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Major Sources for Chinese Population Studies

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In its constant striving for the goal of four modernizations, the Chinese government has keenly realized that the success of achieving such a goal depends heavily upon China's ability to manage and control its own population growth. The extreme and harsh measures taken by the government for birth control reflect the government's obsession with the issue of population. In the early 1980s, China began, with the increased assistance of foreign experts and United Nations agencies, to devise more cohesive population control policy, adopting more empirical techniques and modern methods for collecting demographic data that are needed for reform planning. Emerging from this urgent concern with the "problem of population" (jen-k'ou wen-t'i) in China and the increased availability of demographic data has been a new field of Chinese population studies in China as well as in other countries. This article is intended to give an introduction to some major sources for the studies of Chinese population that have been published during the past decade.

According to a United Nations report, China has not only one of the largest populations but also one of the best-documented populations in the world. Since 1949 there have been four national censuses. The most recent ones are the third and fourth censuses conducted in 1982 and 1990 respectively. The 1982 census has produced the Chung-kuo 1982 nien jen k'ou p'u ch'a tsu liao (1982 population census of China: Results of computer tabulations) and the 1982 population census of China: Major figures by the State Statistical Bureau in 1985 and 1982 respectively. Also published in 1983 by the Bureau was the Chung-kuo 1982 nien jen k'ou p'u ch'a 10% ch'ou yang tiao ti chu yao shu tsu (Major figures from the 10% sample tabulation of China's 1982 population census). The 1982 census was so impressive that an international seminar on China's 1982 population census was held in Beijing in 1984, which produced the volume of the proceedings under the English title of A census of one billion people.

Following this national census was a sampling census conducted in 1987. The result of this sampling census is the thirty-three volume set of the Chung-kuo 1987 nien 1% jen k'ou yang tiao ch'a tsu liao (1987 national census of 1% of the Chinese population) published between 1988 and 1990. All the provinces and autonomies and major cities are covered, with the exception of Taiwan.

Three years later, in July 1990, the fourth national census was conducted. The published data have been coming out gradually during the past two years. They appear in two large series, both of which have been compiled by the local government agency or authority responsible for the census and are now in progress. One series under the title of Ti ssu tz'u jen k'ou p'u ch'a shou kung hui tsung hui pien (The fourth national census: manual tabulations) has now produced twelve titles from the provinces in China proper. Since the
name of each province appears first in the title, one would have to find the individual titles under the name of the province. For example, for the province of Honan, the title reads: Ho-nan sheng ti ssu tz'u jen k'ou p'u ch'a shou kung hui tsung tsu liao hui pien (The fourth census of Honan Province: manual tabulations).

The other series, entitled 1990 nien jen k'ou p'u ch'a tsu liao (The 1990 national census), has just appeared in the recent summer catalog of the China International Book Trading Corporation in Beijing with nine titles from three provinces, two cities, and four counties of Chiangsu Province. Individual titles are under the name of the provinces, cities, and counties. For example, the title of the Shanghai volume reads: Shang-hai shih 1990 nien jen k'ou p'u ch'a tsu liao (The 1990 census of Shanghai) and, for the county of Wu-chin in Chiangsu, the title reads: Chiang-su sheng Wu-chin hsien 1990 nien jen k'ou p'u ch'a tsu liao (The 1990 census of Wu-chin County of Chiangsu Province). Considering the large number of cities and counties in China, the census is indeed a gigantic enterprise which will result in hundreds of volumes to be published in the future. Fortunately, Chung-kuo jen k'ou ch'ing pao chung hsin (China Population Information Center) has offered a timely publication of the general tabulation of the 1990 census — Chung-kuo ti ssu tz'u jen k'ou p'u ch'a shu ch'u piao (Tabulations of figures of the fourth census of China).

Population surveys have been conducted periodically in China for a variety of purposes and in many categories. Most notable of these published materials are China in-depth fertility survey: Phase I: Shaanxi, Hebei and Shanghai. Principal report, compiled and published by the State Statistical Bureau in 1982; The 1/1000 fertility survey of 1982 by the same body; and Female fertility in China: A 1% population survey by the China Population Information Center in 1988 covering a period of fifty years from 1930 to 1981. Sample surveys have been conducted at both the national and local levels and recorded primarily in the statistical yearbooks of China and of its provinces. For instance, the 1987 Chung-kuo jen k'ou nien chien (Population yearbook of China, 1987) reported a national migration survey that was conducted by the Center for Population Research of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1986.

As mentioned above, yearbooks have been a major source of population data and statistics. Virtually, there is one general and one statistical/economic yearbook for each province and autonomy. The same type of yearbooks are compiled and published for nearly all the major cities and special economic zones. These annual publications include good and valuable demographic data which are often not available elsewhere. For example, some provincial yearbooks offer data at the county level. Others offer specific data on the labor force and on migration between the villages and cities.

In addition, there are specific yearbooks on population and population-related areas, such as Chung-kuo jen k'ou nien chien (Population yearbook of China) and Chung-kuo jen k'ou t'ung chi nien chien (China population statistics yearbook). The latter is an exclusive compilation of population statistics and the 1991 volume has comprehensive coverage of the
1990 census. In recent years, the coverage of these publications has appeared to be more detailed and broader in scope.

Related to the population issue is the *Chung-kuo chi hua sheng yu nien chien* (Yearbook of family planning and birth control of China), which began publication in 1986 and also provides demographic data and statistics in the areas of its primary interests.

Yearbooks aside, annual publications, like *Chung-kuo jen k’ou tzu liao shou ts’e* (Handbook of demographic sources) which have become available to the general public since 1990, are equally important sources. *Chung-kuo jen k’ou tzu liao shou ts’e* combines demographic data from the yearbook of family planning and birth control and China population statistical yearbooks. In 1985, the Department of Public Security, which is responsible for overseeing migration and other security-related issues, published the handbook *Chung-kuo ch’eng chen jen k’ou tzu liao shou ts’e* (Handbook of information on population in Chinese cities and villages) which, unfortunately, has not been updated for a while. Since the local public security apparatus is known to be responsible for providing population data for the provincial yearbook, information of this sort may be found in those local statistical yearbooks.

As noted earlier, population study is a new field in China. Interestingly, with the national census in 1982 and again in 1990, China has emerged as the country with the best-documented national population in the world. It is not surprising that population studies in China have flourished in the past few decades. Most studies have been done by universities and colleges, population research institutions, and population studies societies of which some publish an organ for their research results. The university journals (*hsüeh pao*), because of their large number, are still the major sources of information. A listing of some of these journals follows:

- *Jen k’ou tung t’ai* (Demographical activities)
- *Jen k’ou yen chiu* (Population studies)
- *Jen k’ou hsin hsueh k’an* (Journal of population studies)
- *Jen k’ou tsa chih* (Journal of population)
- *Jen k’ou yu ching chi* (Population and the economy)
- *Chung-kuo jen k’ou k’o hsüeh* (Chinese demography)
- *Chung-kuo jen k’ou pao* (Chinese population)
- *Hsi pei jen k’ou* (Population of Northwestern China)

Monographic studies are numerous and will be reviewed in a future article in *PacificScope: the Newsletter of the International Relations and Pacific Studies Library*. However, one particular monographic series deserves special mention here, that is, *Chung-kuo jen k’ou* (Chinese population), published since 1987 by Chung-kuo ts’ai cheng ching chi ch’u pan she, with Professor Sun Ching-chih of the Beijing Economic Institute as the chief editor for the series. Thirty-two volumes including each province and autonomy, major cities, Hong Kong/Macau, and Taiwan were planned to be published. Based primarily upon the 1953,
1964, and 1982 national censuses, each volume provides a comprehensive picture of historical movements and current state of the local population that includes migration, birthrate, death rate, population distribution by age, gender, and occupation, quality of population in terms of physical and intellectual conditions, family planning and birth control, and other topics. So far, twenty-nine are available in the University of California libraries. Another important source is the *Population atlas of China* published in 1987 by the Oxford University Press in association with the China Statistics Publishing House. On a smaller scale is the *Lao nien jen k'ou ti t'u chi* (Atlas of the aged population) published in 1985. Together they give valuable information on the Chinese population on the basis of the 1953, 1964, and 1982 national censuses.

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