

Assignment for Day 1.1: Film Work Sheet

“Last Train Home” (2009)

Directed by Lixin Fan

1. According to the filmmaker, each year during the Chinese New Year holidays, roughly 130 million migrant workers travel from their jobs in the cities back to their rural home villages. Why do they undertake this oftentimes quite arduous journey?

2. How have the individuals in the Zhang family struggled to find a place for themselves in a changing China? Analyze the motivations and choices made by:
 - a. The parents, Chen Suqin and Zhang Changhua, and their decision to work in an urban factory for the past 17 years.

 - b. Their daughter Qin (age 17) and her decision to leave her home village.

 - c. Their son Yang and his life in the family’s home village.

 - d. The grandmother who looks after Qin and Yang in the village.

3. Describe and discuss the generation gap between Qin and her parents. How have traditional Chinese family values, like filial piety, come under challenge by a rapidly industrializing society?

4. Compare and contrast the working and living conditions in the parents’ urban garment factory to their rural home.

5. How do you think Chinese culture will be affected over time by the lives of China’s migrant workers?

6. Did the documentary make you feel or think differently about China in general? About the lives of migrant workers in China? About globalization?