

William N. Brown

Splendors of Quanzhou, Past and Present

OPEN ACCESS

 Springer

Splendors of Quanzhou, Past and Present

William N. Brown

Splendors of Quanzhou, Past and Present

 Springer

William N. Brown
MBA Center
Xiamen University
Xiamen, China



ISBN 978-981-19-8035-0 ISBN 978-981-19-8036-7 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8036-7>

© NewChannel International Education Group Limited 2023. This book is an open access publication.

Open Access This book is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this book or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the book's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the book's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

This work is subject to copyright. All commercial rights are reserved by the author(s), whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Regarding these commercial rights a non-exclusive license has been granted to the publisher.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Preface

Quanzhou—My 3rd Home

Xi Jinping and Aladdin

In November 2001, when then Fujian Governor Xi Jinping made me an Honorary Citizen of Fujian, he said at dinner that evening, “China knows the world but the world still does not know China.” He added, “You have written about Xiamen, your 2nd home. You should also write about Quanzhou, your 3rd home.”

Xi Jinping was keen on Quanzhou’s history and culture because, as he said during the National People’s Congress (NPC) almost 20 years later, in 2019: “Fujian was the start of the ancient maritime silk road, and is the core of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.”

Fujian was the maritime silk road’s starting point, but the greatest port in Fujian, indeed in all the world, was Quanzhou. It was Quanzhou’s ancient trade network that inspired Xi Jinping’s vision of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—and Quanzhou is playing a leading role in the twenty-first century’s BRI as well.

In 2021, Quanzhou’s GDP reached 1,130.417 billion yuan.¹ In 2019, the gross value of foreign trade between Quanzhou and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road partners reached 105.355 billion yuan, a year-on-year growth of 24.6%. And, Quanzhou’s 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Pilot Zone is helping to lead China’s expansion of international economic and cultural exchanges.

But I knew little of this back in 2001, and I had little interest in writing more books (except for management textbooks). But that changed in 2003 when I agreed to help Quanzhou enter the International Awards for Livable Communities and discovered that this legendary city had almost no materials in English to share with the judges and audience in Europe.

So, heeding Xi Jinping’s encouragement over a year earlier to write a book on Quanzhou, I spent over 6 weeks driving to every corner of the city and exploring its history, culture, geography, and cuisine. And as I spent eight months researching the presentation that I would give in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, I became entranced by Quanzhou’s astonishing rich history and heritage. I learned that Marco Polo had

sailed home from Quanzhou, and that Quanzhou was Columbus' goal in China. (He never made it but I've been there over 100 times).

Quanzhou Tea, Porcelain, and Silk

When foreigners think of China, they think of tea, porcelain, and silk—and Quanzhou was famed for all three. The Boston Tea Party's dumping overboard of Fujian's prized tea on three ships that had sailed from Xiamen helped stoke the U.S. War of Independence. Quanzhou's Dehua white porcelain was so prized that some European monarchs bankrupted their nations funding research to ferret out the secrets of its production. As for silk, the famed Arab explorer Ibn Battuta said China's best silk was not from Hangzhou, as even many Chinese believe, but from Quanzhou, which the 40,000 Muslim residents called Zaytun, the origin of the English word "satin".

Quanzhou today is a world apart from the sleepy city I first visited in 1989, and even far more developed than it was in 2003 when it won double gold medals in the Netherlands at Livcom. But happily, perhaps more than any other Chinese city, Quanzhou has balanced phenomenal growth with the preservation and enhancement of its unparalleled historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

In 2003, I shared with the international judges in Europe how Quanzhou did not just store away her heritage in museums but actually incorporated it into the new city. All new architecture, for example, whether apartment buildings, banks, or shopping malls, adhered to codes that insured the historical and cultural aesthetics of each district. The result was a uniquely modern, comfortable city that embraced the future while preserving a colorful past—a feat that won the city kudos from UNESCO's Relic Protection Campaign, as well as honors for environmental protection in 2001 (Fig. 1).

Even with Quanzhou's ceaseless change as it embraces the twenty-first century, it has managed to retain and even strengthen the identity that so enthralled Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and many others—a city so enchanting to foreigners that it probably inspired such legendary tales as Aladdin and Sinbad.

Mythic Zaytun—Home of Aladdin?

Arab legend claims that the legendary Sinbad the sailor visited Zaytun, but Sinbad himself was probably inspired by Admiral Zhèng Hé (郑和), the great Chinese explorer. Zheng Hé's court name was Sanbao, and like Sinbad, he was Muslim, and made seven epic sea voyages. To this day, many Asian countries have temples to Sanbao who, unlike Western explorers, navigated the seas to engage in pure exploration, cultural and commercial exchanges, and, of course, to help the world understand China, which to most of the world was so far off and so wealthy as to be legendary.



Fig. 1 Protected Trees amidst “New Classic” Architecture

Quanzhou also was probably the inspiration for the Aladdin story—which to many people’s surprise was about a boy in China, not the Middle East. My 1905 version begins, “Aladdin was the son of Mustapha, a poor tailor in one of the rich provinces of China.”²

The Aladdin tale was first heard in Paris in 1709, when a Syrian Christian storyteller named Hanna Diyab told the Aladdin and Ali Baba stories to Frenchman Antoine Galland. In 1710, Antoine Gallan published them in his *The Thousand and One Nights* collection. I have collected many nineteenth- and twentieth-century versions of the Aladdin book, and they all take place in China, from beginning to end. Even the book covers and story illustrations are of Chinese—in Chinese clothing, and with Chinese scenes and architecture.

Many scholars argue the Aladdin story should be in the Middle East, not China, because the story uses Muslim words and cultural setting, but this is easy to explain. The young Syrian Christian storyteller had never been to China, so he used familiar terms such as sultan instead of emperor. But Hanna Diyab set his story in China because the people of his day saw China as the remotest, richest, and most magical kingdom on earth.

Even the West’s most brilliant philosophers and leaders revered Chinese culture and government. In 1732, British politician Budgell said that all nations knew of China’s four great inventions, but where it truly excelled all nations was in the “art of government”.³

Voltaire, the Enlightenment genius, claimed that China was a nation ruled by philosophers, and he proudly displayed a Confucius portrait on his library wall. In 1764, Voltaire wrote: “One need not be obsessed with the merits of the Chinese to recognize at least that their empire is in truth the best that the world has ever seen.”⁴

But not all Westerners loved China—especially decadent royals who inherited their positions. After the German philosopher Christian Wolff praised Confucius in a 1721 lecture on China’s moral government, he was told to leave Prussia within 48 hours or be hanged.

By the twentieth century, Westerners had removed China from the Aladdin stories because they opposed China’s growing role in the world. Their only China stories were of how evil China would destroy the West’s wonderful world.

But Disney took it even further and not only deleted all references to China but also invented their own place—Agrabah, which is probably a combination of Agra, the region with India’s Taj Mahal, and Baghdad.

So, there is no doubt that Aladdin was Chinese—but why from Quanzhou? The story says Aladdin was from “a rich city in China”, and no port in China, or anywhere else on earth, could rival Quanzhou—the start of the maritime silk road and the richest and greatest port on earth.

Quanzhou had three Franciscan cathedrals and also seven mosques for its 40,000 Muslims. The Ashab Mosque, built over 1,000 years ago, was the most beautiful mosque outside of the Middle East. Even today, Quanzhou has hundreds of ancient tombstones of Muslims and Christians. The city had every world religion imaginable, which is why, in 1991, a UNESCO official representative said Quanzhou was a world museum of religions.⁵

The celebrated Arab traveler Ibn Battuta (1304–1358), who traveled over 75,000 miles, said Zaytun was the world’s largest port. Using their innovative magnetic compasses, Chinese merchants sailed from Quanzhou to buy ivory, pearls, hawksbill turtles, and rhinoceros’ horns, and sell China’s satin, tea, iron wares, and other Chinese treasures in great demand throughout the known world. The Mogadisu and Kilindini in East Africa treasured Quanzhou Dehua’s porcelain, but the greatest prize was of course Chinese silk: Damask and red and green silk to Vietnam; printed silks to Thailand; colored satin to Malaysia; floral designed silk to Indonesia; brocade to Burma; colored brocade and white silk to India; green brocade to Iran; colored thin silk to Kenya; and colored brocade to Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia.

Ancient Quanzhou was truly legendary—a fit home for Aladdin and his magic lamp. But Quanzhou’s future will be even greater than its legendary past thanks to the BRI.

Zaytun Rises Again!

In 2019, at China’s annual NPC session, Fujianese were proud to learn of Xi Jinping’s remarks that he had “yuánfèn” (fate) with Fujian, where he had lived for 17.5 years. And Xi explained that Fujian was not only the start of the ancient maritime silk road but also the core of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Although all of Fujian participated in the maritime silk road trade, the core was Quanzhou, or mythical Zaytun—which is exactly why Xi Jinping suggested I write a book about it.

Even 20 years ago, Xi Jinping was dreaming about recreating Zaytun’s ancient maritime silk road, but the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will be on a far greater scale than merely commercial and cultural exchanges because it is helping to fight poverty abroad the very same way it tackled the problem at home: Roads first, then Riches (要想富, 先修路).

Roads then Riches

“First roads, then riches”, Chinese said to me when I drove with my family over 40,000 km around China in 1994—up the coast to Beijing, Inner Mongolia, the western regions through the Gobi Desert and Tibet, and back home to Xiamen through south China. In every corner of the country, China was building roads even to the poorest locations.

As a business professor, I could not see the economic justification for investing hundreds of millions to build infrastructure even in places like Ningxia, which UNESCO said was impoverished beyond hope. There was no way, I thought, that China could ever recoup such a massive investment—but like their ancient forebears, modern Chinese leaders think very long-term. And as Xi Jinping has said, merely giving aid does not solve poverty, and may even increase “poverty of thought”. So, China built roads to give the people opportunities to lift themselves from poverty.

Ancient Chinese said: “Give a fish, fish for a day; teach to fish and fish for a lifetime.” Roads truly did lead to riches, as I saw when I drove around China again in 2019. Even the poorest places—like Ningxia—were prospering because the enterprising Chinese seized the opportunities they’d been given by a government that had faith in them.

BRI—Roads then Riches Overseas

I marvel at how China has lifted the world’s largest population from poverty with its pragmatic “roads then riches” plan. First infrastructure, then wealth. Of course, they have thousands of years of experience in this. Over 2,200 years ago, the world’s greatest infrastructure project, the Dujiangyan irrigation system, ended the region’s devastating floods and allowed Sichuan to irrigate some 500,000 square km of land—and it is west China’s breadbasket to this very day. The Grand Canal allowed trade from both north and south China to be linked to that of the Silk Road of the desert. And China’s massive infrastructure projects I’ve witnessed over the past three decades prove that modern Chinese leaders have even greater vision, and courage, than their predecessors.

But who would have imagined that Xi Jinping would use the BRI for “Roads first, then Riches” to “lift other nations from poverty?”

My youngest son, who with his wife does volunteer medical work in Africa, said that even in the remotest areas he sees Chinese working hand in hand with Africans to help them achieve riches not only through building roads but also through building railways, bridges, dams and hydroelectric stations, ports, and airports.

And as the core of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Fujian and Quanzhou are playing a greater role than ever in helping to shape a better world for not only China but also for its BRI partners.

No Alternative but BRI—Even for Nonparticipants

Not all nations embrace the BRI, of course, yet even nations that oppose it in the media have embraced it in practice because, already, there is no cost-effective alternative. On October 1, 2019, West India's Nhava Sheva Port shipped cargo all the way east to China's coastal Fujian Province and then by rail from Xiamen all the way west again to Tashkent, Uzbekistan.⁶ Yet even this serpentine detour was nearly 20 days faster than any alternative route.

If nations will work together, our little planet will be a better place for all of us—and we don't need Aladdin's magic lamp—just Chinese' age-old pragmatism, perseverance, and love of peaceful prosperity. That's a dream that all of us can share.

Xiamen, China
May 2022

Dr. William N. Brown

Notes

1. Quanzhou Statistical Information Network http://tjj.quanzhou.gov.cn/tjzl/tjgb/202204/t20220419_2718483.htm.
2. Altemus, Henry (1905), "Aladdin and other Stories". Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia, p. 7.
3. Teng, Ssu-Yu (1960), "China," Chapter XXX, *China's Examination System and the West*. University of California Press.
4. Schwarz, Bill (1996), *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*. Psychology Press, p. 229.
5. Wang, Xinghe (2016), *Research and Development of Quanzhou Cultural Creative Products Based on Regional Culture*, International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education, (ICADCE 2016), p. 1.
6. Yuan, Shenggao (2019), "Railways push trade ahead via key routes," *China Daily*, Oct. 31, 2019.

Contents

1	Quanzhou at a Glance	1
2	The Story of Zaytun	5
3	Exploring Quanzhou Maritime Museum	17
4	Exploring the Ancient Maritime Silk Road in Today's Quanzhou	29
5	Quanzhou: Home of Miraculous Chinese Puppets!	47
6	Academy Upon the Sea—Past and Present	51
7	Records of Ancient Zaytun	59
8	Quanzhou—A Love of Nature Since Time Immemorial	69
9	Zayton, City of Bridges	73
10	Enchanting Hui'an	79
11	Nan'an—Home of Koxinga	95
12	Jinjiang and Shishi	105
13	Anxi—Oolong Tea Capital of China	113
14	Dehua—China's Ancient Porcelain Production Center	121
15	Quanzhou—Home of Minnan Cuisine	127
16	Captivating Quanzhou Specialties	135

Chapter 1

Quanzhou at a Glance



Quanzhou's Historic Names

Before New China's adoption of "pinyin", there was no standard Romanized spelling of Quanzhou, so you might need to try various spellings to find this great city in Western history texts. The most common spellings included:

Zaitun (origin of the English word "satin" and Arabic for "City of Olives", from the Chinese nickname Citong Cheng—City of Teng Trees,) as well as Zayton, Zaytun, Zaiton, Zaitoum and Cayton.

Chinchew (a variant of Chincheo, the Portuguese and Spanish name for Zhangzhou, also Chin-chew, Chance, Chinchu, Chwanchow-foo, Chincheo, Ch'üan-chou, Ts'üan-chou, Tswanchow-foo (or fu), Ts'wan-chow-fu, T'swan-chau fu, Ts'wan-chiu, Thsiouan-tchéou-fou (or fou). Marco Polo's spelling was Tyunju

Romanization of the local Hokkien name includes Chuan-chiu, Choan-Chiu, and Shanju.

Climate

Subtropical marine monsoon climate.

Annual avg. temperature 20.7 °C; annual avg. precipitation 1,235 mm.

Latitude: N.24°30' ~25°56'; longitude E. 117°25' ~119°05'.

Demographics

Size: 11,245 km² (Fujian's largest metropolitan region).

Coastline: 16.6 km; 2,700 ha of beaches; sea area of 4,200 ha.

Population as of 2020: 8,782,284 (urban: 6,107,475—compared to 196,000 in 1992).

Overseas Chinese from Quanzhou: 7.5 million in 129 countries and regions (760,000 in Hong Kong and Macao). Some 2.5 million, including descendants, have returned from abroad.

Natural Heritage

Two thousand two hundred and one species of wild plants, including 35 endangered species.

Four thousand species wild animals, including 31 endangered species.

Four hundred and seven protected ancient trees (27 kinds), 466.67 ha mangrove forest.

Chinese white dolphin habitat 21 lakes (2,983 ha).

Historical Heritage

Five hundred and five “Protected Cultural and Historical Relics”, including 20 churches and temples (the 1,700-year-old Yanfu Temple is Fujian’s oldest).

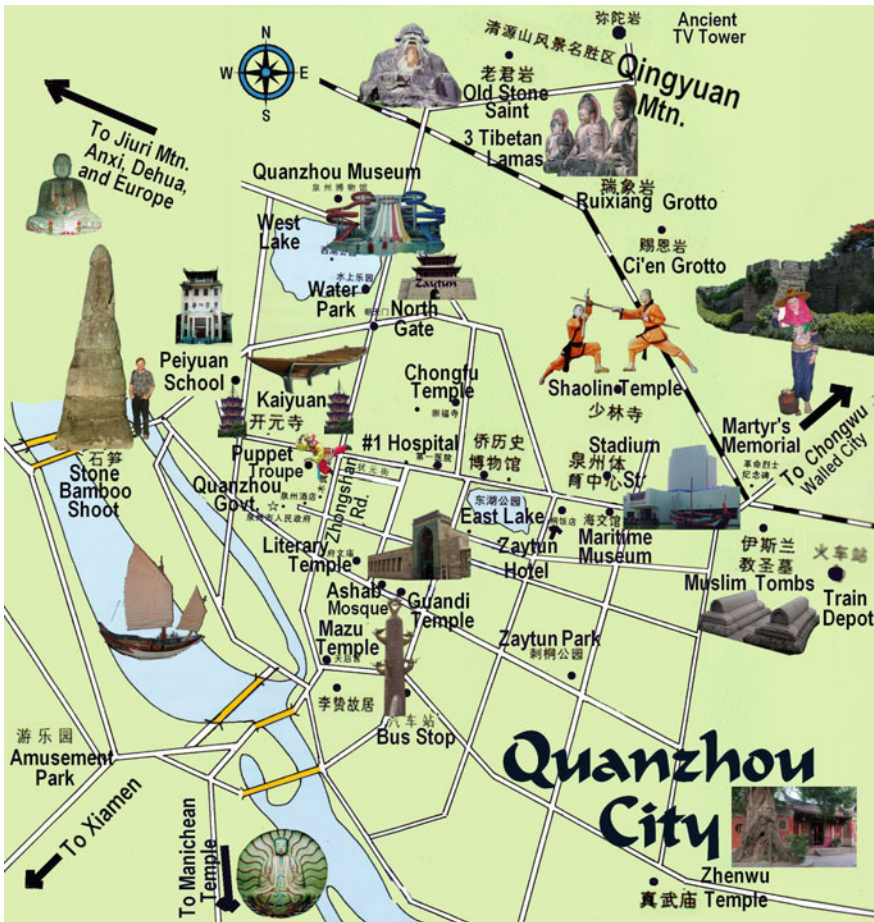


Fig. 1.1 Quanzhou at a Glance

Six City Museums, including the 27.5 million yuan Maritime Museum (China's best), and the 60 million-yuan City Museum.

Folk Culture

Quanzhou is home to many treasured crafts and traditions such as acrobatic hand puppets, paper lanterns, bamboo weaving, porcelain, wood sculpture, tree-root carving, miniature flour carvings, paper weaving, lacquer ware, clay work, and a 1,700-year-old stone-carving tradition, etc. Quanzhou was also the origin of Southern Shaolin Kungfu and the Minnan Tea Ceremony (precursor to the Japanese Tea Ceremony). Special arts schools train youngsters to perpetuate these (Fig. 1.1).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 2

The Story of Zaytun



There are no people in the world wealthier than the Chinese.

—Ibn Battutā (Arab traveler, 1304–1358)¹

Columbus may have ended up in a “new world” but he was seeking an ancient one. He had devoured Marco Polo’s accounts of the legendary wealth of Quanzhou, from which the Venetian vagabond sailed for home.

Zaytun (the Arab’s name—a homonym for “olive”, symbol of peace) was the largest port on earth, rivaling Alexandria in Egypt. Start of the Silk Road of the Sea, this was the legendary port of call for Ibn Battuta, Sinbad, and Admiral Zheng Hé, who 70 years before Columbus sailed the seas in 440-foot treasure ships that would have dwarfed Columbus’ little *Santa Maria*.

Columbus never made it to Zaytun, but I have. That mystic “City of Light” is just a 90-min drive up the coast from my adopted home of Xiamen (which a few centuries ago was part of Quanzhou).

At this city (what) you must know is the Haven of Zaytun, frequented by all the ships of India, which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all the merchants of Manzi, for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shiplot of pepper that goes to Alexandria or elsewhere, destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zaytun; for it is one of the greatest havens in the world for commerce.

—Marco Polo.²

Zaytun’s True Wealth Marco Polo was impressed by Zaytun’s gems, pearls, porcelain, and silk, but he overlooked the true wealth of this mythic port—the place and the people! Zaytun was blessed with an unparalleled natural wealth and beauty that the enlightened inhabitants maintained as meticulously as their miniature landscapes, which have been famous throughout Asia for 1,000 years.

Zaytun was a city of gardens, lakes and forests, ringed by mountains, facing the sea, and nestled between two great rivers. Zaytun, with its three great concentric city walls, had a storybook setting that has inspired Chinese poets and philosophers for over 1,000 years (Fig. 2.1).



Fig. 2.1 Zayton in 15th century Marco Polo book

It is no wonder that the great Arab traveler Ibn Battuta remarked upon Quanzhou folks' love of gardens. The entire city was indeed like a miniature garden but on a gigantic scale, with each citizen playing their part—even as they do today.

Five Thousand Years of Balance For 1,000 years, Quanzhou folks have crafted their prize-winning miniature landscapes not to win prizes but for the sheer beauty of it. And even as they revel in the judicial juxtaposition of stone and miniature trees, so they have adapted their city to the confines of their unique topography to create not just family gardens but neighborhood gardens, public parks and city forests that reinforce rather than destroy their environment. I suspect this uniquely Chinese sense of balance and long-term perspective explains how China has survived for 5,000 years.

“Land is Life” is an old Chinese adage that proved true in Quanzhou. Both land and inhabitants thrived, and the City of Light became a global commercial and cultural crossroads—a melting pot where merchants, diplomats, philosophers and missionaries from all over the world coexisted peacefully, intermarried, and most importantly, learned from one another.

Jerusalem of Asia UNESCO dubbed Quanzhou a “World Museum of Religion”, because the city hosted every major religion, from Nestorian Christianity and Tibetan Buddhism to Islam. Quanzhou’s Muslim community supposedly dates back to the day of Mohammed himself, and the Persian Manichean religion survives today only in Quanzhou. Quanzhou people not only did not lack diversity of religion or philosophy,

they were also well grounded academically. Called the “Academy Upon the Sea”, Quanzhou produced 2,454 “Jinshi”, successful candidates in the highest imperial examinations, 20 prime ministers, and 950 nationally acclaimed scholars.

World Citizens Broad exposure to world philosophies, religions and academics helped nurture the uniquely global outlook that insured Quanzhou folks’ prosperity both at home and abroad. Today, over 7.2 million overseas Chinese,³ and 40 percent of Taiwan’s Han Chinese, trace their roots to Quanzhou. But Fujianese were a force to be reckoned with long before the City of Light became a beacon for the world.

The Fujian Flame As we’ll see in China’s best maritime museum (see this chapter), China’s great maritime tradition was born right here in Fujian over 2,000 years ago, when King Fuchai built a shipyard near Fuzhou. Our province is named after King Fuchai, as are the great Fujian boats (“Fuchuan”), with their prows’ painted “dragon eyes” that enabled boats to see where they were going—which too often was straight into the mouth of a watery hell. And a few thousand years before that, the Minyue people of Fujian were the world’s first truly ocean-going explorers. The ancestors of the Austronesians, they crossed from Pingtan Island to Taiwan, and from there settled the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans, from Hawaii and Easter Island in the east to New Zealand in the south.

The full extent of their bravery is seen when you read that Guang Sima claimed that during the 10th century, fully 40 percent to 50 percent of ships traveling from Fujian to north China were lost at sea! Even in the 19th century, many were lost simply sailing the coast between Hong Kong and Xiamen. So, it was with some awe that Koreans recorded the arrival of Quanzhou merchants as early as 1017. Quanzhou traders also visited Manchuria and Japan. Su Shi wrote:

Only the crafty merchants of Fujian dare to travel to Koryo where the kingdom urges them to seek profits. Men such as Xu Jian of Quanzhou are legion.⁴

But if men such as Xu Jian were legion, it was partly because they had so little flat land back home to hang onto.

“Eight parts mountain, one part water, one part field” (八山一水一分田) Fujian is blessed with everything but flat land. So much of Fujian is vertical that we could easily have the biggest province in China if someone flattened it. A millennium ago, Fujianese sought more farm land with massive land reclamation projects, but even after draining the malarial marshes and pushing back the sea, farm land was still inadequate, so the intrepid Fujianese took to commerce—and here they found their calling.

Fujianese Integrity Over the centuries, Fujianese developed a reputation not only for business prowess but also for unimpeachable integrity. In 1912, Reverend Pitcher wrote in *In and About Amoy*:

...what shall we say of them (Fujianese)? They are a part of a wonderful people...

One hears all kinds of comment upon the deceptiveness of the Chinese and yet in business circles, the commercial world, they have the reputation of being the most straightforward and conscientious merchants in the whole Eastern hemisphere. This holds true here in Amoy... You may always depend upon the man with whom you may be dealing to deliver the goods. No

matter how much they may lose in the transaction the Chinese have the reputation of fulfilling their contracts every time to the letter.⁵

It was the people, as much as the place, which made Zaytun the natural start of the Silk Road of the Sea. And, of course, there was also Zaytun's silk...

The first city which we reached after our sea voyage was the city of Zaytun... Zaytun is an immense city. In it are woven the damask silk and satin fabrics which go by its name, and which are superior to the fabrics of Khansa and Khan-Baliq. The port of Zaytun is one of the largest in the world, or perhaps the very largest. I saw in it about a hundred large junks; as for small junks, they could not be counted for multitude.

—Ibn Battuta, Arab Traveler (1304–1358).⁶

Silk Road of the Sea “Silk Road” evokes images of deserts and camels, but the Maritime Silk Road accounted for much of the trade because one ship carried as much as 700 camels (and ships didn't spit at you). While Fujianese sailed the seven seas, the rest of the world sailed to Zaytun for Chinese medicines, tropical fruits, agricultural products such as Quanzhou's Anxi tea, the famed white porcelain of Quanzhou's Dehua (one of China's four great porcelain centers), and of course Fujian's famous silks—the best of which Ibn Battuta claimed were produced in Zaytun (from which we get the English word “satin”).

Over 3,000 years ago, silk was worth its weight in gold in the West. The Roman poet Horace (65–8 B.C.) wrote about silk, and Lucan (39–65) wrote of “Cleopatra's white breasts...revealed by the fabric... close-woven by the shuttle of the Seres (Chinese).”

The Secret of Silk For centuries, Westerners beguiled by visions of Cleopatra's silky undies sought to discover silk's origin. Pliny (23–79), in *Natural History*, wrote that silk grew on trees.

The first race encountered is the Seres, so famous for the fleecy product of their forests. This pale floss, which they find growing on the leaves, they wet with water, and then comb out, furnishing thus a double task to our womankind in first dressing the threads, and then again of weaving them into silk fabrics. So has toil to be multiplied; so have the ends of the earth to be traversed: and all that a Roman dame may exhibit her charms in transparent gauze.

To safeguard silk's secret, China forbade the export of raw silk. Silk fabric was sent through Constantinople to the Island of Cos, where it was unwoven and used to produce Roman nobility's ethereal garments. Silk's secret was discovered only in 550, when Nestorian monks secreted silkworms in bamboo tubes and smuggled them out of China. But the production of porcelain was a tougher nut to crack.

Zaytun Porcelain Even more desirable than Zaytun's silk was her porcelain. One of China's top porcelain centers, Quanzhou's delicate wares so bewitched Western rulers that some monarchs bankrupted national treasuries to amass their vast collections (see Chap. 13).

Fujian—Established Happiness With her silk, porcelain, tea and other treasures, this province well deserved the name of “Fujian (福建, Fukien in old Romanization):”

The name Fukien, which means ‘established happiness’, in a large measure characterizes the people of this district. I think we may safely go further and say that this is true of the whole province. What we mean is this: They are not antagonistic to foreigners... With the exception of a few occasions, the Chinese in these parts have never exhibited any opposition to the stranger within their gates.

—Pitcher, *In and About Amoy*, 1912, p. 96

Unfortunately, that happiness was soon to be disestablished...

Rise and Fall Zaytun was bustling by the early seventh century when Mohammed’s two disciples supposedly arrived, followed closely by Nestorian Christians, Manicheans, and adherents of virtually every other religion and philosophy. By the thirteenth century, Quanzhou was a magnificent city with three concentric walls encircling the central government area, inner city, and foreigner’s quarters.

China and India together accounted for over half of the world’s GNP. In March 2014, a *Harvard Business Review* article noted that before the First Opium War, China’s economy was more open and market-driven than the economies of Europe. Angus Madison, a British economic historian, claimed that China accounted for 29 percent of the globe’s GNP as late as 1820. But within a century of Zheng Hé’s day the legendary City of Light had been extinguished.

Before his seventh voyage in 1432, Zheng Hé erected a tablet in Changle (near Fuzhou), in which he claimed to have “unified seas and continents” and “the countries beyond the horizons from the ends of the earth have all become subjects”. But his great expeditions had taken a heavy toll on the land—especially on the common folk, who received nothing in return for their sacrifices to build the fleets.

While Westerners made a killing at commerce (Magellan’s crew once sold 26 tons of cloves for 10,000 times the cost), the imperial fleet was built primarily to impress the world with the glories of China and, of course, her emperor. And the ships returned to China loaded down not with practical commodities but cargoes of exotic gifts and luxuries for the imperial court (primarily the corrupt eunuchs).

The emperor decried the waste, saying, “I do not care for foreign things. I accept them because they come from far away and show the sincerity of distant peoples, but we should not celebrate this.” His sentiments echoed those of Chinese 1,500 years earlier, whom Pliny wrote were:

...inoffensive in their manners indeed; but, like the beasts of the forest, they eschew the contact of mankind; and, though ready to engage in trade, wait for it to come to them instead of seeking it out.

Dousing the City of Light Not long after Zheng Hé’s death, China closed her doors and destroyed the greatest navy the world had ever seen. Whereas the Ming Dynasty navy had thousands of ships in the early 1400s, within decades it was a capital offense to build boats with more than two masts.

In 1525, the Ming emperor ordered the destruction of all seafaring ships, and the arrest of the merchants who sailed them. By 1551, it was a crime to sail the seas in a ship with more than one mast.

Rekindling the City of Light Zaytun had so captured the imagination of foreigners that some thought it was China's capital! In 1515, Giovanni d'Empoli wrote: "The Grand Can [Khan] is the King of China, and he dwells at Zaytun." But trade ceased, the ports silted up, and that mystic City of Light was snuffed out. Thanks to a couple of decades of dramatic reform and opening up, however, Quanzhou's new generation is as excited about their future as they are proud of their past, and Quanzhou is becoming once again a global commercial and cultural crossroads.

No. 3 in GDP Growth In spite of a few centuries of obscurity, modern Quanzhou people still possess their ancestors' age-old knack for business. In the decade before Quanzhou won double gold medals in the international competition for livable communities, this resurrected city's annual GDP grew an average of 26 percent—the third fastest amongst China's top 212 cities. And Quanzhou is using this newfound wealth to make itself a better place to live.

Return to the Garden City Quanzhou people are once again managing their city with the same meticulous care as they lavish upon their gardens and miniature landscapes. And Quanzhou gardening is grassroots, not a top-down affair begun by bureaucrats spouting "One Earth" slogans. In just a four-year period, for example, Quanzhou youth spent 1.3 million man-hours planting over 6 million trees, with the total afforestation area reaching 71,600 ha in 2021.

From family gardens to neighborhood gardens, city parks, forests, and lakes, Quanzhou people are again molding their city to their unique environment, rather than wrecking that environment to accommodate urban sprawl.

Off the Wall Quanzhou, once famous for its city walls, now has a new wall. This 1 billion-yuan project, with its grand battlements, towers and gates, recaptures the feel of old Zaytun—but it has many practical uses. The wall shields the city from floods, offers beautiful roadside gardens and forests for recreation, and the parallel ring road deflects traffic around the city and lessens congestion and pollution. Even the wall's interior is put to use. The endless row of rooms will accommodate Quanzhou folks' entrepreneurial bent as they rent them out for shops, work areas, cafes.

Endless Cultural Traditions Quanzhou is also resurrecting and breathing new life into its numerous cultural sites and traditions. This ancient city of traders, educators, philosophers, and adherents of virtually all major religions, also gave birth to Chinese marionettes, Southern Shaolin Kungfu, and Southern Chinese music and opera. Quanzhou produced the prized *blanc de Chine* porcelain proudly displayed to this day in museums around the world. Hui'an's 17,000-year tradition of stonework attracts admirers and buyers from all over the planet.

Dozens of architectural relics include one of Islam's top 10 mosques, the last temple to the Persian Mani, and engineering marvels like the ancient Luoyang and Anping stone bridges (longest in the world). Quanzhou is also famous for its unique cuisines, and, of course, the Anxi tea that sparked the Boston Tea Party.

Above Ground, Not Below Some experts claim that modern Quanzhou has more archaeological artifacts than any Chinese city but Beijing or Xi'an,⁷ but as Quanzhou people quickly point out, "Xi'an's heritage is below ground—ours is above!"

Marco Polo Describes the Great Haven of Zaytun

By Marco Polo (Yule-Cordier Edition, Volume II, 1903 edition and 1920 addenda).

Now when you quit Fujū (Fuzhou) and cross the River, you travel for five days south-east through a fine country, meeting with a constant succession of flourishing cities, towns, and villages, rich in every product. You travel by mountains and valleys and plains, and in some places by great forests in which are many of the trees which give Camphor. There is plenty of game on the road, both of bird and beast. The people are all traders and craftsmen of Fujū. When you have accomplished those five days journey you arrive at Zaytun, which is also subject to Fujū.

At this city you must know is the Haven of Zaytun, frequented by all the ships of India, which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all the merchants of Manzi, for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shipload of pepper that goes to Alexandria or elsewhere, destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zaytun; for it is one of the greatest havens in the world for commerce.

The Great Kaan derives a very large revenue from the duties paid in this city and haven; for you must know that on all the merchandise imported, including precious stones and pearls, he levies a duty of 10 percent, or in other words takes title of everything. Then again the ship's charge for freight on small wares is 30 percent, on pepper 44 percent, and on lignaloos, sandalwood, and other bulky goods 40 percent, so that between freight and the Kaan's duties the merchant has to pay a good half the value of his investment (though on the other half he makes such a profit that he is always glad to come back with a new supply of merchandise). But you may well believe from what I have said that the Kaan hath a vast revenue from this city.

There is a great abundance here of all provision for every necessity of man's life. (It is a charming country, and the people are very quiet, and fond of an easy life. Many come hither from Upper India to have their bodies painted with the needle in the way we have elsewhere described, there being many adepts at this craft in the city.)

Let me tell you, and also that in this province there is a town called TYUNJU where they make vessels of porcelain of all sizes, the finest that can be imagined. They make it nowhere but in that city, and thence it is exported all over the world. Here is abundant and very cheap, inasmuch that for a Venice groat you can buy three dishes so fine that you could not imagine better.

I should tell you that in this city (i.e. of Zaytun) they have a peculiar language. (For you must know that throughout all Manzi they employ one speech and one kind of writing only, but yet there are local differences of dialect, as you might say of Genoese, Milanese, Florentines, and Neapolitans, who though they speak different dialects can understand one another.)

And I assure you that the Great Kaan has as large customs and revenues from this kingdom of Chonka (Fujian?) as from Kinsay, aye and more too.

We have now spoken of but three out of the nine kingdoms of Manzi, to wit Yanju and Kinsay and Fujū. We could tell you about the other six, but it would be too long a business; so we will say no more about them.

And now you have heard all the truth about Cathay and Manzi and many other countries, as has been set down in this book....

Touring Zaytun—A Sample Itinerary

An official Quanzhou brochure boasts “2,000 tourist sites famous at home and abroad”, so where on earth (or China) do you start? With a few dozen trips to Quanzhou under my belt (eat your heart out, Columbus), I suggest the following simple itinerary.

1. **Maritime Museum** The first stop in Zaytun should be the UNESCO-sponsored Maritime Museum—China’s biggest and best! After enjoying these eye-opening bilingual exhibits you’ll have a better handle on not only ancient China’s marvelous maritime achievements but also ancient Quanzhou’s pivotal role in both domestic and international affairs. And after the museum, head downtown.
2. **Zhongshan Road Historic District** was so abuzz with activity 1,000 years ago that one visitor said it was “intoxicating”. Treasure Street had more gems, jewels, and gold than any place on the planet.

The Zhongshan Road restoration and preservation project was awarded the “Excellent Relic Protection in Asian-Pacific Area” in UNESCO’s Relic Protection Campaign. After a stroll along this delightfully shaded street, enjoy a dozen major sites all within walking distance (or catch a pedicab if you can wake the operator). With a good three dozen tours of Quanzhou under my belt (and excellent Quanzhou cuisine hanging over it!), I suggest this simple itinerary:

Downtown Sites

1. **Ashab Mosque** One of Islam’s top 10 holy sites. Next door is...
2. **Sri Lankan Prince’s Home**, tourist shopping mall behind it.
3. **Guandi Temple** adjoins the Sri Lankan Prince’s Home.
4. **Old Chinese Architecture**, beautifully rebuilt as shops.
5. **Confucius Temple** is only a 10-min walk west of Ashab. Nice literary museum.
6. **Copper Buddha Temple**, park, lake and pavilion.
7. **At Historic Zhongshan Road**—the restoration project won a UNESCO award! As you stroll, sample local snacks, and exotic west China delicacies pedaled by Xinjiang Muslim vendors.
8. **Side Streets** lead to hidden treasures like ancient officials’ homes.
9. **Quannan Protestant Church** Quanzhou has over 170 Protestant churches.
10. **Dr Sun Yat-sen** left an inscription in, of all places, a dentist office! It is near the intersection clock tower, on the left.
11. **Clock Tower**—a timely landmark to get your bearings.
12. **Kaiyuan Temple Complex** (includes Twin Pagodas, Buddhist Museum, and Song Dynasty Ship Exhibition) is just west of the Clock Tower.
13. **Peiyuan High School** (培元中学), started 100 years ago by a missionary with the London Presbyterian Mission, has inscriptions by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his wife Soong Ling Qing.
14. **Zhongshan Park** is nice for a break; great shops in vicinity, including an extensive art supply shop by the South Gate.

15. **Food!** I moved to China primarily because Chinese food is too expensive in America—and Quanzhou cuisine fits the bill perfectly. Review the chapter on Quanzhou cuisine, then try any of the hundreds of fine restaurants, or try out the “Delicacy Street” just east of the puppet store about a 15-min walk.
16. **Goddess Mazu Temple**, very south of town.
17. **Quanzhou Angel Sculpture/dancing fountain** (in intersection).

City Outskirts

1. **Muslim Holy Tombs** (just east of the Maritime Museum).
2. **Overseas Chinese Museum**. Most overseas Chinese are from Fujian, and most of them from Quanzhou (especially Jinjiang), hence the museum.
3. **Qingyuan Mountain** to the north (many sites, including China’s largest Taoist statues, and carvings of the three Tibetan lamas).
4. **Southern Shaolin Temple**—home of Southern Shaolin Kungfu, the young abbot Master Shi is putting Quanzhou’s martial arts back on the map.
5. **Luoyang Bridge**, one of my favorite sites, is just to the north.
6. **Jiuri Mountain**, official start of the Silk Road, is a few kilometers west of the city.
7. **Stone Bamboo Shoot**—a fertility totem (we’ll leave that for later)
8. **Wenling Delicacy Street**—a lane dedicated to fine local cuisine.
9. **Parks and Gardens**—endless parks and gardens.

Also note the famous miniature landscapes.

Hit the Road! Quanzhou’s Counties

1. **Hui’an** (ancient walled city, Hui’an girls, extraterrestrial beaches, and China’s best stone masons).
2. **Nan’an** (birthplace of Koxinga, Cai’s Minnan Village, and Anping Bridge—our planet’s longest stone bridge).
3. **Jinjiang** (our planet’s last Manichaeian temple, Muslim Ancestral Hall of Chendai, ancient kilns).
4. **Anxi** (home of the tea that sparked the Boston Tea Party).
5. **Dehua** (ancient porcelain center, and origin of the *blanc de Chine* porcelain coveted by collectors and museums worldwide).
6. **Yongchun** (incense capital, and Dongguan Bridge).
7. **Shishi** (garment capital of China, Sisters-in-Law Tower, and China’s largest ocean theme park).

Whether ancient Zaytun or modern Quanzhou, there’s plenty to see, but to appreciate both, start your visit with China’s best Maritime Museum (Fig. 2.2).



Fig. 2.2 Quanzhou Scenic Areas

Notes

1. “Muslim Journeys | Item #84: Ibn Battuta Describes Chinese Ships on the Indian Coast”, September 14, 2022 <http://bridgingcultures-muslimjourneys.org/items/show/84>.
2. Polo, Marco (1920) *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Henry Yule, edited and annotated by Henri Cordier. John Murray: London.
3. Quanzhou China, Overview (2020) http://www.enquanzhou.com/2020-05/11/c_424045_2.htm.
4. Clark, Hugh R (2019) “Frontier Discourse and China’s Maritime Frontier: China’s Frontiers and the Encounter with the Sea through Early Imperial History.” *Journal of World History*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 1–33.
5. Pitcher, Philip Wilson (1912) “In and about Amoy: some historical and other facts connected with one of the first open ports in China,” Methodist Publishing House, Shanghai.

6. 1. Ibn Battuta, the “Prince of Travelers”, was born in Tangier on 24 February, 1304, and after a stay in India was dispatched by the Sultan Muhammad Thugluq to China. After many adventures, he returned home in 1349, having traveled, according to Yule’s estimate, over 75,000 miles by land and sea. “The Traveler of Islam” died 20 years later—but fortunately not before dictating his travels (which many disbelieved at the time) to a royal secretary, Ibn Juzayyat Fes.
7. Pearson Richard, Min, Li and Guo, Li (2002), “Learning about Quanzhou; the Archaeology of a Medieval Port in Fujian, China”, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 23–59. Published by Springer.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 3

Exploring Quanzhou Maritime Museum



The sign in the foyer of Quanzhou's UNESCO-sponsored maritime museum (China's best!) well summarizes Quanzhou folks' aspirations: "UNESCO, Peace and Friendship, Cultural Dialogue, Looking Back on the Past, Looking Forward to the Future".

The more I review the past, the more I appreciate that the Chinese were a peaceful people (at least outside their own borders). Even *Sun Tzu's Art of War*, the world's best war manual, urges that violence be the last resort. And Lao Tzu wrote in the *Tao Te Ching* [31]:

Violence, even well-intentioned, always rebounds upon oneself. Weapons are tools of fear; a decent man will avoid them except in the direst necessity, and if compelled, will use them only with the utmost restraint. Peace is his highest value. If the peace has been shattered, how can he become content? His enemies are not demons but humans like himself. He doesn't wish them personal harm. Nor does he rejoice in victory. How could he rejoice in victory and delight in the slaughter of men?

Had Chinese not been more philosophically inclined to commerce than conquering, they could have easily dominated our planet 1,000 years ago, and today the world would be wielding chopsticks at McRice outlets.

Art of War, Way of Peace

In 1861, Fuzhou's American missionary Robert Samuel MacClay (1824–1907) explained in his insightful *Life Among the Chinese* exactly why Chinese since Confucius' day prefer the pen over the sword:

The soldier occupies the lowest position in the Chinese classification of society, and this arrangement, we think, is in accordance with the true sentiment of the nation on this point. The Chinese do not regard it as at all derogatory to their character to be told that they are deficient in the elements of warlike strength. 'We are not a military people,' say they, 'we are a literary nation. With us reason, and not force, defines rights and privileges; argument, and not the sword, decides controversies.'

A millennium ago, China had a vast navy armed to the teeth with weapons the West had never imagined. They had cannon, giant crossbows, and even land and sea mines.

Advanced shipbuilding features like watertight compartments weren't used by Westerners until the mid-1800s! And even 2,000 years ago they had battleships with paddle wheels that could just about walk right up onto land. China's shipbuilding greatness continued right into the nineteenth century...

February 1822, Captain Pearl, of the English ship *Indiana*, coming through Gaspar Strait, fell in with the cargo and crew of a wrecked junk, and saved 198 persons out of 1,600, with whom she had left Amoy, whom he landed at Pontianak.¹

Imagine a junk, almost 200 years ago, with 1,600 passengers. Yet even that ship was dwarfed by the treasure ships of Zheng Hé's day, as you'll learn in Quanzhou Maritime Museum. Famous Arab traveler Ibn Battuta described the magnificent "Zaytun Ships" (Fig. 3.1):

The large ships have anything from twelve down to three sails, which are made of bamboo rods plaited like mats. A ship carries a complement of a thousand men, six hundred of whom are sailors and four hundred men-at-arms, including archers, men with shields and arbalists, who throw naphtha (flaming petroleum). These vessels are built only in the towns of Zaytun (Quanzhou) and Sin-Kalan (Guangzhou). The vessel has four decks and contains rooms, cabins, and saloons for merchants; a cabin has chambers and a lavatory, and can be locked by its occupant, who takes along with him slave girls and wives. Often a man will live in his cabin unknown to any of the others on board until they meet on reaching some town... Some of the Chinese own large numbers of ships on which their factors are sent to foreign countries.

—Ibn Battuta

A Sample of Chinese Military Inventions

Fourth Century BC: chemical warfare: ox-hide bellows pumped burning balls of dried mustard and other toxic matter—2,300 years before World War I's mustard gas.

First Century AD: paddlewheel battleships to navigate very shallow rivers.

Ninth Century AD: grenades and bombs of gunpowder mixed with toxic substances, like human excrement, wolfsbane, aconite, croton oil, arsenious oxide, arsenic sulfide, ashes, tung oil, and soap-bean pods that produced black smoke to cover movement or disorient the enemy.

Tenth Century AD: flamethrowers, flares, fireworks, bombs, grenades, land mines and sea mines, rockets and multi-stage rockets.

Eleventh Century AD: watertight compartments on ships (not in the West until the mid-1800s).

Thirteenth Century AD: guns, cannons, mortars, and repeating guns.

China's Secret Weapon Unlike their Western adversaries, Chinese did not conduct commerce at gunpoint because they had an even more powerful weapon to create truly sustainable win-win advantages. In 1861, Fuzhou missionary Maclay described this "weapon":

Fig. 3.1 Maritime Museum Shipbuilding Dioramas



The islands off the coast of China, and many of those in the East Indian Archipelago, have been colonized by the Chinese; and in early every kingdom of eastern peninsular Asia they are found in large and influential communities. It is a noticeable fact that whenever the Chinese colonize among a heathen people, their superior civilization gives them at once a decided advantage over the native population.

By their intelligence, industry and capacity for business they almost monopolize all the important and highly remunerative departments of labor; commerce passes into their hands, and they become the chief factors, the leading spirits in the native communities in which they live...

—Maclay 1861.²

Chinese's ancient preoccupation with peaceful coexistence and win-win prosperity is precisely why I have dozens of times taken Chinese and foreigners alike to visit Quanzhou Maritime Museum, and you too will enjoy it—starting with “The World of China's Ships” (on the second floor, to the right).

The World of China's Ships The history of shipbuilding begins with a video of how the ancients went from flotation (hollow gourds tied to their waists) to bamboo rafts, dugout canoes, animal hide coracles, boats, and large ships. I was surprised to see a 2,000-year-old drawing of a dragon boat race. It is remarkably like the dragon boat races of today. And Fujianese, of all peoples, should excel at dragon boats because, as archaeology, linguistics and even DNA have shown, it was Fujianese who were the world's first ocean-going explorers, settling the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans up to 5,000 and 6,000 years ago—from Hawaii and the Easter Islands in the east to New Zealand in the south.

Tibetan Yak Skin Coracle. I've read accounts of selfless Xiamen University (XMU) alumni who braved freezing Tibetan rivers in these unwieldy craft to selflessly volunteer in Tibet in the 1950s and 1960s. I marveled at their courage and selflessness—characteristics of Chinese volunteers to this day everywhere from Inner Mongolia and the Gobi Desert to Tibet and Xinjiang in the west and Hainan Island in the south.

Beside the yak coracle was a beautifully painted canoe used by natives of a small island off Taiwan's east coast; it reminded me of ceremonial Native American canoes.

Goatskin Rafts My friends thought I was kidding when I said Chinese made rafts from inflated goatskins. A photo on the wall behind the model shows a gigantic river raft made of over 700 goatskins! I paddled a smaller one on the Yangtze River and was, once again, awed at the bravery of Chinese boat people (many of whom never set foot on land in their entire lives until Xi Jinping intervened and provided them homes, jobs, medical career and education for their children.

Miniature Boat Models A vast array of intricately detailed boat models show the sheer diversity and sophistication of Chinese shipbuilding. Boats were designed according to use, climate, and water conditions (rough or smooth seas, hot or cold climates). My favorite is the crooked bow boat which I was told was designed this way to take better advantage of extremely strong currents—though I wonder how they handled the return trips.

Grand Houseboats, owned by foreigners and wealthy Chinese, used to ply Fujian's rivers during the hot summers. As I write this in a sweltering Quanzhou summer, I wish I was on a Chinese houseboat.

Tying the Knot! The museum used to have an excellent knot-tying station but it was removed. Maybe too many lasses were tying the knot. Months later, someone made a half-hearted attempt to resurrect the exhibit by dangling a few frayed bits of

rope on a pole, and hanging a few nicely framed knots on other walls, but unlike the previous exhibit, there were no instructions, so it proved to be a knotty problem for my friend Jim, who was soon at the end of his rope.

“South Pointing Needles” Unlike Westerners, Chinese insist that compasses point south, not north, but since they invented compasses (and almost everything else), I guess they’ve a right to say so. Westerners were so ignorant of compasses that when they finally came into use in Europe, captains forbade sailors from eating onions lest they interfere with the cunning device’s powers.

Koxinga, the pirate-cum-patriot born in Japan of a Japanese mother and Quanzhou Chinese father, was well represented with paintings, ship models, clips from the Koxinga TV series (I played the last Dutch governor of Taiwan), and a diorama with lights, sound and action of the great battle in which he wrested control of Taiwan from the “greedy grasp of the Dutch invaders”.

Flagging Exhibit For the record, however, the two Dutch ships’ flags are French, not Dutch. Both nations’ flags have red, white and blue stripes, but the Dutch flag’s stripes are horizontal, the French stripes are vertical. Though perhaps such details are too trivial to matter...

I mentioned the flag issue several times to the museum staff. One finally said: “Dutch, French—six of one and half dozen of the other. They’re both foreign.” She paused, and added for good measure: “Koxinga fought them 300 years ago. Maybe the Dutch and French have switched flags by now.”

Dioramas and Displays The east side of the museum’s upper floor has delightful dioramas detailing the construction of wooden ships, which hasn’t changed much in centuries. Dozens of models of fishing junks, treasure ships and warships help convey the complexity of ancient Chinese shipbuilding. The sails were so stable that during the past decade many designers have begun to adapt them to Western yachts and sailing ships.

Thanks to innovative ships, navigational techniques, mastery of mapmaking, and the compass, Chinese seafarers like Admiral Zheng Hé sailed pretty much around the globe. In fact, Gavin Menzie, former submarine commander in the British Navy, claims that Zheng Hé’s fleet, not Columbus, discovered America. While his claims seem to me a bit farfetched, his book, *1421—The Year China Discovered America*,³ has at least gotten Westerners’ attention.

Admiral Zheng Hé, 1421

(Adapted from *Amoy Magic*, by William Brown, Xiamen University Press).

Zheng Hé, China’s most illustrious adventurer, was a Muslim descendant of the King of Bukhara (southern Uzbekistan), and the governor of Yunnan, who was the last Mongol to hold out against the Ming Dynasty. After the Ming defeated Yunnan in 1381, they castrated thousands of youths, including Zheng Hé—a cruel punishment for a Muslim boy dreaming of adulthood and four wives. But Zheng Hé proved to be an excellent scholar and linguist, and his skills in court (if not courting) got the attention of the prince who overthrew the emperor, his nephew, and made Zheng Hé an admiral.

Over his 28-year career, Zheng Hé commanded at least 317 ships and 37,000 men. He sailed from Korea to Antarctica and around Africa into the Atlantic. His navigational charts remained unsurpassed for centuries (though his geographical knowledge was not perfect; Zheng Hé wrote that both Christ and Mohammed were from Western India, which he assumed included all of the Middle East).

During his first voyage, in 1405, Zheng Hé commanded 62 ships and 27,800 men. The first voyage passed peaceably enough, but during the second voyage of 1409, Zheng Hé had differences with the King of Ceylon and hauled him back to China. Even today, a Sri Lankan prince's home stands to the east of Quanzhou's Ashab Mosque (adjoining the ancient temple).

Alas, Zheng Hé's seventh voyage was his last. The emperor decided that the rest of the world had nothing China needed, and after Zheng Hé died, international trade declined as well. Decades later, all records of Zheng Hé's exploits were destroyed, Chinese were forbidden to travel abroad, and the members of Zaytun's Islamic community, facing increasing persecution, adopted Chinese surnames and melded right into Han society—so well, in fact, that in the 1990s some Hui people had no idea their ancestors were Middle Eastern Arabs until researchers informed them.

A UNESCO “World Museum of Religion” It is no wonder that UNESCO calls Quanzhou a “World Museum of Religion”. Today, tens of thousands of Quanzhou people are descended from Zaytun's early foreign settlers, and they brought with them not only Islam but every other religion imaginable, as we shall see in the museum's fascinating collection of foreign religious artifacts.

The foreigners who flocked to ancient Zaytun exchanged not just commodities but cultures, philosophies, and religions. The maritime museum's hundreds of ancient religious relics help us realize that, at one time, Zaytun was indeed the “Jerusalem of Asia”, with representatives of most religions.

The ground floor hall to the left of the foyer displays many religious artifacts unearthed over recent decades. There are so many, in fact, that they are even scattered about the field behind the museum (hence the present construction of the large Islamic Heritage Center).

Over 150 Islamic tombstones and carved stone fragments were recovered during the dismantling of the city walls during the first part of the twentieth century. While most were from cities scattered across Persia, some were from Yemen, Hamdan, al Malf in Turkestan, and Khalat in Armenia.

The Arab Connection China's rulers valued Muslims' business skills so highly that they appointed them to high municipal- and provincial-level posts. Mr. Pu Chongqing (蒲重庆), who runs an incense factory in Yongchun (永春) and is a descendant of Muslims who came to Quanzhou around 1200, said one of his ancestors was Pu Shougen (蒲寿更), the Quanzhou Maritime Commissioner, and later assistant to the governor. Another ancestor of his was governor of Chongqing in Sichuan, in southwest China. But foreigners' power went to their heads, and when they tried to take charge, the incensed Han Chinese put them in their place, and many hightailed it to some other place.

Muslim Chinese Muslims are still in Zaytun, but they've blended into the wood-work. After their failed coup, Zaytun's "Laowai", or foreigners, avoided trouble with increasingly xenophobic Chinese neighbors by adopting Chinese names. Baiqi Island now has over 10,000 descendants of Arabs, all surnamed Guo. They did not even know they had Arab blood until historians told them recently, and the Bu and Huang people of Yunlu Village learned that they were descendants of Pu Shougeng, the ancient Arab customs officer.

Triangles and Calculators Muslims also traded in knowledge. Much of Western science and mathematics we owe to Arab traders who sailed from ancient Zaytun with storehouses of mathematical and scientific knowledge more precious than their cargoes of silk, porcelain and pearls.

Pascal's triangle, for instance, was not invented by the great French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) but by Chinese centuries earlier. Pascal is also credited with inventing the adding machine, but centuries earlier Chinese had been ciphering with the abacus, which in the hands of a Chinese merchant or tax collector was deadly accurate. (I've never understood the devilish device, which some say was invented in ancient Persia. I'm not surprised. Who but Saddam's ancestors would have dared?).

The museum's barely legible Muslim relics are in Chinese and Arabic. The Arabic often has quotes from the *Koran*, or poetry, but the Chinese translation is much more straightforward—like "Dead Foreigner".

A Yuan Dynasty stone quotes the *Koran* in Arabic but in Chinese it simply reads: "General Kang died on 1st day of the 4th month."

My favorites include a stone found outside the southwest city gate in 1978. It reads: "The arrow of death has hit!" Another stone, excavated from the South Gate in 1946, has quotes from the *Koran* (9:21–22 and 55:26), and a Sufi poem: "Death is a cup from which all men drink."

Christian Artifacts The museum has over 40 Christian relics, with nearly 1,000 lines of inscriptions—the largest collection of its kind. Many Yuan Dynasty headstones were unearthed from the wall foundation of the East Gate in 1947. The languages include Chinese, Latin, Syro-Turkic (Turkish written in Syriac script), and even the unusual Phags-pa script based on Tibetan and Chinese.

Quanzhou discovered that its heritage included Tibetan Buddhism when the outer layer of three "Buddhist" monks on Qingyuan Mountain was removed to discover that, underneath, they were Tibetan lamas. Perhaps Nestorians and Tibetans arrived together!

Nestorians were a millennium ahead of their time. Their advanced medical skills opened doors everywhere, and wherever they went they established language centers and translated their scriptures into the local tongues (Fig. 3.2).

Nestorians had missions in Tibet, and some historians believe the Tibetans actually adapted their rites for worshiping the dead from Nestorian practices (who expanded upon ancestor worship to please an emperor anxious to please his extinguished forebears). Nestorian syncretism (which in the end proved their doom, not their salvation) is seen in the tombstones with a four-winged angel beneath the Christian cross in a Buddhist lotus position before a lotus.

Fig. 3.2 Nestorian Christian Tombstone



Nestorian Christian Angel

At one time, hundreds of thousands of Nestorians were scattered throughout China, and a Nestorian metropolitan set up a center right here in Zaytun. And then the Nestorians vanished almost without a trace.

Some tombstones are of Franciscan Catholics, like Bishop Antonius, or Bishop Bar Solomon, who died in 1313. I was amazed at how far afield Franciscans roamed within a mere century of Francis' death, and after reading so much about the 3rd Franciscan Bishop of Zaytun, Andrew of Perugia (who supervised construction of the Franciscan Cathedral outside of the East Gate), I was excited to see his headstone on display, though I did wonder where the bishop now rests his head.

Andrew's headstone was unearthed in 1946 at the foundation of the city wall, near the Dragon Temple. The Latin inscription reads: "Here lies at rest the Catholic priest Andrew of Perugia, follower of Jesus Christ."

Hindu Relics The maritime museum displays some of the more than 300 Hindu architectural and sculptural fragments discovered in Quanzhou. Many were found in the vicinity of the Tonghuai Gate, indicating there was probably a Hindu temple in the southeastern part of the city.

In 1933, an elephant presenting a lotus to Shiva lingam was discovered in a small temple on Xianlei Street. In 1934, workers at the drill grounds excavated the four-armed Protector of Hinduism, with upper two arms holding the chakra and sangra. Even the ancient Kaiyuan Buddhist temple has a couple of Hindu columns added during reconstruction. Hinduism was strong in Quanzhou because of the close ties between Quanzhou merchants and Tamil guilds in India.

Manichaeian Relics The last section of the religious relics display is devoted to Persian's Manichaeism. A legend beside some strange dog-like carvings say they resemble Assyrian art, so I'm guessing they are Manichaeian. The carved granite

Buddha-like Mani, by the way, is a reproduction. The real McCoy is in our planet's last Mani temple (southeast of the city in Jinjiang).

Quanzhou's Sole Jewish Relic? On October 10, 2001, Xinhua News Agency reported that workers had unearthed from beneath the ancient Deji Gate what some thought was the first archaeological proof of the ancient Jewish community. It is probably not Jewish. Jews weren't the first to use a six-pointed star. Hindus also use it, with the Tamil "Om" in the center. But an excavated synagogue in Roman era Capernaum had a "Star of David" architectural motif, so the Quanzhou stone may prove to be of Jewish origin as well—if it survives the elements. After months of searching, I finally found it lying unprotected in the open courtyard of the Goddess Mazu Tianfei Temple.

That Zaytun had a large Jewish community is confirmed by many sources, from Arab traders to Bishop Andrew of Perugia, who in January 1326, lamented in a letter that Zaytun's Jews obstinately refused to undergo Christian baptism.

In the controversial book *City of Light*, which purports to be a translation of the journal of a Jewish traveler who reached Zaytun before Marco Polo, Jacob d'Ancona wrote that Zaytun had 2,000 Jews, and many tens of thousands were scattered around the rest of China, their ancestors having arrived during the days of the patriarchs. Some say that the Lost Tribes of Israel are in China. And given the maps they use here, I can see how they got lost.

In the next chapter we'll visit sites in the UNESCO award-winning downtown area—and I'll even give you a map so you don't end up with the Lost Tribes.

Zaytun's Openness to Foreign Religions

As for the doctrine of the Occident which exalts *I'ien Chiu* (天主, Lord of Heaven—Christian God), it is ... contrary to the orthodoxy (of China's Classics), and it is only because Christians are thoroughly versed in mathematical sciences that the state uses them. Beware, lest you forget that.

—Emperor Kangxi.⁴

Passing through many cities and towns, I came to a certain noble city which is called Zaytun, where we Friars Minor have two Houses... The city is twice as great as Bologna, and in it are many monasteries of devotees, idol-worshippers every man of them. In one of those monasteries which I visited there were 3,000 monks. The place is one of the best in the world.

—Friar Odoric⁵ (in China from 1323–1327).

All but one of Zaytun's seven mosques has vanished, and Ashab is but a shell of its former grandeur—but Christians don't even have a shell left standing. Not a trace is left of the great Franciscan Cathedral that Bishop Andrew built with the emperor's funding, or of the other Catholic churches and monasteries, or of the Nestorian churches. All that remains today are a few dozen tombstones (which survived thanks to the efforts of local historian, Wu Linliang). But we also have Bishop Andrew's letter home.

Third Bishop of Zaytun Andrew of Perugia, 3rd Bishop of Zaytun presided over one of Zaytun Franciscan convents (while Peter of Florence supervised the other. Andrew also supervised construction of the east gate of the Catholic Cathedral, which the emperor not only allowed but actually financed. Following are excerpts from Andrew's fascinating letter home (written in 1326) in which he shed much light on the size of the foreign community, the vast wealth of his Chinese hosts, and the openness of Chinese to foreign trade, philosophy and religion.

Bishop Andrew's Letter Home⁶

Friar Andrew of Perugia, of the Order of Minor Friars, by Divine permission to the Bishop, to the revered father the Friar Warden of the Convent of Perugia, health and peace in the Lord forever!

...through much fatigue and sickness and want, through sundry grievous sufferings and perils by land and sea, plundered even of our habits and tunics, we got at last by God's grace to the city of Camballech, which is the seat of the Emperor the Great Chan, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1308, as well as I can reckon.

There, after the archbishop was consecrated...we obtained an Alafa from the emperor for our food and clothing. An Alafa is an allowance for expenses which the emperor grants to the envoys of princes, to orators, warriors, different kinds of artists, jongleurs, paupers, and all sorts of people of all sorts of conditions. And the sum total of these allowances surpasses the revenue and expenditure of several of the kings of the Latin countries.

As to the wealth, splendor, and glory of this great emperor, the vastness of his dominion, the multitudes of people subject to him, the number and greatness of his cities, and the constitution of the empire, within which no man dares to draw a sword against his neighbor, I will say nothing, because it would be a long matter to write, and would seem incredible to those who heard it. Even I who am here in the country do hear things averred of it that I can scarcely believe...

There is a great city on the shores of the Ocean Sea, which is called in the Persian tongue Zaytun; and in this city a rich Armenian lady did build a large and fine enough church, which was erected into a cathedral by the archbishop himself of his own free will. The lady assigned it, with a competent endowment which she provided during her life and secured by her will at her death, to Friar Gerard the Bishop, and the friars who were with him, and he became accordingly the first occupant of the cathedral.

The cathedral was taken over by Friar and Bishop Peregrine, who died on July 7, 1322, and was succeeded by Andrew, who continues:

I caused a convenient and handsome church to be built in a certain grove, quarter of a mile outside the city, with all the offices sufficient for twenty-two friars, and with four apartments such that any one of them is good enough for a church dignitary of any rank. In this place I continue to dwell, living upon the imperial dole before-mentioned... Of this allowance I have spent the greatest part in the construction of the church; and I know none among all the convents of our province to be compared to it in elegance and all other amenities...

Tis a fact that in this vast empire there are people of every nation under heaven, and every sect, and all and sundry are allowed to live freely according to their creed. For they hold this opinion, or rather this erroneous view, that everyone can find salvation in their own religion. Howbeit we are at liberty to preach without let or hindrance. Of the Jews and Saracens there are indeed no converts, but many of the idolaters are baptized; though in sooth many of the baptized walk not rightly in the path of Christianity...

Farewell in the Lord, father, now and ever. Dated at Zaytun, A.D. 1326, in the month of January.

For Whom the Bells Toll Of course, the many religions occasionally had their squabbles. One of the most amusing weapons that the Catholics wielded against

Muslims was bells.

For some reason, Muslims abhorred bells. Even intrepid Arab traveler Ibn Battuta, who seemingly feared nothing, recounted his “terror and dismay” at the clangor of bells in Caffa. So of course our Sainly Marignolli delighted in letting the Saracens know for whom the bells tolled. He wrote in his *Recollections of Eastern Travel*:

There is Zaytun also, a wondrous fine seaport and a city of incredible size, where our Minors Friars have three very fine churches, passing rich and elegant; and they have a bath also...

John Marignolli proudly wrote of the Franciscan’s “fine bells of the best quality, two of which were made to my order, and set up with all due form in the very middle of the Muslim community”.⁷

Maybe the Catholics used the bells to call the Muslims on the prayer carpet for waking them at dawn with the Muslim call to prayer?

The Catholics’, Nestorians’ and Muslims’ keen interest in Chinese souls is not surprising, given that ancient Western tradition claims Chinese are descendants of Noah’s son Shem, ancestor of Abraham, patriarch Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. John Marignolli wrote:

Shem was anxious to maintain the worship of the true God, and his history we shall now follow. In the second year after the flood he begat Arfaxat, who ... at the age of thirty-five begat Sela or Sale, by whom India was peopled and divided into three kingdoms. The first of these is called Manzi, the greatest and noblest province in the world, having no paragon in beauty, pleasantness, and extent. In it is that noble city of Campsay, besides Zaytun, Cynkalan (Canton), Janci, and many other cities.^{8,9}

Notes

1. Williams, in *Chinese Repository*, VI. 149, quote in *The Travels of Marco Polo*, V. II. P. 252.
2. MacClay, Hastings (1861) “Life among the Chinese,” Carlton and Porter, New York.
3. Menzie, Gavin (2008) “1421: The Year China Discovered America, William Morrow Paperbacks.
4. Clark, Anthony, (2008), “Early modern Chinese reactions to Western missionary iconography,” Southeast Review of Asia Studies (Vol. 30), Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies.
5. Friar Odoric arrived in Canton in 1322 with Friar James (Ireland) and traveled on foot to Zaytun. Legend has it that he brought the bones of four missionaries martyred in India to Zaytun, where he buried them. During the voyage, he stilled a storm by tossing one of the bones into the sea. Evidently the martyr didn’t complain of such ill treatment; if he had, he would not have had a leg to stand on. He landed in Canton and traveled overland on foot to Zaytun.
6. Yule, Sir Henry (1866), “Cathay and the Way Thither Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China,” Hakluyt Society.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. John Marignolli: Giovanni di Marignolli, Franciscan missionary in China from 1342 to 1346, Giovanni di Marignolli. Born in Florence, Italy, 1290, became a Franciscan and held the chair of

theology in the University of Bologna. Because of a Chinese embassy that arrived in Avignon in 1338, Pope Benedict XII sent Marignolli and other Franciscans to China. At the end of 1341, he crossed the Gobi Desert and was received with honors in the court at Peking. After three years in Peking, he traveled through southern China, and Southeast Asian countries, and arrived back in Italy 15 years after his departure. Years later he wrote of his Eastern travels in his *Chronicon Bohemiae*.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 4

Exploring the Ancient Maritime Silk Road in Today's Quanzhou



Ashab Mosque (清淨寺, Qingjing, “pure and clean” in Chinese) is the perfect place to start your downtown tour because it is a convenient walk from the mosque to half a dozen other key sites. Ashab is not only one of China’s 10 most famous temples but also, according to some experts, one of Islam’s top 10 holy places, as well as China’s oldest mosque.

And its surroundings are the starkest testimony to Quanzhou’s rapid change. When I first visited Ashab in 1989, it stood head and shoulder above the dilapidated shacks that surrounded it, and the road was more like a back alley. Today, Tumen Street is wide and the newly rebuilt buildings are a beautiful marriage of modern and old, with the richly carved brick and granite motifs characteristic of Minnan (south Fujian) as well as the arched windows and doors of Islamic architecture. And while Muslims for centuries worshipped in the roofless Ashab Mosque (the dome fell after an earthquake in 1607), today they have a beautiful new mosque right beside Ashab that was financed in large part by overseas Muslims who are entranced by Zaytun’s rich history and tales of Mohammed’s disciples moving to the city over 1,300 years ago.

At one point ancient Zaytun had at least seven mosques, like the Qingjing Mosque at the South Gate (built by a Muslim from Shiraf, on the Persian Gulf), but Ashab is the only mosque still standing (Fig. 4.1).

The 2,500-square-meter Ashab Mosque, also called “Kylin”, for Chinese unicorn, or “Shenyou” (Holy Friend) Mosque, was built in 1009, (year 400 of the Muslim calendar), and is China’s oldest surviving stone mosque. This beautiful imitation of a Damascus Mosque was built of blue and white granite, and has a Fengtian Altar, Mingshan Chamber, and Prayer Hall. The mosque was renovated in 1310 (Yuan Dynasty) by Ihamed B. Muhammed Gudeish, from Iran.

The dome above the Fengtian Altar collapsed during a 1607 earthquake, but the magnificent 11.4-meter-high vaulted entrance and four walls remain.

Ashab Mosque’s portal has four large pointed arches that create three compartments. The second compartment has 99 small pointed arches, which symbolize

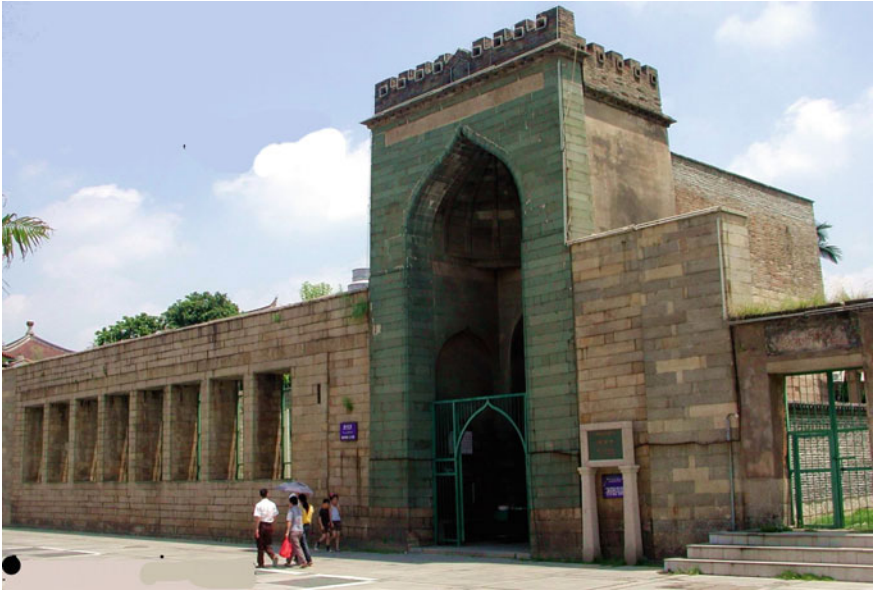


Fig. 4.1 Ashab Mosque, 1990

Allah's 99 appellations of excellence. Above the portal is a square tower with battlements (great spot for taking photos if you can get them to unlock it for you).

An Arabic inscription engraved in the stone lintel of the archway reads:

God is witness that there is no God but He, and the angels and all those possessing knowledge stand up for justice. There is no God but He, the mighty and the wise. Verily, in God's sight the true religion is Islam.

To the west of the portal is the former 600-square-meter worship hall, once covered by a large Islamic dome. A 15th century Chinese record describes the worship hall:

The halls on the west stand in rows supremely. Their design is different from that of other earthly monasteries, yet swelling and floating, as if emulating a heavenly pavilion.

A minaret once towered between the portal and worship hall, but it collapsed, and was replaced with a wooden tower. And then a typhoon blew the tower down in 1687—80 years after an earthquake knocked down the dome. In the northwest corner of the mosque are the Ming-shan Hall, Ablution Pavilion and Sermon Hall.

Eternal Well The 1,000-year-old well is said to never run dry, and to always have clean, pure water. It did have a plant growing in its dark depths, but I'm sure it was a clean, pure plant.

A Buddhist nun demanded to know why Ashab Mosque had a stone incense burner, since Muslim worship doesn't use incense. Worse yet, the burner has a lotus leaf motif, suggesting Buddhist influence—and I found a duplicated incense burner in a mosque in Fuzhou as well. When I suggested the lotus brought to mind Buddhist



Fig. 4.2 New Quanzhou Mosque

influence, an incensed Muslim said: “Buddhists have no monopoly on the lotus! All religions use them.” But another Muslim confided that incense burners were adopted because Chinese converts felt Islam wasn’t a bona fide religion without incense. (And, of course, Muslims also had strong vested interests in the incense trade).

Two steles in the mosque’s eastern grounds record the Yuan Dynasty and Ming Dynasty renovations, and on the north wall is engraved a 1407 imperial edict protecting Islam.

During the state-funded reconstruction of Ashab Mosque in 1983, workers found several tombs, including that of the son of the Persian prime minister whose father was killed in 1312. Other tombstones belonged to Muslims from Tabriz, a Khan (elite muslim) from Khorazm, and a woman from Nabrus in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Restoration Today, Quanzhou Muslims are able to worship in a new mosque beside the old one. In addition, the city has a large Islamic Cultural Heritage Center adjoining the maritime museum (Fig. 4.2).

Quanzhou’s comprehensive development plan insures cultural and historic integrity of new architecture by requiring new construction in “Muslim” areas to retain at least a stylized Islamic flavor. The shopping area across the street from Ashab has an Islamic gate, and even the signboard behind the mosque has a Middle Eastern flavor!

Guandi Temple (关帝庙) Just east of Ashab Mosque is the ancient temple dedicated to heroic generals Guan Yu and Yue Fei. Guandi Temple seems to sprawl forever, incense smoke wafting through the dark recesses hosting a myriad of idols for 24 other famous generals, as well as enlisted heroes. Cultural relics include Zhu Xi’s inscription, “Righteousness” and Zhang Ruitu’s, “Heaven and Earth Imbue the Valiant Spirit”. (For a contemporary insight on how such worship begins, visit Hui’an’s “PLA Temple” in the walled city of Chongwu).

Houcheng Tourist Culture Street (泉州后城旅游文化街) Quanzhou's official tourist shopping area, Houcheng Street intersects Tumen Street just east of the mosque and temple, and offers a variety of tourist services and products. Between Ashab Mosque and the temple is a winding Tourist Shopping Center with vendors offering everything from replica antique coins and copper bowls to jade jewelry, gramophones, and 1960s-era Chairman Mao alarm clocks and watches (which are increasingly popular, so don't expect to land a real Mao clock for only a few "mao"). After emptying your pockets, walk west a block to the Confucian Hall.

Historic Zhongshan Road (中山路) From the Puppet Shop, head west and turn north on the ancient Zhongshan Road, with its endless shops and the leafy canopy of trees that make a stroll pleasant on the sultriest days. Notice the Islamic architecture.

I particularly like the building with Islamic windows above and a "Fun" clothing store with "Life in U.S." motto below. The city is almost as cosmopolitan as ancient Zaytun.

Hidden Treasures Head down almost any narrow side street and you'll come upon hidden treasures like the home of the Qing Dynasty Minister of Defense, Huang Zonghan (黄宗汉, 1803–1864) who succeeded the famous Opium-era Commissioner, Lin Zexu.

Home of Huang Zonghan (at Sufficient Benevolence Lane, 镇抚巷黄宗汉故居). According to Qu Weiwei, a tourism student at Overseas Chinese University, Huang Zonghan was born in Quanzhou, and was governor of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces (两广总督) from 1856–1861. Huang fought so "bravely" against the Taiping rebels that Emperor Xianfeng (咸丰) personally inscribed a stele with the words, "Loyal, Diligent, Honest" (忠勤正直). It was a great honor. Unfortunately, the emperor stole the stele back when his hero became embroiled in a political scandal, and the stele is probably gravel by now.

Overseas Chinese University Professor Cheng Lichu (程立初), Huang Zonghan's descendant, gave us a tour. He pointed out the granite stele engraved, right to left, with "Da Si Ma" (大司马) and said: "Written by the emperor himself! Only the emperors could write that well."

One Million-Yuan Restoration Professor Cheng said the restoration, which received no government funding, cost his family 1 million yuan. I could not imagine how they could spend that much renovating an old house until he showed me the intricately carved woodwork, and the granite columns in the courtyard. "The originals were wood," he said. "But trees don't come that big nowadays."

Professor Cheng claimed he could easily earn 1 million yuan back if he needed it. (If he doesn't need it, Quanzhou Overseas Chinese University must pay a lot more than we get at XMU). He claimed that he was offered 10,000 yuan for just one potted tree—and refused. Maybe he's saving it for when he's really up a tree?

Professor Cheng also said he could get 1 million yuan just by selling the painting of a matriarch that hangs above the family ancestral shelf. It didn't look that hot to me, but I can't tell a black velvet Elvis from a Van Gogh. According to the professor, this dour dowager was painted by none other than renowned Chinese artist Xu Beihong (徐悲鸿).

Xu Beihong (1895–1953), most famous for his horse paintings, studied in France and adapted his techniques to Chinese painting. He survived his early years in part by painting portraits of wealthy clients, so the painting in Huang Zonghan's house may indeed be a genuine Xu Beihong piece.

Many Mansions As Professor Cheng showed us some more of Huang Zonghan's 14 mansions (lots of wives, probably), we came upon several ladies having tea in a tight lane between two beautiful brick buildings. A great photo op, you can enter that picturesque lane at No. 22 Yuxi Lane (Jade Rhinoceros Lane, 玉犀巷), which is north of and parallel to Furen Xiang). We exited the north end, and then entered the next doorway on the left to find a delightful courtyard that was refreshingly cool, in spite of the oppressive heat. "Beats air conditioning!" the professor said.

A man was scooping leaves from a spring fed carp pond with a net on a long bamboo pole. The carp looked old enough (and complacent enough) to have lived there since the days of Huang Zonghen himself. Toward the back of the courtyard was a massive jumble of outlandish Taihu Lake (太湖) stones from Jiangsu Province. Professor Cheng said: "Taihu Stones of Jiangsu Province's Taihu Lake are prized by miniature landscape artists throughout China. These are sold by the pound now. Imagine what this is worth!"

Given the price he is asking for his paintings and trees, I did not want to ask.

Taihu Stone Story

By Miss Qu Weiwei (曲微微).

Taihu Lake's Taihu Stones, also called Dongting Stones, come in two kinds: those from water and those from land. Water stones are of course better because the water has carved it into more elegant shapes. While Taihu Stone is usually white, black and green stones have also been found.

Taihu Stones became popular in the Tang Dynasty, and from the Song Dynasty have been widely used in rich people's gardens. Even the emperor asked that Taihu Stones be shipped to his palace.

The famous novel *Shui Hu Zhuan* (*Outlaws of the Marsh*) mentions Taihu Stones in some chapters. Today, the most valuable Taihu Stone is in Shanghai's Yuyuan Garden. It is named Yu Linglong (exquisite jade, 玉玲珑).

Chinese think Taihu Stones are beautiful precisely because they are so crinkled, thin, holey—downright ugly. This reflects the Taoist philosophy in which when something reaches the peak it crosses over. So Taihu Stones are so ugly they are beautiful.

I laughed at that. Maybe there is hope for me yet!

National Treasure Professor Cheng pointed out a glistening cave stone and exclaimed, "This is a priceless national-level treasure! Look closely and you can see that the natural design resembles snow on winter plums—like a Chinese abstract painting."

I saw neither snow nor plums, but I did appreciate the stone's natural beauty. I've collected minerals and stones since I was six, and our XMU apartment is crammed with over 500 pounds of specimens. But it didn't appear that local residents were so enamored of the stone. They were using it as a mop rack. When I aimed my camera,

Miss Qu Weiwei started to remove the mops, but the professor said: “Leave them there so people can see how we care for such treasures!”.

Getting to Huang Zonghan's Home: It is only an 11-min walk from the Copper Buddha Temple (Tongfo Si, 铜佛寺), on Zhenfu Lane (Zhenfu Xiang, 镇抚巷), between Zhongshan Road and Nanjun Xiang (南俊巷)—just north of Fengze Street (丰泽街).

Zhongshan Shopping Quanzhou is shopper's heaven, with wall-to-wall shops—and name brands at that! Stores that don't hawk name brands make up for it with grandiloquent names—like the sports shop called “Standard Physical Culture Stores”.

I don't care for sifting through cotton slippers or tea towels, but I do enjoy meeting people in Chinese shops. They're friendly, and invariably invite you in for tea before getting down to business. And bargaining can be a real eye-opener...

One Size Fits All!

My wife Susan Marie rummaged through a pile of sweaters in a night market stall. She finally found one she liked, but it was too small. “Bu yao jin!” (不要紧! No problem!) the lady said. “It stretches when you wear it!”

“It won't stretch that much,” Sue said. She eventually found another sweater she liked, but it was far too large.

“Bu yao jin!” the same lady said. “It shrinks when you wash it!”

Fortunately, even the diehard “one size fits all” types are good-natured about it, and will laugh as they hit you with, “I'm losing money, but hey! We're friends!”—even though you met only 10 min earlier. Or they toss out a line common in many countries, “I'll sell to you at a loss because it is bad luck if the 1st customer of the day doesn't buy something” (even though it is already 3 p.m.).

The one that really gets to me is: “Chinese New Year is coming up so I'm selling everything at a loss or I won't make enough to return home to my family.” How do I know what's a “line” and what isn't? One yuan means much more to them than me, but I dicker anyway, on pure principle. And kindly shopkeepers have often laughed and sold their wares for less than I asked—or given me something in addition for free!

So yes, bargaining can be fun.

Quannan Protestant Church (Zhongshan Road) Zaytun's Nestorian Christianity and Franciscan Catholic cathedrals and monasteries vanished, and while Islam did keep a toehold, many Hui's sole claim to orthodoxy is their refusal to eat pork. But churches have reentered the scene over the past 140 years, and Quanzhou now has Catholic churches and over 170 Protestant Churches.

Pastor Su Weiyan of the South Street Church (泉南堂苏伟垣牧师), on historic Zhongshan Road), kindly gave me an outline of the history of Protestantism in

Fig. 4.3 South Church,
Quanzhou



Quanzhou, and also allowed me to use information and photos from *Unforgettable Journey—Fifty Years for Fujian Christian Churches on the Three-Self*¹ for which Pastor Su was Editor-in-Chief.

The First Opium War opened five treaty ports, including Amoy and Fuzhou, but Quanzhou remained off limits to foreigners. So in 1856, Rev. Carstairs Douglas, a Scottish minister in the English Presbyterian Mission who had arrived in Amoy in July 1955, sailed in secret to southern Quanzhou's Anhai Town (Fig. 4.3).

In 1863, he moved on to Quanzhou, and in 1866, they opened the first Protestant church right across from Kaiyuan Temple, where they preached right in the temple gates. Infuriated scholars burned the church down, whereupon the Christians took a gamble on a gambling den's location a few blocks away on Zhongshan Road.

General Shi Lang, the Chinese hero (see Chap. 10), had a house and rockery on the church's new site, but it had fallen to ruins and become a gambling den. The Christians bought General Shi Lang's land and set up shop again, but once again the scholars burned the church down. And here is where being a foreigner during the Opium Era came in handy. Complaints were registered with the British forces in nearby Amoy, and in 1877, the compensation extracted from the perpetrators

was used to help build a new church of brick and timber, as well as a parsonage for the foreign pastor (the first Chinese pastor was Chen Xuanling(陈宣令), from Zhangzhou, Fujian in 1886).

Quannan Church was renovated in the 1890s, and rebuilt in 1927, but by the 1990s it had deteriorated so badly that it was razed to the ground in 2002. A US\$1.5 million church seating 3,000 was finished in December 2003.

Minnan Dialect and Missions Our vertical province has more dialects than any place else in China. In some places, villagers cannot understand neighbors only three km away! Yet ironically, instead of hindering Christian work this actually worked out to their advantage. Before missionaries could get into China, they worked in other Southeast Asian countries, most of which had large populations of overseas Chinese.

Most overseas Chinese, of course, were from southern Fujian, and so the missionaries learned Minnan dialect. Once China opened up, foreign missionaries converged upon southern Fujian because they already knew the language. Faced with widespread illiteracy, they developed Romanization schemes and Minnan language dictionaries and references. Rev. Carstairs Douglas' *Dictionary of the Vernacular or Spoken Language of Amoy*, published in 1873, remains a standard reference work even today. Unfortunately, he died only four years later of cholera at the age of 46 (having spent 22 of his years in China).^{2,3} But these early foreigners' legacy in education continues at places like Peiyuan High School.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the Dentist This Zhongshan Road Dental Clinic (鲤中卫生院, 二楼), south of the Clock Tower, proves that in ancient Zaytun, virtually every comer has something of interest if you know what to look for.

The modern second floor clinic of Dr. Sheng Mingjie (盛明捷) has a plaque inscribed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. It was written for his grandfather, Sheng Jiuchang (盛九昌). Elder Mr. Sheng, also a dentist, was one of Dr. Sun's soldiers-in-arms. Dr. Sun's inscription reads, right to left: "Weisheng Zhi Yi Dao" (卫生之一道). I think it roughly means that the mouth is an important part of sanitation. A copy of the inscription is on the outside of the building, near the roof (The original, by the way, is in a Beijing museum).

Kaiyuan Temple

...there were three thousand monks and eleven thousand idols...All the dishes which they offer to be eaten are piping hot so that the smoke riseth up in the face of the idols... But all else they keep for themselves and gobble up. And after such fashion as this they reckon that they feed their gods well.

Friar Odoric⁴

Take a left at the Zhongshan Road, near the Clock Tower, and you'll come to Kaiyuan Temple (circa 686), one of China's most important temples and, at 78,000 square meters, Fujian's largest religious center. Kaiyuan's inexpensive entry ticket gains you access to half a dozen other famous sites, including a tree that's a blooming miracle.

Miraculous Mulberry-Lotus Tree According to legend, Mr. Huang Shougong, owner of a mulberry field, dreamed that a Buddhist monk asked him to donate land

Fig. 4.4 Kaiyuan Temple
“Angels”



for a temple. Mr. Huang threw out a fleece. “I’ll donate the land if this mulberry tree blossoms with white lotus flowers.”

Three days later, white lotus flowers bloomed on the mulberry tree, and admitting it was a blooming miracle, Mr. Huang ceded the land. (Though given Quanzhou folk’s prowess at making silk flowers, I wonder if Mr. Huang thought to make sure the lotus blossoms were real?).

Key Kaiyuan Sites Kaiyuan’s main areas include Purple Clouds Screen, Hall of Heavenly Devarajas, Great Buddhist Hall, Sweet Dew Altar of Precepts, and Depository of Buddhist Texts (which has over 3,700 volumes of rare Buddhist scriptures and relics). Other sites include Sanders Shade Temple, Mini-Kaiyuan Temple, Hall of Beneficence, Triumph Temple, Land and Water Temple, and the five-level, octagonal Ganlujie Altar, where Buddhists underwent rites to become monks and nuns. Ganlujie Altar is the largest and best-preserved altar of its kind in China, with the Supreme Buddha Losana sitting on a lotus platform of 1,000 lotus leaves, each having a six-centimeter engraved Buddha (Fig. 4.4).

Barbarian—Befuddling Dates, Mus, Li Way, and Other Taels

An English brochure claimed Kaiyuan Temple was built in the 2nd year of Chuigong in the Tang Dynasty. This is the Chinese singularly barbarian-befuddling way of saying “686 A.D.” Why they persist in such dating I’m not sure, since even many Chinese can’t remember the years of different dynasties, much less the reigns within them.

I don’t give a fig for Chinese dates, but weights and measures are worse. For example, Xiamen’s Huli Hill cannon cost 60,000 “liang”, or taels (1 tael = 38 grams) of silver, and Quanzhou’s Luoyang Bridge, built in 1059, cost 1.4 million taels or “liang” of silver. But what did silver cost in the 1800s, or in 1059?

If the XMU’s MBA Center starts paying me in “liangs”, I’m quitting.

Another pet peeve is the “mu”, which is not cow talk but a unit of land measure. The Chinese dictionary said: “100 ‘mu’ = 1 “qing”, currently called “shimu”. 1 “shimu” = 60 square “zhang”, or 666.7 square meters.”

I don’t want to have a cow over “mus”, but sometimes they’re enough to make me bleat. As for lengths and distances... An English brochure boasts Anping Bridge is 8,110 “chi” long and 16 “chi” wide—but what’s a “chi”? And a Quanzhou sign says: “Shaolin Temple, 600 meters.” but I measured it and it is 1.1 km. Granted, the road winds a lot, and the Kungfu kicking monks probably fly direct, but I’m not the first to go the extra mile when tackling Chinese distances. In 1912, Rev. Philip Pitcher wrote in *In and About Amoy*:

These distances may not be accepted as entirely accurate. They are only approximate. When one comes to calculating distances in this part of China he meets with difficulties at once, chief among them being the difference in the length of the ‘li’ (about one-third of a mile) in different parts of this district. There are long ‘li’ and short ‘li’; there are mandarin ‘li’ and the common ordinary country ‘li’. The difference between these two is considerable, a mandarin ‘li’ being one-fourth shorter.

A Chinese boasted that Anping Bridge is five “li” long. Did he mean long “li”, short “li”, mandarin “li” or country “li”? I guess I’ll just have to give him a little “li” way.

The Buddhist Scripture Library boasts over 3,700 volumes of rare Buddhist scriptures and relics. Two carved stone poles bear carvings of Shiva the Destroyer, a member of the Hindu trinity (which includes Brahma and Vishnu). The poles were transported to Quanzhou from a collapsed Indian temple. But no one seems to mind the mixed motifs. In fact, Chinese temples often have Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist idols and rites in the same temple, as if the more the merrier (or perhaps they are just covering all of their bases).

Lugang Iron Bell was cast in 1837 and presented to Kaiyuan Temple by 46 companies of Lugang, Taiwan. Supposedly, the bell is so loud it can be heard all the way to Luoyang Bridge on the coast.

Purple Haze and Buddhist Angels Purple clouds surrounded Kaiyuan’s 1,387-square-meter main hall while under construction, so it was dubbed Purple Cloud Hall. The great hall had 100 granite pillars, so also called 100-Pillar-Hall. But the

hall's most unique feature is its 24 flying bat-winged angels (apsaras)—one for each division of the traditional Chinese solar year.

Bats symbolize evil and death for Westerners, but Chinese think they are lucky because “bat” (“fu”, 蝠) and “fortune” (fu, 福) are homonyms. The batty angels (or “wonderful music birds”) protrude from pillar brackets and help support the uniquely complicated beam structure. Their outstretched arms bear fruit, scholars’ “four treasures” (writing brush, ink slab, ink stick and paper), and traditional Chinese musical instruments.

Kaiyuan’s angels can’t be photographed without written permission from the provincial Religious Affairs Bureau, so I applied and waited to see what would develop. I just got negatives. But Quanzhou does have other angels—at the musical fountain across from the Quanzhou long-distance bus station.

Hindu Influence The Hindu relics scattered throughout the Kaiyuan Temple are reminders of Zaytun’s extensive early contacts with India—largely because of commerce with Tamil merchants. The unusual Indian sphinx in the temple’s base was added early on, but the columns with Indian carvings behind Kaiyuan’s main hall were scavenged from an Indian temple about four centuries ago when the father of Koxinga (see Chap. 10) helped rebuild the temple. The Twin Pagodas also show Indian influence, in part because an Indian monk supervised one of the renovations.

East and West Pagodas The East and West Pagodas flanking Kaiyuan Temple are the best preserved stone pagodas in China. They were first built of wood and stone, then brick, and later stone. Modeled after the great wooden pavilions of the Central Plains, they have withstood 1,000 years of earthquakes and tourists, thanks to their Song Dynasty reconstruction, which took 22 years (Fig. 4.5).

The East Pagoda (Zhenguo—“nation-protecting”), a brochure says, was built of wood in 670. (I considered writing “1st Year of Xianheng in the Tang Dynasty”—just to see if my Chinese readers could figure it out). It was later rebuilt as a 48.24-meter-high stone pagoda.

The West Pagoda (Renshou—“merit and longevity”) was built in 916. Both of the five-story octagonal structures are carved top to bottom with vivid relief sculptures, and warriors are carved into the niches of each story. Legend has it that when the East Pagoda had been built up to the fourth level, Abbot Faquan died, and the remaining construction was supervised by Tianxi, a monk from India who had come to Quanzhou to preach Buddhist scriptures. This resulted in an unusual marriage of Chinese and Indian motifs, and a bit of monkey business as well.

Bearded Beauty The West Pagoda has two highly unusual carvings. One is of the Monkey King, and the other is of a mustached Goddess of Mercy. Maybe she was related to Guanyin, goddess of mercy and compassion? Guanyin was originally a man, but Chinese woman needed a female to pray to, and male gods were not seen as compassionate or merciful; just look at their expressions—hence the sex change. In west China’s Sichuan I saw a fully-bearded Guanyin goddess in a 1,000-year-old temple.



Fig. 4.5 Twin Pagodas, Kaiyuan Temple

Monkey Business Some folks go ape over the West Pagoda's Monkey King carvings, claiming they are the origin of the Monkey King story since they predate, by hundreds of years, the 16th century epic *Journey to the West*, which popularized the simian saint. In all likelihood, this monkey business began with the monkey-god Hanuman in the Indian epic, *Ramayana*. After all, an Indian monk oversaw the pagodas' renovations.

Song Dynasty Ship To the right of Kaiyuan, past the Buddhist Museum, is the display for the Song Dynasty (960–1279) ship unearthed in Houzhu Harbor in 1974. The 24.2 m by 9.15 m ship had 13 separate watertight compartments, which made the ship virtually unsinkable—at least until it sunk. A typhoon snapped off the mast and the ship went down 100 m offshore, fully laden with Southeast Asian products, as well as 2,350 kg of incense wood—which no doubt incensed the Muslim owners to no end.

Westerners didn't use watertight compartments until the 19th century. This innovative technique was used on the unsinkable *Titanic*, which of course promptly sunk. "Oh, Jack!" For more about the Muslim incense trade, and to actually meet a descendant of the incensed Muslims who owned the unsinkable Song Dynasty sunken ship, please turn to Chap. 13.

Overseas Chinese History Museum (华侨历史博物馆) Given that most overseas Chinese hail from southern Fujian (especially Quanzhou), it is no surprise the city has an extensive museum chronicling their history and their contributions to the motherland. The upper floor has an extensive photo display of overseas Chinese' contributions to virtually every area of Quanzhou.

The Southern Shaolin Temple, for example, was rebuilt with the aid of 1 million yuan from a Filipino Chinese and a Singaporean martial arts organization, and a Singaporean Chinese, Mr. Lin, gave 500,000 yuan to build the Buddhist Museum at Kaiyuan Temple. Overseas Chinese endless contributions have gone toward new schools, universities (like Yang En, New China's first private university), hospitals (Li Guoxing gave 3 million yuan for the emergency center), temples, churches, and perhaps most importantly in my eyes, roads.

Fish or Hook? "Better to give a man a hook and line than a fish", goes the saying, and the best hooks nowadays are new roads. A young friend of mine from Anxi lived a hard life of heavy labor in Xiamen for a decade, but saved enough money that he was able to plant fruit trees back home. The fruit would not have been worth harvesting a decade ago when poor mountain roads meant markets were four times as far. A couple of years ago my friend said: "I'm going back home, Professor. Now I can make more money there than in Xiamen!"

Pigs 'n Poison The Overseas Chinese Museum also sheds light on a very dark subject—the notorious "Piggy Trade" (trafficking in coolies, which comes from the Chinese *kuli* for "bitter labor", 苦力). Exhibits explain how we dastardly foreigners kidnapped Chinese and forced them to labor in inhuman conditions abroad. And, unfortunately, it is all too true. But...having said that, I think the museum should also note that the kidnapping itself was carried out by corrupt Chinese officials, who in turn sold them to dastardly foreigners. In the wax figure exhibit (below), the boss beating the coolie was Chinese, not a foreigner. Granted, foreigners paid him—but that's my point.

Without the connivance of corrupt officials, the opium and coolie trades could never have survived—hence the article I wrote in *People's Daily* a few years ago pointing out that the biggest threat to China's sovereignty has always been not direct foreign aggression but the domestic corruption that allowed us wily barbarians to get a foothold and then a stranglehold.

Hopefully, "Laowai" and "Laonei" alike will learn some lessons from the Poison 'n Piggy trades.

Other Miscellaneous City Sites

Tianhou Temple (天后宫) Both Chinese and foreign government officials and merchants used to seek smooth sailing by offering sacrifices to the Sea Goddess in Tianfei Temple (circa 1196). Tianhou's nationally protected History Museum for Fujian-Taiwan Relations has a large collection of cultural relics, including the purported "Star of David" lying in the courtyard by a pile of assorted relics. Experts have fairly agreed, however, that this is not a Jewish relic. Many ancient cultures used variations of what we call the "Star of David".

Two Mazu Tales

Admiral Zheng Hé and the “Queen of Heaven” According to legend, when the Muslim admiral Zheng Hé encountered a violent storm at sea, he calmed his passengers by telling them the story of Goddess Mazu. The storm abated, and upon his return to China he asked the emperor to honor Goddess Mazu with a royal title, whereupon the emperor declared her the “Queen of Heaven”, and built a temple for her.

General Shi Lang and Goddess Mazu When the Qing Dynasty General Shi Lang (in Chap. 10) sailed to Taiwan to oust Koxinga's descendants, he took a Mazu idol, which he left behind after his victory. When he reported to the emperor how the Goddess Mazu had helped him gain victory, the emperor gave her the title “Imperial Concubine”, and ordered Shi to expand her temple on Meizhou Island. As for the idol left behind in Taiwan, over the centuries the smoke from countless worshippers' incense has turned Goddess Mazu's face black, so they've nicknamed her “Black-faced Mazu” (easier nicknaming her than keeping her face clean, I suppose).

The Quanzhou Museum for Ancient Architecture (泉州南建筑博物馆)

If it were not 2022, but 2006 or earlier, you could still find this museum conveniently located downtown on the corner of Huxin Street and Wenling Street, built on the site of the Hong Clan Ancestral Hall. Once in the area, you might stop at the Huxin Hotel for some of award-winning Chef Zhong's mouthwatering Quanzhou cuisine (check out in Chap. 14). However, since it moved to the city museum at the end of 2007, now you can only find it in Quanzhou Museum.

Chengtian Temple (承天寺), on Nanjunxiang Lane (南俊巷), is one of Quanzhou's three greatest Buddhist temples (the other two being Kaiyuan and Chongfu). It was first built in the Tang Dynasty, and renovated in the 30th year of Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty (1691). The brochure says it used to have “10 wonderful views” but was renovated and returned to its original condition (which means, I suppose, that the original did not have the 10 wonderful views?).

Chongfu Temple (崇福寺) This recently renovated temple on Chongfu Road (崇福路) is a provincial-level protected cultural relic, and where Shaolin Kungfu was taught after Quanzhou's Shaolin Temple was destroyed. Be sure and visit the reconstructed Southern Shaolin Temple on the hill behind the Sports Stadium.

Zaytun Street Life

Many come hither from Upper India to have their bodies painted with the needle in the way we have elsewhere described, there being many adepts at this craft in the city (Zaytun).

—Marco Polo

It is no wonder that medieval travelers claimed Zaytun was intoxicating. If you wanted it, Quanzhou had it—everything from silken tapestries to tattoos. While



Fig. 4.6 Streetside Southern Opera

Quanzhou is tamer nowadays, there's still enough to keep you busy—especially at night, when bright lights are strung through the trees, and across buildings and pagodas.

Night markets are a shopper's paradise (and her husband's nightmare), offering everything imaginable and a few things that aren't. And street vendors' endlessly diverse offerings of snacks are guaranteed to please your stomach as well as your wallet.

Wagner's music is better than it sounds.

Edgar Wilson Nye, quoted in Mark Twain's *Autobiography*.

Streetside Opera Each evening, rain or shine, local artists perform music or drama on stages set up by intersections. Others sketch charcoal caricatures, or transform names into beautiful works of calligraphy. And there is always a fellow who weaves amazingly realistic flowers and insects from leaves, and sells them for a pittance to locals and tourists alike. The streets are one unending delightful performance. And if in spite of all this revelry you find yourself down in the dumps—try visiting the dumps ... (Fig. 4.6).

Down in the Dumps?

No, I'm not really suggesting you visit the city dump or sightsee the sewage treatment center, but they are in fact remarkable, and part of the reason is that Quanzhou has been able to balance mushrooming economic growth with preservation of its historical, cultural and natural heritage. And in an age when environmental problems loom

large over us (especially in China, with 1.413 billion consumers/disposers), it is encouraging to see cities like Quanzhou that make preservation of their environment a priority.

Quanzhou, amazingly, treats 95.29% of its daily sewage, which is much better than 0% a decade ago. Water from the 133 million-yuan state-of-the-art Baozhou Sewage Treatment Plant, which was built in 2017, is pure enough that it can be used for irrigation or to raise fish!

Quanzhou has one of China's most advanced volume-reduced, harmless sanitary landfills. It easily meets present needs, and a new plant has been built for growing demands. The plant not only uses the most cutting-edge imported technology and practices but also employs some good old Chinese ingenuity—like lining the dumping grounds with inert waste from the shoe industry. This gets rid of the waste, and also forms an additional protection against percolating liquids. (Fascinating, eh? Or maybe not—but it is these kinds of practices behind-the-scenes that make the Quanzhou that tourists see such a beautiful, clean and healthy place to visit). And it is getting better.

Phase Two will improve recycling, and allow conversion of some waste into fertilizer. This, combined with extensive campaigns to encourage citizens to reduce, reuse and recycle, and to presort garbage, are all part of Quanzhou's holistic planning, and a good reason why the City of Light may still be around when less enlightened cities have gone the way of the dodo bird.

Notes

1. *Unforgettable Journey—Fifty Years for Fujian Christian Churches on the Three-Self*, published by The Three Self-Patriotic Movement Committee of Christian Churches in Fujian and the Fujian Christian Council.
2. Pitcher, Rev. Philip Wilson, (1912) “In and About Amoy”, Methodist Publishing House in China, Shanghai and Foochow, 1912, p. 283.
3. Rev. Carstairs Douglas, who did more for Westerner's understanding of the Minnan dialect than perhaps any other man, was in excellent health one day and dead of virulent cholera the next. Talmadge wrote of Douglas:

By overwork he had worn himself out, and made himself an old man while he was yet comparatively young in years. He came to China quite young and at the time of his death was only about forty-six years of age, and yet men who had recently become acquainted with him thought him over sixty... he did more work during the twenty-two years of his missionary life than the most of men accomplish in twice that time...

Recently, especially during the last year, it was manifest, at least to others, that his physical strength was fast giving way. Yet he could not be prevailed upon to leave his field for a season for temporary rest, or even to lessen the amount of his work.

I never knew a more incessant worker. He was a man of most extensive general information. I think I have never met with his equal in this respect. He was acquainted with several modern European languages and was a thorough student of the original languages of Holy Scripture, as witness to the fact of his study of the Hebrew *Bible*,

even after his last sickness had commenced. As regards the Chinese language, he was already taking his place among the first sinologues of the land.

4. Yule, Sir Henry (1866), "Cathay and the Way Thither Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China," Hakluyt Society.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 5

Quanzhou: Home of Miraculous Chinese Puppets!



International Puppet Festivals have been held in Quanzhou at least a dozen times, the latest one in 2019, because this ancient center of commerce, philosophy and religion is also the home of Chinese marionettes.

Quanzhou of course has many unique crafts, including exquisite paper lanterns, bamboo weaving, porcelain, wood sculpture, tree root carving, paper weaving, lacquer ware, clay sculptures, miniature flour carvings, and 1,700 years of Hui'an stone carving, but the icing on the cultural cake is puppets (Fig. 5.1).

Quanzhou Marionette Troupe (泉州木偶剧团) has thrilled audiences in over 50 countries and regions, including performances in London's Royal Festival Hall.

Over 50 puppeteers manipulate the puppets while singing to the background of a full Chinese orchestra. Unfortunately, it is hard to catch their acts at home, but you can arrange a once-in-a-lifetime command performance for only a few thousand yuan.

Chinese puppetry dates back at least to the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago, though legend has it the art began 3,000 years with King Mu of the Zhou Dynasty. While returning from hunting in the Kunlun Mountains, he saw a carpenter, Yanshi, giving a song and dance performance with his wooden dolls.

The art evolved over the past 2,000–3,000 years, and reached its epitome in Quanzhou, which has the only Chinese puppets that boast their own musical repertoire performed on unique musical instruments, with over 300 songs and tunes written for more than 700 traditional puppet shows.

These miraculous marionettes have more strings attached than a henpecked husband. When deftly wielded by a master puppeteer, 16–36 strings bring the wooden folk to life as they strut and fret with abandon across intricate Chinese stages.

Unlike Western puppeteers, who work mainly with the control, Chinese puppeteers also manipulate groups of strings with their fingers. The longer the strings (up to two meters), the more difficult to operate, but the more expressive the puppets can become as they portray men and women of all ages and professions—or even spirits or wild animals.

Fig. 5.1 Quanzhou
Marionettes



Puppets make love and war, bicker and barter, dance, jog and somersault. Their deft hands even retrieve objects from the stage floor! Maybe their lips move too, because Jimmy sure fell for this fellow (who robs cradles too). But everything hinges on puppeteers like Mr. Xia Rongfeng (夏荣峰), retired vice director for performers of Quanzhou Puppet Troupe (who kindly gave us a tour and a delightful demonstration).

Puppeteers, who often begin training as children, may take five years to learn the basics, and over 20 years to completely master more than 30 strings! The sheer complexity of marionettes is amazing. They have a torso, limbs, strings and a hollow wooden head (usually camphor or willow) with internal mechanisms to move the lips and eyes. They have civilians hold pens and cups or swing fans, and military hands to brandish swords, spears, and other weapons. There are even three types of feet: bare, booted, and womanly.

No wonder modern youth are hesitant to devote their lives to mastering puppetry, and the camphor creatures are getting more complex by the year.

Modern Puppetry Master Puppeteers of the late Qing Dynasty, like Lin Chengchi, could make their puppets draw swords and open umbrellas, but modern puppeteers are as good, or better. And for all their skill, they are continuing to perfect their craft to create utterly breathtaking puppets and performances. Modern stages are deeper, allowing the puppets greater freedom of movement, and allowing the use

of different types of puppets simultaneously. For example, the Iron-fan Princess in *Flaming Mountain* is manipulated with strings, poles and fingers.

In *Taming the Monkey*, the simian puppet monkeys about doing everything from riding a bicycle to playing a guitar. In *Drunken Zhong Kui*, Zhong Kui fails the imperial examinations simply because he is so ugly. After he commits suicide, the King of Hell appoints him “Master demon chaser”, but he is so overwhelmed by the number of wicked demons and ghosts that he turns to drink. But in the end, he goes on the wagon, and then devotes himself to an eternal battle against wickedness. It is a hell of a story.

Carrying the Tradition Abroad The Quanzhou Puppet Troupe held a workshop for 11 British puppeteers and puppet lovers in London’s Little Angel. Puppeteer Christopher Leith had worked with marionettes for over 35 years but still found the training tough. The Chinese said they’d done well in such a short time, and should be up to snuff in a couple of years (a long time for us Westerners, but nothing for Chinese who spend decades at it!).

Crafting Puppet Heads Crafting quality camphor wood puppet heads is a vanishing art. People just aren’t patient enough nowadays to spend 10–15 years mastering this exacting craft. Of the few dozen puppet head makers left in Quanzhou, only 10–20 make quality puppets. The rest chum out mass-produced heads (or, worse yet, press out plastic heads, which may look the same but don’t have the soul of the genuine wooden folk).

Puppet heads begin life as a block of camphor wood which is cut to a rough form, sanded, and then carved with finer detail. After a coat of paint, and then gloss, further details and hair are added. Cheap heads are churned out in only three to four days, but it takes Master carver Wang Yique a couple of weeks to give birth to his masterpieces...

The article “Heads Up”, in Dragon Air’s in-flight magazine, *The Silk Road*, (September 1988) was about Quanzhou puppet master, Wang Yique, who at the time had made puppets for 60 years. Master Wang said: “I’ve done this since I was 13 years old. I can’t give it up now. Besides, I want to leave something behind after I’m gone.” He also noted that none of his children or grandchildren had chosen to make puppet heads.

Wang Yique spends up to half a month carving a head with the exaggerated features that can be seen from a distance. Some puppets have four heads, four mouths and eight eyes—all controllable by one finger!

Glove puppets appear simpler to use than marionettes, but these require years of training. With the forefinger in the head and thumb and middle finger operating the arms, the puppeteer can perform astonishing feats. The puppets pour tea into tiny pots, wield fans, change clothes, brandish swords, or perform somersaults while juggling barrels and dishes on poles balanced on their head. Quite literally breathtaking.

Quanzhou Puppet Troupe Museum I could spend an entire day going through the endless displays of ancient and modern puppets ranging from warriors, emperors and the Monkey King and his entourage, to heroes of the Liberation, foreign villains, and musician puppets that play the violin.

Puppet Museum Sign

Quanzhou puppet art has a long history and has been inherited for generations. It is well known at home and abroad as a bright pearl in the treasure house of Quanzhou. On display are master puppet pieces, rich contented articles and photographs, which vividly present the exquisitely carved puppet heads and the unique craftsmanship of the puppet-making, and also shows you the puppeteer's high skill of the string and glove puppet manipulation, as well as the Quanzhou puppet arts' influence in Taiwan and abroad. All of these will present to you a splendid picture of this art. Please step into the gallery of Quanzhou puppet art. Enjoy its magic.

Chen-Family Puppet Museum One of my favorite stops, this topnotch museum used to be right behind the Ashab Mosque but has relocated. The display included marionettes, Jinjiang hand puppets, and many other forms of puppetry. Nicely laid-out displays showed how the wooden creatures are crafted lovingly from blocks of camphor wood until, in the hands of a master, they spring to life with more gusto than Pinocchio on the trail of the *Blue Fairy*.

But now, regretfully, both of these delightful puppet museums have shut down, but I still reserve a space for them in this book so their memory lives on.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 6

Academy Upon the Sea—Past and Present



THE city of Chinchew, in South China, lies a short distance inland from the port of Amoy, opposite the north corner of Formosa. It is about the size of Edinburgh, and, like Edinburgh, is devoted to learning...

—Annie Duncan, *City of Springs*, 1902¹

Quanzhou Confucian Literary Temple, a block west of Ashab Mosque, on the north side of Tumen Street, showcases Quanzhou’s educational legacy, with life-size wax sculptures of Quanzhou’s literati.

Dubbed “Seashore Zhoulou” (“Academy/Scholar Upon the Sea”), Quanzhou has been a wellspring of literary talent and leadership. From the Tang to the Qing Dynasty (about 1,100 years), Quanzhou churned out 2,454 successful candidates in the highest imperial exams, and 950 famous scholars produced 2,083 influential works. Quanzhou also produced 20 prime ministers.

Famous Quanzhou intellectuals have included writers Ou’yang Zhan, Wang Shenzhong and Huang Kehui, historians Xiaqing, Liang Kejia, Huang Fengxiang and He Qiaoyuan, and philosophers Li Zhi, Cai Qing, Chen Chen and Cai Ding. Quanzhou military talents have included Ding Gongchen, Zeng Gongliang, Yu Daqin, Zheng Chengyong, Su Song, Li Guangdi, etc.

Confucius would have been proud! (Fig. 6.1).

Ancient Confucian Education

Failure to obtain a coveted prize never baffles or discourages the indefatigable competitor. In some cases the contest continues a lifetime with the prize never won. For example at a single prefecture 10,000 candidates presented themselves, under the old regime, at the regular examinations. Among them were found the grandfathers, sons, and grandsons, all competing for the same prize, i.e., the same degree. In 1889 the Governor General of Fukien (Fujian) reported that at the autumnal examination in Foochow (Fuzhou) there were nine candidates over eighty, and one over ninety years old. At still another, thirty-five competitors were over eighty and eighteen over ninety. Such indomitable perseverance along educational lines...has been seldom witnessed outside of China. If ever her educational methods conform to Western ideas...Chinese scholarship is destined to take first rank.

—Rev. Pitcher (*In and about Amoy*, 1912, p. 84)



Overseas Chinese University

Fig. 6.1 Overseas Chinese University

Anxi Confucian/Taoist/Buddhist Temple Anxi also has a famous Confucius temple (安溪文庙), built in 1001. Or is it a Confusion temple? A Quanzhou English map has designated it the Anxi Confusion Temple. I’m not absolutely certain it is a typo.

Given that Taoism and Confucianism, two of China’s main religions, are 180 degrees apart in philosophy, it is surprising that in some temples, people worship both. Unlike Confucianism, which emphasizes absolute obedience, conformity, standards, and education to preserve them, Taoism is the Montessori approach to enlightenment. Taoism means “The Way” (as New Testament Christianity also meant “The Way”), and is based on the teachings of Lao Tzu in sixth century B.C. China. But with Taoism the way is relative for there are no standards for proper behavior or right and wrong. All is relative. The emphasis is individual freedom, loose government, and mystical experience.

Not surprisingly, emperors preferred Confucius to Lao Tzu—though not in the sage’s own lifetime...

A Brief Bio of Confucius

(Adapted from *Magic Xiamen*²)

As a youth, Confucius mastered poetry and history classics, and the six arts (ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and arithmetic). In his 30s,

he became a teacher and devoted his life to insuring that Chinese for the next 2,000 years followed suit.

Confucius humbly claimed to be a common man of ordinary intellect, so anyone could follow his lead in seeking perfection through study and conformity to society. But few wanted to follow Confucius' lead because he was usually jobless, homeless, and half-starved.

Confucius' failures ate at him. He said: "It is these things that cause me concern: failure to cultivate virtue, failure to explore in depth what I have learned, inability to do what I know is right, and an inability to reform myself when I have defects."

I think what really ate at him was his wife, who was also homeless and half-starved—not choice ingredients in the elixir of marital bliss.

While claiming to be just one of the boys, the unemployed Confucius said he was unstoppable and immortal until his heavenly mandate was completed. "If Heaven does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of K'uang do to me?"

Not much, except keep him unemployed. So, at age 56, he left the inhospitable leaders of Lu State, who still weren't hiring, and spent 12 years traveling about with a slowly growing following. He returned home at age 67 and died six years later, leaving behind 3,000 disciples who were usually jobless, homeless and half-starved. But they kept alive the teachings that would become dear to 2,400 years of imperial hearts.

Confucians taught a grassroots philosophy that the foundation of society is filial piety. Obedience to father and elders and magistrates and emperor guarantees social order, stability, and peace. Deviations, of any kind (like preferring coffee over tea) insure anarchy.

Emperors loved Confucius's emphasis on obedience, but his warning that unjust governments would be overthrown did not go over as well. In 231 B.C., the emperor tried to eliminate Confucius' influence by destroying every book in China, but someone missed a few volumes. Confucians crawled back out of the woodwork, regained the upper hand, and have been stacking China's deck ever since (while being careful to remove all the wild cards).

My Favorite Confucian Quotes

Fishy Fishing, "Confucius fished but didn't use a net." ("子钓而不纲").

(No wonder he was poor).

On Women: "Girls are the most impossible; too close and they lose their humility; keep your distance and they're disgruntled." ("子曰: 唯女子与小人为难养也, 近之则不孙, 远之则怨").

(Lesson: You can't win!)

"Aspire to the principle, behave with virtue, abide by benevolence, and immerse yourself in the arts."

Quanzhou No. 7 Middle School (泉州七中)—a Window on the Future

When *Quanzhou Evening News* reporter Wu Zehua (吴泽华) heard I was giving three Americans a tour of Quanzhou, he invited us to visit a school. I was hesitant because our schedule was tight and, frankly, my friends didn't fly 12,000 miles to China to see a school—specially when one was a teacher himself. But we did visit the school, which was tucked away on a small street opposite Goddess Mazu Temple—and that tour turned out to be the highlight of our day.

I've long studied Quanzhou's rich history, but Quanzhou No.7 Middle School offers a glimpse into city's even richer future. After our visit I could well understand how the school shot from relative obscurity in the early 1990s to become one of the nation's most innovative schools today. In 2007, Qinghua University chose it as one of the country's top six schools, with national and international recognition in everything from traditional academic and athletic pursuits to robotics innovation!

The school began on the premises of Goddess Mazu Temple in May 1937, as the private Huiming Middle School (私立晦鸣中学).³ The high school was added in 1948, and in 1956 went public, it was moved across the street to its present location, and was renamed accordingly. But it wasn't until the 1990s that the school underwent its radical metamorphosis, thanks primarily to radical and visionary leadership.

Leadership The school's Principal and Party Secretary, Wu Pengfei (吴鹏飞), has a Master's degree in Education and is a "Provincial Backbone Principal". And the school teachers, aged 33 years on average, are all graduates of some of the nation's top teachers' colleges; 56 of whom have earned postgraduate degrees.

Global Mission The school's mission is to "Nurture Modern Chinese, Healthy in Body, Spirit, Mind, and Morals" (培养身心健康的现代中国人). "Modern" implies suitable knowledge and competitiveness for modern global society—graduates who are cooperative and innovative. But the school aims not just for "Modern Chinese" but also responsible "global citizens" by developing excellent English and communication skills through an international curriculum.

An International School In 2002, the school was Fujian's first middle school to offer a joint program with a foreign school. It has several Canadian teachers, and graduates of 2005 and 2006, recipients of dual Chinese and Canadian diplomas, were qualified to study abroad in an English-speaking country. It further promotes communication skills with activities such as English corners and competitions, an English cultural festival, English arts performances, Christmas parties, etc. Students with exceptional promise can further hone their talents at the school's modern broadcast and recording studio.

The Pay-Off The school went from 3rd level in 1990 to 2nd level in 1993, and 1st level in 1995. Today, it is one of Fujian's 12 model high schools and a provincial 1st-level middle school. In 2001, the school's management received ISO9002 certification, and in 2003 it became one of Fujian's first schools to be designated a "National Model" school. The school has received 14 national and 68 provincial awards in everything from athletics and linguistics to science and environmentalism.

Academic Excellence In 2005, 64 students scored over 600 on the college entrance exams, with eight gaining entrance to Qinghua University and Peking

University and 38 entering the nation's Top 10. In 2006, student Ceng Chunming (曾春明) scored 673, highest in the province, and 164 students scored over 600; 11 students entered Qinghua and Peking universities, and 42 entered the Top 10.

Students have won numerous national and international academic and scientific competitions, including 18 national and international gold medals during the first few months of 2007. Since the Robotics Lab was built in 2003, alumni have won 45 gold medals in robotics. In October 2006, three students from the school were China's only students to land gold medals in the International Youth Robotics Competition in Thailand.

The **Year 2061 RoboBand** (2061 星空乐队) won China's only gold medal for middle school students at the International Youth Robotics Competition. The robotic ensemble is fully programmable, or it will play along to music played on a CD, with robotic fingers, hands and bodies moving with the music.

RoboFish Explorer (水下观察者) not only won a gold International Youth Robotics Competition, but also the prize for "Most Innovative Technology". Whereas most underwater devices disturb the environment, churning sediment with propellers, this remote-controlled "fish" propels itself gracefully and naturally with fins and tail as it uses GPS or pre-programmed guidance to analyze its environment and transmit video from the "fish" head's camera. I asked Vice Principal Chen if the robotic "fish" was good to eat and he said: "No. Too many bones!"

Quanzhou No. 7 Middle School is also developing a Genetics Lab (基因工作室) overseen by four graduate biology researchers of Zhongshan University's Genetics Lab.

Enthusiastic Alumni The school's metamorphosis has of course excited its alumni, who are proudly pouring funds in to their alma mater. Alumni donations have helped build the state-of-the-art gymnasium (Fujian's best), the library, the Hong Kong Alumni Building, the Quanzhou Alumni Building, the Philippine Alumni Building, as well as provide numerous scholarships. During the school's 75th anniversary, alumni established the 20 million-yuan "Quanzhou No.7 Middle School Scholarship" (泉州七中助学奖学基金)—Fujian's largest scholarship of its kind.

A large diorama near the front gate displays numerous endangered animals, all stuffed and in natural poses amongst trees and shrubs. I again joked with Vice Principal Chen and asked: "Are any good to eat?" He said: "Of course! That's why we've built this—to encourage students to protect them, not eat them!"

This diorama, the first and last thing I saw at Quanzhou No.7 Middle School, well exemplifies its holistic values—its emphasis upon innovation and progress balanced with stewardship of resources. I've no doubt that the school will indeed produce not only "Modern Chinese" but also global citizens capable of leading China into the new century. So, after you've toured historic Quanzhou, explore the Quanzhou of the future—at the school.

Peiyuan High School, just west of Kaiyuan Temple, made me an honorary alumni a few years ago. "I'm thankful to finally graduate from high school," I told them.

Peiyuan was started in 1904 by Mr. Anderson of the London Presbyterian Mission, and received the patronage of no other than Dr. Sun Yat-sen!

Rev. Anderson's father was one of the men who had helped free Dr. Sun after he had been kidnapped by the Qing court officials in London. To express his appreciation, Dr. Sun encouraged Chinese to contribute toward building Anderson's school, and in 1920 he wrote an inscription for the school. In 1980, his wife, Soong Ching Ling (Honorary President of China) wrote another inscription to the left of her husband's.

Dr. Sun's inscription reads, right to left: "Tong Da Jin Gong" (All Enter Future Heaven. 共进大同). Madame Soong's inscription, read left to right, is "Wei Guo Shu Ren" (Bring Up People for the Country, 为国树人).

Anderson Library, built in 1927, was Quanzhou's tallest building (aside from the East and West Pagodas). It resembles a church inside, perhaps because until the 1950s it was also used for church services.

The Philippine extension was established in the 1920s, and Taiwan's first of three branches was begun in the 1950s. The school's recent expansion and renovation has been possible in part because of generous gifts from alumni and overseas Chinese, and the school has recently bought a factory site to the south for campus expansion.

Vice Premier Li Lanqing (李岚清) visited Peiyuan in 1994 and wrote the large inscription that is now beside the 300-year old tree. In 2004, the school celebrates 100 years of producing graduates who have gone on to distinctive careers in business, academics and government, and the school has branches overseas. Many exemplify the school motto on the wall beside Li Lanqing's inscription:

Trust, Freedom, Service (真理自由服务).

Community Service Peiyuan's motto seems to have also been adopted by Quanzhou Christians. Since Fujian's church services were begun again in 1979, the province has opened over 2,000 churches, including over 200 churches in Quanzhou alone—and community service is a big part of Quanzhou Christians' lives. In 1998, Fujian churches donated over 800,000 yuan and over 100,000 articles of clothing to flood victims along the Yangzi, Songhua and Nenjiang rivers. The Quanzhou church donated B10,000 yuan to Anxi's Bailai County for renovating primary school classrooms, and giving free medical care to Yongchun minorities. Contributions to medicine and education are also being made by individual Christians like cardiologist Dr. Lin Yingwang.

Dr. Lin is former director of the Medical Department of Quanzhou's No. 1 Hospital, as well as Vice Director of the 10th Standing Committee of the Quanzhou Municipal People's Congress. Dr. Lin established a cardiovascular clinic in Jinjiang No. 1 Hospital, and has published dozens of papers in medical journals. Other Christian doctors also volunteer their services in clinics around the city.

Notes

1. Duncan, Annie D. (1902), "City of Springs: Or, Mission Work in Chinchew," Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier.
2. Brown, William (2000) "Magic Xiamen," Xiamen University Press.
3. The name is from a phrase in Confucius' *Analects*, "When wind and rain howls darkly, birds cry unceasingly." (《论语》“风雨如晦，鸡鸣不已”).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 7

Records of Ancient Zaytun



Quanzhou Shaolin Temple (泉州少林寺) It seems every Fujian village lays claim to: (1) tastiest food, (2) prettiest girls, and (3) deadliest Kungfu (not always in that order).

Each village has its own martial arts traditions, passed down only to those of the same surname. Many claim that all Southern Shaolin Kungfu originated right here in Quanzhou's Shaolin Temple (Fujian's Putian and Fuqing make the same claim, but 1,000 years ago Putian was part of Quanzhou anyway).

Fly or Drive? The Shaolin Temple is behind the Sports Stadium at the top of Zaytun Street (刺桐路), on Dongyue Hill (东岳山). It is exactly 1.1 km past the sign that says you only have 600 m to go. I asked the abbot about the discrepancy and he said: "It is 1.1 km if you drive, but Kungfu monks fly."

Quanzhou Southern Shaolin Temple was built in the early Tang Dynasty by Zhikong, a monk from the Songshan Shaolin Temple up north. After the temple was destroyed in 1763, the Shaolin tradition continued to be taught in Congfu Temple (see below), but now that so many folks around the world are getting their kicks out of Kungfu, the Shaolin Temple was recently rebuilt. Each year, thousands of Kungfu enthusiasts make pilgrimages to this Mecca for martial arts enthusiasts (and also visit the two local martial arts schools).

Kungfu Architecture Notice the trimmings and carvings under the temple eaves. Unlike other temples, they all depict Southern Shaolin monks in different fighting postures (Fig. 7.1).

Abbot Shi Changding I'd have never imagined a 30-year-old like Master Shi Changding (释常定) could be abbot of a Southern Shaolin Temple! Since he began Kungfu at age 13, Master Shi has made a name for himself, and helped put Quanzhou's Southern Shaolin Temple back on the map. The young abbot is also a "Wushu" (martial arts) Colonel, assistant secretary-general of Quanzhou Martial Arts Association, adviser to the France-Fujian Martial Arts Association, and deputy to the NPC. He has also helped initiate many international exchange programs with martial arts groups and organizations throughout Asia, Europe and the Americas.



Uniquely carved columns in Kung Fu Temple

Fig. 7.1 Quanzhou Kung Fu Temple Architecture

Fig. 7.2 Quanzhou Kung Fu Temple Abbott



Now Master Shi has set his sights on expanding the Southern Shaolin Complex (Fig. 7.2).

Southern Shaolin Kungfu Museum

You'll get lots of kicks out of the Martial Arts Hall of Quanzhou Sports Center. The four key exhibits are:

1. “Shaolin Martial Arts Handed on From Ancient Times and Developed in Quanzhou”.
2. “Heyday of Shaolin Giving Birth to a Multitude of Heroes”.
3. “Carry Forth the Good Tradition and Let 100 Flowers Blossom”.
4. “Make Friends with Martial Arts and Let the Seeds of Friendship Spread All Over the World”.

Stone Bamboo (石笋) Just outside the city’s western wall, sometime before 1011, someone erected the 4.18 m high “stone bamboo shoot”. But given the totem was the object of fertility worship (“shengzhi chongbai”, 生殖崇拜), I suspect that “bamboo shoot” is just a euphemism for the biological appendage that it closely resembles (though a bit big, granted). To make sure I did not miss the allusion, my companion exclaimed: “The shoot is aligned with those two hills. See? They’re the breasts! Can you tell?”

Fertility totems are still used in Thailand, where new brides rub against them to make sure that they have a baby boy. I don’t know if it works or not, but given China’s 1.413 billion population, I think they should erect a barricade around this shoot (Fig. 7.3).

Fig. 7.3 Stone Bamboo Shoot



Stone Bamboo Shoot

After some personal problem, the prefectural magistrate, Gao Huilian, had the Stone Bamboo split in two; it was reassembled in the 15th century. Since this is the only fertility totem in the region, scholars assume it was erected by Indian traders (probably Shivaites).

Qingyuan Mountain (清源山) After the Maritime Museum, Ashab Mosque and Kaiyuan Temple (and Quanzhou's world-famous puppets), my favorite Quanzhou site is Qingyuan Mountain, which was first mentioned in ancient texts around 2,200 years ago and has been famous for well over 1,000 years. Just three km north of the city, this 62-square-km national 5A-level tourist attraction is not only beautiful ("Fujian's Fairy Land") but also a holy site for many religions, including Buddhism, Taoism and Tibetan Buddhism. Even the founder of the Cao'an Manichaeon Temple is said to have been buried there, though no one is sure where.

Qingyuan Mountain is the perfect destination when someone tells you to go take a hike, and the humble 498-m elevation offers a bit of respite from sweltering summer days. Secluded and silent, save for the sound of waterfalls and gurgling brooks, the densely wooded trails wind past pagodas, temples, and 36 caves. Pilgrims used to worship the caves' hundreds of statues until they were destroyed by Red Guards during the "Cultural Revolution".

Qingyuan's vast collection of relics ranges from Old Stone Saint (老君岩), China's largest Taoist statue, to the statues of the Three Tibetan Buddhist Lamas (三世佛) in Bixiao Cave (long thought to be Buddhas until the outer layer of concrete was removed to reveal they are Tibetan lamas). The Manichaeon who founded Cao'an Temple, the planet's last Manichaeon temple, is buried on Qingyuan, though no one knows where.

Other popular Qingyuan Mountain sites include the statue of a seated Avalokitesvara, beside the Thousand-Hand Rocks, a statue of Sakyamuni inside Niche Cavern (on the left peak), and the tomb of Hong Yi. One of the best views of Quanzhou is from South Platform Rock. And you can reach all of these sites easily and safely, thanks to endless trails laid out by centuries of nature lovers and devotees of various religions who have laid out paths and steps—lots of steps!

Hours: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Steps On his last trip to Quanzhou, Alan Smith, founder of LivCom, mopped his perspiring brow and said: "Chinese steps only go up—never down!"

Over the past few thousand years, Chinese have built steps up every hillside and mountain in China. No doubt, even Mount Everest has steps on the Chinese side, and Tibetans at the top sell mineral water, roasted water melon seeds, and peanuts.

Many is the time I've imagined myself to be the first to hike some remote hill, only to stumble across granite steps worn smooth by time and tourists. But on the bright side—it is not likely that hikers in China can ever get lost.

Old Stone Saint (老君岩) The Song Dynasty Old Stone Saint ("No. 1 Lao Tzu Under Heaven") is China's oldest Taoist sculpture, and the largest (5.63 m high by 8.01 m wide). Legend claims that if you rub his nose, you'll live 120 years; rub his eye and you'll reach 160. Folks used to say you'd die early if you rubbed his mouth, but such down-in-the-mouth talk didn't bolster tourism, so now locals brightly mouth off, "Rub mouth and get good luck!" Alas, 1,000 years of rubbing Lao Tzu the wrong



Fig. 7.4 China's Largest Statue of Laozi

way was rubbing his nose away, so a few years back they fenced him off and hired a guard (Fig. 7.4).

Zaytun in the Eyes of Ibn Battuta

“The Muslims live in a town apart from the others...On the day that I reached Zaytun I saw there the amir who had come to India as an envoy with the present (to the sultan), and who afterward traveled with our party and was shipwrecked on the junk. He greeted me, and introduced me to the controller of the douane and saw that I was given good apartments (there). I received visits from the qadi of the Muslims, the shaykh al-Islam, and the principal merchants. Amongst the latter was Sharaf ad-Din of Tabriz, one of the merchants from whom I had borrowed at the time of my arrival in India, and the one who had treated me most fairly. He knew *The Koran* by heart and used to recite it constantly. These merchants, living as they do in a land of infidels, are overjoyed when a Muslim comes to them. They say “He has come from the land of Islam,” and they make him the recipient of the tithes on their properties, so that he becomes as rich as themselves. There was living at Zaytun, amongst other eminent shaykhs, Burhan ad-Din of Kazarun, who has a hermitage outside the town, and it is

to him that the merchants pay the sums they vow to Shaykh Abu Ishaq of Kazarun.”

Holy Tombs (灵山伊斯兰教圣墓) A Ming Dynasty Stele in the Fuzhou Mosque’s courtyard claims Mohammed sent four disciples to China between 618 and 626.¹ One went to Guangzhou, one to Yangzhou, and two settled in Quanzhou. Sashye (Sa-ke-zu-the 3rd Saint) and Gaoshi (Wu-ko-su-the 4th Saint) were buried on the hill on the east edge of town, past the Maritime Museum, on the Holy Hill. This very grave site was so called because after the disciples were buried, villagers encountered supernatural signs on the hill (the hillside glowed at night, for instance).

Some say China’s first Muslims were not in Quanzhou but Chang’an, the ancient capital, in 650. But the tombs’ spindle-shaped granite columns are Tang Dynasty—at least 1,000 years old, so they’re ancient, regardless of who rests there, and they have been revered for a millennium. Furthermore, Mohammed is reputed to have said: “Seek knowledge, as far as China”, so when his persecuted followers fled to Africa, it is likely some came to China as well (along with the Manicheans and Nestorians).

The 1322 Renovation. An Arabic inscription on a granite stele records the tombs’ restoration in 1322. Part of it says, in effect, that Quanzhou Muslims.

...renovated this blessed Tomb, with the purpose of pleasing the most noble and majestic Allah and obtaining rich rewards from him... the two saints came to China in the time of Faghfur. They were reported to be men of high virtue. After their deaths, they passed from this incorruptible world into everlasting eternity. People believe in them in the hope of obtaining their benediction. Once in trouble or caught between two fires, they approach the Tomb begging for enlightenment by offering sacrifice. In so doing, they always obtain what they come for and return home in peace.²

Admiral Zheng Hé’s Pilgrimage Another slab records the visit of the great Muslim Chinese mariner Zheng Hé, who visited the tombs in 1417 before his 5th voyage, in which he also visited Mecca. After Zheng Hé departed, the local magistrate erected a monument to mark the event. It read:

The imperial envoy, commander-in-chief and eunuch Zheng Hé, is going to the country Hormuz and other countries across the sea, and made a pilgrimage to this Holy Tomb to crave the blessings and protection of the saints on the 16th of the 5th month in the 15th year of the Ming Dynasty Emperor Yongle’s Period.¹

Zheng Hé offered sacrifices and prayed for safety (a common practice even with Muslims then). Whether prayers helped or not, Zheng Hé sailed most of the known world—and, incidentally, helped spread Islam throughout Southeast Asia.

Muslims don’t monopolize the Holy Hill, which also has Buddhist tombs scattered about, but the Muslims are taking back the territory. An army of stone masons,

¹ Muslims say there are no reputable records of this. The Arab military commander Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas ibn Wuhayb al-Zuhri is also alleged to have made a diplomatic trip to China in 650, though this too is disputed.

² *The Islamic Historic Relics in Quanzhou*, Fujian People’s Publishing House.

directed by architects armed with intricate sketches, is building dozens of new Muslim tombs (most for the Ding Clan—the primary clan in Chendai Village).

Windrocking Stone (风动石) As your guide leads you down the garden path to the tombs, on the right is the famous “Windrocking Stone”, inscribed with large Chinese characters meaning “wonder of nature”. Zhou Daoguang, a Ming Dynasty official, visited the stone, dubbed it “Jasper Ball”, and carved an inscription on the rock. Considered one of Quanzhou’s “Top Eight Spectacular Sights”, its claim to fame is that it “sways gently with the wind and moves with a mere touch of the hand”. My hosts said it was a “gift of Allah”, rivaling the “Swaying Tower of Esfahan”.²

Chinese have even written poems about the great wonder of nature:

The ball of a stone sways and sways above the lake,
 and was christened the Purple Platform by Prefect the late.
 The wintry moon from celestial palace gate emerges,
 Shooting stars shower like beads on the bronze plate of earth.
 A flowing stream swift as an arrow turns the saky wheel,
 Which looks the look of a mirror round from the Far Ball Hill.
 Oft-time hear the shrill cries of cranes pass the sky;
 Leisurely the fairies dawdle away their time and tide.

“It is good luck to move this stone!” a Muslim said. “It moves easily for the pure of heart.” Well, that’s me! So I placed a fingertip on it, and then a palm, an arm, my entire body—it did not budge. We finally wedged a stick under it, balanced a cell phone on the stick, and in unison three of us shoved—and the cell phone shook a little.

“See! See!”.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

There is also supposed to be a sweet spring trickling from beneath the stone, but it must have dried up at my approach. This infidel didn’t even see mud.

Water God Temple (Zhenwu Temple at Fashi, 法石镇武寺) Since the Song Dynasty, locals have worshipped Xianwu, the Water God, as well as offered sacrifices to the sea god, in this Shitou Street Temple. Even with rivers on both sides of the city, water has not always been easy to come by, as evident from a local legend.

Traveling out of Town

After the next part, we head for Quanzhou’s rural counties. Fortunately, roads are better than Beaton’s “new roads” in 1945. They’re even better than 1995, when it took me over 30 h to drive from Xiamen to Wuyi Mountain. Today, it is seven hours. Rev. Pitcher wrote in 1912:

Traveling in the Amoy district is a slow process, more often wearisome than otherwise—a peculiar wearisomeness of its own.

So far as south China is concerned there are no roads. The nearest approach to a road, generally speaking, is a narrow footpath, something like the cow paths that lead to our meadows, winding and twisting like some serpent among the paddy (rice fields). These paths are raised about a foot above the fields, and were originally made so as to mark the divisional lines between the property of different owners.

The only commissioner of these highways is the tramp of ceaseless thousands bearing their heavy burdens over them, from one generation to another. One never expects them to be kept in good order. No fences mark their boundary, no sign-posts point their direction. The stranger easily becomes confused and lost among boundless fields covered with a network of paths that seem to run in every direction but the right one.

Notes

1. Hum Sin Hoon (2012) “Zheng He’s Art of Collaboration: Understanding the Legendary Chinese Admiral,” Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 253.
2. In Esfahan, Iran, if either of the minarets flanking the tomb of Amu Abdollah (died in 1316) is shaken, the other minaret shakes as well.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 8

Quanzhou—A Love of Nature Since Time Immemorial



Ibn Battuta remarked upon Quanzhou people's love of gardens and nature, and judging from the number of parks and natural preserves, gardens are still their first love.

Micro to Macro Gardening Quanzhou is like a four-tiered miniature landscape, from prize-winning miniature gardens in residents' courtyards or on balconies to residential gardens, community parks and squares, city gardens, and parks and forests, including the nearby mountains and rivers.

Community parks, squares and forests reflect the harmony, creativity and care invested in potted landscapes, but on a much larger scale. Quanzhou has spent hundreds of millions on unique gardens. With land at a premium, they have to be pretty innovative—building car parks below kid parks, or using “vertical” landscaping (rooftop gardens, hanging planters).

The parks are very diverse. Quanzhou Water Park attracts vacationers; Kaiyuan Temple offers serenity; Fuxin Garden Square had a musical fountain. Qingyuan Mountain, the ancient “fairyland”, appeals to both athletes and meditative souls who savor the Taoist setting. Some parks have entrance charges to cover maintenance costs, but where possible parks are inexpensive or free to maximize use by low-income families.

Bridging the Gap With the growing generation gap, Quanzhou is seeking innovative ways to meet the needs of both young and old by emphasizing both passive and active leisure and cultural activities, educational activities for retirees, and increased opportunities for elderly volunteers. City parks offer the older generation plenty of opportunities to teach the youth Chinese shadow boxing, calligraphy, Chinese painting, or how to perform the simple but elegant Minnan tea ceremony.

West Lake Park Every decent-sized city in China has a lake park, the most famous being Hangzhou's 2,000-year-old West Lake, which in 2011 became a UNESCO World Heritage Center. But Quanzhou's newly renovated West Lake is also delightful.

Dubbed “Northwest Ocean” by locals, this park in the northwest of the city was a swamp until the city dredged it out. Dykes and bridges connect the islands, which have once again become home to wild creatures and birds. Ornatly painted wooden

pleasure boats serve tea as you tour the lake. Take a camera to photograph the wild pigeons and egrets, which sometimes almost cover the trees. Also visit the many memorial forests planted by local volunteers.

East Lake Park The nicely wooded and landscaped East Lake Park, right in the middle of town, was one of Quanzhou's original "Eight Famous Sites". Scenes surrounding the "Lotus Fragrance on the Stars" lake include Fragrance of Lotus, Pavilion of Praying for Plain Wind, and Children's Playground.

Zaytun Park Zaytun Park (Citong Park), on Zaytun Road, was opened in 1997 and includes such sites as Citong Sunken Flowerbed and Listening to Rain in Banana Groves.

Fragrant Grass Garden This delightful midtown garden on Xinmen Street was built by General Shi Lang, and was the site of the original Chongzheng Academy.

Water World (Aquatic Elysium) This park was a real hit with our family because it is big (7,357 square meters), fun, and inexpensive—such a bargain that during summers we loaded up our Toyota van with a dozen kids, made the drive from Xiamen, and returned late the same evening. We liked the water slides, paddle boats, and tidal pool (though I've had bigger waves in our bathtub).

Quanzhou Amusement Park is in Quanzhou Exhibition Town, across the river to the south. The English brochure boasts it covers more than 250 mu (pronounced "Moo"). The more than 30 amusements include the Ferris wheel, roller coaster, playground, and go-karts. To quote the brochure, "It is a large modern playground integrating amusement, shopping and body build." I'm sold!

Parks in Rural Quanzhou

Anxi Zhimin Field Sport and Ecological Recreation Center Wow-now that's a mouthful! This outdoors center in Anxi's Longmen Township offers a good day or two of exciting outdoor activities, including white water rafting (supposedly the best in Fujian), rock-climbing, hunting, hiking, field survival, and tea making (which can be as arduous as the rest).

Dehua Peach Fairy Creek Ecological Tourist Area Peach Fairy Creek ("Taoxian Xi") offers bamboo rafting, rubber rafting, hiking, and traditional performances of "Nanyin" (Southern Music), Folk songs, and "Santong" Drum (三通鼓).

Ancient Garden City

About 700 years ago, the Arab traveler Ibn Battuta remarked upon Quanzhou people's love of gardening, and that love of nature is evident even today, ranging from the intimate care given miniature landscapes and balcony plants to neighborhood gardens, community parks, and city parks and forests. Gardening is a grassroots affair, from the bottom up as well as top down. And Quanzhou folks' aesthetics have transferred to architecture as well.

It seemed that most Chinese cities' approach to rapid modernization used to be razing everything old and replacing it with tile-and glass-covered concrete cubicles. Of course, who are we Americans to talk? We don't have ancient culture to preserve,

but we do have a natural heritage, which we're decimating. New housing developments invariably begin with bulldozing down the ancient trees, which are then replaced with saplings bought on sale at a local nursery.

Quanzhou's marriage of old and new architecture accommodates not only the natural heritage but the cultural and historical heritage as well. The new housing areas are a delightful blend of old and new, retaining the ancient Chinese or foreign flavor, while incorporating modern technology and innovations such as solar water heating. And while the first new apartment buildings had little in the way of green space, Quanzhou leaders have a motto: "Do more, learn more", and each successive project has had more, and better, greenery (thanks in part to innovations like car parks below gardens).

Today, as in Marco Polo's day, Quanzhou's true wealth lies not in products but the place, and the people.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 9

Zayton, City of Bridges



Central Fujian bridges are second to none under heaven.

—Chinese saying.

The bridges of China are wonders! On some of them people build their temples and houses and shops—where they live and carry on their business. There are at least two bridges of this kind in the Amoy district, each having a population of from fifty to one hundred inhabitants—perhaps more. These bridges are generally of wonderful construction. How the largest of them were built must always remain a matter of pure conjecture.

Twenty-five miles west of Amoy there is a famous bridge...There are natives who will tell you that man could not have lifted, by any imaginable machinery, to their present position those immense stones of which it is made. The only conclusion they can come to is the gods must have done the work.

The bridge is called 'The Po-lam Bridge'—a place much frequented by foreigners residing in Amoy. It is 200 yards or more long, built upon solid stone piers each about twelve feet high. Some of the stones laid on these piers are of great length and weight. One of them is seventy feet long, five feet thick and four feet wide, weighing something like 107 tons. It always has been a question: How were they put in place?

—Rev. Philip Pitcher, *In and About Amoy*, 1912, pp. 297–8

Land of Bridges Quanzhou is a land of bridges, both literally and metaphorically. Zayton was not only the bridge between China and the rest of the planet (assuming they were on the same planet), but it also gave us some of the world's most unique bridges, spanning rivers, gorges, and bays. Given our vertical province's tortuous topography, it is no wonder that Quanzhou folk excelled in bridge-making. By the Song Dynasty, Minnan alone had at least 313 bridges.

My favorite bridges include the magnificent 700-year-old wooden covered bridge in Pingnan, Putian's Ninghai Bridge (protected by a modern bridge built right over top), and Quanzhou's magnificent Anping Bridge (longest stone bridge on earth) and Luoyang Bridge.

Before visiting Quanzhou's mythic bridges, view them through the eyes of Ms. Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, a resident of southern Fujian in the 1920s:

Galeote Pereira, when he was captured by the Chinese as a smuggler in 1549, was taken through Ch'uan-chou (Quanzhou) on his way to Foochow (Fuzhou), and was greatly impressed with the populous countryside, the 'gallantly paved streets' and, above all, 'the

very noble and very well-wrought bridges of stone...for service over the rivers'. Ch'uan-chou's bridge was even more splendid than Foochow's bridge of Ten Thousand Ages, surpassed only by the one spanning the Loyang River ten miles to the north. For me, the great granite bridges of Fukien (Fujian) had an indescribable fascination. It lay, not in their uniqueness (there are believed to be none like them in the world), but, I think, in the grand, brave way in which they spanned the rivers, set their broad buttresses against the currents. Their grey bulk had personality and inspired respect; they reminded me of elephants. No one knows exactly how the stones were put into place. The buttresses supported solid granite slabs twenty-two feet long, two feet thick, laid, in the bridge over the Loyang estuary, five abreast for over a thousand feet. At the roofed gateway sat a massive stone figure, the twelfth-century builder himself. When we saw them, their function had not altered in any way since they had been built.

For me, the Roman coliseum rises yawning like an empty wasps' nest; life has gone from it. Even in Lucca, whose coliseum is a teeming hive of cell-slums, built with the help of Lombardic bricks and Romanesque hewn stones, builders and users are buried in history—remembered it is true, but as a legend. But across the great stone Fukienese bridges the people swarmed, thinking, acting, writing, talking, exactly as their forebears had done for more than seven hundred years. The stream of pole-carriers, litter-bearers, pedestrians, flowed unbroken throughout the centuries, the strong tide of life undiminished, undiluted; an endurance so close-textured, so ubiquitous that, living in China, one accepted it and only afterward was amazed.¹

Quanzhou's three most famous bridges are Luoyang Bridge, Anping Bridge, and Dongguan Bridge. Dongguan, in Yongchun, is a bit off the beaten path, so we'll visit it after we've seen two marvelous bridges just off the No. 324 National Highway.

Anping Bridge (安平桥), World's Longest Stone Bridge

This recently renovated 2,255-m bridge was the longest bridge on earth during the Middle Ages, and is still the planet's longest stone bridge. It was built in 1138 in Anhai by the monk Zupai as a replacement for the ferry, and wasn't completed until 1152. He used massive granite slabs, most of which are said to have been shipped from nearby Jinmen Island (Quemoy). It was originally called the Five-Mile Bridge because it was Five "li" (Chinese miles) long—but I'm not sure if they were the long "li", short "li", mandarin "li" or common country "li". Whichever "li", the bridge is a long walk on a hot summer day, so take it slowli.

Luoyang Bridge (洛阳桥) To the north of Quanzhou city is China's first seaport bridge, the Luoyang Bridge. Though shorter than Anping, it is older, and is my favorite bridge by far, in part because of the amazing story behind its builder, Mr. Cai Xiang...

Before Mr. Cai Xiang (1012–1067) was able to overcome incredible difficulties to erect the Luoyang Bridge, traversing the Luoyang River required travelers to spend an entire day going inland, or to chance crossing on small craft that were often sunk by squalls sent by evil spirits. In 1053, Quanzhou Prefect Cai Xiang, who was born in Xianyou and became a "Jinshi" (a scholar who succeeded in the highest imperial examinations) at the tender age of 19, decided to remedy the situation by building a stone bridge at the mouth of the Luoyang River.

Mr. Cai Xiang used many innovative engineering techniques, including what may be one of the planet's first attempts at biological engineering. The piers were

ingeniously shaped like a ship's bow to divert the raging tides. Chinese, always poetic, call them "10,000 ships launching", though the number is off by about 9,900.

Ancient Bio-Engineering The pillars' massive granite blocks were held together with butterfly-shaped iron wedges. The pillars were further reinforced with live oysters, whose natural secretions cemented the blocks together.

The granite slabs were up to 10 m long and 1 m wide, and weighed 10 tons. Each time I traverse the bridge, I marvel that the ancients could have even hewn the mammoth blocks, much less transported them to the Luoyang River, where they battled its legendarily ferocious currents to set them in place.

Historical records relate that the completed bridge was 1,200 m long by five meters wide, and had 500 stone sculptures to serve as railings, all supported upon 46 piers. Over 700 pine trees were planted on both ends of the bridge, and as further protection from typhoons, the bridge was armed with 28 stone lions, seven pavilions, nine towers, and numerous stone warriors.

A Border Stone in the middle bears the characters Jin-Hui Jiaojie because the center of the bridge lay on the border between Hui'an and Jinjiang.

The bridge stood largely unchanged for centuries. Even during the 8.0 earthquake almost 400 years ago (which toppled Ashab Mosque's dome), the bridge suffered only minor damage. But Japanese invaders accomplished what nature could not. In the center of the bridge is a "Pusa" (Buddha) that used to have a moonstone in her forehead. It supposedly glowed at night, guiding seamen to safety—until the Japanese stole it.

One Million-Yuan Renovation! Luoyang Bridge was renovated several times after 1949. A renovation in the early 1990s cost over 1 million yuan. When I asked why so much, an official said: "Because nowadays we have to dig away half a mountain to find a 10-meter slab of granite!" Maybe they could try shorter pieces and lots more oysters?

Cai Xiang Memorial Temple (Cai Xiang Ci, 蔡襄祠), is south of Luoyang Bridge. Within is a stone tablet—"The Records of Building Wan'An Bridge", inscribed by the great bridge builder himself. "Wan'An" (10,000 Peace) was another popular name for Luoyang Bridge.

Making Waves One large sun-baked stone has a natural formation resembling a snake and a turtle head. It is said that before the bridge was built, a snake and turtle lived here and caused the waves.

On the other side of the stone, four characters say "God ("Shangdi", 上帝) sat here." Obliging locals will point out the impression left by Buddha's buttocks when he sat there trying to dissuade the snake and turtle from wreaking such havoc with the tides and waves.

Sichuan or Xichuan The Xichuan Pavilion has a fascinating legend behind it. During the Ming Dynasty, when Quanzhou was suffering from a prolonged drought, the Mayor of Quanzhou, Fang Ke, asked people to pray for rain. Evidently, their god wasn't up on geography because he sent an angel to give Sichuan (west China) a good wetting down.

As the angel passed through Quanzhou he took pity upon the parched landscape, but he dared not release the rain anywhere but the god's designated target. But Mayor

Fang Ke was a savvy politician. He renamed the area Xichuan, evidently figuring that god could not read (because the characters are different even if they sound similar). The angel must have agreed about his lord's literacy, because he released his rain upon Quanzhou (and Sichuan had to make do with bottle water). Hence the stone pavilion's inscription, "Xichuan Ganyu" (西川甘雨), which I was told meant, "Water is precious, one drop is invaluable."

Arm and a Leg A village temple north of the bridge used to be the bridge construction office, and is dedicated to the god who safeguarded its construction. The last "Zhuangyuan" (top scorer in the highest imperial examination) of the Qing Dynasty, from Jinjiang, wrote the inscription above the temple door.

The temple has a red-faced idol of an ancient monk, whom locals revere because, according to legend, when the people lacked fuel for cooking, he used his own leg as firewood. "The monk really existed!" I was told, "Though we can't prove the leg story."

Personally, I thought they were just pulling my leg. But I said: "American restaurants are worse. They charge an arm and a leg."

Luoyang cuisine Speaking of food... Luoyang has some legendary seafood—and it doesn't cost an arm or a leg. Awesome oysters, the size of small eggs; steamed fish soup, washed down by Oolong tea that is all the better because of the excellent local spring water; and crabs that are supposedly better than Xiamen's because they are wild, not cultivated, and served in a thick sauce much like a Western gravy, but redolent of Chinese medicinal herbs. Heavenly.

Dongguan Bridge (东关桥) A wooden covered bridge between Dehua and Putian, is remote, but this provincial-level protected relic is a beauty—especially since an overseas Chinese donated 1 million yuan to renovate it. Built in 1145 (18th year of reign of Emperor Gaozong in the Southern Song Dynasty, in case you're dying to know), in Dongmei Village, Dongping Township, this magnificent 85 m by 5 m wooden beam bridge spans the scenic Humei Brook.

Like other ancient wooden bridges, it has a shrine in the middle, and religious paintings on the beams above. The wooden bridge is supported by stone block columns, with the upstream side shaped like a ship's bow to deflect heavy currents (they learned this from Luoyang and Anping bridges).

Xiamen Bridge Museum Though in Xiamen, not Quanzhou, this is right next door, and the best way to appreciate China's contributions to bridge building. The museum has models and photos of bridges all over China, as well as the rest of the world, and is the best location to take photos of Xiamen's beautiful Haicang Suspension Bridge. (I'd tell you what world records it has set, but I want to keep you in suspense).

The Legend of Luoyang Bridge

There are many legends about Cai Xiang. One says he tried 10 times to lay Luoyang Bridge's foundation, but each time it was swept away by the powerful tides. In frustration, he sent an officer to find the Sea God and ask advice. The officer returned from who knows where with a one-word suggestion, "Vinegar". Cai Xiang interpreted this cryptic word, and laid the bridge successfully.

Rev. Pitcher (*In and About Amoy*, 1912) has my favorite account:

It was during one of these squalls that a very remarkable thing happened, which led to the building of the bridge. At this particular time, while a large boat load of passengers was being ferried across, a storm came down upon them in wildest fury. Just when all hope was about to be abandoned of ever reaching the shore a voice rang out above the storm commanding one named Cai (蔡) to build a bridge across this dangerous point of the sea. They were soon after all safely landed. It was discovered later that there was but one person by the name of Cai living in that neighborhood. It was also learned that he had only just married, and that it had been revealed to his wife in some mysterious manner that she would be the mother of the man who was to build the bridge.

In due time the child was born who was named Cai Xiang and grew up a precocious youth. In his young manhood he became a mandarin. His mother took pains to tell him what had occurred in the storm, of what had been revealed to her years before, and what his mission therefore in life might be expected to be. Young Cai became deeply impressed and took steps at once to secure an appointment as mandarin in his native prefecture that he might undertake his appointed task. He knew it was against all custom and law for one to be appointed to office in his own district, he was therefore not a little puzzled to know how this desire of his was to be brought about. But fortune often favors those who are in earnest, and in course of time circumstances brought out Cai to the palace of the emperor, where he hit upon a novel as well as bold idea to accomplish his wish.

One day while walking in the imperial grounds he took a pot of honey and wrote on a tree this sentence—‘Cai Xiang the learned, be magistrate in your native prefectural city.’ Sometime later the emperor came walking along, and what his surprise was can only be imagined when he saw this sentence now emblazoned on a tree in living characters of armies of black ants that were feeding on the honey.

His surprise found expression as he read out in a loud tone of voice: ‘Cai Xiang the learned, be magistrate in your native prefectural city.’ Mr. Cai was conveniently near at hand, and at the same time innocently enough took the words of the emperor as an appointment to the office he so much desired, and proceeded without delay to thank his sovereign for the great honor he had conferred on him. Though the emperor protested that was not at all his meaning—that he was merely reading the sentence which the ants had written (which by the way Cai had taken good pains to bring about, having carefully selected a tree with an ant nest at the base)—he held his majesty to the words as his intention to appoint him to this office. Finally, the emperor yielded...

He began at once making preparation for building the bridge. His greatest task was in laying the foundations for the central piers as in that particular spot the rushing current never ceased its flow and ebb. How to sink the foundations there puzzled Cai Xiang for many a day, when it occurred to him to write to Neptune on the subject, asking him to be kind enough to keep the waters back from the place for one brief day, and to be so accommodating as to mention the date when that would occur. Then the question arose who was to take this letter to old Neptune.

In answer it was discovered that there was a man living nearby whose name was Able to Descend into the Sea. This man was pressed into service and like a bold knight he set out to fulfill his mission, by laying himself down in a comfortable and dry spot where he proposed to stay until the incoming tides covered him, when he could communicate with the god of the waters. While he was waiting, he fell asleep. How long he slept will never be known, but when he awoke, he found the letter gone, and another addressed to Cai Xiang, though he was in the same spot that he was when he went to sleep.

The letter was delivered to Cai Xiang. It contained but a single character ‘醋’ (vinegar). It was indeed as gall and vinegar to receive such a message, for whatever could it mean! Struggle as he might with it, search his brain hard and long, he could make no sense out of it.

Finally, he began to break up the character into its different compound parts (二十一日酉), and thereby he solved the problem and received his answer from old Neptune. The reply was that at evening on the 21st of the month the waters would be stayed. These directions were followed, the foundations successfully sunk and in due time the building of the wonderful bridge completed.

Note

1. Mackenzie-Grieve, Averil, "A Race of Green Ginger," Putnam, London, 1959, p. 112, 113.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 10

Enchanting Hui'an



...an out of the way village, in the county of Hui'an, or "Gracious Peace". The situation of this village is a most picturesque and beautiful one. Just outside of it, Toa-bu, or the "Great Mother" rises abruptly from the plain, and towers up amidst the peaks and mountain-tops that range themselves around it... In front of it there flows a stream that comes out of the heart of the mountain, its waters pure and sparkling, and as yet undefiled by their touch with the outer world. It never dries up, for its fountains repose deep in the bosom of those everlasting hills; and no summer's drought, nor fiery-faced sun can penetrate to where they lie. Its music, too, never dies out, for jutting rocks, and stones worn smooth, and curves and winding passages, and miniature falls make it sing an endless song.

—Reverend John Macgowan, 1889¹

Walled City, Stonemasons and Hui'an Maidens Hui'an's many claims to fame include the walled city of Chongwu (the best-preserved Ming Dynasty wall in China, and one of only a handful of walled cities left in the country), the uniquely costumed Hui'an maidens (Fujian's most unusual people group), and miles of beautiful beaches that are, supposedly, unlike any other on earth! Locals said of Chongwu's 13-km beach: "American scientists say the sand is unlike any other sand on earth. Each grain is six-sided, and therefore very healthful for the body!"

Well, I've always thought this was another planet in the first place. But Hui'an's biggest drawing card is not its extraterrestrial sand but its stone, which locals have been carving for 1,700 years.

Hui'an Stonemasons Over 100,000 of Hui'an's 1,030,600 folks work with stone. When Beijing needed stonemasons to build the Great Hall of the People and Tiananmen Square in the 1950s, they shipped in workers from Hui'an, because with over 1,700 years of stonemasonry under their belt, they are China's best.

Hui'an stone products—everything from furniture and tomb stones to carvings of deities, demons, Mickey Mouse, and American presidents—attract tourists and buyers from all over China and Southeast Asia. (Take a statue home in your carry-on!).

Shadow Carving Hui'an stonemasons may be the best but they aren't resting on their laurels. They continue to develop new materials, products, and techniques, including innovative shadow carving that would have Fred Flintstone clamoring for a family portrait (Fig. 10.1).

Fig. 10.1 Hui'an Shadow Stone Carving



Shadow carvers reproduce virtually any painting or photograph by tracing it onto a polished slab of marble, tapping out the design, dot by painstaking dot, and coloring it in. The figures are so realistic they look ready to jump off the stone.

Give the artists a good, high-resolution family photo, and they'll copy it for you, and mail it to your home. An 8 inch \times 10 inch photo costs from 300 to 600 yuan, depending upon the level of artistry desired (with some, dots are visible, whereas others really do resemble photos).

General Lin Lu—Father of Fujian Lins We know that Hui'an folks have been stone masons for at least 1,700 years because the carved granite tomb of General Lin Lu, ancestor of all Fujian Lins, is over 1,700 years old. You can visit this "Holy Land of Lins" at Tuling Village, north of Hui'an about 20 min on the No. 324 Highway (by the No.144-km marker). There's not really that much history about the place, since the tomb has been completely rebuilt with new granite sculptures and concrete. But it is something to think that all of Fujian's Lins descended from this man, who in turn was the descendant of a man hiding out in the woods.

The Story of the Lins

By Miss Qu Weiwei

Bigan (比干) was a famous prime minister during the Shang Dynasty, and uncle of the stupid emperor Zhou (纣). An honest man, Bigan was forever pointing out his stupid nephew's



Fig. 10.2 Ancient Chongwu Wall

mistakes. Eventually the heartless king had had enough, and cut open Bigan's heart (which did him little good because he was still heartless). The furious king wanted to kill Bigan's pregnant wife, too, but she ran off and hid in a stone house in a forest, or "Lin" (林), where she gave birth to a son whom she named "Jian", meaning hard, solid, strong (坚).

Some years later, another tribe toppled the Shang Dynasty and set up the Zhou Dynasty (周朝). The new king respected Bigan's honesty, so he found his son Jian and gave him the surname of Lin because the forest had protected him from death.

So Bigan's descendant was General Lin Lu, ancestor of all Fujian Lins, including the great hero Lin Zexu, the famed writer Lin Yutang, and the sea Goddess Mazu (whose real name was Lin Moliang).

Walled City of Chongwu This may be the best-preserved of China's few remaining Ming Dynasty walled cities. This delightful town, with its uniquely clad Hui'an Maidens (considered Fujian's most exotic people group) is just up the coast from Quanzhou and perched upon the horn-shaped Chongwu Peninsula. Originally an easily defended sentry post prized by famous heroes like Koxinga, the first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, changed the name from Dousai to Chongwu, which means "advocating of arms" (maybe the emperor was a Republican?). The walled city is well worth a visit—and fortunately you no longer must endure Abortion Road to get there (Fig. 10.2).

Abortion Road In the early 1990s, the sole road to Chongwu was so bad that locals claimed no pregnant lady could take the pot holes and bumps without losing

Fig. 10.3 Chongwu Walled City Entrance



her child. My first trip from Xiamen to Chongwu took eight hours, and we bounced so hard that I hit my head several times on the bus roof—which was 18 inches above my head. Fortunately, today it is smooth sailing all the way—but a century ago even an eight-hour trip would have seemed miraculous. In the nineteenth century, Mr. G. Philips wrote that the trip from Fuzhou to Quanzhou:

...which also takes five days to travel over, is bleak and barren, lying chiefly along the sea-coast, and in winter a most uncomfortable journey...

Nowadays, it is only a two-hour drive from Xiamen—freeway all the way.

Chongwu's 2.467-meter wall is easily the best-preserved Ming Dynasty wall in existence, and constructed entirely of Hui'an's greatest natural resource: granite. By day and night all throughout Hui'an, young and old alike chip away with stone and chisel to create everything from intricate temple dogs and garden lanterns to Mickey Mouses (or Mickey Mice?). They also build granite homes—and I know for a fact they're cold in the winter! Worse yet, the poor men have no one to snuggle up too, as you're about to learn... (Fig. 10.3).

Hui'an Maidens (Adapted from *Amoy Magic*). Chongwu's isolation on its peninsula prevented the ancient Baiyue people from assimilating into the Han culture, so much of their unique culture and dress still survives today. Considered Fujian's most unique people group (though they are Han Chinese), they lure both tourists and social scientists with their unique fashions and strange marriage customs.

Unique Costumes Chinese say Hui'an girls have democratic bellies and feudal heads because their tight, short jackets and skintight black hip huggers that flare out baggily at the legs leave their bellies bare, but they fastidiously cover their heads with

Fig. 10.4 Hui'an Maiden

scarves. A Chongwu girl told me they emphasize the belly because in the Minnan dialect, belly “bazai” sounds like the Mandarin “facai” (to prosper). She also said the blouses were probably short to keep them out of the sea when they bent over the nets.

Scarves Hui'an women have more scarves than Imelda Marcos has shoes. Miss Huang said they average 120 or so scarves, and some accumulate over 300. “The scarf makes my round face look longer and prettier,” she explained. “And older ladies think scarves help them recover their youth.”

Derriere Dowry Unmarried Hui'an girls wear a wide, colorfully embroidered belt, but Miss Huang was evidently married because she sported the heavy silver belt (from 1.5 to 6.5 pounds) that is not only a girl's dowry but also her marital insurance. “My husband doesn't dare leave me,” she said, “because I have all his wealth around my waist.”

Photophobia Hui'an women are notorious for photophobia. Miss Huang said many share a superstition common around the world—that being photographed shortens one's life. One wonders how they develop this negative outlook on photography (Fig. 10.4).

Tying the Knot I like Hui'an costumes; I even have a small statue of one on my desk in the XMU's MBA Center. But I doubt they leave their bellies bare simply to keep the blouses dry. I think the uncovered tummy is simply a tantalizing “revenge” for an ancient insult by a member of the lesser male species.

Legend has it that long ago, a young girl refused to marry a wealthy man. The man was determined to tie the knot, though, so he bound her up, carried her off, and married her in spite of her protests. Even today, the designs around shirts' sleeves



Fig. 10.5 Hui'an Women Sawing Ship Beams

and waists are said to remind Hui'an girls of their tragic ancestor's bonds. I also suspect the marriage customs are a form of eternal revenge upon all men.

Not This Year Dear... Ancient custom forbids bride and groom staying together on their wedding night, so the groom stays in a friend's house. On day two, the bride pays respect to the groom's family and gives gifts to the elders. On day three, the groom's sister leads the bride to the communal well to draw two buckets of water. After five days of obeying various customs, she returns to her parents' home. Bride and groom are not allowed to live together until she bears a child. But here I conceive a problem: When does she conceive?

Until a child is born, a woman cannot stay with her husband or even talk to him. If she meets him on the street, she must treat him as if he were a stranger. If her husband visits her home, she must wait in back until he leaves. The newlyweds are allowed to stay together only three times a year: Spring Festival, Grave-Sweeping Day, and Mid-Autumn Festival.

Hui'an lassies may be bothersome brides, but they are also indefatigable laborers. They clean house by night and spend all day lugging ponderous loads of rock or grain on baskets slung over their deceptively petite shoulders. Meanwhile, the men fish, or chisel stone in quarries, or hawk victims for their motorcycle taxis, or hang out in tea shops (Fig. 10.5).

Chongwu Religion Religion is a big part of Chongwu life, and with wives like theirs, I can see why. On festivals, Chongwu people light candles and incense and

offer sacrifices in the Temple of the 12th Lord, but nowadays, many also attend the newly renovated and expanded Protestant church, which was first built in the 1880s. As late as 1995, members sat on pews made of tree trunks split in half, but now the church has been rebuilt and expanded, and equipped with genuine pews, much to my *derriere's* delight. Chongwu's Catholic church attendance has also grown a lot recently. But Chongwu's most unique temple, by far, is dedicated to 27 People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers.

PLA Temple Imagine a temple that plays not Buddhist chants but revolutionary songs. Chongwu has one, thanks to Ms. Zeng Hen, who grinned and hugged me like I was the prodigal son returned, then gave me the red-carpet tour of her PLA temple, and told me the tale behind it.

Zeng Hen's family moved from Singapore to Chongwu when she was 13. The following year, September 17, 1949, the teen was strolling the beach when Taiwanese bombers began strafing the shore. Gallant PLA soldiers rushed out to her rescue; 24 died in the attempt. Ms. Zeng Hen tried to show her thanks and respects by offering sacrifices and incense to the deceased soldiers.

In 1991, with 600,000 yuan in donations, she built the PLA temple. Initially, the army objected, fearful she was creating another religion, but in the end, they saw it as a great opportunity for folks to show respect for the PLA, and over the years not a few army officers have visited the unique temple (Fig. 10.6).

Behind the altar loaded down with offerings of fruit, incense, crackers, soda cans, mineral water, wine and roasted watermelon seeds are the 27 little hand-painted PLA soldiers. (Three other local PLA martyrs were added for good measure). The figurines are fully uniformed and supplied with rifles and pistols, mobile phones, whistles, first-aid kits (a bit late for those?) and everything else a soldier needs. The 27 inhabitants are surrounded by toy tanks, airplanes, police cars, battleships, toy phones, and a pink plastic grand piano with a clown at the keyboard.

Ms. Zeng Hen has come a long way from the 13-year-old girl paying her respects with incense and fruit. I dare say that in a few centuries, folks will repeat the tale of how the 27 heavenly warriors descended upon a cloud to save Zeng Hen from the evil minions across the Strait.

Forest of Statues I think the walled city's greatest attraction is... the walled city! But even though this is one of the best-preserved Ming Dynasty walls in China, many Chinese tourists give it but a cursory glance and head to the seaside to view Chongwu's biggest tourist attraction—the forest of 500 new statues. Why bother? You can see thousands, for free, in the stores and factories lining former Abortion Highway Road (two decades ago, the modern highway into town was so bad that locals said a pregnant woman riding a bus over it would be bounced so badly she'd have an abortion). But one walk through the Forest of Statues and I changed my tune.

Over 500 statues portray fascinating people and events in history and literature (like *Dream of Red Mansions*, 红楼梦). The 108 famous generals from the *Outlaws of the Marsh* are also very popular. Chinese seem to revere generals. I doubt I could name a dozen American generals if my life depended upon it.

Hire a good guide to explain the stories behind the statues. For example, I'd have never known the polished black bull was stone, and that gave you good luck if you

Fig. 10.6 Chongwu PLA Temple



smacked it. Sounded like a lot of bull to me, but I smacked it, and the stone bull rang like a bell. I especially liked the chubby Maitreya Buddha, which I told my host looked like a Disney dwarf. “No way!” he said. “This beats Disney!” But I must have worried them because when I visited again a few months later, a granite Mickey Mouse stood behind Maitreya—for good measure, perhaps. Pretty Mickey Mouse, I thought.

Filial Piety A set of 24 statues represent the model sons in 24 tales epitomizing Confucius’ ideal of filial piety. Eight-year-old Wu Meng bared his body so mosquitoes would feast upon him first and spare his aged parents. Wang Xiang was so pious that when his wicked stepmother wanted fish in the winter, he lay upon the ice to melt the river with his body heat. Heaven took pity upon him and gave him the fish. A pious daughter breastfeeds her ailing mom. A pious emperor obeyed doctor’s orders and tasted his father’s excrement to help diagnose his father’s disease. Hindsight helped.

Black and White Cats My favorite statues are the two colossal cats representing Deng Xiaoping’s famous saying—“It does not matter if the cat is black or white as long as it catches rats.” The black cat has not only the mouse but also ancient Chinese coins under its paw and on its tail. Noting the lesson here, I thought it appropriate

to photograph Hui'an native Professor Wu Shinong in front because he can surely "catch mice" (his story is at the end of this chapter).

Earth Art Many visitors do a double take when they see the boulders strewn along the shore, because here and there they look for the world like a fish, or a turtle. We have a Zhejiang art professor to thank for this "earth art". With a few deft taps of the chisel here and there, he has transformed rocks and boulders into various sea creatures. I was right on top of a giant fish before I saw it. Good thing I wasn't Jonah.

Hot Bread for Taiwan Many of the white ships anchored offshore are from Taiwan. Closer to Taizhong Harbor (94 miles) than Xiamen, Chongwu was the mainland's first harbor to accept Taiwan ships. Chongwu and Taiwan folk jest that fresh baked Chongwu bread is still hot after making the two-hour crossing to Taiwan. With so many delays implementing the long-awaited "San Tong" (Three Links), it is nice to see that Chongwu already has her own "Mini San Tong" (小三通).

Amazing Walled City Maze The walled city is amazing. It is also quite a maze. Of course, it is no problem getting out because all you have to do is head in one direction long enough until you reach the wall, which you can ascend to get your bearings before you descend and lose them again. I've considered tying a piece of string around my waist and reeling myself in afterward, but some enterprising Hui'an peasant would probably cut the string and sell it. But after much trial and error (mostly error), I've figured out a surefire way of getting in and out.

The walled city has several large gates, and a few small ones. Enter the gate at the top of the narrow road that begins at the Protestant church and step back in time 300 years—except for the kamikaze motorcyclists who careen around corners, hands glued to their horns. Just down the path on the left is the Chen-Family Ancestral Home.

Chen-Family Ancestral Home The first time I peeked through the courtyard door of the Chen home, a granny grinned, spouted off something in the dialect, grabbed my arm, and led me inside for tea. They gave me a tour of their home, and showed me the ancestral paintings and photos.

They've been in this home for hundreds of years, and much hasn't changed—but Mrs. Chen does have a topnotch kitchen. Of course, this came as no surprise. Chinese are not only the planet's best cooks but also the best eaters, spending much of their waking lives cooking and eating delightful (most of the time) foods.

Their son was bent over a giant basin of dough making some of Chongwu's famous fish rolls. This family has sold them for several generations, and I bought about 10 pounds to give to friends back home. Sliced and fried, they are heavenly.

At the T My landmark is the "T" intersection's temple. Turn right at the "T" and follow South Gate Street (Nanmen Lu, 南门路) all the way to the seaside gate. Note the architecture—the rounded Minnan roofs, and the "flying sparrow" eaves. Also note the tailor, Mr. Chen. He uses a 100-year-old "Minjiang River" sewing machine—much the same as those used a century ago. Newly minted machines are made much the same, but no point in reinventing the wheel. They work, and they don't require electricity.

Lighthouse Ascend the wall opposite the temple and walk north to the lighthouse, which offers a nice view of the walled city, and of the large crescent of a beach, with

its fine white extraterrestrial sand (Hui'an has miles of beautiful beaches). Then either return the way you came, or walk along the top of the wall (which helps you avoid the funerals, which can back you up a dead end).

Funerals It seems that every time we visit Chongwu we encounter a long funeral procession of paid professional mourners, musicians—and plastic babies? The tail end of the procession often has several men bearing a litter containing naked plastic baby dolls. I asked what they symbolized but they said they didn't know. Rebirth, perhaps?

After seeing the third funeral in one day, I told an MBA student who was with me: "China has more dying people than any place on the planet."

"That's not true!" he protested. "We have great medical care here."

"It is mathematics, not medicine," I said. "Biggest population".

The walled city's streets are so narrow there is no way to escape funeral processions, so you just press your back to the wall and cover your ears to shut out the cacophony of cymbals, drums, trumpets, and "suona". "Suona" is the horn commonly played at funerals, but I'd think the shrill thing would wake the dead, not comfort them.

The professional mourners were so surprised to see us "Laowai", backs to the wall, that they forgot to wail and stared at us as if we were demons from hell itself, instead of just standard-issue foreign devils from afar. I waved, they grinned and waved back—and then got down to business again, wailing piteously as if in apology to the extinguished object of this parade.

The "Chinese Stare" One thing that has changed little over the past century is the "Chinese Stare". Everywhere, people gather around the "Laowai" and stare. It is unsettling at times, but understandable if you realize that we also stare at unusual sites, or people. If I recognize a movie star in Los Angeles, I do a double take. If I see an Arab in robes and headdress, I stare. And let's face it—as we "Laowai" tourists roam the narrow winding streets of Chongwu, we stare at them! Worse, we take photos as they go about their lives, as if they were exhibits. So, if we, the very unusual foreigner, are stared at, or surrounded by crowds, or have parents with little children point at us and say: "See, Little Plum Blossom, that's a foreigner!" (to which I often respond: "I can't help it!"), it is understandable. But fortunately, the crowds are friendly—and were even back in 1889.

When McGowan wrote *The Story of the Amoy Mission* in 1889, the Chinese were still smarting from the humiliation of defeat in the two Opium Wars, and foreigners were not always the most welcome site. Yet even then, McGowan wrote that, once the Chinese got to know you:

The crowd becomes sympathetic. The sneer dies out of their faces. There is nothing that touches the Chinese heart so mightily as practical benevolence. It is a virtue they highly appreciate. Their stolid, emotionless features begin to light up with genuine feeling, and the eyes of some are twinkling and flashing as their hearts are moved... (what) has just happened has been a mighty revelation. It has brought you closer to the Chinese heart than you were before, and it has revealed to you the wondrous possibilities of the future...²

So, as you stare at the places and peoples, accept their good-natured stares in return! And given that they are going to stare, give them their money's worth, as

I do when I talk to the village pigs, goats, chickens, and turkeys (both two- and four-legged varieties).

Huiquan Beer Quanzhou is famed not only for Anxi tea but also, more recently, Huiquan beer. Though I'm not one to root for beer (root beer is more my speed), bona fide beer aficionados claim Huiquan beer is one of China's best—and the best with seafood.

Huiquan has invested hundreds of millions to give Qingdao Beer (produced in the former German colony) and the imports a good run for their money. After Professor Wu Shinong showed me around the sprawling, modern Huiquan factory, we visited the biergarten (beer garden) downtown just outside the old factory where my companions tasted various brews while I stared at the sculpture on the back wall that looked suspiciously like a giant marijuana leaf.

I can't really judge Huiquan beer, so I checked with the pros at www.beeradocate.com, and found this review by "Stoutman":

A Chinese surprise!!!! Very light and easy to drink with a hint of fruitiness in the aroma. The yeast culture provides the perfect refreshing spicy and fruity character that is expected of a wheat beer. Even stranger, this beer has an almost pale green color. It also has considerably more hop flavor than any of the traditional wheat styles of beer I have sampled. I generally dislike wheat beers, but this one is good.

Wood Carving While Hui'an's biggest drawing card is stone carving, the city also has quite a few factories producing quality wood statues. I waltzed in unannounced at the Hui'an Jusheng Crafts Company, and even though they knew I wasn't going to buy, the general manager, Mr. Lu Peiyang (卢培养) and his 16-year-old son Lu Dongqiang (卢东强), served up the tea and gave me a tour of the four-story factory.

Mr. Lu said most of Hui'an's wooden statues are religious objects for export, and suggested I look for secular carvings in Putian or Xianyou, up the coast toward Fuzhou. I was surprised that, given the high quality of the wood and the artistry, the statues were painted, gilded and smothered in wigs and costumes. I asked what the point was of using expensive wood when mass produced plastic or ceramic would look the same. "Tradition," Manager Lu said. "Temples want wood."

Idol Talk The endless array of wooden idols brought to mind the old Chinese saying, "He who carves the Buddha does not worship them." And I wondered what kind of deities they were, and who on earth (or China) worshiped them. For example, the nattily attired idol wearing a fez and clasping a pile of gold coins in his lap looked Muslim—which wasn't too far-fetched. Muslim traders, after all, were the best businessmen in the ancient Orient. But Muslims don't worship idols, and Miss Qu Weiwei checked it out and found he is Nadu Gong (拿督公), a local earth god (Tudi Gong, 土地公) for overseas Chinese in Malaysia. When they first moved to Malaysia, they discovered the natives worshiped the local earth in the hopes of a good harvest. The Chinese adapted the idea by piling some gold in the down-to-earth deity's lap so he would know just what kind of harvest the enterprising Chinese wanted.

For your edification, Overseas Chinese University's Miss Qu Weiwei gives us the stories behind three of the most common idols.

The Chinese Zorro! Jigong Living Buddha (Geekung, 济公活佛) is a favorite subject for sculptures and paintings, and one of China's most colorful characters. Also called "Crazy Monk" (Jidian Monk, 济颠), this wine swilling, meat munching monk was loved by the common people because he cared for the poor and put the rich in their place—kind of like a Chinese Robin Hood (罗宾汉) or Zorro.

Jigong was born to the Li family during the Southern Song Dynasty in Zhejiang Province. By age 12, he was already a "Xiucui" (skilled writer, 秀才), but he was obsessed with the sutras and became a monk, changing his name from Li Xiuyuan (李修远) to Daoji (道济). Jigong loved meat, especially dog meat, and getting drunk, and in general acted like a mad man. This unorthodox behavior earned him the nickname Crazy Monk. Today, a cave by Linyin Temple's (灵隐寺) Flying Stone (飞来峰) has beds and tables named after Jigong because it is said that he went here to roast dogs and guzzle wine.

Jigong used a ratty old folding fan for a weapon, which in his magical hands was deadlier than the sharpest sword. Armed with this magical fan, he fought injustice and punished stupid or bad officials. The Chinese saying for his behavior is, "When encountering injustice, aid the oppressed" ("Lùjiàn bù píng bō dāo xiāng zhù", 路见不平拔刀相助). Like Zorro, Jigong fought injustice with style, usually causing the villain to look ridiculous, which earned him the affection of the downtrodden.

The Story of Jigong (《济公传》) was written about the mad monk, and some people believe he was one of the 500 arhats, but because Buddha did not approve of his behavior (especially his wine guzzling and penchant for roasted puppy legs), his statue is always in the temple aisles and not with the other more holy arhats (who still manage some mighty bellies for being vegetarians; I suspect they had a few hot dogs too).

Nazha (哪吒), the fat little boy with the funny haircut, is another frequent subject of paintings, sculptures, and folk tales. The story actually comes from India. The boy Nalakuvara was said to be the third son of General Li Jing (李靖) in heaven. His father disliked the boy and treated him like a monster because he was in his mother's womb for three years and emerged round like a ball.

Nazha's powerful teacher gave him a magic ring (乾坤圈)—a great gift, but one that led him to his doom when he practiced with it upon the seashore. The ring was so powerful that it stirred up the dragon king's underwater home. Nazha wasn't really trying to make waves, but the infuriated lizard sent his son to fight Nazha. After Nazha killed the dragon's son, the dragon king determined to kill the entire family of General Li Jing (who was much lower in rank than the dragon). To save his family, Nazha committed suicide by cutting his body and bones to pieces. His powerful teacher then saved him by using a lotus for his body, after which he became the original flower child. Over the years, the legends multiplied. In *Journey to the West* (西游记) Nazha even battled the monkey king (but was defeated by the superior simian).

Black and White Wuchangs These two demons stick out above the crowd because their long red tongues are always sticking out, lolling down past their fat chins. Mr. White Wuchang has a white face, white clothes, and a tall white hat upon which are the four characters "Tianxia Taiping" (天下太平), meaning "All under

heaven is peaceful.” Mr. Black Wuchang has a black face, black clothes, and a black hat with the characters “Yijian Facai” (一见发财), meaning, “You prosper as soon as you see him.” Both phrases are nice (peace, and prosperity), but Chinese fear seeing them because what is the point of either peace or prosperity if you’re dead?

Mr. White and Mr. Black have different personalities but the same job description: kill folks and escort their souls to hell, where they are judged by the king of hell after they have undergone various procedures and ordeals such as crossing the Naihe Bridge (奈何桥), where they must drink the Mengpo Soup (孟婆汤) so that they forget everything that happened during their life.

It seems a bit unfair to be judged for a life you’re totally forgotten, but Mengpo Soup or not, in Chinese mythology, once you die there is hell to pay.

Professor Wu Shinong—Hui'an Entrepreneur

It is easier to understand Hui'an's rapid economic growth when you've spent a few years in the shadow of a Hui'an entrepreneur like Professor Wu Shinong, of XMU's MBA Center (now XMU's Vice President). He epitomizes the local talent and drive that made ancient Zaytun a City of Light, and that is rekindling that light today.

Wu Shinong was born in Hui'an County, and after graduating from high school in 1974, he spent four years as a factory worker during the “Cultural Revolution”. His parents owned a small grocery store before 1949, and after Liberation escaped being labeled capitalists because of their stores' small scale—but since then the Wu family has proven to be entrepreneurs to the bone.

After 1949, they became sales people in a state-run store. Today, they have two houses and several stores. Wu Shinong has three older sisters and one older brother. The brother runs a small watch store, the older sister is retired, the middle sister runs a small transportation company with three trucks, and the youngest sister works at Huiquan Beer (her policeman husband was my guide on one of few dozen Chongwu trips).

Wu Shinong, like the rest of his family, is an entrepreneur. In fact, I joke that his name should be “Wushi buneng” (无事不能) because I suspect there's not much he can't do when he puts his mind to it. But fortunately for me, he has focused his talents on China's future: MBA business education.

In 1978, Wu Shinong entered XMU, majoring in economics, and in 1986 received an MBA from Dalhousie in Canada. From 1987 he worked on a joint PhD program between XMU and Dalhousie; spending two years in Xiamen and one year in Dalhousie, was a Fulbright scholar in Stanford in 1994, and returned to Xiamen in 1995.

Though young (my age!), Professor Wu Shinong has been integrally involved in every step of China's development of management education, beginning with the initial feasibility study from 1987 to 1989, and the test group

for MBA education in China (18 professors from nine universities organized this).

In 1999, Professor Wu was selected as one of the 10 Chinese professors who have had the most influence on empirical research in economics and management. The prolific professor has written four books, co-authored three, and published 60 pieces in leading journals. He also helped translate Steven Ross' bestseller, *Corporate Finance*. Professor Wu was the first person in China to study security market efficiency, and the effect of financial information on capital markets.

Early on, Professor Wu upset the apple cart when he published a paper on China's accounting in *General Accounting Research*. In part because Professor Wu is not an accountant, traditional economists heatedly argued his points, but younger scholars recognized the validity of his arguments and approach. During his studies, Professor Wu saw that the holistic viewpoint was crucial—"seeing the interrelationships between capital markets, accounting information, and how they affect one another and investors."

Professor Wu, who studied economics and statistics, said:

In 1991, because the Chinese capital market was just established, there was no precedence, very short history, and no promotion of empirical studies. In 1995 I started thinking about this problem, and we had a better information base at that time, and I was able to show that the capital market did react to financial information, and corporations' announcements. So, I started thinking about this. In 1993 I wrote the first paper about capital market efficiency, but I only had 16 firms from Shanghai and Shenzhen security exchange to study. It was a small number, but it was only the first attempt. Nowadays we have larger samples—sometimes more than 1,000 firms. And now you can find that there is relatively stable behavior, or patterns to examine, and you can compare or use Western capital market theory to apply to China's situation, and you can see differences, and explore the reasons for the differences. There are so many questions of interest.

Regarding XMU's MBA program, Professor Wu said:

Only a handful of universities can offer comprehensive PhDs in management (in all specialties). XMU is one of them. In July 1990, XMU was the first Chinese university allowed to offer a Chinese MBA; Nankai followed one week later. MBA degrees weren't official then, so the graduation certificates said: "Economics (Business Administration M.A.)." Students were upset, so we called it the Masters of Economics (Business Administration).

Nankai, like XMU, began as a joint project with Canada. They had the first graduates one week after XMU's MBA—they were told by Beijing to follow the procedures already worked out with XMU.

In his copious free time, Professor Wu is a husband and father—and judging from his daughter, doing pretty well at that too. His daughter is a math whiz, as well as good at English and Chinese, in the top 15 of her school, and wants to study journalism, law, or management—first at Peking University, and then on to Harvard, Stanford, or Cambridge.

Notes

1. Macgowan, Rev. John, *The Story of the Amoy Mission*, reprinted by Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, Taipei, 1971. Originally by Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, London, August 1889, p. 127.
2. Ibid.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 11

Nan'an—Home of Koxinga



Jiuri Mountain (九日山). The official starting point of the Silk Road of the Sea was not Quanzhou city proper but Jiuri (9th Day) Mountain in Nan'an, about seven km from Quanzhou city's West Gate. The Han Chinese had a big (or actually, a very small) reason for not settling down on the coast—mosquitoes.

The coast teemed with malarial mosquitoes, and tens of thousands died before they moved inland. Only after a massive land reclamation effort, which drained the malarial marshes, were Chinese able to move to the coast itself. But Jiuri was an auspicious place to begin because of its perfect “fengshui” (“wind and water”—the Chinese geomancy that dictates much of Chinese life).

A Chinese guide in northeast Fujian told me that a NASA photo showed glowing spots all over China, and on inspection they all turned out to be ancient tombs—thus proving, scientifically, the validity of “fengshui”.

The mountain is called Jiuri (9th day) because from the Jin to the Song dynasties, disposed nobles in Quanzhou climbed the mountain each year on the 9th day of the 9th month, and gazed with longing toward their former home in the north. And here they performed the Safe Passage Ceremony, for both Chinese and foreign ships, to the “God of Transportation” (precursor of California Highway Maintenance).

Yanfu Temple. Fujian's oldest temple (or second oldest, some argue), was built in 288 at the base of Jiuri Mountain, facing the river to the south, with hills on the west, east and north, like an armchair. Jiuri offers ideal “fengshui”—and a picturesque pallet for centuries of calligraphers.

At Dr. Lim's we met a calligrapher of note. Persuaded to write an inscription for us, his brush almost miraculously brought life and movement to the paper. With a superbly graceful precision, his hand seemed to be evoking beauty that was already there, rather than making a dogmatic statement. But the Chinese have, it seems, always known that and beauty cannot be taken by storm.

—Averil Mackenzie-Grieve¹

Calligraphy. While Yanfu Temple is one of Jiuri Mountain's 36 official sites, the real drawing card is calligraphy. My Chinese guide boasted: “Every meter of these cliffs is covered in ancient calligraphy!”

“So are American subways,” I said. And speaking of that, Jiuri even has English calligraphy—not graffiti but real calligraphy.

UNESCO Calligraphy. The 1991 UNESCO Maritime Silk Road Expedition visited Jiuri Mountain and left an English inscription, with signatures in many Western languages. The English UNESCO inscription reads:

Seven centuries after the ‘begging wind’ inscription a new inscription illustrating friendship and dialogue will be added to Jiuri Mountain. We, the international team of the UNESCO Maritime Road Expedition, who have traveled from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe on board the *Fulk al Falan* ship of Hefoe lent for the occasion by the Sultan of Oman, are here as pilgrims not only to renew that age-old prayer but also to carry the message of peace between peoples which is the ultimate aim of the UNESCO integral study of the Silk Road. Roads of dialogue. 15 February 1991, International Team Maritime Road Expedition.

The most important inscriptions are the records of the sacrificial rites held by Southern Song Dynasty Quanzhou officials when they prayed for smooth sailing (which UNESCO called “begging winds”). Other key inscriptions include those by famous Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi, and the unique inscription by Luoyang Bridge’s builder Cai Xiang. Where other calligraphers wrote on paper and had it transferred to stone, Cai Xiang wrote directly on the stone—but what would one expect from a man who was said to have received bridge building advice from King Neptune himself.

A concrete pavilion near the peak, crafted to resemble wood, honors an esteemed poet who lived there for 23 years. A round, flat stone is inscribed with “Fan Jing Shi” (Translating Sutras Stone, 翻经石), in memory of the Indian monk (拘那罗陀, Indian name, or 真谛三藏, Chinese name), who lived here around 300 while translating Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. He must have had company because he scratched a Chinese chess board into a stone.

One of the most unusual inhabitants was a monk who lived in a tiny cave for 44 years. Some say he was Chinese, while others say Indian. Regardless, it is hard to believe he could have spent his entire life in that hole-in-the-wall.

Stone Buddha (石佛) is 300 years older than the Old Stone Saint in Quanzhou. After he lost his head during the “Cultural Revolution”, Hui’an artisans crafted a cement head, which probably helps give Stone Buddha a more concrete philosophy on life.

Minnan Village Cultural Landmark (蔡资深古民居). For a delightful look at 19th century life, visit Nan’an’s sprawling Minnan village just south of Guanqiao, and two km west of the No.324 Highway. The 16-house complex, which now has 200 residents, was built between 1865 and 1911 by Mr. Cai Qian (Cai Zishen), a Nan’an native with three brothers and 10 sons. At age 16 he emigrated to the Philippines, where he prospered, and after carving a name for himself in the Philippine history books, he returned to Nan’an to carve (literally) a home for himself and his descendants.

None Like Mr. Cai’s. What makes Mr. Cai’s home really stand out is the profusion of intricate stone, wood and tile carvings, from granite foundations to intricate ceramic eaves. The endless carvings gave rise to a local saying: “You can have millions, but not have a house like Mr. Cai.”

The caretaker, a 4th generation descendant of Mr. Cai, gave us tea, and then a tour. The village has stone sidewalks covering the drainage, firewalls between each row of buildings, and large courtyards to dry grain. As I entered the home, I was told that Minnan homes always had three steps to represent “Tian” (heaven, 天), “Di” (earth 地), and “Ren” (benevolence, 仁). There are also four doors, and a Minnan tradition reminds one to “respect parents when entering the right door”, and “respect others like brothers” when exiting the left door. Of course, one should never, ever, enter through the two center doors!

Doors. Traditional houses had four front doors, but the two center doors, with their brightly painted celestial guardians, were always kept barred, and opened only for the emperor. Everyone else, including the master of the house (and her husband) used the side doors.

In 2020, a man in west Fujian threw open his center doors with a flourish and said: “Only for the emperor—and today, for you!” It was a nice gesture, but with everyone watching, I could not bring myself to step over the lintel, so I said: “Not even us American devils are that fat!” And as my host laughed, I slipped in through the right door.

Ming Dynasty Styrofoam. The chipped corner of an old, richly carved “beauties bench”(美人靠), upon which foot-bound beauties spent their days on display, revealed not wood but some white material. I looked closer and discovered it was Styrofoam! But I wasn’t overly surprised. Chinese invented everything else, so why not Styrofoam? But it turned out that a 20-part TV series about Koxinga’s descendants had been filmed here and this was just a leftover movie prop.

Mr. Cai’s Unusual Well. Chinese love wells, the older the better—like the 1,000-year-old well at Ashab Mosque, or the 2,000-year-old well at Wuyi Mountain’s Minyue King Palace. And of course, they swear that the water in each well is as clear as the day it was dug (regardless of decades of tourists losing within its depths their eyeglasses, cameras, handkerchiefs). Mr. Cai’s well was not old, but it was allegedly very unusual. The water is supposedly warm in winter and cool in summer. Professor Wu Shinong drew some water from the well to prove the point, but it seemed neither hot nor cold. Near the well was the Cai Clan stone tub in which girls bathed in water to which had been added aromatic herbs.

Virgin Goddess Mazu? The ancestral shelf’s various gods included a local god with a flowing white beard, and a small “Pusa” that evoked quite a debate. One man claimed it was the Virgin Mary, because Mr. Cai had spent most of his life in the predominately Catholic Philippines. Another argued she was a Buddhist goddess, perhaps Guanyin (the Hindu god who had a sex change to become the Chinese goddess of mercy). Yet another said it was Goddess Mazu, who like Mary was also a virgin, and therefore perhaps the same person. I stayed out of the conversation.

Eclectic Architecture. Given the architecture, who knows what religion they worshipped! One wall’s base has a Hindu lotus motif, while a nearby roof has Muslim style eaves (the roof dragons, by the way, were allowed on the homes of 7th-level government officials or higher).

Tom and Jerry. Many carvings illustrate historical stories or fables. One wall’s base has a granite mouse stealing a gourd, but his days are numbered because a granite

cat is eyeing him. A wooden wall carving depicts the 24 models of Confucian filial piety that we saw represented in Chongwu's Field of Statues—the son baring his arm for mosquitoes to keep them off his parents, the youth melting ice with his bare back to get a fish for his ailing wicked stepmother, the maid breastfeeding her ailing mother, the pious emperor tasting his father's excrement to help diagnose his disease, etc. We could also learn a lesson or two from the headless horseman...

Headless Horseman. During the “Cultural Revolution”, Red Guards destroyed cultural treasures in even the most remote places, so Mr. Cai's home, so close to a highway, was not neglected. They destroyed or defaced carvings, and chiseled off so many heads and faces that that Mr. Cai's house has more headless horsemen than *Sleepy Hollow*. Like the carvings of Confucius' tales, these headless statues also teach a lesson to those of us who want to get a head—or keep our head.

Elegant Old Furniture. Rooms were rather bare by American standards, but what little furniture they had was exquisite. One room was empty but for a round mahogany table with inlaid marble top, and benches. The canopied beds now fetch thousands of dollars in antique stores, though Xianyou has excellent reproductions. (Imagine my dismay when an Anxi peasant friend told me they had just burned a beautiful 200-year-old carved canopy bed because a grandmother had died in it!).

Renovations. Endless carvings and calligraphy are nice, but for me it was a bit overkill. What I most appreciated was the sheer functionality of the place, right down to small details like the sliding slatted wooden windows. But if Mr. Cai's mansion cost a pretty penny to build, it is now costing the government a small fortune to keep it up as well. Nan'an's former Mayor Chen said the government has spent over 1 million yuan in restoration and installation of fire alarms, and hires security guards to protect their investment. Unfortunately, these guards are about 30 years too late to stop the Red Guards from beheading horsemen.

Music to My Ears. At the Cai Mansion guard gate we came across elderly gents playing traditional instruments. They gave us a rousing performance of Southern Music and Mayor Chen unabashedly belted out the accompaniment for some ancient Minnan folk songs. But the high-pitched folk songs in the nasally Minnan dialect aren't exactly my cup of tea (or coffee either), and it must have showed. The man playing the two-stringed Chinese fiddle (“erhu”, 二胡) apologetically explained that Minnan singers are limited because they have only the five notes of the ancient pentatonic scale. It sounded to me like they had dozens of notes, and none in a key that I'd ever heard of. But I smiled, and said: “No problem. I know all eight notes and I can't sing either.”

Nan'an Cuisine. After visiting the Cai Mansion, we had a delightful lunch of Nan'an cuisine (Minnan cuisine, but with some delightful twists I'd not seen elsewhere). I especially enjoyed the lamb rib (“yangpai”, 羊排) with peanut sauce, the taro and black mushrooms, and the Minnan rice with dried oysters and taro (芋头饭). I thought it would be hard to stomach the local specialty, “Twice boiled fish stomach in pork broth” (鱼鳔煲), but it was actually quite tasty. We also enjoyed bitter melon and pine nuts (苦瓜和松子) and Nan'an's most expensive fish, Eastern

Star Fish (东星鱼), which costs 175 yuan a “jin” (1.1 lbs) even here in the outback. I think they misnamed it. It should be named Eastern Five-Star Fish! After a dish of hot succulent crab (which Chinese call a “cool” food), we were served piquant ginger tea, which is “hot”. This balanced the body’s “heat” and also cleared the palate for the next course.

As we ate, Mayor Chen explained that the son-in-law of Tan Kah Kee (Chen Jiageng) was born in Nan'an, and after the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, most of XMU's money came from the son-in-law, not Tan Kah Kee—hence XMU and Nan'an's close relationship. But Nan'an's favorite son is, of course, the Japanese/Chinese pirate-cum-hero liberator of Taiwan, Koxinga! So we trudged off to his ancestral home's Koxinga Memorial Hall.

Koxinga Memorial Hall (Zheng Chenggong Jinian Guan, 郑成功纪念馆)

Koxinga, who liberated Taiwan from the Dutch, is as much a hero to the Japanese as the Chinese. For one thing, Koxinga was partly “made in Japan”—born in Japan of a Japanese mother and Chinese father from Nan'an. Japanese also admire his bravery and loyalty, and during the 19th century, plays about Koxinga were as popular in Japan as Shakespearean plays in England. Koxinga died in Taiwan and was buried in Tainan until his grandson brought his body back to his ancestral home in 1699, but today Taiwan has over 100 temples dedicated to Koxinga.

Man of Steles. The Koxinga Memorial has photographs, paintings and artifacts, and to the right of the memorial is a “stele forest” with a large collection of stone steles graced with the calligraphy of famous folks. When I asked how they got important personages to laboriously carve Chinese characters onto stone, my guide looked at me as if I were from outer space and not just another country (though Chinese does strike me as from another planet at times), and said: “They didn't carve the stone. They wrote it on paper, and workers traced it onto polished granite or marble and carved it out.”

I had no idea what they said, but I appreciated their innovativeness. In fact, they were so innovative that my Chinese friends could not read some of them either. Maybe they were doctor's prescriptions?

The characters on one stele were stylized roses. Another used the beautiful ancient characters that resembled what they represented (sun, moon, mountains) until centuries of scholars so stylized them that they became unrecognizable. One calligrapher drew his characters in such a way that they resembled a scholar (for the life of me I could not figure out what it said).

The exhibit also has some of Koxinga's calligraphy, in which he warned: “Study is most important.” Maybe so, but good marksmanship didn't hurt either—especially after the scholar Koxinga burned his Confucian robes and went to war. While Edward Bulwer-Lytton claimed: “The pen is mightier than the sword,” I suspect that usually only holds true when the pen is 22 calibers.

After the memorial and forest of steles, check out Koxinga's ancestral home at the bottom of the hill, and then visit the Koxinga Mausoleum.

Legend of the “Made in Japan” Chinese Hero Koxinga

Zheng Chenggong (1624–1662), called Koxinga by the Dutch, learned his trade from his father Zheng Zhilong.

Zheng Zhilong was from Shijing 石井 (stone well), at the mouth of Anhai creek (location of the famous Anping Bridge). In his youth he studied foreign trade in Macao, then sailed to Japan and applied Portuguese trade principles to piracy. By the 1620s, Zhilong's enormous fleet literally ruled the Fujian coast. In 1626 and 1627 he attacked and took possession of Amoy (Xiamen) Island, which became the base for his piracy and smuggling operations. In 1628, Zhilong surrendered to the Ming authorities so he could enjoy official status, and as a reward he was promoted to major and then provincial military governor, thus making the transition from pirate to politician (which was not much of a transition). By now, Zhilong's family were practically the overlords of Fujian Province, and with his tremendous wealth, he built a walled town south of Quanzhou in Anping (Anhai), which became a prosperous trading center.

Zheng Zhilong supplemented his enormous fortune by selling protection to traders—which they dared not refuse, because Zhilong had over 1,000 ships and a private navy under his control. But Zheng Zhilong sealed his fate when he surrendered to the Manchus after they invaded Fujian, because he was opposed by no other than his son, Koxinga.

Somewhere in Zhilong's busy pirating schedule he had found time to marry a Japanese maid, Miss Tagawa, who bore a son: Fu Song, aka Zheng Chenggong, aka Koxinga. Legends claim that stars fell and the heavens sang on the night of his birth.

When Koxinga was seven, his father shipped him back to the ancestral home of Nan'an for school. Like all fathers before and since, Zhilong wanted his son to have what he did not have as a youth—namely, lots of homework.

Koxinga was an excellent scholar and survived both school and homework, and at age 21 headed off to Nanjing State College, never dreaming that his future lay not in scholastics but in piracy and politics—thanks to the militant Manchus.

After a peasant army overthrew the Ming Dynasty, the Manchus waltzed into the power vacuum and created the Qing Dynasty. After a fight in Fuzhou in 1646, Tagawa (Koxinga's mother) was raped by Manchus on Amoy and committed suicide. When Koxinga's father surrendered, Confucian filial piety dictated that Koxinga also throw in the towel (remember the 24 parables of Confucian piety?), but for some reason (perhaps his mother's suicide?), Koxinga parted ways with his father.

In 1647, at the tender age of 23, Koxinga and his over 90 followers began his Gulangyu-islet based anti-Qing rebellion.

Koxinga changed Xiamen's name to Siming (“Remember the Ming”, 思明), which is the name of one of Xiamen's two main streets even today. Gulangyu Islet's Sunlight Rock was his command center, and training ground for Koxinga's legendary fighters. He chose as his body guards (Tiger Guards) only those who could pick up a 600-pound iron lion and walk off with it.

Koxinga's legendary fighters wore iron masks and iron aprons, wielded bows and arrows painted green, and used long handled swords for killing horses—a brilliant strategy he learned in school days while studying about the Great Wall. (The Great Wall was built to keep out not the barbarians but their horses, for while the Tartars were well-nigh invincible on horseback, on foot the Chinese easily made Tartar sauce out of them).

On April 21, 1661, Koxinga set sail with 25,000 men and hundreds of war junks to drive the Dutch from Taiwan and return the island to the motherland. This mission cost him his life, but forever endeared him to Chinese on both sides of the Straits. On January 27, 1662, the Dutch surrendered, and Koxinga's men kicked back and played the Mooncake Gambling Game (you will too if you're in south Fujian or Taiwan during Mid-Autumn Festival). But patriotism had taken a greater toll on Koxinga's health than piracy had. He died five months later on June 23. One Chinese historian noted somberly that Koxinga “died of overwork”. May it be a lesson to us all.

Koxinga's son took over his father's work, but in the end Koxinga's descendants were done in by the descendants of a young soldier that Koxinga wronged and vastly underestimated...

General Shi Lang (施琅)

The great hero General Shi Lang was but one of Koxinga's tens of thousands of nameless soldiers when Koxinga ordered him put to death. Shi Lang escaped, so Koxinga had his entire family put to death instead, but Shi had revenge (of a sorts) on Koxinga's descendants.

Years later, when the Qing emperor wanted to oust Koxinga's descendants from power in Taiwan, he asked Premier Li Guangdi (李光地) which general to send. Li Guangdi was from Hutou (湖光) Town in Quanzhou's Anxi County (安溪县). You can visit his former home (“Li Guangdi Guju”, 李光地故居) in Anxi's Hutou Town.

Premier Li knew of Shi Lang's hatred for the Zheng Clan, so he urged the emperor not to appoint a northerner, who had no feelings about the matter, but to appoint a local who had vested interests in the matter—Shi Lang. Shi was of course delighted to cross swords with the descendants of the man who had murdered his family, but upon his victory, instead of seeking revenge, Shi Lang allowed Koxinga's descendants to return to Quanzhou, and to bring back

the body of Koxinga to be buried in Nan'an. This rare combination of military prowess and benevolence earned Shi widespread respect and admiration (though once in power, the Shi family turned out to be fairly rascally as well).

General Shi Lang is also remembered for rebuilding and expanding Nanputuo Temple in 1684, during the reign of Emperor Kangxi. Shi Lang added the Great Mercy Hall for the worship of Guanyin, Goddess, and changed the temple's name from "Pu Zhao" to "Nanputuo". The large bronze bell was cast during his reconstruction project. On the emperor's orders, Shi also expanded the Goddess Mazu Temple on Meizhou Island because he attributed his success on Taiwan to the sea goddess's intervention. If you'd like to meet the great man, drop by his tomb—not in Nan'an but to the north of Quanzhou, but while we're on this grave subject, I'll throw in a few words about tombs.

Tomb Raiders

China's historic tombs are a grave site for anyone expecting to encounter something really historic. Most tombs resemble Lin Lu's resting place, where the emphasis is more on the extinguished gentleman's comfort than on preserving historic relics. Not only have significant tombs undergone complete face lifts, with new stone and concrete embellishments, but ancient carvings have vanished. Of course, some are in museums, where they are protected from the elements, vandalism, and theft. But at least the folks in charge should put up a sign (and photos) explaining what used to be on the site, and where it has gone to.

Wangchao's Tomb. A Chinese book described the marvelous old stone animals around Wangchao's Tomb so I headed Toy Ota down a narrow winding rutted road, through a village and across fields, until I finally found—a new construction site!

The grand arch is impressive, but I climbed all over the site and found nothing but a little chunk of stone sheep that was cowering in the grass. Disappointing. But Shi Lang's Tomb turned out to be a site for sore eyes!

General Shi Lang's Tomb. Just above the Luoyang River, on the No. 324 Highway, a sign for General Shi's tomb points west. I figured it would be just off the road, but it took half an hour to get there. It turned out to be 15 km away, and I stopped every few minutes to make sure I had not missed it. It is not that easy to find, but it is one tomb that is well worth the trip. And judging from the size of the parking lot, the locals are expecting a lot of tourists to visit the final resting place of the benevolent general.

The entire site has obviously been recently renovated, but with style. The stone path leading to the tomb crosses a river and winds underneath shrubs that have been pruned to form shady arches. The general still rests in his old tomb

in the back, up against the hillside, his top two wives on either side. Rows of newly hewn granite officials guard the general's grave, and before them are two rows of original carved animals.

It is a great tomb—and worth the ride to get there.

Note

1. Mackenzie-Grieve, Averil, "A Race of Green Ginger," Putnam, London, 1959, p. 112, 113

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 12

Jinjiang and Shishi



My apologies for lumping together the two fine cities of Shishi (Stone Lion City, 石狮) and Jinjiang (晋江) in one chapter, but I am less familiar with these areas, even though they do have quite a few interesting historical sites. In fact, I have an entire book on Jinjiang sites, which was settled earlier than Quanzhou city proper, and is the home of many famous overseas Chinese, but I am personally familiar with only three: Cao'an Manichaean Temple (草庵摩尼教寺), Chendai Village's Ding Clan Ancestral Temple (陈埭丁氏回族祠堂), and the Ancient Kiln in Cizao (磁灶古窑址) (we'll look at kilns and porcelain more closely in Dehua). But for the record, here are some key sites.

Cao'an (草庵) Planet's Last Temple to the Religion of Light. Manichaean Temple, not far from the Sisters-in-Law Tower, is the planet's last bastions of the Persian religion Manichaeism, "The Religion of Light" (an esoteric combination of Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and any other religion that was handy). Mani's followers arrived in China in the late 7th century—just about the same time as their arch rivals, the Muslims and Nestorian Christians.

The Persian founder Mani (216–276) taught that existence is nothing but an eternal battle between good and evil, light and dark. He adopted elements of many religions, reasoning that each contained at least a grain of truth. Mani's malleable metaphysics appealed to St. Augustine, who followed the religion for a decade until his conversion to Christianity.

St. Augustine. The famous Catholic saint and scholar knew too well the eternal battle between good and evil—at least during his hormone driven youth. The intellectual genius partied by night and prayed by day: "God, grant me chastity—but not yet!" After his illegitimate teenage son died, he entered the Catholic clergy, denounced Mani, wrote a bestselling series of anti-Mani literature, and became a bishop and a saint. The jury is still out on where he ever achieved chastity, but from the expression on paintings of the man, I doubt it.

Tang Dynasty Chinese called the increasingly popular religion Moni, Momonifa (Law of Moni), Xiao Moni (Little Moni), Da Moni (Great Moni), etc., and after the Tang it was called Ming Jiao (Religion of Light). For 600 years, this "Religion of

Light” found increasing acceptance throughout China, especially around Quanzhou. In 1946, workers outside Quanzhou’s Tonghuai Gate unearthed the tombstone of a high-level Yuan Dynasty clergymen responsible for governing foreign religions, including Manichaeism and Christianity.

Mani’s influence in Fujian was so extensive that there is even a small Mani shrine on the peak of Ningde’s remote Taimu Mountain, though today it is used by worshipers of the Taimu Goddess.

The growing popularity of the white-robed Manicheans, led by priests wearing violet headpieces, worried Buddhist competitors. The Buddhist history *Fozu Tongji*, compiled between 1258-1269, denounced Mani worshipers as “vegetarian” devil worshipers. (Odd they should note the vegetarian aspect, since Buddhists too, in theory, avoided meat).

Mani’s minions worried the government—with good reason, it turned out. The politically-inclined Mani worshipers helped overthrow the Yuan government and enthrone Zhu Yuanzhang, who named his new dynasty “Ming”, and then rewarded the Ming Religion by banning it. Supposedly, one reason was that he objected to the Ming Religion having the same name as his new Ming Dynasty (which just proves China’s early concern for intellectual property rights).

Despite persecution, Mani’s religion kept a toehold in Quanzhou, which today boasts the planet’s last Mani temple—the Thatched Nunnery. It was built in 1339, after villagers had spent 26 years carving statues of Mani all over the cliffs of Huabiao Mountain. The artists must not have had a good photo to go by because Mani bears a striking resemblance to standard issue Chinese deities—except that he sports four braided dreadlocks, and has rays of light emanating from behind.

In spite of its uniqueness, some worshipers still think Mani is in fact Guanyin, the popular Goddess of Mercy. I asked a nun if they worshiped Mani or Buddha and she said: “Mani, of course!”

“What’s the difference between Mani and Buddha?” I asked her.

She pondered this, then said: “You’ll have to ask someone in charge, but there’s no one in charge at the moment.”

Chendai Village and Ding Clan Ancestral Hall. Chendai Village has so many Hui minority folks surnamed Ding that I had to drive at a snail’s pace lest I get a Ding in my bumper. Some of the Dings, with their big noses, curly hair and beards, looked like they were ready to burst out in Arabic, not Chinese. Many are not practicing Muslims, but they are fiercely proud of their ancestry, and their Arab forebears’ achievements. And modern Dings are quite the entrepreneurs as well!

Mr. Ding Jinhua (丁进华) gave me a tour of the Ding Clan Ancestral Hall (Hui Nationality Exhibition Hall, 陈埭丁民回族祠堂). This unusual ancestral hall is built in southern Fujian architectural style, but the decorations are Islamic, and it has been carefully designed to resemble the Chinese character “Hui” (回), with a square hall in the center of a larger square courtyard.

Pools. The ancestral hall is quite a museum, with three walls of photographs and displays behind glass. They have also prepared a nice little pamphlet on the history and contributions of the Ding Clan (but no English version).

I tried everything to get a good photo of the “Hui” shaped hall, including climbing to the tip top of the mosque. Mr. Ding solved the problem by leading me to the market across the street and borrowing a rickety 30-foot bamboo ladder. While two Muslims held the swaying ladder from below, I climbed it, praying silently that they held no historical grievances against Christians. But I made it to the roof, and snapped some good photos of both the hall and the pool in front. Buddhist temples have similar pools, which are used for gaining merit by freeing captive fish, but Muslims have no qualms eating fish.

On Ancestral Worship

But the foundations of ancestral worship are not laid on shadowy, visionary soil of myths and legends, but on substantial, solid, historical ground. Ancestral worship has its origin both in the family and nation and is both a family and a national custom. It is as old as the empire itself. Contemporary with the birth of the nation, it has become so interwoven in the warp and woof of its history, that to attempt to disengage the strings would be to destroy the whole fabric... No other one thing in its entire history has tended more to bind this people together or to perpetuate the nation than this universal respect (whether sincere or a sham) for the living and devotion for the dead; and no other one thing has so bound them to the dead past or so diverted their attention from the living future.

—Pitcher, *In and About Amoy*, 1912.

If the Shoe Fits. The Chinese Mainland produces over 50% of the world’s sports shoes 80% of these come from Fujian, and most of these are from China’s “Shoe Town”, Chendai Village.

Not even Imelda Marcos could have dreamed that this sleepy village would end up with over 1,000 shoe enterprises doing over 2 billion-yuan business annually, and have a US\$22.3 million, 150,000-square-meter shoe market. Nearby Anhai Town is China’s largest leather tanning base, and Baiqi Town is the center for rubber sole production.

Quanzhou as a whole now has over 300,000 people employed in more than 4,000 industries producing every make of foreign and domestic shoe possible (excluding, possibly, horse-shoes). In fact, Quanzhou produces fully 20% of the world’s sports and casual shoes. But no wonder. Quanzhou has 100,000 shoe salesmen, and 30 subsidiaries and agencies abroad.

Jinjiang, which produces over 500 million pairs of shoes annually, hosted the 1st Jinjiang International Shoe Fair in March, 1999. The four-day fair displayed over 5,000 kinds of shoes, shoe machines and shoe materials. Over 100,000 people took part in the show, 21 agreements were signed, and sales reached 1.3 billion yuan. In addition, two Hong Kong specialists gave lectures to 400 business and government leaders.

The latest in computerized design and production technology enables Quanzhou firms to not only keep quality high and costs low but also to go green. Many firms are substituting rubber for azo, and PU for PVC, using benzene-free glue, and replacing white glue laminators with thermosol versions of shoe parts.

For more on the Quanzhou shoe industry, please turn to the supplement at the end of this chapter.

Rizal International Shrine in Jinjiang. In 2002, Jinjiang invested 10 million yuan to create the five-hectare Rizal Memorial Park, with its 18.61-meter-high statue of Rizal (much higher than the 12-meter statue of Rizal in Manila). Filipino business leaders invested an additional 2 million yuan. Filipino House Speaker Jose de Venecia

said that China's park was a "great symbol of the 1,000-year-old friendship between our two nations", and that "This Rizal Park in China helps elevate the status of our Philippine national hero Dr. Jose Rizal as a hero for the whole Asian region."

Rizal's Humble Ancestral Home. The Rizal Memorial Park will become a must-see for Filipino-Chinese, 80% of whom, like Rizal himself, trace their roots to southern Fujian. But more impressive than the sprawling (and expensive) park is his tiny ancestral hovel in the little village right beside the park. It is amazingly small and in poor repair for a man of his stature, but refreshing. It shows where the man came from. In a few years it will probably have been replaced by some concrete monstrosity of an ancestral temple, with magnificent arches, Rizal idols, and calligraphy explaining how he descended from the heavens to save the Philippines.

Jose Rizal

The Filipino Hero From Quanzhou

Jose Rizal was born June 19, 1861 in Calamba, Philippines, and died December 30, 1896, in Manila. This patriot, physician and intellectual was an inspiration to many generations of Filipinos.

Rizal was the son of a wealthy landowner on the island of Luzon, and his mother was one of the most educated Filipino women at that time. Rizal studied medicine in the University of Madrid and became leader of the Filipino students in Spain. He pursued reform of Spanish rule in the Philippines, though he stopped short of demanding Filipino independence from Spain. In Rizal's eyes, the Philippine's primary enemy was not Spain, which was undergoing dramatic reform, but the Catholic faction that clung to power in Spain's impoverished colony (Fig. 12.1).

Rizal continued his medical studies in Paris and Heidelberg, and in 1886 he published his first novel, in Spanish. *Noli e Tangere* exposed the evils "of the Catholic friars" rule much as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* brought to light the evils of America's slavery.

Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1892 to found a nonviolent reform society, La Liga Filipina, in Manila, but was exiled for four years to Mindanao, in the northwest, where he continued his scientific research and founded a school and hospital.

A nationalist secret society, the Katipunan, launched a revolt against Spain in 1896. Though Rizal had absolutely no connections with Katipunan, he was arrested, found guilty of sedition, and executed before a firing squad in Manila. The evening before he was executed, he wrote the Spanish masterpiece, *Mi Ultimo Adios* (My Last Farewell), which helped Filipinos realize that there was no alternative to independence from Spain.

Other Jinjiang Sites

Anping Bridge. The longest bridge on earth during the Middle Ages, it is still the longest stone bridge today. But given its length, avoid the midday heat. And while you're in Anhai...

Anhai Starry Pagoda (Anhai Xingta, 安海星塔). Pagodas don't excite me, usually, but the Starry Pagoda is very distinct. This beautiful red and white four-sided, five-level pagoda was built in 1629, and is elegant in its simplicity of design.

Fig. 12.1 Rizal International Shrine



Rizal Int'l Shrine (Jinjiang)

Dragon Mountain Temple's 1,000-Handed Guanyin (Longshan Si Qianshou Guanyin). Taiwan's famous Longshan Temple is an offshoot of this sprawling Buddhist complex, which was first built during the Sui Dynasty (581–618). A millennium later, this was one of the temples that Koxinga's nemesis, General Shi Lang, helped to renovate. The Guanyin's 1,000 hands, with an eye upon each palm, represent her omnipotence and omniscience, but a Buddhist abbot confided to me: "That's just symbolic. If she really had 1,000 hands and eyes, she'd be quite a monster!"

Buddha and Relief Cliff Carvings of Nantian Temple (Nantian Si Shifo Moya Shike). Three cliffside carved stone Buddhas are said to be the crown jewel of southern Fujian stone carving. Nantian's calligraphy is also popular, particularly the *Quannan Foguo—Buddhist Kingdom of Quan* written by Wang Yipeng (泉南佛国, 王一朋著).

Stone Lion City (Shishi). In just over a decade, the 1,300-year-old city of Shishi has metamorphosed from a backwater town into a modern center of commerce and industry. Shishi is now the garment capital of Fujian, and perhaps the largest garment center in Asia, and hosts the Cross-Straits Garment and Textile Expo.

Shishi's more than 5,000 factories in the textile and garment industry did over 56 billion yuan in business in 2017, and the way things are going, businesses like

the 5,000-square-meter Xinhua Bra and Underwear Factory aren't going bust anytime soon.

Shishi Tour Sites

Sisters-in-Law (Gusao) Pagoda. If you get high on pagodas, head east to Shishi's 21.65-meter-tall Sisters-in-Law Pagoda (Gusao Ta), which was built on Baogai Hill (宝盖山) in 1146. Women used to wait upon this hill for the return of husbands and sons from sea voyages.

The Legend. A Song Dynasty man sailed to Southeast Asia to seek his fortune and promised to return in three years. His wife and sister missed him so badly that they piled up stones by the river and watched for him, year after year, but he never returned. The two women died of grief, and the sympathetic villagers called the rock pile "Sisters-in-Law Tower". And somewhere along the line (1146, actually), the rock pile metamorphosed into a four-story pagoda that is one of Quanzhou's navigational landmarks even today.

Six Victory Pagoda (六胜塔) is located on the very northernmost tip of a Shishi peninsula. Description: tall.

Shishi's Gold Coast Holiday Village (Shishi Huangjin Hai'an). The South Fujian Golden Seashore Holiday Village is quite a massive undertaking. The first phase included the Golden Beach Paradise, Yacht Club, Food Plaza, Seaside Resort, and China's largest ocean theme park, the South Fujian Ocean World, which included an Aquarium, Dolphin Performance Hall, Diving, Underwater Performances, etc.

Shishi has miles of beautiful beaches. Yakou (衙口), just a few kilometers south of Shishi, has one of the finest stretches of sand in China. While you're in Yakou, you might want to visit Shi Clan's Ancestral Temple (衙口施氏祠).

Inway Ni—A Young Quanzhou Entrepreneur. Inway, from Anhui, was one of the most driven MBA students I've ever had. Even before graduating he had started several businesses. But he also knows balance. When his wife had a daughter, he exclaimed to me happily: "Before, I was a full-time businessman. Now I'm a full-time father—and part-time everything else!"

The Quanzhou Tiger

"Asian Tigers" usually brings to mind some Asian countries, but Quanzhou is a tiger in its own right.

During Marco Polo's days, when Zaytun was the start of the Maritime Silk Road and a global commercial and cultural crossroads, the city traded in everything imaginable. Today, the new Quanzhou seems to actually produce about everything imaginable, and has been making great contributions to Fujian and all of China. Over the past two decades, Quanzhou's economy has accounted for one-fourth that of Fujian Province, and 1.3% that of the entire nation!

Private enterprise is playing a pivotal role, accounting for 80% of Quanzhou's GDP as early as 2000.

Cyber Expo—The E-Silk Road. Quanzhou has so many thousands of enterprises that it can overwhelm the potential buyer or investor. Fortunately, the city has embraced the latest Internet technology and practices to create a Cyber Expo open to the world 24 hours a day, all year round.

Early on the Quanzhou government recognized the growing role of e-commerce and net marketing, and in September 1999 initiated the first online product expo (the Never Closing Expo). The Cyber Expo offers each participant a standard cyber-booth, which includes a home page, sub-domain name, e-mail box, pages for 10 products with text and photos, order-and-pay system, information release system, and net management system. The expo website also offers cyber booths for companies outside of Quanzhou.

The Cyber Expo's 1st session included 1,145 enterprises and over 12,000 projects. The 2nd session, opened December 8, 2000, had 1,500 companies and 20,000 products. The first two sessions resulted in over 1,000 orders with a value of US\$ 17 million. The 3rd session, which opened November 3, 2001, doubled the previous session, with 2,580 companies and over 30,000 products.

The 4th session of China Enterprises and Products Online Expo, (November 2, 2002—November 1, 2003) drew over 3,000 companies from many industries, including textile, shoes and clothing; construction and building materials; arts and crafts; food and beverage; hardware and machinery, petrochemical; electronics and information; tourism and service, and such new ventures as biology and medicine, new materials, environmental protection, and deep processing of farm and sideline products.

The 4th session also held concurrently the 2nd session of China Enterprise Cyber-Marketing Cooperation Conference, and was attended by global business and government representatives, and cyber-marketing experts.

China Enterprises and Products Online Expo is sponsored by Quanzhou Municipal Government, Fujian Economy and Trade Commission, Fujian Township Enterprise Bureau, and organized by the Quanzhou Township Enterprise Bureau, insuring participants of a top-quality program.

Strike Gold at CIFIT (China International Fair for Investment and Trade)

The best place to scout out business opportunities, whether in Xiàmén or elsewhere, is our annual CIFIT (Zhōngguó Guójì Tóuzī Màoùyì Qiàntán Huì, 中国国际投资贸易洽谈会).

Every two years on September 8, CIFIT hosts pavilions with investment opportunities in every province in China, from coastal Fujian to the Himalayan heights of Tibet.

CIFIT has been responsible for over half of foreign investment to small and medium enterprises, and for much of large businesses as well, with over 100,000 visitors and exhibitors from over 144 countries and regions, and over 2,000 international and governmental institutions, business associations and enterprises. CIFIT's over 1,800 forum and seminar speakers have included top Chinese leaders, Nobel Prize winners, United Nations officials and vice premiers of various countries. As of 2005, CIFIT had witnessed the signing of some 11,362 investment projects worth over US\$60 billion.

Want to Know More? Municipal government officials are glad to provide information and materials on investment opportunities, and other “Laowai” and “Laonei” businessmen should also have a good handle on how to go about setting up shop, and home, in Xiamen.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 13

Anxi—Oolong Tea Capital of China



No Fujian Tea, No U.S.A.?

December 16, 1773, angry American colonists, disguised as Native Americans, protested against the British tea tax by throwing 342 crates of Fujian tea into Boston Harbor. Thus, Fujian helped pave the way for American independence. While it is not certain that Anxi tea was one of the 5 kinds of Fujian tea at the Boston Tea Party, Anxi tea was even then very popular in the West.

Fujian has long been China's tea capital, and Quanzhou's Anxi County the chief source of Oolong tea, which at one time was so precious in Europe that only royalty drank it. There are many legends about how tea drinking came about. One says that the Indian monk who introduced Zen Buddhism to China around 530 cut off his eyelids so he would not fall asleep while meditating, and where the eyelids fell, a plant with leaves shaped like eyelids sprang up. And as luck would have it, these leaves, when brewed, created a stimulating beverage that further helped both the eyelidless master and his pupils stay awake during meditation.

It is a nice story, but I don't see eye-to-eye with it because Chinese drank tea long before Bodhidharma played his eye-opening prank. Many Chinese believe tea drinking began almost 5,000 years ago with the "father of agriculture", the almost mythical Emperor Shen Nong (2,737–2,697 B.C.). The first real proof of tea drinking comes from the tombs in Tibet and Xi'an that proved tea was consumed over 2,000 years ago during the Han Dynasty, and the doctor and surgeon, Hua Tuo (華佗, 140–208) wrote about the use of tea in a medical text "Huatuo Food Sutra"《华佗食经》. The use of Tea in ancient Tibet proves that the Silk Road was well established over 2,000 years ago, and tea slowly increased in popularity until the Tang Dynasty, when it became one of the great national pastimes of China—along with poetry, painting, calligraphy, music, martial arts, and all of those other peculiarly Chinese practices perfected over the past 5,019 years.

Our trouble is that we drink too much tea. I see in this the slow revenge of the Orient, which has diverted the Yellow River down our throats.

—J. B. Priestley



Fig. 13.1 Anxi Tea Ceremony

Chinese claim that tea not only tastes good but also cures everything from bad eyes to impotence, and was a chief ingredient in the Taoist's elixir of immortality. Tea must also be highly addictive, because we foreign devils fought two Opium Wars and forced the drug on China at gunpoint, for a century, just so we could balance our trade deficit and pay for our tea (and silk, and porcelain).

Tea fanned the flames of American independence in Boston, when colonists threw it overboard during the Boston Tea Party. Tea made the Hatter Mad. But the tea that tantalizes “Laowai” and “Laonei” alike nowadays is a far cry from the concoctions Chinese used to brew up (Fig. 13.1).

While Chinese abhor foreigners' adulteration of quality tea with cream and sugar, only 1,500 years ago (yesterday by Chinese's standards), the citizens of the Celestial Empire added not just sugar but also rice, ginger, salt, orange peel, spices—even onions. Fortunately, either tea tastes better nowadays or Chinese are inured to it because except for the Tibetans (who still add rancid yak butter), and groups like western Fujian Hakkas (who add pounded meat and veggies), the only thing added to tea nowadays is pure water, preferably spring water, and if not that, then running river water. And it is served up in elegant yet simple Minnan tea ceremony, which many consider the precursor to the elaborate Japanese Tea Ceremony. But whereas Japanese have almost made a religion of preparing, serving and sipping tea, the Chinese ceremony has retained a pragmatic simplicity. Chinese do tend to stand on

ceremony about a lot of things, but when it comes to food and drink, their primary aim is to please not protocol but the palate.

So, while you're in Anxi, or anywhere else in southern Fujian, make sure you take in the Minnan Tea Ceremony. Who knows? It might just cure you of everything that ails you.

And while you are in Xiamen or just about anywhere else in China, drop by the award-winning Huaxiangyuan Tea shops, run by three generations of an Anxi tea family.

Tao of Tea

Chinese tea lovers never developed an intricate tea ceremony like *chanoyu* in Japan—which, by the way, they tend not to like because its elaborate stylization is quite contrary to the Taoistic feeling of spontaneity and carefree informality they associate with tea drinking. Nevertheless, there is definitely a Chinese art of tea. It is known as “Ch’a-shu”.

...Tea is at its best when enjoyed in pleasant surroundings, whether indoors or out, where the atmosphere is tranquil, the setting harmonious... Nevertheless, a perfect combination of these five—setting, company, tea, water and tea-things—will fail to work its magic in the absence of the special attitude required to do them justice.

The key to that attitude is mindfulness...

When the mind, having freed itself from the trammels of past and future, is fully concentrated on the Here and Now, a whole range of pleasures involving ears, eyes, nose, palate and mood can be enjoyed by two or three people who have come together to make and drink fine tea. However, that enjoyment would fade in the presence of reverential silence, stiff formality or self-consciousness.

—John Blofeld

Anxi Tea—Elixir of Life?

“We Told You So...” 1.3 billion times! Chinese are indefatigable proselytizers, especially of Chinese medicine and tea. If I so much as snuffle, every neighbor, colleague and student on campus accosts me with sure-fire Chinese herbal cures, or compel me to swallow two dozen tiny black pellets made from poisonous toad venom (I kid you not!). One fellow assured me that a patent medicine cured colds, guaranteed, in three days. I asked why, if this was true, his own daughter had a cold for over a week. He looked at me as if I were proof of why some animals ate their young, and said: “It was two different colds.”

Likewise, all of my Chinese friends feel compelled to recite a litany they no doubt learned in school: “Coffee’s bad for you but tea is healthy.” And how I hate a smug, “I told you so”—especially 1.3 billion of them. Scientists in the US and Japan have discovered that when it comes to fighting cancer, green tea is twice as effective as red wine, 35 times more effective than vitamin E, and 100 times more effective than vitamin C at protecting cells and their DNA. Of course, that’s just a restrained Western scientist’s viewpoint. Chinese enthusiasts believe the leaf is the long sought-after Taoist elixir of immortality.

Five Hundred-Year-Old Home! (Anxi, Hutou)

Anxi Tea Tackles Cancer? Anxi “Chinese Long-Life Tea”, which won 1st prize in the 2001 Fujian Province Tea Competition, is a popular “medicinal” tea. One website claims that this supposedly 2,200-year-old tea blend (Anxi wasn’t even around 2,200 years ago!) regenerates the body at cellular level, attacking free-radical onslaughts, delaying cellular aging and detoxifying the liver, as well as “cure nervous disorders, arteriosclerosis, cardio-vascular failures, premature aging, divers skin conditions including boils, kidney and liver insufficiencies, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout”.

As if reading my mind, the author went on to say:

Regrettably, recalcitrant Western medicine does not only reject any remedy that lists a too splendid array of claims, but will violently antagonize its spread, branding it as a sheer hoax. Which is the reason why Anxi tea is still widely unknown in the Western world.

I must rank among the recalcitrant Westerners, because when they claimed that folks in Siberia and Ecuador, as well as China, live up to 120 years because they drink Anxi tea, I wondered how on earth those remote people got hold of it. Amazon.com, perhaps?

Tea Tours. Anxi tea is a big business nowadays, and produced in sprawling tea processing factories, but you can still run across peasant households producing fine teas using time-honored methods and homemade machines. You’ll need a local or a guide to help you find them, but it is worth the search, especially when they pull out their cheap little red clay tea sets and, with care and reverence, brew up some homegrown leaf.

Your best bet to find such a family is to visit the smaller villages like Longmen (Dragon’s Gate, 龙门) south of Anxi county proper. And a suggestion: take a generous bag of candy for the kids and you’ll have little friends for life.

Another suggestion: taking photos! Every family wants a good photo of the elderly to display after they pass on, but an 8 inch x 10 inch costs a small fortune for a peasant household. As you travel throughout the countryside, take photos, get their addresses, and mail them a copy. You’ll have a friend for life—or maybe even longer!

Fujian China International Travel Service (CITS) provides guided Tea Tours of farms, factories, markets, and the Anxi Tea Museum.

Touring Anxi. There’s more to Anxi than tea! Every time I visit this rural county, I discover new historical, cultural and natural treasures. For instance, I’ve visited the remote township of Hutou (湖头) at least a dozen times because it is the hometown of Lixi, our “baomu” (household helper, 保姆), who has been with us since 1988 and is now the 5th member of the family. But the only thing I really knew about Hutou was that it produced south Fujian’s best rice noodles (mifentiao, 米粉条). Then last year I learned that Lixi was born in a marvelous 500-year-old earthen building.

The deeper I delve, the more fascinating Anxi becomes—and it changes each time I visit, shifting shape with the seasons and the unique cultural and religious traditions and festivals that are celebrated monthly (probably even weekly).

Half the town turned out for this celebration, and the other half of the town joined in when the foreigner showed up in a Toyota!



Fig. 13.2 Anxi Qingshuiyan Temple

Prime Minister Li Guangdi’s Former Residence (Li Guangdi Guju) in Hutou (湖头). I had visited Hutou a dozen times or more, never imagining that this little backwater was home to an illustrious Qing Dynasty Prime Minister, Li Guangdi, who recommended to the emperor that General Shi Lang be the man in charge of ousting Koxinga’s descendants from Taiwan.

The 3,120-square-meter home, first built in 1698 (37th year of Emperor Kangxi’s reign, in case you’re dying to know) is in Hu’er Village, Hutou Township, Anxi County (Anxi Xian, Hutou Zhen, Hu’er Cun).

Qingshui Cliff Temple (Qingshuiyan Temple). One of China’s most picturesque temples, this rambling three-story affair was built in 1083 right up the side of Penglai Village’s densely forested Pengshan Hill, clinging to the hillside rather like the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet. After it burned down in 1277, monks raised money for the 12-year renovation project that was completed in 1317 (Fig. 13.2).

Qingshui Cliff Temple is a very holy place for Buddhists, and its incense burner has been used to light incense for over 100 burners scattered about Taiwan. A brochure claims that Qingshui attracts over 600,000 visitors annually, and I can see why. Nice temple—but for me, the biggest attraction is the incredible scenery, and the massive trees. An ancient camphor tree is so large it takes half a dozen people holding hands to reach around it. The ancient sentinel is called “Facing North” because when the tree heard that the Song Dynasty general Yue Fei (岳飞) had been murdered by a treacherous official, the tree held out all its branches to the north to express its sorrow.

Nine Peaks Cliff is another of Penglai Town's cliffhanging sites. Built in 1415, during the time of Muslim Navigator Zheng Hé, its eight official sites include Line Mountains, Three Tablets, Lions, and Huge Rock (catchy name, that one). The real attraction, for me, is the surrealist scenery, with fog-enshrouded peaks covered with forests of bamboo and camphor, and villages nestled in the valleys. But Chinese like the calligraphy, the number-one piece probably being the poem by Ming Dynasty Premier Zhang Ruitu (张瑞图), which reads: "A thousand tree branches have but one trunk, numerous branches of the Changjiang River (the Yangtze) have but one source (乔木千枝原为一本, 长江万派总是同源)." It is particularly appropriate because the little town of Penglai is the source of many streams of overseas Chinese, many of whom have returned to their ancestral homeland to help rebuild it.

Like Qingshui Cliff Temple, (and just about every other temple in Quanzhou, as well as Christian churches and the Muslim Mosque), Nine Peaks Cliff has been renovated with the aid of generous donations from members of Penglai's over 100,000 overseas Chinese community. They had good reasons for leaving Anxi, and fortunately, even better reasons for returning.

Anxi Fights the Poverty Amidst Plenty. Anxi is the ancestral home for well over 700,000 overseas Chinese, mainly in Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Nearly one-fourth of Anxi residents have overseas relatives or have lived abroad, and 2 million Taiwanese are of Anxi ancestry. Anxi folks cut the apron strings and went abroad because Anxi, though blessed with rich natural resources, was also impoverished in the old days.

Anxi has long been famous not just for tea (the best coming from Changkeng, Xiping and Gande) but also for other resources like fruits, minerals, and the forests of Gande, Fengtian, Lutian and Longjuan townships. In northern Anxi, Jiandou and Weili produce anthracite, Qingyang has manganese, and Pantian mines produce ore with over 55-percent iron content. The area also has some beautiful crystals.

Anxi Serves up "Chicken Soup for the Soul!" My farmer friends in Anxi's Hutou and Jiandou know that I've collected rocks, gems and crystals since I was a child, and several times have phoned to say: "Professor, we've found another rock for you!"

When I was ill a few years back, two Hutou friends made the long (and costly) trek to Xiamen bearing gifts for both body and soul. They presented me with a live mountain chicken, which they had lugged on the bus for hours (it was for medicinal broth), and a beautiful crystal that a farmer had found in a field and saved for me.

Anxi people are rich indeed—at least in the ways that count.

Though rich in resources, Anxi was until recently impoverished economically. In the mid 1980s, Fujian's poorest county was Fu'an; Anxi was second. The primary cause of their poverty was the county's remote location. Even in the mid 1990s, the bus from mountainous Anxi to Xiamen's markets took eight hours, but new concrete roads, many built with the aid of overseas Chinese, have cut the journey to two hours.

Markets are now mushrooming for Anxi's mountain mushrooms and edible fungi, which are excellent income generators for forested areas because they don't require a large initial investment or long gestation period.

Anxi Anti-Poverty Strategies. My little Anxi friends have a much brighter future today, thanks to Anxi's anti-poverty strategies, which have earned it honor as a model

county. Anxi's strategies include measures like providing capital and expertise to impoverished villages, preferential policies for mountain-area development, and an emphasis upon trade and investment.

Anti-poverty teams have helped set up local enterprises and mushroom farms, renovate existing enterprises, improve mining operations, raise tea production, combat soil erosion, start fisheries, overcome transportation problems and find markets both in Fujian and throughout China.

After selecting Longmen (Dragon Gate, 龙门) Township as a "Science and Technology Anti-Poverty Demonstration Site", Fujian Academy of Agricultural Sciences sent in experts to improve agriculture and livestock practices. Over a four-year period, household incomes reportedly grew 160%.

The Oolong Tea Research Institute and Oolong Tea Quality Control Center have helped improve teas, gained footholds in lucrative markets like Shanghai, and exhibited the tea in national and international exhibitions.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of Anxi County, Quanzhou, and Fujian Provincial Government, Anxi farmers can now have their tea and drink it too! Of course, it helps a lot that Anxi people aren't just waiting for aid but taking matters into their own hands with grassroots movements—like the Longmen Bridge project.

The Book of Tea

Kakuzo Okakura's *The Book of Tea*, published in 1906, is a marvelous little treatise on the influence of tea on Asian culture, of the differences between the East and West, and of why we should try to narrow the gaps. A reviewer wrote of the book: "The words linger with you long after you have finished, and tea, once an ordinary beverage, acquires a soul—a source of peace."

(Teaism influences) our home and habits, costume and cuisine, porcelain, lacquer, painting—our very literature...the initiated may touch the sweet reticence of Confucius, the piquancy of Lao Tzu, and the ethereal aroma of Sakyamuni himself.

The average Westerner, in his sleek complacency, will see in the tea ceremony but another instance of the thousand and one oddities which constitute the quaintness and childishness of the East to him... When will the West understand, or try to understand, the East? We Asiatics are often appalled by the curious web of facts and fancies which has been woven concerning us. We are pictured as living on the perfume of the lotus, if not on mice and cockroaches. It is either impotent fanaticism or else abject voluptuousness. Indian spirituality has been derided as ignorance, Chinese sobriety as stupidity, Japanese patriotism as the result of fatalism. It has been said that we are less sensible to pain and wounds on account of the callousness of our nervous organization!

Why not amuse yourselves at our expense? Asia returns the compliment. There would be further food for merriment if you were to know all that we have imagined and written about you. All the glamour of the perspective is there, all the unconscious homage of wonder, all the silent resentment of the new and undefined. You have been loaded with virtues too refined to be envied, and accused of crimes too picturesque to be condemned. Our writers in the past—the wise men who knew—informed us that you had bushy tails somewhere hidden in your garments, and often dined off a

fricassee of newborn babes! Nay, we had something worse against you: We used to think you the most impracticable people on the earth, for you were said to preach what you never practiced.

Such misconceptions are fast vanishing amongst us. Commerce has forced the European tongues on many an Eastern port. Asiatic youths are flocking to Western colleges for the equipment of modern education. Our insight does not penetrate your culture deeply, but at least we are willing to learn. Some of my compatriots have adopted too much of your customs and too much of your etiquette, in the delusion that the acquisition of stiff collars and tall silk hats comprised the attainment of your civilization.

Pathetic and deplorable as such affectations are, they evince our willingness to approach the West on our knees. Unfortunately, the Western attitude is unfavorable to the understanding of the East.

Perhaps I betray my own ignorance of the Tea Cult by being so outspoken. Its very spirit of politeness exacts that you say what you are expected to say, and no more. But I am not to be a polite Teaist. So much harm has been done already by the mutual misunderstanding of the New World and the Old that one need not apologize for contributing his tithes to the furtherance of a better understanding.

Let us stop the continents from hurling epigrams at each other... We have developed along different lines, but there is no reason why one should not supplement the other?

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 14

Dehua—China’s Ancient Porcelain Production Center



The Chinese pottery (porcelain) is manufactured only in the towns of Zaytun and Sin-kalan... The best quality of (porcelain is made from) clay that has fermented for a complete month, but no more... The price of this porcelain there is the same as, or even less than, that of ordinary pottery in our country. It is exported to India and other countries, even reaching as far as our own lands in the West, and it is the finest of all makes of pottery.

—Ibn Battuta, *History’s Greatest Traveler* (1304–1369)

A Passion for Porcelain. While it is true that Westerners sold opium, for centuries, Chinese trafficked in porcelain, which for Europe’s royalty was as addictive as any poppy product. Thin as eggshells, translucent in sunlight, ringing like a bell when struck, porcelain captured the imagination of Westerners like nothing since Cleopatra’s Chinese silk negligees, and was so seductive in its allure that Europeans used “China” as a euphemism for “sex”.

Janet Gleeson, author of *The Arcanum—the Extraordinary True Story*, an absorbing account of the Europeans’ passionate pursuit of porcelain, notes that in Wycherley’s 1675 play, *The Country Wife*, an admirer sees Mr. Homer with Lady Fiddler and begs: “...don’t think to give other people china, and me none; come in with me too.” After Lady Fiddler comments: “...we women of quality never think we have china enough,” the exhausted Mr. Homer says: “Do not take ill, I cannot make china for you all...”.

The Arcanum—The Extraordinary True Story, reads better than a mystery or thriller as Janet Gleeson recounts the incredible lengths to which Europeans went to discover the “Arcanum” (the secret of porcelain production), and the extremes they went too to preserve the Arcanum once they discovered it. The European’s passion for porcelain created an entire industry for corporate espionage, and counter-espionage.

European monarchs gleefully bankrupted national treasuries to satisfy their passion for porcelain. And like monarchs who a millennia earlier were obsessed with spying out the secrets of silk, so Europe’s kings were driven to fathom the secret behind porcelain, which like silk was worth more than its weight in gold. Countless potters and scientists were imprisoned until they either produced porcelain or rotted in the attempt. Most rotted. But Quanzhou had the answer.

Zaytun, one of ancient China's two great porcelain centers, was famed for its pure white porcelain, which is considered even today by connoisseurs to be the most sublime of porcelains. Zaytun shipped its celestial crafts, via the Silk Road of the Sea, to the four corners of the earth. Song Dynasty porcelain went for a song and a dance at home, but it fetched a king's ransom abroad—with good reason.

While Chinese were wielding chopsticks and delicate tableware, my European forebears used fingers and wooden boards, so they descended upon China in the search for plates, bowls, spoons, and spices (medieval Europeans, lacking refrigerators, used Asian spices to doctor spoiled meat).

Wits and Half-Wits. In the 1990s, some Chinese media claimed, in all seriousness, that Chinese were smarter than us barbarians because chopsticks require more dexterity than knives and forks. This may be true. But knife and fork require two hands, whereas chopsticks only use one. Therefore, we use both sides of our brain, whereas chopstick wielders only use one. In other words, our full wit, versus... I rest my case.

About 1,000 years ago, clusters of kilns were located all over Quanzhou, from Hui'an and Jinjiang to Tong'an (Tong'an and Xiamen were part of Quanzhou back then). Eleventh century comb-decorated bowls from Tong'an have been found in Japan and Southeast Asian countries.

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, production expanded and gradually moved from the coast to the inland regions of Anxi and Dehua, where output grew fivefold during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Alas, much of the ancient.

Qudougong Ancient Kiln (屈斗宫古窑址). Since 1949, archaeologists have found over 180 ancient porcelain kilns, dating from the ancient Song Dynasty to the more recent Qing. These kilns have fired the imagination of guidebook authors, who have written of the 17-chamber Qudougong Kiln: "Such a large-scale kiln of ancient times looks like a dragon crouching on a hill, magnificently." Archaeologists recovered over 6,700 Song and Yuan Dynasty relics from the kiln's 17 chambers.

This well-preserved ancient kiln, discovered in 1976, is located on the southwest hillside of Mount Pozai, in Baomei Village, Xunzhong Township, Dehua County. Whether you're an expert or a layman, this fascinating site gives insights into Song and Yuan Dynasty ceramic technology and technique.

Modern Porcelain. Modern Dehua kilns produce every porcelain product imaginable, provided you've a limited imagination: fine dishes, statues of deities and demons, and gigantic vases big enough to hide in (see Porcelain Street below). I loved the trolls, perhaps because I've got Norwegian blood in me (bitten by a Scandinavian mosquito). I could see a faint resemblance.

Porcelain Street. The large arch near the river, with the character, "Taocijie" (陶瓷街), marks the beginning of Porcelain Street and probably the end of your budget. Get great bargains on everything from tableware and statuary to porcelain lamps and garden decorations.

I bought some plates made for export at Mr. Lin Shuangyang's small shop on Porcelain Street. No one in his immediate family was in the porcelain business, so Mr. Lin's cousin attended the technical school by the ancient Dehua kiln, and opened his own factory in 1973. It wasn't until 1999 that they finally achieved their dream of opening this shop.

Bone up on *Blanc de Chine*! Learn more about Dehua’s exotic porcelain in the fascinating book, *Blanc de Chine—the Great Porcelain of Dehua*. Written by Robert H. Blumenfield, an American collector of Dehua’s *blanc de Chine*, the 240-page book is available on Amazon.com for only US\$52.50 (a bargain, compared with the US\$75 retail price). Or try *Blanc de Chine: the Porcelain of Tehua in Fukien*. Amazon.com has two used copies—a steal at only US\$495.

Dehua Cuisine! Dehua has fine food, and even finer prices. Try the Yiyuan Restaurant (益源大酒家), on Xingnan Street (兴南), the same street as Porcelain Street, but downtown, past the river. We fed a crowd in a private room for less than 100 yuan. They offer most “Laowai” favorites, but also try mountain delicacies like red mushroom soup. Because they’re red, Chinese say they cure anemia and replenish women’s blood after childbirth. I doubted that I suffered from either anemia or childbirth, even though my love for Chinese food may cause me to appear like I’m in the second trimester. Still, red mushroom soup is excellent, especially if you have the good fortune to eat it fresh, right after they’re picked (only during two weeks at the end of August).

Daiyun Mountain (戴云山). This 1,856-meter high provincial-level natural preserve is a delightful place to stroll on sizzling summer days. Attractions include rare animals and plants, which you won’t likely see since they’re rare, and Daiyun Temple, which was built in the 2nd year of Taiping in the Liang Dynasty (908).

Nine Immortals Mountain, in the Daiyun range, gets its name from the legend that it was the meeting place for Zhang Guolao (张果老) and seven other immortals. The site has 99 caves, 12 scenic areas, and over 40 calligraphic inscriptions with so many stories behind them that you’d need to be an immortal yourself to hear them all.

Shiniu Mountain (Stone Ox Mountain, 石牛山). The 1,782-meter high mountain, in eastern Dehua County, is a circular volcanic basin famous for “graceful and marvelous stone caves”, though apparently not all are natural. I read that the Stone-Pot Cave of the Lion Cliff was “built” in the Southern Song Dynasty.

Popular attractions include the Ming Dynasty Stone-Pot Temple, cable cars, glass observation platform at the peak, and Daixian Waterfall, which descends into a picturesque, winding creek 30 km long. Bamboo raft rides are the best way to enjoy the tranquil scenery. The hot springs are also hot attractions, and rather than just opt for a starred hotel, try spending a night in a “Nongjiale” (Farm B&Bs).

Lingjiu Rock Temple (灵鹫岩寺). This temple’s drawing card is the view. Situated on the northwest of Jiuxian Mountain, the misty scenery changes constantly, but you can always find the 12 official sites of “strange rocks and queer caves” with names like Vulture Rock.

Incensed in Yongchun. In China, the drive is always at least as interesting as the destination, and the trip to Dehua is no exception. The nicely paved concrete road snakes through valleys and past a unique village, Hankou (汉口村), which was dusted in crimson as if the Red Tide had become a red snowfall. Even the ducks were red. It turned out that red-dusted Hankou was a village of incense makers (and gave a whole new twist to my notion of “Red China”)—a tradition they have inherited from their Muslim trader forebears of 800 years ago (Fig. 14.1).



Fig. 14.1 Yongchun Incense

The salvaged Song Dynasty ship on display near Kaiyuan Temple is mute testimony to the perils of sea travel even during Zaytun's heyday. The ship was returning to China with many Southeast Asian products. It also had over 2,400 kg of the coveted incense that Muslims were famous for making (I'd have been incensed if my ship of incense sunk). Eventually Muslims began making the incense right in Quanzhou, and a few centuries later moved to the hinterlands of Yongchun. Today, the Hui-minority Pu family still makes incense in a Hankou factory run by Mr. Pu Chongqing (蒲重庆).

Mr. Pu said his Muslim ancestors came to Quanzhou around 1200. One of his illustrious ancestors was Mr. Pu Shougen (蒲寿更), the Chief of Customs whose wheeling and dealing accounted for so much of the foreign trade at that time. The extent of Muslim influence is seen in that yet another of his ancestors was governor of Chongqing, in Sichuan.

The Pu family's award-winning Pu Qinglan incense is now as popular overseas as in China, with annual domestic and foreign sales each equaling about US\$6–7 million. Visit their factory at Hankou Village, Dapu Township, Yongchun County (永春县达浦镇汉口村).

Yongchun Brickmakers. Not far from Hankou are fields of domed kilns on both sides of the highway. I was fascinated at how quickly they could fashion bricks by hand with wooden forms. Not near as exotic, I suppose, as the fashionable porcelain up the road in Dehua, but much more practical.

Hankou Bridge and Farmhouse! A beautiful old wooden farmhouse with an enclosed courtyard snuggled up against a hillside, and shaded by massive trees. To get a halfway decent photo I stood in the middle of the highway, one eye on the



Fig. 14.2 Hankow Yongchun New Bridge

viewfinder and one on the kamikaze truckers who seemed bent on redressing opium-era grievances upon my person. Finally, I asked a fellow who owned a three-store place across the road if I could take the photo from his rooftop. He happily agreed, though he could not understand why I’d want to photograph an old house. Why not a new one?

I clamored onto his rooftop and was rewarded with yet another Kodak moment—a panoramic view of the brand-new Hankou covered bridge! I had tried to take a photo of it the previous year, but couldn’t get the right angle. The bridge isn’t in any guidebooks, but it should be, because it proves that bridge building is not a lost art in southern Fujian (Fig. 14.2).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 15

Quanzhou—Home of Minnan Cuisine



(Adapted from *Amoy Magic*, William Brown).

One should eat to live, not live to eat!—Moliere (1622–1673)

Moliere never had Chinese food!—Bill Brown (1956–?)

The earnest Beijing reporter who asked why I moved to China and obtained permanent residence expected a weighty answer on the lines of “To serve the masses”, and so I gazed at her solemnly and said: “Because Chinese food is too expensive in America.”

There was some truth to this. Let’s face it, eating is a big part of life, so we might as well enjoy it, and Chinese are masters of both cooking and eating! But Chinese food in China is a far cry from the sweet and sour and lemon chicken we get back in America. Chinese delight in eating anything that doesn’t eat them first.

When I spoke in Manila to a group of Chinese business people descended mainly from Quanzhou ancestors, I said that Adam and Eve were not Chinese because had Eve been Chinese, she’d have tossed the apple and eaten the snake. A business lady jumped up and said: “That’s not true!” I was afraid I’d offended her, but before I could apologize, she said: “If Eve had been Chinese, she’d have eaten the snake and sold the apple, not tossed it!”

Quanzhou cuisine is essentially Minnan (south Fujian) cuisine, but each area, be it Nan’an, Anxi or Hui’an, has its own specialties. The area around Luoyang Bridge, for example, serves succulent oysters so large I could make a sandwich with them. Nan’an dishes up excellent leg of lamb with peanut sauce. Anxi’s remote hamlet of Hutou is famed for its rice noodles. The city Quanzhou itself, located between two rivers and facing the sea, prides itself on rich seafood.

You’d have to travel far and wide to sample them all, but fortunately, Quanzhou is almost wall-to-wall restaurants. Better yet, the Wenling Delicacy Street packs just about every kind of local food and snack into one 613-meter lane!

Wenling Delicacy Street (温陵美食街), which runs north and south between Jinhua Street and Fengze Street, has “more than 130” (which probably 131) quaint



Fig. 15.1 Wenling Food Street

snack shops and restaurants built with traditional architecture, and offering a wide variety of local Quanzhou snacks and fine cuisine (Fig. 15.1).

Both ends of the streets have memorial gates with inscriptions. The couplet on the North Gate reads: “Enjoy here the gentle wind and soft moonlight of hometown; raising your glass for a toast, you are intoxicated with love and affection for your townsmen.”

One morning, as I happily set forth to enjoy a simple breakfast, I was accosted by my kind host and taken to Wenling to feast upon gelatinous sweet potato powder cakes and...

Chinese Breakfast Americans say the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach, and Chinese have certainly won my heart—except with breakfast.

While by noon I can stomach salted minnows, pork fat, deep-fried fish lips and sea worms in jellyfish mold, first thing out of bed in the morning my heart and stomach cry out for the familiarity and simplicity of an American breakfast: coffee, eggs, and toast.

The breakfast buffet at Quanzhou’s Zaytun Hotel, my Quanzhou home away from home, offers over 60 hot and cold items (yes, I counted!), as well as dimsum, and a chef who will fry up eggs (and then douse them in soy sauce). But I consistently forego these delicacies and ask for eggs, toast, and coffee. This totally bewilders Chinese, for whom any meal must include at least 10 courses, half of which are critters seen only on *National Geographic* channel, and the half being strange veggies harvested from mountains or scavenged from cracks between sidewalks.

After a long day in which I'd had little for lunch and missed supper altogether, I went to bed hungry but happy in the knowledge that next morning the Zaytun Hotel would, albeit begrudgingly, serve me eggs, toast and coffee.

Next morning, just as I was headed to the dining room, my hosts burst upon the scene, exclaiming: "None of that buffet stuff today. We've something special," and led me straight to Wenling Delicacy Street and a big bowl of steaming congealed pig blood soup. Yum.

Local delicacies include vermicelli paste, white sugar rice cake, Anhai frozen seaworms, fried oysters, "rouzong" (rice, pork and other ingredients wrapped in reed leaves), Shenhu fish balls, orange rice dumplings, *deng deng*. And given Quanzhou's location on the sea, between two rivers, seafood takes up a large part on fishy menus. So eat up—and eat slowly...

Seize or Savor? Chinese are not only the best cooks but also the best eaters, and their language shows it. A typical greeting is "Have you eaten?" And a common phrase at the table is "Eat slowly!" Where we Americans are always urging the waitress to hurry so we can gobble, guzzle, and get out the door, Chinese are forever admonishing the waitress as she serves up plate after plate: "Slow down! Let us enjoy our food!"

For an American who lives by the motto *Carpe Diem!* (Latin for "Seize the Day!") it is hard to handle Chinese who would rather savor a morsel or a moment than seize a day or anything else. Chinese take life slowly. After 20 years in China, I too am slowing down, though I think it is not a philosophical breakthrough but simply the unwinding that accompanies age. Nevertheless, I well relate to the insights shown by Ms. Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, who wrote of her experiences in south Fujian in the 1920s in *A Race of Green Ginger* (next page).

Zhong Mingxuan (钟明选) The Master of Quanzhou Cuisine

I was very fortunate to enjoy a meal prepared by Quanzhou's most celebrated chef, Mr. Zhong Mingxuan. Mr. Zhong is the host of Quanzhou TV's popular Minnan Cuisine program, and has been filmed by TV crews from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Zhejiang Province.

All of the guests clamored for Chef Zhong to make an appearance in their private dining rooms, so he would chat a few minutes, race out, race back in, race back out again—but I gradually managed to pin down a picture of the man's career, which is being carried on by his 48- and 44-year-old sons, Zhong Yichuan (钟驿川) and Zhong Yidong (钟驿东).

Excerpt from *A Race of Green Ginger*

(Ms. Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, Fujian resident in the 1920s)

We could not help contrasting their slow and contemplative savoring of each object of sensuous pleasure with the Western habit of grasping, and discarding half-assessed, a multiplicity of objects or experiences. The Chinese cult of beauty in all forms never lacked elaboration, but it was an elaboration in depth. A spreading downward of understanding which, like the roots of a tree, nourished and increased pleasure. The foreign traders set themselves to create this Western multiplicity of needs. They had successes chiefly because the Chinese are a practical people and by the end of the nineteenth century, too hidebound

by traditions to develop, too arrogant to learn, they had fallen far behind the West, but were shrewd enough, nevertheless, to appreciate the products and inventions of Western science.

The foreigners, too, were successful in selling to men and women incapable of making a bad or ugly thing, cheap, mass-produced goods, ugly and badly made, which seemed to us an anomaly until we realize that a Chinese buyer rarely bought foreign goods for aesthetic reasons. The Chinese admired neither the appearance of the Westerners nor that of their goods. They were, however, fascinated by the mechanical ingenuity of the West. The Western merchants found a market, too, among the poor and unlettered, to whom the opening of the Treaty Ports brought, if not an increase in prosperity, at least a raising of subsistence level. Inland, however, the Chinese were still extremely conservative.

If you want to make money out here, you've got to make the Chinese want things, and want 'em so badly that they get so's they bloody well can't do without 'em'; Mr. Tulser poured more brandy into his beer. 'That's the secret.'...

I surveyed the long and, to me, still bewilderingly complex civilization of the Chinese, and said: 'I should have thought the Chinese wanted enough things.'

'Ah, but,' Mr. Tulser pointed a knowing, nicotine-stained finger, 'you've got to make 'em want the things you want 'em to want. Why, many's the time as a young 'un—believe it or not—I've stood on a soap box in a village up-country teaching the Chinese how to smoke cigarettes. Never seen 'em before—end look at 'em now; smoke like lime-kilns... And are they grateful?... ' 'Nough to drive you to drink, isn't it?'

Chef Zhong, now aged 72, has been whipping up prize-winning Quanzhou cuisine since 1965, but he doesn't stay at one place long. "I don't go to the best places but to the places that need help," he said. "I need a challenge." So, either I was eating at a less than best place or this man was a miracle worker because he'd only been at this restaurant for two months.

"I don't like to just rely on tradition," Chef Zhong said. "I'm bold. I like to experiment. Xiamen was first to use foreign flavors, like garlic. Quanzhou leads in Minnan cuisine, but Xiamen is second, and Zhangzhou third."

I don't know if his dishes were classics or just experiments to pawn off on foreigners, but each one was so tasty I was hard put to photograph them before devouring them. I especially enjoyed Minnan spring rolls (Minnan "bobing", 闽南薄饼), chicken rolls ("jijuan", 鸡卷), silk gourd gum soup ("siguacheng tang", 丝瓜蛭根汤), sesame sweet potato cakes ("zhima digua bing"—which differ everywhere 芝麻地瓜饼), and Baoshao Tofu ("baoshao doufu", 包饶豆腐). But I thought I had died and gone to heaven when I got a taste of Osmanthus Crab ("Guihua Xie", 桂花蟹), which looked like scrambled eggs and crab, but tasted like nothing in this world.

Minnan spring rolls are quite unlike any others in China. Diners are often given the various veggies, meats, sauces and peanut powder on saucers, and they assemble their own mix and wrap it in paper-thin soft white wrappers. Now that I'm used to this, I prefer them to the more common deep-fried spring rolls because they aren't drenched in oil.

Lao Pan's Quanzhou Favorites

Fish in Rice Krispies ("Maixiang Yinjuan Yu", 麦香银卷鱼) —Absolutely my favorite! (They said it was crisped wheat, but I think it was rice).

Tofu (“Yiping Doufu”, 一品豆腐). There are few things healthier or more versatile than *doufu*, and this is one of the best dishes I’ve had. Also try the incredible baoshao tofu.

Pickled Red Veggies with preserved egg (“Xiancai”, 苋菜). It tastes a lot better than it looks!

Beef and Oyster Sauce (“Haoyou Niurou”, 蚝油牛肉). Pork is king in China, so beef is sometimes not up to snuff. I’ve suspected some beef as being sole food (recycled shoe soles). But Zaytun’s beef melts in your mouth.

Shark Lips (“Yuchun Bao”, 鱼唇煲). I told them not to give me any lip but they did anyway—shark lips! It wasn’t that bad, actually. Not lip smacking, but tasty. They’re sort of chewy, like rubbery fish jello.

Pickled Beans (“Jiangdou”, 豇豆)—a tasty little appetizer.

Fried Veggie Buns (“Jianbao”, 煎包). Excellent!

Lamb Ribs in Foil (“Shousi Yangpa”, 手撕羊排). Delightful; reminds me of Mongolian lamb, but without the baked sheep’s head staring me in the face.

Quanzhou Noodles (“Lumian”, 卤面). Nice way to end a meal! (Long noodles symbolize long life).

Home Cooked Quanzhou Style Minnan Cuisine Recipes

(Adapted from *Magic Xiamen*)

Swimming Crab Dish—the No. 1 dish (in my eyes, and stomach too). Steam live crabs, shell them, and remove inedible parts (I was surprised to learn that Chinese deemed anything inedible!). Cut the pork, water chestnuts, scallion stalks and bamboo shoots into one-inch strips and mix with beaten eggs and salt. Thoroughly mix in the shelled crabs, stir-fry in hot oil with oil and shredded ginger, and add Shaoxing wine.

Coral Prawn: I’m not sure how they corral coral prawns, but they’re heavenly. Clean live prawns, deep-fry quickly, and season with diced ginger, garlic, sugar, thick Minnan chili sauce, scallions, Shaoxing wine, and clear broth. Sprinkle with pepper powder and sesame oil. Devour—slowly, if possible. If not, at least take a photo, so while they’re digesting you can remember what they looked like.

River Eel: I was glad my hosts bore me no eel (ill) will then they served this excellent dish. Clean Jinjiang River eel and cut into two-inch slices. Marinate eels for one hour in a blend of salt, crushed ginger, and wine. Deep fry the eel slices and add oil, sugar, soup-stock, small pieces of pork, soy sauce, and Shaoxing wine. Steam in a steamer (duh!), then spray with sesame oil.

Steamed Perch: I was perched on the edge of my chair waiting for this one! Select a two-pound or larger perch and then scale and clean it. Place on a large bamboo steamer with small chunks of pork, slices of winter bamboo and ginger, shoots, winter mushrooms, scallion stalks, and some salt and water. Steam on high flame for 20 min, and then remove scallion stalks and ginger slices (personally, I like to eat these).

Fried Red Crabs: The crabbiest diner mellows after feasting on red crabs, which are harvest in the winter in Shihu of Hanjiang (Quanzhou Bay) produces the best red crabs. Pickle large red crabs (at least one pound) in sorghum liquor and then wrap

in fatback. Place the lard-wrapped red crabs upside down in a pot with ginger slices and sorghum liquor, and allow them to steam for 10 min. When done, remove the fatback, clean the crabs, and cut each crab into eight slices.

Spicy Fried Rolls Wrap these ingredients in a round sheet of dried tofu: cubed pork, fish meat, onions, water chestnuts, soy sauce, five spices, and sweet potato starch. Deep fry, cut in slices, serve.

Minnan Spring Rolls These delightful delicacies are a Minnan version of Mexican burrito. Buy spring roll wrappers at markets; for the filling, mix shredded carrots and bamboo shoots, green peas, shredded meats and shrimp, tofu, and anything else that strikes your fancy or wanders in off-the-street. Cook well, add salt and soy sauce, and wrap in spring roll wrappers, along with a little mustard, chili sauce, plum sauce, scrambled eggs, leeks, and Chinese parsley (coriander). Enjoy.

Oil-Scallion Cake Add fish meat to diced pork and water chestnuts, then add a little sweet potato starch, some scallions, a dash of “five spices”, and some sugar and salt. Form into balls and coat with rice starch in bowls and steam. Let cool, and sprinkle with your favorite Chinese condiments (chili paste, pickled radish, *deng deng*).

Tosun (Jelly Fish and Sea Worm) Xiamen’s No. 1 specialty—and my least favorite! But you haven’t lived until you’ve tried it.

These culinary delights are dug from the mud on the beach. Enough said. Wash the “Tosun” (jelly fish) clean and stew over a slow fire until the gelatin dissolves. Pour soup into cups and let cool into a jello-like substance (somewhere along the line adding seaworms).

Force down with Chinese chili sauce, mustard sauce, vinegar.

Fried Squid Our favorite! Clean squid thoroughly and soak in clear water for a couple of hours, then cut it into thin slices and score with intersecting diagonal cuts. Fry the squid with bamboo shoots, scallions, tomato, sugar and vinegar until they roll up into a tube shape. (Don’t overcook or they’ll have the texture of rubber grapes).

Fried Oysters (sort of an oyster-egg pancake) Dip oysters in sweet potato starch, add soy sauce, and fry. Pour beaten eggs on the mixture and continue to fry until done. Add Chinese parsley (coriander); eat with mustard or chili sauce.

Stir-Fried Rice Noodles Deep fry rice vermicelli until golden, rinse in boiled water to remove grease. Stir-fry shredded pork, fish, mushrooms and bamboo shoots in peanut oil and add chicken bouillon, Shaoxing wine, and salt. Add noodles, serve hot. Awesome.

Zongzi Pyramidal dumplings of glutinous rice and other ingredients, wrapped in bamboo leaves. Originally served at Dragon Boat Festival, they are now eaten all year round. First, stir-fry glutinous rice, pork, chestnuts, mushrooms and shrimp (or some use red beans), and wrap them with bamboo leaves into a pyramid shape, and tie them, then braise them in a soup until well done. Dip the zongzis in a mixture of soy sauce and garlic.

Quanzhou Snacks

Oyster Chowder: a hearty porridge made of glutinous rice, fish, pork, oysters, soy sauce, and pepper, often accompanied with “youtiao” (twisted deep-fried dough sticks) or turnip cakes.

Quanzhou Beef is served in shops around town, two of the best just around the corner from the four-star Quanzhou hotel.

Stuffed Fishballs (another of my favorites, some say the best come from the walled city of Chongwu). Finely diced pork, dried shrimp and water chestnuts are mixed, wrapped in a coating made from fresh fish and starch, and boiled until done. Serve with mashed garlic and pepper in soy sauce.

Pickled Chicken Feet. I was sure something fowl was afoot when they served up these fellows, but locals sure love them—second only to jellied duck webs.

Turnip Cakes (my favorite): powdered turnip, rice and flour are mixed, a dash of salt is added, excess moisture pressed out, cut into slices, and deep-fried.

Steamed Sponge Cakes are made from rice flour and sugar, which is fermented and then steamed in bowls.

Fried Sesame Cakes: glutinous rice paste is stuffed with a blend of sesame seeds, peanuts, sugar, and diced winter squash, then deep-fried.

Orange Cakes: powdered glutinous rice is steamed, sugar is added, and the mixture is molded into different shapes.

Sesame Cakes: sesame cakes are steamed, and sprinkled with sesame seeds.

Peanut Soup: a favorite in Southern Fujian, where folks have long worked for peanuts, this is simplicity itself to make. Simply boil peanuts to form a milky soup, and serve up at the end of the meal—either with, or in place of, the fresh fruit platter.

Chinese-English Menu

It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for.

—Oscar Wilde

Getting a Handle on Chinese Food

Chinese prefer strange and exotic foods, but failing that, they give common foods strange and exotic names. They pass off plain chicken as “Phoenix Breast”, or duck eggs as “Lotus Eggs”. And the famous “Monk Climbing the Wall” soup has neither monk nor wall. I hope.

The playwright who quarreled with words would have appreciated these offerings from Chinese menus:

Silver Fish Wrapped in Snow, from Beijing, is neither winter precipitation nor the ornery bugs that ate holes in my wool Scottish tie. It is simply cooked macaroni fried in whipped egg white.

Chicken in a Lantern, also from Beijing, is cooked chicken and vegetables wrapped in clear cellophane and tied with a ribbon.

Phoenix Breast, from Sichuan, is not the legendary Egyptian fowl but plain old cheap chicken breast.

Lotus Eggs are not the lotus' source; they're just chicken eggs.

Dragon and Phoenix Ham, from Sichuan, is naughty but duck, pork, water chestnuts, chicken wing bones, ham and white bread—mixed and fried. (So who was the dragon?).

Steamed Dragon's Eye Rolls, from Sichuan, are strips of pork rolled around red bean paste, topped with a cherry, and served on glutinous rice.

By the time I've worked my way to a menu's soup section and come across, "Bright Moon in a River" and "Buddha Leaps the Wall", I'm ready to climb the wall myself. But it is worth the climb. China's elegantly named dishes are invariably just as elegantly prepared and served, and well worth the wait.

To make life easier, I've compiled this handy dandy Amoy Magic Menu in English, Chinese, and "pinyin"—and this version I've added tone marks. If you still can't say it—just point!

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 16

Captivating Quanzhou Specialties



The Chinese are of all peoples the most skilful in the arts and possessed of the greatest mastery of them. This characteristic of theirs is well known, and has frequently been described at length in the works of various writers. In regard to portraiture there is none, whether Greek or any other, who can match them in precision, for in this art they show a marvelous talent...

...they had come to the palace while we were there and had been observing us and drawing our portraits without our noticing it. This is a custom of theirs, I mean making portraits of all who pass through their country. In fact, they have brought this to such perfection that if a stranger commits any offence that obliges him to flee from China, they send his portrait far and wide. A search is then made for him and wheresoever the (person bearing a) resemblance to that portrait is found he is arrested.

—Ibn Battuta, Ancient Arab traveler

Quanzhou is famed for originating many unique Chinese crafts and traditions, such as fine silk, porcelain, stonemasonry, puppetry. Even today the streets are a nonstop variety show as wandering artisans create insects of grass, or intricate little figurines of colored flour, or in minutes whip out charcoal sketches or caricatures.

While you're in mystic Quanzhou, stock up on a few of these local treasures (and, as always, e-mail me with your own discoveries or additions). You can also browse online. Google led me to hundreds of fine Quanzhou company websites.

Dehua Porcelain—a limitless variety of fine China, as well as the ivory white porcelain figurines.

Dehua Famous Alcohol—brewed with herbs, it is “pure, mellow, fragrant, and the curative effect is prominent”. Drink enough and you won't care if you're cured or not.

Hui'an Stone Carvings and Shadow Carvings. Family portrait, perhaps! Take home a granite dining room set in your carry-on.

Puppet Heads. The hand-carved camphor wood heads are rapidly giving way to mass-produced plastic puppets, so buy them while you can (and while you can afford them).

Old Fan Zhi Magic Lees—a concoction of corn, beans, and over 50 Chinese herbs, it is said to cure everything from stomach and spleen ailments to indigestion.

Silk Flowers and Lanterns. Quanzhou Silk Lanterns are legendary. If possible, visit the city on Lantern Festival (15th day of the Chinese New Year).

Silk is very plentiful among them ... For that reason, it is so common to be worn by even the very poorest there. Were it not for the merchants, it would have no value at all, for a single piece of cotton cloth is sold in their country for the price of many pieces of silk.

—Ibn Battuta, ancient Arab traveler

Qingyuan Tea Cake, made from herbs and tea, has for a century been reputed to be just what the doctor ordered for increasing appetite, strengthening the spleen, (Chinese seem to have a thing about spleens!), helping digestion, etc.

Anxi Oolong Tea—one of the West’s most popular teas two hundred years ago.

Anxi Rattan and Bamboo—several factories produce quality baskets, shelving and furniture; you can even get it made to order. Check the Internet for sites.

Yongchun Preserved Vinegar, a black vinegar reputed to be one of China’s “Four Famous Vinegars”, has been a Quanzhou staple since the Song Dynasty. But I’d be careful with vinegar. “Drink vinegar” is a Chinese euphemism for “jealousy” and infers one’s spouse is unfaithful.

Shishi Sweet Rice Cakes. Dating from the Ming Dynasty, these are said to be some of the best rice cakes, but I wouldn’t know. I prefer German chocolate cakes myself.

The Chinese Artisan

I came upon a man in Amoy proper who with his ancestors had for generations made with rare perfection those tiny figures taken from Chinese legend and theater that one here and there sees fashioned in the streets. Made of rice-flour, each mass of dough colored a vivid green, red, blue, and so on with German dyes, the figures, about four inches long, are each spitted on a little stick, which when twirled between thumb and forefinger makes them kick up their legs and wave their arms like whirling dervishes... He worked with his son in the little mud hovel that had served his father and grandfather before him, producing forty figures a day when he worked steadily, setting them up in holes in a board to dry. As he was the only expert, there was a ready sale for all he could make; imitators made them, too, but heir usually cracked even before they dried. He could have made more, one gathered, but being a true, even though unconscious, artist he insisted on always doing his best. The work was entirely free-hand; as the man put it, with his constant smile and an occasional gesture of his rough workman hands with a suggestion of the suppleness of the artist in the fingers, he just made what was in his heart. Real artists neither live in palaces nor wear silks in China. More than once I have seen one who outwardly was only a ragged coolie in a dirty street, sitting at a makeshift bench or table making these fantastic stage figures of colored dough on whirling sticks, or something else as intricate and full of life, while the crowd surged, children jostled and fingered, men quarreled noisily about him, and still his deft fingers plodded on, copying some artistic little thing directly from generations of memory and selling them at a copper or two each.

—Franck, 1925.¹

Note

1. Frank, Harry A. "Roving Through Southern China," The Century Co., New York, 1925, p. 198.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

