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WALKING ON WATER:
FUZHOUNESE IMMIGRANT RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN NEW YORK'S CHINATOWN

by

KENNETH JAMES GUEST II

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2001

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

28 June 2001
Date

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Abstract

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by

KENNETH JAMES GUEST II

Advisor: Professor Jane Schneider

Since the 1980s, as many as 200,000 mostly rural Chinese have migrated, legally and illegally, from the towns and villages outside the city of Fuzhou, on China's southeastern coast, to New York's Chinatown, bringing with them their religious beliefs, their religious practices and even their local deities. In recent years these immigrant laborers in Chinatown's restaurants and garment sweatshops have established numerous specifically Fuzhounese religious communities, ranging from Buddhist, Daoist, and Chinese popular religion to Protestant and Catholic Christianity. This ethnographic study examines the central roles of these religious communities in the immigrant incorporation process in Chinatown's highly stratified ethnic enclave. It also explores the transnational networks established between religious communities in New York and Fuzhou, including their role in transmitting religious and social constructs from China to the United States and the influence of these new US institutions on religious and social relations in the religious revival sweeping southeastern China.

Acknowledgements

"How did you become interested in China?" people ask me. I thank my grandparents, Walter and Mary Foley, who, with their daughter, were my family's first explorers in Asia and climbed China's sacred mountain, Taishan, in 1937. Their daughter, my mother, Frances-Helen, took me to Hong Kong forty-three years later when I was seventeen. And I never underestimate the role of our thrice weekly dinners at the Chinese restaurant off Route 92 in the sleepy rural town of Deland, Florida, during my high school years.

I owe a deep debt, solely of gratitude, to Columbia University in New York where I majored in East Asian Studies, and where I was required to study two years of a language. Professor Irene Liu taught me to enjoy communicating in another language and a classmate whose name I do not recall showed his slides and told us fantastic stories of studying in China. And so in my junior year I ended up at Beijing University. Scott Matheney introduced me to Frank and Jean Woo and Edwin Fisher who introduced me to the folks at Gang Wa Shi in Beijing. There Qin Xiaoyou, Li Ke, Wu Anna, Qi Tingduo and Astor Feng introduced me to the complexities of practicing religion in China. Along the way Philip and Janice Wickeri, Bud and Millie Carroll, Gail Coulson, Gao Ying, Peng Cui-an, Li Yading, Zhao Zhilian, Ji Tai and many others served as guides, mentors and friends.

At the City University of New York my thanks go to many. Sal Cucchiari inspired my interest in anthropology and religion and drew me to the Graduate Center. Susan Lees, Ellen DeRiso, Eileen Sheerin, Heather Clarke, Susanne Scheld, Ana Aparicio and Marilynne Diggs-Thompson provided much needed support and encouragement along the way. Louise Lennihan, executive officer of the Anthropology Program, has been my most ardent cheerleader and advocate. A Graduate Teaching Fellowship at Hunter College confirmed for me my love of teaching. A CUNY Graduate Center Alumni Dissertation Year Fellowship enabled me to dedicate the time needed to write up my fieldwork. This research was also assisted by a Dissertation Fellowship for the Study of Religion and Immigration from the Social Science Research Council with funds provided by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

I have had a truly excellent dissertation committee, all of whom have generously shared of their time, passion and wisdom. My advisor, Jane Schneider gently nudged me to clearer anthropological writing and thinking, spent hours reading and commenting on my drafts, celebrated my forward progress whenever that actually happened, and convinced me that I could someday become an anthropologist. Peter Kwong encouraged me to immerse myself in Chinatown and the lives of its Fuzhounese immigrants, showed me that a commitment to social justice and academic pursuit can go hand in hand, and challenged me to aspire to excellence in my research and scholarship. Ida Susser arranged a National Science Foundation fieldwork training grant which first took me to Fuzhou in 1997, helped completely restructure my SSRC application the night before it was due, and

gave me my first opportunity to publish an anthropological article, co-written with Peter Kwong. Jose Casanova, my outside reader, generously welcomed me into a fascinating world of scholars studying immigration and religion in the United States.

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the love and support of a small group of my most intimate friends and advisors. It is with profound gratitude for their presence in my life that I give thanks to Qin Xiaoyou, a friend since I lived in Beijing in 1984 and my invaluable research assistant in New York's Chinese community; to Asher whose listening ear and timely insights allowed me to find myself more clearly in the midst of dissertation writing and other life turmoils; to Gennaro, Nick and all my friends at the Metro who gave me a safe space to write and always saved a piece of baklava for me; to K, steady and true, my collaborator in so much that is good, fun and meaningful in my life; to Charlene, my academic soul mate and inspiration, with whom I have been exploring religious communities for nearly fifteen years; to Vicki, my loved one these many years and mother of my son, who believed that I had a gift to teach; to Frances-Helen, without whose support and unswerving faith I would never have made it through the last few years and certainly never kept my appointments with Nick and Gennaro; and to Thomas Luke, favorite son and inspiration for my creation. Thank you for the many sunlit afternoons filled with bike rides and ball games, ice cream and laughter. May there be many, many more in the days and months and years to come.

Finally, I must express my deep debt of gratitude to the members of the religious communities in Chinatown and Fuzhou, China, some mentioned here by name, others

whose identities are disguised. Their willingness to share their lives and stories with me provides the primary material for this dissertation and has been an unending source of inspiration on a professional and personal level. I trust that my retelling of their stories will in some small way repay the generosity they have shown me over the past years.

Walking on Water:
Fuzhounese Immigrant Religious Communities in New York's Chinatown
by
Kenneth J. Guest

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Introduction

Walking on Water

On a spring Sunday afternoon in 1999 I stood in the fellowship hall of the Church of Grace to the Fujianese in Chinatown on New York's Lower East Side, eating lunch with about one hundred and fifty recently arrived immigrants. Over a bowl of Fuzhou noodles a young man named Li Lin told me the following story.

We left from Changle City to the east of Fuzhou. It was March 11, 1993. I was twenty-one years old. I hadn't planned to go but a cousin of mine asked me if I was busy. I wasn't. So I went with him. The snake heads [smugglers] in Changle sent us by bus to Wenzhou, twelve hours north on the coast. We waited in the mountains of Wenzhou one night and then were loaded onto an old fishing vessel the next evening. Somewhere in the international waters north of Taiwan we were transferred to a Taiwanese cargo ship. One hundred and forty of us.

It was April 12 before we reached Mexico. A Mexican boat came out into international waters to meet us. We changed ships and then when we were in sight of land small groups of us were put on motor boats for a speedy ride to shore. The Mexicans took us by bus to a safe place overnight and then north to the US border the next day. There were twenty of us in the group, ten Chinese and ten Mexicans, plus two Mexican leaders. I couldn't believe the river at the border was so small. It was

barely more than knee deep. But before we could cross that night, helicopters with spotlights appeared searching for illegal immigrants. We laid still in the low underbrush until three or four in the morning when they disappeared and we made our way across the border.

The van that met us was soon stopped by police. We all ran for our lives and managed to escape into the nearby mountains. One of the Mexican leaders had a cell-phone and called for another car which took us to Los Angeles. Chinese smugglers met us again there. We stayed for two nights in a hotel full of illegal immigrants and flew the next day to Washington, D.C. where we waited until our relatives and friends were able to make the $20,000 payment for our journey.

We encountered many storms during that month at sea. It was an extremely difficult crossing. I wasn't sure we would make it. Many times I found myself singing old hymns I had learned in my childhood in the house church meetings my mother led. Sometimes in the early morning, if the weather was calm, I would go up on deck and sit in the ship's prow. The old hymns would come back to me. In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever. I didn't really know what it meant. It just came flooding back out of my memory. When I started to sing my entire being felt comfortable and safe. I had never had this feeling before, this feeling I had on the boat. At the time I didn't really know what the feeling was about. But when I got to America I realize that God had been present with me on that

journey. Even though I grew up in a Christian family I hadn't really taken it seriously. But on the boat I finally learned how to pray, to pray with my heart, not just with my mouth.

Li Lin's story, like that of so many recent immigrants from southeast China, is a story of great hardship endured in hope of making a better life. And like many of his compatriots, his journey connects religious communities and networks in New York and in China. For many immigrants religious communities are an initial point of entry into the United States reality. They are a place for reconnection with family and fellow villagers, for sharing news of home, for exchanging ideas about how to survive in this alien and exploitative environment, to give thanks to their particular deity for safe passage and to make petitions for a successful continuation of the journey. They are also a place for organizing support for their religious communities - churches and temples back home.

When I got to New York I ended up finding a room right next door to the Church of Grace. My mother had told me to look for it but I didn't know where it was. I never imagined how wonderful it would be to find a church made up solely of people from Fuzhou, speaking my own dialect. When I went to church all the intense pressures of the outside world fell away. My entire being would relax. And I felt warm and comforted. The church has really helped me a great deal. I wasn't a very serious Christian in China. But I'm very involved here. I've even become a member of the church's Board of Deacons. The Church of Grace is my home here.

Fuzhounese Immigrant Religious Communities in New York

Since the early 1980s as many as 200,000 Chinese from the towns and villages outside Fuzhou, in southeast China, have made their way to New York. This massive international migration, spurred by economic restructuring in both China and the US and facilitated by a vast and highly organized international human smuggling syndicate, has uprooted whole segments of Fuzhounese communities, dislocating people economically, culturally and legally, and placing them in a receiving country for which they are unprepared and which is unprepared to incorporate them. The undocumented status of many of the new immigrants further complicates the picture.

Their primary destination is Chinatown, New York, a densely populated Chinese community on Manhattan's Lower East Side where these new immigrants utilize kinship and village connections to begin their US journey and survive in an unfamiliar environment. The street corners where East Broadway passes below the Manhattan Bridge are crowded with young Fuzhounese waiting for jobs to be posted in the myriad employment agencies. The jobs may take them temporarily across the US to work in "all-you-can-eat" Chinese buffets or place them in garment sweatshops or on construction sites in the New York area. But for most recent Fuzhounese immigrants, New York's Chinatown is home base, the place they return to recuperate, reconnect with family and friends and find their next job.

Over the past fifteen years, Fuzhounese have established a number of their own religious communities in Chinatown, fourteen by the end of 2000. These include Protestant and Catholic Churches as well as Buddhist, Daoist and Chinese popular religion

temples. In the complex economic, political and social environment of Chinatown's ethnic enclave, many of these religious organizations have become central locations for a transient Fuzhounese population, where they can build a community, activate networks of support built on kinship, region and faith, and establish links to their home churches, temples and communities in China.

This study examines the role of local New York religious communities in the Fuzhounese immigrant experience. What is their place in the immigrant incorporation process, particularly in light of contemporary theories of the ethnic enclave? How significant are the transnational religious networks being established between New York and Fuzhou in building boundary-crossing relationships and identities which contest the hegemonic and oppressive US economic and cultural environment where so many Fuzhounese have no legal status? How do these religious communities, despite their institutional fragility and their place within the flows and vagaries of the international labor market, not to mention the factionalizing conflicts in China and the US, enable immigrants to construct systems of meaning?

In particular, this study explores the influence of Fuzhounese immigrant religious communities in five primary areas:

- replicating and mitigating hierarchies of class stratification in the Chinatown,
- shaping how Fuzhounese immigrants mobilize social capital necessary for survival in the ethnic enclave,
- building active transnational religious networks between New York and Fuzhou,

- constructing counter hegemonic identities, and
- encouraging the search for meaning within the immigrant experience, reinforcing immigration as a theologizing process.

This dissertation examines six Fuzhounese immigrant religious communities in New York's Chinatown.

1. *He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple* is a small storefront temple which serves as a religious and community center for the 2,500 immigrants from Fuqi village (total population 4,000), a coastal village on the outskirts of Fuzhou which now features one of the most developed temple complexes in the region thanks to nearly one million US dollars raised by villagers in New York and sent home to honor religious sentiments and build community influence.

2. The *Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving*, also a storefront, serves as a central religious, social and economic coordination site for compatriots from Changan Village and neighboring Dongqi Village who now have a network of US restaurants which solely employ fellow villagers, mostly undocumented workers. Members of this temple have also built a new temple in Changan and facilitate a transnational ritual process linking their home village deities, a spirit medium now living in the US midwest, and their fellow villagers across the country.

3. *Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church*, one of the oldest religious institutions in Chinatown, is currently home to three generations of immigrants: Italian, Cantonese Chinese, and Fuzhounese Chinese. Transfiguration's Fuzhounese community struggles to integrate its primarily rural, pre-Vatican II Catholic traditions and beliefs into a modern

multi-ethnic congregation in which it often feels marginalized by language, theology, politics and class.

4. *St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church*, located only a few blocks from Transfiguration, now houses a small but growing group of Fuzhounese immigrants who split from Transfiguration over theological and political issues related to the chasm between public and underground Catholics in China. Ardently anti-Communist and pro-Vatican, much of this community's energy is focused on addressing the persecution of Chinese Catholics in the Fuzhou area.

5. *The Church of Grace*, independently established in 1988, now has a membership of over six hundred, a mailing list of twelve hundred and activities that overflow its space in a renovated 1904 public bath house on Allen Street. Comprised exclusively of immigrants from the Fuzhou area and conducting its services and many activities in the local Fuzhou dialect of Chinese, this Protestant Christian congregation is a first stopping point for many new arrivals, a center for mutual aid and information exchange about New York and Fuzhou, and an access point for connections to home churches and communities in China.

6. *The House Church of New York* split from the Church of Grace in 1998 over theological, political and regional differences rooted in the dynamics of their home communities in China. The one hundred member congregation, led by a revered senior minister who suffered greatly for his faith during China's Cultural Revolution locates its origins in the anti-Communist underground house church network in China and, in particular, an indigenous Fuzhounese denomination commonly called the Little Flock.

Religion and Immigration in Context

Only limited research has been published to date specifically addressing Chinese religious communities in the US. Most of it focuses primarily on Chinese Christians in earlier immigrant generations (Cayton and Lively 1955; Palinkas 1989; Woo 1991; Chen 1992; Yang 1999). Even less has been published about non-Christian Chinese religious expression.

While a number of studies have been conducted in New York's Chinatown (Wong 1982, 1988; Kwong 1987, 1996; Zhou 1992; Lin 1998), religion has received only passing mention or has been completely neglected. Even in Kuo's (1977) book on Chinatown's voluntary associations, the role of churches is covered in little more than one paragraph. In all, little attention has been given to the rich history and contemporary reality of Chinese religious communities and expressions in New York. A fine edited volume recently published on religious diversity in New York (Carnes and Karpathakis 2001), overlooks the Chinese completely and includes only one chapter on any east Asian religion.

As part of the growing literature on post-1965 immigration, attention has turned recently to the role of religion in immigrant communities. As religious pluralism in the US increases exponentially, the contributions and complications of religious diversity in the fabric of American life deserve even closer scrutiny. Increased attention to this central aspect of immigrant communities can only advance our understanding of the immigrant experience in the US. Notably work by Warner (1998) and Ebaugh (2000) has drawn

together collections of ethnographic case studies from Chicago and Houston, respectively, and begun to lay out an analytical framework for future research.

Fieldwork among Fuzhounese religious communities has required consideration of issues not always at the forefront of other studies and which, when taken together, I believe offer a unique contribution to this emerging body of literature.

1. A gap in the new literature concerns class issues in the immigrant experience. Scholars have examined issues of gender, transnationalism, second generation dynamics and organizational structure, but little attention has been paid to the economic conditions of immigrants or to the role of religious communities in challenging or replicating class hierarchies in the US scene. Chinatown's Fuzhounese religious communities are primarily comprised of garment shop, restaurant, and construction workers, many of whom are undocumented. The choice of this subject has required a more careful exploration of issues of class and religion because of the socio-economic context in which these communities exist. In this study I examine these dynamics particularly in light of the problematic theory of the ethnic enclave often cited in contemporary literature on immigrant incorporation. I believe the focus of this study on the religious communities of poor immigrant workers will make a significant contribution to advancing our understanding of the immigrant religious experience.

2. It is also my contention that immigrant religious communities must be examined as embedded in global processes and transnational flows transcending established notions of space and time while linking home and host countries. In this study I have placed Fuzhounese migration and Fuzhounese religious expressions in historical and global

perspective, allocating chapters to the socio-economic and political context of both Fuzhou and New York's Chinatown as well as the complex religious dynamics of Fuzhou which have in turn affected Fuzhounese religious communities in New York. The experience of conducting the fieldwork for this study has revealed the absolute necessity of providing this kind of in-depth context in order to understand today's immigrant religious communities.

3. Fuzhounese immigrants related to these communities consistently frame their experiences in theological terms, striving to understand what these life changes mean. By including the voices of Fuzhounese immigrants I seek to accomplish two things. First I hope their voices will break through the dehumanizing influences of global capitalism and the exploitative ethnic enclave. Second, I intend to challenge the functionalist tendencies still prevalent in the social scientific study of religion which so often examine the social role and function of religious groups and avoid this central theme of the search for meaning.

Outline of the Dissertation

In chapter one I examine the historical and contemporary context of Fuzhou in an attempt to illuminate the root causes of today's massive outmigration. In addition to long time patterns of Fuzhounese outmigration, I consider the effects of recent Chinese economic reforms and their connection to a globalizing world capitalist economy. Most Fuzhounese immigrants over the past twenty years have started their US sojourn in New York City's Manhattan Chinatown. In chapter two I explore the contemporary realities of this ethnic enclave and its controversial role in the incorporation of these new immigrants

into the US economy and culture. Portes and others (Wilson and Portes 1980, Portes and Bach 1985) have introduced the concept of the ethnic enclave as an alternative to the assimilationist narrative of immigrant incorporation. Zhou (1992) suggests that social solidarity in the Chinatown enclave allows immigrants to utilize cultural capital to enhance earning potential and upward mobility. This chapter considers how dense networks of social obligations engendered in the enclave may actually result in cultural, political and economic disadvantages for Fuzhounese immigrant workers. What looks like social solidarity among Chinese at one level may constitute a framework for co-ethnic exploitation at another level. Together chapters one and two seek to describe the contemporary local context and global/transnational processes in which the Fuzhounese religious communities, described in chapters three, four, five and six, are embedded.

Chapter three provides an overview of religion in Fuzhou, with particular attention to concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Chinese history, the role of heterodox sects in modern Chinese history and the contemporary conflict between Falun Gong and the Chinese state. Chapter 4 explores the post-1949 history of Protestant and Catholic religious traditions in Fuzhou, including attempts by the state to establish new definitions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and Christian responses. Chapter 4 concludes with descriptions of three strands of Protestantism prominent in the Fuzhou area which have direct connections to New York's Chinatown and the religious communities discussed in chapters five and six.

Chapter five examines the religious landscape of Chinatown. After describing the overall Chinese religious scene in New York and the religious complexities of Chinatown

itself, the chapter looks specifically at the development of four Fuzhounese congregations, the He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple, the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving, and Transfiguration and St. Joseph's Catholic Churches.

Chapter six is an ethnographic case study of two Fuzhounese Protestant churches - the Church of Grace to the Fujianese and the New York House Church, independent congregations recently founded by Fuzhounese immigrants and serving an exclusively Fuzhounese constituency immersed in the political, economic and cultural context of the Chinese ethnic enclave.

Chapter seven examines the implications of these case studies of Fuzhounese immigrant religious communities for contemporary debates on the relationship of religion and immigration. Based on the fieldwork conducted during the course of this study in Chinatown and in Fuzhou, it is my conviction that to fully understand the dynamics of New York's Chinatown as an ethnic enclave, one must consider religion. And to fully understand the dynamics of religion in New York's Chinatown one must place its religious communities in the context of local economic and political realities as well as transnational flows and global processes.

Fieldwork Methodology and Access

I began my fieldwork in Chinatown in the fall of 1994, conducting a limited survey of mainline Protestant churches. My primary finding was that Fuzhounese immigrants were not members of these congregations which were comprised of earlier generations of Chinese primarily from Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the spring and summer of 1997 I conducted a more systematic survey of Chinatown's religious communities. A street by

street walking tour of the neighborhood quickly identified newly emerging independent religious communities exclusively serving Fuzhounese immigrants. Interviews revealed close connections between these New York groups and home communities in China. No set pattern existed. Not every group exhibited as direct an involvement in the movement of people as the Daoist temple. But all served as a node of access to the networked webs of information, employment, housing, health care, and connection to China, webs that encompassed both New York's Chinatown and Fuzhou and built on the continuous flow of people and money, both documented and undocumented between the two locations.

In July and August of 1997 I travelled to Fuzhou and other cities in Fujian Province to test these initial findings. Though developing access in China is always a delicate process and usually quite time consuming, I discovered that introductions from New York friends, relatives and congregation members opened unexpected doors. Furthermore, discussions of religious beliefs and traditions provided an avenue for initiating conversations about other sometimes more sensitive issues.

My most intensive fieldwork was conducted between December 1998 and the spring of 2001. I initially focused on the Protestant Church of Grace, of all the congregations the most organized with regular programs and an identifiable leadership structure, and of all the congregations most welcoming to my inquiries. Over time I expanded my contacts with the other congregations as well, conducting regular participant observation and interviews where possible. Leaders, clergy and lay, and members have generously shared their stories of faith and migration, introduced me to their families and friends and entrusted me with the responsibility of sharing their stories with others. I have

attended rituals, festivals, religious programs, and administrative meetings. I have conducted hundreds of hours of in-depth interviews, visited people's homes - sometimes only a bed in a crowded tenement room - accompanied members to local hospitals and doctors visits, attended weddings, funerals, Christmas parties, New Year celebrations, and citywide evangelistic meetings. In three of the congregations I was allowed to administer written questionnaires, though only toward the end of my research after sufficient rapport had been established.

In July and August of 1999 I again returned to Fuzhou, this time even better prepared with personal introductions. I was able to visit many of the home churches and temples related to the immigrants I had been working with in New York and the texture and vitality of Fuzhou's religious landscape began to come alive for me in ways that it had not before. It is clear to me that the access afforded me in China on this trip and on a subsequent visit in March and April 2001 would have taken months if not more to develop in China without the intervention of my New York informants, if I would have been able to develop it at all.

For most Fuzhounese the isolation of their religious groups from American culture beyond Chinatown mirrors their individual experiences and that of the Fuzhounese population as a whole. Few Fuzhounese have any meaningful ongoing contact with non-Chinese. In this context I was at first a great curiosity as a European-American who spoke Chinese, and continue to be so for newly arrived immigrants. Moving beyond curiosity, I became a source of information about the "world beyond." I was often asked to interpret events, describe people and places and offer advice about everything from proper

preparations for Y2K to how to program an overused photocopy machine's security code. At times I became a cultural broker, translating letters from the Immigration and Naturalization Service into Chinese, recording English language practice tapes for members preparing for US citizenship exams, advising the board of elders on practices of other US churches in issues from pastors salaries to how to obtain a certificate of occupancy from the New York City Buildings Department. All of these interactions built relationships of trust over time.

My visits to Fuzhou in 1997, 1999 and 2001 bridged many additional gulfs as I had the chance to visit people's home towns, families, home churches and temples, and close associates. These experiences were never underestimated or underappreciated by Fuzhounese in New York. The deepening of my rapport after these trips was striking.

I must also acknowledge the powerful desire of the members of these congregations to have their stories told, individually, as communities of faith, and as the Fuzhounese people. The journey that they have undertaken has been arduous. Their existence in New York is often precarious. In hot, overcrowded garment sweatshops, in the backs of busy Chinese restaurants serving inexpensive food to the US middle and upper classes, in the dangerous construction trades clearing and developing our country, Fuzhounese are building the American economy and nation with the very sinews of their bodies, laboring in a land and among a people that know them not, where their presence is not recognized by the country's immigration statutes. In the midst of this, Fuzhounese long for their contributions to be recognized and affirmed.

Like Li Lin, whose story opens this introductory chapter, recent Fuzhounese "*toudu*" or "steal across" the sea to the United States, braving wind and weather, immigration agents, human smugglers and border patrols. All Fuzhounese, regardless of their legal status, have chosen to leave their homes and communities in search of a better life for themselves and their families, striking out from their coastal towns and villages, crossing the sea, walking on water, this time beyond Asia to the United States of America. The following pages tell their stories. For many, their faith provides a means of making sense of their journey and their religious communities provide a means for surviving on often rugged paths. Where they have gone they have taken their deities with them, immigrant gods accompanying a sojourning people. And where they have gone they have constructed religious communities as safe harbors in the storm, as islands of safety on their way to an unfamiliar shore.

Chapter 1

Fuzhou: Diasporic Traditions

Immigrants in Chinatown's Fuzhounese religious communities launch their immigrant sojourns from rural hometowns and villages to the east and southeast of the city of Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province on the southeast coast of China. For centuries Fuzhou has been a leading port city not only for coastal China but for south and southeast Asia as well. Eighty-seven years before Columbus's famous voyage on the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria, a seven foot tall admiral named Zheng He set sail from Fuzhou in 1405 with a fleet of 317 ships and 27,870 sailors on an imperially sponsored trading mission to the south seas of Asia, the Middle East and down the east coast of Africa, enhancing the connectedness of the era's "world system" (Frank 1998). The British named Fuzhou among the first five treaty ports forcibly opened to Western powers after China's defeat in the Opium War of 1839-1842 and as such one of the first places opened to foreign missionaries. In China's contemporary history, Fuzhou was declared one of China's first special economic zones, designed to lead the nation into the post-Mao era of reform and openness to the outside world.

For centuries Fuzhou's people have reached beyond the borders of China to seek their fortunes and protect themselves against the vagaries of natural disasters, political upheavals and economic crises in their country. As a result, today Fuzhounese can be found throughout east and southeast Asia (Hicks 1993). In this context, the current migration of Fuzhounese to New York continues a long established strategy for self-preservation and economic enhancement employed not only by the Fuzhounese but by communities all along China's southeast coast (see Ch'en 1940).

The current migration to New York diverges from earlier Fuzhounese outmigrations in a number of key respects. Domestic economic reforms and opening to foreign investment have led to significant economic growth throughout the 1990s in the

Fuzhou metropolitan area, yet the unprecedented magnitude of current migration has emptied the surrounding towns and villages of their younger generations. The pull of an international labor market extends the Fuzhounese diaspora beyond southeast Asia across the Pacific Ocean to the United States and establishes complex social and economic networks between host and home communities. And in one of the most striking developments, highly organized international human smuggling syndicates enable much of this outmigration to occur.

This chapter places the process and rationale of today's emigrants in the context of Fuzhou's regional history and diasporic traditions. This history and contemporary reality provide an essential element of the framework for understanding the dynamics of the Fuzhounese religious communities considered in chapters 3 to 6.

Fuzhou Today

Fuzhou, whose population is now nearing six million, is a bustling industrial sprawl quickly leaving behind its centrally planned socialist economy of the past forty years and moving into a more central role in China's domestic economy and the global economy as well. A sleepy mid-size port city in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Fuzhou has expanded significantly since, exemplifying coastal China's rapid economic growth over the past twenty years. The first impression of the visitor in the late 1990s is that everything is under construction. The air is thick with construction dust which lingers over the city, hemmed in on three sides by mountains, before being swept away periodically over the Pacific Ocean. The narrow tree-lined streets have been widened. Dilapidated two-story wooden structures housing stores on the ground level and cramped dwellings on the second have been demolished, replaced by apartment blocks and high rise office towers. A fleet of red taxis now plies the thoroughfares where fifteen years ago only public buses and bicycles held sway. Newly middle class business people discuss banning bicycles from the main streets to eliminate the nuisance they pose to automobile traffic. While port cities such as Guangzhou, Xiamen and Shanghai have outpaced Fuzhou's expansion, Japanese and

Taiwanese investment in Fuzhou has increased significantly in the 1990s and joint venture, export oriented industries have boomed in the city and its suburbs. After years of isolation, Fuzhou is returning to the more prominent position it previously has held periodically in the Chinese domestic economy and global economic affairs.

Fujian Province, located on the southeastern China coast is bounded to the south by Guangdong, to the north by Zhejiang and to the west by Jiangxi. Fujian is isolated from much of inland China by mountain ranges both north and west. This geographic isolation has helped maintain Fujian's peripheral status vis a vis the Chinese central government for most of it's history. Another mountain range sharply divides the province between inland mountainous areas and the coastal regions. Ninety-five percent of the province is either hilly or mountainous. Only five percent is flat and ideal for farming. The rest is farmed through intensive terracing and irrigation. Transportation and communication between inland and coastal regions has historically been facilitated by several major river systems which cut through the mountains. (Rawski 1972: 59-61)

The greater Fuzhou area includes three cities and six counties. Most of the undocumented Chinese in the US originate from within this larger region, particularly from Changle City, Mawei District, Tingjiang Township and Lianjiang County. The city of Fuzhou sits on the edge of Fujian Province's coastal plain, surrounded by mountains to the north, south and west. The Min River travels from the province's northwest through Fuzhou before opening into a wide estuary and flowing past hundreds of small islets along the jagged coastline and into the Taiwan Straight. Fuzhou lies thirty miles inland from the ocean. It occupies approximately the same latitude as Miami, Florida, with a subtropical climate which averages 19.6 C and summers filled with monsoon rains.

The roads running out of Fuzhou toward the coast are lined with factories, industrial parks and foreign investment oriented free trade zones as they pass through the city and its suburbs. But further to the east along the banks of the Min and southeast toward Changle the four and six lane highways pass farmland and fishing boats along with

half empty towns and villages full of vacant new homes built with overseas remittances. It is the towns and villages along this coastal plain that produce the flood of tens of thousands of immigrants now populating New York's Chinatown and toiling in restaurants, garment shops, construction sites and factories across the United States.

When asked, immigrants in New York say they are from "Fuzhou". In reality this refers to the larger Fuzhou region and not to Fuzhou City itself. Of the 343 respondents to surveys conducted in Chinatown's Fuzhounese Protestant churches and a Buddhist temple during this study, only twenty or 5.8% identified Fuzhou City as their home town. 85% are from the less developed and more rural areas along the coast. (Guest 2000; Guest 2001)

Despite strong economic growth in Fuzhou City, including increased industrial production, particularly for export, the same economic opportunities have not extended to the coastal areas. Farming pays at best US $600 a year. The fishing industry is failing. There is little other local industry and only a few service sector jobs have emerged in restaurants and stores opened with overseas remittances. Interviews conducted as part of this study revealed that in these towns and villages casual labor may earn between US$50-100 per month.

While some coastal residents migrate to Fuzhou City to work in its expanding economy, these opportunities pay only US $1,800 a year and hold little promise of long-term stability. As documented by Solinger (1999), China now has upwards of 100 million internal migrants comprising a massive floating population moving from rural to urban areas in search of wage labor. In China today access to the social safety net, including housing, education and health care, is predicated upon a system of household registration which ties Chinese to their place of birth. Outside one's registration area, access is difficult or impossible to establish. While more flexibility exists in the system today than twenty years ago, the ability to legally change residency is limited for rural dwellers with scarce financial resources and few personal connections. As a result, rural residents

choosing to migrate to a city may provide the labor necessary to fuel China's urban economic expansion, but they are forced to live outside the social safety net and are denied their full rights of citizenship.

Over the past fifteen years outmigration to New York has developed as the main economic strategy for people in Changle and north along the Min River (Chin 1999). The word on the Tingjiang street, for instance, is that with hard work even an undocumented worker can earn nearly $2,000 a month in the United States. While this may be true for some, it does not account for the grueling hours and difficult work conditions which make these jobs impossible to physically sustain for long periods of time. Still many calculate that they will be able to earn far more by migrating to the United States, even after paying exorbitant smuggling fees, than they would by remaining in China. As a result, most young people do not work. They rely on remittances from relatives already established overseas and they wait for their turn to emigrate. One consequence is that most local farm land is no longer tilled by local farmers, but rented out to other Fujianese who have migrated down from the province's mountain regions or to migrant workers from Sichuan Province whose depressed interior economy has made Sichuanese a major component of the floating population throughout China.

Diasporic Traditions

Interaction with the global economy and the sending of its sons and daughters abroad is not an anomaly in Fuzhou's history. Rather it represents a repetition of an age old pattern. Fuzhou, according to Chinese records, was established in 207 B.C.E. by the duke of Fu-yue as his capital city. Some accounts suggest that as early as 1,900 years ago Fuzhou's port received ships from southeast Asia. Economic development and population growth in this frontier region were relatively slow until the middle of the Tang dynasty in the eighth century when the province grew rapidly from marginal status to being one of China's most heavily settled and economically prosperous.

> The emergence of an Indian Ocean trading ecumene in the seventh and eighth centuries, coinciding with and no doubt prompted by the emergence of messianic Islam at the western end of the littoral, led to a major expansion in the total volume of the Indian Ocean trade and brought a new wave of traders to the Chinese ports. By the turn of the eighth century the traders of the Persian Gulf had tied together east and west into an unbroken network extending from the shores of Africa all the way to the coast of China. (Clark 1990: 40)

By the eighth century large communities of Arab and Persian traders could be found in Guangzhou and Yangzhou and their trading routes took them along the coast of Fujian.

By the beginning of the Song dynasty (978-1279) Quanzhou in Fujian had become one of the major ports of call of South Seas traders. Reports from the era note Quanzhou traders frequenting ports around the South China Sea, including Vietnam and Borneo. Merchants from Quanzhou and Fuzhou were also involved in northbound trade to Korea and Japan. By 1087 Quanzhou was established as an official superintendency (legally sanctioning the trade) and soon surpassed Guangzhou as China's leading port (Clark 1990). By the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo would visit Fujian. Of Fuzhou he remarked on the large number of ships loaded with goods. And of Zaitun (Quanzhou), "It is indeed impossible to convey an idea of the number of merchants and accumulation of goods in this place, which is held to be one of the largest ports in the world," (Cited in Clark 1990: 51).

One of the most famous figures in China's long history of international commerce was the admiral Zheng He (1371-1440?), a Chinese Muslim eunuch from Yunnan province. Over a twenty-eight year period from 1405 to 1433, under the sponsorship of the Ming emperor, Zheng He commanded huge fleets that visited thirty-seven countries from southeast Asia to India, the Persian Gulf and even the east coast of Africa. Thousands of Fujianese merchant traders accompanied these trading missions. Fuzhou served as one of the primary ports for organizing their maritime supplies, logistical support and repairs. According to the Chronicles of the Ming Dynasty, at each stop over the course of seven voyages - in Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Java,

Sumatra, Ceylon, India and Persia, across southeast Asia and around the Indian Ocean, Zheng He's fleet encountered the far reaching networks of overseas Chinese from the southeast provinces which had at that time already been in formation for hundreds of years and which still provide the framework for the vast overseas Chinese network in Asia today.

Mercantile connections along Fujian's coast made possible a remarkable integration between urban coastal markets and rural agriculture. Trading up and down the east coast of China and deep into China's river networks, Fujianese maritime merchants were able to circumvent the treacherous trade routes over the mountains. Through the resulting China-wide trade networks, the farmers of Fujian's hinterland could sell their goods far beyond the traditional market networks to all of China and even to the entire Indian Ocean littoral. Fuzhou, at the eastern end of the Min River system, served as a central transfer point between hinterland and domestic and international markets.

At times Chinese international trade and migration have been circumscribed by the Chinese central government. In the early stages of the Qing Dynasty (17th century) the new rulers placed severe restrictions on trade and travel in order to consolidate their authority over the loyal remnants of the predecessor Ming Dynasty, many of whom had escaped to Fujian, Taiwan, and even southeast Asia. Most recently, after 1949 the Communist party gradually introduced restrictions on internal mobility and external contacts peaking in severity during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) when contact abroad was seen as counter-revolutionary activity. Throughout such periods of intense restriction, however, the Fujianese role in the maritime aspects of China's internal economy has allowed them to maintain access to opportunities for international trade and travel. Sailors from Fuzhou, even during the height of the Cultural Revolution, were involved in the transportation of goods along the China coast, including Hong Kong.

Western Imperialism and New Engagements

From the 16th to the mid-19th century the establishment of the European trade regime and European colonies in Asia provided a strong pull for Chinese outmigration. European plantations and land development required intensive labor and many from southeast China, including Fuzhou, followed already established overseas networks to reach these new labor markets. With the fighting of the Opium War (1839-1842) against the British, China entered a new era in which its encounter with the outside world suddenly became complicated by the interjection of foreign powers onto Chinese soil.

The Opium War erupted as a result of a severe trade imbalance which had developed between China and the British over the previous two centuries. China exported silk, porcelains, tea, spices and many other luxury goods to the West but severely restricted imports, at one point closing all ports except Guangzhou to foreign trade and requiring merchants to pay any trade deficit in silver.

By the 1830s the frustrated British hoped to change these policies and introduce large quantities of opium grown on their poppy plantations in India to the limited but growing opium market in China, thereby shifting the trade balance in their favor. The Chinese refused and, at their own version of the Boston Tea Party, threw barrels of opium overboard into Guangzhou harbor. The British, with vastly superior naval power, soon occupied Guangzhou and sent an expeditionary force to the capital in Beijing. There the emperor was forced to sign the first of a series of unequal treaties promising indemnification for losses, agreeing to accept opium as payment, and allowing Britain and later other western powers access to certain treaty ports. Within these treaty ports the western powers were to be allowed free trade, extraterritorial legal rights, and the freedom for missionaries to evangelize. Thus, after a period of relative isolation, the southeastern coast of China, and the port city of Fuzhou in particular, were officially reopened as a hub for international trade and commerce and nodes of access for the Chinese to the global economy and for foreigners to the Chinese domestic economy.

Of particular interest for our study, the signing of the Unequal Treaties heralded the arrival of the first Western Protestant missionaries on China's soil. Fuzhou, as one of the first treaty ports, became one of the primary destinations. The first Protestant missionaries, sent by the Congregationalist sponsored American Board Mission, arrived in Fuzhou in 1847. The US Methodist Episcopal Mission was established in 1948 and the British Anglican Church Missionary Society Mission in 1850. These three groups would form the backbone of Protestant foreign mission work in Fuzhou in the 19th century, before being joined by the Young Men's Christian Association in 1905 and the YWCA in 1913. Fuzhou proved a difficult assignment for these early missionaries. They were not welcomed by the Chinese, who saw them as part of the larger foreign incursion. In addition, health problems were rampant and quite a few missionaries and their children died or were forced to return home. Missionary work was also severely affected by political affairs. Missionary letters from Fuzhou note the decision to evacuate all foreign church workers twice in the 19th century, once because of the Chinese Taiping Rebellion and once because of the armed conflict between the French and the Chinese.

Despite Fuzhou's sizable population, nearly 600,000 in the mid-1800s, Chinese conversion to Christianity happened slowly. The first Chinese converted only in 1856, nine years after the launch of the Congregational mission. By 1880 the Anglicans could claim only 3,556 converts and the Congregationalists only 215. (Dunch 1996: 39,42) One significant factor lay in the Chinese perception of missionaries as compatriots of the foreign imperialists who were forcing opium into China by means of military might. Nor was this perception enhanced by missionary reliance on the terms of the Unequal Treaties but also on western merchants and government consular officials for assistance with communication, transportation, legal protection and even currency exchange. According to missionary H. W. Worley,

> Foochow, perhaps more than some other centers, felt the moral incongruity of the message of the missionary who came in the wake of the opium ships.

> This was still more augmented by the fact that in the early days of the mission in Foochow no satisfactory means of forwarding money to the missionaries had been found. The only way of getting local currency, without taking a trip all the way to Hong Kong was to go to the opium ship which anchored off the mouth of the river and there exchange drafts on New York for Mexican silver dollars. No missionary could make the trip from Foochow, thirty miles down to the mouth of the river, visit and opium ship, and come back again with a bag of silver dollars, without the fact being known to a very wide circle of Chinese. In view of this circumstance and connection it is not so surprising that the mission grew so slowly, but that it grew at all. (cited in Lacy 1948: 43-44)

Revolutions and Renewed Exodus

The 19th and 20th centuries have been periods of tremendous upheaval for China and this upheaval has had significant implications for the history of Chinese immigration. The Opium war with the British was only the first of five wars of foreign aggression during this time, concluding with eight years of Japanese invasion and occupation (1937-1945). In addition five revolutionary civil wars tore the country apart from within. The massive Taiping Rebellion lasted from 1850 to 1864. The Republican Revolution of 1911 brought an end to the severely weakened Qing dynasty. The incomplete Nationalist Revolution of 1925 to 1928 sought unity against foreign imperialism. The Nationalist Party and the Communist Party fought from 1945 to 1949 for control of the country. And of course Mao's Cultural Revolution shook China from 1966-1976. In addition numerous smaller uprisings added to the turmoil of the period. (Fairbank 1986:x)

Despite these military, political and economic upheavals of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Fuzhou continued, and at times expanded, its extensive interaction with world commerce. Fuzhou's primary commodity for export during much of this time was its famous Wu Yi tea and clipper ships from Britain and the United States filled Fuzhou's Pagoda Anchorage loading their shipments. By the peak of the tea trade in 1903, forty million pounds were shipped from Fuzhou annually. (Gardella 1990) Even with the dilatory effects of the Japanese occupation of Fuzhou and its surrounding region in the 1930s and the intense civil war between the Communists and Nationalists which saw tens

of thousands of Fujianese Nationalist sympathizers flee to Taiwan in 1949, Fuzhounese continued to engage in commerce beyond China's borders.

According to Hicks (1993), by 1940 there were more than 8.5 million overseas Chinese and nearly 3 million of these were from Fujian Province. Most were from the southern portion of Fujian, but 300,000 were from the northern region, particularly Minhou and Fuqing, both south of Fuzhou, and Minqing and Gutian. Ninety percent of the overseas Chinese in southeast Asia were from Fujian and Guangdong Provinces and of all Fujianese overseas, ninety-five percent were in southeast Asia, highlighting the strong connections between Fujianese and the southeast Asia region. In the later part of the 19th century, just as contract laborers were being organized in south China, particularly Guangdong Province, to work in the farms, mines and railroad construction on the US west coast, so too were large scale contract labor groups being organized in Fujian to supply the rapidly expanding labor needs of the European colonies being established in southeast Asia. Local Fujianese middlemen recruited farmers for Malaysia and Vietnam. So many Fuzhounese laborers were imported to Sarawak, Borneo, that the city of Sibu came to be known as Little Fuzhou. At one point several hundred Fuzhounese were even recruited to work in the mines in Mexico. (Hicks 1993)

From the annals of Santu, an island in Shansha Bay in northern Fujian with a large emigrant population, we learn,

> During the period 1851-1875, while the British were encroaching on Burma and when the French annexed Annam (Vietnam), they very often obtained assistance from the people of Santu-ao. Thus, as prohibition on emigration had been lifted and residents of the homeland were constantly emigrating, their power expanded and they were used by foreigners....
>
> At the beginning of the Kuanghsu Period (1875-85) Ch'iu Chung-po from Hsin-an bought several steamships and travelled to Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong, Swatow, Amoy and so forth. People who were prepared to take risks in the hope of making a quick fortune took passage on these and travelled to Southeast Asia, so that wasteland thrived instantly.... In the latter years of Kuanghsu (1899-1908), when the national government

> declined and people's moods deteriorated, there was a seemingly endless surge of migrants taking their families to the archipelago of Southeast Asia. (Hicks 1993:231)

While the large scale contract labor groups became less prominent by the turn of the 20th century, Fujianese outmigration continued as entrepreneurial merchants and individual laborers utilized overseas Fujianese regional, village and kinship networks to escape China's economic and political turmoil and seek a better life for themselves and their families back home. As they do today, remittances from overseas Chinese played a crucial role in providing for economic survival and stability for kin and community in Fujian up until the Communist victory in 1949.

The flow of immigrants out of China gradually slowed after 1949, as did the flow of remittances from overseas Chinese into the mainland, as the Communist government initiated a series of reforms and campaigns to bring the country under central control. Communist scrutiny of Fujian was particularly intense because of the province's close proximity to Taiwan, new home of the defeated Nationalist government. In 1949 many Fujianese loyal to the Nationalist Party or having served in the Nationalist military fled to Taiwan, often leaving family behind, rather than face retribution from the victorious Communists. The new Chinese government systematically restricted contacts with the outside world and was particularly vigilant about any interaction with Taiwan. Various military raids from Taiwan into Fujian during the ensuing thirty years only served to reinforce this anxiety. Largely cut off from its overseas connections, throughout the period of 1950 to 1980, the Fujian and Fuzhou economies lagged behind the rest of the country. The situation was only exacerbated by the mainland government's reluctance to invest in a "front-line" province so close to Taiwan. Industrial development, particularly heavy industries, was particularly affected.

Post-1978: Economic Reform and Reconnecting to the International Economy

In the late 1970's, the Chinese Communist Party moved rapidly to reestablish its legitimacy with the Chinese people after the disastrous Cultural Revolution. After the

death of Mao Zedong (1976) and the fall of the Gang of Four, China's new paramount leader, Deng Xiao-ping, instituted a series of economic reforms beginning in December of 1978 which would transform rural and urban life as well as foreign relations. Decollectivization gradually returned land to farmers through the family responsibility system. Farmers regained control of crop management and labor allocation and many families began to diversify their economic activities into rural industries and marketing. With the loosening of restrictions on household registration (*hukou*), labor mobility gradually increased and sizable numbers of the rural population moved to the city to seek wage labor. (Zhou 1996) Urban reforms included the weakening of the work unit (*dan wei*) as the sole unit for economic activity. Urban private enterprise began to emerge as a response to chronic underemployment and limited earning possibilities within the work unit. (Lieberthal 1995) In the Fuzhou area, residents began to reactivate kinship and village networks for outmigration, particularly to Hong Kong and Macao and later to the United States.

After its self-imposed international isolation of the 1960's and 1970's, China awoke to find that it lagged far behind other Asian economies, including the smaller Asian "tigers" such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea, not to mention Japan. Deng's Open Door Policy, inaugurated in the early 1980's, sought to rectify this situation by creating at first four special economic zones (SEZs) along the southern and southeastern coast of China. These SEZ's, comparable to export processing zones in the globalization literature, were designed to entice foreign corporations to invest capital and transfer modern technology in return for cheap labor and land, tax breaks and a stable social environment.

Overseas Chinese have provided the primary link between these areas and the global economy. In China as a whole, only 7% of foreign investment in the early 1990s came from the United States and 5.8% from Japan (Castells 1998: 295). 71% of the 116 billion pledged for investment in China between 1979 and 1992 came from Hong Kong

and Taiwan. Chinese investors from Hong Kong and Taiwan used "guanxi" (relationship) networks, particularly looking for relatives, friends, people from the same place of origin (*tong-xiang*). Initial investments focused on building the necessary infrastructure to support international connections (hotels, business services, airports, roads, and property development). Once these were established through Hong Kong and Taiwanese capital, investments began to flow from overseas Chinese all over the globe, including New York, California, Canada, Australia, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Manila, Bangkok, Penang and Singapore. (Castells 1998: 297) In spite of this tremendous investment and development in Fuzhou and along the coast of China, there has been a renewed massive outmigration.

From Fuzhou to New York

The earliest Fuzhounese arrived in New York in the 1940s: a few sailors who jumped ship after arrival and a few hundred who were granted residency for serving in the US Merchant Marine during World War II. New York's Fuzhounese population grew slowly over the next three decades as seamen who had escaped from China to Hong Kong in the 1950s made their way to the US and chose to stay on illegally. Attempts to reunify their families in the 1970s in New York may have provided the earliest stimulus for the extensive smuggling network that exists today, as Fuzhounese worked through Chinese travel agencies to procure the documents and tickets for relatives who had been able to leave China for Hong Kong to make the onward passage to the US. (Kwong 1997a: 28)

Opportunities for Fuzhounese outmigration expanded as China launched its economic reform program in the late 1970s and opened to overseas investment. Those with relatives in Hong Kong and Macau attempted to "visit" or to get temporary permission to work. If allowed out by the Chinese government they stayed, gradually bringing their family to join them. In turn, those in Hong Kong and Macau began to look for ways to relocate to New York, often overstaying tourist visas obtained in order to visit "relatives" in the US. At the same time overseas Fuzhounese networks were drawn into the establishment of the human smuggling enterprise.

By the mid 1980s a growing number of rural Fuzhounese were seeking to follow their compatriots to New York. News of economic opportunities, even for undocumented workers in the restaurant and garment industries, had reached Fuzhou and the flow of remittances from New York had begun to flow into home towns and villages. Some utilized family reunification clauses in the US immigration laws after their relative had attained legal status in the 1986 amnesty for illegal immigrants in the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Others utilized the growing number of human smuggling networks in the Fuzhou area to leave China for the US. Some traveled directly by air either from China or after exiting to Hong Kong. As the air routes became more carefully monitored, smugglers utilized sea routes, often to Mexico, where Fuzhounese immigrants and their snakeheads crossed the border alongside Central American immigrants and their "coyotes". Chinese smugglers continued to adapt their routes to best evade US government border control efforts, becoming ever more creative and brutal while charging ever increasing smuggling fees. The average smuggling fee in 1988 was $22,000 and by 1993 had increased to $30,000 (Chin 1999). Fuzhounese interviewed in this study reported paying fees in excess of $50,000 approaching $60,000 in late 2000. Undocumented immigrants are typically held by snakeheads upon arrival in the US until friends and family pay the full smuggling fee. Those unable to raise the funds may be beaten, their families in China may face extortion, or the unfortunate immigrant may be forced into service to the snakeheads in criminal activities or prostitution. (Kwong 1996, 1997a; Chin 1999)

Fuzhounese Emigration and the Chinese Diaspora

When asked to describe the Fuzhou area and Fujian Province, residents frequently reply,

Shan duo, Di shao. The mountains are plentiful, the land is sparse.

Di shao, Ren Duo. The land is sparse, the people are plentiful.

This reality, they then explain, lies at the root of the Fuzhounese tradition of outmigration. When population outstrips the land's ability to produce food or human and natural disasters strike, Fujianese people take to the sea. "Fuzhounese are very brave," I was often told. "They have been emigrating for thousands of years, trying to find better work and a better life." In the minds of the people of Fuzhou, their tens of thousands of compatriots in the New York area are but the latest wave of daring outmigrants leaving behind family and home to seek prosperity on another shore.

As we have seen, the current outmigration of rural Fuzhounese to New York, which is the source of members for the religious communities considered in this study, is only the latest chapter in the history of the Chinese diaspora. The history of the overseas Chinese has recently been popularized by Sterling Seagrave's Lord's of the Rim (1995). His stories of China's overland trade routes with the Middle East and Europe, Buddhist missionaries in the Americas before Columbus, an eight foot tall eunuch Admiral, Zheng He, and the establishment of overseas Chinese communities throughout Asia stir the imagination. The history of the overseas Chinese is long and complex as is the mythology surrounding it.

Over the past fifty years significant scholarly research has been conducted examining the experiences of overseas Chinese - most of whom have originated in China's southeast coastal provinces, Fujian, Guangdong, and Zhejiang - and focused on their relationship to the Asian economy, their relationship to the homeland China, and their role in China's economic development (Purcell 1965; Ch'en 1940; Skinner 1957; Watson 1975; Pan 1990; Ong and Nonini 1997; Wang 1991, 1998). Additional scholarly research has focused on China's emigrant communities. In his classic work, Emigrant Communities in South China: A Study of Overseas Migration and Its Influence on Standards of Living and Social Change, (1940), Ch'en Ta, focuses on the effects of outmigration on villages in southern Fujian and northern Guangdong Provinces. James Watson (1975) also turned his attention to an emigrant community, conducting a multi-sited research project examining

the Man lineage in the New Territories of northern Hong Kong and its migrant outposts among restaurant workers in London. Foreshadowing dynamics in Fuzhou's rural emigrant communities, Watson states,

> Until approximately fifteen years ago, San Tin was a traditional peasant community with an economy based on agriculture. By the early 1960's however, the villagers had ceased farming and San Tin was converted into an emigrant community with an economy almost totally dependent upon remittances. Eighty-five to ninety percent of San Tin's able-bodied men now work in Chinese restaurants scattered throughout the United Kingdom and other parts of Western Europe. (Watson 1975: 2.)

Today, more than twenty-eight million overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia play key roles in booming economies. Ethnic Chinese control significant segments of the economy in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia and Singapore, not to mention Taiwan.

> Though they make up little more than three percent of Indonesia's population of more than two hundred million, ethnic Chinese are the nation's trading class, from shopkeepers to billionaire managers of multinational conglomerates, and they control as much as seventy percent of Indonesia's private economy. They are also among the country's young and well-educated professionals, own many of its factories and form the backbone of the distribution network for food and other commodities. (Mydans, 1998.)

As overseas Chinese rapidly expand their investments in mainland China, the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia, scholars are beginning to pay careful attention to a network with US $2.5 trillion in economic activity in 1996, second only to the United States and ahead of Japan. (Kwong 1997b: 74)

One reason for the lavish attention paid to diasporic Chinese communities has been the inaccessibility of mainland China to western researchers between 1949 and the early 1980s. And while opportunities for study in the People's Republic of China have increased since the mid 1980s, attention to the Chinese diaspora has continued, though with a shift of focus to the overseas Chinese business elite as seen against the backdrop of the globalizing economy and shifting patterns of global migration. Perhaps the

predominant theoretical conceptualization of this period can be found in the writings of Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini in their book, Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism (1997). Here, Ong and Nonini declare the earlier scholarly framework inadequate for understanding contemporary realities of overseas Chinese. They suggest a new rubric, Chinese transnationalism, "a culturally distinctive domain within the strategies of accumulation of the new capitalism - both Chinese and non-Chinese - emerging over the last two decades in the Asia-Pacific region" (1997: 4). How do these discussions apply to the recent waves of Fuzhounese immigrants? Does the notion of transnationalism provide a useful framework for understanding the Fuzhounese religious communities considered in this study?

Ong and Nonini state that a fundamental goal of their work on Chinese transnationalism is "reconceptualizing the relationship between the study of Chinese identities and the place-bound theorization of a pre-global social science, implied in such terms as territory, region, nationality and ethnicity" (1997:5). They draw heavily on David Harvey's (1990) analysis of the transformation in the global economy from the Fordist models of production to post-Fordist "flexible accumulation." Driven by increased competition for profit, and facilitated by innovations in technical, financial and communications services, corporations have developed increasingly globalized and flexible strategies for lowering the cost of production. Significantly, since the early 1970s, corporations have shifted capital and production out of old industrial centers to newly industrializing countries such as Mexico, Taiwan, Korea and more recently coastal China, where labor costs are lower, local government regulation of labor and environmental conditions are more lax and taxes are low. According to Harvey, flexible accumulation

> rests on flexibility with respect to labor processes, labor markets, products and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets and above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organizational innovation. (1990: 147)

Within this new flexible global economic regime of late capitalism, factory ownership has shifted from the central corporation to contracting and subcontracting companies. The speed of all aspects of economic activity has increased dramatically and the importance of geographic space in determining mobility and flows of capital, goods, services and even labor has decreased, an effect which Harvey calls space-time compression.

The activities of today's transnational overseas Chinese, argue Ong and Nonini, must be viewed as a Chinese strategy of accumulation under this particular form of capitalism (1997:4). Seemingly following Castells (1996), they argue that the world is no longer made up of cores and peripheries, but is a "polycentric global capitalism" with "multiple nodes of geopolitical and economic power" (1997:14). Chinese transnationals are playing a pivotal, nodal role in the new flexible capitalism which has emerged in Asia-Pacific since the 1970s and creating new kinds of social organization in this changing environment.

Fuzhounese in Ong and Nonini's Framework

Ong and Nonini have come under intense criticism for their narrow focus on the transnationalism of Chinese elites and their failure to account for class stratification within the Chinese diaspora. Where do recent Fuzhounese immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, fit into Ong and Nonini's framework of Chinese transnationalism? Are they transnational Chinese? In their book's opening paragraph Ong and Nonini retell the highly publicized story of the Golden Venture which ran aground off Long Island with its cargo of 286 smuggled Chinese immigrants. But rather than focus on the lives of these immigrants, Ong and Nonini use this incident to reflect on the smugglers as Chinese business people functioning within a global capitalist framework. The Golden Venture incident illuminates for them "the global scope of many Chinese businesses, their historical roots in diaspora, their operational flexibility and spatial mobility, and their capacities to circumvent disciplining by nation-states" (1997: 3).

With this perspective, Ong and Nonini define these undocumented immigrants as Chinese transnationals by virtue of their having been acted upon by transnational forces, processes and flows, in particular a transnational Chinese smuggling syndicate. Their framework gives little consideration to the possibility of the immigrants themselves acting as transnational agents. For while undocumented Fuzhounese are affected by the global economy and transnational regimes of flexible accumulation, they are not only commodities transported by the smuggling networks. Fuzhounese choose to utilize these networks, to actively participate, to become migrants.

Undocumented Fuzhounese immigrants do not fit the model of Chinese transnationalism described by Ong and Nonini. Business people from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries, mainland economic and political elites as well as power brokers in smuggling networks do. Even some early Fuzhounese immigrants who have regularized their immigration status are moving beyond the isolation of the Chinatown economic enclave.

But the experiences of individual Fuzhounese and of the religious communities considered in this study suggest that even undocumented Fuzhounese, despite structural marginalization from many legal forms of transnational behavior, still seek out ways to be actively involved in their communities both in New York and Fuzhou. In their book Nations Unbound (1994) Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc pioneer the theoretical application of the concept of transnationalism. In one of their earliest formulations they write

> We define "transnationalism" as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships - familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political - span borders we call "transmigrants." An essential element of transnationalism is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies. (1994:7)

Are Fuzhounese "transnational" immigrants within this broader framework? Their remittances support family members and build family homes. They send money to build churches, temples and ancestral halls. They may not be able to travel back and forth between the US and China. Their legal status in the US and the Chinese governmental system may not allow them to participate politically in either place. But through social organizations such as religious communities and village and regional associations they do find means to participate across the Pacific. Through them they receive regular news from home. And through them they cooperate to channel funds into religious activities and community based development projects in China.

This transnational participation may have many motivations. Interviews suggest that one powerful consideration is the ability of these undocumented and marginalized struggling workers to create alternative patterns of citizenship both in the US and in China. Structurally marginalized from full citizen participation both in the United States and China, through their transnational activities, circumscribed as they may be, Fuzhounese immigrants attempt to negotiate alternative strategies for participation and survival against the rigors of New York's ethnic enclave.

Why They Leave

With economic opportunities expanding in the Fuzhou region over the past decade, why have so many Fuzhounese chosen to embark on this danger-filled and expensive journey to the uncertain conditions awaiting them in New York?

1. Fuzhounese leave to make money, more money than they can make at home. The expanding economic opportunities accompanying foreign investment and industrial growth of Fuzhou City in the 1990s have had limited impact on Fuzhou's rural areas. Incomes in rural areas or factory jobs, described earlier in this chapter, cannot compare to anticipated US earnings (Chin 1999:17).

2. As previously mentioned, rural workers migrating to Chinese cities in search of work are structurally disadvantaged by the restrictions of the household registration system

(Solinger 2000) and, in Fuzhou, an employment registration system limiting legal employment to city residents. Rural Fuzhounese may choose to be undocumented workers in America, rather than undocumented workers in a Chinese city.

3. By the mid 1980s remittances from Fuzhounese in New York were already transforming rural towns and villages. Beautiful four story homes were being built and ancestral halls reconstructed. With Fuzhou's urban and rural economic improvements still a number of years in the future, the lure of rapid economic advancement and the desire to maintain "face" (*mian zi*) or appearances within the community led fellow villagers to consider outmigration as a strategy. (Kwong 1997a)

4. Changes in US immigration laws, particularly the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 which granted amnesty to undocumented immigrants who could prove their arrival before 1982, coupled with executive orders by President George H. W. Bush in 1989 granting legal status to Chinese students in the US after the Tian An Men Square massacre and 1990 easing restrictions on applications for political asylum based on China's population control policies, allowed many early immigrants to legalize their status and bring family members to the US through the family reunification provisions of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Later immigrants claimed refugee status if apprehended after arrival in the US or waited for the next amnesty, assuming that each new US president would issue one just as Reagan and Bush had.

5. Rural Fuzhounese extended the time honored tradition of deploying family members beyond the local area as a means of family economic diversification, this time reaching beyond China and across the Pacific Ocean. In light of the political and economic upheaval of the previous era in China and the uncertain prospects for the future, outmigration seemed a rational strategy for economic enhancement.

6. The rapidly expanding human smuggling network made transportation to the US readily available. Snakeheads were and are still ubiquitous in the Fuzhou region. A ten or twenty percent downpayment on the total fee, which in early 2001 surpassed $60,000,

would begin you on your way to America. And, being good business people, snakeheads promoted their services with tales of Fuzhounese economic success in New York.

7. At the turn of the millennium the towns and villages east and southeast of Fuzhou are no longer poor. Remittances have continued to flood back into the Fuzhou area, invested particularly in housing construction and support of families. Beyond the creation of a limited number of service and construction industries, however, these remittances have had little substantive effect on the local economy. With few local opportunities for economic advancement and significant numbers of fellow villagers already in the US, younger generations have begun to see outmigration as an obvious career choice - almost an extension of the family business.

8. Perhaps the most significant factor in Fuzhounese immigration is the seductive and powerful pull of the US labor market. The demand of the US economy for low wage, low skilled workers, coupled with the US government's inconsistent enforcement of labor and immigration laws, draws Fuzhounese workers to New York. According to Kwong,

> ...the problem of illegal immigration, including Chinese immigration, can only be understood in the context of the underlying supply-and-demand principle enshrined in traditional US economics. In that sense, the illegal immigration problem is no different from our national drug problem, where all the traffic interdiction and supply eradication efforts in Latin America and Southeast Asia over the past twenty years have had little impact on US sales and consumption. Quite to the contrary, these efforts have had the paradoxical effect of making the traffic in illegal drugs more profitable and the criminal cartels that control it more sophisticated and menacing. Similarly, harsh immigration laws will only make illegal aliens more vulnerable to smugglers and employers, raise the costs of smuggling even higher, and force the smuggling syndicates to grow even more brutal and immune to government powers. (1997a: 7)

Tingjiang: Widow's Village

On June 20, 2000 fifty-eight Chinese died in the back of a sealed, refrigerated tomato truck traveling from Belgium to Dover, England. These immigrants, many from Tingjiang and neighboring areas were being smuggled from Fuzhou to England by a

Fuzhounese crime syndicate. They had been apprehended by the Belgium police in April but later released with an order to leave the country. Their Chinese smugglers had shepherded them through that legal tangle and eventually loaded them onto the truck and sent them on their way. Tragically, the refrigeration unit had been turned off and the occupants slowly suffocated. Only two survived.

Tingjiang is in many respects typical of the emigrant communities around Fuzhou. Local residents suggest that as many as 80% of the men between twenty and forty years of age have gone abroad in the past ten years, mostly to New York. Many of the young women have gone abroad as well. More are preparing to go at the next opportunity. Among the teenagers and children of Tingjiang, interviews revealed that some had not seen their father or mother for ten years. English academies have proliferated and are full of these young people preparing to go to America. One ancestral temple conducts daily English classes led by a Fuzhou university graduate. "Why are you studying English?" "To go to America!" they replied. "Why should I stay here?" one young woman asked. "My whole family - father, mother, older brother - are already in New York City. My grandparents will go later if they want to. I will leave soon. I want to make money too!"

On June 26, 2000 The New York Times published a callous article by Elizabeth Rosenthal about Tingjiang entitled "Chinese Town's Main Export: Its Young Men". Noting Tingjiang's nickname, "Widow's Village", given because all the young men have gone abroad to work, leaving their wives and families behind, Rosenthal states,

> But don't weep for Tingjiang. It is an unabashedly prosperous place, peppered with lavish multistory tile houses, some with elevators and pools. The kids wear Gap clothes. Cell phones are a standard accessory. And its widows are only widows in the Sunday football sense: Tingjiang's missing men are still very much alive - almost all working illegally in restaurants and on construction sites, thousands of miles away, in the United States.

Tingjiang in New York

The story of the Fuzhounese deaths in England and others like it reveal that the apparent prosperity of Fuzhounese emigrant communities masks a much more complex and discouraging reality for Fuzhounese immigrants. Not all of them are alive and not all of them are well. The passage to the US, or more recently to Europe, organized by international smuggling networks is often grueling and hazardous. And employment, once located is often long and arduous. New York's Chinatown is full of Fuzhounese looking for work which they often can only do for a limited duration because they cannot endure the physical hardship of sixteen hour days and seven day workweeks sleeping on the kitchen floor of a restaurant. The Lower East Side's tenement houses, built for earlier generations of European immigrants, are hazardously overcrowded. The pressure on bodies and minds can be extremely heavy.

While towns and villages like Tingjiang are filled with Nike tennis shoes, Gap T-shirts, and ubiquitous cell-phones, these superficial status symbols do not tell the story of economic disparity within the community, or the poverty, the family separation, the physical and mental illnesses of many. The current Fuzhounese migration may renew centuries old patterns of outmigration. But it is occurring in a new globalizing economic context and is intimately tied to an internationalizing labor market hungry for low wage, exploitable workers, which while having some similarities to the southeast Asian regional labor market of the late 19th and early 20th century, now extends to the other side of the world and is facilitated by a multi-billion dollar human smuggling industry.

Vulnerable undocumented Fuzhounese workers easily fall victim to demanding employers in Chinatown, many of whom are Chinese themselves. The analysis of Chinatown and its Fuzhounese immigrant population in the following chapter reveals the intense economic stratification and exploitation within the Chinese community as a whole and within the Fuzhounese community itself. This analysis will provide another central piece of the framework necessary to understand the workings of the religious communities considered later in this study.

Chapter 2

Chinatown and the Fuzhounese

On a clear cold day in Chinatown the steam escapes from garment sweatshops and rises from clouded windows up into the sky. Sunlight plays off the twin towers of the World Trade Center to the west, the City and Federal office buildings of Foley Square, and along East Broadway through the heart of Chinatown's new Fuzhounese neighborhood. As East Broadway, also known as Fuzhou Street, emerges from under the Brooklyn Bridge, Eldridge Street shoots directly north, its tenement buildings lining a path which frames the glistening Chrysler Building in the midtown Manhattan distance. At the southern end of Eldridge Street stand the employment agencies - called "introduction halls" in Chinese - where Fuzhounese go to check the want ads posted on big boards. A restaurant in Asheville, North Carolina paying $1,500 a month plus room and board. Another in Dallas, Texas. A construction site in midtown using non-union labor paying $1,000 for two weeks work. A garment shop in Brooklyn paying by the piece. A canning factory in Pennsylvania. Nearby a fleet of private vans offers to take passengers to the next city, Philadelphia, Boston or Washington. On the corner a crowd of young men and a few young women hang out smoking. Waiting for a job: the next step along this path to what they hope will be their American dream.

For most Fuzhounese immigrants, New York City's Manhattan Chinatown is their first stop in America. Here they connect with friends and family and home villagers. They find jobs. They eat Chinese food. They bunk in with fellow workers who fill the Lower

East Side tenements. They visit temples and churches to offer thanksgiving for safe passage from China. And they begin to piece together a strategy for finding their way through American society. Popular estimates among the Fuzhounese themselves claim 300,000 immigrants from the Fuzhou region now make their home in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut tri-state area. The Fukien (older transliteration of Fujian) American Association in New York City estimates that there are more than 150,000 new immigrants from Changle alone (Hood 1997: 91). These figures are difficult to corroborate. No comprehensive survey of the Fuzhounese community exists. Nor is it clear given the high number of undocumented workers among the population, that such broad based surveys would be accurate.

Chinatown exists in the American popular imagination as one of the signature sights of New York City, spoken of in the same breath with the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the Brooklyn Bridge, Wall Street, Central Park, Little Italy and the New York Yankees. The name, Chinatown, evokes images of crowded streets, curb side fish and vegetable markets, firecrackers on the Chinese New Year, cheap Chinese restaurants with whole roasted ducks dangling in the window, narrow alleyways, incomprehensible Chinese signs and sing-song Chinese language, mysterious gang violence, old ladies telling fortunes by the park and old men playing dominos and mahjong. Tourists from across the United States and around the world flock to Mott Street to buy Chinese trinkets and sample Chinese food. New Yorkers brave the throngs on Mulberry and Grand Streets to buy fresh vegetables, seafood and meat. Overwhelmed visitors crowd under the golden arches of the Canal Street or Bowery McDonalds, an oasis of

Americana in a sea of foreignness. These powerful stereotypes of Chinatown accentuate the exoticism of this ethnic enclave on New York's Lower East Side. They play upon the strongest Orientalist tendencies of American cultural discourse, reinforcing the notion of Chinatown's marginalized otherness and setting this area and its inscrutable people apart from the rest of New York City and even the rest of US culture.

These stereotypes tend to obsfucate and mystify the complex internal dynamics of Chinatown, dynamics which often pit Chinese against Chinese based on differences of regional origin, language, educational background, economic resources, political persuasion and legal status. The new Fuzhounese immigrants who labor in the restaurants, construction sites and thousands of garment factories run by Chinese in the area and across the country are the most vulnerable to this intense stratification. For while Chinatown is a gateway into America for most Fuzhounese and the beginning of their pursuit of the American dream, for many, Chinatown is also a trap, an ethnic enclave manufactured by the economic and political Chinatown elites to keep them isolated and thus vulnerable to labor exploitation.

This chapter interrogates the container term "Chinatown" in order to shed light on Fuzhounese life in this unique social and economic formation and upon the Fuzhounese religious communities which exist in it. It begins by placing recent Fuzhounese immigration against the background of Chinatown's history, and suggests a framework for understanding the stratification of the Fuzhounese community. Six life histories serve to further illuminate the Fuzhounese situation. The chapter concludes by examining the

dynamics of Chinatown in light of recent theoretical debates regarding US immigration and the role of ethnic enclaves in immigrant incorporation.

History of Chinatown

New York's Manhattan Chinatown began as an urban safe haven for Chinese seeking to escape the racism and violence directed against them by white Americans in the late 1800s. Chinese workers had been brought to the United States from southern China, mainly Canton Province (Guangdong), from the 1840s, first as agricultural workers, then as cheap labor "coolies" ("bitter labor" in Chinese) for large mining companies during the California gold rush and later to build the western spur of the transcontinental railroad through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. By 1875 there were 105,000 Chinese laborers in the West. The completion of the railroad in 1869 allowed for the first significant numbers of Chinese to move to America's eastern cities. Despite this rich history of contributions to building American society, antipathy toward the Chinese ran deep. They became targets of xenophobic politicians, journalists and working class mobs who branded them the "yellow peril" for taking jobs away from American citizens. They were humiliated, ostracized, and many were beaten and killed. In 1882 the US Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first and only US immigration law to ban immigration of people of a single nationality. (Kwong 1987, 1996)

Five Points, the area where Chinese began to settle in lower Manhattan, had long been an immigrant community, heavily populated by Irish in the 19th century. As the Irish moved out of the Five Points area in the late 1800s they were replaced by three new immigrant groups - not only the Chinese, but also the Italians, and the Jews. The Italians

were largely poor farmers from southern Italy. The Jews were escaping religious persecution in eastern Europe. The Chinese were fleeing anti-Chinese violence on America's west coast. By 1900 two thousand Chinese had settled in the area of Pell, Doyer and lower Mott Street. As in other major metropolitan areas, New York's Chinatown enabled Chinese immigrants, then about ninety percent men, to seek safety and support from compatriots from the same province, county, town and even family.

Chinatown began a steady expansion in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. By 1945 four thousand Chinese inhabited the area. The Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 were repealed in 1942 in recognition of China's participation on the side of the Allies during World War II. In addition, the US government granted citizenship to all those who had served in the US armed forces. By 1953 the Chinese population had expanded to 15,000 with thousands of new immigrants arriving annually, primarily refugees fleeing mainland China through Hong Kong.

New York's Chinatown grew more rapidly still after 1965 when the US government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act. The previous law gave preference to nationalities already represented in the US population, thereby ensuring continued strong immigration from Northern and Western Europe. The new law substituted a flat quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country, without regard to race and nationality and included special provisions for reunification of families. A total of 32,831 Chinese lived in New York City in 1960. That number grew to 238,919 by 1990. In Manhattan's Chinatown, the Chinese population grew from 11,578 in 1960 to 94,487 in 1990. (Lin 1998: 108) Though the 2000 census data was not available at the time of

writing, all indications are that, with the massive Fuzhounese immigration since 1990, the Chinese population of Manhattan has increased significantly.

Chinatown Today

Today Chinatown has expanded well beyond its early borders, pushing north through Little Italy, east through the Jewish settlements of the Lower East Side, and south into government housing projects and toward the Brooklyn Bridge. It is a densely populated area crowded with tenement housing, restaurants, stores, businesses, and community organizations of all varieties. Chatham Square stands as a symbolic crossroads of today's Chinatown. Located at the key intersection of Five Points, the area around Chatham Square has been known for nearly two hundred years as a central location for newly arrived and poor immigrants. From Chatham Square, Mott Street runs north through the heart of the original Chinatown section. Parallel to Mott, the Bowery conjures images of poor unemployed men and their flophouses and Christian missions. To the west Park Row runs directly toward City Hall and a concentration of Municipal and Federal Office Buildings including the US District Court House whose grand exterior stairs feature prominently in many US motion pictures. East Broadway runs eastward, anchoring the new Fuzhounese district.

Two statues stand in Chatham Square, constructed by competing political elites in Chinatown (discussed later in this chapter) and symbolically representing the stark political and cultural differences between Chinese immigrant generations. One, of Confucius, was erected in 1984 by earlier immigrants from Hong Kong, Canton and Taiwan. Its construction was organized by the Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Association and

largely paid for by the Taiwanese Nationalist government as a sign of respect for traditional Chinese culture which had been destroyed under the mainland Communist government, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. The second statue, constructed in 1997 by Fuzhounese individuals and civic associations at a cost of $200,000, is of Lin Ze Xu, the famous Chinese patriot from Fujian Province who led the Chinese resistance to the British importation of opium into the port of Canton (Guangzhou) in the 1840s. The Lin statue, two feet taller than the Confucius statue, stands facing East Broadway, the main Fuzhounese thoroughfare in Chinatown.

Chinatown and the Fuzhounese: Six Contemporary Immigrant Waves

Chapter 1 described the arrival of the earliest Fuzhounese immigrants in New York between 1940 and 1980. The Fuzhounese religious communities considered in this study, however, are comprised primarily of immigrants who have arrived since 1980, 82% since 1990 (Guest 2000, 2001). Interviews and surveys reveal that among this group there are several compressed waves or generations which comprise recent Fuzhounese immigration history.

Arrival	Characteristics	US Legal Status
1. Prior to mid-1980s	Residence outside China prior to arrival in US	Legalization under 1986 IRCA
2. mid-1980s to 1989	smuggled, rural, poor	Legalized in 1990 amnesty
3. to present	young, smuggled	No legal status
4. to present	both urban and rural, all ages	Legalized under 1965 INA family unification provisions
5. to present	children born & raised in US	Legal by birth in US
6. to present	children born in US, raised in China	Legal by birth in US

An analysis of these waves sheds light on the stratification within the larger Fuzhounese community and, as described in chapters 5 and 6, within religious communities as well. The articulation of these waves with the overall stratification of Chinatown will be examined later in this chapter.

The first contemporary wave of Fuzhounese began to arrive in the late 1970s and continued through the early 1980s. Many of them came to the US by way of an intermediate Fuzhounese community, most frequently Hong Kong, but also Macau and Singapore. Some of them arrived legally in the US. Most did not. Many arrived with enhanced financial and social capital. For instance, many came having learned Cantonese along their way, easing their transition into a Chinatown then, though no longer, heavily dominated by Cantonese speakers. Fortuitously for these immigrants, all were able to regularize their immigration status, either with a green card or citizenship as a result of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. In turn they were able to utilize family unification provisions of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act to bring immediate family members to the US as well, initiating a continuous chain of legal migration.

A second wave began to arrive in the mid 1980s through 1989. This group, whose passage was provided largely by smugglers, began to empty the smaller towns and villages outside Fuzhou. These immigrants were largely rural poor willing to take a risk to improve a difficult life. Those who arrived prior to 1990 legalized their status as a result of the amnesty for Chinese after the Tian An Men Square uprising and massacre. Like the previous wave, they too were able to legally pursue reunification with family members.

The third wave began in the 1990s and continues today. Increasingly, this is comprised of young immigrants who come to the US without legal documentation and by means of human smugglers. They arrive significantly indebted to the snakeheads and unless they have family connections who are willing to advance payment, remain indebted for years. Save for the limited number who successfully apply for political asylum, all remain undocumented, outside the mainstream, working in the informal economy. They are the most easily exploited segment of the Fuzhounese immigrant population.

A fourth wave of immigrants parallels the third in time sequence, spanning the 1990s. But this wave benefits from the legalization of their relatives in the 1980s amnesties. These immigrants are of all ages, including children, siblings and parents of earlier immigrants. They arrive with legal status and are able to engage the US society as such. This fourth wave, chronologically, is not monolithic but is comprised of two distinct segments. One segment includes relatives from Hong Kong or sometimes Macau or Singapore, reuniting with their family. These immigrants, particularly the young people, are urbanized and often well educated by the public school systems in those countries. They arrive with added advantages for survival and success in the US environment, including English and Cantonese language skills, advanced education or expectations of such, and a basic introduction to the skills needed in the urban economy. Most of these immigrants enter directly into the US educational system, either in high schools or colleges, particularly the City University and State University of New York systems.

The other segment of the fourth wave is also comprised of legal immigrants arriving by virtue of family reunification provisions of the immigration law, but from the

rural areas outside Fuzhou. These immigrants come with little preparation for success in the mainstream US economy, educationally or linguistically, having completed at most junior high school and speaking little English, if any and imprecise Mandarin. Despite their legal status, the older immigrants in this group, mostly parents of earlier immigrants, remain largely isolated in their family groupings. And despite their legal status, the young immigrants are often relegated to the ethnic enclave economy in Chinatown or its extension through the network of Chinese restaurants that criss-crosses the country.

A fifth wave of the Fuzhounese immigrant community is comprised of children born in the US who are growing up here. They are US educated and speak English as a first language. They grow up in distinctly Chinese homes, but they are the second generation, a transitional group which is also deeply steeped in US culture. Among the Fuzhounese, this group is small but growing, mostly under ten years of age.

A sixth wave, largely invisible to the public, if not to the Fuzhounese themselves, is made up of children born in the US but sent back to China as infants. As depicted in the story of Mr. Lu Jianguo later in this chapter, these children are often born to struggling Fuzhounese workers who came here illegally and remain without status. By virtue of their US birth, they are automatically citizens; although raised in China by grandparents or other family members, they carry US passports. Because of their parents' poverty and lack of US based support networks, however, they cannot be maintained in the US. Their future status and its affects on their parents will bear careful watching.

This categorization of immigrant generations and predicaments of the Fuzhounese community provides a framework for understanding the structural stratification of the

larger Fuzhounese population and, of particular concern to this study, the Fuzhounese religious communities of New York's Chinatown. The attributes described among Fuzhounese immigrants as a whole exist in parallel within the religious communities. And within the churches, differential access to power and authority often parallels the broader social and legal conditions of the membership.

Life Histories

The following life histories, gathered during the course of this study, reflect some of the diversity of experiences among Fuzhounese living in New York's Chinatown today and illustrate the marked stratification even within this most recent group of Chinese immigrants. Fuzhounese are rich and poor and in between. They are documented and undocumented. They are smuggled in. They have come through family reunification. Varied legal status, educational background, language ability, financial capital and social networks frame their ongoing struggles. These life histories capture both the logistics and the emotions of the immigrant journey and the New York immigrant life. Touching upon a number of the immigrant waves previously described, these stories disclose the pain and suffering as well as the hopes and dreams of these adventurous and often courageous sojourners in a strange land. They also reflect the inequality and differentiation that exists within the Fuzhounese community.

Mr. Liu Aizhu

Mr. Liu Aizhu is twenty-five years old. An only child, he grew up in Tingjiang, where his parents still live. In 1994 at the age of nineteen he decided to leave Tingjiang and travel to America. He arranged the journey with a local snakehead for $24,000,

payable upon safe arrival. Along with a group of young people from Tingjiang he traveled south by bus to a small town on the coast outside Guangzhou. where they were led onto a two thousand ton freighter commanded by Taiwanese smugglers. Altogether one hundred and sixty-five Fuzhounese from different towns and villages made the voyage. On the boat they slept on the hard wood floor and ate at most two bowls of white rice congee/gruel every day. Some days it was only one bowl. With so many people aboard they were forced to use ocean water to shower. The smell would wash away but, afterward the salt would stick to their skin and itch and itch and itch. They had already "jumped into the sea". There was no turning back.

After seventy-five days on the boat Mr. Liu and the others were transferred to a fishing vessel, where they passed one day and one night before reaching the shore of Mexico. One group at a time the human cargo was to be transferred ashore and led across the mountains into Los Angeles. But after the first group had been gone for awhile word came back that five of them had died along the way. They never found out why. The snakeheads became very agitated and moved the boat further off shore to wait. That night was very cold and stormy. The seas raged around them and water poured into the boat. The passengers, unprepared for the cold, huddled together, shivering in the bottom of the boat, awaiting calm seas and a chance to disembark on dry land and make their way on the final stretch of the journey to America.

I wasn't on very good terms with my family when I left Tingjiang. In fact, I hadn't told anyone in my family that I was leaving. When we finally arrived in Los Angeles the smugglers wanted their money. Twenty-

four thousand dollars. So I called home and told my family. My father couldn't believe it was me. He couldn't believe that I had already reached America. And he didn't really recognize my voice on the telephone. I think he thought it was a trick. So he asked the snakehead to let me get in touch with one of my cousins who was already in America so that they could see me and verify it was really me. But then the smugglers thought that I was trying to trick them. They told my father that they would kill me if they didn't get the money and then they hung up. They began to beat me. They beat me with copper piping. They beat me on my back, on my legs, and on my chest. I will have the scars the rest of my life. I was beaten unconscious and left lying bloody on the floor. The next time I called home, thank God, my father had already made arrangements for the money, borrowing from friends and family in China and the US. The plan was for my father to pay the snakeheads back in Tingjiang. But I could tell he still didn't trust them. I wasn't sure what was going to happen. That was a long night waiting to find out if he had actually paid. I was really scared. I didn't want to be beaten again. But he paid. After a week, the smugglers let me go.

I was young and I had finally made it to the "Land of Beauty" as we call America. I wanted to get to work. At the beginning I found a good job in a restaurant. I worked very hard. The boss liked me and even raised my pay.

But after several months I came down with a very serious illness that affected my legs. I still think it had something to do with the beating by the snakeheads. This was the beginning of my great hardship in America. I had difficulty standing for any length of time. The pain was too intense. I couldn't keep a job. For more than four years this went on. I saw doctor after doctor. Both Western and Chinese. But because I was illegal and I didn't have any money I didn't have many choices. I went to emergency rooms when it was really bad, but I was always afraid someone at the hospital would turn me in. I went to many different Chinese health clinics. They were illegal just like me. But nothing seemed to work. It was so bad I started to think about how to kill myself. If life was going to be this hard I couldn't keep it up. For a while the pain subsided and I was able to work again. The doctors told me not to, but I didn't really have a choice. I needed the money. But in March 1999 the pain came back. I couldn't stand up. It hurt to sit down, too. What was I going to do? I thought about going home to Tingjiang. But there was nothing for me there - not after five years away.

Miraculously in April 1999 I started to feel better, a little bit at a time. I think this was the work of God. I had been living next to a Fuzhounese church on Allen Street. The people there had been helping me, sometimes paying my medical bills, visiting me in the hospital, and praying for me. One day when the pain was so bad I didn't know what to

do I went to the church and prayed. I asked God what to do. I gave my life to Jesus. I think that's when things started to turn around. I've decided to stay in America. The pain still comes and goes. But it's bearable most of the time. I'm able to work again. At least for short stints. But I'm not as strong as I used to be. These jobs in the restaurants are so grueling I can usually only work for a week or two. Then I have to take time off to rest. At least I don't think about committing suicide anymore.

Ms. Chen Ru

My name is Chen Ru. I'm nineteen. My mother died when I was a little girl - seven days old actually. My father never was around much after that. He was always off gambling. I was basically an orphan. My paternal grandmother raised me in the countryside near Changle.

My father's sister came illegally to New York a number of years ago. She's still illegal but she has a very good restaurant up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. When I was younger she would send money back to support me and my grandmother. She's been trying to get me to come to America for several years.

Finally in 1999 I decided to come. I made arrangements with a snakehead in Changle. There are lots of them around - all looking for business. I agreed to pay him US$50,000. Within a week I was on my way with a fake US visa in my fake Chinese passport. I boarded the plane in

Fuzhou with two other girls from Changle. We changed planes in Shanghai. Our flight went to the Philippines where I waited for nearly a month. From the Philippines we flew to Los Angeles. I knew we would never make it through immigration so I hid in the women's bathroom in the airport. But late that night they found us. I was held in an INS detention center in Los Angeles for a month. I called the local snakehead in L.A. He worked with a lawyer to get me out on bail until my hearing. I'm not sure how they did that but these snakeheads have really good relationships with lawyers. Maybe they claimed political asylum or religious persecution.

As soon as I got out they put me on a plane for New York. I never showed up at the court in Los Angeles. The INS has never tracked me down.

My aunt, who is my father's younger sister, loaned me the US $50,000 to pay the smugglers. I worked in her restaurant in New York for a while and I lived in her little apartment. I started to go to the employment agencies in Chinatown to see what kind of work I could find. There are a lot of them all over Chinatown, but especially on East Broadway. Employers from all over the US post jobs, long term and short term, mostly in restaurants. I didn't want to be a burden on my aunt. And I needed to pay off her loan to me. So I took a job at a Chinese buffet restaurant advertised in Miami. They put me on a bus the next day. I

worked there for three months living in the back of the restaurant. The money was pretty good but I missed my aunt, so I came back to New York for a while. Now I'm working in another Chinese buffet restaurant in Washington, D.C. The owner is nice and we all live in an apartment next to the restaurant. I'm working hard. In three or four years I should be able to pay off the loan from my aunt. I know I'm not here legally. There's nothing I can do about that. But I do have to pay off this debt.

Chen Huibing

Mrs. Chen Huibing was born in Fuzhou City in 1945. Her family was relatively poor which turned out to be to their advantage during the political campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s as anyone considered to be of privileged class status was criticized and targeted for reform and reeducation. She worked as an elementary school teacher in China. She and her husband, who was born in 1936, were married in 1969 at the height of the Cultural Revolution.

My family had always been Buddhist in China. But there had been so much sickness for so long in my family and our prayers to the gods weren't working. When a neighbor woman told us about Jesus we began to pray to him and the illnesses went away. My mother was the first one in our family to become a Christian, in August of 1985. I became a Christian in 1986. We started a church in my mother's home. My husband and I lived there too. Every week people would come to pray and read the Bible. We registered it with the local religious and government

authorities. After that, once a week, the largest church nearby, Flower Lane Church, would send a sister to preach. I left Fuzhou in 1992 to come to America. Since then our house has been torn down as part of the urban renewal. But our church meeting has moved to the home of another sister.

I came legally to the US. My husband's older brother sponsored us. I came for my children. If we hadn't come, they wouldn't have been able to come. I work in a garment shop sewing clothing. The first shop I worked in was run by a Jewish man but he retired and moved away. The one I'm in now is run by a Chinese man from Canton. I make about six or seven hundred dollars a month, sometimes less. We work when the shop has an order. They call me at home and tell me to come in. Sometimes it's seven days a week, 12-14 hours a day. Sometimes its only three or four days a week. It's very unpredictable. It depends on the orders. I get paid by the piece for the sewing: six cents for each T-shirt, seven cents for a shirt with hood and zipper, nine cents for a shirt with five buttons, seven cents for a long dress and eight cents for pants with a zipper and two pockets.

My husband has been very ill the last couple of years and unable to work regularly. When he works we make over $1,000 a month. When he doesn't we rely on my salary alone. Our rent is $380 a month. We share a three bedroom apartment with two other families. Each family has

one bedroom. We share one living room, one kitchen and one bathroom. When my husband is not working our budget is very tight. We don't have any extra money to send home to support my mother or my daughter and family who are still in Fuzhou. They must take care of themselves.

My son came to the US last year. We had applied for a visa for him in 1992 but it took seven years. He works in a restaurant about twelve hours away from New York. We don't see him very much. He has a wife and two children back in Fuzhou. His youngest child, a son was born after he had arrived in America. He is very sad not to be able to see his little boy.

Jiang Ruxi

Ms. Jiang Ruxi was born in Fuzhou City in 1958 but she was sent by her family to live with her grandmother in a small village south of Changle near Guhuai to avoid the unrest of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Her parents are both professionals. Her mother was a doctor as was her mother before her. Her father is an architect and has built some well known buildings in the Fuzhou area, including a few of the new rural Catholic churches. Though she was raised Catholic, she has since converted to Protestantism.

Ms. Jiang finished high school in 1976 at the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution. Her parents arranged for her to go to Hong Kong to visit some relatives where she stayed and worked from 1978-1984. Her older brother soon followed and then went to work in Japan where he still lives with his wife and three kids.

In 1984 I came to New York as a tourist and just stayed after my visa expired. I was able to get my US citizenship after the amnesty in 1986. I've been working in garment shops since then. I live and work in the Chinese area in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. But I just do it to make money. I can make more here than in Fuzhou. With my US passport I can come and go when I feel like it. I try to visit my older brother in Japan once a year and usually the whole family gets together in Fuzhou once a year. I own a five story building in downtown Fuzhou that I rent out to a Japanese restaurant and a couple of businesses.

My younger brother rents the top floor for his business. He went to Japan in 1986 to go to college. Now he has an import/export business. A lot of Japanese want to invest in Fuzhou. It's a Special Economic Zone. Labor is cheap. And business conditions are pretty good. Whatever they want, my brother can arrange. He is even designing some Japanese restaurants in Fuzhou for Japanese investors.

Some people think all Chinese must be poor. But we're not. There are people in Fuzhou who make a good living. Especially people who have business with the Americans or Japanese. I have a friend who studied in Japan. Now he has two wives. One in Japan. One in Fuzhou. He met his Japanese wife when they were in college. We're all encouraging him to break up with the Japanese wife and settle down with the one in Fuzhou, especially now that she has a baby.

I like it in Fuzhou. It's my home. I like it here in America, too.

Ms. Li Bao-en

My name is Li Bao-en. I was born in Guhuai, a village south of Changle in 1950. My father was a sailor and left China in the 1950's when I was a little girl and went to Hong Kong to work. He sent money back to the family whenever he could.

My husband and I were married in 1971. He was from Changle, which was at the time a county seat. I moved there to be with him. Unfortunately being a village girl I couldn't legally move my official residence permit [hukou] to a town or county seat like Changle. It made it very difficult. And when our children were born they were given rural hu kous, not urban ones. Life became even more complicated trying to get them health care and education. Much of the time they lived with my mother in Guhuai.

We decided if we could get outside of China we could establish an overseas residency permit. First my husband applied to go to Hong Kong where my father was. He waited eight years with no success. Most of the time if you wanted to go out to Hong Kong you had to go through the back door, bribe someone, or have some personal connections in the government. We didn't have the right "guanxi" [connections]. Finally in 1980 he applied to go to Macau. Nobody wanted to go to Macau! The economic situation was pretty bad there, unlike Hong Kong. But in 1980

all you needed was a letter from a friend in Macau saying you were a relative and inviting you to come work. Within three months his application was accepted. He went first. I followed a couple of years later and the kids came several years after that. He worked on the dockyards at first doing hard labor as a coolie. He didn't make much money, but what he could save he sent back to us. He was trained as an electrician in China and he gradually moved into that work and construction too.

My husband got a visa to work in the US in 1991. Then he petitioned for me and the kids and we came in 1992. I never worked in Macau or in New York. He has always supported us. We have a nice house in Flushing, Queens, but I come into Chinatown often to shop and to do things at my church. My two kids have graduated from college now, one of them with a degree from City College. That's really important to us since neither one of us went beyond high school in China. We brought my mother out from Guhuai to live with us two years ago. She misses her friends but its easier for us to take care of her here. I send money back sometimes to help out people or groups that I care about, like my old church. But we don't plan to go back to live in China. There's nothing for us there now. We've both become US citizens. We're planning to stay. And the rest of our family, brothers and sisters and my husband's parents will probably come join us.

Mr. Lu Jianguo

My name is Lu Ahso. I'm thirty years old, married and have two children. I'm from Fuqi village on the southern bank of the Min River just as it opens into the Pacific Ocean. Fuqi used to have 4,000 people, but now two thousand are here in America. There aren't even enough people to work the farms. Now they're rented to outsiders from Sichuan Province [southwest China].

Fuqi is a pretty poor village on the side of a hill. There's not much farm land. Most of the income comes from fishing. My family was always very poor. I've been eating bitterness since I was born. If you don't have money people can't stand you. There were times when we didn't really have enough to eat. I only went to school until I was ten. We were so poor I had to go to work. I can read a little bit but not too much. There's no way we could make it better there. My older brother left in 1986 and was smuggled into America. He got his green card in the amnesty in 1989 after Tian An Men Square/June 4th. I came in 1992. I paid the smugglers twenty thousand dollars. I had to pay it off over time once I got here, plus a lot of interest. We spent sixty days on the boat coming. I'm not sure where we landed, because I don't speak any English. Maybe somewhere near Boston. Then the snakeheads brought us to New York.

My wife came over around the same time as I did. She was also smuggled in. She's not from my village. I'm not sure where she's from. I've never been there though I think it's nearby. I've never really been anywhere in China. We met here in New York and got married here. I couldn't have married in China. I was too poor. My wife is at home. She just gave birth. So she isn't working. I can't find any work right now either. We're living on our little bit of savings. She works in a garment factory. She's very brave and strong. She works until one or two o'clock every morning. Sixteen or eighteen hours a day. Most women do. She'll look after the baby for a while and then go back to work.

We live in a three bedroom apartment, three families, each with one room. We're all from Fuzhou. We have to take care of ourselves. Nobody looks after us. If you get sick there isn't anybody to help. Each family pays $400 a month for the apartment.

Maybe when my daughter grows up my wife and I can go back to China and my daughter can petition for us to come legally. I have two children. One here in New York. One in China. The one in China is one year old and is being raised by my wife's parents. I paid someone I knew $1,000 to take her back to China. That's the way it works usually. A woman I knew took her back. The baby had her own passport, so it was not a problem. She was born in the US, so she's a US citizen. We got her a passport. I took her to the airport. I don't think I had ever cried before.

But I did when I sent her back to China. Why? She was only seventy days old, (he cried) when I sent her back. But I don't have any money. I can't take care of her here. So many Fuzhounese are like this. To send a child away to grow up with grandparents in another country...its very bitter. We are all working too. And to have a baby in the apartment making so much noise would disturb everyone. And my wife needed to go back to work too. Two daughters, a baby here and a one year old in China. I haven't seen a picture in a long time. They say she has a bad temperament so they can't get a picture of her. I want her to come back to America, but I don't know when we'll be able to work it out.

Fuzhounese Differences; Wider Stratifications

The stories of Liu Aizhu, Chen Ru, Chen Huibing, Jiang Ruxi, Li Bao-en and Lu Jianguo clearly illustrate the complexity of the Fuzhounese community in New York. While the range of experiences includes some who have been quite successful, it also includes many individuals who are extremely desperate financially and emotionally. These marginalized individuals are central to making the Chinatown ethnic enclave function, but they exist on the edge of survival. For behind the steamy garment shop windows and bustling restaurants lies the stark reality of impoverishment and exploitation. These immigrants have come to America in search of economic stability for themselves and their families, but what many have found is grueling labor and an uncertain future. The remainder of this chapter will examine the differences among the Fuzhounese reflected in

the life histories within a broader pattern of stratification found in Chinatown and among Chinese immigrants as a whole.

Just as Fuzhounese immigrants comprise a variety of waves, so too does the larger Chinatown community, with immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, south Asia and many parts of mainland China. And Chinatown's stratification exists not only within these waves but between them. Kwong (1987, 1996) suggests the terms Uptown Chinese and Downtown Chinese to describe the Chinese community's internal differentiation along class lines. Uptown Chinese immigrate to the US with skills needed by the US economy. They may be students, business owners, or professionals. With these skills they are better able to integrate into US society and tend not to live in Chinatowns, though they may have businesses there. Downtown Chinese usually immigrate to the US to reunite with families, a possibility opened by the 1965 Immigrant and Nationality Act. While favoring professionals, the Act provides for 74% of new immigrant spaces to be reserved for family reunification. Downtown Chinese are often from less affluent circumstances and they tend to settle in US Chinatowns with their sponsoring relatives.

Stratification is an issue for all immigrant groups in America, not only the Chinese. Legal immigrants to the US include professionals, entrepreneurs, laborers, refugees and asylum seekers. And in recent years large numbers of undocumented workers have arrived, not only from China, but also from Mexico, Russia, Central America, the Caribbean, eastern Europe and even Ireland. Labor migrants, legal and undocumented, in search of menial and largely low paying jobs, have come to represent the majority of immigrants to the US. (Portes and Rumbaut 1990) The differences of legal status, social

and financial capital available to these immigrants means that immigrant communities with common national origins are not monolithic but, like the Chinese, are often distinguished by significant internal stratification.

Analyzing Ethnic Stratification: The Ethnic Enclave Model

In recent years scholars have formulated a number of frameworks for understanding inequality among various immigrant groups and the implications of this inequality for the economic formations in major cities and contemporary processes of immigrant incorporation. Of particular theoretical importance to this study of Fuzhounese immigrants in New York's Chinatown is the ground breaking work done by Portes and Bach (1985) and later Portes and Stepick (1993) on the development of an ethnic enclave among Cubans in Miami which they see as an emerging model for immigrant incorporation in today's global cities.

In *Latin Journey* (1985) Portes and Bach record a case study of a new ethnic formation in the Cuban community in Miami, a formation they call an "ethnic enclave". The history of Miami since the 1950s is a history of successive waves of immigration and the resulting impact on Miami politics, culture, and economics. The 1959 Cuban Revolution brought entire groups of privileged Cubans to Miami, fleeing the collectivization and nationalization underway in Castro's Cuba. A later wave of poorer refugees arrived from Cuba in the 1980 Mariel boatlift. (Portes and Stepick 1993; Card 1990)

Portes and Bach argue that the success of Miami's Cuban immigrants derives from the establishment of an ethnic enclave. Portes' notion of an ethnic enclave dates from his

earlier work and focuses on the advantages available to communities of immigrants who utilize human cultural capital. According to this definition, the enclave consists of

> immigrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organize a variety of enterprises serving their own ethnic market and /or the general population. Their basic characteristic is that a significant proportion of the immigrant work force works in enterprises owned by other immigrants. (1981:291)

In further developing the concept in *Latin Journey*, Portes and Bach argue that the two most essential and influential characteristics of enclaves are:

> (1) the presence of immigrants with sufficient capital, either brought from abroad or accumulated in the United States, to create new opportunities for economic growth, and (2) an extensive division of labor. (1985:203)

Portes and Bach suggest that this formulation usually occurs through two successive waves of immigration of the same group. First an entrepreneurial class is successfully transplanted from home to receiving country. This class grows. Its economic activities expand and diversify. When the second wave of immigrants arrives the entrepreneurial class can offer them opportunities virtually unavailable to immigrants entering other labor market sectors. Most scholars have long accepted the concept of "dual labor markets". In this formulation the primary labor market operates in the monopolistic industries where workers' jobs are high paid and secure. The secondary labor market is lodged largely in small competitive businesses, where jobs are low paid and insecure. Most immigrants and minorities of color tend to fall into the second situation. Portes and Bach's articulation of the ethnic enclave points to a possible third alternative. The enclave's economic structure, they argue, enables immigrants to achieve upward social mobility. Using culturally based social networks, language, common history and traditions, immigrants are able to find

better-paying jobs, more promotion opportunity and greater ability to use education and skills in the ethnic enclave than they are in the "dead end jobs" of the secondary labor market of the dominant economic structures.

Indeed, despite low wages in the enclave, workers stay in subordinate jobs in order to take advantage of "paths of mobility unavailable on the outside". (Portes and Bach 1985: 204) In Portes and Bach's scenario, as immigrant firms expand, so do openings for co-ethnics at the supervisory and managerial level as well as opportunities for ownership and self-employment. In this model the prosperity of the community is built on close-knit family and kinship networks, where both enclave entrepreneurs and workers are bound by and benefit from ethnic solidarity - mutual obligations, trust and loyalty - which constitutes a form of social capital absent beyond the enclave boundaries. Portes and Bach portray the Cuban enclave as a favorable alternative to the secondary labor market for new immigrants.

A New Immigrant Narrative

Urban ethnic neighborhoods are not new. But in presenting the ethnic enclave concept, Portes and Bach are offering a very different immigrant narrative than those of the past. Instead of seeing immigrant concentrations as a place of transition - a place to move away from in order to get better jobs and opportunities, they are suggesting a new and extremely optimistic possibility for the incorporation of new immigrants into the US economy. Cubans in the Miami enclave have jobs in the enclave itself. These jobs, suggest Portes and Bach, are in fact better paying jobs than those available outside in the secondary labor market. And because they are within the Cuban enclave, lack of English

language skills is not a barrier to employment. Cuban employers are able to retain motivated workers who are willing to work hard in order to have the opportunity to learn the trade themselves and advance within the firm as foremen and supervisors. Eventually they hope to utilize ethnic connections within the enclave to open up their own business and become self-employed. In this narrative Cuban immigrants can move from the status of humble immigrants without skills and without capital to achieve self-employment and ownership inside the enclave and accomplish this within one generation.

The ethnic enclave as described by Portes and Bach suggests new possibilities for today's immigrants and provides a framework for reconceptualizing notions of class, mobility and assimilation within immigrant communities. Finding jobs within the enclave, new immigrants presumably learn skills and receive on the job training. They may even be able to move up the ladder to self-employment without ever leaving the enclave. If true, this is indeed a new trajectory.

Applications of the Ethnic Enclave Model

The concept of the ethnic enclave is hard to generalize, as even Portes and Bach admit. (1985:38) In describing the Cuban ethnic enclave, they lay out several defining characteristics. The ethnic enclave is not an ethnic neighborhood. It is primarily focused on ethnic economic activity. The enclave has an entrepreneurial class possessing the capital necessary for the establishment of ethnic businesses. And the enclave has a diversity of employment arising from the growth of these businesses, which in turn offers opportunities for upward mobility both to supervisory and management positions and even to ownership and self-employment.

These are very unique conditions. Immigrants with professional and entrepreneurial skills, especially those with individual capital, have some degree of mobility in the mainstream American economy. They are often not willing to be stranded in an immigrant enclave to work and perhaps live along side the poor and unskilled. Secondly, to maintain the diversity of job opportunities that will allow participants in the ethnic enclave to achieve self-ownership and self-employment, firms cannot grow too large. In small communities, monopolies in any particular sector would severely inhibit options for self ownership and self-employment. All told, the scenario - in which immigrants with capital and entrepreneurial skills start businesses large enough to hire workers but not too large to monopolize the enclave - seems extremely rare.

Perhaps there are very few immigrant communities which would satisfy the criteria. In *Latin Journey*, Portes and Bach detail only two other examples, the Japanese and Jewish immigrant communities arriving in the US during the 1890-1914 period. Both are noted for their tightly knit communities that were not exclusively residential.

> They were instead economic enclaves, areas where a substantial proportion of immigrants were engaged in business activities and where a still larger proportion worked in firms owned by other immigrants.... For the entrepreneurially inclined, networks based on ethnic solidarity had clear economic potential. The community was 1) a source of labor, which could be made to work at lower wages; (2) a controlled market; and (3) a source of capital, through rotating credit associations and similar institutions. (1985:38)

Using these parameters, can the ethnic enclave model detailed by Portes and Bach in the Cuban community in Miami be generalized to other immigrant communities?

Min Zhou and John Logan (1989), later expanded in Zhou (1992), attempt to apply the ethnic enclave concept to New York's Chinatown. They define and analyze the

enclave in three ways, examining place of residence, place of work and industrial classification. They conduct a separate analysis of the labor market situation of immigrant women. Yet even in a study conducted in New York's Chinatown with its many similarities to Miami and conducted by a student of Portes, the findings produce mixed results. Zhou and Logan suggest that for Chinese immigrant men, labor market experience, education, and English language ability, or human capital, have the same positive effects on wage earnings within the enclave as they would outside of it. However, they find that "human capital returns for men are not greater within the enclave than outside." (1989: 819)

Zhou and Logan's analysis of women's experiences within the enclave further weakens the ethnic enclave hypothesis. Despite the increased importance of women in the Chinatown enclave economy, both as consumers and workers (primarily in the garment industry), the key predictors of women's earnings were hours logged and occupation, not human capital. They found a total absence of human capital effects and no measurable earnings returns on previous human capital. Why? Zhou and Logan identify certain status-based obstacles for women working within the enclave, including occupational segregation by gender, women forced to play triple roles as mother, wife and worker, and jobs requiring higher education consistently reserved for men. They conclude that Chinese cultural notions of male supremacy reinforce gender discrimination in the ethnic enclave. The authors suggest that further research must be conducted to determine "to what degree the positive functions of the enclave for men are derived from the subordinate position of women." (1989:818)

Though the quantitative findings for the success of the Chinese ethnic enclave are mixed in the 1989 study, in her book *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (1992), Min Zhou relies heavily on cultural explanations to make the case for the positive returns of participating in the enclave economy. Following Portes and Bach's notion of ethnic solidarity, Zhou argues that in Chinatown the "economic behavior of enclave participants is not purely self interested, nor is it based on strict calculation in dollars." The enclave benefits entrepreneurs who receive profits in large part from the low wages paid to labor, but in return also incur obligations to the workers. The enclave benefits the workers who, while "willingly exploited," are given opportunities for training in occupational skills which may improve future employment (1992: 14). Chinese immigrant laborers are willing to work for substandard wages, a fact Zhou attributes directly to three factors: a Chinese cultural work ethic, a positive comparison to poorer wages in China, and a willingness to make sacrifices in the short term in order to derive benefits in the future. In the case of Chinese women in the enclave Zhou argues "their behavior must be understood in the context of Chinese culture which gives priority not to individual achievement but to the welfare of the family and the community as a whole" (1992: 14). Zhou concludes that what women lose for themselves becomes a significant contribution to the family. Unfortunately her argument is weakened by the mixed results of her own research, noted earlier.

Ethnic Stratification and Globalization

Kwong does not see the Chinatown enclave as a successful channel for moving recent Chinese immigrants into the mainstream economy and society. The social capital of

community ties, kinship networks, and ethnic solidarity do not provide the uniformly positive benefits portrayed by Portes and Zhou. Nor does the enclave economy provide unique possibilities of upward mobility for recent immigrants.

> Chinese are attracted to Chinatown because of employment opportunities. However, job availability should not be confused with easy upward mobility, nor should it be seen as the result of ethnic solidarity. Employment in ethnic enclaves is the product of America's post-industrial economy in which American businesses have shifted their production to immigrant communities that provide cheap and unorganized labor. (1996: 203)

Kwong locates the reason for the emergence of Chinatown as an economic enclave squarely within the framework of the restructuring of the American economy within the globalizing world economy. The garment sweatshops, over-crowded tenement housing and vulnerable undocumented workers of Chinatown which exist in ironic juxtaposition to Wall Street and the World Trade Center must be understood within the global flows of capital, production, migration and labor that have developed over the past twenty-five years.

As described in chapter 1, beginning in the 1970s corporations developed flexible strategies for accumulation of profits based on the ability to locate anywhere in the world where optimal production, infrastructure, labor, marketing and political conditions existed, bypassing high production costs, labor militancy, and environmental concerns at home (Harvey 1990). At the same time, corporations attempting to manage this new decentralized global system established command centers - headquarters - in a limited number of cities with advanced communications, reliable infrastructure and a concentration of specialized support services such as accounting, legal, advertising,

computer services and management consulting. In her book, The Global City (1991), Saskia Sassen shows how, despite rapid deindustrialization, a few global cities like New York, London and Tokyo were able to recreate themselves as key hubs at the center of global and national economic networks. Recent research has examined the emergence of a second tier of global cities which may serve both global and national financial networks. These cities, like Los Angeles, Sydney, Hong Kong, Toronto, and Miami do not operate on the same scale as Tokyo, New York and London, but they serve similar functions within their context. (Sassen 2000)

Although reborn as global financial centers, cities like New York have a markedly vulnerable work force as a consequence of de-industrialization. Unions, in particular, have been weakened as industrial production has shifted off shore and union jobs eliminated. Workers have been faced with unemployment or a shift to low wage, low skill jobs in the service industry which has been expanding to support the global corporate command operations. In fact, economic restructuring has generated a large supply of jobs and casual labor markets that facilitate both the employment of disadvantaged foreign workers and a demand for specific high-level skills that can be met by workers from anywhere as long as they have the required education. In some cases, for instance the garment industry in New York, corporations confronted with rising production costs and labor strife at offshore sites take flexibility to the next stage by shifting some production back to metropolitan countries with closer access to markets and increasing pools of immigrant, refugee and non-unionized cheap labor (Waldinger 1989; Ong 1991).

The mobility of capital has contributed to the mobility of labor. In the third world economies of Asia, Central America and elsewhere, mixed production systems based on free trade zones, subcontracting firms and sweatshops have come to typify industrialization, exploiting women and child laborers in particular (Ong 1991). Rural workers, many forced off their land by the expansion of agro-business, have flooded third world cities in search of wage labor, creating a displaced, underemployed labor force, not easily absorbed by the growing but still relatively small highly capitalized sector of the local economy. This massive internal migration and dislocation, coupled with the pull of labor markets in core countries, has led to the global movement of tens of millions of immigrants. (Glick-Schiller, et al 1992; Basch, et al 1994) In effect, the international circulation of capital has led to the formation of international labor markets (Sassen-Koob 1983; Sassen 1988).

According to Kwong, Chinatown's enclave economy is not a system of mutual support, but in essence, a free enterprise zone operating within this system of flexible accumulation and exploiting disadvantaged Chinese immigrants. Chinatown industries operate six days a week, ten hours a day and pay as little as two dollars an hour, offering no benefits. Restaurant workers' pay is no better. And recent waves of illegal immigrants from Fuzhou have driven wages down further still. Chinatown's enclave economy is essentially unregulated and extremely exploitative.

This free enterprise zone is illegally operated and maintained by Chinatown's economic elite which doubles as an informal political structure, operating with the tacit approval of the outside governments at the city, state, and federal levels. Kwong (1987,

1996) traces the origins of Chinatown's traditional political elite to the informal kinship and political structures in rural China in the Qing Dynasty. Prior to emigration, these associations were established for protection, cooperative economic activity and adjudication of disputes. These associations, transplanted to the US, and transformed to fit the new realities, are at the root of Chinatown's economic structure and have come to form the core of Chinatown's political power. Because of Chinatown's position as an ethnic enclave within the larger US economy, these elites have established de facto rule of the community. Chinatown is under the direction of this elite, not of the government of the US, New York State, New York City or any group representing the outside American political system.

Kwong criticizes Zhou's notion of a Chinese "work ethic". Zhou argues that this work ethic, including values of discipline and hard work, allows recent immigrants to work for substandard wages and in sweatshops as part of their long term goal of becoming successful. Kwong responds that while these wages are comparatively higher than in mainland China, the working conditions in the Chinese free enterprise zones are so horrifying they should never be duplicated here. Further, many illegal immigrants would not choose to work for these wages or under these conditions but are forced to do so to pay off their debts to smugglers who brought them into the US.

The popular debate focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the ethnic enclave in enabling integration or non-integration, according to Kwong, distracts attention from key internal dynamics of the ethnic community and economy. For instance, by focusing on ethnic solidarity, as Zhou has done, scholars risk obsfucating the inherent class

contradictions of Chinatown. Without seeing the differentiation of the elites and working class, it is hard to understand the dynamics of Chinatown society.

Conclusion

The analysis of inequality and exploitation within the Fuzhounese community and the Chinatown enclave presented in this chapter provides another important piece of the framework for understanding the internal dynamics of the religious communities considered in later chapters. This study consistently shows the significant roles Fujianese religious communities play in the lives of their constituents. They are central points in the global flow of these migrant laborers and they are key actors in mitigating some of the harshest effects of Chinatown's ethnic enclave. But this study also shows that these Fuzhounese religious communities are deeply embedded in the enclave, in its inequalities and its stratification. For while they clearly serve to mitigate some of the harshness, they also reflect its differentiation and stratification in their own structures and activities.

The modern history of China also reveals that religion has frequently been an avenue for engaging issues of social inequality and stratification. As described in the following chpater, religion has been intimately tied to many of the social movement over the past two hundred years which have addressed the economic and political dislocations of their times. In some respects religion has almost been a language people can use to talk about their suffering, among other things, rising to the forefront at particular moments of history and connecting profoundly to certain historical processes. The following two chapters will examine the situation of religion in modern Chinese history as well as its particular formations in the Fuzhou area in order to provide a framework in which to

understand the theological and and political context from which New York's Fuzhounese religious communities have emerged and which still influence their institutional polity and practice today.

Chapter 3

Religion in Fuzhou: An Overview

A religious revival is sweeping Fuzhou and the entire Fujian Province. Beginning in 1979, religious practices have been reestablished and religious traditions reinvented, recovering from the devastating effects of the Cultural Revolution and returning religious activities to a prominent role in both urban and rural life. Buddhist temples, family ancestral halls, Daoist shrines, Protestant and Catholic churches are rising in cities, towns, villages, hillsides and rice paddies across the greater Fuzhou region. Economic liberalization has increased local discretionary expenditures, and overseas Chinese have flooded the area with funds, filling local temple and church coffers and revitalizing traditional cultural-religious practices such as village festivals, funeral and wedding ceremonies, grave building and sweeping, feng-shui (geomancy), and fortune telling. Although recent evidence suggests the pattern is spreading across China, this extraordinary renaissance of ritual activity has been most intense in southeastern China, particularly in Fujian, Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces (Pas 1989; Dean 1993, 1997, 1998; Yang 2000).

The Chinese government recognizes five official religions - Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. Local popular religious practice, which is the predominant expression in rural China, is still considered to be "feudal superstition". The state seeks to limit these practices by circumscribing legal religious activities within officially registered religious sites which must be aligned with one of the five recognized

religions. China's religious policies and their often inconsistent implementation continue to evolve in response to this rapidly shifting religious landscape. According to a Changle government official interviewed in early 2001,

> The development of religion in our area has far outpaced our government's ability to deal with it. For instance we now have 100,000 Christians in a total population of 680,000 in Changle. Ninety percent of them are Catholic, mostly meeting in unregistered locations. These are very high percentages in China. We are racing to keep up. So obviously we are going to make mistakes.

This chapter provides an overview of the religious diversity of the greater Fuzhou region and the religious revival currently underway. In addition it will attempt to provide a historical framework for understanding the ongoing deep conflict between religious organizations and the Chinese state which at first glance may be masked by the rapid expansion of religious organizations and practices in the contemporary period. As an example of the deep fault lines that continue to exist between the state and religion, the surprising emergence of Falun Gong onto the national Chinese stage in the late 1990s and the Chinese government's equally rapid moves to suppress it will be considered. This chapter, and the more specific discussion of Chinese Christianity in chapter 4, provide a context for understanding the intense political and theological dynamics which characterize Fuzhounese immigrant religious beliefs and infuse their religious communities in New York.

Sources of Religious Diversity in Fujian

The roots of Fuzhou and Fujian's religious diversity lie deep in the history of the province on the borderland of the Chinese empire. Throughout China's history, Fujian has been a place to which people have fled in times of famine, overpopulation, political

repression and military disruption. Each new wave of immigrants has brought with it spiritual practices, religious beliefs and particular deities which have been added to Fujian's richly textured religious fabric. As China has reopened to the outside world over the past twenty years, this fantastic religious diversity has been reinforced by overseas Chinese in Asia, particularly Taiwan and to a lesser extent Hong Kong, who originated in Fujian Province and left, often before 1949. These earlier emigrants have channeled significant resources into rebuilding ancestral halls, restoring graves and reconstructing temples, many of which were destroyed or severely damaged during China's Cultural Revolution (Lin Guoping 1993).

Since the 1990s, money has also been flowing back into the Fuzhou area from the tens of thousands of people working in the United States. Just as Fuzhou's overseas garment and restaurant workers remit hard earned savings to build new homes for children and aging parents, roads for the local village and shops for the local economy, so too they underwrite the building and rebuilding of religious edifices in their hometowns and support professional and lay religious practitioners and activities. It is quite common for Fuzhounese workers who have arrived safely in America to express their gratitude to the divine power which guided them to these shores by returning a portion of their earnings as an offering of thanksgiving (Langfitt 2000). Though many will not be present for ceremonies and rituals in their home communities they hope their gifts will enhance their good fortune as well as their status in the community.

Since 1980, the Chinese government has reinstated its constitutional provision of freedom of and freedom from religion. While applied unevenly across the country, the

gradual reimplementation of this fundamental policy has created a religious environment significantly more relaxed than the antagonism and repression in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. With the rapidly receding influence of official Marxist-state ideology, religion has raced into the vacuum to reclaim a central role in public discourse of ultimate meaning and values, a discourse ever more vibrant as the rapid pace of socio-economic change compels a reconsideration of what matters in life. Perhaps because of Fujian Province's history of distance from the central Chinese government, coupled with the emerging influence of Fuzhou's overseas Chinese population, the possibilities for religious activity in the Fuzhou area have been particularly expansive.

Fuzhou City's Religious Scene

In Fuzhou City, population nearing six million, religious practices are deeply woven into the social fabric and temples and churches are sprinkled broadly across the city. While large scale public rituals are discouraged by the local Religious Affairs Bureau and Public Security Administration (Dean 1997) religious activity is rapidly expanding in officially registered religious sites and in unregistered locations, such as in Christian house churches.

- The expansive Western Zen Buddhist Temple occupies prime real estate in the western section of the city of Fuzhou, its recent restoration funded by a wealthy adherent living in Singapore. The air is thick with incense and bundles of paper money immolated to appease ancestors and bring good luck to the worshiper.
- The spire of the Protestant Heavenly Peace Church, rebuilt with funds drawn largely from overseas Fuzhounese Methodists in Asia, rises on the hillside of the Cangshan

district of Fuzhou City just across the Liberation Bridge, its presence highlighted by a neon red cross.

Other religious sites are more humble in location and adornment, standing on quiet back streets or down narrow, winding *hutong*, Chinese alleys.

- In a tiny storefront where Mrs. Chen conducts her ceremonies, the faithful come to consult a local deity, the Heavenly Emperor Ye. Plied with tea and cigarettes, Ye possesses Mrs. Wang, a spirit medium, and through her entranced voice advises the petitioner on prospects for luck, wealth, male children and how to avoid misfortune.
- Behind a fast food restaurant on August 17 Road North, stands a thousand year old courtyard holding the city's only mosque. The Imam, recently arrived from Gansu, a distant western province of China, has been sent by the All-China Islamic Council to minister to Fuzhou's approximately two thousand Muslims, descendants of Muslim traders who called upon Fuzhou and Fujian Province's ports centuries ago. No one, save the Imam, comes to the mosque for prayers as most of the Hui minority population, as Muslims are described ethnically, continue only a few cultural traditions with little religious substance.
- On a narrow shelf high on the wall in her kitchen, Mrs. Wu keeps a small altar to the kitchen god and burns incense daily to ask for its protection. Her husband is a Protestant. Her mother is a devout Buddhist. Mrs. Wu walks a careful line to keep harmony in the household.
- Outside the officially registered Protestant and Catholic churches, many of Fuzhou's Christians gather in dozens of house churches which meet in the living rooms of the

faithful, unwilling to "cooperate" with Christians in the public churches, who are viewed as working closely with the Chinese government.

Mr. Dong's Buddhist Supply Store

In a small storefront in an old style two story wood structure on August 17 Road South in the heart of old Fuzhou, Mr. Dong operates a religious supply shop, one of many along that stretch of the road that support the ritual needs of the religious revival occurring in Fuzhou and in the surrounding towns and villages. Business is brisk. Mr. Dong's first customer of the morning runs a similar shop on the eastern edge of Fuzhou City at the foot of Drum Mountain where a large Buddhist temple complex and monastery are among Fuzhou's main tourist attractions. The customer buys thirty copper altar candlesticks wholesale for his shop, ties them precariously onto a board on the back of his motorcycle and speeds away. The next customer, from a village south of Fuzhou, buys a more varied selection of goods for a new ancestral hall that his family has constructed. Mr. Dong specializes in copper goods. His shop is full of copper candle sticks, incense bowls, and statues of the Buddha and the bodhisattva goddess GuanYin. But the store, like most of the religious supply shops that line both sides of the street, carries a wide variety of all the paraphernalia needed for Chinese Buddhist, Daoist and popular religious rituals. Candles, red wooden drums, paper money and incense fill the counters and shelves inside his dark and musty stall. Outside hang colored lanterns, lettered signs and even a few costumes for ritual performers.

Mr. Dong's father, born in 1915, had operated a religious supply store for many years until it was closed down at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. His

father reopened the store in 1989 and Mr. Dong left his job at a government run food supply company to work with him. He had been earning fifteen dollars a month plus subsidies for housing, health care and his daughter's education. Now his store, which after his father's death in 1997 he runs with his wife, clears about five hundred dollars a month after taxes and expenses. Four of his six siblings are in private business now; two of them - his youngest sister and oldest brother - are in religious supplies.

Mr. Dong, a Buddhist himself, goes to the local temple on the first and fifteenth day of every lunar month and on major holidays as is Buddhist custom. There he burns paper money, paper clothes and paper goods to honor and appease his ancestors, provide for them in the underworld, and ward off any ghosts who may endanger his own well being. Although the shop he owns supplies ritual goods to religious organizations and practitioners throughout Fuzhou and its surrounding towns and villages, Mr. Dong does not consider himself to be a religious specialist, either formally or informally. Religious professionals must formally register with one of the five local religious associations and with the government's Religious Affairs Bureau, but his only relationship to the government is as a private business owner. He is also skeptical about the claims of others to religious specialization.

> There are religious specialists around. They come to buy supplies at my store, from all over the area. But to be effective they must have a special connection to the Buddha or the Bodhisattva. To luck. To Fate. Not everyone can be one. Unfortunately, not all of them are legitimate. (1997)

Religion in the Greater Fuzhou Region

Outside Fuzhou City the religious landscape becomes even more complex and more intimately connected to the massive outmigration to the United States. Driving east along the northern bank of the Min River one passes town after town in which large visible new religious edifices have been constructed.

- In Tingjiang the Kang Zhuang Protestant Church has built a 500 seat sanctuary, a five floor dormitory, a kitchen that can prepare food for 1000 and an education building.
- Clearly visible across the river from Tingjiang to the south stands the Houyu Protestant Church newly constructed, vividly painted in yellow and prominently located on a steep hillside. Both of these congregations have relied on members in America to provide the financial support to construct the buildings and to support the lay workers who organize their programs.
- In Dongqi Village, a five minute car ride east of Tingjiang, the Huang family has rebuilt its ancestral hall, also relying on remittances from Huang family members in the United States. The building, with a beautifully decorated courtyard, serves as a family run and oriented community center. Older family members fill the back rooms playing mahjong. A classroom on another side of the courtyard is filled with fifteen teenagers studying English in preparation for going to America.
- Rising on a hill at the back of the next village to the east, Changan, the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving is a testimony to the successes of its members. Nonexistent ten years ago, this temple now climbs four stories against the hill in this nearly empty village, culminating in an altar to the Emperor of Heaven and a commanding view of the village below and the Min River to the south.

- In Fuqi Village, south of the Min River near Houyu, a new road is being built with funds from the Fuqi Village Temple, a sprawling mountainside complex including a seven story pagoda, constructed over the last thirteen years with remittances from Fuqi residents in New York. The temple's leader lives in New York and travels back to Fuqi once a year for special ritual ceremonies.
- Further south of the Min River and east of the newly classified city of Changle, the road to the new Fuzhou airport passes an eighty foot tall red brick gothic style Catholic church built illegally by an underground Catholic congregation relying on remittances from New York. The building was constructed in plain view from the highway and only blocks from the local police station. Today it stands empty, however, and its twin towers list sadly, days of dynamiting having nearly destroyed it in a government ordered crackdown against religious structures constructed in the area without proper building permits.
- In a town south of Changle, the official Protestant church, a concrete hulk with a two tiered sanctuary balcony and a four story education building, built largely with funds from overseas, is a short distance away from an unofficial house church and evangelist training center also supported by parishioners now in America. The training center was closed and its leaders dispersed after a vitriolic conflict between two leaders spilled over into the Protestant church and forced public security and government religious authorities to intervene. The Protestant church attracts slim congregations now on an average Sunday. The leaders of the training center quietly continue their work but from other locations.

Problematic State Definitions of Religion

The Chinese government has attempted to organize all legal religious activity under the rubric of the five officially recognized religions, each with its own national, provincial and local, quasi-independent, state authorized associations. Drawing upon European constructions of the notion of religion (Asad 1993) filtered through a Marxist lens, this formulation is extremely problematic. Catholicism and Protestantism, for instance, despite both being branches of Christianity, are classified as separate religions based on their particular histories in China. Both have grown rapidly in recent years, adding additional levels of complexity to their local and regional expressions which are not easily represented or managed by the state authorized associations. Islam likewise has a unique and complicated historical trajectory in China and a dynamic political and social role in contemporary events. Much has been written about the diversity of Chinese Muslims, particularly about the appropriateness of categorizing them as a single ethnic or religious group. (Gladney 1991; Dillon 1999) Buddhists and Daoists most likely outnumber the other religious groups, but their memberships have never been successfully estimated as a result of a lack of membership records and blurred distinctions between Buddhism and Daoism, not to mention their intimate integration with Chinese popular religion at the local level. For instance, while a local temple may legally register as either Buddhist or Daoist, its symbols and rituals most likely include elements of both and are intertwined with popular religious beliefs.

To attempt to understand religion in China, particularly the Buddhism/Daoism/ popular religion spectrum, as several distinct doctrinal systems is to impose Western

constructs of "religion" onto a significantly different set of circumstances. In reality these expressions cannot be categorized so neatly. China's religious landscape is and has been much too complex and the boundaries between Buddhism, Daoism and popular religious expression are fuzzy at best. A temple may include statues of the Buddha, the bodhisattva, Guan Yin, a local Daoist deity and even altars for family ancestors.

To a large degree, the state's religious categories are inadequate for descriptive or analytical purposes. The categories and the structures established for maintaining them do serve, however, as key tools in the state's system for defining what religious activities and beliefs are appropriate or inappropriate, legal or illegal, orthodox or heterodox. The remainder of this chapter will focus on this problem as it relates, specifically, to the interaction of Chinese Daoist, Buddhist and popular religious practices with the state.

Defining Religious Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

The distinction between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" in Chinese religious practice has been highly scrutinized by China scholars (Overmyer 1976; Naquin 1976; Jordan and Overmyer 1986; Madsen 2001) as a key analytical framework for understanding the relationship of religion and the state. *Zheng* (straight) or *zheng dao* (straight path) are Chinese terms that have been translated as "orthodoxy". *Xie* is most commonly rendered as "heterodoxy". The term *yi duan* or "heresy" is sometimes used within religious traditions as a less serious way to describe internal theological differences which lack external political ramifications. In the past, China's Confucian scholar-officials considered the *zheng dao* to be true Chinese culture and the many heterodox beliefs and practices to be impure deviations. Despite the changed political and religious dynamic of

post -1949 China, these hotly contested and negotiated terms are still deployed to demarcate acceptable and unacceptable religious beliefs and practices, not only in the eyes of the Chinese state and its officially sanctioned religious organizations, but also within religious traditions to draw distinctions between different theological, ritual or political stances. For example, Protestants consider Catholics to be *yi duan* because of their veneration of Mary. Underground Catholics consider Catholics in the open churches to be *xie* because they have renounced their primary allegiance to the Pope as a condition of their recognition by the Chinese state. Buddhists decry Falun Gong as *xie* to clearly distinguish themselves from this widespread practice which has been denounced by the government.

Heterodoxy as Threat to the State

Historically the Chinese state has viewed religion warily and has consistently attempted to absorb it into the religious hierarchy of the State Cult, headed by the emperor, coopting religious beliefs and practices into the state orthodoxy. This has not always been successful. Throughout China's history heterodox sects have challenged the authority of the state and the emperor's Mandate of Heaven, his cosmic/divine right to rule. For the purposes of this study it is interesting to note that heterodox religious activities in the contemporary era have significant historical antecedents. Several heterodox sects, often, though not exclusively drawn from folk-Buddhist traditions, generated significant peasant based and millenarian tendencies that threatened the social order of the Chinese state during the 19th century, a time of transformation in China because of the precipitous decline of the Qing Dynasty and the encroachment of European

imperialism. The traditional institutions of Chinese government failed to respond adequately to the changing elements of the economic, political and social environment. The Qing, of Manchu descent rather than the majority Han nationality, were viewed in certain circles as foreign usurpers of the kingdom and so were targets of attempts to overthrow the government. Famine and poverty were rampant in many parts of the country in the 19th century and when China's territorial integrity was compromised through a series of Unequal Treaties with western powers after the Opium War, the government's power and authority were further undermined. Over the course of the century the Qing position declined rapidly as a series of emperors were unsuccessful in confronting the deteriorating national situation.

An early example of these peasant based, millenarian movements was the Eight Trigrams rebellion in the fall of 1813. A loose network of religious sects, belonging to a three-hundred year old millenarian religion, sometimes called the White Lotus Sect, carried out simultaneous uprisings in several cities in north China, including Beijing. The primary deity of the Eight Trigrams was known as the Eternal and Venerable Mother.

> Like other folk-Buddhist sects that became popular during the Ming and Qing dynasties (and in some places in China remain popular to this day), the White Lotus was a salvation religion. Unlike Confucians, who thought that this world was basically good and could be improved by human effort as long as people underwent proper moral cultivation, folk-Buddhist sects believed that the world was hopelessly corrupt and could be saved only by supernatural intervention. (Madsen 2001)

The Eight Trigrams rebellion's leaders promised that the uprising was destined to bring about the fall of the Qing dynasty and usher in a new period of "endless blessings."

The rebels attempted to seize the Forbidden City in Beijing but were easily thwarted. Government troops quickly restored order in other cities , suppressing the unrest within a few months. The Eight Trigrams rebellion was only one of many uprisings undertaken by these sects during their three hundred years of history. In her book Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813, Susan Naquin notes,

> It is perhaps even more important that the Eight Trigrams uprising was typical of those regular outbursts of peasant protest that occurred in north China during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) and that were expressed through the organization of a religious sect and a millenarian ideology. The phenomenon of the religiously inspired peasant rebellion, although common in China during the Ch'ing has been neglected by Western historians. (Naquin 1975: 2)

Among the best known peasant based millenarian movements in 19th century, and perhaps the most deadly and protracted in Chinese history was the Taiping Tianguo, or Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace of 1851-1864. Founded by Hong Xiuquan, the sect started among the Hakka minority in a mountainous region of southwest China in the 1840s. Hong believed that God the Father had called him to save humankind and that Jesus was his Elder Brother. Hong had briefly encountered Christianity on a visit to Guangzhou through a series of missionary tracts which provided what he believed to be an explanation of a vision that had haunted him from an earlier mental illness. As a result, Hong became a militant evangelist for a moral life to serve the one true God. (Fairbank 1986; Spence 1990, 1996)

Hong's followers believed that God had ordered them to overthrow the current Qing dynasty and set up a new order of brotherhood and sisterhood among God's

children. With an army of 60,000 by 1851 the Taipings surged northward into central China capturing Wuhan. Continuing northward they made Nanjing their Heavenly Capital in 1853, slaughtering all the resident Manchus in the process as an act of purification and ethnic cleansing, showing that the foreign devils would be driven from China. The ensuing fifteen year civil war was tremendously destructive to life and property in China. Some estimates claim that as many as twenty million Chinese died (Spence 1990). More than six hundred cities changed hands, often with massacres.

At its height the Taiping government claimed control of nearly half of China. But absorbed in internal religious ritual, overextended by warfare and lacking trained administrators, the Taipings were unable to consolidate their rule, especially in the countryside. The local landed elite remained in place in most rural areas and as a result no significant social revolution occurred. By 1864 the Taiping's religious fervor and millenarian vision had faded and the original leadership was dead or impotent as a result of internecine warfare. After Hong's death in July, 1864, Qing troops stormed Nanjing and defeated the ill-directed and inept remnants of the Taiping government. According to Qing accounts, "Not one of the 100,000 rebels in Nanjing surrendered themselves when the city was taken but in many cases gathered together and burned themselves and passed away without repentance" (Spence 1990: 178).

Yet another 19th century peasant based millenarian revolutionary movement was the Boxer Uprising (1898-1901). Related, according to some scholars (Esherick 1987), to the White Lotus Sect, the Boxers focused on destroying the Western imperialists who were imposing their will on China and took particular aim at Christian converts and

Christian missionaries, calling for an end to the special privileges enjoyed by these groups under the terms of the Unequal Treaties.

The situation in the countryside of northern Shandong Province had continued to worsen in the late 19th century. Famine followed a period of disastrous floods and drought. Destitution was widespread. The foreign menace was seen as a root cause. By 1899 they had destroyed or confiscated large portions of property belonging to missionaries and Chinese Christians and had even killed several converts in the Shandong-Hebei border region. Participants were largely poor peasants who practiced a type of martial art from which they derived the name "Boxer". Their strength was based on a combination of this martial art and a form of spirit possession which they believed would bring them magic invulnerability. They would invoke one of the gods in their popular pantheon, enter a trance, be possessed by the god and rise up to dance and fight. The nationalistic Boxer movement spread from village to village in north China growing into a significant mass movement by 1900.

In June of 1900 the Boxers entered Beijing and Tianjin, killing Christians and looting. Hundreds of foreign civilians including diplomats, missionaries, and journalists were besieged in Beijing for eight weeks as the Boxers laid siege to the capital's foreign legation. The battle ended when an international Western army entered Beijing, quickly defeating the Boxers and forcing the empress dowager Cixi and her court, who had at the last minute thrown in their lot with the Boxers against the foreign imperialists, to relocate to the western Chinese city of Xi'an. The Boxer militia was quickly dispersed and the Boxer movement gutted. The Chinese government was forced to sign a surrender treaty

including indemnities for foreign losses and an expansion of foreign rights in China. (Fairbank 1986; Esherick 1987; Spence 1990)

Troubling Characteristics of Heterodox Sects

Madsen (2001) notes a number of characteristics of these heterodox sects which were particularly troubling to the Chinese state in the 19th century. They are characteristics which, as found in heterodox religious movements in China today, still concern the Chinese government and are at the root of its various efforts to circumscribe religious activities.

1. The millenarian sects focused on radical salvation. This was seen not only as intellectually wrong by Confucian scholar-officials but also as politically dangerous. If people truly believed the end of the era was imminent they might be inspired to revolt against the established social order.
2. Salvation was not just long term and spiritual, but also immediate and physical. The sects therefore attracted and held people through exorcisms, promises of the ability to perform superhuman feats through martial arts, and magical healing practices - especially through *qi gong*, an element of traditional medicine. The claims of these sects to be able to address concrete problems threatened the state's pre-eminent role in managing society.
3. As voluntary associations, these sects challenged the predominant social structure in which communities were based on kinship. Anyone could join these sects and immediately achieve equal standing through proper ritual behavior. All members could achieve salvation, regardless of family, lineage or village connections.

4. The voluntary associations extended beyond the normal geographic boundaries of local communities, building networks across long distances that had previously been monopolized by the state, and enabling popular communication and action on a translocal basis.
5. The membership of these millenarian sects was derived from a cross-section of Chinese society, drawing from all economic and social strata, a radical leveling practice in a highly hierarchized society.
6. These largely rural sects, often organizationally separated from religious specialists by great distances, relied heavily on lay leadership, another significant leveling factor. In addition, these lay leaders included many women, adding another egalitarian challenge to a society dominated by patriarchal structures and practices.

Falun Gong

The current conflict between the Chinese government and Falun Gong appears to be but the latest chapter in the ongoing saga of tension between the state and heterodox religious sects in China. On April 25, 1999, Falun Gong exploded into public view as 10,000 - 15,000 practitioners gathered quietly and unannounced in Beijing outside the central government offices to present a mass appeal requesting government acceptance of their practice. Publicly introduced in China in 1992 by Mr. Li Hongzhi, after seven years Falun Gong boasted 100 million followers, 39 general instruction offices, 1,900 ordinary instruction offices and 28,000 practice sites (Schechter 2000: 41).

Falun Gong, which can be translated "Practice of the Dharma Wheel" is a type of *qi gong*, a central element of traditional Chinese medicine. Like other forms of *qi gong*,

Falun Gong aims through meditation and exercise to place its practitioners in a proper relationship to the cosmic forces which circulate within the body and through the world. Practicing these exercises is believed to bring physical health and spiritual enlightenment.

In the movement's early days, Li Hongzhi, along with many other *qi gong* teachers/masters, was associated with the official China Qi Gong Research Society. Through it the Falun Dafa Research Society was established to provide a formal link for his teachings to the *qi gong* network. The Society allowed him to create training centers and contact locations to propagate his teachings. In 1994 a conflict arose between the Qi Gong Research Society and Li over the size of fees he should charge for his lectures and teachings. Refusing to raise his rates, Li left the society in 1995, placing himself outside the officially sanctioned network of practitioners.

Despite, or perhaps because of the movement's phenomenal growth since 1992 and the organizational effectiveness of its April 1999 demonstration, by the summer of 1999 the Chinese government branded it *xie jiao*, that is, heterodox, calling it an evil cult and declaring that it must be smashed for the safety of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people. In Fuzhou, 260 practitioners were arrested immediately after the banning. In the two years since, political study sessions have continued in schools and work units describing the heretical teachings of Falun Gong and warning of its dangers to personal well-being. In 2001 the national Religious Affairs Bureau will publish a book on Heretical Teachings and Unorthodox Practices, focusing on Falun Gong but including heretical teachings in other religious traditions as well. Official religious organizations are quickly following suit, attempting to define their legally recognized groups as orthodox in

distinction to heterodox groups like Falun Gong. The Fujian provincial Protestant organization, based in Fuzhou, has opened an "anti-heterodoxy office" to propagate to the grassroots the official understanding of Falun Gong and other unorthodox groups.

Madsen (2001) suggests that this tension between Falun Gong and the state reflects historic patterns. Folk-Buddhist sects, like Falun Gong, he argues, have often blended smoothly with ordinary folk piety, in this case melding into the widespread morning meditation activities and pervasive *qi gong* medical practices. But under some circumstances, reminds Madsen, whether because of crises of famine, poverty or government repression, these sects may rise up in massive rebellion. That "fluid changeability" has traditionally affected the Chinese government's response to these groups and continues to do so today. Despite Falun Gong's largely peaceful nature, the government mistrusts its ability to create alternative networks of power, communication and mobilization. It mistrusts Falun Gong's leveling tendencies in light of China's growing economic disparities. And it mistrusts Falun Gong's emphasis on salvation outside the officially sanctioned framework for resolving social problems. The Chinese state has consistently attempted to restrict such "heterodox" movements. It's severe attacks and political mobilization against Falun Gong are only the latest example. But in many cases the restrictions have only served to make it more likely that the apocalyptic dimensions of these sects may come to the fore.

Conclusion

The future development of Falun Gong and its relationship to the Chinese state remains to be seen. Despite a nearly two year campaign against it, Falun Gong shows no

signs of disappearing. Demonstrators from across China, many from rural areas, continue their almost daily displays in Beijing's Tian An Men Square, despite facing beatings, arrests and imprisonment. The recent self-immolation of Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing reveals the intensity of belief among many followers and the lengths to which some will go to resist the state's restrictions and pursue an alternative path to salvation. The rapid spread of the movement globally to dozens of nations and millions of people has only raised the stakes for the Chinese government, which now has identified Falun Gong with another grave danger, external interference in internal Chinese affairs.

Falun Gong is not widespread in the Fuzhou area. Nor is its manifestation in New York particularly relevant to the immigrant Chinese communities considered in this study. In fact, most of its US adherents are not Chinese. But Falun Gong is the most talked about religious movement in China today. For many Chinese it has taken on the role of helping people cope with the economic dislocations and political uncertainties of the present period, a role the state reserves exclusively for itself. Most significantly for the purposes of this ethnography, Falun Gong provides a salient contemporary example of relations between religion and the state in China, an example which illustrates many of the dynamics described in the succeeding pages.

The following chapter will focus a spotlight on Christianity in Fuzhou and extend the analytical framework of orthodoxy and heterodoxy to the tensions between Christian groups and the Chinese state and the tensions within Christian traditions themselves. In recent years many Christian partisans outside China have accused the Chinese Communists of persecution of its Christian population. The Falun Gong experience is a caution against

reading restrictions against Protestants and Catholics as anti-Christian or even anti-religious. The underlying challenge to the sovereignty and integrity of the Chinese state is of far more overarching concern, regardless of its sectarian origins. As we have seen, state resistance to heterodox sects is not new in China. The following chapter will explore the possibility that since 1949 the issue has not been Christianity per se, but the threat which salvific, separatist religious sects, particularly those with foreign connections, might pose to the stability and authority of the Chinese state.

Chapter 4

Religion in Fuzhou: Spotlight on Christianity

The religious revival sweeping Fuzhou extends to both Catholic and Protestant Christians. On its journey from Fuzhou to the ocean the Min River passes town after town with prominently displayed, newly constructed churches. To the southeast, the Changle area is dotted with towering new church buildings. Nationally, Protestants are estimated at over 10 million (though some outside partisans suggest numbers as high as 50 million) and Catholic membership is estimated at 4 million in registered churches and between 8-10 million in unregistered churches (Human Rights Watch 1997). The number of Christians continues to expand in the greater Fuzhou region. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Changle area alone is estimated to be home to 100,000 Christians, nearly fifteen percent of the total local population. Remittances from the faithful working in the United States are funding this explosion of new religious edifices and underwriting the massive expansion in religious activities. But relations between Christians and the government continue to be nettlesome as do relations within the Christian communities. These difficulties involve fundamental disagreements about the role of the state in regulating religion and painful divisions among believers with varying theological and political views.

This chapter focuses on post-1949 developments in Fuzhou with particular attention to the negotiation of Catholic and Protestant identity and institutional structure in relation to the state apparatus during the Communist era. In so doing, it analyzes the

reasons why the Chinese government continues to be wary of Christian churches and their potential for resistance and rebellion. Discussions of heterodoxy and orthodoxy, applied to Buddhism, Daoism and popular religion in the previous chapter, are here extended to include Protestants and Catholics. As this chapter reveals, outside China's urban areas Protestant and Catholic Christianity is relatively free form and volatile. It is largely lay led, egalitarian and millenarian, finding salvation outside the established social structure in much the same way as earlier heterodox sects in Chinese history (Madsen 2001). Its growing networks transgress established kin, village and regional boundaries and in many cases intentionally challenge the state's authority to control mobility and communication, not only within China, but with Christian groups beyond China's borders. Remittances and the regular transnational movement of overseas Fuzhounese, while encouraged by government authorities for their positive contributions in many areas of Chinese social life, complicate the government's efforts at control and regulation in the religious sphere.

Histories of specific Protestant communities presented in the latter half of the chapter serve two roles: first to expose the painful divisions which exist within the Protestant communities along political and theological lines; and second, to reveal the way in which these varying theological and political views lead to different strategies for negotiating the state imposed categories of heterodoxy and orthodoxy. The exploration of Christianity's complex expressions and conflicts in the greater Fuzhou region will provide essential background for understanding the highly conflictive dynamics of Fuzhounese Christian congregations being established in New York City.

Christianity in China, An Overview

Protestant missionaries first arrived in Fuzhou in the late 1840s following China's defeat in the Opium Wars and the signing of the Unequal Treaties in 1842. The Jesuit missionary Giulio Aleni had come to Fuzhou much earlier, in 1625, though his interaction was limited largely to the scholar elite of the time (Zurcher 1990). It was only with the 19th century work of the Spanish Dominican order that Catholicism began to take root among the Fuzhounese masses. Protestants and Catholics in Fuzhou and in China as a whole have followed two distinct trajectories and are considered to be two separate religions by constituents and government officials alike. This is only reinforced by linguistic differences resulting from the inability of early Protestant and Catholic missionaries to agree on common terms for fundamental Christian concepts. So, for instance, Catholicism is known as the Teachings of the Heavenly Lord (Tian Zhu Jiao), and Protestantism is known as the Teachings of Christ (Ji Du Jiao). One significant common characteristic of the two traditions is that since 1949 both have spawned groups which to varying degrees refuse to comply with state regulations, choose to operate independent of state authorized religious institutions, and often openly defy the state's requirements for orthodox, religious activities. Internal theological and political differences have in turn spawned debates within each tradition about purity and pollution.

A thorough review of the rich history of Protestants and Catholics prior to 1949, examined briefly in chapter 1 and touched upon in sections of this chapter, is beyond the scope of this project. Suffice it to say that despite the special privileges granted to missionaries by the series of 19th century unequal treaties, and despite the educational, economic and legal benefits of conversion, the growth of Christianity among the Chinese

population remained limited. Many Chinese viewed Christians as part and parcel of Western imperialism and as nationalistic resistance intensified, Christians were frequent targets. Christianity grew slowly in the Fuzhou area up to 1949, for the most part only among the educated classes (Dunch 1996).

The situation changed radically for Christians after the Communist Party's victory over the Nationalists in 1949. China expelled all foreigners, predicated on its fundamental nationalistic commitment to return sovereignty to the Chinese after more that one hundred years of Western imperialism. The post-1949 government moved expeditiously to expel missionaries, to nationalize church affiliated schools and hospitals, and sever all ties, financial and otherwise, between Chinese Christians and their institutions overseas. By the end of 1950 all Protestant and Catholic missionaries had left Fuzhou. Administration of the large network of schools, colleges and social service agencies (like the YMCA) had been taken over by the government. Christian churches were left to survive on their own.

The Communist Party also moved to establish "mass organizations" to bring disparate social entities into one "united front" for rebuilding China. Activities of all five recognized religions were consolidated under the auspices of the government's Religious Affairs Bureau in cooperation with the Communist Party's United Front Work Department. Over the next few years national associations were formed for each religion. The new Chinese constitution guaranteed freedom of religious expression, but under certain clear conditions. Principle among these was *aiguo, aijiao* or "love the country, love the church", a requirement that patriotism - building a socialist nation - be a central tenet of any legal religious organization. A second condition was self-sufficiency,

especially independence from foreign influence. The mass organizations served the functions of promoting these principles of the new orthodoxy, providing formal relationships between religious groups and state and Party structure, and encouraging the participation of Christians in society.

Catholics in Post-1949 Fuzhou

For Catholics the reorganization demanded in the 1950s created serious structural and ecclesiastical problems that continue to plague contemporary church-state relations. As participants in the Patriotic Association, Chinese Catholics were forced to renounce allegiance to the Pope and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. No longer, for instance, would the Vatican be allowed to appoint bishops for the churches in China. The Catholic Patriotic Association, working in close consultation with the Religious Affairs Bureau would assume that responsibility.

Not all Catholics were willing to accommodate to these new patterns. Complicating matters, the Vatican declared that all Catholics participating in the Patriotic Association would be excommunicated. Many Catholics, and Protestants as well, concluded that those Christians who participated in the government-promoted mass organizations had apostatized themselves and could no longer be trusted as true Christians. Catholics unwilling to participate in the officially recognized churches in many instances formed house churches outside the government network. As the Patriotic Association was being established at the local and regional levels, the government proceeded to imprison clergy and laity who refused to cooperate or who were considered to have allegiances outside China. As resistance continued, arrests and persecution increased. In Fuzhou, for instance, Bishop Zheng Changcheng, appointed by the Vatican

in 1951 to replace the departed missionary bishop, was arrested in 1955 and imprisoned for twenty-nine years, returning to Fuzhou only in 1984 after years of labor re-education on a farm in Jiangxi Province. He was then kept under house arrest until 1989 when at the age of 78 he was allowed to resume his leadership of Fuzhou's Catholics.

After its formal establishment in 1957, the national Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) denounced the Vatican and without the Vatican's authorization commenced the autonomous election and consecration of bishops. By 1962, forty-two bishops had been chosen and consecrated by bishops connected with the CCPA, including a replacement bishop for Fuzhou. From the point of view of the Vatican, these consecrations were "illicit" but "valid," a subtle theological distinction. Since the consecration rituals were carried out in the proper manner, the bishops were truly bishops; when they administered the sacraments, the sacraments truly conveyed God's grace. But since Rome had not approved their consecration, the bishops and their followers were acting disobediently.

> ...Under normal circumstances...a good Catholic should not attend a Mass or go to a confession conducted by one of these illicit bishops or anyone associated with them, have a marriage blessed by them or receive any of the other sacraments from them. Catholics who did would commit a mortal sin, and if they did not repent, they would go to hell. Whatever the mix of motives that led some priests and bishops to participate in the CCPA, most ordinary Catholics seemed to have shunned these collaborators. An underground Church grew up, consisting of congregations who risked punishment by meeting secretly with priests who had refused to cooperate with the Patriotic Association. (Madsen 1998: 38)

Protestants in Post - 1949 Fuzhou

The history of Fuzhou's Protestant community, and particularly its experience since 1949, is essential for understanding the complex political and theological dynamics which inform and differentiate New York's Fuzhounese Protestant churches. In 1949 there were six denominations in Fuzhou: Methodists, Anglicans, Church of Christ in China (of Congregationalist background), Seventh Day Adventists and two indigenous Chinese groups, the True Jesus Church and the Christian Assemblies (also commonly known as the Little Flock). A September 1950 national meeting in Beijing attended by four Protestant representatives from Fuzhou put in motion the establishment of the national Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement (self-government, self-support and self-propagation) and in the fall of 1950 a Fuzhou TSPM office was opened. These principles were a radical shift for many churches that had relied heavily on foreign financial support and personnel. Over the following years in Fuzhou a number of struggling congregations merged, consolidating activities within existing denominations. The Protestant TSPM was formally constituted during the First National Christian Conference in 1954. The national Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association was formalized in 1957 and local bodies organized across the country.

For Protestants in most of China, the reorganization proposed by the Chinese government and formalized at the national TSPM conference in 1958 required a relinquishing of denominational structures and institutional patterns and a merger of all Protestants under the TSPM banner. This was by no means a simple task. In 1949 there were close to one million Protestant in China, approximately one-half of one-percent of the total population. They were related to twenty-three major denominational groups,

representing both indigenous organizations and foreign mission boards. Including those working in Christian institutions, there were about ten thousand professional Chinese church workers and almost four thousand foreign missionaries. Shanghai, which had always been the center of Chinese Protestantism, had 141 places of worship in 1950. Throughout China there were 322 Protestant hospitals, more than 240 schools, 13 Christian colleges and 210 seminaries and Bible colleges. (Wickeri 1988: 117-118)

In an example of the uneven application of religious policy, even on major issues, and the relatively relaxed approach to religion by the Fuzhou City and Fujian Provincial authorities, after the 1958 national TSPM conference mandated unification of Protestant denominations, Fuzhou's churches never merged. Instead they retained their separate operations until 1966 when they all were shut down over the course of a month as the Red Guards launched the Cultural Revolution. According to the head of Fujian Province's TSPM at the time, "We were never asked by the government to merge so we never did." Each denomination maintained independent activities and organization. The Methodist denominational structure continued, for example, though some of its practices were altered by changing social policy. For instance, the Methodist practice of rotating ministers periodically among its churches was ended because the implementation of the *hu kou*, or household registration system, restricted people's ability to move from place to place. Until they were closed in 1966, the Methodist offices in Fuzhou were side by side with the offices of the TSPM.

Although the various denominations avoided consolidation under the TSPM in Fujian Province, their experiences were quite different. For example, cooperation

increased between the three largest denominations, commonly referred to as the *gong hui* - Methodist, Anglican and Church of Christ in China - under the auspices of the TSPM. But the three smaller denominations, each with its own distinct theology and church polity, resisted even limited cooperation.

Difficult Christians: The Little Flock

Not all was smooth sailing for Fuzhou's Protestants during the 1950s. The Little Flock encountered particular difficulties. Many of its leaders had openly supported the failed Nationalist cause in the civil war, fearing the atheist ideology of the Communist Party. Following the Communist victory in 1949 many of these leaders were targeted by the new government as counter-revolutionaries. When many within the Little Flock opposed the Communist's signature land reform campaign in 1950-51, the confrontation with the government escalated. Many Little Flock leaders and members were arrested and imprisoned, sentenced to varying terms of "re-education" to assist in their conversion to socialist principles.

The Little Flock was founded in Fuzhou in 1922 by Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng) as a completely indigenous and autonomous Chinese Christian movement. By 1949 it had grown to include over seven hundred congregations and meeting points with 70,000 members, primarily in China's coastal provinces, rivaling in size even the largest denominations introduced by missionaries. By 1949 the Little Flock, marked by an ardent nationalism and rejection of missionary influence, along with other indigenous sects and churches such as the True Jesus Church (founded 1917) and the Jesus Family Church (1921) accounted for fully twenty-five percent of all Chinese Protestants. (Wickeri 1988)

The Little Flock traces its theological and organizational origins to the Exclusive Brethren Movement in London, England. Ms. Margaret E. Barber (1869-1930), originally a missionary of the English Anglican Church, arrived in Fuzhou in 1899 where she taught in a mission school for seven years before returning home. In 1911 Barber, known locally as He Shou'en, returned to Fuzhou after being strongly influenced by the Exclusive Brethren. Along with her twenty year old niece, M. L. S. Ballord (Li Shouling), Barber established a Bible school and training center on the Min River southeast of Fuzhou where she had a profound influence on the early leaders of the Little Flock movement and on Christian communities throughout the area. (Guo 1997)

Watchmen Nee was born in Fuzhou in 1903, a third generation Christian from an Anglican family. As a student at the Anglican Trinity College high school in Fuzhou in 1919, Nee underwent a powerful conversion experience at a revival led by a Shanghai evangelist, Ms. Dora Yu. Nee followed Yu to Shanghai but returned to Fuzhou a year later. In 1922 Nee and the brothers Wang (Wang Zai and Wang Lianjun) were baptized in the Min River and launched the Little Flock movement, which spread rapidly in Fuzhou and the surrounding towns and villages. In 1923 Nee moved down the Min River to Ma'xian where he lived and studied the Bible with Barber and read extensively, including books by members of the Exclusive Brethren. (Kinnear 1973)

Nee's later teachings and the organizational form adopted by the early Little Flock reflected the insights gained through Barber and the Brethren. Nee argued persuasively for autonomous and independent local churches. He believed there should be only "one church in one locality" identified simply by its geographic location. Nee urged Christians

to return to the pure and simple forms of Christian living and fellowship evidenced in the New Testament's early Christian communities. He called Christians to a deep personal experience of salvation and rejected a professionalized clergy. On these principles, Nee railed against foreign mission activity and denominational hierarchies. He encouraged his followers to abandon the established denominational churches which he believed had become lukewarm in their faith and degenerate in their organizational structure. Entire congregations began to pull away from their mission denominations and the Little Flock expanded rapidly. As a result, the majority Protestant community often accused the Little Flock of sheep stealing.

In 1928 Nee relocated to Shanghai where he built a three thousand seat assembly hall in the heart of the city. Little Flock churches spread quickly from Fuzhou throughout Fujian Province, neighboring Zhejiang Province and inland from Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. A series of internal conflicts roiled the Little Flock as the number of churches grew and leaders attempted to coordinate work and assert doctrinal positions. In 1947, for instance, Nee declared that the Fuzhou Assembly would be known as the Little Flock's "Jerusalem", contradicting the principle of one church per locality in favor of creating a center for coordinating evangelistic work across China. Other Little Flock leaders strenuously resisted. Growth continued in the Communist period until Nee was arrested in 1952 and charged with a series of crimes against the state, culminating in public trials in 1956. Sentenced to fifteen years in prison, he died in a labor camp in 1972, a martyr for the faith in the eyes of his constituents.

Since 1979 Little Flock congregations, like those in Tingjiang and Houyu discussed later in this chapter, have re-emerged and continue to flourish, fueling much of the significant growth of Christianity in Fuzhou and rural areas of Zhejiang and other provinces. Yet many Little Flock members today still bear the scars of their confrontation with the government and the network of Little Flock churches carries its institutional memory. A fundamental distrust of the government was concretized and members withdrew further from contact with the TSPM-related churches and leaders. A network of home meeting points developed outside the sanction of the state and grew during the Cultural Revolution. Today that network has grown rapidly and extends throughout much of China. Church leaders in Fuzhou estimate that more than half of local Protestants may be related to the Little Flock. While some urban Little Flock churches have in recent years registered with the government as official religious sites, they have done so largely to reclaim former Little Flock church buildings and properties and to exact certain promises of protection from the government -- not in any hope of useful cooperation. Even these limited efforts at interaction with the religious and state authorities have provoked severe attacks within the Little Flock community. Drawing on their particular history of conflict with the state in the 1950s and the collective experience of Christians during the Cultural Revolution, the vast majority of Little Flock congregations in rural areas operate as house churches and remain fiercely independent of the state and antagonistic to its efforts to monitor and regulate them.

While the Little Flock is not organized beyond the local church as a denomination with a hierarchical structure, a clear network among congregations exists. Despite

government regulations prohibiting Christians from traveling from one locality to another to proselytize, Little Flock Christians regularly exchange visits with other congregations across China, sharing information, training local leaders and maintaining an extensive intra-congregation network. And despite government prohibitions against professional visits from Christians outside the mainland, it is not uncommon to find Christians affiliated with Hong Kong and Taiwan Little Flock groups visiting local Little Flock congregations, speaking and training especially in the areas of children's activities. It is worth noting that these international Christian networks are not unique to the Little Flock. Many Chinese Christian churches in the US regularly send delegations to Chinese house churches to preach, deliver religious educational material, and distribute financial assistance.

Difficult Christians: The Home of Grace

Another indigenous strand of Chinese Protestantism with deep roots in the Fuzhou area, the Home of Grace, has regularly fallen outside the state's definition of orthodoxy and run into conflict with religious and public security authorities. The Home of Grace bases its theology and practice on the teachings of the famous Fuzhounese evangelist John Sung (Song Shangjie: 1901-1944). After Sung's death, his followers spread out around China to establish training centers to continue Sung's unique methods of Bible study, his ardent call to repentance of sin, and his emphasis on daily devotional prayer. Mrs. Dong, who had studied with Sung during his final years of life in Beijing, established a center in Fuzhou city in 1945, quickly attracting many followers, including Mrs. He of the Changle area. After the Communist defeat of the Nationalists, Mrs. Dong and Mrs. He moved the Home of Grace to Changle and continued their work in the tradition of John Sung until,

unwilling to participate in the newly established Three-Self Patriotic Movement and charged with being counter-revolutionaries, they were stopped by the Communists during the 1950s.

John Sung was born into a poor family in a small village outside the town of Hinghua, four hundred miles south of Fuzhou. His father was a Methodist minister in this area heavily influence by American Methodist missionaries, a leader in the Methodist work which included churches, an orphanage, boys and girls high schools and Bible schools for men and women. Reportedly an impetuous and brilliant young man, by age thirteen John Sung was traveling with his father and preaching in the towns and villages of Fujian Province. Trained in the Methodist schools in Hinghua, he was encouraged by a woman missionary to attend Ohio Wesleyan University, a Methodist school in the United States. There he completed a bachelors degree, a masters of science and a Ph.D. in physics and chemistry between 1919 and 1926. In addition to being relentless in his studies and working full time to support himself, Sung also found time to engage in certain social causes of the time, including efforts to challenge racial discrimination in university policy and United States law through the OWU International Students Association.

Sung graduated with honors from OWU. Both the prestigious Yenjing University in Beijing, China and Harvard University offered him positions. But still unclear about his career path Sung accepted a scholarship to study religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York, home to many of the major figures in the "social gospel movement", for example, scholars such as Henry Sloan Coffin, Harry Emerson Fosdic, and Henry Van Deusen. The social gospel movement emphasized the Christian scriptures' call to a life

fully engaged in the social issues of the time. Sung immersed himself in his studies and his personal search, much as he did at OWU. His inquiries took him far afield from his mission church beginnings. At one point he translated the *Dao De Jing* into English and spent significant time exploring eastern religious texts and traditions. But he was not satisfied by these pursuits. In February, 1927, his biographer Leslie Lyalls (1964) reports, Sung had a spiritual awakening and returned to his early Christian roots which were sunk deeply in the soil of personal piety, prayer and Bible study. The next day he burned his class lecture notes and his theological books as "books of demons". He began to fervently call upon his fellow students and teachers to repent of their sins and return to the true God. Fosdick, then president of Union, fearing Sung was mentally destabilized from years of intensive study, convinced him to accept admittance to a sanitarium for psychopathic patients. There he stayed for six months, much of the time against his will, until finally being released under the condition that he would return immediately to China. That he did, throwing his American diplomas, medals, awards and fraternity keys into the sea as his ship approached the China coast.

In later years Sung would recall the six months in the sanitarium as having profoundly shaped his religious beliefs and practices. His mental hospital had become a theological college, he said. He read the Bible more than forty times beginning to end. With direct guidance from God, he developed his trademark form of Bible study. Called "turning the wheel" (*zhuan lunzi*) it calls for reading eleven chapters a day and is based on the theory that all the chapters of the old Testament find a counterpart in the chapters of the New Testament.

After returning to China, Sung devoted himself to itinerant revival preaching and became one of the foremost evangelists of his generation in China. His preaching style, which some have compared to the US evangelist Billy Sunday, was theatrical. Sung would dash from side to side on the stage, sweating profusely, sometimes jumping into the congregation to exhort his listeners, at times standing atop the communion rail to drive home his points. His message at revival meetings challenged his listeners to experience the life changing power of the Holy Spirit, to repent of their sinful ways, to engage in daily Bible study using his method and to practice fervent daily prayer. He placed an emphasis on family, home-based worship and suggested organizationally dividing village churches into groups of ten for mutual support. In the 1930s as war with Japan made evangelistic work in China more difficult, Sung made seven trips to south Asia to conduct revivals among overseas Chinese from Fujian and Guangdong. His stops included Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Borneo, Thailand and Vietnam where he was particularly welcomed by overseas Fujianese.

Sung's charismatic performances inspired audiences by their energy and vitality. In contrast, his daily adult life was beset by a series of physical ailments, ranging from boils to cholera to trachoma to heart problems. Suffering from a debilitatingly painful hip, his doctors sent Sung to Beijing's leading hospital for treatment in 1941. There he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and cancer. After surgery, he remained in Beijing, settling in the Western Hills, also known as the Fragrant Mountains to convalesce. In these last years of his life Sung realized that his peripatetic evangelism had not been enough. One night Sung dreamed that God warned him that he could not reach everyone by himself.

He would need to train others to spread the Word. And so in the Western Hills of Beijing he established the Home of Grace. His followers came from across China to study and train, some for short periods, others for long. They prayed, turned the wheel in Bible study and discussed the needs of the church in China.

After Sung's death in 1944 those who had been with him in Beijing spread out across the country to continue his work. But over the ensuing years many ran afoul of the new government and its religious policies. Among Sung's students and strongest supporters were many from well off industrialist families who sided with the Nationalist cause in the emerging civil war. For instance, Mrs. Dong, who launched the Fuzhou Home of Grace, was the wife of a high ranking Nationalist government official. As a result, following the Communist victory in 1949 they quickly came under close scrutiny as potential counter-revolutionaries. In addition, like many evangelical Protestants of the time, members of the Home of Grace distrusted the atheism espoused by the Communist Party. Their skepticism led to resistance of the Communist backed TSPM and refusal to cooperate with the efforts of the government's Religious Affairs Bureau.

According to one Home of Grace long time leader who as a teenager was with John Sung in Beijing,

> *By the early 1950s, after the Communists arrived, because of issues of purity, holiness and faithfulness we could not participate in the Communist's Three Self Movement. For this reason - faith- we kept separate and the Home of Grace was shut down. The significant leaders and workers were all arrested and imprisoned.*

In Fuzhou Mrs. Dong's student, Mrs. He, died in prison in 1969 after being in and out of detention for fifteen years on charges of being a counter-revolutionary. Her student, Sister Jiang, was incarcerated in 1975 for six years on similar charges and for conducting unauthorized religious services.

Though the work of the Home of Grace has resumed in a number of places in China, including Changle where a unique relationship existed with the TSPM in the 1980s and early 1990s, the scars of the earlier period barely mask the deep wounds of John Sung's followers. Skepticism of Home of Grace leaders toward the government and the TSPM is still palpable. According to one senior leader now in the US, interviewed in 2000,

> *Now some of our older leaders have come out of China after many years of imprisonment. Others are out of prison, but still in China. Our numbers in China are not few. But there is no formal/official work. Because of Three Self. Because of the Communist system there is no way to formally re-open the Home of Grace in China. There is no way to compromise with the Communists without loosing our faith. So our brothers and sisters have dispersed across China to continue the work of spreading our methods of Bible study and prayer that were developed on Xiang Shan outside Beijing and to help churches love God and study and follow God's own word in the Bible.*

Rev. Liu Yangfen and the Cultural Revolution

With the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, all public religious expressions whether Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Daoist or popular were terminated, whether they were manifested in officially registered churches and temples or not. Many religious leaders, clergy and lay, were targeted for persecution and reform. The story of Rev. Liu Yangfen, who plays a central role in the story of Fuzhounese Protestants in New York, serves as an example of the experiences of many Christians during this period. In 1946 Rev. Liu, a second generation Christian, was sent by the Methodist mission board in Fuzhou to Vanderbilt University, a Methodist school in Nashville, Tennessee, to study hospital administration. At the time, more than thirty mission hospitals in Fujian Province were intending to centralize their administration and coordinate their services. The boards sponsored Liu's training in hospital administration so that he could return to Fuzhou and head up the work. After returning to Fuzhou in 1948, Liu soon turned from hospital administration to pursue his sense of calling to the ministry, eventually serving as the senior pastor of the Flower Lane Church in downtown Fuzhou until it was closed in 1966. During the Cultural Revolution Liu came under constant criticism as a counter-revolutionary for his connection to the foreign missionaries and his studies abroad, not to mention his commitment to Protestant Christianity. One night a group of young people, Red Guards, ransacked the library at the Flower Lane church, piling all the church's books as well as Liu's in the courtyard and setting them ablaze. Liu, donning a dunce cap was forced to kneel in front of the fire until the hair on his head and face was singed off. Later he was sent to the mountains in northwest Fujian for labor re-education. There he worked with rural farmers, serving as their "barefoot" doctor. Only in 1979 was he "rehabilitated"

- released from his term of re-education - and allowed to return to Fuzhou to reopen Flower Lane Church.

From 1979 to 1985 Liu worked tirelessly to reopen churches throughout the Fuzhou area, restarting the provincial seminary in Flower Lane Church and traveling widely in the area to assist churches in reclaiming buildings from the government and training new leaders for their congregations. In 1985, Liu left Fuzhou. His daughter, born in Nashville during his student days, had been able to leave Fuzhou via Hong Kong in the late 1970s and establish citizenship in the United States. Liu followed her to New York where in recent years he has been a central figure in the emergence of both Fuzhounese Protestant congregations discussed in chapter 6. His spiritual biography has had a particularly sanctifying effect, which has proven to be a key to his ability to bridge the theological chasms that have been transplanted from Fuzhou to New York, particularly the differences between Little Flock Christians and other Protestants.

Despite the intense persecution of religion during the Cultural Revolution, interviews confirm that religious belief and expression did not cease; they simply went underground. During these years when public worship in churches was precluded, house churches grew rapidly. Protestants and Catholics gathered secretly in darkened living rooms for prayer and Bible study. Without access to clergy or formal institutions, local lay Christians quietly organized themselves to continue their ritual practices. Today many Chinese Christians look back on those years of suffering as a time of tremendous spiritual and numerical growth, as molten steel is forged in a crucible.

Post-1979 Revival

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Communist Party Congress, held in December, 1978, restored China's policy of freedom of religious belief after more than twelve years of suppression. This party congress, which also launched Deng Xiaoping's economic reform program, began the process of condemning "leftist errors" made during the Cultural Revolution, including that era's total repudiation of the Chinese Communist Party's "correct religious policy" (MacInnis 1989:3). Restrictions on religious practice began to relax almost immediately, though the process was gradual as religious believers and government officials began to experiment with the new policies. By the end of 1979, thirteen Protestant churches had reopened in China. Four of them were in Fujian Province, including the first one in Xiamen in August of that year. In October, 1979, Rev. Liu's Flower Lane church became the first church to reopen in Fuzhou. With only one building open, all of Fuzhou's denominations worshipped there for a period of time, though many of them held separate services to preserve their distinctive theology and practice. Starting in the late 1970s, many who had been imprisoned or sent to rural areas for labor reeducation were released from prison and returned to their homes. Catholic Bishop Zheng Changcheng of Fuzhou, an ardent Vatican loyalist, was released after twenty-nine years. Church properties confiscated and occupied for other uses were gradually returned to religious organizations, often with financial compensation for damages done or time occupied. In Fuzhou, as in the rest of China, Protestant denominations retained their particular ritual and organizational characteristics but ceased to formally identify themselves as such, falling instead under the institutional umbrella of the TSPM. The Fujian Provincial Protestant Seminary was reopened, first at Flower Lane

Church and later on its original campus. Churches, both Protestant and Catholic began to fill with parishioners beyond their seating capacities, spilling into outdoor courtyards and into neighboring streets.

After 1979 the state began the arduous process of reestablishing the religious and political infrastructure to administer the large network of religious organizations and activities that was beginning to emerge. A new national constitution, adopted by the Chinese Communist Party in 1982, included Article 36 on religious freedom. Document 19, "the most definitive statement of religion and religious policy ever issued by the Chinese Communist Party" (MacInnis 1989:2) was circulated that same year to party and state cadres across the country and to the various levels of the Religious Affairs Bureau. These policy statements established the legal foundation for a period of religious tolerance that continues to this day. The new religious policies seemed driven by a realization that with the launching of economic reform and opening, restrictions on religion of the earlier era could not continue. Attempts to completely and strictly control or eliminate religion would only drive it further underground.

Registration of Religious Organizations and Sites

Christianity grew rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s. Protestants, for instance, reported opening one new church every day in China over the period. In Fujian Province, by early 2001 there were 1,500 registered churches and another 2,500 official meeting points. But just as reforms made local economic and social events less manageable for the Chinese government, so too the rapid growth of religious groups made it more difficult to monitor and administer the religious scene, particularly its explosion of church, temple and

ancestral hall construction. Beginning in the late 1980s and culminating in 1994, the state implemented a series of policies requiring the registration and approval of all religious organizations and sites. In order to qualify for registration, religious groups, regardless of their faith tradition, were required to meet several conditions.

1. There must be a designated meeting site.
2. There must be a clearly designated leader or leadership team.
3. There must be a committee to provide financial oversight.
4. There must be an adequate number of participants to maintain the group

The implementation of this policy has been extremely controversial, both within China and abroad. Both Protestants and Catholics have significant numbers of members who on political and theological grounds refuse to cooperate to varying degrees with the state sanctioned religious structures. Over the past twenty years, observers outside and inside China often use the terminology of "open church" and "underground church" to distinguish Protestants and Catholics who cooperate with the government and those who resist cooperation and control. In reality the dichotomy is not so clear. There is in fact a continuum of opinions and expressions. In addition, the implementation of state religious policy is not monolithic. Rather it tends to be mediated by church-state relations in each locality.

The new registration system places additional pressure on Christians to comply with government policies and guidelines or risk falling outside the state's legal framework. But significant diversity exists among both the registered and unregistered groups.

- Not all "house churches" are "underground". Registered congregations may meet in church buildings or in house meetings. Registered house meetings are usually associated with a nearby church and are physically clustered around it. Their activities and leadership are determined by that "mother" church.
- Registered congregations may participate fully in the state authorized religious structures such as the Protestant TSPM or the Catholic Patriotic Association or they may participate infrequently, only as required, or only as necessary to protect their own interests.

Diversity also exists among unregistered congregations, particularly in their relationship to the state religious and security apparatus.

- Some operate openly, with full knowledge and tacit approval of the local Religious Affairs Bureau or the Public Security Administration officials. They encounter interference only when issues of public safety or public nuisance arise, for instance when too many people attend activities or the activities become too noisy and neighbors complain.
- Some unregistered congregations operate more quietly, seeking to avoid state management and interference or engagement of any kind with the state apparatus.
- Some unregistered congregations operate in direct conflict with and open defiance of the state, resisting state mandates and conducting activities clandestinely to avoid arrest and detention.

While government officials argue that registration serves to protect the Chinese people from unscrupulous religious leaders and con men, many Christians see the

regulations as a framework for cracking down on religious groups out of favor with the government.

> By enshrining the administrative mechanism of registration in the spate of religious laws passed since the late 1980s, the Chinese state has provided itself the legal means to suppress unregistered Protestant activities while simultaneously insisting to the world that "no-one in China is punished because of his or her religious belief" - only for breaking the law. (Dunch 2001: 196)

In essence the regulations on registration of religious organizations and locations define heresy in political rather than doctrinal terms. Religious activities outside the registration system are most likely not orthodox in the eyes of the state. And so the registration system provides a powerful tool for the government as it continues its attempts to enforce a sense of order vis a vis potential chaos and promote its ideas of orthodoxy over heterodoxy.

Catholics, the Vatican and the Chinese State

Relations between China's Catholics and the state have been particularly vitriolic in recent years. Contestation of authority to consecrate bishops and clergy is one example. The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continues to do so without approval from the Vatican. The Vatican in turn secretly designates and ordains bishops in China, some of whom travel quietly to Hong Kong for the ceremonies. The result in much of China is parallel Catholic structures. In Changle the number of underground Catholics, priests and churches far surpasses those related to the Patriotic Association. Each group has its own bishop. And while members of the two sides may know each other, they do not cooperate. In fact levels of animosity and distrust run high, particularly between the unregistered churches and the Patriotic Association churches.

In the 1990s the unregistered congregations have become more confrontational, challenging government restrictions on construction of new churches and on public displays of piety. In the Fuzhou area, and in many places across China, a great number of churches, both Protestant and Catholic, have been newly erected without government authorization. Many of these in the Changle area have been built relying heavily on remittances from members working in the United States. All have been built in plain view of local government authorities. In the rural areas around Changle, Catholics - sometimes thousands strong - conduct open air worship and baptisms, often in the middle of the night, despite government prohibition. But as unregistered congregations across China have become more aggressive, the Chinese government has become more repressive. Catholic priests and bishops are frequently detained and sometimes tortured (Human Rights Watch 1997). Recent reports from Changle County (Langfitt 2000) confirm that nearly twenty "underground" Catholic churches, built without government permission, were demolished by the authorities in 1999 alone. While some reports suggest that this may be part of a larger government effort to curb the illegal construction of religious edifices, many Catholics see it as a direct expression of the state's efforts to repress Catholicism in China. And although the Vatican and the Chinese government have engaged recently in secret negotiations to normalize relations, there has been no agreement on the Vatican's desire to reestablish its hierarchical control over Chinese Catholic institutions. (Madsen 2001)

Three Instances of Protestant Proliferation in the Greater Fuzhou Region

As we have seen in the two previous chapters, Fuzhou City and its surrounding towns and villages are home to a rich diversity of religious expression. The remainder of this chapter will focus on three instances of Protestant proliferation found in the areas from which the majority of Fuzhounese have emigrated. These stories reflect both the dramatic effects of economic, political, and religious reforms since 1979 and also the effects of recent infusions of remittances from Fuzhounese immigrants in the United States. Three strands of Protestantism are portrayed in these instances - TSPM related, Little Flock and the Home of Grace, all of which are heavily represented in New York's Fuzhounese churches. The following descriptions illuminate the origins of theological and political divisions which have emerged so strongly half way around the world.

Kangzhuang Protestant (Little Flock) Church, founded in 1937, and Peace Protestant (Anglican) Church, established in 1918, will be considered first. Both churches are located in Tingjiang, described in chapter 1, about thirty-five miles east of Fuzhou on the northern bank of the Min River. The different histories, politics and theologies of these two congregations in this emigrant area reflect how the current moment of religious expansion is also highly conflictual, with pre-Cultural Revolution and even pre-1949 fault lines forcefully re-emerging as if they were a permanent substrate of Christianity in China.

Next the Houyu Protestant (Little Flock) Church will be examined. Located on the southern bank of the Min, the much smaller town of Houyu is directly across the river from Tingjiang. A ferry runs between them and as a result the Houyu and Tingjiang Little Flock Churches have regular interaction. The development of the Houyu church, also in an emigrant community, provides further insight into the powerful role played by

remittances in Fuzhou's emerging religious landscape and the strong connections between Fuzhounese Christians in New York City and their home communities in China.

The third case is the Home of Grace, located south of Changle to the southeast of Fuzhou. This unofficial training center and network of churches, traces its history, described earlier in this chapter, to the Fuzhounese evangelist John Sung, and its recent experiences offer a fascinating study of the complexity of relationships between Protestant Christians and the Chinese state.

1. Tingjiang

Protestant mission work in the Fuzhou area and northern Fujian Province in the 19th and early 20th centuries was divided among three groups - The Church Missionary Society (Anglican - *Shenggong Hui*), The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (Congregationalist - *Zhonghua Jidujiao Hui*), and The Methodist Episcopal Church (American - *Mei yi Mei Weili Gonghui*) - as part of a comity agreement between major missionary groups in China. Since their founding in Fuzhou in the 1840s these three missions had established extensive networks of churches, schools, hospitals, and other social service agencies throughout the region. The Methodists focused to the west of Fuzhou, up the Min River to Minqing and Xiaowu and south to Putian and Fuqing. The Congregationalists worked to the southeast. The Anglicans focused on the Min River Valley to the east of Fuzhou and the coastal region to the north. This included the towns of Mawei, Minan, Tingjiang, Guantou and Lianjiang County on the northern banks and, to a lesser extent, Changle County to the south.

The Tingjiang Peace Protestant Church, located on a small rise in the center of town, was founded in 1918 by the Anglican Diocese of Fuzhou. Anglican missionaries reached Tingjiang by boat since there were no roads in the area, as they extended their work down river from their base in Fuzhou City. In the 1950s the Tingjiang Anglican Church became a member of the TSPM and, following the three-self principles, was required to manage independently of foreign support for the first time. The congregation continued to meet until the extreme religious persecution of the Cultural Revolution. Sister Chen, who died in 1998 at the age of 101, served as the church's evangelist for much of its history. Her daughter-in-law, also named Chen, followed her in this role. During the Cultural Revolution their home was ransacked more than ten times and the church was converted into a factory producing chopsticks and other eating implements, reopening only in 1984.

On the western edge of Tingjiang stands the Kangzhuang Protestant Church, a beautiful new three story sanctuary that seats nearly five hundred people next to a five story education building and dormitory. Though officially registered with the government, this congregation draws a sharp distinction between itself and the Anglican Church and maintains a strong independence from the TSPM. Kangzhuang aligns itself with the Little Flock tradition described earlier in this chapter.

Kangzhuang Church traces its origins to Sister Lin Peijin, a third generation Anglican, who was so inspired by an evangelistic crusade by Dr. John Sung in Fuzhou that she decided to combine her training as a midwife with work as an evangelist. In 1937 she moved to Tingjiang and opened a small health clinic. Congregational lore recalls how she

served Tingjiang and the surrounding territories, often traveling up into the nearby mountains to deliver a child. And everywhere she went she preached the Gospel. Sister Lin began a Christian group at her health clinic. Evangelists and other lay people from Fuzhou's Little Flock, many of them women, came to help her. Together they formed a house church that met until the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. After 1966 they met clandestinely in homes. In 1970 Sister Lin was arrested for her activities and imprisoned for eleven years. She was released from prison after the reforms of 1979 and the congregation resumed meeting. House church meetings in her home in the early 1980s regularly drew more than one hundred people. Still uncertain of the extent to which religious freedom would be honored by the state, the congregation secretly baptized believers in a pond at the back of the village.

As reforms continued on economic, political, and religious fronts, the local government returned the old Anglican church building to Tingjiang's Christians in 1984. Anglican and Little Flock members shared this building until 1994 when political and theological differences between the two groups boiled over. The flash point was Christmas. As Biblical literalists, the Little Flock does do not celebrate the festivals or holidays often associated with Christian tradition elsewhere, including Christmas and Easter, because they do not have specific Biblical precedents. They consider these to be European cultural adaptations imposed on the core Biblical message and ultimately distractions from serious piety. The Anglicans strongly disagreed and desired to celebrate Christmas as they had done in the past.

In a split oddly prescient of a split among Fuzhounese Protestants in New York several years later, the Little Flock group broke away from the Anglicans and sought permission from the local Religious Affairs Bureau to buy a new piece of land and build their own church. In an attempt to resolve this seemingly intractable conflict, the government agreed to allow them to build but would not allocate land for the construction. The Little Flock leadership cobbled together plots of privately owned farm land on the west side of town just off the newly constructed main highway from Fuzhou to Lianjiang.

Sister Lin dreamed of seeing the church finished before her death and church members in Tingjiang and the large number of members abroad rallied to the cause. Church members built the sanctuary with their own labor on weekends and evenings. Even visitors returning home from New York put in a few days on the site. Some days as many as one hundred people worked together. Money poured in from former parishioners now in America, some directly, much of it through family members remaining in Tingjiang. Altogether $200,000 was raised. The building was finished in January 1996. Sister Lin died later that year at age 86.

The Tingjiang Anglican Church also sought permission to build a new church and construction was completed in November 1998 on the original Anglican church property. According to Sister Chen, daughter-in-law of the original evangelist, unlike the Little Flock church, most of the $60,000 for construction came from within China, not from overseas. "Each individual in the congregation contributed as they were able. Then I went to other public churches in the area for help." She utilized the network of churches

associated with Three-Self Movement. Each supporting congregation contributed the offerings from one week toward the cost of the new church building in Tingjiang. Reflecting the continuing existence of the old denominational identities in the area, Ms. Chen specifically targeted former Anglican churches for support. Many responded positively. At the opening ceremonies the new sanctuary was filled as representatives from TSPM-related churches throughout the area attended, including eighteen ordained ministers, an extraordinary number in a region chronically short of ordained clergy.

Differences in Ritual and Polity

Both churches continue active ministries despite Tingjiang's massive outmigration. At the Kangzhuang Church worship begins before 7:30 Sunday morning. The first hour is filled with hymns, prayers said simultaneously, and finally communion. The second hour is reserved for preaching the word. The sanctuary is filled with nearly three hundred people this Sunday. Seventy-five percent of the congregants are women who fill the left hand section of the church pews as well as the left half of the right section. All men, with the exception of two, sit on the far right. Nearly half the women cover their heads with a black netted hair covering, called a *mentou*, in conformity to Paul's urging in Corinthians. Those present are primarily older and younger, with few between twenty and forty years old, reflecting Tingjiang's recent pattern of outmigration. The sanctuary is unadorned. No cross is displayed, according to Little Flock tradition.

Communion, called *bai bing hui*, is considered to be central to Little Flock worship. This Sunday, as every Sunday, unleavened flat bread is passed among parishioners on silver plates, each person breaking off his or her own piece. Homemade

grape wine is then circulated in a clear glass mug followed by a bowl of plastic spoons and an empty basket. Each person chooses a spoon, dips it in the cup, drinks the juice and returns the used spoon to the basket. Communion is served by men and women lay leaders. Little Flock congregations have no ordained clergy. Rather leadership of the congregation is coordinated by an unpaid group of brothers and sisters with one brother often serving as the first among equals. The leadership team is mostly older. All have at least one relative in New York.

In addition to Sunday worship services and weekly Bible studies, prayer meetings and a sizable youth/young adult group, the congregation serves as a resource center for work in the surrounding areas, a variation on the Little Flock principle of local church independence. Once a month Little Flock members from other churches gather at Kangzhuang for meetings. Kangzhuang's lay leaders regularly travel to other places, including the Little Flock stronghold on Langqi Island, to lead services. Relationships with congregations of the southern banks of the Min River, like Houyu are also strong.

Kangzhuang's worship and organization reflect general patterns within the Little Flock tradition. Other common characteristics include the practice of adult baptism by full body immersion. They reject denominationalism. Each church exists independently of other congregations. And there is a strong antagonism toward or at least skepticism about the authenticity of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement's related churches and leaders. Little Flock churches tend to emphasize their correct path to salvation over and against others'. One Little Flock leader in Fuzhou said, "Some of our members go to the public

churches to see their old friends. But we don't trust those churches to really preach the Gospel."

Worship attendance at the Anglican church averaged over one hundred people after the new building was finished, but has slipped to around seventy because of Tingjiang's massive outmigration. In total, thirty of the seventy-five families have left for America.

Comparing the theology and politics of her church to a Little Flock church, Sister Chen says,

> *Their worship is different. Women wear head coverings. They don't have a cross in the church. They think that if you have a cross it is an idol. Their communion is different from our Anglican communion. They don't need a minister to serve communion. A Brother is enough. They pray. They sing. They pray. Then they take communion. In the Anglican church we need a minister. We always have a minister - usually from Fuzhou - come to serve communion the first Sunday of every month. Not even an evangelist can do it. It's very different.*
>
> *After liberation all the churches worked together under the Three-Self. But the Christian Assemblies (Little Flock) are different. We love our country and love our church (aiguo, aijiao,). They just love their church. According to the Bible there should be mutual respect and love. But they say if you come here with us you will be saved. If you go over there to the Anglican church you won't be saved.*

Sister Chen expresses deep disappointment in the animosity and distrust between Little Flock and TSPM-related churches.

> *Tingjiang 's Christian Assembly (Little Flock) doesn't recognize the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. And some in the Christian Assemblies are focused on undermining the public churches. They say, "Oh, there's no one going to church over there. They don't have any life or vitality. If you come here you will be saved. If you go there you won't." All the Christian Assemblies in Fuzhou are like this, criticizing the public churches. We've all suffered for our faith in China. How can they talk that way?*

The Tingjiang - New York Connection

While the Anglican congregation drew heavily on local TSPM-related support for its rebuilding project, the church is deeply embedded in the flow of immigrants - their ideas and resources - between China and the US. Sister Chen herself emigrated to New York with her husband in 1999, leaving her family's church in the hands of a recent graduate of the Protestant seminary in Fuzhou. Sister Chen's six children all preceded her to the United States, the first coming in 1984, and have opened restaurants in the New York area. She attends the Church of Grace, one of the two Fuzhounese Protestant congregations in New York's Chinatown, a choice clearly driven by theological and political factors.

> *We went over to the New York House Church on Market Street. We went once. But for them, House Church means Christian Assembly [Little*

Flock]. At first I thought it was just a house church, not related to the Christian Assembly. But it is clearly Christian Assembly. So I haven't gone back.

One Sunday at the Church of Grace in New York, Evangelist Chen withdrew from her bag an artist's rendering of a new church being built in Mawei - also of Anglican origins and just upriver from Tingjiang - beautifully reproduced in color on small wallet sized cards with the church's address printed on the back.

The Mawei church is rebuilding. They have raised a good bit of money but are hoping to raise more. Altogether $250,000. I often went there to preach, sometimes twice a month. So when they found out we were coming to New York they asked us to help spread the word among people here about their project. They asked us to encourage people we meet to contribute money and send it to them. We can't take the money, but you can send it directly. Here's the name and address.

Upon arriving in the US Sister Chen and her husband immediately applied for green cards.

After we get our green cards I want to be able to go back and forth between New York and Tingjiang. My family is here. I haven't seen them in many years. But no one is there in Tingjiang. One by one the people are leaving to be with their families. So long as I am able to move about I

will go back and forth to help with the church. When I can't move about anymore, then I will stay here in the United States with my children.

2. Little Flock in Houyu

A short ferry ride across the Min River, and clearly visible from Tingjiang, stands the imposing five story Houyu Protestant Church, another Little Flock congregation, built against a steep hillside and rising above the farm land on the southern littoral of the Min River Valley. Like many towns and villages in the area, Houyu is an emigrant community having sent most of its working age population to the United States. Houyu residents estimate that there are two thousand town members remaining and five thousand in America. Most of the migration occurred in the 1990s, creating tremendous social dislocation. The Houyu church represents yet another example of the remarkable contributions immigrants are making to the religious proliferation and diversification in Fuzhou region.

The Houyu church traces its origins directly to missionary Margaret Barber who visited the area with two Chinese evangelists in the late 1910s. There were no Christians in Houyu at the time. Mrs. Li Jiande's grandmother was the first convert.

My grandmother, she was possessed by a demon and made very sick till she almost died. It was very serious. My grandfather was a man of great education. He was a Chinese doctor. In that generation he was considered very smart. And my grandfather was able to do spirit possession. He had cured many people's illness. But he was not able to heal my grandmother.

There were three evangelists who came to Houyu. One of them was our very famous He Shou'en. (M. E. Barber) From England. And two other Chinese. They came down the river to Houyu to evangelize. They sang hymns. They went all over walking the roads healing people and casting out demons. They came to our house and cast out my grandmother's demon. The three evangelists said tomorrow is Sunday. Jesus is risen from the dead. He can cast out demons and heal the sick. We will help you pray. If you believe then tomorrow you will arise and walk. Really. Sunday they prayed. And Sunday she was healed. They stayed in her house for two or three days, maybe many days, teaching her how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to sing hymns, how to believe in Jesus. Ever since the church in Houyu has been in my family's home.

This is the history of the Houyu church. Today there are many Christians there. From the beginning the church was in my family's home. Even during the Cultural Revolution during the most severe repression it was in my grandmother's house. She was persecuted terribly. There was no freedom. There was no way to have meetings during the day. Only at night. I remember this. I was still at home during the Cultural Revolution.

Li Jiande emigrated from Houyu in 1979 following her husband who had established residency in New York after more than twenty years as a sailor in Hong Kong. The house church meetings resumed in Li's family home in Houyu until they could not fit

any more. In 1989 the congregation contacted Li in New York. They had received permission from the local authorities to build a new church but they needed financial support from their fellow towns people in the United States. Says Li,

> *There was me. And there was another woman who has just gone back. We organized the brothers and sisters from Houyu. I was in charge of receiving the money and sending the money. She was in charge of making the contacts (lian-luo). We collected tens of thousands of dollars. Then there were many families in Houyu, the husband was here working, the wife was still at home in Houyu, sons in America, parents at home, they all contributed. Also many of the young people in China contributed their labor. We built the church ourselves. Now it wouldn't be possible. So many people have left in the 1990s. Now the church is just children and old people. The sanctuary seats five hundred people. When we first built it it was full. But only one hundred attend regularly now. Houyu people in the US are so plentiful. Very few are left at home. I don't know what the future will hold for our church.*

3. The Home of Grace

The teachings of the evangelist John Sung continue to be propagated in the Fuzhou area and across China through networks of Christians associated with the Home of Grace. As described earlier, one Home of Grace training center reopened south of Changle in 1981, though without official sanction. Its story of rapid expansion in the 1980s and 1990s and its abrupt closing by public security officials in 1998 reflect the

tenuous existence of unregistered religious organizations which insist on operating outside the mainstream of religious orthodoxy and government authority.

Leaders of the Home of Grace suffered relentless persecution during the 1950s as a result of their connections to the Nationalist government and their reluctance to cooperate with the government authorized TSPM. And like other Christians during the Cultural Revolution, their activities were completely suppressed. Big Sister Jiang, among the third generation of leaders at the Changle Home of Grace, was incarcerated in 1975 for conducting unauthorized religious activities.

After Jiang's release from prison in 1981 she returned to the Changle area to reopen the Home of Grace. As in its predecessor center in Beijing in the early 1940s, lay Christians, mostly women, would gather from churches across the Changle area and then return to work in the churches before going back for further study. The most ardent followers would commit to a two year course. During the second year people went out to work in the house churches and then return to continue their training. Most of the work was conducted in Changle's rural areas, both in registered churches and in unregistered house meetings.

The work of the training center in Changle continued to grow steadily in the 1980s and early 1990s, drawing heavily on the volunteer leadership of dedicated women. For much of the time they were able to maintain an awkward yet sustainable relationship with government authorities, many of whom were willing to turn a blind eye to their activities. In this regard religious and public security officials in Fujian Province and the Fuzhou area have been more lenient than those in interior areas of China. The large number of

Christians who were immigrating to New York and returning remittances to the area also made local officials less willing to interfere.

Relationships between the Home of Grace and the local registered TSPM-related church became deeply intertwined as towns folk often participated in the activities of both. The light hand of local religious authorities in applying government regulations allowed local Christians to support both without fear of retribution or pressure to take sides. In fact, relationships between the two groups were so open and positive that in 1984 one of the key younger fourth generation leaders of the Home of Grace was appointed by the Changle TSPM to serve as pastor in charge of the local church, creating a unique opportunity for the programmatic, and theological integration of an unregistered Christian training center with an official TSPM-related church. In 1994 when the possibility emerged of rebuilding the church, Home of Grace members contributed significantly. Over the next several years a towering new sanctuary was built with two balconies. In the basement a social hall could seat five hundred. In the rear a dormitory was constructed with room for several hundred overnight guests. In the years that followed many Home of Grace activities were held in the church's facilities. Special revival meetings and Bible studies were held at Chinese New Year, Pentecost, and for worker training sessions. Participants would come from across the Changle area and beyond, staying in the church's dormitory and eating in the social hall for days or even a week at a time. At the height of its success, during a TSPM national conference held in Fuzhou on rural church development, official delegates traveled to the church and celebrated its accomplishments as a model to be replicated across the country.

Despite this unique opportunity, today the Home of Grace stands empty, its leaders disbanded and its evangelists scattered throughout the Changle region. The expansive new local church and its facilities are largely unused, except for a greatly diminished Sunday morning worship service. Conflicts of personality and power had developed over time between two women leaders of the Home of Grace. And their separate power centers had exacerbated the situation. One had taken leadership of the local TSPM-related church in 1984 and overseen its rapid expansion and extensive rebuilding program. The other had successfully established an unregistered house church in her home in 1986 in the center of Changle City.

In April 1998 intense jealousies and a simmering power struggle between the two women erupted into open conflict, spreading across the Changle region as Christians took sides with one or the other. Complaints were lodged with the religious and government authorities. Activities were disrupted. The furor rose to such a pitch that the Public Security Bureau was unable to ignore it and intervened to insure public safety.

In rural areas across China, including Changle, the ability to exorcise demons (*gan gui*) is seen as a sign of being blessed by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Healing and exorcism have been one of the primary means Chinese Christians have utilized to compete with the power of local Chinese religious spirit mediums and assert the superiority of Christianity. Within the Christian community the gift of exorcism reflects a leader's power, purity and direct connection to God.

During the Chinese New Year festival in early 1998 a young woman from the town where the Home of Grace is located developed mental problems. Her father and older

brother had recently been killed by a man fired from the family's company. Her husband was in America working. She was totally bereft and needed support. The problems became most serious in April and the woman went to the Home of Grace seeking comfort and healing. The underlying tensions between the two women leaders came to the fore as each attempted to exorcise the woman's demons. Each had her own style and method. And each claimed superiority over the other. Charges of heresy were made between the two women. Their followers lined up to support one and criticize the other. The conflict continued to escalate over several months, involving more and more people in public and private recriminations, until finally on August 16 the Public Security Administration raided the Home of Grace, shut down its work and confiscated John Sung's books, declaring Sung's teachings heterodox. The one young woman was removed from leadership of the local TSPM-related church.

Despite these problems, the work of the Home of Grace continues to grow and the two women continue to train evangelists and guide house churches throughout the region. But in a sign of the complicated relationship between church and state the two women operate under extremely different conditions and limitations. One continues to operate her house church in Changle City, holding daily pre-dawn Bible studies which draw between thirty and forty participants and Sunday worship services of over one hundred. Local government and religious officials are fully aware of her unregistered house church and its role as a center for Home of Grace evangelists but rarely interfere. At Christmas of 2000, however, when over eight hundred worshipers arrived, overflowing the house and flooding the local street, public security officials called her in and notified her that this

could not happen again for public safety reasons. The other woman has not only been removed from her position at the church south of Changle, but has also been banned from serving as an evangelist all together. She ascribes this to the local religious authorities being jealous of her overwhelming successes. She persists in her ministry, however, working closely with a younger group of evangelists who also travel throughout the Changle region. She works hard to avoid detection of the Public Security Administration who regularly detain her for her activities.

According to sources familiar with the Home of Grace movement, by the end of 2000 there were more than two dozen churches supported by Home of Grace-trained workers in the Changle area alone. In addition work is strong in nearby counties. Moral and financial support continue from local Christians and Home of Grace leaders and members who have immigrated to the United States. Says one of those based in New York,

> *Even though the Home of Grace training center has been closed, there are a number of small Bible study groups still active in the countryside. We are supporting these groups. We send them Bible study books and song books. They are very hungry and thirsty for God's word and we do what we can to help them.*

Conclusion: Chinese Christianity and Heterodoxy

Christian leaders in the 1950s were confronted with a difficult choice. Many supported the goals of the Chinese Communist Party to restore China's national autonomy and renew China's national character through economic, political and ideological reform.

They also sought to forge an institutional space for Christianity within a new, formally atheistic, social order. Over the past fifty years, participants in the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association have struggled to maintain their religious integrity while negotiating a public space for freedom of belief within the formal structures of the Chinese society. It has been a process involving significant compromises, conflicts with the state and intense criticism from within the Christian community. And it has had to overcome the huge setbacks of the Cultural Revolution which interrupted the process of accommodation and left deep wounds for many. But it has also been a process with some successes. Through creative effort these Christians have managed to carve out space for an acceptable form of Christian orthodoxy.

This chapter, and in particular its concluding local histories, offers significant insights into the Protestant expressions which have emerged to fill that space and its margins as well as insights into the reasons why the Chinese government is still troubled by Christian churches and continues to go to such lengths to monitor and regulate religious expression. Many of China's Christians simply have not bought into the established orthodoxy. And as such they are reminiscent of so many earlier, troublesome, heterodox groups. They are lay led, rural based, egalitarian in nature and fundamentally millenarian, with a view of personal and collective salvation far removed from that espoused by the Chinese Communist Party. And many still bear the deep wounds of the Cultural Revolution.

As economic reforms have restructured Chinese society over the past twenty years, the Chinese people, especially rural people, are facing economic disparity and uneven development well known in pre-communist eras. Coal miners are striking for better working conditions. Rural farmers are rising up to resist exorbitant and unbearable taxes. Tens of millions of internal migrants float from rural areas to cities in search of wage labor. In the midst of such potential chaos the Chinese state is particularly concerned with maintaining social stability. In the religious sphere it consistently acts in such a way as to confirm that it is wary of the revolutionary potential not only of popular religious movements such as Falun Gong discussed in chapter 3, but also of rural Catholic and Protestant Christians.

Madsen (2001) has suggested that rural Catholicism in China today should be viewed as a form of Chinese popular folk religion with all its potential for heterodox belief and action. In particular Madsen sees a strong connection between folk Catholicism and heterodox sects in Chinese popular Buddhism. As described in chapter 3 these similarities include:

- millenarian visions of radical salvation
- immediate and physical salvation
- voluntary associations undermining dominant social structures
- long distance communication and action networks
- radical leveling of class differences
- egalitarian approaches to lay leadership, particularly women's leadership

Drawing upon the local examples in this chapter, a case can be made to include much of China's rural Protestant Christianity in this framework. Here Catholics and Protestants can be seen to focus intently on the magical and the miraculous, on exorcisms, healing rituals, visions, and direct revelation. Their faith is largely anti-materialistic and anti-modern. It is far removed from the orthodox expressions of Christianity supported and promoted through the state-recognized religious associations. And it is sustained, and sometimes enhanced, through infusions of immigrants' resources and support from beyond China's borders.

What role these Christians will play in the future development of the dynamic Chinese social and political situation is uncertain. These religious communities are inherently unstable and factionalized. And the pressure placed on them by the state to conform is at times intense. But in the midst of the tremendous changes shaking China, these grassroots organizations continue to add members, build networks of support and communication within China, and develop links through their emigrant members to religious organizations and communities beyond the bounds of the Chinese state. Chapters 5 and 6 to follow will examine the development of these overseas connections between Fuzhou and New York and expand our analysis of the mutual transformation those networks have wrought on communities on both sides of the Pacific.

Chapter 5

Chinatown's Religious Landscape: The Fuzhounese Presence

Chinatown's religious landscape today reflects the complex immigrant history of this urban New York neighborhood. Walking around one discovers old Jewish synagogues, both active and empty; Catholic churches built by Irish and Italian Catholic immigrants and now home to Cantonese, Fuzhounese, and Hispanic congregations; Protestant churches ranging from old mainline denominations like the Methodists, Episcopals and Presbyterians, to Hong Kong and Taiwanese imports like Overseas Chinese Mission and Ling Liang Church, to newly formed independent religious communities primarily comprised of undocumented workers from southeast China, operating in the local Fuzhou dialect; large Buddhist temples whose leaders are monks with serious theological training and whose constituents are primarily older Cantonese immigrants or recent middle class Hong Kong and Taiwanese immigrants; and numerous storefront Buddhist, Daoist and Chinese popular religion temples oriented around home villages, whose festival celebrations, fortune telling and spirit possession reflect the vibrant and complex religious life of rural mainland Chinese from the areas around Fuzhou. The diversity of these religious communities reflects not only the neighborhood's immigrant history, but also its contemporary stratification.

After providing an overview of religion among the Chinese in Chinatown, this chapter and chapter 6 following will focus on the emerging religious communities of immigrant Fuzhounese. The data collected during this study consistently shows that these groups, which include large numbers of undocumented workers, play key roles in the

migration and immigrant incorporation process. They serve as key locations for mobilizing the social capital necessary for survival in Chinatown's highly exploitative ethnic enclave while at the same time reflecting much of the stratification in the surrounding community. They function as nodes for building and accessing transnational networks which influence events and institutions in New York and at home in China. And they contribute to the construction of alternative identities which serve as counterpoints to the dominant hegemonic structures and discourses of the ethnic enclave and the US society.

Of the fourteen congregations specifically serving the Fuzhounese in Chinatown at the end of 2000, six groups representing the diversity of Fuzhounese traditions will be examined in more detail. Four of these - the He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple, the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving, Transfiguration and St. Joseph's Catholic churches - will be discussed in this chapter. Chapter 6 will analyze the history of Fuzhounese Protestants in Chinatown through a study of their two congregations, The Church of Grace and The New York House Church.

Data for this chapter was collected between April 1997 and December 2000. As discussed in chapter 1, few attempts have been made to document Chinese religious expressions in the United States. Even fewer studies have described the religious reality of New York's Chinatown, with the exception of a limited number of church histories written for internal congregational purposes such as anniversary celebrations. Major studies of Chinatown (i.e. Wong 1982, 1988; Kwong 1987, 1996; Zhou 1992; Lin 1998) mention religion only in passing or neglect it completely. No research had been conducted

on Fuzhounese religious communities. Except where otherwise noted, data for this study is derived from first hand ethnographic fieldwork including street by street mapping, participant observation and personal interviews. Institutional histories are reconstructed from oral and primary sources.

Data about religious organizations in Chinatown was initially drawn from publicly available lists circulated in Christian and Buddhist networks, as well as the regular advertisement of religious services in the main Chinatown newspapers and yellow pages. A visual check of key streets quickly revealed inadequacies in the publicly available lists. Buddhist institutions in general were severely under-represented. Most of the religious communities created by recent Fuzhounese immigrants - largely new and independent - simply were not on any of the maps, formal or informal, that had been drawn. Most of them had no legal organizational status in New York and were advertised by word of mouth through family and village networks.

The information presented in the following pages is the product of a street by street observation conducted by the author. It captures more fully the historical and religious diversity of the approximately sixty block area considered to be part of Chinatown today (see Appendix A). Beginning in the oldest section of Chinatown, bounded by Canal Street, Bowery, Baxter Street and Worth Street - what most people think of as "Chinatown" - the survey extends outward to the edges of today's Chinatown: south to the river, east through the formerly Jewish Lower East Side and north, through what is still known as Little Italy but whose Italian presence is maintained primarily now in tourist oriented Italian restaurants and shops.

Of the eighty-four religious institutions identified in the study, fifty-nine are exclusively Chinese. In addition, three Catholic churches have multiple congregations in one parish, combining Chinese and Italian or Chinese and Hispanic. The twenty-two non-Chinese institutions include a wide range of congregations:

Protestant (Hispanic, African-Am., European-Am.)	10
Jewish	4
Roman Catholic	4
Greek Orthodox	1
Ukrainian Orthodox	1
Jehovah's Witness	1
Japanese Buddhist	1

The sixty-two institutions with Chinese members include:

Buddhist	26
Protestant Christian	23
Chinese Popular Religion	8
Catholic	3
Daoist	2

Fourteen congregations specifically serve the Fuzhounese population in Chinatown. Five are popular religious temples venerating local deities from the home village or region in China from which their adherents have come. Four congregations specifically identify themselves as Buddhist temples though these may incorporate

elements of Daoism or popular religion as well. Two independent Protestant Christian congregations have been established. One temple, the Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving identifies itself as Daoist, but includes Buddhist and Daoist deities on its altar as well as the sage Confucius. The two Catholic churches with Fuzhounese constituents are multi-ethnic parishes including older groups of Italians along with Cantonese-speaking Chinese from south China and Hong Kong and more recent Fuzhounese arrivals. Excluding the two Catholic parishes, the other twelve Fuzhounese religious groups are independently established with no formal institutional association beyond their own local organization. Mirroring the Fuzhounese migration, these institutions are all recently established and as such fairly fragile. Only the He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple (1987) and the Protestant Church of Grace (1988) were founded prior to 1990. All of the others were established during the past decade.

Chinese Religious Diversity In Chinatown: An Overview

The Chinese religious community in New York City reflects the diversity of the Chinese diaspora. New York's Chinese churches and temples have been formed by ethnic Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam as well as mainland China. The mainlanders include the earliest immigrants from the Taishan area of Canton Province, south China; scholars, businessmen and professionals from China's major urban centers; post-1989 Tian An Men political asylum seekers; Fuzhounese from towns and villages of China's southeast coast and a small recent wave of undocumented workers from Wenzhou, a coastal city twelve hours north of Fuzhou by bus.

Each group brings a different linguistic tradition, cultural background, economic resource and religious experience. They speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Fuzhounese, the local Taiwanese minnan dialect, Wenzhounese and English. They use these languages in different combinations, sometimes with separate religious services within the same institution, sometimes with simultaneous translation during the same services, and sometimes with a determined effort to stick to one over the others. The religious institutions also represent different historical waves of immigration out of China and into New York. Early Cantonese immigrants now established as middle class professionals and business owners congregate together in certain churches and temples. Hong Kong and Taiwanese who have come since the 1970s gather in others. Fuzhounese undocumented immigrant laborers form their own institutions. Second generation Chinese may meet in the same building as their parents but their English language congregations are often distinct ritual and programmatic entities.

Chinese established their earliest religious communities in the Five Points area of lower Manhattan, starting on Pell, Doyer and lower Mott Streets in the late 1800s, after the opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 facilitated the arrival of many more Chinese from California. The Methodist Five Points Mission, originally opened in 1848 to serve Irish immigrants, began its first work with Chinese in 1878. Transfiguration Catholic Church began an outreach to Chinese in 1909. The first Buddhists in New York were Chinese who arrived in the mid to late 1800s. It is not known where the first temple was established and many worshipped at makeshift altars in Chinese associations. According to Renqiu Yu, writing in the Encyclopedia of New York City, "Chinese deities

were worshipped in temples, or 'joss houses' (two were built in the 1880s) and ancestral shrines were erected." (Yu 1995) The word joss, meaning a Chinese idol or cult image, is not Chinese but derives from pidgin English based on the Portuguese or Latin "deus", meaning "god" or "deity". A joss house was then a Chinese temple or shrine. In the 1890s, according to Charlie Chin, as the Chinese population increased and Chinatown expanded, "entrepreneurs opened restaurants in the neighborhood to attract tourists; soon there were also gift shops and 'temples'", (Chin 1995) suggesting that the "joss houses" had become part of the tourist attraction of Chinatown. The oldest extant Buddhist temple in Chinatown, the Eastern States Buddhist Association, opened in 1963.

Today churches and temples have expanded through a wide swath of the Lower East Side. In recent years, Chinese religious communities have also emerged in significant numbers as part of the economically diverse Asian community in Flushing, Queens, and in the working class Chinese neighborhood of Sunset Park, Brooklyn. A few other Chinese congregations are scattered throughout the five boroughs, including Chinese Christian fellowships on most major college campuses. A recent explosion of Chinese meditation groups related to China's persecuted Falun Gong movement gathers in public parks and members' homes throughout the city.

Aside from counting numbers of religious organizations, measuring the religiosity of New York's Chinese population is a complex task. A telephone survey of 164 Chinese residents of Queens in 1997-98 recorded the following responses to the question of religious affiliation:

Protestantism	13.4%

Catholicism	6.7%
Buddhism	21.3%
Other	1.8%
No Religion	56.7%

Respondents were selected at random from Chinese surnames in the Queens telephone directory (Min forthcoming).

Unfortunately the analytic framework of the survey forces respondents to fit their beliefs into an institutional framework which does not reflect the religious experience of most Chinese, and certainly not the religious practices of recent immigrants from Fuzhou. Many studies of Chinese religion stress the intertwining of Buddhism, Daoism and Chinese popular religious beliefs at the local level and their integration with family and village customs and activities (Weller 1987; Sangren 1987; Shahar and Weller 1996). As exemplified by the Fuzhounese He Xian Jun Temple of Master Lu examined later in this chapter, most religious expression in mainland China's rural areas is popular in expression, not readily reduced into the formal categories of Buddhism or Daoism. Chinese popular religious expression, which includes, funerals, weddings, veneration of ancestors and festivals related to the Chinese lunar calendar, is vibrant and central to family and home village life. Such beliefs and practices do not disappear when immigrants arrive in New York. They continue in homes, stores, shops, restaurants and temples. They may be modified to fit a new cultural environment, but they continue. Asking Chinese New Yorkers by telephone to place their religious beliefs within the framework of world religious systems such as Protestant Christianity, Catholicism or Buddhism disregards the

complexity and diversity of Chinese religious expression. In this regard it should come as no surprise that the majority of respondents claim no religious affiliation.

As we have already seen, since 1949 the Chinese government has also attempted to fit all public forms of religious expression into the world religion framework, drawing upon an imported European, heavily Marxist, intellectual tradition. All other popular religious expressions were declared to be feudal superstitions. The government's actions have not been an analytical project however, but an organizational one. Temples and religious practitioners across China, despite the complexity of their religious expression, have been forced to register with one of the five major religious organizations in order to receive official sanction. So a temple combining Buddhist, Daoist and popular religious elements, like Master Lu's, finds itself registered with the Buddhist Association in China and Master Lu himself as a Buddhist religious practitioner. This organizational framework is not effective in advancing understanding of much of China's rural religious expression. Nor is it an effective analytical framework for examining religious beliefs and practices among Chinese in New York.

A preliminary unpublished survey of New York's Chinese religious communities conducted as part of the Religion and Immigrant Incorporation in New York project at the New School University documents ninety-nine Christian churches and forty temples in the New York area. Among the Christian churches 38% are in Manhattan, 41% are in Queens with a significant concentration in Flushing, and 11% are in Brooklyn. Included in these numbers are eight predominantly Taiwanese congregations in Queens. Not included are the numerous Chinese churches in New Jersey, upstate New York and Long Island

that are primarily populated by middle class, highly educated immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. Among the temples, 20% of those surveyed are in Manhattan, 35% are in Queens, 8% are in Brooklyn and 5% are in the Bronx. A number of the New York City Buddhist congregations have built temples, retreat centers and monasteries in northern New Jersey and upstate New York where members go for dharma teaching, meditation retreats, and ritual ceremonies. Members may go individually, but the temples also regularly organize buses and group excursions. (Huang and Zhou 2000)

Huang and Zhou's survey, drawing primarily on publicly available lists, makes a significant contribution to the mapping of New York's Chinese religious institutions. The current study suggests additional steps that must be taken to complete the documentation process.

1. Certain segments of the Chinese religious population, including independent and particularly non-Christian institutions, are less likely to appear on publicly available lists. Huang and Zhou's survey identifies forty temples in the New York City metropolitan area. In comparison, the current study has identified thirty-six temples (Buddhist, Daoist, and popular) in Manhattan's Chinatown alone. Unaffiliated institutions, regardless of size, are difficult to detect without street by street observation. This appears to be true for the newly created Fuzhounese religious institutions as well. While making the documentation process more time consuming and labor intensive, street by street observation may be a necessary tool in mapping contemporary religious communities, particularly those with significant numbers of recent immigrants.

2. Individual, family and business oriented religious expressions are also difficult to document in a survey of institutions. Drawing upon rural and urban Chinese popular religious practices, Chinese immigrants continue traditional activities. In many Chinese homes throughout the New York area offerings are made to the Kitchen God. In many Chinese restaurants, stores and businesses small altars may be found at which owners offer prayers. These religious practices, intimately intertwined with Chinese family and village culture, may not be as readily identifiable out of context in the United States environment.

3. Public processions and festivals also do not register on a map of religious institutions. Yet they play a distinct role in projecting an ethnic community's religious beliefs into the public domain. Chinatown's Chinese Protestants hold an annual evangelistic crusade in Sara Delano Roosevelt Park sponsored by the Christian umbrella organization Chinese Christian Herald Crusade. Fuzhounese Catholics at Transfiguration Church have initiated an annual August procession on the Lower East Side, honoring the Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother Mary. The celebration of the Buddha's birthday in late May/early June which began circumambulating Manhattan's Chinatown, now travels east down Kissena Boulevard in Flushing, Queens. These events have not yet achieved the wide public recognition of their counterparts/predecessors like the St. Patrick's Day parade, the Puerto Rican Day parade, the Columbus Day parade, the India Day parade down Fifth Avenue, or the Caribbean Day parade in Brooklyn or even the annual Chinese New Year celebration. But through these nascent public displays and processionals, Chinese religious communities are seeking to project their presence into the

public discourse and accentuate their claim to a place in the most multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious of global cities.

The Fuzhounese Religious Communities

Over the past fifteen years Fuzhounese immigrants have established their own religious communities in New York's Chinatown, adding their unique flavor to the area's variegated and textured religious fabric. The Fuzhounese migration, spurred by economic restructuring in both China and the US and facilitated by a vast and highly organized international human smuggling syndicate, has uprooted whole communities of people, dislocating them economically, culturally and legally, placing them in a receiving country for which they are unprepared and which is unprepared to incorporate them. Amidst this dislocation, Fuzhounese immigrants are constructing and maintaining religious communities as one means of building supportive networks and activities, including religious networks and practices and as a mode for negotiating their place in this complex and volatile global process. The stories of Fuzhounese immigrants associated with the He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple, the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving and Transfiguration and St. Joseph's Catholic churches, reconstructed in this chapter, as well as those of the Church of Grace and the New York House Church in chapter 6 reveal the complex roles these congregations play in the Fuzhounese migration process, in immigrant incorporation in the US, and in building networks that link religious communities in lower Manhattan and the lower Min River Valley of southeast China.

He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple

On Eldridge Street, which runs through the heart of Chinatown's new Fuzhounese community, stands a storefront-turned-village temple. This October day, the ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese Lunar calendar, is a major feast day honoring the Chinese Buddhist bodhisattva, Guan Yin, goddess of mercy and so the temple is being transformed into a festival hall. Tables and chairs fill every inch of the main room as well as a small courtyard further back. A buffet line near the altar is stacked with a dozen different vegetarian courses. In the rear of the building gas fires rage under commercial sized woks in the crowded kitchen, preparing additional food for the day's visitors. Today the main hall will be packed with women, mostly, taking their lunch breaks from the nearby garment shops and paying their respects to Guan Yin and Master Lu. More than two hundred people will make the pilgrimage during the course of the noon hour.

Master Lu, a short gruff man in his late fifties established the small temple on Eldridge Street shortly after arriving illegally in 1985 from Fuqi Village east of Fuzhou. Fuqi Village lies on a hillside on the southern bank of the Min River. Out of 4,000 villagers, nearly 2,000 are now estimated to be in the New York area. Fuqi's economy previously was built around farming and fishing. Today this emigrant community relies primarily on remittances from villagers working in the US.

Master Lu is not uncharacteristic of local religious practitioners in both rural and urban China who incorporate a polytheistic blend of ritual and belief. For the ten years immediately preceding his migration to New York, Master Lu practiced his craft as a spirit medium in the towns and villages around his native Fuqi and on Langqi Island in the mouth of the Min River, home of his wife's family. What is particularly unique about

Master Lu is that he has transferred the central location of his practice from rural Fuqi to urban New York. At the same time he has built a direct connection to his hometown and maintained the local flavor of his work. Fuqi villagers visit him for advice in New York, just as they did back home. The deity, He Xian Jun speaks to him in New York just as he did in China. Contributions from members support the temple in New York as well as the construction of a major temple complex in Fuqi.

The New York temple serves as something of a community center for the people of Fuqi and surrounding areas. Festivities are held on the first and fifteenth of every month (Chinese lunar calendar) as well as three times a year in honor of Guan Yin. The largest gathering occurs at the Chinese New Year when many Fuzhounese working in restaurants across the country return to New York. Over seven hundred immigrants made the New Year's journey to master Lu's temple in 2001.

The Temple is named after He Xian Jun, a prominent Daoist deity in northern Fujian Province and the predominant local deity of Fuqi Village and surrounding areas. The association of a Daoist deity with an officially Buddhist temple reflects not only the integration of Buddhism, Daoism, and Chinese popular religious beliefs at the local level, but also the difficulty in using institutional religious frameworks to categorize the dynamic religious expressions of rural Chinese communities.

Master Lu has had an extremely intimate and personal relationship with the deity for over twenty five years, a relationship which has not been lessened by the geographical distance between Fuqi Village in southeast China and Eldridge Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In between festivals Master Lu receives visitors. They come to ask

the god's advice about everything from business ventures to children's names to potential success of petitions for political asylum. They come to pray for the health of sick relatives. They come to give thanks for safe passage across the ocean with snakeheads from China. He Xian Jun, who characteristically provides his adherents with dreams in response to their queries, is revered as a god of healing and resolving intractable problems. There is a steady stream of petitioners throughout the average day. Old friends drop in to say hello and show off a new grandson. Couples planning to be married come by to check the auspiciousness of their match or the date for their wedding. Sundays are busiest since many working Chinese have the day off. Master Lu intercedes on their behalf to inquire of He Xian Jun. The deity gives him a message or a vision to relay and interpret to the petitioners. At rare times He Xian Jun actually possesses Master Lu's body in order to communicate, but mostly the responses come in the form of dreams or visual images.

The following interview was conducted with Master Lu in his New York temple one afternoon in September of 1999. It traces the development of this poor rural villager from a childhood gathering firewood to support his family on the banks of the Min River to his position as a ritual master of a religious community that spans the globe. In addition to providing the rich imagery of his life's journey, the interview reveals Master Lu's intimate relationship with the deity He Xian Jun and the religious framework he has constructed to give meaning to his life experience, particularly his immigrant experience.

The first people emigrated from Fuqi probably before Liberation [1949], just before. Some of them came out through Hong Kong or Singapore. Starting in 1984-1985 a larger group of people started to

come by smuggling. My father was one of the earliest, before Liberation. He left in 1946. First to Singapore, then by boat to America in 1952. He left Fuqi to look for a life. He couldn't make a go of it in Fuqi.

At that time there were very few Fuzhounese in New York. The American government was very vigilant at that time. So my father went into hiding. He didn't have legal status. But after awhile he didn't have any problem. He worked in a restaurant. That's the way most of us do it. He worked continuously in a restaurant. He never got legal status. And since he was older [38] when he arrived in America, he never really made much money.

I was born in Fuqi in 1942. My father left home when I was four years old. He was gone for thirty-three years. My mother, for thirty-three years, even though he was alive in America, it was as if he were dead in her life. She was twenty-eight years old when he left. She raised me and my two brothers. My father never got legal status in America his whole life. But he did get American Social Security, food stamps, welfare. A little bit more than $200 per month. In his later years he lived in the Fujian Provincial Association Hall, boiling water, making tea, sweeping the floors, helping with some small things. They also gave him some money. But there were not many people in the Fujian Association, so they didn't have very much money to give him.

Every year he would send one hundred or two hundred dollars to us. China's economy was not strong at the time. So the money went a long way. But my mother was still very poor. She did some sewing. My brothers and I went to the mountains to gather wood to sell. We also gathered the little fish and shrimp from the waters in the rice fields to take home for food. Little crabs. They were a little hard, but if you cook them in the wok they get softer. We didn't have any rice, only little sweet potatoes. And it never got better. Even after I grew up I was still gathering wood.

My parents were Buddhists. During the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976] during my youth, they [Chinese Communist Party] tried to clean out the old superstitions. But my family was very poor. My father did not send money home often. My mother worked very hard. I had a dream in which I imagined I would come to America. So we often went to the temple to worship to ask the god to help me get to America sooner and for my father to come home a little sooner so we could see one another's face.

In 1973 I went to pray to He Xian Jun because people told me that if I went to his temple I could find the answers to the questions I was asking. "Your family is so poor, your father hasn't come back," they all said. "If you want to get your prayers answered about going to America you should go to the main temple on Rock and Bamboo Mountain. There

you can ask for a dream. They will be able to tell you definitely what it all means." At the temple I asked, "Can I go or not? I don't have anything. My father doesn't have any legal status in America. How can I go to America?" He [He Xian Jun] gave me a dream. I saw a person wearing a long white robe and talking about the two Chinese characters in the word for April. How did the monks at the temple explain this dream? They didn't. I just understood it over time. I asked the old folks in the village. They told me that the meaning is that the longest the robe could be is twelve feet. It couldn't be longer. And April meant the month of April. It was right on time. In April 1985 I came to America. Twelve years from my dream. The dream represents time. The longest the clothes could be is twelve feet. This equals twelve years 1973-1985. In 1973, beginning in March, I went to ask for the dream. I received the dream in April. In April 1985 I came to America. Right on time. Twelve years.

My second dream was about whether or not my father would be able to come home. I saw a man and a woman dancing. Surely he should be able to come home. I thought surely the man was my father and the woman was my mother. The dream must mean that they would be together again. I had the dream in 1973. In 1979 he suddenly came home. He had been sick to the point he had to go to the hospital in New York. They couldn't help him. He wanted to come home but he didn't have any money. And he was worried that if he tried to come home he would die on

the way. One night a little child told him in a dream to go home. He said, "I can't. I will die on the way." The child said, "Yes, you can make it." So he decided to come home. He made it home. But after fifty days he died.

After your father came home and died you still thought about going to America? Why?

You can make more money in America, have a little bit better life. My original purpose for coming was to make money. I hadn't planned to open a temple.

I found a snakehead in Tingjiang, across the river from Fuqi by boat. The price was $17,000 but I didn't give any money up front. Only after I got to America. If I didn't get here then I didn't have to pay. But when it was time to leave the country, I couldn't get out. When I got to Shanghai I couldn't get on the plane. I had a Chinese passport, but the smuggler hadn't gotten the right visa. I went home to Fuqi and waited. When I finally did leave China I traveled from Shanghai to Japan. From Japan to Canada. From Canada to Ecuador. Ecuador to Mexico. From Mexico to Los Angeles. Los Angeles to New York. All on the plane except from Mexico to Los Angeles. In Mexico I climbed a mountain for an hour, then there was a small vehicle waiting for us to take us across the border. We all sat on that bus praying to He Xian Jun, "Protect us! Protect us!" I know some people who have been stopped at that customs checkpoint. One of my friends. So I was praying. In front of us they were searching a

car. I was praying. But when we pulled up they just said, go through. We were so happy. There were five of us. One from Tingjiang, one from Min'an, two from Houyu and me. We were all praying. We just zoomed right through.

How did you arrange housing and work?

Friends and relatives. Since 1975 I had been doing this kind of work [with He Xian Jun]. In 1975 He Xian Jun had already come to inhabit my body. We didn't dare to do this work at home. It was still during the Cultural Revolution and religion was being repressed very intensely. I went to other places to work. Neighboring villages. Langqi Island. In my relatives' and friends' homes. Then I would go away. Sometimes they could pay me. Sometimes they just gave me rice or oil. Or people would come secretively to my home, just as guests. People would ask me to come if someone was sick, or if there were problems in the family: fights, divorce, family problems. I would try to make peace. People would introduce me, one to one to another.

These people helped me come up with the money when I got to New York. We already had a lot of people from Fuqi in New York at the time. In 1981-1982 there were already some that were smuggled out through Macau or Shanghai. They would go to Macau to "visit relatives" and then just keep on going to New York. I worked in a restaurant for two

years. Every month I paid $1,000 back to the people who had loaned it to me.

When did you first think about opening this temple?

Right when I got to America, He Xian Jun told me to open a temple. I told the god, since I borrowed other people's money, I'm embarrassed to just start a temple. After I've returned the money then I will do it. If I don't return the money people will say I'm lazy. But if I return the money I will be free to do anything. They can't say anything about it, regardless how little money I make. He Xian Jun told me in a dream to open this temple. And we had a conversation. He told me if you work in a restaurant it's too dirty. I can't get close to your body. The meat smells. Other smells. I was worried though. I was illegal. I didn't get my green card until after the 1989 amnesty. If I worked in the back of a restaurant, the police probably would not catch me. But if I opened a temple.... What should I do? I asked the god. He said, "Don't worry. You won't get caught. No one will bother you." He told me where to open this temple too. Originally it was a little farther up on Eldridge Street. He told me to move here to this building. I said no, because it wasn't a very good neighborhood at the time. He said it was OK, nothing would happen to me. So I moved the temple here in 1993.

I told He Xian Jun that since my family was poor if I could get to America I promise to build a temple for him in Fuqi. I made that promise

before I came. If he would send me to America and I could make some money the first thing I would do is build a temple in Fuqi for him. I do my work. He does his.

How did you know you had this skill?

I didn't even know it myself. I just tried. If I got it right then I had the power. Like, is the baby going to be a boy or a girl. If I got it right, then I've got the power. Today you should go to such and such a place and do something. Did it work out? Yes? Then it works.

Does it really work?

Yes. If things didn't change why would people trust me? Why would they contribute to building the temple back home in China?

The He Xian Jun Temple in New York plays a key role in the lives of immigrants from Fuqi and neighboring villages as they seek to make sense of their new and often hostile environment and negotiate their difficult existence in New York City. The temple, with Master Lu as the centerpiece, serves as a site for the exchange of information among its adherents regarding jobs, housing, health care, and coping mechanisms for dealing with any of the struggles of daily life. Another important and overlooked function of village-oriented temples such as this is as a source of credit. He Xian Jun Temple operates an informal revolving loan fund. "If people need help paying off their snakehead they often come here. I don't have any money of my own to loan them. But if the temple has some money we loan it to them. They pay it back as they are able," Master Lu explained.

The temple and Master Lu also serve as an important link between New York and Fuqi. To honor his reciprocal pledge with He Xian Jun, Master Lu has orchestrated the construction of a beautiful temple complex on the hillside above Fuqi Village overlooking the Min River as it flows into the sea. With contributions of over $500,000 from adherents in New York, Master Lu has built a multi-leveled temple which dwarfs anything in the surrounding villages. An additional $300,000 has been raised for a seven story pagoda. Architectural drawings are prominently displayed inside the temple on Eldridge Street.

Land in China is at a premium and religious organizations often are denied permission to build new religious edifices. But Master Lu is well known to the government authorities in Fuqi because of the remittances his temple channels back into the local community. He is also influential in Fuqi's overseas population in New York, where, in addition to his role in the temple, he serves as vice-chairman of the Fuqi Village Association. As a result, the temple leadership in Fuqi has had remarkable success negotiating with village government authorities for what it needs. For instance, in return for being granted permission to build the temple on the steeply sloping hillside at the back of the village, Master Lu agreed to fund the construction of a new road through the village and connecting to the main thoroughfare which links Fuqi with neighboring villages and Changle to the south and Fuzhou to the west. The village would not have to take agricultural land out of production and would gain a significant new public road. The temple would get the land it needed for its new construction.

Master Lu returns to Fuqi Village at least once a year, usually in the spring. His brother has remained in Fuqi to manage the sprawling new temple complex. Master Lu's son is also there, living in the family's spacious new five story home and waiting for his green card application to be processed. On his annual return visit to Fuqi, Master Lu conducts a month long religious retreat for his followers. Hundreds of pilgrims from across the area visit Fuqi temple during this time. Monks from a large temple in Fuzhou City are hired to lead the rituals. Master Lu also takes these occasions to meet with local political and religious authorities. Despite living primarily in New York he is recognized by the Changle Religious Affairs Bureau as a Buddhist monk and he retains membership on the Changle Buddhist Association Council. Back home in New York Master Lu proudly displays videos of his visits, the many pilgrims who attend the festivals and the beautiful new temple buildings. The videos regularly play on the temple's VCR and are loaned out to adherents around the tri-state area, another span in the bridge between Fuqi and New York linking religious communities.

A man of great renown in Fuqi Village and its environs, in New York City Master Lu's life is quite simple and circumscribed.

> *I spend my days here at the temple. When there are no visitors I fold paper devotional money and watch Chinese videos with my wife and family. I don't go out. I wouldn't know where to go. I don't speak any English. So even though I've had a green card for eleven years I've never applied to become a US citizen. I'd fail the English test. I live in the temple, work in the temple. I've never even seen the Statue of Liberty.*

The Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving

Not far from the He Xian Jun Temple, in another storefront on the eastern end of Canal Street, the bright red sign over the door with yellow-orange letters reads:

Three	Faiths
Chang An	New York
Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving	

It is a sweltering June day in 1997. Inside, the small store-turned-temple is decorated in austere fashion. A few chairs line the walls. A list of temple contributors and leaders is mounted prominently just inside the door. On the far wall is a glass encased altar holding twenty small statues arranged on five ascending levels. A dragon is painted on the back wall of the altar encasement. Huang Di, the emperor, sits on the uppermost level. Confucius, Lao Zi (representing Daoism) and the Buddha sit side by side on the second level. A long table extends from the altar back toward the front door, its surfaces covered with offerings of fresh fruit, ritual candles and a few pots of burned incense.

A group of seven men and two women occupy the chairs lining the side walls of the temple. Mr. Li, one of the temple leaders, introduces the temple. "The members of the temple have all immigrated from the village of Chang'an or next door Dongqi Village." These two villages are located about thirty miles east of Fuzhou City on the north bank of the Min River as it flows into the sea, almost directly across from Fuqi Village. "Most all

of them have been smuggled into the US over the past few years. When asked if many more Chang'an villagers were in New York, Mr. Li laughed and said, "Most of them are already in New York but more are coming all the time! It's mostly just grandparents and small children in Chang'an now. The young people- men and women - have come to New York, most of them illegally, to find work. (Li, 1997)

Sitting in the temple that very day was a young man, nineteen years old, casually yet neatly dressed and carrying a medium size duffel bag. He indeed had just arrived from Chang'an days before, smuggled into New York and now waiting patiently in the temple for a van that would pick him up and drive him to a city in the Midwest, where others from Chang'an and Dongqi Village had opened a Chinese restaurant and he was promised work.

> *I finally made it to America on my third try. I was arrested twice and sent back to China - once in Japan and once in Thailand. I finally came through the Middle East, eastern Europe and then on a plane to New York with a fake visa. I just want to make money. There's nothing for me at home in Chang'an. So I came out. If I can make $200,000 then I'll go back to China.*

According to Mr. Li, the Heavenly Thanksgiving sect had been founded about ten years earlier in Dongqi Village. Mr. Huang, now the master of the Dongqi temple, had left China in 1957 for Hong Kong where he earned a living as a sailor, eventually working as an engineer. On a visit to New York harbor in 1972 he jumped ship and remained in New York until 1986 when he was able to establish US citizenship through the amnesty

for undocumented immigrants. He returned to Dongqi in 1987. At that time a local village deity spoke to him and instructed him to form this new group. The group's key tenet was to build unity among religions and religious believers by integrating Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism into one ritual practice. Despite its fundamental belief in the unity of these religions, the first Heavenly Thanksgiving temple, built in Dongqi Village in 1987, was registered as a Daoist temple to fit Chinese government guidelines.

In 1993 a group of seven immigrants from Chang'an and Dongqi established a branch of the Dongqi Temple in New York. Originally on Eldridge Street a short distance away, it had only earlier that spring (1997) moved to Canal Street. Since its founding the temple has served as a gathering spot for immigrants from the two villages and as a place for worship and ritual on the key days of the Chinese lunar calendar. By 1997 most of the original group of seven owned restaurants in the New York area but rotated responsibility for the temple operations. And in each of their restaurants there was also a small altar for the gods of the temple.

In 1995, with funds raised from one hundred fellow villagers, several of the founders returned to Chang'an to build the third Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving. With help from the original temple in Dongqi, construction began on a major temple complex hugging the hillside at the rear of Chang'an Village overlooking the Min River and the Pacific Ocean. Built on the site of an old Buddhist temple, this new structure rises steeply through five levels, each adorned with altars to the gods and configured in the same order as the miniaturized statues in the New York temple. From the highest landing the temple

looks south over Chang'an Village, its newly constructed multi-story homes built with remittances sent from the US.

The religious community that is related to these three temples reflects many of the characteristics of other Fuzhounese religious groups discussed in these pages. The Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving in New York City clearly serves as a site in the immigrant journey for fellow believers. In this case the leadership of the temple plays a role in the actual arrangements involved in the migration process. While serving as a ritual center, the temple is also equipped to assist immigrants in transit. On the main floor of the New York temple, behind the front room and altar, is a full kitchen. A set of stairs leads down to a basement level comprised of four smaller rooms filled with four to six beds each. These are used by fellow villagers passing through New York on their way to a network of restaurants spread from Virginia to Pennsylvania to Indiana to Michigan.

The temple serves as an important location for assisting the incorporation of new immigrants into the US economy. Immigrants are connected to the network of restaurants and provided employment. This incorporation is limited however by the internal stratification of the temple network. Some members own the restaurants. Others work as undocumented laborers for well below minimum wage. Nevertheless, the social solidarity of the network provides off the books employment to the undocumented workers at wages far above what they could earn in China. At the same time, the workers' cheap labor enables the owners to reap a profit far above what they could earn if forced to employ US citizens at the legal minimum wage or above. In this case the Chinatown

ethnic enclave and its effects are extended beyond New York by means of the village and temple network that encompasses work locations scattered throughout the United States.

The Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving also demonstrates the ability of the emerging Fuzhounese religious networks to enable immigrants to contribute to and influence their home communities in China. While many immigrants interact with their sending community through remittances to build homes and support family members, participation in the Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving allows members to contribute collectively to the larger social projects of their home village. Not only has significant money been invested in the construction of the home temple complex, but in 1999 the New York temple established a charitable foundation to engage in development and relief operations in the Chang'an and Dongqi areas as well as elsewhere in China.

Through several visits to the temples in New York, Dongqi and Chang'an, the difficulties of maintaining religious networks that span towns, cities, and nations often half a world away, particularly given the intense mobility of the migrant community became clear. At times the temples have been empty, the leadership gone elsewhere to work. At times internal conflicts have erupted with control over the temples being contested. As with the other religious communities considered in this study, the story of the Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving reveals the inherent fragility of these nascent Fuzhounese institutions. Their leadership is constantly mobile and so regularly reconstituted. They are unfamiliar with the United States and so limited in their ability to establish networks of support. Their attempts to bring together disparate elements of the immigrant community under broad organizational umbrellas often crumble.

Against the odds, however, like Master Lu's He Xian Jun Temple, the Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving reflects the ability of local religious traditions, indigenous to the towns and villages of rural Fuzhou, to extend their reach and influence far and wide. In 1998 the Dongqi Village temple's spirit medium, long engaged in fortune telling, prescribing healing herbal medications and giving all manner of advice, immigrated with her husband to Indiana, USA to open a takeout Chinese restaurant. Here she continued to serve as a spirit medium for the temple and its adherents. People with problems or questions, whether in China or in cities across the US, would call her in Indiana. Petitioners with inadequate funds to call would leave their inquiries on slips of paper on the temple altars in China or the US so that temple leaders could call in for them. On the first and the fifteenth day of the lunar month the medium would go into a trance and be possessed by one of the gods of the temple. Confirming her efficacy, the temple master in Dongqi claimed he could feel the god leaving the village to go to America to inhabit her. In Indiana the spirit medium's husband posed the questions to the inhabiting god who would respond. The husband kept careful notes of the responses and afterward would return peoples' calls with the eagerly awaited answers.

By 1999 the handwritten notes were still being placed on the altar of the temple on Canal Street in New York. But the sign above the front door had been changed and the people in charge of the temple were different. After several inquiries it became clear that one faction from the Chang'an Temple had replaced another. This new faction had a spirit medium as well, but a different person, located in Illinois, not Indiana.

Chinatown's Fuzhounese Catholics: Transfiguration and St. Joseph's Churches

The Fuzhounese Buddhist, Daoist and popular religious temples and the two Protestant congregations in Chinatown have developed independently and without denominational precedent or institutional support. Manhattan Chinatown's two Fuzhounese Catholic congregations have followed a distinctly different developmental trajectory. At both Transfiguration Church and St. Joseph's Church the new Fuzhounese Catholics have been incorporated into already existing parishes steeped in immigrant history.

Transfiguration Church

Transfiguration Church's work with Chinese spans nearly one hundred years. The congregation itself was founded in 1827 in lower Manhattan. Throughout its history, Transfiguration has been a parish of immigrants. Beginning with the Irish, followed by the Italians, the Cantonese and now the Fuzhounese, Transfiguration has been home to wave after wave of New York's new residents. Its history mirrors their history on New York's Lower East Side and continues to do so today.

Father Peter Verela, an outspoken Cuban exile, was the parish's first priest (1827-1846) and guided the congregation through two great fires in New York, two cholera epidemics and constant anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant social pressure. The great Irish Potato Famine of 1845-1847 set the tone for Transfiguration in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1847 over one thousand Irish were arriving in New York every day. Transfiguration parish relocated in 1853 from Chambers Street to lower Mott Street, the heart of the new Irish community in the Five Points district and center of New York's most notorious slum, noted for its murders, muggings, prostitution, bars and dilapidated

housing. But by the late 1800s, the Irish began to move out of the Five Points area, being replaced by three new immigrant groups - the Italians, the Jews and the Chinese. (Transfiguration Church 1977)

Transfiguration began to reach out to Chinese in 1909 with the arrival of Father Hilarius Montanar of the Paris Mission Society. Father Montanar had been working in Canton (Guangzhou), the area from which most of Chinatown's residents had come. During his tenure as priest he began English classes for the immigrants and served as an interpreter in public and private affairs. He returned to Paris in 1914 and Transfiguration's Chinese Mission closed between 1920 and 1940 for lack of Chinese speaking clergy and because of the violent inter-Chinese conflicts of the period. Father Umberto Dalmasso, A Chinese-speaking Silesian priest reopened the Chinese Mission in 1940. In 1949 the Diocese assigned responsibility for parish administration to the Maryknoll Fathers. Maryknoll, founded as the Catholic Foreign Missionary Society of America, was known for its extensive mission work in China, although that work was coming to a close with the Communist defeat of the Nationalists and the expulsion of foreign missionaries from China. The change in parish administration marked a significant commitment by New York's Catholic Diocese to focus on this new immigrant population.

Despite the presence of other Catholic parishes in the neighborhood, including St. James, St. Joseph's and St. Joachim's, Transfiguration came to be known as the one serving the Chinese community and its work expanded rapidly at a time when Chinatown's population was also seeing significant growth. In 1975, with Transfiguration's Chinese membership on the ascendancy and its Italian congregation in decline, the Maryknoll

Fathers returned the parish to direct diocesan control. In 1976 Father Mark Cheung, himself a refugee from south China, was appointed parish administrator, the first Chinese priest in the history of New York to be appointed to such a position. Transfiguration was now the most prominent Chinese parish in New York City.

Throughout its history Transfiguration's Italian and Chinese congregations have maintained largely separate identities, separate masses and separate programming. In the 1980s conflict heightened between the two groups and among the Chinese themselves. Succeeding Chinese priests were unable to resolve the conflicts and by the early 1990s the parish and its school were racked by lawsuits and accusations of financial misconduct. In 1991 Cardinal O'Connor directly intervened and again appointed a Maryknoll priest with extensive administrative experience as parish administrator.

As the Fuzhounese population expanded in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fuzhounese Catholics, many of them from the powerful underground Catholic church, found their way to Transfiguration. Most of Transfiguration's new constituents were rural Catholics, veterans of the conflict between China's underground Catholic church and the state-recognized Patriotic Church. They were and are still fiercely loyal to the Pope and fiercely antagonistic toward the Patriotic Church movement. As we have seen, the religious practices of such people in China followed a pattern dedicated to maintaining the purity of Catholic tradition as it had been practiced prior to 1949 when the Chinese government severed its political connections to the Vatican and disallowed Chinese Catholic interaction with the Holy See. This meant, among other things, opposing Vatican II Catholicism along with any modernization tendencies suggested by the Patriotic

Catholic Church. In addition their experience of Catholicism was largely formed by clandestine organizational forms which emphasized rigid adherence to doctrine as well as personal piety and devotion over collective study, theological reflection and community service.

Priests at Transfiguration regularly receive correspondence from the bishop of the Fuzhounese underground Catholic churches, written in Latin, requesting assistance for certain parishioners on their way to America. The letters document the parishioners' home church, baptisms and membership as well as instances of persecution, and ask Transfiguration's priests to help them apply for political asylum based on religious persecution. The US State Department has allowed many Catholic asylum seekers to cite China's population planning policies, especially the one child per family policy, forced abortions or sterilizations, as grounds for claiming religious persecution. In such instances documentation from China authenticated by a US Catholic parish can provide substantial support for an asylum application. Not all claims of religious persecution are legitimate and Transfiguration is careful to avoid being drawn too far into these cases. But enough cases are accepted by the State Department that many Fuzhounese are encouraged to make this claim when arriving in the United States or later if apprehended. Snakeheads in some cases advise their clients that if caught they should cite religious persecution based on the one child per family policy as an abrogation of their Catholic faith.

The staff leadership of Transfiguration has made a number of attempts to accommodate the Fuzhounese and incorporate them into the larger parish. First, in 1992, they added a Mandarin language mass on Sunday morning at nine o'clock to cater

specifically to the Fuzhounese and to complement the English mass at 10:15am and the Cantonese mass at 11:30am. Language is of crucial importance to New York's Fuzhounese as they attempt to establish their identity in Chinatown. The unique Fuzhou dialect, known locally as *Fuzhou-yu* or *Fuzhou-hua* is spoken in the coastal regions near Fuzhou to the north and south of the Min River and in Fuzhou City itself. Linguistically it is close to the Min dialect prevalent in southern Fujian Province and in Taiwan. It is however, unintelligible to speakers of Cantonese (southern China and Hong Kong) and Mandarin, the two predominant dialects in Chinatown. In China Mandarin is called the "national language" (*guo yu*) or the common language (*pu tong hua*) It is based on the Chinese dialect spoken in northern China including the area around the capital city Beijing. In the 1950s the Chinese government introduced Mandarin as the dialect of instruction in the nation's public schools and in national media. But for the vast majority of Chinese, especially the seventy-five percent of the population in rural areas, Mandarin is a second or third dialect learned after their own local one. At home, work and play they speak their local dialect. Confronted with the rapidly expanding Fuzhounese population, and without a priest who could conduct masses in Fuzhou dialect, Transfiguration introduced a Mandarin mass as the best alternative. The Fuzhounese responded positively to the use of Mandarin, which has emerged as a "lingua franca" among Chinatown's Chinese population, as a sign that Transfiguration would make room for them alongside the Cantonese and English speaking congregations already present in the parish.

Also in 1992, Transfiguration launched the Ren Ai Society, a fellowship specifically for the Fuzhounese. Through this the church leadership has attempted to

acculturate its Fuzhounese members to life in a modern Catholic parish. Bi-laws were drawn up with a mission statement and organizational structure. Officers were elected. Members were encouraged to participate as liturgists, ushers and choir members. Monthly meetings of the Ren Ai Society were held to mobilize members for retreats, spiritual formation and service to the congregation. But attendance is sporadic and meetings chaotic. Only one officer has been willing to serve on the parish council (which is almost entirely Chinese of Cantonese descent). The newly formed Ren Ai Society youth group has no interaction with the church's other youth group made up of English speaking Cantonese. Language is an admitted barrier. But so are class distinctions and Fuzhounese adherence to familiar patterns from home. Cantonese members see Fuzhounese congregants as largely uneducated and uncultured. Carrying the parish's financial burden and managing its organizational affairs, the Cantonese find it difficult to cross over class lines with these coarse immigrant laborers. Fuzhounese for their part feel marginalized and treated as second class citizens within their own parish as the class divisions of the Chinese enclave are mirrored in Transfiguration's congregational structure and interpersonal relations.

Fuzhounese seem most comfortable replicating familiar customs and rituals brought from China. Each Sunday before the Mandarin mass, they gather in the sanctuary to pray and say the rosary. Annually before the Christmas midnight mass more than one hundred come to pray together, using the Fuzhounese dialect. And each year after the special mass for Chinese New Year, Fuzhounese stay to make a special veneration to Mary, which they call *bai shengmu*, directly translated as *worship the Holy Mother*.

The veneration of Mary is of great significance to the Fuzhounese Catholic immigrants and is the impetus for one of the major innovations at Transfiguration in recent years. At their request, Transfiguration has initiated an annual public procession in honor of the Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven in mid-August. The procession, similar to clandestine processions in China, was proposed by parishioners from a village outside Changle where this had been practiced, albeit quietly in the evening or even just inside the walls of the church. Every year since 1996 Transfiguration members remove the large statue of Mary from the sanctuary and carry it through Chinatown, particularly in areas now inhabited by Fuzhounese.

Catholic tradition teaches that after her death, Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul. This official church dogma was declared by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950 at the urging of lay Catholics throughout the church. The feast day is celebrated on August 15 of each year. (In China this is in close proximity to one of the major Buddhist celebrations for the goddess of mercy, Guan Yin.) As one parishioner said, "If we could have these processions in China where there is such persecution, why can't we have them here in America where there is freedom?" Transfiguration leaders have attempted to expand the procession to include the parish's Cantonese members and even other congregations, but it is still primarily Fuzhounese who lend support. In fact, Fuzhounese Catholics return to Chinatown from across the tri-state area to participate in this special act of devotion imported from their home towns and villages around Fuzhou.

St. Joseph's Church

A second Fuzhounese Catholic congregation has formed at the nearby St. Joseph's Church as a result of a split within the Transfiguration Fuzhounese group. Tension between Fuzhounese immigrants related to the split between underground churches and those from the Patriotic Association in China had been present from the beginning of the Transfiguration Fuzhounese group. Conflict escalated in 1996. Maryknoll's national organization formally hosted approximately forty seminarians and young priests from the Chinese Patriotic Church under the auspices of the Program for Formation of Chinese Seminary Professors and Students sponsored by the US Catholic Council of Bishops. Maryknoll had been encouraged to help Catholic priests wherever possible to leave China for further Catholic education and training, but the only ones who could legally depart were those associated with the Patriotic Church. In the US, Maryknoll arranged for their support in diocese across the country while they engaged in theological training.

With the full backing of the New York Catholic hierarchy, including Cardinal O'Connor, nine of the seminarians and young pastors studied at the New York Diocese' Dunwoody Seminary. Later they came to Transfiguration to intern. Some of the Fuzhounese where highly critical because they felt that these seminarians and young priests, as members of the Patriotic Church, were not in obedience to the Holy Father and so should not be trained in their diocese or their church. The priests, they believed, had not been legally ordained and so should not be serving communion or presiding over other rites of the church. Some also questioned why only seminarians from the Patriotic Church were being trained and none from the underground church. A number of the older Chinese priests,` in particular, were adamant that to take communion from these illicit priests was a

sin. A group of Fuzhounese Catholics most ardently supportive of the underground Chinese church, encouraged by several Chinese priests, broke off from Transfiguration and moved several blocks away to St. Joseph's Church.

St. Joseph's was founded in 1904 by the Missionaries of St. Charles, a community of priests and brothers formed in Italy in 1887 to care for the vast numbers of Italian immigrants then flooding to the United States. Today the parish is still primarily Italian although the surrounding neighborhood is becoming predominantly Chinese. A small Chinese congregation, mostly Cantonese, has been in existence for just over twenty years. St. Joseph's runs a parochial school serving over 250 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade and has added a Sunday afternoon service at three o'clock to accommodate the new Fuzhounese congregants. A mainland Chinese priest from the underground Catholic church in Beijing has settled in St. Joseph's parish to work with the Fuzhounese after a nearly two year term at Transfiguration.

In an interview in 1999, two key lay leaders of the breakaway group expressed fears for their safety even here in New York because of the presence of agents of the Chinese Communist government and its Religious Affairs Bureau. Nevertheless, they were continuing their work in support of China's persecuted but loyal underground Catholic church. At the time a video of the destruction of unregistered Catholic churches in Changle (see chapter 4) was being circulated among St. Joseph's Fuzhounese members and relief funds solicited. Members also circulated a petition urging the Chinese government to cease the harassment and persecution of Catholics and the destruction of their institutions. Several members who had achieved status as US citizens were

considering returning to Changle and Fuzhou to present the petition to government and religious authorities in an attempt to bring pressure for religious freedom from overseas Chinese compatriots.

Conclusion

The stories of the four congregations considered in this chapter and the two congregations to be discussed in chapter 6 stand as testimonies to Fuzhounese immigrants' ingenuity and determination to create social forms for expressing religious and cultural beliefs in the face of oppressive economic conditions and largely undocumented immigration status. These religious communities are central networks for survival, both material and emotional. As religious sites they enable people to establish a boundary-crossing identity in a hostile environment where they have no local status - indeed to articulate alternative identities which contest the hegemonic and oppressive US economic and cultural environment. Immigrants thereby locate their experiences in larger structures of meaning in which their religious traditions play an anchoring role. As we shall see again with the Fuzhounese Protestant churches, this research also shows, however, the fragility of these networks and the difficulty of sustaining newly emerging institutions in competition with and at times subject to the flows and vagaries of the international labor market, not to mention problems in China and conflicts in the United States.

Chapter 6

"Let's See How God Leads Us":

Building Fuzhounese Protestant Churches in New York's Chinatown

Fuzhounese immigrants have formed two Protestant churches in Manhattan's Chinatown. The Church of Grace, founded in 1988, and the New York House Church, which split from it in 1998, are independent congregations created with distinct Fuzhounese identities. Despite the recent schism, the two Fuzhounese congregations are thriving, filling their worship spaces and are rapidly expanding programs and services for their immigrant constituents while most Protestant congregations in Chinatown are small and struggling to survive. Both congregations use the Fuzhou dialect heavily in their services and programs, a unique feature among Chinatown's Christian congregations and one that stakes out a distinct identity in the Chinese community. Within New York's Fuzhounese community the Church of Grace is particularly well known and even other area churches will send an inquiring Fuzhounese to find it.

This chapter explores the development of these two congregations and their contemporary role in the Fuzhounese community. Particular attention is given to the fissioning process in which issues of theology, regionalism and class combined with powerful personalities to produce a painful schism that tore apart the uniting umbrella of Fuzhounese identity. The transferal of theological differences and regional mistrust from Fuzhou to New York will be examined as will the intersection of the ethnic enclave's stratification with the congregation's structure. Finally, the transnational linkages enabled

by these congregations will be considered. For while they have become well known in New York, their reputation spreads far beyond the Hudson River, extending up the Min River Valley deep into Fuzhou's Protestant church community.

Fuzhounese Protestants in New York - Background

On a rainy night on the last day of April, 1992, five leaders from the Church of Grace, a small new Fuzhounese congregation, arrived at the New York City public land auction hoping to purchase a 1904 public bathhouse at 133 Allen Street which had been the city's last public baths when closed in 1988 because of budget cuts. The evening before, braving torrential rain, they had gone to see the two story property just above Delancy Street, at the extreme northern edge of New York's rapidly expanding Chinatown. The basement was flooded. The building showed signs of neglect and abuse both from its nearly eighty-five years of serving poor immigrants living in the tenements of New York's Lower East Side and from being closed and abandoned for a number of years. Only one or two other prospective buyers came to inspect the lot.

It was not ideal, but the availability of church-sized buildings in Chinatown was severely limited and church leaders pinned their hopes on this old bathhouse. The congregation had $50,000 in the bank and pledges for $50,000 more. The minimum bid had been set at $300,000. They hoped they would be able to raise the additional amount quickly if they won the auction, but they knew they could not pay much more for a building they would have to renovate extensively. The moment came. They made their bid at $300,000. They waited.

The dream of owning a church building of their own to serve the waves of immigrants from Fuzhou had been harbored and nurtured for many years. In 1978 a small group of Fuzhounese immigrant women began to gather for prayer and Bible study at Chinatown's Ling Liang Church. There Mrs. Dong, also originally from Fuzhou and wife of the minister, helped establish the Fujian Agape Fellowship (*Min Ai Tuanqi*). Ling Liang Church, part of a larger denominational network with roots in China and churches in Hong Kong and Taiwan, had been established in Chinatown in the 1970s by an earlier wave of Cantonese speaking immigrants. The Fujian Agape Fellowship shared space with the main Ling Liang Church congregation, but largely remained separate. This separation was symbolized by the Fellowship's exclusive use of the local Fuzhou dialect for its gatherings. As the only Fuzhou dialect Christian group in Chinatown, by the mid-1980s it's membership had grown steadily to several dozen, drawing from the gradually increasing flow of Fuzhounese immigrants.

Many of the earliest Fuzhounese immigrants came to New York via Hong Kong where a sizable community of compatriots had gathered over the previous two decades. Mr. Chen Shufan, for instance, left China in 1949 for fear of Communist reprisals after serving in the Nationalist government's navy. After spending eleven years as a naval officer in Taiwan he relocated to Hong Kong hoping to reunite with his wife and children whom he had left behind in Fuzhou. Others were able to arrange for short term work permits in Hong Kong and Macau and never returned. Some stole across the China-Hong Kong border. Still others signed on as ship workers in the coastal waters of south China and jumped ship in Hong Kong. Some later jumped ship a second time in New York.

In the 1960s and 1970s in Hong Kong, Mr. Chen and others were instrumental in establishing three independent Fuzhou dialect Protestant churches, one on Hong Kong Island and two in Kowloon, to serve this distinct immigrant group which had difficulty with the local Cantonese dialect. Rev. Dong, then pastor of one of Hong Kong's Ling Liang Churches, frequently preached in these churches. Before leaving for New York in the mid-1970s he and his wife had become well known among Hong Kong's Fuzhou Christians. So it seemed natural to many New York immigrants to congregate in Rev. and Mrs. Dong's church and to start a Fuzhou dialect-specific fellowship in the midst of an otherwise Cantonese speaking Chinatown parish.

By the mid-1980s the Fujian Agape Fellowship had grown to several dozen members. All were recent immigrants. Even those who came via Hong Kong had originated in "Fuzhou". In reality few were from Fuzhou City. Most were rural dwellers hailing from Fuzhou's surrounding towns and villages. Their families were farmers or fishers. Some were sailors who had left the area in earlier waves of outmigration. Some were shopkeepers, teachers or local government officials. All shared a desire to improve their lives and the lives of their families. And all shared a certain ingenuity in manipulating local and international conditions to achieve their goals.

Few of them had legal status in the United States. Chen Shufan had arranged an international air flight from Hong Kong to the Dominican Republic in 1980 which required an overnight stay in New York to change planes. His transit visa allowed him to leave Kennedy airport for the night. The next day he did not show up for the second leg of his journey to the Dominican Republic. Instead he chose to remain anonymously and illegally

in the US. Others overstayed tourist visas. Their status as Hong Kong residents deflected the scrutiny US immigration officials direct at the current arrivals straight from Fuzhou. A few came with the help of a fledgling human smuggling network. All worked in restaurants and garment shops in lower Manhattan. The garment shops were beginning to rebuild after the offshoring of the 1970s. Restaurants serving the growing tourist trade and American taste for Chinese cuisine continued to grow. Owners readily welcomed low wage laborers to fuel this expansion.

Linguistic unity rooted in the Fuzhou dialect drew people together at Ling Liang Church, as did their common immigration experience and shared struggle to survive in the isolated and exploitative Chinatown ethnic enclave dominated by earlier Cantonese arrivals. From the beginning the divisions of home town, kin group, class, politics and especially religious worldview and practice which would later drive them apart were present, buried just below the surface. Yet, so powerful was the need of these early immigrants for solidarity and support that it would be more than ten years after the establishment of an independent Fuzhounese church in 1988 that the tensions would erupt in full scale conflict.

Misunderstandings and disagreements did emerge early on between the growing Fujian Agape Fellowship and the Cantonese-speaking members of the larger but stagnant Ling Liang Church. The Cantonese congregation struggled to find its identity in a Chinatown with rapidly expanding Christian institutions. Yet they resisted incorporating the newly arrived and largely uneducated Fuzhounese immigrants into the congregational structure. Many Cantonese feared that with increasing Fuzhounese immigration, the

expanding Fuzhounese group at Ling Liang Church would soon dominate. Within the Fuzhounese leadership itself, different visions of the future emerged in the context of this conflict. Mrs. Dong preferred that the Fujian Agape Fellowship remain a part of Ling Liang Church though maintaining a separate identity. Others imagined an independent Fuzhounese congregation when their membership increased sufficiently. Some favored independence but feared they could not sustain themselves financially or accumulate the resources needed to build and maintain a church in the United States. Ultimately the voices for independence had demographics on their side. The overall Fuzhounese population continued to expand in the mid and late 1980s as did the number of Protestant brothers and sisters arriving from churches in Hong Kong, Macau and back home in the Fuzhou area.

Rev. Liu Yangfen

One of those arriving in the mid-1980s was Rev. Liu Yangfen, whose experiences during the Cultural Revolution are described in chapter 4. This greatly beloved and highly controversial figure became a central character in the development of Fuzhounese Protestantism in New York and eventually in the split that shook the Church of Grace in 1998. In addition, since moving to New York, he has served as a focal point for building a complex religious network between New York and Protestant churches in the Fuzhou area.

Rev. Liu Yangfen arrived in New York from Fuzhou in 1985. Minister of Fuzhou's central Flower Lane Protestant Church in the 1950s, Rev. Liu was severely persecuted in the 1960s and early 1970s for his outspoken Christian faith and because a

two year master's degree earned at Vanderbilt University in the 1940s placed him in the targeted category of foreign collaborator and spy. For years he was assigned to labor reeducation in the impoverished mountain region of northwest Fujian Province. As we have seen, when, in the late 1970s, China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, introduced his post-Mao economic reforms and moved to normalize social relations and institutions disrupted during the Cultural Revolution, the first church to reopen in Fuzhou was the Flower Lane Church. In 1980 Rev. Liu was politically "rehabilitated" and assigned as pastor in charge. As an elder statesman in the Christian community he was revered by grassroots Christians for his resistance to the persecution of the Communist Party. Over the next six years he traveled throughout the urban and rural areas of Fuzhou, preaching in newly reopened churches, conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals, serving communion, visiting house church gatherings and encouraging the re-emergence of Chinese Christianity.

By the time Rev. Liu left Fuzhou for New York in 1985 his was a household name among Fuzhou's Christian community, both those in the open churches and in the underground churches. And his departure only aggrandized his legend. None of the new generation of ministers could compare favorably to his heroic profession of faith in the face of angry Red Guards and fanatical anti-Christian government bureaucrats. No one could forget his pioneering spirit in revitalizing Christian work in Fuzhou after the Cultural Revolution. Most claimed a personal connection to this larger than life figure: a family member baptized, a wedding attended, a relative who graduated from the same school. After his emigration his legend only continued to expand.

During their study abroad in the 1940s, Rev. Liu's wife gave birth to a daughter. By virtue of the place of her birth she could rightfully claim US citizenship. In the 1970s Rev. Liu, a man of tremendous "guanxi" or connections despite his official ostracism by the government, succeeded in going through the backdoor to procure a visa for his daughter to travel to Hong Kong. There she declared her US citizenship and migrated to upstate New York where she and her husband opened a Chinese restaurant. In 1985 she petitioned for her father to join her and his visa was granted. According to Rev. Liu the decision to leave was not an easy one. "There was still much work to be done in Fuzhou. But I felt my time had come to an end. People were beginning to leave Fuzhou for New York and I thought I might be able to work with them there. I also thought I might still be able to assist the churches in China, but from the outside." Upon arrival in New York, the Fujian Agape Fellowship quickly sought Rev. Liu out and he began to travel once a month to New York City to preach. He also began to explore ways to assist the Protestant churches in Fuzhou.

A Church of Their Own

In 1988 the Fujian Agape Fellowship decided to establish an independent Fuzhou dialect congregation in Chinatown. Beginning one Sunday morning in May twenty members gathered for prayer and Bible study at the home of Chen Shufan on Orchard Street, a railroad style flat in an old five story tenement building. They ate lunch together at a local restaurant. In the afternoon several dozen Fuzhounese crowded into the large living room of Brother Lu Yangsheng on Monroe Street for worship. Rev. Liu preached

that first Sunday with over thirty-five people in attendance. Mrs. Dong and Brother Jiang Kesong assisted with the liturgy.

By July the group relocated to a loft space at 22 Catherine Street which it shared with another church. The congregation rapidly expanded. Word spread through the growing Fuzhounese network. Most came from Manhattan as their work schedules permitted. Still others came from upstate New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Seventy people attended the first Sunday services at Catherine Street. Said Chen Shufan, "We didn't know what would happen. Who would come? Would we have enough money to pay the rent and utilities? But we prayed and waited to see how God would lead. God has been very good to us."

Key to the congregation's allure among recent immigrants was its identification with and commitment to the use of the Fuzhou dialect in its worship and programs. The model had been successful in building three Fuzhou dialect specific churches in Hong Kong and in the early days of the Fujian Agape Fellowship at Ling Liang Church. Now the congregation's leaders hoped that the Fuzhou dialect would prove as effective an organizing principle in the future expansion they imagined.

From its beginning the congregation conducted worship services in Fuzhou dialect with simultaneous translation into Mandarin. Board meetings were conducted in Fuzhou dialect and Fuzhounese was the dialect of most informal conversations. Among the older members it is often the only language they speak, though they may understand some spoken Mandarin. For the mostly rural immigrants from the Fuzhou area the use of Fuzhou dialect proved a significant unifying factor in the midst of an ethnic enclave

dominated by Cantonese and Mandarin speakers. The congregation's first three names after independence reflect its emerging sense of identity and its attempts to capitalize on its use of the Fuzhou dialect in the wider Chinatown community.

1. *Fuzhou Dialect Fujian Agape Fellowship of New York*
2. *Fuzhou Dialect (and Mandarin) Crusade of New York*
3. *Chinese Christian Gospel Association, Fuzhou Dialect and Mandarin*

Eventually the congregation chose the broadest representation, opting to identify itself as Min (short hand for Fujian Province) and dropping references to the Fuzhou dialect in its name:

The New York Christian Church of Grace to the Fujianese.

Within the congregation, however, the use of Fuzhou dialect is still predominant and in the wider Chinatown community the church has established a distinct identity as the "Fuzhounese church".

Organizing a Congregation

By the time the Fujian Agape Fellowship struck out on its own in 1988 many of the earliest immigrants had been able to regularize their immigration status as a result of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. The provisions of this act provided a blanket amnesty to those illegally entering the US prior to 1982. Without legal status, the leaders of the Fujian Agape Fellowship had little hope of formally organizing their own congregation. But reassured by their own legality they moved to put in place an internal structure and formalize the status of the congregation in relationship to the structures of US society. Over the next several years the congregation established a Board of Deacons and a number of small groups including a choir, youth group, women's fellowship and

student fellowship. In the fall of 1989 it established a building fund for the purchase or construction of a new church property. In May of 1990 a building committee was established to actively explore possibilities for the congregation's future.

Externally the congregation began the process of legal incorporation, seeking recognition under New York State law as a religious organization and petitioning the Internal Revenue Service for tax-exempt 501(c)3 status. To employ personnel, to avoid property tax and to allow tax deductibility for members' donations, the congregation needed to regularize its status in relationship to the city, state and federal governments. The process took nearly three years and provided many challenges to a congregation of recent arrivals, new citizens and non-English speakers with little experience in negotiating the complex and sometimes mysterious American state bureaucracy. These steps would be essential for the congregation's success in its new environment.

In his introduction to *Gatherings in Diaspora*, (1998) sociologist Steven Warner suggests that a unique characteristic of religion in the United States is its tendency to evolve into a congregational structure. Even the religious practices of new immigrants, he argues, quickly transform into congregational forms,

> Because religion is so important to an immigrant group, and because the group's circumstances have been changed so drastically by migration, the religion must take on new forms to be capable of survival in the new land.... The most characteristic adaptation I expect to encounter among immigrant religious groups is the development of congregational forms.... The congregation is a local *voluntary religious association*, usually culturally homogeneous and often legally constituted as a nonprofit corporation controlled by its laity and administered by professional clergy. (1998: 20-21)

The emergence of this congregational form should not be imagined as ex nihilo, out of nothing. Immigrant religious communities do not develop congregational characteristics out of the air. Rather, congregations are disciplined by the regimes of US law, civic and government structures and bureaucracies. In order to achieve legitimacy and effective operation in the US context, groups of immigrant religious practitioners must successfully negotiate an intricate maze of regulations and regulatory agencies. To purchase property or employ personnel they must be organized as a legal corporation, including a Board of Trustees. Once property is purchased, construction or renovation must be approved by the local buildings department, an application which usually requires plans and authorization from an architect and engineer. Finding these professionals among a group of recent immigrants with little English facility may stretch a congregation's resources and networks. To legally occupy a building a certificate of occupancy must be obtained specifying the types of activities and numbers of people allowed in a space. Inspections by Fire and Building Departments attempt to ensure a group's adherence to fire and construction codes.

If the group wishes to employ personnel, the disciplining continues. Income taxes must be withheld and submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. Social Security taxes must be paid to the Social Security Administration. New York State unemployment and disability insurance must be calculated and disbursed. W-2 or I-9 forms must be issued to employees. Functionally a system of financial accounting and accountability meeting government standards must be established.

For the Church of Grace, complying with these regulations has been and continues to be a difficult process, straining its human resources. At the same time the experience has been an enforced civic orientation.

Finding Clerical Leadership

The desire to find a minister proved one of the driving motivations of the congregation's attempt to normalize its legal status vis a vis the US state. Chinese Christian congregations in the US regularly face difficulty in recruiting and retaining well qualified clergy. In the case of the Church of Grace, Rev. Liu was willing to help, but in 1988 he was already seventy-six years. old. The strong lay leadership which had emerged chose instead to invite Elder Chen Shewo from Hong Kong. Elder Chen, originally from Fuzhou and out of a Little Flock background, had served as the evangelist at Tsuen Wan Church, one of the Fuzhou dialect congregations in Hong Kong. Many knew and respected him from their time together there. Elder Chen and his wife eagerly accepted the invitation and the congregation set about obtaining a US work visa for him. First however they needed to establish this legal status and recognition as a religious organization, a process that took three years. In the interim the Church of Grace's Board of Deacons maintained control of the congregation's administration, program and ritual. Rev. Liu continued to preach once a month. Responsibility for other Sundays rotated weekly among area ministers, a practice which has been retained throughout the history of the church. In May 1991, uncertain of how Chen Shewo's case would be resolved, the congregation added a young evangelist, Mr. Zheng Yile as Minister in Charge. But on all matters of congregational polity and practice the Board retained decision making power.

In December 1991 Elder Chen finally received his visa and arrived in New York to serve as senior minister.

The congregation's difficulty in bringing Elder Chen to its staff proved but a precursor to twelve years of frustration in recruiting and retaining pastors. Five senior pastors served the congregation for various lengths of time between 1991 and 2000. For more than two years, 1998-2000, the congregation had no senior pastor and relied on the services of junior evangelists.

In mainline Protestant traditions in China the term *chuandao*, literally to "spread the principles or doctrines", refers to lay professional religious workers and is variously translated as evangelist, preacher, local preacher, or catechist. This status is clearly distinguished from the Chinese term *mushi*, literally "shepherd teacher", which is translated as pastor or reverend and refers to ordained Protestant clergy. In the Little Flock tradition, however, an egalitarian church polity does not recognize the status of ordained minister. Instead all members are brothers and sisters (*dixiong jiemei*) of equal rights and responsibilities. For organizational purposes, one brother serves as the brother in charge, or first among equals, and is sometimes referred to as an elder (*zhanglao*). The Church of Grace has, over its history, combined both traditions, the mainline Protestant and the Little Flock. Elder Chen Shewo and Brother Wang De En of the Little Flock tradition and Rev. Liu and most recently Rev. Chen Zhaoqing have all served as senior leaders of the congregation. For the purposes of this study, when referring to the senior leaders as a category, the term senior pastor is used to distinguish them from the evangelists on staff.

The Church of Grace's continued growth is not attributable to continuity of senior pastoral leadership, but rather to the determined and dedicated lay leadership centered in the Board of Deacons and to the explosive growth of the Fuzhounese immigrant population after 1991. A survey of two hundred Church of Grace congregants conducted in May 2000 (Guest 2000) revealed certain striking trends in Fuzhounese immigration patterns.

A. The Church of Grace: Arrival in the United States by Year and Gender

Year	Men Arriving	% of Total Men	Women Arriving	% of Total Women	Total # of Arrivals	Total %
Prior to 1970	0	0	2	2	2	1
1970-1974	1	.1	1	1	2	1
1975-1979	2	.25	1	1	3	1.5
1980-1984	3	.4	4	3	7	3.5
1985-1989	4	.5	9	8	13	6.5
1990-1994	32	39.5	23	19.3	55	27.5
1995-2000	36	44	77	65	113	56.5
No Resp.	3	.4	2	2	4	2.5

Clearly the trickle of Fuzhounese immigrants prior to 1990 was replaced by an ever increasing flood thereafter with the most striking expansion in the last half of the decade. Fully 84% of those surveyed had arrived in the US since 1990. 27.5% arrived between 1990 and 1994. Twice that number, or 56.5%, arrived between 1995 and early 2000. Only 10% arrived in the 1980s. While the lower number of respondents arriving in the 1980s may to some extent reflect the tendency of earlier immigrants to move out of Manhattan to live or establish businesses, the data reflects the overwhelming number of recent immigrants comprising the Church of Grace congregation.

A striking trend emerged in the 1990s regarding gender and immigration. Between 1990 and 1994 women comprised 42% of the Fuzhounese immigrants in the survey. Men comprised 58%. But between 1995 and early 2000, the proportion of women immigrants rocketed to 68% of the total and men declined to 32%. Of all Fuzhounese women surveyed at the Church of Grace, 65% arrived between 1995 and 2000 compared to only 19% who arrived between 1990 and 1994. Overall, the data shows the Church of Grace serving a rapidly expanding immigrant membership after 1990 and after 1995 a particular explosion of female parishioners.

In April 1992, the Church of Grace successfully bid on and purchased the old public bathhouse on Allen Street at the New York City public land auction. Opened at the turn of the twentieth century to serve Jewish and Irish immigrants who lived in tenements without hot water or bathing facilities, the building would now provide the latest group of immigrants with a spiritual center. Under the leadership of Chen Shewo and Board of Deacon's chairperson Chen Yonghuang, funds were raised, renovation plans approved by the city and construction begun. The Fuzhou language churches in Hong Kong loaned $50,000 for the purchase and renovation - a reverse of the flow of New York money to build churches in China. Church members in New York volunteered their time and money to complete the project.

Inside, the original bathhouse skylights were retained in the street level sanctuary. The old marble slabs from the showers were re-laid as the sanctuary floor. Overall the interior was styled to reflect rural Protestant churches everywhere in China, simple and unadorned. The pews are hand-hewn of plain wood, varnished and cushionless. In the

front a central pulpit stands on a raised platform, surrounded by a communion rail. A few potted plants are arranged on either side. The stark white walls are left without ornamentation. A single piano was purchased for playing hymns and a wooden offering box installed in the foyer entrance.

All appeared on course for the August 1993 grand opening. But one month beforehand, Elder Chen Shewo abruptly announced his resignation. By the end of July he had relocated to Texas, only nineteen months after his much anticipated arrival. Elder Chen's tenure at the Church of Grace had been stormy from the beginning. While a series of personal conflicts with the Board of Deacons and his wife's public unhappiness as a Cantonese among Fuzhounese created awkwardness in the congregation, the fundamental conflicts revolved around theology and power. Before accepting the congregation's offer to serve as Elder in Charge, Chen Shewo, a member of the Little Flock tradition (described in chapter 4), established one pre-condition. The Church of Grace must begin to follow Little Flock practices by offering communion every Sunday, not once a month as had been the church's practice. The Board of Deacons acquiesced. After his arrival in New York in late 1991 Elder Chen continued to press the Board to conform to Little Flock patterns. He insisted, for instance, that to be effective, all baptisms must be by immersion, fully submerging the new believer in water. He even argued that older members whose baptism was by sprinkling water on the head or anything less than full immersion should be rebaptized to ensure the ritual's efficacy.

Throughout Chen Shewo's service at the Church of Grace another conflict simmered between him and members of the Board of Deacons over the extent to which

each would hold power in the congregation. Accustomed to exercising control over congregational affairs, the Board had resisted Elder Chen's desire for more power. Despite his position as minister in charge, the Board, for instance, retained control over who would preach. Elder Chen only preached once a month. Preachers for other weeks were invited by the Board, often without consultation with Elder Chen. The strong Board, comprised of founding members of the congregation, chose to keep power in their hands. Chen Shewo, an older, strong leader accustomed to more deference, chose to retire to Texas to live with his son rather than work under those conditions.

In the crisis, Rev. Liu was asked to step in as senior minister on a provisional basis. The grand opening was pushed back several weeks and on August 22 the Allen Street church building was filled with over two hundred people in attendance. Chen Shewo returned from Texas for the opening ceremony. Over the next four years the aging Rev. Liu served as senior pastor with the help of three younger evangelists.

One of these was Mr. Chen Yonghuang, from the town of Guhuai south of Changle, who came to the US illegally in 1980 from Hong Kong and received citizenship under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Yonghuang served as chair of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees from their inceptions and during the renovation of the Allen Street building he went on unemployment benefits and served as construction manager. Rev. Liu encouraged him to attend seminary and in 1993 he relinquished leadership of the Board of Deacons to another Guhuai immigrant, Mr. Chen Baoping, to pursue his studies and begin work as the church's part-time evangelist. His

two sons, also members of the Board of Deacons, serve as choir director and manager of the church bookstore and database.

A second evangelist, also from the Changle area, was Ms. Lin Huamei who emigrated to New York in 1990. Huamei had been deeply involved in the Home of Grace in China (described in Chapter 4). In New York she worked for several years in garment shops before being invited by Rev. Liu to serve as church evangelist in 1995. At the Church of Grace, Huamei worked primarily with the Women's Fellowship group and conducted home visits. Huamei led a daily morning Bible study group based on the Home of Grace methodology developed by Dr. John Sung. Periodically she was invited to preach during the main Sunday worship service, an unusual occurrence in a church where during its history preachers and even worship leaders have been almost exclusively men. In 1997 Huamei started a house church meeting in her Brooklyn apartment which in 1998 became the Church of Grace's Brooklyn branch. Huamei left New York in the fall of 1998, however, in the aftermath of the conflict in the Home of Grace in Changle (see chapter 4). The Brooklyn branch continues under the guidance of the Church of Grace Board of Deacons and staff. Since then she has spent the bulk of her time at the Home of Grace training center in the southeastern US with periodic trips back to China.

Mr. Chen Songxi, the third evangelist, is from a tiny village just south of Changle and neighboring Guhuai and attended the Three Self Protestant Provincial Seminary in Fuzhou before serving for six years as evangelist in a rural church in Yutian, Changle County. In 1995 he left China to study at a small Chinese language seminary in New Jersey. His sister, owner of a Chinese restaurant on Staten Island, sponsored him. He

served an internship year at the Church of Grace in 1997-1998 and then was invited to remain as an evangelist with particular responsibility for the church's growing youth and young adult program.

The Split

By 1997 the umbrella under which the disparate groups in the Church of Grace gathered began to fall apart. For years the common immigrant experience, the shared Fuzhou dialect and more recently the unifying presence of the revered Rev. Liu had held together a congregation fundamentally divided along lines of hometown, class, and religious background. Tensions came to a head in the fall of 1997.

For several years, Rev. Liu had been seeking a replacement for himself. By 1997, at age eighty-five, his health was suffering under the stress of serving the growing Church of Grace congregation and the increasingly tense atmosphere surrounding the church's leadership. Surgery that summer left him unable to continue full time. In the fall of 1995, with Rev. Liu's encouragement, the Board of Deacons had invited Brother Wang De-en to visit for several months to explore the possibility of a longer term call. Brother Wang was not Fuzhounese. A native of Jiangxi Province he had, however, visited Fuzhou, was acquainted with Rev. Liu, and like him had suffered severely in China for his religious beliefs. From a Little Flock background, Brother Wang had recently come out of China to live with his daughter in Vancouver, Canada.

Brother Wang served the Church of Grace from December 1995 to July 1996 before returning to Vancouver to attend to what he called "family business". His nine month visit to the Church was uneventful but after his departure two factions began to

form on the Board of Deacons regarding his future with the congregation. Some, particularly those of a Little Flock background, strongly supported his continuation. Others resisted.

According to a member of the Board of Deacons at the time,

There were two factions in the Board of Deacons. I really liked him. His preaching was very clear. But he was also very rigid. If he thought you were wrong, he told you so. So some people didn't like him. He was also Little Flock. Some people didn't feel that Little Flock and the Church of Grace were a very good match.

But he [Brother Wang] never said you've got to dress in a certain way or do things in a particular way. He always talked about how to be a good Christian, how to be saved, how to have a good relationship with God.

I thought he should come. Most people on the Board of Deacons did. Only a minority disagreed. They were afraid perhaps of the Little Flock aspect. But the majority agreed. So we wrote him a letter of invitation He said he would decide but he did not. "I still have a few things to take care of, I'll let you know," he said.

In preparation, some members of the church rented a neighboring apartment for him in 1997. Among this group some were so excited about his possible return that they

purchased cots so they could live in the apartment for special retreats and study with him. But Wang De-en did not respond to their invitation.

According to Wang De-en, interviewed in 2000,

I'm from the Little Flock background. The Church of Grace did not have a Little Flock way of doing things or background. While I was there I didn't get involved in their structure or management. I focused on preaching mainly and didn't get involved in anything else. I only stayed a little while. I wasn't a good fit for that congregation. So I left.

According to a member of the Board of Deacons,

We still don't know why he didn't come. Some people probably misunderstood and mistakenly believed that the Board didn't want him. But that isn't what we decided. Maybe some of the Christians down in the pews had some things to say, but not the Board. They may have said, "Oh, Little Flock is such and such," but this was a minority. Brother Wang himself decided not to come back.

In the fall of 1997 another issue of religious practice rose to the surface - whether to have communion weekly or monthly. In the Little Flock tradition, communion (*bai bing hui*) along with preaching of the Word is considered the central ritual practice in Christian worship. (see chapter 4) Throughout China, Little Flock worship services begin with a communion ritual including extensive hymn singing and collective prayer followed by a second hour or more of preaching. Ever since Elder Chen Shewo's tenure began in

1991, the Church of Grace had honored the Little Flock tradition of weekly communion. But after the congregation moved to Allen Street and worship attendance began to expand rapidly in the mid-1990s, a consensus began to develop among some key church leaders that the congregation should shift to monthly communion. Their rationale rested on the sense that weekly communion made the service too long. For Fuzhounese immigrants working grueling hours in restaurants, garment shops and construction with at most one day off a week, a worship service extending beyond two hours constituted a hardship and an unreasonable expectation. They also felt that many people were beginning to come late to worship in order to miss communion, showing up only for the preaching. Others felt that weekly communion had become mere ritual and habit, diminishing its significance. Still other church leaders, including Rev. Liu and those from the Little Flock tradition, adamantly resisted the change. At the peak of the crisis in the fall of 1997, discussions and debates ensued among the Board on a nearly weekly basis.

Simultaneously Brother Wang De-en did return to New York but not to the Church of Grace. Instead, with the encouragement of Rev. Liu, he launched a Bible study group at the home of a Christian in Queens. Many of his supporters from the Church of Grace, while continuing to attend there on Sundays, started going to Queens to participate in his study group during the week. Several long term members and members of the Board of Deacons attended regularly, members who later formed the core leadership group of the New York House Church.

Then abruptly, the Board of Deacons decided to serve communion only once a month. Rev. Liu did not attend the meeting where this decision was made. On

discovering the decision, he immediately announced that since the Board had clearly been aware of his preference and had acted otherwise he assumed they no longer wanted him at the Church of Grace. Without further discussion he terminated his role there. The participants in Brother Wang's Queens Bible study also withdrew from the Church of Grace and encouraged others to join them. In January 1998, with Rev. Liu in attendance and preaching, these Christians, largely of a Little Flock tradition, started the New York House Church in the living room of Brother Lu Yangsheng on Monroe Street, ironically the same living room occupied by the Fujian Agape Fellowship (now the Church of Grace) when it split from Ling Liang Church ten years earlier.

Points of Conflict: Communion, County and Class

Theological differences, regionalism and class stratification proved to be the fault lines in the Fuzhounese Protestant community. In interviews, members of both congregations consistently identify the communion controversy as the catalyst for the schism. The communion controversy, however, represented a more deeply perceived theological divide. For years the minority Little Flock group had operated under the Church of Grace umbrella, and two senior pastors, Chen Shewo and Wang De-en were of Little Flock backgrounds. Rev. Liu never identified himself as Little Flock but consistently supported their positions. But within the congregation, power rested with the Board of Deacons, a group dominated by immigrants not of a Little Flock tradition. Additionally, none of the three evangelists hired under Rev. Liu's tenure came from a Little Flock background, but instead were influenced by the Home of Grace or the Three Self Patriotic Movement. Members of the Little Flock tradition increasingly saw their

concerns marginalized and their ritual traditions and congregational polity ignored or rejected. In this context, perhaps, it is not surprising that a group would split off in order to achieve more self-determination in its ritual form and institutional polity. Certainly the split had a clear precursor in the 1994 schism between Little Flock and TSPM - related Christians in Tingjiang. In New York, however, not the Christmas celebration, but a communion controversy served as the match that lit the already laid kindling. Other incendiary points of tension and conflict included regional differences and underlying complex issues of class and power.

Kinship, surname and village networks remain strong among Fuzhounese immigrants. At the Church of Grace, a sense of regional competition arose, particularly between people from the immigrant communities of Changle County and those along the banks of the Min, including Tingjiang, Lianjiang, Guantou on the north bank, Houyu and Xiangyu on the south bank, and Langqi Island. At the Church of Grace, many of those from outside Changle felt excluded from power. Popular discourse in the Fuzhounese Christian community posits that the Church of Grace is comprised solely of people from Changle. Other representations suggest that the congregation is mostly made up of people from the town of Guhuai.

In other words, discourse among the congregants suggests that after the conflict about communion, regionalism was the second most important cause of the split. A common characterization is often made that "All the people from Changle go to the Church of Grace. Folks from along the Min River all go to the New York House

Church." Survey data collected at the two congregations in May 2000 confirms the general contours of these claims.

Hometown

Location	The Church of Grace Total	% of Total	New York House Church Total	% of Total
Changle	94	54	18	27.7
Lianjiang	20	11.5	24	36.9
Tingjiang	16	9.2	5	7.7
Langqi Is.	12	6.9	4	6.2
Fuzhou	11	6.3	7	10.8
Mawei	4	2.3	3	4.4
Fuqing	1	.5	3	4.6
Wenzhou	1	.5	0	0
China-other	11	6.3	0	0
New York	4	2.3	0	0

As the above table shows, a full 54% of Church of Grace participants cited an area in Changle County as their hometown. Only 30% named the areas of Lianjiang, Tingjiang, Langqi Island, or Mawei north of the Min River. In contrast, hometown identification of participants at the New York House Church is almost reversed. 55% cited areas north of the Min as their hometown, including Lianjiang, Tingjiang, Langqi Island, and Mawei. Only 27.7% of participants claimed origins in Changle. Analysis of the data, however, shows that the split along regional or hometown lines is not as stark as portrayed in popular discourse. Although the data reflects a distinct correlation of region to church affiliation, the correlation is far from absolute.

Taking the suspicion of inherent regionalism to an extreme, an ardent though minority view within the Fuzhounese Protestant population holds that the Church of Grace is controlled by a small group of people from the town of Guhuai. Receiving particular

criticism has been a group of family, friends, and acquaintances from Guhuai who came to be known for the way they asserted their power to influence congregational decisions. In reality members from Guhuai do play a role out of proportion to their numbers in the congregation. All three chairmen of the Board of Deacons have been from Guhuai. All three evangelists have had a strong connection to the area. Young adult children of Guhuai immigrants also play prominent roles as leaders of the congregation. They themselves were born outside of the United States but because of language skills and educational experiences they serve as cultural brokers for their parents' generation and as a transitional group between them and the generation of Fuzhounese children now being born in the US. They serve as leaders in the powerful youth group, the choir, and the library/bookstore.

The four friends from Guhuai knew each other well in China and play an influential role in the life of the New York congregation. Their friendship and sense of loyalty has only been solidified by the controversies faced by the Church of Grace in recent years. At Board of Deacons meetings they are the most vocal and their opinions largely prevail. Forceful in their vision for the congregation, they stick together during meetings and conflicts. They are also extremely dedicated and hard working. Many of the primary functions of the congregation would not happen without their involvement. Outside the church, they socialize and communicate on a regular basis. Religiously all have been associated, directly or through family members, with the Home of Grace in China. From this snapshot of their role it is possible to see why those outside this network might feel marginalized from power.

Statistics regarding the relationship of hometown to choice of church perhaps say more about the differential geographic influence of indigenous theological movements in the Fuzhou area, particularly between the Little Flock, Home of Grace, and Three Self Patriotic Movement. In some towns, such as Tingjiang, both Little Flock and Three Self churches exist, as described in chapter 4. Most members of the Tingjiang Little Flock church attend the New York House Church, because of its familiar ritual practices and its reputation in the Fuzhou area as being the Fuzhounese congregation most receptive to Little Flock traditions and theology. But those Tingjiang residents from the TSPM - related church like evangelist Chen and her husband (discussed in Chapter 4) do not feel ritually comfortable at the New York House Church and so attend the Church of Grace. In the Tingjiang case, a regional determination may be mitigated by religious tradition. Understanding variation in patterns of affiliation between the Church of Grace and the New York House Church seems to require a consideration of both religious tradition and regional origins.

Fuzhounese Protestants, Class, and Immigration History

Interviews conducted during the course of this study also suggest that fundamental questions of class and power proved an additional source of conflict among church members and within the Board of Deacons. While more difficult to analyze, differential status and access to power appear obvious when certain factors are considered. Among Fuzhounese immigrants at the Church of Grace, variables in internal stratification include legal status, type of work, education level, residence prior to the US, language skills, and personal connections based on hometown. Fuzhounese immigrants at the Church of Grace

and the New York House Church represent several of the compressed waves or generations in recent Chinese immigration history to the US described in chapter 3.

Arrival	Characteristics	US Legal Status
1. Prior to mid-1980s	Residence outside China prior to arrival in US	Legalization under 1986 IRCA
2. mid-1980s to 1989	smuggled, rural, poor	Legalized in 1990 amnesty
3. to present	young, smuggled	No legal status
4. to present	both urban and rural, all ages	Legalized under 1965 INA family unification provisions
5. to present	children born & raised in US	Legal by birth in US
6. to present	children born in US, raised in China	Legal by birth in US

This categorization of the relative conditions of immigrant generations and predicaments of the Fuzhounese community provides a framework for understanding the causes of the structural stratification of the larger Fuzhounese population and - of particular concern to this study - within the Fuzhounese Protestant churches of New York's Chinatown. The attributes described among Fuzhounese immigrants as a whole are reproduced within the Protestant churches. And within the churches, differential access to power and authority often parallels the broader social and legal conditions of the membership.

A logical place to examine stratification within a congregation is in a comparison of the governance structure and the membership of the congregation. At the Church of Grace, an analysis of status markers, including legal status, type of work, educational level, residence prior to arrival in US, English and Cantonese language proficiency and personal connections based on hometown, as reflected in the Board of Deacons, is revealing. At the end of 2000, of the sixteen current members of the Board plus three

religious workers, all but one were born in the Fuzhou environs, none in the US. All but one have permanent legal status, including seven green cards, ten naturalized citizens, and one religious worker. Eleven of the nineteen (58%), were born in Changle County, including seven in Guhuai alone. Of the others, three were born in Fuzhou City, and one each in Min An, Tingjiang, Langqi Island, Minqing (west of Fuzhou), and Hong Kong.

Eleven of the nineteen (58%) lived elsewhere for a period of time before coming to the US, nine in Hong Kong, one each in Macau and Singapore. As a result, nine of them speak some Cantonese. Nine also speak some English, though only five speak it well enough to conduct business or in depth conversations. Six of them speak Fuzhou dialect and Mandarin exclusively. Occupationally four are professionals (two accountants, one a real estate manager and one a postal worker); three are in the restaurant industry (one as owner, two as chefs). Four work as seamstresses in garment shops (all women). Two are students, one a construction worker, one a housewife and two are retired. Eight have completed some higher education, two with masters and three with bachelors degrees. Seven are women and twelve are men, a reverse of the ratio of women to men among the total membership and worship attendance.

The aggregate membership of the Church of Grace Board of Deacons represents a privileged status in comparison to its own congregation's membership and in comparison to the core group of leaders of the New York House Church and its overall membership. The Board of Deacons at the Church of Grace is largely comprised of immigrants from generations one, two and four outlined above. Overall, membership of both congregations draws more heavily from wave three, revealing higher levels of undocumented status; of

employment as laborers in restaurant, garment and construction industries; of direct migration from rural areas around Fuzhou; and of language limitations. Nine of the nineteen Board of Deacons immigrated to the US prior to 1990 (45%) a rate more than double the overall percentage for the two congregations. The Board of Deacons is also significantly older. 45% of its members are over fifty years old. In the Church of Grace general membership, only 19% are over fifty.

The Church of Grace: Its Location in the Fuzhounese Immigrant Experience

In the discourse of transnational processes and globalization theory, the Church of Grace and the New York House Church should be considered nodes of access to an intertwined web of social and economic relations which spreads from this New York entry point throughout the city, across the country and eventually back to China. For many members of US society, visiting New York's Chinatown feels like entering a foreign country. Yet even for those grown accustomed to the "foreignness" of Chinatown, the Fuzhounese sections of the enclave still seem like another reality. Entering these churches is strikingly reminiscent of walking into a church anywhere in rural China, more specifically the churches around Fuzhou. The language changes. The clothing changes. Personal kinship and village networks become revitalized. The food changes. Even the smell of the bathroom changes. In a framework inspired by Victor Turner, the foyer of the Church of Grace is a liminal space for these Fuzhounese Christian immigrants, a place of transition between one reality and another, a place that removes them, even if temporarily, from their day to day reality and affords them a glimpse of something different (Turner 1969). Immigrants who outside these churches are foreigners in a very strange land are

transformed into insiders. Outside they cannot speak the dominant US language English or even the dominant Chinese dialects of Cantonese and Mandarin spoken in Chinatown. Inside, their language, Fuzhounese, is predominant. Outside they are seen by earlier Chinese immigrants as "country bumpkins" (*tubaozi*) and derided as uncultured and uncouth. Inside they celebrate a common cultural heritage of an exploring people.

In subtle ways the Church of Grace and the New York House Church, like the He Xian Jun Temple and the Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving described in chapter 5, provide sites for counterhegemonic discourse and community building that are central to immigrants' ability to create narratives and identities for survival on their immigrant sojourn in the US. Outside the immigrants are considered poor; inside they are considered as adventurous wage earners supporting a church in New York and family and community at home in China. Outside they are itinerant workers moving from city to city, job to job. Inside they find a central meeting place - a location for connection and reconnection with fellow Fuzhounese and with home. Outside they are isolated newcomers in a dominant US culture. Inside they are integrated into an extended Chinese communication network as news circulates among family and friends and recent arrivals from China. Outside they are exploited workers. Inside they may be respected members and leaders of their church community. Outside they may be illegal immigrants, undocumented workers, invisible to the US state or even targets of INS raids and crackdowns. Inside they are children of God who through the death of Jesus have had their sins forgiven and through baptism have been admitted into the fellowship of true believers whose sole comfort lies not in worldly status, honors or possessions but in the freedom associated with obedience to God.

Outside they are sinners, law breakers, one step away from imprisonment and deportation, the truncation of their dreams of freedom, liberation and financial success. Inside they are exhorted to remember that while a US green card may be nice, only God's green card will get them into heaven.

This religious orientation and theological self-understanding distinguishes these churches from other Chinatown social institutions. It demarcates the religious institution from the village or surname association, from the union or political party. People participate and contribute not only because of the familiarity of friendship and village, but because of the church's ability to convey meaning and religious significance to immigrants whose lives are more regularly filled with disorientation and dislocation.

Worship begins at 11 am at the Church of Grace. The pews fill gradually over the ninety minute service. Attendance averages just under three hundred (compared with the New York House Church: 80; and the Church of Grace's Brooklyn branch opened in 1998 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn: 70). The mailing list for the Church of Grace newsletter is well over one thousand with addresses across the United States, including some Immigration and Naturalization detention centers. As discussed in chapter 2 the Fuzhounese population is highly transient and attendance at these churches reflects this. The pews may be consistently filled, but the participants change from week to week. On Christmas Day, one of the few days of the year that all Chinese workers are guaranteed to have off and a time when Fuzhounese employed across the US return to New York City to visit friends and relatives, The Church of Grace's worship attendance soars to over six hundred. The sanctuary is packed, the second floor social hall and the basement

classrooms are flooded with people watching the service on big screen televisions. Noisy crowds spill out the front door and into Allen Street.

Like the New York House Church, the Church of Grace serves as a Fuzhounese Christian community center on Sunday. Over bowls of noodles served after worship the conversations roar. News of home from new arrivals. News of jobs and places to live. Discussions of recent events in China or in the US media. A member of the Board of Deacons passes along a video tape from his home church in Min An which describes their building project and solicits funds from overseas compatriots. The president of the Women's Fellowship collects money from members for an emergency relief gift for a middle aged garment shop seamstress whose husband just died of cancer in a Lower East Side hospital. She collects over $2,000 by the end of the day. The evangelists gather together first time visitors for a discussion of basic principles of Christian faith and invite them to join the baptism and membership class that will be starting in a few weeks. A group of college students meets in a corner to discuss their upcoming exams. The Church of Grace lacks the focal point of Rev. Liu at the New York House Church, but the decentralized interactions are wide ranging and have their own style and order.

The Youth Fellowship

The congregation at the Church of Grace is relatively young, particularly in relationship to the New York House Church. Survey responses show 63% of the congregation under forty years old and 80% under age fifty. In comparison, at the New York House Church only 43% are under forty years old.

A. The Church of Grace: Age of Members

Age	# of men	% of men	# of women	% of women	Total #	Total %
1-9	2	2.5	3	2.5	5	2.5
10-19	9	11	15	12.5	24	12
20-29	19	23.5	28	23.33	47	23.4
30-39	24	29.6	26	21.6	50	25
40-49	13	16	23	9	36	18
50-59	5	6	12	10	17	8.5
60-69	3	4	6	5	9	4.5
70-79	1	1.2	5	4	6	3
80-89	1	1.2	2	1.6	3	1.5
no resp.	2	2.5	0	0	2	1

B. New York House Church: Age of Members

Age	# of men	% of men	# of women	% of women	Total #	Total %
1-9	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-19	1	4.8	2	4.5	3	4.6
20-29	5	23.8	7	15.9	12	18.5
30-39	4	19	9	20.5	13	20
40-49	7	33.3	12	27.3	19	29.2
50-59	2	9.5	5	11.4	7	10.8
60-69	1	4.8	4	11.4	5	7.7
70-79	1	4.8	3	6.8	4	6.2
80-89	0	0	1	2.2	1	1.5
no resp.	0	0	0	0	0	0

The preponderance of young people is visibly evident in the Church of Grace congregation. Three children's Sunday School classes averaging 30-35 kids run concurrently with the main worship service. The choir is virtually an extension of the youth group. Young people provide the simultaneous translation during worship, run the sound system, play the piano, staff the library and bookstore. Sunday afternoons and evenings the church building belongs almost exclusively to the youth fellowship which spans older teenagers to young adults in their mid-thirties. After worship they have choir

rehearsal, youth fellowship meetings, Bible study, informal dinners and recreation, including setting up a Ping-Pong table in the main foyer.

The youth group is comprised of generations three and four as outlined earlier. They are both documented and undocumented, rural and urban, college oriented and work oriented. At the core of the group are college students or graduates, quite a few having grown up in Hong Kong, who easily cross from their parents' Chinese culture to the broader US culture. Switching easily between languages, they clearly imagine themselves succeeding in the mainstream US economy. This portion of the group serves as a bridge between the congregation and US culture. They are well represented on the Board of Deacons. They lead the English language children's Sunday School classes. They handle the congregation's financial accounting. They manage the computer database, library and bookstore. Once a year the youth fellowship organizes a weekend trip for the entire congregation. Buses are rented, a retreat center visited and booked, sight seeing side trips arranged, and money is collected. The youth handle all the arrangements, primarily because they are the ones in the congregation with the cultural skills to negotiate a foray of more than one hundred Fuzhounese immigrants beyond New York's Chinatown.

The youth fellowship's members also include undocumented restaurant, construction and garment shop workers who work grueling hours, speak no English, have little or no contact with mainstream US society and little hope of advancement beyond the Chinatown ethnic enclave economy. They are transient and fragile, in and out of hospitals. The physical strain shows on their faces and in their bodies. They take no leadership roles and attend as they are able, rarely lingering for informal conversation and activities. Their lives are too full of pressure and anxiety.

With such a complex mix of participants, tensions sometimes run high within the fellowship and between the fellowship and the rest of the congregation. With its aggregate set of skills, the youth fellowship holds significant power in the congregation, making them perhaps the second most powerful group after the Guhuai connection. They are well organized with a full slate of officers elected annually by the youth fellowship members. But this base of power also holds significant potential for creating tension and conflict. For instance, the youth group has advocated strongly for programs it supports and personnel assignments it views as helpful. It has also pushed the congregation to modernize its worship and structure, proceeding more rapidly than older members and rural young members are comfortable with.

In one recent incident, the church staff proposed splitting the youth fellowship into two groups to address what they saw as competing programmatic and spiritual desires. Some of the young people from rural areas in Fuzhou had advocated for more Bible study and prayer in the youth fellowship meetings. From their perspective, the group's current inclination toward fun, games, food and outside activities detracts from the main reason to even have a church group, namely to know God better and develop a deeper spiritual life. As an interim step, church staff have formed a separate youth Bible study and prayer group which meets Sunday afternoons following the full youth fellowship meeting. Leaders of the youth group, drawn exclusively from the college educated, urbanized immigrant, group have to this point resisted a permanent split of the fellowship, fearing it will ultimately diminish their power within the congregation. The evangelist responsible

for overseeing their work has since been reassigned to youth work in the Brooklyn branch church.

The Sister's Fellowship

Women comprise two-thirds of the average worship attendance at the Church of Grace, approximately the same as at the Brooklyn branch and the New York House Church. This is similar to churches in China though it does not reflect the larger Fuzhounese immigrant community which has a male majority. Nor does it reflect the gender composition of the church's formal leadership structure where both lay and clerical leaders are predominantly male. On the Board of Deacons, only seven of nineteen (35%) are women. Only one of the nine full-time religious workers employed by the Church of Grace in its history has been a woman. All three Board chairmen have been men. Women tend to take leadership in more traditional service and teaching roles. For example, all of the children's Sunday school teachers are women and women prepare most of the meals for the Sunday repast after church.

Women rarely take leadership roles in the worship services, either as preachers, liturgists or translators. The evangelist Ms. Lin Huamei provides an exception to this, offering a more public leadership role at the Church of Grace. Another exception occurs four times a year during those months with five Sundays. On the fifth Sunday the sermon time during worship is left open for testimonies given spontaneously by congregation members. On these Sundays the speakers are almost all women - middle aged and older - who speak usually in Fuzhou dialect about their families, homes and home churches, the

miracles and healings that brought them and their families to the Lord, and their supplications to the Lord Jesus to save them and all people from sin and death.

When questioned, most church leaders, male and female, claim that there is no fundamental difference in the status or roles of men and women at the Church of Grace. When asked why no women lead Sunday worship or why there are fewer women Deacons, or why the current women Deacons speak less frequently than the men in the meetings, leaders suggest that women are more bashful and less willing to be up front leaders.

But the actions and ideas of women at the Church of Grace are far from stereotypical and hardly monolithic. Rather their stories represent the complex set of negotiations in which Fuzhounese women engage as they navigate the relationship between gender, cultures, patriarchy, religion and the changes brought about by migration. In response to questions about the role of women in the church and the relationship between women and men, Ms. Chen Lihua, a member of the Board of Deacons reflects:

Do women and men have different roles or status at the Church of Grace?"

> *No matter in the house, the family or the church, women should respect men because God first created men and men are created from God's image and glory. Women are helpers of men. So at church, and in the family, men should have more responsibility. But in reality some of them are not willing to take responsibility. So women must also assume*

significant responsibilities. For example, as the Bible says in Judges, there was a woman judge named Deborah.

How about at home?

I think that in God's love, there should be no difference in the position of men and women in the family. They should love one another, with mutual respect.

What do you think the Bible has to say about the proper role of men and women?

In the Bible, Paul says women should be quiet and listen. He doesn't allow the women to speak. But that was at that time. Now it is different. Some women have more Spirit and gifts than men. I see that in the Bible there are also women prophets. The work of both women and men is a gift from God.

One place women are independently organized within the Church of Grace is in the Sisters Fellowship. The fellowship meets once a month for two hours on a Sunday afternoon. Bible study and devotions are the central focus of the gathering. The thirty to forty participants are predominantly middle age and older women, with the women maintaining a separate financial account and having their own treasurer. Collections are taken each month and used to provide honorariums for speakers and emergency assistance to members who encounter personal and financial difficulties. In certain situations the Sisters Fellowship may orchestrate, behind the scenes, church-wide collections for women or families in need, personally canvassing members to solicit financial contributions.

Sisters Fellowship meetings are conducted in Fuzhounese in order to include the oldest members who speak little or no Mandarin. The Sisters Fellowship serves as a central link for many of these elderly rural women who held positions of respect and leadership in their home churches and communities but who now find themselves isolated by language and culture since their migration to New York.

Theological positions, while generally conservative to fundamentalist at the Church of Grace are not well defined, publicly articulated or rigidly enforced on many issues, including the role of women. Interviews in Fuzhou though, particularly among Little Flock and house church leaders revealed at least one strain of local theology which explicitly defines women's role as subordinate. A leading figure in the Little Flock house church movement in Fuzhou, for instance, argued that while most house churches were comprised almost exclusively of women, when a man was present, even just visiting, he should be placed in charge of the service. In fact, he argued, even women should be called Brothers because the Bible foretells that in heaven there will be no female, only male. So even people today who outwardly appear as female, inside they have men's spirits. Other house church leaders, however, suggest that while men should hold more responsibility, these other views are quite extreme.

Given the prominent role of women in indigenous sects like the Little Flock and the Home of Grace in China, and the de facto leadership women provide in most aspects of the Church of Grace in New York City, we must assume that the conceptualization of women's roles in the congregation is a complex and contested one. In comparison to the more extremist view held by some house church leaders in China, Ms. Chen Lihua's

formulation reflects a sophisticated negotiation between religious tradition, cultural norms, perceived Biblical standards and congregational realities, a negotiation that embodies both the struggle of Chinese Christianity to confront the contemporary world where women's roles are changing and the struggle of the Church of Grace to adapt to the situation of its new immigrants.

Church of Grace: Social Concerns

In the fall of 1999, nearly two years after the split, a deacon at the Brooklyn branch, proposed to the Board of the Church of Grace the creation of the Church of Grace Social Service Corporation to cooperatively address the social needs of the congregation. In the proposal he suggested that if the congregation pooled its financial and personnel resources it could begin to confront the social crises facing the community. The Church of Grace Social Service Corporation could open its own company and factories. It could employ church members for fair wages and in decent conditions. It could even open a day care center for children whose parents would otherwise be forced to send them back to China to be raised by grandparents.

Complete silence filled the room when the deacon finished presenting his fifteen page handwritten proposal. Despite the significant social problems confronting the Church of Grace's constituent members, official public discourse rarely addresses human smuggling, sweatshops, grinding work conditions, high incidences of physical and mental illnesses, child labor, indentured servitude to Chinese snakeheads, long-term separation of family members in the US and China, oppressive indebtedness, prostitution or gambling. Never addressed in sermons, when such problems make the pages of the church newsletter

they typically serve as background for testimonies of miraculous healing and exhortations to pray for comfort and relief. While the church serves as a focal point for an extensive informal network of mutual assistance and information sharing, the congregation provides no formal programs or services to address the community's social needs. In this context, the deacon's proposal was quite stunning.

One older deacon rose to his feet and said, "This is what I always dreamed we should be doing." But others questioned whether or not a church in the US could legally engage in such activities. Some expressed the sentiment that this wasn't really a church's role. The majority felt that the congregation did not have the financial or human resources to make such an endeavor a reality, even if they thought it was appropriate.

Church leaders are clearly aware of the problems. Many of them came to the US illegally and are only recently, if at all, removed from Chinatown's most difficult work environments. Yet presented with a thoughtful, if slightly grandiose, proposal to engage the needs around them, they quickly moved away from a call to activism and on to other administrative business. Why?

Theological Orientation: The Church of Grace is theologically conservative, emphasizing faith not works, personal not collective salvation. Leaders wish to focus on the positive message of personal salvation and redemption revealed in the Biblical stories of Jesus's life and the exhortations for "right" living in the letters of Paul. They focus on the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God to comfort people in their distress. Says one older woman deacon when asked what Jesus means to her, "Jesus has taken my bitter life and given me rest and comfort in my sadness." Preachers urge congregants to

recognize their sinful ways, to repent, to ask God for forgiveness, and to receive the gift of God's grace, embodied in the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Lack of Experience: Practically, most church leaders are novices at church management. Most have never been responsible for a complex social organization of any kind before. Furthermore, Church of Grace leaders are uncertain of the proper role of a church in society, particularly the US society. In China the official religious domain is limited to personal devotion and congregational activities focused on piety, such as worship, prayer and Bible study. Domains of power and social action are reserved for the state.

For example, Falun Gong, the Chinese Buddhist meditation practice discussed in chapter 3 which recently has received significant coverage in Western media, remained of little concern to the Chinese government until 1999 when ten thousand followers staged an unanticipated demonstration encircling the residential compound of the highest government officials demanding more just treatment of members by local officials. The Chinese government immediately declared Falun Gong to be illegal and began widespread arrests of leaders and education campaigns to alert the general population to Falun Gong's dangerous characteristics. As locally based spiritual practice, Falun Gong was of little concern. But when it shifted domains to include power and social activism it came under direct and intense attack.

In the tightly controlled religious environment of contemporary China, only recently have local mainland Chinese churches begun to engage in socially oriented activities. These activities, which might include a Sunday afternoon free health clinic or a

senior citizens tai-qi class are carefully negotiated between local churches and the local Christian Council on the one hand, and the Religious Affairs Bureau and government officials on the other hand. Churches undertaking these activities are the Three-Self-related churches officially recognized by the Chinese Communist government and largely despised by many conservative Christians who consider them to be manipulated and theologically impure (see chapter 4). Having grown up in this environment, most Church of Grace leaders have limited experience with enacting church programs that move beyond a concern for personal piety and so have been reluctant to break new ground in their seemingly fragile congregation.

Personal Distance: For many on the Board of Deacons, the crises of the larger community are no longer personally urgent. While many of them passed through illegal status and difficult working conditions, most have achieved some level of success or at least stability. The failure to be moved to collective activism on behalf of their struggling Fuzhounese compatriots may in fact highlight the class stratification within the congregation between the Board and the general membership.

New York House Church

> *I hope you'll write a history of the house church movement in China.. It's a history that needs to be told. They say there were 700,000 Protestants in all of China in 1949. But by the time the reform campaigns of the 1950s were finished and the Cultural Revolution had taken its toll, the persecution had winnowed the number down to the true core, about 70,000 true believers. They were in the underground house churches.*

From there the house churches have grown in the last twenty-five years. Now there are millions in the house churches, maybe tens of millions. If you could write that story it would be a great contribution.

Rev. Liu Yangfen

When they split with the Church of Grace, the defectors named their new church "The New York House Church", staking a direct claim of connection to the house churches in China - to the evangelical, anti-Communist, largely underground lay Protestant Christian gatherings linked through a loose internal network. The core of the new congregation came from the Little Flock tradition and had been active in Little Flock related congregations in China. As discussed in Chapter 4 the Little Flock movement developed in the Fuzhou area and in recent years has spread rapidly across China both openly and underground, sometimes in churches, mostly in homes. In their internal operations and external relations, New York House Church members moved deliberately to place their new congregation back within the confluence of this historical and religious stream after years of compromise at the Church of Grace.

Since its inception, the name New York House Church has indicated a physical location, as well as a location in the religious and political landscape. After a year in the living room of Brother Lu Yangsheng on Monroe Street, the New York House Church moved into another home, this time the ground floor of a five story walk up on Market Street, newly purchased and refurbished by Philip and Mary Lam. Philip, a leading real estate manager in Chinatown and vice-chairman of one of the main Fujianese Associations, is a member of the Church of Grace Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees. Mary

serves as a translator for the US Immigration and Naturalization Service and US Federal court system and teaches Sunday School weekly at the Church of Grace. The couple, from Fuzhou via Hong Kong, have offered the ground floor of their home to the church for three years free of charge. They saw no problem supporting the New York House Church as well as the Church of Grace. According to Mr. Lam

> *Rev. Liu made a great contribution to the Church of Grace, helped us raise a lot of money to pay for the building and renovation. I'm sorry he left. But there are so many Fuzhounese in Chinatown now. They can't all fit in one church. Two probably wont be enough either.*

Sunday morning worship begins between 9 and 9:30 at the New York House Church in a distinctly Little Flock style with prayers and hymn singing. About thirty people are present. The women sit mostly on the right side of the aisle, men mostly on the left, though this tradition is not strictly observed and practically becomes more difficult to maintain as the floor-through hall fills to capacity later in the morning. A few women wear a black netted hair covering called a "*mentou*", another marker adopted by the more ardent Little Flock followers. Only eight to ten of the sixty women present will wear them on an average Sunday. Members of the congregation are distinctly older than the Church of Grace or the Church of Grace's Brooklyn branch. Fifty-nine percent of the women are over forty years old compared to forty percent at the Church of Grace and the Brooklyn branch. Fifty-three percent of the men are over forty years old, compared to only twenty-six percent at the Church of Grace and a mere twenty percent at its Brooklyn branch church.

Shortly before eleven, the core group of sisters and brothers of the congregation begins the *bai bing hui* or communion service. The Little Flock does not ordain ministers and its tradition discourages official leadership structures, believing instead in the equality of all members and relying on dedicated sisters and brothers to carry out the congregation's work. Today communion servers are all lay people, also according to Little Flock tradition. Rev. Liu, seated in the front row, participates as an ordinary member. First flat unleavened bread, most likely matzo, is crumbled in a plate and passed among the congregation. Members stand in their place when the plate is passed to them. Most people take a small flake and eat at their own discretion. Not everyone takes a piece; even some long term members abstain. "In our tradition, if there is something between you and God that you haven't worked out, you shouldn't take communion. It could be bad for you," says one member in explanation. After the plate is returned to the altar, a clear glass mug of sweet grape colored punch is circulated. Most core members drink directly from the cup. Others accept the offer of a plastic spoon to dip in the cup. Used spoons are collected, washed and reused the next week. The ritual is an exact replica of *bai bing hui* in Tingjiang and other Little Flock churches in Fuzhou. By eleven o'clock the hall is packed and the preaching begins, usually in Fuzhou dialect, occasionally in Mandarin translated into Fuzhou dialect by one of the members.

Reverend Liu Goes to Work

When the worship service concludes well after noon with a few more hymns and prayers, the subdued congregation comes alive. A huge pot of Fuzhou noodle soup or Fuzhou rice soup is brought from the back room which serves as church kitchen and

dormitory for one of the brothers. Hot steamed buns, plain and with meat filling appear as well. The eighty to ninety people in the room crowd around, gather up their luncheon repast and settle back into small groups scattered around the room, drawing the individual chairs into circles for conversation.

It is at this point that Rev. Liu's work for the day really begins. For much of the morning ritual he participates as an equal among the brothers and sisters. For much of the afternoon he will be the center of activity, remaining in the hall late into the day talking with a long line of parishioners who, despite the pressures of work and family, take the time to approach this pillar of the Fuzhounese Protestant community, a symbol of religious virtue and a source of encouragement and assistance through the trials of their American journey.

Rev. Liu is well known in this community. People know that he is well connected and that he will help church members if he can. Rev. Liu knows doctors, people with places to stay, sometimes job possibilities. Rev. Liu also knows a good deal about the legal system and even a few trustworthy Christian lawyers. Or perhaps someone who will deliver their infant child back to grandparents in China for a reasonable fee. In the popular imagination, there is little Rev. Liu cannot do. And so people take turns talking to him on Sunday afternoon, sharing with him their troubles and concerns and hopes. Says one woman deacon, "When brothers and sisters come with problems we try to help them out. Sometimes we know about jobs or housing. We do what we can." On Sunday afternoon and at times throughout the week, the New York House Church becomes a Fuzhounese Christian community center. Rev. Liu serves as the focal point of the network.

In addition to members already in the US, a second group of people who seek out Rev. Liu and the New York House Church are newly arrived immigrants. Rev. Liu's reputation is well known in Fuzhou, too. Fuzhou Little Flock churches often tell their parishioners that upon arrival in New York they must visit him and the New York House Church. In some ways the church has become a stop on a Fuzhounese Christian underground railroad and Rev. Liu is the station master. New arrivals, both legal and undocumented make their way to Market Street on Sundays. Their first task is to share news of home. How is their church? Their pastor? A well known Brother or Sister? Has the church had any problems with the government? Then people discuss their current conditions and ask if there is anything Rev. Liu or the church can do to help. Sometimes at first, help is just a prayer, words of encouragement and a sense that their problems have been heard and understood. They are not alone - an important feeling as one sinks into the travails of the ethnic enclave. Later as opportunities arise, word may come of more material assistance.

On occasion Rev. Liu has become actively involved in supporting recent immigrants' applications for political asylum based on claims of religious persecution. His assistance may take several different forms, among them providing letters of support for member's asylum applications, verifying church membership in New York and China. On occasion Rev. Liu also accompanies members to their court appearances and testifies on their behalf. He is well informed about church-state relations in Fuzhou. Even the most subtle conflict or controversy eventually reaches his ears. He also has more than half a century of personal experience of religion in China. An elderly, well-spoken (in English as

well as Mandarin and Fuzhou dialect) ordained minister, he has proven an ideal expert witness for cases involving claims of religious persecution.

Rev. Liu says he accepts no payment for his help. Likewise, he never accepted a salary during his tenure at the Church of Grace. But Chinese Christian practice is for church members to generously support their pastors. Gifts of money are usually transferred discreetly in small red envelopes, the traditional Chinese "*hong bao*". In addition, Rev. Liu lives in the home of a parishioner and is supported by his daughter who owns a restaurant in upstate New York. At the New York House Church, grateful immigrant parishioners who insist on making a financial gift may be encouraged to channel their support to the New York House Church or to house churches and their leaders in China.

A third group of people who visit Rev. Liu on Sundays at the New York House Church are Chinese Christians who are planning to return to China on short-term mission visits to underground house churches. Throughout the year small groups of two or more Chinese US citizens travel as tourists to Fuzhou and other places in China smuggling in Bibles, audio tapes of sermons, inspirational Christian messages and a wide variety of written material. They quietly visit house churches and house church leaders delivering these materials and illegal financial contributions from Christians in the United States. Some of them are individually motivated. Many represent Chinese Christian churches in the New York area which have taken up a particular concern for the growth of Christianity in China. Most are ardently anti-Communist and these ideological beliefs feed directly into a desire to support the Chinese Protestant house churches, typically portrayed

as severely persecuted in a country lacking religious freedom and seen as valiantly resisting the godlessness of the Chinese state.

Rev. Liu is a central figure for many of these short-term mission trips. His word and letter can open many Chinese doors. A rich repository of information about the history and contemporary reality of China's house churches, he is a valued resource to many a traveler. Rev. Liu himself produces tapes of sermons and purchases quantities of books and pamphlets with the support of New York House Church members. He sends the materials to China, often with representatives of these short-term mission groups. Although not traveling himself, his son is a regular visitor to the house churches, bringing greetings from his father and delivering not insignificant resources. Those returning from China make a return trip to Rev. Liu and the New York House Church to report on their activities and findings and to receive his blessing for a mission successfully accomplished.

Conversion in Chinatown

Twice a year, at Easter and again in the fall, the Church of Grace conducts baptismal ceremonies during Sunday morning worship. At the New York House Church baptisms are less frequent but occur at least once a year. As many as forty people have been baptized on each occasion at the Church of Grace and as many as twenty each time at the New York House Church. These baptisms are clearly the ritual high points for two congregations in which preaching of the Word and reading the scriptures are normally the central elements of worship.

At the Church of Grace a baptismal pool has been built into the elevated altar area in the front of the sanctuary and for baptism ceremonies the church is jam packed with

family, friends and an extremely curious congregation. In specially constructed dressing rooms beside the altar women and men shed their street clothes and don long white robes. Assisted by members of the Board of Deacons they step into the pool. "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen!" says the minister and plunges them under the water. They arise gasping, startled, many of them crying from the experience. They step out of the pool drenched and, braced by church members, stagger back to the dressing rooms, the water cascading from their soaked robes and hair (and sometimes socks) onto the marble floor of the old bathhouse, cleansed spiritually as generations have been cleansed physically in that space.

Beside the baptismal pool looms a bank of photographers and videographers with some of the most sophisticated camera equipment available in New York City. A flood light constantly illuminates the scene. Flash bulbs erupt as the convert is immersed and as she or he is raised again. In a process carefully orchestrated by church volunteers, within forty-five minutes each person will receive an official certificate of baptism, complete with name, date, location, pastor's signature and color photograph commemorating and documenting the occasion.

The baptismal scene at the New York House Church occurs on a smaller scale but is no less exuberant. A four foot high wooden frame has been built to form a precarious baptismal pool on the floor that serves as the sanctuary. A hose runs warm water from the sink in the back bathroom into the pool lined with heavy plastic sheets. The crowd is more raucous than the Church of Grace. People talk while children play and cry all through the ceremony. A small crowd mills around the pool at all times. One of the

congregation's core group administers the baptismal immersion, a major difference with the Church of Grace where an ordained minister must be present. After the immersion a group of church leaders, including Rev. Liu, gather around the person to pray and offer a blessing. The documentation process lacks the Church of Grace's precision clockwork but each person is photographed individually and a group shot is taken at the conclusion of the service.

Conversion rates of Fuzhounese Protestants in New York are lower than might be anticipated in a population emigrating from a largely non-Christian country. Surveys show that 60% of those in attendance at the Church of Grace had become Christians in China with a slightly higher rate at the Brooklyn branch church (64.5%). 26% of the Church of Grace congregation had been baptized since arrival in the United States (31% at the Brooklyn branch) and 12% made no response, suggesting they may be still uncommitted seekers. These figures contrast sharply with the New York House Church where fully 86% of those responding to the survey had become Christians in China and only 11% had converted after arrival in the United States. Although the conversion rates of these three congregations in the US, especially the Church of Grace and its Brooklyn branch, are not insignificant, clearly these Fuzhounese congregations draw upon a strong base of Protestants born into Chinese Christian families or converted in China prior to migration.

A. The Church of Grace: Conversions (by Location)

Gender	China	%China	US	%US	No Resp	%No Re	Other Location
Men	46	57	29	35.8	4	4.9	2=2.5%
Women	75	62.5	24	20	21	17.5	0
Totals	121	60	53	26.4	25	12.4	2=1%

B. Brooklyn Branch of the Church of Grace

Gender	China	%China	US	%US	No Resp	%No Re	Other Location
Men	9	60	5	33.3	1	6.7	
Women	22	66	10	30.3	1	3	
Totals	31	64.5	15	31.3	2	4.2	

C. The New York House Church

Gender	China	%China	US	%US	No Resp	%No Re	Other Location
Men	18	86	3	14	0	0	0
Women	38	86	4	9	2	5	0
Totals	56	86	7	11	3	3	0

Understanding Differential Conversion

The differential rates of conversion between the Church of Grace and the New York House Church require further analysis. The congregations clearly differ in physical location in Chinatown, physical layout of their worship space, worship style, and theological orientation, factors which when considered together may provide insight into the differences. For people seeking out a new place to worship or to explore a new religious belief system, these factors may prove significant in their choice of congregation and ultimately translate into greater or lesser numbers of converts in each church.

For example, it is much easier to find the Church of Grace which is located on Allen Street, a major thoroughfare of Chinatown. Its building is obviously a church and its signage is clearly visible, suggesting the openness of a public facility. The New York House Church, in contrast, is tucked away in a residential building on the much smaller Market Street. At first glance the presence of a church is not obvious, and its small signboard is not prominently displayed.

It is not possible to be a casual or anonymous visitor to the New York House Church. The door to the worship space is always closed during the service and one cannot see in without opening the door. The door opens into the middle of the room. The ninety or more seats are mostly filled. Once inside the visitor stands midway between the front and rear of the room, exposed to half the congregants as she or he awkwardly seeks a seat in the crowded room. In comparison, the Church of Grace has two large doors that lead to an expansive entry foyer. From there the visitor or seeker can look through glass paneled doors into the sanctuary or discreetly slip into a seat in one of the back pews.

The worship style and format of the Church of Grace is also more inviting to visitors. The service is significantly shorter than at the New York House Church. In addition, the Church of Grace distributes bulletins describing the order of worship, programs available for the congregation and inspirational readings. During the worship service the liturgists formally welcome visitors, make community announcements and invite seekers to join membership classes. The New York House Church worship service proves much more difficult to penetrate for visitors unfamiliar with Little Flock traditions and rituals.

While both congregations espouse a conservative to fundamentalist theology, the New York House Church draws its members, core beliefs and practices from the indigenous Chinese denomination, the Little Flock. This tradition, expressed primarily in its worship liturgy, communion sacrament and preaching, is highly dogmatic and so less

approachable to newcomers. Worship and theology are more eclectic and less dogmatic at the Church of Grace.

While it is not possible to identify any single characteristic of these two churches as the causal determinant for their members' differential rates of conversion in the US, the combination of factors provides insights into the interplay of obstacles which may deter newcomers and seekers from participating in one congregation over the other.

One of the Church of Grace evangelists categorizes conversions of Fuzhounese in New York into four categories. The first includes long time members of churches in China who because of extenuating circumstances never received baptism. Clergy may not have been available to conduct the ritual or in the case of underground churches no opportunity was available. The second category of converts includes those who attended church irregularly or were familiar with Christianity in China but never made the commitment to "believe in the Lord" until they arrived in the United States. The third category includes Fuzhounese who only heard about Christianity once they arrived in New York while the fourth is comprised of people who are not Christians, do not believe in the fundamentals of Christian teaching, but are using the conversion process to bolster their claims for political asylum based on religious persecution. This, believes the evangelist, is not a small number, but a number which is very difficult to be specific about. "It is hard to be sure who is insincere. We ask them basic questions about their faith and provide basic teachings about the church. But ultimately it is between them and God."

The ritual emphasis placed on baptisms reflects their symbolic importance for these religious communities. They are at their core outward and visible signs of inner

conversion, a transformation of these individuals in both body and spirit. And they are for many a personal yet public identification of their life journeys with a larger metanarrative, that of the Christian faith. This is no small shift for Chinese born and raised in an environment infused with non-Christian religious practices, a culture deeply tied to popular religious traditions entwining the individual with family, lineage and village, and a political discourse which has disparaged and at times harshly repressed all religious belief.

The baptism ritual also has tremendous importance for those congregants observing or administering this sacrament as they recall their own conversion and reflect on their own life journey. At the Church of Grace and the New York House Church the baptism, the washing away of sins, the purification of body and soul, the acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, as guiding light and source of life, represents for many of these immigrants a claim to a new life narrative and a search for new frameworks of meaning for their radically changed reality.

Chapter 7

Safe Harbor

For most Fuzhounese immigrants the journey to America begins in the rural towns and villages to the north and south of the Min River. Whether by boat or plane, across the Pacific or through Eastern Europe, with legal status or without, ten thousand miles later they arrive on the banks of another river, the Hudson, in an urban metropolis that is one of the most globalized cities in the world. Propelled by the desire to make a better life for themselves and their families and carried along by what is almost a rip tide of powerful transnational flows of capital and migration, these immigrants are cast ashore on Manhattan's Lower East Side. But instead of a safe harbor what most Fuzhounese find is the swirling vortex of a ravenous labor market and the rolling hydraulic of a densely constructed and unforgiving ethnic enclave where deportation is always a possibility.

For many Fuzhounese immigrants the religious communities considered in this study are islands in the storm. They are a place to rest, to realign bearings, plan for the next step, find news from home, learn from other seafarers tips for navigating the treacherous waters, and give thanks to their deity for making it this far. Once immigrants are more established, the religious communities may serve as locations for throwing life lines to others, for sending word home that they have survived and for making concrete religious expressions of their gratitude for safe passage and good fortune.

In summary I will argue that the ethnographic data gathered in this study of religious Fuzhounese immigrants and their religious communities suggests five conclusions.

1. Fuzhounese religious communities serve as a key location for mobilizing the social capital necessary for surviving in the ethnic enclave, particularly in the following ways:

a. Reterritorializing previously existing social networks

b. Exchange of information

c. Exchange of financial resources

d. Support for the legalization process

2. Hierarchies of class may be replicated within the religious communities that reflect differential immigrant experiences and reinforce the stratification of the enclave.

3. Religious Fuzhounese immigrants have successfully constructed religious networks between home and host religious communities in Fuzhou and New York that significantly affect the migration process, the immigrant incorporation process in the United States and the changing economic, political, social and particularly the religious situation in Fuzhou.

4. Fuzhounese religious communities serve as sites for establishing alternative identities to the dominant hegemonic structures and discourses of the ethnic enclave and of US society.

5. Immigration is a theologizing process - a search for meaning

While these findings are discussed specifically in relationship to Fuzhounese religious communities, I would argue that they suggest a paradigm for understanding immigrant religious communities in the US and also serve to enhance the contemporary study of immigrant incorporation into US society.

1. ***Fuzhounese religious communities serve as a key location for mobilizing the social capital necessary for surviving in the ethnic enclave.***

In chapter three, this study interrogates the claims of Portes and Zhou that the ethnic enclave provides a positive alternative to the primary and secondary economy for recent immigrants. In the enclave, they claim, practices of ethnic solidarity among co-ethnics enable new immigrants without financial capital to employ social capital - language, cultural affinities, common history, family and kinship networks, hometown and regional associations - to expand their earning capacity to the level of the secondary economy without leaving the enclave. Through a review of the ethnic enclave literature this study has sought to critique that claim and to cast doubt on the premise that the enclave is a beneficial alternative to immigrant incorporation.

As Portes and Zhou suggest, ethnic solidarity clearly exists. But the concept must not be used to paint too rosy a picture. Within the ethnic enclave imagined solidarity among Chinese is shattered by internal conflicts of class, region, gender, language group, political perspective and religion. Kwong (1997a) has argued that the idea of ethnic solidarity is manufactured to reinforce the image of employers as benevolent patriarchs in the face of their exploitative labor practices. The concept of ethnic solidarity clearly needs to be considered within the larger context of immigrant realities and systemic disciplining

of the labor force. Otherwise the notion of ethnic solidarity may be glibly used without consideration of its complex role in the immigrant experience.

Likewise, social capital exists. While for most Fuzhounese social capital is not a long term solution to their poverty, exploitation, and marginalized status in the US economy, still mobilization of social capital is a key survival strategy for immigrants with no financial capital and no legal immigration status. While for most Fuzhounese the ethnic enclave is a trap, utilizing social capital enables them to survive in it. In this regard, the processes Fuzhounese utilize to mobilize social capital for survival should be carefully considered.

The cases examined in this study consistently reveal the important role of Chinatown's Fuzhounese religious communities as sites for mobilizing the social capital necessary for survival in the hostile and exploitative environment to which Fuzhounese immigrants are relegated. Social capital is mobilized in the following four ways.

a. Reterritorializing previously existing social networks

Through these religious communities Fuzhounese immigrants reconnect to social networks based on kinship, surname, village associations, religious affiliation or even specific theological principles and practices within a religious tradition. Newly arriving immigrants reconnect with family, friends, fellow villagers, members of the same home church or temple by visiting specific religious communities in New York. As noted previously, the Fuzhounese population of New York is extremely transient, moving from location to location, for instance from New York to Miami to Seattle to New York again in pursuit of employment. Religious communities serve as points of reconnection in the midst of

dislocation. Sunday services or monthly lunar celebrations are occasions for interaction of people with a shared history and set of beliefs. Religious rituals provide regular gatherings throughout the year and year after year. For those working outside the New York area, return visits may be scheduled to coincide with religious holidays and festivals such as Christmas, Easter, the procession for the Assumption of Mary, the Chinese New Year or the three annual celebrations of the goddess Guan Yin. In the case of the Church of Grace, newsletters keep parishioners in touch with the congregation.

Under the auspices of these religious communities opportunities for creating new social networks also exist. Through activities and interaction immigrants engage with others they may not previously have known but have come to know through the auspices of these Buddhist, Daoist, Catholic or Protestant religious communities. Unlike many other social and cultural institutions, religion provides the basis for immediate and often profound acceptance within a community of people who may have previously been strangers.

b. Exchange of information

Fuzhounese religious communities serve as a central location for the exchange of information needed for survival in the enclave. Over Sunday noontime bowls of Fuzhou noodles or at temple festivals, immigrants engage in a give and take of information regarding employment opportunities, available housing, transportation methods and location of low cost and reliable health care, either Chinese or Western. Beyond the main ritual settings, each congregation's religious professionals serve as key facilitators of this information exchange. Present at the religious facilities on a daily basis, these religious

workers interact on a frequent basis with parishioners who drop in to solicit advice and share needs or successes.

c. Exchange of financial resources

In certain circumstances Fuzhounese religious communities make available or facilitate the exchange of financial resources among immigrants. At times the religious institution itself may have a process for redistributing resources, for instance the Fuqi Buddhist Temple's revolving loan fund for repaying smuggling debts or the Church of Grace's Sisters Fellowship Compassionate Fund which is used to assist members who are ill or unemployed or stricken by other misfortune. At times the exchange of resources may occur on an individual to individual basis though still under the rubric of solidarity within the religious community. An example would be the $2,000 raised by parishioners at the Church of Grace for a woman whose husband had died.

d. Support for the legalization process

Fuzhounese religious communities may also serve as sites for organizing support of applications for legal immigration status. Immigrants exchange information and offer advice about the process. The efficacy of particular lawyers and paralegal firms are discussed. As in the case of Rev. Liu, clergy and other religious professionals may assist in the legalization process. In the Christian churches letters verifying membership may be prepared, baptism certificates provided, and documentation of religious conditions in China submitted, all of which may be of particular benefit for those seeking political asylum based on religious persecution.

With the exception of the Catholic congregations which are distinguished by their location in long-established Catholic churches integrated into the Catholic hierarchy and social service networks, the other Fuzhounese religious communities lack formal social service programs. As independent organizations starting from an infrastructural void, these congregations have extensive informal networks for mutual assistance but their organizational infrastructure has not evolved to include the organized services that have become the hallmarks of so many urban US Christian churches and have so often drawn on government funding. Causes for this lack of a social service component range from theological resistance to lack of institutional experience, to reluctance to enter partnerships with US government bodies.

2. Hierarchies of class may be replicated within the religious communities that reflect differential immigrant experiences and reinforce the stratification of the enclave.

Each of these religious communities is conceptualized, not broadly as Chinese, but specifically as Fuzhounese. Despite internal differences, Fuzhounese do imagine a commonality within their community. Perhaps the central organizing principle of this imagined community is the Fuzhounese local dialect. But the Fuzhounese immigrants are by no means monolithic, nor are the Fuzhounese immigrant religious communities. Despite often effective efforts to utilize Fuzhou regional identity and Fuzhou dialect as frameworks for mobilizing social capital and ethnic solidarity, in reality the Fuzhounese immigrant community is stratified along lines of financial capital, legal status, gender, language ability, home region, and circumstances of arrival. These hierarchies of class and

status may be replicated within the religious communities, serving to reinforce the stratification in the surrounding enclave.

The case study of the Church of Grace offers a compelling example of the possibilities for replication of the enclave's stratification. The Board of Deacons represents an elite within the congregation, on the average evidencing significant advantages related to legal status, type of employment, language ability, educational level, and personal connections in comparison to the congregation as a whole. This stratification and its institutionalization in organizational form places the Board members in a position to administer and benefit from the collective resources of the entire congregation whether that be the services of the staff, access to equipment, utilization of the property or opportunities for self-enhancement.

The split between the Church of Grace and the New York House Church reflects the possibility that hierarchies within the enclave may not only be replicated but reinforced within the religious community. The purchase, renovation and administration of the new Allen Street property was a collective effort of the congregation in 1992-1993. $300,000 was raised to purchase the property. An additional $300,000 was raised for the renovation of the dilapidated bathhouse into a multi-activity church facility. In addition, parishioners, especially members of the Board of Deacons, contributed thousands of hours of volunteer labor to the project.

The religious conflict and theological differences within the Church of Grace that escalated in 1997 were clearly intertwined with contentious issues of power and status, resulting in the minority leaving to establish the New York House Church. After years of

operating within the Church of Grace under the umbrella of Fuzhounese solidarity and enduring what they considered a marginalization of their theology, religious ritual and individual participation in the decision making process, this minority group moved out on its own. The conflict over communion was highly symbolic but the process of decision making within the congregation was perhaps the most problematic as members of the central power circle forced through a decision over the minority's objections and in the absence of their main advocate, Rev. Liu. The result was not only a schism of a theologically diverse congregation into two separate religious groups. The split entailed more materialistic ramifications as well. Those who left, clearly marginalized within the power stratification of the Board of Deacons, ended up worshipping in a borrowed living room for a year, followed by a rent-free lease on a floor-through of a Chinatown residence. Those who remained at the Church of Grace, by contrast, retained ownership over the Allen Street property - which, after renovations, was worth more than $600,000. All of the assets of the congregation, including the bank account, equipment, furnishings, and significantly, the legal status of "religious organization" which had taken so many years to acquire and which provided such substantial benefits to its members, stayed with them. Conflict and struggle within the congregation resulted in a redistribution of power and resources which disenfranchised those who already had less status and power and aggrandized the position of those in positions of superiority.

3. *Religious Fuzhounese immigrants have successfully constructed religious networks between home and host religious communities in Fuzhou and New York that significantly affect a) the migration process, b) immigrant incorporation in the United*

States and c) the changing economic, political, social and particularly the religious situation in Fuzhou.

Recent studies of Chinese transnationalism (Ong and Nonini 1997) reviewed in Chapter 2, focus primarily on middle class and economic elites who have the financial resources and legal status to live and work in multiple locations. For them, transnational identity as part of an overseas Chinese diaspora is a bi-product of economic privilege. Within this framework, the human smuggling syndicates become the primary representatives of Fuzhounese transnationalism. The vast majority of Fuzhounese immigrants, including those smuggled into the US like those on the Golden Venture are portrayed as objects of action by transnational flows and processes. The current study reveals Fuzhounese religious immigrants as determined, ingenious agents and actors in constructing transnational migration streams utilizing transnational flows to build networks of support and communication which mitigate against global schemes of exploitation and dehumanization. Many contemporary studies of transnationalism and diaspora tend to obscure the understanding of the structured inequalities of class and race confronting minorities in the US national scene. In response, this study has helped to contextualize contemporary Fuzhounese immigration within the exploitative and highly stratified ethnic enclave.

Some Fuzhounese who arrived prior to the 1986 or 1989 amnesties or who have successfully applied for US political asylum may be able to participate in a more extensive set of transnational practices and identity building. They may have the legal status and financial stability to travel between New York and Fuzhou and engage in activities which

span the two locations. Examples include the evangelist from the Tingjiang Three-Self-related Protestant church who hopes to live part-time with her children in the US and serve part of the time as a religious worker in her home congregation. Or Lin Huamei whose religious beliefs and commitment to the work of the Home of Grace led her to consider establishing a house church in New York, all the while continuing relationships with the US training center and traveling regularly to China to support Christian co-workers in the rural areas around Fuzhou.

For the majority of Fuzhounese disciplined by the economic regime of Chinatown and the citizenship criteria of the US state, their transnationalism is much more nascent, grassroots and fragile, an ocean-borne transnationalism of the working poor, not the jet-set transnationalism of the elite. It is a transnationalism of the common folk, not of highly organized institutional structures or well-to-do transnational migrants in the Chinese diaspora described by Ong and Nonini. Unlike the transnational entities so often discussed which transcend the state, most Fuzhounese immigrants mobilize small-scale transnational networks from a position deep within and vulnerable to state structures. As workers, many undocumented, they are disciplined by economy and state alike. But beginning with their international migration utilizing the human smuggling networks, these immigrants seek to creatively overcome the restrictions of the state system, its borders and boundaries and the local and global capitalist regime.

Religious communities are arguably the oldest transnational networks. Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim and Protestant missionaries have traveled the world and built global linkages between local communities. To date, however, discussions of religious

transnationalism have largely focused on the transnational institutions and global structures of world religions that transcend state boundaries. (Rudolph and Piscatori 1997) Transnational religious networks being established by Fuzhounese immigrants are more independent, multi-faceted, decentralized and opportunistic. Yet their influence spans the migration process between China and the US, the immigrant incorporation process, and the changing economic, political, social and religious situation in Fuzhou.

While clearly in early stages of formation, these networks are strong enough that events in one place affect the other. When the Home of Grace in Changle split and was closed down by the Chinese government, ramifications of the events were felt strongly in the Church of Grace in New York. In fact, a split occurred within the Church of Grace. Members took sides in the China controversy. Some stopped attending the New York congregation, suggesting that the core Guhuai group on the Board of Deacons had favored one side over the other. In a parallel yet reverse process, when the split occurred between the Church of Grace and the New York House Church, word spread quickly among churches in Fuzhou. Local congregations and leaders, especially those of the Little Flock orientation, soon took sides and aligned themselves with one New York congregation or the other.

a. The migration process

In the cases of the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving and the New York House Church, the communities at times play a direct role in the migration process. The young man with his duffel bag clearly identified the Daoist temple as a way station along the international journey between Chang'an and Indianapolis. Leaders of the New York

House Church lend advice, money and even access to immigration authorities to parishioners seeking to emigrate from Fuzhou to New York. The leaders of the Home of Grace training center in the US seek to bring other persecuted leaders out of China as well as local leaders who come for short term training before returning to work in China.

b. The immigrant incorporation process

Transnational networks link churches and temples in Fuzhou with counterparts in New York. These transnational networks are utilized by religious immigrants and religious communities to ease the incorporation process in New York. In Fuzhou the New York congregations are well known. Fuzhou's religious leaders regularly advise parishioners to seek out their New York counterparts for assistance, ranging from jobs and housing to loans for repayment of smuggling debts and legal advice.

c. Influence in Fuzhou

In recent years the transnational religious networks have significantly increased immigrants' influence in the Fuzhou area. Perhaps the most visible signs are the large new religious structures that dot the Fuzhou countryside - ancestral halls, churches and temples built with immigrant remittances. Underlying these material symbols is a revitalization of local ritual practices enabled by a relaxing of local government restrictions and fueled by significant international support from overseas Fuzhounese. Money is flowing in as are people and other material resources. Despite the outmigration of significant numbers of rural constituents, religious programming in the area continues to expand thanks to remittances.

The expansive nature of these activities enabled by transnational networks between New York and Fuzhou can be registered in the worried responses of the Chinese state. In 1994 the government instated a requirement that all religious sites must be registered with the Religious Affairs Bureau. In many respects this reflects the proliferation of unauthorized religious sites and buildings. That the government directed destruction of twenty Catholic churches in the Changle area alone reveals the self-confidence with which local Catholics have approached local church-state relations and the vehemence with which government authorities have responded. The arrest and harassment of underground Protestant and Catholic church leaders reflects the government's discomfort with the influence of their growing networks and in particular, the involvement of those outside China in Fuzhounese religious matters.

This study clearly demonstrates the significance of transnational religious networks established by Fuzhounese immigrants. Through these networks they seek to transcend regulated national boundaries and construct broader notions of citizenship and participation. They utilize their emerging transnational religious networks to articulate an alternative existence and identity in the face of the homogenizing influences of global capitalism and the US labor market. Their participation in the life of their home communities, encouraged, facilitated and rewarded through religious networks assists in creating and enhancing a transnational identity which may in fact serve as alternative to immigrant incorporation in the host society.

4. *Fuzhounese religious communities serve as sites for establishing alternative identities to the dominant hegemonic structures and discourses of the ethnic enclave and of US society.*

For undocumented workers denied the rights of citizenship and excluded not only from the mainstream of US economy and culture but also the centers/structures of power within the ethnic enclave, Fuzhounese religious communities serve as sites for establishing alternative identities to the dominant hegemonic structures and discourses.

In her book Contesting Citizenship in Urban China (1999), Dorothy Solinger examines the case of tens of millions of rural Chinese who have illegally migrated to China's urban centers to participate in the exploding market system despite lacking proper household registration (*hu kou*) to live fully as urban citizens. The market, she argues, while enabling some to get rich, cannot supply robust or permanent solutions to the problem of citizenship for these transients. And so, she suggests, migrants act on their own to form proto-citizens of themselves against the designs of the state. Oddly enough many rural Fuzhounese choose to emigrate to the US because of the unlikely prospect of regularizing their rural *hu kous* in urban China. In an odd parallel, many Fuzhounese in New York find themselves in a situation similar to China's internal migrants, unable to establish full citizenship rights in their new context. Despite actively participating in the US economic regime, including paying taxes, the most basic rights of US citizens are denied them: legal status, labor protection, health care, the social safety net, not to mention the right to vote.

Through participation in the religious community's varied activities - religious, social and institutional, immigrants enact an alternative construction of their role in US society. In addition, the religious community serves as a liminal space, a transitional place, a place in between that touches both New York and China. It recreates physical surroundings, kinship and village networks, rituals, language and food that recall life in China. It reconnects to cultural and religious traditions back home. Yet it is in the midst of America. Religious communities allow Fuzhounese immigrants to imagine themselves differently in the midst of a hegemonic discourse which describes them in unflattering and dehumanizing terms.

On Guan Yin's birthday hundreds of recent immigrants from Fuqi village leave their workplaces for lunch and make their way to Master Lu's temple on Eldridge Street. Exiting the temporal framework of American capitalism where the sweatshop clock keeps track of the grinding hours and number of garment pieces produced, the journey to Master Lu's temple transports these urban workers into an alternative notion of time and place. In the temple their lives are dominated not by the rhythms of the sewing machine and steam press, nor by fourteen hour days and six day work weeks, American holidays, customs and the dense interactions of New York City. Inside the temple the familiar rituals connect them to the rhythms and pulses of home, to the Chinese lunar calendar, and to their rural roots. Re-evoked in these rituals are home-bound ways of conceptualizing health, morality and fortune. The rituals also reconstitute and reterritorialize frameworks of self-understanding affirmed by the presence of old friends, fellow villagers and talk of home. For a moment, the temple's festival serves to resist the dominant hegemony of time

and place and provides congregants an opportunity to reconceptualize their lives and work, their past, present and future.

5. Immigration is a theologizing process

"I wasn't sure if I should go to New York," said Chen Shufan, reflecting on his decision to immigrate twenty years earlier.

> *One young lady in the church said to me, "If God wants you to go, you will get there. If God does not, you'll remain in Hong Kong. But if you go to New York you will start a Fuzhounese church." So I decided to go. It was really miraculous. God spoke to me through that young woman and I knew once I got safely to New York that we would start a Fuzhounese church. And we did.*
>
> *Chen Shufan*

> *I just wanted to make money. My family was poor. I knew I could make money in America. But I said to the god, "If you let me get there safely, I will build a temple for you back in China." I worked in a restaurant for a while, but the god said, "no, the smell of meat is too powerful. I can't come to you when you smell like that. Stop and open a temple in New York first." So I did. He does his work. I do mine. Now we have a temple for him back home too.*
>
> *Master Lu*

It wasn't an easy decision. But I was getting older. My wife had died. And my family had already left. When my visa came through I decided to go. But I hoped that when I got to America I would be able to minister to the Fuzhounese people there.

Rev. Liu Yangfen

This study has consistently shown the significant role of the Fuzhounese religious communities in assisting immigrants in coping with the exploitative ethnic enclave and in building transnational networks that resist the dehumanizing effects of the global capitalist system. But a functionalist analysis of religion in the Fuzhounese community is inadequate to capture the full significance of what religion means in the life of Fuzhounese immigrants.

It has been suggested that the immigration process is fundamentally a theologizing process - an exploration of the relationship between the immigrant and God. Why am I here? Where do I fit in? Why is this happening to me? What does it mean? The suffering. The hope. The back-breaking toil. The movement of people from Fuzhou to New York is driven by circumstance and opportunity. The migration is motivated by poverty in Fuzhou, political uncertainty in China, lack of job opportunities, and competition with neighbors. It is facilitated by global flows and a multi-billion dollar human smuggling industry, and a rapacious US market for cheap exploitable labor. Yet immigrants interviewed for this study, like those quoted above, consistently described their experience in religious terms. For them the immigration experience engenders a search for

meaning, an attempt to understand themselves and others like them within the purposes of the cosmos.

In the story that opens chapter 1, Li Lin sits in the bow of his smuggling vessel singing the hymns of his childhood. In the cross, in the cross.... His song is an effort to reach back, to return to his youth, his home, his mother, his childhood faith, his homeland. It is a claim to not being alone. In the cross, to be with Jesus, for Jesus to be with him, even in suffering. His song is also a song of desire, the desire that his journey have meaning, have a purpose, fit into some larger conceptualization of the universe. His song gives voice to the emotions not only of his transnational journey, but of a transtemporal journey between what has been, what is, and what will be. It is a song that seeks to return meaning to life, to make sense of transition, dislocation and uncertainty.

When members of the Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving place their prayer requests on the altar in New York they invoke their connection to systems of meaning and power directly related to their life at home in China. They trust that the deity of the home temple will travel across the ocean, just as they have, migrating to America to respond to their request to cast light on their hopes and dreams. Furthermore, they believe that that deity will continue to speak through a transplanted spirit medium who seeks to bridge the space between human and divine despite conducting her work half a world away in a storefront temple or a Chinese take-out restaurant. And they pray that their system, which has enabled them to interpret the past and predict the future, to connect with what has been and glimpse their destiny, will be sustained while being stretched beyond anything they had ever imagined.

When I left Fuzhou for Taiwan in 1949 I had no idea I would someday help to establish a Fuzhounese church in Hong Kong. When I thought about migrating to New York I never imagined that I would help start Fuzhounese churches in America. I'm an old man now and I'm very proud of what this old, poor, simple Christian has done. But the other night I had a dream. I dreamed that I returned to Fuzhou after all these years. I returned to Fuzhou to start a church. Imagine that. Fuzhou. Hong Kong. New York. Fuzhou. A full circle. My life would make a full circle. I've already started talking to some of my friends to see if this could be possible. I know the churches in Fuzhou are already growing. But this church would be special. It would be made up of people who had left Fuzhou for New York and come back to stay. Or of people who go back and forth. That would be truly amazing.

Chen Shufan

The massive outmigration from the towns and villages surrounding Fuzhou is but the most recent chapter in the story of Fuzhounese reaching beyond their shores as a way of improving life for themselves and their families. The influx of Fuzhounese to New York's Lower East Side is but the latest chapter in the story of immigrants to the United States seeking to exchange their labor, at great personal cost, for the possibility of dreaming new dreams. The increasing complexity of the global capitalist system, the deepening exploitation, not only by the US economy but by Chinese co-ethnics in the enclave economy, and the willingness of the US government to ignore the dilatory effects

of the Fuzhounese' marginalized legal status significantly complicate the experience of these contemporary immigrants.

In light of these obstacles, rapid Fuzhounese advances in establishing social institutions such as religious communities is striking. The extent to which they have mobilized transnational religious networks is remarkable. Fuzhounese immigrant religious communities in Chinatown are poised to play a unique role in immigrant incorporation. As more and more Fuzhounese regularize their legal status and stabilize their economic conditions these institutions and networks can only continue to grow in complexity and depth. Their development over time will require ongoing attention and study both of the effects on Fuzhounese immigrant experience in New York and of the implications for religion and society in China.

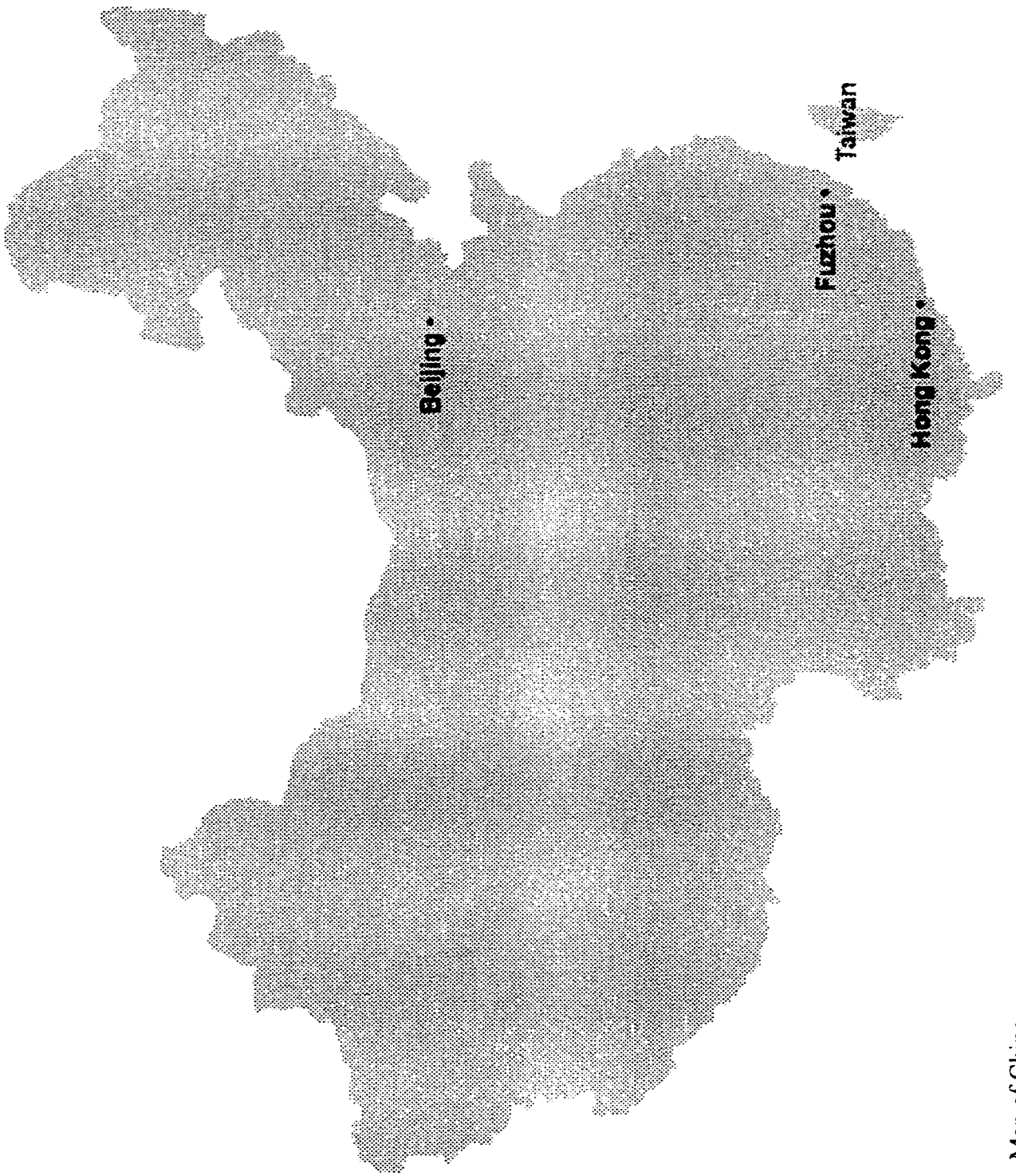

Figure 1. Map of China

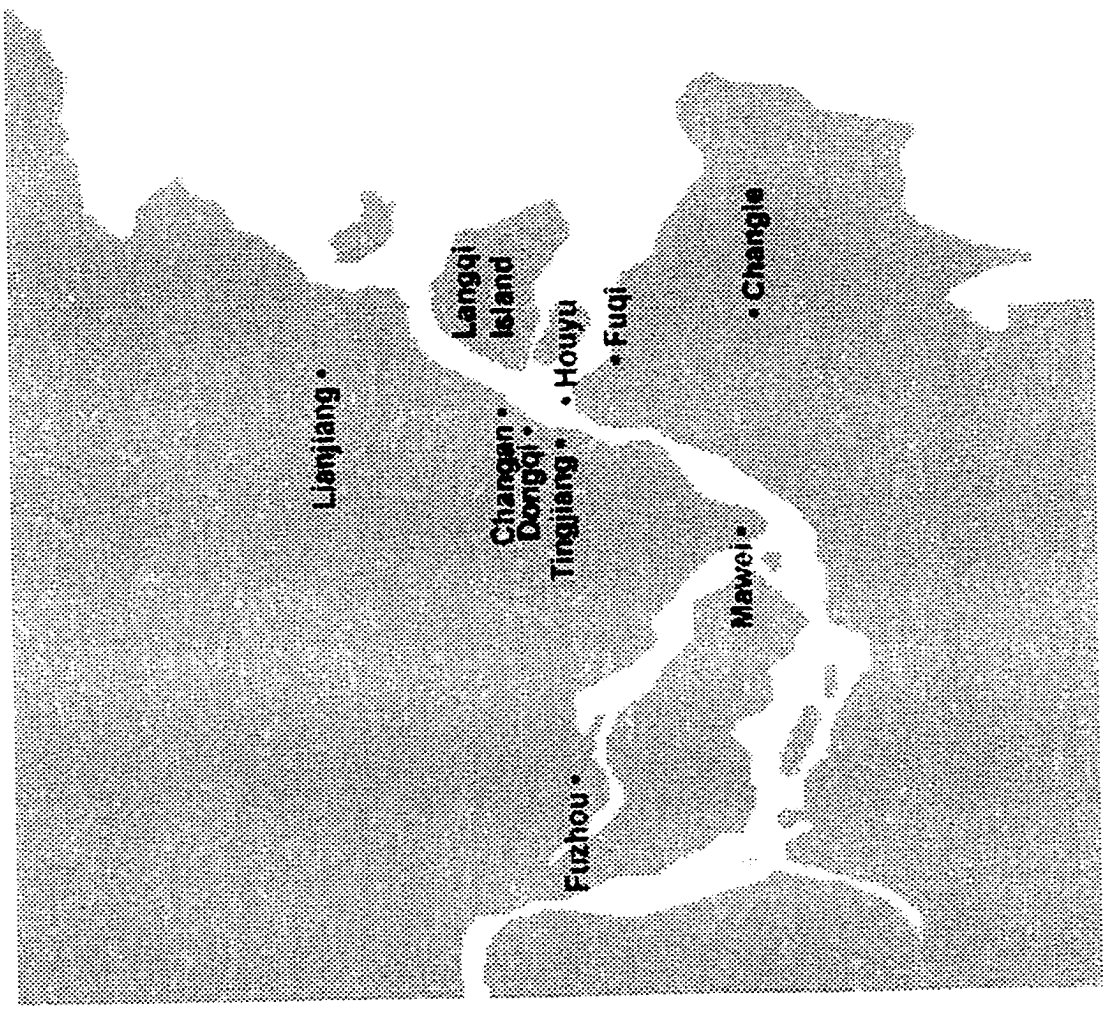

Figure 2. Map of Greater Fuzhou Area

Appendix A
Religious Sites in Chinatown, New York

Address	Name	Zip Code
48 Allen Street	Church of the Living Lord	10002
48 Allen Street	New York Ling Liang Church	10002
48 Allen Street	Chinese Christian Herald Crusade	10002
133-35 Allen Street	Church of Grace to the Fujianese	10002
113 Baxter Street	Catholic Church of the Most Precious Blood	10013
106 Bayard Street	Columbus Park Fortune Tellers	10013
20 Bowery	Huang Da Xian Buddhist Temple	10013
20B Bowery	Da Gu Buddhist Temple	10013
81 Bowery	North Pole Gold Temple	10002
81 Bowery	Temple of Transcendental Wisdom	10002
119 Bowery	Shen Suan Fortune Teller	10002
139 Bowery	Church of New York Chinatown	10002
225 Bowery	The Salvation Army Chinatown Corps	10002
227 Bowery	Bowery Mission	10002
121 Bowery	New York Amitabha Society	10002
268 Broome Street	Zheng Yin Si Buddhist Temple	10002
280 Broome Street	Kehila Kedosha Janina Greek Jewish Synagogue & Museum	10002
359 Broome Street	Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral	10013
378 Broome Street	Most Holy Crucifix Roman Catholic Church	10012
171 Canal Street	Daoist Temple of Heavenly Thanksgiving	10002
133 Canal Street	Da Chen Mahayana Buddhist Temple	10002
245 Canal Street	Fa Wang Temple, China-Buddhist Association	10013
214 Centre Street	Guang Ming Zen Temple, American Society of Buddhist Studies, Inc.	10013
227 Centre Street	Guang Gong Temple and Vegetarian Restaurant	10013
253 Centre Street	Chinese Evangelical Church: Christian Evangelical Mission	10013
65 Chrystie Street	Grace Faith Church	10002
83 Division Street	Eastern Zen Buddhist Temple	10002
7 East Broadway	Fo De Temple, Transworld Buddhist Association	10002
103 East Broadway	Chinese American Buddhist Association Dragon Temple	10002
1-3 Eldridge Street	Elephant Mountain Chinese Popular Religious Shrine	10002

12 Eldridge Street	Eldridge Street Synagogue, Congregation Khal Adath Jeshurun	10002
20 Eldridge Street	Pu Zhao Temple, Buddhist Association of New York	10002
24 Eldridge Street	Temple of the Holy Mother, Chinese popular religious temple	10002
58 Eldridge Street	Church of the United Brethren in Christ in NYC	10002
71 Eldridge Street	He Xian Jun Buddhist Temple	10002
77 Eldridge Street	Bethel Chinese Assembly of God	10002
111 Eldridge Street	Fu Lai Temple, Chinese popular religious temple	10002
162 Eldridge Street	NY Chinese Alliance Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance	10002
166 Eldridge Street	Sea of Galilee Pentecostal Church, Assemblies of God	10002
5 Elizabeth Street	Trust in God Baptist Church	10013
165 Elizabeth	Shinji Shumeikai of America, NY Center	10012
27 Forsyth Street	St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church	10002
28 Forsyth Street	True Buddha Temple of Compassionate Grace	10002
66 Forsyth Street	Church of Eden: Seventh Day Adventist	10002
126 Forsyth Street	Assembly of God Church	10002
3 Henry Street	Mariners Temple Baptist Church	10038
48 Henry Street	Our Savior Episcopal Church	10002
61 Henry Street	First Presbyterian Church	10002
121 Henry Street	Shi Zhu Shan Xian Buddhist Temple	10002
136 Henry Street	Chinese Missionary Baptist Church of New York	10002
137 Henry Street	Chevra Mishkan Israel Anshei Zetel	10002
138 Henry Street	Trinity Community Church	10002
141 Henry Street	St. Teresa's Roman Catholic Church	10002
141 Henry Street	St. Teresa's Convent and Rectory	10002
154 Henry Street	Chung Te Buddhist Association of New York, Yi Guan Dao Temple	10002
173 Henry Street	Jiu Xian Jun Buddhist Association	10002
158 Henry Street	Guan Yin Temple, World Buddhist Center	10002
115 Hester Street	Tian Yuan Gong, Chinese popular religious temple	10002
154 Hester Street	Overseas Chinese Mission	10013
22 Howard Street	New York Christian Short Term Mission Training Center	10013
90 Lafayette Street	Rescue Mission	10013
90 Lafayette Street	Chinese Christian Assembly	10013

63 Madison Street	Chinese United Methodist Church	10002
83 Madison Street	St. Joseph's Convent	10002
97 Madison Street	Chinese Evangelical Mission	10002
99 Madison Street	Buddhist Society of Wonderful Enlightenment	10002
193 Madison Street	Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, South Manhattan Congregation	10002
32 Market Street	Jiu Xian Jun Buddhist Temple	10002
38 Market Street	New York House Church	10002
1 Monroe Street	St. Joseph's Parish School	
5 Monroe Street	St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church	10002
15 Monroe Street	Tingjiang Temple	10002
105 Mosco Street	Transfiguration Greater Chinatown Community Association	10013
64 Mott Street	Eastern States Buddhist Temple	10013
29 Mott Street	Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church	10013
13 Oliver Street	Pan Gu & Guan Yin Temple	10038
21 Oliver Street	St. James Convent	10038
23 Oliver Street	St. James Rectory	10038
15 Pike Street	Sung Tak Buddhist Association	10002
4 Rivington	New York Chinese Alliance Church	10002
61-63 Rivington Street	Chinese and Spanish Church of the Nazarene	10002
58 Rivington Street	Jewish Synagogue	10002
16 Spring Street	Eastern US Taoist Association	10012
195 Worth Street	True Light Lutheran Church and School	10013

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