

*God Aboveground: Catholic Church, Postsocialist State, and Transnational Processes in a Chinese Village.* By ERIBERTO P. LOZADA, JR. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. 250 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

*God Aboveground* explores broad global issues as refracted through the prism of one south China village. "Little Rome" is a predominantly Roman Catholic community of around nine hundred people in the "Hakka homeland" of Meizhou in northern Guangdong. Eriberto P. Lozada, Jr., assistant professor of anthropology at Butler University, lived in the village with his family for eighteen months in 1996 and 1997, and his account of life there is richly textured because of his unique position simultaneously as a visiting scholar, a community member, an Asian American, a father, and a Roman Catholic.

However, the book is not simply a study of one village as a discrete social system, nor is it a study of Catholicism in China. Lozada argues that Little Rome is a "deterritorialized community," and that life there cannot be understood apart from the "transnational processes" of religious and ethnic identification, mobility, communication, and commercial exchange. Drawing on recent anthropological work on globalization, including the work of his Harvard Ph.D. supervisor, James L. Watson, he further argues that these transnational forces are inherent to the articulation of culture and community in particular social and settings like Little Rome through the process of "localization." His central interest, therefore, is in understanding the process by which global, national, and local forces combine continually to generate and reshape community, culture, and identity.

In *God Aboveground*, therefore, we have a book based on field observation in one community that is less about that community than about global cultural change in its local manifestation. The range of theoretical issues it addresses is broad, ranging from Hakka ethnicity and the analytical utility of "charisma" to the changes flowing from the commodity economy in 1990s Guangdong. The result is a thought-provoking book in which specific events in the life of Little Rome are interspersed with challenging theoretical discussions using a "diagnostic event" analysis. Not surprisingly, this works better in some chapters than others, and the chapters based on a wedding, a funeral, and building a road in Little Rome (chapters 6–8) struck this reader as the clearest and most accessible. At other points, Lozada raises theoretical arguments that are interesting in themselves, but do not seem essential to the rest of the book (as in his typology of sage and rebel as paradigmatic figures in Chinese religious culture on p. 26), or discusses "transnational processes" without tying them back very clearly to Little Rome specifically (as in the discussion of the mobilization of Hakka ethnicity in chapter 9).

Given Lozada's diagnostic event approach and his interest in tracing the local outworkings of global processes, it is perhaps to be expected that we do not learn a

great deal about intra-community tensions in the book, whether around class, history, or religion. He notes at one point that distrust lingers between some families due to Maoist-era betrayals (p. 83), but he does not unpack it. Nor does he explore possible differences in the subjective meanings of Catholic adherence among generations or among those living in the village, their labor-migrant relatives in Shenzhen or Hainan, and their overseas kin. For instance, in the wedding chapter, the bride and groom are both, separately, baptized prior to their wedding, and it would have been fascinating to learn more about the dynamics and motivations of that decision for each (especially the bride, who was from a non-Catholic village and family). Likewise, it would be interesting to learn more about the "nominal" Catholics or the apparently devout young woman who refused to be married in church for fear of her coworkers' disapproval. Lozada presents Catholic adherence as central to the community identity of Little Rome, but he says little about how individuals might seek to resist or renegotiate that identity (perhaps because intensive interviewing was not central to his methodology).

Nevertheless, this is a rich and rewarding study that is modest in length, broad in theoretical implications, interesting in detail, and enlivened by good maps, tables, and twenty-four photographs, historical and contemporary. It could be used selectively in undergraduate courses on contemporary China, and it should certainly be read by specialists and graduate students with an interest in contemporary Chinese society, Chinese religion, Hakka ethnicity, Christianity in China, and anthropological debates around globalization, modernity, and religion.

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