

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: CHN30826
Country: China
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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.

Questions

- 1. Where is Youtang village, Shangjing County, Fuqing City? Is there evidence that this area is 'remote' or 'secluded'?**
- 2. The applicant states that Youtang has around 3,000 inhabitants, and that the nearest police were in Shangjing, some 5 km away. Is there any information on the extent of police/PSB presence and activity in and around Fuqing City or similar parts of Fujian?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Where is Youtang village, Shangjing County, Fuqing City? Is there evidence that this area is 'remote' or 'secluded'?**

Fuqing City (福清市) is a “county-level city” of Fuzhou City (which is a “prefecture-level city”) in Fujian, China (‘Fuqing’ 2006, Wikipedia article, updated 4 October 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuqing> - Accessed 23 October 2006 – Attachment 1). As Wikipedia explains:

County-level cities (县级市 *xiànjíshì*) are, like prefecture-level cities, not “cities” in the traditional sense of the word, since they are actually large administrative regions that cover both urban and rural areas. (‘Political divisions of China’ 2006, Wikipedia article, updated 23 October 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_divisions_of_China - Accessed 24 October 2006 – Attachment 2)

Fuqing City has a population of over one million (estimates vary from 1.1 to 1.3 million) and occupies an area of 2429.76 sq. km. A map of the city area is attached – the area of Fuqing City is in green (‘Fuzhou City Communications and Tourist Map’ (Section showing Fuqing City) <http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/fuzmap.shtml> and

<http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/prefectl.jpg> - Accessed 20 December 2002 – Attachment 3)

Fuqing City is divided into 1 subdistrict office and 20 townships, according to the Chinese language version of Wikipedia ('Fuqing City' (福清市) 2006, Wikipedia article in Chinese language, updated 15 October 2006

<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E7%A6%8F%E6%B8%85%E5%B8%82> - Accessed 23 October 2006 – Attachment 4), one of which is **Shangjing Township** (上迳镇) (it is a "town" rather than a "county" - 镇 *zhen* means "town" and is a sub-county division which may contain a number of villages and rural areas as well as the main town, in the manner of an Australian "shire" but smaller due to the density of the population in eastern China). Shangjing, the main town of Shangjing Township, is located 13.5 km south of the city of Fuqing (see Encarta map, tourist map). ('Shangjing' 2000, Microsoft Encarta Interactive World Atlas 2000 (annotated by researcher to include Youtang village) – Attachment 6).

Youtang village was not found on any map. An online database (http://www.worldcitydb.com/youtang_568343.html) gave its location as: latitude : 25.38°N; longitude : 119.21°E. Using the Encarta Interactive World Atlas CD-Rom, this locates Youtang at a distance of 5km northeast of Shangjing and 9km south of the city of Fuqing (see attached map - 'Shangjing' 2000, Microsoft Encarta Interactive World Atlas 2000 (annotated by researcher to include Youtang village) – Attachment 6). The road distances would be somewhat longer. From the shading on the map, it appears to be near the end of a valley with hills on three sides.

The following Chinese language Chinese government websites were searched¹ for maps or references to Shangjing (上迳) without success (the sites were very slow with a lot of bad links):

- <http://www.fuqing.gov.cn/> Fuqing government site (Chinese language)
- http://www.fuzhou.gov.cn Fuzhou government site (Chinese language)
- <http://www.fujian.gov.cn/> Fujian government site (Chinese language)

In relation to the question of whether Youtang is 'remote' or 'secluded', as claimed by the Applicant, it appears from the information above that the village, while in the quite densely populated coastal region of eastern China, is in a rural area some distant away from a major administrative city or town.

2. The applicant states that Youtang has around 3,000 inhabitants, and that the nearest police were in Shangjing, some 5 km away. Is there any information on the extent of police/PSB presence and activity in and around Fuqing City or similar parts of Fujian?

No information was found in the sources consulted on the population of Youtang or the distribution of police stations or Public Security Bureaus (PSB) in Fuqing City. Information on the organisation of the PSB is contained in the US Library of Congress study (Worden,

¹ The searching was done by a researcher who was not fluent in Chinese with only a basic understanding of Chinese and the ability to recognise only a few hundred common characters and place names and to read a Chinese dictionary. A fluent speaker may be able to locate more information on these sites, although the speed of the sites is a problem.

Robert L., Matles Savada, Andrea & Dolan, Ronald E. (Eds.), 1987, 'Public Security Forces' in *China: a Country Study*, July, US Library of Congress website <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html> - accessed 25 July 2002 – Attachment 6). This indicates that there are police branches at all levels down to township level, which would include Shangjing but not necessarily Youtang, which is a sub-township village. The report states, under the heading 'Public Security Forces',:

In 1987 the Ministry of Public Security was the principal police authority. The ministry had functional departments for areas such as intelligence, police operations, prisons, and political, economic, and communications security. **Subordinate to the ministry were provincial-level public security departments; public security bureaus and subbureaus at the county level (the bureaus located in the prefectures and large cities, the subbureaus in counties and municipal districts); and public security stations at the township level** (see fig. 22). While public security considerations had a strong influence at all levels of administration, the police appeared to wield progressively greater influence at the lower levels of government.

While somewhat dated, this information is still repeated in various current websites such as Wikipedia, and no other information was found to contradict or update this assessment.

Searches of the sources listed below for any police or religious activity in either Shangjing or Youtang failed to find any reports.

Information on the situation of Catholics in Fuqing City is contained in two previous research responses:

- RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response CHN17603*, 21 October (Q1 Fuqing – Fujian – Q2 Hubei)
- RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response CHN17483*, 29 August (Q1 Fuqing – Fujian – Q2-6 Bishop Yang Shudao – birth date – arrests)

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Region Specific Links

<http://www.fuqing.gov.cn/> Fuqing government site (Chinese language)

http://www.fuzhou.gov.cn Fuzhou government site (Chinese language)

<http://www.fujian.gov.cn/> Fujian government site (Chinese language)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_administrative_divisions_of_Fujian

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzhou>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuqing>

Search Engines

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

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

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

List of Attachments

1. 'Fuqing' 2006, Wikipedia article, updated 4 October 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuqing> - Accessed 23 October 2006
2. 'Political divisions of China' 2006, Wikipedia article, updated 23 October 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_divisions_of_China - Accessed 24 October 2006
3. 'Fuzhou City Communications and Tourist Map' (Section showing Fuqing City) <http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/fuzmap.shtml> and <http://www.fujiankids.org/swis/fuzcity/prefectl.jpg> - Accessed 20 December 2002
4. 'Fuqing City' ('福清市') 2006, Wikipedia article in Chinese language, updated 15 October 2006 <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E7%A6%8F%E6%B8%85%E5%B8%82> - Accessed 23 October 2006
5. 'Shangjing' 2000, Microsoft Encarta Interactive World Atlas 2000 (annotated by researcher to include Youtang village)
6. Worden, Robert L., Matles Savada, Andrea & Dolan, Ronald E. (Eds.), 1987, 'Public Security Forces' in *China: a Country Study*, July, US Library of Congress website <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html> - accessed 25 July 2002