

Ellen Oxfeld
Sociology/Anthropology Department
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont 05753

PERSONAL

Born--November 6, 1953 in Newark, New Jersey

EDUCATION

B. A. Williams College: Major in History 1975
A.M. Harvard University: Regional Studies/East Asia 1977
Ph.D. Harvard University: Social Anthropology 1985

ACADEMIC HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Phi Beta Kappa, Williams College
Magna Cum Laude, Williams College
Highest Honors in History, Williams College
Thomas J. Watson Travel Fellowship, 1975-1976
(Travel, study and research in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand and India)
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, 1978-1979 and 1979-1980
American Institute of Indian Studies, Junior Fellowship, 1981-1982
National Research Fellowship, 1981-1982
Winner of the 1996 Thomas and Znaniecki Award from the
American Sociological Association Section on International Migration (for 1993 book *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong: Family and Enterprise in an Overseas Chinese Community*)
Fulbright Fellowship, January through June 2007, for research on the changing food system in rural China

RESEARCH

Sept/October 2012, and May/June 2010: fieldwork in rural Meixian on local food culture.

January to June 2007: fieldwork in rural Meixian, Guangdong, China on changing meanings and uses of food in local culture.

July to August 1993, September '95 to June'96, July to August 1997 -- Fieldwork in Meixian, Guangdong, China, on the use of concepts of morality and status in the daily lives of rural Chinese

July, 1989, Calcutta, India -- research on Calcutta Chinese community

July, 1986, Toronto, Canada -- research on Indian Chinese who immigrated to Canada

June 1985 to August 1985, Calcutta, India -- research on Calcutta Chinese community

July 1980 to September 1982, Calcutta, India -- doctoral dissertation research amongst Chinese community in Calcutta, India

June 1979 to August 1979, Calcutta, India -- feasibility study for doctoral research on overseas Chinese community in tanning industry of Calcutta, India.

Spring, 1979 -- research on Indo-Chinese refugees for Professor Judith Strauch, Harvard University Anthropology Department

LANGUAGES

Mandarin Chinese and French -- competent in reading, speaking and writing
Bengali -- elementary speaking
Hakka Chinese -- intermediate speaking

DOCTORAL THESIS

"The Limits of Entrepreneurship: Family Process and Ethnic Role Amongst Chinese Tanners of Calcutta."

PUBLICATIONS (Books)

Bitter and Sweet: Food, Meaning, and Modernity in Rural China (University of California Press, 2017).

"Drink Water, but Remember the Source": Moral Discourse in a Chinese Village. (University of California Press, 2010).

Coming Home? Immigrants, Refugees and Those Who Stayed Behind, Ellen Oxfeld and Lynellyn Long, eds. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Blood, Sweat and Mahjong: Family and Enterprise in an Overseas Chinese Community, (Cornell University Press, 1993). Winner of the 1996 Thomas and Znaniecki Award from the American Sociological Association Section on International Migration

PUBLICATIONS (refereed articles and book chapters).

"Comment." In *Current Anthropology*, Volume 61, Number 4, August 2020, pp. 408-9. (Commentary part of a published discussion of the article "Ethics of the Heart: Moral Breakdown and the Aporia of Chinese Volunteers," by Rundong Ning and David A. Palmer in same issue).

"The moral registers of banqueting in contemporary China." In special issue of *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* ("Moral Economies of Food in Contemporary China" guest-edited by Anders Sybrandt Hansen and Mikkel Bunkenborg, pp 322-339), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868102620904251>. First published, March 3 2020.

"Life-cycle rituals in rural and urban China: birth, marriage and death" pp. 110-132, in *Handbook on Religion in China*, edited by Stephan Feuchtwang, (Edward Elgar, 2020).

"Bitter Greens and Sweet Potatoes: Food Practice and Memories of Hunger in Rural China", pp. 166-179, in *Food Insecurity: A Matter of Justice, Sovereignty, and Survival*, edited by Tamar Mayer and Molly Anderson, (Routledge 2020).

"Rural Chinese Families: The Continuing Relevance of Moral Obligation," in *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Culture and Society*, pp. 174-194, edited by Kevin Latham (Routledge, 2020).

"Moral discourse, moral practice, and the rural family in modern China," in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850-present*, edited by Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely and John Lagerwey (Brill, 2015)

"The Moral Significance of Food in Reform Era Rural China," in *Ethical Food Movements in Post-Socialist Societies*, edited by Melissa Caldwell, Yusun Song, and Jakob Klein. (University of California Press, 2014).

"Cross Border Hypergamy? A Look at Marriage Exchanges in a Transnational Hakka Community." (In *Cross-Border Marriages*, edited by Nicole Constable, University of Pennsylvania Press: 2005).

"When You Drink Water, Think of Its Source: Morality, Status, and Reinvention in Rural Chinese Funerals" *Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 63,#3: November 2004..

"The Man Who Sold the Collective's Land: Understanding New Economic Regimes in Guangdong." (*Taiwan Journal of Ethnology*, Volume 2, #1, June 2004. Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica. Special issue on "Learning and Economic Agency in China and Taiwan," Edited by Charles Stafford).

"Chinese Villagers and the Moral Dilemmas of Return Visits." In *Coming Home? Immigrants, Refugees and Those Who Stayed Behind*. (Ellen Oxfeld and Lynellyn Long, eds., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

"Toward an Ethnography of Return." (Co-authored with Lynellyn Long). In *Coming Home? Immigrants, Refugees and Those Who Stayed Behind*. (Ellen Oxfeld and Lynellyn Long, eds., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

"Still Guest People: The Reproduction of Hakka Identity in Calcutta, India." In: *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad* (Nicole Constable, ed.). University of Washington Press, 1996

"Individualism, Holism and the Market Mentality: Notes on the Recollections of a Chinese Entrepreneur," *Cultural Anthropology*, August 1992, Volume 7, #2:267-300

"The Sexual Division of Labor and The Organization of Family and Firm in an Overseas Chinese Community," *American Ethnologist*, November 1991, Volume 18, #4: 700-718

"Profit, Loss and Fate: Gambling and the Entrepreneurial Ethic in an Overseas Chinese Community," *Modern China*, April 1991, Vol. 17, #2:227-259

ENCYCOPAEDIA ENTRIES

"Chinese in India." In *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, published by Human Relations Area Files, Inc., Carol Ember (Ed.). Kluwer Academic Publishers: 2005.

"India" in *The Encyclopaedia of the Chinese Overseas*, Archipelago Press, Landmark Books. Lynn Pan, Editor, 1998.

REVIEWS, REPRINTS, AND NON-REFEREED ARTICLES

The China Journal, No. Volume 93, Issue 1, January 2025, pp. 187-88. Review of *Hakka Women in Tulou Villages: Social and Cultural Constructs of Hakka Identity in Modern and Contemporary Fujian, China*, by Sabrina Ardizzoni, Leiden, Brill, 2022.

The China Journal, No. 86, July 2021, pp. 181-182. Review of *The Chinese Pursuit of Happiness: Anxieties, Hopes, and Moral Tensions in Everyday Life*, edited by Becky Yang Hsu and Richard Madsen. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019

Review of *Negotiating Rural Land Ownership in Southwest Rural China: State, Village, Family* Yi Wu Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016 in *The China Quarterly*, [Volume 239](#), September 2019. pp. 823-825.

Review of *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*. James L. Watson and Rubie S. Watson. The Chinese University Press. In *The China Journal*, Vol. 58, July 2007.

Review of *God Aboveground: Catholicism and Transnationalism in a Chinese Village*, by Eriberto Lozada. In *The China Journal*, Issue 53, January 2005.

Review of *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*, by Jun Jing. In *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* (2001).

"Imaginary Homecomings: Chinese Villagers, Their Overseas Chinese Relations, and Social Capital." *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, March 2001, Vol.30, #2 (181-186).

"Blood, Sweat and Mahjong," in *Race and Ethnicity: Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*, John Stone and Rutledge Dennis, eds. Blackwell, 2003. [Reprint of introduction to *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong*, Cornell 1993].

Review of *Migration and Ethnicity in Chinese History: Hakkas, Pengmin and Their Neighbors*. Tim Wright, ed. In *American Anthropologist*, Vol.101,#2, June 1999.

PAPERS PRESENTED

"Moral Restoration or Moral Transformation? Rural Returns and Ritualized Commensality during the Lunar New Year," paper presented at conference "Spiritual Crisis and Moral Transformation in Contemporary China," November 12-13, 2021, University of Rochester

"Magical Conviviality: Banqueting As Ritualized Performance in Rural China." Prepared for the panel, "The Politics of Ritualization and the Ritualization of Politics in East Asia" (AAA Annual Meeting, November 20, 2015).

"Food, Meaning, and Morality in Reform Era Rural China," paper prepared for "Food systems, ethical systems and post-socialism." Joint 2014 Annual Meetings and Conference of the Association for the Study of Food and Society and the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society (Collaboration and Innovation across the Food System), Burlington, Vermont (University of Vermont), June 21, 2014.

"Moral discourse, moral practice and the rural family in modern China," paper prepared for "Modern Chinese religion: 1850-present." International conference, Chinese University of Hong Kong, December 12-15, 2012.

"Feeding the Generations: Intergenerational Care and Food Exchanges in Rural China." Prepared for the panel, "The Political Economy and Cultural Practice of Care in Contemporary China," November 17, 2011, American Anthropological Association.

"Food and Moral Discourse in Reform Era Rural China: An Incipient Resistance?" Paper prepared for Ethical Foods and Food Movements in Post-Socialist Settings." SOAS Food Studies Centre, University of London, May 11-13, 2011

"Nature, culture and commodity: The circulation of foodstuffs and the exchange of health, status and meanings in rural Meixian," American Anthropological Association Meetings, Panel, "An Inconvenient Circulation: Global and Local Dynamics of Food Production and Consumption," November 19, 2010.

"Bitter Greens and Sweet Potatoes: Food as Embodied Memory in Rural Meixian." SEAA Conference, Taipei, Taiwan, July 2009.

"*Liangxin*: The Idea of Conscience in the Moral Discourse of a Rural Chinese Community." SEAA Conference, Hong Kong, July 13-16, 2006.

"Slow Food:" Countercurrents to Food "Modernity" in Contemporary Rural China." American Anthropological Association, Annual Meetings, November 2005, Washington, DC.

"The Moral Dilemmas of Return Visits: Guangdong Villagers and their Overseas Kin," Association for Asian Studies Meeting, March 2004, San Diego, California.

"The Man Who Sold the Collective's Land: Understanding New Economic Regimes in Guangdong." Presented at Workshop on Learning and the Chinese Economy, London School of Economics, May 18, 2002.

"The Woman Without a Daughter-in-Law: Gender, Power and Economic Transformation in a Chinese Village." Presented at Research Seminar on Anthropological Theory, May 24, 2002. London School of Economics.

"Cross-Border Hypergamy? A Look at Marriage Exchanges in a Transnational Hakka Community." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. November 2001, Washington, DC.

"The Woman Without a Daughter-In-Law: A New Balance of Power Within Rural Chinese Families?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 1999, Boston.

"The Daughter Who Didn't Cry at Her Father's Funeral: Status, Conscience and Heterodoxy in Rural Chinese Death Ritual." Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 1998, Washington, D.C.

"Imaginary Homecomings: The Moral Discourse of Chinese Villagers Toward Their Overseas Chinese Relations." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 1997, Washington, D.C.

"In a Different Voice? Chinese Women and Sociocentrism." Paper presented at the New England Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, October 10, 1992, Boston University

"Still 'Guest People': The Reproduction of the Hakka Identity in Calcutta, India," April 1991, Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies.

"Is 'East' to 'West' as Holism is to Individualism? Notes on the Recollections of a Chinese Entrepreneur," November 1989, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association

"Profit, Loss and Fate: Gambling and the Entrepreneurial Ethic in an Overseas Chinese Community," March 1989 -Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies

"Intimacy, Festivity and Connections: Married Daughters and their Parents in an Overseas Chinese Community," March 1988, Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies

"Family Strategy and Middleman Minority Theory: A Missing Link" December 1985, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association

"Women, Family Structure and the Division of Labor in Chinese Operated Tanneries of Calcutta, India" March 1984, Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies

"Family Structure and the Productive Process in Chinese Operated Tanneries of Calcutta, India"
November 16, 1983, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago,
Illinois

RECENT PUBLIC LECTURES:

"Rural returns and ritualized commensality during the Lunar New Year: restoration or transformation of moral communities?" Centre for China Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China Studies Webinar, March 14, 2022.

"Food and Moral Predicaments in Rural China: Past and Present," University of Vermont, January 28, 2015. Sponsored by Graduate Program in Food Systems.

"Moral Discourse in a Chinese Village," April 2006, Ilsley Library, Middlebury (sponsored by Vermont Endowment for Humanities).

"The Culture of Food in Rural China," April 2008 Hubbard Library, Montpelier (sponsored by Vermont Endowment for Humanities), and July 2008 (Hakka Roundhouse Reunion, Toronto, Canada).

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Society for East Asian Anthropology, American Anthropological Association, Board Member and President (2022-2023).

Tenure external review for candidate in Brown University Anthropology Department (2021)

External review committee for Anthropology Department at Davidson College (January 2006).

Doctoral dissertation reviews in anthropology for University of Helsinki, Australian National University, and CUNY Graduate Center.

Manuscript Reviews for Cornell University Press, Cambridge University Press, Stanford University Press, Academia Sinica, Institute of Ethnology Press, University of Pennsylvania Press, Berghahn, Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, *American Ethnologist*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Journal of Ritual Studies*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (formerly *Man*), *Anthropological Quarterly* and *Current Anthropology*, *The China Journal*, *Current Anthropology*, *Journal of Material Culture*, *Identities*, *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, *Journal of Chinese Religions*, *Asian Anthropology*, *Global Food History*, *Hau*, and *Gastronomica*

Chair and organizer of panel entitled, "Coming Home? Immigrants, Refugees and Those Who Stayed Behind," Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 1997.

Chair and organizer of panel entitled, "Women and Flexible Accumulation in China: Economic Restructuring of Familial Power Dynamics," Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 1999.

Co-Organizer and chair of panel entitled, "Persona, Practice and Political Economy," November 1989, Invited Session of General Anthropology Division and Society for Psychological Anthropology at Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association

Chair and organizer of panel entitled, "So you really want a Daughter? Parents, Daughters and the Shadow Structure of Chinese Kinship", March, 1988, Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian

Studies

Chair and Organizer of panel entitled, "Marriage Payments and Society in Contemporary China and India: Towards a Reevaluation," April 1987, Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Professor of Anthropology, Middlebury College, 1997 - present.

Associate Professor of Anthropology, Middlebury College Sociology/Anthropology Department, Fall 1992- 1997.

Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Middlebury College Sociology/Anthropology Department, Fall 1985-August 1992

Teaching Fellow, Havard University Anthropology Department: Spring and Fall Semesters 1979; Spring Semester 1980

COURSES TAUGHT

Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology
Global Consumptions: Food and Power in Comparative Perspective
From Famine to Feasting: The Role of Food in Chinese Culture
Topics in Anthropological Theory
The Anthropology of Food
The Anthropology of China
Race and Ethnicity Across Cultures
Gender, Culture and Power
Post-Communist Societies? Russia and China Compared
Foods and Feasting in Chinese and Indian Societies
Ethnography of India
Versions of the Foreign
The Cultural Revolution: Memoir, History and Fiction

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Champlain Valley Organization of Economic Opportunity Board of Directors: 1991 to 2010 (Board President, 1994-1995).

Vermont Health Care for All, Board Member since 2005, Board Vice-President, 2010 to present.
Educational and organizing work on the issue of single payer health care in Vermont since 1997

REFERENCES

Available upon request.