New Chinese Migrants in Europe

The case of the Chinese community in Hungary

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Dedicated to the memory of Vladimir Gribov

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The case of the Chinese community in Hungary

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Acknowledgments

It took more than ten years before I could understand them. I went to tea shops and gambling dens to be able to meet everyone and investigate them...

[...] He was willing to talk because, first, I treated him as a human; second, I invited him to dinner; third, he could win some money from me.
- Mao Zedong on peasants in Hunan
Miscellany of Mao Zedong Thought (1949-68), Part II, p. 389
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Introduction

Much attention is of late being paid to the changing patterns of international migration. Made possible by the enormous expansion of transportation and communication links, new patterns are emerging which are more reversible, more flexible, and often involve shorter time periods spent in the destination country, followed by return or remigration. These patterns are as different from the westbound *im*migration of yesteryear – insofar as the latter term uses the optics of a specific destination country – as Europe's host societies are from what they were in the seventies. The driving force behind "postmodern" migration is no longer abject poverty, political, ethnic, or religious persecution, or inherited patterns of a village: it is the aspiration for a life of a better quality, less control by the society over the individual, and more and better money-earning opportunities. It is a shift of base that does not cut the migrant's links to his place of origin: the social capital he has accumulated in his earlier life remains and can be used almost independently of his moves in space. In one of the most interesting attempts to conceptualise new migration patterns, John Salt (1997) suggested that international migration itself be regarded as a growing and "diverse international business, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs world-wide, and managed by a set of individuals and institutions each of which has an interest in how the business develops" and is a potential player in emergent transnational communities. A debate is already taking place among demographers whether quantitative definitions of migration should be loosened to include, for example, shuttle traders in Asia and Eastern Europe. "Classical" migration patterns that served as the basis for the definitions used by international monitoring agencies such as the United Nations are typically characterised by moves from a niche in one social, economic, and political environment to a niche in another, which the migrant experiences as ruptures that involve a reconstruction of his identity.

The debate around the need to reconceptualise migration is reflected in Zlotnik's (1992), Skeldon's (1990, 1992, 1997), and Massey and co-authors' (1993) work.

The significance of the change in migration patterns – accompanied by a steep rise in the sheer volume of migration – is attenuated by the weakening of the nation-state order. In many cases, the political identity and social behaviour of diasporas and migrant communities can no longer be explained within the nation-state discourse, attracting the interest of scholars who see in them indicators of emerging sovereignty and identity structures in a post-nation state era (Appadurai, 1991; Basch et al., 1994; Smith, 1995; Cohen, 1997; Brah et al., 1998). Some of these communities can be described as "transnational communities" beyond the reach of any one nation-state. The shared discourse of belonging that informs the identity of such a community cannot be understood in the framework of stable and localised structures of one country but includes a multiplicity of symbols, values, rituals, relationships, and institutions belonging to several countries (Skeldon, 1990 and 1997; Zlotnik, 1992). It is usually distinct from the dominant or official discourses of belonging of any state but may display a greater or lesser degree of overlap, based on which we can speak of transnational communities with or without a geographic core. The transnational community cannot be studied etically, as an objectively existing institution, but only emically, as an aspect of other institutions, policies, economies, migration flows and discourses of exclusion and inclusion (Ong and Nonini, 1997; Pieke, 1998b; Ma Mung, 1992; Hamashita, 1997).[1]

Eastern Europe emerged as a new international migration space in the 1990s and quickly became an important sending, transit, and receiving

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[1] The continued influence in the community's discourse of belonging of elements representing a country other than its country of residence seems to be an essential criterion to define its transnational nature. A minority that belongs to the same ethnic stock that forms the majority of another country may, may partially, or may not be part of a transnational community, depending on the extent to which the changing symbols, rituals, and institutions of that other country find continued reflection in the minority community's shared discourse of belonging, and to which, on the contrary, the latter preserves symbols, rituals, and institutions that originally come from that other country but are no longer relevant in its discourse. Thus, for example, the cultural and political symbols and institutions of contemporary Hungary have lately entered the discourse of belonging of part of the Hungarian minority in Romania but have remained irrelevant to another part. The former group can be seen as forming a transnational community, while the latter, for which the shared ritual, symbolic, and institutional denominators with Hungary have not been replenished since the early 1920s, cannot.

region (International Organisation for Migration, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d). Many of the migration flows in the region follow new migration patterns, such as that of migrant workers, expatriate business people and small entrepreneurs, and shuttle traders. This latter kind of migration is particularly salient in Central Europe, the region Claire Wallace (1996, 1997, 1998) calls "the buffer zone" which attracts migrant flows from farther East that cannot massively penetrate into Western Europe. In Hungary and Poland, in particular, migration studies have emerged, covering new migration patterns as well as more traditional types of migration flows triggered by the redrawing of borders, wars, and intensifying contact with diasporas in the region (Sik and Tóth, 1994, 1996, 1997; Fullerton, Sik, and Tóth, 1995, 1997; Iglicka et al., 1997; Głąbicka et al., 1997). A few studies have described and some attempted to set up new terminologies for non-traditional forms of migration such as short-term workers and shuttle traders (Wallace, 1997; Stola, 1997; Sik, 1997), mostly dealing with migrants from the former Soviet Union, but also touching on Vietnamese and Chinese. Doomernik (1997) has described the transnational community of new Russian-speaking migrants in Europe.

The Chinese are one of the biggest groups participating in new migration patterns. The People's Republic of China has undergone a boom in both internal and international migration since the beginning of the "reform and opening-up", which accelerated in the 1990s. Many studies have been done on this new wave of migration by Chinese scholars (Yang, 1994; Ding and Stockman, 1996; Xiang, 1996; Yuan et al., 1996; Qian, 1996; also Chan, 1996; Hoy, 1996; and Scharping, 1996), probably because the phenomenon of mass internal migration is a new and alarming experience to much of urban society in the PRC and is being actively discussed by the media as well as policy makers. The adventures of new Chinese migrants overseas, too, has become a popular subject in Chinese media, including such hits as the soap opera "Pekinese in New York" (*Beijingren zai Niu Yue*) The idea of large-scale international migration has also captured the interest of non-mainstream Chinese political thinkers such as Bao Mi (1991), author of the novel *Yellow Peril*, for whom this is a way to save the Chinese nation, and Su Xiaokang (1991, 1996) and Wang Shan (*Looking at China through the Third Eye*, 1994) who, from different political platforms, point to the danger of an explosion in Chinese migration to the outside world. At least three books have been published on the adventures of Chinese migrants in Eastern Europe (Mao, 1992; Li, 1993; Chen and Chen, 1997), the latter two entirely devoted to Hungary, and at least two soap operas have been cast in the region in the hope to repeat the success of "Pekinese in New York": "Yellow Sun on the Danube Banks" in

Hungary and "Farewell, Moscow!" in Russia, both in 1997. Yan Xin (1993) and Liu Ningrong (1996) published books on the expanding business of the "snakeheads" (*shetou*) and the sufferings of their clients, the "snake people" (*renshe*). Snakeheads are migration brokers who organise trips to America and Europe mainly from Fujian and Zhejiang provinces by providing documents and arranging passage. In extreme cases, passage to America has involved traveling on crowded ships in unsanitary conditions, subject to abuse by the crew, and clients have worked years in New York sweatshops to pay the price of the passage.

Since 1993, when the grounding of one of the ships carrying clandestine Chinese migrants, the *Golden Venture*, created an upstir in American media, scholars in the United States have also produced analyses of brokered migration, and specifically its criminal aspects (Kwong, 1997; Kyle and Zai, 1997; Smith, 1997, see especially the chapter by Myers). A volume of European country studies touching upon new Chinese and including a report on migration into Central Europe, written from a demographer's standpoint (Pieke and Benton, 1998) and a volume comparing the PRC's new experience with internal and international migration have recently appeared (Pieke and Mallee, 1998). Jean-Luc Porcquet (1997) wrote an ethnography of clandestine migrants from Wenzhou in Paris. Overall assessments of new trends Chinese migration provided so far have been by demographers (Skeldon 1996).

This book attempts to develop a better understanding of who the new migrants are. It employs the framework developed by Benedict Anderson ("deterritorialised" or "long-distance" nationalism), Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini (the Chinese as transnational communities), and Takeshi Hamashita ("Chinese world-system") for an analysis of the expression of new migrants' motives and identities in migration strategies, entrpreneurial choices, and social organisation. Particular attention is paid to the political behaviour of new migrants' organisations and their relations with China. These questions are of obvious importance when one considers the size of current migration flows and the increasing international aspirations of the People's Republic of China.

Starting as shuttle traders, restaurant workers, students, or even exchange scholars and becoming semi-settled entrepreneurs, new Chinese migrants are present in increasing numbers and influence in established overseas Chinese communities such as those in Western Europe. Many of them have higher levels of education, come from localities without strong traditions of migration, and are entrepreneurs who have moved around in China (from smaller to larger cities or from inland provinces to coastal zones of the highest economic growth) prior to leaving overseas. They have less patience than their predecessors to wait for opportunities of upward mobility: while earlier migrants came to Europe with the willingness to work twenty years before opening a small restaurant, newcomers want independence faster, and they are open to new spheres of entrepreneurship. Earlier overseas Chinese communities, having filled the niche in a given national economy, have tended to expand to other countries (see e.g. Pieke, 1993, 1998a); new migrants tend to choose diversifying their businesses in the same country and increasingly attempting to exploit local resources (land, finances, manpower). From this perspective, new migrants can be expected to take a conscious stand vis-à-vis the host society faster than their predecessors.

The new wave of Chinese migration has impacted the Chinese communities in Australia and New Zealand, North and South America, the Pacific islands, and generated an influx of Chinese into Cambodia, northern Burma and the Russian Far East. Of the new Chinese communities that emerged from this new migration, Hungary's was perhaps the first to go beyond being a mere "foreign outpost of the rapidly commercializing Chinese economy" (Pieke, 1998a:8).

Chinese migration to Hungary started, on a large scale, in 1989-90 and reached its peak in 1991. Subsequently, the Chinese population in the country, consisting mostly of migrants from the People's Republic of China (PRC), declined to 10,000 and has remained around that number as migrants spread over other countries in Eastern Europe but maintained businesses in Hungary. As members of the community quickly accumulated wealth, it became more consolidated, developing, among others, a sophisticated organisational structure and a thriving press. The Hungarian Chinese Association (HCA), established in the autumn of 1992, emerged to a leading position within the community, which it has maintained, despite periodic challenges, to this day. HCA's successful legitimisation strategy drew upon contacts with the People's Republic of China government.

This book first traces the development of the settlement of Chinese in Hungary, presenting the background in both Hungary and China, the chronology and mechanisms of migration, a qualitative demographic profile, settlement patterns and the occupational and social breakdown of the community based on data gathered in interviews. Patterns of migration are described.

Second, this book describes the development of social organisation in the community. The focus is on power dynamics within the community and its changes over the examined time period. The ways in which legitimacy of individual and organizational power brokers is derived are investigated, including the role of relations with China and Hungary, and conclusions are made regarding the political identity of the community. This

part of the work makes use of Li Yiyuan's (1970) model of overseas Chinese communal identities.

The functioning of international trade networks is examined, and a shift is noted from kinship- and native-place-based ties to quasi-political ones. The recent consolidation process within the community is investigated.

Third, using Chinese migration to Hungary as a case study, this work attempts to give a characterisation of new Chinese migration. It is concluded that, in addition to empirical differences in the quantitative characteristics of the dominant population movements that describe the migration process, a clear distinction between new and traditional migration can also be made in terms of the political and social behaviour and the identity discourse of the communities they create. The Chinese in Hungary form part of a new Chinese transnational community characterised by the saliency of its symbolic, political, and economic attachment tó the People's Republic of China. This transnational community is rapidly expanding into established overseas Chinese communities in Western Europe, spurred by three factors and aided by an increasing influx of new migration. First, the catering-based economies of traditional communities are in a crisis because of market saturation and no further countries to expand into. In this situation, their members are eager to exploit business opportunities in China, a central element in the economic success of new migrants. Second, the appearance and rapid success of the new migrants, who are far better connected with China, in traditional communities encourages the latter to adapt to the discourse of belonging of the new transnational community. Third, traditional communities are being exposed to a growing number of political and business initiatives coming from the PRC and are increasingly embracing a deterritorialised nationalism which Peking now employs in its dealings with overseas Chinese.

Methodology and sources The bulk of this study is based on six years of fieldwork in Hungary (1992-98), parts of whose findings have repeatedly been reported previously. The work has included extensive participant observation, monitoring of Hungarian Chinese publications (all books and a sample of all periodicals, including at least one sample of the weeklies per month) as well as of PRC publications on the subject.

The approach I have used is 'an interdisciplinary and geographically comparative one. Since relevant organisational, economic, and personal contacts of the members of the investigated community span China, Hungary, and many other countries at any given time and are in a continuous flux, there was a need for "ungrounded fieldwork," which took the investigator, within the limits of his possibilities, outside Hungary's bor-

ders. For the same reason, the telephone, the fax machine, and even e-mail were used in interviewing. In the field, instead of selecting a particular location within the community from which to observe, I moved with my informants, accompanying them on business and leisure trips, attending meetings of organisations, business meetings, and dinners, and of course visiting homes, markets, shops, and restaurants.

Although I did compile an interview questionnaire for my own reference, I avoided its direct use, i.e. list-like questioning, in most cases as this tended to be associated with official procedures and evoked distrust among informants (an earlier questionnaire study of Chinese in Budapest had had to be abandoned for this reason). In fact, most respondents were unaware of the fact of the investigation. In most cases, I relied on indirect ways to direct the topic of the response toward a direction relevant to the research, using a similar approach to that of Chinese researchers like Li Minghuan (1995). Nearly a thousand interviews were made using the snowball method, covering Chinese in Hungary ranging from low-income shuttle traders through rich entrepreneurs, embassy officials, and mainland journalists to intellectuals, as well as various power, territorial, and political groupings and age groups. These were aided by my appointment as honorary consultant to the Hungarian Chinese Association soon after its formation. Names of persons and business enterprises have been, as usual, changed, except for a few cases where the information reported is known to wide audiences with the consent of the individual.

Work in Hungary was supplemented by both fieldwork and an analysis of existing literature on latest developments in Western European Chinese communities, particularly those in the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Spain, and Italy. Among the few scholarly books and papers in this field, I refer to those by Li (1995), Ceccagno (1997), Pieke and Benton (1998), Pieke and Mallee (1998), and Liao (1997), but most of the information came from news media.

1 The Background: The Migration Scene in China and Conditions in Hungary at the Turn of the Nineties

Hungary in 1989: Pull Factors and the Beginning of Immigration

In 1989, the Soviet Union bordered Hungary from the East and Yugoslavia from the South. It was the time that came closest to revolutionary in the country's peaceful and gradual transition to democracy. People were receptive to anything new and intolerant toward any kind of restriction. The thirty years of First Secretary János Kádár's unique experiment in "goulash Communism", during which nationalism and chauvinism had been taboo, had not passed without effect. The heroes of the day were the liberal dissidents, and the term "the free world" was taken literally. Prime Minister Miklós Németh's government of transition pursued a liberal economic policy, and its view of immigration, with which no post-war Hungarian government had to deal, was positive insofar as it seemed to be conducive to foreign investment. It wasn't yet the time to ask questions about the way of investment, the person of the investor, the source of incoming money or goods, or their effect on domestic industry and trade. Tariffs were low and the tax system in its infancy, and, within reasonable limits, both were easy to evade. Entering the country was easy, with visas issued upon arrival to most of those who needed one. And as international attention toward Hungary was at its peak during this period, in the wake of the decision to let East Germans use the country to transit to the West, the number of foreign visitors grew rapidly, as did the time they spent in it.

Although Hungary was caught unawares by the appearance of intercontinental migration at her doorstep in 1989, in the euphoric atmosphere of an imminent transition to full democracy and "marching towards Europe", amid the almost daily expansion of freedom and consumer goods, even the fairly sudden appearance of noticeable numbers

of Chinese, Mongols, and Arabs seemed somehow natural. After a decade that prepared the ground for Hungary's long-term primacy in foreign investment in the region, they saw all foreigners with money as potential investors, that is, people who contributed another building brick to the success of the country. As to foreigners without money, they contributed to Hungarians' pride: "Look at them; for them, we are the West". The appearance of foreigners gave a boost to Hungarian language schools and subsequently of foreign students, who were able to stay in Hungary for an extended term. Non-governmental organisations took upon themselves the concern with the human and legal condition of those seeking refuge and a new life in Hungary.

Before the wars of the Yugoslav succession, the foreigners to settle in Hungary in largest numbers were Romanian and Soviet citizens, mostly ethnic Hungarians. In addition to them, however, were also some who had come from farther away. One of the most significant groups was formed by young Americans who chose Hungary as the destination of their customary trip to Europe between graduation and work. The enthusiastic reception and the apparent chance to watch the "collapse of Communism" from a cheap and relatively comfortable seat while enjoying "European romanticism" made some stay and teach English, represent or found NGOs or newspapers, or open small businesses, pubs, fast-food outlets. A number of English-language periodicals came into being in 1989-90, among them such high-quality products of the press as the now-defunct East European Reporter. In 1991, rising Hungarian prices, improving Czech infrastructure, and a marketing strategy in which the Czech government ably built on Prague's historic lure began to turn romance-hungry Americans away from Hungary and toward the Czech Republic. At this time, it was estimated that up to ten thousand Americans were living in Hungary.

Unlike Americans, most arrivals from afar were attracted mainly by economic opportunities offered by a newly freed and poorly regulated market and an infrastructure that provided transportation and telecommunication conduits and a nascent financial hinterland to other East European markets and was the best developed in the region. The Arabs, Chinese, South Koreans, Mongols, and Vietnamese who appeared in Hungary pinned their hopes largely on this.

The small Arab community was formed on the base of mostly Palestinian, Syrian, and Egyptian students studying at Hungarian universities. Arabs opened restaurants, travel and translation agencies, and food stores and introduced Hungarians to the conveniences of pita and streetcorner currency exchange. Small hubs of such businesses formed near Zsigmond Móricz Circus and Garay Square.

Most Arabs were in Hungary as students, and by 1992, after many of them had lost that status and immigration practices had been tightened, the Arab presence became much less visible. Some of the Arabs moved to Romania, which had long entertained cordial relations with Arab countries and today hosts more than ten thousand Arabs. Indeed, Lebanese nationals have registered some two thousand companies in Romania since 1990, while Syria is in the third place in terms of the number of companies with foreign capital (*Open Media Research Institute*, 1996a).

The small group of South Koreans was the first testimony to their hallmark strategy of economic expansion in post-Communist Eastern Europe, characterised by a combination of investment by large corporations and small trading or catering enterprises much like that of the Chinese. The circumstances of the Koreans' appearance in Hungary were unusual. After Hungary, in 1988, became the first East Bloc country to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea, it became fashionable in Seoul, with the Hungarian ambassador's North Korean accent frequently heard on television and radio. In South Korea, just after the end of the Chon Tu Hwan regime, it was a time of enthusiasm for democracy, but also a time when the leftist interests of the intelligentsia were finally allowed to be voiced. The concern with North Korea's future added to South Koreans' interest in the East European transition. Hungary, the first country in Eastern Europe accessible to South Koreans, became a destination for business and, for a while, a matter of political priority and intellectual adventure. With South Korea's entry into the international salon of developed countries closely related to Seoul's Olympic diplomacy, the first authentic Asian restaurant in Budapest was opened by the former secretary-general of the country's weightlifting federation. Korea's highbrow periodicals published last-minute reports on "Socialist society".[1] In 1990-91, some students, scholars, artists, and businessmen came from South Korea to Hungary. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as political interest turned toward Russia and the development of the Hungarian market did not match the hopes of large Korean investors, most Koreans returned or went on to Russia or Western Europe. Only a few galleries and restaurants reminds them today.

The Vietnamese were guest workers (mostly employed in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) turned petty traders. Some of them came to Hungary in the hope of making a better living. They joined Russians, Poles, Turks, Chinese, and Mongols in the community of shuttle traders that was

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[1] Such as Mi-jeung Jo's "Buda p'esutuui songgwa sarang" ("Sexuality and love in Budapest") of 1991.

beginning to represent a primitive but important variety of commerce in the newly freed markets. Called "suitcase traders" in Turkey, "ferries" (*chelnoki*) in Russian, "barter masters" (*daoye*) in Chinese, they carried their merchandise in their luggage between countries in Eastern Europe and Asia and usually sold them themselves.

Unlike the concentrated Vietnamese colonies in Germany and the Czech Republic, which have become heavily criminalised since the expiration of guest worker contracts, there is no Vietnamese ghetto in Hungary, and there have been no major crimes reported, even though here, too, cigarette smuggling is an important part of Vietnamese livelihood. Most of the Vietnamese left Hungary after the tightening of immigration practices in 1991-92, the crackdown on street trading in Budapest in 1994, and the proclamation of war on the "black economy" in 1995. In 1997, an organisation called the Hungarian Vietnamese Association emerged with claims to represent Vietnamese market traders.

Overall, immigration from outside the East European region appears to show a common dynamics. The economic and sociocultural pull factors that had accounted for the surge in migration in 1989-90 either disappeared (such as the liberalism of immigration practices), diminished (such as the competitiveness of economic opportunities for investors or the tolerance of society to foreigners), or lost their novelty (such as the opportunity to observe a social and economic transition) by 1992. Consequently, Hungary lost much of its appeal as immigration target country, while other countries in the region (Romania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia) started absorbing migrants. By the mid-nineties, both Hungarian demographers and the International Organisation for Migration had concluded that, after the rapid growth of the preceding five years, migration to Hungary was appearing to stabilise at a lower level (IOM, 1994a:3, Hablicsek and Tóth, 1996:169). Only one important group of migrants from afar remained, that of the Chinese, which stepped on the path of economic and social consolidation. Nonetheless, Hungary's appeal as immigration target country was never completely lost, and the continuing inability of Romania to start its economy off and the recession in the Czech Republic increased it once more in the late nineties.

Hungarian demographers recently began to include international migration in population forecasts. Tóth and Hablicsek (1996) claim statistically detectable foreign population in Hungary to have been around 131 thousand in the beginning of 1994. Assuming that immigration remains at the 1994 level—which is lower than that of the preceding years—until 2000 but then begins to grow under the influence of economic growth in Hungary and the pull effect of the existing migrant population, they calculated that around 200 thousand foreigners would be residing in Hunga-

ry in 2010. In addition, there would be some 230 thousand naturalised foreigners (mostly ethnic Hungarians), assuming that their numbers would grow at the same pace as that of foreign residents but with a five-year delay compared to the latter. Considering that the combined figure would account for some 4.4% of the population, it appears to be a low one compared to forecasts for Western Europe. On the other hand, the age pyramid of these migrants will be more bottom-heavy than in older migrant communities, so that in the age segment between 35 and 40 they may account for as much as 10% (Hablicsek and Tóth, 1996:178-79).

The People's Republic of China: Population Pressure in the Post-Mao Era

Mao Zedong held the view that more people meant a stronger country. As he put it, China needn't be afraid of a nuclear war because it could afford to lose three hundred million people (Su Xiaokang, 1991:7). Although China's population had reached 120 million, far in excess of Europe's, as early as in 1600 (Spence 1990:7), the problem of overpopulation relative to China's natural resources first emerged as a serious one in the 18th century, when the appearance of imported crop cultures such as the potato raised life expectancy. By 1790, the population reached 300 million, while the area of cultivated land had only doubled since 1600. Significant migration flows started toward the mountainous areas of the upper Yangzi and Han rivers, inhabited mostly by non-Han (i.e. ethnically non-Chinese) peoples, as well as, in spite of a Qing dynasty ban, to Manchuria, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. To illustrate the significance of this wave of Chinese emigration, suffice it to mention a Chinese state called Lanfang Da Zongzhi (Great Overall Government of the Orchid Fragrance), founded on the island of Borneo in 1777. This state had 40 thousand subjects and 20 thousand more taxpayers from the surrounding Malay villages and was not absorbed by the Dutch colonial administration until 1888 (Li Yiyuan, 1985:10-11). Some Chinese even settled in Africa (Snow, 1988:40-43).

The fallows taken under cultivation in Manchuria and the mountain areas, however, gave low yields due to the scarcity of fertiliser in these low-populated, little urbanised regions. (The main fertiliser in China was human excrement, as cattle were rare.) In addition, forest clearing in the mountain areas led to the silting of rivers, which caused unusually devastating floods.

By the end of the 18th century, population pressure exceeded anything experienced in the past (see Spence, 1990:110ff for more on this).

The demographic explosion led to an imbalance in the ratio of the sexes as female infanticides became more common. (In the patrilocal marriage dominant in China, daughters left their parents' household and couldn't be relied on to support the latter in old age, thus constituting a net economic liability.) According to a study of a village in South Manchuria—a relatively well-to-do area with rather low population density—by Jonathan Spence, nearly all women above the age of 30 were married or widowed in 1792, but one-fifth of men in that age group were bachelors (Spence, 1990:94-96). Since to grow old childless was not only existentially dangerous but also the greatest shame in traditional China—or as the Confucian classics put it, "there are three kinds of unfilialness; not having offspring is the gravest"—and meant that one's spirit would not find peace in the netherworld, it can be safely ventured that the disbalance of the sexes contributed to other social and economic tensions, largely due to overpopulation, which fatally weakened the Qing dynasty by the mid-19th century.

By 1850, China's population reached 430 million, causing the intensification of migration. The latter was additionally stimulated by the large-scale destruction caused by the Taiping rebellion that erupted shortly thereafter. The mass colonisation of Inner Mongolia, Northern Manchuria, and Yunnan province in the southwest began. The Chinese-ruled part of Turkestan was declared a Chinese province under the name of Xinjiang in 1884, and Taiwan in 1885.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the largest wave of Chinese emigration to that date took place from the southeastern coastal provinces of the country. It was that wave that created the most significant overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, America, and Africa. In Southeast Asia, the colonial governments encouraged the settlement of the Chinese, finding them better suited than the natives to the development of trade and industry. The Chinese worked first in mines, on plantations, or as coolies, then increasingly as merchants. In Singapore, where there had been only 3,300 Chinese in 1824, there were 165 thousand, three-quarters of the population, in 1901 (Bruk, 1988:418). In America, Chinese were imported as labourers by the railway companies and plantation workers but also arrived individually to work on the California gold mines (hence the Chinese name of San Francisco: Jiujinshan—Old Gold Mountain) and opened shops, laundries, and grew vegetables. Some one hundred thousand Chinese lived on the West Coast of the United States and about the same number worked on plantations in Peru in 1880 (Spence, 1990:211-15).

While the United States started hindering Chinese immigration by a number of laws starting in 1882, Chinese were in effective control of the trade in such Southwest Asian islands as Mauritius and Réunion by the end of the same decade. Unlike U.S. President Grover Cleveland, who, approving a further law to limit Chinese immigration, claimed that "the Chinese are incapable of assimilating to our people and endanger our peace and prosperity", Sir John Pope-Hennessy, Governor of Mauritius, rejected a similar law two years before and told the colonial assembly that "…the Chinese… are able to sell to the poorer classes of this community the cheap and simple goods that poor people wish to buy" (quoted in Snow, 1988:48-49, 55-56). By the turn of the century, Chinese labourers were working on the railways and in the mines of South Africa, the Belgian Congo, Mozambique, Tanganyika, and Niger. The 65 thousand Chinese workers in South Africa, similarly to the United States, became a campaign issue: the Progressive Party won the 1907 Cape elections on a platform of banning Chinese immigration to the state. In the face of efforts to drive them out of South Africa, Chinese community leaders allied themselves with the more numerous Indian community, also affected by discriminative measures at the beginning of apartheid. The Indians were led by a young lawyer named Mohandas K. Gandhi (Snow, 1988:48-49, 52-53, 57, 59).

Between the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, population growth was slowed down by continuous warfare. Thereafter it picked up again, and in 1957, the population reached 647 million, showing a 30 percent increase over the last years of the Qing (Spence, 1990:545). Stability and peace, as well as effective flood prevention measures and the replenishment of grain reserves, however, decreased crop failure, and in 1956, in spite of the increase in population, nutrition per capita was the same as in 1930 (Spence, 1990:548). The use of chemical fertiliser and machines, as well as higher-yield grain strains spread, especially after the de-collectivisation of agriculture in 1978, which revived peasants' willingness to work. Consequently, agricultural output enjoyed a period of continuous growth. In addition, grain imports increased as well, made possible by the growth of industrial exports. The pressure of an increasing population on the land was thus alleviated by the intensification of agricultural production.

At the same time, the system of household registration known as *hukou*, modeled after the Soviet Union's and introduced in 1958[2] banned unauthorised changes of residence, resulting in a near-freeze of voluntary

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[2] See Kojima 1996:378-81 for the various measures adopted to suppress migration under the *hukou* system. I thank Dr. O. S. Tchoudinovskikh for bringing this study to my attention.

migration processes for some two decades apart from the period of famine (1959-61) caused by the "Great Leap" and the time of the Cultural Revolution. (This does not mean that there were no population movements; in the sixties, masses of urban residents were sent down to the countryside.) The absence of significant voluntary migration in the sixties and seventies is demonstrated by the fact that while urban population growth exceeded rural population growth before 1960 by a wider margin than in any other developing country, they were now almost equalised (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Averages of urban (1) and rural (2) population growth per annum in the developing countries (A) and in China (B)

	1950-60		1960-70		1970-80		1980-90		1990-2000	
	u	r	u	r	u	r	u	r	u	R
A	4.7	1.4	3.8	2.0	3.6	1.7	3.4	1.3	3.4	0.9
B	7.2	0.8	2.9	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.1	2.7	0.6

Source: Wenbao Qian, "The Features of Internal Migration in China". Paper presented at the European Science Foundation workshop "European Chinese and Chinese Domestic Migrants," Oxford, 3-5 July 1996.

The ebb of migration was, naturally, temporary. Between 1949 and 1977, China's population doubled, and in the eighties and nineties, the situation, in many ways, began to resemble the demographic explosion of the 18th century. Although Chinese spokesmen repeated that concerns with China's population were "erroneous ideas spread by foreign powers" as late as 1974, Communist Party Secretary-General Hua Guofeng announced the implementation of the drastic family planning policy known as "one family—one child" in 1980. The forced implantations of contraceptive spirals, the forced abortions, the "sterilisation teams" traveling the villages and causing occasional riots, and the fines in money and land leveled against offenders rapidly halved the fertility average of Chinese women compared to 1974. But the figure was still 2.2, and the population reached 1.2 thousand million, the maximum targeted for the year 2000, in 1995. (The target was then changed to 1.3 thousand million.) In spite of the campaigns, birth control proved increasingly difficult to enforce as local leaders slipped out of the central government's control, but it did lead to a recurrence of female infanticides. Selective abortions became common in the nineties as equipment became available to determine the sex of the foe-

tus. According to data of the State Statistical Bureau and WHO, the ratio of men to women in 1995 was 104 to 100, but among those born in 1997, it was 117 to 100 (cited by Su Xiaokang, 1996)! Chinese researchers have suggested that such incredible ratios are not a reflection of reality but a result of not reporting the birth of 2 to 10% of female babies, who are sent away to relatives (Zeng, 1993 and Li Jiali, 1995, discussed in Goldstone 1997:56). Nonetheless, by the first years of the next millennium, a number of men with no prospects of marriage will be coming of age. In the southern and inland provinces, kidnappings committed by or at the behest of rural men unable to find wives are already becoming commonplace. Such cases tend to become known only if the victims are students touring the countryside or women kidnapped from city streets. The case of a girl kidnapped in Yunnan province in 1991 became public because, after being released two years later, she was denied registration at the university she had been traveling to when she fell victim to the kidnappers. In 1995, sixty-eight women kidnapped from Vietnam were freed in a town in Canton province.

In 1996, China had only 0.27 acres of arable land per capita, less than half of the world average and barely more than half of the 1952 figure (*China News Digest*, 1996b). According to a calculation by Yang Yunyan (1994:211), ninety-one per cent of the theoretical "population capacity" of the five provinces with the highest population density is already used up, and cultivated land has been steadily shrinking since the Great Leap because of real estate development and environmentally destructive industries. Logging has caused soil erosion along the rivers and the silting up of downstream lakes, which some researchers connect with the increasing severity of the yearly flooding (Forney 1996), but apart from that, deforestation aggravates the psychological pressure of overcrowding. (China has only one-ninth of the world average of forest per capita, and though Hungary has few forests left, one of the most commonly mentioned positive comments from Chinese living there is about the greenness of the country.) In their acclaimed study of "Chen Village", Chan, Madsen, and Unger (1992:289) comment that in Southern Canton, near the Hong Kong border, what had until recently been China's most fertile lands reminded one in the early nineties of "the surface of the Moon" because of large-scale construction.

In spite of imports, grain consumption per capita fell from 400 kilograms in 1984 to 360 in 1988, and serious food shortages continued – and continue to this day – to occur in inland provinces (Spence, 1990:737). In the nineties, the area of cultivated land continued to decrease because of a boom in industrial growth and real estate speculation. According to the scenario suggested by a scholar from Peking University, if arable land continued to shrink at the same pace as in the mid-nineties, its per capita ac-

reage would decrease by half in fifty years, which would make it equal to the current figure in Japan. Japan, however, covers two-thirds of its rice consumption from imports. A similar ratio in the case of China would mean a serious burden on both the country's foreign trade balance and the world's agriculture, as just ten per cent of China's rice consumption would equal half the exports of the United States (Yang Du, 1996:203-04). One can see Europe becoming once again an agricultural region, producing for the Asian market while industry will have moved to cheaper Asia. As the Russian joke went in the sixties: the Yerevan Radio receives a call: "Is it possible that there will be a worldwide famine? — Yes, if the Chinese learn to eat with a spoon".

Jokes aside, the Chinese diet has been changing in fundamental ways, affecting the use of arable land. First of all, farmers in the richer areas have been switching from grain to cash crops. Much of the remaining farmland in Canton province has been acquired by large Hong Kong farmers who created huge vegetable plots in the place of the scattered rice paddies, producing largely for the Hong Kong market. Second, the consumption of meat, especially of beef, has grown sharply in the upwardly mobile urban and coastal regions. Since cattle require much more land and feed for the production of a unit of meat than hogs, it has traditionally been scarce and used only as a draft animal, with beef being rare in the diet and cow's milk still, to some degree, a luxury. The spread of cash crops and cattle farming may drastically reduce the area of rice cultivation. In addition, it may deplete the soil faster than wet-field rice farming as it has been practiced for thousands of years, and the rice supply in the South, which depends on the three yearly harvests, may be in jeopardy if soil quality deteriorates sharply. In 1995, China became a net grain (rice and maize) importer for the first time, jumping straight to second place after Japan and causing an explosion of grain prices on the world market (wheat prices jumped 50 per cent) (*Heti Világgazdaság*, 1996; Mufson, 1996). China's grain and red meat consumption is already double that of the United States, and it has also emerged as the number one consumer of chemical fertiliser (*China News Digest*, 1996e). The PRC government has announced that it will study the possibility of purchasing half a million hectares of farmland in Brazil to alleviate its need of fruits and vegetables (*China News Digest*, 1996d).

After 1978 – the first year of "reform and opening-up" – the gradual loosening of the *hukou* system made spontaneous migration possi-

ble again.[3] The directions and motives of its main flows, however, had changed. They were directed primarily to cities, especially coastal cities starting to feel the effects of economic reform, rather than—as before—to areas with lower population density. In fact, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Northern Manchuria, which used to be recipients of migration up to 1976, now became net sources of migration.[4] Migration to cities exceeded migration from the cities in 1978 for the first time, and in 1979 reached nearly 4 million (Kojima, 1996:389, 400). (The first large group of spontaneous migrants consisted of urban residents, mainly youth, forcibly resettled in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.) Excluding "*hukou* migration", which reflects primarily transfers of state employees, the largest flows of registered migration between 1985 and 1990 were to Peking, Shanghai, Tianjin (China's third largest city) and Canton and Yunnan provinces, while there was little migration to Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Manchuria, which have relatively large per capita areas of farmland. The main sending areas were not the poorest regions, but those moderately developed and with high population density. The average educa-

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[3] In 1984, the State Council issued a directive that urban *hukou* could be issued to those who have a residence in the towns and either have a valid employment contract or the means to engage in entrepreneurial activity. Since then, several further steps have been made toward liberalisation, at both the central and provincial level (see Ling Li, 1997:33). The process of obtaining an urban *hukou* is not a simple one even for those who satisfy these criteria; rather, it is like obtaining a work permit in a foreign country. Private companies, especially smaller ones, however, often recruit workers without a local *hukou*. Without a *hukou*, one has to pay for medical care and education, including primary school. This, however, is less and less of a disincentive to potential migrants, partly because of rising incomes and partly because—as anthropologists studying rural China in the 1990s note—peasants, in fact, often have to pay for these even if they stay in their village. See Qian (1996) for a discussion of relaxations of the *hukou* policy and Gao (forthcoming) for a discussion of education and medical expenses in a Chinese village in the nineties.

[4] A similar trend exists in Russia, where Siberia, the Far East, and especially the Far North are experiencing an outflow of ethnic Russian population. Like Manchuria, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia in China, these regions were settled by the currently ethnic majority relatively recently, starting in the second half of the nineteenth century and drawn mainly by the abundance of farmland, and the resettlement was encouraged by the Communist governments in the context of the development of heavy industry. Now, these areas are unpopular because of their harsh climate, relatively underdeveloped infrastructure, and remoteness from the centres of trade, all of which increase the cost of living. On the history and current outlook of the Russian settlement of Eastern Siberia, a useful review is provided by the papers collected in Tomilov et al. (1997).

tional level of migrants was above the national average (Yang Yunyan, 1994:202; Kam, 1996).[5] For migrations registered in Chinese governmental statistics between 1980 and 1985, "employee transfer" (between government departments or state enterprises) was still the most frequently given reason, but between 1985-1996, "looking for work" and "entrepreneurship" was at the top (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Top reasons for changing residence in the PRC, per cent

	1982-86	1985-90
Transfer	25.7	14.5
Looking for work, Entrepreneurship	8.2	29.4

Source: Yang Yunyan (1994), *Zhongguo renkou zhuanyi yu fazhan di changqi zhanlüe* [The long-term strategy of population mobility and development in China], Wuhan chubanshe, Wuhan, p. 124.

The main factors of spontaneous migration, thus, had shifted from the availability of food and land to jobs, income, and – as put by a Chinese demographer – "the demand for a freer political and cultural environment in which migrants could fully express their values" (Yang Yunyan, 1994:124).

In the coastal provinces, rural industrialisation and migration to cities – and in Southern Canton province, also to Hong Kong[6] – liberated low-pay agricultural jobs. Migrants from inland provinces filled these jobs, creating in many places a two-tiered agricultural labour structure with ethnically distinct tiers. Not all excess agricultural labour could be absorbed in this way, however; by the late nineties, when the overcapacity crisis reached rural enterprises, official data showed 175 million rural unemployed, or 34.8% of the total rural population (*China News Digest*, 1997b). Rural-urban migration of the agricultural populace (as opposed to returning "rusticated youth") came to the forefront of attention as early as

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[5]Mobo Gao (forthcoming) has found that migration actually increased school enrolment in the impoverished Gao Village in Jiangxi. In the 1990s, villagers have been attaching more importance to the literacy of their children because they believe that education results in a better job and better pay in the city and because literacy enables one to write letters home.

[6]See Chan, Madsen, and Unger (1992, esp. pp. 290-92) for the picture of a Cantonese village's developing a dependence on migration to Hong Kong in the seventies and eighties.

1982, when the term *mangliu renkou* ("blind population flow") seems to have first been used in their regard. In that year, newspapers reported about thirty thousand migrants a day in the railway stations of Sichuan and a total of 1.1 million in Canton (Spence, 1990:736). In 1989, a newspaper in Canton reported that one hundred thousand migrants a day poured into the city during the week of the Spring Festival; this was called *bai wan mingong xia Zhujiang*, "one million workers come down to the Pearl River". The figure reported for Shanghai was 2.51 million in 1994 and almost 4 million in 1997; in the same year, two separate studies reported 3.30 million and 2.86 million migrants, respectively, as living in Peking, bringing them (taking the higher estimate for Peking) to about one-quarter of the population of both cities. The growth rate was faster than predicted; for example, in 1990, it had been estimated that there would be 2.1 million migrants in Peking in the year 2000 (Ding and Stockman, 1996; Yuan et al., 1996; Xiang Biao, 1996; *China News Digest*, 1998). According to government agencies, "floating population" in 1996 totaled 100 million and was expected to add 26 million rural-urban migrants annually in the next 5 years, totaling more than the labour force of Indonesia (see Table 1.3) (Xinhua, 1997; *Migration News*, 1998b). Many villages have become economically dependent on remittances of migrant workers, who can make up the majority of the active population.[7] On the other hand, labour-intensive industries in the coastal regions, including such important export-oriented ones as the textile and clothing industry, have become dependent on the existence of a two-tiered wage system where the bottom tier is occupied by migrants, as rising local wages would render them incompetitive or force them to move inland should they rely on local workers. In this respect, economic inequities created by migration facilitate economic growth.[8]

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[7]For an in-depth discussion of the role of outbound migration in Chinese villages, see Gao (1994 and forthcoming). In the Eastern Jiangxi township studied by Gao, 20% of the total population were claimed to have migrated out by 1992, mostly to Shenzhen (on the Hong Kong border), Swatow (on the Canton coast), and Amoy (on the Fujian coast).

[8]On the dependence of the textile and clothing industry on migrant labour, see Yang and Zhong (1998:11). I am indebted to Dr. O. S. Tchoudinovskikh for pointing out this study.

Table 1.3 'Floating population' in the PRC (official estimates), million

1992	1994	1995	1996
70	80	80	100

Sources: F. N. Pieke (1998), Introduction to Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke, *The Chinese in Europe*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 1-17; Xinhua, 5 January 1997.

Since 1987, the central and municipal governments have undertaken measures to control the rural-urban migration flow. Most were attempting to control the transfer or sale of *hukou*. As the situation became particularly urgent in the second half of the nineties as state enterprises began to lay off redundant workers, new measures faced the reality of what in China is illegal internal migration. The Peking city government passed eleven measures to control migration between the summers of 1995 and 1996, and in 1998 announced that it would limit the number of migrants employed in the city to 1.3 million in order to open jobs for local workers laid off from restructured enterprises (*Migration News*, 1998b) and banned migrants from 20 categories of jobs; the Shanghai government banned them from 23 categories. The *People's Daily* urged unemployed state workers to "learn from rural migrants" and accept difficult, dirty, and dangerous tasks in construction and services. During the first nine months of 1997, police in 15 cities returned 190 thousand migrants and beggars to their home villages and found 100 thousand migrant children alone on the streets. In Shenzhen in 1996, immigrants were 98 per cent of those arrested for crimes, according to police spokesmen (*Migration News*, 1998a).

The general public and the media are reacting to the tide of migration with concern. The wording of the reports on migrants—"tide", "flood" and the like—reminds of that used in describing natural calamities, suggesting the uncontrollable and dangerous nature of the phenomenon. A newspaper heading from 1994 (*Zhongguo Qingnian*, 23 February) is a good example: "Migrants in Search of Work Flood Wuchang Station; 50,000 Stranded, Some Nervous Breakdowns". In 1996, 34 per cent of native Pekinese considered migrants as the top cause of their lack of a sense of security (Yuan et al., 1996). In Shanghai, 80.8 and 77.4 per cent of residents agree respectively that migrants have a negative influence on the safety of property and on the living environment (Ding and Stockman, 1996). The public opinion of internal migrants is thus very similar to that of foreign immigrants in Europe.

Life is an Enterprise: Overseas Migration from Consumer China

As cities and coastal hubs of economic growth became targets of internal migration, physical, infrastructural, economic, and psychological pressures of overcrowding mounted. A Chinese demographer has calculated that the populations of Peking, Shanghai, and Tianjin exceed the "limit populations" that they are able to accommodate without physical overcrowding by 25.9%, 35.5%, and 10.6% respectively (Yang Yunyan, 1994:213). In spite of their relatively low unemployment rates, the outlet valve of international migration rapidly went into operation. In Canton and Fujian, top *qiaoxiang* provinces with high economic growth, incoming and outgoing migration flows both increased in the nineties. Canton Province received one of the highest numbers of incoming migrants – estimated at over 10 million – at the same time as 378 thousand people emigrated overseas in 1978-96, compared to 190 thousand between 1950-1977, according to estimates by PRC scholars (Yue Qiaoyan, 1997, cited by Cheng and Ngok, 1998; Xinhua News Agency cited by Ling Li, 1997:31). Economic growth, rather than slowing down emigration, stimulated it by mobilising new, upwardly mobile layers of the populace, which was added to the revival of the flow of migrants from traditional *qiaoxiang* who were for the first time able to join their relatives living abroad.

On the one hand, a significant number of Chinese profiting from growing incomes and the relaxation of restrictions on foreign travel, as well as the 1985 law on emigration was able to travel abroad, legally or illegally, for the first time. Between 1990 and 1996, when they were abolished, 4.3 million exit visas were issued, excluding those to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan (*China News Digest*, 1996f). On the other hand, the pressure of a society with increasingly consumption-oriented values prompted those getting behind in the economic competition to look elsewhere for the income that would secure the desired social status for themselves and their families. For them, the pathway of migration was determined by the dual criterion of less competition and more economic opportunities, and this often, though not necessarily, meant going overseas. Thus, the new flow of overseas migrants is composed of winners and losers of the new urban consumptive competition, ranging from millionaire entrepreneurs, who want

their wives to live in the garden suburbs of Australia and their sons to go to American colleges, to post-graduate students and failed small entrepreneurs who came to the city with their savings and now borrow to pay traffickers to bring them to Europe. Typically, this new flow is one of potential entrepreneurs looking for the optimal investment for their financial, labour, or cultural capital.

> Some people say this is like "conquering an overseas Manchuria"... Others say it is like the gold fever. Once upon a time, tens of thousands of Chinese emigrants crossed the ocean to become gold diggers on the West Coast of America... A century later, tens of thousands of Chinese ran to the shores of the Danube to dig for gold. (Li Zhongqiang, 1995)

This migration wave joined an intense current of international migrations in which Asians – among them "secondary" Chinese migrants from Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and Taiwan to America and Australia – had already started playing a leading role. In the beginning of the sixties, Asians accounted for 7.8, 5.5, and 4.0 per cent of immigration to the United States, Canada, and Australia, respectively; in the beginning of the nineties, their share had risen to 38, 50, and 40 per cent respectively (Skeldon, 1996). In the 1980s, an average two thousand families per year emigrated from Singapore, over 20 thousand people left Taiwan, and – between 1986 and 1996 – some 500 thousand, or almost one-tenth of the population, emigrated officially from Hong Kong (Li Minghuan, 1995:71, 78). Around three-quarters of the 1,800,000 ethnic Chinese in the United States and the 400 thousand ethnic Chinese in Canada have immigrated since 1970. According to the 1996 census, Chinese are the largest "visible minority" in Canada, accounting for 27% of the total, and more than half of them are from Hong Kong (*Migration News*, 1998d). Between 1983 and 1990, forty thousand skilled Malaysians, largely Chinese, immigrated to the United States (*Migration News*, 1997).

Proportionally the largest growth in Chinese immigration occurred in Europe and Australia. Since the abolition of the "white Australia" policy, the number of Chinese residents on the island has grown tenfold. In France, largely due to the wave of refugees fleeing the Communist take-overs of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, it has grown to between 120 and 300 thousand (Live, 1998:102, Li Minghuan, 1995:138-40).

In the mid-1990s, new migrants who were leaving China as students or businessmen to make a fortune abroad became a favoured topic in popular literature (press reports and "checkout-counter" paperbacks) and soap-opera television. Zhou Li's novel *A Chinese Woman in Manhattan* (*Manhadun di Zhongguo nüren*) and Cao Guilin's novel *Two Pekinese in*

New York (Beijingren zai Niu Yue) became best-sellers in China's book market, and the soap opera made of the latter was second in popularity only to *Foreign Babes in Peking*. Heroes of such stories usually were "chaps next door"-turned-picaresque villains, not always honest but quick-witted and lovable. The reader is invited to shiver with delight in detailed descriptions of the immoralities of overseas life.

On the other hand, the idea of mass migration overseas has appeared in influential unofficial writings of social critics, such as the exile Su Xiaokang, the neo-authoritarian Wang Shan, and Bao Mi, the pen-name of an author living in the PRC who published his novel *Yellow Peril* in Canada in 1991. Since 1991, Peking has regularly used the threat of mass migration as a bargaining chip to counter Western criticism it sees as attempting to contain or destabilise China. In the spring of 1991, Deng Xiaoping (as quoted by Wen Wei Po, a pro-Peking Hong Kong newspaper) spoke thus against Western sanctions imposed on the PRC in the aftermath of Tiananmen: "If the West maintains economic sanctions, it wouldn't be bad to relax it a bit (*song-yi-song*) along the coast, let go of those who want to go! If the Chinese Communist Party loses control over China, then a hundred million Chinese will flee to Indonesia, ten million to Thailand, and five hundred thousand to Hong Kong". In April 1997, a Chinese delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission, responding to criticism of his government, noted that if an economic or social collapse prompted just one per cent of the population to leave the country, those twelve million refugees "would destroy East Asia's prosperity overnight" (*Migration News*, 1997). At the same time, the government mouthpiece *Beijing Review*, arguing that a weak, not a strong, China would be a threat to international security, called on readers to imagine the "horrible scenario" of thirty or 120 million impoverished Chinese (three or ten per cent of the population) engaging in "refugeeism" and "pouring into neighbouring countries and territories" (Li Haibo, 1997).

In reality, it is surprising how *few*, not how many, Chinese have migrated so far. Jack Goldstone (1997:65) has pointed out that if China sent as many migrants abroad as Mexico does, the rate of emigration would be 15 million a year. If, on the other hand, the proportion of migrants seeking opportunities abroad remains at the current ratio to the total number of migrants (1.8 per 1000), then, if the total number of migrants grows to 400 thousand by 2005, emigration rate would reach around 1 million per year. And if incomes in inland areas grow and if infrastructure improves, migration abroad will become a viable option to a larger proportion of the people who opt to migrate.

At the moment, however, only migration into Russia's Far Eastern regions and Northern Burma across the Chinese border is of a scale that