

Taiwanese Empire Overseas--- the structural integration of Taiwanese People in China

Ping Lin *

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Abstract

This study, sponsored by Oriel College, Oxford and Academia Sinica in Taiwan, explores the structural integration of Taiwanese people in China by investigating 51 respondents selected with maximum variation in Dongguan/Shanghai in 2004-2005. We argue that respondents were segregated at *upper* status after migration. This upper status helped them at the initial stage of integration but hindered at later stages. Further discussions on the other dimensions of integration will be pursued in other papers.

Keyword: structural integration, migration, Taiwan, China

1. Introduction

Since early 1990, it is estimated that more than one million Taiwanese people have migrated from Taiwan, an industrialized country, to China, a developing country, contrary to the general migration pattern from poorer to richer countries. Among these one million Taiwanese, more than 120,000 and 300,000 were estimated to be living in Dongguan and Shanghai respectively in 2004-2005. Most migrants were business migrants (expatriates and entrepreneurs) who were mainly both pushed by the risk of being jobless at home and pulled by the promise of higher income overseas. Others were family members of business migrants, student migrants, and returnees who mainly moved for non-economic reasons such as family reunion and orientation toward Chinese culture¹. Although their motivation for moving has been partially explored, their post-migration life is not discussed yet.

We find most respondents had little will or intention to settle down in China, even though they had lived there for a decade, by examining their attitudes and practices as regards language acquisition, residential pattern, and intermarriage/dating². Whilst the political issues (disputes across the Strait, and constraints in China) are regarded as possible barriers between the Taiwanese and the Chinese, we find respondents were little by the political issues across the Strait.³ By

* Ping Lin is a DPhil Student in Sociology at Oxford University and PhD Candidate Fellow in Sociology at Academia Sinica. Email address: ping.lin@orile.ox.ac.uk

¹ Regarding how many Taiwanese were in China, where they lived, and why they moved to China, please see Ping Lin (2006), "Economic Expectation for Migration to China---Taiwanese Immigrants of Dongguan and Shanghai", paper presented at *The 3rd Annual Conference of European Association of Taiwan Studies*. 30-31 March. Paris, France.

² Please see Ping Lin (2007), "Did They Mix? Adaptation of Taiwanese People in China", *Sociology Working Papers*, University of Oxford (*Forth coming*)

³ For more details on political integration, please read Ping Lin (2006). "Immigrants and Citizenship, the political integration of Taiwanese in China", paper presented at *the Annual Conference of the*

examine how respondents interacted with the Chinese at work and how they regarded the Taiwanese organisations in China, we may find out the barrier between respondents and the Chinese. Aspect of other types of integration will be addressed in separated papers.

2. Literature Review

Studies on the immigrants' structural integration in Europe state that immigrants are usually restricted to the lower part of the economic ladder to work in low-skilled or low-paid jobs. Structural integration refers to how immigrants gain equal access to different social sectors, institutions and organizations in the host society, such as the labour market and school education (Spencer 1981; Baumann 2002; Castles and Miller 2003; Baldwin-Edwards 2002). Through these official or civic social structures, immigrants are able to work with the majority and gain a basic knowledge of the host society (Coenen and Leisink 1993; Schedler and Glastra 2000). During these processes, immigrants gradually become part of the fabric of society.

Regarding the social structures offered by the host society, there is no doubt that some immigrants may organize their own organizations, such as trade unions, religious gatherings, and ethnic schools for themselves. These organizations play an important role both representing the entire immigrant sector and uniting the immigrant groups as social gathering places for immigrants (Collins 2002). To some immigrants, especially the newcomers, these ethnic organizations not only function as platforms for contacts with the host population but also as gathering places to develop their social networks in an alien environment (Martikainen 2005). Whilst these organizations work as representatives of immigrants, they may also cause segregated assimilation, in the form of the "segregated school" (Darby and Dunn 1987; Murray 1985; Kristen 2005), the "ethnic enclave" or the "ghetto" (Wilson 1982; Lin 1998; Peach 2001) in the host society.

In this study, we discuss how Taiwanese immigrants interact with the Chinese at work, since the structural integration concerns the interaction between immigrants and the native in the social sectors. Because only three respondents worked in Chinese (or joint) firms, we focus on interaction occurring at Taiwanese firms from three aspects: Taiwanese employees with their Chinese colleagues, Taiwanese employers with their Chinese employees, and Taiwanese businessmen and their Chinese partners. Apart from these interactions, we also discuss the role of the ethnic school (two Taiwanese schools) and religious group (Tzu-chi in Shanghai) among the Taiwanese community.

3. Research Methods

Most related research is based on limited interviews with Taiwanese concerning their investment strategy, firm management, and adjustment of family members (Chen and Ku 2002; Cheng 1998; Dong 2004) because it is impractical to do the statistical survey. The target of this research is to map the general course of

different Taiwanese, instead of giving a picture with clear proportions of each type of Taiwanese. In order to achieve this goal, this research used ethnography (mainly including participant observation and a few tape-recorded interviews) as the main research method and maximum variation as the sampling strategy. We collected people's life histories in daily casual talks at home, in their workplace, in community centres, shops, factories, religious meetings, and festivals. Details about how respondents were selected are discussed as followings.

3.1 Sampling Strategy

Maximum variation sampling strategy is used to obtain the largest range of information and perspectives available on the subject of study (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Patton 1990; Maykut and Morehouse 1994). I adopted this strategy in order to gain an understanding of Taiwanese with a range of different backgrounds. To practise this strategy, I actively joined activities held by different groups of people or organisations (i.e. TAO, Tzu-chi foundation; see following for more details). During these different activities and gatherings, I obtained both a general picture about local Taiwanese communities and helpful personal connections in the search for potential respondents with different backgrounds. From these diverse Taiwanese whom I got to know in these different contexts, I selected some to be the respondents.

Some respondents were selected because they confirmed or challenged the findings of past research. For example, the results from the *1997-1998 Survey* show that most Taiwanese in China are often middle-aged, middle-educated, married, males with pro-China political attitudes, working in Taiwanese firms. Yet I not only met people conforming to this pattern, but also people from the following categories: single female, age below thirty or above sixty, employees of Chinese or international firms, those with anti-China political attitudes, and graduates. Some respondents were selected because they confirmed or challenged the existing theories. For example, since economic theories state that people move for a better income, I selected some respondents who migrated to China solely for a higher income and some who did not. Theories of social capital argue that people often move to countries where they already have social connections; thus I selected some respondents who had Chinese relatives and some with no social connections to anybody in China before migration. Some respondents were selected because they were typical cases, or cases at the extreme ends of the spectrum of a particular phenomenon. For example, both findings from previous studies and my own observations in the field showed that 'business migrants' and "returnees" were two typical types of Taiwanese in China. Therefore, I selected respondents working for different types of Taiwanese firms (IT industry, traditional industry, and servicing) and the first and second generations of Mainlander Taiwanese.

Some cases were selected because they provided particularly rich or enlightening information. For example, one female respondent was selected because she had moved to Shanghai more than ten years ago. During this period, she had worked for several different firms, dated local Chinese, and actively participated in Taiwanese gatherings. What is more, she had broad interests in the study of

anthropology. She not only provided me with rich information but also gave me meaningful insights to interpret the information I obtained.

Most Taiwanese whom I met in the fieldwork and all the respondents whom I selected knew that I was a part-time teacher and was carrying out research concerning Taiwanese in China. At the beginning of my research, I reported to the school principals what I planned to do. Some respondents asked a bit more about my research. A few of them were interested in it and actively offered ideas and personal connections in the search for other respondents. But most respondents had little interest in knowing the details of my research.

Apart from the tactics to broaden my connections and to select respondents, I took note of whether somebody might have a different background or different ideas from others during casual gatherings. I also asked my respondents, “*Do you know anyone who may have different viewpoints on the issues we just discussed?*” at the end of some casual conversations in order to make sure I did not miss any chance to meet immigrants with different backgrounds or ideas. Like most sampling processes in qualitative research, the sampling in this research started *snowballing* techniques starting with some easy cases but ending up with a large range of different respondents. Being a part-time teacher in two Taiwanese schools, I succeeded in building up good relationships with Taiwanese residents. With their help, I obtained a great deal of information. In total, I obtained thirty respondents in Dongguan and twenty-one respondents in Shanghai.

Respondents and Triangulation

The basic features of respondents can be described as following. Among these fifty-one respondents, thirty are male and twenty-one are female. Their ages range from twenty-four to eighty-eight years old. Two of them have little school education, but most have more than twelve years of school education. Some of them are newly graduated without any working experience in Taiwan, but others had several years of working experience before migration. When I met them in 2004/2005, respondents had variously lived in China only a few months, several years, or more than ten years. While some respondents still lived in firm accommodation and associated with other Taiwanese, others had married Chinese and owned private housing.

In addition to respondents' information, and in order to confirm its representativeness, I also obtained information from individuals and from the activities of *TBDS* (Taiwanese Businessmen's Dongguan School, the first Taiwanese school in China and the only Taiwanese school in southern China), *HDTS* (Hua Dong Taiwanese School, the second Taiwanese school in China and the only Taiwanese school in Shanghai Metropolis before the summer of 2005), *DTBA* (Dongguan Taiwanese Business Association, the first and largest Taiwanese Business Association in China), *KTBA* (Kunshan Taiwanese Business Association, one of the branch business associations in Shanghai Metropolis), *STBS* (Shijie Taiwanese Business Association, one branch of *TBDS*), *TAO* (Taiwan Affair Office, the office of the Chinese Government in charge of all Taiwanese affairs in China) in Dongguan City and Shanghai Metropolis, *Tailian* (affiliated association of *TAO*), *Tzu-chi* (one of the branches of Taiwanese

Buddhists) in Shanghai, and *DAT* (Dongguanese Association in Taipei, the only native association for Dongguanese in Taiwan). These institutions and organizations provided important networks and information in the course of the fieldwork. Activities sponsored by them offered not only good arenas for me to participate in and observe respondents' life but also rich opportunities for researchers to employ triangulation. That is to check respondents' opinions by information from these organisations in order to lower the risks of misinterpreting.

Participant Observation

My job as a part-time schoolteacher in two Taiwanese schools put me in an ideal position to participate in the Taiwanese community and observe their life. In the field, I not only paid attention to my conversation with respondents but also to how Taiwanese immigrants in general behaved. I transformed the topic guide (see section 2) into different small topics to explore respondents' ideas in appropriate contexts. Whilst my part-time job as a schoolteacher helped me to obtain their trust, my travelling experience in inner China and student life in Oxford successfully enabled me to bridge the gap with most potential respondents. My personal background and experience often triggered them to talk about their life in China spontaneously. During these activities, I seldom 'asked' respondent as in a formal interview, but more 'talked and listened to' them as casual conversation. Without my formally 'asking' questions, they naturally told me most of the information I needed in different contexts. Most of their nervousness and cautiousness in interviews disappeared in these daily conversations. Sometimes the context of a conversation was even more important than the conversation *per se*, because it helped me to properly understand and interpret respondents. Thus I included more contexts than dialogues as the 'supporting evidence' in the thesis, even though some readers might regard these contexts as beside the point. Although these activities might be criticised as less 'scientific and systematic' than tape-recorded interviews, I obtained more diverse and in-depth information which would not be found via the traditional tape-recorded interview and paper survey.

At the end of the day after each activity or relevant conversation, I spent hours taking notes about the activities or conversations, including contexts, in English at night. Although almost all the activity or conversation was in Mandarin Chinese (Holo dialect or a bit of Cantonese), the field notes were taken directly in English because it would help my supervisor in Oxford to understand. Although they were written in English, I also noted the keywords in Chinese in case of any misunderstanding after the fieldwork. Every ten days or two weeks, I emailed all the field notes to my supervisor and exchanged my ideas with him. This high frequency of field note taking and contact with my supervisor helped me to keep a clear mind in the field and to develop insights on certain topics.

4. Results

The results can be separated into three sections: Taiwanese employees and Chinese employees in section 4.1, Taiwanese employers and Chinese employees in section 4.2, and Taiwanese employers and Chinese partners in section 4.3. Sections 4.1 to 4.3 will tell us how respondents cooperated or competed with the

Chinese. The second examination about the role of immigrants' organisations will be discussed in section 4.4, which will illustrate how the Taiwanese organisations affected respondents' integration.

4.1 Taiwanese Employees and Chinese Employees

There are two Taiwanese schools in the whole China in 2005: TBDS in Dongguan and HTBS in Shanghai. We take these two Taiwanese schools as cases for discussion because they not only reflected the common management mode of Taiwanese firms but also partially functioned as hubs for Taiwanese people in both cities. Although these two private schools were in different cities, their administration structures and management were roughly the same (Lin CS 2002). We take TBDS as the main example for discussion. The features of HTBS will be pointed where they essentially differ from TBDS.

4.1-1 "Oil is oil; water is water." (油是油, 水是水)--- Hierarchy at work

In the TBDS, all the high-ranking staff was Taiwanese except the deputy principal.⁴ Apart from these high-ranking staff, all middle and low ranking staff in each division was Chinese, running errands and doing the routine work in each office. Most Taiwanese staff had obtained their university degrees and other qualifications in Taiwan or overseas, but almost all Chinese staff only had six to twelve years of school education. Just as administrative staff was separated into two categories by ranking, all the schoolteachers were also separated into three categories according to where they were from and what subjects they taught⁵.

The first category was those teachers dealing with *main subjects*, such as Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Most were from Taiwan and had one or more university degrees, plus teaching certificates. Only a few teachers of this type were Chinese. All Taiwanese teachers in this group also acted as homeroom teachers of each class, and so they were responsible for directly interacting with students' parents. The second type of teachers was in charge of *minor subjects*, such as Physical Education, Music, and Arts Education. Most of them had graduated from Junior College (twelve to fourteen years of school education) and held teaching certificates from China. All teachers of this type were Chinese. The third type of teachers was referred as *Life Teachers* by the school authorities. These Life Teachers did not actually teach academic subjects, but were in charge of discipline in the boarding students. Most of these Life Teachers had nine to twelve years of school education. Theoretically, the first two types of teachers were in charge of all daytime activities; Life Teachers handled all activities from evening to the next morning.

As Taiwanese staff/teachers had better educational achievements than their Chinese counterparts, they all received greater pay and allowances than Chinese. All staff/teachers from Taiwan earned income roughly at the same level as

⁴ As discussed in previous Chapter, the deputy principal was Chinese and represented the local Chinese government in the school.

⁵ Apart from Taiwanese teachers and Chinese teachers, both TBDS and HTBS hired two to five European/American teachers to teach English conversation. We do not discuss these teachers in this thesis because they are little related in this research.

teachers in most private schools in Taiwan. Apart from the income, they also drew certain allowances, such as free accommodation (or rent subsidy), two free air tickets between Taiwan and China per year, and free local transportation. All the Chinese staff/teachers had their income at the same level as for private schools in China. That is, all Taiwanese staff/teachers had their income⁶, accommodation⁷, and transportation⁸ allowance much better than their Chinese staff/teachers.

The hierarchical gap between Taiwanese and Chinese at work did not only exist as formal arrangement, but also occurs in informal personal interaction. For example, most Taiwanese staff/teachers had their office desks together in rooms with other Taiwanese. In all manner of meetings, Chinese staff/teachers had their seats together with Chinese unless the school authorities organized other arrangements in advance. They even sat separately on the school bus to the city centre in the evening. The school authorities did not arrange such personal interaction, but nevertheless such separation was automatically observed by these staff/teachers, forming an invisible boundary⁹. This invisible line made it easy for me to see a Taiwanese talking with a Chinese for business or short chatting, but unlikely to see them chat or gossip as close friends.

This hierarchy caused serious segregation. Both principals in TBDS and HTBS referred to this segregation as a tough issue for them to deal with. The principal of TBDS referred to this segregation with a metaphor, *oil is oil and water is water*, to me in September 2004. It means the relationship between Taiwanese and Chinese in the same school is just like putting the oil and water in the same bucket. You could put them in the same bucket, but they would never actually mix. This is always a gap between them. This feature of hierarchical segregation does not only exist in TBDS and HTBS, but also at three firms (Delta Electronics in Dongguan, Quanta Electronics and APP Paper in Shanghai) I observed. What I

⁶ For example, Taiwanese staff/teachers obtained ¥10,000-20,000 per monthly, exclusive of all other monetary allowances. Chinese teachers of the first type and second type (teaching “main subjects” and “minor subjects”) earned only ¥1,500-3,000 per month. Chinese staff and the life teachers earned around ¥800-1,500 per month. As information from respondent Wu in Dongguan, the Chinese deputy principal could be the only possible exception in receiving payment and allowances equal to Taiwanese staff/teachers.

⁷ The quality of Taiwanese and Chinese accommodation was also very different. All Taiwanese staff/teachers got either large en-suite bedrooms for per person, or flats (including kitchens and bathrooms) shared with other Taiwanese. Their rooms or flats were arranged like hotels or as for normal families, with furniture, including TV sets, air conditioners, bedding, and refrigerators. The accommodation for most Chinese was quite simple. Chinese teachers (excluding Life Teachers) were provided with either a tiny single room, or a larger room share between four Chinese. Their rooms were as simply decorated as a youth hostel. Life Teachers and staff had even worse accommodation. They were asked to use rooms sleeping six to twelve people. Only the deputy principal and a few “particular” Chinese teachers (i.e. Chinese with university degree or membership of the Communist Party) had accommodation roughly equivalent to that of Taiwanese.

⁸ Although both Taiwanese staff/teachers and Chinese staff/teachers were provided with free transportation to the city centre, their travel allowance back home was much different. All Taiwanese staff/teachers got free air tickets for return to Taiwan twice a year, but Chinese staff/teachers did not have any transportation allowance no matter how far away they were from home.

⁹ As Mr Huang, the principal of HTBS in 2005, told me, the first thing he did in the school was arranging the “mixed seat” for the weekly meeting. Every Taiwanese teacher was asked to sit with another Chinese teacher or staff in the weekly meeting. He hoped this arrangement could bring more interaction between Taiwanese and Chinese in the school.

observed and what respondents told me stated that this hierarchical structure was quite common in both cities (e.g. Field note 04/04/05). The precise detail of the hierarchical gap between Taiwanese and Chinese employees might vary between different firms or districts, but the basic feature of this hierarchy: almost all Taiwanese were obviously on the upper strata in Taiwanese firms.

4.1-2 Reproduction of Hierarchy after Work

Teachers and staff in activities after work also automatically reproduced this pattern of segregation at work. For example, HTBS arranged an outing to Hangzhou for all teachers/staff in the April of 2005. The school authorities did not arrange the seats for everyone but it is very clear that most Taiwanese teachers/staff sat on Bus No. 1 and most Chinese teachers/staff sat on Bus No. 2. It also happens on the school buses arranged by TBDS to the city centre of Dongguan (or Guangzhou sometimes) for teachers/staff to relax every weekend. Although Taiwanese and Chinese sat on the same bus, they rarely went to the same place for entertainment after getting of the bus.

This hierarchy at work was not only practised by Taiwanese/Chinese employees, but also followed by the outsiders. For instance, many students' parents prepared gifts for Taiwanese teachers on traditional holidays (such as moon cakes for Moon Festival) or invited teachers to have dinner on the weekend to show their appreciation and respect. During the Moon Festival in 2004, I saw many moon cakes for Taiwanese teachers from student parents. Whilst many Taiwanese teachers complained of "*too many cakes*", I did not see any Chinese teachers getting moon cakes from students' parents.

Because the income of Taiwanese is much higher than that of most Chinese, it allows them better buying power and pastime activities. After work, Taiwanese often socialised together, going for meals of steak or sushi at hotels or semi-European styled restaurants. After eating, they would go for foot massage, drinking and karaoke, or shopping for fake Gucci and Burberry. Then they would return to their accommodation around midnight or the next early morning. The whole cost of these activities could be more than ¥500 per night per person. This high cost automatically precluded Chinese from joining their Taiwanese colleagues. Chinese often went together for meals like dumplings or fried noodles at some cheap food stands. After dinner, they did some shopping for daily accessories like shampoo or snacks. Then they would return to their accommodation. Whilst the hierarchy at work allowed for little interaction between Taiwanese and Chinese, the gap in buying power made this segregation even worse. The structural hierarchy meant most Taiwanese kept their interaction with Chinese colleagues at the level of business. The gap in buying power caused by wage gap separated them from each other at after-work recreation¹⁰. Because of the gap of buying power, even a well-intentioned attempt at being polite could be improperly interpreted¹¹.

¹⁰ For example, Joy, a female respondent in Dongguan, who claimed herself emotionally close to the Chinese, expressed the gap caused by buying power. She in November 2004 made a significant remark to me to explain why she could not actually happily hanged out her Chinese colleagues. She said, "*What can I talk with them out? Can I tell them I spent several hundreds of Yuan for a fake Gucci?*"

¹¹ The following case illustrates this invisible segregation partially caused by differential buying power

Alongside this pattern of segregation, there were a few deviant cases we should refer to. Respondents intending to live in China for longer would pay greater respect to and encourage friendlier relationships with their Chinese colleagues than did other respondents¹². Another deviant feature is the difference between HTBS in Shanghai and TBDS in Dongguan. The hierarchical gap in HTBS is smaller than that in TBDS¹³. Although Taiwanese in HTBS complained of the stubbornness of their Chinese colleagues, and Chinese complained about the unfair hierarchy, both sides kept this hierarchical structure limited to the workplace, not to extend to life after work as that in TBDS. In HTBS, it was not unusual to see Taiwanese casually chatting with Chinese about their cultural heritages in the cities of YRD. Chinese of HTBS in general enjoyed more mutual respect with their Taiwanese colleagues than their Chinese counterparts of TBDS.

Although Chinese in HTBS gained more mutual respect from their Taiwanese colleagues than their counterpart in TBDS, the hierarchy still firmly existed. The Taiwanese in TBDS and HTBS did not encounter the structural discrimination at work experienced by immigrants in Europe. These Taiwanese constituted the upper echelons of the workplace, not the lower ones as in Europe. This “upper segregation” made few Taiwanese in TBDS and HTBS actually further explored China through working with the Chinese people.

4.2 Taiwanese Businessmen and Chinese Employees

As information from respondents in sections 4.1 and that from TBDS /HTBS, Taiwanese usually had their pay much higher than their Chinese colleagues.

and its perception. It is custom that most Taiwanese prepare some gifts for their neighbours, friends, or partners on some holidays to show their appreciation of help/cooperation. At the end of 2004, Nora bought a purse (around ¥70) as a Christmas gift for her Chinese partner, the Life Teacher of her class. She thought this purse was cheap yet beautiful. As Nora told me, they did not have much personal interaction with each other, but she thought that her Chinese partner would be happy to get a beautiful purse as Christmas gift. I left TBDS for HTDS in early 2005. One day Nora rang me to complain about a rumour being spread by this Chinese teacher. Her partner was referring to Nora as “*Oh, that rich teacher!*” implying that Nora was so spoiled that she could spend money improperly. Nora was depressed with this comment because her attempt at being polite was interpreted as showing of wealth.

¹² For example, Sparrow in Shanghai and Mao in Dongguan. Sparrow’s husband had worked in China for several years. Her moving to China was just for the purpose of reunion with her husband. As she said, there was little chance for her and her husband to get jobs with similar pay in Taiwan, so they had bought their private flat and planned to live in Shanghai for certain period of time. I heard of her talking about going with her Chinese assistant for snacks in the late afternoon several times. Mao was a second-generation Mainlander Taiwanese. Like other Mainlander Taiwanese respondents, he had a strong psychological orientation towards Chinese culture and loathed the current anti-China politics in Taiwan (also see Chapter Ten). At the age of forty-nine, he was made redundant by a private school, but got a teaching place in TBDS. Due to his psychological orientation towards China, and his economic which relied on working in China, he was one of the few respondents clearly expressed little will to go back to Taiwan. Mao’s wife and daughter were also in Dongguan. Mao even arranged for his daughter to study in a local Chinese school instead of TBDS. When I was in TBDS, both Mao and I were familiar with a low-ranking Chinese staff named Xia. As Xia told me, they (Mao, his wife, and Xia) sometimes cycled out to eat dumplings on the weekend. When Xia left TBDS in November 2004, Mao even arranged a farewell dinner for Xia. Such consideration was rare between Taiwanese employees and Chinese colleagues.

¹³ For example, low-ranking Chinese staff was allowed to have meals together with Taiwanese in the same school cafeteria. The accommodation quality for Chinese teachers (four persons a room) is not so far away from the quality for Taiwanese teachers (one to two persons a room).

However, this type of management culture seemed unattractive to Chinese employees. Chinese employees often complained that Taiwanese employers were stingy in the salaries and allowances they paid. Why did Taiwanese employers pay their Chinese employees much less than their Taiwanese employees? What did Taiwanese employers think about their employees?

4.2-1 ‘*Ju-yi-fan-san*’ (舉一反三)---Lack of Teamwork and Creativity

In the fieldwork, I often heard of Taiwanese complained about the poor quality of Chinese employees. We will further discuss what this ‘poor quality’ from the viewpoints of entrepreneur respondents, by examining the interviews with Feng in Shanghai and Ying in Dongguan. Feng asked me to find a Taiwanese to train his Chinese employees during my interview with him. He said,

*As you see, all the staff in my firms is Chinese, except my wife and me. They [Chinese employees] all graduated from well-known universities like Fudan, Chaotong in Shanghai or cities nearby. They should be smart and know what they should do... Sometimes it is so annoying for me to communicate with them. They never get through to the logic of what we Taiwanese expect. You have been a schoolteacher for years so you may know some people capable of teaching my Chinese staff. They [Chinese employees] do not know what ‘*Ju-yi-fan-san*’ and ‘teamwork’ are. I do not care what educational attainment this Taiwanese ‘trainer’ might have. I would be happy to pay him NT100, 000 (¥25,000) per month with seven holidays with free air tickets back home per year if he/she could help me.”*

(Interview 01/03/05)

“Those Chinese [employees]... They are so lazy. If you want them to clean that desk, they will simply clean the desk only. Only the surface of the desk! Nothing else!” Ying said. I smiled a bit and she kept on talking: “they will not clean the dustbin, put back the chair, and wash up the coffee cups. They will do nothing but clean the surface of that desk if you only told them to clean the desk. You have to tell them every detail of what they should do; otherwise they will only do what you told them literally...they do not help each other. If one Chinese is suddenly ill, I have to immediately allocate another Chinese member of staff to perform his task temporarily. If I do not tell another Chinese to do it, no Chinese would voluntary help this absentee...and they are so pragmatic and materialistic. If another firm pay a little more in salary, they will suddenly leave for another firm without resigning. Just disappear on the next day! Now we pay their salary at the end of each month and ask them to resign officially two weeks before their leaving or they will not get the remaining salary.”

(Interview 17/11/04)

Feng did not specifically tell me what he wanted this prospective employee to train his current employees to do. The salary and allowance he would be happy to pay for this trainer was so high that I was sure he was really annoyed with having to manage his Chinese employees. He just complained his Chinese staff in terms

of their lacking “*Ju-yi-fan-san*” and “*teamwork*” without further explanation. This phrase ‘*Ju-yi-fan-san*’ literally means that a good student will do his three individual tasks well if his teacher has set him a good example of how to do one of the tasks. So, a good employee should have a little bit of creativity, to perform similar tasks well like ‘*Ju-yi-fan-san*’. Ying’s responses about ‘cleaning the desk’ and ‘temporary task allocation’ might be a bit exaggerated but it explained what Feng’s ‘*Ju-yi-fan-san*’ and ‘*teamwork*’ refer to.

Ying’s example of ‘cleaning the desk’ explained what Taiwanese employers I met expected. They expected Chinese employees would follow their logic and show some creativity in similar tasks; yet often found that Chinese employees were stubborn (that is, purposely reluctant to be creative). Most Chinese employees only did precisely what Taiwanese employers told them to do. That is why Feng blamed them as ‘*having no idea what Ju-yi-fan-san is*’. The lack of teamwork was another problem. Chinese employees rarely helped each other unless they were familiar with each other. If an unexpected task was suddenly required (or some task was unfinished because of the absence of other employees), no Chinese employee would voluntarily do it. Businessman respondents often found themselves wasting a lot of time and energy dealing with tiny matters that they thought Chinese employees should have sorted out automatically.

Comments by Feng and Ying reveal a general criticism of Taiwanese employers to their Chinese employees. Most Chinese employees were well disciplined and readily trained for tedious jobs, but lacked the will and creativity to cope with unexpected tasks. While most of them had a more solid grasp of theory than their Taiwanese counterparts, few were able to apply it to real problems at work. What’s more, they felt few Chinese employees were as talented as their education qualifications suggested. Although they might have graduated from well-known vocational schools or universities, the degrees were not as good as they sounded.

4.2-2 “*Fake certificate?*” ---Sense of Distrust

The third problem is sense of distrust. Chinese employees’ leaving the firms without formal resignation is a frustrating problem for Taiwanese employers. It is no surprise that people will leave for jobs with better income, but what Taiwanese employers objected to was that Chinese left without any advance warning. What was even more annoying was that some Chinese employees left to work for that firm’s competitors, or set up new firms with the clients’ information from the original firms.

A surprising example what I heard was the quarrel between Taiwanese employer Xuan and her former Chinese employee Chen. Chen left Xuan’s teashop to run another teashop after she had become familiar with the whole business under Xuan. What seemed more disgraceful was that Chen’s teashop was just five minutes walk away from Xuan’s teashop, with similar decorations and brand name. Xuan had spent time and energy teaching Chen, but Chen copied her idea, took away some customers, and competed with her. This experience made Xuan very unhappy and decided to ask her younger sister for help. Xuan and her sister controlled the core information in business and let their Chinese employees only do the routine jobs. When Xuan told me her disputes with Chen, I recalled my

conversation with Ying. When Ying complained about the lack of creativity her employees, I asked, “*How could it be? I think they are in school at least nine years.*” Ying shook her head and replied, “*No...no... We have no idea if their education certificate is true or fake...you cannot trust them...*” We cannot judge Xun’s comment about Chen and Ying’s comment about true/fake certificates, but their comment revealed lack of trust between themselves and the Chinese employees¹⁴.

Case of Xuan and Ying displayed strong distrust of the ethical behaviour and moral value of their Chinese employees. Although the rising cost of production pushed Taiwanese firms to cut the allowance and wage of Taiwanese employees and replace some Taiwanese employees with Chinese employees, this distrust of Chinese employees leads most Taiwanese employers I talked to to keep the core of financial management and business techniques firmly under Taiwanese control, no matter how many Chinese employees were taken on. Because of these worries, most Taiwanese employers kept interaction with Chinese employees as a superficial and business-only relationship¹⁵.

4.3 Taiwanese Businessmen and Chinese Partners

A survey conducted by the Trade Union in Taiwan in 2003 reveals that 82.8 per cent of Taiwanese firms in China are wholly Taiwanese-owned ventures. Only 19.5 per cent were joint firms with Chinese¹⁶. Of the fifty-one respondents in this research, eleven were self-employed. Among these eleven people, five respondents conducted their business corporately with Chinese people. We may obtain how Taiwanese businessmen find their Chinese partners by examine the experience of these respondents.

4.3-1 “*He helped me a lot*”---the Shortcut to Local Knowledge

Among these five respondents, Kang Sr and Xin-F set up their firms with the cooperation of Chinese citizens. However, their Chinese ‘partners’ did not actually run the firms but were only entitled as partners on the official paper. Thus we do not discuss Kang Sr and Xin-F in this section. Among the three people, Min’s Chinese business partner was also his wife. Yo-F and Ruby-H were actually doing business with Chinese partners. So we take the cases of Ruby and

¹⁴ This image of distrust is also discussed by another research on the management of Taiwanese firm in China (Deng 2002: 231).

¹⁵ Whilst stories about the disloyalty of Chinese employees were everywhere, a few respondents had slightly different opinions. Both Xin-F in Dongguan and David in Shanghai stated that Chinese employees could be good employees if the employers treated them properly. Xin-F ran a firm producing dehydrated meat with the machines imported from Taiwan. David ran a consulting firm helping Taiwanese IT firms train their Chinese employees. They both took dealing with Chinese staff as important challenges for running businesses successfully. Although Xin-F and David made some complaints similar to those of Feng and Ying, they both attributed their success in business both to their good management of, and the cooperation by, their employees. As they told me, Taiwanese who could manage their Chinese staff well were more likely to succeed than other Taiwanese. Xin-F was one of the few respondents who referred to Chinese employees as “*good helpers*”. David was one of the few respondents enunciating the principle of “*telling them clear rules but respect them as well*”. These were the only two deviant cases where Taiwanese complained about their Chinese employees yet also praised them a little.

¹⁶ Source from <http://www.cnfi.org.tw/kmportal/front/bin/home.phtml>

Yo-F as examples for illustration.

Ruby said, “We [Ruby and her Chinese partners] are quite good. Actually, they [Chinese partners] helped a lot. I told you. Only Chinese can help you do business successfully. We often hang out together. Did you see the poster hanging at the entrance of CASA last night? We drove together to Xizang [Tibet] and took that photo there. The idea of interior design in CASA also came from them. They taught us how to deal with the local police?” ...I tell you, almost all Taiwanese make a lot of money here. If there are some Taiwanese not making money here, one of the possibilities is they do not have Chinese friends [as their partners].”

(Interview with Ruby’s Family on 04/12/04)

Y-F said, “He [Chinese partner] was with us for many ten years. In the beginning, he drove for us. But he was quite good. He has given us a lot of tips on how to avoid the hidden risks and read between the lines of the official regulations. This is a country where all the regulations are still developing and changing quickly. It would be more difficult for us to survive here without his help.”

(Interview with Yo-F on 29/05/05)

From the interview with Ruby’s family and Yo-F, we can see that they attributed part of their success to the help of Chinese partners. It is a common feature that respondents, especially in Dongguan, complained that China was a country without clear and strict law enforcement. The old regulations were often vague, without clear definition of offences and their punishment, as well as without effective enforcement. The vagueness and unpredictable pace of legal amendment sometimes damaged their rights and opportunities in business. Despite respondents in Shanghai stating that the local business environment was better than that in Dongguan in terms of law enforcement, they too worried about vague regulation and had little sense of how to deal with this problem. Although respondents usually had more professional knowledge to run their business, they usually lacked the ‘local knowledge’ to deal with these problems.

On the other hand, the partners of Ruby’s family and Yo-F had more ‘local knowledge’ to deal with the vague regulation, to predict the pace of law amendment, and to point out the difference between old and new regulations. Respondents lacked the know-how to do this. Some respondents like Ruby and Yo-F relied on their personal connections with Chinese business partners to defeat these troubles. With the help of their Chinese partners, Ruby and Yo-F know how to apply the proper regulations to protect their business rights and how to read between the lines to avoid troubles caused by unexpected law amendment¹⁷. In this type of ‘cooperation’, respondents contribute their

¹⁷ Respondents Kang Sr in Dongguan and some friends I met in Dongguan adopted different strategy. They relied on connections with local officials through the trade union to overcome their lack of local knowledge. They spoke of the lack of advance knowledge of new laws or regulations being considered, written, or deliberated. They also need information channels through which they can read new laws or an analysis of them in details. News on the Press might report passage of law but it does not give

professional skills in business and their Chinese partners usually play the role of consultants. Now, the question is: Does this 'cooperation' bring respondents closer to their Chinese partners after work?

4.3-2 “*Friends?*”---Being Sociable only for Business

Although this type of 'cooperation' brought success for certain respondents, we should not take it for granted that this mutual cooperation at work will spontaneously overflow into further connections after work. If we explore further, we will find respondents' perspectives toward their Chinese partners are still limited to a certain superficial level. The reply from Ying reminded us of how Taiwanese entrepreneurs may perceive their interaction with their Chinese partners. Ying's husband is Taiwanese and moved to Dongguan for business more than ten years. He owned two firms, one in Dongguan and another in Jiangxi Province. I sometimes often heard of Ying talking their (she and her husband) social life with the partners of his husband.

Ying said, “All my family members are here. Our business is in China. So we bought a flat in Guangzhou...” It seems they will have live in China for the rest of their life. Then I asked, “How many Chinese friends do you often associate with?” She said, “We [Ying and her husband] sometimes have dinner or meet his [Ying’s husband] partners outside. Err...friends...what do you refer to?” I stopped a second and said, “Have you invited Chinese people having dinner at your home or stayed overnight? Have you gossiped with them as you would gossip with Taiwanese friends” She replied, “Oh, you mean this...no...no... we have dinner or chat outside.” She shook her head when saying “no”.

(Field note 29/10/04)

Ying's response on '*have dinner or chat outside*' shows that businessmen might enjoy good interaction with their Chinese partners, but rarely regard them as 'close friends', that is, people to happily share their private life with. They would associate with Chinese *outside*, but they rarely kept them as close friends *at home*. Although people like Ruby and Ying's husband were happy to cooperate with local Chinese and also took this cooperation to be the necessary approach for successful business, they associate with Chinese only because of the necessity for business¹⁸.

details or interpretations. The local government may notify some important firms but most are left uninformed. So, participating the gathering of TBA was one of the most important channels for Taiwanese entrepreneurs to obtain any information on new government regulations and their enforcement. Readers may check Schak's study on TBA for more details (Schak 2003: 143-147).

¹⁸ From the case of Ruby, Yo-F, and Ying's husband, can we say that Taiwanese who cooperate with Chinese partners *will* be successful? On the contrary, the survey referred in the beginning of this section states that only 19.5 per cent Taiwanese business in China were joint firms with Chinese people. In this survey, Taiwanese preferred not to do the joint venture with Chinese partners because of worries about possible disputes with Chinese partners (Tsai HM 2004). Most respondents also told me they would run their business with other Taiwanese or by themselves instead of cooperating with Chinese. They worried that partners might compete with them after cooperating for a certain period of time, just as Chinese employees did to their Taiwanese employers.

In sections 4.1 to 4.3, we illustrate how most Taiwanese interact with the Chinese at work. While hierarchical structure between Taiwanese and Chinese at work produces the status gap after work, the wage gap brings the gap of purchasing power between Taiwanese and their Chinese colleagues. The status gap and economic gap formed an intangible boundary between Taiwanese and Chinese people. They could work together peacefully and associate as nodding acquaintance, but only a few of them kept close interaction with each other. Although Taiwanese are on the upper economic strata in China, unlike most immigrants at the lower economic ring in Europe, the result of segregation due to career structure is similar.

Apart from the interaction with the natives at work, European studies also shed light on how immigrants' organisations affect the interaction between immigrants and the host society. Most research on the influence of immigrants' institutions focuses on the role of religious groups. They not only function for the sake of their members, but also play a role as 'information centres' for non-member immigrants, and for socialisation between immigrants and local people. We are going to discuss the role of immigrants' organisation in the following section.

8.4 The Roles of Taiwanese Organisations

One evening in early September 2004, a phone call interrupted my conversation with Ms Chen, the principal of TBDS. A student parent told her a car accident had just happened between the local Chinese and one of the school buses, which led to the bus driver being beaten up by the Chinese. The accident had been sorted out, but the caller asked Ms Chen to spread this news to the other Taiwanese to be careful in any accidents involving the local Chinese. The next day in the general weekly meeting, Ms Chen told all schoolteachers about this accident and asked students to tell their parents. The car accident led me to think about the role of immigrants' organisation in the local Taiwanese community. It functions as more than just a place of school education for Taiwanese pupils. In this research, I found that two Taiwanese schools, the Taiwanese Business Association¹⁹ and a Buddhist organisation in Shanghai also function rather as religious groups do for immigrants in Europe, in terms of intra- and inter- ethnic communication. They also function as a platform for immigrants to associate with each other, including non-members. In this section, we will discuss the TBDS (school) in Dongguan in section 4.4-1 and Tzu-Chi (religious group) in Shanghai in section 4.4-2 as two examples to illustrate the function of Taiwanese' organisation in China.

4.4-1 "Love Mothers at school.", Not Only for Education

¹⁹ Although Taiwanese have been allowed to visit China since 1987, their investment in China was not officially recognised as legal investment by the Taiwanese government until 1991, after which it increased at a very rapid pace. As the number of Taiwanese business grew, they organised their own group, the TBA (Taiwanese Business Association). The largest TBA was set in Dongguan in 1993. Although TBA sends delegation to Beijing from time to time comprised of representatives from sub-units, there is no nationwide association representing all Taiwanese entrepreneurs, this being forbidden by the Chinese government since 1993. For more discussions on the functions of TBA and its relationship with the local government and central government, please see Schak's (2003) *The Taiwanese Business Association in the People's Republic of China*.

Most schools in Taiwan have one organization called the “Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)”. PTA is often expected to act as a support for non-academic activities, in order to reduce the load on schools, such as helping the school to prepare the anniversary celebration and summer travelling. To many parents, it is a time-consuming task to participate PTA’s activities or PTA’s committees. Most parents are happy to know their kids are well looked after, but only a few of them have enough energy and money to actively participate in PTA (Chen and Chung 1999). This ‘free-rider’ sense makes most PTAs in Taiwan into weak and unnoticed organisations.

However, both the PTA in TBDS is different from many PTAs in Taiwan. They have their own permanent office for daily gatherings of all students’ parents. They even arrange regular activities for themselves or for students.²⁰ They also arranged weekly gardening classes and a choir for themselves. Members in TBDS just referred to the parents who often joined in the PTA’s activities as “Love Mothers (愛心媽媽)” because these students’ mothers often contributed their help (love) to the school. Apart from the regular activities, some “Love Mothers” went to school every day.

What did these Love Mother do every day? They spent most of the time at the PTA Office in the school. If the school needed any help, they would voluntarily to do it. They helped teachers in preparing the teaching material (i.e. sorting the books in the school library) and negotiated the conflicts among students. The PTA in TBDS even helped the ‘textbook edition’ at the beginning of each semester. Sometimes they just chatted in the PTA Office and waited to see their kids after class. Most of their weekday life was in the school or at “home (rented flats near school)²¹” with other Love Mothers. On the weekend, they would go to the city centre together for shopping, having dinner, and then return to their “homes” in the evening. Sometimes they would also complain of TBDS as a school that only kept on charging them money without good quality of education in return, but they still often went to TBDS to meet other Taiwanese friends. It seems TBDS was a centre where they could socialise with people they trusted, rather than just as a school for their children.²² Have they thought of travelling to other places in China, instead of just staying at/near school everyday? One of these Love Mothers said she did not leave Guangdong without the company of his husband because “*it is too dangerous outside*” though she had lived in China for seven years (Field note 26/09/04). Her comments on “*too dangerous outside*” and ‘hiding’ in TBDS show most of these Love Mothers lacked of trust in the local society, which echoes the lack of trust between businessman respondents and

²⁰ For example, PTA in TBDS helped the school authorities to arrange the bus service for students every weekend. Information concerning their regular activities is also available on line. Please see <http://www.td-school.org.cn/3WS0570/jzh/index.HTM> and <http://www.htcspa.com/>

²¹ As I know, some of these “Love Mother” lived together at rented flats near school. They lived together near the school because their husbands were working in other cities of Guangdong or the inner China. They did not want to go with their husbands so they “*lived with their kids*” in Dongguan, although they did not actually live with their kids. Kids lived in the school dorm on the weekday, but returned their “home” (rented flat near school) (Field note 16/09/04).

²² Some readers may think my discussion in this section is too focused on women’s responses. My observation is that Taiwanese men also need strong connection and support from other Taiwanese, but they build up their social network by business association. They may look different from women but the main aim, seeking connection with other Taiwanese, is unchanged.

Chinese employees as discussed before.

These Love Mothers are not the only ones relying on TBDS in Dongguan. Both Taiwanese business and local government to some degree relied on TBDS as an informal community centre. 26 September 2004, Tailain, TAO, DTBA, and TBDS cooperated to hold the annual Moon Festival celebration in the campus of TBDS. More than three thousand Taiwanese joined this celebration. These Taiwanese took this chance to associate with each other in that occasion. Local officials also took the chance to express their care and support to these Taiwanese immigrants. Because TBDS is the first school approved by Taiwan and China at the same time, it sometimes symbolises a place of interaction for people from Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong. For example, from the official records of the school authorities, even Mr Chen (Minister of China's *Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council*) and Mr Yung (former Taiwan's Minister of Education) visited TBDS in 2004 and 2005. Between January and October 2004, TBDS totally hosted more than four hundred visits. These visits covered officials across the Strait, schools from Taiwan and China, and Japan, and even overseas Chinese from Malaysia²³.

4.4-2 “Tzu-chi in Shanghai.”--- Gathering Not Only for Members

In European societies, religion is evidently a key institution for setting the boundary between natives and immigrants. Immigrants' religious organisations are often regarded as important mechanisms to explain immigrants' structural integration into the host society. One of the important issues concerning religious groups in Europe is how immigrants exercise their religious belief in the host country, especially if there is a big gap in religious practice between immigrants and local people, as with Muslims in Western Europe. This gap should not apply to respondents in this study, since people across the Strait in general share similar religious beliefs, such as Buddhism and Daoism (James 2004: 20). It should be easy for them to have their religious activities in China.

However, China often maintains heavy controls on religious activities, especially religions related to any foreign powers. Two well-known examples are Catholics and Falung Gong in China²⁴. When religion conflicts with politics, it is no longer as simple as the practice of a faith. China's attitude on religion related to foreign power arouses my interest in exploring another side of immigrants' institutions: how a Taiwanese Buddhist organisation could survive in China. We take the case of Tzu-chi (a Buddhist²⁵ organisation based in Taiwan) to explore the practice of

²³ Apart from my personal observation, all the events discussed here are also available on the net for more details. See <http://www.td-school.org.cn/3ws0608/schoolhistory.htm>.

²⁴ For example, for Catholics, China insists the Chinese Government, instead of the Holy See, has the right to approve the Chinese bishop. But the Holy See insists Chinese bishop should be named and installed by the Vatican, just like all the other bishops. This dispute means Catholic Churches in China are split into official churches (the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, CPCA, whose bishops and priests are appointed by Beijing) and underground churches (which maintain contacts with the Vatican) (Madsen 1998, 2003). As regards the second case, practising Falung Gong is legal in many countries, including Britain, America, and Taiwan, but prohibited in China because of its record of anti-Communist protests (Keith and Lin 2003).

²⁵ Buddhism is quite popular in Taiwan and China. One of the famous Buddhist organisations in Taiwan is Tzu-chi, founded in 1966. They own four schools (primary school, secondary school, junior

a Taiwanese religious group in China. The whole field note concerning Tzu-chi is also related to the life Y-lin, a senior member of the group, who introduced me.

Today I met Y-lin's family. In the evening, Y-lin's neighbours [the He's family] joined the dinner. All of them are Taiwanese members of Tzu-chi. As they said, they often had dinner together. They talked a lot about their regular activities in Tzu-chi, such as gathering every Sunday and meeting once a month. It seems plenty Taiwanese here are members of Tzu-chi...

After dinner, I looked around Y-lin's house whilst they were watching Tzu-chi's satellite television programme from Taiwan. As they said, these programmes were repeated three times a day. They often watched the one in the evening...

(Field note 11/03/05)

Today, I joined Tzu-chi with Y-lin. During the breakfast with Y-lin, she said Tzu-chi just offered a place for people to get together and have some social life, like some other religions. So, "you will see many kinds of Taiwanese there. All the gossiping, fighting, and power games in other organizations also happen in Tzu-Chi", she said.

On the way to Tzu-chi, she told me she moved to Shanghai to do business in 1993, but she failed and changed jobs twice. She joined Tzu-chi in 1995...In 1998, she met her husband in Tzu-chi. In 1999, she bought a private flat just one floor beneath the Tzu-chi's meeting place because she often participated in the activities of Tzu-chi. In 2000, she got married. Tzu-chi changed their gathering place so she also sold her flat...

She was active at Tzu-chi before marriage because she could feel a "sense of comfort and security", but she found a lot of gossips and power games inside. After marriage, she was low profile at Tzu-chi for a period of time but returned actively after having her second baby Catherine [around 2003]. She returned to Tzu-chi because "it is still a good place. We do not have many friends here." ...

(Field note 12/03/05)

The case of Y-lin illustrates the importance of religious gatherings to religious immigrants. She moved to Shanghai to do business in 1993 but failed several times, changed her jobs, and felt upset. In this condition of sadness and loneliness, she joined Tzu-chi in 1995. The location of her first private house, so close to the location of Tzu-chi's gatherings, showed she was emotionally very reliant on Tzu-chi at that time. In Tzu-chi, she met her husband. When Tzu-chi moved to

college, and university), two hospitals, one publishing centre (for monthly magazines, semi-monthly newspapers, books, video and audiotapes), and one TV Company (for daily Television programs) (Huang J 2003: 146). So Tzu-chi is regarded as a powerful religious group. They have also attracted overseas Buddhists into joining them. Now they have more than 30,000 certified commissioners overseas (Liaberte 2004).

another place for gatherings, she also sold her housing and got married. After marriage, she was quite low key in Tzu-chi for a while because of the annoying power games among members. Around 2003, she still returned to Tzu-chi because ‘we do not have many friends here.’ Now, she was with Tzu-chi almost every day. She watched Tzu-chi TV, had dinner with members (the He’s family) in the evening, and participated in the gathering on the weekend. Sometimes I rang her on the weekday but got the reply from her daughter Catherine. As Catherine told me, “she [her mother] is going to do Tzu-chi [participate in the activities of Tzu-chi]”²⁶. The case of Y-lin tells us the importance of religious groups to religious immigrants. Apart from the enthusiastic religious members, immigrants’ religious groups are also important to non-members. The following citation will tell us the stories of marginal members and non-members.

Around forty minutes, we arrived in their meetinghouse. She introduced me to some young members, one boy in Shanghai American School, one girl Annie in Biology of Soozhou University...Because it was just after the Chinese New Year, the whole gathering was reviewing what activities they held in 2004 by a series of videos...Nothing about politics...

During the break, I chatted with a few guys. One man from Malaysia speaking English to a little girl said he took his daughter to Tzu-chi because he hoped his daughter could make friends with Taiwanese teenagers...One newcomer asked me how to help his son to study in university, after hearing of my part-time job in HTBS. It was also his first time joining Tzu-chi...I also talked a little bit with Annie’s father. They left Soozhou in the early morning only in order to join this gathering. From the outfits and body languages of participants, I found this gathering attracted various Taiwanese, but only a few people joined for their religious beliefs...

(Field note 12/03/05)

In this citation above, we also found what often discussed in European studies on immigrants. The gathering of Tzu-chi also functions as a centre for Taiwanese in the Chinese society, akin to the gathering of Muslim in the UK. Tzu-chi often also attracted many non-members to participate. To most non-member participants, they did not participate in such religious gatherings for practice of faith, but for the sake of social connection with other immigrants. To the Tzu-chi, more new faces may bring more followers. The gathering of Tzu-chi was not only for members, but also function as a hub of communication for non-members. We also see how varied people participated in Tzu-chi for different purposes. Some non-members (e.g. the middle-aged man asking my help) used it as a chance to meet some immigrants, without any specific purposes but with the hope of maybe by chance obtaining some helpful information via this gathering (e.g. asking me how to help his children). Some marginal members (i.e. the Malaysian) treated this religious gathering for a specifically non-religious purpose for themselves and family members (i.e. the social life of his daughter). Some other marginal

²⁶ We even kept in touch after my fieldwork. The last email from her says she is “*busying doing Tzu-chi*” and “*ready to do a master’s degree in Anthropology at Tzu-chi University in Taiwan*”. It demonstrates the influence of Tzu-chi to her.

members (i.e. Annie's family) were more likely to take the gathering as a chance to practice their faith. To sum up, Tzu-chi is not only a religious gathering, but also a group for certain Taiwanese in Shanghai.

Research on Muslims in Western Europe states it is very important for Muslims and the local society to compromise with each other as regards religious gatherings. As we discussed before, China is quite cautious about any religious group related to foreign powers. It is interesting to explore how Tzu-chi could survive in Shanghai. Strictly speaking, Tzu-chi was not a legal Buddhist organisation in Shanghai. How could it make it? As information from Y-lin, Tzu-chi took a series of steps to survive in Shanghai.

First, they created a good impression by charitable works in the poor communities, such as donating to 33 primary schools to have better facilities and helping the poor people at Chong-ming Island²⁷ in Shanghai. These charity works sometimes reduce the burden on the local government. Secondly, they did not register as a religious group in Shanghai City, but as a firm of "*Human Resource Management and Publishing*" in Soozhou (a city in the west of Shanghai) to diminish the risk of political intervention. Their registration in Soozhou offers the legal base for holding their regular activities without referring to any political sensitiveness. Thirdly, they did not openly recruit their members, but do so through family and private connections. Some Tzu-ching (慈青, young members in universities) even organised their regular gathering.

Fourth, they purposely obtained legal permission to publish a few works on moral discipline, printed in simplified Chinese characters. This process made the local government more likely to treat them as 'good people' rather than another Falung Gong. This good impression led the local government to "*Open one eye and close the other one* [pretending Tzu-chi not exist]" to activities held by Tzu-chi (Field note 12/03/05). Furthermore, they purposely put away all the publishing in traditional characters but displayed their legal publishing in their activities gathering because they knew some Chinese could attend/monitor their gatherings. Displaying these approved publications would make Chinese participants think of Tzu-chi as a harmless organisation. Most importantly of all, they never did anything related to politics. The entire gathering was absolutely detached from politics. What Tzu-chi did might not be perfect, but they successfully made the Chinese Government tolerant of them.

From the discussion concerning TBDS and Tzu-chi, we see the immigrants' school does not only serve as a place of school education for pupils. It also functions as an 'information centre' for immigrants in general to associate with each other and circulate information. It sometimes works as a platform for immigrants and local officials to interact with each other and even for the home country and host country to contact with each other. We also know immigrants' religious groups are not only for religious gatherings, but also work as places to let members and non-members to associate with each other. Both TBDS and Tzu-

²⁷ Chong-min Island is located where the Yangtze River flows into the sea. It is administratively part of Shanghai City but responsibility for the development of Chong-min falls between several cities in Jiangsu Province (Hendricks 2003).

chi plays an important role in offering immigrants shelter and emotional support. All these multi-functions help the newly arrived immigrants to settle down quickly; but it also may hinder their participation in the mainstream society. We are going to further talk about this worry in Chapter Nine.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter we explored why their involvement was limited by analysing how they interact with Chinese at work and the role of immigrants' organisation (TBDS and Tzu-chi) in their adaptation.

Whilst most migration research in Europe states that immigrants are often clinging to the lowest rungs at work or relegated to the bottom of the economic ladder, we found an opposite form of segregation in this research: almost all respondents were segregated at the upper part of the economic ladder. This upper segregation left most respondents reluctant to socialise with Chinese people and easily receptive to subjective interpretation on the difference between themselves and the Chinese. Most respondents kept their socialisation with local Chinese at the level of nodding acquaintance. Only a few respondents would pay more respectful attention to the Chinese and appreciated the mutual help in their offices or in daily life.

Whilst most immigrants in Europe gradually get involved in the host society by increasing experience of work, we found that respondents' work experience helped little in their integration. On the opposite, their work experience formed the gap of social status. The wage gap formed the economic gap in purchasing power. Both the social status gap and economic gap shaped a sense of (more or less) superiority among most Taiwanese people I met in China. So most of them tended to not to deeply associate their Chinese colleagues. Only a few respondents had deeper interaction with their Chinese colleagues or partners. At the same time, the existence of certain Taiwanese organisations (i.e. schools and religious groups in this research) strengthened interaction among the Taiwanese, but not interaction between the Taiwanese and the Chinese. These partially helped to keep respondents as special groups distinct from the Chinese.