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Domestic Religious Beliefs and Practices amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The candidate affirms that this is her own work, unaided except by her supervisors, and has not been submitted for a degree at any other University.

Gloria Luksun King.

GLORIA LUKSUN KING.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

(i) OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project is to try to understand the domestic religious beliefs and practices found amongst the Cantonese-speaking people in Johannesburg.

Bodde (1962: 21) writes that from the earliest times ancestor worship in China has predominated above all other forms of religious expression and, furthermore, Freedman (1970: 164) points out that "the universality of ancestor worship among the Chinese is the universality of the domestic cult... " It seems that is is also the domestic cult which has best survived amongst the Overseas Chinese, and this is certainly true for the Chinese in Johannesburg.

In the study of ancestor worship in the field of Social Anthropology, the pioneering work of Radcliffe-Brown and Fortes is well known and their approach was primarily structural-functional. Fortes' analysis of the Tallensi showed that religion is a logical articulation of the social structure. Radcliffe-Brown believed that the field of religion was the study of rites rather than beliefs and he linked his definition of ancestor worship to unilineal organisation. Thus, " ... the cult group in this religion consists solely of persons related to one another by descent in one line from the same ancestor or ancestors" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 163).

Radcliffe-Brown visited China between 1934 and 1936 and it is of interest to note that he uses numerous quotations from the Chinese Classics in his chapter on "Religion and Society" in Structure and Function in Primitive Society in support of his approach. He quotes the Book of Rites as saying: "Ceremonies are the bonds that hold the multitudes together and if bonds are removed those multitudes fall into confusion." (idem: 159)

The study of religious phenomena in relation to the social structure is a valid one but not without limitations. The study of

meaning is also important, and today most anthropologists realise that for a better understanding of religious phenomena we must also recognise the importance of the realm of meaning. Geertz (1966) stressed the need to look at cultural dimensions.

The ancestor cult is an important aspect of Chinese religious activities and many of the rites and ceremonies take place in the homes. Some homes have permanent altars which vary from a small shelf on the wall to large ones with a number of shelves extending several feet in height. The traditional ancestor tablet is a narrow, flat piece of wood, painted in red with the ancestor's name inscribed in gold. I have not seen any of these tablets in Johannesburg. The substitute is simply a piece of red paper with the names written in black. (see Plates 7, 8 and 9). In homes with ancestral altars, lighted incense is generally placed on the altar as a daily routine and on special occasions e.g. birthday or wedding, joss sticks, incense, "candles" and paper representing gold and silver (mock money) are burnt also. (see Plate 11). Many homes do not have permanent altars but the rites will still be observed on these special occasions. It is also important to note that, on the whole, Chinese ancestors are benign and only punish descendants if provoked. Freedman (1970: 194) and others write that ancestors do not support the authority of senior relatives.

An interesting adoption from Western practices is the placing of flowers on the graves. During ts'ing meng and shui i [1] festivals, lineage and clan groups gather to take flowers to the graves of kinsmen and/or clansmen. Flowers are taken to deceased kinsmen before a celebration, at the anniversary of a death and also before one goes on a long trip or is going away from some length of time. Some gamblers are known to visit cemeteries regularly as do students about to write examinations! It appears that many people also take flowers at Christmas and Easter.

The two communal ancestral rites still observed in Johannesburg are ts'ing meng and shui i festivals and on these occasions kinsmen

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1. See Glossary for Chinese characters.

visit the graves of their deceased clansmen. These rites may certainly be said to perpetuate unity within the same clan or lineage group. (Explained in chapter 5(ii)). A study of these rites provide some indication of the importance of rituals that take place outside the home and also of the importance of the lineage and/or the clan.

Kinship is indeed an important aspect of ritual life and by observing the people who attend rites and ceremonies one can gain some indication of the importance of kinship ties in the recruitment of people for various occasions. The participation of kinsmen seems to be essential for the social recognition of specific events in the lives of the people. At the same time, if one gives a celebration one knows that if kinsmen are not invited, they can and will most probably be offended. A celebration dinner may not commence until "close" relatives have arrived. The constant gathering of kinsmen would undoubtedly help to reinforce kinship ties, and Chinese in general are well aware that celebrations bring one in contact with and make one more aware of one's kinsmen. One woman explained how she advised an orphan always to attend celebrations given by kinsmen in order to get to know his own kinsmen.

Other important aspects of Chinese beliefs which influence a person's actions and relationships to others are the ideas of the relation between man and the forces of nature and also between man and man. The belief that there is a close relationship between man and the natural world is well documented in literary sources, and historical records have attributed natural disasters to the amoral conduct of ruling emperors. Chinese culture is dominated by the idea of harmony in the universe. If a man can ensure harmonious relationships, he can hope for a "good life".

On important occasions, such as a wedding, there is a great deal of giving and exchanging of gifts and symbolic items. It seems that for the Chinese in Johannesburg symbolic items have meaning at the time but, just as food offered to the ancestors is later placed

with the rest of the food to be consumed by people present, so symbolic items are later treated as ordinary items. The customs of gift-giving and the giving and distributing of "red-packets" is a complicated but an important adjunct to understanding ritual, but so far, this sphere of Chinese traditions has been neglected by researchers. Each rite and each symbolic item expresses the values and desires of the people but the explanations given are always simply "because it is ho", (it is good) that is, it will ensure harmony.

Freedman has published a great deal on aspects of Chinese kinship and religion. In his article "Ritual Aspects of Chinese Kinship and Marriage" (1970) he acknowledges the importance of studying the symbolic system "... we cannot fully understand what goes on at a Chinese wedding until we have studied all the realms of symbolic meaning that bring their significance to this act of rites" (1970: 187).

In his essays on Geomancy (feng shui).[1] Freedman (1966: chapter 5 and 1968) stresses the significance of cosmological ideas in understanding this institution. In his presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1968, he explains that although the study of geomancy had been neglected in recent years as "superstitions" nevertheless the anthropological interest in religion and ideas as systems has led to a revival of interest in this field. Freedman (1966) states that feng shui (which is the correct siting of a grave, building or village) presupposes a certain view of the universe and also rests on certain assumptions about the nature of society. The activities of the Chinese here in Johannesburg seem to confirm these beliefs. On the one hand there are the beliefs in the influence of forces governing the relationships between man and natural environment and spiritual forces; on the other hand, the relationships between man and man can be seen in the rights and obligations toward kinsmen and ancestors.

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1. In Cantonese fung shui

It seems that many of man's actions especially in times of crisis, are either to restore, preserve or better one's lot in life and, in this respect ancestors, external forces such as forces of the universe and other people all play their roles. Freedman (1966) found that feng shui is a preoccupation with success but it seems that nearly every aspect of life is a means to striving for success. In symbolic expression, there is to be seen the desire for the continuation and reciprocation of "good" and therefore of harmony.

In writing on geomancy and ancestor worship, Freedman speaks of the difficulty in grasping the basic premise of feng shui when one has been brought up in a tradition which sharply distinguishes between man and nature. Freedman continues to say: "Of course the attempt to see through Chinese eyes and to think of geomancy as Chinese think of it will be successful only to the extent that my interpretations does not conflict with what Chinese say or do" (1966: 122). As a Chinese, albeit raised in a combination of Chinese and Christian/South African background, this dissertation is my attempt to provide an interpretation of Chinese ritual activities in Johannesburg "through Chinese eyes".

(ii) METHODOLOGY

In this study, I decided to choose a very selective sample of households rather than a random one. My purpose was to focus on traditional religious beliefs amongst the Cantonese speaking people rather than to get a general view of religious attitudes in the community as a whole. I, therefore, tended to study 'cases' where I knew more traditional attitudes prevailed.

The greater part of my dissertation comprises ethnographic material and I have recorded rites and ceremonies in great detail since there is a dearth of published material in this field and the details are necessary for my analysis.

Most rites and ceremonies take place in the homes and only invited guests either participate or are able to observe the proceedings. Thus whenever I was present at rites I was, more often than not, a true participant-observer.

My approach has been to observe (whenever possible), to discuss and to find explanations for rituals and in particular those highlighted by crisis situations. These are occasions and situations which definitely demand some rite or ceremony, and these may either be traditional or Christian or a combination of both belief systems. In the initial stages of my research I tried to get information from my informants on what they had done in the past, or, if such a situation had not occurred before, I asked: "what would you do?". I found that such hypothetical questions produced very unsatisfactory results, as on many occasions informants genuinely did not seem to know and often tended to underestimate their possible involvement in traditional practices. The time lapse between my initial interviewing and the completion of this dissertation has enabled me to witness this discrepancy between belief and actions on a number of occasions, although some people did hold steadfast in practice to their previously stated views. However, this misjudgement of the possible course of action is also interesting. On the one hand, most people do not seem to realise their commitment to traditional ideals and practices until the

occasion arises; on the other hand, some of these people did not realise the pressure that would be exerted on them by others. For example, a young man once told me with utmost determination that when he got married he would dispense with the tea-ceremony and other traditions as they were "a waste of time and money", but eventually when the time came he carried all these out "to please the parents". At another wedding the bride's mother had to yield to elderly relatives. The bride herself was indignant and constantly objecting to traditional practices and her mother pacified her by saying that it was really for her good. In the meanwhile the bride's mother was also discreetly expressing her disapproval as the whole affair was involving her in a great deal of additional expense.

Another difficulty in the use of questions about hypothetical situations is that although one can speak about a happy occasion such as a marriage, it is extremely difficult to discuss misfortune as the suggestion alone could be seen as tempting such adversity. Death is a particularly difficult subject to discuss: when a family had just suffered a bereavement, I tried not to over-impose and, in these situations, close observation of activities and decisions were important. Some people do not even like to use the word death (sé) and are most reluctant to discuss the subject.

My main method of obtaining information was to observe and then ask for explanations. This proved to be very time consuming as, to begin with, I could only record the events when the occasion took place. I am most fortunate in that my parents took a personal interest in my research and many a time, in company, they would initiate discussions on a topic of interest to me.

I recorded as much information as possible with regard to the history and composition of fifteen households and, from these families, I also recorded the following events: a birth, nine marriages, a posthumous marriage, a birthday celebration, four funerals and three anniversaries of deaths. However, my research data is not confined only to these households. For example, I have information on a further eleven marriages: most of these were

described to me by person(s) who were participants in the rites and ceremonies.

The advantages and disadvantages of being an anthropologist studying her own people can be seen from two aspects: (1) in doing field research, and (2) the understanding and analysis of the material.

In the field situation, the ease with which one is able to establish rapport must depend on both the personality of the fieldworker and the willingness of the community to take a stranger into its confidence. In the case of the South African Chinese, I am of the opinion that a Chinese anthropologist has advantages. The community is generally a reticent one, possibly because of its marginal and insecure position in the structure of South African society (refer to Appendix 2), and it is anxious to avoid saying anything that will lead to adverse publicity.

In a project such as this, I feel that a good understanding of the language is of great importance, particularly in dealing with ritual and symbolism. Many fieldworkers have a very intimate knowledge of the people amongst whom they work, but I have grown up with them. I feel an outsider working through a translator might easily have missed a good deal of the verbal intricacies with symbolic content, as a translator (usually untrained in anthropology) would have to be particularly perceptive to observe the kind of information of special interest to the fieldworker. I also found that many interesting facts were highlighted by casual remarks.

On the one hand, there are dangers in being so familiar with the community of study as on a number of occasions I failed to question what appeared to be obvious. In this respect, my supervisors played an invaluable role in drawing my attention to omissions and ambiguities. On the other hand, a person looking at her own community might, I think, be more sensitive to attitudes and traditions. For example, although I do not carry out all ancestor rites myself, the desire to do so is quite understandable to me as I am not unaware of the feeling to ensure concord with

the ancestors.

In my observations and interpretations, I have always tried to substantiate my own beliefs and ideas in order to maintain an objective approach, but it seems I have nevertheless been influenced by some of my ideas and upbringing. In reading my draft Dr Ward pointed out that I betrayed a bias toward patri-ideology in the way I described and presented the kinship data (chapter 6): I picked out the males for description and left the reader to work out female links. This bias was indeed "unconscious" as Dr Ward suggested.

In a sense, my fieldwork did not begin on a particular date, as is determined for most fieldworkers by their arrival to the field. I have always been a member of the community and I have been able to draw on a few incidents and experiences which occurred long before my interest in Social Anthropology. However, I can record one period of intensive observation. I returned from London in 1965 and my absence of just over a year, and no doubt, my studies under the guidance of Professor Maurice Freedman, had considerably helped to sharpen my focus on the traditional activities of the community here. Most of my fieldwork was recorded between 1966 and 1967. Unfortunately I was only able to write up at sporadic intervals but the delay in the completion of this dissertation has perhaps one advantage in that I have always been "in the field" and so have been able to add to my material and also observe the consequences of ideas and opinions of some years back. In 1968 I married and now have two children - these experiences have certainly made me reflect more carefully on the functions and meanings of traditional practices.

In the analysis of my material, I have obviously used the theoretical approaches of social anthropologists who have written on similar topics. My analysis, however, poses one problem not often met by those working in primitive societies. Most of these latter societies have no written culture, but the Chinese, on the contrary, have a vast store of written material and philosophical topics have been discussed for more than two millennia. This

poses a number of problems: to what extent must the researcher in the present delve into the literature of the past? And in how great a detail? In a topic such as religion it is obvious one cannot ignore the thinking of the past but it is equally impossible to do very much library research, particularly for a study of this size. I have found a number of ancient concepts crucial to understanding present day beliefs and practices and I would have liked to do a more thorough study of literary sources, but here in South Africa the library facilities for Chinese studies are limited. The other related problem is that I have had to rely on works translated into English.

I follow the Meyer-Wempe system in romanising Cantonese words. Occasionally there are words used here which do not appear in the dictionary and my explanations are, firstly, that they may be particular to those villages or districts. Secondly, some "Cantonese words" are Cantonese renderings of English words, e.g. yaa for yard. In quoting from literature, I have maintained the dialect and spelling as used in the original texts.

CHAPTER II. BACKGROUND TO THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN JOHANNESBURG.

(i) ARRIVAL OF CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(a) Free Immigrants.

The first Chinese immigrants to South Africa arrived towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is known that a few Chinese had been in South Africa prior to that time but they had returned home, perhaps, with experience and knowledge of conditions which influenced more people to venture abroad. Some of the early settlers came to South Africa directly from China while others had stayed in Nan Yang, Mauritius and even East Africa for varying periods before settling in South Africa. Durban was the main port of disembarkation, although during the Anglo-Boer War many arrived at Port Elizabeth and Lourenco Marques and some remained and worked in the coastal towns. The potential wealth related to the Gold Mines eventually attracted many of the immigrants to Johannesburg, and today Johannesburg has the largest proportion of the Chinese population in South Africa. Johannesburg is still known as (San) Kam Shaan (New) Gold Mountain. Australia has been given a similar designation whereas the United States of America is called the old Gold Mountain as immigration took place at an earlier date.

The Chinese who came to South Africa were not unlike those who went to other parts of the world; their main motive was to search for economic betterment but emigration was only looked upon as a temporary measure, as they cherished the hope of returning to China. Hardships took second place to the strong desire to accumulate wealth, and it is common knowledge that they lived with the minimum of physical comforts.

By 1904, there was a recorded Chinese population of 2 461 (Census and Statistics of South Africa), (Natal - 171,

Cape - 1 380, Transvaal - 910). The early arrivals were all men. The first group of women, who only arrived towards the end of the first decade of this century, were all wives of men who were already in the country. From then onwards more women made their way to South Africa. The men found that they wanted to extend their stay and some had also accumulated sufficient money to send for the families they had left in China. Some men returned to China in search of wives, or alternatively some married by arrangement, in which case the choice was made with the assistance of relatives and often only on the basis of photographs. When both sides had agreed to the arrangement, the girl would emigrate to join her husband-to-be.

The Immigration Regulations of 1913 declared that further immigration of "Asiatics" would be prohibited. Domicile could only be obtained after continuous residence of three years, and absence from the Union of South Africa for a period of three years or more from the date of departure could result in the cancellation of domicile. Many did not wish to jeopardise their legal right to remain in the country: thus a short sojourn more often than not extended into an indefinite period and finally a permanent stay.

Wives and families were, however, permitted to join their husbands and the gradual arrival of women and children inevitably led to the resumption of the traditional way of family life. In spite of the gradual arrival of women, the sex ratio was to remain very uneven for many years. Some men never married, and some did not see their families again; some married non-Chinese women, and a few married in South Africa, while still supporting previously existing families in China.

(b) Indentured Labourers

At the conclusion of the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of this century, the greater part of the African labour force

had left the Gold Mines. By 1904, the economy of the country was showing a steady decline and the mines in the Transvaal were on the point of stagnation: the mineral wealth was there, but the labour force was lacking. The suggestion of importing labour was a controversial issue, as White South Africans feared economic competition. Nevertheless the mines found it essential to resort to Chinese labour, the opinion being "in working out the salvation of South Africa, the brain toil is the province of the White, the brawn or spade work that of the black or some coloured race" (Reeves 1954).

Recruiters went to China to recruit men and contracts were drawn up which took precautions to prevent the Chinese from competing for skilled work. Furthermore, it was a condition of each contract that repatriation was to follow its expiry. All the miners were eventually repatriated but nevertheless, in writing of the early Chinese in South Africa it is important to mention these miners, as their presence in large numbers precipitated the formulation of policies affecting the Chinese in general. It also appears that some of the antagonism and unfavourable race attitudes towards Chinese stemmed from this period.

The first miners arrived in 1904, and in six months 23 000 were recruited. Originally efforts were made to recruit labourers from the southern areas of China but the Viceroy of Canton was not particularly co-operative, and eventually 60 000 were recruited from the Northern parts of Chifu and Chinuwagat in the Shantung Province. Repatriation began in 1907 and the last batch left in March 1910. A total of 63 567 miners were imported to South Africa excluding those who died on the way and the deserters (Reeves 1954: 183).

The majority of miners were from the North of China and so their predominant language was Mandarin (Kwok-Yu). There was little contact between the miners and the free

immigrants. The language differen , made communication difficult, and on the whole the miners were regarded with little respect, partly because of the work they were doing and also because there were s to have been many criminals and "undesirables" amongst the Some miners patronized the shops of the free immigran

There was certainly some st, but it should be borne in mind that there seemed to ittle selection in the recruiting of the miners, and rthermore the conditions for the miners were not altoge her satisfactory: crimes were committed by the miners and in ome towns and in some towns local people were said to live in terror of the miners. On one occasion they also robbed and killed some Chinese shopkeepers.

Generally the community today do not wish to be identified in any way with the miners.

The short stay of the Chinese miners, however, saved South Africa from economic crises. The Gold output increased from £12 142 307 in 1903 to £29 000 000 in 1908 (W.B. Worsfold 1912: 228).

(ii) CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA

At present there is no separate official record of the Chinese population in South Africa as for census purposes, they are classified under the general term of "Asiatics", which includes Indians. Further, there are no other sources for accurate statistical details of the Chinese.

The Chinese consulate in Johannesburg has provided me with the following estimates according to regional distribution and language group - (1969)[1] -

Place	Total No.	Hakka	Cantonese
Johannesburg and surrounding area	3 500	15%	85%
Pretoria	520	5%	95%
Kimberley	160	20%	80%
Port Elizabeth	2 000	80%	20%
Cape Town	360	90%	10%
East London	300	90%	10%
Durban	120	95%	5%
Mafeking	15	-	100%
Total population in South Africa[2]	6 975	41,4%	58,6%

There are a few persons from other regions e.g. Fukier. but they do not form a significant number, in all cases they speak Cantonese and have intermarried with either Cantonese or Hakka.

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1. Figures according to M. Horrell, 1966

Pretoria	600
Cape Town	1 300
East London	300
Port Elizabeth	1 500
Durban Johannesburg	2 500
Total	6 200

2. Horrell in A Survey of Race Relations in S.A., (1966: 122) quoted the Minister of Planning who stated there were 7 174 Chinese in South Africa.

According to the above figures it is quite clear that, like overseas Chinese communities elsewhere, there is a tendency for people from the same area and language group to cluster in the same place. The Hakka have concentrated in the coastal towns, and the majority of Cantonese are in the Transvaal. Furthermore, it is estimated that there is a predominance of Fok and Lai clans in Johannesburg, whereas the Lau form the greater proportion of the community in Pretoria. The process observed by T'ien Ju K'ang (1953: 4) in Sarawak, Freedman (1957: 24) in Singapore and others is that kinsmen tend to help (or recruit) kinsmen, and people know that they can call upon kinsmen for assistance - whether it be in providing temporary accommodation or for financial assistance[1].

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1. One of the means of raising capital was the rotating credit system. This is formed through verbal agreement by a group of persons, and each person contributes a prearranged fixed sum each month. At each meeting, each person who wants the pool of money collected, writes on a piece of paper the interest he is prepared to pay, and during the meeting the slips of paper are opened and the money is given to the person with the highest bid. In this way, the pool, which can be a few or several thousand Rand, will rotate in turn to each member of the group. Those in greater need of the money will obviously bid a higher interest in the hope that his will be the highest at that meeting. Interest of 10% is considered high and that of 2% considered low. Those not in great need of the money will eventually benefit from the interest received from the other members. A complete rotation may take up to one year or more, depending on the number of members. The rotating credit system is still found today and often initiated when a person finds he is in need of a large sum of money or anticipating a need for money for a variety of purposes, e.g. a new business, investment, going abroad, and even paying for a wedding. Ardener points out that this system either assists in small-scale capital formation, or it creates savings (1964: 217).

Assistance was also rendered in ways regardless of kinship and without expectation of financial returns. A medical school was not established in South Africa until 1919, but before this a certain young Chinese wanted to study medicine. Members of the community felt that a professionally qualified person would be of considerable advantage to them, and thus money was collected and he was sent to Scotland for his entire course of medical studies. A friend of the family was responsible for initiating and organising the fund.

Old people were also helped to return to China if they were not able to afford the passage themselves. In this case, it was more likely to be arranged by members of the same clan or lineage, and very often they even provided the returning migrant with a small sum of money to take home. Many people recall how, in the early days, even people who merely had the same surname were regarded with the same sentiments as if they were kin.

Today, economic activities no longer depend on the unity of the family group, and most young people in particular are free to earn a wage completely independent of their parents, but in traditional religious practices and to a certain extent in the social sphere, kinship is still a regulating factor. An awareness of kinship links, and that kinship carries certain rights and obligations is certainly evident. The situation is perhaps summed up in the reply to one of my questions - "Who will see to funeral rites if the person has no relatives?". The answer I received was "But there must be relatives", and the person was rather astonished that I should have doubted the fact.

The term used for "relatives" is ts'an yan, and the definition of ts'an yan seems to be a flexible but practical one. This is particularly evident on occasions

of celebrations which call for a gathering of kinsmen for a party and certain rites or rituals. On a specific occasion, one's radius cannot encompass too many people, but one cannot be without, or with too few, kinsmen.[1] A member of the immediate family takes priority, but I have observed that in a case where there are many kinsmen of the same clan, same lineage and immediate family, then genealogical relationship and terms are adhered to in defininin; them all as ts'an. On the other hand, if one's family is small or there are few members of the same clan name, then even though genealogical relations cannot be traced, "we still regard them as kinsmen (ts'an yan), or our own people (ts'ŋ kei yan).

Above the level of family and kinship the interests of the Chinese community are represented by a hierarchical series of organisations which also act as the spokesmen for the community. Each year each organisation elects a committee and its aim is to protect the interests of the community, i.e. in cultural, economic, residential, educational and recreational matters. From time to time office-bearers have made representation to government and other authorities on behalf of the community. Throughout South Africa the various towns and provinces with a sufficient number of Chinese have their local associations. In Johannesburg, where there is the largest population of Chinese there are a number of associations which, together with those of neighbouring towns, have a corporate body - The Transvaal Chinese Association. All the various Associations throughout South Africa are united by the Central Chinese Association of South Africa, which, according to the Constitution of 1960 is made up of 19 constituent members. The General Meeting takes place biennially and delegates from throughout the country attend to discuss the affairs of the community and also to elect new office bearers.

It is of interest to note that Johannesburg, which

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1. See Chapter 6.

has the largest Chinese population in South Africa, does not have a Johannesburg Association. Overall representation is in the Transvaal Chinese Association which also incorporates the neighbouring towns. One possible reason is that the most influential office-bearers of Johannesburg, in any case, dominate the Transvaal Association. Office bearers are elected by ballot but in the smaller towns they are normally elected at a meeting.

(iii) CHINESE IN JOHANNESBURG.

(a) "Chinatown"

Johannesburg has a so-called "Chinatown" which is now only approximately two blocks on either side of the West end of Commissioner Street. To some extent Chinatown is the focus of Chinese activities, but perhaps more so in the past than it is now. In the earlier days it consisted of some restaurants, a few houses, and other buildings where rooms were rented by individuals or families for living quarters, or by clan or lineage groups for communal purposes. Some were only used for clan functions while others were places where men congregated during weekends to play mahjong and other games. There were also places where annual New Year and Double Tenth [1] parties were held and about a generation ago these were attended by many people, but they are far less popular nowadays. I have been given nostalgic accounts of the old days, when at weekends many people gathered at the restaurants for tea or a meal thus bringing about regular social gatherings, perhaps not unlike in the tea houses in China. It is still generally recognised that this is the area with most accessibility in catering for Chinese requirements.

There has been an increase in the number of restaurants, but those in Chinatown cater mainly for the Chinese community. There are also a number of shops which sell Chinese goods and foodstuffs, besides a few other business concerns. There is only one shop which is not run by Chinese, but by an Indian. Just after the war some of the old buildings were demolished and a block of flats was erected, and in more recent times more houses have been demolished to make way for a highway. Some of the original buildings still exist. They provide accommodation for Chinese people

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1. The tenth of October marks the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911.

including a number of aged people, mainly men, who have no families and the rent there is very cheap. Two rooms, formerly used as club rooms, are now used mainly for funerals.

The only places available for religious activities were in some of the club rooms in Chinatown where images of deities were at one time installed. These are no longer there and today there are no places available to the community for traditional worship.

(b) The family and household

My study has not been extensive enough to trace any consistent patterns in the clustering of kinsmen in Johannesburg, although there are a number of places where kinsmen do live and trade in the same vicinity. At present, a person's business site depends on various non-kinship factors, such as the availability of suitable premises and the restrictions of the Group Areas Act (1).

Freedman (1957: 1) pointed out that the establishment of family run shops among overseas Chinese perpetuated the principle of the family. However, such coincidence between economic and household organisation was in the minority in Singapore. The father was head of the household and in control of economic matters which he would later hand over to his son while himself remaining in the household in the care of that son and his family. In the first and second generations in this country Chinese people reproduced this pattern of living, and in the early days there were many instances where sons and daughters were taken out of school after a few years of schooling, so that they could help in the family business.

Today the picture has been altered somewhat and a considerable number of families now rely on outside employment,

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1. See Appendix 2.

the majority in white-collar jobs and others as artisans and professionals. Sometimes the onus has fallen on the younger generation to provide a livelihood for their parents as they are able to speak English more fluently and are also better educated.

The ideal of an extended family as a residential unit is no longer univer[illegible]ty held. Some families still have the strong desire to [illegible]y together but it is not always possible to extend one's prop[illegible]ty legally and living accommodation is always limited: in ve[illegible]apt legal terms it is "frozen". Some parents still insist that sons should move into their home after marriage as, to have an extended family under one roof accords with an old value and still engenders a good deal of pride. Nowadays, however, many of the young people prefer to set up their own homes and not only the young, but also their parents often say that this obviates the possibility of conflict. It is of interest to note that even if a married son and his family have their own home, the home of the paternal grandfather is also referred to as "home" (uk k'ei).

The composition of the fifteen households from which I gathered information on various rites showed similar principles: there was a tendency for aged parents to live in the household of a married son (or alternately, for a son to continue to live in his father's home long after his marriage, eventually taking over responsibilities of the home). At the time of my research nine households consisted of extended families. In three of the families, the aged parents (in each case one surviving parent) were entirely dependent on their sons. In the one case, the aged father moved from the home of the one married son to that of another as it suited them better. In the second case, the aged mother seemed to feel that she did not have as much authority as she thought due to her and complained that her daughter-in-law did not always heed her advice. In the third case, the old man explained that he was quite happy to relinquish all responsibilities of the business to his son and he was

quite contented with life as both his son and daughter-in-law respected him and ensured that he was well cared for. This is similar to Fei's observation for Kaihsienkung that - "These steps of retreat correlated with the increase of obligation of the young from entire dependence to taking a co-operative role and finally to bearing responsibility for the whole livelihood of the parents." (1939: 74).

In the remaining six households with extended families, both parents and the married son who lived in the same household earned independent incomes. From the examples, it seemed that it was not necessarily the eldest married son who lived with the parents, but it could be any married son and his family (only two were eldest sons). Perhaps this is another example of Freedman's observation (1966: 50) that primogeniture has waned in Chinese society. In Johannesburg, however, aged parents are generally not left to fend for themselves, unless as in a few cases known to me, they prefer to continue running their own businesses. The idea of sending a parent to an institution is certainly abhorred but I have been told of a few chronically ill old persons having been sent to homes for invalids.

The extent of authority of parents over adult sons is, in my opinion, a combination of personality factors and economic circumstances of both the parents and their children and their spouses. In the one case, a man who worked in his father's highly successful business admitted that he was often subjected to his parents' decisions, for example, they decided on which school the grandchildren should attend. In this case, even though the son and his wife and family did not live in the same household as his parents, they managed to exert considerable influence over them and this was reinforced by the son's economic dependence. In another case, where a married son and his family lived with his parents, the son explained that he liked to discuss matters with his father who never forced his opinion on him. In these families, where father and son earned separate

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incomes, they usually came to some arrangement in the joint upkeep of the household and thus one was not usually completely dependent on the other. It is unlikely that a son (married or single) would give all his earnings to his father as was the case in traditional China, where the father controlled all the money earned by his family.

The traditional Chinese family was characterised by the dominant father and the submissive son. This may have been the case with the first generation fathers in Johannesburg, particularly when the family worked closely together as a unit, and on marriage the son's wife moved in to join the work force both in business and home. Today, there are still fathers who exert great authority and perhaps who still demand unquestioned obedience but many fathers enjoy a more relaxed relationship with their families.

In Johannesburg, the idea of patrilocal marriage is still strong and so, on marriage, daughters move out of their parent's home to that of their husbands. It is unusual for a married daughter to remain in her father's household; this occurred in one of the households in my sample, but it was only a temporary measure because of housing problems. It is also unusual but not unknown for parents or a surviving parent to move into a married daughter's household. In all fifteen households, the unmarried children lived in the home of their parents.

In a study of the Chinese family in Johannesburg, it is important to remember that the Chinese have not been permitted to own land (since 1885) or fixed property (since 1932). The household in the home village in China was usually a property-owning group and the property was held in the name of the most senior living male. Ownership and subsequent inheritance played an important role in determining the rights and obligations of the members of the family. (see p. 42)

On the whole inheritance of movable and immovable

property is an aspect of the community about which I have not been able to get much information. It is difficult to get precise information as most people prefer not to discuss it. It appears that today an increasing number of people are prepared to make wills, but many still shun the idea. I would think that the most significant decisions would be involved if inheritance included immovable property and in Johannesburg there are in fact few cases where people own land and property. I have a few examples: in the one case, when the father died, the property was willed equally to the sons and daughters but they decided to leave it intact for the use of their mother who is still living on the property. In another case, the property was inherited equally by the sons and the daughter was given a specific sum of money. In the case where one son and his wife and family lived with and supported the parents, and they had taken over the business from them, they eventually inherited the business as well. In another case, the wife was the sole beneficiary but it became clear that their only son was prominent in making decisions and through the mother was able to exercise influence over the use of the finances. The daughters did not benefit financially. It seems that daughters are often given jewellery of the mother although in some cases it may go to the daughters-in-law. Jewellery may also be divided amongst both daughters and daughters-in-law. From my information then, there does not seem to be any rule to the apportioning of inheritance. It does appear, though, that the daughters, who in the past had no share, may now have equal or at least some consideration. It also appears that circumstances can be a deciding factor, for example, if a son has supported his parent, he may be the sole beneficiary even though he is not the eldest son.

The above evidence shows that the Cantonese family and household in Johannesburg still adheres to certain traditional ideals and patterns of organisation. However, changes have occurred, particularly as the family is no longer a single economic unit, working and living on a

jointly owned property, and furthermore, individual earning power has encouraged the Western ideals of greater personal independence. The families I studied would, I think, tend to be more traditionally orientated, as on the whole my selection arose from observing traditional rites and customs.

Today, Chinese live and trade in most suburbs in Johannesburg; there is possibly a greater concentration of homes in Mayfair, Bertrams and Bez Valley, mainly because it has been easier for them to obtain houses and flats in these areas and also because some people prefer to live in a vicinity close to their friends and relatives. There are now also Chinese families living in the northern suburbs as well as in the "New South" as, since about 1973, permits both to occupy and purchase houses have been granted a little more easily by the Department of Community Development and this has been greatly welcomed by the Chinese.

In the early days, the Chinese saw themselves as sojourners in this country, but today, most people, particularly those who are born and have been brought up here, see this as their home. This change of attitude is certainly reflected in the homes: in the old days people lived frugally, the idea was to save as much as possible to return to China, but today, if given the opportunity people are prepared to invest in homes which they take pride in.

(c) Voluntary Associations

In the past clan and lineage associations played an important role in co-ordinating activities and finances for assisting their home villages in China but this is no longer done. Today, it seems that the only functions of these associations is to organise the Spring and Autumn festivals. Each year persons are elected to carry out the duties for the following year.

There are a number of regular social and recreational

activities which are organised by voluntary associations, and distinct identification amongst the members was sometimes evident in rivalry and conflict among clubs and societies. The sports clubs provide for basketball, softball, tennis, table-tennis, badminton and football. A few of these teams participate in regular league matches with European teams, amongst other sports, there are league fixtures amongst the Chinese teams themselves.

There are eight Chinese sports clubs in Johannesburg affiliated to the Southern Transvaal Sports Association, which has the function of centralising, co-ordinating and representing the sports clubs. The S.T.S.A. is, for example, responsible for selecting teams for the annual Chinese interprovincial sports tournament which takes place at different centres, and if it is held in Johannesburg then this committee is responsible for all the organisation of the sports activities and also the accommodation of the visiting players.

Other voluntary associations include religious groups, such as the Chinese Catholic Association and Baptist Youth movement, and cultural organisations such as a Chinese Music Society.

As described in Section (ii) of this chapter, organisations are formed on a regional basis to look after the interests of the community, and from time to time office-bearers have made representations to various authorities on behalf of the community.

(d) Occupations

Most of the early free immigrants became traders. Some had laundries, although there are none today. A few were employed as unskilled labourers but this was exceptional, as menial jobs were not admired. Some also established both market gardens and farms, particularly in and near Johannesburg,

and today these farms supply the general market, as well as providing the community with certain Chinese vegetables.

Small business ventures had many advantages, of which the most significant was that although immigrants could not speak the local languages, they were able to conduct their business by using "sign language" as their chief means of communication. Furthermore, if they were industrious and frugal, it was possible in this way to accumulate savings rapidly as their earning power was not restricted as in the case of employment. The majority lived in sparsely furnished rooms adjoining their shops: few bought furniture, as they preferred to economise by making their own.

Few of the early migrants wanted to invest money in South Africa, and in later years government legislation, particularly in the Transvaal restricted and prohibited the purchase of land and property. Therefore, most homes and businesses are rented. (This was not the case in the Cape Province where they were able to purchase property until 1950).

The majority of Chinese in Johannesburg are in business and at one time there were also a fair number in the African townships. In 1956 the greater part of the Western Areas of Johannesburg were rezoned, and it was then estimated that 700 Chinese would be affected, a number which represented 150 traders. Chinese in other parts of the city which have been declared for a specific group were able to retain trading rights under a permit system. In more recent years the Group Areas Act has been the main reason for the greater population movement of the Chinese community. Many of those who have retained business rights have remained in the same area, some for more than thirty years. But many were forced to vacate their original premises and have not been able to acquire new trading rights or, in the case of non-White areas, all former inhabitants have been moved away, thus making a business redundant in the area.

The most popular type of businesses in Johannesburg have been grocery stores; there are also a variety of cafes, butchers' shops and restaurants catering for Africans. At present in Johannesburg there are at least ten restaurants which serve Chinese meals mainly for White customers and there are some stores which cater almost exclusively for the needs of the Chinese with commodities specially imported from Hong Kong and sometimes from China.

In more recent years, an increasing number of people, particularly the younger set, have been seeking employment outside the family. The majority are employed by European firms mainly as clerks and secretaries, and there is an increasing number of professional people. The desire for a profession or skill has been greatly spurred on by the Group Areas Act, which has made it virtually impossible to transfer business rights or to acquire new ones.

(e) Education

The first Chinese school in Johannesburg was established in 1928 in the vicinity of "Chinatown", with twenty-five pupils and one teacher. At first the children were taught only Chinese but in 1930 a European teacher was employed as the need to learn the local language was realized.

The Chinese school was the main educational centre for Chinese children for many years. In 1958, with 250 pupils, the school was moved to a new and larger building on the corner of Siemert and Market Streets, which is its present site.

At present, the Chinese school has approximately 300 pupils ranging from pre-school (nursery school) to matriculation level. In the lower grades, the greater proportion of the curriculum consists of Chinese (language, history and geography); Mandarin is taught but the medium of instruction is Cantonese. As the pupils progress, more and more time

is devoted to subjects prescribed by local educational authorities to meet requirements for certificates issued by such local bodies as the Transvaal Department of Education. And so, for the older pupils the greater proportion of their time is devoted to non-Chinese subjects.

The enrolment at the Chinese school has been fairly consistent, as it seems an increasing number are attending "White" schools.

Enrolment of pupils at the Chinese School.

1962	-	298	1967	-	257
1963	-	251	1968	-	271
1964	-	233	1969	-	275
1965	-	245	1970	-	290
1966	-	224	1971	-	300
			1972	-	302

Chinese children were admitted to "White" schools for the first time round about 1940. The children were admitted, firstly, to privately run Catholic schools and then also to other private schools, but the first few enrolments to Government schools for Whites did not take place until 1973. Today there are at least 800 children in White schools and attendance has been for a sufficient length of time that today there are adults who have been educated entirely in White schools.

In my opinion the pupils of the Chinese school tend to be more "tradition minded" and tend to place greater value on Chinese culture and are also able to read and speak more Chinese than do the pupils of White schools. However, it must also be borne in mind that the parents who are more tradition minded are the ones who prefer an education at the Chinese school for their children. It also follows that while at Chinese school, the education tends to propagate and perpetuate knowledge of the Chinese language and culture.

Today, young people and more especially boys, are

encouraged to attend university for practical reasons and perhaps also for the prestige. A few students have readily admitted that they were only at University at their parents' insistence. Chinese students have been enrolled at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and the Witwatersrand and in 1969 the total number just exceeded 200. This figure does not include students enrolled with the University of South Africa which runs correspondence courses. In 1968 there were 113 Chinese students at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The proportion of women students has always been small and I do not think they have exceeded twenty in any one year. There has been a steady increase in the number of Chinese students at Wits, but the numbers in Cape Town have been relatively static and even declined in recent years; this is mainly because many Port Elizabeth students now enrol at Rhodes University which is much nearer than Cape Town. Chinese are now admitted to virtually all University faculties; the only exception being physiotherapy.

Since 1972, Chinese have been able to attend the White Trade and Technical colleges, Government institutions previously closed to Chinese. In the past in a few cases (e.g. in hairdressing) it was possible to overcome this disability by resorting to correspondence courses for theoretical subjects. Otherwise, the lack of training facilities has prevented Chinese from pursuing careers in the trades and technical fields until now.

(f) Christianity

In Johannesburg, Catholics predominate -

Catholics	500 (1961)	1 030 (1971)
Baptists	57 (1961)	71 (1973)
Anglicans	±50 (1961)	latest figure not known

The Catholics have a Chinese Catholic Association and a branch of the Legion of Mary which was, until recently, an

active group of young people who paid regular visits to the Chinese families to acquaint them with Catholicism. An Irish priest has also become well known and well accepted by the community, and he is the spiritual director of the Chinese Catholic Association. He deals with most of the problems relating to the Chinese, such as acceptance to Catholic schools, and care for neglected persons. It is also significant that a large number of Chinese attend White Catholic schools, and some attend the Anglican schools.

The Baptists in Johannesburg have a South African-born Chinese minister who was ordained about 15 years ago. They also strive for greater unity amongst their adherents and have regular organised youth activities. A quarterly newsletter is printed, containing articles in Chinese and English. There are no voluntary organisations amongst the Chinese Anglicans in Johannesburg, with the result that there is little unity and little effort to spread the faith.

In Johannesburg, only one person came to South Africa from China as a Catholic. Similarly the first Anglican is believed to have been converted before coming to South Africa. In Johannesburg, there were only four Catholics in 1940; all of the same family. Thus the remainder have become Christians through conversion and the baptism of their children, in the remarkably short time of thirty years.

Port Elizabeth has the second largest Chinese community in South Africa, and there the Anglicans slightly outnumber the Catholics. The Chinese Anglicans have their own church, which has a White minister but is otherwise served and financed by the Chinese community. The Catholics also have their own church and also a Chinese priest who came to South Africa approximately ten years ago. The Anglicans and the Catholics run their own schools for the Chinese and the majority of children were educated in these schools, but in 1973, a new school was built by the Provincial authorities for the community.

There are a few Christians in other centres: Pretoria has a few Catholics and Cape Town and Kimberley have both Anglicans and Catholics.

In addition to the members of Christian denominations, there are of course those who are so-called "non-Christian", or specified on official documents as of "no religion" or "Confucian". It is not easy to specify the exact nature of the religious beliefs of this group. Many have not embraced a voluntary religion which requires formal acceptance, organised worship and specified body of belief and practices. At the same time they are not fully aware of the significance of the Chinese traditions which they may or may not carry out within their families. Alternatively, old traditions may not be practised at all.

Because the observance or non-observance of Chinese customs is not checked by any organised body of clergy or religious practitioners, (though perhaps it may be affected by the opinions of family or friends or personal beliefs), the rites and ceremonies can be omitted quite easily. Furthermore many rites are dropped deliberately, particularly by the younger generation. However, I was told of one girl who had been so well brought up in traditional ideas that she is now more conscious of tradition than her mother-in-law.

Although many South African Chinese have not formally embraced Christianity, most of them, and more especially the younger generation, are familiar with Christian values and idea The way of life in which the South African Chinese part e is theoretically based on an ethic and moral code at buted to Christianity. Children attending White schoo exposed to the ideas of Whites, while those atte the Chinese school are also given religious instruction which is Christian in content, but non-denominational in accordance with regulations of the Educational Board.

The official stand of the Catholic Church is one of tolerance for traditional Chinese practices. In China (before Communism) or in large Chinese communities, tolerance facilitated the perpetuation of old beliefs. In South Africa, however, in a minority situation, few White people are sufficiently aware of Chinese rites and ceremonies to be able to express their tolerance, and the Chinese themselves are often unable to express the exact nature of their beliefs and practices. Thus, very often children first learn about Christianity at schools and the initial attitude imparted to them is to distinguish between that which is Christian as opposed to all else, which is pagan and undesirable.

The most important matter of concern in the conversion of adults to Christianity, is the question of traditional rites and ceremonies. The attitude towards Chinese practices in general, is one of individual interpretation. Catholics may carry out rites which are regarded as a sign of respect, and these include burning of incense and joss-sticks and placing food at a gravesid· But no rite should be practised if it is intended to be for the placation of spirits, thus the burning of paper articles and taking joss-sticks home after a funeral are regarded as "superstition". However, Catholics are told not to condemn these practices in others although they should not associate themselves with them.

The Anglicans do not seem to have an "official" view on Chinese practices. However, the number of Anglicans and Baptists is very small in comparison to that of Catholics.

From the above description of the Chinese in Johannesburg it can be seen that in spite of being immersed in a non-Chinese environment traditional ideas have not

disappeared amongst the Cantonese-speaking people in Johannesburg. Most Chinese are in a marginal situation in that they may come into regular contact with non-Chinese people in business, in their jobs and other daily routine matters, but primarily with Chinese people in their social life. Many of the older people speak very little English and thus they would tend to seek out their own people.

CHAPTER 3. ORIGINS AND TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHINESE IMMIGRANTS.

Like all migrants, the Chinese who came to South Africa brought the cultural traditions of their society of origin with them. On arrival the first generation of immigrants had to adapt to a new setting very different from the one they had left. The areas of life which demanded adaptation were two: first, those in which the migrants interacted with non-Chinese, however, I am told, that those contacts were primarily in business and seldom in social spheres. Second, the areas of life which traditionally depended upon the existence of certain purely Chinese institutions which were not present in South Africa (for example, in the spheres of religion: ancestral halls, local temples, Taoist and Buddhist "priests", geomantic experts). In the subsequent generation's education, increased contact with non-Chinese and longer experience of living in a non-Chinese world have inevitably led to still further modifications of the traditional social and cultural patterns but there are still many ways in which the Chinese in South Africa remain inevitably "Chinese". It is, therefore, necessary to give at least a brief description of their place of origin and the traditional domestic religion there. (The recent events that have so drastically altered both the society and culture in China fall outside the period of emigration and are not considered here.) However, in my opinion, the curtailment of ancestor worship in China, particularly through the destruction of ancestral tablets both in the homes and temples, does contribute to the decline in interest in ancestor worship here. The original domestic ancestral altars and ancestral temples were, to some extent, the focus for the religious activities here and thus in the past constant contributions were sent for the upkeep of the altars in the villages.

(i) REGION OF ORIGIN

Although there is a small number of people from what the Cantonese call "distant parts" (ngoi kong yān), the vast majority of the present day Chinese in South Africa are descendants of

migrants from Kwangtung Province in South Eastern China. The two main regions from which they originate are, firstly, the Cantonese-speaking district of Shun Tak (Mandarin: Shun Tei) which is situated in the South Eastern part of the Province, and, secondly, the Hakka-speaking county of Mooi Uen (Mandarin: Mei Hsien). As the title indicates, this study concentrates on the former.

Among the Cantonese districts of Kwangtung, Shun Tak has a rather special position, especially as regards the traditional independence of its women. It is often said that this was connected with the early development of the silk industry (1) for which women provided the major part of the labour force. It was also probably not unconnected with the emigration of men. The existence of female "anti-marriage pacts" was mentioned to me by some of my informants.

According to my informants, until 1910 Shun Tak was primarily a rice growing district, but after that date silk production was found to be more lucrative. Silk production introduced other important requirements such as the cultivation of mulberry trees (in the summer months) and the leaves were used to feed the silk worms. These leaves were either used by the people themselves, sold to neighbouring villages, or taken to the market town for trading. Others became involved in the breeding of the silk worms; the silk cocoons were either unwound before being sold or alternatively they were sold as cocoons to someone who had the equipment to do the unwinding. Some villages supplemented silk producing with fish farming in the winter months. Families had their own pool for breeding fish as well as plots for cultivating crops.

According to my informants, many able-bodied men of the Shun Tak villages had gone abroad in search of financial rewards,

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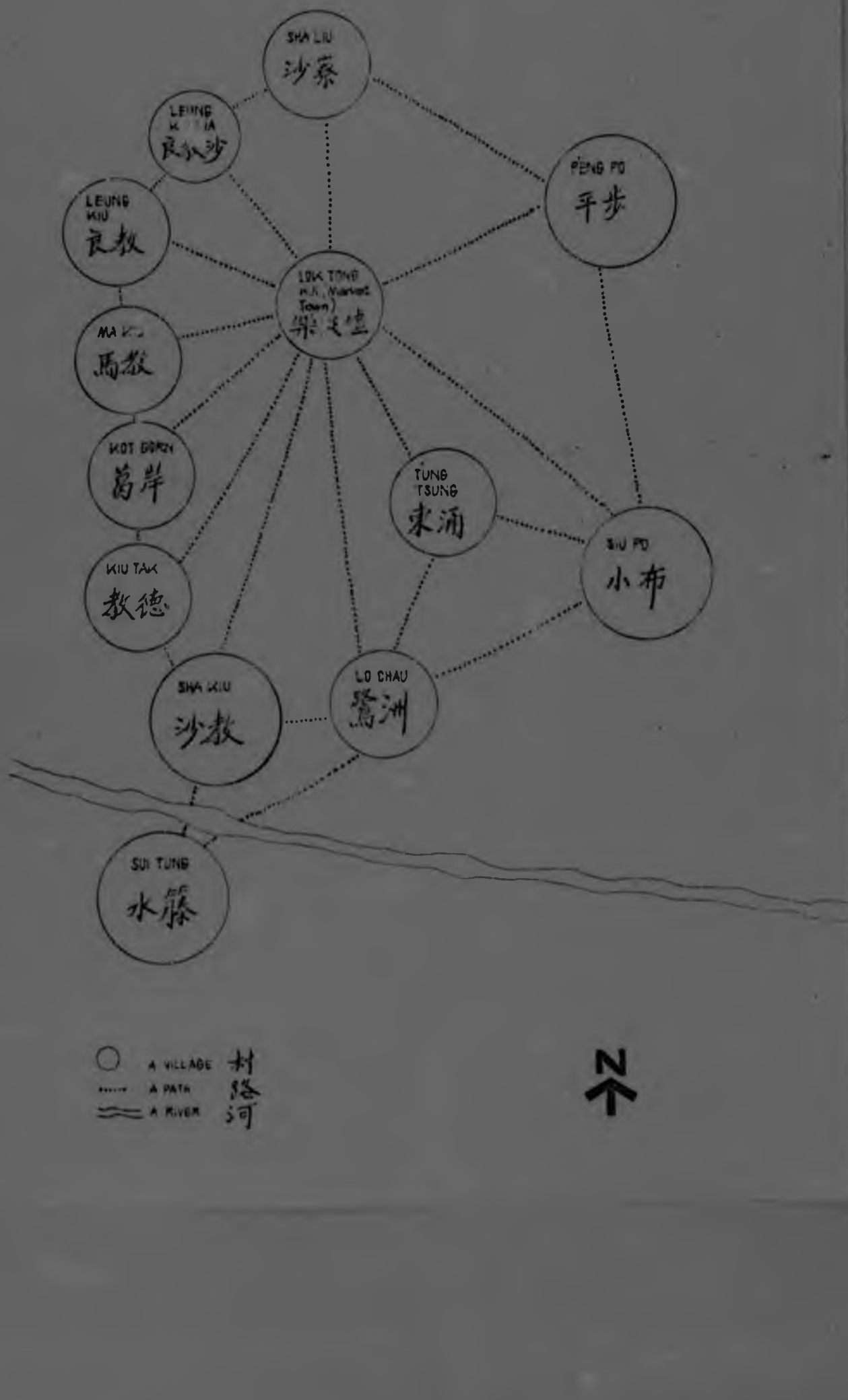
1. See Freedman (1965: 32).

and the villages depended very much on remittances from their men folk. It is said that in a few of the villages, at least one member of every household was abroad. The welfare of their home villages was an important focus for the emigrants and they took great pride in them. Indeed, overseas remittances from South Africa helped to finance such projects as the building of ancestral halls (t'ɐz t'ōng), schools, and, in at least one village, factories with looms for unwinding silk cocoons. The significance of overseas contributions was demonstrated during the Japanese invasion when in spite of all the chaos the ancestral hall and the homes of the members of one particular lineage in a certain village remained intact because their relatives in South Africa had organised to send regular funds home. The significance of this lies in the fact that usually in times of hardship buildings were pulled down and the components sold in order to provide money to buy food. At such times ancestral halls were normally the first to be taken apart, and only as a last resort, the homes.

In most of the villages in this region, the people were of more than one clan name. It appears, however, that people of recognised common descent did live in the same vicinity of a village and a lineage maintained its unity and identity by having its own ancestral hall. Common descent also determined the extent of rights and obligations. Consciousness of one's own descent group was regularly reinforced, particularly by various ancestral rituals which called for the gathering of a particular group of descendants. The lines of demarcating a particular descent group depended on the occasion: thus in one village the members of the same clan name divided into two descent lines with their own ancestral halls. However, these two sub-lineages believed that their founding ancestor had moved to their village site from a neighbouring village and so when the neighbouring village (also of the same clan name) commemorated their ancestors these two sub-lineages also participated. On these occasions there was the distribution of pork to each family unit of the group. People still recall the festive air of such gatherings: there was the communal meal, the distribution of pork, and for the

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE CLUSTER OF VILLAGES FROM WHICH MOST OF THE CANTONESE-SPEAKING CHINESE IN JOHANNESBURG HAVE COME.



young boys the opportunity for an outing. At Ts'ing Meng[1] (Spring festival) they would visit the graves, during Shui I[2] (Autumn festival) they would only gather at the ancestral hall.

I was unable to get a detailed map of the region from which the emigrants came, but at my suggestion, two people who had been brought up in the villages consented to draw a diagram from memory showing the location and proportionate size of the villages in relation to each other. This diagram shows a market town surrounded by a series of villages and would approximate to Skinner's description of a standard market-town, the basic function being to exchange what the peasant produces for what he needs. (1964: 74) This marketing area also more or less coincides with Skinner's model. I am told that it takes between 2½ to 3 hours to walk from P'eng Po through the market-town to Sha Liu. Skinner says that a village is usually between 3.4 to 6.1 km. from a market town. If we use Mallows and Beinart's standards[3] for calculating time and walking distance - 15 minutes to walk 1 km., then the distance between Sha Liu and Sha Kiu, the two villages which are the furtherest away from each other, is 12 km.

(ii) TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND.

(a) The Great and Little Traditions in Traditional China.

China is a country of great extent and diversity, yet it cannot be denied that some cultural uniformity and political unity has extended over many centuries. In attempting to understand Chinese cultural traditions it may be useful to bear in mind Redfield's (1956) concept of the Great and Little Traditions. Redfield's thesis is that the Great Traditions are those of the intellectual élite. In China this refers to the literary tradition which immortalised works going as far back as the time of

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1. In Johannesburg the term Haang Ts'ing is also used. (Mandarin: Ching Ming)
2. Ts'ing Meng and Shui I are described in Chapter 5(ii).
3. "Planning in the C.B.D.", Traffic Quarterly, April 1966.

Confucius, and after more than two thousand years they still continued to be the source of study for all the scholars of China. Redfield also states that the Little Traditions work themselves out and maintain themselves in the life of the unlettered, that is, the peasant population who are usually agriculturists. This well describes the majority of people in China. Redfield suggests that the two kinds of tradition are interdependent and affect one another. In China there seemed to be little direct contact between the literati and the peasants, but it was nevertheless true that every village had aspirations of seeing its sons climb the ladder of success through passing the civil service examinations and these examinations, of course, entailed the study of Confucian texts. The situation is very complex, and ideally any study of Chinese religious practices should make use of both traditional literary sources and the writings of fieldworkers who have studied the non-literati. All that can be done here, however, is to give a brief sketch of some of the general themes in the hope that it may throw some light on the situation in Kwangtung at the time of the emigration.

One major problem is that no modern fieldwork has ever been done in the Shun Tak area. We have already noted that Shun Tak had certain special features as regards emigration, the position of women and marriage. The question is bound to arise whether or not it was different in other ways too, and in particular whether Shun Tak people had any special religious practices different from those found elsewhere in rural China. To this we can give no definite answer, except to point to the fact that the religious practices observed in South Africa do not seem to be exceptionally "different". It may be appropriate also to draw attention to the point made by Ward (1965: 135) mentioning "the uniquely widespread uniformity and long continuity of traditional Chinese society and culture" which existed at the same time as quite considerable local variation. Ward was expressing a view held by nearly all the authorities:

namely, that although local variations did still exist yet by the early years of this century the general cultural and social patterns had become remarkably similar in nearly all parts of the country. If that was so, then the descriptions and analyses made in other parts of China may certainly have at least some relevance to Shun Tak.

(b) Traditional Levels of Rural Social Groupings.

As in all societies of which we have knowledge, the family was the basic unit of domestic life in China. The family, in practice often merely an elementary family, but ideally a patrilocal extended family, consisting of the parents, their sons with their wives and children and unmarried daughters, lived under one roof, owned common property, co-operated in economic activities, maintained a single budget and worshipped common ancestors. If the parents had died and division had not taken place then, theoretically the eldest male of the most senior living generation was the head of the family unit. If formal division had taken place within the household, property would be divided and separate hearths set up but the ancestral shrine would remain a unifying factor. It is often stated that the ancestral tablets could not be duplicated or replaced and, therefore, descendants came together at specific times and occasions to perform religious rites. Freedman (1966: 150) pointed out, however, that it was possible for younger brothers to make substitute tablets and to carry on ancestral worship independently in their own homes after family division. Thus division marked the end of one family's cycle and the beginning of others.

In the traditional Chinese family, the principle of patrilineal descent emphasised the importance of males. Inheritance passed through the male line to males and the male head was the economic, social and religious head of the

basic social unit, the family. The extent to which a father actually wielded authority over his sons is said to have depended upon his economic circumstances. A poor man had little in land or wealth to withhold from his sons. Fei (1939: 74) observed that the actual authority of the parents varied with the degree of their dependence on their children. In theory the head of the family was the unquestioned authority who controlled the family income and owned the family land and property. The members of the family were, in a sense, members of his labour force. If sons worked outside the family, their wages would still be brought back to the head of the family and the head of the family had to be consulted in any decision involving the members of, or matters relating to, the family. Lin Yueh Hwa (1948) in his study of a Fukienese village relates the story of Dunglin. Dunglin had been in business outside the family for some years; furthermore, he lived in the market town away from his village home where his father's brother, mother and elder brother lived. Dunglin decided to get married and had chosen his future wife himself but, before he took any formal steps, he returned to consult his uncle, his mother and his brother. No objections were raised, and so Dunglin's betrothal took place.

Freedman (1966: 149) suggests that among the Chinese there is no longer a close relationship between the inheritance of jural authority and property rights and the rights of seniority of a particular son. The emphasis on the significance of primogeniture which appears in much of the literature is a mistake; it probably was important in the past but more recent ethnographic evidence shows that the eldest son's special share did not provide him with means to exert his seniority or preside over a stable paternal unit. Freedman says that the tendency is that whatever the father had would be inherited jointly or equally by the sons and thus while sons often waited impatiently to

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attain "social maturity" and liberation from paternal authority at the death of the father (if he was in a strong financial position), the greatest competition and animosity was likely to occur between brothers. In ritual activities, however, every attempt was made to preserve the ideal family structure unless the group of agnates had been irrevocably torn apart by animosity and disagreements.

The family was a unit among other like units joined together in a more complex level of organisation - the localised lineage. There is evidence that localised lineages were more highly developed and more significant in the social structure of South Eastern China (which includes Kwangtung and, of course, Shun Tak) than elsewhere. Within a lineage the group of male agnates defined by their descent from a common ancestor formed a religious unit. The focal point of such a unit was the ancestral hall (or temple) which held the ancestral tablets of the members' related forebears. Periodically the males of the lineage came together for religious rites which are said to have been a means of reinforcing the solidarity and self-awareness of the lineage. In many areas of Kwangtung Province the larger lineages wielded very considerable political and economic power(1).

In Kwangtung Province lineage members often lived side by side in so-called "single surname villages". In such villages, often known locally by the surname concerned, for example the Lee village, the Tang village, all the males and all the not yet married females had the same surname and traced descent agnatically from a common male ancestor, only the married-in women come originally from different

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1. see Freedman (1958: chaps. 7, 8 and 9), (1966: Chap. 3) for discussion on the economic basis of a lineage's organisation, its political structure, segmentation etc.

lineages. Chinese lineages were always exogamous, and so where single-surname villages existed villages were also exogamous. By no means all villages in Kwangtung were single-surname villages, and, as we have seen, the villages[1] from which the South African Chinese immigrants came appear all to have contained members with a number of different surnames, and therefore, of at least a similar number of different lineages.

Normally all traditional local groupings in Southern China were associated with specific ritual places. Each family household had its "ancestral altar", it also usually had a special spot for the worship of the so-called Kitchen God (or Cooking Stove God) and another for the spirit of the place in which the house stood; each lineage and lineage segment had its ancestral hall; each village had its special places (or shrines) for its locality spirits ("Earth Gods": t'o tei kung) and for the spirits of special natural objects (e.g. big trees or rocks) and very many, if not most villages also had at least one temple dedicated to one of the many gods of the traditional pantheon.

(c) Spirits and Ancestors

Kulp (1925) speaks of the Chinese village as consisting of a plurality of communities. Firstly, there was the community of living persons in the village, and secondly, the spiritual community consisting of the spirits believed to reside in natural objects, the spirits of departed ancestors and ancient folk heroes. It was necessary for every living person in the society to adapt himself to the

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1. Although in Johannesburg the term "village" is used, for example, in defining exogamy, in fact it refers to village membership in China, which in turn implies a particular lineage or lineage section.

demands of the living community, but he must also adjust himself to the needs of the spiritual community. The latter adjustment was achieved through the performance of the rituals of "worship" - this being the English word most commonly used to translate the Chinese term paai.

Yang (1948: 90) objects to the use of the term "ancestor worship" for ceremonies and feasts observed to commemorate ancestors; Hsu (1940), on the other hand, defines ancestral rituals as essentially "religious" because the attitudes of descendants towards their ancestors is one of reverence and dependence and because their spirits were the centre of a body of beliefs and cult activities. The different views of these two writers appear to depend upon different definitions of what is "religious". Freedman (1957: 227) points out that the Chinese themselves use the word paai (usually translated as "worship") as the verb for the ritual activities performed in the presence of deities and ancestors alike. Hsu (1940) in his study of two North China communities analysed the use of the word shen (Mandarin) which implies superior spirits including gods. The spirit of a deceased could be appointed shen by the superior spirits in the supernatural hierarchy for good conduct during life. Hsu explains that all people wished to identify with powerful and superior ancestors and it followed that the use of the term shen was desirable. In time all ancestors seemed to become shen and their bad deeds were soon forgotten[1]. Hsu states that ancestors were indeed associated with the higher levels of spirits and

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1. This, of course, did not take into account the tablets which had been excluded from the ancestral hall because poor families might not have been able to pay the required fees for admission of the tablet into the ancestral temple, and it should also be remembered that some lineages were too poor to afford the building of an ancestral hall.

the significant point here seems to be that there is no clear dividing line above or below which the term shen can or cannot be used. It seems that an ancestor's spirit could be termed shen but this did not mean that he had the powers of a god. An ancestor could only act through a god and, further, a man only worshipped his own ancestors, whereas theoretically anyone could worship a particular god although in some cases, a god was thought of as "belonging" in a special sense to a particular village(1). In other words, it is probably more accurate to translate the Chinese term shen with the general English word "spirit" (which can be used for ancestors as well as deities etc.) rather than the more specific (and perhaps higher order) word "god".

Writers differ in their interpretation of the beliefs which underlie the practice of ancestor worship. Freedman (1958: 88) points out that this difference must in some degree be due to regional and class differences. Kulp (1925: 306) states that the ancestral spirits are believed to control human affairs according to their pleasure and if neglected could become angry and wreak vengeance upon the living by sending misfortune. Fei (1938: 78) observes that sometimes misfortunes and sickness are interpreted as warnings from the ancestors of an action of which they did not approve. Hsu (1940) in his North China study maintains that ancestors do not punish or reward, but the good or bad behaviour of descendants are "vaguely believed to be of some consequence to the deceased ancestors in the other world". Hsu also explains that a man who does not behave ethically during his life would have bad descendants who would in turn "defame him (ancestor) and squander the family fortune". In his study of West Town, Hsu (1948: 241) states that the ancestors "are never offended by their descendants and they never cause disaster to befall the coming generations". Hsu's analysis

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1. A belief which did not usually prevent "outsiders" from approaching him if they wanted to do so.

seems to be that there was some idea of a mutual dependence between the living and the dead ancestors, but that a man was also directly responsible for the nature of existence of his soul through his behaviour during this life. In the first place, a person would be rewarded personally by the supernatural judges when he reached the underworld. Secondly, it was his responsibility to leave behind descendants who were well provided for and who had also been well drilled in the concepts and practices of filial duties. Then, in turn, the success would be reflected back to the ancestors because the descendants would be conscientious in seeing to the needs of the ancestors while the descendants would already have been provided with some material means for seeing to the sacrifices. If ancestors were neglected, it was believed that they would become hungry, wandering ghosts. Freedman (1966: 140) also puts forward the view that ancestors were thought to care for descendants and would "not capriciously cause harm to them". At the same time "men look to their forebears for protection and feel morally obliged to them for any benefit that accrues from the merit accumulated by the dead during their life time".

The importance of the authority structure in the living domestic situation has already been mentioned above. It embodied an attitude of respect and submission on the part of children towards parents, in particular the father. Respect was due also to all lineal ascendants and more generally to all older members of the family and lineage. This basic and very highly valued attitude and the behaviour that went with it was known as haau, usually translated as "filial piety". The closely related relationship between the living and the dead was paai tsó sin or "ancestor worship".

The most important feature of Chinese religion in the household is thus the practice of ancestor worship which is based on filial duties which appear to be extended into the

spiritual world. In the village, there is little doubt that, given economic circumstances, the father had absolute authority over his sons and his family in general. Freedman pointed out that the father-son relationship was one of harsh subordination, while Hsu maintains that a father had the final say in the life and death over his son. Lin relates how Dunglin beat his son who was already grown up and married, for disrespectful behaviour towards his mother. The Chinese social, economic and religious organisation facilitated the means of imposing strict social rules in the household and village, thus in this social structure a man was constantly seeking approval from his superiors, both dead and alive.

(d) Household Ritual and Traditional Social Structure.

The older Chinese, and to some extent the younger generations are still aware of the lineage to which they belong. Ta'ing Meng and Shui I are two activities requiring lineage organisation which are still observed in Johannesburg: these traditional gatherings of lineage members are still orientated towards the memory of their ancestral halls in the villages in China. No ancestral hall representing the original ones have been set up in South Africa and no further lineage segmentation has taken place to justify the establishment of a new ancestral hall for a new South African Chinese lineage. Ancestral halls were always set up by lineages and not domestic units. There is also an absence of temples and earth shrines. Perhaps it is because their numbers were always small that the South African Chinese have not built ancestral halls or temples as the overseas Chinese have done in some other countries, e.g. Singapore.

The main traditional rituals to survive here in Johannesburg are those connected with the household and with certain rites de passage and these are mostly amongst

the Cantonese; the Hakka seem to practise fewer traditional rituals. As this study concentrates in any case on domestic ritual, I shall confine this brief description of the traditional situation in China primarily to the domestic sphere. It should not be forgotten, however, that in the villages from which the emigrants come, the religious observances that were carried out in the household were only a part of the wider ritual life that also existed outside it.

It is often suggested that rites of ancestor worship promote kinship solidarity. This was probably very true of the ancestral rites carried out by and on behalf of the traditional lineages in their ancestral halls. Freedman (1958: 84) suggests that there is also the aspect of memorialism to be considered as well. This concept explains the rites which though carried out regularly do not serve to define or bring together the daily rituals carried out in a household. Thus memorialism implies acts of devotion to ancestors at the domestic level. The ancestors worshipped in the household shrine were not more than three to five generations removed from the existing family head, and personal devotion could thus be the result of close personal ties in life (Freedman 1957: 135). Once the tablets were moved to the ancestral hall, they became part of the ritual centre of a lineage segment.

A shrine was to be found in every household and it was a place of worship for both gods and ancestors. Ancestors occupied an inferior position but they shared in the offerings made to the gods. Elsewhere in the house, the kitchen god placed above the stove, also received periodic offerings. This god watched over the daily life of the household and made an annual report to the emperor in heaven. The fortune of the family was based on this report thus rites, including smearing something sweet on the god's mouth, were carried out to ensure that the kitchen god

returned to heaven with a favourable report of the members of the household. The household shrine (often a table, shelf or shelves) usually housed either an image or a picture of one or more of the well known gods of the traditional pantheon (Kwan Yin, for example, the famous Goddess of Mercy from the Buddhist tradition, was a favourite) who would be worshipped there as well as in their special temples. In times of misfortune people appealed to these gods rather than to their ancestors. The ancestral spirits were usually represented on these shrines by "ancestral tablets" or strips of paper bearing the deceased's name. Sometimes there were portraits too.

Ancestor worship in the household was carried out in varying degrees of complexity according to the extent of the rites and the persons participating. The simplest was perhaps the daily lighting of the incense sticks, said to have been done usually by the women in the family and most characteristic of what Freedman calls the acts of memorialism. Other rites included the offering of food, when, led by the head of the family, the persons present would take turns in kow-towing before the ancestral tablets.

The traditional Chinese calendar included many festivals. Fei(1939: 129) states that festivals always took place in between periods of industrial activity . They included Ch'ing Ming (about April 6th) when the graves had to be tended and the ancestral spirits were offered food and clothes; there was also "New Year" and other festivities in accordance with agricultural activities. Ancestor worship in the household took place at all these festivals and also on occasions of celebration such as the birthday of the father, grandfather, mother and grandmother, and at weddings or births. Besides these occasions, ancestors had to be consulted in important ventures; for example, Hsu (1940) reports that the families in North China referred to ancestral spirits for decisions on

migration and division of the family and the ancestors' answers were obtained through the use of divining blocks or by drawing lots. Ancestors also had to be informed of important events taking place in the family, such as births, marriages and deaths. At a marriage, the new bride was ritually introduced to her husband's dead ancestors represented on the shrine and then to living senior members of the family. Summing up these activities, Hsu (idem: 20) says that in this manner "earthly affairs are given traditional sanctions which indicate the digrity and seriousness of the affairs".

Hsu (1940:) in his description of the New Year festivities, describes the strict observance of age and male superiority in the various rites connected with ancestor worship. The male head of the family took the lead in making obeisances to the ancestors, followed by other male members in descending order of seniority. After the males, the female members followed in order of seniority. In some rituals, such as the ceremony of inviting the ancestors home for the celebrations, only male members participated. On the one hand, women took care of the rites and duties of an informal nature, but on the other hand, the male members played the vital role in rites of social significance.

The differential status of males and females can also be observed in the performance of mourning rites. Fei (op cit: 77) says that mourning duties, the intensity of which varied in accordance with one's relationship to the deceased were "in a sense the legal charter of descent and the claim on inheritance". Fei and Lin Yueh Hwa both relate that the chief mourner (usually the person first in line of descent) had specific duties which included the holding of the head of the dead when the corpse was placed in the coffin. Fei says that this justified the extra inheritance due to the direct heir, and if the nearest

kinsman was absent the person next in line of descent could carry out the duties and thus lay claim to the additional inheritance. It is suggested, therefore, that rites of mourning established claim on inheritance and rites of ancestors worship served to affirm the rights and obligations accruing to one(1).

According to Fei's diagram (op cit: 78) for degrees of mourning, a wife assumed the heaviest mourning, i.e. for an indefinite period. A son mourned for two years and sixty days and he was forbidden to wear silk for one year, but his mother could not wear silk for an indefinite period. Thus a wife observed the greatest degree of mourning and her inheritance was the status attributed to her by virtue of her position in the social hierarchy as wife of the deceased and, more particularly, as mother of male heirs. A wife's mourning obligations emphasized her position of inferiority and depenaence in her husband's family, for if mourning rites were seen to be a means of establishing jural rights it can perhaps be explained that her mourning was a widow's ritual means of emphasizing her continued place in the alien group into which she had been incorporated and which was obliged to support her. A woman could also enjoy some degree of authority, Kulp describes how a man could not dispose of his inheritance of property and land without his widowed mother's approval. Lin, in the Golden Wing, gives another example of the influence a mother could assert, when she asked Dunglin to rejoin his household with his late brother's family. In his West Town study, Hsu observed that a son was required to mourn for his father for three years but four years for his mother, and the reason given was that she had been responsible for rearing him. However, if a woman was a young widow without sons, then she had a low position in the household and she

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1. However, we have seen that Freedman disputes the claim of the eldest son (i.e. the usual direct heir) to additional inheritance. (see page 42 above).

was subject to her mother-in-law's control. Nevertheless, a young widow still belonged to her husband's family and a chaste widowhood could be a means to distinction and praise.

The actual rituals of mourning were of two kinds: the first involved the wearing of special types of white clothing at the funeral and post-funeral ceremonies and the performance of special duties; the second involved the continued wearing of certain (white or blue) garments and the observance of certain abstinences for specified periods of time. The details varied with the relationship to the deceased. Mourning was also an indication of one's status. Lin Yueh Hwa describes the mourning rites for a woman in the village he studied and in this case, the son assumed the role of chief mourner. The husband, contrary to official principles, did not wear any sign of mourning and Lin states that this implied that a senior or elder was not required to observe mourning for a person of junior status.

Status was also significant in deciding who would or should not be considered worthy of receiving "worship" as an ancestor after death. Here the most important consideration seems to have been whether or not the deceased person had been married. Hsu (1948: 253), in his West Town study states that in the traditional Chinese family the role of the individual was to be linked in a "great family" and thus a bachelor or spinster was "socially lost". For a man it was important to marry in order to provide sons to continue the family line. For a girl marriage was, if possible, even more important. Yang (1961: 61) states that the soul of an unmarried or divorced woman was destined to become a homeless wandering ghost because no daughter could be worshipped in her natal family shrine and she would not have joined another family[1]. It is well

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1. This was the reason why posthumous or "ghost" marriages were quite often entered into in traditional times. I was told of a number of cases in Johannesburg. (see Chapter 4 (iv) (h)).

known that the birth of a girl was reg rded as a potential loss to her natal family since on marriage her domestic services, her fertility and her main ritual obligations were transferred to her husband's family and finally her spirit tablet would be placed beside that of her husband on his family's shrine and not in her own father's home.

Nevertheless, marriage did not cut a woman off completely from her natal family, a married woman retained her own surname and she was expected to continue to take part in some of the religious rites in her father's home. A daughter was expected to mourn for her parents. Lin Yueh Hwa (op. cit: 105) observed that it was a daughter's duty to carry out the ceremonial washing of her dead mother's body before burial. In describing the New Year festivities, Hsu says that a married daughter would pay a visit to her family of origin but only after the ancestors' spirits had been sent away and, unlike the rest of the family, she did not offer incense or kow-tow before her father's ancestors.

Domestic religion undoubtedly reflected the differences between the social roles of men and women. Men, and particularly the male head of a household, were required to perform the important rites, that is, rites which served to mark some critical event in the lives of the living or the deceased. The latter has been explained as a means of affirming the claim to rights and obligations due to the male head of the family. Women were responsible for much of the preparation for feasts and ceremonials and they also performed the daily informal tasks of caring for the ancestral shrine belonging to their husband's families. Women, however, were omitted from rites outside the household and usually had no part in the rituals in the ancestral hall. In the case of a disaster which was interpreted as the wrath of the gods, priests were called to perform ceremonies to

placate the gods and during that period, men performed all the duties and rites including cooking food for the priests. A woman's duties thus remained at the domestic level.

As a final point in this section, it is interesting to note that the studies of overseas Chinese have revealed that the memorialism aspect of ancestor worship tends to persist while rites which called for a wider unit of kinsmen became of less significance. Freedman (1957: 224) says that this change need not necessarily indicate that the connection between kinship and ancestor worship was so close that change in the one led necessarily to corresponding change in the other aspect of family life. He says that it may rather be that certain elements have continued to exist independently of kinship organisation, thus a closer examination of the nature and extent of religious beliefs would be relevant.

(e) Geomancy: Fung Shui (Mandarin: Feng Shui)

As we have seen, the spirits of ancestors were usually thought to be benign and not to interfere with their descendants unless they were neglected. However, the written material shows that ancestors, particularly those of immediate lineal ascendants, could affect descendants. It was this belief that underlay the ideas and practices of the geomancy of burial.

Strictly speaking, the practice of geomancy refers to the correct siting not only of a burial spot, but also of a house, building, a village or district. The exact site is thought to influence the descendants of a dead man, (there are examples, even, of reburial at a "better site"), or affect the people living in a particular house or members of a certain village. Alternately the position of someone else's building may in turn affect a nearby property.

Freedman (1968: 7) writes :-

> "It is very important to grasp the idea that in the Chinese view a building is not simply something that sits upon the ground to serve as a convenient site for human activity. It is an intervention in the universe; and that universe is composed of the physical environment and men and the relationships among men. Men are bonded to the physical environment, working good or ill upon it and being done good or ill by it ... The physical universe is alive with forces that, on the one side can be shaped and brought fruitfully to bear on the dwelling and those who live in it, and on the other side, can by oversight or mismanagement be made to react disastrously ... So that, in principle, every act of construction disturbs a complex balance of forces within a system made up of nature and society, and it must be made to produce a new balance of forces lest evil follow".

The important thing here is the recognition of the traditional Chinese view of the Universe: "Heaven, Man and Earth form a natural triad" (Freedman 1968: 13) and a disturbance in one member can reverberate in the others. Freedman rightly sees that this notion provides a context of ideas which by involving mankind directly with the natural environment makes fung shui more readily comprehensible; in my opinion, however, this same set of ideas is of even more far-reaching importance in explaining not only geomancy but also a number of other ritual activities. The Cantonese in Johannesburg speak of chûn chan, a phrase which can best be translated as "the confusion of elements", something which can lead to serious misfortune. I discuss this idea later on.

Freedman (1967) called his article "Ancestor worship: two facets of the Chinese case", the two facets being worship before the tablets in the home and of the ancestor's grave. What is of particular interest is Freedman's explanation in terms of the dualism of Yin and Yang which he calls "a system of complementary oppositions" (1968: 7) (Bodde (1962: 35) stated that the Yin and Yang concepts

implied a "mutual reciprocity coupled with mutual inequality"). Thus the bones in the earth are yin, the tablets or the ancestral tablets are yang; ancestors (shen) are yang, ghosts (kuei) are yin. We shall see how this dualism constantly appears in ritual activities in South Africa, although none of my informants have been able to explain it in terms of yin and yang.

The two facets of the Chinese case show that on the one hand, in ancestor worship, the descendants praise their ancestors and look to them for protection; on the other hand, the geomancy of burial permits the ancestors to be used as "passive pawns" by the descendants as their choice of a burial site (particular with the advice of a geomantic expert), that will ensure the flow of beneficial influences. (Freedman 1966: 140). Freedman points out that the influences do not flow equally to all descendants of the dead person thus depending on the site, some may benefit more than others, but it is one's duty as a filial son to seek a good burial spot. Thus, while ancestor worship reflected the solidarity of agnates, the practice of geomancy expressed the competition between agnates.

While a dead man's remains might, so to speak, be "used" to the benefit of descendants it appears that there was some idea that good fortune must also be morally earned. Freedman (1966: 127) cites a story in which the man concerned was believed to have obtained geomantic knowledge dishonestly and thus, although through geomantic influences his son became a scholar, his good fortune did not persist and he was duly punished by a god who appeared as a stranger.

The Chinese are, as Freedman points out, preoccupied with the idea of success and thus the practice of geomancy is an effort to ensure a good future. But the belief in geomancy also provides a means for explaining failure and unhappiness, in the face of which ancestors have been reburied,

pagodas built to ward off harmful affects in the landscape, and protecting mirrors placed over front doors etc.

The fact that Chinese are constantly concerned with success cannot be too strongly emphasised. But how does one define 'success' and how is success to be achieved? Freedman's analysis of geomancy has given us important indications and I hope that the present analysis of ritual activities on an overseas group will not only provide an ethnographic record of activities which have not so far been written down, but also help to make traditional religious beliefs and practices more meaningful.

CHAPTER 4. RITUALS OF THE LIFE CYCLE.

(i) BIRTH

Traditional China placed great importance on having posterity and amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg there is still the desire for sons to continue the family line. However, girls are not unwelcome. It has often happened that a family with many boys will want a daughter and vice versa, although the lack of a son might be cause for more concern. I have heard parents rationalising that nowadays daughters are just as good as sons and that girls remain closer to their families than boys. I have also heard remarks such as: "They think they are better off because they have so many sons and we have none" and "th y look down on us because we have no sons". A father, frustrated at a continued succession of daughters, named one of his daughters Patience.

In the following sections, it will be seen that many of the customs which express the joys and anxieties of child-bearing and childbirth are still to be found amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg.

(a) Pregnancy Taboos.

A pregnant woman may find herself subjected to a variety of taboos: there are many things she may not do, certain foods she may not eat, and some still have to take traditional remedies. Taboos must be observed not only for the well-being of the child, but it is sometimes feared that a pregnant woman may have a defiling influence on others. Taboos restrict the activities of the pregnant woman but they also appear to symbolically stress the importance of her home and, in particular, her bedroom.

My informants were not able to give me a clear idea

of traditional beliefs on the progression of the months of gestation as apparently written in the almanac[1]. Three of my informants said that they used abridged versions of the almanac which did not contain this information and perhaps this accounts for the awareness, yet vagueness, of these details. Nevertheless, many people believe that the unborn child is vulnerable to the actions of the mother and also to physical changes in the parental home. A mother-to-be should not use scissors on her bed for fear that she might harm the child (one of the explanations given for a cleft palate), nor should she drape a tape measure around her neck as it might cause the umbilical cord to twist around the child's neck. Any hammering or general repairs around the home might also harm the unborn child; for example, when a child was born with a lump on his head, his father recalled that he had filled a hole in the floor with cement before the child was born and so the lump resembled the filling of cement. Simply removing the cement from the floor caused the lump to disappear.

The furniture in the pregnant woman's bedroom should not be moved around. The explanation I was given is that the unborn child is somewhere in the house and should the furniture be moved it could cause the child to be deformed, or some other harm will come to the child. On one occasion a girl re-arranged her bedroom furniture. Her mother-in-law saw the change and although the girl was a devout Christian, she immediately had the furniture put back - just in case it might affect her unborn child! A mother-to-be should also not move to a new house and the more tradition minded maintain that she should not even spend a night away from home, that is, not on any other bed

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1. The Chinese almanac (t'ung shue) contains magical and prosaic information on all important aspects of life and it also contains chronological data which can be used for determining times and dates for activities such as a marriage, the date for moving into a new home or commencing a new business venture.

except her own. I know of cases where a miscarriage or death of an infant has been attributed to moving house while the mother was pregnant. I also know of two cases where people put off moving house until after a child had been born.

My informants believe that the unborn child is more vulnerable in the early stages of gestation and explained to me that it is acceptable to move house after the seventh month of pregnancy. However, when one is moving it is nevertheless necessary to take precautions and so before the bed is removed, either the husband or wife should warn the child that the bed is about to be dismantled.

A pregnant woman may also cause harm to others. She may not observe a new bride's bed being made up for the first time. She might be permitted to look at the room, but not sit on the bridal bed. Similarly, a pregnant woman may not observe a bride getting dressed in her bridal gown and she is also not permitted to see the wedding rites being performed. A girl told me how, on one occasion, although she had been invited to the bride's home for lunch on the morning of the wedding, she was turned away by the bride's mother when she arrived. (She was naturally very bitter and hurt over this incident). On another occasion, I was at a bride's home while she was dressing for the wedding. A pregnant cousin of the bride was present during the morning. However when the time approached for the bride to change, the pregnant girl, on the advice of her mother, made an excuse to go visiting elsewhere. This girl later told me that she was not sure if the bride's mother would object to her presence; she made the excuse so as not to cause ill-feeling or embarrassment, as she felt that had the bride's mother not been "superstitious", she would have persuaded her to stay. A pregnant girl may not observe the performance of rites, but it is in

order for her to attend the dinner celebration.

I have also been told that men who gamble a lot may resent the presence of a pregnant woman, as it is thought she is capable of causing bad luck.

(b) Birth.

In Johannesburg today, most confinements take place in one of the maternity homes, although a generation ago confinements generally took place at home with the assistance of a midwife. Many older people still believe in traditional remedies and so Chinese medicines are sometimes still given to both the mother and child despite the attendance of Western doctors. A girl who has just had a baby may be cared for by her mother-in-law or any other capable female relative but it is also possible to hire a woman to p'ooI uêt (companion for the month) and she takes over household duties for as long as required. These women are the same ones who offer services at weddings in assisting the bride.

According to traditional beliefs, the new mother must remain at home until one month after the birth, and this is often marked by the "full-month" celebrations (see below). The girl is not permitted to visit her own parents or to participate in any outside social activities. One girl told me how she wanted to bring forward the date of the "full-month" party so that she could go out again as she pleased. Another girl was not allowed to visit her sister even though she only stayed a few doors away in the same block of flats.

(c) Full-month and dinner celebration for a new born baby.

The "full-month" celebrations (moon uêt) are held as

near as possible to one calendar month from date of birth. In Johannesburg today the celebrations take place on a Sunday, and for this reason they may have to be held on a day prior to the full month but preferably not after that date. The one exception of which I am aware, was held after the month, because the family was in mourning for the paternal grandmother. Thus they waited until the mourning period was over before giving a party for the first male grandchild of the family.

Each family makes its own decision whether to celebrate a birth or not. A party may not be given for a variety of reasons: they may not think it necessary, perhaps for financial reasons, or perhaps, as in another case, when they could not get a suitable date because other family celebrations had been arranged for the only available days. Some parents only give a party for the first child and sometimes only if the first child is a son. Some families do not celebrate at all, and others celebrate for every child, whether boy or girl. In some families, the paternal grandparents provide the celebration: in one family I know, the grandparents paid for the parties for all the grandchildren while in another family, the grandparents provided a party for the eldest child of each son.

During this month it is popular to cook pork-trotters in vinegar especially for the new mother. These foods are believed to be of medicinal rather than symbolic value. In preparation for the "full-month" celebration, fresh ginger must be preserved in vinegar and eggs boiled and then dyed red. (I could not get an explanation for the symbolism of these items).

On the day of the "full-month", the baby is taken by the parents to visit the maternal grandmother. This should be the first time that the newborn child goes to her maternal grandparents' home. It is a special visit and



Plate 1. Ancestors are worshipped when a baby was taken to visit his paternal grandmother for the first time. This home had no permanent altar and so the ritual items were just placed in front of a portrait of the late grandfather. The statue of Buddha was merely ornamental and of no ritual significance.

the couple takes gifts to the maternal grandparents.

At the one visit at which I was present, the gifts were contained in two red boxes (the laí hôp). They comprised two cooked chickens, a piece of roasted pork, two oranges, several red eggs and preserved ginger. The red eggs and ginger were in sufficient quantity for the girl's mother to distribute to her relatives and neighbours. Strictly speaking, on receipt of these red eggs and ginger, the relatives and neighbours should send along red packets for the baby. Pieces of sugar cane should also be included, but are omitted when not obtainable.

The red boxes are taken home again by the young couple but, of course, the boxes are not returned empty. Some pork, chicken, and red-packets are left in each.

At another ceremony I attended, the gifts were contained in cardboard boxes, as laí hôp were not available. When the couple left the mother's mother wanted to return part of the gifts, but the child's father refused and so the boxes and their contents were all left behind. The baby was given red-packets by her maternal grandparents. In each case, some of the contents of the boxes were offered on the household altar and in the yard. It should also be noted that some time before the party, it is necessary to take flowers to the cemetery.

The new mother's activities are still restricted until the moon uêt, but today there is little or no restriction on the movements of the child's father. However, I have come across one example of how the father's social activities were believed to have caused the death of their baby. This happened about fifteen years ago. The older people believed that the baby had died at the age of two weeks because the father had gone to the moon uêt party

of another child: this resulted in chûn chan [1] and it proved fatal for his own child.

After these visits a dinner is held either at a restaurant or at the parents' home, depending on the size of the gathering. The celebration dinner is given by the child's father (or paternal grandparents), and the guests are mainly from his father's side [2] and probably include only close family of his mother.

Guests bring gifts for the baby, usually some articles of clothing: blankets or shawls appear to be popular gifts. It is customary for relatives, particularly the child's grandparents and the married siblings of the parents, to give jewellery e.g. a bracelet or pendant in gold or jade for a girl; the child is also given red packets (lei shi) [3] by relatives. These relatives will also give a substantial gift of clothing, and the maternal grandmother takes particularly great pride on the occasion of her public recognition as a p'ōh (maternal grandmother).

The dinner is a nine course meal and should include red eggs and preserved ginger, and a dish of pork trotters cooked in Chinese vinegar. Some years ago, it was customary for the baby to be taken to each table and shown to (introduced) to the guests, who would give him red-packets in return, but it appears this is no longer done.

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1. chûn chan (confused) implies the confusing of influences or elements and is 'not go . For example: a person who has attended a funeral should not attend e.g. a wedding on the same day. Some people will not even go visiting after attending a funeral. More examples later.
2. It is a common expression to speak of a "side" (pin), e.g. the bride's side, the husband's side etc., meaning relatives of that particular person. Since this is widely used I shall use the literal translation as it is a convenient word for a common expression.
3. lei shi - Meyer-Wempe translates this as "good luck money" - explained in greater detail later on.

After the dinner, each family unit[1] is given a small package containing some red eggs and a few pieces of ginger to take home.

(d) Christening.

If one or both parents are Christians, then the child will probably be baptised. The baptism may coincide with the moon uët date, but this is not necessarily the case, as it may not be possible to arrange the christening on the same day or the parents may decide on another suitable date.

(e) Analysis.

In providing a sociological analysis of Chinese beliefs and activities surrounding the events of a birth, Van Gennep's hypothesis is that rites are necessary for a change in status. A Chinese woman who is expecting a child goes through the stages of segregation, separation and aggregation and in the same way the unborn and then newly born child is also subjected to the same rites. In traditional society, it is perhaps not difficult to understand the apprehension in awaiting the arrival of a new born, particularly of a son, as so much of a family's and particularly the wife's status and aspirations depended on having posterity.

The partial segregation of a woman begins with her pregnancy when various taboos are placed on her actions and movements. Douglas (1966: Chap. 6) suggests that separation is necessary because danger lies in transitional states and an interstitial person is not only vulnerable but is also a danger to others. My fieldwork certainly revealed these fears and it appears that one person in a state of transition is of particular danger to another person also in a state of transition and thus special care is taken to avoid contact, for example, between a pregnant woman and a bride.

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1. This generally means a nuclear family, or part of it. For example, if only two unmarried brothers of the family were invited to the party, they would probably be given one package to share between them, but a widow would have one of her own as she would not be expected to share one with her married son.

After the birth of the child the new mother and her child are not supposed to leave home until the full-month party. It is also of interest that even if the mother does go out, the one place where she is forbidden to go is the home of her parents, though her parents may visit her and the baby. On the day of the celebration of the full-month the woman and her child make their first official outing and it is a visit to the maternal grandparents, and special rites are carried out. The gifts are taken to the child's maternal grandparents and the red eggs may be regarded as a form of announcement of the child's birth as the maternal grandmother is given sufficient to distribute amongst their relatives, friends and neighbours. In return the child is given red-packets as well as sugar cane, probably symbolic of a long, sweet life.

The Chinese world view expressed in classical writings is that there is a close balance and interdependence between Man, Heaven and Nature. It is possible that this is the basis for the fear that a delicate balance of forces surrounds the unborn child and must be carefully controlled lest they affect the child.

Traditionally on the day of the month-old celebration, the child's hair is shaved off, possibly a form of cleansing rite and thus symbolising the child's entry into a new stage of life. I could not get an explanation for the red eggs but their distribution is in keeping with what appears to be a way of announcing an event. The attendance of the full-month party is also reciprocated by a gift of some red eggs.

The day of the full-month is clearly set aside for the aggregation rites. The child is symbolically cleansed and shown to kinsmen and friends and also to ancestors on both the father's and mother's sides of the family.

(ii) FICTIVE KINSHIP (PSEUDO - ADOPTION)

Pseudo-adoption is the term used by Fei (1938: 87) for a "system by which a person is partially included in another's kinship group without the connection of procreation or marriage", and "the child does not sever its relation with its real parents" (p. 89) but remains with his natural parents ; this form of fictive kinship is still found amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg.

The evidence from the people in Johannesburg seems to indicate that real adoption is not a common practice amongst the Cantonese-speaking people. Freedman (1966: 7) writes that in South-Eastern China adoption was a means to swell the ranks of the family and adopted sons were sent out on trading expeditions overseas. There are a few cases of adoptions in Johannesburg which follow the South African legal requirements, that is, the natural mother allows her child to be adopted and she relinquishes all further claim to the child. In this case, neither the natural mother nor the adoptive parents ever know each other's identity. I am only aware of two such cases of adoption; its rarity is simply because few Chinese children are available for adoption and illegitimacy is very rare.

There are a number of reasons for pseudo-adoption. It is believed that this practice will attract good or divert evil influences or spirits. Particularly in the case of an only son, every effort is made to protect him and ensure his well being, and so it may seem wise to attach to a family of good-fortune through pseudo-adoption. In one village, however, I was told a large number of parents "adopted" a particular woman for their sons: she was not held in high regard and described as rather untidy, but a hardy type, and she was also unmarried. She was pseudo-mother because of her robust characteristics and they hoped that the boys would also be physically strong. Furthermore, she had a good knowledge of rituals especially of funeral rites and this could be useful. But, her abject qualities were also important, as it was hoped that as pseudo-mother her undesirable characteristics would deceive and keep away evil spirits from her

pseudo-sons. This is similar to the giving of degrading fictitious names which I describe in Chapter 7.

In one case here in Johannesburg an infant was very sickly and for this reason his paternal grandparents decided to find him a healthy pseudo-mother. In another case, the boy was just very disobedient and so the father acquired pseudo-parents whose own children were regarded as very obedient.

A man or woman may also "adopt" a son because they have no sons of their own. It is thought that this may lead to the conception of a male child. Another reason given to me was that the parents might be good friends and therefore decide to establish a formal relationship through one of their children. One old lady said that someone had wanted to "adopt" her grandson, but she had refused, explaining: "After all we do not get on so well ordinarily so why enter into such a relationship?".

In order to establish the pseudo-adoption (sheung kai) the parents of the child give a small celebration party and the pseudo-parents give their pseudo-adopted child a red-packet. The child need have no prior relationship with his pseudo-parents e.g. he/she need not be of the same clan or lineage.

After the relationship has been established the two families regard each other as "relatives" (ts'an yan). In the old days in the village, in China, pseudo-children took presents to their pseudo-parents at New Year and would be given red-packets in return. Pseudo-children do not inherit, and nor do they have to assume mourning for pseudo-parents. On one occasion, however, I heard a pseudo-son complain that the natural son and heir of his pseudo-father had not provided him with the armband for mourning.

Fei's explanation for pseudo-adoption is that "it also ovides a wider social connection for the child" (op. cit: 88). his cannot be doubted but it should be noted that it also provides a wider network of alliances for the parents. This is supported

by the fact that there is a desire to allow pseudo-adoption only to take place with people whom one likes. In a similar way, as we have seen, the posthumous marriage of deceased children also provides an additional link in social relationships for the living members of the respective families.

The nature of pseudo-kin relationships seems to vary, but the rights and obligations are definitely not as specific as in the case of a true kinship tie. In some cases the relationship may be that of very firm friends or the relationship may only become effective on ritual occasions or celebrations.

In general it may be suggested that this "k'ai" relationship, which Fei termed "pseudo-adoption", has many similarities with the fictive kin relationship described for Europe and South America and known as "godparenthood" and "compradrazgo" (Mintz and Wolf: 1950). Both these latter types of relationship are entered into with the object of either doing some good to the child or cementing and expressing an existing social tie between the child's parents and the fictive "father" or "mother", and often the effect is to widen the circle of "alliance". Although, of course, the traditional Chinese "k'ai" relationship lacked any kind of Christian content or form, and was not regarded as having a religious aspect at all, it seems in most of its social aspects to be of essentially the same general type.

(iii) BIRTHDAYS.

(a) Young People.

Formerly, it was customary only to celebrate the birthday of senior persons, but today, following the customs of South Africans, birthday parties are given for young children and teenagers, and a twenty-first birthday celebration is also often held.

Parties for young persons emulate those of the local Whites. Parents give parties for very young children and a first birthday party is not uncommon. The celebration is usually an afternoon tea-party attended by some age mates, friends and relatives. If it is held on a weekday afternoon and inconvenient for working people, even relatives may not be invited. When children are a little older, and particularly if they are at school, they are allowed to invite their own friends. The children are given cakes, sweets, and cold-drinks, and during the party the lighted candles of the birthday cake must be blown by the birthday boy or girl, who then makes the first cut of the cake.

Teenage and twenty-first birthday parties are more elaborate. For twenty-first birthdays, halls may be hired, and perhaps 200 to 300 guests entertained to a dinner and dancing. Occasionally, a person may decide not to celebrate at all or simply to have an outing for the immediate family and close friends. Some

teenagers prefer to entertain a group of friends to dinner or take them to a night club and exclude parents and other relatives. If it is a big party then more than likely the expenses will be borne by the parents. A small celebration will either be paid for by the birthday boy or girl or the parents.

At such celebrations, a toast with champagne, a speech in reply, blowing out of candles and cutting of the birthday cake are generally observed. In the case of a twenty-first birthday the handing over of a symbolic key is part of the procedure.

This type of celebration, although foreign to traditional life, may include facets of customary practices: for example, relatives may give red-packets as well as the ordinary birthday gifts. A celebration means that the ancestors should be remembered, and thus before the party a special trip is often made to take flowers to the ancestral graves, and older women of the family may burn incense, offer food, and burn paper articles.

(b) Senior Persons.

In traditional Chinese belief, old age blessed with a growing family of children and grandchildren was, and still is, contemplated with much delight. It is understandable, therefore, why it is customary only to celebrate one's birthday in old age, and more particularly when one has a married son as he is regarded as the host, whether he pays for the party or not.

Men are given parties more often than women, and there does not appear to be a specific age at which a senior person begins to celebrate birthdays. In some cases they waited until the marriage of their children, while some still do not celebrate even long after becoming a father-in-law. In one case, a man celebrated his birthday each year with a gathering of about 50 guests, but the year following the marriage of his eldest son he had a much bigger party of approximately 140 guests, and this was an addition of not only affinal kin, but also agnatic kinsmen who had not previously been invited.

If, as in the traditional situation, the family shared a joint income then obviously there would not be a clear distinction in who bore the responsibilities of the expenses. More than likely, the mother of the family would play a major role in organising the celebration. Today, if the sons earn an independent income, they may be expected to pay the expenses. In one family of five sons, each of whom is married and lives and works independently of the father, the brothers each take a turn, year by year, in organising and paying for the party. In another case, the brothers share expenses every year.

On the day of the celebration there are a number of customs to be observed. It is usual to have a celebration on a Sunday as it is more convenient for all; it may be a

day which falls before the actual date, but preferably not after the actual birthday, which is often reckoned according to the lunar calendar.

A special dish for the family, which is also offered to guests if they come to the house, is kai tan cha (a special tea with boiled eggs). As a child I remember my mother and grandmother preparing the tea and we were told we had to drink it and eat the egg even though we were not very fond of it.

The women who were married into the family had to serve tea to the person celebrating his birthday. A young girl, who married a few years ago, said that her own mother instructed her on how to carry out these rites, as the correct etiquette should be taught by one's own family. Her mother-in-law was mainly an observer and not prepared to initiate the proceedings, but it was known that she was nevertheless critical if things were not done correctly. Mothers-in-law talk with pride (or criticise) what the daughters-in-law know of customary rites, regarding it as a reflection on their upbringing.

In families where these rites are still observed, every daughter-in-law serves tea, and this is sometimes extended to all women married to lineal members of the family and whose husbands are younger than the person celebrating his birthday. Daughters do not usually carry out this rite, although I know one family where sons and daughters are expected to observe it.

Tea serving is a similar procedure to that at a wedding[1], except that the daughter-in-law has to make all the preparations herself and also invite her parents-in-law

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1. See page 109

to accept her obeisance. There is generally some reluctance to be honoured in this way and persuasion is required before the person will agree, but with obvious pride and joy.

In some families, the women still kow-tow on their knees, but in other families, fathers-in-law insist that it is not necessary to kneel and will accept tea served while standing. Each woman takes her turn, and after offering tea and the tray of sweet meats she is given a red-packet by the birthday celebrator. The whole ceremony is often conducted in a lighthearted manner, and I have seen husbands tease the women and threaten to take photographs of them on their knees. Not all women carry out these rites willingly. One girl refused to do it, but, although her mother-in-law disapproved, she never openly said so to her daughter-in-law. However, the eldest daughter-in-law was later forced to participate, when the second daughter-in-law was willing to carry out the rites.

I was told of one family who only in recent years stopped serving tea. It is unusual for a family to discontinue a custom once they have adopted it, particularly if they have been "lucky". The birthday celebrator also gives red-packets to all members of the family who are younger than he and will therefore include all his own children and grandchildren, and his siblings and their families. Depending on the birthday celebrator, the distribution may be made to a wider circle of cognatic kinsmen.

The main celebration will be the dinner party, held either at home or in a restaurant. It is customary to have a nine[1] course meal which will include a dish of fried noodles (chaau mín): noodles are symbolic of longevity.

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1. Symbolism for nine explained on p. 125

Guests take gifts which are often symbolic, e.g. boxes of dried noodles and particularly 'long life noodles' (shaû mîn). Boxes of noodles or bottles of whiskey or brandy are always given in even numbers, i.e. in pairs. Other popular gifts are dried sea-foods, sometimes fresh fruit or other foods, e.g. cakes. Occasionally more personal items such as clothing may be given, or, as some years ago, a popular gift was a framed Chinese embroidered picture with the names and the occasion written on the glass.

During the course of the dinner party, the women of the family will be busy receiving the gifts. Half of each gift is returned to the giver, e.g. one of the original two boxes of noodles or half the packet of dried mushrooms. It is obvious that a gift such as a blanket, shirt or picture cannot be divided and must be accepted as it is, but otherwise the entire gift should not be retained.

When part of the gift is returned, the celebrator is supposed also to give a piece of roast pork, a piece of egg-sponge cake (kai daan ko), two red-packets and two oranges. I have been told that these items should be returned with the remaining portion of the gift, but on one occasion I saw a gift returned with only oranges and red-packets. Every family unit attending the party is also given a parcel containing these items.

Prior to such a celebration, flowers should be taken to the graves of deceased members of the family and immediately before the dinner, ancestor worship be carried out.

(c) Longevity birthday. (Sheūng Shaū)

When a person is sixty years or more, he may have a celebration called Sheūng shaū, at which, it has been said, the birthday celebrant wears the clothes in which he/she will one day be buried. In China these were very elaborate

embroidered clothes; such clothes are not available in Johannesburg and I have never been able to establish if this custom was ever in fact observed here.

The longevity birthday is also often called the big birthday (taai shaang yât) and will usually be a bigger celebration than other birthdays. It is preferable not to have this celebration until one son is married, but celebrations do take place before the marriage of a son. The celebration is generally given by the married sons, and on the invitation card the names of all direct male descendants may be listed.

A blanket is a popular gift. Often the character, shau, is embroidered on it, or perhaps stuck on with shiny paper, or a picture of the God of Long Life (Shau Kung) may be pasted on. The Blankets are displayed on the walls during the celebration dinner. Gifts also include sea-foods, whiskey or brandy, and sometimes fresh fruit, and noodles. As in the case of an ordinary birthday, items are given in pairs and half is returned. Kinsmen should give a fairly substantial gift consisting of the following items; a blanket, sea-foods, roast pork, bottles of whiskey and boxes of noodles.

The dinner, return of gifts, and distribution of red-packets follow the same procedure as for an ordinary birthday celebration except that each person attending is given a red-packet, usually containing nine cents.

(d) Analysis.

The traditional birthday celebration is for elderly people, but as I have described, the young people today also celebrate though in their case they closely follow the traditions of White South Africans. Perhaps the one traditional rite observed in the case of young people is the remembrance of ancestors, either by taking flowers or

by both the taking of flowers and the performance of ancestor worship just before the actual celebrations.

Each birthday for an elderly person is also an occasion for the symbolic re-affirmation of his status in the family, and it appears to me [illegible]e expressive of his approaching status as an ancestor. In most of the families I studied, daughters-in-l[illegible]ere expected to serve tea and make obeisances. The cele[illegible]ant also distributes red-packets to his descendants.

A person may celebrate his/her birthday each successive year, but on a particular year, the sheung shau may be celebrated. Baker (1968: 52) shows that reaching "elderhood" has a different significance in two of the different villages on which he was well informed. In Nanching, a man who reached the age of 65 years gave a big feast to qualify for council membership and thus the attainment of elderhood also meant the attainment of a certain degree of political power. In Sheung Shui, Baker says respect and feasting were the rewards of elderhood, but no overt political control, although on ritual occasions they received additional portions of food.

In Johannesburg, sheung shau is a special occasion and involves the getting together of kinsmen and friends but, just as the prerequisite for attainment of shau (longevity) in Nanching and Sheung Shui is financial means, so a large celebration in Johannesburg would also require certain cash outlay; at one extreme a celebration consisted of 70 to 80 tables,[1] though many were considerably smaller, perhaps a house party. This display appears in the main to be a social statement of the attainment of a desired measure of prosperity and enough posterity to ensure the continuation of the family line. The significance is, firstly, in having male offspring to continue the family; secondly, sons who are willing and able to give a celebration; and thirdly, all this is surely an expression of hau (filial piety).

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1. It is usual to estimate the size of a celebration according to the number of "tables": Chinese restaurants cater per table (not per person), and each table seats eight persons.

Finally, there must be a circle of kinsmen and friends to celebrate and observe this auspicious occasion. This does not mean that a person without mature sons will not sheung shau, as in one case a man with two daughters still celebrated and in this case his wife was the principal organiser.

At the celebration of the birthday of a senior person, as at a full-month party and wedding, the attendance of guests gives recognition to the event. A celebrant of shau generally distributes red-packets to all those at the celebration, it usually contains y

In Nanching, according to Baker (op. cit.) a celebration of elderhood is perhaps a rite of passage as it marks the man's attainment of political and social status. In Johannesburg some people explain that shau is the occasion on which the celebrant will wear the clothing in which he will one day be buried. This may have been the case in China, but I have not been able to substantiate that this happens here; however, it certainly suggests that it is step towards becoming an ancestor. Furthermore, portions of roast pork are distributed to each family unit who attends the celebration. It is perhaps significant that pork is also distributed to lineal descendants on the festival days for commemoration of ancestors (Spring and Autumn).

(iv) MARRIAGE

The marriage of Chinese in South Africa, and more particularly those in Johannesburg may involve the partners both in customary rites and in a civil or church ceremony which makes the marriage valid in South African law. Traditionally Chinese custom required a series of rites and ceremonies which marked the girl's departure from her own home and the establishment of new kinship ties, and also rites to ensure that all parties were aware of the new relationship. It involved also the organisation of numerous presentations of gifts and counter gifts, and the introduction of the bride to her new home where, through the tea-ceremony, she was not only introduced to senior members of the groom's family and told how to address them, but her position in the family hierarchy was also clarified. Finally, there was the celebration for friends and relatives. The laws of South Africa require that a couple should be married by a recognised marriage officer, thus the marriage of a Chinese couple often involves a combination of customary and civil ceremony or religious (Christian) rituals.

Until the late fifties, the Chinese Consul was generally called upon to officiate at a marriage. The occasion included the signing of a marriage certificate in the presence of the Consul at an afternoon tea-party[1] in the presence of a gathering of friends and relatives. This "Consular ceremony" was held in conjunction with the traditional rites which took place in the respective homes of the bride and groom. The Consul, however, is not a recognised marriage officer and it has now become clear that a legal document, particularly for the South African born, is essential. Today, the consular ceremony has been dropped completely.

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1. A "tea-party" (ch'a tsaan) usually means the serving of both Chinese and English cakes, pastries and savouries and either Indian or Chinese tea. Guests are usually seated at tables. (See Plate 2)

(a) Social Area of Marriage

Amongst the first generation in South Africa most marriages were arranged, but today it is unlikely that a couple would not have known each other prior to the wedding date. If marriages are arranged, it is generally not without the approval of the couple concerned. Now-a-days young people have ample opportunity to meet each other, as most of them are freely allowed to attend social functions and participate in various sporting activities. There are, however, still parents who are very strict and control the activities of their children to the extent of forbidding them to attend socials and dances.

Since young people now prefer to choose their own marriage partners it is inevitable that parents and elders have less say about whom they should or should not marry. Parents often exclaim that it is now a young people's world, as they make the decisions. In spite of this, there are still certain norms which are widely accepted, or which elders at least try to enforce upon young people.

Language groups

In the past there was a preference for marriage within one's own language group. In Johannesburg, the Cantonese generally objected to marriage with Hakka-speaking people. At present, however, intermarriage seems to meet with less disapproval. One elderly woman explained to me that in the past the Cantonese had objected to intermarriage with Hakka-speaking people because if they returned to China, which was their greatest wish, their daughters would have to live far away from their families. But she went on to explain that she no longer felt that Cantonese should not marry Hakka-speaking people because there is now little chance that the community here will ever return to China. Objections have generally been raised on the grounds that the wives of Hakka-speaking men are expected to work much

harder or, in stronger terms, that Hakka people make their women 'slave' for the men. This generalisation possibly stems from the greater freedom of Shun Tak woman[1]. For the older generation we must also be aware of the reality of language differences.

Clan exogamy is generally observed in South Africa. Marriages have taken place between people with the same clan name, but such unions are certainly not freely approved. One mother expressed her disapproval, but explained that as it was a love match and the couple insisted on marriage she was powerless to put a stop to it.

Generally, it appears that boys and girls do take the trouble to find out their clan names[2] before becoming too involved. One boy woefully stated that he would have liked to change his clan name because all the girls whom he favoured were of his clan. Others have firmly stated that they would not marry a girl of the same clan name simply because "it is not our custom", and parents would object. There are not many couples who have married spouses of the same clan names[3]. The general idea is that it will not be good. I have also heard it being said that it would be very strange for children if their paternal and maternal grandparents were to have the same clan name.

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1. Shun Tak was the centre of the silk industry in Kwangtung and sericulture enabled women to earn an independent wage. After unconsumated marriages, the women of this region were able to set themselves up in special houses to lead an independent female existence. (Freedman 1966: 32).

2. Clan names are not always obvious from the surnames used in English. When many of the Chinese were registered as South African immigrants they gave their Chinese names in the traditional order (clan name first, followed by personal names) and so today many people find that their surnames are the personal names of their grandfathers or fathers.

3. I can account for four examples. (1969)

The social distance of kinship links has on some occasions been redefined in order to cope with this problem. If persons have the same clan name, marriage is less objectionable if the couple are not of the same village or same lineage i.e. if their supposed shared agnatic descent is not actually traceable.

I was told of an example of a young girl in China who had been adopted out when still a child and then assumed the clan name of her family of adoption. Later she married, but at the time she did not know that she had married a man of her original clan name. Although the breach was unintentional, her future turned out to be an unhappy one - her husband died and she was left with a number of small children, some of whom also died. Examples such as this are a means of rationalising the statement that a breach of clan the rule of exogamy is 'not good'.

Past hostility between certain clans has resulted in the refusal to intermarry with the belief that something 'not good' will befall the couple. There are three pairs of clans here who believe that they should not intermarry[1], although they are by no means hostile in other respects. The first person who drew my attention to this fact gave me two examples and explained that one had ended in divorce and the other had many daughters but no sons! The reason for this taboo is that some time in the past there had been disputes between these clans and they had resolved never to intermarry and thus, should they still marry it will not be "good".

Husband's sister becomes brother's wife.

Another match which does not generally meet with approval is Koo oôn pó[2], literally meaning "husband's

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1. Six examples of this type of marriage known to me.
2. Three examples known to me.

sister becomes the brother's wife", that means a brother and sister marrying a sister and brother. The only explanation I could get is that it is 'not good' and could lead to misfortune. A few years ago when a couple, standing in this type of relationship contemplated marriage there were very strong objections from both sides until the couple threatened to leave home. Eventually the parents relented, and rationalised that the couple of another marriage of this kind seemed happy and had produced both sons and daughters. "Even so", said another sceptical person, "we have to see what the future holds for them".

Over-stepping an elder sibling

Ideally brothers and sisters of the same family should marry in order of seniority. When laàm t'aū (overstepping) occurs, and more especially if a younger sister marries before an elder brother, then special observances are sometimes carried out to avoid possible misfortune. In some families parents have insisted that an elder sister should marry before the younger one while in another example, a daughter was only permitted to marry after the marriages of her two elder brothers[1]. This possibly conforms with the Chinese idea that society must fit into a rigid hierarchical structure. Kinship terms are very specific and bear the number of one's order amongst siblings.

Overstepping is not always within the control of parents, although they do not always object to it as the breach can at least be overcome by special rites (described later).

Youths of nàmo village marrying sisters.

I have been told that the members of one particular

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1. Five examples where laàm t'aū was prohibited; one couple ignored parents' objections.
Six examples where laàm t'aū was permitted.

village have objected to two of their boys marrying two sisters because it would be as if the boys used water from a stream which sprung from the same source. In this particular case, the second sister eventually married another person as there was so much objection from the first sister's husband's family and friends. The explanation given was that when such marriages took place in the past it was 'not good' and thus they did not want a repetition.

Non-Chinese

Ethnically mixed marriages are generally thought to be undesirable. One constant objection to young people going abroad is the fear that they will eventually marry non-Chinese.(1) However, a marriage with a White seems to be preferred to one with a non-White and this is probably due to the political situation in South Africa.

Mixed marriages have been contracted not only amongst the younger generation of today, but also amongst the first generation in this country when there were few Chinese women. The number of mixed marriages is difficult to estimate, but in Johannesburg I do not think it is highly significant.

It appears that most non-Chinese spouses here are eventually accepted by their Chinese relatives although the first reaction of most parents and relatives has been one of outright anger. I know of two families whose sons have married Whites abroad and the parents have refused to have anything more to do with them.

On the whole, the couples of mixed marriages here tend to stay away from social gatherings. This is possibly due to self-consciousness in the face of some disapproval from the community and they are obviously singled out for attention. At a recent wedding many guests expressed great interest in seeing the non-Chinese (Indian) wife of

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1. It must be remembered that mixed marriages with Whites are illegal in South Africa. (see Appendix 2)

a re.ative and I doubt she could have been unaware of the interest in her presence. A further factor to be considered is that many Chinese functions are held at White venues otherwise prohibited for non-Whites, thus non-White spouses would obviously avoid being subjected to the embarrassment of being refused admission.

Children of mixed marriages, particularly with other non-Whites tend to move back into the Chinese community and in many cases such couples have insisted that their children marry Chinese. It must also be remembered that there are more advantages in being Chinese than in belonging to another non-White group. In one case the children of a Chinese-White marriage preferred to 'play White'.

The legal implications of a marriage across the colour line are important: a Chinese may marry another non-White, but, since 1949, it has been illegal to marry a White person. Therefore, those who wish to marry Whites have to consider emigrating permanently, while those who marry Whites abroad cannot bring their spouses back to live in South Africa. This means that the local community do not get the opportunity to become acquainted with people of mixed marriages with Whites.

Since 1970, when a White woman was permitted to be reclassified from "White" to "Chinese" in order to marry a Chinese, a few more such marriages are now known to have taken place.



Plate 2.
Guests seated at a tea-party.



Plate 3.
Marriage gifts. In the foreground, a symbolic branch of pine and in the background the ceremonial boxes (lai hŏn).



Plate 4.
The tea-serving ceremony. The bride and groom are on their knees before a senior relative. The taai kam stands by.

(b) Preliminaries to a Betrothal and Marriage

In the traditional situation, parents would decide on the spouses for their children and then make the necessary arrangements. Today when a couple decide to marry, the first step is that the boy's parents should meet the girl's parents to make a formal proposal. I know of a few couples who have become engaged without the parents' knowledge, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Even if the engagement has taken place without the parents' knowledge, the parents will still meet at some stage to discuss formalities for the marriage unless, of course, there is complete disapproval in which case parents shall have nothing to do with the matter.

Once the match has been approved by the parents, there is a meeting to discuss the form of the marriage ceremony, e.g. the extent to which traditional rites should be incorporated; the kind of gifts required (including the number of cakes required by the bride's parents from the groom's parents), the type and amount of sea-foods and symbolic items; and any other details that must also be clarified.

Very often friends or relatives of either set of parents may be asked to be present at the discussions either for an additional opinion or to give moral support. By and large, it seems that the extent of customary rites depends on a compromise or agreement between the two parties. At first, and even later, there may be considerable feelings of apprehension in case the demands should be excessive either in terms of gifts, symbolic items or rites to be performed. In one case, where two sisters were both Christians, the elder sister's marriage was accompanied by a great many customary rites (gifts, tea-serving, the third day and subsequent parties) but the younger sister's marriage took place in church and was later followed only

by a dinner party. In each case, the boys' families made the decision and the girls' parents agreed. The girls' parents, in fact would have preferred to eliminate customary rites as much as possible. In South Africa there is, on the whole, very little haggling about gifts and I am told most parents accept what is given them except for the symbolic items and the amount of cakes required for distribution by the girls' family. There are times, however, when demands are made and in one extreme case the boy's parents insisted that the girl's parents should provide her with a traditional chamber-pot, which many families had already replaced with the chamber-pot included in a toilet set which forms part of her trousseau. The girl's mother thought this rather ridiculous and replied by saying that although such objects were not available in this country, she was quite prepared to provide her daughter with one if the boy's parents could assist in importing it from China. When faced with this problem, the boy's parents relented.

If there are specific requests, they are made during these discussions and if anything is found not to be acceptable during the actual ceremonies then the complaints are channelled through the official go-between or a mutual friend who may act in that capacity. Traditionally, when marriages were arranged, the go-between (mui yan) would have been responsible for the match and he/she would also be involved in the negotiations between the two parties. In Johannesburg today, there are few arranged marriages, but the services of a go-between might still be required to assist in the negotiations and wedding rites.

(c) Betrothal (tẑng fan or kaau kaai chi)

In a Chinese marriage, the betrothal is the first step in the establishment of a recognised union. Freedman (1970: 181) says that in reality a betrothal is the first step in a marriage itself. The seriousness of a betrothal is still recognised as here in Johannesburg, it is very rare indeed for an engagement to be broken off.

A diamond ring is now an essential item for an engagement: the ceremony is called the betrothal (tẑng fan) or "to hand over the ring" (kaau kaai chi). The ring can be "handed over" in a number of ways. The man may give the girl a ring in complete privacy and this concludes the betrothal; a private engagement may also be followed by a celebration and in this case it is quite likely that gifts are not exchanged.

In twelve of the twenty cases studied, a gift exchange took place and the ring was put on the girl's finger in the presence of kinsmen and friends. Five were private affairs with no celebration; two were private engagements but followed by small parties and one had no engagement. The last marriage was not approved by the parents, and eventually the couple married in a registry office (discussed later).

Thus in most cases, engagements are held in what is regarded as the "traditional" manner. The girl's family will invite guests, usually relatives and perhaps close friends, to their home for a ch'a tsaan (tea-party). In a few cases, where the home was thought to be too small

for all the guests, or the distance between homes too inconvenient, then a hall or restaurant was hired. The guests of the girl's family arrive first, and at an appointed time the prospective groom, his bestman and groomsmen (who are appointed before the engagement), parents and relatives arrive at the girl's home. The girl's father is supposed to meet the boy's group on arrival. On one occasion, when the boy's party had arrived the girl's father, could not be found to welcome the guests. The boy's party was told to wait in their cars and after a while it was decided that they should take a drive around and return because it was 'not good' to wait about.

The boy's family brings gifts (a variety of Chinese cakes the same as those for a wedding, see page 101), contained in red boxes, the bestman carries the main box (t'aū p'oon hôp)[1] and hands it over to the girl's father, the groomsmen follow with the other boxes.

The guests are then invited to take their places at the tables which have been set for the tea-party. The main table, which is often extended to a long table if there are many guests, is reserved for senior members of both sides, with the central places reserved for the couple. If at home, other tables are laid out for other guests, but it is not usually possible for everyone to fit into the same room, and so people often wait around until the engagement has taken place.

When the guests at the main table are all seated, the girl is escorted to her place either by her father or some senior woman relative. The guests are invited to begin eating, and at an appropriate moment the master of ceremonies

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1. These boxes are loaned by the restaurants who make the cakes. They are round boxes, with lids, approximately 20 ins. in diameter, lacquered in red with gold decorations. (see Plate 3)

who may be a relative or particularly eloquent friend says a few words about the gathering and then asks the couple to rise. They are asked to bow three times to each other, and then the groom puts the ring on the fourth finger of his fiancee's left hand. Today, he is generally coaxed into giving the girl a kiss!

On three occasions when the girls were getting married before their elder brother (laam t'au), the brother was not allowed to observe the engagement. There were other occasions when this taboo was not imposed in connection with this breach of order, on one occasion the explanation given to me was that the families did not believe in this superstition because they were Christians.

While the tea-party is in progress, some older women will see to "accepting from boxes" (shau hôp) and "reciprocating of boxes" (oô hôp). This means that some of the gift i.e. the cakes, are taken out but the boxes are never returned empty. A few cakes are left in the box and returned together with two red-packets.

Some of the cakes are distributed amongst the relatives of the girl's relatives and friends who have been invited to the engagement. Close relatives get a bigger share and more distant relations and friends get a smaller quantity.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the red boxes are returned to the groom and his bestman and the party from the groom's side take leave. Traditionally, the man's

family and the girl's family give separate dinner parties and this is usually still the case.

The time lapse between the betrothal and marriage varies; it may be as long as a year or eighteen months but preferably not longer, and often much less. Marriage, it seems, must be preceded by the engagement, therefore, if a couple intend to get married quickly they have the engagement one week-end and the wedding the following week.

(d) Preparations for the Wedding Day

Many decisions have to be made before the wedding day.

Date

The date is usually chosen with the agreement of both sets of parents. Many of the older people still believe that an auspicious date must be carefully selected from a Chinese almanac[1]. Perhaps because of this, there was one occasion when there were five weddings on the same day. Eighteen out of twenty weddings studied took place on a day chosen in this manner, otherwise the day may be chosen merely because it is the most convenient, for example, preceded or followed by a public holiday or for other personal reasons.

The traditionally minded believe that the wedding date should not fall in the same month in which there is a birthday of a member of the immediate families of either

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1. The almanac is based on the belief that - "Each time unit stood for a certain combination of heavenly and earthly forces at work. The meeting of these forces at a certain hour in combination with a certain day in a certain month in a certain year might be harmonious and lead to good luck, whereas another combination might mean an antagonistic meeting of forces and lead to misfortune. ... The results of human action were similarly predetermined by the particular time such action took place. Thus, a person's whole career and fate depended on the operation of these mystical forces as they affected him." (Yang, 1961: 135).

the bride and groom or their paternal grandparents, if still living; it is feared this will bring bad luck to the person concerned. (I could not get any further explanation for this practice). In some families, the whole immediate family is taken into account, that is, parents and siblings, but if the family is big it adds complications and in this case it is sufficient just to take senior relatives into account, and possibly to narrow it down further, just to the male members.

In one case, where the girl's family was certainly the more vociferous, her parents would not select a date from the months in which her immediate family had birthdays, but decided on a month in which the members of the groom's father had his birthday. The women on the groom's side were most indignant: although not superstitious, they felt that if the girl's family feared for their good fortune they should have showed more concern for the groom's father. Eventually, they settled on the month of his father's birthday.

Attendants to the bride and groom have to be chosen. The groom may choose his brothers, other male relatives or friends. Similarly, the girl may choose her own sister, other relatives or friends. A bride generally includes her younger sister(s), but if she is marrying before an elder sister, then it is not usual for an older sister to be bridesmaid. As a rule attendants are chosen before the engagement; the bestman and groomsmen (on hing tai) have specific duties in the engagement ceremony.

The final decision depends largely on the families concerned. At some weddings the choice of bridesmaids may be a mutual decision between the two sets of parents (or mothers), alternatively, one set or one parent may insist on having the final say. In one case, the groom's mother decided that there should be four bridesmaids, two from the bride's side and two from the groom's family, and she decided on the two persons to be chosen from her side of the family. A bride's mother may claim that the

decision is hers, or the bride may choose for herself. In the more traditional families, the bride's choice would have to be approved by the older people. There does, however, seem to be a preference for choosing relatives of the correct age group before friends. On two occasions, girls were chosen because of their sin ts'an yan[1] relationship.

As a rule an even number[2] of attendants is chosen, of whom one of each sex is chief attendant. Some retinues include flowergirls.

The driver of the wedding car must also be some one of 'good' background. I am told, preferably a happily married man who has sons and daughters.

Invitations must be printed. If the celebrations are held separately by the bride and groom's families, separate invitations must be printed, as the names and venues would be different. Otherwise, the same invitations can be used.

Chinese invitations are on red paper and the Chinese characters in gold printing. On one occasion, after the copies of the invitation had been printed, it was found that it contained an odd number of characters; therefore, they were rejected and the guests were invited

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1. When the spirits of two deceased persons are united in marriage by their respective families, the two families then regard each other as affinal kinsmen.

2. At a wedding there is great concern that symbolic items and also persons directly concerned with the wedding should be in pairs, odd numbers are 'not good'. At a marriage, the idea of complementary duality is important and this appears to be based on the concept of yin and yang which expresses the harmony of the two opposing forces. Discussed later in this chapter under "Analysis".

by telephone, but this is regarded as rather extreme action. It is considered 'not good' to reprint invitations, as reprinting is taken to symbolise remarriage. At another wedding where there were insufficient invitation cards, it was decided that additional ones should not be reprinted.

When a dance is held in addition to a dinner, white invitation cards may be printed in English and the wording on these invitations often presents a problem. Unlike the Western tradition, a wedding reception is never given by the bride's parents alone, it may be given by both sets of parents or even by the groom's parents or the groom himself. Thus the invitations often do not mention the host and hostess specifically, or they are made out by both the bride's and groom's parents, so that the wording becomes very cumbersome.

Invitations are delivered about one month before the wedding day. According to tradition, invitations should be delivered by hand and not sent through the post. Many people still adhere to this custom unless the distances are very great then they have to be posted, otherwise, they may be passed on from person to person. Amongst some families, relatives are invited verbally and not given written invitations.

Major Expenses

The greater proportion of the expenses is borne by the groom or the groom's family[1].

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1. This is similar in Hakka weddings except for difference in the distribution of expenses. The girl's family pays for the celebration of the engagement and the boy's family for the wedding celebration. The girl pays for her own outfit.

The expenses for the groom's side include :-

(i) the bride's outfit - gown, shoes, gloves, headgear.
(ii) the bridesmaids' outfits.
(iii) all flowers - includes bouquets, corsages and buttonholes.
(iv) the bed.
(v) category of items which may be considered gifts -
  (a) symbolic items (described on page 100).
  (b) biscuits/cakes for distribution - the quantity required is decided after discussion with the bride's family so that there is sufficient for distribution.
  (c) sea foods, whiskey for the bride's parents.
(vi) party on wedding day[1].

The expenses for the bride's side are :-

(i) suit and shoes for groom which is worn on the wedding day.
(ii) bedroom furniture (except bed) is part of trousseau.
(iii) blanket, bedspread and usually eiderdown.
(iv) party on wedding day.

These are the main items, aside from symbolic items and the many red-packets which are seen to by each side respectively. The girl's trousseau is also provided by her side, but its contents varies from family to family.

Kitchen-tea or bridal shower

Today, most bridesmaids organise a kitchen tea or bridal shower for the bride; this is an idea which has been adopted from White South African traditions. The party is usually an afternoon tea-party and the guests are all female friends and relatives who take along an appropriate gift which is sometimes specified on the invitation. The bride is asked to guess either the contents

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1. Traditionally each family held their own celebration but today, most weddings give one party and each side pays for their own guests.

in the parce' or the giver of the gift and wrong responses are subject to forfeits.

Bachelor party

The groom's bestman may organise a bachelor party attended by male relatives and friends. This is a drinking party, and so it may be omitted by the more traditional because the older people do not approve of their young men drinking alcohol.

Bridal bed

Shortly before the wedding day but after the bride's trousseau has been taken to the groom's home, the bridal bed has to be made up. The bedroom furniture is also placed in the bedroom. Generally, someone is specially chosen to carry out this task; the person may be male or female but must be a person of 'good' background. A pregnant woman may not observe the bed being made up; in some cases she may not even look in the new bride's bedroom or she may look but definitely not sit on the bed.

On one occasion the couple were only to spend a few nights at the groom's parents' home before moving to another town but the bride's mother insisted that they had to get a new bed, which was eventually borrowed and the family went through the procedure of making up the bed.

Remembrance of Deceased Kinsmen

A while, perhaps a week, before the wedding day it is necessary for both the bride and groom and their respective families to take flowers to their deceased kinsmen. Generally flowers are distributed to all deceased kinsmen whether they died young or old.

Civil ceremony

The series of rites and ceremonies described in the

next section constitute a Chinese marriage, but, according to South African law, such a union is not a legal one. I mention the civil ceremony as part of the preparations for the wedding day, because this is how it is generally regarded. The civil ceremony is looked upon mainly as a necessary legal formality. Couples who do not have a church ceremony are legally married at a Registry Office. In a few cases a day was selected, but in most cases it passes with little or no undue attention and may be attended by only a couple of people who act as witnesses. In many cases, even parents do not attend.

In most cases, the marriage certificate is obtained before the actual "wedding day" and may even be a month in advance but they are not regarded as married and certainly should not live together until the "wedding day". At one wedding, the couple went to the Registry Office the day following the "wedding day".

I recall attending a wedding party, perhaps ten to fifteen years ago, at which the traditional rites had been carried out. However, at the end of the day, the groom's father felt that something should be on paper and so someone was asked to draw up a marriage contract, which was signed there and then by the bride and groom. There had been no consular ceremony, but since there was the exchange of gifts and a party, the marriage was recognised by the community and the signatures were just an afterthought.

(e) Transferance of Gifts and Trousseau (kwðh lai)

This is the occasion when the girl's trousseau and other personal belongings are taken to her new home, and the gifts from the boy's family are transferred to the girl's home.

Kwðh lai (literal translation is "performance of the rites", but this also means the "transferance of gifts") takes place before the wedding rites and is looked upon

as part of traditional marriage proceedings. The day for kwôh lai is chosen by the families concerned: it may take place on the morning of the wedding day, the previous day (a Saturday as weddings are usually on Sundays) or even a week prior to the wedding. It may just be a day convenient to both sides, or it may be a day chosen as an auspicious date.

Preparations

In preparation for kwôh lai, the girl packs her belongings in readiness to be transferred to the groom's home. The main trunk, kist or suitcase is often packed either with the assistance of her mother, or with the help of unmarried female relative or friends, whose personal lives and families are thought to be of "good" circumstances. I have seen objections being raised to the assistance of a girl whose father had died and also to an elderly unmarried woman. On one occasion, the girl packed her belongings without any assistance.

The main items for the main trunk or kist are blankets, sheets and a bedspread; some of the girl's personal belongings are used to fill the trunk. More suitcases or trunks or even cardboard boxes may be used to pack the remainder of the girl's trousseau. In each container is placed two red-packets (lei sri)[1] containing 9d. (now 9c.) each, a pair of dried red dates (hung tso)[2] and a pair of dried lotus seeds (lin tsz)[2]. A piece of red paper is stuck on the outside of each piece of luggage. An additional red packet is also placed on the top of the main trunk and to be taken out by the groom who opens the trunk on arrival. The bedspread and blankets are used

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1. Red-packets discussed later.
2. Red dates and white lotus seeds have "lucky" connotations and it is interesting in that they are usually used together in gifts. Due possible explanation is that they represent the colours white and red and thus yin and yang. At the same time, red is a "good" colour and lin tsz sounds the same as "include sons". The symbolic play on sounds and words is discussed later in this chapter.

on the bridal bed. The following are some of the customary items included in a girl's trousseau.

A toilet set (with modern bathroom facilities, this is often a redundant item) - consisting of a basin, water jug, chamber and soap dish. In the chamber is placed pieces of ginger[1], six boiled eggs which have been dyed red[1], hūng tsó, lin tsz, pieces of paåk[2] (branches from a cypress tree), pair of naartjies (mandarin oranges)[3], two pairs of chopsticks[4], two red packets, and all this was covered with a piece of red paper. The bride must also have a Chinese teapot, tray and cups and glacé and dried fruits (t'ōng kwóh) contained in a special tray for the tea-serving ceremony.

The bride's parents buy the groom a new suit and shoes which are packed and taken from the bride's home, together with her trousseau. On one occasion, the groom's mother insisted that the trousers of the suit should be placed uppermost in the box, so that when the groom opened the box he would see the trousers first. The Chinese word for trousers is foð, which is phonetically similar to the word meaning "rich and prosperous". When a girl marries before her elder brother, it is usual for the groom to buy him a pair of trousers. At one wedding one of the woman insisted that the bride's elder unmarried brother also had to be given a pair of pyjamas.

At another kwðh lai, a rite called ch'é foð took place: a pair of trousers had to be bought for each of the men in the house who were senior to the bride - her father, father's brother and elder brother. The trousers had to be placed uppermost in the bride's kist, the kist had to be carried

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1. Possibly fertility symbols.
2. paåk sounds the same as "to pair together".
3. kat meaning mandarin orange sounds the same as kat a word for lucky.
4. faai tsz meaning chopsticks sounds the same as faai - fast, quick and tsz - sons .

out of the house before it was opened and the trousers taken out and handed to the head of the family to be taken back into the house. This is said to ensure that the bride's leaving would not take away all the "good" or well-being of those left behind: in this way, fod was being taken back into the house.

The more the bride has to take away, the more prestige it is for her and her family. When the bride's trousseau arrives at her new home it is placed in the bridal room, visitors often like to take a look at the room and the extent of the girl's trousseau is generally a point for discussion.

The main preparations at the boy's home consist of preparing the bride's bedroom and the gifts for the ceremony. The gifts consist firstly of symbolic items; secondly, of the sea foods and other items where economic value is an important factor and thirdly, the cakes for distribution.

An even number of special red boxes are borrowed from one of the Chinese restaurants. The first box, called "the first or leading box" (t'au p'oon hōp) contains the symbolic items. These include crystallised fruit (t'ōng kwóh), a packet of sesame seed (chi mā)[1], packets of crackers and confetti, 2 bottles of whiskey, lai kam ('ritual gold/money') - perhaps equivalent to "bride price", red-packets. The remaining boxes contain the wedding cakes - generally four types are selected from a possibility of seven kinds: (1) lung fung p'eng (dragon phoenix cakes), (2) pei tañn soh (cake with preserved egg), (3) lin yung p'eng (lotus seed cake), (4) tau saa p'eng (soya bean cake), (5) hup to soh (almond cake), (6) yē tsz p'eng (coconut cake), (7) kai taan ko (egg sponge cake).

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1. chi ma sounds similar to chi maai meaning "to stick together".

The remaining boxes are filled with different types of dried foods such as mushrooms (tungkoo), abalones (paau uē), dried scallops (kong uē chee), ink fish (jau ju) and a case (a dozen bottles) of whiskey. By this stage, if there are not sufficient red boxes, the items are placed in ordinary cardboard boxes, on which a red piece of paper is attached. Nowadays, a few of the cakes are specially made Chinese cakes, but for general distribution by the girl's family tins of biscuits are used, both because these are already packed and thus save a lot of work, and also because it is difficult to obtain large quantities of Chinese cakes. The "Western" biscuits are usually in larger and smaller packs, e.g. a few of 5 lb. packs will be given to relatives, and a larger quantity of 1 lb. packs are for all the other guests. The biscuits are given not to individuals, but to family units.

Description of a kwðh lai rite

The bridegroom does not participate directly in the kwðh lai ceremony, and traditionally the bride was supposed to hide away. Even today, the bride does not generally come out and entertain or have tea with the guests. The bestman and groomsmen drive to the bride's home, accompanied by the go-between (mui yan) and a few helpers, and the groom remains at home.

When the party arrived at the bride's home, in this particular ceremony, they entered in a procession led by the bestman, carrying the t'au n'oon hôn, and the go-between, who loudly called out her congratulations to the new parents-in-law. The other groomsmen followed with the remaining hôp. They were met by the bride's father, who was instructed to receive the main hôp, and was told to open it and remove the red-packet at the top. This was called "red packet for opening the box" (hci hôp loi shi).

After all the gifts had been taken into the house, the

visitors were entertained by the bride's parents to a tea party, at the same time the women were busy with shau hôp.

In the meantime, incense and joss sticks on the altar had been lit and small quantities of the contents of each item from the t'aū p'oon hōp were put on a plate and placed on the altar. Later a few wedding cakes and cream cakes were also put on the altar.

The women who helped with the shau hôp, were close friends or older women relatives who had some idea of what to do and had been asked to assist. The red containers must be returned, but the entire contents are never taken out. About half of each item in the t'aū p'oon hôp was taken out and replaced by the following items -

two faaî faât (circular loaves made with a breadlike dough); two kai taan ko (egg sponge cake)[1]; a branch of pine; pair each of lin tsz (lotus seeds) and hūng tsó (dried red dates); two lei shi; bundle of chop-sticks (f i tsz); and pair of naartjies (mandarin oranges).

While the women were busy and the go-between apologised profusely on behalf of the groom's parents that the gifts were inadequate and shat lai (discourteous). It seems customary for Chinese always to apologise even when it is clear that there is an abundance of gifts, food or whatever. In formal conversation, the tendency is always exaggerated modesty.

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1. At another wedding, the bride's family only sent one faaî faât and one kai taan ko. The groom's family complained through the mui yan that there should have been a pair of each and so the additional two were given on the third day when there was a further giving and returning of gifts.

If there are many gifts, it is the subject of great excitement and talk. A display of many gifts can be interpreted, on the one hand, as an indication that the boy's family has substantial wealth or, on the other hand, that they are "giving face".

The contents of the remaining hôp were also taken out, but in each case a little was left in the box, and in addition a pair each of lin tsz and hūng tsó and red packets were placed in the hôp.

When the guests had had their tea, and the hôp had been seen to, it was time for the groomsmen and go-between to take their leave. The father of the bride was instructed to hand the t'aū p'oon hôp to the bestman, who then led the way out with the groomsmen taking the other boxes. Once the hôp were all taken into the cars, they began loading the bride's trousseau as well, until all the things had been packed into the cars. On their departure crackers were burnt.

When the party arrived back at the groom's home, the bride's belongings were taken into her new bedroom, and the groom opened the main trunk and removed the red-packet which had been placed at the top for this purpose.

(f) The Wedding Day

"Recognition of Kinship" (Ying ta'an)

These rites are carried out on what is regarded as the wedding day; ying ta'an takes place at most Cantonese weddings and particularly if there is no church ceremony.

Relatives and friends gather at the respective homes of the bride and groom to witness the rites and also the arrival and departure of the bridal retinue. Anyone required to be present will generally be invited for lunch that day and also requested to be early. All those who

are present to see the groom leave for ying ts'an are given a red packet. A similar distribution is made to all those who watch the bride sheung kiu[1] (board the edan chair), so called, although she now goes by motor car, and these red-packets are provided by the groom's side.

The groom is accompanied by his bestman, groomsmen, the go-between and close relatives to the home of the bride but the parents of the groom do not go with them.

In a few cases an auspicious hour was chosen for the departure from the groom's home. Care is usually taken to ensure that when the groom leaves to "receive the bride" (tsip san neung), he is accompanied by an even number of people and they must go in an even number of cars. The bridal car, which should not be black, is decorated with ribbons. At one wedding four red cars were used.

When the groom goes to ying ts'an they take two lai hôp with them. The first box contains: two bottles of whiskey, two packets of fire-crackers, two packets of confetti, and a piece of paak (cypress) and prepared red-packets, some of which are for distribution. The second box contains an assortment of wedding biscuits. Both these boxes are, of course, returned by the bride's parents after the greater part of the contents have been taken out.

Description of a ying ts'an rite at a bride's home

The bride's close relatives and friends gather at her home; there may be between twenty to forty people. Lunch is provided and often served as early as 10 a.m. to allow time for preparations.

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1. It is interesting to note that kiu is also for "bridge".

The bride puts on a white bridal gown with the help of either her sisters, other female relatives or friends. On one occasion, the woman who was supposedly the expert on rituals insisted that someone of "good" circumstances should assist the bride with her make-up, and not the girl of the bride's choice because her father was deceased. Eventually it was decided that a girl of "good" circumstances (in this case, there were no deaths in her immediate family, there were brothers and sisters, the family was in a reasonable financial standing and had generally no conspicuous misfortune) should put on the first bit of make-up, for which she received a red-packet from the bride's mother. Thereafter, the girl of the bride's choice was permitted to continue the task. At this wedding, the bride's father was told to place her headdress on her head.

At this particular ying tɛ'an the groom's party arrived with the loud blaring of car hooters. They entered the house in a procession, the bestman with the t'aū p'oon hôp (the first ceremonial box) followed by the groom and go-between the groomsmen who carried the second lai hôp and bouquets and buttonholes for the bride and her bridesmaids and relatives. Then followed the remainder of the party of people accompanying the groom.

First of all, the guests were entertained to a tea party and a variety of cakes and savouries. After tea the tables were cleared or put aside to make way for the rites that followed. Senior relatives were called forward either by mui yan, taai k'am[1] or someone who had either been

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1. taai k'am - is a woman who is asked (in a sense hired) to assist the bride and to instruct her on the correct performance of rites. This woman is given a red-packet for remuneration by the bride's parents - it appears they are never paid directly and nor will the taai k'am state specifically how much she wants. She also receives red-packets from relatives, during tea-party mui yan is the go-between.

asked or taken it upon herself or himself to conduct the proceedings.

The groom was instructed to bow three times[1] to each new affine, he was told to address each person by the new kinship term and to pin on the corsage or buttonhole. The first persons who came forward were the bride's parents and grandparents.

On a few occasions, while the groom was being told how to address his new parents-in-law I heard the mui yan reminding him that the parents had gone to a great deal of trouble in bringing up his wife and he should always remember this and respect them. Other relatives senior to the bride who came forward included her parent's siblings, parent's uncles and aunts and also her own married elder siblings.

On one occasion when they were running late and the bride's family was a very large one, the mui yan decided that it would be too time consuming to carry out the rite for each relative and so it was only carried out for the parents and the most senior relatives[2]. The mui yan said that they could leave it over to the third day.

When all this had been completed the bride was escorted from her room. The bride and groom were asked to bow three times to each other, the groom handed the bride her bouquet and she took her place beside the groom. The taai k'am was then at the bride's side all the time and in most cases she assisted and advised the bride until the third day.

The party took leave and crackers were lit as they departed. Confetti mixed with rice is showered on the

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1. - called - kin lai - to salute or observe a rite.

2. F.F.B., F's older brother, F's eldest parallel cousin and wife.

bridal couple: I was told this was "good luck" for the bridal couple and the rice has a connotation of abundance of food.

Church Rite

When either the bride or the groom is a Christian, and the actual marriage takes place in church then the procedure is slightly altered. The church rites replace ying ts'an. Generally "receiving of the bride" is not carried out at all, although I have observed one wedding where the groom fetched the bride from her home after ying ts'an and the couple arrived at church together. On the whole, it is agreeable for the couple and relatives to meet at church and the father of the bride gives her away in accordance with Western traditions.

A church ceremony may also eliminate the necessity of the gifts being taken to the bride's home for ying ts'an. The flowers and corsages are also delivered to the bride's home by any one of the helpers.

After the church ceremony the photograph taking and tea-ceremony will take place as in the traditional ceremony.

Photographs

Every wedding makes an allowance of time for taking photographs. Strictly speaking, the photographs should only be taken after the "tea-serving" as this latter rite signifies the actual arrival and incorporation of the bride into her husband's household. It appears that this was the sequence in the last generation. Today, a more practical procedure is generally followed, and photographs are taken before the tea-serving ceremony so that the length of the ceremony should not take up too much time and consequently make it too dark for good photography.

Photographs are taken either in some public garden or a

photographer's studio. There should be photographs of the bridal group and the immediate relatives of both sides. In one photograph other relatives may also be included, these being people who have been specifically invited by the respective parents to be present for the photographs. These relatives have some genealogical link, but the distance to which relatives are reckoned depends entirely on the decision of the parents. Some "family-group" pictures contain as many as fifty to sixty persons.

"Tea-Serving" (ts'am ch'ā) (1)

The next ceremony is serving tea at the home of the groom's parents. Sometimes it may be at the bride and groom's new home, but on occasions I have known parents insist that it must take place in their home even if this involved a long journey (e.g. twenty miles there and back). At one wedding, both sets of parents were quite adamant that the necessary rites should take place in their own house, respectively, thus the groom and his party had to travel over 300 miles to the bride's home and then return with her to his home for the tea-serving and dinner party. In most cases, where one home is a great distance away the parents are generally willing to use alternative accommodation. Tea-serving then takes place in the home of some relative, while a bride from out . town may "leave home" from a hotel.

The people who are present at the tea-serving will have been invited to attend by the groom's parents. None of the bride's relatives are present, unless they are her bridesmaids. First, there is a tea-party for all and usually tea and cakes are served to the guests. During this time the taaî kam sees to the preparations for the tea ceremony. She sees that tea is made (Chinese tea), the cups placed on the tray and a hung tsó is placed in each cup and the tea is poured over it. The glacé fruits (t'ōng kwóh) which includes coconut slices, lin tsz, dried melon seeds etc. are placed in a ts'uen hōn, a tray with separate compartments for each type of fruit.

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1. See Plate 4.

The ancestral altar is prepared by lighting joss-sticks, incense and candles. Two chairs must be placed in position for those who will be served tea, and a mat placed in front of the chairs for kneeling. At the rites at which I was present, the chairs were placed to the side of the altar so that they did not obstruct the approach to the altar.

First of all, obeisances must be made to the ancestors. Facing the lighted incense and joss sticks, the bride and groom kneel down and offer the tray of tea, someone will take two or three cups from the tray and place it on the altar. Prior to this, the groom's parents will have made up four red packets which are placed on the side of the altar, and these were given to the couple, with the idea that they are from the ancestors.

At one wedding, one of the old ladies suggested that tea should also be served outside for the earth and locality spirits who are present in all places. This is simply called "yard worshipping" (paai yaa)[1] and so the bride and groom were escorted to the back veranda where incense was burning and three cups poured in libation.

Senior relatives generally go to the tea ceremony prepared with red-packets, but a great deal of coaxing is always required before they take their place on the chairs, and there is generally the plea that it is not necessary. However, without a doubt, there would be hurt feelings if someone were omitted, unless, the persons may have decided to stay away altogether.

Parents are the first to be served with tea. They are asked, usually by the taai k'am, to sit in the chairs provided. Again, there is great reluctance to sit and

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1. yaa is a Cantonese rendering of the English word "yard".

sometimes they just stand. The couple are sometimes required to k'au t'au,[1] and the couple go on their knees, but nowadays some parents insist that bowing three times is sufficient. Throughout the rites, the taaî k'am is next to the bride instructing her on what to do and is constantly filling more cups with tea. The parents are then offered the tray of tea. The parents each take a cup from which a few drops are poured into a bowl provided for the purpose and the cup is left on the altar. They then each take another cup from which they have a few sips before replacing the cup on the tray; this has the same idea as a libation. The crystallised fruits are also offered and the parents take one piece each. The parents then give a red packet to the bride and groom, very often they are given gold sovereigns or the bride is given gold and perhaps jade jewellery. The taaî k'am is also given a red-packet, but it will only contain a token sum of money (about R1.05).

The tea pouring procedure is then repeated for senior married relatives who have to be persuaded to go forward, usually husband and wife, unless the person is widowed, then he or she goes alone. However, it is usual that only the persons, senior to the groom and married, are called forward and the bridegroom's mother will decide who is to receive the obeisance. The younger people often show greater embarrasment and also amusement and so, to them, the bridal couple are often asked just to bow and offer tea standing instead of kneeling. All the relatives also reciprocate by giving red-packets containing perhaps R2.10 or R1.05.[2]

Dinner celebration (paai tsaû)

The biggest communal event of the day is the dinner party held in the evening. In my sample of twenty weddings, only one marriage did not have a dinner, and this was because the marriage was disapproved by both parents. Four had a

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1. k'au t'au is to kneel on the ground and to touch the ground with one's forehead three times. (Usually spelt kow-tow)
2. Equivalent to the old guinea and half-guinea.

dance following the dinner. A few weddings had a combined dinner and dance.

Some years ago it was customary for the bride's family and the groom's family to give their own parties and the bridal couple would, of course, only be present at the party of the groom's family. Today the majority of parties are held jointly, and in my examples over the past three years there has been only one case of separate parties. In the joint celebration the parents will come to some agreement beforehand on how to share expenses. They may share equally or in proportion to the number of guests invited by either side.

A dinner is held either at one of the Chinese restaurants or at a hired hall. Occasionally, and only if the party is very small, it may be held at home.

Some of the gifts for the bride and groom are sent to their homes but most of them are taken to the reception. Gifts generally include household items for the couple's new home.

Guest lists are always made out on a big sheet of red paper and names are checked as the guests arrive. This is mainly to ensure that the hosts know that everyone has arrived before dinner is served. Dinners have been delayed, even up to two hours, waiting perhaps for just one person who happens to be a senior relative. Chinese do not send replies to invitations, but relatives are expected to be present unless they have given some specific reason or are on bad terms with the host and refuse to have anything to do with them.

The ancestors are also remembered before the beginning of a dinner. Some place will be found outside the hall or restaurant where incense, joss sticks etc. are lit, a tray of food is also placed there and a few glasses of liquor poured in libation. This ritual is carried out by women relatives or friends, and it is not necessary for either the

bride or groom to be present.

In the hall or restaurant, one large table is usually laid out as the main table for the bride and groom, senior relatives, and other important guests such as members of the Consular corps. The parents decide on who will be seated at the main table and as many as forty persons may be invited.

It is an honour to be seated at the main table but again, as at tea serving, people never assume this or take their places voluntarily; on the contrary, each one in turn has to be specially called and sometimes persuaded or even forced by the parents to take a seat at the main table.

It appears that even the people who sit at the main table must not be in the circumstance to cast bad fortune on the couple. On two different occasions, two women who should have been seated at the main table were omitted and explanations were given. In one case, that the woman's mother had died several weeks earlier. In the second case, there were two possible explanations, one being that her husband was out of town and it is "good" to be in pairs, but it was also suspected that the hosts might have been retaliating because this woman had not invited them to her daughter's previous engagement celebration even though this engagement had not been marked by a dinner celebration.

Speeches are made during the dinner, but no hard and fast rule is adhered to. What appears to be the usual procedure is that there is an M.C., and the bride and groom's parents each either ask someone to speak on their behalf, sometimes the fathers may speak personally, but this seems quite rare. The main purpose of these speeches is to thank people both for attending and for their gifts. Someone of prominence, such as the Consul or school principal or a friend or relative, may be asked to speak, as well as to propose a toast to the bride and groom. Sometimes, several people may be asked to speak. Speeches often express the wish for

the continuance of Chinese culture and praise for the parents for bringing up their children well. Speeches are generally in Chinese, although some may speak in English, or in both English and Chinese. According to Chinese custom the groom does not speak, but nowadays he is sometimes asked to reply, or in some cases he too may ask someone to speak on his behalf. As may be evident from this, speeches sometimes take up a considerable amount of time.

The dinner is a nine-course Chinese meal and even if it is not held in a Chinese restaurant but in a hall the catering will still be done by a Chinese restaurant. The number of guests at a party is reckoned according to the number of tables, that is, eight persons per table. Parties I have observed have ranged from a few to over a hundred tables.

The menu for the evening can be selected from a range of dishes, but certain foods are symbolic, although they do not all have to be prepared in one way. There is always one dish of roast pork and liver sausages and another dish of chicken (this is red meat and white meat);[1] Shark's fin and birdnest soups are usually included because they are luxury items. There are usually prawns and other sea foods. Steak is never served. Spring-rolls are popular and are said to symbolise plenty, because they have an outer covering filled with stuffing.

When, as in the past, separate parties were held by the two families, it was customary for food to be taken to the bride by members of her family and this was eaten in some room set aside for her use while waiting for the commencement of the party. At the dinner party the bride was supposed to be shy and withdrawn. (Today most brides eat at the dinner party). It was also customary for the bride to go from table to table, during the dinner party, offering tea to

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1. I think this is another representation of yin and yang, similar to my earlier suggestion for white lotus seeds and red dates.

guests. The bride was accompanied by her mother-in-law and a few senior women relatives of her husband's family, and by the taai k'am. Guests at each table would stand when the bride approached their table, take a cup of tea, have a few sips and then replace the cup on the try together with a red-packet. Similarly the groom also went from table to table with his bestman, groomsmen and a few senior relatives to drink with the guests. If the groom does not consume alcohol, then various ruses have to be resorted to such as preparing a bottle of tea! The groom is also given red-packets by the guests. This custom is now rarely practised.

Relatives still give the bridal couple red-packets. In any case, it is usual for the bride's relatives to give her red-packets and the groom's relatives to give him red-packets.

Every family unit invited by the bride's family is given some cakes, or today, a tin of biscuits which has been given to the girl's family by the groom's family in the kwòh lai ceremony.

The dinner is a very important part of a wedding for the obtaining of social recognition of the change in status. It seems that a communal gathering serves the function of acquainting people with the event. On more than one occasion the omission of a party has highlighted its significance. In one case a man was living with another woman, whom he had possibly married according to the South African law; nevertheless, people often remarked that they did not know her change of status if they had not celebrated the occasion.

On another occasion, as we have seen, no party was given because the boy's parents strongly disapproved of the match. The couple decided to get married in the Registry Office. Often I heard some of their relatives express their confusion as to how to regard the girl, since, having had no party, they were in a dilemma as to whether they were supposed to know of

the marriage. In this case the problem was solved with the birth of their first child when a party was given by his parents and a celebration of the child's birth naturally implied acceptance of their marriage.

On a third occasion, the groom was from a distant town and his parents had decided just to have a small dinner at their home to celebrate the marriage. The bride favoured a party at her home town, arguing that if her friends and relatives did not participate it would make her seem like a "street girl".

After the wedding dinner party, relatives often congregate at the groom's home. Traditionally, this was a time for teasing the bride and groom. Some people insist that the bride and groom must be in their bedroom by midnight and on the first night they must leave the lights on, possibly to symbolise a bright future.

Dance

The wedding celebration may be a dinner-dance, but sometimes a dance-party may be given in addition to a dinner party on the same evening. Some people, such as relatives and perhaps close friends, will obviously be invited to both functions, but usually there is not a complete repetition of guests. The tendency is to invite the older people to dinner and a younger set to the dance. A dance is held either in a hotel or hall hired for the evening. As a rule, there will be a band, and drinks and snacks will be provided and the catering may be done by professional caterers. In recent years a group of Chinese youths belonging to a society are willing to provide the service in return for a donation to their society (club).

The form the dance takes is adopted from a white South African wedding-reception. There is an M.C., someone proposing the toast to the couple; a reply by the groom

who in turn proposes a toast to the bridesmaids and the bestman replies on their behalf. A toast may also be proposed to the parents and more than one person may be asked to make a speech.

During the evening, the bride will throw her bouquet to be caught by an unmarried girl and a garter is thrown to the men. There is also the cutting of the wedding cake, the pieces of which are then distributed by the bridesmaids. Very often, the bride and groom must leave the party to give them sufficient time to return to his home before midnight.

It is unlikely that the bride and groom will leave for their honeymoon immediately and so it is not necessary for the bride to change into another outfit. Many couples have to remain in the bridegroom's home at least until the party on the third day.

(g) Activities after the Wedding Day

"Stepping into the new bed-room" (taâp san fōng).

The custom taâp san fōng is carried out the day following the wedding day.

The girl's side must send a young boy to the girl's new home. The boy can be a young brother or any relative, and is generally between the ages of about five years and ten years. The boy is taken to the bride's new home by one of the older relatives, and they take along a gift of food. The young boy's task is merely to step into the bride's new bedroom to ensure she will have sons. The young boy is given a red-packet by the bride's parents-in-law. They are entertained to tea and thereafter, the young boy and his companion return home.

Inviting the son-in-law

The bride's parents give a party on the third day after

the wedding and this is commonly known as the "third day party" or more specifically, "inviting the son-in-law" (ts'eng nui sai).

Traditionally, the son-in-law would take gifts to his parents-in-law to express his satisfaction that the girl was a virgin. Today, some people are oblivious of this significance and one woman told me that she was not aware of this meaning until many years after her marriage.

One girl told me that the taai k'am had told her that she should give a pair of worn panties to her mother. Another girl said her mother-in-law had given her a handkerchief for hymenal blood.

On the whole, this is an occasion of social significance. The bride's parents invite not only the newly wedded couple but also their new affinal kinsmen. Invitations are given to guests and I have seen the girl's parents ask for advice either from the groom's parents or indirectly through the taai k'am as to who should be invited. On one occasion invitations were sent to relatives overseas even though it was quite clear they could not attend. Those invited are normally people regarded as close kinsmen of the groom. At the same time the bride's parents will also invite those they regard as their kinsmen. The party may be a small one but on some occasions I have seen up to twenty or more tables.

The guests take gifts. The groom must take roast pigs, perhaps one or two, but once I was told the groom took four pigs which was interpreted as expressive of his high esteem for his wife and her parents; he also takes boxes of fresh fruit and money for red-packets which are distributed to all those younger than the bride. (One marriage simply took place at a Registry Office and the gifts of cakes and symbolic items were only taken to the bride's parents' home on the third day.) The other guests (each family unit) take either cakes, Chinese savoury dumplings or fresh fruit, or a combination of these items.

This should be the first time that the bride returns to her parents' home after her marriage. Often when the party is held in a restaurant, the newly married couple and their relatives are still required to go to her parents' home first and are entertained to tea there before going to the restaurant for dinner.

Before the guests take leave, they are given a small portion of their original gifts to take back home. On one occasion I watched the roast pigs being chopped up and the head and tail were returned: I was given the explanation that every undertaking should have a beginning but also be seen through to its logical conclusion, also implying a successful completion of any task.

Inviting the groom's mother-in-law

Within a few weeks another party is given by the groom's side; this is literally called "inviting the mother from outside" (ts'eng ngoi mou). The girl is now part of her husband's family, thus her mother is an outsider to her new kinship group, similarly, after marriage a girl is referred to as the "daughter married out" (ngoi kà nui)[1].

The guests are the members of the girl's natal family and their relatives; the circle of kinsmen will again be determined by the girl's parents but invitations are made by the groom's family.

These guests also take gifts, but mainly fresh fruit and cakes. A few of each gift are returned. It appears that when a person visits for the first time (particularly a new affinal kinsman) they take a small gift of something edible, and the hostess will at least make a gesture of returning part of it even if the guest refuses to accept it.

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1. When a girl marries she is said to ch'ut moon, literally this means she is "going out the door".

I was told that this must be done because it is good that everything "must continually come and go", in other words the action represents the setting up of a continuous chain of reciprocity.

Other parties for new affinal kinsmen

Thereafter, various relatives of both the bride and groom may decide to give a dinner party for the bride and groom and the new affines. The parties may, for example, be given by married siblings or uncles and aunts; there does not appear to be any fixed rule and the events depend largely on the persons themselves.

The main purpose of these parties appears to be the recognition of the new kinship tie, and a relative takes the initiative in inviting the new kinsmen to their home. These parties generally take place at home and are not on the same scale as the party for the son-in-law or mother-in-law.

(h) Posthumous marriages

The spirits of a dead boy and girl can be joined in marriage by their respective parents. I am told that even in Johannesburg many parents carry out this rite for deceased children. Affinal kinsmen then refer to each other as sin ts'an yan (sin means former or "late", ts'an yan means a relative).

In the one case that came to my knowledge the family decided to find a spouse for their dead daughter about ten years after her death, by which time she would have been in her late teens. The decision was taken because her family constantly saw her ghost in the house and therefore concluded she was not happy. Her sister explained: "the dead only appear when not in peace". They subsequently learnt of a family with two deceased boys of about the same age and both sets of parents agreed to marry the girl with one of the boys.

(Eventually the second brother was also "married"). The two families arranged to celebrate the union and a dinner party was held but attended only by the immediate families of the "bridal couple". During the evening there was burning of incense and joss sticks for the "couple" and also their ancestral spirits.

After the marriage, the two families regarded each other as affinal kinsmen, in fact the one mother continued to say "to me they are more important than other relatives". They get on very well together. In another case, the parents of a posthumously married couple also explained to me that their relationship was like one through a "real marriage", and they called each other by the relevant kinship terms.

There is clear social recognition for these marriages. People are invited to parties through the relationship of sin ts'an yan; at two weddings, one of the bridesmaids at each wedding was chosen through this relationship, although in both cases there were other relations available for the rôle.

(i) Analysis

"Marriage" says Freedman "is by far the most important contractual relationship in Chinese society. On it turns, not simply the happiness of a husband and a wife, but much more significantly, the successful absorption of a "foreign" woman into the family and the smooth regulation of the ties created between two sets of kin" (1967 : 11). This certainly sums up the feelings and desires engendered by the rites and ceremonies of a Chinese marriage in Johannesburg.

Choice of Marriage Partners

To begin with, it is believed that a successful marriage must start with the choice of the correct partner. I did not find evidence of preferential categories but there are definitely prohibited categories which I shall attempt to explain.

In the case of "over-stepping an older sibling" this clearly reflects the concern for knowing one's place in society. When one takes into account age, generation and sex, no two people are equal. "Over-stepping" is a breach of order and this requires special rites in case it should create disharmony.

Leach (1961), in his article on matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, puts forward the theory that in societies where this type of preferential marriage takes place, it may create an asymetrical relationship between the wife-giving and wife-receiving group. This relationship is expressed in tangible prestations and also in intangibles such as relative status and prestige. Among the Chinese in Johannesburg there are prohibitive rather than preferential categories, but using the same form of analysis helps to understand the Chinese case and reveals the similar structural implications, that is, the importance of creating alliances with other descent lines. However, it is important to remember that Leach is talking of successive generations, whereas the main emphasis of prohibitive categories amongst the Chinese here applies to siblings or members of the same generation. The exception being the case of past hostility between clans, which significantly indicates that they do not wish to create any further alliances with each other.

Leach (1961: 100) notes that for the Chinese the wife-receiving group has senior status. An analysis of prestations would support Leach's hypothesis although I doubt that any Chinese would accept that one party is junior to the other. At a wedding, the groom's family incurs far greater expenses in giving gifts to the bride's family than the latter does in return. Furthermore, the groom is also responsible for providing the bride's family with cakes for distribution to her relatives and friends and he also provides the money for red-packets to be distributed to all those who are present to see the bride's departure from her natal home. (Red-packets are further discussed under 'Gifts' below). For the present argument it is significant to note

that when red-packets are given by one individual to another, it is usual for a senior person to give to a junior, never vice versa.

If more than one sister were allowed to marry into the same descent line, there would be two undesirable consequences. Firstly, it would help to consolidate the wife-receiving/ wife-giving status of the two descent lines. In terms of Chinese thinking it would not be desirable to become increasingly subordinate to another group because each family unit and each lineal group was always trying to better itself in relation to others. Secondly, such a marriage would also confine the circle of kinsmen. Hsu's explanation for the prohibition of F.s.d. type of marriage is that it would "shrink the circle of kinship and reduce the number of relatives who may be of help". (quoted in Leach 1961: 75) This explanation also applies to the prohibition of marrying some one of the same clan name.

Furthermore, a direct exchange is also prohibited as the brother, sister to sister, brother marriages. Leach, in his discussion of Hsu's explanation for the prohibition of F.s.d. and m.B.S. marriages says, ineffect it means "every local descent group must have wife-receiving partners and wife-giving partners and these two categories must not be confused". (idem: 76)

Accordingly the customs relating to eligible marriage partners, appears then to be attempts to ensure the widening of the circle of kin. One seeks to improve one's position, both through material means and through kinship ties.

There is further evidence to show that the Chinese are concerned with the formation of alliances. Posthumous marriages[1] and pseudo-adoption[2] are ways of formalizing

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1. See page 120
2. See page 68

ties between two previously unrelated kin groups. It is significant that, although the overt explanation is that such relationships are entered into for the benefit of the children concerned. They often result in the formalizing of ties between two families who are already on friendly terms. It is also of interest that one informant specifically stated that she would not allow a certain person to pseudo-adopt her grandson because she did not like them.

Symbolism

In the interpretation of Chinese symbolic items it is of first importance to understand the use of puns. Freedman writes: "The Chinese language is a natural for punning. In English ... puns belong to the realm of wit ... In Chinese they are eminently ritual. Moreover, they are by no means confined to speech, for an object can be made to stand for a homophone of its name - a bat, to take the commonest case, representing happiness because the words are pronounced alike". (1967 (b), p. 19). So we find an elder brother who has been overstepped by a younger sister in marriage must give her brother a pair of trousers: the sound foo represents both "trousers" and also "rich, wealth, abundance". Amongst the items in the wedding gifts must be a packet of chopsticks as the two words, faai tsź, meaning chopsticks also mean "fast, quick" (faai) and "sons" (tsź). A branch of cypress tree is sent by the groom's family and in return the bride's family sends a piece of pine. Paak (cypress tree) sounds the same as "to pair together", whereas ts'ūng (pine) sounds similar to " to agree with".

Then there is also the symbolism of likeness, a good example being the lotus root. The idea is that when a piece of lotus root is broken off there are long threadlike fibres which stretch for some length before breaking off. The lotus root therefore symbolises the hope that the marriage will have the same resilience. The idea of duality is also important. A duality within unity stems from the ancient concept of yin and yang, which are two opposing forces which complement each other, for example, the balanced

pairs of Heaven and Earth, heat and cold, male and female etc. The dual unity is essential for harmony and since marriage is pairing, the whole series of rites is filled with symbols of duality, for example, symbolic items must be in pairs and there must be an even number of people escorting the bride and groom. On the whole, duality seems to be important on happy occasions but the number nine also appears to be significant. The explanation I have been given is that it means ch'eung kau (a long time, permanent). The Cantonese for nine is the homonym, kau.

People who assist or are in contact with the bride and groom may also affect their well-being. Thus there must be avoidance of certain categories of people, these include the girl with a deceased father, the mourning, the elderly spinster and also the pregnant woman.

Gifts

The sequence of gift-giving and returning is an important part of contracting a traditional Chinese marriage and begins at the betrothal, when the gifts are given by the groom to the bride's parents.

Mauss's (1954: 10) hypothesis is that there is an obligation to give, to receive, and to return gifts and that a breach in this chain of actions would indicate a refusal to continue the relationship. At a Chinese wedding the giving, receiving and returning of gifts is also an indication of the delicate balance of good fortune and harmony: on this occasion there is not only a desire to establish good fortune for the new couple and between the new affines but also to ensure that, with the giving and exchange of symbols of good fortune, the balance of each family is not upset. A good illustration of this is when the bride leaves her natal home, she deliberately leaves behind some symbols of good fortune. Freedman writes that good fortune is like a limited good and each person must protect his own supply.

In writing on Geomancy (Freedman 1968: 7) points out

that a building or grave must be understood as an intervention in the universe and as such something capable of disturbing the forces in the system of nature and society. Similarly, I think, a marriage is a deliberate change in the status quo of two families and so there is a conscious desire to restore and maintain harmony between and within the two families.

The gift giving and returning between the two families are of two kinds: (1) the type Firth (1967: 14) regards as an attempt to restore economic balance; here economic value comes into consideration and the exchange can be seen as being important from a contractual point of view. (2) the symbolic items which are concerned with the future of the newly wed couple and with preserving harmonious relationships. Gifts of the first category fall mainly on the groom's family.

The idea of reciprocation is decidedly important. When gifts are taken to the bride's home in red ceremonial containers, the gifts are immediately removed from these containers and the containers are taken away again by the groom's representatives. But what is of particular interest is to see the manner in which the gifts are accepted. The container is never emptied but instead a small part of the original contents must remain together with additional symbolic items. This is a symbolic expression of the desire for good reciprocal relations between the affines. The explanation given to me by my informant was that "what is good must come and go between us". Importance is attached not only to the items themselves but the manner in which they are given and returned, and the principle underlying the actions is that if there is reciprocity then there will be continuity of harmony and good between the families.

During any occasion of importance, there is the giving of red-packets. In Cantonese they are called lei shi (lei means a rite, shi means a custom). A lei shi (red-packet) is money in different amounts wrapped in red paper or contained in a special red envelope with gold decorative printing on it. The equivalent of one guinea or half-guinea

is often given; on some occasions the amount must add up to the symbolic figure of nine, and on other occasions I have seen people insist that the red-packet must contain an even number of coins.

A red-packet seems to be a way of expressing acknowledgement or a means of reciprocating something. All those who assist the bride and groom, such as the bestmen, bridesmaids, the drivers, the girls who help the bride with her make-up or packing her trousseau, are all given red-packets in acknowledgement.

The acc ance of a red-packet also appears to endorse the performance of a rite and consequently acknowledging the purpose of the rite or ceremony. When the main ceremonial gifts are taken by the groom's side to the bride's home, the first ceremonial box is handed to the bride's father and it is his duty then to remove a red-packet which has been specially placed in the box for him. In this way he has formally accepted the gifts in exchange for which the groom's party will then take the bride's trousseau to her new home. When the bride's trousseau arrives at the groom's home, it is the groom's duty to open the main kist and also remove a red-packet. Again it can be said that the groom has, by that action, formally accepted the bride's belongings into his home.

The similar idea of acknowledgement and reciprocation also applies t. the tea-serving ceremony. First of all, serving tea is a way of humbling oneself and it is also a way one formally apologises for wrong done to another. On the wedding day, the bride and groom are required to serve tea to the groom's parents and other senior relatives and at the same time the bride is introduced to her new senior affines and instructed on the term of address for each one. In return for this mark of respect and as a mark of acceptance of their new status, the newly wed couple is given red-packets by each of the person who accept their obeisance.

The Significance of Kinship

The participation of kinsmen seems to be essential for the social recognition of specific events in the lives of the people and this seems particularly so in the case of the marriage. This highlights the significance of kinship in ritual life. No two persons, except perhaps unmarried siblings have exactly the same set of genealogical relationships and thus an understanding of the criteria for the presence of a particular group of people at a rite or celebration would require a situational analysis. The norms of kinship amongst the Johannesburg Chinese are discussed more fully in Chapter 6. Briefly the principles which I found were: (1) the primary significance of agnatic relationships, and (2) the idea that no one can be totally without kinsmen. This is because special occasions demand the presence of close relatives, and so if there are few or no paternal kinsmen, maternal kinsmen may be mobilised, or people of the same clan name even though there is no direct traceable genealogical link.

We find that so called close kin are invited to observe the rites in the home such as the bride's departure, they are asked to accompany the groom's party to fetch the bride and are later served tea. The invitation to these people is an acknowledgement of their kinship tie and in some cases where relatives have been omitted they have clearly shown that they were offended. In some cases, the omission of an invitation or refusal to attend without good reason, is an indication of a breach in the relationship. The rites on the day the bride is formally escorted to her new home, is significantly called yin ts'an, the recognition of kinship.

Public recognition: by the living and the dead

A celebration seems crucial for the social recognition of a specific event. In a few cases I have heard of people saying that they did not know whether a couple were married or not because there had been no celebration. A particularly

good example is the one I mentioned on page 125 above.

After the marriage, the acceptance of new affinal relations leads to a series of dinner parties to which affines formally invite each other. On these occasions the guests also take gifts, often fruit or cakes, which again are only partially accepted by the host.

Throughout the marriage, ancestors are not forgotten. I have described how flowers have to be taken to the graves and how during each important rite in the home someone will light incense at the altar, and prior to the celebration dinner someone will be given the responsibility of carrying out ancestor worship. During the tea-serving ceremony the ancestors are also served and in addition, each senior couple who accepts the obeisances of the newly wed show their respect to the ancestors by offering a cup of tea to them and pouring libation from it before accepting one for themselves.

The traditional Chinese marriage is, therefore, not only the recognition of a contract between two persons, but involves kinsmen whose presence is essential not only as witnesses and observers but to render assistance to the parents of the bride and groom. It is both a right and obligation for kinsmen to be invited and to attend. Furthermore, elaborate precautions are taken to ensure the establishing and continuity of good relationships between the families, both from the point of view of social relationships and the forces of good fortune. Rites to the ancestors ensure that they too will promote the happiness of the new union.

CHAPTER 5. RITUALS OF DEATH AND THE COMMEMORATION OF ANCESTORS.

Traditional China was one of the world's most famous centres of "ancestral worship". The spiritual influences of the deceased over their living descendants were strongly believed in, and regular, often elaborate rites were performed for them[1]. Before any deceased relative could "become an ancestor" in this sense, it was necessary that the correct funeral and post-funeral rituals should be performed, in order to separate the spiritual from the bodily aspects of the deceased and conduct them to their new, otherworldly status. In traditional China the rituals of death and ancestor worship were closely connected. They were also perhaps the most widely practised and strongly believed in of all rituals, and they certainly often acted as major foci of kin group (lineage and domestic-family) solidarity. It is, therefore, of great interest to record the ways in which the various groups of overseas Chinese- each of them living in different circumstances, all of which are very different from those of the traditional homeland, carry out the rituals of death and ancestor worship today.

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1. For examples see - Fei, 1938: 78; Freedman, 1958: chapters 10 and 11; Freedman, 1965: chapter 5; Kulp, 1925: 306.

(i) RITUALS OF DEATH.

(a) Death.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the Chinese ideal is for a person to reach old age, and to have children and grandchildren, preferably sons and grandsons. They also cherish the ideal of being well cared for by the younger generation and then to die peacefully, surrounded by members of the family.

A natural death at old age can be accepted and does not need undue explanation, but an unnatural death is often subject to many rationalisations. Perhaps not unlike other people, the Chinese sometimes believe that a violent death is retribution for amoral deeds, for example, in the case of a man who was known to exploit the community, or a woman said to have ill-treated her aged husband.

There is also the eventual wish for a proper burial. As yet I have not heard of a Chinese cremation here in South Africa as the idea is totally opposed to Chinese thinking. A funeral should be arranged by the next of kin, but if the deceased had no close relatives then the arrangements are made by someone perhaps of the same clan or, in more exceptional cases, they may be assumed as a combined responsibility for members of the same clan or lineage, who may decide to get together and contribute towards the funeral expenses.

The Chinese belief in an after-life is well known: from my discussions with informants in South Africa, it appears that the exact nature of the next life is vague but it seems to resemble this life. My informants seem to believe that their next world is in the "sky", perhaps similar to the Christian idea of Heaven.

Amongst the more traditionally minded there are implications that on death the person joins the ancestors and that the deceased does require care and must be provided for by living members of the family. After the death of one man in hospital, where he was the only Chinese patient, I later heard some older women in discussion and one said that she knew death was imminent because when she visited him the previous day she distinctly saw some strange Chinese people entering the hospital although no one was known to have visited the patient, and so she was quite convinced that they were the ancestors who had gone to fetch him. On another occasion I also heard of premonitions which included seeing deceased people.

(b) Funerals.

I have fourteen case studies - they are of funerals which I have either observed personally or discussed with people who attended them. They include the funerals of both my paternal and maternal grandfathers, at which I was both observer and participant. These funerals range from one for a week old baby to that for men and women of old age.

A funeral can generally be conducted in one of three ways :-

1) according to traditional rites, or
2) Christian rites, or
3) a combination of traditional and Christian rites.

Funerals for young, unmarried people are very simple. The funeral for the baby was attended by very few people, just the immediate family and collateral relatives and, in this case, the one parent was a Christian, and so a Church service preceded the burial. The family did not assume mourning[1] for the child. In another family

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1. i.e. They did not wear black or any other sign of mourning or avoid social activities for a specified period. Mourning practices are discussed in greater detail later on.

先夫學公文科不幸於一九七〇年六月十九日晨病終医院享壽七十有三歲淚拜六月二十八日「星期日」下午二時三十分在聯衛会所出殯哀此訃

聞

未亡人梁氏哀啓
孤子 周鶴
女 運 [illegible]
媳婦 謝氏

鼎惠
恩辭

如蒙賜唁請折現金
捐助慈善教育用

代收處：廣華興



LEO.—A funeral service will be held for Mr. Leo Man War, late of [illegible] Park Drive, Mayfair, Johannesburg, on Sunday, 28th June, at the Chinese United Club, 10 Commissioner St., Johannesburg, at 2.30 p.m., thereafter proceeding to Newclare Cemetery. Donations in lieu of floral tributes to A. Kin & Co., 9b Commissioner Street, which will be distributed to charity.
20 25 C133931

先慈劉門周氏兩子[illegible]
約望醫院享壽七十
七日(星期日)午十[illegible]
[illegible]
天主教堂二時卅分出殯哀此
訃

聞

[illegible]



LAUSON.—A requiem mass will be held for Mrs. Foon Shing Lauson, late of 40 Terrace Road, Fertrams, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, 7th June, at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, [illegible] Braamfontein, thereafter proceeding to Newclare Cemetery. [illegible] David [illegible] 22 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, between 12.30 to 1.30 p.m. Donations in lieu of floral tributes to the [illegible] Commissioner Street, which will be distributed to the General Hospital and Cancer Research.
4 [illegible]

先慈霍公高期不幸於一九七〇年六月十九日下午六時病終医院享壽八十有四歲淚拜六月二十八日「星期日」下午二時三十分在 (CHURCH OF THE HOLY ANGELS, 32 KITCHENER AVENUE, KINSINGTON, J.H.B.) 教堂出殯哀此訃

聞

[illegible]
媳婦 羅氏 [illegible]
孫 [illegible]

鼎惠
恩辭

如蒙賜唁請折現金
捐送慈善教育用

代收處：瑞興行
廣華興



FOK FOO. A requiem mass will be held for Mr. Fok Foo, late of 102 Shangri-La, Berea Street, City and Suburban, Johannesburg, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, 28th June, at the Church of the Holy Angels, 32 Kitchener Avenue, Johannesburg, thereafter proceeding to Newclare Cemetery. No floral tributes by request. Donations in lieu thereof to Sui Hing Hong, 10 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, or A. Kin, 9b Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, which in turn will be distributed to charitable organisations.

Three funeral notices which appeared in English-language newspapers in Johannesburg, illustrating three different procedures in funeral rites.

the child was in her teens, but as she was the youngest in her family, they also did not mourn.

When an adult dies, many arrangements have to be made, and generally the next of kin is responsible for organising and financing the burial. In the fourteen cases studied, the following were responsible for the arrangements :-

Males.

The son of deceased	- 1 case
Widow assisted by a son	- 2 cases
Widow assisted by a friend (the couple had no children)	- 1 case
Widow assisted by deceased's brothers (children still young)	- 1 case
Father (burial of son)	- 1 case
Deceased's brother's son (own son too young)	- 1 case
Father (burial of a baby)	- 1 case
Friend of the same clan name (deceased unmarried and had no immediate family)	- 1 case

Females.

Son (in one case the husband was still living but was too ill to attend the funeral)	- 2 cases
Husband	- 2 cases
Friend of the same clan name	- 1 case

If there is a surviving spouse, then the spouse and adult children are responsible; but if the spouse has already died then adult children or nearest relatives take care of the funeral. Where there were no relatives, the clan/or lineage links provided the channel for assuming responsibilities. In one case the deceased woman's only daughter had died and her son-in-law was reluctant to assume the duties, so that the funeral was taken care of by a man whose only connection with the family was that he was of the same clan and that his family knew the deceased personably well. I can quote a number of other cases where clan or lineage links, in the absence of genealogical ties, served as criteria for accepting responsibilities.

The most usual day for a funeral is a Sunday, as it is the day on which most people are free from business and employment. If death occurs early in the week then the following Sunday would be the most likely choice, but if death occurs towards the end of the week leaving little time for making necessary arrangements, then relatives may wish to delay the funeral for another week. Often funerals may also be delayed to allow time for relatives to travel from great distances, and I know of one case when the funeral was delayed for over three weeks because, according to the Chinese almanac, the family could not find an auspicious date.

Death notices are usually placed in the Chinese newspaper. Nowadays, a notice written in Chinese is sometimes placed in English newspapers, as the circulation of the Chinese newspapers is relatively small. Notices generally announce the time and date of the funeral and also list the deceased's immediate surviving relatives, i.e. spouse, married and unmarried children and grandchildren, and also siblings. The age of the deceased is also given, and three years are usually added to his chronological age[1] - the additional years represent one for heaven - (t'in), one for earth (tef), and one for the deceased (ts2 kei).

In perhaps the last five to ten years, the majority of families now request that donations be sent in lieu of floral tributes and there are only a limited number of

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1. Chronological age can be calculated in one of two ways :

(a) The traditional Chinese method - starting at ONE on the day of birth and adds a year (age - sui) each New Year.

(b) The traditional European method - starts at NOUGHT on the day of birth and adds one year on each subsequent birthday.
Today, most Chinese people in Johannesburg use the traditional European method but to my knowledge, some of the older people who were born and brought up in China still think of their age in the traditional Chinese way.

wreaths, from the family and perhaps close friends. The money collected is then given to some charity of the family's choice. This is a notable change, as in the past the number of wreaths was a sign of the esteem in which the deceased was held. However, people now realize that the money can be used for a worthy cause. Generally one of the shops in Chinatown will undertake to collect the donations.

The rites observed in the case-studies are as follows :-

	Deceased		
Rites observed	Male	Female	Totals
Traditional	4	3	7
Christian	4	0	4
Traditional and Christian	1	2	3
Totals ...	9	5	14

Traditional funeral.

Traditional rites require a certain amount of preparation before the funeral. Red and white-packets have to be made up for distribution. Originally the custom was to put 3d. (a tickey) in a white-packet and two 3d. pieces in a red-packet, but since the decimalisation of currency in South Africa and the discontinuance of the 3rd piece, there has been a certain amount of uncertainty, although I recorded one funeral in which relatives still tried to get sufficient 3d. pieces. At another funeral white-packets were made up with three 2c. pieces, and the red-packets with one 5c. piece, but this contradicted the original explanation I had been given that the white-packet contains an uneven number, and the red an even number of coins(1).

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1. It is interesting to note that traditionally, white - yin = odd, and red - yang = even.

Ritual material must also be obtained: incense, joss sticks, candles and paper money and paper clothes. A long flat piece of wood is also prepared and the deceased's name is written on it (in Chinese characters) so that it can be placed on the grave for identification. If there is an altar in the home, the deceased's name may also be written on a piece of red paper for placing on the altar.

Clothes to be worn by the dead person also follow certain customs. Generally, Western clothes are used, and soft hats (for men) and soft shoes should be worn; thus Western slippers are generally chosen. Old clothes may be worn, but if the deceased does not already have suitable clothes then new clothes will be bought. To my knowledge there was only one funeral where traditional funeral garments were imported from Hong Kong, otherwise Western garments are used. Some member of the family, usually the person organizing the funeral, will also choose the coffin. I do not know of any attempt to import a traditional coffin, in any case that would not be feasible as it would involve great expense if one were to be airfreighted to South Africa. Furthermore, coffins are never acquired beforehand.

Mourning for the deceased begins from the day of the funeral, and thus the mourners also have to obtain their clothing. The indication of mourning for men is a black tie and black armband. The women wear black[1] dresses and black accessories and no make-up or gold jewellery. Young children sometimes wear white clothes but otherwise they also wear black. The women's clothes and the ties and armbands for the men worn on the day of the funeral are paid for by the chief mourner, who in normal circumstances

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1. Colour symbolism discussed in Section (c).

is the next of kin (e.g. the eldest son), and he is also responsible for arranging the funeral. In one case two brothers agreed to share all expenses.

A large room is usually hired in a club building (oof soh) in Chinatown for a traditional funeral, as a place is required for the lying-in-state of the body, the performance of rites and also the assembly of the mourners for the funeral. The immediate family (i.e. spouse, children, parents and siblings) will be at the venue to await the arrival of the body of the deceased, which is taken there by the undertakers. In most cases the coffin is then opened for viewing.

The women usually get busy lighting incense, joss sticks and candles, and prop them either in a tin filled with sand or in a large bar of soft soap. There is also a liberal supply of mock money (.e. paper representing gold and silver), which is gradually burnt up in a bin especially placed there for that purpose.

Obeisances are made to the dead person, the extent and manner depending on the family: in those I observed, each member of the immediate family was required to bow three times before the coffin and then remain in the room taking a last look at the deceased. In one case, the widow and daughter remained on their knees weeping openly for some time, until friends persuaded them to get up. The kneeling posture seems to be customary, but I do not think the weeping is ritualised, as was the custom in China, but just a deep emotional reaction. Friends and other relatives who attend the funeral also enter the room, whereupon each person is given a white-packet by a person at the door. Some people bow three times before the coffin and then go forward to take a look at the body. Occasionally I noticed that people, mainly women, would also go forward, take a few sheets of "money" and drop them into the bin for

burning. After paying their respects in these ways, the people either gather in the room, which is not large enough for a big crowd, or they go out and wait on the pavement in the street. All women attending the funeral wear dark coloured clothes: red would certainly be out of place, but there is no special significance to the colour of white (the traditional colour of mourning). Dark blue is sometimes worn.

In the meantime, various items are placed in the coffin. These include a set of Chinese playing cards and some mock money. A 3d. piece is placed in the mouth of the dead person; the two explanations I have been given are (1) that it will prevent the deceased from saying bad things of the people he has left behind and (2) that the money is used for the passage to the next world.

About one to one and a half hours is generally allowed for this part of the funeral, and the coffin is then closed for burial. The pall-bearers are generally the nearest male relatives, including sons-in-law. At one funeral I attended there were not sufficient immediate relatives to act as pall-bearers, but other men were not especially asked to assist, and when the time came the kinsmen just waited for the men to go forward voluntarily. Thereafter, there was much discussion amongst the women about who volunteered and who was reluctant to go forward. It appeared that no actual request had been made because it was important that face should be saved on both sides, as someone might have refused for fear of being polluted(1). In any case, the immediate family would be careful not to be blamed for causing future misfortunes which could be related to their association with the corpse.

During a funeral, mourners are told not to allow tears to fall on the coffin nor to allow their shadow to fall underneath the coffin, as it is "not good". No further

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1. See page 176 for explanation.

explanation as to why this should be so could be elicited. The coffin is then placed in the hearse and undertakers provide cars for the chief-mourners, these usually being the immediate family. The hearse, the cars for the chief mourner and family, and the cars of the remainder of the mourners are then driven to the cemetery in procession. After arrival, the coffin is borne to the grave which will have been dug by the cemetery staff and decorated with flowers and an artificial lawn by the undertakers. The coffin is lowered and flower petals (a European custom) are scattered over the coffin, first by the family and then by the rest of the people attending the funeral. African workers then immediately begin filling the grave. In the meanwhile, the people stand around, some in silence and others engaged in conversation. On a few occasions I have heard remarks of disapproval at the amount of conversation, which was regarded as a sign of lack of respect.

After the grave is filled in members of the family, usually a few women, light the incense, joss sticks and candles. Mock money is again burnt and then an extra large joss stick is lit and taken home by one of the male members of the family, generally the son. If the family have an ancestral altar, the joss stick is placed on it. On one occasion, when the deceased had no surviving relative, the joss stick was taken to his old home, even though it was to be occupied by new tenants unknown to the deceased. On another occasion it was taken to one of the communal buildings in Chinatown. The belief behind this custom is that the lighted incense stick leads the soul of the departed back home, or some other place to return to.

After the funeral of one woman her husband did not take the joss stick home: a number of relatives subsequently reported seeing her wandering around, and one person

dreamt of her asking for clothes and a bottle of medicine, which was found in the exact spot indicated in the dream. This was interpreted as indicating that her kwai[1] (soul) had nowhere to go because of the omission of this custom. Two female relatives decided something had to be done. They bought incense, joss sticks and mock money and took it to her grave, where they lit and burnt the ritual items as usual, they "called" her (kiu hei- call the spirit) and then took the lighted joss stick to the home of her husband. After this there were no further reports of seeing her.

As the people leave the cemetery after the funeral, they are each given a red-packet. The money contained in the white and red-packets should not be taken home, and it is usual for people to stop at a shop on the way home to buy something to eat, generally sweets.

It is noteworthy that the lei shi given to the guests before the burial are white, and contain an uneven number of coins, symbolising yin, the negative forces, whereas those given after the burial and before the return home are red and contain an even number of coins, symbolising the yang or positive forces. This giving of red-packets could be seen as a symbol signifying the recipient's cutting off from negative, dangerous effects of being associated with a corpse, while the insistence that the contents are not taken home shows that even the colour red by itself is not enough to secure safety from the "pollution".

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1. The word kuei (kwai) is often translated as "ghost or devil" and used for other people's ancestors but one's own ancestors are shēn (shan), meaning "ancestor". (Freedman 1967: 86). However, amongst the Chinese here, the word kwai seems to be used quite freely for one's own ancestors but the word shan is also used especially in reference to ancestor worship (paai shan).

These ideas were not however explicitly expressed by my informants, who simply stated that the giving of white packets before the burial and red ones after was customary, and that to take the contents of the latter home would be "not good" (m̄ ho).

After the funeral, the immediate family of the deceased, i.e. the spouse and siblings and both married sons and daughters and unmarried children, gather at the home of the chief mourner[1]. Various customs are followed which symbolise overcoming the bitter experience. These include the eating of something sweet immediately on returning to the house or the washing of one's hands. More red-packets, prepared before the funeral, are then distributed to each person. The family will have dinner together before dispersing.

On the third day (i.e. a Tuesday if the funeral was on a Sunday), the chief mourner visits the grave for the first time. He is often accompanied by some relative, but it is generally difficult for the entire family to go on a weekday because of employment or business. On this day, flowers are taken to the grave and incense, joss sticks and candles burnt. Food, in the form of pork, a chicken (slaughtered and cleaned but uncooked) and three oranges, is taken along and offered at the graveside. After the rites the food is taken home and later cooked and eaten by the family. Neither at this nor any other time is food which has been offered to ancestors treated differently, and after the rites it is usually consumed along with the ordinary repast. On this third day, the family will gather once again for dinner.

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1. In the case of the family who had an ancestral altar, a red piece of paper bearing the name of the deceased wife was put up on the altar and members of the family each had to take turns in going before the altar and bowing three times.

Christian Rites.

Four of my examples provide information for the funeral customs followed for two baptised babies and two elderly persons, who had been converted to Christianity when in danger of death.

The mother of the one baby had been a Roman Catholic for many years. The baby's funeral was conducted entirely according to Catholic rites and there was no question of traditional ritual. The other baby was baptized just before he died as he was born at a Catholic maternity home. The parents were not Catholics but approved of the baptism. This child was also accorded Catholic burial rites.

In the other two examples of Christian funerals, both fathers had adult children who had been educated in Catholic schools and had been converted to Catholicism for some years. In both cases, the men were baptized shortly before death. The families were anxious for the rite to be performed and it was carried out with the approval of the dying men. In both cases, the wives and children had decided that the funerals should be conducted in the Christian manner and so they dispensed with all practices of incense burning and offering of mock clothes, money or food. In spite of this the funerals were not completely devoid of Chinese customs, such as the distributing of white and red-packets and the gathering of descendants after the funeral, but the important fact is that a major change had occurred in the ideas about the necessities required by the deceased and there was the acceptance of the new idea that the soul had gone to heaven and no longer required material things. This is why I have regarded these as Christian funerals.

At one funeral, a Requiem Mass was held at the church

and attended mainly by members of the family, after which the body was taken to a venue (oof soh) in Chinatown. The majority of mourners had assembled , the traditional viewing was allowed for an hour, and white-packets were distributed to mourners as they entered the room. At no time, however, was there burning of incense, nor the usual placing of symbolic items in the coffin, although at the last moment, just before the coffin was to be closed, it was decided that a 3d. piece should be placed in the corpse's mouth.

At both these funerals, the families had decided to dispense with traditional customs, but it was not without considerable determination, as some of the relatives or old family friends still expressed concern for the welfare of the deceased. In both these cases, however, they were able to waive traditional practices as they had an alternate set of rites to replace the old ones and they held resolutely to the Christian explanation for the fate of the soul. A Catholic priest accompanied the dead to the grave and more prayers were said before the burial. Again, the people generally waited until the grave was covered before dispersing.

At both funerals, red-packets were distributed after the burial. One family took flowers to the grave on the third day.

The Synthesis of Christian and Traditional Rites.

In ca s where there was a combination of both Christian and traditional rites, it appears that this was done mainly as a compromise between the various views of surviving family members entitled to have a say in making decisions. Indeed, one person might have the overriding authority to reject the wishes of others as in the case of the two Christian funerals, though they were not without

criticisms. There was also a case in which the husband of the deceased refused the son's suggestion for a priest to be present at the burial.

In the one case, the wife and children were Christians and thus on the death of the wife it was inevitable that she should be given a Christian funeral. The husband was not a Christian and, although he did not object to Christian rites, he nevertheless had doubts as to his wife's future welfare without Chinese rites. Thus the funeral took the form of a Requiem Mass, and the mourners were accompanied to the cemetery by a priest who said prayers at the graveside. After the grave had been filled in the priest left. The husband then carried out the traditional burning of incense and paper articles, and took a joss stick home. A member of the family explained to me that, since he felt very deeply about the necessity of traditional rites, they did not intervene as it could do no harm. However, it was considered better to wait until the priest had left. On the third day the widower took flowers to the grave but did not take food.

In the other cases, the main emphasis was on traditional rites. In the one case, the brother's son, who was responsible for organizing the funeral, asked a priest to be present at the graveside to pray before the burial. Neither the deceased nor his brother's son were Christians, but the latter felt the presence of a priest gave the occasion greater dignity. Apart from this, all the traditional rites were carried out.

The other example is similar to the last case, except that the child of the deceased were baptized Christians and they requested that a priest be present to say prayers before the burial.

(c) Mourning (Cheuk fûk)

Mourning begins on the day of the funeral. Elaborate rules prevailed in China stipulating the type of dress to be worn and the periods of mourning, depending on the relationship to the deceased. In South Africa, most families decide on the period of mourning, which then applies for the whole family, with perhaps the exception of a widow or a son and his wife.

It is interesting to note that in South Africa, black is the colour of mourning whereas in China coarse white hemp cloth and the colours of blue and white signify mourning. In South Africa, colour symbolism appears to be reversed as brides wear white gowns, whereas black is now associated with death and many people object to wearing any black clothing if they are not mourning.

The people who are expected to mourn are the immediate family, including married daughters and their husbands, direct descendants, and collateral relatives. There is no obligation to mourn for a child. Some families mourn for a year, but many people mourn for 100 days or 49 days. In the example I quoted in Chapter 6 (see diagram 4), the difference in length of mourning was an indication of degree of closeness of kinship; sons and daughters-in-law mourned for 100 days but grandchildren and collateral descendants mourned for 49 days.

The custom of mourning also appears to vary with different families. Firstly, one's clothing is a visible sign of mourning. Men wear black ties and armbands on their jackets and women wear black clothes. In two cases the daughter's children were not required to wear black, although told to wear subdued colours and not red or pink (colours symbolising joy). The clothes (usually new) worn by the mourners[1] on the day of the funeral

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1. These are the mourners who are members of the family and chéu' fûk for a specified period of time, and not "mourners" in the sense that they were the distant relatives and friends who attended the funeral.

are paid for by the chief mourner. Secondly, mourning should imply some form of restriction on social activities. Strictly speaking, people in mourning should not attend any public entertainment or party. Most people in mourning also avoid visiting for fear that they might cast influences which are "not good" on people whom they visit. These restrictions must also be seen as a means of reinforcing mourning obligations to the deceased.

The family of the lately deceased are thought to be under the unfortunate influences of death which might affect others. Generally, the bereaved take care not to offend other people, but at the same time people are aware of the situation and then often, if an invitation is refused, hosts and hostesses who are not superstitious will explain that they do not fear evil influences and so the bereaved persons may attend if they so wish. On the other hand, if the hosts make no mention of the matter, it is clear that one's presence is not required.

Many people also maintain that they would not visit or attend a party on the same day as attending a funeral. On one occasion members of a family were not sure whether their presence at a birthday party for an elderly man would be appreciated, as they had to attend a funeral earlier in the day. However, the man's daughter-in-law suggested that perhaps those members of the family who had not attended the funeral could go to the party; in this way the family was represented at both occasions.

In practice, the extent of restraint from social activities varies not only with different families but with individuals. One family remained in mourning for the mother for an entire year without attending a single film show or party. Another took the restrictions far more lightly, and a month after the death of a paternal grandmother the grand-daughter was bridesmaid at a wedding

and her parents attended the dinner party. In another case, sisters of the same family reacted differently - one sister willingly attended a house party a few weeks after the death of a parent, while the other sister disapproved. It thus appears that the restraint from social activities will vary, but black clothing will be worn for the entire period. It seems mourning is not believed to have any direct effect on the welfare of the deceased and there do not appear to be any supernatural sanctions.

The conclusion of mourning (t'uet fūk) is also marked by a gathering of the family. Those who believe in traditional practices will carry out ancestral rites and generally both Christians and non-Christians will take flowers to the grave. The gathering takes place at the home of the chief-mourner. Traditionally the black clothes worn at mourning were burnt, but this is no longer done. The family have dinner together and there is also a distribution of red-packets. Girls in particular are told to wear brightly coloured clothes or even new dresses.

Many families in South Africa still have relatives, often immediate family, back in China. When a member of a family does overseas, the South African relatives will also assume mourning. If the deceased happens to be a parent, and the sons are in South Africa, they will usually send money back to China for the funeral expenses. Some families also get together for the beginning of mourning and again for the conclusion of the mourning period.

Some years ago many families sent money back to the villages to maintain their ancestral altars, but nowadays this is rarely done, as the Communist Government strongly discourages ancestor worship.

(d) Erection of a Tombstone.

It seems that several months are usually allowed to lapse after the burial before a tombstone is erected over the grave. Most tombstones are still inscribed in Chinese, with the name, district and village of origin, age of deceased and date of death. Sometimes the name and a few details as to dates of birth and death are also inscribed in English.

Some families choose an auspicious date for the erection of the tombstone. The period of ts'ing meng[1] is said to be a good time and a tombstone can be erected during this period without consulting an almanac.

(e) Analysis

Marriage and death are the two great ritual events in the life cycle of a Chinese. In comparison with descriptions (in literary sources) of death and funeral rites in China and also amongst some overseas Chinese such as in Singapore, the rites observed in Johannesburg are somewhat subdued and even simplified. Here, there are no Buddhist or Taoist priests to assist, nor are there funeral associations or loud bands as in Singapore. I have not witnessed any ritual wailing, although all funerals are marked by great sorrow and sometimes with particularly emotional scenes.

Death of a loved one brings sorrow, and dread for death itself, but, at the same time, a strong need is felt for proper rites to ensure the deceased's wellbeing and peace in the next life. This is the basic wish, whether the family is very traditional or Christian, but the courses of action and associated beliefs are, of

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1. See page 162.

course, very different. It is perhaps because the ultimate wish is not so different that it has been possible for some people to switch to Christian funeral rites in place of traditional ones. The important thing here seems to be that something must be done for the deceased and where alternative rituals have been observed, the accompanying beliefs can also be tenable.

At a death there is a definite emphasis on the obligations of kinsmen. As I discussed in Chapter 6, mourning duties fall along genealogical lines, and the rites also serve to define and create kinship solidarity. In most cases the responsibility of seeing to and paying for the funeral is readily accepted by the next of kin. To my knowledge, no Chinese in Johannesburg has had to suffer the indignity of not being accorded a proper funeral because if there are no immediate kinsmen, then inevitably people with lineal or clan ties become mobilised. A large number of people attending a funeral is thought to be a reflection of the esteem and respect accorded to the deceased; in Singapore, the funeral processions were swelled by hired mourners, but in this country the size of the crowd depends on the sense of obligation of relatives and friends.

Death is an adverse event with connotation of ill-fortune, and thus bereaved members of the family are also encompassed in this flow of bad luck. It is, therefore, essential to avoid ordinary social life and this is possibly one of the functions of the mourning period. Douglas (1966: 115 ff.) points out that people in interstitial positions are usually the most vulnerable to fears of pollution and thus it is interesting to see that, in particular, the newly wed, or couples about to be wed, must stay away from funerals. Similarly, those who had suffered bereavement were kept at a distance at wedding rites. In one case, the family mourned for only

one month as the deceased woman's daughter-in-law was about to give birth and elderly relatives decided that mourning should be terminated before the arrival of the baby.

The distribution of white and red-packets again seems to be an acknowledgement of one's presence at the funeral: white for mourning at the beginning of the funeral, but red, the auspicious colour, at the conclusion of the burial as though to neutralise one's association with the bad luck of death. Those who have attended a funeral also avoid taking home any reminders of the funeral which might pollute their home, thus the white and red-packets are not taken home.

In the beliefs connected with tombstones, we have an example of the concern for maintaining continuity if the family is successful. Thus, if a family is successful, the ancestors' graves must not be disturbed. This is probably related to the belief in geomancy.

(ii) COMMEMORATION OF ANCESTORS. (Personal and domestic memorialism at Graves and Altars)

In his book Lineage Organisation in South East China, Freedmam uses the word "memorialism", which he defines as rites "in which ancestors were cared for simply as forebears and independently of their status as ancestors of the agnates of the worshippers". (1958: 84) He thus draws a distinction between personal devotion on the one hand and rites of kinship solidarity, i.e. the bringing together of agnatic descendants, on the other. In his latest book Chinese Lineage and Society, Freedman (1966: 154) points out that the concept of memorialism needs deeper analysis especially in the light of the analysis of the cult of immediate jural superiors. However, he does stress that memorialism sometimes overlaps with ancestor worship and the criterion he originally had in mind in making the distinction was to note whether or not non-kinsmen were included on the altar. I find memorialism a useful term, and for lack of an alternative I would like to use it for certain rites carried out here in Johannesburg.

The most significant rite here is the taking of flowers to the graves of ancestors; I understand this is not a traditional rite. Some people go as frequently as once a week, others less often but most people go at least a few times in the year. (This is in addition to the visits prior to any particular celebration). Some people may go individually but most frequently an immediate family will go together. A casual visit is voluntary and thus there are no specified rules as to who should go. It is usual to buy some flowers, which may be bought beforehand or from the flowerseller[1] outside the cemetery.

The flowers are then distributed among certain graves. At

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1. This Coloured flower-seller is well acquainted with the fluctuating demands of the Chinese community and, for example, at Ts'ing Meng and Shui I, she greatly increases her supply of flowers.
She told me that during Easter and Christmas times the demand is also far greater than usual.

casual visits they are usually placed on the graves of deceased members of the family, whether a grandparent or a child, but they may also be laid on the graves of more distantly related persons and also friends. This is essentially an act of memorialism; it is a desire to remember certain deceased persons. The rite is carried out by a voluntary group of people and not necessarily defined by agnatic links.

When the visits occur before a special celebration it is usually thought necessary for the celebrants to take flowers personally and, on such occasions, each agnatic ancestor must be remembered. Some families are also particular in that flowers must be taken to the older ancestors first and then to the more recently deceased. This simply means going to the oldest cemeteries first.

It is interesting to note that at Easter and Christmas, it is the more recent graves, and also the children's section, which are covered in flowers while most of the older graves, especially those at Braamfontein[1] appear neglected. These non-Chinese festival dates obviously bring thoughts of deceased friends and loved ones, stirred by feelings of personal memorialism. During the Spring and Autumn festivals, which are clearly focussed on rites of kinship derived from the Chinese tradition, it will be seen that even amongst the oldest graves few will be without at least a few bunches of flowers.

(a) Cemeteries.

In Johannesburg there are three cemeteries in which Chinese have been buried. In each a separate section has been set aside, so that Chinese graves are not intermingled with those of other ethnic groups.

The oldest cemetery in which Chinese were buried is

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1. Cemeteries described in following section.



Plate 5. Grave of the taaf paak kung. This photograph was taken during the ts'ing meng festival.



Plate 6. Some of the Chinese graves at Braamfontein cemetery. The graves in the foreground are at right-angles to those in the background.

that in Braamfontein, and this bears many interesting vestiges of traditional beliefs. The first grave, dated 1889, is believed to contain the remains of the first Chinese to be buried in Johannesburg, and he is called the great ancestor (taai paak kung). Whenever people visit the cemetery, it is customary to place a few flowers at this grave. At the Spring and Autumn festivals all those who take flowers to their own ancestral graves also place a few flowers at the taai paak kung's grave, and so, on these occasions, there will be a big heap of flowers there. The explanation I have been given for this custom is that it is a sign of respect for him.

A large number of miners who came to South Africa as indentured labourers and died in this country are said to be buried in Braamfontein. At present this supposed area is a flat piece of ground immediately in front of the Chinese section, but there are no gravestones and it appears that no effort has been made to commeorate these dead miners. According to records, 3 192 miners died on the Rand. (Reeves: 189).

In Braamfontein there is another grave of particular interest. This is the grave of a twenty-four year old youth who died in 1907, and the account I was given of him is as follows: in that year, the Government attempted to pass a law whereby it would be compulsory for Indians and Chinese to carry passes. Under the leadership of Gandhi, the Indians and a section of the Chinese community held passive resistance campaigns. The Chinese leaders appealed to the community not to apply for the documents. This young man, however, went ahead and applied for the documents as he was employed by a hotel and he feared losing his job. When the community heard of it they expressed great indignation and the young man committed suicide. His tombstone, a rather elaborate one, was erected by the community and bears the inscription: "He died for conscience sake." At festivals a large

number of flowers are also placed on his gravestone as a token of respect for his action.

Some of the tombstones in the Chinese section at Braamfontein are badly neglected, and as the majority of them are made of cement they are not very strong and have not lasted very well. During the festivals in Spring and Autumn one may see a few flowers scattered at practically every grave, but during the rest of the year it is evident that less than half the graves are still cared for. The obvious possibility that the neglected graves are of people who have no direct descendants, has been mentioned to me. In recent years a number of tombstones have been wrecked by vandals. A few have been replaced with new tombstones. I asked one person why they did not replace the old, brittle cement ones with the new stronger ones made of granite or marble. I was told that if the descendants were doing well, the family would probably not want to replace or alter the grave in any way for fear that it would disturb the existing congenial condition of the family. My informant also believed that one of the wrecked gravestones had been replaced quickly, because that family had not been doing too well, and thus felt that this change might also bring about a change in their fortune.

The Chinese section at Braamfontein Cemetery also looks very haphazard. The plots are in regular rows, as most gravestones face West, but some face Eastwards. Furthermore, a few rows of graves are at right angles as the burials were made in the pathway. The explanation I was given for the irregularity of those facing different directions is that it might be due to <u>fung shui</u> (geomantic) practices. Municipal regulations made it impossible to choose a site and thus the only possible way of reconciling potentially adverse forces was to vary the direction of the burial and consequently to alter the direction of the gravestone.

The graves on the paths have another explanation. The next cemetery to be opened for the Chinese was in Brixton, where there is also a taaf paak kung, but when Brixton had no more available plots, people were reluctant to be the first to bury a relative in the newest cemetery in Newclare. The result was they went back to Braamfontein and filled in every possible vacant space there.

The objection to going to Newclare was that no-one wanted their relative to be the first one there. Relatives feared that this would bring bad-luck to living members of the same lineage and even of the same clan. It was said it would not be lei (of gain, interest); lei carries the connotation of good fortune which will penetrate all spheres of life. An informant clearly recalls that one man did not want his ortho-cousin to be the first to be buried in Newclare, commenting that there are so many people from his village who are in this country, thus implying that this action could affect a large number of people,[1] and therefore he did not like the idea. Eventually, in 1935, the first person was buried in Newclare, but apparently he was of mixed Chinese and European origin. It was only after a few people had been buried there that the community felt at ease to take their relatives there.

Fung Shui practices are not really possible in burials in South Africa but the associated ideas are certainly not forgotten. On one or two occasions I have heard of people pleading with authorities at the cemetery for other plots, and slight changes have been allowed, e.g. one person did not want his relative to be buried near a tap. I have

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1. Rites are often performed in the hope that they will set up a chain reaction of "good". It appears that in this case the fear is that by being the first to be buried in the cemetery, it could set up an undesirable reaction amongst the kinsmen.



Plate 7.
An ancestral altar.



Plate 8.
An ancestral altar.



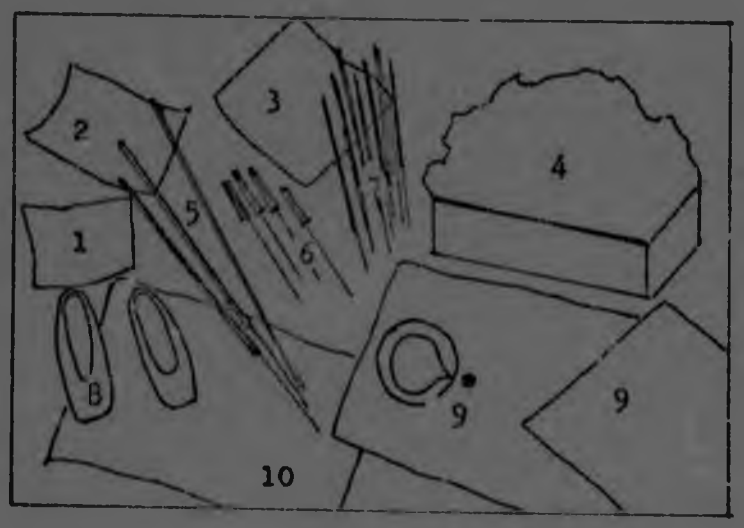
Plate 9. An ancestral altar.



Plate 10. The worship of ancestors at the anniversary of a death. This home had no permanent altar.



Plate 11. The ritual items used for ancestor worship.



1. mock money
2. mock money
3. mock money
4. "ingots"
5. joss sticks
6. candles
7. incense
8. shoes
9. set of paper clothes
10. the wrapping (not a ritual item)

also heard explanations that certain grave sites were good because of the colour of the soil.

(b) The Ancestral Altar.

The ancestral altar (shān chué t'oī)[1] in the household varies considerably in appearance and size. As a rule it is used to accommodate both deities and ancestors but, nowadays, there are small altars which tend to be for ancestors only.

A large altar is a specially constructed piece of furniture (See plate 7). The picture on the left upper section is of the three hero-gods, the picture shows Kuan Ti with Liu Pei and Chang Fei standing behind him; this is a particularly popular trio. Kuan Ti, the God of War, was originally a kind of Robin Hood figure. Kuan, Chang and Liu are known as the Three Brothers of the Peach Orchard (the place where they swore friendship) and are renowned for their exploits in upholding justice. (Christie: 112) On the right side of the upper section of the altar is mention of all the Ho ancestors (Ho being the clan name of this particular family). The little strip of red paper on the bottom corner of the frame bears the name of the owner's recently deceased wife. The centre panel of red paper on the lower section is for all the spirits in the vicinity of the house and the two small strips on either side are for the deceased, unmarried children of the owner. The two panels hanging on the sides of the altar are poems expressing good and prosperity. The picture on the side of the altar is of Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, another very popular deity. The shelves at the side hold the paraphenalia for ancestor worship and the kaffir-pot is used for burning items.

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1. In more recent years, in China, the Communist regime has strongly discouraged ancestor worship and made it increasingly more difficult to carry out the rites by making ritual items extremely costly. In some cases ancestral tablets are said to have been destroyed. Prior to this, most Chinese families in Johannesburg sent money back to China specifically for the upkeep of the ancestral altar in their original homes, but it seems this is seldom done now.

Simpler forms of the altar are seen in Plates 8 and 9. Plate 8 shows a picture of Kuan, Chang and Liu and a piece of red paper bearing the names of ancestors. The shelf on the wall holds the containers for burning incense and items offered to the ancestors. In Plate 9, the sideboard is conveniently placed below a portrait of an agnatic ancestor while the framed piece of red paper mentions other ancestors. The surface of the sideboard is used for ritual items.

An ancestral altar can, therefore, either be a prominent part of the home as it is usually in the living room or it can simply be an inconspicuous shelf in the corner of the room; it can also just be a photograph conveniently hung above a cupboard, sideboard or small table.

The first altar described conforms to the principles as in China. Unmarried children may only have a plaque on the lower portion of the altar; referred to as being "on the ground". It is apparently an insult to tell someone that they may not "ascend" (sheung) the ancestral altar. Unmarried women could not have their ancestral tablets on the altar in their father's home and it appears that in the villages in China they were not even permitted to die in their father's home, but this belief does not appear to be of concern to the people in Johannesburg.

If a house has an altar, the daily rites carried out consist of lighting incense sticks and placing them in the incense holder on the altar. In the case of the larger altar, three incense sticks are lit and placed in position as seen in the photograph. In some homes, one or more incense sticks are lit and placed outside in the yard. The family will place some food items on the altar and also any special delicacy the family may be enjoying.

On the whole, the daily lighting of incense is carried

out by the womenfolk, usually the wife but more particularly a mother if there is a member of the senior generation living in the house. The men may help out and sometimes children are instructed to do so. In at least one case that came to my notice the family was too busy and so the maid was told to light the incense.

If a household has no altar, then on special occasions (such as weddings, birthdays or other celebrations), ancestor worship (paai tsó sin) still takes place, but in the yard (see Plate 10). If there is an altar the rites would obviously be performed at the altar but the more smokey task of burning mock money would probably be done outside. On such occasions the ritual items include: three joss sticks, two bundles of incense sticks, and two (or two pairs) of candles (red wax on a bamboo stick). The square sheets of paper have gold and silver printing on them and thus represent gold and silver (mock money). Sometimes some of the papers are individually folded into the shape of a tube, possibly representing ingots; one informant told me that she folded the paper because it looks better and, whenever one gives a present, one likes it to look nice (see Plate 11). Paper clothes (including shoes) are usually only burnt on the anniversary of a death.

When food is laid out for offering to the ancestors, the tray is usually set for three places - thus three rice bowls, three pairs of chopsticks, three glasses and three tea cups: not many people are able to explain this. However, one person told me that of the three places, one is for t'in (heaven), one for tei (earth), and one for tsz kei (oneself): in this case the informant was referring to tsz kei as the ancestor but it seems quite evident that the third place represents man in the triad of heaven, earth and man.

Once the tray of food is ready and the candles, joss

sticks and incense are lit, the person carrying out the rites, usually one of the women, will lift each of the dishes of food, but nothing is actually served. The glasses of alcohol (usually whiskey or brandy) and cups of tea are poured out as libation and each cup is poured out three times. In the meantime, members of the family should make their obeisances to the ancestors by standing in front of the altar or temporary altar, clasping their hands together and waving their hands up and down and bowing three times. Sometimes senior male members go forward to make obeisances, but others leave it entirely to the women. Children are often rounded up and instructed to make their obeisances.

The foods offered on these occasions are a few of the dishes which have been prepared for the dinner. Immediately after the rites, the food is replaced with the remainder of the food to be served and consumed without special significance being attached to it. None of my informants actually mentioned the idea of communion with the ancestors through consuming the same food.

In China it appears that the inheriting of the ancestral altar may determine the apportioning of the inheritance as well as jural authority (Freedman 1964: 94). In Johannesburg, some of the larger altars were set up when families arrived from China or, in other cases, the red plaques were first put up at the death of a father, mother, husband or wife. Where a son and his wife and children live in the same household as his parents the likelihood was that the daughter-in-law continued the ancestral rites as before. Nowadays, fewer people are interested in the regular maintenance of an ancestral altar. One family I know took the opportunity to abandon the altar when they moved to a new house.

There are no ancestral temples in Johannesburg and

thus there is no question of transferring the ancestral plaques from the domestic shrine to another place. In any case sufficient time has probably not elapsed as, at the most, two or three generations are represented on the altar. (Freedman (1958: 82), suggested that ancestral tablets were removed to the ancestral hall after three to five generations). There are a few known cases where members of a family have specially travelled to Hong Kong to have the ancestral tablet of a deceased relative installed at one of the Buddhist temples(1).

From my information, then, it does not appear that in Johannesburg the inheritance of the altar is the focus and symbol of ancestral influence. When necessary, ancestral worship can take place without an altar.

There were also a few people in the sample who, although raised in China and belonging to the first generation of emigrants, were sceptical of the belief in the after-life. One elderly gentleman instructed his family not to set-up an altar for him as he did not believe in the after-life and always jokingly added that he would resent having to sit in one place, i.e. the altar, thereafter.

(c) The Anniversary of the Death of an Ancestor.

This rite is called kei nîm, "to hold in remembrance". Most of the families which I studied observed the anniversary of the death of at least one ancestor and, in some cases, of both the paternal father and mother, and grandfather and grandmother. In all cases the ancestors commemorated appear to be known personally to at least the older

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1. These temples provide for worship of all those whose ancestral tablets are installed there.

generation of the family. In one case, the ancestors were parents who had died in China and thus were only known to the first generation emigrants to Johannesburg.

If the commemorated ancestor is buried in Johannesburg then it is necessary to take flowers to the grave, either before or on the day of the commemoration, which usually falls on the anniversary of the death. This rite serves to define the agnatic descendants of a particular ancestor. Each nuclear family is expected to take flowers; in some cases, where the numbers of all the descendants are not too large, the may go together, or each nuclear family may go independently. If one person or family is unable to go, it is quite acceptable for that person to ask another to do it and simply to repay the amount involved for purchasing his share of flowers.

The anniversary of a death is commemorated by a dinner for all agnatic descendants and their spouses. Some families are very insistent that all descendants, including married daughters and their families, should be present for the dinner. Before the dinner rites of ancestor worship are carried out. The only difference from the ancestor worship which takes place at other celebrations is that a set of paper clothes is burnt at the same time as the mock money.

(d) Annual Festivals of Ancestor Worship.

In addition to the "personal" commemorations of particular deceased relatives such as the anniversaries of their deaths, the dates of which are, of course, different for different groups of kinsmen, the Chinese in Johannesburg also observe certain calendrical festivals which are common to all Chinese. These are the Spring and Autumn festivals, and the New Year while other festivals, such

as the Dragon Boat festival, and the Moon festival, are not unknown but seldom observed here.

The Ts'ing Meng (Haang Ts'ing) and Shui I Festivals.

Traditionally in the Spring and Autumn the people in the villages in China carried out rituals for their ancestors and these were generally observed as communal occasions by lineage groups. It appears that the ancestral halls (t'sz t'ong) were the foci of activity and a means of defining the participating group, since members of a particular t'sz t'ong usually observed the rites at the same time. In Johannesburg today, t'ong membership is still a way of remembering one's lineage ties.

A popular explanation of the Spring festival (ts'ing meng) is that the ancestral spirits live in a world similar to our own (presumably in terms of daily material and social needs) and the gates of the underworld are closed and guarded by deities. At ts'ing meng, the gates are opened and so, in China, when the living descendants went to the graveside they invited the ancestors home for the duration of ts'ing meng which was approximately one month. In the household, food was placed on the ancestral altar at each meal time for the ancestors. At this time there were also fears that unwelcomed spirits might enter the homes and so branches of willow are hung outside the homes to ward off unwelcomed ghosts.

People in Johannesburg still recall the festive air in the villages at the time of ts'ing meng. The men and boys made a pilgrimage, sometimes requiring a journey of up to three or four hours, to reach the graves which were then tended and offerings made to the ancestral spirits. Young boys, in particular, looked forward to this outing. On their return there was a communal meal at the t'sz t'ong and pork was distributed to each family unit. The women remained at home. Today, many people still remember their

lineage or sub-lineage by recalling "we shared the same pork".

In China there was an autumn festival known to my informants as shiu i which was also an occasion for the remembering of ancestors. The men would gather at the ancestral hall for burning incense, mock money and paper clothes for the ancestors' use. On this occasion they did not visit the ancestral graves.

In Johannesburg, ts'ing meng[1] and shiu i[2] are still observed, and the period during which these rites take place is still in accordance with the dates set out in the Chinese calendar. It is interesting to note that the dates set out in the Chinese calendar are for seasons in the northern hemisphere which do not coincide with the seasonal changes in South Africa. In this country, the traditional ts'ing meng is still observed around March/April, which is in fact autumn. Similarly, shui i, the autumn festival, takes place in the South African spring.

There is general consensus that the extent of participation at these festivals is on the decline in Johannesburg. One person complained that in the "old days" they would require at least ten cars to transport the people on their outings to distribute the flowers at the cemeteries, but today only five cars are sufficient. On the whole, the groups are organised on a clan name basis irrespective of the lineage to which they belong. Each year, the organisers are appointed for the following year but this is not done on a very formal basis: in the case of one of the smaller clans, the duties seem to fall regularly on the most willing and capable. In the case

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1. ts'ing meng means "bright and clear".
2. shiu i means "burn clothes".

of one of the largest clans here, each year the members originating from a different village (i.e. lineage) appoint organisers from their own number. It is the organisers duty to take care of the finances, to decide on the exact day for observing the festival (i.e. one day during the period of ts'ing meng which extends over a month), and then to ensure that the information is publicised by putting up posters in Chinatown and perhaps also an insertion in the Chinese newspaper. The smaller groups may telephone all the people concerned. The organisers must also decide on a venue and catering for the dinner, and it is usually also their duty to see to the purchasing of flowers. (Flowers seem to be a modern idea as flowers were not distributed in China). Each person who participates also contributes towards the expenses involved. Among my informants was one local lineage, i.e. all members of the same village, who for many years broke away from the rest of the people of the same clan name and observed these festivals independently; this was decided upon because it was a group particularly strong in terms of people and finances. In more recent years, however, this splinter group has rejoined the rest of the clan, mainly because of the decline in interest of its members.

On the appointed date for both ts'ing meng and shiu i usually the men (but in some cases now the women also participate), assemble in Chinatown at the arranged time and then they drive together to the various cemeteries where they distribute flowers to every grave bearing their clan name. In this country there is no need for actually tending the tombs, as the cemeteries are cared for by the municipality. In the evening they assemble at a restaurant for dinner. Some clans now include the womenfolk for the dinner, but others still keep the occasion for men only. One person said that in their clan some people only accompanied the group to distribute flowers while others only attended the dinner.

Some people observed both ts'ing meng and shiu i but simply take flowers on their own and do not join in the group observances. In another case, two brothers would take flowers and they and their families would then have dinner together.

New Year

Traditionally the Chinese used a lunar calendar but modern South Africa uses the Gregorian one; thus the Chinese in this country can observe two new year celebrations. The lunar new year occurs in late January or some time in February. It seems that few families actively celebrate both new years and the tendency seems to be to celebrate the Gregorian new year.

In the households I know, the families stay up until midnight to welcome the new year with burning of fireworks and firecrackers. The homes with ancestral altars light incense and joss sticks, and the new year begins with the offering of chocolates or something sweet to each member of the family. Some homes paste strips of red paper with verses expressing good wishes, on the wall. Most families like all members of the family to be at home at midnight at the "passing of the year" and so, often when young members of the family are away at parties, they still return home to see the new year in. This is one of the reasons often given why no large scale ball is ever organised on new year's eve by the Chinese community in Johannesburg.

The following illustrates two ways in which the new year is celebrated. In the one household there is always a special dinner on New Year's Eve and the dishes include chicken, roast pork, an edible algae (faat ts'oi) (sounds similar to faat ts'oi, meaning to get rich), and lettuce (shaang ts'oi) - shaang means life, living, ts'oi means

a vegetable, and also wealth)[1]. In the second household, there was less emphasis on the New Year's Eve dinner. However, refreshments served after midnight contained the symbolic items. This family always had fried noodles (ch'aaú min), noodles being symbolic of long life, and a rice soup with lettuce. This family also had a box of chocolates which was offered to every member of the family. Both families ensured that there was fruit (shaang kwóh) (meaning "life" and "fruit") in the house. The first household had an ancestral altar and so lit incense etc. at midnight but the second household did not carry out any ancestral rites.

If there are married sons in the household the daughters-in-law may be expected to serve tea to their parents-in-law. This rite consists of serving Chinese tea and offering sweetmeats and, traditionally, the women had to perform this duty on their knees (as at a wedding), but today most women serve tea standing. In return the women are given a red-packet each. Children are also given red-packets, either by their grandparents or parents.

The lunar New Year seems to be of far less significance and there are young people who are no longer aware of this date except perhaps being reminded by a report in the English language newspapers. In the last few years there has been an attempt to revive the celebrations of the Chinese New Year and, for example, there have been performances of the Dragon Dance[2] for the occasion.

Other Traditional Festivals.

The traditional festivals observed in Johannesburg

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1. For explanation on homonyms and symbolism, see page 124
2. The Dragon is a symbol of beneficence.

are very few indeed as compared with the very many that are recorded for rural China. Birthdays of Deities which were celebrated in temples are not celebrated in Johannesburg, but certain rites which are observed in the homes on festive dates are still carried out by some people. Two of my informants maintained that they observed the Moon Festival (1) on the 15th August. They usually had special foods such as roast pork and chicken for dinner and lit incense on the altar and worshipped (paai) the ancestors. Another informant said that, in the past, she would also light incense outside the house to paai the moon, but since her family moved home they no longer have an altar and no longer observed these rites. At the time of the Moon Festival the Chinese restaurants make the special "Moon Cakes" and some families still observe the custom whereby children give a gift of Moon Cakes to their parents and parents-in-law if they are married. One informant said, he, like most people, no longer observed the festivals but always bought the special foods sold for the occasion. Besides the Moon Cakes, glutinous rice, wrapped in leaves is sold at the time of the Dragon Boat Festival(2), but I do not know anyone who observes this.

Most of my informants who have lived in China recall celebrating festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival, Ch'at Tze Mui (for young girls) and the Lantern Festival, but they agree that these festivals are now seldom, if ever observed in Johannesburg.

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1. Moon Festival - a celebration of the full moon and also the harvest time.
2. It is said that during the Chou dynasty, a virtuous statesman was wrongly accused of corruption and in protest he drowned himself. The people who admired him greatly set out in boats to search for him and the Dragon Boats commemorate this incident. Rice wrapped in leaves was sent down to the bottom of the river for the drowned statesman, and so this food is specially made for this occasion.

Analysis

In China, there are two distinct kinds of worshipped ancestors: domestic and extra-domestic (Freedman 1970: 164), the foci for worship being (i) the ancestral altar and possibly other deities in the home, and (ii) the ancestral hall.

In Johannesburg, ancestral worship certainly continues but there is no uniformity as to the extent to which ancestors are still revered. The appearance and size of altars varies but the non-existence of an altar does not necessarily imply that the family do not worship ancestors. Furthermore, the taking of flowers to the graves has become incorporated as an aspect of ancestor rites as there are defined occasions when flowers must be taken. In his study of the Singapore Chinese, Freedman states that the survival of the domestic cult is largely in the hands of women and this is very much the case in Johannesburg. Freedman and Topley (1961), in their study of the Singapore Chinese, suggest that there, also, the individual household usually emerges as the only regular unit for ancestor worship.

Structural-functional studies stress that ancestor worship both expresses and creates kinship solidarity. Schienfeld (1960) goes further to say that the cult of ancestors is a symbolic way of affirming rights and obligations accruing to one through descent. Schienfeld also states that it is important to remember that among the Chinese the kinship group was the only real source of security for the individual, and from the family he received land and other resources and the benefits of family power and prestige. Expulsion from a village was regarded as an extreme form of punishment.

Scheinfeld (idem: 13) states that the three functions

of ancestor worship are: (1) to relieve personal anxiety and misfortune; (2) symbolically to affirm status; and (3) coercively to enforce status. The first two functions are still relevant for the Chinese in Johannesburg, but the third is tenuous as there are no longer the traditional sanctions to enforce obedience and I think that there is a recognition of change and of the need for a more relaxed relationship between father and son and other members of the family. The symbolic affirmation of status seems to take place at times of celebration and essentially on occasions which mark the beginning of a new phase in life, for example, the serving of tea to parents or parents-in-law which takes place at a marriage, at new year and on a parent's birthday. On each of these occasions ancestor rites must also be performed. However, the affirmation of status here is certainly not as rigid as in China where important rites were performed by men only and religious activities reflected the difference in social roles of men and women.

It may already be evident that rites are carried out with the object of ensuring "good" and thus relieving personal anxiety. This is discussed in greater detail in Appendix 1.

The rites on the anniversary of a death and at death itself specifically bring together an agnatic group defined by the ancestor commemorated. The function of these rites is mainly social, except that the financial burden falls on the the person who assumes the responsibility for seeing that the rituals are carried out. Traditionally, a person's rights and privileges were determined by his position on the hierarchy of kinsmen and, furthermore, this was reinforced by religious and economic factors. Today the individual is not so dependent on the family and so, even though rites are performed, they no longer serve to define rights and duties. Many young people are not altogether aware of the

significance of traditional rites, and if they are Christians these rites may be of no significance to them. Amongst some families traditional rites only become significant at crises of life, and sometimes young people only attend at the insistence of older people.

Freedman (1970: 164) points out that whereas the domestic cult may be universal among Chinese, the extra-domestic cult that centred on the lineage ancestors cannot be universal, for lineages are not found everywhere in China. Lineage organisation certainly existed in the villages from which theSouth African Cantonese people have come but not the localised lineages as found in some other parts of South Eastern China where a lineage coincided with members residing in one village. The cluster of villages[1] from which the South African Cantonese have come are mostly of more than one clan name, but it seems that the members of each clan name group tended to cluster together in a particular part of the village and that they would certainly recognise their common descent. Thus they were of a lineage or sublineage focussed on its own ancestral hall. Some such groups, however, were not able to build their own ancestral halls. A few villages were dominated by one lineage; one such village had two ancestral halls, thus recognising two founding ancestors, said to be brothers. The members of the one sub-lineage again recognised two fōng, i.e. descent lines. These are still important ways of reckoning closeness of relationship here in Johannesburg.

In Johannesburg the ts'ing meng and shiu i participation

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1. I have no doubt that thorough research into this aspect amongst the Chinese here would reveal very interesting material, but since my interest is in the domestic cult, I have no more than touched on the surface. Apart from day to day occurrences, many people here can still recall incidences of conflict and problems of village life in China.

is based on a common clan name, except for the sublineage which hived off for some years. Traditionally in China activities centred on the ancestral hall (except the ts'ing meng visit to the graves) but, as there are no ancestral halls in Johannesburg, the joint participation of a number of lineages for the rites presents no difficulties in this respect. The main activities are the distributing of flowers to the graves and the communal meal in the evening.

It is clear that there is a waning interest in activities of the wider kin group, that is the extra-domestic rites. It is also important to take into account that the older people who were brought up in China are aware of their membership in a particular lineage or sub-lineage for they can recall their activities focussed on particular ancestral halls and this indeed provided an important stamp in their memories of common membership. Those who have been born in South Africa have no personal experience of corporate group activities defined along those descent lines, and mainly know about their membership only from what they have been told and from their participation in the rites which take place here. But, as I have described, festivals which were traditionally lineage affairs in China now include here today, a wider group based on a common clan name and moreover many people do not attend at all. On a number of occasions I questioned younger people about their village of origin and lineage in seeking explanations for groups attending ts'ing meng, and on most occasions they had to clarify the facts by asking their parents. Most people know their clan name, but one young man did not know whether he was Hakka or Cantonese-speaking! I think, though, that this is an exceptional case.

CHAPTER 6. THE NORMS OF KINSHIP IN RITUAL ACTIVITIES

In the traditional situation, kinship played a very significant rôle in determining one's rights and obligations whether they were of a social, economic or religious nature. In my description of rites and ceremonies in Johannesburg, I constantly use the terms "relatives", "close relatives" and "kinsmen", since it would be too cumbersome to explain on each occasion the actual, detailed relationships of the actual persons involved; this chapter will be an attempt to clarify these concepts. In this study, my focus has been on various ritual and ceremonial activities, but it soon became evident that kinship ties played a significant rôle in the recruitment of people for the various occasions. There is an awareness of the significance of kinship ties, but empirically, the people who constitute "relatives" do not appear to be of the same genealogical degree. Put generally, one could say that the principles of the traditional kinship system are common to all Chinese in Johannesburg, but the radius of the group for potential mobilisation in each case is not constant, and so what is done in practice does not always coincide with the ideal.

First of all, it seems that having kinsmen is important, or conversely, no-one can be without kinsmen (refer to third point). Secondly, recognition of kinsmen implies specific rights and obligations. Thirdly, conditions and the range of kinsmen present is not the same as in traditional circumstances, for example, one's immediate kin may be in China and one's closest local kin may only be members of the same sublineage or maternal kinsmen. Then, one's close kin may live some distance away and not in close proximity as the case would have been in the village. At the same time, marriage does not necessarily mean that a daughter has to move a great distance away. Often a very close relationship is maintained between a married daughter and her family of origin and they may visit each other very regularly. Therefore, the effective circle of relatives in Johannesburg seems to be a flexible but a practical one, and people have explained to me that "we regard them as

relatives because they are our "closest" kinsmen in this city (or country)". Freedman (1957: 87), writing on the Chinese in Singapore, found that the significance of kinship was not the same as in China, and similarly, Elliot (1955: 19) says that "the kinship system was something that belonged to the ancestral soil and could not be transplanted".

In the study of kinship in a Western, urban environment, Firth (1956: 21) writes that :-

> "... among the correlates of the varying recognition and maintenance of kin ties would appear to be the following :
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> residential accessibility; common economic interests, as in occupation, or in property-holding; composition of household; composition of elementary family, especially as regards that of the sibling group; the biological range of persons available for kin recognition; the existence of key personalities in the kin field, to take the initiative in kin contacts; and the phase of development in which any given family finds itself Through these combinations of circumstances runs the element of personal selection, leading again to the question of what regularities can be discerned".

These factors and circumstances mentioned by Firth also need consideration in the observation of kinship ties and obligations amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg. There is a definite awareness and emphasis on the system of patrilineal descent and genealogical knowledge is important in determining the assembly of a group of people for a particular occasion. Personal selectivity may play an important part, and this seems particularly the case in non-traditional celebrations, e.g. birthday of young people (refer to p. 71) where, in the extreme case, guests were only from the peer group and relatives were excluded.

In Firth's study of kinship in East London, a number of categories in distinguishing kinsmen are defined, based on the use of either genealogical relationships or personal selectivity. It will be useful to look at these categories because they do help to pinpoint some important factors in determining the effective network of kinsmen on a specific occasion. First, Firth distinguishes between <u>recognised</u> and <u>nominated</u> kin, "the former category is made up of all persons who are recognised by the

informant as related to him by consanguinity or affinity, whether by name or not. The latter category refers to kin whose names are specifically known". (op. cit: 42) Amongst the Chinese, knowing a name does not appear to be of critical importance; in the tracing of ancestors I was told that memorising the names was not important because they were to be found on the ancestral tablets in the ancestral halls, and in the case of living senior members of the family, it is of greater importance to know the term of address. According to Chinese custom, anyone older than oneself must be addressed by an appropriate term of address. In the case of a daughter-in-law, she should address all her affines, including her husband's younger siblings by a kinship term and at the marriage rites, such as ying ta'an and serving-tea, the new couple are repeatedly told how to address new affinal kinsmen. Since the normal manner of greeting a person is by addressing him/her by the kinship term of address, this in itself implies recognition of kinship. I have heard young people being reproached for not knowing how to address someone, and on one occasion a young man was reproached for not using the correct term because this implied he did not know who were his relatives.

Parents, particularly mothers, spend a great deal of time coaching their children into using correct kin-terms when visiting or meeting someone. My son is now two years old and I find myself in this situation: I instruct him to kiu (call a person) by the correct kin-term although he cannot yet say many of these words. Older people are always very pleased at this gesture and at the same time, of course, it is a reflection on my knowledge of kin terms.

The following case highlights, firstly, the importance of the use of kinship terms of address for recognised relatives, and secondly, the significance of a celebration with the presence of kinsmen to give social sanction to a particular event. Some years ago, a widowed Chinese from South Africa re-visited his native village in China after a long absence and during his stay he apparently acquired the services of a woman from a neighbouring village to carry out the housekeeping duties. On his return to

South Africa, he asked the woman to remain in order to take care of the house. The foremost concern in the care of a house was usually the maintenance of the ancestral altar. Soon after the old man returned to South Africa, the woman complained that those who were genealogically related to the old man did not treat her with due respect; she implied that as the old man's wife, she should at least be addressed by relevant kinship terms. The old man denied her claims and other kinsmen returning from visits to the home village argued that: "If a party had been given, then we would recognise her as his second wife, but the old man did not give any such celebration while he was there, so how are we to know that he really intended her to be his wife?".

The terms of address for elder siblings and relatives of the same age group are still used, but amongst many of the young people, particularly those who speak more English than Chinese, there is a tendency to use first names. In some cases, English names are used when conversing in English and kinship terms when conversing in Chinese.

Sometimes kinship terms are extended to unrelated persons as an indication of respect or great regard for the relationship, e.g. the children of two women who came from China together became very great friends and their children were taught to address each other as children of siblings.

Firth divides the nominated kin into effective and non-effective kin. "By effective kin is meant all kin with whom some social contact is maintained, as by correspondence, occasional visits or attendance at family ceremonial " (op. cit 34). Effective kin are then divided into peripheral and intimate kin. With "... the latter social contact is purposeful, close and frequent. With the former, it is distant, accidental or sporadic " (op. cit. 45). Amongst the Cantonese here too, the effective kin can be defined and sub-divided in the same way. The definition of non-effective kin would depend, firstly, on the range of available genealogical kin and the boundary delineating the effective network for particular occasions, and, circumstances and closer contact could

lead to the greater importance of personal selectivity. Secondly, a relationship which would otherwise fall within the selected core of the effective network would be non-effective if there had been a purposeful break in the relationship for some reason.

The continued recognition of kinship obligations and the occasional gathering of kinsmen would undoubtedly help to reinforce the awareness of kin ties, and, as I have pointed out, the people are aware that a celebration still serves an important function in establishing the social recognition of an event. Once I heard an orphan being advised always to attend celebrations so that he would know who his relatives were. Regular contact may depend on factors such as proximity or "selectivity on a basis of emotional attachment rather than the basis of close relationship" (op. cit. 44), as suggested by Firth. However, on any occasion of social significance even peripheral kin, or kin who may otherwise be termed "non-effective" might be offended if not invited. One often hears discontent expressed: "why should I invite them as I never see them?" and also "We are relatives and yet friends are invited and we are not".

In mourning the death of a person genealogical relationships are clearly traced. A large group of mourners, indicating a large group of descendants, would be looked upon as prestigeful. However, on such an occasion a person with no actual genealogical relationship would neither be asked to assume mourning nor is it likely that anyone would make a personal request to assume mourning. The reason for this is obvious: death is undesirable and even thought to be polluting, thus one does not deliberately and unnecessarily associate oneself with death anymore than one would request someone else to do so. (On one occasion I heard of a pseudo-son complaining that he had not been provided with a black armband to mourn the death of his pseudo-father, but his complaints appeared to have been ignored). The people who actually mourn the deceased are people of close genealogical relationship. On the one hand, there are kinsmen beyond this range of social distance who would probably be expected to attend the funeral and, on the other hand, they may have a personal feeling of obligation to do so. There

may be reasons why certain persons would not attend, e.g. on one occasion the parents of a newly wedded couple felt that the young couple should not attend the funeral of a contemporary of their own sublineage because it was a week after their own marriage and it was feared it could have an ill effect on them. On other occasions where a family feels obliged to attend a funeral but has also been invited to a happy celebration on the same date, it is a common practice for some members of the family to attend the funeral and others the celebration, and so the family is represented at both events.

On happy occasions, there is a greater flexibility in recruiting people for the various rites and celebrations. Invitations and attendence are expressions of recognition of a kinship tie, or may be an honour accorded to a person whose genealogical relationship is more distant. In practice the recruiting of persons for such occasions depends on a number of factors: Firstly, the actual availability of a range of people linked by genealogical ties, as some kinsmen may live overseas, or even if in South Africa, they may be some great distances away. In the latter case some relatives may make a special effort to be present, but even then they may not always be able to stay long enough to attend all the rites and ceremonies, and furthermore, some relatives may just not be able to attend at all. Secondly, there may be a large number of genealogically related persons and, for practical reasons, it may be necessary to limit the number of relatives required for particular rites. In this case, distance of the genealogical relationship and generation may be important criteria for selection. Thirdly, one may not have many kinsmen and yet it seems that social recognition of particular events requires the presence of a reasonable number of people. Fourthly, there are also all the reasons mentioned by Firth which gives greater possibility for personal selectivity (mentioned earlier in this chapter).

The following example of a particular family indicates how the boundary delineating the network of effective kinsmen has retracted gradually over the last twenty years, during which the original nuclear family of parents and six sons has greatly

increased in numbers. Originally, the head of this family (I shall refer to him as Mr L.A.) had as his only traceable relatives, patrilateral, parallel cousins and their spouses and children. Mr L.A.'s clan name was represented by three other unrelated families (referred to as Mr L.B., L.C. etc.) and these latter families were always considered as "relatives" and included in celebrations of any kind. Furthermore, although not related by genealogical ties, the children and spouses of Mr. L.A.'s, Mr L.B.'s, Mr L.C.'s families addressed each other by kinship terms as siblings. In the intervening years the children and even many of the grandchildren of all families concerned have married and now have families of their own. The original circle of around thirty persons is now represented by close to one hundred persons. At the recent marriage of one of the grandsons of Mr. L.A. where apparently it was decided to have a small celebration, none of the above mentioned, unrelated families were invited. In earlier years on the celebration of Mr. L.A.'s birthday all the fellow clansmen's families were invited, but in the past few years, the guests have only included all the genealogically traceable relatives of Mr. L.A. and of the unrelated clansmen, only those of the generation of Mr. L.A.'s sons and not the younger generation. There was an exception for a few years when residential proximity appears to have been the deciding factor: One of the daughters of Mr. L.B. live near by to some of Mr. L.A.'s sons, and with closer contact, the children of this family were invited to the celebrations although the other grandchild of Mr. L.B. was excluded. However, since this family moved away the younger generation have no longer been invited.

Empirical Data

The following diagrams and descriptions show the network of genealogical relationships which provide the range of relatives for recruitment as actually observed by the writer. Each diagram illustrates the effective network which was mobilised on a specific occasion.

Example I (refer to diagrams following p. 182).

This network of relatives lived partly in Johannesburg, partly in a small town 150 miles away from Johannesburg, and partly overseas. The overseas members never having been to South Africa. The events took place during a period of approximately ten years.

A emigrated to South Africa more than thirty years ago, his four children came too but his wife died in China. The eldest son (F) and his family live in the same town as his father; but the second son (G) decided to move elsewhere soon after his marriage and this caused considerable unhappiness as his father was then quite sickly and wanted him to stay close by. The two daughters moved to Johannesburg after their marriages as their respective husbands had established businesses there.

B (A's now deceased brother) had married before leaving China but his wife and child did not accompany him to South Africa. B subsequently married a non-Chinese (2) in South Africa, she is now deceased. There is very little contact between the children of this marriage and the other relatives, in fact, they do not associate much with Chinese.

C also emigrated to South Africa more than thirty years ago and after a few years his wife and family joined him in Johannesburg. It should be noted that his wife was A's sister.

C's brother, D, was in South Africa for more than ten years before he went back to China in search of a wife. They married in China, and had a son, O, before returning to South Africa but she died a few years later. Although O is of N's generation, he is closer in age to N's children.

A's other sister's husband, E, and family have always lived in China.

(i) Marriage of G (see diagram 1)

G's marriage celebrations (1964) were complicated by the fact that his father who lived at some distance away from Johannesburg was ill and unable to travel, while more of G's other kinsmen and also his bride and her relatives lived in Johannesburg. The bride's family requested that a combined celebration be held in Johannesburg, but G's father's family, with the support of the wives of M and N, were determined that G should attend at least part of the proceedings. *Yin ts'an* was held at the bride's home in Johannesburg, but for convenience of the greatest number of the groom's relatives a gathering of relatives for lunch beforehand and for a tea-party afterwards was held at the home of N. After this those who were making the long journey to G's father's town (150 miles away) set out for the dinner celebration that was to be held there. As for the bride's relatives, they held a small gathering of their own close relatives in their own home to celebrate the occasion.

For these reasons, *yin ts'an* (held in Johannesburg) did not include the groom's father. The children of B by his second marriage who lived in the same town as G's father also did not attend *yin ts'an*, though they did go to the dinner celebration. G's elder brother and his wife and children, however, did make the journey to Johannesburg to take part in *yin ts'an*, together with the other close relatives indicated on the diagram by underlining: namely, G's other siblings, their spouses and children and G's father's sister's children and their spouses and children. In other words, the "close relatives" involved in this part of the traditional rites can all be shown to have genealogical links with G through common descent from X, G's grandfather long since deceased in China. It is to be noted that the genealogical links concerned are not exclusively agnatic, but that daughter's children (and even daughter's spouses) are included. With the exception of the children of B by his second marriage, already referred to, the only absentees from the total of descendants of X were those who were physically unable to be present (either because of sickness, or because they were not in South Africa at all).

As far as decisions and general organisation of the celebrations were concerned the most important persons were women: the wife of

F taking the most responsibility, but in close consultation with the wives of M and N (at the Johannesburg end). G's own sisters did not appear to have much influence, a fact which seemed mainly to be due to personality factors as neither of them expressed any strong opinions about the occasion at all.

The bestman and groomsman were G's brother's wife's brother and his father's sister's daughter's son. No other unmarried male relatives would have been old enough. The bridesmaids were, first, the daughter of a friend of the bride's family and second, a girl related through a marriage of deceased persons, in this case, the dead brother and sister of the bride and bridesmaid respectively (not on diagram).

(ii) Mourners at the Deaths of C and D (see diagram 2)

C died about a year after D.

At the death of C (1959), the group who assumed mourning comprised his direct descendants i.e. M and N and wives and children, D at the death of C, and O. M as the only son was responsible for the organisation and the expenses involved. At the time of C's death, D was still alive and he was consulted on the decisions made. The entire group mourned for 100 days.

At the time of D's death, his own son was still a young child, thus responsibilities for the funeral fell to M.

(iii)Marriage of Son of N (see diagram 3)

The marriage of the son of N took place in 1970.

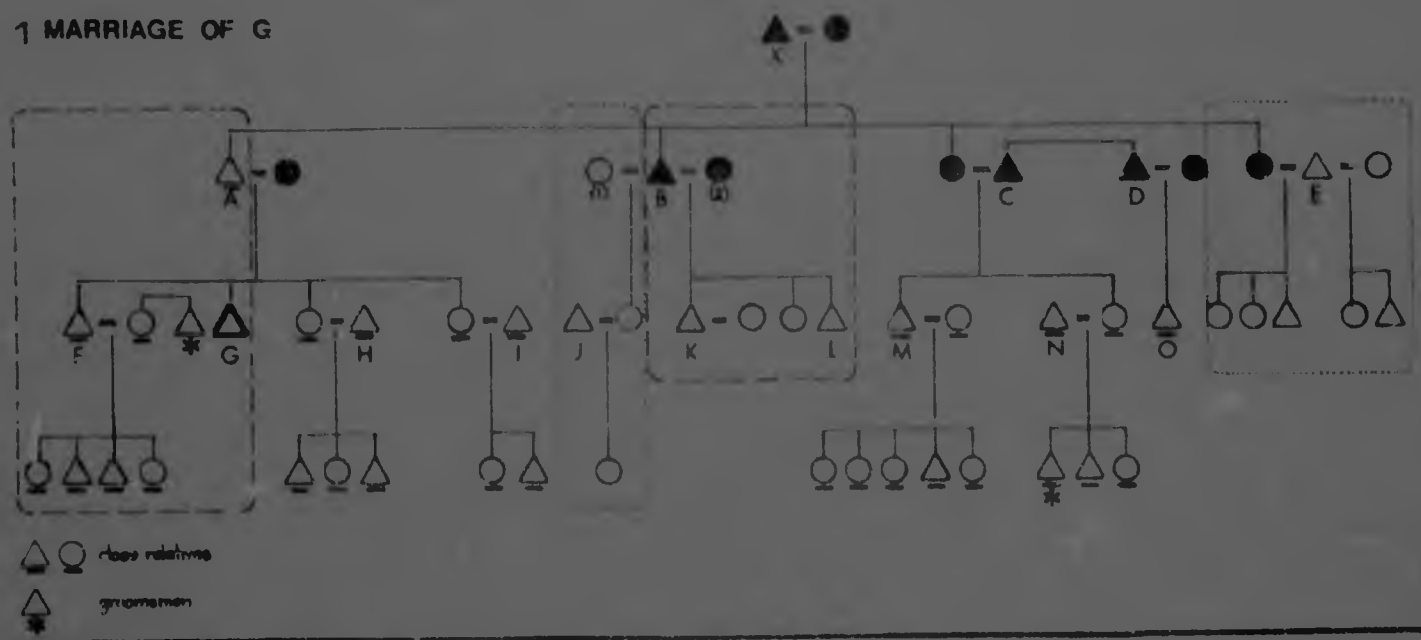
The bridegroom's father N had no kinsmen in South Africa and so it was necessary to substitute those of his wife. His wife's brother M and his wife and two of their daughters were away from home (on an extended trip overseas) at the time, leaving two daughters (one married) and a son at home. The wedding took place in Church because the bride was a Christian, and there was no formal ying ts'an.

However, all the groom's matrilateral kinsmen and their spouses were invited for lunch before the ceremony and tea afterwards, and tea was served to all those of the groom's parental generation and above: namely, to his parents, and to A and to F, H, I and their wives. It is to be noted that H and I were, of course, only the husbands of women linked matrilaterally to the groom; in traditional Chinese kinship thinking it is most unlikely that they would have been accorded any formal role at his marriage. G, who was obviously a matrilateral kinsman, and his wife had moved to some distance away, and were not able to attend the wedding. Tea was also served to an olderly neighbour whose late husband was of the same clan name as the groom's mother.

A NETWORK OF GENEALOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

DIAGRAMS FOR EXAMPLE I

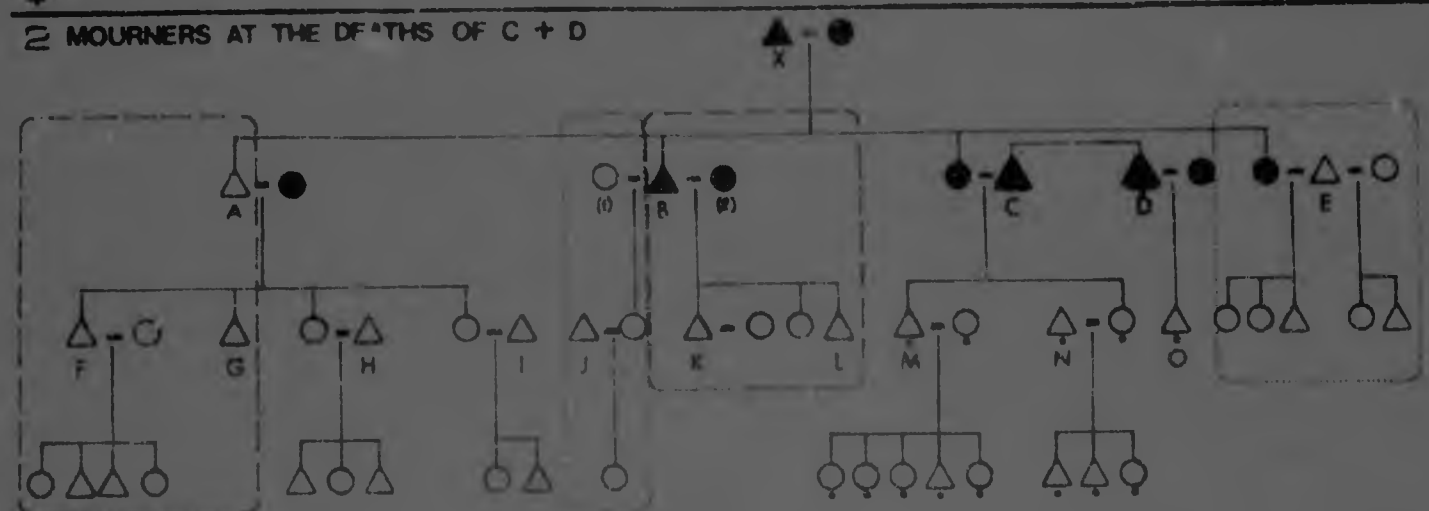
1 MARRIAGE OF G



△○ close relatives

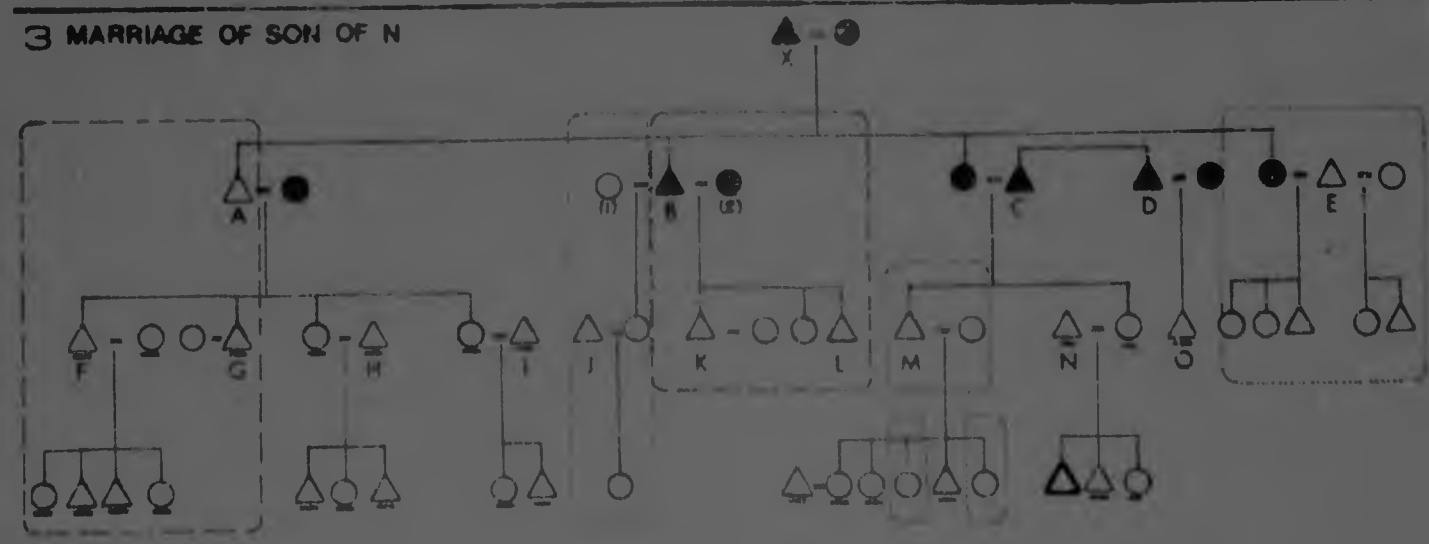
△ grievemen

2 MOURNERS AT THE DEATHS OF C + D



△○ mourners

3 MARRIAGE OF SON OF N



△○ close relatives

legend to all diagrams

△○ living relatives

▲● deceased

△○ living 170 miles from Johannesburg

△○ overseas

△ "ego" in each case

all others live in Johannesburg

Example II (re r to diagram following p. 183)

(i) Mourners at the death of A (see diagram 4)

A died in China (1966) and relatives in Johannesburg were immediately notified. All relatives represented on the diagram who were living in Johannesburg had to assume mourning. B and C, the sons and direct descendants of the deceased, decided that mourning would commence on the weekend following the receipt of the letter. The relatives assembled at the home of B, and B and C jointly bore the expenses which included sending money back to China for the funeral; the dinners for the mourners at the commencement and conclusion of the mourning periods; and some of the clothes and symbols of mourning i.e. black armbands and ties.

It was decided that the two sons and their wives would mourn for one hundred days and the remainder of the effective kin group for forty-nine days and the women in this latter group were not required to wear black and nor were they required to stop attending public entertainment although it was suggested that they did not go to parties.

There was no direct reference to the decisions of those members who were overseas, as it was assumed they would make their arrangements independently.

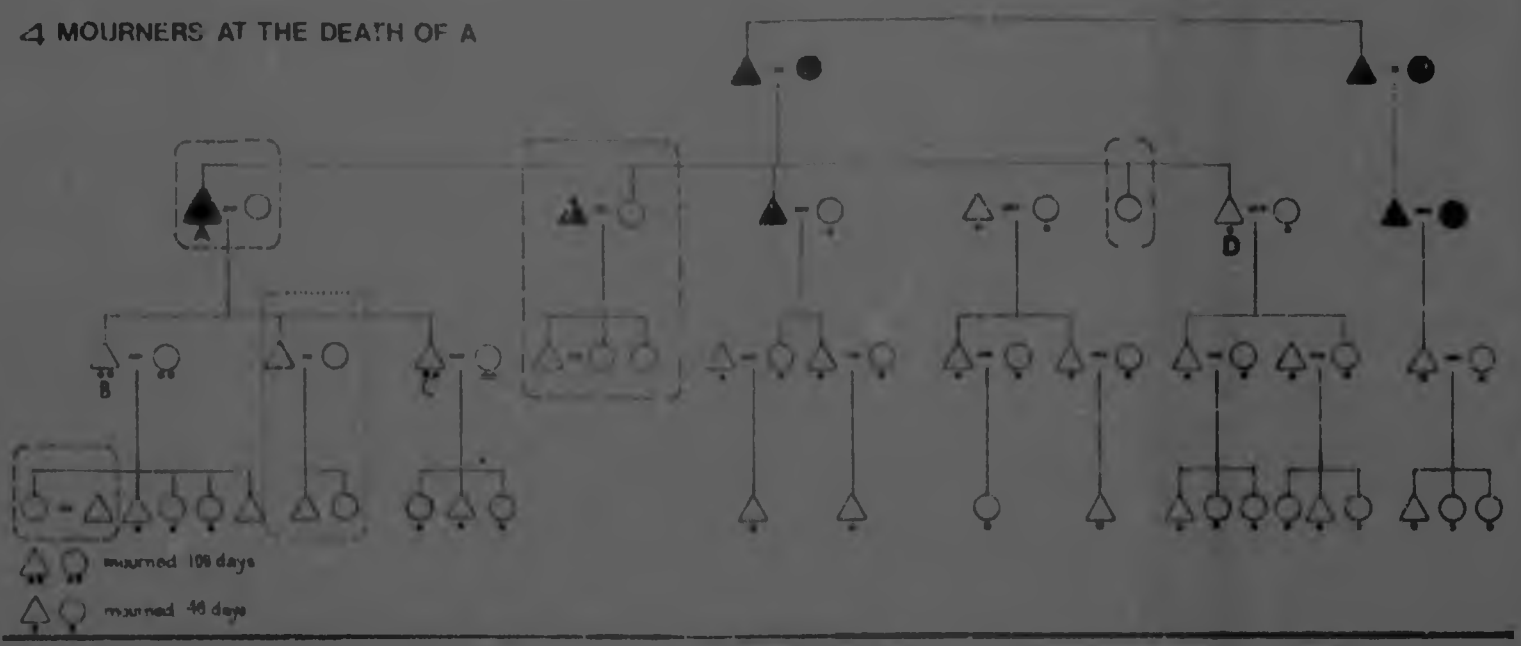
(ii) Birthday celebration of D (see diagram 5)

The annual celebration of D's birthday was given by D's married son. All people shown in the diagram (i.e. living in Johannesburg) were invited to attend the celebration. Guests also included people who were friends.

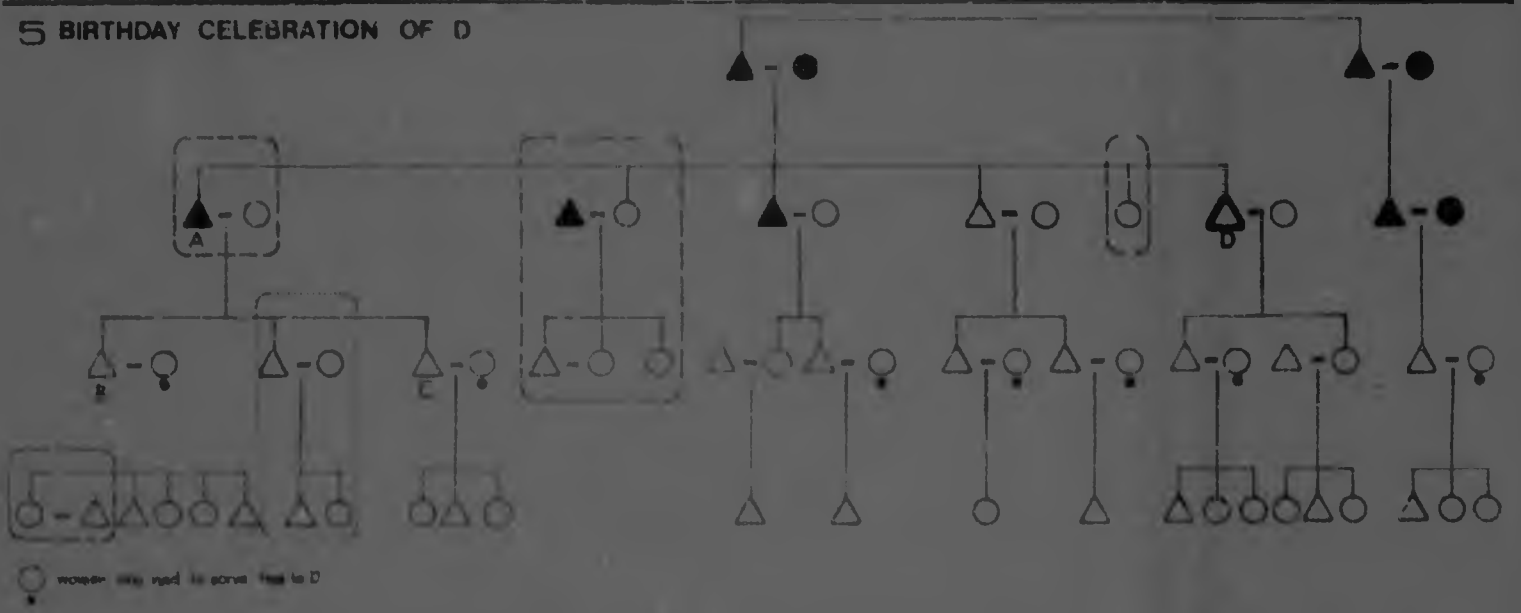
During the day, the tea-serving ceremony was held and all women married into the family and junior to D, and therefore, does not include elder brother's wives, served tea to D.

A NETWORK OF GENEALOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS
DIAGRAMS FOR EXAMPLE II

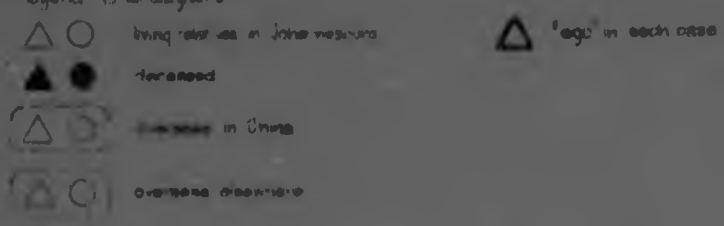
4 MOURNERS AT THE DEATH OF A



5 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF D



legend to all diagrams



CHAPTER 7. RITUAL, KINSHIP AND RECIPROCITY

In the beginning of this thesis, I state that my sample is a small one as this is intended to be a qualitative rather than a quantitative study and it is not my intention to make generalisations about the complete spectrum of religious beliefs and practices of the Johannesburg Chinese. I have observed some of the competing demands of traditional and Christian beliefs, but my study is essentially focussed on the more traditional beliefs and practices of the Cantonese-speaking Chinese in Johannesburg.

Traditional rites and ceremonies are still observed and are derived from the culture of the homeland. However, most people recognise that they are often carried out in a simplified form, the explanations given as haf kam T, (it is just the meaning), thus the belief system persists. It is evident that Chinese religious activities are pragmatic: they provide a course of action to ensure good and to alleviate or prevent anxieties and misfortune as defined by the traditional beliefs. For example, ghosts can be harmful and revengeful and customs help to ensure good. It also follows that if culturally defined anxieties exist, then it is probable that traditional answers will be sought. Rites and beliefs often reinforce each other. For most of the older generation contacts, except perhaps in business or work, are mostly confined to fellow Cantonese; today they are usually the people who direct the procedure in ritual and ceremonial occasions. These people do, of course, know that other ethnic groups do not suffer ill-effects by not performing rites. Sometimes I have heard this latter reason being given as to why certain rites can be dropped or replaced, but then again, I have been told on many occasions: "We do it because we are Chinese". It is difficult for an individual to disregard a rite which he believes will be of consequence to him, but in a few cases I have observed the decision to choose Christian rites in place of traditional ones. In one of the latter examples, it was the choice of Christian rites at a funeral and this involved a change in the whole belief about the survival and needs of the soul. It is my opinion, then,

that some rites will survive unless the person becomes reasonably acquainted with an alternative belief system. In the case of the younger generation, they have no first hand experience of traditions in China. Some may be greatly influenced by the older generation here in South Africa but an important factor is that they are far more exposed to non-Chinese practices than their parents and grandparents. It appears that some families observe both Christian and traditional practices, but as I explained in Chapter 2 (iii)(f), professed Christians often carry out traditional rites but regard them as of social rather than religious significance. Freedman (1957: 224) observed that in Chinese religion "In the absence of an ecclesiastically enforced body of dogma, individuals pick and choose in a wide range of religious beliefs which are present in their general environment". In the traditional situation, the Chinese religious beliefs and actions were regarded as ecletic; it was perfectly acceptable to subscribe to any teachings, Buddhist or Taoist or any other, at any time the individual thought fit. It was not a "sin" to deviate in one's religious beliefs.

Traditional Chinese religious beliefs and practices are also dominated by the idea of fate and religious activities are often devoted to ensuring success through the influencing of one's "luck". Yang (1961: 135) says Heaven[1] is thought to be responsible for predetermining all events in the universe, from affairs of the state to humble occurences in the individual's life. However, the predetermination of all personal events is set by forces which, in turn,

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1. "Heaven was the supreme anthropomorphic power of the universe directing the operation of the spiritual world. There was the general dichotomy in this spiritual world. At the top was the grand pantheon of gods (shen) each of who was assigned definite functions in the governing of both men and spirits. Below the gods were the multitude of spirits and ghosts (kuei) who constituted the common subjects of the spiritual world." (Yang 1961: 23).

are "connected with the mystical movements of stars directing the mystical operation of time ..." Thus by choosing an auspicious time, or, in the case of geomancy, a correct site in the landscape, one could ensure the beneficient working of mystical forces. The workings of the universe are thus seen to be closely tied to the workings of human society. It appears that divination was a popular practice in China to determine the reasons for and possible solution to one's problems. I have not seen much evidence of divination here in Johannesburg apart from the choice of auspicious dates (especially for a wedding), also for the erection of tombstones and, on one occasion, for a funeral. I mention in Appendix I that I knew of a few people who patronized Malay fortune tellers. Alternatively, some people who have visited China have gone to temples to divine for one member of the family or another. The method I have heard most of is that of k'au ts'im: a Chinese temple normally possesses a set of bamboo-sticks which are numbered, each number being identified with a printed verse. The idea is to choose, or shake out, a bamboo stick from a tube and the verse corresponding to its number is interpreted. Otherwise, the people here try to ensure good and success by the performance of rites and observance of customs.

In summary, then, one can say that the Cantonese here in Johannesburg who observe rites and ceremonies are preoccupied, on the one hand, with the manipulation of impersonal forces in which the association of ideas is important and, on the other hand, with ensuring that ancestors will be propitious and harmful ghosts kept at bay. At the same time the actual performance of rites and ceremonies implies the observance of rights and obligations to kinsmen.

First of all, it is important to understand the association of ideas, and of ideas with things which symbolise these ideas. Granet observed that "this idea of correspondence has great significance and replaces the idea of casuality, for the things are connected rather than caused" (quoted in Needham: 287). This is the basis of the cosmological belief in the close relationship of Heaven, Nature (Earth) and Man, such that disturbance in one sphere will lead to a reverberation in the others. This means that if all is going well, man must take care not to disturb or alter the beneficient course of

the impersonal forces or, alternatively, if a man wishes to improve his own lot he may attempt to do so by attempting to bring about changes in the impersonal forces.

Occasions which mark the crises of life seem to be important junctures of life when every effort is made to encourage success and prosperity. The symbolic content of rites and gifts on these occasions gives us a good indication of the desires and values of the people. At a marriage we find the concept of complementary duality is important. This is based on the concept of yin and yang which expresses the harmony of two opposing forces and thus completeness. Things, words and the circumstances of persons are also associated with the desires for the event. They symbolise prosperity, fertility and happiness, not only for the new couple but also for the affinal kinsmen. In fact gifts bearing all the symbolism are given from one father to the other and not from the groom to the bride. Persons directly involved or who assist the bride and groom must be in circumstances of "completeness". Thus we saw how the mourners, the childless, the elderly spinster, were not permitted to assist the bride directly. New Year begins with the complete family in the household. Furthermore, the association of incompatible forces pertaining to certain categories of people could result in the confusing of forces (chün) and to the possible detriment of the persons concerned; thus the pregnant woman had to be careful of her contact with a bride. However, the association of a favourite son with names or persons with unfavourable qualities is thought to ward off harmful ghosts by misleading them.

Confucian writings laid great emphasis on "knowing man" and stressed the importance of ritual which in turn specified rules for correct behaviour, especially towards one's kinsmen. Scheinfeld writes that ancestor worship reflects the stability of the group, and the belief that neglect of ancestors results in supernatural punishment is the same as saying that neglect of rites of solidarity will bring about moral irresponsibility and eventual disintegration of the family. In looking at the significance of kinship and ritual activity, it is also important to understand the functions of the kin group in the traditional situation. Baker (1968: 71) in writing

about a lineage village in Hong Kong states: "The Chinese lineage is founded on both kinship and ritual, which are complementary and largely interdependent, but in the case of a lineage village it is also a community, so that the community functions are mainly inseparable from those of kinship and ritual". The Johannesburg community do not come from single lineage villages, but traditionally each lineage did tend to cluster in one part of the village and so we can still assume a certain degree of interdependence. In this situation we can see the importance in the traditional situation of assuring the goodwill of kinsmen who were also neighbours, especially as Scheinfeld points out, as the kinship group was the only real source of security for the individual. The recognition of kinsmen means the recognition of rights and obligations due to and from them.

The principle of agnation survives here in South Africa. In extra- domestic rites there is an attempt to maintain it, but on a more extended basis as it appears that there is not sufficient participation to warrant the organisation of ancestral commemoration on a lineage basis. Agnatic descent survives best as an organisational principal at only the domestic level, and particularly on occasions of ancestor remembrance, and at funeral rites. On occasions of celebration it is less clearly defined depending on the availability of kinsmen (see Chapter 6). In Johannesburg, unlike Singapore, there is no reliance on voluntary associations at marriage or funerals, there are in fact no such voluntary associations here.

The decline in interest in extra-domestic ancestor worship may reflect the fact that there is no longer the great reliance of lineage members upon each other. They no longer live in close proximity as in the rural situation. Another reason is that the existence of extra-domestic ancestor worship in the village depended upon the existence of an ancestral hall, which in turn was supported by the deliberate setting aside of property for the building and upkeep by the lineage or some wealthy lineage member(s) (Freedman 1966: 33). Prior to the Communist era, many Johann[illegible]g Chinese were known to contribute very generously to the u[illegible]p of ancestral halls in the villages. (No halls have ever been established in South Africa). The membership to these halls served to define the

participation in extra-domestic ancestor worship here in Johannesburg. Today, even though some of the ancestral halls may still be in existence, they are no longer used for ritual purposes and the ancestral land belongs to the communes. Thus the ancestral hall has lost its ritual significance and it is only its memory which helps the Johannesburg Chinese to perpetuate extra-domestic ancestral rules; the ancestral hall as such is no longer a reality.

In writing on the Singapore Chinese, Freedman says that, although the kinship system and ancestor worship are intertwined, it cannot be said that the maiming of the former will lead to the curtailment of the latter (1957: 224), but rather that certain elements in ancestor worship can continue independently of those which were dropped when the kinship basis was destroyed. This is certainly true, as we see how in Johannesburg, the definition of kinsmen sometimes becomes less clear cut but there is still an attempt to perpetuate the domestic rites and ceremonies in the ideal manner. It is also important to note that the beliefs which survive deal not only with ancestors but also with an obsession for one's own well-being which is dependent on impersonal forces. There is also the reliance on the good will of other people. On ritual occasions, the presence of kinsmen is necessary both as witnesses and to give assistance. But kinsmen do not attend of their own accord (except at a funeral), they have to be invited. This in itself implies a recognition of one's kinship obligation, and further, sets off a chain of reactions - the kinsmen are obliged to attend unless they have a good excuse. Important occasions such as a marriage, a birth or a birthday require the social recognition of kinsmen, as in one example where there was doubt as to how a supposedly married couple should be regarded and addressed, or the case where people refused outright to accept a woman's claim to be a kinsman because there had been no "party" and therefore no marriage could be said to have taken place.

On important occasions of celebration, most people still observe genealogical ties and kinsmen are seldom ignored unless there has been an overt breach in the relationship. That is to say, there is a recognition of kinship obligations and generally a desire not to offend. Alliances are important, to the extent that ties with

previously unrelated families can be formalised either through pseudo-adoption or the posthumous marriages of deceased children, or, of course, through ordinary marriages.

In Malinowski's analysis of the kula amongst the Trobriand Islanders, he observed that giving is an act with social meaning. Mauss's thesis is that there is an obligation to give, to receive and to return a gift and failure to do so amounts to a refusal of friendship. Furthermore, Mauss (1954: 11) maintains that in the gifts there is "a pattern of spiritual bonds between things which are to some extent parts of the person". Firth (1967: 9) and other writers have since argued that the Maori (the example used by Mauss) did not believe that a spiritual essence resided in the gifts. Similarly one cannot infer that the Chinese here do in fact believe there is a spiritual essence in their gifts, but at marriage in particular, items among the gifts do symbolise specific desires and a failure to give or return the correct gifts or quantities of them can certainly cause offence because the offender is felt to be threatening the well-being of the couple or family concerned.

Firth (1967) criticised Mauss's work in saying that gift giving is more complex than Mauss allows, for example, presence and absence of status differentials and the relative quality and quantity of gifts must be considered. Sahlins (1965: 141) maintains that a material transaction may suggest a particular social relation between the participants in that transaction and that relations may be initiated or underlined by that transaction. If these two arguments are also taken into account, then we get a better understanding of the significance of gift giving and exchange among the Chinese in Johannesburg and especially of the giving of red-packets. The gifts of seafoods, whiskey and cakes given by the groom to the bride's father are clearly of economic consequence and important in contracting the traditional marriage, however, the groom is also responsible for the cakes and red-packets distributed to the girl's relatives (see Chapter 4(iv) - Analysis). Sahlins speaks of high rank being expressed and secured by generosity, while gifts also create loyalty. In the gift exchange here, we are not concerned with political rank but, as Leach states, gifts can still signify

the senior status of the giver. The gifts themselves symbolise the desire for posterity and prosperity, and reciprocation of such things is essential. If the recipients took everything it would be a case of negative reciprocity, which Sahlins calls the "unsociable extreme". The explanation why the bride's family does not accept the entire gift is that good "must come and go", that beneficial forces must flow, which is the same as saying that the newly created affinal relationship should be harmonious. Generous gifts certainly evoke much pride, and could very possibly stir the loyalty which Sahlins is referring to.

Distribution of gifts at a full-month party and at the birthday celebrations of an elderly person suggests both a reciprocation for the person's attendance at the celebration and also a distribution as a material expression of affirming the celebrant's status. (Gifts distributed on these occasions are given to family units and not to individuals). As I suggested earlier, the celebration of the birthday of an elderly person seems to be the celebration of the social achievements of the celebrant, whereas a birth of a child and particularly a son is also a significant advent for the family.

In ritual giving or distribution, food is the main item in the gifts. On the one hand, they are expensive items such as seafoods, and on the other hand, cakes and fruit which have symbolic significance. Sahlins (op. cit: 170) suggests that food is ordinarily symbolic of hearth and home, and giving or refusing of food is a means of starting, sustaining or destroying sociability.

The giving of red-packets is normally from one individual to another and this certainly seems to express, initiate and underline many social facts. Firstly, a red-packet is generally given by a senior to someone junior, thus at a wedding the bride and groom are given red-packets by senior relatives. At a birthday celebration the celebrant gives red-packets to agnatic and collateral descendants, thus underlining his status as a senior kinsman and perhaps a potential ancestor. A new born baby is given red-packets by relatives and friends which, ostensibly to "give him luck", also serves as a recognition of the baby's existence and new status as the

most junior member of the family. Secondly, red-packets are a means of reciprocation: there are numerous occasions when the performance of a rite (e.g. serving tea at a marriage, New Year or birthday) or assistance rendered during ritual occasions (e.g. bridesmaids, taai kam) must be reciprocated, this is done in the form of a red-packet.

In summing up this study of religious beliefs and practices among the Cantonese speaking people in Johannesburg, it appears that there is unity in the cultural and social dimensions of ritual behaviour. Ritual symbolism expresses the desire to create and maintain a harmonious relationship between man and impersonal forces (e.g. expressed in ancestor worship in the emphasis on the triad of Heaven, Nature (Earth) and Man), and between man and man (e.g. expressed in the emphasis on duality). The traditional social structure was one in which each person had a place with defined rights and obligations. This hierarchy stretched from the youngest to the senior members to the ancestors, and any change in status was thus an important occasion and requires recognition. Harmony within the society was and to a large extent still is maintained by each person knowing and excercising his/her own rights and obligations.

APPENDIX I

MISCELLANEOUS RITUALS AND BELIEFS CONNECTED WITH MISFORTUNE.

In the description of ritual activities I have already mentioned many incidents in which either the accidental or deliberate flouting of customs leads to the belief in retribution in some form of misfortune. There is the case of an unsuccessful marriage which was blamed on the breach of clan exogamy. In other examples, the birth of children born with deformities was blamed on the mothers' activities during pregnancy.

Misfortunes may include such matters as constant illness, accidents or an untimely death; any incident of an adverse nature not normal for everyday life, may call for an explanation. Explanations for misfortune may be given by the victim, but those involved may not be so concerned and explanations have sometimes been offered to me by observers. In China, there were occasions when people went to diviners to try to uncover reasons for adversity, but there do not seem to be such specialists among the Chinese in Johannesburg and so some people are known to patronize Malay fortune-tellers. Actions or rites may be sought to improve the situation. There are, of course, many people who accept a misfortune on the basis of empirical facts and there is no need for further rationalisations. However, a continued run of bad luck has led a few people I know to seek a solution in Christianity, and their faith is sustained by regular church-going and attendance at prayer meetings.

The seeing of visions or actions attributed to ghosts (kwai) often leads to concern. Ancestors who are neglected and also persons who die an unnatural or violent death are sometimes thought not to rest in peace and may cause harm to the living. These ghosts are referred to as uen wān, translated by Meyer Wempe as the "ghost of one who has died without redress". One person I spoke to said that when the dead are happy and contented then the living will also be contented - "It is

natural, you will just feel it", she added. In one case, when a man had died an accidental death, his wife went to China where her husband's ancestral tablet was installed in a Buddhist temple and rites were carried out for the repose of his spirit. I was told that the man's spirit is probably at peace as he did not seem to have bothered anyone.

Kwaî have been thought to be responsible for motor car accidents; these kwaî are themselves believed to be victims of accidents and they lurk in the vicinity of certain roads which often happen to be dangerous places where numerous accidents have occurred. Certain people have reported incidents of their cars skidding for no reason or seeing objects in the road which were in fact not there. One person who survived unharmed from a serious car accident was told that, before using the road again, he should take some flowers to the spot of the accident. His family also immediately took flowers to their ancestors in gratitude for the fact that no one was injured in the accident. Another person was involved in a car accident in which the driver of the other car was killed. Subsequently, this person had two further mishaps in approximately the same place on the road and he was therefore convinced that there were kwaî there. Thereafter, in an attempt to placate these spirits, he lit incense etc. in his own yard in order to paai the kwaî and apologise for what had happened. He felt that the situation improved after that.

At times, the activities attributed to ghosts may be believed to have moral implications. In one case, I was told that a man was said to have caused the suicide of a friend by insisting on the return of a loan when it was impossible for him to repay it. For many years, thereafter, the dead friend was believed to cause accidents and strange incidents to happen to the man's family. The young children were mysteriously lifted out of their cots; cats appeared and disappeared in their home and there was constant illness. Nothing seemed to placate the unhappy spirit until many years later when the man concerned himself died.

One family told me that when they moved into a new house, each member of the family became ill in turn and it was suspected that something was wrong with the house. Later when they began to hear strange sounds, and even found a spot of blood on their veranda, they immediately made arrangements to move out.

Not all ghosts seem to be harmful and some are just treated as a nuisance. A number of people have reported seeing ghosts appear periodically at particular places and some speak of waking up at the middle of the night and finding themselves breathless because a ghost was weighing on them. Sometimes the ghosts are said to be deceased relatives reminding descendants not to neglect them.

I have been told of an occasion when geomancy came into consideration. It was thought that the psychotic tendencies in a family might be due to the bad burial site of their father in China. Reburial was considered but it was not carried out as, apart from the great expenses it would have involved, it was thought that the Communist government would probably not permit it.

Misfortunes are, of course, normally interpreted retrospectively, but actions may also be taken to avoid possible adversity and to ensure a good and successful life. The explanation for establishing pseudo-kinship ties is that they will help to improve some situation because association with a person in desirable circumstances may influence one's own lot. Similarly an only son, or a favourite son who happens to be sickly and prone to misfortune may be given a pseudonym which is lowly and derogatory and the fictitious name is supposed to fool evil spirits who would not be attracted to something so undesirable. In the case of post-humous marriages, young people have died before their spirits are eligible for ritual consideration and care as ancestors, thus the reason for conducting a post-humous marriage is hope of ensuring the happiness of these young people so that their spirits will not harm the living.

Analysis

In examining of the treatment of misfortune among the Chinese here in Johannesburg it is clear that often the definition of and solution to adversity still follows the traditional belief system.

The underlying beliefs that neglected and wronged spirits can be harmful is the basis of many of the situations thought to involve kwai. In the case of a misfortune, the person may interpret it as his own guilt or someone else's fault. If the individual has an uneasy conscience, then he may seek to appease the kwai by lighting incense and worshipping the spirits. If the kwai are thought to be actively harmful, it is unlikely that they will just be ignored. If the person and cause is completely unknown, the people concerned may choose to avoid the situation altogether as for example, by moving out of the house. In China, the problem might be taken to a diviner.

It seems that the fate of the soul of a person acts, in some cases, as a form of moral sanction. However, this does depend on the extent of the person's beliefs in spirits and also on whether there are circumstances to warrant a sense of guilt, for it is certainly not the case that each time there is an accident people immediately search for possible wrong doing to explain it.

Besides being attributed to the vengeance of ghosts, misfortune can also be attributed to the negligence, wrongful deeds or lack of precautionary actions by man. In these cases, the underlying belief is that impersonal forces can be of consequence to man and he must take care either in associating himself with or dissociating himself from the right categories otherwise there will be confusion (chûn) of the forces.

APPENDIX II

LEGAL STATUS OF CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The structure and settlement patterns of the Chinese in South Africa cannot be understood without reference to their legal position. South Africa has discriminatory laws based on racial differences and thus by appearance alone the Chinese are easily distinguished from the "White" or"non-White" groups and it is to be expected that they will have peculiar legal status.

This chapter is only a very brief outline to show how the activities and movements of the Chinese in South Africa are restricted and influenced by legislation.

Population Registration

The Population Registration Act, 1950, provided that the population should be classified into racial categories: the White, Coloured and Native people. In 1959, Coloured people were subdivided into Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian, "Other Asiatic" and "Other Coloured". (Horrell 1966: 11).

In terms of Population Registration, Japanese are classified as "other Asiatic" and in 1961, the Government announced that Japanese business men and their families would be accorded White status. (Horrell 1962: 68). This has resulted in some confusion as most people cannot distinguish between Chinese and Japanese. All Japanese in this country are temporary residents.

Immigration

Immigration of Chinese into South Africa was curtailed at an early stage of the influx to this Country. Prior to 1910, the Transvaal, Cape, Orange Free State and Natal, had their own laws restricting and prohibiting the entry of Asiatic

immigrants, and Chinese were then classified with the Indians.

In the Transvaal, the Peace Preservation Ordinance of 1902 stopped the entry of Asiatic immigrants, and in 1907 compulsory registration of all lawful Asiatic residents was required. Asiatics were bound to produce their Certificate of Registration on demand by police or other authorised persons. The Certificate of Registration also had to be produced when applying for trading licences.

In 1890, the Orange Free State prohibited the influx of Chinese - "No Arab, 'Chinaman', Coolie or other Asiatic Coloured person ..., may settle in this State for the purpose of carrying on a commercial business or farming or otherwise remain there for longer than two months without first having obtained special permission from the State President" (Miao: 11). No Chinese have ever settled in the Orange Free State.

The Immigration Act 1902, in the Cape and the Immigration Restriction Act, 1897, in Natal, were the initial laws, which classified Asiatics as "prohibited immigrants" under the given reasons of deficiency in European language and lack of visible means of support (Miao: 10). Those who had acquired domicile by previous residence were exempted.

Ownership and Occupation of Land

Laws specifying ownership and occupation of land are important determinants of the settlement patterns of the Chinese. As early as 1885, the South African Republic (Transvaal) passed laws to prohibit "persons belonging to any of the native races of Asia, including Coolies, Arabs, Malays and Mohammedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion" from owning fixed property for residence other than in special streets, wards and locations assigned for them.

In the Transvaal the ownership and occupation of property was subject to greater restrictions; apart from the original

motive of segregating the races, the Gold Law, 1898, prohibited Coloured persons[1] from owning mining ground or working on digging except in the employ of Whites (Mia · 16).

The Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act, 1932, placed restrictions on the ownership of "fixed property" except in areas assigned for Asiatic occupation: any deeds in favour of "any Asiatic or Asiatic Company" was prohibited. Those who were lawfully registered on "proclaimed land" on 1st May 1930 were exempted but in 1935, the law was amended making even this registered ownership unlawful, while further occupation was subject to various time limits.

In 1922, the first legislation was passed in Natal to segregate Asiatics by restricting ownership and occupation of fixed property.

As a result of the numerous laws in the Transvaal, only a few Chinese families own property. There is a proportionately b·ter extent of ownership in Natal but the Cape has by far the largest number of Chinese o·ned properties. In the Cape ownership was not prohibited until the Group Areas Act in 1950 b·t paradoxically it has had much more serious repercussions as in recent years many families in the Cape have had to move from or dispose of homes of long standing and well established business concerns.

The Group Areas 950, imposed control throughout the country on inter-raci· property transactions and inter-racial changes in occup·ation. Except for African townships and African Coloure· eserves, all parts of the country which

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1. "Coloured" was then defined as any African or Asiatic, Native or Coloured American, Coolie or 'Chinaman'. By 1946 Asiatic has been distingu·hed from Coloured.

were not allocated to specified groups are controlled areas, and inter-racial changes in ownership and occupation are controlled by permits granted by the responsible Minister. (At first the Minister of Interior, in 1962 - Minister of Community Development, and 1965 - Minister of Planning).

Many towns have proclaimed 'defined areas' where control is exercised over the occupation of any buildings which are erected, extended or altered (Horrell: 25). In this way it has been possible to 'freeze' the number of Asians residing and/or trading in White areas. The restrictions have imposed great housing problems for the Chinese in Johannesburg.

In large metropolitan areas, buildings in 'defined' areas may be proclaimed for a specificed purpose, such as trading. In this case a trader may continue his business but must move his home to the Group Area set aside for his race. Where the area has been proclaimed, a disqualified person may continue to own property, but not to occupy it. Further, a disqualified person may bequeath such property to someone of his own race, but the heir must dispose of the property to a qualified person within a year unless a permit is granted for an extension. In this way, even property already owned must eventually be passed on to the specified group. When an area is proclaimed for occupation by a particular group, the Minister determines the date by which the disqualified persons must move out, which must not be less than one year.

Group Areas have been proclaimed for the Chinese in Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and Pretoria.

The greatest amount of development has taken place in the Area in Port Elizabeth, where in 1969, at least twenty houses and two blocks of flats have been erected. The Kimberley Area is occupied by only two families. In February 1967, the proposed Area in Pretoria was dropped, as more land was required for the neighbouring Indian Area. In March 1967, a plan was advertised for an Area called Willowdene for the Johannesburg

Chinese, but subsequent objections from the Chinese community, the Johannesburg City Council, and also from the present residents in the area, led to their being dropped in November 1968. At present, (1969) most of the Chinese in Johannesburg reside in either the older, unproclaimed, or White Areas.

The licensing of trade and business

The licensing of trade and business for Asians is also subject to strict control. Various Asiatic Land Tenure and Trading Acts confined trade and business to segregated areas. Today, restrictions are provided by the various Group Areas Acts. The acquisition of a licence to new premises requires special permission and if a permit is refused by local authorities, the decision is final. Many businesses have been forced to close as a result of Group Areas and very few new licences have been granted.

Employment

The White Labour Policy prohibits Chinese from practising certain types of employment. At present Chinese are not employed in Government concerns, i.e. Civil Service and Railways, but in Kimberley in 1965, and in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg in 1972, Chinese were employed in Local Government departments. Doctors are employed in non-European Provincial Hospitals, where they receive a lower salary than their White colleagues.

The Mines and Works Act of 1911, later popularly known as the Colour Bar Act, prohibited "Asiatics and Natives" from being employed in any skilled position or one allowing authority or responsibility.

Job reservation has protected Whites from non-White competition in specified types of skilled work e.g. building in urban areas, the operation of lifts in certain types of buildings in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Bloemfontein. Other regulations have specified the proportion of Whites and Coloureds

(including Asians) who may be employed e.g. clothing and motor vehicle assembly industries. Where White workers are not available, temporary exemptions may be granted.

On the whole, the Chinese have not been seriously affected by job reservation. Certainly in Johannesburg employment in other spheres has been available and in general Chinese have had more freedom than other non-White groups.

Education

Free and compulsory education is provided only for European children, but education is still highly valued and I personally know of no Chinese child who has not been sent school. The Chinese school is often prepared to overlook full fees if parents are in poor circumstances.

The Education Act of the Transvaal of 1907 specified "No coloured person is allowed to enter or remain a pupil or member of any primary or secondary school, class or institution for White children or persons, including trade or industrial school and teacher-training institutions". The Chinese are still affected by this ruling and thus may not attend any government-subsidized school for White children. A few students have, in recent years, been admitted to the technical college in Johannesburg.

Chinese children are allowed to attend private schools for Whites subject to the approval of the Department of Education, Arts and Science and, of course, provided that the school is willing to accept them.

Chinese are able to attend English-speaking "White" universities. The Extension of University Education Act 1959, provided for the establishment of separate university colleges for African, Coloured and Asian students. An Indian University College has been established, but there are too few Chinese to make a Chinese University College feasible. In October 1959,

the government prohibited further non-White enrolment at a university without the consent of the responsible Minister. Chinese students must apply for permission to attend the "White" universities but on the whole they have not experienced any restrictions.

Public Transport

The regulations governing the use of public transport vary from province to province and from town to town. In Johannesburg, Chinese are free to travel in "White" transport, but in some neighbouring towns, they are forbidden to do so.

Chinese may travel in coaches reserved for Whites on suburban trains. On long journeys, however, they are only permitted to travel in coaches reserved for Whites provided they are able to produce a letter issued by the Chinese Consul General stating that the bearer of the letter is Chinese and "of social standing". The letter also acknowledges that reservation officers and ticket examiners may exercise their discretion in allocating accommodation.

Hospitalization

Chinese were segregated in Provincial Hospitals until 196), when it became possible for them to be admitted to "White" sections of Government Hospitals. Chinese are also able to make use of facilities offered by private Nursing Homes.

Franchise

At the time of Union the franchise differed in the four provinces. In the Cape and Natal franchise was granted to all male citizens on the basis of literacy and income or property qualifications. In practice there were further difficult restrictive procedures for registration of non-White voters in Natal (Horrell 1966: 1). In the Cape Chinese have enjoyed limited rights of vote as the Coloured people; in 1956, the

Separate Representation of Voters Act removed Coloured voters from the common roll to a separate roll and could only elect White representatives. In the Transvaal and Free State, the franchise was extended to White men only. Therefore, in South Africa today no franchise rights are granted to Chinese, even though they may possess South African nationality.

Public Facilities, Entertainment

The Group Areas Act, 1957, prohibited racially disqualified persons from attending any public places for entertainment or partaking of refreshments where seating accommodation is required. However, most hotels, cinemas and theatres, public swimming baths and libraries allow Chinese to use facilities provided for Whites. It is generally at the discretion of the proprietors and subject to permission being granted by the Group Areas Board.

Sports

In 1962 the Minister of the Interior restated the Government policy that non-Whites should organise their sporting facilities separately (Horrell 1966: 43). The position of the Chinese has been somewhat uncertain. On the one hand, some Chinese have played with White team mates and been selected to represent provincial teams but on the other hand, incidents have occurred where teams were asked not to include Chinese players. Amongst university students, problems have arisen over inter-varsity tournaments scheduled at one of the Afrikaans-speaking universities.

Mixed Marriages

In the Transvaal, a law was passed in 1897 which made it a criminal offence for a Coloured person to marry a White woman. The Immorality Act of 1927, prohibited extra-marital intercourse between Whites and Africans (Horrell 1966: 10). In 1949, marriages between White and non-White were prohibited and in 1950 carnal intercourse between a White and non-White was made illegal. Chinese, therefore, may not marry a White person. In

1969, an interesting case arose whereby a Chinese man and White girl were charged under the Immorality Act as they had lived together in the same house and had had three children. Subsequently the girl was allowed to apply for reclassification as Chinese, which was granted and they were permitted to marry.

In conclusion it can be seen that the legal position of the Chinese in South Africa is vague and subject to uncertain interpretation. Thus the Chinese occupy a borderline position, as they are in some cases accorded White status, especially in the social sphere although classified as non-White.

GLOSSARY OF CANTONESE WORDS AND CHARACTERS USED IN THE TEXT

(Romanisation according to Meyer-Wempe)

ch'ā ts'aan	tea party (celebration)
chaaû mîn	fried noodles
ch'è	to pull back
cheuk fûk	to go into mourning
ch'eûng kaû	a long time, permanent
chi mā	sesame seeds
ch'i maai	stick together
chûn	confuse, to mix
chun gurn	spring rolls
ch'ut moon	marriage of a girl (going out of the door)
faai tsź	chopsticks
faai tsź	quick, sons
faât ts'oî	edible algae
faa't ts'oī	get rich
fong	room, dwelling
fōng	descendants
foò	rich, wealth, abundance
foò	trousers
fung shui	geomancy (wind and water)
haāng laî	to perform ceremonies to exchange courtesies
haang ts'ing	spring festival
haau	filial piety
haî kam ī	the thought, motive, meaning
hap to so	almond cake
heung lei	neighbours (someone of the same village)
hing taî	brothers (also persons of same clan name)

hūng tsó	red dates
kaau kaai chi	to be betrothed (hand over the ring)
kai	pseudo-adopt
kai tafn cha	egg tea
kai tafn ko	egg sponge cake
kat	mandarin orange
kat	fortunate, lucky
kaú	nine
kau	dog
k'au t'aū	to kow tow, bow
k'aū ts'im	to divine by lots
kei nfm	hold in remembrance
keung	ginger
kîn lai	to salute, observe rites
kiû	to call, address
kiû hei	call the spirit
kong uē chee	dried scallops
koo ōn só	husband's sister becomes the brother's wife
à kung	maternal grandfather
kwaf	ghost, spirit, devil
kwaf sheung shan	possessed by a spirit
kwòh lai	performance of the rites (observe a ceremony)
laâm t'aū	over stop
lai	ceremony, rite, worship, etiquette
lai hōp	ceremonial box
lai kam	betrothal money
lai mât	gift, present

lei	gain, interest, sharp
lei shi	good luck money, "red-packet"
līn tsź	lotus seed
lin tsz	include, sons
lin yung p'eng	lotus seed cake
m̄ ho	not good
Mooi Uen	name of a county
moon uēt	a full month
mui yan	go-between
ngoi kà nui	a married daughter (a daughter married out)
ngoi kong yan	a person from distant parts
on hing taí	bestman, groomsman
oō	reciprocate
ooí soh	club building
paai	to worship, honour, make obeisances
paai tsaú	dinner celebration
paai tsō sin	to worship ancestors
paak	cypress
p'aak maai	together
paau uē	abalone (a kind of shell fish)
pan lōng	[illegible]l nut
p'ei taân so	cake with preserved egg
pin	side
p'oh	maternal grandmother
p'ooi uēt	companion for the month
poōn neung	a bridesmaid
(San) Kam Shaan	Johannesburg (new gold mountain)
san neūng	a bride

shaang	生	alive
shaang kwóh	生果	fresh fruit
shaang ts'oi	生菜	lettuce
shān	神	spirits, deities, divine
shān chué p'aaī	神主牌	ancestral tablet
shān chué t'oī	神主枱	ancestral altar (table)
shau kung	壽公	God of long life
shaū mīn	壽麵	noodles eaten at a longevity feast
shat laī	失禮	discourteous
shau	受	to receive, gather, to harvest
sheūng shaū	上壽	to celebrate the longevity birthday
shiu i	收衣	autumn festival (burn clothes)
Shun Tak	順德	name of a county
sin ts'an yan	親慼	relatives through marriage of deceased persons
sui	歲	age
sź	死	to die, death
taaī faī	大髮	a round loaf made with yeast
taaī kam	大監	woman who accompanies a bride
taaī kung	大公	great grandfather, ancestors
taaī paak kung	大伯公	great ancestor
taaī shaang yŭt	大生日	longevity birthday (big birthday)
taap san fōng	踏新房	to tread in new dwelling room
t'aū poōn hŏp	頭盤盒	the first ceremonial box
tau saa p'eng	豆沙餅	soya bean cake
teī	地	earth
têng fan	定婚	betrothal
t'in	天	heaven, sky
t'in kaí	天九	a card game
t'ōng kwóh	糖果	glacé fruits

t'o tei kung	earth gods
tòng	clan, lineage association
ts'am ch'ā	serve tea
ts'an ka	in-laws, near relatives by marriage
ts'an ts'ik	relatives, kindred
ts'an yan	relative
tsaí tsik	a feast, banquet
ts'eng ngoí mou	inviting the (groom's) mother-in-law
ts'eng nuī sai	inviting the son-in-law
t'ing meng	spring festival (bright and clear)
tsó kwan	kitchen god
ts'uen hôp	partitioned tray (for sweets)
ts'ung	pine
tsí kei	oneself
tsí kei yan	one's own people
t'sz t'ōng	ancestral hall
t'uêt fûk	conclude mourning
tung koo	edible mushroom
t'ung shue	almanac
uán pó laîp chuk	mock money and incense (items for ancestor worship)
uk k'ei	home
uen wān	unhappy, wandering ghost
yai	yard
yau lai	courteous, polite
yaū uē	ink fish
yē tsz p'eng	coconut cake
ying ts'an	recognise kinship

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B.J.S.	The British Journal of Sociology
H.M.S.O.	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
I.R.R.	Institute of Race Relations
J.A.S.	The Journal of Asian Studies
J.M.B.R.A.S.	Journal of Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society
J.O.S.	Journal of Oriental Studies
J.R.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
S.J.A.	Southwestern Journal of Anthropology

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