

# BULLETIN

OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS



VOLUME TWELVE, NUMBER TWO  
1980, \$3.50

# BULLETIN

## OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS

Post Office Box W • Charlemont, Massachusetts 01339

### Political Trials in Taiwan

December 10, 1979, Human Rights Day, approximately 20,000 gathered at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, for speeches advocating democratization on Taiwan. Formosa Magazine, which is in the avant-garde of liberal groups advocating more democracy on Taiwan and which through its organization, publication and distribution has been functioning as a fledgling political opposition, sponsored the meeting. Taiwan Garrison Command, with its control of martial law, attempted to prevent the meeting by refusing meeting permits, arresting and physically abusing meeting organizers and invoking a curfew. When this failed they brutally broke up the meeting. A news black out and sweeping arrests followed. During the trials which just ended the mother and 7-year twin daughters of attorney Lin Yi-xiong were brutally murdered. Another daughter, age 9, was severely wounded. The Taiwan authorities have arrested no one.

Historically, the Taiwan authorities have refused to allow even the mildest opposition. The inclusive nature of the arrests and the stiff sentences meted out clearly demonstrate that this policy continues unabated. The murder of Lin's family members is a clear warning to people of conscience that political dissent will not only land them in jail but will possibly reach out to include the innocent.

The Editors

#### Tried by Military Court

#### Tried by Civilian Court

Political Dissident	Age	Current Position	Jail Sentence	Political Dissident	Age	Current Position	Jail Sentence
Huang Xin-jie	52	Publisher, Formosa Magazine	14 years	Chen Bo-wen			6 years & 8 months
Shi Ming-de	39	General Manager, Formosa Magazine	Life	Fan Zhen-you			6 years & 8 months
Yao Jia-wen	42	Attorney	12 years	Zhou Ping-de	41	Businessman	6 years
Zhang Jun-hong	42	Editor-in-Chief, Formosa Magazine	12 years	Yang Qing-cu	40	Writer	6 years
Lin Yi-xiong	39	Attorney	12 years	Wang Tou	36	Writer	6 years
Lu Xiu-lian (F)*	36	Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Formosa Magazine	12 years	Qiu Mao-nan			6 years
Lin Hong-xuan	39	Priest	12 years	Wei Ting-cao	44		6 years
Chen Ju (F)	30	Member, Board of Directors of E. Asia Human Rights Assoc.	12 years	Su Zhen-xiang	30	Merchant	5 years
Hong Zhi-liang	33	Businessman	5 years	Wu Zhen-ming	24		5 years
Li Qing-rong	52	Writer	5 years	Wu Wen-xian	28		5 years
Gao Jun-ming	56	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan	7 years	Xu tien-xian	29	Priest	5 years
Lin Wen-zhen (F)	41	Dean, Calvinist Institute of Theology in Taiwan	5 years	Cai You-quan	29	Priest	5 years
Xu Qing-fu	45	Businessman	7 years	Ji Wan-sheng	41	High school teacher	5 years
Zhang Wen-ying (F)	31	Dentist	2 years	Qiu Cui-zhen	29		5 years
Wu Wen	37	Priest	2 years	Liu Hua-ming	37		5 years
Lin Su-zhi	34	Merchant	2 years	Yu A-xing	42		5 years
Zhao Zhen-er	36	Priest	2 years	Zhang Fu-zhong	28	Editor, Formosa Magazine	4 years
Shi Rui-yun (F)	30	Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan	2 years	Chen Zhong-xin	31	Editor, Formosa Magazine	4 years
Huang Zhao-hui	34	Merchant	2 years	Cai Cui-ho	41	Owner of a drug store	4 years
Jiang Jin-ying (F)	39	Housewife	2 years	Fu Yao-kun	47		4 years
				Dai Zhen-yao	32		4 years
				Pan Lai-cang	30		1 year & 8 months
				Li Cang-zhong	34		1 year & 4 months
				Wang Man-qing			1 year & 2 months
				Zeng Guan-ming	26		10 months
				Cai Jing-wen	31		10 months
				Liu Tai-huo	40	Owner of a printing shop	10 months
				Li Ming-xian	32		10 months

\* F: female

# The Industrial Work Force of Young Women in Taiwan

by Linda Gail Arrigo\*

Young women's participation in industry in Taiwan has increased phenomenally since the mid-1960s due to the development of light industry for export, notably the textile and electronics industries. The number of women employed as workers in manufacturing increased 3.2 times in the decade 1965 to 1974, while the total population of women over 15 years of age increased 37.5 percent. Table 1 shows the shift in employment by age category, from 1965 to 1977. Most notably, the percentage of employed young women occupied in manufacturing has nearly tripled, and the average age of women in agriculture has increased by almost six years. Of course as the large cohorts born in the early 1950s reached their teens and early twenties, the numbers of young women available for employment swelled. This younger generation has received education of at least primary school level, and a majority have also completed also junior or senior high school; employment as a salaried worker in industry or commerce after junior high school graduation has become a predominant life pattern for young women. In contrast, most women of the previous generation received primary or less education, and now remain in farm households, in family businesses, in petty own-account sales, or do putting-out work such as knitting and finishing while they care for their families. The modern occupations of unmarried women are most succinctly shown in data from the island-wide sample survey carried out by the Taiwan Provincial Family Planning Institute in late 1971. Although the sample included women aged 18 to 29, 90 percent of the unmarried women were under 23 years old (Table 2).

The rise of participation of young women in industry can also be seen in the history of the three Export Processing Zones in southern Taiwan. The earliest, the Gaoxiong EPZ, was inaugurated in 1966. In mid-1977 enterprises in the three EPZ's employed 67,000 direct labor workers, and 85 percent were women. These 56,800 women were overwhelmingly young and unmarried: age 14-15, 6.1%; age 16-19, 40.4%; age 20-24, 31.1%; age 25-29, 12.1%; age 30-39, 6.7%; age 40 and over, 3.6%. Of another 3,400 women employed as staff in the EPZ companies, 49.5% were age 20-24 and 33.1%, 25-29.

Although it is true that the female industrial workforce is overwhelmingly young and unmarried, especially in light industry, in many factories there is a substantial percentage of older, usually poorly educated women who seem to have re-joined the labor force after their children have reached school age. Moreover, in the past five years or so there has been a small but discernible trend towards employment of young married women, which may be seen in the change of labor participation rates (Table 3). This trend is, I believe, based firstly in the maturation of the female work force; that is, some small number of women, perhaps especially those with long experience and seniority before marriage, do not resign after marriage and childbirth; and secondly in the shortage of young unmarried female workers (whom managers perceive as more nimble, even if less stable), especially in areas with high labor demand. For example, during the rapid expansion of the electronics industry in 1972 and 1973, the shortage of unmarried workers was compensated for by hiring married women, especially in plants where the technical process of production requires lengthy training and thus makes the higher turnover of unmarried women costly. Of course the cost of maternity benefits for married women is otherwise a counterforce.

The development of light industry for export has necessitated massive migration of young women to urban and industrialized suburban areas. Especially in the early stages,

---

\* This paper was prepared in Chinese for the conference, "Modern Man and His Industrial Environment," sponsored by the U.S. Educational Foundation in the Republic of China, May 13-14, 1978, at Donghai University, Taizhong. A slightly popularized version appeared in the magazine *Zhonghe Yuegan* ("Monthly Digest") July and August 1978 issues.

**Table 1**  
**Employed Women by Age and Occupation Categories, Taiwan Area**  
 1965 to 1977 (thousands)

**April 1965**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>15-19</i>	<i>20-24</i>	<i>25-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40+</i>	<i>Average</i>
Professional, Administrative, Clerical		116 (11.2%)	17 (6.3%)	37 (20.3%)	20 (15.6%)	25 (12.8%)	17 (6.6%)	28.9
Sales and Service		216 (20.9%)	60 (22.2%)	36 (19.8%)	23 (18.0%)	35 (17.9%)	62 (24.2%)	31.4
Manufacturing, Labor, Transport		136 (13.2%)	64 (23.7%)	30 (16.5%)	12 (9.4%)	18 (9.1%)	12 (4.7%)	24.4
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		564 (54.7%)	129 (47.8%)	79 (43.4%)	73 (57.0%)	118 (60.2%)	165 (64.5%)	32.3
<b>Total</b>		1032	270	182	128	196	256	30.7

**July 1971**

Professional, Administrative, Clerical		193 (12.6%)	18 (4.1%)	71 (25%)	29 (21.2%)	42 (12.2%)	33 (9.9%)	29.7
Sales and Service		307 (20.1%)	74 (17.1%)	47 (16.5%)	31 (22.6%)	80 (23.3%)	75 (22.4%)	31.4
Manufacturing, Labor, Transport		411 (26.9%)	224 (51.9%)	88 (31%)	19 (13.9%)	49 (14.3%)	31 (9.3%)	23.3
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		619 (40.4%)	116 (26.9%)	78 (27.5%)	58 (42.3%)	172 (50.2%)	195 (58.4%)	33.3
<b>Total</b>		1530	432	284	137	343	334	29.8

**July 1977**

Professional, Administrative, Clerical		372 (18.3%)	45 (9.7%)	131 (30.8%)	96 (37.4%)	63 (16.3%)	37 (7.4%)	27.9
Sales and Service		378 (16.6%)	54 (11.7%)	70 (16.4%)	58 (22.6%)	92 (23.8%)	104 (20.8%)	32.8
Manufacturing, Labor, Transport		689 (33.9%)	305 (65.9%)	172 (40.4%)	51 (19.8%)	87 (22.6%)	74 (14.8%)	25.0
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining		593 (29.2%)	59 (12.7%)	53 (12.4%)	52 (20.2%)	144 (37.3%)	285 (57%)	38.0
<b>Total</b>		2032	463	426	257	386	500	30.8

*Source: Quarterly Reports on the Labor Force, Taiwan Area.*

1965–1968, large plants were set up near the major cities, Taipei and Gaoxiong, and tour buses were sent to gather inexperienced young girls from remote villages; in the rush of industrial expansion through the early 1970s, dormitory and other housing for them was often in short supply. At the same time, the continued migration of whole families to industrialized areas and the expansion of factories farther outwards from the urban centers to tap new and cheaper labor markets probably allowed a greater and greater proportion of young women to remain home with their parents while working in modern industry. Since the mid-1974 world recession, which hit Taiwan's booming electronics assembly industry suddenly and severely, many of the huge worker dormitories planned and built in the early 1970s appear superfluous; today many stand only half occupied. This is probably beneficial, since women who live with their parents generally feel less economic pressure on their standard of living, and in my study reported greater life satisfaction. Of course home-cooked food is much more appetizing than the factory and street canteens on which dormitory resi-

dents depend. At least some employers are aware of the greater stability and satisfaction of workers who live with their parents; and moreover the employer avoids the expense of dormitory construction, maintenance and subsidy.

At the area of my study, an industrial suburb to the south of Taipei, the unmarried women studied may be divided into several groups reflecting the recent development of the area. Some are the daughters of families who are native to the area; their homes and farmland may have been engulfed by the advance of four-story apartment buildings, and most family heads are no longer farmers. Others migrated with their families to this urbanizing area from other parts of Taiwan, especially northern counties, probably within the last fifteen years. A further large group is registered as natives of mainland China, though mostly born in Taiwan. Of course this reflects the massive and largely male migration of military and government workers from the mainland in 1948–49. By ethnographic impression, it is medium and lower status mainland migrants, often married to Taiwanese wives, whose daughters work in

factories. A large part of women living in dormitories, or renting with friends have left their families far away, coming from even Pingdong and Taidong. But perhaps half commute back once a month or so to parents within the range of Danshui, Jilong, Zhongli, and Xinzhu (two hours plus, one-way; since Sunday is the only regular holiday, they must often make the round trip in one day). About 20 percent of women in the dormitory I studied have nearby (less than one hour's travel) parental households. Often their schedules of work and night study make it very difficult to return to homes off the main lines of transportation; but also nearly 25 percent of a small sample of dormitory residents stated they preferred to live away from home, and in interviews they cite the freedom from familial control of their expenditures and entertainments. There are some significant differences among the above-sketched groups (outlined in Table 4). For example, mainlander girls living at home and dormitory residents have the highest average education, though their families also rate lowest on my economic status indicators. Table 4 shows the proportions of these groups found in a sample of electronics assemblers taken in a Xintian factory in late 1975 (N=260).

These proportions mark a point in the historical development of the area, as well as the development of industry in Taiwan and its control of the labor force. Of course they apply to a factory with set shifts, which is convenient for girls living at home and/or attending school. For large factories in less urban industrial locations, where there is not such a dense mass of population nearby, a much larger portion of the workers live in company dormitories. And where the process of production demands a swing shift, i.e. workers rotate through two or three

shifts, working days one week and nights the next, as in the plastics and textiles industries, almost all the girl workers must live in adjacent dormitories.

It would seem to be easy to make an accurate description of this pattern of work and residence, if those in charge of the census or household registration chose to do so.

A tentative summary, from interviewing around the island, is that most dormitory residents live within two or three hours travel time from their home, though often much less, and they return home once or twice a month. Thus most migrant female workers in Taibei country are from Taoyuan and Xinzhu counties, and workers in the Gaoxiong Export Processing Zone are predominantly from Gaoxiong and Pingdong counties, as would be expected. But where there are superior urban educational and career mobility opportunities, i.e. in Taibei, this relatively local migration is overlaid with large numbers of long-distance migrants who can only return to their families once or twice a year, given their condition of work.

The system of recruitment from junior high schools continues. Large companies lobby the principals of the junior high schools around the island, who allow the personnel recruiters to make their presentations, and who "recommend" their currently graduating students. The busloads of graduates from Suao (east coast) and Pingdong who are unloaded at dormitories in Taibei and Taoyuan in late May often slip away to other jobs or recreations by mid-summer, but some remain to take advantage of established work-study programs. Or individual junior high school graduates with educational ambitions and good grade records seek out companies, more commonly in northern Taiwan, who cooperate with nearby private schools. Once settled, these students usually stick out the rigorous three or four year stint of day work and night school. In the above-mentioned sample, 32 percent of the women were presently attending formal schooling, and 35 were learning career-oriented skills such as sewing, accounting and foreign languages.

As foreign-invested and native export-oriented companies have proliferated through the early 1970s, they seem to have

**Table 2**

**Occupation and Education of Unmarried Women, 18-29 years, Sample Survey of Taiwan Area, late 1971**

Occupation	
Manufacturing	25.4%
Service or Sales	15.5
Family Business	9.1
Clerical, Administrative, Professional	21.8
Farming (94% on family farms)	4.6
Attending School	10.6
Keeping House	8.3
Seeking Employment	3.2
Other	1.5
Total	100.0%
Education	
No formal education	3.7%
Primary school	45.6
Junior high school	10.8
Senior high school	24.6
College and university	15.2
Total	100.0%

Source: Taiwan Provincial Family Planning Institute, 1971 KA Survey of Young Women, Codebook.

**Table 3**

**Taiwan Area Female Labor Force Participation Rate, 1964-1974**

	Average Labor Force, thousands		
	Never Married	Currently Married	
1964-65	1011	45.20	27.72
1966-67	1055	42.54 (-5.9%)	24.45 (-11.8%)
1968-69	1320	56.91 (+33.8%)	29.33 (+20.0%)
1970-71	1445	57.94 (+1.8%)	27.38 (-6.6%)
1972-73	1724	61.24 (+5.7%)	32.53 (+18.8%)
1974	1813	61.01 (-0.4%)	34.38 (+5.9%)

**Table 4**  
**Description of Subsamples in a Study of Unmarried Working Women**  
**Survey in Factory and Private Dormitory**  
**in Taipei Industrial Suburb, late 1975**

Occupation Residence	Native Place	Electronics Assemblers			Professional and Clerical	
		Taipei	Home Taiwan, non-Taipei	China	Dormitory All	↓ 32 23.2
	Sample Number	45	77	47	27	32
	Average Age	19.2	19.7	18.6	20.6	23.2
Father's Occupation	Business	20%	24%	15%	20%	16%
	Laborer	27	39	26	10	3
	Farmer	16	12	—	52	19
	Public employee	13	8	30	7	22
	Military	—	—	4	7	19
Dialect	Mandarin	2%	9%	80%	13%	47%
	Hakkien	96	82	20	74	50
	Hakka	2	9	—	13	3
Educational Level	Primary	22%	23%	15%	10%	—%
	Junior High	36	38	26	35	3
	Senior High	42	38	57	52	38
	College	—	1	2	3	60
	Average Years Education	9.6	9.5	10.4	10.4	14.3
	Expected Years Education	11.7	11.4	13.5	12.9	14.4
Presently in School	34%	29%	46%	36%	41%	
Other Learning Activities	Sewing	16%	27%	11%	7%	25%
	Abacus, Accounting	6	9	13	19	16
	Typing Foreign Language	7	7	—	13	34
Family Composition	Family Members at Home	7.9	6.9	6.6	5.7	4.6
	Number of Children	5.9	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.3
	Sibling Rank	3.4	2.7	2.7	3.2	3.0
Family and Personal Economy	Family Economic Status*	94.6	92.0	90.0	85.0	126.5
	Age Began Work	16.1 yrs.	16.0	16.4	17.4	18.5
	Family Needs Girl's Earnings	56%	60%	58%	55%	26%
	Family Wishes Delayed Marriage	18%	30%	5%	0%	19%
	Monthly Salary**	US\$53.40	US\$53.20	US\$51.60	US\$54.00	US\$95.40
	Disposition of salary					
	Food Expense	28%	30%	27%	38%	31%
	Remit to Parents	62	64	73	35	56
	Other	10	6	0	27	13
	Savings over Month's Salary	39%	29%	36%	36%	56%
Life Satisfaction	Round Trip Home to Work Travel	+ .19	+ .27	.17	— .26	— .13
	Prefer to Live Away from Home	50 min.	42 min.	43 min.	19.3%	6.4%
		2.3%	5.6%	8.3%	24.1%	6.5%

\* Family Economic Status. Estimated yearly income in thousands, based on household goods for cases in which no response was given for family income.

\*\* Exchange rate, NTS40 = US\$1.00, so 90.0 = about US \$2,250.

initiated new locations further from the major urban centers to get access to stable labor and/or slightly lower labor costs. By now there is already intense competition for young women workers in the Taoyuan basin. During early 1974, at the height of production, a foreign-invested electronics company in Taoyuan county sent out 58 buses daily to remote villages within a radius of one hour's drive in order to maintain its work force of 4,000. Labor in Xinzhu is about NT\$200 a month cheaper than in Taipei. Settling near the residence of the labor also diminishes the need for costly investment in dormitory facilities. Perhaps the geographical expansion of industry has had the effect of allowing an increase in the industrial participation of married women, and a decrease in long-distance migration for unmarried women.

There is, I speculate, an aspect to the uncertainty of production for textiles and electronics companies since the world economic crisis of mid-1974 that has not been previously recognized. At least for the electronics industry, there has been a proliferation of small native companies, and these may survive partly by subcontracting for the large foreign producers, who can thus avoid expansion of their own facilities. Perhaps the growth of small contractors and putting-out operations was the main cause of an apparent labor shortage in 1975, rather than any permanent return of girl workers to the agricultural sector, or their miring in services of ill repute, as has been sometimes suggested. And on visits to urban residential areas, military dependents' villages, and rural townships one ubiquitously finds women engaged in handicraft (crocheting, sewing soles on plastic shoes) and small-scale mechanized (knitting sweaters, winding coils) production activities for export, at a piece rate paying somewhat less than factory work. It has been suggested ethnographically (Hu Tai-Li, Academia Sinica) that such production has only reached the village level in the past five years or so. For a complete picture of Taiwan's industrialization and labor force, it would seem important that the relationship between large scale export industry and small local industry be examined in the future.

### Life Patterns of Unmarried Working Women

Although the magnitude of women's participation in factory production is by now so large as to constitute a major life pattern for women before marriage, within this pattern there is variation of several recognizable sorts, based on socio-economic status of the girl's natal family, her position among the children of the family, the point in her life cycle, and other personal qualities such as beauty. Moreover, workers in factory production are not distinct from those who serve as shop clerks, waitresses, or secretaries; girls often move from occupation to occupation, depending on what opportunities are available at the moment.

Especially for girls from farm and lower income urban backgrounds, there is pressure to earn money to contribute to family welfare. Of course this is systematically related to farm income and national policies. To my experience in visiting the rural homes of factory girls, they often report very tight family finances in the late 1960s, and the necessity for them to leave home at an early age to take up wage employment. Middle-age farmers, their fathers, shake their heads that you can feed yourself from farming, but it is useless to try to make money; you are lucky not to take a loss in rice farming. Then they

recount happily the urban professions their grown sons are employed in. Numerous farmhouses now sport newly-built wings and modern tiled bathrooms, as well as appliances such as color televisions and washing machines. It can be seen that for the previous generation having many children paid off; but except during holidays and family ceremonies the extra rooms are generally empty. One often sees one room of the farmhouse smartly decorated with modern plastic grillwork and wallpaper, and the explanation is the recent marriage of a son, who of course lives in the city with his wife and new baby. Are people happy to move to the city? When asked about life in the country, girl migrants will say, "The air is so clean, and it's so peaceful and quiet at my home. I can have a whole wide room to myself instead of just a narrow bunk in a crowded room. Life is freer in the country—you can do what you want to do when you want. People are more sincere." But they deny any intention of moving back. "Farm work is too tiring. Living in the country is monotonous. There is no chance for advancement."

Pressure to remit money home is very much patterned by position in the family. Oldest daughters must shoulder much of the responsibility for family welfare, both in rural and low income urban homes, and their education is almost always sacrificed in favor of brothers. But younger daughters often receive assistance with tuition and living expenses from older sisters. In my sample, 24 percent of the subjects reported paying tuition for a sibling. And it must be realized that the traditional idea that girls don't need education has already changed greatly, especially as parents perceive that their daughters can make more money if educated.

When there are only two or three siblings, the burden is often shifted from the eldest to the second child. In my sample of working women, for both assembly workers and higher income women, roughly 20 percent reported that their parents wished them to postpone marriage in order to continue contributing to the family. Pressure to postpone marriage seems to be positively related to income of the daughter, and especially to her income as a portion of total family income. The reported rate of postponement pressure is a fairly high rate, because a large part of the sample is not yet at the customary age for marriage, or somewhat beyond it, and these parts report very low pressure. Of course those of low socio-economic standing report a much higher rate. The pressure for postponement of marriage is patterned among the daughters similarly to the above economic pressure.



**Table 5**  
**Net Migration for Urban, Sub-urban and Rural Areas of Taiwan, 1971, 1976**

Net Migrants	1971		1976	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1. <i>All Cities</i> (59)	+36,730	+39,409	+18,672	+30,418
a. 5 big cities (48)	31,274	31,941	-2,647	+5,767
b. 11 county cities	6,356	7,468	+21,319	+24,651
2. <i>Sub-urban Townships</i> (71)	-3,241	-2,733	-1,541	-1,646
3. <i>Rural Townships</i> (231)	-31,523	-40,012	-15,359	-22,231
a. 201 plain townships	-30,202	-37,471	-14,388	-20,721
b. 30 aboriginal townships	-1,321	-2,541	-971	-1,510

Source: MOI, *Taiwan Demographic Fact Book*, 1971, pp. 617, 635; 1976, pp. 875, 893.

The accompanying real life history\* illustrates some of these statements, but provides more qualitative description. The subject is a rather ordinary working girl in southern Taiwan. From her elder sister to her younger sister, one can see the historical change in employment opportunities and life styles. Although she reports a fairly deprived childhood, the present affluence of the household reflects the rising standard of living in Taiwan due to industrial employment, and the success of the family's early policy of sending a daughter to work early in order to educate the sons.

## Appendix: A Case Study

### A Woman Factory Worker

*This year Tsai Hwei-chen\*\* is twenty-two years old. At present she works at an asbestos weaving factory in Gao-xiong, and she has been there for four years already. Almost all the girls working in this factory are from the same rice-farming village in Pingdong as Hwei-chen. Their working hours rotate weekly through two shifts. They begin at seven,*

\* The following life history was written up by my co-investigator Chiang Ing-chu.

\*\* As Ms. Chen and Ms. Chiang have done, we use the Wade-Giles romanization for the woman worker's name.

**Table 6**

Year	Monthly Base Salary NT\$	Food and Transportation Allowance	Full Performance Bonus	Bonus Issued*
1968	600	0	0	
1972, beginning	800	0	50	Monthly
1972, end	850	0	50	Monthly
1973	1000	0	100	Monthly
1974	1250	10 daily, 260 monthly	200	50 weekly
1975, beginning	1500	" "	200	Monthly
1975, end	1800	" "	200	Monthly
1976, beginning	2000	" "	400	200 semi-monthly
1976, end	2000	" "	400	Monthly
Sept. 1977	2150	" "	600	300 semi-monthly

For tardiness or absence during the period, the bonus for that period is forfeited. Thus 400 NTGS for a month is a more stringent condition than 200 NTS semi-monthly.



## Case Study

work till noon, rest 50 minutes, and then work again till six p.m., for the day shift. They can also work overtime for another hour, and usually they all do; one must have a special reason in order to be excused from the overtime work. Hwei-chen said, "If you don't work overtime, the other girls will laugh at you that you are lazy."

Because she has been working at the asbestos company for four years, Hwei-chen's monthly base salary is NT\$1900 (US\$50.00), plus food allowance of NT\$700, and a performance bonus of NT\$300. Including the production bonus and overtime, she can make over four thousand a month (about US\$110). Hwei-chen lives in the company dormitory, for which there is only nominal cost. It is only on Sundays and holidays that she can go back to her village; she goes home about once a month.

Her village is populated entirely by Hakka people, who migrated from South China over eight generations ago. Her parents make their living by farming. Hwei-chen has two elder brothers, one elder sister, one younger sister and two younger brothers—there are seven children in all. Her elder sister has already been married out and has two children. Before she married she stayed at home and helped with the farming; she never went to work in a factory. The two elder brothers both graduated from high-level vocational schools, and are now both working at good jobs. Her younger sister is eighteen years old this year. After graduating from junior high school, Mei-chen went to join Hwei-chen in working at the asbestos-weaving factory. As for the little brothers, one is in junior high, the other still in primary school.

When a friend and I went to Hwei-chen's home to visit and play, we could see her living room was well furnished and attractively arranged. There was a set of carved-wood, marble-seated armchairs and a sofa, a color television, a refrigerator, a good quality stereo with two speakers hanging on the walls, and even a small fishtank. I was surprised to find such luxurious furnishings even out in the countryside. I asked Hwei-chen whether these appliances had not come out of her earnings. At first she didn't admit so, but later she said that her family bought most of them from money she had earned.

When Hwei-chen and her younger sister come back from working at the factory on a Sunday or holiday, Hwei-chen stays home to help cook or to crochet. The armchair decorations, a lace bedspread, and a wall hanging are all her handiwork. Hwei-chen is rather quiet and doesn't like to talk much; but her younger sister is more lively, and usually goes out to play with friends.

The family does not have much land; it is farmed by the father and mother. The little brothers, when at home, occasionally help a little. When we went to their house, the mother was out busy drying the harvested rice, although it was the Mid-Autumn Festival. Aside from the fields, part of the family's land has been turned into a fish pond where people can go sportfishing for a fee. The eldest sister usually looks after the pond; her husband is a fisherman, and when he goes out to sea he doesn't come back for a long time. So even though the eldest sister has been married out, she usually visits her natal home daily. She lives in a house right next to the fish pond, which is a twenty-minute walk from her parents' house and their fields.

Hwei-chen says that when she was in primary school she frequently helped with the work in the fields, and at that time, because the family's economy was not good, she and her elder sister had to help earn money by harvesting rice, planting beans, and picking beans for others. After graduating from primary school she went to work in a textile factory in Taiwan, to earn money for her family while her two elder brothers continued to study through junior high school and advanced vocational school. After working at the Tainan textile factory for four years, Hwei-chen moved to Gaoxiong, closer to home, to work at the asbestos-weaving company. Her younger sister did not come to work until after she finished junior high school.

Hwei-chen said, "My little sister is really silly not to continue studying. When I graduated from primary school our family was poor. I wanted to study but they wouldn't let me, because we were too poor. Now our family is well off enough even to pay Mei-chen's tuition, but she doesn't want to study. I always urge her to study, but she just won't. She is too fond of playing. Before, my elder sister and I even had to do hard field labor for other people; but now our little brothers and sisters have it easy."

Mei-chen, the younger sister, said, "After I graduated from junior high, I went to work in the asbestos company together with some classmates. I could see that other people were making money very well, and I didn't feel like continuing my studies even though my family told me to. It wasn't till I started working here that I found out how tiring it is. I figured I would just stay at this asbestos company two or three months and then go someplace else. I would never have thought I could stay here for two years; I'm surprised the time could have passed already.

"The company has a two-shift system. We work at day one week, at night the next. I don't feel well during the night shift, so I keep getting thinner and thinner. We must wear caps over our hair, cotton face masks, and uniforms. Your whole body gets covered with asbestos fluff all the same. There is no air conditioning, and in the summer you are sweaty and sticky over your whole body. The company says they can't put in air conditioning because the fiber is too damp and the air conditioners would get clogged anyway. There are a few vacuum tubes around the machines to remove the fiber dust, but not enough. Working in a weaving factory is really unpleasant. You wouldn't recognize me in my work clothes.

"I'd like to learn singing; I like music. Then I could be a singing star. But my family doesn't agree to that. Right now I'd like to quit this company, but my mother says to stay because the pay at this company is higher . . . The manager here is a louse, just like an 'elder brother pig,' he's always getting fresh with us girls . . . Next year for sure I'm going to get work in Taipei."

Mei-chen goes out with boys often, more so than does her sister, and she feels she is right to do so. Hwei-chen is not so outgoing. She doesn't talk about meeting boyfriends or getting married. But her friends say she already has a very good boyfriend, presently in military service. It is also generally said that a girl of her age should be commencing to save up money for her trousseau. ☆

## The Effect of Industrial Policies on the Lives of Working Women

The large number of girl workers who live at home with their parents have a living environment that is physically more comfortable and psychologically more familiar than a company dormitory or a rented room shared with two or three friends. Sometimes they complain about parents' restrictions on their activities and express a desire for social experience and training in independence. However, as can be seen in the item on general life satisfaction in Table 4, the girl workers living with parents in my sample averaged a score of +.22, and those in dormitories -.26 on a scale of +1.00 to -1.00. A further interesting observation is that for the groups living at home there seems to be a strong inverse relationship between preference for living away from home and the portion of a girl's income left after food expenses and remittances to parents.

A common pattern of remittance for girls living at home is that they bring their entire salary envelope home to their mothers, and then the mother gives them a fixed amount for the meals they eat away from home, and sometimes more for recreation and clothing. Then the parents also pay tuition for girls who are in school. Many girls attending school eat every meal except breakfast away from home on weekdays, and in this respect their lives and expenditures are not that different from dormitory residents attending school. For student-workers living a ways out from the urbanized area, the day commonly begins with catching the bus at 6:30 a.m. and ends with arrival home at 11:00 p.m. Currently, it is common for a girl living at home to get about NT\$1000 a month back from her mother, about a third of her salary; but she may also take a rice-box to work, for lunch. Tuition is a formidable expense, NT\$3000-4000 a semester, and averaged over the year this is 20 percent of total income, including bonuses. Students living in the dormitories pay their own tuition; they rarely have any savings against an emergency. Moreover, they must eat all their meals on a strictly limited budget—for some, an endless menu of "sunny spring" (plain) noodles and rice with watery vegetables. Both girl workers living at home and those in dormitories complain about their limited social environment, but the latter in particular lack either a place for meeting with friends and the opportunity for enlarging informal contacts (which often lead to meeting prospective mates, not just the pre-military age "little turnip-head" boy workers in the factories) through nearby relatives. Most dormitories lack telephone in-call facilities, and a visitor may discover it difficult to find a girl even after arriving at the obscure location of a company dormitory.

Girl workers invariably try to find other employment after they graduate from senior high school. This is surely part of the reason that personnel managers assign lower-educated applicants to the more rigorous assembly lines, and senior high school graduates to more leisurely work, where they may be less discontented. In numerous cases the senior high school students are unsuccessful in finding other employment; there is a general pessimism now about the probability of finding a good clerical job. The usual explanation they give is that you have to have "connections" in order to find one, and senior high school education is so common now that it is of less significance than a good connection. And girls from farm and low status families rarely have those connections, they say.

Wages have been steadily rising in the last few years, but it is difficult to tell what has been the real increase, discounting inflation. Most working women complain about the low wages and the difficulty of making ends meet as prices continue to rise gradually, but they will also concede that their standard of living has improved, compared with several years previous. However, there are increasing problems with the wage package. The history of the wage structure of one large manufacturer has been quoted in a current magazine. Although a vivid example, it is not unique; the system is common in electronics, textiles and other factories.

As can be seen in Table 6, non-base wage additions to the salary rise quickly after 1974, and in particular the performance bonus becomes fully 20 percent of the total package. Moreover, the conditions for which the performance bonus will be forfeited include in many companies:

- 1. Tardiness for one to four minutes on three occasions during the pay period.
- 2. Tardiness for five or more minutes, once.
- 3. Taking sick leave.
- 4. Taking leave for personal business or vacation.
- 5. Any absence except military reserve call-up and a few such official reasons.

At such a company, then, a day's absence due to illness would cost NT\$310 (the daily wage is generally still paid for a limited number of days of sick leave), and a few minutes tardiness would cost NT\$300, the equivalent of 3.6 days' base wage. Considering that it is unavoidable that people get sick sometimes, that there is often personal business which they must take care of during working hours, and that the crowding of the transportation system, especially during morning rush hour, makes it impossible to figure an exact time of arrival, what is the effect of this wage policy? Do such regulations bear any relation to the actual losses incurred in production due to absenteeism and tardiness? Due to such regulations, the realizable wage of a girl worker is likely to be considerably lower than the advertised wage package. If a new worker were to be sick one day and late one morning during a period of three months (which already requires considerable diligence, and customary arrival at the factory location about 30 minutes before work time), her average received wage would be 6.8 percent below the advertised wage package.

But it is also generally known that a kindly section head will sign for workers and allow them to keep the bonus, if they are just occasionally tardy. By the experience of line leaders who have been in particular companies for three years or more, when the labor market is tight, and there are plentiful production orders, management avoids docking anyone's pay, for fear the worker will become dissatisfied and move elsewhere. Since the turnover of girl workers usually runs 5-10 percent monthly anyway, it is very easy to lose out in a competitive labor market. But when business is slow, management docks pay on any available occasion, and given the stringency of the regulations, these occasions are plentiful. It would seem then that part of the function of the performance bonus is to adjust expenditures on labor inputs, in response to the international market. Moreover, the performance bonus may also function informally to encour-

age overtime service when requested, as used by individual section managers. According to some girl workers, if they refuse to work overtime when requested, they must consider what will be the attitude of their section chief the next time they request a signature on their work cards.

Why have the performance bonus and other miscellaneous payments ballooned in recent years? To quote a personnel manager of a medium-size electronics parts producer, "Before the mid-1974 crash, we were at peak production. We could plan production six months in advance. But now the orders of foreign buyers are unsteady, and we are lucky to be able to plan production six weeks in advance." *In this particular company, moreover, training a worker required nearly a month and the dropout rate during training was high. It is understandable that there would be a heavy reliance on overtime or work cutbacks.* In summary, it would seem the performance bonus is a fluid means for adjusting labor costs under unstable production. Further, padding the bonuses with wage increases instead of the base salary allows the total salary to rise to a currently competitive level, while relatively decreasing the amount paid for overtime. Thus a company can, while keeping with the letter of the labor law, pay even less hourly for overtime than for regular working time. A girl worker of my acquaintance, one with long seniority and higher base wage, makes NT\$17 an hour for actual work if she collects her performance bonus, but only NT\$15 an hour for overtime work. All the same, girl workers usually consider it a privilege to be asked to work overtime, and companies sometimes post "overtime opportunities" along with their salary announcements in recruiting advertisements.

Does the high performance bonus motivate punctual appearance for work and regular attendance? The following quotes are fairly typical of those heard around working women, in regards to their work.

"Every day I rush to work, walking. There are so many cars and motorcycles and buses on the road, you can hardly breathe. I'm sure some day I'm going to be worrying about losing my performance bonus, trying to walk faster and faster, and I'll get hit by a car." There does indeed seem to be a high rate of traffic accidents, including serious ones, among the girls I know.

"I got up to wait for the bus at 6:30 a.m. It is only a 30-minute ride, and I have to be to work at 7:45 a.m., but the buses are always so crowded. Anyway, there were so many students in front of me that I couldn't get on two buses that came by. I knew I already missed my performance bonus by ten minutes, so I just went home and went to sleep. For 200 NT\$, I may as well enjoy a good sleep."

"I went home to Shilin on Sunday. My family had a big feast and sacrificed a pig for my father's 60th birthday. They wanted me to stay until the ceremony was finished, late at night. My cousin said he would take me into the city early the next morning by motorcycle; it should only take me an hour to get to work then. But my cousin procrastinated, and I knew I already lost the bonus. Well, if I lost it, it was too late. So I stayed home another two days to make it worthwhile."

"I've got to prepare my lessons, or I won't pass the graduation examinations! I'm taking today off from work. There goes NT\$400! If I made that much every day I'd be rich. Anyway, I don't work at a no-future job like that for the money. I just want to finish my education, and then I'll quit, even if I

can't get a good job and just sit at home."

"I know I look terrible. I haven't been able to get better for the last two weeks. I can't afford to take off and lose my bonus. On Thursday I typed a production slip wrong. My boss got angry. I told him, it's all I can physically do just to sit at my desk, and I can hardly see the words on the page. But I finished the stack of rush orders all the same. You'd think you sell your life to the company. I'm going to quit as soon as I can find another job. I do a clerk's work, but I get paid the same as an assembly worker."

A summarizing speculation is that the performance bonus is likely to be set highest in companies in which labor is a major portion of production costs, the product is highly susceptible to fluctuations in the international market, and the work requires minimal training. Under such conditions, a high rate of labor turnover may even be desirable from the aspect of financial management.

Most companies bemoan the high rate of turnover of young women workers, but they do not seem to take full cognizance of the effect of their management policies in creating company-hopping. Regulations about leaves of absence are a case in point. Generally leaves are only allowed for one to three days at a time, for documented family business such as weddings and funerals. A longer leave, say for a week, is likely to require all the paperwork of resigning with option to continue later, and entail loss of the year-end bonus. Of course if the worker quits altogether even with certainty she can return later, she loses her hard-earned seniority, perhaps a difference of NT\$300-400 a month. She is not likely to return to the same company.

The rates of turnover for girl workers are seasonally patterned, with highest separation rates occurring in February or January after the payment of the Chinese New Year's bonus, and in June and September due to students leaving and entering school. Personnel managers keep detailed charts of this seasonal pattern of turnover. Turnover rates for girl workers rarely fall below 5 percent and are often as high as 15 percent a month; companies with brief training periods can tolerate the higher turnover. For example, at a company with high turnover more than 60 percent of new assemblers leave within the first three months, but after that period the separation rate is low. As a social environment then, the body of workers tends to be composed bimodally of a large portion of new workers and a large portion who have settled in for a long stay. This is reflected in the 1977 seniority distribution of direct labor employees at a medium-size urban electronics factory with high turnover:

---

Length of Service	Percent of Direct Labor
0-3 months	31.1
3-6 months	13.8
6 months-1 year	14.7
1-2 years	24.1
2-3 years	4.9
3-4 years	11.3
	100.0

---

Where the turnover is low and roommates in a company dormitory are familiar with each other, they cooperate better in maintaining the cleanliness of their environment, e.g. mopping the floors daily, even when the company is remiss in maintaining the facilities and fixing toilet fixtures. It is likely that they also form deeper interpersonal ties.

For girls from households in south and east Taiwan the trip home requires 6-8 or more hours, and transportation costs of several days' wages. On holidays when public transportation is strained beyond capacity, the trip may be even more time consuming and uncomfortable. Merely coming and going may take up two days. Considering also the rigor and monotony of the work routine, it is no wonder that employees would sometimes like a respite and some time to spend with relatives. A portion of girl workers are little more than children, often bewildered at the demands of being self-sufficient in an impersonal industrial environment. Since girl workers are generally considered "unskilled labor," what problem is there in rotating jobs such that the terms of leave and vacation can be ameliorated? Does increased industrialization mean that human needs of people, to be with their families and friends and do more than work to barely live, should be denied? Or is the continual recycling of a mobile labor force convenient to variability of production, and minimizing seniority and unification of the workers? Since the labor force as a whole has by now reached a fairly high level of sophistication, the training of new entrants is not a problem for most factories.

Some responses of girl workers are:

"When I first left home, I went to work at XX company in Xinzhuang. I worked there for four months, and they liked my work very well. I really liked my co-workers and boss there—I wish I could have stayed with them. But after a while I got too lonely for my mother and wanted to go home. I gave the company the excuse that I was ill and had to rest, so they would let me quit. I went home for a week and a half, but then my mother tried to set up an old-fashioned introduction for me, the kind where you serve tea and the boy's family looks you up and down. How awkward! I left for Taibei again right away. I wish I could have gone back to my old job, but I was embarrassed. I didn't even dare tell my friends I was back in Taibei."

"I've been working here for five years, and I've reached the top of seniority. In all this time I've never had a good vacation. I've sold five years of my youth to the company. I need a rest from this brain-numbing work for two or three weeks. But there is no way I can leave without quitting or taking a big loss. There are so many regulations you feel you are tied up with ropes till you can't budge an inch. And I've given them five years of my life! Those managers really don't have any emotions."

This sense of time passing with nothing to show for it is prevalent among girls who have already finished senior high school but failed to find better jobs, and among women who have reached the age of 26 or so but have no marriage prospects. Especially for the latter, the future in industrial employment is inevitable and bleak. Their income is not sufficient for a comfortable single life, and they are generally increasingly alienated from their natal families as time passes.

From the life histories I have recorded, it is apparent that industrial employment partially liberates young women from paternalistic control and provides a refuge of sorts for those women disadvantaged in the traditional society, e.g. adopted daughters and divorced women. But the traditional society does not provide a social role for the growing numbers of unmarried women past customary marriage age, and it is likely they will continue to pass their personal lives isolated and hidden in dormitories and rented rooms, but continually subject to social censure.

The narrow and unstable social environment of girl workers has been created by the demands of rapid free-enterprise capitalist industrialization—involving massive migration, high mobility, economic insecurity and often also disruption of family ties and degraded living environments. The problem of their long-term adjustment and marriage opportunities has grown from the sex imbalance in their work environments, the limited economic capacity of large portions of young men in the employment system, and the demographic "marriage squeeze" of a growing population. This high mobility and fragmentation of social ties also makes it very difficult to identify and rectify social problems, social problems which are further easily obfuscated by the facade of rising prosperity and material wealth. Figuring out how to creatively deal with these social problems will require a tremendous amount of inquiry and social concern.★



Shi Ming-de (left)

Kang Ning-xiang (center)

Linda Arrigo (right)

Photo by D. W. S. Davison

# Appendix: Lim Li-suat

## Lim Li-suat, nickname A-suat

September 1975

Thursday night I went to one of the dormitory rooms where I had recently met a young mainlander girl who could tell stories about old mainlander soldiers for hours on end. I asked the girls who were sitting around their reaction to last Saturday's talk on marriage compatibility by a psychology professor. In the course of discussion, one girl in a school uniform gave an eloquent account of what being independent means to her. "As for me, my home is not far away, but I want to live here. Here we can be free. When you live at home, you have to turn all your money over to your parents. When you want to go out you have to ask them. What you want to eat, what you want to do, is beyond your own control. Here we come and go as we please, eat what we want. Of course my freedom is limited by economic means, but within these limits I feel I have control over and responsibility for myself."

Mid-June 1977

In trying to find the story-telling mainlander girl again after my long absence from Taiwan, I ran into A-suat again. Before I knew her only by sight. Her articulateness had made an impression on me, and now I determined to know her better.

When I visit her at her room a week later, she was reading classical Chinese from the book of classical Chinese texts with phonetic guides and explanation prepared by the *Guoyu Daily* newspaper, just for her own amusement. She said she likes to read about ancient history, because one can learn about how people behave and society operates. I asked if she had studied modern Chinese history. She replied, "Yes, I have studied a little. There isn't much of it in the textbooks . . . once one of my history teachers, a young teacher, said not to believe everything we read in the books. He also told us not to quote him outside of the classroom. Maybe after a long time we will be able to know the real present day history."

I asked her what she does besides go to work; does she still go to night school? She had graduated from high school just last month, but she was staying on at the electronics company because about a year ago she got a promotion to the position of personnel and materials management for one section. She must manage about sixty people; some are retired military. Her section is more mechanized than most; the workers just watch the machines, so there are no girl assembly workers in her area. Her work is fairly leisurely, and she can take off over an hour for lunch, or leave for home earlier, if her work is finished for the day. But she has quite a few different tasks. Aside from keeping track of attendance and advising the line leaders, she must requisition the raw materials for the day and prepare reports on the cost of the product, taking into account the cost of the raw materials and the labor applied. This includes reporting on labor efficiency.

As for what she does besides work, she said, "I have joined the social service group that my teacher started. It just got going a few months ago. We do some activities like going to see children in hospitals and orphanages. I am also studying some child psychology. You have to study it in order to do the services right. Every Sunday afternoon we go to see the children in the hospital. It is pretty hard to do. The family is usually around the child, and is not very cooperative with our presence. We try to bring things and think of games to play with the children. It is very hard to make them smile; they are usually sullen. You feel it isn't worthwhile to come. But every once in a while a child will say something clever and be glad that you came, and then you feel that you are learning and want to come again. Or we go to orphanages. Sometimes the children there are very dirty and disorganized. It depends on whether they have already taken a bath when we come or not. If not, you have to keep them at arm's length or you will get black splotches on your clothes. They are very naughty, not obedient. When we bring candy or toys they snatch them from us, and fight. For the older ones, there isn't much hope of making them behave better, but for the younger ones we hope that if we give them some love they will learn. I like social work; we must be concerned about our society. I'd like to be a teacher."

Another girl came in to see Lim Li-suat. She had four beautifully waterpainted covers with inscriptions like "A drop of love . . ." on them to be used for name rosters for a blood donation drive. A-suat discussed how to staple in the blank lined paper for name lists. After the other girl left I explained that I am interested in society too, and am researching the rôle of women in industrialized countries. I asked her to come to visit me in a few days.

July 28, 1977

Lim Li-suat arrived at my house slightly early. She was very well dressed, but said she just came back from work and these were her regular clothes. She wore a tailored white skirt, very high white heels (the expensive kind), and stockings that were faintly white in sheen. She is not very tall, but well-proportioned, and with a slight swell of bosom also. She has short hair, and a curly permanent now. Two years ago when I first met her she wore a neat khaki schoolgirl uniform and a "Dutch boy" student haircut. She has beautiful skin, and she wears glasses most of the time. She often has a slightly stiff "good-little-schoolgirl" expression. Her voice is shrill and a little rasping, again suitable to the stereotype. Her responses are quick and she speaks intelligently. It is easy to see why she was promoted from the ranks of assembly worker to her present position.

I served some grapes. She asked about my husband and child, which she heard about two years earlier. I liked her, and I told her quite openly that I had freed myself from marriage and was going about my own goals of social research, though sometimes I missed my child. I am glad to be free. This seemed to touch something in her, and suddenly she began to talk about herself with intensity.

"I am free, too. I am free, like floating with no relatives or friends to care about me and to depend on. These last few years I keep feeling as though I am floating. I feel free and independent, but it is also a little frightening. In this society, it is difficult to explain yourself if you don't have relatives. Friends think you should have relatives to care for you if you are a good person."

"I am an adopted daughter." A-suat said this starkly and simply. I asked her to explain. "Now I don't have a happy relationship with my adopted family, and I don't really belong to my real parents. So I have nobody."

What does it mean if you are an adopted daughter? Why should that matter?" I sat back with studied relaxation, as if I didn't know anything about what it means to be an adopted daughter in Taiwanese society, watched her intensely, and waited patiently for her reply.

"People look down on you," she said with a pained grimace.

"Like who? Why should they look down on you?" I asked gently.

"Like my eldest younger brother. He said to me, 'If you have money you can make a dead man work for you.' It means he looks down on me. He said that to me, even though I have been his sister for so many years and took care of him when he was little." The lines of strain around her mouth deepened, and she seemed to speak on very quickly so that she wouldn't cry. I was perplexed by the Taiwanese idiom, and surprised that she was suddenly exposing a deep part of her personal feelings. I asked her what 'If you have money you can make a dead man work for you' meant when he used it.

"It happened this last Chinese New Years. All children go home to their parents at Chinese New Years. So do I. When I got home my eldest younger brother was already back from the military camp; he is in military service now. I always take care of the house. I saw the wallpaper in the front room was discolored and peeling, so I measured the room, and gave my youngest little brother some money to buy wallpaper and some other things for Chinese New Years, and sent him out to the store. Then my eldest younger brother said to me, 'If you have money you can make a dead man work for you.' It really hurt my feelings, but since we never got along very well anyway, I didn't make much of it and just went about my preparations and the wallpapering.

"The next day I got up and took a walk around where I live, which is in the suburbs but nearly outside the city. I saw a pretty pagoda, and hiked to it and went in. I found it was a pagoda for holding bone urns. It was a little scary, and I left right away. I mentioned it when I went home, and my eldest younger brother said I was bringing bad luck to the house, especially on the first day of the New Year. But how was I to know it was a bone tower? I left as soon as I found out, too. Huh! I still didn't think he had anything in for me.

"In the afternoon I was watching television by myself, and my brothers were playing poker. My littlest brother started crying because the others owed him some poker chips and

wouldn't hand them over. He screamed and cried for a long time, and finally I couldn't watch TV anymore, and I went over and told my brothers to take care of him and give him the poker chips. They didn't pay any attention to me, my eldest and second younger brothers didn't even talk to me, and my littlest brother kept screaming. I got angry and told them, 'If you don't listen to your elder sister, you can give back the red envelopes!' I didn't really want them back, I just wanted them to pay attention to me. Maybe I shouldn't have said that, but they were being really mean. My eldest younger brother said to me, 'Who cares about your lousy money!' and a lot of other things too. My mother came over and scolded me for making a fuss on the New Year, and she told me to go back to watching TV. But my mother picked up the package of cookies I was munching on while watching TV and put it away."

I could already see a few minutes earlier that A-suat's eyes were getting overly shiny. Now a few drips welled over, stopped at the bottom edge of her glasses, and slowly continued to mark wet streaks on her cheeks. I gave her a tissue, which she took and used, and said something lightheartedly in the hope that she wouldn't get too overcome, and then embarrassed, and stop talking. But she was so immersed in the experience that she continued immediately.

"I always cry when I think about it, even though it is already half a year ago. My roommates think I am too sensitive . . . But how could my mother treat me like that? I couldn't say that I worked for her for so many years, took care of the children and did the housework. I just started bawling and went to my bed and wrapped myself in blankets and cried all night. My eyes got swollen. Nobody came to call me or talk to me.

"The next morning as I was waking up I heard my father and eldest younger brother talking in the front room, right near to where I was sleeping. My eldest younger brother said he was going back to his military camp early; he didn't want to stay at home. Then he said to my father, 'She's got such a temper. She's studied too much, she's gone crazy.' My brother said it right where he knew I could hear. When I heard that, I was beside myself, really anguished—I put myself through three years of junior high school and three years of senior high school, all working in the daytime and studying at night! They didn't help at all! How could I be crazy?!—I got angry and started crying again, and I came out and asked my brother how he could talk about me like that. He left. My father said some things to calm me, then he repeated what my brother said, repeated it directly to me, 'You've studied too much, you're mentally ill.' I couldn't stand it any more. I threw my things together and I left. It was only the third day of the New Year, and there wasn't any electricity or hot water at the dormitory; everyone was away, but I didn't think of that yet—I just left my home.

"I cried and walked, just wandering in the direction of the bus stop. Tears were running down my face, but I stifled my sobs. I don't know what people on the street thought; I didn't pay any attention to them. I walked and cried. Then a young man came up on a motorcycle and asked me the way to Chia Chuang College. I pointed the way, but didn't talk to him. He kept saying politely that he didn't know the way and would get lost, so would I please get on the motorcycle and direct him? He was very gentle and polite, and the college was just a few bus stops in the direction I was going, so I got on, and kept crying to myself. He didn't say anything, just drove on. After about ten minutes I looked up and saw he wasn't going the way to Chia

Chuang College! I shouted and made him let me off. In another few minutes he would have carried me far off the main road! He left without saying anything. He looked like a polite young man; how could I know he was a bad man? I felt worse and cried harder.

“I took the bus all the way back to Xin Zhuang, near my dormitory; I didn’t have anything to do, so I went to a movie. It was some American movie. The theatre was half empty. I cried as I watched the movie, and still didn’t have any place to go, so I sat through it again. There was a man standing near me in the aisle, and finally I noticed that he was wandering closer and closer. I kept watching the movie. But then he came very close and faced me. He exposed his private parts to me! I couldn’t stand to look, I almost threw up! I was very frightened; I stood up and left the theatre in a hurry. How could two bad things like that happen in one day? That never happened to me before.

“By then the sky was beginning to get dark. I wanted to go back to the dormitory, but the electricity and hot water were turned off during the vacation time. There were only a few people left who couldn’t go home because their homes were far away in south Taiwan. I was afraid to be by myself in the dark; and if I talked to the other girls they would want to know why I came home already on the third day of the New Year, when my home was just on the other side of the city. Finally I got on the bus and went back to Da Ze [Ta Tze]. When I got home again it was eight o’clock. I knocked on the door. My mother opened the door, and just said, ‘Oh, you’re back;’ she didn’t ask where I had been. My eldest younger brother was home too. We went to bed. The next morning my eldest younger brother got ready to go back to his military camp, and my mother got up early and fixed a special breakfast for him and fussed over him. She didn’t prepare any for me. When I left she didn’t say much to me, or tell me to come back again soon. It was still a day before the end of the New Years holiday, but I just lived in the dark dormitory.”

During most of her narration, A-suat’s arms were tightly flexed, and she ate only a few grapes. A tear trickled down now and then. Now her arms and cheeks relaxed somewhat. I asked her about her current relationship with her family.

“Ever since I was little the neighbors always knew and remarked that I was an adopted daughter. I didn’t know why it mattered that I was an adopted daughter; I lived with my family and did everything like their daughter. Why do they always have to mark me a *yang nü*?

“After a few weeks I went back home again briefly. When I was going to school I could only manage to save a few hundred dollars and take it home every month or so, and buy some extra things to eat at New Years or other festival times. But since I graduated from high school last June and also got promoted, I can afford to send more money now. I took some money to my home, on Sunday. My mother wasn’t there, but my father said that my mother told him to tell me that the household didn’t need money any more. My father repeated what my mother said without any particular expression. He just does what my mother says. I really feel separated from my family; they don’t care about me. Since then, I send money home by post office money order rather than by going myself, because they look down on me and I am afraid they won’t take it. Aren’t I part of the family?

“I wanted to give my third younger brother a thousand dollars to buy a watch, just because he just got a very good grade on his senior high school entrance examination and will get into

Chien Kuo High School. I felt pained that he might not take it; but my second younger brother, I get along better with him—he told me not to worry and took the money to give to our younger brother.”

I asked Lim Li-suat if she ever helped pay for her younger brothers’ education. They were allowed to go at least through junior middle school before working, and A-suat recently paid NT\$1000 a semester toward her third younger brother’s tuition. I asked her if there is some question of inheritance, that now her family should want to ostracize her. She said they were poor and don’t have any land to split up any way. Moreover, when she was twenty and she went to live in the dormitory and work, her parents told her quite clearly not to expect any *jia zhuang*, dowry and wedding furniture from them. She would have to save up for her *jia zhuang* from her own earnings. I asked A-suat how she felt about that. She said it was all right with her; she didn’t seem at all resentful about it. I queried her on the specifics of her early life, and gradually the following outline came out.

“When I was two years old my real parents, who live in San Zhung Bu, gave me to my adopted mother. At that time my adopted mother didn’t have any children. But later she had five boys. When the last one was born, I was thirteen years old. At first we lived on Yen Ping North Road. We were very poor. My mother worked near Yuan Huan. When I wasn’t in school, I had to take care of the baby. When I was eight, during the summer, I had to carry my little brother all the way down to Yuan Huan at noon so my mother could nurse him. He was so heavy; I had to walk almost an hour to get there. Later we moved to Da Ze.

“After I graduated from primary school, I couldn’t go to school any more. At that time there wasn’t any generally available middle school. At first I worked as an apprentice in a garment assembly factory, in Xin Zhuang. I just made about two hundred dollars a month, and I lived at home and brought the money home to my parents. I worked for three years almost. Since I was an apprentice, I never made any money to speak of, but at least I could learn a little about making clothes. We were very poor then too. When I was about eleven or twelve I remember that my mother, my eldest younger brother and I had to work every night until twelve, peeling water lotus seeds for a restaurant. We worked like that for a long time, but we still didn’t have enough money to eat. We didn’t have any vegetables or meat to eat. We didn’t even have enough rice, because our credit at the rice shop was bad, and they wouldn’t give us any even if we didn’t have enough to eat. Everyone in our family had white tongues, white on the sides. I don’t know why it was like that, but when we didn’t have enough to eat our tongues were white. After my eldest younger brother went to work our financial situation got a little better.

“My uncle ran a rice shop, and his son helped him. When his son went to military service, my uncle hired me to help, so I quit the garment factory. I worked in the rice shop nearly three years; I still lived at home and gave my wages to my mother. Then my cousin came back from military service.

“By then I was twenty. I wanted to go back to school, so I found a job as an assembler at an electronics company, a job that allowed me to go to school at night and also provided a dormitory and some tuition assistance. My family wasn’t happy that I wanted to go. Probably they would have been happier if I stayed at home and earned money and kept doing the housework. My father said, ‘It is useless for girls to get education.’ But I went any way. When I needed money for my tuition I went to borrow

it from my real elder brother in San Zhung Bu. I have two real elder brothers. But I was never close to my real family, because since I was little I only went to see them once or twice a year. When I go there they are very kind and polite to me, as though I'm a guest. When I borrow money from my real brother I pay it back right away."

"I didn't know you were already twenty-six. I thought that since you just graduated from high school you must be about twenty-two. Are you concerned about marriage?" I asked her.

"I am afraid to get married. My life is very free at present, but of course everyone has to get married. Some people say that old spinsters get to have bad tempers. I think maybe it is true. It really troubles me. Recently I have been losing my temper for no reason at all. Last week I was sitting watching television in the central lounge near my dormitory room. A girl stepped on my toe, but I didn't say anything, just glared at her once. Then she bumped me, and said, 'Miss, don't you talk?' I don't know why I got upset. I got up and ran to my room and lay down on my bunk and cried in the blankets. My roommates must think I'm overwrought to cry like that over nothing.

"But I am really afraid to get married. I just look at my parents, and I think I never want to get married. They have been fighting ever since they got married. When I was little, they said they wanted to get divorced, but they didn't get divorced and they had so many babies. They don't even care what they say in front of us children. My mother has the temper of a tiger, she bosses my father around. At least recently he is developing a little more self-respect. I would rather not get married than get married and live like that." ☆

---

## Moving?

**Moving is costly. For you. And occasionally for us. If you change your address but do not tell us, the Post Office throws away your copy of the Bulletin . . . and then charges us!**

**Give us a break. Tell us before you move.**

### Old Address

(street)

(city, state/province)

(ZIP)

### New Address

(street)

(city, state/province)

(ZIP)

**BCAS, P.O. Box W, Charlemont, MA 01339 USA**

---

## Books to Review

*The following review copies have arrived at the office of the Bulletin. If you are interested in reading and reviewing one or more of them, write to Bryant Avery, BCAS, P.O. Box W, Charlemont, MA 01339. This is not, of course, an exhaustive list of the available books in print—only a list of books received. We welcome reviews of other worthy volumes.*

- Milton Osborne: *Southeast Asia; An Introductory History* (G. Allen & Unwin, 1979).
- Milton Osborne: *Before Kampuchea; Preludes to Tragedy* (G. Allen & Unwin, 1979).
- Kampuchea Conference: *Documents from the Kampuchea Conference*, Stockholm, November, 1979.
- Joan McMichael (ed): *Health in the Third World; Studies from Vietnam* (Nottingham, 1976; to be reprinted by Carrier Pigeon, Boston).
- Michael Stenson: *Class, Race & Colonialism in West Malaysia* (Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1980).
- R. K. Vasil: *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia* (Humanities Press, 1980).
- John A. Lent (ed): *Malaysian Studies; Present Knowledge and Research* (Northern Illinois Univ. occasional papers #7, 1979).
- Carl Trocki: *Prince of Pirates* (Malaya/Singapore) (Singapore Univ. & Ohio Univ. Presses, 1979).
- Asia Forum on Human Rights: *The State of Human Rights in Malaysia* (Hong Kong, 1979).
- Charles F. Keyes (ed): *Ethnic Adaptation and Identity; The Karen on the Thai Frontier with Burma* (Philadelphia: I.S.H.I., 1979).
- M. Nazif Mohib Shahrani: *The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1979).
- Wm. McCagg, Jr. and B. Silver (eds): *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers* (Pergamon, 1979).
- Lawrence Lifschultz: *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution* (London: Zed Press, 1977, 1979).
- Hartmann and Boyce: *Needless Hunger; Voices from a Bangladesh Village* (San Francisco: Inst. for Food and Development Policy, 1979).
- Gail Omvedt: *We Will Smash This Prison! Indian Women in Struggle* (Zed, 1980).
- Morton Klass: *Caste: The Emergence of the South Asian Social System* (ISHI, 1980).
- Primila Lewis: *Reason Wounded; An Experience of India's Emergency* (G. Allen & Unwin, 1980).
- David E. Sopher (ed): *An Exploration of India; Geographical Perspectives on Society and Culture* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1980).
- R. R. Ramchandani: *India and Africa* (Humanities Press, 1980).
- Georgie D. M. Hyde: *Education in Modern Egypt; Ideals and Realities* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
- Alvin W. Gouldner: *The Two Marxisms; Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Theory* (Seabury, 1980).
- Hok-lam Chan: *Li Chih (1527-1602) in Contemporary Chinese Historiography* (M. E. Sharpe, 1980).
- Marc Blecher and G. White: *Micropolitics in Contemporary China: A Technical Unit during and after the Cultural Revolution* (M. E. Sharpe, 1980).
- Henri Maspero: *China in Antiquity* (Univ. of Massachusetts, 1979).
- B. Michael Frolic: *Mao's People; Sixteen Portraits of Life in Revolutionary China* (Harvard, 1980).
- Yuan-tsung Chen: *The Dragon's Village; An Autobiographical Novel of Revolutionary China* (Pantheon, 1980).
- Kazuo Sato (ed): *Industry and Business in Japan* (M. E. Sharpe, 1980).
- Diane Tasca (ed): *U.S.-Japanese Economic Relations* (Pergamon, 1980).
- John Girling: *America and the Third World; Revolution and Intervention* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
- Michael T. Skully (ed): *A Multinational Look at the Transnational Corporation* (Sydney, Australia: Dryden Press, 1978).
- Jim Hyde: *Australia; The Asia Connection* (Kibble Books, 1978).
- Malcolm Booker: *Last Quarter* (on Australia and Asia) (Melbourne Univ. Press, 1978).
- Donald M. T. Gibson (ed): *Australia and America; Are We the Same?* (Dryden, 1977).