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## Separation and Reunion in Modern China

In this original and highly readable book, Charles Stafford describes the Chinese fascination with human and spiritual 'separation' and 'reunion'. Drawing on his field studies in Taiwan and mainland China, he gives a vivid account of raucous festivals of reunion, elaborate rituals for the sending-off of gods (and of daughters), poetic moments of leave-taking between friends, and bitter political rhetoric about Chinese national unity. These idioms and practices of separation and reunion – which are woven into the fabric of Chinese daily life – help people to situate themselves in historical communities, and they also help to explain the passions aroused by the possibility of national division. The discussion of everyday rituals leads into a unique and accessible general introduction to Chinese and Taiwanese society, culture and politics.

CHARLES STAFFORD is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of *The Roads of Chinese Childhood* (1995).

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For my parents and my sisters

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