A CHINESE VILLAGE

Taitou, Shantung Province

YANG

A CHINESE VILLAGE

Taitou, Shantung Province

By MARTIN C. YANG

Columbia University Press, New York · 1945

The completion and publication of this study were made possible by funds granted by the Viking Fund, Inc., a foundation created and endowed at the instance of A. L. Wenner-Gren for scientific, educational, and charitable purposes. The Viking Fund, Inc., is not, however, the author or publisher of this publication, and is not to be understood as approving, by virtue of its grant, any of the statements made, or views expressed, therein.

Foreign agent: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Humphrey Milford, Amen House,
London, E.C., 4, England, AND B. I. Building,
Nicol Road, Bombay, India

MANUFACTURED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Foreword

THE rise of community studies is one of the most significant phenomenon in the development of the social studies. Such studies have come into being in response to certain trends which are evident in modern science in general. Scientific research began with the more or less artificial isolation of particular phenomena and their investigation without relation to the contexts in which they normally occurred. However, it became increasingly evident that there were factors of patterning and of functional interrelations between phenomena of different orders which could not be revealed by this approach. The importance of such factors increases with the complexity of the configurations into which phenomena are integrated and reaches a climax in the social situations with which sociology, anthropology and, to a lesser extent, personality psychology have to deal. The community study constitutes a frank recognition of the necessity for investigating such situations as wholes. It contributes equally to the development of pure and of applied science. It reveals, as no other type of investigation can, the interrelations of the multitudinous factors which influence the life both of the community and its component individuals. It also provides that intimate understanding of individual needs and desires without which no attempt at planned change can be successful.

How to study and describe the life of any community is, in itself, a problem of no mean proportions. While there has been a steady improvement in our perception of the wide range of phenomena which have to be observed and recorded, community studies which appeared quite adequate a few years ago fail to provide answers to many of the questions which we ask today. Most of the earlier studies were primarily enumerative and designed to provide the sort of data which would lend themselves most readily to statistical treatment. They tell us how many washing machines there were in a village at a certain time or how many villagers belonged to each of how many churches. Although the value of such data is still recognized, modern social scientists are becoming increasingly interested in discovering how washing machines or churches are integrated into the life of the community and how the people feel about them.

As long as the social scientist is dealing with American or even Western European communities, lack of information on these points is partially compensated for by a background of common understandings. Even in the absence of specific data many things can be taken for granted. However, as soon as one attempts to deal with communities whose cultures are fundamentally different from our own very few things can be taken for granted. There are, to be sure, certain common denominators of human motivation, but these are too general to provide much help in the understanding of specific situations. Between such universal factors and the overt behavior characteristic of the members of any community there lies a zone of concepts and attitudes. It is these covert elements of culture which give the overt behavior its social significance and without a knowledge of them much of this behavior will remain inexplicable.

How to penetrate the covert level of an alien culture is still one of the most difficult problems which confronts the investigator. Since most of any society's attitudes operate at the unconscious level, they can rarely be ascertained by direct questioning. Even when the members of a community are thoroughly friendly and cooperative, they are still unable to tell the investigator many things simply because they have never thought about them. The investigator will have to discover such things for himself. If he is to do this successfully he must have not only an intimate knowledge of the language but also a genuine sympathy with his subjects and a more than ordinary degree of sensibility. He must be able to perceive the emotional context of situations and to understand much that is left unsaid. Unfortunately, it is an open question whether such sensibility can be either learned or taught. At least it is vastly more difficult to acquire it than to learn a strange language or the formal techniques in recording a community's organization and activities.

Most American social scientists are fully conscious of these difficulties. They know that the best way to acquire an intimate knowledge of any culture is and always will be to be reared in it. As a result they are turning more and more to individuals who were born and brought up in non-European cultures for aid in understanding these cultures. It is much easier for such persons to acquire the necessary scientific techniques for community study than it is for outsiders to acquire the sort of knowledge of a community without which these techniques are of little value. Any individual who attempts to describe the life of his own community must, of course, approach it with a more than ordinary measure of objectivity.

However, the non-European who acquires real skill in the use of European scientific techniques can hardly fail to develop this objectivity also. Any individual who has participated intimately in two cultures is in a position to see both with heightened clarity. Every point of contrast brings into consciousness attitudes and values which might otherwise remain unconscious. "Marginal men" are in a position not only to interpret their cultures to us but also to interpret our culture to ourselves. It is safe to predict that some of the most valuable contributions to social science will come from scientists who, because of this double cultural participation, can approach both facts and theoretical formulations with detachment.

The present book shows how happy the results of such a blending of intimate knowledge and scientific training can be. Although it is not the first study of its sort, it seems to me to be one of the most successful. Dr. Yang knows his village as only a villager could, yet looks at it with scientific detachment. His descriptions are both accurate and sympathetic and will be of equal interest to the social scientist and the general reader. One finishes the book with a feeling that these are real people and people very like ourselves.

RALPH LINTON

Columbia University, New York

Author's Preface

AS the rural rehabilitation movement assumes increasing weight in China's national reconstruction program, statesmen, economists, and social leaders are coming to realize that a scientific and comprehensive study of China's rural life, past and present, is a prime necessity in the furtherance of this movement. Study of this kind can eliminate much of the waste and inefficency which has marked the beginnings of the movement and can also prevent many tragic mistakes.

The present world situation is bringing nations increasingly into closer contact. Far-sighted statesmen and students of humanity realize that the foundation of international association lies in the ability of different nations to understand each other's cultures. It is gratefully observed that China in the past half century has had the privilege of being studied from a cultural point of view by numerous Western scholars. The writing of this book is a small part of one of these projects. The writer hopes that his work may contribute something to the cultural understanding between China and America.

The village of Taitou has been selected as the object of the first study because the writer was born and reared there, and lived there until he entered high school. Until recent years, he has returned to the village at least once each year, the periods of his visits varying from five days to several months. He has maintained his contacts with his relatives in Taitou and has kept himself informed about the daily life and significant happenings in the village. Therefore, this study is a record of facts which have been personally seen, heard, and experienced.

The great problem in a study of this sort is the selection of the best method of presentation. The usual way is to choose the important aspects in the daily life of the community—economic, social, political, religious, educational—and to describe each one in detail. The better way seems to be to begin with the presentation of the most primary group and follow through to the limits of the social range. From a dynamic point of view, a society is made up of the complicated interactions between individuals in a primary group and between groups in the larger organizations. The actual life of a society, as well as of an individual, is like a stream starting from its source and flowing toward a larger body of

water. It is also a process of diffusion or radiation, the relationships being more loosely integrated the further removed they are from the primary source. An effective method for studying the life of a rural community is to start with the interactions between the individual in the primary groups, go on to those between the primary groups in the secondary group, and finally those between the secondary groups in a large area. An important consideration is that in each of these areas, the life must be presented in its entirety, not in fragmented pieces.

In Taitou we find that the family is a primary group. It is true that in a large family there may be two or three smaller basic units, such as a married son with his wife and children, who form a small exclusive group within the family pattern. But so long as all members live under the same roof and work and eat together, the family is a unified, primary group.

The village is a secondary group. Between the family and the village, there are various transitional groupings—clans, neighborhoods, the associations of families on the basis of similar social or economic status or school affiliations, and religious groups. Beyond the village is the market town, which draws all the villages together in a loose but nevertheless distinct relationship. It represents the large area, and the transitional links between it and the village are the groups of small villages and the groups of families which are of one clan but which are scattered in two or three neighboring villages. The interactions in these groups are sometimes different from those in all other kinds of groups and cannot be ignored.

Based on the above method and findings, the present study is organized as follows: first, the physical environment, the social pattern, the people who live in the community, their means of livelihood, and their standard of living are described. Thus the reader first sees the village as a static community. However, the foundations of the social life lie in the interactions of the individuals within the family. To explain the Chinese conception of the family, a typical farm family in Taitou is described in respect to the interactions between the family members, economic and ceremonial activities, the rearing and training of children, the caring for the old, and the significance of marriage.

In discussing the villagers' standard of living, our method is to describe what kinds of food the people actually eat in a year and how they prepare the three meals every day. Attention has also been paid to some conspicuous customs in relation to food consumption and to the social stratification as regards the general types of meals prepared in different families.

Since it has not been approached from a dollar-and-cents point of view, nothing has been presented in tables or charts, or, in other words, in statistics.

Beyond the family, life extends to the village; therefore, the next description has to do with village life. In this section it is apparent that the life of the village is much less significant than that of the family. Although the village is a unity with a unified life of its own, and a clearly defined leadership, it also has smaller groups within its own organization. The next section of the book, therefore, has to do with village organizations, neighborhood activities, extra-village associations, village conflicts, and village leadership. Since the clan organization plays now and then a significant role in regard to individuals as well as families, it is necessary to devote some space to its form and activities.

Rural life beyond the village is seen in relations of the village to the market town. It is also seen in the relations of the village to neighboring villages in the same market town area. No attempt is made to divide these relationships into economic, social, political, religious, or educational aspects, since the writer's purpose is to present the picture as an integrated whole.

In conclusion, the relations between the village and the places beyond the market town area are briefly mentioned, special emphasis being paid to the recently developed relationship with Tsingtao.

The writer believes that it is possible to picture the daily life of a rural community with the framework thus outlined. And to make the picture real, through the eyes of a person who actually grew up in the community and experienced most of the social life described, the study is concluded with the story of a villager's boyhood. The writer feels justified in saying that the information given in this study is reliable and that the life picture thus presented is preserved in its wholeness so far as possible; he hopes that the rural community of Taitou will be culturally understood by the readers.

However, statistical accuracy cannot be claimed in regard to the figures that have been given, except those cited from published books or articles; nor can the complete exactitude of all the information be guaranteed. This is regrettable, but inevitable, since the writing was done in a place several thousand miles away from the village and was dependent entirely upon memory.

Disagreement regarding the described economic and social conditions in the village is expected from people who are familiar, in one way or another, with rural China. Some may feel that the picture has been

painted too favorably; others may accuse the writer of being too lenient with the landlords, usurers, and the crooked village gentry. Whatever the criticisms may be, the truth lies in the fact that one cannot cover all phases of China in one study. China is so huge, and its living conditions are, due to the undeveloped means of communication and transportation, so diverse from place to place that what one observes in South China may be entirely different in the north. Even in the same province, one finds quite different economic and social practices in various sections. For this reason, one cannot assume that because abuses exist in some parts of China, these must be found also in Taitou, and that if life is dark in some village, it must be the same in this one. The readers are here assured that the writer tried very hard to free himself from any significant bias. There has been no intention to exaggerate one element of the culture and conceal another. He has tried his best to recall things as they actually existed in the past and are existing today. He has also tried to explain everything in such terms that most of the villagers themselves would agree with his statements. Of course, he could not avoid including in his writing some of his own points of view.

The study was made possible by the kind sponsorship of the Department of Anthropology of Columbia University, of which Professor Ralph Linton is the chairman. Professor Linton not only supervised the whole study, but also read the manuscript with great patience several times and made numerous valuable suggestions. His genuine appreciation of the work encouraged the writer a great deal and in turn helped the accomplishment.

Acknowledgment is also due Miss Leona Steinberg, who rendered appreciable assistance throughout the work. She edited the manuscript and made many suggestions regarding the organization of the material.

Apologies and appreciation are given to the villagers of Taitou who have been referred to in the study. In no case were real names given, but since the community is one in which people know each other intimately, and, since the life described is entirely contemporary, the individuals and families cited will be easily identifiable to the present inhabitants of Taitou. What must be pointed out here is that all the citations have been made in the single purpose of scientific study; there is not the slightest personal favor and disfavor involved.

M.C.Y.

Columbia University, New York
April, 1945

Introduction

FREEDOM from want," one of the four freedoms enumerated by President Roosevelt as a goal for humanity, has stimulated world-wide interest. The Hot Springs Conference on Food and Agriculture held in 1943 made unmistakably clear the fact that food is basic to the health and welfare of people and that great changes in the application of science to agriculture will have to be brought about if the world's populations are to be more adequately fed. The hope that science holds out for a better world is stimulating a growing interest in the development of more scientific and productive agriculture in China, India, and other densely populated nations. More and more leaders from these countries and from other parts of the world are coming to the United States to learn about scientific developments in agriculture. They do so with an interest that applies not only to science as such, but to the practical applications of science to production and living.

During the past decade we have had a remarkable development in the social sciences. We are learning that progress in one science must inevitably be followed by progress in all others. For example, many laboratory and experimental findings in the field of agriculture have been enlarged upon in medical research to the ultimate welfare of human health. In two other fields, soil conservation and human nutrition, we have only recently made considerable progress in extending through mass education, some of the findings of research. Our progress in extending these scientific truths has been made possible through researches in the social sciences, through extension education, and the raising of the educational level of the masses of our people.

If we are to make continued progress in applying the findings of science to human welfare we will need to know more about the manner, methods, and means man employs in making a living; the way he organizes to accomplish the things he considers important; the level of living he has and the standard he strives for; the ideas he has about ways of making a living; and the channels of communication with the world outside. We need to have a greater appreciation of the basic values by which people live and the processes and forces that must be effective if change is to occur.

In the field of agriculture there has not, until recent years, been an awareness of the importance of understanding "culture." Missionary workers in other countries have in general not been fully oriented to the new culture and have as a result ignored many of the cultural principles developed by the social scientist. The American people have been appreciative and sympathetic toward China. Missionaries have gone to China and rendered outstanding service. Agricultural experts from the United States have gone there and helped in many ways, and yet the impacts of scientific agriculture on China have been very slight.

It seems inevitable that many changes will take place in China after the war. Since China is a rural nation its changes in agriculture are likely to be far-reaching. Because of the stresses and strains of war, China will want to rehabilitate its agriculture as soon as possible so that its gallant people may not long suffer. To help direct these changes, China's agricultural students and technicians are now coming to the United States for training in research and Extension.

Dr. Yang's book presents a living account of rural China as seen in its cultural and social setting—a rural village. Before reading Dr. Yang's book I had read many of the books on China's agriculture which were readily available and from each learned about different segments and phases of China's agriculture and rural life. To my knowledge this book is the first of its kind to tie together the various phases of rural life in China in a thoroughly coherent and understanding story.

I cannot think of many writings which can possibly be more timely so far as China and the United States are concerned. Those who read the book will be immediately impressed with the fact that rural China has a culture vastly different from ours. We know from experience that we cannot transplant our culture to Asia. If we have a scientific basis for understanding how the culture of the Chinese works, we should be able to give to China more intelligent assistance in the task of agricultural reconstruction. Dr. Yang's book can, in my estimation, make a great contribution, which will assist us in aiding, in such ways as China may desire, in the planning and the development of a more productive and scientific agriculture; for he has laid before us a new and scientific key to an understanding of the rural culture of China.

Dr. Yang's book is important to all workers in the field of agriculture from another angle. It is a fine example of a new approach by which the methods of cultural anthropology are brought to bear in an agricultural

community. I hope that more such studies will be forthcoming from other parts of the world. Such studies will be very important from the standpoint of the improvement of rural conditions throughout the world.

M. L. Wilson
Director of Extension Work
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D. C.
January, 1945

Contents

The Village Site | 1

THE village of Taitou is located on a stretch of level land ringed with mountains on the southwestern shore of Kiaochow Bay. Directly across the bay to the east is a small peninsula, on the southern end of which is the city of Tsingtao. This city, which has grown up in recent decades, now provides Shantung and its neighboring provinces with means of access to the outside world. It is a center of commerce, industry, and transportation and thus plays an important role in the growing trade between rural China and the manufacturing centers in distant parts of the world.

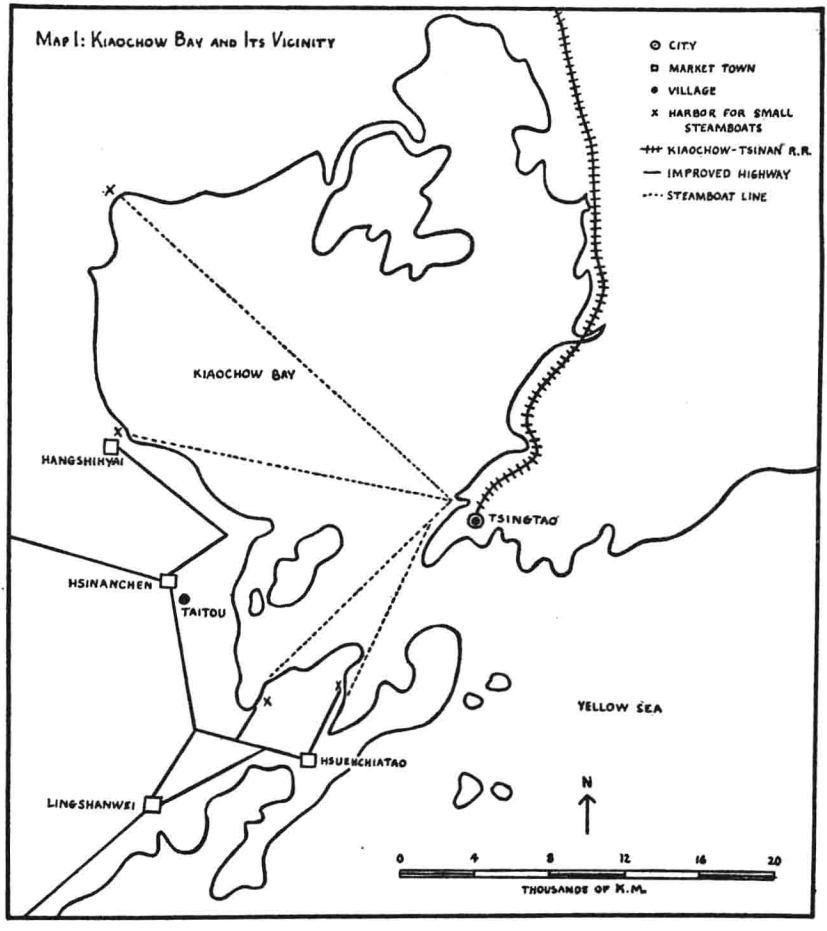
This region is one of the oldest agricultural areas in China. Its people are almost all farmers who cultivate their own land and live in compact villages. There are about twenty villages and a rural town. The town is Hsinanchen—the only marketing center for the region. Taitou is about two thirds of a mile south of Hsinanchen with which it is connected by a new highway. The communication between this area and the outside is comparatively good; there are improved land routes and modern sea vessels. When the villagers want to go to Tsingtao, for instance, they take a highway that leads south to the small port of Hsuehchiatao and from there take a steamboat across the bay. When the weather is good, there are numerous routes that can be traversed by sailing boat. To the north there is a modern motor road leading to Wangtai, a large market town, and thence to the county seat of Kiaohsien. While Taitou is politically a part of the County of Kiaohsien, observation of the network of communication shows us that it is much closer to and has more important connections with Tsingtao than it has with the county seat.

The Small Pearl, the highest of the local ranges, lies to the west. To the north lies the Long Hill stretching from west to east, while to the south is the Long Wall. These three form a horizontal arc with the eastern shoreline at one end.

There are four rivers which flow from west to east. These are small streams and not navigable. In the rainy season they are indeed obstacles to transportation and travel, for there are no bridges across them, only stepping stones which are useless at high water.

The stream that flows along the southern edge of Taitou is locally called

Taitou River. To the north the land is high and extends in a sort of platform to the base of Mt. Small Pearl. To the south it sweeps downward; the lowland is the mouth of a valley formed by the water rushing down from the mountains toward the sea to the east. The name of the



village derives from this formation: *tai* means platform or stage; *tou* means end. The low area is one of the few places in this part of China which is suitable for the cultivation of rice, although part of it is grassy or wooded swampland.

The climate of the area is good because of the proximity of the sea and mountains. No record of climate has ever been made for Taitou, but Tsingtao Municipal Government thus describes it:

It is foggy in the summer. From April to the end of July there are always one or more heavy fogs every week. From December to March of the next year, it is dry and rather cold, but there is not much snow. Therefore, the most desirable seasons in Tsingtao, so far as weather is concerned, are periods from middle of April to middle of June and from the beginning of September to the beginning of November. In Tsingtao the hottest day has not been more than 35.6 ° C. and the coldest day has not been more than 12.8 ° C. below zero.

Regarding the direction of winds, in the summer there are more winds from southeast, while in the winter more from northwest. There are more breezes than strong winds. Big storms are few. In the winter there are usually three or four periods of strong winds from Po-hai [or the Gulf of Chili], which is across the Shantung Peninsula in the north.*

In support of this general description records of the temperature of twenty consecutive years are given here in condensed form:

MONTHLY RECORD OF CLIMATE FOR TWENTY YEARS IN TSINGTAO [a]

Month	*Air depression (in mm.)*	*Temperature (in °C.)*	*Monsoon*	*Days of fog, frost, rain, snow*	*Rainfall (in mm.)*
Jan.	772	−2	North	2, 15, 5, 5½ : 27½	8
Feb.	770	−0.1	North	4, 13, 4, 4: 25	8.4
Mar.	767	4.4	South	4, 7, 1½, 5: 17½	15
Apr.	762	10.1	South and Southeast	6, ½, 5: 11½	27
May	758	15.4	South and Southeast	Rain 7, fog 8: 15	28
June	755	19.5	South and Southeast	Rain 8½, fog 11: 19½	80.7
July	755	23.5	South and Southeast	Rain 12, fog 12: 24	96
Aug.	755	25.3	South and Southeast	Rain 11, fog 2: 13	136
Sept.	761.4	20.8	North	Rain 7.5, fog .5: 8	92.8
Oct.	765.7	15.9	North and Northwest	Rain 3, fog 1: 4	12
Nov.	779	8.0	North and Northwest	Rain 4.2, fog 1: 5.2	17
Dec.	773	1.0	North	1, 14.4, 4.4, 3.3: 23.1	15.9

[a] *Kiao-Ou-Chih*, Vol. II (1929), Section 6.

According to Buck,** the annual rainfall for the area is 700 mm. This

* A brief translation from *Kiao-Ou-Chih* ("Gazette of Tsingtao"), Vol. II (1929), Section 6.

** John Lossing Buck, *Land Utilization in China* (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1937), Atlas volume, Chap. III, Maps V, XII, XIII.