



## Introduction:

### In Memory of G. William Skinner: His Contributions to Anthropology

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This issue is singular in two senses: It is dedicated to the theme “In Memory of G. William Skinner: His Contributions to Anthropology,” and it is a special issue published in addition to the regular June and December issues of *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* published annually. These papers were originally presented in a TSAE (Taiwan Society for Anthropology and Ethnology) presidential panel at a joint conference with SEAA (Society for East Asian Anthropology) that took place on July 2–5, 2009. *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* decided to publish these papers as a group and in a timely manner. All the authors, including this writer, were at one time graduate students of Dr. Skinner. We have written these papers not as regular research papers, but more as personal reflections, reviews, and reinterpretations of Dr. Skinner and his works. Each author relates his or her memories of Skinner and explains the way(s) Skinner inspired him or her to pursue research that has evolved from or taken Skinner’s concerns as a touchstone. I intend for this brief introduction to proceed in a similar manner.

When I visited Skinner in June of 2000 for the first time since having completed my Ph.D. program in 1997, I explained to him that having had a chance to visit inland China and observe some of the night markets there, I was considering a project that would compare inland and coastal night markets. His reply was typical—that I should compare night markets in China’s macro-regions instead of adopting a vague coastal and inland division, despite those classifications’ common use by the Chinese government, media, and the academy. Feeling embarrassed at suggesting an inappropriate framework (despite the fact that I knew regional analysis would be an important part of my project, as my

dissertation research on Taiwan's night markets had clearly demonstrated), his response reminded me the extent to which his regional analysis schemes had been neglected by anthropologists who preferred to adopt simpler distinctions like urban/rural, modern/traditional, or coastal/inland.

My own example reflects one of the main themes raised by the papers in this special issue, that Skinner's regional system paradigm and its theoretical significance has often been overlooked by anthropology. Lawrence Crissman's paper clearly spells out the contributions of Skinner's spatial analysis and explains in detail how Skinner insisted on engaging in scientific model building, an effort that was later overshadowed by the symbolic and interpretive turn in anthropology. "The Anthropologist without a Village," the title of Donald DeGlopper's paper, points to the fact that Skinner's academic concerns were always the larger social and historical issues. The paper also shows how Skinner went far beyond his contemporaries in calling our attention to the continual nature of phenomena and warning us of the danger of using simple binary distinctions like urban/rural to describe them. Steven Sangren points out that Skinner's work has long reminded us of "the fallacy of approaching Chinese village as isolated or autonomous social worlds" and goes a step further to argue that, had the lessons for general social theory in Skinner's legacy been taken seriously, anthropologists might have paid more attention to the temporal and cyclical developments that complicate common analytical binaries like "urban-rural," "modern-traditional" or "local-global." Crediting Skinner's work for its enormous rigor, organization, and detail, DeGlopper further stresses that "If you knew the man, the personality and the voice comes through in all the work." Paradoxically, it is probably this very idiosyncrasy that may have overwhelmed many in its detail and formality, and prevented them from recognizing his basic points and significance. As "an anthropologist without a village," Skinner developed an analytic framework that allows scholars to always put the phenomena they were studying in an appropriate spatial, temporal, and systematic context. As the authors in this issue all stress, Skinner's framework has proven crucial to the investigation of complex societies like China or Japan, but all too often it is neglected by anthropologists.

Skinner published his first paper on Chinese marketing systems in 1964, and his marketing and regional analysis model has been reformulated or innovated upon, especially by his own students, ever since. Crissman's paper describes how his own model solves a problem in Skinner's intensifying rural marketing system model. Helen Siu, inspired by Skinner's scholarship, describes her effort to press beyond it to find a distinct path for historical anthropology, one that stresses the importance of investigating how regional structures emerge as a "conscious construct" among historical actors. Although not specifically alluding to his intellectual inheritance in this paper, Sangren clearly

demonstrates in his book *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (1987) that he was inspired by Skinner's regional analysis model and applied it to the temporal, spatial, and cyclic nature of Taiwan's folk religion. As his last graduate student, Hiroko Maeda elaborates from Skinner's late comparative studies of early-modern French, Chinese, and Japanese demographic studies in kinship to present interesting qualitative analyses of succession and continuation strategies among Japanese merchant families in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

I first met Dr. Skinner in 1989 as he was in the process of moving from Stanford to Davis. I had just finished my qualifying exam and hoped that he would be willing to serve on my dissertation committee. We talked in the hallway as carpenters were installing bookshelves in his new office. On learning my intention, he said simply that he was certainly interested in night markets. I was surprised that it took me a mere three minutes to formally become his student. Knowing little at the time of how marketing system analysis might enrich my research, I considered investigating the complicated night market system as something "extra" to my original research plan (or something I needed to push myself to do now that I had become Skinner's student). Not until I had mapped out the night marketing systems of the Taipei Basin (台北盆地) and the Tainan Plain (台南平原) did I begin to realize that without knowing their temporal, spatial, and systematic patterns I would not have been able to decide even the simplest issue of how to sample. And that was key to larger questions of how to appropriately explore the processes by which night markets developed.

The political economy approach was in its heyday during the mid-eighties when I was attending graduate school at UC-Davis. Theoretical discussions of "dependency," "world system," and "articulation of modes of production" dominated our seminars. Ideas like "penetration of the capitalist system," "articulation of formal and informal sectors," or "reproduction of labor" were what I took with me to my field research in Taiwan. My investigation into the night marketing system made me realize that Skinner was actually a step ahead of these Marxism-derived concepts. His analytical models allowed me to explore how local night markets were linked with higher-level ones, how night market commodities were produced and distributed in cyclical and spatial terms, and how consumers and vendors traveled within the night marketing system. In other words, without using those fancy Marxist terms, Skinner's marketing system paradigm not only revealed similar socio-economic phenomena, but also allowed me to disclose the spatial and systematic processes by which night marketing penetrated into Taiwan's countryside and how the "division of labor" developed across space and time. My research differs from similar studies of informal economies thanks to my being able to tell the story in concrete spatial and temporal terms that connected how the state regulated night markets, how

night marketing became such an important part of Taiwan's economy, and how night marketers and consumers alike made their decisions.

James Watson once credited G. William Skinner as being a scholar who had continuously trained new generations of anthropologists of Chinese society. Many key figures in China studies, including the authors featured here, flourished on the fertile ground established by Dr. Skinner. As Helen Siu mentions in her paper, Skinner was most generous to his students, allowing them to make "every effort to further what he started, to look beyond the theoretical schema of our times." For that we are all truly grateful.

## Reference

Sangren, P. Steven

- 1987 History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

## Appendix

### Professor G. William Skinner's Vitae

#### Education

- 1942-43 Deep Springs College, Deep Springs, CA.  
 1943-44 Missouri Valley College, Marshall, MO. (U.S. Navy V-12 Program). Studied business administration in preparation for Supply Corps.  
 1944-46 University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. (U.S. Navy Oriental Language School). Completed 18-month course in Chinese.  
 1946-47 Cornell University. Graduated June 1947, with Distinction in Far Eastern Studies.  
 1948-54 Cornell University. Candidate for Ph.D. in Anthropology. Degree awarded 1954.

#### Regular academic posts

- 1958-60 Assistant Professor of Sociology, Columbia University.  
 1960-62 Associate Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University.  
 1962-65 Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University.  
 1965-89 Professor of Anthropology, Stanford University.  
 1990- Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Davis.  
 2005- Emeritus.

#### Field research

- 1948 Community study of a Spanish-American village, Cundiyo, New Mexico. Additional field work in a Navajo community, Fruitland, N.M.  
 1949-50 Study of the rural community centered on a market town near Chengdu, Sichuan, China.  
 1950-51 Field survey of overseas Chinese communities throughout Southeast Asia.  
 1951-53 Study of Chinese social structure and community leadership in Bangkok, Thailand.  
 1954-55 Study of regional variation in overseas Chinese culture in Thailand and of Chinese assimilation to Thai society.

- 1956-58 Study of assimilation, acculturation and national integration of the overseas Chinese in Indonesia.
- 1977 Research in China on urban marketing.
- 1985 Research in Japan on historical ethnography and historical demography of the Nôbi region.
- 1988, 95 Research in Japan on historical ethnography, historical geography, and local history of Ogaki and its rural hinterland.

### Honors

- 1946- Phi Beta Kappa
- 1948- Sigma Xi
- 1965-66 Senior Specialist in Residence, Institute of Advanced Projects, East-West Center
- 1968- Who's Who in America
- 1969 Guggenheim Fellow
- 1969-70 Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
- 1977 Member, American Vegetable Farming Systems Delegation to China, ACLS-NAS-SSRC Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC
- 1980 Deputy Chairman, American delegation to Symposium on the Social and Economic History of China, Chinese Academy of Social Science
- 1980- Member, National Academy of Sciences
- 1982- Who's Who in the World
- 1983-84 President, Association for Asian Studies
- 1987-89 Barbara K. Browning Professor of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University
- 2001 Doctor of Laws honoris causa, University of Hong Kong

### Fellowships and research grants

- 1949-50 Fellowship from Viking Fund; travel grant from Social Science Research Council for research in China.
- 1951-53 Travel grant from the Social Science Research Council for research in Thailand.
- 1956-58 Research fellowship, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, for research in Java.
- 1963-64 Research grant from the National Science Foundation for research on 'Differential patterns of acculturation'.
- 1966 Research grant from the Social Science Research Council for research on political socialization.
- 1970 National Institute of Mental Health Special Fellowship for research on 'Sibling configuration and family process'.
- 1972-76 National Science Foundation grant for research on 'The dynamics of organizational process in China,' Edwin A. Winckler, co-P.I.
- 1981-82 National Science Foundation grant for research on 'Sibling differentiation and kinship systems'.

- 1984-85 Senior Research Grant, Fulbright Program for Japan (Japan-United States Educational Commission) for research on 'Historical demography of the Nôbi Region, 1700-1900'.
- 1987-88 Rockefeller Foundation, Population Sciences Research Program on Women's Status and Fertility, grant for project on 'Women's autonomy and reproductive behavior in Tokugawa Japan'.
- 1988-89 National Science Foundation grant for research on 'Infanticide and reproductive strategies among Tokugawa Japanese villagers'.
- 1989 (declined) NAS Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC, National Program Grant for research on 'Regional Systems and Demographic Process in the Lower Yangzi'.
- 1992-96 National Science Foundation grant for research on 'Regional Systems and the Modern Transformation of Agrarian Societies: Population and Development in France, Japan and China'.
- 1993-96 Luce Foundation grant for research on 'Population and Development in Contemporary China: A Spatial Analysis,' awarded through the US-China Cooperative Research Program, and in conjunction with the East-West Center Program on Population, the China State Statistical Bureau, and the Beijing Institute for Information and Control.

### **National offices and committees**

- SSRC Subcommittee on Research on Chinese Society: Chairman 1963-70.
- ARL Center for Chinese Research Materials: Member Advisory Committee 1967-70.
- SSRC Chinese Society Bibliography Project: Director 1964-73.
- Task Force on Libraries and Research Materials of the ACLS Committee on Studies of Chinese Civilization and the Joint Committee on Contemporary China: Member 1974-78.
- ACLS-SSRC Joint Committee on Contemporary China: Member 1961-65, 1980-81.
- ACLS-SSRC Joint Committee on Chinese Studies: Member 1981-83; chair, Subcommittee on Population Research, 1981-83.
- ACLS-NAS-SSRC Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China: Member 1966-70; member, Social Sciences and Humanities Panel, 1982-83.
- Association for Asian Studies: Member Board of Directors 1962-65, 1982-85; chairman, Nominating Committee 1967-68; member, Committee on Information Control 1969-74; member, Advisory Committee for the Bibliography of Asian Studies 1983-84; Vice President 1982-83; President 1983-84; member, Program Committee 1988.
- National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis: Member Board of Directors, 1989-92.
- CITAS (China in Time and Space), a public-access databank serving the social sciences and environmental studies communities: Member Committee on Policy and Planning, 1993-96.
- China Data Center, University of Michigan: Member Advisory Board, 1998-2008.

China Historical GIS, a international project to construct GIS historical maps involving Fudan University (Shanghai), Academia Sinica (Taipei), Griffith University (Brisbane), managed by the Harvard-Yenching Institute: Member, Management Committee, 2000-2008.

### Professional associations

American Anthropological Association  
 American Association for the Advancement of Science  
 American Ethnological Society  
 American Sociological Association  
 Association for Asian Studies  
 International Union for the Scientific Study of Population  
 National Academy of Sciences  
 Population Association of America  
 Siam Society  
 Social Science History Association  
 Society for Cultural Anthropology  
 Society for Economic Anthropology  
 Society for Qing Studies

### Publications

#### 1. Books and monographs

- Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1951. 91 p. (Data papers 1).  
 (General editor) *The Social Sciences and Thailand*. Bangkok: Cornell Research Center, 1956. 185 +125 p. (in Thai and English).  
*Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957. xvii + 459 p. (Japanese edition: Bangkok: Japanese Chamber of Commerce, 1973, 365 p.).  
*Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958. xvii +363 p. (Monographs of the Association for Asian Studies, III). (Japanese edition: Tokyo: Ajia Keizai Kenkyujo, 1961. 417 p.). (Reprinted 1979 by Universities Microfilm International).  
 (Editor) *Local, Ethnic, and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia: A Symposium*. New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1959. 68 p.  
 (Editor) *Modern Chinese Society: An Analytical Bibliography*, Vol. 1, *Publications in Western Languages, 1644-1972*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973. 1xxviii + 802 p.  
 (Editor, with Winston Hsieh) *Modern Chinese Society: An Analytical Bibliography*, Vol. 2, *Publications in Chinese, 1644-1969*. Stanford University Press, 1973. lxxci + 802 p.  
 (Editor, with Shigeaki Tomita) *Modern Chinese Society: An Analytical Bibliography*, Vol. 3, *Publications in Japanese, 1644-1971*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973. 1xix + 531 p.  
 (Editor, with Mark Elvin) *The Chinese City Between Two Worlds*. Stanford: Stanford University

Press, 1974. xiii + 458 p.

(Editor, with A. Thomas Kirsch) *Change and Persistence in Thai Society: Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975. 386 p.

(Editor) *The City in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977. xvii + 820 p. (Chinese edition: Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000. 832 p.)

(Editor) *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays by Maurice Freedman*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979. xxiv + 491 p.

## 2. Articles and book chapters

Aftermath of Communist liberation in the Chengtu Plain. *Pacific Affairs* 24, 1 (Mar. 1951): 61-76.

The new sociology of China. *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, 4 (Aug. 1951): 365-371.

Peasant organization in rural China. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 277 (Sept. 1951): 89-100.

A study in miniature of Chinese population. *Population Studies* 5, 2 (Nov. 1951): 91-103. (Reprinted in *Social Demography*, edited by Thomas R. Ford and Gordon F. De Jong. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970, 642-656.)

Cultural values, social structure and population growth. *Population Bulletin of the United Nations* 5 (July 1956): 5-12.

The unity of the social sciences. In *The Social Sciences and Thailand*. Bangkok: Cornell Research Center, 1956, 3-6. (In Thai and English).

Chinese assimilation and Thai politics. *Journal of Asian Studies* 16, 2 (Feb. 1957): 237-250. (Reprinted in *Southeast Asia: The Politics of National Integration*, edited by John T. McAlister, Jr. New York: Random House, 1973, 383-398.)

The Chinese of Java. In *Colloquium on Overseas Chinese*, edited by Morton H. Fried. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1958, 1-10.

Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 321 (Jan. 1959): 136-147.

The nature of loyalties in rural Indonesia. In *Local, Ethnic and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia: A Symposium*. New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1959, 1-11. (Reprinted in *Social Change: The Colonial Situation*, edited by Immanuel M. Wallerstein. New York: Wiley, 1966, 265-277.)

Change and persistence in Chinese culture overseas: A comparison of Thailand and Java. *Journal of the South Seas Society* 16 (1960): 86-100. (Reprinted in *Readings in South-east Asian Anthropology*, edited by Donald J. Tugby. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1967. Reprinted in *Southeast Asia: The Politics of National Integration*, edited by John T. McAlister, Jr. New York: Random House, 1973, 399-415.)

Java's Chinese minority: Continuity and change. *Journal of Asian Studies* 20, 3 (May 1961): 353-362.

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- 97-117. (Indonesian translation: Golongan minoritas Tionghoa. In *Golongan Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia*, edited by Mely G. Tan. Jakarta: Penderbit PT Gramedia, 1979 1-29.)
- What the study of China can do for social science. *Journal of Asian Studies* 23, 4 (Aug. 1964): 517-522. [Chinese translation in *Ta-hsüeh sheng-huo* (Hong Kong) 6 (1966): 8-13.]
- The Thailand Chinese: Assimilation in a changing society. *Asia* 2 (Autumn 1964): 80-92.
- Marketing and social structure in rural China, Parts I, II, and III. *Journal of Asian Studies* 24, 1 (Nov. 1964): 3-44; 24, 2 (Feb. 1965): 195-228; 24, 3 (May 1965): 363-399. (Part I reprinted in *Peasant Society: A Reader*, edited by Jack M. Potter et al. Boston: Little, Brown, 1967, 63-93; and in *Man, Space and Environment: Concepts in Contemporary Human Geography*, edited by Paul Ward English and Robert C. Mayfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, 561-601. Parts I, II, and III separately reprinted in Bobbs Merrill reprint series. Reissued 1974, 1977, 1981, 1988, 1994, and 2000 as a pamphlet by the Association for Asian Studies. New edition as a monograph: Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2001. 144 p. Japanese edition: Kyoto: Horitse bunka sha, 1979. 222 p. Chinese edition: Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998. 197 p. Korean edition: Seoul: Sinsu wen, 2000. 240 p.
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- Overseas Chinese leadership: Paradigm for a paradox. In *Leadership and Authority*, edited by Gehan Wijeyewardene. Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1968, 191-207.
- (with Edwin A. Winckler) Compliance succession in rural Communist China: A cyclical theory. In *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organization*, 2nd ed., edited by Amitai Etzioni. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969, 410-438.
- Chinese peasants and the closed community: An open and shut case. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, 3 (July, 1971): 270-81.
- (with Arthur P. Wolf) Maurice Freedman (1920-75) [obituary]. *China Quarterly* 63 (Sept. 1975): i-iii.
- Maurice Freedman, 1920-1975, and Bibliography of Maurice Freedman. *American Anthropologist* 78, 4 (Dec. 1976): 871-885.
- Mobility strategies in late imperial China: A regional-systems analysis. In *Regional Analysis, Vol. 1. Economic Systems*, edited by Carol A. Smith. New York: Academic Press, 1976, 327-364.
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- Urban and rural in Chinese society [Part Two introduction]. In *The City in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977, 253-273.
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- Cities and the hierarchy of local systems. In *The City in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 275-364. (Reprinted in *Studies in Chinese Society*, edited by Arthur P. Wolf. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978, 1-77.)
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- Chinese history and the social sciences. In *Chinese Social and Economic History from the Song to 1900*, edited by Albert Feuerwerker. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1982, 11-16.
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- Sichuan's population in the nineteenth century: Lessons from disaggregated data. *Late Imperial China* 8, 1 (June 1987): 1-79.
- Conjugal power in Tokugawa Japanese families: A matter of life or death. In *Sex and Gender Hierarchies*, edited by Barbara D. Miller. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 236-270.
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- Creolized Chinese societies in Southeast Asia. In *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, edited by Anthony Reid. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996, 50-93.
- Family systems and demographic processes. In *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis*, edited by David I. Kertzer and Thomas E. Fricke. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 53-114.
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- Chinese cities, then and now: The difference a century makes. In *Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999, 56-79.
- (with Mark Henderson and Yuan Jianhua) China's fertility transition through regional space: Using GIS and census data for a spatial analysis of historical demography. *Social Science*

*History* 24, 3 (Fall 2000): 613-643.

Family and reproduction in southeastern China: A comparison of Cantonese, Hakka, and Yao.

*Asian Anthropology* 2 (2003): 1-47.

Looking Backward in Time and Forward in Space. In *New Reflections on Anthropological Studies of Greater China*, edited by Xin Liu. Berkeley: UCB Institute of East Asian Studies, 2004, 43-49.

Grandparental Effects on Reproductive Strategizing: Nôbi Villagers in Early Modern Japan. *Demographic Research* 11 (Sept. 2004): 111-147.