

BERNARD GALLIN, *Hsin Hsing, Taiwan; A Chinese Village in Change*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1966, xi+324 pp.

The object of research of contemporary anthropologists would seem to have been shifting rapidly away from the so-called "primitive" societies to complex societies. American scholars have been in the vanguard of this movement. The American academic world, which has traditionally produced outstanding achievements in area studies, has exhibited a number of pioneer work dealing with East Asian studies, especially the village life of the Chinese people. We may cite as examples in the field of Chinese studies such works as J. Doolittle's *Social Life of the Chinese* (which was published as early as 1865), A. H. Smith's *Village Life in China* (1899), and D. H. Kulp's *Country Life in South China* (1925) in which the authors have approached the study of the life of the Chinese people from a particular sociological viewpoint. For village studies in Japan, we may note J. F. Embree's distinguished work, *Suye Mura* (1939). In the post World War period, there is *Village Japan*, the joint work of R. K. Beardsley, J. W. Hall and R. E. Ward, written as the result of long-term (4 year) research by specialists in a variety of fields, who conducted their investigations while residing in the village which they were studying.

The forte of American scholars lies in their attempts to grasp the realities of a specific local community—that is to say a particular village—through the "intensive method" based on long-term residence in the field. The results of this method may be seen both in the volume under review here, and in the aforementioned *Suye Mura* and *Village Japan*. Upon reflection, use of this intensive method would seem to be due to the existence of both a scholarly environment rich in utilization of positivist methodology, plus the possibilities of financial aid from a wide variety of foundations.

Hsin Hsing is the first product of American scholarship to employ the methodology outlined above in a study of Taiwan. The book is the result of investigation and research undertaken by Gillan for a sixteen month period, from 1957–1958, while he was living with his wife in the village of Hsin Hsing, located in the west central part of Taiwan. (More specifically, the village is in Pu Yen Hsiang, Chang-hua Hsien. Hsin Hsing in 1957 had a population of 657, with 115 households.)

Given the prevailing political circumstances, it was impossible for the author to enter Communist China for the purpose of carrying out research on a mainland Chinese village. To compensate for this, the author clearly was attempting to approximate for academic purposes a mainland Chinese agricultural village by using Taiwan as a research laboratory. Given this position regarding his research, the author's selection of Hsin Hsing village (which is located near the once prosperous Taiwan port of Lu-kang, a city in which the traces of old China have been long maintained,) was probably appropriate.

Such a position on the part of the author is thought-provoking, especially today, when some writers hold ulterior political motives and emphasize such

themes as "Taiwan is not China," or "the originarity of *Taiwanese* culture."

A major characteristic of the present work is the author's attempt to depict various aspects of the daily life, and in particular the ecology, of one Taiwan Han village, within the appropriate historical context. With this purpose in mind, the author devoted extensive effort in his empirical studies of social and cultural change in Taiwan, to recording details of the influence of such factors as urbanization, the population explosion, agricultural land reform, and the flow of population out of the village, on the hitherto traditional village organization, on the bonds and forms of union among the villagers, on family relationships, and on the values of the villagers, as well as the course such phenomena have taken over time.

To date, virtually all of the field studies of local communities in Taiwan have been concerned with the primitive hill and/or mountain Formosan aborigines societies. Occasionally there have been studies of the Chinese plain societies, which have made use of the disciplines of archaeology, geography, religion and agricultural economics. (That sociological investigation of Taiwanese Han society is an underdeveloped field of study in Taiwan is symbolized by the fact that the Department of Sociology of the National Taiwan University was not formed until 1968.) But I have not heard of another work which, like the present volume, offers an integrated and overall grasp of the daily life of a local community from a number of points of view, and moreover for which the author lived for a year or more in one village, while carrying out his work.

Gallin, needless to say, merits our praise both for publishing the first anthropological study relating to Taiwan's Han society, and for undertaking his research from the original position of trying to understand China through Taiwan. And there is no doubt that this book may serve as an excellent and enlightening introduction to the world of the island of Taiwan, an island of whose very existence most of the world would have been unaware were it not for the tumult over the Civil War in China and the Peking-Washington confrontation. But before we can accord to this book critical recognition as a flawless piece as scholarship. A number of additional comments are necessary.

The book's chief weak points lie in such deficiencies in scholarly requisites as its lack of awareness of problems relevant to comparative studies,¹ and its inadequate sophistication in both theoretical treatment and use of existing works.²

¹ It is regrettable that the author did not make better use of such English language works on the villages of rice producing societies as, for Japan, *Suye Mura and Village Japan*, and for China, *Country Life in South China*, *Agrarian Problems in Southernmost China* by Chen Han-seng, or *Peasant Life in China* by Hsiao-tung Fei.

² I do not think that the author has sufficiently digested and absorbed the existing English literature. And the omission from the bibliography of the works of such Japanese scholars as Niida Noboru, Tatsumi Makino, Morimitsu Shimizu, Seiji Imabori, and Tadashi Fukutake, may be attributed to the fact that the author is not fluent in Japanese, despite the fact that it has long been common knowledge that the scholarly achievements by Japanese in Chinese studies cannot be neglected.

Again, it is difficult to accept the fact that, in contrast with the authors attempt to give a detailed portrayal of the ecology of the village by collating and recording every datum (it is not clear to the reviewer whether or not this is an anthropological device), in treating the problem of cities which relate to rural life, he deals only with Taipei, ignoring the intermediate level of small- and medium-sized cities. This may be said to be oversimplification. To the reviewer's knowledge, excluding the area immediately around Lu-kang, those cities which are relevant to rural life are, aside from Lu-kang, first Chang-hua and then Taichung, and not, directly, Taipei. Again excessive stress on overpopulation in relation to land as the basic problem of rural economy also derives from oversimplification. I think that the fact that scarcity of land is not the basic cause of rural financial difficulties may be clearly stated on the basis on the new and changing trends in rural population seen in modern Japanese agriculture and in contemporary Taiwan.

The anthropologist who cannot plunge into a penetrating analysis which goes beyond the mere enumeration of aspects of rural society and economy, but who merely defines the structure of Taiwanese rural villages, is led into making erroneous direct analogies. Earlier, I made a favorable appraisal of Gallin's method of attempting to approximate the character of Chinese society through the use of Taiwanese *chia* (family) and villages, which form the basic society. However, this evaluation is of course a qualified one. For example, it is of course not the case that I approve of the author's applying a notion of rural Taiwanese villages which does not take into account differing political systems and class relationships, in an unmodified analogy with the rural villages of mainland China. It is a truism to say that it is dangerous to apply this sort of direct generalization to China. It goes without saying, also, that it is yet another flaw to bring the specific and unaltered example of pre-World War II mainland Chinese villages into comparison with post World War II Taiwanese Hsin Hsing village.

Because of the weakness of the analytic framework used to treat class and strata within the village, the author had to fall back on the extremely ambiguous concept of *kan ch'ing* (non-kin interpersonal relations), which he borrowed from M. H. Fried's *Fabric of Chinese Society, a Study of the Social Life of a Chinese Country Seat* (New York, 1953), to explain human relationship.

It would also seem that the author is not entirely free from the various difficulties which scholars from advanced nations face when doing research on local communities in less developed nations, particularly the problem of local dialects. Thus, in villages where the Min-nan dialect is used as the daily language, for the author who can handle only Mandarin even the use of a competent interpreter is insufficient—a point of which the author of the present volume is well aware. A good illustration of the language problems involved is the grave error of confusing the Min-nan *A Ma* (grandmother) with the Mandarin *Ma* (mother). If his aim is to try to approach a notion of Chinese society and culture from the basic society—*chia* and village, one would expect that the author should have used the daily language of the

villagers as his medium, and not Mandarin, particularly since in 1957 in the village concerned, the movement to disseminate Mandarin as the national language had only been in progress for a brief twelve years.

While the author's examination of social and cultural change from a socio-economic viewpoint, giving considerable weight to urbanization in particular, is acceptable, it is improbable that the totality of social and cultural change in Taiwan can be grasped through an analysis which ignores the character of the political administration which controls the village. (Even in pre-modern China, the superstructure, or political administration, existed almost literally "above the clouds," but more recently—including the era of Japanese control—the situation in Taiwan has been different.)

Furthermore, indispensable to any comprehensive analysis of social and cultural change in Taiwan is a consideration of the thought and behavior patterns of the people, which take shape according to the regime or administration in power. Without analyses made from these points of view it would seem difficult for the author to evaluate accurately the social, cultural, and historical significance of such phenomena as (1) the reorganization of Buddhist temples and Confucian shrines undertaken by the Government-General of Taiwan during the late period of the colonial rule as a part of the process of the movement to Japanize the Taiwanese; which ultimately proved unsuccessful; (2) the recent educational and religious policies of the Nationalist Chinese government, widely thought to be a reaction to the corresponding policies of the Communist China; specifically, these include such measures as striving to see that Confucian festivals be even more flourishing than before, and propagandizing of Buddhist ethics at every opportunity; (3) the increasing importance of the role played by the Tsung ch'in hui (kinship bands) and the Tung hsiang hui (territorial bands), in every aspect of local political affairs, in particular at election time in contrast with the trend of the times; and (4) the intensification of the trend toward use of old traditions upon ceremonial occasions where these are seen as fitting in with the Nationalist Chinese government's movement for cultural restoration.

It is, thus, a matter for regret that the author did not spare more pages for a discussion of the nature of political authority and its policies as well as the people's responses to it within his analysis of the factors of social and cultural change.

There are one or two factual errors which should be pointed out.

(1) The regulation promulgated in 1905 was "Land Registration Regulations," not "Land Investigation Regulations." (p. 16)

(2) Despite the fact that the author bases his statement on a quotation, the public elementary school did not in fact offer instruction in Taiwanese local dialects. It is a historical fact that from fairly early in the period of Japanese rule all instruction was given in Japanese and use of the Taiwanese local dialects within the school was strictly forbidden. (p. 19)

(3) From 1952, the Hsiang mayors have been elected by direct vote of Hsiang residents and not, as the author states, by indirect vote of village

representatives to the Hsiang council.

I would also like to make a few comments upon the Bibliography appended at the end of the book. First, it is to be regretted that the author does not mention either the Japanese language periodical *Minzoku Taiwan*, which was published from 1941 to 1945; or the Chinese language periodical *Tai-wan Feng-wu* (The Taiwan Folkways) which began publication in 1951; both of which are indispensable sources for research on the society and customs of Taiwan. Second, it is strange that there are only three Japanese language sources listed in the Bibliography³ (one of them written by a Chinese author). Moreover, it is not only curious but also inconvenient for those readers who wish to use the original Japanese editions, that these books have been cited with their titles romanized according to the Chinese reading of the characters. In addition, the author should mention the existence of a Chinese translation of *Taiwan shiho* (Taiwan's Customs and Laws), which is one of the most important materials for social, historical, economic, and cultural studies in Taiwan.

Despite the fact that I have above stated a number of cautionary remarks regarding the present book, I would like to reiterate here that *Hsin Hsing* is important both as a stimulus for scholars whose subject is Taiwanese studies and, to the extent that it is such a stimulus, as a pioneering work in its field. As may be seen from the fact that recently Taiwanese scholars too have begun to publish works of the variety—for example, Sung-hsing Wang's *Kweishan Tao, a Study of a Chinese Fishing Community in Formosa* (Nankang, Taipei, 1967), the possibilities for dialogue centering on common research problems among scholars throughout the world continue to be created. Scholars of Taiwanese studies can only rejoice in this. (*Kuo-huei Tai*)

³ Taiwanese studies undertaken during the fifty years colonial rule by Japanese interested in Taiwan cannot be neglected. It is scarcely necessary to mention the significance of the fact that one Japanese source is given, when one thinks of the service which Japanese scholars have rendered in the field of Chinese studies.