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Report for 1999-2000

by co-chairpersons Gordon Mathews and Chris Hutton

August 7, 2000

The society hosted a rich variety of speakers in the course of the year attesting to the diversity of topics that can be subsumed under the label of anthropology. Our speakers included Sandeep Kumar on Indians in Hong Kong, Patrick Hase on Fung Shui in the New Territories, Graeme Lang on Why science evolved in Europe and not China, Fred Blake on Footbinding, Kristopher Schipper on Beijing as a Holy City, Mary Erbaugh on 'The Chinese revolution as a force for a shared public discourse', Jean Berlie and Antonio Robarts on The Social Fabric of Macau, John Lagerwey on The Chinese Dragon In Legend and Practice, Alan Smart, on When Good Gifts Go Bad: Guanxi and Exchange in the PRC, Diana Martin on the transformation of Chinese rural domestic objects into cultural artifacts, Dan Waters on Some of Hong Kong's Lesser Festivals and Monuments and the Culture that surrounds them. Grant Evans gave an illustrated talk to the AGM about his research into the Lao aristocracy in the modern period. The society held its Film Festival on April 10, 1999 which featured in particular the films of Christine Choy, the Head of the School of Creative Media at City University, Hong Kong. Other activities included a tour of the History Museum led by Paul Harrison (October 30), a visit to the tai-ping hung-chiu ceremony in Fanling Wai led by Dr Chan Kwok-shing of the South China Research Group (February 19), a dinner meeting with Dr Karstin Kruger of the Institut fuer den wissenschaftlichen Film in Goettingen who discussed his involvement with the teaching of documentary film making in Yunnan (March 10). Dr Kruger was also able to accompany members of the society on the boat trip to Kau Sai Chau where we attended some of the rededication ceremonies for the Hung Sing Temple there, organized under the auspices of the Antiquities and Monuments Office, and partook of a substantial pun choi lunch. We are very grateful to the AMO and the restoration committee of Kau Sai for their hospitality. Members of the society may recall that Kau-Sai is the fishing village where Barbara Ward carried out many of her anthropological studies from the 1950s through the 1970s.

The society's membership remained steady, but we continue to look for new members and hope to widen the society's membership base further in coming years. In particular, the executive committee seeks dynamic new members who can bring fresh ideas and organizational skills to the society.

The co-chairs would like to thank all the committee members who shouldered the burden of running the society during their prolonged periods of absence: Joseph Bosco, S.J. Chan, Sidney Cheung, John Dolfin, Grant Evans, Paul Harrison, Jane Fong, Janet Lee Scott, Andrew Stables, Larry Witzleben. In this context we would especially like to thank Joseph Bosco and Grant Evans for their hard work in producing the HK Anthropologist in recent years. In addition, the society is indebted to Dr Joseph Ting and Ms Irene Chan of the Hong Kong Museum of History (the society's venue) for their continued support of the society through co-sponsorship of our lectures.

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Cover photo: A Taoist priest writes in red ink above the censor during the rededication ceremony of the Hung Sheng temple in Kau Sai (11 March 2000, photo by Joseph Bosco).

Phai-mia

Helen Cheng

Introduction

I never thought that my grandma's making and selling of offering papers or spirit money, *kim*¹ (金), could be a subject matter worth studying. Born in a traditional Chinese family, I came to know *kim* before I even knew how to talk. I have always helped my family burn *kim* to gods or ghosts once a week or so since early childhood, so I hardly pay attention to *kim* as it is so familiar to me.

Kim came up when I told my anthropology teacher that I would like to do grandma's life story. The teacher suggested that she and *kim* could be worth studying. I took his advice, at first simply to accommodate the teacher's interest.² But when I started interviewing members of my family, I realized how little I really understood of grandma's life.

I would like to make it clear that this is account of a cultural practice at a specific time and place is drawn purely from my family's memory. It is a life story more than a life history. A life history seeks accuracy concerning events and details, while a story focuses more on the narrative and the interpretation of that narrative. What my family says about the meanings of offering papers might not be "correct" from the point of view of religious specialists, yet they are the rituals, life and belief of village people.

My understanding of their life and customs come from my grandma's fragmentary accounts concerning *kim*. It is a partial life story constructed from memory. The story took place in a farming village in southern Fujian during

the '30s and '40s. My family came to Hong Kong a decade ago. As a matter of fact, I cannot literally "be there" for this research, either in time or space. However, the practices and the beliefs are still stamped onto everyday life and conversation. Our family still burns *kim* according to the village custom that has been passed down from generation to generation.

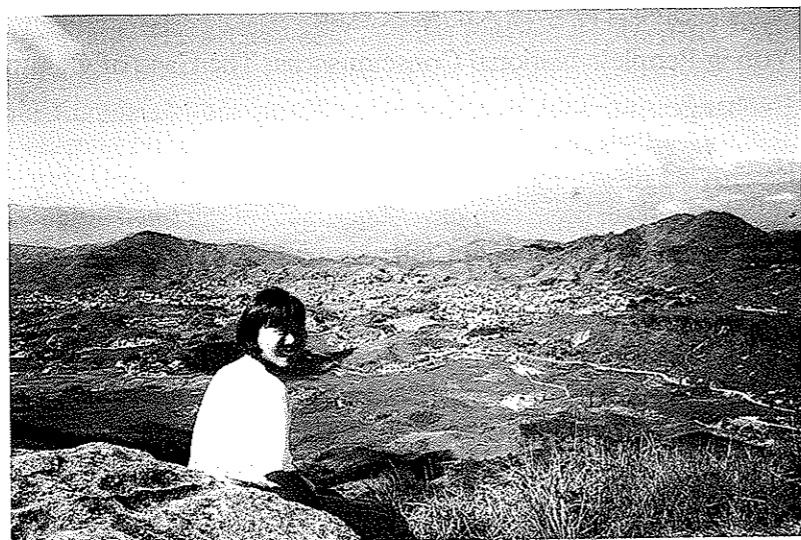


Figure 1: Author on mountain overlooking the town near her home village in Fujian.

Brief Background

The key person in this study is my grandma, who was a craftswoman and vendor of handcraft *kim* during the years of *khong chian* (抗戰 Anti-Japanese War 1937-1945).

Grandma was born in a mountain village in southern Fujian. There were five villages nestling in the mountain ranges, far away from the market town. Each village had about 100-300 households. At that time, there were no paved roads and no public transportation to the town, so villagers went to town on foot. It took about three hours to get there and five hours to return. People living in the villages grew crops and reared domestic animals such as pigs, rabbits and chickens for their livelihood.

Grandma's father was one of the wealthy expatriates *huan khe* (番客) in the Philippines. Half of the men in grandma's village went to the Philippines to seek their fortune. But only

a few succeeded.

During her childhood, Grandma was the only *chheng kim sio chia* (千金小姐 Thousand Gold Piece Girl) among the villages. Her feet were bound so that she would look and behave like a "thousand pieces of gold". She had two girl maids put her on their back and take her around whenever she went out. She was praised by the villagers for her beauty (of her face and her feet) and her skills at embroidery.

At the age of seventeen, Grandma was married to my grandpa who had returned from the Philippines. Grandma's mother and brother left her to join her father in the Philippines because it was time for her brother to learn the family business. Grandma married a *huan khe*, like her father. But, this man did not bring back much money, only declining health. Even after her marriage, grandma depended on her family in the Philippines for her and her husband's livelihoods.

Grandpa passed away when grandma was thirty-three, leaving six kids, under the age of eight, including one unborn. At that time, according to my grandma and my uncle, the *khong chian* (Anti-Japanese War) broke out. Communication between the village and the Philippines was cut. Villagers, especially families who used to depend on overseas relatives had to find new ways to support themselves. Some people worked for the landlords. Others smuggled salt from the towns to the villages. In fact, those salt smugglers were making good money, since there was a shortage of salt in the villages. When I lived in the village, I often heard *Grandma Chit* (靜嫻), another widow of grandma's generation, proudly tell of her adventures smuggling salt. Of course, salt smuggling was hard work. According to *Grandma Chit*, she had to put 100 pounds (*gin* 斤) of salt on her shoulders and walk barefoot. Grandma could not do heavy labor because of her bound feet. But she had skillful hands.

Grandma took off her finely embroidered shoes (women with bound feet sleep with their shoes on) and unbound her feet. She was very skilled at domestic crafts, so she used these skills to develop other crafts, mainly making *kim*, which she later sold in the villages. For more than a decade, she supported the whole family by walking from village to village, selling her product. She abandoned the business

once her son started to make money.

Setting up the Interviews

I first came to know that grandma was in the paper offering business by accident. When I was about five or six, I found a funny chop in our house (I was living in the village then) while playing hide-and-seek. My mother told me that it belonged to grandma (whom I had hadn't yet met) and was used for making *kim*. It was the only time that anyone mentioned to me that grandma had made *kim*. Grandma never talked of her days when she made her living making *kim*. But she often reminds me that we should burn offering papers to *put kong* (佛公 gods) to receive their blessings and to *cho kong* (祖公 deceased family members) so that they can have money to spend and will not suffer in the nether world.

On 13 November 1999, I went to our family-run dessert shop with a tape recorder and note pad. Over the dinner table, I mentioned that I was going to interview grandma to study the traditional craft of *kim*.

To my surprise, my mother who is forty-five years old, two uncles from mother's side (they are 33 and 35 respectively and had just come to visit Hong Kong) all said that they could tell me how to make *kim*. These two men could explain the whole process because they had watched old ladies doing it many times when they were living in the village. I was told that everyone in the village would have known a bit about making *kim* though not a lot of people could really do it. Mother is one of the few who actually had some hands-on experience. It was my grandma who taught her. When my mother married my father, there were still some leftover raw materials from grandma's *kim* business. Not to waste the raw materials and thus the money, Grandma taught mother to make *kim*. The finished products made by mother were then for their own use. Mother said that they used up all the materials after half a year and had to start buying *kim*.

Before interviewing grandma, my mother and uncles volunteered to explain to me how offering papers were handcrafted and presented. According to them, *kim* is both economic and religious at the same time. It is a religious offering because it resembles and represents economic concepts and symbols.

¹All romanization is in the local Southern Min language, using the missionary romanization system. The *k* in *kim* is pronounced like an unvoiced *g*.

²I knew the teacher was carrying out research on paper money.

Kim is not just a mediated symbol in the religious practices to connect and communicate between the human and non-human world, but also the commodity for exchanges between the human and non-human worlds. It is made for the purpose of exchange. *Kim* is offered by humans in exchange for blessings and protection from the non-human world. Therefore, it is made as a commodity to resemble and represent symbols of commodities.

Making *kim*

People in the villages use a generic term *kim* to refer to the two basic kinds of offering papers, *kim* (gold) and *gin* (silver). A person in the *kim* business makes and sells both *kim* and *gin*.

Tools needed for making *kim* and *gin* are simple: a brush and two *in* (印 wooden chops), one inscribed with *thiⁿ koaⁿ so hok* (天官賜福) which literally means “blessings from the gods of Heaven”, another one inscribed with *teng chai ong* (丁財旺) which literally means “man, money and fortune”. Materials used are *chho choa* (粗紙 coarse paper), *moh* (膜 tinfoil), *kho* (糊 starch), *chhat* (漆 red dye) and *kam chhao* (咸草 grass strings).

Gin is made of coarse paper and tinfoil. The paper and the tinfoil are in the shape of

squares. The smallest unit for *gin* is *chit chi* (one stack), consisting of three pieces of paper, tied together by a grass string at the top right corner. Only the top piece is pasted with tinfoil. The flimsy tinfoil is pasted in the middle of the paper. There are three different kinds of *gin*, depending on the size of the tinfoil. Small *gin* has a tinfoil of four Chinese inches (a Chinese inch equals one tenth of a foot), medium of six inches, and large of eight inches. All *gin* has the same paper size.

Gin is half-finished *kim*. To make *kim*, a layer of red dye is brushed over the tinfoil of *gin* and two lines of words are chopped on the top middle and bottom middle. *Tian kuan si fo* appears on the top and *ding chai wong* appears on the bottom. Just like *gin*, the minimum unit for *kim* is one *chi*, consisting of three pieces of paper, tied together by a grass string at the top right corner. Only the top piece is pasted with tinfoil brushed with red dye. The sizes of *kim* are also the same as *gin*.

It is mainly women, especially old women, who are involved in the making of *kim* because it is monotonous and time consuming. There is only one thing that people should avoid in making *kim*. When the piece of tinfoil is not neatly and completely pasted onto the crude paper, it is a *phoa chi* (破錢 broken money). A *phoa chi* cannot be repaired. Gods and ghosts want the best and there is no way that you can

cheat them. *Phoa chi* is much less valuable than *kim* or *gin*. *Phoa chi* could not be offered alone. It could only be offered as a kind of extra in the sacrifice. Therefore, it can only be sold at a very low price. When village people buy *kim*, they will examine the tinfoil very carefully to avoid *phoa chi*.

Offering *kim*

According to my mother and my uncles, *gin* and *kim* are money offered to the non-human world. *Gin* is like bill notes in the human world and can be used immediately and *kim* is like pieces of gold which have to be changed into notes before they can be used. *Gin* is burnt to those in the dark world only, the *kui* (鬼 ghosts). The Dark world is just like the human world except that it is underground. Therefore, the ghosts have to pay for what they want to buy. *Gin* is offered to ghosts so that they will have money to spend there. *Kim* is also burnt to the ghosts, but only for old ghosts. New ghosts, i.e. those who have been dead for less than two years will get *gin* only. It is believed that there is a *ming tong gun hang* (冥通銀行 Bank of Hell) in the dark world and all ghosts who receive *kim* need to go to the Bank of Hell to change it into notes before they can spend the money. The worry is that new ghost will not know where the Bank of Hell is located or how to go there. So only *gin* will be offered to new ghosts so that they can have immediate money to spend. Old ghosts are familiar with the dark world so that *kim* can be offered to them.

Kim is burnt to those in the sky world, the gods (*sin* 神) or the immortals (*sian* 仙). *Kim* is much more valuable than *gin*. Only the best should be served to those in the sky world to show one's respect and sincerity. So only *kim* will be offered to the gods and immortals. We human beings need not worry how they spend *kim* because gods and immortals need not to spend money at all. Gods and immortals can have whatever they want by magical power. Then, why should people offer *kim* to them? I was puzzled. My mother chuckled.

“Why would visitors present gifts to a very rich man who already has everything he wants?” my mother asked. Villagers offer *kim* to the gods or immortals when they are asking for gods' help or when they thank gods for the help.

Kim is just like a kind of gift to show people's sincerity and respect. Then, how would gods and immortals treat the *kim* offered to them? They will save the *kim* and return it to the human world. People often seek help from gods and immortals. Quite some of the prayers directly or indirectly involve with the issue of money. For example, some people might pray to earn more money. Others might pray for a new house in the future. If the gods and immortals respond to those kinds of prayers, they will have to give a proportion of the *kim* they have back to the people. If we human beings do not offer *kim* to the gods and immortals, they cannot help us when money is involved. After all, money is not an object of the sky world.

When making offerings to the non-human world, the more the better. No matter how hard life is, village people will not cut economize on *kim* and *gin*. Actually, when life in the human world is harsh, people tend to burn more offering papers. It is because either they feel that they humans cannot do much to help themselves and thus burn more offering papers to ask for assistance from the non-human world, or they think that the harshness is caused by inadequacy of sacrifices to the non-human worlds. Perhaps the ghosts are unhappy because they do not have enough money to spend or perhaps the gods and immortals are unhappy because some other people (say, their ancestors) forgot to offer the promised amount of sacrifice. In either case, human beings will be punished and thus more offering papers are needed to ease the anger of the non-human world.

In order to make sure that enough offering papers are prepared, it is common knowledge in the villages that the minimum sacrifice for each ghost is one *chi* of *gin* and *kim* for a ghost, and three *chi* for a god or immortal. *Gin* can be burnt in any amount after the minimum requirement. However, for *kim*, the sacrifice after the minimum requirement are 30 *chi*, 100 *chi* (which is called one *phei* 一把, two *phei* 兩把) and so on. However, my mother and uncles cannot explain why there are such rules. “The rules have been passed down by our ancestors. Every one just follows the rules. No one asks why. Perhaps there is no special reason but just for the convenience of people so that they know how much *kim* they should offer”, said my mother.



Figure 2: This is an example of Hong Kong gold paper money, it uses different sayings and has a larger piece of foil than the money made by the author's grandmother.

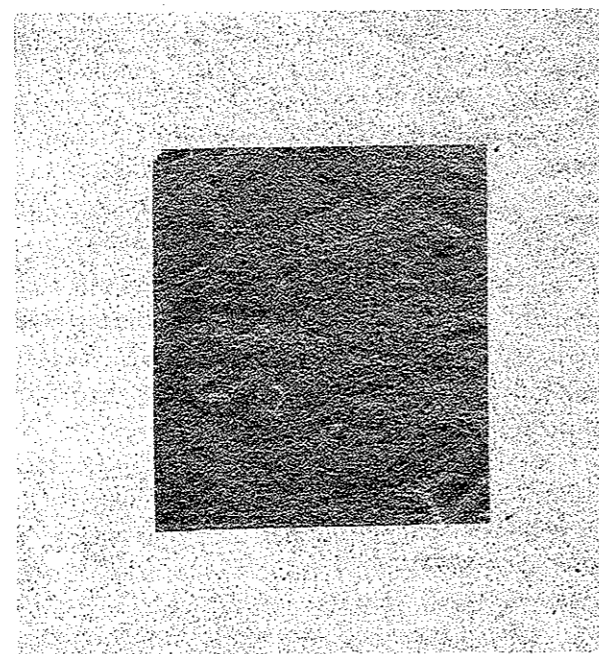


Figure 3: Silver paper money (silver foil in the center), the same as the paper used by the author's grandmother.

This was not the only question to which my mother could not provide a satisfactory answer. In fact, my mother and my uncle knew nothing about how grandma sold *kim* at her time.

Selling *kim* - *Phai-mia* (歹命)

Grandma was watching television in the living room when I arrived home at ten o'clock. She was really happy to see me. She was especially happy to hear that I was going to spend the night at home (I seldom stayed overnight at home for the last three years while living on campus). I told her that I would like

to ask her a few questions on the making and selling of *kim*; she did not say a word. I took it as a silent consent.

I asked grandma to come to our room (my sister, my grandma and I share a room). I asked her to sit down and clipped the microphone on her collar. I got straight to the point and asked her how she made and sold *kim*. To my surprise, she told me that it was too long ago and

she could not remember anything. That was such an obvious lie to me. She always has had a very good memory. She remembers every birthday of her more than fifty grandchildren and great-grandchildren (although she has met more than half of them only once or twice in her life). Both of us knew that it was just an excuse. Apparently, grandma was reluctant to share the experience with me, her granddaughter.

Why was she so reluctant to talk about it? I was baffled and curious. From conversations with my uncles and my mother, I did not detect

any negative connotation about making and selling *kim*, except perhaps poverty. Yet poverty has never been a taboo topic for grandma. She often recalls the hard old days and reminds us to work hard. I decided not to give up although I had the feeling that the interview would make grandma uneasy.

I changed the question a little bit and asked if it was a hard work to make *kim*. "No. How could it be harsh? You only have to move your hands", she replied. "Who taught you?" I asked. "Who needs to learn? Everyone would have *kim* at home. Just get one and look at it, you will know how to make it", she said. At my persistence, bit by bit, she briefly revealed the process and skills of making *kim*, which tallied



Figure 4: View from a mountaintop of the hamlets making up the author's home village.

with the description given by my mother and my uncles. She also revealed more about the raw materials.

Grandma went to the *ging* (供 supplier) to buy coarse paper, tinfoil, brushes and wooden chops. The *ging* was the only licensed *kim* business entity in the village. It was a manufacturer and wholesaler at the same time. The *ging* bought coarse paper and tinfoil from the towns and made wooden chops and brushes. The *ging* manufactured *kim* to sell. It also sold raw materials and tools needed for making *kim*.

It was a legal and common practice for

people to make *kim* for their own use. Life was hard and people wanted to save money, but they could not save on the amount of offering papers. It was usually the least productive member of the household, such as the grandmother, who made *kim* at home. Some households also sold the extra *kim* that they made for supplementary income. However, selling *kim* without a license was illegal. If illegal vendors were caught by the then Kuomintang (國民黨) government, they would be fined heavily for tax evasion. Therefore, some *kim*-making households would sell their *kim* to the *ging* at a lower price to avoid getting caught.

Kim was a cheap commodity and the profit margin was very low. Yet Grandma depended on the business as her sole source of income. Her costs for making *kim* was high because she could not walk to the town where coarse paper and tinfoil were sold at lower prices than the *ging*. The two difficult steps of making *kim* were to blow the tightly pressed tinfoil to lift a single flimsy piece and paste it neatly on the right middle part of the coarse paper. Over ninety percent of the cost of *kim* came from tinfoil. If she did not blow the tinfoil well, the loss would be great. In grandma's language, "the loss is as long as a snake."

To save costs, grandma made red dye by boiling branches of a tree named *ng ki* (黃枝) which had reddish-yellow juice. She made starch by cooking sweet potato flour. Grandma eventually told me something about making *kim*. Yet, no matter how persistent I was (I asked this question at least eight times), she denied that she went out to the villages to sell *kim*. She at first insisted that she handed *kim* to the *ging* to sell. Later, she said that villagers came to her house to buy *kim*. "It was illegal to sell *kim*. The government would catch and fine us for doing business without paying tax. Who would go out to sell *kim*? Of course people came to buy in my room." "But, grandma, dad and mom told me that you unbound your feet and went to the villages to sell *kim*, are they lying?" I did not want to give up. Grandma just shook her head.

The interview did not run as I had expected. Grandma was deeply troubled by the whole issue. She removed the microphone from her collar ten minutes after the interview began. She was sad although she did not say it. I saw tears rolling in her eyes when I asked how she

got into the business. But I pretended not to notice. My sister scolded me for being cruel to force grandma to speak about something that she obviously did not want to talk about, let alone think about. I felt bad to have pushed grandma. At ten thirty, while I was still recording and taking notes, grandma stood up and left the room, abruptly ending the interview. She said once again a sentence that she had been repeating at least twenty times during the short interview: "Who bothers to make *kim*? *Phai-mia* (Bad-fate)!"

The fact that grandma uttered the word *phai-mia* so many times during the interview deeply troubled me. She never mentioned who was *phai-mia*. Was she referring to herself? When a person is *phai-mia*, it implies there is no value in his/her life. Village people would often regard themselves as "poor" (窮) or "suffering" (受苦) but never *phai-mia*, unless he/she despaired about life. Judgements about life and the value of life concerning the elderly can be summarized as *ho-mia* (好命 good fate) or *phai-mia* (bad fate). And for someone as old as grandma, *phai-mia* means the total denial of the meaning in her life. Grandma has a happy life after years of hardship. She is regarded as *hou-mia* because her life can be described as "bitterness ends and sweetness comes". I often heard visitors or relatives praising grandma for her *hou-mia* and she has been very contented with such compliments. Why would she utter the word *phai-mia* in this interview? Why would she try so hard to deny the fact that she went to the villages to sell *kim*?

With these questions in mind, I went to ask my father. My father could recall only a little about grandma's making and selling of *kim* as he was very small at that time. Yet, he was sure that grandma did go to the neighboring villages to sell *kim*. "I remember being left alone at home when she went out to sell *kim* for the whole day", my father said. "And I remember I was always hungry. We didn't have enough food. I had to wait for a whole day for my mom to come home and we still had not enough rice." Even father could not understand why grandma was so reluctant to let me know she went out to sell *kim*. My father suggested me asking Second Uncle. He was much older than father and should remember more.

Early next morning, I went to Second Uncle's stall (He is a hawker at the market).

Second Uncle was surprised that I knew grandma's story. He could not provide extra information on the making and cost of *kim* as "it was so long ago and I didn't pay attention to it". Yet, he remembered how grandma sold *kim*.

According to Second Uncle, no one in the family helped grandma to make or sell *kim*. She did it all by her own efforts, working eight or ten hours a day. It was a very tedious job requiring much patience and concentration. Grandma went out to sell *kim* once every week, carrying a cloth bag full of the *kim* she had made. She visited every household and asked if they needed *kim* or not. It took a whole day for her to walk around a village. That was the only competitive edge grandma had over other *kim* manufacturers, especially the *ging*. Other vendors required customers to come to buy the goods from them. Grandma delivered them to the door.

Second Uncle admitted that it was a very hard job for grandma. She had to work all day long and keep a look out for government officials. Yet, what she could earn was very little, even when business was good. Sometimes she even made a loss if the tinfoil was not blown out properly.

The whole family suffered from hunger. Three years after working as a maker of *kim*, grandma still could not earn enough to feed the family and the only way she could think of was to sell one of her daughters (about age ten at that time).³

"Grandma was thinking of selling me to get some money so that younger brothers and sisters could be fed," Second Uncle said.

It must have been painful for grandma to give her own daughter to another family. Perhaps that is why she thinks of *phai-mia* when talking about *kim*. She might regret giving up her flesh and blood, I was thinking.

"Then why are you still here in the family?" I asked

"Because the war had ended. My grandma in the Philippines sent us money again." Second Uncle said.

I asked Second Uncle if he knew why grandma was hiding her stories from me. "She is old and doesn't want to recall the unhappy past" Second Uncle said.

I could understand grandma being reluctant to recall the unhappy past of selling her own flesh and blood. Perhaps, talking about

kim reminded her the old hard days and the loss of her daughter. So I casually concluded, "is that why grandma considered selling *kim phai-mia*?"

"It is not *phai-mia*. It is hard. *Kim* makers had to work all day long. But what they earned was minimal. Sometimes they even made a loss if the tinfoil was not blown out properly. And government officials would catch them selling *kim* if they weren't very careful. It is a hard work. But it is not *phai-mia*." Second Uncle corrected me.

"Is grandma *phai-mia*?"

"Bullshit. Of course grandma is not *phai-mia*. She is *ho-mia*. She has children, grandchildren and great grandchildren around her. She has such a big and happy family. They are all blessings. Who dares to say grandma is *phai-mia*?" Second Uncle was a little bit annoyed that I used the word *phai-mia* to refer to grandma.

I went home and told my mother about grandma's reaction to the interview and my confusion. Mother was silent for a while. She looked into my eyes, and said, "I cannot prove this is true. But I am sure it happened. She had been (sexually) harassed. Your grandma went to every individual home to sell *kim*. There were occasions that bad guys took advantage of her."

I felt sorry for grandma, but I also felt proud for her. Such a tiny woman had gone through so many suffering to support her family during the hard times. I nodded my head and thanked mother for reminding me. "But, I don't think this is the reason for your grandma to feel *phai-mia*" mother added. Could there be anything worse than that?

As a widow, grandma could not complain even if she was harassed. She would be accused of seducing the men. She was supposed to stay at home. But to sell *kim*, she went to people's houses which might be interpreted as inviting harassment. Grandma endured the humiliation to engage in the business of selling *kim*. In mother's words, "she already foresaw how neighbors and villagers would treat her when

³This daughter had miserable life after that and was physically abused in her ner home. She died at the age of thirty from liver disease.

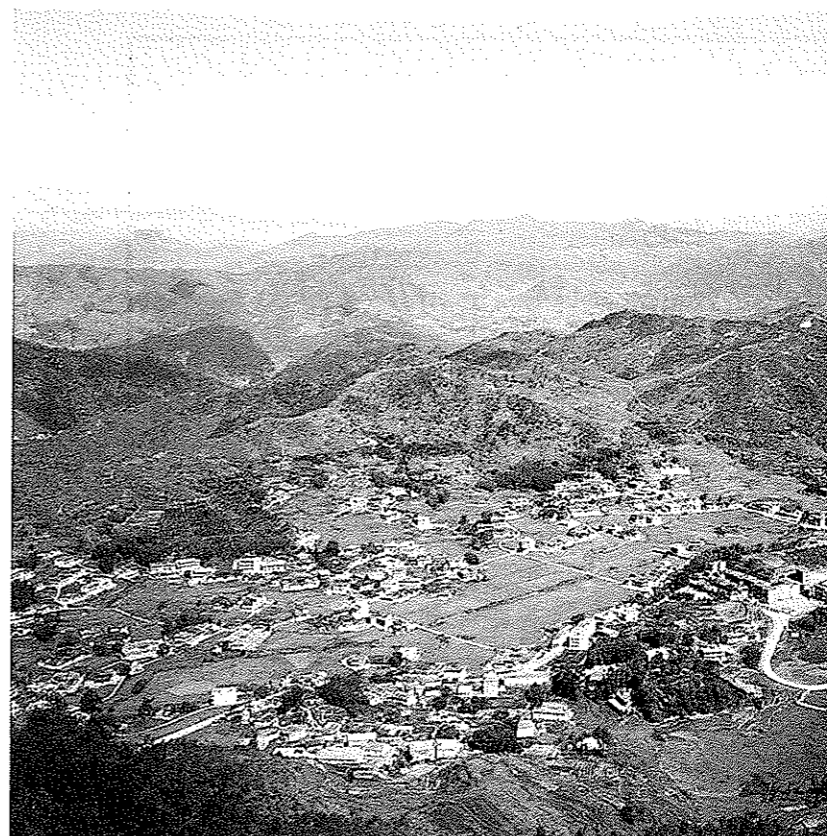


Figure 5: Mountaintop view of the author's home village in Fujian.

she decided to unbind her feet."

Yet, she never expected her own mother and family would abandon her. When the war finally ended, communication from the Philippines resumed and grandma's parents and brother in the Philippines learnt of her poverty and sent her money and words of comfort. After half a year, however, word reached the Philippines that grandma was not a chaste widow. She had been touched by men other than her own husband. Grandma's mother immediately sent a letter to grandma and disowned her because she had disgraced the family name and made them "faceless". When illiterate grandma asked the postman to read this for her, the news spread. It became public knowledge that her own mother had disowned her. Since the letter, the family cut off their relationship (斷絕關係) with grandma. They never went back to the home village again. They never sent a word to grandma again and returned all letters from grandma. To grandma, selling *kim* is *phai-mia* because it is the origin of all her shame and pain. She was humiliated and abandoned by her own parents. *Phai-mia* meant that her life was devoid of meaning. Yes,

her parents gave her life but denounced the "non-value" of it, because she made a living selling *kim*. How could grandma not feel *phai-mia* when I brought up the topic with her? I felt really bad.

Conclusion or Question?

I discussed my interview with grandma with my teacher. He asked me to tell grandma that it was not her fault. No one should devalue her life for something like that. Professor Blake is right. I am proud and grateful for her endurance to bring up my father and support the whole family.

But, I am also angry with myself for bringing the shame and pain back to my beloved grandma. Perhaps she decided to erase that part of history from her life. Perhaps she did successfully "forget" what

happened to her fifty years ago. Yet, when I tried to make an inquiry, albeit in all innocence and with the best of intentions, I felt I was hurting an old lady by asking her to live through the humiliation again. Experiences can be left hanging. If no one ever talks about them, they "cease to exist". Yet, our conversation forced grandma to face her feelings. I think "rationally" speaking, grandma did not consider she had done something wrong. The *phai-mia* did not come directly from her, from *kim*, but her parents' abandonment and the denial of her worth. Grandma's parents have passed away long ago, taking with them their unforgiving anger towards her. Grandma is 96 now. She will leave this world some day. I believe that as anthropologists we can change an unjust and unfair world by simply describing it. Yet, when it is my grandma, I am not so sure. After that night, grandma was silent for a few days. She did not talk much for a whole week. Now, I have decided to write this down. Does it help my grandma understand her experience better? Does it help ease her feelings of being abandoned? Or does it force her to utter the word *phai-mia*?

交流活動與香港年青人的國家意識

盧文芳

引言

根據八四年簽訂的中、英聯合聲明，香港在百年殖民統治以後，直接由其宗主國交還予原來所屬的主權國，為世界殖民史中昂見。因此，九七年香港政權移交之際，吸引了世界各地傳媒雲集香江，競相報導，使香港一時成為全球的焦點所在。而香港這個特點，亦在八十年代起吸引了不少學者蜂擁討論，風靡一時。論者們多指出香港人傾向認同自己為「香港人」(Hongkongese)，而非「中國人」(Chinese)。

然而，當筆者嘗試從一個文化的角度反思「香港人」這個身份認同問題時，發現不少上述的「香港人」研究均簡化了問題的本質。它們多只強調香港自四九年以後與中國大陸「分」的某些介面，而忽略了兩地在過去五十年來「連」的互動關係。此外，它們亦少考慮到國家意識、身份認同等概念的基本彈性，沒有從時人使用「中國」、「大陸」及「香港」等詞彙的實際情境著手，來探討這些詞彙的實際指涉內容。

故此，筆者提議使用多元田野的方法，把「香港人」的課題重新放回不同時期中、港兩地「連」的網絡中去理解。而在芸芸的連繫網絡中，筆者選擇了香港年青人前往中國大陸觀光交流的活動著手。因為這些安排兩地青年「同食、同住、同生活」、以幫助香港年青人認識、感悟「祖國」的活動，正好在地理環境、人物及事物三方面為參與者提供一個有形的參照對象（他者），能夠有力地將問題實質化起來。筆者以為，交流活動其實可比擬為一個圍繞國家意識而發展的「劇場」，並希望透過對這個「劇場」的分析，嘗試從國內旅遊之於國家意識的關係為「香港人」文化身份認同的研究提供多一些視角。

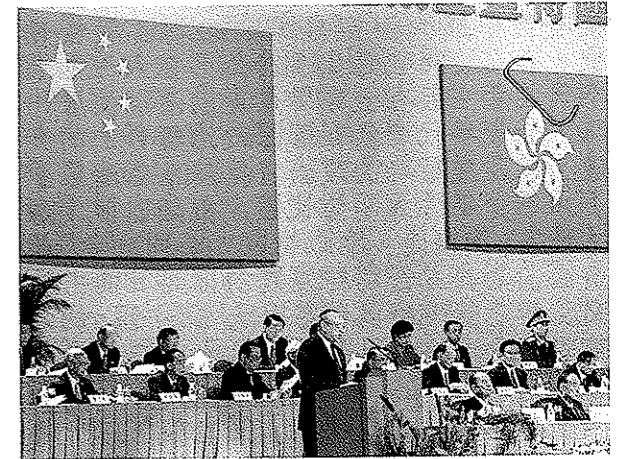
交流活動的重要轉折與年青人的國家意識

其實，香港年青人前往中國內地觀光交流的活動，早在六、七十年代經已有舉辦，迄今有接近三十年的歷史。有趣的是，筆者發現其興衰發展原來與年青人的文化身份認同、國家意識有著唇齒相依的

緊密關係。

百花齊放的「認識中國·關心社會」（一九七十年至七三年）

七一年冬，港大學生會首次公開舉辦「回國觀光團」。行程由香港新華社及內地有關省份的華僑旅行服務社安排，共造訪八個城市，穿越十個省份。除座談會外，團員參觀大小型工廠、公社、生產大隊、大學、小學及多個名勝古跡旅遊點，以瞭解當時中國大陸工農、教育、民生情況，



為期二十九天。回港後又在多份學生刊物中撰寫報告，到中學、大專院校、工會及各式團體匯報、講述大陸當時情況及個人感受等，為期長達半年之多，在當時學界引起了極大的迴響。此後，其他大專亦紛紛響應，組團到中國大陸交流，再配合接續幾年的《中國週》，交流活動不但擴展至大專學界以外，更激起七、八十年代年青人到大陸觀光旅遊的熱潮。

值得注意的是，是次活動不但以《認識祖國發展》為主題，也出現了大量「回國」、「回歸」、「認識祖國」、「愛國熱情」、「民族精神」等字眼，在當時香港社會普遍「恐共恐左」、「風頭火勢」的氣氛下，可謂是個劃時代的突破。

究竟學界為甚麼會在當時一個避談政治、甚至仍是「恐共恐左」的氣氛下突然發展出強調「國家」、「愛國」的交流活動呢？其實，六十年代尾以來，學界已有爭取中

歹命

鄭巧玲

文章摘要

一位同學對她祖母的專業——製紙錢作研究，以此慢慢了解一位傳統鄉村婦女承擔的種種，並進而開始欣賞祖母於逆境中對傳統文化傳承的執著。

文成為法定語文運動、及大規模的保衛釣魚台運動，已經表現出濃厚的民族愛國色彩，故七一年的交流活動不過是把當時的「國家」、「民族」的問題突顯出來而已。而從學界與當時普羅大眾的距離一點，筆者以為這個熱潮，其實是當時香港新生代對其自身身份的尋索。一方面，他們與其父母、祖父母輩不同，少與中國大陸接觸，只有在香港生活的經驗及主要圍繞香港的共同記憶；但另一方面，他們又受到大陸與香港之間種種既連且分的關係挑戰。於是，他們開始對自己的文化身份產生疑問，而發展出一種為自己身份定位的素求。而在這場尋索中，當時本地社會不同階級的不均和拉力，正好成定位的要素。因為在新生代成長的環境中，本地華人與外藉人士有明顯的分化和對立，雙方生活距離懸殊。外國人士遂在當時社會重新整合的拉力過程中，頓時成為本地華人眼前以資對比的「他者」，容易刺激他們的民族情緒。加上年青人缺少切身經歷，沒有對中國大陸抱存深刻的負面記憶包袱，容易變得理想化。於是，在六、七十年代共產主義在全球學生運動浪潮披靡一時、七十年代中國在國際政治舞台上的突破、以及文革時的政治宣傳等催化影響下，不少年青人開始懷疑、推翻以前「恐共恐左」的概念，而以嚮往、認同紅色「新中國」為其身份認同問題的出路。而由於交流活動能讓參與者有認識「新中國」的最前線機會，故參與者眾。

從「火紅年代」急轉直下（一九七三年至一九八九年）

然而，隨著七六年四月天安門事件、十月中國四人幫垮台及文化大革命的終結，香港社會及學運卻又旋即進入一個紛亂、迷惘的階段，後來更摒棄盲目認同「新中國」的紅色熱情，而把注意力重新集中到香港本土的問題上。更重要的是，七十年代的參與者在談及有關中國大陸的事宜時，一般只用「中國」、「中國大陸」、「大陸」等名稱，而當其指涉對象為與當時共產政權有關者時，則會用上「左仔」、「左派」、「左傾」、「親共」等專用詞彙。嚴格來說，「中」、「共」各有所指，不盡相同。然而，八十年代以後，參與者多把「親共」的事物統稱為「親中」；於是，支持共產政權的人由「左仔」改稱為「親中人士」，類似文革時、或任何容易讓人聯想起共產中國的政治、文化行為被評為「咁大陸」。也就是說，「中」、「大陸」和「共」／「左」背後的意含開始被等同起來，尤以

「親中」、「大陸」一類為甚，成了時人對中國大陸負面事物的一堆統稱。

由於「新中國」夢經已破滅，學界裡雖然尚有零星上述的「認中」、交流活動，但無論參與者的積極、數目及規模等都大不如前。不過，交流活動仍然被視為認識「中國」的有效工具，而以新的形式保留下來。誠然，以前所有交流活動都是由香港新華社安排的（官方）；但自從八十年代中起，部份大專學生會及國是學會開始利用中國大陸的門戶開放政策，及其限制港人前往旅遊的放寬，自行前往大陸「探路」，安排「非官方」的交流活動，或改從自助旅遊去認識「中國」。

新一代的交流活動（一九九零年至今）

到了九十年代初時，不但上述七一年那種交流活動因為失去發展的原動力而幾近完全息微，又基於有關「中」、「共」等概念的改變和八十年代後本地華人與外國人士的拉力日趨緩和，「中國大陸」在八四年中英聯合聲明簽署、大亞灣核電廠事件後，反而取代了外國人士的「他者」地位，成為一個與「香港人」利益抗衡的「新他者」。而年青人對「中國」、「大陸」的意識亦因而變得更加矛盾、複雜了。

然而，有趣的是，香港社會卻又在這種氣氛下興起了新一輪的交流活動熱潮。一方面，民間自行組織或合辦交流活動的機構日多，其中以香港新一代文化協會、香港青年協會、香港大專學生協會及香港大專學生聯會這四個機構最具範模。此外，香港政府亦以加深新生代對「祖國」歷史和現況的瞭解、幫助他們確認自己的「國民」身份為公民教育的主要目標，至使這類交流活動慢慢擴展至中、小學去。九七年前後，香港青年事務委員會、香港優質教育基金與香港宋慶齡基金等幾個大型基金會，更動輒動員數以千計的香港學生前往中國大陸交流，氣勢一時無兩。筆者一位在上述那些機構任職的報導人稱，八八年時，全港到中國大陸觀光交流的正式團隊數目才不過八個，九五年微升至二十二個；然而，單是九九年七至八月暑假期間，全港即有三百多個「回國」交流活動同時舉行，極富社會文化意義。

細究這次交流活動熱潮，我們不難發現，九十年代的交流活動與七十年代者其實有很大的分別。首先是組織者方面。七、八十年代時，交流活動基本上均由學生組織及少部份社會上的青年組織自發舉辦；然而，在新一代的交流活動當中，似

乎明顯出現了「國家」的參與。首先，香港教育署一改作風，在九六年開始大力支持香港學生到中國大陸交流；香港政府又透過青年事務委員會轄下的《源來自中國—舉辦國內考察團社會參與資助計劃》、《青年內地考察團—資助計劃》及優質教育基金直接資助前往中國的大小交流活動。而《愛我中華·建樹香江》等大型交流活動，更由不少中國及香港政府官員出任顧問、委員等職務，很具政治味道。此外，有論者指出，由於八十年代尾、九十年代時，學界本身的討論議題開始有明顯的改變，並對中共政權及「親中人士」反感，中共遂改變其在香港青年人當中的統戰策略，把資源分散投資到學界以外的青年組織身上。其中於九三年成立的青年大專學生協會（學協），即被不少人評為「親中」；而學協成立後，類似的跨院校「親中」青年學生團體如雨後春筍，大有直接與本來學界分庭抗禮之勢，甚至有人冠以「新國粹」派的稱號（蔡子強等1998）。誠然，究竟箇中是否涉及中共統戰策略的變動實在難以證明，但九十年代以後，本來由學界壟斷的局面，被社會上其他青年組織及基金會，甚至是香港政府、「國家」所打破一點，倒是個不爭的事實。而新一代的交流活動，亦由下而上推動變得由上而下發展，成了政府建構「正確」國家意識及不少政界、商界人士爭取新政治及經濟資本的有力工具。此外，新生代在參與這些活動之前，大部份都沒有到過廣東省、或其「鄉下」以外的中國地區，甚至從未踏足中

國，故他們對中國大陸的印象往往會局限在某些特定的論述框框之內。而更重要的是，其一方面因為年齡的緣故，對八十年代中英聯合聲明、大亞灣核電廠事件、中英政治爭拗、以至於六四事件的體會已經有了一段距離；而另一方面，他們又同時受到「香港人」文化身份認同與社會上一再強調「應有」的國家意識這兩種論述的衝擊。那麼，究竟這班新生代又是如何一個新的社會文情境框框中理解「國家」呢？交流活動所發揮的作用又為何？

筆者整理參與觀察及訪問所得時發現，今日香港年青人心目中的「國家」與組織者在交流活動中所論述的「國家」其實是有了一定程度的差異的。一方面，雖然彼此的文化民族主義明顯比較強烈，認同自己為「中華民族」的一員，而對諸如中國大陸水災、地震等災害非常關心。但另一方面，他們卻又把「中華民族」、「中國」當中絕大部份的政治元素抽掉出來，再歸納到一個帶有負面含意的「大陸」類別之下，從而抽空地去想像一個個「歷史中國」、「文化中國」和「地理中國」迷思的存在。於是，他們心目中所「回歸」者，其實是一個想像中的「中國」，而不是今日整個歷史、文化、政治或地理上的中國大陸。但正因身份認同問題的基本彈性，「中國」及「大陸」這兩個意義迥異的概念遂能夠在不同種類、不同層次的意識及身份認同中互相消長，構成一個彼此可以共存的緩衝機制，而沒有出現過往很多「香港人」研究中



二分、非此即彼的身份認同危機。

因此，筆者認為，在活動組織者利用交流活動來建構人們的國家意識時，參與者本身其實亦正在透過參加交流活動來跨過廣東省一帶、跟他們彼鄰、負面的「地理大陸」、「血緣大陸」和「文化大陸」，而進到自己既有想像中的、美好「中國」去，選擇性地去認識、感悟一個經過去脈絡化的「中國」，印證其心目中既有的「中國」。是故新一代的交流活動，同樣又是新一代尋找「真實的中國」的一道「朝聖」之門。

然則，究竟在回歸「中國」三年後的今天，香港年青人又是如何理解自己的文化身份？如何理解其眼前的「國家」呢？其與九七回歸之際又是否有所不同呢？——這是當前有待進一步探討的課題。

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Young People's National Consciousness: The Case of Cultural Exchange Activities Between Hong Kong and Mainland China

Noel Lo

Abstract

This research investigated the national consciousness of young people in Hong Kong by studying exchange activities between Hong Kong and Beijing organized by the Hong Kong New Generation Cultural Association. The association is an arena in which Hong Kong young people and their counterparts in Mainland China have direct interaction. The study also examines how Hong Kong people identify themselves. Furthermore, the study looks at how the organizing youth associations present the Chinese nation and the state in their discourses. The study shed light on how young participants from the Hong Kong side perceive, interpret, react to and manipulate their touring experience in Mainland China, and vice-versa. By studying the national consciousness of the Hong Kong people from both the organizers and participants, the study contributes to a much deeper understanding of the Hong Kong people's national consciousness as well as the relationship between tourism and anthropological research.

MAKING LOVE AND MONEY: Clubs Around U.S. Army Camps in South Korea¹

Cheng Sea-ling

Since 1996, Filipino women "entertainers" have been trafficked into kijich'on (US military camp towns in Korea) to work in GI clubs. This phenomenon brings together the issues of human trafficking, military prostitution, global inequalities and globalization processes taking place on a macro-level, with issues of nationalism, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity on a more micro-level. The Filipino women can easily be identified as the subjects of multiple oppression: US neo-colonialism, patriarchal commodification of sexuality by global capital, as well as ethnic discrimination. Yet within such structural inequalities, how do individuals interact? Is there any negotiation or resistance taking place? If there is, what form does it take? Men who pay for sex may actually look for more than just "the sex act" or patriarchal domination of women; and women in the sex industry can certainly be more than either "whores" (defective personally and morally) or "victims of male sex rights" (passive and powerless). A dichotomous understanding of gender relations in prostitution fails to explain the reality one observes in kijich'ons where Filipinas can be seen merrily strolling in groups or with their GI boyfriends. Following Weeks (1989:12) I suggest that sex work should be understood in a historical context, in terms of the cultural meanings assigned to it, and in terms of the internal, subjective meanings of the individuals. We need to

understand the political-economy of these Filipinas and GIs in their Korean dislocation, their work environment as well as their interactions in order to understand what these women's apparently gleeful cruising with their "oppressors" may mean.

The following is an ethnographic study of Filipino women's interactions with their GI customers. Through these stories, I wish to contest the commonly accepted idea of women as powerless victims and men as patriarchs and detached consumers of women's sexual services in the sex industry. Filipino women and GIs are dislocated individuals in the political economy of transnational movements that are themselves gendered. Mobilized by geo-politics and global capital, they collide over money, sex, and love. Temporary dislocation brings about insecurity and instability but also freedom from home conventions. Their ideas about gender, sexuality and ethnicity shape subsequent interactions between dislocated individuals in these sites of desire. The ambiguity and complexity of power play, contests and alliances that surface unsettle the dichotomous understanding of gender relations in prostitution.

Background to Filipino women entertainers' entry into US military camp towns

US forces have played a major role across the Asia-Pacific since the end of WW2, and in Korea especially. In spite of significant withdrawal of troops in the 1970's as a result of the Nixon doctrine, South Korea still has around 37,000 US military personnel stationed in 120 bases. The military presence has created a demand for female company and sexual services around the bases. In the post-war era, out of poverty and lack of opportunities, Korean women have risked social ostracization to work in these GI clubs. Derogatory terms such as "Western Princess" and "Western sluts" are

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commonly used to refer to these women. Confucian ethics that emphasize female purity and a conception of a pure Korean race coupled with patriarchal nationalist identification of the female body with national boundary, combine to see these women's sexual liaisons with foreigners, especially GIs who have been identified as imperial oppressors in the dominant anti-American discourses, as a betrayal of the Korean race and nation. Economic disparity as well as economic protectionism until the late 1980's however made these women's access to US dollars and import goods valuable. More ironically, many Korean families arrive at the States through "GI brides" and the subsequent piggyback emigration that these women made possible.

However, in the 1990's there was a shortage of Korean women to work in *kijich'ons*. With Korea's rapid ascent in the world economy since Park Chung-hee's aggressive economic reforms in the 1960's, and the liberalization and democratization policies in the late 1980's, Koreans have enjoyed much more opportunities for employment, consumption and overseas travel. The strong

Korean currency and the greater spending power of Koreans generated a strong consumerist economy. The entertainment and sex industry has also expanded and diversified. Serving a Korean clientele has proved financially and socially more advantageous than serving GIs with relatively limited resources.

By this time, capital originating from Korea has found its way into many developing countries of the world, not only investing but also bringing in cheap labour to take up jobs abandoned by upwardly mobile Korean nationals. Filipino women have been trafficked by the joint efforts of Korean and Filipino recruiters to fill up the vacancies left by Korean women, and they are attractive to employers because they are cheap labour and speak English, and they are easy to

control as migrant labour. Overseas employment has been a development strategy in the Philippines since the Marcos government. Poverty and unemployment has ensured a continuous outflow of labourers who are responsible for remittances that have become an important part of the economy. The first significant influx of Filipinos came to work in Korean factories in the late 1980's after the signing of the ROP-Korea Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement and the Korean Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement. In the 1990's, with the directive for globalization under President Kim Young-sam, the Agreement for the Promotion of Investment was signed in 1995, boosting overseas investment and exchanges of technology and labour. These measures on the part of the Filipino and Korean governments opened the official door for Filipinos' entry into Korea in search of better lives for themselves and their families. In 1995, the number of Filipinos in Korea were estimated at 19,772, of which 8,000 were illegal². Korea's lax immigration requirements compared with those of Japan have further facilitated the entry of



Figure 1: Epitome of the Exotic - Wall paintings outside a GI club.

Filipino entertainers. Korea is now the 7th most important destination of legally deployed overseas Filipino workers and 5th for

² Estimation of Filipino citizens in Korea by the Filipino overseas employment administration (Go 1995): Total: 19,772 (I. Illegal 8,000; II. Trainees brought in under the 1995 Agreement (Korean Federation of Small Businesses) 5,272; III. Trainees brought in under the 1986 Agreement 4,500; IV. Musicians, singers and seafarers 2,000.)

entertainers. Entertainers visas issued to foreigners have rapidly increased, in particular for women, between 1994-98. And 85% of all Asians with entertainer visas are from the Philippines. The Korea Special Tourism Association, registered with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is responsible for bringing most of the Filipino entertainers into the GI clubs. The Association is formed by all owners of GI clubs, and the president of the association is a local councillor. A current estimate of Filipino entertainers in Korea is 600.

The entry of Filipino women marks the changing power relationship between the US, Korea and the Philippines. While US military domination continues in the Asia-Pacific, it is no longer paralleled by their economic might. Korea's economic advancement has on one hand emancipated many Korean women from following their predecessors in serving the US military forces, and on the other enabled the bringing in of women from the "Third World" to fill up the vacancies.

Trafficked Women

Most of the Filipinas are in their early 20's. Commonly they are from Manila, Angeles City (previously where the US Clark Airforce base was situated) and Laguna. Only a few of them have worked in a club before coming to Korea. Some have had no working experience, while those with working experience have either worked in factories or in sales. Promised a handsome salary and a waitress' or dancer's job, some of them, however, are made to strip and dance almost as soon as they arrive. Their passports are held by the club owners, and at least part of their salaries are not paid until they leave Korea to prevent them from running away. Working hours sometimes last for 18 hours. Some women do not have a single day off for the year that they work in Korea. Some clubs have drink quotas that the women have to fulfill or they may be penalized. They get only 2 USD from every 10 USD drink a customer buys them. They are sometimes compelled to provide sexual services to men and get between 20-40% of the proceeds. VIP rooms are found in some clubs and customers may bring a woman into the room (with her

consent) for around half an hour if he buys the woman four drinks. A customer may pay a "bar fine" to take a woman out of the club. Varying with the time of the month (more expensive on pay days) and the length of time desired, "bar fines" range from 100 USD to 300 USD. The women usually get 20% of the money. Whatever happens in the VIP room or on a "bar fine" outing is subject to negotiation between the woman and the customer.

GI Joe or Cheap Charlie?

Most of the GIs being sent to Korea are young men in their late teens and early 20s. Usually with a lower class background, many are ethnic minorities; they join the army in search of change and improvement of life. An assignment to Korea is considered a "hardship tour", where they are removed from their families for a whole year. The short duration of the assignment seems to justify the absence of any program that may help with the GIs' integration into the host country - there is no language skills training, nor any briefing session on the social and cultural makeup of the country.

Their identity as soldiers of the United States Forces stationed in Korea on what they believe is a mission to protect the country, is important to their sense of masculinity as an American male - the "GI Joe" identity. Some of the young men I met have had little interaction with women before entering the army. Stepping out of the base brings them, however, almost immediately into the myriad of clubs with scantily clad women eager to shower their attention on any man for the price of a drink. Yet the euphoric experience of being swarmed by women is constantly at risk of being thwarted since the popularity of a man usually declines with the hard cash that he has, especially with soldiers holding the rank of private. Those who refuse or who cannot not buy the women drinks are often teased with the name "Cheap Charlie". This is a challenge to masculine pride that many young GIs find hard to swallow, and many Filipinas are familiar with the power of such tactic to get more out of the men. Many young privates take several months and a substantial part of their salary to realize that "she is *just* a drinkie girl" and "I am *just* like any other customer". Love

relationships are volatile, and while monogamous relationships are the ideal they are rarely the rule. Promises of marriage abound though only a few are realized.

In spite of possible conflicts, the GIs and the Filipinas actually form a kind of alliance against the Koreans – they communicate better with each other in English, the Filipinas have good knowledge of American culture given the US presence in the Philippines for almost a century, and GIs not only sympathize with the Filipinas as being away from home but usually see the women as being unjustly treated by their Korean employers. Identifying themselves as protectors of the weak and as freedom fighters standing on the side of the Filipinas against abusive Korean club owners, the GIs are often an important source of social and financial support to the women. GIs sometimes directly challenge club owners' treatment of the Filipinas, help Filipinas runaway, sometimes even bringing them to the Filipino embassy to help them get home. Conflicts between GIs and club owners are not uncommon.

“Virgins in Korea”

Mary is a 24 year-old single parent who has left her three children in the care of her mother in the Philippines. Compelled by ideas of loyal daughter and faithful mother, she has left home to make money not only for her children but also her natal family. I have known her since May 1999, and we grew very close in the following eleven months. When she returned home in May 2000, I met her and her family at the Centennial Airport in Manila and spent the next 8 days with her. When I first met her, I learnt about her “boyfriends” and asked if she wanted to marry a GI. She didn't know, she said. But any uncertainty that existed then has completely been dispelled after spending a full year in Korea. In the process, she has come to realize the many benefits for herself and her family if she did marry an American GI. Thus, she did not fail to leave Korea without a fiancé who was to visit her family in the Philippines three weeks later.

At one of my first meetings with her, Mary told me about the three men she was seeing, one was her “real boyfriend”, the other two were “just boyfriends”. (Having boyfriends is part of their job, I have been told by almost

every Filipina, but most are “just boyfriends”, though there is always “the one”, however quickly that might change.) She suddenly laughed and said, “But I am still a virgin in Korea.” Seized by my fascination with the sudden utterance of the word “virgin”, I missed the subtle play Mary was engaged in by qualifying such a state with the geographical condition of “in Korea”. The fact that she was a mother completely escaped me. I asked naively, “Really?”

“In Korea, yes! I haven't slept with anyone yet!”

Seeing my bewilderment, she added, “I have a kid³, remember?”

I was to learn that such play on the feminine ideal of virginity and purity, commanding particular reverence to people with a strongly Catholic upbringing, was a common practice among the Filipinas. There are basically two different but related ways in which they “play” with this ideal. One is as illustrated above, juxtaposing the ideal with behaviour which may amount to a blatant contradiction to attain a comic, ironical, even subversive effect, while asserting her subscription to it. The moral ideal is subverted by not only the contradictory behaviour, but also the appropriation of the ideal to describe such contradictory behaviour through the effect of qualification (e.g. “in Korea”). The other way is to identify oneself as committed to such ideal, and thus to demand respect and/or pity, thus protecting or advancing their interests. In both cases, the women showed not only a strong awareness of the strength of these dominant ideals, but also an emotional, even if not literal, adherence to it. The strength of the purity ideal also hinges on its association with ideals about romantic love, and related ideas of loyalty and monogamy. Unlike what is commonly perceived of the sex industry, these ideas feature significantly in these women's interactions with their customer/boyfriends.

Mary said her one and only true love

³ She told me she had only one child when we first met. Six months later, she told me that she had lied, and that she actually had three children. She did not want other people to know that she had so many children, worried that it might put some customers off. I interpreted the revelation as a sign of her growing trust towards me.

was a 19-year-old black GI called Jamie, and he was the only one with whom she has had sex, even though she was going out with another GI and had a fiancé who had returned to the States. Mary explained, “I just want to have sex with one man, I want to be faithful.” Copulation sets the boundary for faithfulness for most of these “entertainers”. Being physically intimate with other men, calling them “boyfriends”, flirting with them, even going into a VIP room with a man for 20 minutes are behaviour inside that boundary.

These acts are considered necessary for their job, and “boyfriends” are supposed to “understand” and tolerate this. The logic sometimes goes, “If you give me more money, I need not be doing this.” Such redefinition of codes of intimacy often becomes a bone of contention between the women and their boyfriends, real or otherwise, contributing partly to the volatility of relationships in military camp towns.

Despite her love for Jamie Mary finally agreed to marry a guy called Larry because of family opposition to having a black man in the family, coupled with Jamie being expelled from the army for misconduct and now being jobless in the States. I learnt about their decision to marry one afternoon when I met her outside the US Embassy. She had come with Larry so that he could get the necessary papers for marriage. I was surprised at the news because Mary never talked much about Larry, except that there was “a white guy” who has been very nice to her even when Jamie left her.

“Do you love him?” I asked.

“No” (She turned and sniggered, as if I just said something silly).

“Ha? So why are you marrying him?” I laughed.

“Because he gives me what I want.”

“And that is...?”

“Money.”

“And...?”

“(The opportunity) to go to the States.”

Mary has repeated that she could not have sex with someone she does not love. Through another skilful play on ideas about female purity, romantic love, and the ideal of sex



Figure 2: ‘America Town’, Kunsan, North Cholla Province - A walled compound of clubs for GIs and, increasingly, Korean men.

within marriage, Mary manages to refuse sex to Larry while she continues to lay claims to his financial support as a fiancé.

“He even asked if I have slept with Jamie. And I said yes. I said yes, *I gave myself to him.*”

“And he doesn't mind?”

“Maybe he doesn't, but he accepts (it).”

“Why did you tell him?”

“Because he asked.”

“You could have said no.”

“*I just wanted to tell the truth. I said I did.*”

“And he accepts that you are not sleeping with him now?”

“Hmm, yes. Because I said, you know, OK, no more, *I can't sleep with you before we are married after what (has) happened between me and Jamie, I don't want to do it again... Even though you have spent a lot of money on me, I couldn't sleep with you.*”

“Has he slept with another Filipina?”

“No.”

“So he has never had sex after coming to Korea?”

“He told me no. *I think he is a virgin again.*”

“A virgin?”

“Yes, again.”

“A virgin in Korea?”

“Yes.” (emphasis added)

I had to marvel at her flexibility in kneading cultural and gender ideals to fit with her scheme of things. By portraying herself as a selfless romantic who “gave” herself to a man

she truly loved but who has abandoned her, she assumed the image of a woman who has been disillusioned by men's love. This "trauma of love" is used to justify her refusal of sex to Larry. It also puts Larry in the position of a suspect who might inflict potential trauma, and that may be interpreted as a call for further demonstration of his "true love". Reminding Larry that the financial assistance that she needs from him is not sufficient reasons for him to demand sex from her, Mary reiterates that sex is not for sale in spite of her job. It is like saying that she has learnt her lesson with men, and now, sex is, in Mary's delaying tactic with Larry, only sanctioned by the marital contract. Like many other Filipinas, Mary was making use of the image of the Philippines as a religious and conservative country to back up her claims that she would not have sex again before getting married. Portraying herself as the forsaken heroine of a tragic love tale, she has succeeded in representing herself as a victim of both economic and emotional woes but was not ready to compromise her moral values. And how much appeal does that have on the male ego of a young American GI to further pledge his love and support?

Faithfulness, honesty, understanding, sacrifice etc. are not only ideals of romantic love that these women merely "play" with to advance their interests. The frequency with which these ideas come up in their descriptions of themselves and others (that Larry was "a virgin again" in Korea), as well as in their exchanges with men, shows that these are important tenets in their social world. They also struggle constantly to adapt their actions to these ideals. At times the women boldly assert their success, at other times there is an obvious sense of guilt and loss.

Mary explains time and again to me that her plan to marry Larry is tied to her plans for her family. She wants to

marry a guy who can help bring good fortune to her family. She will get her three children and 17-year-old brother to the States once she is married. Mary wants her brother to join the US army — to be a GI — so that they can both help with the family in the Philippines. She has largely given up the dream of marrying Jamie because of her family's opposition and the more secure future that Larry offers. She is aware that she knows little about Larry, but is confident that marrying an American man will open doors to the land of riches for her family. She says she will divorce Larry after she has got her US citizenship. Meanwhile, Mary continues to indulge in her fruitless romance with Jamie in secret.

During a telephone conversation following our meeting in front of the US Embassy, I asked if Larry has given her an engagement ring. Mary said indifferently, "Yes, he said he would. But I don't care. I can live without a ring." I was thinking of how Mary has put family interest and preference before her own when she suddenly said, "I am sorry I am just using my brain now, Sealing... I mean I am sorry for my attitude now, that I am only using my brain. (Oh, using your brain, and not your heart?) Not my heart. Yes. Not my heart. (What would you do if you were using your heart?) [she giggled for a while.] Maybe I am gonna kill myself? Ha ha ha. (Why?) Cos it's hard for me [she sounded like she was sobbing, but also laughed out aloud.]"



Figure 3: Tips for GIs.

It is typical of Mary to laugh while voicing her woes. Accounts of her problems are always checked by uneasy chuckles every now and then. The laughter may have served as a kind of safety valve for her sense of helplessness, but also her sense of guilt. She would ask me, after telling me all her "plans", if I thought that she was "bad". She is aware that her scheming is "bad" or morally regrettable, yet it has all been dictated by the "brain". The "brain" has come to stand for her family responsibilities, hard work and calculations; the "heart" for her desires for love, romance, and freedom. A sobbing laugh or laughing sob becomes more comprehensible in the context of such tensions.

"Love Looks Past All Things"

I met Annabel after she and six other Filipinas ran away from a club and filed their case with the police upon a priest's advice. Annabel is a 26 year-old single parent with an 8 year-old son. She never married the father of her son because of family opposition. She has wanted to work as a GRO (In the Philippines, Guest Relations Officer is the title of a job for women who sit, drink and chat with male customers in karaoke and clubs. No sexual relations are required.) in Korea. She has not been given a single day off because of her poor sales of drinks, and the club owner was always accusing her of not working hard enough. Annabel and the other Filipinas ran away after two months when the club owner threatened to make them do strip shows.

On the day we went to ask for their passports from the police, we waited at a café because the inspector in charge was not in his office. The women who had mobile phones were talking non-stop to their GI "boyfriends", finishing almost every call with, "I love you, sweetheart" while the others giggled on the side. Annabel did not have a mobile phone; she was the only one out of the seven who didn't try to make a call, and was sitting very quietly, as if in deep thought and worry. I tried to chat to her.

"I want to go back to the camp town. We have many customers, you see. They said that they would give me money if I quit my job and go back to the Philippines. They said

they would send me money. I need to go back and ask them, to confirm (their promise), you know. I need the money..."

I was given the impression that she did not have a "real" boyfriend and wanted to meet her customers to get some guarantee for financial help upon her return to the Philippines.

The police refused to release their passports on the grounds that they should not leave the country before investigations were completed. The club owners⁴ and I decided that we should continue to seek help from the Filipino priest and the Philippine Embassy. Meanwhile, we agreed that the Filipinas should stay in a hotel rather than return to the military camp towns in order to avoid possible animosity from other club owners. However, I learnt the next day that the five women who had GI boyfriends went back to the towns and stayed with them. Annabel and another woman whose boyfriend was somehow not available, were supposed to stay together in the hotel the club owner arranged for (at the women's expenses) until they could leave Korea.

Annabel was radiant when I met her and the other women the following week. In spite of the women's wish to stay in Korea and find another job, we (I and the club owners) managed to convince them that possible danger in Korea made return to the Philippines a better choice. Annabel was still worried that she had no money to bring home, but she looked very happy. I asked where she had stayed for the past week as I could not find her at the hotel where they had checked in. She extended a contented smile and said, "With my boyfriend, he got a pass for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so we stayed at a hotel, and he paid for the room too."

Annabel told me excitedly about her

⁴ The women's reports to the police led to the detention of the president of the club owners' association (The Korea Special Tourism Association). This created a state of emergency among the clubs which had to prepare for raids by the police and immigration officers. The seven Filipinas and their clubowners were blamed for the trouble and their loss. On one occasion, a club owner threatened physical harm to one of the Filipinas. Though the clubowners of these women had been very exploitative, they had no wish to see these women being harmed, and they believed that sending the women away would hasten the end of the incident. I believed that leaving the country would ensure the safety of the women.

boyfriend, a 20 year old American from Missouri, who she met two months ago at the club. Annabel was emphatic about the fact that he “respected” her (because he would not take her into a VIP room) and that he was a virgin who has resisted her attempts at seduction. The first time they dated, she tried to seduce him in his room, but he refused and said, “This is not the right time. I really like you but we should be doing this after we get married.” I asked why she tried to seduce him. “Because I like him,” she replied. She then told me that they would be getting married. Or so it seemed.

In one week, away from the club, Annabel found herself a man who was willing not only to pay for their stay in a hotel, bought a remote-control model car for her son, but further decided to marry her. The compression of time in military camp town relationships thus reached a new height, at least to my knowledge. The sullen face a week ago still worrying whether she would have someone sending her money in the Philippines, was replaced by a beaming smile. A future had been secured. A dream had come true.

I met the women again at the airport on the day they left Korea. Annabel showed me a picture of her and her boyfriend, and her excitement about the impending marriage unabated. Interestingly, in the middle of her elated account of her marriage plans, Annabel said, pouting, “I don’t like Americans, I like Filipino men, but I don’t know...(why I ended up with him).”

I met Annabel’s fiancé 3 days after she left Korea. Brought up in a very devout Christian family where both parents and one of his sisters are in the military, Philip enlisted even before he finished high school at the age of seventeen. He believed that his life is in the hands of God and whatever happens is the will of God, this includes the fact that he had never seen the ocean before boarding a flight to Korea. He has spent all his life in a town in Missouri before being sent to Camp Casey in Tongduchon, Korea. For the first six and a half months in Korea, he stayed on base most of the time and would not join his colleagues in going “downrange”⁵. He found the clubs morally unacceptable and did not understand why they were there. “I mean it’s not only here (in Korea), it’s everywhere with the military. I

don’t know why it’s like that, if I can do something to change it I would certainly get rid of it.”

He first visited a strip bar when he was still in basic training. Trusting that he would not get drunk, his sergeant asked him to drive a group to the bar. He saw a strip show for the first time. He cried, he said.

(You cried?) “Yes, I cried. It’s just so sad to see the women doing that. I just couldn’t believe that it was happening.”

However, on his 20th birthday, his sergeants took him out bar-hopping. He met Annabel at midnight, after hours of drinking, “then there was just this (clicked his finger, signifying a spark), and love at first sight. It just happened. I told her, ‘I want to bring you back to the States.’” For the seven weeks that followed, before Annabel ran away from the club, Philip said he had been seeing her at the club almost every night. He has seen her entering into a VIP room with another GI for 20 minutes and felt very difficult. But Annabel cried while assuring him that “nothing happened”. He has paid for her bar fine twice to take her out — once to walk around the vicinity of the clubs after which she returned to the club before midnight, once to watch a video in his room (where Annabel tried to seduce him). When he was just wondering if he had been spending too much money on Annabel, she ran away. They only met again two weeks later (and most probably after I met her outside the police station). He was personally against pre-marital sex but only went to bed with Annabel after he decided to marry her. He was glad that he met Annabel just two weeks after she arrived in Korea, “So she couldn’t have done much.”

I asked if his parents knew that Annabel worked in a club. He was reluctant to let them know at first, especially since his father has been in the Air Force in Korea and “has an idea what the place is like”. “But now they know... But it doesn’t matter. Love looks past all things. It’s over. She did it but she is not doing it now. Lucky that I met her just six days after she started working there. And for what I know, she didn’t know exactly that she would

⁵ A term used by GIs in Tongduchon to refer to the street where all the clubs and bars are. The phallic image of a shooting rocket or missile is obvious.

be doing this before she came...But I don’t know what I would tell my kids when they ask how we met... “I met your mother while she was working in a club...” ha ha ha (laughed embarrassingly, suggesting such an answer is impossible). I mean, I asked where my parents met, they met at the Air Force.”

Peer pressure was also against his decision to marry. One friend said the “because this is the first time I have sex, I should...see more, like what they say, taste more flavours. But no, I don’t think so. I said, ‘No, to me it’s [sex] a one person thing.’ [Two other friends] said no, slow down, because we have just met

the guys in the army are good. I am not saying that all of them are bad but most of them...So everybody is out there for sex, yes, sex again, as if sex is all there is to life.” He yearned to be different and morally superior to others in spite of his humble background. I had the feeling that he would try hard to keep up his promise to Annabel, not because of an undying love for her, but because of his confidence in himself as being special.

His will did waver, at least temporarily. I failed to confirm whether Philip actually went to the Philippines the following month (October). Annabel got suspicious when I made an appointment with Philip to have dinner one Friday evening. I just wanted to talk to him before he left for the Philippines. I waited for 90 minutes but he never showed up. Annabel sent me an email of accusation and warning the next day, highlighting that she was two-month pregnant with

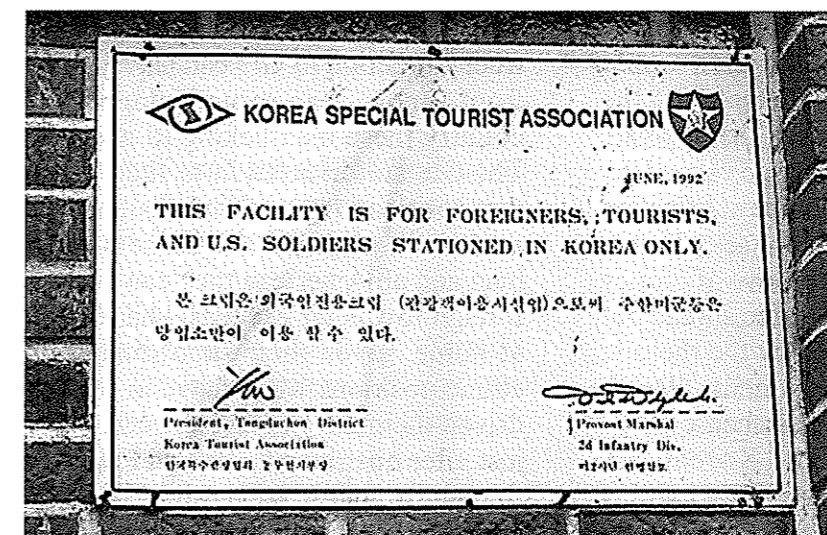


Figure 4: Tourist warning.

Philip’s child. I replied and explained that it was nothing like what she thought and I would not contact Philip again for the peace of her mind. She wrote a short reply thanking me and said she was waiting for him to arrive. However, an email from Annabel arrived in December saying that she needed to talk about her pains. Alarmed, I gave her a call and found out that he did not go to the Philippines on grounds that he had to join some training for his promotion. Then he told Annabel that he was confused. He seemed to have met another woman in one of the clubs. His friends were asking him to think about how different a married life would be. Annabel was desperate and lost, she was four-month pregnant, things for the wedding were all ready. Her family started to blame her. I could comfort her little more than telling her to be strong and have faith. In early January, her email arrived telling me that she was overjoyed to hear from Philip, who confirmed his love for her and was to go to the

for two months, it’s too short a time to decide about getting married. But I don’t care what they say.”

He promised to visit and marry Annabel in the Philippines in two months. “But I don’t know why Annabel doesn’t trust me. Well, I can see why. Most of the guys, a lot of them, are just out there for sex. They say everything, they say they will marry the girls and then once they got what they want, boom! They are gone. I can see why she is worried that I won’t be going to the Philippines. She keeps asking me if I am really going.”

Not only could he see why Annabel was worried, I thought, he could also see how he could get out of the situation unscathed, like so many other GIs. However, I got the impression that Philip was a young man with quiet ambition. Living in a moral world where the world is simply divided into the “good” and the “bad”, he was eager to distinguish himself from the crowd: “I guess no more than 9% of

Philip’s child. I replied and explained that it was nothing like what she thought and I would not contact Philip again for the peace of her mind. She wrote a short reply thanking me and said she was waiting for him to arrive. However, an email from Annabel arrived in December saying that she needed to talk about her pains. Alarmed, I gave her a call and found out that he did not go to the Philippines on grounds that he had to join some training for his promotion. Then he told Annabel that he was confused. He seemed to have met another woman in one of the clubs. His friends were asking him to think about how different a married life would be. Annabel was desperate and lost, she was four-month pregnant, things for the wedding were all ready. Her family started to blame her. I could comfort her little more than telling her to be strong and have faith. In early January, her email arrived telling me that she was overjoyed to hear from Philip, who confirmed his love for her and was to go to the

Philippines in February for the wedding. This was the last time I heard from Annabel. I have lost touch with her since then. "No news is good news," I keep telling myself. Though I am still not sure what is "good" for Annabel, and for Philip.

Conclusion

To most observers, these Filipinas are easily categorized as "prostitutes", or to the more politically attuned, "victims of military prostitution and global capitalism". The Filipino women I have talked to, however, would never claim that they are "prostitutes" or that they sell sex. Few of the men who pay to be "entertained" by these Filipinas would call them prostitutes. In fact, many of the women and men try to show just the opposite — that their interactions are governed by notions of "love" rather than money. Affection is always asserted to be a basis for sex. Rather than "paying for a trick", the flow of money and the occurrence of sex are often spread out over time and space, mediated by the rhetoric of love, sacrifice, and commitment. "Drink money" and "bar fines" are paid because of the job and are demanded by the Korean bar owners. Money given to a woman on payday is for her family, her sick mother, or her children doled out with benevolence that befits a man/boyfriend/fiance. Given the image of rampant prostitution around US military bases, it is an everyday struggle for both Filipinas and GIs to redefine themselves as not being involved in "prostitution".

Many Filipino women promised

themselves that they would not get emotionally involved in Korea — they had come to make money and as such should use their brains and not their hearts. Yet almost all of them leave Korea with tales of forsaken love. Most GIs have heard about the cheap sex available in Korea before they arrive, but many of them will spend months of time and salary looking for "love" in the clubs. For the Filipinas, poverty and the lack of opportunities at home have made working overseas in and of itself a kind of privilege. While Korean women have turned away from *kijich'ons* and GIs, Filipino women continue to entertain visions of the United States as a land of opportunities and riches where personal and familial dreams may come true. Attraction to GIs can hardly be divorced from a more deep-rooted admiration for the country these men belong to and symbolise. The GIs are, in relation to the Filipinas, in a rare position to not only take but also give. The amount of attention and sense of power as a man and an American they can enjoy in these foreign towns far exceeds what can be found at home, given their subordinate class and ethnic positions which have in the first place driven them into joining the army. "They are just after one thing," GIs and Filipino women frequently accuse each other, i.e. money and sex respectively. Yet human desires are rarely as simple and straightforward as that. Through their common desires for recognition, affection, and intimacy, Filipinas and GIs seek to negotiate each of their own aspirations and longing with and through each other.

Geopolitics and global capital have brought together these dislocated men and

women to collide over money, sex, and love. Looking at the interactions between Filipinas, GIs, and Koreans, a diversity of meanings other than "prostitution/commercial sex" arises around the transactions that take place in and outside the clubs. Contests over the control of sexuality and the meaning of prostitution imbricate attempts at self-definition along gender, class and ethnic lines. Issues of power and control in prostitution will have to be theorized taking into account such differences and complexity. What these trafficked Filipinas are engaged in certainly seem more than just a submission to the exercise of "male sex-rights" (Pateman 1998).

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Figure 5: Violating the Victim Paradigm - Trafficked women who laugh.

性、愛與金錢：駐韓美軍『基地村』的性別政治

鄭詩靈

以駐韓美軍(37,000人)為對象的俱樂部事業於1996年開始從發展中國家引入所需的外籍女性營業員。這批女性大部份來自菲律賓，以人身買賣的手法被帶到這此「基地村」俱樂部。於一般對性商業的研究中，女性性工作者普遍被介定為「受害者」，男性顧客則是父權社會培育出來的「壓迫者」。此文以菲律賓女性營業員的經歷及她們與美軍顧客的關係為焦點，指出這二分法分析的不足，再進一步提出要理解性商業內的權力關係，除了作結構分析外，更需從參與者的角度解讀。

Star-Spangled Journey: Hong Kong Movie-Induced Tourism

Chow Tsz Yan

"Hong Kong is Asia's undisputed food and shopping paradise!" Such attractive images peddled by the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) led to the blooming of tourism in the last two decades. However, facing more and more vigorous competitors from all around the world, the HKTA has recently tried to re-package Hong Kong in many innovative ways. Eco-tourism, heritage tours and Disneyland are all being promoted now. At the same time, to keep its position as one of the best tourist cities in Asia, the HKTA has started to promote the popular screen images of Hong Kong to stimulate tourism and thus the OMA movie map 「香港電影地圖」 was born at the beginning of Millennium.

Since Hong Kong is regarded as the "Hollywood of the East", promoting Hong Kong film and TV locations to overseas visitors will, no doubt, be very effective. In fact, there are many Hong Kong movie lovers from other countries. For example, Hong Kong movies have dominated the market of Taiwan mainstream cinema for many years, which is why the OMA project targets young people in Taipei¹. After seeing films or a TV drama series², the audience may love some scenes and try their best to "return" to the location site! The map features locations from recent Hong Kong film and television. It aims to encourage the fans of Hong Kong cinema to visit Hong Kong, and to follow in the footsteps of their favourite stars.

Tourism and the Tourist gaze

John Urry describes 'tourism' as a temporary journey out of our residence and work places within a relatively short period of time.³ The word "tourism" means trips for certain purposes such as business, education,

¹ See: "休閒情報" 台北市『香港旅遊協會』 www.hkta.org/taipei/

² Hong Kong TV drama series play a major role in the propagation of HK's image since they are broadcast all over South East Asia (SEA) and Hong Kong TV stars are the idols of the teenagers from those countries. However, our focus will stay on the movie-induced tourism as the effects of TV drama series are not so clear-cut.

family and of course, pleasure. Holiday is derived from the phrase "holy day". In the past, a tour was a trip to worship gods or saints. Similarly, movie lovers see the locations of their 'gods' as pilgrimage (朝聖地) sites.

The term 'tourist gaze', used by Urry, is meant to be an encompassing term that defines social practices when on holiday:

"...places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, or intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving a different sense from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records, and videos which construct and reinforce the gaze." (Urry 1990:3)

The Movie Pilgrimage Map

The Chief Executive Officer of HKTA, Wong Lee Wai has marked out from the early Bruce Lee to Jackie Chan and Chow Yun-Fat, Michelle Yeoh, Karen Mok, Gigi Leung and the famous "Hollywood" director John Woo, as the leaders of Hong Kong movies and the idols of Taiwanese teenagers, especially the rising stars such as Aaron Kwok, Nicholas Tse, Leon Lai and Sammi Cheng. That is why the HKTA published the "Hong Kong Movie map", which includes 10 films and 40 location sites. The target is the young "Hong Kong-movie-lovers".⁴ They are:

- 1) City of Glass 玻璃之城 (Directed by Cheung Yuen Ting, 1998)
- 2) He's a woman, She's a man 金枝玉葉 (Directed by Peter Chan, 1994)
- 3) Moonlight Express 星月童話 (Directed by

³ The original work *The Tourist Gaze*, (1990) Chapter 1, pages 2-3: "The journey and stay are to, and in, sites which are outside the normal places of residence and work. Periods of residence elsewhere are of a short-term and temporary nature. There is a clear intention to return 'home' within a relatively short period of time."

⁴ "休閒情報": 台北市『香港旅遊協會』 www.hkta.org/taipei/

- Lee Yan Gong, 1999)
- 4) Chungking Express 重慶森林 (Directed by Wong Kar Wai, 1994)
 - 5) Cest La Vie, Mon Cherie 新不了情 (Directed by Derek Yee, 1998)
 - 6) Love Generation 新戀愛世紀 (Directed by Wong Jing, 1998)
 - 7) The Truth about Jane and Sam 真心話 (Directed by Derek Yee, 1999)
 - 8) Gorgeous 玻璃樽 (Directed by Vincent Kuk, 1999)
 - 9) Days of Being Wild 阿飛正傳 (Directed by Wong Kar Wai, 1990)
 - 10) Ordinary Heroes 千言萬語 (Directed by Ann Hui, 1999)
 - 11) Tempting Heart 心動 (Directed by Sylvia Cheung, 1999)
 - 12) Gen X Cops 特警新人類 (Directed by Benny Chan, 1999)
 - 13) Comrades, almost a love story 甜蜜蜜 (Directed by Peter Chan, 1998)

Urban landscape of the Metropolis

From chart 1, we can easily see that the main focus of the HKTA is to build up the image of Hong Kong as a modern Metropolis. The movie map tries to introduce Hong Kong's magnificence. The skyscrapers long Victoria Harbour have long been the master-sign of Hong Kong's urban landscape and is famous all around the world. Enjoying the skyline with neon lights along Waterfront Promenade⁵ is a 'must' for the tourists at night. "World record" landmarks in Hong Kong are also major spots. Tsing Ma Bridge as the longest road and rail suspension bridge in the world, as well as the Mid-levels Escalator which is the world's largest outdoor escalator system are examples. The "cyber" and fashion outlook of Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, is but the latest representation of the 'progressive' nature



The book cover of *Hong Kong Movie Map*.

⁵ From star ferry past Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the dome-shaped Hong Kong Space Museum and the Hotels along the

Waterfront such as Kowloon Shangri-la and the Royal Garden to Hung Hom.

Chart 1

Movie name	Location	Major Selling Point
City of Glass	1) University of Hong Kong (Main Building) 2) The Peak	1) Renaissance style building 2) Lover's corner (the path from Mt. Austin to the Peak Galleria)
Gen X Cops	1) Hot Gossip & KK Cafe and Pub 2) Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	1) Night Life 2) Venue for Handover ceremony
Tempting Heart	The Land mark	Shopping (boutiques carrying label)
Days of being Wild	1) Castle Road (old Telephone booth) 2) Queen's Cafe	Nostalgia
Ordinary Heroes	Aberdeen	Lifestyle of Boat People and Sampan (the logo sign of Hong Kong)
Gorgeous	Felix, Peninsula Hotel	High class restaurant with Harbour view
He's a woman, She's a man	Cafe Deco Bar & Grill	High class restaurant with Harbour view
Moonlight Express	Stanley Oriental	High class restaurant with Sea-view
Chungking Express	1) Nathan Road 2) Hillside Escalator 3) Lan Kwai Fong	1) The Golden Mile (shopping on Nathan Road) 2) Hong Kong SoHo 3) Night Life
Cest La Vie, Mon Cherie	Temple Street	Night Market
Love Generation	Tsing Ma Bridge	Longest road and rail suspension bridge
The Truth about Jane and Sam	1) Lantau Island (Tai O), 2) Waterfront Promenade	Chalet and rural village 2) Glittering skyline
Comrades, Almost a Love Story	1) Canton Road 2) Victoria Park	1) Shopping (boutiques carrying label) 2) Chinese New Year Bazaar

of Hong Kong.

Chungking Express is a popular movie all around the world, and it successfully reflects the urban landscape of Hong Kong. In the film, the Hillside Escalator help us to re-discover the Mid-Levels. Under the camera of Christopher Doyle, Lan Kwai Fong 蘭桂坊 becomes the symbol of an international city. As a 'Food Paradise', SoHo⁶ offers a variety of cuisines (French, Nepalese, Mediterranean, Cajun, Manchurian and so on). Bars and Pubs are filled with both local and foreign customers. The California Building has symbolic meaning too. The western-style way of living (so-called yuppies) appeals to the young Asians.

Heritage Tour

In fact, the film map sells Hong Kong abroad not only with its modernized features, but also its local heritage and nostalgia. The tourists can go to the Main Building of the University of Hong Kong's with its Renaissance style, and the old Telephone booth on Castle Road to search for colonial history. They can witness the lifestyles of boat people with a Sampan ride in Aberdeen, and the old folk rural village in Lantau Island (Tai O), all of which are on the map.

The tourists can also experience local lifestyle and culture by visiting the famous night market in Temple Street. There the tourists can locate the fortune telling shot in *C'est La Vie, Mon Cherie*, Cantonese opera, street snacks (red bean cake) and the goldfish market. They can also go to the Public Square next to Temple Street where old citizens gather. HKTA even recommends the traditional food like Herb and Egg Tea of Yuan Ji in Centre Street to the tourists.

Commodification

Although the movie-induced tourism showcases the many facets of Hong Kong, the aim of the movie map is still to encourage tourist consumption! That is why you can see the selling point of the Victoria Park in the movie map is the Chinese New Year Bazaar.

⁶ SoHo means South of Hollywood Road, around Elgin, Shelley and Staunton.

But, unknown to the tourist, that is not its real role in Hong Kong: it is the lung of the polluted city area and of course the place for the 'June 4 Incident' ceremony! Also, this money orientation explains why Chung King Mansion, with all its cheap wares is not promoted, only the Nathan Road boutiques, although movies are seldom shot there!⁷

More interestingly, the HKTA has tried to link up film shots with a deluxe way of shopping on their map. Even if in a film Karen Mok is just browsing and enjoy herself window shopping, or Leon Lai is only riding his bicycle out of Canton Road, but not shopping at all. Yet, shopping on Canton Road and Landmark boutiques where one can find the labels D&G, Miu Miu, or Calvin Klein are a major part of the map's contents.

The HKTA movie locations map gives the allure of high class restaurants with Harbour views. The tourist enjoy the spectacular view of Victoria Harbour at the romantic dining spots such as the rooftop restaurant Felix of Peninsula Hotel shown in *Gorgeous*, Café Deco Bar & Grill in *He's a woman, She's a man* and Stanley Oriental in *Moonlight Express*. Queen's Café opened in 1952 is a famous local Russian café with nostalgic atmosphere. With the help of "Days Being Wild", it became a favourite location for the movie lovers too.

In addition to movie locations the HKTA promotes shops selling movie paraphernalia (poster, postcard, film books, original soundtracks and all kinds of movie products) on page one of the map. 為你鍾情 is a Russian Restaurant in Causeway Bay made famous by its owner Leslie Cheung. Posters, CDs, costumes and another personal belongings of him are showed in his shop to attract his fans. There are shops selling star's second hand clothes in Tsim Sha Tsui (Up Date Mall) and Causeway Bay. The good taste of the artists are also advertised, such as the shops, restaurants, and nightclubs that the artists frequent. Because the bosses of Star East (東方魅力綜合娛樂中心) are famous local stars, such as Alan Tam, Eric Tsang, Anita Mui, Leon Lai, Michael Wong and so on, the HKTA use it as gimmick to sell local night life.

⁷ Another major reason the HKTA do not wish to focus on Chung King Mansion is that the disorderly image of Chung King Mansion not what they want to promote about HK!

Postmodern Tourism

In the past tourists usually joined mass marketed package holidays, but there is a trend towards individually tailored holidays. Tour agencies and tourist authorities are now eager to provide alternative tour formats. For instance, tourist maps based on the location of books (eg. 哈日族旅遊規劃) in both Taiwan and Hong Kong.



A poster of *Days of Being Wild* (source:www.movieworld.com.hk)

Japanese drama series are hit nowadays in Taiwan and also Hong Kong.⁸ We can also see such travel information in local papers and magazines everyday, and now there are some

Another Case Study: BTA Movie Map

The British Tourist Association (BTA) produced its own Movie Map featuring 200 film and TV locations in January 1996. 250,000 copies were sold-out in a short period and an immediate reprint was done.⁹ Their aim is to increase the number of visitors and tourist revenue. Jo Leslie, corporate PR manager for the BTA said: "We hope that the new movie map will prove just as popular with overseas

⁸ see www.nextmedia.com.hk

⁹ see www.visitbritain.com/moviemap

¹⁰ see www.visitbritain.com/moviemap

¹¹ Full Monty a big hit at the UK box office and was a nominee for the Oscar. See www.visitbritain.com/moviemap.

¹² Shakespeare in Love was shot in Broughton Castle, Banbury, Oxfordshire, Hatfield House, The Great

visitors and increase tourist spend throughout the country."¹⁰ In fact, the scheme generated an excellent return on investment. According to the BTA, between 1998 and 2000, there was a projected growth of 2 million in tourism numbers. Here is some other figures from the London Tourist Board Overseas Visitors Survey:

- 1) 54% of recipients said they would not have visited the movie sites if it had not been for the map.
- 2) 87% of recipients recalled receiving the Movie Map in 1996.
- 3) 53% of those who recalled receiving the movie map visited one or more of the sites.
- 4) 37% visited just one site, 33% visited two while 21% visited three and 9% visited four or more.
- 5) In 1998, overseas visitors spent 2.7 billion in the UK.
- 6) 19% of all people visiting London said TV/cinema/radio prompted them to come.

Location Examples

- 1) Lyme Park, Cheshire, saw its number of visitors jump 178% as a direct result of the BBC TV series *Pride and Prejudice*. Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire, was used for interior scenes for *Pride and Prejudice*. During 1996 visitor numbers increased by 59% over 1995.
- 2) Saltram House, Devon, saw visitor numbers rise by 39% in 1996, over 1995. This was entirely due to the film *Sense & Sensibility*, as the house had not been marketed in any other way.
- 3) The Crown Hotel, Amersham, location for the romantic scene in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* is always fully booked.
- 4) There is now a *Full Monty* tour around Sheffield following both commercial and cinematic success of the film.¹¹

Hall at Middle Temple, the River Thames at Barnes and Holkham Beach in Norfolk.

¹³ Elizabeth was filmed in York Minster, Aydon Castle, Warkworth Castle Cathedral, Alnwick Castle and

Bamburgh Beach in Northumberland, Haddon Hall near Bakewell, Derbyshire, the Tower of London and Durham Cathedral.

UK Movie Map 1999

Following the success of the first two editions, the third edition of the Movie Map was launched on June 15th 1999. It includes 67 films and TV programmes, 110 locations on a grid-referenced map and many more locations mentioned in the text. Movie Map 99 up to this moment has distributed to 300,000 copies. *Shakespeare in Love*¹², *Elizabeth*¹³, *Mrs Brown*¹⁴ and *Notting Hill*¹⁵ all appear on the map. Other hit films included on the map are *Little Voice*, *Sliding Doors* and *Hilary and Jackie*.

Following the popularity of movie-induced tourism major film companies have entered the tourism business by opening their studios or building movie theme parks. In the United States, Universal Studios and Disneyworld – MGM in Orlando and Florida have been alluring the tourists for so many years, and there is a new competitor from Australia – the Movie World of Queensland. There are sets of the well-known films (mainly SFX ones) such as *ET*, *Jaws*, *King Kong*, *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*. They sometimes also provide performances related to the films. The Planet Hollywood theme restaurant is also by-product of movie-induced tourism.

Hyperreality

Movie tourism would appear to be a good example of Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality.¹⁶ Baudrillard says that signs that are used to represent things are drained of their meaning (hyperreality); and the relation between signifying systems and reality becomes confusing. In his work, Baudrillard uses America as an example along with Disneyland to claim that Disneyland and America are one and the same. There is no "real" America outside Disneyland; the walls surrounding Disneyland are there to make

people think that Disneyland is only a fantasyland, and there is a real America out there.¹⁷

The problem of hyperreality is similar to Walter Benjamin's famous work "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", where he suggests the idea of "decay of aura" under the impact of new media and new cultural technologies. According to both theories, reality disappears with the new medium. For example, because of the HKTA's propaganda foreigners think that Hong Kong is still a city of Sampan and Susie Wongs. The movie map does little to dispel this message. On the other hand, the local fans of the TVB drama series *The tea village* set in Guangxi may go for a tour there, but they learn little of real native life. To make it more charming, the local government has re-modeled its village to meet the image shown on TV!

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¹⁴ Mrs Brown used Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, Wilton House, Salisbury, Duns Castle, Lincoln Inn Fields in London.

¹⁵ Notting Hill was shot in the Portobello Road area of Notting Hill, and Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath.

¹⁶ Theoretically, there are 4 orders in the world of hyperreality: 1) Signs are basically the reflection of reality; 2) Signs mask reality; 3) Signs mask the absence of reality. 4) Signs become simulacra – they have no relation to reality; pure simulation.

¹⁷ Refer to Baudrillard: "Simulations and Simulacra".

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www.visitbritain.com/moviemap

電影旅遊業

周子恩

文章摘要

香港旅遊業向以美食、購物天堂形象作招徠，並在過去二十年取得一定成績。然而面對近年鄰近各國的正面戰，本地旅遊業受到嚴重打擊。為了轉劣勢，香港旅遊協會遂意把本港重新包裝成亞洲現代化大都會，即所謂“動感之都”，當中環保旅遊，迪士尼樂園等便是上佳例子。

與此同時，為了吸引更多旅客，旅協亦有意透過香港一眾著名影星和“東方荷李活”之美名，進行一系列的宣傳攻勢，如興建電影城等，而『香港電影地圖』OMA Movie Map 便是在這個背景下應運而生。

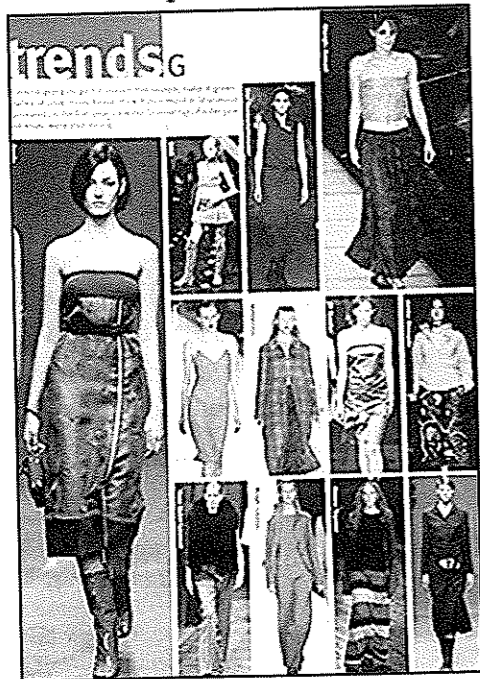
Consuming Designer Fashion in Hong Kong

Linda Yeung

The Appeal of Fancy Clothes

As the economy of Hong Kong developed rapidly in the 70s, people in the territory became drawn to the global phenomenon of fashion. Catching with the latest styles came up by European designers and not least of all, buying designer fashion from the world's fashion capitals became a popular pursuit. Designer boutiques began to flourish in the 80s, and today, they are a common sight, lining busy streets in popular shopping areas such as Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Central and Admiralty. Agents of leading fashion houses here are generally tight-lipped about their sales figures, but prominent retailers of designer items such as the Joyce Boutique and the Swank Shop, as well as agents of Italian labels such as Versace, D&G and Versus, all point to a trend of more locals buying from them than tourists.

According to retail manager of the Joyce Boutique, Angele Mountricha, Hong Kong people are more "fashion-forward" (meaning being inclined towards buying the trendiest items), not merely being fashion conscious, than their counterparts in Western countries.



Trends (Fashion Report by South China Morning Post, September 1999).

There are more trendy outfits at the Giorgio Armani boutique in Hong Kong than the one in Milan, she says.

The latest styles came up by leading fashion houses are often the subject of social conversation and widely reported in local newspapers. In Asia, Japan and Hong Kong are the two top markets for Italian fashion, according to statistics from the Italian Trade Commission. Hong Kong consumers are also known for their demand for quality fabric and cutting, which is well-associated with European export clothing.

The purpose of this research is to uncover the cultural meanings behind designer fashion, in order to account for their wide popularity and paramount status in the society of Hong Kong. Being investigated are the qualities and symbols attached to the expensive clothes that so attract shoppers, who put their considerations about the styles before the heavy price tags.

Theories and Methodology

Consumption itself is a pertinent subject of study that is increasingly of interest to anthropologists. Several authors including Bocock (1993) and Miller (1995) note that it is a prominent feature in advanced capitalist societies, where widespread commercialisation and global homogenisation of values are major forces on people's choice of goods and lifestyles. In Hong Kong, a consumerism-oriented society, designer boutiques commonly found in upmarket shopping malls are often filled with shoppers during sales periods.

Miller (1995), Kiron (1999), Featherstone (1991), Bocock (1993) are among a number of writers who point out the importance of consumption in the modern, or post-modern world, in which people establish their sense of self or identity more through the goods they buy or their lifestyle than their occupation or family background.

Designer fashion, like many consumer goods, are a repository of signs and symbols; in other words, they are purchased not so much for their physical, or actual use value as the

socially constructed values imbued in them. They serve as communicators, symbols of either class or other personal attributes. Brand name goods, in particular, are common means for asserting one's status in societies where class boundaries are blurred, like in the case of Hong Kong.

Veblen (1899) pointed to the use of luxury goods by upper class individuals as a show of pecuniary strength, while Bourdieu (1984) gave a wider view in suggesting that by opting for different goods, people of different classes reinforce a hierarchy of class positions. Designer fashion, then, can be seen as a marker of class boundary, either between the upper classes and those below or between the old bourgeoisie and the nouveaux riches. In creating and consolidating various images for different brands, the advertising industry is said to play a key role in shaping people's perception of certain goods. A product of capitalism, fashion plays on differences among people. Those who conform with prevailing fashion trends while seeking to create an individual style are nonetheless trying to assert an identity they aspire to, or create a distinctive status for themselves.

The research itself involved in-depth interviews with altogether 20 informants – 14 women and six men – people who are either personal friends, referred through referrals or acquaintances at fashion events. Their ages range from 21 to mid-50s, and they are of various ages, classes and occupations ranging from beautician, lawyer, reporter, to public relations company owners. Three are married socialites. The male informants comprise one university student and five professionals, all as fashion-conscious and familiar with designer labels as the females. The informants' views, while not representative in any statistical sense, help us understand cultural views towards designer fashion in Hong Kong. They are loyal fans and regular shoppers of designer fashion. Unlike the young generation who are more attracted to lower-priced, Japanese labels, they stick to high-end, mostly European labels. A range of questions were raised during the interviews to find out what really mattered to them in the way they dressed. Interviews were also undertaken with retail agents and local designers to find out what Hong Kong people look for in expensive clothes.

Status and Power in Good Clothes

A Government interpreter friend once noted to me that she would buy newspaper from a vendor who is dressed in clothes from Benetton (a medium-priced Italian casual wear line) than one in clothes from Temple Street, Yau Ma Tei. This is because the fact that someone has higher expectations for his appearance, she said, means he would also have higher expectations for his job, even in selling newspapers. Which means newspapers sold by him would be complete, without any sections missing! Her words reflect a common perception in Hong Kong that rates well-dressed people as being professional and having a higher status. As a result of the Eurocentric nature of the global fashion industry (Davis 1992), designer fashion from Europe in particular is associated with power, status and prestige.

Several informants have noted their desire to "look their role" in their work environment by opting for Italian clothes or fashion accessories, such as handbags or shoes. Personnel consultant Peggy is one who derives a sense of professional status from how she appears in front of others. The principal consultant at a headhunting firm in Central with years of experience in poaching candidates for



Fashion page (Elle Magazine, October 1999).

senior banking executive jobs says she would faint on the spot if she was seen in casual outfits by her clients or boss. She likes to shop at a boutique frequented by banking professionals for her work clothes and the handbag or briefcase she carries to work are all brand names. On most days, she wears Salvatore Ferragamo shoes. "You have to project a professional image after having been in the field for so long. You should dress in a certain way," she explains.

Reporter Angel, now in her early 30s, who covers political news and often meets with legislators and other key professionals at work, says being better-dressed helps her win the confidence of those people who will then be more willing to divulge information to her. Obviously there is a socially perceived linkage between personal appearance and professional competence.

A similar mindset causes business consultant Stephen to stick to his habit of putting on a Kenzo suit when meeting with clients. The reason he does so, he says, is because he wants to give the impression that he has paid attention to his appearance, which to him also means respect for his job. "It's important that the way you dress matches your position, your job," he says.

Being clad in Italian brands give my informants a sense of well-being, for the expensive labels from the world's fashion centre are also a sign of sophistication and professional standing. After having worked in a law firm as an account executive for six years, Sarah, now in her late 20s, prefers to appear in designer labels, unlike in the days when she had little work experience. She used to shop in areas selling bargain-priced goods, like Lee Yuen Street in Central, but her curiosity about designer fashion was raised when she heard about them from her colleagues and saw people wearing them in the office. For several years now, the 28-year-old has been shopping in Landmark, just a street away from her office and usually pays attention to labels she reads about in newspapers and magazines, those that "everyone knows". Gleefully, she said during our interview that she had just bought a Gucci handbag worth more than \$3,000. So as her work experience increased, she began to adopt a more sophisticated look with designer items. Such items have become the social criteria for

judging personal qualities, apart from one's occupational status. In her case, discarding the cheap clothes she used to buy means a progression from her past as an inexperienced, naive worker. She is making a few thousand dollars more each month compared to several years ago. As she only needs to give a fraction of her income to her parents whom she lives with, she is prepared to spend more on designer items. Being dressed in them give her a sense of status, as is the case with the tai-tais or other informants who are professionals. The tai-tais, for example, have no fixed budget on clothing and fashion accessories each month, but they are keen to stock up on trendy items from designer boutiques - generally seen as the international trend-setters - each season. One said she must buy at least one or two items from Chanel each year. This shows the importance to them of putting on their body what is socially seen as distinguished items as a sign of status.

The informants' desire for dressing well is driven by the prevailing value in modern day society in which, as said by Bourdieu (1984: 310), people are judged "by their capacity for consumption, their 'standard of living', their lifestyle, as much as by their capacity for production." Personal appearance is the key to people's struggle for a sense of distinction in the social world.

Top Italian labels such as Prada and Miu Miu have been immensely popular among younger professionals in Hong Kong in the past few years. The maturer group such as the socialites or women in their 40s or above tend to opt for established big-name labels like Chanel, Hermes, Salvatore Ferragamo, Giorgio Armani or Gucci. Expensive clothes from abroad, no matter what, constitute a sign of status. As put by David Hong, managing director of the Swank Shop, agent for a number of European labels, such as Valentino, Zegna, Givenchy, Kenzo, Plein Sud and Christian Lacroix, people who shop at his boutiques like to follow international fashion trends and 85 per cent of his customers regard designer clothes as a status symbol.

As shown in the cases of my informants, luxury clothes are a tool for conspicuous consumption. They are conscious of others' reaction to their outfits. Ben, a 30-year-old emigrant to Australia but who comes back to Hong Kong from time to time for

business says he wears designer clothes and shoes more often in Australia, because people there are more casually dressed and thus he can stand out more in those items over there. When he wears them in Hong Kong, he derives much pleasure from admiring gazes from others. "I admit I am vain," he says. "You have to be able to afford it to look vain. Can a construction worker afford to be vain? People show up in fancy clothes at social balls for the feeling of honour they have when people look at them (their outfit)." Beaming with satisfaction, he adds he likes to wear different brands on different days, "Prada today, Gucci tomorrow, Versace the next". He adds: "I like to look special, hence no G-2000 clothes for me." He typifies someone who derives satisfaction from wearing recognisable designer outfits. He said he favoured a pair of \$2,000 shoes he bought at Prada even though they are uncomfortable to wear. What matters most, he says, is that they look cute and beautiful. He notes: "I just wear them when I am not required to walk much to a destination, say from a car park to a supermarket."

University student Ah Lai is another informant highly conscious of his image, and he prefers Italian to Japanese labels because the Italian ones are known to be usually carrying a heavier price tag. "It does not matter that much if my clothes are very trendy or not, all I know is they are expensive," he said, looking smug. The same concern for looking different from the average population causes divorcee Maria to emphasise a refined, elegant look. She, like other socialites, is also careful not to overdress in order to differentiate themselves from the nouveaux riches. Putting on less commonly seen label clothes is one way she adopts to stand out socially. So when she goes on her annual shopping trips to Europe, she always asks sales staff in the boutiques she goes to whether the clothes she has set her eyes on are available in Hong Kong. "I won't buy them if the answer is 'Yes'," says the fifty something devotee of Hermes and Chanel.

Being status conscious, my informants insist on having the real thing - the authentic imports rather than counterfeited label clothes. Ah Lai, a frequent shopper at the Landmark in Central, for example, shuns clothes with a "Made in Hong Kong" label. "You feel better with the "Made in Italy" label, it refers to

European goods at least. If it's something made in Hong Kong, no different from Giordano, why should I buy it?" he asked, expressing little interest in such diffusion lines as CK Calvin Klein or Armani Exchange, which he says firmly are made in Hong Kong, not imported from Italy. He added: "I can tell the difference between a Jean Paul-Gaultier T-shirt made in Italy as opposed to one that was made in Japan. The Japanese one I saw was \$200 - \$300 cheaper, but made with a thicker material, which made it less comfortable. The Italian one has got a better colour tone."

Views given by others too indicate a hierarchical scale in the fashion system, in which clothes are classified into high and low categories on the basis of their price; the most expensive ones, that is the original items from the main lines produced by internationally-known designers are at the top of the scale, followed by diffusion lines that are above what is perceived to be uncreative, mass produced T-shirts that simply bear a designer logo. Of course, clothes unconnected to any designer label are at the bottom of the scale, and have little, if not any significant value for people wearing them.

As an archetypal product of capitalism, fashion lives through constant creation of new styles, which keep the fashion-conscious public constantly in pursuit of changes. Modern consumers are seeking their identities and sense of distinction in new and trendy styles. Hence wealthy watch factory owner, Peter, always insists on having the best of clothes, being a devotee of of Giorgio Armani jackets famous for their sleek tailoring. "I would go for the flair and distinctive styles offered by various labels, such as the fleece ski jacket that Polo Ralph Lauren is known for, and I won't buy designs from say Prada that have been widely copied and sold on the streets. You have got to make the most out of a label, like if you want jewellery, you'd go to Tiffany," he said.

Symbols for a Good Living

Like many in Hong Kong, my informants invariably showed an aspiration for the upper class in following the latest styles created by leading world designers. Indeed, being proud about their label clothes, they regard having access to those clothes as integral

to a good living. Socialite Lucy says she would miss out on a good life should she fail in getting hold of certain clothes. Every year she must buy a few items from Chanel. Stockbroker Alan treasures his limited designer wardrobe, saying: "Usually people who dress smart know how to enjoy life. I bought Versace clothes as a reward for the sense of achievement that I obtained from work. You can make easy money from stocks, you are dumb if you do not spend on brand name clothes after making some handsome gains."

The spacious, classy environment of designer boutiques give customers a feeling of exclusivity. Apart from that, the attentive, friendly services of their staff reinforce informants' feeling of designer clothes being an indispensable part of a good life. Beautician Pat enjoys the "privilege" of shopping selectively at her favourite Max and Co boutique, a retailer of Italian fashion. Sales persons there would shower her with advice on what buy every time she shows up. "They may give me 20 pieces to choose from, and I may only try six, seven on. Then there may be two or three in the end that I find really suit me."

The superior status culturally attached to designer clothes can be seen in several informants' thinking that they are "high-level" goods. When asked if he minded appearing in the same outfit as a member of his staff at a social occasion, factory owner Joseph replied: "When you are at a certain level, you appear to others in a certain light. The effect of clothing depends very much on who is wearing it."

Through the object of clothes, a social demarcation is drawn between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Socialite Lucy, a mother of two who attends social functions quite frequently, harbours the thinking that the way one dresses has to do with the kind of life one has. She considers herself to be in a privileged position as she can dress in any style she fancies, unlike ordinary folks. "If I were an average worker, I would not pay as much attention to the clothes I am wearing. I couldn't afford playing with styles anyway," she says.

The fashion system is by nature a system of classification, with certain brands being seen as designed exclusively for some and not others. Hence account executive Sarah thinks that well-established brands like Chanel



Ming Pao fashion page (2 September 1999).

or Christian Dior are not suitable for people from ordinary backgrounds like hers. With a laugh, she says: "They are not the right level of clothes for me. I think I am not up to that level yet. I am not in the same position as Fanny Ma, she is the queen of social 'balls'". A 25-year-old secretary, Vivian, looks to the rich and famous such as Fanny Ma, whose pictures always appear on the pages of social pages of newspapers and magazines, for inspiration in dressing. "I can't afford all the clothes that they buy, but I can buy clothes of similar styles or mix items in a similar way as them. The styles are stored in my mind and will come out again when I go shopping." Rarely does she follow the styles of starlets, she says, because to her, "their taste is no different from ordinary people's".

Given the upper class image commonly associated with them, designer clothes impose barriers to people who are conscious of their lower class background. Hence beautician Pat says she will not buy from Christian Dior even if she can afford it, as she believes the clothes do not suit her anyway. Basically she thinks as someone with a humble background, she lacks the "look" for them. "I won't carry those labels off. With their flamboyant styles, they look too luxurious." She had also said that only people with the noble *qizhi* (a mandarin term meaning cultural disposition) would look well in designer clothes. Such thinking reflects a cultural belief that only the rich have a certain ease or naturalness that causes them to look fit and proper in luxury clothes.

Distinction Through Possession of Cultural Capital

Designer clothes are part of a system of distinction or hierarchy that categorises people according to their pecuniary strength or knowledge about the capricious world of fashion. Views given by my informants show that designer fashion is branded as part of high culture, and it differentiates its users from people who are less at home in world culture, less of a cosmopolitan. Socialite Lily, for example, feels proud being dressed in famous labels because: "If you are wearing anything that has an international appeal, that shows you have culture, you are on the international scene. Through the clothes you buy, you are likely to get recognition as someone who leads a jet-setting lifestyle," she says. But of all labels, she is not interested in Chanel and Christian Dior, despite their longstanding status and wide popularity. The reason is their great appeal to the nouveaux riches. Lily distinguishes herself from them as someone who is long used to wearing good, expensive clothes. "People wear Chanel to show off, like wearing a Cartier watch," she explains. "A few years ago people who made a fortune from scratch would like to have a Chanel handbag. Their taste may have changed now with the rise of some new labels. But to have a Chanel bag is the dream of someone who is not born rich, something that one wants to have to create status for herself. It's like buying your first Mercedes."

In opting for a subtle style, factory owner Joseph also differentiates himself from people in lower level position. He says: "When you get older, you don't want people to tell people who are wearing high fashion. You prefer people to discover what you're wearing when you take off your jacket and expose the label inside while you hang it around your chair at social functions."

For various informants, the skills and knowledge about creating fashionable styles constitute a form of cultural capital. My informants, especially the women, have a habit of reading through international fashion magazines and watching television programmes on major fashion shows. Their strong conformity with fashion styles is driven by a desire to show they are well aware of the

latest designs in the world's fashion capitals. Another socialite, Lucy, admits she is very sensitive to trends. "When a label becomes a hit, I would find out what its clothes are like and see whether they suit me. Some labels do not suit me, like Issey Miyake, which make me look like a mummy. But if it's a really hit label, I'll buy one or two tops still to match with other clothes. If the styles really suit me, then I'll buy more".

The woman informants, generally more concerned about looking fashionable than men, emphasise the much-revered mix and match skills, that is the ability of creating a "fashion feel" by pairing up various fashion items from different labels. They claim that doing this allows them to express their individuality, but what is actually shown is limited individuality by people trying very hard to conform to a set of fashion norms. Locally-based fashion designers interviewed agreed that a modern image and fashionability are key concerns for their target customers.

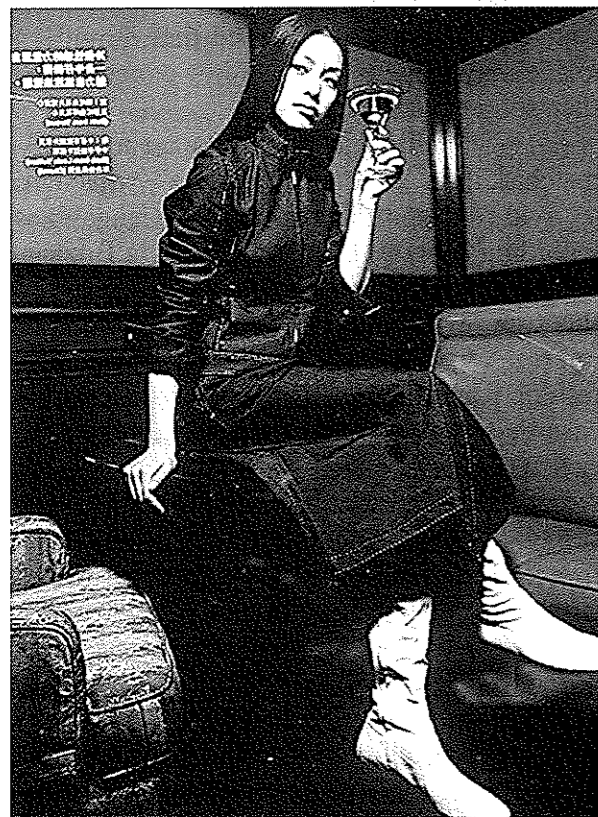
Socialite Lily describes her mix-and-match skills as her "personal forte", while Pat, an avid reader of English fashion magazines including Vogue, Elle and Harpar's Bazaar, believes her fashion sense has improved through "trial and error" and exposure to overseas trends through magazines and TV fashion programmes. "It is not necessarily the case that you will look good because you are rich and can put a tens-of-thousands-of-dollar worth of garment on your body," she says firmly. "I pay consideration to fashion trends first before deciding what to mix and match with. Wearing trendy colours is very important and also you should not mix the wrong types of fabrics together."

Lastly, other findings suggest that the consumption of designer fashion is also a gendered practice. Among my informants, the women report feeling good when knowing that they look beautiful and fashionable, while it is more important for the men to look respectable. The male informants generally see dressing fashionably as primarily a woman's domain. This perhaps reflects the deeply ingrained cultural emphasis on the importance of looks for women. A volunteer charity fund-raiser, socialite Susan makes sure she looks well each time she goes out soliciting donations. "Men will approach you if you are beautifully dressed.

A woman looks better in beautiful clothes and so, it's easier for her to approach and communicate with men, who will also be more willing to donate money in her presence."

Conclusion

Designer fashion is a common tool for status-seeking in highly capitalistic Hong Kong. Its appeal lies in its cultural associations with professionalism, prestige, social respectability, taste, a good living, modernity, personal success, and so-called individuality. All these are treasured qualities in Hong Kong, a relatively newly developed city with flexible class boundaries and where the pursuit of status is more likely to be sought through material means. Wealth, more than anything else, is



A model in a Chanel and LV outfit in a luxurious setting (Elle Magazine, August 1999).

widely perceived as a sign of personal distinction. With their heavy price tags, authentic luxury clothing that are direct imports from the world's fashion capitals carry much weight.

As put by one informant, "you have to have money to have taste." In Hong Kong, one way of differentiating oneself from the average

lot is through a show of taste for expensive label clothes. Being well-dressed is also a symbol for a good, privileged life filled with material comforts. But the strong emphasis on a good material life has its root in a class culture. In the absence of a rigid class system, what exists in Hong Kong is a system of hierarchy imposing classifications among people. The luxury item of designer fashion is very much a part of this status game, with people trying to excel socially either through conspicuous consumption or establishing various forms of links with the world of high fashion. Knowledge in famous labels, trends, or the revered skill of mixing and matching fashion items are all socially desirable, ego-flattering status-markers.

By paying attention to fashion trends and choosing between labels, customers of designer fashion construct for themselves a sense of distinction as modern, superior individuals. They take pride in being individuals who know what constitutes a good look and not least of all, can afford the time and money required.

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名牌時裝在香港的文化意義

楊麗賢

文章摘要

名牌時裝是很多香港人嚮往的東西，但人們所追求的並不單是舒適、趨時的服飾，乃是這些服裝背後的地位象徵。在一個高度資本主義化社會，服裝代表一種社會分界線，用作顯示個人優勝之處。

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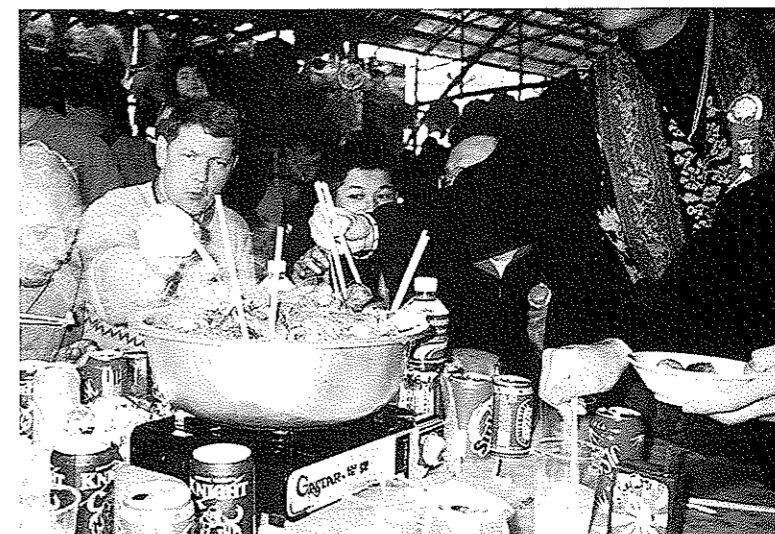
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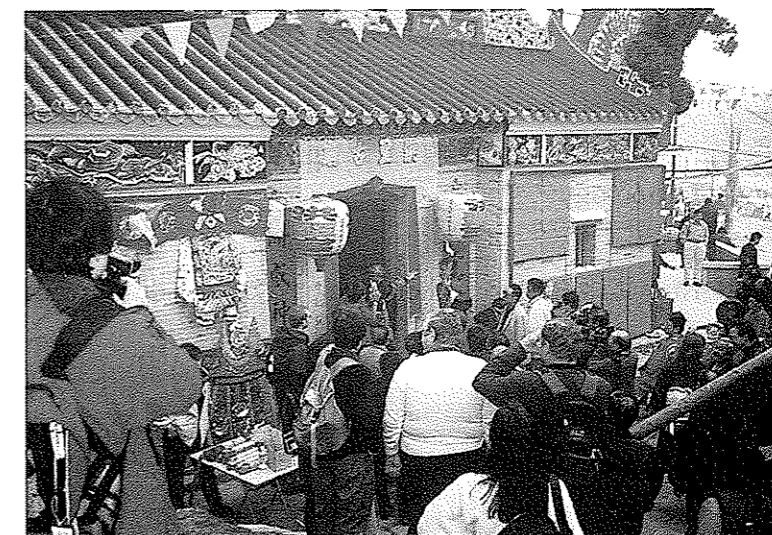
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Society members and friends eat pun-choi at the Kau Sai Hung Sheng temple rededication festivities (11 March 2000; photo by Chris Hutton).



Society members among the crowd observing the rededication ceremony (photo by Chris Hutton).

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