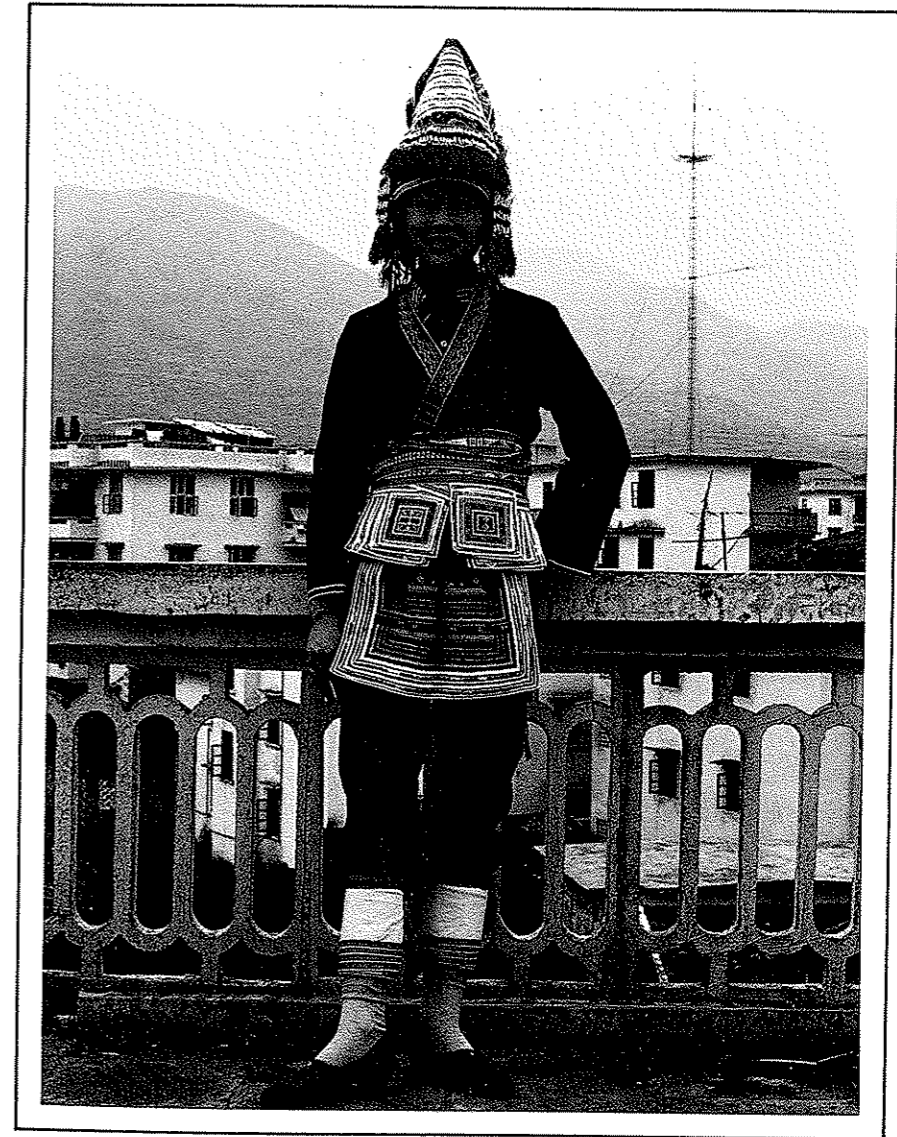


Hong Kong Anthropology Bulletin



No. 111 JUNE 1989

YAO DESCENT STRUCTURES • TAOIST TURTLE SYMBOLISM
CHINESE TEMPLE RITUALS • MARRIAGE AND FREEDOM
SECRET WOMEN'S WRITING

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JUNE 1989

EDITORIAL

This issue of the HONG KONG ANTHROPOLOGY BULLETIN is devoted to studies in the anthropology of Chinese society which have recently taken place within mainland China itself. We are particularly fortunate to be able to include four of the articles presented by overseas researchers at the Second International Colloquium on Yao Studies, held in Chengzhou, Hunan, 20-24 November 1988, and organised by the International Association for Yao Studies in cooperation with the National Minority Institutes of Guangdong, Guangxi and Hunan. These are those by Chiao Chien, Jacques Lemoine, Douglas Miles and Chiang Wei. While Chiao Chien's article deals specifically with the marriage customs of both the Yao and Han Chinese, Chiang Wei's represents a summary of recent research on the secret women's writing of Hunan, the ethnic identification of which has not yet been clearly established. Although both Lemoine's and Miles' papers directly address the ethnic Yao minorities of China, both also make reference to wider comparative studies in Southeast Asia. Jacques Lemoine's deals with issues in the study of Taoism which are currently attracting great interest both in China and overseas, while Douglas Miles compares Yao kinship structure in Guangdong with that in Northern Thailand. Stephan Feuchtwang's paper also refers to comparative research undertaken outside China, in this case in Taiwan, but bears more on the analysis of the revival of religion in China under the new economic reforms which was also the topic of an earlier article in the HONG KONG ANTHROPOLOGY BULLETIN, by William Newell (HKAB 1 : 1987), and contrasts interestingly in approach to that of Jacques Lemoine. Religion in China, both in Han Chinese and ethnic minority areas, is the object of increasing attention to Chinese and overseas researchers, and we hope therefore that these studies will appeal to those in Hong Kong who are concerned with similar issues.

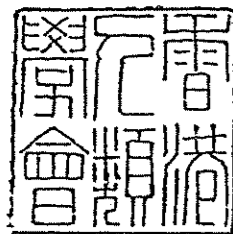
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Editorial Advisor: Janet Lee Scott

cover: *Pai Yao maiden from Liannan Autonomous Yao County (Kwan 1986)*



HONG KONG ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CAPITALISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF DESCENT UNITS IN CHINA AND THAILAND: A COMPARISON OF YOULING (1938) AND PULANGKA (1968).

Douglas Miles

This paper concerns Yao in two villages. Residents of both proclaim Pan Hu to be the progenitor of their ethnic group and their epics about ancestors celebrate the same culture heroes. (e.g. Lemoine, 1987). But thousands of miles and several international borders separate these communities and there is no evidence that intercommunication has ever occurred.

Youling is in northwestern Guangdong near the junction of that province's boundaries with Hunan and Guangxi (southeastern China). Agriculturally, the Pai Yao inhabitants are lowlanders but there is good reason for their usual identification as "mountain people": their settlement crowns the pinnacle of a massive limestone monolith which rises more than 200 metres from the surrounding waters of their irrigated fields. This community was the subject of a social survey by a team from Lingnan (now Zhongshan) University fifty years ago (in 1938). The researchers included C. B. Lee, K. K. Lee, K. Y. Lin and W. C. Wang. Their reports appeared in English with an introduction by Professor Reo Fortune the following year (*Lingnan Science Journal*, 1939, Vol. 18).

My purpose is to illustrate the value of that publication for analysis of information about the Yao I studied with Dr. Chob Kachanaanda thirty years later (during 1966-68). These Iu Mien of northern Thailand were not only mountain dwellers but also highland farmers who required land at high altitudes (more than 1,000 metres) to grow opium poppy. They produced the narcotic and other crops in dry fields and by techniques of shifting cultivation. One of their villages was Pulangka on a ridge near the point where the boundary between Nan and Chiengrai provinces meets the international border with Laos.

The theoretical problem to which I shall relate these introductory comments concerns the development of Yao kin groups into patrilineal or bilateral descent units and arises from further observations which indicate the influence which commerce may exercise on such variance where land rather than labour is the scarce component of agricultural production or vice versa.

1. Ancestor Worship

Pai Yao farmers climb from their fields on the valley floor to their homes on Youling's pinnacle by stairways of quartz boulders which the countless footsteps of many generations have worn and polished to a high sheen. Ladders of large pebbles provide access between the rock shelves which support the buildings of the settlement above and below one another.

In 1938, 420 stone, brick and timber cottages accommodated approximately 1,200 people on the monolith's peak (K. K. Lee, 1939:371) Twenty-five ancestral halls occupied the largest spaces. The most elaborate was a place for worship by all villagers. Some congregations of the 24 smaller temples partially overlapped but otherwise all had different members who appear to have ranged in number from about 10 to more than 100 persons with an average of approximately 38. I emphasise that each ancestral-cult group among these Pai Yao included residents of at least two dwellings and normally of many more houses. (C. B. Lee, 1939:362-363; W. C. Wang, 1939:397)

By contrast, the Iu Mien have never built an ancestral hall in Pulangka. During 1966-68, their population averaged a mere 245. But each of the 19 houses on the northern Thai ridge accommodated a different ancestral-cult group. Nobody belonged to more than one and their membership ranged numerically from 2 to 57 (Miles, 1972b: 1973b; 1978). These people were the permanent residents of their dwelling where they worshipped ancestors in an enclosed and roofed gallery designed and oriented especially for that purpose (Figure 1). Such differences between the two communities pose the main problem for the following discussion.

2. Conjugal Residence and Families

Houses were larger in Pulangka than in Youling and on average accommodated more than 11 persons (Miles, 1972b) compared with fewer than 3 among the Pai Yao (Stübel, 1938). This was partly due to the fact that institutions regulating conjugal residence and inheritance were highly conducive to the formation of extended families among the Yao I

studied but not among those to whom K. K. Lee (1939:376) referred in commenting on relations between newly-weds and their parents. She wrote,

".... the couple moves into a separate house and starts a new life of cooperation with complete independence from the parents. The son does not have to look after his parents in their old age, but he and his wife may bring them food at times .. (.) .. there is little chance for the son and daughter-in-law to cooperate with the old couple Men and women, old and young alike have to work as hard as cattle until all their energy and vigour is gone".

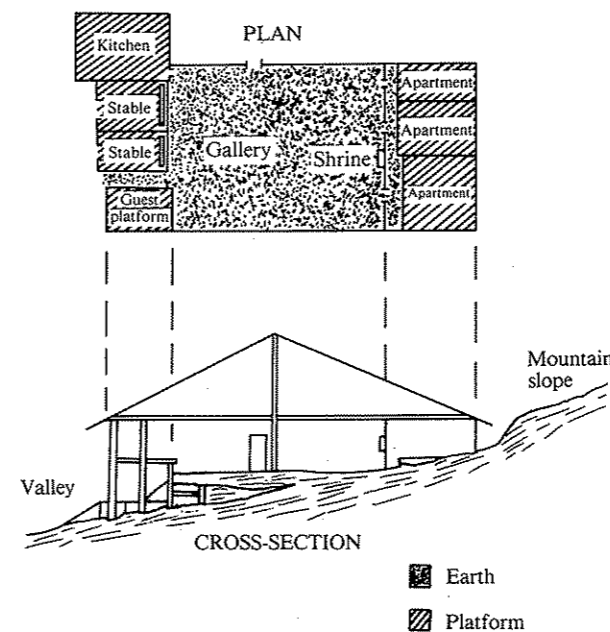


Fig. 1 Pulangka House

All Pai Yao spouses lived apart from siblings as well as parents within a year of marriage. Nor did principles of land inheritance favour any non-residential but permanently corporate relationship between brothers. K. Y. Lin (1939: 416- 417) described pre-mortem bequests whereby all sons received their share of the parental estate at marriage. He stressed that,

".... the younger son may sell his property without the permission of the father or his elder brother if he is compelled to do so by his poverty or other reasons".

The same author also reported transfers of inherited land between brothers but I emphasize only by way of sale and purchase (*idem*).

Institutions regulating conjugal residence and inheritance in Youling thus promoted the proliferation rather than the growth of families but provided no basis for enduring relations between them in the form of responsibilities for mutual, material support or collective rights over productive assets. These social realities appear to have been subject to different values from those which were evident in residential and economic relations of close kin and affines among Iu Mien in Thailand.

For example, whereas every Pai Yao husband and wife lived neolocally, all marriages in Pulangka were initially either virilocal or uxorilocal and most remained so for their duration. This meant that a typical conjugal couple resided not only with the groom's parents or the bride's but also in the same house as his or her siblings and with the spouses of these brothers and/or sisters (Miles, 1972a).

I use the term *dwelling group* (*peo*: Figure 2) for any collectivity of kin and affines living permanently under the same roof in Pulangka. They jointly maintained different granaries, stables, pig-pens and chicken coops from other relatives while depending freely on products of one another's farming, fishing, hunting and collection of jungle produce (e.g. wild vegetables, firewood, timber etc.). These people collectively owned an inheritable estate of productive assets and were corporately liable for one another's debts including loans on accounts which every *peo* operated with merchants in valley towns (See Section 7). But the most important dimension of the solidarity between residents of the same house was the monopoly they exercised over one another's labour (Miles, 1972b). Such privileges and obligations also entailed exclusive devotion to the same ancestors by all these relatives but lapsed in the case of individuals who moved out permanently through marriage or adoption (Miles, 1978).

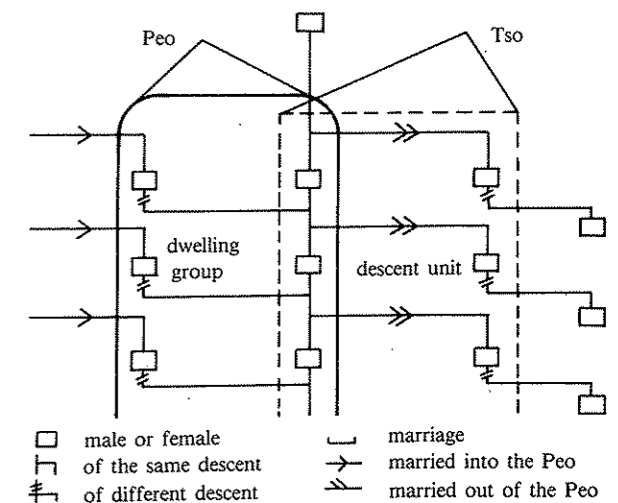


Fig. 2 Pulangka Dwelling Group and Descent Unit.

3. Bilateral and Patrilineal Descent Units.

A typical Pulangka dwelling group developed around a core of co-residents who had married natolocally. I emphasize that these adults included women as well as men and that in contrast with their spouses, they belonged to the same exogamous and bilateral descent unit (*tsu*: Figure 2) which recruited their offspring. I use the term ascendants to distinguish such parents from others (*idem*). Children belonged to their father's or mother's descent unit depending on whether he or she was an ascendant and in either case, they enjoyed the same natal rights to inherit from the *peo*'s estate. Their other parent had forfeited his or her birthrights by becoming an uxorilocal groom or a virilocal bride and therefore had none to transmit. But by the same token, the inheritance rights which in-marrying spouses had acquired nuptially were equivalent to those of their natolocally resident wives or husbands.

The foregoing information presents striking contrasts with data about Youling where K. Y. Lin (1939: 416-417) and K. K. Lee (1939: 375-376) reported for example, that mothers as well as fathers could bequeath property in pre-mortem inheritance to each of their children on marriage. But land which a woman had thereby inherited could not pass to her grandchildren and reverted on the demise of their parents to one of her brothers or his heirs. A father's bequest to sons on the other hand, passed to his male descendants in perpetuity (see Section 6). In short, while the ethnography of the Pai Yao emphasizes that both sexes inherited and bequeathed land, the inference is very strong that the right of women to do so was subject to restrictions which sustained an overwhelming tendency to patrilineality and which operated in favour of men.

In the transmission of descent, Youling women had no rights at all. Descent units (*fong*) which played no part in domestic affairs took the form of strongly agnatic lineages which regulated recruitment to all but the largest ancestral-cult groups (see above, p. 2). The main question my paper poses concerns the fact that the right to transmit descent was the exclusive prerogative of males in Youling but a monopoly of neither sex in Pulangka. I seek to explain this difference.

Pai Yao descent units were structurally identical with the patrilineages (*tsu*) which are the subject of Freedman's (1958, 1964, 1967) analytically pioneering research on the Han ancestral cult in southeastern China. It could be that the motivation for Yao to emulate Han orthodoxy in ancestor worship was stronger in northwestern Guangdong than in the mountains of north Thailand. The multiplicity of ancestral halls in Youling and their complete absence from Pulangka would support this hypothesis and

the further supposition that emphasis on patrilineality varied accordingly. This view would not necessarily be inconsistent with another explanation which centres on the fact that by the 1930s, there was an extreme shortage of land (but an abundance of cheap labour) in the agricultural sector of Guangdong's economy (Ho, 1959).

4. Land Scarcity and Irrigated Farms

My proposition is that Pai Yao society regulated access to the scarce means of production not only by commoditizing land but also by subjecting inheritance to narrower restrictions than might otherwise have operated; that these included the denial that the offspring of any landowner's daughter were his descendants and hence the disqualification of her grandchildren from the right to inherit his property; that the rigorously patrilineal constitutions of the congregations which gathered in the 24 smaller ancestral halls religiously legitimated this denial and thereby sanctified concentration of ultimate control over inherited land in the hands of agnates.

The following observations by K. Y. Lin (1939:413-416) support this hypothesis with evidence that the market price of Pai Yao land resulted in differential access to the means of agricultural production. The same statements thereby also reveal the pressures which excluded any woman's grandchildren from rights to her parents' estate.

"Most of the land in Yau-Ling Pai is privately owned ... Ownership of the land may be transferred through buying and selling. The price of one *mow* is approximately \$100 to \$150".

"There is unequal distribution of wealth among the Yao people. Some of them are rich, some of them are poor and some without property. However, there is no great demarcation between the rich and the poor; both of them belong to the same working-class farmers. Wealth is very precarious. One who lives on his own productive ability and is self-sufficient is said to be rich. The rich men usually lease their excess lands ... to tenants on an equal sharing basis. Some of them employ cultivators ... on an agreement that each employee is provided with three meals a day and paid twenty cents in wages". "The rich men such as T'ang Szu Shen Kung own as much as 60 *mows* of rice fields. On the other hand there are poor men who own nothing ... Normally each family can cultivate 10 or more *mows*"

The Pai Yao land to which these quotations refer was both continuously cultivatable and permanently valuable as real estate. The irrigation system on

which the crops depended was immovable community property which embodied many generations of labour on building and repairwork. I stress that the principal aqueducts originated from the stone foundations of the houses on the very pinnacle of Youling and suspect that Pai Yao farmers maintained their settlement on this site to secure their control over the springs and cascades from which the megalithic constructions of their ancestors delivered water to their fields more than 200 metres below (Miles, *pers. ob.*). A number of specialists serviced the operation of the system on behalf of the community and in return for payment in kind by landowners and tenants (C. B. Lee, 1939:365). But the soil of the valley floor required additional enrichment with cow and pig dung as well as with lime obtainable from nearby pits. (K. Y. Lin, 1939: 409).

5. Scarcity of Labour and Shifting Cultivation

Pulangka farms, by contrast, were swiddens. Their locations were temporary because their only sources of fertility were the rain and the ash resulting from combustion of felled jungle covers to which they reverted for at least a decade after two or three years of consecutive use. Farmers forfeited all previous rights over the site of any field they abandoned to fallow, and the community prohibited re-cultivation of the area until re-forestation approached climax.

All permanent residents of the village shared equal rights to clear any regenerated plots. Such terrain was abundantly available and was subject to neither sale, purchase nor inheritance. Dwelling groups could therefore expand their resources in land simply by felling more jungle at the beginning of each agricultural cycle. Hence, the more workers at their disposal, the more land they could cultivate. Indeed, they sought to raise the per capita output of their workers by intensifying production (Miles, 1979) and avoided intensification of labour to promote the output of a constant area (e.g. by off-farm tasks to boost soil fertility with irrigation and animal manure).

Only the largest dwelling groups established rice and maize swiddens in addition to opium fields during the same year; by so doing, they provided their workers with full and continuous employment. But most *peo* grew poppy only or combined that enterprise with the cultivation of one but not both of the cereals because of insufficient labour to meet the demands of all three crops when the seasons for crucial production phases overlapped (*idem*). As a result their workers were underemployed for periods of successive weeks every year; their annual per capita output and incomes suffered accordingly. Paradoxically, underemployment existed because labour was scarce. Indeed, the following discussion

will illustrate that the outstanding success of a few dwelling groups in competition for the community's workforce had reduced some to the bare minimum of members necessary to subsist and I suspect had results in the extinction of others.

These observations lead to the following proposition which is a corollary to my hypothesis relating patrilineal descent in Youling to land scarcity: that the Iu Mien of Pulangka regulated competition for the workforce of their community by simultaneously desexualizing and commoditizing the right of any spouse to reside natolocally and to become an ascendant; that is, by assigning the offspring of any conjugal couple to their father's or mother's descent unit according to whether his *peo* or hers had paid for their parents' union; that higher matrimonial costs promoted the opportunity of wealthier dwelling groups not only to recruit workers as in-marrying spouses from the poorer sector of the community, but also to avoid losing the labour of female as well as male members-by-birth through either simple out-marriage or engagement in direct exchanges of brides, grooms and adoptees (Miles, 1972a); that bilateral descent among the Iu Mien of northern Thailand was a function of a matrimonial system which geared control over the population's workforce to the cost of weddings and of bridewealth.

6. The Cost of Yao Marriage.

Every Pai Yao marriage was between people from different households neither of which gained a worker through the union; indeed, both lost an adult member as a result. Each also forfeited land by way of pre-mortem bequests for almost immediate and exclusive use by the newly-weds. Obviously, the transfer of this property had no influence on the descent of the couple's future children. The sexual identity of their father had pre-determined that they would belong to his patrilineage, not to his wife's, and that they would worship his ancestors, not hers. By the same token, it was their mother's sex which denied her descent unit their membership and her ancestors their devotions. Pai Yao weddings (and presumably bridewealth payments) were relevant to such issues only to the extent that they distinguished the man who held rights of paternity over the bride's future offspring from all other males.

At Iu Mien weddings in northern Thailand, the paternity of the bride's children was not at issue; typically, she had demonstrated her fertility pre-maritally by giving birth to several offspring over whom she retained custody and who accompanied her to the wedding altar. The identity of their genitors was not only public knowledge but also received regular social recognition; they addressed and referred to their fathers in the kinship terminology which operated between these youngsters and their

mother's husband. Under such circumstances, the recognition of a man as the father of a woman's children did not determine whether they would belong to his descent unit and worship his ancestors. But nor did he assume such rights over his step-children or his own by virtue of being her husband as well. On the contrary, such arrangements were entirely contingent upon agreements between his dwelling group and her's concerning obligations for the sponsorship of their wedding and payment of bridewealth.

Either the bride's dwelling group or the groom's assumed total responsibility for all expenditure and by so doing, not only retained one worker but also gained another. The wedding committed both spouses and the bride's offspring to the ancestors the sponsors worshipped and provided husband and wife with rights of exclusive sexual access to each other. Thereafter, spouse-givers could not demand the couple's separation even if bridewealth (in silver ingots or cash) was still owing. Completion of that additional payment terminated the liability of the spouse-receivers to reciprocate with a bride, a groom or a child in adoption and in lieu of bullion or money (Miles, 1972a). There was no institution of "groomwealth" but the receivers of an uxoriocal husband could pay bridewealth which his natal dwelling group owed to a third and thereby exempt themselves from liabilities to which his recruitment might otherwise have subjected them.

The celebration of a Pai Yao marriage was modest by cross-cultural standards and took place mainly in the home of the bride's parents who invited "nearest relatives" for meals over a period of two days. (K. K. Lee, 1939:374-375). There was also an evening reception in the groom's natal home where neighbours and close relatives had a right to "one meal" only. K. K. Lee did not stipulate who received and contributed to the bridewealth; nor did she clarify what proportion this sum constituted of all "expenditure for the wedding purposes"; but even the total expense was "never very great" and I emphasize that the "bridegroom and his family" were never responsible for all of it.

Iu Mien weddings were famous in northern Thailand as ceremonies of conspicuous, prolonged and repetitive consumption. Hundreds of guests from scores of villages would gather for such celebrations over a period of three to four days. I attended eight of these events while living in Pulangka. Six banquets at each catered for an average total of 618 diners. At local prices, the cost of ingredients and sundry expenses (for example, firewood, cloth and lighting fuel; hireage of priests, scribes and horses, and so forth) amounted to an average of Bht. 7,600 and together with the mean

value of bridewealth totalled about Bht. 11,000 or slightly more than US\$500.

7. Commerce and the Structure of Yao Descent Units

The resources which Pulangka dwelling groups converted to cash for such purposes consisted partially of stored wealth in the form of silver ingots and ornaments. I have referred to these as productive assets because of their use in the recruitment of labour. They constituted the main portion of the group's inheritable estate. But a less conspicuous source of matrimonial finance was far more important for the collective interests of the members.

Every Pulangka *peo* operated accounts with Chinese shopkeepers in the lowland towns of north Thailand (for example, Pong, Chiengkam, Chiengrai). Credit from these businesses was essential to purchase consumer goods in advance of harvests but was contingent on satisfactory servicing of far more substantial and long-term loans which the Yao took at exorbitant interest rates to fund weddings and bridewealth transactions among themselves. Consider the following examples:—

In 1968, the second-largest dwelling group (with 24 members) was repaying such loans for 8 marriages including 3 in which 5 of the 6 spouses were already dead. The weddings which had created some of these debts had taken place more than twenty years before my fieldwork began. But an equally indebted dwelling group was one of the smallest which comprised an impoverished elderly widow plus her unmarried daughter with two infant children. They still owed one trader for three marriages of deceased ancestors who included the grandmother's own parents. She had barely reduced the outstanding debt since her son's marriage into another *peo*. His mother and sister continued to service the loan by payment in opium but to meet the demands of their creditor had forgone the opportunity to grow rice in 1967 because the season for clearing jungle from grain swiddens competed with the poppy harvest in February and the combination of both tasks was beyond the capacity of the miniscule dwelling group. More fortunate borrowers from the same merchant made their repayments in rice which they delivered on his instructions to his other debtors including the two women I have just mentioned.

Few merchants ever visited Pulangka and none lived there. But their absence and the apparent inaccessibility of the tiny settlement to commercial traffic were economically deceptive. Capitalism had no less influence on Yao social structure in that village than in Youling, which was only a thirty-minute walk from a major road to Sanjiang town and Guangzhou city (K. K. Lee, 1939:37).

At least 32 shopkeepers resided permanently with their families among the Pai Yao on Youling's limestone peak. These merchants were mainly Han who did business as money-lenders by extending credit on purchases of consumer goods which were re-payable in agricultural and other local produce (especially lumber) which they sold in lowland markets. The traders gained control over much Yao land by providing mortgages over such property and by selling wealthier villagers the right to foreclose on the debtors, thereby increasing differential access to the scarce means of production between members of the same descent units (K. Y. Lin, 1939:414,422; C. B. Lee, 1939:360; K. K. Lee, 1939:371).



A Yao Bride in Northern Thailand (D. Miles).

Chinese merchants of northern Thai towns had also developed a complex system of debt and credit to control the produce of clientele among the Iu Mien. (Miles, 1972a) By the 1960s, such arrangements had geared most shifting cultivation by Yao in Thailand to poppy growing and to the international demand for opium from the Golden Triangle. Farmers in some mountain villages of that region grew little of anything else and were almost totally dependent for rice and maize on other highland debtors of their merchant creditors. Rival Chinese businesses secured control over production levels and distribution of these crops by increasing credit for matrimonial finance to preferred Pulangka dwelling groups and thereby promoted the success of these clients in competition for the labour necessary to expand and diversify agricultural enterprise. Such success entailed Iu Mien use of that credit to arrange natolocal marriages for female as well as male members of descent units which thereby recruited the children of both. My paper concludes by relating a summary of the foregoing observations to an earlier proposition concerning Yao emulation of Han orthodoxy in ancestor worship.

8. Conclusion

I hypothesize that Yao descent units developed patrilineally in Youling and bilaterally in Pulangka by responding to the impact of commerce on the scarcity of land in Guangdong and of labour in the mountains of north Thailand.

A shortage of land was certainly not unique to the Yao minority of southeastern China and appears to have been endemic in most peasant communities of the Han majority (Ho, 1959). Indeed, whereas the Pai excluded the grandchildren of a woman from rights to her patrimony, Chinese law disinherited her children as well (Freedman, 1958, 1966). Both ethnic sectors of the population thus denied that a landowner's descendants included the progeny of his or her daughters. I speculate that this denial was part-and-parcel of restrictions which regulated access to the scarce means of agricultural production in each case. These propositions lead to the inference that regional agrarian exigencies predisposed Youling society to conceptualize descent according to the same rigorously patrilineal notions as the Han, and by so doing to emulate the orthodoxy of China's majority in ancestor worship.

By contrast, terrain suitable for swiddens of rice and maize as well as poppy was abundantly available in Thailand's northern mountains, where Iu Mien dwelling groups were under constant commercial pressure to maximize the agricultural labour at their disposal. These conditions and relations of production operated against sexual discrimination in the allocation of rights over people but were conducive to the arrangement of natolocal marriages for female as well as for male members of the *ts'o* and to the development of descent units which recruited the children of both. In brief, the impact of capitalism on the scarcity of labour among the Yao of Pulangka structured their notion of descent as a bilateral phenomenon and thereby contributed to their deviance from Han orthodoxy in ancestor worship (See above, Section 1 and Miles, 1978).

Notes

I presented a version of this paper in China to the Second International Colloquium for Yao Studies at the Chenzhou Yao Academic Conference, during November, 1988. Generous assistance from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, accelerated the preparation of the penultimate draft. Consultations among Yao and other participants in the conference enabled me to proceed directly thence to northwest Guangdong. My purpose was to assess

prospects for anthropological research in villages of Lian-nan Yao Autonomous County where I briefly visited Youling.

Thanks are due to the following for funding and arrangements necessary for that excursion: the Faculties Research Fund of the Australian National University, the Australia-China Council and to Professor Chiao Chien, Chinese University of Hong Kong. I am also grateful for advice, information and co-operation to Messrs. Liu Yao Quan, Zhu Hong and Zao Long Fu of the Guangdong Research Institute of Minority Nationalities. My constant companion from Chenzhou to Guangzhou was Mr. Guo Jia Xiong, Foreign Affairs Office, Chen County, Hunan; his natural talents as an interpreter, diplomat and mountaineer proved essential for the assignment which benefitted greatly from his delight in the experiences we shared.

Once again I acknowledge my eternal debt to Khun Wanat Bhruksasri, Director of the Tribal Research Institute, Chiangmai University, which sponsored my fieldwork in Thailand; he introduced me to the Yao over two decades ago.

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THE TURTLE SYMBOL IN YAO KWATANG AND TOUSAI ORDINATIONS.

Jacques LEMOINE

Among the different aspects of traditional culture, one of the most important and difficult to study for the anthropologist is ritual. From a phenomenological viewpoint, ritual in illiterate or semi-literate society seems like the lady who haunted the dreams of the French 19th. Century poet, Charles Baudelaire; "at each encounter neither quite the same nor totally another". The fact is that ritual embodies a number of symbolic gestures and sayings organized in such a way that communication is established through a series of scenes, the order and progression of which is in itself significant in the same way as when we attend a theatrical play. The lone ritualist, or the master of ritual in larger group ceremonies, is the director of the stage, and in the same way as different interpretations of a play can be shown, a ritual may vary according to the personal insight of the ritualist. However it also benefits from the privilege of an internal structural logic which presided over the original writing of the play, although the meaning of some details may sometimes be blurred in the eyes of the performer himself, so that they are only preserved, like fossils, as constituent parts of a larger structure. In this respect, ritual, like myth, is an incomparable source for the study of the underlying metaphysics haunting cultures and societies.



The Turtle Dance: swaying back to back (Lemoine).

When, some twenty years ago, I became aware that the major Yao rituals all belonged to a Taoist tradition I thought that their analysis would be much illuminated by a textual comparison with the existing Taoist rituals among Han Chinese communities. I eventually travelled to Taiwan and attended large *Jiao* (建醮) village celebrations in the vicinity of the southern city of Tai Nan. I carefully watched every step of a ritual which lasted no less than five days, ending up with long and numerous tape recordings and an abundant photographic iconography. I found however that Yao *jiao* rituals were quite different from the *Zheng Yi* (正一) Han Chinese rituals, and that if a comparison could be made, it would be at the structural rather than at the textual level. The most important difference between the *Zheng Yi* and the Yao *jiao* rituals is that where the former are intended to renew the alliance between a village community and the divine superstructure of the Tao through the intermediary of Taoist priests, the latter are plain ordination ceremonies. As a matter of fact, the ideal Yao community is a community of priests, where every male adult has been initiated into the religion and is thus entitled to a place in the Taoist cosmic bureaucracy. Yao ordination has been thus described as a true "rite de passage" between childhood and adulthood.¹ All those who have been initiated into the religion will thereafter be considered as "good people" ("良民"), as they call themselves in their rituals, and receive a "religious name" (法名). The degree of integration into the Tao cosmic body is however gradual, and the postulants are given progressive degrees like scholars entering the traditional Chinese Imperial bureaucracy. The two major ordination categories are *kwa tang* ("掛燈"), "hanging the lamps" and *tou sai* ("度師"), "becoming a Master" — also called *tou kai* ("度戒"), referring to the ordeals (*kai*) the postulants have to go through (*tou*), as noted by most field researchers among the Yao.² As far as we know, Yao Taoism belongs to a different tradition known as Meishan Jiao (梅山教), and has been influenced by the Cantonese Taoist tradition. This explains the different ritual languages resorted to by the Yao in the course of their very rich and complicated rituals.

Among the significant structural symbols embodied in Yao ordination ceremonies, I have

noticed the recurrent appearance of the turtle symbol at three crucial points: 1) in the first, *kwa fam toi tang* (掛三台燈), grade of ordination, the postulants are seated on special stools representing the turtle split inside out into two halves; 2) in the second, *tou sai*, grade of ordination, paper-cut images of a yellow turtle are stuck on walls and beams in the ordination chapel wherever the sacred paintings are hung; 3) a dance of the turtle is first performed at the foot of the heavenly platform where the ordinands are to ascend to Heaven after climbing a ladder of swords, and this occurs again many times in the course of the ordination, both in the sacred chapel and back at the foot of the heavenly platform. This dance, led by the whole team of priests, is very striking; it is formed of a sequence of several mimics, featuring: 1) the postulants going in procession to study the Tao, 2) then looking for the turtle, 3) stabbing the turtle, 4) driving the turtle, 5) picking up the turtle, 6) carrying the turtle on their back, 7) stringing the turtle, 8) hanging up the turtle, 9) cutting open the turtle, 10) dividing the turtle, and 11) drinking the turtle soup.³ Each dancer is holding a pair of small cymbals that they clap feverishly, joining to the next dancer and resting and swaying back to back when they "carry the turtle": this part has been retained in the Yao folkloric dance exhibitions of today. Then, the first two dancers form an arch under which the next two pass, forming an arch in turn and so on, until the whole procession of postulants has passed through this process, when they string the turtle, etc. This is called in Yao *tsuen to* ("串龜"), "to string the turtle". Why do they need to string, hang, cut into pieces the turtle, and finally share a turtle soup?



The Turtle Dance: passing under an arch (Lemoine).

In Chinese mythology the turtle is a symbol of longevity, one of the *si ling* (四靈) ("numinous creatures" or Four Potentates), emblematic animals of the four directions, the three others being the unicorn, the phoenix and the dragon. The turtle has taken part in cosmogony, bringing Yu the Lo Shu, and is finally introduced by the *Bencao Kangmu* (本草綱目) as a symbol of Yin and Yang, the convex part of its shell representing the starry dome of Heaven and its flat bottom, the Earth.⁴

In the Chinese Taoist tradition of the Celestial Masters, the Mother of Metal (姆) (or the Queen Mother of the West, Xi Wang Mu, 西王母) is seated on a magic square upon the back of a turtle, and when the Taoist priest has performed the Step of Yu (禹步) to recreate the world, and summoned the Four Potentates, he kowtows on his knees in the "position of the turtle", preparing to bring the message to Heaven, while an attendant, the incense keeper, stands to one side of him with the sword held in a vase so as to "kill the turtle"... No satisfactory explanation has been provided so far for this episode of the Zheng Yi Jiao liturgy.⁵

A simple comparison between the Han and Yao ritual uses of the turtle symbol shows that at some point, linked to the meeting of the priest(s) with the Taoist Heavens (at the foot of the Golden Gate, 金闕) the priest(s) impersonate(s) a turtle. Moreover, in the Han ritual one assistant holds a sword "to kill the turtle", while on the Yao side the priests perform a dance for the purpose of "stringing together" what appear to be pieces of the turtle. When interviewed, the Yao priests explain that this dance refers to the ancient myth of the flood, when after the complete drowning of mankind the only two survivors, whom they call *Fu Hei ts'e mwi* ("伏羲姊妹") Fu Xi and his sister, after Fu Xi and Nü Wa of the Han Chinese tradition, find that they have landed on the top of Kun Lun mountain. Desperate to find mates in order to continue mankind, they meet a turtle who has also survived the flood and ask her advice. When the turtle answers that they should marry each other, Fu Xi is so indignant that losing his temper he kills and breaks the turtle to pieces with a stick. And the myth adds that from that day on, the back of the turtle has been made of pieces gathered together. Thus when the dancing priests impersonate the turtle gathering its pieces together, they allude to the myth of the flood and to the character of Fu Xi who plays such a fundamental part in Taoist lore.⁶ This is even more conspicuous in the explanations given for the shape of the postulants' seats in the *kwa fam toi tang* ordination. This seat is made of two truncated pyramids both joined by the same helve, one resting on the ground, the other being the surface of the seat. At about the middle of the helve there is a dodecahedral protuberance⁷ which the Yao priests

call "the seal of Lao Jun". The whole is referred to as "three palaces" and the seal of Lao Jun is the palace of the middle while the two diametrically opposed pyramids — the upper and lower halves of the turtle — stand for the upper and lower palaces. If we consider the two halves of the turtle as symbols of Heaven and Earth, the symbolism of the Three Palaces is easy to understand, as Heaven and Earth are joined together through the "seal of Lao Jun".

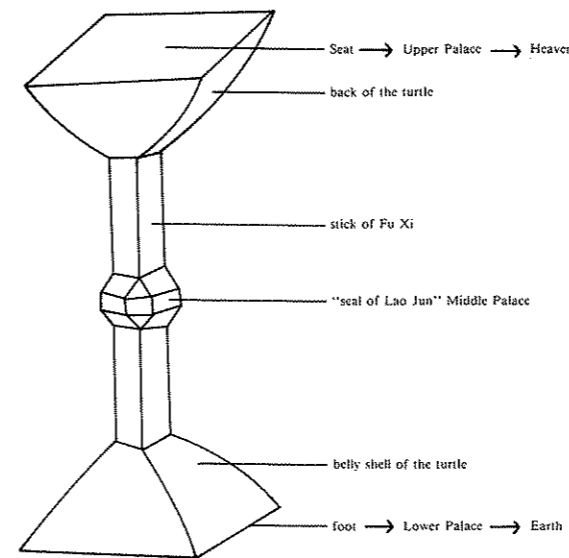


Fig. 1 The symbolism of the stool in the *kwa fam tang* ordinations

Furthermore, the stem joining them symbolises the stick of Fu Xi. And we may add that it symbolically pierces the turtle as well as joining its two halves together. Moreover, in the communion of the priests and postulants sharing the turtle soup, there is a voluntary pun based on the fact that Tao is pronounced in Yao like in Cantonese To, and that the Yao name for turtle has exactly the same pronunciation. Sharing the turtle is thus "sharing the Tao".

In my opinion, the crouching of the *Zheng Yi* Han Taoist priest in the posture of the turtle when delivering a *piao* (表) memorial to the Golden Gate has exactly the same function as the Yao priests' dance to "string the turtle". But it is preserved at this point of the ritual more like a fossil than a significant gesture, and consequently its real meaning has somehow faded away.⁸

Why should this be so? Here I shall refer to my personal study of the myth of the flood, part of which has already been published in French.⁹ For those many, I fear, who have no access to this

language, I shall now briefly summarize my thesis: according to Chinese cosmogony, the layout of the historical world was the work of Yu after he had drained the floods. Founding ancestor of the Xia dynasty, he was also the founder of the dynastic ruling lines, the basis of the Chinese political system. But there is a more ancient flood myth still, according to which mankind, wiped out by the flood, was recreated by an incestuous couple: Fu Xi and Nü Wa... Completely reinterpreted by Confucian history, Fu Xi and Niu Wa becoming in Sima Zhen's *Addition to the Shi Ji*¹⁰ the first two of the Three (successive) Sovereigns, San Huang (三皇) at the dawn of history, this myth has survived marginally in Chinese works such as the Tang writer Li Rong's *Du Yi Ji*,¹¹ and in the oral tradition of different peoples of south China belonging to the Miao-Yao, Tibeto-Burmese, Zhuang-Dong and Mon-Khmer families. Compared to the myth of Yu which "explains" the origin of the State, the myth of the incestuous couple of Fu Xi and his sister "explains" the present conception of mankind in tribal societies, in two most important aspects of their actual environment: the division of societies into exogamic groups, whether these be clans or lineages, and the multiplicity of languages and ethnic groups. In the Yu myth the flood is a means of transition from a tribal chieftains' society to a civilized world under one hereditary ruler, while in the Fu Xi myth, the flood wipes out the incestuous descent from one original couple and paves the way to actual unilineal descent group societies and a polyethnic environment. Both Yu and Fu Xi represent the origin of actual mankind (i.e. "from after the flood") and the beginnings of the civilized world. The Han *Zheng Yi* Taoists perform the "step of Yu" in order to symbolically recreate this civilized world at the beginning of any ritual establishing communication with the Tao.¹² And this is because as part of the Han Chinese Empire, they place themselves in the dynastic tradition (even if they advocate a kind of extra-dynastic legitimacy for the Tao.)¹³ The posture of the turtle appears in the process of reading a *piao* memorial to the Court of the Jade Emperor etc. and so it represents the ultimate link between heaven and mankind. The Yao story of the flood explains that after "killing the turtle", doubting its pronouncements, Fu Xi walked around the earth to find other humans, and when finally he came back he was sorry for the turtle and tried to put it together again. If we consider that it was Fu Xi who invented the trigrams who has given to mankind with them the mystery of all life, his attempt to repair the turtle and his acceptance of incest is somehow the first step towards understanding this fundamental mystery. And in the Yao tradition the mystery will remain forever embodied in the turtle symbol of the Tao, as emphasized by the symbolic communion of the priests sharing the turtle soup.

Yu is not so familiar to the tradition of the Yao Taoist priests, but the story of Fu Xi and his sister is frequently evoked. The dance to "string the turtle" may have a metaphysical meaning comparable to that of the Step of Yu for the Zheng Yi priest, albeit in a different social context. In the Han Chinese ritual, the step of Yu has taken a prominent place while the "turtle" posture of the Zheng Yi priest at the foot of the Golden Gate (probably a fossilised form of the ancient dance preserved by the Yao) has retained the sense of the importance of Fu Xi's understanding of the mystery of life as the ultimate form of man's obedience in the presence of divine impersonations of the Tao.



The Zheng Yi Taoist priest in the posture of the turtle while an acolyte holds a sword at his back 'to kill the turtle' (Lagerwey).

This analysis of the turtle symbol in Yao liturgy helps to illuminate its still central position in today's Chinese Taoist liturgy. The turtle symbol is in fact a reminder of this older myth of the flood. While its function has become obscure in Chinese Taoist ritual, it is still very conspicuous in Yao liturgy, as exemplified by the turtle dance of the Yao postulants. I have chosen this example in order to show the importance of studying Yao rituals, especially when they are still practiced in China or outside China. Despite the amazing number of textual publications on Yao liturgy, research is still in need of comparative data on the description of the rituals themselves. I hope to have clarified this point in the example given above, and that researchers into Yao traditional culture will join their efforts to preserve and make available such a precious source for the knowledge of both Yao and Han cultures.

Notes

1. For example by Zhang Youjuan in "A simple Explanation of Taoism Among the Yao of the Ten Thousand Mounts", paper presented at the First International Colloquium on Yao Studies, Hong Kong May 6-7 1986.
2. Peter Kandre, "Autonomy and Integration of Social Systems: The Iu Mien ("Yao" or "Man") Mountain Population and Their Neighbours" in Peter Kunstadter ed., *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations*, Princeton, 1967; Douglas Miles, *Yao*, unpublished thesis, Sydney, 1974; Chob Kacha Ananda, *Etude Ethnographique du Groupe Ethnique Yao de Nord de la Thaïlande*, unpublished thesis, Paris VII, 1977; Shiratori, Kojiro, ed. *To-Nan-Ya Sanchi Minzokushi*, Tokyo 1978; Takemura Takuji, *Yaozoku no Rekishi to Bunka*, Tokyo 1981; J. Lemoine, "Yao Religion and Society" in John McKinnon and Wanat Bhrukasri, eds., *Highlanders of Thailand*, Oxford-Kuala Lumpur, 1982; and *Yao Ceremonial Paintings*, Bangkok, 1982.
3. Far from my field notes, in the first draft of this paper I had over-simplified the description of this dance. I owe to Mr. Liu Xiaochun of the Cultural Centre of He Prefecture in Guangxi, and a specialist of Yao dancing, who refreshed my memories in the course of the colloquium, this more accurate description.
4. A diagram of the "civilized world" (or the Nine Regions) on which Yu walked when draining the flood waters. According to the *She Yi Ji*, *juan 2*, "Yu put forth the utmost effort to () drains and ditches, lead the torrents, and smoothen the peaks. A yellow dragon waved his tail ahead of him and a black turtle carrying green mud followed him. This black turtle was an emissary of the spirit of the (Yellow) River; under the turtle's chin there was a mark (print), all in old *zhuan* seal characters, the words being those of the mountains and rivers of the Nine Regions. Everywhere Yu bored through he marked the place with green mud, and printed on it the mark of the Black Turtle. When people today use earth to make a boundary, it is the heritage of this".
5. J. Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, (Macmillan) New York 1987, dwelling on his Taoist informant's opinion advocates sexual symbolism. For example, p.134: "Some such hypothesis is clearly necessary if we are to explain the strange gesture of the incense keeper putting the sword in a vase, not to

mention the even stranger designation of this act as "killing the turtle". What is it to "kill the turtle"? The sexual symbolism of the turtle is well known. The symbolism of the keeper's gesture would seem to be self-evident: he is forcing its phallic head back under its magic carapace and so obliging this master of the breathing practices that lead to longevity to recycle its excited seminal essence...." Here I should also mention that the "sword in a vase" is also found in the Yao paintings representing standing Master Zhang and Master Li, the two Celestial Masters of the Yao Meishan tradition. Thus putting the sword in a vase could be explained more simply as a reminder of the heritage of the Celestial Masters, whom the Taoist High Priest represents while officiating at the audience of the Tao.

6. He is accredited with having inventing the trigrams, the Chinese lute and the rites of wedding. A late legend introduces a meeting between Fu Xi and Yu in a cavern. Fu Xi hands Yu the Lo Shu (Lo River Diagram). In another tradition, Yu received the Ho Tu (Yellow River Chart) from a dragon-horse emerging on the river-bank, and he found the "Lo Shu" diagram on the shell of a black turtle sent to him by the spirit of the Lo River. Both chart and diagram form a magic square. I have analysed (Lemoine: 1987) the encounter of Yu with Fu Xi as a syncretic attempt to fuse both myths.
7. All the apexes of this solid geometrical figure can be inscribed in a sphere, and it seems to be

a solid geometrical representation of the "magic square".

8. I find particularly striking the reinterpretation as sexual symbolism suggested by today's ritualists.
9. Jacques Lemoine: 1987, "Mythes d'Origine, Mythes identification", *L'HOMME*, 101, janv.-mars 1987, XXVII, 58-85.
10. Si-Mazhen, *Shi Ji, Bu San Huang Ben Ji*.
11. "Long ago, in the beginning of the world, there was only Nü Wa and her elder brother, on the Kun Lun mountain, and no people on earth. They discussed marrying each other, but were overwhelmed with shame. The brother then led his sister to the top of Mount Kun Lun and prayed: "Heaven, if it is your will that we, brother and sister marry, then let the smoke gather (unite) together; if not let it disperse". As the smoke united together, her sister came (gave herself) to him". In the Yao version of the same story, they asked a bamboo about marrying each other. As the answer was positive Fu Xi cut it in pieces (this is why the bamboo today is made of segments) and they burned it on the two opposite banks of a river. But the smoke reunited across the river....
12. M. Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal*, 1972, Washington University Press.
13. See A. Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoisme des Han*, Paris 1969.

CHANCE AND TRADITION: SOCIAL AND ETHICAL FORMATION IN POPULAR CHINESE TEMPLE RITUALS

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This year, on my first visit to Southern Fujian¹, I was astonished by the number of temples to be seen. I mean not large temples of Buddhist or Daoist learning, pilgrimage and tourism, but smaller temples without government support, financed instead by local donations and in some cases by gifts from overseas Chinese. Every seat of village government, all towns and many neighbourhoods of large towns and cities which I visited or passed by, seemed to have a newly refurbished or newly built temple².

Perhaps this is something to do with Min Nan culture and so is true only of southern Fujian, as it is of Taiwan on the other side of the straits. Perhaps it is also true of Guangdong. Some people have told me that temples are built with money from Chinese emigrants and their descendants. But two of the village temples I visited were built without overseas Chinese donations. Perhaps the opening of local temples and their festivals are a result, at least in the southern coastal areas of China, of the prosperity of recent years. Whatever the explanation and prevalence of this phenomenon, I will confine most of my remarks to the Southern Fujian cultural region. That includes Taiwan where I lived and studied popular religious practices in 1966-68³.

Local temples are part of what C.K. Yang defined as the diffused religion of China. Many commentators, policy makers and social scientists in the People's Republic define them as part of feudal superstition, to be distinguished from the institutions of the great textual traditions of Chinese religion and of the world religions, just as Weber distinguished between universal religions and the magic cults of peasantries. In making these dichotomies they assign ethics to the institutional and textual traditions and ascribe a pragmatism and lack of ethics to the diffused and magical cults. But I do not think such separations are possible. There are too many links and mutual influences between what is described as great and small, institutional and diffused, universal and magic. More to the point, I think we can profitably enquire into the ethical and political nature of 'diffused' religion.

The texts and liturgies used in local temples are of the great traditions. But they are used by ritual experts and not usually known by those who hire them. So the moral and philosophical convictions stated in the texts are not usually matched by ordinary participants' statements of belief and explanations for their participation. Neither do the

legends and stories told about the gods and demons addressed seem to add up to any system of belief or conduct. But by examining the practices and contexts of temple festivals and in particular by interpreting them as a kind of drama rather than as beliefs, I think we can see that they do imply and convey a moral and political nature.

A small drama of participant observation on my visit in April this year sets the scene of what I want to consider.

Entering a neighbourhood temple of a city one evening accompanied by my hosts, I admired the new wooden carvings and beams and the figures of deities in the side and front halls and then went on to the darker main hall at the back. There I recognised a tube of divination sticks (*qian*). Near them was a lamp-lit table with an old lady sitting at it, a large old book of standard interpretations in front of her. Seeing me notice this, one of my hosts asked if I wanted to pick out my luck. So with a sense of awkwardness, I asked if I should burn incense first as others were doing. Possibly to save embarrassment, I was told this was not necessary and instead went straight to shake the tube. I was reminded to ask a question. I did, and took out the lot which came to hand. Then I stood in front of the shrine of the main god, whose figure was shrouded by curtains. Divination blocks were ready, on the altar table. I picked them up, held them for a moment in a gesture of respect, and dropped them to the floor. The throw being positive, I took the stick to the old lady. What had I asked? As she looked up the entry for the lot's number I told her my question was whether I would be able to return here. After reading, she answered "well, perhaps, perhaps not!"

I had received an easy, if true answer. But that was not all. I had also registered a question with someone outside my own doubts and entered it into a standard procedure, familiar to my hosts. It was also familiar to me as part of what I had known and studied as an observer. Since my question was about wanting to continue those observations, asking it made my cultural and academic distance waver and the participation not just an act of curiosity. It felt more intimate than a show of participation, since the question expressed a wish appropriate to the small act of faith I had put on. I did want to repeat my visit and continue my observation and description of this and other linked practices which had long

fascinated me. Indeed, I wanted to make of them an important part of my foreseeable life. I felt I had put on an exhibition of a wish and an uncertainty.

From previous study I had already concluded that for its principal actor, an act of divination such as this is a standardisation and an externalisation of uncertainty. What uncertainties, from what interior unit (an individual? on behalf of what or whom?), and how identified in the procedure of divination and its ritual environment, are matters into which we should enquire. But I hope by this illustration to have introduced the premise according to which I have entitled this enquiry. In the minor religious practice I experienced, *chance* in the broad sense of unforeseeable eventualities, including those already experienced, is inserted into a ritual procedure. This ritual on the contrary has the quality of *tradition*, which is to say of repetition and of familiarity to a local cultural environment.

Since it was not my local environment, but one I was visiting from a great distance, the translation into a familiar ritual of my uncertainty and of the new chance of pursuing my interest in studying a constantly changing Chinese society was across a wide and awkward gap. To a local person, the translation would be across a finer gap. But the ritual, and the imagery provided by the temple environment, translates even for the most frequent and familiar devotee a present and changing situation which is spoken about and calculated in quite other ways outside that discourse of temple divination. The quality of translation into that discourse, the narrative it establishes, should provide clues to a moral and political quality. By this I mean that the imagery and practices of temple festival, worship and divination convey a kind of authority and a sense of direction and of social responsibility. But before coming to this, which we might call the practical text of temple discourse, I will frame it by looking at its context — the changing environment in which temples are built and cults started.

(I) LOCAL TEMPLES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Drawing lots (*chou qian*) is not the only form of divination that has remained or become popular again, along with the re-opening of temples. Spirit-writing (*fu-ji*, or *fu-luan*) and spirit-mediumship (*wu* and *tong-ji*) have also been widely reported in the People's Republic press. They too are connected with the building of temples, as foci of cults which may eventually gain sufficient clientele for the building of a temple to house their activities or as the occasion for reviving village temples⁴. The phenomena of divination and of temple building are, in short, intimately connected.

One way of studying the re-emergence of these phenomena in the last few years is to explain them by the material and ideological conditions which must have allowed and excited their revival. This would leave aside the question of their originating conditions and accept them as part of the cultural lexicon of Chinese social life in modern history. It would simply seek to explain their decline and rise, disappearance and reappearance.

I have already mentioned the possibility of a link between rising prosperity and temple building. To present a large donation and organise the collection of further donations for local public works, such as roads, bridges, schools and temples, has long been an activity instigated by the wealthier members of a village or town as an act of patronage and an enhancement of status. The inscriptions of their names, the amounts donated, and the date they were made, form rolls of honour and documentation of local history. The small temples with which I am concerned rely entirely for their construction and upkeep on donations, not upon the income from entrusted land or any other property than that of site and building. Of course, these can themselves become valuable assets whose use and exploitation are sought by subsequent patrons. But that is a secondary factor⁵.

Property and economic activity are far less important in the foundation and activities of what I am calling local temples than in the foundation of Buddhist or Daoist temples of retreat⁶ or in the foundation and upkeep of ancestral halls. Of course, the donation of land and other gifts to these other types of temple are also recorded and exhibited, but not as acts of patronage to a local community. They are recorded as acts of piety in the tenets and purposes of the religious institution itself, whereas the building and refurbishing of a local temple is the provision to a local community of a number of services, of divination, celebration and recreation, openly available to all residents and visitors. Of course, the foundations of temples of retreat may fund charitable and other services, available without restriction. Ancestral trusts may fund schools and scholarships and provide selectively for the welfare of members of a local lineage. But local temples are themselves a donated service, and the main activities associated with them are festivals, which must be funded on each occasion by a further collection of donations in the locality. So, donation and upkeep of a local temple has the same merit and obligation as the building and repair of a bridge, used by all in the locality. The travellers and visitors who make use of them are expected to respect them as a recognition of the pride of the place and its hospitality.

If we take for granted a steady acceptance of local

temples, then the state of their repair and the splendour of their activities will rise and fall like those of other public facilities with the rise and fall in the general prosperity of the locality. But of course we cannot take steady acceptance for granted. Local temples have in the first place an intrinsic sensitivity to changes in the residential composition of the locality and to whichever deity's cult is celebrated for its efficacy (*ling*). New deities may be added, old ones and their festivals decline in importance. Each addition, each major new construction creates an opportunity for new patronage and leadership, or is an opportunity created by a new bidder for leadership.

Gary Seaman's remarkably detailed description (1978) of a spirit-writing cult in post-war Taiwan clearly shows the relationship between public patronage, local politics and the imperial bureaucracy of the deities invoked in local temples. It describes events leading from the establishment of a spirit-writing cult in the home of a trader and interpreter who had returned to Pearl Mountain village during the war from court service in Japan, to its expansion and re-establishment at the core of a new temple constructed in 1960. It is the story of a spirit-writing cult becoming a local temple cult.

The temple was built at a place near a stream which divided the two, rival parts of a village. After it was built, a second public work, the building of a bridge across the stream, made this place the commercial centre of the village. But before that, the growing membership of the spirit-writing cult and the rise to prominence of the brother of its spirit-medium as an arbiter in disputes between the two parts of the village made possible the donations and agreements for both these construction projects. The cult membership and his own skills as an arbiter and political entrepreneur were the basis for the brother's election as village leader. On the basis of this membership of the cult and its links to other cults based on the local town, he established an alliance with the town's mayor, a member of one of the related cults. By this connection and as vote broker for candidates to higher political representation, he was able to arrange a number of public works contracts, partially voluntary and partially government-funded, among which were two which added a village administrative office and a store-room and stage to the temple building.

So, changes in local leadership and changes in the popularity of cults, and the introduction or invention of new cults, may affect the decline and rise of local temples. These changes will themselves be responses to changes in the nature of economic activities and economic organisation. For instance, the commercialisation of agriculture and development of

small rural businesses seem to have been the conditions in which the figure of Ma Zu was first brought inland to the place I studied in the mountains of Taibei county from a large and well-known temple in a coastal town. She was said to have been effective in quelling crop pestilence, a striking extension of her established association with the protection of sea travellers and traders. Another example, this one of changing economic and political conditions affecting local temple cults in the eighties and in Xiamen is given by Guo (1985). Irrigation engineering and the reliability of water supply meant the disappearance of rain-seeking rituals. Two developments, one the provision of preventive health care facilities, the other the establishment of new inter-village relations after Liberation bringing village feuds to an end, between them reduced the importance of the demon-quelling gods of the village temple. But they and the god of the territory or land — Tu-di Gong — have acquired a new importance as protectors of wealth and protection from accidents for the small factories and commercial establishments which now predominate in the village. And a new deity has been introduced for the protection of vehicles — Che Gong.

So, local temples and their cults change with changing political and economic circumstances. Their form may remain, but their contents change. But it may be that the change in content changes the way the form is to be interpreted. Li Yi-yuan in his instructive contribution to the conference at which this paper was presented notes from his survey of temple cults in Taiwan now, that the number of cults in a single temple has increased and that the nature of these cults has changed the character of temple worship itself. It is now much more individualistic, the cults having far more to do with the chance of individual or family achievements than in the more communal past. Nevertheless they are contained in the local temple, its imagery and its festivals. Dr. Li also notes that at the same time as these worldly and individualistic cults, there has been a parallel growth in sects much more devoted to the revitalisation of moral life. Many of them are spirit-writing cults such as the one described by Gary Seaman. And as we have seen in that example, local temples can result from such sects, the very temples which also contain the apparently less ethical, and less spiritual cults of the first tendency noted by Dr. Li.

I have noticed a long-term change which might contain the one which Li Yi-yuan has brought to our attention. The local temple in the small town where I lived in 1966-67 had two main halls when it was last rebuilt, in 1947, each with its own main deity. The deity in the front shrine, Bao Yi Zun Wang, had been the only main deity when the temple was first built in stone (probably 1878, the date inscribed on

its oldest stone incense burner). But the addition of a rear hall devoted to Xian Gong or Fu Yu Di Jun (Lu Dong-bin) established in Mountaintreet the cult of a trio of deities — called the Three Sage Gods (San Sheng Di Jun) or Benefactor Gods (En Zhu Gong) — in which Xian Gong is the central figure. Nearly all the cases of divination which I was able to register during a survey of residents in 1967 had been addressed to this newer deity.

The deity of the older cult, Zun Wang, was military, both in the demeanour of his statue and its apparel and in the stories locally told about him. The flaring of his incense had warned of the Japanese invasion. He had protected the first settlers from the aborigines (whose land they had taken). His is the patron cult of that part of Anxi county in Fujian province from which the first Chinese settlers came to these northern mountainslopes of Taibei county. His main celebration in 1967 was a procession festival in which his figure was taken to greet a branch figure from Zun Wang's cult centre temple in a nearby town, by division of whose incense the local temple had been started. This is a type of festival common in Min Nan and probably other parts of China'. The visiting figure and that of his local host together patrol the local territory and the next day the guest is passed on to the next territory, so that these days make up a season of processions and feasts between neighbouring territories, competing in the clamour and display of bands and military arts.

By contrast the main festival of the newer cult, of Xian Gong, was the god's birthday celebration. It had as its main feature, not a patrol, but the presentation of children to Xian Gong's protection as nominal parent. The families of the main donors to the new temple in 1947 and to its furnishings since then made up most of the participants in this festival in 1967. Instead of a Daoist re-adjustment of the cosmic forces which was conducted for procession festivals, for birthday festivals a Buddhist liturgy was followed. Instead of feasts in every household held at procession festivals, the participants in Xian Gong's birthday took two specially cooked meals in the temple itself. Xian Gong also had a procession festival day, but it was the least of the three annual festival processions. Zun Wang's was the greatest annual procession. He also had a birthday, but far less attention and money was spent on it than was spent on Xian Gong's birthday.

It is probable that the cult of Xian Gong in Mountaintreet began as a spirit-writing group within the old temple. In any case, it was sponsored by a relatively wealthy resident whose family name, Lu, is the same as that of the deity. His son took the initiative to rebuild the temple in 1947 with an additional shrine to Xian Gong, linking it to the Xian

Gong of a mountain temple which has since become an extremely popular resort for tourism and pilgrimage. Lu's grandson was in 1967 the head of the temple's committee, made up of the biggest donors to its upkeep.

Evidently, then, the annual Xian Gong celebration was a notably self-contained ceremony. It took place within the local temple but without much reference to the locality as such. Xian Gong has no place-of-origin association. He has none of general Zun Wang's demon-killing connotations, despite being traceable to a great Daoist immortal.

It may be that Xian Gong's popularity is an effect not so much of rising prosperity but of increasing economic integration. No longer so bound to the land, nor to a distinctly local market, the wealthier households' connections with their neighbours are no longer so tight. Their kin and commercial connections are geographically more distant and dispersed than were those of local patrons in earlier generations. In addition, the mass schooling and new kinds of recreation based on mass media may eventually replace the theatre and display which accompanied local temple festivals.

So, the 1947 rebuilding of the local temple to include the cult of Xian Gong could be an example of change in the character of local temple cults because of these new economic and cultural conditions.

More radical political and cultural change, other ways of cooperating, other ways of giving and accepting leadership, may replace those to which the institution of local temples is suited. The collective organisation of rural economy and politics in the People's Republic and the ideology of scientific socialism which accompanied it promised such a change. But, as many Chinese analyses have pointed out, the forcible suppression of popular religious practices merely sent them underground. The uncertainty of the direction of political winds may even have encouraged resort to worship and divination. The subsequent decollectivisation of rural production and the encouragement of commercial enterprise was not only a new political direction. It unleashed new economic conditions. It opened individual household prospects, but it also introduced the uncertainty of markets and the competition for commercial advantage. There has been greater prosperity but also less security of income.

Participants in the experience of political and economic uncertainties, in the facts and the prospects of individual prosperity have at their disposal the language and the strategies of social connections and of market rationality. They also have, and undoubtedly also use, the languages and orientations of

the more official political, legal, and scientific discourses of responsibility, contract, management and technology. Equally surely, they engage in the moral discourse of social responsibility and of good or corrupt government. But in addition to all these old and newer languages, through the older generations they also have the discourse and calculations of temple worship and divination at their disposal. Its revival has surely been encouraged by the new conditions of prospect and uncertainty, and by the dismantling of collective leadership and its replacement by less directed and less organising village government.

Some analyses of the current situation and the revival of popular religion insist, as does Guo (1985), on the basic tendency of people's reliance on their own abilities and knowledge and therefore the decline of dependency upon supernatural authority. But they find it difficult to account for the inertia of traditional religious practices, and their adaptability to new circumstances. The whole thesis of secularisation implied by this view contains a notion of technological progress, or of increasing possibilities of control and decreasing dependency upon uncertain and dangerous natural conditions. But it cannot deny new kinds of uncertainty and danger, social or political, man-made if not natural.

The means of tolerating uncertainty and of taking responsibility and decisions without certainty of outcomes, the guiding sense of authority, may still not be provided or entrusted to political institutions. Evidence of new religious movements in the industrialised and industrialising countries could be attributed to these new uncertainties. In any case can the uncertainties of chance be ruled out altogether? A better question to ask is this: what are the appropriate institutions for enhancing a people's sense of their own responsibility and reliance on their own abilities and the knowledge at hand?

An explanation of local temples' revival or decline with this question in mind would have to start by finding out what is the kind of cooperation and leadership which they and their activities constitute. What kind of authority does divination and local temples provide, as drama and as social institution?

(2) A COMMENTARY ON THE POLITICAL DRAMA ENACTED IN LOCAL TEMPLES

The addition of a new and more self-contained cult within the local temple I studied may indicate the trend of religious things to come, as I have so far suggested. But I now wish to suggest something else about it, which Seaman's Pearl mountain temple indicates. That temple, you will recall, started as a spirit-writing cult in its founder's home, and the cult

members remained an inner group within the temple's organisation. So were the participants in the festival of Xian Gong in an inner group when compared with the mass participation of the temple's other main festival, though Xian Gong was no longer invoked in spirit-writing seances. The relationship between an inner group of founders and major donors and an outer mass of festival participants could be typical of the institution of local temples.

A local temple is one which houses a territorial guardian and thus includes all the households in its area, literally marked out in procession festivals. But local temples also house other deities which may not have this festival. Or else the very same deity which has come to have this territorially universal constituency may at the same time be the focus of more exclusive claims.

A frequent claim to a privileged if not exclusive access to the god's power is the sharing of his or her surname — as was the case not only for Xian Gong/Lu, but also for the god of the older shrine and the procession festival, Zun Wang/Zhang. A broader circle of more privileged access is drawn by the historical claim that Zun Wang was brought by the original settlers in a branching network of 'divided incense' from his cult centre in An-xi county, southern Fujian. Subsequent settlers from other places of origin are thereby outsiders relatively speaking, although they are still inside the area of established households by virtue of having taken some of the temple's incense when inaugurating their domestic altars. That qualification, of having an established household in the temple area, draws the final circle of exclusion. Everyone else, including residents whose permanent household is elsewhere or who have not yet set up their own family home, is a guest at the festival.

Circles within circles by virtue of shared surname or shared place of lineal origin describe some of the relationship between inner and outer constituents of a local temple. But there are additional possibilities.

Many, possibly most local temple's cults started in the confines of a domestic space. An incense sacklet or an incense burner and an image on its owner's altar next to the space for the honouring of his ancestors can be the focus of a new reputation for efficacy (*ling*). The fortunes of the householder and the deference to the deity by which he registers those fortunes gain repute together. The relationship of deference is respect for the quality reputed. Where I lived, that quality was frequently called responsiveness (*gan* or *ying-gan*) or simply the extraordinary effectiveness (*ling*) manifested in response to correct deference.

Ling is also translated as extraordinary intelligence passed on through a transmission of experience. In such instances it describes the virtuosity of a master of some skill or knowledge being demonstrated and thus taught (Farquhar, forthcoming). In the case of a deity, *ling* is not necessarily taught, but its effectiveness is transmitted in some manifestation of extraordinary or unexpected success or simply the avoidance of danger, actual or expected. *Ling* of a deity is also the power to cause that danger and inflict harm or extraordinary failures, as punishment for wrong-doing. The *ling* used to describe mastery of a skill acquired by art and discipline and passed on by demonstration and apprenticeship applies to many of the skills associated with temples: Daoist magical, liturgical, bodily and meditational knowledge; traditional medical knowledge; martial, theatrical and musical arts. It is not the same as *ling* describing the power of divine protection and intervention. But that both kinds of transmission are given the same name is I think instructive. The relationship of learning by apprenticeship, in which the bond of fellow-students is like that of siblings — whether or not segregated into brotherhoods and sisterhoods — describes the martial arts and the musical bands which make up a god's procession. It also describes the relationship among the initiates of a spirit-writing cult learning by direct scriptural revelation from one or more deities. On the other hand they are bound in a deference to a master or a superior which can be so elaborate it requires an expert to perform it correctly.

Parallel to this deferential gathering around the transmission of *ling*, is the relationship of sponsoring the building and organisation of a cult. The way of reaching consensus within the cult, of sealing political alliances outside it, of making deals for the use of public funds, or of persuading donors to make important contributions is a mixture of respect for merit and the cultivation of personal loyalties typical of patron-client faction formation:

'Cult organization is a complex blend of ritual offices and personal networks, of political entrepreneurship and the intervention of gods'. (Seaman, 1976:81)

The 'intervention of gods' is at the core of spirit-writing cults, for they are revelations and reminders of an order based on virtue summed up by Seaman (1976:7) as

'... an ideal order based on the true meritocracy of the celestial empire of the Jade Emperor. The gods in heaven judge merit and dispense fortune according to a truly honest appraisal of a man's actions and intentions, not according to official whim

and crass political considerations as do the powers of this world'.

A refined calculus of merit measures was the subject of one of the cult's 'morality books' (*shan-shu*). Rewards for meritorious conduct in a life-time constituted one path to the avoidance of courts of purgatory and appointment to the position of a temple god (Seaman 1976: chapter 9). The accumulation of merit by a descendent for an ancestor's appointment was significantly also possible. In other words merit must not be understood simply as an individual achievement, it is lineal and filial. The virtues counted are indeed the standard virtues often described as 'Confucian'.

But one of the two other paths to deification mentioned by Seaman's informants was to have been an historical personality with such potency that it remained effective after death. Such gods were distinguished from those of the imperial bureaucracy as semi-independent 'kings' (*wang-ye*) or as dark gods (*yin-shen*) (Seaman 1976:55). There would seem to be a space left by the canons of virtue for the strength and strategy of military leadership and political entrepreneurship, for these are typically demon-quelling and dangerously powerful gods.

The third path to deification mentioned was by more secret arts of self-cultivation than public or filial deeds, namely the disciplines of Daoist or Buddhist retreat (Seaman 1976:53). So the order of meritocracy as expounded in the texts and statements of the cult studied by Seaman includes the panthei of the gods of popular religion and it includes all three of the ethics of lineal and public service, of personal strategy, and of the disciplines of meditation and magic.

Nevertheless, the gap and contrast between the current political order and the merit, strategy and effectivity of the 'ideal' order demands further attention.

It is a separation repeated in the construction and organisation of the temple — an exclusive room for the seances, the blue gowns of their participants standing for their purity and inner positions in the cult. It is repeated in the relation between the cult and the ordinary donors to a local temple and its festivals.

Here an odd and significant complication is added to the contrast between personal connection and the principle of universal access and participation which orders a meritocratic hierarchy. For the inner cult of virtue combines with wealth. The capacity to make larger than standard donations brings with it a position of patronage in what is otherwise a strictly

democratic form of organisation once the temple takes on the functions of a local temple.

As I and many others have observed (Feuchtwang, 1974; Brim 1970; Guo 1985 and others) in smaller and less wealthy areas, the procession festivals of local temples and often the reconstruction of temples themselves are financed by a standard donation collected from every household which has permanent residence in the temple area. Furthermore, the annual leaders for the festival — the master of the incense burner and leaders of each residential section — are chosen by divination block from a complete list of heads of households. Each has an equal chance of being chosen. The temple records are a complete census, and the means of selection completely democratic. But those who volunteer above-standard donations are more prominently displayed on the published lists of donors. Their capacity to give — however it was gained — thus achieves both merit in the temple's internal order and recognition for contributing a public good to the standard donors and their households. In the wealthier areas, there is indeed an effective wealth qualification before a man can be chosen to be a festival's leader. But the whole area enjoys the spectacle he has provided for it.

Not all local temples were formed out of spirit-writing cults. Not all temples of spirit-writing cults become local temples. On the contrary, they seem more often to have a more general appeal (see Overmeyer 1985 and Jordan and Overmeyer, 1986). But I am sure that many examples could be added to the examples I have given of a local temple housing an inner spirit-writing cult.

What I wish to draw out of such examples is the thought that the more spiritual or overtly ethical quality of a sect is continued, more implicitly, in the relationship of deference to the *ling* of a hero and the stories told about it. The transmission and reputation of extraordinary gifts (*ling*) is the central feature of local temple cults, their festivals, and the attention they receive every day in divination and pledge from individuals and households. The implicit ethics of that relationship can be seen in the organisation and morality books of the spirit-writing cult. In both cases, authority is due to their being forms of transmission from a past and both form a present collectivity in receiving that transmission. Their social and political implication can be seen in the way the temple and festival disposes participants in circles of inner and outer access and leadership.

I have now described various forms of this relationship of deference to *ling* —

(i) that of simple deference to *ling* and to its

medium by a single household, or by a grouping of households related by common origin or place of common origin from such an household;

(ii) that of a group learning virtue from such a transmission in the case of a spirit-writing cult;

and (iii) that of a special relationship to it by cultivation of special arts to become an individual expert or medium.

These are variants of the relationship to *ling*. It is this relationship which organises selectivity and interiority, if I may so call the inner spaces of relative exclusion, in local temples' cults.

To complete this commentary I return to the drama of divination by which an individual selects her or himself and inserts a situation in which they find themselves to the organisation, relationships and imagery of a local temple.

In January 1967 a woman from a nearby hamlet came to the temple I studied. She came to seek guidance by drawing lots. She was in serious financial straits which had driven her into thinking of selling one of her two young sons into another family. But she had understandable doubts about taking this course of relief from her difficulties. Not knowing the procedure of drawing lots, she consulted a woman friend who went to the temple with her. This woman friend and her husband were also my friends and I asked them afterwards how they had guided the troubled woman through the procedure. First the situation in question, or an actual question, must be kept in mind, they said. Next the divination blocks are taken and held in the hands in a gesture of respect — as for greeting a superior or a guest — and the god, who was in this case Xian Gong, should be told the address and the name of the head of the household, the situation in question, and the question or the desired outcome. If on then throwing the blocks the answer is either indefinite or negative, the supplicant has to ask or suggest why this was the response. She goes on in this way until the blocks show a positive response to the modified question or desire. The sticks are then shaken and the one which emerges is taken out and the blocks thrown again until a stick receives a positive response. This was the procedure.

The appropriate slip of paper from the pads hanging on the wall of the temple was then torn off and the couplet on it interpreted as an answer to the question or about the desired course of action and its outcome. In the temple there was a book of standard interpretations for each of the sixty sticks and slips divided into twelve categories of situation. A friend or the temple keeper can help with the interpretation.

The troubled woman's answer was one which indicated a good outcome for either course, keeping or selling her son.

I do not know what she eventually did. But I think the procedure helped her to reflect upon and to state the situation in a certain way. This was by far the most common form of divination, costless, simple and not very time-consuming compared with spirit-writing or consultation of a *tong-ji* spirit medium or other kinds of diviner. Among these other modes of divination, it is the one which relies most heavily upon the existence of a local temple. Indeed, I would say it is part of the institution of a local temple to provide this kind of divination. In any case, by recourse to it, a social subject, its situation and sense of direction in that situation, is stated in a certain procedure.

That procedure includes the context of a local temple and its cast of persons: the supplicant, those to whom she refers or on whose behalf she comes (her household) with or without their knowledge, those who help her in the procedure, the gods addressed and by implication the the community of donors which provided the gods' thrones and halls. The imagery of the procedure is a kind of drama and is indeed repeated in the depiction of other situations in the theatre and for the location at large in the procession on festival days. It is an imagery of another time. The historical accuracy of the depiction is not at issue, except when another kind of historicity intervenes as a rival authority to the cult and its temple. Cult and temple, its divination blocks and its festival days construct a different authority with its own construct of an anterior time.

Divination is the presentation of a decision publicly, that is through others, and in a standard form. The situation is one in which other forms of calculation known to the participant have left a sense of uncertainty. So it is a situation heightened by incalculability or uncertainty — of weather or of market or of political future. Incalculability or luck is by divination turned into a defined temporality, given a sense of time, and a decision or outcome are turned into the working and response of extraordinary virtue/knowledge (*ling*) or of fate (*ming*) and corrections of fate by appeal to *ling*. But note that this does not imply fatalism; there is no resignation to let things happen because after all the object is to reach a decision. And if a decision is offered it may not be accepted. If it is, then the decision and the activity have been authorised, identified in a certain way, placed in a sense of time, under a certain form of agency and thereby given a certain form of authority and identity.

This does not mean that all activities of the subject identified will thenceforth have this identification or seek recognition by this kind of authority. Other activities or the same but in other situations may be calculated by other means, depending on what means are available or have been learned and what conditions of uncertainty remain. Indeed, an historical analysis of the changing means and conditions of calculating important eventualities, and what count as important eventualities would be the most appropriate way of studying changes in the prevalence and practices of divination.

But let me conclude by one further comment on the authorisation which divination in a local temple provides.

The gods are images of political authority and of judgement. But they are always of the not-present. They are historic metaphors or analogies of authority, protection and judgement. They are also figures in the temporal continuity of the supplicant subject. They and the temple define a containing social subject linked to the supplicant and her situation in a relation of deference. She represents one of the following:—

a household and line of descent in a surname locality and their shared security (*ping-an*);

a household in a territorial locality of domestic altars and their shared security;

a household in a universalising cult and its restoration of virtue.

A local temple nowadays combines all three. But dominant in its establishment is the authority of *ling* within which selected salvation, protection and success is sought.

What kind of responsibility and what unities and differences of combined activity does its establishment form and recognise? My answer to this question is derived from both an examination of the drama of divination and worship, and from the organisation of its institution, local temples and festivals as public works. They stand for a local history and its culture in a network of local histories and cultural differences; they stand for competitive communalism and personal patronage; they also stand for direct democracy and deference to an inner circle of patron-leaders. Changing conditions of uncertainty and incalculability change the contents and the nature of the cults. But their authority is constructed in the same way, by the historicity of the transmission of *ling* and the privilege of access to it. With this authority are transmitted the ethics of lineal and public service and of self-cultivation.

Whether this way of dealing with chance by tradition will disappear in the processes of modernisation is not easy to say. Taiwan and southern Fujian show how the institution of local temples has so far accommodated these processes; the authority and ethics of local temples may provide a balancing sense of security and a reminder of social responsibility. On the other hand, alternative knowledges of history and senses of direction, other forms of collective responsibility, and other kinds of public celebration and recreation may supplant those of local temples.

Notes

- 1 This paper was originally presented at the Conference on Chinese Religious Ethics and Modernization held at the University of Hong Kong (14-16 June 1988). Grateful acknowledgements to the Chinese Academy of Social sciences and to the British Academy for arranging and funding this trip. Thanks too, to City University and to the Spalding Trust for financing research assistance.
- 2 The London-Cornell Fellowship (Carnegie and Nuffield Foundations) made this trip possible. My thanks go to its memory.
- 3 According to Guo (1985:128) 'In the Min Nan region almost every village has a small temple (*xiao miao*) in which the village's protective god (*bao-hu shen*) is worshipped (*gong-feng*)'.
- 4 For instance, Guo (1985:128) describes how the gods were said by an eighty-year old woman in the village he studied to have entered her body and pleaded to be housed again in a new village temple. This was the start of a small group of activists in 1982 dividing the village into residential units and collecting donations from every household to construct a new local temple.
- 5 The space in front of a town temple which is a centre of recreational activity and gossip, as well as of theatre on festival days, can become the site of market stalls and these in turn a source of income for the temple whose managers may require from them a fee. Concessions to diviners and other ritual consultants, or the sale of ritual goods can also be sources of regular income. These would become increasingly important only with the growth of the town and the reputation of the temple and its festivals. Major local, or territorial temples of cities are, in Taiwan, Hong

Kong, and overseas Chinese cities, rich economic assets. See my discussion of territorial temples in Feuchtwang (1976). But in their foundation they are not normally endowed. Indeed, I think that absence of a foundation trust and in its place the collection of donations from households in a residential area is a distinguishing characteristic of territorial temples as a type of popular Chinese religious institution.

- 6 For descriptions of some of the economic activities of Buddhist and Daoist foundations, and their monks and nuns, since Liberation, see Luo Zhu-feng (ed) (1987)
- 7 At the same time of the lunar year, the 10th month, in Xiamen demon-queller deities called Wang Ye, who were themselves reformed demons, were taken on inspection tours from a central temple in this way, according to Guo (1985:128).

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qian	籤	Sun Sheng Di Jun	三聖帝君
chou qian	抽籤	In Zhu Gong	恩主公
fu-ji	扶乩	Zhang	張
fu-luan	扶鸞	gan	感
wu	巫	ying-gan	應感
tong-ji	童亂：亂童	shan shu	善書
ling	靈	Wang ye	王爺
Ma Zu	媽祖	yin shen	陰神
Tu-di Gong	土地公	ming	命
Che Gong	車公	pingan	平安
Bao Yi Zun Wang	保儀尊王	Xiao miao	小廟
Xian Gong	仙公	bao-hu shen	保顧神
Fu Yu Di Jun	孚佑帝君	gong-feng	供奉
Lu Dong Bin	呂洞賓		

MARRIAGE AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM: OBSERVATIONS ON THE CASES OF PAI YAO, AO YAO AND THE PEASANTS OF EASTERN HUIAN COUNTY.

Chien CHIAO

This Abstract of a paper originally presented in Chinese at the Second International Colloquium on Yao Studies in Hunan (November 1988) was partly intended to demonstrate to certain of our Chinese colleagues some of the methods and techniques common in socio-cultural anthropology today. It is still uncommon in China for researchers to consider issues in the study of Han Chinese society and issues in the study of the minority nationalities together. And it is still common for researchers to try to find in the marriage customs of the minority nationalities survivals of earlier forms of social organisation. Through the data presented here I try to show that by concentrating synchronically on a single issue, here feminine inequality in marriage, a comparative approach can be adopted which avoids some of the draw-backs of diachronic 'evolutionism'.

Marriage, like other social institutions, regulates man's life and inevitably threatens the individual's freedom and rights. Under the strong influence of Confucian ethics and through a long process of involution, the Han Chinese have developed a set of norms about marital affairs based on extreme feminine inequality. The major points of these are: (1) parent-arranged marriage; (2) the patrilocal, patriarchy and patrilineal family; (3) absolute obedience of the woman to her husband and parents-in-law; (4) rigid female chastity; (5) denial of the woman's rights to divorce and remarriage; at the same time a man is allowed to divorce his wife, remarry and marry more than one wife. Under such norms, the individual's freedom and rights in regard to marriage are totally deprived, and this is particularly true in the case of women. In the central part of China, these norms are so powerful that few can get away from them. Among the minority nationalities or in border areas, however, resistant mechanisms against these norms have been developed. This paper discusses three such cases.

The first case concerns the Pai Yao, who are a branch of the Yao, distributed mainly in Liannan Yao Autonomous County in northern Guangdong, with a total population of about 60,000. The Pai Yao marriage starts with patrilocal residence. The newly married couple, however, set up their own residence and live independently from the groom's natal family within a year. Afterwards, they visit the natal

families of both sides with equal frequency. Division of labour in house-work as well as in production is also equal. Women have nearly the same rights as men do in divorce and remarriage. Though deeply influenced by the Han Chinese in many other aspects of their culture such as religion, the Pai Yao resist Han Chinese influence quite successfully in their marriage system.

The second case concerns the Au Yao, who are the smallest branch (1,685 by 1982 statistics) of the Yao, distributed in the southwestern Da Yao Shan mountains in central Guianxi. Au Yao marriage is bilocal. There were however three aspects of the traditional Au Yao marriage which suggested heavy Han influence: (1) parental arrangement of the marriage, (2) severe penalties for premarital pregnancy imposed on the girl's family; (3) divorce was forbidden.

To prevent premarital pregnancy, the parents married off their daughters as soon as they reached puberty. Such arranged and early marriages usually had no love in them. After marriage, however, both partners reportedly had the right to choose of their own will a sex partner whom they really loved, outside the marriage. Their principle was said to be *dung bei mu dung nien*, which means "the one who sleeps with you is not the one who eats with you". The general practice was that after supper, the husband went to sleep with his sex partner while the wife's lover came to spend the night with her. Proper arrangements were also made for the children born in such a manner.

The last case concerns the peasants in eastern Huian County in southern Fujian. They are Han Chinese, though there are some speculations about their possibly non-Han origin because of the colorful and peculiar dress of their women. Their marriage adheres strictly to the Han Chinese norms discussed above except that after marriage, the wife continues to live with her natal family and visits her husband only during major festivals, such as at the New Year, or the Mid-autumn Festival, until she becomes pregnant. The gap between the wedding and actual living together ranges from three to twenty years. The average is five years.



Killing the Turtle, at the foot of the Heavenly Platform (Lemoine)

In eastern Huian, agricultural work is exclusively performed by women while men are engaged in fishing, handicraft or small business and frequently away from home. In agricultural work, a woman develops a strong feeling of sisterhood and affection with her team workers. In her husband's family, on the other hand, she has a very low status and has to maintain formal and cold relationships with her sister- and brother-in-laws and the authoritarian parents-in-law by herself, since her husband is so often absent. To delay the actual living-in in the husband's family, is a negative way of reducing a woman's suffering in an arranged marriage based on extreme feminine inequality.

Individual freedoms and rights in regard to marriage, divorce and remarriage for both sexes are well protected in the Marriage Law promulgated by the PRC government in 1950 and 1980. In the actual implementation of the Law, however, conservative Han Chinese cadres often continue to apply traditional norms. Since governmental control and influence on society in the PRC is much more strong and comprehensive than at any other period in Chinese history, it remains to be seen whether the Pai Yao, the Au Yao, the peasants of eastern Huian and many other ethnic groups will gain or lose in safeguarding individual freedoms in marriage and related matters.

THE WOMEN'S SCRIPT: INTRODUCTION, PRELIMINARY CATALOGUE AND ANALYSIS OF EXTANT DOCUMENTS.

CHIANG WEI

The "Women's Script" (女書) is a syllabic script used by some women in Shangjiangxu xiang (上江墟), Jiangyong xian (江永縣), Hunan province, China. It is quite different from Hanzi, the writing system usually referred to as Chinese. In this paper¹ I will:

First, give a brief introduction to this script in terms of its origin, the language it represents, its linguistic characteristics, its "literary genres" (more about this later but suffice it to say here that I use this term to mean any tradition of writing within a certain "case of literacy", this latter term meaning the use of a specific script to represent a specific language), the style in which it is written and read, its relation to the oral tradition, the people who use it, the way it is taught and learned, its current status, and people who are doing research on it and the articles they have published on it.

Second, catalogue the extant documents written in this script that are known to me and analyze them in terms of literary genre and subject, author, date of composition, scribe, date of recording, intended reader, relationship between author and intended reader, content, place document found, date document found, manner document found, number of page, number of line, number of characters, writing material, and style of calligraphy.

Third, discuss the future of this literacy in terms of the historical development of literacies in East Asia and the political-cultural climate in China today.

Origin: Researchers have suggested that the "Women's Script" might be a left-over from the pre-Qin era, having been neglected by the First Emperor (秦始皇, 221-210 B.C.) when he was unifying the scripts of China (Gong ed.1986: 34-35,55). The main basis for this argument seems to be that certain characters (throughout this article, I refer to a written symbol of the Women's Script which represents one syllable as a character except when I discuss the linguistic characteristics of the script, wherein I refer to such a symbol as a syllabic sign) resemble certain Hanzi of the pre-Qin era (Gong ed.1986: 29). To me, the evidence seems too thin. A related suggestion is that this script might have been

originally used by the local Yao minority people (Gong ed.1986: 24-26,35). Supporting evidence include: 1. Mention of a Yao script in two Qing Dynasty records, the *Gazetteer of the Close* by Xinning xian (新寧縣) (Gong 1986: 9) and *Qianji* (黔記, records of Guizhou) by Li Zongfang (李宗昉) (Li 1936: 23). 2. 50-80% of the residents of Jiangyong are currently applying to be re-identified as Yao. 3. Temples in Jiangyong incorporate symbols of Panhu (盤瓠), the mythical god of the Yao (Gong 1986: 9 and personal communication with Gong). However, many are against this view because: 1. In many places, the Yao have adapted some Hanzi to represent the Yao language and the Qing Dynasty records may have been referring to these. 2. The language spoken by the residents of Jiangyong has been identified as belonging to the Han language branch instead of the Miao-Yao language branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family (Xie 1987: 72, Huang 1988: 161) and 3. So far the government has rejected the residents' request for re-identification.

There are two local legends explaining the origin of the script. The first one attributes it to a very intelligent woman called The Nine-Catty-Girl (because she weighed nine catties at birth, 1 catty being approximately 0.6 kg). Since this can neither be verified nor disproved, it will not be discussed here. The second has it that during the Sung Dynasty, a local girl was chosen as a royal concubine. She found life in the court miserable and wrote home to complain of her situation. To avoid the court discovering her dissatisfaction, she wrote the Hanzi at a diagonal angle, and told her family to read them diagonally and pronounce them in the local dialect. They followed her instructions and understood the letter. Part of this legend is supported by the following facts: 1. *Yongzhouzhi* (永州志), a Sung Dynasty gazetteer of Jiangyong records that a local girl was chosen as royal concubine to the emperor Sung Zhezong (宋哲宗, 1086-1100 A.D.) (Zhou 1987) 2. There is an extant document said to be the letter sent home by this woman. However, these do not prove that the woman actually invented the script. Even if such a person did write such a letter, the script may have originated earlier and was used by her, or the script may have been invented later and was used to record the gist of the letter. In any

event, it seems unlikely that a woman living 1,000 km. away in the Northern Sung capital of Kaifeng could devise such an elaborate form of secret communication and also teach the folks back home to decipher it successfully.

As has been shown by our discussion of the legend of the royal concubine, it would be unreliable to use the content of the documents to identify the date of the script, since the contents could have been recorded later. Therefore, the only solid evidence of the date of the script is the date of the manuscripts, some of which are said by the owners to have been in the family for "several generations". I take that to mean about two or three generations, since the manuscripts are placed around rather carelessly and the material used to write on is rice paper (宣紙), a kind of rather fragile Chinese paper. This would mean that the earliest date of the Women's Script for which we now have hard evidence is around 1900 A.D. However, since a woman sometimes has the documents in her possession burned or buried with her at death, we might be able to find older documents if excavations are ever possible.

Language: The language represented by the Women's Script includes

21 consonants: p, p', m, f, v, t, t', n, l, ts, ts', s, tɕ, tɕ', ɕ, ɕ', k, k', ŋ, h, ɸ.
Except for n and ɸ, these occur only at the beginning of syllables.

9 vowels and 2 nasals: i, y, u, e, ɸ, ə, o, a, n, ŋ.
7 tones: 44, 35, 21, 5, 42, 13, 33. (the larger the number the higher the tone) (Huang 1988)

Syllabic structure is /C-i or y or u or ɸ -V-i or y or u or n or ŋ or ɸ/. According to the glossary compiled by Zhou Shuoqi (Gong ed. 1986), there are 525 syllables. But according to Huang Xuezheng (1988), there are 1,381 syllables. The morphophonemic structure is monosyllabic. The syntactical structure is S-V-O. There is regular phonological correspondence with Putonghua but many terms are different from Putonghua. It is spoken mainly in southern Hunan, covering an area of 10 *xian*. As said above, many Chinese researchers consider it a branch of the Han language.

Linguistic characteristics of the script: The Women's Script is a syllabic script with between 675 and 820 syllabic signs (different researchers have different figures). According to Zhou's glossary, there are 151 signs that are redundant phonologically and 46 signs that represent more than one sound. The general shape of the signs is a diamond shape. Stroke shapes include diagonal lines, dots, circles, and curves. The number of strokes in one sign can range from 1 to 20.

Literary genres: I divide the Women's Script literature into two large categories which include eleven genres. The two large categories are letters and stories. The differentiating criterion is whether there are specific intended readers: letters have these and stories do not. The genres under the letter category include:

1. Marriage congratulations: These are called *dasanzhao* (打三朝, meaning roughly "the third morning") by Chinese researchers because they are sent to the bride on the third day of her wedding.
2. Consolation letters: These are called *weiwunshu* (慰問書) by Chinese researchers because they are sent to console the intended reader for a personal tragedy, usually a death in the family.
3. Invitation to become ritual sisters: These are called *jiejiaoshu* (結交書) by Chinese researchers. They usually include an invitation to spend a few days at the author's home.
4. Letters of reproach: These are called *zebeishu* (責備書) by Chinese researchers. The one which I have is quite acrimonious.
5. Prayer: These are called *qingyuange* (請願歌) by Chinese researchers. The women used to write these on fans and handkerchiefs and place them at the altar of the shrine of the goddess Gupo (姑婆) on May 10th of the Lunar calendar. They usually ask some favor of Gupo, e.g. that a sick child recover or a husband who's been away return.
6. Ordinary letters: Letters with no specific purpose aside from sending greetings.

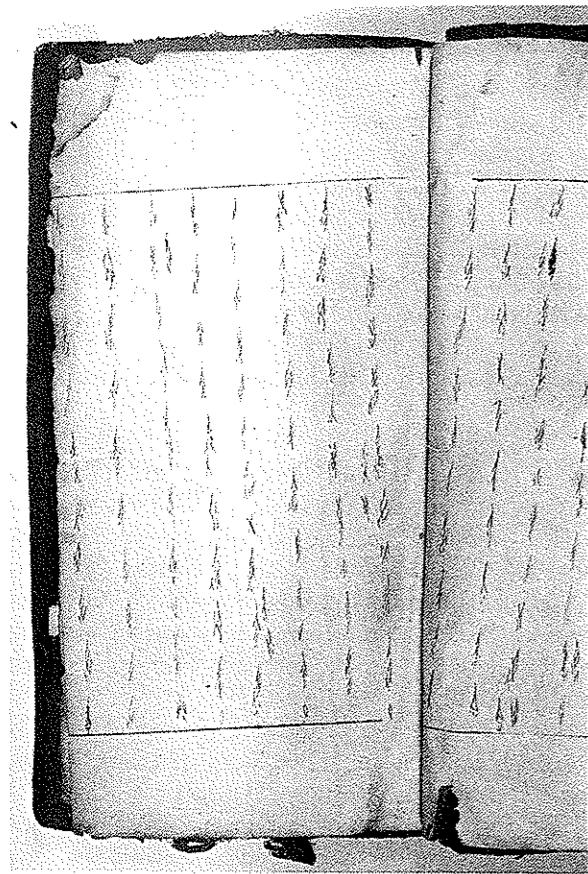
The genres under the 'story' category include:

1. Historical events: Records of local manifestations of events of national importance, e.g. the Taiping rebellion, the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945, and the Communist Revolution of 1949.
2. Local events: Records of events of only local interest, e.g. the elopement of a certain girl, the mistake of a bride receiving someone else's bridegroom.
3. Folktales: Long stories often well known in Hanzi literature, e.g. 'Love Story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai' (梁山伯與祝英台).
4. Folksongs: Short texts sometimes with and sometimes without a plot, e.g. 'Sewing Patterns Song' (綉花歌), 'Young Bamboo by the River' (河邊稚竹).
5. Biographies: These may be written by a woman herself or by a literate friend. Typically they are concerned with the author's family, i.e. her parents, husbands (since economically women are dependent on men and domestically men on women, both sexes remarry soon should their spouses die), and children, probably because the women's lives are still preoccupied with the private sphere. Another feature is that they dwell mostly on the negative side of life, e.g. deaths, and illness, perhaps partly due to

the hardship of local life and partly to the tradition of this genre.

It should be noted that this is an etic classification. I do not have enough information yet on whether there is an emic classification.

Style of writing and reading: All texts are in either five-character or seven-character sentences. The better written texts rhyme every other sentence. They are never read but sung. The tune seems to be repeated every four sentences. More research needs to be done on the musical aspect of the reading before I can provide further information. It is said that before 1949 women rarely farmed (most had bound feet), their preoccupation being embroidery and domestic work. Embroidery was always done in groups and during these group work gatherings one woman would be exempted from the work so she could 'read' a text to entertain the others.



Women's Script 'Marriage Congratulations' text (Chiang 1988)

Relation to the oral tradition: When I was in Jiangyong in April, 1988, asking Zhou Shuoqi some questions about a text, his middle-aged wife who wasn't literate in the Women's Script heard our discussion and sang, without prompting, the folktale which the text recorded. It was evident that Zhou, although also a native of Jiangyong, did not know the song. At the time I didn't pursue this further but

it seems likely that some genres of this 'case of literacy', possibly folksongs and folktales, are written versions of an ongoing oral tradition of the women. In fact, since most extant texts belonging to the story category are written by Gao Yinxian (高銀仙) and Yi Nianhua (義年華), the two surviving old women who can still write the script, and Hu Cizhu (胡慈珠), who died in 1976, all three of whom have worked with Zhou Shuoqi, the first Chinese researcher to study the script, and also since all of the original manuscripts not written by Gao, Yi, or Hu belong to the letter category, it might be the case that the interest of people besides the women themselves in the script stimulated the women to expand the use of the script to record parts of their oral tradition.

Another point worthy of attention is that the Yao have a tradition of communicating with friends afar by composing songs and passing these songs along the way to the intended audience (Chen and Hsieh 1988). But at this stage it is unclear whether the Women's Script literacy was influenced by the Yao tradition.

The people who use it: As discussed in the origin of the script, there is some indication that the people of Jiangyong may belong to the Yao minority, but so far scholarly opinion is in favor of classifying them as Han, one important reason being that their language has been judged to be a branch of the Han language.

Teaching and learning: According to the women that I have talked to, including Gao, Yi, and those who claim that they use to be literate but later became illiterate through lack of use, most of them learned the script during their teens and twenties, always voluntarily, and usually from a woman older than themselves, who might be a sister-in-law, an aunt, a neighbor, or a ritual sister. An exception is Tang Baozhen (唐寶珍) who was 76 years old in 1988 and says that she learned it in her fifties from Gao when she moved to Gao's village. But I must add that Tang can now neither read nor write the script and there are no extant texts written by her, although it is possible that she learned to read it and later lost that ability. Judging from the way Gao tried to teach me and the way Yi said she taught her class, the manner of teaching was probably like this: the teacher reads or recites a text while the student looks at the text; the student memorizes the characters and the sounds they represent, probably by reciting after the teacher; the student writes the characters as she recites the text; the student participates in group singing sessions and learns more characters while practising those already learned. Personally I have tried two approaches to learning the script. At first I used Zhou's glossary in Gong's book, learning each character individually with its

sound and meaning, starting with those with the least strokes and working my way up. I ran into difficulty after I reached characters with seven or eight strokes. I forgot the old ones and couldn't memorize the new ones. Then I used another method. I borrowed texts from Zhou together with his translations. I copied the whole text sentence by sentence, looking at the translation and pronouncing the characters in the local language. This way I became proficient after copying three long texts. Taking my own experience as a guide, I would conjecture that the traditional method of teaching and learning was quite effective.

Current status: The use of the Women's Script has been in decline since 1949 due to three reasons:

1. Change in the economy, religion, and gender roles: as mentioned above, embroidery and domestic work used to be the main occupation of women. After 1949, foot binding was banned and women were encouraged to do farm work. For some reason, the only obvious result today of this effort to make the sexes more equal is the deletion of embroidery in women's repertoire of necessary skills. Since it was mainly during group embroidery work that the texts were sung, the disappearance of such groups meant that an important occasion for the practice of this literacy was gone. What's more, religion was repressed after 1949 and virtually banned during the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, Gupo's shrine was demolished and the tradition of presenting prayers there died out. Thus a second important function of this literacy ceased to exist.

2. Increased chances for women to be educated. Since 1949, the government has made several efforts to promulgate primary school education and basic literacy in Hanzi locally. Although there has been only limited success, especially in regard to female literacy because girls are still considered more useful if they stay home and help out and because they eventually will marry out, which means that any educational investment in them will not benefit their family of orientation, it is undeniable that more women are educated now than before. This has reduced the women's need of a separate script.

3. The Cultural Revolution. During that period, the Women's Script was seen as a feudal relic to be wiped out. The women dared not practice or teach it and many texts were lost. It was supposedly then that many women forgot how to use it.

The net result of the above is that there are only two old women left today who still know how to read and write this script. One of them, Yi Nianhua, started a class in 1987 to teach some girls in her village, but the class only lasted four months due to lack of funds. Other than these two old women, there are today eight others who have learned this script, all for research purposes except Yi's grandson Lu Jianqing (盧建清) who is said to have learned it

as a boy out of his own interest. The others are Zhou Shuoqi (male), Gong Zhebing (male), Zhao Liming (female), Xie Zhiming (female), Chen Jin (female), Cathy Silber (female), and myself. As to the total amount of extant texts, I have so far collected 100 documents totaling 79,883 characters and I know there are still a number of documents that I have not seen.

Researchers and articles:

1. Zhou Shuoqi (周碩沂): a native of Jiangyong currently working at the Jiangyong xian Culture bureau (文化館). He was the first to call attention to this script back in 1954 but his work was unfortunately interrupted between 1959 and 1979 by political movements. He compiled the first glossary of the Women's Script together with Gong Zhebing and Chen Jin (published in Gong ed. 1986) and has collected many documents. Moreover, he has translated most of the documents into Hanzi and has written some articles on it which he has published in oil print locally. He says he has also written a book in which he has compiled a new glossary with over 820 syllabic signs. He has been unable to publish the book due to lack of funds.

2. Gong Zhebing (宮哲兵): currently Assistant Professor at the South Central Institute of Nationalities (中南民族學院) in Wuhan. He revived and expanded scholarly interest in the Women's Script by writing part of and editing the book *The Women's Script and the Yao Nationality's Qianjiadong* (婦女文字和瑤族千家峒) in 1986. He is a well known Yao specialist and has done extensive field work among the Yao of China as well as in Jiangyong. He has also collected many Women's Script documents.

3. Zhao Liming (趙麗明): currently a teacher at National Qinghua University in Beijing. She has several articles collected in Gong's book. Besides, she and Prof. Gong have collaborated on another book about the script but have not been able to publish it also due to lack of funds. In it they have compiled their own glossary. She has done several short-term field studies in Jiangyong and has collected some documents.

4. Chen Jin (陳謹): also currently an Assistant Professor at the South Central Institute of Nationalities. Her article is in Gong's book.

5. Xie Zhimin (謝志民): a third Assistant Professor at the South Central Institute of Nationalities. He has done several months of field work in Jiangyong. He has an article in the 1st. issue of the 1987 Bulletin of the Central Institute of Nationalities (中央民族學院學報).

6. Huang Xuezen (黃雪貞): currently a researcher at the Language Research Institute, Central Academy of Social Sciences (中央社會科學院語言研究所) in Beijing. She has also done several months of field work in Jiangyong, studying the local

language. She has published an article on it in the 3rd issue of *Fang Yan* (方言, *Dialect*), 1988.

7. Cathy Silber: An American woman who has worked at the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing (外語出版社). She has done several months of field work in Jiangyong.

8. As for myself, I did field work in Jiangyong from March to May, 1988, studying both the linguistic and social aspects of the script. I have acquired a number of document xeroxes from Gong, Zhou, Gao, and Yi, all of which are listed in the matrix catalogue I am now compiling. My next step will be to publish articles translating, analyzing, and commenting on individual documents. I will also continue to replenish this catalogue as more information becomes available. One important task that will probably take longer to finish is compiling a glossary of my own (since there is no government to stipulate an orthography for the Women's Script, it is to be expected that people with different documents produce different glossaries) and a dictionary dealing with idioms of the language.

The Future of the Women's Script: It is a distinctive trait of writing systems in East Asia that most of them derive from either the Hanzi or the Aramaic tradition of the Near East (Chiang 1988). Moreover, cases of literacy within China that differ from Hanzi have all sooner or later been overwhelmed by the latter, including the Latin Script, the most recent contender which seemed very hopeful in the 1920's and 30's. This plus the dire situation of the Women's Script today seems to leave little hope of its surviving beyond Gao and Yi. However, given the current attitude of the Chinese government in encouraging development of local cultures, there is just a slight possibility that it might live on. I have mentioned that Yi held a class for young women that lasted four months. The fact that there were a number of students shows that local interest exists. The immediate problem is lack of financial support (mainly to pay the teacher's salary) and the long-term problem is whether this literacy will find a new niche for itself. Mr. Gong has been devising plans to save the script but it will probably be a few years before we know the results.

Notes

1. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, Sigma Xi, and the Yale John Enders Research Assistance Grant Committee for sponsoring this research, Dr. Chien Chiao, Chairman of the Anthropology Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for offering me a position there so I would have the chance to write up this article, and my colleague Dr. Nicholas Tapp for his thoughtful suggestions.

2. The dictionary pronunciation for “沂” is /yi/ rising tone, but people in Jiangyong and Zhou himself pronounces it /t'i/ rising tone. Therefore, I follow their pronunciation in my Pinyin transliteration when referring to his name.

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SUMMARY OF THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES (1988/89)

The beginning of the year 1988 saw the replacement of John Dolfin of the University Service Centre by Diana Martin of the University of Hong Kong as the new President of the Hong Kong Anthropological Society. In view of John Dolfin's other commitments to ensuring that the valuable collections at the University Service Centre should have a secure future, we are grateful to him for all the work he has undertaken on behalf of the Society. In the year 1988-89 the Hong Kong Anthropological Society arranged a particularly successful number of talks and lectures in conjunction with the Hong Kong Museum of History, who have always been most generous in making their facilities available for these purposes. On 13th. April a Dinner Lecture by Dr. Stephan Feuchtwang of the City University of London on 'Rural Social Support Systems in China' was jointly organised by the Society and the Department of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. On 9th. May a lecture was given by Dr. Jana Howlett, of the Department of Slavonic Studies in the University of Cambridge, on 'Representation and Religion: the Icon and the Image'. This was followed on 18th. May by the Second Barbara Ward Memorial Lecture, delivered by Dr. Rubie Watson of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh, and introduced by Dr. James Hayes. The title was 'Old Womens' Feasts: Ghost Food in a Hong Kong Village'. The Lecture was very well attended, and was generally considered to have been a great success. On 31st. May Christopher Haffner of the Hong Kong Freemasons Association gave a most informative talk on the 'Contributions of the Freemasons to Hong Kong Society', and on 1st. June Dr. Joy Hendry, of Oxford Polytechnic, gave a lecture on 'Japanese Politeness' which was also well received. On 8th. June M. Joel Thoraval, of the Department of Anthropology in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, lectured on 'The Islamic

Community of Hong Kong'. His talk was based on his current stimulating research into this somewhat neglected topic. On 15th. June Dr. Richard Irving of the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Hong Kong, gave a lecture on the symbolism of 'Dragons and Crocodiles in New Territories Villages', and on 22nd. June members of the Society presented a Slide-Show based on a research trip to Hainan Island organised by the Society in April. After the summer vacation, on 20th. November a study tour to the Mai Po marshes was organised by the Society which was led by Dr. Richard Irving, and on 22nd. November a lecture was delivered by Dr. Wong Siu-lun of the Department of Sociology at the University of Hong Kong on the fascinating research topic of 'The Entrepreneurs of Shanghai'. On 10th. January 1989 Dr. David Faure, of the Department of History in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, delivered a stimulating lecture on 'Lineage in the Pearl River Delta: How It All Began', while on 25th. January Dr. Jacques Lemoine, Director of the Centre of Research on the Anthropology of Southern China and the Indochinese Peninsula, delivered a lecture on 'The Shamanic Equation in the Diagnosis of Hmong Illness'. Dr. Nina Jablonski, of the Department of Anatomy in the University of Hong Kong, gave an interesting lecture on 'The Golden Monkeys of China: Evolution and Conservation', on February 14th. This was followed on 15th. February by a major lecture on 'The Culture of Flowers' by Jack Goody, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology in the University of Cambridge. Finally William Chiang, of the Chinese University's Department of Anthropology, gave a talk on 'The Women's Script: Some Social and Linguistic Aspects' on 1st. March, and Dr. Mark Elvin, of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, presented a lecture on 'Tales of Shen and Xin: Body-person and Heart-mind in China during the last 150 years', on 14th. March.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CHIANG WEI currently lectures in the Department of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and is a member of the International Association for Yao Studies. He is also completing a Ph.D. thesis in the Department of Anthropology at Yale on the womens' writing in Hunan, which he has studied intensively with a general interest in literacy and oral modes of communication, and was formerly a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

CHIAO CHIEN is Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and in that capacity as well as of Founding President of the International Association for Yao Studies has sponsored and organised much research on the ethnic minorities of China. His own fieldwork has been conducted on the Puyuma of Taiwan, the Navaho of Mexico, the Yao of Guangdong, and religion in Hong Kong society.

STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology in the Department of Social Science at the City University of London, and organiser of the London China Seminars at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. His original research was conducted in Taiwan and his book An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy (Vithagna

1974) is well known. He combines an interest in the role of religion in Chinese society with a concern with wider regional issues of economic development, and has recently co-edited such volumes as The Chinese Economic Reforms (Croom Helm 1983).

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