



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## Retrieving the past glory: social memory, transnational networks and Christianity in contemporary China

Liu, J.

### Citation

Liu, J. (2017, February 2). *Retrieving the past glory: social memory, transnational networks and Christianity in contemporary China*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45842>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45842>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/45842> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

**Author:** Jifeng Liu

**Title:** Retrieving the past glory : social memory, transnational networks and Christianity in contemporary China

**Issue Date:** 2017-02-02

# RETRIEVING THE PAST GLORY

Social Memory,  
Transnational Networks and Christianity  
in Contemporary China

JIFENG LIU





# **RETRIEVING THE PAST GLORY**

Social Memory, Transnational Networks and Christianity in  
Contemporary China

**JIFENG LIU**

Front cover illustration: Trinity Church

Photo by Jifeng Liu

Back cover illustration: Gulangyu Island

Photos provided by Zhan Zhaoxia

Designed by Jifeng Liu

Printed by Ridderprint

© 2017 Jifeng Liu

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission of the author.

# RETRIEVING THE PAST GLORY

Social Memory, Transnational Networks and Christianity in  
Contemporary China

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,  
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,  
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties te verdedigen op  
donderdag 2 februari 2017 klokke 16.15 uur

door

Jifeng Liu

geboren te Zoucheng, China in 1984

## **Promotors**

Prof. Dr. H.L. Murre-van den Berg

Prof. Dr. F.N. Pieke

## **Promotiecommissie**

Prof. Dr. E.G.E. van der Wall

Prof. Dr. H. Harrison (University of Oxford)

Dr. A.Y. Chau (University of Cambridge)

The research for this dissertation has been financially supported by the China Scholarship Council (CSC), the Leiden University Fund (LUF), the Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC) at Leiden University and the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC).

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>A Note on Romanization, Names, Monetary Units and Acronyms</i>	<i>xi</i>
1. Introduction: Christianity and the Negotiation of the Past	1
Understanding world Christianity in the context of East Asia	4
Christianity, urban China and historical narratives	9
Shifted paradigms in social memory research	21
Doing fieldwork in Xiamen	32
Organization of the dissertation	38
2. Xiamen History, Society and Christianity	39
Xiamen as a place	39
A brief history of Xiamen	42
The structure of contemporary Xiamen society	47
Social change on Gulangyu Island	50
Christianity in modern Xiamen	56
3. “Dare to Rehabilitate Those Who Were Blackened”: Discursive Reversals on Western Missionaries	67
A memorial service revisited	67
The re-creation of a historical figure	72
Former rightists: remembering the dead, grieving for the living	80
World heritage and local politics	82
The invisible presence of the state	89
The church behind the scenes	94
Conclusion	98
4. The Glory Passes: Social Change in a Church and on an Island	101
Celebrating eighty years	101
The history of Trinity Church	108
The story of the Old Pastor	114
Glory no more	124
Conclusion	130

5.	The Production of Christian History	133
	The shades of “cultural aggression”	133
	The official production of Christian history	135
	Individual efforts at making alternative narratives	145
	Recording the suffering of the church	152
	Conclusion	155
6.	The American Face of Christianity: Global Mission and Local Politics	159
	Rainbow: an American mission in Xiamen today	161
	Running the mission and the company	164
	English teaching as Christian mission	170
	Imaging America through Rainbow	175
	New missionaries, American ministry and church politics	180
	Conclusion	188
7.	Conclusion	191
	Revisiting church and the state in today’s China	191
	Dynamics of negotiating the Christian past	194
	Reencountering world Christianity	202
	<i>Bibliography</i>	207
	<i>Chinese Characters</i>	229
	<i>Summary</i>	235
	<i>Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)</i>	237
	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	239

## Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks go first to those in Xiamen who were willing to be participants in this project. They are Simon Chen, Chen Yiping, Chen Yongpeng, Dai Zhaozhang, the late Fang Youyi (1931-2015), Hao Zhiqiang, He Bingzhong, Hong Buren, the late Huang You (1926-2015), Li Qixian, Lin Beilei, Lin Shiyan, Peng Yiwan, Wang Shitai, Wu Zhifu, Ye Kehao, Zhan Zhaoxia, Zhu Libing, Zhu Zixian, and those who are left anonymous for safety reasons under the uncertain political conditions. I am also deeply indebted to Pastor Chen Shiyi, an octogenarian who served in Xiamen's Trinity Church after retiring from the Nanjing Theological Seminary in the late 1980s and has been a citizen of the United States since the early 1990s. Since it was not convenient for Chen to access the Internet, I emailed my questions to his daughter who forwarded them to Chen, Chen then wrote down his answers on papers that were scanned and sent to me by his daughter. During my short stay in Wenzhou, Pastor Liang accommodated me and opened his church to me. The ideas he shared with me helped me compare the situation of Christianity in Wenzhou and Xiamen.

My supervisors, Heleen Murre-van den Berg and Frank Pieke, provided intellectual guidance and helpful encouragement throughout my years at Leiden University. Heleen is very approachable and always makes me feel comfortable. She has constantly cheered me up whenever I fell into depression or lacked confidence in my research. By virtue of his extensive knowledge of and great insight into contemporary China, Frank has inspired me with a deeper understanding of Chinese society and guided my research on the right track. Further debts are owed to Li Minghuan, my former supervisor at Xiamen University, who encouraged me to study in Europe and take a broad vision in scholarship.

This dissertation has benefited from the comments of the members of the Doctorate Committee: Ernestine van der Wall, Henrietta Harrison and Adam Yuet Chau. As established scholars in the culture and history of Christianity, modern Chinese history and the anthropology of Chinese popular religion respectively, these three members offered constructive criticism and suggestions from different perspectives.

I would like to give my special thanks to Chris White who has been a constant source of inspiration and support. As a specialist in Christianity in Southern Fujian, his benevolent presence is a warning to me not to muddle through anything. Thanks to his "inspection," many errors in facts and many misunderstandings have been avoided. Many thanks are due to Wang Zhixi whose introduction to a church in

Xiamen sparked my interest in Chinese Christianity in 2011. During my brief stay in Hong Kong in May 2015, he lent me a dozen of books inaccessible in the Leiden University Library for me to refer to. I would like to express my gratitude to the late John de Velder (1944-2015) and his wife Linda Walvoord, as well as Huub de Jonge, for having helped me in collecting materials concerning the American medical missionary John Otte's experiences in the United States and the Netherlands.

I wish to extend my gratitude to many people who have helped by reading my draft chapters or discussing with me, among them Alexander Chow, Bram Colijn, Markus Davidsen, Barend ter Haar, Lyu Yunfang and Mark McLeister. I was not alone during my stay in Leiden because of a group of doctoral students researching a number of topics in Modern China Studies who have listened patiently to my repeated references to my research and generously shared their ideas with me. They are Chan Hiu Ling, Chen Bo, Chen Liang-yu, Chen Meiwen, Ma Xiao, Ma Xinrong, Tan Yujing, Wang Shu-li, Wang Zhongyuan, Yang Lijing, Zhu Jingshu, and others.

Studying in Europe had been a long-cherished wish of mine that was made possible because of the financial support from the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Fieldwork research for this project was funded by the Leiden University Fund (LUF), the Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC) at Leiden University and the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC). I am also grateful to the Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for its financial support for a conference trip in May 2015 and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) at the University of Copenhagen for the SUPRA Nordic scholarship that made my academic visit possible in September 2015. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

Thanks are owed to Rosemary Robson who invested a lot of time and creativity in editing the final manuscript. Needless to say, I am responsible for any remaining errors.

I am deeply indebted to my family for their years of emotional and financial support. This research is dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandfather, Zhang Dafu (1939-2010), who lived through the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists. During the Land Reform Campaign in the early 1950s, his father was "wrongly" categorized as a landlord (even those "rightly" classified as landlords did not deserve persecution in many cases), and consequently he and his five elder brothers were deprived of any chance to attend secondary education and therefore never had the opportunity to enter university. His identity was permanently restricted to that of a peasant and his dream of becoming a musician or an intellectual never came true. To my surprise, in his later years he appreciated Mao Zedong, the man who should take the prime responsibility for his unhappy experience of life, for creating an "equal" society; in contrast, he criticized Deng Xiaoping, who directed the national reform and opening-up policy, for the wide disparity between rich and poor. In the last three years of his life, I was reading for my master's degree in

sociology. I was definitely an intellectual in his eyes. He implicitly expressed his wish that his life could be recorded. Having been bored with his repeated telling of his story since I was a teenager, I had no interest in his biography at that time. Not until I took up social memory and alternative history as themes in this research did I begin to understand his wish, that is, an ordinary person's history needs to be recorded. Although it is too late, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather with a sense of guilt but in the hope that he knows about it.



## A Note on Romanization, Names, Monetary Units and Acronyms

The *pinyin* system of romanization of Mandarin Chinese (*Putonghua*) is used for most Chinese expressions, except when the organization, individual or author is better known under another spelling (for example, *Kuomintang* and John Sung instead of *Guomindang* and Song Shangjie).

I have translated the Chinese names of churches and places into English, since these names are often descriptive. In some cases, it is important to note that urban changes have necessarily brought changes in names or that some of these churches have inherited names from their predecessors. For example, the New District Gospel Church (*Xinqu fuyin tang*), located in Huli district, quite a new administrative district only established in 1987, was said to have been constructed to take the place of the abandoned Gulangyu Gospel Church. In the case of most of the respondents in this research who are Chinese, their names are used in the Chinese order (surname followed by given name). However, when I refer to those Chinese scholars whose publications are in English in the text, their full names will follow the European order (given name precedes surname).

All monetary units in this book appear as Chinese dollars (*yuan*) unless otherwise indicated. While the official renminbi-US dollar exchange rate of 1995 was about 8.33 *yuan* = 1 US dollar, in 2013 it was around 6.15 *yuan* = 1 US dollar.

Frequently used acronyms are as follows:

CCC: China Christian Council

CCP: Chinese Communist Party

CPPCC: Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

GMC: Gulangyu Management Committee

LMS: London Missionary Society

KMC: Kulangsu Municipal Council

KMT: *Kuomintang*, Chinese Nationalist Party

PCE: Presbyterian Church of England

PRC: People's Republic of China

RAB: Religious Affairs Bureau

RCA: Reformed Church in America

TSPM: Three-Self Patriotic Movement

UFWD: United Front Work Department

WHS: World Heritage Site



## Chapter 1

# Introduction: Christianity and the Negotiation of the Past

I research Christianity<sup>1</sup> in Xiamen, but the story will commence with a hastily planned trip to Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, in early January 2014. At a pastor's apartment in Xiamen I had met a Christian, Xiao Lei, who comes from Wenzhou and who warmly invited me to the annual celebration of a church in her native city. Of course I was delighted to attend. Wenzhou, with its reputation as "China's Jerusalem," has attracted much academic interest because of its booming Christian population and the unique vitality injected by "boss Christians."<sup>2</sup> The grand celebration lasted three days, and I cannot say I was surprised by the magnificent performance, packed church,<sup>3</sup> and resourceful pastors who all conspired to compose the choreographed drama that was staged in front of me. It seemed I was watching something with whose script I had become familiar beforehand. Everything took place methodically in line with what I had learnt from the writings of scholars. In fact, it was precisely the Wenzhou Christianity I had expected. At that time, I was trying to identify similarities between the Wenzhou and Xiamen Christian communities, hoping to emphasize such topics as modernity, transnationalism, subjectivity of religious practice and the like. This desire of mine to gain a closer look at the Wenzhou church explains why I immediately accepted Xiao Lei's invitation.

---

1. The Chinese term for Christianity (*Jidujiao*) is almost always used as a synonym for Protestantism (*Xinjiao*), and rarely used to refer to Catholicism (*Tianzhujiao*) or Eastern Orthodoxy (*Dongzhengjiao*). Throughout this research, unless noted, the term Christianity refers to Protestantism. When I refer to Catholic Christianity, the term Catholicism will be adopted. In reference to the entire Xiamen Christian community, the phrase "the Xiamen church" or "the local church" is used.

2. E.g., Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Chen and Huang, "New Type of Christians."

3. In Chinese "church" is used to refer to either a formal church building (*jiaotang* or *libaitang*) or the congregation (*huizhong*) or the governing body (*tanghui*) of a particular church community.

While the celebration was what I had expected, the following day I was impressed when I visited a local pastor. Pastor Yi, who was serving in a government-sanctioned church, received Xiao Lei and me in his apartment. His wife was preparing lunch while his two school-age daughters were doing their homework, but were distracted by us from time to time. During the lunch Yi mentioned that, in compliance with a new government regulation, he had heard on the grapevine that churches in Hangzhou, the provincial capital of Zhejiang, were required to turn off LED lights so that crosses would be invisible at night. He paused for a moment, and then said: “Crosses will have to be removed soon.” Although I did perceive a mood of melancholy descend upon him, this comment did not fully register with me. I even comforted him confidently that the official decision would end up with nothing being definitely decided during the efficient negotiations of the Christian entrepreneurs - “resourceful negotiating agents” in Nanlai Cao’s words.<sup>4</sup> However, the following months proved that I was wrong.

Shortly after I returned to Xiamen, I learned the news that “oversized” crosses were required to be removed across Zhejiang. In the following months, the Internet was filled with images in which giant cranes hired by the authorities were removing crosses. An already tense situation intensified after the forced demolition of a church complex that began in March 2014. The Three Rivers Church (*Sanjiang tang*), a magnificent landmark building, became the focus of attention at home and abroad. Although hundreds of Christians gathered spontaneously or organized themselves into efficient human shields, the government refused to compromise. As its base was blasted, the 180-foot high spire finally collapsed, and the whole building was razed to the ground soon afterwards. The official explanation was that the building far exceeded the approved size.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2013 the Zhejiang provincial government launched the three-year campaign known as “Three Reconstructions and One Demolition” (*Sangai yichai*), whose goal was to reconstruct old residential areas, former factory districts and villages in the city. In the course of its implementation, illegal buildings would be demolished.<sup>6</sup> This campaign was swiftly put into action by its subordinate governments. The county government of Yongjia (in Wenzhou prefecture) responded energetically to the top-down campaign and straightway initiated a project - “Building the Province’s Most Beautiful Highway.” In order that the project could be carried through, the Three

---

4. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*, 172.

5. “Yongjia yifa chaichu Sanjiang weifa zongjiao jianzhu [Demolishing Illegal Religious Buildings in Yongjia in Accordance with the Law,” E-Government Center of Yongjia People’s Government, accessed June 26, 2015, [http://www.yj.gov.cn/html/gb/art/2014/4/art\\_16\\_101063.html](http://www.yj.gov.cn/html/gb/art/2014/4/art_16_101063.html).

6. For more information about the provincial project - “Three Reconstructions and One Demolition,” see the official website: <http://220.189.211.53/sgyc/>, accessed March 14, 2016.

Rivers Church was relocated and its new premises were completed in September 2013. The relocation of this church was selected to be one of the model projects of Wenzhou prefecture. Even before the demolition, positive media coverage of the new church structure could be found on the official website of the Wenzhou government. Then, after the church building had been identified as illegal, the coverage was substituted by a revised one, from which the Three Rivers Church had been erased. The Yongjia government declared that the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) had given approval for an edifice of 1,881 square meters, but the new building actually measured 11,004 square meters, far exceeding the permitted size. It is worth remembering that this building belonged to an officially recognized church and had been accorded the status of being a model project; therefore, local officials could not have been unaware of its construction. It is not uncommon in China for churches, even registered ones, to be built without formal permission first having been sought, usually because people are aware that strict official control of religious venues usually makes obtaining normal approval impossible. In many cases, churches are accorded official recognition after, rather than before, they are constructed. Negotiations between church members and government officials are an important part of this recognition mechanism - in effect a *fait accompli* (see Chapter 4).

What happened to the Wenzhou church in 2014 poses a serious challenge to those who insist on the resourceful Christians' negotiating capability and in their enthusiasm overlook state rule and intra-church politics.<sup>7</sup> It proves that the elite Christians or groups are not always effective in coping with changing official policies. The whole event was reportedly related to the secretary of the Zhejiang provincial committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), a fact that once drew public attention to the divergence in individual and governmental attitudes toward Christianity. Unexpectedly, the official demolition program did not cease after the Three Rivers event; instead, it has evolved into a widespread movement with a mission to remove crosses across Zhejiang. Although the government invited extensive criticism from abroad, it has never compromised; indeed it has even intensified its repressive measures. Nor has it stopped there, as it has arrested disobedient pastors and Christian human rights lawyers. It is believed that, although the movement has failed to reduce the number of the Christian population, it will force members to detach themselves from the officially recognized Christian organizations that serve as the liaison with the state apparatus. During the latter's whole campaign, the central government never lifted a finger to halt the Zhejiang provincial government's campaign. Moreover, precisely at this same critical juncture, Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Communist Party and the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and his

---

7. See mainly Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*. Another piece of anthropological research focusing on state rule and local politics presents a different picture of Wenzhou Christianity. See Zhu, "Wenzhou de Jidujiao"

administration have launched a series of political movements devised to strengthen ideological control. The current political situation has led the public to suppose that the Zhejiang Movement that targets Christianity so explicitly actually reflects the intention of the top leadership. Some attribute the central government's acquiescence in the provincial government's harshness toward Christianity to the notion that the top leaders had realized that there had been a certain amount of inefficiency in its policy implementations and consequently suspected the grassroots officials' political loyalty.<sup>8</sup>

The church demolition and cross removal in Zhejiang bothered me, and a series of questions arose in my mind: Is economic capital really able to raise Christians' capability to negotiate with the state? Is Christianity still perceived by the state as a potential subversive force that undermines the official ideology? Are Christian communities willing not just to get involved in political affairs but even trying to bring about change in China's political system? What concerned me most, however, was if follow-up studies of contemporary Chinese Christianity would be properly informed or would simply not extend beyond the limits imposed by the dichotomous approach of state domination versus church resistance.

Burdened with these questions arising from the Wenzhou story, I reconsidered my perspective on Christianity in today's Xiamen. Compared with Wenzhou, the current state of Christianity in Xiamen is that it does not seem to be particularly conspicuous. Instead of building splendid churches so as to raise their profile, many Xiamen people appreciate the city's status as the first place Christianity openly entered China and show a greater interest in issues related to the past rather than the present. Therefore, the goal of this research will now be to reveal the collective enthusiasm for history in today's Xiamen, an issue that has long been neglected in the study of Chinese Christianity. Importantly, this research will introduce a perspective that avoids the traps of both the politicized approach and the overly optimistic view of current political atmosphere.

## Understanding World Christianity in the Context of East Asia

For a long time, the predominant theory in the sociology of religion was the secularization theory postulated by Peter Berger who predicted the declining significance of religion in modern society.<sup>9</sup> Time has proved his prognosis untenable and it seems religion is not doomed to decline; on the contrary, there is a massive

---

8. See, e.g., Ying, "Politics of Cross Demolition," 40-43.

9. Berger, *Scared Canopy*.

global revival underway.<sup>10</sup> Even Berger himself has frankly admitted the failure of his secularization theory.<sup>11</sup> Consequently in their recent research, Berger and his colleagues have not ignored the regional variations. They now point out that, in contrast to “religious America,” Europe is a relatively secular part of the world in global terms.<sup>12</sup> Learning a lesson from the failed prediction of secularization theory, other scholars of world religion should no longer either ignore the wide divergence in the presence of religion or overly emphasize the similarities in diverse contexts. In their work, the thriving Christian communities in East Asia might be used as examples to shed light on the varied states of Christianity (or Christianities) across the world.

Some distinguished scholars of world Christianity have already noted that, although not much attention has been devoted to it so far, one of the most important changes in this religion in the past century has been its rapid rise in the non-Western world (especially in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres). Among these are Philip Jenkins and Lamin Sanneh, the most prominent exponents of the discourse of southern expansion, who have pointed out the steady southward advance of Christianity into countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, and the concomitant shift in the balance of power in the religion between these newly established centers and its old European heartland. The trend, best known by the phrase the “Global South,” seems set to continue apace in the foreseeable future. In other words, even though the Western world has dominated Christianity for most of the second millennium, Christianity is now primarily a non-European religion. The dynamic growth of Christianity in the Global South has been matched by the twilight of the Western phase of Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

Although the discourse of this southern shift gives explicit directions to a super-macro prospect of world Christianity, the Global South should not be perceived as merely a numbers game. It is extremely important that the trend should be contextualized in different social, political and cultural environments. As Julius Bautista notes:

While the demographic growth of the faith outside a European and North American milieu is a significant issue for Christianity as a whole, we must not assume that the impact of population growth is homogenous in all countries of the global south. What

---

10. Robertson and Chirico, “Worldwide Religious Resurgence.”

11. Berger, “Desecularization of the World.” When referring to Berger’s desecularization thesis, a fact easily overlooked is that, in the same text, he also points out that, “In Western Europe, if nowhere else, the old secularization theory would seem to hold.” (P.9) As Grace Davie has argued in the same volume, “In a world characterized by religious resurgence rather than increasing secularization, Western Europe bucks the trend.” Davie, “Europe: The Exception That Proves the Rule,” 65.

12. Berger, Davie and Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?*

13. Jenkins, *Next Christendom*; Jenkins, *New Faces of Christianity*; Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations*; Sanneh and Carpenter, *Changing Face of Christianity*.

I seek to do is to point out that while Asians have been associated with the staggering march of Christianity to the global south, there are some specificities about the Asian experience of secularism, nationalism, ethnicity and statehood that we should take into consideration.<sup>14</sup>

Even though advocates of the southern shift are explicit about the fact that statistically speaking the Christian centers will be Africa and Latin America rather than Asia, they still tend to be amazed by the booming Christian population and indigenous churches in East Asia, especially South Korea and Mainland China. In today's South Korea, probably one of the most Christianized countries in the non-Western world, in total the faithful constitutes more than a quarter of the whole population.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in the past three decades, Christianity has been a prominent part of the general religious resurgence in China. Despite the state's atheistic ideology and restrictive regulations, Christianity has survived Mao Zedong's (1893-1976) political movements and developed remarkably in the past few decades.<sup>16</sup> As Daniel Bays writes, "Today, on any given Sunday there are almost certainly more Protestants in church in China than in all of Europe."<sup>17</sup> A number of studies indicate that Christianity has evolved in step with the changing local historical and political conditions of China. The most important outcome of this development is that indigenous denominations in modern China unquestionably have their roots in Chinese cultural and social contexts.<sup>18</sup>

Mark Mullins' book, *Christianity Made in Japan*, focuses on the "native" response rather than the Western missionary intentions and efforts. In it, Mullins gives a clear illustration of how world Christianity has been able to become localized in Japan, as it had previously become localized "Western Christianity" in Europe and in America.<sup>19</sup> Inspired by Mullins' research, in the context of China, Peter Tze Ming Ng has advocated that, "What we should be looking for is not 'what Western missionaries have done in China,' nor is it simply taking 'Christianity in China as an unfinished Western project,' it is rather the 'Christianity Made in China,' and indeed, it would

---

14. Bautista, "Asian Christianity," 201-202.

15. Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 3. South Korea has been a major missionary-sending country. According to a data of 2015, there are 20,672 South Korean missionaries working through 159 mission agencies in 171 countries. Moon, "Missions from Korea 2016," 183.

16. Bays, "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today"; Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Dunch, "Protestant Christianity in China Today"; Huang, *Dushi li de xiangcun jiaohui*; Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*; Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*; Yang, "Lost in the Market."

17. Bays, "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today," 488.

18. E.g., Bays, "Growth of Independent Christianity in China"; Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China*; Lian, *Redeemed by Fire*; Ng, *Chinese Christianity*.

19. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan*.

turn out to be a new kind of Christianity found in China with Chinese Christians as the proper subject of our study.<sup>20</sup> In this context, it is important to note that empirical studies of contemporary Chinese Christianity have steadily confirmed that it is mainly Chinese believers who have revived the faith, and it is people from upwardly mobile strata (for example, entrepreneurs, migrant workers and educated youth) are changing the composition of today's Christian population.<sup>21</sup>

For the receiving societies in the missionary era, religious perceptions of the self, community and the state were inevitably transformed when Western discourses of modernity became dominant in the modern world.<sup>22</sup> In modern East Asia, rather than being merely a system of belief and practice, Christianity has been an important source and system of ideas and knowledge for ordinary people, intellectuals and politicians, helping them negotiate modernity and giving them meaning when confronted with changing realities, for example, when the sovereignty of their countries was under threat from imperialism and colonialism.

The negative discourse about Christianity against the backdrop of Western imperialism was closely related to the building of the modern Asian nation-states. Kiri Paramore's book, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*, sheds light on the historical development of anti-Christian ideas and their role in the construction of the modern Japanese state in the late nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Under Meiji rule, the discursive identification of State Shinto with an essentialized Japanese identity forced Japanese Christians into a struggle about being both Japanese and Christian at the same time.<sup>24</sup> Since the latter half of the twentieth century, finding their feet after their humiliation in the aftermath of the Second World War, extreme right-wing nationalist politicians in Japan have been making the case for the rehabilitation of disgraced State Shinto and for its installation as a civil religion.<sup>25</sup> As a minority religion in Japanese society, Christianity has always been forced to negotiate its place.

By sharp contrast, South Korea's different historical experience of colonialism provides a good illustration of how Christianity can play a pivotal role in national politics, positively rather than negatively. In the early twentieth century, when Korea was under Japanese rule, Korean Christians were in the forefront of resisting the colonizer's efforts to introduce Shinto. As a result, Christianity was naturally associated with emerging nationalism. Besides the reputation it had acquired from its resistance to Japanese colonialism, the prestige of post-war Christianity benefited from

---

20. Ng, *Chinese Christianity*, 41.

21. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*, chaps. 2 and 6; Chen and Huang, "New Type of Christians"; Huang, *Dushi li de xiangcun jiaohui*; Yang, "Lost in the Market."

22. Van der Veer, *Conversion to Modernities*.

23. Paramore, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*.

24. Vanderbilt, "Post-War Japanese Christian Historians."

25. Takayama, "Modern Japanese Civil Religion."

being the religion of the American liberators, at that time an overwhelming power compared to its Asian neighbors. These two factors, boosted by the consequence of the post-war leadership being assumed by the Christian elite, have meant Christianity has gained plenty of social space for its development.<sup>26</sup> Even today South Korean Christianity retains its modernist image. One example is its role in the state's agenda in promoting cremation, a way of modernizing death practice in the church's eyes.<sup>27</sup>

Modern China is another complex example. In some coastal cities, such as Fuzhou and Xiamen, Chinese Christians played a major role in the Revolution of 1911 and the subsequent building of a modern state. Christian individuals and organizations were deeply involved in the social and political life of these cities during the late Qing (1644-1911) and early Republican (1912-49 in Mainland China) eras. They played leading roles in the movements against smoking opium and abusing slave girls as well as being prominent in voluntary associations advocating social reform.<sup>28</sup> However, the contribution of Christianity to the nation-state building was soon overwhelmed by anti-Christian movements. This issue will be elaborated in the ensuing section.

As Albert Park and David Yoo have argued, "Protestant Christianity in East Asia, in particular, was often mediated and understood through the history and the particular cultural and social structures of a local area or a given people. Through this interaction, Protestant Christianity inspired new forms of subjectivity, visions of society, and conceptions of national identity."<sup>29</sup> What this section requires is a more nuanced understanding of the state of East Asian Christianity in the overall Christian world allied with an insight into the influence of Christianity in the political, cultural and social landscape of the region. The context of East Asia affords us a good starting point from which to discuss the discourse of the Global South, especially when its proponents tend to overemphasize the diminishing influence of nation-state in this trend. Indeed, this assertion might be true in some particular regions of Latin America and Africa, as Jenkins has pointed out,<sup>30</sup> but, in East Asia the role of nation-state and the various situations in which it finds itself should not be underestimated in the study of Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

In a nutshell, this study of East Asian Christianity will not be confined to such frameworks as (de)secularization theory and the Global South trend, or even be simplified to a numbers game. It will sound a warning to scholars of world Christianity that they will not really be able to understand the particular situation of Christianity in

---

26. For the Christian history and politics of Korea, see Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*.

27. Park, "Christian Reactions to Government-Led Cremation."

28. Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestant; White, Sacred Webs*.

29. Park and Yoo, "Introduction," 6-7.

30. Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 10-13.

31. See Bautista and Lim, *Christianity and the State in Asia*.

East Asia without in-depth investigation. Most important of all, because within China the presence of Christianity varies from region to region, we should avoid painting a homogenous picture of Chinese Christianity.

## Christianity, Urban China and Historical Narratives

Despite its emphasis on the significant role of the nation-state in the study of Christianity, this research will not take the two as diametrical opposites. As already hinted at, partly because of the tension between the state and Christianity in the Maoist era, many researchers tend to place church-state interactions in a binary construct of state dominance and church resistance.<sup>32</sup> For instance, one study even goes as far as to imply that “organizational weapon” of the unregistered churches<sup>33</sup> can be used to subvert Communist powers.<sup>34</sup> The prevalence of the state versus church model owes much to Western theories of civil society. The idea that a civil society was (re)emerging in China aroused a wide-ranging debate in the 1990s. Even though scholars reached a consensus that the concept of “civil society” as it has been applied to the Chinese context presupposes a dichotomous opposition between the state and society,<sup>35</sup> this framework has a long history of informing studies of Chinese Christianity.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the idea of church-state separation in democratic societies engenders taken-for-granted expectations of the full religious freedom of autonomous individuals and the independence of religious organizations from the state. However, church-state separation as a liberal Western cultural idea cannot be taken as given in the context of Chinese society; since ancient times religion in China has never been

---

32. E.g., Chao and Chong, *Dangdai Zhongguo Jidujiao fazhan shi*; Kindopp, “Politics of Protestantism”; Kindopp and Hamrin, *God and Caesar*; Wenger, “Official vs. Underground Protestant Churches.”

33. “Unregistered churches” are widely known in English as “house churches” (*jiating jiaohui*). However, this is not uncommon for many unregistered churches have hundreds or even thousands of members and their activities are no longer confined to private housing. At present, the term “house church” is still often used in the Christian communities and in scholarship mainly because of the tradition inherited from the early house church movement.

34. Koesel, “Rise of a Chinese House Church,” 587.

35. Among these, Philip Huang argues that: “In a society that has for so long been so thoroughly dominated by the party-state, it is unrealistic, short of a sudden collapse from within of the party-state apparatus itself, to look for the overnight development of societal organizations genuinely separate and independent from the state, in the manner idealized by the public sphere and civil society models.” Huang, “‘Public Sphere’/‘Civil Society’ in China,” 237.

36. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*, 7-8.

detached from the state.<sup>37</sup> In the current political atmosphere in particular, it is unrealistic to expect to find a free space for Christianity overnight.

So far a few scholars have realized that such a politicized approach fails to capture the social complexity of the religious dynamics in the country and that it oversimplifies the complicated interactions between multiple actors. There is a growing consensus that Christianity in reform-era China cannot be properly understood unless the dichotomous approach is discarded.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, it is worth noting that any research overemphasizing relaxed conditions for Christianity in today's China would be misleading and unrealistically optimistic. Taking all these points into consideration, this research will depart from the dichotomous model and also learn from the previous studies of Wenzhou Christianity.

What is often overlooked in the studies of Chinese Christianity is its link with the past. As far as popular faith is concerned, limited academic attention has been paid to local reactions to official manipulations of social memory.<sup>39</sup> In the case of Catholicism, a few scholars have stressed the influence of the Catholic past on its current presence.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, in the study of Protestantism in China the issue of how people connect the present with the past still remains an understudied topic. What is fascinating is that this is exactly what is happening in present-day Xiamen society. Since Christianity entered Xiamen over 170 years ago, the faith has grown and become rooted in local socio-cultural structures. Recently there has been a burgeoning movement in Xiamen to reinvent the Christian past and reconstruct its historical narratives.<sup>41</sup> History enthusiasts, Christian and non-Christian, are devoting themselves to reinterpreting the church legacy and publicly celebrating their connections to the past. This is a civil movement on a local level that questions, even challenges, official historical narratives. The citizens who are involved in this movement are those who are interested in historical issues, despite the fact that they might lack any professional training in history. Even the local government acknowledges and makes use of church heritage for pragmatic purposes.

---

37. Bays, "Tradition of State Dominance"; Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*; Yu, *State and Religion in China*.

38. For a fuller discussion, see Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Ying, "Dangdai Zhongguo zhengjiao guanxi tantao."

39. E.g., Jing, *Temple of Memories*.

40. Harrison, *Missionary's Curse*; Lozada, *God Aboveground*; Madsen, *China's Catholics*; Wu, *Maimang shang de shengyan*.

41. It is worth noting that the term "movement" might be misleading in the context of Chinese politics. Xiamen history enthusiasts do not form a coherent structure with a specific leadership, ideology or purpose. It would be particularly wrong to envisage them as some kind of clandestine anti-government organization.

To a certain extent, the Xiamen citizens' enthusiasm for reconstructing the glorious past of Christianity has been an outcome of their grievances arising from the present precarious situation: the social changes on Gulangyu Island (literally Drum Wave Island, formerly known as Kulangsu or Koolangsu in the West), an islet off the coast of Xiamen Island, and the subsequent decline of Christianity on the island. For this reason, the changing context of Gulangyu, as the trigger for the civil movement, has been chosen as the starting point for this research. In the aftermath of China's defeat in the First Opium War (1839-42) with Great Britain, Xiamen was forcibly opened up to the outside world as one of the five treaty ports ceded to the British, and Gulangyu was thrust into a Western-led modernization process. Christianity played a major role in reshaping the socio-cultural context of the island. Trinity Church (*Sanyi tang*), built in 1934, has been a witness to the heyday of Christianity on this island. Even despite the harsh repression during Mao's political campaigns, Trinity Church survived and revived after its reopening in 1979. However, the church is now doomed to a decline in numbers and influence because of the government-led commercialization driven by the development of tourism on the island. In October 2014 the church held its eightieth anniversary celebration. I was invited to be present and witnessed how the church people responded to the state modernization project by reminiscing about its glorious past and grieving over its irreversible fate.

As an essential ingredient of the societal fabric, the Christian past has drawn extensive attention both from inside and outside the Xiamen Christian community. When I went to Xiamen at the end of 2013, a memorial service that was held by a non-Christian group for an American missionary, John Otte, was mentioned repeatedly by my respondents. Otte was denounced as an "imperialist rogue" during Mao's movements but, during the commemoration, all charges against Otte were unofficially dropped, and he as a person and his life were highly commended. The grassroots discourses on missionaries in a broader sense were reversed. To some extent the Otte commemoration inspired and stimulated local history experts (*difang wenshi zhuanjia*), elderly people who, while not possessing any professional training in history are interested in collecting documents and preserving or publicizing the city's history, to embark on a study of the Christian history of Xiamen.

This was a bold step because since it took power in 1949 history writing as a national project has been the monopoly of the Chinese Communist regime.<sup>42</sup> All publications on religions in Mainland China continue to be published under strict censorship; some are banned from being printed, whereas some need to be revised, in particular those parts referring to the religious repression after 1949. In the late 1980s, the Xiamen RAB assigned the task of writing its Christian history to the Xiamen Christian

---

42. It is not an invention of the CCP. There has been a long-standing tradition of strict control of history writing by ruling groups in imperial China. See e.g., Chen, *Qingdai qianqi de zhengzhi rentong yu lishi shuxie*.

community. In 1993, a manuscript that failed to satisfy either the government or the church community was eventually completed. Because of the dissatisfaction it aroused, the assignment was passed on to several other writers, but so far no acceptable manuscript has been completed. While this project apparently cannot reach a satisfactory conclusion, local history experts have taken matters into their own hands and have translated English-language history books or written their own. Some have succeeded in having their work published through “unofficial” (to some extent “illegal”) channels; others have failed. A growing number of people are beginning to narrate the past of their Christian families, including compiling genealogies that trace their families back to the first convert or circulating memoirs for their Christian ancestors.

This phenomenon immediately raises the question: Why does the past of Christianity matter so much to the people of Xiamen? The answers to this are many and varied but one major reason is that the version of the official narratives endorsed by the state conflicts so deeply with their own understanding of their shared past. Importantly, these unofficial, rather than the official, versions are providing people with an alternative historical knowledge of Christianity.

These negotiations of the Christian past are embodied not only in the issues of memory or history; they are also to be seen in church practices. In its efforts to revive once thriving Christianity on Gulangyu, Trinity Church has sought the involvement of international Christian agencies. In this context, a fellowship established by Chinese-American missionaries under the aegis of an officially registered church is one of the matters investigated in this dissertation. In opposition to the popular perception of Christian indigenization in China, aware of the fascination of young Chinese people with the outside world, this American ministry does its best to display its “foreign” (especially American) features to attract young believers. This present-day transnational ministry reveals an image that diverges considerably from the perennial connection to imperialism found in official discourse. Its presentation of Christianity in a package with the modern image of the United States has deeply influenced young people, not only in their beliefs but also in their understanding of modern society and Christianity. Nor has the cooperation between the local churches and the American Christian agency been all plain sailing but has in make turned to be very trouble prone.

To reach an understanding of the collective passion for reinventing the past, it is important to understand the local sense of nostalgia, the way in which individuals or social groups seek to recreate the past to satisfy their present needs. Nostalgia is seen as a response to dissatisfaction with one’s immediate situation. Such dissatisfaction engenders a desire in an individual to idealize past events. By looking backward to an idealized past, one can momentarily disengage oneself from the unsatisfactory

present.<sup>43</sup> My respondents, consciously or unconsciously, usually mentioned the glorious past of Gulangyu. Then, they would shake their heads and heave a sigh about the cultural deterioration of the island in the wake of the expansion of tourism led by the local government. In contrast to what the government has done to unilaterally discredit the historical missionary activity, they invariably over-embellish the city's past by intentionally disassociating Christianity from the colonial context, and exaggerating the church's role in Xiamen's modernization process. The upshot is that, what they are doing is not essentially different from what the state does, only they are operating at the opposite pole. This fixation on an imagined past might be an explanation of why the local people have no interest in the present-day American evangelists, in spite of the fact that they cherish mission history and acknowledge the erstwhile missionaries' contribution to the area's prosperous past.

The timing and the socio-political contexts in which cultural reinvention takes place are factors too important to be overlooked. Success in cultural reinvention can only be achieved when the timing is right and when there is a certain degree of liberty. The previous decade saw a nationwide movement for recording oral history, that at times challenges official narratives. One salient movement is the current "Republican fever" (*Minguo re*), namely: the upsurge in public support in China for the legacy of the Republican era. The roots of the people's great yearning for Republican freedom and democracy can be traced exactly to their dissatisfaction with their present situation.<sup>44</sup>

What is happening in Xiamen is occurring at a significant historical juncture. It is important to note that some locals share a collective need for this sort of reinvention and believe that taking such action is essential to the survival of their social collectivity. A conviction about such a need will push people to group together and join in this process. A relaxed and liberal political climate will enable the group to engage in their cultural reinvention without fear of reprisals for its members and without its cultural practices being repressed. Nevertheless, the political climate in which this reinvention is taking place is far from liberal. We should bear in mind that, as a national project, social memory or history writing in modern China has been dominated by social engineers who invariably try to dictate citizens' remembrance and forgetting.<sup>45</sup> Even today the Chinese authorities seek to keep a tight rein on society's memories at several levels.<sup>46</sup>

---

43. Nosco, *Remembering Paradise*, 4.

44. Zhang and Weatherley, "Rise of 'Republican Fever.'"

45. Béja, "Forbidden Memory, Unwritten History"; Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution*, chap. 2; Jing, *Temple of Memories*; Schwarcz, "Out of Historical Amnesia"; Watson, "Making Secret Histories"; Yuan, "Lei Feng fuhao"; Zhou, *Jiyi de zhengzhi*.

46. Jun Jing puts it on three levels: "At the archival level, such control takes the form of restricting access to historical documents. At the level of mass media and public education, control is exercised through censorship, political propaganda, and the careful writing and

Christianity has long been in the center-piece of the official narratives of “national humiliation” (*guochi*). The discourse is closely related to the building of the modern nation-state and later to affirmation of the Communist regime’s legitimacy. It is not an invention of the CCP to associate Christianity with the imperialist invasion of China. The most violent attack against foreigners and one explicitly associated with Christian missionary activity came around 1900. Motivated by anti-foreign, proto-nationalist sentiments and with the backing of the Qing government, members of the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists (*Yihequan*), generally known in the West as the “Boxers,” killed perhaps 30,000 Chinese Catholics and Protestants and 250 foreigners, most of whom were missionaries.<sup>47</sup>

The Republican period was also not free of large-scale, anti-Christian campaigns.<sup>48</sup> In the twentieth century, patriotic Chinese made endless references to the “century of humiliation” China had suffered at the hands of foreign imperialism, beginning with the First Opium War.<sup>49</sup> This war was viewed by the British establishment as a battle for free trade in general and open access to the Chinese domestic market in particular. However, not unnaturally the Chinese saw it as a life and death struggle to retain their national sovereignty and keep the reins of their foreign trade in their own hands. In short, they wanted to ensure they remained free of the manipulation and skullduggery of the Western forces, not least the pernicious import of opium. The fact that the war led to the *de facto* guarantee that British ships could continue transporting opium to China “presented the China coast missionaries with something of a moral quandary.”<sup>50</sup> In the subsequent series of treaties, the missionaries’ influence grew. Shielded by the guarantee of “missionary freedom,” they were not subject to the management of and supervision by the Chinese government, but enjoyed the protection of their respective governments. As John Fairbank has commented, “The missionary himself had an ambivalent status. He had the chance to preach and innovate in China only because he was part of the Western invasion. Gunfire and the unequal treaties initially gave him his privileged status and opportunity.”<sup>51</sup> Irrevocably, the Western missionary endeavor was linked to imperialism and colonialism, a sentiment heightened because some missionaries actually participated in the negotiations for and the drafting of the

---

rewriting of history textbooks. At a more personal level, control relies on intimidation and, sometimes, physical punishment of those who offer a radically different and unwelcome version of the past, particularly when it touches on the history of the Communist Party.” Jing, *Temple of Memories*, 18.

47. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 85-86.

48. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, chap. vii; Yeh, *Wusi yihou de fandui Jidujiao yundong*; Yip, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students*.

49. Callahan, *China: The Pessoptimist Nation*.

50. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 47.

51. Fairbank, “Introduction,” 2-3.

treaties.<sup>52</sup> The embarrassment that resulted in the political stigma of Christianity in Xiamen stemmed partly from the fact that the first foreign Protestant missionary brought the gospel on a warship of the British invaders during the course of the First Opium War.

Whereas the pre-1949 history of Christianity has been overshadowed by the specter of imperialism, the post-1949 narratives of missionary work have been affected by the Communist leader Mao Zedong's negative judgment that carried the highest political authority. In his 1939 essay, *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, Mao wrote that: "The imperialist powers have never slackened in their efforts to warp the minds of the Chinese people. It is embodied in their policy of cultural aggression. It is implemented through missionary work, through establishing hospitals and schools, publishing newspapers and inducing Chinese students to study abroad. Their aim is to train intellectuals who will serve their interests and to deceive the people."<sup>53</sup> In another well-known article of 1949, "Friendship" or Aggression?, Mao specifically targets "United States imperialism" in detail and ridicules the role of American missionary enterprise as "spiritual aggression" in the name of "friendship."<sup>54</sup> Shortly before the victory of the Communist revolution, Mao published "Farewell, John Leighton Stuart," one of his most widely read articles. In it Mao fiercely criticizes and satirizes John Leighton Stuart (1876-1962), an American Presbyterian missionary, the first president of Yenching University and later United States ambassador to China. In Mao's eyes, he is a typical example of Western imperialists working hand in glove with the Christian mission, education and politics.<sup>55</sup> To the masses in the early People's Republic, Chairman Mao's works were like the word of God to devout Christians. Almost every citizen with basic literacy skills had one or more copies of the *Quotations of Chairman Mao* (commonly known in the West as the *Little Red Book*), and even the illiterate could recite large paragraphs from Mao's works. His judgment set the tone for decades of political discourses on the history of Christianity in modern China.

In the early days of the PRC, on different occasions the top leaders expressed their concern about "imperialism under the guise of Christianity" and the Western missionary enterprise that was linked to imperialism and colonialism.<sup>56</sup> At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, "United States imperialism" came under fire the

---

52. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 47-48.

53. Mao, *Mao Zedong xuanji*, vol. 2, 629-30.

54. Mao, *Mao Zedong xuanji*, vol. 4, 1505-506.

55. Mao, *Mao Zedong xuanji*, vol. 4, 1491-98.

56. For example, in 1950 on several occasions Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), the first Premier of the PRC, told representatives of the Protestant church that Christianity had obtained the missionary rights by threats with guns against the Qing government, therefore the major problem with Christianity was its relationship with the imperialism. See Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian*, vol. 1, 220-27.

most. The top-down Three-Self Reform Movement (*Sanzi gexin yundong*) in the early 1950s confronted Western missionaries and the Christian enterprise with unprecedented challenges.<sup>57</sup> Subsequently, a nationwide Accusation Movement (*Kongsu yundong*) against “American imperialists under the cloak of religion” was launched in Christian communities.

Christianity’s role in the “national humiliation,” as a significant theme running through modern Chinese history, has redefined and thrown into even sharper relief the Communist Party’s historical role as a liberator of the people, cast in terms of the shared Chinese struggle against foreign imperialism. This conviction of the association of Christianity and imperialism has prevailed in the CCP-led history writing in modern China. Gu Changsheng’s book, *Missionaries and Modern China*, the fruit of an official project to record Christian history, represents a mainstream view: Catholic and Protestant missionaries acted as tools of imperialist aggression.<sup>58</sup> This book went through four editions, the latest in 2013, even though Gu himself changed his position, particularly after becoming a citizen of the United States.<sup>59</sup> At the turn of the century, the government-sanctioned national Christian organizations were still publishing volumes criticizing the disgraceful role of Christianity in the imperialist invasion of China.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, dozens of books have been published recounting the missionaries’ contributions to China’s modern science, medicine, education and the like.<sup>61</sup> More recently, increasingly more books, translated or original, portraying particular missionary figures instead of the blanket image of missionaries, have become available.<sup>62</sup> In today’s China, publishing is still subject to strict censorship laws by the authorities, so without official approval none of these works could possibly have appeared in China. What puzzles me is: How could these two situations exist simultaneously? What is the current role of Christian history in maintaining the Party’s political legitimacy?

The government’s intention can only be inferred, but impossible to really figure it out since the relevant officials seldom give interviews. From the perspective of its

57. Ying, “Fandi aiguo yu zhongjiao gexin.”

58. Gu, *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo*.

59. This change in view is mainly reflected in his autobiographical English book. See Gu, *Awaken*.

60. E.g., Luo, *Diguo zhuyi liyong Jidujiao qinlüe Zhongguo shishi*; Zhongguo Jidujiao sanzi aiguo yundong weiyuanhui & Zhongguo Jidujiao xiehui, *Jidujiao aiguo zhuyi jiaocheng*.

61. E.g., Cao, *Chuanjiaoshi yu Zhongguo kexue*; He, *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo shehui biange*; Ng, *Jidu zongjiao yu Zhongguo daxue jiaoyu*; Wang, *Meiguo chuanjiaoshi yu Wanqing Zhongguo xiandaihua*.

62. E.g., Fisher, *Calvin Wilson Mateer*; Gao, *De Zhen (John Dudgeon) zhuan*; Girardot, *Li Yage (James Legge) pingzhuan*; Shen, *Xunzhao Su Huilian (William Edward Soothill)*; Stuart, *Zai Hua wushi nian*; Tan, *Meiguo chuanjiaoshi Bo Jia (Peter Park)*.

citizens, the state restriction on Christian history writing is not set in stone. The cases discussed in this research reveal that the government has begun to concede plenty of space for rewriting the history of Chinese Christianity prior to 1949, therefore Christianity or particular missionaries in the past can now be painted in a positive light. By contrast, the suffering of churches, foreign missionaries and individual Christians caused at the hands of the Communist regime after the 1949 watershed remains a forbidden zone. The ruling Party is still unwilling to acknowledge its early mistakes.

With the decline in the ideal of Communism, the reform-era state has had to confront a crisis of legitimacy.<sup>63</sup> The political atmosphere of the late 1980s hardened in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 that triggered tighter ideological control of the state to combat the influence of the so-called “Western bourgeois liberation trend” (*Xifang zichan jieji ziyouhua sichao*). The official production and propagation of China’s historical humiliation was put on the ruling Party’s agenda, leading to a revival in patriotism and nationalism. According to Paul Cohen, “The challenge facing patriotic educators, in the climate of revived nationalistic feeling and weakened faith in Communism that characterized the 1990s, was to fill the minds of the young with narratives of the suffering and humiliation of the imperialist interval in China’s history and entreat them to ‘not forget.’”<sup>64</sup> As Zheng Wang has described, “The legitimacy-challenged Chinese Communist Party has used history education as an instrument for the glorification of the party, for the consolidation of national identity, and for the justification of the political system of the CCP’s one-party rule in the post-Tiananmen and post-Cold War eras.”<sup>65</sup> Religions, in particular Christianity, have been perceived by the Party as competitors for the minds of the next generation. For example, in April 1990 Chen Yun (1905-95), one of the top Party leaders, reminded the then incumbent President Jiang Zemin of counter-revolutionary activities in the name of religion, particularly stressing their competition for the youth.<sup>66</sup> As long as this state of affairs prevails as a special unit embedded in local societal structure, alternative versions of the Christian past cannot be easily reproduced.

The revival of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and popular religions in recent years is also an outcome of a shift in the legitimacy of the Chinese state. As Richard Madsen has argued, Communist rule was legitimized by a Sinicized version of Marxism-Leninism; as the Marxist legitimacy base has begun to wither away, the CCP has embarked on a new course and has adapted its role to that of the heir to and

---

63. Ding, *Decline of Communism*.

64. Cohen, “Remembering and Forgetting,” 2.

65. Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 9.

66. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi zonghe yanjiuzu & Guowuyuan zongjiao shiwuju zhengce faguisi, *Zongjiao gongzuo wenxian xuanbian*, 177.

protector of 5,000 years of Chinese cultural heritage.<sup>67</sup> The cultural tradition, once denounced as “feudalistic” (*fengjian de*) and “backward” (*luohou de*) by the state as recently as the late twentieth century, has become a new source of legitimacy of Communist rule. In this movement toward re-finding China’s roots, Christianity has never been regarded as part of national culture. Instead, in some cases, it is still seen by some government officials as an “alien species” causing an imbalance in the “religious ecology.”<sup>68</sup> Some even claim to be establishing a resistance to Christianity by reviving Chinese popular religions and traditional cultural features in the name of national security.<sup>69</sup> To a certain extent, Christianity is still perceived a powerful competitor for the mainstream ideology. The widespread resistance from the government and nationalists to the building of a magnificent Gothic church in Qufu City (in Shandong province), the birthplace of Confucius, illustrates the significance of the ideological aspect in any attempt to understand the presence of Christianity in today’s China.

Various studies have shown that harsh memories of Maoist state repression on Christianity, including Protestantism and Catholicism, have profoundly affected believers’ current religious practices and interactions with the authorities.<sup>70</sup> However, when generation is taken into consideration as a variable, the situation might change. In his study of Wenzhou Christianity, Nanlai Cao argues that the older-generation Christians who suffered during the political campaigns are more likely to retain anti-state emotions but they are now retiring from worldly affairs. On the other hand, instead of being outsiders, the younger-generation Christians who have not experienced the state’s harsh religious repression are actively seeking to take full advantage of what membership of the present socioeconomic mainstream can offer them and hence be able to play a fuller part in economic and financial affairs in general.<sup>71</sup> In today’s Xiamen, some older people are certainly still aware of what happened to foreign missionaries and local Christians during the rule of Mao Zedong. They have a strong sense of historical and cultural mission to record the, as yet, untold past in the hope that a reliable testimony in a collective form can be committed to memory by the young generation.

As I have observed, many Xiamen citizens who are versed in the city’s past tend to negotiate alternative narratives around the discourses on modern, advanced societies. Many students of Chinese religion have attempted to discover the affinities between

---

67. Madsen, “From Socialist Ideology to Cultural Heritage.”

68. For a detailed discussion on “religious ecology,” see Li, “‘Zongjiao shengtai’ haishi ‘quanli shengtai.’”

69. E.g., Wang, “Minzu minjian zongjiao xinyang.”

70. Harrison, *Missionary’s Curse*; Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*; Lozada, *God Aboveground*; Madsen, *China’s Catholics*; Wu, *Maimang shang de shengyan*.

71. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*.

religion, nation-state and modernity.<sup>72</sup> A palpable tension exists between the modernist imagination of the Chinese nation-state, which emphasizes essentialism, territoriality and fixity, on the one hand, and that of entrepreneurial capitalism celebrating hybridity, deterritorialization and fluidity, on the other.<sup>73</sup> People interpret modernity, especially its relationship with Christianity, in their own way. Enlightened by Max Weber's premise of the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Wenzhou's private entrepreneurs (even though a very few of them have actually read Weber's book) attribute the region's economic success to their Christian belief.<sup>74</sup> For many Chinese, saying that one is a Christian is the equivalent of stating that one is Western, modern and is benefiting from economic success. In his discussion of this view of the youth, Fenggang Yang writes that many Chinese believe that, "Today the most advanced societies are 'Christian countries' with Christian traditions," and some Chinese converts in the United States express the conviction that, "There is a causal connection between Christianity, on the one hand, and modern market economies and political democracy, on the other."<sup>75</sup> Western modernity is also an important ingredient in the attraction of Christianity for urban believers.<sup>76</sup>

Christians and the post-Mao state actually share many important concepts, values and aspirations for modernity, even concerns about Chinese society's perceived moral crisis.<sup>77</sup> As Nanlai Cao has argued, "Chinese Christians are not simply victims of the state modernizing project; nor is the post-Mao Christian revival a process of faithful believers resisting state ideology."<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the revival of Christianity in China today is better understood as a dynamic process in which emerging socioeconomic groups embedded in their historical and cultural context are trying to claim their own space in which to practice a long-established faith under the changing economic and political conditions. As Yoshiko Ashiwa has pointed out, "Modernity is not a one-sided project of the state to discipline people's thoughts but is a reciprocal project of religions and states reshaping themselves and each other."<sup>79</sup> Bearing her words in mind, in any analysis of Chinese Christianity and modernity the theme of the subjectivity of common devotees should be paid more attention.

---

72. E.g., Ashiwa and Wank, *Making Religion, Making the State*; Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*; Tong, *Overseas Chinese Christian Entrepreneurs*; White, *Sacred Webs*; Yang, *Chinese Religiosities*.

73. Ong, "Chinese Modernities."

74. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*.

75. Yang, "Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity," 251.

76. Yang, "Lost in the Market."

77. See e.g., Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Entwistle, "Faith in China"; Wielander, *Christian Values in Communist China*.

78. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*, 164.

79. Ashiwa, "Positioning Religion in Modernity," 44.

As Bays points out, considering its size, resources and nationwide activities, the Christian church in China is now regarded as a major non-governmental entity.<sup>80</sup> The possible consequences of Chinese Christianity for the future of civil society fascinate researchers. Ryan Dunch insists that, despite the ongoing struggle to claim an autonomous space for religious activity in day-to-day experience, there is no direct correlation between Christian demands for autonomy and political opposition to the government.<sup>81</sup> Richard Madsen argues that the current, somewhat obdurate state of the Catholic church might prove to be more of a hindrance than a real strength in any attempts to form a civil society, since the Chinese Catholic church, that has been historically formed by and has not yet shed its Counter Reformation theology, tends to be more authoritarian and less tolerant of moral pluralism. Consequently, present-day Catholics have inherited and sustained a way of life - particularism, dependence on vertical hierarchy, and factionalism - that was fine for building a strong communal identity in a preindustrial Chinese society but not conducive to building a civil society in ongoing modernizing China.<sup>82</sup> Wenzhou Christianity, as Nanlai Cao has argued, is less likely to become any kind of national civil association contributing to China's political transformation. These privileged Christian entrepreneurs are striving to carve themselves out a position as members of emerging local elite by opening their arms wide to embrace a rather motley package offered by what has been summed up as evangelical Christianity, rational masculinity, state connections, a freewheeling market and a Western lifestyle all at one go. In this process of self-creation, having a Christian identity sets someone apart as a person with a claim to higher social status, who can also assert that he or she also holds the moral high ground, thereby honing the distinction between those who are successful and those who are less so.<sup>83</sup>

During my field research, the popular term "civil society" was only referred to once by an educated youth. In this research, it is not my plan to take up the correlations between the movement of cultural reinvention and the development of civil society as a major theme. My reason is that, in my view, the concept of "civil society" does not seem to contribute to the understanding of collective motivations. The Christian past has become the raw material for the imagining of a modern society. Instead of the theoretically laden concept of "modernity," my respondents use more colloquial phrases such as "modern" (*xiandai de*) and "advanced" (*fada de*) to refer to their understanding of the past. From their point of view, pre-1949 Xiamen used to be much more modern and advanced than other regions of China and this was the direct result of the introduction of Christianity and Western civilization in a broader sense. In this sense, the history enthusiasts in Xiamen are constructing a shared past of

---

80. Bays, "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today," 502.

81. Dunch, "Protestant Christianity in China," 212-13.

82. Madsen, *China's Catholics*.

83. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*, 166-67.

belonging at one and the same time to the state-led modernization project and the forming of a local pride. In the reproduction process of discourses about what is modern and advanced, an inevitable tension arises between national narratives on Christianity's inglorious role in modern Chinese history and alternative versions of a modern Christian image in local society. On the one hand, as Chinese society has become increasingly more liberal and plural in the wake of three decades of the Reform and Opening-Up Policy (*Gaige kaifang*), it is not easy for the state to monopolize the social memory of Christianity effectively. On the other hand, it would be overly optimistic to exaggerate the Christians' ability to negotiate state narratives. Therefore, logically speaking, negotiating mechanisms must have been spontaneously formed in the societal fabric in the Christian past.

Instead of analyzing the growth in numbers of Christians or the evangelization tactics of the churches as some studies have striven to do, the purpose of this research is to address Christianity's relevance to the ideological negotiations with the officially established authority. This was approached by asking how the history enthusiasts negotiate the Christianity-related ideology by reconstructing the Christian past and reproducing religious histories that redefine forms of local power structures in today's Xiamen. By taking this track, the study of Chinese Christianity has been able to move away from viewing Christianity simply as a religious system, and focus on the way how it has become deeply embedded in and matters to society as a whole. In this study, detailed analyses of different events contribute to understanding what Christianity means to the people of Xiamen and the dynamic interaction between diverse actors.

## **Shifted Paradigms in Social Memory Research**

This section begins with a brief introduction to memory in psychological studies, including Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory inspired by Emile Durkheim. I then review three approaches in the study of social memory. The final part is a description of works on social memory that argue that a more dynamic view should be taken of the relationship between the present and the past and between the official memory and popular memory. This is achieved by conceptualizing memory as actively being restructured in a process of negotiations.

Different disciplines follow different perspectives in memory studies. Since memory always refers to the understanding of the past, the first question to be solved is its relationship with history and history as a discipline. In the view of traditional historiography, memory is essentially different from history, because memory is unreliable as a source of truth. However, more recently, the emphasis on the distinction between memory and history has been reconsidered. Affected by the trend in cultural and social history, memory has now become evidence in historical research.

On the other hand, as a consequence of postmodernism, the way to understand what is objective truth and if there is indeed a “truth” has changed, blurring the boundary between memory and history. As Peter Burke has pointed out, history is a specific kind of social memory.<sup>84</sup>

In this research, I have moved away from trying to distinguish memory and history, leaving this question to specialist researchers in the field.<sup>85</sup> Terminologies like “social memory” and “history” will be used alternatively without being strictly defined, but with the proviso that “history” is most often used to describe representations of the past that appear in written form; “social memory” refers to the living information about some social events conserved in their minds by members of a particular society. In the following text, unless noted, these two terms always refer to the past.

### *The social framework of memory*

Memory studies were initiated in the field of psychology over a century ago. Hermann Ebbinghaus began the very first experimental study of memory. He introduced the method of reciting nonsense syllables into a laboratory setting and subsequently set up a paradigm based on statistical and mathematical theories to test the validity of his findings and to work out the results so as these could be stated in terms of a mathematical model. He tried to solve the problem of memory by isolating it, as far as possible, from its context in daily life. Ebbinghaus’ publication of his experimental investigation of memory (1885) was the first instance of the application of a precise scientific method to the study of “higher mental processes.”<sup>86</sup>

Ebbinghaus’ work stands as an embodiment of the essentials of the scientific method. This experimental approach enlightened subsequent studies and garnered scientific respectability for psychological studies of memory. On the basis of his groundbreaking work, follow-up studies were conducted in laboratory settings and subjected to rigorous experimental procedures and formal techniques. But, as time went by, defects in this sort of experimental approach became increasingly apparent. Frederic Bartlett, a British experimental psychologist, realized the complicated workings of memory in real-life contexts: since the psychological subject is an organism, “it is impossible to understand any high level mental process if it is simply studied by and for itself.”<sup>87</sup> Initially Bartlett followed Ebbinghaus’ lead and worked for some time with nonsense materials, but finally found that, “The result was disappointment and a growing

---

84. Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, chap. 3.

85. See e.g., Cubitt, *History and Memory*; Le Goff, *History and Memory*.

86. Ebbinghaus, *Memory*, 11.

87. Bartlett, *Remembering*, 186.

dissatisfaction.”<sup>88</sup> Hence he retained the advantages of the experimental approach in relatively controlled situations but also kept the study as realistic as possible. Bartlett then introduced remembering into social-psychological research and in doing so demonstrated that social factors are of immeasurable importance in determining what a person perceives and what he or she recalls.<sup>89</sup>

Indeed, memory has never been the exclusive territory of psychologists. Several years before Bartlett’s employment of memory in social psychological research, his French contemporary Halbwachs had already begun sociological studies of memory and Bartlett’s transition of memory studies to social psychology benefited in part from Halbwachs’ groundbreaking research.<sup>90</sup> Halbwachs gained fame from the study of the social frameworks of memory and his innovative concept of “collective memory.” His primary contribution to memory studies is the establishment of the connection between collective memory and a particular social group. He argued that there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society and all memories are structured by group identities. Therefore, any discussion of the origin of personal recollections must take into account the impact of such social institutions as family, community, religious group, social class and tradition. Collective memory must invariably be placed within a social framework because social groups themselves decide on their own terms those things that should be remembered and the way in which this remembrance will be affected. Halbwachs went on to argue that individual memory can be understood only by connecting “the individual to the various groups of which he is simultaneously a member.”<sup>91</sup> As a follower and younger colleague of Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of sociology, Halbwachs’ thought was without question affected by Durkheim,<sup>92</sup> and he benefited particularly from the concept of “collective consciousness” - that is, “the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society.”<sup>93</sup>

However, Halbwachs’ effort to combine personal images and social manifestations of the past did not result in a clear theory that would be able to explain how collective memory is formed. Even though Halbwachs was right in his assertion that social groups do construct the world in their own terms by reaching what is in fact a majority-agreed consensus of what happened in their history, he failed to explain how the dynamics of collective memory work.<sup>94</sup> One important weakness in Halbwachs’

---

88. Bartlett, *Remembering, Preface*, v

89. Bartlett, *Remembering*, part 2.

90. See Bartlett, *Remembering*, 294-96.

91. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.

92. For the influence of Durkheim on Halbwachs’ invention of collective memory and Halbwachs’ development premised on the former, see Coser, “Introduction.”

93. Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*, 79.

94. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 54

assertion that a society has the power to shape an individual's memory of what happened in the past is that it ignores the undeniable dialectical tensions between what an individual person remembers and the past as it has been constructed by a society. It would seem that his adherence to social determinism was responsible for this failure to address the question of how individual consciousness might relate to those of the collectivities these individuals actually make up. As James Fentress and Chris Wickham have commented, Halbwachs puts excessive emphasis on the collective attribute of social consciousness; the result is that the concept of collective memory is "curiously disconnected from the actual thought processes of any particular person."<sup>95</sup> The most common criticism of Halbwachs' theory is found in the following question posed by Fentress and Wickham, namely: "How to elaborate a conception of memory which, while doing full justice to the collective side of one's conscious life, does not render the individual a sort of automaton, passively obeying the interiorized collective will."<sup>96</sup> The explanatory power of Halbwachs' approach is further reduced by his assumption that collective identity precedes memory. As Barbara Misztai comments, Halbwachs' approach "prevents us from accounting for changes in a group's perception of the past, which could arise due to new conditions, but also presumes a vision of frozen social identity."<sup>97</sup> In other words, Halbwachs underrated the importance of a group's living memories, specifically those dynamic representations of a shared past in dialogue, interdependence or conflict with the tradition of the main collectivity.

One long-standing analytical approach to past-present relations is viewing social memory as a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present. Halbwachs asserts that the past is a social construction mainly shaped by present concerns. He inherited the Durkheimian legacy that every society requires a sense of continuity with the past, and developed the notion that present concerns determine what of the past we remember. His affinity with Durkheim's position is also clearly visible in his overemphasis of the collective nature of social consciousness and concomitantly in his postulation that a past must be imagined collectively *en masse* if it is to be instrumental in a sense of oneness or unity in a society. Halbwachs was not alone in this view. George H. Mead, for example, claims that the past is construed "from the standpoint of the new problem of today."<sup>98</sup> Ian M.L. Hunter also holds a similar view, stating that the primary function of memory "is not to conserve the past but to make possible adjustment to the requirements of the present."<sup>99</sup> Although they pursued different

---

95. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, Foreword, ix.

96. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, Foreword, ix.

97. Misztai, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 55.

98. Mead, "Nature of the Past," 241.

99. Hunter, *Memory*, 203.

research goals and proceeded from different assumptions about how present conditions influence perceptions of the past, the essence of their arguments is the same.

This “presentist” approach, emphasizing how present needs shape construction of the past, has aroused some apprehension. Barry Schwartz argues that an overemphasis on the present could lead to a neglect of the functions of collective memory for insuring cultural continuity. He shows the drastic changes in perception the figure of Abraham Lincoln has undergone among Americans over the years, and has observed that in contrast to being merely a retrieval process, reiterated in each generation of Americans, the remembering of Lincoln is a constructive process. According to its own lights and ideas, every generation of Americans has formed its own image of Lincoln that has deviated, sometimes quite radically, other times less drastically from the Lincoln as conceived by those who had preceded them. However, it has not been a different society, since a stable sense of national identity and consensus of values has been maintained. On this basis, Schwartz suggests that, if the presentist approach were to be pushed too far, Lincoln would be converted into “a mere screen on which the contemporary society projects its own image.”<sup>100</sup> He finally concludes, “the collective memory comes into view as both a cumulative and an episodic construction of the past.”<sup>101</sup>

### *The invention of tradition approach: official manipulation and power production*

The invention of tradition approach argues that the past is shaped to suit present dominant interests. This perspective argues that those who are most prominent in society and hence tend to dominate its way of thinking and utilize and exploit public ideas about the past seizing every means available to them, namely: the more malleable tools of public commemorations, school syllabuses, the mass media, plus those sources that might be considered less open to alteration as official records and chronologies. One of the widely accepted explanations, as Paul Connerton has said, is that people’s image of the past commonly legitimates a present social order.<sup>102</sup> This is the reason that researchers prefer particularly to adhere to the theme of power relations and restructuring in memory studies. Memory, as Michael Foucault has argued, “is actually a very important factor in struggle...if one controls the memory of the people, one controls their dynamism...It is vital to have possession of this memory, to control it, administer it, tell it what it must contain.”<sup>103</sup>

---

100. Schwartz, “Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln,” 103.

101. Schwartz, “Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln,” 104.

102. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 3.

103. Quoted in Megill, “Foucault, Structuralism,” 500.

Researchers following this paradigm have illustrated how new traditions and histories are invented in order to legitimize political structures, solidify social orders and sustain national communities. The rub is that by defining social memories as inventions of the past, scholars tend to study the officially led institutionalization of remembrance or the creation of a master narrative of a group members' common past. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) represents this perspective. "Traditions which appear or claim to be old," as Hobsbawm points out, "are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented." Invented tradition, he postulates, is taken to mean "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."<sup>104</sup> In late nineteenth-century Europe, "Quite new, or old but dramatically transformed, social groups, environments and social contexts called for new devices to ensure or express social cohesion and identity and to structure social relations. At the same time a changing society made the traditional forms of ruling by states and social or political hierarchies more difficult or even impracticable. This requested new methods of ruling or establishing bonds of loyalty."<sup>105</sup> At that time of rapid change, Europe saw a mass production of traditions that were used to exert power and influence, to found or validate institutions by bestowing authority on them, to provide emblems of the unity of society and to adapt individuals to and make them accept the contemporaneous social system. The invented traditions of the period since the industrial revolution can be categorized as three overlapping types: the first is used to establish or symbolize social cohesion or the membership of groups within real or imagined communities; the second is taken to legitimize the institutions, status or authority structures of a given society; and the third is needed to provide a set of values, beliefs and conventions for members of a community.<sup>106</sup>

Many studies have been written about the way in which societies in recent times have devised their own versions of history in their efforts to ensure social cohesion and validate their own authority. Moreover, they have simultaneously not neglected the socialization their citizens in a constructed, shared culture. While the Durkheimian tradition argues that people remember collectively and selectively, the invention of tradition approach elaborates this tradition by suggesting more directly who is responsible for the selectivity; that is, who controls or imposes the content of social memories. This imposition presupposes that any such invented memories are introduced to back up whatever the powers-that-be have in mind as an acceptable version of events. The official manipulation of social memory is embodied in both socially organized forgetting and socially organized remembering. Both methods are

---

104. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 1.

105. Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions," 263.

106. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 9.

employed and mutually reinforce serving ruling groups to legitimize and stabilize their political orders and interests.

This state-centered approach emphasizes the mechanism of state rituals as an effective means of the production of official narrative. In the course of the last century, communist revolutions eliminated the rituals and symbols of the *ancien régime* from which they took over and subsequently had to invent new ones to replace those that had been toppled. To achieve their purpose and pave the way for new social memories, communist regimes designed new flags, thought up new national events to be commemorated and rewrote school textbooks. Christel Lane's work is concerned with a great variety of rituals that derive from Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union, including familial life-cycle rituals, initiation into social or political collectives, labor and national holidays. She argues that these were tools of cultural management consciously adopted by political elites to maintain and perpetuate power relations between political elites and the masses.<sup>107</sup> Grant Evans has investigated the prevailing atmosphere in Laos over the last four decades, from the new dawn ushered in by the 1975 revolution to the more down-to-earth postsocialist present. Inevitably his study includes a description of the ritual and symbolic changes that have been introduced by the government in pursuit of its goals.<sup>108</sup> From his grounding in an analysis of textual resources, James Wertsch outlines a particular version of collective remembering that leads him into how the Soviet Russian state produced and provided its citizens with official accounts of the past.<sup>109</sup>

The collective notion of the past in the building of the Chinese nation-state during the late Qing and Republican periods, in particular how intellectuals invented a new kind of Chinese history and constructed the modern Chinese nation as an "imagined community," has also attracted scholarly attention.<sup>110</sup> "Historical consciousness in modern society," as Prasenjit Duara argues, "has been overwhelmingly framed by the nation-state"; specifically, "national history secures for the contested and contingent nation the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time."<sup>111</sup>

Undeniably, there has been a long-standing tradition for ruling groups to control the writing of history in China. Each of China's dynasties sought in its time to legitimize its power through new interpretations of history. To consolidate its rule, one of a dynasty's first acts was to write the history of the preceding dynasty.<sup>112</sup> This tradition has been continued by the Communist state since 1949. Ever since the

---

107. Lane, *Rites of Rulers*.

108. Evans, *Politics of Ritual*.

109. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*.

110. E.g., Shen, "Huangdi shenhua yu wan Qing de guozu jiangou"; Shen, "Minzu yingxiong xipu yu Wanqing de guozu xiangxiang."

111. Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 3, 4.

112. See e.g., Chen, *Qingdai qianqi de zhengzhi rentong yu lishi shuxie*.

foundation of the CCP, Marxist historiography has been a main sphere of ideological control.<sup>113</sup> Under the Communist rule, for a long time as an official monopoly well-designed history has shaped the people's social memory. Freedom of discussion in particular areas is either absent or strictly limited; any conflict with official narratives invites persecution.<sup>114</sup> The ruling groups are well aware that the only dependable way of making people effectively forget one thing without the aid of natural amnesia is to make them remember another with greater effect. The art of official amnesia, therefore, "always goes hand in hand with the art of political remembrance."<sup>115</sup> The political elites indicate which part of past experience should be remembered or forgotten according to the political line of the moment.<sup>116</sup> Episodes in the past have been erased more thoroughly from both official history and personal memory, leaving the ruled with a seemingly plausible representation. The colonization of public and private space, as Rubie Watson has declared, constitutes one of the hallmarks of state socialism.<sup>117</sup> A number of ethnographies have offered convincing evidence that traumatic memories of Maoist socialism forcefully affect the behavior, mental health and political attitudes of Chinese citizens.<sup>118</sup>

Since a certain degree of academic freedom has been allowed, the role of the party-state and various technologies in the manipulation of memory embodied in various political movements has begun to attract some Chinese researchers. Describing the Large-Scale Production Campaign (*Dashengchan yundong*), for instance, Zhou Haiyan depicts how a series of memories about the Nanniwan Spirit (*Nanniwan jingshen*) were constructed and reconstructed by the CCP at different periods. She concludes that, in addition to solving the economic crisis in the 1940s, the campaign brought the Party continuous sources of political legitimacy during subsequent crises.<sup>119</sup> Technologies in memory manipulation such as "grievance venting" (*suku*) served as an important psychological mechanism in mass mobilization.<sup>120</sup> Modern Chinese history has been written so as to maximize the gratitude due to the Party. Therefore, written history serves as a record of debts owed the rulers by the ruled. Alongside this kind of history there has developed another practice known as *yiku sitian* - recalling the bitterness of the past so as to appreciate the sweetness of the present. This constitutes a debtor-

---

113. Dirlik, *Revolution and History*; Unger, *Using the Past*.

114. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*.

115. Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution*, 81.

116. Béja, "Forbidden Memory, Unwritten History," 91.

117. Watson, "An Introduction," 19.

118. E.g., Huang, *Spiral Road*; Jing, *Temple of Memories*; Kleinman, *Distress and Disease*; Watson, "Making Secret Histories."

119. Zhou, *Jiyi de zhengzhi*.

120. Guo and Sun, "Grievance Venting."

creditor relationship.<sup>121</sup> Exemplary models, for example, Lei Feng (1940-62), a Communist soldier, were selected and produced by the authorities and have played an important role in political mobilization, as well as in gathering strength and popular support for various political movements. As a political myth, the public memory about him constructed by the party-state has been internalized by generations of people and still functions even today.<sup>122</sup>

When attention is paid to who controls or imposes such invented memories, social memory becomes equivalent to ideology serving the interests of the powerful and an instrument of elite manipulation used to control lower classes. Because memory's social and cultural aspects are underplayed, as Alon Confino's points out, "Memory thus becomes a prisoner of political reductionism and functionalism."<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the equation of ideology with memory is also misleading. One of the chief purposes of ideology is to act as a sort of cement that will guarantee national cohesion; hence it is monolithic. On the other hand, although collective memory can strengthen, it can also cause discord. It is crucial to remember that the memory of a social group cannot always be reduced to the political aim of sustaining relations of power as it is not necessarily solely imposed from above.

### *The popular memory approach: contesting the dominant ideology*

The official manipulation of society's memory is not always effective. Examples from a number of countries show that individuals and sub-groups have their own, often quite strong, opinions, and therefore they will readily repudiate any depiction of their past that conflicts with what they personally can recollect and is also at odds with what they perceive to be the truth. As Michael Schudson has pointed out, "The past is not only the stories people tell of it; it is the claim of events that set the conditions about which people feel compelled to tell stories."<sup>124</sup> In other words, collective memory is not so easy to undermine or distort. A dominant power that ignores the authenticity and the experience of the memory held by any group under its sway is in danger of finding itself being put in a bad light. Moreover, negative memories produced by a ruling group might challenge its own legitimacy and a regime could fall if it creates too many bad memories and fails to eradicate them.<sup>125</sup> From the point of view of common sense, it is not always possible to impose totally invented or fabricated traditions on people

---

121. Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution*, 82-83.

122. Yuan, "Lei Feng fuhao."

123. Confino, "Memory and Cultural History," 1395.

124. Schudson, "Lives, Laws and Language," 5.

125. Ci, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution*, 75.

regardless of political systems, democratic or undemocratic. As Jun Jing writes, “The transmission of memory involves a large armamentarium of symbolic resources and moral evaluation, in which the worth of political control itself can be questioned and even challenged.”<sup>126</sup> In this sense, this state-centered presentist memory approach tends to presume the ruled to be passive recipients of assigned narratives and simplifies the multidimensional interplay between the people and the state.

In discussions of the popular memory approach, scholars are particularly interested in the issue of unofficial narratives shared by members of certain social segments who do not necessarily adhere to the dominant, public or official representations of the past. This approach, inspired by Foucault’s notion of counter-memory, observes that memories can be socially constituted from below as well as from above. The articulation of counter-memories is analyzed as evidence of resistance to various forms of domination.<sup>127</sup> Critical of Foucault’s under-evaluation of the power of popular memories to resist control by the dominant power and ideology, the Popular Memory Group of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham is devoted to the study of alternative memories.<sup>128</sup> Unlike the official memory approach, that assumes that memories are socially constituted from above, popular memory theory emphasizes the fact that cogent memory can also be a bottom-up construction. When it is so created it acknowledges a way of remembering and forgetting that begins at the local level.

Many researchers argue that counter-memory acts as an everyday resistance to dominant societal structures. In his study of a Malaysian village, James Scott points out that the negative impact of a state-led green revolution project that was condemned by impoverished villagers by the creation of a “remembered economy” that glossed over many unattractive features of an older system of land tenure. Their memory was quite selective. Intriguingly, it very much focused on of the erstwhile benefits of land tenure and labor relations that have gradually been abraded or have even been completely eradicated by state-introduced changes. The account of the village poor who were overcome by a wave of nostalgia resulted from the fact that so many of the innovations of the past decade have worked decisively against their material interests.<sup>129</sup> After its defeat at the hands of the Communists, the *Kuomintang* (KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party) retreated to Taiwan. Its members experienced a sense of urgency to regain its legitimacy as the sole orthodox successor to Chinese culture. Once established in the island, the Nationalist government promoted Mandarin Chinese and inculcated hatred of Japanese imperialism and of the Communists in the people. Stung by this imposition, Taiwanese Aborigines and

---

126. Jing, *Temple of Memories*, 171.

127. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, part ii.

128. Popular Memory Group, “Popular Memory.”

129. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 178-83.

Hakka people selected “good memories” of the Japanese occupation as a weapon against KMT ideological indoctrination.<sup>130</sup> In present-day China, the widespread yearning for Republican freedom and democracy originates precisely from their dissatisfaction with the present situations.<sup>131</sup>

These forms of political control over society’s memory have been extensively researched in terms of the relationship between the Chinese party-state and intellectuals.<sup>132</sup> But more research needs to be done, especially grassroots studies that focus on local reactions to the official manipulations of social memory.

### *The dynamics of memory approach: memory as a negotiating domain*

Research on memory has been furthered by the dynamics of memory approach. Misztal argues that this perspective allows us to understand “commemoration as a struggle or negotiation between competing narratives, and stresses that the dynamics of commemorative rituals involves a constant tension between creating, preserving and destroying memories.”<sup>133</sup> In this explanation, commemoration is seen as a socially constructed and contested process that is shaped by, and shapes, the present as well as the past. Hence collective memory is viewed as a continuous exercise in dialogue and consequently, when examined, it reveals the restrictions placed on the ability of actors to refashion history in general or what might have happened to them personally in particular to suit what they want to achieve now.<sup>134</sup> Hence, from the dynamic perspective the definition of memory realistically does not simplify and whittle down remembering to mere tool that a ruling elite might use to control and manipulate the group of people whom they consider to be the lower classes and those who do not fit the general pattern, namely: the minority groups. In contrast to the invention of traditions approach, that views memory as a social group’s experience essentially sustaining relations of power, the dynamics of memory perspective argues that memory is not constrained solely by the official narrative. This approach recognizes that commemoration is not constructed only by powerful actors or groups from the top-down, but can also be constructed and contested by ordinary citizens and civil societal groups. It sees memory inhabiting the space left over between what is imposed by ideology and the possibility that there might be other ways of understanding and

---

130. Wang, *Huaxia bianyuan*, chap. 12.

131. Zhang and Weatherley, “Rise of ‘Republican Fever.’”

132. E.g., Goldman, *Literary Dissent*; Goldman, Cheek, and Hamrin, *China’s Intellectuals*; Gu and Goldman, *Chinese Intellectuals*; Mok, *Intellectuals and the State*; Unger, *Using the Past*.

133. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 127.

134. Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory*.

interpreting experience. This more complex perspective acknowledges that dominant constructions of memory can be challenged or even rejected by ordinary citizens who can transform personal narratives into various representations. In addition, it acknowledges that various elements are often at play at once. Finally, the dynamics of memory approach understands that there are limits to the construction of commemoration as the past is often resistant to efforts to make it over, and that permanent and changing versions of the past are always part of one another. It shifts the emphasis in the direction of a more complex view of how past and present interact with each other in the formation of collective memory. It postulates that collective memory is an operative process of sense-making over time.<sup>135</sup>

Generally speaking, the virtue of this perspective is that it avoids political reductionism and functionalism. As Misztal has pointed out, it “runs a lower risk of reifying collective memory as it is aware of the flexibility and ambiguities of memory and because it incorporates conflict, contest and controversy as the hallmarks of memory.”<sup>136</sup>

This research adopts this dynamic perspective, making a basic assumption that the past of Chinese Christianity is not a free field that can be repeatedly contrived or re-contrived to suit particular purposes and that efforts to stamp out any alternative version, or indeed to browbeat people into submission, have not been nor will be effective enough to guarantee that imposed interpretations of past events will find general acceptance.

## Doing Fieldwork in Xiamen

This research is based on materials collected during fieldwork in Xiamen between 2011 and 2015. My field study consisted of three sections. The first part began in May 2011, when I was officially accepted as a PhD student in sociology at Xiamen University (XMU), and continued up to the spring of 2012. At that time, I focused on transnational Christian networks, in particular the role of returned overseas Chinese who devote themselves to bridging the gap between Chinese society and American Christianity. The second section was conducted from December 2013 to May 2014, plus October of the latter year. The final trip came in November 2015. In the fall of 2012 I transferred to Leiden University, but retained my studentship at XMU. During my fieldwork, XMU’s School of Public Affairs offered me letters of introduction bearing official seals to assist my visits to the Xiamen Archives and the Xiamen RAB. In China, a letter of introduction from an official or quasi-official agency is necessary to access government and other sorts of work units (*danwei*). When interviewing

---

135. Olick and Levy, “Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint,” 922.

136. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 73.

people within or outside the church community, I referred to my status as an affiliate of Leiden University. It turned out that my research benefited from the identity conferred by a Western university. I would have been less welcome if I had come as a local student. My background stimulated my respondents to discuss the decline in Christian beliefs in Europe (the Netherlands in particular where prostitution, homosexual marriage and private use of marijuana are permitted), and also prompted the request from local history experts for assistance in looking for foreign historical materials related to the Xiamen church. However, whenever I gained access to archives and interviewed religious affairs officials, I showed my XMU credentials and presented myself as a student of a Chinese university. Even with this affiliation, most officials were hesitant to share their ideas about Christianity with me. In short, although I did use a status conferred by one of two universities on various occasions, I did not mislead any of my respondents.

One afternoon during my field research in April 2014, I went to the Xiamen Archives in an attempt to find some useful historical materials. Before I had even entered the door to the reception room, the sounds of an emotional debate reached my ears. A man who had requested access to his father's personnel file (*dang'an*) had been refused. One staff member explained the position to him, stating that only his father himself was qualified to see it. "But my father is bedridden. Do I need to carry him over here?" He was filled with rage at the way he was being prevented from seeing his own father's file. I was carrying an official letter of introduction in the hope that it could make the church archives accessible. After showing the letter, I was asked to fill in a form and to check the boxes associated with the subjects listed. I was surprised to see a short list indicating very limited information. Contrary to the list I had been given, when I had been to the archives I already knew that a local church member had copied hundreds of pages of historical documents relating to the city's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) just two years earlier. Even worse, when the junior staff member submitted my request to her superior in charge, the latter rejected more than half of items on the list. What I was allowed to access were merely policy documents that had been made public and could be found online. They explained that a notice had been issued not long before stating that archives relating to sensitive religious questions were not open to the public; an official letter of introduction from religious affairs authorities was necessary before I would be able to gain more access. However, shortly afterwards my request for such a letter was rejected by an RAB official. That experience depressed me but it also helped me understand the difficulty in accessing church histories. Historical archives concerning post-1949 Christianity are now under even stricter control than they were before.

Just one month after initiating the second phase of my field study, I was left feeling extremely frustrated. I was quite aware of the difficulties in investigating foreigners' transnational Christian activities, because I had a thorough knowledge of the state

policies and appreciated the complexities because I had looked into such a case in 2011. Nevertheless, I still underestimated the difficulties. Returned Chinese-Americans were alert to any potential risk when I explained my purpose. The problem, I later realized, was that I had assumed a fairly “open” landscape in the Xiamen church and that I would encounter no problems in doing research on such fashionable themes as modernity and transnationalism. My intention was to identify the characteristics of Christianity in Xiamen and compare it with that in other areas such as Wenzhou. In his study of a Catholic community Wu Fei has asked: “Like a stonemason, I attempt to carve a regularly shaped artifact, to be named ‘academic research,’ out of a single piece of stone. However is it really my work to dress or cut the stone according to my own likes and dislikes?”<sup>137</sup> When I realized the problem, I decided to depart from my intended focus and reacquaint myself with the Xiamen church community from another, hopefully more objective, angle. Then, as I worked, I became conscious that my fieldwork was taking place at a historical juncture at which local people had just begun to be concerned about their Christian legacy. After a discussion with my supervisors, I refocused on the locals’ efforts to reconstruct the Christian past.

The fact that I am not Christian did cause my investigation any considerable inconvenience. On one occasion my request for a conversation was refused by an unregistered church leader, even though I had been introduced by his fellow preacher. He gave a straightforward reason from a typically Christian perspective: “Such a non-Christian from a secular university could not understand our faith in Christ.” I supposed that his reaction was prompted largely by safety reasons, and I fully understood the fragility of his position as an unrecognized church leader. Nevertheless, I have to say that many Christians repeatedly told me that I could not understand their faith and experience unless I accept Jesus as my savior. When I was in Wenzhou, a pastor who gave me accommodations reiterated this view over and over again. In one conversation, he mentioned a scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who once visited his church and authored an article. “I read her articles. With all due respect, from the Christian view, these articles written by non-Christians are ridiculous.” His contempt for non-believers’ research turned up again and again in our everyday conversations and made me really uncomfortable. I then responded: “With all due respect, from the non-Christian view, articles written by Christians are sometimes ridiculous too.” He forced a slight, reluctant smile but did not say anything. My sudden impulsive response embarrassed him. Since then I have often pondered why many Christians insist that their beliefs could not be comprehended. Is it simply because of my lack of religious experience? The only thing I can assume is that these believers must have already generated their own interpretative systems. In the past the composition of China’s Christian population has frequently been described as “three-

---

137. Wu, *Maimang shang de shengyan*, 31.

many” - that is, many female, many old and many illiterate believers.<sup>138</sup> Recently, however, increasingly more young, educated people are attending urban churches in economically advanced regions, a trend that is gradually changing the composition of today’s Christian population. Xiamen Christians invariably profess the city’s long-standing Christian tradition and wish to demonstrate their cultural superiority. “No matter what kind of dignitary,” an intellectual proudly said to me, “they will bow their ‘noble’ heads when they set foot on Gulangyu.”

Rather than identify myself as a “cultural Christian,” a term popular in Chinese society to refer to someone who appreciates the Christian doctrine and the faith but has no personal commitment to the church, when asked I replied that I regarded myself as a “seeker” (*mudaoyou*). “Seeker,” a term also popular among Christians, means a person who is keen on learning about the Christian faith but has not yet converted. My respondents often tried to convert me. Obviously, I disappointed all of them. They felt sorry to have to tell me that I shall not be saved without Jesus as my savior. I often gave them an excuse, claiming that it was necessary to distance myself from the faith in order to maintain a certain degree of objectivity. I appreciated that many of them understood the requirements of scientific research. I attended various church services just as an ordinary Christian would do and became familiar with their faith by reading the Bible, listening to sermons and singing hymns. As often as possible, I made my presence visible on various occasions. But I neither prayed in public nor participated in Holy Communion, a rite reserved for church members only.

In October 2011, I attended a closed men’s retreat held by a Chinese-American fellowship. When sharing testimonies, my emotion spun out of control and I burst into tears. Since that time, I have become more aware of the dangers of a deep involvement in religious experiences and reminded myself from time to time of my role as a researcher rather than a believer. Misfortune might be a blessing in disguise. Precisely because of this unexpected episode, I caught the attention of the leader who believed that I would accept Jesus soon. Even though I still did not convert, I did become more popular and credible among those fellowship members, a step that greatly facilitated my investigation.

Although local history experts are keen to explore the Christian past, their efforts are often restricted because of limited sources and lack of foreign language skills. Ma Zhenyu, a retired engineer who was in charge of writing the history of Trinity Church, came to seek my assistance. The biggest difficulty in the construction of Trinity Church in 1936 had been constructing the roof. Thanks to a Dutch engineer from the Netherlands Harbor Works Company, who was living in Xiamen, a roof for the new structure was finally designed and the church building was completed one month

---

138. See Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan shijie zongjiao yanjiusuo ketizu. “Zhongguo Jidujiao ruhu wenjuan diaocha baogao.”

before it hosted the second National Bible Assembly in July 1936. As he had solved the most difficult part in the construction process, Ma believed that the engineer's name should be committed to memory. He did his utmost but still failed to identify the engineer. When he heard that I was doing my PhD in the Netherlands, he invited me to lunch and requested my help. As soon as I returned to Leiden, I devoted myself to the matter. However, because of the multiple restructurings of the company, I was unable to locate the engineer's name. Ma then asked me to bring a picture of the current company building with me to the church. To my surprise, my picture was projected on a big screen during his testimony at the church's eightieth anniversary celebration. On behalf of the church, he spoke of his appreciation of my help and even listed my name among his most important sources. An American guest joked with me saying: "Now you are famous." Given my active involvement and assistance, Ma said to me that: "You are no longer an outsider (*wairen*)." Every time he presented me to other church people, he introduced me with the words: "He is the young man from the Netherlands who tried to help us identify the Dutch engineer." Although my name was far from familiar among those Christians, after this the distance between me and these church members had indeed narrowed. My research benefited from becoming not just one of the Christian community, but also part of the cause to which the local people committed.

I collected historical materials for those who appreciate the past of the Xiamen region in general and the role of Christianity in particular. In so doing, I became far better acquainted with two key pastors and several local history experts, who were delighted to be of assistance. Quite apart from research purposes, I gladly contributed to the local cultural or church activities because I appreciate these people's growing cultural awareness and enthusiasm to narrate alternative histories. I have to say that the refocused theme of my research is more welcome among the local history experts who consider me as their companion in history issues, even though I have repeatedly explained my research subject. In a sense, they appreciate my research as they rightly think that their commitment is being recorded.

Being Chinese helped me avoid the official restrictions that often hinder foreign researchers from participation in Christians' everyday lives. I conducted the fieldwork on my own, except for the paid assistance (sixteen or so hours) of a graduate student at XMU, who helped in collecting state discourses on Christianity from official newspapers. I was well aware that the theme of my research could be quite sensitive and might cause my informants unwanted trouble. The first priority in my research was to avoid putting them into any form of difficult situation, even though the Christians are no longer under the pressure to renounce their religion (but they still cannot join the CCP without doing so). Those who are still alive will remain anonymous throughout this research, despite prior public disclosure of persons and/or events existing in published forms (including newspaper and Internet articles).

However, I cannot keep Xiamen City anonymous as sociological or anthropological studies have traditionally done, because this research needs to be located in the historical, political and social contexts of modern and contemporary Xiamen. If it were not identified in its social context, it would prevent readers from understanding the collective enthusiasm for connecting the past to the present and how this is undertaken. Moreover, the locality is referred to in detail and some of the historical and geographical information would easily lead readers to Xiamen; any efforts to keep the place unidentified would be in vain.

When collecting my data, on special occasions I did use participant observation and I conducted interviews. Sixty-one people acted as my respondents (some of them on a number of occasions; eighty-one interviews in total were carried out), including those with twelve pastors and eight local history experts. In most cases, informal conversations, rather than (semi)structured interviews, were preferable. I did design major questions but, in many cases, let them tell their stories freely. They were all aware of my identity as a researcher and what the purpose of our conversations was. Careful consideration was given to some information derived from the talks that they had specifically asked me not to publish. In the case of some quotes that are essential to the analysis, I have carefully changed the informants' personal data to preserve their anonymity. I studied at XMU from 2007 to 2012 and was awarded my master's degree from there; therefore the locale is not completely unfamiliar to me. The Southern Fujian dialect (*Minnanhua*), that is significantly different from Mandarin (*Putonghua*), the official language, is used by many local people. Xiamen is a city of domestic migration in which a large proportion of the population are not native speakers of the local dialect. As a result, in my fieldwork all conversations were conducted in Mandarin. Even so, I was aware that the use of Mandarin could potentially impact on this research. To reduce any negative impact, each time I sensed something in interviews might be untrue or contradictory, I posed the same question to other respondents and compared their answers.

Throughout the research, I identified myself as a narrator who retells the stories of those who are recounting the Christian past. Despite my efforts to record the locals' experiences as accurately as possible, they might not always agree with my position. I expect that many will never have access to my research. Therefore, the question that has long been bothering me is: Does a stone really have a grain? If the answer is "yes," I am afraid that academic research, as a regularly shaped artifact, is often carved out against, rather than along, the grain.

## Organization of the Dissertation

In addition to the introduction, this dissertation has six chapters. In Chapter Two, I give a complete picture of Xiamen, covering its geographical, administrative, historical, social and cultural contexts. The social change that has affected Gulangyu Island and its Christian community will be described in detail, serving as the starting point for this research. Chapter Three examines a memorial service held in Xiamen in 2010 for an American missionary who died and was buried there in 1910. Chapter Four recounts the eightieth anniversary celebration of Trinity Church in October 2014, revealing the fate of Christianity on the changing island and how the church has responded to the state modernization project by reinterpreting its glorious past and grieving over its irreversible fate. In Chapter Five, I depict the contestation over the writing and publishing of church history texts between the state, the churches and enthusiastic amateur historians.

Chapter Six sets out the remedy for reviving Trinity Church and the politics of legitimation of transnational Christian activities during the reform era. It proves that the international Christian agency cannot really be accepted by the Chinese Christian community because of its political sensitivity and its absence from the historical tradition and present-day societal fabric. In Chapter Seven, the conclusion, I revisit the central themes of my research and try to draw out some of the broader implications of the study.

## Chapter 2

# Xiamen History, Society and Christianity

Understanding the lived history of Christianity in modernizing China is impossible without a fuller understanding of the rise of Xiamen, a city that occupies a special position in Christian history of China and the opening of the nation to the outside world. Before exploring the main subjects in more depth, it would be useful to give a brief review of the locality. This chapter begins with a concise introduction to Xiamen as a geographical and an administrative entity, followed by a history and an overview of the structure of contemporary Xiamen society. As the starting point for this research, the historical and social changes on Gulangyu will be elaborated.

### Xiamen as a Place

Fujian province is located on China's southeast coast, bordered by Jiangxi to the west, Zhejiang to the north, Guangdong to the southwest and the East China Sea to the east. In China, every province has a single character abbreviation and the character "Min" refers to Fujian. Fujian has many dialects that have never merged the way in which those of other provinces have done over time.<sup>1</sup> They vary so considerably that people cannot understand non-native dialects without actually learning them. The principal dialects are the Southern Fujian dialect, the Fuzhou dialect and the Hakka dialect. Within the Southern Fujian region, the Xiamen vernacular has prevailed, a fact usually attributed to the prosperity of the city since the late imperial period.<sup>2</sup>

Xiamen, formerly known in the West as Amoy, situated on one of the best deep-water harbors in China, is located on the southeast coast of Fujian, in the estuary of the Nine Dragons River (*Jiulong jiang*). Facing Xiamen Island across the Taiwan Strait are Taiwan and the Penghu or Pescadores Archipelago. Lying between two prefectures on land, Xiamen is surrounded on three sides: to the west it borders Zhangzhou prefecture, and to the east and north Quanzhou prefecture. The three surrounding prefectures constitute Southern Fujian (*Minnan*), a region more prosperous than

---

1. See Li, *Fujian fangyan*.

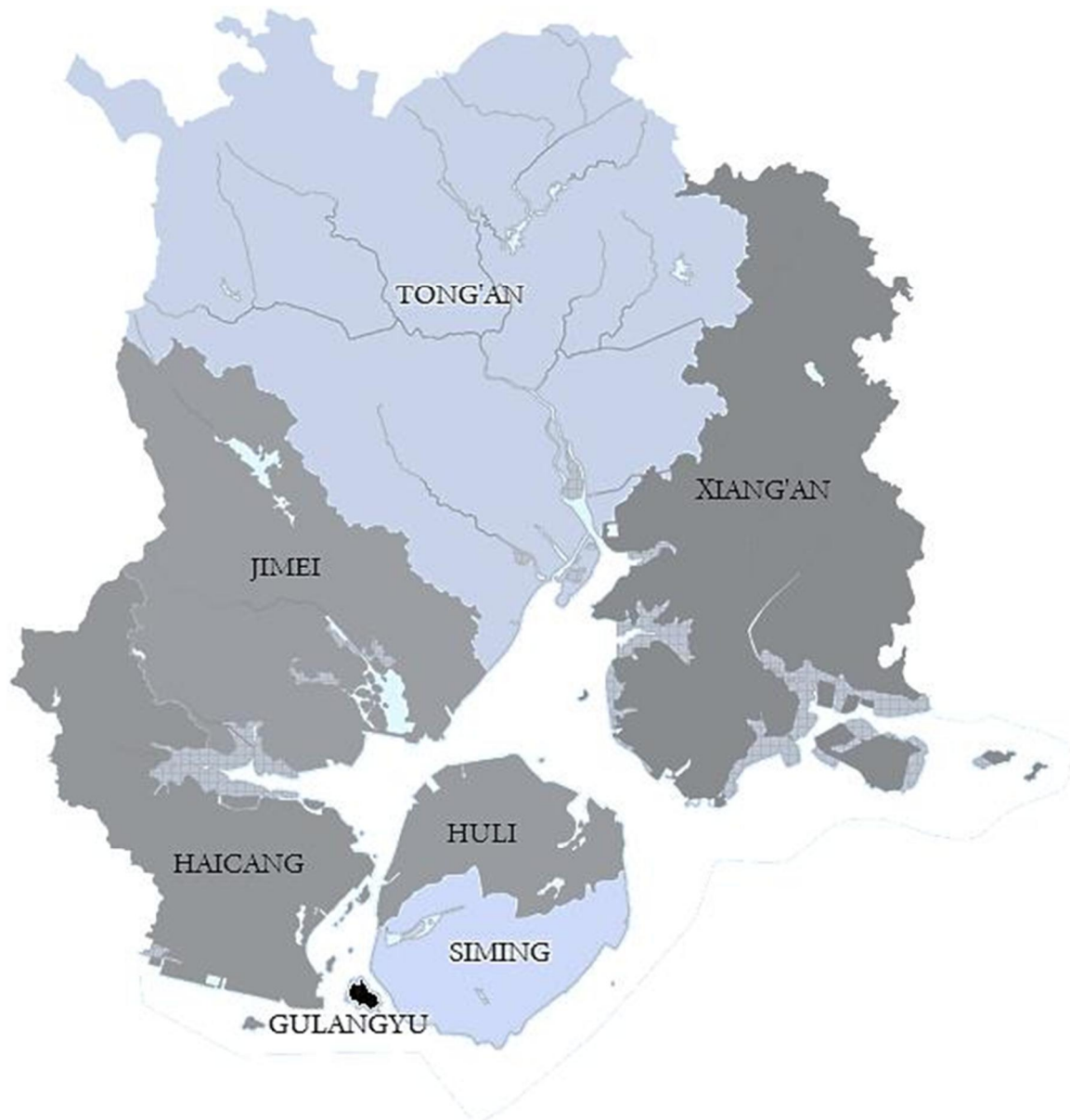
2. See e.g., Chen and Li, *Xiamen fangyan*, 28-31; Zhou, *Xiamen fangyan cidian*, 19.

those of Middle Fujian (*Minzhong*), Eastern Fujian (*Mindong*), Western Fujian (*Minxi*) and Northern Fujian (*Minbei*).



*Map of China.*

The name “Xiamen” carries two distinct meanings. In the first instance, it can refer to a specific urban area and the suburbs in its immediate vicinity. In this sense, Xiamen City (*shi*) can be regarded as a municipality. Administratively speaking, Xiamen City is currently composed of six districts, namely: Siming, Huli, Jimei, Haicang, Tong’an and Xiang’an. Siming and Huli districts are situated on Xiamen Island itself and the other four are on the Mainland. Gulangyu Island, administered by the Gulangyu Management Committee (GMC), has been affiliated with Siming district since the government restructuring in 2003. In the second instance, citizens often refer to the islands of Xiamen and Gulangyu with a sense of superiority. This attitude derives from the fact that, as the main part of Xiamen these two islands have long been urbanized, but it is only recently that the other districts have been merged into Xiamen City. Even today, a boorish person can be ridiculed as a “Xiang’an farmer.”



*The administrative region of Xiamen.*

By 2014, the city had a resident population (*changzhu renkou*) of 3.81 million. Of these, 2.03 million were registered household residents (*huji renkou*), and of these 978,200 (48.08 percent) resided on Xiamen and Gulangyu Islands.<sup>3</sup> It has a land area of more than 1,573 square km (Xiamen and Gulangyu Islands amount to 141 square km)

---

3. The *hukou* (or *huji*) system is the official residential identification and control program in China. The purpose of a household registration system is to record and officially identify a person as a resident of a particular area. Although it has ancient cultural roots, the current administration of the system is used by the state to exercise control over the movement of people within the country. Those without *hukou* of a particular city are not eligible to benefit from the city's social security systems, including medical insurance and children education. At present, however, the effectiveness of the *hukou* system as a useful instrument by which to control domestic population mobility is declining.

and a sea area of 390 square km.<sup>4</sup> Its resident population has enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in China and they are noted for their personal and economic links with the outside world. By virtue of its geographically and politically favorable conditions, Xiamen has become an international seaport city. According to official statistics, in 2014 the city's gross domestic product reached 327.3 billion *yuan* (53.5 billion US dollars according to the 2014 exchange rate), in which the tertiary industry accounted for 53.5 percent, a higher percentage than the secondary industry (45.8 percent).<sup>5</sup> On account of its municipal infrastructure, neat cityscape and higher standard of living, Xiamen is among the most popular Chinese cities to live in today and it rejoices in the soubriquet of being a "pearl of the sea." Legend has it that countless egrets once made it their home; hence it earned an alternative name, Egret Island. In recent years, Xiamen has been designated a tourist city and attracts millions of tourists each year.

As a second-tier city in China, Xiamen is still less well known in the West. It can be considered less "global" than bigger cities such as Beijing and Shanghai that cater to mass movements of people from across the globe and function as hubs for global financial flows. Nevertheless, as Angela Lehmann demonstrates, in recent years as a "globalizing" city Xiamen has been hosting a growing number of international expatriates.<sup>6</sup>

The ethnographic research for this study was conducted on both Xiamen and Gulangyu Islands and consequently, when necessary, these two geographical areas will be distinguished in the text below. For example, in distinction to Gulangyu Island the designation "Xiamen Island" will be used. Meanwhile, the name Xiamen in general refers to both Xiamen and Gulangyu Islands in this thesis, and Xiamen City means the Xiamen prefecture that is made up of the six districts.

## A Brief History of Xiamen

In the distant past, Xiamen was an isolated island remote from the Central Plains (*Zhongyuan*, the term that usually means the central state and dominant Han culture) civilization. There is extremely little pre-Song Dynasty (960-1279) written work about Xiamen.<sup>7</sup> According to a county gazetteer, in AD 282 the Jin court (266-420)

---

4. "Brief Introduction to Xiamen," Xiamen Municipal Government, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.xm.gov.cn/zjxm/xmgk/>.

5. "Xiamen City's Main Economic Indicators in 2014," Xiamen Statistics Bureau, accessed October 21, 2015, [http://www.stats-xm.gov.cn/tjzl/tjsj/jdsj/sjyb/201501/t20150129\\_25033.htm](http://www.stats-xm.gov.cn/tjzl/tjsj/jdsj/sjyb/201501/t20150129_25033.htm)

6. Lehmann, *Transnational Lives in China*.

7. Zhou *et al.*, *Xiamen zhi*, 1.

established Tong'an county, to which the Xiamen area belonged.<sup>8</sup> Over a thousand years later, the next substantial change in Xiamen's administrative division occurred. In the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), troops were stationed on Xiamen Island, giving an indication of the island's military importance.<sup>9</sup> More people moved to the island in greater numbers and contributed to its economic development and population expansion. In the early years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), a city wall was built by Zhou Dexing (?-1392).<sup>10</sup> After this landmark event, the term "Xiamen" (literally meaning "gate of the mansion") was officially adopted replacing its earlier name "Paddy Field Island" (*Jiaheyu*).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the once flourishing official overseas trade in Southern Fujian began to decline. Thereafter, stimulated by the expansion of the commodity economy, a new type of private overseas trade, centered on Yuegang (in Zhangzhou) and Anping (in Jinjiang) ports, rapidly emerged and the latter two places finally dislodged the leading position of the port of Quanzhou. After these two ports declined in their turn, Xiamen became one of southeast China's most important port cities.<sup>11</sup> In 1684, the Manchu Qing government established the Fujian Customs to take charge of managing merchant ships and collecting taxes. The fact that its headquarters were located in Xiamen, rather than the provincial capital Fuzhou, is proof of the prominence achieved by the port.<sup>12</sup> In this era Xiamen gradually established itself as a leading port, initially for both national and international trade. In the year of 1766 during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735-95), Liao Feipeng, a noted scholar-official who had had a provincial-level degree (*juren*) conferred on him in the imperial civil service examinations, described Xiamen Port, saying: "There are tens of thousands of ships mooring in the port."<sup>13</sup> Liao's account fires the imagination of the prosperity of the Xiamen Port. In 1757, the Qianlong Emperor shut down Xiamen's port, along with those in other cities with the exception of Guangzhou, an act that marked the beginning of nearly a century of seclusion. Despite this measure, trade between Xiamen and Southeast Asian (*Nanyang*) countries was not completely severed.<sup>14</sup>

Under the Qing Dynasty, Xiamen emerged as the political, economic and military center of Southern Fujian, despite the fact that Quanzhou and Zhangzhou, the two prefectures surrounding Xiamen, still retained their status as the administrative

---

8. Lin *et al.*, *Tong'an xian zhi*, 41.

9. Zhou *et al.*, *Xiamen zhi*, 79.

10. Xue *et al.*, *Lujiang zhi*. The page with the description of *Lucheng* is unidentified.

11. For the ports for private sea trade in Ming-Qing Fujian, see Lin, *Ming mo Qing chu siren haishang maoyi*, chap. 4.

12. Lin, *Fujian duiwai maoyi yu haiguan shi*, 144-48.

13. Xue *et al.*, *Lujiang zhi*. Page of preface by Liao Feipeng is unidentified.

14. See Lin, *Fujian duiwai maoyi yu haiguan shi*, 164-68.

centers. The expansion in maritime trade under the Qing stimulated the development of an interwoven coastal network centered on Xiamen.<sup>15</sup>

Although the dynasty seated itself firmly in the saddle, its authorities were not able to establish all-encompassing governance on the coast. As a long isolated and underdeveloped island, Xiamen had never really been tightly controlled by the successive central states. Consequently, factors like trade or war sweeping in from the sea had constantly played a role in (re)shaping the Xiamen landscape. During the times at which the banning policy was at its most severe, the coastal residents were still not deterred from trying their hand at smuggling or turning to piracy and joining a pirate band, even though they knew they ran the risk of being beheaded. In an effort to diminish, if not banish, the threat from the sea, on two separate occasions maritime trade was forbidden by Ming and Qing emperors. Only a few countries approved by the central government were excepted from this ban. In the years in which the threats were highest, the coastal residents were forced to move inland; even touching seawater could lead to the death penalty. In spite of the severe penalties, the government policies failed to eliminate piracy. In fact, it worsened as numerous bankrupt maritime businessmen and fishermen joined pirate bands, intensifying the problem. Meanwhile, private sea trade thrived and rapidly expanded, especially under the rule of the rebel Zheng Chenggong (also known as *Koxinga*, 1624-62) who claimed loyalty to the defeated Ming court.<sup>16</sup> In 1647 Zheng rebelled against the newly established Qing Dynasty and captured Xiamen and Jinmen Islands, where he set up an administrative body under the governance (nominally at least) of the usurped Ming imperial family. In response, in an attempt to cut off the rebels' connections and keep them isolated the Qing state adopted a policy banning maritime trade. In contrast to the Qing court's strict prohibition on maritime trade, Zheng's group promoted foreign trade through which it was able to supply its military requirements and this trade brought Xiamen increased commercial prosperity. The flourishing maritime trade gave a huge fillip to shipbuilding, commerce and the handicraft industries in Xiamen and the surrounding areas. When the Qing government took over Xiamen, the court attached great importance to its military significance and moved the Fujian naval headquarters there from Fuzhou. Yet another event that forced the Qing government to cede temporary control over Xiamen occurred in 1853, when a secret society called the Small Knife Society (*Xiaodaohui*) revolted against Manchu rule and occupied the island for six months.<sup>17</sup> As Ching Maybo has argued, although in the Ming and Qing periods the power of the state was gradually expanded into South China, its aim being to absorb the region into its empire, it was still possible for people to "evade" the arm of the

---

15. Ng, *Trade and Society*.

16. See Lin, *Ming mo Qing chu siren haishang maoyi*, 117-26.

17. See Lian, *Fujian mimi shehui*, 137-48.

state.<sup>18</sup> Xiamen on the periphery of the Chinese empire had long remained place with a reputation for “not being governed”; a place in which the state had to struggle to exercise efficient and consistent control.<sup>19</sup>

Another factor which was to complicate the center-local relationship between the Qing court and Xiamen was by the intervention of Western forces. Only one and a half centuries after Xiamen had been absorbed into the Qing Empire, the court once more lost full control over the area. The city’s fate was changed completely in the 1840s. Defeated by the British in the First Opium War, the Qing government was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing on August 29, 1842, under whose terms Xiamen was opened up as one of five treaty ports, the others being Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai. It is at this point that our study of Protestant Christianity in Xiamen begins.<sup>20</sup> In the following century, Xiamen was to be controlled by the late Qing government, the *Kuomintang* government and the Japanese invaders respectively, before reverting to Nationalist rule in 1945.

On October 17, 1949, the Communist-led People’s Liberation Army took over the islands of Xiamen and Gulangyu. The People’s Government was established shortly thereafter. As one of the final battlefields in which war was waged against the KMT troops, Xiamen was “liberated” by the Communist army, but at a high cost. The next problem which presented itself was that the local officials, many of whom had overseas ties, especially with KMT-ruled Taiwan, were considered potentially disloyal to the new regime. Therefore, upon the capture of the city a large number of key positions were filled by demobilized military officials. Later, in the 1950s, “politically loyal” young students recruited from Shanghai and Zhejiang were sent to Xiamen to strengthen the Party’s leadership.<sup>21</sup> In the aftermath of the Communist victory, a series of political events took place that unleashed a continuous transformation in the social structure of Xiamen as well as that of the whole country. Chronologically, these encompassed land reform, a campaign to suppress counter-revolutionaries, cooperation, the introduction of collectivization, the de-privatization of commerce and industry, the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Anti-Rightist Movement,<sup>22</sup> the

---

18. Ching, “Guojia ruhe ‘taoli.’”

19. Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*.

20. Catholic missionaries had been penetrating the area since the late Ming. It is said that a Catholic church was built in Zengcuan, a fishing village. However, this site has not been located and no remains have ever been found. See Gong, “Xiamen Tianzhu tang.”

21. Interviews with retired Communist Party cadres.

22. The Anti-Rightist Movement launched by Chairman Mao was a reaction to the Hundred Flowers Campaign. It was a series of campaigns to purge alleged “rightists” (*youpai*) that lasted from roughly 1957 to 1959. Who and what a “rightist” was not always clearly and consistently defined. Although the term of disapprobation could also include critics to the left of the government, its official use was to identify and stigmatize those intellectuals who

Great Leap Forward, the Four Cleanups (or Socialist Education Campaign), the Cultural Revolution, and finally de-collectivization and re-privatization of commerce and industry.<sup>23</sup> Just as in other parts of the country, the overseas relations of Xiamen were largely cut off under the rule of Chairman Mao.

In the light of the openly hostile political confrontation between the Communists and the Nationalists during most of the period between 1949 and 1978, Fujian was assigned the military and political mission of confronting Taiwan. A task it was to accomplish by building itself into a significant military fortress. Fighting across the Strait broke out around the off-shore islands of Fujian throughout the 1950s. Xiamen in particular, the nearest place to KMT-ruled Jinmen Island, had to bear the brunt of heavy bombardments. Peaceable cross-strait exchanges were not resumed until 1987, when the KMT government in Taipei announced the lifting of martial law and permitted the war veterans to visit their hometowns in Mainland China.

In 1979, the top-level reformers departed radically from the path marked out by their predecessors by proposing the use of foreign investment to promote exports and stimulate the domestic economy, and this goal required setting about raising managerial and technological levels. In the framework of the state's Reform and Opening-Up Policy, in 1980 Xiamen was designated one of five Special Economic Zones (SEZ, *jingji tequ*) that it was hoped would attract investment and new technology, mainly from Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese. Another breakthrough for Xiamen came in 1984. The boundary of the SEZ was extended from the original area of 2.5 square km in present-day Huli district to cover the whole of Xiamen Island (Gulangyu included). Consequently, significantly greater scope for encouraging foreign investment by introducing lower enterprise tax rates was created. Over the past three decades, Xiamen City has witnessed a rapid rise in prosperity and industrialization. The most salient factor in the trajectory of Xiamen's development has been the special policy privileges granted by the central state.<sup>24</sup>

Several bridges over the channel and the Xiang'an Harbor Tunnel have been built in the past few decades. Nowadays, it takes only a few minutes to drive to the Mainland from Xiamen Island. An international airport was inaugurated in 1983 and gives easy access to other cities at home and abroad from Xiamen. Nowadays Xiamen Island is just a topographical concept, and the channel is no longer a barrier to the top-down state control it had been in the imperial era.

---

appeared to favor capitalism and oppose collectivization. The campaign involved the persecution of half a million people.

23. There have been a number of anthropological and historical works on these socialist movements. For a detailed account of these processes in Xiamen, see Huang, *Spiral Road*. The village in which Huang Shu-min conducted his research has been urbanized since the early reform era.

24. Howell, "Xiamen Special Economic Zone."

## The Structure of Contemporary Xiamen Society

It seems many entertain a fixed belief that the color of the civilization of China is yellow, reflecting the hue of the thick loess earth that covers the Yellow River Valley, where the earliest Chinese civilization is said to have been conceived and born. This ignores the fact that China also possesses vast expanses of sea and people seldom associate the gorgeous blue of the ocean with Chinese civilization. Fujian has been described as “eight-tenths mountains, one-tenth water and one-tenth fields” (*bashan yishui yifentian*). The entire province is very mountainous terrain, dotted with many plateaus but possessing few plains; arable land *per capita* falls far short of the national average. In the northwest, Fujian is encircled by mountain ranges and it has a long sea border in the east. Although the barriers created by the mountains and the sea did to some extent confine the people within a narrow world, the geographical boundaries did not prevent them from being inspired by an intense eagerness to explore the outside world. Partially on account of the limited arable land resources in Fujian and the concomitant increasing population pressures, in the course of time the people of Southern Fujian turned to the sea and established quite elaborate maritime networks for overseas trade and migration.

As an important *qiaoxiang*,<sup>25</sup> Xiamen has a historical tradition of a large number of its people immigrating to Southeast Asia and other countries.<sup>26</sup> From the 1840s to the 1890s, the emigrants who departed from the port of Xiamen numbered around a substantial 390,000. However, from 1890 to 1930, the city experienced its peak of emigration with numbers reaching nearly 1.36 million (including contract laborers).<sup>27</sup> Not only did the huge number of emigrants send home a large amount in remittances, in their new places of residence they also established strong personal overseas ties that they used to promote regional development, trade relations, modern education and transnational religious networks. Although Xiamen never did develop into a major industrial base, overseas Chinese capital nevertheless did play a significant part in the regional development there in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> The wealthy and influential overseas Chinese involved themselves in the fields of business, finance, transportation and real estate. Besides these commercial activities, they also promoted

---

25. *Qiaoxiang* usually refers to a person's home village or district, depending on which place a particular person identifies as their place of origin. Researchers of the Chinese diaspora have extended the use of this term to indicate “a sojourner's village or hometown.” See Douw, “Introduction,” 3.

26. For further information, see Xiamen huaqiao zhi bianweihui, *Xiamen huaqiao zhi*, 32-46.

27. Dai, *Quyuxing jingji fazhan yu shehui bianqian*, 310-11.

28. See Cook, “Bridges to Modernity”; Dai, *Quyuxing jingji fazhan yu shehui bianqian*; Li and Zhao. “Xiamen,” 227; Yu, “Remaking Xiamen.”

modern infrastructural construction, as well as establishing education, medical services and charitable facilities for the common people. One good example is Tan Kah Kee (1874-1961) who established the Jimei primary/middle school and college campuses and Xiamen University. More importantly perhaps, the overseas Chinese inculcated a vision of modernity.<sup>29</sup> Since 1979, Xiamen's extensive ties with overseas Chinese have been an enormous boost to local economic development. These overseas Chinese have been an important source of capital for Xiamen in particular and Fujian in general. Very much aware of this important resource, local governments have offered the families of overseas Chinese incentives to encourage them to utilize the capital and information provided by their relatives abroad to open factories and run businesses.

In the era of reform, as well as economic growth, the Southern Fujian region has also witnessed a revival of local traditions.<sup>30</sup> Kuan-Pearce's study in Anxi county reveals that, far from just contributing to economic development of the *qiaoxiang*, the "moral economy" that binds the overseas Chinese to their ancestral lands has also led to a religious revival.<sup>31</sup> For centuries, the cultural landscape in the *qiaoxiang* has been heavily shaped by overseas Chinese.<sup>32</sup> Although many of these contributors had their roots in its surrounding areas rather than Xiamen proper, they have tended to make investments in or contributions to Xiamen rather than their true ancestral lands, presumably responding to Xiamen's prosperity and reputation at home and abroad.

In 1988, Xiamen gained the status of "a city with a separate listing in the plan" (*jihua dan lie shi*). This elevation meant that the mayor of Xiamen was placed on an equal footing with the deputy-provincial governor which has granted it more room to maneuver with both the central and provincial governments. The highest-ranking officials in Xiamen City are the Party secretary and city mayor, who report to the provincial Party secretary and governor respectively.<sup>33</sup> Their ranking is that of deputy provincial level (*fushengji*); a status even higher than their counterparts in Fuzhou, the provincial capital. On the next lower level (six urban districts) are the chief and deputy department-level ranks (*tingji* and *futingji*) occupied by the chief and deputy district Party secretaries and district administrators.

---

29. Cook, "Reimagining China."

30. See Tan, *Southern Fujian*.

31. Kuan-Pearce, *Rebuilding the Ancestral Village*.

32. Li, *Fujian Qiaoxiang*; Zheng, "Guojihua yu difanghua."

33. The Chinese state is functionally divided between the Party that provides ideological guidance and the government that handles the administration. Organs of both coexist at all levels of the state with the Party having authority over the government at the same level. The Central Committee is the highest level of the Party, whereas the State Council is the highest level of the government. The overwhelming majority of officials are CCP members.

The religious governance agencies include the United Front Work Department (UFWD), the Party organ responsible for uniting non-CCP elements in society, and the RAB of the government on various levels. The former is responsible for formulating religious policies and rallying religious leaders around the Communist Party; whereas the latter runs the day-to-day administration of religious affairs. On provincial, prefectural and county levels, the RAB is sometimes combined with the Ethnic Affairs Commissions. The person who is the provincial- or lower-level RAB chief is frequently also a deputy director of the UFWD on the corresponding level. In Xiamen, the official name of this bureau is the Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Xiamen. In this research this is shortened to Xiamen Religious Affairs Bureau. The dual handling of religious and ethnic affairs by the local Religious Affairs Bureau was promoted in the 1980s and 1990s in an effort to consolidate administrative activities. The same personnel deal with both religious and ethnic affairs. The State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) and lower-level RABs usually exercise their control through what are known as patriotic religious associations. Two Christian organizations are sanctioned by the state. The first of these is the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM, *Sanzi aiguo yundong*). It was founded in the 1950s as a non-denominational Protestant organization. Its three founding principles are “self-governance” (*zizhi*), “self-supporting” (*ziyang*) and “self-propagation” (*zichuan*). The TSPM functions as a liaison organization between the state and registered (and therefore officially recognized) churches. The second government-acknowledged Christian organization, the China Christian Council (CCC), was established in 1980 as a partner to the TSPM, its task being to oversee theological activities and train church leaders. The leaders and missions of these two organizations have often overlapped. On account of their close relationship, they are referred to as the *Lianghui* (literally meaning “two committees”).<sup>34</sup> The provincial-level *Lianghui* is vested with the power to approve the ordination of ministers, although no one can be ordained without the prior approval of the provincial RAB. In the restructuring of government functions, the Siming RAB, originally a deputy division-level (*fuchuji*) agency, was promoted to the chief division level (*zhengchuji*). Under the Regulations on Religious Affairs which came into effect in 2005, a religious body is required to report to the RAB on the county or district level of the place in which it is located. In Xiamen City, however, the four major churches (the New Street Church, the Bamboo Church, Trinity Church and the New District Gospel Church) are directly administered by the RAB on the city level rather than that on the district level. For example, on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of

---

34. The two organizations do not always hold the same position. In July 2015, for instance, Zhejiang Christian Council publicly appealed to the authorities to cease the “absurd removal of crosses which damages the relations between the Party and the masses,” whereas the Zhejiang TSPM did not stage any public protest.

Trinity Church in October 2014, an official from the Xiamen RAB was invited to attend; however, no one from the Siming RAB was invited.

## Social Change on Gulangyu Island

### *Gulangyu in the late Qing and Republican periods*

Modern Xiamen people tend to over-glorify the past of Gulangyu. Although they might look back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with romantic nostalgia, the historical texts left by missionaries depict a somewhat different picture. The Reverend Philip Wilson Pitcher (1856-1915), a missionary of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), known as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church (of America) until 1867, paints a word picture of early twentieth-century Xiamen/Gulangyu that contrasts starkly with the rosy vision in the imagination of contemporary local people.

A city! But not the kind of city you have in mind. There are no wide avenues, beautiful private residences, magnificent public and mercantile buildings. All is directly opposite to this condition of things. The streets are narrow and crooked, – with the sewer underneath and plainly in sight thro[ugh] the chinks of the uneven flagstones, – ever winding and twisting, descending and ascending, and finally ending in the great nowhere...There is no street either straight, or one even called “Straight” in Amoy. Then in addition to the crookedness, they must add another aggravation by making some of them very narrow.<sup>35</sup>

Pitcher was extremely depressed and could not stop lamenting about the inconceivably bad reality.

There are streets in Amoy so narrow that you cannot carry an open umbrella...The streets are alive with a teeming throng, and the unwary pedestrian is liable to be hustled about and shouted at unceremoniously. Here every aspect of Chinese life passes before you, presenting grotesque pictures. Here goes the motley crowd, from the wretched beggar clothed in filthy rags to the stately mandarin adorned in gorgeous array. On beholding such sights we stop and question ourselves if this is all real or whether it is not the working of our imagination. Men almost nude, hatless and bootless, go hurrying by, giving a grunt of warning for people to clear the road as they go struggling under the weight of some ponderous burden, while still others are bearing on their shoulders the sedan chair. What does it all mean? Have men turned themselves into “beasts of burden?” Indeed they present a sad phase of human life. But

---

35. Pitcher, *In and About Amoy*, 16.

perhaps the beggars show a more wretched state of existence than these “heavily laden” ones.<sup>36</sup>

This negative impression of Xiamen at that time was not confined to one person’s experiences. Pitcher’s accounts are confirmed by the written records left by other foreigners. For example, Cecil A. V. Bowra (1869-1947), the then commissioner of customs, once wrote that: “Amoy City is a hotbed of every form of disease, among which plague and cholera are prominent. The causes are the filthy state of the town, and the fact that the civilization of the people has not advanced to the point at which the advantages of hygiene is realized.”<sup>37</sup>

Neither Xiamen Island nor Gulangyu Island was considered much of a “paradise” when foreigners first took up residence there in the early 1840s. In fact, the conditions in latter were so bad it was considered even unhealthier than the former on account of all its squalor and filth. When British troops were stationed on the island in 1841, hundreds of them were stricken with fever. Hence the island initially held no attraction for either missionaries or merchants. However, from the 1860s, they did begin to take up residence here very comfortably in well-built houses offering sea views on all sides; the majority situated at vantage points on higher elevations. Gulangyu slowly evolved into an ideal residential area, a reputation that has persisted until recent times. In the wake of China’s defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Taiwan was ceded to the rising state of Meiji Japan by the Qing court. Concerned about the threat of having to make more territorial concessions, the Qing government decided to seek “international protection” for Xiamen to prevent it also being seized by Japan. In 1903 the island was officially declared an international settlement, on which thirteen countries, including Great Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, France, Japan, Germany, Spain and Portugal, could enjoy extra-territorial privileges and set up their consulates.<sup>38</sup> Gulangyu at that time was under the control of an international board of managers known as the Kulangsu Municipal Council (KMC, *Gongbuju*). The KMC, founded in 1903, was independent of the Qing government. Its Board (elected annually) took care of the day-to-day running of the settlement.

The first Municipal Council was elected in January 1903 and began to exercise its authority on May 1 of the same year. The first KMC Board was composed of six non-Chinese members, plus one Chinese representative appointed by the Xiamen governor (*daotai*).<sup>39</sup> A set of resolutions similar to those that prevailed in the Shanghai

---

36. Pitcher, *In and About Amoy*, 17.

37. Bowra, “Amoy,” 816.

38. Gulangyu and Shanghai were the only two places in all China to have an international settlement.

39. As of 1926, the number of Chinese representatives was increased to three, and their foreign counterparts were decreased to four. Zheng *et al.*, “Gonggong zujiejie shiqi de Gulangyu,” 27. For the organizational system, see Appendix 2 of *Xiamen wenshi ziliao*, vol. 3 (1980).

International Settlement was adopted by the residents of the island and subsequently ratified by the Qing court. It can be said to have formed the KMC Regulations and Byelaws (*Gongbujū lǐlǐ*) by which the International Settlement was governed. After the adoption of these regulations, Gulangyu was transformed into a sort of “paradise” for foreigners, as Pitcher describes in his book. All the major business houses and banks were located on the Xiamen side of the harbor. Besides the foreign residences on the island, Gulangyu was the preferred location for the schools and higher educational institutions of the three major missions, the Hope Hospital and the Union Church in which services in English were held every Sunday. It also contained foreign consulates, several post and telegraph offices, two club houses with reading rooms and libraries, two hotels and several pharmacies. Gulangyu boasted one of the finest recreation grounds along the coast. Here foreigners could pursue their sporting activities and indulge in healthy exercise, playing tennis, cricket and field hockey.<sup>40</sup> Nor were foreigners the only people to live on the island; it was also home to native Chinese.

As Gulangyu was managed peacefully as an international community, growing numbers of upper-class Chinese or returned overseas Chinese from Southeast Asia, and those fleeing from Taiwan under the Japanese rule (1895-1945), settled down on the island. In the mid-1870s, the incumbent Xiamen governor conducted a census that revealed 2,835 Chinese inhabitants and 252 foreign nationals on Gulangyu.<sup>41</sup> According to a report of the Xiamen Customs, in 1911 the total population on the island was approximately 12,000, including 300 foreign nationals.<sup>42</sup> Only twenty years later, the number of residents had almost doubled. A Republican dossier reveals that around 1930 it was home to over 567 foreigners and 20,465 Chinese residents.<sup>43</sup> Long-suffering China had torn by war for decades. As a peaceful island under its KMC governance, Gulangyu attracted people who sought stability and wanted to ensure their wealth was secure. A large number of laborers also settled on the island and made a living serving the wealthy. A complete social structure gradually emerged. Although the population soared, the island remained a haven of law and order, with the exception of the period during which it was occupied by the Japanese. Japan launched a comprehensive invasion of China in July 1937 and shortly afterwards occupied Jinmen Island. Subsequently Xiamen found itself under attack by Japanese fighter planes and warships. When Xiamen Island fell to Japanese on May 10, 1938, approximately 43,000 refugees fled to Gulangyu in search of shelter. Gulangyu’s status

---

40. For the impact of the Gulangyu International Settlement on the development of modern Xiamen, see He, *Gonggong zūjie Gulangyu*.

41. See Giles, *Short History of Koolangsu*, 14-15.

42. See Xiamen shi zhi bianweihui & Xiamen haiguan zhi bianweihui, *Jindai Xiamen shehui jingji gaikuang*, 356.

43. See Gulangyu guanweihui, *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian*, 2-81.

as an international settlement offered it a temporary reprieve from the ravages of war. However, after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Japanese troops swiftly occupied the island from December 8, 1941, until the end of the war in 1945.

By and large, Gulangyu had enjoyed a century of comparative peace, during which the Western-style modern education system from primary to college levels produced a number of educated people, many of whom earned nationwide fame in medicine, education, science and the arts. The foreign nationals and overseas Chinese of Southern Fujian origin initiated the Western modernization of Gulangyu and introduced a Western lifestyle to this island. Gulangyu earned the reputation of being an “islet of pianos” because the number of these instruments found there. Hundreds of revamped Western buildings constructed in a colonial Southeast Asian style were built and even today the island is still noted for its international architecture.

### *Gulangyu in post-1949 state projects*

Since October 1949 when the Communists assumed power in Xiamen, Gulangyu has never been detached from state control. The island was designated a “scenic wellness area” (*fengjing liaoyangqu*) in the 1950s and a couple of sanitariums were established there for Communist cadres and army and navy officers affiliated with the Fuzhou Military Region of the People’s Liberation Army. The official overall plan for Xiamen City clearly stated that the population size of the small island had to be strictly controlled by a household registration system based on the principle of “moving out allowed, moving in forbidden.” Moreover, no industry or factories unconnected with tourist enterprises were allowed to move there or be built. In 1982 Gulangyu was re-designated a “scenic tourist area” (*fengjing luyouqu*) and the number of permanent residents dropped to fewer than 20,000. In 1988 Gulangyu was recognized as national-level scenic area and in 1995 it was announced that all factories had to move out and the number of permanent residents was to be limited to no more than 15,000.<sup>44</sup> People who wanted to obtain permanent residence on the island were subjected to a thorough investigation and had to grapple with exhausting and cumbersome approval procedures.

All this had a detrimental effect. Gulangyu used to be a fully functional residential community with a population of over 20,000, well supplied with hospitals, schools, factories and it was run by various administrative organs. When it was designated a specific tourist area, the function of the island as a residential community had to take a back seat. Factories were moved away and with them job opportunities vanished. Hence people have increasingly had to look for work on Xiamen Island and commute

---

44. For the official planning of Gulangyu, see Xiamen shi difangzhi bianweihui, *Xiamen shi zhi*, vol. 1, 382-83.

between the two islands on weekdays. As the population shrank, the Second Hospital of Xiamen (whose antecedent was Hope Hospital founded by the RCA) also moved out, causing the residents considerable inconvenience. It was said that two pregnant women who could not wait to be sent to Xiamen Island gave birth at the ferry terminal. The death because of a delay in treatment of a renowned calligrapher by the name of Gao Huai (1914-2007) came as a shock to those natives who insisted on remaining on the island. The residents now complain bitterly: "There is no maternity ward in which to give birth; there is no mortuary in which to die." Schools, including the noted Gulangyu Piano School and the high school division of the Number Two Middle School of Xiamen (formerly known as the church-run Anglo-Chinese College, established in 1898), have likewise been moved to Xiamen Island because of the decreasing number of students. The moving out of schools and hospitals and the general overall inconvenience of life on the island has eventually forced many residents to leave. As millions of tourists land on the tiny islet each year, the living conditions of the residents have been rapidly "deteriorating." Growing numbers of residents are now seeking to transfer their *hukou* to, or are at least residing, in Xiamen even though their *hukou* is still valid on the island. Not until the launch of the world heritage status application in 2009 did the authorities become properly aware of the problem caused by the reduction in the number of natives. Realization dawned too late. Gulangyu is now stuck in a vicious circle. According to the official data in 2010, there were 13,777 residents who had their *hukou* on the island. However, although 5,953 of them had retained their *hukou*, they were living elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Another thorny issue is that, while Gulangyu has been losing its young, educated and wealthy residents, the aged, illiterate and poor natives who are incapable of finding work or less likely to be able to earn a good living in Xiamen, an increasingly expensive city, stay put.

Keeping pace with the rapid rise of tourism, more than 3,000 non-residents, mainly businesspeople and laborers, have come in as new "residents."<sup>46</sup> The new residents, in particular those laborers from rural areas who are generally known as "migrant workers" (*nongmingong*) in China, do not have Xiamen *hukou* and in most cases cannot benefit from the city's social security systems, such as medical insurance and children's education. They usually leave their families in their native villages and strike out to make a living alone on Gulangyu. Therefore, their residence on Gulangyu is less likely to increase the birth rate on the island. In the locals' eyes, these "outside" (*waidi de*) laborers from poor inland provinces are not as "civilized" as Gulangyu residents, and will never become sophisticated "islanders" with high quality (*suzhi*). *Suzhi* has become a keyword in contemporary Chinese society and has inspired a wide range of

---

45. See Gulangyu guanweihui, *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian*, 4-13.

46. "Introduction to Residents with *Hukou*," People's Government of Siming District, accessed October 16, 2015, <http://www.siming.gov.cn/smgk/nj/2014/html/05-0100003.htm>

socio-political practices during the reform era.<sup>47</sup> It marks one's sense and sensibility of value and worth in the market economy, and the governing elite's view that improving the *suzhi* of China's vast population is vital if the country is to become a competitive player in the field of global capital.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, the notion of *suzhi* is often used pejoratively by the post-Mao state and by educational elites to refer to the peasantry and rural migrant workers. As the islanders quip: "As the people wearing leather shoes left, those with slippers arrived; as the piano players moved out, the dray laborers came in."<sup>49</sup> The strict control of the inhabitants has drastically altered Gulangyu's population and class structure.

Coasting on its architecture, sandy beach and its reputation as an islet of pianos, Gulangyu enjoys a romantic image. Every year, the island attracts millions of domestic and international tourists. During the peak tourist seasons, approximately 70,000 visitors land on the tiny islet in a single day. As tourists walk through the alleys in the dense shade of trees, enjoying the views that are rare in modern cities, they have a chance to conjure up the glorious past of the island and probably admire the present residents. However, the locals' sentiments are far more complicated. In the new century, as some of my respondents have said, Gulangyu has quickly "deteriorated into a resort island full of seafood restaurants, barbecue stalls and souvenir shops." As the Xiamen citizens frequently sigh: "Gulangyu is dead." As far as they are concerned, Gulangyu is no longer that beautiful, clean, civilized and romantic island of the past. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, among many of the local people there has been a rise in a burgeoning nostalgic sentiment that views Gulangyu through rose-colored spectacles as the "heaven that never disappears" (*yongbu xiaoshi de tiantang*). By dwelling on an idealized past of Gulangyu, for a moment or two residents can disengage themselves from the unsatisfactory present. As Peter Nosco writes: "When one is dissatisfied with one's immediate situation, it can be a comforting exercise to imagine and construct a more pleasing idealized environment."<sup>50</sup> A respected senior scholar who grew up on Gulangyu once commented harshly on such nostalgic sentiments: "Those who are longing for and have an attachment to Gulangyu do not have memories that reflect a true image of the island's glorious past. The only thing it allows some of them is to give full vent to the emotions aroused by these dilapidated buildings and the 1,200 existing historical houses...Nevertheless, faced with reality, no

---

47. References to *suzhi* are used to justify the formation of all manner of social and political hierarchies. People with "high" *suzhi* are seen as having a natural right to more income, power and status than those people with "low" *suzhi*. See Kipnis, "Suzhi."

48. Yan, "Neoliberal Governmentality and Neohumanism."

49. On Gulangyu any kind of motor vehicle (storage battery cars are used for police patrol or tourists) are forbidden. The carrying of goods relies on a large number of drays and laborers, the majority from Anhui and Henan provinces.

50. Nosco, *Remembering Paradise*, 4.

praise or repair can return the past and all the sadness or outpouring of feelings are nothing but a sense of loss.”<sup>51</sup>

As an officially recognized National 5A Scenic Area,<sup>52</sup> Gulangyu was formally put on the agenda of the application for UNESCO world heritage site status in 2009.<sup>53</sup> Prompted by their affection for Gulangyu, the locals were making an attempt to recover its past glory from the destructive trends of tourism. Some of them regard their efforts as a form of assisting the official application.

## Christianity in Modern Xiamen

When Christianity first entered China remains a matter of some debate, even dispute, among students of Christianity in China and ancient Chinese history. But a nine-foot high limestone stele with a text in both Chinese and Syriac that was unearthed in the Xi'an region in the 1620s adds concrete visual evidence of an early (if not the very beginning of a) Christian presence in the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The stele (erected in 781), named “Memorial to the Propagation of the Daqin (Syrian) Luminous Religion in the Middle Kingdom” (*Daqin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei*), tells a remarkable story. According to the inscription on the stele, in 635, 600 years before the coming of the first European friars, a delegation of Nestorians (*Jingjiaotu*)<sup>54</sup> arrived in the cosmopolitan capital of Tang China, Chang'an (now Xi'an), after months of trudging along the ancient Silk Road. Three years later, the Taizong Emperor (r. 626-49) issued an edict permitting the group of Nestorians to build the first Christian church in China. The story told on the stele says that, Christianity had been established in China and had flourished there for over 150 years at least.<sup>55</sup>

---

51. Niu, Hezhi (pseud.). “Gulangyu: huozhe haishi siqu?” [Gulangyu: Dead or Alive?] on Gulangyu cultural community's website, accessed August 29, 2015, <http://www.cn-gly.com/Html/?1184.html>.

52. In the evaluation system of tourist attractions, 5A-class is on the top level recognized by the China National Tourism Administration. Gulangyu was selected in 2008.

53. According to a Gulangyu official, the municipal leadership considered the plan as early as the late 1990s. It was shelved for over a decade because of the notorious smuggling case involving Lai Changxing and his Yuanhua Group, in which numbers of central and local government officials became entangled.

54. From a historical point of view, the term “Nestorian,” as S.P. Brock has argued, is misleading not to say incorrect. The ancient oriental church in the early period called itself “the Church of the East.” Today a fuller designation “the Assyrian Church of the East” is widely accepted in scholarship. See Brock, “The ‘Nestorian’ Church.” However, the term “Nestorian” is still used in the Chinese context.

55. For more information concerning Nestorianism in ancient China, see Zhu, *Nestorianism of China*.

In 845, when the Tang court launched a campaign of anti-Buddhist persecution, Nestorian Christianity was also implicated and almost disappeared from the public scene. Nestorianism survived among some ethnic minorities in China's northwest frontier, especially among the Mongolian tribes. When the Mongols seized power in China and established the Yuan Dynasty, Nestorianism was brought to the Central Plains again. The official relationship existed between the Mongols and the Church of the East.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the Franciscans and the Dominicans had also sent missions to China where these orders established churches in Khanbaliq (also called Dadu, present-day Beijing). Regardless of its internal denominational differences, Christianity was referred to as *Yelikewen* (the Chinese phonetic transcription of the Mongolian word "Erkegun").

As Daniel Bays has argued, "In the Mongol period, despite the Roman church joining the Church of the East in missionary work in China, the elements of Christianity present seem to have been so closely tied to the foreign presence that there was almost no influence on indigenous persons and institutions."<sup>57</sup> *Yelikewen* prospered only among the privileged Mongols and other specific non-Han Chinese ethnic peoples, and consequently this religion failed to take deep root in Chinese society. Upon the demise of Mongol rule in 1368, *Yelikewen* again almost disappeared from the Central Plains as the Mongols retreated north.

During its third advent in the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic Christianity did take root and became a part of Chinese society. When European Jesuits came to China in the late Ming, the spread of the religion in China flourished. Among the China missionaries Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), who insisted on a "policy of accommodation," in many ways epitomizes all that was good in the Jesuit attitude toward missions and with a deep interest in Chinese culture.<sup>58</sup> Despite this diplomacy, under the Ming and Qing regimes the China mission experienced many vicissitudes. In the early Qing, for instance, papal condemnation of Chinese rites angered the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661-1722) and elicited a complete prohibition on missions by the state that lasted over one hundred years. The imperial state's repressive measures did not really eliminate Catholicism, but perhaps unexpectedly forced it underground where it became deeply embedded in the fabric of rural communities. This history has shaped the present Catholic landscape.<sup>59</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church entered China during the early Qing period, but it presented a comparatively low profile on the public scene.

---

56. A Syriac text published by the Father Paul Bedjan in 1888 offers a meticulous account of the official relationship between the Mongol rulers and the Church of the East. See Murre-van den Berg, "The Church of the East."

57. Bays, *History of Christianity in China*, 14.

58. Bays, *History of Christianity in China*, 21-24.

59. See e.g., Harrison, *Missionary's Curse*; Zhang, *Guanfu, zongzu yu Tianzhujiào*.

In the nineteenth century, the Christian scene in China grew more complex when the first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison (1782-1834), came to Guangzhou in 1807, a time at which missionary activity was still under strict prohibition by the imperial state.<sup>60</sup> Under the protection of the British East India Company, Morrison translated the Bible and conducted missionary work clandestinely. Although Morrison only converted a very small group of Protestants, his arrival signified a new era in Christianity in China.

The first Protestant missionary to settle in Xiamen was David Abeel (1804-46) who brought the gospel on a British warship on February 24, 1842, six months before the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing.<sup>61</sup> Abeel pioneered the RCA mission in China. Shortly after the entry of the RCA, the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Presbyterian Church of England (PCE) followed suite in 1844 and 1850 respectively. The forced opening of Xiamen as a treaty port had made it a region quite independent of the Chinese state and hence a comparatively relaxed space in which the acceptance and spread of Christianity could take place.

In contrast to the RCA's traditional view that any churches and associations of churches organized by its missionaries abroad should be consistent with those in the United States in all essential matters, its missionaries in China had rather different ideas. They believed that Chinese churches should be established as one denomination and a close association with other missions was necessary. As John Van Nest Talmage (1819-92), an RCA missionary, stated churches in Xiamen should unite and form one denomination.<sup>62</sup> After a long debate, the missionary view prevailed and a formal partnership between the RCA and the PCE was finally established in 1862. The union allowed each mission to maintain an identity of its own, while permitting them to coordinate their activities. Nevertheless, it did allow for a degree of denominational independence by allowing each mission to keep its financial matters relatively separate and allowing the missionaries to act under commissions of their own denominational boards. Furthermore, the union enabled the missions to join forces in such common pursuits as medical and educational work, publishing and relief of the poor. This collaboration allowed the missionaries, Chinese pastors and the converts of the various churches to consider themselves as belonging to one single church rather than two competing ones and they felt they could meet together to discuss their common

---

60. For Morrison's missionary activity in China, see Morrison, *Life and Labors of Robert Morrison*. The Dutch trading company the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) brought Protestant Christianity to Taiwan and Dutch Protestant missionaries established missions to convert the Taiwanese Aborigines as early as the seventeenth century. In this part, the historical discussion is confined to Mainland China.

61. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 13.

62. Fagg, *Forty Years in South China*, 192.

problems.<sup>63</sup> In the achievement of such a union, a major facilitating factor was denominational compatibility. Specifically, both the RCA and PCE missions were adherents of Reformed/Calvinist theology and Presbyterian polity. The shared tradition explains the fact that the two missions were able to share liturgical forms.<sup>64</sup> As Talmage writes:

[The two churches] hold to the same doctrinal standards, and they explain them in the same manner; they have the same form of church government and their officers are chosen and set apart in the same way; they have the same order of worship and of administering the sacraments; all their customs, civil, social, and religious, are precisely alike, and they love each other dearly.<sup>65</sup>

The denominational factor strengthened the RCA-PCE intimacy, but did not result in the alienation of the LMS. The LMS later joined the union that worked towards the establishment of an indigenous Chinese Christian church. The efficient cooperation of the Three Missions (*San gonghui*) was illustrated at an early stage by the agreement known as the “comity of missions.” Under this agreement, the Southern Fujian region was divided into three approximately equal parts: the RCA had most of the western area plus a small amount of territory to the north, the PCE the south and part of the east, and the LMS the north and the remainder of the east.<sup>66</sup> The agreement was designed to avoid duplication of missionary activities and unnecessary expense. The headquarters of the Three Mission bodies were initially built on Xiamen Island and later moved to Gulangyu. They displayed a high degree of harmony and cooperation and later joined the Church of Christ in China (*Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui*), a decision that characterized the denominational background of the Xiamen church. This body did not include such minor denominational churches as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Christian Assembly and the True Jesus Church. In 1958 the Communist state instigated united worship (*lianhe libai*) that forced Christians to unite and worship under the same roof regardless of their denomination. Despite the fact that both the state and the official Protestant church have declared that Chinese Christianity has entered into a “post-denominational” era,<sup>67</sup> in Xiamen the denominational differences have never been eradicated.

In recent years, a growing number of Christians in Xiamen have professed their denominational background to be the Church of Christ in China or the Three Missions. Since the 1990s there has been a resurgent interest in Calvinism among the

---

63. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 76-77.

64. See Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China*, 288-93.

65. Fagg, *Forty Years in South China*, 192.

66. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 62-63.

67. E.g., Ding, *Ding Guangxun (K.H. Ting) wenji*, 18.

well-educated in the big cities of eastern and central China.<sup>68</sup> This growth in interest is largely attributable to the influence of overseas Chinese Christian leaders, among them Jonathan Chao (Zhao Tianen, 1938-2004), founder of the Chinese Church Research Centre and China Ministries International in Hong Kong, and Stephen Tong (Tang Chongrong), an evangelist from Indonesia who was born in Xiamen. In Xiamen although many educated Christians might describe themselves as adherents of Calvinist teaching, very few of them, including the clergy and lay believers, can elucidate the connections between Calvinism and their faith. Calvinism, the theological foundation of the Three Missions, helps the local Christians to understand the close cooperation of the early missionary societies and to retain their identity as a united denomination. Other minor churches are naturally excluded from this process.

In 1848, the RCA built a Protestant church for local worshippers in Xiamen, the New Street Church (*Xinjie tang*), reputed to be the “First Holy Church in China” (*Zhonghua diyi shengtang*). Its title, conferred by the National Federation of the Church of Christ in China in 1935, has been instrumental in locating the position of the New Street Church and that of Christianity in Xiamen in China’s Christian history. Hence Xiamen has been proclaimed the birthplace of China’s Protestantism. Although this title is rather exaggerated or contrived, it is a useful peg for officials keen on promoting tourism and the city’s international reputation.<sup>69</sup> Actually, as early as 1807, the LMS missionary Robert Morrison settled in Guangzhou where he secretly conducted church services. More recently, the locals have begun to insist that Xiamen, the second city in Mainland China entered by Protestant Christianity, was the first place where missionaries preached openly.<sup>70</sup>

The development of indigenous Christianity continued to be a contentious issue in China from the mid-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. The prototypical indigenous Chinese churches had already been formed in Xiamen area around the 1850s. According to David Cheung, by the early spring of 1856 when the combined church membership of the RCA-affiliated New Street Church and Bamboo Church (*Zhushu tang*) had reached 110, the missionaries held the first election of Chinese Christians as church elders (*zhanglao*) and deacons (*zhishi*).<sup>71</sup> Two Chinese church workers named Luo Jiayu (1826-70) and Ye Hanzhang (1832-1912) were chosen by the churches and ordained as pastors on the morning and afternoon of March 29, 1863, respectively. Contemporary Xiamen Christians are still proud of being the pioneers of the independent movement in China’s native church. They also

---

68. Chow, “Calvinist Public Theology.”

69. White, “Harnessing the Church.”

70. See e.g., Sanyi tang, *Sanyi tang bashi nian*, 13.

71. Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China*, 13.

claim that in the nineteenth century the Xiamen church had already adopted the “Three-Self” principles, nearly a century before the religious policy of the CCP.<sup>72</sup>

Hundreds of Western missionaries served in Xiamen up to the 1950s. Their work was not restricted to evangelization; they also became involved in health care, education, newspapers and other public undertakings. In the early missionary era, the provision of medical facilities proved to be a valuable instrument of evangelism. It did much more than relieve the sick of their pains, and was particularly helpful to the poor who were unable to afford cures. As Abeel writes:

The gratuitous practice [has] made a good impression on all classes of the community. The number of cases treated during the past year has been about 5,000; and everywhere we learn how the hearts of the people are opened by the good done to their bodies. They see that foreigners can come with disinterested motives, as well as for the sake of gain. In this way, gratitude is won and confidence gained. The people are induced to respect us as friends, and are prepared to bear more readily the truths that tend to the healing of the soul.<sup>73</sup>

Whereas medical services were the magnet that attracted a large number of poor people, the missionaries’ knowledge of the world was what interested members of the upper class. Western science appealed to the educated and opened them the door to enlightened opinions. Although the missionaries had very few opportunities to discuss religious matters with the members of the upper class, special efforts were made to cultivate good relations. They later realized that they would have to begin their proselytizing among “the lower orders and rise by degrees to the higher.”<sup>74</sup> It was a strategic shift that showed that Christianity was no longer a religion of the needy, but also of the upper class. Chris White’s historical research shows that Christianity in Xiamen successfully attracted those who were prominent and influential in local affairs.<sup>75</sup>

After the establishment of the first primary school on Gulangyu by the LMS missionary John Stronach (1810-88) in 1844, church school education mushroomed on this island. The gamut of the mission schools extended from the primary department, through middle and vocational school, and on to a theological seminary. The teaching in these schools was not restricted to the propagation of the Christian doctrine; it was also the vehicle for the introduction of Western science and technology to the local people. The church-run institutions that featured a Western-

---

72. In seeking an explanation of the concept of “Three-Self,” many scholars would like to go back to the time of Henry Venn (1796-1873) who advocated that the native church “should potentially be a church of the country, a church that could become self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending.” See Warren, *To apply the Gospel*, 26.

73. Quoted from De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 16.

74. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 30.

75. White, *Sacred Webs*.

style education or training provided converts with important routes to social mobility. As Ryan Dunch has argued that, although the first generation of converts in Fujian often originally came from the bottom of society, for example, under-educated villagers, their offspring rapidly moved on to professional jobs in urban areas.<sup>76</sup> The Shao family of Tong'an origin is a very good example. Shao Zimei, the first convert of the family, was driven out of his home village by his lineage members who were hostile to his conversion. As he moved to Gulangyu, his children were able to receive Western schooling. In just the next two generations, there have been ten school, college and seminary principals. The Shao family consequently exerted great influence on Xiamen society.<sup>77</sup>

Of these schools, some like the secondary-level Anglo-Chinese College (*Ying Hua zhongxue*) and Talmage College (*Xunyuan zhongxue*) established a notable reputation. Church-run schools offered children from poor families the chance to enjoy an education. Even for those from wealthy families, these noted schools that supplied Western-style education presented an attractive proposition.<sup>78</sup> Many outstanding graduates were recommended by missionaries for study abroad, in particular in the United States and Britain, and later became famous scholars, scientists and musicians. There is a long list of noted graduates of the pre-1949 Anglo-Chinese College, including several academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), the top two national research institutions of China, among them Huang Zhenxiang, Gu Maoxiang, Zhuo Renxi, Hong Boqian and Wang Yinglai who received his doctorate from Cambridge. Its alumni also include the archaeologist Zheng Dekun who received his PhD from Harvard and taught at Cambridge, Zhu Xiaoping who finished his doctoral study in Cambridge and became a professor there, as well as the economist Wu Xuangong and the biochemist and theologian Chen Weizhong. Talmage College also trained a group of outstanding students, like the world-renowned writer Lin Yutang who studied at Harvard and Leipzig and had a Nobel Prize nomination for literature, the astronomers Yu Qingsong and Dai Wensai who obtained his PhD from Cambridge, the horticulturist Li Lairong who received his doctoral degree from Pennsylvania State University and the marine biologist Zeng Chengkui who studied at the University of Michigan and was elected an academician of the CAS. Apart from these notable figures, the church schools also produced many excellent graduates in medicine and physical education, including Lin Qiaozhi and Ma Yuehan (John Ma).<sup>79</sup> These educational institutions have exerted important long-term effects. Many elderly residents of Xiamen today are still appreciative of their education in Christian schools prior to the establishment of

---

76. Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*, 32-47.

77. Huang *et al.*, "Shao shi jiazu."

78. He, *Gonggong zujia Gulangyu*, 117-27; Zhu, "Jiefangqian Gulangyu de jiaoyu gaikuang."

79. For stories of some of these scholars, see Hong and Zhan, *Gulangyu xuezh*.

the People's Republic. Graduates of mission schools, who were often Christians, gradually became elites in all walks of life and greatly enhanced the image and status of Christianity.

Another important aspect to be considered is that the missions' focus on musical ministry contributed to the cultivation of Gulangyu's artistic temperament. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Gulangyu had begun to enjoy a reputation for music and almost all church-run schools offered music lessons and founded choirs or brass bands. As mentioned above, it was at that time melodies played on the piano were to be heard in every corner of the island, and Gulangyu consequently earned a reputation for its number of pianos. The musical tradition continued during the Republic and in Communist period when a number of pianists and music educators, like Zhou Shu'an and Xu Feiping, grew up on the island.<sup>80</sup>

From the 1840s until the Communists took over the city, most of the Western medical services in the Xiamen region were supplied by missionaries. In 1898, John Otte opened Xiamen's first modern Western hospital on Gulangyu. Medical missionaries trained the first group of Western-style medical doctors, including Chen Tianen and Huang Dapi. The Xiamen church also launched a series of social movements that protested against opium, infanticide, women's foot-binding, slave girls and so on.

One major obstacle that confronted the missionaries in their efforts to combat Xiamen's illiteracy was the Chinese writing system that is radically different from the phonemically based Latin alphabet used in most of the Western world. This difficulty stimulated the missionaries to use the letters of this Latin alphabet to represent a romanized form of Chinese characters. In 1852, Talmage published the 15-page *Tn ^g-oē Hoan-jī Chho '-ha 'k* (*Tanghua fanzi chuxue*, literally *Introduction to Amoy Alphabet*) to help locals read the Bible that had been translated into romanized Xiamen colloquial. Two decades later, the *Chinese-English Dictionary of the Vernacular or Spoken Language of Amoy* (*Xia Ying da cidian*), compiled by the Scottish missionary Carstairs Douglas (1830-77), was published. The romanization of the dialect significantly reduced the amount of time needed to learn to read and also facilitated the learning of the Chinese language by later arrivals.<sup>81</sup>

In the early years of missionization, Xiamen was regarded as a paragon of effective evangelism. In the 1870s the LMS described the thriving mission in these words: "In direct result, mission work in the Amoy [Xiamen] district will compare favorably with that carried on in any part of China. In the number of converts, the organization of churches, in evangelistic effort, and in contributions for the spread of the Gospel, the records of the Amoy mission afford conclusive evidence that the grace of God has not

---

80. See Peng, *Xiamen yinyue mingjia*.

81. See Fagg, *Forty Years in South China*, 106-107.

been received in vain.”<sup>82</sup> Xiamen enjoyed a high reputation in Christian circles as an area of pioneer activity, aptly illustrated by its hosting of the third General Conference of the Church of Christ in China.<sup>83</sup> Despite its importance as an early center of Christian activity, in the twentieth century Southern Fujian began to lose its prominence among the missions. As more areas in China were being increasingly evangelized, mission centers were moved to larger and more influential cities, mainly Shanghai and Beijing. Despite this alteration, Xiamen continued to be recognized as an area of pioneer activity. Right up to 1949, Christianity constantly affected secular life in Xiamen and became deeply embedded in the local cultural and social structure.

Despite the fact that the Xiamen church played an important role in the historical development of Christianity in China, it has not attracted much academic attention. Leaving aside the early missionaries’ autobiographical works, few historical studies have been undertaken. Among these, David Cheung’s research focuses on the origins of Protestantism in Southern Fujian (in particular in Xiamen). He delves into the development and progress made by the churches that pioneered the very important processes of indigenization and ecclesiastical union in China in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Gerald de Jong’s study specializes in the history of the RCA mission to Southern Fujian from the beginning to its closure in 1951.<sup>85</sup> Chris White explores the lives of Protestants in Southern Fujian (mainly in the Xiamen region) in the late Qing and Republican periods and argues that the new faith did not deracinate Christians; instead, they embraced and utilized both their Chinese and Christian identities. White specifically addresses the topic of such elite Christians as Xu Chuncao (1874-1960) who were influential on a local level and interacted actively with society at large.<sup>86</sup>

Lineage ties constitute an important feature of the social structure of Fujian.<sup>87</sup> In the early missionary years of Catholicism in rural Fujian, the conversion of some local lineages explains why the gospel succeeded in taking root and developing during the Ming and Qing dynasties.<sup>88</sup> Ever since the introduction of Protestant Christianity to Xiamen, the family tradition has also been utilized in missionary activity. The Christian tradition of marrying people of the same faith has promoted intermarriage

---

82. LMS, *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*, 220.

83. This body held its first general conference in Shanghai in 1927 and the second in Guangzhou in 1930. The third general conference took place on Gulangyu in 1933.

84. Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China*.

85. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*;

86. White, *Sacred Webs*.

87. There are many studies of Fujian lineage. See e.g., Chen, *Fujian de jiazhu shehui yu wenhua*; Freedman, *Lineage Organization in Southeast China*; Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society*; Lin, *Golden Wing*; Zheng, *Ming Qing Fujian jiazhu zuzhi yu shehui bianqian*.

88. Zhang, *Guanfu, zongzu yu Tianzhu jiao*.

between families with different surnames. The upshot is that in the Xiamen Christianity community today, it is not easy to clarify the complicated family relations.

The Xiamen church suffered under Mao. Widespread criticism of missionaries was evident in many of the political movements of the city. In the 1950s, all remaining Western missionaries left Xiamen of their own accord or were expelled. Instead of being expelled immediately, some missionaries were obstructed from leaving until after they had suffered public accusation or humiliation. Hence at that time the heritage left by the Western missionaries was fading fast. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), all churches were closed. On one occasion church workers were forced to kneel inside a circle of fire and watch the destruction of Bibles and faith-related books. One of the workers jumped from a building shortly after this event, the first suicide of the Cultural Revolution in Xiamen.

Not until 1979 were churches reopened and worship could recover. The New Street Church and Trinity Church were among the first group of churches to be restored. In contrast to the Maoist dogmatism, the reformist policy sought to provide room for divergent ideas allowing a greater freedom of expression. Along with these changes came a form of freedom of religious belief. This is particularly demonstrated in the noted 1982 directive entitled “*The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country’s Socialist Period*,” more commonly known as “Document 19.” It provides a basic protection of religious belief but gives atheism preferential treatment.<sup>89</sup> Currently, there are forty-four officially-sanctioned churches and gathering points (*juhuidian*). Besides, there are dozens of unregistered churches or congregations. Among these, two major groups have a large congregation of more than 1,000 members each. There is no reliable figure that indicates the present number of Xiamen Christians. A leading pastor of the prefectural *Lianghui* conservatively estimated 30 to 40,000 Christians, who constitute 1.5 or 2 percent of the city’s registered inhabitants. However, a preacher of an unregistered church gave me a number double that of the *Lianghui* pastor immediately after he had heard the pastor’s estimate from me.<sup>90</sup>

Southern Fujian and the neighboring regions (for example, Putian) have vibrant communities of Buddhists, Daoists and followers of various popular religions, all of which have attracted extensive academic attention.<sup>91</sup> In Southern Fujian, most of the

---

89. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi zonghe yanjiuzu & Guowuyuan zongjiao shiwuju zhengce faguisi, *Xin shiqi zongjiao gongzuo wenxian xuanbian*, 54-73.

90. Researchers who have interests in the numbers must bear in mind the methods used to compile these figures, and have a good insight into why different agents release and insist on their versions of statistics. See Huang and Zhai, “Zhongguo Jidutu renshu zhi zheng de xueli yu ‘zhengzhi.’”

91. E.g., Ashiwa and Wank, “Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple”; De Groot, *Religious System of China*; Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults*; Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*; Dean

families have carved wooden shrines placed in the most prominent places in their living rooms. People usually worship several deities who belong to different categorized religions simultaneously. In a typical shrine, can be found statues of Buddha, the Goddess of Mercy (*Guanyin*), the Heavenly Empress (*Mazu*), the Great Emperor Who Preserves Life (*Baosheng dadi*) and the Earth God (*Tudi gong*), all enjoying the burning of red candles and incense sticks at the same time. At present, compared to the large number of adherents of other religions, Christians constitute only a small part of Xiamen's religious population. Statistically speaking therefore, Christianity is definitely a minority religion. Nonetheless, Christianity is certainly considered part of the local culture and history. Today as we wander the streets of the city, the legacy of Christianity consisting of old churches, hospitals or school buildings are prominent landmarks. For the people of Xiamen, Christianity is an integral part not only of the city landscape but also of their everyday life.

Since the 1980s, the overseas ties of the church have been resumed, in particular those with the Chinese diaspora church of Southeast Asia. Members of the Xiamen church who fled abroad prior to October 1949 have created a bridge with overseas Chinese Christian communities and contributed huge amounts to the Xiamen church during the financially tough times. For instance, in the construction of the New District Gospel Church (*Xinqu fuyin tang*) in the mid-1990s, one million *yuan* (120,000 US dollars according to the 1995 exchange rate) came from local contributions, but seven million (840,000 US dollars) were donated by Chinese diaspora churches in Southeast Asia. In recent years, financial contributions have decreased, as the more elderly overseas members of the Xiamen church have died and with their passing the transnational connections have weakened. Nevertheless, as more foreigners are now working and residing in Xiamen, the church community has established new kinds of transnational connections (see Chapter 6).

The fact that serves as a starting point for this research is that Christianity on Gulangyu Island, the former center of the Three Missions that saw the glory time of Christianity, was doomed to decline because of the state-led commercialization driven by the development of tourism on the island. The center of gravity of Christianity has shifted to Xiamen Island that has subsequently experienced an upsurge in the number of Christians.

---

and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain*; Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, part 1; Kuah-Pearce, "Worship of Qingshui Zushi"; Tan, "Chinese Religious Expression"; Watson, "Standardizing the Gods."

## Chapter 3

### ***“Dare to Rehabilitate Those Who Were Blackened”: Discursive Reversals on Western Missionaries***

#### **A Memorial Service Revisited**

It was a sunny afternoon on April 10, 2010, a few days after the annual Grave Sweeping Festival (*Qingming*), before the white chrysanthemums for the deceased had even withered.<sup>1</sup> On the island of Gulangyu people gathered in the square in front of the original site of the Hope Hospital (*Jiushi yiyuan*) to commemorate the centenary of the death of Dr. John A. Otte (1861-1910), a medical missionary who had died and was buried on the island. As do many other celebrations prevalent in China today, the ceremony commenced with a speech delivered by the convener on behalf of the organizing committee. Several prominent local people also addressed the crowd gathered for the ceremony before the organizers and key guests unveiled a specially commissioned bust of Otte. One after another people came to lay flowers at the foot of the bust. The choir of the Xiamen YMCA sang “*Ye Christian Heralds, Go, Proclaim*” and “*The Essence of Love*” at the opening and closing of the ceremony.

Otte was born in the Netherlands on August 11, 1861, and emigrated to the United States with his family in 1867.<sup>2</sup> He attended Hope College in Holland, Michigan, from which he graduated in 1883. In the fall of that year he entered the University of Michigan to study medicine and obtained his MD three years later. Unfortunately, three consecutive attacks of diphtheria seriously damaged his voice. Rather than having to take services that would have required conventional preaching, his attention turned to the medical mission, a field of missionary work that was then in its infancy. Otte was appointed a medical missionary of the RCA in China. However, at that time there were neither the funds to send him to the field, nor any hope of collecting a

---

1. The whole event is an ethnographic reconstruction based on interviews and documents.

2. In this section, the bulk of the information on the life and work of Otte has been taken from Warnshuis, *Dr. John A. Otte*.

sufficient amount to build a hospital. Therefore, instead of going to China immediately, Otte went to the Netherlands where he continued his medical studies



*The memorial service for John Otte on April 10, 2010. In the background is the newly repaired Hope Hospital complex. Photo provided by Chen Yongpeng.*



*People laying flowers at the foot of Otte's bust. Photo provided by Chen Yongpeng.*

from 1886 to 1887. Not only did this expand his experience, on the missionary front he was given financial support by some Dutch donors. Otte and his wife arrived in Xiamen on January 13, 1888. The greater part of the first year was spent on the study of the Southern Fujian dialect and on making plans to set up his medical missionary work on a proper footing. Initially Otte opened the Neerbosch Hospital<sup>3</sup> in Xiaoxi, a village in the backblocks of remote Pinghe county, where there was a small but thriving church under the care of the Chinese minister Ye Hanzhang. After six years of hospital work, the time came for the Otte family to take its first furlough. In America Otte was successful in raising almost 10,000 dollars for the building of a men’s hospital in Xiamen that was to be named the Hope Hospital in honor of his Alma Mater. During this furlough, Otte also paid a brief visit to the Netherlands where he raised funds for a women’s hospital building that was to be named the Netherlands Woman’s Hospital.<sup>4</sup> In the autumn of 1897, the Otte family returned to Xiamen. Before his departure, Otte was ordained a minister by the Classis of Michigan.



*The Hope Hospital on Gulangyu. Photo provided by Ye Kehao.*

After returning to Xiamen, Otte assumed the responsibility for the construction and running of the Hope Hospital that was opened on Gulangyu in April 1898. Otte’s last

---

3. It was named after the Neerbosch Orphanage in the Netherlands, from which the first donation, a Dutch girl’s pennies, was received.

4. Several years later, its name was changed to the Wilhelmina Hospital in appreciation of the generous support from the then Queen Wilhelmina (r. 1890-1948) who gladly consented to be named the “Patroness” of the hospital. Subsequently, the whole hospital was renamed the Hope and Wilhelmina Hospital, but it has been usually abbreviated to the Hope Hospital.

trip to the United States came in June 1908. He returned to Xiamen four months later and served there until his death. On April 14, 1910, Otte died of pneumonic plague that he contracted from one of his patients. His last words were neither English nor Dutch, but in the local dialect. Otte was buried in the missionary cemetery on the island. At his funeral service, that was also held on Gulangyu, a congregation of nearly 1,000 natives and foreigners alike gathered to express their sorrow.



*Otte's grave with his medical students and friends standing behind. Photo provided by Chris White.*

The Hope Hospital is the institution for which Otte was most famous. Here poor patients, most of whom came from rural districts, could receive free medical help and would be expected to pay only five cents a day for food. In the twelve years of Otte's work at the Hope Hospital, more than 17,000 inpatients and 135,000 outpatients were treated, and over 7,500 surgical operations of all kinds were performed. As one of the founding fathers of modern medicine in Southern Fujian, Otte also trained the first group of local Western medical doctors and nurses. He was also the designer of the renowned red-domed Eight-Trigram Building (*Bagua lou*) on Gulangyu, that even today is most conspicuous landmark of the islet, indeed of the whole city. Furthermore, as an enthusiast photographer he produced many historically precious images of Gulangyu with his camera.

After the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, as nationalism soared the presence of missionaries declined sharply. Once the Chinese military entered the Korean War in 1950 and began fighting the UN army on the side of North Korea, any Chinese associated with American groups was in danger of being labeled a “running dog of imperialism.” As one RCA missionary declared, “[The Korean War] had made us enemy aliens and that put us in a new category.”<sup>5</sup> Around the mid-1950s the few foreign missionaries who had remained after the Communist takeover were either forced to leave or actually expelled from Southern Fujian.<sup>6</sup> Even though Otte had been dead for half a century, in the turmoil engendered by the extreme political movements that characterized that time, his soul could not rest in peace. The first issue of the official *Xiamen Historical Materials* (*Xiamen wenshi ziliao*) in 1963 included a critical article that attacked Otte specifically. In it, the authors accused Otte of bullying the weak, extorting patients’ money and committing indecent assaults on women. Otte was denigrated a “hypocrite with an extremely ugly soul,” and an “imperialist rogue riding on the Chinese people’s heads.”<sup>7</sup> Even more sadly, his grave was destroyed and up to the present his remains have never been found.<sup>8</sup>

During the memorial service for Otte in 2010, all charges against him were unofficially dropped, and he was even highly commended as “Xiamen’s Bethune.” Norman Bethune (1890-1939) was a Canadian physician and anti-fascist. His service with the Eighth Route Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) has earned him enduring acclaim. His commitment to the Chinese revolutionary course left a deep impression on the Communist leader Mao Zedong. Mao’s 1939 article, *In Memory of Norman Bethune*, was committed to memory by generations of Chinese students. The analogy of Otte as “Bethune” was popular recognition of the missionary. The event reached a climax during the speech by Zhao Tianyi, a retired Communist cadre who was the former director of the Xiamen Culture Bureau. Zhao’s address, entitled “Dare to Rehabilitate Those Who Were Blackened” (*Ganyu wei bei mohei de ren fanbai*), impressed the audience deeply as he enumerated all accusations leveled against Otte and refuted them one by one. Some people were unhappy about the comparison with Bethune, as they believed that, because his dedication transcended class, wealth and politics Otte was a much greater man. The breadth of his humanity

---

5. See De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 326.

6. This clearance began before the victory of the Communist revolution. Worried by the deteriorating domestic situation caused by the civil war, most missionaries chose to leave of their own free will, but some still remained.

7. Zheng and Huang, “Meiguo yisheng Yu Yuehan,” 64.

8. No living person knows where Otte’s remains lie. After the reopening of China the Reverend Walter de Velder (1907-2005), an RCA missionary who served on Gulangyu and married Otte’s daughter Margaret, returned to Gulangyu at least four times to look for the graves of Otte and Margaret, but failed.

contrasted to the narrower path trod by Bethune who served only the Communists. Be that as it may, the use of Bethune’s name did mean that ordinary citizens with little historical knowledge could learn about and recognize Otte’s contribution.

In the transformation of John Otte, from the denigrated “imperialist rogue” to his positive recognition as “Xiamen’s Bethune,” we see how the discourses on this American missionary have been totally reversed through unofficial channels. Despite this, the government’s attitude toward the histories of the association of Western missionaries with “national humiliation” has not been radically revised in official narratives. This begs the question of why, in the case of Otte, this complete reversal of discourses was possible? In this chapter I attempt to explain what socio-cultural mechanisms enabled the local people to counter official amnesia and gradually break down the state domination of missionary discourse.

### **The Re-Creation of a Historical Figure**

A brief sketch of the grassroots group that organized the activity is indispensable if the celebratory event is to be fully understood. Gulang Voice is an informal group that was initiated in 2009 and originally named the Gulangyu Cultural Conservation and Research QQ Group.<sup>9</sup> The group’s goals are easily deduced from its original name, namely: to research and protect the cultural and historical heritage of Gulangyu. Soon after the foundation of the original QQ group, in next to no time its membership had swelled to over 300 people from all walks of life, including scholars, writers, business people, photographers and documentary filmmakers. They were drawn together by a common reason - their great affection for Gulangyu. This informal, fairly loose-knit group was convened by Cui Jiayu, an employee in a state-owned enterprise. Members address each other informally as “group friend.” The stance adopted by the group insists that it adheres to open, independent, non-commercial and academic principles. From time to time it organizes various cultural salons, invites domestic and foreign experts to talk at Gulangyu forums, records eyewitness accounts and regularly holds small concerts on the island. Every member is required to use their real name when they register for membership. No “unlawful issue” can be raised in their online group discussion, and members are often reminded to avoid politically sensitive topics.

Anxious to stress the group’s mission to preserve Gulangyu’s history and culture, the members had been waiting for a major opportunity to make their public debut.

---

9. QQ is an instant messaging software offering a variety of services, such as private message, group chat, online games, music, shopping and microblogging.

### *Prior collective practice: the recovery of the Union Church*

Although the memorial service for Otte is the proudest achievement of Gulang Voice so far, the first action undertaken the group was the restoration of the Union Church (*Xiehe libaitang*). Qin Gaoyang, a documentary filmmaker and active member of the group, posted an old picture of Gulangyu on the QQ group discussion in May 2009. Almost none of the members, even those who were Gulangyu residents, were able to recognize the building in the picture. In fact, the only person able to identify it was son of an elderly local history expert. The picture was of the Union Church.

The Union Church was established in 1863. The funds for its construction were donated by foreign Christians on the island, and it was initially named the International Church (*Guoji libaitang*). After it was rebuilt in 1911, the church was renamed the Union Church. Since most of the churchgoers were foreigners, services were conducted in English. In the normal run of things, the locals referred to the building as the “Barbarian Church” (*Fanzai libaitang*).<sup>10</sup> After Xiamen was taken over by the Communists in 1949, for a few years the church board was placed under the authority of the Southern Fujian Synod (*Minnan dahui*) of the Church of Christ in China but worship at the Union Church finally ceased in 1952. As time passed, when the premises of the Xiamen Second Hospital located next door to the church were expanded, the church building was appropriated for use as a storehouse. In 1974, the building was hemmed in by new structures and concealed from view. After the reopening of churches in the reform era, the property rights of the Union Church were returned to the Xiamen *Lianghui*. However, the latter was not able to afford the great expense needed to repair the church, so for decades the dilapidated building remained invisible to the public.

---

10. In Chinese history, the literary and political elites distinguished civilized peoples and barbarians (*fan*). *Fanzai* was once associated with the Westerners. Many texts from the first half of the nineteenth century refer to Westerners as “barbarian devils” (*fangui*). See Dikötter, *Discourse of Race in Modern China*. In my interviews with local history experts, they denied the derogatory sense of the ancient usage of *fanzai* and re-phrased it more naturally: people who came from different cultures. However, the derogatory usage was recorded by the then RCA missionary John Van Nest Talmage, who once wrote that: “The Chinese know but little of foreign nations and have for ages looked upon them all as barbarians.” Fagg, *Forty Years in South China*, 184. John Macgowan (1835-1922), an LMS missionary, also recorded his unpleasant experience that: “The one name with which we were assailed everywhere was ‘Barbarian,’ a word in which was concentrated the very essence of Chinese thought as to the opinion that everyone had about us. Wherever we went our greeting was summed up in that. Men would mutter it in their teeth as they passed by us. A mother with a smiling face would hold up her child and cry out in excited tones, ‘Look at the Barbarian.’ The term was thrown at us from street corners.” Macgowan, *Beside the Bamboo*, 179-80.

When members of Gulang Voice “rediscovered” the old church, the beautiful architecture so clearly visible in the old picture was unrecognizable. They were distraught that the beautiful building had fallen into such disrepair and that the historical and cultural significance of the landmark went unrecognized. This frustration stimulated the group to mobilize its own resources in order to draw attention to the plight of such a historic building. Group members used the church as a symbol as they called on acquaintances for support and arranged for television and newspaper reports to draw public attention to the need to preserve Gulangyu’s history and architecture. Some of the members took advantage of their personal relationships with the Gulangyu Management Committee, the Xiamen *Lianghui* and other official agencies to plead their cause. A successful entrepreneur who comes from a Gulangyu Christian family bore all the maintenance costs. Thanks to the joint efforts of various parties, the church building was eventually restored and reopened.

The restoration of the Union Church was a crucial landmark for Gulang Voice. Not only had the condition of the building been deplorable, even more shocking was the fact that hardly anyone really knew it existed. Precisely because of its efficient cooperation and the social influence its members could exert, this achievement quickly gained the group fame and boosted its self-confidence. More importantly, the group members had learned how arousing public concern was a good way to deal with the authorities. This was the first time the group was associated with Christianity. Shortly afterward, Gulang Voice seized yet another opportunity to make its voice successfully heard.

### *The reappearance of John Otte*

One other previous event should also certainly not be ignored in an analysis of the 2010 centenary of Otte’s death, that is, a statue for Otte was erected on April 28, 2008, on the 110th anniversary celebration of foundation of the Xiamen Second Hospital, the successor to the Hope Hospital. On that occasion, John de Velder (1944-2016),<sup>11</sup> a hospital chaplain in New Jersey was invited to be present to represent Otte’s family. By erecting a statue of Otte, the hospital was attempting to enrich its competitiveness by means of extending its history and using the Hope Hospital’s reputation. However, it

---

11. John’s father, Walter de Velder, was married to Otte’s daughter, Margaret. Margaret Otte died in childbirth and Walter de Velder later married Harriet Boot, John de Velder’s mother. He lived in China for several years as a young boy while his parents were serving there as missionaries. He remembered leaving China with his mother and siblings in 1949, when the Communists took over; his father returned to the United States two years later when the situation had grown even worse.

was easier said than done. Ultimately, Otte, as the hospital’s co-founder, played only a minor part in the celebration. Otte still remained fairly unfamiliar to the local people.



*Unveiling Otte’s statue in the Xiamen Second Hospital. Photo provided by Mr. Lan.*

The breakthrough in making his name better known came in August of 2009 as group members were enthusiastically discussing Gulangyu’s historical celebrities on their QQ online forum. One of the members posted a scanned letter from John Otte’s granddaughter to the Xiamen Municipal Government.<sup>12</sup> This letter, that describes Otte’s life in China and mentions the Hope Hospital and other major landmarks he designed, including the Eight-Trigram Building, immediately sparked off an intense discussion. Moved by comments posted online by forum members such as Otte’s “professionalism in saving lives regardless of his personal safety” and his “dedication to the people of Xiamen,” group members began referring to Otte as “Xiamen’s Bethune.” Cui Jiayu noticed that the centenary of his death was approaching and planted the idea of celebrating this event. The notion swiftly resonated with other members. Qin Gaoyang suggested a photo exhibition and a memorial service for Otte with the title “*Love Never Ends*.” Other members also proposed that the road around the hospital site be renamed after Otte, and a second statue be erected. Within a short

---

12. John de Velder who was close to Otte’s descendants established relations with a very few church leaders and locals. Hence, the connection between Otte’s family and Xiamen is limited to a very small circle.

time, a rough draft was submitted for discussion at the next cultural meeting. In the meeting they reached a general consensus that they called the “Three-in-One Program,” namely: one photo exhibition; one memorial service; and one anthology of books and articles written in praise of Otte.

### *Re-creating John Otte*

Of the hundreds of missionaries who served in Xiamen from the 1840s to the 1950s, over 150 were sent into the field by the RCA.<sup>13</sup> Many of them died and were buried in the missionary cemetery on Gulangyu. However, apart from some old buildings and a few tombstones, very few material remains have survived the series of political campaigns unleashed in the Maoist era. Given the subsequent dearth of material, how did Gulang Voice re-create such a historical figure?

When Pastor Zhou mentioned to me that Otte was unfamiliar to the people of Xiamen before 2010, even to Gulangyu residents or churchgoers, my curiosity was piqued. I thought it strange that such an influential historical figure had all but completely vanished from the collective memory. I challenged this statement in my interviews with church clergy and lay believers. I repeatedly asked the same question: “Do you know of Dr. Otte?” Nearly all the people I talked to said they did not know about Otte or, if they now did, they had not been aware of him before the 2010 memorial service. In short, Pastor Zhou’s comment seems to have been quite accurate. Even the key organizers of the commemoration service, among them Cui Jiayu and Qin Gaoyang, admitted that they did not really know much about either Otte or missionary history, although they had been living in Xiamen for years and had passed by what was left inherited from a past era.

Rather than commemorating a missionary, those group members with a self-declared social conscience wanted to participate in a social event in a broad sense. It is a long-term Chinese tradition that, in order to avoid trouble, people refer to the past in a circumlocutory fashion, using it as a tool to discuss the present.<sup>14</sup> And this is precisely what happened in the Otte case. Educated members who are versed in the history of late imperial and Republican Xiamen insist that this area used to be the most prosperous place in South China. Comparatively speaking, today Gulangyu has deteriorated into a tourist destination, and Xiamen has been overtaken economically by other coastal cities. In the eyes of the members of Gulang Voice and the Christian community, Otte stands for the glorious past of the Xiamen area. As I was told by one of them, if Otte had not been there, sooner or later they would have commemorated another figure. In a nutshell, Otte appeared just at the right time.

---

13. See De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 347-49.

14. Unger, *Using the Past*.

As soon as it was decided to hold the commemorative event, the first priority was to create a vivid image of Otte. The organizers were convinced that Otte needed to be re-created as a “real” historical figure who had lived and served in the Xiamen region for decades. To resolve the problem of how to go about this, the group convened in ten face-to-face discussions, involving over 100 members. Qin Gaoyang bought dozens of old photographs and postcards from abroad. Pastor Zhou shared a series of unpublished articles about Otte that had been collected by Otte’s granddaughter. The whole enterprise was boosted by the program of a memorial service for Otte held by the RCA in Grand Rapids, Michigan on June 16, 1910, buttressed by one of Otte’s used calling cards and the title deed for the hospital land. The whole campaign was helped enormously by another contributor, an American scholar working at Xiamen University, who offered the collections he had built up over a long period.

Among these collections, the most prestigious document was the title deed that was purchased from abroad by one of the group members. It actually consists of three documents: a survey of the hospital site by the Xiamen coastal defense authorities in 1887, the official permission for permanently leasing land for the construction of the Hope Hospital in 1889 and the 1905 land lease for the women’s hospital. This title deed bears the seals of the Qing government and the American and Dutch consulates, as well as Otte’s signature. Its authenticity was confirmed by local history experts. People believed that the title deed was sufficient to prove Otte had acquired the land through legitimate channels. This legality contrasted sharply with the accepted narratives that Western missionaries had seized the rights to lease or buy Chinese lands by the exertion of imperialist force.<sup>15</sup> These documents indicate Otte’s innocence of any misdeed in the disgraceful history of imperialist aggression. The group members fervently hoped that Otte could be portrayed as a great man untarnished by any historical blemish. In other words, it was expected that the organization of such an event for a non-controversial figure would not cause political problems.

When all these items were displayed, people were delighted to see the materialization of so many fragments that revealed Otte’s life and commitment. However, the group soon realized that more than a scattering of historical documents would be required to restore Otte’s obliterated status. What the celebration was still lacking was the support of acknowledged history experts. With this thought in mind, the group consulted and subsequently invited several local history experts to introduce Otte’s life. Wang Yaode, former deputy director of the Xiamen Zheng Chenggong Memorial Hall, is a renowned expert on Xiamen history and, because of his exposure

---

15. The conflict about land for church construction has been regarded as a major factor in the upsurge in numerous anti-Christian cases (*jiaoan*) in late imperial China. For anti-Christian cases in Fujian, see Lin, *Qingji Fujian jiaoan zhi yanjiu*. For the official narratives on missionary-occupied land for the construction of churches and villas on Gulangyu, see Gulangyu guangongwei, *Gulangyu qu aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu cailiao xuanbian*, 38-39.

in the local media and participation in many local cultural events, has become quite a public figure. Regarded as an Otte expert principally on account of his translation of A. L. Warnshuis’ *A Brief Sketch of the Life and Work of Dr. John A. Otte*, he was invited to give an introduction to the doctor’s life to group members. Although this event raised his status to that of main authority in comparison to other elderly local history experts, he actually did not know much more about Otte other than what was in the biography he had translated. In fact, this limited information was quite sufficient, since what the group needed was Wang’s reputation rather than his knowledge. In the revival of popular faith in reform-era China, the authority of intellectuals is consciously used to legitimize folk religious practices, once labeled “feudal superstition” (*fengjian mixian*).<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Dean has coined the term “conferences of the gods” to indicate the process by which, in order to legitimate a particular deity cult or religious festival scholars are ever more frequently invited by temple committees and local governments to participate in temple-sponsored academic conferences so that their scholarly credentials can be used to endorse claims to antiquity or cultural significance.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in this instance, a detailed chronology of Otte’s life was finalized on the basis of Wang’s guidance, and no time was lost adopting this as the standard version. The group members involved in the memorial event attended several lectures and were acquainted with the historical “truth” embodied in Otte’s chronology. Even though there were mistakes in this chronology, they were not worried about seeking any clarification, and quickly circulated it both inside and outside the group. Ordinary people managed to counter the official amnesia and reconstruct collective memory.

The central figures on the organizing committee understood that, if the event were to be held, it was crucial to desensitize Otte, a man who had multiple identities: he was a missionary, a doctor and an architect. The group quickly reached a consensus that Otte’s missionary background should be touched on only lightly and his identities as doctor and architect should be highlighted instead. No one can deny his dedication as a doctor as the hospital building still stands there, even though it is no longer used. The Eight-Trigram Building, as a landmark not just of Gulangyu but also of Xiamen, testifies to his great talent as an architect. Qin also added that Otte should also be celebrated as a photographer. He had purchased four sets of old postcards issued by the RCA in memory of Otte. On the bottom of the cards, Qin was excited to find that some of the photographs had been taken by Otte personally. As a photographer himself, there was nothing that could have brought him more pleasure: the great Otte had shared the same hobby and specialty as he enjoys. Hence he regarded his findings as a major discovery and shared this enthusiastically with other members. Some of these members were dubious about Otte’s newly-found identity as a photographer,

---

16. E.g., Gao, “Yizuo bowuguan-miaoyu jianzhu de minzuzhi.”

17. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 261-63.

and believed that he was, at best, an enthusiastic amateur. Qin, however, insisted that these beautiful pictures would not have been possible if he had not mastered a high technical proficiency. Besides, he added, as a doctor Otte must have learned about X-ray technology, for which the skills of photography and film processing were both required. In fact, it was not until 1895 that the German scientist Wilhelm Röntgen (1845-1923) discovered the X-ray that was only later applied to the medical fields. The Hope Hospital bought its first X-ray machine from the United States in 1932.<sup>18</sup> Otte could not have had any experience with radiology before his departure to China in 1887. Furthermore, there is no evidence that indicates he learned anything about it during his furloughs. Since Qin’s “discovery” could enrich Otte’s image and contribute to balancing his missionary background, his colleagues finally agreed to accept Otte’s identity as a photographer.

In accordance with the priorities established by Gulang Voice, Otte was primarily a doctor, then an architect and finally a photographer. Although Otte’s missionary background was not mentioned publicly at the memorial service, no one denied Otte’s position in the Christian history of Xiamen. To ensure the complete desensitization of Otte’s legacy, the organizing committee decided that Gulang Voice should be nominally in charge of the event. As a grassroots group, it would contribute to the highlighting of the secular aspect of this event. It was understood that the Xiamen church and the Christian community could not adopt a high profile in such an uncertain political situation. Indeed there are many studies of popular religious practices demonstrating that an acceptable subject that caters to the state’s planning is the key tactic to gain legitimization. Such undertakings include the construction of museums<sup>19</sup> or “new socialist countryside” (*shehuizhuyi xin nongcun*),<sup>20</sup> intangible cultural heritage<sup>21</sup> or even a reforestation project.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to these popular religions, Christianity has to maneuver to gain space for its survival and development through other channels. The prosperity of Christianity in contemporary Wenzhou, as Nanlai Cao points out, is based principally on the economic success of this area and the fame of the “Wenzhou model” promoted by the reformist state; economic progress desensitizes Christianity and wins Christian entrepreneurs negotiating room with local authorities.<sup>23</sup>

---

18. Xiamen shi difangzhi bianweihui, *Xiamen shi zhi*, vol.5, 3469.

19. Gao, “Yizuo bowuguan-miaoyu jianzhu de minzuzhi.”

20. Yue, “Chuantong minjian wenhua yu xinnongcun jianshe.”

21. Wu, “Cong fengjian mixin dao feiwuzhi wenhua yichan.”

22. Chau, *Miraculous Response*.

23. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*.

## Former Rightists: Remembering the Dead, Grieving for the Living

Among the group members were four well-acknowledged experts on Xiamen history, who served as government officials or quasi-officials. An immediate question was who, of these four, should be invited to give the keynote speech? In the end, two members were chosen, Kong Qinmai and Zhao Tianyi. Kong, in his eighties, was the oldest expert. He had once held leading positions in the Xiamen Federation of Social Sciences, the Xiamen Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the Xiamen Local Gazetteer Office, and had long worked as the editor-in-chief of *Xiamen Historical Materials*. Because of Kong’s long-term involvement in the compilation of local gazetteers, he is often referred to as a “living map of Xiamen” or a “living encyclopedia of Xiamen.” He is regarded as an authority on historical matters and has frequently appeared in the media. A skill he probably acquired in his years of experience in writing and researching local history, Kong has a talent for dealing with state organs and is balanced in the views he expresses. When speaking on missionary history, he mentions the contributions made by these foreigners, but avoids any politically sensitive issues.

The second keynote speaker was Zhao Tianyi, a retired Communist cadre, who was head of the Xiamen Culture Bureau. Both Kong and Zhao were labeled “rightists,” and therefore became nonpersons, during the Anti-Rightist Movement of the 1950s. In comparison to the reticence of Kong, Zhao was much bolder in his comments. In view of his Communist background and courage in speaking up, the group believed his speech would exert the greater influence, and therefore made Zhao the prime keynote speaker. Zhao, like Kong and the others, knew very little about Otte, but he was delighted to accept the invitation to give a speech at the commemoration. At least he knew what the audience expected and his speech did not disappoint. He carefully read the article targeting Otte in the first issue of *Xiamen Historical Materials* and analyzed the accusations against him. Unlike Kong’s measured tone, Zhao expanded on his theme more broadly and advocated the rehabilitation of once stigmatized people. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, redressing (*gaizheng*) those who had been deeply wronged in the Maoist period lay at the center of politics in post-Mao China. Consequently, Zhao’s speech was an easy step to political matters. As Pastor Zhou said to me, “Zhao opened fire on the government.”

In my conversations with those who were accused of being rightists, they often lamented that they had in reality been redressed but not completely rehabilitated (*pingfan*). There are significant differences between these two corrective actions. In the late 1970s the Chinese leadership launched its work of righting past wrongs under the slogan “bringing order out of chaos and returning to rectitude” (*boluan fanzheng*). The upshot was that in the early 1980s those wronged were allowed to resume their former

positions; neither a public apology nor national compensation was forthcoming. Hence in their addresses Kong and Zhao repeatedly stressed that they had never been rehabilitated. Neither in their position nor that of these stigmatized missionaries had any corrective action ever been taken. In my interviews with Gulang Voice leaders, even though nearly none of them is Christian, I sensed a great deal of gratitude and respect for these missionaries who had suffered a fate not far removed from their own experiences.

Although the political atmosphere has grown more liberal, so far there has been no official re-evaluation of missionaries. In other words, missionaries, unlike numerous Chinese wronged during the Maoist era, have never been officially redressed. “Tactics were therefore necessary.” Zhao Tianyi gave me a proud smile and continued: “I spoke from the Marxist perspective of historical stages. Specifically, they [the Party’s Marxist theorists] said the late Qing was [an era of] feudalism.<sup>24</sup> Without a doubt, Western capitalism represented by missionaries was an advanced stage [of the process]; their arrival in China was [therefore part of] a historical progress.” Zhao even quoted the Party’s former leader Liu Shaoqi’s (1898-1969) remark - “History is written by the people” - to affirm the efforts on the grassroots level to achieve the reappraisal of Otte. Zhao’s speech resonated with the audience. Some grassroots officials even praised him in private for his courage. However, in the newspaper the next day, not a word of contents of his speech was mentioned (although his name was included in the report). Zhao was quite proud of his courage and regarded it as a breakthrough in intellectuals’ freedom of speech. The “rightist,” once a stigmatized political label, is now being reinterpreted and used as positive symbol. In Zhao’s eyes, the suffering he experienced as a rightist was proof of his right-minded, honest character.

In China and elsewhere, mourning ceremonies offer a special arena within which individual suffering can be accorded public or cultural significance.<sup>25</sup> In a Hakka village in Hong Kong, as Elizabeth Johnson has found, a funeral is an occasion not only for grieving for the deceased but also for serving as a vehicle for personal protest.<sup>26</sup> A commemorative event for a late celebrity plays a similar role. The memorial service for Otte supplied an opportunity for the former rightists to present their grievances about their decades of suffering and the fact that the Party has never admitted the traumas it inflicted on the ordinary people.

---

24. For a fuller discussion of the periodization of China’s past by Chinese Marxist historians, see Feuerwerker, “China’s History in Marxian Dress,” 336-40.

25. Watson, “Making Secret Histories.”

26. Johnson, “Grieving for the Dead.”

## World Heritage and Local Politics

### *Pragmatism and the principled stand of the local state*

In 1987 the UNESCO endorsed the Chinese government’s applications for six sites to be awarded the title of the World Heritage Site (WHS).<sup>27</sup> Currently, according to official statistics, there are forty-eight sites in China inscribed on the world heritage list and another fifty-five sites on the tentative list.<sup>28</sup> In recent years the government of the PRC has actively promoted cultural and religious sites both as a means of earning tourism revenue and an expression of nationalistic pride in China’s past.<sup>29</sup> As China rises, the government is striving to enhance its “soft power” (*ruanshili*), and WHS status is regarded as one avenue of projecting Chinese culture and history to the rest of the world. Among local governments, the entry of scenic spots on the UNESCO list has become a coveted classification.

This is the context in which Gulangyu, an officially recognized National 5A Scenic Area, was formally placed on the agenda of the WHS status application in 2009. This move was not universally popular and it immediately incurred opposition both silent and public based on a variety of considerations. Gulangyu officials were reluctant to be responsible for making the application, as they were well aware that such a process is an uphill battle. Some university scholars opposed the application as a “matter of principle” (*yuanze wenti*): Gulangyu used to be a colony forcibly occupied by foreign powers, therefore celebrating this heritage would be tantamount to celebrating imperialism. Among the consultants, for instance, one professor of history at Xiamen University who had once published a book criticizing the Gulangyu International Settlement firmly opposed the proposal for WHS application. Scholars with this frame of mind argued that the Chinese people in Xiamen should not be “doubly humiliated.” However, their objections went unheard as the main municipal leaders had already pledged the provincial superiors their commitment, so the consultation of the experts was a mere formality. Whatever their discomfort about proceeding with the application process, subordinate officials were not prepared to risk their political future by opposing their seniors. Those university professors who disagreed with the plan were considered to be excessively academic (*xueyuanpai*). In the semantic context

---

27. The mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, the Peking Man site at Zhoukoudian, the Mogao Caves, the Great Wall and the Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang gained the status as “World Cultural Heritage Sites”; Mount Taishan is a “World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site.”

28. “Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List” and “Properties Submitted on the Tentative List,” on UNESCO’s official website, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>.

29. Oakes and Sutton, *Faiths on Display*.

of Chinese, “academic” usually carries a negative connotation. It tends to indicate pedantic insistence, overly conservative attitudes or an inflexible stance. The university professors were not subsequently consulted, but were in fact completely marginalized in the decision-making process. In present-day Xiamen, the rewriting of local history is a popular occupation among both civilians and authorities. In the process of knowledge production, the reconfiguration of power relations never stops. Local history experts without any academic historical training have seized the higher ground. Simultaneously, university historians have been deprived of their voices, in part because of their reluctance to be cooperative. Paradoxically, their names are still listed as consultants in the official application documents. Rather than being concerned about their opinions, apparently what the government needed was their professorial identity and the reputation of their affiliated institution - Xiamen University, a renowned institution in China. Unsurprisingly, regardless of the opposition, no time was lost in submitting the big-budget (over 100 million US dollars) program to apply formally for WHS status.

The GMC officials understood that it was essential to redefine the past of Gulangyu. This was an essential tactic for two reasons: the purposes of both fulfilling WHS criteria and convincing opponents. In its quest to distinguish Gulangyu from other competitors around the world, the application committee conducted a comparative study and finally identified Gulangyu’s superiority lay in its architectural and cultural diversity. “There are numbers of colonies around the world, how can we convince UNESCO experts?” Xu Mingde, one official in charge of the WHS application, said: “The most outstanding feature of Gulangyu was that the KMC, made up of representatives from different countries, was established to manage the island. These Westerners [and Chinese] therefore lived together in peace and harmony.” In this sense, as far as the officials were concerned, Western countries represented diverse cultures rather than colonial powers. When a design team affiliated with Tsinghua University in Beijing, one of the most prestigious universities in China, was invited to draft the application documents, the officials specifically instructed that the island’s colonial background should not be mentioned; instead, the description had to be “neutral” and avoid such words as “imperialist aggression.”<sup>30</sup> The true semantics of

---

30. It is worth mentioning that the only use of the term “imperialist aggression” in the application is that to describe the Japanese invasion in the 1940s. In the official documents for the WHS application, the Japanese occupation, a major catastrophe resulting in casualties in the tens of millions, is blamed for the disruption to the plurality of culture on the island. Although the history of Gulangyu was reinterpreted in the world heritage application, the authorities were still unwilling to rewrite the history to do with the Japanese imperialism. This reluctance corresponds to the government’s attitude toward the Second Sino-Japanese War. When the preparation of Gulangyu for WHS application was in full swing, the site of the infamous Japanese Unit 731 that specialized in germ warfare and the use of poison gas located

“neutral description” as used by local cadres was actually a positive reinterpretation of the past. A quotation from the original application documents submitted to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) on January 29, 2013 reads as follows:

With the approval of the Qing government, Gulangyu was officially carved up as an international concession in 1903, so as to balance the powers of the Western countries and to collectively protect the port trade in Xiamen. Hence there emerged an autonomous system commonly run by several countries on the island...Thanks to the influx, clash and integration of multiple cultures in the nearly 100 years, the sea-island landscape of Gulangyu, its free-style urban fabric, various matched community functions, diverse architectural styles and technology with strong stamps of the age, and graceful and delicate design of home gardens as a whole, created a unique community environment of Gulangyu, which exhibited its global multicultural background and its subsequent developments and re-creations. All of these made Gulangyu a unique example of a modernized international community in the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>31</sup>

The Gulangyu International Settlement had long been denounced as a base of imperialist aggression against China’s southeast coast. The KMC was also criticized for the extraterritoriality imperialism was permitted to seize, and for trampling on China’s sovereignty and the degradation of the Chinese people. The third (1980) and sixteenth (1990) volumes of *Xiamen Historical Materials*, focusing on the Gulangyu International Settlement, lay bare the darkness that enshrouded the island under the imperialist occupation and praise the anti-imperialist struggle of the local people. Now times have changed. In the new official narrative of Gulangyu the International Settlement has been reinterpreted as “a modern, international, public community housing multiple cultures.” Even the KMC is described as “a self-administered agency with modern attributes.”<sup>32</sup> In the history of the island reproduced by authorities the historical shame was whitewashed to ensure the WHS application was more acceptable.

---

near Harbin in northeast China attracted the attention of scholars and representatives of the national CPPCC. People proposed that it should be submitted for WHS status. In recent years, the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands in the Japanese narrative) between China and Japan has several times provoked a spike in nationalistic sentiments. In the eyes of the state, therefore, the repackaged narrative of Gulangyu history that portrays Western countries as a source of cultural pluralism, and Japan squashing it, fits a contemporary understanding of the past. It would be very hard to delete the catastrophic memory of the Japanese aggression from Chinese history.

31. “Kulangsu on Tentative Lists,” on WHC’s official website, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5807>.

32. Gulangyu guanweihui, *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian*, 2-2.

As the tone was reset for the history of modern Gulangyu, the so-called “matter of principle” the university scholars had railed against was no longer an issue.

This situation seems to be covered by the concept of “*lieux de mémoire*” (sites of memory) proposed by Pierre Nora in 1989.<sup>33</sup> Nora’s idea is that memory needs to take root in a concrete object or site, and should be nurtured by anniversaries or celebrations; otherwise it is overtaken by, or lost in, the authority held by universal claims of history. Nora’s concept helps contribute to our understanding of why the Chinese state at all levels is so busy establishing patriotism education bases or tourism red spots.<sup>34</sup> However, pragmatically, in the process of the nation’s modernization, meanings bestowed by the state have always been moveable feasts.<sup>35</sup> Economic enticements have even led to the consumption of “national wounds” (for instance, the Old Summer Palace) for tourism purposes. Whereas the transformation of national wounds into tourist destinations boosts local revenues, remarkably it renders the designated role of patriotic education null and void.<sup>36</sup>

Neither the Xiamen authorities nor ordinary citizens are willing to define Gulangyu as a site of historical shame. Gulangyu basks in a romantic image created by its architecture, sandy beach and its reputation as an islet of pianos; features that every year attract millions of domestic and international tourists to the island. If this lucrative image is to be preserved, the rewriting of Gulangyu’s history must take a positive direction; in other words, it would simply not do to highlight the humiliation of its colonial past.

---

33. Nora, “*Les Lieux de Mémoire*.”

34. Matten, *Places of Memory*.

35. In an analysis of Humen, Guangdong province, where the First Opium War broke out, James Flath writes, “During the Mao era of the PRC, Humen came to represent resistance to imperialism, and to support China’s isolationist foreign policy. In the post-Mao era, Humen was further articulated as the place where China’s ‘Century of Humiliation’ began. But paradoxically, as the Pearl River Triangle takes a leading role in Chinese commerce and manufacturing, the site is just as likely to be associated with global export, high fashion, and high technology.” Flath, “Chinese People Began Their Struggle,” 167.

36. The present-day Old Summer Palace Ruins Park is one such a case. Located in northwestern Beijing, the Old Summer Palace was built in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a summer retreat for the Qing emperors. After being sacked and burned down by Anglo-French allied troops in 1860 at the end of the Second Opium War (1856-60), it became a symbol of national wounds and was officially designated a patriotic education site. However, it is also a public park in which tourists can enjoy themselves taking in scenic spots rather than absorbing their historical significance. Lee, “Ruins of Yuanmingyuan.”

*Church legacies and world cultural heritage*

Instead of following a policy of sporadically trying to eradicate all religions, the post-Mao government acquiesces in a trade-off that permits limited freedom of religious expression in exchange for continued political loyalty.<sup>37</sup> In an analysis of the New Street Church, Chris White reveals that the local authorities have indeed attempted to co-opt the church with tourism and historical importance in mind.<sup>38</sup> A recent event greatly changed the government’s attitude toward Christianity. In 2002 the competition for the international awards for livable communities was hosted in Germany. An American member of the delegation entrusted with presenting Xiamen’s proposal at the competition, suggested that the New Street Church, as China’s first Protestant church, should be incorporated in the Xiamen document. Initially the delegation heads disagreed with making any reference to Christian elements, but the members swiftly changed their minds when he explained that Xiamen’s association with Protestantism would contribute to its chances of winning of the gold medal in the birthplace of Protestantism.

“There are two forms of renovation of historical relics,” Xu Mingde said, “namely: either the restoration of the architecture or of function.” The officials understood that the restoration of function (for example, hospital, school or consulate) would be beyond the bounds of possibility. One thorny issue the GMC officials had to face, Xu complained to me, was the heavy loss of cultural elements. Those presenting the WHS application were faced with a dilemma: since the departure of the foreigners in the late 1940s only tangible buildings, and not any traces of intangible culture, remain on the island. Ravaged by the forces of commercialization, in the locals’ eyes Gulangyu has quickly “deteriorated into a resort island and seafood market.” Only a very small number of foreigners still live there. This present situation is in stark contrast to the interpretation of its past - “a modern, international, public community housing multiple cultures.”<sup>39</sup>

In the application for WHS status, fifty-three core heritage sites (*hexin yicundian*) were identified on Gulangyu, over ten of which were related to Christianity, including the Christian cemetery and a church-run hospital and schools. In the past Gulangyu was a major mission base where approximately one-third of the missionaries in Fujian resided. There were several specific reasons why this islet became an attractive missionary center. Xiamen, with its growing population and number of churches, was separated from Gulangyu by only half a mile of water. The presence of the RCA, LMS and PCE members on Gulangyu also encouraged easy contacts among the Three

---

37. Potter, “Belief in Control.”

38. White, “Harnessing the Church.”

39. Gulangyu guanweihui, *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian*, 2-2.

Missions. Moreover, as one of China’s best deep harbors, its communications with the outside world were relatively easy.<sup>40</sup> From 1903 the Gulangyu International Settlement enjoyed certain self-governing privileges that were devised to guarantee the presence of foreigners and of Christianity. Certainly, no one would deny the role of Christianity in the modernization process of Gulangyu.



*The Hope Hospital complex before repairs. Photos by Zhu Zixian.*



*The Hope Hospital complex after repairs. Photo provided by Chen Yongpeng.*



*The Union Church before and after repairs. Photos by Chen Yongpeng and author respectively.*

If the truth be told, the authorities had not paid attention to Christian sites before Gulangyu was placed on the WHS application agenda. In 1992, the authorities had even initially toyed with the idea of expropriating the Christian cemetery to expand the large botanical garden on the island. Thanks to the outraged protests of local Christians and Chinese-Filipinos expressed in the pages of overseas Chinese-language newspapers, the local authorities backed out of this plan. They did not dare to offend overseas Chinese who tended to invest in the Xiamen area - their ancestral homeland. Many of their relatives were buried in this cemetery (see Chapter 4). Furthermore,

---

40. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 167.

Xiamen, a state-mandated Special Economic Zone, needed to maintain a global image (*guoji xingxiang*) in the outside world, in particular in Taiwan just across the Strait. Another incident occurred in 2004 when the original building of the Hope Hospital was scheduled for demolition to make way for real estate development. This time some concerned local residents informed John Otte’s granddaughter. She immediately wrote to the municipal government, underlining the significance of the site. The letter was submitted to the Xiamen government through the Xiamen Second Hospital - the Hope Hospital’s professed successor, which drew the authorities’ attention to the matter. Local leaders eventually abandoned the plan.

After the decision to go ahead with the WHS application, the religious issue, namely: Gulangyu’s connection to Christianity, could no longer be overlooked. As Xu told me:

Christianity constitutes an indispensable part of Gulangyu’s cultural heritage; therefore we must pay attention to it and include it in our WHS application. If there were no Christian culture, there would have been no modern Gulangyu civilization or any possibility to submit the present WHS application. Few things would be left if Christianity were excluded, since these core sites - the hospital, schools and churches - were all related to it. It was Christianity that led the way for the modern civilization of Gulangyu. Following the introduction of Christianity, Western thought, culture, music and lifestyles arrived. As the presence of foreigners increased, more Western cultures were introduced and interacted with Chinese culture. Gulangyu prospered soon after.

Hu Weikang, deputy head of the GMC, also noted:

Christianity exerted a great influence not only on Gulangyu, but also on Southern Fujian and the whole of China, in the fields of medicine, the arts and sports. It changed the Xiamen people’s way of thinking and their lifestyle; even now continues to affect the way people live. Gulangyu people have unique personalities precisely because of Christianity. They love music and sports because of Christianity.

The restored original building of the Hope Hospital was altered by the authorities to make it into a musical instrument museum; another plan that also incurred widespread criticism. The government baulked when faced with the criticism of being “uncultured” (*mei wenhua*). The emergence of Gulang Voice greatly inspired local officials. On account of their affection for Gulangyu, the group members made a concerted effort to rescue its once flourishing culture from the detrimental trends introduced by tourism. The group members regarded their efforts as “civic engagement in the WHS application” (*minjian shenyi*) - a form of assisting the official application. The authorities were pleased to welcome the group’s participation and enthusiasm. Hence, when Cui Jiayu paid a visit and spoke of John Otte, the officials showed their interest. The value of Otte’s legacy is immediately apparent in the description given by Hu Weikang: “When the world heritage experts come, we shall lead them to see Otte’s bust. Hopefully at that time there will be flowers there laid by

Chinese people in remembrance of him; even if these flowers are withered. It will show that the Chinese people have not forgotten Otte.” Hu sat there, sipping his tea. He probably realized he had said something inappropriate, so hastened to add: “It would not make sense if I deliberately arranged for withered flowers past their prime to be placed at the bust.” Although I do not know if he will actually arrange for this when WHS experts visit, from the local officials’ point of view, his attitude makes Otte’s role in the heritage project is abundantly clear.

## The Invisible Presence of the State

*“We did serious things in a non-serious [informal] way”:  
the state as a silent partner*

The members of Gulang Voice were well aware that the memorial service could not be held without official approval. The Hope Hospital complex and the square in front of it are government property. Without the government’s consent, the group would have been hard put to find a spot on the islet to host such an event. More importantly, they were also all highly aware of the political sensitivity of the event, even though they believed they had re-created pretty unflawed image of Otte.

The group members come from all walks of life and many of them have contacts with high-level authorities. One of such person is Zhang Haiqin, who works at the Xiamen Federation of Social Sciences as a middle-level cadre. As a think-tank for the Xiamen government, her affiliated institution also researches Gulangyu and provides advice on heritage protection. More importantly, as a semi-official institution “within the system” (*tizhi nei*), in the administrative sequence it has an equal status (deputy department level, *futingji*) with the GMC. Even if Zhang just acted as a go-between and not on behalf of her work unit, her background in a state-recognized organ would still be effective. Since Zhang’s introduction, government officials have been more welcoming to group members. Rather than as a representative of the GMC, Hu Weikang, a Gulangyu official, has received them privately and showed great interest. Hu was happy to give permission for the event, and even sent a subordinate to attend the organizing meetings on his behalf. Although the venue no longer presented a problem, the officials’ concern about the political sensitivity of the exercise had not been totally eliminated.

As the event drew closer, Cui perceived slight changes in the attitude of Hu Weikang. At the beginning, Hu was strongly supportive, but later became quite circumspect. I also sensed Hu’s caution in our interview when I mentioned that the GMC’s involvement in the recovery and preservation of church heritage had “made its mark on the WHS application, and had indirectly helped the church.” He immediately

responded cautiously, and corrected my wording: “This is not about help. You should not put it in those terms...When church [buildings] are restored, it does seem like superficial protection of the church. But in fact the reason is to ensure that tourists can experience religious culture and that this will enhance the quality of their tourism.” Just three years after Otte’s commemoration, the authorities held a grand ceremony for the Buddhist Master Hong Yi (1880-1942),<sup>41</sup> on the theme of republishing his transcribed scriptures on Gulangyu. During this event, over 200 guests including Communist cadres, Buddhist clergy and adherents as well as local celebrities were present.<sup>42</sup> As Master Hong Yi was a Buddhist monk, the ceremony was obviously related to Buddhism. Nevertheless the cadres declared that it was a “cultural event” rather than a religious activity. As an event related to Buddhism, it was a much less sensitive issue.

In contrast, no official was willing to become involved in the Otte event at the risk of jeopardizing his or her political future. Hu Weikang explained to me: “The [prefectural] government has not carried out any research on John Otte’s worth; there is no unit to undertake such a professional study. Therefore the historical evaluation has not been formulated. The [local] government is not permitted to put forward foreigners, certainly not their systemic glorification, until it has been supplied with a scientific appraisal based on studies conducted by related departments.” With this understood by both sides, all connections between the authorities and Gulang Voice took place through informal channels. When speaking of the negotiations with the government, Cui Jiayu looked proud and said: “We did serious things in a non-serious [informal] way” (*Women yong bu renzhen de fangshi ban renzhen de shi*). What Cui meant by this was that the group was deeply committed to holding the commemorative event; they saw the value of it and were willing to offer their time and talents to organize the celebration. However, the way they went about this organization was by utilizing unofficial, informal methods. He continued: “The government officials, in particular those who are natives, supported us in private. However, they were all aware of potential trouble and did not dare to acknowledge their endorsement in public. All negotiations took place privately, and in public they turned a blind eye to our activities.” In the bureaucratic system, whether the

---

41. Hong Yi, originally named Li Shutong, had once been a versatile artist whose achievements in drama, music, poetry, painting and calligraphy had won him widespread recognition. After he became a monk at the age of 39, he contributed a number of important Buddhist works. In the spring of 1936, Hong Yi retreated to the Sunlight Rock Temple (*Riguangyan si*) on Gulangyu where he transcribed three Buddhist scriptures.

42. “*Hong Yi Gulang xiejing chongkan diancang yishi zai Gulangyu Riguangyan si longzhong juxing*” [Grand Ceremony Held in the Gulangyu Sunlight Rock Temple for the Re-publishing of *Hong Yi Transcribing Sutra*], on the Xiamen Buddhist Association’s website, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.xiamenfojiao.com/newsinfo.aspx?id=6216>.

government of any level “knows” or “does not know” something depends on if there is a written report. Even though individual officials do know about it in private, it does not mean the government will formally admit its awareness of a particular event. Therefore, there were no written documents used in their communications, and private meetings were preferred. The GMC did not report this event to its superior authorities. If any blame had been elicited from senior government officials, the Gulangyu leaders could easily evade any responsibility by a plausible denial.

The first priority was that the memorial service for Otte should be packaged as a cultural event rather than a religious affair. This decision provided the Gulangyu officials and the group with some common ground and it was on this basis that the commemorative celebration was successfully carried out. This revival of religion in the name of secular activities is an embodiment of a sense of folk wisdom.<sup>43</sup>

As it is a grassroots group without any official background, in the eyes of government officials, cooperation with Gulang Voice could easily land them in hot water. Before the Otte event, the officials had suggested the group register itself with the civil affairs department. They tried to convince the group conveners of the wisdom of this on the grounds that, as the group had no legal identity, the government could not financially support it because it did not have an official bank account and seal. At that time, as Gulang Voice was short of funds to see its activities through. Some principal members had hoped to obtain financial support from the government but they eventually gave up this idea. Their reasoning was simple, once they registered with the government, they would be supervised by the authorities and this would run contrary to their initial position. The upshot was that the authorities failed to co-opt the group. It was possible to hold the event because, as a grassroots group, its members did not need to obey official regulations or follow cumbersome reporting procedures. In reform-era Chinese society, the “system” tends to constrain those who are within it. In contrast, those who are outside are able to be more flexible in a freer space. By establishing relationships that transcend the boundaries of the “system,” particular state-society relations can be formed.<sup>44</sup>

The local officials often complained to me that “the group’s pace is too slow.” They indicated that they were much more open-minded than the group members thought. Ironically, even those officials who had been invited by Gulang Voice did not show up at the event. Since it did not elicit any negative response from their superiors, when it was all over but the shouting, the Gulangyu officials were pleased to publicly claim their support and participation. Hu Weikang, the deputy head of the GMC, said to me: “We supplied the site for them. They invited us to attend the event. I was there.”

---

43. These kinds of studies are mainly of popular beliefs, see e.g., Chau, *Miraculous Response*; Gao, “Yizuo bowuguan-miaoyu jianzhu de minzuzhi”; Wu, “Cong fengjian mixin dao feiwuzhi wenhua yichan”; Yue, “Chuantong minjian wenhua yu xinnongcun jianshe.”

44. For a similar discussion, see Xiang, *Transcending Boundaries*.

However, all the group leaders I interviewed denied his presence. If he had been there, as a mark of respect he would be invited to give a speech by the organizing team. I could not identify them on any photos taken that day. Nobody but themselves know if they were really there. “They are all cowards,” said Pastor Zhou disparaging them when he was talking to me.

### *The incorporated state authority*

Although on the surface it might have appeared as though the state was not present during the Otte event, a deeper analysis reveals that the tentacle of the state did indeed penetrate this civic activity.

Although the memorial service was ultimately a great success, contradictions had inevitably arisen during the process. The first hurdle was that not all the members agreed on the program for Otte. The reason for their objection was that such a high-profile memorial event for a historical missionary would probably be banned by the government. However, the concerns of a few did not dissuade the majority that it was not a good idea. On the contrary, opponents of the plan were disparaged as “the left” (*zuo de*). Although the concept of left is not fully elaborated, Chinese intellectuals tend to define those conservatives who “support a socialist state, who emphasize national unity and security, who think highly of the old communist/socialist economic system, and who value traditional culture” as being on the left.<sup>45</sup> In such a self-proclaimed non-governmental group, this was tantamount to negative labeling, a deprecation leveled to those who are willing to accept the authoritative rule of the single party. The dissenting voices were quickly silenced by the clamor of the majority.

Using a network of personal relations, Qin Gaoyang contacted Brian L. Goldbeck, the then United States Consul General in Guangzhou. Goldbeck was highly appreciative of their efforts to commemorate an American citizen and promised to be present at the ceremony. The prospect of a big name appearing at the celebration caused great excitement among the members, who considered that the attendance of an American diplomat would definitely extend the influence of the event. Qin was quite proud of his personal connections, and excitedly mentioned the support in their discussions: “The Consul General asked me how they could be of assistance. I told them to ask Hillary Clinton to help us obtain some texts and pictures [relating to Otte].” It all sounded as if he had a close relationship with the American embassy

---

45. Pan and Xu, “China’s Ideological Spectrum,” 2. Concepts of “left” and “right” in contemporary China differ from their usage in their Western European and North American contexts. For a fuller discussion, see Qin, Hui. “Dangdai Zhongguo de ‘Zuo’ yu ‘You’” [“Left” and “Right” in Contemporary China], on Aisixiang’s website, accessed September 14, 2015, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/12306.html>.

officials. By referring to the name of a top American politician, Qing was hoping to flaunt his possible contribution to the Otte event. He was doomed to disappointment as he failed to convince other members. People believed that his avowed political connections were over-exaggerated.

Unexpectedly, the members of Gulang Voice split up. When Qin formally submitted the plan to the organizing committee, to his surprise he faced strong opposition. Even Cui Jiayu who had once stood by Qin rebutted his proposal. The opponents argued that, if an American diplomat were present at the memorial service, it would be turned into a diplomatic incident. It was reasonable to presume that, if the US Consul General in Guangzhou attended, the municipal or even the provincial governments would send officials from foreign affairs to escort the guest. This would elevate the commemoration to a diplomatic and political affair. It would inevitably politicize the event and attract the government’s attention. To avoid trouble, the government would probably ban it. The most likely scenario would be that the program would be forbidden by the local-level Gulangyu authorities even before they had reported it for city-level approval. Qin tried to set the members’ minds at ease by explaining that he had mentioned the plan to the municipal Foreign Affairs Office; an official supported Qin’s plan and had praised him as a “popular goodwill ambassador” (*minjian youhao dashi*). Despite Qin’s arguments, the organizing team could not be convinced that private support was not the equivalent of official consent. Finally, Qin had to make a concession and withdrew his invitation to the American diplomat. Instead, he asked for a congratulatory letter that was to be translated into Chinese and read out at the occasion. The Consul General was pleased to send them a letter expressing his gratitude for these efforts to recognize and remember the remarkable contributions of one of the early Americans in China.

Apart from Qin’s informal communication with foreign affairs officials, nobody else raised the matter of the attendance of any American diplomats with government officials. Most of them were certain that it would cause trouble. In this instance the authority of the state was incorporated by the group members. And not only in this case, but also throughout the whole process the authority of the state always continued to hover in the backs of people’s minds, and imperceptibly upset the apple cart from time to time. Zhu Yujing’s study reveals the complicated local politics of Wenzhou Christianity through the different dimensions of the state. In her study, the sources of state power over Christianity come not only from its actual intervention in church affairs, but also from the symbolic production of state-endowed legality that makes the state even more powerful than it actually is.<sup>46</sup> In this case the authority of the state was internalized by members of the grassroots group, and was effective notwithstanding

---

46. Zhu, “Wenzhou de Jidujiao.”

the non-presence of local officials. Paradoxically, the state power showed itself in the form of an invisible presence.

## The Church behind the Scenes

### *Stigmatized missionaries and official amnesia*

The first churchman the group members contacted was Pastor Zhou, with whom many group members were quite well acquainted. Not long before, they had successfully restored the Union Church building with Pastor Zhou and hoped he would again offer the group his support. Zhou was pleased to see the plans for such a ceremony for a historical missionary, and promised to be of assistance. Acting circumspectly Zhou did not formally report his and the YMCA's involvement to the Xiamen *Lianghui*, guessing the leadership would not give its approval. The fact that the members of the clergy who were invited to attend the ceremony did not show up proves that Zhou had been right. As Zhou said, it is Chinese worldly-wisdom to play it safe (*mingzhe baoshen*). Very few people in the church had known anything about Otte, a fact I confirmed in interviews with both clergy and laity. More importantly, the clergy tend not to concern themselves with historical matters generally. I did wonder why the local clergy had not learned about Otte and local church history and raised this matter. “The teaching of Christian history was halted for decades, therefore many ministers do not have a sense of the past,” Zhou said with a reluctant smile, and then continued comfortingly: “From this year in the Fujian Theological Seminary I am going to teach a course on the Christian history of Southern Fujian.”

Turning to the Xiamen church as a whole, it is impossible to say with confidence that the church people are ignorant of the past. Even today some of them are still aware of what happened to foreign missionaries during the rule of Mao Zedong. In the 1950s, instead of being expelled immediately, some missionaries were obstructed from leaving China. It was not uncommon for a missionary group to have its members stand trial before allowed to exit the country.<sup>47</sup> The Reverend Henry A. Poppen, an RCA missionary, was singled out for trial, undoubtedly on account of his having served in many capacities during his more than thirty years of service in the Xiamen region.<sup>48</sup> Poppen's trial was held on the athletics field of Talmage College in Zhangzhou in 1951 and was attended by approximately 10,000 locals, Christians and non-Christians. The trial lasted about three hours, during which time various accusations were made against Poppen. Two of his chief accusers were people he had

---

47. Some biographies and memoirs of particular missionaries or mission societies were published, e.g., Thompson, *Neidihui chu Zhongguo ji*.

48. *Xiamen ribao*. “Bu Xianli yi bei wo quzhu chujing.”

befriended - one, a teacher whose education he had supported financially; the other, a student he had visited frequently in the hospital and whose medical expenses he had paid.<sup>49</sup> The main accusation against Poppen was that he was an American imperialist. This sort of public criticism was deliberately voiced to discredit missionaries. The image of missionaries was intentionally distorted, and Christianity was completely stigmatized. The newly founded regime associated missionaries with Western (mainly American) imperialism, and mobilized the masses to humiliate them in public, a tactic by which the newly established Communist regime gained legitimacy. Around the mid-1950s the few remaining foreign missionaries were expelled from Southern Fujian. At that time, any sort of items relating to missionaries could cause Chinese citizens serious trouble. My respondents possess old broken pictures, from which the images of missionaries had been cut out. These photos with foreign faces were an invitation to danger. During the Cultural Revolution, numerous pictures were burnt for fear of being raided by Red Guards. Plenty faith-related books and Bibles were burnt in public.



*One of the few remaining graves of foreign missionaries/Christians. Charles James Sadler, son of Reverend James Sadler, missionary of the LMS. Photo by Chris White.*

Another painful memory was awakened by recollections of the events in June 1957. Gulangyu residents paraded in support of the Egyptian struggle for control of the Suez Canal against the British, French and Israeli armies. As the procession passed the “Barbarian Cemetery” (*Fanzai mu*), the wrathful crowd vented its resentment on the

---

49. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 334.

tombs and dug up 320 remains.<sup>50</sup> Otte’s tomb that was located in the missionary cemetery on Gulangyu was probably destroyed around this time. In Chinese culture, the deceased should be laid to rest, so any disturbance of their graves is regarded as great affront.<sup>51</sup> The incident severely offended the sensibilities of older-generation Christians, a fact that was mentioned several times during my field research.



*Most of the gravestones in the shape of a cross were damaged. Photo by Chris White.*

In the Maoist era no exception was made for the Hope Hospital. The Xiamen Military Management Committee announced the expropriation of the hospital property in January 1951.<sup>52</sup> The provincial government officially approved the municipal government’s request to take over the hospital on October 30.<sup>53</sup> In December 1951, the Xiamen Health Bureau formally assumed control of the Hope Hospital and its affiliated nursing school,<sup>54</sup> and renamed it the Second Hospital of Xiamen. The Hope Hospital was condemned as a tool of imperialist aggression; caught between two fires, American medical personnel were accused of adopting an “anti-

---

50. See Qihuang Shanren, “Fanzaimu kou de bianqian.”

51. For the traumatic memory of destruction of ancestral graves, see Jing’s *Temple of Memories*, chap. 4.

52. *Xiamen ribao*. “Benshi Junguanhui xuanbu guanzhi Jiushi Yiyuan chanye.”

53. Xiamen archive (Ref.: B36-1-33).

54. *Xiamen ribao*. “Benshi Weishengju jieban Jiushi Yiyuan ji fushe hushi xuexiao.”

Communist stance” and of being involved in “counter-revolutionary activities,” of “deliberately distributing the wrong medicine to sick children” and of “carrying out tests on Chinese patients for experimental purposes.”<sup>55</sup>



*Gravestone of a Chinese Christian woman that had had a cross knocked off the top. Photo by Chris White.*

Although some academics have now acknowledged the contributions made by the Protestant missionaries to the modernization of China, the Chinese government has not yet officially re-evaluated the missionaries’ historical role. Hence no official re-evaluation has been made for John Otte. Xiamen clergy were certainly acutely aware of the uncertain political situation, and did not risk anything that might stir up sensitive issues to do with missionaries.

---

55. See *Xiamen ribao*. “Benshi Junguanhui xuanbu guanzhi Jiushi Yiyuan changye.”

*State-recognized pastor: coordinator in local politics*

Pastor Zhou comes from a Christian family in North China. After graduating from the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1994, he followed his girlfriend, now his wife, to Xiamen and served as a preacher in an officially sanctioned church. Several years after he began his ministry, he was sent abroad to study by the Fujian *Lianghui*, and obtained a master’s degree in theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore in 2003. He was ordained a pastor the following year and appointed senior pastor in 2008. Only one year into his pastoral care, he was moved to the provincial and municipal *Lianghui* offices. As this transfer was actually a promotion in the church hierarchy, it has allowed Zhou to play a greater role in church affairs. Pastor Zhou now holds several positions within state-recognized Christian organizations, among them the YMCA and TSPM of Xiamen, the provincial TSPM and the Fujian Theological Seminary. Hence Zhou now has been endowed with legitimacy by the state. He actively takes part in various social events and has a good relationship with the authorities. During the WHS application process, on behalf of the Xiamen *Lianghui*, he assisted cadres in the restoration of church buildings as cultural relics, and in doing so won the officials’ trust. Pastor Zhou is always willing to bring in and make use of secular resources to serve church requirements. “These are connections (*renmai*),” he proudly said to me after hanging up a phone call, in which he recommended me to a government official.

Because of his active participation in social activities and close relationship with government officials, he is called a “social pastor” or even a “political pastor” by some people both inside and outside the church. In dealing with government officials, he has the advantage of being familiar with the “bureaucratic culture” (*guangchang wenhua*) and specializes in communication and coordination within local politics. Consulted about the Otte event, Pastor Zhou made it clear that he should keep a low profile. Hence his coordinating role between Gulang Voice and the church attracted no undue attention. In the media coverage that followed, his identity as a pastor was deliberately obfuscated. Even so, his role should not be underestimated. Apart from the participation of the YMCA choir, as a member of the organizing team his presence definitely encouraged the group. All the people present were aware of Otte’s missionary background. They would have been disappointed if the church had stayed away, since the memorial service was, to a certain extent, one for the celebration of Christianity.

## Conclusion

The analysis above clearly reveals how the memory of the late John Otte was utilized by the parties involved to meet their respective needs. Despite the political sensitivity

and the potential risk involved, the grassroots group assisted by Pastor Zhou and with the acquiescence of local government officials made the memorial event possible. In the course of the event, the actual theme running through the negotiations was the historical narrative about a once stigmatized medical missionary.

Of course commemorations, like the government-organized celebration of Confucius or the Yellow Emperor, the constructed ancestor of the Chinese nation, are constructed by powerful actors or groups from the top-down, but this does not mean that they cannot also be constructed and contested by ordinary citizens and civic groups. The remaking of a collective memory is an ongoing process of negotiation and demonstrates the limits imposed on the power of actors in the present to reconstruct the past to fulfill their own needs.<sup>56</sup> As Rubie Watson notes, representations of the past consist of much more than written histories.<sup>57</sup> The commemoration service for Otte represents a form of popular endeavor to negotiate with official narratives.

Such a grassroots event also prompts the people who are involved to reflect on issues touching upon history and politics. People, including members of Gulang Voice, clergy and local history experts, were found to be willing to proclaim their cultural and historical missions, and to let it be known that they expect a fair evaluation of historical figures. By virtue of public media, the Otte event elicited great responses. Several central figures once boasted it was the first time such a ceremony had been held for a missionary in postsocialist China. When I mentioned a much earlier monument and ceremony for another missionary - Eric Henry Liddell<sup>58</sup> - in 1988 to them, they displayed no interest in learning more. The point here is not if the public Otte event was truly the first one for Western missionaries in CCP-ruled China, but that the locals believe that this was so. They are convinced that this event is a concrete example of their contribution toward the correction of the unfair treatment of missionary figures. By paying tribute to Otte and the work he had done, the group

---

56. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 67-74

57. Watson, “An Introduction.”

58. Eric Henry Liddell (1902-45), the 1924 Olympic 400m gold medalist, was born in Tianjin in 1902. He was the second son of the Reverend and Mrs. James Dunlop Liddell, who were Scottish missionaries with the LMS. Liddell was raised in China until the age of five. Then he and his elder brother were enrolled in a boarding school in south London. After graduating from Edinburgh University, he returned to North China to serve as a missionary and school teacher until his death in a Japanese internment camp in Wei County (now Weifang City), Shandong province, in 1945. In 1991, a monument to Liddell was established in Weifang by the Eric Liddell Foundation based in Hong Kong. In November 2011, the Tianjin Municipal People’s Government, in partnership with the Embassy of the PRC in the UK, held a photo exhibition on the theme of *Eric Liddell and Tianjin* in London. On that occasion, Liddell was highly commended by Chinese authorities as a messenger of friendship between two peoples.

members were putting their sense of historical mission into practice. There was a long tradition in imperial China that, in a centrally controlled empire, it was always safer to couch one's current criticisms in a past age than to write directly about the incumbent court.<sup>59</sup> Taking heed of the political circumstances, the non-governmental group held the celebration in the guise of a cultural event. Celebrating it in a secular form was a method to desensitize Christianity and missionary history.

What made the discursive reversals on missionaries possible was the local government's pragmatic purpose and tacit approval. In the light of the application for the WHS status of Gulangyu, the authorities reappraised the value of a church legacy, alongside that of the grassroots group and today's church. Acknowledging the pragmatic exigencies, the local officials allotted Christianity more social space. However, the amount of social space allowed by the state is limited. The seemingly open-minded officials would not make any major compromises at the risk of their political future.

As a religious organ, the Xiamen church was not very high-profile in this event. The memory of the church's suffering is still alive and prevents many church members from becoming involved in more activities. A resourceful pastor promoted the whole event in a rather low-key manner. Rather than leading a religious event, the church depended on the grassroots group to commemorate the late missionary. Even so, the success of the event contributed greatly to a positive image of Christianity and missionaries from the perspective of the local society, as well as to stimulating an extensive interest in the Christian history of Xiamen among the history enthusiasts. Otte does not stand alone.

Two years after the 2010 memorial service, a small-scale commemoration event for Otte, attended by dozens of people, was held in the newly restored Gulangyu Union Church. Additionally, a free medical diagnostic service was supplied for island residents by the Xiamen YMCA to mark the 102nd anniversary of Otte's death. This time, it was the Christian community, rather than any non-Christian groups, that organized the event. Although government officials did not attend, they sent flowers in the name of the Gulangyu Management Committee. Compared to the 2010 memorial service, the holding of a second event for Otte was a bold move on the part of the Christian community, expanding space for Christian history and heralding a change in official attitudes.

---

59. Unger, "Introduction," 1.

## Chapter 4

### The Glory Passes: Social Change in a Church and on an Island

I arrived at the Xiamen-Gulangyu ferry terminal around eight o'clock in the morning, on Saturday, October 25, 2014. Although the Descent of the Frost (*Shuangjiang*, the last solar term of the autumn according to the Chinese calendar) had already passed, the weather was still as torrid as ever. Unlike it had been most weekends I had experienced before, Egret River Avenue (*Lujiang dao*), the road leading to the ferry for the trip to Gulangyu was not at all crowded. As a major tourist attraction of Xiamen, Gulangyu hosts millions of visitors each year. During the peak tourist seasons, approximately 70,000 visitors land on the tiny islet through this terminal in a single day. The upshot is that in recent years this road has been cursed with traffic congestion, causing problems for the citizens and the authorities alike. But on this day only small groups of people were wandering about outside the terminal or consulting the information desk. To relieve traffic congestion, precisely five days earlier the local authorities had adopted new measures: all non-Xiamen residents were now required to take ferries from another port 5 km away, and pay newly adjusted fares, four times higher than the previous standard; the original terminal and fee is now only for local residents holding Xiamen identity cards.

Members of Trinity Church, the main church on the island, probably realized that the newly implemented measure, one of the local government's projects to exploit the tourism potential of Gulangyu, was just another indication of the church's decreasing power in deciding its own future.

#### Celebrating Eighty Years

Walking through the winding alleys on Gulangyu, I saw posters advertising Trinity Church's eightieth anniversary celebration pasted on walls. Members of the young reception committee carried placards aloft conveying an enthusiastic welcome to visiting guests. They guided non-local participants through the busy pathways to the church. Ceremonial assistants (mostly middle-aged or elderly female church members)

wearing red T-shirts with badges stood at the church gate and scattered throughout the compound to welcome participants and escort honored guests (mainly overseas church representatives, respected senior Christians and major contributors to the celebration) to sign the red register. As I entered the gate, there were two reception desks on each side of the pathway. Honored guests were ushered to sign their names and collect their bags containing memorial coffee mugs bearing a picture of Trinity Church and badges. Pastors, elders and deacons/deaconesses were busy receiving and chatting to visitors. Since Trinity Church does not encourage named donations, there were very few signs indicating contributors; a situation very different from those I had encountered at other ceremonial events in Southern Fujian church communities.<sup>1</sup>

The daylong anniversary event consisted of two sections, a morning ceremony and afternoon celebration. The morning ceremony was scheduled to commence at ten, but by nine-twenty the church was already packed with believers, honored guests and curious tourists. The wooden backdrop of the stage was covered with a crimson velvet cloth, in the middle of which was a cross. A big numeral “80” was on its left and the phrases “testament,” “thanksgiving” and “glory” on the right. They were also embellished with decorative doves and waves stuck above and below. The top as well as the left and right sides of the velvet cloth were adorned with a painted night sky spangled with glittering stars. The front rows of pews were reserved for honored guests; the ordinary church members took their seats in the middle and back sections of the nave. Most seats were already occupied by those attending, mainly elderly people over sixty; a few were even in their eighties or nineties. By comparison, the young people constituted much less than half of the audience. Considering the church was overall filled with participants, I estimate that there were no fewer than 900 people were in the church building to participate in the events or simply out of curiosity to see what was happening. As an invited guest, I chose a reserved seat in the third row near the middle aisle, a good spot for taking pictures. A camera crew hired by the church committee moved around to various spots in the church, videotaping the event. By my side a photographer standing in the aisle videotaped the front stage throughout the event with a professional video camera supported on a tripod.

Around a quarter to ten, a female church worker walked onto the stage and led those gathered in singing a Southern Fujian-language hymn. People hurriedly ended their greetings with their acquaintances and seated themselves. At ten o'clock exactly as the church bell rang, the originally noisy crowd became quiet. The choir members wearing white half-length surplices with blue-edged capes assembled in the choir loft

---

1. On April 17, 2014, I attended a church anniversary celebration in rural Pinghe county, a mission base in nineteenth-century Southern Fujian. The names of all the donors and the amount they had contributed were written down on big posters hanging on the walls. The background of the red poster was a traditional treasure bowl (*jubaopen*) with a boy and a girl of wealth standing in either corner at the bottom.

in five rows. The ceremony opened with a hymn entitled “*Praise Jehovah*” under the guidance of the conductor. After this, the choir members sat down, while Senior Pastor (*zhuren mushi*) Han, the host of the event, mounted the pulpit and led a responsive reading from the Bible. The reading was projected onto two screens hanging from the ceiling on either side of the stage. The Reverend Han read the chapter displayed, and the congregation followed closely behind. After several rounds the reading drew to a close. Following this, all the people stood up and sang the hymn from the *Amoy Hymnal* (*Minnan shengshi*) announced by Han. In the early period of the Christian history of Xiamen, Western missionaries and early Chinese Christians translated into or wrote a handful of songs in the Southern Fujian dialect. After subsequent compositions and several compilations, there are now more than 500 hymns in one of the current versions. Throughout the service the choir sang hymns alternately in Mandarin and dialect.



Choir singing at the opening of the ceremony. Photo by Ye Kehao.

After the scripture reading and prayer, Preacher (*chuandao*)<sup>2</sup> Yu began to deliver the main sermon entitled “*Sustaining the Glory*” from the pulpit. Yu reviewed the achievements of Trinity Church since it was founded in 1934 and identified it as a successor to churches built in Jerusalem and Antioch at the time of Jesus and His Apostles, as well as a pioneer that had initiated a new chapter after the reopening of churches in post-1979 China. To illustrate Trinity Church’s pioneering role over the

---

2. “Pastor” and “preacher” are two different levels in the church system. In a registered church, those young church workers who have graduated from officially sanctioned seminaries are eligible to preach. After years of service, they can be recommended by their affiliated churches to be ordained as pastors with the official approval by the *Lianghui* organizations and the religious affairs authorities, both on the provincial level.

last three decades, he enumerated its groundbreaking accomplishments as follows: as one of the earliest reopened churches in the late 1970s, Trinity had reestablished its young adult fellowship, youth fellowship and the children's Sunday school ahead of other churches elsewhere in China. Yu stressed that these seemingly ordinary activities were actually bold, pioneering undertakings during those particularly uncertain times. He said:

Under extremely difficult conditions, we courageously took that step. This had proved to be unimaginable and too extreme for other churches three decades ago. Today history is again pushing Trinity Church to the forefront. We are now experiencing difficulties that other churches will find themselves confronted by. We are “crossing the river by feeling the stones” (*mozhe shitou guohe*) and will share our experiences and routes with fellow churches, just as we did thirty years ago. Last week the policy governing the use of the [Xiamen-Gulangyu] ferry terminal was adjusted. We need to change. This is a prosperous time but also a turning point...The environment is forcing us to make changes. Our historic mission is to keep the torch of the gospel alight.

Rather than emphasizing the early years prior to 1949, Yu's sermon was focused on Trinity Church's experience since 1979 and on the present challenges it was facing. After Yu had completed his sermon, Pastor Han briefly mentioned the situation in which Trinity Church found itself using the words “change,” “challenge” and “crisis.” These terms reflected the fact staring the church in the face that “The elderly [members] have moved to Heaven and the young [members] have moved to Xiamen [Island].”

The morning ceremony closed with a prayer and a benediction given respectively by the chairwoman of the Xiamen TSPM, and Pastor Wen Yihan (widely known as the Old Pastor), a retired but still respected pastor of Trinity Church. The church committee had prepared a simple lunch for each participant: one bottle of Coca Cola, a steamed stuffed bun and a rice cake. One by one, people collected their lunch from the church workers and ate as they stood in the yard or sat in the church. Many people gathered around in groups to chat with visiting relatives or friends who had travelled far for the service. As part of the event, an exhibition of old photographs had been set up in the basement. Many people milled around the showcases exhibiting pictures of the church against the backdrop of early Communism. I came across a few of my respondents and had a quick lunch with them as they discussed recent events in the Christian community.

Around one-thirty, after lunch, the praise service commenced with a hymn and a prayer. People had a little bit more room to make themselves comfortable as some had left. Performers already made up and in costume were sitting in front rows. During the prayer a religious affairs official escorted by Senior Pastor Han took his place in the first row, to my front left. He stood as did all the people in the nave until the prayer



*Old photos of Trinity Church in the showcase from left to right, top to bottom: Trinity Church during the Cultural Revolution; the Reverend Lu Zhuoying died in 1966, a turbulent year; the Bibles preserved by the Reverend Chen at the risk of being persecuted during the Cultural Revolution; Ms. Wen, a nurse, with children; the faithful who had gathered underground at Wen's in their youth returned and photographed; Preacher Shao Youwen after being released from prison in 1974. Photo by author.*

was finished. The first guest to give an address was a representative of the RCA. A deaconess translated his short message into Mandarin Chinese. On behalf of the RCA, the American guest-of-honor presented the church with a gift - a tablet with the following inscription: "The Reformed Church in America celebrates with Trinity Church God's faithfulness in its 80 years of witness and service." The audience listened carefully to the speaker, clapping respectfully as he finished.

When the religious affairs cadre was led on to the stage, some of the audience murmured their displeasure. I checked the event program but could not find his name. He had not been expected and his speech was added to the schedule at the last minute. I was quite aware that, after being reopened in 1979, Trinity Church was wary of inviting government officials to attend any public event. Nevertheless, the official's speech proved to be quite welcome; in fact, it was even characterized as "spiritual" (*shuling de*) by some of the Christians in attendance. In his short speech, the official

cited Bible verses or used a Christian vocabulary (key words or sentences underlined below) at least ten times.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he did not focus on the role of the state or



*Religious affairs official delivering a speech. Photo by Ye Kehao.*

religious regulations; instead, he emphasized the faith and fused the state narratives and Christian beliefs naturally into a whole. For instance, by interpreting the verse “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way,” running the church according to the laws and regulations, he deliberately mingled biblical teaching and the state narrative of religious governance.

The status and role of Trinity Church is irreplaceable in Xiamen Christian circles. The reasons for its fruitful accomplishments are three-fold. First and foremost, it is the care of the faithful by the dedicated clergy. They distribute timely spiritual sustenance (*lingliang*) on time and always offer fragrant manna (*xinxiang de Ma’na*)<sup>4</sup> from the pulpit. Secondly, [the church committee] organizes religion in accordance with the laws and regulations (*yifa yigui banjiao*), and with the teaching, “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”<sup>5</sup> To satisfy the need for self-reliance, Trinity Church establishes and improves various aspects of the regulations and rules, and organizes religion according to legal requirements. This guarantees an orderly operation of the whole church. Thirdly, Trinity Church serves society. Apart from the

---

3. I am grateful to Dai Zhaozhang who supplied me with the video of the event that allowed me to transcribe everything the official said.

4. This is a reference to the food provided the people of Israel by God during their forty years in the wilderness. See Exodus 16:31.

5. Corinthians 14:40.

[church-management] work, we should be actively engaged in social welfare charities,<sup>6</sup> following the teaching of Scriptures: “Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.”<sup>7</sup> Our Trinity Church has been engaged in charity work for years. There is a verse from the Bible: “Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?”<sup>8</sup> Our Trinity Church has eighty years of rich historical experiences and a wealth of understanding of how to organize religion. In the future, on the foundation of its experience and achievements may Trinity Church follow the principles of self-governance, self-supporting and self-propagation. May it carry forward the fine tradition of loving one’s country and loving one’s religion (*aiguo aijiao*) and act as the light and salt (*zuoguang zuoyan*) of the world. We should continue to guide the faithful in dealing with the heavenly mission (*tianguo de shiming*) and with citizenship in the proper way, with spiritual life (*shuling de shengming*) and with real life, hope of the afterlife (*laishi de panwang*) and responsibility in this life, and the themes of faith and life. We should guide the faithful better to serve and contribute to society. We should also promote the positive functions of Christianity, counting among them humane care, ethics and social responsibility, alongside economic development, cultural prosperity and social harmony. Finally, I wish you all, the pastors, the faithful and friends peace and joy (*ping’an xile*). I hope Trinity Church will stay young forever. Thank you all.

A 298-page history book entitled “*Trinity Church 1934-2014*” was featured in the anniversary celebration. Although it is nominally a collective work by the church, the actual author is Ma Zhenyu, a member of the church’s literary group, who shared his experiences during the writing process with those attending the anniversary celebration. Following Ma, Pastor Wen Yihan opened his speech on a very high note: “Today I am filled with thanksgiving and joy.” Even though he is now in his eighties, Wen’s voice is quite resonant. His opening received a big round of applause and during his address the audience broke into rapturous applause several times. In the remainder of the afternoon, Trinity Church’s children’s Sunday school, youth fellowship, Enoch Choir and other similar groups performed as they had been billed on the program. After the celebration, those attending were called to join a group photo standing on the doorstep of the main church building. Afterwards people drifted away one by one and the compound gradually emptied. Honored guests were invited to enjoy a feast in the company of some church committee members.

---

6. In the Chinese context, the use of words like “we” and “our” by the official was only a linguistic means to express his friendliness. He was not implying he was part of the Christian community.

7. Romans 12:17.

8. Job 12:12.

## The History of Trinity Church

After Christianity was brought to Xiamen in 1842, churches were built throughout the city, among them three of the main churches, the New Street Church, the Bamboo Church and the Xiamen Port Church (*Xiagang tang*). In the early 1930s, the New Street Church had a congregation of more than 300 members, Bamboo 400 and Xiamen Port a few hundred. At that time, more than 300 members of these three churches resided on Gulangyu.<sup>9</sup> Although the Gospel Church (*Fuyin tang*) had been built specially for the Chinese believers on the small island in 1903, it could not accommodate the growing Christian population. From an ecclesiastical perspective, the New Street, Bamboo and Xiamen Port churches were all part of the RCA and PCE union. However, the Gospel Church was established by the LMS. Those who lived on Gulangyu were rather reluctant to attend the Gospel Church, not least because of its different church structure and history.<sup>10</sup> Those Christians living on Gulangyu who retained their own affiliations with the three churches had to take sampans to Xiamen Island for church services at the weekend. Before the ferry terminal was opened in 1937, sampans had been the most common means of transport. Depending on the weather, particularly if it was windy or raining, it was extremely inconvenient for people to have to commute. In 1928 the Bamboo Church invited the New Street and Xiamen Port churches to establish a joint church on Gulangyu to cater to the ever-increasing needs of the church members on the small island.<sup>11</sup> Shortly afterwards a church building committee was founded and the new church being constructed was named Trinity Church, indicating that it was being built by the three churches in combination, but also a pertinent reference to the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

After years of fundraising, the church building committee finally collected 80,000 Chinese silver dollars (*yinyuan*), only 18,000 of which were donated by foreign

---

9. Jiantang chouweihui, *Wei jianzhu Gulangyu Sanyi tang Mujuan qi*.

10. In the church structure, each governing body affiliated with the LMS was independent. On the other hand, the RCA/PCE churches operated on a presbytery/synod system. Within a Presbytery were many divisions. These churches were governed by elders and deacons, whereas LMS churches were not. In Huian county today, there are no elders but church directors (*tang zhuren*), since this area was traditionally influenced by the LMS. Members were used to each other or even simply related; in other words, they felt more comfortable with people from their own denomination. Christians on Gulangyu who were connected to RCA/PCE churches in Xiamen would feel a little uncomfortable at the Gospel Church in terms of social connections and habit, but theologically there is not much difference. I am indebted to Chris White for his helpful information and comments.

11. For details, see Zhu, “Benhui zhi chengli yu jingguo.” In this section, the historical information comes mainly from Sanyi tang, *Sanyi tang bashi nian*.

missions. It was not until October 24, 1934, that ground was finally broken for the erection of the new structure. After finishing the blueprint of the church building that initially seated 500 people, the architect Lin Rongting (1901-98), went to the United States. Without the approval of Lin, church building committee members whose architectural knowledge could have been written on the back of a postage stamp recklessly expanded the scale of the foundations in order to seat more members of the congregation. After some speedy construction work the main structure was finished in March 1935, but the roof was not completed until the summer of 1936. One month later, the month-long Second National Bible Assembly was hosted in Trinity Church during which more than 2,000 participants studied the Old and New Testaments under the guidance of Dr. John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901-44).<sup>12</sup> Even today Trinity Church is renowned for the magnificence of its building that can accommodate up to 1,000 people. In May 1935 Lu Zhuying (1880-1966), the principal of a Christian school on the island, was elected the first senior pastor of the church. Before the main church building was roofed, he preached to the congregation in the assembly hall of the Lok Tek Girls' School (*Yude nüzhong*). In the early years 300 to 400 Christians would attend Sunday services.<sup>13</sup>

It was not until July 10, 1949, however, that the formal dedication of the new church was held. Before the completion of the ceiling and the decoration of the main building, Xiamen Island was occupied by the Japanese on May 10, 1938, and tens of thousands of refugees fled to the Gulangyu International Settlement seeking shelter. Trinity Church became a sanctuary for a large number of refugees. After the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Japanese troops swiftly occupied Gulangyu on December 8. Pastor Lu Zhuying was jailed for ninety-three days.<sup>14</sup> In October 1945, Xiamen and Gulangyu islands were both retaken by the KMT government. The church committee decided to raise money to continue the construction, the most work being required on the ceiling and the walls. The civil war between the Communist and Nationalist parties was in full swing and the latter's rule on Mainland China crumbled. The war inched closer to this area, and eventually Xiamen became one of the final battlefields between the two forces. Aware of the Communists' attitude toward Christianity, church members were concerned that the dedication would not be possible after a Communist victory. Consequently, on the morning of July 10, 1949, thirteen years after the church had first been used, the dedication ceremony was hastily held. The tense joy was punctuated by bursts of gunfire not far away. In the period, hundreds of Gulangyu church members fled abroad in fear of the Communists and

---

12. Dr. Sung, a famous Christian evangelist, was one of the most prominent figures in the Christian revival movement, not just among the Chinese in Mainland China but also in Taiwan and Southeast Asia, in the second and third decades of the twentieth century.

13. Only one of the first members was still alive when the 2014 event took place.

14. Lu, "Rikou yu zhong qiunan ji."

later became an important source of financial aid in the reform decades. Their worries were not in vain. The Communist Revolution ended in 1949, but the suffering of Trinity Church had just begun. The next celebration would not be possible until 2004, commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the church.

When the Communist victory had been achieved in Xiamen, Pastor Lu Zhuying had just turned seventy years old. Co-pastor (*tongli mushi*) Zhang Hanqing (1903-92), as Lu's assistant, was in reality responsible for church affairs. In the beginning, compared to the corrupt KMT officials, the highly disciplined Communist army and cadres positively impressed the church members who did not suffer any obvious oppression in the first years of the PRC. Trinity Church held Christmas and Easter concerts in 1949 and again the following year, reports of which even appeared in local official newspapers. Every Sunday 440 or so believers came to the service. With the outbreak of the Korean War, a nationwide Christian Three-Self Reform Movement (renamed Three-Self Patriotic Movement in 1954) significantly reshaped the development of Christianity in China, drawing it into a patriotic and anti-imperialistic united front. When the Xiamen preparatory committee of the movement was set up, Zhang Hanqing became part of it. Shortly afterwards, a series of rigorous investigations into churches were launched. On behalf of Trinity Church, Lu Zhuying and Zhang Hanqing were required to fill in many forms dealing with political censorship as well as to report progress in work and in political thought. Over and over again, they were instructed to confess their association with imperialism and disclose reactionary elements (*fandong fenzi*) hidden in the church.<sup>15</sup>



*The Easter celebration in Trinity Church in 1957. Note the PRC's national flag. Photo provided by Dai Zhaozhang.*

At the beginning of April 1952, the cross was removed from the church's central stage, to be replaced by the PRC's national flag, which was hung up under official

15. See Xiamen archive (ref. B058-001-0058).

instruction to “love one’s country and love one’s religion.” As of July 1957, the pastors were required to read materials assigned to improve the congregation’s political consciousness (*zhengzhi juewu*). This aroused widespread discontent and embarrassed the clergy. The church building was often used for mass meetings. Its report to the authorities in 1951 shows that the number of regular churchgoers was over 600; those members who did not reside in the Xiamen area (mainly abroad) numbered 328.<sup>16</sup> According to the then incumbent Preacher Wen Yihan’s short report published in 1957 in *Heavenly Wind* (*Tianfeng*), the official journal of the national TSPM, there were over 800 adherents registered with Trinity Church and more than 400 regularly attended Sunday services.<sup>17</sup> Nearly 200 members had left in only half a decade mainly because of political reasons. After the Anti-Rightist Movement, two decades of suffering engulfed Trinity Church. Wen Yihan, then a young man, two church committee members and four lay Christians were labeled rightists. During that period, people’s nerves were stretched to the limit by the pervasive government surveillance. Zhang Hanqing’s inadvertent words - “Each time a campaign is launched, Christians will have to suffer” - were recorded by plain-clothes police.<sup>18</sup>

In 1958 the authorities promoted united worship, that forcing Christians of different denominations to merge. The Gulangyu government had initially intended to merge Trinity Church and the Preaching Church (*Jiangdao tang*), another small church present on the island, with the Gospel Church. By all accounts, the reasons the authorities wanted to merge Trinity Church into the Gospel Church were two-fold: on one hand, the government was seeking for a way to expropriate Trinity’s huge church building to use it as a people’s assembly hall; on the other hand, it was located near the seat of the district government, and the self-declared atheist cadres were annoyed by the peals of church bells. However, in September 1957 Senior Pastor Zhou Qingze (1916-64) of the Gospel Church was criticized as a rightist for publicly condemning the government’s religious policy.<sup>19</sup> With the senior pastor labeled a “reactionary,” the church he led could not be innocent in the eyes of the officials. In contrast, Zhang Hanqing was unobtrusive and barely uttered a word in public in opposition to cooperation with the government. Furthermore, the authorities were aware that they still needed to utilize Zhang, then vice-chairman of the Xiamen TSPM, to unite the Christian communion. Finally, instead of being incorporated into the Gospel Church, Trinity Church expanded as it hosted the other two congregations.

---

16. Xiamen archive (ref. B058-001-0058).

17. Wen, “Sanyi tang.”

18. The report about Zhang Hanqing is preserved in the Xiamen Archives. Ma Zhenyu once referenced it around 2012. However, my request to access the relevant archives was rejected in the spring of 2014.

19. See *Xiamen ribao*, “Zhou Qingze shi zongjiaojie de youpai fenzi”; *Xiamen ribao*, “Zhou Qingze pizhe zongjiao waiyi fangdu fanghuo.”

Although the congregation of Trinity Church should have grown as members of these two other churches were included in it, the church became virtually economically unsustainable as many members left out of fear of persecution. In 1966, as the Cultural Revolution swept over Xiamen, the Red Guards targeted Trinity Church under the slogan of “complete elimination of any traces of imperialist aggression.” Trinity Church was shut down. The church building was confiscated to serve as an assembly hall for the Gulangyu District People’s Government; hence it escaped damage, except that the three big characters giving the church’s name above the main entrance and foundation stone were smashed by revolutionary Red Guards. In stark contrast to Trinity Church, the compound of the Gospel Church was turned into a factory workshop and gradually fell into disrepair. Not until 1987 was the latter’s property restored.<sup>20</sup> Lu Zhuying died on October 8, 1966, still under the cloud of “reactionary thought” (in the authorities’ file), several months after the launch of the nationwide Cultural Revolution.

October 28, 1979 was the first Sunday service of the reopened Trinity Church and the nave was packed with the faithful. Although any form of public announcement was forbidden, the news spread rapidly by word of mouth. It proved that people had not abandoned their Christian beliefs even though they had not attended church during the turbulent times; their worship actually went underground only to surface immediately when more relaxed religious policies were implemented. Repression does not necessarily cause the decline of religion; on the contrary, it can lead to its growth.<sup>21</sup> On the basis of the religious market theory, Fenggang Yang has proposed a triple-market model indicating that the heavy religious regulation in Chinese society cannot necessarily eliminate or effectively reduce religion. In fact, he argues that extremely strict regulation might actually even serve to make the religious market an even more complex picture by forcing religious groups and believers to take refuge in black and gray markets.<sup>22</sup> Another consequence that is still understudied is that harsh repression has shaped a generation’s collective memory and subsequently profoundly affected their religious practices and church-related politics.

---

20. It is now a nursing home, privately run by a Christian, but the property belongs to the Xiamen *Lianghui*.

21. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, chap 1.

22. According to Fenggang Yang, the “red market” of religion refers to all legal (officially recognized) religious organizations, believers and activities; the “black market” indicates all illegal (officially banned) religious organizations, believers and activities; the “gray market” of religion consists of all religious and spiritual organizations, practitioners and activities with an ambiguous legal status. In the eyes of the authorities, the “gray market” represents an unmanageable state of religious affairs that could potentially provide fertile soil for new religious movements. See Yang, “Red, Black, and Gray Markets.”

The religious policy in the early reform years, although the climate had changed from eradication to limited religious toleration, has been very much confined to reinstating church activities, in particular those for young adults. Although the post-Mao state nominally reaffirmed the freedom of religious belief regardless of age, religions were still regarded by the Communist Party as competitors for the minds of the next generation, and therefore local governments tended to prevent minors below eighteen years old from participating in religious activities. In the early years after the reopening of churches, Sunday school in Xiamen was in fact strictly forbidden by the authorities. Even so, Trinity Church took the lead in reinstating a children's Sunday school and a youth fellowship. The church choir frequently visited churches in Southeast Asian areas, including Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>23</sup> Members of Trinity Church who had fled abroad prior to October 1949 created a bridge with overseas Chinese Christian communities and contributed huge amounts to the Xiamen church during the financially tough times. For instance, in the construction of the New District Gospel Church in Xiamen in the mid-1990s, 87.5 percent of the cost was borne by Chinese Christian communities in Southeast Asia. Although the religious affairs authorities strictly prohibited the religious sector from accepting foreign funds, under the pastoral leadership of Wen Yihan, Trinity Church was able to make it possible. Financial contributions have decreased in recent years, as increasingly more elderly overseas members of Trinity Church have died and the transnational connections have weakened.

Trinity Church reached its peak in the 1990s with over 2,000 registered members, among whom around 1,000 regularly attended Sunday services. It has been deeply involved in social welfare projects and assisted other churches within and beyond Fujian, part of the burgeoning trend of Christian philanthropy.<sup>24</sup> The Lily Garden Retirement Home financed and managed by a church member and located in the old Gospel Church building on the island was once selected as a national-level model unit. Trinity Church took swift action on the second day of the devastating Sichuan earthquake in 2008 and participated in the reconstruction of local churches and the

---

23. When the Trinity Church choir visited churches in Southeast Asia shortly after the reopening of the churches and of the country to the outside world, initially it faced some open hostility. Some old Christians who had fled from Southern Fujian prior to 1949 or from Mao's various campaigns did not welcome pastors who had been recognized by the official TSPM. Hence Trinity Church conducts transnational exchanges with care. For example, in its correspondence it uses a traditional square seal with ancient characters (widely used prior to 1956) rather than the officially designated nationwide uniform round red seal. Since the founding of the People's Republic, every organization has been required to use a uniform seal, usually inscribed with a five-pointed star in the middle symbolic of the Communist enterprise. Nevertheless, the official seal of Trinity Church does not bear a star.

24. See Jidujiao quanguo Lianghui, "Jidujiao gongyi cishan shiye."

training of clergy in the region affected by the disaster. According to the Reverend Wen, during the past three decades church-run charitable foundations have contributed more than one hundred million *yuan* to other churches nationwide.<sup>25</sup> Members of the church frequently go to remote regions to help their counterparts develop their ministries for the young and the elderly, as well as to train clergy.

In the aftermath of the Japanese invasion, civil war and the Communist political movements, the belfry and parsonage of Trinity Church were not finished until 1948 and 1992 respectively. Not until 2000 was the main entrance built; sixty-six years after the establishment of the church, the construction of Trinity Church was finally finished. In 2004 Trinity Church held its seventieth anniversary celebration, the second celebration since its founding. In over eighty years the church has only held two anniversary celebrations. Unquestionably Trinity Church is a leading church in Xiamen, even the whole of Southern Fujian. To achieve a deeper understanding of the past glory the church members cherish, we now turn to the instrumental role of a key pastor, a bold and experienced church leader, Wen Yihan.

### The Story of the Old Pastor

On a hot, humid afternoon in early March 2014, I finally met Old Pastor Wen. He was sitting across the table from me and had made tea in a big plastic cup that he then poured into two smaller cups for Ma Zhenyu and me. Ma opened the conversation by referring to my studies at Xiamen and Leiden Universities, as well as the purpose of our visit. I smiled and nodded showing my consent and appreciation, but I was in fact studying the man in front of me. To prevent myself from being regarded as impolite, I soon took my eyes off the Old Pastor. The cup for tea-making was no longer transparent, stained from years of tea-making. I wondered if the stains could ever be washed away. Southern Fujian people are well known for their strong preference for tea (for example, *Tieguanyin*, literally meaning “Iron Goddess of Mercy,” a premium variety of Chinese oolong tea) and the pleasure of making it. People often have exquisite tea sets in their homes or places of work. It is the time-honored custom of the region to entertain guests with carefully prepared tea, so it is quite rare to see someone making tea like this in a plastic cup. The Old Pastor is of medium build and has a local appearance: thick lips, prominent cheekbones and a flat nose. Although in his eighties, he was still in excellent health. His voice is so sonorous and he is so energetic, he still gives sermons without the aid of a microphone. This impresses his audience. In his deep voice, he calmly related his life history. He skipped his youth, and began with his service in the church and his suffering since 1950.

---

25. One of my informants questioned the amount that Trinity Church had contributed to its counterparts, and implied that Wen had exaggerated his contribution.

### *Pastor Wen's early years*

Born into a Christian family in Xiamen in 1930, he is four years older than Trinity Church where he has served for most of his life. His fate was destined to be intertwined with the momentous political and social changes that have affected the country.

When the People's Republic was founded in distant Beijing, at the age of nineteen, Wen was working as an apprentice in his uncle's dental clinic. He was an active volunteer in the Stream Church (*Xiaoxi libaitang*) in Pinghe county, where he was placed in charge of the youth fellowship and the choir. As one of the early mission centers, Pinghe has achieved a prominent position in Fujian Christian history. During the initial months of the new nation, the church members in Pinghe were still celebrating the long-awaited peace unaware of the suffering that lay in wait for them. There were no signs of any harassment of Christianity until the sudden arrest of five church members late on a night in 1950. Among these five people, one was a pastor and school principal, and the others elders and deacons. The next morning, all of them were executed for "collaboration and counterrevolution" (*tongdi fan'geming*). Subsequently, the Stream Church was raided by public security authorities and forced to close. Several years later, the government rehabilitated these five executed people. Later evidence proved that the pastor should actually have been commended. He was reported to have had contact with the crypto-Communists and made a valuable contribution to the county's "peaceful liberation" (*heping jiefang*). As the church was shut, Wen went into the countryside to lead house worship. He was so young and inexperienced that he did not even know how to preach to a congregation; therefore he confined his activities to teaching peasants to read the Bible and sing hymns. "Thanks to my inability to preach," Wen smiled and continued, "I was not arrested for 'counterrevolutionary activities' although I was later told there were two plainclothes policemen following me."

In 1953, the Yanjing Union Theological Seminary and the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary held entrance examinations. Wen was eager to study at Yanjing, that was more "spiritual" than Nanjing in his words, but he was not able to afford the transportation costs, tuition fees and living expenses. Fortunately, he met Zhang Hanqing, then senior pastor of Trinity Church. Zhang appreciated this young preacher who was serving in his hometown of Pinghe, especially prizing his dedication to the church in such tough times. On Zhang's recommendation, the church committee agreed to sponsor Wen's theological education on condition that, in return, he served Trinity after graduation. Making grateful use of this sponsorship, Wen finished his studies at Yanjing and returned to Gulangyu in 1956.

That same year, Mao Zedong and the Communist Party launched the Hundred Flowers Movement (*Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming* or *Shuangbai yundong*), which encouraged the citizens of the PRC to express their opinions on the newborn regime

openly. Differing views and ideas for solutions to national policies were encouraged on the basis of Mao's famous expression: "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." The movement that was launched in late 1956 was designed to encourage the arts and to stimulate the advancement of the natural sciences. In less than a year, in July 1957, this period of more liberal thought was abruptly terminated. As the campaign proved too complicated to handle, Mao decided that it was time to call a halt. The concomitant repression was continued through the latter part of 1957 with the founding of an Anti-Rightist Movement to detect those who were critical of the Party's regime and its ideology. Precisely at this politically charged time, Wen began his preaching mission in Trinity Church. In the early years of Communist rule, harassment of Christianity and Christians nationwide inspired a great deal of fear. Taking advantage of Mao's policy of airing one's views, religious figures vented their anger and complaints. Wen complained bitterly that the freedom of religious belief that was stipulated in the constitution was in fact no more than a useless flower vase on the table. He advocated that those who had been unlawfully killed should be immediately rehabilitated. He also wanted to do something about the present reality and the future of the church youth who were foundering in a dilemma was gloom and doom. The first hurdle to be overcome was that the youth were frequently mobilized to participate in agricultural production on Sundays, so they could not keep the Sabbath. The next problem was that the authorities encouraged young Christians who behaved extraordinarily well to join the Communist Youth League or the Party. This put them on the horns of a dilemma. Those who refused the offers were regarded as politically backward and those who were recruited to the political organizations were required to recant their Christian faith. The third stumbling-block was that those who wanted to enter college needed to specify their religious background in political censorship procedures and that young Christians tended to be rejected.

Wen's complaints put him in a difficult situation. When the political tide suddenly shifted, he was denounced as a rightist. In the spring of 1958, the Xiamen TSPM spent approximately one month criticizing Wen in the name of "consolidating a patriotic front." On May 11, 1958 the *Xiamen Daily* (*Xiamen ribao*) published an article targeting Wen's "anti-Party fallacy."<sup>26</sup> He was then sent to the countryside to undergo "reform through labor" (*laodong gaizao* or *laogai* for short). He was forced to participate in different infrastructural construction projects, building railways, highways, salt-works and a reservoir. On one occasion during the Cultural Revolution, Wen was paraded through the streets wearing a humiliating tall paper hat with a big wooden placard hung round his neck on a string, inscribed with the derogatory phrases "running dog of the American imperialists" (*Mei diguozhuyi zougou*) and "ox

---

26. *Xiamen ribao*, "Bodao Wen Yihan Du Zunneng fan Dang miulun."

ghost and snake spirit” (*niugui sheshen*). Despite his humiliation, he made no effort to stop his Christianity-related activities: he preserved Bibles at the risk of being persecuted and circulated them among Christians, as well as organized secret family gatherings at nights.

### *The Old Pastor’s political tactics*

As Deng Xiaoping rose to power over the Party and the state, the reopening of churches was put on the agenda. At the same time, those who had been wronged began to be granted redress. After being persecuted for twenty-two years, Wen resumed his service in the church. His two decades of misfortune during the political unrest had furnished him with experience in dealing with authorities; a skill that later made him a resourceful representative of the Xiamen church. The Christian verse - “As wise as serpents and as innocent as doves”<sup>27</sup> - recurred several times in Wen’s talk with me. He insists that church members need to master the tactics that will enable them to deal with government officials; confrontation is not always the best option. Instead of avoiding contact with people from official backgrounds, as he had done in the Maoist era, Wen is willing to maintain a good relationship with the government. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he has to report to the authorities in accordance with religious regulations.

Wen gave a summary of his tactics, one of which is to present the officials with a *fait accompli* without any consultation or report beforehand (*xianzhan houzhou*). For instance, at the beginning of this century, Trinity Church began to establish branches on Xiamen Island. Banyan Village (Rongcun),<sup>28</sup> a fishing village near the main university, was put on its agenda. Building a church is not an easy project under the current regulations, on which the authorities keep a very sharp eye. Before the ground can be broken, the believers need to obtain official approval at prefectural level of a venue for their religious activity (*zongjiao huodong changsuo*), and thereafter consent from the provincial religious authorities. To make the process easier, they decided first to establish a congregation rather than a registered church. The Old Pastor consulted with the then director of the Xiamen RAB in private. Instead giving a straightforward, unequivocal response, the religious affairs official told him the following short story:

There was a person who found rat holes in his house. It happened that his neighbor was constructing a new house. He asked a mason working at his neighbor’s house for some cement in order to plug the rat holes. His direct request put the worker in an awkward position. The mason said: “How am I supposed to answer you? You should

---

27. Matthew 10: 16.

28. I have named the village this because of its ubiquitous banyan trees.

have just taken some without letting me know it. Once you have asked me for the cement, I shall have to ask my boss for permission.

By recounting this story, the Communist cadre was implicitly indicating that Wen could carry out his plans without a prior report. “It was an inspiration,” Wen said to me. He realized that local officials would prefer turn a blind eye to church activities. They will avoid any confrontation with the churches on condition that the ecclesiastical activities do not damage their political future. Therefore, in the absence of a written report, they can pretend not to know about a particular matter. Several years later Banyan Village had already built up a congregation of over 200 young people. Wen then approached the official again and said, “Cooked rice cannot be uncooked” (*shengmi zhu cheng shufan*) - what’s done cannot be undone. The official this time was delighted to consent to their proposal for the construction of a church. When the city’s Construction Bureau intervened in the plan, the religious authorities even helped the Old Pastor with the approval procedures (for example, obtaining the state-owned land-use certificate). He found that in many cases the individual officials were on his side. In contrast to most church members, whether clergy or lay believers, the Old Pastor praised the religious affairs officials highly, giving them the thumbs up in front of me.<sup>29</sup>

The Old Pastor also boasts of his support for young dedicated people to study theology in seminaries in China or abroad. While believers are converting in great numbers, few of them have the opportunity to become officially recognized pastors. This imbalance is found all over China.<sup>30</sup> The clash of authority between the Communist Party and Christianity about how seminaries should be run and what they should teach offers an interesting insight into the Party’s determination to keep the reins of institutional and ideological control of this part of Chinese society firmly in its own hands.<sup>31</sup> By analyzing the hurdles that are limiting the expansion of TSPM church leadership along a single authorized channel, Carsten Vala argues that: “These barriers hinder the development of a large and committed corps of TSPM pastors and reflect both the Party’s unease about Christianity’s revival and its attempts to shape the future of that revival.”<sup>32</sup> To register at any state-sanctioned seminary in Communist-ruled China, an applicant must be affiliated with a registered church and supported by the church organizations. He or she has to be equipped with an official letter of

---

29. This does not mean the Old Pastor (or other church members) believes that the Party will really accept the “incompatibility” between the Christian faith and its political stance. He and other members mentioned several times the state’s real attitude towards Christianity, namely: “utilization,” “restriction” and “transformation.”

30. See Vala, “Pathways to the Pulpit,” 97.

31. The state restriction on seminary education also applies to other religions including Catholicism. See Leung, “Communist Party-Vatican Interplay.”

32. Vala, “Pathways to the Pulpit,” 118.

introduction bearing official seals of his/her affiliated church and the local *Lianghui*. By screening religious motivation among candidates, the state strives to assure that only those with the appropriate outlook (read, political loyalty) are admitted to seminary training.<sup>33</sup> This is the fly in the ointment because it is precisely the insufficiency of educational opportunities in seminaries and the strict political screening that are opening the door to underground theological education and various types of foreign investment in training Chinese church leaders. For instance, overseas seminary professors have certainly taught in China.<sup>34</sup> Over the past three decades, Trinity Church has supported six pastors and five preachers through this officially sanctioned channel, of whom two have obtained master's degrees in theology. Beyond the official (or "legal") channels, Trinity Church, in collaboration with overseas seminaries (mainly in the Philippines), has trained dozens of church workers.

Preacher Yu was educated in a Chinese-Philippine Bible seminary and has been awarded his bachelor's and master's degrees in theology. He is now registered in a doctoral program at a Chinese seminary in the United States. Yu has enjoyed plenty of recognition as an extraordinary evangelist and as the successor to the Old Pastor. However, his theological education in foreign institutions, rather than in an officially sanctioned seminary in Mainland China, disqualified him from being a fully-fledged minister of religion. The Xiamen *Lianghui* leaders who had all received a "legitimate" theological education refused to endorse his promotion, citing the rules under which the clergy were ordained. Undaunted the Reverend Wen negotiated with the religious affairs authorities and finally achieved a consensus for his ordination. A cadre advised Wen to send Preacher Yu to register in a correspondence course at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and consequently Yu was able to qualify for ordination after his certificate had been conferred. Wen's handling of the religious management cadres is by no means a unique case. In his ethnographic research on an urban church, Mark McLeister has found that the judicious handling of personal relationships with local

---

33. In the training of the younger generation of religious personnel, the official guidelines are: "To provide talents for the mutual adaption of religions and the socialist society, we should support and help patriotic religious organizations to run various religious educational institutions to train a corps of young religious personnel who love the motherland; accept the leadership of the Party and the government; adhere to the socialist road; safeguard the dignity of law, the people's interests and the unity of the country and the Chinese nation; have fairly rich religious knowledge; can contact make with the religious masses." See Guojia zongjiaojuzhengce faguisi, *Zhongguo zongjiao fagui zhengce duben*, 101.

34. Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*, 81; Vala, "Pathways to the Pulpit." A few scholars have noted the active participation of the Southern Korean Protestant community in the training of Chinese clergy. See e.g., Baugus and Park, "Korean Presbyterian Mission to China," 91-93; Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*; McLeister, "Three-Self Protestant Church," 238.

officials by church leaders paves the way for local-level religious policy implementation to be flexible, and consequently routine church activities are conducted beyond the reimits of religious policy.<sup>35</sup>

The Christian faith teaches its followers not only to be wise serpents and innocent doves, but also to “be strong and courageous.”<sup>36</sup> Rather than heeding the caution to keep church activities low-profile in most instances, on one occasion the Old Pastor actually mobilized Christians in a public protest against an overwhelming force at the risk of outraging the municipal leaders. In August 1992, an announcement giving notice of the expropriation of part of a Christian cemetery on Gulangyu was published twice in the *Xiamen Daily*. The land was scheduled to be expropriated to form part of the Xiamen Overseas Chinese Subtropical Plant Introduction Garden. Relatives of the deceased buried there were required to claim their ancestors’ remains within fifteen days. Those graves that were not claimed would be dealt with as if they had no owners. The island’s Christian cemetery, with about 400 graves of pastors and lay believers, is immensely important to the Christian community. Some of those buried in the cemetery have been influential in local Christian history. For instance, Ye Hanzhang, one of the first two Chinese pastors ordained in the Xiamen area, and Lu Gangzhang (1854-1928), a pioneer of *qieyinzi* (a romanization of Chinese), were both buried in the cemetery. Many descendants of these deceased have emigrated abroad but still maintain connections with the Xiamen church. Pastor Wen, on behalf of the Xiamen *Lianghui*, petitioned the Xiamen Municipal Government, the CPPCC Xiamen Committee, the SARA and even went as high as the State Council of the PRC. It can be postulated that the foremost concern that finally stopped the expropriation of the land might have been the media coverage organized by overseas Chinese. Ye Zhiming, a grandson of Ye Hanzhang, published a critical comment in a Chinese-language newspaper in the Philippines. As a significant *qiaoxiang* and an early Special Economic Zone, the Xiamen government was hoping to attract investments from overseas Chinese; consequently, the government was greatly concerned about its so-called global image.<sup>37</sup>

The notice appeared again unexpectedly in the *Xiamen Daily* on January 15, 1993. Besides officially petitioning the municipal leaders, this time Pastor Wen mobilized the congregation of Trinity Church to stand guard over the cemetery to defend it against

---

35. McLeister, “Three-Self Protestant Church.”

36. Joshua 1:6.

37. In his doctoral research on China’s house church Protestants, Timothy Garner Conking has argued that the international appeal has been instrumental in pressuring the PRC government leaders to exchange persecution for acknowledgement and ignorance for outright recognition. See Conking, *Mobilized Merchants-Patriotic Martyrs*. However, during the government-launched movement to demolish the Three Rivers Church and remove crosses across Zhejiang, intense international appeals did not change the situation.

any sudden demolition. Before taking this step, Wen informed the religious affairs authorities that he would take action to protect the church property. Wen asked the church members to carry banners that read “Xiamen Christian Cemetery” and arranged for the church kitchen to prepare food for the guardians. The collective Christian protest was reported to the then mayor in terms of a revolt against the Communist Party. When the municipal government contacted the RAB, the director was scared of being punished and blamed Wen for stirring up so much trouble. The mayor was quite angry and interrogated Wen severely in a face-to-face encounter, asking him why he was opposing the Party and the government. Wen answered that what he was opposing was the expropriation of church property for the expansion of the Subtropical Plant Introduction Garden, not rebelling against the Party and the government. He reminded the mayor that the plan would greatly upset a large number of overseas Chinese and would definitely damage the international image of Xiamen; it might even threaten the political future of the mayor himself. Finally, after land deeds that proved the church’s ownership of the land had been located, the municipal government made compromises and agreed not to requisition the land.

Although the Old Pastor’s tough stance on this occasion enhanced his reputation, Wen has never wanted to stir up tension between the church or himself personally and the government. He attributes the hostility of some officials toward Christianity to their ignorance. Not one to point out a problem without offering a solution, he insisted that the government officials need to be educated. Whenever he has visited churches in Southeast Asia, Europe and Australia, he has invited one or two provincial- or prefectural-level religious cadres to accompany the delegation and their expenses were covered by the foreign churches. Those officials who have benefited from free foreign travel have appreciated Wen’s invitations. In the early reform years, opportunities to see the outside world were few and far between. Although the authorities on different levels did organize tours in which officials could participate in investigations abroad, such opportunities often seemed to pass the religious official by. Wen’s long-term strategy proved effective. Government officials who had been exposed to Christianity are friendlier to the faith and also realize that Christianity could be effective in maintaining the ties between overseas Chinese and their ancestral lands. The current deputy head of the Xiamen RAB recalled a pleasant trip to Southeast Asia with the Trinity Church choir in 1995. At one point, the bus on which the group was travelling had a flat tire and everyone was stuck by the roadside. The choir decided to hold an impromptu concert for some villagers as they waited for the tire to be repaired. Many choir members also saw this as an opportunity to evangelize the Communist Party member. The official asked some of the choir members if the tire trouble was part of God’s plan. They held a discussion with him about divine will,

suggesting that the misfortune had actually created a pleasant memory, to which the official agreed.<sup>38</sup>

The Old Pastor is definitely a resourceful member of the religious elite, endowed with the talent to play a great role in church affairs. The foregoing description shows that the Old Pastor does indeed possess a superior inner power which allows him to exert an influence over the Christian community. His cultural advantage derives from his theological education at the Yanjing Union Theological Seminary, a widely accepted “spiritual” institution, putting it streets ahead of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary that has been regarded as intimately connected to the authorities. In the wake of the decades of the interruption in theological education and pastoral training, the Xiamen Christian community, as elsewhere in China, was suffering a shortage of trained clergy. Wen’s orthodox education imbued him with a sense of responsibility to revive not just Trinity Church but also the Xiamen church after 1979. His social relationships with the government and other church communities in- and outside China have also been apparent over the past decades. Wen first took the position of secretary-general of the Xiamen TSPM in 1988, and was then promoted to vice-chairman of the Xiamen TSPM and vice-president of the Xiamen Christian Council in 1993. He later held leading positions in *Lianghui* organizations on both provincial and prefectural levels and all these posts have enabled him to participate much more widely in Christianity-related affairs. In the 1990s, he was even put on the standing committee of the CPPCC Xiamen Committee and selected as a deputy of the People’s Congress of Gulangyu District.

As Wen said, he had received orientation trainings before he was appointed to the *Lianghui* leadership. For instance, he attended three months of courses at the CCP’s Central Socialism College in Beijing and visited such Communist revolutionary bases as Ruijin, Jinggangshan and Gutian. Wen’s influence was perceived and respected within the social structure in which multiple actors were involved. Within the Xiamen church community, he is usually referred to as the “Old Pastor” out of respect not only for his advanced age but also because of his prestige. Increasingly more churches and pastors both at home and abroad come to seek his protection. For instance, a Chinese-American evangelist sought Wen’s assistance when he was under police investigation in an inland province. Wen is always underlining his role as “protective umbrella” (*baohusan*) for those clergy who are in trouble. The Old Pastor’s status and reputation peaked around the beginning of the new century.

The Old Pastor’s influence over the Xiamen Christian community originated partly from his twenty-two years of suffering, a common theme in many studies of China’s Protestant and Catholic communities. In his research on North China’s Catholics,

---

38. I am grateful to Chris White for sharing this official’s recollection of the 1995 trip to Southeast Asia.

Richard Madsen points out the centrality of the virtue of loyalty to the faith in the moral imagination of Catholics, and that those who uncompromisingly oppose the political regime in harsh political circumstances naturally claim the moral high ground.<sup>39</sup> In her study of a Shanxi Catholic village, Henrietta Harrison has reached a similar conclusion.<sup>40</sup> On the Protestant side, Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan likewise provide similar findings, stating that some Christians believe that they have received more blessings from the Holy Spirit than other Christians in China because they have suffered more. Imbued with a strong sense of spiritual superiority, this notion has emboldened some to break government regulations.<sup>41</sup> One of Wen's contemporaries, Yang Enli (1928-2011), a female church worker who was condemned to imprisonment and "reform through labor" for sixteen years strongly opposed the state and the official TSPM and went ahead and built a noted house church after the Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 5). During her lifetime, she despised Wen for serving a TSPM church and cooperating with the government. In contrast to the church leaders in the above-mentioned studies, his suffering did not force the Old Pastor into opposition with the secular regime; on the contrary, he has interacted actively with government officials and by so doing sought to expand the space allowed the church.

However, the aforementioned illustrations would be misleading if we were to overlook the Old Pastor's unsuccessful attempts at interaction with the state. At the turn of the century, in collaboration with the Old Pastor a Chinese Christian community based in the United States organized church leadership trainings in Singapore and Hawai'i. Wen was responsible for recruiting potential trainees and taking care of the domestic organizational work. The Xiamen religious affairs officials who were well aware of the plan turned a blind eye until a third training session was reported to the SARA. When the SARA instructed the provincial religious authorities to investigate, its Xiamen subordinates claimed they had not known anything about the transnational training activity. Although the American organizer had already reserved flights and hotel rooms for the trainees, the training project was strictly vetoed and the Old Pastor was given a stern warning. Combined with Wen's successful interactions with local officials, we can see that the dealings of the seemingly resourceful church elites with the authorities through their personal relationships can only be realized on the level of the local society; as soon as a higher state agency intervenes, the tacit agreement breaks down and, out of self-protection, the local officials forsake their church contacts. Nevertheless, this instance demonstrates the differentiation between the central and the local governments on religious regulations. In their interactions with the Xiamen Christian community, local government officials tend to function as members of local society rather than agencies of state authority or

---

39. Madsen, *China's Catholics*, chap. 3.

40. Harrison, *Missionary's Curse*.

41. Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*, 204.

firm implementers of policy. In this sense, there is no such clear ontological divide between the state and the Christian church. The relationships between the state and church cannot be fully discussed except in the reality of concrete circumstances.

## Glory No More

### *“The Church is going downhill”*

The changes in any religion cannot be disembedded from the specific frames of time and space. To understand the changes in Christianity in general and Trinity Church in particular, we must refer to the role of the local changes on Gulangyu that touch upon the structuring Christian practices. Its economic exploitation has meant that Gulangyu has been losing its young, educated and wealthy residents. Those who remain are the aged, illiterate and poor natives. In the process of this social shift, thousands of street vendors and laborers have become new “islanders.” Although Trinity Church has done some work among the new residents (for example, Bible class), the church members do not actually seem very interested in preaching the word of God to the laborers from poor inland provinces. As I was having a banquet with the church committee members, one of them quipped that: “As the people wearing leather shoes left, those with slippers arrived; as the piano players moved out, the dray laborers came in.” Although the discourse of the opposition between *suzhi* and the “new residents” is in general use among Gulangyu (and Xiamen) natives, those individual church members who are also members of the island community also use it and do not bother to conceal their disgust. The case of Wenzhou Christianity likewise shows that “social differentiation is embodied in the practice of Christian space.”<sup>42</sup> The emerging discourse of *suzhi* among Gulangyu Christians articulates a sense of urban elite subjectivity and overarches the development of Christianity on Gulangyu in the context of a highly commercialized economy. Present-day Christians seem to have forgotten the composition of the early converts who were drawn from the underprivileged peasants and laborers. In a nutshell, these Christian islanders forget the past selectively.

The upshot of the economic exploitation of Gulangyu is that Christianity in general and Trinity Church in particular are being confronted with an unprecedented crisis. Before the twentieth century, the ferry fare was 1 *yuan*, but later it was increased to 8 *yuan*. In fact, the increased fare was hardly a factor of significance to the island’s church community. Every churchgoer might find it a headache to have to squeeze through the crowded alleys. In the 1990s the church used to have a registered congregation totaling 2,000 or so, of whom 1,000 regularly attended Sunday services.

---

42. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*, 162.

In recent years, however, the number of registered members has decreased markedly to 1,000, of whom fewer than 500 now regularly attend Sunday services.

As we were sitting in the pastors' office, Senior Pastor Han was quite surprised when I repeated what she said at the ceremony: "The elderly [members] have moved to Heaven and the young [members] have moved to Xiamen [Island]." She smiled and turned the conversation to how she came to serve Trinity Church.

The Old Pastor gave me a phone call and invited me...When I decided to join Trinity Church in 2009, my fellow church workers advised me not to come as this church was going downhill. It was a pitiful sight! Only the choir and the children's Sunday school performed on the stage at Christmas. The elderly members asked me where the young and middle-aged believers were, and why there were only two programs. They had no idea what was happening, but they knew there should be many acts in the Christmas show. Yes, I knew where they were; they had all left...The youth fellowship had almost ceased to function. The young believers used to come to Gulangyu every Saturday evening around eight and had to return to Xiamen [Island] an hour later. It was almost midnight when they got back home. There are fewer than twenty members in the youth choir now. The aging problem is dangerous to our church. It is a crisis of some proportion.

Early in this century the church committee became aware of the rapid drain of the congregation, and set up three gathering points to retain its adherents residing on Xiamen Island. Despite the steps they have taken, the situation is not one that can be remedied easily. The first gathering point is situated in Banyan Village near an elite university and has developed into a church independent of Trinity Church. The other two points are still nominally branches of Trinity Church, but in essence fully functional and able to operate independently. Even more importantly, their new followers are not aware of or interested in the connections with Trinity Church, their mother church. The branches on Xiamen Island have not maintained the members' affiliation and sense of belonging to Trinity Church effectively; instead, to some extent setting up the branches has widened the disconnection between the believers and their mother church.

The outflow of members definitely affected the anniversary celebration. The plan for the event was initially proposed in 2011, and the church members spent the subsequent three years working on the preparations. I received a formal invitation in May 2014 when I was staying in Xiamen. The program attached to the letter of invitation revealed the forthcoming event would begin on the evening of October 24 and end on the morning of October 26. However, the program was later condensed into less than one day. The church committee rescheduled the event for fear of not being able to receive guests with all due ceremony. Subsequently, the event was reduced to an internal celebration and very few guests from outside the church were invited. The rescheduling affected my research plan. Considering Trinity Church a

transnational community, with members scattered throughout Southeast Asia and North America, I had initially planned to investigate its transnational connections by interviewing the overseas Chinese Christians who are connected to the church.<sup>43</sup> The change in plan to hold a smaller ceremony and not extend many invitations meant that very few of the transnational members of the church attended or even knew about the celebration and, consequently, that I was not able to talk to these members.

The impact of state projects (the aforementioned official designations of Gulangyu in different periods) on religions has attracted extensive academic interest. Of the five officially sanctioned religions, Buddhism and Daoism (its popular off-shoots included) tend to draw the most attention, mainly in the light of the exploitation of religious venues in terms of tourism. Religions have indeed become a highly profitable business, and sometimes the stakes are very high. As religion-related activities help to strengthen and improve the local economy, local governments tend to lend a willing ear to and encourage religious revivals. By converting temples into tourist attractions, market-oriented tourism authorities interpose themselves in the planning and organization of temple activities. Relevant studies reveal that the government's overutilization of religious sites for economic or personal purposes has intensified all sorts of contradictions.<sup>44</sup> Although some temples have managed to avoid such state attempts at cooptation, others have reluctantly adapted, and some have been taken over completely.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to the sites of other religions, the state's economic exploitation of Christianity is a fairly rare occurrence, basically attributable to the fact that Christian sites do not generally attract non-Christian tourists. Since the government-launched projects affect the state of the island's Christianity only indirectly rather than directly targeting Christianity or any particular church, Trinity Church does not have the chance or does not even know to whom it can complain or appeal. Moreover, it is obliged to obey the state projects, whose declared intention is to boost the local economy and thereby benefit the people of Xiamen. On account of this state intervention, it is possible to observe that Christianity on Gulangyu has been deprived of an equal opportunity to compete with the other churches on Xiamen Island.

---

43. Few academic studies have been done on the transnational connections of religion in contemporary Xiamen. E.g., Ashiwa and Wank, "Globalization of Chinese Buddhism"; Lyu, "Xiamen waiji Jidutu jiaoshi de zongjiao huodong"; White, "Influence across the South Sea." The links between Christianity in contemporary Xiamen and the overseas Chinese communities are understudied.

44. E.g., Ashiwa and Wank, "Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple"; Chau, "Introduction," 8-11; Ji, "Buddhism in the Reform Era"; McCarthy, "Gods of Wealth, Temples of Prosperity"; Yang and Tamney, *State, Market, and Religions*.

45. See Chau, "Introduction," 10.

### *The reconfiguration of the power structure*

The Old Pastor has been one of the most influential pastors in Xiamen during the reform era. Under his pastoral care, Trinity Church became a leading church in the region. However, the decrease in congregation numbers has inevitably resulted in a reconfiguration of the power structure in the Xiamen church. Although the celebration was an internal event, the whole Christian community was well aware of it and those from other Xiamen churches or from abroad would have been welcome if they had come. In fact, the church committee did anticipate the arrival of other church representatives, as a deaconess said to me, “It would be inappropriate (*shili*) for other pastors not to appear.” However, “they” did not make an appearance. Some were leading the Xiamen YMCA on a visit to Jinmen and hence were unable to be present, but other churches leaders who were in Xiamen could surely have attended, but chose not to.

After the reopening of the churches, Pastor Zhang Hanqing held the posts of vice-chairman of the Xiamen TSPM and vice-president of the Xiamen Christian Council. Wen Yihan then succeeded Zhang. As the representative of Trinity Church he assumed leading positions in the *Lianghui*, CPPCC and People’s Congress systems. However, none of his successors at Trinity Church have ever been as influential. Incumbent Senior Pastor Han is certainly symbolically positioned in the leadership of the Xiamen TSPM as general vice-secretary, a largely honorific post with little real influence. No other member of Trinity Church holds any position in the Christian organizations. Contrary to the decline of Trinity Church, the Bamboo Church and the New Street Church, two major churches on Xiamen Island, have been growing rapidly. Their congregations number more than 5,000 and 4,000 respectively.<sup>46</sup> Now the leaders of these churches and the New District Gospel Church have taken over the leading positions in the Xiamen *Lianghui* organs. Trinity Church has gradually been marginalized in the reconfiguration process of the local power field.

This reconfiguration of the power structure within the Xiamen Christian community has also been promoted by the local authorities. As mentioned previously, the appearance of a religious affairs official at the anniversary event made some members uncomfortable, and the church committee was unwilling to report to the authorities that it was planning an event. Certainly the elderly and experienced Pastor Wen gained the respect of the cadres who often consulted him about how to tackle

---

46. Xiamen Port Church was closed during the Cultural Revolution and has not been reestablished. Its church building was assigned to the True Jesus Church by the Xiamen *Lianghui*. The current Xiamen Port Church has nothing to do with the previous one. Descendants of Yang Huaide (1866-1946), then senior pastor of Xiamen Port Church, established the earliest house church in Xiamen, a group which has served as a leader of the unregistered churches around Fujian.

religious affairs. However, since Pastor Han took over the senior pastoral role, the situation has begun to change. Han is very cautious when it comes to religious regulations and likes to report to authorities before activities are held; her attitude is quite different to the way Trinity Church worked previously. Han made two decisions that aroused widespread discontent among the members of the church committee. The roof of the main church building leaked when it rained. If it had been the Old Pastor dealing with this matter, he would have asked roofers directly to repair the roof after approval by the church committee. As she thought that the church building had been classified as a cultural relic, Pastor Han's first step was to report the problem to the GMC. As the government officials had been apprised of this situation, the church committee could not carry out the repair work before it had been given official approval. At the time of the 2014 anniversary celebration, the church had still not been granted this permission, although it had been nearly two years since the renovation application had been submitted. Since the church compound was recognized as national-level key cultural heritage site by the State Council in 2006, state power has penetrated church management in the guise of cultural heritage management. In 2015, three years after submitting the repair plan, the authorities did finally approve it and promised to cover the costs amounting millions of *yuan* in the name of conserving cultural heritage. Han's formal report to the government did save Trinity Church a huge amount of funds. It has also helped assuage the church members' discontent about her submission to the government. Nevertheless, it does not show that Han is more adept at managing church affairs or dealing with the officials than the Old Pastor was. Instead, it is another example exposing the fact that providing funds is an easy way for the government to penetrate church affairs and inform church politics.

In the era of governmentality, the shift in the governing tactics of the Chinese state does not necessarily mean a diminution in its influence over society. Instead, the state resorts to well-constructed, rational bureaucratic structures and dispersive functional organs to guarantee the implementation of its authority. As Frank Pieke points out, "social management" in recent government rhetoric and action allows a considerable degree of pluralism while strengthening the leading role of the Party over the society; in fact, the Chinese state is "both more powerful and resourceful and less direct and invasive."<sup>47</sup> Zhu Yujing's research on Christianity in Wenzhou demonstrates how the state power penetrates the church by means of the public administration (for example, the registration system for land and property).<sup>48</sup> Contrary to its past dealings with the religious authorities and city- or district-level governments, Trinity Church now has to interact with a range of different administrative departments: land resources, estate management, construction, city planning, tourism and now even cultural heritage

---

47. Pieke, "Social Management in China," 149.

48. Zhu, "Wenzhou de Jidujiao."

management and the like. The originally centralized state power has been dispersed but the church leadership is struggling to cope with interventions from every corner of the bureaucracy.

Another decision made by Pastor Han was the extending of an invitation to the religious affairs official; a step that was also in conflict with the church's long-standing tradition. Prior to joining Trinity Church, Han had served in the New District Gospel Church, whose leader is now the chairwoman of the Xiamen Christian Council. In that church, pastors do maintain contacts with government officials. When Han kept up the way she worked in her former pastoral service, she caused dissatisfaction among the members of the church committee. Some members of the church publicly blamed her: "Are you a government official or a pastor?" Han felt deeply wronged by the church members. During my talk with Pastor Han, she suddenly asked me: "Do you think what I did was improper?" I was at a loss to know how to answer. Fortunately, she continued talking: "The Old Pastor is so old that we have to respect him even though he does some things wrongly. He suffered from 'reform through labor.' He is capable of being in control of a situation...However, I am not like him. Times have changed. We run the church in different ways." As the Old Pastor gradually withdraws from the church community, Trinity Church is facing a marginalized position in the power field. For any one of Wen's successors, it will be a formidable task to regain the influence it once had, in particular for Senior Pastor Han who has very modest qualifications. In our conversation, Han was so jealous she showed her envy of the deaconess who translated the RCA representative's English address into Chinese, as well as of those fellow pastors and preachers who have bachelor's or master's degrees. She feels at a disadvantage as she had only studied in a two-year program in a provincial theological seminary and does not understand any foreign language. Moreover, in contrast to the Old Pastor, she lacks the social skills to deal with social relationships effectively or interact with officials. She has suffered attacks accusing her of incompetent leadership. This sent her into a severe depression. In Han's case, her deficiency in a variety of people and managing skills has resulted in her isolation and powerlessness. I could imagine the complicated feeling she must have felt when the Old Pastor highly commended Preacher Yu's sermon from the stage on the occasion of the anniversary.

Han's respect for the religious authorities is completely understandable. Parallels can be found in the research on the state presence in and around popular religion since the 1990s. Nowadays, agents of popular religions are no longer passively subject to state dominance, but actively take advantage of state power to gain social space and opportunities for development.<sup>49</sup> Actually it is quite common to have government

---

49. See e.g., Chau, *Miraculous Response*; Gao, "Yizuo bowuguan-miaoyu jianzhu de minzuzhi."

officials present at celebratory events in Xiamen church communities. Just weeks prior to the Trinity Church event, the same official had been invited to address a celebration held by the New Street Church. Although the Reverend Han has failed to attract the support of her church, she has earned the trust of the state as an obedient “patriotic religious personnel” (*aiguo zongjiao renshi*). She might not be aware of the paradox that it is her obedience and the consequent officially guaranteed legitimacy that decreases her prestige among her fellow workers and the congregation. Trinity Church is now facing a transformation of legitimacy, the retirement of the Old Pastor has opened up a new way to continue to hone the ability to negotiate with the authorities.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

Trinity Church, built in 1934, was a witness to the prosperity of Christianity on Gulangyu. Despite the harsh repression during Mao’s political campaigns, it survived and revived after its reopening in the late 1970s. However, Trinity Church was doomed to decline because of the state-led commercialization project propelled by the development of tourism on the island. As Gulangyu underwent rapid social, cultural and demographic changes, Christianity on the island in general and Trinity Church in particular were both inevitably affected. Compared to the repressive and hostile Maoist state, in its dealings with Christianity the postsocialist state is multi-faceted and diffused in diverse aspects of the society. One of the most immediate results is that Christianity on Gulangyu has been thrust into the state projects and it is now impossible to divorce it from the market economy. This chapter reveals the decline of Christianity on the island in the throes of change and the church members’ nostalgic feelings of loss and their longing for a glorious church that no longer exists.<sup>51</sup>

Organizing the 2014 anniversary celebration gave the members of Trinity Church the opportunity to review its glory over the course of its eighty years of existence and grieve about the dismal picture of the church’s future. Whatever they have done to revisit and even inscribe the past via the writing of its history, a situation in which the increasingly gloomy prospects of Christianity and Trinity Church on Gulangyu find themselves seems irreversible. Church members might be unwilling to admit it, but they must know in their hearts of hearts that its former glory is a thing of the past. However disheartening prospects might be, they do not mean Trinity Church is accepting its glum future passively. The church committee has been attempting to

---

50. For the role of religious elite in gaining legitimacy for the religious practices in reform-era China, see e.g., Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*; Chau, *Miraculous Response*; Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, part 1.

51. Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, xiii.

retrieve the past glory by building branches on Xiamen Island and has sought the assistance of international Christian agencies.

For three years the church members had prepared to commemorate the eightieth anniversary fully but eventually held only an abbreviated ceremony that, although it was successful, was nothing out of the ordinary. For those who attended, it was no different from any celebrations held at the usual Christmas or Easter services. Therefore, I doubt that the celebration could propel the people into the particular historical time and space they so desired, not to mention making them become more involved. However, if the members absorb the text, the writing of church history, as a form of inscribing practices in Paul Connerton's sense,<sup>52</sup> could contribute to memorializing the glorious past to a limited degree. Overall, a single celebration is insufficient to inscribe the past on the people's memories, particularly in the rapidly developing modern world that is teeming with changes, making forgetting a characteristic of contemporary society.<sup>53</sup> In other words, Trinity Church might be successful in converting individual memories into a system of memory materials by collecting fragmental oral histories and making a book-length historical text; however, it is far less likely to be able to re-convert the latter into personal memories. My postulation is that this anniversary commemoration will not help either to stem the irreversibility of Trinity Church's fate or to promote the closer integration of the congregation. The generational effects on collective memory must also be taken into consideration.<sup>54</sup> Just as I observed at the celebration, the youth comprised a small proportion of the audience. As the elderly Trinity Church members gradually pass away, it is highly likely that the collective memory will wither with them. If those who are alive fail to transfer the memory to the youth, the past of Trinity Church will soon be a subject just for the history books.

---

52. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 73.

53. Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*.

54. Schuman and Scott, "Generations and Collective Memories."



## Chapter 5

### The Production of Christian History

Writing about Christian history in present-day China is no longer an exclusive club opens only to Marxist theorists or well-trained historians. It is now a market increasingly open to diverse players. The theme of this chapter is a reexamination of a recent Xiamen phenomenon, namely: the government, churches and amateur historians are all showing an enthusiasm for producing historical texts linked to Christianity. Therefore, it dissects the respective efforts of three types of producers: the government, churches and individuals. The analysis demonstrates that state politics, historical agencies and individual subjectivity (especially the psychodynamic dimensions of nostalgic sentiment) have intersected in their official and unofficial efforts at the production of history. It provides a basis from which to understand the state project of representing the past in which the mobilization of personal memories for historical reconstruction has paved the way for conditions under which competing visions can be expressed. To a certain extent, the emerging unofficial or private narratives (for example, oral history) are challenging the state's grand master narratives. Nevertheless, it is not my intention to put the popular efforts in opposition to the official accounts. In fact, the purpose is to show that the official production of history texts and unofficial efforts often mingle and interpenetrate.

#### The Shades of “Cultural Aggression”

Since its foundation, Christianity has had a worldwide mission history. In some receiving countries or regions, the introduction of Christianity has irrevocably resulted in conflicts with existing traditions and, in some instances, it has even upset the balance in terms of politics and culture. Unquestionably, the spread of Christianity around the world in modern times was supported by the rise of Western capitalism and the rapid expansion of this economic system. The people in the areas of reception were confronted not only with the gospels; they also had to juggle with their Janus face: guns and privileges. In China, a Confucianism-dominated agricultural country, in which it was a “foreign religion” (*yangjiao*) Christianity once brought great challenges

that tested the social structure and the sovereignty. Its encounter with the ancient Chinese empire was intertwined with the relentless advance of the Western imperialist powers at the height of their nineteenth-century heyday. After the First Opium War, a series of unequal treaties that were imposed on defeated Qing China privileged missionaries, giving them freedom to preach and build churches in designated areas. Christianity not only benefited from these treaties, it was also stigmatized with its political “original sin,” a label that could never easily be eradicated. One of the consequences was the persistence of the criticism of “cultural aggression,” that first gained ground as early as in the 1920s after the May Fourth Movement and even today is still pervasive in official discourses.<sup>1</sup>

After the founding of the People’s Republic, the image of Christianity worsened as soon as the Korean War broke out in 1950 and the upshot was that missionaries were categorized as enemy aliens. Research on missions in China was therefore made a restricted field, only open to officially appointed Marxist theorists for the purpose of building the Communist ideology.

The year 1978 marked a new era not only for the economy of PRC and its foreign policy, but also for the historical study of Christianity. Since then, constraints placed by the top on research in the humanities and social sciences have been relaxed and accordingly the study of Christian history has acquired its own space. Nevertheless, despite this relaxation, in the 1980s less than critical research on Christianity still found it hard to find a publisher. A change crept in the 1990s and a small number of well-received research results written from the perspectives of cultural exchanges, education, modernization and globalization were made available.<sup>2</sup> Since the turn of the twenty-first century, dozens of books have been published on the contribution of missionaries to the modernization of China. Even though some scholars of Christianity have attempted to depoliticize the discourses on Christianity, the complete elimination of political influence on either academic research or citizens’ minds still does not seem feasible in the foreseeable future. The discourse of “cultural aggression” continues to prevail and even today is widely accepted by a large number of citizens. As argued in the introductory chapter, although the government has permitted some publications, it has never made any considerable adjustments to its stance on foreign missions.

---

1. Tao, “‘Wenhua qinlüe’ yuanliu kao.”

2. For an overview of reform-era research on the history of Christianity, see Tao and Yang, “Gaige kaifang yilai de Zhongguo Jidujiao shi yanjiu.”

## The Official Production of Christian History

As soon as it had taken over the Mainland, the Communist regime initiated a national project to produce histories of late Qing and Republican China. Although this endeavor was interrupted by a constant series of political movements, the official project was fully resumed in the 1980s and has constructed a comprehensive set of grand historical narratives.

### *CPPCC historical projects*

Zhou Enlai, the then Premier and Chairman of the CPPCC National Committee in the PRC, instigated the founding of the Historical Materials Research Committee (HMRC) in 1959. This was renamed the Historical Materials Committee (HMC) in 1988. Shortly afterwards, the government required the provincial-, prefectural- and county-level CPPCC organs to establish HMRCs. The goals of the system, that featured “political consultation” and “unity of peoples,” were to “reposition history” (*cunshi*), “benefit the government” (*zizheng*), “unite all walks of life” (*tuanjie*) and “educate the people” (*yuren*). Under the CPPCC system, senior deputies who were drawn from all walks of life, but with a tendency to choose celebrities who had “personally experienced (*qinli*), seen (*qinjian*) and heard (*qinwen*)” significant historical events in late Qing and Republican China and they were invited to contribute first-hand retrospective accounts of their lives in historical volumes that were published irregularly.

Unquestionably the ideological landscape of early Communism was what shaped this campaign of historical production. The majority of the contributors were former Qing or Republican government officials, intellectuals and officers of the defeated KMT army who had lost their influence under the new regime. Such figures were usually the targets of the Anti-Rightist Movement and those movements that followed in its wake. Without a doubt, their historical writings were strictly supervised and were used to achieve particular political purposes. Produced under the discipline of the new regime and in order to avoid stirring up any political trouble, their historical accounts were usually reconstructed with a particular intention in mind.<sup>3</sup>

As a cultural movement with political aspects, the work of the CPPCC on historical accounts has been the most influential official project in efforts to reconstruct the official memory. According to incomplete statistics, from 1960 to 1990 (interrupted during the Cultural Revolution) HMRCs (HMCs since 1988) on and above county level had produced approximately 2,300 series of historical publications: specifically 13,000 volumes consisting of 300,000 essays which totaled 200 million Chinese

---

3. Lin, “Zhonggong Zhengxie ‘wenshi ziliao’ gongzuo de tuizhan.”

characters.<sup>4</sup> Although Zhou Enlai declared that, “All things from the most backward to the most advanced should be recorded,” the main purpose of the project was to expose the negative sides of the “old society” (*jiu shehui*), creating a perfect foil for the “New China.”<sup>5</sup> Generally, the CPPCC framing of pre-1979 historical accounts emphasized the reactionary elements of the past and its post-Mao historical work was required to “hold high the banner of patriotism.”<sup>6</sup>

Under the aegis of the 1959 national history project, the CPPCC Xiamen Committee established its HMRC and in 1963 published two volumes of *Xiamen Historical Materials*. In these works, Christianity was criticized as an aggressive body rather than as a tool of imperialist aggression. The second volume was a special issue covering the process by which Gulangyu was forcibly occupied and transformed into an international settlement. In this monograph, Gulangyu was denounced as a “vampire camp,” from which the Three Missions based on it “made wide incursions into the hinterland of Fujian province.”<sup>7</sup> Besides the vehement accusation of “cultural aggression” and “interference in China’s sovereignty,” moral discourses were often brought into play to censure missionaries or their mission work. One instance is the denigration of the RCA missionary John Otte who was designated an “imperialist rogue” and a “hypocrite with an extremely ugly soul.” In order to blacken him further, he was also charged with indecent assaults on women, a moral sin that seriously eroded his missionary identity.<sup>8</sup> The Xiamen historical accounts of Christianity were strictly framed within a certain logical and explanatory structure that was consistent with an overall state-sanctioned framework of national history whose purpose was to re-affirm the Party’s uninterrupted historical continuity as a national liberator.

After only two volumes, the CPPCC Xiamen Committee’s historical work was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, during which hundreds of unpublished manuscripts totaling two million characters were destroyed.<sup>9</sup> Not until 1979 was the initiative resumed and those cultural workers denounced as rightists reinstated in their positions. Over the course of the ensuing two decades, twenty-one volumes of *Xiamen Historical Materials* were published. One 1980 publication again brought up the position of Gulangyu as an international settlement and particularly the dishonorable roles of church-run hospitals and schools in propagating “mental anesthesia.”<sup>10</sup> One noticeable trend that was the beginning to emerge was that some articles did begin to admit, in fact even exaggerate, anti-imperialist patriotic movements within these

---

4. Li, *Preface*, 1.

5. Zhou, *Zhou Enlai xuanji*, 297.

6. Huang and Liu, *Wenshi ziliao gongzuo gaishu*, 8-12.

7. Yu, Zhang, and Zeng, “Gulangyu lunwei gonggong zujie de jingguo,” 78-83.

8. Zheng and Huang, “Meiguo yisheng Yu Yuehan ruci lingren.”

9. Xiamen Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, *Preface*.

10. Zheng *et al.*, “Gonggong zujie shiqi de Gulangyu,” 4.

mission schools. One example repeatedly cited to illustrate the existence of anti-imperialist movement was the following. One day in February 1914, much earlier than the well-known May Forth Movement of 1919 that did so much to arouse Chinese people's anti-imperialist sentiments, three students of the church-run Anglo-Chinese College decided to teach an Indian policeman who had been hired by the KMC a lesson and forced him to drink seawater.<sup>11</sup> It was impossible to verify the incident as all the witnesses had passed away. It might possibly have been true if we take account of the common antipathy simmering among the residents engendered by the privileges and arrogance of the foreigners. Nevertheless, true or not, this sole incident could hardly be characterized as an anti-imperialist campaign or struggle. Regardless of the truth, the illustration does indicate that narratives about Christianity could be led into the pathway of the storyline of patriotism.

The seventh volume of 1984 contains two essays written by Christians introducing the New Street Church and Trinity Church. Although both the articles began with a criticism of the unequal treaties on which missionaries and their cultural aggression relied, the descriptions that followed took a positive tone.<sup>12</sup> The following eight volumes published in the mid- and late-1980s created a much more relaxed atmosphere in which historical accounts of Christianity could be produced. The 1987 volume focused on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Two articles outlined the contributions made by church schools to the war effort, for instance their reception and care of war refugees.<sup>13</sup> Since then, Christianity in Xiamen's official narratives has begun to appear as part of the Chinese united front against Japanese invasion. The two volumes of 1988 contained two articles describing Christian histories authored by the late Wu Bingyao, an influential church leader. In the former essay, he praises the efficient missionary work of the Three Missions.<sup>14</sup> In his latter contribution, he tries to defend the stance that it was not the missionaries' intention to become entangled with foreign imperialism and Christianity had been mistaken for a tool for imperialist aggression. He tries to excuse Christianity's role by resorting to such rhetorical phrases as "directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously."<sup>15</sup> Furthermore we begin to see that, under the current circumstances, citizens are willing to make compromises by admitting Christianity's disgrace and in doing so make use of the state discourse to ensure the release of

---

11. Zheng *et al.*, "Gonggong zujie shiqi de Gulangyu," 79.

12. Lin, "Zhonghua diyi shengtang Xiamen Xinjie libaitang"; Zhu, "Gulangyu Sanyi tang jianzhu shimo."

13. Chen, "Gulangyu nanmin jigou he Guoji jiujiuhui"; Zhu, "Xiamen lunxian hou Gulangyu Yude nanmin shourongsuo."

14. Wu, "Bainian lai de Minnan Jidu jiaohui."

15. Wu, "Jidujiao Minnan dahui de yici shenghui," 131.

alternative narratives. Superficially at least, the state requires its citizens to comply with the official narratives.

The relaxed atmosphere of the late 1980s suddenly hardened, partly because of the Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 that resulted in the introduction of tighter ideological control by the state. Against this backdrop, the *Xiamen Historical Materials* released a special issue (volume 16) in 1990 criticizing the Gulangyu International Settlement, and in this they launched a fierce attack on Christianity and mission hospitals and schools. Despite this one outburst, the increasingly relaxed atmosphere for historical work has not been fundamentally reversed. The volume of the following year, the eightieth anniversary of the Revolution of 1911, concentrated on how the Qing rule in Xiamen was overthrown, during which “many patriotic pastors and Christians were revolutionary activists” and Xu Chuncao, an influential Christian who claimed to have “only accepted Christ but not submitted to foreign command,” often confronted foreign missionaries.<sup>16</sup> In another essay, the *Egret River Newspaper* (*Lujiang bao*) which was founded by a British missionary was praised for “raising awareness of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism” and consequently promoting the “bourgeois democratic revolutionary movement.”<sup>17</sup> Since then, revolutionary discourse flavored with the characteristics of Communist legitimacy has been applied to Christianity. Over the next few years, essays about Christianity assumed a much more positive tone. They introduced many celebrities who were raised as Christians or educated in church schools. Political issues were avoided. The last volume that came about in 2002 marked the culmination of the 1959 historical project. The major reason for the termination, according to the former editor-in-chief, was a shortage of manuscripts and a decline in readership.

As did the CPPCC National Committee’s historical project, the Xiamen historical work relied on those contributors who were usually part of the regime’s united front work, for example, Republican government officials, intellectuals and religious elite. Although those who experienced significant historical events did contribute precious retrospective accounts, albeit subject to the constraints of the particular political conditions, they had to cater to the mainstream ideology. Censored personal memoirs were presented as legitimate historical accounts.

In the mid-1990s, another round of the national historical project was initiated. It was launched just at the time that the economic prosperity of Xiamen was stirring up a passionate interest in the city’s past and the government-led historical team proudly traced the origins of Xiamen City back to 1394.<sup>18</sup> It resulted in the second extensive production of Xiamen history in the new century. Between 2007 and 2013, the CPPCC Xiamen Committee’s HMC published twenty-four monographs covering a full range

---

16. Zhang, “Xiamen Xinhai geming de linzhao,” 22.

17. Qiu, “Xinhai geming qianhou de Xiamen baokan,” 115.

18. Fang *et al.*, *Xiamen cheng liubai nian*.

of subjects (for example, religion, music, physical education, films, newspapers and the women's movement). It was an official task and it was unquestionably finished in a hurry. A particular book might take only several months to write from when it was commissioned until its publication.<sup>19</sup> Local experts and ordinary cultural workers who had no historical training assumed the responsibility for the project. Professional historians and university academics kept their distance. The books that were churned out could hardly be regarded as serious historical works. The authors or editors who were usually laymen in their fields created "history" on the basis of hearsay. Not to put too fine a point on it, these hotchpotches were basically devoid of both creativity and originality. The large-scale of the production turned history into an industrial product.

Using government funding, the authorities produced a large number of copies and distributed them to the citizens free of charge. In a nutshell, the government produced the city's history and managed to popularize it with adequate funding. To some extent, this gesture catered to citizens with feelings of nostalgia, especially those who lamented Gulangyu's excessive commercialization. As Le Goff argues, "It [the quest for collective memory] amounts to a conversion that is shared by the public at large, which is obsessed by the fear of losing its memory in a kind of collective amnesia - a fear that is awkwardly expressed in the taste for the fashions of earlier times, and shamelessly exploited by nostalgia-merchants; memory has thus become a best-seller in a consumer society."<sup>20</sup> In historical production, nostalgic memory is often used to piece together the history of a locality, and this process accelerates the commercialization and rapid consumption of the local history. This is amply illustrated by the fact that the past of Christianity and its contribution to Xiamen's modernization has been exaggerated. Christianity has been commended as the most significant promotor of Xiamen's modernization to the detriment of the contribution of the Xiamen people who have worked hard in this area and whose contribution has been underestimated or even ignored.

Nowadays it has become the custom to link some themes like schools and celebrities closely to Christianity. The book, *Noted Musicians of Xiamen*, for example, lists twenty-one famous musicians, of whom seven were Christians and benefited from what the church had to offer. The book argues that it was Christianity that formed Gulangyu's musical legacy that in its turn has nurtured many great musicians. However, in the case of the well-known soprano Yan Baoling (1924-66), who committed suicide because of her unbearable humiliation during the Cultural Revolution (see below), the author intentionally ignores the growing grievance about Yan's suffering and does not devote a special chapter to her. The fact that she is only referred to in a couple of sentences in the chapter about her son provoked widespread

---

19. See e.g., Hong, *Afterword*, 205.

20. Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 95.

discontent.<sup>21</sup> Apparently, Yan's suffering and the political causes behind her suicide were not supposed to be specified.

Since 2009, when the Xiamen government decided to go ahead with the WHS application, the Gulangyu Management Committee has organized an extensive historical production that has led to the publication of dozens of monographs. This has been an exercise in quantity, not quality, and the project has been almost totally devoid of any creativity or originality. The organizers did not bother to cast their net very far and invited almost exactly the same editors or authors who used the same materials without looking for any new evidence. At the time these books were still intended for a lay readership, but the whole project was supported by public funds. Tens of thousands of printed copies were widely circulated free of charge. In the application for WHS, over ten of the fifty-three core heritage sites of Gulangyu were related to Christianity, among them the Christian cemetery, church buildings and church-run hospital and schools.<sup>22</sup> Although the authorities had not paid much attention to Christian sites before Gulangyu was placed on the WHS application agenda, after the decision to go ahead with it, the religious issue, Gulangyu's connection to Christianity, could no longer be overlooked. Despite the fact that no one would deny the role of Christianity in the process of the modernization of Gulangyu, generally speaking the historical evaluation presented in the official document fails to acknowledge the role of Christianity.

Although so many publications related to Christianity have been published, so far there has been no official re-evaluation of Christianity. Kong Qinmai, the former editor-in-chief of *Xiamen Historical Materials* and a delegate to the CPPCC Xiamen Committee, said that, although the religious policy was now less constraining, the government has never made any considerable changes to the official discourse on Christianity. He remarked that at the CPPCC conferences, Christianity is often raised in the conjunction with the names of patriotic religious figures and patriotic activities and it speaks volumes about the situation that the government has never slackened its efforts to train anti-Christianity Patriotic socialist successors. For example, in 1999 Gulangyu's Next Generation Working Committee edited a textbook to promote the cultivation of the youth patriotism. In this volume, the editors collected abundant evidence to bear witness to instances of imperialist guilt on Gulangyu and the inglorious past of Christianity. With the exception of some of the Western-style buildings built by missions, the textbook does not acknowledge any contributions by Christianity or the missionaries. The only note of appreciation is the grudging admission that missionaries chose scenic locations for their buildings.<sup>23</sup> While the

---

21. Peng, *Xiamen yinyue mingjia*, 222.

22. Gulangyu guanweihui, *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian*.

23. Gulangyu guangongwei, *Gulangyu qu aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu cailiao xuanbian*, 38-39.

editors do their best to encourage the young people to love their scenic island, they do their utmost to avoid raising their appreciation of Christianity.

*Special gazetteer of Christianity in Xiamen:  
three decades of failed efforts*

China has a rich tradition of local history writing. *Difangzhi* (*fangzhi* or *zhi* for short), often translated as “local gazetteers” or “local histories,” have existed in China since ancient times.<sup>24</sup> The rise in the production of local gazetteers can be traced back to Song and Yuan periods.<sup>25</sup> A complete catalogue, including Taiwan, lists over 8,200 extant editions of gazetteers that appeared before 1949.<sup>26</sup> There have been long-term debates over to which discipline, geography or history, a local gazetteer should be assigned.<sup>27</sup> When they are referring to the production of Christian history, Xiamen government officials and church leaders refer to it as *zhi* (gazetteer), that differs from *shi* (history) as its purpose is to chronicle without commenting. However, they have never intended it to be considered in the geographical sense, and *zhi* essentially refers to a concise history. This section, therefore, outlines the historical nature of the special *zhi* project.

In the first instance, a local gazetteer was compiled and published for three basic purposes: namely, to draw attention to a particular place, to glorify the emperor and express local pride. James M. Hargett states that, by the time of the Song Dynasty which saw the production of many more gazetteers on both local and national levels than in any previous era, the general trend was to adapt these publications more than they had ever been before to serve political, administrative and military ends.<sup>28</sup> Using gazetteers the ruling groups could educate themselves about the geography and customs of different regions or the histories of particular periods. More often than not, the dynastic states played an active role in the creation and production of local gazetteers, an exercise in which they usually relied on the local gentry to compile and print these works. Traditionally, the compilation of local gazetteers was decreed by central authorities and implemented by governmental officials in the localities. The most celebrated local literati and official scholars assumed the responsibility for compiling these works. The government was supposed to be financially responsible for

---

24. The history of the development of the local gazetteer in China from its embryonic form to its full maturity in the Ming and Qing periods is too long and complex to chronicle here in full. For details, see Lai, *Zhongguo difangzhi*; Peng, *Zhongguo fangzhi jianshi*.

25. Bol, “Rise of Local History.”

26. See Zhongguo kexueyuan Beijing tianwentai, *Zhongguo difangzhi lianhe mulu*.

27. See Lai, *Zhongguo difangzhi*, 21-27; Peng, *Zhongguo fangzhi jianshi*, 4-8.

28. Hargett, “Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers.”

the whole process. Nowadays, in contrast, the PRC is the sole body responsible for compiling and publishing local gazetteers. A constant theme running through contemporary gazetteers is the emphasis on the need to present first and foremost a correct ideological picture and positive evaluation of both the CCP in particular and the government record in general and simultaneously to extol China's great economic and social achievements. By compiling gazetteers, a routinized historiography, the Party implants its will on official history and reinforces the legitimacy of its rules.<sup>29</sup>

To guarantee the political correctness of the gazetteers, the compilation is required to abide by state regulations. In 1963, the Publicity Department (in charge of ideology-related work) of the CCP Central Committee issued a circular entitled "Various Opinions about the Compilation of Local Gazetteers," proposing a system of censorship to control the publication and distribution of such works. This guideline document prescribes that a draft of a local gazetteer shall not be published until it has been reviewed and found unproblematic both politically and in terms of the protection of national secrecy.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of the "Provisional Guidelines on the New Compilation of Local Gazetteers" issued in 1985 was to institutionalize and standardize the boom in the compilation and production of local gazetteers. This document was finalized in 1997 and released in 1998 as the official "Guidelines on Compiling Local Gazetteers." The provisions of the Guidelines stipulated that Marxism-Leninism, the thoughts of Mao Zedong and the theory of Deng Xiaoping must be the guiding principles of any such work; and the administrative and editorial activities must be "guided by the CCP and undertaken by the government." "Political quality" was to be the principal feature in the gazetteer project. The regulation set out that "[compilers need to] pay special attention to the political quality of the gazetteers. Local gazetteers are not personal works, but 'political books' or 'official books' of a highly political nature...The view that gazetteers ought to be distanced from politics is wrong."<sup>31</sup>

Gazetteer compilation in the PRC was first revived in 1956 but its results were few and far between because of the upsets caused by continuous political disruption. Since the 1980s, when China embarked on the fast track of economic development, gazetteer compilation projects have been returned to the political agenda. As the saying goes, "The compilation of histories happens in prosperous times" (*shengshi xiushi*). Hence, with the breaking of a new economic dawn, it should come as no surprise that, with the economic upswing during the 1980s, the Chinese government decided that the time was ripe for new local histories to be compiled.

---

29. See e.g., Unger, *Using the Past*.

30. Zhongguo difangzhi zhidao xiaozu bangongshi, *Difangzhi gongzuo wenxian xuanbian*.

31. Zhongguo difangzhi zhidao xiaozu bangongshi. "1990 nian quanguo difangzhi gongzuo huiyi jiyao," 4-5.

National institutions on different administrative levels were in a position to provide fairly adequate political, human and financial resources for the compilation and publishing of gazetteers. On the national level, the China Steering Group for Local Gazetteers oversees offices or departments in provinces, cities and counties. The Local Gazetteer Office is a regular government unit, responsible for the compilation and publishing of gazetteers on its administrative level. The office is often headed by the top local government leader. In 1981, the Chinese Local Gazetteers Association was founded and this promoted the climax in the compilation of local gazetteers. By the 1990s, the first round of gazetteer work was finished, and more than 9,000 gazetteers had been compiled by 1992.<sup>32</sup>

Before the compilation of a comprehensive gazetteer of a particular place was initiated, the local official gazetteer office encouraged people in all walks of life to put together their own gazetteers and the corresponding authorities (for example, educational, industrial and commercial, transport and religious affairs) were responsible for supervising those that fell within their remit. In the late 1980s, the Xiamen RAB was assigned the task and portioned out it to different religious organizations. The Xiamen *Lianghui* accepted the assignment and swiftly set to work. By and large, the project was managed by the *Lianghui* and supervised by the RAB officials. The Old Pastor, then the *Lianghui* leader, entrusted this project to Guo Qinghuai.<sup>33</sup> In order to fill in the deficiencies in the historical sources, Guo Qinghuai visited libraries and archives in Fuzhou, Nanjing and Shanghai. He also consulted references in missionaries' memoirs and the *Chinese Recorder* and the *Christian Occupation of China*. In the early 1990s, the ideological restrictions were still strictly

---

32. Quanguo difangzhi ziliao gongzuo xiezuozu, *Zhongguo xin fangzhi mulu*.

33. Guo Qinghuai was born in the 1920s in Shanghang county, Western Fujian, one of the renowned Communist revolutionary bases. His childhood was spent against the disruption of the war, when the Communist-led Red Army established the Western Fujian Revolutionary Base and the Chinese Soviet Republic (1931-35), a rebel force in the eyes of the ruling KMT regime. After withstanding a two-year siege by overwhelming numbers of KMT troops, the CCP eventually abandoned this base and undertook the military retreat to Northern Shaanxi, known as the Long March (1934-36). It was at this time Guo's father was taken by the Communist army to serve as a doctor and never returned. He is said to have been executed as he refused to follow the Red Army, but the source was never verified. Guo was educated at Xiamen University and the Yenching Theological Seminary (restructured as the Yanjing Union Theological Seminary in the 1950s) and taught Biblical Geography at the Nanking Theological Seminary (reorganized as the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in the 1950s). During the Anti-Rightist Movement, Guo was denounced as a rightist and exiled to Xinjiang, a remote western region. As soon as he was redressed after 1979, he resumed teaching at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary from which he retired in 1988 and moved to Xiamen. Even though retired, he was still active in the Christian community and was invited to be a voluntary pastor by Trinity Church.

adhered to in China and Guo's writing was required to follow the Marxist-Leninist view of history. During the writing process, Guo traveled to America to visit his children and decided to settle there. He quit his writing duties and these were later transferred to Luo Anping, an editor at the Anxi County Gazetteer Office and a close relative of the Old Pastor. In view of the latter's recommendation and his work experience in a government department, Luo was considered politically reliable and transferred to Xiamen to undertake the work.

Luo finished the gazetteer in 1993, but both the *Lianghui* and the RAB were dissatisfied with the manuscript. As Luo was not originally from Xiamen, he was not very conversant with the Christian history of this area. As he was engaged in a government-sponsored project, Luo had been permitted to access archives, so he listed many events that had taken place during the various political movements of the Maoist era.<sup>34</sup> His description of the state oppression of Christianity and the role of the TSPM put the two in an embarrassing situation. After much toing and froing the manuscript was finally rejected. Besides the many palpable mistakes, the principal objection to the manuscript was that it was excessively politicized. In the eyes of the church, it was deficient in spiritual content and the government was nonplussed by the detailed descriptions of the repression of the Christian community, precisely what it was doing its best to erase from the collective memory. The project was shelved for two decades until the 2010s. To date, there has been no government-approved systematic history of Christianity in Xiamen.

Although Luo's manuscript was not approved, part of it was adapted for a twenty-five-page concise history in the *Xiamen City Gazetteer*. The indictment of "cultural aggression" and the accusation of the role of Christianity in the imperialist invasion have been omitted. This is not to say that the narrative obliterates all political motivations. The only official intervention mentioned is the Cultural Revolution and it is referred to several times as the reason for churches being shut. However, no details are given about the political campaign. The Cultural Revolution is used to cover all of the repression that resulted from the ultra-leftist line of the Gang of Four rather than from the Party.<sup>35</sup>

After three decades of trying, the government has failed to compile a systematic history of Christianity. The vacuum of officially authenticated texts has unintentionally resulted in a negotiable field for alternative narratives. Nevertheless, for the unofficial narratives the going has been rough, since the government has established a set of censorship procedures and strictly controls publications on Christianity.

---

34. Luo, *Xiamen Jidujiao zhuan ye zhi*, chap. 6.

35. Xiamen shi difangzhi bianweihui, *Xiamen shi zhi*, 3801-25.

## Individual Efforts at Making Alternative Narratives

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the RCA mission to China, a history book entitled “*The Reformed Church in China 1842-1951*” was published in 1992. The book describes Xiamen’s historical landscape in detail. When three printed copies were brought to Xiamen, the book aroused great interest among local history experts. In 2000, Yao Deming, a retired engineer, voluntarily assumed the responsibility for the translation and publication of the book. This was an extremely tough challenge for a middle-school dropout who does not understand English. He finally turned to a university lecturer in English-Chinese translation and committed himself to collecting old photographs and identifying proper nouns (that is, names of people and places). The journey was a long one and not until 2010 was the translation finished, when, financed by private donations and a major church, Yao was ready to have the Chinese version published. This in itself was a problematic undertaking.

Although it is now possible to publish some forms of Christian literature legally in Mainland China, at present the legal publication of Christian works in China is still strictly constrained.<sup>36</sup> If a book is to be legal, it must secure an officially issued International Standard Book Number. It can only be obtained from licensed publishing houses that operate under close official supervision. Without being subject to strict and cumbersome import procedures, Christianity-related books published in Taiwan, Hong Kong or anywhere else outside China cannot be legally sold in any of the existing bookstores or on the several book-selling Internet sites hosted in Mainland China.

Yao consulted an editorial director of a university press. The editor read the manuscript and explicitly pointed that, because the last chapter dealt with post-1949 political issues, any effort to try to publish it in Mainland China would be a forlorn hope. As he had served in the editorial team of the *Xiamen Historical Materials* for years, Kong Qinmai was more aware of the difficulty in publishing materials concerning post-1949 political matters. The final chapter about the forced termination of the RCA mission between 1949 and 1951 presented the biggest problem. As Kong said:

I have acted as a censor for the publishing authorities, so I know the hoops. By and large, the book is alright. But the last chapter, in particular the part on the RCA missionary Henry Poppen’s deportation and the details about those who were expelled under escort rudely, brutally, even savagely, is sensitive. This meant that the manuscript would not be acceptable by the authorities. Yao Deming came and sought my help. As an editor, I am practiced in the tactics of neutral description. I suggested they did not use any sensitive phraseology. The upshot is that we are not supposed to remain [literally] faithful to the original texts, but we should nevertheless convey the

---

36. Remmers, “Legal Christian Publishing in China.”

intent of the original book. We should not publish it illegally and should abide by the Party's publishing and religious policies. Our dilemma is that we must not deviate from the original book. In the last chapter, for instance, the words of "struggle assembly" (*douzheng dahui*) should be replaced by the far more neutral "holding a meeting" (*kaihui*) and "struggle" substituted by "stating the reason" (*shuoli*). Speaking of Poppen's deportation, the description should be rephrased along these lines: he was told to leave the country after the meeting held for "stating the reason."

When I asked if he had received any instructions from his superiors on how to review such books, Kong shook his head and continued: "When I was the editor-in-chief of the *Xiamen Historical Materials*, I was never given any particular instructions from the top on what kind of topics could or could not be published. We understood what the government wanted. That is tacit knowledge. Whenever we referred to the politically sensitive past [connected to Mao's political movements], we said 'as we all know the reason that,' just a couple of words instead of a fuller description." In fact, not all books about Christianity are difficult to publish. As Kong said:

I have examined many books about Xiamen, some of them about religion [Christianity]. Those books dealing with incidents related to Christianity and the intervention of foreign consuls were disapproved of. Their topics fell outside the mainstream. Our favorites have to do with cross-cultural exchanges between China and the West, and modern Western medicine and the like. Some of these topics could and should be learned about. The most important guiding principle in examining manuscripts is that they should belong to mainstream themes such as cultural exchanges, integration, development and other positive issues. I know how to deal with the government and make use of policies to the utmost extent.

In spite of his former official posts, good reputation and the influence he could exert on government officials, Kong has had personal experience of failure. Around 1999, a fine arts publishing house in Beijing organized a series of photographic books devoted to fifty cities or regions to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of "New China." At the publisher's request, Kong edited a volume entitled "*Old Photographs of Tibet*." There he met an impasse that nobody was willing to review the manuscript. Under the publishing regulations of the PRC, manuscripts are not given the go ahead for publication without having been examined by the authorities. If the published books can be shown to violate laws and regulations, the authors or editors and the authorities responsible for them will face punishment. The process dragged on for five years, but the volume was never published. As Kong said:

The fine arts publishing house wanted to publish the manuscript. However, nobody was willing to examine it, because no one was willing to take the risk. It took five years but the project was finally abandoned. The publisher sent the manuscript to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC), but the latter said the subject was religion and therefore it should be reviewed by the SARA. Later the SARA rejected it, offering an

explanation that the manuscript was about ethnic affairs. The manuscript resembled a ball that was being kicked several rounds between the two authorities. Eventually it was sent to the United Front Work Department [of the CCP Central Committee] that supervises both the SEAC and SARA. A deputy director read the manuscript but did not dare [to approve it] either. One of his concerns was that it might contain some “imperialist elements” in the photos. We could neither verify nor refute this point because most of the people in the pictures have already passed away.

As Kong suggests, the Chinese version of RCA history could not be published in Mainland China and therefore the only possibility was to find a publisher in Hong Kong or Taiwan. This might have solved the publishing problem but still left the matter of its distribution: without complying with the formal censorship and importation procedures all printed matter produced outside Mainland China is not permitted to enter the Mainland, let alone be circulated. Kong cast around and mobilized his resources and finally introduced Yao Deming to the C&M Company, a firm focusing on cultural products. This company has quite a complex background. Understanding the nature of C&M is impossible without some idea of one of the economic phenomena in post-1979 China. Early in the reform era, the government launched tax incentives to attract foreign investments. Undoubtedly this policy has contributed to the vast influx of inward-bound investments and the rapid development of China’s economy, but it has also inevitably created a situation in which many Chinese enterprises or investors establish overseas corporations and then return to the Mainland as foreign investors with access to preferential treatment. As said the manager of C&M:

Our company is itself a concoction. It is not wholly state-owned, but state-owned assets preponderate. This firm is deemed an independent company that is fully foreign owned, nevertheless the major shareholder is the state. The firm’s idiosyncratic identities make it easier for us to do business. The procedure is simple. Whenever we need to, we choose one of the particular identities. The Taiwanese publishing house is also under our control. It is a complicated set-up. The most important objective is not to violate policy. Hence, in this instance, the manuscript was published under the imprint of a Taiwanese publishing house, a choice that meant it was exempt from scrutiny by the RAB and the publishing authorities in Mainland China. Instead, the company itself was responsible for its review. And we actually own and run the Taiwanese publisher. The whole process was legal. Public distribution through bookstores requires the intervention of an import company.

Under the imprint of a Taiwanese publisher, the Chinese version of the book was printed in Xiamen, and the copies were naturally spread around. Under the terms of the publishing policy, the printed copies should have been packed and delivered to Taiwan and should not have been circulated before being censored and permitted to enter the Mainland. As it stands, the copies cannot be sold in bookstores and can only be distributed through personal channels. Crucially, the fact that C&M has the

privilege of avoiding official examination of the manuscript does not mean the elimination of political risks for the firm and its manager. As the manager said:

We are the publisher and bear the main responsibility. If the authorities at the top blame us, I shall be penalized and removed from my position and the firm ordered to close down for two or three years. The company could be finished even within a year [not to mention two or three years]. The state's attitude toward religious culture has unquestionably changed. Books on Buddhism used to be difficult to publish. But in recent years the restrictions have been relaxed as Buddhism is considered an ameliorating factor in maintaining social stability and educating the people. [Taiwanese Buddhist] Master Hsing Yun's books have been published in the Mainland, as his books have been acknowledged to be expressions of the Buddhist spirit. Nevertheless, books about Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam are still difficult to publish. Only if they deal with historical topics might it be possible to have them published. All books on religions are required to be subjected to examination by the RAB and many of them are published by designated presses. Despite this change in attitude, most publishers are unwilling to touch them. To do publishing business in China, it is essential to learn how to work around the edges of policy. We are not supposed to violate policy or publicize the book's release. Never ever look for trouble!

Even though C&M agreed to publish the book, the translators and editors were cautious about the wording used. Some details about how missionaries were insulted and humiliated at the time of their deportation were deliberately omitted. For example, in the description of local militiamen humiliating two women missionaries, Ruth Broekema and Jean Nienhuis, these details were deleted: "To show their disdain for the women, one of the young men spit [spat] on his hands and wiped them on Nienhuis's face. When she took a handkerchief to wipe her mouth, he grabbed it, threw it on the floor, and stamped on it."<sup>37</sup> In the translation of the details of the public trial of Henry Poppen, the fact that he was "considered a common criminal" when he was deported, "with his hands tied behind him, was separated from the others and placed in jail" is passed over in silence.<sup>38</sup> It makes no reference to the government's ruse when, at Poppen's public accusation trial attended by over ten thousand, he "was allowed to speak briefly in his own defense, although the loudspeakers were turned off for that part of the trial."<sup>39</sup> In the Chinese version, it says the sound quality of the speakers at that part was so bad his voice could not be clearly heard. Words in the original texts like "occupation" or "Communist takeover" were translated as "liberation," a term uniformly used in official narratives to describe the just Communist revolution that "liberated" the Chinese people from the oppression of the "three big mountains" (*sanzuo dashan*, namely: imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism). The

---

37. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 337.

38. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 335.

39. De Jong, *Reformed Church in China*, 334.

Chinese version does still remain critical of the Communist Party but nevertheless strikes out particulars about the persecution of missionaries. This trend signifies that, as far as Chinese politics are concerned “detailed description is more powerful than sharp criticism.”<sup>40</sup>

Rather than being sold in bookstores, copies of the Chinese version of the book have been widely circulated through unofficial channels among the Xiamen Christian community and even by government agencies. At one point the Gulangyu officials were actually intending to sponsor the publication. They finally gave up the idea precisely because they were so aware of the political sensitivity of post-1949 politics. Nevertheless, taking a pragmatic point of view as soon as the copies of the Chinese version were circulated, the Gulangyu authorities added the book to its historical materials project to help boost their WHS application. Apparently the officials had shelved their concern about sensitive matters, although they were still mindful of the publishing regulations. Their rationale seemed to be that it is the responsibility of the publishing and religious affairs authorities to supervise the publication of historical texts relating to Christianity. Therefore, as the Gulangyu government is a bureaucratic unit, supervisory duties do not fall within the remit of its officials. Later, I realized that even the RAB officials knew about the book’s release and had turned a blind eye to it. By and large, the local cadres are not particularly motivated to carry out ideological controls of Christianity and tend to acquiesce in whatever the civilians do.

The book, a significant source for Xiamen history, has elicited an enthusiastic response both inside and outside the Christian community. Two months after its publication, the *Xiamen Evening News* (*Xiamen wanbao*) carried a report about the book.<sup>41</sup> The reporter Sun Xiaowei did not eschew words like “Christianity” or “missionary.” Rather than seeing it as a religious undertaking, Sun treated the mission as a cultural phenomenon, looking at it from the perspectives of cultural exchange and integration (the “mainstream” as Kong said). Over the past several years, this newspaper has carried a few reports to do with the contribution of Christianity to Xiamen society. In 2015, the *Xiamen Evening Newspaper* launched two feature articles about Xiamen culture and education that had been promoted by the missions.<sup>42</sup> This despite the fact that, in 2003 when Sun moved to Xiamen, nobody ever uttered a word in praise of the missionaries in public. Each time he mentioned the Christian past, he had to quote the CPPCC’s historical accounts and criticize the missionaries. Even

---

40. Anthropologist Xiang Biao’s article on the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement of 2014 was published in a Mainland Chinese journal. Although the empirical description of the movement was deleted, to his surprise, the criticism of the Chinese government was retained. This has led Xiang to speculate that, “detailed description is more powerful than sharp criticism.” See Xiang, “*Women ruhe xushu dangxia, jinru lishi*,” note 3 on page 100.

41. *Xiamen wanbao*, “Ya Bili jiqi houjizhe men.”

42. See *Xiamen wanbao* of February 1, 2015, and November 1, 2015.

though the political atmosphere has been relaxed, the story of post-1949 Christianity that might easily invite trouble is still forbidden territory as far as Sun is concerned.

In contrast, as an official organ the *Xiamen Daily* strictly adheres to the Party guidelines and seldom reports on Christianity. In actual fact, throughout the momentous history of the political movements of the Mao era, as the only legal newspaper the *Xiamen Daily* propagated the Party policy toward Christianity and actively promoted the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. It put itself in the forefront of those attacking missionaries. Even since the beginning of the reform era, it has seldom referred to Christianity, either positively or negatively. This is very different to its policy toward Buddhism and popular religions, in particular when it is discussing the religious communications between Xiamen and Taiwan. Although both the *Xiamen Daily* and the *Xiamen Evening Newspaper* are supervised by the Publicity Department of the CCP Xiamen Committee, we should not overlook the difference between them. The latter is a semi-official newspaper which cannot rely financially on a steady income either from subscriptions from work units or from state subsidies. Therefore to maintain itself it needs to attract a wide readership. Unsurprisingly, special features on Christianity and Xiamen in the past have proved of interest to its local audience. As a party newspaper, the *Xiamen Daily* that is financed by subscriptions by work units and state subsidies never needs to worry about the market.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, there is no need for it to touch on Christianity-related issues that have been declared forbidden territory by the administrative organs.

Besides the translation of the RCA book, many people are also interested in other original writings about Christian history. Zhu Zixian, a preacher of the Museum Church,<sup>44</sup> an unregistered church, is one such person. Sponsored by a Christian bookstore-owner, Zhu authored a manuscript entitled “*Following the Footprint of Love*,” focusing on missionaries and influential church members.<sup>45</sup> Technically speaking, it is hardly a historical work. The author has never had any historical training and the storyline of the manuscript is intended to be light reading for laymen. Ninety percent of the contents (for example, mission schools and hospitals) are very common knowledge and can be found in the official *Xiamen Historical Materials* of the 1990s. In spite of its lightweight content, the volume faced many challenges before it finally saw the light of day. The first problem stemmed from the position of the Museum Church in the early days of the People’s Republic. As a preacher of the Museum Church, Zhu is a faithful follower of the church founder, the late Yang Enli, who refused to join the

---

43. For types of newspapers in China, in particular their institutional affiliation and finances, see Stockmann, *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule*, chap. 3.

44. The house church is adjacent to a museum and was therefore named after it by the church members.

45. See Zhu, *Gensui ai de jiaozong*. I am grateful to Zhu Zixian who supplied me with a copy of his unpublished manuscript.

TSPM in the 1950s and insisted on holding gatherings in her private house. She was put in prison and labor camps for sixteen years so that she could undergo “reform through labor.”<sup>46</sup> Her younger brother was sentenced to six years of so-called “reform.” After being released in the late 1970s, Yang Enli continued to lead her house gathering and it became a leading church in the house church community of Fujian. Yang gained a reputation at home and abroad in particular after the wide circulation of the documentary *The Cross: Jesus in China*.<sup>47</sup> As a spiritual leader of the house church community, Yang Enli had a profound effect on Zhu and his fellow workers. It is not surprising that Zhu devoted one very detailed chapter to the church he has been serving and the suffering of his spiritual mentor. Apparently, the Museum Church has been a thorn in the side of authorities ever since its foundation, and is still active, undeterred by occasional official interventions. Under the religious regulations, as it has not registered with the official *Lianghui* organizations, its status is illegal. This is not an exceptional situation. Although house churches do exist throughout the country, the government does not admit their legitimacy and takes repressive actions against them from time to time. Therefore, these details in Zhu’s book have prevented his manuscript from passing the official censorship.

Another sensitive episode has to do with the sufferings of Shen Shengyu (1894-1969), the principal of the Anglo-Chinese College, and his wife Shao Youwen (1903-82), the principal of the Lok Tek Girls’ School. During the Maoist era both of them were imprisoned in Longyan, a remote region of Western Fujian. The fact that Shen died in prison embarrassed the government, particularly when he was declared innocent after his death. After her release, Shao never joined the TSPM organization and worked as a freelance preacher until her death. Shen and Shao were both college graduates and as principals of famous schools, local celebrities who educated a number of students who have later become influential in Xiamen society. After 1949, they became political pariahs and their children were deprived of access to higher education. Recently, their students have commemorated them on different occasions. Preacher Zhu Zixian’s description of the couple, in particular Shen Shengyu as being a martyr to his faith, has put the government in an embarrassing situation. Certainly the authorities declared Shen and Shao’s innocence as early as the 1980s, but never apologized for their suffering, and the same can be said of a vast number of political victims. Because he wrote about these two episodes, over the past five years Zhu’s manuscript has never passed the censorship. Even so, Zhu has still steadfastly refused to strike out the sensitive parts.

---

46. For Yang’s suffering under Mao’s rule, see Yang, *Yejian de ge*.

47. It was produced by Yuan Zhiming who fled to the United States after the Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 and later converted and became an active pastor.

## Recording the Suffering of the Church

At the beginning of the new century, churches in Xiamen began the work of collecting retrospective accounts and recently have periodically published booklets. The most important of these are Trinity Church's *Good News (Jiayin)*, the Bamboo Church's *The Vineyard (Putayuan)* and the New Street Church's *The Tree of Life (Shengming shu)*. The contents are usually personal testimonies of members of the congregation. The most remarkable example of recent church history is the book-length history of Trinity Church. The common practice of churches in Xiamen is to publish special memorial volumes focusing on congratulations from the *Lianghui* leaders and government officials rather than on historical matters. As Ma Zhenyu said, Trinity Church was determined to produce a different volume "emphasizing the Christian history, theology and leadership of God so as to educate the younger generation, show the glory of God and afford people hope and faith." The history book "*Trinity Church 1934-2014*" that was released at the church's eightieth anniversary celebration, contains over 150,000 characters and hundreds of old pictures.



*Booklets issued by the New Street Church, the Bamboo Church and Trinity Church respectively.*

*Photo by author.*

In order to produce the book, the editorial group of *Good News* did its very best to collect personal testimonies. Since 2011, the issues have contained more pieces about the histories of the church. They include essays on missionaries and mission schools and hospitals. An oral history series on 2012 was composed of three essays on Shen Shengyu and Shao Youwen. These attracted the most attention from the church members. In the essays, their daughter recollects the couple's suffering.

They were both arrested and imprisoned in 1951, in 1956 and again in 1966. The TSPM organization ejected them, so they were no longer able to serve. In the decades that followed, their children were implicated and hence became nonpersons. They were repudiated by universities and sent to remote mountainous regions to do manual labor. Misled by the pressure exerted in that era, we were disobedient. When our parents were released and returned home, there was no welcome but criticism of them and their faith from their beloved daughters... They were arrested three times. In 1966, the year of the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, big-character posters (*dazibao*) encircled our small rented room. We had to bend forward to enter. One day, my parents were taken to be paraded [through the streets]. It was said that they were forced to kneel in the street with their hands tied behind them. Shortly afterwards, they were put in jail. While my father died in prison in 1966 [should be 1969], my mother was jailed for six years and not released until 1972.<sup>48</sup>

Another popular oral history published in 2012 is about Yan Baoling who committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution. The narrator, who was Yan's neighbor, recalls the details of her suffering.

Because she was a sociable person, the Red Guards slandered her as a courtesan and hung a pair of worn shoes (*poxie*) around her neck as she was made to stand in front of the crowd.<sup>49</sup> One day, a group of fierce Red Guards came to the headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and confiscated all Bibles and faith-related books. They threw printed matter on the ground and burned it as the [YWCA] staff members kneeling around the fire. Yan Baoling was the director-general and was therefore ordered to kneel at the very front. Her legs were burnt. But this was not the end of the nightmare. A couple of days afterwards she was ordered to accompany the Red Guards to raid her house on Gulangyu. I did not dare to speak to her and could only watch silently. A few days later Yan jumped from the third story of the YWCA building.

A female elder of Trinity Church says that, when the *Good News* published such personal reminiscences, the copies were particularly welcomed by the church members and there was no trouble in distributing them. Those celebrities of the Xiamen church who had made great contributions to local society were rewarded with overwhelming attention. However, neither the official CPPCC historical work nor the efforts of individuals or churches spoke with the voice of the ordinary Christians who come from below but constitute the majority. Generally speaking, the production of Christian history in Xiamen has been a mission or passion confined to the cultural elite. For the uneducated and socially marginalized individual Christians, as the silent majority, their voice has tended to be lost. Under the Anti-Rightist Movement, seven

---

48. *Good News*. April 2012, 11-13.

49. In China, this is an insulting reference to women who are alleged to have committed sexual misdemeanors and are accordingly disparaged as "worn shoes."

members of Trinity Church, among them one preacher, two elders or deacons and four lay Christians, were denounced as rightists and publicly accused. One of the laymen was called Huang Douya (literally meaning “soybean sprout”). His name allows us to conjure up an image of him: a person who was born and raised in a poor family. Following the tradition among the poor that a humble name could make an impoverished person live longer by not tempting fate, his parents gave him a derogatory name (*jianming*). Although Huang was referred to by Ma Zhenyu during our conversation, his name and suffering were never mentioned in the church’s history book. Huang Douya is an example of a person who could not catch people’s interest and inspire their respect or feelings of nostalgia.

Ma Zhenyu, a member of Trinity Church and a retired engineer with a college diploma, was entrusted with the task of writing the book of the church history in May 2011. Despite the fact he had not received any historical training, Ma has his own view of history. He disagrees with the prevailing opinion about the way in which historical periods should be divided. Although many academic scholars or common people do tend to agree that 1949 spelt the beginning of political repression, Ma insists that the political situation did not deteriorate until the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957. During the very early stages of Communism, Trinity Church continued to prosper, a fact recorded by the then incumbent Preacher Wen, who published an essay in *Heavenly Wind*, the TSPM journal.<sup>50</sup>

On reading this book I was surprised to discover so many paragraphs devoted to the political repression of Christianity in general and Trinity Church in particular. When I asked Ma if it is not overly sensitive to mention the issues, he responded confidently:

Politically sensitive? No. I am critical of the Communist Party and I slap their faces with their own hands [a Chinese phrase akin to hoisting them with their own petard]. But I have never fabricated the evidence. I have consulted the archives and included the reference numbers as they appear in the book. If you [the authorities] arrest me, I shall show you the archives and inform you of the sources. I have quoted Pastor Zhang Hanqing’s comment: “Each time a campaign is launched, Christians will have to suffer.” It is true. They [the Party cadres] themselves have spoken in this vein. Since 1957 it has been their religious policy to treat Christians as class enemies (*jieji diren*). I have cited a paragraph of the CCP Central Committee. We should speak with the facts and should not spout nonsense as the Communist Party does. I have written that Trinity Church hung out the national flag [of the PRC] in April 1952 in obedience to the official instructions to “love one’s country and love one’s religion.” I have a photo of that scene.

I have concealed some hatred in the text, but have done it covertly. Those who have lived through the political movements will understand my intention, but those who did not share these experiences will not be able to make head nor tail of it. Perhaps

---

50. Wen, “Sanyi tang.”

they might even consider it nonsense. I do not intend to publicize it [the political repression]. I just underline the real history rather than whitewash the government's actions by saying everything was shipshape and Bristol fashion. I admit I do dwell on the past and I have not written much about the present situation. Of course, the manuscript will not pass the [official] censorship and I have never dreamed of publishing it formally.

When I assumed responsibility for writing the history, I preferred the title "*Sanyi fengyun*" (literally meaning "The Winds and Clouds of Trinity Church"). I like to talk about the class struggle and how the Communist Party fooled the people. I am also keen to expose the ugly realities in society, but these outrages are not pleasing in God's sight. The church committee suggested the current title.

Although Ma Zhenyu concedes it was unpleasing in the sight of God to reveal so many ugly facts and conceal hatred in the texts, he is stilling willing to play the "cat and mouse game" with the authorities. This game seems to offer him a sense of accomplishment. In contrast to Ma's enthusiasm for revealing the harsh treatment of Christianity by the CCP, in his talks with me he also referred to the weakness of the clergy during the turbulent times, although he omits any negative remarks about them in his book. Instead, he writes that: "Trinity Church members have witnessed the Sino-Japanese War and the Cultural Revolution, to say nothing of a series of political struggles and persecutions. However, as the servants of God, they have endured this hardship as it was imposed on them and none of them has betrayed the Lord in exchange for wealth and status or forsaken their missions halfway."<sup>51</sup>

The history book turned out to be a great success. Both clergy and common church members praised the text highly. Thousands of copies were distributed among the Christian community and the overseas Chinese Christians as well. Christians can learn not only the history of Trinity Church but also that of the Xiamen church from the book.

## Conclusion

This chapter explores the nature of the encounter between official history and unofficial narrative through the lens of the writing of Christian history. The historical production in a zone of such intense cultural work has made Christian history a particularly significant site through which to articulate the confluences of Communist ideology about imperialism and sovereignty, of unofficial efforts and of popular nostalgia. The regional and historical particularities of Xiamen throw these issues into sharp relief.

---

51. Sanyi tang, *Sanyi tang bashi nian*, 8.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the CPPCC's collection and publication of personal testimonies produced a unified, coherent narrative whose purpose was to affirm the Party's legitimacy and its role as the liberator of the Chinese nation previously sunk in misery. Christianity, denounced for its apparently inextricable links with imperialism, was targeted intensively in official historical works. The frame set up by the CPPCC project squeezed and colonized the space of private memory. Today, whenever the people of Xiamen think about reconstructing its Christian history, what they find are excessively homogeneous accounts and far less living memory. Decades of extensive ideological indoctrination has shaped people's way of thinking, a fact made clear during my talks with Xiamen residents who tended to admit Christianity's dishonor in modern history before dealing with the points. The state has successfully imposed set-piece rhetoric on its citizens. Therefore, when the common people talk about Christian history their vocabulary tends to be monotonous. A parallel plot is represented in George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The vocabulary of Newspeak, Oceania's official language, is radically reduced as the ruling group strictly controls the fluency of expression of those they rule.<sup>52</sup>

Comparatively speaking, the Xiamen authorities show more tolerance for the narrative of pre-1949 Christianity. Their views on the post-1949 period, in particular the stories relating to the political movements of the Maoist era that reveal the fault lines in the Communist regime, mean that the restrictions they placed on any alternative narratives have been extremely strict. Consequently, the production of Christian history is easier if political events are omitted. In the blame game, when it alludes to its political mistakes, the government usually makes the Cultural Revolution in general the scapegoat but does not allow details to be publicized. The government closes archives and forces publishers to delete any detailed repression of Christianity, since it is well aware that details of the Party's mistakes will damage its legitimacy and the Cultural Revolution could be used as a vehicle to give vent to public grievances. In the representation of their city's glorious past, the Xiamen authorities publicize the elite Christians positively. An unexpected consequence is that these images of elite Christians are playing an important role in depoliticizing Christianity and in making it part of the city's proud cultural and historical legacy.

However, in recent years, the Xiamen government's imperative of mobilizing cultural workers in order to authenticate a narrative has created conditions in which individuals have been able to articulate themselves creatively. These cannot be defined simply as acts of resistance to or indeed complicity with the hegemony of the state, nor can they be regarded as voices that have been silenced by and need to be freed from the domination of the official discourse. Instead, it has been precisely the state's systematic penetration of and attempts to dominate the historical narratives that have

---

52. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

unintentionally paved the way for the emergence of alternative voices and perspectives through which to navigate the fissures in post-Mao ideology so as to inscribe a very different set of meanings on historical events. The twenty-four monographs published by the CPPCC Xiamen Committee since the beginning of the millennium indicate that even within the government-sponsored historical project, the state is not able to dominate all aspects.

After three decades of efforts, the Xiamen RAB and the *Lianghui* have not yet compiled a systematic history of Christianity. For the point of view of the citizens, the vacuum left by the non-appearance of an official history has given them an opportunity to reconstruct the Christian past without being hamstrung by any requisite reference sample. As the official restrictions on social memory have been watered down, civilians can find different channels through which to release what they want to say. Nevertheless, the conclusion of this chapter is not that the government is prepared to accept this situation lying down. In fact, the three-decade long special gazetteer detailing Christianity in Xiamen had never been given up. At the end of 2015, a manuscript was finally finished by the fourth writer to attempt this project. This manuscript was later reviewed by the authorities and the Xiamen *Lianghui*. An officially recognized systematic history of Christianity is beginning to take shape.

Although the history of Christianity in China during the Cultural Revolution is still “a black hole,”<sup>53</sup> the locals are dedicated to piecing the fragmented memories together. To some extent, the collective memories of the era of early Communism are still impeding church-state relations. The state has never apologized for the suffering of churches or individual Christians nor has it compensated them for their losses. In the eyes of the Christian community, the Party has never been willing to accept its responsibility. The Party leaders are conscious that the handling of this historical issue should not progress any further. If it were to, the historical fact might harm the legitimacy of the Party. Apparently the past should be dealt with remains an obstinate issue that refuses to go away from the heart of present politics. From a local point of view, the people of Xiamen no longer need to obey the political logic and they are showing great enthusiasm for reconstructing its Christian history, in particular reveling in unearthing almost forgotten stories and bringing them to light. There is a general consensus among the Christian community and cultural workers that the Cultural Revolution is largely to blame for the dearth of historical materials. Almost without exception, the fire set by the Red Guards at the YWCA is brought up in conversations but, apart from this, they can cite no other instances. Until recently, after their reopening most of the churches have not yet taken the trouble to set up any sort of system to restore their historical materials. Their lack of enthusiasm for preserving history does not really have much to do with the Cultural Revolution.

---

53. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 185-86.

Instead, it sheds light on the fact that the government, churches and individuals are all disposed to use the Cultural Revolution as a practical tool to explain missing memory or hiatuses in history.

In Xiamen today, the writing of Christian history remains largely a passion of the cultural elite. They have paid great attention to the elite Christians who made a large contribution to establishing the city's glorious past and consequently local pride. In stark contrast, the voice of the early converts from the bottom layers of society, who were frequently uneducated, economically deprived and socially marginalized (Huang Douya, for example, mentioned above), still remain silent, in need of a voice. This imbalance also occurs in terms of gender. Compared to the male converts in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, the vast number of female converts in the Xiamen area, with the exception of a very few examples of outstanding women such as Shao Youwen, a preacher and principal, and Zhou Shu'an, a well-known music educator and composer who was educated at Harvard, are often left nameless. In the Christian history, the pioneering Chinese women of the early missionary period have left very few personal records and were given scant coverage in missionary reports.<sup>54</sup> This situation is not confined to China, it can be found throughout most of the world. For example, in her study of Christianity in the Middle East, Heleen Murre-van den Berg points out that the most difficult question to answer is how the early missionary activities informed the women's daily lives (for instance, marriage and career) and stimulated women to rethink their roles in family and society.<sup>55</sup> Recently, this issue has begun to be paid very limited attention in the historical study of Chinese Christianity.<sup>56</sup>

The enterprise of history writing in Xiamen has not attracted much attention from well-trained historians. University scholars do not get involved. A few of the university professors I interviewed look down on the "low quality" of the local history experts and definitely have no interest. On the other hand, as far as government officials are concerned, academics are not welcome in the government-sponsored history projects as they are difficult to discipline and are not particularly obedient in following the government guidelines.

---

54. Lutz, "Women in Imperial China."

55. Murre-van den Berg, "Protestant Missions and Middle Eastern Women."

56. For example, in her historical study of Christianity in the Chaozhou area, Xiangyu Cai gives an vivid picture of the experiences of ordinary Christian women. See Cai, "Christianity and Gender."

## Chapter 6

### The American Face of Christianity: Global Mission and Local Politics

Around 2000, the problem of dwindling congregations began to surface. Trinity Church was particularly hard hit and Christianity on Gulangyu in general was affected. To retrieve the glorious past, Old Pastor Wen, who then was head pastor at Trinity, worked hard to establish gathering points on populous Xiamen Island and to develop new approaches to attract young converts. At this critical point in time, an American Christian agency entered upon the scene and initiated its missionary activities for young adults. Of course, the two communities could not but encounter each other and a cooperation was born. Through the Global South movement, the ambitious American church has been attempting to play a greater role in the global mission enterprise.<sup>1</sup> This encounter is important to the study of Chinese Christianity and the present global mission should certainly not be overlooked. The analysis in this chapter will shed light on the interplay between this international Christian presence and local politics.<sup>2</sup>

The enormous economic development that China has experienced since the 1980s has stimulated massive flows of international migration. Just in the past few years, international immigration to China has swelled in numbers and diversified to a far greater extent than ever before.<sup>3</sup> Many among these migrants are devoted to the Christian mission. As we have seen in Chapter 2, foreign missions to China are not a new phenomenon; their history can be traced back almost one and a half thousand years. There was a sharp break after the founding of the People's Republic, a time at which foreign missionaries were expelled and the links between the Chinese church and the international Christian church were severed. Under the terms of the religious policy, foreigners are still forbidden to establish any organizations or sites for missionary activity. Furthermore, they are not allowed to solicit followers among

---

1. See e.g., Borthwick, *Western Christians in Global Mission*.

2. The “glocalization” paradigm that attempts to produce a combined perspective on globalization and localization has been adopted in the study of Chinese Christianity. See e.g., Ng, *Chinese Christianity*.

3. See Pieke, “Immigrant China.”

Chinese citizens, not to mention contemplating appointing any religious staff.<sup>4</sup> Foreign involvement (even if only perceived) will greatly increase the likelihood of having restrictions imposed on the organization. The discovery of the presence of any international funds or staff would arouse the suspicion of the Chinese government that such activities were being engineered from abroad, perhaps for such political purposes as “peaceful evolution.” If such a presence were to be discovered, if they had indeed transgressed the policy, Chinese Christian groups would face charges of receiving foreign funding or allowing foreigners to preach.

Despite this policy and its ensuing restrictions, a few researchers have pointed out that foreign Christian groups have always been able to participate in the development of Chinese Christianity in different ways. Daniel Bays and Ryan Dunch both talk about English teachers in missions, but without giving any field details.<sup>5</sup> Hunter and Chan refer to the financial and training support received from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other countries.<sup>6</sup> Nanlai Cao mentions the visits to and preaching in the Wenzhou church by Chinese American Christian entrepreneurs, whose “high morals,” “politeness” and “humble manners” deeply impressed local believers.<sup>7</sup> A few scholars refer to the active participation of the South Korean Protestant community in the training of clergy in China.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to these very brief references unsupported by detailed evidence, Lyu Yunfang’s study has made no bones about the missionary connections of foreign teachers (*waijiao*) in Xiamen today.<sup>9</sup> Miwa Hirono’s research in minority ethnic areas of western China reveals the ways in which present-day international Christian non-governmental organizations have adapted to the current political situation and propagate their religious values through their promotion and support of development projects.<sup>10</sup>

So far very limited scholarly empirical evidence has been produced to prove the presence of international Christian agencies in present-day China, especially any connections between the Chinese church and its foreign counterparts via unofficial channels.<sup>11</sup> As Dunch writes, “The number of Protestants associated with these

---

4. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi zonghe yanjiuzu & Guowuyuan zongjiao shiwuju zhengce faguisi, *Xin shiqi zongjiao gongzuo wenxian xuanbian*, 273-74.

5. Bays, “Chinese Protestant Christianity Today,” 503; Dunch, “Protestant Christianity in China Today,” 202.

6. Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*, 80-81.

7. Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*, 60-61.

8. E.g., Baugus and Park, “Korean Presbyterian Mission to China,” 93; Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*; McLeister, “Three-Self Protestant Church,” 238.

9. Lyu, “Xiamen waiji Jidutu jiaoshi de zongjiao huodong.”

10. Hirono, *Civilizing Missions*.

11. There are a few books edited by non-PRC churches or ministers that refer to the presence of international Christian agencies. These publications have seldom been mentioned

Western-based efforts and their relationship to the wider church in China are not clear.”<sup>12</sup> In the eyes of the Chinese state, any growth, however limited, in such efforts has heightened its political sensitivity toward transnational Christianity. Aware of the high risk of expulsion they face, most foreign missionary undertakings are clandestine, random, informal and consequently lack consistency. Under the present circumstances, foreign evangelists have to face the fact that it is virtually out of the question for them to keep up any long-term relationship with prospective converts or to continue to remain in contact with and stimulate any new converts whom they might have made. Apparently, neither the Christian church nor lay Christians are willing to make their involvement known. Therefore, given the circumstances any thorough investigation of this sort of international Christian agency would seem unlikely to be successful. However, as a researcher focusing on Christianity in contemporary China, I had the good fortune to be given access to just such an international missionary organization.

### **Rainbow: An American Mission in Xiamen Today**

Sitting in a café, Larry told me about his early life, a story of conversion and dedication.<sup>13</sup> Larry’s parents were both born and raised in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province. To escape from the Great Famine (1959-61), they fled to Hong Kong, then a British crown colony. Larry was born there in 1965 and migrated to France with his family a few years later. As did many overseas Chinese, Larry’s parents opened a restaurant in which he often worked as a waiter. Despite being raised a Christian, Larry did not really accept the faith. Not until the age of seventeen did conversion happen in his life. He went to college in the United States and it was here he converted to Christianity. During the next few years, Larry completed his education and obtained a master’s degree in engineering, and subsequently worked as an engineer. He met and fell in love with Anna who had migrated to the United States from Taiwan with her Christian family and worked as a prosecutor after obtaining her law degree. They married and had three daughters. They took out bank loans so that they could buy a house and a car. Larry often compares his two lives in two countries, developed and developing, to his audience and refers to the reason they decided to give up their

---

in the pages of serious academic works. For example, Baugus and Park write that at least 3,500 South Korean missionaries are serving in Mainland China, and a number of Korean pastors have been able to preach to officially registered congregations without restrictions and have even provided continuing education to *Lianghui* pastors. See Baugus and Park, “Korean Presbyterian Mission to China,” 91-93.

12. Dunch, “Protestant Christianity in China Today,” 202.

13. The members of Rainbow all use English names. In this chapter, I follow the tradition and adopt English pseudonyms for people referred to.

fortunate life in America and spread the gospel in China. Larry says they were unable to stop thinking about the meaning of life until they were convinced of what was the right thing to do by Anna's father, the Reverend Zhang. Zhang, a retired pastor of a Chinese church in the United States who had actively ministered in China, happened to be in Xiamen at that time. On his recommendation, Larry and Anna finally decided to settle in this coastal city and establish a ministry organization.

Speaking of why he chose to be an evangelist, Larry said:

We once lived the American dream. However, engineering was not a passion of mine but a means to make a living. It is theology that really interests me. After working as an engineer for four years, I decided to do a master's degree in theology. At that time, I had been working on a master's in engineering for two semesters. I quit that program in order to concentrate on my theological study. It usually takes three years to finish the theological training. Nevertheless, it took me seven years because I had to take care of my family and young children, and I also served in the Chinese-American church. During that period, I learned Greek and Hebrew.

In our conversation, Larry illustrated their social status in America by citing an unforgettable experience: "My wife worked as a prosecutor. Once while driving we were stopped by a policeman, but we were let go as soon as Anna showed her prosecutor's credentials." I have heard this version several times from those young people who admire the couple for the sacrifice of their comfortable way of life in America and their subsequent devotion to Christian mission. As a college student commented: "Their dedication is extraordinary. Not everyone can achieve this. It really touched me." The couple also emphasized what was happening in Chinese society, as Anna said: "The youth here lack faith and spiritual pursuits. So I decided to stay and guide them to know of the Lord." They sold their house and car, and paid off all their bank loans. In 2003, they began their big adventure as new-era missionaries. Before long, they had rented a private property in Banyan Village, a fishing village near a reputable university. They initiated a discreet evangelistic ministry for a service of worship for young people and named it Rainbow. Because of its arch-like shape, a rainbow is usually associated metaphorically with a bridge. The very purpose of Rainbow is to "bridge the young Chinese people to the Lord" as it claims, and, I might add from my observations, to American society and culture.

In the very beginning, the Saturday gathering drew only eight or so people, but this soon grew to over 200. Hence, Larry and Anna had to rent a bigger private property. On particular occasions, they had to put some of the people attending in another hall from where they could follow the service via cable television. Unsurprisingly, the gatherings of large numbers of people attracted the attention of the police. Anxious about the precariousness of their situation, the couple's first priority was how to prevent trouble. Pastor Zhang, Anna's father, had close links with Chinese church communities and sought the help of resourceful Old Pastor Wen (see Chapter 4). Wen

and the church committee were glad to be of assistance as Trinity Church was in urgent need of developing a younger congregation on Xiamen Island. In his own words, the Old Pastor's role was to "cover" (*zhègāi*) Rainbow's preaching activities. Nominally Rainbow became a youth fellowship of Trinity Church, and hence nominally operated as the church's gathering point for young believers. To ensure a liaison between Trinity Church and Rainbow, the former sent its incumbent preacher, Mo Liwen, to take charge. After her appointment, Mo was responsible for dealing with the authorities. Trinity also supplied Rainbow with a piano, dozens of plastic chairs and monthly rental subsidies to cover its rising expenditure.

From a financial point of view, in order to maintain a good relationship and secure a steady stream of support, Larry and Anna visit American churches from time to time. As a result of their efforts, over the past decade Rainbow has been financially sponsored by American churches. Encouraged by its rapid growth, once it was up and running smoothly, the couple established another gathering point called Kindness Family, focusing on "improving the quality of marriage and children's education." Members organize activities of a similar sort to those I have observed in Rainbow. Participants are mainly young and middle-aged couples with children. They bring their offspring to Kindness Family and the Rainbow members babysit for them, leaving these couples free to concentrate on the activities. As in Rainbow, there are bilingual talks and discussions.

In 2007, the Banyan Village Christian gathering point was granted legal status as a venue for religious activity, and the following year what had been a deserted church was "(re)built" in the church compound. Three years later it was promoted to the status of a formal "church" (*jiatāng*) with the joint approval of the provincial *Lianghui* organizations and the religious affairs authorities. Preacher Mo was assigned by the Xiamen *Lianghui* to take charge of the Banyan Village Church and was ordained a pastor in November 2012. After the Banyan Village Church had been granted legitimate status as a *jiatāng*, it also assumed responsibility for covering Rainbow. Until the summer of 2015, the latter was affiliated with the Banyan Village Church as an English corner,<sup>14</sup> part of the youth ministry.

Under the existing Chinese government regulations on religion, a baptism service can only be held in officially registered churches. Some followers of Rainbow were publicly baptized in the Banyan Village Church and were issued with baptismal certificates by it. Some other people received private baptism from the Rainbow members. In contrast to the uniform certificate bearing the official seal of a particular church, the Rainbow counterpart is just a witness card made of a thick paper, on

---

14. The phrase "English corner" (*Yingyu jiao*) refers to informal instruction or casual chats in English held in schools and colleges in China. The purpose of these sessions is to improve the oral English skills of the participants. They are often conducted by foreign teachers, native speakers of English.

which it says: “Baptism witness card: we bear witness that you have been baptized a Christian.” The signatures of Anna and other key members are at the bottom. All of those who are involved sign their English (therefore not legally binding) names. In 2008, those baptized exceeded one hundred in a single year, more than half the number achieved by the Bamboo Church (195 baptized in 2008), one of the three biggest registered churches on Xiamen Island. At that time, the English corner that offered opportunity to engage with native speakers was something of a novelty, and it exerted a fascination on a considerable number of young students and professionals. Another great advantage was that the mission gave young people the chance to communicate with American natives who were still inaccessible to them in everyday life. Rainbow has created a lively and relaxed atmosphere in which they can practice their English; one that compares very favorably to the rigid teaching methods used in schools, and it has already made a name for itself as an authentic English corner.

## **Running the Mission and the Company**

### *The Company: curtain of the international Christian agency*

I came across the Brand-New Company completely by chance. Although I had frequently heard of it in conversations with Rainbow members with whom I was well acquainted, whenever I inquired about the company they were reluctant to enlarge on it. My curiosity was very much aroused. In August 2011, when I enrolled in their free English practice service, a junior member emailed me the details of an American person. Curious about his email address that was apparently linked to a particular organization, I searched for it online. When I clicked a website, a business company appeared on my computer screen. Surprisingly, some faces familiar to me appeared and I recognized them immediately. I had seen some of them many times at Rainbow’s Saturday gathering. In fact, the company’s core leadership consists of Larry (president), Anna (chairwoman of the board), Jacob (general manager), Kara (marketing director) plus some other people from the organization. Jacob and Kara are both Caucasian American citizens. The Company claims to be focused on consultancy. Below is the introduction to the company quoted from its website:

The Brand-New Company is an American-owned enterprise with a team of experts from around the world. By means of the worldwide network of resources, the company aims at designing series of training courses for individuals and enterprises at different stages of development. We believe that true excellence derives from the renewal of understanding, thinking and healthy characters. With global resources, we pave the way for your integration into a new world filled with vitality, inspiration and renewal; for a new journey to explore and grow in your life. Our team would like to

accompany your life journey, no matter what challenges you are facing concerning business development, interpersonal relationship, marriage and children education.

The company claims to assist in the character building of children, parent-child relationships and the upgrading of white-collar professionals. It also offers a management consultancy. These first two services are given by Rainbow for free. The third closely resembles the bilingual preaching of Rainbow. As for the last one - management consultancy - most of the expert consultants listed on the company's website had served or were still serving Rainbow as "English teachers." Later it was confirmed that the principal aim of the company is to serve the mission rather than to make a profit. Besides training young ministry workers, the real role played by the company is to connect American churches and receive missionaries from outside Mainland China. More importantly, it conceals the transnational religious activities under the guise of "lawful" business. This covert agenda explains why the website has never been upgraded: there is no need.

Given the regulations on religion in China today, especially the one that stipulates that foreigners are absolutely forbidden to preach without the authorities' approval, Brand-New is an effective strategy for surviving and developing. When looking at this set-up, it is important to take the present situation of China into account, namely: the government attaches great importance to local economic development, therefore Western missionaries carry out their mission in the name of foreign investment. The company assists the couple and other missionaries in obtaining long-term work visas.

### *Name-tags and organizational structure*

At each Saturday gathering, people wear different colored name-badges that indicate their distinct status. The groups so formed are usually named after their tags:

White-tags: first-time visitors to a Rainbow Saturday gathering, whether Christian or not.

Blue-tags: non-Christians who have come to the Saturday gathering at least twice. The organization pays close attention to these potential converts.

Green-tags: Christians who have attended the Saturday gathering at least twice. Any blue- or white-tags those who want to be baptized in private by Rainbow or publicly by the Banyan Village Church on the former's recommendation, and who must have completed a course entitled "*Exploring the Truth*" given by senior members. The course, composed of one-and-a-half-hour eight sessions every Saturday afternoon, is designed to assist non-Christians to "reflect on atheism and realize the existence of God." After the eight-week course, applicants will be interviewed by senior members or the couple personally to determine whether they are ready to be baptized.



*Name-tags in different colors. Photo by author.*

Red-tags: part-time volunteers who are junior members of the ministry. Christians who actively attend Rainbow (usually green-tags) are not qualified as red-tags until they have completed a series of courses (for example, *Spiritual Discipline*). The courses run for over half a year and are designed to be a test of the strength of the perseverance of the green-tags. Those who lack the necessary steadfastness will either give up of their own accord or be excluded by the leadership. Red-tags are not required to work for the company unless that they decide to dedicate themselves entirely to the gospel enterprise. After their completion of the compulsory courses, they will be interviewed by key members or on some occasions the founding couple. The purpose of this interview is to ensure that these applicants will be able to help others. Generally speaking, there are around fifty red-tags, but their number usually fluctuates. Each year some leave for different reasons; they might have graduated from university or have moved to another city. Replacements are being trained and selected all the time to succeed members who have left. No matter how long a person has served as a red-tag, he/she would be considered a life member.

Purple-tags: the group of those who have completed a formal theological training program given by Rainbow and are now supported as full-time ministry workers. Their number is around fifteen. To become a purple-tag, red-tags are required to have rounded off a series of courses and trainings, including Bible study, church history,

organizational skills and the like. Those who are currently receiving training are called “trainees” within the missionary group and are not eligible to be selected as purple-tags unless they have passed the final assessment. Almost all purple-tags and trainees simultaneously work for the company in which they are given systematic training courses. In the early years of Rainbow, Larry and Anna set up a two-year program and trained a dozen full-time ministry workers who later became pillars of the establishment. Later the program was extended to six years, consisting of three years’ training and another three years of mission service. Under the terms of their “contracts” (a form of agreement with Rainbow that studiously avoids any mention of missionary activities) between the trainees and Rainbow in the name of the company, upon the completion of the training program purple-tags must work for Rainbow (also in the name of the company) for at least three years. The amount of their salary varies according to their status, either trainees or qualified workers. Whatever their status, their earnings are considerably below the average income of the Xiamen area. Samuel, a key ministry worker who received his bachelor’s degree in economics from an elite university and who has been a purple-tag for several years, once compared his salary with those of his classmates. He earned no more than 1,600 *yuan* (260 US dollars) each month in 2013. He and his wife, who also served the mission full-time, had a combined monthly income around 3,000 *yuan* (488 US dollars). However, they are not wholly dependent on this salary as the mission also provides their housing and general cost of living as well as paying for his paralyzed father’s living expenses. When I asked whether they were going to have a baby, he sighed and answered that: “It was hard to raise a child now.” He mentioned the example of Donald, one of the first trained workers, who resigned his full-time service and found a new job under increasing pressure caused by his newborn baby.

To ensure the young workers’ devotion to the evangelistic enterprise, the leaders offer the young single people accommodations with full board, ensuring they can serve the mission at all times. Their commitment is reinforced by the six-year program and through a system of internal marriage. Harry who is a red-tag explained as follows:

Those trainees who graduated from college (usually around the age of twenty-three) will be nearly thirty by the time they finish the six-year program. Their future life will be fixed. If they decide to devote themselves full-time, their marital relationship will not survive if their spouses do not support it. Therefore it is better to find a mate within Rainbow. Both Amy and Larry hope for internal pairings, as this sort of marriage will be more stable. Biblical teaching requires Christians to marry people of the same faith. You might think that Rainbow is like a big family.

As Harry said, Rainbow is indeed like a family. For instance, there is a female purple-tag whose younger brother is a trainee and her mother a cook for the organization members. After she married another trainee, therefore four members of her family are now serving the mission. In recent years, over a dozen internally paired couples have

emerged. Their babies are called “Rainbow kids.” In short, the full-time members are strongly tied to the group by internal marriages and their commitment to the long-term training program.

Subculture theory underlines the assumption that the role a group of like-minded people plays in establishing its own distinctive way of thinking and acting. If most of the members of a group with close ties to one another hold the same view about some significant issue, those who initially do not agree with the majority way of thinking will soon come round to the same view. As people interact with each other, they are constantly passing on all manner of information, thoughts and feelings as well as rewards. Disagreements within the group might arise; nevertheless powerful forces will press members into the same mold in thought and action.<sup>15</sup> The full-time members of Rainbow interact with each other through strong ties. On consideration it would seem fair to say that the rather authoritarian couple do dominate the organization and hence play an important role in shaping the members’ religious faith and practice, perhaps even their personalities. Rather than focusing on the more old-fashioned methods of preaching and converting, the mission is dedicated to “equipping those who are capable of equipping others.” Besides accepting the tenets of faith, a person who aspires to become a red- or purple-tag is also required to become a member of the organization. Rainbow could be said to be a relatively closed group and it is very distinctive and separate from the outside society. Consequently, the members have to make some sacrifices as it is “expensive” for them to belong to the group in terms of both social and material costs. Their reward is that they are given strong emotional support, non-material rewards and close interaction within the group. Finally, the tension its exclusivity generates with its surroundings encourages the members to commit themselves even more, who might perhaps feel all at sea, to the mission.<sup>16</sup>

Those who are accepted as red-tags will be invited to attend an annual ceremony and given uniform T-shirts as well as Bibles. This event is in fact a “rite of passage” entitling them to membership of the group.<sup>17</sup> Throughout what is a total of six years of courses and training, these young workers and the founding couple establish an intimate relationship that is very like the discipleship in a traditional priestly training. However, these young workers are instructed with greater religious commitment that contrasts with level of engagement usually found in the official training of the clergy in state-approved seminaries.<sup>18</sup> The strictly established selection and training mechanisms

---

15. Homans, *Human Group*.

16. For the reciprocal relationship between the degree of exclusivity and the degree of commitment, see Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, chap. 6.

17. Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*.

18. Vala, “Pathways to the Pulpit.”

ensure that Rainbow is strongly integrated both reduce free-riding and lead to the exclusion of those without great commitment.<sup>19</sup>

The group of orange-tags is made up of non-citizens of the PRC, the majority from the United States, who serve Rainbow on a temporary basis and who are referred to as “English teachers.” Every Saturday gathering, there are usually at least several, sometimes even dozens of Americans present. The orange-tag group is not homogenous but can be divided into the following major categories. The first is composed of full-time missionaries sent by American churches. They hold nominal posts in foreign companies or teach in schools based in China but their real duty is to give instruction in Christian activities and train Chinese evangelists. The churches in America that sent them, rather than Rainbow, pay for their livelihood. The second category that of the missionaries sent by the American churches to serve Rainbow on a short-term basis. When it is felt that the new forms of ministerial activities have been properly introduced, the American church will send experienced missionaries to offer full guidance. The third group is American citizens who are specifically invited by the couple to teach foreign languages or give lectures on particular themes. The guests themselves bear all their costs, including travel and accommodations. Recently, a growing number of groups of American college students have come to hold musical concerts or outdoor sports events or simply to communicate with their Chinese counterparts and they have attracted a large number of young people. The fourth is a miscellaneous group drawn from the many Westerners who are working in Xiamen. They are invited to participate in the Saturday gatherings. With the increasing need for the service of foreign Christians in worship, in 2005 the city’s religious affairs authorities approved the establishment of the Xiamen International Christian Fellowship.<sup>20</sup> This group is open to non-PRC citizens, including people from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. Anyone who wants to attend this fellowship will be required to show their passport. Larry and Anna are members of the fellowship. From time to time, they invite Westerners from this fellowship to Rainbow, particularly when the number of language teachers present on Saturdays is too low. I never saw Larry and Anna wearing name badges but they do not really need them. All the evidence seems to indicate that, as the founding leaders of the organization, they have absolute authority over Rainbow.

---

19. Iannaccone, “Why Strict Churches Are Strong.”

20. It was officially approved as a “temporary venue for foreigners’ Christian activity” (*waiguoren Jidujiao huodong linshi changsuo*) by the Xiamen RAB in 2005. It is referred to by the members as the Xiamen International Christian Fellowship.

## English Teaching as Christian Mission

When they talk about missionary work, relying on their historical knowledge of the pre-1950 Xiamen mission, Xiamen Christians are far more likely to think of evangelists, medical personnel or even people working in the social services rather than English teachers. This was grasping the wrong end of the stick because, almost from the inception of their missions, English teachers have had an important part to play in the mission work of churches whose roots are in the English-speaking world. Especially during the last few decades, this distorted picture has been being adjusted because nowadays a large and still growing number of missionaries sent abroad by Western churches have been English teachers. Xiamen is no exception. Historically, since Christianity was introduced in the 1840s, the missions have established dozens of educational institutions on different levels in which the English language has been required. However, nowadays in Xiamen, by teaching young Chinese people foreign languages (mainly English), foreign teachers constitute a unique group that influences the faith of young people.<sup>21</sup>

As Donald Snow points out, English teaching is regarded as “a useful mission vehicle in part because Christian English teachers have the opportunity to live and work in countries which for religious, political, or cultural reasons do not accept missionaries who openly work as evangelists, pastors, or in other church-related capacities.”<sup>22</sup> This is particularly true in Muslim and communist nations.

Unquestionably, English teaching is also a useful approach to everyday mission, since the opportunity to achieve proficiency in English is a valuable commodity that invariably attracts an audience. In modern urban Xiamen and elsewhere, those who would never go to an evangelistic meeting conducted in either the vernacular or Mandarin Chinese will tolerate the gospel when it is presented in English, simply because it gives them a chance to improve their English skills or meet Westerners. Many of my informants honestly admitted their “utilitarian motivations,” practicing English and making the acquaintance of Americans. The dominant role played by English as the world’s international language of diplomacy, business and scholarship has generated an enormous number of English teachers worldwide. English is a compulsory subject in the Chinese school education system. The past decades have seen a mushrooming market in private schools or training agencies catering to the needs of individuals who desire to acquire skill in English to improve their work or educational situation and their social life. In both state and private educational institutions, native speakers of English are highly valued not only for their linguistic and cultural background, but also because their very presence makes studying English seem much more real and exciting to students and does a huge amount to raise

---

21. Lyu, “Xiamen waiji Jidutu jiaoshi de zongjiao huodong.”

22. Snow, *English Teaching as Christian Mission*, 16.

learners' levels of interest and motivation. This factor guarantees large numbers of Western English teachers' nationwide regular employment. Nevertheless, it is often made explicitly clear by the educational authorities or the institution that employs them, that English teachers are expected to behave as secular workers rather than missionaries. To ensure that this stipulation is observed, restrictions are often placed on any religious activities they might have been contemplating pursuing. Accordingly, those language teachers are often very discreet about their mission activities and tend to preach outside the classroom.<sup>23</sup>

As Baugus argues, one consequence of this sort of practice for the missions to China is a "foreign Christian presence dominated by young, adventurous, short-term workers with little to no training in church development or pastoral experience and no access to the Christian church."<sup>24</sup> It has to be said that this criticism does not apply to Rainbow. In contrast to the foregoing clandestine mission activity, a study of Rainbow will help to shed light on how Chinese-Americans conduct their highly organized missionary enterprise by open and above board English teaching. To discover how it goes about its missionary work, the best step is to observe a typical Saturday gathering quoted from my fieldwork notes.

Around two thirty on the afternoon of June 18, 2011, I arrived at Banyan Village, half an hour before the Saturday gathering was scheduled to begin. Nobody was at the entrance of the church. After I had pushed open the front door of the church hall and entered, I saw a group of people sitting in the front rows of pews. They were saying something to one another in low voices with their heads bent and fingers crossed. I heard fuzzily, "I hope all the brothers and sisters who are coming today...Amen." They were praying.

Approximately ten minutes later, as soon as the group prayer had finished, preparatory work began. Two young ladies were singing hymns and at the same time reminding their colleagues to eliminate echoes and adjust the pitch of audio equipment. Another young woman was carrying a stainless steel rack on which hung a number of name badges to the church entrance. Beside the rack, a square red cloth with dozens of pockets on it was hung on the iron church gate. An English letter was inscribed on each pocket. Later I realized that they put name tags of those who had not showed up recently in these pockets that were indexed by the initials of their first (usually English) names. The badges of those who often attended were hung on the rack. This arrangement allowed the participants who are active to be easily distinguished from those who are not. Several young people were arranging indoor seats into six circles, three on the left half of the church hall and the rest on the right. A sign placed outside the front door said "Intermediate," another one saying

---

23. See Lyu, "Xiamen waiji Jidutu jiaoshi de zongjiao huodong."

24. Baugus, "Introduction," 19.

“Elementary” was put outside the annex, and the third sign of “Advanced” was upstairs. These signs directed the participants to the English conversation groups that suited their language proficiency.

While they were busy, increasingly more people arrived. All of them were led to the reception desk and asked if they had come for the first time. If so, they were requested to register with their names (in both Chinese and English) and give contact information and the like. Once this had been recorded, they had to write their names on white badges. As far as I could observe, it was suggested that every newcomer uses an English name. Anyone who did not yet have such a name would be advised to take one, sometimes one recommended by the receptionists. Most of the participants did use English names, but a few did insist on retaining their Chinese names. Participants joined different English conversation groups in accordance with their self-evaluation of their English proficiency and the members’ advice. Each group consisted of six to eleven participants, under the guidance of one English native speaker. Conforming to Chinese culture foreigners were respectfully called “teachers.” I joined an intermediate-level group. The teacher, Alex, was a young man of Asian appearance. He is a second-generation ethnic Chinese from Houston, the United States. At that time, he and his wife were working in his parents-in-law’s garment factory in Putian, a neighboring city. He held a brief outline, printed on an A4-sized paper in his hand. During the conversation, he glanced down at the paper from time to time and tried to lead the talk around to the topic: How to be attractive? The fact that participants were not very pro-active in speaking left Alex at somewhat of a loss. People were guided back to the topic when the talk went too far astray. Although the teacher attempted to ensure the conversation was Christianity related, most of the participants were non-Christians and were easily diverted from the main theme.

The sudden music was a reminder of the close of the English corner. Someone holding a microphone was on the front stage announcing the end of the conversation groups. People began to place all the chairs in rows as they had been before the English corner. When this had been done, two women stepped onto the stage with microphones in their hands and greeted the audience. The middle-aged lady was Anna, the hostess, and the younger woman was a translator who translated what Anna said into Chinese. I glanced quickly at each corner of the church hall and estimated an attendance of around 150.<sup>25</sup> Most of them are at their twenties or thirties. Anna asked the white-tags to raise their hands and those who were sitting around them to greet them. It was a ritual of welcome. I, a non-Christian green-tag, shook the hand of a lady who was sitting on my left. There were twenty or so people who had come for the first

---

25. I was well acquainted with the interior layout of the church building and the number of seats available for the congregation. Therefore, I could easily estimate the attendance at each gathering. According to my observations on several occasions, its Saturday gathering attracts 150 to 200 who attend regularly.

time. This done, a short video entitled “Six Stages” was played by means of projection equipment. Its purpose was to acquaint the newcomers with Rainbow. When this had finished, they proceeded to the section in which English songs were practiced. Lyrics, both in English and Chinese, were projected onto two screens at the front. Anna led the audience in reading out the English lyrics. These songs were all Christian hymns, two of which were “*The Lord Is My Light*” and “*Knowing You.*” As we were singing, Anna requested the audience to stand up and wave their arms in time with the melody. She also urged the people to relax both emotionally and physically.

Approximately twenty minutes later, the English language lessons began. One open-ended English sentence, related to that day’s English corner topic, appeared on the front screens. Anna asked the audience to raise their hands and read the whole sentence, filling in the blank. Only a few people raised their hands. With Anna’s permission, red-tags gave microphones to a man and woman, respectively. They stood up and read the sentence out with the words filled in. Anna praised them and asked the audience to applaud. Soon after Anna encouraged everyone to say this sentence to the people around them. This lasted only one minute. After the English language learning, Anna introduced foreign guests and invited an American couple, Jim and Lorrie, onto the stage. The couple had been married for twenty-eight years and had a son and a daughter. Jim was a certified public accountant and had run his own business focusing on accounting and tax services for eighteen years. Lorrie was teaching health in a high school. Later Anna presented another couple from Guangzhou and asked them to stand up. The wife conveyed their greetings to everybody in less-than-fluent English. Anna was at pains to emphasize that the couple had come to Xiamen on this occasion solely because of Rainbow. It was four-thirty and time for the Life Talk segment to begin. Larry, wearing glasses and a long-sleeved striped shirt, walked onto the stage, accompanied by a young lady as his interpreter. At the beginning, someone introduced her saying that she had once been a Rainbow translator but had later moved to Guangzhou. The topic was “*Relationship 101: How to Be Attractive (Kind)*” and the content was related to the theme of the English conversation. In his speech, Larry referred to his experiences in life in France and America, as well as to biblical teaching.

Around one hour later, the Life Talk finished on schedule. Several purple-tags took the stage and reported details of forthcoming activities, including times, places, persons in charge and how to register. Specifically, these activities were: firstly, a range of courses on “*Exploring the Truth*” to be given by purple-tags to blue-tags who wanted to know more about the Christian belief; secondly, a lecture entitled “*Dating in Different Cultures*” to be given by American guests specially for blue-tags; thirdly, a lecture on “*How to Plan Well*” was to be given by Jim, the aforementioned American accountant; fourthly, a lecture on “*Healthy Diet*” would be delivered by Lorrie; fifthly, Globe E-Friend for those blue-tags who had come to Rainbow at least three times and

wanted to communicate with American people online. Over the next few days, some persons would be present to phone candidates and examine if their oral proficiency in English could meet the standard requirements. Anybody who had an interest could register his or her details, including Chinese and English names, mobile phone number, English proficiency, affiliated institution and the like. Finally, they called for volunteers to serve as tourist guides for the American guests and repeatedly emphasized that all costs would be borne by these “teachers.”



*Rainbow members presenting the forthcoming free courses for non- or regular Christians. Photo by author.*

Once this business had been rounded of, the Candlelight Conversation began. Tables had been already prepared in the front yard, and six to ten plastic chairs were allocated to each. On each table stood a sign reading “Student,” “Work,” “Freedom” or “Marriage,” indicating the respective themes. Rainbow members had also prepared candlesticks and snacks. As it was not at all dark, the candles were not lit. People who wanted to go ahead with English practice stayed and chose their favorite theme. Before they left, the other people were requested to take off their name badges and hang them on the rack. Rainbow members enthusiastically said goodbye. When I left without taking part in the Candlelight Conversation, there were still a couple of young adults registering for the forthcoming activities.



*A Candlelight Conversation group discussing the topic of "Freedom." Photo by author.*

Its Saturday gathering, that has been a set feature for years now has brought Rainbow fame in the field of English learning among college students. The presence of American faces in particular has attracted a great number of young people. By providing opportunities for practicing English with native speakers, the missionary organization has gained in popularity among the young Christians. Although it declares that it provides its foreign language practice in the framework of the English corner, the topic for each gathering invariably has a link to the Christian faith, closely intertwined with biblical teaching. In a nutshell, rather than preaching the gospel directly, the mission resorts to English teaching and American culture as its carriers. While the young people are making themselves acquainted with the Christian elements here, they are also fulfilling some of their yearning for opportunities to come into contact with America specifically or a global capitalist market in general.

### **Imagining America through Rainbow**

William Bainbridge once wrote that, "Religion offers a way to transcend and transvalue relative deprivation. In heaven, all will be equal and all will be fulfilled. Membership in the religion can be a private badge of status, compensating the

individual for lack of status in secular society.”<sup>26</sup> Following the same line of what might be called the deprivation explanation, some scholars espouse the idea that the growth of Christianity in China is most likely to occur in the underdeveloped rural areas; many of the believers are female, old and either illiterate or semi-illiterate.<sup>27</sup> More recently, however, more researchers have been increasingly noting an upwardly mobile stratum (for example, Christian entrepreneurs and educated young people) attending urban churches in economically advanced regions; a trend that is gradually changing the composition of the modern Christian population.<sup>28</sup> As I have observed in Rainbow meetings, the vast majority of attendees are young college students or well-educated professionals.

Formerly, when the sociology of religion sought for explanations of the reasons behind religious conversion, two approaches, the individualistic and the institutional, tended to take center stage.<sup>29</sup> The individualistic approach emphasized the significance of such micro-level factors as individual crisis, personal bonds and networks that might be developed or, conversely, break down. The institutional approach shifted the focus to the competitiveness of religious organizations among themselves. However, in looking for other reasons for the rise of Christianity in urban China, Fenggang Yang argues that, besides these two approaches, the contextual aspects, above all the globalized market under political repression, should be examined as the primary influence.<sup>30</sup> Yang and his colleague alert us to the fact that global contexts are now of inescapable importance.<sup>31</sup> From my observation of how matters are conducted in Rainbow, I am convinced that the yearning for the West, in particular that for America, plays a great role in conversion. Christianity, in combination with the English language and American faces, conveys a modern and cosmopolitan image to educated young Chinese. The attraction of the English language and contact with Americans is largely propelled by a sense of wanting to connect with the outside world. They both reflect the young people’s desire to be in touch with modern Europe and America, as well as for global integration.

As said, one key feature of Rainbow is the English corner; another that it holds gatherings each Saturday afternoon. Although these really stand out, it also carries out a full range of activities, as among them lectures given by American guests, retreat

---

26. See Bainbridge, “Sociology of Conversion,” 180.

27. E.g., Hunter and Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China*; Leung, *Gaige kaifang yilai de Zhongguo nongcun jiaohui*.

28. See e.g., Cao, *Constructing China’s Jerusalem*, chap. 2; Chen and Huang, “New Type of Christians”; Yang, “Lost in the Market.”

29. For conversation theories, see Bainbridge, “Sociology of Conversion”; Snow and Machalek, “Sociology of Conversion”; Yang and Abel, “Sociology of Religious Conversion.”

30. Yang, “Lost in the Market.”

31. Yang and Abel, “Sociology of Religious Conversion,” 150.

camps for young men and women, outdoor sports, mini English corners, plus the Global E-Friend platform for those who want to communicate with Americans. In contrast to those of the local churches, Rainbow's target groups tend to be young college students, white-collar professionals and business people with a higher educational background. With this in mind, its mission activities take place in a relaxed and lively atmosphere that is attractive to a group of young people filled with a longing to learn about American society and culture. To meet these demands, Rainbow seeks to introduce even more foreign characteristics by inviting Americans to each gathering and by advising all the members adopt an English name. Anna uses at least three names or titles on different occasions: her English name in Saturday's English corner, "Professor Zhang" in the Kindness Family counseling for marital relationships and her Chinese name in an officially registered church in which she gives a sermon to local Christians. She is very conscious of the fact that English or Chinese names and titles mean different things to diverse audiences. For the young people, her English name stands for her American citizenship and helps create a cordial atmosphere for the Western-oriented Chinese. Her self-proclaimed "professorship" at an elite university brings her respect among the young and from middle-aged couples of her own age. Nonetheless, she rarely mentions that the position was just a one-year job that has already expired. She also passes over the fact that she was actually just an ordinary foreign teacher without any professorial chair.<sup>32</sup> Whenever she has been invited to give a sermon to local Christians, she has used her Chinese name instead of her English name, a gesture that apparently caters to the taste of Chinese-speaking audience and also ensures her presence in a state-sanctioned venue is low-profile. Larry, who apart from his native Cantonese, is multilingual in Mandarin Chinese, French and English, takes a rather different tack. English is always given priority at each public event, although he grew up in France and consequently his French should be more proficient. In the case of both Anna and Larry, their English proficiency, their years of living in the United States and their travels across the world are all indicators of their American citizenship and cosmopolitan qualities. A postgraduate student recollected that Larry was once invited to give a speech at his university, and he was fascinated by Larry's oral proficiency in English. However, his admiration for Larry's cosmopolitan experience evaporated immediately when he was

---

32. Since the 1980s, the Chinese universities have recruited a large number of full-time foreign personnel as "foreign experts," usually for short-term foreign language teaching rather than permanent academic research. At the present time, a very limited number of non-PRC citizens have been awarded full-time professorships. In the administrative system, the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs on the national level and the Bureau of Foreign Experts Affairs on the provincial and prefectural levels are in charge of issuing certificates and the management of these foreigners.

given the opportunity to study in a French institution for a semester and travel across Europe.

His story is different to that of Andrew. Sitting in a coffee shop, Andrew, a student who was then pursuing his master's degree in engineering management, narrated his story. He began to acquaint himself with Christianity at college, but had not accepted Christ until he was introduced to Rainbow. He attributed the interval to the fact that:

Local churches are usually filled with elderly Christians. My younger sister once attended some churches in Zhejiang province where [the congregation] was completely [composed of] elderly ladies. The young people of her own age no longer wanted to go there. They had even got the impression that Christianity is a faith for the old or those who have nothing to do after filling their stomachs. These churches are very unlike Rainbow where you can find a group of really outstanding young people and white-collar professionals like Larry and Anna...It offers many different interest groups that other churches do not have. Some people do come here because of these interest groups rather than the gospel, and subsequently acquire an interest in Christianity. Rainbow supplies various and abundant packages, so you can at least try some. People are very enthusiastic and hospitable. In contrast, other churches are dull, stuck-in-the-mud and lacking in vitality.

Jordan went to the Saturday gathering for the first time in 2006 and immediately favored the way the gospel was preached.

Most importantly, these topics are awesome. They do not talk dogmatically about beliefs; instead, they refer to those that are significantly connected to our own lives, values and worldviews; subjects that we cannot learn about at school. These open discussions enable you to reflect on the sorts of things you do not think about outside that particular atmosphere. Another plus point is that their English songs are great, especially when they are led by Anna. Thirdly, I do like the contents of Larry's talks, as well as his humbleness and good manners.

Despite these testimonies to an awakened interest in Christianity, in many cases the people who attend Rainbow find it very difficult to conceal their affection for America, a country nearly none of them has visited. Mary is a fashionable girl who recently graduated from college. Her parents are both government officials and "loyal" (in her words) to the Communist Party. Yet she is grievously disappointed in the country and constantly complains about the many social problems. However, it is the one-party rule has caused her most discontent. "I think faith has nothing to do with political parties. I trust you, therefore I shall join your Party, but I can have my own faith. The two are not contradictory. Nevertheless, the CCP is afraid, because it is well aware that it is not perfect. Hence, it adopts many tools to take control and ensure you have no other beliefs. I think this is wrong." When she spoke of going abroad, I sensed the intensity of her desire to take this step. She admitted that her affection for America originates mainly from her discontent with the social realities around her. "The word

'xenophilia' (*chongyang meiwai*) seems a bit negative to me. Since I have never been to America, I have no idea if I am right or wrong. But at least, I do not like my own country." Mary's imagination of an American society that has a much higher degree of freedom is extremely positive. She insists that it is Christianity that has made American society better. "I do not believe that people will be granted God's grace as soon as they convert. When the individual Americans convert to Christ, they change gradually but will experience a substantial transformation."

As a young woman in the new era, Mary might not be counted a feminist. However, she is apparently discontented with the traditional Chinese marital relationship, in particular the men's lack of appreciation of their spouses. In contrast, in her eyes American marital relationships are admirable.

After contact with foreigners, I have become even more xenophilic. I am not a traditional person, and I am concerned with men's responsibilities and experiences. A good man must be the soul of his family. Certainly, his wife can back him up, but this does not mean his spouse should be just a housewife, occupied with the laundry and the cooking. A housemaid can do it. They should be mutually supportive. I think American people do it well. In Chinese families, the most frequent things I have seen are quarrels, divorce and the other woman. Although I am not knowledgeable about America, from those [Americans] whom I have met I definitely have a sense of American men's love for and appreciation of their wives. How many Chinese men would say they appreciate their wives? They might say their ladies are good, kindhearted, honest and decent. But very few of them would say they appreciate their wives. American men do this very often.

In some people's eyes, Rainbow provides a path by which to understand both the Christian faith and American society. Spurred on by their American dream some of them are exploring a range of possibilities of migrating abroad. Among my respondents, Victoria shows the greatest desire to emigrate to America. Born and raised in the remote Xinjiang region, she graduated from a local teachers' college and later her career took her to a coastal province. For the sake of her daughter's musical education, she moved to Gulangyu and sent her only girl to the noted Gulangyu Piano School, leaving her husband to take care of their business in northern China. We met for the first time in 2011 and I do not have very pleasant memories of that meeting.

A missionary couple was invited to visit Victoria's home on Gulangyu. I was requested by a purple-tag to lead the way and act as an interpreter for the couple and Victoria's family. Obviously, she had no interest in me, a mere student registered at a Chinese university. It was a cloudy and windy morning. The American couple and I landed on the island where we were received by Victoria. Even though she could hardly speak a word of English, on a Rainbow member's recommendation she used her English name. Her apartment is only ten minutes' walk from the ferry terminal, but we spent more than one hour on the way. She frequently stopped and posed for a

group photograph with the guest couple. I was supposed, indeed asked, to be a photographer. When we were talking in her living room, her daughter, Wendy, came home from school. On her mother's instructions, Wendy played the cello and then the piano. I sensed her displeasure at her mother's repeated requests. Nevertheless, as an obedient daughter, she still performed for the guests. During the talk, Victoria's primary concern was how to send her daughter to an American school, and subsequently if the couple could help. She had heard that American schools would like to accept students from Christian families and recommended by an American church. The following year, I left to pursue my doctorate in the Netherlands. Each time when I went to Xiamen to do field research, Victoria showed an interest in my European connections. She has kept in touch with me via social media and persistently inquiries about the possibility of migrating to Western Europe.

Unquestionably, the revival of Confucianism or other religions indicates that the traditional religion or culture is still inviting to people. However, for those Chinese who are largely Western-oriented, Christianity provides the antithesis of something traditional, conservative or restrictive. In fact, it is commonly seen as diametrically opposed to more traditional beliefs as it is modern, cosmopolitan and universal.<sup>33</sup> The case studies of people who choose to attend Rainbow gatherings instead of going to other Chinese churches indicate that the perception of Christianity as modern is strengthened when American elements are involved. In itself, an American background makes an international agency's proselytizing efforts more effective.

### **New Missionaries, American Ministry and Church Politics**

The theme of the indigenization (*bensehua*) of Protestant Christianity in China has attracted widespread attention among Chinese researchers, in particular those at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), a ministerial-level think-tank that reports to the CCP Central Committee and the State Council.<sup>34</sup> Undeniably, to a certain extent, the CASS researchers' interest derives from the expectations of the top leadership. At a recent national religious work conference in April 2016, Xi Jinping emphasized that, "In adapting religion to the socialist society, one of the most important tasks is to adhere to the path of Sinicization (*Zhongguohua*)."<sup>35</sup> Looked at historically, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chinese Christian elite has initiated a far-reaching reform of the "foreign religion." While this has been being affected, a vibrant

---

33. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*; Yang, "Lost in the Market."

34. E.g., Duan, *Zhongguo Jidujiao de Bensehua*; Zhang and Zhuo, *Bense zhi tan*; Zhao and Duan, *Jidujiao zai Zhongguo*.

35. *Renmin ribao*, "Fazhan Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi zongjiao lilun."

and multi-faceted popular Christianity has emerged.<sup>36</sup> In Xiamen, as early as the second half of the nineteenth century, the Three Missions based in this area had begun to empower the local church by allowing it a certain degree of autonomy,<sup>37</sup> a fact of which the Christian community is proud even today. Nowadays in Xiamen, the label “foreign religion” is seldom associated with Christianity.

In stark contrast to the indigenous churches that have localized and taken root in the social and cultural environments in which they have found themselves, Rainbow scrupulously retains its American characteristics and deliberately goes to great lengths to distinguish itself from the Xiamen Christian community, an act of self-marginalization. By an analysis of its conflict of history with an officially recognized church, this section has produced a picture of the present situation in which the American mission finds itself on the margins of the local church.

### *The relationship between the American mission and the state-sanctioned church*

For political reasons, the founding couple made a tactical decision and nominally affiliated Rainbow with Trinity Church. In the words of Old Pastor Wen, Rainbow is one of gathering points of his church. He himself was once invited to teach theology at Rainbow’s worker training sessions. Rainbow leaders do not deny the role of Wen’s church in gaining their organization legitimacy, but tend to argue that it was not an example of one-dimensional support but a case of a reciprocal relationship. In the early years of their cooperation, there was mutual satisfaction. They were no competitors and Rainbow was in fact independent. The Old Pastor did not impose any restrictions on it. Those who wanted to be baptized under Rainbow’s influence were recommended to Trinity Church.

The situation changed when approval was granted for a church compound to be “(re)built” in Banyan Village. When it was completed in 2008 the church was “(re)opened” after a lapse of half a century. Shortly after, on the grounds that it was a youth ministry Rainbow was transferred from Trinity to the new church, to which Rainbow was nominally affiliated as an English corner. The Banyan Village Church took over the covering of the missionary organization from Trinity Church. To emphasize the link between the two, Larry repeatedly emphasized that Rainbow had contributed enormously to the “building” of the church. As I have observed, both the founders and the members of Rainbow have actively taken part in the restoration and religious activities of the Banyan Village Church.

---

36. Lian, *Redeemed by Fire*.

37. Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China*.

As part of the church, Rainbow was officially seen as an English corner. Although it had to be affiliated with the church in order to gain a legitimate status, it was independent of the church in most instances. It was a reciprocal relationship. Rainbow acquired its legal status through the church and, in return, improved the attendance and added attractiveness. Moreover, those Christians converted by Rainbow (baptized in Banyan Village) were considered an achievement by the church; successes that contributed to the latter's status in the Xiamen church. Even more importantly, because of Rainbow the Banyan Village Church was now the recipient of many donations. These donations were divided according to an agreed proportion into two parts: one part for the church and one part for Rainbow. Despite their ostensible cooperation, the element of competition between them was high - when Rainbow seemed to be enjoying a much better reputation, some church members were obviously dissatisfied.

Mo Liwen, a young preacher of Trinity Church, was sent to be in charge of the Rainbow ministry. However, Larry denied her any substantial role; the person who really assumed the responsibility was the Old Pastor. Even Mo's role as a messenger was not acknowledged. As Larry said, "Actually she seldom came. We usually contacted the Old Pastor directly." Preacher Mo was put in an awkward position, in her own words because she was bypassed. The Rainbow leaders made it clear that the Old Pastor was the real umbrella that they needed, therefore they tended to communicate with Wen in person. When Mo was ordained a pastor and appointed to the position of senior pastor of the new Banyan Village Church, the conflict was exacerbated as her authority went unrecognized.

The honeymoon seemed to be over before it had begun. The statuses of the two actors in the relationship were blurry and were subject to a lengthy negotiation process. Rainbow was gradually marginalized and, if it wanted to regain lost ground, it had no option but to give in gracefully as it needed Mo and her church as an umbrella. Rainbow's bargaining position was weak and its situation was made even worse when the leaders were warned that Mo was unwilling to cover the mission organization. Dissatisfied with the relationship, the Rainbow leaders sought other churches with which they could potentially cooperate but their attempts failed. It is said that the founding couple's strong personalities and potential domination of church affairs worried the leaders of other churches. More importantly, not all the churches were courageous enough to accept having a foreign mission led by influential pastors under their wing. Although Mo Liwen is not very influential in the church community, her husband is a resourceful figure in the official church organizations on prefectural and provincial levels.

The dispute in their daily relationship between the two was also reflected in their styles of worship. As an American youth ministry, Rainbow specializes in attracting young people. Mo, who is a traditionalist, even went as far as strongly advising

Rainbow to adopt the *Amoy Hymnal* that is widely used in the Southern Fujian region. This had repercussions because some young people in the Banyan Village congregation left when the church resumed a more traditional style. Another point of friction was the distribution of financial resources. Initially the Banyan Village Church had been responsible for certain expenses incurred for printing and hospitality but, as time passed, it was no longer willing to bear these costs.

### *“Building” or “rebuilding”: narratives of the birth of the Banyan Village Church*

Within Rainbow group, the narrative is “first Rainbow, then the Banyan Village Church,” as Larry commented:

The request to build a church was initially objected to by the RAB on the grounds that there were not many Christians in the village and that Buddhism was actually the prevailing religion. Only when the number of Christians exceeds 200 can the application for a church be approved. In response to the criticism, the Old Pastor told the officials that there was in fact a gathering point, with 200 to 300 in regular attendance. After his intervention, the Xiamen RAB finally authorized the building of the Banyan Village Church.

Mo Liwen disputes Rainbow’s statement. From her point of view, the village church was established as early as 1926. Although the church building was destroyed by the Japanese bombing and finally destroyed during the CCP-KMT fighting across the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s, the remains of the belfry still bore witness to its past existence. There is no question that before the construction of the new church building, part of the old belfry still did exist. I saw the pictures during my field research and the remains were still there. The Rainbow members must have known about them since they were still there during their first five years on the island. The construction of the new church building was a “rebuilding” of the old church in the eyes of the RAB officials. More importantly, Pastor Mo insists that the RAB approved the church construction on two main points: firstly, the fact that the old church had once stood on the site and secondly on the basis of the post-1979 national religious policy on the restoration of religious sites. Rainbow members dismiss Mo’s account. They argue that the new church has nothing to do with the historical one; more specifically there was no continuation in the composition of the church congregation and worship. Furthermore, they added that the original site of the old church had become a rubbish dump and even that it had been the property of a villager until the construction of the church building.



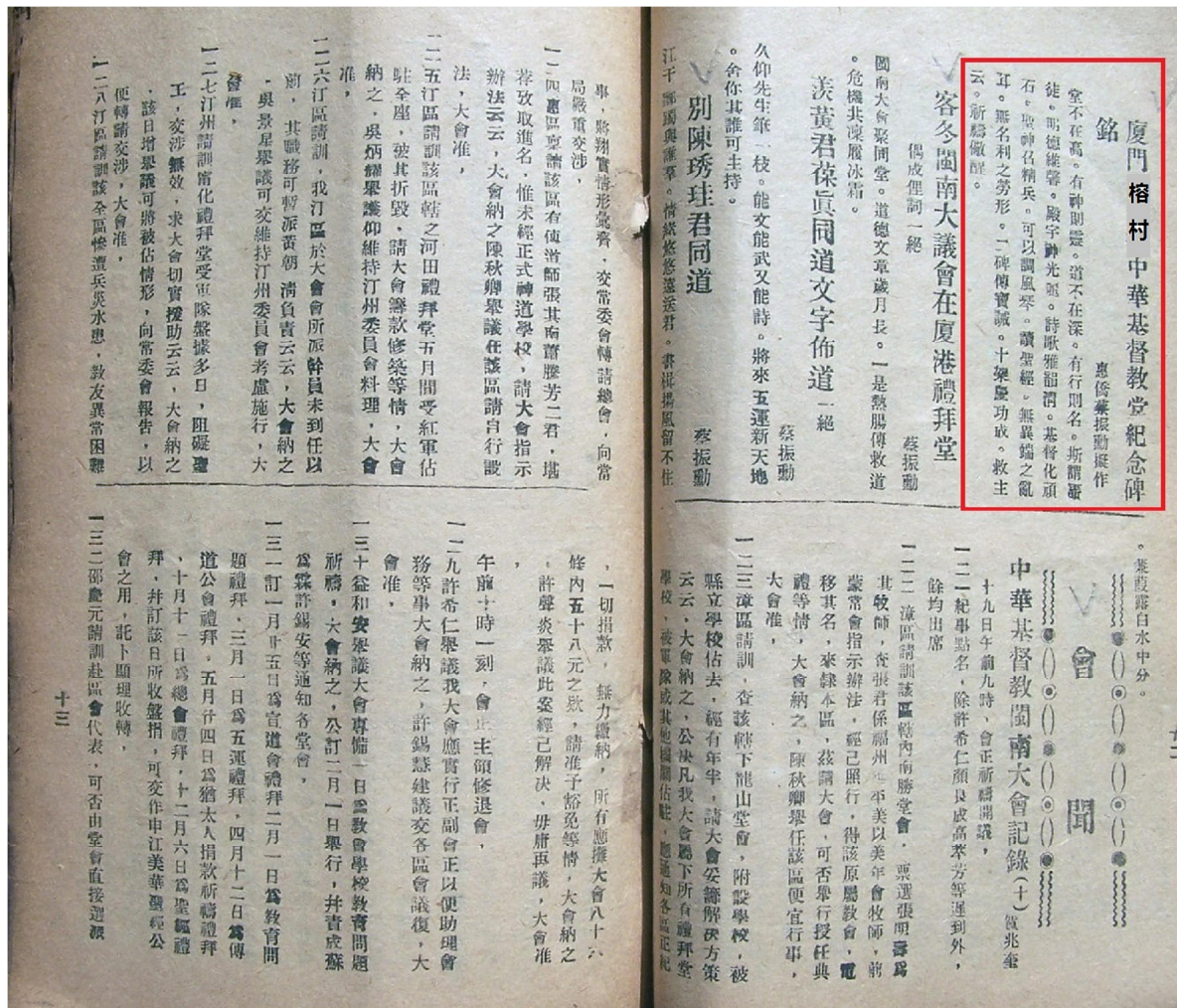
*Cai Zhenxun's grandsons having their picture taken in front of the stele (erected in December 2012) bearing Cai's inscription. Photo provided by Lin Muli.*

Rainbow and the Banyan Village Church did not reach a consensus on the “building” versus “rebuilding” dispute until December 2012, a time at which Mo was raising donations to erect a stele with an inscription created by the first preacher of the historical church in Banyan Village, Cai Zhenxun (1874-1968). Cai composed the text entitled “*The Stele Epigraph for the Xiamen Banyan Village Church*” in imitation of a widely read essay - “*The Epigraph on My Humble House*” (*Loushi ming*) - authored by Liu Yuxi (772-842), a prestigious scholar-official in the Tang Dynasty. The short text made up of eighty-one characters was originally published in *Daonan*, an important Christian publication based in Xiamen but that also included information about the Three Missions and other churches throughout Southern Fujian, on April 2, 1931. It reads as follows:

A church needs not be high;  
 It is holy as God is with us.  
 The teaching does not have to be abstruse;  
 So long as it is practiced and widespread.  
 The saints are those  
 Whose great virtue emanates the true fragrance.  
 Our sanctuary is where the light of God graciously shines;  
 Our hymns are written in elegant, ethereal rhyme.  
 Christ converts stones;  
 God calls good soldiers.  
 In this sanctuary we can play the organ and read the Bible.

No heresies intrude;  
 No obsession with fame and wealth.  
 The two stone tablets transmit the Ten Commandments;  
 The Cross celebrates redemption.  
 The Savior warned us to watch and pray.<sup>38</sup>

The historical Banyan Village Church that was situated in a remote fishing village had a fairly small congregation and lay on the periphery of the city's Christian community in the 1930s. In his concise text, Preacher Cai Zhenxun draws an analogy between this church and Liu Yuxi's house – although a humble construction, the host maintains civilized demeanor.



“The Stele Epigraph for the Xiamen Banyan Village Church,” authored by Cai Zhenxun. Source: Daonan 5, no. 7 (1931): 12.

Pastor Mo's husband found it and informed the church. Subsequently, it initiated a series of historical writings and the erection of the stele. Upon the erection of the stele, Mo invited Cai's grandsons to view the “rebuilt” church compound and the stele that acknowledges their grandfather's contribution. Under the circumstances, Cai's descendants were effectively mobilized and one of them finished a biography of Cai, in

38. Translated from Cai, “Xiamen Rongcun Zhonghua Jidu jiaotang jinian beaming.”

which the latter's life revolves around the establishment and development of the historical Banyan Village Church.<sup>39</sup> Nowadays the church flyers handed out to those attending Sunday service and visitors, gives a historical introduction to the church and although it is very concise, it reveals continuity between the historical church and the present one.

When I posed Rainbow members questions about the stele, asking them what they thought of it, they tended to make such comments as "We just focus on preaching the gospel." Apparently, the erection of the stele was enough to supply convincing evidence of the "rebuilt" nature of the Banyan Village Church. Since then, Rainbow members have not spontaneously mentioned the disputed narrative.

### *Local tradition and power structure*

Ever since Rainbow has been established, Pastor Zhang, Anna's father, has played a vital role. Whereas Larry and Anna are American, Zhang is from Taiwan, extremely convenient from many points of view – linguistically, culturally and historically - for communicating with the people of Southern Fujian.<sup>40</sup> Both Larry and Anna are familiar with the conditions in China and aware of the necessity of avoiding conflicts with local churches. Samuel, a key purple-tag of the missionary organization, once explained:

There are many American people in Xiamen, but not anybody else can bring it (the organizational missionary enterprise) off. Larry and Anna do not want to be dragged into church affairs. Most of the time they just plead ignorance. Of course, they are well aware of the rules. If they were not, how could they deal with them? They have an American network but use it only if and when the need arises. Some foreigners might speak out against the inappropriate conduct of the local clergy, but that is not our way. We know the rules of the game. If we speak out, everything will be exposed. Other foreigners are not in the same situation. They are not in the same circle and have no conflicting interests. You [foreigners] might speak your mind about [something], but we [local church members] will pay no attention to you. However, if any people within the Xiamen church were to behave like this, they would find they had enemies to contend with. In this sort of environment, you can decide whether or not you want to get involved.

Referring to the *Lianghui* organizations, Samuel continued:

---

39. Lin, "Cai Zhenxun xiansheng xiaozhuan."

40. In any probe into how Christianity has made significant inroads into Chinese society, social relationships (*guanxi*) should be taken into account. Western missionary enterprises and native Chinese churches have relied heavily on these *guanxi* for development. See e.g., Lee, "Guanxi and Gospel."

We need a subtle strategy. Specifically, we just [go ahead and] do it rather than say anything. It is better for us to stay in the gray area. Never try to clarify. Do not pay attention to the religious regulations. We are obedient to God. So far, there has been no intervention [by the government or the *Lianghui*]. There might always be someone among the audience who observes everything.

When a government official of the Xiamen RAB was asked about religious groups formed by non-PRC citizens by a fellow researcher based in Xiamen, he swiftly responded: “Do you mean Rainbow?” The religious affairs officials are quite well aware of what Rainbow does, but they have never interfered. As a representative of the Xiamen International Christian Fellowship, Larry has been invited to dinner several times by the Xiamen RAB, but the hosts never mentioned Rainbow to him. Larry, of course, is wise to the fact that the authorities are well informed about his organization. As he said, “Everyone knows what we are doing here. We have no secrets.” By keeping Rainbow low profile, the authorities can pretend it does not exist, even when they undoubtedly known what it does.

When I asked Larry if they had a long-term plan, I perceived a mood of melancholy descending on him. He shook his head and said:

Since we came, we have realized we could not make plans for many things. The situation has changed rapidly. When we arrived, we expected to cultivate the youth and we succeeded. In the next decade, we shall continue to dedicate ourselves to the mission God willing. In China, we cannot make plans because of our identities. These are very subtle things. The fact that we have been here for ten years is a miracle. Over the past two or three decades, a number of missionaries have come to this country under the cover of some other identity. However, none of them has achieved anything like Rainbow [has done]. It is a miracle. As soon as they began their mission, they were taken away [by the authorities]...So far, we have not had to deal with the RAB. We shall [certainly] be in trouble if we are caught. It is hard to say [what the prospects for the next ten years will be]...As far as the government is concerned, it would be ridiculous for the officials to make trouble for us, because we convey positive information [about China today] abroad. Bad news will follow if we find ourselves in trouble. Rainbow makes a favorable impression on foreigners.

In view of the disruption between them, the relationship between Rainbow and the Banyan Village Church continued to deteriorate and finally broke up. In search of a new umbrella, the former then sought cooperation with the Bamboo Church. This time the relationship between the two is severely asymmetric. Rainbow needs the Bamboo Church’s cover but the latter does not need the former to attract attendance congregation. As a leading church under the leadership of the influential Chairwoman of the Xiamen TSPM, Bamboo has over 5,000 registered members and provides various ministries for different age groups. The most obvious manifestation of the inequality is that Rainbow is not allowed to use its name and logo; instead, it has to

conduct its activities openly in the name of the Bamboo English Corner. As a purple-tag said:

The Bamboo Church is a major institution. There is no shortage of either money or workers. The English corner will have to content itself with enriching its youth ministry. We now duplicate our activities in the Banyan Village Church in the Bamboo Church and pool all our resources. Nowadays, all of the registered churches are doing this [English corners with foreigners involved]. The TSPM [leaders] are aware of it and acquiesce in it. The churches led by courageous pastors have all espoused this. However, none of the Bamboo pastors appears [at such gatherings]; only a lay church member who has been assigned to coordinate our work attends...Once there were dissenting voices. The focus issue is how to identify the converts who have been influenced by Rainbow. Are they with the Bamboo Church or with Rainbow? This has a direct bearing on the financial donations. Money! This is a sensitive issue...The pastors all have families to raise and cannot survive without their followers' donations...We are unwilling to discuss the matter with the Bamboo Church.

## Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, foreigners took advantage of the extraterritoriality bestowed upon them by virtue of the unequal treaties. Today, rather than resorting to gunfire, Westerners take advantage of the privileged status that is so often bestowed upon them by the great popular aspirations generated by America. Modern Chinese Americans have now assumed the mission of building a bridge between the young Chinese and the Lord. The English language, American faces and Christianity are a potent cocktail by which to construct a cosmopolitan and global image. As the Communist government strictly prohibits traditional-style missionaries, English teaching plays an important role in obtaining long-term visas and attracting the Western-oriented youth.

Rainbow is not the only foreign agency involved in the Xiamen church. Some other Southeast Asian churches of Southern Fujian origin and seminaries have established a close cooperation with the churches to train clergy. One of the reasons they have been welcomed is their forefathers' connections with the Xiamen church. The new-era American missionaries are reluctant to join the church community properly, since they are aware that maintaining a distance will make them safer. Therefore, although the American missionary organization in Xiamen has been successful in converting the youth, it is not in a position to be either localized in or assimilated with the indigenous Christian tradition. An examination of the prosperous mission enterprise that was grounded in a particular cultural and historical context in the late-nineteenth-century Xiamen sheds light on the dilemma faced by today's international Christian agencies.

The religious affairs officials, who are well acquainted with Rainbow but pretend not to know it as long as it does not stir up any trouble, probably feel confident that the organization will not be able to develop a big movement. Trapped in the church politics, the most immediate difficulty Rainbow has to deal with is the official churches. The controversy aroused by the “building” versus “rebuilding” narratives reflects a contestation between the contemporary missionary agency and the state-recognized church. In this case, the reconstruction of historical narratives was not compiled in opposition to the official narrative; instead, it actually took place within the Christian community. The Banyan Village Church that is recognized by the authorities could easily win. As a *Lianghui* leader told me, “They should obey the regulations, otherwise [...]” He did not continue, but I could guess what he left unspoken from his tone. He even reminded me not to get involved.

On the opposite side of the fence from the young Christians who wish for fuller involvement in the global world, church workers in Xiamen do not show much real interest in the present American mission. This situation is in sharp contradiction to the historical tradition of Christianity in Xiamen, the result of American and European missions and the passion for reestablishing religious networks with Southeast Asia. The Xiamen Christian community is now proud of its global connections mainly in historical terms. Through their yearning for the Christian past, Xiamen Christians have found a sense of participation in the global church.

As it had to square up to the independence of the Banyan Village Church and the transfer of Rainbow to another leading church, Trinity Church’s strategy of international cooperation strategy was declared a failure. For the declining Trinity Church, the future seems even more enshrouded in doom and gloom.



## *Chapter 7*

### **Conclusion**

This piece of sociological research is an ethnography of Protestant Christianity in present-day urban China. The different facets of Christianity I have described and analyzed reveal how intimately embedded it is in the social and cultural milieu of modern, contemporary Xiamen. I have attempted to show Christianity is not just a system of thought and practice for the Christian community; as part of the social fabric it matters to the whole society. This study resonates with Nanlai Cao's research in the Wenzhou area that found that, "Christianity constitutes a popular domain in which the state and numerous local forces participate, rather than an autonomous symbolic universe that is inherently anti-state and anti-hegemonic."<sup>1</sup> As a source of local pride, Christianity lies at the center of reinterpreting and reconstructing the city's glorious past. By closely examining how the government, churches, grassroots groups and individuals attempt to (re)construct narratives revolving around the Christian past, this research reveals the dynamic and ongoing interaction of different actors. The findings also point out that, after decades of isolation from the outside world, the Xiamen church is now reencountering the world Christian community. Finally, this research also indicates that any relevant future studies will need to reconsider the interplay of the international Christian agents and local traditions.

### **Revisiting Church and the State in Today's China**

Just as this research came to an end, the National Religious Work Conference was held by the current administration in Beijing on April 22-23, 2016. The CCP considered this conference to be of great importance. With the exception of one member who was on a business trip in the United States, all the other members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CCP attended. The last national conference of equal importance had been held in 2001 when the central government was dealing with the

---

1. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*, 164.

outlawed Falun Gong. Afterwards, scholars of Chinese religions became obsessed with examining President Xi Jinping's speech, hoping to dig out potential trends in religious policy through a nuanced understanding of the wording. Many people would tend to agree that the state is tightening its grip on religious groups. They also noted that the Movement that began in Zhejiang advocating church demolition and the removal of crosses, mentioned at the very beginning of this dissertation, was not referred to at the conference. Nevertheless, the fact that Jiangsu province, adjacent to Zhejiang, was promoted as a model of "the elimination of simple, rough-and-ready work methods that could result in extreme individual or group events," that is: in opposition to the Zhejiang Movement, has led scholars to infer that the CCP Central Committee has a negative attitude toward Zhejiang. Despite the fact it was ignored, after the conference the Zhejiang Movement is still very much alive and now increasingly more researchers are tending to assume that Zhejiang has been selected as a pilot province and the new regulations on religious buildings will be applied to all religions across the country. It is not uncommon that, in many instances, scholars of contemporary Chinese religion and politics have to "conjecture" the true intentions of the top leadership.

What has been happening in Zhejiang has challenged the previous research on Wenzhou Christianity, in particular the over-emphasis on the negotiating ability of elite Christians who enter the mainstream of local society in the wake of their economic success. The current situation indicates that the role of the state in interacting with Christianity is not going to be downplayed any time soon.

In showcasing a number of different examples, this research shows that the state still has a powerful grip on the Xiamen church. Although there have been no conflicts of any magnitude and church-state relations have been running smoothly since the 1980s (as the Old Pastor commented), the state's authority has actually penetrated the Christian community and constantly constrained the church in a variety of ways. As the historical legacy has been recognized and utilized by the government, the Christian community now has to deal with new methods of governing, one of the chief ones being heritage management. Moreover, the trend toward decreasing congregations on Gulangyu that was one side effect of the official exploitation of the island is now irreversible. After thirty years of rapid development, China's economy is now tending to slow down slightly. Under the pressure of the need to revive the local economy, the Xiamen government will definitely not cut back on its economic exploitation of Gulangyu in the interests of the church. Any urban development planning will definitely not take the future of Christianity into consideration. Under the onward march of government project, the local church has no option but to obey and adapt to the overall situation. On the other side of the coin, the city's development project also allows the church to realize such practical objectives as using government funding to restore church buildings.

When I discussed the Zhejiang Movement with the Old Pastor, he said it would never happen in Xiamen given the city's relatively relaxed political atmosphere and friendly religious affairs officials. Over three decades of experience in dealing with local government, he has gained great confidence. As this research has indicated, local officials who are deeply embedded in local society, tend to act as social actors rather than agencies of the state in their interactions with Christianity. As long as their political future is not jeopardized, government officials will not refuse to cooperate with the church and will even help it benefit from local politics. Some resourceful religious elites are adept in dealing with the local government and church politics. However, the advantage enjoyed by Christianity in dealing with the authorities or those of a particular church within the Christian community will disappear as soon as the powerful figures withdraw. The decline of Trinity Church is not just attributable to a shrinking elderly congregation; undeniably the Old Pastor's successors have been lacking in strong, charismatic personalities. This situation reveals that the negotiating ability of Christianity with the state is heavily reliant on strong figures, a finding that illustrates the fragility of Christianity in the changing political conditions.

When referring to the good church-state relations, the Old Pastor apparently did not take account of the unregistered churches that have been disturbed by the public security authorities from time to time. He also overlooked the fact that each time the higher state agencies have intervened, his cooperation with local-level "friendly" officials ruptured immediately. Moreover, he might be overly optimistic to take the reversed circumstances in Wenzhou as read. Three years before it happened, the Wenzhou church would never have anticipated the rise of this harsh movement. Riding on the crest of their great economic success, the resourceful Christian entrepreneurs were very ambitious to construct "China's Jerusalem." The seemingly peaceful environment in which Christianity could flourish lulled scholars into ignoring the role of the state. Although the state has not changed the existing religious policy significantly, any minor adjustments can still considerably reshape the landscape of Christianity. The fickle attitudes of government leaders on different levels toward Christianity can decide the space allotted Christianity in an instant but this does not mean Christianity and the state will revert to confrontation and find themselves in the situation as it was before 1979. However, as long as the current political system remains in place, Christianity will not really obtain a more favorable position in its dealings with the state in the foreseeable future.

As mentioned at the beginning of the research, the Zhejiang Movement that has been predominantly perceived by the public and overseas observers as a campaign against Christianity could lead relevant studies back to the dichotomous paradigm of state domination and church resistance. The concern might become a reality. Some scholars are keener on the matter of Western-style religious freedom that has never

been realized in the Chinese context.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is unrealistic to expect overnight freedom for Christianity in the current Chinese political situation. Such a false expectation might draw academic research back to the binary construct of state versus church confrontation or might simply treat the Christian community as merely a passive victim of or even a force resisting the Communist regime. However, as this research has demonstrated, this assumption is not true.

## **Dynamics of Negotiating the Christian Past**

Since its entry into China in the early nineteenth century, Protestant Christianity has integrated into Chinese society. As an established part of the social fabric, Christianity can be definitely said to have varied dimensions and to exist in different forms. Bearing this in mind, social science studies of Chinese Christianity should not be confined to such conventional perspectives as the religious motivation and the spectacular growth in the number of the Christian population. One question that looms large is: How should Christianity be understood? Religion is only one dimension of Christianity-related activity. It also affects non-Christians. Unquestionably, Christianity also matters to them and acts as a differential system of meaning. One very important consideration is that excessive amount of attention paid to the growing size of the Christian population could lead to a simplification of the issue. Only by putting Christianity in the context in which it is rooted and nourished can it be comprehended in any depth.

This research provides a case that sheds light on the continuities between the past and the present. As a direct consequence of China's defeat in the First Opium War, Xiamen was forcibly opened up to the outside world as a treaty port, and Gulangyu

---

2. For example, Fenggang Yang, a leading scholar of contemporary Chinese Christianity, delivered a keynote speech entitled "*Is China the New Roman Empire? The Rise of Christianity in Contemporary China*" in Milan, Italy in late December 2015. For Yang, it was meaningful to deliver such a speech in Milan where Christianity was granted freedom as early as the "Edict of Milan" issued in 313. Yang compared today's China with the ancient Roman Empire and pointed out that: "In many ways this looks like the historical replay of Christianity in the Roman Empire in the fourth century." He was probably intimating that China might follow the Roman Empire and make Christianity the state religion. It is not my purpose to deny the significance of such an approach, but the comparison of today's China with the ancient Roman Empire should not be simplified to the issues of political repression and the unintended growth in the Christian population. For the abstract of Yang's speech, see the website of the Department of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Milan, <http://eng.sps.unimi.it/ecm/home/archives/news/content/is-china-the-new-roman-empire-the-rise-of-christianity-in-contemporary-china.0000.UNIMIDIRE-41936>, accessed May 25, 2016.

was thrust into a Western-led modernization process that led to it becoming an international settlement. In this period, hundreds of Western missionaries settled in the Xiamen region and launched widespread activities in education, medicine, newspapers and other social enterprises, and in these endeavors greatly contributed to shaping the landscape of the locale. These activities cast an aura of Westernization and modernity over the whole missionary enterprise in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century China. Although post-1950 missionary activity was forcibly terminated and intentionally discredited by the ruling Communist Party, its far-reaching influence has never been eliminated. Certainly, colonial and missionary modernity left a profound imprint on the collective psyche of Xiamen society. Xiamen citizens' internalization of Western forms of modernity, seen in the Western-style architecture and heard in the collective enthusiasm for Western-style music, has certainly been shaped and maintained by the romantic temperament of the city. In a nutshell, the successful construction of reform-era Xiamen's romantic image must in part be credited to its Christian legacy.

In modern China, Christianity has invariably and inextricably been associated with imperialism. The historical discourse on Christianity's discreditable role in the "century of humiliation" is not an invention of the CCP; it began in late Qing period. The missionaries' privileges were the fruit of China's defeat by the major Western powers and its subsequent fall in a rapidly changing world order. Although the missionary enterprise was not inherently imperialist, the missionaries' presence could not be but profoundly affected by contemporaneous international relations. The Chinese people's hatred of foreigners and the denunciation of Chinese Protestants and Catholics, who were condemned as traitors to their country, experienced an upsurge around 1900 that culminated in the massive Boxer Uprising. During the Republican period, the sentiment was taken on board by the nationalists who were struggling to build an independent nation-state. The Communist Party inherited the prevailing public perception from the peasant rebels and nationalists. Later, discourses revolving around Christianity were exploited by the ruling CCP to proclaim its historical mission in terminating the long-suffering nation's humiliation and liberating the people from imperialism.

Since the Communist Party rose to power over Mainland China, the reconstruction of historical narratives has been a national project, in which the Marxist social engineers have continually strived to dictate what citizens remember and forget. The Christian past has been an inescapable part of the official memory project. During the 1950s, there was a series of nationwide accusations whose principal target against the backdrop of the Korean War and the Cold War was American missionary activity. The Xiamen region was no exception to the general trend. The once privileged, respected missionaries became the objects of public humiliation. In front of 10,000 angry people who attended a public trial, the RCA missionary Henry Poppen had to struggle to

understand how his two main accusers, whom he had befriended with financial and medical help, had developed such intense hatred of him overnight. John Otte who established a modern hospital and in fact had dedicated his life to Xiamen is another missionary who was discredited. In the course of the fierce criticism in the Mao era and after decades of deliberate forgetting, Otte has been erased from the collective memory. After 1949, as they were either smashed up during the early era of Communism or transformed by government-led tourism projects, the church-related schools, hospitals and other carriers of memory ceased to function. With these material reminders of the missionary past gone or absorbed into another system, the social frameworks on which collective memory was established and shared have eroded. It goes without saying that this sort of environment exacerbates the difficulties of retaining a complete memory, since the concrete sites of memory have faded.<sup>3</sup> Otte would never have returned to public view if the historical value of the hospital buildings, which had fallen into disrepair, had not rediscovered or if the buildings had simply been demolished by the government and the land sold as real estate. Fortunately, Christianity-related buildings across the city - churches, mission schools and hospitals - were not demolished during the extreme campaigns, only expropriated for government or public use. Other forms of carriers of historical memory like the foreigners' cemetery and the more ephemeral archives and the like were not as lucky and were destroyed, partly because they were regarded as useless in the process of socialist construction.

Historical writing is among the most significant forms of official memory. The Communist government's collection and compilation of personal testimonies served as a way to demonstrate the new leadership's commitment to absorbing those experiences within a unified, coherent narrative that would simultaneously affirm the Party's legitimacy and its part of a continuous lineage as liberator of the miserable Chinese nation. Needless to say, Christianity that had been denounced for its entanglement with imperialism was targeted in official historical works. The framework set up by the CPPCC project (for example, the *Xiamen Historical Materials*) squeezed and colonized the space allowed private memory even further. Even after the launch of social reform and its policy of opening up to the outside world, the government has not slackened its efforts to dominate the narratives that deal with the Christian past. The Xiamen authorities' as yet unsuccessful but still ongoing history writing project, initiated in the 1980s, reveals that a unified history for Christianity, like that for any other religion, is still an item on the agenda of the state.

What is happening in Xiamen is not an isolated episode; rather, it is part of a nationwide oral history movement. Although ideological control lies at the center of the Party's rule, governments and officials on local levels are not particularly strongly

---

3. See Nora, "Les lieux de mémoire."

motivated to take a firm grip on ideology-related matters at all times. Consequently, ordinary citizens' historical reconstructions of less sensitive issues are achievable in some local societies. The central state has become aware of the booming civic movement and has responded with an active response. The label of "historical nihilism" (*lishi xuwuzhuyi*) is attached to those who "deny histories of the Party and the nation" and even "rewrite history." "Historical nihilism" has been under heated debate since 2013, when a few scholars with quasi-official backgrounds began to publish in the official media. Xi Jinping openly opposed "historical nihilism" and, on different occasions, has blamed it on "domestic and foreign hostile forces." In Xi's words, the primary hazard posed by "historical nihilism" is that it will "deny the guiding position of Marxism, the inevitability of China progressing to socialism, and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party."<sup>4</sup> Following Xi's guidelines, some official theorists have advocated reconstructing grand narratives to combat this emerging "historical nihilism."

As do many other memory studies, this research demonstrates that the official manipulation of society's memory in China today is no longer effective. A number of history enthusiasts, Christians and non-Christians alike, within and outside churches, are dedicated to reinterpreting the legacy of Christianity and, in the course of their work, publicly commemorate its connections to the past. The civic movement is not confined to Christian individuals or groups. The analysis of the commemoration of John Otte, for example, shows that the majority of the organizers were non-Christians, and their efforts were spurred on by their affection for the city's past rather than any religious motivation. Since the missionaries presented themselves as leaders of modernization by their establishment of a variety of modern institutions and were less than likely to express their power by exploiting any connection to the imperialist forces behind them, they won the respect of the people in Xiamen. Extremely few stories about any struggle against missionaries have been transmitted to the present generation.<sup>5</sup> Ordinary citizens think the national rhetoric of anti-imperialism is fairly unconvincing and also has little relevance to their lives. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the way they are boycotting state discourse could easily swing to the other pole. In their rebellion against the state-dominated master narrative, popular versions tend to go to the opposite extreme. In contradistinction to the negative tone adopted by the Party to refer to Western missionary activity, some of the locals tend to over-embellish the past and thereby create a new set of narratives completely contrary to the official

---

4. Qiushi Theory. *Xi Jinping tan lishi xuwuzhuyi* [Xi Jinping Talking about Historical Nihilism]. [http://www.qsttheory.cn/zhuanqu/zywz/2015-09/24/c\\_1116665737.htm](http://www.qsttheory.cn/zhuanqu/zywz/2015-09/24/c_1116665737.htm), accessed February 24, 2016.

5. The best-known example is that of Xu Chuncao, an elite Christian, who once publicly declared that "I am loyal to Christ Jesus, and have not compromised with those foreigners." See Zhang, "Xiamen Xinhai geming de linzhao," 22.

version. They consider Gulangyu in the missionary era to have been a base of advanced Western civilization, regardless of its colonial and imperialist background. A prime example of this is the way the local officials have handled the WHS application.

At each service of Sunday worship, as people enter any church in Xiamen, they will find a pile of newsletters placed at the front door for free distribution. In the bookstores run by churches, they can also discover book-length publications released both along officially permitted or private channels. In any of those publications, people will be able to read local church history. Churches or individuals have gained considerable space for publishing (albeit sometimes “illegally”) about historical matters. They are now able to reconstruct the history that is premised on their own understanding. History matters considerably to them, because the version made and endorsed by the state appears to conflict strongly with their own understanding of their shared past. However, the fact that people do not believe in the state narratives does not mean that the great master narratives disappear. The influence of state discourse on patterning people’s ways of thinking and practice is not unusual, as this authority has been incorporated into the structure of social memory. This assumption is illustrated by the recurrent opening of my interviews in which my respondents always referred to Christianity’s inglorious entanglement with imperialist aggression before going on to make their point. It seems that they were using the same discourse that had its origins in the unified and coherent official rhetoric. This demonstrates that the impact of official history will not cease to function in the foreseeable future.

Although the state is a shrewd and often relentless manipulator of society’s memory, ironically, it is the local government’s pragmatic purposes and tacit approval that make the alternative historical discourses on Christianity possible. As early as the late 1980s, prompted by the nationwide history project highlighting socialist China’s great achievements, the Xiamen authorities repackaged the city’s history and publicized the late influential Christians in a positive light. As an unexpected consequence, the historical image of elite Christians has played an important role in depoliticizing Christianity and in making it part of the city’s proud cultural and historical legacy. Since then, Christianity has gradually appeared with an increasingly positive image. The biggest example of the government’s directly pragmatic use of the Christian past came in 2002 when officials realized that its Christian history could contribute to a Xiamen victory in the competition for an international award for livable communities that was hosted in Germany, the birthplace of Protestantism. Another round of intensive utilization by the government resurfaced after 2009 in the wake of the application for WHS status for Gulangyu. The government reappraised the value of the legacy of the church, as well as that of the grassroots groups and the Christian community. In response to pragmatic requirements, the local officials allowed Christianity more social space. Through their application for WHS status, government officials are trying to attract more tourists to boost local economic development and

by the recovery of Gulangyu's cultural and historical landscape to gain the people's support. The source of the Communist regime's legitimacy has, to some extent, shifted from its historical discourse or political ideology to current performance.

The socialist ideology that Christianity is facing today is far different to what it was in 1949. As Frank Pieke has argued, "Socialist ideology is no longer the end served by Communist Party rule, but the mere means by which party rule is perpetuated...The specific relevance of ideology in justifying the CCP's rule means that...ideology [is deployed] as part of the party-state's ongoing quest to reproduce and reinvent itself: ideology is treated not as the objective of rule but as an inseparable aspect of practical governance."<sup>6</sup> In the study of today's Christianity, it will no longer be seen as a consistent victim of the atheistic or anti-religious socialist ideology. The relationship between Christianity and the state ideology is not fixed but fluid, a fact that is exemplified in the official attitudes toward the production of Christian history. Despite the fact that the authorities are showing more tolerance of the narrative of pre-1949 Christianity, the church after 1949, in particular the stories about political movements that highlight errors of Communist regime, is still subject to extremely stringent restrictions. The once self-proclaimed revolutionary Party now tends to dilute its revolutionary image; it has been replaced on the Party agenda by social stability and harmony. Under this circumstance, the production of Christian history is getting easier, at least as long as no reference is made to Mao's political campaigns. When it speaks of the traumas it inflicted on the ordinary people, by and large the Party usually blames the Cultural Revolution but balks at allowing details to be publicized. The authorities still close archives and force publishers to delete details about the repression of Christianity, since they are well aware that details of the Party's faults will damage its legitimacy, hard won by the thirty years of economic achievements. Hence, the Cultural Revolution has been used as a handy vehicle to vent public grievances.

Although both historical reconstruction and social memory refer to the past, they are not the same and need to be distinguished. What is happening under the present conditions in Xiamen is that it is common for both the government and citizens to transfer personal memories or hearsay evidence into published texts, a major sort of history but without the benefit of in-depth study. Although enthusiastic amateur historians (usually elderly local history experts) without proper training have actively participated in this historical production, professional historians have not shown any great interest in the historical enterprise. Scholars at Xiamen University, the best higher educational institution in the area, have not become involved. Some of them who disparage the "poor quality" of the local history experts, definitely having no interest; some of them are not willing to assume the responsibility of dealing with the

---

6. Pieke, *Good Communist*, 11.

distorted histories. The boot is also on the other foot because, as far as officials are concerned, the government-sponsored history project does not welcome the academics as they are difficult to discipline and are not willing to comply with the government's agenda.

This research argues that the reconstruction of the Christian past is actually an ongoing and dynamic process of negotiations. It illustrates the limits to the power of different actors - the state, churches, grassroots groups and individuals - to remake the past according to their present interests. It also demonstrates that official projects and unofficial attempts at history making often intertwine and interpenetrate each other's domain. Consequently, the definition of memory viewed from a dynamic perspective does not reduce remembering to either an instrument of official manipulation or a form of popular resistance. In the context of postsocialist China, this research locates social memory in the space left over between the ideology enforced by the state and the possibility that there might be another way of understanding the Christian past. This perspective acknowledges that various elements that make social memory constant are often at play together. It postulates a complex view of how the relationship between the past and the present has been crucial to the way in which social memory is formed. Importantly, it treats social memory as an active process of sense-making that has been taking place over a longer or shorter period of time.<sup>7</sup> Even though under single party rule, China is now on the way to being an increasingly plural society, it is not easy for the state to continue to monopolize the social memory related to Christianity. However, it would still be overly optimistic to exaggerate the capacity of the populace to challenge the official ideology. Therefore, in any attempt to probe into the reconstruction of the Christian past, it is meaningful to investigate the negotiating mechanisms that have been spontaneously formed in the societal fabric. The negotiating mechanisms do not function in any united or fixed form; rather, they are represented in everyday maneuvers. Consequently, such an issue needs to be located in a particular social and cultural context and be treated as a process that incorporates conflict, contest, controversy and cooperation as the hallmarks of memory.<sup>8</sup>

As I have recorded, the historical and social changes in the Gulangyu landscape and the collective passion for history there did not originate directly from a denial of official narratives. Intriguingly, the changing trajectory of Gulangyu represents two diametrically opposed discourses. Following the logic of market economy, the local government maximizes the potential of the island for economic purposes. In contrast, any of its citizens with a sense of nostalgia see what is happening there as a process of "deterioration" and put the blame on the excessive exploitation of tourism, that they are convinced is the foremost culprit. Christianity on Gulangyu Island, the former

---

7. Olick and Levy, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint," 922.

8. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 73.

center of the historical Three Missions that witnessed the flourishing of missionary enterprise in the region, was doomed to decline because of the shrinking congregations. In recent years, the center of gravity of Christianity has shifted to Xiamen Island that has experienced a surge in the number of its Christian population. The changes on Gulangyu and in the church community of the island have triggered a series of subsequent events in Xiamen, among them a growing nostalgia for the past glory, a commemoration of a church anniversary and the late missionaries. In trying to explain the collective passion for reinventing the past, it is important to understand the local pride and the sense of nostalgia as ways in which individuals and social groups resort to reconstructing the past as a way to relieve their great regret about the present situation.

The citizens who are engaged in the civic movement do not intend to challenge the state ideology, even though the challenge does arise as an unintended consequence. This situation explains why in the early stages of the cultural reinvention movement its members did not envision the prospect of a more civil society. It might also help elucidate why the clergy and lay Christians in Xiamen have no interest in present-day American evangelists, however much they cherish mission history and endorse the missionaries' contribution to the prosperous history of the area. As a liberal Western cultural idea, the concept of "civil society" cannot be taken as given in the context of Chinese society. There is no clear border between Christianity and the state, between unofficial narrative and official discourse, to define the space of each. The analysis of the production of history texts, for example, has demonstrated that official projects and unofficial attempts have often intertwined and interpenetrated each other; they definitely do not represent two completely separate domains. And, as long as the movement continues, those who are involved, particularly when they find the official narrative contradictory to their understanding of the city's past, will gradually generate a public consciousness. In the long term, this process will contribute to the growth of the consciousness of a more civil society.

The history of Christianity in China is a well-studied field that has generated extensive research. However, so far very few scholars really pay attention to how Christians or members of Christianity-influenced communities understand their own past. My intention has been to record and retell how such a group of people understand and go on to reconstruct the Christian past that has substantially shaped their sense of identity and local pride. The Xiamen story shows that a civic movement of making alternative narratives moves the historical issues in relation to Christianity into the mainstream of Xiamen society in everyday maneuvers. Nevertheless, it does not mean Christianity as a religion has entered the social mainstream. As a minority religion, Christianity still wanders outside the mainstream of Xiamen society. Therefore, I am dubious about Nanlai Cao's argument that, "the presence of a business community organized at the grassroots level can...move Christianity from

the margin to the mainstream of Chinese society in everyday maneuvers.”<sup>9</sup> From my point of view, I am convinced that we need to distinguish between the presence of the religion of Christ and Christianity-related issues.

## Reencountering World Christianity

Thirty years of isolation from the outside world in the Maoist era had once estranged the Chinese Christian community from the Christian world. Since 1979, the Xiamen church has resumed connections with Chinese diaspora churches, the majority in Southeast Asia. Members of the Southern Fujian church who fled abroad prior to October 1949 created a bridge between the Xiamen church and overseas Chinese Christian communities and the latter contributed huge amounts to the Xiamen church during the financially tough times. This sort of Christian network was stimulated by the state-led economic reform and the policy of opening-up. In the early reform era, in order to attract foreign investments to boost the economy, the government indirectly encouraged the reestablishment of transnational religious connections. In the course of the negotiations, both sides made their compromises. For example, in the mid-1990s a county-level government permitted overseas Chinese Christians to rebuild a church on condition that the latter agreed to bear the construction costs of a public hospital for a township.

Since the late 1990s, the situation has changed in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis. A number of overseas Chinese of Southern Fujian origin went bankrupt and were consequently forced to decrease their contributions to the church in their homeland. In contrast, China's economy was not badly scathed; it continued to develop and Xiamen became one of China's most economically prosperous regions. In the construction of the New District Gospel Church in the mid-1990s, 87.5 percent of the costs were borne by overseas Chinese churches, the majority in Singapore and Malaysia. However, the Eastern Xiamen Church (*Dongbu tang*) at present under construction, the most expensive church (200 million *yuan*, over 30 million US dollars according to the 2016 exchange rate) ever built in the Xiamen region, depends mostly on donations from local Christians. This considerable change in their economic situations has substantially reshaped the network between Xiamen and Southeast Asia. While on this subject, another fact that should not be overlooked is that the restoration of transnational connections originated from the long-term emigration tradition of Fujian. Nowadays, as increasingly more elderly overseas Chinese Christians have died, since the turn of the century the transnational networks based on geographical and lineage origin have weakened.

---

9. Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem*, 163.

Nevertheless, the Southeast Asian churches are still very much present. Alongside the decline in their economic contributions, these churches have initiated other channels to engage in the Xiamen church. The foremost among these is the training of clergy and church workers for both registered and unregistered churches. Since the late 1990s, the Fujian provincial *Lianghui* has sent dozens of young preachers to pursue their master's degrees in Trinity Theology College in Singapore. Many of them have returned to become the backbone in the church hierarchy. Meanwhile, through unofficial channels unregistered churches (for example, the Museum Church in Xiamen) have sent their preachers to Singapore Bible College. These examples are not to say that the transnational networks of officially sanctioned churches and independent churches are necessarily sharply divided. For instance, the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines, directed by a member of the Xiamen Shao family, has trained a large number of church workers for both registered and unregistered churches. Hence, instead of making economic contributions, Southeast Asia is now influencing the Xiamen church in terms of theology and co-worker training. This connection has been stimulated by some prestigious and influential evangelists among Chinese Christian communities such as Stephen Tong, an Indonesian Reformed pastor who was born in Xiamen. Tong's Reformed theology is attractive to many Xiamen Christians. His promotion of Reformed theology is giving an impetus to the recovery of the Reformed tradition in the mainstream church in Xiamen.

Of the Three Missions, the RCA was the first to reconnect with the Xiamen church after 1979. In 1992, the RCA headquarters in the United States invited Zhu Siming (1923-2015), a respected Christian, to attend the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of its mission to China as a representative of the Xiamen church. At the celebration of the eightieth anniversary of Trinity Church in 2014, a representative of the RCA was sent to attend and gave a public speech. The publishing of a history book about the RCA in the Xiamen area has helped expand the historical knowledge of the local Christians. All these events have contributed to the emerging sense of adhering to the authentic tradition of the RCA among the Christian community. A deaconess of Trinity Church who was studying Reformed theology in a Southeast Asian seminary once told me that she was hoping the RCA would produce a detailed instruction manual on how to lead a church with the RCA tradition. It is very obvious that many Xiamen Christians relate the church to the global church in two senses: in the first instance, they relish the heritage of the historical church as a part of nineteenth- and twentieth-century globalizing Christianity; in the second instance, they want to strengthen the Reformed theology and church governance structure so as to make it conform more to their mother missions. Apart from these two aspects, they do not really have a consciousness of integrating into the world Christian community in other forms. The Xiamen church shows no desire to regain its place as an entity in the global institution.

In her study of a Shanxi Catholic village, Henrietta Harrison found that the new generation of priests have attempted to retrieve the faith community's connection with the global Roman Catholic church by asking the Vatican for recognition and by "rejecting some of the community's traditional practices and imposing new practices that they defined as belonging to the global church."<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the Roman Catholic tradition that the Vatican exercises authority over faith communities across the world, there is no such an institution that Protestant communities have to obey in terms of either theology or church structure. Although the Reformed tradition has had far-reaching effects on the Xiamen church, the latter does not necessarily have to conform to the institutions of its mother missions. This situation of institutional disconnection between the Xiamen church and its mother missions is largely the result of the fact that the early missionaries purposefully worked to establish the native church of China rather than a branch of the foreign missions.

At the beginning of the century, as it faced the problem of a declining congregation, Trinity Church did seek cooperation with international Christian organizations. At present, by means of the Global South movement, the ambitious American church has been attempting to play a greater role in the global mission enterprise. As a consequence, the Xiamen church is encountering the American church again. This time, both Xiamen society and the global mission enterprise are very different from what they were in the nineteenth century. In China, the stigma once attached to membership in a foreign religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has been transformed by the widespread yearning for all things Western, a desire especially apparent among young people. Unquestionably, it is its foreign background that has meant that Rainbow, an American Christian agency, has been successful in converting a large number of college students and young professionals. In contrast to the negative representation associated with the nineteenth-century Western imperialist powers, in the current international environment the Christian service supplied by Americans contributes to its competitiveness in attracting young potential converts. The English language, American faces and Christianity together construct a cosmopolitan, global image. Through contact with and acceptance of American Christianity, the young people expect a fuller involvement in the global world. Despite the enthusiasm it generates, for political reasons the American image hampers it from being readily acceptable to the local church. The success of the historical Three Missions and the indigenized church provides a good lesson for the present missionary groups. They cannot really survive and expand in today's Chinese society as they once did in the classical missionary era if they refuse to become rooted for the second time. The reencounter of Chinese Christianity with the global mission today is inevitable. The Internet, tourism, migration and many opportunities to study abroad allow Chinese

---

10. See Harrison, *Missionary's Curse*, 183

people easier access to world Christianity. Whether or not the Chinese state permits this, Chinese Christians now can frequently interact with the world Christian community and will integrate more actively into the global mission.<sup>11</sup>

As this research has indicated, scholars of world Christianity should probe more deeply into how the connections between today's Chinese Christianity and world Christianity work. As the Christian networks are contextual, fragile and changing all the time, Chinese Christianity should not be taken for granted as part of world Christianity. Some Chinese Christians might say: "All believers under heaven are brothers and sisters," but they are saying this mainly in terms of faith. It is not an indication of their prospect of integrating deeply into the world community. Contrariwise, researchers of Chinese Christianity should be aware that their subject should not be considered a phenomenon isolated from world Christianity. Furthermore, relevant research should pay attention to the interplay of an international Christian presence and local traditions. It attempts a combined perspective of globalization and localization, and has been applied to the historical study of Chinese Christianity.<sup>12</sup> It suggests that this perspective would also prove fruitful if it were also adopted in the study of present-day Chinese Christianity.

---

11. One example is the "Back to Jerusalem" movement, a mission-oriented project to evangelize all of the nations between China and the Middle East. This movement is generally associated with unregistered churches in China rather than state-sanctioned churches. See e.g., Hattaway *et al.*, *Back to Jerusalem*.

12. See e.g., Ng, *Chinese Christianity*.



## Bibliography

- Ashiwa, Yoshiko. "Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China." In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, 43-73. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Ashiwa, Yoshiko, and David L. Wank. "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism: Clergy and Devotee Networks in the Twentieth Century." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2005): 217-37.
- Ashiwa, Yoshiko, and David L. Wank, eds. *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Ashiwa, Yoshiko, and David L. Wank. "The Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple: State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 337-59.
- Bainbridge, William Sims. "The Sociology of Conversion." In *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, edited by H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard, 178-91. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1992.
- Bartlett, Frederic C. *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950 [1932].
- Baugus, Bruce P. "Introduction: China, Church Development, and Presbyterianism." In *China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom*, edited by Bruce P. Baugus, 1-23. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.
- Baugus, Bruce P., and Sung-il Steve Park. "A Brief History of the Korean Presbyterian Mission to China." In *China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom*, edited by Bruce P. Baugus, 73-95. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.
- Bautista, Julius. "About Face: Asian Christianity in the Context of Southern Expansion." In *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict*, edited by Julius Bautista and Francis Khek Gee Lim, 201-15. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009.
- Bautista, Julius, and Francis Khek Gee Lim, eds. *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009.

- Bays, Daniel H. "The Growth of Independent Christianity in China, 1900-1937." In *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, edited by Daniel H. Bays, 307-16. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Bays, Daniel H. "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today." *The China Quarterly* 174 (2003): 488-504.
- Bays, Daniel H. "A Tradition of State Dominance." In *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions*, edited by Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, 25-39. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.
- Bays, Daniel H. *A New History of Christianity in China*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Béja, Jean-Philippe. "Forbidden Memory, Unwritten History: The Difficulty of Structuring an Opposition Movement in the PRC." *China Perspective*, no. 4 (2007): 88-98.
- Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.
- Berger, Peter L. "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview." In *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, edited by Peter L. Berger, 1-18. Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center / Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999.
- Berger, Peter, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas. *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Bol, Peter K. "The Rise of Local History: History, Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2001): 37-76.
- Borthwick, Paul. *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
- Bowra, Cecil A. V. "Amoy." In *Twentieth Century Impression of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China*, edited by Arnold Wright, 813-28. London: Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Co., 1908.
- Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2011
- Brock, S.P. "The 'Nestorian' Church: A Lamentable Misnomer." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78, no. 3 (1996): 23-35.
- Burke, Peter. *Varieties of Cultural History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Cai, Xiangyu. "Christianity and Gender in South-East China: The Chaozhou Missions (1849-1949)." PhD diss., Leiden University, 2012.
- Cai, Zhenxun. "Xiamen Rongcun (pseud.) Zhonghua Jidu jiaotang jinian beiming" [The Stele Epigraph for the Xiamen Banyan Village Church]. *Daonan* 5, no. 7 (1931): 12.
- Callahan, William A. *China: The Pessimist Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Cao, Nanlai. *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.
- Cao, Zengyou. *Chuanjiaoshi yu Zhongguo kexue* [Missionaries and the Sciences in China]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1999.
- Chao, Jonathan, and Rosanna Chong. *Dangdai Zhongguo Jidujiao fazhan shi 1949-1997* [A History of Christianity in Socialist China, 1949-1997]. Taipei: Zhongguo fuyinhui, 1997.
- Chau, Adam Yuet. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Chau, Adam Yuet. "Introduction: Revitalizing and Innovating Religious Traditions in Contemporary China." In *Religion in Contemporary China: Revitalization and Innovation*, edited by Adam Yuet Chau, 1-31. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.
- Chen, Bingling. "Gulangyu nanmin jigou Guoji jiujihui" [The International Relief Agency: Refugee Organization on Gulangyu]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 12 (1987): 52-54.
- Chen, Cunfu, and Huang Tianhai. "The Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today." *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 2 (2004): 183-200.
- Chen, Ronglan, and Li Xitai. *Xiamen fangyan* [The Xiamen Dialect]. 2nd ed. Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 1999.
- Chen, Yongming. *Qingdai qianqi de zhengzhi rentong yu lishi shuxie* [Political Identity and History Writing in the Early Qing]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011.
- Chen, Zhiping. *Jin wubai nian lai Fujian de jiazu shehui yu wenhua* [Lineage Society and Culture in Fujian over the Past Five Centuries]. Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2011.
- Cheung, David. *Christianity in Modern China: The Making of the First Native Protestant Church*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Ching, Maybo. "Guojia ruhe 'taoli': Zhongguo 'minjian' shehui de beilun" [How to "Evade" the Arm of the State: the Paradox of China's "Civil" Society]. *Zhongguo shehui kexue bao*, October 14, 2010.
- Chow, Alexander. "Calvinist Public Theology in Urban China Today." *International Journal of Public Theology* 8, no. 2 (2014): 158-75.
- Ci, Jiwei. *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: From Utopianism to Hedonism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1994.
- Cohen, Paul A. "Remembering and Forgetting: National Humiliation in Twentieth-Century China." *Twentieth-Century China* 27, no. 2 (2002): 1-39.
- Confino, Alon. "Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386-1403.
- Conkling, Timothy Garner. "Mobilized Merchants-Patriotic Martyrs: China's House-Church Protestants and the Politics of Cooperative Resistance." PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, 2013.

- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Cook, James A. "Bridges to Modernity: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese and Southeast Coastal Modernization, 1843-1937." PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1998.
- Cook, James A. "Reimagining China: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese, and a Transnational Modernity." In *Everyday Modernity in China*, edited by Madeleine Yue Dong and Joshua L. Goldstein, 156-94. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006.
- Coser, Lewis A. "Introduction." In *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs. Translated and edited by Lewis A. Coser, 1-34. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Cubitt, Geoffrey. *History and Memory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Dai, Yifeng. *Quyuxing jingji fazhan yu shehui bianqian: yi jindai Fujian diqu wei zhongxin* [Regional Economic Development and Social Change: Centered on the Modern Fujian Area]. Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2004.
- Davie, Grace. "Europe: The Exception That Proves the Rule?" In *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, edited by Peter L. Berger, 65-83. Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center / Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999.
- De Groot, J.J.M. *The Religious System of China: Its Ancient Forms, Evolutions, History and Present Aspect, Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected Therewith*. Leiden: Brill, 1894.
- De Jong, Gerald F. *The Reformed Church in China 1842-1951*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992.
- Dean, Kenneth. *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Dean, Kenneth. *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Dean, Kenneth, and Zheng Zhenman. *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Dikötter, Frank. *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Ding, Guangxun. *Ding Duangxun (K.H. Ting) wenji* [Collected Writings of K.H. Ting]. Nanjing: Yilin chubanshe, 1998.
- Ding, X.L. *The Decline of Communism in China: Legitimacy Crisis, 1977-1989*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Dirlik, Arif. *Revolution and History: The Origins of Marxist Historiography in China, 1919-1937*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

- Douw, Leo. "Introduction." In *Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to "Cultural Capitalism" in South China*, edited by Leo Douw, Cen Huang and Michael R. Godley, 3-21. London: Kegan Paul International, 1999.
- Duan, Qi. *Fenjin de lichen: Zhongguo Jidujiao de Bensehua* [The Course of Endeavor: The Indigenization of Christianity in China]. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2004.
- Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago University Press, 1995.
- Dunch, Ryan. "Protestant Christianity in China Today: Fragile, Fragmented, Flourishing." In *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, edited by Stephen Uhalley Jr. and Xiaoxin Wu, 195-216. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.
- Dunch, Ryan. *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857-1927*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by George Simpson. New York: Free Press, 1964.
- Ebbinghaus, Hermann. *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*. Translated by Henry A. Ruger and Clara E. Bussenius. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913.
- Entwistle, Phil. "Faith in China: Religious Belief and National Narratives amongst Young, Urban Chinese Protestants." *Nations and Nationalism* 22, no. 2 (2016): 347-70.
- Evans, Grant. *The Politics of Ritual and Remembrance: Laos since 1975*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.
- Fagg, John Gerardus. *Forty Years in South China: A Biography of the Rev. John Van Nest Talmage, D.D.* New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1894.
- Fairbank, John K. "Introduction: The Many Faces of Protestant Missions in China and the United States." In *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, edited by John K. Fairbank, 1-19. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Fang, Youyi, Fang Wentu, Peng Yiwan, and Lin Meizhi, eds. *Xiamen cheng liubai nian* [Six Hundred Years of Xiamen City]. Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 1996.
- Fentress, James, and Chris Wickham. *Social Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Feuchtwang, Stephan, and Wang Mingming. *Grassroots Charisma: Four Local Leaders in China*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Feuerwerker, Albert. "China's History in Marxian Dress." *The American Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1961): 323-53.
- Fisher, Daniel W. *Di Kaowen (Calvin Wilson Mateer) zhuan: yiwei zai Zhongguo Shandong shenghuo le sishiwu nian de chuanjiaoshi* [Calvin Wilson Mateer, Forty-Five Years a Missionary in Shantung, China: A Biography]. Translated by Guan Zhiyuan, Miao Fengbo and Guan Zhiying. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009.

- Flath, James. "‘This Is How the Chinese People Began Their Struggle’: Humen and the Opium War as a Site of Memory." In *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*, edited by Marc Andre Matten, 167-92. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited by Donald F. Bouchard and translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Freedman, Maurice. *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*. London: Athlone Press, 1958.
- Freedman, Maurice. *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*. London: Athlone Press, 1966.
- Gao, Bingzhong. "Yizuo bowuguan-miaoyu jianzhu de minzuzhi: lun chengwei zhengzhi yishu de shuangmingzhi" [Ethnography of a Building Both as Museum and Temple: On the Double-Naming Method as a Political Art]. *Shehuixue yanjiu*, no. 1 (2006): 154-68.
- Gao, Xi. *De Zhen (John Dudgeon) zhuan: yige Yingguo chuanjiaoshi yu wan Qing yixue jindaihua* [Biography of John Dudgeon: A British Missionary and the Medical Modernization in Late Qing]. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2009.
- Giles, Herbert Allen. *A Short History of Koolangsu*. Xiamen: A.A. Marcal, 1878.
- Girardot, Norman J. *Chaojin Dongfang: Li Yage (James Legge) pingzhuan* [The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage]. Translated by Duan Huaiqing and Zhou Liling. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2011.
- Goldman, Merle. *Literary Dissent in Communist China*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Goldman, Merle, Timothy Cheek, and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds. *China’s Intellectuals and the State: In Search of a New Relationship*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Gong, Jie. "Xiamen Tianzhu tang" [The Xiamen Catholic Church]. *Siming wenshi ziliao* 5 (2009): 66-70.
- Gu, Changsheng. *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo* [Missionaries and Modern China]. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1981.
- Gu, Changsheng. *Awaken: Memoirs of a Chinese Historian*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009.
- Gu, Edward, and Merle Goldman, eds. *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Gulangyu guangongwei, ed. *Gulangyu qu aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu cailiao xuanbian* [Selected Materials for Patriotic Education]. Gulangyu: n.p., 1999.
- Gulangyu guanweihui, ed. *Zhongguo shijie wenhua yichan yubei mingdan shenbao wenjian* [Application Documentation of World Cultural Heritage, Tentative List of China]. Xiamen: n.p., 2012.

- Guo, Yuhua, and Sun Liping. "Suku: yizhong nongmin guojia guannian xingcheng de zhongjie jizhi" [Grievance Venting: An Intermediary Mechanism for the Formation of the Peasants' Concept of State]. *Zhongguo xueshu* 4 (2002): 130-57.
- Guojia zongjiaojuzhengce faguishi, ed. *Zhongguo zongjiao fagui zhengce duben* [Chinese Religious Laws and Policies Reader]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2000.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated and edited by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hargett, James M. "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in the History of Difangzhi Writing." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56, no. 2 (1996): 405-42.
- Harrison, Henrietta. *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.
- Hattaway, Paul, Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang. *Back to Jerusalem: Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- He, Ju. *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai Zhongguo shehui biange* [Missionaries and Social Change in Modern China]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2014.
- He, Qiyong. *Gonggong zujia Gulangyu yu jindai Xiamen de fazhan* [Gulangyu International Settlement and the Development of Modern Xiamen]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007.
- Hirono, Miwa. *Civilizing Missions: International Religious Agencies in China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914." In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 263-307. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Homans, George C. *The Human Group*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.
- Hong, Buren. Afterword to *Xiamen liushi nian* [Sixty Years of Xiamen]. Edited by Hong Buren. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2010.
- Hong, Buren, and Zhan Zhaoxia. *Gulangyu xuezhe* [Scholars from Gulangyu]. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2011.
- Howell, Jude. "The Political Economy of Xiamen Special Economic Zone." In *Fujian: A Coastal Province in Transition and Transformation*, edited by Y.M. Yeung and David K. Y. Chu, 119-42. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000.
- Huang, Jianbo. *Dushi li de xiangcun jiaohui: Zhongguo chengshihua yu mingong Jidutu* [Country Churches in Cities: Urbanization and Christianity of Migrant Workers in China]. Hong Kong: Daofeng shushe, 2012.

- Huang, Jianbo, and Zhai Jiexia. "Zhongguo Jidutu renshu zhi zheng de xueli yu 'zhengzhi'" [The Reasoning and Politics of the Debate on the Christian Population in China]. *Daofeng: Jidujiao wenhua pinglun*, no. 35 (2011): 301-15.
- Huang, Philip C.C. "'Public Sphere'/'Civil Society' in China? The Third Realm between State and Society." *Modern China* 19, no. 2 (1993): 216-40.
- Huang, Sen, and Liu Qi, eds. *Wenshi ziliao gongzuo gaishu* [Outline of Historical Materials Work]. Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1992.
- Huang, Shu-min. *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989.
- Huang, You, Shao Jianyin, Shao Huiqing, and Shao Shaohui. "Xiaozhang yunji de Shao shi jiazou" [The Shao Family That Produced Ten Principals]. In *Koushu lishi: wode Gulangyu wangshi* [Oral History: My Past on Gulangyu], edited by Zhonggong Xiamen shiwei xuanchuanbu & Xiamen shi shehui kexue lianhehui, 86-126. Xiamen: Xiamen yinxiang chubanshe youxian gongsi, 2011.
- Hunter, Alan, and Kim-kwong Chan. *Protestantism in Contemporary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Hunter, Ian M.L. *Memory*. Rev. ed. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964.
- Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Why Strict Churches Are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1180-1211.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Ji, Zhe. "Buddhism in the Reform Era: A Secularized Revival?" In *Religion in Contemporary China: Revitalization and Innovation*, edited by Adam Yuet Chau, 32-52. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.
- Jiantang chouweihui. *Wei jianzhu Gulangyu Sanyi tang mujuan qi* [Appeal for Donations for the Construction of the Gulangyu Trinity Church]. 1935.
- Jidujiao quanguo Lianghui. "Zhongguo Jidujiao gongyi cishan shiye huigu yu zhanwang" [Review of and Prospects for Chinese Christian Philanthropy]. *Zhongguo zongjiao*, no. 7 (2012): 64-66.
- Jing, Jun. *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Johnson, Elizabeth. "Grieving for the Dead, Grieving for the Living: Funeral Laments of Hakka Women." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, edited by James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, 135-63. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Kang, Jie. *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

- Kindopp, Jason. "The Politics of Protestantism in Contemporary China: State Control, Civil Society, and Social Movement in a Single Party-State." PhD diss., George Washington University, 2004.
- Kindopp, Jason, and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds. *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.
- Kipnis, Andrew. "Suzhi: A Keyword Approach." *The China Quarterly* 186 (2006): 295-313.
- Kleinman, Arthur. *Social Origins of Distress and Disease: Depression, Neurasthenia, and Pain in Modern China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Koesel, Karrie J. "The Rise of a Chinese House Church: The Organizational Weapon." *The China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 572-89.
- Kuah-Pearce, Khun Eng. "The Worship of Qingshui Zushi and Religious Revivalism in South China." In *Southern Fujian: Reproduction of Traditions in Post-Mao China*, edited by Tan Chee-beng, 121-44. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006.
- Kuah-Pearce, Khun Eng. *Rebuilding the Ancestral Village: Singaporeans in China*. 2nd ed. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011.
- Lai, Xinxia. *Zhongguo difangzhi* [Local Gazetteers of China]. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1995.
- Lane, Christel. *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - The Soviet Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Le Goff, Jacques. *History and Memory*. Translated by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Lee, Haiyan. "The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound." In *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*, edited by Marc Andre Matten, 193-232. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Lee, Joseph Tse-hei. "Guanxi and Gospel: Mapping Christian Networks in South China." In *Encountering Modernity: Christianity in East Asia and Asian America*, edited by Albert L. Park and David K. Yoo, 71-94. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.
- Lehmann, Angela. *Transnational Lives in China: Expatriates in a Globalizing City*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Leung, Beatrice. "Communist Party-Vatican Interplay over the Training of Church Leaders in China." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 4 (2001): 657-73.
- Leung, Ka-lun. *Gaige kaifang yilai de Zhongguo nongcun jiaohui* [The Rural Churches of Mainland China since 1978]. Hong Kong: Jiandao shenxueyuan, 1999.
- Li, Minghuan, ed. *Fujian qiaoxiang diaocha: qiaoxiang rentong, qiaoxiang wangluo yu qiaoxiang wenhua* [Research on Fujian Qiaoxiang: Qiaoxiang Identity, Qiaoxiang Networks and Qiaoxiang Culture]. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2005.
- Li, Rulong. *Fujian fangyan* [Fujian Dialects]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1997.

- Li, Si-ming, and Ling-xun Zhao. "Xiamen: Regional Center and Hometown of Overseas Chinese." In *China's Coastal Cities: Catalysts for Modernization*, edited by Yue-man Yeung and Xu-wei Hu, 221-39. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992.
- Li, Xiangping. "'Zongjiao shengtai' haishi 'quanli shengtai': cong dangdai Zhongguo de 'zongjiao shengtai lun' sichao tanqi" ["Religious Ecology" or "Power Ecology": Commencing with the Trend of the Theory of "Religious Ecology"]. *Shanghai daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 18, no. 1 (2011): 124-40.
- Li, Yongpu. Preface to *Quanguo geji Zhengxie wenshi ziliao pianmu suoyin 1960-1990* [Index to Table of Contents of the CPPCC's Historical Materials, 1960-1990]. Vol. 1. Edited by Li Yongpu. Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1992.
- Lian, Lichang. *Fujian mimi shehui* [Secret Societies in Fujian]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1989.
- Lian, Xi. *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Lin, May-li. "Zhonggong Zhengxie 'wenshi ziliao' gongzuo de tuizhan 1959-1966: yi Shanghai jingyan wei zhongxin" [Promoting "Historical Accounts" at the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 1959-1966: The Shanghai Experience]. *Xinshixue* 26, no. 3 (2015): 145-203.
- Lin, Muli. "Xiamen shi Jidujiao Rongcun tang (pseud.) shouren chuandao Cai Zhenxun xiansheng xiaozhuan" [A Brief Biography of Cai Zhenxun, the First Preacher of Xiamen Banyan Village Church]. Unpublished manuscript, 2013. Microsoft Word file.
- Lin, Renchuan. *Ming mo Qing chu siren haishang maoyi* [China's Private Sea Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1987.
- Lin, Renchuan. *Fujian duiwai maoyi yu haiguan shi* [Fujian's Foreign Trade and its Customs History]. Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 1991.
- Lin, Wen-hui. *Qingji Fujian jiaoan zhi yanjiu* [Christian Cases in Qing Fujian]. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1989.
- Lin, Xuezeng *et al.*, comp. *Tong'an xian zhi* [Tong'an County Gazetteer]. Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1967 [1929].
- Lin, Yi. "Zhonghua diyi shengtang Xiamen Xinjie libaitang" [The First Holy Church in China - Xiamen New Street Church]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 7 (1984): 94-102.
- Lin, Yueh-hwa. *The Golden Wing: A Sociological Study of Chinese Familism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- London Missionary Society (LMS), *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*. London, 1873.

- Lozada, Eriberto P. Jr. *God Aboveground: Catholic Church, Postsocialist State, and Transnational Processes in a Chinese Village*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Lu, Zhuying. "Rikou yu zhong qiunan ji" [Record of Life in a Japanese Prison]. *Gulangyu wenshi ziliao* 4 (1999): 51-53.
- Luo, Anping (pseud.), ed. "Xiamen Jidujiao zhuan ye zhi" [Special Gazetteer of Christianity in Xiamen]. Unpublished manuscript, 1993.
- Luo, Guanzong, ed. *Qianshi buwang houshi zhi shi: diguozhuyi liyong Jidujiao qinlüe Zhongguo shishi shuping* [Review of the Utilization of Christianity in the Imperialist Invasion of China]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003.
- Lutz, Jessie G. *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971.
- Lutz, Jessie G. "Women in Imperial China: Ideal, Stereotype, and Reality." In *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, edited by Jessie G. Lutz. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010.
- Lyu, Yunfang. "Xiamen waiji Jidutu jiaoshi de zongjiao huodong yanjiu" [A Study of Foreign Christian Teachers' Religious Activities in Xiamen]. *Shijie minzu*, no. 5 (2010): 67-74.
- Macgowan, John. *Beside the Bamboo*. London: London Missionary Society, 1914.
- Madsen, Richard. *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Madsen, Richard. "From Socialist Ideology to Cultural Heritage: The Changing Basis of Legitimacy in the People's Republic of China." *Anthropology and Medicine* 21, no. 1 (2014): 58-70.
- Mao, Zedong. *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected Works of Mao Zedong]. Vols. 2&4. 2nd ed. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991.
- Matten, Marc Andre, ed. *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- McCarthy, Susan. "Gods of Wealth, Temples of Prosperity: Party-State Participation in the Minority Cultural Revival." *China: An International Journal* 2, no. 1 (2004): 28-52.
- McLeister, Mark. "A Three-Self Protestant Church, the Local State and Religious Policy Implementation in a Coastal Chinese City." In *Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Francis Khek Gee Lim, 234-46. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013.
- Mead, George H. "The Nature of the Past." In *Essays in Honor of John Dewey: On the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday October 20, 1929*, 235-42. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929.
- Megill, Allan. "Foucault, Structuralism, and the Ends of History." *The Journal of Modern History* 51, no. 3 (1979): 451-503.

- Misztal, Barbara A. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, 2003.
- Mok, Ka-ho. *Intellectuals and the State in Post-Mao China*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan / New York: St. Martin's, 1998.
- Moon, Steve Sang-cheol. "Missions from Korea 2016: Sustainability and Revitalization." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40, no. 2 (2016): 181-85.
- Morrison, Eilza, comp. *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*. Vols. 1 & 2. London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839.
- Mullins, Mark R. *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.
- Murre-van den Berg, Heleen. "Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Middle Eastern Women: An Overview." In *Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East: Two Hundred Years of History*, edited by Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Ingvild Flakerud, 103-22. Oxford: Berg, 2005.
- Murre-van den Berg, Heleen. "The Church of the East in Mesopotamia in the Mongol Period." In *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, edited by Roman Malek, 377-94. Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2006.
- Ng, Chin-keong. *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983.
- Ng, Peter Tze Ming. *Jidu zongjiao yu Zhongguo daxue jiaoyu* [Christianity and Chinese Higher Education]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003.
- Ng, Peter Tze Ming. *Chinese Christianity: An Interplay between Global and Local Perspectives*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24.
- Nosco, Peter. *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990.
- Oakes, Tim, and Donald S. Sutton, eds. *Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010.
- Olick, Jeffrey K., and Daniel Levy. "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics." *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 6 (1997): 921-36.
- Ong, Aihwa. "Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and of Capitalism." In *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini, 171-202. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin Books, 1989.
- Pan, Jennifer, and Yiqing Xu. "China's Ideological Spectrum." Research Paper No. 2015-6, Political Science Department, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA.
- Paramore, Kiri. *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009.

- Park, Albert L., and David K. Yoo. "Introduction: Modernity and the Materiality of Religion." In *Encountering Modernity: Christianity in East Asia and Asian American*, edited by Albert L. Park and David K. Yoo, 1-15. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.
- Park, Chang-won. "Christian Reactions to Government-Led Cremation in South Korea." In *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict*, edited by Julius Bautista and Francis Khok Gee Lim, 155-65. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009.
- Park, Chung-shin. *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003.
- Peng, Jingzhong. *Zhongguo fangzhi jianshi* [A Brief History of the Chinese Local Gazetteer]. Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1990.
- Peng, Yiwan. *Xiamen yinyue mingjia* [Noted Musicians of Xiamen]. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2007.
- Pieke, Frank N. *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today's China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Pieke, Frank N. "Immigrant China." *Modern China* 38, no. 1 (2012): 40-77.
- Pieke, Frank N. "The Communist Party and Social Management in China." *China Information* 26, no. 2 (2012): 149-65.
- Pitcher, Philip Wilson. *In and About Amoy: Some Historical and Other Facts Connected with One of the First Open Ports in China*. 2nd ed. Shanghai and Foochow: Methodist Publishing House in China, 1912.
- Popular Memory Group. "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method." In *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics*, edited by Richard Johnson, Gregor McLennan, Bill Schwarz and David Sutton, 205-52. London: Hutchinson, 1982.
- Potter, Pitman B. "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China." *The China Quarterly* 174 (2003): 317-37.
- Qihuang Shanren (pseud.). "Fanzimu kou de bianqian" [The Changes in the "Barbarian Cemetery"]. *Gulangyu wenshi ziliao* 10 (2003): 151-54.
- Qiu, Yiling. "Xinhai geming qianhou de Xiamen baokan" [Newspapers and Periodicals in Xiamen around the Revolution of 1911]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 18 (1991): 112-22.
- Quanguo difangzhi ziliao gongzuo xiezuozu, ed. *Zhongguo xin fangzhi mulu 1949-1992* [A Catalogue of New Chinese Gazetteers 1949-1992]. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1993.
- Remmers, Phil. "The Emergence of Legal Christian Publishing in China: An Opportunity for Reformed Christians." In *China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom*, edited by Bruce P. Baugus, 245-67. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.
- Renmin ribao*. "Fazhan Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi zongjiao lilun, quanmian tigao xinxingshi xia zongjiao gongzuo shuiping" [Develop a Religious Theory of

- Socialism with Chinese Characteristics; Comprehensively Improve the Level of Religious Work under the New Conditions]. April 24, 2016, 1.
- Robertson, Roland, and JoAnn Chirico. "Humanity, Globalization, and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: A Theoretical Exploration." *Sociological Analysis* 46, no. 3 (1985): 219-42.
- Sanneh, Lamin. *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Sanneh, Lamin, and Joel A. Carpenter, eds. *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Sanyi tang. *Sanyi tang bashi nian* [Trinity Church 1934-2014]. Xiamen: n.p., 2014.
- Schudson, Michael. "Lives, Laws, and Language: Commemorative versus Non-Commemorative Forms of Effective Public Memory." *The Communication Review* 2, no. 1(1997): 3-17.
- Schuman, Howard and Jacqueline Scott. "Generations and Collective Memories." *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 3 (1989): 359-81.
- Schudson, Michael. *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- Schwarcz, Vera. "Out of Historical Amnesia: An Eclectic and Nearly Forgotten Chinese Communist in Europe." *Modern China* 13, no. 2 (1987): 177-225.
- Schwartz, Barry. "The Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln." In *Collective Remembering*, edited by David Middleton and Derek Edwards, 81-107. London: Sage, 1990.
- Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Shen, Jia. *Xunzhao Su Huilian (William Edward Soothill): chuanjiaoshi he jindai Zhongguo* [Finding William Edward Soothill: Missionaries and Modern China]. Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 2013.
- Shen, Sung-chiao. "Wo yi wo xue jian xuanyuan: Huangdi shenhua yu wan Qing de guozu jiangou" [The Myth of Huang-Ti (Yellow Emperor) and the Construction of Chinese Nationhood in Late Qing]. *Taiwan shehui yanjiu jikan*, no. 28 (1997): 1-77.
- Shen, Sung-chiao. "Zhen Dahan zhi tiansheng: minzu yingxiong xipu yu wan Qing de guozu xiangxiang" [Imagine China: Construction of the Genealogies of Chinese 'National Heroes' in Late Qing]. *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan*, no. 33 (2000): 77-158.
- Snow, David A., and Richard Machalek. "The Sociology of Conversion." *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984): 167-90.
- Snow, Donald B. *English Teaching as Christian Mission: An Applied Theology*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001.

- Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Stockmann, Daniela. *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Stuart, John Leighton. *Zai Hua wushi nian: cong chuanjiaoshi dao dashi* [Fifty Years in China: The Memoirs of John Leighton Stuart, Missionary and Ambassador]. Translated by Chen Liying. Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2012.
- Takayama, K. Peter. "Revitalization Movement of Modern Japanese Civil Religion." *Sociological Analysis* 48, no. 4 (1988): 328-41.
- Tan, Chee-beng, ed. *Southern Fujian: Reproduction of Traditions in Post-Mao China*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006.
- Tan, Chee-beng. "Chinese Religious Expressions in Post-Mao Yongchun, Fujian." In *Southern Fujian: Reproduction of Traditions in Post-Mao China*, edited by Tan Chee-beng, 97-120. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006.
- Tan, Shulin. *Meiguo chuanjiaoshi Bo Jia (Peter Park) zai Hua huodong yanjiu 1834-1857* [Peter Parker in China, 1834-1857]. Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 2010.
- Tao, Feiya. "'Wenhua qinlüe' yuanliu kao" [A Textual Study of "Cultural Aggression"]. *Wenshizhe*, no. 5 (2003): 31-39.
- Tao, Feiya, and Yang Weihua. "Gaike kaifang yilai de Zhongguo Jidujiao shi yanjiu" [Study of the History of Christianity in China since the Reform and Opening Up]. *Shixue yuekan*, no. 10 (2010): 5-21.
- Thompson, Phyllis. *Neidihui chu Zhongguo ji* [China: The Reluctant Exodus]. Translated by Mei Shan Chang. Hong Kong: Haiwai Jidu shituan, 2003.
- Tong, Joy Kooi-chin. *Overseas Chinese Christian Entrepreneurs in Modern China: A Case Study of the Influence of Christian Ethics on Business Life*. London: Anthem Press, 2012.
- Unger, Jonathan, ed. *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993.
- Unger, Jonathan. "Introduction." In *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China*, edited by Jonathan Unger, 1-8. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993.
- Vala, Carsten T. "Pathways to the Pulpit: Leadership Training in 'Patriotic and Unregistered Chinese Protestant Churches.'" In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, 96-125. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Van der Veer, Peter, ed. *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Vanderbilt, Gregory. "Post-War Japanese Christian Historians, Democracy, and the Problem of the 'Emperor-System' State." In *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict*, edited by Julius Bautista and Francis Khek Gee Lim, 59-78. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009.
- Wang, Aiguo. "Minzu minjian zongjiao xinyang duiyu zongjiao shengtai pingheng jizhi de weixi" [The Maintenance of Ethnic Folk Religion in the Balance of Religious Ecology]. *Minzu shibao*, March 2, 2010, A3.
- Wang, Lixin. *Meiguo chuanjiaoshi yu Wanqing Zhongguo xiandaihua* [American Missionaries and the Modernization of Late Qing China]. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997.
- Wang, Ming-ke. *Huaxia bianyuan: lishi jiyi yu zuqun rentong* [Hwa-Hsia Ethnic Boundaries: Historical Memory and Ethnic Identity]. Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1997.
- Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Warnshuis, A.L. *A Brief Sketch of the Life and Work of Dr. John A. Otte*. New York: Board of Foreign Missions, RCA, 1911.
- Warren, Max, ed. *To apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971.
- Watson, James L. "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ('Empress of Heaven') Along the South China Coast, 960-1960." In *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, edited by David Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, 292-324. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Watson, Rubie S. "An Introduction." In *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie S. Watson, 1-20. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994.
- Watson, Rubie S. "Making Secret Histories: Memory and Mourning in Post-Mao China." In *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism*, edited by Rubie S. Watson, 65-86. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994.
- Wen, Yihan (pseud.). "Xiamen shi Gulangyu Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui Sanyi tang" [The Gulangyu Christian Trinity Church in Xiamen]. *Tianfeng*, no. 10 (1957): 32.
- Wenger, Jacqueline E. "Official vs. Underground Protestant Churches in China: Challenges for Reconciliation and Social Influence." *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 2 (2004): 169-82.
- Wertsch, James V. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- White, Chris. "Harnessing the Church in Today's China: The Case of Xiamen's Xinjie Church." *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2010): 53-64.

- White, Chris. "Waves of Influence across the South Sea: Mutual Support between Protestants in Minnan and Southeast Asia." *Ching Feng* 11, no. 1 (2012): 29-54.
- White, Chris. *Sacred Webs: The Social Lives and Networks of Minnan Protestants, 1840s-1920s*. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.
- Wielander, Gerda. *Christian Values in Communist China*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013.
- Wu, Bingyao. "Bainian lai de Minnan Jidu jiaohui" [The Southern Fujian Church over the Past 100 Years]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 13 (1988): 76-102.
- Wu, Bingyao. "Jidujiao Minnan dahui de yici shenghui" [A Grand Meeting of the Southern Fujian Synod of the Church of Christ in China]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 14 (1988): 116-31.
- Wu, Fei. *Maimang shang de shengyan: yige Tianzhuojiao qunti zhong de xinyang he shenghuo* [Sacred Word above the Awn of Wheat: Faith and Life in a Rural Catholic Community]. Hong Kong: Daofeng shushe, 2001.
- Wu, Zhen. "Cong fengjian mixin dao feiwuzhi wenhua yichan: minjian xinyang de hefahua licheng" [From Feudal Superstition to Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Legalization Process of Folk Religions]. In *Zhongguo zongjiao baogao 2009* [Annual Report on China's Religions 2009], edited by Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui, 161-80. Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009.
- Xiamen huaqiao zhi bianweihui, ed. *Xiamen huaqiao zhi* [Xiamen Overseas Chinese Gazetteer]. Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 1991.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Benshi Junguanhui xuanbu guanzhi Jiushi Yiyuan chanye" [The Municipal Military Management Committee Announce Taking Control of the Hope Hospital Premises], January 8, 1951, 1.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Bu Xianli (Henry A. Poppen) yi bei wo quzhu chujing" [Henry A. Poppen Has Been Expelled]. March 5, 1951, 1.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Benshi Weishengju jieban Jiushi Yiyuan ji fushe hushi xuexiao" [The Municipal Health Bureau Takes over Hope Hospital and Its Affiliated Nursing School], December 7, 1951, 1.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Zhou Qingze shi zongjiaojie de youpai fenzi" [Zhou Qingze Is a Rightist of the Religious Sector], September 11, 1957, 7.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Zhou Qingze pizhe zongjiao waiyi fangdu fanghuo" [Zhou Qingze Plants Poison and Fire under the Cloak of Religion], September 12, 1957, 1-2.
- Xiamen ribao*. "Shi Jidu jiaotu gonggu aiguo zhenxian, bodao Wen Yihan (pseud.) Du Zunneng fan Dang miulun" [Xiamen Christians are Consolidating Patriotic Front by Refuting Wen Yihan and Du Zunneng's Anti-Party Fallacy]. May 11, 1958, 2.
- Xiamen shi difangzhi bianweihui, ed. *Xiamen shi zhi* [Xiamen City Gazetteer]. Vol. 5. Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2004.

- Xiamen shi zhi bianweihui & Xiamen haiguan zhi bianweihui, eds. *Jindai Xiamen shehui jingji gaikuang* [Social and Economic Profile of Modern Xiamen]. Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 1990.
- Xiamen wanbao*. “Ya Bili (David Abeel) jiqi houjizhe men” [David Abeel and His Successors]. November 17, 2013, 20.
- Xiamen Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui. Preface to *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* [Xiamen Historical Materials]. Vol. 3. Edited by Xiamen Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui. 1980.
- Xiang, Biao. *Transcending Boundaries: Zhejiangcun: The Story of a Migrant Village in Beijing*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Xiang, Biao. *Women ruhe xushu dangxia, jinru lishi: jianlun renleixue de xianshi juese* [How Do We Narrate the Present and Enter History: The Realistic Role of Anthropology]. *Kaogu renleixue kan*, no. 83 (2015): 89-102.
- Xue, Qifeng *et al.*, comp. *Lujiang zhi* [Xiamen Gazetteer]. Vol. 1. 1769. A copy preserved by Asian Library of Leiden University.
- Yan, Hairong. “Neoliberal Governmentality and Neohumanism: Organizing Suzhi/Value Flow through Labor Recruitment Networks.” *Cultural Anthropology* 18, no. 4 (2003): 493-523.
- Yang, C. K. *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*. Berkeley: University of California University, 1961.
- Yang, Enli. *Yejian de ge: jingli yonghuo de zhen Shen* [Songs in the Night: Testament to the Living God]. Alhambra, CA: Zhongguo dalu shengtu jianzheng shigongbu, 2004.
- Yang, Fenggang. “Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity: The Importance of Social and Cultural Contexts.” *Sociology of Religion* 59, no. 3 (1998): 237-57.
- Yang, Fenggang. “Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald’s: Conversion to Christianity in Unban China.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 4 (2005): 423-41.
- Yang, Fenggang. “The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 47 (2006): 93-122.
- Yang, Fenggang, and Andrew Abel. “Sociology of Religious Conversion.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, edited by Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, 140-63. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Yang, Fenggang, and Joseph B. Tamney, eds. *State, Market, and Religions in Chinese Societies*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui, ed. *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Yeh, Jen-chang. *Wusi yihou de fandui Jidujiao yundong: Zhongguo zhengjiao guanxi de jiexi* [The Anti-Christian Campaigns after the May Fourth Movement]. Taipei: Jiuda wenhua, 1992.

- Ying, Fuk-tsang. "Dangdai Zhongguo zhengjiao guanxi tantao: jianlun dui Jidujiao de fazhan yingxiang" [The Church-State Relationship in Contemporary China and Its Impact on the Development of Christianity]. *Xin shiji zongjiao yanjiu* 2, no. 2 (2003): 110-74.
- Ying, Fuk-tsang. "Fandi aiguo yu zhongjiao gexin: lun Zhonggong jianguo chuqi de Jidujiao 'Gexin xuanyan'" [The "Christian Manifesto" and the Making of a Patriotic Protestant Church in the People's Republic of China]. *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan*, no. 56 (2007): 91-141.
- Ying, Fuk-tsang. "Chai shizijia de zhengzhi: Zhejiang sheng 'sangai yichai' yundong de zongjiao-zhengzhi fenxi" [The Politics of Cross Demolition: A Religio-Political Analysis of the "Three Transformations and One Demolition" Campaign in Zhejiang Province]. *Daofeng*, no. 44 (2016): 25-61.
- Yip, Ka-che. *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922-1927*. Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1980.
- Yu, Anthony C. *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 2005.
- Yu, Feng, Zhang Zhenshi, and Zeng Shiqin. "Gulangyu lunwei gonggong zujie de jingguo" [The Process of Gulangyu's Deterioration as an International Settlement]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 2 (1963): 76-107.
- Yu, Yang. "Remaking Xiamen: Overseas Chinese and Regional Transformation in Architecture and Urbanism in the Early 20th Century." PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2007.
- Yuan, Guangfeng. "Zuowei zhengzhi shenhua de 'bangyang' yu shehuizhuyi xinren de suzao: 'Lei Feng' fuhao de shengchan, yunzuo jizhi yu gongzhong jiyi" [The 'Example' as a Political Myth and the Shaping of New Socialist Men: The Production, Operating Mechanism and Public Memory of Lei Feng]. *Si yu yan* 48, no. 4 (2010): 23-84.
- Yue, Yongyi. "Chuantong minjian wenhua yu xinnongcun jianshe: yi Huabei liqu miaohui weili" [Traditional Folk Cultures and Constructing 'New Rural Areas': Temple Festivals in the Huabei Pear Region as an Example.] *Shehui* 28, no. 6 (2008): 176-93.
- Zhang, Qiang, and Robert Weatherley. "The Rise of 'Republican Fever' in the PRC and the Implications for CCP Legitimacy." *China Information* 27, no. 3 (2013): 277-300.
- Zhang, Shengcai. "Xiamen Xinhai geming de linzhao" [The Revolution of 1911 in Xiamen]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 18 (1991): 21-23.
- Zhang, Xianqing. *Guanfu, zongzu yu Tianzhujiào: shiqi zhi shijiu shiji Fuan xiangcun jiaohui de lishi xushi* [State, Lineage and Catholicism: A Narrative of the History of the Church in Seventeenth- to Nineteenth-Century Rural Fuan]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009.

- Zhang, Xiping, and Zhuo Xinping, eds. *Bense zhi tan: ershi shiji Zhongguo Jidujiao wenhua xueshu lunji* [The Exploration of Indigenization: Academic Essays on Christian Culture in Twentieth-Century China]. Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1998.
- Zheng, Zhenzhi *et al.* “Gonggong zujie shiqi de Gulangyu” [Gulangyu during the Era of the International Settlement]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 3 (1980): 1-84.
- Zhao, Shilin, and Duan Qi. *Jidujiao zai Zhongguo: chujinghua de zhihui* [Christianity in China: the Wisdom of Contextualization]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2009.
- Zheng, Xijue, and Huang Heyuan. “Meiguo yisheng Yu Yuehan (John A. Otte) ruci lingren” [The American Dr. John A. Otte Was Such a Bully]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 1 (1963): 64-66.
- Zheng, Zhenman. *Ming Qing Fujian jiazuzuzhi yu shehui bianqian* [Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming-Qing Fujian]. Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2009.
- Zheng, Zhenman. “Guojihua yu difanghua: jindai Minnan qiaoxiang de shehui wenhua bianqian” [Internationalization and Localization: Social and Cultural Changes in Qiaoxiang in Modern Southern Fujian]. *Jindaishi yanjiu*, no. 2 (2010): 62-75.
- Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed. *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* [Selected Important Documents since the Foundation of the PRC]. Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1992.
- Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi zonghe yanjiuzu & Guowuyuan zongjiao shiwuju zhengce faguisi, eds. *Xin shiqi zongjiao gongzuo wenxian xuanbian* [Selected Works on Religious Work in the New Era]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 1995.
- Zhongguo difangzhi zhidao xiaozu bangongshi. “1990 nian quanguo difangzhi gongzuo huiyi jiyao” [The Minutes of the 1990 National Gazetteer Working Meeting]. *Xinjiang difangzhi*, no. 3 (1990): 4-7.
- Zhongguo difangzhi zhidao xiaozu bangongshi, ed. *Difangzhi gongzuo wenxian xuanbian* [Selected Documents to Do with the Work on Local Gazetteers]. Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2009.
- Zhongguo Jidujiao sanzhi aiguo yundong weiyuanhui & Zhongguo Jidujiao xiehui, eds. *Jidujiao aiguo zhuyi jiaocheng* [Christian Patriotism Textbook]. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006.
- Zhongguo kexueyuan Beijing tianwentai, ed. *Zhongguo difangzhi lianhe mulu* [The Union Catalogue of Chinese Local Gazetteers]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985.
- Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan shijie zongjiao yanjiusuo ketizu. “Zhongguo Jidujiao ruhu wenjuan diaocha baogao” [An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China]. In *Zhongguo zongjiao baogao 2010* [Annual Report on China’s Religions

- 2010], edited by Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui, 190-212. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010.
- Zhou, Changji, comp. *Xiamen fangyan cidian* [Xiamen Dialect Dictionary]. Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993.
- Zhou, Enlai. *Zhou Enlai xuanji* [Selected Works of Zhou Enlai]. Vol. 2. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984.
- Zhou, Haiyan. *Jiyi de zhengzhi* [The Politics of Memory]. Beijing: Zhongguo fazhan chubanshe, 2013.
- Zhou, Kai *et al.*, comp. *Xiamen zhi* [Xiamen Gazetteer]. Taipei: Datong shuju, 1984 [1839].
- Zhu, Hongmo. “Benhui zhi chengli yu jingguo” [The Establishment and Process of the Church]. In *Gulangyu Sanyi tanghui niankan* [Annual Report of Gulangyu Trinity Church], edited by Trinity Church Committee, 5-10. Gulangyu: n.p., 1935.
- Zhu, Hongmo. “Gulangyu Sanyi tang jianzhu shimo” [The Establishment of Gulangyu Trinity Church]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 7 (1984): 108-25.
- Zhu, Hongmo. “Xiamen lunxian hou Gulangyu Yude nanmin shourongsuo” [Lok Tek Girls’ School Refugee Camp after the Fall of Xiamen to the Japanese]. *Xiamen wenshi ziliao* 12 (1987): 55-59.
- Zhu, Qianzhi. *Zhongguo Jingjiao: Zhongguo gudai Jidujiao yanjiu* [The Nestorianism of China: Research on Christianity in Ancient China]. Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1993.
- Zhu, Yujing. “Guojia tongzhi, difang zhengzhi yu Wenzhou de Jidujiao” [State Rule, Local Politics and Christianity in Wenzhou]. PhD diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011.
- Zhu, Zhi. “Jiefangqian Gulangyu de jiaoyu gaikuang” [An Educational Profile of Pre-1949 Gulangyu]. *Gulangyu wenshi ziliao* 9 (2002): 66-69.
- Zhu, Zixian (pseud.). “*Gensui ai de jiaozong*” [Following in the Footprints of Love]. Unpublished manuscript, n.d.



## Chinese Characters

### *Districts of Xiamen City*

Haicang 海沧

Huli 湖里

Jimei 集美

Siming 思明

Tong'an 同安

Xiang'an 翔安

### *Other place names*

Anhui 安徽

Anping 安平

Anxi 安溪

Beijing 北京

Chang'an 长安

Chaozhou 潮州

Dadu 大都

Fujian 福建

Fuzhou 福州

Guangdong 广东

Guangzhou 广州

Gulangyu 鼓浪屿

Gutian 古田

Hangzhou 杭州

Harbin 哈尔滨

Henan 河南

Huian 惠安

Humen 虎门

Jiaheyu 嘉禾屿

Jiangsu 江苏

Jiangxi 江西

Jinggangshan 井冈山

Jinjiang 晋江

Jinmen 金门

Longyan 龙岩

Lujiang dao 鹭江道

Min 闽

Minbei 闽北

Mindong 闽东

Minnan 闽南

Minxi 闽西

Minzhong 闽中

Nanjing 南京

Nanyang 南洋

Ningbo 宁波  
 Penghu 澎湖  
 Pinghe 平和  
 Putian 莆田  
 Quanzhou 泉州  
 Qufu 曲阜  
 Rongcun 榕村  
 Ruijin 瑞金  
 Shaanxi 陕西  
 Shandong 山东  
 Shanghai 上海  
 Shanghang 上杭  
 Shanxi 山西  
 Shenyang 沈阳  
 Sichuan 四川

Taipei 台北  
 Taiwan 台湾  
 Tianjin 天津  
 Weifang 潍坊  
 Wenzhou 温州  
 Xiamen 厦门  
 Xi'an 西安  
 Xiaoxi 小溪  
 Xinjiang 新疆  
 Yongjia 永嘉  
 Yuegang 月港  
 Zengcuoan 曾厝垵  
 Zhangzhou 漳州  
 Zhejiang 浙江  
 Zhoukoudian 周口店

### *Other characters*

aiguo aijiao 爱国爱教  
 aiguo zongjiao renshi 爱国宗教人士  
 Bagua lou 八卦楼  
 Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming 百花齐放, 百家争鸣  
 baohusan 保护伞  
 Baosheng dadi 保生大帝  
 bashan yishui yifentian 八山一水一分田  
 bensehua 本色化  
 boluan fanzheng 拨乱反正  
 changzhu renkou 常住人口  
 chongyang meiwai 崇洋媚外  
 chuandao 传道  
 cunshi 存史

dang'an 档案  
 danwei 单位  
 daotai 道台  
 Daqin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei 大秦景教流行中国碑  
 Dashengchan yundong 大生产运动  
 dazibao 大字报  
 difang wenshi zhuanjia 地方文史专家  
 difangzhi 地方志  
 Dongbu tang 东部堂  
 Dongzhengjiao 东正教  
 douzheng dahui 斗争大会  
 fada de 发达的  
 fan 番  
 fandong fenzi 反动分子

- fangui 番鬼  
 fangzhi 方志  
 fanzai 番仔  
 Fanzai libaitang 番仔礼拜堂  
 Fanzai mu 番仔墓  
 fengjian de 封建的  
 fengjian mixin 封建迷信  
 fengjing liaoyangqu 风景疗养区  
 fengjing lüyouqu 风景旅游区  
 fuchuji 副处级  
 fushengji 副省级  
 futingji 副厅级  
 Fuyin tang 福音堂  
 Gaige kaifang 改革开放  
 gaizheng 改正  
 Ganyu wei bei mohei de ren fanbai 敢于为被抹黑的人翻白  
 Gongbujü 工部局  
 Gongbujü lüli 工部局律例  
 guanchang wenhua 官场文化  
 guanxi 关系  
 Guanyin 观音  
 guochi 国耻  
 Guoji libaitang 国际礼拜堂  
 guoji xingxiang 国际形象  
 heping jiefang 和平解放  
 hexin yicundian 核心遗存点  
 huji 户籍  
 huji renkou 户籍人口  
 huizhong 会众  
 hukou 户口  
 Jiangdao tang 讲道堂  
 jianming 贱名  
 jiaoan 教案  
 jiaotang 教堂  
 jiating jiaohui 家庭教会  
 Jiayin 佳音  
 Jidujiao 基督教  
 jieji diren 阶级敌人  
 jihua dan lie shi 计划单列市  
 jingji tequ 经济特区  
 Jingjiaotu 景教徒  
 jiu shehui 旧社会  
 Jiulong jiang 九龙江  
 Jiushi yiyuan 救世医院  
 jubaopen 聚宝盆  
 juhuidian 聚会点  
 juren 举人  
 kaihui 开会  
 Kongsu yundong 控诉运动  
 Kuomintang 国民党  
 laishi de panwang 来世的盼望  
 laodong gaizao 劳动改造  
 laogai 劳改  
 lianhe libai 联合礼拜  
 Lianghui 两会  
 libaitang 礼拜堂  
 lingliang 灵粮  
 lishi xuwuzhuyi 历史虚无主义  
 Loushi ming 陋室铭  
 Lujiang bao 鹭江报  
 luohou de 落后的  
 Mazu 妈祖  
 Mei diguozhuyi zougou 美帝国主义走狗  
 mei wenhua 没文化

- Minguo re 民国热  
mingzhe baoshen 明哲保身  
minjian shenyi 民间申遗  
minjian youhao dashi 民间友好大使  
Minnan dahui 闽南大会  
Minnan shengshi 闽南圣诗  
Minnanhua 闽南话  
mozhe shitou guohe 摸着石头过河  
mudaoyou 慕道友  
Nanniwan jingshen 南泥湾精神  
niugui sheshen 牛鬼蛇神  
nongmingong 农民工  
ping'an xile 平安喜乐  
pingfan 平反  
pinyin 拼音  
poxie 破鞋  
Putaoyuan 葡萄园  
Putonghua 普通话  
qiaoxiang 侨乡  
qieyinzi 切音字  
Qingming 清明  
qinjian 亲见  
qinli 亲历  
qinwen 亲闻  
renmai 人脉  
Riguangyan si 日光岩寺  
ruanshili 软实力  
San gonghui 三公会  
Sangai yichai 三改一拆  
Sanjiang tang 三江堂  
Sanyi fengyun 三一风云  
Sanyi tang 三一堂  
Sanzi aiguo yundong 三自爱国运动  
Sanzi gexin yundong 三自革新运动  
sanzuo dashan 三座大山  
shehui zhuyi xin nongcun 社会主义新农村  
shengmi zhu cheng shufan 生米煮成熟饭  
Shengmingshu 生命树  
shengshi xiushi 盛世修史  
shi 市 (city), 史 (history)  
shili 失礼  
Shuangbai yundong 双百运动  
Shuangjiang 霜降  
shuling de 属灵的  
shuling de shengming 属灵的生命  
shuoli 说理  
suku 诉苦  
suzhi 素质  
tang zhuren 堂主任  
Tanghua fanzi chuxue 唐话番字初学  
tanghui 堂会  
Tianfeng 天风  
tianguo de shiming 天国的使命  
Tianzhujiao 天主教  
Tieguanyin 铁观音  
tingji 厅级  
tizhi nei 体制内  
tongdi fan'geming 通敌反革命  
tongli mushi 同理牧师  
tuanjie 团结  
Tudi gong 土地公  
waidi de 外地的

waiguoren Jidujiao huodong linshi  
 changsuo 外国人基督教活动临时场  
 所  
 waijiao 外教  
 wairen 外人  
 Women yong bu renzhen de fangshi  
 ban renzhen de shi 我们用不认真的方  
 式办认真的事  
 Xiagang tang 厦港堂  
 Xiamen ribao 厦门日报  
 Xiamen wanbao 厦门晚报  
 Xiamen wenshi ziliao 厦门文史资料  
 xiandai de 现代的  
 xianzhan houzou 先斩后奏  
 Xiaodaohui 小刀会  
 Xiaoxi libaitang 小溪礼拜堂  
 Xiehe libaitang 协和礼拜堂  
 Xifang zichanjiuji ziyouhua sichao 西方  
 资产阶级自由化思潮  
 shehuizhuyi xin nongcun 社会主义新  
 农村  
 Xinjiao 新教  
 Xinjie tang 新街堂  
 Xinqu fuyin tang 新区福音堂  
 xinxiang de Ma'na 馨香的吗哪  
 xueyuanpai 学院派  
 Xunyuan zhongxue 寻源中学  
 yangjiao 洋教  
 Yelikewen 也里可温  
 yifa yigui banjiao 依法依规办教  
 Yihequan 义和拳  
 yiku sitian 忆苦思甜

Ying Hua zhongxue 英华中学  
 Ying Xia da cidian 英厦大辞典  
 Yingyu jiao 英语角  
 yinyuan 银元  
 yongbu xiaoshi de tiantang 永不消失  
 的天堂  
 youpai 右派  
 yuan 元  
 yuanze wenti 原则问题  
 Yude nüzhong 毓德女中  
 yuren 育人  
 zhanglao 长老  
 zhegai 遮盖  
 zhengchuji 正处级  
 zhengzhi juewu 政治觉悟  
 zhi 志  
 zhishi 执事  
 Zhongguohua 中国化  
 Zhonghua diyi shengtang 中华第一圣  
 堂  
 Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui 中华基督教会  
 Zhongyuan 中原  
 zhuren mushi 主任牧师  
 Zhushu tang 竹树堂  
 zichuan 自传  
 ziyang 自养  
 zizheng 资政  
 zizhi 自治  
 zongjiao huodong changsuo 宗教活动  
 场所  
 zuo de 左的  
 zuoguang zuoyan 做光做盐



## Summary

This ethnography of Protestant Christianity in contemporary Xiamen, Fujian province, is not simply a story of Christian revival in reform-era China. In contrast to such frameworks as (de)secularization theory and the Global South trend (or even a simplified numbers game), this research illustrates the need to comprehend how Christians or members of Christianity-influenced communities understand their own past within the framework of the study of Chinese Christianity.

As a result of China's defeat in the First Opium War, Xiamen was forcibly opened up to the outside world as a treaty port, and Gulangyu (an islet off its coast) was thrust into a Western-led modernization process. From the moment it first entered Xiamen in 1842, Christianity became deeply embedded in the local cultural and social structure and even today constantly affects secular life in this area. In recent years, there has been a burgeoning movement in Xiamen to reinvent the Christian past and reconstruct its historical narratives. For pragmatic purposes such as UNESCO world heritage status application, the local government acquiesces in and even supports these popular efforts. The fact that serves as a starting point for this research is that Christianity on Gulangyu, a former center of the missions that saw the heyday of Christianity, was doomed to decline because of the state-led commercialization driven by the development of tourism on the island.

Christianity has long been at the center of official Chinese narratives of "national humiliation." This discourse was closely intertwined with the building of the modern nation-state and later with the strengthening of the legitimacy of the Communist regime. Although Xiamen history enthusiasts who are engaged in the civil movement have no intention of testing the state ideology, this challenge has emerged as an unintended consequence. This has caused tension between official narratives and the popular reconstruction of the Christian past. This research has revealed the negotiating mechanisms that have been spontaneously formed in local society to deal with this tension.

By closely examining how the government, churches, grassroots groups and individuals attempt to make narratives revolve around the Christian past, this research reveals the dynamic and ongoing interactions between different actors. In this study, I depart from the traditional dichotomous approach of state domination versus church resistance. Moreover, I reflect on the over-emphasis on the negotiating ability of the

Christian elite and argue that the role of the state in its interaction with Christianity should not be downplayed in the current situation.

This research also examines the recent changes in the Christian networks linking Xiamen and Southeast Asia. Buttressed by the emigration tradition and lineage connections, the Xiamen church resumed its links with Southeast Asia in the early reform era. However, at the turn of the century, the involvement of the Southeast Asian churches began to ebb as the older generation Christians of South Fujian origin passed away. This loss of the older generation with closer ties to China was aggravated by the diminishing economic influence of the Chinese in Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis that struck in the late 1990s. On the basis of an analysis of an American Christian organization, this study points out that, after decades of isolation from the outside world, the Xiamen church is now reencountering the world Christian community. The representation of Christianity that emphasizes its relationship with the modern image of the United States makes a deep impression on young people, not only in their beliefs but also in their understanding of the modernity associated with Christianity. However, the American Christian agency that has become entrapped in local politics is being plagued by troubles. This research has demonstrated that, whether or not the Chinese state permits, Chinese Christians frequently interact with and in the future will integrate more actively into the world Christian community. Accordingly, it has revealed the importance of reconsidering the interplay between international Christian agents and local traditions in the study of Christianity in China today.

## Samenvatting

Deze etnografie gaat over de opleving van het christendom in het Chinese hervormingstijdperk, meer specifiek over het protestantse christendom in het huidige Xiamen in de provincie Fujian. Deze studie wil, anders dan interpretaties binnen (de-)seculariseringstheorieën of het ‘Global South’ paradigma (inclusief een eenvoudig verhaal over snelle groei), Chinees christendom begrijpen vanuit de manier waarop zowel Chinese christenen als andere lokale betrokkenen, dit christendom interpreteren vanuit de eigen studie van het verleden.

Als gevolg van de nederlaag van China in de Eerste Opiumoorlog (1839-1842), werd Xiamen geforceerd opengesteld voor de buitenwereld als een verdraghaven en Gulangyu (een eilandje voor de kust van Xiamen) kwam ineens in een door het Westen geleid moderniseringsproces terecht. Sinds de komst van het christendom in Xiamen in 1842, was dit diep verankerd in de lokale culturele en sociale structuren. Zelfs nu nog beïnvloedt het nog voortdurend het seculiere leven in dit gebied. In de afgelopen jaren kwam er in Xiamen een beweging op die het christelijke verleden opnieuw wilde uitvinden en de historische verhalen wilde reconstrueren. Om pragmatische redenen, zoals het aanmelden als UNESCO werelderfgoed, stemt de lokale overheid stilzwijgend in of steunt dit populaire streven zelfs. Het gegeven dat als uitgangspunt dient voor dit onderzoek is dat het christendom op Gulangyu, het vroegere centrum van de zendingsorganisaties die de glorie van het christendom meemaakten, gedoemd was tot achteruitgang door de staatsgeleide commercialisering, aangedreven door de ontwikkeling van toerisme op het eiland.

Het christendom is lang de basis geweest van de officiële verhalen van ‘nationale vernedering’. Deze verhalen waren nauw verweven met het bouwen van de moderne nationale staat en later met de legitimatie van het communistische regime. Hoewel de geschiedenis-enthousiastelingen in Xiamen die zich bezighouden met de burgerbeweging niet van plan waren de staatsideologie te testen, is dat als onbedoelde consequentie wel het gevolg geweest. Dit heeft een spanningsveld veroorzaakt tussen de officiële verhalen en de populaire reconstructie van het christelijke verleden. Dit onderzoek laat de onderhandelingsmechanismen zien die zich spontaan ontwikkelden binnen de lokale gemeenschap om met dit spanningsveld te kunnen omgaan.

Door nader te onderzoeken hoe overheid, kerken, volksbewegingen en individuen proberen verhalen over het christelijke verleden een vorm te geven, laat dit onderzoek

de dynamische en voortdurende interactie zien tussen verschillende spelers. In deze studie begin ik met de traditionele dychotomische benadering van staatsdominantie en weerstand van de zijde van de kerk. Bovendien reflecteer ik op de over-beklemtoning van het vermogen tot onderhandelen van de christelijke elite en beargumenteer ik dat de rol van de staat in zijn interactie met het christendom in de huidige situatie niet wordt gebagatelliseerd.

In deze studie worden ook de veranderende christelijke netwerken tussen Xiamen en Zuidoost-Azië onderzocht. Gesteund door de emigratietraditie en de familieverbanden, pakte de kerk van Xiamen in de vroege hervormingstijd de verbindingen met Zuidoost-Azië weer op. Bij de eeuwwisseling begon de betrokkenheid van de kerken in Zuidoost-Azië te veranderen omdat de oudere generatie christenen in Zuid-Fujian uitstierf en door de nasleep van de financiële crisis in Azië in de late jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw. Op basis van een analyse van een Amerikaanse christelijke organisatie, wijst deze studie uit dat, na decennia van isolatie van de buitenwereld, de kerk van Xiamen nu de christelijke wereld herontmoet. Het beeld van het christendom in relatie tot het moderne imago van de Verenigde Staten oefent een grote invloed uit op jongeren, niet alleen wat hun geloof betreft maar ook hun begrip van moderniteit in relatie met het christendom. Echter, de Amerikaanse christelijke instelling die verstrikt is geraakt in de lokale politiek wordt geplaagd door moeilijkheden. Deze studie heeft het belang van heroverweging van de wisselwerking tussen de internationale christelijke actoren en lokale tradities in het bestuderen van het christendom in China aangetoond.

## Curriculum Vitae

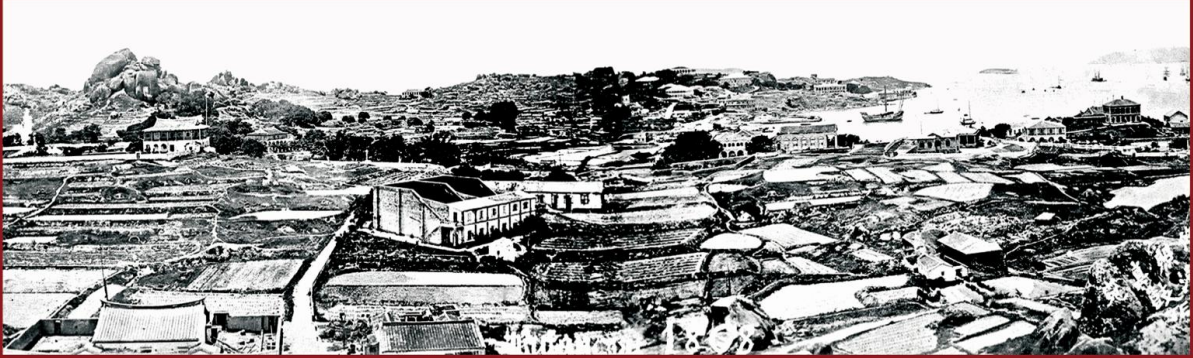
Jifeng Liu was born on December 7, 1984, in Zoucheng, Shandong province, China. He received a BA in social work from Shandong Institute of Business and Technology in 2007 and an MA in demographic sociology from Xiamen University, China, in 2010. After obtaining his master's degree, he was employed as a market researcher in the Horizon Research Group, Guangzhou, China. He began his doctoral project on the sociology of migration at Xiamen University in 2012, and one year later he started his PhD research on Protestant Christianity in contemporary China at Leiden University in the Netherlands. During his doctoral project, he has been a visiting PhD student in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies at the University of Copenhagen.

Jifeng is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity (MPI-MMG), Germany. His current research explores how the rise of China has stimulated the restructuring of the religious networks between the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and Southern Fujian in the twenty-first century, as part of the Indian and Chinese Religious Networks in Southeast Asia project directed by Peter van der Veer (MPI-MMG) and Kenneth Dean (National University of Singapore).

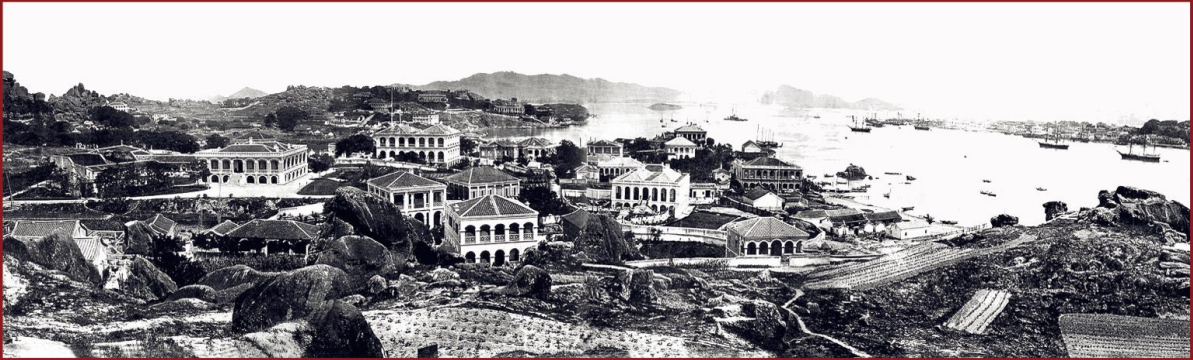
As a sociologist, his research interests revolve around Christianity in contemporary China, religion-state relations and transnational religious networks. His article entitled "Reconstructing missionary history in China today: cultural heritage, local politics and Christianity in Xiamen" was published in *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* (vol. 18, no. 1, 2017).



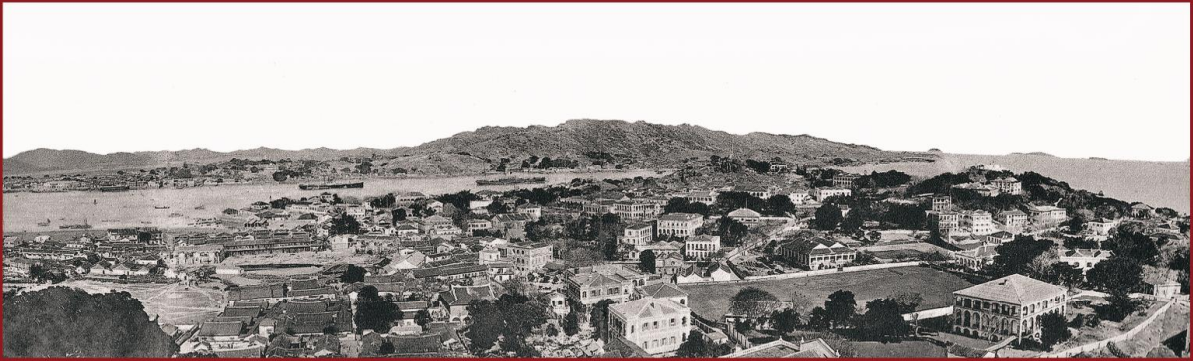
# Gulangyu Island



*1860s*



*1880s*



*1900s*



*1930s*