

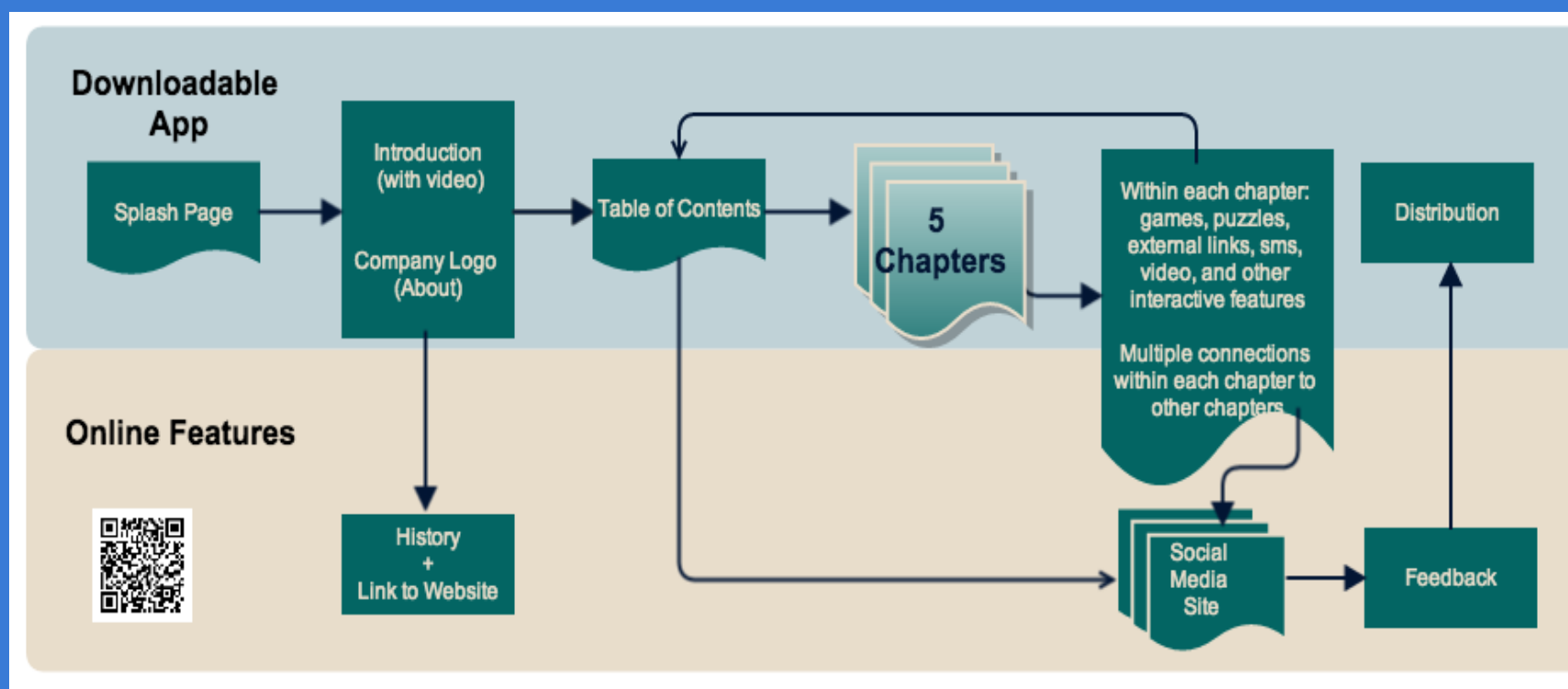
WANDERING Meimei

Meimei Liu Lang Ji

The *Wandering Meimei / Meimei Liu Lang Ji* project tells the story of a Chinese migrant woman factory worker on the frontlines of globalization. One of 200 million girls and young women who toil impossibly long hours on assembly lines in Asia, Meimei's connection to her world is maintained through her mobile phone and it is not without irony that she spends her days helping to build them. What technology she uses, what she believes in, and what she reads and writes will shape the future of her nation. *Wandering Meimei* uses the interactivity of a mobile app to allow the reader to meet Meimei and discover the world where she makes everything we own and wear. The project combines an interactive app with a social media site for the Chinese market. This is a demo of the English version.



Wandering Meimei: Story Structure



Responsive Design

Shake, jiggle, stroke, and swipe the story as you navigate Meimei's tale. Interactive features in the story include audio, video, puzzles, QR codes, and SMS messages.

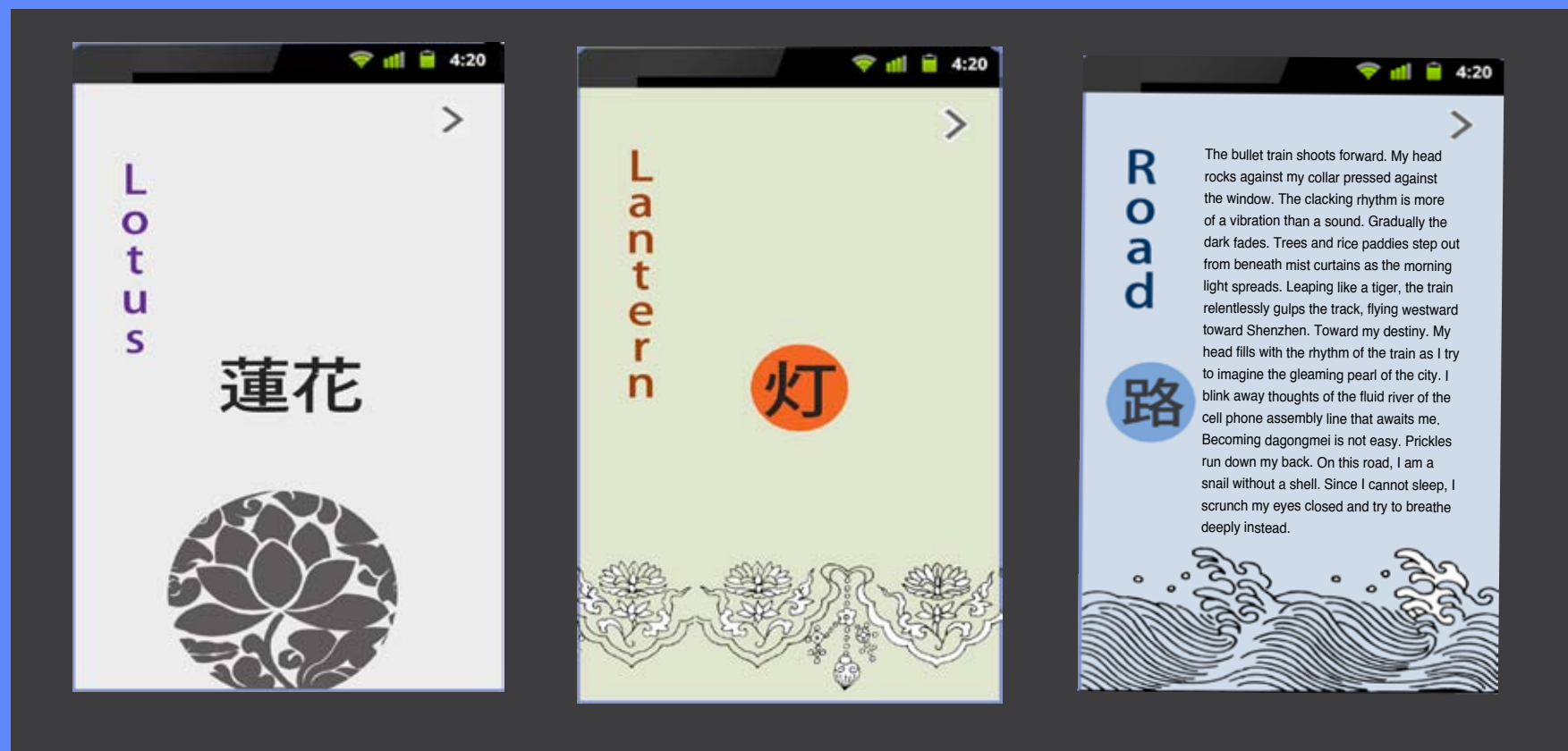
WANDERING

Meimei

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Identifiable Story Threads in Five Interactive Chapters



Responsive Design

Shake, jiggle, stroke, and swipe the story as you navigate Meimei's tale. Interactive features in the story include audio, video, puzzles, QR codes, and SMS messages.



Wandering Meimei

Meimei Liu Lang Ji As a Literary Text



For structural inspiration for the text, we looked at one of the classic novels of the Song Dynasty, The Outlaws of the Marsh, which tells the story of 108 bandits who steal from the rich to give to the poor. Many of medallion-like structures in the text echo the structures of feng shui and provided inspiration for our electronic literature interface.

To create a literary work for the Chinese market and for factory girls, we turned to Chinese literature to identify an appropriate genre. The natural choice seemed to be the genre of lizhi, a form of inspirational and encouraging story of courage, bravery, and strength. The most famous example of lizhi is a comic strip character called Sanmao Liu Lang Ji (1935) by Zhang Leping. In Wandering Sanmao we found our model for a 21st century heroine. A homeless boy on the streets of Shanghai following the first war with Japan, Sanmao is an iconic figure to a people for whom migration is a major part of their lives. Our Meimei character became Wandering Meimei or Meimei Liu Lang Ji. This genre was so perfect because it has been until now a genre that has only been applied to men and boys.



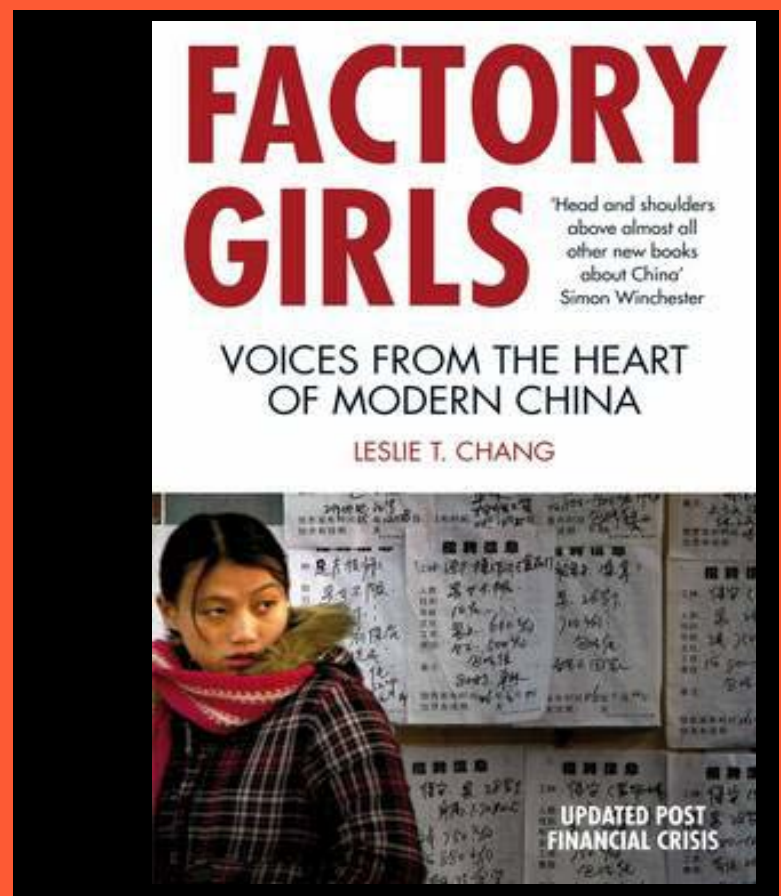
Filial piety (孝 xiào) or ancestor worship was one of the central tenets of Confucianism. Under Confucianism women were the keepers of the family stories: the stories of the male lineage. Meimei is our storyteller who will dare to tell her own story. But under Confucianism, one's family's story starts with one's house. Our Meimei has a particular interest in her village that she leaves behind and in traditional Chinese architecture.

Who is Meimei?

The most mobile work force in the Chinese economy is a massive migrant population of 200 million factory workers composed primarily of young women under the age of 25. Yet they are an invisible population. Within the global economy, ‘meimei’ is with us in the things we buy and the things we carry with us—from sweaters to shoes to iPhones.

Meimei means little sister and is a word used interchangeably as an affectionate name for any young woman. The dagongmei are working sisters—a class of factory worker that powers manufacturing around the globe. Connection for the migrant women is maintained through the **umbilical cord of their phone**.

Chinese women’s lives, loves, work, and sense of self are shaped and transformed by mobile technology. The phone is their first major purchase once they leave home and their only access to online entertainment. Their phone is so important to these women that they refer to themselves in the terminology of the technology: “I need to recharge. I am upgrading myself” (Chang 2008, p.



The phone has a vast potential as a vehicle for digital storytelling. Wandering Meimei / Meimei Liu Lang Ji is an app designed to start a two-way conversation. We invite Meimei to write back.

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Meimei and Architecture: the Yingsao Fashi

The gorgeously illustrated Yingsao Fashi is to architecture what Herodotus's Histories was to historical writing. Completed in 1103 by Li Jie it was the bible for building construction in China for more than 900 years. Compiled from the history of architecture and interviews with contemporary craftsmen, the names given to the house's parts are drawn from Song dynasty literary language of trees and flowers. It is an important book to Meimei.

The Building Manual explained how to use the principles of the natural world to build a wooden house without any nails or fasteners that could stand for hundreds of years. The feng shui compass is the tool that governs traditional Chinese building standards because when the house is perfectly positioned the house is naturally cooled in summer and heated in winter. The force of the balanced roof is a giant spring that holds the structure in place. It is this strong foundation that Meimei leaves behind as she travels to the strange new world of factory work

