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PRC IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THEIR INTEGRATION IN THE CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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From the end of the 1970s to the mid-1990s, about half a million people from the People's Republic of China (PRC) immigrated to the United States. These *dalu ren* (mainlanders), as they are commonly referred to in the Chinese community, constitute a significant portion of the Chinese American population. However, little scholarly research has examined this new group of immigrants. In this chapter I use statistics compiled by U.S. government agencies to develop a demographic profile of this distinctive group and then use ethnographic data to present a preliminary assessment of their incorporation in the larger society, especially their integration into the existing Chinese American community.

HOW MANY PRC IMMIGRANTS HAVE COME?

Between 1949 and 1978, the PRC prohibited its citizens from leaving the country. However, some people did manage to flee to Hong Kong or to other places. Only after 1978, under the open-door and related policies of reform, did mainland Chinese immigrants begin to come directly to the United States.

However, to determine how many PRC immigrants have come to the United States is not as simple a task as one might imagine. First, there is a definition problem. Who are PRC immigrants? The simplest definition is that PRC immigrants are those who were PRC citizens before coming to the United States. However, some PRC citizens became permanent residents or citizens of Hong Kong, Taiwan, or other countries before coming to the United States. But they, too, had lived as citizens of the PRC under the Chinese Communist Party. Should "PRC immigrants" include all those who have ever lived as citizens in the PRC or only immigrants who came directly from mainland China?

Second, the statistics compiled by U.S. government agencies often make no distinction between PRC immigrants and Taiwan immigrants. When a distinction is made, the parameters are not always clear or well defined. For example, beginning in 1982, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reported some immigration statistics separately for those from mainland China and those from Taiwan. However, I have found that some numbers presented in different tables in the published reports are not always consistent; this may be due to clerical confusion or neglect. INS also provides statistics about two kinds of "origins" of immigrants: one is based on "country of last permanent residence," and one, on "country of birth." For those people who were born after 1949, these two "origins" are often (but not always) the same. For those who were born before 1949, however, the problem is complicated. Many mainland-born people went to Taiwan with the Guomintang (Kuomintang) under Chiang Kai-shek and then came to the United States from Taiwan. For these people, the two "origins" are different. Calculations informed by social and historical events are necessary to reconcile the differences in various statistics presented by United States government agencies. Keeping the definitional and statistical problems in mind, I will develop estimates of various numbers of PRC immigrants.

First, the number of total immigrants who came *directly* from the PRC between 1979 and 1995 is about 380,000. Beginning in 1982 the *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* reports some statistics separately for Taiwan and mainland China, as Taiwan became a country-unit with a chargeable quota of 20,000 per year. Based on the tables in the INS yearbook for the period between 1982 and 1995, a total of 351,341 immigrants came directly from mainland China (country of last permanent residence). However, referring to the total numbers from all China (mainland plus Taiwan) and to the numbers of "country of birth" (see Table 13.1), there are obvious miscounts for the years 1982, 1983, 1991, 1992, and 1993. To correct these miscounts, about 10,000 need to be added to the number of total PRC immigrants. In addition, for the years 1979, 1980, and 1981, the yearbook reports immigrants from mainland China and Taiwan without differentiation. Taking a reasonable estimate for those three years, there should be about 20,000 PRC immigrants. Therefore, the number of total immigrants who came *directly* from the PRC between 1979 and 1995 is about 380,000. This is the lowest estimate of the number of PRC immigrants.

If we include all people who have lived as citizens in the PRC for some time, the number of total PRC immigrants could be as high as 470,000. This number comes from calculations based on the numbers in two "origin" categories in the INS yearbook. Between 1982 and 1995, of the 471,736 people who were born in mainland China (country of birth), only 351,341 came directly from mainland China (country of last permanent residence). In other words, 120,395 (471,736 minus 351,341) mainland-born people did not come directly from mainland China. They probably came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, or other places. In the same period, among the 212,406 immigrants from Taiwan

Table 13.1
Chinese Immigrants: Country of Last Permanent Residence and Country of Birth, 1941-1995

Year	Country of Last Permanent Residence ¹			Country of Birth ²			
	China (mainland +Taiwan)	Mainland China	Taiwan	Hong Kong ³	Hong Kong	Mainland China ⁴	Taiwan
1941-50	16,709						
1951-60	9,657			15,544			
1961-70	34,764			75,007			
1971-80	124,326			113,467			
1981	25,803			4,055	4,055		
1982	36,984	15,919	12,099	4,971	4,971	27,100	9,884
1983	42,475	14,335	19,018	5,948	5,948	25,777	16,698
1984	29,109	14,425	14,684	12,290	5,465	23,363	12,478
1985	33,095	15,578	17,517	10,795	5,171	24,787	14,895
1986	32,389	16,458	15,931	9,930	5,021	25,106	13,424
1987	32,669	18,458	14,080	8,785	4,706	25,841	11,931
1988	34,300	21,924	12,376	11,817	8,546	28,717	9,670
1989	39,284	22,183	17,101	15,257	9,740	32,272	13,974
1990	40,639	22,654	17,985	14,367	9,393	31,815	15,151
1991	23,995	23,995	15,927	15,895	10,427	33,025	13,274
1992	29,554	29,554	18,035	16,802	10,452	38,907	16,344
1993	57,775	57,775	15,757	14,026	9,161	65,578	14,329
1994	58,867	47,699	11,168	11,953	7,731	53,985	10,032
1995	41,112	30,384	10,728	10,699	7,249	35,463	9,377
1982-95	452,788	321,087	181,289	163,535	103,981	418,859	154,879

1. INS, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, Table 2 and Table 8 in 1986-1991; Table 2 and Table 9 in 1992-1995.

2. INS, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, Table 3.

3. Hong Kong data are not reported separately until 1951.

4. Prior to fiscal year 1982, data for mainland China and Taiwan are consolidated under China in the yearbook. Beginning in 1995, "Mainland China" is listed as "China, People's Republic."

(country of last permanent residence), only 181,461 were born in Taiwan (country of birth). Most of these 30,945 (212,406 minus 181,461) Taiwan immigrants were probably born in the mainland but went to Taiwan in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Therefore, about 90,000 (120,395 minus 30,945 equals 89,450) mainland-born people came neither from the mainland nor from Taiwan.

Another major route of mainland-born people to the United States is through Hong Kong. It is well known that many PRC people have escaped to Hong Kong since the founding of the PRC (e.g., Zhou 1992:72). Between 1982 and 1995, of the 163,535 immigrants from Hong Kong (country of last permanent residence), only 103,981 were born in Hong Kong (country of birth). Most of the 59,554 (163,535 minus 103,981) were likely born in mainland China. We may then assume that most of the nearly 60,000 Hong Kong immigrants who were not born in Hong Kong once lived in the PRC. Adding these 60,000 to the number of 380,000 people who came directly from mainland China, we get 440,000. There are still 30,000 (90,000 minus 60,000) mainland-born people who came neither from the mainland and Taiwan nor from Hong Kong. How many of these people once lived as citizens of the PRC? A study (Godley 1989) estimates that nearly a half million overseas Chinese returned to mainland China in the first two decades of the PRC. Most of them were "sojourners" (*huaqiao*) in Indonesia. They may or may not have been born in mainland China. In the 1970s, after suffering brutality climaxed in the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), more than 300,000 of them left mainland China for Hong Kong, Macau, or other places (p. 349). How many of them have come to the United States? There is no reliable base for an informed estimation. Therefore, the total number of Chinese immigrants who were once PRC citizens is between 440,000 and 470,000. Compared with the first estimate in the previous paragraph, this is a higher estimate of PRC immigrants between 1979 and 1995.

Besides legal immigration, there are also illegal immigrants from the PRC. Since June 6, 1993, when the *Golden Venture* ship smuggling Chinese immigrants ran aground near New York City, illegal Chinese immigration has become a great concern for the media and the U.S. public. Most of the smuggled Chinese are from Fuzhou area in Fujian Province and came to New York City (Smith 1997). Regarding the number of illegal Chinese immigrants in the United States, however, there are no estimates that people can agree upon. According to Paul J. Smith, "Estimates of the number of Chinese smuggled into the United States each year vary wildly—from a low of 10,000 to a high of 100,000" (1997:x). The high estimate of 100,000 per year is claimed by Willard H. Myers III in the book edited by Smith (1997:113). However, Myers provides no source or calculation procedure leading to the estimate.¹ Meanwhile, Smith's low estimate of 10,000 per year is not the bottom-line number. The latest Immigration and Naturalization Service's report of "Illegal Alien Resident Population" (1997) does not include China in the list of the top 20 countries of origin of illegal immigrants.² The 20th country in the list had a total of 30,000

undocumented immigrants in the United States in 1996. This implies that the total number of illegal PRC immigrants living in the United States in 1996 could be less than 30,000. This report also states that, among the people who entered the United States illegally, "a large majority of them are from Mexico; most of the rest are natives of Central American countries." The INS may have underestimated the number of illegal immigrants, including illegal Chinese immigrants. However, comparing the cautious estimates by the INS and the media's sensational suggestions, I tend to think that the number of illegal Chinese immigrants in the United States is probably closer to 30,000 in total than 100,000 coming every year. Further studies are necessary to solve the estimation problems.

Other PRC people who are currently residing in the United States include Chinese students, scholars, temporary workers, and their spouses and their children. The INS yearbook reports statistics of these nonimmigrants without distinguishing between mainland China and Taiwan, so it is impossible to know exactly how many nonimmigrant Chinese visitors are in the United States. *The Almanac of Higher Education* reports separate numbers of Chinese students from mainland China and from Taiwan who are enrolled in American colleges each year. The most recent data available are for the academic year of 1993–1994, when 44,381 mainland Chinese students were enrolled (37,581 from Taiwan and 13,752 from Hong Kong). There were probably about 9,000 students' spouses and children, assuming a ratio of students to their dependents of 5:1 (based on the INS yearbook reports of total Chinese students and their dependents). There are no published reports about the current numbers of PRC visiting scholars and their spouses and children (J visas), temporary workers and their spouses and children (H visas), and temporary visitors (B visas). Overall, the total number of nonimmigrant residents from the PRC may be between 60,000 and 80,000.

In sum, the number of PRC immigrants who came directly from mainland China between 1979 and 1995 is about 380,000. The total number of Chinese immigrants who have lived in the PRC as citizens for some period is perhaps about 470,000. This does not include illegal Chinese immigrants, which the INS (1997) claims are no more than 30,000. In addition, there are up to 80,000 nonimmigrant PRC people currently residing in the United States, mostly as students, visiting scholars, temporary workers, and their families.

HOW DID THEY COME?

PRC immigrants came in all the categories classified by the INS; the major categories are family-based immigrants, employment-based immigrants, refugees and asylees, and orphans adopted by U.S. citizens.

When the PRC opened its door of emigration at the end of the 1970s, some people began to come to join their families in the United States. Throughout the 1980s, family-based immigrants were the majority of PRC immigrants. Employment-based immigrants began in the early 1980s and significantly in-

creased in the 1990s. For example, in 1986, 86 percent of mainland-born immigrants came as family-based immigrants (which may include some people who came directly from Taiwan or Hong Kong); only 2,808 people were employment-based immigrants (which may include few, if any, who did not come directly from the PRC). In 1992, one-half of the mainland-born immigrants were family-based immigrants, and 11,454 people were employment-based immigrants. In the following three years there were many more employment-based PRC immigrants, partly due to the Chinese Student Protection Act.

In 1992 the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA). The CSPA allowed PRC nationals who were present in the United States between June 4, 1989, and April 11, 1990, to adjust to permanent resident status. According to the INS yearbook, 52,826 PRC citizens adjusted to immigrant status under the CSPA (1993: 26,915; 1994: 21,297; 1995: 4,213; 1996: 401). Most CSPA immigrants were students or visiting scholars in American universities. Considering the social and political context, the CSPA could be classified as a refugee act. Interestingly, however, CSPA immigrants are classified as employment-based immigrants, not as refugees or asylees.³

The numbers of Chinese refugees, asylees and orphans have increased in the last 10 years (see Table 13.2). Between 1982 and 1995, a total of 4,927 refugees arrived from China (strictly speaking, this number includes refugees from Taiwan, but, in reality, refugees from Taiwan were few during these years). Between 1983 and 1995, a total of 2,975 PRC people were granted asylum in the United States. China became the number one leading country of birth for asylees in 1995. Chinese orphans who were adopted by U.S. citizens increased dramatically in the last few years. In 1982, 31 PRC orphans came. In 1995, more than 2,000 orphans came to the United States from mainland China. China is now the number one leading country of birth of orphans adopted by U.S. citizens.

It is important to note that many Chinese people originally came to the United States on nonimmigration visas and adjusted to immigrant status later. Between 1986 and 1995, for example, people who adjusted from non-immigrant status in the United States accounted for almost half of all mainland-born Chinese immigrants. Among them, 35 percent had been students and their dependents, 11 percent exchange visitors and their dependents, 14 percent temporary workers and their dependents (some of them came as students first, then changed to temporary worker status upon finding employment), and 18 percent temporary visitors for pleasure (probably a substantial portion of these temporary visitors came from Taiwan and Hong Kong rather than the PRC), and the rest were visitors for business, fiancés or fiancées, intracompany transferees, refugees, and parolees.

Table 13.2
Chinese Refugees, Asylees, and Orphans Adopted by U.S. Citizens: 1982–1995

Year	Refugees	Asylees	Orphans
	China (including Taiwan)	People's Republic of China	People's Republic of China
1982	21		31
1983	155	7	7
1984	210	16	6
1985	82	74	16
1986	39	22	10
1987	416	27	15
1988	162	90	52
1989	210	150	33
1990	133	679	28
1991	192	348	62
1992	1,229	277	201
1993	269	336	330
1994	268	414	748
1995	1,541	535	2,049
Total	4,927	2,975	3,588

Source: INS, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1982–1995*.

ASSIMILATION OF PRC IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Milton Gordon (1964:70–71) distinguishes seven stages of assimilation, starting with cultural assimilation or acculturation, moving to structural assimilation, and then to marital and other dimensions of assimilation. To Gordon, structural assimilation, that is, the large-scale entrance of newer groups into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on the primary group level, is critical to the process of assimilation: "Once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously with or subsequent to acculturation, all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow" (Gordon 1964:81).

To what extent have PRC immigrants achieved cultural assimilation and structural assimilation? The U.S. census does not clearly distinguish PRC immigrants from other Chinese immigrants, and no survey data of PRC immigrants are available at this time. However, qualitative studies suggest two characteristics of assimilation among PRC immigrants. First, their acculturation or Americanization usually begins before immigration. Many PRC immigrants are from urban areas of China and have received some years of higher education before coming to the United States. They learned English and were

exposed to some aspects of American culture, and some even adopted various American lifestyles, such as using a knife and a fork instead of chopsticks, drinking coffee and Coke instead of tea, eating steaks and hamburgers, wearing a suit and a tie or blue jeans and T-shirts, and becoming fond of rock music, Hollywood movies, and the American sports of basketball or football. Many schools and universities in China have integrated their curricula with American history, politics, society, culture, and science. Actually, the entire modern educational system in China has become very much Westernized or Americanized in form *and* in content.

Second, structural assimilation of PRC immigrants appears to be quite substantial for the majority of PRC immigrants. Most PRC people came to attend universities and then found jobs in high-tech companies owned, operated, and dominated by non-Chinese. Many professionals have joined their professional associations or clubs. They are more likely to be living in middle-class suburbs than in Chinatowns. Of course, there are also family-based immigrants who work in Chinese restaurants, garment factories, and other Chinese businesses. Almost all children of PRC immigrants attend public schools.

However, acculturation and structural assimilation do not necessarily mean the complete rejection of Chinese culture and ethnic solidarity. According to Portes and Zhou (1993), preserving traditional culture and maintaining ethnic group cohesion may help, rather than hinder, immigrant adaptation in the new contexts of American society. Therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which PRC immigrants have become integrated into the ethnic Chinese community in the United States.

INTEGRATION OF PRC IMMIGRANTS IN THE CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Newly arrived PRC immigrants face the existing Chinese American community as their "proximal host." "The proximal host is that group which would be the category or group in which the immigrant group would be likely to be classified or absorbed" (Mittelberg and Waters 1992:413). The integration of newly arrived immigrants with the particular proximal host depends on many factors. Mittelberg and Waters (1992) found that middle-class Haitians and non-Jewish Israelis made efforts to differentiate themselves from their proximal hosts—racial blacks and religious Jews, respectively. Similarly, PRC immigrants also have ambivalent relationships with the existing Chinese American community.

The Chinese American community is very diverse in language/dialect, ideological orientation, political allegiance, and sociocultural background. The history of Chinese immigration to the United States goes back to the mid-nineteenth century. Until the World War II, most Chinese immigrants were laborers from the Guangdong Province. Between 1946 and 1966, 17,630 Chinese refugees fleeing from civil wars and political turmoil in China came to the United States (INS 1970: Table 6E; see also Chinn 1969). Since 1965, owing to the new immigration laws and acts,⁴ the Chinese population in the United

States has doubled in each of the following three decades and reached 1.6 million by 1990. Post-World War II Chinese immigrants (*xin qiao*) differ from earlier Chinese immigrants (*lao qiao*) in several ways. Most *lao qiao* came from peasant backgrounds in rural areas of Guangdong and worked as physical laborers or merchants. Many *xin qiao* come from other provinces, have more education, and work as professionals in non-Chinese companies or government agencies. Earlier post-1965 Chinese immigrants came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asian countries. Many ethnic Chinese came as Indochinese refugees in the mid-1970s. These Chinese immigrants who came in waves have established various Chinese associations and organizations.

Traditional Chinatown Organizations

The *lao qiao* (pre-World War II Chinese immigrants) suffered considerable racist discrimination in the United States, and consequently retreated into ghetto Chinatowns in the major metropolitan cities. These Chinatowns used to be dominated by *huiguan* and *tang*. *Huiguan* are home-district associations and clan (same surname) associations based on primordial sentiments. For those who were unable to join a *huiguan*, there were some *tang* (triads or secret societies) based on fraternal principles (Lyman 1974; Pan 1994; Wickberg 1994). Above these separate and competing *huiguan* and *tang* was the umbrella Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). These Chinatown organizations provided many services to Chinatown Chinese, including housing and employment, social support and protection, credit union and financial help, medical clinics and evacuation services in case of death, and mediation services in cases of dispute. Since the 1950s, when McCarthyism was strong, CCBA and its affiliated organizations sided with the Kuomintang government in Taiwan and were opposed to the Chinese communists in mainland China.

Because of the political orientation and the ascribed nature of membership, traditional Chinatown organizations have incorporated very few PRC immigrants. When the PRC opened its door of emigration in the late 1970s, some *lao qiao* sponsored their family members or relatives in the PRC for immigration. Some may assume that these family-based PRC immigrants could be easily incorporated into the existing Chinatown organizations. However, in a study of an unspecified metropolitan city in California with a large concentration of Chinese, Shirley Shek Wang (1993) reports that about 90 percent of CCBA members and leaders are people who fled mainland China before 1949 (52). Few, if any, were recent PRC immigrants. In a home-district association with about 200 members, only 50 came during the last 20 years, which includes people from Hong Kong and Taiwan (67). My own research in the Washington, D.C., area finds little integration of PRC immigrants in the traditional Chinatown organizations.

Post-1965 Chinese Associations

Traditionally, the CCBA presents itself to mainstream society as the only legitimate representative for the Chinese community. Today, only a small number of Chinese associations are under the control of CCBA (Wang 1993:41). Many new types of Chinese ethnic and immigrant organizations and associations have been established. The degree of integration of PRC immigrants in these new Chinese groups varies across United States cities.

The first type of new Chinese organization is those formed by the more Americanized Chinese in the 1960s and the 1970s, including community service agencies, civil rights organizations, and recreational clubs. These ethnic organizations promote Chinese participation in the larger American society. Some bring in money with government financial programs to improve the social and economic situations of the Chinatown community. The most prominent one is the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), established in the 1970s. The OCA, headquartered in Washington, D.C., has branches in every metropolitan area where there is a large Chinese population. It has lobbied the U.S. Congress and the administration on behalf of Chinese Americans and has mobilized Chinese citizens to participate in American politics and society. In 1994 the OCA joined PRC students to protest the sensational report of the CBS television company about Chinese spies. However, OCA has attracted few PRC immigrants in its programs and activities. An important reason for the lack of integration is that OCA focuses on U.S. politics, whereas recent PRC immigrants are still too new to participate in American politics and society.

Post-1965 *xin qiao* from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other places have formed many *tongxianghui*, a new type of same-district association with broader boundaries. In the greater Washington area, the same-province associations include those from Fujian, Henan, Shandong, and Shanghai. There are also associations across provinces or even across countries, such as the *Dongbei* (the three provinces of northeast China), the *Jiangzhehu* (the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang and the city of Shanghai), and the "Indochinese Association" (Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos). Because most new immigrants live in ethnically mixed suburbia, interactions with other members in these *tongxianghui* are not as frequent and intense as in the traditional Chinatown organizations. Because of the open membership system in which anyone who shows an interest can participate in their activities, some PRC immigrants have participated in the activities of the *tongxianghui*, although few PRC people have entered the leadership. In the mid-1990s, PRC immigrants began to organize their own *tongxianghui*, such as the Beijing *Tongxianghui* in the Washington, D.C., area and the Beijing *Tongxianghui* in Houston, Texas. Participants in these associations are not necessarily Beijing-born people but people who once studied or worked in Beijing.

Another type of new immigrant association is alumni associations of Chinese universities and prestigious high schools. In the greater Washington area, there are more than 30 alumni associations of the major universities in Taiwan

and mainland China. Many alumni associations hold frequent activities, including lectures, open forums, karaoke dancing, and so on. Except for Taiwan-specific alumni associations, most have welcomed PRC scholars and students. Some, such as the Nankai Alumni Association in the greater Washington area, have made earnest efforts to recruit recent PRC immigrants into their leadership circle.

Chinese weekend language schools (*zhongwen xuexiao*) have rapidly increased in the last two decades. In the Washington metropolitan area, more than 30 such Chinese schools teach Chinese language and cultural customs from the kindergarten level to high school. These schools are not only for children; they also function as a weekly social occasion for the parents. Some schools provide free *taiji* or *qigong* classes for the parents while their children are learning the Chinese language. However, these Chinese schools are divided or fragmented. Most schools use textbooks imported from Taiwan, teach traditional Chinese characters, and adopt the traditional *bopomofo* spelling system used today in Taiwan. PRC immigrants are reluctant to send their children to these Chinese schools because of the content. In the 1990s PRC immigrants began to establish their own Chinese schools, in which they teach simplified Chinese characters and the *hanyu pinyin* Romanization used in the PRC.

Similar to Chinese-language schools for children, there are parallel student associations on university campuses: one for mainland Chinese students and one for Taiwanese students. Some have observed that Taiwanese students and Chinese students do not mix on American campuses (Meyer 1994). However, during critical political events of China and Taiwan, there are some realignments in these student associations. For example, during the 1989 Tiananmen student movement in Beijing, Chinese students from Taiwan and mainland China on many campuses united to protest the brutal suppression by the Chinese government. When Lee Teng-hui, president of the Republic of China in Taiwan, visited his alma mater, Cornell University, in 1995, PRC students and some pro-unification students from Taiwan protested his visit, while other Taiwan students welcomed him.

Religious Organizations

Because religions often proclaim teachings that transcend worldly boundaries, Chinese religious organizations may help to integrate recent PRC immigrants with earlier Chinese immigrants. In the United States, a majority of Chinese do not belong to any religious organization. Of the religious believers, most are Christians and Buddhists (Dart 1997). In the mid-1990s, there were about 900 Chinese Christian churches and 150 Chinese Buddhist temples and associations in the United States (Yang 1998b). There are very few Taoist temples and other Chinese religious groups. In my ethnographic research on Chinese Christian churches and Buddhist temples in the Washington, D.C., area, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Houston, I found very

few PRC immigrants in Buddhist temples, but many in Christian churches. For example, the Texas Buddhist Association (TBA) is the first and largest Chinese Buddhist group in Houston and claims about 1,000 families as members. Regular attendance of TBA's Jade Buddha Temple is between 200 and 300. Most are from Taiwan, and a few are from Hong Kong. Among the 152 core members who have voting rights, no one is from the PRC. During my four-month fieldwork in the temple, I met only one regular participant who was once a PRC citizen. She was born in Hong Kong, went to the mainland to participate in the construction of the "New China" in the early 1950s, emigrated to Hong Kong in the early 1980s, then began to practice Buddhism, and finally immigrated to the United States in the 1990s. Similarly, I found few PRC immigrants in other Buddhist groups in Houston, Chicago, and the greater Washington area.

In contrast, many PRC immigrants have joined Chinese Christian churches. Indeed, since 1989, a majority of visitors to Chinese churches are mainland Chinese students, scholars, and their families. For example, the first Chinese Christian church in Washington, D.C., was established in 1935 for Cantonese-speaking Chinatown residents and their children. For a long time, this church held Sunday services in Cantonese and English. However, having received a substantial number of recent PRC immigrants since the 1980s, the church now provides Mandarin Sunday services, Sunday school classes, and fellowship groups. The second Chinese church in the Washington area was founded in 1958 by new immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 1989 this church started a ministry to evangelize mainland Chinese students and scholars. Among its current 300 members, about one-third are recent PRC immigrants. The largest Chinese church in Houston has two fellowship groups especially for mainland Chinese. Several other Mandarin-speaking fellowship groups also have a mixture of people from Taiwan, mainland China, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Church leaders enthusiastically foresee that PRC immigrants will become the majority of Chinese-speaking church members in the next few years. Of course, the integration process of PRC immigrants in Chinese churches also has tensions and conflicts. Some PRC immigrant Christians are forming their own churches. Nevertheless, I have found a greater integration of PRC immigrants in Chinese Christian churches than in any other Chinese associations in the United States today (see Yang 1998a, 1999).

SUMMARY

Since the late 1970s, about half a million PRC immigrants have come to the United States, either directly from the People's Republic of China or through Hong Kong and other places. While family-based immigrants made up the majority in the 1980s, employment-based immigrants became more numerous in the 1990s. Many PRC people came on nonimmigrant visas such as students and adjusted later to permanent resident status. The Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 allowed more than 50,000 PRC citizens to achieve per-

manent resident status. PRC refugees, asylees, and orphans adopted by U.S. citizens have rapidly increased in the last 10 years.

The assimilation of PRC immigrants is following the steps of the post-1965 Chinese immigrants. Acculturation or Americanization begins before their immigration, and most are structurally assimilated in public institutions—schools and workplaces. However, cultural and structural assimilation does not necessarily mean the complete rejection of Chinese culture and Chinese solidarity.

The integration of PRC immigrants into the ethnic Chinese community in the United States varies among the various kinds of Chinese organizations and associations. PRC immigrants have very limited access to traditional Chinatown organizations, Chinese-language schools organized by immigrants from Taiwan, and Chinese Buddhist associations. These types of groups often have close relationships with the Kuomintang government in Taiwan. Similarly, PRC immigrants are not yet ready to get involved in the social and political organizations that focus exclusively on political participation in the larger American society. Some PRC immigrants have participated in the activities of the same-province or same-region associations (*tongxianghui*) and alumni associations of Chinese universities (*tongxuehui*) that are characterized by an open membership system. The highest integration of PRC immigrants in the Chinese American community is found in Chinese Christian churches, which often provide regular and intimate contacts with other Chinese believers. More research is needed to ascertain the role of these churches in the assimilation and incorporation of PRC immigrants.

NOTES

1. Willard H. Myers III (1997) gives several numbers: first, "by the fall of 1988 expanded air smuggling routes were carrying more than 20,000 Fujianese annually" (p. 112); second, "In each of the next four years, 1990 through 1993, more than 100,000 Fujianese" paid \$32,000 per person to be smuggled to the United States (p. 113); third, "Beginning with the 1994 smuggling season, Fujianese migrant arrivals declined significantly to roughly 15,000 and continued declining in 1995, with arrivals dropping to the pre-IRCA [Immigration Reform and Control Act] baseline of about 5,000" (p. 118). These changing estimates in these years seem to be accordant with the media coverage on Chinese illegal immigration. However, Myers merely claims these numbers without giving any source, or evidence or explaining the estimation bases and calculation procedures. Besides, Myers' chapter has many errors concerning simple facts: for example, he states that the United States enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1873 (p. 98), although it should be 1882; he says that the repeal of the exclusion acts was in 1942, although it should be 1943; he writes that "Nicaragua had consulates in China" (p. 111), although Nicaragua and China do not have formal diplomatic relations. If he cannot get these simple facts correct, how much can we believe his claims about the number of illegal Chinese immigrants? Jack A. Goldstone (1997) quotes only one estimate in his chapter, which claims 25,000 Chinese illegally smuggled into the United States per year in 1987–1991 (p. 50). This estimate comes from a newspaper article by

Paul J. Smith (editor of the book) in the *International Herald Tribune* (p. 72, note 8), which is not accessible to me at this moment. Goldstone's chapter focuses on projecting the future of illegal and legal Chinese immigrants to the United States. If his projections are based on unreliable estimates, these projections themselves are questionable. In the same edited book, Ko-lin Chin (1997) writes, "One researcher suggests that as many as 8,000 Chinese are covertly entering the United States every month" (p. 169). The "one researcher" is Willard H. Myers III, and the reference is an unpublished article by Myers (p. 190, note 7). Chin continues, "According to official estimates, in 1991 approximately half a million Chinese were living in the United States illegally" (p. 169). The reference that Chin gives is an article by T. J. English in the journal *Smithsonian* (p. 190, note 8), but I checked and failed to find the article in that issue of the journal. Overall, this book, edited by Paul J. Smith, stands unique in the literature. However, it contains too many problems as sampled here, so is not a reliable scholarly resource about illegal Chinese immigration.

2. According to this INS report, the total number of undocumented immigrants residing in the United States in October 1996 is estimated between 4.6 and 5.4 million. Mexico is the leading source country with an estimated 2.7 million. Other major source countries include El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada, Haiti, Philippines, Honduras, Poland, Nicaragua, Bahamas, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Pakistan, India, Dominica, Peru, and Korea. Similarly, the U.S. Bureau of Census (1997, Table 10) does not list China in the top 20 countries of origin of undocumented immigrants.

3. "Refugee—Any person who is outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. . . . Refugees are exempt from numerical limitation and are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent residence after one year of continuous presence in the United States." "Asylee—An alien in the United States or at a port of entry unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. . . . Asylees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the United States" (INS, *Statistical Yearbook of INS*, 1995, Glossary).

4. Many ethnic Chinese came as refugees under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistant Act of 1975. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 treated Taiwan as a chargeable country with a maximum 20,000 quota per year. The IRCA of 1986 granted 13,752 Chinese legalization, and the Immigration Act of 1990 raised the quota of immigrants for Hong Kong from 5,000 to 10,000 per year.

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