Introduction

Kinship and Friendship

The social relationships studied in this book are what has been called "amiable relations," defined by "the moral obligation to feel – or at least to feign – sentiments which commit the individual to actions of altruism."[1] These relations of amity fall into two broad categories, kinship and friendship.[2] While they may shade into each other (say, in cases of ritual kinship or ritualized friendship),[3] these two major modes of attachment to groups not only are mostly practically discernible and supported by different institutions but also are often defined in relation to and even in contrast to each other in political thought and in anthropological models. Most commonly, friendship is viewed as an "achieved" relationship that is independent of the "ascribed" ties of kinship, and as such, constitutes an alternative and transcendent realm of human solidarity.[4]

The perceived autonomous and achieved character of friendship-based bonds vis-à-vis the prescribed and "natural" connections of kinship is of great significance in the evolutionist model of the social theories that dominated in the nineteenth century and that still enjoy

[1] Pitt-Rivers (1973: 90).
[2] Pitt-Rivers (1973). This classification is widely cited by scholars who write on social groups in Western antiquity. See, e.g., Konstan (1997: 1–8) and Murray (1982: 48).
[3] Generally speaking, the overlapping phenomenon (less the relationship itself than the concerned parties' perception of it) is more prominent in modern societies. For some case studies of how social scientists handle the problem in their research on contemporary kinship and friendship, see Allan (1979, 1996). In his study of ritualized friendship in ancient Greece, defined as "a bond of solidarity manifesting itself in an exchange of goods and services between individuals originating from separate social units," Herman (1987: 10) analyzes the common features that ritualized friendship shared with both kinship and friendship.
[4] Konstan (1997, ch. 1).

far-reaching influence in contemporary academic and popular circles. In this model, the emergence of civil society, which is comprised of individuals severed from the family and bound together by mutual obligations and by loyalty to their commonwealth, marks a break with the premodern social order in that it witnesses a progress from status to contract.[5] The Greek city-state, a civic community whose members were supposed to associate with one another on principles of equality and competition, has been hailed as the ancient precursor of the nation-state of the modern West,[6] bearing out Edith Hamilton's (1867–1963) famous statement about the modernity of ancient Greece.[7] In demarcating a public, political sphere from the private, domestic sphere, and in privileging achieved roles over ascribed ones, the Greeks belong to antiquity only in a chronological sense and their proper place is in the modern world. By contrast, in the evolutionist model China stands as the quintessential example of stagnation and primitiveness for resting on kinship organizations and family ethics for millennia. In China no social, political, or religious institution succeeded in transcending kinship ties to create civic bonds and a countervailing force against the domination that the family had exerted in all spheres of Chinese society from classical antiquity until China's coerced encounter with the West in the modern era. To both Western Orientalist thinkers and patriotic Chinese intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the enduring centrality of the family in China's sociopolitical organization and value system seems to have been at the root of the backwardness of Chinese society and betokens a despairing contrast between an unchanging China and a progressive West.[8]

[5] Elshtain (1993, introduction); Pateman (1988, chs. 1 and 2); C. B. Patterson (1998, ch. 1); Rosaldo (1980: 401–405). Among the nineteenth-century evolutionist social theorists were such luminaries as Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887), Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), Henry Maine (1822–1888), and Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889). The famous thesis "from status to contract" was formulated by Henry Maine (1861).

[6] Redfield (2003: 10–11).

[7] See Hamilton's influential book *The Greek Way*, which first appeared in 1930 and went through one revised edition and numerous printings. "By universal consent the Greeks belong to the ancient world . . . . But they are in it as a matter of centuries only; they have not the hall-marks that give title to a place there . . . . None of the great civilizations that preceded them and surrounded them served them as model. With them something completely new came into the world. They were the first Westerners; the spirit of the West, the modern spirit, is a Greek discovery and the place of the Greeks is in the modern world" (Hamilton 1943: 18–19).

[8] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) played the most important role in propagating this view of China in the West (Saussy 1993: 162–163). For a concise discussion

In light of the special significance of ancient China and Greece in the evolutionist comparative paradigm structured around kinship and friendship, this study, which contrasts the cornerstone status of patrilineal kinship relationship in China with the preeminence of friendship-based relationships in Greece, has a premise that needs to be stated at the beginning. The important differences between ancient China and Greece in social organization and value system should not carry any evolutionary implication for our understanding of the two societies and their descendants. Both the ancient Chinese and the ancient Greeks struggled hard to juggle the various ways of organizing their societies and dealing with interpersonal and gender relations, just as they did in other respects in their pursuit of the good life. The criticism directed at the tendency to polarize China and Greece in comparative studies of the two civilizations should be particularly heeded in an inquiry such as this one.[9] Kinship and friendship constituted two primary categories of social relations in ancient China and Greece, as they did and still do in all cultures known to us. To describe one society as kinship-oriented and another as friendship-oriented must be a matter of relative difference. Moreover, it will be a sterile comparison if we do not further delineate the subcategories of relationships under the two primary categories, analyze how those relationships are configured into different nexuses of affinity and conflict, or study how the dynamics of relationships within and outside of the family and kinship network shape each other. Thus it is with an understanding of the relative nature of the differences, and of the need to disaggregate the two primary categories of amiable relations and examine the intricate correlations between them and among

of Hegel's conception of the family, see Landes (1982). On how Western evolutionist thinking influenced the views of leading Chinese thinkers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see the anthology edited by Fogel and Zarrow (1997), especially the essays by Liu and Liu (1997) and F-S. Wang (1997). Also see Glosser (2003, ch. 1) and Liang Shuming (2003: 18–22) for some representative modern criticisms of the domination of the family institution in Chinese history.

9 Three noted comparatists, David Hall, Roger Ames, and François Jullien, have been sharply criticized for portraying China and Greece as neat binary opposites (e.g., aesthetic/rational, concrete/abstract, oblique/direct, spontaneity/freedom). Jullien, in particular, has sustained scathing attacks for depicting China and Greece / the West in terms of bipolar alterity and valuing China for providing a "theoretical distancing" that enables Western readers to understand their own tradition better. For such criticisms, see Billeter (2006), van Norden (2000), Reding (1996), Salkever (2004), Saussy (2002), L. Zhang (2005), H. Zhao (2007). Shankman and Durrant (2000: 6–7), however, praise Hall and Ames for successfully avoiding a simplification of the two traditions.

their various subcategories, that we embark on a comparison of interpersonal and gender relations in ancient China and ancient Greece.

The present inquiry takes as its starting point the following questions: in what different ways were the family and other social spheres (from politics to religion) related to one another in ancient China and Greece? How did such differences bear on gender relations in these two male-dominated societies if sexual separation was a key principle of social organization and the family was the major realm of activity and influence for women? What different subcategories and constellations of affinity and conflict did "kinship" and "friendship" comprise in ancient China and Greece? And, finally, in these two ancient societies did the dynamics of affinity and conflict within the family mirror those in the larger social processes or did they differ?

To answer these questions I will investigate various sociable occasions in ancient China and Greece that were intended for the collective cultivation of social bonds and during which men and women acted and interacted. Because they brought people together and especially because of the normal behavioral restrictions in these two societies that practiced sexual separation, sociable activities such as festivals, choruses, and banquets provide ideal contexts in which to observe such interactions. Moreover, examining Greek and Chinese gender relations in various sociable contexts helps locate gender in a broader perspective. Inasmuch as group pursuits of pleasure and solidarity were deeply embedded in the religious, political, and ethical life of ancient China and Greece, an analysis that attempts to unfold the nexus of social domains in these two societies enables us to understand their gender relations in light of their distinctive sociopolitical organizations and values.

In the rest of this chapter, I shall define some basic terms and concepts, provide relevant historical settings, introduce the major arguments and primary sources, and lay out the organization of the chapters. In doing so, I also wish to delimit my goals and to acknowledge what my sources and methods are best suited for and what their biases prevent me from accomplishing.

Time and Place

This study covers a broad chronological span, roughly from the tenth to the fourth centuries BCE. According to conventional historical periodization, for China and Greece the six centuries fall into the major periods shown in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1. *Historical periods, ca. tenth to fourth centuries* BCE

China		Greece	
ca. 1045–771 BCE	Western Zhou	12–9th c. BCE	Dark Age
770–256 BCE	Eastern Zhou	ca. 800–480 BCE	Archaic period
770–ca. 450 BCE	Spring and Autumn period	480–323 BCE	Classical period
ca. 450–221 BCE	Warring States period	323–31 BCE	Hellenistic period

Both "China" and "Greece" had changing geographical and political connotations and neither was a unitary territorial or political entity during the six centuries under investigation. In this section, I shall clarify in what sense ancient China (ca. 1000–450 BCE) and ancient Greece (ca. 800–300 BCE) make distinctive civilizational units despite the huge geographical variations and historical changes within each tradition.

Following the breakdown of kingships at the end of the Greek Dark Age, hundreds of independent city-states (*poleis*) made up Greece, and they would remain the characteristic form of Greek political organization deep into the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[10] The far-flung Greek world that will unfold in this study includes Greece proper, the Aegean islands, the coast of Asia Minor, southern Italy and Sicily, and northern Africa.[11] In China, the Western Zhou court first wielded relatively strong rule over a league of regional states. These states were headed by relatives and allies of the royal house, who served as the court's local agents despite enjoying considerable autonomy in civil, legal, and military affairs. After the first century or so of Western Zhou rule, and unquestionably after 771 BCE (the year the king died in a military action against an alliance of pastoral invaders and disaffected nobles and the court relocated to the east, hence the beginning of the Eastern Zhou), the regional states increasingly engaged in independent warfare and

[10] Murray (1980: 64) believes that "the *polis* already existed in all essential aspects by the end of the Dark Age." For sources and general historical studies on the *polis*, see Ehrenberg (1969), Jones (1940), Murray and Price (1990), and Rhodes (1986). Under the leadership of Mogens Herman Hansen, the Copenhagen Polis Center (CPC) has, since its founding in 1993, produced many studies on the character and development of the *polis* (for a comprehensive list of its publications, see Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 191–193). On the distinctiveness of the *polis* among what Hansen calls "city-state cultures," see the next section. It is estimated that there were about fifteen hundred *poleis* over a period of one thousand years (ca. 650–323 BCE) (Hansen 2006: 1–2).

[11] Finley (1977: 17) likens "the Greek world" to concepts of medieval Christendom and the present "Arab world."

diplomacy. By the late Spring and Autumn period the authority of the Zhou court had become virtually nominal.[12] The Chinese world in the period of our discussion was centered in the northern plains, stretched across the Yangtze River in the south, and reached the coast in the east.

Political and territorial unity never existed in either ancient China or ancient Greece. Instead, it was the shared cultural bond among the smaller units in each land that gave each a distinctive tradition when set against those outside. According to a speech that Herodotus (ca. 485–425 BCE) attributes to the Athenians during the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians in the early fifth century BCE, there was a "Greek thing" (*to Hellēnikon*) defined by common blood, common language, common religion, and common customs and mores (*Histories*, 8.1.144). These claims may be open to challenge or may need qualification for a specific region, a certain population, or a particular time. However, it would be difficult to deny the existence of a "Greek way" or a pan-Hellenic identity, which becomes all the more compelling if we speak of perception (by the Greeks themselves or by others, contemporary or in later times) rather than of historical reality.[13] Summing up more than a decade of collaborative work at the Copenhagen Polis Center leading to an inventory of all known Greek *poleis* in the Archaic and classical periods, Mogens Herman Hansen states, "So the Greeks had a common culture and a fixed belief that they were a single people. And that justifies the proposition that all 1,500 *poleis* belonged to one and the same city-state culture, a proposition formulated with force and brevity by the poet Poseidippos: 'there is only one Hellas, but there are many *poleis*.'"[14]

[12] An estimate is that there were more than one thousand regional states in the early Western Zhou; by the late Spring and Autumn period this number had been reduced to dozens because of the incessant wars of annexation that the states waged against each other (Lü Wenyu 2006: 20–21, 150–151).

[13] With respect to Herodotus' claim that the Greeks were of the same stock, Finley (1984: 8) points out that, even though the ancient Greeks were a "thoroughly mixed stock," "what matters socially and historically in the field of 'race' is not science but beliefs." Elsewhere, Finley (1977: 18) sensibly states that "common civilization never meant absolute identity." As he expounds, "there were differences in dialect, in political organization, in cult practices, often in morals and values, sharper in the peripheral areas, but by no means absent in the centre as well. Yet in their own eyes the differences were minor when measured against the common elements of which they were so conscious." Hansen (2006: 36–37) affirms Herodotus' claim along similar lines.

[14] Hansen (2006: 37).

The unity of the Chinese tradition should be understood in a similar way. Besides the regional cultures that flourished in the states there emerged "an underlying shared system of politicoreligious values, as well as homologies in the social organization of elites."[15] This phenomenon is even more remarkable because it became more evident and widespread during the Spring and Autumn period, when the fall of the Western Zhou resulted in the weakening and eventual loss of any central political drive that might contribute to the forging of cultural solidarity. Although the notion of a China characterized by cultural homogeneity across geographical regions and social strata is inapplicable to the period of this inquiry (or, for that matter, to the two-millennium-long imperial period after 221 BCE), there nevertheless took place a "gradual process of amalgamation and fusion, one from relative disparity to relative uniformity" during the Zhou. This process occurred amid political disunity and thus testifies to the immense, and to a great extent independent, force of cultural cohesion.[16]

Within the six centuries covered in this study, the Archaic and classical periods (ca. 800–300 BCE) will be at the center of the examination of the Greek tradition. While this is a highly conventional chronological choice,[17] there are two reasons behind my decision to focus on these periods, as well as to cross over into the Hellenistic age from time to time.

First, there was clear and strong continuity in Greek social life before and after Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), and what seemed to be

[15] Falkenhausen (1999: 542–544).

[16] Quoted from Blakeley's (1977: 211) lengthy examination of the different sociopolitical traditions of the states during the Spring and Autumn period. F. Li (2006: 294) characterizes the increasingly widespread adherence to the Zhou ritual system during the Spring and Autumn period as a "spontaneous process in which the common Zhou cultural tradition was revered and followed in the newly rising regional political centers." Chen Lai (2006: 18, 80) discusses Spring and Autumn culture as a double process of extension and crystallization of Western Zhou culture on the one hand and transmutation and new developments on the other. Pines (2002: 132–135), who comments on the closer ties among the various parts of the Zhou realm during the Spring and Autumn period despite the political disintegration, believes that the cultural developments during this period sowed the seeds for the quest for unity in the Warring States period.

[17] It is still common, despite much recent attention to the Hellenistic period, for discussions of Greek history and culture to concentrate on the four centuries or so between Homer and Alexander, which are usually taken to represent the Greek achievement. To privilege the Archaic and classical periods does not mean that scholars are unaware of the crucial role of the Hellenistic period in the spread of Greek civilization, and it is certainly incorrect to regard all developments in the later era as a simple continuation of Archaic and classical legacies.

strikingly new developments in sociability and gender relations in the later period often turned out to be merely different or more salient manifestations of an enduring feature that has been abundantly illustrated in the previous two periods. As has been pointed out, against the current trend emphasizing the changes during the Hellenistic period, the third and early second centuries BCE formed a continuum with the classical period in the ideas and institutions of Greek civic and private life, and a meaningful break occurred or became visible only afterwards.[18] The second reason is that the Archaic and classical periods effectively elucidate the most notable aspects of Greek sociability and gender relations and allow for the most instructive comparisons with the Chinese tradition. For example, from the perspective of a classicist, Kenneth Dover may have been justly criticized for omitting from his classic study of Greek homosexuality the postclassical period on the grounds that "the distinctive features of Greek civilisation were fully developed before the end of the classical period" and it is therefore not "useful to accumulate evidence which shows only that characteristically Greek attitudes and behavior survived for a long time as ingredients of a Greco-Roman cultural amalgam."[19] However, from a comparative perspective, I find that the most compelling and the most economical strategy for approaching Greek sociability and gender relations is to focus on these two periods, which not only represented the height of Hellenic civilization for the Greeks themselves but also exerted the most lasting influences on the Western tradition. When I do go into the Hellenistic period, it will mainly be to search for supplementary and corroborative evidence or to illustrate the continuity of a certain aspect of the Greek tradition.

My discussion of the Chinese tradition will focus on the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn periods (ca. 1000–450 BCE). The Western Zhou, which precedes the times of China's greatest early thinkers by several centuries, has not received much attention in China–Greece comparative research. Yet there is no denying the period's significance not only for the foundation of Chinese culture in general but also in the realm of Chinese sociability and gender relations in particular. In

[18] Gauthier (1985), Shipley (2000, ch. 3), Van Bremen (2003). Under the Hellenistic kingdoms, democratic institutions such as the assemblies, city councils, and courthouses remained very much intact, and the religious festivals, athletic games, and gymnastic activities might have engaged people's enthusiasm as much as before. See note 34 below.

[19] Dover (1978: 4). For criticism that Dover simplifies the picture by limiting himself to the two earlier periods, see Percy (2005).

that it gave China an ethnic core along with the basic paradigms for its system of political, ethical, religious, and ritual beliefs and practices, even as they continuously underwent transformation and renewal,[20] the Western Zhou was held up as the golden age of Chinese civilization until the fall of China's last dynasty in the early twentieth century. This study will bear out the crucial role of the Western Zhou in defining the structure and principles of Chinese sociability and gender relations. As for the Spring and Autumn period, it is important for our purposes because it brought about a steady and often creative crystallization and dissemination of the cultural values of the Western Zhou despite that period's political disunity and apparent cultural fragmentation.

Without implying that the subsequent Warring States era did not contribute critical new syntheses to the Western Zhou legacy, and without repeating my reasons for making short shrift of the Hellenistic period in discussing the Greek tradition, I shall simply quote Lothar von Falkenhausen on these eras: "As established structures [of the Western Zhou] underwent increasing stress, piecemeal modifications occurred; but even the thoroughgoing cultural transformation of the Warring States period left crucial parts of the Bronze Age heritage intact."[21]

In his introduction to *The Legacy of Greece* Moses Finley authoritatively declared that for the purpose of defining the legacy of the Greeks, "place, region, is largely a matter of indifference."[22] Statements of such tenor may no longer receive the unqualified approval of classicists or other scholars, and it is imperative to pay more attention to variations in place *and* in time for a nuanced understanding of any particular tradition. However, I believe that it also repays to look beyond internal distinctions and change to discern significant and persistent patterns within a tradition, as well as salient differences between traditions.[23] The

[20] Falkenhausen (2006), C-Y. Hsu (2005: 456), F. Li (2006: 293–296).

[21] Falkenhausen (1999: 543). More recently, with an eye on an overall narrative of increasing internal coalescence and demarcation of external boundaries in Chinese culture during the Zhou, Falkenhausen (2006) examines the changes and variations in Zhou social organization from the beginning through the Warring States period. F. Li (2006: 293–294) quotes Falkenhausen (1999: 543) with approval. M. E. Lewis (1997) affirms the same point in the ritual and symbolic realms, arguing that Zhou rituals provided the reforming kings and ministers of the Warring States period with a repertoire of ideas and images on which to draw for major institutional creations.

[22] Finley (1984: 2).

[23] In a conference volume entitled *The Cultures within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration*, Dougherty and Kurke (2003: 6) advocate exploring diversity within Greek culture to understand how the processes of contact, conflict, and collaboration among subcultures "combine to comprise what we understand as 'Greekness.'"

relationship between broad generalization and change and variation is examined by Benjamin Schwartz, who finds himself poised between a strong bias "toward an insistence on the reality of historic change and the emergence of novelty within Chinese culture" and a need to identify "more or less enduring dominant cultural orientation[s]." Commenting on how the political order enjoyed a primacy and weight in East Asian societies without compare in other civilizations and cultures, Schwartz observes,

> In fact, however, we may not be dealing with a dichotomy between mutually exclusive terms. The dominant cultural orientation operates on a high level of generality and it is most easily discerned when we contemplate the whole sweep of Chinese history. It is a general orientation which remains quite compatible with vast and significant changes operative within its wide boundaries.[24]

As the reader will see, the men and women in the following chapters hail from all over China and all corners of the Hellenic world and from across several centuries. They will show us in these pages how the Theban way, the Spartan way, the Lesbian way, and the Athenian way of sociability and gender relations converged into a Greek way, and how this Greek way entailed practices and ideas that set it apart from the Chinese way as embraced over the centuries by the male and female convivialists of Qi, Chu, Qin, Song, Jin, Zheng, and Lu. Of course, exceptions and inconsistencies, all of which call for specialist studies, will remain to defy the positing of two such broadly distinctive patterns and to testify to the awesome richness of human experience and the tremendous complexity of ancient Chinese and Greek civilizations. Nonetheless, it will be a special tribute to the vivacious men and women of the two ancient worlds to attempt to identify and celebrate their distinctive lifestyles and ways of organizing and thinking.

The *Polis* and Lineage

If one were to name the best-known and most significant sociopolitical and cultural developments in Archaic Greece and Western Zhou

> Maintaining a holistic view that recognizes "Greekness" will help put into the right perspective the effort to deconstruct the monolithic view that considers Greek culture as "something simple, pure, and unproblematic – as the beginning, the source of Western civilization" (Dougherty and Kurke 2003: 2). The same applies to the study of ancient China.

[24] Schwartz (1987: 1).