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also report themselves to be mystified by the formation of personal relationships and say they would concur with the psychoanalyst Winarick (1985): 'It is as if the whole process of choosing a love involves bumping into the right person and accidentally discovering the right chemistry' (p. 380). This speculation leaves open the question as to whether (and how) this concept may be valuably introduced into Western conceptions of love, and the manner in which a belief in this concept may be a valuable independent variable in future, cross-national research.

This discussion leads us inevitably to conclude this chapter with a familiar line: a call for more research. One obvious deficit in the current body of data is our lack of information concerning mainland China, where government policies have given access to only very limited, often politically controlled, data and where the dramatic changes induced by 40 years of communism have been little explored (Wu and Tseng, 1985). In particular, we know little about ethnic or regional variations on the Mainland, although the scanty evidence available suggests considerable diversity (cf., Ho, 1989, on ethnic variation; Wen, in press, on geographical factors).

Even given the right political climate, getting such data will not be easy. As Gao (1991) notes, there are considerable problems in eliciting intimate disclosure from Chinese respondents. Yet, given the increasing international importance of the Chinese nations, from both academic and commercial perspectives, we urgently need work that will attempt to relate the dramatic changes in the social and political scenery throughout Chinese societies to the individual, everyday lives of the ordinary Chinese citizen. Such work must examine how the fabric of interpersonal support and cohesion which underpin so many of these ancient societies is being stretched to match these new structural realities, and expore the consequences of such adaptations. We also need to go beyond the traditional, rather broad, characterizations of 'the Chinese people' that, while warning us of the dangers of over-generalizing from Western perspectives, often ignore the multiple and complex levels of individual and subgroup variations existing in any society. It is only through such further work that we can obtain real insight into the personal relationships of this vast, complex, and most challenging of peoples.

Chapter 20

Chinese Social Interaction: Harmony and Hierarchy on the Good Earth

William K. Gabrenya, Jr, and Kwang-Kuo Hwang

Water and earth—above all, water—set the ecological stage for the emergence of the Chinese ethos several millennia ago. Today, on the good earth and in shining semiconductor factories, a thousand million Chinese interact in ways not unlike those established in ancient times. All under heaven are united in harmony and in chaos, in hierarchy and in rebellion, in stubborn traditionalism and in merciless modernization: all greatly fascinating to the West now as for centuries before.

This brief chapter will attempt to summarize what is known in Western and Chinese social science about the interpersonal behaviour of this vast, ancient, modern, diverse—but surprisingly uniform—segment of the human condition. Readers who find our presentation a too-thin soup should also try the excellent related chapters on communication (Gao, Ting-Toomey, and Gudykunst), intimate relationships (Goodwin and Tang), and achievement (Yu) in this volume.

CONFUCIUS AND CHAOS

The Confucian Ethic and the Regulation of Social Interaction

Any discussion of Chinese behaviour must begin with the pervasive influence of the social philosophy attributed to Confucius (*Kongzi*, 孔子). Confucian concepts are employed both in an analytical, abstract, philosophical sense and as a useful heuristic for describing the professed values of Chinese people. These ideas and ideals are wielded in numerous ways to explain not only the social behaviour of individuals and small groups (see, for example, Bond and Hwang, 1986), but also macroeconomic trends (see, for example, Hwang, 1988, on the Confucian basis for East Asian modernization). Although Chinese social behaviour is often interpreted as a reflection of Confucian ideological beliefs, historical circumstances and current conditions also shape Chinese behaviour in important ways (as historical circumstances shaped Confucianism itself long ago), providing alternate, albeit often concordant, explanations of observed behaviour patterns (see, for example, see Redding, 1990).

The Confucian ethical system regulating social behaviour has three principal ideas: *ren*, *yi*, and *li* (仁、義、禮); benevolence, righteousness or justice, and propriety or courtesy. 'Regulation' is certainly the appropriate term. Confucianism is a thoroughly secular, this–world system developed in a time of chaos to allow China a modicum of harmony in the cool embrace of inescapable hierarchy. In an agrarian society of isolated villages, where relationships are collectivist, involuntary, and permanent, rules regulating social interaction are crucial, as there is essentially no escape from troublesome interpersonal relations (Moghaddam, Taylor, and Wright, 1993). The Confucian system centres on five 'cardinal relations' (the *Wu Lun*/五倫) in which power differentials and responsibilities are prescribed: relations between emperor and minister, father and son, husband and wife, among brothers, and among friends (see Sun, 1993). The most important of these is the father–son relationship, characterized by conformity to the role expectations derived from filial piety (*xiao*/孝), rather than by an affective bond. Hence, for 2,000 years schoolchildren (in the élite class) read the *Xiao Jing* (孝經), which emphasizes duty to established roles. *Xiao* is discussed in detail by Ho (in this volume).

Insecurity

Redding (1990) and others (see, for example, Stover, 1974) maintain that the key to understanding Chinese social behaviour is an appreciation of the extent to which Chinese have experienced insecurity in a bitter sea of tragically endless environmental, political, and economic chaos. The most recent 150 years have been particularly difficult. Data in the Human Relations Area Files document the frequency of uncontrollable disasters such as famine, destructive weather, and pestilence in China. For example, the Mainland received the maximum rating for prevalence of famine in the Standard Ethnographic Sample (Ember and Ember, 1992).

Through most of Chinese history, individuals have been afforded little security by the traditional Chinese state, which was ruled by a distant and thinly scattered political élite unwilling or unable to maintain order through the rule of law. Instead, order was maintained by forcing people to learn their prescribed roles through Confucian education and family socialization, and by enforcing proper role behaviour by threat of punishment.

The kin in-group provided the 'first, last, and only' source of security in traditional China. This security was realized at the expense of a wider sense of community and social responsibility such that families were in various degrees of continual rivalry and competition in what was essentially a zero-sum game. A basic principle of Chinese strategic behaviour is to 'be on guard against everyone and on all occasions'. 'Treat each person like a guest, but guard against him like a thief' (Chiao, 1989). Nepotism has often been the solution to this problem of trust. The absence of a wider sense of community or nation led Sun Yatsen to lament that the Chinese are 'like grains of sand'. Colloquially, Chinese speak of *ren chi ren* (人吃人): 'people eating people'. The levels of threat, insecurity, rival familism, and lack of community have decreased but still remain important features of most Chinese societies' social ecologies.

RELATIONAL PERSONALISM

Social scientists have long sought simple and sovereign conceptions of Chinese social behaviour in a manner reminiscent of the configurationist school of culture and personality (Benedict, 1934). Such ideas include 'situation-centredness' (Hsu 許烺光, 1953), 'personage' (*ren*/人; Hsu, 1971), 'social orientation' (Yang, 1981), 'relation-orientation' (Ho, Chan, and Chiu, 1991), 'collectivism' (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1986), and 'personalism' (Redding, 1990). We will follow this tradition by using the term *relation-oriented personalism* or *relational personalism* in this chapter. By this term we intend to emphasize the great extent to which Chinese social interaction is stereotypically 'collectivist' (cooperative or harmonious) in certain social contexts but in others exhibits an 'individualist' (competitive, agonistic) style.

Relationships

Relational personalism begins with a distinction between in-group members or insiders (*zijiren*/自己人) and out-group members or outsiders (*wairen*/外人). In his 'face-and-favour' model of resource allocation, Hwang (黃光國) (1987) divided relationships into three categories: expressive ties, including those with close family members; mixed ties, such as those with friends and other kin; and instrumental ties, those with strangers or out-group members with whom there is no lasting relationship. Social interaction expectations, norms, and behaviours differ for these three kinds of ties in a number of ways presented in later sections of this chapter. Yang (楊國樞) (1992) proposes that Chinese make a fundamental distinction among people who are *sheng* (生; 'raw', outsiders), *shu* (熟; 'cooked', insiders), and *jia* (家; family).

The core idea of Confucianism is *ren*, an insistence that one should practice a hierarchical love tied to intimacy of relationship (Hwang, 1988). The social domain in which one is expected to practice *ren* is the 'greater self' (*da wo*/大我), in juxtaposition to the 'small self' (*xiao wo*/小我). Most Chinese define their *da wo* narrowly as is seen, for example, in their reaction to the idea of public charity: resources given to charity are resources that could have been reserved for the family. The distinction between *xiao wo* and *da wo* is widely used in Chinese daily life. When two or more parties say 'we are *zijiren*' (or *zijiaren*/自家人, persons within the circle of a family), they are trying to create a feeling of *da wo*. Studies of Chinese organizational behaviour have found that Chinese leaders tend to classify their subordinates as either *zijiren* or *wairen* and to treat them accordingly (Hwang, 1990).

Social Networks

Chinese navigate complex networks of *guanxi* (relationships; 關係) which expand, day by day, throughout their lives. Each individual is born into a social network of family members, and as he or she grows up, group memberships involving education, occupation, and residence will provide new opportunities for expanding this network (see, for example, Chang and Holt, 1991). In contrast to the pattern in Western societies, especially the United States, these

relationships persist long after the groups are dissolved or no longer have face-to-face interaction, forming lifelong, rich networks of *guanxi*.

The relative permanence of such social networks contributes to the importance and enforceability of the Chinese conception of reciprocity (*bao*/報). Yum (1988) notes that Western societies emphasize short-term, symmetrical reciprocation in exchange relationships while people in Confucian societies recognize that they are 'in it for the long run' and emphasize the extension of the relationship into the unforseeable future. Hence, Chinese friends find it awkward to thank a friend for every little favour, as in 'thanks for giving me a ride'. 'Among the most intimate, gratefulness is not verbalized.' Hwang (1987) has analysed the implications of this long-term reciprocity for people involved in various types of relationships.

Intermediaries are important in the development of networks of *guanxi*. Chang and Holt (1991) used interviews with adults in Taiwan to investigate their perceptions of how one might establish (pull/*la*/拉, manipulate/*gao*/搞, or climb/*pan*/攀) *guanxi* with another. They found four common methods: appealing to kin relations; pointing to a previous association; using in-group connections or mediators; or social interaction requiring social skills such as the ability to play the '*renqing* (favour) game' described by Hwang (1987). Intermediaries are useful in bringing out-group members together into new relationships (Yum, 1988). In a large-scale study of social networks in mainland China and the United States, Blau, Ruan, and Ardelt (1991) found that Chinese kin acted as brokers in aiding their relatives to make contacts with people outside the kinship network, but that American kin did not function in this way.

Face and Social Interaction

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of Chinese social interaction, the dynamic relationships among the concepts of *mianzi*(面子; face), *renqing* (人情; favour), and *guanxi* must be developed. As the famous writer Lin Yu-Tang (林語堂) put it, 'Here we arrive at the most curious point of Chinese social psychology. Abstract and intangible, it is yet the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated. ...Not to give a person face is the utmost height of rudeness and is like throwing down a gauntlet to him in the West' (Lin, 1935, p. 201).

Lian and mianzi

In a pioneering paper, Hu (胡先縉) (1944) proposed that there are two basic categories of face in Chinese culture, *lian*(臉) and *mianzi*. An individual's *lian* can be preserved by faithful compliance with ritual or social norms; having *lian* 'represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly in the community' (p. 45). In contrast, *mianzi* 'stands for the kind of prestige that is emphasized in this country [the United States]: a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation' (p. 45). She indicated that the Western concept of face corresponds to the Chinese *mianzi* but is wholly lacking in the connotations of *lian*. Both *mianzi* and *lian* are social constructs rather than personological entities resident in the individual (Ho (何友暉), (1976).

In Chinese society, saying an individual *bu yao lian* ('doesn't want face'; 不要臉) means that he or she is nasty, shameless, and immoral; it is a great insult to his or her moral character. However, saying somebody *mei you mianzi* ('has no face'; 沒有面子) simply means that he does not deserve honour or glory. A sense of self-blame, shame or *diulian* (丟臉), is suffered with respect to *lian* as a result of wrong-doing regardless of the presence of an audience (see Bond and Hwang, 1986; Bond and Lee, 1981; King and Meyers, 1977). Chinese students' and adults' emic conceptions of face support Hu's *lian/mianzi* distinction but suggest there are generational or age differences in beliefs about the situations that lead to loss of either kind of face (Cheng 陳之昭, 1988). Redding and Ng (1982) found that Hong Kong Chinese businessmen claim face is a consistently important consideration in their professional interactions, and that fear of losing *lian* formed the basis for the informal system of contracts and agreements that is common in Chinese business.

Shudao and mianzi

King (金耀基) (1988) has argued that the Confucian principle of forgiveness (*shudao*/恕道), which is embodied in the maxim 'Do not do unto others that which you would not wish others to do unto you', includes both self-respect and consideration. For a majority of Chinese, the most frequent practice of *shudao* in daily life is the avoidance of hurting another person's face in social interaction, particularly in public (see, for example, Bond and Lee, 1981). When others are part of the actor's *da wo*, saving one's own face is the same as saving the other's face.

Hierarchy and mianzi

'Harmony within hierarchy' is probably the phrase most commonly used to characterize a wide range of social behaviour in Confucian societies. Chinese tend to be very sensitive to their hierarchical position in social structures and will behave in ways designed to display, enhance, and protect both the image and the reality of this position. To Westerners, these *mianzi*-enhancing behaviours may appear ostentatious (expensive cars) or irrational (for example, the Taiwan baby salamander craze of 1989, in which rare amphibians were smuggled from China as a status symbol). Empirical research has demonstrated the extent to which Chinese use considerations of hierarchy in making socially evaluative judgements (see, for example, Bond, Wan, Leung, and Giacalone, 1985).

The renqing rule

The concept of *renqing* has several implications in Chinese culture (Cheng, 1988; Hwang, 1987). First, *renqing* indicates the emotional or affective responses of an individual confronting various situations or life events. Second, *renqing* means a resource that an individual can present to another as a gift in the course of social interaction. In Chinese society, when one has either happy occasions or difficulties, all one's acquaintances are expected to offer a

gift or render some substantial assistance. In such cases, it is said that they send him or her their *renqing*. Henceforth, the recipient will owe *renqing* to the donors. Third, *renqing* connotes the social norms by which one has to abide in order to get along well with other people in Chinese society. The '*renqing* rule' (Hwang, 1987) includes two categories of social behaviour. First, in normal times, one should keep in contact with acquaintances in one's personal network of *guanxi* by greetings, visitations, or exchanging gifts with them from time to time. Second, when a person in one's network gets into trouble or faces a difficult situation in life, one should sympathize with him, help him, and 'do a *renqing*' for that person. Once the recipient has received a *renqing* from other people, he should return it as soon as the opportunity arises.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Sociability

Chinese patterns of day-to-day social interaction reflect the importance of building lasting personal relationships and extending one's *guanxi*. In a study of university students, Wheeler, Reis, and Bond (1989) found that Hong Kong students had fewer interactions than did Americans, but these interactions were longer and involved more people. In contrast, the picture that emerged of the American students was of the 'social butterfly' engaged in a large number of dyadic interactions with many different people. As Triandis et al. (1988) noted, individualists are not less sociable than are collectivists; indeed, they must work harder to gain entrance to and maintain relationships that are impermanent and subject to change at any time. These findings would seem to support Hsu's (1972) proposal that Americans' feelings of impermanence in their relationships lead to a pervasive sense of individual psychological insecurity (in contrast to the pattern of external insecurity experienced by Chinese; see above). The manner in which Chinese cognitively organize social interactions (Forgas and Bond, 1985), incorporate group memberships as a part of their self-definition (Bond and Hewstone, 1988), and score higher in self-monitoring (Hamid, 1994) underscores the social orientation of the Chinese.

The Chinese valuation of *renao* (熱鬧), roughly translatable as 'bustling atmosphere', also illustrates the social-orientedness and relational personalism of the Chinese (Pan 潘英海, 1993). To be *renao*, an event must feature a high degree of activity and sound, and a large number of people. *Renao* facilitates social interaction somewhat outside of normal social hierarchies and networks, thereby releasing people from the usual constraints inherent in Chinese society. *Renao* is *linruo* (臨若), 'ambiguous' or 'chaotic', producing a situation that promotes social penetration, reorganization of relationships, and emotional expression. Stereotypical *renao* situations include night markets, temple celebrations, and successful dinner parties.

Interaction Style

The concept of *li* permeates both formal social interaction and that of people who feel they are *zijiren*. To a great extent the social interaction of Chinese evidences striking parallels with that of other relational personalist cultures such as the Arabs (Nydell, 1987) and the Japanese (Condon, 1984)(see De Mente, 1989; Hu and Grove, 1991; Kapp, 1983, for detailed discussions of Chinese interaction habits).

Social sensitivity

Attentiveness and sensitivity to the needs of others (see, for example, Markus and Kitayama, 1991) is a key ingredient of *li*. The strong social orientation of the Chinese makes it difficult at times for people to abstract themselves from the interpersonal demands of a situation and, therefore other's actions are given personalistic attributions. For example, interpersonal obligations are sought and perceived in communication:

> Zhang: 'I like your shirt.'
> Li: 'Please take it.'

Chinese expect people to anticipate others' needs or to know their feelings without asking or being told; to do otherwise indicates poor social skills or a characterological deficit. Yum (1988) views this 'anticipatory communication' within the context of a 'receiver-centred', in contrast to the Western 'sender-centred', communication style. (See also Gao, Ting-Toomey, and Gudykunst, this volume.) Friends are not only expected to show high levels of courtesy and warmth to each other, but there is an implicit assumption that when one treats strangers in an overly kindly manner, one is devaluing friendship and has misplaced priorities. Face and hierarchy are maintained in gift-giving rituals, although perhaps not to the carefully articulated extent of the Japanese (Condon, 1984). Direct expressions of gratitude are inappropriate within one's *da wo*, particularly the family; it is future reciprocity that is important.

The dinner party

One of the most important settings in which Chinese maintain and extend their *guanxi* and practice face-work is in the hosted dinner party. 'The Chinese are probably among the peoples of the world most preoccupied with eating' (Chang 張光直, 1977, p. 13; see also Redding, 1990, p. 70). The host can obtain *mianzi* by creating the right kind of *changmian* (場面; literally, 'occasion') through the status of the guests, the quality of the food, the maintenance of a highly boisterous atmosphere, and the appropriate degree of ostentation (*paichang*/排場)(Chen, 1990). Subtle face-saving and face-giving rituals are enacted, in which host and guest must each play their role properly and maintain an appropriate degree of hospitality and gratefulness. 'The interaction at the Chinese dinner invitation can be seen as a highly pre-coded cultural event which engenders group bonding and promotes social harmony' (Chen, 1990, p. 133).

Politeness

Western visitors to China often become fascinated with issues of 'politeness' or 'civil behaviour'. Gu (1990) suggested the Confucian concept of politeness (*limao*/禮貌) has four qualities: respectfulness (concern for the other's face, status, and so forth), modesty (self-denigration), attitudinal warmth (demonstrations of kindness, consideration, and hospitality), and refinement. (See the

chapter by Gao, Ting-Toomey, and Gudykunst, this volume.) Conceptions of which specific behaviours Chinese consider polite are highly variable across situations, however, and often diverge from classic Confucian prescriptions (Gabrenya and Shu, 1993).

Tezhifei

The *tezhifei* (特支費; 'special expenses money') system in Taiwan illustrates the adaptation of administrative practices to meet the demands of face and *guanxi*. High officials and administrators in the public sector are given a formal salary supplement to defray the expenses they must incur in carrying out the obligations of their office, including extending their personal and organizational *guanxi* and treating their subordinates appropriately. For example, Chinese etiquette demands that the host or the highest-ranking person pay the bill at a dinner party, avoiding the embarrassment and non-*da wo* atmosphere of individual checks. An administrator gives his subordinates *mianzi* by taking them to dinner, and he or she gains *mianzi* by picking up the tab, which in fact is paid out of the *tezhifei*. At least a portion of the *tezhifei* is not subject to receipts or oversight, giving the administrator great discretion in its use. In line with Chinese valuation of humanism over law, the controls on this money are social rather than legal. *Jiaozhifei* (交際費; 'allowance for social intercourse') is a somewhat more restricted analog to tezhifei in the private sector.

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

Cooperation

Cooperative behaviour follows essentially the same pattern as the Confucian relational personalist guidelines for benevolence, that is, a strong in-group bias. Studies in the social psychology tradition have been used to assess the extent to which people cooperate or compete on interactive tasks such as the Madsen board, prisoners' dilemma game, and derivative procedures (see Smith and Bond, 1994). This research has found that Chinese in the People's Republic of China (PRC)(Domino, 1992) and Chinese-Americans (Cook and Chi, 1980; Cox, Lobel, and McLeod, 1991) are more cooperative or equalitarian than are Caucasian Americans. 'In more collectivist societies there is a greater reliance on the criteria of equality and need *within* the in-group, but greater use of the equity criterion *outside* the group' (Smith and Bond, 1994, p. 124; italics original). Research on traditional Chinese agriculture suggests that material considerations can also play an important part in guiding patterns of cooperation. Wong (翁紹華, 1970) found that Chinese peasants' cooperative activities and organizations in mainland China prior to the Second World War were rational attempts to make best use of human, land, tool, and animal resources, and to deal with a chaotic ecological and political environment.

Cooperative behaviour can also be observed in the extent to which people work to satisfy group-serving versus self-serving goals. In a line of research that came to be termed 'social loafing', it was found that on moderately intellective tasks Chinese students will perform better as a group than as individuals,

whereas American students do the opposite, exhibiting the widely-found social loafing effect (Gabrenya, Latané, and Wang, 1983; Gabrenya, Wang, and Latané, 1985; see also Earley, 1993; Karau and Williams, 1993). Gabrenya (1990) found a relational personalist pattern in a process analysis of the social interactions of Taiwanese and American dyads working on a problem-solving task. Chinese were more polite and cooperative working with friends than with strangers, but Americans showed the opposite effect.

Conflict

Harmony in social relationships is prescribed by the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhong Yong*/中庸), while hierarchy and conformity in relationships are demanded by the Wu Lun (Hofstede and Bond, 1988; Westwood, Tang, and Kirkbride, 1992). Aggression against out-groups, however, is energized by the Confucian attachment of moral value and *mianzi* to holding in-group biases (Hwang, 1988). Out-group violence is further exacerbated by the paucity of social norms for out-group interaction, reducing the ability of Chinese groups to peacefully resolve conflict (Bond and Wang, 1983).

Ethnographic information supports this relational personalism pattern. Traditional China ranked at the top of the Human Relations Area Files index for external and civil war, but at the bottom for individual antisocial behaviour (Ember and Ember, 1992). The extent of out-group aggression is also illustrated in several ethnographies (see Bond and Wang, 1983, for a review), of which the story of the Lin family of Wu Feng (Misty Peak) village in central Taiwan (Meskill, 1979) is a case study. The Lins emigrated to Taiwan from mainland China in the early eighteenth century and fought a long series of pitched battles with neighbouring clans. It wasn't until the middle of the nineteenth century that the declining Qing dynasty (1644–1911) succeeded in suppressing this conflict, at which point the Lins became 'gentrified' and entered the Taiwanese élite.

Little comparative research has been reported on interpersonal aggression. Observational studies comparing mainland Chinese and Swedish (Ekblad, 1986, and this volume) and Taiwanese, Japanese, and American (Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stigler, Hsu, and Kitayama, 1990) schoolchildren found that mainland Chinese children were less aggressive than were Swedish children, but Taiwanese children were more aggressive than were American children. Sampling differences between Taiwan and the PRC may account for these conflicting findings. (The manner in which Chinese socialize children against in-group aggression is discussed in Ho, 1986.)

Laboratory studies reveal that out-group members are treated more harshly than in-group members (Leung 梁覺, 1988) or fail to constrain verbal aggression (Bond and Venus, 1991). Hierarchical position bestows the right to be aggressive (Bond et al., 1985). Chinese do not evidence the American preference for adversarial judicial systems (Leung and Lind, 1986), but do prefer bargaining and mediation (Leung, 1987).

Conflict in the family

Conflict in the Chinese family has been a rich source of material for Chinese fiction (see the *Dream of the Red Chamber*), a concern of mental health profes-

sionals (particularly problems between mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law), and the focus of anthropological field research (Weller, 1984). In this setting it appears that the idealized systems held as models by Confucians are seriously compromised by the complications of daily life. For example, Cohen (1976) in his *House United, House Divided*, presents a startling description of the processes by which a joint family's sense of *da wo* is sabotaged from within: 'it seems clear that a deliberate effort to force partition is involved when a family's sharing practices are increasingly compromised by the refusal of some individuals to contribute their labor and time, or by the outright embezzlement of family funds' (p. 204).

Face and conflict

Ting-Toomey (1988) proposed that members of collectivist or high-context societies attend more to face-work and look upon conflict from a social rather than a task perspective, avoiding conflict if at all possible. A subsequent scenario study found that Taiwanese students preferred styles of conflict resolution that involved obliging (yielding), avoiding, compromising, and integrating (finding a joint solution) more than did Americans (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin, 1991). Ho (1974) noted the importance of saving others' *mianzi* in conflict situations: 'the exercise of caution to prevent hurting people's face is regarded as a hallmark of social skill and experience which presumably mellow with advancing age' (p. 248). As another observer put it, 'Before you hit a dog, you ought to consider the face of its master' (Chiao, 1989). Face must be left for others in conflict (*liu mianzi*/留面子), even defeated adversaries. Ho (1974) pointed out one cost of this strategy: conflicts may not be ultimately resolved, and may be manifested in violence when they again come into the open.

Mediators

Chinese often avoid and resolve conflict and minimize loss of face in real and potential conflict situations by the use of mediators and intermediaries, eschewing the direct approaches favoured in the West (Bond et al., 1985; Bond and Wang, 1983; Cloke, 1987; R. G. Ma, 1992; Wall and Blum, 1991; Yum, 1988). Wall and Blum (1991) interviewed officially designated street mediators in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, during the late 1980s. They found that the mediation system mandated by the government was similar to that used in imperial times. In both imperial and communist China, authorities expected citizens to settle their disputes by referring them to village elders, respected third parties, or, in the present system, to people appointed by the authorities. In neither time was mediation voluntary as it tends to be in the West. Zhang Yimou's film *The Story of Qiu Ju* illustrates the sometimes tragic implications of this system in a humorous way.

Cooperation and Conflict: Negotiation

The small extant cross-cultural literature on negotiation, while largely theoretical and anecdotal, suggests that negotiation norms and practices among the Chinese are consistent with the previous discussions of relational personalism, face-work, cooperation, and conflict. In an interview study cited above, Redding and Ng (1982) found that Hong Kong Chinese managers emphasized the importance of *lian* in commercial contract negotiations but not in more highly bureaucratic interactions involving either government officials or personnel decisions. Shenkar and Ronen (1987) proposed that three categories of norms guide Chinese negotiation. Norms involving communication patterns include emotional restraint and self-control, careful conformity to politeness rituals, and avoidance of aggressive persuasion techniques. The Confucian model follows the form of *xinping qihe* (心平氣和; 'being perfectly calm')(see also Argyle, 1986). Social obligation norms include credibility (信用/*xinyong*), a collective emphasis in which the group's goals are put ahead of those of the individual negotiators, leadership (with deference to the group leader), and a high concern for the encumbrance of indebtedness which requires reciprocity along the lines of the face-and-favour model. Finally, norms about relationships are linked to the powerful in-group/out-group distinction.

Kirkbride, Tang, and Westwood (1991), calling on the earlier work of Pye (1982), suggested that Chinese see conflict as a zero-sum game in which there must be a loser and the relationship is terminated. Conflict is sidestepped by avoidance strategies and by compromise. To Americans and British, compromise may be viewed as necessary but is held to be a sub-optimal solution requiring the making of concessions. In contrast, to the Chinese, compromise is framed as achieving a commonality of purpose that is preferable in that it implies a stronger, longer-term relationship. However, Kirkbride and his colleagues caution that the avoidance of conflict may also delay and complicate its resolution. Empirical support for some of these cultural differences in conflict resolution preferences was found by Tang and Kirkbride (1986) in a comparison of Chinese and British employees of the Hong Kong civil service.

CHINESE SOCIAL INTERACTION: METATHEORETICAL ISSUES

Problems of Theory

We will conclude this chapter by speaking to some concerns we have for the quality and direction of research on Chinese social interaction. We believe that the study of Chinese social interaction shares certain problems with the study of collectivism in general.

The first problem that we would highlight is that the individual and societal levels of analysis are frequently poorly distinguished, and the theoretical links between the levels are not specified.

Second, the distinction between ideology, 'ideal culture', or 'big traditions', and on-the-ground behaviour, real culture, or 'little traditions', is insufficiently drawn, perhaps encouraging an overly enthusiastic, uncritical application of Confucian precepts to modern Chinese life. Empirically, there is a danger that self-report studies fail to penetrate beyond social desirability among Chinese respondents. Yang (in Metzger, 1988, p. 13) and Sun (1993) note that the social scientist must be careful to distinguish between widespread social values and the thought and philosophy of scholars.

Third, the differences between China and the West, such as those related to modernization, may be over-interpreted, since earlier in its development the West resembled China in many respects (K. S. Yang, personal communication, 1989).

Fourth, behaviour is often assumed to be due to internalized values or beliefs, with insufficient attention given to environmental demands. Informal observation of Chinese overseas students and immigrants suggests many of the behaviours discussed in this chapter are as much under situational as intrapsychic control.

Finally, most comparisons in the cross-cultural literature involve Chinese and members of societies, primarily the United States, Great Britain, and Australia, whose origins are British. Such comparisons may exaggerate Sino–Western differences in social behaviour over what might be found if continental European societies were included.

Problems of research

Much of the empirical work in this area is inspired by the methods of American social psychology, despite cross-cultural psychology's attempt to improve on this model (Gabrenya, 1988). Perhaps as a result, the research relies heavily on self-report methods such as scenario studies and value surveys. An examination of 15 years (1979–93) of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (*JCCP*), conducted by the first author, revealed that of 101 articles that reported studies which included Chinese, Japanese, or Korean participants only 26 per cent used behavioural measures.

The research thus far is also overly dependent on college students as respondents. A content analysis of *JCCP* from its founding in 1970 to mid-1993, performed by Öngel and Smith (1994; personal communication, March 29, 1994), found that 50 per cent of studies on Chinese culture used college students as subjects.

Another problem is that the research thus far has been conducted primarily in the *Nanyang* (南洋; 'south ocean'), the area including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, or what Fairbank (1987) termed Maritime China, to the near-total exclusion until the late 1980s of the PRC. Öngel and Smith's *JCCP* analysis revealed that only 21 per cent of the 61 studies with Chinese samples included a sample from the PRC. The extent to which mainland and *Nanyang* societies are part of the singular culture of a Greater China (*Da Zhonghua*/大中華) and whether the 'heart' of Chinese culture lies in the centre or the periphery is an actively debated (Gold, 1993; Harding, 1993) and ultimately empirical question with important implications for the generalizability of research.

In addition, research *about* the Chinese, conducted *in* the *Nanyang*, is primarily done *by* Americans. Öngel and Smith examined the authorships of the 61 Chinese studies in their *JCCP* analysis. Only 30 per cent of the first authors were resident in a Chinese society; 56 per cent were in the United States, and none were in the PRC. Of all 120 authors involved in these studies, only one was in the PRC, 10 were in Taiwan, and 32 were in Hong Kong. The effect of this startling authorship bias on the content of research is a highly complex issue that must be considered in the context of the university systems,

resources, career paths, language abilities, publication outlets, research agendas, and so forth of cross-cultural psychologists in Chinese and other societies. The Cultural Revolution's suppression of social science and the emerging sinicization movement's (Yang, 1993) encouragement of Chinese-language research outlets must also be considered in interpreting these findings. All such considerations aside, these data beg the question (also discussed in Blowers, this volume), Who ought to study the psychology of the Chinese?

NOTE

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