

NOTE ON ANONYMIZATION

Pine Mansion, South Gate, and River Hamlet are pseudonyms for the urban villages described and compared in this book. They are not necessarily close to the actual Chinese names. Each researcher chose the name for the village she worked in; in the case of Pine Mansion, I reused the name I had already given the village in previous publications.

Because of the material's complexity and diversity, I chose to anonymize the people mentioned in this book by referring to them only by a family name—that is, not to invent an alternative first name (in Chinese, a personal name). None are composite characters; all are real people with whom we had casual conversations, formal interviews, or both. All of the family names I used for anonymization are widespread in China. In some rare cases I kept the real name, but in most instances I used a range of common names in ways that would avoid confusion between persons bearing the same name but belonging to different cases (living in different villages). The only exception is the Pine Mansion Chens, with whom I have worked in Shenzhen. I anonymized their former village's name, but not the Chen surname, for reasons linked to my previous research on this former emigrant village—so that people in the diaspora reading my book would recognize their kin—and because almost all native inhabitants of this village bear the same name as it was a single-lineage village prior to urbanization. Naming people “Mr. Chen” or “Mrs. Wang” sounds even more formal in Chinese than in English, and therefore in many instances, after introducing them in this polite way on the first occurrence, I drop the title and refer to them simply as “Chen” or “Wang.”