CHINA

Adapting the Past
Confronting the Future

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INTRODUCTION
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Over the course of the twentieth century, the Chinese people were driven through an unusually wrenching series of social changes. While these changes have fundamentally transformed the nature of social life in China today, they have not entirely eclipsed the social structures and values of "traditional" China. Rather, China today is composed of a complex and seemingly contradictory amalgam of elements drawn from that country's Confucian tradition, the reformist but authoritarian Republican era of 1911–1949, Maoist socialism of 1949–1978, and the dynamically changing "open door" (but still very authoritarian) China that emerged under Deng Xiaoping's leadership after 1978. The readings in this section are designed to convey the complex and contradictory social patterns and customs that characterized China as it entered the twenty-fist century. This essay presents only a brief overview of the social transformations of the past century.

Late Imperial Social Order

Chinese society in late imperial times was shaped by a set of Confucian assumptions about the nature of the ideal society. The cement that held society together was supposed to be moral consensus rather than, say, law or police power, and the building blocks that were held together by this cement were human bonds and mutual obligations arrayed in a vast hierarchy. This hierarchy ranged from emperor and ministers down through local officials and village gentry and finally to the immediate family—through the bonds between father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, and so on. It was assumed that a uniform, "correct" set of values and rules of behavior could be specified for all of the links in this vast human chain. In the ideal society, systematic instruction in the proper rules and group pressure to comply with them would produce social harmony and prosperity.

This conception produced a social order that was very different from the one that was emerging in modern times in the pluralist, individualistic West. Chinese officials were as much preachers as administrators, and they devoted great time and energy to encouraging proper thought and behavior. So, for example, they sponsored the drafting of codes of morality and essays extolling virtuous behavior, arranged for public lectures on Confucianism to be given on market days, and erected shrines in memory of righteous individuals. Nonetheless, officials and philosophers recognized that much of the population was poorly educated and could not be expected to behave properly simply as a result of such preaching. But they might conform to the expectations of their parents, their teachers, and their employers or other patrons. Thus an important task of Confucian statecraft was to try to ensure that everyone was bound tightly into the hierarchy of mutual obligations, so that there were no deviant groups or autonomous individuals.

At the base of this hierarchical social order was the Chinese family, and from the time of Confucius onward it was assumed that maintaining order in society at large depended in fundamental ways on ensuring that families were well regulated. The form of family life that evolved in China conformed to this image of strict, hierarchical role relationships and was thus different in fundamental ways from the family patterns of the contemporary West and even to some degree from the families of the pre-modern West. Individuals were born not simply into a family but a patrilineal kin group, and in some parts of China entire villages of several thousand souls belonged to a single lineage, sometimes called a Chinese "clan." Both patrilineages and the families that comprised them were organized hierarchically, with younger members and females expected to show deference and respect for older members and males. From infancy onward Chinese were instructed in obedience to the family and "filial piety," an ethic of worshipful deference toward one's parents and other elders. All members of the family were expected to defer to the will of the family patriarch who, as the representative of the patrilineal line and the head of the corporate family, was expected to make binding decisions that promoted the interests of the family as a whole.

Nothing better illustrates the strong emphases on group loyalty and the internal hierarchy of the Chinese family than the dominant set of marriage customs of late imperial China. Parents with the aid of hired marriage go-betweens arranged most marriages. In many cases the result might be termed a "blind marriage," since the bride and groom did not meet until the day of the wedding and had no say in the choice of a partner. Furthermore, since divorce was strongly discouraged, the perhaps poorly matched strangers were expected to

make the best of things no matter how unhappy they were personally. These customs sound strange to Westerners oriented to romantic love, freedom of mate choice, and husband-wife companionship, but to most Chinese they made eminent sense. The new wife was not seen as a romantic partner for her husband, but as a new recruit for an existing, corporate family. She had important obligations to her in-laws that took precedence over whatever relationship she might develop with her husband. The same calculus applied to the new husband. If the bride was an intimidated stranger, he could be expected to fulfill his required role of helping to bring her into line so that she would become a dutiful and deferential daughter-in-law who would not upset the solidarity of her new family. In the great majority of cases the new bride moved into the family of her husband, rather than the couple setting up an independent household or going to live with her parents.

These distinctive features of Chinese family life created strong family bonds and a sense of security as well as indebtedness. Such sentiments could be a powerful force motivating individuals to work hard, study diligently, and take risks—all for the benefit of the family. But these features were achieved at some cost, particularly in the unhappiness and frustrated aspirations of individual members whose needs and feelings might be overridden by the demands of the family and its patriarch.

Family ties were not, of course, the only important social bonds in the late imperial social hierarchy. A variety of other kinds of social ties helped stitch society together. Many of these were vertical—for example, between teacher and student, employer and employee, sect leader and follower, and patron and client. Others were primarily horizontal—between former classmates, fellow villagers, members of temple associations, members of a craft guild, and city residents from the same native place. Observers often noted that most Chinese sought wherever possible to develop a wide-ranging network of personal "connections" (*guanxi*) of various kinds, rather than to have to depend on inter-actions with strangers on an impersonal basis.

The government's control over grass roots social life in late imperial times was minimal and largely indirect. The authorities did, over the course of most of the last millennium, attempt to institute a system of mutual responsi-bility groups in localities to assist the government in achieving its primary goals—maintaining order and collecting taxes. These groups were designed to make other families liable to sanctions if some members—their neighbors—did not pay their taxes or engaged in criminal or rebellious activity. The government also, as noted earlier, regularly made attempts at moral indoctrination of the populace and, through the examination system used to select officials, provided

powerful incentives for local communities to organize their own efforts to tutor the young in Confucian values. In addition, imperial authorities were quite willing to use force to try to suppress forms of behavior or associational life that were deemed a threat to the state—heterodox religious sects, secret societies, feuding lineages, bandit gangs, and so forth. Still, the imperial bureaucracy was quite small in both numbers and resources, and it could not hope, nor did it attempt, to directly control grass roots social life. Instead, officials were generally content to allow social groupings to manage their own affairs as long as they did not challenge that state and its orthodoxy. As a result, well into the twentieth century, many activities that we associate with modern governments— running schools, caring for the poor, even organizing local police and fire pro- tection—were often carried out by lineages, guilds, and other relatively autono- mous social groups, rather than by the government.

Dilemmas of Reform in Republican China

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as China's weakness in competition with foreign powers became increasingly clear, voices in favor of reform and revolution were raised. Although the distinctive patterns of social organization sketched above might have helped promote stability in dynastic times, now drastic changes were seen as necessary. Critics could generally agree on what was wrong with the Chinese social order, but not on the solution.

China was weak, many argued, precisely because of the legacy of basing state power on personal ties and group membership. Individuals were socialized to be loyal primarily to their own family and kin group, and secondarily to local cults, guilds, groups of former schoolmates, and so forth. This form of social organization inhibited the development of national loyalty and made it difficult to develop general solidarities, such as class consciousness or an ethic of citizen- ship. Loyalty and kind treatment of those in one's network of mutual obligation went hand in hand with callous indifference or even vicious cruelty toward strangers or rivals. Early in the twentieth century Sun Yat-sen lamented that Chinese society resembled a "sheet of loose sand." In truth it was not simply that the grass roots groupings would not stick together, but that they were often at one another's throats.

The traditional social order was criticized on other grounds as well. The strong emphasis on obedience, deference to superiors, and reverence for tradition were said to foster a conservative or passive mentality that obstructed new ideas, technical innovations, and progress in general. The nepotism and personal

favoritism that were fostered by Confucian values, it was argued, made it difficult to get Chinese organizations to select and promote the most capable individuals. And patriarchal family organization fostered a wide range of undesirable tendencies—for example, suppression of female talent, personal unhappiness of younger family members, and preference for a large number of sons.

In the Republican period (1912–1949), these criticisms of traditional social patterns coalesced into two rival agendas for change. Although it has been customary to refer to these options as reform versus revolution, those labels are somewhat misleading. As we shall see, the "revolutionary" solution, which came to the fore in 1949, was in some ways more "traditional" than the agenda offered by Western-oriented "reformers." So instead let us call these the "liberal" and "statist" options.

Those Chinese influenced by the Western liberal tradition advocated the development of a modern state machinery, a well-developed legal system, extensive reliance on markets, and the freeing of individuals from the excessive demands of, and loyalties to, their families and other social groups. The liberals argued that, as in the West, the liberation of individuals from traditional group bonds and obligations would not only produce greater personal happiness and fulfillment. It would also unleash much greater initiative and energy in all spheres of life that would benefit society in general. Simultaneously, the weakening of traditional bonds and the development of more modern forms of associational life, such as trade unions, professional societies, and voluntary associations, would also foster broader sentiments of citizenship and patriotism. Individual behavior would be regulated not so much by a hierarchy of personal obligations, but by a strong and impartial legal system, markets, commercial law, and other "modern" institutions. The liberals contended that this agenda would foster not chaos (the fear of the traditionalists), but a stronger state and an aroused citizenry.

A variety of changes in the nature of the Chinese social order occurred during the Republic era in response to these reformist efforts. A Civil Code and other legal instruments were enacted; chambers of commerce, professional associations, and other "modern" organizations emerged; and among some elements of the population (particularly the educated classes in the cities), new ideals of freedom of mate choice and divorce began to make some headway. Foot-binding for women, which had come under attack in the closing stages of the Qing dynasty, fell out of favor, while education for women and other departures from Confucian tradition were increasingly accepted. However, these changes were only partial, and the political and military chaos that consumed China after the 1930s prevented the liberal reform agenda from receiving a full test.

On the surface the "statist" solution, particularly as Chinese Marxists developed it, seemed to be advocating many of the same things as the liberals, such as freedom of mate choice in place of arranged marriages. However, in reality this agenda was quite different. The liberal option gradually lost favor as the Nationalist regime became increasingly authoritarian after the 1930s, and liberalism disappeared from the agenda after 1949 when the even more statist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came to power. It was thus the statist approach that dominated the social change agenda in the Maoist era. What did this approach emphasize?

Social Transformations in Mao-Era China

The Chinese Communists shared with their dynastic predecessors the belief that the individual freedom from group obligations favored by the liberals would lead to chaos. If the demands of families and other personalistic groups constituted a major impediment to progress and national strength, the proper solution was not to free individuals from such demands, but to transform the nature of these groups so that they would systematically promote the interests of the larger society. In this sense the CCP could be said to have pursued the age-old dream of Chinese statecraft—to produce a unified and orderly social hierarchy. A crucial difference, however, is that the Chinese Communists had more power and greater resources than their dynastic predecessors to try to realize this dream.

What did this statist solution mean in practice between 1949 and 1976? It meant that the state made extensive and generally successful attempts either to gain control over, or to suppress and replace, existing grassroots groups. China's new rulers recognized that control of factories, banks, railways, schools, the military, the mass media, and other large institutions would not be sufficient to remedy the ailments of China's social order. The revolution would also have to transform grass roots social groupings in order bring them under state control.

In the Chinese countryside these efforts involved attacks on the power and property of lineages, temple associations, and other traditional forms, and the mobilization of rural residents into collectivist forms of agricultural organization similar to those in the Soviet Union. By 1956 this transformation had been substantially completed, with the resulting collectives subsequently consolidated into the commune system of the 1960s and 1970s. Chinese farmers and their families as a result became highly dependent upon local leaders installed and supervised by the CCP. Work assignments, family income, advanced educational opportunities, and eventually even permission to have a baby became subject to

the power and restrictions of village cadres. This bureaucratic structure and associated state migration restrictions effectively confined rural residents to a lower caste position, an institutional feature that might appear to have more in common with feudalism than with socialism.

In urban areas much the same transformation occurred, although the specific organizational forms differed. As in the countryside, the aim was to eliminate any autonomous social groups. Some organizations, such as secret societies and religious sects, were attacked and suppressed, while others, such as trade unions, were co-opted or replaced by new organizational forms. The same socialist transformation completed by 1956 made urbanites heavily dependent upon two state-mandated organizational systems.

Work units (*danwei*) not only organized the daily work activities of their employees, but also often provided housing, nursery schools, health clinics, dining halls, and recreational facilities. They played an additional powerful role in social control over employees and their family members through mandatory political study sessions, supervised leisure time activities, household cleanliness inspections, mediation of family disputes, approving of marriages and divorces, and, by the 1970s, childbirth as well.

For those who did not have a work unit or did not reside in housing provided by such a unit, the second basic structure of post-1949 urban life—neighborhoods and their residents' committees—expressed state power. These are not voluntary associations, but obligatory structures established by the state in the early 1950s. Like work units, they have a dual role—to provide services for residents and to exert control. The residents' committee officers may establish nursery schools and first aid clinics, organize reading rooms for the retired and elderly, run small-scale sewing and bicycle repair workshops, mediate family disputes, and help keep an eye on local children after school lets out. In addition they are expected to organize mandatory political study sessions, report strangers to the police, organize local crime patrols, and pressure local families to accept the state's family planning targets. In this structure of work units and residents' committees, as in rural communes, individuals and families became highly dependent upon the resources and decisions controlled by the grass roots representatives of state power.

Where does the Chinese family fit into this complex bureaucratic system? Some observers claimed that the CCP was intent on destroying the family so individuals could be released to give their total loyalties to the Party and to Mao. Certainly the Confucian tradition, which had provided the ideological basis for China's patriarchal family forms, fell under concerted attack after 1949.

However, although there have been some instances of Party-mobilized conflict within families, that has not been the dominant approach. The post-1949 changes were designed not so much to destroy the Chinese family as to eliminate its autonomy. Mao and other leaders wanted families to be strong but compliant groups which would serve the interests of the state, rather than their own "narrow" or private interests. To this end state family policy was in some ways quite "conservative," as in the policy after the early 1950s of discouraging most divorces and in the legal stipulation that grown children must help support their aging parents.

In sum, in regard to grass roots social groups and even the family itself, the approach taken by the CCP after 1949 paradoxically reflected the Confucian tradition. The ideal society was one in which individuals would be tightly embedded in social groups arranged in a bureaucratic hierarchy, one that operated under the ideas and rules of an official orthodoxy. However, state control over this hierarchy, and therefore over all Chinese citizens, was strengthened immeasurably in comparison with the social order of late imperial China.

Flaws in the Mao-era Social Order

In many respects the social changes introduced after 1949 were quite successful. The nation was politically unified under a strong government that could stand up for China in world affairs. The new regime was able to mobilize human energies on a vast scale to confront the nation's problems, and local conflicts between lineages and language groups were kept largely under control. Crime, prostitution, drug addiction, and other "social evils" declined dramatically. The "sheet of loose sand" image no longer applied to China's body politic, and the authorities were able to gain an impressive degree of control over grass roots social life. As a result, sentiments of nationalism and loyalty to the regime and to Mao personally became widely shared.

Nonetheless, the new social order had a number of inherent flaws. These became particularly apparent during the Cultural Revolution decade from 1966 to 1976, when Mao and his radical followers tried to realize more fully their vision of solidary socialism. The radicals tried to eliminate all vestiges of private enterprise, market competition, material incentives, and pursuit of private interests, and to substitute a benevolent bureaucracy that would provide the population with their basic needs and reinforce their group and national solidarity. The premise was that by relying on the paternalistic state, people

would experience security and rising living standards, leading to a sense of commitment to the system.

Most Chinese in Mao's final years saw their social environment in very different terms. They were locked into membership in state-mandated grass roots structures that tightly monitored all aspects of their lives. The time-honored ability of Chinese to leave and seek better opportunities elsewhere was effectively blocked. The bureaucratic structures had been repeatedly racked by political and class struggles, producing hatreds and fears of colleagues and neighbors from which there was no ready escape. Chinese were forbidden to have contact with most of the complex variety of China's traditional culture or the richness of the cultures of the outside world. They could only enjoy a narrow range of literature, art forms, styles of dress, and leisure activities that the state considered "proletarian." The failures and inefficiencies of the socialist eco-nomic system produced not abundance and a sense of a security, but the familiar maladies of socialist economies elsewhere—consumer shortages, long lines, stag-nating or declining living standards, and a constant struggle to meet family needs. Those same economic failings made it necessary for individuals and families to cultivate personal ties and "back door" strategies in order to gain access to the basics of life. That necessity helped to undermine faith in the system, since it became increasingly apparent that high-ranking bureaucrats were in a much better position than ordinary citizens to deploy such personal connections for personal and family benefit. A social order that was intended to produce paternalistic welfare and popular gratitude increasingly had the effect of fostering social tension and popular resentment.

Chinese Society in the Post-Mao Years

The post-Mao elite under Deng Xiaoping's leadership was clearly aware of these flaws in the social order that they had helped build. Most of them had been victims of Mao's later political purges, and they became convinced that the path that China had taken since the mid-1960s was a dead end. China would fall further behind the dynamic capitalist economies of Asia and might even implode in political conflict unless dramatic reforms were introduced.

The years since 1978 have seen reforms in China so fundamental that many Chinese and outside observers consider them a new "revolution" at least as significant as the one that occurred after 1949. While no comprehensive account of these changes will be attempted here, the basic reform strategies employed by Deng and his colleagues can be summarized. They wanted to find

ways to accelerate economic growth, raise living standards, and reduce political controls and tensions in the hope that these changes would restore faith in the leadership of the CCP. In the quest for these general goals, the CCP systematically introduced market reforms in place of bureaucratic allocation, opened the door for economic and cultural interchanges with the outside world, stressed the development of legal institutions, rehabilitated millions of victims of earlier campaigns, and relaxed state controls over popular thought and behavior. Curiously, the resulting strategy of substituting market and legal regulation for bureaucratic mobilization in many ways is reminiscent of the "liberal" option for remaking Chinese society that lost out in the struggle for influence in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the economic realm the post-1978 changes have produced a partial but nonetheless dramatic reduction in the degree of personal dependency upon the bureaucracy. In the countryside the collapse of collectivized farming and the revival of family farming, combined with the loosening of migration restrictions, has given rural families more autonomy to pursue a variety of strategies in their quest for prosperity. Managing the family's farming activities is in many places increasingly giving way to setting up family businesses, placing family members in jobs in village factories, and receiving remittances from the earnings of family members working elsewhere. While they are less subject to the daily orders and supervision of local cadres than in the Mao era, rural families also have to worry more about whether they can provide for their own needs, since the social safety net formerly provided by the collectivized system has been largely dismantled.

However, the bureaucratic state has not disappeared from the lives of rural residents by any means. The state's presence and control in the countryside are still much stronger than was the case in pre-1949 China. Village cadres beholden to the state still control access to farmland and, through their powers to tax, grant licenses, and approve construction projects, they maintain considerable influence over the ability of local families and the village as a whole to benefit from new opportunities. Rural cadres do not monitor and control the private lives of local residents as tightly as their predecessors did in the Mao era. However, on occasion and in certain realms, particularly in regard to enforcing state family planning targets, they can still mobilize considerable resources to demand compliance and punish locals who defy their authority (reading 24).

In China's cities the Deng-era reforms began somewhat later, generally after 1984, but there they also fundamentally altered the nature of the social order. Initially market reforms were aimed at providing more incentives and efficiency for enterprises rather than individuals. However, with the deepening of the reforms since 1992, the dependence of individual urbanites on their work

units (and to some extent on their neighborhood organizations) has decreased. Lifetime work at fixed wages in a bureaucratically assigned job increasingly has been replaced by short-term labor contracts, freedom to seek and to change jobs, and variable pay based on complex incentive schemes. The "rehabilitation" of private enterprise and of foreign and joint-venture firms provides new employment options beyond the state and collective enterprises of the Mao era. As in the countryside, decreased dependence upon the bureaucracy is accompanied by increased competition and insecurity. Urbanites can no longer count upon the state and its bureaucratic appendages to supply them with a lifetime job, housing at nominal cost, free medical care, and the other benefits of a socialist economy. Revived labor markets produce competition for job opportunities (including increased competition from rural migrants), and once on the job, workers are likely to face a complex new array of rewards and fines as well as the prospect of being demoted, laid off, or fired. Reforms in other realms mean that housing, medical care, and other basics are no longer "free goods." Urban families are now required to pay costs that are increasingly influenced by market forces.

While it is sometimes argued that Deng Xiaoping's reform strategy involved an attempt to reform economic institutions while keeping political institutions unchanged, in truth the changes in the political realm have also been dramatic. The CCP continues to dominate the system and will not tolerate any organized opposition, but political rehabilitations and liberalization were central to the reform program. In many realms markets and laws are seen as preferable to bureaucratic allocation as a way of regulating popular behavior. With controls over allowed forms of behavior and thought substantially relaxed, although by no means eliminated, Chinese society has become much more varied and colorful. In the wake of these changes, religious activity, Confucian thought, lineage feuds, Western classical and world pop music, traditional Chinese operas, muckraking journalism, raising pets, employing household servants, wearing the latest Western fashions, and countless other formerly tabooed practices have all made a comeback.

China's leaders maintain that their system is still socialist rather than capitalist, since at least nominal state or public ownership of land and capital remains dominant over private ownership. But increasingly slogans about "building socialism" are seen as irrelevant by ordinary Chinese, and perhaps by the leaders themselves. More and more the Party bases its claim to legitimacy on its management of the economy and its defense of the nation, rather than on pursuit of a future socialist society.

Flaws in the Reformed Social Order?

In many ways the reforms introduced in China since 1978 have been highly successful, and certainly in comparison with the situation in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Income and consumption levels have been raised dramatically, poverty rates have declined, consumer shortages and rationing have been dramatically reduced, and China has captured the attention of the world for its successes in attracting foreign investment and selling its products overseas. China's leaders successfully defused many of the tensions that had built up during Mao's final decade in power. Millions of the victims of his campaigns were rehabilitated, broken careers and separated families were made whole again, and China ended its forced isolation from its own cultural heritage as well as the cultures of the outside world. In many ways China has become a more "normal" and even somewhat pluralist society.

Despite such successes, as China entered the new millennium it was by no means clear how stable the reformed social order would be. Party leaders, in their effort to keep the economic engine booming and retain control over an increasingly pluralistic society, seem to be, as one analyst put it, "riding a tiger." Deepening the reforms in the 1990s produced massive layoffs from failing state enterprises as well as Dickensian working conditions in many village and foreign-run enterprises. Individuals losing their jobs and facing cutbacks or rising costs in their housing and medical care look around them and see China's newly rich with their cellular phones, chauffeured limousines, and lavish private mansions. The pervasiveness of official corruption encourages a popular belief that the well-connected are monopolizing the fruits of China's reforms, rather than those who are most innovative or work the hardest. The resurgence in crime, prostitution, drug addiction, and other social problems feeds a popular perception that China's reforms have led to moral collapse. Some Chinese feel that China's Marxist leaders are presiding over the creation of the sort of unbridled capitalism that Marxism was designed to overthrow, while others recall Mao's prediction that China would face the danger of capitalist restoration after his death. The social tensions produced by political and class conflicts during the late-Mao years have not been replaced by social harmony and popular gratitude. Instead new resentments have been generated by widespread feelings that the current social order is inequitable and corrupt. Increasingly farmers, workers, and others are joining together to protest the injustices that they face and see around them.

The successors to Deng Xiaoping do not appear to have ready or effective answers to these problems. They have allowed an increasingly "normal" and contentious society to emerge, but they appear quite uncomfortable with the resulting pluralism and disrespect for official orthodoxy. While they feel they have no choice but to continue to push the reform agenda forward in order to keep the economy growing, they have been unable to come up with a new ideology and set of legitimating symbols to replace the widely discredited package of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought. Instead they repeatedly fall back on slogans and practices of the socialist era, no matter how out of touch with reality and ineffective these have become. Muddling through appears to be the order of the day in managing China's increasingly contentious society.

The Complexity of Chinese Society Today

The reading selections that follow are designed to convey some of the diversity and contradictions of reform-era Chinese society. Under the impact of the reforms, social patterns stemming from the socialist era are in competition with revived influences from China's own past as well as with new influences and fads flowing in from the outside world. The relaxation of political and economic controls has made it possible for an underlying and formerly suppressed diversity of customs and ways of life to become visible once again and for new customs and trends to appear. Generalizations about social patterns have become more difficult, as the standard template of socialist institutions has given way to behavior and thought patterns that vary markedly depending upon local traditions, Cultural Revolution experiences, recent economic fate, access to information, closeness to China's coast, and other factors.

Readings 21–24 focus on contemporary family patterns. They present the complex mixture of continuities with traditional family patterns and changes stemming from the socialist and reform eras. It is also clear that contemporary family patterns in rural (readings 22 and 24) and urban (readings 21 and 23) China often diverge in important ways. Oversimplifying the contrast, the patrilineal family system is alive and well in most villages, producing, among other results, a strong preference for sons over daughters that poses a challenge for the state's family planning program. In contrast, in China's large cities family patterns look less patriarchal and more like the "conjugal" patterns found in advanced industrial societies, and this fact produces, among other things, an increasing acceptance of divorce that contrasts with the situation in the countryside.

Readings 25–28 focus on the increased diversity in popular customs since 1978. Reading 25 vividly describes the Western-influenced consumption styles now visible in China's cities, as exemplified by the popularity of McDonald's restaurants. Reading 26, in contrast, describes the resurgence in rural areas of customs that stem from China's pre-1949 traditions, in this case involving the consultation of geomancy specialists to properly align new homes and gravesites and generally deal with life's problems. The revival described in reading 27 is more complex. Catholicism and other forms of Christianity of course had their origins in the efforts of Western missionaries in late imperial and Republican China. However, Catholic worship today is more influenced by the practices that took root in China prior to 1949 than by new foreign influences, a fact reflected in the continued use of Latin rather than Chinese in church liturgy. (The CCP's continuing ban on contacts between the Vatican and Chinese Catholics means that church practice is frozen in forms that predate Vatican II.) The revival of Christian worship is visible in both rural and urban locales in China. Finally, reading 28 deals with the revival of another set of indigenous customs, as observed in urban China—a set of mental and physical self-discipline techniques known as *qigong*. The resurgence of belief in *qigong* rituals and *qigong* masters described in this reading was a precursor to the rise of one particular *qigong* sect in the 1990s—the Falun Gong. In 1999 the mass following attracted by Falun Gong, and the willingness of this sect to challenge the authorities, caused an official panic that led the CCP to ban the group and launch a campaign to suppress it, a campaign that Falun Gong believers have resisted with surprising resilience. These two readings also illustrate the fact that revivals of traditions are not visible only in China's villages, while customs influenced by the West are not confined to the cities. Some of the revived practices, whether of domestic or foreign origin, cut across the rural-urban divide.

Readings 29 through 32 are all concerned with issues of inequality and inclusion or exclusion in Chinese society. Reading 29 conveys some of the debate occurring in the 1990s about the role of women in China and whether the dismantling of socialist institutions and the debunking of Marxist ideology have encouraged new or revived forms of gender inequality. Reading 30 deals with residents of a poor village who migrate to the city in search of manual labor jobs. To the extent that they are able to string together a series of daily jobs, they can earn more than they could back in the village. However, their higher wages and the money they can send back to their families are counterbalanced by the discrimination and harassment they face from urbanites on a daily basis. For a

contrasting case of a village that has become so rich that they have to hire migrants from such poor villages to staff their booming factories, see reading 36.

Reading 31 deals with other forms of urban social life that are increasingly visible, if not fully accepted, in urban China today. It was sometimes claimed in the Mao era that China had no criminals or homosexuals, a claim that was dubious even at the time. In the reform era both groups are not so effectively suppressed and have become part of the social landscape. Recurring crackdowns have been launched against crime, but criminal groups and a criminal subculture are nonetheless increasingly visible. Homosexuals face a different situation. Official suppression has been relaxed, but China's gays still harbor considerable anxiety about whether they can enjoy the same increased tolerance as other groups.

Educational institutions are central to questions of inequality and inclusion or exclusion in any society. Schools play the key role in preparing China's youths for their places in society, as well as in preparing Chinese society as a whole to compete in the global economy. Reading 32 portrays the ways in which the lowest levels of schooling in one Chinese city have been affected by the post-1978 reforms. Schools reflect particularly vividly the consequences of a shift from bureaucratic mobilization to market competition. Children attending such urban schools enjoy a considerable advantage over their peers in the countryside, some of whom do not even complete primary school, and very few of whom can hope to get a college education. These disparities reinforce the great gulf in life opportunities between rural and urban China. That gulf was a product of the socialist institutions of Mao's China but persists today—as seen in the contrast between pampered urban children being treated to meals at McDonald's in reading 25 and migrant rural youths scrambling for menial day labor jobs in reading 30.

While these essays cover a diverse terrain, they barely scratch the surface of Chinese society today. Even so it should be abundantly clear that China enters the new millennium with a dynamically changing and increasingly diverse social order. The image of a vast social hierarchy operating under an official orthodoxy, an ideal stressed by Mao as well as his dynastic predecessors, no longer fits current social realities. But the liberal image of individuals competing in a society governed by markets and laws does not fit very well either. The current social order is a complex, often contradictory amalgam of market forces, outside cultural influences, legal regulation, personal networks, popular social movements, bureaucratic regulation, and other elements. It remains uncertain whether China's leaders can continue to "ride the tiger" by transforming this social order without further undermining their own political authority.