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To Be "Emplaced": Fuzhounese Migration and the Politics of Destination

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This article offers an exploration of what it means to be "emplaced" amidst the various spatial and temporal streams currently flowing through an emigrant village in the Fuzhou countryside along the southeast coast of China. These flows include both transnational currents resulting from two decades of mass emigration via human smuggling networks to the United States and other foreign destinations as well as national and translocal currents driven in part by Post-Mao reforms for market liberalization and China's "opening up" (kaifang). Particularly, I aim to provide a corrective to the overemphasis of displacement as an experience outside of "home" and moreover, to the mystification of "home" sites as imaginary places simply of longing and belonging. My goal is not to dismiss symbolic understandings of mythical homelands but rather to better contextualize and refine assumptions of migrant displacement in relation to imaginations of locality and belonging from the empirical and phenomenological grounds of those who remained behind. Significantly, approaching issues of migrant identities and social formations from the location of dispersion rather than arrival enabled me to critically examine and situate existing analytic assumptions of displacement (e.g., as migrant nostalgia for "home") alongside local theorizations of emplacement made by those who stayed put as others moved around them. As I will show for my Fuzhounese subjects, the ultimate form of displacement was seen and experienced as the result of immobility, rather than physical departure from a "home."

Key Words: transnational migration, diaspora, Fujian, China, locality production of, the built environment

The notion of a cultural and economic gap between one's "home" and "settlement" country has long informed much of the analysis concerning both motivations for migration and the possibilities for assimilation in receiving nations. Typically, scholars of international migration have assumed that the movement from "home" to "settlement" is naturally strange and alienating while "to go home is to be where one belongs" (Malkki 1995: 509). This assumption that one's identity and experiences are only whole and well when rooted in a territorial homeland has been critiqued by anthropologist Liisa Malkki,

among others, as the "sedentarist analytic bias" of research on migration (1995: 508; cf. Basch et al. 1994; Clifford 1997; Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997; Rouse 1991).

"Diaspora" as a key unit of analysis beyond the territorially bounded nation has provided important challenges to the dominant assumptions of migration studies by foregrounding the multiplicity and hybridity of cultural identities among immigrants and refugees. Responding to an era of decolonization in the "Third" World and deindustrialization in the "First" World, works on diaspora, particularly in Postcolonial and British Cultural Studies, have been among the first to analyze the important historical transformations of the global political-economic order in relation to the formation of cultural identities and political communities among displaced and mobile people. For instance, in observing the mass movement of former colonial subjects into the former metropoles of European empires, Stuart Hall (1991; Hall et al. 1996) challenges the conceptual distancing of "home" and "settlement," peripheries and centers and other spatial metaphors emphasizing the boundedness and purity of people, places, and cultures. As Hall notes, far from being alienating and strange, these postcolonial migrations are the logical culmination of long-standing political and social ties—an experience less about social rupture than about historical continuity. Moreover, this kind of analysis has contributed to a blurring of distinction between economic migrants and refugees by historicizing the inextricable links between political and economic oppression. Paul Gilroy's conceptualization of a "Black Atlantic" and the "double consciousness" of its diasporic African subjects has also provided important critiques of the essentialized conflations of cultural identity with discrete nation-states (1991; cf. Gilroy 1993). Specifically, Gilroy notes how the ongoing experience of displacement is the grounds, not barrier, for forging an alternative cultural identity anchored in a diasporic network (i.e., "the Black Atlantic") outside the territorial confines of any particular nation-state (cf. Hall et al. 1996: 235). Displacement, in this sense, refers to the shared experience of feeling out of "place" within and across the boundaries of the nation-state.

Unfortunately, in most scholarship concerned with diaspora, critiques of assimilationist ideologies and primordial ties to territorial nations often privilege the idea of displacement to such an extent that "home" countries become devalued as proper sites for research. This is because displacement is usually construed as the *result* of the physical departure of people from a prior literal or imagined "home"; an analytic move that logically excludes these "home" sites as significant domains for examining diasporic conditions. At best, such sites simply

get reinterpreted as immigrant nostalgia for a shared mythical homeland and desire for impossible returns (cf. Safran 1991).

My research in a rural village near Fuzhou, China, where over 85 percent of households have at least one member in the United States, aims to provide a corrective to this overemphasis (and sometimes, celebration) of displacement as an experience outside of "home" and moreover, to the mystification of "home" sites as imaginary places *simply* of longing and belonging.[1] Certainly, as both the articles by Abdel-Hady and by Chung show in this issue, symbolic "homeland" identification can also be very nuanced from the perspective of dispersed migrants, feeding into a variety of social formations including the building of ethnic solidarity, budding transnational social movements, and a "global civil society" (Abdel-Hady; cf. Hall 1991). My aim is not to dismiss symbolic understandings of mythical homelands in favor of a more positivist and "real" notion of "home" but rather to better contextualize and refine assumptions of migrant displacement in relation to imaginations of locality and belonging from the empirical and phenomenological grounds of those who remained behind. Significantly, approaching issues of migrant identities and social formations from the location of dispersion rather than arrival enabled me to critically examine and situate these existing analytic assumptions of displacement (e.g., as migrant nostalgia for "home") alongside local theorizations of *emplacement* made by those who stayed put (or rather, "stuck") in my field site as others moved around them. As I will show for my Fuzhounese subjects, the ultimate form of displacement was seen and experienced as the result of *immobility*, rather than physical departure from a "home."

Fuzhounese migration came to public attention through several tragic disasters—the 1993 Golden Venture boat drownings off the Long Island shore and the 2000 Dover, England, truck suffocation deaths among them—which revealed the unrelenting desire of the Fuzhounese to emigrate despite the ever-increasing physical dangers and economic costs of traveling through human smuggling networks.[2] This desire is the puzzle at the heart of my research. Specifically, a central aim of my project is to broaden existing economic analysis of the risks and rewards of Fuzhounese migration by showing how my subjects' aspirations are shaped by various (and often entangled) regimes of value—some more closely tied to economic models, but others clearly tied to state-building projects and local hierarchies of status, gender, kinship, and religion. Moreover, by drawing on anthropological theories of exchange and value, I show how transnational subjectivities are enacted in material and embodied ways through the circulation of not only migrant bodies but also money,

goods, media, ritual blessings, and other expressive forms of sentiment (*renqing*) across national borders. Particularly, what I offer is a sketch of the various confluent and disjunctive flows propelled by exchange—of which migrant bodies constitute just one part—which support what anthropologist Nancy Munn (1986) once termed the "spatial-temporal extension" of persons.

To think of Fuzhounese migration in this way—as a collective project for spatial-temporal extension—is to explore not only people's yearnings for linkages to other spatial locations but also their desires for embodying the privileged "spirit" of the times, which in this case required maintaining a temporal flow onward and forward alongside the mercurial pulse of a normative Chinese modernity. As many scholars have pointed out (Berman 1982; Fabian 1983; Harvey 1989; Schivelbusch 1986), mobility and travel are, after all, not only spatializing practices but fundamentally also *temporalizing* practices. Ultimately, as I will show for the Fuzhounese, longing and belonging turned out to be less about physical travel and place of origin than about inhabiting the world in a particular dynamic and cosmopolitan way; that is, as a valorized subject of a modernizing and globalizing China. Fuzhounese contestations over such ways of being "modern" are what I describe in this article as "The Politics of Destination."

The data presented in this article were collected during fourteen months of fieldwork (June–August 2000, September 2001–July 2002) in Fuzhou, Fujian, along the southeast coast of China. For eleven of those months (September 2001–July 2002), I resided with a family in a migrant-sending village, which I call "Longyan" throughout my work. During this time, I also volunteered to teach English at the local middle school one day a week. My host family along with the school provided me with organic sites for intermingling with a huge cross section of the village population in the long-standing anthropological tradition of participant observation. The particular historical information of Longyan provided in this article was culled from a number of sources. These sources included (1) taped interviews and informal conversations with Longyan's two de facto historians as well as with the two village party secretaries and various residents; (2) official village- and district-level reports on the demographic and historical profile of Longyan (*Achieving Longyan's Bright Future* 1997; Ji 1999); and (3) three self-published memoirs mainly detailing village life before the Communist Revolution written in the 1980s by former leading members of Longyan, two of whom currently reside in Taiwan (Chen 1984; Li 1987; Zheng 1983). For the purpose of protecting subjects' confidentiality, I have disguised all identifying markers of Longyan from these citations with pseudonyms.

In relation to the theme of "Global Spaces/Local Places" for this issue of *Identities*, this article offers an exploration of what it means to be "emplaced" amidst the various spatial and temporal streams currently flowing through my field site in the Fuzhou countryside along the southeast coast of China. These flows include both transnational currents resulting from two decades of mass emigration to the United States and other foreign destinations as well as national and translocal currents driven in part by Post-Mao reforms for market liberalization and China's "opening up" (*kaifang*). At the heart of the matter, this article is about the processes for emplacement in a world where "place" and "home" can no longer be assumed to be stable objects and points of anchorage.

Much intellectual discourse in recent years has been concerned with defining the analytic boundaries of concepts like diaspora and transnationalism and with debating their usefulness to the discussion of international migration and other globalizing phenomenon in the contemporary era. As Brettell outlined in the introduction to these articles, although some scholars criticize transnational practices for being neither substantive nor new, others bemoan the overuse and dilution of diaspora as a catch-all designation for divergent mobile and dispersed communities. I tend to share the perspective of scholars like Ong (1999), Ong and Nonini (1997), Clifford (1997), Appadurai (1997) and Sassen (1991) (to name a few) who suggest that though transnational flows may not be "new" per se, their intensification under the particular conditions of late modernity do make them significantly more substantive as social forces and sustainable phenomena to be reckoned with in the world. As for diaspora, what I draw from both the strictest typologies (Safran 1991) and more flexible, broad usages (Clifford 1994) is a shared emphasis on displacement as the constitutive grounds of identity formation among dispersed populations. Particularly, in relation to transnationalism, diaspora often seems to posit a more particular relation to a "home," especially in the narrow definitions of scholars like Safran (1991) who insist on the dual positioning of physical distance from and social longing for some original site of dispersal. In such strict, defining terms, one needs to have traveled away from a original "home" with no immediate plans of return (though much desire for it) to qualify as "diasporic" where anyone regardless of physical movement could be said to be "transnational" given their social orientation and sustained linkages to other persons and locales beyond national borders. In this sense, I would say that although this article draws from the spirit of diasporic discourse with its attentiveness to the processes of displacement, it is more firmly located in the analytic grounds of transnationalism.

Ultimately, I would also argue that these two terms—diaspora and transnationalism—overlap more than they diverge. Fundamentally, both diaspora and transnationalism are deterritorializing concepts aimed at breaking up the monopolizing grammar of the nation as the organizing "imagined community" (Anderson 1991 [1983]) of persons on the ground and on the move. Both terms share an interest in critiquing the dominant binary of majority-minority positionings within a singular nation-state in favor of more flexible and variegated models of attachment across national borders. Moreover, both concepts highlight not only the spatializing practices of mobile and far-flung subjects but moreover, their *temporalizing* practices, with emphasis on the politics of historicity and memory in forging social ties within and beyond the space-time of modern nations. As I see it, the conceptual distinction between diaspora and transnationalism is more a matter of nuanced inflection than exclusive difference. Although diaspora tends to privilege the processes and experiences of displacement as grounds of identity formation, transnationalism—with its language of linkages, flows and circulation across national borders—tends to emphasize the multifocal possibilities of emplacement. If home-lessness is the constitutive grounds of diasporic relations, the pragmatics and processes for reconfiguring "home" beyond the hegemonic nation is very much at the heart of transnational scholarship as evident by its promotion of alternative spatial metaphors for social anchorage: the transnational social field (Basch et al. 1994), the transnational village (Levitt 2001), and the transnational migrant circuit (Rouse 1991).

In this article, my examination of emplacement presupposes the imbrication of "home" sites in diasporic formations while, at the same time, contributes to the continual intellectual projects of both diaspora and transnationalism for relativizing (though not discounting) bounded and autochthonous assumptions of belonging to the nation-state, the primordial homeland or the pristine "local" (against a penetrating globalization "from above") (cf. Brecher et al. 2000). I do not wish to suggest that territorial boundaries no longer matter in an era of transnational and global flows. Rather, my goal is to show how these villagers' quest for emigration through human smuggling constituted a particular boundary-*making* (and -breaking) project. This boundary-making project does not oppose the nation-state and other hegemonic constructs of emplacement so much as it reinscribes them within a moral hierarchy of relative mobility and connectivity, where to be on the move or linked to such flows is the current norm.

Here I am interested not only in how translocal and transnational flows have intensified under Chinese state policies for modernization over the past twenty years but also how through this process, mobility

has been specifically objectified and valorized as a central feature and *modus operandi* of modern subjectivity (cf. Ong 1999; Liu 1997). As I argue, Fuzhounese yearnings for migration only make sense as part of a larger project of spatial-temporal extension. As state-classified peasants for four decades, the rural Fuzhounese were precisely *not* the kind of subjects authorized to chart moral careers as mobile cosmopolitans in China. In turn, what they revealed through their persistent aspirations and dissonant strategies for going overseas was not only the normativity of mobility per se but also the power relations inherent in what Doreen Massey (1993) called "differentiated mobility"—that is, the uneven and unequal positioning of different groups and persons in relation to various flows and movements. Fuzhounese efforts to inhabit a more mobile and cosmopolitan style of life are struggles over such "differentiated mobility." Again, these efforts for emplacement—of which migration is only a part—are what I will elaborate on as a distinctive "politics of destination."

Some dwellings on locality

In many ways, Longyan near Fuzhou city, where I conducted my ethnographic research, appeared to be an idyllic rural village, surrounded as it were by verdant mountains on three sides and by the flowing waters of the Min River—the main river running through Fujian Province—as it splinters off and winds into the South China Sea. The small, flat valley bounded by the mountains, river, and sea contained most of the houses for village residents as well as more than thirty Buddhist-Daoist temples, one Protestant church, an elementary and a middle school, a local government office, a few patches of farmland and a green market at the end of two short and intersecting commercial streets of small shops. One of these two streets, River Head Road (*jiangtou lu*), has long served as the vibrant hub for Longyan residents, although its luster as the commercial center for neighboring and even far-flung places up until the Communist Revolution (1949) no longer exists, except in the youthful recollections of its oldest members. Although not much has changed about River Head Road's practical functions over the past century and a half, the street's spatial significance—like that of Longyan itself—has undergone several challenges and revisions since the Republican Era in China (1912–1949).

In fact, in regards to Longyan as a whole, there is actually some confusion and debate about whether this community of about 5,000 persons and 1,300 households is (or should be) properly called a "village" (*cun*) or a "township" (*zhen*) in the present day. Although Longyan's physical, geographic boundaries—three sides of mountains,

one side of rushing river—remain intact, its emplacement within regional, national and more recently, transnational spatial hierarchies has been anything but stable through the years. This is evident by the shifts in Longyan's official "place" markers over the last century: from a regional township and military command center in the late Qing to a small district within a larger rural commune under Mao to a discrete "peasant village" (*nongcun*) under decollectivization and finally, to its recent and ongoing transformation as a cosmopolitan *qiaoxiang* or "home village of overseas Chinese." These various designations of town, commune, peasant village, and overseas village evoke quite different structures of feeling for being "local" in Longyan (cf. Williams 1977).[3] Moreover, they have not succeeded one another as linearly and neatly as the official changes made to Longyan's "place" designation would suggest. Rather, as I discovered through my research, all of these distinct senses of locality still resonated in Longyan, although not necessarily at the same frequency or force.

Town, commune, peasant village, and overseas village channeled different spatial and temporal imaginings of what it meant to be a "local person" (*dangdiren*) in Longyan. Some figurations of the "local," like "township," conjured up nostalgia for the pre-Communist days of regional prestige and influence while others, like "peasant village," evoked ever-present anxieties of the stagnation and narrowing limits of one's social world since the Communist Revolution. Yet another term like "commune" carried entangled associations of political obsolescence, moral idealism, and personal bitterness over utopic aspirations and material deprivations in the recent and still reverberating past. All these senses of locality have persisted in memory and embodied experience beyond their functional purposes for political administration by different state regimes in China. In fact, they have not only coexisted with but also centrally shaped Longyan residents' current efforts and collective claims for being an "overseas village."

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1991, 1997) has observed how contingent and fragile imaginations and experiences of the "local" can be, especially in the contemporary context of increasingly transnational and globalizing forces. As he notes, "locality is ephemeral unless hard and regular work is undertaken to produce and maintain its materiality" (1997: 181). In trying to understand the unrelenting desires of the Fuzhounese to migrate through human smuggling networks, I found that I was also tracking this process for the production, transformation, and maintenance of locality in Longyan. Despite people's knowledge of the great physical dangers and staggering economic costs of human smuggling (Currently Averaging US $60,000 per person), aspirations for leaving China persisted in Longyan because, in many

ways, such migrant yearnings enabled residents to embody a more privileged sense of locality among other existing and competing notions of the "local." As Appadurai argued, locality is not merely the given, stable grounds for identity formation and collective action but also in itself, "a relational achievement" (1997: 186) and "property of social life" (182). Not only were there different and contested ways for being "local" in Longyan, but as I show through my examination of migration strategies and exchange practices in Longyan, some people also became more local-ized than others in the process.

Not everyone who resided in Longyan was considered "local people" (*dangdiren*). A good portion of the population who had migrated from Sichuan and other interior provinces of China was commonly referred to as "outsiders" (*waidiren*) as were the small corps of teachers and school administrators who mainly hailed from Fuzhou city and held urban residence status in the Chinese state's household registration system (*hukou*). It goes without saying that as a resident of Longyan, I also occupied this position of "outsider." Although all these people, including myself, shared spaces of habitation and sociality in Longyan, we did not all share the same material and embodied sense of locality. These distinctions were not only based on where people were from, but also and perhaps more importantly, where they were potentially *going* in the increasingly fluid and mobile context of Post-Mao China and globalization. Some people were better positioned amidst regional, national and transnational flows to imagine themselves as mobile and forward-looking (or "modern") subjects in a cosmopolitan context. Although others less connected to such currents easily became "stuck" in the most narrow and confining sense of locality—as unchanging "peasants" (*nongmin*) in an equally stagnant and backward "peasant village" (*nongcun*).

Over the past two decades, emigrating through human smuggling networks has been only one technique among others for Longyan's spatial-temporal extension beyond the imagined and material limitations of "peasant" locality (cf. Munn 1986).[4] In fact, one did not need to physically leave China to feel emplaced within a larger global and transnational social field. Likewise, one could experience displacement while remaining at "home" simply because the boundaries of locality and one's social world had shifted or come under contestation (cf. Mahler 1992; Verdery 1998). These discontinuities and dissonances of locality were already present in Longyan and could be felt in very material and embodied ways through the built environment itself.

For the remainder of this article, I offer three sketches of how architecture and landscape could enable concurrent and often conflicting

senses of emplacement (and displacement) among Longyan's inhabitants. As a starting point for discussing Fuzhounese migration, the built environment seems particularly appropriate since scholars and journalists often seemed puzzled by Fuzhounese desires to spend the fruits of emigration—overseas remittances—predominantly on the restoration and building of elaborate temples and houses rather than on more "rational" economic activities like investment in local enterprises and public works in these "home" villages.

In Longyan, where overseas remittances currently comprise approximately 70 percent of all village income, local and regional officials have also expressed concern over the "wastefulness" (*langfei*) of residents' expenditures on these increasingly ostentatious mansions and lavished places of worship.[5] According to the local party secretary's office, an estimated two-thirds of all overseas remittances presently go to the construction of new houses and temples in Longyan. Although this activity is commonly dismissed by local officials and elites as the unproductive result of newly wealthy but "low cultured" residents (*di wenhua*), my project asks: how do these transformations of the built environment contribute to the production of locality as a structure of feeling? Specifically, how do they complicate the possibilities and terms for emplacement among Longyan's various inhabitants?

House: up, up, away

In less than a decade, a new crop of brightly tiled enormous houses have rapidly emerged at the center of Longyan, replacing plots of farmland along both sides of the Min River as it cuts through the heart of the valley landscape. Commonly referred to as the homes of "American guests" (*Meiguoke*), these distinctive buildings marked the newfound prosperity of households with members abroad (and mostly in the United States) and with abundant remittances flowing into Longyan (Figure 1).[6] Typically rectangular in form and rising four or five stories high in flashy shades of bubble gum-pink or peach, these buildings not only dwarfed other houses around them in size and aesthetic dazzle. They also exhibited the competitive spirit of their owners, who tried to outdo one another with each new and successive construction and renovation project. Although most residents in Longyan viewed the completion of each new house with a combination of collective pride and personal envy, they also tended to gripe about the general—and *literal*—escalation of competitive house-building among those with overseas connections. As Old Man Liu (*Lao Liu*), my self-proclaimed godfather in Longyan, observed one day while walking

FIGURE 1 "American guest" mansions in Longyan Photograph by author, 2002.

around with me, "They keep getting taller and taller." Shaking his head and pointing to specific houses, he noted, "First, this one had a three-story house, then over there—four stories, then five . . . . It's really getting too overboard!" Incidentally, it may be worth noting that Old Man Liu had a four-story home himself and as one could guess, he was less than pleased about being outdone by the newest houses.

Shortly after I settled into Longyan in the fall of 2001, the debut of a new house nestled between the mountains and the southern bank of the Min River would spark even greater visions, debates and gossip about distinction and prosperity among village residents. This house (Figure 2), not only upped the ante in height—rising six stories tall instead of the usual five. It also offered a novel façade of elegant white tiles, jade green windows and warm terracotta roofing that contrasted sharply with the garish pink and peach uniformity of previous "American guests" mansions. Like most of the other new houses, this one was built with overseas remittances by Longyan inhabitants who had emigrated to the United States in the late 1980s through human smuggling networks and who had since achieved a level of prosperity by starting their own family-run Chinese restaurant abroad. Because of ongoing chain migration, this family also had no members left in

FIGURE 2 The newest house in Longyan, Lunar New Year 2002. Photography by author, 2002.

Longyan to actually reside in their new mansion on a permanent, full-time basis. Like so many other enormous houses in the vicinity with dwindling or no members remaining because of continual emigration, this new mansion was expected to be mostly unoccupied aside from the occasional return visit or future retirement plan of its various overseas members.

The fact that this house had been built without definite residents in mind to live there did not deter other Longyan inhabitants from imagining what it was like to occupy that space. Even though most people had only seen this mansion from a distance, partially because the owners were rarely there to have visitors, gossip still abounded about what the interiors might look like and especially about its relative luxury among other new houses. My favorite uncorroborated rumor concerned the existence of an elevator located dead center in the house for easy and speedy access to all six floors. Although this house turned out to have only a staircase like all the other new mansions, this imaginary elevator made sense to people as the kind of distinctive, innovative feature of the interior that would complement the novel, modern look of the building's exterior.

Ultimately, the fact that this family did not actually build an elevator mattered less than the sense of lack others derived from imagining this new and superior mode of habitation and mobility among them. People assumed that because this family had the wherewithal to build a house with a boldly different aesthetic and then the luxury to use it only for the occasional return visit from overseas, these "American guests" must also dwell in a more cosmopolitan fashion than other families did in their own houses in Longyan. Through the elevator, people extended and concretized their imagination of the kind of superior, modern *habitus* this family must have acquired as successful "Overseas Chinese" (*huaqiao*) with an ease of coming and going beyond the narrow terms of Longyan, the "peasant village" (*nongcun*) (cf. Bourdieu 1977).[7] Figuratively, if not literally, the elevator offered a new means for judging the relative mobility of Longyan residents, both in dwelling and in travel.

When it came to understanding the various possibilities for emplacement, these two aspects—dwelling and travelling—were of course inextricably linked in Longyan as they were in other locations (cf. Clifford 1997). Houses of all sizes and styles, including these "American guest" mansions, were not only structured by different imaginations and conditions of dwelling. They were also produced through distinctive trajectories of movement among people through time and space. I learned to appreciate the different temporal and spatial contours of the built environment early on in my research when Longyan's party secretary of "peasant" administration guided me to the panoramic view from his office window and proceeded to narrate a history of village transformation through the various housing styles visible in the landscape. Pointing at different buildings in our view, Party Secretary Chen traced three distinctive styles and eras of Longyan life: (1) red exterior, (2) white exterior, and (3) tiled exterior housing (*hongzhuang, baizhuang*, and *cizhuang*, respectively).

Hongzhuang or "red exterior" architecture referred to flat one- or two-story red-brick dwellings built before 1985 in the first flurries of economic success among villagers following the initiation of China's economic reform in 1978. These houses were associated with wealth made before the era of mass emigration in Longyan when residents first branched out from compulsory farming under the rural commune system into several lucrative village enterprises mainly involving construction and renovation work in and around Fuzhou city. During this first wave of success under reform (1978–1985), it became a popular trend among newly prosperous villagers to build houses that reflected their thriving construction and renovations skills. Old-style wooden houses increasingly gave way to more fashionable red-brick structures,

especially when the massive population of children born in the 1960s (under Mao's call for "more kids, more wealth" or *duozi duofu*) became newly married adults in the 1980s and sparked even more construction due to a new shortage of village housing.

By 1985, Party Secretary Chen told me that people were no longer engaging in the most difficult kinds of agricultural labor such as planting sweet potatoes and other vegetables in the inhospitable mountain terrain surrounding the fertile valley. Not only was the local construction industry an established success by the mid-1980s but the first trickle of overseas emigration began to reshape people's imaginations of the terms and possibilities of prosperity. "From 1985 to 1990, every year at least ten or so went abroad," Party Secretary Chen noted. "First year, there were ten or so. In '86, twenty or so. In '87, forty to fifty. By 1990, massive numbers were going abroad." Like other successful villagers since economic reform, the first families of migrants overseas celebrated their newfound prosperity by upgrading their village dwellings to reflect the newest styles of the time. Those already possessing "red exterior" houses layered over the existing bricks with a fresh new look of white stone blocks while others still living in worn, wooden structures razed their old houses and built new "white exterior" dwellings from scratch.

By the early 1990s, those who derived their success from the construction and renovation industry increasingly lost momentum and faced mounting difficulties keeping up with the standards of prosperity set by residents with overseas connections. While people left for abroad en masse, a new flow of migrants from China's interior provinces like Sichuan and Anhui also began to move into Longyan and replace local residents in all sorts of village occupations, from agriculture to jobs in factories and construction crews. While local residents maintained positions as owners, managers and foremen in village industries, the internal migrants started to out-compete and take over all the menial, low-wage labor in Longyan starting in the early 1990s.

Housing styles underwent another transformation as the first wave of overseas migrants cleared off their smuggling debts while the second wave, including many disillusioned construction workers and entrepreneurs, began to leave the country in unprecedented, massive numbers. During this period, the first distinctive houses associated specifically with overseas prosperity emerged in Longyan. Known as *cizhuang* or "tiled exterior" houses, these dwellings not only offered a novel face of brightly colored tiles. They also began to dominate their immediate surroundings through sheer height and size. As mentioned earlier, people increasingly distinguished houses not only by the style of their exterior but also by their number of floors and their general spaciousness.

This sense of spaciousness did not concern the actual square footage of floor space so much as it reflected new attentiveness to the ratio of rooms and floors to the number of residents in a given house. Particularly, what distinguished the "American guest" mansions from other large houses in Longyan was the small and dwindling number of inhabitants in these dwellings. While others who made their wealth locally tended to fully occupy and furnish all the rooms of their new houses, those with overseas connections commonly left their mansions near or completely empty with less than a handful of occupants and with only the barest of amenities on one or two of the bottom floors. Despite the fancy exterior of these houses, most floors, if not all, were left totally unfinished and hollow with neither electrical connections nor plumbing installed, not to mention the utter lack of interior design. Like the new six-story "American guest" mansion discussed above, some of these houses had no occupants at all because of continual chain migration and sat absolutely vacant on village streets. Although these overseas families could have rented their empty houses to others, especially given the flow of internal migrants moving to Longyan, most preferred to keep their mansions totally unoccupied and bare in their absence.

This emptiness was, in fact, central to the sense of overseas prosperity and luxury surrounding these houses, marking both the house's overseas connections and the immense wealth of its absent owners. As villagers saw it, only those generating plenty of money abroad could afford to build a gigantic house in Longyan and then leave it completely vacant and therefore, non-productive and -income-generating. Through the emptiness of these mansions, villagers could also evaluate just how constraining and crammed their own quarters and ways of habitation were without access to overseas connections in Longyan. On the streets, the vacant interiors of these mansions served as reminders of the superior mobility of absent owners with dual residences abroad and in Longyan while others remained stuck within the confining boundaries of the village.

People also imagined that those living abroad must reside in similar kinds of spacious and luxurious housing as the mansions they built for themselves in Longyan. Often while accompanying me on the streets of Longyan, villagers would point out some of these houses and ask me questions like "American houses all look like this high-rise mansion (*gaolou dasha*), right?" Initially, it seemed perplexing to me that people could imagine American dwellings through houses that I took to be distinctly non-American in aesthetics and architectural structure. But though I tried to describe my sense of American housing styles—the sprawling suburban home, East Coast brownstones,

high-rising apartment complexes—as something quite distinct from these five-story, rectangular pink buildings, villagers were rarely convinced by my explanations and refutations of their imaginative comparisons. People simply assumed that my knowledge of American housing styles was partial at best (which is true) and that somewhere in the vast geography of the United States—particularly where they imagined their own relatives—these same peach and pink tiled mansions were rising triumphantly from the modern American cityscape.

This imagined resemblance between Longyan mansions and American houses only began to make sense to me when I noticed similar high-rising tiled buildings in various states of construction, renovation and grand opening all over Fuzhou city. Like the houses in rural Longyan, these new buildings in the city proper were being imagined in local advertisements and everyday conversations as a more cosmopolitan, modern and Western-inflected style of habitation in an increasingly open and globalizing China. Just like Longyan villagers, Fuzhou urbanites were also caught up in an immense housing and construction craze as household incomes rose steadily over the past decade and new middle-class aspirations were nurtured through a growing and diversifying consumer market and through new newspaper columns and television programming like the popular show *Chezi Fangzi* (Cars and Houses), which promoted the joys of shopping, fine dining, interior decorating, homemaking, and personal ownership of new cars and houses. Similar to the "American guest" mansions in Longyan, the new five- and six-story tiled buildings in Fuzhou city were commonly referred to as "high-risers" (*gaolou dasha*) and viewed with pride as a superior way of dwelling among urban residents.

These affinities between Longyan and city imaginations of housing suggest how villagers' assumptions of American-ness were refracted *less* through transnational ties in this case, than through Fuzhou's urban dreamscape of modern and cosmopolitan modes of living. The similarities, however, end here. Although a five-story building in Longyan was likely to hold anywhere from zero to three members of the same household in the entire place, a similar (though somewhat larger) structure in Fuzhou city would most likely be filled to capacity with each floor divided into two residential units for a total of ten families under the same roof. Moreover, although both Longyan villagers and Fuzhou urbanites took an increasing interest in the remodeling and design of domestic interiors (*zhuangxiu*) to reflect more "modern" ways of dwelling, significant differences existed between the typical floor plan of these high-rising buildings in the city and in the village.

The most pronounced difference between city and village "high-risers" occurred on entry into these domestic spaces. Although these city

residences usually opened into spacious living rooms—a fairly recent shift according to my urban sources—village mansions typically led people into an initial space of worship where a large altar displaying ancestral tablets, household gods, incense vessels and food offerings would sit dead center in the room. Although many of these "American guest" homes, especially those with occupants, also installed separate living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens as was typical of new city floor plans, these spaces tended to occupy middle or back rooms of the first floor rather than the primary entryway of the house. In contrast, most city residences in these high-rising buildings positioned altars for worship in marginal spaces such as in a small corner of the office or on an open kitchen shelf, if they even displayed such religious shrines at all. Many urban dwellings I visited, in fact, had no place for worship at all while in most village residences, regardless of housing styles, a central altar room at or close to the entrance was the norm in floor plans.

I want to stress here that this difference bears little correspondence to some kind of neat, normative assumption of "modern" urban and "traditional" village lifestyles. Although ritual life was certainly central to Longyan villagers, the next section on temple building and renovation projects demonstrates how these practices were actually *integral* to villagers' imaginations and aspirations for modern, cosmopolitan life ways, not barriers to such aspirations.

As I learned in Longyan, the grounds of "tradition" and "modernity" were constantly shifting and under contestation as people strategized, adapted and shifted life courses in response to material and symbolic transformations of the village landscape over the past two decades and beyond. What were once the shining symbols of new prosperity in the early 1980s—the "red exterior" houses—were by the early 1990s, the ramshackle signs of lowly living among newer imaginative structures of modern and cosmopolitan dwelling. Although what was usually considered the most "traditional" kind of housing—the wooden compounds—were virtually all gone by the time I arrived in Longyan, the "red exterior" and to a less extent, the "white exterior" houses had also lost their novelty by the 1990s and increasingly became stand-ins for the "traditional" and the "backward" (*luohou*) among village dwellings and styles of habitation. This was especially true of "red exterior" housing that was commonly rented out to poorer internal migrants when local residents built new "tiled exterior" mansions with overseas wealth. For longtime village residents who were still residing in these "red exterior" dwellings, this meant that they were now inhabiting the same kinds of spaces as the "outsiders" they considered more provincial and inferior than them while other more fortunate villagers were moving into more dynamic and cosmopolitan modes of living—not only

by building grander houses but by doing so as mobile, transnational subjects with the luxury of dwelling and travelling through both Longyan and the United States.

Without physically moving or transforming their ways of dwelling, the old residents of these "red exterior" houses felt the privileged boundaries of locality shift beneath them starting in the mid-1980s, and by the 1990s found themselves newly displaced in the emerging social terrain of Longyan as an "overseas village" (*qiaoxiang*). Those like the Lin family, who lived in a "red exterior" house along the south side of Min River, could still recall with pride how they had the best home on the street in the early days of the local construction boom in Longyan. But such memories of superior dwelling now highlighted disjunctures with newer forms of habitation and made these former spaces of "modern" living seem hopelessly primitive, crammed and dilapidated in the present era. Dwelling in such comparatively confining quarters was now an embodied reminder of one's marginalization and failure in the age of "American guest" mansions and mass emigration to the United States.

Temple: spirits of the time

In Figure 3, two temples sitting side by side at the end of a Tang-style stone bridge along the Min River offer contrasting narratives of the recent history of religious revitalization in Longyan. On the left, the Qing-era, low slung temple with the elaborate curving eaves houses the Monkey King (*Qitian Dasheng*), the divine trickster made famous in the classic Chinese tale, *Journey to the West*, about the quest to retrieve the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures from India in the early Tang period. On the right, the contemporary tall, burgundy-tiled temple provides the newest space for *Guanyin*, the Buddhist goddess of mercy and among other things, the patient guardian of the mischievous Monkey King. Although it is hard to imagine from this picture, for most of these two temples' histories, the Monkey King temple on the left dominated the visual landscape on this side of the Min River. In fact, less than half a year before this picture was taken, the temple on the right could not even be seen from the bridge, tucked as it were in the sloping hill almost directly behind the ornate roof of the Monkey King temple.

Although technically *Guanyin* is considered a more powerful deity than the Monkey King, the temple of this goddess was always meant to play a supporting role to the Monkey King temple in Longyan. Legend has it that in the Republican era (1912–1949) villagers first built this *Guanyin* temple after a tragic but awe-inspiring opera performance

FIGURE 3 Tang era bridge leading to the Monkey King Temple (left) and the newly renovated Guanyin Temple (right with flags). Photograph by author, 2002.

of *Journey to the West* took place on the bridge in front of the Monkey's temple. At the height of a chase scene when the trickster Monkey loses his pursuers by destroying a bridge and flying over the rushing waters, Longyan's own bridge supposedly collapsed with scores of audience members on it. But amidst this disaster in progress, something miraculous also happened at that time: the opera performer playing the Monkey King was seen soaring over the gaping waters and the heads of shaken audience members only to land on the other side of the river, as the real trickster god did during this chase scene in the original tale. Witnesses of this event took it as a sign for building the *Guanyin* temple as a tribute to the Monkey King's divine efficacy. The Buddhist goddess was brought to this site behind the Monkey King to serve as the trickster god's guardian and anchor, as she does in the original *Journey to the West*. With this smaller temple set back on the hills behind the then-larger and dominating Monkey temple, villagers believed that the compassionate *Guanyin* would watch the Monkey's back and moreover, keep the mischievous trickster in his place. "So he won't fly off again and cause trouble," as one old resident told me.[8]

Village residents on this side of the Min River had every reason to want to keep the Monkey King in his place. The trickster god, after all, was the titular district god (*ditou shen*) for this part of the village, responsible for overseeing the well-being of all who lived on the south side of the river since this temple was built in the Qing era during the imperial reign of *Jiaqing* (1796–1820). As it turned out, Longyan's long-standing boundaries extended beyond the geological markers of three mountains and one river to cosmological borders that divided the village into smaller temple districts. Before the Communist Revolution (1949) when popular religion thrived in Longyan, there were reportedly four separate temple districts within the village. But after decades of vigilant Communist denouncement and destruction of ritual life and temples, only two of these four temple districts were able to effectively revive and blossom in the 1980s and 1990s. The two other ones eventually got incorporated into these already flourishing temple districts, dividing the entire village roughly into two cosmological zones—north and south of the Min River. While the loosening of state policies on religion in the mid–1990s resulted in a dizzying escalation of temple renovation and construction in both of these districts, only one deity in each area continued to serve as the territorial god. As long as villagers could remember, the Monkey King was the designated district god for this area south of the Min River.

Because of the Monkey King's singular importance south of the Min River in Longyan, residents in this district were increasingly frustrated with the unchanging façade of this temple as all others, including the *Guanyin* temple next door, underwent drastic renovation and construction under loosening state policies on religion and growing overseas prosperity over the past decade. Particularly, as villagers began to succeed in their risky journeys abroad, overseas remittances began to flow back into Longyan with the designated purpose for thanking the gods through new temple construction and other lavished ritual activities. In the 1990s, at least four million Chinese *yuan* (approximately US $500,000)—the majority of which came from overseas remittances—was invested on the renovation, expansion and new construction of temples in Longyan. The *Guanyin* temple alone underwent two expensive makeovers—a renovation for 70,000 Chinese *yuan* in 1989 followed by the more elaborate expansion and construction of a new high-rising building in 2002 (Figure 3, right), currently towering over the old Monkey King temple at a cost of over 300,000 *yuan*. In fact, aside from the Monkey King temple, every major temple initially restored in the 1980s had drastically expanded in size and height over the last decade. The temple of the other territorial god, for instance, underwent three makeovers in 1987, 1992 and 1993 costing

over 300,000 *yuan* and resulting in the razing and rebuilding of an expanded compound including a new theater space for entertaining the god and his worshippers.

The Monkey King temple, in the meantime, had weathered all the ups and downs of ritual life in Longyan since it first opened nearly two hundred years ago by maintaining practically the same aesthetic and architectural form. It was in fact the historical value of this temple's particular structure and look that both saved it during the worst years of the Cultural Revolution and as villagers saw it, doomed it in the present era of increasingly competitive temple renovation and construction. Although more than forty temples in Longyan were either demolished or collapsed under disrepair between the bombing and looting of Japanese invasion and civil war (1937–1949) and the equally destructive acts of the Cultural Revolution (1969–1977), the Monkey King temple managed to stave off disaster and preserve its integrity, first by chance and later through the sheer gumption of one of its worshippers. Specifically, during the height of the Cultural Revolution as clashing red army factions tried to outdo each other by tearing down all signs of "backward superstition" in Longyan, one persistent villager succeeded after twelve tries to lobby the Fujian Provincial administration for the historical preservation of the Monkey King temple and the interlocking stone bridge leading to its entrance. Although the temple itself was converted into cadre offices during this period, the Provincial recognition of its historical value guaranteed that the integrity of the structure itself was unharmed and unchanged through the years.

In the present era, this same administrative order for historical preservation had become the key obstacle for villagers to demonstrate their gratitude to the Monkey King for protecting them on dangerous smuggling ventures and helping them secure overseas prosperity. Although during the heydays of Mao, this temple's preserved architecture was a sign of the superior power of the Monkey King to defy Communist plans for obliterating ritual life, its unchanged form now evoked its relative austerity and obsolescence among other newly built or expanded temples rising four and five stories high in lavished forms. Twice in 1990 and in 1999, villagers on the south side of the river gathered funds to renovate the interiors of the Monkey King temple as a celebration of their collective overseas prosperity and gratitude to the god for successfully overseeing their temple district. But with the prohibition against the transformation and expansion of the actual structure, worshippers of the Monkey King simply could not keep up with the pace of temple reconstruction among other newly successful and grateful worshippers, especially with followers of the

other main territorial god who could collectively flaunt their religious gratitude for recent successes by spending overseas wealth on temple construction with no limits in sight.

Like the building of new houses, these temple renovation and expansion projects were central material practices for villagers' spatial-temporal extension beyond the former boundaries of Longyan as a stagnant "peasant village" (*nongcun*). These temple construction projects not only reflected a competitive dynamic between village districts trying to outdo each other in the display of newfound overseas prosperity. They also highlighted the rich complexities of religious revitalization as a kind of collective, forward-looking project among villagers. Particularly, through their unremorseful enthusiasm for the tearing down and complete rebuilding of ritual spaces—regardless of "historical value"—villagers promoted their temples and their gods not as nostalgic bearers of "traditional" morals and lifestyles but rather, as the crucial *vanguards* of modern, cosmopolitan ways. As villagers understood them, gods including the Monkey King were fundamentally coeval subjects who both inhabited and exceeded the same spatial and temporal spheres as their worshippers. In other words, they were not timeless and unchanging but forever up-to-date, contemporary spirits. More accurately, as prescient beings with divine power over the progress and fate of their worshippers, gods were the ultimate trendsetters, always steps ahead of the temporal curve of humanity. Not surprisingly, as villagers transformed their own habitats to reflect newer imaginations of modern, cosmopolitan lifestyles, they also worked on updating their spaces of worship. In fact, villagers in general prioritized the renovation of temples over that of their own houses, funneling the first batch of overseas wealth to their gods rather than to themselves as recognition of the god's superior positioning as a modern subject in the temporal-spatial order.

In this sense, the historical preservation of the Monkey King temple was never a nostalgic, ideological project about "traditional" values but rather, a strategy of last resort for survival in desperate times. Now that the climate for ritual life had considerably improved, residents south of the river could only express frustration that the district god responsible for forwarding their own newly improved lifestyles was not dwelling in an even more modern and cosmopolitan space than their own "American guest" mansions. After all, the trickster god, like all other divine beings with the power to leap over rivers, mountains, and distant lands in a single step, already embodied and in fact surpassed the kind of worldly transnational mobility to which most villagers aspired in the contemporary era. For villagers, it only made sense that the Monkey King should inhabit a space representative

of his superior cosmopolitanism and modernity, particularly as these aspects have trickled down and positively affected the residents in his district. The god's continual residence in this small and relatively humble space was seen by his worshippers as an unjust and dissonant set of circumstances—a frustrating displacement and marginalization of the Monkey King's obvious divine efficacy and influence on his prosperous and grateful followers in the present era.

In contrast to the Monkey King temple, the new *Guanyin* site (Figure 3, right) articulated village imaginations of what proper dwellings for their modern and cosmopolitan gods should look like. In fact, these new-style, religious buildings bore an uncanny resemblance to villagers' own "American guest" mansions in their height, tiled exteriors and straight, utilitarian lines. Only as villagers often pointed out, their own houses did not have the same kind of lavished decorative eaves or the kind of complete and carefully remodeled interiors as these buildings do, thus making these divine spaces (except for the Monkey King's) just a bit more advanced than people's own dwellings, as they should be according to village understandings.

Road: high-speed horizons

In this final sketch of village landscape and built environment, I want to redirect our attention to travelling as an aspect of social relations, conditions of dwelling and imaginations of potentiality and possible life courses among Longyan residents. As I have argued earlier (with reference to Appadurai and Clifford), travelling and dwelling are inextricably linked to the production of locality and people's experiences of relative emplacement among a range of mobile (and immobilized) subjects. Having focused more on instances of dwelling in the prior sketches, it seems apropos in an article on international migration to return, in the end, to questions of travel and "travelling cultures" among the residents of Longyan village (cf. Clifford 1997). As I have tried to show in previous sections, dwellings themselves—whether "American guest" houses or new-style temples—were not just immobile sites of residence but also emanations of travel relations and "differentiated mobility" among village subjects including divine beings (cf. Liu 1997; Massey 1993).[9]

In a very concrete and literal fashion, the image in Figure 4 points to another aspect of Longyan's transforming experience of locality in the contemporary era. Cutting across the valley landscape of the village, the pristine strip of a new highway curving into the infinite distance promises in the very near future to connect Longyan in an even more high-speed and direct fashion to the mobile flows of China's cosmopolitan cen-

FIGURE 4 The newly constructed highway stretching across village farmland to connect Longyan to Shanghai in the north. Still closed to traffic as of August 2002. Photograph by author, 2002.

ters, from Beijing and Shanghai in the north down to Guangzhou in the south. The road, which has not yet opened for traffic, required significant encroachments on fertile village land for its construction over the past few years, not to mention the massive demolition and drilling necessary for constructing a cavernous tunnel through the solid center of one of Longyan's imposing, sacred mountains. Despite this loss of productive agricultural land and the major alteration of one of their mountains, villagers all seemed to eye this long stretch of highway with considerable pride and optimism. "Look how pretty it is," one resident ruminated as I clicked the photo. "In the future, when you want to come and go between the countryside and the city, it will be even more convenient, even speedier. Then it won't seem so far between here and there."

Less than a decade ago, villagers still recalled the necessities of travelling for more than three hours along primitive dirt and pock-marked roads to reach Fuzhou city. Those who could remember even further back to the Republican Era (1912–1949) also reminded younger villagers (and myself) of how better connected Longyan was to the city and other places before the Japanese Invasion (1937) and the Communist

Revolution (1949) reduced it to an immobile and isolated "peasant village" in the countryside. On the eve of conflict with Japan in 1937, the oldest residents could still remember the completion of a new road from Longyan to the South China Seas meant to function as a major thoroughfare for the transportation of troops and goods in the high era of village prestige as an important military command and commercial center.

Less than a year later, this road would be obliterated in the first stages of war with Japan when higher military commanders under the Chinese nationalist party (*Guomingdang* or KMT) ordered the same local servicemen who built the road to dig it up in a defensive effort to stymie the advancing Japanese military. The Japanese managed to reach the village nonetheless, older residents recalled bitterly, as the KMT forces, who were supposed to defend the village, fled for their own self-protection and left Longyan at the mercy of the Japanese. In the ensuing devastation, the Japanese not only killed, looted, and raped some in the village but also forced others to travel along this same dug-up and devastated road while doing relentless hard labor for their military efforts. As some old residents still recalled, those who died during hard labor were simply left dead along this road until villagers came by to identify and bury them in shallow graves by the roadside. Until the era of mass emigration overseas (1985-Present), this road remained in the same devastated and haunted state as a constant reminder of Longyan's past regional influence and superior connectedness and its reduction by war and revolution to an out-of-the-way, marginal place—an isolated "peasant village" (*nongcun*).

Since the influx of overseas remittances, significant reconstructions of roads have helped reduce the travel time to Fuzhou from three hours to about forty-five minutes when I was conducting my field research. Still, village residents held even higher hopes for the new highway running through the middle of their landscape, which was in the last stages of completion when I left Longyan at the end of Summer 2002. Where I saw gloomy outcomes of air pollution, traffic congestion, and other environmental hazards, people glimpsed the promise of greater embodied mobility and social connectedness through this new highway and moreover, the hope for re-centering their social world as a locality of extended reach and import.

The politics of destination

My nostalgia for the soon-to-be outmoded village landscape and pace of life seemed quite unwarranted to these no-nonsense, modern(izing) villagers. As I learned whenever romanticized sentiments about the "peasant village" threatened to creep into my engagements with

Longyan residents, these were subjects with no desire to remain where they presently were or worse, return to some kind of glorified version of their past, despite their prestigious and rich history as a military and commercial center in the region. Although much scholarship on migration and diaspora have led us to consider "home" sites as places of nostalgic longing and view the articulation of displacement as a migrant's "politics of return" (cf. M. P. Smith 1994), what Longyan residents showed me through their aspirations, imaginations, and everyday practices of dwelling was the *necessity* of mobility and travel to the experience of emplacement in their contemporary context. How one came to embody a superior mode of living had less to do with a "politics of return" than a politics of *destination*. To be the ideal kind of modern, cosmopolitan subject in Longyan, one needed to find ways to be always better connected and more fluidly on the move, even as one remained in the same "home" site. To revisit and revise a well-known insight of Paul Gilroy (1991) about diasporic conditions, for these Longyan residents, "It ain't where you're at, it's where you're going . . ." that matters (cf. Ang 1994: 10).[10]

By arguing for a "politics of destination" among the Fuzhounese, I am not only trying to invert previous formulations of migrant identities. Here I also offer a riff on Weber's famous thesis of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1992 [1930]), where a politics of *pre*-destination became key to people's understandings and enactments of value in their daily lives.[11] As a play off Weber's famous thesis on the spirit of capitalism, the politics of destination is also meant to highlight a cosmology of value and value transformation among the Fuzhounese, which like the project of the Protestants, is anchored in religious imaginations of social life. Only in this case, the gods are no longer on the sidelines and simply watching from above, as the predetermined blessed and the damned sort themselves out through a display of economic rationality and the ever-expanding accumulation of capital. Rather, in this politics of destination, there are still possibilities for negotiation with divine authorities in altering one's fate (as well as negotiation with human authorities) and for channeling human energies (in their material form as labor power, capital, commodities, and so forth) against and beyond the hegemonic projects of the Chinese nation-state or larger global forces for capitalist development. As I hoped to have highlighted in this article, there are other forms of credit at stake in Fuzhounese migration than the kind you get from a credit card: things like human and divine relations of reciprocity, notions of personhood, and one's sense of place in the world, articulated, in this instance, by the ways people negotiate and transform the very terms of locality through the built environment.

Notes

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1. I am certainly not the first scholar studying Chinese migration and transnational processes to make this critique of the conceptual deployment of "home" as simply nostalgic or mythical site of return. A number of recent historical and anthropological projects have turned a critical eye to China as the "homeland" of dispersed and diasporic Chinese, making serious empirical engagement and analytic integration of home and settlement sites largely through a transnational framework (Ang 1992; Hsu 2000; Louie 2000, 2004; McKeown 1999; Ong 1999).
2. Historian Peter Kwong (1997, 2001) suggests that this distinct wave of illegal immigration from rural Fuzhou in Fujian Province began in the early 1970s, though it really picked up only after 1986 with the passage of the United States Immigration Reform and Control Act, which offered a blanket, one-time amnesty to all previously undocumented migrants and enabled subsequent and widespread chain migration among the Fuzhounese (cf. Chin 1999, 2001; Guest 2003; Kyle and Koslowski 2001). The extent of this new massive wave of emigration from Fuzhou has been documented by a number of researchers. For instance, Liang and Ye (2001) noted how by 1995, Fujian province ranked first in emigration flows out of China, sending 66,2000 people or 28 percent of China's total emigrant population. Paul Smith (1994) suggested that between 1991–1994, an annual 25,000 Fuzhounese entered illegally into the United States (cf. Kwong 2001). Other estimates suggest anywhere between 10,000 to 100,000 enter every year (Smith 1997: x). New York has been a central destination of this flow. Einhorn (1994) estimated that by 1994, as many as 100,000 Fujianese were living in New York with an additional 10,000 entering each year (cf. Liang and Ye 2001).
3. I borrow Raymond Williams' term, "structures of feeling" which he defines as "social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available" (Williams 1977: 133–134; emphasis in original).
4. The term "spatial-temporal extension" is drawn from Nancy Munn's analysis of value via the Kula system of exchange in Papua New Guinea. She notes that "*extension* means here the capacity to develop spatial temporal relations that go beyond the self, or that expand dimensions of the spatiotemporal control of an actor. I speak then of the capacities of acts and practices for yielding certain levels of spatiotemporal transformation" (1986: 11; emphasis in original).
5. The figures used in this article were provided by Longyan's Office of the Party Secretary during my field research in 2001–2002. Although statistics in China are notorious for inaccuracies, they are still useful as normative, ideological constructs of empirical reality in Longyan and reflect both official self-promotion of the village as

a *qiaoxiang* (overseas village) and critiques of certain kinds of ritual and housing expenditures among "peasant" subjects (*nongmin*).

6. The building of ostentatious houses in emigrant villages is not unique to Longyan as evident by the passing observations of Watson in rural Hong Kong (1975) and Brettell in Portugal among overseas-connected residents (1986, 2003). Here I offer to move beyond passing observations of this phenomenon to considered analysis of the built environment as a mediation of bodily mnemonics and embodied subjectivity.
7. Pierre Bourdieu used the term, *habitus* (via Marcel Mauss 1992 [1934]), to describe "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*" (1977: 72) and to foreground the socially informed body as a non-discursive and inert source for the encoding of social memory and for the maintenance, affirmation and transformation of existing social orders. I am extending these meanings of *habitus* here to discuss particular social imaginations of embodied ways of being.
8. It is of interest that the old caretaker of the Monkey King temple who first told me this story on the bridge basically reenacted this whole scene as he traced its unfolding, dramatizing different actors' performances in this scene on the stage and guiding me with the arcing movement of his index finger, as a witness then might have, to the flight of the Monkey King from one side of the river to the other. Through his performative storytelling, he highlighted the very affective dimensions of the built environment and particularly, the embodied form memories assumed as evoked by the actual temple standing before the old caretaker.
9. This term, "differentiated mobility," is drawn from Doreen Massey's work (1993). As Massey noted, "The point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation *to* flows and the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this . . . some are more in charge of [mobility] than others; some indicate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it" (Massey 1993: 61; cited in Liu 1997: 96).
10. Drawing on Paul Gilroy's phrase, Ien Ang (1994) writes that "The experience of migration brings with it a shift in perspective: to paraphrase Gilroy, for the migrant it is no longer 'where you're from', but 'where you're at' which forms the point of anchorage." Here I am arguing for an alternative "point of anchorage" for village residents which has to do more with "where you're going" than either "where you're from" or "at."
11. This politics of *pre*-destination, as Weber noted, lead inadvertently to the collective valorization and channeling of human energies toward things like this-worldly asceticism, industriousness and calculative, rational investments of wealth—in other words, the lethal combination necessary for massive capitalist expansion and development ever since Ben Franklin's time.

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