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STATE OF THE FIELD

REVISITING THE *KANKŌ CHŌSA* VILLAGES: A REVIEW OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE STUDIES OF NORTH CHINA RURAL SOCIETY

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During the late 1930s and early 1940s Japanese researchers carried out a large and well-funded study of customary law in rural North China. The results of that research, published in the 1950s, have been one of the major sources for theories about prewar Chinese rural society. In the last twenty years Japanese and Chinese researchers have undertaken follow-up studies of the same villages. This review article introduces Chinese and Japanese follow-up studies on the kankō chōsa villages, the new materials and approaches they have used, and their contributions to on-going debates about Chinese rural society and social change.

Keywords: *kankō chōsa*; follow-up studies; customary law; village governance; de-stratification; situational social relations

One of the most important sources for understanding rural life during the first half of the twentieth century are reports by Chinese and foreign social scientists who surveyed village communities and used their case studies to develop theories about the structure and organization of Chinese rural society. In recent years Chinese and foreign social scientists have returned to many of the villages that were studied in the first half of the twentieth century, undertaking follow-up studies that build on earlier research. This review article looks at the rich record of follow-up studies by Chinese and Japanese scholars on a set of North China villages that were first studied by Japanese researchers in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The wartime project, which is commonly referred to as the "*kankō chōsa*" 慣行調査 (*guanxing diaocha*, in Chinese), was a large and well-funded research project designed to investigate what the researchers called "customary law." The project brought together scholars from the South Manchurian Railroad's research bureau with researchers from Tokyo University, to conduct a joint investigation of a number of villages on the North China plains. The results of their research were published after the war in six large volumes, which included transcripts of hundreds of interviews with local officials, village heads, landlords and ordinary peasants.[1] The researchers queried various aspects of rural

1 Kankō Chōsa 1952–58; 1981.

life – family and family organization, lineage organization and function, economic activities, landholding and customs related to selling, renting and mortgaging land, markets and market practices, religious activities, annual ceremonies, births and deaths, marriages and funerals, village leadership, village governance, village relations with township and county government, and much more. One of the great attractions of the *kankō chōsa* volumes is the method of presentation. The volumes present the researchers' interview notes, in question and answer format, and thus we can hear the voices of different individuals in a village and explore their differing views, for example how landlords and tenants saw their mutual relations, or what different people thought about their families and lineages and their obligations to them.[2]

These *kankō chōsa* village studies have been one of the main sources for knowledge about rural social, economic and cultural practice in North China in the first half of the twentieth century, and were the key source for a number of well-known English-language works on North China rural society, including books by Ramon Myers, Philip Huang and Prasenjit Duara, as well as for many books and articles by Japanese scholars, including those who had been involved in the survey work like Hatada Takashi, as well as contemporary scholars like Uchiyama Masao.[3] Books based on the *kankō chōsa* surveys by Myers, Huang, Duara and Uchiyama were translated and published in Chinese and played a major role in stimulating Chinese interest in the *kankō chōsa* surveys.[4]

This review article will introduce Chinese and Japanese follow-up studies on the *kankō chōsa* villages, the new materials and approaches they have used, and their contributions to on-going debates about Chinese rural society and social change. The Chinese books that will be introduced here reflect a rapidly growing scholarly interest in rural history, including the study of rural society during the socialist era and changes under the reform policies. The rapid changes in post-reform China, including urbanization, the growth of a large migrant population, and growing gaps in income between cities and the countryside have led to strong interest in and support for academic research that examines rural problems, often under the rubric of "*sannong* 三农" –agriculture, rural areas, and peasants.[5] This new interest in "micro-studies" of single villages was inspired partly by the bold theoretical claims of the work of foreign scholars, but also by the work by Chinese social scientists, including the prize winning work of Zhang Letian on socialism and reforms in a Zhejiang village.[6] There are now a number of academic programs in rural studies, each with its own distinctive research style. These new schools include the group known as the central China school,[7] as well as centers at

2 For descriptions in English of the Japanese village surveys see Myers 1970 and Huang 1985. Uchiyama Masao has done a careful review of the literature on the *kankō chōsa* volumes and the various critiques. See Uchiyama 2003 and Uchiyama 2009. There is, of course, no question that the studies were done during the anti-Japanese war, and in areas occupied by the Japanese army, and they thus have to be used with caution.

3 Myers 1970, Huang 1985, Duara 1988, Hatada 1973, Uchiyama 2009, and Uchiyama 2003.

4 Huang 1986, Myers 1999, Duara 2003, and Uchiyama 2001.

5 The "sannong" formulation was developed in the early twenty-first century and has become a central feature of policy discussions in China.

6 Zhang 1998 (2005).

7 On the central China school, see Day 2008.

Fudan,[8] Nankai,[9] and Shanxi universities.[10] The American scholar Philip Huang has also played a role in stimulating rural studies in China, establishing the journal *Zhongguo Xiangcun Yanjiu* (*Rural China: An International Journal of History and Social Science*) in 2001. Scholars participating in the follow-up studies come from several disciplines, most commonly anthropology, sociology and history. Most of them have undertaken restudies of villages that are well known in the academic literature in order to look at long-term changes that cut across political and economic regimes.

This essay will first introduce a large scale Chinese-Japanese collaborative project that revisited five of the *kankō chōsa* villages.[11] It will then examine other follow-up studies in Chinese and Japanese on specific villages, review secondary studies based on the follow-up studies, and consider the contributions of these studies to our understanding of rural society and rural social change in twentieth-century North China.

NANKAI–JAPANESE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT ON NORTH CHINA VILLAGES

In the late 1980s policy changes in China opened the door for foreign researchers to undertake fieldwork in rural China. The Japanese partners in what was to become a major collaborative research project were all members of a small research group on Chinese rural history and society that had begun meeting monthly from 1977 to read and discuss the *kankō chōsa* records. Several of the members of the group, including Mitani Takashi, the head of the project from Hitotsubashi University, as well as the author of this review had spent research time at Nankai University in the 1980s and knew that Wei Hongyun, one of China's leading modern historians, and his colleagues shared our interest in rural history.[12] Between 1990 and 1995 the Nankai–Japanese team studied the villages of Shajing 沙井 (Shunyi District 顺义区, Beijing), Wudian 吳店 (Fangshan 房山区 District, Beijing), Fengjiacun 冯家村 (Jinghai county 静海县, Tianjin), Houxiazhai 后夏寨 (Pingyuan county 平原县, Shandong) and Sibeichai 寺北柴 (Luancheng county 栾城县,

8 The Fudan school is best known for the work of the sociologist Zhang Letian, author of the award-winning *Gaobie Lixiang: Renmin Gongshe Zhidu Yanjiu* ("Farewell to Ideals: A Study of the People's Commune System"), Zhang 1998, and for a series of case studies done under the supervision of Jiang Yihua 姜义华.

9 The Nankai group got its starts with the work of Wei Hongyun, and now includes several sub-groups. Wang Xianming 王先明 heads one sub-group and his students have published a series of books on North China in the Republican period; one of the members of that group, Li Jinzheng 李金铮, has published several books using pre-war Chinese survey materials on Ding and Qingyuan counties in Hebei. Another group at Nankai, headed by Zhang Si, will be discussed later in this essay.

10 Xing Long's group at Shanxi University has made a large collection of rural documents and established a center for social history. See Xing and Ma 2008; Xing 2007 provides an introduction to his work, and Xing, Ma and Chang 2011 explores the use of village archives.

11 I was a member of this joint project, and so information comes from personal records.

12 The members of the joint project team included on the Chinese side, Wei Hongyun, Zuo Zhiyuan 左志远, Zhang Hongxiang 张洪祥, Zhang Limin 张利民, Qi Jianmin, Zhang Si, and Li Enmin 李恩民. In the first stages Qi Jianmin, Zhang Si and Li Enmin all participated as graduate assistants. On the Japanese side the members were Mitani Takashi, Hamaguchi Nobuko, Uchiyama Masao, Suetsugu Reiko, Kasahara Tokushi, Nakao Katsumi, Sato Hiroshi, Oda Noriko, and Linda Grove.

Hebei).[13] During the research visits we interviewed village, township and county officials as well as ordinary peasants, recording the interviews, which were subsequently transcribed. The field notes, including the records of interviews in question and answer form, together with statistical data and other village records, were published in Japanese in three volumes. The first, which includes the interview records from Wudian, was published in 1993, and the second and third volumes, including the interviews and other records from the other four villages were published in two large volumes in 1999 and 2000.[14] The long-awaited Chinese edition of the field notes was published in 2012.[15]

Most of the members of the joint research team – both Chinese and Japanese – were historians, and one of the central focuses of the research was the history of each village from the time of the Japanese surveys in the early 1940s to the present. This included gathering accounts of the wartime and immediate post-war years, land reform, collectivization, the creation of communes and the Great Leap Forward, and the various mass movements in the 1960s. The Japanese and Chinese researchers formed two-person teams, with each team taking responsibility for two kinds of work. First was the collection of the life histories of each of our informants, and second was in-depth interviewing on specific topics. The informants were chosen from the whole village community, including former and present leaders as well as many ordinary peasants. Since we were particularly interested in understanding the impact of major national events, movements and policies on people in the village, many of our interviews were with older villagers who had participated in land reform and collectivization, who remembered the Great Leap, and who could tell us about changes in their own lives and those of their families. We also made a special effort to include women, a group that had been completely neglected in the wartime studies.[16] The effort was thus to get a comprehensive overview of changes in the villages over the last fifty years. The preliminary reflections of the Japanese members of the joint project were published in 2000 in a book that was intended for a general audience including our own students.[17] The first part of the book presents a chronological narrative of changes in the villages from the pre-war period to the reform era, and the latter half has individual essays by team members on the economy, education, politics, and social relations in the villages. Both the Chinese and Japanese members of the joint project

13 The original plan called for follow-up surveys of five of the major *kankō chōsa* villages. We had decided to exclude Lengshuigou 冷水沟 (Licheng county 历城县, Shandong) because one of our members, Nakao Katsumi, had carried out fieldwork in that village as part of his Ph.D. research. We experienced difficulty in getting local support for fieldwork in Houjiaying 侯家营 (Changli county 昌黎县, Hebei). In 2001 Zhang Si of Nankai, who had been a graduate assistant at the time of the surveys in the early 1990s, was able to carry out fieldwork in the village with his graduate students. We also added the village of Fengjiacun (Jinghai county, Tianjin), which had been the subject of a very short survey in the *kankō chōsa*. With the exception of Wudian (Fangshan district, Beijing), all of the villages were visited at least twice. I have personally made follow-up visits to four of the villages since 2007.

14 Mitani 1993, 1999 and 2000a.

15 Wei, Mitani and Zhang 2012. The fourth volume, edited by Zhang Si, includes materials from his survey of Houjiaying.

16 Suetsugu Reiko, one of the pioneers of Chinese women's history in Japan, did much of the interviewing of women and wrote an essay summarizing her conclusions. Suetsugu 2000.

17 Mitani *et al.* 2000. Chinese translations of the essays in this book are included in Wei, Mitani and Zhang 2012.

team have published articles and books using the materials, and some of these will be discussed later in this review.

While the Nankai–Japanese follow-up study of five villages is the largest collaborative project on the *kankō chōsa* villages to date, it is not the only follow-up study. There have been a number of follow-up studies of single villages, including two villages that were not included in the joint project – Lengshuigou 冷水沟 near Jinan in Shandong, and Houjiaying 侯家营 in Changli County 昌黎县 in northeast Hebei province.

FOLLOW-UP STUDIES ON LENGSHUIGOU (SHANDONG)

Lengshuigou is the most studied of the *kankō chōsa* villages; the first follow-up fieldwork was done in 1984–1986, and the most recent in 2009–2010.[18] One of the reasons for the concentration of interest on Lengshuigou is its location twenty kilometers east of the Shandong provincial capital of Jinan, which is home to Shandong University whose faculty and graduate students have undertaken most of the studies of Lengshuigou.[19] The first follow-up study was by Nakao Katsumi, a Japanese anthropologist who was a visiting foreign graduate student at Shandong University from 1984 to 1986. With the help of Shandong University faculty he was able to arrange to do fieldwork in the village and published his results in 1990.[20] Nakao, who was also a member of the Tokyo *kankō chōsa* research group, set out to examine the impact of land reform, women's participation in agriculture, and political movements on rural society. He was interested in exploring the structural features of village society and identifying the links to earlier forms of organization, and exploring what had been changed and why. He also devoted some time to interviewing older villagers in an effort to try to verify data in the wartime *kankō chōsa* interviews.

Lengshuigou was the largest of the *kankō chōsa* villages, with a population of 350 households and 1,800 residents in 1941, which had grown to 819 households with 3,413 residents in 1984. The *kankō chōsa* researchers had selected the village in part because, unlike most North China plains villages, it grew rice. Before 1949 Lengshuigou peasants had sold their rice in urban markets for a high price, using the cash income to buy less expensive grains for their own consumption. The cultivation of rice and general prosperity of the village had been facilitated by its access to water from an artesian aquifer that lay under the Jinan region. Nakao's study argued that the village had become relatively impoverished during the socialist era, partly because of the draining of the aquifer as one of the unintended consequences of industrial development projects in the Jinan region. Policy changes, including the implementation of the unified purchasing and marketing system in the 1950s, also

18 In addition to the published studies discussed in the following sections, Lengshuigou has also been studied as part of a major research project by the history department at Shandong University that has done a comparative study of six villages in Shandong. See the preliminary report for that project, Guojia Sheke Jijin 2011. I would like to thank Zhang Limin and Zhang Weimin for providing a copy of this report. Several Shandong University sociology graduate students have also written their M.A. theses on the village.

19 See the list of M.A. theses on the *kankō chōsa* villages appended to the list of references.

20 Nakao 1990.

contributed to the impoverishment by eliminating the incentives for growing rice. Nakao discovered that the downturn in income had touched off factional struggles in the village between different lineages. Nakao's study also examined changes in customs, including changes in the important practice of family division. In the pre-war period, family division had usually been postponed until the death of the older generation, but beginning in the late 1950s, families had started to divide when they experienced internal conflicts, and changes in the policy on allocation of housing land in the early 1980s led to the common practice of family division when a son married.

Nakao's survey was followed in 1990–1991 by a large follow-up survey conducted by sociologists at Shandong University. Xu Jingze 徐经泽 directed the project, with the collaboration of Kim Kwang-ok, a prominent anthropologist from Seoul National University who had used the *kankō chōsa* records on Lengshuigou to write his Oxford M.A. thesis. Yang Shanmin supervised the fieldwork, which was undertaken by a team of Shandong University students, and the results were published as *Xiandaihua: Xiangcun de Xuanze – Yige Cunji Shequ de Zonghe Yanjiu* ("Modernization: Village Choices – a Comprehensive Study of One Rural Social Community").[21] The Xu and Yang survey set out to provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the economy and society in the village, and to link that information to the experiences of individual villagers. At the time of the survey, the break-up of the commune and the division of land among households had created a diversified occupational structure. The survey plotted the percentage of individuals engaged in agriculture, examined other work choices and used data on individuals and families to examine the structure of income in the village. Looking back on recent history, the authors of the survey concluded that the commune system had failed: while it had succeeded in gaining political control over the peasants, it had failed to provide economic incentives and as a result commune members had little motivation to work.

As for changes in cultural patterns, the authors argued that pre-war religious institutions like temples and temple fairs had disappeared with little protest from the villagers. Follow-up studies on other villages – including Houxiazhai and Houjiaying – have shown similar patterns. The only one of the villages that had rebuilt a village temple was Sibeichai in Luancheng, Hebei. In that village a small group of villagers – mostly women – had gathered funds to rebuild a small, one-room temple; there were no statues in the temple, only images of gods painted on the walls. Sibeichai also had revived a temple fair (*miaohui* 庙会) – the main feature of which was several days of traditional opera performed by an invited professional troop of actors.[22]

When we compare the *kankō chōsa* reports of religious activities in the villages, which Prasenjit Duara had argued were a central component of the "cultural nexus of power" that he believed played a central role in village governance, it is surprising to see how such practices disappeared with little resistance. In the post-reform era there is much greater room for religious practice, and in many parts of China – particularly in the Southeast coastal region – villages have rebuilt temples and restored rituals. The lack of similar activities in most of the *kankō chōsa* villages is a puzzle. While several of the follow-up studies

21 This 323-page study was published by the Shandong Daxue Chubanshe. I would like to thank Zhang Si from Nankai for giving me a copy of this book.

22 See Mitani 2000b for a description of the reconstruction of the village temple and the temple fair.

have noted this phenomenon, so far no one has offered a convincing theory as to why this should be so.

While there has been no revival of traditional Chinese religious practices in Lenghshuigou, beginning in the 1980s Protestant groups from Hong Kong began to proselytize in the region, and at the time of the Xu and Yang survey there were some ninety Christians in the village, most of them middle-aged or elderly women. The survey included interviews with a number of the Christian converts.

The most recent follow-up study of Lengshuigou was published in 2013 as part of a national project to study one hundred villages.[23] The national project was organized under the leadership of the well-known sociologist Lu Xueyi and sociologists at Shandong University undertook the restudy of Lengshuigou.[24] According to the leaders of the research group, they planned to produce a diachronic study that would make use of all of the earlier studies of the village to examine major changes in village society over one hundred years. While social historians interested in the history of the *longue dureé* usually construct narratives of the process of change, the authors of the Lengshuigou study say that they were interested in an analysis of the changes themselves, particularly the structural changes in village society. Thus in presenting the results of their study, each chapter of the book begins with parallel descriptions of the subject of that chapter (population, education, etc.) in the pre-1949 village, during the period of collectivization, and in the era since the reforms.

This "100 year" study used earlier works including the *kankō chōsa* materials, other documentary records, interviews, observation, historical materials that had been collected and edited by the village,[25] and a detailed survey that sought to sample one member of every household in the village.[26] The book includes seven chapters on population, education and sanitation, family, social structure and women's roles, economic structures, village politics, village culture and traditions, social networks, and an introduction and conclusion. Together they provide an overview of changes over the last one hundred years.

For this reviewer the two most interesting chapters were Chapter 4 on social structure and social life, and Chapter 8 on social relations and social support networks. Both chapters use sophisticated analytical schemes to understand the dynamics of village social stratification and social networks over the last century. The authors argue that there was a

23 Lin *et al.* 2013. According to an explanation given in a work guide for the project, the 100-village study was first proposed in 1997 and funding was approved in 1998. The volume on Lengshuigou is the fourteenth study from the project to be published, and all have been published by the Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe.

24 Lu Xueyi passed away about a month before a conference to mark the publication of the survey on Lengshuigou.

25 Lengshuigou village had a tradition of promoting education and many villagers had become teachers. Those individuals, working together with the village committee, published a village gazetteer in 2010 and the editorial committee is continuing to collect materials on the village. See Lengshuigou Cunzhi Editorial Committee 2010. Individuals in several of the other villages, including Houxiazhai in Shandong and Shajing in the Beijing suburbs, are in the process of collecting materials to write their own village histories.

26 The text of the questionnaire is included as an appendix to the book, as are samples of transcripts from interviews. The subjects for the survey were selected on a "random" basis, in an effort to obtain a wide representation. Interviewers administered the survey to the first adult they met when they entered each family compound; their original target was to achieve a sample of 580 respondents, and they obtained responses from 540. See details on the survey in Lin *et al.* 2013, p. 32.

"de-stratification" (*qujiecenghua* 去阶层化) during the collective period; this de-stratification broke down the complicated status hierarchy of the traditional society, reclassifying all individuals as "commune members" with few distinctions in occupation, work or reward for work. Economic status, educational attainments and family connections, which all had been important determinants of social status in the earlier social system, ceased to function as differentiating factors; in their places, political categories became the main determinants of difference. All of the villagers were put into one of three categories: village cadre, ordinary commune member, or member of a discriminated group.[27] The study also shows that although the period is usually seen as one of leveling of economic resources and equality of distribution, in Lengshuigou the income gaps between the different teams were quite large, and the only individuals who were able to shift from a poorer to a richer team were women who could sometimes manage this through marriage.

In looking at post-reform social stratification, the study applies Lu Xueyi's categorization of rural social statuses based on occupation to an analysis of Lengshuigou.[28] The authors argue that beginning in the late 1970s with the "removal of the hats" that marked those who had been assigned bad class status, the standards for determining status changed, resulting in a contemporary society in which occupation, income and educational level play central roles. Proximity to the Jinan metropolitan area and the setting up of an "industrial zone" on part of the village's former farm land opened many economic opportunities which were successfully exploited by more adventurous villagers who came to join a new, relatively wealthy private entrepreneurial strata.

In Chapter 8 on social relations and networks, the study takes up the question of how individuals interact with others and build social networks. Much of the theoretical argument of this section is based on the 2007 book on social trust in rural Chinese communities by the senior author, Lin Juren.[29] Beginning with Fei Xiaotong's well-known explanation of the differential mode of association, which describes the way in which individuals in traditional Chinese society constructed social relations in concentric layers based on family, lineage, locality and other particularistic categories, the authors go on to argue that after 1949 the party state strove to break those relations, and replace them with universalistic values based on loyalty to collective and state. They argue that the effort was not a complete success, since the particularistic relations based on blood ties simply became more hidden. Since the collective could not always provide everything the individual or family needed, individuals still needed to negotiate on many occasions, and relied on others in their work team depending on whether they felt relatively "closer" or more "distant" to another team member. This created a formation the authors refer to as "semi-universalism" (*zhun pubian zhuyi* 准普遍主义). The state's efforts to eradicate earlier systems of affiliation were complicated by the fact that when mutual aid teams and lower-level cooperatives

27 The argument is of course tricky – since, at least in theory, a major factor in the original distinction between "ordinary commune member" and those who belonged to the discriminated classes of landlord, rich peasant, bad elements, counter-revolutionaries were economic statuses at the time of land reform. After collectivization and the elimination of private ownership of land and means of production, the economic distinctions were eliminated leaving the statuses as political classes.

28 Lu 2002.

29 Lin 2007.

were established, existing family and lineage relations were one of the resources for constructing new units. When the transition was made to higher-level cooperatives with compulsory membership for all, sub-village work teams, the lowest unit of organization, were based on village residence areas. Since in Lengshuigou, as in most North China villages, members of lineages tended to live in close proximity, lineage ties usually overlapped with the primary collective unit, the work team.

Big changes came to this system after the beginning of reforms. With the breakup of the commune, individuals were freed from compulsory team labor, and as more and more individuals found employment outside the village, they began to construct new social networks that extended beyond village borders. In this section the authors make very effective use of their survey data to show how individuals build three different types of networks, which they refer to as instrumental, emotional and exchange-based. This growing diversity in types of networks has led to the decline of the differential mode of association with its built-in hierarchical principles and its replacement by "modern" style social networks in which individuals exercise much greater choice in the type of networks they construct.[30]

FOLLOW-UP STUDIES OF HOUJIAYING

One of the chief features of the follow-up studies of Houjiaying in Changli County, northeast Hebei, has been the use of a rich archive of village documentary sources from the 1950s to the1980s, which were first discovered by Zhang Si of the Nankai University history department.[31] Zhang, who was a graduate research assistant on the Nankai–Japanese project, studied in Japan, earning a doctoral degree at the University of Tokyo. His original research plan, based on the use of interviews to explore village history, was changed when he discovered a rich collection of village materials.[32] The village "archive" includes: "class archives" from the *siqing* (four clean-up movement of 1963 to 1966) which provided three-generation histories of each family in the village; statistical records from the 1950s to the early twenty-first century; village financial records, including receipts, from 1964 to 2004; records of activities in the village including criticism and self-criticism by party members and documents relating to the restoration of the reputations of those attacked during the *siqing* movement and the Cultural Revolution, including the movement to cleanse class ranks; village correspondence from the 1960s to the present; cadre notebooks; private documents including records of family divisions and land deeds; records on those who were classified as the "*silei fenzi*" (four type elements who were designated as class enemies); and census records for the village since 1949.[33] Zhang Si and his students

30 Oda Noriko, one of the members of the Nankai–Japan survey team, has made a similar argument in an article that stresses the role of individual networks in reform-era China. Oda 2010.

31 Zhang Si had joined the Nankai–Japanese collaborative project as a graduate assistant, and then earned his Ph.D. at Tokyo University with a dissertation on village community that used the *kankō chōsa* materials on Shajing as the main sources. Zhang 2005.

32 According to Zhang Si's account, the materials were found in an old wooden chest that had been used as a bench in the village office.

33 Reproductions of the documents have been published as volume four of the field notes on the Nankai–Japanese joint study. Wei, Mitani and Zhang 2012.

published a massive volume on the village in 2010.[34] In that volume Zhang provided an overview for the individual subject chapters, which were written by his students; as a result, there is some unevenness in the presentation. The book focuses on developments after 1949, taking up various aspects of the village's relationship with outside forces and actors. Some of the most interesting of the arguments take up one of the classic questions about Chinese village life, raised in a very memorable way by G. William Skinner in his 1971 article, "Chinese Peasants and the Closed Community: An Open and Shut Case."[35] While Skinner's article presented an explanation of the long-term cycle of opening and closing that he argued characterized the relations between village communities, the market and the state, others have developed their own schemes to think about the links in the post-revolutionary period. One early manifestation of this was Audrey Donnithorne's theory of the cellular nature of post-revolutionary society, in which she described post-revolutionary society as constructed of a vast number of small, cellular units, striving for self-sufficiency with weak links between units.[36] Friedman, Pickowicz, Selden and Johnson in their well-known study of the village of Wugong also argued that opportunities to go outside the village were greatly restricted during the age of communes, even in a village like Wugong, which was a national model.[37]

One of the most creative chapters of *Houjiaying* is a reconstruction of contacts outside the village, based on receipts and records of village expenditures during the commune period (Chapter 7). The chapter looks at four major categories of connections outside the village: first, attendance at meetings; second, missions outside for investigation purposes; third, study tours; and fourth, trips in search of economic connections. He Jiangli 何江丽, the author of this chapter, argues that, "After 1949 there was a hardening of the borders of the village, but it maintained a limited but open status, and the more complete penetration of the village by the state brought with it new forms of interaction with the world outside the village, and in some ways expanded the geographical scope of outside relations" (p. 366). She used the village receipts to plot the changing intensity of contacts outside the village. This was possible because villagers who were sent to meetings at the commune or county, or on other missions, could report their expenses and receive payment. The village covered expenses even for meetings at the nearby commune headquarters. For example, for such local meetings a villager would receive a small amount to cover the bicycle parking fee and 3–4 *jiao* to cover the costs of eating lunch in town. He's calculations show that the pace of meetings at the commune peaked in 1974 with an average of eleven meetings a month, with twenty-five villagers attending those meetings. By 1979, at the beginning of the reform period, the meeting pace had slowed, with an average of two to three meetings a month.

A second category of contacts with the outside involved *waidiao* ('outside investigation'). Chinese practice called for "background investigations" for individuals who were applying to join the party, the military or to enter post-secondary education; in the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, such investigations were also undertaken as part of political

34 Zhang 2010.

35 Skinner 1971.

36 Donnithorne 1972.

37 Friedman *et al.* 1993.

movements, when units sought to investigate the past of members who were targeted in movements like the anti-rightist, four clean-ups, and cleansing the class ranks.[38] And later, in the late 1970s and early 1980s new investigations were undertaken to clear the names of those who had been falsely accused in earlier movements.

Houjiaying may have had an unusually high number of outside contacts for a North China village. The village is located in the northeast corner of Hebei province close to the main route of access to the Northeast, and from the early twentieth century on, large numbers of Houjiaying villagers had gone to the Northeast as seasonal laborers; many Houjiaying families had relatives who had stayed in the Northeast after the war.[39] During the political movements in the 1960s and 1970s – movements like *siqing*, which reinvestigated the class status of every village family, and cleansing the class ranks, which readjusted the class designations made at the time of land reform – a work team that settled in the village called for thorough investigations of the outside connections of village families. These investigations provided many opportunities for village cadre to visit towns and cities where Houjiaying villagers had once lived or worked, or where they had relatives. For example, Hou Baishun, who was the head of the militia and deputy party secretary, made twenty-one visits outside of the village in 1970 on such missions.

One of the other ways in which villagers interacted with the outside world was through "study tours" arranged by the local government to promote various political, cultural and economic activities. The villager who traveled farthest was the agricultural technician, Wang Jingyuan; in 1970 he was selected to join a county team of fifty agricultural technicians that was sent to Hainan to study the production methods of high-yield gaoliang.

The final category of outside relations involved trips outside in search of economic assistance. While we often think of the village under the commune system as embedded in a tightly-controlled planned economy with little room for economic maneuvering, the evidence from Houjiaying suggests a much more fluid situation. While much of the travel related to efforts to start rural industry dates to the last decade of the commune system, there is also evidence of earlier efforts to use personal connections – for example with a brother working in a Shanghai fertilizer factory – to gain access to goods that were in limited supply.

This brief overview of Chapter 7 provides a glimpse at the richness of the analysis based on village archival sources. Other chapters examine agricultural production, sidelines, division of income, population, insurance, medical care, and aspects of daily life including education, women, and the impact of new media. Analyses of the lists of movies that were shown in the village, magazine subscriptions paid for by the village and records of broadcasts give us some idea of the changing mental world in which Houjiaying villagers lived. Several letters of protest, addressed to Chairman Mao, show us how a native of the village who had become a cadre in an outside organization responded when his family's class status was changed as part of the *siqing* movement. The stamps and comments on

38 The records on Houjiaying are probably more complete than those of most villages. Houjiaying was designated as a test point for the *siqing* movement, and a work team was resident in the village throughout the movement.

39 When Philip Huang classified the thirty-plus villages he was studying, Houjiaying was classified in the category of villages that had produced large numbers of emigrants. See Huang 1985, Appendix A.

the letters also show how the system responded – or perhaps more accurately failed to respond – to the complaints.[40]

A catalogue of the village archives together with copies of many of the original documents was published in 2012, giving scholars wishing to explore the village archive an idea of the total contents.[41]

At about the same time that Zhang Si and his students were exploring the use of village archives, Wang Jing finished her M.A. thesis at Beijing University's sociology department. Her thesis focused on kinship and family.[42] Part 1 of the thesis made extensive use of the *kankō chōsa* materials to examine kinship in the village, focusing on the dominant Hou lineage. Part 2 of the thesis, which looked at developments after 1949, examined changing notions of physical space in the village, family and marriage patterns, and political movements. Wang Jing used the *kankō chōsa* materials, her own interview notes, and a collection of village records that she found in the county archives, which seem to be duplicates of some of the *siqing* records that Zhang Si and his group uncovered in the village. One of the focuses of her treatment was the change in physical living space. At the time of the Japanese survey, Houjiaying villagers lived in large compounds, known as *yuan xin* 院心, which were home to extended family units. The Tangshan earthquake in 1976 destroyed part of the village housing, and when the village was rebuilt small units for nuclear families replaced the large compounds. Wang argues that the new housing arrangements produced a more harmonious society, eliminating the causes of petty quarrels that had characterized life in the larger compounds. Wang also used the *siqing* records from the county archives to present a detailed picture of the political struggles and village leadership from the time of land reform to the Cultural Revolution, linking lineage and family politics to the various struggles and using individual cases to document the process of readjusting class status in the village.

MULTI-VILLAGE FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Lan Linyou, an anthropologist at Minzu University of China, has been one of the major figures in stimulating interest in restudying the *kankō chōsa* villages. For his Ph.D. thesis Lan chose the village of Houxiazhai in Northwest Shandong province – a village that had been included in the Nankai–Japanese collaborative project. Lan conducted fieldwork in the village in July and August 2001 and submitted his dissertation, which was published in 2007.[43] Lan says that he became interested in North China villages after reading the works of Huang and Duara, as well as the work of Maurice Freedman on the Chinese lineage. His fieldwork led him to doubt some of their conclusions about the nature of lineage in North China villages. On the basis of his own fieldwork, Lan concluded that Huang and Duara had erred in using the surname as a proxy for lineage, and as a result had misunderstood the nature of lineage relations and their impact on political order in the

40 The letters can be found in Wei, Mitani and Zhang 2012, pp. 5–9, and 129–138.

41 Wei, Mitani and Zhang 2012. Zhang Si has continued to collect village archives and has established a small center at Nankai to work on the records from a number of North China villages.

42 Wang 2006.

43 Lan Linyou 2007.

villages.[44] Lan argues that the North China lineage was a "broken lineage," i.e. a very weak version of the classic lineage. The North China lineage lacked most of the outward representations of the classic South China lineage – including the lineage hall, commonly owned land, lineage schools, and even the genealogy.[45] Lan's study included chapters that looked at marriage and the family, marriage strategies, and the relationship between the local area and the national state. In this latter chapter Lan, on the basis of interviews with several elderly informants, described the roles of lineage and non-lineage groups in village politics during the pre-war and wartime periods. On the basis of a very detailed description of the complicated factional politics of the early 1940s, Lan proposed a theory of what he calls situational social relations (*qingjingxing shehui guanxi* 情境性社会关系), a theory that he developed much more fully in his second book. Lan then applied the theory to an analysis of village factional struggles in the 1960s.

Lan also challenged a number of general assumptions about marriage patterns in North China villages, including Skinner's suggestion that the standard area for choosing marriage partners probably was coterminous with the standard marketing area. Building on Skinner's claim that in most parts of rural China a peasant's world was directly linked to the standard marketing area, Ishida Hiroshi and others have argued that most rural marriage partners were chosen from those who came from the same marketing area.[46] Lan used detailed data on marriages in Houxiazhai over several decades to argue that this was not the case. He makes two major points. First, Lan argued that if we drew a circle on a map with a five-kilometer radius around Houxiazhai, we would find that most marriage partners came from villages within that circle. However, while there would be some villages with dense marriage relationships with Houxiazhai, there would be other villages with no marriage relations. Second, within that five-kilometer radius, some of the villages that provided marriage partners would belong to other standard marketing areas. On the basis of this data, Lan argued that the crucial factor was not whether a village was in the same standard marketing area, but rather whether there were relatives or friends in a village. Lan's study of village marriages looked not only at marriage networks, but also explored the different types of marriages, how the patterns had changed over several decades, how class status impacted marriage choices in the Maoist era, and the rising costs of marriage in recent years.

Although I had visited Houxiazhai many times as part of the Nankai–Japanese project and thought that I had a good grasp of the village's dynamics, I learned a great deal from Lan's book and his description of the internal dynamics of village politics. He was able to get his informants to provide rich narrative accounts of village politics from the 1940s to the early 1970s, and his analytical approach opened new ways of looking at lineage and politics at the grass roots level. Unfortunately the book shows little evidence of using either

44 Lan is correct that both Huang and Duara had assumed that those who shared a surname belonged to the same lineage. However, it is important to note that the *kankō chōsa* researchers, as well as the Nankai–Japanese collaborative project members had been told by the villagers of Houxiazhai that surnames did not correspond to lineage – that there were several lineages of Wang's, as well as of Li's.

45 Some of the Houxiazhai lineages possessed what they called "jiatang" 家堂, which were hanging scrolls that depicted the generations of the ancestors (male) as if their spirit tablets were lined up in generational rows.

46 Ishida 1986.

the *kankō chōsa* materials or the field notes of the Nankai–Japanese study, which had already been published in Japanese at the time of his study. Use of these materials would have greatly enriched his account.

Lan's second book is a study of Houjiaying, with comparisons drawn from field studies by members of his group in Lengshuigou and his own earlier work on Houxiazhai.[47] The book is theoretically more sophisticated than the first book on Houxiazhai, and makes extensive and effective use of western, particularly French, theoretical works in the field of political anthropology.[48] While Lan did all his own fieldwork for the first book, for this second volume he organized a team of students and assistants who participated in the research. This book does make use of the *kankō chōsa* materials and draws very fruitful comparisons between the villages in the 1940s, the collectivist era, and contemporary times. Lan lays out a very ambitious intellectual agenda in the introduction to the book, stressing the importance of his theory that common surname does not equal common lineage, and that those of the same lineage do not necessarily become allies in village political affairs.

Lan's focus in this book is on village politics, trying to understand how and why certain individuals become village leaders. Lan constructed a typology of what he identified as four types of village leaders: protective (*baohuxing* 保护型), weak broker (*yinglixing* 赢利型), puppet (*kuileixing* 傀儡型), and part predator/part protector (*chizhuang huzhuang xing* 吃庄护庄型). This typology, which was constructed as a challenge to Duara's typology of village leaders, is then used to analyze political leadership from the 1940s through the village elections held in 2009. Lan presents a very rich description of the people who become village leaders over more than half a century, looking at the changing institutional processes and logics for selection, and examining how the selections fit with ideas about family and lineage. Although there had been some form of election throughout the reform period, Lan notes that ordinary villagers only become deeply interested in the elections after 2003, when village officials begin to receive regular payment for their work.[49]

Lan's book concludes with a long chapter in which he goes over his own arguments in contrast with those of Huang, Duara, Uchiyama and others, looking for what he describes as an "indigenous understanding of sharing surname but not sharing lineage," and the implications of this for understanding the fundamental organizing principles of the village. On the basis of his extensive fieldwork in the *kankō chōsa* villages, Lan is convinced that the North China villages are not nearly as closed as Huang imagined, not nearly as organized as Duara envisioned (pp. 338–39). To understand what happened in village leadership

47 Lan says that his original plan was to investigate all six villages. However, two of the villages – Shajing (Shunyi) and Wudian (Fangshan) – were both in the relatively near suburbs of Beijing. The counties to which they belonged had become districts of Beijing by the early twenty-first century, and both villages had undergone very rapid urbanization, losing their agricultural land and turning to urban employment. The book makes some minor references to Sibeichai in Luancheng County, but Lan and his students were not able to gain sufficient material to include it in the same way as the other villages.

48 Lan Linyou 2012.

49 During the collective period, village cadre were expected to work in the fields and earn work points like other members of the collective, at the same time they were expected to carry out directives from higher-level organizations, even if they conflicted with the interests of the village. As a result, competition to hold village office was not so high. This changes after the reforms when some begin to see the possibilities of personally profiting from village office holding.

struggles and why, Lan argues for an analytical framework based on situational social relations, an approach that focuses attention on events that are unrelated to structural factors in the village, but that play a role, at least for some period of time, in influencing the outcome of village power struggles.

Lan ends the book with a discussion of the "songs of the lotus flowers," (*lianhua luo* 莲花落) folk performances that had once been popular at village temple fairs in Houjiaying and nearby villages. He describes the on-going loss of community in North China villages, one sign of which is the closure of village schools since there are no longer enough children to fill their seats. He sees this as just one of the signs of the loss of village public space and common feeling. This loss has been accompanied by a fierce competition for village office that increasingly involves the participation of candidates with connections to "black forces," which bring the threat of violence into the village world. While Lan's work presents a pessimistic view of contemporary Chinese rural politics, it also offers many interesting approaches that challenge the way other scholars have viewed the North China village polity. Lan says his work was undertaken with the intention of providing an indigenous reading of village politics, but also with the intention of opening a conversation about the theoretical implications of the transformation of rural China with foreign scholars.

JAPANESE INTERPRETATIVE WORKS

The works discussed to this point presented the results of follow-up studies of the *kankō chōsa* villages. This section will briefly introduce some of the interpretative works in Japanese by scholars who were members of the Nankai–Japanese joint project. Given the limitations of space, this section will focus on the work of three scholars – Hamaguchi Nobuko, Uchiyama Masao, and Qi Jianmin – who have contributed to the theoretical debates about the nature of North China villages and village governance.[50] Other important work has been done by Nakao Katsumi on village social relations and customs, Suetsugu Reiko on women's lives and village gender relations, Kasahara Tokushi on education, and Mitani Takashi on village religious practices and associational groups.[51]

Hamaguchi's essay on village cadre begins with a very careful reconstruction of the generations of leadership in each of the villages.[52] Using the *kankō chōsa* data as a starting point, she first examines the shifts that came after land reform. The national narratives tell us that there was a radical change from older village elites to new village governments based on the landless and poor peasants. Her reconstruction shows that while village heads and party secretaries were chosen from the poor peasants association, individuals who had

50 Interested readers can find work by the other team members in Mitani *et al.* 2000, where Nakao Katsumi summarizes his views on personal relations in the villages and the practice of establishing fictive generation ranking across lineages; Kasahara Tokushi's studies of village education and the intimidation of school teachers, which basically removed them as important challengers to the role of the party in rural North China; Mitani Takashi's study of village religious practice and other forms of customary communal activities; and my own comparison of economic development patterns. See also Oda 2010 for her interpretation of strategies of building networks that has many similarities to the arguments in Lin 2013.

51 See their essays in Mitani *et al.* 2000; Nakao 2000; Suetsugu 2000; Kasahara 2000; and Mitani 2000b.

52 See Hamaguchi in Mitani *et al.* 2000, pp. 113–50.

belonged to village councils in the pre-liberation period continued to play a role in village governance. During the early stages of collectivization in the mid-1950s a second generation of leaders appeared who would continue to hold office until the political campaigns of the *siqing* and Cultural Revolution. Many of this generation of leaders were army veterans who had joined the party and gained leadership experience through military service. The third generation of leadership included those who rose as Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.[53] In most of the villages, members of this generation were still in charge into the early twenty-first century. Hamaguchi argues that their continued occupation of leadership positions was largely the result of the reform polices, which had opened many alternatives to talented younger villagers who left to find work, making it difficult to recruit new leadership. These circumstances produced the situation discussed in Lan's work on Houjiaying, where incentives for personal benefit became a crucial element in decisions to compete for political leadership. Hamaguchi also touches on the question of the relation between lineage loyalty and political leadership in the village, arguing from the case of Houxiazhai, that over the long run we can identify efforts to try to balance leadership roles among the different lineages. When the balance broke down, leaders were replaced. In some villages there were frequent leadership changes because of the difficulties of finding a balance, in others there was longer-term stability.

Uchiyama Masao is known as the leading Japanese scholar on questions of "*kyōdōtai*," or village community, the issue that was at the heart of the wartime and 1950s Japanese debates about the interpretation of the *kankō chōsa* studies. The well-known Kaino–Hirano debates about whether one could identify *kyōdōtai* in Chinese villages, and if so what was involved, have been discussed at length by later Western, Japanese and Chinese scholars and have been the starting point for many of the studies of the special characteristics of Chinese villages.[54] Uchiyama has provided the most complete review of those debates, and then gone on to consider what we have learned from the re-studies of the 1990s.[55] This review will look at two major aspects of Uchiyama's argument: collective practices, and the nature of the village elite.

Uchiyama focuses on the relationship between pre-liberation practices of mutual aid and assistance, including crop watching and voluntary labor exchanges, and asks whether there is any connection between those earlier practices and the willingness of villagers to accept the Communist Party's call for collectivization. He argues that, "In the background of the agricultural collectivization we have to consider the already existing forms of cooperation that involved sharing of labor and equipment and labor exchanges of various types, as well as the customs of sharing the use of wells and other 'communal' activities. Peasants who were accustomed to a rural society that was based on such traditional agriculture customs saw the collectivization as a rational agriculture policy" (p. 241).

53 While it is often argued the Cultural Revolution was primarily an urban phenomenon, in the villages it presented an opportunity for a new generation of younger leaders to organize and assert their claims on leadership.

54 There are many different understandings of what is involved in "*kyōdōtai*" which is commonly understood as the translation for "community" (the German *gemeinschaft*), which was a central analytical term in German sociology. Hirano understood this term – following Marx, Wittfogel and others – to mean the community as the base of the authoritarian state.

55 Uchiyama 2003. There are also some essays on *kyōdōtai* in his 2009 book.

A second and related question is the role of village leaders, cadre after 1949, and their relationship with the formal organizations of the party and state. Uchiyama argues that in the pre-liberation period village leaders organized activities in consultation with the county government. These leaders were in theory chosen through elections, in practice by the village elite, and had the responsibility of dealing both with the demands of the county government and with maintaining order within the village.

When he turns to consider the village cadre of the collective period, Uchiyama asks whether village cadre after 1949 are totally subservient to the party-state, or whether they have some ability to protect the interests of the villagers, which do not always coincide with those of the state. One of the crucial periods for examining this question is the Great Leap Forward, when cadre were strongly pressured to respond to party-state demands. Quoting a long-time accountant and village elder of Houxiazhai, Uchiyama argues that village cadre found ways to get around the demands of the party-state without directly confronting higher-level officials, thus acting to protect village interests. Overall, Uchiyama believes that a focus on *kyōdōtai* provides "multiple windows" for viewing Chinese society and economy from the 1940s to the present, and should help in understanding how Chinese peasants dealt with the party and the state.

The last book to be introduced here, Qi Jianmin's study of state power and social integration, takes up many of these issues, offering a theoretically sophisticated argument that is grounded in a very careful reading of the evidence from both the *kankō chōsa* records and the Nankai–Japanese follow-up study.[56] Qi begins with questions about the relationship between state and society. He notes that while some scholars believe that the authoritarian state is able to exercise control down to the level of the individual, others believe that even under an authoritarian regime state and society are separate entities that move, at least to some extent, independently. Most attempts to explore these issues have either concentrated on the state and its bureaucracy, or on intermediate organizations. Qi set out to consider these issues at the most basic level in China, i.e. the village. He focuses his study on the complicated questions related to what he calls social integration (*shakai ketsugō* 社会結合), examining the ties that are created and bind the people who share a common living space and how they organize themselves. In exploring these issues, Qi takes up many of the concerns that others have touched on: lineage and its impact on village governance, the role of religion and religious practices, the importance of collective work, etc. His book is divided into two parts, the first on pre-liberation North China rural society, and the second on the post-liberation period to the end of the Cultural Revolution.

In Qi's reading, the relationship between village leaders and ordinary villagers undergoes definite change as a result of the political movements of the early 1960s, especially the *siqing* movement. Beginning with land reform, the party state had worked to develop village cadre whose loyalty was to the party state. However, after the shock of *siqing* criticism, village cadre realized that they had to continue to live in the village, and that they needed to find a way to protect village interests. While party central wanted to put the stress on class struggle, in most villages the real struggle was between the ordinary peasants

56 Qi 2006.

and the village cadre, and village cadre increasingly sought ways to avoid offending their fellow villagers – a style Qi refers to as acting like good fellows (*haoren zhuyi* 好人主义).

In Qi's view of rural society, although the village is the smallest constituent unit, it is not a community (*kyōdōtai*) in the Japanese or European sense of the term. While it has since the late Imperial period served as an administrative unit, there is little sense of "everyone together." Unlike a tightly closed *kyōdōtai*, the Chinese village was open, it allowed easy movement of people in and out, and changes in land ownership. Self-governance institutions in the villages were weak, there was a major gap – both pre-liberation and post-liberation – between village leaders/cadre and the ordinary peasants, and this opened the door for the state to enter as a mediator and maintainer of order. Qi argues that after 1949 both the state and village internal linkages become stronger. Within the village the organization of production teams, the fixing of class statuses and the establishment of the household registration system led to a system in which there was a struggle over scarce resources. This created a structure in which the state seemingly had authoritarian power, but found it very difficult to exercise that power at the base.

CONCLUSION

Over the last twenty years new studies of the *kankō chōsa* villages have provided a wealth of empirical data and new interpretations. As Chinese villages in the second decade of the twenty-first century are rapidly changing under the impact of urbanization and out migration, these new studies offer the opportunity for long-term comparative studies of a wide range of political, social, economic, institutional, and lifestyle questions. At a time when many historians are researching the history of the People's Republic of China and when new books by the Chinese journalist Yang Jisheng and the Western scholar Frank Dikötter[57] have raised fundamental questions about the history of the "socialist era," these follow-up studies of the *kankō chōsa* villages offer a rich collection of village-level data and interpretation which allow us to explore the complexities of local history and the interaction of national policies and campaigns in a number of social and political settings. By preserving the lives, experiences and words of peasants in a rapidly disappearing rural world, these studies should contribute to a better understanding of what the socialist revolution meant in rural China, and how rapid transformations of the reform era have changed rural life.

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57 Yang 2012; Dikötter 2010, 2013.

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