

Hawai'i's Nam Long

Their Background and Identity as a Zhongshan Subgroup

Douglas D. L. Chong

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The Nam Long people of Zhongshan county in Guangdong constitute a distinct speech group among the various Chinese subcultural groupings in that county.¹ They are one of several Zhongshan speech groups that migrated from the coastal Min region to the northeast in present-day Fujian Province, beginning over a thousand years ago. Eventually they formed a discrete enclave of village settlements in Zhongshan (called Xiangshan until 1925). There they retained elements of their Min dialect and adhered to time-honored traditions, including that of bringing in brides from the mother's or sister-in-law's family or from an aunt's or a grandmother's village. Family histories and extended genealogies thus reflect complex patterns of close-knit kinship ties through affinal connections and attest to the clannish nature of Nam Long villages. So strong has been their ethnocentrism that, while the Nam Long people have adopted the standard Zhongshan or Shekki (Shiqi) speech (a subdialect of the Yue or Cantonese dialect) in school and business, their ancestral tongue has persisted in their villages along with traditional customs and inbred bloodlines.

In Zhongshan the name "Nam Long" (Nanlang), literally "southern brightness," also refers to an area of fifty to fifty-five square miles inhabited by the Nam Long people and to the large marketplace that for centuries served as its central hub. This village area is located in the eastern portion of the county within the See Dai Doo (Sidadu) district (renamed the Fourth District). It fronts the Pearl River estuary and is situated across from Bow On (Baoan) county, which lies to the north of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. The Nam Long area is only a twenty-minute car ride from Shekki, Zhongshan's county seat and commercial center (Ching and Chong 1987: 37). Throughout this study the name "Nam Long" applies to this specific area or enclave and the subtype of Min dialect spoken there, as well as to its native inhabitants and its over-

seas emigrants and their descendants—that is, the Nam Long people.

By the mid-nineteenth century adventurous Nam Long males had begun to emigrate abroad. Their initial sojourns entailed long ocean passages to California as prospectors during the Gold Rush and to South America as laborers or gamblers. During the latter part of the century more appreciable numbers of Nam Long laborers migrated overseas to three major destinations—North America (principally California); South America (including Cuba, Panama, and Brazil); and the Hawaiian Islands. Hawai'i's Chinese community was formed mainly by emigrants from Zhongshan, who made up nearly 70 percent of the Islands' Chinese population. As a result, Hawai'i has for generations claimed to have the largest Zhongshan community in the world outside of China. This overseas community, however, was formed by sojourners and settlers from many Zhongshan districts. Nam Long people stemming from See Dai Doo are merely one component of the Islands' Zhongshan population.

The initial emigration of Nam Long laborers to Hawai'i occurred over a century ago. Nowadays the majority of the fourth- and fifth-generation descendants are well assimilated into Hawai'i's multicultural society and seem totally unaware of their Nam Long identity. Most younger-generation Chinese from well-known Nam Long families in Hawai'i cannot identify themselves as descendants of native Zhongshan stock, much less as being of Nam Long ancestry. The significance of their Fujian origins and Min "roots" also holds no meaning for the younger generation. In contrast, a few third-generation elders who belong to the See Dai Doo Society in Honolulu are still aware of their Nam Long identity and background and are earnestly striving to discover more about their heritage. Within the past five years a few Nam Long descent groups associated with native-place village and surname organization in Hawai'i have become more interested in their origins and Min roots as well. With the exception of a few linguistic studies, however, there has been virtually no research done on the origins of the Nam Long people.

My objective in this brief paper is to link the Nam Long people in Hawai'i with their home area in Zhongshan. I shall deal with their immigrant experience in the Islands, their

historical background in China, and finally Nam Long marriage ties and their distinctive speech. In particular, I wish to establish more clearly the identity of the Nam Long people as a separate subcultural group. Hence I include an account of their Min forbears' migration southward from Fujian and subsequent resettlement in the Nam Long area of present-day Zhongshan.

MIGRATION PATTERNS AND SETTLEMENT IN HAWAII

Nineteenth-century Nam Long migration to Hawaii mainly followed the common Zhongshan pattern of labor recruitment for work on the Islands' sugar and rice plantations. However, many Nam Long villagers also emigrated to South America or to California, where at first the gold rush was a major attraction. Nam Long families in Zhongshan still talk about the time of their great-great-grandfathers' generation, when some brothers left for South America and others for California or Hawaii. These villagers always recount that those ancestors who left early for South America and became sugar, cotton, and tobacco laborers eventually returned home as wealthy businessmen and gamblers, while those who sojourned in Hawaii initially as sugar plantation laborers returned as comfortable rice farmers and store owners. Some of the early Nam Long emigrants to South America came to dislike the lifestyle there and eventually transmigrated to Hawaii to join their kinsmen living in the Islands. Nevertheless, in a few cases the reverse was true. In other cases, relatives living in South America returned to China for a visit and ended up taking their village nephews back with them to South America.

Nam Long emigrants who transmigrated to Hawaii after the California Gold Rush oftentimes arrived with at least some savings. This personal capital enabled them to enter into farming pursuits on their own and encouraged the more successful among them to become settlers in the Islands rather than merely temporary sojourners. The family of Mrs. Tom Chung, which stems from the rice-farming village of Sai Chin (Xicun) in Nam Long, offers an example.² Her maternal grandfather emigrated to California and joined many other Nam Long prospectors in their search for gold throughout the Sacramento delta during the late 1850s and early 1860s. A decade later the rest of her family also left for California. After gleaning a tiny fortune in gold dust, they used their resources to seek a more stable livelihood in Hawaii. Enduring much hardship, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ching Kan You, eventually settled the family on a small but secure rice plantation in Kaluanui, Oahu. The Chings tilled the soil and comfortably raised a large family in Hawaii before retiring after the turn of the century and returning to China.

Other Nam Long settlers in Hawaii also profited from their California Gold Rush experiences either before they

arrived in the Islands or before they permanently settled there. Tin-Yuke and Wai Jane Char (1979: 24, 104) provided several examples among the old-time Nam Long rice planters on Kauai. One was Hee Fat, who was a successful planter and among the earliest recorded Hawaii-born Nam Long Chinese. His parents moved to Kauai from California following the gold rush, and Hee Fat was born in Anahola, Kauai, on August 23, 1858. Another Nam Long settler, Ching Duck Pui, the progenitor of the Ako descent group of Kauai, reached Hawaii in 1846, along with Ching Alana. Both left for the California Gold Rush several years later. After a year of prospecting in Northern California, the two men returned to Hawaii with gold nuggets and gold dust. Ching Alana settled in Honolulu, and Ching Duck Pui went on to start a rice plantation in Waimea, Kauai.

Most of the Nam Long people who left California for Hawaii initially engaged in agricultural pursuits. They tended to congregate in settlements with kinsmen and fellow villagers who had immigrated directly from Zhongshan, usually as laborers contracted for the sugar plantations. These immigrant Nam Long farmers, in turn, were instrumental in bringing over additional villagers from their home area to help reclaim coastal swamps and valley terrain and turn such land into productive rice acreage. As experienced cultivators, they realized the potential for rice planting in Hawaii.

Nam Long immigrants persevered in their reclamation efforts and eventually set up and operated large, profitable rice plantations in Hawaii. Their mutual support enabled them to succeed in these ventures and to establish good-sized communities centered around their flourishing plantations. On the island of Oahu they settled along the windward coast from Kahaluu to Kahuku, opening up rice plantations and cooperatives there as early as the 1860s. James Chun (1983: 13) relates that "with few expectations the [rice] planters had come from the Nam Long area of See Dai Doo in Chungshan [Zhongshan] county. Many were actually *heong li* [*xiang li*], people from the same village. On top of that, so many of them were related to each other, either by blood or marriage."

Others also remember Nam Long rice farmers who flourished in windward Oahu. Mrs. Chun Mun Chu (1972) has related the story of her maternal uncle, L. Akuna (Lee Mou Chung), who had been a gold miner in California. By the late 1870s, Akuna had married a native Hawaiian, opened acres of rice paddies, and built his own mill at Kaalaea in the vicinity of Kahaluu. More recently, Henry C. F. Lau (1988: 94–96) has recalled a number of Nam Long rice farmers with the surnames Ching (Chen), Au (Ou), Wong (Wong or Huang), Chun (Chen), and Yim (Yan), along with some from other Zhongshan districts, who settled in Kahaluu and Waikane. Lum Pui Young (1975) has further elaborated on the Nam Long rice-farming lifestyle in Waiahole, Waikane, and Hakipuu. Similarly, Mrs. Kam Mun (1972), a ninety-three-year-old retired storekeeper living deep in the Kahana Val-

ley, has vivid recollections of the many Nam Long folk who reclaimed old taro patches for rice cultivation there well over a century ago.

James Chun (1983: 14) has written of the large number of Nam Long farmers who settled farther down Oahu's windward coast in settlements at Kaaawa, Kahana, Punaluu, Kaluanui, and Hauula. They engaged in the thriving rice industry around the turn of the century. Chun also has described the large Honolulu Chinese businesses that retained major interests in rice farming. According to Chun, "the principal firms involved in the rice plantations (not merely those in Punaluu) were Wing Sing Wo, Wing Hong Yuen, and Wing Wo Tai. Wing Hong Yuen, which was owned by Nam Long people, probably got the bulk of the Punaluu business."³

The island of Kauai was also the location of several noted Nam Long settlements. Some of these dated back to the late 1850s, when the founders transmigrated from California Gold Rush districts or else immigrated directly from their native villages. Other flourishing settlements sprang up thereafter, each with prominent, rich planters among its Nam Long inhabitants. For example, a well-known old-timer, Ching Kin Moi, arrived in 1879 and began reclaiming swampland in Hanapepe in 1881. Eventually he was able to derive a comfortable living from rice plantations he had established. Hanapepe Valley later became a popular settlement for Nam Long farmers and merchants as well as for Sam Heong (Sanxiang) immigrants, members of another Zhongshan speech group whose ancestors also emanated from Fujian. Moreover, other early Nam Long rice farmers bearing the common surnames of Ching, Wong, Lum (Lin), and Hee (Xu) sought out prime lands in the lush valleys and seaside deltas of Waimea, Hanapepe, Wailua, Kapaa, Anahola, and Hanalei.

Wong Lo Yau (Aloiau), one of the early successful Nam Long rice "kings" of Kauai, operated numerous rice plantations in Anahola and Kapaa beginning in the early 1880s. His biography, written by a great-granddaughter, Mrs. Violet L. Lai, records Aloiau's early years in China (Lai 1985: 3–4):

When school was out, Aloiau would often walk about one and one-half miles to Nam Long, the marketplace. For nine days a month, on the dates that ended in 2, 5, or 8, the market would be in full force . . . one could buy anything at Nam Long. It was not only a place for buying, selling, and haggling over goods, but also a common place for meeting friends, engaging services for letter-writing, and even matching couples for marriage.

In his teens, Aloiau spent more and more time at the Nam Long marketplace talking to the sailors and adventurers back from far-off lands, who dazzled the young man with their small pouches of gold and exaggerated stories of boundless opportunities in the Gold Mountains (California) and the Sandalwood Mountains (Hawai'i).

In 1865, Aloiau left his village in the Nam Long area for Hawai'i. He spent an interlude of about five years in Honolulu, where he worked for a kinsman at the latter's duck ponds in the Moiliili-Waikiki district and rice fields in Kapa-

hulu. When he left Oahu for Kauai around 1870, Aloiau was thoroughly familiar with the methods of rice cultivation and knowledgeable about plantation management as well (Lai 1985: 7, 10–12, 17).

Although many Nam Long settlers had left for Honolulu and elsewhere by the turn of the century, others stayed on in Kauai and became successful rice plantation owners and businessmen. A number of first- and second-generation Nam Long families were still living in the above-mentioned Kauai farming settlements around the 1920s (Lee 1988: 88–93). In the Hawaiian Islands, the largest Nam Long communities continued to exist along the northwest coast of windward Oahu and in the valley flatlands of leeward Kauai.

Through their concentrated farm communities and kinsmen dispersed in Honolulu and other locations, the early Nam Long immigrants and their descendants were able to create networks of local ties. Entrepreneurs of the second generation, intent on economic gain and social advancement, capitalized on the Nam Long trait of close mutual support basic to such relationships. They jointly invested in cooperatives, rice mills, marketing agencies, stores, restaurants, and banks in partnership with other Nam Long associates. Meanwhile, early Nam Long settlers in Hawai'i continued the practice of arranging matched marriages, as was customary in their native area of Zhongshan. It was not until the third and fourth generations, which came of age during the World War II period or thereafter, that the tenacious local bonds formed by Nam Long bloodlines disappeared in Hawai'i.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND MIN "ROOTS"

Who exactly were the Nam Long people, and where did they come from? Their historical origins can be traced back over two thousand years to various regions in North China. Nevertheless, Fujian scholars (Zhu 1985: 142, 149–50) have long regarded Guangzhou and Shouzhou, areas located in present-day Henan Province, as the homeland of the main bands of Han Chinese migrants who settled the Min coastal regions.

Intermittent disturbances and incursions of tribal peoples into North China led to such southward migrations, beginning in the late third and early fourth centuries. The mountainous Min region remained relatively isolated from the rest of China, however, until the seventh and eighth centuries, when many Chinese surname groups, led by aristocratic elites, entered the region (Bielenstein 1959: 108; Luo 1971: 157–69). During the turbulent tenth century an autonomous Min Kingdom prevailed under Chinese rulership (Schafer 1954: vi–xii). More aristocratic families and their retainers then settled in the region to seek refuge. The population continued to increase during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126), when Fujian became an integral part of imperial China, and even more so over most of the Southern Song period (1127–1279), until the region's commercial

economy and flourishing maritime trade faltered in the thirteenth century.

Although the settlement of Fujian has been generally documented, any specific migrations of the Han Chinese to the Putian area of Fujian are difficult to trace. Evidence confirms that this midcoastal area (present-day Putian Diqu), situated to the southwest of Fuzhou (Foochow), the provincial capital, is indeed the ancestral area of the Nam Long people. Yet Nam Long genealogies, when tracing back early descent lines to North China, frequently leave gaps of ten to twenty generations during the periods of migration into Putian and give few indications as to exact periods of settlement there. These gaps occasionally are bridged by references to a few minor heroes, scholars, or figureheads who purportedly existed during some of the unrecorded generations. By and large, though, genealogical data provide little mention of Putian prior to the migrations southward into Guangdong that occurred during the thirteenth century near the end of the Southern Song.

Putian, however, remains a familiar name associated with the origins of a number of Nam Long families in Zhongshan, as attested by genealogies and local histories. For example, the *Xiangshan xian zhi xubian* (Supplement of the Xiangshan County Gazetteer) records that Lum Meng Chut (Lin Mengqui), founding ancestor of Lum Ook Bien (Linwubian) village in the Nam Long area, migrated there directly from Putian during the Lizong region (1225–1264) of the Southern Song (Li 1923: juan 3, 31a). The *Catalogue of Chinese Genealogies in Taiwan* corroborates the origins of the Lum Ook Bien village group by citing five extensive genealogies of Lum lineage branches that remained in Putian. Again, some other Nam Long descent groups bearing the surnames Lum, Chun, Wong (Huang), Situ (Xiao), and Lai (Li) clearly evidence Putian ancestral origins in their respective lineage genealogies, according to this catalogue (Chen 1987: Nos. 2,623–36).

Connections between the Nam Long people in Zhongshan and their Putian ancestral area have likewise been ascertained through the study of Chinese dialects. Nicholas C. Bodman (1981), one of the few Western linguists to have studied the Nam Long speech, has traced both the Nam Long and Loong Doo (Longdu) subdialects current in Zhongshan back to a northeastern Min speech group close to Fuzhou.⁴ Moreover, Yuen Hung Fai (Ruan Henghui), a professor of linguistics at Fudan University, claims that Putian is definitely the home area of the Nam Long speakers in Zhongshan, for their subdialect derives from the native speech that prevailed in Putian near the end of the Southern Song and the beginning of the Yuan dynasty (Yuen 1983: 1). It is significant that Professor Yuen, native of the Nam Long area, traces his own lineage branch back to an ancestor who immigrated from Putian during the Southern Song. In effect, linguistic research combined with genealogical evidence confirms that Putian is the home area of the Nam

Long people, although admittedly not the sole location of all Nam Long progenitors.

Even though little is known about Chinese migration and settlement patterns in Putian, one may infer that the Nam Long ancestors stemmed from groups of aristocratic elites and their retainers who gradually congregated in coastal and river localities of that mountainous and relatively isolated area. These immigrant groups, like others that eventually reached the Min region from North China, most likely settled in Putian in greater numbers from around the eighth century. Subsequently, many Nam Long ancestors immigrated from Fujian during the late Song and early Yuan dynasties (1280–1367). Hence one may conjecture that the period in which the Nam Long's Min "roots" were formed generally lasted about five or six centuries. It was during this period of more intensive settlement and population growth that Putian speech apparently developed into a Min subdialect distinct from others spoken in the neighboring areas. Like the Min and Yue dialects in general, though, Putian speech emerged as a form of Middle Chinese that had evolved from an older North China dialect.⁵ Besides this dialectal development, the emergence of other traditions attributable to the Nam Long's Min roots may also have preceded the Putian ancestral period.

SOUTHWARD MIGRATIONS AND NAM LONG SETTLEMENTS

The southward migrations from Fujian by Nam Long forbears were also complex, but more information is available concerning the time periods and patterns involved than is the case with the earlier movements into the Putian area. Much of the southward migration occurred during the thirteenth century near the end of the Southern Song and in the early Yuan period. However, some emigrant groups headed south from Fujian about three centuries prior to the troubled time of the Mongol invasion, and this population movement continued to an extent well into the succeeding Ming period (1368–1643).

The more massive exodus from Fujian that began near the end of the Southern Song has been largely attributed to the Mongol takeover. Zhu Weigan, a modern-day historian and native of Putian, figures that Fujian lost over 50 percent of its registered households during the troubled Song-Yuan interregnum. Nevertheless, he indicates that Putian (called Xing-hua under Song and Yuan rule) suffered only about a 5.5 percent decline in household count (Zhu 1984: chart, 393–94). Thus other factors, such as setbacks in local commerce and the maritime trade, banditry, the intrusion of new "guest" groups on their treks south, and the incessant peasant disturbances that transpired in Fujian over much of the Southern Song (Zhu 1984: 344), must have had a more long-term effect in stimulating Putian emigration.

Then, too, the relatively small amount of arable land available, along with the mountainous and barren coastal terrain, undoubtedly prompted many impoverished Putian inhabitants to migrate southward in search of fertile frontier land. The author recalls that in the early 1980s some Nam Long natives of Hang Mei village still recounted traditional tales that their parents had told them about the misery in Fujian: "There the soil was so poor, mounds of sweet potatoes were frequently mixed with the little rice to stretch the staple. When famine came, the rice disappeared and the potatoes stayed; when the potatoes left, our people had to leave!"

Overland routes of migration to Guangdong and the Nam Long area can be traced by means of genealogies, local gazetteers, and a few extant maps. Some Nam Long and other Zhongshan settlers may also have come by sea. Several Western linguists, who tend to regard coastal Min speakers as a seafaring population, have depicted a seaborne settlement of Zhongshan. Soren Egerod (1956), for example, acknowledges that the manner of original settlement there may have varied, but claims that "most [Min-speaking groups] have arrived by sea. The settlers were very largely seafarers, fishermen, and traders and possibly also pirates in some cases." The sources available for this study, however, indicate that Nam Long or Zhongshan migrant groups followed overland routes from area to area, usually over long periods during their gradual movement southward. Their migration patterns were similar to those of Hakka and other Min-speaking groups that reached Guangdong in roughly the same span of time, the tenth to the fifteenth century.

Many recorded migrations from Fujian to Zhongshan followed inland routes that traversed present-day Jiangxi Province to the border area of Nanxiong (Nam Hoong) in northern Guangdong. Some Nam Long forbears settled in Nanxiong or other mountainous border areas in the region for extended periods before passing through the so-called Gate of Nam Hoong on their way south.⁶ There they followed tributaries of the North River (Beijiang) and then the course of that major waterway to where it flows into the Pearl River estuary. Next they mainly traveled along the upper shores of that estuary and settled in present-day Dongguan (Doong Goon) county southwest of Guangzhou (Canton City). Later on, crossing at the mouth of the upper Pearl River brought immigrant groups into Zhongshan.

Nam Long lineages have recorded variations of this general itinerary in respect to time or place. An account of the Hee lineage, Nam Long for over twenty-two generations, suggests that the Hee forbears departed from Fujian and arrived in Nam Long relatively late (Hee et al. 1986: 118–19). Hee aristocrats fled Honan following military invasions, and eventually some descendants reached Fujian, where they dwelt for many centuries. In the fourteenth century the Hee descent group migrated to Nanxiong, joining other Hee-surname groups that had settled there some seven hundred years previously. From Nanxiong, the Nam Long Hee

forbears followed the riverine route south of the Dongguan. Finally, around the fifteenth century an ancestor crossed over to Zhongshan and founded Poon Sa (Pansha) village in the Nam Long area.

Members of the "three-stroke" Wong (Wang) lineage, situated in the Wong Ook (Qangwu) neighborhood of the same village, claim that their ancestor also left Dongguan and settled in Poon Sa (or Pun Sha), possibly about 1468. According to the Wong genealogical record, their forbears emigrated from Fujian as well (Lai 1985: 248–49). On the other hand, Yuen Hung Fai relates that his ancestors departed from Nam Hoong after their trek from Putian and settled in a Loong Doo village of Nam Long in about 1250. Ten generations later, a descendant moved to Tso Bu Tau (Zuobutou) village in Nam Long and founded the Yuen lineage there (Chong 1985: 3).

Accounts of extensive migrations by surname groups also reveal different patterns of southward migration as well as earlier periods of entry into Zhongshan and the Nam Long area. Harold Ching and Douglas Chong have chronicled a branch of the Ching surname that forms one of the oldest and largest lineages in Nam Long. They record that around the fourth century, the Chings began to migrate southward from present-day Anhui Province. A few branches settled in Suzhou (Soochow) in Jiangsu Province and also near Fuzhou. Around 1070, during the Northern Song, a Fujian descendant was assigned to an official post in Dongguan county. From there his son, Ching Paak Hong (Cheng Beifeng), was dispatched to govern the Nam Long area, where he died in office. His four brothers remained in Nam Long and established three early villages (Ching and Chong 1987: 3).

The Supplement of the Xiangshan County Gazetteer (Li 1923: juan 3, 31a–34b) reveals more diverse patterns of immigration into Zhongshan and the Nam Long area. From this source, together with the above accounts of ancestral migrations, one can conclude that in general, first-generation village settlement in Nam Long derived from three migratory patterns. The most predominant pattern involved settlement by forbears who left northern Guangdong settlements like Nam Hoon for Dongguan and eventually Zhongshan following the Southern Song period. (The case of the Ching ancestors who came directly south from Fujian due to an official assignment and pioneered in the early settlement of Nam Long is exceptional, based on the historical records on hand.) A second pattern entailed the founding of Nam Long villages by ancestors who had settled in the Sam Yup (Sanyi) region closer to Guangzhou prior to relocating in Zhongshan during the Ming. The third led to settlement by other neighboring groups, like those from the Loong Doo district and See Yup (Siyi) counties to the west of Zhongshan, which moved into Nam Long during the Ming and early Qing (1644–1912) dynasties.

Moreover, a fourth pattern of Nam Long settlement developed when new villages were established by Nam Long lineage branches that left their original village sites due to

overpopulation and adversities stemming from lineage feuds. An example of this localized pattern occurred when a Ching lineage that had originally settled in one village branched out into three villages after four generations, then subsequently divided into seven different villages following the sixteenth generation. Similarly, after a number of generations, certain Lee (Li), Leong (Liang), and Lum lineages each split into over half a dozen villages housing separate lineage branches.

From the perspective of the Nam Long people the criteria of surname or lineage descent, along with specific village identity, have remained the key demarcations of their rural communities. According to my research and an American Consulate General report (1963), thirty-four different surnames now exist among the Nam Long population. However, nine large surname and lineage groups have long dominated the area. By far the largest surname group is the Chun aggregate, which established sixteen villages throughout the Nam Long area. Next in size are the Wongs, who settled in ten Nam Long villages. The Ching lineage, the largest group claiming common descent from a single ancestor, is spread over seven villages. Nevertheless, its lineage branches are centered around the three main ancestral villages of Hang Mei (Hengmei), Tin Bin (Tianbian), and On Dung (Anding) and the two subvillage settlements of Sai Chuen (Xicun) and Chunk Hum (Chikun). The Leong, Yuen (Ruan), Lum, Wong (Wang), Hee, and Yim groups are the other large Nam Long lineages or surname aggregates.

Of the twenty-five other surnames existing in Nam Long, a few claim to have descended from old Fujian lineages that have lost their genealogical records. Others trace their local origins to ancestors who stemmed from other Zhongshan areas or neighboring counties. Yue-speaking surname groups, like Lau (Liu), Mark (Mai), and Kan (Jian), and even a few Hakka groups such as Kam (Gan), Ho (He), and Char (Xie), adopted the Min speech and social practices traditional to the Nam Long people when they settled in their villages.

NAM LONG INSULARITY: MARRIAGE TIES AND SPEECH

Throughout this paper mention has been made of the clanish nature of Nam Long society. This characteristic has persisted over many centuries, for most Nam Long village families have lived and died within the confines of their insular area in eastern Zhongshan. The distinctive Nam Long speech has enabled these inhabitants to maintain a separate identity and to set themselves off from outsiders, even from neighboring villages bordering their enclave. Carefully arranged marriage ties have also served to perpetuate the close-knit and inbred features of Nam Long society.

Nam Long families have traditionally intermarried among their own villages and have much less often taken wives from

outside their area. While marriages within the same surname were disallowed, matched marriages with first and second cousins of the maternal branches were frequently arranged. For countless generations rotating matches with affinal lines occurred as well. This Nam Long practice was often followed when a father would take a daughter-in-law from his mother's or wife's village and likewise would marry his daughter off to a branch of his maternal relations. Existing genealogical records of the Ching, Hee, and Wong descent groups indicate such common marriage practices. For example, Ching Yook Gwong, a native of Sai Chuen, claims a family pedigree that includes twenty-odd generations of female forbears identified by the rotating Nam Long surnames of Yim, Lum, Sen (Sun), and Lee.⁷

Notable exceptions to such involuted marriage practices, as recorded in these genealogies, were cases in which wives were acquired from nearby villages: Ngai Hau (Yakou), Choy Hang (Cuiheng, the birthplace of Sun Yat-sen), and a few others. Although situated close to Poon Sa, the southernmost Nam Long settlement, both Ngai Hau and Choy Hang are definitely outside of Nam Long's communal and linguistic borders.

Only in recent times has the Nam Long area been infiltrated by numerous outsiders. Simultaneously, the boundaries of various villages have slowly been eroded through expansion and urbanization. I have observed, nevertheless, that Nam Long villages have tenaciously held onto their native tongue and customary practices. As in the old days, most outsiders who have recently moved into the Nam Long area have soon found themselves speaking the Nam Long dialect and following the traditions of this proud and insular subethnic group.

To outsiders, the most striking characteristic of the Nam Long people is their speech, a Min subdialect, which in Zhongshan constitutes a local subdialect as well. The Nam Long speakers are one of three Min speech groups located in Zhongshan. The other two, the Loong Doo and Sam Heong (Sanxing), are situated in the western and south-central parts of the county, respectively. The Loong Doo and Sam Heong people also trace their ancestry back to Fujian. In Zhongshan they too live in discrete enclaves and, as is the case in Nam Long, each of their areas has its own large marketplace and an extensive network of villages that preserve, to a degree, the traditional Min speech and social patterns.

Linguist Nicholas Bodman (1981) claims that the Nam Long speech was derived from a northeastern Min dialect spoken in the Fuzhou region. Bodman also has noted unique features of the Putian dialect that tend to make Putian a discrete speech region, one of eight such major regions in Fujian. Another linguist, Jerry Norman (1977: 326–48), who has attempted to classify the many types of Min speech existing in Fujian and elsewhere in South China, contends that the Nam Long dialect is only one of 450 forms of the Mindong or Eastern Min dialect.

Having concentrated in the Nam Long area, settlers of Putian or Eastern Min extraction perpetuated their Min ancestral speech. Yuen Hung Fai (1983) has traced the Ming subdialect, presently spoken by native Nam Long inhabitants, back to the Eastern Min dialect as it prevailed in Putian during the late Southern Song. On the other hand, the development of the Nam Long dialect was affected locally by centuries of contact with Cantonese speakers. Bodman (1981) points out that the Shekki dialect, in particular, has had a strong influence on the Nam Long syntax and lexical usages. Yuen even considers Nam Long speech to be a variant of the Shekki, a five-tone Yue subdialect that is the standard Zhongshan vernacular.⁸ However, he acknowledges that Nam Long speech has retained its old Putian roots. It is also evident that the Nam Long vernacular still has nasal and phonological features that identify it as a Min rather than a Yue dialect.⁹

In Zhongshan, Min and Yue dialectal characteristics are readily apparent in the local vernaculars. The three Min speech groups share traits that make their village subdialects mutually intelligible to some degree. Based on my fieldwork among informants in the three separate Min areas, I estimate verbal communication between a Nam Long and a Loong Doo native, each speaking his own vernacular, to be about 60 percent mutually comprehensible even if neither party has previously had much exposure to the other's dialect. However, when either a Nam Long or a Loong Doo attempts to communicate with a Sam Heong without much exposure beforehand, the comprehension rate might be only 30 to 40 percent. Besides, the speakers may suffer rather intense frustration, for the sounds and tones they both use have familiar "Fujian" qualities, yet their phonemes and syntax do not correspond in exact patterns of speech.

There are also similarities and differences between Nam Long and the standard Shekki dialect, as spoken in Zhongshan and Hawai'i. For instance, although both dialects have about the same number of tones, their tonal ranges and pitches seem to be of different scales. Shekki tones are a more even blend of Cantonese—straight and mellow—while, in contrast, the Nam Long pitch is deeper, higher, and nasal. Moreover, although both Nam Long and Shekki have a rather limited number of initial and final phonemes, these sets do not frequently correspond. Thus most "ch" initial sounds in the Shekki dialect become a "d" or "dy" sound in Nam Long, while an initial "h" sound in Shekki is pronounced "k" in Nam Long. Other striking contrasts arise from differences in vowel and tonal sounds and the use of totally different terms for the same meaning or expression.¹⁰

Zhongshan immigrants in Hawai'i, including Hakkas from that county, spoke local vernaculars representing the three major dialects of southeastern China: Min, Yue, and Hakka. Nevertheless, most seem to have been conversant, if not fluent, in the Shekki speech. Hence Shekki, or "Heungshan" (Xiangshan), became the standard Zhongshan dialect in Hawai'i as well. Since Zhongshan immigrants made up a

large proportion of the Islands' early Chinese population, the Shekki speakers regarded themselves as Punti or "natives" within the local Chinese community (Soong 1988: 41–42; Chong 1988: 17–18).

In Hawai'i, the Nam Long people enjoyed some advantages linguistically within the Punti grouping. They could, with practice, communicate intelligibly with the other Min speakers from Zhongshan, the Loong Doo and the Sam Heong. Moreover, because they had lived with easy access to Shekki City, Nam Long immigrants may have been more proficient in the standard Zhongshan dialect than some Min, Hakka, or even Yue speakers who stemmed from village enclaves more isolated from the county seat. They also stood to benefit from their status as prestigious Punti in their dealings with "outsiders" hailing from other Guangdong counties or regions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The historical background of the Nam Long people has been described mainly in respect to their migrations and eventual settlement in Zhongshan and Hawai'i. Their distant forbears emanated from North China, but only after many centuries did migrations funnel into the Putian coastal region of Fujian where their Min ancestral "roots" formed. Subsequent southward migrations, generally along more fixed routes, brought about the settlement of the Nam Long people, who developed into a close-knit, insular subgroup.

During the nineteenth century Nam Long people emigrated to the Americas and Hawai'i in search of wealth and new frontiers, as had their forbears during their southward migrations within China. In fact, Nam Long migration patterns to Hawai'i, including transmigrations from California and South America, call to mind the divergent routes that had led earlier settlers to Fujian and then Guangdong, and finally to the Nam Long area. However, their migratory routes to Hawai'i extended overseas rather than overland. Furthermore, during this later period of emigration the Nam Long people maintained a distinct subcultural identity within larger migrant groupings composed of Zhongshan and other Pearl River Delta natives, due mainly to their close-knit kinship and village ties and their Min subdialect.

Nam Long settlements in Zhongshan and Hawai'i also differed in many ways. In Zhongshan the Nam Long villages became concentrated within the borders of their enclave, while in Hawai'i major communities founded by Nam Long farmers and rice planters spread over coastal areas of two of the major islands. Moreover, like other Chinese settlers in Hawai'i, the Nam Long immigrants and their descendants were attracted to urban areas, particularly Honolulu. Therefore, their rural settlements tended to remain small or decline in population over time. In contrast, the Nam Long people have essentially remained villagers even though change and

modernization have affected their area. Today, for example, a main highway serving the eastern sector of Zhongshan county cuts directly through the Nam Long area, and the three dozen major villages are served by two centrally located marketplaces instead of only one as before.¹¹

Over time, differences in the social environment and settlement patterns in Zhongshan and Hawai'i have affected the Nam Long identity in contrasting ways. In Zhongshan, as in many other parts of Guangdong, subcultural groups have long tended to dwell in discrete communities. The Nam Long enclave is a good example. Neither modern reforms nor revolutions have been able to erase the cultural boundaries of that village area or eliminate the traditions from which the inhabitants derive their common identity. Modern education, for instance, has not led the Nam Long natives to forego their Min speech and switch totally to Cantonese or the Chinese national language (Guoyu). Neither have schooling and revolutionary policies made them forsake their traditional and ancestral background. Even the practice of matched marriages, or at least the effects of the custom, seems still to prevail and further bolster the Nam Long identity in Zhongshan.

In contrast, Nam Long immigrants and their descendants in Hawai'i have had to adjust to a developing multicultural society. In this setting they have been exposed to the forces of modernization and social change, but in a Western context and with almost continuous contact with other nationalities and ethnic groups. Under such conditions Nam Long settlers and their offspring soon began to depart from their time-honored customs. They also became more dependent on "foreign" languages, English and Hawaiian, and by the second generation were exposed to new ideas and practices through American schooling. Accommodation to Hawai'i's multicultural society then became apparent. After nearly two generations, Nam Long families in Hawai'i started to discard their traditional practice of matched marriages. By the third and fourth generations intermarriage with non-Chinese became common until, by the early 1960s, Nam Long descendants intermarried with other ethnic groups at a rate of about 50 percent, as did the Hawai'i Chinese in general (Tseng 1974: 28). In such an environment assimilation was rapid and the loss of the Nam Long speech and identity in Hawai'i almost inevitable.

NOTES

1. At present Zhongshan has a population of over a million and is listed as a municipality (*shi*) within the Foshan Municipal Administrative Division (Foshan Shi Xingshengguhua). Guangdong Sheng Diming Weiyuanhui 1987: 86.
2. The following information concerning the Ching family was gained from an interview with Mrs. Tom Chung in 1968. She left China as a child in 1880 and died in 1976 at the age of 105.
3. Ching Wah Chan (1988: 98–100), another third-generation Nam Long resident, has briefly dealt with the background of

the Punaluu Chinese. The early settlers of Punaluu came from at least ten villages in the Nam Long area in Zhongshan, he claims. Ching also lists forty-one Punaluu families bearing characteristic Nam Long surnames that populated this Nam Long settlement during the early 1900s.

4. Although both Nam Long and Loong Doo may have stemmed from a northeastern Min dialect, Soren Egerod (1979) has noted that the two subdialects "belong to different Fujian strains and have quite a different history" in respect to their subsequent development.
5. Linguistic studies have shown that present-day Min and Yue are closer in form and sound to so-called Archaic Chinese of North China than is present-day Mandarin. Bernhard Karlgren's terms "Archaic" and "Ancient Chinese" have now generally been replaced by the more conventional terms "Old Chinese" and "Middle Chinese," respectively. Norman (1988: 23).
6. Among some old Cantonese families the fact that their lineage forbears had passed through the "Gate of Nam Hoong" on their migrations southward has been a matter of great prestige. Therefore, some genealogies that trace ancestral lines to Nam Hoong may contain blatant fabrications. Some Nam Long lineage records mention Nam Hoong, but others do not. Undoubtedly, many Nam Long forbears settled in the numerous northern settlements of Guangdong around the area of Nam Hoong, such as those of the Cheong (Zhang) descent group, who are recorded to have settled in Cook Gong (Qujiang), slightly southwest of and downstream from Nam Hoong.
7. This information is to be found in the personal genealogy and family record of Ching Yook Gwong.
8. Yuen (1983: 235) maintains that the Zhongshan dialects may be divided into four main subgroups: Shekki, Siu Lam (Xiaolan), Dou Moon (Daomen), and Sui Seong (Shuishang). Although Yuen claims that Nam Long speech is closer to or a variant of the Shekki, he acknowledges that their roots are different.
9. Norman (1988: 228) states that "despite the very considerable differences found among the Min dialects themselves, this [Min] group is, next to Mandarin, the most distinctive and easily characterized group of Chinese dialects." Nasalization occurs in the Southern Min dialects as well (*ibid.*, 237) and is an attribute that tends to set off these coastal Fujian tongues from other local vernaculars.
10. For example, in the Shekki dialect one would say *faan hee* to mean "go home," while a Nam Long speaker would use an old Fujian phrase, *ko yen*.
11. A map of See Dai Doo, published by the See Dai Doo Society (1987), lists twenty-one Nam Long villages in the northern section of the district and fifteen in the southern section.

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