

Food, Famine, and the Chinese State —A Symposium

Editor's Note

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The Workshop on Food and Famine in Chinese History sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, was held at the John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University, from August 5 to 25, 1980. The workshop brought together young scholars whose research is related to food supply, food distribution, and food crises, to discuss problems of common interest and to learn from specialists in regional systems, hydraulic engineering, geography, agricultural economics, demography, and sociology how the methods and models of their fields might be applied to the study of food supply and famine in China. Essays by three participants preceded by an introductory article by Lillian M. Li, organizer of the workshop, are published here in revised form as examples of the types of research currently being undertaken on these topics. A comment by Paul R. Greenough, author of a book on the 1943 Bengal famine (1982) and an auditor at the workshop, concludes the symposium.

Members of the workshop were: David D. Buck (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), Robert Eric Entenmann (Harvard University), François Godement (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales), James Lee (California Institute of Technology), Lillian M. Li (Swarthmore College), Mira Ann Mihelich (Haverford College), James E. Nickum (Cornell University), Jean C. Oi (Lehigh University), Peter C. Perdue (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Pierre-Etienne Will (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales), R. Bin Wong (Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan), and Roy S. Yim (Oxford University). Consultants at the workshop were: Jared L. Cohon (The Johns Hopkins University), Michelle B. McAlpin (Tufts University), Jane Menken (Princeton University), G. William Skinner (Stanford University), Vaclav Smil (University of Manitoba), Charles Tilly (University of Michigan), and Thomas B. Wiens (The World Bank).

The papers published here are noteworthy not only for the substantive content but also for the sources that underpin much of the work. The three historical papers draw on some sources that have only recently become available to scholars outside China. Some are located in the Palace Museum Archives in Taipei, and some in the Number One Historical Archives in Beijing. The types of material used and the richness of the archives will undoubtedly serve to greatly expand the research agenda for China. In order to demonstrate some possibilities, the journal has published here extraordinarily detailed notes and citations. We have attempted to be consistent in the style of the citations, the abbreviations used, and other such matters. However, there are always substantial constraints in terms of space. Accordingly, the final bibliography of James Lee does not include the primary sources that are part of the support materials used in the construction of his charts. Readers with queries about the work are invited to correspond with Professor Lee.

A second matter of interest to our readers will be the review procedures for this symposium. The editor initiated discussions about the symposium, the first complete draft of the symposium was read by three anonymous referees, all of whom offered recommendations necessary for revisions. This symposium benefited from the rigor of their comments. The readers and authors owe a debt to these three individuals.

The articles in this symposium are based on a variety of data sources. In reporting those data, the editorial office is well aware that "There is no simple, consistent system of style for the use of numbers in textual matters" (*A Manual of Style*, 1969:196). In general, we have attempted to maintain consistency in the use of numbers of words within an article or within a "region" of an article, e.g., within a section or paragraph.

We have started from the general guideline that exact numbers of less than 100 should be written out as words and numbers of 100 or more should be in numbers. However, important exceptions are observed, which are briefly summarized here. (1) Numbers are always used for (a) years, (b) percentages, (c) money, (d) references to parts of a book or article, and (e) statistics or measurements in a "region" of quantitative material. (2) If the largest number applicable to the same category throughout a "region" of an article is 100 or more, numbers should be used for all in that category. (3) Thousands under 100 thousand should be written out; thousands of 100 or more should be in numbers and units. (4) Millions and billions should be in numbers and units. With respect to (3) and (4), the term of (1e) take precedence.

Substantial assistance in facilitating the drafts of the work, coordinating the papers, and providing informed thought and judgment about matters was graciously given by Lillian M. Li. I wish to acknowledge her contribution. Dr. B. Bartlett kindly provided assistance in the development of the list of abbreviations.