

data in Kio-a-thau, sixty percent of women who were born between 1845 to 1894 had their feet bound (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1
Footbinding practices based upon census data in Kio-a-thau

Period in which the girls were born	Total number of girls born	Total number of those born who had bound feet	Total number after the abolition of footbinding	Percentage of footbinding (%)
1845-1854	2	1	0	50
1855-1864	3	3	0	100
1865-1874	11	11	6	100
1875-1884	24	11	7	46
1885-1894	38	21	8	55
Subtotal	78	47	21	60
1895-1904	45	7	6	16
1905-1914	84	0	0	0
1915-1924	109	0	0	0
1925-1934	96	0	0	0
1935-1944	107	0	0	0
1945	5	0	0	0
Subtotal	446	7	6	2
Total	524	54	27	10

Source: Colonial household registers for Kio-a-thau. **Notes:** All the women who kept their feet bound necessarily defied the abolition policy. Some may have died or married out so there would be no record of unbinding of their feet on local household registers.

A NEW DIVISION OF LABOUR AND CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN

During the Japanese period, a new division of labour began to develop as compared to the pre-colonial period. Women were no longer bound by Chinese kinship in terms of labouring and social role as Gates mentioned. Rather, they

were expected to join capitalist agricultural and industrial activities. The commercialised agriculture, along with the new technology and improvement in agricultural methods, impacted on the labour usage between genders. Women as well as men found some possibilities to change their traditional roles in the household. In order to achieve its economic goals, the colonial government aimed to recruit female labour in order to assure the plentiful supply of cheap labour. To meet its manpower needs, the colonial government implemented many measures such as the abolition of foot-binding, the ban on slavery involving adopted girls and little daughters-in-law (*simpua*), and the encouragement of women to receive education, which all aimed to change gender roles. In the following section, I explore the on-going process of how women were incorporated into this frame of a new division of labour

Commercialised labour requirements

With the economic goals of Japanese colonisation towards Taiwan, the division of labour characteristic of the pre-colonial period began to be reshaped. The dynamic of this transformation was largely due to colonial intention. As Ho (1978: 3) states, “under the guidance of the colonial government, the island was developed as an agricultural appendage to Japan.” Ka (1995) affirms that the plan for commercialised crops such as sugar and rice needed a large labour force and thus created considerable labour demand. Isett (1995: 240-44), in his *Sugar Manufacture and Agrarian Economy of Nineteen Century Taiwan*, described in detail the labouring process involved in growing sugarcane. For example, for the cane harvesting,

Individual peasant households carried out the labour-intensive task of harvesting, although in some cases they hired hands to ensure that the mature cane was cut, bundled, and delivered to the mill within as short a time as possible. The cutting of cane was done by men, while women and children gathered leaves for compost and fodder for the oxen, bundled the cane for transport, and let the ox cart carrying the cane to the mill.

There were two important sources of agricultural workers for the sugarcane plantations. The first were the tenants on land controlled (either owned or leased) by sugar companies. The tenants made contracts with sugar companies to plant

sugarcane under the companies' supervision. They had to fulfill their rental obligations and work as wage labourers at the companies' request (Ka 1995: 105; Yanaihara 1929: 240-41). Ka (1995: 105) indicates that land under such arrangements constituted five to seven percent of Taiwan's arable land.

The other source was to recruit labourers in the market. These labourers were paid by either casual contracts or long-term contracts. In Kio-a-thau, locals called these hired labourers – *hui-sia-gang* – labourers working for the sugar company. According to one informant, the number of company-owned farms neighbouring Kio-a-thau was nine. Each company farm was responsible for about 20 to 30 *chia* of land on average. Each company farmer had a director-general and a manager. Most of the directors-general were Japanese officials, while the managers were local people because they had the local networks to recruit workers. Locals called the manager *ku-li-tao*, which means the head of sugarcane workers. One of the most important missions for the manager was to recruit many *hui-sia-gang*. Besides this, the *Ku-li-tao* also did other miscellaneous things such as giving fertilisers to peasants, regulating annual quotas of sugarcane, and distributing the daily pay to workers in cash.

The other source of labour was the local family farms. These family farms were not owned by sugar companies but by locals. Ka (1995) argues that the persistence of these indigenous family farms depended on successful competition with capitalist production as mentioned above, since they could thrive through self-exploitation in terms of labour force. These family farms were mainly composed of farms cultivating 1-5 *chia* of land. Most of the labour force was family labour. The smaller the farm was, the more it relied on family labour. In busy times, such as harvests, however, family farms also needed to hire labour from outside on a daily or long-term basis. This labour was supplied by “fellow villagers, especially from who cultivated less than 0.5 *chia*, areas with a different harvest season, or poorer areas where many had to hire themselves out” (Ka 1995: 103).

Large-scale sugar plantations needed plenty of workers. According to the official estimation in 1900, wages were the greatest cost for the sugar production (Isett 1995: 245). Furthermore, the labouring demand for growing sugarcane varied. According to Isett (1995: 243), the cultivation and refining of sugarcane were “seasonal activities.”⁴ The period of growing sugarcane lasted for about 16 months. The season for seeding sugarcane started in July, with a second one in December. The busiest seasons for recruiting labourers focused on the stages of clearance, weeding, and harvesting. The intensity of work was variable. For example, the most labour-intensive work was in the harvesting seasons and refining periods (Isett 1995: 242; 243). At these times, the managers of sugarcane fields had to recruit many unskilled waged labourers as well as skilled labourers to help with the farming. Locals who needed casual work thus noticed that they should keep good relationships with managers. Later on in this chapter, I will give the case study of Su, who was this type of a wage labourer for the sugar company in the 1940s.

In fact, the Japanese colonial state faced a dilemma in developing some economic schemes, such as the sugar economy: first, it was impossible for the state to recruit many labourers from Japan; second, it seemed to face a shortage of labour if it chose large-scale crop plantations. In 1909, the Taiwan Sugarcane Company recruited 450 workers from inner Japan (Kakei 1989: 381). However, these staff were mostly technicians and staff whose aim was to train locals how to operate the refinery. According to Kakei (1989: 381-82), these workers took turns working in different sugar refineries over the island and trained many local workers. The colonial government also adopted some measures to resolve the problem of unskilled labour shortage. For example, the government signed a contract with the Chinese government in 1934. According to the contract, about sixty thousand migrant workers – the majority of them from Fujian – were recruited under an arrangement of temporary entry permits (Kerr 1974: 172). Kerr states: “The majority were unskilled labours recruited for seasonal employment on sugar plantations and tea gardens, or for work in the mines.”

⁴ For details of the distinctive stages of cultivating sugarcane, see Isett (1995: 241-242).

With the Japanese concerns about the labour shortage, it was therefore reasonable that the female labour force became a target in the eyes of the colonisers because this potential force remained untapped. In regards to local Taiwanese workers, Takekoshi (1907: 202) reported on two discouraging features in the early twentieth century. The first was that the birth rate was low and the death rate was high among Taiwanese. Another was “that women in Formosa, with the exception of the tea-pickers and the Hakka women, shut themselves up all day in their houses and do not go out and help their husbands in the fields.”

Political propaganda about the advantage of recruiting female labourers followed. For example, the official organ newspaper, *Taiwan nichii nichii shimpō* (Taiwan daily news), highlighted the economic advantages of recruiting women (5 March 1915). An observer stated the economic advantage (in 1915) of abandoning footbinding in such a way, “The average labour fee for a woman is 40 *cian*.⁵ There are one million and 500 thousand women on the whole island now. If they unbound their feet and joined in the economic activities, they could create five million *yen* per day.” In the following two sections, I argue that Japanese government policies regarding the abolition of footbinding and the emancipation of little-daughters-in-law and adopted daughters were gradually greatly influenced by economic concerns.

The Japanese attitude towards footbinding

In order to recruit female workers, the Japanese government first faced the local contradictory ideas of women’s role. Several scholars observe the Japanese attitude towards footbinding. Wolf and Huang (1980: 44) state that “[w]hen it came to foot-binding and the sale of female children as *ca-bo-kan* (servant-slaves), the Japanese authorities felt compelled to interfere...” Levy (1966: 95) comments that women’s footbinding as well as the Chinese habits of opium smoking and men’s wearing pigtailed were “obstacles in the way of efficient rule.”⁶ Lamley (1999: 218) indicates that the policy of abolishing footbinding was closely

⁵ One *yen* = 100 *cian*

⁶ The Qing government forced men to wear pigtailed.

connected to the Japanese biased attitude towards “bad custom.” Recently, Takenaka (1995: 260-62) describes Taiwanese women’s foot-binding as “inhuman,” “a mechanism for preventing them from running away,” “unhealthy,” “against nature,” and “a reflection of patriarchal ideas”. Takenaka continues to assert that the abolition of footbinding meant the destruction of “feudal society” and, from then on, Taiwanese women would lead a “sensible and easy” life.

However, when the Japanese colonial state first ruled Taiwan, its attitude towards footbinding was not so “disgusted” as compared to later times. For example, the third Governor-general, Nogi Yoshinori, promulgated a law on 9 November 1896 which encouraged women to “abolish footbinding without compulsion” since he admitted it was a local “customary law.” However, such a moderate policy was only temporary and transitional. After overcoming many local rebellions all over the island, the government started to actively encourage local people to abolish footbinding. In 1900, with the assistance of the colonial authorities and the colonial government, a medical practitioner named Huang Yu-jie organised the Natural Foot Society. Those men who joined in the society swore not to allow their sons to marry women with bound feet. In the society’s inaugural address Huang stated, “Now Taiwan has become a part of the Japanese empire, and the government is carrying out reforms. The Taiwanese are also a people of reform, but it will be really shameful if they are not aware of the past” (Levy 1966: 100). Levy (1966: 101-102) mentions that the members of the Natural-foot Society were given “congratulatory medals” inscribed with the words “Glorious Medal of Taiwan.” Each medal holder was presented with a silken sash by the Japanese Governor-General.

Besides human rights, the Japanese objection to footbinding was based on an economic dimension. Unbinding feet impacted very much on women’s social life and, as Arthur Wolf points out, their involvement in the economy. Wu (1996: 240-241) indicates that one of the motivation for the abolition was to enable women to get involved in the economy, especially in commercialised agricultural farming. Tsurumi (1977: 220) further points out how unbinding and education affected Taiwanese women’s social status: “Increased schoolgoing for girls was

closely related to other new directions for women. An end to footbinding and entrance into the colony's industrial work force were two important changes." According to Tsurumi (1977: 219-28), the social status of Taiwanese women became higher than in the pre-colonial period. Yu (1988: 286) indicates the proportion of school-aged girls who enrolled in elementary schools increased from 1.02 percent in 1908 to 61.0 percent in 1943, while the increase for boys was 8.2 percent to 80.7 percent respectively. Those educated women became more involved in professional and public life which was previously dominated by men. For example, in 1914, with a total of 21,859 factory workers, 28 percent were females. In 1941, this percentage exceeded 40 percent (Tsurumi 1977: 221).

In general, the abolition of footbinding in Kio-a-thau really worked (see Table 6.1). According to the local census data, the average percentage of footbinding was sixty percent in 1895. The percentage reached its highest between 1855-1874, when all women born had their feet bound. After 1875, the figure remained fairly stable. Approximately half of the newborn baby girls had their feet bound. The first recorded case of footbinding in the available census data for Kio-a-thau took place in March 1845, while the last instance occurred in September 1901. From then on, there was not one case reported. After 1895, there was a high percentage of the abandonment of footbinding. Most women in Kio-a-thau who were born after 1895 and their parents, especially after 1905, had accepted the idea about the emancipation of footbinding. Some of those who had bound feet unbound them (see Table 6.1). Positive encouragement from the colonial authorities therefore played an important role in abolishing footbinding.

The liberation of little daughters in law (*simpua*), servant-slaves (*ca-bo-can*), and adopted daughters in Kio-a-thau

Ino Kanori, a Japanese anthropologist who studied Taiwan, mentioned the popularity of the sale of daughters and maid-servants (*ca-bo-can*) in the Cing period (for details, see the discussion in the following section) although they were banned by the government. Wolf and Huang (1980: 2-15) report the custom of adopting daughters and *simpua* in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in

Fujian, Kwangtung, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The major difference between *simpua* and adopted daughters was that the *simpua* were prospective daughters-in-law, which relates more to “reproduction,” whereas adopted daughters related mainly to “labour.” Kajihara (1989: 96) claims too that every daughter-in-law wished to adopt in daughters for assistance as soon as possible in order to “avoid” the heavy household chores of a large family. Wolf and Huang (1980) state that locals believed that adopting in a daughter could induce the conception of sons.

By contrast, a *ca-bo-kan* was like a slave, who would accompany a rich bride and also serve as a maid-servant. Unlike adopted daughters, *ca-bo-kan* was more popular among rich families, who would recruit several maid-servant slaves rather than adopted daughters in order to do the household chores. Ino (1928: 171) mentions that earlier Han-settlers recruited maid-servant slaves from mainland China in the eighteenth century. These slaves often stayed for the rest of their life and remained single. Wolf and Huang (1980) mention, in certain circumstances, in particular in hard times, daughters would be adopted out as adopted daughters. They (Wolf and Huang 1980: 95) state, “in hard times, peasants’ families were forced to sell their daughters as slave girls or give them out in adoption as little daughters-in-law (*simpua*).”

By comparison, a similar custom of adoption between different surnames also took place in Japan. Hsu (1975: 37-39) indicates that the adoption of a son-in-law or *mukoyōshi*, a custom whereby a man goes to live in his wife’s household and assumes the family name of her father, was much more common in Japan than in China. Ariga (1939) indicates servants and tenant farmers often used kinship terms as a matter of courtesy in addressing their employers and landlords in Japan, inasmuch as that there is a “closeness of relationship among those who live and work in the same household” (Hsu 1975:39). In colonial Kio-a-thau, such custom of adoption between the Japanese and the locals continued. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the senior Japanese employers adopted two Taiwanese children: Water and Love. Yamamoto and his wife did not have any children, so they adopted these two. Another reason was that both Water and Love worked for Yamamoto. Yamamoto and his wife treated these two adopted children very well.

Love recalled: “When I got engaged, my [adopted] mother gave me lots of gifts like earrings, bracelets, rings, jewelry, and some make-up as if she were marrying her own daughter out.” In a very old picture taken by Zensaburou Kaneki (see Methodology), we can see Water with his natal family on their return from Tokyo for a short visit in 1928, when he was about ten years old.⁷ He is sitting next to his mother in a bamboo-chair, dressed in rather “modern” style and wearing a pair of new shoes. His father is standing to his left. In fact, the occasion that I showed him the photo was the first time Water had seen this picture, 75 years after the picture was taken. I stood by him while Water was looking at this photo in 2003. He stated, “I look sort of tired in the picture because I was ill at that time.”

However, Japanese attitudes towards the local custom of adoption were quite different. Based on issues of human rights, the colonial state thought that the sale of daughters was a kind of “slave trade.” In 1917, the high court in Tokyo promulgated a law which banned the custom of adopting out daughters, saying it violated “good and kind social customs” (Kajihara 1989: 88). Kio-a-thau’s census surveys reveal some important data. Table 6.2 shows that the percentage of *simpua* and adopting out daughters became smaller from 1895 onwards as a result of the ban. This shows that the ban impacted significantly on the local cultural behaviour.

However, with the contrasting roles of the genders and various household demands such as reproduction and labouring, private negotiations between families about adoption of daughters continued. Table 6.2 shows that a contradictory trend emerged that the percentage of adopting in daughters still increased. The main reason is that although the slave trade (adopting out daughters) was banned by the government, the adoption by relatives and friends (adopting in daughters), which was similar to that of Japanese adoption, through registration was still allowed. In other words, locals could not sell their daughters as usual but they were allowed to adopt in daughters through normal adoptive procedure. Besides this, locals could still utilise many strategies to meet their own

⁷ I do not present the picture here because I want to protect his personal privacy.

requirements of adoption. For example, I was told that many *simpua* were transferred their identities in the household registration from a *simpua* to an adopted (in) daughter in order to avoid the investigation of the government. The former was not allowed but the latter was legally permitted. This contributed to the increasing number of adopting in daughters. That was the reason why Table 6.2 shows that the percentage of adopted *simpua* fell from 1895 onwards, whereas the percentage of adopted in daughters continues to increase in Kio-a-thau.

The increasing number of adopted in daughters also impacted on the strategy of using adopted daughters by the locals. Table 6.2 shows that the highest rate of adopting in daughters between 1925-1934 basically corresponded with the peak period of sugar exports in Taiwan (see Chapter 2). The growing sugar economy would have required an increased demand for seasonal labour, which would in turn have resulted in a shortage of domestic labour. As a result, locals may have recruited more adopted daughters to deal with this shortage within the home and sugarcane fields. Zero, an adopted daughter whose case will be examined below, told me her foster sister's story. Her foster sister was a *simpua* in the 1930s. She was bought as a little-daughter-in-law when she was only two years old. She was raised by her adopted parents as a prospective daughter-in-law. Her adopted parents wanted her to marry their only son, but the son did not like her at all. Zero said:

The brother disliked my sister. He chose a nickname for my sister: Toad, a very bad nickname. One day he came to my foster mother, accusing my sister of not shaking his cradle. The sister once told me that she had a harder life. "At least you can go to school but I can't," she said to me. My adopted sister had to do lots of household chores such as cooking and taking care of her younger brother. Besides these, she had been working as a *hui-sia-gang* – workers for the sugar company – for about two hours per day since my foster father was a supervisor in the sugarcane field then.

Due to the loathing between the couple, her foster family decided to marry Zero's sister out to Te-a-heng, about ten kilometres away from Kio-a-thau, when she was 18. Zero stated that the foster sister and she had to do many household chores every day. Zero as an adopted daughter was also sent by her foster mother to be a maidservant for a Japanese official (see the case study below). Their stories reveal

that a changing role of *simpua* and adopted daughters, who were also used to connect with economic activities and thus to make money.

Table 6.2
The number and percentage of adopted *simpua* (little-daughters-in-law) and adopted daughters in Kio-a-thau

Years baby girls were born	Total number of baby girls	Number of adopted in daughters		Number of adopted out daughters		Number of adopted in <i>simpua</i>		Number of adopted out <i>simpua</i>	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1845-1894	78	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
1895-1904	45	3	7	0	0	3	7	0	0
1905-1914	84	11	13	3	4	3	4	0	0
1915-1924	109	19	17	1	1	2	2	0	0
1925-1934	96	19	20	3	3	1	1	0	0
1935-1944	107	12	11	2	2	0	0	0	0
1945	5	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	524	65	12	9	2	10	2	0	0

Source: Colonial household registers for Kio-a-thau. **Notes:** I must make it clear here that the data before 1895 cannot be verified because the Japanese government conducted the first census survey in 1905. I speculate that the reason why fewer cases of adoption were written down were because women did not reveal every detail about their past when they were asked to register households.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WOMEN'S WORK

The above discussion points out the contradictory attitudes and beliefs of locals and the colonial state. For the locals, cultural and household economic factors were paramount, while the logic was mainly related to human rights and economic development for the latter. For the colonial government, the move to abolish footbinding was greatly motivated by the economic need to make use of female labour. These changes naturally brought about dramatic impacts on women's daily life. However, according to my observation, the women's

incorporation in the labour market varied according to their respective social classes. In the following section I will offer several case studies to explore the differential impacts on different social classes through this time of social-economic transformation.

Seasonal or migrant labour in sugarcane fields

Su was born in 1928 in a poor family, and when she was only twelve she became a wage labourer in the sugarcane fields (1940). She lived in Zihguan, a village next to Kio-a-thau. Every day she needed to walk about ten kilometres with other “child labourers” to the sugarcane fields owned by KSR in Gun-zi-pei. She reported:

There were a total of 13 children in our team: four or five of them were males; eight or nine were females. Our relationship was as friends or neighbours. The average age was about twelve or thirteen. [How did you find the job?] Job opportunities [during the war period of the early 1940s] were very limited. A sugarcane worker for the sugarcane company was one of the few chances for making a living, especially in the [Pacific] war period. It was not hard to find a job [as a worker] if you had strength. Actually, the sugarcane company had created lots of job opportunities for [poor] people. At harvest time, the company even hired some very old people to watch over the bundled sugarcane [to prevent them from being stolen].

Su described the daily schedule for a sugarcane worker was as follows:

At seven my “co-workers” and I went to the fields together. We all walked in our bare feet, carrying a lunch box, some water, spending one and a half hours to get to the “workplace” – the sugarcane fields. Then we took a break and at nine we started working until twelve. After taking a break, eating our lunch boxes, we began work again until five. It would take another one and an half hours to go home. Such kind of workers, who were called *huei-sia-gang*, were quite popular then. I remember very clearly that I earned 25 *cian* per day [in the early 1940s] when I first received the money. An adult female worker earned 35 *cian* per day. But a male worker earned even more than that...⁸ I gave all the money to my mother, without keeping any pocket money.

She stated that most of them kept working for a long time, but the prerequisite was that “the *ku-li-tao*, the manager of sugarcane workers, needed you.” Later on she introduced her brother to work via the manager of the workers, *ku-li-tao*. Su said:

⁸ For example, the daily wage for Dai, a male sugarcane worker, was 45 *cian* in 1933; 48 *cian* in 1934; 52 *cian* in 1935; 67 *cian* and 72 *cian* in 1936.

My little brother was a person who always kept silent. He could not manage public relations with others. This was his weakness. I thought I had to help him, so I came to the manager to ask for a job as a sugarcane worker. My brother thus obtained his first job in life.

Her introduction also contributed to her brother's marriage. She commented: "My brother and sister-in-law got acquainted with each other in the sugarcane field. I found a female worker who was hardworking and looked nice. I acted as a go-between. Eventually they got married through my introduction."

She was the only daughter in her family then. Therefore, if she went to work, someone like her father would share "her" household chores. For example, she pointed out, "My father would cook dinner, since when I got back from work, it was almost seven and impossible for me to cook."

Su's case shows that a few adjustments of household chores can imply the transformation of gender roles in the household. Her father came to live with his wife's family. In the early 1940s, he was temporarily not living with his wife because he had a volunteer job in the local church. Although such a father was less powerful than in a virilocal family, it was still unusual for a father, not mother, to cook dinner at that time. In usual circumstances, Su, as the eldest and only daughter, would normally have been responsible for the household chores such as cooking as I have described in the early part in this chapter. However, with the involvement of female workers in the cash economy, the labouring pattern changed between genders. Su became a major income earner in the household and therefore waived her "daughter's duty" such as cooking. Furthermore, the increasing importance of her status in the family is displayed by her introduction of her brother to work and her role in arranging his marriage. To some extent, a daughter was not disliked by parents because she could also contribute their financial as well as other abilities to the family.

With regard to work, Su reported that most of the work of a child labourer involved cutting off sugarcane leaves. But when she grew up, she was switched to

the tasks of an adult female labourer (see Table 6.3). She provided a vivid description of life as a sugarcane worker:

Everything you saw was sugarcane. It was pretty spacious and you just hid in it quite often. The land was extremely hard to dig [in order to seed or fertiliser]. But if it was raining, the clay became softer. We had about 20 workers and most of them were females or children and should be responsible for about 30 *chia* of land under the supervision of the supervisor.⁹ Sometimes Japanese officials would come along – they always came riding horses and looked very grumpy and grim-faced. In the field, we wore a hat made of bamboo leaves with our feet bare. Dressed in a loose shirt and *Dai-wan-kou*, a pair of loose trousers, and a raincoat made of dried straw if it was raining. The worst thing was ‘hiding from air-raid bombing’ in the [Pacific] war period. We had to hide under bundles of sugarcane....

Undoubtedly, seasonal or migrant workers were the major agricultural actors in Kio-a-thau, or even the neighbouring rural areas, in colonial times. Sugarcane fields provided locals with many casual job opportunities. Plates 6.1 to 6.4 show that the sugar company recruited many workers for labouring in sugarcane fields. These locals were mostly people with lower social status such as the poor, women, and children. Both men and women, the young and old, got involved in such economic activities. Jheng (1996: 102) claims that eighty to ninety percent of villagers in Kio-a-thau claimed that they or their family were involved in some ways in the labouring process. Su told me, “The sugar company offered many job opportunities to some inferior people such as *le-han-ka* – single but jobless people – and the poor to make a living.”¹⁰ In other words, it became one of the available strategic options for their survival. Furthermore, Su’s case shows that the sugarcane fields also provided some people with an opportunity to develop their social networks.

⁹ Although it was after the colonial period, we can still see clearly from the workbook published in 1956 by the Taiwan Sugar Company: Kio-a-tou Sugar Refinery (1956: 1-8) how manpower was used during the respective stages of sugarcane production: ploughing needed three water buffaloes, and twenty labourers per hectare; land clearance needed three water buffaloes and twenty-five labourers; fertilizing needed 14 labourers; seeding needed 50 labourers; weeding needed three water buffaloes, and eight labourers.

¹⁰ River, one of my informants, remembered that “most of them [in the late 1930s] were female workers. The average work day was eight hours. But I also found a lot of casual jobs, which meant you could work just for half a day....[in the late 1930s] I found some of the workers were migrants, who came from Beimen, Tainan, a poor rural area. Most of them were males. As for local workers, most of them were female and child workers. By and large, they came from poor agricultural families, which meant they could tolerate laborious jobs.

Su developed her strategies to deal with the work and her family. She worked as a sugarcane worker for quite a long time. She got married at the age of 22. After the marriage, she said she had to help her husband's family, who had several *chia* of wet paddy and dry fields. They also raised pigs for selling in the market. She said:

I had to help my husband's family, so I quit the job as a wage labourer temporarily. Shortly afterwards, the supervisor asked me if I could go back to work because I was a senior sugarcane worker. I told him I could not because I had a family. He begged me repeatedly so I promised him to work as a part-time worker because the labouring demand of growing sugarcane varied in a year. I went back to work if it were busy seasons such as land clearance, weeding, and harvesting. And I could stay home taking care of my family and help with the fieldworks.

Fountain, a supervisor in the 1930s, mentioned that women served as a major source of such kind of casual workers when the sugar company needed labour. He said:

Most of these casual workers were women. The major reason was not because they were cheaper. Rather, it was because it was easier to recruit female workers than male. Most of the women did not have regular jobs. We needed a large amount of labourers, say, especially at the harvest season. Women's schedule was more flexible, so they could fit our labouring pattern [in the sugar fields].

As for the work content, the role of female workers such as Su seems to have been similar to children's (see Table 6.3). Fountain said, "Basically female workers and child workers belonged to the same category. Both groups were unskilled." He described the tasks of the men, women, and child workers in detail as shown in Table 6.3. Then he continued, "Those female workers were lower class people. They were born in peasant families. Most of them were uneducated."

As for the difference between genders in relation to the content of work, he commented:

Male workers did work that was more strenuous such as cane digging and transporting at harvesting. We had to recruit more male workers to do these types of work. Besides that, we would rather recruit female workers. Of course they were cheaper to recruit. As far as I remember, in the 1930s, a

male worker could earn sixty to eighty *cian* per day, while a female worker could just earn thirty *cian* if they did the same work.

Fountain also pointed out that this classification of the division of labour was male-made. He commented that the division of labour, together with income, often became one of the main sources of gender disputes in the fields. In other words, the particular division of labour seems to be a result of local initiative as much as colonial state action. He reported:

Some women were even working better than men. They were using hoes rather than the hand-hoes commonly used by women workers. I think they were more efficient because they liked to earn more money.

As Fountain indicated, making more money was the major reason for women to work hard. If they did men's jobs, they would get more money. For some women, income rather than division of labour mattered. It was often reported that women drove ox-carts and did things that stronger men would do. Under such circumstances, men were facing competition from women. Fountain pointed out, "In the sugarcane fields we often mocked some men who did little work like this: 'You are lousier than women.'"

However, for men, it was shameful if women earned more than them. Therefore, men would complain to the supervisor: "You cannot let women do such as such (for example, driving ox-carts) because they are too strenuous." In other words, men would use cultural excuses to deal with women breaking into the "domain of men," although the true reason was that these men were worried about female competition in the workplace. Consequently, the simplest way to work out this problem was to separate "men's work" from "women's work." Men were required to do work such as sugarcane cutting, digging, and driving ox-carts, while women were required to do the other "side jobs" such as seeding, weeding, and fertilising.

Table 6.3
Division of labour in sugarcane fields

Work content	Male worker	Female worker	Child worker
Land clearance	✓	✓	
Seed bedding	✓	✓	✓
Seeding		✓	✓
Weeding	✓	✓	✓
Fertilising		✓	✓
Soil cultivating	✓	✓	✓
Irrigating	✓	✓	✓
Harvesting (sugarcane digging)	✓		
Harvesting (sugarcane cutting)		✓	✓
Cane transporting	✓		

Source: Fieldwork data, Kio-a-thau, 2003. **Notes:** For the pictures of sugarcane seeding, soil cultivating, harvesting, and cane transporting, see Plates 6.1 to 6.4.

Household Maid-servant: Zero's case

Zero was born in October 1928 and was adopted out when she was only two years old. She remarked that her father and foster father were “best friends.” Prior to her birth, her parents already had four daughters and two sons. She affirmed that this was the major reason for her to be adopted out. She claimed that her parents did not “sell” her, but only asked her foster parents to take good care of her. She reported that she did not know she was an adopted daughter until she was ten years old. One day her classmate at school told her that she was kind of similar to Far, Zero's natal brother. Zero's explanation for this reluctance to tell her that she

was adopted was that, “My foster parents would like a clear break in the relationship between my natal family and me.”¹¹

As noted previously, Zero’s foster sister was adopted out. After that, most of the household chores fell on Zero. That was one of the reasons why she did not graduate from primary school until she was 16. After that, her foster mother [her foster father had died] asked her to be the maidservant of a Japanese official in 1943. Zero described her foster mother as a “shrewd woman.” After her husband died, the mother had to support the whole family by herself. As a result, she sent Zero to work as a maidservant for a Japanese high-position official who worked at KSR and lived in a Japanese dormitory nearby.

Zero went on to describe the nature of her daily labour each day. According to her description, she needed to do some other jobs besides the regular schedule of being a maid-servant. She recounted these with a kind of sadness:

I always went to work [being a maid] from eight to five. The work content comprised gardening, weeding, mopping the wooden floor, and feeding the pets: a dog and some goldfish. The Japanese wife insisted she cook and iron the shirts for her husband. Then I took over the other duties. I was very impressed that the wife should bow her husband in. During the middle of the day, I had about two hours’ break. I didn’t take a rest but picked up bags of dried grain as material to burn. I had to dig sweet potatoes or pick up their leaves if I had time. When I returned home at five, I had to prepare the dinner. First, I usually divided the stem of the sweet potato from the leaves, which served as one of the major dishes. After that, I had to look after the kids of my sister-in-law. Oh, dear, she had ten kids! At five the next day, I woke up, and then cooked sweet potatoes as our breakfast almost every day. I could not eat rice because we could not afford to buy rice. After breakfast, I had to go to the Japanese restaurant in the neighbourhood to collect the leftover food from last night to feed pigs. Can you imagine that? Each of the barrels for carrying leftover food weighed about 10 *kin*.¹²

Besides making money, Zero pointed out another reason for her to be a maid-servant was that it provided a good opportunity for her foster mother to build *Guansi* [*Guanxi*] (personal relationship, see the discussion in Chapter 4) with the Japanese. The mother liked to do keep good relations with the Japanese in order to obtain some benefits from them. Zero pointed out:

¹¹ A foster family buys the adopted daughter and from then on she totally cuts off all the relationship with her natal family. For details see Kajihara (1989: 88).

¹² 1 *kin* = 0.6 kilogram

Through my job, we could keep a close connection with the Japanese authorities of the sugar refinery. The officer I was serving was responsible for the management of sugarcane fields owned by the refinery. As a result, we could obtain *pak*, a priority to get land tenure right to plant crops.¹³

Zero's case is similar in many respects to that of Beggar, who I discussed in Chapter 4. One thing they had in common is that both served as household servant for Japanese high-position officials at KSR. The difference is the motivation for getting the positions. The main reason for Beggar to work for the Japanese employer was simply accidental, while Zero's mother sent her to work for both financial and political reasons. At that time, KSR owned many pieces of land that were used for growing sugarcane. For agricultural reasons, there was about a one-year interval between two periods of planting sugarcane because the interval could help restore the fertility of sugarcane fields. The sugar company often rented these pieces of land to locals who either wanted to grow crops such as sweet potatoes and beans, or to raise pigs. It was reported that the Japanese welcomed this because the roots of these crops and the pigs' excrement served as natural sources of fertiliser for the sugarcane fields. To the Taiwanese, especially to the landless and tenant classes, acquiring such land was a good thing because they could grow some crops for daily requirements or to sell.

The main reason Zero's foster mother sent Zero to the Japanese employer was to obtain priority for renting such land. At that time, this was an unusual privilege for locals. Zero's Japanese employer was the head person who was in charge of the management of the sugarcane fields. Zero said she herself acted as an intermediary between her mother and the Japanese. As a result, they obtained many pieces of land owned by KSR. Her mother then rented these pieces of land to other peasants who needed arable land and thus made money. Her mother gradually became influential in Kio-a-thau because peasants would come to her asking for the second tenure rights.

¹³ Local dialect: *pak*. (Mandarin: *pu*) Pak means leased land. For a detailed system of Pak in the settlers' history in Taiwan, see Shepherd (1993: 250, 268, 272, 343).

Midwife: Belt

Belt was born in Gangshan, a township near Kio-a-thau, on 30 March, 1913. When I first met her in May, 2003, she was already a ninety-year-old woman. Belt was a retired midwife and was respected by locals. Belt grew up in a large family. She was the eldest of three daughters in the family. Her father loved her very much. He named her “Belt” because he heard from a Chinese teacher that there was a witty and tough woman whose name was Belt in Chinese ancient history. Her father had high expectations of his eldest daughter. Her father was a policeman, which was considered an “upper-class” job in Japanese colonial times, according to the reports of my informants. When I asked Wang and Dragon, and Wang’s wife, Queen, for instance, what sorts of occupation were regarded as “noble” for both genders in the colonial period, they replied:

- Wang: Police [mentioned first]. Schoolteachers. *Yuan-liao-wei-yuan*, committee members of the sugar refinery.
Dragon: And village heads. Doctors.
Queen: Doctors are always good for any period.
I: How about women?
Queen: Schoolteachers and midwives. I can’t think of any others besides these.

Belt was thus born in a high-class family. Unfortunately, when she was seven years old, her mother died of cholera. After her mother’s death, Belt recalled that she led a hard life. Bad luck came twice as her father became blind because of hardwork.

From then on I had to “take responsibility” for all the family household chores and economy. I did a lot of casual jobs such as “watching house” and babysitting. I was thinking of becoming a sugarcane worker, a popular part-time job among women then, but then my father was extremely against the idea of his daughter becoming a female sugarcane worker... I had to do lots of part-time jobs since my mum was dead and my father became blind when he was just 31. I had to be responsible for making a living... But actually my father was against that idea [of becoming a sugarcane worker] since it would affect his dignity in the society.

She described her father as a “sensible” and “civilised” person. He insisted that his daughters should receive a “good education” as well as men. Belt was quite intelligent and excellent at school. After graduating from primary school, she entered secondary school, which was quite unusual among Taiwanese girls in the

1920s. Furthermore, she was permitted to enter the Department of Midwifery at the Taihoku (Taipei) Imperial University, the best university then, in which only a few Taiwanese people were allowed to register in colonial times. She returned to Kio-a-thau as a midwife in 1934 after graduation, at the age of 22. The next year she married a teacher at Shu-long Primary School. They had two sons and one daughter. The sixth year after they got married, her husband died of pneumonia. When I interviewed her in early 2003, she reported

The first day I got married, both heels of my high-heeled shoes broke, which apparently foresaw the bad luck of my marriage. After my husband's death in 1940, I had to support my family by myself...I remember watching the coffin of my husband, feeling puzzled about the future. I was thinking then why an able man was wearing beautiful clothes but lying there.

She continued that, after her husband died, she had to support her family, including three small children and a mother-in-law, mainly by midwifery. She worked hard and she was good at midwifery. Soon she became famous because she saved many pregnant women from danger during the process of giving birth. She said, "I was so welcome that I earned a large sum of money." In the late 1940s, she bought a house in Kio-a-thau and used it as a hospital for giving births. This hospital for midwifery in Kio-a-thau Street was closed about fifteen years ago because the young people no longer wanted to give birth with midwives. Through this specialty in midwifery, she supported her family, including her two sons and a daughter. One of her sons went overseas to study, got a doctoral degree, and is now teaching in a university in Taichung.

Waged household servant: Willow

As noted above, the colonial government bans on adopted daughters impacted on the labouring use. To local people, in order to "maintain" the institution of a large family, one of the strategies developed in the late colonial period was the waged household maid. Households that needed manpower would recruit these maids to replace the domestic labour of the adopted daughters or *ca-bo-can* in pre-colonial times. Waged household maids were recruited as casual workers and paid in cash. They did most of the household chores that adopted daughters had done, but

without changing their personal identities. Willow is a good example to illustrate this point.

Willow was born in 1934 in an uxorilocal family in Zihguan, a neighbouring village to Kio-a-thau. She was eager to go to school but her parents did not think it right for a girl to attend. She was the eldest daughter in the family and was not adopted out as an adopted daughter because she said, “The Japanese police would investigate the situation if a family adopted out daughters.” She was sent by her parents to a family as a “waged household servant” in Youchang, a near-by village, when she was just a teenager. She lived together with that family and did most of their household chores. She described her life as a household servant there as follows:

When I was 13, I was sent to Youchang, about 10 kilometres away, to be a household servant for a large rich family. I lived there and did most of the household chores, such as washing clothes and taking care of the children. My father or mother would come and collect the wages I earned on a regular basis, about once a month, and then leave. I was so homesick. When I asked them to take me home just for a while, they were unwilling to do so because they said this would waste their money on things such as bus fares or whatever. I was very disappointed [weeping]. After a year as a servant, I came home and continued with my old duties: picking up fire wood and sweet potatoes.

Willow reported that she was not the only one to be recruited as a waged household servant. This family recruited two or three maid-servants to do various things in the household. For example, Willow said, “They paid a maid-servant whose main mission was just to be a “wet nurse” because his mother, the daughter-in-law, was too weak to breast-feed her own baby.” Willow was reluctant to stay there because she was young and she missed her family very much. Willow asked her parents to let her go home but her parents did not agree because they needed money. Willow worked there for a year. One day she heard many family members crying because the daughter-in-law suddenly died. Shortly after that event, Willow was sent back. “I did not know why I was sent back to my family,” Willow said, “but I was very happy because I could live with my family again.” Willow stated that the happiness did not last very long. “I found that I had to do more household chores at home than as a waged servant.

Willow's case suggests that a new kind of labour demand in the household emerged as a result of the ban on the slave trade of daughters. The case studies of Zero, and Willow show the casual or long-term demand for labour in the household among both locals and the Japanese, especially in the late colonial period. In some sense, such servants had somewhat taken the place of adopted daughters after the ban on adopted daughters. Wage servants therefore filled the gap resulting from the ban on adopted daughters, which impacted on the availability of domestic labour. Willow's case reveals that locals used waged household servants to take the place of adopted daughters as one strategy to overcome this problem. This strategy did not go against colonial policy but could meet some practical labour requirements without changing the women's identities. On the other hand, some informants told me that some families overcame the ban by hiding the fact that they had adopted little-daughter-in-laws since they were illegal.

Based on these case studies above, we can make further observations. First of all, the traditional notion of "division of labour" was influenced by the colonial state, which created several measures to "protect" women from things through the abolition of footbinding, the liberation of adopted daughters, and the encouragement of female education. However, the ways Taiwanese women were incorporated into the new order varied according to different social classes. Women born in "high class" families such as Belt and Guess would be encouraged to become a nurse, teacher, or midwife. Take the number of "medical specialists" in the colonial period for example. Of the seven people in Kio-a-thau practising in the medical field (CTSJ 1984: 352), two were females: Belt was a midwife and the other woman was a dentist. Women who were born or raised in "middle class" families such as Zero on the other hand would be taught to be a "good and healthy wife" taking care of the family, while women born in "low class" families such as Su would be pushed into manual labour as a sugarcane worker. Under such circumstances one can see why Belt's father did not wish his daughter to become a sugarcane worker. Belt's case illustrates the different ideas between the father and the daughter. The daughter thought of the practical benefits of supporting the family, whereas the father highlighted abstract social

prestige, thinking that the occupation of a sugarcane worker would “affect his dignity in the society.”

Concepts of “care giver,” “helper,” or “being tender” were seen as common attributes of a nurse, teacher, or midwife, which were thus suitable occupations regarded by the Japanese for women. Tsurumi described the status of Taiwanese women who took up careers. She (Tsurumi 1977: 222) said, “Only a few Taiwanese women began careers after completing specialised professional studies, but their importance far exceeded their numbers. As pioneers in prestigious new fields they provided for female[s] role models that had never before existed.” In contrast, elite men were encouraged to become doctors (Lo 2002). Lo (2002) traces the changing roles and identities of some “ethnic professions” of Taiwanese such as doctors and other medical careers. Such local medical students and practitioners “continued to embrace a modernist professional culture” (Lo 2002: 299). He further indicates that the Japanese trained these people as a bridge between the colonial system, local communities, and to spread the Japanese “civilisation” through their medical services in Mainland China and Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION: WOMEN’S AGENCY

In summary, the role of a woman in terms of the division of labour was affected by the differing roles of both genders in the society and household. In pre-colonial times, women’s activities were largely confined to the domestic sphere. In extreme circumstances, some daughters could be sold to become adopted daughters. The popularity of footbinding stopped women from participating in fieldwork and labourious tasks. This disadvantaged their entrance to other sectors as well as limited their role in agriculture. However, with the advent of colonial rule, the abolition not only changed the labouring extent and pattern of gendered involvement in labour but also converted the fixed ideas about women. The colonial government asked parents not to bind the feet of their baby girls. Besides

this, the government also encouraged those who had their feet bound to unbind them.

The colonial government implemented measures such as the abolition of footbinding and the liberation of *simpua* and adopted daughters in order to achieve its economic goal. On the surface, it seems like the advent of an increasing number of “civilised” and “modern” women, who unbound their feet and “escaped” from “patriarchal control.” In essence, however, they were manipulated by another “patriarchal control” – the colonial state – to assure the plentiful supply of labour. The female force was thus not an integral part of Chinese kinship and gender arrangements but a linkage to the outer capitalist world. Through my case study in Kio-a-thau, I have mapped out the on-going process of how women were involved in this capitalist sphere step by step. The local gendered practices in Kio-a-thau show that, firstly, with respect to the colonial policy, the abolition of footbinding worked well, while the liberation of adopted daughters and *simpua* did not work very well. The major reason I offer is that the colonial government underestimated the complexity of *simpua* and adopted daughters in Taiwanese society in every aspect – cultural, social, and economic. The *simpua* played an important role in reproduction, while the adopted daughters functioned as domestic labour. Local figures indicate that the percentage of adopted daughters still increased, suggesting the ban under the colonial policy resulted in a shortage of domestic labour. Willow’s case as a waged household servant revealed one of the consequences of this shortage.

Secondly, a new configuration emerged as a result of the emancipation of female bodies and female’s schooling. Local women fitted themselves into various social roles such as maidservants, midwives, and sugarcane workers. These roles partially broke down the fixed ideas about women. In this chapter, I have examined how women of different social classes exercised their personal agency in a socio-economic situation they had never experienced before. Zero and Su’s cases reveal that parents began to reconsider the role of daughters or adopted daughters. Daughters were traditionally considered inferior in the household. Under the changing circumstances, women contested their social roles according

to their respective social classes. Those daughters who were born in upper classes could choose to be midwives and schoolteachers, while those who were born in lower classes could act as maidservants and sugarcane workers. For the daughters, this could fulfill their filial piety highlighted by the Confucian moral. For the parents, daughters were not considered worthless. Rather, Zero's case shows that, first, an adopted daughter could be either used as "tools" for "making money." Second, women could act as an intermediary between the locals and the colonial authority. The main reason Zero's foster mother sent Zero to the Japanese employer was to obtain priority for renting the land from the Japanese. As a result, women's marginality in the social hierarchy offered advantages in negotiating with the colonial authority.

Thirdly, Su's case shows that women better fitted the "irregular" rhythm of the sugar plantations than men since women had more free time. They could simultaneously take care of a family and work if necessary. By contrast, men were culturally expected to obtain more "fixed" and "regular" jobs. Under these circumstances, becoming full-time or part-time sugarcane labourers in sugarcane fields became one of the available strategies for the majority of women in rural areas. Su's becoming a "part-time" sugarcane worker after marriage illustrates the greater flexibility in women's work time schedules than men. She was involved in the irregular pattern of sugarcane cultivation. When the time was busy, such as the harvest season, she could join the team and make extra money to support her family. She could then stay home to fulfill her traditional wife and mother's roles in the household when demand for labour was low.

Fourthly, such a new situation transformed the traditional gendered division of labour in the household. With the involvement of female workers in the cash economy, the labouring pattern changed between genders. Su's case shows how a few adjustments of household chores could occur between genders as a result of her working in the sugar field, although a father who helped with cooking and household chores was rare at that time. Su became a major income earner in the household and therefore waived her "daughter's duty" such as cooking. In other words, her ability to make money enhanced her status in the household. This

enhancement was also shown by her ability to find job opportunities and later a wife for her brother.

To sum up, women used their agency to deal with these changing circumstances, although they were situated in an inferior situation. Their achievements came from hard work. Various places such as factories, sugarcane fields, schools, and medical institutions became localities for women to prove that they had ability outside the home. Though they typically did not earn much money, women obtained some “self-pride” and “self-esteem” from their jobs. This did not necessarily come from any benefit or welfare they got but from a kind of satisfaction for supporting others. In other words, for a Taiwanese woman, as Su has pointed out, the meaning of being a woman lay more in “others” or the “household” than in herself. Only if she was successful in these areas could she think she herself was successful. Taiwanese women therefore contested their marginality in an ambivalent manner, coupling “self-sacrifice” and “self-pride.”

6 SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine the gendered division of labour. Many anthropologists have discussed women's roles in relation to the process of industrialisation in Taiwan (for example, Wolf 1972; Diamond 1979; Olson 1975). Greenhalgh (1994), Diamond (1979), and Gallin (1989) are in agreement about the inferiority of women's role both in households and society (see Introduction). However, they differ on whether or how the role of women changed transform through the process of economic transformation. For example, Diamond (1979) argues that Taiwanese women's involvement in the factories in the 1970s remained under the control of the household head, typically a male. Furthermore, women's work, no matter whether in the household or in the workplace, is defined as an "extension of their family duties" (Diamond 1979: 318). Olson (1975) points out that women in different social classes changed their mores about themselves as a result of industrialisation. Olson (1975: 674) argues that high status urban women place more emphasis on self-reliance, and less emphasis on conformity to authority than do low status urbanities. Kung (1981) explores the perceptions of work by women who were engaged in an electronics factory. He argues that the involvement into factory work impacted on their understanding of women's own social status and personal relationships. Kung (1981: 209) states:

Women in factories certainly share enough of the same disabilities to permit the development of class consciousness; but rather than developing class consciousness, women direct their resentments at group leaders, supervisors, co-workers, or office staff. Women are more concerned about opportunism in social relations and fine graduations in rank than with the union and how it actually might be made to serve them.

The process of industrialisation in Taiwan did not start from the 1970s onwards. In fact, a large scale of this process could be traced back to the Japanese colonial period. The sugar economy was a good example. Sugarcane companies should recruit many labourers, including males and females, to be involved into sugar production. At the moment we are not aware how this process of industrialisation

in colonial Taiwan impacted on the locals. Furthermore, the role of women in Taiwan was significantly transformed in the last century. During my review of the literature, I wondered, first, how did women as well as men, respond to the same circumstances of industrialisation through time? Did the historical discontinuity affect women's roles? Secondly, how did women of different social classes respond to that discontinuity?

The colonial situation provides us with an opportunity to explore my questions. With the intervention of the Japanese colonial state in Taiwan, a new kind of division of labour aimed at capitalist accumulation was created. This intervention involved the reshaping of local gender roles by, for example, trying to abolish footbinding and encouraging girls to receive education. Women who received education were encouraged to enter into social networks by doing jobs such as factory workers, clerks, midwives, and school teachers. During my fieldwork in Kio-a-thau, I found that this new division of labour changed the original gendered configuration of labour usage in the pre-colonial period. Also, I discovered that intervention had a differential impact on women of different classes. Thus, I focused on the dimension of how these rearrangements in the Japanese colonial period occurred and how the women dealt with these new circumstances according to their different classes. The overall argument of this chapter is that this kind of colonial reshaping created a new cultural configuration, through which women of different classes developed various strategies to deal with these contradictory outcomes. These strategies involved adjustments in household tasks, changes in identity, and the struggle between genders.

The first section of this chapter describes economic patterns and labour demands in the pre-colonial period. What were the differing roles of the genders and what were the household dynamics at that time? In the second section I explore the new division of labour brought about by Japanese colonialism. What were the views held by the colonial state about the gendered division of labour? How did the changes that they instigated evolve? In the third section I provide several case studies to examine how women of different social classes dealt with the changes and how their agency manifested itself.

HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS OF THE CING ERA AND EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD

In the late Cing period, most of the agricultural production remained at the stage of subsistence economy.¹ Ho (1968: 313) describes the agricultural pattern in Taiwan as follows. “When Japan acquired Taiwan in 1895, its agriculture was stagnant and its peasants were engaged almost exclusively in subsistence farming.” The subsistence agriculture was composed of wet-rice and other dry-field crops such as wheat and millet. The cultivation of these crops could be complementary because of their “capital, labour, and land requirements” (Isett 1995: 238). For example, in southern Taiwan in the nineteenth century, as Isett (1995: 238-9) indicates, “The tripartite combination of wet-rice, sugarcane, and sugar refining was possible because their respective production schedules did not compete for capital, labour, or land.” Farmers planted wet-rice in February or March, while they grew sugarcane in July and harvested it after about 16 months. After that, the old-style sugar mill (see Chapter 2) started to operate through the winter and into early spring. During the intervals of cultivation, peasants could mobilise their labour into “non-agricultural lines of production” (Isett 1995: 237), which varied according to the agricultural calendar, and “often manifest[ed] itself in sideline or handicraft commodity production” (Isett 1995: 237).

In the pre-colonial period, women played a limited role in agriculture. Major fieldwork tasks were done by men (Takekoshi 1907: 202; Shepherd 1993: 386).² Instead, women were more involved in the domestic household economy and “non-agricultural lines of production” as mentioned above. Guess, one of my informants, told me how her mother and paternal grandmother were involved in household economy. Her paternal grandmother was born in 1877. Her mother was born in 1902. Both of them had their feet bound when they were small children. Her paternal grandfather owned two or three *chia* of wet-rice fields. He had no children, so he adopted Guess’s father as a son [on 30 August 1902]. Guess remembered:

¹ The Cing Dynasty took over Taiwan in 1684 after defeating the Jheng Cheng-gong’s army.

² For example, Shepherd (1993: 386) states, in the Cing era “a Chinese husband would expect less field work from his wife” [compared with an aboriginal husband].

I was told that my grandmother would help my grandfather with some field chores such as drying rice husks, and do some agricultural jobs such as shelling peanuts at home even though she bound her feet. She was a very hard-working woman. My mother was born in the early Japanese period and was asked to bind her feet when she was young. At that time, my grandmother lived with us because she had no other son except my father. She helped my parents to take care of us. My father worked at KSR. My mother was a housewife and she was responsible for most of the household chores such as cooking, laundry, and cleaning. My grandmother also helped to raise two or three pigs as a side job for the family. I always saw my mother and grandmother, both of whom had bound feet, collecting leftovers together to feed the pigs when I was young. I had to help my mother with household chores because I was the oldest daughter in my family.

The other story came from Flower's paternal grandmother, who was born in 1890 and also had their feet bound. She continued this for the rest of her life, although the Japanese encouraged her to abandon foot-binding. Although the grandmother bound her feet, she could stay at home doing some household chores and some field chores such as digging sweet potatoes and shelling peanuts. "She could do most of the field chores except some laborious tasks such as ploughing fields and driving ox-carts," Flower commented. Her grandmother had two children with her first husband. One was a girl and the other was a boy. She remarried when both children were teenagers because her first husband died. Her second husband, Flower's paternal grandfather, came to live in his wife's house. Flower stated, "Her first husband left several *chia* of land. My grandmother could not manage them herself. Her son was too small to labour in their fields, so she needed someone who could take care of the fields."

The usage of labour between genders was closely connected with the differing role of both genders. Several anthropologists have indicated that these differing roles in the system of intrafamilial exchange were reflected in a gendered division of labour and activity sphere in Taiwanese society (Greenhalgh 1994; Diamond 1979; Gallin 1989; Gates 1987). Greenhalgh (1994: 759) indicates, "[Taiwanese] women were expected to contribute to productive undertakings when their labour and skills were needed, their activities were appropriately confined to the 'inside' or domestic sphere, where they would not come into contact with unrelated men." Gallin (1989: 377) states that female children in Taiwan were not valued because

they were household members “who drained family resources as children and who withdrew their assets (domestic labour and earning power) when they married.” Most of the women were often used as domestic labour. An unmarried daughter had to do the household tasks and was rarely educated. Gates (1987: 106) indicates, “a girl-child was raised very different from a boy. Girls began to work at chores, tend babies, or do elaborate needlework while boys were still playing freely or in school.” In contrast a son obviously had some “privileges” in terms of household chores. River, one informant, recalled a memorable event when he wanted to meet his classmate, Jon, one morning in the early 1930s. Jon’s eldest brother had died before he was born, so his parents were quite happy about Jon because he was the only boy in his family. River noted that Jon was treated like an emperor in the family:

I saw everybody doing everything for him. His sister-in-law was preparing a lunch box for him. His two eldest [unmarried] sisters were busy. One was helping him to get dressed. The other was fastening his shoelaces. Meanwhile, his mother was yelling aloud: hurry up! He’s going to be late for school....

Footbinding was a crucial factor that affected the gendered division of labour at that time as it confined women’s major activities within households. Furthermore, this confinement substantially reduced the opportunities for women to develop their economic potentiality in other sectors. Although I was told that some women with bound feet also did some side jobs at home such as sewing “three-inch-long shoes” [for women with bound feet] to make extra money to support family expenditure, these cases were rare. The above accounts from Guess and Flower both show that the popularity of footbinding regulated the movement of women, thus further reinforcing the subordinate status of women. Women’s footbinding was one of the “Chinese customs” carried out deliberately by early Han-settlers in Taiwan (Shepherd 1993; Lamley 1999: 218). Fan (1997: 45-50) indicates that footbinding was a site of “erotic imagination” for husbands since the wiggling gait of the women who bound their feet would raise men’s imagination about sexuality. Also, footbinding was a “restraining device which highlighted the concept of female chastity” (Fan 1997: 45) since it physically prevented women from moving about freely. This prevented them from coming into contact with other men except their husbands and families. However, Blake (1994: 708) argues

that footbinding was a way that women in China “supported, participated in, and reflected on the Neo-Confucian way of being civilised.” The discourse of footbinding was described as “natural” and women thus believed that they could overcome these intense physical pains in order to fulfill their social roles. In the labouring sense, Hill Gates (2001: 147) thought that footbinding “permitted an extraordinary degree of control over young female labourers” and was embedded in a Chinese kinship/gender system which differed from western capitalism. Under such a system, “The bodies and labour-power of unmarried daughters were allocated absolutely to their parents to use for the good of the patricorporation” (Gates 2001: 146). She further argues that although footbinding prevented women from heavy labour, footbound women provided a major source of “light labour” in the household such as spinning and weaving for sale before the advent the industrial period.

How popular was it for women to bind their feet in Taiwan? In 1905, when the first general census survey was conducted, the rate of footbinding for women on the whole island was 66.6 percent (Takenaka 1995: 261; Wu 1996: 220), although the figure varied sharply among different ethnic groups such as Fujian, Hakka, and Plains aborigines’ women (Shepherd 1993: 526). Shepherd (1993: 526) reveals that only 0.5 percent of plains aborigine women had bound feet according to the 1905 census reports, as compared to 1.5 percent of Hakka women and 68 percent of Fujian women. Plains aborigine women in contact primarily with Hakka rather than Fujian were exposed to a different set of expectations with respect to female footbinding and related roles.³ Hakka women’s low footbinding rate also accounted for the cultural difference from Fujian women in terms of division of labour (Wolf and Chuang 1994). In a local sense, According to my

³ Initially Han-settlers used footbinding as a “strategic tool” to claim “moral superiority” when they contacted non-Han people in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Taiwan. Han women who bound their feet were considered to be more “civilised” than the Other – the aborigines, although the latter did not necessarily accept this. As Shepherd (1993: 386) states: “two of the three practices that most appalled the aborigines and seriously undermined Chinese claims to moral superiority in aborigine eyes were female infanticide and footbinding (the third was the Chinese use of nightsoil). Plains aborigines [in Taiwan] almost never adopted footbinding, despite its prevalence among their Hokien (Fujian) neighbors.”

data in Kio-a-thau, sixty percent of women who were born between 1845 to 1894 had their feet bound (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1
Footbinding practices based upon census data in Kio-a-thau

Period in which the girls were born	Total number of girls born	Total number of those born who had bound feet	Total number after the abolition of footbinding	Percentage of footbinding (%)
1845-1854	2	1	0	50
1855-1864	3	3	0	100
1865-1874	11	11	6	100
1875-1884	24	11	7	46
1885-1894	38	21	8	55
Subtotal	78	47	21	60
1895-1904	45	7	6	16
1905-1914	84	0	0	0
1915-1924	109	0	0	0
1925-1934	96	0	0	0
1935-1944	107	0	0	0
1945	5	0	0	0
Subtotal	446	7	6	2
Total	524	54	27	10

Source: Colonial household registers for Kio-a-thau. **Notes:** All the women who kept their feet bound necessarily defied the abolition policy. Some may have died or married out so there would be no record of unbinding of their feet on local household registers.

A NEW DIVISION OF LABOUR AND CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN

During the Japanese period, a new division of labour began to develop as compared to the pre-colonial period. Women were no longer bound by Chinese kinship in terms of labouring and social role as Gates mentioned. Rather, they

were expected to join capitalist agricultural and industrial activities. The commercialised agriculture, along with the new technology and improvement in agricultural methods, impacted on the labour usage between genders. Women as well as men found some possibilities to change their traditional roles in the household. In order to achieve its economic goals, the colonial government aimed to recruit female labour in order to assure the plentiful supply of cheap labour. To meet its manpower needs, the colonial government implemented many measures such as the abolition of foot-binding, the ban on slavery involving adopted girls and little daughters-in-law (*simpua*), and the encouragement of women to receive education, which all aimed to change gender roles. In the following section, I explore the on-going process of how women were incorporated into this frame of a new division of labour

Commercialised labour requirements

With the economic goals of Japanese colonisation towards Taiwan, the division of labour characteristic of the pre-colonial period began to be reshaped. The dynamic of this transformation was largely due to colonial intention. As Ho (1978: 3) states, “under the guidance of the colonial government, the island was developed as an agricultural appendage to Japan.” Ka (1995) affirms that the plan for commercialised crops such as sugar and rice needed a large labour force and thus created considerable labour demand. Isett (1995: 240-44), in his *Sugar Manufacture and Agrarian Economy of Nineteen Century Taiwan*, described in detail the labouring process involved in growing sugarcane. For example, for the cane harvesting,

Individual peasant households carried out the labour-intensive task of harvesting, although in some cases they hired hands to ensure that the mature cane was cut, bundled, and delivered to the mill within as short a time as possible. The cutting of cane was done by men, while women and children gathered leaves for compost and fodder for the oxen, bundled the cane for transport, and let the ox cart carrying the cane to the mill.

There were two important sources of agricultural workers for the sugarcane plantations. The first were the tenants on land controlled (either owned or leased) by sugar companies. The tenants made contracts with sugar companies to plant

sugarcane under the companies' supervision. They had to fulfill their rental obligations and work as wage labourers at the companies' request (Ka 1995: 105; Yanaihara 1929: 240-41). Ka (1995: 105) indicates that land under such arrangements constituted five to seven percent of Taiwan's arable land.

The other source was to recruit labourers in the market. These labourers were paid by either casual contracts or long-term contracts. In Kio-a-thau, locals called these hired labourers – *hui-sia-gang* – labourers working for the sugar company. According to one informant, the number of company-owned farms neighbouring Kio-a-thau was nine. Each company farm was responsible for about 20 to 30 *chia* of land on average. Each company farmer had a director-general and a manager. Most of the directors-general were Japanese officials, while the managers were local people because they had the local networks to recruit workers. Locals called the manager *ku-li-tao*, which means the head of sugarcane workers. One of the most important missions for the manager was to recruit many *hui-sia-gang*. Besides this, the *Ku-li-tao* also did other miscellaneous things such as giving fertilisers to peasants, regulating annual quotas of sugarcane, and distributing the daily pay to workers in cash.

The other source of labour was the local family farms. These family farms were not owned by sugar companies but by locals. Ka (1995) argues that the persistence of these indigenous family farms depended on successful competition with capitalist production as mentioned above, since they could thrive through self-exploitation in terms of labour force. These family farms were mainly composed of farms cultivating 1-5 *chia* of land. Most of the labour force was family labour. The smaller the farm was, the more it relied on family labour. In busy times, such as harvests, however, family farms also needed to hire labour from outside on a daily or long-term basis. This labour was supplied by “fellow villagers, especially from who cultivated less than 0.5 *chia*, areas with a different harvest season, or poorer areas where many had to hire themselves out” (Ka 1995: 103).

Large-scale sugar plantations needed plenty of workers. According to the official estimation in 1900, wages were the greatest cost for the sugar production (Isett 1995: 245). Furthermore, the labouring demand for growing sugarcane varied. According to Isett (1995: 243), the cultivation and refining of sugarcane were “seasonal activities.”⁴ The period of growing sugarcane lasted for about 16 months. The season for seeding sugarcane started in July, with a second one in December. The busiest seasons for recruiting labourers focused on the stages of clearance, weeding, and harvesting. The intensity of work was variable. For example, the most labour-intensive work was in the harvesting seasons and refining periods (Isett 1995: 242; 243). At these times, the managers of sugarcane fields had to recruit many unskilled waged labourers as well as skilled labourers to help with the farming. Locals who needed casual work thus noticed that they should keep good relationships with managers. Later on in this chapter, I will give the case study of Su, who was this type of a wage labourer for the sugar company in the 1940s.

In fact, the Japanese colonial state faced a dilemma in developing some economic schemes, such as the sugar economy: first, it was impossible for the state to recruit many labourers from Japan; second, it seemed to face a shortage of labour if it chose large-scale crop plantations. In 1909, the Taiwan Sugarcane Company recruited 450 workers from inner Japan (Kakei 1989: 381). However, these staff were mostly technicians and staff whose aim was to train locals how to operate the refinery. According to Kakei (1989: 381-82), these workers took turns working in different sugar refineries over the island and trained many local workers. The colonial government also adopted some measures to resolve the problem of unskilled labour shortage. For example, the government signed a contract with the Chinese government in 1934. According to the contract, about sixty thousand migrant workers – the majority of them from Fujian – were recruited under an arrangement of temporary entry permits (Kerr 1974: 172). Kerr states: “The majority were unskilled labours recruited for seasonal employment on sugar plantations and tea gardens, or for work in the mines.”

⁴ For details of the distinctive stages of cultivating sugarcane, see Isett (1995: 241-242).

With the Japanese concerns about the labour shortage, it was therefore reasonable that the female labour force became a target in the eyes of the colonisers because this potential force remained untapped. In regards to local Taiwanese workers, Takekoshi (1907: 202) reported on two discouraging features in the early twentieth century. The first was that the birth rate was low and the death rate was high among Taiwanese. Another was “that women in Formosa, with the exception of the tea-pickers and the Hakka women, shut themselves up all day in their houses and do not go out and help their husbands in the fields.”

Political propaganda about the advantage of recruiting female labourers followed. For example, the official organ newspaper, *Taiwan nichichi shimpō* (Taiwan daily news), highlighted the economic advantages of recruiting women (5 March 1915). An observer stated the economic advantage (in 1915) of abandoning footbinding in such a way, “The average labour fee for a woman is 40 *cian*.⁵ There are one million and 500 thousand women on the whole island now. If they unbound their feet and joined in the economic activities, they could create five million *yen* per day.” In the following two sections, I argue that Japanese government policies regarding the abolition of footbinding and the emancipation of little-daughters-in-law and adopted daughters were gradually greatly influenced by economic concerns.

The Japanese attitude towards footbinding

In order to recruit female workers, the Japanese government first faced the local contradictory ideas of women’s role. Several scholars observe the Japanese attitude towards footbinding. Wolf and Huang (1980: 44) state that “[w]hen it came to foot-binding and the sale of female children as *ca-bo-kan* (servant-slaves), the Japanese authorities felt compelled to interfere...” Levy (1966: 95) comments that women’s footbinding as well as the Chinese habits of opium smoking and men’s wearing pigtailed were “obstacles in the way of efficient rule.”⁶ Lamley (1999: 218) indicates that the policy of abolishing footbinding was closely

⁵ One *yen* = 100 *cian*

⁶ The Qing government forced men to wear pigtailed.

connected to the Japanese biased attitude towards “bad custom.” Recently, Takenaka (1995: 260-62) describes Taiwanese women’s foot-binding as “inhuman,” “a mechanism for preventing them from running away,” “unhealthy,” “against nature,” and “a reflection of patriarchal ideas”. Takenaka continues to assert that the abolition of footbinding meant the destruction of “feudal society” and, from then on, Taiwanese women would lead a “sensible and easy” life.

However, when the Japanese colonial state first ruled Taiwan, its attitude towards footbinding was not so “disgusted” as compared to later times. For example, the third Governor-general, Nogi Yoshinori, promulgated a law on 9 November 1896 which encouraged women to “abolish footbinding without compulsion” since he admitted it was a local “customary law.” However, such a moderate policy was only temporary and transitional. After overcoming many local rebellions all over the island, the government started to actively encourage local people to abolish footbinding. In 1900, with the assistance of the colonial authorities and the colonial government, a medical practitioner named Huang Yu-jie organised the Natural Foot Society. Those men who joined in the society swore not to allow their sons to marry women with bound feet. In the society’s inaugural address Huang stated, “Now Taiwan has become a part of the Japanese empire, and the government is carrying out reforms. The Taiwanese are also a people of reform, but it will be really shameful if they are not aware of the past” (Levy 1966: 100). Levy (1966: 101-102) mentions that the members of the Natural-foot Society were given “congratulatory medals” inscribed with the words “Glorious Medal of Taiwan.” Each medal holder was presented with a silken sash by the Japanese Governor-General.

Besides human rights, the Japanese objection to footbinding was based on an economic dimension. Unbinding feet impacted very much on women’s social life and, as Arthur Wolf points out, their involvement in the economy. Wu (1996: 240-241) indicates that one of the motivation for the abolition was to enable women to get involved in the economy, especially in commercialised agricultural farming. Tsurumi (1977: 220) further points out how unbinding and education affected Taiwanese women’s social status: “Increased schoolgoing for girls was

closely related to other new directions for women. An end to footbinding and entrance into the colony's industrial work force were two important changes." According to Tsurumi (1977: 219-28), the social status of Taiwanese women became higher than in the pre-colonial period. Yu (1988: 286) indicates the proportion of school-aged girls who enrolled in elementary schools increased from 1.02 percent in 1908 to 61.0 percent in 1943, while the increase for boys was 8.2 percent to 80.7 percent respectively. Those educated women became more involved in professional and public life which was previously dominated by men. For example, in 1914, with a total of 21,859 factory workers, 28 percent were females. In 1941, this percentage exceeded 40 percent (Tsurumi 1977: 221).

In general, the abolition of footbinding in Kio-a-thau really worked (see Table 6.1). According to the local census data, the average percentage of footbinding was sixty percent in 1895. The percentage reached its highest between 1855-1874, when all women born had their feet bound. After 1875, the figure remained fairly stable. Approximately half of the newborn baby girls had their feet bound. The first recorded case of footbinding in the available census data for Kio-a-thau took place in March 1845, while the last instance occurred in September 1901. From then on, there was not one case reported. After 1895, there was a high percentage of the abandonment of footbinding. Most women in Kio-a-thau who were born after 1895 and their parents, especially after 1905, had accepted the idea about the emancipation of footbinding. Some of those who had bound feet unbound them (see Table 6.1). Positive encouragement from the colonial authorities therefore played an important role in abolishing footbinding.

The liberation of little daughters in law (*simpua*), servant-slaves (*ca-bo-can*), and adopted daughters in Kio-a-thau

Ino Kanori, a Japanese anthropologist who studied Taiwan, mentioned the popularity of the sale of daughters and maid-servants (*ca-bo-can*) in the Cing period (for details, see the discussion in the following section) although they were banned by the government. Wolf and Huang (1980: 2-15) report the custom of adopting daughters and *simpua* in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in

Fujian, Kwangtung, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The major difference between *simpua* and adopted daughters was that the *simpua* were prospective daughters-in-law, which relates more to “reproduction,” whereas adopted daughters related mainly to “labour.” Kajihara (1989: 96) claims too that every daughter-in-law wished to adopt in daughters for assistance as soon as possible in order to “avoid” the heavy household chores of a large family. Wolf and Huang (1980) state that locals believed that adopting in a daughter could induce the conception of sons.

By contrast, a *ca-bo-kan* was like a slave, who would accompany a rich bride and also serve as a maid-servant. Unlike adopted daughters, *ca-bo-kan* was more popular among rich families, who would recruit several maid-servant slaves rather than adopted daughters in order to do the household chores. Ino (1928: 171) mentions that earlier Han-settlers recruited maid-servant slaves from mainland China in the eighteenth century. These slaves often stayed for the rest of their life and remained single. Wolf and Huang (1980) mention, in certain circumstances, in particular in hard times, daughters would be adopted out as adopted daughters. They (Wolf and Huang 1980: 95) state, “in hard times, peasants’ families were forced to sell their daughters as slave girls or give them out in adoption as little daughters-in-law (*simpua*).”

By comparison, a similar custom of adoption between different surnames also took place in Japan. Hsu (1975: 37-39) indicates that the adoption of a son-in-law or *mukoyōshi*, a custom whereby a man goes to live in his wife’s household and assumes the family name of her father, was much more common in Japan than in China. Ariga (1939) indicates servants and tenant farmers often used kinship terms as a matter of courtesy in addressing their employers and landlords in Japan, inasmuch as that there is a “closeness of relationship among those who live and work in the same household” (Hsu 1975:39). In colonial Kio-a-thau, such custom of adoption between the Japanese and the locals continued. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the senior Japanese employers adopted two Taiwanese children: Water and Love. Yamamoto and his wife did not have any children, so they adopted these two. Another reason was that both Water and Love worked for Yamamoto. Yamamoto and his wife treated these two adopted children very well.

Love recalled: “When I got engaged, my [adopted] mother gave me lots of gifts like earrings, bracelets, rings, jewelry, and some make-up as if she were marrying her own daughter out.” In a very old picture taken by Zensaburo Kaneki (see Methodology), we can see Water with his natal family on their return from Tokyo for a short visit in 1928, when he was about ten years old.⁷ He is sitting next to his mother in a bamboo-chair, dressed in rather “modern” style and wearing a pair of new shoes. His father is standing to his left. In fact, the occasion that I showed him the photo was the first time Water had seen this picture, 75 years after the picture was taken. I stood by him while Water was looking at this photo in 2003. He stated, “I look sort of tired in the picture because I was ill at that time.”

However, Japanese attitudes towards the local custom of adoption were quite different. Based on issues of human rights, the colonial state thought that the sale of daughters was a kind of “slave trade.” In 1917, the high court in Tokyo promulgated a law which banned the custom of adopting out daughters, saying it violated “good and kind social customs” (Kajihara 1989: 88). Kio-a-thau’s census surveys reveal some important data. Table 6.2 shows that the percentage of *simpua* and adopting out daughters became smaller from 1895 onwards as a result of the ban. This shows that the ban impacted significantly on the local cultural behaviour.

However, with the contrasting roles of the genders and various household demands such as reproduction and labouring, private negotiations between families about adoption of daughters continued. Table 6.2 shows that a contradictory trend emerged that the percentage of adopting in daughters still increased. The main reason is that although the slave trade (adopting out daughters) was banned by the government, the adoption by relatives and friends (adopting in daughters), which was similar to that of Japanese adoption, through registration was still allowed. In other words, locals could not sell their daughters as usual but they were allowed to adopt in daughters through normal adoptive procedure. Besides this, locals could still utilise many strategies to meet their own

⁷ I do not present the picture here because I want to protect his personal privacy.

requirements of adoption. For example, I was told that many *simpua* were transferred their identities in the household registration from a *simpua* to an adopted (in) daughter in order to avoid the investigation of the government. The former was not allowed but the latter was legally permitted. This contributed to the increasing number of adopting in daughters. That was the reason why Table 6.2 shows that the percentage of adopted *simpua* fell from 1895 onwards, whereas the percentage of adopted in daughters continues to increase in Kio-a-thau.

The increasing number of adopted in daughters also impacted on the strategy of using adopted daughters by the locals. Table 6.2 shows that the highest rate of adopting in daughters between 1925-1934 basically corresponded with the peak period of sugar exports in Taiwan (see Chapter 2). The growing sugar economy would have required an increased demand for seasonal labour, which would in turn have resulted in a shortage of domestic labour. As a result, locals may have recruited more adopted daughters to deal with this shortage within the home and sugarcane fields. Zero, an adopted daughter whose case will be examined below, told me her foster sister's story. Her foster sister was a *simpua* in the 1930s. She was bought as a little-daughter-in-law when she was only two years old. She was raised by her adopted parents as a prospective daughter-in-law. Her adopted parents wanted her to marry their only son, but the son did not like her at all. Zero said:

The brother disliked my sister. He chose a nickname for my sister: Toad, a very bad nickname. One day he came to my foster mother, accusing my sister of not shaking his cradle. The sister once told me that she had a harder life. "At least you can go to school but I can't," she said to me. My adopted sister had to do lots of household chores such as cooking and taking care of her younger brother. Besides these, she had been working as a *hui-sia-gang* – workers for the sugar company – for about two hours per day since my foster father was a supervisor in the sugarcane field then.

Due to the loathing between the couple, her foster family decided to marry Zero's sister out to Te-a-heng, about ten kilometres away from Kio-a-thau, when she was 18. Zero stated that the foster sister and she had to do many household chores every day. Zero as an adopted daughter was also sent by her foster mother to be a maidservant for a Japanese official (see the case study below). Their stories reveal

that a changing role of *simpua* and adopted daughters, who were also used to connect with economic activities and thus to make money.

Table 6.2
The number and percentage of adopted *simpua* (little-daughters-in-law) and adopted daughters in Kio-a-thau

Years baby girls were born	Total number of baby girls	Number of adopted in daughters		Number of adopted out daughters		Number of adopted in <i>simpua</i>		Number of adopted out <i>simpua</i>	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1845-1894	78	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
1895-1904	45	3	7	0	0	3	7	0	0
1905-1914	84	11	13	3	4	3	4	0	0
1915-1924	109	19	17	1	1	2	2	0	0
1925-1934	96	19	20	3	3	1	1	0	0
1935-1944	107	12	11	2	2	0	0	0	0
1945	5	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	524	65	12	9	2	10	2	0	0

Source: Colonial household registers for Kio-a-thau. **Notes:** I must make it clear here that the data before 1895 cannot be verified because the Japanese government conducted the first census survey in 1905. I speculate that the reason why fewer cases of adoption were written down were because women did not reveal every detail about their past when they were asked to register households.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WOMEN'S WORK

The above discussion points out the contradictory attitudes and beliefs of locals and the colonial state. For the locals, cultural and household economic factors were paramount, while the logic was mainly related to human rights and economic development for the latter. For the colonial government, the move to abolish footbinding was greatly motivated by the economic need to make use of female labour. These changes naturally brought about dramatic impacts on women's daily life. However, according to my observation, the women's

incorporation in the labour market varied according to their respective social classes. In the following section I will offer several case studies to explore the differential impacts on different social classes through this time of social-economic transformation.

Seasonal or migrant labour in sugarcane fields

Su was born in 1928 in a poor family, and when she was only twelve she became a wage labourer in the sugarcane fields (1940). She lived in Zihguan, a village next to Kio-a-thau. Every day she needed to walk about ten kilometres with other “child labourers” to the sugarcane fields owned by KSR in Gun-zi-pei. She reported:

There were a total of 13 children in our team: four or five of them were males; eight or nine were females. Our relationship was as friends or neighbours. The average age was about twelve or thirteen. [How did you find the job?] Job opportunities [during the war period of the early 1940s] were very limited. A sugarcane worker for the sugarcane company was one of the few chances for making a living, especially in the [Pacific] war period. It was not hard to find a job [as a worker] if you had strength. Actually, the sugarcane company had created lots of job opportunities for [poor] people. At harvest time, the company even hired some very old people to watch over the bundled sugarcane [to prevent them from being stolen].

Su described the daily schedule for a sugarcane worker as follows:

At seven my “co-workers” and I went to the fields together. We all walked in our bare feet, carrying a lunch box, some water, spending one and a half hours to get to the “workplace” – the sugarcane fields. Then we took a break and at nine we started working until twelve. After taking a break, eating our lunch boxes, we began work again until five. It would take another one and an half hours to go home. Such kind of workers, who were called *huei-sia-gang*, were quite popular then. I remember very clearly that I earned 25 *cian* per day [in the early 1940s] when I first received the money. An adult female worker earned 35 *cian* per day. But a male worker earned even more than that...⁸ I gave all the money to my mother, without keeping any pocket money.

She stated that most of them kept working for a long time, but the prerequisite was that “the *ku-li-tao*, the manager of sugarcane workers, needed you.” Later on she introduced her brother to work via the manager of the workers, *ku-li-tao*. Su said:

⁸ For example, the daily wage for Dai, a male sugarcane worker, was 45 *cian* in 1933; 48 *cian* in 1934; 52 *cian* in 1935; 67 *cian* and 72 *cian* in 1936.

My little brother was a person who always kept silent. He could not manage public relations with others. This was his weakness. I thought I had to help him, so I came to the manager to ask for a job as a sugarcane worker. My brother thus obtained his first job in life.

Her introduction also contributed to her brother's marriage. She commented: "My brother and sister-in-law got acquainted with each other in the sugarcane field. I found a female worker who was hardworking and looked nice. I acted as a go-between. Eventually they got married through my introduction."

She was the only daughter in her family then. Therefore, if she went to work, someone like her father would share "her" household chores. For example, she pointed out, "My father would cook dinner, since when I got back from work, it was almost seven and impossible for me to cook."

Su's case shows that a few adjustments of household chores can imply the transformation of gender roles in the household. Her father came to live with his wife's family. In the early 1940s, he was temporarily not living with his wife because he had a volunteer job in the local church. Although such a father was less powerful than in a virilocal family, it was still unusual for a father, not mother, to cook dinner at that time. In usual circumstances, Su, as the eldest and only daughter, would normally have been responsible for the household chores such as cooking as I have described in the early part in this chapter. However, with the involvement of female workers in the cash economy, the labouring pattern changed between genders. Su became a major income earner in the household and therefore waived her "daughter's duty" such as cooking. Furthermore, the increasing importance of her status in the family is displayed by her introduction of her brother to work and her role in arranging his marriage. To some extent, a daughter was not disliked by parents because she could also contribute their financial as well as other abilities to the family.

With regard to work, Su reported that most of the work of a child labourer involved cutting off sugarcane leaves. But when she grew up, she was switched to

the tasks of an adult female labourer (see Table 6.3). She provided a vivid description of life as a sugarcane worker:

Everything you saw was sugarcane. It was pretty spacious and you just hid in it quite often. The land was extremely hard to dig [in order to seed or fertiliser]. But if it was raining, the clay became softer. We had about 20 workers and most of them were females or children and should be responsible for about 30 *chia* of land under the supervision of the supervisor.⁹ Sometimes Japanese officials would come along – they always came riding horses and looked very grumpy and grim-faced. In the field, we wore a hat made of bamboo leaves with our feet bare. Dressed in a loose shirt and *Dai-wan-kou*, a pair of loose trousers, and a raincoat made of dried straw if it was raining. The worst thing was ‘hiding from air-raid bombing’ in the [Pacific] war period. We had to hide under bundles of sugarcane....

Undoubtedly, seasonal or migrant workers were the major agricultural actors in Kio-a-thau, or even the neighbouring rural areas, in colonial times. Sugarcane fields provided locals with many casual job opportunities. Plates 6.1 to 6.4 show that the sugar company recruited many workers for labouring in sugarcane fields. These locals were mostly people with lower social status such as the poor, women, and children. Both men and women, the young and old, got involved in such economic activities. Jheng (1996: 102) claims that eighty to ninety percent of villagers in Kio-a-thau claimed that they or their family were involved in some ways in the labouring process. Su told me, “The sugar company offered many job opportunities to some inferior people such as *le-han-ka* – single but jobless people – and the poor to make a living.”¹⁰ In other words, it became one of the available strategic options for their survival. Furthermore, Su’s case shows that the sugarcane fields also provided some people with an opportunity to develop their social networks.

⁹ Although it was after the colonial period, we can still see clearly from the workbook published in 1956 by the Taiwan Sugar Company: Kio-a-tou Sugar Refinery (1956: 1-8) how manpower was used during the respective stages of sugarcane production: ploughing needed three water buffaloes, and twenty labourers per hectare; land clearance needed three water buffaloes and twenty-five labourers; fertilizing needed 14 labourers; seeding needed 50 labourers; weeding needed three water buffaloes, and eight labourers.

¹⁰ River, one of my informants, remembered that “most of them [in the late 1930s] were female workers. The average work day was eight hours. But I also found a lot of casual jobs, which meant you could work just for half a day....[in the late 1930s] I found some of the workers were migrants, who came from Beimen, Tainan, a poor rural area. Most of them were males. As for local workers, most of them were female and child workers. By and large, they came from poor agricultural families, which meant they could tolerate laborious jobs.

Su developed her strategies to deal with the work and her family. She worked as a sugarcane worker for quite a long time. She got married at the age of 22. After the marriage, she said she had to help her husband's family, who had several *chia* of wet paddy and dry fields. They also raised pigs for selling in the market. She said:

I had to help my husband's family, so I quit the job as a wage labourer temporarily. Shortly afterwards, the supervisor asked me if I could go back to work because I was a senior sugarcane worker. I told him I could not because I had a family. He begged me repeatedly so I promised him to work as a part-time worker because the labouring demand of growing sugarcane varied in a year. I went back to work if it were busy seasons such as land clearance, weeding, and harvesting. And I could stay home taking care of my family and help with the fieldworks.

Fountain, a supervisor in the 1930s, mentioned that women served as a major source of such kind of casual workers when the sugar company needed labour. He said:

Most of these casual workers were women. The major reason was not because they were cheaper. Rather, it was because it was easier to recruit female workers than male. Most of the women did not have regular jobs. We needed a large amount of labourers, say, especially at the harvest season. Women's schedule was more flexible, so they could fit our labouring pattern [in the sugar fields].

As for the work content, the role of female workers such as Su seems to have been similar to children's (see Table 6.3). Fountain said, "Basically female workers and child workers belonged to the same category. Both groups were unskilled." He described the tasks of the men, women, and child workers in detail as shown in Table 6.3. Then he continued, "Those female workers were lower class people. They were born in peasant families. Most of them were uneducated."

As for the difference between genders in relation to the content of work, he commented:

Male workers did work that was more strenuous such as cane digging and transporting at harvesting. We had to recruit more male workers to do these types of work. Besides that, we would rather recruit female workers. Of course they were cheaper to recruit. As far as I remember, in the 1930s, a

male worker could earn sixty to eighty *cian* per day, while a female worker could just earn thirty *cian* if they did the same work.

Fountain also pointed out that this classification of the division of labour was male-made. He commented that the division of labour, together with income, often became one of the main sources of gender disputes in the fields. In other words, the particular division of labour seems to be a result of local initiative as much as colonial state action. He reported:

Some women were even working better than men. They were using hoes rather than the hand-hoes commonly used by women workers. I think they were more efficient because they liked to earn more money.

As Fountain indicated, making more money was the major reason for women to work hard. If they did men's jobs, they would get more money. For some women, income rather than division of labour mattered. It was often reported that women drove ox-carts and did things that stronger men would do. Under such circumstances, men were facing competition from women. Fountain pointed out, "In the sugarcane fields we often mocked some men who did little work like this: 'You are lousier than women.'"

However, for men, it was shameful if women earned more than them. Therefore, men would complain to the supervisor: "You cannot let women do such as such (for example, driving ox-carts) because they are too strenuous." In other words, men would use cultural excuses to deal with women breaking into the "domain of men," although the true reason was that these men were worried about female competition in the workplace. Consequently, the simplest way to work out this problem was to separate "men's work" from "women's work." Men were required to do work such as sugarcane cutting, digging, and driving ox-carts, while women were required to do the other "side jobs" such as seeding, weeding, and fertilising.

Table 6.3
Division of labour in sugarcane fields

Work content	Male worker	Female worker	Child worker
Land clearance	✓	✓	
Seed bedding	✓	✓	✓
Seeding		✓	✓
Weeding	✓	✓	✓
Fertilising		✓	✓
Soil cultivating	✓	✓	✓
Irrigating	✓	✓	✓
Harvesting (sugarcane digging)	✓		
Harvesting (sugarcane cutting)		✓	✓
Cane transporting	✓		

Source: Fieldwork data, Kio-a-thau, 2003. **Notes:** For the pictures of sugarcane seeding, soil cultivating, harvesting, and cane transporting, see Plates 6.1 to 6.4.

Household Maid-servant: Zero's case

Zero was born in October 1928 and was adopted out when she was only two years old. She remarked that her father and foster father were “best friends.” Prior to her birth, her parents already had four daughters and two sons. She affirmed that this was the major reason for her to be adopted out. She claimed that her parents did not “sell” her, but only asked her foster parents to take good care of her. She reported that she did not know she was an adopted daughter until she was ten years old. One day her classmate at school told her that she was kind of similar to Far, Zero's natal brother. Zero's explanation for this reluctance to tell her that she