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BECOMING HONG KONG, RAZING  
BAOAN, PRESERVING XIN'AN: AN  
ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF  
URBANIZATION IN THE SHENZHEN  
SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

**Abstract**

Located just north of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, the largest and oldest of China's Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has been both a project and symbol of post-Mao modernization. In this paper, I trace how the Shenzhen built environment mediates images and experiences of 'Hong Kong', arguing that transnationality in the SEZ is an everyday practice where tradition, colonialism, and the Cold War provide raw materials for the local re-working of the changing relationship between the Chinese state apparatus and finance capital. My story has a double focus: the ideology of urbanization as modernization and historic preservation. On the one hand, the ideology of urbanization-as-modernization legitimates a spatial order in which the rural is always posed to be superseded by the urban. Both the rural and the urban are empty signifiers that are created through comparison and deployed to guide action. In this important sense, 'Hong Kong' has been urban with respect to rural 'Shenzhen' (formerly Baoan County), even as 'Shenzhen' has been urban with respect to the Chinese hinterland (neidi). On the other hand, historic preservation domesticates 'Hong Kong' as Shenzhen's past through the figure of Xin'an County, the geographic predecessor of both Shenzhen and Hong Kong. These complimentary displacements produce a nostalgia peculiar to the SEZ: a desire for a past that entitles contemporary Shenzhen residents to Hong Kong's prosperity. This nostalgia is structured with reference to a shared origin – Xin'an County – where Hong Kong's postwar history (1950–1979)

becomes the past that Shenzhen (rural Baoan) would have had, if not for a cruel twist of socialist fate.

## Keywords

Baoan; Guangdong; Hong Kong; modernization; nostalgia; preservation; Shenzhen; simulcrum/copy/mask; spatial imaginary; urbanization; Xin'an

## I

EVERY SIX MINUTES, every day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Company (KCRC) provides a train service from Hung Hom to Luohu and back. Upon disembarking at Luohu, passengers rush toward the Hong Kong customs station where they are segregated into Hong Kong residents (an overwhelming majority) and everybody else (a motley-cultural crew of passport holders from countries such as the People's Republic of China, the United States, and Japan, but also Belize, Pakistan, and Nairobi). Hong Kong residents and everybody else meet up again as they charge across the Shenzhen Bridge, only to separate on mainland soil with Hong Kong residents proceeding straight ahead and everybody else taking an escalator to the second floor. Hong Kong identity cards permit holders to stay in Shenzhen for up to seventy-two hours, while longer stays may be arranged through the Public Security Bureau. Foreign passport holders are required to secure a visa before entering Shenzhen and may do so at either the China Travel Services Office or Guangdong Province Public Security Bureau, which have offices at the top of the Customs' escalator. Here, travelers may purchase either a China Visa (valid for one to six months and costing HK\$ 600.00 to \$1200.00) or a five day Special Economic Zone Visa (HK\$ 100.00), respectively. In fact, the permeability of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border literally manifests half of the Chinese expression for reform, 'reform and opening' (*gaige kaifang*).

Being the oldest and largest of the PRC's Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Shenzhen has been an important national symbol of China's efforts to 'make a place for itself in the forest of nations' (*yili yu shijie minzu zhi lin*). In 1979, the area just north of Hong Kong, Baoan County was elevated to the status of Municipality (*shi*) and renamed Shenzhen and by 1981 Shenzhen Municipality had been divided into the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and Baoan County. Administratively, the 'Special' of the expression 'Special Economic Zone' refers to the privileges that Shenzhen enjoys within the state apparatus. As a site for experimenting with economic liberalization, Shenzhen was placed directly under the administration of the central government, its status equivalent to that of a province or an independent city. As part of the political apparatus of the PRC,

Shenzhen was ranked a sub-provincial city, subordinate to Guangdong Province. Shenzhen leaders often exploit the discrepancy between Shenzhen's economic and political status, as projects are variously coded 'economic' or 'political' depending upon whether the sponsoring cadre's support comes from Beijing or Guangdong. Shenzhen's overdetermined existence as a bureaucratic category notwithstanding, there is widespread acknowledgment that Hong Kong has not only served as a model for the project of modernization in Shenzhen, but also provided the global connections that were necessary to jump-start the PRC's entry into the US-dominated system of global capitalism. Suddenly, 'Special' reads less as 'favoured' than it does 'illicit', as in the expression 'special relationship' (*tebie guanxi*), a euphemism for extra-marital affairs and shady collaboration, instances of the crass upward mobility and rampant hedonism of these times.

'After all', Professor Qiu of an economic think-tank asked rhetorically, 'what else was here, except Hong Kong? Shenzhen (Market) was just a small border town (*bianchui xiaozhen*).'

For Northern immigrants like Professor Qiu, Baoan's poverty went unquestioned; under the collective economy, all rural areas had been less modern and consequently much poorer than urban areas. During the Mao years, centralization of the mainland economy recoded all elements of production as bureaus within the state apparatus, with a fundamental divide between manufacturing (in urban areas) and agriculture (in rural areas). Individuals were incorporated into the state apparatus through their work unit (urban) or collective (rural). This apparatus implemented modernization through the industrialization of cities, with capital for industrialization accumulated by means of the 'scissors policy' (*jiandao cha*) – the systematic transfer of agricultural surpluses to urban areas. Simultaneously, Guangdong – which, according to Ezra Vogel (1969), Beijing 'distrusted' because of the province's links to the Nationalist Party during the civil war – received significantly less state investment than other regions. Thus, for immigrants from the urbanized North, the relevant measure of progress has not been between the rural area formerly called Baoan County and Hong Kong, but between China's major cities (Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai) and Hong Kong. These cities had been the focus of Maoist industrialization, setting the standard for the PRC's modernization efforts.

'If it weren't for Deng Xiaoping drawing a line and giving this area special privileges', Professor Qiu explained, Shenzhen (Baoan) would still be poor. The so-called 'economic geographic advantage' (*jingji dili youshi*) has three aspects. First, there was proximity to Hong Kong. Second, there were favourable policies from the government. Third, there was overseas Chinese investment. All of Guangdong is *huaxiang* (homeland of overseas Chinese).

In contrast, Baoan locals, who are now disparagingly called 'nouveau riche' (*baofahu*) by Shenzhen's predominantly immigrant population, look across the border and see lost opportunities. For these residents, Hong Kong was always a resource. In fact, Uncle Liao, an elderly fisherman went so far as to assert that

opening the local economy to Hong Kong wasn't even an original idea. I smiled at his vehemence.

'Don't laugh'. He shook a finger at me, emphasizing his point. 'What was the so-called "eighty cents economy"? Whenever things were too difficult here, we wrote a letter to a Hong Kong relative asking for help. It cost eighty cents to mail.'

He then challenged me with a reference to Wenjindu, the customs office at the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border where mainland livestock and produce was exported to Hong Kong during the Mao era. 'Why did they keep Wenjindu open?' He rhetorically slapped the fingers of his right hand in the palm of his left, before finishing; 'There was always a Hong Kong market for our produce and livestock.'

Once the border was opened to foreign capital – with special provisos for 'compatriot capital' – Hong Kong investment rushed into Shenzhen. All Shenzhen urban plans have incorporated Hong Kong into their economic forecasts and the 'stability and prosperity' (*wending fanrong*) of the territory were assumed to have direct consequences in Shenzhen. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, conservative estimates suggested that Hong Kong investment was 70% of foreign investment in Shenzhen, and that investment in Shenzhen represented 30% of total Hong Kong investment in the People's Republic. Indeed, until July 1, 1997, leading Shenzhen economic journals and institutes actively promoted policies and investment that would more completely integrate 'ShenKong', a two-character gloss for Shenzhen-Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup> By most accounts, post Mao regulation of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border has benefited both the Chinese State and the Hong Kong economy. For the Chinese State, regulation of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border has been a means of generating foreign currency as well as attracting technology and creating new jobs for unemployed youth. For Hong Kong investors, on the other hand, the opening of the border guaranteed fortuitous access to Chinese labour, products, and markets at a time when the economy needed to be restructured to remain competitive. Beginning in the late 1970s, Hong Kong manufacturers confronted labour shortages, rising production costs, and growing competition from other East and Southeast Asian economies. However, unlike Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore, which had government investment in research and development, Hong Kong manufacturers secured competitive advantage through privileged access to the mainland, but more specifically to Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta region (Lee 1998). In Shenzhen, this relationship is portrayed as 'store in front, factory in back' (*qian-dian houchang*), a metaphor indexing the complex interplay between domestic and international interests at stake in restructuring the border.<sup>2</sup>

Not unexpectedly, ShenKong has always exceeded economic indicators. Hong Kong's influence in the SEZ ranges from architectural styles to popular music and fashion. Shenzhen Mandarin is peppered with expressions directly translated from Hong Kong Cantonese; indeed, Shenzheners maintain that Hong

Kong Cantonese sounds better than Guangzhou Cantonese, while young migrants learn Cantonese by watching Hong Kong television programmes and many businessmen prefer Cantopop karaoke to Mainland songs. In addition, village level relations with relatives in Hong Kong have also been renewed and cultivated. Although this process has been less visible than the diffusion of Hong Kong popular culture through the mass media, it has nevertheless provided alternative cross-border connections. Not only do chartered buses and the KCRC bring relatives over for holidays, since Reform, Hong Kong relatives have directly participated in the planning and administration of new villages, as lawyers, consultants, and investors. Moreover, since rural governments instituted elections for leadership positions, in several Shenzhen villages, villagers have voted for leaders who hold Hong Kong identity cards because it is believed that Hong Kong people can act independently of the Chinese state. Many of these leaders left for Hong Kong as teenagers, returning after Reform. Others have never left Shenzhen/Baoan, instead applying for Hong Kong residency through Hong Kong relatives. The modern Cantonese opera *Spring Tide* (*Dachao*), which was produced by Wanfeng (village) explicitly developed this theme through the relationship between Ji Zhenhua, village head and his wife, Zhang Lifang, a Hong Kong resident.<sup>3</sup>

These images – of multi-national capital and transnational families – confirm a tendency in contemporary cultural studies to view disjunctures in globalization in terms of transnationality, travel, and border-crossing. Arjun Appadurai (1996: 33) provides a representative strategy, 'I propose that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed: (1) ethnoscapescapes; (2) mediascapes; (3) technoscapes; (4) financescapes; and (5) ideoscapes.' For Appadurai, these landscapes provide a vocabulary for talking about 'the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe.' In a similar vein, Aihwa Ong (1999) offers 'flexible citizenship' as a category for rethinking how post-Cold War restructuring of the relationship between the state and capital continuously generates new, transnational subject positions. Although it would seem that a theory of the culture of transnationality might offer powerful insight into Shenzhen-Hong Kong relations, I would like to complicate these models of traveling theories by pointing to its (and our) potential complicities with ideologies that celebrate the unfettered mobility of capital and capitalists. Crudely put, the permeability of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border facilitates capital mobility, while the relative impermeability of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border regulates and disciplines labour.

Transnationality must be read as a site where the postwar articulation between the state and capital is being restructured through new alliances between 'local' elites and 'global' capital. In my reading, borders are generated by institutional practices that produce surplus value by regulating the mobility of

labour and guaranteeing the mobility of capital. As Saskia Sassen (1998) contends, illegal labour, that is labour without the right to cross borders, is fundamental to the global economy in two senses. At home here, illegal labourers work for substandard wages. At home there, those workers who remain in their countries work legally for wages, which are substantially and necessarily less than their illegal and legal labor would earn here. Shenzhen residents of all classes are not only aware of what their jobs would earn in Hong Kong, this discrepancy is provided as evidence of Hong Kong's economic superiority and, by extension, better – albeit illegal – life. Xiao Lin, for example, hesitated before admitting she would try to illegally enter Hong Kong again. 'After all, all they do is send you back. If they don't catch me, I can make HK\$ 4000.00 a month as a live-in maid (baomu). Here, all I can make is 400 or 500 renminbi.' Nor is it necessary to 'escape to Hong Kong' (*pao Xianggang*) to experience border-generated wage differentials. Hong Kong professionals, like other foreign experts working in Shenzhen, are paid hard currency at international standards – often making five to ten times what their mainland colleagues are. Indicative of Shenzhen's role in managing transnational labour regimes is the enforcement of an internal border, commonly called the 'second line' (*er xian*), which separates Shenzhen from the rest of China, which is usually glossed as 'the interior' (*neidi*). Chinese people need passes (*tongxingzheng*) to visit Shenzhen, working papers (*zhanshizheng*) to find legal employment, and permanent residence (*hukou*) to receive residence-based welfare. That is, just as Hong Kong's current prosperity is implicated in unilateral access to a Shenzhen/ Pearl River Delta hinterland, Shenzhen's 'specialness' is structured by an institutional segregation from *neidi*.

Images of ShenKong's flexible citizens, like Ji Zhenhua and Zhang Lifang, also suggest one of the central themes of my story: the domestication of Hong Kong in Shenzhen through the intimacies of tradition (*chuantong*). According to this gendered narrative, South China lineages embody bloodlines that pulse from pre-colonial Hong Kong to post-reform Shenzhen. Tradition as a source of familial competitive advantage sutures Shenzhen to Hong Kong by way of two groups of locals: Shenzhen locals (*bendi ren*) and Hong Kong locals who share the same ancestral halls. The burning of incense to common ancestors in these halls becomes the sign of a recognition of shared origins that exceed and pre-empt changes in the world system. Moreover, it is the sincerity of these beliefs that authorizes tradition as an alternative to history.

'Guangdong really believes', the head of an office in the Bureau of Culture tells me. 'The government needs to find a definition (of superstition) that is appropriate for both modernization and the actual situation. The people burn incense. It's not a religion because there's no dogma, but it's not a superstition because they're not making fantastic claims. It's a tradition.'

She also concedes that it is precisely this tradition, these regional commonalities that define Shenzhen as *huaxiang* (hometown for many overseas Chinese) and, by extension, fix the emotional ties between Shenzhen and Hong Kong,

which in turn have led to overseas Chinese investment in their hometowns. Throughout the Mao era, Baoan was a 'jumping off point', for mainlanders who wanted to escape to Hong Kong, while villagers now admit that family registries (*jiapu*) were smuggled to Hong Kong for safe-keeping during the Cultural Revolution. Since Reform began in 1979, overseas hometown associations (*tongxiang hui*) and same surname associations have not only invested in Shenzhen, they have also sent lawyers to help villages negotiate compensation for land use rights and contacted foreign firms interested in investing in Shenzhen. These cross-border practices do more work than produce a sense of transnational Chinese tradition, which is focused on specific sites in Guangdong. Urban Shenzheners and Hong Kong people have been grafted onto these family trees as 'Guangdong' people. In this world of expanding markets, parents are reunited with children, local entrepreneurs meet up with global capital, and transnational businessmen romance the migrant worker – all this the inevitable and natural result of cultural affinity.

For me, Shenzhen is not simply a geographical place, but rather a spatial mediation of an alliance between the Chinese state and capital, domestic and foreign. ShenKong, in contrast, designates a cultural formation that characterizes Shenzhen, in which 'Hong Kong' signifies both origin and telos of a particular form of modernization. Significantly, for most Shenzhen residents, Hong Kong as a literal destination (on the KCRC or in a car) remains the inaccessible dream next door. In the rest of this paper, I examine two sites – the ideology of urbanization as modernization and historic preservation – where the construction of the Shenzhen built environment mediates the sometimes uneasy (if overdetermined) alliance between the Chinese State and Hong Kong capital. I posit that urban planning and historic preservation partially manage the Shenzhen desire for Hong Kong by splitting the object of this desire into two distinct temporalities. In addition to continuing the project of modernization as urbanization, Shenzhen urban planning figures Hong Kong as (Shenzhen's) future, while historic preservation domesticates Hong Kong as (Shenzhen's) past. These temporalities have been identified with two competing groups in Shenzhen: urban immigrants, like Professor Qiu who are figured as the authentic subject of Shenzhen's modernization project, and rural locals, like Uncle Liao, who are figured as the proper object of modernization. In this reading, local wealth can only be read as 'illicit' because by definition, modernization should have eliminated the rural. That is, if villagers are wealthy it is only because they have usurped someone else's inheritance. At the same time, a third group, Hong Kong people are introduced through a narrative of homeland. Hong Kong people hover at both the origin and telos of this project. On the one hand, they represent the goal of modernization. On the other hand, Hong Kong may be appropriated through a discourse of local origins, which ruralize Hong Kong accomplishments vis a vis north China. These complimentary displacements (of Hong Kong by Shenzhen, and rural people by urban people) produce a nostalgia peculiar to

ShenKong: a desire for a past that entitles contemporary Shenzhen residents to Hong Kong's prosperity. This nostalgia is structured with reference to a shared origin (Xin'an County) where Hong Kong's postwar history (1950–1979) becomes the past that Baoan County would have had, if not for a cruel twist of socialist fate.

## II

This is a story about the successive deterritorializations and administrative restructuings of a rural area that, during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, was called Xin'an County. After the Qing Dynasty's defeat in the first Opium War, part of Xin'an County, Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British Empire. Subsequently, the Kowloon peninsula and the New Territories were incorporated into the colony. North of the border, Xin'an ceased to exist in 1913, when the Nationalist Government renamed the area Baoan County. Until 1950, when the newly established government of the PRC closed the border, people and goods moved freely across the border. Or at least, this is how Lao Wu remembers Baoan-Hong Kong. Closer than Guangzhou. A boat ride away. In Hong Kong, relatives provided housing for short stays and introductions to companies that were looking for labour. Lao Wu moved through these *guanxi* ('connections') to a job on a Shell Oil tanker and had been working for two years when the border closed. He remained in Hong Kong, sailing from Hong Kong to Kobe and Amsterdam. Lao Wu's only altercation with the company was caused by patriotism: he refused to work on ships that were provisioning American troops in Vietnam. By the time Lao Wu retired, the border had opened to Hong Kong residents so he returned to his natal village and built a house, but he continued to travel, visiting his children in Hong Kong and California. In contrast, Mr Guo, a Shanghai architect who had come to Baoan County in 1962 as part of the *zhiqing* movement, remembered the unrelenting poverty of the area. He defined poverty in terms of a fundamental lack of the material culture which now proliferated in Shenzhen: electricity, four-lane highways, skyscrapers, industrial manufacturing, and shopping malls with imported goods. During a formal interview, he explained that historically Baoan County had been one of the poorer and smaller counties in Guangdong when compared with Dongguan, Zhongshan, and Nanhai. The local economy was determined by geography, agriculture, and production quotas. Roughly speaking, fruit trees were cultivated in the eastern, mountainous half of the country, while rice fields, fish ponds, and oysters farms constituted production along the narrow coast and western half of the county. From 1950 until 1978, annual production increased slowly, with an increasing emphasis on industrial manufacturing. However, even in the late 1970s when industrial output had grown from twenty to thirty percent of the total county GNP, most residents remained engaged in agricultural production. In addition, industrial output was



primarily in the service of agriculture: food processing, canning factories, and production of small tools.

The closing of the border marked an important transition in the articulation of China and the world system. Previously, the border had delimited colonial encroachment within a world system in which Great Britain had been hegemonic. Throughout the late Qing Dynasty and Nationalist eras, Hong Kong had been both a symbol of China's 'backwardness', and a space from which to resist the government that was blamed for the country being 'backward'. During World War II, the allies returned their concessions to the Nationalist government. Even after the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) victory in the civil war, the question of Hong Kong's return to China was debated (Garver, 1997). However, both Hong Kong and the PRC were no longer part of a world system that Britain dominated (Arrighi, 1994). It is possible that had the Nationalists won, the Americans would have supported the return of Hong Kong. Instead, the colony, like Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea was integrated into the pacific perimeter to contain the expansion of communism. Garver (1997) parses the Sino-American war zone into two regions. In the first region (Korea, Taiwan and Indochina) the two countries fought proxy wars, while in the second region (Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan) both actively pursued ideological combat. Rather than Hong Kong playing a specific role in a conflict between colonialists and nationalists, suddenly Hong Kong was part of the Cold War division between capitalists and communists.

The pragmatist wind that swept through Beijing after the death of Mao Zedong was as much a continuation of the drive to modernize the People's Republic as it was a rejection of the violently debilitating excesses of the cultural revolution. It also marked a shift in the international policy of the PRC. At stake in reform and opening were the conditions under which China would modernize. Should domestic policy continue to emphasize planned industrial production, or should production become increasingly consumer oriented? Should modernization continue in an antagonistic relationship with capitalist countries, especially the United States, or should modernization occur through a cooperative relationship with foreign capital? The answer to all these questions, of course, hinged on the core leadership's understanding of how it would re-interpret Marxism to the contemporary situation. Nor was the significance of the answers to these questions limited to the PRC because they would mark a turning point in the expansion of the postwar economy. As Aijaz Ahmed (1992: 31) has noted, the Chinese Revolution was not only one of the many communist movements in the twentieth century which grew out of the fight for national independence, but also that '(t)he overwhelming fact of the Chinese Revolution, seizing state power in 1949 and remaining a key defining polarity until after the end of the cultural revolution, exercised enormous influence on anti-colonial struggles throughout this period, from the end of the second world war up to the mid 1970s.' It was precisely the Party's commitment to rural

revolution that made the Chinese Revolution a national project and an international model.

As important landmarks in the spatial imaginary of South China, Xin'an and Baoan provide the common ground for both Shenzhen and Hong Kong narratives of Cold War modernization and post Cold War restructuring of the world system. Indeed, as Lao Wu and Mr Gao remind us, these narratives are defined not only by disparate-but-overlapping experiences of changes in the world system, but also by complementary imaginaries of modernity. In Shenzhen and Hong Kong, modernity has been pursued through urbanization, with historically shifting images of a world city and its rural-other implicit in these projects. Concomitantly, in both Shenzhen and Hong Kong, the rural has both signified exclusion from modernity and embodied the object of modernization. However there are two important differences. In Shenzhen, the rural object of modernization has been Baoan county, while in Hong Kong, the rural has been identified as a continuation of Xin'an County. Second, because Hong Kong modernized before Baoan/Shenzhen, Hong Kong has served as a model – a concrete manifestation of 'modern world city (*guoji xiandaihua chengshi*)', if you will – for the project of modernity in Shenzhen. The fact of Hong Kong constantly undermines Party claims that socialism (with or without Chinese characteristics) is the only way for China to modernize precisely because Hong Kong modernized as a British colony rather than as part of the PRC. For Shenzhen locals, Hong Kong has not only constituted a part of familiar landscape, the closing of the border is read as deprivation and remaining behind misfortune.<sup>4</sup> According to Chow (1998: 186), 'In Hong Kong, the violence of coloniality is, we might say, a practicable way of escaping the violence that comes with living as "national" and "citizens" of independent countries.'

In September 1995, when I began fieldwork in this complexly post-socialist and postcolonial space, a uniquely 'Chinese' modernity seemed highly contingent, constantly threatened, and yet strangely resilient, defined as much by '5000 years of Han culture' as by a postmodern 'passion for the real', to quote my 63 year old neighbour (1996) and Scott Durham (1998), respectively. Aunt Wei, who taught me to make Cantonese-style soups with medicinal herbs, described Shenzhen as a product of Chinese history and urban planning gone awry. On the one hand, she constantly griped that China was 'too feudal' (*guofen fengjian*) pointing to bureaucratic corruption as an example of behaviour that has yet to be modernized. On the other hand, Aunt Wei noted that, 'plans can't keep up with change (*jihua genbushang bianhua*).' (She also uses this particular colloquialism when explaining why I always lost our late afternoon card games.) I believe 'plans can't keep up with change' was originally an ironic comment on the inability of the Shenzhen Municipal Government to enforce any of the urban plans that have been approved since 1979, but it may be a straightforward description of the pace of development in Shenzhen or an indirect allusion to social conflict. After all, as Aunt Wei chuckles, 'the top has policies, the bottom has tactics (*shang you zhence, xia you duice*).'

Like my neighbour, Durham (1999: 150) is interested in tracing the various ways that past, present, and future commingle, defining 'passion for the real', as 'a nostalgia for the lost original points of reference which can . . . only be simulated or reconstructed.' The fact that the object of nostalgia is a simulacrum is less important than the annihilation and reconstruction of communal origins, which become foundational for new community identities. Durham (1999: 3–25) usefully sketches two working definitions of the simulacrum. In the tradition of Baudrillard and Jameson, the simulacrum is a copy of an original that does not exist. Instead, the 'model' for the simulacrum is an image (itself composed of ungrounded signs) that has supplanted the real as the 'ultimate' referent of the simulacrum. As such, the simulacrum exists only in relation to other copies, endlessly circulating according to semiotic rules, which are themselves unstable and subject to arbitrary reconfiguration. Here, the simulacrum is not only false, but much worse; being an empty copy, the simulacrum is unreal. Moreover, the structural impossibility of returning to an authentic origin inspires repeated displacements of one simulacrum by another. In contrast, Foucault and Deleuze provide a model of the simulacrum where emphasis shifts from evaluating how closely a given simulacrum approximates the real to understanding the process of simulation. Here, the simulacrum is understood in relation to a creative, usually performative process. In an abrupt turn around, the simulacrum appears to be a mask that was created in order to appropriate or even subvert the powers of a particular image because the emptiness of the simulacrum as a signifier is less important than the transformative powers inherent to simulation.

By highlighting the double nature of the simulacrum – as copy and as mask, I would like to draw attention to the socially productive instability of Xin'an as the peculiar object of nostalgia in ShenKong. On the one hand, by taking Shenzhen at face value, that is, as false copy of Hong Kong, I highlight one of the structural mechanisms by which the Chinese State capitalizes globally on domestic inequalities: the violent and continual displacement of the rural by the urban.<sup>5</sup> In the effort to unmake the Mao years by making Shenzhen/Baoan 'just like' Hong Kong, the origins of collective Baoan have been annihilated and reconstructed as traditional Xin'an. The physical identification of Shenzhen and Hong Kong has been achieved by razing the built environment of rural Baoan. Modernization has thus entailed the elimination of the rural built environment, including physical landscape, buildings, and spatial organization. Urban Shenzhen has pursued the policy of 'moving mountains to fill the ocean' (*yi shan tian hai*). By razing entire villages and replacing them with planned developments, Shenzhen has produced spaces that are independent of the immediate history of the area. Indeed, the architecture – modernist and postmodernist alike – that Shenzhen commissions further emphasizes a radical break with a past that Shenzhen must overcome if it is to become a modern world city. Most crucially, this process has been institutionalized. Not only as the rural and urban historical categories through which modernization has been experienced and understood, they are

also administrative categories within the state apparatus. After Liberation, most Chinese modernization projects, ranging from industrial production to education and the arts, focused on cities and implemented by ministries and bureaus that were located in urban governments. Projects were carried out under the direction of a specific bureau within the state apparatus. Since economic liberalization began in 1979, the power of locally based ministries and territorial governments has increased with respect to the central government. Nevertheless, reform did not emplace an alternative structure for power sharing or incorporating local communities in the planning process. Instead, pre-reform institutions – municipal governments and collectives – have remained the basis of economic production. In Shenzhen, these two systems came into direct conflict as an urban government displaced local collectives. SEZ modernization of specific industries and tracts of land was assigned to particular ministries or bureaus. The Shekou Industrial Zone, for example, was developed under the China Merchants Bureau (a division with the Ministry of Transportation). Land for these projects was expropriated from local villages/collectives without providing villagers with alternative livelihoods to farming.

On the other hand, by seeing urbanization as mask, it is possible to understand how Baoan locals were able to transform their traditional poverty through rural urbanization, the local ‘mask’ in Shenzhen. The transfer of land use rights from rural to urban administration entailed negotiations between villages and the city. Although villages did not have the right to veto integration, by law they were permitted compensation for their land as well as their homes. This money was then invested in collective industrialization with the profits re-distributed through stock holdings.<sup>vi</sup> Male villagers were also given land on which to build their homes, which in especially rich villages were often financed by the village corporation. This reconstituted patrimony formed the basis of rural urbanization as an alternative modernization in Shenzhen. Importantly, rural urbanization allowed village corporations to compete with state enterprises for foreign investment (predominantly Hong Kong manufacturers) and to act as urban with respect to migrant workers, who came to work in Shenzhen. That is, the household registration system has created a pool of legal and illegal labourers, which all Shenzhen residents might exploit. Like the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border, the neidi-SEZ border creates relative competitive advantage for all members on one side of the border against everyone on the other side. Social differentiation and stratification within Shenzhen (or Hong Kong) are elaborated as variously positioned groups and individuals differently manipulate the inequalities that have been institutionalized through border protocols. I would like to suggest that antagonisms between Shenzheners (urban migrants with household registration in the SEZ) and locals have arisen in part from the social reversals created by rural urbanization. Although village enterprises are not as profitable as major state-owned industries in Shenzhen (999, Saige Electronics, or Southern Oil, for example), the collective organization of village enterprises has made villager

households wealthier than urban households, whose members are salaried employees rather than owners of the state owned industries. Moreover, as state-owned industries in Shenzhen have been the first in the country to experiment with the privatization of welfare benefits (housing, medical, and education), village enterprises have initiated social welfare programmes for village members. These programmes are administered as part of the village corporation.<sup>7</sup>

During the early 1980s, therefore, Shenzhen produced two distinct forms of modernization: urban (associated with the state apparatus) and local (associated with Baoan's former collectives). In planning the new urban, Shenzhen leaders and architects toured Hong Kong in order to learn about what a 'modern' (*modeng*) city was. The symbol of this new era was Guomao (World Trade Building), which at the time was the highest skyscraper built in the People's Republic. Guomao was located in the Luohu commercial center at the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border and intended to house the Shenzhen offices of provincial, municipal, and ministerial enterprises from the rest of China. From these offices, cadres from all over China could look to Shenzhen to establish trade links between Chinese and foreign companies. In contrast, villages were built on a more intimate scale. On either side of Old Nantou Road, Banyan trees shaded small benches, and the long, newly built two-story shopping units remained only partially occupied because most shopkeepers rented commercial space in one of the old, pre-Reform buildings that abutted the street, arranging baskets of fresh vegetables and displays of clay pots in the street itself. Family homes, the tallest of which were eight-stories, punctuated the skyline. The Shenzhen ideology of urbanization as modernization coded this architectural opposition as an ideological difference between 'modern' and 'local' where the modern was linked with the urban (represented by Hong Kong and new Shenzhen) and the local was an expression of the rural (represented by Baoan).

This is not to suggest that the local, unlike the new urban, is not constantly under construction, but rather to stress that ideologically this construction is justified by coding modernization in terms of urban development, an always incomplete project. Moreover, this form of urbanization is increasingly implicated in the global economy. Thus, by the mid-1990s both urban and local Shenzhen had already been displaced. Along the stretch of Shennan Road that, since the mid 1990s has been known as the 'financial centre' (*jinrong zhongxin*), a rainbow of postmodern glass and steel shimmer provocatively, the blue and green layers of the Diwang Commercial Centre reflecting the luminescent pink of the Shenzhen Development Bank, which refracts the massive indigo of the Book City complex. Diwang was built by the Xionggou Group (HK). At 68 stories, Diwang not only looms over Shenzhen, but also towers over most of Asia, enticing shoppers with displays both larger and more luxurious than those offered in Guomao, announcing the acceptance of economic rationality and concomitant integration of the Shenzhen and Hong Kong economies. Unlike the Luohu centre where Guomao asserted the subordination of modernization to national goals, the

Shennan financial centre points to the SEZ's overdetermination by global markets. Suddenly, ShenKong is more than a political fantasy, it is an economic necessity. Likewise, the chaos of Old Nantou Road already foretold its immanent demise; now that no farmland remains to be developed, the Nanshan District government has zoned the built environment for construction. Since the mid-1990s, section by section, village by village, the older sections of the Nantou peninsula have been razed to make way for shopping malls and luxury apartments. 'Older' in this context refers also to some of the first factories built in Nanshan, which became obsolete in less than 10 years.

### III

The 1997 return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty enabled a re-telling of the history of Xin'an County, a rhetorical gesture that provided a cultural means for appropriating Hong Kong through state representations of family lineages and local tradition. These local lineages – which are stronger in the South than in the North, according to Professor Qiu – define both Shenzhen and Hong Kong in terms of a shared past. Being native (*bendi*) segregates Baoan locals from northern migrants, and lumps them with all Hong Kong people. The evidence? A commitment to tradition that Baoan locals and all Hong Kong people putatively share; the 'fact' that Cantonese is linguistically closer to classical Chinese; and transnational kinship (embodied by overseas Chinese).<sup>8</sup> In addition to news articles and documentaries that emphasized this common history, popular songs and television soap operas also portrayed the historical connection between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. In this spirit, Luo Zhewen, a standing member of the Central Committee advocated preserving this history through the restoration of two areas in Shenzhen, the Xin'an Fairy Town (Nantou City) and the Pengcheng Fortress (located on Daya Bay). Since 1988, Nantou had been a municipal level historic site, while since 1989, Pengcheng had been a provincial level historic site. National recognition of both sites emphasizes Qing Dynasty defense of Chinese land, history, and civilization. This spatial reconfiguration highlights 'one country' rather than 'two systems'. At stake is the State's claim of a particular mapping of modernity. Through reference to Xin'an County Shenzhen narratives ignore Hong Kong's colonial past even as the Chinese State appropriates the SAR's position in the world system. Most crucially, in these re-writings, Hong Kong people are ruralized with respect to north urban migrants in Shenzhen. Consequently, urban migrants are therefore posed to lead Hong Kong just as they have been authorized to modernize rural Baoan. It is as if the Cold War never occurred. In this history of shifting landmarks, the People's Republic of China is established, Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty, and China becomes a major player in the world system.

Chow has enriched our understanding of nostalgia by examining how place no longer anchors our yearnings for the past or home. She points to the incessant remaking of space (the constant annihilation and reconstruction of Shenzhen/Baoan, for example) that characterizes modern society, asking (1998: 135), '(I)ntead of thinking that nostalgia is a feeling triggered by an object lost in the past . . . could we attempt the reverse? Perhaps nostalgia is a feeling looking for an object?' Her analysis of the filmic image produces a media-dependent definition of nostalgia (Chow, 1998: 138, my emphasis): 'Nostalgia is a subjective state that seeks to express itself in pictures imbued with *particular memories of a certain past*.' Yet what if those memories are projections into the past of a future that had been promised, but instead materialized next door? A re-membling of a failed past? The reassertion of (Imperial) Xin'an rather than (Maoist) Baoan as the origin of (Reform) Shenzhen? In this final section, I sketch the production of Xin'an as such an object. Significantly, the social division between urban and local Shenzhen reasserts itself in the definition, experience, and manipulation of the past.

The restoration of the Tianhou Temple as a museum has, in practice, provided a locus for the previously banned worship of Tianhou. Devotees from both Hong Kong and Shenzhen regularly visit the temple, creating a cross-border community. On the other hand, Baoan locals have achieved a relative degree of economic independence for the municipal government. The spatial organization of their new villages is not only different from the rest of Shenzhen, it also includes local organizations such as Ancestral Halls and village-level temples, which provide a locus for village-based identity formations. Importantly, these village-level organizations – like Tianhou Temple and Xin'an Old Town – are also part of the state apparatus, indicating that social conflicts in Shenzhen are primarily mediated through re-appropriation of the resources of specific bureaus within the government, rather than through open conflicts between the government and the people. The primary bureaus for mediating this conflict has been the Bureau of Culture within the Ministry of Propaganda.

Mr Song, one of the people involved in the restoration of the Tianhou Museum, explained that the *fengshui* of the Tianhou Temple was once ideal. The temple grounds were situated at the base of Dananshan Mountain and stretched all the way to Chiwan Bay. Like other places in Shenzhen, however, today the temple grounds abut construction sites; Dananshan Mountain has been partially removed and the coveted lands along the coast are now part of the Chiwan Bay Port, which as of 1999 was still under construction. The Tianhou mother temple is located in Fujian, while the Chiwan temple is considered the mother temple for the Tianhou cult in the Pearl River Delta. Photographs that hang in one of the Temple galleries show boat after boat of fishermen and their families making the annual pilgrimage to Chiwan to celebrate the birthday of the Goddess. After Liberation, however, the Temple was occupied by border troops who closed the Temple because 'it represented feudal superstition'.

Mr Song continued:

The border troops did not leave until 1993, when the Nanshan District Government decided to renovate the temple as a museum. During the time that the temple was closed, Tianhou temples sprouted all over Hong Kong, just like mushrooms after spring rain. However, now that we're open again, every year thousands of people make the trip from as far away as Hong Kong and Dongguan to celebrate Tianhou's birthday.

(Interview, Summer 1999)

I ask what the difference between a museum and a temple is.

The older man chuckled. 'The simple answer to your question is that a temple is idealistic (*weixin*) and a museum is materialistic (*weiwu*).'

The longer answer unpacks the implicit political organization of idealism and materialism. Idealism refers to beliefs. Therefore a temple would fall under the jurisdiction of the United Front Ministry (*tongzhanbu*), which is responsible for religion. The purpose of a temple is to provide a space in which believers may congregate. Any group that wants to open a temple must apply to the Provincial United Front Bureau for a permit. Officially, Guangdong limits the number of temples to eight hundred, but unofficial estimates suggest that there are at least thirty thousand temples throughout the province. Beliefs are further distinguished from superstitions, which are beliefs that the government has decided harm believers. The government does not permit the public gathering groups whose beliefs have been identified as superstitions. In contrast, materialism refers to knowledge gained through science. Museums therefore fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Propaganda. A museum has three basic functions: collecting artifacts, organizing exhibitions, and sponsoring research. Although museums are approved at either the provincial or national level, any level of government may sponsor them. In addition, every level of government may designate 'cultural preservation articles' (*wenhua baoliuwu*), which cannot be razed without petitioning the corresponding Ministry of Propaganda. Of course, a higher level of government may issue the order to raze a cultural space, but must compensate the lower level of government for the loss.

The cracks between museum and temple, museum and cultural preservation site, and belief and superstition provide opportunities for alternative uses of designated cultural spaces. Tianhou is a case in point. Although it is officially registered as a museum, it is primarily used as a temple. In the main hall, Tianhou is set off by ropes, which prevent worshippers from approaching too closely. Tables for offerings have been set up within this space, as have large sticks of incense, which burn all day. Kneeling cushions and censers have been set up outside this space. In fact, Mr Song reported that many visitors call the museum curator, 'temple master' (*miaozhu*) rather than 'curator' (*guanzhang*). Moreover, since the opening of the Temple, three 'Chiwan Mothers' have emerged, two



from Dongguan and the third from Hong Kong. These older women claim that on specific days, Tianhou appears on their body. On the Goddess' birthday, the museum permits the Mothers to worship inside the blocked-off area. When they rise from their prayers, their followers, who have gathered in the plaza outside the main hall, kneel immediately. The museum also provides the Mothers with microphones so that all visitors can hear what they have to say. The Museum allows the Mothers these privileges because they bring in large numbers of followers into the compound who donate for the upkeep of the Goddess. In addition to local believers, wealthy Hong Kong and local merchants have made large donations to the temple. Returning overseas Chinese also make special trips to the temple. Is this belief or superstition? Is it appropriate use of a museum?

Various levels of the Ministry of Propaganda have attempted to harness this sentiment as a patriotism that legitimates the Communist Party. As Mr Song indicated, however, the appropriate narrative form of propaganda is materialism (knowledge based in science) instead of idealism (belief). At the same time, most officials in the municipal and district level bureaus are not from Baoan and many, like Mr Song are not from Guangdong. This means that unlike villagers, most Shenzhen officials have neither Hong Kong relatives, nor do they burn incense in local temples and ancestral halls. Moreover, jobs within the state apparatus are assigned to college graduates whose education stresses scientific thinking. Crudely put, these tendencies translate into a political preference for building museums rather than temples, despite local practice. Consequently, for the history staged at Tianhou and other museums, the CCP makes national rather than regional claims: Shenzhen is important because it is part of the Chinese State, not because it is so-and-so's hometown. Throughout Shenzhen, historic preservation of dynastic spaces foregrounds state claims of its leading role in modernizing rural Baoan, even as Shenzhen and Hong Kong locals have appropriated these spaces as loci of traditional practice.

The stated goal of restoring Nantou City and preserving Dapeng Fortress (*Suocheng*), for example, was to evoke the pre-Opium War unity of Hong Kong/Shenzhen in the territorial form of Xin'an, which had its *yamen* at Nantou City and a defense fortress in Dapeng. Situated on a small peninsula on the western banks of the Pearl River, Nantou City was the most important site in Xin'an. Archeological and documentary evidence suggest that the city was founded on the site several hundred years before the common era. Nantou marked the maritime frontier of Guangzhou, making it the most important military-naval outpost in the region. Foreigners could sail to Macao, but the water route from Macao to Guangzhou was too shallow for the passage of heavy galleons and junks. In order to enter Guangzhou, the large ships had to first pass through the Lantao channel, and then, via the Nantou peninsula, entering the Guangzhou harbor by way of Humen (Faure and Hayes, 1984). Historically less important than Nantou, Dapeng (from where Shenzhen derives its nickname, 'Pengcheng' – City of the Roc) was established in 1394 (Hanwu 27), housing a

regiment of about 1000 soldiers. The site was selected in order to protect the coastal population from raiding pirates. Soldiers were permitted to bring their families to the barricade on condition that military service was hereditary through the male line. The most famous of these soldiers was the Lai family, which produced five generals in three generations. Indeed, it was Lai Enjue who led the Chinese forces against the British during the Kowloon maritime battle (July 1839). However, because of limited investment by the imperial government, the relatives of Dapeng soldiers cultivated crops and raised lived stock outside the city walls, gradually claiming the land surrounding the military settlement as a hereditary village.

Although both sites have national status, economic responsibility for Xin'an Old Town and Dapeng has been delegated to the municipal Ministry of Propaganda, which in turn has assigned responsibility for maintaining these sites to the respective district level ministry. Xin'an Old Town is administered by Nanshan District (within the SEZ) and Dapeng Military Town is administered by Longgang District (outside the SEZ). Given the development history of the SEZ, Nanshan not only began modernizing before Longgang, but the scale of investment has been larger, as have individual villager's investment in housing. This economic divergence is reflected in Nanshan's extensive investment in Xin'an, while Longgang only provides funding for three employees at Dapeng. Nevertheless, Dapeng is better conserved. A local cadre attributed the condition of Dapeng to economics. 'The west has always been better off than the east', she asserted:

Roughly speaking, Cantonese speakers lived in the west on the good land, and Hakka speakers lived in the east in the mountains. When they started developing the tourist industry (luxury hotels on the Dapeng beach), villagers became rich overnight, so they moved all together into the new village right next door. It wasn't a case of one family at a time making improvements or razing the old house to build another one.

(Interview, Summer 1999)

According to Shenzhen law, the local government must offer compensation for homes that it raises in order to complete historic preservation projects. Because they have limited funding, Dapeng has not been able to buy out remaining families, many of who rent the old houses to migrant workers. However, the museum does require that the exterior of the homes be maintained and that all improvements to the interior of the homes be first approved by the museum. The only right to Dapeng that villagers retain upon leaving is the right to burn incense in family compounds. Moreover, hanging on the wall outside the entrance to the Lai Family compound is a memorial plaque from Hong Kong and local members of the family, which celebrate the return of Hong Kong.

After buying a ticket, visitors enter Dapeng through the East Gate. Signs then direct guests to the more important landmarks: the Lai Family compound, and

exhibition of Qing Dynasty artifacts, and another exhibition which tells the history of Dapeng. The transformation of Dapeng from a backward, rural area to national symbol mediates the ideological displacement of Baoan by Xin'an precisely because its spatial organization simultaneously embodies both the present and the past. On the one hand, the decaying homes represent the rural present that modernization promises to overcome. The exodus of villagers to new villages enacts this promise. Where the old houses are small and dank, new village homes are large (two to three stories, one hundred square meters per floor) and covered in glazed tiles. The floors are also tiled, and villagers entertain guests in air-conditioned sitting rooms. On the other hand, villagers' commitment to ancestral halls and hometown spatially links modern and dynastic China. Importantly, the village's claim to tradition – as at Tianhou – is incorporated into the framework of a museum. By making Dapeng a museum, the state effectively places the rural present into the past.<sup>9</sup> This ideological shift justifies the economic development of Shenzhen, which in turn is predicated on razing Baoan. This process – and the conflicts between different levels of claims to modern space – is even clearer at Xin'an.

The Xin'an Old Town Museum project attempted to reclaim Nantou City as a historic landmark. The main entrance to Xin'an is located just beyond the Nantou overpass, which allows pedestrians to cross Shennan Road, the main traffic artery in the SEZ. Next to the overpass, a large arch announces the museum. Just beyond the arch, a Guandi Temple has been reconstructed.

'That's not where it was originally located', a cultural functionary sighed, 'originally, the temple was located inside the city walls, but when they began the reconstruction they wanted to attract visitors. Now look at it.'

Another added, 'To put it bluntly, its not the kind of place that people with any kind of status would want to visit.'

In 1997, when the museum first opened, the reconstruction of the Guandi temple had been modelled on the restoration of the Tianhou temple as a museum. In addition to an area set aside for burning incense, organizers had used two rooms as galleries for photograph installations. Relocating the temple was justified on the grounds that it would attract people into Xin'an and tickets were sold through a window in the temple wall. At first, young students dressed in yellow tee shirts were employed as tour guides. After buying a ticket, one of the students would accompany the visitor from reconstructed building to reconstructed building: an opium den, a pawnbroker's shop, a bank, the Xin'an yamen, the Tian Wenxiang ancestral hall, and a brothel. Inside the buildings, wax figures had been arranged in historic tableaux. The tour guide carefully explained the history being staged. However, the museum did not attract many visitors. Soon zither concerts in the Tian Wenxiang ancestral hall were discontinued. Later, the students left and guards moved into the buildings. In 1998, in order to attract a larger audience, a section of the Guandi Temple was converted into a stage for kungfu performances and the photographs were removed. By 1999, migrant

labourers had occupied the kungfu stage, paying 1 yuan to sing karaoke. Visiting the temple to burn incense remained free.

Nanshan cultural functionaries have attributed the failure of Xin'an Old Town as a tourist destination to two factors. First, they point to the layout of the museum/town. Although, the bureau has reconstructed historic buildings, these buildings about construction sites, *changfang*, and new village homes. Throughout the 1980s, before Nantou was identified as a historic site, streets had been widened to permit the passage of cars and many old buildings had been razed to permit construction. Indeed, the south gate (built during the Ming dynasty) presses up against a toy factory and a garbage station. Consequently, walking through Xin'an/Nantou involves dodging cars and small trucks, avoiding cement mixers, and stepping around shop displays, which spill out of small stores into the street. Second, Xin'an is not as 'fun' (*hao wan*) as Shenzhen's theme parks (Splendid China, China Folk Villages, Window of the World, Future World, Happy Valley, and Water World), which are also located in Nanshan (Overseas Chinese Town). Functionaries admit that they take guests to Overseas Chinese Town, rather than to Xin'an. More tellingly, unless asked, most do not mention that Nantou was once the county seat of Xin'an county, focusing instead on how quickly the Nanshan built environment is approximating downtown Shenzhen, which in turn, they say, is overtaking Hong Kong. In order to overcome these problems Nanshan District has approved a plan to transform a part of the old city into a historic theme park. The restored area will tell the history of Xin'an in an enclosed space that is isolated from the chaos of Nantou and placed more firmly outside everyday Shenzhen. A lesson in managing the simulacrum: if historic continuity is to be clearly delimited, then temporal discontinuity must be spatially reproduced. Local villagers and Hong Kong residents who continue to use 'museums' as 'temples' not only blur these distinctions (after all, a temple belongs to the past and a museum to the present), they also enact the kinds of historic continuity that the Chinese State has claimed for itself.

As at Tianhou and Dapeng, this staging of history at Nantou pivots on an implicit analogy between the Party and the Qing Dynasty. More interestingly, perhaps, this analogy indicates a shift in the implicit ideological grounding of the Party's legitimacy, a shift from science to tradition, even as official ideology remains grounded in materialism. The split between overt and covert forms of legitimization provides implicit legitimization for diverse religions and traditional practices, which remain contained within the structure of the state apparatus. This spatial hierarchy has decisively shaped how modern space in Shenzhen is being built and occupied. Throughout the Municipality, modernist and postmodern buildings symbolize the official face of Shenzhen – modernizing, progressing, and assuming its place in the world. These buildings (like Guomao) are characterized by competitive accomplishments. Guomao was the first sky scraper built in China and Diwang, the 'Earth King' building, was once

Asia's highest skyscraper and will soon be surpassed by the new Saige electronics building. Nowhere in these buildings is there reference to either tradition or pre-Reform local history. In contrast, smaller buildings built by entrepreneurs and villagers use traditional glazed tiles on the roof, place lions outside the gates, and includes small, red shrines for either Guandi or Guanyin and early morning incense.

In this constantly changing and strangely doubled landscape, Xin'an provides a vocabulary for experiencing and understanding urbanization in Shenzhen as a continuation of Hong Kong prosperity. Hong Kong symbolizes a modern, international future; Baoan literalizes the rural backwardness that China must overcome to become Hong Kong, and; Xin'an provides a mythic homeland for both Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Importantly, the re-appropriation of traditional spaces as national museums not only highlights tensions between the two forms of simulation – copy and mask, but also suggests another means of socially organizing the relationship between the two. Rather than staging an either/or scenario (either copy or mask as the object of nostalgia), the museums stage a hierarchically structured both/and scenario (both copy and mask). The stability of this formation rests on the hierarchical integration of the mask within the copy. Villagers are allowed to burn incense, provided their interpretation of tradition does not exceed the State's understanding of history. In this way, Hong Kong – which, as a result of international border protocols remains an inaccessible destination for Shenzheners – returns to Shenzhen as Xin'an, a museum managed by the Chinese state where Guangdong people preserve tradition.

#### IV

Twenty years after the opening of the SEZ, Shenzhen maps seemed to be promissory notes rather than accurate guides to the city. Nanshan District tourist maps, for example, included tracts of land that had yet to be reclaimed, roads that would be under construction well into the next millennium, and computer simulations of hotels that would be opening the following year. Every week, bus routes were suddenly modified as new roads were opened or old roads widened, while bus stop names changed because former landmarks (villages and buildings) were razed and new complexes installed. Moreover, locals, long-term residents, and recent arrivals all used different landmarks to navigate within this rapidly metamorphosing space. This essay represents an attempt to understand the pace and scale of those changes as simultaneously economic, political, and cultural. The breach (between urban and local Shenzhen) that I have chosen to highlight provides only a partial account of this process. Moreover, it is difficult to claim that this process is representative of reform urbanization throughout China. The fact that Shenzhen originated with the legislated replacement of a rural area with a city has meant that rural/ urban antagonisms have been more pronounced than

in other cities, while the comparison with Hong Kong has been more explicit. Nevertheless, I believe that by tracing how images and experiences of Hong Kong mediate and elaborate rural-urban differences in Shenzhen we can re-think transnationality as an everyday practice where tradition, colonialism, and the Cold War provide the raw materials for the local re-working of the always changing relationship between the Chinese state apparatus and capital flows, both domestic and international.

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## Notes

- 1 That the economic and the political represented different approaches to the problem of 're-unifying' China is clear in the language used in the formulation of Shenzhen's character (*xingq*) in the *Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Overall Urban Plan* (1986: 5): 'With respect to politics (*zhengzhi*) and an eye toward the return of Hong Kong to (Chinese) sovereignty, (the SEZ) will support the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong, promote the return of Taiwan, and complete the nation's great work of re-unification through its leading use (*jiji zuoyong*) in implementing the strategic policy (*zhanlue juece*) of "one country-two systems" (*yiguo liangzhi*).'
- 2 Since 1970, East Asia has emerged as a new epicentre of capital accumulation on a global scale, challenging American hegemony in the world system. Indeed, the discussion of the world economy in terms of 'regions' may be attributed the Japanese strategy of capital accumulation, which is based on the radical externalization of costs within the inter-state system. This strategy allows Japanese firms to concentrate on the production of high value-added commodities and finance. Externalizations include costs related to military protection, environmental protection, labour management, and increasingly, production infrastructure. This investment pattern has resulted in the subordination of South East Asian economies to Japanese capital. Korean, Taiwan, and Hong Kong capital have followed Japan in investing in states comparatively

weaker than themselves, a pattern which has left national economies proportionately weaker the further away they are from the initial Japanese impulse (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 1998).

- 3 *Spring Tide* chronicles the transformation of a rural collective (composed of farmers) into an urban manufacturing cooperation (composed of stockholders). As Ji Zhenhua struggles to convince fellow villagers that stockholding is another form of collectivism – his version is called ‘community ownership system’ (*gongyouzhi*) – Zhang Lifang wants to persuade Ji Zhenhua to move to Hong Kong with her. Ultimately, Ji Zhenhua triumphs through economic success. The villager-stock holders are grateful for their new livelihood, while Zhang Lifang is persuaded that the community ownership system offers her family more than anything they could achieve in Hong Kong.
- 4 A publication commemorating both the tenth anniversary of Shenzhen and the role of urban planning in developing Shenzhen deployed a rhetoric that invoked Hong Kong as both a model and origin of urbanization in Shenzhen (Shenzhen Urban Planning Committee, 1990: 1): ‘The history of urban development demonstrates that an entire society promulgates a plan for the common interests (of its members). The regulations for urban planning established by Hong Kong in 1939 have pointed to this purpose: “to promote the public’s health, safety, convenience, and common welfare”. If a capitalist city like Hong Kong believes this to be the purpose of planning, then, of course, a socialist special economic zone should pay even more attention to common welfare and environmental quality.’ Significantly, urbanization is presented as the appropriate form of modernization.
- 5 The rural – in the form of the county (*xian*) – remained the formal centre of Chinese government until July 1921. At that time, the Beiyang government promulgated the City Self-governing Ordinance and established two categories of city, the Special City and the Ordinary City. Nine years later, the Republican government promulgated the City Organization Law, which designated cities as the seat of regional administration (Shirk, 1993).
- 6 For a more detailed account of this process, see O’Donnell ‘Path breaking: constructing gendered nationalism in Shenzhen’. *Positions*, 7(2) (1999), 67–99. For a general overview of new forms of corporatism in rural China see Jean Oi (1999) *Rural China Takes Off: Institutional Foundations of Economic Reform*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 7 In the early 1990s, the Shenzhen municipal government attempted to integrate village corporations into the state apparatus through an institutionalized ‘rural urbanization’ (*nongcun chengshihua*) movement. The programme had a double target: the rural, as a form of social organization and farmers as not-yet-modern citizens (Zhu, 1992; Zhang, 1994). The economic stakes were clear; as a class, village-corporations represented a significant tax base. In 1991, the year rural urbanization began, total industrial profits for Futian village enterprises constituted 40% of industrial profits for the District. Politically and culturally, rural urbanization established the inferiority of (former) farmers and urban residents through the discourse of talented people (*rencai*). Urban

- Shenzhen leaders argued that only modern institutions could attract and produce people of talent suited to the new world order.
- 8 This reasoning is not unique to urban migrants. During the Cold War, the anthropology of China deployed a similar logic to structure fieldwork. By rooting contemporary social conditions in imperial China, anthropologists re-connected Hong Kong and Taiwan to China, a rhetorical gesture which then allowed them to argue that Hong Kong and Taiwan represented 'Chinese' culture. Anthropologists conducted fieldwork in Hong Kong and Taiwan because '... given the present political situation, the New Territories were as close to China as I (we) could get (Potter 1968: vii).'
  - 9 Process of villager migration to new villages and migrant worker occupation of old villages is also taking place in Hakka compounds throughout Longgang. As at Dapeng, villagers retain rights to ancestral halls located in the compound. An archaeologist friend admitted the explicit link between historic preservation, local tradition, and the state, 'Why is Hakka research suddenly hot (in Shenzhen)? Because Longgang is primarily occupied by Hakka people, and now they have their own government. Before, the (new) Baoan County government wasn't interested in historic preservation, because the main Cantonese sites are in Nanshan.'

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