Rural Migrants and Settlement Rights in Early Twentieth-Century Shanxi: A Study of "Class Background Registers"

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试论近代山西乡村外来户的"入住权"

——以《阶级成分登记表》为中心

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Abstract

Shanxi experienced a severe population shortage after the late Qing Dingwu famine. The frequent disasters and warfare of the Republican era further increased population movements in north China, and in addition to northeast China, Shanxi became a major destination for migrants. In this period over two million migrants settled in Shanxi. Those that settled in the countryside formed a unique social group of immigrant households. The kinship and territorial bonds of north Chinese villages are well known, and such villages are often considered to have been very insular and xenophobic communities. Migrant households found it difficult to join the village

community, and often had no choice but to live precarious lives on the outskirts of villages. Migrant households had to acquire “settlement rights” in the village in order to have any chance of survival and development. But settlement rights could not be achieved overnight; they were not only a matter of time, but also involved certain requirements and favorable circumstances. Through a close examination of “class background registers” compiled during the Four Cleanups movement (1963–1966), this article shows how migrant households in late Qing and Republican China used famine as an opportunity to gradually acquire settlement rights. On the one hand, migrants used wage labor, tenancy, and credit to form dependent relations through land with resident households. On the other hand, they used social relations, adoption, and uxorilocal marriage to form kinship relations with resident households. Compared to south China, where village settlement rights emphasized recognition of common ancestry, settlement rights in north China villages emphasized common lived experience. This difference is an important factor in explaining rural social formation and development in north China.

Keywords

migrant households, resident households, class background registers, settlement rights

摘要

清末的“丁戊奇荒”，使山西遭受了严重的人口损失，随后民国年间频繁的灾荒、战乱等因素，使山西成为关东之外的另一个移民目的地，超过 200 万的外来人口先后涌入山西，部分流入乡村，在乡村中形成了一个特殊的群体——外来户。我们知道，近代华北乡村具有家族血缘性、村庄地缘性的鲜明特征，闭塞性、排外性很强，外来户很难进入村中，只能寄居在村庄的边缘，生活难以保障。只有获得村庄的“入住权”，外来户才有生存与发

展的可能。但“入住权”的获得不是一蹴而就的，不仅要经历一个漫长的过程，还要具备相应的条件与机遇。通过解读形成于建国后四清运动时期的《阶级成分登记表》发现，在灾荒的契机下，外来户围绕土地，通过雇佣、租佃、借贷等与本地户形成依附关系，通过投亲靠友、过继、入赘与本地户结成亲缘关系，逐渐获得了村庄的“入住权”。华北乡村的“入住权”注重实践过程，与华南乡村“入住权”强调祖源认同相差甚远，是解释乡村社会形成与发展的重要因素。

关键词

外来户；本地户；阶级成分登记表；入住权

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Sources and Setting

Research on early twentieth-century rural social history is often vexed by a lack of source material, and data on regional population movements is especially difficult to come by. Fortunately, in the process of conducting fieldwork with Shanxi University’s Research Center for Chinese Social History (RCCSH) a few years ago, the lead author collected a number of “class background registers” originally compiled during the Four Cleanups movement in the 1960s. These forms, a type of social class record from China’s collective era, were produced in the context of ever-intensifying ideologies and policies of class struggle. Although similar types of records were recorded during the rent reduction campaign in the Communist base areas, Land Reform, and the Cultural Revolution, those from the Four Cleanups movement are the most common. The forms used in this article are from the Four Cleanups period, when specialized

work teams visited every single village and recorded the class status of every single household, in order to reorganize class ranks and launch a new wave of class struggle. These forms are extraordinarily detailed and comprehensive. They record for each household its economic and financial conditions, social relations, family histories, life experiences, and political attitudes for as many as four generations of family members. As such, they document household experiences from the late Qing up to the eve of the Cultural Revolution, and provide relatively long-term data spanning over fifty years of modern Chinese history. Although these forms were produced in a highly political environment and personal accounts are sometimes exaggerated, overall their comprehensive style and rigorous compilation make them an important local data source together with genealogies, village histories, and stele inscriptions. These forms are an invaluable source for observing rural social developments, and a handful of academic studies based on similar forms have already confirmed their scholarly worth.

Philip Huang has pointed out the historical value of class background registers in his article on rural class struggle in the Chinese revolution (Huang, 1995). Liu Ke was one of the earliest scholars to use these forms, in his series of studies on the economic development of rural households in the suburbs of Beijing (Liu Ke, 1990, 1992). Liu Kexiang also used similar forms in his study of rural hired labor after the first Sino-Japanese War (Liu Kexiang, 1992). Wang Yuesheng relied on class background registers from southern Hebei province in his investigation of changes in rural family structure between 1930 and 1990 (Wang, 2003). Wang Xianming used these forms to examine the social mobility of rich peasants in north China during the Chinese Civil War (1946–1949) (Wang, 2012). All these studies have made important contributions to research on China's early twentieth-century rural society and economy.

In recent years, scholars at Shanxi University, led by Xing Long and Hu Yingze, have

carried out relatively systematic collection, indexing, and research of class background registers from throughout Shanxi. They have used these forms to put forward new interpretations of rural population movements, changes in land rights, and the distribution of draft animals during Land Reform, and changes in cadre organization during the Four Cleanups, further expanding the scope of these rich data (Xing and Liu, 2007; Hu, 2014; Hu and Zhang, 2017; Hu and Guo, 2017; Xing, 2018; Noellert, 2018; Liang, 2018).

This article examines four villages in Yongji county, southern Shanxi: East and West Sanyuan, Yihetun, and Zhaoyi. There are several reasons for selecting this area. In terms of geography, Yongji is situated at the intersection of three provinces—Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan—an area with relatively active population movements and migrant household settlements. In terms of environment, Yongji is situated between mountains, plains, and a river. To the north is part of the Yuncheng basin, to the south is ridge upon ridge of the Zhongtiao Mountains, and to the west is the Yellow River. The villages discussed in this article all sit against the Zhongtiao Mountains, where migrant households were attracted by the abundant reserves of cultivatable highlands and relatively rich natural resources. In terms of sources, Yongji's class background registers are relatively complete and detailed, especially on migrant households. The forms include information on time of immigration, reason for migration, and socioeconomic conditions in both previous and current settlements, providing a rich contextual source and vivid case study for understanding migrant households and settlement rights.

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Migrant Households and Settlement Rights

Rural society is an important site for understanding early twentieth-century social developments in China, and through the relations between several groups of people we can understand

traditional rural society. Traditionally, rural China was a classic example of a status society. On the basis of an agrarian economy, society was divided into the four classes of scholar-officials, farmers, workers, and merchants. In terms of economics, as marked by the accumulation of wealth, the village community was divided into the various classes of landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, and hired laborers. In terms of social status, the village community was divided into different households, families, and lineages according to blood and surnames. In terms of culture, the civil service examination system created differences in culture and power, and divided the village into elites and commoners, literati and civilians. Without exception, these various relations all took shape within a stable community, characterized by both conflict and cooperation. When a group from outside this community attempted to enter it, these internal relations would develop into relations between insider and outsider. The village community might temporarily set aside conflicts of family, class, and power, and organize into a unified community based on common bonds of territoriality and kinship, in opposition to outsiders, to mutually protect the communal interests of the village. This would involve the formation of two distinct groups: resident households and "outsider," or migrant, households.

"Outsider" household, as the name implies, refers a person or family who has migrated from another place, in contrast to a "resident," "indigenous," or "old" household that has resided in the community for a relatively long time. In general, someone in the village who does not have direct kin or territorial relations with other villagers, who has resided in the village a relatively short time, who is not registered, and who does not participate in public village affairs is referred to as an "outsider." Such outsider, migrant households typically only had temporary settlement rights, were more mobile, and could return to their place of origin at any time. Migrant households could therefore include temporary migrant tenants and laborers, beggars, itinerant

merchants, sojourning artisans or entertainers, and others. They could also include sojourners seeking refuge with relatives or friends in the village, or who had lived in the village for a time but still were not accepted by the residents. In this article, however, "migrant households" mostly refers to groups of migrants fleeing from famine who came to settle in a new land.

In traditional rural China, migrant and resident households were clearly differentiated. As Fei Xiaotong pointed out, "it is meaningful to draw a distinction between village residents and migrant households, because this distinction already has extensive significance in social life" (Fei, 2001: 37). There are obvious differences in surname, hometown, language, customs, lifestyles, occupation, etc., and less obvious differences, such as the right to use village public goods like wells, canals, millstones, and vacant land, or the right to participate in public activities like praying for rain, sacrifices, and assemblies. In south China, villages with relatively developed lineage organizations used genealogies and ancestral halls to distinguish between residents and outsiders. In north China, lineage organizations were weaker, but most villages comprised a community founded on territorial and kinship relations, and these relations were used as the basis for distinguishing between residents and outsiders. However, no matter what they were based on, breaking through these differences required gaining the resident villagers' acceptance, that is, settlement rights.

The concept of settlement rights was first introduced by David Faure, who coined the term to explain lineage formation and social developments in south China and revise Maurice Freedman's theory of Chinese lineages. Freedman's structural-functionalist approach emphasized the effects of frontier society, irrigation and rice agriculture, migration, and opening up wasteland on the development of lineage organizations in southeast China, but he did not mention the effects of settlement rights on lineage formation. In his study of the rural history of

Hong Kong's New Territories and the Pearl River Delta, Faure discovered that settlement rights, land rights, lineage alliances, and local deity worship played key roles in lineage organizations, and also helped explain the popularity of migration stories among them. Only by acquiring settlement rights could migrant households legally own land, become tax-paying citizens and legally recognized village residents (Faure uses the term, "incumbents"), and enjoy the rights and privileges accorded by the state (see Faure, 1986, 1989). In particular, settlement rights are "the right to use public goods in a given frontier area, including: the right to cultivate land that has never belonged to anyone else, the right to build a house on wasteland, the right to collect firewood on a mountain, the right to catch fish and invertebrates in rivers or seas, the right to enter markets, and the right to be buried near the village. Not everyone living in the same village could have these rights. Villagers are very clear about who has them, and who does not have them" (Faure, 2007: 5). As a result, settlement rights are not simply the right to live in a village, but emphasize the right to play a role in village society. In other words, they are the right to use the public goods of the village, the right to participate in village activities, and the right to purchase village products.

Chinese traditional rural society was characterized by relations of kinship and territoriality, insularity and exclusivity. As a result, in order for migrant households to acquire settlement rights and become village residents, they not only had to go through a lengthy process, but also possess the necessary means. Legally speaking, as long as a person lived in a given place for over three years, he or she could become a member of that community (Household Registration Law, 1934 [1931]). But the village itself did not necessarily recognize this time limit. In respect to migrant households, the village developed its own set of rules for community acceptance. David Faure believes that in south China, settlement rights were passed down from ancestors.

"Their ancestors may have been bestowed land by an emperor, or they immigrated to a given place and began cultivating the land, or they built the houses that their descendants still live in, or they bought the land, or they married with the indigenous people, or they expelled the original inhabitants. Based on these historical precedents, their descendants possess the land, and, as long as they do not move away, will have settlement rights" (Faure, 2007: 5). In this respect, the village lineage can only claim settlement rights by tracing a common ancestor, and people with other surnames or from other lineages cannot claim these rights. Fei Xiaotong and Prasenjit Duara use a concept similar to settlement rights, called "membership rights." In villages in Jiangsu and Yunnan, Fei found that migrant households who wanted to join the village community had to possess two things: "First is roots in the soil—they must own land in the village. Second is that they must enter into the local kinship network through marriage" (Fei, 1998: 72). Duara, using Mantetsu sources to study rural north China, argues that membership in the village community required owning land and housing in the village, residing in the village for at least three generations, possessing an ancestral grave, and making sacrifices to the ancestors on New Year's and other holidays. If all of these requirements were not met, even some families that had lived in the village for ten years were stilled registered as "sojourners," and others who lived in rented housing might not even be registered. Some did not have the right to participate in communal activities, and others did not have the right to own housing and land (Duara, 1988: 171–76). Philip Huang has also emphasized the relationship between fictive kinship networks and settlement rights. Huang argues that in addition to kinship relations in the village, there were also fictive kin relations among villagers living on the same streets and other neighbors within the village. Even though they were not related by blood, villagers would use differences in age and generation to form close bonds modeled on kinship relations. New migrants to the village

had to assimilate into these networks based on real or fictive kinship in order to feel accepted by the village community (Huang, 1985: 269–71).

Settlement rights are a key factor in explaining the formation and development of rural society, a status marker distinguishing residents and outsiders, and they play a key role in migrant assimilation into local society. Based on previous studies, we can see that settlement rights have a few common requirements—land, real or fictive kinship relations, and common ancestors or ancestral graves. But regarding the issue of settlement rights, there are still many questions to be answered. For example, were there any differences between settlement rights in north and south China, and if so, what were they? Besides the requirements just mentioned, what other factors were involved in acquiring settlement rights? What kinds of detailed procedures and tribulations must migrant households go through in order to acquire settlement rights? Were there any differences in settlement rights across time and space? How did settlement rights change in the course of modernization? There have yet to be any empirical studies that can answer these questions. Based on these considerations, this article takes a micro-historical approach, using class background registers from four villages in southern Shanxi to investigate the interactions between resident and migrant households from the late Qing into the Republican period. Through an examination of the detailed experiences of migrant households settling in villages, we analyze the settlement rights of migrant households in rural north China, and compare them to those of rural south China.

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Migrant Households in Early Twentieth-Century Rural Shanxi

From the late Qing to the Republic, natural disasters and warfare brought tremendous change to rural societies in north China. Population movements between provinces were extremely active,

and the sight of peasants leaving their home villages was very common. Amidst these changes, Shanxi province was an important destination for many immigrants. Although the data available to us are incomplete, it appears that in the early twentieth century Shanxi was home to over two million immigrants. This massive influx of people created a new group in rural society—outsiders.

Large-scale immigration into Shanxi began with the Dingwu famine in the 1870s. Beginning in 1875, a rare and severe drought lasting several years struck many parts of north China. This became known as the Dingwu famine, one of longest lasting, most extensive, and most devastating natural disasters in history. The disaster resulted in the loss of over half of Shanxi's population, roughly ten million people, and the abandonment of a hundred thousand hectares of land.[1] The ratio between population and land was seriously unbalanced, the economy was on the verge of collapse, and society was on the verge of disorder. In southern Shanxi, it was not uncommon to see entire villages go extinct. After Zeng Guoquan was appointed governor of Shanxi in 1875, he implemented a series of disaster relief measures, including actively supporting refugees, persuading local elites and officials to donate relief funds, setting up food distribution tents, and so one. One particularly important measure encouraged immigrants to come restore population and agricultural production in the province. Zeng issued a decree (Zeng, 1968: 373–75) to various counties to actively recruit immigrants to cultivate barren land, stipulating that if a landowner's household went extinct or if he emigrated elsewhere "and does not return in the fall, the land will be passed on first to a near relative, then a distant relative, or if

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[1] On the demographic and economic consequences of the Dingwu famine in Shanxi, see the work of, among others, He Bingdi, Xia Mingfang, An Jiesheng, Xing Long, Hao Ping, and Wang Jinxiang.

not then any immigrant from outside the village, county, or prefecture will be allowed to claim it" (Zeng, 1978: 9). In order to guarantee that immigrants would be able to freely cultivate abandoned land, Zeng also requested that prefectures and counties distribute funds to immigrants for purchasing farm implements, draft animals, and seeds, merged corvée labor with the land tax, and issued deeds to tenant households.

Zeng's measures to encourage immigration set off a rush to "fill Shanxi," as immigrants from Hebei, Shandong, Henan, and Shaanxi poured into the province to claim and cultivate wasteland. Many local gazetteers record this massive immigration. In 1877 in Yicheng county, for example, after the Dingwu famine the local gazetteer states, "immigrants are increasing year after year. According to the latest survey, the population is increasing by more than ten thousand persons per year, and this year all the mountainous wastelands are being cultivated, and there is almost no wasteland left. This gives a sense of the rate of population increase" (Yicheng County Gazetteer, 1968: 177). In 1877 in Linfen county, after the Dingwu famine, the gazetteer mentions that "the population was reduced by more than half, but this year immigrants coming directly from Shandong are streaming into the county, and now make up almost thirty percent of the county's population" (Linfen County Gazetteer, 1968: 214). There were even some prefectures and counties in which immigrants outnumbered the native population. The Anze county gazetteer, for example, mentions that after the great famine, "the native population is no more than ten thousand, but immigrants from Shandong, Hebei, and Henan now number several times more than the native population in Pingyao, Lu, and Qin prefectures" (Anze County Gazetteer, 1968: 1210). From these examples we can see that in some areas immigrants could be the majority of the population. An Jiesheng has used evidence from Linfen and Yicheng counties to estimate that after the Dingwu famine, over one million immigrants from other provinces permanently settled

in Shanxi to practice agriculture (An, 1999: 410).

In the Republican period (1912–1949) there continued to be a constant stream of refugees from other provinces flowing into Shanxi. But in contrast to the official recruitment of cultivators following the late Qing Dingwu famine, in this period most immigrants were migrating of their own accord in order to escape famine back home. Following the Xinhai Revolution, increasing internal and external calamities likewise brought on increasingly frequent natural disasters, and epidemics and banditry exacerbated social turmoil. Moreover, rapid rural population growth brought many peasants to the verge of bankruptcy, giving rise to tens of thousands of refugees, many of whom immigrated into rural Shanxi.

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The data in Table 1 come from Shanxi provincial population surveys, conducted by the Yan Xishan regime, from 1918 to 1926. From Table 1 we can see that first, an average of four thousand persons migrated to Shanxi per year, and 90 percent of them came from the three provinces of Hebei, Shandong, and Henan. Second, there is a clear regional migration pattern. Over half of migrants settled in Jincheng, Linfen, Yuncheng, and Changzhi in south and southeastern Shanxi. Those migrating to central Shanxi comprised another 38 percent of immigrants, while relatively few migrated to north Shanxi.

In the Republican period, without the help of preferential policies, why did Shanxi, the south and southeast in particular, still continue to draw so many migrants? The answer is related to the entire social and ecological climate of north China. Following the Dingwu famine, Shanxi saw a long-term decline in the extent and frequency of natural disasters, and environmental conditions were relatively stable. Especially after Yan Xishan came to power, he made it his personal mission to “protect the territory and ensure peace,” and implemented a series of social reforms,

such as the reform of village administration and the "six policies and three occupations" rural reform, to achieve social stability and economic development. Shanxi's social environment was stabilized, and for the entire decade of the 1920s there was no warfare in the province. In contrast, Hebei, Shandong, and Henan in the same period experienced rapid population growth, constant warfare, and frequent natural disasters, forcing untold numbers of refugees to flee their homes. Linyi county, in Yuncheng, Shanxi, for example, saw so much migration during the Republican period that over thirty villages in the county were established by immigrants (Linyi County Gazetteer, 1993: 165). In Tunliu county, in southeastern Shanxi, following the Dingwu famine, immigrants from Henan and Shandong comprised nearly half of the county's population. Then, following the great drought in 1942, outside immigrants swarmed into the county once again (Tunliu County Gazetteer, 1995: 42–47). There are a great many more records like this.

In addition to ecological and social factors, there are a few other factors worth noting. First is geography: south and southeastern Shanxi share borders with Hebei and Henan and are the closest part of Shanxi to Shandong. Of course most refugees would try to avoid traveling long distances as much as possible, and resettle as soon as possible. Second, even before the Dingwu famine, southern Shanxi was a frequent destination for settlers from Hebei, Shandong, and Henan. We can assume, therefore, that earlier migrants laid a foundation for later migrants, and could provide them with financial support, information, and advice based on experience. As a result, many migrants came to seek refuge with friends and relatives. Third, Hongtong county, in Linfen, is famous among immigrants in south Shanxi, who regard it as their original ancestral home. Many family genealogies in Hebei, Shandong, and Henan record that their ancestors originally migrated from Hongtong. As such, refugees fleeing to Shanxi often believed that they were "returning to their ancestral roots."

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Differences between Resident and Migrant Households

Traditionally, the Chinese state did not directly control rural society, and local elites acted as middlemen bridging the gap between the state and local society. Because of their position, local elites were held in high esteem in local society, and in effect became the administrators of local society. Local elites were also always representatives of a single family or lineage, and the social group that formed around such a family or lineage, living in a village for generations, became known as local resident households. The kinship and territorial bonds formed between these residents are what gave form to the special social and cultural network of the village, sometimes known as an "acquaintance society." In order to protect the interests of the lineage and fellow villagers, an "acquaintance society" exhibits a strong sense of xenophobia, and migrant households who are obviously different from local residents have a hard time joining the village community. Even if they do manage to join the village, locals still treat them differently. We can examine the differences between resident and migrant households in terms of origins, language, living standards, occupations, public goods, and public activities.

First, regarding origins and length of residence, the people of China have long had a deep belief in the notion of origins, a notion that has grown out of the interactions and effects of two thousand years of Confucian ethics, culture, dialects, and particular administrative rules and institutions. Moreover, this notion of origins only grew stronger over time, and only began to weaken in the Republican period (He, 1966: 1–9). In the early twentieth century, legally speaking, resident and migrant households were divided into native and nonnative origins based on place of birth and length of residence. In 1931, the Nationalist government issued a Household Registration Law, which stipulated that a person is considered a native if he or she

has lived in the area for more than three years and is not registered elsewhere. In contrast, the law stipulated two kinds of nonnative origins—one is if the person is registered in a place of origin and has lived in another place for more than six months, and the other is if a person is not registered elsewhere but has also lived in a given place for less than six months (Household Registration Law, 1934 [1931]). In 1946, the law was revised, increasing the time limit for nonnative status to one year (Household Registration Law, 1946 [1937]). However, no matter whether it was six months, one year, or three years, the actual workings of local society did not necessarily follow such legal texts, but followed their own guidelines for joining the village community. In some villages, even some migrant households who had lived there for ten years were still referred to as "sojourning" or "floating" households (Duara, 1988: 172). The children of some migrant households, even though they were born in the village, were still called "migrants," like their parents (Fei, 2001: 36). And in still other villages, even some families that had lived in the village for several generations were called "guests" (Fei, 1998: 72). These examples therefore suggest that length of residence was not a major factor that was used to distinguish between residents and migrants in village society.

We can also judge the differences between residents and migrants in terms of living and housing conditions, manifested by differences in the layout, location, and level of security of their housing. Differences in economic power often determined the limits of each household's housing construction, and each household built their house according to their means. House construction was therefore one way of acknowledging and displaying one's place in the social hierarchy (Lu, 2006). In north China villages, established residents typically lived in one-story brick houses located in a relatively level central location, and even the poorest of poor peasants would have their own house. But the same cannot be said of migrant households. They did not

have the right to build a house in the middle of the village, and most had limited means. Migrants who came to depend on friends and relatives tended to live temporarily in houses already in the village, but the remainder of the migrants found shelter wherever they could: abandoned caves, run-down old temples, thatched huts build on the edge of the village, or even on the streets.

Folk beliefs have long flourished in north China, and there were many temples for making offerings to the gods. There is a saying that there cannot be a village without a temple. But some abandoned temples were often the dwelling places of migrant households. For instance, a migrant household in Zhaoyi village, Yongji, who were originally from Puyang, Henan, lived in the Dragon King temple on the edge of the village. With no roof over their heads and no floor beneath their feet, they lived a miserable life (Zhaoyi Village Class Background Registers [hereafter, CBR], 1966: Fanjia team, no. 3). Some migrant households did not even get to live in a run-down temple, and had to wander the streets. A migrant from Henan, for example, begged his way to Xisanyuan village, Yongji, where he took up residence in a run-down temple and worked as a hired laborer. Since he had no food and no clothes and looked like an invalid, villagers said he was sick, and tried to make him leave the village (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 5, no. 19). Migrant households with more means might have a residence of their own, but it typically was no more than a thatch hut or mud cave on the edge of the village, and was clearly differentiated from the homes of the residents. A migrant from Sanyuan village, Yongji, who had fled from famine in Changyi, Shandong in 1927, had a large family and thus could not live in a small temple. His household gathered vegetation from the Zhongtiao Mountains to build a three-room thatched hut at the foot of the mountain (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 2, no. 9). If a migrant had relatives in the village, he might live in their house and work to earn his keep. Other migrants without a place to live might

use marriage as a way to acquire the right to live in the village, a subject to which we will return.

In the village there were many public goods available for collective use as well as public activities, but they were only open to resident households. Migrant households had limited or no rights to these collective goods. In Shajing village, Hebei, resident households needed only to apply to the village government to use public goods like ladders, tables, and millstones. Migrant households, in contrast, had to ask an intimate friend in the village to make a request to the village head before they could get permission. Only resident households could use things like ground for storing grain and other belongings, earth for building houses, and water reservoirs (North China Research Institute, 1952: 141–43, 157, 219–29). In some villages the communal cemetery also was open only to resident households, which left some migrant households without a place to bury their dead. In Zhaoyi village, Yongji, the mother of a migrant from Xiangyang, Hubei, died of overexertion. Without a place to bury her and no money for a coffin, the migrant could only bury her in a straw mat (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Fanjia team, no. 11). As for public village activities like sacrifices, praying for rain, watching folk operas, and so on, migrants had absolutely no right to participate. All of these vivid examples demonstrate the differences between resident and migrant households in terms of public village activities.

There were also differences between resident and migrant households in terms of occupations. Generally speaking, village land was limited, and most of it was concentrated in the hands of a few households. There was not enough land to support additional households, and land sales were typically carried out within the village community, making it difficult for migrants to obtain land. As a result, most migrants engaged in nonagricultural occupations involving commerce or other sideline jobs. In contrast, most resident households worked in agriculture because they had secure landholdings and considered farming superior to commerce.

In the villages Fei Xiaotong investigated, the primary distinction between resident and migrant households was manifested in terms of occupation. This distinction was most salient in Kaixiangong village, where none of the migrant households were farmers. These households instead provided the labor for a third of all the special nonagricultural occupations in the village (Fei, 2001: 36). Migrants also had a particular advantage in commerce. In an acquaintance society organized by blood relations and personal obligations it was naturally difficult to conduct trade, and "strangers" without social ties or blood relations became important commercial agents. "Villagers can haggle with them and settle accounts on the spot without needing to mention personal obligations and without any shame" (Fei, 2008: 86–94). In this respect, in both the cities and the countryside, the development of commerce depended on such outside migrants.

In rural Shanxi it was also common for migrant households to engage in commerce. Shanxi population statistics from 1926 show that over a third of migrant households engaged in commerce (Department of Statistics, 1926). In his 1934 survey of southeast Shanxi, Liu Rongting mentions that "most of the handicraft industry in the various counties of southeast Shanxi is in the hands of migrants from Henan" (Liu, 1934: 56). These kinds of examples can be found throughout local gazetteers. In Qinyuan county, for example, in the Republican era "blacksmithing is mostly done by migrants, and they comprise 2 to 3 percent of the county's population." Regarding commerce, "Qinyuan has a sparse population with many barren mountains. People with just a few mu of poor land are content to farm it rather than engage in commerce, and so most of the commercial power is controlled by migrants. Merchants make up no more than 2 or 3 percent of Qinyuan's population" (Qinyuan County Gazetteer, 1976: 173–75). In Wenxi county, "metal- and wood-workers are all from Henan" (Wenxi County Gazetteer, 1968: 13), and in Ruicheng county, "pottery and iron workers are all migrants"

(Ruicheng County Gazetteer, 1968: 324). Moreover, in some particular villages like Sanyuan, Yongji, one migrant made bellows and trained apprentices in addition to farming, while other migrants made straw mats or ginned cotton to supplement their income. Another migrant was also a carpenter and stonemason who made a living from this work when he first arrived in the village and was later able to save up and buy five mu of land (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 2-5). In Yihetun village, Yongji, most of the migrants were skilled at weaving large storage bins, and others depended on their skills in making tofu, casting steel pots, and carpentry.[2] The tofu maker was able to save up and buy thirty mu of land, and one carpenter who fled from famine to Shanxi was able to save up enough to buy over seventy mu (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1-4).

As mentioned above, migrant households were distinct from residents in terms of residence, occupation, public activities, and so on, and their status was relatively low. Resident households had a certain feeling of superiority, and in their words and behaviors expressed a certain degree of exclusion and discrimination, which led to the "stigmatization" of migrants.[3] In rural Shanxi, residents' stigmatization of migrants was relatively severe. Migrants were often portrayed negatively as uncouth, uncivilized, and violent, and believed to be a cause of social disorder. Of course, there were also some migrants who earned recognition as hardworking, frugal, and ungrudging. In Zhao Shuli's novel, the little village of Lijiazhuang was home to a few refugee households from Henan and elsewhere, and local residents contemptuously referred to them as

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[2] Traditionally, large bins for storing grain and other goods were woven out of strips of wood.

[3] The concept of "stigmatization," first introduced by the American sociologist Erving Goffman, refers to a social group forcing negative stereotypes based on physical or character traits onto another social group (Goffman, 1963).

"grass ashes" or "ashen fawns" (Zhao, 2004). Some migrants were labeled by their place of origin and called "Henan-man" or "Shandong-man." Some villages even had sayings that made fun of migrants, such as a common saying in Sanyuan village, Yongji: "Luoban village has one horn of an ox, and the rest are all a bunch of ruffians" (East and West Sanyuan Village Fieldnotes, August 11 to 14, 2014). Sometimes such stigmatization would spark conflicts between resident and migrant households.

These differences and conflicts had a strong adverse effect on migrants' ways of life, and restricted their path toward social mobility. Migrants desperately hoped to escape such stigmas and acquire village settlement rights, assimilate into village society, and gain a new lot in life, or at least get the opportunity to escape cold and starvation.

Prod. ed.: Level-1 head follows

How Migrant Households Acquired Village Settlement Rights

Migrant households were clearly differentiated from resident households in many ways, and these differences were not only manifested in terms of socioeconomic status, but were even more so a kind of distinction in local social identity. Traditional rural society was characterized by bonds of kinship and territoriality, and villagers depended on these bonds to cooperate and interact, in the process creating a strong social identity with a powerful sense of insularity and exclusion, so much so that anyone without a shared social identity was turned away. Only by acquiring this local social identity could migrant households become "people of the village," and only by becoming "people of the village" could they share in all the rights that resident households enjoyed, escape their fate as refugees, and live a stable life. Settlement rights were similar to this kind of identity, and therefore acquiring settlement rights was especially significant for migrant households. But settlement rights could not be acquired overnight; they

were not only a matter of time, but also involved certain requirements and favorable circumstances, not to mention acceptance by native villagers. The following sections focus on the details of how migrants used land and marriage relations to acquire settlement rights.

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Agricultural Dependents of Resident Households

In traditional rural societies land is the primary means of production and for most people it is the basic source of income and wealth accumulation. In China, villagers' fate was intimately tied to land. Those who possessed an abundance of land lived comfortable lives and could deal with natural disasters, while villagers with little or no land lived very difficult lives and could be brought to ruin as soon as a disaster struck. For migrant households, land meant not only harvests and sustenance, but also implied a potentially legitimate social identity. As long as they had land in the village, no matter whether it was sharecropped, rented, or newly cultivated wasteland, migrants had the means to "settle" and join the community. When migrant households first arrived in a village, they thus focused on forming dependent relations with resident households through sharecropping, tenancy, loans, purchases, opening up wasteland, and so on, and began the primitive accumulation of land. This was a basic requirement and important means by which migrants could acquire settlement rights.

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Wage Labor

In north China wage labor was a common form of economic relations, and based on the length of employment laborers were divided into long-term and short-term laborers. There were also monthly laborers, seasonal laborers, annual laborers, as well as others, to which colloquial terms like "endurance man," "endurance labor," and "shoulder labor" were applied. The two main

parties involved in wage labor were the employer and the employee or farm laborer. Mao Zedong defined farm laborers as those who "have neither land, farm implements nor funds, [and] . . . can live only by selling their labor power" (Mao, 1991 [1926]: 8). Various statistics show that in early modern Shanxi farm laborers made up about 10 percent of the population (Wang and Niu, 2006). Compared to resident households, practically all migrants were poor peasants and farm laborers, the lowest class in the village, and depended on wage labor to make a living. In Sanyuan village, for example, there were sixteen migrant households—over 30 percent of all migrant households—employed in long- and short-term labor. Some migrants in the village had worked for wealthy households for anywhere from nine to seventeen years (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1996: team 2-5). In Yihetun village, over 60 percent of migrant households had worked as wage laborers, sometimes for as long as eighteen to twenty years (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1-4). Wage labor was not limited to farming; some migrants were also cooks, clerks, odd-jobbers, etc. Their primary form of wage was not cash, but grain, goods, or simply room and board. Nor were all laborers men; some migrant women were employed by resident households. In Sanyuan village, for example, one migrant man was employed as a short-term laborer, while his wife was employed in spinning thread and cooking to make a living (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 5, no. 11).

Through wage labor migrants became dependents of resident households, but for the migrants this provided them with a chance to obtain settlement rights. Through wage labor, migrants could ensure their survival, and some could even save up money to buy land and housing. More importantly, migrants could improve their relationship with their employers and increase the chances for interaction. Because migrants were paid low wages or no cash wages at all, resident households could reduce or avoid the cost of employing resident laborers, and

because most migrants were hardworking and able, residents could also ensure the productivity of their land. Wage labor thus transformed relations between residents and migrants into employer–employee relations, and this became one way in which migrants could acquire settlement rights.

Prod. ed.: Level-3 head follows

Tenancy Relations

In terms of the distribution of tenancy relations in early twentieth century China, the scholarly consensus is that in south China landownership was highly concentrated, there were relatively few owner-cultivators and relatively many tenant farmers, and tenancy relations were relatively developed. In north China, in contrast, landownership was less concentrated, there were relatively many owner-cultivators, tenancy relations were relatively weak, and instead hired labor was more common. But this does not mean that there was no tenancy in north China. In villages with migrant households, tenancy relations were relatively prevalent, and they often took the form of specialized tenancy relations with resident households. In Shanxi there was a kind of tenancy called "extended rent based on land area," in which extra rent was added onto the original land area. For example, if one rented 100 mu then rent was collected as if the area was 125 mu. This kind of tenancy was primarily used with migrant households who were desperate for land, and it meant that in addition to the standard rent, migrants were burdened with extra costs. Thus although this was unfair, in order to survive, migrants had no choice but to accept this arrangement. In Yihetun village, for example, one migrant had no choice but to rent five mu of extended rent land from a resident household (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1, no. 9). Another interesting phenomenon was that migrants from the south tended to form tenancy relations with resident households, while migrants from the north tended to form labor relations.

This might have been related to the historical prevalence of tenancy in the south and wage labor in the north. In Yihetun village, over 70 percent of migrants from Hubei had histories of tenancy, and some of them even rented multiple plots of land from multiple people at the same time. In contrast, less than 10 percent of the migrants from Henan, Shandong, and Shaanxi rented land, and the majority were employed by resident households as long- and short-term laborers (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1-4).

Acquiring tenancy status was in itself one form of obtaining settlement rights. In general, wealthy residents preferred to rent their land to poor resident villagers, not migrants. But by paying higher rent, migrants could gradually obtain "tenancy rights." Some migrants could even turn poor land into more productive land through their hard work, and for the landowner the migrant's outsider status no longer became the main reason for renting to them. Through tenancy, migrants acquired the right to use land, which was one aspect of acquiring "settlement rights," and helped to improve the status of migrants in the village.

Prod. ed.: Level-3 head follows

Loans

In the village, private loans were a common form of economic exchange: "when farmers are impoverished and cannot pay their expenses, or if they can normally get by but something unexpected happens, then their only way out is borrowing" ("Report on the nationwide land survey," 1974: 48). There were many ways of borrowing aside from cash loans, including, among others, borrowing grain, housing, land, and implements. Repayment could also be in cash, grain, or labor, and even in some cases when the debt could not be repaid, one's daughter could be sent to be a child bride in return. The interest rate on loans was relatively high. In statistics from 1934, the annual interest rate of private loans in Shanxi was around 3–4 percent, which was

above the national average ("Survey of rural finances," 1934). It is also important to note that even though interest rates were high, not everyone was able to borrow, because borrowing required some degree of personal relations. In rural China there were always more borrowers than lenders, and in a lenders' market it was is not always easy for peasants to find a loan, and all transactions were dependent on existing mutual trust between lender and borrower (Li, 2003). Because migrants lacked kin relations with resident households, it was often difficult for them to get a loan. In Fanjia village, Yongji, one migrant from Henan needed to get the guarantee of a third party in order to borrow two dou of millet at spring planting time, which was to be repaid with two dou of wheat after the harvest (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Fanjia team, no. 47). Sometimes even when a migrant could borrow cash, it was at a much higher interest rate than normal. Another migrant from Henan borrowed 100 yuan from a resident household after fleeing to Shanxi, for a term of three years with an annual interest rate of 24 yuan, seven or eight times the normal rate (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Fanjia team, no. 45). Such high rates often led migrants into a debt crisis, but in order to survive they had no choice but to borrow money to purchase land. One migrant household from Hubei in Yihetun village, for instance, borrowed 50 yuan from a resident household for his father to see a doctor. After four years the debt had grown to 90 yuan. In the end, the migrant had to pay off his debt with the ten mu of land and two rooms in a house he purchased through his hard labor, and then in order to survive he had to give his older sister away to borrow another 44 yuan and purchase six mu of land (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1, no. 1). Migrants were frequently caught in this kind of vicious cycle, and a great many sooner or later ended up impoverished.

For migrants, borrowing and tenancy were just as important socially as they were economically, and not only were a means of improving their standard of living, but were also a

catalyst for softening relations between native and outsider and a direct reflection of settlement rights. Besides relying on third parties and accepting higher interest rates, one reason why migrants could borrow from resident households and obtain settlement rights was because they did not need to consider personal obligations and relations and therefore they tended to stick to the contract and repay their debts on time. In an acquaintance society, sometimes kin relations complicate the relation between lender and borrower, and was is not uncommon for repayment to be delayed or interest reduced. This created an opportunity for migrant households to become more regular agents in borrowing. By acquiring "borrowing rights," therefore, migrants could establish trust and moral obligations with resident households, and further consolidate their settlement rights.

Prod. ed.: Level-3 head follows

Saving Money to Buy Land

In traditional rural China, given the low level of technology and limited occupations, peasants' incomes and standard of living were relatively low. But they had diverse expenses, including purchasing land, implements, fertilizer and other means of production, food, clothing, fuel and other daily necessities, and also expenses for medicine, education, entertainment, marriages, funerals, and other personal obligations. Compared to resident households, however, migrants' expenses were simple. Migrants used most of their money to purchase land, housing, and other basic necessities. Because migrants had experienced the hardship of leaving home, they were well aware of the difficulties of survival, and compared to resident households they had to work harder to survive. Migrants made a living in various ways: carrying firewood and straw, working as long- and short-term laborers, peddling, and the like, and as soon as they accumulated some savings the first thing they did was invest it in land. A migrant in Sanyuan village purchased ten

mu of land, one ox, and one plow with savings that his parents had earned working as a long-term laborer and spinning thread (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 3, no. 9). In Yihetun village, a migrant from Shandong immigrated to Shanxi with his father in 1911, and initially worked as a long-term laborer and beggar. Later his father got a job in the Yuncheng salt works, and made enough money to purchase twenty-five mu of land in 1926, and then purchase six more mu and an ox in 1945 (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 2, no. 16). By purchasing more and more land, some migrants even became wealthy. One migrant's father and uncle worked as long-term laborers, and frugally saved up enough money to buy seventy mu of land. The migrant himself ran an oil press, and was able to purchase another twenty-four mu and hire eight long-term laborers. He also had two carts, an ox, a mule, and a horse, and lived comfortable life (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 3, no. 34). But we should also remember that most of the land migrants were able to purchase was marginal since residents were reluctant to see good village land sold off to outsiders. In extraordinary times, such as during wars and natural disasters, it might be easier for migrants to purchase land, because in the face of war or increasing taxes, residents might sell off their land, and after disasters residents themselves might flee, selling off their land at a low price. These were all opportunities for migrants to obtain "purchase rights" and "settlement rights."

Prod. ed.: Level-3 head follows

Cultivating Wasteland

Resident villagers had priority in renting land, purchasing land, and borrowing. If migrants wanted to obtain these rights, they had to pay higher rent, accept higher interest rates, and pay much higher prices for land. Many impoverished migrants could not bear such a heavy burden. If a migrant could not get land in the village, he was likely to turn to the wasteland outside the

village, typically mountainous, alkaline, or floodplain land of poor quality in marginal areas. But for many migrants, cultivating such wasteland was an important way of obtaining land and making a living. In West Sanyuan village, for example, one father and son carried firewood and worked as long-term laborers, and saved up enough money to purchase an ox and cultivate twenty mu of wasteland. Three other migrant households in this village also depended on cultivating wasteland to make a living (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 4, no. 7; team 2, no. 11). But not everyone had the right to cultivate wasteland—even if it was not in the village, wasteland was still considered village property by default, and there were certain requirements for cultivating it. In Gu county, for example, cultivating wasteland required paying rent. When refugees from Shandong and Henan arrived there, they asked landlords for permission to cultivate some wasteland. Their contract stipulated that they had to cultivate, plant, and harvest on their own, and did not have to pay rent for the first year, but in the second year they had to pay half the rent, and beginning in the third year, full rent (Research Committee, 1990: 2.68–69). But there was also a certain amount of chance involved, because not every place had wasteland available for cultivation. Yihetun village, for example, located near a famous salt lake called Duck Pond, had large areas of low-lying land with poor drainage and high alkalinity. The land was not very productive and required a disproportionate amount of labor, and in addition there were large amounts of wasteland left over from the Dingwu famine. As a result, few residents cultivated this village land, but many migrants did. One migrant, for example, immigrated to Shanxi with his father in 1886, and moved to Yihetun village after hearing that the wasteland there could be cultivated for free. He settled in the village and cultivated five mu of wasteland, then with money earned through carpentry he bought more land, and by the 1940s had accumulated over sixty mu of land and had become wealthy (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966:

team 1, no. 30). Thus while natural disaster brought hardship to resident households, it could also create an opportunity for migrant households to acquire settlement rights.

Acquiring the right to purchase land and open up wasteland had an even more important meaning for migrants as a way to privatize land. Through renting, wage labor, and borrowing migrants could acquire the right to use and cultivate village land, but these dependent relations were not stable, and resident households could take them away at any time. But through opening up wasteland and buying land, migrants acquired ownership rights that could not be controlled by residents. In agrarian societies, land contracts are like ID cards for villagers—if a migrant has land, he is no longer a "wanderer," but a legitimate tax-paying citizen who can enjoy certain rights and privileges. In late Qing and Republican China, although migrants might not have won the acceptance of resident households and might not have been able to completely escape their marginal social status, to some degree through land ownership they became part of the village and enjoyed settlement rights.

Migrants also had another, rather special way of acquiring land, which involved a kind of commercial exchange of land through marriage. In traditional China, marriages were frequently economic exchanges in which a groom would exchange money, land, housing, animals, grain, and other forms of wealth for a bride. This was, however, a kind of backward marriage arrangement, although it was common among poor families. Extremely impoverished migrants, for example, often used this type of marriage arrangement to acquire land. In the case of a migrant from Henan, for example, in the course of fleeing famine his father sold off his second and third elder sisters, and he lived with his third elder sister in Pinghao village. Then, after his fourth elder sister was sold to someone in Yihetun, he moved there too. In 1945, his sister's husband joined the army, and she departed with her husband, leaving him with ten mu of land

and a five-room house (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 3, no. 25). And it was not only land and housing that might be involved—some migrant households lived such miserable lives that they had to sell off their daughters in exchange for just a limited amount of grain. One migrant householder in Shuangnianzi village, for example, lived as a beggar throughout his migration, and just to fill his own stomach he sold off his daughter in exchange for 5 sheng of millet and half a barrel of sweet potatoes (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Shuangnianzi team, no. 11). But in marrying with resident households, migrants acquired more than just land, housing, and other material goods. More importantly, they established kin relations with residents and laid down legitimate roots in the village.

Upon arrival in a village, a migrant typically gradually became a dependent of a resident household through working as a long- or short-term laborer, renting land, or borrowing. Even though migrants usually had to settle for poorer land outside the village, they still had to accept paying higher rents and interest rates. Sometimes, as we have noted, they were also subject to villagers' discrimination and mocking, and still did not have the right to participate in public affairs and activities. But once a migrant had land, he was no longer a complete stranger excluded from the village, but to some degree became someone who was recognized by the residents and enjoyed some settlement rights. Such migrants had the right to cultivate wasteland, purchase land, take out loans, and rent land, and some even established good landlord-tenant relations with resident households. These rights all represented an important transformation in a migrant's status. As such, we can see how using land to establish dependent relations with resident households became an important chance for migrants to obtain settlement rights.

Prod. ed.: Level-2 head follows

From Territoriality to Kinship: Building Kin Ties with Resident Households

If land was the foundation of migrants' settlement rights, then kinship relations were the key to migrants obtaining settlement rights and realizing a change in their fortunes. By establishing kin ties with resident households, migrants could at last officially become a part of the village. As Yan Yunxiang argued, for people who immigrate to a place where they have no former kin ties, establishing affinal relations with resident villagers is the best way to get a foothold in local society (Yan, 1996: 47). But traditional rural society emphasized the principle of "marriage between equals," and different levels of the marriage market were relatively rigid. For marginal groups like migrants, it could be very difficult to get approval from locals and marry a local bride. Fei Xiaotong noted that "marriage relations are no doubt the trick to acquiring local status, and when one person marries into another place, they become a local of that place (uxorilocal marriage also allows men to join another community), but when a migrant has already settled in a place, it is not easy to marry a local bride and give his children the opportunity to join the local community" (Fei, 1998: 72). In order to acquire settlement rights and become a part of the village, migrants had to pursue other routes to kinship, from initially depending on friends and relatives to fictive kinship relations like adoption, nominal kinship, sworn brotherhood, etc., or real kinship relations like uxorilocal marriage for men and virilocal marriage for women. These kinds of relations are similar to what Bourdieu calls "practical kinship," a kind of situational and individualized interpersonal relationship that is at the same time somewhat instrumental and calculative (Bourdieu, 1992: 214–315). Migrants establish such relations by acquiring and cultivating them, not by inheriting them from their place of origin or parents. Although in this situation the kin relations between residents and migrants are still not equal, migrants can ensure their subsistence and achieve the right to participate in village affairs and receive public goods.

Traditionally, there were many customary rules regarding marriage. The emphasis on

"marriage between equals," for example, stressed that the bride and groom should come from families with similar social and economic status. Most rural migrant households, however, were poverty-stricken refugees in the lowest stratum of society. In terms of both standard of living and social status, they could not compare with resident households, even the poor peasants and hired laborers of the village, which made marriage between migrants and residents very difficult. Many migrants chose to return to their place of origin to find a bride, or marry with other, similar refugees. One migrant in Wujiaxiang village, Yongji, for example, immigrated to Shanxi in 1911, and after having trouble finding a bride he returned to his home village in 1916 to get married (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Wujiaxiang team, no. 4). Marriage between migrants in the same village was also very common. In Sanyuan village, migrants from Shandong intermarried among themselves, and in Yihetun village one migrant's older sister married a man who had migrated with them from Henan (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 2, no. 2). Migrants settled in neighboring villages could also intermarry. If a migrant could not find a wife, he might buy a refugee woman from a human trafficker to be his wife. Such refugee women may have gotten separated from their families, or they may have been only survivors, and had to sell themselves in order to survive. A migrant in Sanyuan village immigrated from Shandong to Yu township, Yongji, with his grandfather in 1927, and because it was hard to find a wife locally, in 1942 he married a refugee woman who was sold into the village (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 2, no. 6). However, marriage between migrants did not help them acquire recognition among native villagers. Only by establishing kin relations with resident households could migrants obtain legitimate settlement rights.

Migrants also had several other potential routes to settlement rights. First, they might depend on friends and relatives in the village. In a foreign place, people from the same hometown might

be a migrant's only dependable social connection, because such people spoke the same dialect, had similar customs, and might be connected through distant kin or family friendships. Even if two strangers from the same hometown met in a foreign place, they could still feel like old friends as soon as they meet (Peng and Jiang, 1994). In an isolated village community, migrants rarely had any kin or territorial bonds with resident households, and could only rely on affinal kin or previous immigrants from the same hometown to gain the right to stay in the village. But even these connections were rare and largely limited to migrants from relatively nearby villages. A migrant in Suo village, for example, had immigrated from a nearby village and came to stay with his elder sister who had married into the village (Suo Village CBR, 1966: team 4, no. 11). In some settlements or villages with large proportions of migrants, "old migrants" had a status similar to resident households, and other migrants from the same hometown might seek refuge with them. In Sanyuan village, for example, the Liu family, originally from Shandong, was one of the earliest migrants to settle in the village. After living there for nearly thirty years, two other families from the same hometown came to take refuge with the Liu family, and together these three families opened up land for cultivation, shared resources, and became a rather powerful group among the migrant community (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 2). Depending on friends and relatives in the village was based on territorial relations between people from the same hometown. Although this kind of connection could strengthen ties between migrants, it could not help establish nonterritorial relations with resident households.

Second, migrants could use adoption and fostering to form fictive kinship relations with resident households. In his research on lineages, Feng Erkang introduced the concept of "imitation kinship" to refer to persons who are not related by blood but imitate such kin relations in social interactions in order to achieve a certain goal. Such relations include rulers bestowing

surnames, uniting two lineages under the same surname, fostering, adoption, nominal kinship, sworn brotherhood, etc. (Feng, 1997). Rural migrants imitated kinship with resident households for survival and to be able to settle in the village. If a migrant could establish such relations with a resident household, then he or she would have a much better chance of acquiring settlement rights. In Fanjiaxiang, Yongji, a migrant immigrated from Henan, and for the sake of survival, his father sold him to a resident wealthy family for 6 yuan to be their son, and he changed his surname (Zhaoyi Village CBR, 1966: Fanjia team, no. 55). By doing so, migrants could settle in the village and gain a reliable livelihood. In Sanyuan village, one immigrant and his younger brother came to the village with their parents when they were still toddlers. When he was thirteen, his parents went blind, and his younger brother was given for adoption to a resident villager, and later the migrant also did business with the adopter (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 5, no. 27). Thus we can see that such fictive kinship relations were an important way by which migrants could acquire settlement rights and the acceptance of native villagers. Although this acceptance may have been highly unequal, over time it brought native and nonnative closer together.

Third, male migrants could marry uxorilocally into the village and become a member of a resident's family. Uxorilocal marriage was also called marriage to "recruit a son-in-law," "foster marriage," or more colloquially, "crossing the threshold backwards" or "kin recruitment." This was a type of marriage in which the groom went to live with the bride. There were many reasons for uxorilocal marriage, but it primarily occurred when the groom did not have the financial means to take a bride, and when the bride's family lacked male offspring. In traditional China, uxorilocal marriage carried a very low status, because it implied changing one's surname or even given name, the termination of one bloodline for the continuation of another, and that the bride's

family had the initiative in the marriage. But for the sake of survival, traditional values had to give way, and for poor migrants, uxorilocal marriage was an important source of settlement rights. Uxorilocal marriage was more common among migrants, because through it they could acquire property and the right to inherit it, and thus could ensure their own livelihood. But of course one necessary requirement for uxorilocal marriage is having a strong male laborer capable of agricultural production. In Yihetun village, one migrant begged his way from Kaifeng, Henan, to the village to escape a flood in 1926, and worked there as a long-term laborer. In 1934 he married into a local family, inherited forty-five mu of land, and thereafter lived a self-sufficient life (Yihetun Village CBR, 1966: team 1, no. 16). But not everyone could marry uxorilocally—they had to be introduced by a matchmaker, prove that they had the ability to work and raise a family, and could only get married after a thorough investigation.

Fourth, migrant women could marry into the village, in exchange for land, housing, goods, and settlement rights. This type of marriage could include remarrying, child brides, free marriage, etc. In China, marriage has extensive social meaning, and is not only symbolic of the continuation of reproduction, but also represents the natural combination of two families. Through marriage, two families without any blood or territorial relations are formed into a single even larger family, and they will provide mutual support and share resources within the family. Among migrant households, if a husband passed away prematurely it was difficult for a single woman to bear the burden of the family, and she would typically decide to remarry, and normally her new spouse would also be from a poor family. In East Sanyuan village, when one boy's father died, he and his mother had no way to make a living, so they migrated to another village in Yongji county and the mother remarried into another family. But her new husband was also very poor, and only had a few mu of poor land, and so they were forced to migrate again to Yu

township (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 5, no. 8). If a migrant family had an unmarried woman, they would be very welcomed by resident households, because taking a migrant wife could alleviate the complications of betrothal gifts and special ceremonies. For equally poor resident households, sometimes for a very small price, like a little land, or allowing a migrant household to live with them, they could take care of the important issue of marriage. But for migrant households, if they could become kin of a resident household, then they would have the right to act as a "family" in the village, and even acquire settlement rights. In Sanyuan village, for example, one migrant fled from Henan to Wenxi county, Shanxi, to escape war and drought, and then without any means of survival, he gave his son away, and married his daughter to a landlord in Wenxi in exchange for the right to settle in the village (East and West Sanyuan Village CBR, 1966: team 5, no. 11).

From the above analysis, we can see the trials and efforts migrant households went through in order to obtain village settlement rights. As strangers on the margins of a community united by kin and territorial bonds, migrants faced many challenges. Fleeing from war and natural disasters, they had to figure out how to stay warm and eat; they had to carefully negotiate relations with resident households, cast off their stranger label, and obtain residents' acceptance and village settlement rights; they had to create better opportunities for their children, so that they would not be subject to the ridicule and exclusion of resident villagers. In order to accomplish all of this, they had to cast away their moral reservations and dignity, sacrifice their former kin and territorial bonds, and expend labor and money in exchange for survival in a foreign place. We can also see that migrants' path to obtaining settlement rights was torturous and complicated, and involved a combination of various requirements beyond just land and marriage.

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Conclusion

In the social system of traditional rural society, how migrants could obtain village settlement rights and become resident villagers was not only a reflection of their own individual life histories and family histories, but was also an important manifestation of changes in early modern rural society. In general, land and marriage were the basic requirements for a migrant to obtain settlement rights, but perhaps as a result of limited sources or perspective, heretofore we have known little about the various ways and procedures through which migrants acquired land and established kin relations. However, these details are precisely what we need in order to understand settlement rights and the formation and development of rural society. Through studying a new, systematic source—class background registers from the Four Cleanups—we can now outline the process through which migrant households acquired settlement rights. When they first arrived in a village, migrants belonged to the lowest social stratum, were excluded from the village, and survived as drifters and beggars living in run-down and rude housing and collecting firewood. Migrant were stigmatized by resident households, and conflicts often erupted between the two social groups. For survival and to improve their own social status, migrants formed dependent relationships with resident households through wage labor, land tenancy, borrowing, cultivating wasteland, and purchasing land, as they moved to become more independent. Other migrants also improved their economic situation through various other means, such as commerce and joining the army. Although migrants still had a marginal status in the village, they could acquire partial settlement rights through the right to cultivate, borrow, purchase, and open up wasteland. Pursuing this path, they could escape from the life of drifters and become legitimate tax-paying citizens and enjoy the rights attendant on that status. Migrants could also move one step closer to settlement rights by using their territorial bonds to take refuge

with friends and relatives, forming fictive kin bonds through adoption or fostering, or forming real kin ties with resident households through uxorilocal marriage, remarriage, or marriage. In this way, migrants could achieve a status equal to that of resident poor peasants and become a part of the village. Then, with the passage of time and the relaxing of tensions, migrants' offspring might attain full status as resident villagers.

Our review has shown that acquiring settlement rights significantly differed between north and south China. In south China, settlement rights were intimately linked to lineage membership. By constantly reinforcing the settlement rights passed down from their ancestors, lineages labeled and excluded migrants from the village. If a villager could get his name recorded in the genealogy, then he could have settlement rights and participate in lineage sacrifices and enjoy lineage resources as a member of the lineage. As such, if a migrant wanted to obtain village settlement rights or membership, he had to uphold the lineage system, and by means of migration legends, ancestor myths, and lineage construction work hard to cast off his outsider label. For village lineages, it appears that material resources like land and social resources like kinship were not the most important factor. As long as a migrant could establish common ancestry with residents, with a written genealogy as proof, then he could have village settlement rights and become a member of the village. In addition, settlement rights in south China were shaped by the larger historical context of officially sponsored migration in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Migrants themselves were originally official, legitimate villagers, and they used legends of common ancestry to overcome group boundaries and promote mutual recognition and integration. In north China, in contrast, rural migrants were predominantly refugees who lacked official status and migrated of their own accord to escape natural disasters. Unlike in the south, settlement rights lacked any substantial relation to lineages. In the north, lineages were subject to

a completely different path of development. In south China, lineages emphasized symbolic and functional features like genealogies, ancestral halls, lineage property, and clan rules. In north China, lineages instead emphasized pragmatic forms like ancestral graves and pedigrees. This pragmatism was also manifested in the trials and efforts that migrants had to go through to acquire settlement rights. In north China, land and marriage were the essential factors by which migrants' settlement rights were measured. If migrants could not obtain land or housing in the village, and could not establish dependent or kin relations with residents, then they could not gain the acceptance of residents or settlement rights (of course, revolution is another method, but this is beyond the scope of this article). These are all pragmatic forms of settlement rights, in stark contrast to the symbolic meaning of recognizing common ancestry.

Rural north China's emphasis on pragmatic settlement rights is closely related to the structure of early modern villages in the region. Scholars agree that from a long-term perspective, north Chinese villages have been characterized by their insularity and cohesiveness, and many villages comprise communities linked through kinship, designed for self-cultivation, and organized through mutual cooperation and interaction. These communities are openly xenophobic, highly cohesive, and closed to outsiders.[4] By the early twentieth century, the commercialization of the rural economy and the deterioration of the environment, in addition to frequent warfare and natural disasters, seriously weakened the cohesiveness of these rural communities and tore apart their lineage organizations. These historical factors forced rural communities to change from inward-looking to outward-looking, providing an opportunity for migrants to join them. Large-scale migrations then created villages composed of villagers from

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[4] See for example the work of Philip Huang, Prasenjit Duara, Li Huaiyin, Lan Lingyou, Wang Jian'ge, and Xia Mingfang.

diverse origins and backgrounds, and further disintegrated the cohesiveness of these communities. This made it difficult for villages to regain a sense of collective, communal order, and cooperative functioning. To some degree, in the transformative process of modernization, the village was no longer a tightly closed community, but tended toward an open, diverse, and loosely organized coalition. At the same time, the increasingly open village in turn accelerated population movements between villages in north China, and accelerated the process of migrant settlement.

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Table 1. Migrant Origins and Destinations

Year	Origin				Destination		
	Hebei	Shandong	Henan	Other	South Shanxi	Central Shanxi	North Shanxi
1919	1,013	810	943	360	2,135	742	249
1920	2,759	615	3,808	728	5,933	1,712	264
1921	1,319	588	1,643	195	2,943	670	132
1922	1,681	846	1,350	314	3,187	1,284	105
1923	1,540	498	1,290	457	3,680	5,235	1,220
1924	907	404	1,042	403	3,994	2,371	1,289
1925	1,108	411	763	335	3,395	2,977	1,290
1926	2,128	342	1,137	506	3,687	6,035	1,221
Total	12,455	4,514	11,976	3,298	28,954	21,026	5,770
Percent	39%	14%	37%	10%	52%	38%	10%

Source: Department of Statistics, Shanxi Provincial Government, 1918–1926.

Notes: 1. To facilitate comparison, we have divided Shanxi into three regions. South Shanxi includes Jincheng, Linfen, Yuncheng, and Changzhi; Central Shanxi includes Taiyuan, Jinzhong, Lüliang, and Yangquan; North Shanxi includes Datong, Shuozhou, and Xinzhou.

2. The vast majority of immigrants to Central Shanxi settled in the provincial capital, Taiyuan.