



Village Production and the Self Identification of Village Communities

The Case of Fangshan District, Beijing

With the transformation of the urban-rural market system in the late Qing (1644–1911) and Republican periods (1912–1949), farmers in the rural hinterland of Beijing began using the agricultural slack season for handicraft production or coal mining. These activities diversified the economy from farming to include the production of special commodities. This article advances the concept of village production to examine both the modern transformations of village economic activities in this area and the villagers' experiences of integration into a larger market during the process. By highlighting these shared embodied experiences, this perspective will contribute to the study of China's rural society through understanding how the changes in village production played a role in constructing the villagers' self-identification with the village community.

KEYWORDS: village production—self-identification—embodiment

CHINA'S village communities and its rural culture are both based on agriculture. It is therefore essential for folklorists to describe the farmers' productive activities: how they use the available natural resources to make what kind of product, what sort of productive knowledge and skills the farmers possess, and what kind of productive organization, trade patterns, and consumption habits they form. Given that agriculture and handicraft production usually depend on and are defined by the lands within village boundaries, they establish what this article terms "territorial village production." This village production includes not only the material exchange of production but also the embodied experiences (*shenti jingyan* 身体经验) and perceptual knowledge (*ganxing zhishi* 感性知识) that farmers accumulate in specific production processes in their everyday lives. This understanding intends to integrate the production of material goods, trade activities, and other related folklore practices with the embodied experience of the self-identification of a village community. Thus, village production is viewed as a thread in the tapestry of a village's development, and its historical transformations directly relate to the reinforcement or collapse of a village community. As shown in the following case study of Beijing's rural economic transition at the beginning of the twentieth century, understanding the historical transformation of village production is of significant importance to the understanding of the economic forces at play in village community construction as well as the affinity of its village culture.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese sociologist and anthropologist FEI Xiaotong published his works (2012 [originally published 1939]; and FEI and ZHANG 2006 [originally published 1945]) that became exemplars for the study of rural economic and social transformation in Chinese coastal and hinterland regions. Through case descriptions and analysis, Fei's work offered a deep understanding of various aspects of rural economic life during the process of industrialization, especially changes in land use and ownership, labor technology, distribution, exchange, and consumption. Fei also proposed ways to resolve the problems of rural poverty and hunger, and suggested ways to reform land institutions and to improve the financial and market systems. In recent years, anthropological studies of village communities have refocused on changes made to rural economic life since industrialization. In addition to the analytical model established by Fei Xiaotong, recent scholarship has paid attention to the flow of gifts and collaborative forms of agri-

cultural production (YAN 2000; LUO 2000; ZHANG 2005).¹ This research seeks to better understand the self-identification and reconstruction of village communities through the operation of cultural and political capital and moral relationships (*renge yu daoyi guanxi* 人格与道义关系) in everyday life. This article takes the perspective of embodied folklore (*shenti minsu* 身体民俗) to suggest the concept of village production. It endeavors to describe and capture the fundamental changes to production and exchange in the social transformation of rural northern China, representing villagers' vivid oral and physical memories of this passing history.

The emphasis on village production is strongly shaped by my own fieldwork. When villagers told their life stories, their clearest memories—and the liveliest elements in their narration—were often of their everyday farming and productive activities. In addition, the emphasis on production accords with current disciplinary reflections in Chinese folklore scholarship. The cultural phenomena that folklorists have studied can mostly be characterized by embodied experiences, which seem to resonate with MAUSS's (2003) concept of “techniques of the body.” Folklore practices such as oral narration and performance, repeated collective ritual, the ways of body nurturing and training at various life stages, and different kinds of production and manufacturing techniques are parallel to Mauss's examples of “body techniques” through which individuals in different societies know how to use their bodies (MAUSS 2003, 301, 318).

Rather than being content with the textual documentation or classification of these practices, folklore research needs to be more concerned with the *embodied experiences* of these practices. It is necessary for folklorists to reconsider the data that is acquired through interviews, observations, or experience. In my view, approaching embodied experience (*shenti jingyan* 身体经验), referring to individual and collective bodily experiences in a particular society, can help us to better understand the meanings of folklore practices. And only by understanding these bodily experiences can folklorists more fully understand the way of living in that society (PENG 2010).² When studying a village community specifically, this approach can help folklorists to readjust their view to the often overlooked economic production and exchange activities in everyday life, and to appreciate the social changes in a village community.

Regarding research on the self-identification of a village (*cunluo rentong gan* 村落认同感) or the sense of local identity (*difang gan* 地方感), it is particularly crucial to take embodied experiences into consideration. This is because a group's sense of belonging to a place is intertwined with the embodied experiences of their social interaction. Previous scholarship, especially in the field of anthropology, has paid much attention to the construction of place identity in rural China. Stephan Feuchtwang's research in the 1990s focused on the support system of village community and the transformation of local traditions (WANG Sifu 2007; 2008, 291–327). In Feuchtwang's view, local identity in rural areas resulted from three systems, each of which could produce an identity of belonging to different boundaries. These systems include: (a) the system of the “natural village” (*ziran cun* 自然村); (b) the political system; and (c) the system of folk organizations that connect households, government, and economic activities through ties of kinship and friendship. Based

on case studies conducted in ten regions across different inland and coastal provinces, Feuchtwang developed tentative statistical models to measure the shifting strength of various types of place-based identities. By explaining the interrelation between political-social systems and the sense of local identity, Feuchtwang highlights the importance of understanding the farmers' lived experiences in the local context.

Adopting a similar approach, this article uses the concept of village production to explore the importance of local identity when villagers in northern rural China entered a new market system at the beginning of the twentieth century. It treats everyday productive activities, trade activities in the market, and village-based economic collaboration as integrated embodied experiences of this place identity. It focuses particularly on various folklore practices that can express these experiences, including the knowledge and techniques of production that were transmitted and circulated among the villagers through related folk narratives. In addition, it gives attention to historical documents and local gazetteers in order to better speak to oral narrative accounts.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE URBAN-RURAL ECONOMIC STRUCTURE IN MODERN BEIJING

Influenced by China's industrialization at the beginning of the twentieth century, the production and exchange activities of many villages in rural northern China, especially those that were close to cities and mines, became deeply enmeshed in national and international market systems. The farmers in Fangshan 房山, a rural district in western Beijing, became increasingly engaged in household sideline production during slack seasons, in addition to temporarily migrating out to work in industrial factories and mines. These villages developed competitive markets by taking advantage of resources and technology, and by investing the capital they had acquired during this process. This enabled villages to establish productive specializations in regional markets, as indicated by a popular saying in Fangshan, "small baskets from Qixian 七贤 village, big baskets from Yan 沿 village, and a group of small carts from Taihe 太合 village."

To better understand this transformation, it is necessary to understand the larger picture of shifting rural economic life in the modern history of Beijing. Before the Second Opium War (1856–1860), the economic relationship between Beijing city and the neighboring villages was basically unidirectional: the organization and production of agriculture, handicraft, mining, and transportation in the suburban areas were all directed to satisfying urban consumption. Nevertheless, this supply-demand relationship was not absolute. Chen Hua argues that a "Beijing economic circle" was already firmly in place during the Ming and Qing Dynasty. In this circle, Beijing as a city of huge consumption required massive imports from the outside, but also formed a relationship of mutual support with its surrounding areas (CHEN 1996, 70–78).

After 1860 however, Tianjin 天津, as a trading port and the base of the Westernization movement, was forced to open, growing to become the largest industrial-

commercial city in northern China, affecting the patterns of market competition in the entire region. Rural villages in northern China became the primary market for the foreign yarn and cloth imported through Tianjin, resulting in the decline of the family-based spinning and weaving handicraft shops on the one hand, and on the other, promoting the concentration of cotton farming in the area (QIAO and XING eds. 1998, 25; FAN 2007, 219–27). The expansion of markets for imported industrial commodities and the shifting economic structure also unquestionably affected economic production and exchange within rural society around Beijing. As their communities were incorporated into a larger market, villagers actively engaged in the circuit of production and trade based on their potential and resources, especially in the areas of sideline production, handicraft manufacturing, and transportation.

First, the mining industry in Beijing's suburban areas increased proportionally in importance and offered the rural population opportunities to become the labor force of the secondary industrial sector. Especially in western Beijing, coal mining developed rapidly after absorbing foreign investment and technology.³ In contrast to the modernization of industrial mining and transportation, the process of agricultural production itself had been barely modernized in the rural areas near Beijing. The output was even relatively devalued. Therefore, the farmers more frequently migrated out to work in mines in slack seasons: digging coal in mines, transporting coal by camels, or weaving coal-carrying twig baskets as a sideline production.⁴ These opportunities prompted the transformation of the village production from single-family farming to diversified, combined multiple production activities.

This transformation was manifested in the mountainous areas of western Beijing. Previously, the villagers had made their living by planting crops on hillsides, growing fruit trees, and collecting wild plants on the hills. After the large-scale coal mines opened, many young and middle-aged villagers chose to work there in the slack seasons from the fifth lunar month to the tenth, a pattern that was locally called “walking the pit” (*zouyao* 走窑) (LIU and YUE eds. 2006). In Raoyuefu 饶乐府 village, west of Fangshan district, there was an annual “September Temple Fair” (*jiuyue miao* 九月庙), at which coal pit owners customarily hired workers. The owners would pay some of the wages in advance only if the poor farmers found a guarantor and signed a contract making themselves responsible for all the risks of the work. These farmer-miners worked in the mines from the first of the ninth lunar month to the first day of the fifth lunar month the following year (WANG and HOU 2003, 95).

Second, changes in market commodities and social consumption each acted upon the other. Farmers bought more industrial commodities, such as cotton cloth, matches, and kerosene. This produced a new situation, in which the farmers, who had once offered agricultural products to urbanites, now became consumers of modern industrial manufacturing. Urban and rural areas each became sites of both marketing and production. In this process, a small group of farmers chose to act as sales agents for urban commodities or to provide services at various fairs, which led to the subtle change of their identity of being a farmer.

Third, in the modern transformation of Beijing's urban-rural market, traditional agriculture, sideline production, and handicraft manufacture in Beijing's suburban areas continuously responded to new development opportunities. For example, the "Eighteen Flower Villages" (*huaxiang shiba cun* 花乡十八村) were famous for flower production as early as the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) (YU and YING eds. 2011, 1537). A seventeenth-century document titled *Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略 (Brief guide to the sights and features of the imperial capital) stated that the area had "many springs, and was suitable for planting flowers. Thus the local people made a living selling flowers. The people sold hundreds of *dan* [石] in two hours and the flowers were dispersed throughout the capital city" (LIU and YU 1983, 120).⁵ Another example was Gaobeidian 高碑店 village, which was located along the Tonghui 通惠 river in modern-day Chaoyang 朝阳 district. Before the mid-Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), households mainly lived as porters to deliver water-transported grain, a practice known as "carrying the huge load" (*kong da ger* 扛大个儿). When the river silted up, grain transportation moved overland, and the villagers were forced to change their way of life, establishing businesses that sold fresh fish and goldfish in Beijing city. By the early twentieth century, the villagers had established self-protection organizations to secure their position during the transformation of Beijing's urban-rural market (BEIJING MINSU BOWUGUAN 2007, 100–25).

The commercialization of agricultural production in modern Beijing can also be seen in the growth of commerce and trade in Beijing's suburban areas, which were set up by local merchants and those from more distant places like Shanxi 山西 province. For example, in Dongba 东坝 village in Beijing's eastern suburbs, older villagers recalled a street traversing from west to east that during the Republican period (1911–1949) had 108 shops (BEIJING MINSU BOWUGUAN 2009, 32–33). Among these, the grain traders from central Shanxi province worked with local grain wholesale shops (*doujuzi* 斗局子) who then sold in Beijing city (BEIJING MINSU BOWUGUAN 2009, 18–19; 26–27). In sum, the shifting economic life of rural Beijing at the beginning of the twentieth century had a great impact on the everyday lives of the village communities, which was reflected in the combined, diversified, and specialized modes of village production.⁶

VILLAGE PRODUCTION: THE EMBODIED

EXPERIENCE OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION IN A VILLAGE COMMUNITY

The adjustment and reestablishment of village production did not result in the dissolution of the village communities. Instead, as the case of Yan village in Fangshan district in Beijing illustrates, the sense of belonging and identification was solidified and reinforced. According to older villagers, Yan village was formed no later than the early Qing Dynasty. Unlike the nucleated villages in north China, the households in Yan village were relatively dispersed. One possible reason was that the households with different surnames moved into the village with different social ranks, and thus their residences were physically separated from each other.

Before 1949, there was a total of 2,347 *mu* 亩 of farmland with over one *mu* per capita.⁷ Among these, 1,817 *mu* were dry land and 530 *mu* were irrigated rice fields. Dry land was mainly distributed around the village, mostly in the north, while the rice fields were located mainly on the banks of Spring River. Although the soil was poor in Yan village, the division of dry and paddy cropland meant that a harvest was guaranteed regardless of drought or flood. The Spring River provided water for the villagers to irrigate paddy fields and to assure the harvest even in drought years. Floods were averted because the terrain of the village drained off extra water from the river during the rainy months of July and August.

According to elder villagers, the craft of basket-weaving developed as a distinctive tradition in Yan village sometime prior to or around the late Qing Dynasty. The people in Yan village would go to the mountains to cut the twigs of the chasteberry tree (荆条 *jingtiao*) after every autumn harvest. After soaking, processing, and trimming, the twigs were woven into various appliances and tools. As this job required care and physical strength, it was generally only done by men. Women helped by cutting branches while the men would complete the weaving.

It takes three steps to weave a basket: making the base (*pudi* 铺底; *dadi* 打底); weaving the sides (*bianbang* 编帮); and wrapping the rim (*shayan* 刹沿; *shouyan* 收沿). To make the base, every three branches in a total of eight sets are aligned up from their root sections. Every two sets are interlaced together, with the length of the intertwined section equaling the diameter of the base. The center of the basket base then looks like the character 米. Then a set of several thinner weavers are used to twist around the 米-shaped spokes. The first circle is called small twine weave (*xiao wuhua* 小五花), and the second a large twine weave (*da wuhua* 大五花). This is followed by using a single thick branch to weave each of three circles outward from the center of the base (*da quantiao* 打圈条). The last part of laying out the base is to braid three weavers together and weave them around the base in circles (打三稍 *da sanshao*) (FIGURE 1). This also makes the spokes of the base tilting upwards. In addition, a strap made out of willow wood and a short wooden stick are inserted into the rim vertically to form the foot for the base, which can protect the base from wear and tear. In this process, one set of three new weavers (rods) are inserted into the weave for each spoke to increase the original eight sets in the base to sixteen sets.

The second step is to form the sides of the basket. A rope, which is indispensable for basket weaving, is used to tie all the sixteen sets of rods upwards at the top. Then a thicker branch is used each time to go under-and-over the rods in circles until the sides are finished with numerous rows. The third step is to wrap the rim. This should be done when the sides are six or seven *cun* 寸 (about 20 centimeters) high. The rods that go upwards need to be bent counterclockwise one by one and interlaced together tightly so that the rim can be securely locked (FIGURES 2, 3, 4). Villagers can finish weaving at least two durable and beautiful baskets a day.

A small number of basket-weaving craftsmen were scattered in the neighboring villages, but they were not as good as the ones in Yan village in terms of their



FIGURE 1. The process of basket-weaving (*da sanshao* 打三稍).
All photos by author.



FIGURE 2. Basket-weaving: wrapping the rim.



FIGURE 3: Selling baskets at morning markets.



FIGURE 4: A basket-carrying women viewed from behind.

weaving skills, the variety of the baskets they produced, or their production scale. Conversely, Yan village depended heavily on the craft. Just before 1949, more than two-thirds of families in Yan village were engaged in basket weaving and produced over thirty different kinds of products. Baskets from Yan village were famous in the Fangshan and Zhuozhou 涿州 areas for their quality and variety. In addition, a small number reached Beijing and Tianjin.

The rise of the basket-weaving industry in Yan village was made possible by its natural environment, given that the village was surrounded by mountains, rivers, and main roads. The people in Yan village could not only go to the mountains to cut the raw materials of twigs but also deliver and sell the twig baskets via the convenient roads. Beiquan River 北泉水, a branch of Juma 拒马 River, flowed through the south of Yan village. This river offered irrigation to the rice fields of Yan village and also provided the necessary conditions for soaking twigs, an important procedure in basket weaving.

However, the main reason for the collective turn to basket-weaving in Yan village was the change in supply-demand relations in modern markets. With the rise of the coal, lime burning, and transportation industries in this area, basket-weaving experienced a period of rapid growth (CAI 2009, 26–59). The rectangular-shaped twig baskets known as coal-pulling baskets (*la mei kuang* 拉煤筐) were in great demand by the industry. In addition, before 1950, many households specialized in making carrying baskets (*duankuang* 端筐), which were used in the lime kilns in Zhoukoudian 周口店 area.⁸

For all the benefits of this local industry, “walking the pit” in fact produced quicker slack-season income for Yan villagers than basket-weaving. In addition, basket-weaving was arduous work. The production process, from cutting and carrying back twigs to soaking, knocking off branches, and weaving, took a tremendous amount of time and was dirty work. The soaked twigs, also called “stinky twigs” (*chou tiaozizi* 臭条子) by the villagers, had a foul smell.

However, most people in Yan village still chose to make a living in basket-weaving. They thought this sort of work was more stable and safer than “walking the pit.” More importantly, although there were some people weaving baskets in other villages, because almost all of the men in Yan village engaged in this production to make a living, it had become a male tradition. The financial benefit of this skill and tradition provided an opportunity for these men to become economically sufficient and to achieve their social roles in the family and community, or as the Chinese idiom puts it, “to make one’s own home and establish oneself in business” (*chengjia liye* 成家立业). As the basket weaver Shao Pu 绍璞 (71 years old) recalled:

When I got married, my father was 72 years old, while my mother was 60. I was the only son and child of my family. One can hardly imagine how hard that life was. [Addressing his son] When your mother married into this family, she was carried in on a sedan chair. After that, it was not common for a bride to do that on her wedding day. All the money for the wedding was borrowed from relatives. After the wedding, my mother added up the expenses and found out we

owed over 20 RMB. She cried secretly. What could we do? My parents were old, while I had just gotten married and couldn't travel far. All I could do was to find a job at home. What job was there? The only option was weaving baskets. My father didn't know how to weave, so I learned weaving from my uncle. Weaving baskets didn't require much capital, and it was a fast way to earn money. Like the saying: "No breakfast in the morning yet, [but by weaving baskets one can earn enough to] buy a horse to ride at noon already." The baskets sold well in the past. By weaving some baskets, and bringing them to the market, one could get cash immediately. I saved the money that I earned from weaving baskets bit by bit for the difficult years of famine. I have done it for my whole life since I started it. (Quoted in CAI 2009, 33)

Thus, for Yan villagers, engaging in basket-weaving was more than learning a skill to make a living. They viewed it as an important life choice they made after they reached adulthood. Shao Pu's narrative shows that basket-weaving as a productive tradition not only generated shared experiences and strengthened the emotional bond among family or clan members, it also signified the manhood and social identity that was defined by marriage and economic independence.

Basket-weaving production in Yan village also contributed to the rise of village-based folk beliefs and related practices (CAI 2009, chapter 5). Unlike villages in the plains areas, Yan villagers often went to the mountains to the north to cut the twigs as part of the production process. Due to this distinctive activity, they held beliefs that were not found in other villages in this area, specifically that a deity resided in the mountains and could protect the twig-cutting villagers from wolves. According to local legends, this mountain deity rode on a pack of wolves. The villagers spoke of sighting a group of people in the distance when climbing the mountains. But upon approaching, the people turned out to be a pack of wolves and then disappeared in a flash.

Related to this belief, Yan village also had an organization called the "mountain deity society" (*shanshen hui* 山神会). According to villagers, the number of societies dedicated to the deity had reached seven or eight in the Republican period. Each society was organized by over a dozen households, of whom one was selected as "incense master" (*xiangtou* 香头). This person was tasked with raising a pig that would be offered at the end of the lunar year. On the morning of the first day of the lunar New Year, all the mountain deity societies gathered on a small hill in the north of the village to offer sacrifice and worship the deity. After the ceremony, each society's members gathered in the *xiangtou's* home to share the offerings and discuss who would occupy the role in the coming year. In Yan village, the mountain deity society was banned in 1958.

The distinctive folk beliefs in Yan village show how the shift in village production became intertwined with religious rituals and practices. Through shared and embodied religious experiences, these rituals and practices effectively channeled collective concerns and hopes related to their shared economic productive activities (twig-cutting and basket-weaving). Identification with the village community was further solidified in this process. CAI Lei's investigation (2009) of worship in vil-

lages near Yan village revealed that the mountain deity was a common regional tutelary deity, and that each village had his temple. For villages in the plains area, even those close to mountains, however, this temple did not exist. Located in a plain, yet bordered by mountains, Yan villagers worshiped the mountain deity although they did not have a temple. This integration of mountain deity worship might result from their basket-weaving, as they had to go into the mountains to cut and collect a large amount of twigs. Another reason that contributed to their special belief was that the natal families of many Yan village women were in mountain areas.

Mountain deity worship by Yan villagers differed from that of mountain villages in three ways. First, there was no mountain deity temple in Yan village. Second, the liturgical unit was not an individual family but the mountain deity-worshipping societies, each of which involved several families. Third, the aim of worship was different from that seen in mountain villages. In the remote mountain village of Shengshuiyu 圣水峪, for example, the first day of the first lunar month, every family would go to the mountain deity temple to burn incense and give offerings. One requirement for the offerings was three bowls of dumplings, in which the number of dumplings in each bowl should be odd; this was the so-called “god is three while ghost is four” (*shen san gui si* 神三鬼四) or “god is odd while ghost is even” (*shen dan gui shuang* 神单鬼双), as the number of offerings for ghosts should be even. On the first and fifteenth days of other lunar months, some families would offer incense and candles for the mountain deity, or kneel in the direction of his temple. Mountain villagers held that the deity would protect people from being hurt by wild animals as he was in charge of them. People who herded sheep on mountains wished that the mountain deity would protect their sheep from being eaten by wolves. Those working in dangerous limekilns and quarries asked him to secure their physical safety. In contrast, Yan villagers’ asked for an abundant harvest of twigs and safe return.

As Yan villagers grew more involved in industrial or handicraft production, they became much more active in various activities of deity worship.⁹ This sense of identification and belonging can be further seen through the ways that villagers connected the basket-weaving tradition with the image of their own village. Given the market that Yan villagers’ baskets occupied, the villagers took the quality of the baskets and the reputation for doing honest business into consideration. This had earned Yan village the image of being the most recognized basket-weaving production site in the local area. I interviewed a basket-weaver who was in his seventies, who said of the baskets that the villagers now brought to the market, “I cannot stand looking at them [because of their poor quality].” This elder basket-weaver had engaged in this production his whole life, to the point that his fingers had been deformed by the arduous work. On the one hand, his comment reflects a nostalgia for the days when Yan village’s basket-weaving tradition was at its peak; on the other, it also reveals how this tradition of economic production and his embodied experiences of practicing this tradition had become a vital component of his self-identification as a Yan villager. It is not surprising to see his dissatisfaction with the

poor basket-weaving skills of the current Yan villagers, which has uprooted what used to be an important signifier of village image and identity.

CONCLUSION

Through this reading of shifting economic life in Fangshan district, Beijing, we can see how Yan villagers established a combined, diversified production in addition to agricultural farming, such as seasonal work in coal mines or basket-weaving production and trade. This transformation was shaped by numerous factors, including industrial development, the expansion of industrial commodities, and changes to the urban-rural market structure.

In the historical process of adjusting their economic activities and reestablishing their production, the village communities in rural areas near Beijing were not weakened or disassembled. Instead, their sense of belonging and self-identification were solidified. This can be accounted for by the fact that farming still had a significant place in the villagers' economic life. Commodity production (that is, basket-weaving) was still based in the village. Even when people migrated out to do temporary jobs, they returned to their village homes.

In the context of the industrial development and the commercialization of rural economic life in modern Beijing, the process of integration into a larger market also endowed village communities with new roles and functions. Though individual households each made their own livelihood, villages tended to specialize due to the similarity of resources, skills, and market position. Their collective experiences of engaging the market and interacting with the outside world became another venue to deepen identification with village communities. This was also one of the main reasons why temple ritual practices, which reflected the order of village life and the villagers' identity with place, became so prosperous in this area in the late Qing and Republican periods when the modern transformation of village production took place.

A village's production is more than a structure or typology of a village's economic structure. It is a practice of collaboration within a village community, and a series of active choices that integrates it into production and trade circuits. This process is defined by the embodied, shared experience among the villagers and continuous exchange, which enables these experiences to play an important role in the construction of self-identity with the village community. Although the fate of a village community in contemporary China is beyond the scope of this article, understanding village production with an embodied approach will enable us to more reflectively dwell over the issue of a village community as villages in China undergo rapid urbanization and marketization.

NOTES

1. By looking at the collaborative farming activities that centered on the sharing of draft animals (*datao* 搭套) in rural North China, ZHANG (2005) examines the relationship between

the sense of a village community and the pragmatic benefits of these individually-based collaborations, as well as the decline of rural collaboration in modern China.

2. Folklore studies in the West indicated early interest in the question of the body when taking oral traditions and folk beliefs as their research focus, but this interest only recently became a self-consciously engaged field within the discipline. PENG (2010) points out that the study of embodiment and bodylore in American folklore research was influenced by the philosophic thinking in phenomenology and existentialism on the one hand and the sociological and anthropological research on the body on the other.

3. The initial purpose of British investment in the coal mines of Mentougou 门头沟 district, Beijing, was to secure coal for foreign ships in trading ports (BEIJING SHI MENTOUGOU QU ZHENGXIE WENSHI ZILIAO WEIYUANHUI 2005, 62; 230–31).

4. The wild twigs on local hills were widely used in the mining industry. The twigs could be packed into bundles and functioned as supporting poles of the pits. They could also be weaved into back-baskets or carriage-baskets to carry coal and so on (BEIJING SHI MENTOUGOU QU ZHENGXIE WENSHI ZILIAO WEIYUANHUI 2005, 596–97).

5. One *dan* is roughly 50 kilograms.

6. This phenomenon was not only limited to Beijing, and it could also be seen in other regions in northern China. For example, the export demand of agricultural and husbandry products through Tianjin led to the rise of a fur-leather trade market in Xinji 辛集 town in Shulu 束鹿 County, Hebei 河北 province. This market directly influenced village production in surrounding villages, which engaged in the fur-leather processing industry, especially the specialized production of leather whips (LI 1998, 165).

7. One *mu* equals roughly 0.0667 hectares (667 square meters).

8. It was not until plastic products became readily available in the early 1990s that the basket-weaving industry in Yan village started to decline. Today's younger generations are barely interested in learning basket-weaving. The youngest basket weaver is over 50 years old, and the craft is facing extinction (CAI 2009).

9. Another example of this phenomenon can be seen in Hetaogou 河套沟 village in the northern Fangshan district. This village used to hold its annual Heilongguan Temple Fair (Heilongguan miaohui 黑龙关庙会) at lunch on 2 February. At the fair, various societies converged in the temple of the dragon king to offer sacrifice and entertain the deity. This temple fair was extraordinarily lively in late Qing and Republican China, coinciding with the time when villagers migrated for temporary work in coal mines.

REFERENCES

- BEIJING MINSU BOWUGUAN 北京民俗博物馆, ed.
 2007 *Gaobeidian cun minsu wenhua zhi* 高碑店村民俗文化志 [Annals of folk culture in Gaobeidian village]. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
 2009 *Dongba minsu wenhua zhi* 东坝民俗文化志 [Annals of folk culture in the Dongba area]. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe.
- BEIJING SHI MENTOUGOU QU ZHENGXIE WENSHI ZILIAO WEIYUANHUI
 北京市门头沟区政协文史资料委员会 (CPPCC Committee of Cultural and Historical Data of Mentougou District of Beijing), ed.
 2005 *Jingxi meiyue* 京西煤业 [The coal industry in western Beijing]. Hong Kong: Xianggang Yinhe Chubanshe.
- CAI Lei 蔡磊
 2009 Shouyi laozuo moshi yu cunluo shehui de jiangou: Fangshan Yancun biankuang shouyi de kaocha 手艺劳作模式与村落社会的建构—房山沿村编筐

手工艺的考察 [The mode of craftsmanship production and the construction of the village community: The study of basket-weaving in Yan village, Fangshan]. PhD dissertation, Beijing Normal University.

CHEN Hua 陈桦

1996 *Qingdai quyue shehui jingji yanjiu* 清代区域社会经济研究 [Regional social economic development in the Qing Dynasty]. Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe.

FAN Rusen 樊如森

2007 *Tianjin yu beifang jingji xiandaihua* 天津与北方经济现代化 (1860-1937) [Tianjin and economic modernization in northern China: 1860-1937]. Shanghai: Dongfang Chubanshe.

FEI Xiaotong 费孝通

2012 *Jiangcun jingji* 江村经济 [Peasant life in China: A field study of country life in the Yangtze Valley]. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe. (Originally published as Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*, with a preface by Bronislaw Malinowski. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939.)

FEI Xiaotong and ZHANG Zhiyi 张之毅

2006 *Yunnan san cun* 云南三村 [Earthbound China: A study of the rural economy in Yunnan]. Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe. (Originally published as Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih-I Chang, *Earthbound China: A Study of the Rural Economy in Yunnan*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1945.)

LI Zhenghua 李正华

1998 *Xiangcun jishi yu xiandai shehui: Ersshi shiji qianbanqi Huabei xiangcun jishi yanjiu* 乡村集市与现代社会—20世纪前半期华北乡村集市研究 [The village market and modern society: Research on the village markets in rural Northern China in the first half of the twentieth century]. Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe.

LIU Tieliang 刘铁梁 and YUE Yongyi 岳永逸, eds.

2006 *Zhongguo minsu wenhua zhi: Beijing Mentougou qu juan* 中国民俗文化志北京门头沟区卷 [Annals of Chinese folk culture: The Mentougou district of Beijing]. Beijing: Zhongyang Bianyi Chubanshe.

LIU Tong 刘侗 and YU Yizheng 于奕正

1983 *Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略 [Brief guide to the sights and features of the imperial capital]. Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe. (Originally published 1635.)

LUO Hongguang 罗红光

2000 *Budengjia jiaohuan: Weirao caifu de laodong yu xiaofei* 不等价交换—围绕财富的劳动与消费 [Exchange of unequal values: Wealth around work and consumption]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe.

MAUSS, Marcel 马塞尔·毛斯

2003 *Shehuixue yu renleixue* 社会学与人类学 [Sociology and anthropology]. Trans. She Biping 余碧平. Shanghai: Shanghai Yiwenshe. (Originally published as Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*, precede d'une introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss par Claude Lévi-Strauss. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.)

PENG Mu 彭牧

- 2010 *Minsu yu shenti: Meiguo minsuxue de shenti yanjiu* 民俗与身体—美国民俗学的身体研究 [Folklore and the body: Research on embodiment in American folklore]. *Minsu yanjiu* 3: 16–32.

QIAO Zhiqiang 乔志强 and XING Long 行龙, eds.

- 1998 *Jindai Huabei nongcun shehui bianqian* 近代华北农村社会变迁 [Social transformations of modern rural north China]. Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe.

WANG Shaoqing 王邵清 and HOU Zhiyang 侯之扬

- 2003 *Min'guo shiqi de Fangshan shangye* 民国时期的房山商业 [Fangshan trades in Republican China]. In *Fangshan wenshi ziliao quanbian* 房山文史资料全编 [Complete works of cultural and historical data of Fangshan], vol. 1, 89–96, restricted internal publication.

WANG Sifu 王斯福 (Stephan Feuchtwang)

- 2007 *Shenme shi cunluo* 什么是村落 [What is a village?]. *Zhongguo nongye daxue xuebao* 1: 15–32.
- 2008 *Diguo de yinyu: Zhongguo minjian zongjiao* 帝国的隐喻—中国民间宗教. Trans. Zhao Xudong 赵旭东. Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe. (Originally published as Stephan Feuchtwang, *The Imperial Metaphor: Popular Religion in China*. London: Routledge, 1992.)

YAN Yunxiang 阎云翔

- 2000 *Liwu de liudong: Yige Zhongguo cunzhuang zhong de huhui yuanze yu shehui wangluo* 礼物的流动—一个中国村庄中的互惠原则与社会网络. Trans. Fangcun Li 李放春 and Yu Liu 刘瑜. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe. (Originally published as Yan Yunxiang, *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.)

YU Minzhong 于敏中 and YING Lian 英廉, eds.

- 2011 *Rixia jiuwen kao* 日下旧闻考 [Current study on old news]. Beijing: Beijing Guji Chubanshe. (Originally published 1788.)

ZHANG Si 张思

- 2005 *Jindai Huabei cunluo gongtongti de bianqian: Nonggeng jiehe xiguan de lishi renleixue kaocha* 近代华北村落共同体的变迁—农耕结合习惯的历史人类学考察 [Changes to village communities in modern north China: A historical, anthropological study on the custom of collaborative farming]. Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan.