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Global Families

A History of Asian International Adoption in America

Catherine Ceniza Choy



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The Hong Kong Project

Chinese International Adoption in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s

Without a doubt, China plays a key role in the American public's understanding of international adoption in the United States. Newspaper and magazine articles about the phenomenon abound. Although Americans also adopt large numbers of Eastern European, Latin American, and other Asian children, Chinese girls have become the poster children of international and transracial adoption, if not contemporary American adoption in general. In the twenty-first century the image of American families adopting from China has become increasingly mainstream.[1] In the April 2007 issue of *O: The Oprah Magazine*, a photograph of Chinese adoptees is featured in the article "Speak Easy: What Never to Say to an Adopted Child." At the White Swan Hotel in Guangzhou, where many American adoptive families stay in China to complete visa paperwork, one can purchase "Going Home Barbie," a Barbie who is cradling a Chinese baby.[2]

Adoption from China is a powerful visual example of contemporary American multiculturalism because it is predominantly transracial with white American parents adopting the majority of Chinese children. Published in 2000, Rose Lewis's children's picture book *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes* features an American woman who travels to China to adopt a baby girl. Based on Lewis's personal experiences as an adoptive mother, the book became a *New York Times* best seller and garnered several awards, including a *Child Magazine*'s Best Books of the Year 2000 award and a Children's Crown Gallery Award. In 2006, the book was adapted into an animated feature for a Scholastic video collection about different families entitled *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes . . . and More Stories about Families*.

In most accounts, the history of international adoption from China begins in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the concurrent emergence

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of China's "one-child policy" and its increasing standardization of international adoption. The policy may have eased some of the pressures of a rapid population increase within Chinese communities. One source estimates that the Chinese population has been reduced by at least 250 million. The major criticism of the policy is that it motivates Chinese families, living in a patriarchal society with a marked cultural preference for boys, to discriminate against female infants, who may be aborted, abandoned, or unregistered.[3] Abandonment created a supply of baby girls available for adoption. This demographic coincided with the implementation of China's first adoption law in 1991 and the Chinese government's creation of institutions such as the China Center for Adoption Affairs, which connected it with the demand for adoptive babies in the United States by projecting an image of organization and transparency that is attractive to potential adoptive parents from the United States.[4]

In the United States, multiple social phenomena converged to increase the popularity of international adoption from China. The accessibility of birth control pills beginning in 1960, the legalization of abortion in 1973, and the increasing social legitimacy of single parenthood decreased the supply of white American babies available for adoption.[5] Racial tensions over the adoption of African American children by white American families that had culminated in the 1972 National Association of Black Social Workers' public opposition to transracial adoption; the legal barriers deterring the adoption of Native American children by non–Native Americans erected by the passage of the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act; and the stigmatization of children in the U.S. foster-care system motivated potential American adoptive families to consider adopting children available overseas.[6] Furthermore, after the highly publicized North Korean criticism of South Korea's "export" of children vis-à-vis international adoption during the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, the South Korean government created incentives to encourage domestic adoption and implemented a plan to eliminate international adoption by 2012.[7] Thus, social developments in Asia as well as in the United States turned American potential adoptive parents toward the possibility of adopting from China.

This history of Chinese international adoption is generally understood to be distinct from that of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. While the histories of the latter are inextricably linked to the aftermath of war,

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U.S. military involvement, and the rescue of war orphans and mixed-race children, by contrast Chinese adoptees are hardly perceived as war orphans in the U.S. public imagination. Rather, international adoption from China is cast as one of the most socioeconomically privileged forms of modern family formation with solidly middle-class if not wealthy Americans adopting Chinese girls.

This popular narrative of the history of Chinese international adoption has overshadowed an earlier period of Chinese adoption in the United States. My research in the archival records of the International Social Service-United States of America (ISS-USA) branch reveals that beginning in the late 1950s, Chinese American and white American families adopted Chinese children in increasing numbers. The ISS-USA facilitated the adoptions of Chinese refugee children from Hong Kong under the auspices of what their social workers called "the Hong Kong Project."

The deplorable, severely overcrowded living conditions of Chinese refugees who fled from communist mainland China to Hong Kong resulted in the increasing abandonment of their children. Beginning in 1958, the ISS-USA collaborated with Hong Kong agencies to facilitate the international adoption of Chinese orphans in the United States. Initially, the project targeted Chinese American communities for the recruitment of potential adoptive parents, but the ISS-USA considered families of any ethnic group. The majority of these placements involved the adoption of "known" children by Chinese American families, meaning that the adoptive parents either knew of the child through a friend or other intermediary in Hong Kong or were even related to the child. However, American social workers observed with surprise that white American families were also eager to adopt these children. By the early 1960s, more than five hundred Chinese children had been adopted under the auspices of the Hong Kong Project. In 1962, a special flight of forty-eight Chinese orphans arriving in the United States for adoption received significant national publicity in mainstream and local newspapers. Yet, despite recent media attention to other historical international airlifts of children such as Operation Babylift during the Vietnam War, this airlift of Chinese orphans has been forgotten today.

The history of this earlier period of Chinese international adoption in the United States is significant in two major ways. First, it illuminates

some striking resemblances between this earlier Chinese adoption and adoption from other Asian countries. The historical context of war—in this case, the Cold War against communist China—as the condition that makes children available for adoption connects the histories of international adoption from these countries. Furthermore, as with previous waves of mixed-race Japanese American and Korean American adoptive children, U.S. refugee legislation and special bills facilitated the immigration of Chinese children in the absence of a permanent provision in U.S. immigration law regarding international adoption. Narratives of the rescue and liberation of Chinese adoptive children, similar to the stories about other adopted mixed-race Asian American children, appeared in American news reports. Despite such stories, the problematic issues of visible racial difference and racism also haunted the international adoption of Chinese children by white American families.

Second, despite a myriad of problems ranging from the difficulty of determining the guardianship of children and of obtaining official documentation to social workers' anxieties over physical and cultural differences in transracial adoption, ISS-USA reports maintained that ultimately such challenges could be overcome. Emphasizing the flexibility and resilience of Chinese adoptive children, they concluded that Chinese international and transracial adoption in the United States could indeed work. Given that the practice of racial matching had dominated domestic adoption in the United States and also influenced social workers' processing of international adoptions, ISS-USA's conclusion was a watershed in the history of Asian international adoption and in the transformation of the United States into an international adoption nation.

The Hong Kong Project

The ISS-USA began arranging Chinese international adoptions in the United States beginning in the 1950s, but the numbers were initially small. In 1955, it provided assistance to American families who adopted four Chinese children from Hong Kong.[8] The high level of publicity devoted to the plight of Japanese and Korean mixed-race children overshadowed adoption from Hong Kong. Within a few years, however, interest in adopting children from Hong Kong had increased

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significantly, even exceeding interest in adoptions from Japan and Korea. By January 1, 1959, the ISS-USA was processing 139 cases of children from Hong Kong for adoption in the United States, exceeding the numbers of cases from Japan (26) and Korea (49).[9]

The change derived from the introduction of the Hong Kong Project and the active recruitment of adoptive families in the United States by the ISS-USA in collaboration with Hong Kong social welfare agencies. The project illustrates that transnational adoption cannot be understood solely on the basis of supply and demand without taking into account the specific transnational linkages created by organizations and individuals, in this case a project undertaken by the ISS-USA that inspired family making across national borders and facilitated formal adoption.[10]

In 1958, an ISS newsletter announced that the Hong Kong Project was a new two-year ISS program, which involved opening an ISS branch office in Hong Kong in the hope of finding homes for several hundred abandoned and orphaned Chinese children.[11] The announcement featured plans for stimulating interest in adoption from residents in several cities, beginning with San Francisco and then moving to Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Portland, and Chicago.[12]

Although the project targeted Chinese American communities throughout the United States, the ISS-USA expressed an openness to transracial adoption: "Placements will be considered for families of any ethnic group, but it is thought probable that Chinese families would be most interested." It also considered potential adoptive families who had not originally applied for "Oriental" or part "Oriental" children (as they were referred to in the literature of that time) as possible families for the children.

My findings reveal that the initial focus on Chinese communities in the United States was primarily a strategic move to facilitate adoptive placements and less an attempt at racial matching, a prominent practice in U.S. domestic adoption. ISS officials noted that "while it is anticipated that a large number of children will be placed for adoption with Chinese American families who know at first hand the appalling conditions under which they live and who wish to provide a chance in life for these children who share their culture and heritage, applications are acceptable from U.S. citizen families of any ethnic group."[13]

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Such was the case for the Bing family of California. Even prior to Mr. and Mrs. Bing's adoption of their goddaughter Belinda's four children from Hong Kong, Mr. and Mrs. Bing provided financial support to the children and their parents. After the children's birth father passed away, Belinda and her children encountered further hardship, which led to the Bing family's adoption of the two oldest sons followed by the younger brother and sister. A 1958 "Social History" report by a Hong Kong caseworker named Wynne Chan described Belinda and her children as "undernourished." According to Chan, one of the younger sons "had only two proper meals a day. He had either bread or pudding in the morning. He stated that the family took a lot of porridge during summer time." Although Chan's report also highlighted the mother's sensitivity and capability—noting that she took care of her children, while stitching gloves at a factory and sewing at home—Chan concluded that their living conditions were "not at all up to standard."[14] After the Bing family adopted Belinda's two oldest boys, the birth mother asked if they would also adopt her two remaining children. An ISS-Hong Kong caseworker named Ho Kam Fai detailed their poor living conditions in a 1962 social study:

> The widowed mother is living with the children-in-question and a 16-year-old sister-in-law in a cubicle on the sixth floor of a resettlement building. The cubicle measures about 12 feet square. It is partitioned into a bed-room, a sitting room and a kitchen. The bed-room is just large enough for a bed in which the children-in-question and the mother share. The sister-in-law sleeps on a canvas bed which is placed in the sitting room at night. The kitchen is just a tiny place which is crammed with 2 kerosene stoves, a container for storing water and other cooking utensils. . . . The sitting room, jammed with everything, from sewing machine to old broken shoe boxes and broken chairs, looks more like a store room. Accommodation is evidently inadequate, house-keeping standards are poor. As there is in the cubicle only one window which is tightly closed, ventilation is bad, especially in the hot summer. As this area is mainly a resettlement area, the whole place is covered by numerous resettlement buildings which are identically alike in design and which are uniformly of seven storeys. Each building houses about 420 families.[15]

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Another case described equally, if not more, dire living conditions. In 1959, the Lee family of Seattle, Washington, began adoption proceedings for a three-year-old boy from Hong Kong. The Lees knew the boy because his mother and Mrs. Lee had been close friends since childhood. The boy's father died, leaving the mother to care for the young boy and his two older brothers. In her social study of their living conditions, Valeen Pon, another ISS-Hong Kong caseworker, observed:

> They live in a squatter area of huts. . . . During floods in June of this year, some of these huts collapsed and there were fatalities. . . . The hut is made from salvaged tin, lumber and cardboard. The hut belongs to fellow-villagers who allow the family their small living area. It is not even 3 ft. wide, 6 ½' high, and about 7 ft. long. Two wooden shelves about 5 ft. long on which they sleep, take up almost all the space. They eat on a small table with a collapsible leaf and there is not more than 2 sq. ft. of floor space. . . . Water is carried from a street tap several blocks away. There are no toilet facilities. The mother cooks on an old kerosene drum with wood. Their accommodation is very poor, even on Hong-kong standards.[16]

In both these cases, social workers at the ISS-Hong Kong branch noted the formidable challenges that the birth mothers faced in order to provide basic housing and nutrition for their children. As Pon wrote in her evaluation of the adoption plan, "The mother is struggling alone to keep the children fed." These observations harken back to Greta Frank's warning in 1957 about using international adoption to provide better opportunities for adoptive children: "[The mother] would not have given up the child [if] she would have had food and shelter. . . . It is just a question, a warning voice."[17]

U.S. national and local press publicized the availability of Chinese children for international adoption.[18] ISS-USA workers also solicited advice from Chinese Americans on how to target the Chinese American community. In 1958, when a Chinese American colonel from Washington, D.C., visited the ISS-USA office in New York on behalf of friends who were interested in adopting a Chinese boy from Hong Kong, Dorothy Sills utilized the opportunity to get his insight on the Hong Kong Project:

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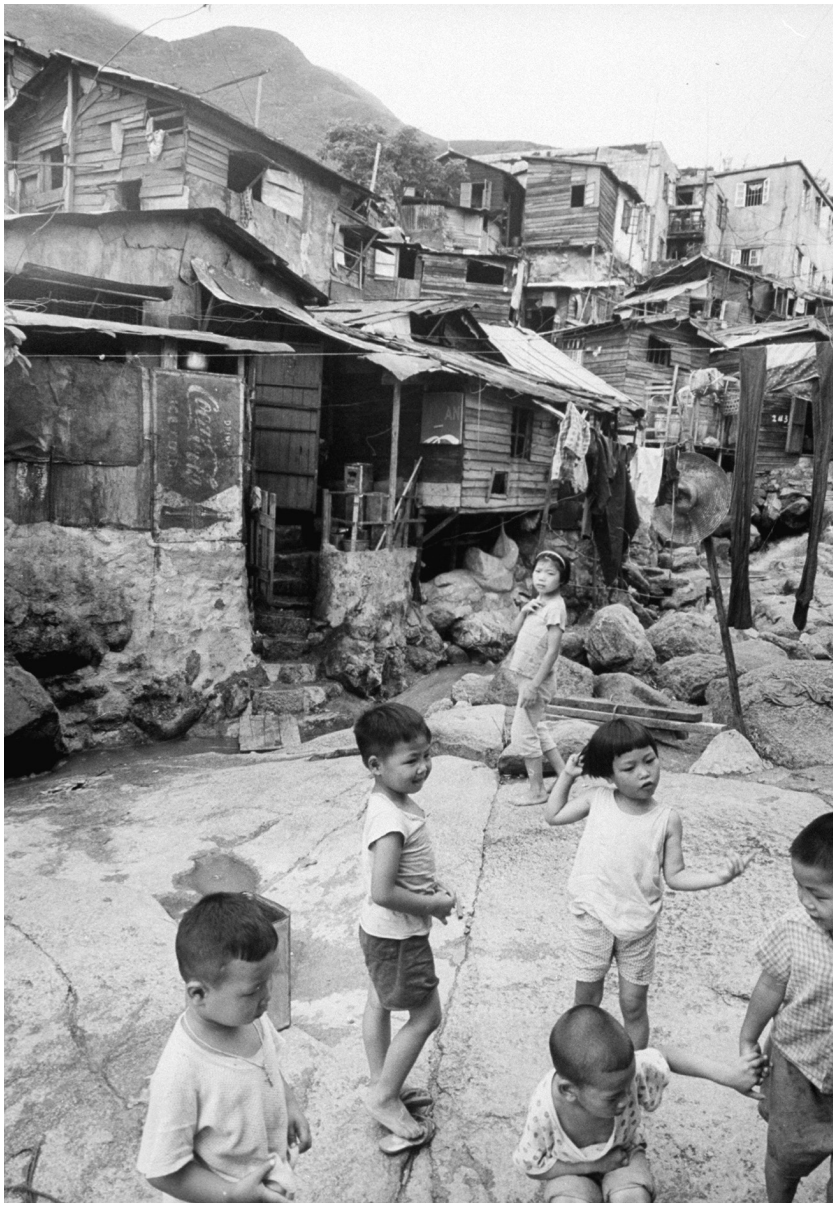


Figure 2.1. Shacks of refugees from Red China, in Hong Kong. May 1, 1962. (Photo by Larry Burrows/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images)

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> Since he showed a great deal of interest in the Hong Kong project in the course of our discussion of procedure for his friends, I asked if he had a few minutes to look at the pictures of our Hong Kong children and talk briefly with Mrs. Valk about the project. This appealed to him and he made a few suggestions about ways in which we might reach the professional Chinese group in the United States. He implied that this group would probably not keep up with the Chinese newspapers, but would keep up with the alumni bulletins of their colleges and universities. He mentioned particularly that there are many Chinese physicians, engineers, and attorneys and thought these groups would be interested in the project and might also be a resource of families or homes. He suggested Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia College and University, the University of Michigan, and the Universities of California and Southern California as having had particularly large groups of Chinese-American students. He was very much in agreement with the steps that had already been taken and offered to help us at any time he could in developing this project.[19]

Soon after the Hong Kong Project commenced, the ISS-USA mentioned receiving "a sprinkling of applications from all over the country and from many kinds of people, both Chinese and Caucasian, and mixed couples."[20] The first child processed under the auspices of the Hong Kong Project was a two-and-a-half-year-old orphan boy whose prospective adoptive parents were American-born Chinese. According to the ISS-USA, the prospective father was a World War II veteran with a Master of Science degree. He and his wife tried to adopt an American-born Chinese child but were told there were none.[21] Thus, the appeal to the Chinese American community coincided with the scarcity of Chinese children available for adoption in the United States, a historical product of the predominantly male composition of Chinese American communities in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Chinese social customs favoring the emigration of men greatly contributed to this demographic as did the passage and implementation of U.S. immigration restriction, specifically the 1875 Page Law, which stereotyped Chinese women as prostitutes and barred them from entry.

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The Hong Kong Project reached its peak with much fanfare and publicity over two events. The first was the arrival in the United States of the five hundredth Hong Kong orphan for adoption. A 1961 news article characterized the child as lucky: "Shirley, as she is now named, was met by her new parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chen Foo Wong of Forest Hills, New York. She stepped from the plane wearing a traditional Chinese costume in red, the good luck color, reinforced by a lucky symbol embroidered on the jacket. Shirley, now five, arrived under a quota-free visa issued by the State Department to children under 14 who are to be adopted by United States citizens. Abandoned on the streets of Hong Kong three years ago, she had been cared for in a children's institution until she left to join the Wongs."[22] ISS-Hong Kong marked the event with a special ceremony and the ISS-USA assistant director, Susan Pettiss, greeted Shirley upon her arrival in New York.[23]

The second event—a 1962 special flight of forty-eight Chinese children arriving at the Los Angeles airport for adoption by white American and Chinese American families across the United States—garnered even more publicity. A news article from the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*



14 Home and Fashions NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND SUN, MONDAY, MAY 28, 1962 Claire Wallace, Women's Editor

Orphans From Hong Kong Look to U.S. for a Home

These two wide-eyed orphans are among the thousands of abandoned children now being cared for in Hong Kong's orphanages and institutions.

Destitute parents were forced to abandon these 11 tiny tots who posed for their picture in a Hong Kong orphanage. At right, East meets West as Debra, one of the more fortunate of Hong Kong's little refugees, brought to this country by International Social Service, receives a loving welcome from her new American sister.

Parents Ask Bov. 2½, Wants

By PAT CONNORS

A baby is abandoned in the teeming refugee district of Hong Kong every three days—deserted by desperate parents who pour into the Service, a non-sectarian case-work agency with offices in 20 countries. "Since 1958," she said, "ISS has found homes for more than 800 of Hong Kong's littlest refugees.

Americans who wish to adopt a child follow standard adoption procedures, applying either to their local agencies or to ISS/WAIF at 345 E. 46th St., New York 17. Ap-

Figure 2.2. The ISS-USA collected news articles about the Hong Kong Project in its administrative files. This 1962 news story vividly depicted the plight of abandoned children in Hong Kong and the role of the ISS-USA in arranging the international adoptions of these children by American families.

covered this event under the heading "Bamboo Curtain Tots Arrive." Similar arrival stories were published in the local papers of the adoptive families: *Chicago Daily News*; the *News* in Bridgeton, New Jersey; *News-Free Press* (Chattanooga, Tennessee); *Review-Journal* (Las Vegas, Nevada); *Telegraph* (Painesville, Ohio); *Pioneer Press* (St. Paul, Minnesota); *Globe-Times* (Amarillo, Texas); and many others.[24]

In the 1950s, the ISS-USA had primarily coordinated Asian international adoption from Japan and Korea, but by 1962, the largest number of children it brought to the United States came from Hong Kong. During that year, ISS-USA coordinated the adoptions of 95 children from Hong Kong out of a total of 236 ISS-USA–processed international adoptions, making it the highest sending area, followed by 29 children from Korea. The combined number of Asian adoptive children (114) migrating to the United States outnumbered the 89 white European adoptive children, contributing to a broader demographic shift: American families in the United States turned increasingly to Asian nations as sources of international adoption as the supply of European adoptive children continued to decline.[25]

Nineteen sixty-two was an important year for national, and even some international, publicity about adoption from Hong Kong, as a result of that special flight and the large number of adopted children. But it also signaled the eventual decline of international adoption from this area. In 1963, the ISS-USA attributed the decline to multiple reasons: first, increasing economic stability and opportunity within Hong Kong itself, such as a higher rate of employment; second, the expansion of social services to Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, which reduced the rate of child abandonment; and third, the success of the Hong Kong Project, which the ISS-USA believed had helped open up local adoptions in Hong Kong itself.

A recession in Hong Kong in the mid-1960s caused a slight temporary increase in international adoptions.[26] As late as the mid-1970s, adoption from Hong Kong appeared in the ISS-USA archival records.[27] But its levels never reached those of the early 1960s. While the organization actively facilitated Chinese international adoption from Hong Kong, the ISS-USA stayed true to the ISS principle that "an intercountry adoption program meets an immediate need, but it is not a permanent solution for a country or its children. Therefore all ISS branches also

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work to help overcome conditions that produce homeless children." The ISS-USA referred to the rise and fall of international adoption from Hong Kong as a good example of these principles in action.[28]

The Different, and Not So Different, History of Chinese International Adoption from Hong Kong

Chinese international adoption from Hong Kong differed in specific ways from Asian international adoption from Japan and Korea. Although some adoptive children in Hong Kong were classified as orphans, the majority were "known" children, meaning that adoptive families in the United States (especially Chinese American ones) had previously known of or were related to these children. A 1958–1959 study of Asian international adoption from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Okinawa noted that, in the Hong Kong case, the "application for adoption of 'known' children was approximately double the number of children placed or considered for placement through the matching process."[29]

The Hong Kong Project provides a fascinating lens through which to view the international adoption of Chinese children by Chinese American parents, a practice that has been overshadowed by the attention to Asian transracial adoption by white American families. ISS-USA adoption case files reveal the diverse socioeconomic, religious, and regional backgrounds of Chinese American adoptive families. Although the Chinese American colonel advised the ISS-USA on how to publicize the Hong Kong Project to a highly educated and professional Chinese American community, the occupations of Chinese American adoptive parents ranged from restaurant workers and grocery store owners to physicians, engineers, and university professors. They professed different religious faiths, both Christian and non-Christian. And they hailed from different regions of the United States, from New York to Illinois, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, California, and Washington.

The majority of them adopted "known" Chinese children, both related children (especially nephews and nieces) and nonrelated children as in the cases of the Bing and Lee families discussed earlier in the chapter. As a result, some social workers believed that international adoption in the United States was being deliberately used as a strategic form of migration to obtain socioeconomic mobility, especially through

perceived greater access to educational opportunities. As an ISS caseworker, Eugenie Hochfeld, observed in 1959: "Since the cultural belief in Hong Kong seems to be that a child cannot help but benefit by immigration to the United States, and since this can only be accomplished by means of an adoption plan, families in Hong Kong are often willing to surrender their children for adoption in the hope that this will provide a more secure future with more educational opportunities."[30]

ISS workers in Hong Kong struggled over how to proceed with specific cases in which they wondered whether a Chinese family's relinquishment of a son was primarily a financial issue that could be ameliorated locally or whether it signified the family's rejection of the boy. On the one hand, the workers tried to adhere to the general ISS principle of not separating children from their families for reasons of poverty alone. One social worker suggested that it was hard to aid and encourage a permanent separation of children from parents or close relatives unless the separation appeared to be in the best interests of the children.[31] On the other hand, socioeconomic opportunity and the "best interest" of the child often overlapped.

Adoption case files reveal that some ISS workers in Hong Kong were highly aware of and, at times, even sympathetic to these strategies. In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Bing's adoption of their goddaughter Belinda's eldest son, Wynne Chan, a caseworker from ISS-Hong Kong, documented that "[the eldest son] stated besides his youngest sister, he was the one whom their mother loved the best as he was the oldest son in the family. He realized that even though he loved his mother very much he must take the opportunity to go to the States." Given the family's dire situation in Hong Kong, Chan recommended international adoption, concluding, "There is no doubt that the prospective adoptive parents . . . can offer much more in the way of a better education and other material matters than the child's present situation."[32]

Another distinctive characteristic of "known" adoption cases was that they led to the development of truly transnational families. Some of the adoptive children maintained ties to their Chinese birth families in addition to creating new ones with their Chinese American adoptive families. They defied formal adoption's legal emphasis on the children's exclusive belonging to their adoptive family: what has been popularly referred to as the "clean break" from their past. After Mr. and Mrs. Bing

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adopted Belinda's two oldest sons, an adoptions worker named Patricia Seavers conducted a follow-up interview with the boys in 1959. She reported to the ISS-USA that "they were very eager during this interview to show me pictures of the family in Hong Kong. They have assembled an album in which they have their parents' wedding picture and a running account of the growth of this family. They stated that they correspond regularly with their mother and siblings and hope that one day the family can join them here." Mr. and Mrs. Bing continued to send financial support to the boys' birth mother and their remaining siblings in Hong Kong. They conveyed to Seavers that they felt a "heavy responsibility to her and to the remaining children."[33]

In another "known" adoption case, Mr. and Mrs. Tien of Chicago expressed openness regarding continued communication between their ten-year-old adoptive son Samuel and his birth mother in Hong Kong. The regional director and child welfare supervisor of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare corresponded with the ISS-USA: "It appears that [Mr. and Mrs. Tien] have an understanding with [Samuel]'s mother of the finality of adoption, but they would not at all discourage [Samuel] from maintaining contact with his mother through correspondence."[34] According to case file documents, Samuel kept in touch with his birth mother.

Some birth mothers attempted to ensure that communication with their children would continue after adoption. After Mr. and Mrs. Fong from Sacramento, California, tried to adopt Mei-ling, a three-year-old girl from Hong Kong, the birth mother insisted that the potential adoptive parents "write and inform her of [Mei-ling's] life four times yearly." Because the ISS could not guarantee this arrangement, the intermediary in Hong Kong who had initiated the adoption plan asked the Fongs to send the birth mother a letter stating their opinion about this condition. Margaret U, an ISS-Hong Kong caseworker, reported the following to the ISS-USA:

> This letter has been received by the mother and we learn from this letter that the PAPs [potential adoptive parents] regarded the mother's request as a token of omnipotent maternal love and have agreed to observe it after [Mei-ling] becomes their adoptive child. We absolutely made it clear to [Mei-ling's] mother that it was very unlikely that the PAPs will break their promise, but should such [an] unfortunate event arise in

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> the future, this agency will not assume the responsibility in offering her protection. The mother conveyed her understanding of this matter and prepared to take a risk. She retained the letter in her possession for her future safeguard.[35]

The predominance of "known" adoptive children created other distinctions between the Hong Kong case and other Asian sending nations, especially regarding age and sex. Specifically, Chinese American families adopted "known" Chinese children who were older, and they displayed a preference for males. Despite the high preponderance of female children available in Hong Kong orphanages, this gendered preference had its basis in Chinese cultural patterns regarding the relative importance of males and females in society. Historically, the preference for male adoptive children influenced Chinese global family making as early as the late nineteenth century, when tens of thousands of Chinese men hailing primarily from Taishan County migrated to California after the discovery of gold in 1848. The historian Madeline Hsu writes:

> The absence of Gold Mountain guests from Taishan also made it difficult to produce children, and especially the sons, that were essential to perpetuating the family line and continuing the generational exchange of support. . . . The main strategy for dealing with this problem was adoption. The importance of sons, and the popularity of adoption as a means of acquiring them, is suggested by the actions of four of the thirteen women honored in the 1893 gazetteer as virtuous women. These four women, who had merely been engaged to men who had disappeared or died, decided to adopt sons to carry on their fiancés' legacies as well as provide for themselves in the future. In letters to Gold Mountain guests during the 1930s, the most frequently voiced request, after pleas for more money and return visits, was for permission to adopt sons.[36]

Under the auspices of the Hong Kong Project, Chinese American families also adopted girls, albeit in fewer numbers.[37]

A 1958–1959 study of the ISS's international adoption program in the Far East also observed that of "a total of 66 'known' children placed, none was under 3 years of age, only 5 were under 7, 28 were 7–10 years, and 33 were 11 years or older."[38] The difference in age stemmed from the

fact that a high proportion of the Chinese adoptive children were joining relatives or close family friends. By contrast, applications for children unknown to the adoptive parents, like placements from elsewhere in Asia, showed a preference for younger children.

Adoption case files document a spectrum of experiences of older adopted children from Hong Kong. Some of their challenges included learning colloquial English. After Mr. and Mrs. Chang adopted their nine-year-old nephew Benjamin in 1959, he developed an interest in baseball and joined the school's team. During a supervisory visit, the child welfare worker recorded: "An amusing example of his learning to use our language in the 'slang' was given to me in that he once got hit by a ball because they were yelling at him to 'duck' and he was turning around to look for a duck."[39]

Other challenges were more serious. When Mr. and Mrs. Lin relocated to a new community in California, their adopted sons (two nephews) had to transfer to a new school. The eight-year-old son resented the move as well as his adoptive parents' insistence that he also attend a Chinese school, and he tried to run away from home. During a 1963 supervisory visit, an adoptions worker, Grace C. Beals, learned that "he was gone overnight, was found by police officers and finally returned home. On two or three occasions since then, he has taken the same action but has been found each time on these occasions by Mr. [Lin]."[40]

Older adoptive children's experiences present a more complex picture of adoptee life in the United States, providing a stark contrast to news articles of the time period, which typically featured younger adoptive children's relatively smooth assimilation. For example, in 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Leung, a Chinese American couple in New York, began proceedings to adopt Christopher, an eleven-year-old boy from Hong Kong. The Leungs had an adult son, but Mrs. Leung was lonely. Across the Pacific Ocean, after Chinese communists arrested Christopher's father in 1951, his mother fled to Hong Kong with Christopher and his two sisters. However, their poverty was so great that she placed the children in an orphanage and relinquished Christopher for adoption.

After the caseworker Crystal Breeding visited the Leungs and Christopher in December 1959, she expressed optimism about Christopher's initial adjustment, writing that, although he was quiet, "he seemed happy and relaxed." Christopher loved chewing gum. He was interested in the

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"cowboys on television" and the Leungs planned to get him a toy gun. They also bought him new clothes such as "blue jeans and T-shirts."[41]

However, four months later, Breeding corresponded with an ISS-USA case consultant, Althea Knickerbocker, to convey concern about the slow development of Christopher's English-language ability: "He is attending a special class in school where very little work is given to him. . . . It seems that the school may have placed him in a class for slow learners rather than in a class for non-English speaking children."[42] The Leungs' own inability to communicate fluently in English and the absence of Christopher's school records from Hong Kong contributed to what the caseworker suspected was a poor grade-level and classroom placement for the boy. When Breeding interviewed Christopher alone, Christopher related that "he has very little to do in school, the arithmetic is too easy."[43] He also said that American boys bullied him in school.

Older children, like Christopher, had established close relationships with their birth families and, at times, conveyed the emotional difficulty of their adoptions. In her correspondence with the ISS-USA, Breeding noted, "He expressed the feeling of being happy here with the [Leungs], but he has a deep hurt over not having heard from his mother. After his arrival he wrote his mother once, with the [Leungs'] permission, but never heard from her. In our discussion, he asked for a report on her and his two younger siblings in Hong Kong. He remembers his mother with deep attachment, and the younger sisters." These sentiments led Breeding to conclude: "We feel that it is important for this little boy's future happiness for him to have some understanding of his mother's situation at present. Perhaps the International Social Service representative in Hong Kong could send a message from, or report on the mother and siblings prior to the completion of legal steps to complete the adoption."

Ho Kam Fai worked on this request over several months. He located Christopher's mother in Hong Kong, who admitted that she had received several letters from Christopher but that she had purposely not responded because she did not want him to remember his family in Hong Kong. The mother told ISS workers that she wanted Christopher to be loyal and obedient to his new parents. After Ho related this news to Althea Knickerbocker, she asked for his help in obtaining a personal letter from Christopher's mother so that they could give it to the boy. Her request was based on her previous experience with older adoptive children:

> We have had this sort of experience in other cases where older children came to this country for adoption, leaving behind a mother with whom they had a rather strong relationship. A letter from the mother saying that she is glad that the child is well and happy, and at the same time assuring him that she is getting along well, does much to free the child to enter into his new life and new family without reservation. . . . Let us know what you think of this, and whether you are in agreement with asking the mother to write, and also whether she does actually write this letter to her son.[44]

Ho agreed. ISS-Hong Kong received a letter from Christopher's mother, which they translated so that ISS-USA and the New York local adoption agency would know what the mother had written. The translated letter read as follows:

> My son,
>
> I have not sent you any letter for over a year now—since we departed. I have lately heard from the International Social Service that you are getting on well, physically as well as in other respects, in the home of your new parents. I am glad to know that you are very fortunate in being thus brought up. You must always remain faithful and obedient to your new parents.
>
> I am still working for Sixth Uncle and am well. You need not worry about me. Fifth Sister is now on vacation and had come out to live with Sixth Uncle for many weeks before returning to the Institution. Sixth Sister has entered . . . school and one of the elder brothers (previously in Canton) has recently come to Hong Kong to complete his driving course soon and to find work.
>
> You need not worry about the family affairs here. You must, first, be obedient to your new parents; secondly, be diligent in your studies, and never talk of low school grades and thus become inattentive in your school work. You have to start from low grades and advance gradually before you are able to enter college and become a useful citizen in society. This will make your new parents and myself happy. I hope you are doing well in your school work. With kind regards to your new parents.
>
> Your mama[45]

ISS-USA officials expressed their gratitude to the ISS-Hong Kong caseworkers for their help in this regard. Whether this letter helped "free" Christopher to enter his new life and fit in with his new family in the United States without reservation is unknown. The case file did not have further information about Christopher's reaction or his teenage and adult life. What it does present, however, is a moving example of the complicated, multifaceted adjustment of Chinese older adoptive children and of the ISS social workers' diligent, transnational collaboration to respond to these children's needs with sensitivity.

In other specific ways, Chinese international adoption from Hong Kong during this time resembled adoption from Japan and Korea. War was a contributing factor in all cases: the Cold War in China, the post–World War II American occupation of Japan, and the Korean War. Thus, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, connections were drawn between adoption and refugee resettlement. U.S. refugee legislation, especially Section 5 of the Refugee Relief Act, facilitated the immigration of Chinese adoptive children, as it did for Japanese and Korean adoptive children, given the absence of a permanent provision in U.S. immigration policy to enable the entry of internationally adoptive children.

In 1957, Susan T. Pettiss requested reimbursement of $292.74 from the Refugee Relief Program for the travel expenses of one orphan from Hong Kong. Pettiss explained the reason for this:

> The [American] sponsors are willing but unable to pay the transportation and specified costs because it was necessary for them to pay for both the child and the escort. There were no other orphans to be brought from Hong Kong under the RRA [Refugee Relief Act] program so that it was impossible for the child to come in a group of children and for the services of the escort to be shared among several adoptive families.[46]

Similar to the Japanese and Korean cases, narratives of the rescue and liberation of Chinese children through international adoption infused news media and charitable solicitations, presenting international adoption as the sole opportunity for the children's survival. As one flyer, titled "Chinese Orphans Need Adoptive Homes in the U.S.A.," proclaimed:

> The abandoned children—mostly little girls—crowd the orphanages which are "bursting at the seams" and are unable to deal adequately with ever increasing demands. Many of the children—from one to ten years old—in the institutions are free for adoption and *their adoption outside Hong Kong is their only chance for a normal life and a secure future*.[47]

A February 1959 ISS newsletter featured a photograph of seven Chinese babies with a caption that placed the burden of global family making on American families: "WAITING—Thousands of children like these are growing up in orphanages in Hong Kong because *not enough American families will make homes for them*."[48]

As part of an ISS delegation to Asia, the ISS director, William T. Kirk, visited Hong Kong and described the situation there as "especially pitiful." "The situation in Hong Kong is unbelievable," he said. "Institutions are crowded with thousands of orphans, most of them abandoned by their parents."[49] He urged the United States to hasten the passage of permanent legislation that would guarantee the admission of orphan children to the United States for adoption above and beyond the small quotas for Asian immigration then in effect. He also recommended the gradual easing of quotas and other restrictions on Asian immigration in general. Kirk then linked Chinese international adoption from Hong Kong, U.S. immigration policy, and U.S. involvement in the Cold War, commenting that "if we are to keep these people as our friends and allies, we must humanize our approach to the refugee problem before all of Southeast Asia succumbs to the false lure of Communism."[50] Permanent orphan legislation would help convince "people of the world that the heart of America is truly a big heart."[51]

An issue of the ISS newsletter from the summer of 1959 reemphasized the importance of Chinese international adoption by American families by including a photograph of two girls from Hong Kong en route to the United States for adoption. Its caption stated that "1,000 Chinese children . . . face bleak and uncertain futures unless adopted. Unless new adoption legislation is passed by Congress, thousands of children like these in all parts of the world will be deprived of the opportunity to live a normal, happy life with American couples."[52]

Finally, although social customs and language barriers sometimes differentiated Chinese Americans from other American adoptive

parents, they shared similar motivations and experiences. For example, humanitarian reasons led some Chinese American adoptive parents to adopt internationally. In 1959, Mr. and Mrs. Hong of Houston, Texas, chose to adopt a Chinese girl from Hong Kong even though they had the unusual opportunity to adopt a Chinese baby in the United States. The adoption supervisor explained: "Their strong feeling that they want to take a baby who would have no chance for a good life in Hong Kong motivated their decision to select this baby."[53]

Like many other adoptive parents, Chinese American adoptive parents experienced anxiety about the length of time it took to process international adoptions. In 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Cheng wrote to the ISS-USA caseworker Margaret A. Valk to express their concern:

> Since we have not heard from either you or Mrs. Miller of Welcome House for several weeks, we wonder whether there is anything that we can do to help in speeding up the adoption procedures. We would greatly appreciate it, if you could give us some idea of the current progress of our case. We are of course anxious to know that reason or reasons for such a delay in completing the investigation of the two children. If you can give us a rough idea of the length of time still required to complete the final procedures, we shall be most grateful.[54]

Their adoptive children from Hong Kong arrived in the United States one year later.

Other Chinese American adoptive parents were highly critical of social agencies' investigations and the extensive bureaucracy of international adoption organizations. After Mr. and Mrs. Feng approached California's Department of Social Welfare in December 1957 to begin the process of adopting internationally, the California legislature discontinued funding for the state's international adoption program. Thus, the Department of Social Welfare was unable to provide service to the Fengs until 1959 when funding was renewed. In her correspondence to the ISS-USA, Patricia Seavers reported:

> As you know, [Mr. Feng] has had many disappointments in the two years he has been working to bring [his adoptive son, Philip,] to this country. While he places much of the blame for this on his attorney

> he quite naturally feels some hostility toward our agency. . . . He rebels strenuously against the payment of fees, feeling that the orphanage in Hong Kong should be glad to have one less mouth to feed. His idea of a welfare agency is to give and not to ask for money. When this point was cleared, to his apparent satisfaction, he questioned the need for supervisory visits following placement. He feels that social agencies are involved only in criticism, and it was difficult to convince him that we might be of some help.[55]

In the 1950s, Harry Holt, the founder of the Holt Adoption Program (now known as Holt International), popularized these critiques of social agencies' authority and their time-consuming bureaucracy in the case of Korean international adoption, which I discuss in chapter 3.

Yet, after detailing Mr. Feng's many complaints against her social agency, Seavers concluded that "for all our frequent clashes and differences of opinion, [Mr. Feng] emerged in my opinion as a deep-thinking, sensitive man who took a great deal of interest in the process and philosophy of the home study."[56] And, after the Fengs formally adopted Philip in 1961, Mr. Feng contributed regularly to the ISS-USA's annual appeal, donating $20 each year until 1965.

Race in Chinese International Adoption

In chapter 1, I argued that race is fundamental to understanding the demographics, discourses, and institutions of Japanese and Korean international adoption in the 1950s and 1960s. The distinctive racial features of mixed Japanese American and Korean American children exacerbated their social ostracism by making them a visible target for discrimination and abuse in their home countries. Media representations, scholarly studies, and social welfare casework racialized the Far East as a stagnant, homogeneous place of backward-thinking people in contrast to a progressive and dynamic United States. ISS-USA workers, however, recognized that racial, ethnic, and national differences mattered both in the initial stages of the adoptive placement and throughout the mixed-race Japanese American or Korean American child's development.

The growing number of white Americans expressing interest in international and transracial adoption of Chinese children from Hong Kong in the late 1950s presented social workers with new problems related to race in Asian international adoption. They had to begin assessing racial tolerance among the potential white American adoptive parents and their communities now with regard to the adoption of full-blooded Chinese children. A fascinating 1959 symposium on the "adoption of Oriental children by white American families" emerged from a group of questions posed by ISS workers who surmised that adoption of "pure-blood Chinese children might present different and more complex considerations than adoption of children of mixed Oriental-American parentage."[57]

The breadth and depth of these questions were striking. The questions and the ensuing discussions deserve more attention now because they provide a model of open, direct, complex, and multilayered examination of the significance of race and cultural heritage, an issue that continues to be hotly debated in the context of international and transracial adoption in the United States today. Among the questions posed by ISS workers in 1959 were the following: "How important is it for a Chinese child adopted by a Caucasian family to retain an awareness of, and pride in his Chinese heritage? Or, should he be encouraged to ignore such difference? . . . To what extent can families identify with a child markedly different in appearance when this difference is 'racial'? . . . How can a family's ability really to accept a Chinese child be assessed? . . . How can a community's attitudes, trends, and degree of tolerance be evaluated? . . . What conflicts should be expected in a Chinese child adopted by a Caucasian family? How can the family be prepared to be helped to deal with them?"

Margaret Valk pointed out that, similar to the previous waves of mixed-race Japanese American and Korean American adoptees, the international, transracial adoption of Chinese children from Hong Kong involved "many special factors which are not involved in placement of local American-born children, and which do not arise in this particular form when we place European children in [the United States]." However, she noted an important distinction between the Asian and American mixed-race children and the Chinese children:

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> Because of a certain family and community identification with these children as half-American, some of the problems in placing them have been less acute than those we now face in placing Chinese children. For instance, agencies will report that a family would like to be considered for an Oriental-American child, but could not accept a *purely* Oriental child. The family themselves might accept the latter but doubt that the community would. What does this mean? . . . We need help in clarifying or verifying such attitudes.[58]

ISS workers posed these complex questions to five panelists: the geneticist Richard Osborne, the psychologist Robert Chin, the anthropologist Thomas Maretzki, the anthropologist Rhoda Métraux, and the psychiatrist Mottram Torre. Overall, their insights highlighted the ability of the Chinese adoptive child to adapt in white American society. For example, Osborne concluded that "the only problems which might result from the genetic background of an Oriental in a Caucasian environment would be imposed by [the] social or psychological environment and would not be the consequences of inherited differences."[59] Métraux emphasized that "a Chinese child could become a member of the new culture."[60]

The panelists believed that American communities, too, had the ability to change. Although Maretzki tempered his optimism by noting that "there are yet a great number of obstacles to the successful placement of Chinese children in American communities," he also pointed out that "in Chicago, for instance, the Japanese have found a surprising amount of acceptance since the end of World War II. California's attitudes seem to be changing rapidly in a favorable direction. . . . There is a great deal of favorable change going on in many communities. Within a broader historical perspective it is a rapid change, and hopeful. So children from the Orient will, on the whole, face a much brighter future within the community."[61]

Torre critiqued what she considered to be an overemphasis on matching specific American adoptive parents with specific Chinese children. She mused, "It seems to me that we could think much more broadly about almost any parents adopting almost any child. . . . There is a tremendously wide variety of children who could be adopted, and a tremendously wide variety of couples who can become adoptive parents."[62]

Chin cautioned, however, that international, transracial adoption did involve a physical visibility that introduced extra complications. Nevertheless, he believed that these were manageable.[63] Thus, despite the numerous problems encountered, the reports from this period of Chinese international adoption often concluded that these challenges could be overcome.

Conclusion: How Adoption Works

In the years immediately following the 1959 symposium, U.S. news media echoed the participants' optimism regarding the formation and integration of international and transracial adoptive families. In a 1962 news article entitled "Orphans from Hong Kong Look to U.S. for a Home," Susan Pettiss is quoted as saying that "love and understanding are just as important as [a] cultural background." She reminisced about a Chinese boy who had worn a satin coat and cap but who now donned blue jeans and cowboy regalia, commenting that "except for the Oriental slant to his eyes, he was as American as any little boy in any American backyard."[64]

However, these news stories typically presented a seamless picture of successful adjustment without the complications raised by social workers and other professionals. They erased the tremendous amount of political, intellectual, emotional, and physical work that transformed the United States into an international adoption nation. This work is represented by the voluminous amounts of written correspondence in the ISS-USA archives by social workers seeking to match an adoptive child with an adoptive family; to arrange international travel; to meet the complex and continually changing international, national, and state immigration requirements, as well as adoption laws; and to create, execute, and enforce the principles of an approach to international adoption that would serve the best interests of the children.

Much of this work has not been publicized because the detail is staggering and overwhelming. It lacks the allure and excitement of heroic deeds, the moral persuasion of humanitarian rescue, and the deep satisfaction of happy endings. Take, for example, the 1958 letter below in which Margaret Valk tries to "succinctly" explain to Mr. and Mrs.

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Cheng the steps that potential adoptive parents needed to take in order to adopt from Hong Kong:

> The social information about you and your home made available to us through Welcome House has been forwarded to the Department of Social Welfare in Hong Kong who are closely in touch with [St. Theresa's Home]. [St. Theresa's Home] has been asked to make available social, developmental, and medical information about the little boy and girl who have been selected for placement with you. When this information has been received as well as the documentation for the children (this usually includes certificates of birth and official Consents to the placement for adoption), we shall forward it to Welcome House. Welcome House is your local Child Welfare Agency who will be able to keep in touch with you after the children's arrival until they are legally adopted in this country and who will be able to provide information about the children's progress though our agency to [St. Theresa's Home] and the interested Child Welfare authority in Hong Kong.
>
> After we receive from Hong Kong the information and documentation about the children, we and Welcome House will be able to help you prepare the I-600 petition form, which, together with the substantiating documentation about yourselves will be submitted to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. By agreement with the Immigration and Naturalization Service we submit with the I-600 form and documentation, an abstract of the social information approving you as prospective adoptive parents. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, upon receipt of the I-600 form, make their own inquiries of you and approve your petition for the children. The Immigration and Naturalization Service then so inform the American Consulate General in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong the American Consul gets in touch with the children and their guardian and processes them at that end. The processing includes a medical examination, according to standards set by the United States Public Health Service (following which the children are issued their visas). Then, transportation arrangements can be worked out for the children to fly to the United States. In the past we have been able to make adequate arrangements for children to be accompanied to New York City unless prospective adoptive parents prefer to meet them at the Port of Entry on the West Coast.[65]

Anticipating the potential adoptive parents' anxiety, Valk empathized, "You may think that the above description of the steps which remain to be taken sounds very complicated." She tried to allay their concerns:

> We do not believe that it will take very long to process the case through the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. The latter are anxious to process orphan cases as quickly as possible. In Hong Kong we now have our own office and staff with a view to helping the Hong Kong agencies placing their children, who are available for adoption, with all possible speed—as is sound.[66]

During my last visit to the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (where the ISS-USA archival records are housed), an archivist and I talked about the incredible historical significance of, but lack of public knowledge about, the work of the ISS-USA in international adoption. She made this insightful point: "It wasn't sexy work."

While there is truth in that statement, it is also true that the work of international adoption required tremendous passion as well as patience. The ISS-USA archival records give voice to the cacophony of emotions—frustration as well as gratification—that the process of global family making aroused in social workers. The dissonance is due in large part to the fact that they were among the pioneers of international and transracial adoption, wading through yet uncharted territory.

96. Ibid., 15.
97. Ibid., 18.
98. Group Chairmen, "Material for Group Discussion of Integration of Racially Mixed Children in the Asian and Oceanic Countries," p. 9, First Asia-Oceania Conference of the ISS, March 18–23, 1973, Tokyo, Japan, ISS-USA papers, Box 12, File on "Children: Children in Crisis throughout the World, Reports on Children as Refugees," SWHA.
99. Group Chairmen, "Statement for Workshop on Intercountry Adoptions, International Social Service Asia-Oceania Conference, Tokyo, Japan, March 1973," pp. 2–3, ISS-USA papers, Box 12, File on "Children: Children in Crisis throughout the World, Reports on Children as Refugees," SWHA.
100. Group Chairmen, "Material for Group Discussion," 12.

CHAPTER 2

1. Toby Alice Volkman, "Embodying Chinese Culture: Transnational Adoption in North America," in *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*, ed. Toby Alice Volkman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 81–113; and David L. Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 97–103.
2. Jennifer Wright, "There Is a Chinese Baby Adoption Barbie," *the gloss*, September 8, 2010, available at http://thegloss.com/odds-and-ends/there-is-a-chinese-baby-adoption-barbie/ (accessed April 24, 2012). Sara Dorow writes about the White Swan Hotel in her ethnography of contemporary Chinese international adoption, *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship* (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 152–162.
3. Beginning in 1979, the one-child policy "emerged from the belief that development would be compromised by rapid population growth and that the sheer size of China's population together with its young age structure presented a unique challenge." See Penny Kane and Ching Y. Choi, "China's One Child Family," *British Medical Journal* 319, no. 7215 (October 9, 1999): 992–994, available at http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1116810/ (accessed June 16, 2011).
4. Kay Johnson's research points to the Chinese government's role in discouraging domestic adoption and its focus on international adopters to help solve the problem of child abandonment in order to explain the increasing popularity of Chinese international adoption in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Her research is highly critical of the stereotype that the Chinese are unwilling to adopt the children of those who are not blood relatives, especially girls. Kay Johnson, "*Chaobao*: The Plight of Chinese Adoptive Parents in the Era of the One-Child Policy," in Volkman, *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*, 117–141.
5. Sandra Patton, *Birthmarks: Transracial Adoption in Contemporary America* (New York: NYU Press, 2000); and Ana Teresa Ortiz and Laura Briggs, "Crack, Abortion, the Culture of Poverty, and Welfare Cheats: The Making of the 'Healthy White Baby Crisis,' " *Social Text* 75 (September 2003): 39–57.

6. See chapter 7, "The Difference Difference Makes," in Ellen Herman, *Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 229–252. See also the topics of "African-American Adoptions," "Indian Adoption Project," "Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)," and "Transracial Adoptions," in Ellen Herman, "The Adoption History Project," available at http://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/ (accessed June 16, 2011).
7. "History of Adoption from Korea," POV's (Documentaries with a Point of View) online overview of the film "In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee," available at http://www.pbs.org/pov/chajunghee/background.php#identity (accessed August 10, 2011).
8. International Social Service, American branch (hereafter, ISS-USA), "Intercountry Adoption Program: January 1 through December 31, 1955," ISS-USA papers, Box 3, File on "Intercountry Adoptions Committee-ISS Records," Social Welfare History Archives (hereafter, SWHA), Minneapolis, Minn.
9. In 1958, fifty-seven children from Hong Kong emigrated to the United States under PL 414 (the regular immigration law) and PL 85–316 (the special orphans program). ISS-USA, "Intercountry Adoption Program Report for 1958," ISS-USA papers, Box 3, File on "Intercountry Adoptions Committee-ISS Records," SWHA.
10. The change can also be partly attributed to increased publicity. For example, in a 1959 manual on intercountry adoption published by the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, it is noted that adoptable children may be found "also in Hong Kong, where there are many orphaned Chinese children." Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, "Manual on Intercountry Adoption," Department of Defense, 1959, p. 4, ISS-USA papers, Box 12, File 38, SWHA.
11. "ISS, State Dept., Launch Program to Bring Hong Kong WAIFS to U.S. Homes," *ISS World News*, June 1958, ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 21, SWHA.
12. Susan T. Pettiss, "Memorandum, Subject: Hong Kong Program," February 13, 1958, ISS-USA papers, Box 13, File 14, SWHA.
13. Chi-Kwan Mark has characterized the situation of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong from 1949 to 1962 as the "problem of people." See Chi-Kwan Mark, "'The 'Problem of People': British Colonials, Cold War Powers, and the Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 6 (November 2007): 1145–1181.
14. Wynne Chan, "Ref. 115/58 Social History," May 6, 1958, Case No. 580255, Box 86, Folder 14, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
15. Ho Kam Fai, "Social Study," May 21, 1962, Case No. 580255, 1958, Box 86, Folder 14, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
16. Valeen Pon, "Social Study," July 8, 1959, Case No. 591014, 1959, Box 111, Folder 17, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
17. "Recent Developments in Adoption between the United States and Other Countries," 1957, p. 8, ISS-USA papers, Box 10, File on "Children 1954–62, Intercountry Adoption General," SWHA.
18. See, for example, "Oriental Waifs Due Fast Help," *Oklahoma City Times*, June 1, 1962, and "Looking for a Home," *Evening Journal*, June 18, 1962, which

announced the availability of Hong Kong orphans for adoption. Both articles are in ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 25, SWHA.

19. Memorandum to Mr. W. T. Kirk and Miss Emilie T. Strauss from Dorothy H. Sills, "Re: Request for Information on Hong Kong Adoption Case," June 30, 1958, Case No. 581388, 1958, Box 96, Folder 6, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
20. Margaret A. Valk to Rose T. Wilbur, March 27, 1958, ISS-USA papers, Box 10, File on "Children—Adoption Plans of Racially Mixed Children, 1954–1965," SWHA.
21. "ISS, State Dept., Launch Program to Bring Hong Kong WAIFS to U.S. Homes," *ISS World News*, June 1958, ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 21, SWHA.
22. "Hands across the Sea—#2," *Children's Aid Society Newsletter*, ISS-USA papers, Box 11, File on "Preparation Outlines-Adoption" (General), SWHA.
23. "500th Hong Kong Orphan Adopted through ISS," *International Social Service Newsletter*, June 1961, ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 21, SWHA; "ISS, State Dept., Launch Program to Bring Hong Kong WAIFS to U.S. Homes," *ISS World News*, June 1958, ISS-USA papers Box 16, File 21, SWHA.
24. See Ellen Key Blunt, "Chinese WAIFs to Come to U.S.," *Washington Post*, June 19, 1962; "Bamboo Curtain Tots Arrive," *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, June 27, 1962; "Bob Kennedy Greets Orphan Arrivals Here," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1962, pp. 1, 3; "Shy, Smiling Waif Captures Suburb," *Chicago Daily News*, June 28, 1962, p. 1; Howard James, "Hong Kong's Waifs Meet New Parents," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 28, 1962, p. 1; "An Orphan No Longer," Chicago's *American*, June 28, 1962; "10 Chinese Orphans in New Home," Chicago's *American*, June 28, 1962; "10 Chinese Orphans Arrive Here," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 28, 1962; "Family Here Taking Hong Kong Orphan," Amarillo, Texas's *Globe-Times*, June 27, 1962; " 'Hello' Melts Fears of Chinese Orphan," Hammond, Indiana's *Times*, June 28, 1962; "Two Orphans Due Here," *Oregonian*, June 29, 1962; "48 Orphans Fly to U.S.," Cedar Rapids, Iowa's *Gazette*, June 27, 1962; "Chinese Orphans Leave Hong Kong by Air for Homes in U.S. Under New Social Setup," Boise, Idaho's *Statesman*, June 27, 1962; "Arkansas Couple Adopts Refugees," *Arkansas Democrat*, June 28, 1962; "Largest Group of Orphans Leaving Hong Kong for U.S.," Charleston, South Carolina's *News & Courier*, June 27, 1962; "American Families to Adopt 48 Chinese Orphans," Helena, Montana's *Independent Record*, June 27, 1962; "Fairborn Couple among Six Ohioans Adopting Chinese Orphans from Hong Kong," Springfield, Ohio's *News*, June 28, 1962; "Refugees Welcomed," Amarillo, Texas's *News*, June 28, 1962; "Hong Kong Orphans Find a Home in U.S.," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, June 30, 1962; "Chinese Orphans Greeted in U.S. by Robert Kennedy," *New York Times*, June 28, 1962; "Mass of Chinese Orphans Being Adopted in U.S.," Chattanooga, Tennessee's *News-Free Press*, June 27, 1962; "Chinese Orphans Head Here," Las Vegas, Nevada's *Review Journal*, June 27, 1962; "Chinese Tot Finds Love in Mentor Village Home," Painesville, Ohio's *Telegraph*, June 29, 1962; Alan T. Lewin, "Emily Gets New Parents, a Name," St. Paul, Minnesota's *Pioneer Press*, July 2, 1962; "Young Newcomer

Meets His Family," Amarillo, Texas's *Globe-Times*, July 4, 1962; Howard James, "Adopted Chinese Child Is Really on the Ball," *Chicago Tribune*, July 5, 1962; Pat Connors, "Orphans from Hong Kong Look to U.S. for a Home," *New York World Telegram*, May 28, 1962. All of these articles are in ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 25, SWHA. A document entitled "Stories or Pictures of the Hong Kong Orphan Flight" listed six newspapers in Alabama, eight in Arkansas, twenty-nine in California, six in Colorado, seven in Connecticut, one in Delaware, twelve in Florida, three in Georgia, six in Idaho, twelve in Illinois, twenty-three in Indiana, eleven in Iowa, ten in Kansas, six in Kentucky, eight in Louisiana, three in Maine, one in Maryland, six in Massachusetts, eight in Michigan, eleven in Minnesota, two in Mississippi, and two in Missouri in which more publicity appeared, ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 25, SWHA.

25. ISS-USA, "Intercountry Adoption Program Report (January 1, 1962 through December 31, 1962)," ISS-USA papers, Box 10, File on "Children: Intercountry Adoption Conferences and Workshops," SWHA. According to this 1962 report, the largest group in process of emigrating but that had not yet arrived as of December 31, 1962, were ninety-four children from Hong Kong, with forty-three Korean children with the same status constituting the second largest group. The report also notes fifty home studies of American families desiring children from Hong Kong, the largest number of home studies desiring children from a specific place. According to a 1963 statistical summary by the ISS-Far East, their Hong Kong international adoption program had been in operation for five years since March 1958 and the ISS-Far East had completed 779 adoption placements from Hong Kong, the largest number of placements. The 716 completed placements from Japan composed the second highest number, followed by Korea and Okinawa. See ISS-Far East, "Statistical Summary," May 15, 1963, ISS-USA papers, Box 14, File 19, SWHA. An ISS-Hong Kong statistical report with data from June 1958 through March 1962 points to the year 1960 as a high point for adoption placements from Hong Kong. That year, there were 203 placements completed. The vast majority (163) of adoptees were placed in the U.S. mainland, but 15 went to Great Britain and 9 to the U.S. (Hawaii). Canada, New Zealand, France, Honduras, Japan, Panama, and the Netherlands were among the other destinations for adoption placements. See ISS-Hong Kong, "Statistical Report (1st quarter June 1958 through 20th quarter March 1963)," ISS-USA papers, Box 14, File 19, SWHA.
26. Elsie L. Heller, Special Assistant, Adoption Division to Adoption Supervisor, December 9, 1965, ISS-USA papers, Box 20, File 15, SWHA.
27. Wayne E. Hinrichs to Mr. and Mrs. D [pseudonym], January 27, 1976, ISS-USA papers, Box 11, File on "Adoption Programs TAISSA," SWHA. Hinrichs wrote to these potential adoptive parents that "in March we hope to expand the Korean program and again open our adoption program with Hong Kong."
28. ISS-USA, "A Year of International Social Service," 1963, ISS-USA papers, Box 16, File 21, SWHA.

29. Florence Boester, "International Social Service: A Brief Study of the Inter-Country Adoption Program in the Far East," May 1, 1959, p. 2, ISS-USA papers, Box 14, File 19, SWHA.
30. "Group Consultation Meeting, Subject: Placement Plans for Hong Kong Children Living with Relatives," December 22, 1959, p. 1, ISS-USA papers, Box 12, File 29, SWHA.
31. Ibid., 3.
32. Wynne Chan, "Ref. 115/58 Social History on [Eldest Brother]," May 6, 1958, Case No. 580255, Box 86, Folder 14, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
33. Patricia Seavers to Susan T. Pettiss, March 25, 1959, letter from Case No. 580255, Box 86, Folder 14, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
34. Mary E. Sullivan and Elizabeth Many to Andree Laurent, February 2, 1960, Case No. 592079, Box 118, Folder 20, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
35. Margaret U to ISS-USA, May 11, 1960, Case No. 600644, Box 127, Folder 18, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
36. Madeline Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882–1943* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 121.
37. Boester, "International Social Service," 3. Approximately 25 percent of the sixty-six known adoptive Chinese children in the 1958–1959 study were girls.
38. Ibid.
39. Lois T. McKethan, "Supervisory Visit," March 27, 1962, Case No. 590666, Box 108, Folder 30, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
40. Grace C. Beals to Susan T. Pettiss, July 3, 1963, Case No. 610303, Box 140, Folder 31, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
41. Crystal D. Breeding to Althea B. Knickerbocker, December 15, 1959, Case No. 581388, Box 96, Folder 6, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
42. Crystal D. Breeding to Althea B. Knickerbocker, April 21, 1960, Case No. 581388, Box 96, Folder 6, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
43. Crystal D. Breeding to Althea B. Knickerbocker, May 25, 1960, Case No. 581388, Box 96, Folder 6, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
44. Althea Knickerbocker to Ho Kam Fai, September 6, 1960, Case No. 581388, Box 96, Folder 6, ISS-USA case records, SWHA.
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60. Ibid., 23.
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CHAPTER 3

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