

INTRODUCTION

# “THE STATE and MIGRATION IN CHINESE HISTORY”

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## Abstract

This special issue of the *Journal of Chinese History* is dedicated to studies of the connection between migration and the state throughout Chinese history. The special editor's introduction first surveys the major types of migration within China proper, and towards the outside world, including citations to recent scholarship. It brings the eight papers of this issue into dialogue with each other around four major themes: migration and the limits of state power, the violence and trauma of migration, migration and identity, and migration and gender/family issues.

This special issue of the *Journal of Chinese History* is dedicated to studies of the connection between migration and the state throughout Chinese history. The whole of human history is a story of movement and migration. Though many other animal species migrate and occupy new territory, only human beings have done so with an earth-altering impact. And since humans are the only species that engage in “cross-community migration,” such cultural and linguistic encounters have been one of the primary drivers in the “transformation of human life.”<sup>1</sup>

With the rise of first state-level societies across Eurasia and the New World, regulating human movement became a primary concern of statecraft, as it continues to be in the present day. States enticed, subsidized, facilitated, coerced, monitored, channeled, restricted, or prohibited relocation of their own subjects, citizens, or outsiders for a wide range of ideological and policy reasons. The relationship between migration and the state has been a major topic of study in world history for decades, and current events in the Mediterranean and the Americas have highlighted the importance of examining this issue for understanding our world.

China offers an excellent case for the study of migration and the state, not only because migration is such an important feature in Chinese history and in contemporary life, but also because the written and oral sources for its study are exceptionally rich. These include received historical and literary texts, excavated administrative and legal documents, inscriptions, genealogies, imperial and local archives, censuses, and for more recent migrations, memoirs and oral histories.

<sup>1</sup>Patrick Manning and Tiffany Trimmer, *Migration in World History*, 3rd edn (New York: Routledge, 2020), 1–6.

There have been many excellent recent studies of migration for particular periods in Chinese history, as well as broad studies of overseas emigration, but there are very few comprehensive accounts covering the millennia of recorded history. James Lee's study "Migration and Expansion in Chinese History" (1978) provides a deep history of migration in China from prehistory up until late imperial times, with valuable maps and comprehensive tables.<sup>2</sup> Lee shows that even though migrations have been a constant feature in China over the length of its history, this development has been punctuated by major bursts of state-induced migration, on the order of millions of persons, in certain key eras.<sup>3</sup> One will recognize these time spans as the major periods of regime change and state-building in China. The most accessible synthesis of Chinese migration is Diana Lary's textbook *Chinese Migrations* (2012), which carries the story from prehistory up until almost the present day, centered around the major themes of state-sponsored migration, war and natural disasters, population pressure, family and social networks, identity and acculturation, and for more recent migrations, contract labor systems and remittances.<sup>4</sup> For the last five hundred years, Steven Miles' textbook, *Chinese Diasporas* (2020), provides an integrated survey of both internal and international Chinese migrations.<sup>5</sup> The foundational work on migration in Chinese is the six volumes of *Zhongguo yimin shi* 中國移民史 (1997) by Ge Jianxiong 葛劍雄, Wu Songdi 吳松弟, and Cao Shuji 曹樹基.<sup>6</sup> In the introductory volume, Ge provides the overarching definitions, methodology, and periodization for migration in China, and in subsequent volumes, he and his co-authors compile and interpret all the records of migration and movement from prehistory until the mid-twentieth century, with only minor coverage of movements after 1949. Ge and his colleagues later published a related six-volume series on population change in China, *Zhongguo renkou shi* 中國人口史.<sup>7</sup>

As James Lee has stated, "migration built China," for the constantly evolving cultural-political entity we know as China is demonstrably the cumulative result of millennia of human movement. Over the course of Chinese history, the state has tried to compel migration or regulate natural migration flows to achieve frontier expansion and consolidation, integrate political control over territory, promote economic development, redistribute or homogenize populations, or control threatening internal or external forces. Individuals and families have also been "pushed" to leave their homes by warfare, political instability, natural disasters, demographic pressure, and land shortages, while also being "pulled" to other regions in China or towards overseas realms by economic opportunity, but also in more recent times, by a desire for academic opportunity, or political and religious freedom. However, as Maxim Korolkov, Anke Hein, and Steven Miles point out in this issue, it is probably not accurate to separate out private

<sup>2</sup>James Lee, "Migration and Expansion in Chinese History," in *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, edited by William H. McNeill and Ruth S. Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 20–47.

<sup>3</sup>Lee, "Migration and Expansion," 23–24 figures 1, 2. These periods are 221–200 BCE, 150–100 BCE, 200–250 CE, 300–500, 675–725, 925–950, 1025–1050, 1225–1300, 1350–1425, and 1625–1650.

<sup>4</sup>Diana Lary, *Chinese Migrations: The Movement of People, Goods, and Ideas over Four Millennia* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012).

<sup>5</sup>Steven B. Miles, *Chinese Diasporas: A Social History of Global Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>6</sup>Ge Jianxiong 葛劍雄, Wu Songdi 吳松弟, and Cao Shuji 曹樹基, *Zhongguo yimin shi* 中國移民史, 6 vols. (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1997).

<sup>7</sup>Ge Jianxiong 葛劍雄, et al., *Zhongguo renkou shi* 中國人口史, 6 vols. (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2000–2002).

migration flows from state-induced population movements completely, because the two are almost always interrelated, for private migration often takes advantage of corridors of state control or state-sponsored measures, and the government often tries to piggy-back upon and exploit natural flows of population for their own goals. Furthermore, so-called private migration has rarely been an individual decision, for we know from recent studies that such moves are often the result of conscious deliberations made within families for “socioeconomic survival, maintenance, or advancement.”<sup>8</sup>

Looking more broadly then at migrations in Chinese history, we see several recurring types of movement. The most prominent long-term trend, in evidence from prehistory until the present day, has been a centrifugal movement of farmers and other settlers from the core of the Chinese civilizational area (the middle Yellow River valley) out to the peripheries. For much of Chinese history this has encompassed a “march to the tropics,” colonizing the south and southwest, as well as a push into Central Asia that began during the Han period and has continued to the present, and in the past two centuries, the massive population movement into Manchuria and the northeast.<sup>9</sup> Of course, Chinese colonists were drawn or compelled to move into what they thought was “empty” land, but this imperialist fiction was no more true for pre-modern China than it was for the colonization of the American West.

One of the most frequent and traumatic forms of migration has been the relocation of populations fleeing war, regime change, or natural disasters like flood, drought, famine, or plague. This can be seen in the massive shift in population towards the south after 311 CE, and after events like the fall of the Northern Song in 1126, the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, the Ming-Qing transition of 1644, the Taiping and other mid-nineteenth century rebellions, the KMT retreat to Taiwan in 1949, as well as after major flooding events or course changes of the Yellow River (e.g. 1048, 1938), or prolonged droughts or famines in the north like the Northern Chinese Famine of 1876–1879 or the Great Leap Famine of 1959–1962.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the state assisted these refugees with food relief or relocation assistance to less-affected areas, but many times those fleeing disaster were left entirely to their own devices.

<sup>8</sup>Miles, *Chinese Diasporas*, 14.

<sup>9</sup>Herold J. Wiens, *China's March Toward the Tropics: A Discussion of the Southward Penetration of China's Culture, Peoples, and Political Control in Relation to the Non-Han-Chinese Peoples of South China and in the Perspective of Historical and Cultural Geography* (Hamden: Shoe String Press, 1954); Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Chun-shu Chang, *The Rise of the Chinese Empire*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Leo Kwok-yueh Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Charles Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200–1700* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007); Thomas R. Gottschang and Diana Lary, *Swallows and Settlers: The Great Migration from North China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000).

<sup>10</sup>Angela Schottenhammer, “China: Medieval Era Migrations,” in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, edited by Immanuel Ness (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 2:995–1004; Zhang Ling, *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048–1128* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Micah S. Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China: Henan Province, the Yellow River, and Beyond, 1938–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang, *The Great Exodus from China: Trauma, Memory and Identity in Modern Taiwan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (New York: Walker, 2010).

The movement of people from China's rural areas into its expanding cities commenced in earnest with industrialization and labor migration during the late nineteenth century. When this trend accelerated after 1949, endangering the predatory extraction of agricultural surpluses needed for Soviet-style industrialization and threatening urban unemployment, state planners instituted the *hukou* system of household registration in stages over the course of the 1950s, inspired by Soviet internal passport controls and the older *baojia* system of population registration and surveillance of the Qing.<sup>11</sup> By 1960, the fully-developed *hukou* system became a structure of "invisible walls" meant to restrict migration into urban areas from the countryside, further exacerbating the cultural and economic "great divide" between the two zones. When this system was refashioned and made more flexible during the Reform Era, movement towards cities and Special Economic Zones burst forth like a flood, constituting over the last forty years one of the largest migrations in human history, with nearly two-hundred million permanent migrants or temporary contract laborers relocating to cities, often treated as outsiders or an exploitable underclass, for nearly all have lacked legal urban residency.<sup>12</sup>

Movement in the opposite direction in China, from city to countryside, has usually involved some measure of persuasion or coercion from the state, for it goes against the prevailing tide of natural migration. Throughout Chinese history, punitive exile from the capital to some peripheral rural area has been a common way to get rid of political enemies or to undermine rich and powerful lineages. During the PRC era, the countryside became a virtual "dumping ground" for excess urban population and undesirable elements.<sup>13</sup> The notorious "May 7th Cadre Schools" (*wuqi ganxiao* 五七幹校) for hundreds of thousands of former party leaders, minor bureaucrats, and "counter-revolutionary" intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution were basically rural labor-camp prisons used for punitive exile. The largest and most memorable rustication campaign, however, was the "Sent-Down Youth Movement" (*shangshan xiaxiang yundong* 上山下乡運動) of 1968–1980, which transferred approximately seventeen million educated urban youth to the countryside, so they could reform their thinking through labor and contact with the revolutionary peasant classes. The movement was supposed to relieve urban population growth, sideline Red Guard factionalism, and, ostensibly, reduce the urban and rural divide, though it actually exacerbated it instead.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, the overseas trade diasporas and labor diasporas of millions of Chinese individuals and families have been major features of global migration during the last five hundred years. The largest burst of activity was from 1840–1937, when somewhere

<sup>11</sup>Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's *Hukou* System," *China Quarterly* 139 (September 1994), 644–68; Kam Wing Chan, *Cities with Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post-1949 China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Kam Wing Chan, Fang Cai, Guanghua Wan, and Man Wang, *Urbanization with Chinese Characteristics: The Hukou System and Migration* (London: Routledge, 2018); Jeremy Brown, *City Versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>12</sup>Leslie T. Chang, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (New York: Random House, 2009); Floris-Jan van Luyn, *A Floating City of Peasants: The Great Migration in Contemporary China* (New York: New Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup>Brown, *City Versus Countryside*, 8, 231.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas P. Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Michel Bonnin, *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Education Youth (1968–1980)*, translated by Krystyna Horko (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2013); Emily Honig and Xiaojian Zhao, *Across the Great Divide: The Sent-Down Youth Movement in Mao's China, 1968–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

between seven and twenty million persons left China for Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Australia, pushed by political instability and demographic pressures and facilitated by family networks, temples, native-place associations, and the technology for sending monetary remittances back home. In recent decades, some scholars have framed this overseas migration as one manifestation of a broader pattern of Chinese migration, since overseas migrations share many structural features (and even regional connections) with frontier colonization, labor migrations, urbanization, and trade diasporas within China proper.<sup>15</sup> During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there has been a further surge in overseas Chinese students to North America and Europe, and other entrepreneurial diasporas and labor migrants to Africa, Central Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

This special issue grew out of an international conference titled “The State and Migration in Chinese History,” jointly organized by Anthony Barbieri-Low (UC Santa Barbara) and Patricia Ebrey (University of Washington). It was originally scheduled for May of 2020 in Seattle, but was eventually held remotely on July 7–8, due to pandemic conditions. The conference received partial funding from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. We invited papers from a diverse range of scholars, at all career stages, from North America, Europe, and Asia. It was our original intention to provide broad coverage for most periods of Chinese history in which migration formed a key element, but the eight papers eventually peer-reviewed and selected for publication formed three clusters, one during the early imperial and early medieval periods, a second cluster covering the Qing dynasty, and a third spanning the long twentieth century. We regret the lack of papers for the entirety of middle period China (Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties), but this deficiency did allow the participants a rare opportunity to engage in explicit comparisons between cases from the ancient and the early-modern/modern periods.

How to define migration was a spirited topic for debate in papers and conference discussions. Some participants insisted that migration should only include those who permanently settled (and shifted their state registration) to their new location, but most papers adopted a broader definition that encompassed seasonal Han migrants who collected resources in Manchuria (Schlesinger), Buddhist sojourner nuns (Huang), bureaucratic labor migration and commercial sojourning (Miles), “exile-colonizers” on Taiwan who aspired to return home (Yang), urban households ostensibly relocated for national defense (Brown), and troublesome urban youth transported to the countryside for population-balancing, labor-reform, and ecological conservation (Muscolino).

The nature and biases in our sources for Chinese migration was also a major topic for discussion. For the early imperial period, the lack of modern census and population statistics make an evaluation of the scale of migration particularly problematic. Anthony Barbieri-Low discusses the reliability of the figures given by Sima Qian in the *Shi ji* for coerced resettlements initiated by the First Emperor of Qin. Maxim Korolkov and Anke Hein combine mortuary evidence from tombs with received and excavated texts to better perceive the movements of diverse people upon the landscape. Wen-Yi Huang discusses the biased nature of elite texts of the Six Dynasties period, which completely ignore the movements of lower-class individuals, and only mention the travels of elite

<sup>15</sup>Philip Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008); Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900–1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Adam McKeown, “Global Migration, 1846–1940,” *Journal of World History* 15.2 (2004), 155–89; Miles, *Chinese Diasporas*, 6–7.

women incidentally or for specific rhetorical purposes. Jonathan Schlesinger comments upon the particular nature of Manchu archival sources from Jilin, which must be read across the grain to uncover answers to scholars' questions about Han migrants in the area. For his study, Steven Miles balances official archival documents against lineage genealogies and dedicatory inscriptions to reconstruct late Qing migration into Guangxi. For the modern period, Micah Muscolino wrestles with the biased nature of official work-reports of rusticated youth, which often mention only troublemakers or hyperbolic stories of transformative success, while Jeremy Brown utilizes archival documents he purchased from flea markets to overcome the obstacle of restricted party archives of the PRC and restore a contemporary human voice.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Dominic Yang innovatively supplements the deficiencies of memoirs and oral histories of the 1949 relocation to Taiwan with newspaper classified advertisements taken out by recently-relocated mainlanders.

### Migration and the Limits of State Power

Our discussions brought out four major themes in the papers, which allow us to address broad issues related to migration in Chinese history in a comparative framework. First, the participants in this special issue would all agree with the statement that each instance of migration or emigration in Chinese history occupies a point on a continuum from wholly private endeavors, through various forms of state-induced or state-sponsored migrations, up to fully-coercive relocation and violent removal. The article by Maxim Korolkov and Anke Hein points out that even migrations which appear to be privately motivated, still take advantage of nodes and corridors of state power. The private migrants were facilitated by state measures such as mass coinage, road improvements, and communication and security infrastructure. In his essay on the relocations carried out by Qin state and empire, Anthony Barbieri-Low is careful to distinguish those movements of populations that were "semi-voluntary" or "compensated" with tax breaks, conferrals of rank, or amnesties from those that were more punitive or coercive. He also explores the various terms used in early imperial texts to describe human movement. In her essay on female migrants during the Six Dynasties, Wen-Yi Huang declares that "the state was not the sole driver of women's mobility," and she presents cases ranging from Buddhist nuns who traveled on their own initiative or at the invitation of a ruler, to women who migrated to rejoin their husbands who had defected to the north, to those unfortunate women who were abducted in war. As also seen in the later nationwide "sent-down youth" movement, the urban youth studied by Micah Muscolino in his article technically volunteered to go to the countryside for soil and water conservation work, but this volunteerism was actually orchestrated by mass rallies and pressure campaigns directed at parents and school officials. The Cantonese and Hunanese bureaucratic-labor migrants studied by Steven Miles in his essay would probably fall on the continuum under the category of a "state-induced" migration. After the mid-century rebellions decimated state power in Guangxi, the sale of official posts induced men from these areas to journey up-river and "colonize the Qing bureaucracy."<sup>17</sup> This benefited the men and their families

<sup>16</sup>See also Jeremy Brown, "Finding and Using Grassroots Historical Sources from the Mao Era." *Chinese History Dissertation Reviews*. <https://dissertationreviews.wordpress.com/2010/12/15/finding-and-using-grassroots-historical-sources-from-the-mao-era-by-jeremy-brown/>.

<sup>17</sup>See also Steven B. Miles, *Opportunity in Crisis: Cantonese Migrants and the State in Late Qing China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2021).

socioeconomically, while also helping to accomplish the state's goals of reintegrating the area and collecting new commercial taxes.

Several of the essays in this issue highlight the limits of state power in China to control human movement. While it appears that the ancient and modern states occupying the territory of continental East Asia (i.e. China) had sufficient power and resources to induce or coerce people to relocate (though such moves did strain state finances), these same states found it far more difficult to prevent those people from leaving their assigned locations or stopping them from going where they really wanted to go.

Jonathan Schlesinger argues in his article that while the Qing emperors certainly decreed that their “pristine” homeland of Manchuria was to be off-limits to Han migrants, there was actually no uniform “policy of prohibition” for all of Manchuria, for restrictions varied by region and were more concerned with controlling access to vital resources like ginseng or fresh-water pearls than specifically prohibiting ethnic-Han migration. But Manchuria possessed land in abundance and other valuable things that Han migrants wanted, and the state failed miserably at keeping them out. Once the state finally gave up holding back the tide at the end of the nineteenth century, a flood of twenty-five million migrants moved to Manchuria on a contract-labor or permanent basis, one of the greatest migrations in world history up to that point.<sup>18</sup>

For the migrating Buddhist nuns studied by Wen-Yi Huang, some fleeing warfare and some going to study or preach, their religious status gave them special privileges of free movement that was not enjoyed by other men or women, who were controlled through household registration systems and barred from movement through checkpoints. A good number of these Buddhist women even crossed the dangerous north-south border unmolested. The Northern Wei and the Eastern Jin states eventually tried to pass regulations that limited the movement of monks and nuns, but these were wholly ineffective since all levels in society, including the leadership, honored the religious as a special group.

In Jeremy Brown's essay, he argues that the view by some that the *hukou* system erected by the state after 1960 to control movement was an “iron wall” preventing all contact or migration between the city and the countryside is greatly overstated. Many of the thousands of urban households of Tianjin who were compelled to move outside the city as part of a scheme of civil defense in the early 1970s desperately wanted to restore their urban *hukou* registration, and they resorted to all manner of demonstrations and complaints to resist their relocation by the state. Some city officials bent the rules to let certain ones back in. A good number of relocated persons just simply went off-grid and snuck back into the city, moving in with relatives or making a living in the underground economy of Tianjin. Brown shows that “state-imposed migration controls failed to curb people's aspirations to live and work where they wanted, together with the people who meant the most to them,” thus demonstrating that even the powerful modern state, with all its tools of surveillance and control, still has difficulty preventing people from migrating if they really desire to do so.

### The Violence and Trauma of Migration

Those individuals and families who were coercively uprooted by the state, or who were abducted during warfare or fled its onslaught, experienced almost unimaginable

<sup>18</sup>Gottschang and Lary, *Swallows and Settlers*, 2–3, 139. The net migration for the period from 1890 to 1990 was seventeen million people added to Manchuria.

privation and trauma. This theme is explored in a number of essays in this issue. The ancient sources studied by Anthony Barbieri-Low in his contribution only hint at the violence and trauma inflicted by the Qin state's forcible relocation of millions of people in its brutal conquest of the Chinese geocultural sphere. We read in documents about indigenous people being "driven out" and former residents of new Qin conquests being "expelled" or "exiled," but we rarely hear of their suffering. We do read Sima Qian's retelling of the arduous exile of the iron industrialists banished by the First Emperor to Sichuan, and in two rare surviving letters from Qin soldiers, we hear about "empty cities" and territories where the former residents have turned to banditry to survive. Barbieri-Low argues that the Qin were able to callously ignore the suffering of those they forcibly relocated, because their bureaucratic system dehumanized households and individuals, reducing them to numbers.

Trauma is central to the article by Dominic Yang on the "great exodus" to Taiwan in 1949, following the collapse of the KMT regime on the mainland.<sup>19</sup> He estimates that a million people were forcibly displaced in this migration to the island, and, contrary to popular belief, many of these were not KMT elites, but press-ganged soldiers or laborers, compelled to join the Nationalist retreat. Those who made it to Taiwan experienced the trauma of severed family-network ties, poor living conditions, prolonged bachelorhood, and a hostile local population who considered them colonizers. Remarkably, in a kind of "Stockholm syndrome," many of those lower-class individuals abducted and traumatized by the KMT and "socially-atomized" by their forced relocation were later coopted by the state with offers of stable jobs and housing to eventually become staunch supporters of the authoritarian state.

Two of the categories of migrating females studied by Wen-Yi Huang during "an era of mass migration" from the fourth to sixth centuries CE in China were similarly traumatized, but their outcomes were quite variable. This was a time of frequent warfare and several dynastic transitions in the north and the south. Thousands of elite women (and an untold number of non-elite ones) were abducted during the wars of this period and either held for ransom, made to serve as slaves, or gifted as wives in the north, inflicting great trauma. Fortunately, some had maintained lineage connections since their ancestors had earlier migrated southward, and they used these to prevent starvation and destitution. A few noteworthy women in this group were able to climb the social ladder in the north after their forced marriages and rise to lofty positions at court.

In Jeremy Brown's essay, the tens of thousands of urban households of Tianjin who were compelled to move outside the city as part of a scheme of civil defense in the early 1970s also experienced hardship, which was traumatic to some extent, as they lost the "iron rice-bowl" of their former urban *hukou* registration, with its guarantees of employment, food, healthcare, and a better education. In addition to the hard work and poor compensation they suffered in the villages, one ethnic-Hui individual was further traumatized by being compelled to work with pigs, a practice forbidden by his faith. For years, many of these families complained bitterly of their suffering, constantly filing petitions or even engaging in "emotional street theater" or self-harm to express their pain.

<sup>19</sup>See also Joshua Fan, *China's Homeless Generation: Voices from the Veterans of the Chinese Civil War, 1940s-1990s* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Mahlon Meyer, *Remembering China from Taiwan: Divided Families and Bittersweet Reunions after the Chinese Civil War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).



The urban youth who were vigorously recruited and sent to the countryside of Shaanxi for water and soil conservation work in 1964–1967, studied in Micah Muscolino’s essay, were already from troubled backgrounds, but they were further traumatized by the experience of working and living in the countryside. Such conditions contributed to the failure of this effort to reform them, for the males and females engaged in even more transgressive behavior (such as assault and robbery) after being relocated to the countryside. This was a foreshadowing of the great cultural and physical trauma experienced by the seventeen million sent-down youth who would be transferred to villages between 1968 and 1980. The sent-down youth complained of primitive living conditions, back-breaking work, and even sexual assaults.

### Migration and Identity

Migration is deeply entangled with issues of ethnic, national, group, and personal identity. It has been argued that a concrete ethnic identity is often forged only in contact with other groups. For example, a defined notion of what it meant to be “Greek” in the ancient world did not come about until Greek colonists in the Classical and Hellenistic periods lived among other alien cultures. One could argue the same way for developments like the National Essence Movement which arose in the early twentieth century in China after the encounter with the West, or the Chinese diasporic communities abroad and their efforts to define and preserve what it means to them to be Chinese.

A national identity, or the sense that one belongs to some greater “imagined community,” is probably also facilitated by migration and population movement. In his essay, Anthony Barbieri-Low reviews the theory of Chun-shu Chang, who argues that the Qin state’s coerced reshuffling of a large portion of its population (as well as its universal military service) was able to break down regional and lineage identities and forge a new “national identity” as Qin subjects, a development which also benefited the subsequent Han dynasty in its lengthier four centuries of rule. Similarly, Patricia Ebrey has recently suggested that the ability of several major Chinese states after the Qin to repeatedly re-unify the East Asian landmass was not simply due to a shared written culture or a particular geographic configuration, but rather was facilitated by the cumulative homogenizing effect of mass movements of population through state-induced and private migrations.<sup>20</sup>

Jeremy Brown’s essay in this issue touches upon the important distinction of urban versus rural identity. While this had already been an important difference in the minds of most residents of the cities or the countryside, the *hukou* registration system developed during the 1950s codified this hierarchical, binary distinction into law. Many of those Tianjin residents who lost their urban *hukou* and were relocated to villages or suburbs refused to accept this change (i.e. demotion) in their civic identity and fought for years to restore their original status. Dominic Yang’s essay delves into the issue of identity politics in Taiwan after 1949. As Yang points out, this mass relocation to Taiwan blurs the often-artificial dichotomy between Chinese internal and external migration, as well as the distinction between “political refugee” and “colonizer.” Many of those who evacuated to Taiwan after the “fall of China” in 1949 held onto their old regional mainland identity for decades (e.g. Zhejiang person), since they only viewed their stay on Taiwan as temporary. To those ethnic Hoklo and Hakka already on Taiwan (*benshengren* 本省人), the migrants (and their children) were also viewed suspiciously and with some hostility as outsiders (*waishengren* 外省人).

<sup>20</sup>Patricia Ebrey, “China’s Repeated Unifications,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 70.2 (2017), 82–83.

### Migration and Gender/Family Issues

Looking at migration in China through the lens of gender and family can also be illuminating. Under ideal constructs, elite women in late imperial times were supposed to remain “quiescent,” cloistered in the inner chambers, but in reality, they usually accompanied their scholar-official husbands on bureaucratic migration to each new posting, while also making yearly visits to their natal families.<sup>21</sup> We see that the upriver trade diasporas and bureaucratic sojourning studied by Steven Miles almost exclusively involved unaccompanied male migrants.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the contract labor migrations from Shandong into Manchuria in the early twentieth century, and those overseas to the Americas and Australia, almost always exported the younger males of a family. However, the workers who flocked to Shanghai’s textile industry before the anti-Japanese war, and the first wave of the floating population of workers that migrated from the interior to the coastal cities to work in the factories of the Special Economic Zones were predominantly female, pointing to a greater feminization of Chinese migration.<sup>23</sup>

Several of the essays in this volume touch upon such issues of gender and family as they relate to migration. For example, Wen-Yi Huang’s contribution deals exclusively with three categories of female migrants in early medieval China. As noted above, the religious sojourning and migration of Buddhist nuns (often traveling with all female companions) during this period was quite remarkable, for the religious status of the women overruled restrictions normally placed on movement due to their gender or class. The “left-behind women,” who voluntarily relocated to the north to reunite their separated families after their husbands switched their allegiance to the Northern Wei, often ran into very complicated family problems. In many cases, their husbands had already remarried in the north, and this led to difficult cases of polygynous conflict and inheritance troubles.

Dominic Yang’s essay touches upon the gender-related problems involved in the great exodus to Taiwan in 1949. Among the nearly one million *waishengren* who fled to the island, there were three men for every one woman, and this was true within both military and civilian populations. Such an imbalance led to prolonged bachelorhood and greater social atomization for these unfortunate men, who could not find suitable brides either among the sojourner population or among the *benshengren* women already in Taiwan. The lonely migrants often took out personal ads for maids who spoke their native dialect, to at least approximate the material comforts of married life.

<sup>21</sup>Susan Mann, “The Virtue of Travel for Women in the Late Empire,” in *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, edited by Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 55–74.

<sup>22</sup>Steven B. Miles, *Upriver Journeys: Diaspora and Empire in Southern China, 1570–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017).

<sup>23</sup>Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press); Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).