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The "Religious Family" among the Chinese of Central Taiwan

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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I have attempted to elucidate some basic principles relating the Chinese family and religion, using data from a village in central Taiwan. Some detailed materials are presented on various units of worship; the conjugal family, the household, temporal groups of households, the residential compound, and the lineage. I seek to illustrate the allocation of religious functions to these various units of belonging and to reveal some common features among them. First, religious units lie on a continuum, rather than being divided into contrasting categories. Kulp's term "religious family" [KULP 1925] should be re-evaluated in this context. Second, economic considerations are prominent in many of the religious relationships, including that between worshipper and gods. Third, there is a strong sense of "share holding" in most religious units in rural Taiwan which reveals much about religious practices. These features of Chinese religion might emerge even more clearly in a comparison with other Asian religious practices.

The term "religious family" seemed at first too ambiguous and confusing when I read Kulp's monograph on Phoenix village. He defines it as "the practical unit of ancestral worship" [KULP 1925: 145] including "all those persons who ordinarily come together for ancestor worship, whether of the moieties just beneath the sib in rank and size, or just above or identical with the economic groups" [KULP 1925: 146]. This definition seemed vague and covered units at various levels. Moreover, he added three other categories of family (natural, economic and conventional). I found, however, after having conducted field research among the Chinese in central Taiwan, that this first impression was derived partly from my bias as a Japanese.¹⁾ In Taiwan I found that various functions are distributed among groups and categories on various

1) The village was chosen as a sample where lineage organization is clearly observable. As Chen [1975: 116] points out, it is an enigma why the foreign researcher of Taiwan chooses only villages where the lineage is weak or absent.

The field work was conducted in the village for a total of four months (Jan. 8, 1976-April 7, 1976; December 22, 1976-January 7, 1977; August 20, 1977-September 8, 1977). I owe much to the kind help by scholars at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Nankang and to the generous support of villagers during my stay. I would like to express my gratitude to them.

levels, in contrast to Japan where the multi-functional *ie* (Japanese household) occupies the major part of social life. The questions raised by a Korean scholar might also be related to this same point, when he expressed some puzzlement at the similar title of another symposium, asking why religion would be paired with family instead of "individual" or other unit [NAKANE 1972: 115]. Japanese participants, however, took the combination for granted and never dreamed of such a question.

In what follows, I shall attempt to describe what is the "religious family", based on field data, and in so doing, consider some basic principles that make up Chinese social organization. That is, I shall use the term not as a conceptual tool for analysis but rather as a concept expressing unique features to be analyzed. Since my interest is more sociological than ideological, I will concern myself with social aspects of religious practices rather than with the content of belief.

THE VILLAGE

"Bamboo Village" is a Fukienese hamlet in central Taiwan, located between Taichung and Chai. The fictitious name I have given the village is adopted from the landscape, wherein a compound of red brick houses is surrounded by thick hedges of green bamboo. Seen from a distance, the village looks like an island of bamboo floating in a sea of paddy fields. This hamlet is part of a traditional local administrative unit, now composed of four villages in Shetou *hsiang* (rural township), with a total population of 37,557 in an area of 35.8 square km. Though traditionally the administrative unit was totally a farming area, it now includes some parts close to commercial centers. Recently factories have been built among the paddy fields. The population of Bamboo Village itself was 5,602 (911 households) in 1975 up from 4,355 (721 households) in 1955. It has increased by about 20 percent (30 percent for

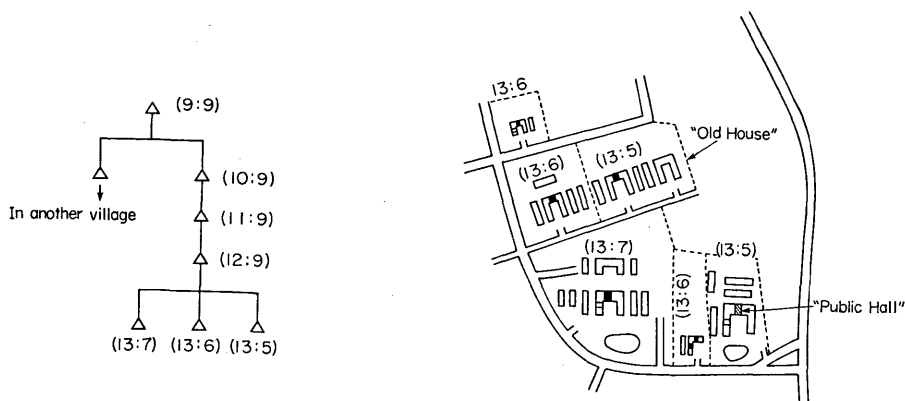


Figure 1. Compounds of the Hsiao in Bamboo Village.

LEGEND

- : Big Room with the domestic altar
- () : The apical ancestor or the compound
- (13:7): The compound of Rightsound

households) in the last 20 years. The natural increase itself has been greater, but many villagers have migrated to nearby cities. The average size of a household has remained almost constant, from 6.04 to 6.14.

Though the name of the township is associated with the aborigines, the present inhabitants, for the most part, are descendants of immigrants from Mainland China. The majority group is of the Hsiao lineage, which comprises 34.7 percent of the *hsiang's* population [CHEN 1975: 115]. Many of their ancestors are supposed to have come from Fukien Province, several generations ago, around the early 18th century. The lineage members live clustered in compounds separated from one another by walls of bricks and hedges of bamboo.

As an example let us choose the 13th generation compound of "Rightsound" now inhabited by those who moved from the adjacent "Old House" (Figure 1).

THE COMPOUND OF RIGHTSOUND

The compound is composed of 23 households of which 10 live in cities or towns. Most of the urban dwellers have given up the right to their rooms to their brothers or people with other surnames. Only three of them still keep rooms vacant. Only the Big Room (大庁) is jointly owned, thus permitting some urban migrants to return for worship of their ancestors. In addition, three households are partitioned with the ash of the incense pot of the "Big Room" brought to the altar of their own house.

The people of the compound say that their ancestors were poor when they came to Taiwan. It was the money earned by two menial servants that became the base of the present wealth of the Hsiao in this village. Therefore, they celebrate the Chinese All Souls' Festival (中元節) twice in order also to commemorate the souls of the faithful servants as well as soothing wandering ghosts in general. The Hsiao became especially prosperous in the fifteenth generation, increasing their property as rice merchants and amassing more than 20 ha of paddy field.

When the first registration took place in 1909 the compound was jointly owned. The first division took place among the descendants of the two senior grandsons of generation 13 and was registered in 1944. This division was initiated by Generous-Charity. Mastering bone setting and being a man of benevolence, he became such a famous doctor that many patients came also from other townships. Living an assiduous and frugal life he added 30 ha of paddy field to his own property; he constructed another set of buildings at the back of the main buildings;²⁾ he constructed his own Deity Room (神明庁) but continued to join in worshipping the ancestral tablets in the Big Room of the compound. After the end of the Second World War a woman of strong personality quarreled with the others of the compound and went

2) Freedman [1958: 49-50] points out this unequal segmentation of Chinese lineages. He [FREEDMAN 1966: 35] also stresses the importance of the study of the small land jointly held by segments beneath the level of the ancestral hall segment.

to court to demand definite division which led to the registration of the shares of the respective households comprising the compound.

Religious activities at the domestic level are held in several locations within the compound (Figure 2). A domestic altar is placed in the Big Room (G). There are four Deity Rooms (I₁~I₄) for gods of higher levels. The yard is used for Gods of lower levels and for the highest gods (天公). There is a distinction between who should be worshipped in front and back of the yard, and inside and outside of the compound. For example, the Gods of Heaven are celebrated in the courtyard inside the compound (A1, B1, C1), whereas the Gods of the Housesite are served food on a bench instead of an altar in the backyard (a1, a2, b3, b20). Wandering souls have been provided offerings outside the compound (B2, C2).

Residents often cooperate in worshipping gods and ancestors. Several levels in the formation of the units for worship can be distinguished: Firstly, a couple with young children may become a worshipping unit for the "Bed Mother" (床母), even though the couple belongs to a larger household unit. The goddess is believed to protect children, and the ritual is held on the evening of July 7. Though I did not find an example in which the deity is worshipped separately by several couples within a household, some informants admitted the possibility of such a case.

Secondly, a household sharing the fireplace and livelihood together worship the God of the Fireplace (灶君) in kitchens (k) and the God of the House-Site (地基主). The household is also the basic unit that prepares most of the offerings to the ancestors and high gods.

Thirdly, several households share the table of offerings outdoors and worships together, even though the offering dishes are prepared later and consumed separately. This joint worship by bringing one's share and taking it back is the unique feature which appears in many social activities of the Chinese. I shall call this the "bringing share" principle. This may be found, for example, in the worship of the God of Heaven, the Soldiers of Gods, and the Good Brothers (好兄弟).

Fourth, the whole compound worship together utilizing the "bringing share" principle on the ritual commemorating the anniversary of the death of Right-Sound, the founder of the compound. This ceremony is attended by a few household members who live in town. More women participate in most of the rituals of the compound than men. However, the rituals at the ancestral hall are supposed to be for men only. Even there, however, I saw a woman who brought the offerings on behalf of a particular segment.

LEGEND

number: household number

() : vacant

B : bathroom

D : dining room

K : kitchen

L : living & bed room

P : pigpen

R : room for guest

S : storehouse

T : toilet

nH : non-Hsiao family

G : Big Room

I₁, I₂, I₃, I₄: Deity Room

A~F: Places for rituals

: well

The "bringing share" principle is involved in most cooperative religious activities within the compound. I also note, however, another principle, "the rotation principle". It is applied in the management of the Big Room of the compound. Here the amount of responsibility assigned is proportionate to the share of the inheritance. This principle seems to be put into effect when some properties are owned jointly. We will be able to see this more clearly in the worship at graves and at ancestral halls.

GRAVE WORSHIP

Worship at the graves of ancestors annually occurs on the spring solstice, Ching-*ming* (清明), as well as on special occasions such as the birth or marriage of male descendants. The presence of some basic property for worship is important for maintaining the graves of remote ancestors. The grave of Right-Sound had 3.7 ha of paddy field as supporting property, but 3 ha of it was divided among the descendants before the end of the Second World War and now the remnant is rented. The rent is used for the offerings at the grave and for the expenses of the domestic altar. There are now only a small number of participants in grave worship. Informants say that many descendants would take part were the property large enough to make as rich offerings as in older times.

The graves of subsequent generations are without basic property and are worshipped by the "bringing share" principle of offerings prepared in each household. For recent ancestors there are more worshippers. Graves without property, however, tend to be obliterated as the generations pass. However, in a rare case an older age descendant may make efforts to care for the graves of the more remote ancestors, offering only incense and covering them with yellow paper.

I witnessed one case in which it took nearly twenty minutes to identify in the public cemetery the grave of the second grandmother. It can be inferred that many graves of remote ancestors were forgotten when there was no custom of inscribing names on the grave stone.

THE PUBLIC HALL

In Bamboo Village, there is a building called "public hall" which does not belong to either of the compounds (Figure 1) though descendants of one lineage live in both wings of the building. The hall occupies the center of a U-shaped structure with almost the same appearance as the Big Room of ordinary compounds. Like a domestic altar, a board-type tablet is placed on the altar with a pot of incense, containing 93 names of ancestors beginning with one of the 10th generation. Though it is somewhat more impressive, it would be impossible to distinguish it from a Big Room by outward appearance alone.

It is similar to an Ancestral Hall in the following points: financial trusts are attached, and rituals are financed by profit from the trust instead of utilizing the "bringing share" principle. Many guests participate in its rituals. The trusts are

dedicated to a particular ancestor of the 9th generation although his name is not listed among the ancestors worshipped—which commence with one of those of the 10th generation. This prevented the inclusion of descendants of the 9th generation ancestor now residing elsewhere from possible participation. This instance brings out the necessary distinction maintained between the domestic altar room and the ancestral hall.³⁾

THE HSIAO ON THE MAINLAND AND IN TAIWAN: PARTICIPATION DESPITE DISTANCE

According to genealogical records, the great grandfather of the founder of the present lineage segment came to Fukien Province as a high officer. His two grandsons established themselves at the local places which became the residential bases of the two major segments of the lineage. It was well after ten generations that some of their descendants moved to Taiwan. By this time there had been considerable segmentation of the lineage, judging from the halls built for the major ancestors. It is interesting to note how in Taiwan there developed the halls and trusts similar to those found on the mainland. A lineage like the Hsiao of Shetou might be compared to a tree grown from a cutting while the parent tree continues to grow in the homeland.⁴⁾

Communication between these two segments of the lineage continued well until the end of the Second World War. Informants say that some trusts sent money for ancestral rituals held on the mainland and some even visited the mainland to participate in the ritual held at the ancestral hall. There were also visitors from the mainland who stayed on until they received money to "repair the graves and ancestral halls at home".

ANCESTRAL HALLS

The Hsiao of Shetou have eight halls. A hall is used to house memorial tablets for the ancestors and for commemorating rituals once or twice a year. A hall keeper, living in the side building, offers tea and incense daily. Some of these halls owned enormous amounts of paddy fields, the rent of which provided for large-scale rituals. The size of the hall and the richness of ritual were the symbols of the unity and the relative status of the segment of the lineage, as can be noted in the folk song about the ancestral ritual of the Hsiao [SUENARI 1977: 124-144].

If we judge only from wealthier examples we might consider ancestor worship

- 3) The ancestral hall in Ch'nan described by Ahern [1973] seems to resemble the Big Room in Shetou in several aspects [SUENARI 1978: 44]. Nelson [1974: 266-267] also discusses an intermediate form found in Hong Kong.
- 4) Professor Chen Chi-nan of the Academia Sinica suggested that such a lineage might be compared to a transplanted tree. Strictly speaking, however, this metaphor should be applied only to a case when the members of an entire lineage move to another place.

as uniform for all or as remaining stable through time. A more careful examination, however, discloses the wide range of size and the radical rise and fall of ancestral halls. Before the end of the Second World War, some of the halls of this village held annual rituals, inviting hundreds of guests to performances of Taiwanese drama and to the feast that followed. In the case of "B" hall, for example, on one occasion, they had forty tables for guests and prepared as many straw mats for children totaling nearly a thousand people in all. Hall "A" was next in the size of ritual, whereas "D" and "F" were less notable and their activities were not well known even by the Hsiao of other segments. "E" is said to have lost its property through poor management before the end of the Second World War. Now their site is used for the community shrine of the god Kuan-ti. Though "D" had a large hall with a pond to the south, their site now has been sold off and moved to a small hut at the foot of the mountain and it is managed by a descendant who was little successful in business. After land reform in 1953 "B", "G", and "H" had little property left. I saw no worshippers on a festive day other than the managers of the hall trust. Such variation and change is quite natural when one considers that care for the hall is affected by the politico-economic power of the descendants; ancestral halls reflect also the adversity suffered by descendants.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREPARING THE CEREMONY

Though rotation is the major principle in the activities at an ancestral hall with property, the independence of each segment is also seen in the process of the ceremony. Each stirp, or branch lineage, composing a segment of the trust brings its offerings and display at the hall. Feast tables are also assigned to each. These are determined by the property distributed to each segment. The principle of "bringing share" does not involve lower units such as households.

It is misleading to imagine a strong sense of reverence to a remote ancestor as just because there are sumptuous festivals held at the lineage halls. Such feasts are feasible only when there is enormous property attached to the halls. Maintenance of the hall is more related to other motives such as a display of economic or political power, rather than religious reverence. If the presence of a hall reflects directly the strong sense of veneration of ancestors, then it might be possible that an ancestral hall maintained without much economic base might also be memorialized by the "bringing share" principle just as performed for rituals held at the domestic altar. This does not happen at any of the halls maintained by the Hsiao. Such practice indeed was observed at a hall of another lineage, the Liu. In their hall members brought offerings that they cooked in households and they took back after the ritual, just as performed at the ritual held at the Big Room of the Hsiao.

LINEAGE TRUST

A lineage trust is the joint property of the lineage or of a particular segment. The

property utilized usually is paddy land rented to its members or sometimes to outsiders. A trust is both a symbol of the unity of the segment and a potential source of conflict within the group. In Shetou township, lineage land amounted to 766 ha, or 41.9 percent of the total arable land. The Hsiao of Shetou owned about 73.4 percent of the lineage land (500 ha) [SAKA 1936: 666, 769-770]. The average size of farm land per household was 0.73 ha in 1932 [SHATO KOGAKKO 1932]. It is tempting to ask why such an enormous amount of land came to be owned collectively when there were so many landless farmers.

It is conjectured that the Hsiao trusts in Shetou began to be organized around the middle of the 18th century. A survey shows 1744 as the year of origin for trust organization in Shetou, though the source document is not indicated [SHATO KOGAKKO 1932]. In this early period, immigrants participated in the ancestral rituals of an ancestral hall only by sending money to the mainland. However, once able to establish a permanent economic base for their life in Taiwan, they began to organize trusts and to construct halls. The first date appearing in the preface of the memorandum of the Hsiao Eleven-units Trust is 1763. They took their own share of the trust on the mainland and used it as a fund for the new trust organized in Taiwan. The trust is further subdivided into junior level trusts. An informant said that the segmentary composition of the trust is the same as on the mainland. If this is true, we may infer that immigrants came almost evenly out of the parent population in the mainland. Otherwise it would be difficult to maintain such an organization. Each major stirp, or branch lineage, had at least a few immigrants who could represent them.

A trust may be started from a portion set aside for the cult of ancestors at the time inheritance is distributed, or from a sum contributed by descendants. In the latter case stocks are established in the names of ancestors who have suitable positions in the genealogy which can represent the contributors. Also, they can organize a new trust from the surplus of an older fund, giving it a different name but having the same group of members. Why this is done is not always clear. There may be quite a few trusts with different names organized by the same descendants. I noted in one instance five trusts dedicated to the name of one ancestor.

Trusts were also re-organized due to fission, as some segment of a lower level became influential and independent from other segments of the same order. On the other hand, there are relatively few cases in which several segments united to organize an upper level trust. The only example that I could check out was the construction of the ancestral hall of "A". Hsiao's trusts proliferated by one or another of these processes. Saka [1936] reports that 147 trusts existed in 1929, although many trusts had already been liquidated as a result of conflicts and lawsuits among their members. Informants say that the trusts were declining in the Taisho era (1912-1926) because there were so many lawsuits that the Japanese government had to make a new law to deal with them. The court records have been one of the major sources of documentary data on the trust [SUENARI 1980a]. I have been able to check the names of 82 trusts and 42 ancestors to whom these trusts were dedicated.

The major function of a trust seems to have been to assure land to cultivate for the

poor landless lineage members. In former times in Taiwan, before land reform, the demand for arable land was high owing to population pressure. Landowners occupied an advantageous position. The rent was high (often more than 50%) and the land could be given to another cultivator at the will of the owner. It was customary to bring a small gift to the landowner on the Moon Festival Day or on his birthday to ensure his good favors [GALLIN 1966: 89-93]. If the land belongs to the trust of the lineage there is no fear of eviction provided the rent is paid. Hence, a trust is a kind of a cooperative land association managed by the lineage.

Another important function might have been to defend the land against the encroachment by other groups. There is an interesting example of this.

A man of Hsiao came from the adjacent county to settle in Shetou. When he bought a house and lot the seller required him to buy the pond at the same time. Fearing that robbers and other influential surname groups would mark him as a rich man and encroach on his property, he asked leaders of the big trusts of Hsiao to buy the pond jointly. Two trusts took a quarter of share jointly and the other trusts took a quarter of share respectively. This trust is still managed as a fish pond by his descendants and the trusts.

The question remains why this trust is not regarded as a lineage trust even though it is organized by members of the Hsiao lineage. The condition necessary for a typical lineage trust seems to have required an ancestor as a focal point: an idiom of ancestor worship is involved even if the major objective of the trust is economic or political. We can, then, see why ancestral halls without economic function are left to decay and only a few people are interested in the continuation of rituals. Idioms cannot survive by themselves. Closer ancestors are worshipped not *pro forma* but with more expressive emotional motivation involving personal memories or feelings of gratitude held by descendants valuing the gift of life or the inheritance of properties. Therefore, I infer that the Hsiao continue to worship their proximate ancestors on the domestic level by a "bringing share" method even when they lack common property. This contention supports Freedman's dichotomy of ancestor worship as functioning on a lineage level and on a domestic level. The dichotomy is useful for distinguishing the emotional sources of ancestor worship from other purposes. We should note, however, that this contrast is useful only in the abstract. A border cannot be so clearly demarcated in any continuum between household and the lineage group functions. Even on the domestic level the sense of sharing is a basic principle unifying the group in all its purposes as is true for the lineage level.

The concept of sharing is cardinal to the formation and the management of a trust, and is closely associated with the distribution of goods. The profit from the trust is divided in either of three ways of calculation—per stirpes, or branch lineages; per capita; or by stocks. Freedman [1966: 51-54] discusses the distinction of "per stirpes" and "per capita", and notes that the former was often applied only at the time of the foundation, so that the descendants subsequently took their share per capita.

The first form of division follows after the principle of equal inheritance among sons; the second is the allocation of profit to each living male member; and the third means to divide the profit in proportion to the amount of the stock which the original members invested. Tai [1945: 233–369] applies this classification to different types of trusts, but I think these three ways can be combined and applied to the same organization for different purposes, for the stock may be owned jointly by the descendants of the original owner, and the trust may supply a grant-in-aid to a successful candidate. One informant said that he was able to attend and graduate from the higher normal school by such grants from the four trusts to which he was related.

A similar function is at work in a "respect-for-the-aged grant" which is paid irrespective of the stirps one belongs to or of the stock one holds. Judging from one example, it is not always clear which methods apply in the distribution of the assets. When one grant was dissolved in 1935, there arose a dispute regarding what principle should be used to divide the assets. The descendants of one brother formed the majority and insisted on the division per capita, whereas the descendants of the other wanted to adopt a per stirpes calculation. The latter constituted the minority and was voted down but they instituted a court case and succeeded to getting a share per stirpes. This case might indicate the existence of the unstable balance between the per stirpes way based on the inheritance rule and the per capita way that reflects the actual population and power of various segments [SUENARI 1977: 109–111]. This tension between two principles could be a cause for the structural dispersion of trust groups in the long run.

The same imbalance between two principles may be also found on the household level. For example, difference in the number of sons between brothers, combined with the inheritance rule by stirpes, might lead to unequal economic status in the next generation. This would be counter to the solidarity of a family based on an equal status of those in the group (per capita principle). So, the Chinese "religious family" may be usefully analyzed as a unit on a continuum rather than representing two distinct contrasting categories of membership.

FEATURES OF THE RELIGIOUS FAMILY

The following characteristics of the "religious family" of Central Taiwan emerge. First, religious units lie on a continuum from smaller to larger. A lineage trust may be organized for the ancestors of more proximate lower levels to more distant generational levels. The size of the trust can vary from small, with less than 1 ha of paddy land, to large with more than 100 ha. The number of worshippers at the grave may vary according to the generation of the ancestors and the nature of the gods. We may regard any of these units as a "family" in the wider sense of the word. Of course the lineage as a jural unit may also be contrasted with the family as a domestic unit. It provides a useful insight for understanding Chinese kinship. But, as far as the data from Shetou are concerned, it leaves some gaps between facts and theory [SUENARI 1978: 45–46, 49]. If the term is used too strictly, limiting it to the household

unit, then we may overlook the dispersing of domestic functions to other units on various levels of inclusion which is, I think, one of the critical features of Chinese kinship. It would also be useful, therefore, to notice such a widening extension of terms in order to comprehend the local usage of the term "family" for wider units. The concept of "family" or "house" is often extended elsewhere to wider units as found in the usage of the Hsiao "family" (蕭家) for the Hsiao "lineage" or of the Liu "house" (劉厝) as applied to clusters of compounds of Liu, or "Old House" (故厝) from which new units are divided. We find such tendencies also recorded in the description by Ahern [1973: 61].

Second, one must note the prevalence of economic considerations in family relationships. Most relationships are formed and expressed in terms of economic reciprocity. One of the motives for ancestor worship is the sense of obligation for having obtained property through inheritance. There have been many studies of this function. For example, Ahern [1973: 144-147] writes that the presence of inheritance property is one of the major factors motivating worship of descendants. The "succession to the deceased" (過繼) is practiced as a reciprocal obligation to continue the fire of incense in repayment for inheritance of the property rights of the deceased. Remote ancestors are worshipped with offerings only when there is basic property for it. Even the relationship between gods and worshipper is contractual: the latter gives the former a small offering as token of cognizance and prays for help promising to make offerings of a larger amount if the wish is fulfilled. Thus A. Wolf [1974: 162] writes, "If divination reveals that the god is not inclined to grant the petition, he then promises a more substantial gift, repeating the process until the god finally agrees." Such a sense of contractual economic reciprocity is more clearly seen in the relationship with gods of a lower level, since it is easy to bargain with them, even on immoral matters.

Third, a strong sense of conscious sharing is characteristic of Chinese social organization [WANG 1967, 1971]. Sharing is the basic concept utilized in many of the religious groups, business groups, or voluntary associations as well as trust groups or other units found within a compound. The three ways of calculating shares, however, sometimes leave room for choices that might be manipulated to adapt rights into uneven realities. On the household level, for example, a sense of inequality as to what is to be one's share is strongly felt before a possible division of a household. The cause for such a division is often the uneven contributions of male members, though, interestingly enough, such division is culturally attributed to the incorrigible egoistic nature of rivalrous women. The rivalry is actually between applying the principle of stock contribution versus the principle of per capita, the equal rights as a members. Though income by each member is pooled and managed collectively in the household account, there is a sense of independent sharing rather than a sense of total immersion in the group.

A CONCLUDING COMPARISON

The above mentioned features of the Chinese religious family become clearer when compared with those operative in Japan and Korea.

Japan provides a case at the opposite extreme from that of China. The Japanese *ie* assumes most of the functions which are assigned to units of various levels in Taiwan. It is not only an economic unit but also a religious unit of worship of ancestors or gods, and also the unit of life crisis rituals and many of the other social activities. The *Dōzoku* (a group of *ie* related by main and branch relationships within a hamlet) may be compared with the compound in Taiwan, but one notes quickly it is not characterized by differentiation at various levels, as in the latter. In Northeastern Japan, ancestors of higher generations are worshipped at the main household; since they are regarded as ancestors only of the main household. The descendants of the branch households send one person as a representative from each household to attend the ritual of the main household, but they do not view it as a ritual for their own ancestors. They participate in it as an event of the main household, just as a man of the main household takes part in the worship of the ancestors of the branch household who are not his direct ancestors. Though *dōzoku*, in some parts of Western Japan, might worship an ancestor jointly, it is only the founding ancestor that is worshipped collectively by its members and the custody of worship of lower ancestors are assorted to the households to which they belonged in their lifetime [YONEMURA 1976: 186ff]. Relationships with ancestors or gods are based more on emotion rather than contract [PLATH 1964]. They worship ancestors even though no secular gains are promised or even if it is not prescribed by some Confucianism rule of behavior.

Although there is a rotation system to assign the responsibility of celebrating gods, the sense of sharing does not penetrate widely. Usually, offerings to gods at the festivals are prepared jointly. Though they collect the expenses from each community household, they pool them and after making the offering eat it together without taking it to each household.

The Korean case is, at first sight, very close to that of Japan. Their household (*chip* 집) is, ideally, composed of a stem family by which the eldest son remains with his parents and his younger brothers leave their natal household after marriage. The household is not only the economic unit, but also the unit of religious activities concerning folk deities, such as the Protecting God of Family or the God of House Site. The allotments of the expense of the village festivals are collected by each household. The names of the heads of the households are read when paper is burned in dedication to the village god at the community festival. But this is just one aspect of family as a worship unit. When we look at the activities involving ancestor worship generally, differentiation into various levels beyond the household emerges. Koreans also gather at the household of the eldest son for the ritual commemorating the anniversaries of the deaths of ancestors. The responsibility for those ceremonies is committed to the eldest. Though this may seem identical with the Japanese case,

there is a sharp difference in the consciousness of the participants. The ancestor in Korea is "our ancestor" instead of the ancestor of the main household. Furthermore, segmentary gradation of the patrilineal lineage may be observed.

As for the relationship between ancestors and worshippers, Koreans seem to be more formalistic. This is not only seen in the manner of Confucian worship to ancestors, but also in the salutation of the children to their living grandparents [JANELLI 1973: 180-187]. Confucian manners are observed even more faithfully among Koreans than among the Chinese of Taiwan [SUENARI 1980b].

The "bringing share" principle is not so clear although Koreans organize associations in which membership is based on equal shares. Distribution is managed by the principle of rotation among members. Here an equalitarian principle of sharing is stressed except in some financial associations. During my field work in a fishing village in the East Coast of Korea I gained the strong impression that although a sense of calculation is strong, the emotional incentive seems to be the more important element involved in group solidarity. Offerings to the gods, collected from the households, are consumed together, just as in the Japanese case.

In general I would conclude the Chinese "religious family" may be regarded as relationships existing on various levels, whereas the Japanese lack intermediate units beyond the *ie* level. The Korean case seem to fall between those operative in China and Japan.

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