Chinese new migrants in Suriname: the inevitability of ethnic performing

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3 FUIDUNG’ON HAKKAS - THE ‘OLD CHINESE’

The history of the ‘Old Chinese’ in Suriname matches the historical development of Chinese segments in other post-colonial states. This is the case not only in Caribbean locations and the Americas, but also in Asia. Their sojourner settlement developed during the ‘era of modern Chinese migration’, roughly 1842-1949, when Southern China was becoming increasingly influenced by the industrialised world.¹ From a Caribbean point of view, there is nothing particularly unique about the Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname; the basic labourer-merchant-sojourner model can be applied to all Chinese populations anywhere in the Caribbean. For instance, the history of the Chinese in Jamaica up to the early 1960s resembles that of the Chinese in Suriname: the Chinese presence can be traced to nineteenth century indentured labour, most Chinese indentured labourers were Fuidung’on Hakkas, they quickly established their own institutions, most were retail traders, and eventually integration and assimilation produced a generational cleavage within the community.² Then again, inter-ethnic relations in Jamaica were tenser than in Suriname; there were anti-Chinese riots in Jamaica (in 1919, 1938 and 1965) but not in Suriname.³

Perhaps the labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory fits initial observations of Caribbean Chinese too neatly, and induces a certain amount of complacency in analyses. McKeown reworked the labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory into a five-stage development of ‘diasporic Chinese business’. These were labour mobilization; the transition from labour networks to credit networks; the development into middlemen between the 1880s and 1920s; development into ethnic minorities and the rise of family firms; and the appearance of diasporic (i.e. transnational) businessmen.⁴ It is, however, difficult to apply this view to the Caribbean as very little

2 Li 2004.
3 Bouknight-Davis 2004: 84.
4 McKeown 2000.
has been written on Caribbean Chinese in the post-indentureship period, particularly with regard to the development of Chinese ethnic entrepreneurship. Did Chinese shopkeepers in the Caribbean make up a middleman minority? How did family and migrant networks develop and how should they be mapped in the Caribbean? The last two stages of McKeown’s historical framework might not be relevant to the Caribbean, because of the limited scale of developments (especially in the case of family firms) in a relatively small society, or perhaps simply because transitions are very recent (in the case of transnational entrepreneurs).

The labourer-merchant-sojourner trajectory tends to become hegemonic, dictating an image of uniform and linear development in Caribbean Chinese history. However, from an insider’s point of view – that is, taking into account laokeh attitudes towards sinkeh – the nature of Chinese migration changes along socio-cultural lines through time, and varies according to the various destinations and changing conditions there. From an insider’s point of view the changes through time can be rather different from the categories implied by the hegemonic model. In this way, for instance, Fuidung’on Hakka migration to Suriname can be said to have transformed four different times: First there were the indentured labourers from Hakka villages in the Fuidung’on Region in the late nineteenth century; then Fuidung’on Hakka entrepreneurial chain migrants up to the first half of the twentieth century; next acculturated Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants via Hong Kong in the second half of the twentieth century; and finally Fuidung’on migrants who are virtually indistinguishable from New Chinese by the end of the twentieth century. In this chapter I use this view of Fuidung’on Hakka migration to paint a picture of the ‘Old Chinese’ in Suriname.

3.1 Indentured Labourers

There were two distinct Chinese migrations to Latin America and the Caribbean, including Suriname. These were indentured labour in the second half of the nineteenth century and ‘free migrants’ in the first third of the twentieth century up to the Great Depression of the 1930s. It would be overkill to provide a comprehensive description of the period of Chinese indentured labour in Suriname, but it is essential to note that on the one hand this historical period

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5 Kent 2003: 117.
is seen as pivotal to Chinese identity in Suriname, while on the other Chinese indentured labour in Suriname was marginal even at the regional level. While not every aspect of Chineseness in Suriname can be traced to Chinese indentured labour, many important symbolic markers and structures certainly can. These are Fuidung-on Hakka identity, the Tong’ap-Laiap dichotomy, and the pattern of entrepreneurial chain migration (in particular the transition from labour networks to credit networks in McKeown’s historical framework above).

Chinese indentured labour in the Caribbean, and thus Suriname, should be viewed in the broader context of the labour crisis in the nineteenth century Caribbean sugar industry, following the decision of European countries to abolish the African slave trade and later slavery in their Caribbean colonies. Chinese indentured labour migration to Suriname lasted from 1853 to 1875, and was relatively small and relatively late compared to the rest of the Caribbean region. Numbers of Chinese indentured migrants to the Caribbean were also small relative to the whole of Asian migrant population, and never exceeded 10% of the total number of migrants. Caribbean migration was also marginal to China as a whole; the Caribbean migrants made up 0.3% of the total Chinese population which was at that time 430 million. Chinese indentured labour in Suriname is even more marginal when we consider the whole picture of Chinese indentured labour in the New World; the vast majority of Chinese migrants went to the sugarcane fields in Cuba and the mines of Peru.

The Encyclopaedia of Chinese Overseas states that the Surinamese labourers were recruited from the Siyi, Fuidung’on and Zhongshan areas in southern Guangdong Province. Data from the Registry of Indentured Labourers confirms that most of the Chinese indentured labourers were likely from Hakka-dominated homelands in the Fuidung’on counties. These areas – just north of Hong Kong and including parts of the New Territories – were on the rim of a primarily Hakka area. Kejia-speakers arrived in the Fuidung’on area by the end of the 17th century, and were originally classed as

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10 Look Lai 1999: 249.
11 Leong 1997: 25, map 1.3.
They occupied the hillier and poorer land, and they did not generally integrate with the Cantonese speaking population.

The first experimental shipment in 1853 was from Java, and so was the last shipment in 1874 after Hong Kong was closed to the ‘Coolie Trade’, whereas the rest originated from the Pearl River Delta, via Hong Kong. The Registry of the Chinese indentured labourers records the last place of residence of the immigrants, most of which are known Hakka areas. The places were varied, ranging from modern Meixian in central Dongguan to Taishan in the western part of the Pearl River Delta but they were mostly in Guangdong Province. However, most of the final immigrants from China came from the Fuidung’ on Region in the eastern Pearl River Delta, particularly the area of present Dongguan Municipality. Moreover, virtually all the personal names in the Registry seem to reflect an original Kejia pronunciation. There is, however, an unverifiable oral tradition that some were also Hoklao (‘men from Fujian Province’, but actually meaning seafaring Min-speakers from Chaozhou, eastern Guangdong Province) among the indentured labourers. It is not exactly clear why and how apparently whole shiploads of indentured labourers could consist of Hakkas exclusively, but that appears to have been the case in Suriname.

What attracted Chinese indentured labourers to Suriname almost exclusively was the demand for bonded labour. The reasons to leave China included increased population, poverty, social instability caused by famine, foreign aggression, local insurrections, etc. Between 1650 and 1850 the Chinese population trebled, which fuelled continuous migration to existing Overseas Chinese communities around Southeast Asia. Even so, Emmer states that there is no clear-cut explanation for the increased emigration from China and British India. In general, labourers recruited in China included people trying to flee famine, prisoners in local wars (e.g. the

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13 Man A Hing 2000.
14 The registry is accessible online via the website of the Dutch National Archive at http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname/base_china/introductie.html
15 One explanation for shiploads comprised exclusively of Hakkas could be strategies to reduce tensions on board, by avoiding mixed transports of Cantonese (Punti) and Hakkas (Look Lai 1993: 75). Chinese indentured labour in Suriname can be viewed in the context of the much longer period of Chinese indentured labour in the British Caribbean, as the majority of workers were shipped via the British crown colony of Hong Kong. Interestingly, Lai notes that toward the end of the British experience, the number of Fuidung’ on Hakkas increased (1993: 49, 104).
16 Emmer 1992: 15.
Hakka-Punti wars), people with gambling debts, victims of kidnapping, etc. In the late Qing dynasty, emigration was a capital crime, and only in 1866 did the Chinese imperial government agree to regulate the emigration of Chinese indentured labourers.

The Surinamese population actually decreased during the period of Chinese indentured labour, as the death rate among the Afro-Surinamese population negated any increases due to immigration. The import of Chinese labourers was never intended as a form of Chinese colonization. The Dutch wanted bonded labour, not necessarily Chinese, but as the French and British had closed their colonies to other colonial powers, so the Dutch authorities only considered China as a source of bonded labour. Furthermore, a sustainable Chinese settlement was not possible through indentured labourers as long as the migration of Chinese women to Suriname was virtually absent. This is usually attributed to Chinese ‘clan leaders’ refusal to permit women to leave, but the Dutch colonial authorities assumed that the lack of Chinese women would not be a problem for either the migrants or the Surinamese. Emmer relates the absence of women migrants in the Caribbean to a traditionally low percentage of Chinese women migrating within Asia which at the time was 3% of all migrants. In Suriname, as elsewhere in the Caribbean Islands, the first Chinese labourers were kept separate from African field slaves, and most worked in the sugar boiling houses. Subsequent Chinese indentured labourers in Suriname were not treated particularly well by their employers, who often complained of lack of productivity. In the whole of the Caribbean there was very little return migration to China and just 0.1% are estimated to have paid for a passage back. No free return passage was included in Surinamese indentureship contracts, as in the rest of the Caribbean, and in Suriname too most went into retail trade after the end of their contracts.

17 Lamur 1977.
20 Ankum-Houwink 1974: 47.
25 Zijlmans & Enser 2002: 44.
3.2 Sojourners and Ethnic Entrepreneurs

Fuidung’on Hakka migration to Suriname continued after Chinese indentured labour ended. Post-indentureship migrants were chain migrants sponsored by ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Suriname, many of whom had been indentured labourers. In 1876, a year after the arrival of the last Chinese indentured labourers, there were no licensed Chinese shops in Suriname. But in 1879 Chinese owned 12 (10.3%) of 117 businesses selling provisions, most of which were outside Paramaribo. Creoles owned about half of all registered businesses, and Jews slightly less. Turnover in the 12 Chinese businesses was in the low and middle range. About twenty years later, in 1898, Chinese owned 48 (25.4%) of 189 businesses selling provisions, now outnumbering Jews (18%) and approaching Creoles (37%), but ahead of the new East Indian entrepreneurs (7.4%). The Chinese shops were still predominantly rural, but now with regard to turnover they approached the Jewish businesses; there were more in the middle range than in the lower, as was the case with Creole businesses.26

The sojourner mentality of post-indentureship migrants clashed with the colonial government’s view of them as settlers (*vrije migranten*, ‘free immigrants’). In modern discourse they would have been termed economic migrants, as their main justification was to earn money to send back home. Sojourning was very rarely an individual undertaking, but implied a network; migrants were seldom pioneers, but required the help of relatives or coregionalists in Suriname for funds to travel, start some sort of income-generating activity, overcome language barriers, settle along earlier Chinese migrants, and deal with local authorities. The result was chain migration, a sustained flow of migrants from the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang sponsored by earlier migrants to Suriname. Chain migration distinguished Chinese in Suriname from other migrant groups, evidenced by the continued existence of *sinkeh* Chinese.27 Chinese

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26 Unpublished data distilled by Ad de Bruijne in the 1960s from the 1876, 1879 and 1898 Patentregisters (colonial registers of licensed business) and the Surinaamsche Almanak of 1898. Branch stores were not registered. Ethnic labels are not exact as they were based on interpretations of names by De Bruijne and his network and assistants.

27 Sustained immigration since the time of indentured labour makes Chinese unique among the Asian groups in Suriname. Chain migration is not exclusive to them, Lebanese migration is also exclusively based on chain migration (De Bruijne 2006). Javanese and East Indians were not in sustained contact with an immigrant group for whom all local adaptations implied loss of authenticity. Suriname-born Javanese and East Indians could claim authenticity uncontested until fairly recently, when
migrants faced bureaucratic restrictions based on requirements with regard to the ability to maintain a livelihood in Suriname, and as a result only about a hundred migrants per year were granted legal residence.28

Escaping hardship is the traditional reason given for leaving the Fuidung’on Region. Hardship meant famine and disease caused by war and civil unrest. The Hakka-Punti Clan Wars raged between 1855 and 1867, particularly in the Pearl River Delta. The Fuidung’on region in the west of the Delta was not as heavily affected by them as the Siyi region (Taishan), but the architecture of the ancestral

increasing globalization enabled Surinamese to experience Indonesian and East Indian variety and modernity for themselves.  

28 Man A Hing 1993: 55.
villages of the Surinamese sojourners reflects the influence of war; the old houses are closed to the outside, with a fortified watchtower. By the time Fuidung’on Hakkas started moving to Suriname, their qiaoxiang was still reeling from the effects of nineteenth-century civil wars such as the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) and foreign invasions (the Opium Wars), and the wars which continued during most of the period of sojourner settlement in the first half of the twentieth century (the Chinese Civil War 1927-1949, Japanese occupation 1931-1945).

Suriname was not the only or the most obvious destination for Fuidung’on Hakkas. It was easier for coregionalists from the Surinamese Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang to go to places that were closer to China such as Vietnam (Annam, North Vietnam) or Malaysia, or known areas of Hakka settlement in the Pacific, such as Hawai‘i or Tahiti. But it was the available network and quality of sponsorship that determined the sojourning, not the actual destination. Up to the 1930s migrants travelled from the Fuidung’on Region overland to Hong Kong, where they boarded ships to the west coast of North American. Travel would continue overland to the east coast, after which ships to the Caribbean Islands and Suriname would be boarded. The alternative route, via the Suez Canal and the Netherlands, does not seem to have been as frequently used.

The relationship between Suriname and the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang was not exclusive. Although the vast majority of Fuidung’on Hakkas arrived in Suriname directly from the Eastern Pearl River Delta, there were also (re)migrants from other parts of the Fuidung’on Hakka migration network. Up to the 1970s there were incidental Fuidung’on Hakka migrants from Vietnam (called Onnamzai, ‘Annamese’ in Kejia). The link with Malaysia was more durable, and there are a number of Fuidung’on Hakka families of mixed Malaysian background.29 The clearest network ties were closer to Suriname, as Fuidung’on Hakkas would travel up and down the three Guianas. In the nineteenth century, Chinese would remigrate from Guyana to the rest of the British Caribbean in search of better

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29 The Naturalization Decrees published in the pre- and post-independence Journal of Acts and Decrees occasionally mention the Malaysian States, from where Fuidung’on Hakka migrants originated, and sometimes the exact place of birth: Perak State (Pusing), Sabah State (Sandakan), Johor State (Kulai), Pahang State, Kuala Lumpur. Singapore is also mentioned as a place of birth. Interestingly, one Naturalization Decree (SB1989.18) mentions a Chinese from ‘Calcutta, India’. Modern Kolkata is still known for its Hakka enclave.
livelihood and opportunities. Unable to compete with the Portuguese business class, many moved to Trinidad as traders or to Suriname and French Guiana as prospectors. There was also marriage migration from Guyana to Suriname, as Fuidung’s Hakkas in Suriname would try to find brides in British Guyana. It appears that Fuidung’s Hakkas from Suriname accessed the Chinese remigration network in the British colonies for similar economic reasons.

Calling Fuidung’s Hakkas sojourners in Suriname hua-shang because of their entrepreneurship might give the impression of some kind of inherent tendency arising from a monolithic Chinese culture. In fact, Chinese entrepreneurship in Suriname has more to do with local patterns of migration and settlement. The stranger hypothesis of entrepreneurship provides a structural explanation as to why groups such as the ethnic Chinese became merchants in Suriname. Migrants from a different cultural background find themselves as outsiders and minorities in their target society who are excluded from conventional options, and eventually settle on entrepreneurship as a way of self-employment. Fuidung’s Hakka immigrants were outsiders in colonial Surinamese society, a condition they shared with other groups such as the Madeirans and the ‘Syrians’ (Lebanese). They all gravitated towards entrepreneurship, and shared similar routes along entrepreneurial opportunities: such as, itinerant vendors, market salesmen, small shops, and larger enterprises. Though they were obviously merchant minorities, none of these groups were middlemen minorities – they were not placed between a colonial elite and the ruled majority.

Light distinguishes between immigrant entrepreneurship, which is basically a coping strategy, and ethnic entrepreneurship, which would specify second-generation entrepreneurship. It is unclear what the proportion of immigrant entrepreneurs to ethnic entrepreneurs was among the post-indentureship Fuidung’s Hakkas; it is likely that a minority of enterprises progressed beyond first-generation migrant entrepreneurship. In both cases Fuidung-on Hakka enterprises in Suriname would provide a number of advantages. In a family business, labour becomes cheap, loyalty is not an issue and language barriers are not a problem, while financial resources can be pooled from family and coethnics and

33 Light 1972.
coregionalists as a source of capital. The need for trusted labour meant that people wanted someone from their own qiaoxiang to make the journey in order to work in the business, with the hope of one day being able to start up a business of their own as an incentive to migrate. In this way chain migration became firmly linked to the retail business among Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname. However, retail trade was not a transplanted tradition. Of all the niches that Fuidung’on Hakkas worked in Suriname, such as bakeries, jewellery shops, and electronics repair shops, only prospecting was a unique, transplanted skill. It is unclear how many Fuidung’on Hakka men were prospectors during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Prospecting could not sustain chain migration, and was eventually abandoned.

Entrepreneurial chain migration became a fixed element in Chinese ethnic discourse in Suriname, as Chinese identity became entwined with the concept of the Chinese corner shop (*Chinese winkel*, Dutch: ‘Chinese shop’; *Chinees op de hoek*, Dutch: ‘Chinese on the corner’). The Chinese corner shop system was reproduced in Suriname as new migrants (*sinkeh*) worked as apprentices in businesses of established migrants. Though a consequence of migrant entrepreneurship is market saturation, Fuidung’on Hakka migrants remained entrenched in the commercial niche, and only very rarely moved into other economic sectors; according to Light and Gold’s definition this is how the Chinese ethnic ownership economy had developed.34 Ethnic resources of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants were relevant to commercial success in their ethnic ownership economy with its semi-monopolistic hold on Surinamese retail trade, and the most important ethnic resource of all was the ability to access and manage various migrant networks. As Light and Gold point out, ethnic identification thus acquires an economic value.35 Management of Chinese identity, i.e. articulation, recognition, and mobilization of membership of the ‘Chinese’ ethnic group for the ethnic ownership economy, was a driving force in the development of Chinese community institutions in Suriname, in particular in the Chinese organizations for example by helping to organize ROSCAs as a source of business capital, by preventing price-wars between competing Chinese enterprises, by helping to stage communal

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34 Light & Gold 2000: 9. The existence of a Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname can hardly be disputed, but it is extremely difficult to make firm statements about it; data on ethnicity of business owners in Suriname is limited due to Surinamese State policy with regard to multiculturalism, while dogmatic views of the economic mainstream dominate over ‘newer’ concepts such as ethnic economies.
performances of Chinese belonging, and by maintaining ethnic resources such as Chinese written language could be maintained (see Chapter 8).

As noted in Chapter 1, the Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname had produced a fairly stable and durable, albeit distinctly local and instrumental, Chinese ethnic identity. This does not mean that it also always produced a harmonious or unified Chinese ethnic group. Merchants responded to the competition inherent in entrepreneurial chain migration by moving out of Paramaribo, away from the majority of established Chinese shops, and by innovating on the corner shop concept (supermarkets). Market saturation implies that the entrepreneurs have become each other's competitors, despite the common assumption that ethnic loyalty is strong among Chinese in Suriname. A Chinese ethnic ownership economy is also no guarantee that Chinese family enterprises will develop. Many Chinese shopkeepers maintain their business as a more or less reliable source of income for the family, as a means to social mobility for their children away from the confines of Chinese entrepreneurship, and as a base for continued chain migration from China, or remigration from Suriname.

Examples are too numerous to mention. One Tong’ap shopkeeper I interviewed had fled to Hong Kong from Bao’an during the famine of the Great Leap Forward (1959-1961). He became a chain migrant to Suriname where he was apprenticed in the corner shop of an older Tong’ap relative. His Suriname-born daughter was eventually sent to the USA, where an uncle already lived, to study. The shopkeeper and his wife plan to retire and join their daughter in the USA. Their son, however, is expected to stay in Paramaribo and continue the business, because the father loved the shop very much and thought that the neighbourhood expected the business to continue. In any case, there was not enough money to send the boy to the USA to study. Another example is the Suriname-born daughter of a Tong’ap shopkeeper who returned from the Netherlands after her university education to continue running the supermarket; her brother had failed in the supermarket business that the family had prepared for him.

It is very difficult to reconstruct the historical details of how the link between the Fuidung’on Hakka sponsors in Suriname and their relatives in the qiaoxiang developed. The locations of the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang can be more accurately fine-tuned using a limited number of Chinese textual sources, such as gravestones with Chinese text in the Oranjetuin, Oud Lina’s Rust and Fa Tjauw Koen Sang burial grounds in Paramaribo and Chinese
language business guides. Based on those sources and the opinions of older Fuidung’on Hakkas, it would appear that migrants who arrived in Paramaribo between the 1900s and the 1960s came mainly from villages in Qingqi District in Dongguan County, Longgang District in Huiyang County, and various regions in Baoan County.36

The only information available is on the situation at the Surinamese end, and the opinions of chain migrants are very much coloured by cultural patterns that dictate what a good chain migrant should be like. Informants glossed over the less attractive aspects of the link with the qiaoxiang, such as the role of credit and debt in the structure of the chain migration network. To a certain extent the link socialized chain migrants to the patterns of Chinese identity in Suriname. More often than not Laiap and Tong’ap sponsors describe social relationships in term of chain migration; people who were sponsored remain tied to the sponsor through moral obligations of reciprocity, which are reconfirmed in public settings. Having been invited to communal events on more than one occasion by a prominent Laiap businesswoman, I often observed the typically Surinamese and Chinese preoccupation with personal networks in action, when strangers would come over to exchange a few words with our host or greet her from across the banquet hall. It turned out that she had sponsored many of them, and though they were not financially obligated to her, the sponsorship link was publicly acknowledged.

3.3 The Hong Kong Chinese

In Suriname, the hope of return became rather more of an illusion in the sojourner discourse after the founding of the PRC. Direct return to Guangdong Province under a communist system was not attractive to Fuidung’on Hakka sojourners in Suriname, and going to Hong Kong instead implied formal settlement in British territory, which was not a realistic option for most. Fuidung’on Hakka men in Suriname expressed the ideology of eventual return through the image of lychee orchards; now the trees which they had planted on the land they owned back home were no longer within reach.

36 Though later Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh were more likely to be from Baoan, and areas further to the south such as the Shenzhen SEZ the New Territories, Dongguan dominates the imagination of the older Fuidung’on Hakkas. To some, Dongguan, and nothing else, is the ancestral homeland of Chinese in Suriname.
Before 1949 there was constant labour migration between Guangdong Province and Hong Kong, which became impossible after the founding of the PRC. After 1949 there were three major waves of (illicit) migration from mainland China, in particular Guangdong Province, to the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong: these were immediately after the founding of the PRC; following the large famine in the early 1960s which resulted from the founding of the first communes and the Great Leap Forward (1959-1961); and in the late 1970s, following the Cultural Revolution and just before economic reforms. Fuidung’on Hakka's attempting to travel along their old chain migration route to Suriname between 1949 and the 1970s found themselves political refugees on the traditional first leg of the journey to the port of Hong Kong. Those who managed to evade PRC border guards overland and the sharks while swimming across to Hong Kong, needed to build up formal identities if they planned to continue journeying. As a place with an established Fuidung’on Hakka group, Suriname remained an attractive destination, but Canada and the USA had also abolished discriminatory limitations to immigration in 1962 and 1965 respectively (followed by Australia in 1973). Suriname thus became doubly interesting as a stopover to those destinations with remigration as a long-term goal.

Insistence on maintaining qiaoxiang ties during the Cold War was apparently easily interpreted by the colonial Surinamese government in terms of ethnic Chinese fostering links with Communist China, and immigration could be investigated as Communist infiltration. This was not forgotten by the older Tong’ap cohorts:

Actually, at that time it was very difficult to get family and friends over from China. In 1970 a Chinese here applied for an entry permit for a relative (a brother-in-law) and in 1973 permission had yet to be granted. Inquiries were made personally with the then President of the Central Bank, but nothing made sense. They heard that the person involved had been investigated by the Dutch consul in Hong Kong and it was discovered that he had worked for a leftist labour Union in Hong Kong and was therefore

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37 Pan 1999: 68. Skeldon (1994: 25) notes that emigration from Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s, most of which was from the New Territories and relatively minor compared to earlier and later periods, cannot be related to the labour-surplus nature of the Hongkongese economy at the time.
considered to be a communist, and was denied entry into Suriname.  

The number of undocumented immigrants from the PRC and Hong Kong in Suriname seems to have been relatively substantial, for in 1958 a general pardon was granted to all Chinese illegals in Suriname. According to official figures, between 1950 and 1964 numbers of ethnic Chinese rose from 2,384 to 5,339 (1.2% and 1.6% of the total population respectively), but the percentage of foreign-born ethnic Chinese dropped from 41.1% to 29.4%. According to Lamur, immigration still remained a strong factor in the demographic development of the Chinese in Suriname; up to 1968 one in twenty ethnic Chinese was an immigrant, while the number of ethnic Chinese increased to 6,791 in 1970. The Hong Kong route also caused a distinct narrowing of the qiaoxiang area; at the beginning of the twentieth century, Fuidung'on Hakka migrants arrived from a wide range of villages in Dongguan, Bao'an and Huiyang Counties, but by the late 1960s most sinkeh apparently came from Bao'an County (now in the Shenzhen SEZ), which was nearer the Hong Kong border.

Life in the Crown Colony put Fuidung'on Hakka villagers under strong pressure to acculturate to the prestigious Cantonese dialect and urban culture of Hong Kong. Despite the waves of immigration from the PRC mentioned above, there were also increasing numbers of remigrants to the old villages from the 1960s onward; as a result Hong Kong acquired a more settled core popu-

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38 XNRB 18 May 2005, 历史的回顾；漫谈 NPS 華人支部 (In retrospect; A free discussion of the Chinese wing of NPS).
39 De West evening paper, 9 January 1958 and 2 April 1958. The illegals were defined as Chinese who had arrived in Suriname directly from Hong Kong or China, or indirectly, with intermediate foreign residency lasting no longer than one year. They were given up to 18 January to register, and eventually 67 individuals did, but most had trouble meeting the requirements of the pardon. The Surinamese police actually started investigating reports of large numbers of illegal Chinese immigrants on 5 November 1957. It was discovered that most illegals entered from Hong Kong via the USA or via French Guiana, and used various forms of identity fraud, in particular assuming the identity of a registered resident ethnic Chinese (alive or dead). Marriages of convenience and fictitious family ties were common.
40 Data from the 1950 (Dutch National Archives, 1950 census in Suriname, 2.10.19.2, 207-212) and 1964 censuses (SIC 33).
41 Lamur 1976: 17. According to Lamur, the increase over six years from 5,339 to 6,791 between 1964 and 1970 was mainly caused by immigration from Southern China via Hong Kong. In any case there was nothing to indicate that any ethnic Chinese newcomers / sinkeh came from areas outside the old Fuidung'on Hakka qiaoxiang.
lation of people who identified themselves as Hongkongese. By the 1970s the generation of Hong Kong-born had basically lost its sense of belonging to the qiaoxiang of the immigrants. The difference in living standards between rapidly developing and Western-oriented Hong Kong society and the qiaoxiang in the PRC made for an attitude of superiority and disdain for the ‘mainland’ among Hongkongese. Hong Kong developed a strong Cantonese-based culture, which would have been impossible in Guangdong.

This process of localization is also reflected in the language shift among mainland immigrants to Hong Kong which had become structural by the 1950s. Regional dialects (Chaozhou, Kejia, Fujianese, Hoisan, Shanghainese) of immigrants were abandoned for the urban Hongkongese variety of Cantonese, and every Kejia speaker in Hong Kong was influenced by Cantonese to some degree, resulting in a ‘New Style’ Kejia spoken by younger people. Self-identification as Hakka, which had been a strong contrastive identity during the Hakka-Punti conflicts of the nineteenth century in the Pearl River Delta, became a liability in the new modernity of Hong Kong. By the 1970s dialect was not a predictable marker of sub-ethnic identity in Hong Kong, but an instrument of strategic identification. This shift away from qiaoxiang culture and language was transplanted to Suriname. Between roughly the middle of the 1960s to the middle of the 1970s the latest sinkeh from the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang neither referred to themselves as Hakka nor spoke Kejia in public settings, but identified with Hong Kong. They were therefore called ‘Hongkongese’ (Kejia: hionggongnyin) by older Tong’ap laokeh which filtered out via Laiap to the rest of the Surinamese population as ‘Hong Kong Chinese’ (Hongkong-Chinezen).

The Hong Kong Chinese became the outsiders (in Elias and Scotson’s sense) to the established Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname.

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42 Lau 1997.
44 Lau 1997.
46 Lau 2000.
47 Blake 1975.
48 In the 1980s Chinese migrants from ‘China and Hong Kong’ formed a relatively significant economic bloc in Guyanese society, of about 2,000 persons and 150 businesses (Garner 2008). These migrants (who would likely have been called ‘Hong Kong Chinese’ in Suriname) were more noticeable in Guyana because of fewer numbers of established Chinese migrants, and were referred to as ‘new immigrants’ (G.K. Dans, ‘The New Immigrants’, Guyana Chronicle, 20 March 1983. Quoted in Garner 2008: 295-296).
The older migrants and assimilated Chinese - Tong'ap and Laiap - resented the Hong Kong *sinkeh* immensely. The Hong Kong Chinese did not have quite the same attitude towards migration as the older Tong'ap. The sojourner discourse of those Tong'ap focused on return even if that never happened; the newest migrants looked beyond Suriname to the world. Fuidung'on Hakka brides from Hong Kong were derided for their modern notions and unwillingness to put up with the hardships earlier Fuidung'on Hakka migrant wives had taken for granted. To this *sinkeh* cohort, the established Fuidung'on Hakka migrants were peasants, out of touch with the modernity of the Pearl River Delta, where the Fuidung'on Region was now the periphery of Hong Kong. The Tong'ap stereotyped the Hong Kong Chinese as members of organized crime rings, arrogant and materialistic, and unwilling to assimilate into Tong'ap life.  

The Hong Kong Chinese introduced certain Chinese festivals which had never been publicly celebrated in Suriname, such as Chinese Lunar New Year's Day / Spring Festival and the Moon Festival. Both festivals were celebrated in public as non-religious events, the Spring Festival in the Chinese organizations and the Moon Festival in De Witte Lotus sports club, effectively to promote social cohesion.

The Hong Kong Chinese cohort remigrated in much the same pragmatic way earlier Fuidung'on Hakka migrant cohorts did, but some extended their business networks around the Caribbean and Latin America (for example São Paolo and Belem in Brazil). The most significant remigration of all Tong'ap cohorts occurred in the 1970s. A large number of Surinamese emigrated in the early 1970s out of fear of what might have happened after the planned independence in 1975, most went to the Netherlands. In 1980 there was the military coup, which initiated another wave of migration to the Netherlands, away from deteriorating socio-economic conditions. There are some indications that the ethnic Chinese of Suriname followed this trend, with numbers not increasing beyond the 6,029 persons of the 1971 census and which had fallen to...

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51 The Surinamese government registered a negative net migration of about 130,000 people between 1950 and 1980, what amounted to roughly 36% of the population. Estimates of total international migration over the last 25 years suggest that more than half of the Surinamese population moved abroad (Ketwaru-Nurmoehamed 1999: 22).
5,494 by the 1980 census.\textsuperscript{52} Between the 1970s and 1980s a
distinct Surinamese segment was noted in the descriptions of Chi-
inese in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{53}

Naturalization Decrees can give an idea of the cultural shift
caused by the influx of Hong Kong Chinese. From 1966 until
Surinamese Independence in November 1975 a total of 69 Natura-
lization Decrees were promulgated which granted Dutch citizenship
to a total of 1,273 ethnic Chinese (more accurately people with
Chinese names, immigrants as well as local-born).\textsuperscript{54} The vast major-
ity were born in mainland China, only 107 (8.4\% of ethnic Chinese)

\textsuperscript{52} SIC 171/92-2: 12. The 1980 census figure of 5,494 ethnic Chinese is unreliable.
The 1980 census had been carried out by the Civil Registry Office (CBB) rather than the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Final results were only published in 1988, but were reinterpreted and re-published by the ABS when inconsistencies cropped up. Ethnic data were suppressed in the 1980 census for ideological reasons. Self-
identification was not allowed, and ‘landaard’ was assigned according to the respondents’ surnames, religion and language spoken at home.

\textsuperscript{53} Pieke 1988. The Tong’ap-Laiap distinction did not survive transplantation to the
Netherlands. The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (www.cbs.nl) makes a basic native / non-native distinction \textit{(autochtoon / allochtoon)}, and defines non-natives as individuals born outside the Netherlands and their Netherlands-born children. Surinamese are classed among the non-Western non-native groups. Laiap in the Netherlands are classed as ‘Surinamese’ by virtue of being born in Suriname, while Tong’ap are classed as ‘Chinese’. Ethnic Chinese from Suriname can be strategically grouped together, as on the website of the \textit{Inspraakorgaan Chinezen} (Chinese Community Advisory Association) where Chinese from Suriname are described as ‘often having excellent control of the Dutch language’ while ‘many are native speakers of Kejia’. (http://www.ioc-ch.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8&Itemid=22). As Kejia-speakers, Fuidung’on Hakka remigrants from Suriname are grouped together with people from Malaysia and Hong Kong, though numbers of Kejia-speakers in the Netherlands are unknown.

\textsuperscript{54} Naturalization Decrees, published in the Bulletin of Acts and Decrees of colonial
and independent Suriname, shed surprisingly little light on Chinese migration in
Suriname. The date of settlement in Suriname is not mentioned, the gender of the
naturalized is not consistently stated, and place of birth is only broadly indicated in
the case of Chinese migrants (usually only ‘Guangdong’ in pre-independence or
‘China’ in post-independence Decrees). The first naturalization decree (GB1956.121,
enacted through GB1957.26) was for a single individual, Afoeng Chiu Hung. At the
time his application for Dutch citizenship was considered an almost heretical break
with the sojourning ideal by Chinese in Suriname, yet significant numbers of Chinese
migrants started to naturalize to Dutch citizenship just a few years later. According
to older Fuidung’on Hakka informants, acquiring Dutch citizenship was more a
question of losing Chinese citizenship for anyone planning to remigrate to North
America, especially at the height of the Cold War in the 1950s-1960s. Local
informants say that because of US migration quotas remigration via intermediate
destinations increased one’s chance of reaching North America. In the run-up to
Surinamese Independence in 1975, acquiring Dutch citizenship was an exit strategy
in case ethnic violence erupted between Creoles and East Indians. Frequency of
naturalization of Chinese migrants in the post-independence Decrees does not
reliably reflect immigration patterns or emigration strategies.
were born in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{55} However, when we consider the transcription of their names, 432 names clearly reflected Kejia pronunciation versus 595 that clearly reflected Cantonese pronunciation.\textsuperscript{56} In 1967-1969 clearly Kejia-based names (193) outnumbered clearly Cantonese-based names (71), but in 1970-1973 it was the other way around: 239 names were clearly Kejia versus 524 clearly Cantonese.

The process of \textit{sinkeh} becoming established, with earlier groups fading to the background, continued, and eventually Hong Kong Cantonese culture became the norm in Suriname. Relations between the earlier migrants and the Hong Kong cohorts had not been particularly good; the older cohorts considered the Hongkongese untrustworthy and arrogant, the Hongkongese cohorts considered the older Tong’ap ignorant peasants.\textsuperscript{57} Fuidung’on Hakka migrants in Suriname had been used to a diglossia of colloquial Kejia and written (Mandarin-based) Chinese, and now Cantonese became the medium of formal public addresses. The shift was not a full replacement of earlier Overseas Fuidung’on Hakka patterns; children could still be sent ‘to China’, though more were sent to Hong Kong or Taiwan than to the qiaoxiang, and spouses would still be sought abroad, though now from Hong Kong rather than the Fuidung’on homeland or the Caribbean region. Something of a transnational identity developed among families originating from the Hong Kong Chinese cohort, as increased mobility and affluence allowed Tong’ap to move more regularly between Hong Kong, Taiwan, the USA, Canada, and the Netherlands, and Suriname; individuals identified themselves by their transnational family, linked to an abstract ancestral village in the Fuidung’on region.

\textsuperscript{55} Chinese made up about 90\% of all applicants for Dutch citizenship in Suriname in 1966-1975. The China-born made up about 88\% of the Chinese applicants. The largest group of applicants born outside China and Hong Kong consisted of Peranakan, with 12 and possibly 30 individuals. There were also 8 born in Suriname, 3 born in Malaysia, 20 from Guyana, French Guiana, Martinique, and Trinidad & Tobago. Not all applicants born in China were Fuidung’on Hakka: one was from Shanghai and one from Hubei Province (PRC).

\textsuperscript{56} 93 names of China-born were either ambiguous or reflected a different Chinese pronunciation; at one extreme the number of Kejia-based and Cantonese-based names could therefore have been about equal, at the other there might have been more than twice as many Cantonese-based names.

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Tseng 1991. The contrast between older Tong’ap and Hong Kong Chinese was particularly evident after Fuidung’on Hakkas remigrated to the Dutch colonial metropole, but Hakka migrants from Suriname tended to isolate themselves in the Netherlands from other Chinese segments.
3.4 The Latest Fuidung’on Hakka Migrants

Immigration from Hong Kong had stopped by the end of the 1980s. The *sinkeh* that followed the Hong Kong Chinese were PRC citizens who came straight from the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang, once again from Dongguan rather than Bao’an / Shenzhen near the Hong Kong border. The post-independence naturalization decrees (i.e. those issued after 1975) give some idea of how the transition from the Hong Kong Chinese cohorts and the later Fuidung’on Hakka *sinkeh* occurred. Between 1977 and 1995 1,118 people with a Chinese name applied for Surinamese citizenship. The percentage of unambiguously Kejia pronunciations in the naturalization decrees hovered around 20% between 1977 and 1981, and dropped to about 15% from 1982 to 1989, but it fell to almost nothing in the 1990s. Clear Cantonese pronunciations averaged a little over 50% between 1977 and 1987, but started tapering off after that (27.9% in 1989) to about 2% in the 1990s. In any case, between 1977 and 1982 almost all Chinese names in the naturalization decrees reflected a background in the eastern Pearl River Delta / Fuidung’on area (i.e. clearly Kejia, clearly Cantonese, or ambiguous pronunciations, made up on average 97%). However, the percentage of Mandarin pronunciations started to increase steadily from almost nothing in the early 1980s to almost 100% by the end of the 1990s. I have noted that in the naturalization decrees from 1977 to 1995, 94% of Mandarin names belonged to Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants.

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58 That works out to 80 per year for every year that decrees were issued, and 56 for every year from 1976 through 1995. There was an absolute peak of 248 Chinese applicants in 1987, nearing the end of Military Rule in 1988-1990

59 1983: 5.7%; 1984: 15.7%; 1986: 21.2%; 1987: 29.8%; 1989: 50%; 1993: 50%; 1994: 95.7%; 1995: 92%. In 2006 and 2007 all China-born applicants for Surinamese citizenship registered their names in Mandarin pronunciations, in Pinyin transcription. The Pinyin transcription first appeared in the naturalization decrees of 1982 (one Mrs. Tjin Kon Tai is ‘also known as Zeng Guantai’ in SB1982.101. She obtained Surinamese citizenship herself by SB1987.40). But before then Fuidung’on Hakka applicants born in the early twentieth century (adults by the time of the Second World War) occasionally registered their names in Mandarin pronunciation, albeit inconsistently transcribed. That habit reflects the influence of the Kuo Min Tang resinicization project, later implemented in Suriname via Fa Tjauw Song Foel; Mandarin was supposed to unify the Overseas Chinese and China, but the result was that Mandarin transcriptions were felt to represent Chinese characters, and thus the ‘true essence’ of Chinese names in Suriname. Individuals tried to have at least their surname (the first syllable in trisyllabic Chinese names) in Mandarin, which could result in hybrid Mandarin / Kejia or Mandarin / Cantonese pronunciations.
The Tong'ap label now referred to four types of Fuidung'on Hakka migrants:

1. an ageing group of pre-1960s laokeh, typically with names reflecting Kejia pronunciation in Dutch orthography;
2. a small number of remigrants from other nodes in the Fuidung'on Hakka migration network such as French Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, Vietnam, typically with names reflecting the orthographies of their former places of residence;
3. the Hong Kong Chinese, characterized by names reflecting Cantonese pronunciation, in English orthography;
4. the post-1983 sinkeh, characterized by names reflecting Mandarin pronunciation, in Pinyin.

Hong Kong Chinese and Laiap informants with clear transnational family ties suggested that the latest sinkeh were sponsored by Tong'ap in Suriname. But by the time the sinkeh started sponsoring their own chain migrants, earlier laokeh had a hard time relating to the newcomers. Laiap could not recognize them as typical Hakka because of their unfamiliar names and the fact that most spoke Mandarin as well as Kejia. Many Hong Kong Chinese tended to avoid associating with what they had come to see as semi-barbaric mainlanders. Solidarity and ethnic loyalty were difficult ideals to reach even within the limited Chinese subgroup in the small Surinamese population, but at least people were familiar with one another in the strong Surinamese and (transnational) Chinese networking traditions. That network of reputation and gossip did not include the latest sinkeh. Resistance to marginalization by established Tong'ap could be an explanation for the creation of the Dongguan Tongxiang Hui (Dongguan Hometown Association) by Fuidung'on Hakka sinkeh as an alternative institution to existing Chinese associations in Suriname.60

From the viewpoint of the Hong Kong Chinese, the old system of Fuidung'on Hakka chain migration had run out of steam as the focus of their migration shifted away from the qiaoxiang and even Suriname. First the qiaoxiang was linked to various locations, some of which were mutually linked (for example Suriname and Malaysia), then Hong Kong subsumed the role of the qiaoxiang, and now a network of Fuidung'on Hakkas overseas survives despite the loss of personal links to villages in the Fuidung'on region.

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60 Dongguan Tongxiang Hui is first mentioned in Times of Suriname, 28 April 2007, ‘Communique “Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foe”’ (Communique from Fa Tjauw Tjoen Foei). See Paragraph 9.4.1.
Surinamese Fuidung’on Hakkas in the Netherlands, for instance, identify with Suriname, Hong Kong, Canada, and the ancestral villages in almost equal measure. This shift away from a translocal link with one homeland towards a more transnational interpretation of belonging could be termed rhizomic. The metaphor of the rhizome, a horizontal creeping stem, is meant to describe the multiplicitous links in modern migrant networks, which are no longer rooted to and branch from one particular source.61

Such a slowdown in Fuidung’on Hakka immigration however is not really apparent from official data. According to census data, numbers of ethnic Chinese had been increasing between 1950 and 2004.62 But this does not reflect changing proportions of Laiap and Tong’ap, moreover the numbers of Chinese immigrants are not recorded in other sources.63 Throughout the twentieth century there were concentrations of different ethnic groups in various areas of Paramaribo, without strict ethnic segregation.64 In the first half of the twentieth century Chinese shops were concentrated in the centre of Paramaribo, particularly on street corners. Although Chinese remained an urban trading minority throughout the twentieth century, the percentage of Chinese in Paramaribo had been gradually shrinking; 76.9% in 1950, 71.1% in 1964, and 60.4% in 1971. This might reflect regional expansion of migrant entrepreneurs away from Paramaribo to less competition and cheaper real estate in the districts.65

In the 1980s the economic reasons for leaving the Fuidung’on Hakka qiaoxiang were not as obvious as they were for earlier chain migrants. Economic reforms in Guangdong Province in the 1980s improved the quality of life in the Fuidung’on qiaoxiang and increased the prospects of generating income locally. The Fui-

61 Deleuze & Guattari 1987.
63 Increasingly balanced gender proportions among the ethnic Chinese group on the whole are also the result of lack of differentiation between immigrants and local-born. Proportions of women to men, 1950: 624/1000; 1964: 767/1000; 1971: 833/1000; 2004: 859/1000. However, the sojourner pattern in which men outnumber women seems to have been replaced by a more equal balance among modern migrants. In 2004 the proportion of women to men among Chinese nationals in Suriname (817/1000) approached that of the whole ethnic group (859/1000).
65 Data from SIC 33, SIC 90, and Dutch National Archives (1950 census in Suriname, 2.10.19.2, 207-212). The concentration of Chinese in Paramaribo had increased again to 82.7% by the 2004 census, reflecting the New Chinese influx.
dung’on Region was reorganized in the process; part of old Bao’an County became the Shenzhen SEZ, and Dongguan was elevated to the status of Municipality. Rapid industrialization made the Dongguan region a destination for labour migrants from all over the PRC. People in the poorest villages could and did become rich renting out or selling real estate for the construction of factories. As in other developing regions in the PRC, local governments in the Fuidung’on region actively courted the Overseas Chinese as investors; ‘Overseas Chinese Offices’ (huaqiao bangongshi) were set up in all Fuidung’on counties, to help Overseas Chinese trace their roots.

Back in the 1930s, the qiaoxiang described Suriname as a source of wealth in the following slogan: ‘Up in heaven is the realm of gods and immortals, down on earth you have Suriname’ (tènsong sinsèntung, tiha sulilam).66 Links to huaqiao once considered counterrevolutionary were again sources of status in the 1980s. Sojourners from Suriname had not been able to resettle in the qiaoxiang for decades, but were increasingly able to visit via Hong Kong. Visitors were expected to provide distant relatives with consumer goods such as refrigerators, washing machines, television sets, and video recorders. However, with increased prosperity resulting from economic reforms, dependents in the qiaoxiang could acquire such items on their own, and for this reason the link between huaqiao and huajuan started to weaken.67

Economic development really took off in the Fuidung’on region by the mid 1990s, and populations expanded due to internal labour migration from the hinterland. The Shenzhen SEZ was closed off to internal migrants, which made Dongguan Municipality the front line of labour migration. Simultaneous with economic reforms in the 1980s, the government of the PRC had relaxed restrictions on emigration. During that period the number of PRC nationals entering Suriname did not increase. When the number of Chinese immigrants suddenly skyrocketed in 1990 (see Chart 1), the number of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants to Suriname apparently did not grow. Fuidung’on Hakka informants in Suriname had a hard time identifying any new faces from the qiaoxiang. It is unclear how many people used the Hakka chain migration network to get to Suriname, but saddled with expectations that had become a lot more sophisticated since the early days, few stayed. Only those dis-

67 The local gazetteers of the Fuidung’on area reflect the change: the Dongguan Difang Zhi does not mention Suriname as an area where Overseas Chinese can be found, the Shenzhen Difang Zhi and Baoan Difang Zhi simply mention this, while the Huiyang Overseas Chinese Gazetteer contains the most extensive reference.
advantaged by lack of skills, education or problems with the law had any real reason to move to Suriname.\footnote{More recent women Fuidung’on sinkeh in Suriname would frequently point to the one-child policy as their reason for leaving the PRC; they already had one child, had become pregnant again, and fled the qiaoxiang to avoid a late term abortion. During a visit to Dongguan in 2004, I found official notices pasted on walls along alleys in various neighbourhoods in Dongguan City warning citizens that the one-child policy should not be flaunted.}

In any case the latest Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh in the 1980s and 1990s were different again from the Hong Kong Chinese, and at first glance they were indistinguishable from typical New Chinese. They had not been acculturated to Hong Kong modernity, nor had they experienced the language shift from Kejia to Hong Kong Cantonese. Instead, having been educated in the PRC, they were fluent in PTH, and were acutely aware of the processes of social change and development in the qiaoxiang. Cultural clashes were inevitable, though hardly noticeable due to the small number of sinkeh. Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname reported shock at an apparent reversal of the established patterns of huaqiao sojourners and huajuan dependents, when migrants began to actually receive rather than send back remittances.

The change in Chinese migration had also become noticeable to the general Surinamese public. By the late 1980s unusually large Chinese-owned structures were being built in Paramaribo, and their occupants, often Kejia-speaking newcomers running supermarkets or small restaurants, were very reticent about explaining the size and function of the buildings. Ethnic Chinese outsiders gave me a variety of explanations as to why such large buildings were built, for example that they are indicators of wealth and status to the people back home, or that Surinamese authorities could not implement building codes (so why not build big), or that they were investments in real estate aimed at an ethnic Chinese niche market. But as most of such Chinese buildings have remained only partly occupied at most, the most sensible explanation for building them seemed to be some type of money-laundering involving mortgage fraud, possibly related to Hong Kong being ceded back to the PRC in 1997. What seems clear is that the new buildings did not reflect local investments, and this suggests that some form of incoming and illegal cash flow may have been involved.
3.5 Language and Religion

Chinese have always been highly visible in Suriname, because of their East Asian looks and their distinctive script. However, ‘traditional Chinese culture’, be it ancestral traditions from the Fuidung’on Hakka homelands or more generally emblematic Chinese culture and folklore, has always been remarkably absent. The general attitude of Fuidung’on Hakka migrants in Suriname was to be low-key and as inconspicuous as possible. But traditional religion also had no function in promoting social cohesion among huaqiao or status for the organizers; that was the role of the huiguan, which was ultimately related to the requirements of the Chinese ethnic ownership economy in Suriname. Fuidung’on Hakkas did have a distinctive local culture, which was only partly observable in Suriname. Their variety of Kejia was the most obvious, though food customs from the homeland were less noticeable. The most distinctive customs were religious: for instance Fuidung’on Kejia in Suriname conduct grave-sweeping rituals for dead relatives (Kejia: gasan or baisan) on Chongyang (the ninth of the ninth lunar month) rather than on Qingming.

Language is a very important marker of ethnic identity in Suriname, where up to the late 1940s the various language varieties strictly defined ethnicity and class (Eersel 1983). Ethnic Chinese in Suriname are marked as outsiders by Chinese language and script, but without distinction between different varieties or styles. By the time of the Japanese invasion of China, preceding the Second World War, a thriving Chinese-speaking group was in existence in Suriname. Using T’sou’s definition, this can be inferred from the existence of Chinese cemeteries (implying that Chinese script was used on gravestones and Chinese was spoken during funeral ceremonies), commercial and socio-cultural associations,

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69 In Penang, Malaysia, elaborate Chinese temple-based religious festivals developed to promote social cohesion and elevate the status of the sponsors (DeBernardi 2004).
70 Chongyang (‘Double Yang’, the ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, usually early October) is commonly known as Kasan in Suriname after the gasan rituals. Gasan (commonly written as ‘kasan’ or even ‘kazan’ in Suriname) means ‘climbing up the mountain’, baisan means ‘paying homage to the mountain’. In the wider Chinese tradition beyond Hakka customs, visiting graves is considered secondary to rituals and practices aimed at ameliorating the potentially harmful influence of the ‘double yang’ (i.e. double 9) of the date. The ‘mountain’ in the name of the Hakka rituals refers to the custom of climbing hills on this date, a practice said to guarantee wellbeing in the coming year. Qingming (the 104th day after the winter solstice, usually 4 or 5 April) rather than Chongyang is the ‘regular’ grave sweeping day in transnational Chinese culture, and is a public holiday in the PRC and Taiwan.
Chinese religious institutions, Chinese-language education (written Chinese, taught in the Kejia vernacular) for Chinese children in Chinese schools, Chinese-language media, and at least two consecutive generations with a basic knowledge of Kejia.

Until the appearance of the Hong Kong Chinese, the Kejia varieties of the Fuidung'on Hakka migrant cohorts were basically the only Chinese language spoken in Suriname. Fuidung'on Kejia is spoken in the areas where Dongguan, the Shenzhen SEZ / Bao'an, and Huiyang meet. The Kejia varieties spoken in those areas are mutually intelligible; the lexicon of Huiyang Kejia has evidently been more influenced by Cantonese, and linguistic data from local publications indicate that tones are the main difference. Fuidung'on Hakkas in Suriname usually describe the different varieties as ‘accents’. Not surprisingly a local Kejia variety has developed in Suriname, with reduced tones, archaic vocabulary items, Sranantongo loanwords, and code-switching with Dutch and Sranantongo. Kejia had been the only form of spoken Chinese in Suriname for a long time, and its low status had been irrelevant until the introduction of Cantonese as a public medium in the 1970s.

The question of how many people in Suriname actually speak a particular form of Chinese tends to be ignored; Chinese identity is seen as a monolithic entity that is defined by, and defines an undifferentiated ‘Chinese language’. There are no reliable data on numbers of speakers of Chinese varieties in Suriname up to the 1990s. Household surveys by the General Bureau of Statistics in Paramaribo held in the 1990s included questions on

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71 T’sou 1987: B-16a. At that time these were a temple to the popular deity *Gan Di Ya* (Mandarin: *Guan Di*) in Paramaribo (up to the 1930s, Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 122-123), and the church of the Chinese Catholic Mission (between 1892 and 1921, Vernooij 1998: 90).

72 Fuidung’on Kejia: Sinitic > Kejia > Yuetai > Xinhui.

73 Li 1997: 3.

74 Zhang 1999.

75 Baoan Difang Zhi; Dongguan Difang Zhi; Zhang 1999.

76 Tjon Sie Fat 2002. Also called ‘Laiap Kejia’. Kejia names for other Chinese varieties in the qiaoxiang reflect the low status of Kejia. Mandarin is still called *zennyi* (真語, lit.: ‘true language’), and Cantonese was called *pakwa* (白話, lit.: ‘white language’, meaning ‘vernacular’). A similar situation developed among Javanese and Indian immigrants. Smaller numbers of speakers of Balinese, Sumatran and other languages merged along with the majority of Javanese speakers. Among the East Indian, the minority of speakers of languages such as Telugu and Urdu, eventually merged with the majority of speakers of a number of related North-Indian varieties of Hindi (particularly Bhojpuri).

77 SIC 181-1998/1.
languages spoken at home, but the results are so wildly fluctuating as to be useless. The concept of preferred language of the household (i.e. current language behaviour) was not contrasted but equated with mother tongue (i.e. first language learned in childhood and still spoken), which suggests that the category was primarily seen as an ethnic marker rather than as an indicator of language development.

What is clear is that Kejia has lost its place as essential Chinese lingua franca to PTH – which lowered the low status of Kejia even further. The newcomers refuse to learn Kejia, and Hakkas who do not learn PTH are considered ‘incomplete’; the inability to speak PTH is a symptom of Chinese who are out of touch with modern China. PTH thus also exposes a generation gap among the Tong’ap. The last Fuidung’on Hakka immigrants have learned PTH in school, and are thus able to communicate with non-Hakka immigrants. While newcomers recognize the usefulness of Sranantongo as inter-ethnic lingua franca in Suriname, they refuse to learn Dutch, explaining that the role of English in the world is rather like that of PTH in China (English – increasingly American English – is described as a guoyu, a koine), and that learning Dutch is not worth the investment of time and money – rather like learning Kejia. Dutch is the dominant local language, rather like Cantonese in Guangdong Province, a view bolstered by the relatedness of Dutch and English. But unlike Cantonese, Dutch in Suriname functions as a guanhua, an official language, a language one needs at all formal levels of society. In PTH and Kejia Srana ntongo is called tuhua / tuwa (lit.: ‘earth speech’, local patois) – in many ways rather like Fuidung’on Kejia. In 2003 two Shandongese women started up a one-hour programme in Mandarin and English on the ATV television station (‘A Bridge to Suriname, a Window to China’). Mandarin was aimed at all Chinese, and all non-Chinese were assumed to know some English.78

78 Various Surinamese radio and television stations carried a number of Chinese-language broadcasts, notably the daily China Central Television slot on the State TV broadcaster STVS. In July 2005, a Chinese-language radio station (Viva-953 on FM radio, of the Suriname Chinese Media Groups Foundation / 蘇理南華語創作媒體) started broadcasting in Cantonese and PTH (ZHRB 12 July 2005, 蘇理南中文電台, FM 匯聚 953 頻道致蘇理南僑胞的公開信 (Open letter to the Chinese of Suriname from Chinese-language radio on 953 FM); XNRB 4 July 2005, announcement by ‘Suriname Chinese Media Groups Foundation’). In February 2008, a Chinese TV station (SCTS on channel 45, of Stichting Kong Ngie Tong Sang TV) which carries programmes from the PRC in PTH was opened in Paramaribo (http://surinaams
Fuidung’on Hakka resentment about the inferior status of Kejia in Suriname is very rarely voiced. In 2004 the newspaper of the Chung Fa Foei Kon huiguan, Zhonghua Ribao, printed a short text titled ‘Kejia Is Quietly Going Extinct’. The writer, a Fuidung’on Hakka by the name of Luo Quan, complained about the continued disrespect of the ancestral Kejia dialect in favour of Cantonese and PTH in public settings:

Last year was the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the First Hakkas in Suriname. From Huiyang, Dongguan and Bao’an, but mostly from Dongguan and Bao’an those first Hakkas came to endure hardship and create their businesses and institutions out of nothing. Those first Chinese set up Kong Ngie Tong Sang (more than 120 years old), Chung Fa Foei Kon, Fa Tjauw Song Foei, and later also Hua Cu Hui and Chung Tjauw Fu Li Foei.

Kejia is spoken at the monthly general meetings of the associations, and during the fuicèn meetings as well. Why? Because they and their ancestors are Hakkas, so they all speak Kejia. But certain people, even though their ancestors, their parents, they themselves and their descendents are all Hakkas, often do not speak the language they use at home, even rejecting it as though any other random language can raise their status.

During this year’s Moon Festival only Minister Jong Tjien Fa uttered one line of something I would not have dared to call Kejia. Besides this, the three masters of ceremony only spoke Cantonese, Mandarin and Dutch, but not a syllable of Kejia could be heard during that Moon Festival which was organized by Hakkas for all Chinese in Suriname. Someone remarked that this indicated assimilation. I said it was self-alienation, that your own self is authentic. This is so sad!

You must have surely seen how Zhejiangese and Fujianese address people from their hometowns in their own dialect. But only we Hakkas like to speak another dialect, especially Cantonese. If you or your children cannot or will not speak your own language, is that not foolishly suppressing your own roots, is that not aiding in the extinction of Kejia? I would hereby like to press upon you, you who work in education and in society, that it is time to take this issue seriously!

Language is the most important issue between the smaller, but more visible and deceptively concrete Tong’ap sphere, and the
caribiana.nl/Cultuur/car20080208_sctv-chinees). This TV broadcaster basically developed out of the Chinese-language slot of STVS.
79 Fuicèn: traditional Fuidung’on Hakka ROSCA.
80 ZHRB, 2 October 2004: ‘客家話正在悄悄地消亡’(Kejia is quietly going extinct).
much larger, but diffuse Laiap sphere. All Fuidung'on have at least a basic command of the lingua franca variety of Sranantongo, but few Tong’ap are proficient in Dutch, the formal language of the Surinamese State. Laiap seldom speak other Chinese varieties than the local, Surinamese variety of Kejia. Fuidung’on Hakka sinkeh of the 1980s and 1990s are also fluent in Cantonese and PTH, but very seldom in any Western language. Immigrants are generally illiterate in Western languages, and Laiap are virtually all illiterate in Chinese. So the Tong’ap and Laiap worlds do not meet on Chinese terms, but Laiap have become gatekeepers for Tong’ap vis à vis the Surinamese State. A child of Chinese migrant parents, i.e. one whose mother tongue and home language are a form of Chinese and who learned Dutch and Sranantongo in Suriname, is also a gatekeeper who is “required to translate – and thus mediate, negotiate, and broker – adult realities across cultures”, as Antonia Castañeda says of children of Latino migrants in the USA.

Whether it is harmful or empowering, the experience of translating is producing a generation of ethnic Chinese who are uniquely equipped to deal with Surinamese as well as Chinese identities.

The Chinese school in Paramaribo is the main generator of Chinese-language literacy in Suriname. The tradition of Chinese schools in Suriname started with reading and writing classes for children of Chinese immigrants organized by the various huiguan (a so-called jiaotonghui: ‘association for the instruction of youths’). In the Second World War the Kuomintang promoted resinicization of Overseas Chinese in Suriname through a Chinese school facilitated by the Fa Tjauw Song Foei huiguan. Republican Chinese curricula were intended to ‘reconnect’ Fuidung’on Hakka loyalty to the Motherland and Overseas Chinese communities elsewhere in the world. The limited size of the Chinese group in Suriname meant limited funding and interest in the effects of the Kuomintang resinicization program, and eventually the Fa Tjauw Song Foei school died out. Mandarin, which meant the Taiwanese Guoyu standard taught in the Chinese school, was of little use from the viewpoint of life in Suriname, until the appearance of Chinese globalization in the form of PRC economic development and New Chinese.

The current Chinese school (Zhongwen Xuexiao, in the Guang Yi Tang jinian lou cultural centre in Paramaribo) is run in a

81 Castañeda 1996: 205.
more professional manner.\textsuperscript{82} It functions as an expat school providing primary education and it is accredited by the PRC (with plans to extend the program to secondary education and further). It is a language centre providing courses in PTH and written Chinese (the school is attended by New Chinese, Tong’ap and Laiap children, and even small numbers of non-Chinese students), as well as continuing the tradition of the basically symbolic \textit{jiaotonghui} reading and writing classes for Fuidung’on Hakka children. (Re)sinicization is less clearly an ideological goal of this school, as its focus on the PRC is basically pragmatic; ‘China’ means the rising superpower of the PRC, and mastery of its language is a valuable asset. However, the PRC curriculum stresses the PTH standard of the PRC as a unifying symbol of global Chinese identity, and transplants the PRC’s view of its history and multiculturalism.\textsuperscript{83}

In the apanjaha logic of Surinamese ethnic discourse, all ethno-cultural segments are equal and should therefore have equivalent sets of markers, and so Chinese in Suriname are assumed to have an authentic Chinese religion. Organized Chinese religion does not exist in Suriname – there are no Buddhist or Daoist temples – and traditional Chinese ‘folk religion’ is rarely visible. The most visible and persistent traditional religious custom among Fuidung’on Hakkas is the \textit{gasan} ritual of honouring the graves of departed relatives during Chongyang. Only terms indicating traditional religious categories were recorded with reference to the nineteenth century indentured labourers (e.g. ‘Confucianist’). Up to 1930 there was a popular religion shrine in the Kong Ngie Tong Sang huiguan. In 1945 about 70\% of 2,312 Chinese belonged to an undefined category of ‘followers of Confucius’, but by 1964 there were 2.8\% out of 5,339 Chinese. In 1972 there were just 75, and in 1980 merely 19.\textsuperscript{84}

Besides (semi-)religious festivals such as Chinese Lunar New Year, the Moon Festival, Chongyang, and the Dragon Boat Festival, and the occasional household and ancestral altars, very few other aspects of Chinese traditional religion are currently visible.

\textsuperscript{82} It is not physically encapsulated by a huiguan building, its ties to the Fuidung’on Hakka huiguan is not particularly clear-cut. In practice it is jointly run by Kong Ngie Tong Sang, Chung Fa Foei Kon and Fa Tjauw Song Foei. See Chapter 8.

\textsuperscript{83} Its extracurricular activities include a students’ dancing troupe that learns and performs ‘traditional Chinese dances’. Many of these dances are dances of ethnic minorities in the PRC, such as Tibetan and Uyghur dances.

\textsuperscript{84} Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 123.
The following is an advertisement placed by a Maoshan Daoist magician in Zhonghua Ribao:

The ninth day, Jia-Yin, of the Element Water and the Constellation Jiao, of the eleventh lunar month of the Ren-Wu year is the anniversary of the death of my teacher of the arts of Maoshan, Master Zhang Jinbo. Our House intends to honour his memory, and so we will conduct a ceremony before the main altar at eight o'clock on the ninth (Thursday) of the eleventh lunar month. We hope all our Brothers will join the sacrificial ceremony at the appointed time. We also welcome all coregionalists, friends, and believers to join!

Maoshan has existed for millennia, and is still with us; The Master has been gone for tens of thousands of years, but remains powerful. Preserved by the great grace of the gods all these millennia; The secret and profound power of the Arts remains through tens of thousands of years.87

Maoshan is the best-known school of Daoist magic, with practices ranging from ‘white’ to ‘black’ in Western terms. This particular Tong’ap practitioner (now deceased) was known for conducting oracular séances and making charms and amulets.88

No Christians were registered among the nineteenth-century indentured labourers, but Fuidung’on Hakka chain migrants tended to convert to Catholicism, apparently a pragmatic choice related to education in Suriname. Catholicism seemed to have been an adaptive strategy among early immigrants; a distinct, Chinese-speaking congregation helped to integrate newcomers until 1922.89 Religion was the one boundary marker that could distinguish Tong-ap (adherents of Chinese traditional religion) from Laiap (Christian, usually Roman Catholic). According to data from the second gene-

85 The Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. It is also called Rice Dumpling Festival, because zong (PTH, 粽, glutinous rice stuffed with meat, wrapped in bamboo leaves and steamed or boiled.) are the focus of the celebration. One particular Fuidung’on Hakka restaurant advertised various fancy zong in the Chinese-language newspapers in Paramaribo ahead of the Dragon Boat Festival. In Suriname zong can be a slightly arcane marker of Hakka cultural identity; tetrahedral zong are said to be Punti, while square ones are supposedly Hakka.
86 12 December 2002.
88 See Tjon Sie Fat 1999.
89 Tjon Sie Fat 1999: 122.
eral census in 1950, 471 out of 585 Suriname-born ethnic Chinese in Paramaribo were Catholic, against 62 of 506 foreign-born ethnic Chinese. Most of those indicated that they were either ‘Confucianist’ (143) or had no religion (241). Aware that Christianity provided the best route to social advancement and education, any obvious signs of alien religious practices were frownd upon within the Chinese segment.

The next oldest Chinese-language Christian congregation among Fuidung'on Hakkas in Suriname is Moravian (Tshoen Tjien Church), established in the late 1940s. The most recent Christian group is the evangelical Protestant Christian and Missionary Alliance Church (Christelijke en Zending Alliantie Kerk van Suriname, CAMA Suriname). The origins of the Chinese CAMA church go back to activities of US missionaries among a couple of Hong Kong Chinese families in Suriname during the late 1970s. Within a decade a Dutch-speaking Laiap group appeared within the original Cantonese congregation, and now several languages are used for various audiences. Although the size of its membership is unclear, the importance of the CAMA church is recognized by Chinese elites by its inclusion in the list of Chinese institutions and huiguan. Chinese language and Christianity are closely linked in Suriname; Chinese Christian congregations are effectively ethnic churches that provide a Chinese community environment.

As markers of Chinese culture from any point of view, traditional religious practices can still distinguish Tong'ap from Laiap identities performatively. Tong'ap can 'do Chineseness' in a way that effectively excludes Laiap. Rituals maintained by Tong’ap such as gasan are linked to the experience of migration – the dead are migrants in more than one way, having passed from the qiaoxiang to Suriname and they go from this world to the next. Generally speaking, Laiap do not participate in such rituals steeped in emotions of separation from and reunion with imagined lineages and qiaoxiang homelands. On the one hand the predominantly Christian world of Laiap does not allow for ancestors, but on the other hand language remains the greatest barrier to Laiap participation in ‘Chinese rituals’. Information on the ritual calendar is written in Chinese (either in the Chinese-language newspapers or tongshu almanacs), and it is therefore basically inaccessible to Laiap. Language barriers also limit Laiap participation in communal festivals such as the Lunar New Year and the Moon Festival; as huiguan events in Suriname, these celebrations are conducted in

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Social positioning of Chinese entrepreneurial chain migrants in colonial Surinamese society was not primarily determined by racial discourse, but rather by their economic strategies. Chinese migrants acquired middle class status as entrepreneurs in the late nineteenth century, not long after indentureship. The structure of the colonial Suriname middle class was complex, as was the case in many colonial Caribbean societies. As noted earlier, in the British Caribbean the middle class was two-tiered; education produced a class of Coloured civil servants, while expanding trade offered migrant entrepreneurs opportunities for social mobility.\(^{91}\) In Suriname, Chinese traders competed with other merchant minorities such as Jews, Portuguese, and Lebanese, but primarily with middle class Creoles and eventually East Indian entrepreneurs. Initially anti-Chinese sentiments were a reaction to the highly visible outsiders as a result of nineteenth century Asian migration and were triggered by growing economic hardship at the beginning of the twentieth century. Framed in Orientalist stereotypes, the view of Chinese immigrants as a growing pollution had settled into the local pattern of inter-ethnic conflict management through racist stereotyping.

Despite a number of profound crises and developments such as the anti-Chinese attitude of the Surinamese colonial elite of the 1920s and 1930s, and the emergence of the Hong Kong Chinese migrant pool, the ‘Old Chinese’ retain an image of stability and predictability. The available data basically reinforce the image of ethnic Chinese as predominantly urban, middle-class, and self-employed in the trade sector, and in fact suggest remarkably little change over the last 40 years; the relative size of the ethnic group is hardly increasing, educational levels are unchanged, social mobility remains high across generations, and the gender imbalance is slowly disappearing. But the image of continuity barely conceals paradoxes; Chinese are well integrated citizens but also outsiders completely lacking citizenship rights, they are strongly upwardly mobile as well as stuck in migrant coping strategies.

Light’s ethnic ownership economy theory allows one to appreciate the instrumental nature of Chinese cultural identity in Suriname. Cultural markers are only relevant if they can function to guard the economic value of Chinese ethnic identification, and so

Chinese language is hugely important, but traditional Chinese religious practices are not. Though the Chinese school run by Fa Tjauw Song Foei / the Surinamese Wing of the Kuo Min Tang promoted reorientation to the idea of Republican China in the 1940s, nothing like the Singaporean ‘Speak Chinese Campaign’ of 1979 ever developed in Suriname. The Campaign was part of a broader process of resinicization in the Malay world, aimed at pulling Peranakan / Baba Chinese / Straits Chinese away from Baba Malay and colonial languages ‘back’ to Mandarin, which thus became the ultimate marker of Chineseness. Increased cultural and linguistic variety and the shift towards PTH as intra-ethnic lingua franca is no more than the latest change in the repertory of Chinese cultural symbols in Suriname as a result of modern migration. Linguistic shifts have occurred before, most importantly in the 1960s when Hong Kong Chinese sinkeh introduced a modern and urban Hong Kong culture among the Fuidung’on Hakkas, and made Hong Kong Cantonese the vehicle for public speaking.

A Chinese community exists insofar as Chinese institutions can manage the relationship between Chinese elites and migrants, and provide support and funding for people who can claim membership as ethnic Chinese. Light’s views on migrant entrepreneurship could be used to fine-tune aspects of McKeown’s general framework for understanding the historical development of Overseas Chinese, especially with regard to the role of ethnic Chinese as middlemen. However, there are far too few data to allow for a proper analysis of Fuidung’on Hakka migration history according to McKeown’s criteria; it is abundantly clear that the Chinese ethnic identity of Fuidung’on Hakkas in Suriname relies heavily on the development of ethnic resources and various translocal and perhaps even transnational networks, but how labour networks transitioned into chain migrant and entrepreneurial networks is unclear. What is clear is that, despite obvious distinctions between various Fuidung’on Hakka migrant groups, there is a surprising overlap between the latest Fuidung’on Hakka migration and the New Chinese. To understand the reasons behind the distinctions we will cast an ethnographic eye on the New Chinese in the following chapter.