

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Background

The article on Marian shrines in China ('China has a number of Marian shrines' 2004, AsiaNews/Sunday Examiner (Hong Kong), 1 June <http://www.catholiccitizens.org/platform/platformview.asp?c=15395>) has information on the Marian shrine in Fuzhou (paragraph 7).

Questions

- 1 . Please find information on the exact location and appearance of the shrine.
2. Is the shrine Chinese style or Western style?
3. Is the shrine in Fuzhou City or outside the city?

RESPONSE

1 . Please find information on the exact location and appearance of the shrine.

The submitted article ('China has a number of Marian shrines' 2004, AsiaNews/Sunday Examiner (Hong Kong), 1 June <http://www.catholiccitizens.org/platform/platformview.asp?c=15395> – Accessed 7 March 2007 – Attachment 1) gives this information:

There is the new shrine in Fuzhou, opened on 30 April 1993 **on top of the hill in Longtian village near Fuzhou city**, Fujian province. This shrine is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and called Rosary Villa. The title given to the shrine is reminiscent of the fact that the Dominicans, who were in Fujian province before Liberation, had dedicated the area to Mary of the Rosary. A statue of Our Lady, a gift from Italy, stands in the **middle of the Chinese style pavilion** on the shrine grounds. The shrine is used as a place for priests' retreats and for group pilgrimages. It was set up by Fuzhou's elderly bishop to promote unity and community in the Catholic Church.

The source of this article is Asianews.it which is a Catholic news service with a website at <http://www.asianews.it/>. There is one other report from Asianews.it which gives more information on the shrine ('Catholic and Protestant pilgrims make way to Marian shrine in

Fujian' 2004, *AsiaNews/Ucan*, 21 May <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=835#> – Accessed 7 March 2007 – Attachment 2). It states:

The shrine straddles a hilltop in Longtian village, Changle, near the provincial capital of Fuzhou, 3,110 kilometers southeast of Beijing. **The sprawling complex, run by the government-approved “open” Church of Fuzhou diocese, contains Our Lady of Rosary Church, a pavilion housing a statue of Mary, gardens, a convent, a library, a home for the elderly and a guesthouse. It also features statues depicting the Way of the Cross, carvings depicting the mysteries of the rosary.**

Bishop Joseph Zheng Changcheng of Fuzhou, 92, began construction in 1993 and the whole project was completed with the official opening of Our Lady of Rosary Church in May 2001. Visible from miles away, the shrine has become a landmark in Changle and has attracted Catholic and other visitors every year.

The report has a small picture of a very large Western-style church surrounded by parkland and some smaller buildings which are indistinct.



The *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2004* (Charbonnier, Jean 2004, *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2004*, China Catholic Communication, Singapore, p.649 – Attachment 3) gives the following information about the Catholic Church in Changle and Longtian:

- Changle (33 km south-east of Fuzhou) St Joseph Church Address 3 Sanfeng Lane, Changle
- Longtian Guihai St. Joseph Church (10 km south of Changle), Longtian Rosary Hill
- Our Lady of the Rosary Pilgrimage opened on April 30, 1993 ... Address: Changlexian Longtiancun FJ

The guide has no pictures or other information about the church.

The only pictures of the site were found on a Chinese language Catholic website. ('重温玫瑰山庄-国福州教区朝圣地' ('Reminiscence of the Rosary Mountain Lodge – Sacred Place for Pilgrimage in the Fuzhou Parish in China') 2006, Cncatholic.org (Chinese language), 19 December <http://www.cncatholic.org/news/200612/21775.html> -Accessed 9 March 2007 – Attachment 4). This shows pictures, taken in June 2006, of:

- a large white church (presumably Our Lady of the Rosary Church) (pp.26-32);
- an large outdoor statue of Our Lady of the Rosary (p.5);
- a hostel (pp.7, 10);
- a Chinese style marble pavilion containing an altar and a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary (pp.8-9);
- A spring with another statue of Our Lady of the Rosary (p.13);
- A library (pp.14-15);
- Other buildings (pp.18-25).

2. Is the shrine Chinese style or Western style?

Both the English language articles ([Attachment 1](#) and [Attachment 2](#)) use the word “shrine” to describe the whole complex of buildings, statues and gardens. This is a “shrine” in the wider sense of a “place regarded as holy because of its associations with a divinity or sacred person or relic, marked by a building or other constructions” rather than the narrower sense of a “niche or enclosure containing a religious statue or other object” (these definitions taken from the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2005, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. (rev.), p.1638). The Longtian shrine, in the sense of the whole complex, thus contains Western-style buildings, such as the Church and library, as well as Chinese-style buildings such as the pavilion containing the statue.

The narrower sense of the word “shrine” could also apply to the Chinese style marble pavilion containing an altar and a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary. The only picture that was found of this shrine (from p.13 of ‘重温玫瑰山庄-国福州教区朝圣地’ (‘Reminiscence of the Rosary Mountain Lodge – Sacred Place for Pilgrimage in the Fuzhou Parish in China’) 2006, Cncatholic.org website (Chinese language), 19 December <http://www.cncatholic.org/news/200612/21775.html> -Accessed 9 March 2007 – [Attachment 4](#)) appears below:



There is a larger copy of this picture at [Attachment 7](#).

3. Is the shrine in Fuzhou City or outside the city?

All sources indicate the shrine is located in or near Longtian village which the *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2004* (Charbonnier, Jean 2004, *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2004*, China Catholic Communication, Singapore, p.649 – Attachment 3) notes is 10 km south of Changle town which is itself 33 km south-east of Fuzhou. The photographs in

Attachment 4 and the descriptions in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2 all indicate that the shrine is in a rural location on top of a hill.

So, the shrine is not located in the urban part of Fuzhou city proper. However, Longtian is located within the administrative district of Fuzhou City. Fuzhou City is not just a city in the normal sense of the word, but the name of a large administrative district covering many smaller cities, towns, villages and rural areas. The Wikipedia entry to Fuzhou City is attached¹ ('Fuzhou' 2007, Wikipedia, updated 8 March <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzhou> – Accessed 9 March 2007 – Attachment 5). This notes that “Fuzhou is the provincial seat and the largest prefecture-level city of Fujian province”, and that it covers 12,000 sq. km. Other Chinese language sources note that Fuzhou City includes Changle city, which includes Longtian town (see <http://wikitravel.org/en/Fuzhou>; <http://www.fujian.gov.cn:8080/> (in Chinese); and <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E7%A6%8F%E5%B7%9E#.E8.8C.83.E5.9B.B4.E5.AE.9A.E4.B9.89> (in Chinese) – not attached)

A map of Fuzhou city is attached which shows Fuzhou City's 2 sub-cities (Changle (orange) and Fuqing (green)) and 5 counties (Minhou, Minqing, Yongtai, Pingtan & Lianjiang) as well as the core-urban area of Fuzhou in yellow ('Fuzhou City Communications and Tourist Map' (undated) Fujiankids website <http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/fuzmap.shtml> – Accessed 20 December 2002 – Attachment 6).

No map was found which shows the exact location of Longtian (Microsoft Encarta Interactive World Atlas 2000 does not show many towns in Fujian by their correct names. There is also another town called Longtian in Fuqing City which is shown in the map at Attachment 6, but this is a different town).

Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Region Specific Links

<http://www.chinacatholic.org/> Chinese language Catholic website

<http://www.chinacatholic.org/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=5179>

<http://www.cncatholic.org/> Chinese language Catholic website

<http://www.mg890.com/fujian/fuzhou/307.htm> Chinese language directory of Catholic Churches in Fuzhou City

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

[Searches were also conducted using Chinese characters (龙田 Longtian town, 长乐市 Changle city and 天主教 Catholic church)]

Databases:

¹ Users should be aware that **Wikipedia** is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is written collaboratively by volunteers. Country Research recommends that users of Wikipedia familiarise themselves with the regulatory practices which Wikipedia employs as a preventative measure against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy. For more information, see the recommended background reading available in the Wikipedia Topical Information Package.

FACTIVA (news database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'China has a number of Marian shrines' 2004, *AsiaNews/Sunday Examiner* (Hong Kong), 1 June <http://www.catholiccitizens.org/platform/platformview.asp?c=15395> – Accessed 7 March 2007
2. 'Catholic and Protestant pilgrims make way to Marian shrine in Fujian' 2004, *AsiaNews/Ucan*, 21 May <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=835#> – Accessed 7 March 2007
3. Charbonnier, Jean 2004, *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2004*, China Catholic Communication Singapore, p.649 (RRT LIBRARY)
4. '重温玫瑰山庄-国福州教区朝圣地' ('Reminiscence of the Rosary Mountain Lodge – Sacred Place for Pilgrimage in the Fuzhou Parish in China') 2006, Cncatholic.org website (Chinese language), 19 December <http://www.cncatholic.org/news/200612/21775.html> – Accessed 9 March 2007
5. 'Fuzhou' 2007, Wikipedia, updated 8 March <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzhou> – Accessed 9 March 2007.
6. 'Fuzhou City Communications and Tourist Map' (undated) Fujiankids website (<http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/fuzmap.shtml> and <http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/prefectl.jpg> – Accessed 20 December 2002
7. Enlarged photo from '重温玫瑰山庄-国福州教区朝圣地' ('Reminiscence of the Rosary Mountain Lodge – Sacred Place for Pilgrimage in the Fuzhou Parish in China') 2006, <http://www.cncatholic.org/> website (Chinese language), 19 December <http://www.cncatholic.org/news/200612/21775.html> -Accessed 9 March 2007