

cult to distinguish from "modernization." Both included a taste for social recognition and acceptance, a high standard of life surrounded by technological conveniences, and a commitment to national patriotism rather than what were seen as parochial cultural attachments. As such, the process of taking root as a Chinese ethnic group in Hawaii was not much different from the experiences of other Chinese migrants around the world. The most significant differences in Hawaii were the transformation of connections to villages in China into distant heritages and the fact that access to modernity was not dominated by a small elite. As Americans, all young Chinese felt that modern life should be within their reach.



CHAPTER 8

Chinese Migration and the Early-Twentieth-Century World Order

I want to be able to rely on you, [my father] who inked each piece of our own laundry with the word "Center," to find out how we landed in a country where we are eccentric people (Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*).¹

There is no East here. West is meeting West. This was all West. All you saw was West. This is *The Journey in the West*. I am so fucking offended. Why aren't you offended? . . . These sinophiles dig us so much, they're drooling over us. They think they know us—the wide range of us from sweet to sour—because they eat in Chinese restaurants. . . . What's so "exotic"? We're about as exotic as shit (Wittman Ah Sing, complaining about reviews praising his staging of an old Chinese novel, in Maxine Hong Kingston, *Tripmaster Monkey*).²

I'm tired of all this Chinese this, Chinese that. You people, you think gambling, extortion, corruption are kosher? Because it's a thousand years old? Well all this thousand-year-old stuff, it's a lot of shit to me. This is America you're living in, and it's two hundred years old, so you better get your clocks fixed. You're not special, and you're not beyond the law, any more than the Puerto Ricans or the Polacks. So we're all going to obey the law the way it says (Lieutenant Stanley White, in *Year of the Dragon*, a Dino de Laurentiis film).³

American children hear no stories about ghosts. They spend a dime at the drugstore to buy a Superman comic book. This "Superman" is an all-knowing, resourceful, omnipotent hero who can overcome any difficulty. . . . Superman represents actual capabilities or future potential, while ghosts symbolize belief in and reverence for the accumulated past. As much as old Mrs. Park, trying to lessen the distance between east and west, might lead me over to the corner of the living room to

look at faded photographs, it was the Redfield's little boy who showed me the heart of American culture, and it lay in Superman, not ghosts. . . . How could ghosts gain a foothold in American cities? People move about like the tide, unable to form permanent ties with places, still less with other people. . . . In a world without ghosts, life is free and easy. Americans can gaze straight ahead. But still I think they lack something, and I do not envy their life (Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, 1943).⁴

Like the disjunctive, nation-based histories discussed at the opening of this book, the preceding quotations illustrate some of the difficulties in establishing common ground for a discussion of Chinese migration. Unlike those histories, however, these observations were produced from within a single nation—the United States—reminding us again that movement and intermingling are as much a part of modern history as the construction of nation-states and national heritages. Although they come together to create a vision of diversity, each statement revolves around a single crude distinction between East and West that has been a cornerstone of conceptualizations of world order in the twentieth century.⁵ Their varying perspectives on that distinction—rejecting it, questioning it, and accepting it—combine to make it somewhat intangible: a shifting distinction between inside and outside.

Wittman Ah Sing and Stanley White both strive for Chinese integration into America by commenting on how the exoticization of Chinese isolated them from the mainstream. Yet they respectively accuse non-Chinese and Chinese for perpetuating that isolation. Both of them could make a good case for their accusation, and neither wanted it to persist, yet they occupy little common ground. The young girl in Kingston's *China Men*, on the other hand, was just beginning to perceive how her "center" could be at the margins of something else. She, herself, was a site within which definitions of inside and outside were shifting.

Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong described his experiences during a visit to the United States in 1943 for a series of newspaper articles published in China. He characterized the East-West divide as one between tradition-bound China and forward-looking America, a distinction that he would develop further that year in his book *Earthbound China*. The distinction was partly inspired by experiences such as his visit to a Chinese restaurant in Washington, DC, where waiters speaking Taishan dialect served chop suey (a Chinese-American creation that could be literally

translated as "miscellaneous chopped-up things") and chow mein ("fried noodles") to be eaten with a knife and fork and accompanied by ice water (occasioning Fei's hypothesis that Americans complained Chinese food was hard to digest because of the great invasion of congealed grease caused by drinking cold water rather than warm tea). While consuming the meal, he watched a Cuban singer and "half-naked women doing Spanish dances" to the accompaniment of jazz music, all presented by a man of Southern European ancestry. His impression was, "Truly bold! A young culture!"⁶ He failed to mention that the entrepreneurs who had brought this cornucopia together were Chinese themselves.

Fei retained ghosts as a symbol of disorder but reversed the location of ghosts and order. Now, ghosts marked encrusted layers of tradition and familiarity in China, while the young United States, despite its freshness, was the site of a somewhat sterile and alienating order. He commented that living in brightly lit American rooms "gives you a false sense of confidence that this is all of the world, that there is no more reality than what appears clearly and brightly before your eyes. . . . [Americans] think of the unknown as static, waiting for people to mine it like an ore, not only not frightening, but a resource for improving life in the future."⁷ In contrast, life in China was engulfed in the textures of the past. He did not write of ghosts literally as the presence of dead spirits, but he preserved the sense of an intangible specter of the past that inhabited and affected the present. A difference, however, between Fei's ghosts and those of south China peasants was that Fei's ghosts did not represent the vague threat of outer chaos. Rather, they were the thick encrustation of past events that made up the very core of being Chinese, perhaps even of being fully human. "Life in its creativity changes the absolute nature of time: it makes past into present—no, it melds past, present, and future into one inextinguishable, multilayered scene, a three-dimensional body. This is what ghosts are."⁸

Fei conflated China, ghosts, and the past on one side of the East-West divide, and America, order, and the future on the other. His own life spanned both sides. Although he had originally undertaken his own intellectual and physical journeys as a search for universal standards, within ten years they had produced an elaborate assertion of difference. He had been drawn into Western academia by a desire to apply the universal light of scientific knowledge to China. He attended lectures by Robert Park in China in 1932—which he said had "determined the course my life has taken"—and then studied with Bronislaw Malinowski in London. His depictions of America as a bold, young culture recalled Park's depiction of

American cities as a site of heteroglot modernity and emancipation from the bonds of culture, while his tradition-bound China offered a finely textured opposition to that modernity that resonated with the rich accounts of cultural holism created by men like Malinowski. He later began to suspect that scientific knowledge had its own cultural underpinnings and that the light of science was insufficient to illuminate aspects of Chinese life that could never be understood without being Chinese. That is to say, Fei's development as a cosmopolitan, migrating individual was inseparable from his increasingly eloquent and systematic construction of differences.

Even though hard to pin down, the differences that are the subjects of the opening quotations were real, inasmuch as they were social discourses that shaped social activity. China as traditional, Chinese as exotic, an America under the rule of law and science, Americans as fresh and vibrant: these ideas have all shaped the imaginations and lives of people in the twentieth century. Yet these distinctions do not map out a set of discrete units with discrete histories that fit together to form a systematic whole. Each speaker was attempting to define or rearrange those distinctions. The young girl from *China Men* was trying to make sense out of her confusion, while Fei Xiaotong had made sense of his via an elaborate anthropology of oppositions. Wittman Ah Sing and Stanley White wanted to abolish the distinction through denial. Taken together, they suggest that the distinctions themselves are not the place to start in understanding the history of Chinese migration; rather, they are the threads of interaction.

CHINESE, PERUVIAN, AMERICAN, AND HAWAIIAN

It is difficult to extricate the particular histories of Chinese in each location from the more general processes of Chinese migration. The search for a stable environment in which to do business, the formation of associations, and the striving for respect via the manipulation of Chinese nationalist and local discourses were broadly similar in all three locations. Yet the last three chapters have been devoted to explaining how these processes worked out uniquely in each situation. What, if anything, about the experiences and institutions described in this book was particularly Chinese, Peruvian, American, or Hawaiian (or Midwestern or Limerican, for that matter)? What is the significance of these differences and their relationship to a broader panorama of Chinese migration?

At the simplest level, all migrant experiences were parts of these respective national histories merely by virtue of having happened within

their boundaries. Yet asserting participation in a national history is not the same as describing how the experience and identity of a Zhongshan migrant in Honolulu were different from those of his younger brother in Lima. The development of national histories is as much an ideological process as a given physical or cultural fact, and inclusion always brings certain consequences, certain reformulations of the past which can obscure broader links. For example, it has been easy until recently to exclude Chinese from United States history by briefly citing their cultural differences and propensity to sojourn. This is no longer the case, but claims for inclusion are often made at the expense of ignoring links to China and transnational networks that shaped much of migrant life. When those links are acknowledged, they are generally seen as parochial connections to a traditional past which Chinese have readily broken away from in becoming American.

Chinese in Hawaii have been sucked into this American history by virtue of annexation. By the 1930s, being Hawaiian had become an ill-formed concept. It could mean identification with native Hawaiian tradition, resistance to American hegemony, an emergent creolization, or a local variation of being American. Recent Asian American histories have tended to choose this third alternative, as did Hawaii-born Chinese after the 1920s. In fact, Chinese in Hawaii were self-consciously "Americanizing" at a greater rate than those in the United States. This is not surprising, because one of the benefits of "Americanization" in Hawaii was precisely that it was a discourse brought in from outside and could be selectively appropriated. Aspects of liberal democracy and the virtues of a pioneer immigrant heritage could be used to discredit the haole oligarchy and buttress Chinese status vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in Hawaii.

In Peru, the sociocultural content of a national history has been subject to more intense debate than in the United States. Within these debates, the history of the Chinese has been used as material for attempts to forge a multiethnic "popular" or "creole" identity out of the tangle of peoples that made up the coastal underclass, as an example that shows the ability of a liberal legal system to preserve justice across cultures and as an example to highlight social disjunctions that deny the very existence of a national history.⁹ The Chinese in the 1920s, as we have seen, saw their own best means of integration to be identification as foreign citizens and cosmopolitan merchants. That is, they promoted international legal and commercial standards rather than blood or cultural blending as the basis for national participation. Thus they threw in their lot with a particular sector of Peruvian society. This strategy was successful in help-

ing Chinese elite go beyond the coolie heritage and eugenicist theories of the 1920s, but it did not serve them well after the rise of a populist government in 1930.

If these national/regional histories are understood as processes of becoming, Chinese clearly participated in each of them. They interacted with expanding states and have been objects and protagonists of debates about national identity. To what extent was this also a process of becoming Chinese? None of the activities described in this book were unique to the Chinese. Many other peoples have migrated as laborers and traders, set up transnational networks, become involved in criminal and entrepreneurial activities, sent money home, and returned home themselves. They have also helped construct nationalist identities, built immigrant enclaves, negotiated ethnic identities, and sought acceptance as locals and citizens. We may be able to identify differences of magnitude between groups in the intensity of nationalist sentiment, frequency of trips home, long-term viability of transnational families and networks, amount of commercial success, or the influence of migrant associations. In the final analysis, however, the Chinese were still migrants, following a variation in the set of experiences lived out by many other migrant groups.

Yet, from the perspective of participants who made up these networks and communities, being Chinese could be the most significant fact of their social existence. Participation in migrant activities both depended upon and produced Chineseness. A person was Chinese by virtue of the fact that he moved in networks channeled through Hong Kong, Shantou, or Xiamen, and back to villages in which they or their ancestors were born. Symbols and oaths of solidarity are common among many peoples, but the particular details and symbols used to mobilize association and bonds of trust among Chinese, such as the names of villages, surnames, ritual oaths, and fictional kinship bonds derived from well-known stories, were irrelevant, if not unintelligible, to non-Chinese. Similarly, although nationalism developed simultaneously among many different peoples around the world, the community of people willing and able to be accepted as Chinese nationals was limited. From another perspective, the barriers created by discrimination and racialized conceptions of Chineseness by others often assured that even people who wanted nothing to do with Chineseness had no choice but to be treated as Chinese. This was especially true in the Western Hemisphere, where Chinese were marked off by distinct physical features. The ethnic identities created in this way were different from cultural or practical solidarities but could still result in a sense of unique heritage, often shaped by experiences of marginalization

or resistance. Participation in all these experiences and processes made people Chinese in some form or another, although none were particular to the Chinese.

The Early-Twentieth-Century World

"Americanization," "Chineseness," *huaqiao*, and the production of other labels and identities are inextricable from historically specific methods of marking difference and building solidarity. Those methods are part of larger patterns of global order that emerge at particular moments in world history. The two aspects of that history most relevant here are the increasing density of global economic networks and the emergence of nation-states and national identity as the main markers of political, cultural, and social recognition around the world.

The networks and associations of Chinese migrants were based on patterns of mutual aid and association in China. These patterns crystallized during the mobility and commercial growth of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries into familiar forms such as lineages, sworn brotherhoods, and merchant *huiguan*. The resilience and flexibility of these forms facilitated expansion along channels of economic opportunity both within and outside of China. They facilitated the spread of Chinese laborers in the late nineteenth century and the later spread of retail and service businesses built on dense networks of credit and finance. They also became sites for the reproduction of migration that were relatively independent of any specific, local economic conditions. As important nodes of migrant networks embedded in an expanding world economy, Chinese migrant associations continued to grow stronger and more pervasive in the early twentieth century as they adapted to specific niches. For example, the tongs that emerged in the eastern United States were well-suited to maintaining a narrow ethnic specialty in laundries and restaurants. The centrality of import-export houses and corporate directorships in Peru corresponded with the high profile of internationally oriented merchants in the national economy. Village and surname groups persisted even among locally born Chinese in Hawaii as markers of ethnic identity and platforms for economic networking.

The political and ideological rise of nation-states also shaped this history. By the early twentieth century, it was apparent that neither migrants nor anyone else could gain respect internationally without a strong nation-state to back them. A national state that took part in internationally recognized diplomatic procedures and had a powerful military

could advance merchant interests and protect migrants against local hostility. The creation and viability of such a state was difficult without the grassroots cultural work of creating a unique national heritage and identity. The development of a feeling of common fate could both galvanize potential citizens into concerted political and economic action and justify international claims to self-rule and autonomy. Awareness of the utility of official and military backing was nothing new. It was apparent in the early influence of Qing officials on Chinese networks in the late nineteenth century, including their sponsorship of CCBA's and Chambers of Commerce after 1905. The sense of total inclusion within a national state, however, did grow in the early twentieth century. Its general effects were evident in the rise of overseas Chinese nationalism, increased investments in China beyond the village, and the development of a diasporic *huaqiao* consciousness.

These larger shifts that spanned migrant networks are only one aspect of the rise of international consciousness, which took different forms in each of the cases in this book. Chinese in all three locations moved through an ideological landscape of Chinese nationhood, local nationhood, eugenics, class, economic interests, and cultural difference. These aspects came together differently in each location, revealing a variety of possible manifestations of similar global conditions.

In the early twentieth century, a Peruvian "nation" was still poorly defined and riven by increasingly hard ethnic divisions. Chinese migrant elite were aware of these divisions, and threw their lot in with the factors of cosmopolitan modernity. They developed close relationships with the Chinese consul, stressing their status as foreign citizens of a modernizing nation and their participation in international commercial networks. They consistently appealed to the reigning discourse of liberalism and constitutional rights that had shaped Peruvian politics in word, if not in fact, since the 1820s. This both served to identify the Chinese with the forces of global modernity and to lift them beyond the eugenic and racializing discourses surrounding the debates over Peruvian citizenship and "racial stock," which only had the potential to drag them down. The Chinese claimed local acceptance based on foreign citizenship and commercial skill. These claims were inseparable from the assertion of a transnationally applicable modernity.

In Hawaii during the years immediately after annexation, Chinese migrant elites became deeply involved in Chinese politics, partly in the hope that a revived and republican China would generate increased local respect. As the promises of the revolution faded, the role of the Chinese nation in local Chinese lives also faded. By the 1920s, many had turned

toward the United States for inspiration. "Americanization" became indistinguishable from "modernization" in the statements of many Chinese. At the same time, they drew upon mythologies of pioneer immigrant groups and theories of ethnic succession—sprinkled with a touch of genetically determined diligence and intelligence—to claim a relatively high status in the local ethnic hierarchy. As ethnic lines were more clearly drawn, many locally born Chinese also began to conceive of their lives in terms of cultural conflict. Notably, the poles of conflict were usually American and Chinese, as forms of Hawaiian or "pidgin" identity became increasingly less attractive. Some of these young Chinese tried to make a career for themselves in China, but for the bulk of them, local ethnic identity within a national context was the most common form of resolution.

In Chicago, Chinese were effectively excluded from any significant recognition or integration into the nation for a number of reasons: racism and exclusion from citizenship, the relative insignificance of the Chinese economy (which blocked self-representation as cosmopolitan merchants, which was possible in Peru), low numbers of locally born Chinese, and the historical process whereby associations used force and protection to maintain a limited yet well-defined ethnic niche. Even though Chicago was as heteroglot as Hawaii or Peru, a sense of what it meant to be "American" was much more clear-cut than the contours of local identity in the other locations. This left little room for negotiation, other than forging a marginal niche as local exotica. Local elite did present themselves as well-heeled local businessmen, an identity that was promoted by graduate student Ting-chiu Fan. But Paul Siu described another side of the Chinese situation, in which they were lost in a gap between two cultures. Migrant associations and transnational networks in Chicago appeared as markers of parochialism and isolation. The relationship between Chinese-ness and modernity or assimilation (which often amounted the same thing) was generally perceived as an opposition, occasionally transcended by a few forward-looking businessmen. In practice, however, the creation of scattered isolated enclaves was just as much a product of industrial progress as was the emergence of undifferentiated individualism. The Chinese grew *in* to Chinatown during the early twentieth century, not out of it.

Chinese Migrants as Moderns

This idea of the "modern" can offer a foothold by which to negotiate the multiple forces shaping Chinese migration. I understand modernity in a loose sense here, referring not so much to debates over the nature of

modernity (in comparison to something like postmodernity), as to various ways in which migrants understood contemporary local and world trends and attempted to keep up to date with them. Chinese migrants in the early twentieth century engaged in activities and self-representations to earn respect in the eyes of each other, the non-Chinese they interacted with, and "international opinion." These included a variety of often contradictory images: Chinese migrants presented themselves as supporters of education and economic change in their hometowns, as representatives of a respectable and economically powerful republic, as wearers of patent leather shoes and high heels, as cosmopolitans, as individuals experiencing liberation or cultural conflict, as successful businessmen, as Americans, and as bearers of Chinese culture and its traditions of diligence, intelligence, democratic incorporation, and exotic allure. All of these images were deployed as interpretations of widespread early-twentieth-century discourses of nationalism, assimilation, individualism, or commercialism, and they could be generalized as an attempt to reach toward the "modern."

Of course, even self-consciously modern Chinese still engaged in ostensibly "premodern" activities, such as the maintenance of a patriline, membership in sworn brotherhoods, personalistic networks, the accumulation of symbols of imperial power, geographic mobility as a family-oriented economic strategy, and struggles for status according to village norms (although we must remember that many of these practices took form during the "early modern" commercial growth of Late Imperial China). Some of these practices were self-consciously crystallized as "tradition," yet all of them continued to be entwined with, to be transformed, and even to flourish as part of Chinese migration in the modern world. Some aspects of these activities were of the kind that Bourdieu would describe as "inscribed" through early childhood socialization, and others were much more consciously appropriated, negotiated, and deployed as responses to new environments. The participation of Chinese migrants in a modern, nation-based world order was not a transformative disjuncture but a complex array of shifts and partial shifts.

Some of the most apparently "unmodern" of those inscribed cultural principles were the institutions, rituals, and constructions of ghostliness discussed in chapter 4. Chinese embarked on their migrations under the auspices of institutions that would structure their experiences abroad and brought conceptual patterns of social relationships that allowed plenty of room to incorporate unfamiliar people.¹⁰ Outsiders—as ghosts and government—presented both threat and opportunity. Group solidarity was forged for mutual protection, while access to opportunities was maintained through formalized and predictable rituals of interaction

and exchange. Encounters with outsiders would take the form of gradually formalized difference rather than eventual homogenization. Ritual specialists and mediators were often required to properly negotiate these boundaries. People like Aurelio Powsan Chia and the Moy brothers were precisely such prestigious mediators, whose influence depended on the maintenance of a distinct Chinese group which they could protect.

Of course, the particularities of Chinese rituals had little efficacy outside of China, and it is hard to argue convincingly that Chinese still shaped their relationships with non-Chinese based on the underlying principles of these rituals. Yet migration did not mean the end of these rituals, because most migrants were still connected via associations and family to altars and lineage halls in China where they were still performed; they did not become things of the past which migrants left behind as they moved through the modern world.

Moreover, the efficacy of rites lay not only in their common symbols, but in their ability to persist and continue to order social life by encompassing mutual misunderstandings and adapting to new forces and actors. That is, encounters of migrants with the modern world did not just lead to the destruction of ritual as a vestige of premodern tradition. Rather, the new relationships formed by Chinese with the rest of the world can be fruitfully understood as involving a reconfiguration of ritual ordering. Participation in rituals created group solidarity at the local level in China via the development of relationships with particular gods and ghosts. It also ordered hierarchical relations throughout the empire via official rites that incorporated newcomers and, in effect, tolerated local misunderstanding, so long as that misunderstanding was veiled under proper comportment. Thus, neighbors who were distinct and oppositional at ground level came together at a higher level of imagination, symbolized by the empire and its apex in the emperor (although some groups, like sworn brotherhood societies, had an ambiguous relationship to the empire).

The emerging world order within which Chinese migrants were moving can be understood on similar terms. Nations, ethnicities, and cultures are arrayed against each other. They each have the practical solidarity of daily encounters and submission to common political hegemony. They also rally around internationally recognized symbols like flags, language, and heritage. The details of these symbols and governing institutions are always different, yet the fact of their existence is common to all nations. They are mediums by which nations are made mutually comprehensible and brought together within a larger "family of nations." No single apex corresponds with the Chinese emperor, but a similar and

often unarticulated sense of ultimate belonging within the natural structure of the human race still prevails. That structure is the mosaic of discrete cultures and sociopolitical groups that make up most concepts of world order, from the United Nations to the area studies structure of history departments. Each of those units is still riven by differences and conflict, but the general effect of this world order is to make all of those conflicts appear as internal affairs rather than aspects of a global structure.

In the cases studied here, it is clear that the Chinese born in Hawaii had come closest to completely conceptualizing themselves in terms of ethnicity, heritage, nation, and blood. But these categories were also used by local restaurateurs and cosmopolitan merchants in Peru and in Chicago, who presented their differences as inseparable from claims for inclusion. They all made claims to exemplify international standards of comportment, both as possessors of unique heritages and as practitioners of commercial activity that demanded recognition and protection as a universal human right. Despite these self-representations, they continued to live their lives through diasporic networks that often seemed subversive to the nation-states to which they addressed these appeals.

Like Chinese-Hawaiians, Fei Xiaotong believed the transcultural rule of law and science promoted within the international system to be much clearer and more orderly than a localized world of ghosts and tradition. His life experience shows, however, that having become socialized into this new discourse by no means meant that boundaries between Chinese and others had been erased. Rather, they had been reformulated and transposed. The presence of the past was an inseparable part of the modern—both as a foil to modernity and as the material from which it was built.

Late-Twentieth-Century Shifts

Chinese migrant history continued to change through mid-century in conjunction with shifts in world history. The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 severed many migrant networks that had already been weakened by the Depression and the Second World War. The division of the government between Beijing and Taiwan also created confusion and uncertainty among proponents of diasporic nationalism. Migration and the circulation of goods and money reached a low point. The Cold War and postindependence rise of Southeast Asian nationalism put further pressure on Chinese to orient themselves to the lands in which they lived. For a short period, individual nations began to dominate the circumstances of being Chinese migrants. Of course, Chinese also took

part in defining the terms of these national inclusions. For example, localization movements such as the Asian American movement have been very successful in directing the standard of national inclusion away from total assimilation and toward pluralist and "multicultural" acceptance of locally oriented Chinese.

Over the past thirty years, however, transnational links among Chinese have reemerged more strongly than ever. These new and reemergent links may be usefully described as diasporic entrepreneurialism, or even as the emergence of a global bourgeoisie, as these networks become increasingly identified with economic power and modernity in the Pacific.¹¹ Some commentators have even seen them as a new form of deterritorialized economic organization, and even a new form of identity.¹²

Regardless of any unprecedented transformations that are taking place, these flows follow many of the routes and networks built up over past centuries, even as they transform those networks. They may now be described more accurately as a web rather than a set of radiating grooves, with new cities like Vancouver, Taipei, Sydney, and New York overshadowing earlier nodes like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Xiamen. As in earlier networks, the family is still a basic institution, but these families are now cut off from the household in China and less interested in the maintenance of the patriline. They are more concerned with assuring the material survival of the nuclear family by taking advantage of opportunities for economic activity, education, and political stability around the world. Geographic dispersal is still common, and the ability to maintain connections across large distances and political boundaries is still an important source of profit and strength, but the altar and household as anchors for the family in space and across time have largely disappeared.

Other remnants of shared cultural behavior also remain and even facilitate the practical reconstruction of networks. People previously unfamiliar with each other can discover that they speak a similar language, eat similar food, have ancestors from nearby villages, and can read each other's body language. These similarities help them to feel they know what to expect and when they can trust each other, thus laying the groundwork for business deals, social encounters, and extended relationships in which differences in personal experience can gradually be overcome and replaced with an even richer texture of common practices and attitudes.

Along with these day-to-day encounters come assertions of the timeless and unbreakable heritage of a "Greater China," which are reminiscent of early-twentieth-century nationalist claims. A recent journalistic account of Chinese migration used one of the most succinct expressions

of this constructed cultural heritage as its title, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor*.¹³ Many of these assertions have emanated from China, as it tries to attract the money of wealthy Chinese migrants. The assertion of a "Confucian ethic" of thrift, diligence, and family values that underlies recent Chinese success is another prescription of this unity. Confucian family values are often formulated in terms much closer to the campaign speeches of an American presidential candidate than anything a Confucian official would have understood as family. This only underlines, however, the way in which the past is constantly entwined with the present.

Participation in this realm of diasporic culture and economic opportunity often entails the resinicization of individuals who had taken on local identities. This could include sending children to learn Mandarin or the revitalization of cultural performances such as the lion dance. It is also driven by a claim that to be Chinese is to be modern, to be at the cutting edge of economic and cultural globalization. We must also emphasize, however, that to the extent that such a diasporic culture exists, it is far from universal and is in many ways a class-based ideology. Only a small portion of people who identify themselves as ethnic Chinese have the means, language skills, and inclination to take part in this diasporic culture, and many resist it as an infringement on hard-won local identities.¹⁴

These developments are part of an ever-shifting flow of historical circumstances. If we trace the history of overseas Chinese networks no farther than the brief predominance of nation-based identities at mid-century, we can only see them as a disjunctively new phenomenon, ultimately shaped primarily by global circumstances. If we root them in the idea of a timeless "Confucian ethos" we have no way to understand the intervening twenty-five hundred years, not to mention the ways in which ideological discourses are constantly appropriated and redeployed. Rather, the recent rise of diasporic networks can only be understood in the context of a shifting history, shaped by the constant interaction of Chinese migrants, local histories, and global trends.

CHINESE CHARACTER GLOSSARY



Ai, Chung Kun	鍾工字
Alee, C. (Ching Lee)	程利
American Chinese Federation	中美聯合會
Bank-fang gui	房鬼
Bao'anju	保安局
Baohuanghui	保皇會
Baoshanghui	保商會
bendi	本地
Chankan, Ezequiel	陳群
Char, Tin-Yuke	謝廷玉
Chen Lanbin	陳蘭彬
Cheng Hop	正合
Chia, Aurelio Powshan	謝寶山
Chin F. Foin	陳宏勳
Chinese American Bank	中美銀行
Chinese-English Debating Society	中西擴論會
Ching You Hoong	程友雄
Chiqi	赤溪
Chongzheng Hui	崇正會
Chu Gem	趙錦
Chun Afong	陳芳
Chungwha Navigation Company	中華航運公司
danjia	蛋家
Duanfen	端芬
Enping	恩平
Fei Xiaotong	費孝通
fen gong	分工
Gangzhou Huiguan	岡州會館
gongsi	公司
Gongyan Bao	公言報
Goo Kim (Goo Kim Fui)	古金輝
Goo, Paul Kimm-Chow	古錦超