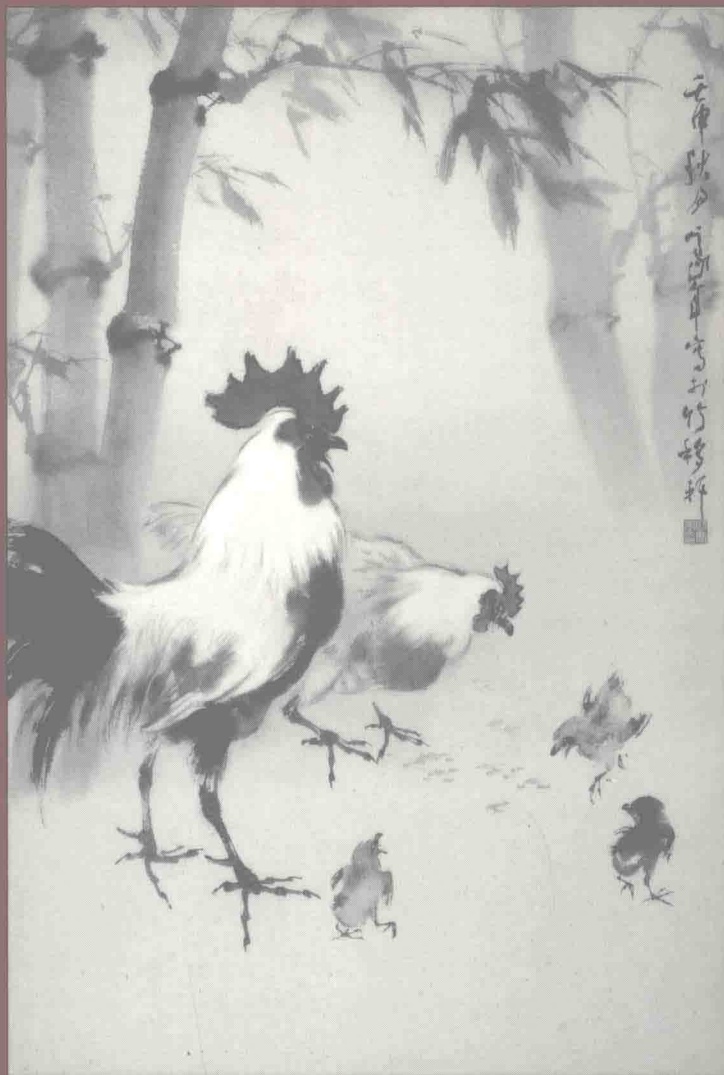


Marriage and the Family



Painting by Master Au Ho-nien

A Global Perspective

Editors

Phylis Lan Lin

Wen-hui Tsai

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Selected Readings on Marriage and the Family: A Global Perspective

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Caveat: The statements in the various articles or papers in this volume represent certain perceptions of human and social conditions that the editors deem important for readers to examine. They may or may not necessarily be the current personal views of the pertinent authors nor are they endorsed by the editors, publisher and other authors in this publication. Readers' comments are welcome. They may be transmitted to the editors for review and/or for forwarding to the authors.

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**Selected Readings on Marriage and the Family:
A Global Perspective**

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Foreword

More than a phrase in the title of a book, "a global perspective," describes the goal of the University of Indianapolis in all its programming and activities. Just a short distance from my office, in the entry hall to our university library fly the flags of 37 countries representing the homelands of our international students. In those flags and in the faces of our students daily we see beyond the horizon of Indianapolis, the world which is our campus, a world made up of many families and traditions.

In addition to our international student population at our home campus, we are also actively engaged in international programming in Cyprus, Greece, Taiwan, and Mainland China. Our formal academic programs are complemented by academic conferences held on our home campus to which colleagues from around the world are invited. One such conference is the *International Symposium on Families: East and West* which has been held in 1991 and 1993. In these symposia scholars from many countries have gathered to present papers and to discuss similarities and differences in the tradition of the family in different cultures. Although there are a number of similarities and a number of differences in the development and understanding of the family and individual roles (parental, children, and gender), one conviction permeated all the discussions: the family is the core of the society and upon its health, societal health is finally dependent. The facts that family traditions are the subject of frequent attacks and that the sanctity of family is eroding and changing in various places in the world are compelling reasons to understand what has been and what is happening in order to strengthen the institution of the family and the values that are inherent therein around the globe.

In order to share the works of the scholars who have gathered for these discussions, thereby to further extend the understanding of the problems facing the families of the world, and to provide resources which will further the discussion and share the knowledge present in these symposia, we have published some of the papers from the 1991 and 1993 conferences. The titles of these volumes are *Families: East and West* and *Marriage and the Family in Chinese Societies: Selected Readings*. This is the third volume of this series.

As we have learned from others, so also we are seeking to reciprocate by returning what we have gained. The University of Indianapolis Press is one means whereby we can reach out to our interdependent society and affirm our common membership in the human family. With the able direction of Dr. Phylis Lan Lin, this is the fifth book in four years under the sponsorship of our Asian Programs area.

Modern communication and transportation have reduced our planet to a global village. The families of the world, with their traditions, move from place to place with relative ease. It is our hope that this series of books will assist the readers in understanding these families, and

in creating around the world an environment in which the family, as the bedrock of our society, can be strengthened and we can learn to celebrate both the differences and the similarities which are found within the greater global human family.

G. Benjamin Lantz, Jr.
President
University of Indianapolis

Acknowledgment

No one can accomplish a project such as this one single-handed. I have been most fortunate to have all sorts of help from various sectors in and outside my university.

Beginning with my student assistant Kathy Munsch, who worked with me throughout the hot summer months and the Fall semester while carrying full-load. We worked at regular and odd hours. For a young student who bore with me on this tedious project with perseverance, I commend her for her intellectual capability and delightful personality. I am proud to have been asked to sponsor her membership to a national honor society, Alpha Chi, in October, 1994. I sincerely thank Kathy for being a most effective and efficient helper.

My relationship with the Publications Office at the University of Indianapolis has been particularly gratifying because of the professional assistance I received from Peter Noot and Rosalie Fletcher. Peter designed the cover and Rosalie did the layout and typesetting the manuscript. She patiently worked through the tedious task of seven drafts without a single complaint--she always got the corrections done in time for me to move on to the next draft. She is extremely efficient and precise, a fine professional who deserves special thanks. Producing a book with state-of-the-art technology requires technical assistance from a professional staff. Brad D. Bishop, Mujib Lodhi, and Rauf Khalid of our Data Processing Center have given me timely assistance. I am indebted to them.

Thanks goes to Dr. Carl Stockton, Professor of History and Dean for Extended and Special Programs, and a prose laureate, for writing the insightful *Afterword* for the book. I am also very grateful to Professor Emeritus Dr. Earning Peterson for proof-reading the final draft. Thanks also go to our department secretary, Sandra Baughn, who has given me invaluable "first class" secretarial help, including typing part of the second draft of the subject index. Finally, I am very grateful to many colleagues at the University of Indianapolis who have given me expressive support throughout the years in all my academic endeavors. I would like to specially mention my deep gratitude to Dr. Lynn Youngblood, Dr. Mary Moore, Dr. Greg Reinhardt, Dr. Pat Cook, Dr. Nancy O'Dell, Dr. Bob Vernon, Dr. Victoria Bedford, Dr. Robin Livesay, Dr. Gerry Speth, Dr. Tim Maher, Linda Dye, Kathy Koval, Christi Guyonneau, Mimi Chase, among others.

Since I teach full-time, direct the Asian Programs, do research, and perform the usual services at the university and the community, the immense amount of time dedicated to this project was often taken from my own family life. I wish to acknowledge my husband, Leon, daughter, Toni, and my parents for their continuing support and understanding throughout my academic life. As a career woman, a wife, a mother, and a daughter, I am most fortunate to have my family's blessing.

It has been a unique privilege to share the editing of this book with Dr. Wen-hui Tsai. A senior sociologist and internationally renowned theorist, researcher, and author of 20 books, Dr. Tsai, who specializes in Chinese studies, social change, marriage and the family, and gerontology,

is well respected and recognized by scholars and students both in the United States and abroad. I have known Dr. Tsai for many years and shared the same membership in several professional organizations. It was Dr. Tsai's idea that we expand this volume from a mere conference proceedings to include papers that were not presented at the conference to attract a broader readership and to be suitable for classroom use as a supplement to conventional textbooks on marriage and family. As sociology today is giving more attention to the global society, I share with Dr. Tsai's conviction that American students need to be aware of variations in norms and values in different societies and cultures. This volume thus represents our efforts in promoting cross-cultural studies in sociology in general and in the field of marriage and family in particular.

Special thanks are due Alfred Tsang, the former Attorney General of the State of Indiana. Since his retirement in 1992, he has provided his volunteer services to the community and to junior colleagues in various fields. Many people benefit from his wisdom. I am one of the most fortunate. In the course of preparing this book, he generously contributed his volunteer time in assisting us in numerous ways, including the review of the first draft and working on the first draft of the subject index. He is most humble, yet I see him as my mentor without an official title. His wife, Buzzy Tsang, who has been Alfred's good companion for 42 years, has always played a supportive role to Alfred's volunteer services. I wish to express my special thanks to Buzzy.

Since the publication of the 1st volume (*Families: East and West*) and the 2nd volume (*Marriage and the Family in Chinese Societies: A Selected Reading*) of this series, many students in my classes and readers around the globe have given me the benefit of their thoughtful encouragements and suggestions. I am looking forward to hearing from them again. There is a Chinese saying, "as we are teaching, we are taught." As I have learned a lot from them, I expect to learn more from them again.

Many people made this book possible. Most of all, I wish to thank the authors for their contribution of articles in this anthology.

Also, my deepest gratitude must be expressed to the internationally famed painter, Master Au Ho-nien, for his generous permission to use his painting for the cover graphic

On behalf of my co-editor, we wish to express our deep appreciation to the Association of Chinese Social Scientists in North America for providing us a special research grant for partial sponsorship of the publication of this book. A special thanks must be addressed to Dr. George Chen, Executive Secretary of the Association, for his instrumental assistance in procuring the grant for us. The major (95%) funding for this book was sponsored by the Asian Programs, University of Indianapolis.

Finally, on behalf of those who worked on this project, I wish to once again express our deepest gratitude to President Lantz for his vision in the promotion of family studies at the University. His leadership has been inspirational to us all.

Phylis Lan Lin
University of Indianapolis

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Introduction

Phylis Lan Lin

Wen-Hui Tsai

The family, a cultural universal, is considered the foundation of a society. We are born into families, grow up in families, and create new families for future generations. The family is the corner stone for personal growth and national development.

Phylis Lan Lin, "Preamble to International symposium on Families: East and West" (1991)

The family provides the continuity of the society. It links humankind from generation to generation. We descend from our ancestors, and in turn, our progeny succeed us. Societies do not exist without families; and they exist for families. Without the family, there is neither history of, nor the future for, the society. We are the product and participants of the socio-biological-economic-psychological function called family. Our basic personal well-being depends on healthiness of the family. The society is served when the family is served.

This is the third volume in a series of collections of papers presented in the first two conferences of International Symposium on Families: East and West, held at the University of Indianapolis in 1991 and 1993. The first, under the title of *Families: East and West*, was published in 1992, the second, *Marriage and the Family in Chinese Societies: Selected Readings*, was published in the Fall of 1994. Not all the papers accepted for the conferences were published. A few invited papers, that were not presented at the symposium, were included in these volumes.

The aim of the symposium was to provide a forum for the exchange of research and study on the family, with the objective that public policies and programs on the family would evolve from our work. The publication of these volumes preserves the data and analysis for further research, and seeks to stimulate interest in the study of family as a career.

By means of advanced communication and transportation technologies, and unabated fertility growth, people of the world are brought closer. Where it used to take days and months for people to reach another country, now is matter of hours and minutes to travel, and nano-seconds to see and hear. Pizza, tofu, KFC chicken, tortillas, pitas, and foods of all ethnic origins from different corners of the world are popularly consumed worldwide.

Linguistically, some non-alphabetical languages are now Romanized, as is the computer keyboard. The Hindu-Arabic numeral system is the universal method of counting and numbering no matter what spoken language. The measurement of time based on the Greenwich Observatory in England and Gregorian calendar, based on the sun and the birth of Jesus Christ, is commonly used for international commerce and diplomacy.

Notwithstanding the slowness of the United States in joining the rest of the world in the metric system of measurement, and the ethnic strife in the Balkans, central Africa, and other parts, people of different races, ethnic origin and creed are permanently residing in parts of the world not of their ancestry. People of mixed background intermarry and many alternative family forms are receiving acceptance by both the public and the law.

Surely and gradually, political and economical boundaries are being dismantled as we see the emergence of a united European Community and a North American trade bloc that will expand and merge in time. The wide, wide world is but a global village, and people are but passengers in a space ship called earth.

In order to know and understand the family, we must view it from a global perspective. The entire human race, whoever and wherever we are, is driven by the same impulse for survival and propagation. The family is our first and last resort to look to in order to sustain our existence.

We have come a long way from the primitive period when our immediate surroundings dictated how we lived and survived. To a larger extent, the local climate and weather are no longer of great concern to most individuals. We no longer depend on what we can gather and hunt for food, fiber, and fuel to live on as we advance in agriculture and manufacturing.

When we study the family from the global perspective, the experience encountered by the families under a given social/economical/political setting may be applied to the families in other parts of the world. Thus we may learn from the lessons experienced by people in one society for the benefit of others.

Even though cultural diversity rooted in a long history of tradition will remain, certain customs and practices of local origin tend to spread at more rapid rates. We have seen the trend in the change of household structure from the extended family to nuclear family in parallel with industrialization and economic development. A counter trend is found as grandparents fill in the breach for the families of single parents. Unlike the traditional extended family, centered on elderly authority, this new multi-generational family functions as a primary

care giver for the elderly. The nuclear family of the American television *Ozzie and Harriet Show* is not necessarily the only bi-generational family model. There are families whose members are not biologically linked. There are households of half or step siblings, adopted children by parents with and without partner or even parents of the same sex. They may not be viewed as the most ideal or "deviant", but the children are mostly better off than living with mismatched biological parents in a tension filled household. Many of the famous and accomplished are brought up under such settings.

Since the ending of cold war, regional armed conflicts are occurring in the major continents. Families are taking on the global perspective as they seek refuge in other lands and orphaned children are adopted in unfamiliar settings.

In this United Nations' International Year of the Family, we see the family as an international entity. Except for the few aborigine peoples, most people or their ancestors migrated from other regions of the earth. Nations and empires rose and fell. Marriages transcend national boundaries. In the universal context, all earthlings of the world are indigenous of this planet. Are we not members of the same extended kinship descended from Adam and Eve?

The conjugal intimacy, being the biological fulfillment for the formation and continuation of the family, differentiates the male from the female, not only the reproductive roles, but the household division of labor as well. Industrialization and medical advances have altered the balance on the rights and burden of the members of the family. the transition from dependence to independence toward interdependence is examined in Part II and IV.

Beyond the spousal relationship are those between parents and children, kin folks, and by affinity. The dynamics of the family web in changing societies are analyzed in Part III and VII.

Coupled with reduction in childbirth risks and infant mortality, people are living longer. Nuclearization of the family, advanced by industrialization and requiring political and social solutions is the topic discussed in Part V and VII.

At the opposite extreme, and counter-paradigmatic of a healthy family, is a family in conflict, and severed. The much hushed marital violence is now in the open. The rising trend in divorce rates has moved from the West to the society of other cultures. Part VI and VIII discuss the development of the troubling conditions, and how they are dealt with.

If the families of the world were functioning at their potentials, there wouldn't be any book to write about the subject. The society would be in total harmony. The aim of marriage

and family study is to seek ways to help it work for its members. It is not realistic that every family can be prosperous and healthy at all times. An ideal family protects its members against stresses and adverse conditions. This is the point of departure where this volume begins (Part 1).

Marriage and Family in Global Perspective

Part I

