

## “MODERN” DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW IN COLONIAL TAIWANESE FAMILIES

Chin-ju Lin

*What were the experiences of daughters-in-law in the patriarchal household? Did they ever resist? By analyzing the life stories of twenty-two “modern” women living in complex households of colonial Taiwan, this article suggests that experiences of daughters-in-law differed a great deal from each other, according to family structures, family life cycles, and life cycles of the individual. It also argues that most of the daughters-in-law did rebel. Whether their resistance could be successful, however, depended a great deal on the rising of modern discourses, employment opportunities outside the home, and the possessed economic resources of the daughter-in-law and her natal family.*

**Keywords:** *daughters-in-law; patriarchal households; divisions of domestic labor; colonialism; Taiwan; work and family*

This article explores experiences and identities of “modern” daughters-in-law in Han (ethnic Chinese) families in colonial Taiwan, and aims at enriching research on women’s experiences in patriarchal households. Experiences of daughters-in-law have been occasionally studied in ethnographic accounts.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, most of them delineated a homogeneous image of powerless daughters-in-law, who lived in rural areas. Few had addressed urban modern women’s experiences within patriarchal families. Under Japanese colonialism (1895-1945), a new group of modern women emerged. These modern women were said to have worked outside the home and owned independent incomes.<sup>2</sup> Did these achievements mean that these well-educated

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modern women were free from the control of patriarchal kinship relations? Could they break away from their domestic role in the family? Because the roles of mothers and wives have been more often discussed, this article only focuses on experiences and identities of these modern women as daughters-in-law in colonial Taiwanese complex households. It explores the interconnections among the organization of patriarchal households, the economy, the division of domestic labor, and employment outside the family. How did these modern women experience their lives as daughters-in-law? How did their experiences differ from each other? Did they ever rebel against their exploited lives in patriarchal Han families? Would the modernization processes initiated by Japanese colonialism contribute to their contestation with patriarchal households? How would their lives differ from those of rural peasant women, which have been the focus of much anthropological investigation?

I will answer these questions by drawing on life stories of twenty-two modern women living in patrilocal complex households under Japanese colonialism. The source included biographies, autobiographies, and life history interviews conducted by other historians and me in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> I chose life stories of women who were born between 1900 and 1930 and lived in stem or extended family forms. Most of them experienced their life cycle as daughters-in-law from the 1920s to early 1950s. At the beginning of the research, to meet the criteria of being modern, I expected them to receive colonial education at least to the primary school level. Moreover, I also expected that they had been employed as white-collar professional workers outside the family so that the tensions between paid employment and unpaid domestic work could be explored. Nevertheless, it turned out that most of the women living in complex families were not usually engaged in paid work outside the family.<sup>4</sup> As a result, all these modern women mentioned in this article should be understood as receiving modern education (the least to the primary school level and the most to the medical school in Japan) and living in urban complex families. They might or might not have worked after marriage.

I organize this article into three parts. First, after introducing the organization of Han families, I situate diverse daughters-in-law's experiences of doing domestic work in the institutional contexts, demonstrating how a daughter-in-law's treatment by her husband's family might differ from another woman's treatment in another family. Second, I explore the working of patriarchal genealogy, its connections with divisions of domestic labor, and the secondary role of the daughter-in-law in urban complex households. Third, I further examine cases of resistance to explore the identity formation of the daughter-in-law and the underlying mechanisms that might have contributed to the success of daughters-in-law's resistance in colonial Taiwan.

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE FAMILY**

The Han family was usually conceptualized as an economic and residential unit in which production, reproduction, and consumption were carried out. According to the residential arrangements, the family can be further differentiated into three different family types: that of the conjugal family, in which a husband and wife coresided; that of the stem family, in which the married couple lived with one of their married sons and his conjugal unit; and that of the extended family, in which a married couple lived with at least two of their married sons and their conjugal units. In this article, to emphasize

the role of the daughter-in-law, I only look at married young women who lived in complex households, that is, stem and extended family forms.

In complex families, the economy was organized centrally to advance the interests of the whole family. In complex family organization, the family held a common coffer. The patriarch was entitled to the distribution of family wealth. Nevertheless, it was possibly managed through a financial manager.<sup>5</sup> Women owned “private money” that was accumulated through the wedding processes,<sup>6</sup> including cash and property from their dowries.<sup>7</sup> The usefulness of such private money was disputed.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, as a sociologist, I am concerned principally with the relationship between private money and women’s autonomy, which will be investigated through my empirical data.

An often-neglected dimension in the study of the Chinese family as a coresidential and coeconomic unit is its genealogical principles. Native anthropologist Chi-nan Chen argued evidently that what Western anthropologists thought of as the “family” was in fact the domestic group “whose membership is defined primarily by genealogical principles and secondarily by functional principles.”<sup>9</sup> He suggested that although functional needs of the household might change certain practices in the family, genealogy is the persistent principle that organizes the ways in which production, reproduction, and consumption were carried out in the family. His interpretation bears significant insight to my understanding of operational principles of Han families. In this article, I use these genealogical principles to explain the organization of reproductive work and the diversity found in women’s lived experiences.

## EXPERIENCES OF DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

What were daughters-in-law’s experiences in complex families? How did they differ from each other? The following section looks at daughters-in-law in families with different economic resources, and daughters-in-law who worked, to identify some of the structural forces shaping their diverse experiences.

### Daughters-in-Law in Averagely Wealthy Families

Let us first consider the case of Yang Qien-he, who graduated from high school in 1943 and worked as a journalist before marriage. The marriage brought Yang into a landlord-cum-new-middle-class stem family, in which she lived with her parents-in-law, her husband, and her husband’s adopted sister and three young brothers. In this landlord family, the father-in-law was a well-educated schoolteacher, whereas the mother-in-law stayed home and received no formal education. When Yang’s husband was employed as factory manager at his uncle’s factory, Yang became responsible for carrying wood and igniting fires to cook three meals for eight people, making clothes for her husband’s brothers, washing clothes for her conjugal unit, obtaining water from the well to cook and to clean the two-floor Western-style mansion, and preparing bathing water for all family members. All this was tremendously labor consuming at a time when gas hobs, running water, washing machines, and plastic water pipes were not available. The following excerpt showed how Yang described her domestic responsibilities.

After the fifth day of my wedding, I started to take over domestic chores. The mother-in-law would wake me up at dawn around 5.00 am to cook breakfast. She would then

go back to sleep and left me in the kitchen cooking. Cooking then was not like today. I had to set up the fire in the stove by burning straw to ignite limestone chips to start cooking. Because it required experiences in controlling the timing of burning straw and the quantity of limestone chips, it took me a long time to set up the fire. Usually when my mother-in-law came back to check my progress, I was still struggling with this difficult task. Kneeling down in front of the stove, listening to the sound of her clogs squeezing on the limestone chips that I spread all over the floor inadvertently, I could sense her anger and was very scared.<sup>10</sup>

Men at the house had breakfast at 7.30 am but women ate around 9.30 am. After cooking the breakfast, I went upstairs to clean all the rooms. By the time of having breakfast, I had been starving because I started doing housework since five in the morning. Even when the breakfast time for women came, I could not just go for breakfast. I had to wait for my mother-in-law. . . . To be honest, I could hardly understand my mother-in-law. Observing her daily routine, I found her [to] resemble a female character in Guy de Maupassant's novel *The Family* who had chronic disease of sweeping and cleaning. She cleaned the house and tied her hair in a knot again and again as if these were the only things that she could do in all her life. Not until she was totally satisfied with the cleaning jobs and tying her hair into a knot, I was not able to have her breakfast.<sup>11</sup>

Yang's imaginative description of her mother-in-law showed an interesting combination of her thought between what she read from Western literature and what she experienced in her daily domestic life. It seems that it was not only the physically consuming domestic tasks that tired her out but also the supervision and nagging from her mother-in-law that made the work appeared even more arduous.

The domestic work performed by Yang seemed heavy enough, but the workload of Xiu-lian, who became the eldest daughter-in-law in a moderately wealthy merchant family without maids, was even greater. In contrast to Yang's family, which did not require any productive activity from her, Xiu-lian was responsible for not only the reproductive work but also the productive work of the merchant family.

I was a golden lady,<sup>12</sup> facing the whole Shi family. I cooked three meals per day, did the housework, and ran errands. After eating, I also needed to clean the kitchen. Then, I had to wash bamboos to make incense. Besides, we also had to run back and forth to hide from air raids. Sometimes my waist was so sore that I could not stand up. In the winter, the wind howled, the door squeaked, my hands sank in the water, my tears fell.<sup>13</sup>

Every morning, I had to hold a basin of warm water for my mother-in-law, serving her to wash her face. If the water were too cold or too warm, she would complain. I also needed to bring dishes [of food] to the room of my parents-in-law. I had to wait until they finished. Then, it was my turn to eat.<sup>14</sup>

On top of all kinds of domestic labor, including cooking three meals for sixteen persons (together with the employees of the merchant family), washing, cleaning, and ancestor worship, Xiu-lian also had to engage in the productive work of manufacturing incense for the family business. Like Yang, she also suffered from her mother-in-law's constant nagging. The imposed load of both productive and reproductive labor, and the services and obedience that she had to perform, as dictated in Confucian texts, made her life as a daughter-in-law unbearable.

Instead of inferring that daughters-in-law were universally exploited in Han patriarchal families, I would like to stress the importance of contextualizing their experiences in terms of different family structures and stages of the family life cycle. Let us consider the following excerpt from my interview. Pan Hen-hong was born in 1914 and married in 1934 to a rural extended family with forty-two members. She described how housework was done in this family.

Hen-hong: The sisters-in-law [of her mother-in-law's generation] in the family never fought. We cooked in turn, one for each week. Those who did not cook had to clean the living room, the kitchen, or feed the pigs. We took turns.

Q: How was the work for you?

Hen-hong: When it was the turn of my mother-in-law, I helped her. She did most of the work and I only helped. It was OK. Only when there was [an] important festival, when our family held a feast, I remember that we washed dishes until 2 o'clock in the morning. . . [But, mostly,] I had plenty of time . . . if there was not much work to do at home I would go out to play. (Laughs.)

Q: Play?

Hen-hong: Yes. Yes. I did not mind people gossiping. (Laughs.) But, you know, it was not easy to be a bride in the past. You needed to be able to make clothes. Sometimes neighbours or relatives asked the bride to make clothes to test her. . . . You were expected to learn everything about domestic affairs before you got married. But I never did. My mother told me that I needed to know the principles so that I could make clothes when I needed to.<sup>15</sup>

I later learned that Hen-hong went back to her natal family once a week to stay overnight at the beginning of the marriage. Later on, she attended midwifery school in Taipei and lived in the dorm during that period. Was Hen-hong's case simply very unusual? Although I recognize that Hen-hong's mother-in-law was in general a very kind person,<sup>16</sup> it seems to me that the structural position Hen-hong occupied in the extended family was in fact more important than personal characteristics. From Pan's words, I do not know the exact family composition, but Figure 1 (see Appendix) depicts a partial reconstruction of the patriarchal genealogy of her family according to the limited information available and helps illustrate the principles behind the division of housework in Han families.

According to previous research on Chinese extended families, housework was divided along *fang* lines.<sup>17</sup> Because there were five *fang*, the whole burden of housework for the extended family was divided into five portions, performed by *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, and *f* in turn. As the mother-in-law of five daughters-in-law, *a* might be retired from housework but continue to act in a supervisory role. This means that the division of domestic labor in extended families was determined by patriarchal genealogy and that the daughters-in-law of the second generation were assigned primary domestic responsibility. Hen-hong only helped her mother-in-law with her one-fifth share. Therefore, even though Pan was the granddaughter-in-law in the youngest generation, she did not have to shoulder all the responsibility. Thus, she had relatively more free time to go out and to visit her natal family as long as she was the granddaughter-in-law. Although it was relevant that Hen-hong's mother-in-law was kind to her, I also think that the autonomy Hen-hong enjoyed at the beginning of her marriage owed a great

deal to the specific stage of the family life cycle.<sup>18</sup> After family division, Pan became the only daughter-in-law. Then, she had to serve her mother-in-law and did take on most of the domestic chores.

Because domestic labor in complex households was shared according to patriarchal genealogy, a daughter-in-law's domestic responsibility changed with the family life cycle. When a stem family turned into an extended family, that is, when more sons got married and the number of daughters-in-law increased, the domestic labor would be shared equally among all of them. This meant that a daughter-in-law could expect the heaviest workload if she was the *only* daughter-in-law in complex households, which could happen in two sets of circumstances: first, if she married into a stem family with only one son; second, when she married a potentially extended family with more than one son but was the eldest or *the only* daughter-in-law for a period of time.

In other words, from all possible family structures, a daughter-in-law suffered the most in a stem family. She had no sisters-in-law to share the domestic labor and had to work under the direct supervision of her mother-in-law. In a stem family, without sisters-in-law, a daughter-in-law became extremely isolated. When the family turned from a stem family to an extended family, however, the tension between mother-in-law and daughters-in-law was more likely to be replaced by disputes between sisters-in-law. Sisters-in-law could compete for resources, become enemies, and turn out to be the most aggressive relations in the extended family. For example, Cohen's research on Chinese family divisions demonstrated that sisters-in-law were very likely to compete with each other over family resources. Disputes among sisters-in-law were also found in my data, but they were not confined to economical questions. Xiu-lian's tensions with her mother-in-law were gradually diffused when three more daughters-in-law married into the family. The division of domestic labor changed.

In a group discussion, Hen-hong asked me,

In the past, do you know what was the most difficult relation in the family? Dan-sai [sisters-in-law]. I think that's the most difficult relation. . . . After I saw many other families [as a midwife], I felt that Dan-sai-a was the most difficult relation to deal with.<sup>19</sup>

Her words stimulated all participants' memories of what they saw in the extended family, mainly as unwed daughters.

I remembered . . . my mother was hanging clothes to dry. Then, my uncle's wife came in. She just pushed it away to dry theirs no matter whether ours had dried or not.<sup>20</sup>

Some mothers-in-law loved this daughter-in-law more than that one. In my family, the eldest brother's wife was really a nice person, but her mother-in-law did not like her. On the contrary, the third brother's wife was really spoilt and very often shouted at her husband. But her mother-in-law liked her very much.<sup>21</sup>

My argument here links household composition to structural conflicts among women. In a stem family, the daughter-in-law might meet the most demanding expectations of her to work for the whole household, and her relationship with her mother-in-law could be the most strenuous. In contrast, in an extended family, the most commonly heard problems of "thousand-year-old in-law conflicts" could be diverted to

become conflicts among sisters-in-law. Except for the distinction in family structures, would class or the presence of maids alleviate the workload of the daughter-in-law and enhance her status in the family?

### Upper-Class Daughters-in-Law

Yu Xiu-hia was trained at medical school in Japan. She was a qualified doctor when she got married, as was her husband. After marriage, however, she was not able to continue working even though the family had maids. The life of a daughter-in-law in an upper-class family was just as humiliating and painful as in the averagely wealthy family with no maids. Yu expressed her strong resentment toward the stem family in the interview:

They were rich. He [her husband] lent out money for profit but he wouldn't give me money. They all looked down on me. He laughed at me, "We are both doctors. If you don't have money, why don't you go out and work?" But I couldn't. He never gave it a thought that I was doing all the housework, giving birth, bringing up children as well as serving the patients at his clinic. . . . To live with mother-in-law [and] father-in-law was even worse. . . . They were old-fashioned. Once I was asked, "What aspect of Taiwan life should be improved, judging from your experiences of studying in Japan?" I said, "The cooking. We should not require so many dishes for each meal. Women could use the time to read books." My mother-in-law [and] father-in-law both jeered at me as a "lazy woman." . . . When I was fetching logs for cooking, my mother-in-law also laughed at me, "You don't find your husband too heavy to raise but find it difficult to lift logs?"<sup>22</sup>

Thus, no matter how high a status she had achieved through education or work, Yu's husband's family perceived her primarily as the daughter-in-law, an idea generated within the structures of patriarchal genealogy. She had to bear children to contribute to the patrilineage of her husband's family, shoulder domestic responsibility in her husband's household, and assist in her husband's productive work. Her skills and education were not appreciated at all. All of her work was unpaid, determined by a marriage contract. Her wish to reduce the unnecessary workload to read books earned her the label of a "lazy" woman who only thought of escaping from *her* responsibilities as a daughter-in-law.<sup>23</sup>

Similar paradoxical status is also found in other wealthy families. Du Pan Fan-ge very often went out to do charitable work, as expected of an upper-class woman under the Japanese colonialism. At home, she ran the extended household and supervised servants. She herself, however, was subjected to both the commands of her mother-in-law and the violence of her husband. There is no doubt that the status of daughter-in-law was higher than that of the handmaids and paid servants, but it did not change the fact that daughters-in-law were situated at the bottom of the gender and generational hierarchy of patriarchal kinship and were often subjected to abuse. Some might be fortunate enough to have kind mothers-in-law, as Pan did in a moderately wealthy family, and have comparably better lives. This did not, however, involve any challenge to the patriarchal kinship rules that granted both the mother-in-law and the husband power over the daughter-in-law.



### **Private Money and the Power of the Daughter-in-Law**

Perhaps a more effective way to assess the power (or powerlessness) of daughters-in-law in complex households is to look at access to private money. As mentioned earlier, in urban wealthy complex households, the family shared a common coffer and the patriarch had direct control over money. According to my data, however, it also seems that in averagely wealthy or nonmerchant families, the wife of the patriarch (i.e., the mother-in-law) was very likely to have full control over the common coffer. This arrangement often (but not always) caused conflict between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law about money. Daughters-in-law were allowed to have private money, accumulated from their wedding. The private money of a daughter-in-law might not directly alleviate the stress of living in her husband's family, but it could grant her certain autonomy.

We can return to Yu, the qualified doctor, to discuss this further. Despite her education, Yu was penniless after her marriage, and her husband even scornfully jeered at her penniless situation. This was probably a partial cause of her powerlessness. According to the way in which family economy was arranged in Chinese complex households, the daughter-in-law had no direct access to money unless she was the financial manager. Her only resource was the private money from her dowry. Yu, however, did not have any such private money because her mother, as an elite educated woman, optimistically believed that her qualification as a doctor was her invaluable dowry. When such idealism met patriarchal reality, it rendered Yu powerless in her husband's family.

In folk discourses, connections were often made between the size of the dowry and the treatment that a daughter-in-law received from her mother-in-law. For example, Xiu-lian attributed her tough life to the limited dowry that she brought with her: "It must be because my dowry was so little."<sup>24</sup> Given my discussion of domestic labor, I doubt whether the amount of dowry could really alleviate the woman's workload as *the* only daughter-in-law in the stem family. In other cases, however, my data supported the argument of M. Wolf that private money could affect daughters-in-law's ability to negotiate within the complex household.<sup>25</sup>

Women who owned private money were able to make their own decisions, even if they were subjected to mothers-in-law's supervision and opinions. For example, the mother-in-law of Yu-zhu valued boys much more than girls. She treated her grandchildren partially, giving all the good food and clothes to her grandsons while the granddaughters had leftovers. Lin Yu-zhu saw the suffering of her daughters. She earned money by weaving straw hats, which was the most prominent handcraft at that time, to accumulate private money to improve her daughters' living conditions. Moreover, she ignored her mother-in-law's objections and paid for her daughters' education.<sup>26</sup> Private money also provided the economic source for resistance on a larger scale: the young bride could use her money to return to her natal family without her mother-in-law's consent. These cases are illustrated later in this article.

### **Working Daughters-in-Law**

This analysis demonstrates that the lives of daughters-in-law were often dominated by heavy domestic workloads, domineering supervision from mothers-in-law, a lack



of economic independence, and secondary status, which enforced obedience and subordination. Constraint by all these “family” factors—a term often used by contemporary researchers to generalize these different issues—meant that it was rare for women in complex households to take up paid employment after marriage. During colonial times, economic factors could lead women in conjugal families to engage in work outside the home, but this did not seem to be the case in complex households. Perhaps, given the way complex families were organized, it was usually the men, rather than women, who would be sent out to seek work. None of the daughters-in-law mentioned above was formally employed after marriage. Few informants spoke about the reasons why they did not work after marriage. Some women quit their jobs at the request of their mother-in-law or the patriarch. Others did not seem to provide satisfactory answers to this question. Maybe the domestic responsibilities fell so heavily on daughters-in-law on marriage that they never had a chance to think of alternatives. Perhaps it would be more productive to ask, What made it possible for some daughters-in-law in complex households to take up full-time paid employment?

Permission or instruction from male authorities (the patriarch or husband) might allow women to work, but more often they mentioned “kind” others such as mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law who made it possible. Pan Hen-hong was a self-employed midwife. In a stem family without sisters-in-law,<sup>27</sup> her “kind” mother-in-law was willing to help her when she went out to deliver babies. Nevertheless, she was still required to take over all housework immediately after she returned home. In a rare case of a teacher who married into a complex household and continued to work, it was her sisters-in-law who generously took over her domestic responsibility.<sup>28</sup> In return, she “donated” part of her salary to them to show her gratitude. This was probably an early case of “buying” domestic services from kin, which was a common pattern after industrialization.

Qiu was the only woman in my sample who lived in a complex household and carried on working full-time as a teacher after marriage. She had a kind mother-in-law (widowed) and a supportive husband (the only son). Even though it was a complex household, the family composition was rather simple. The household was wealthy enough to have handmaids responsible for domestic labor prior to her marriage. Moreover, she also had fairly substantial private money, which would have empowered her. Qiu, however, eventually gave up her job after four years of marriage because she felt it was her duty to take care of her aging mother-in-law. It seems that even for a resourceful daughter-in-law, she might find it difficult to put aside the domestic expectations of the patriarchal family.

The colonial state has encouraged upper-class women in complex households to perform voluntary work but not necessarily to enter full-time employment. It seems that principles of patriarchal genealogy, which positioned daughters-in-law at the bottom of the generational and gender hierarchies, was the most influential discourse in preventing women in complex households from working full-time. In conjugal families in which women were only subjugated to gender hierarchy, both lower-middle-class working women and averagely wealthy housewives did take decisions to employ maids to enable them to go out to work. Women in moderately wealthy and wealthy complex households, however, were not allowed to do so. These women could not make their own decisions. If they wanted to work, it was the mother- or sisters-in-law who would carry out “their” housework. The former situation violated generational hierarchy. The latter violated the principle of fairness in division of labor among

sisters-in-law.<sup>29</sup> These women needed consensus from several other family members to realize their wish to work. Moreover, employing maids would have involved the family budget, which was not in their control. Given the low status of daughters-in-law, it is hard to imagine them successfully resisting other family members' expectations. It might be hard for a wife in a conjugal family to work if her husband opposed it, but it would be a hundred times harder for a daughter-in-law in a complex household to work after marriage.

Without kind support from other family members, a young wife could only hope to climb up the generation hierarchy and become powerful at the later stage of her life. When she started to take charge, she would be able to make her own decision to work and employ maids. This was how Lao Jin-hia eventually went out to work as a public health midwife and then opened her own pharmacy after eleven years of marriage.

Before marriage, Lao worked as a nurse for five years and as a secretary for a year in the Governor-General Hall. She married in 1948 and became the eldest daughter-in-law in a stem family, living with her parents-in-law, her husband (a civil servant), and his five unwed siblings. She also experienced very tough times as the eldest daughter-in-law.<sup>30</sup> Throughout time, however, her husband's five siblings grew up and got married. The family became an extended one. Her workload gradually lifted because her sisters-in-law started to share it. By the time she was asked to work as a public health midwife in the local council in 1959, Lao had become the respectable eldest daughter-in-law and a complete family insider. With her mother-in-law's approval, she took up the job offer. Three years later, her father-in-law died. The family divided and the mother-in-law was to live with her eldest son, Lao's husband. Thus, Lao, her mother-in-law, her husband, and their three children formed a stem family. Lao started to take charge. She rented a house from her mother in her mother's hometown and opened her own pharmacy there. Then, she *moved* the whole household there, including her mother-in-law, and asked her husband to transfer his post to her mother's town. At first, she attempted to combine her pharmacy business with housework but found it impossible. Later, she started to employ maids to help her with cooking and cleaning.

This story illustrates very well a woman's life cycle in a patriarchal family. As a daughter, she had no domestic responsibility and enjoyed relative freedom to work outside the home. As a daughter-in-law, she had to carry out domestic work. As she grew older, she gained bargaining power. Years of performing as a filial daughter-in-law increased her abilities to negotiate with her mother-in-law about the new job opportunity. After family division, the mother-in-law became old and relied on Lao for support. Then, Lao exercised culturally legitimized power to make decisions that benefited her and her uterine family. She started her business, moved the whole family to her mother's hometown, and employed maids.

To conclude this section, although they occupied the same position in the patriarchal kinship structure, daughters-in-law were subject to different degrees of domination. The personality of the mother-in-law and husband might have some influence, but to a great extent, the experiences of daughters-in-law were structurally determined. The amount of domestic work they had to carry out depended a great deal on the size, structure, and life cycles of the household. Situated at the bottom of the generational and gender hierarchies of the complex family, it was private money, rather than the economic standing of the family or the presence of maids, that empowered daughters-in-law. Daughters-in-law hardly had the opportunity to work outside the home without gaining the support of other family members or before moving up to the

next stage of her life cycle. It must be acknowledged, however, that most of these modern women did not wait for this change throughout time. They engaged in active strategies to improve their lives, and it is to these that I now turn.

### RESISTANCE OF DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

In my research, daughters-in-law did not just passively endure their treatment in the patriarchal family. After entering a new servitude through marriage, many daughters-in-law appeared shocked by their treatment and questioned the meaning of marriage or the role of a daughter-in-law.

Was this what the daughter-in-law was all about? I came to the Shi family to work as if I were a cow or a horse.<sup>31</sup>

Marriage turns a woman's life and career upside down. It is upsetting not to read books. Everyday, I am exhausted by housework. There is no space to think about the meaning of life. . . . I really wonder what is the point of marriage. Am I the slave bought by his family for the purpose of work?<sup>32</sup>

These feelings often led to some forms of resistance, which was often neglected by previous researchers. In the following section, by contrasting two examples of resistance, I investigate what might contribute to the success of resistance and explore the relationship between resistance and the working of patriarchal kinship principles.

#### Shi Chen Xiu-lian

Xiu-lian grew up in a complex family with grandparents who had a vegetarian hall in rural Nan-to and a father who owned a photo studio on the high street of Nan-to town. She received primary school education, never worked outside the home, and had an arranged marriage. After marriage, she suffered.

My mother-in-law had just become a mother-in-law. She liked nagging. She complained that I worked slowly, that I was unfocused and that the rice I cooked was difficult to swallow. . . . She went on and on and my heart sank. When I felt that I could not bear any more, I escaped to see my mother. . . . [On the bus,] I wondered how come I was so ill-fated. I resented my mother for arranging a marriage so far away from home and I had to do all the hard labour.<sup>33</sup>

On seeing her mother, Xiu-lian cried. Her mother embraced her and said, "How come you come back? It's not because your husband abused you. It's only because your mother-in-law nagged you. Be a daughter-in-law. You should learn to endure."<sup>34</sup>

The next day, Xiu-lian's husband traveled from his family to pick Xiu-lian up. He said to her, "I treat you well. It's only the elderly people nagging you. Please endure these years."<sup>35</sup> She went home with him. Xiu-lian ran home like this on several occasions until she found herself pregnant, yet she vowed to leave her husband's family when the child grew older. During this time, Xiu-lian adjusted herself to life in her husband's family and became friends with her unwed sister-in-law. Moreover, her son also legitimized her status in her husband's family. Eventually, when there were more sisters-in-law married in, she became the eldest daughter-in-law and did not run back to her natal family anymore.<sup>36</sup>

### Yang Qien-he

Yang met her husband, Jia-xiong, through “romantic courtship” and expected a happy marriage in the modern sense. Before marriage, she had worked as a journalist but quit to protest against racial discrimination at work. After that, she did not work. After marriage, she entered servitude as the daughter-in-law. Her first thought was to escape home before her husband had sex with her. This plan was not realized, however, and Yang forced herself to adjust. Isolated in his family, her husband became the only person who could provide her with mental support and keep her living up to the difficult role of a daughter-in-law in the stem family. Nevertheless, this support was fragile and tentative. One day, after three months of the marriage, Yang was severely scolded by her mother-in-law. Without knowing exactly what the argument was about, Jia-xiong slapped Yang’s face. Never having been beaten by anyone, Yang felt humiliated, shocked, deeply hurt, and disappointed. She left home the next day morning with clogs on. She attempted to commit suicide but lacked the courage. Then, she returned to her natal family.<sup>37</sup>

Qien-he did not say a word until the next day, when questioned by her brother. Then, she burst into tears and told him what happened. Her conservative father was concerned about a married daughter staying in the natal family, which was regarded as shameful. Nevertheless, her brother, who had received a modern education, objected: “She should stay. If she goes home like this, she might commit suicide.” Qien-he stayed.<sup>38</sup>

Yang stayed with her natal family for a month. She hated her husband’s indecisive way of handling this difficult situation between his wife and mother. She could not forgive him for humiliating her and giving her a hard time. After three days, pushed by Yang’s brother, her husband eventually showed up and visited her occasionally during that month. Later, they made up with sex and wanted to have a baby. Even then, he hesitated to mention their reconciliation to his mother. If he could have done so, he would probably have continued living like this without making any effort to improve the icy relationship between his mother and wife. It was Yang’s father, who could not bear the anxiety of a married daughter staying at home, who finally pushed Jia-xiong to find a solution.<sup>39</sup>

Jia-xiong eventually plucked up the courage to talk to his father, an educated schoolteacher. He said that for the sake of his career, he wanted to move out of the family. His father agreed. Then, Yang returned home with him. On the day they were moving out, Yang’s mother-in-law became insane. She hit and abused her son, grabbing Yang’s dowries to stop them from moving out. The young couple only moved out successfully after his father stopped her protests. After this event, Yang lived happily in a conjugal family with her husband. She avoided returning to his family as much as possible and only did so when it was inevitable. But serious conflicts never happened again.<sup>40</sup>

By looking into the timing, strategies, and outcomes of resistance, the following section evaluates what made resistance successful and what made it fail.

These two cases suggest that resistance usually took place at the beginning of the marriage. Why? I consider a woman’s life cycle in the Han family as the key factor that determined the timing of resistance. Because a woman experienced the toughest time as a newlywed daughter-in-law,<sup>41</sup> she had the strongest incentive to resist when she

was first married with no children and was often desperate enough to resist without thinking about the consequences.

One of the possible strategies was suicide, as Yang attempted. M. Wolf suggested that the high incidence of suicide by women aged between nineteen and twenty-nine in early twentieth-century Taiwan was a type of revenge by young daughters-in-law against their husband's family because "suicide was a socially acceptable solution to a variety of problems that offer no other solution."<sup>42</sup> In other words, suicides should be considered as a form of resistance, when young women felt they had no alternatives. If they succeeded, they could turn into ghosts and empower themselves through the supernatural.<sup>43</sup> That is to say, suicide was a strategy for resistance, but one most likely adopted by daughters-in-law with no resources or supports in the secular world, which was less likely to be the case for my informants.

Neither Xiu-lian nor Qien-he committed suicide but, rather, sought help from their natal family. Recourse to the natal family appeared to be the most common strategy for daughters-in-law in major marriages. This can be observed across social strata and can be interpreted as an instinctive response of daughters-in-law against patriarchal exploitation of them. Nevertheless, recourse to the natal family needed material resources to realize it: enough private money for transportation home. In a rural context, where exogamy was the norm and daughters-in-law held little economic resources, it might be difficult to use this measure.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, most of these urban, educated daughters-in-law in my research appeared to have the ability to recourse to their natal family, probably because their wealth and the private money enabled them to do so.

Nevertheless, the same resistance strategy could meet very different results. Xiu-lian's natal family responded with "traditional" discourses and allowed no alternative advice other than the request to accept the order of the patriarchal family: to obey, to comply, and to endure as a daughter-in-law. Her husband's secret support, under patriarchal norms, was a bonus in an arranged marriage. In contrast, neither Qien-he's brother, who had received a modern education, nor later her father, despite his conservative instincts, expected her simply to conform to patriarchal norms. They backed her and negotiated on her behalf to find a better solution. Moreover, Qien-he herself did not think that she should subordinate herself to the existing patriarchal order in her husband's family, a position that I believe was closely related to the romantic courtship and modern education that she had experienced, which may both have given her very different expectations of marriage. These modern values, expressed separately by Qien-he's brother, father, and father-in-law, contributed to support Qien-he's resistance, push her indecisive husband to find a final solution, and provide an alternative resolution of the problems faced by almost all newlywed daughters-in-law.

Where would resistance lead? It seems that possible positive outcomes were very limited. Negative outcomes included death but most likely, as for Xiu-lian, required submission to the patriarchal order, returning to their husband's family, having children, and waiting to become mothers-in-law, which Kandiyoti called "passive resistance."<sup>45</sup> My analysis so far leads me to believe that passive resistance resulted from a lack of resources. Positive outcomes were to leave their husband's family, alone or with their husband. The high frequency of "successful" resistance among my informants—that is, divorce or living as a conjugal family with her husband—might reflect their class privilege, which might be interwoven with patriarchal kinship relations, and the effects of romantic courtship, which might be results of modernization processes.

A lot of married women tended to seek divorce by recourse to their natal family. It was often heard that several daughters of the same upper-class families were divorced.<sup>46</sup> Even in the 1940s, Madam Wang, daughter of a wealthy merchant family, only lived in her husband's family for four months and then returned her natal family for good.<sup>47</sup> Yu, daughter of an upper-class and qualified doctor before marriage, divorced late in 1952, seven years after her marriage, when her husband took a prostitute as a concubine. It seems not so unusual for upper-class daughters-in-law to leave the tough life in their husband's family through either divorce or separation without a formal legal process. Although those instances of divorce among upper-class families were not uncommon, they did not appear to be valued positively, either. Some of my younger informants talked about divorces of earlier generation in negative tones. "They themselves needed other people's service, how were they feeling to serve their parents-in-law or husband?" Still, I experienced surprise when I first heard about these divorces, thanks to the contemporary myth of women's lifelong suffering in the past. Divorce! How was this possible?

Statistics from historical records show that divorce was in fact very common in early twentieth-century Taiwan. It was estimated that the divorce rate was somewhere between 14.4 and 22.3 percent in 1906 and between 7.7 and 9.4 percent in 1925.<sup>48</sup> These estimates only included marriages that dissolved within five years, which were only about 60-70 percent of all the marriages that eventually ended in divorce.<sup>49</sup> Ethnographers attributed the high divorce rate to the prevalence of minor marriages.<sup>50</sup> This interpretation could not account for the divorce cases in my data, all of them major marriages. What was the explanation? Most probably, it related to the historical contexts in which marriage was mostly arranged between families of equal social status by the patriarch or the wife of the patriarch. Given the powerful family background, the husband's family was under pressure to treat the daughter-in-law well. If they abused her to an unreasonable extent, it might cause a long-standing feud. Even though cases of abuse did occur and some educated daughters suffered and died young, in many other cases divorce seemed to provide a solution to these wealthy daughters' unhappiness in her husband's family.

Throughout time, an increasing number of women left their husband's family together with their husband in the 1940s. This was perhaps the most successful form of resistance for the daughter-in-law but the greatest nightmare of the mother-in-law and so remained difficult. To illustrate the point, I return to the structural conflict between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law in classic patriarchy that is best illustrated by Kandiyoti:

In classic patriarchy, subordination to men is offset by the control that elder women attain over younger women. However, women have access to the only type of labour power they can control, and to old-age security, through their married sons. Since sons are a woman's most critical resource, ensuring their life-long loyalty is an enduring preoccupation. Older women have a vested interest in the suppression of romantic love between youngsters to keep the conjugal bond secondary and to claim sons' primary allegiance. Younger women have an interest in circumventing and possibly evading their mother-in-law's control.<sup>51</sup>

Situating in the extended patrilocal family, it could be understood that the mother-in-law would strive to ensure security for her old age through bonds with her son. This



mechanism led to the formation of the “uterine family”, in which a mother stakes her sense of security and belonging through reproducing and controlling sons.<sup>52</sup> For the continuance of the uterine family, attraction between genders must be subordinated to the generational hierarchy of the complex household. When sexual attraction seemed more powerful than mother-son ties, the mother-in-law’s uterine family was threatened. The mother-in-law would often attempt to supervise any sign of intimacy between the young couple. Most informants who lived in complex households experienced such a form of control. For example, the husband of Yu-Zhu was separated from his wife and forced to sleep next to his mother.<sup>53</sup> Xiu-lian’s husband could only comfort her privately in their room but could not even talk to her in public. Yang’s mother-in-law also kept an eye on their sexual life. Since the first night of their marriage, the mother-in-law, pretending to cover the quilt of her other sons next door, watched them. Although the couple dated before marriage, after marriage, Yang’s husband behaved differently. He did not show any sign of intimacy. After coming home from work, he talked with his parents downstairs and only came back to their room upstairs for sleep. They hardly had any sex—perhaps because the watchful eyes of his mother intimidated him.<sup>54</sup>

With this framework in mind, we can reinterpret the two examples of resistance as follows: Xiu-lian was satisfied with her husband’s secret support and was never able to disrupt the generational hierarchy of the complex household. In contrast, Yang capitalized on her husband’s affection and on support from her natal family to subvert the generational hierarchy. She eventually moved out and formed her own uterine family. The insane behavior of her mother-in-law on their departure can be understood as her final bid to protect her uterine family that guaranteed her future security. The contestations between generational hierarchy and sex attractions crisscrossed the son. The son, caught between loyalty to his mother and attraction to his wife, was often left in limbo in such contests. In other words, to successfully resist generational hierarchy, the conjugal ties between the young couple must overwhelm the patrilineal ties. Modernization processes during Japanese colonialism might have contributed to challenge the patrilineal ties. On one hand, the young couple was more likely to marry through romantic courtship and appeared to have stronger conjugal ties than couples from previous generations. On the other hand, employment outside the family also gave the young couple excuses to escape from the control of patriarchal families. Shi-xia, one of the few women who married after a romantic courtship in the early 1920s,<sup>55</sup> was abused by her stepmother-in-law. Her husband eventually decided to take her away from the extended family by giving up his chance of inheritance from the wealthy landlord family. Several of my informants who married in the 1940s, including Qien-he, resisted successfully by using employment as an excuse to leave their husband’s patriarchal household. Although the strong conjugal tie between the husband and the wife was essential, most crucially, successful resistance needed the son’s final decision to rebel against his family.

In this section, using life stories, I argued that daughters-in-law were very likely to try to resist, especially at the beginning of the marriage. Committing suicide and haunting their oppressors from beyond the grave was one form of resistance. Nevertheless, upper-class and educated women in colonial Taiwan mostly attempted to rebel with the help of their powerful natal family, support from the husband, and excuses of outside employment. If their resistance failed, they were left to live in complex households, bear children, and become mothers-in-law in due course (or die young).



This argument counters the suggestions put forward by Kandiyoti, who suggested that *women* resisted social change and colluded with patriarchy because they expected to benefit from patriarchy in the old age. The most likely way for daughters-in-law to resist was to wait to become mothers-in-law in their turn.<sup>56</sup> Kandiyoti rightly pointed out the divided interests between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law. Nevertheless, she failed to incorporate this difference into her argument. My reading of these life stories suggests the visible resistance of daughters-in-law, especially in the early stages of their marriage, and their attempts to find support and to leave their husband's family against the wishes of mothers-in-law. Because these modern women might be more resourceful than their rural counterparts in terms of the resources of their natal family, influences of modern discourses, and employment of their husband, it thus leads to the conclusion that it was the failed attempts of daughters-in-law to resist rather than a lack of resistance in the first place that led to what Kandiyoti called "patriarchal bargains."

### CONCLUSION

This article interprets experiences of daughters-in-law in colonial Taiwan by combining an institutional perspective of the Chinese family, feminist critiques to patriarchal families, as well as identity formations of daughters-in-law. I have demonstrated that although daughters-in-law were often situated at the bottom of the generational and gender hierarchies, they were subject to different degrees of domination according to the life cycle of patriarchal families, the private funds they had access to, and their own life cycle. Wealth of the individual family did not guarantee the treatment of the daughter-in-law, but owning private money and maintaining strong conjugal ties with the husband seemed to empower them. Daughters-in-law were not always passive recipients of patriarchal exploitation. Most of them did resist, especially at the beginning of the marriage through attempts to divorce, recourse to their natal family, or forming their own conjugal family. Whether their resistance can be successful, however, depended on the resources of their natal family, conjugal ties with the husband strengthened through romantic courtship before marriage, and the development of employment opportunities outside the patriarchal family. This research situates narratives of modern daughters-in-law within the patriarchal familial institution and delineates changes that took place during the colonial period. It advances our understanding of the working of patriarchal kinship structures and their intersection with class and modern development in colonial Taiwan.

### APPENDIX

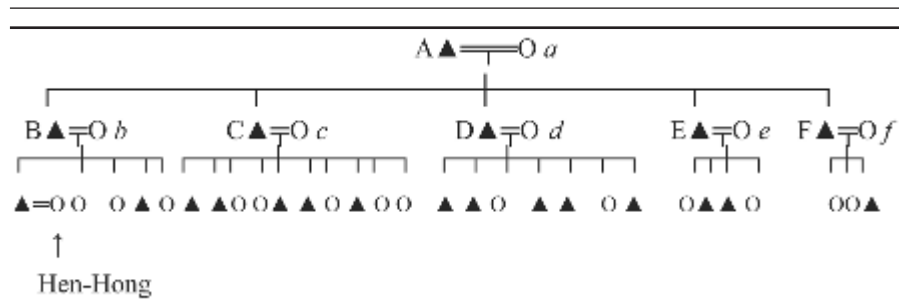


Figure A1. Reconstructed Patriarchal Genealogy of the Ye Family in the 1930s

## NOTES

1. For the lives of rural daughters-in-law, see M. Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1972), chs. 9-10. For statistics and experiences of little adopted daughters-in-law, see A. Wolf and Shieh-shan Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980). Besides, D. Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (September 1988), gives no empirical data but performs sober analysis on the structural conflicts between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law.

2. Xue-hong Xie, *The Autobiography of Half of My Life* (1971; reprint, Taipei, Taiwan: Yang Tsue-hua, 1997), 37.

3. Most of these sources were published in the 1990s when the general public had vested interests in uncovering elder women's lived experiences in the past. I also conducted twelve life story interviews in person to gain insights into these women's lived experiences.

4. The reason is explored in this article.

5. Myron Cohen, *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 60.

6. Cohen, *House United, House Divided*, 60.

7. Rita Gallin, "Dowry and Family in Changing Rural Taiwan," *Journal of Women and Gender Studies* 2 (Taipei: Women's Research Program, Population Studies Centre, NTU, 1987): 75.

8. Cohen and Wolf (M. Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China," in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. M. Wolf et al. [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975]) disputed whether private money belonged to the *fang* (a genealogical unit) but was entrusted to the wife, or whether the wife had autonomy to make use of the money for her and her children. Cohen regarded private money as *fang* money. In a joint family, women could hold private money for the *fang*. After family division, a husband had the right to control the money. It was the role assigned to the men and women in the joint household that made women appear to have autonomy over their private money. As for Wolf, she considered private money as funds for women's "uterine family." If the husband died and the woman remarried, she left her children but took the money with her. If the wife died, the husband took it as a trust for their children. To advance the debate, Watson suggested distinguishing between the jewelry, clothes, and furniture given to a woman and the land, shops, and businesses she received because Watson suspected that the form and/or source of a woman's property determined the control she could exercise over it; see Rubin Watson, "Wives, Concubines, and Maids: Servitude and Kinship in the Hong Kong Region, 1900-1940," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, ed. Ruben Watson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 357.

9. Chi-nan Chen, "Fang and Chia-tsu: The Chinese Kinship System in Rural Taiwan" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1984), 131.

10. Qien-he Yang, *The Triangular Prism of the Life: The Autobiography of an Extraordinary Taiwan Female Writer* (Taipei, Taiwan: Frontier, 1995).

11. Yang, *The Triangular Prism of the Life*, 222.

12. *Qianjin Xiaojia* is a courteous expression referring to someone's daughter. It also means a daughter who is well protected, incapable of doing any kinds of heavy work (or housework).

13. Dian-wan Zhang, *Lu-gang Grandmother and Shi Zhen-rong* (Taipei, Taiwan: ZhangLaoShi WenHua, 1995), 97.

14. Zhang, *Lu-gang Grandmother and Shi Zhen-rong*, 103.

15. Pan Hen-hong, interview, May 8, 1999.

16. Her mother-in-law later agreed to take care of her children when Hen-hong went out to work as a midwife. Hen-hong, however, still dutifully performed all her tasks after she returned home.

17. *Fang*, as a native concept, is understood in relative terms. According to C. N. Chen, a son composes a *fang* in relation to his father. A man stands as the head of a *chia-tsu* in relation to his

sons. *Chia-tsu* is the encompassing genealogy that subordinates *fang*. See Chen, "Fang and Chia-tsu," 66. Cohen also found that *fang* might be used in reference to "agnatic subdivisions of varying size and genealogical depth within the lineage" (Cohen, *House United, House Divided*, 57). Very often, anthropologists used *fang* (or *hu* in Mandarin, *ho* in Hakka) to refer to the conjugal unit consisting of husband, wife, and children in joint or stem families; see Hu (1948), 18, and Fried (1953), 31, cited in Cohen, *House United, House Divided*, 57. C. N. Chen, however, criticized this usage and contended that even if *fang* and the conjugal unit might overlap, they were not the same. *Fang* differed from the conjugal unit in three aspects: first, *fang* excluded unmarried daughters; second, following patrilineal principles, only the men in the lineage and their wives were recognized; third, a son's *fang* was always subordinate to his father's *chia-tsu*; Chen, "Fang and Chia-tsu," 82. In other words, *fang* as the basic unit of the genealogy signified the father-son relation and excluded the daughter. A married woman was regarded as a member of her husband's *fang* and her father-in-law's *chia-tsu*. An unwed daughter was a member of her father's conjugal unit, but she could never create a *fang* in relation to her father's *chia-tsu*, even if she married uxorilocally. Neither could she inherit any property from her father's *chia-tsu*. Moreover, a daughter's ancestor tablet could not be placed in the main hall of her father's *chia-tsu*. She was not qualified to make sacrifices to her father, nor was she qualified to receive sacrifices from her father's line after her death; Chen, "Fang and Chia-tsu," 69. C. N. Chen further demonstrated how the concepts of *fang* and *chia-tsu* organized almost all aspects of family affairs, from lineage organization to property division and household management. I shall not repeat this information here. Although C. N. Chen did not use the term *patriarchal genealogy* but *chia-tsu*, it is clear that these genealogical principles followed patrilineal and patriarchal logics. Therefore, *chia-tsu* can be understood as patriarchal genealogy.

18. When Hen-hong first married, her mother-in-law, the wife of *B*, was not in a position to retire. She was still defined as a daughter-in-law to the Ye family, which took precedence over her role as a mother-in-law to Hen-hong. Probably, in this specific case, Pan's position as a granddaughter-in-law made her relations to domestic labor similar to that of a daughter. She was only a helper to the wife of *B*.

19. Interview with Pan Hen-hong and her friends, who had worked as midwives or nurses, May 8, 1999.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Interview with Yu Xiu-hia, May 5, 1999.

23. The association of laziness and domestic responsibility was constantly found in my informants' words across generations. When a woman did not perform the housework expected of her (as a daughter-in-law in complex households or as a wife in conjugal families), the term *lazy* usually followed. Either she self-claimed it without challenge or other family member labeled her as such.

24. Zhang, *Lu-gang Grandmother*, 91.

25. M. Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China," 135.

26. Ling-yi Wang, "The Fate of a Girl Child Is Like the Seed," in *A-mu's Stories*, ed. Wen-yu Jiang (Taipei, Taiwan: yuazun wenhua, 1998), 125.

27. At this time, Pan had experienced the second family division, and she lived with her parents-in-law, her husband, and their children in a stem family.

28. Chien-ming Yu, "Taiwanese Career Women under Japanese Colony" (Ph.D. diss., History Department, National Taiwan Normal University, 1995), 73.

29. This was probably the underlying reason why the working woman mentioned previously rewarded her sisters-in-law with money.

30. She had to do domestic labor for nine people in total under her mother-in-law's supervision. She not only suffered from her brother-in-law's ridicule but also found herself given insufficient funds to buy goods for the whole family.

31. Zhang, *Lu-gang Grandmother*, 97.

32. The 1943 diary of Yang, *The Triangular Prism of the Life*, 221-22.
33. Zhang, *Lu-gang Grandmother*, 97.
34. Ibid, 98.
35. Ibid, 98.
36. Ibid, 115-116.
37. Yang, *The Triangular Prism of the Life*, 214-29.
38. Ibid, 231.
39. Ibid, 232-34.
40. Ibid, 235-48.
41. M. Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*; Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy"; and Elisabeth Croll, *Changing Identities of Chinese Women: Rhetoric, Experience and Self-Perception in Twentieth-Century China* (London: Zed Books, 1995).
42. M. Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China," 135.
43. Ibid.
44. Here, we can understand why M. Wolf argued that gaining acceptance in a woman's community of the village was very important for newlywed daughters-in-law.
45. Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy."
46. Life stories in Wen-yu Jiang, *The Disappearing Taiwan Amah* (Taipei, Taiwan: yushan she, 1995), 29. All interviews were conducted by Qiu-mei Zeng.
47. Hui-wen Chen, *The Women's Map of Da-dau-cheng* (Taipei, Taiwan: boyang wenhua, 1999), 137.
48. George W. Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 221.
49. Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan*, 221.
50. A. Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China"; and A. Wolf and Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845-1945*.
51. Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," 279.
52. M. Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*.
53. Wang, *The Fate of a Girl Child Is Like the Seed*.
54. Yang, *The Triangular Prism of the Life*.
55. Shi-xia might have been one of these "pioneers" who experienced romantic courtship in early twentieth-century Taiwan. The term *romantic courtship* should, however, be understood in its historical context. Through schooling, these upper-class young men met their spouses via the introductions of their same-sex classmates to their cousins or through chance encounters on the way to school. In the former case, they usually went out in groups. Later, the young man would develop personal preferences and ask his parents to arrange the marriage for him. Because this was still an upper-class network, such marriage usually took place thanks to a combination of (male) free choice and (parental) arrangement, even if the choices were usually made on very simplistic grounds. This is what it meant to be married through romantic courtship in early twentieth-century Taiwan.
56. Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy."