

Ang Yik Kan,
a clan association
in Yangon, 2017

李家館

隴西堂

ARI
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
National University of Singapore

FORGING THEORETICAL AGENDAS IN THE STUDY OF CHINESE VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

3-4 MARCH 2022 | ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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Chinese voluntary associations (CVAs) are “those associations that originate out of the migrant communities and are controlled by them, hence not official and non-governmental, even though many of these might have worked in collaboration with the... government” (Kuah-Pearce and Hu-dehart, 2006). They include:

- Huiguan (会馆): organized along clan (surname), lineage, hometown or dialect lines
- Shetuan (社团): a modern form of huiguan organized based on dialect and hometown affiliations, including Chinese chambers of commerce
- Kongsì (公司), Tang (堂) & Hui (会): some of which may have historically been considered “secret societies”
- Temples (庙宇) and religious affiliations established and operated by clan, lineage, hometown or dialect groups
- Others, such as schools, trade unions, industrial guilds, charitable associations or recreational clubs etc.

Different kinds of CVAs were developed along with the spatial mobilities of migrants with the same place of origin, dialect, lineage, surname or religion who lived, worked and studied away from ancestral places. They often formed essential components of the social fabric of migrant communities. Many of these associations were originally developed during the Ming (1368-1644) and the Qing (1636-1912) dynasties, and spread through the Chinese diaspora to many parts of the world. Members in different associations were bound together through common welfare or economic interests. Arguably, CVAs have undergone tremendous transformations in this day and age, but they still play important roles in the social life of Chinese migrants in and outside China.

Extant studies have documented the significance of Chinese voluntary associations for migrant individuals and groups (T'ien, 1953; Freedman, 1960, Yen, 1981; Kuah-Pearce, 2006), their demise or revitalization in host societies (Chong, 1992; Fung, 2016), transnational networking with ancestral villages and towns (Liu, 1998; Yow, 2013), and cultural politics of CVAs in receiving countries (Kuah-Pearce, 2006). However, most studies focus much on empirical analysis and policy implications while lacking an engagement with conceptual issues or theoretical reflections (except Montsion, 2014; Chen, 2020). As such, the conceptual/theoretical significance of CVAs studies remains relatively underdeveloped.

How do the modern developments of Chinese voluntary associations diverge from its traditional roles and how do they embark on new strategies, linkages and possibilities? How does the ‘re/de-sinification’ paradigm respond to the re-anchoring and remaking of Chinese voluntary associations in the contemporary period? How do we understand the religious dimensions of Chinese voluntary associations that often appear ambiguous and glossed over in the modernization and secularization discourse? Are there gender and age dynamics in the organizations of Chinese voluntary associations that remain largely unexplored, and do these associations still maintain a “male- and elder-centered” profile? By approaching these questions and many others, this workshop presents the work of scholars who leverage their respective disciplinary and empirical expertise to re-invigorate the study of CVAs by forging new theoretical agendas.

CONFERENCE CONVENORS

Dr Ningning CHEN

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Dr Ying Ruo SHOW

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Dr Emily HERTZMAN

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Prof Kenneth DEAN

Asia Research Institute, and Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

DATE	TIME (SINGAPORE TIME)	SESSION
3 March 2022 (Thursday)	14:30 – 16:00	Welcome Remarks & Panel 1
	16:20 – 18:00	Panel 2
	20:00 – 21:15	Panel 3
4 March 2022 (Friday)	10:30 – 12:00	Roundtable Discussion
	15:00 – 16:40	Panel 4
	17:15 – 18:15	Panel 5 & Closing Remarks

3 MARCH 2022 • THURSDAY

14:30 – 14:45	WELCOME REMARKS	
14:30	NINGNING CHEN , National University of Singapore KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore	
14:45 – 16:00	PANEL 1 • LOCAL AND COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITIES	
<i>Chairperson</i>	YANG YANG , National University of Singapore	
14:45	CHEE MENG WONG Independent Scholar	Chinese Opera as Youth Activity? The Dilemma in Cultural Transmission for Cantonese and Hainanese Associations in Singapore
15:00	KRISTA MCJARROW-KELLER KEPING WU Duke Kunshan University	Transitions of Chinese Voluntary Associations in New Zealand: A Generative Model
15:15	YAO-TAI LI University of New South Wales	Sometimes 'Us,' Other Times 'Others': Identity Politics within 'Chinese' Voluntary Associations in Australia
15:30	Questions & Answers	
16:00	END OF PANEL	
16:20 – 18:00	PANEL 2 • WOMEN AND GENDER	
<i>Chairperson</i>	EMILY HERTZMAN , National University of Singapore	
16:20	MEI-FEN KUO Macquarie University	Women as Affective Volunteers in the Evolution of Chinese Voluntary Associations in the White Australia Era
16:35	LYNN WONG Independent Scholar	Women in Singapore's Cantonese Clan Associations: Leadership Roles and Rituals
16:50	JACQUELINE ZHENRU LIN Chinese University of Hong Kong	Patriarchal Necrosociality in the Transnational Memorial Network between China and Myanmar
17:05	YING RUO SHOW National University of Singapore	Gender Politics and Situated Belonging: Grassroots Buddhism and Chinese Voluntary Associations in Singapore
17:20	Questions & Answers	
18:00	END OF PANEL	

20:00 – 21:15	PANEL 3 • “SECRET SOCIETIES” REVISITED	
<i>Chairperson</i>	CHI-CHEUNG CHOI , Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Xiamen University	
20:00	FREDY GONZÁLEZ University of Illinois at Chicago	The Chee Kung Tong: A Voluntary Sworn Brotherhood across the Cantonese World
20:15	YING ZHANG Independent Scholar	The Non-traditional Features of Thai-Chinese Clan Associations in Thai Contemporary Society
20:30	EMILY HERTZMAN National University of Singapore	Chinese Indonesian Voluntary Associations and Hometown Development within Indonesia
20:45	Questions & Answers	
21:15	END OF DAY 1	

4 MARCH 2022 • FRIDAY

10:30 – 12:00	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION • CHINA'S RISE AND THE REMAKING OF CVAS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA	
<i>Chairperson</i>	NINGNING CHEN , National University of Singapore	
10:30	KHUN ENG KUAH Jinan University	Chinese Voluntary Organisation: A Global Chinese-China Dialectical Interconnectivity Framework
10:40	JEAN MICHEL MONTSION York University	More than Survival: Conceptualizing the Adaptations of Chinese Voluntary Associations amid Change
10:50	ELAINE LYNN-EE HO National University of Singapore	Chinese Voluntary Associations and Diaspora Politics
11:00	CHARLOTTE SETIJADI Singapore Management University	Searching for Relevance in a New Age: Chinese Voluntary Associations in Indonesia
11:10	Discussion <i>Moderator</i> EMILY HERTZMAN , National University of Singapore	
12:00	END OF PANEL	

15:00 – 16:40	PANEL 4 • RELIGION, HOMETOWN AND ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	HUI KIAN KWEE , National University of Singapore	
15:00	YUN SEH LEE Flinders University	Bridging Ethnic Harmony: A Tale of Two Temples
15:15	DONALD HONG YIN CHAN National University of Singapore	From Undertakers to <i>Doujyuns</i> (道院): A Development of <i>Nahm Mouh</i> (喃嘸) 's Voluntary Associations in Singapore
15:30	CHEN-CHI CHANG National United University HAN-PI CHANG National Central University	The Remaking of Global Hakka Associations in the Contemporary World
15:45	YI LI Aberystwth University	Chinese Secret Societies and the Unmaking of Tin-Mining in a Southern Burmese Village in the Late Nineteenth Century
16:00	Questions & Answers	
16:40	END OF PANEL	

17:15 – 18:05	PANEL 5 • TRANSNATIONAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	JA IAN CHONG , National University of Singapore	
<i>17:15</i>	YUTIAN LIANG Sun Yat-sen University	The Role of Chinese Voluntary Associations in Chinese Outward Invest in Southeast Asia
	ZHENGKE ZHOU Chinese University of Hong Kong	
<i>17:30</i>	CHANG-YAU HOON KAI LI ZHAO Universiti Brunei Darussalam	Chinese Associations in Brunei Darussalam: Continuity and Change
<i>17:45</i>	Questions & Answers	
18:05 – 18:15	CLOSING REMARKS	
<i>18:05</i>	YING RUO SHOW , National University of Singapore EMILY HERTZMAN , National University of Singapore	
18:15	END OF CONFERENCE	

Chinese Opera as Youth Activity? The Dilemma in Cultural Transmission for Cantonese and Hainanese Associations in Singapore

Chee Meng WONG

Independent Scholar

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Chinese opera in post-war Singapore was previously a popular entertainment and cultural practice much embedded in the communities, serving religious festivals and fund-raising events, though the structure of clan associations involved in training and staging varied across dialect groups. With the decline in dialect usage today, both Chinese opera and general participation in native-place associations have long been losing appeal to youths, despite opportunities for cultural exchange with China opening up from the 1980s onwards. Amateur practice in Chinese opera meantime also turns commercial for seniors while remaining marginalised in the cultural industry. This paper will discuss the historical legacies leading to issues of sustainability for Chinese Voluntary Associations practising this traditional art, by considering the aspect of social capital under larger contexts of cultural policies and transnational networks. Overall trend suggests a divergence in clan networks, cultural practice and religious worship. For a comparative study, it will begin with the Cantonese opera scene which was particularly vibrant in 1960s Kreta Ayer area, with frequent interaction with Hong Kong; it notably saw the clan association Kong Chow Wui Koon representing Singapore's national identity on overseas tours in the 1970s before its lead artistes established Chinese Theatre Circle as a dedicated arts group, subsequently also promoting the traditional art in community centres. Hainanese opera, for a different model of development, has strived on dialect-based organisations like Hainan Society, originally a youth association, which benefited in 1980s from exchange with China where the practice had undergone modern reforms.

Chee Meng Wong obtained his PhD in heritage studies in 2013 from the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany, with a thesis on intangible heritage and intercultural dialogue in postcolonial Singapore. Following a postdoctoral fellowship in literary and cultural studies with Nanyang Technological University (NTU) (2014-16), he was engaged in various heritage research projects, including an NTU project on the historical legacies of Chinese schools. In 2019, he published a monograph entitled *Niucheshui bainian wenhua licheng* (A Century of Singapore's 'Chinatown' in Cultural and Historical Memory), which explores new perspectives on the history and heritage of Kreta Ayer through archival sources of pre-war Chinese newspapers and fieldwork on local practice of Cantonese opera. His research as an independent scholar currently extends to heritage and diversity in the Southeast Asian region such as Malaysia, apart from a publication project supported by the National Heritage Board on multicultural heritage in relation to Singapore's urban landscape.

Transitions of Chinese Voluntary Associations in New Zealand: A Generative Model

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At its conception in the 1930s, the national Chinese association of New Zealand was a collection of regionally based ethnic and linguistic enclaves for Cantonese-speaking migrants (mostly from a few villages in Guangdong province), in a largely hostile English-speaking society that did not accept them as full citizens. With recognition from the government and huge numbers of new Chinese migrants in the 1990s, the national board and regional branches of the main association have institutionally rebranded as an organization for *all* Chinese and accompanied with this has been a move 'outwards' into the community. Our research in one regional association has led us to propose that this change has come from a more accepting society and the changing face of Chinese New Zealanders. Not only is there new blood from Mandarin speaking Chinese, Southeast Asian Chinese and recent migrants from Hong Kong, but younger generations of Chinese have many more economic, marital and social ties outside of the "Chinese" community. The association has set new priorities, including Cantonese culture and language preservation in informal and formal schools and clubs, and in targeting events to a wider community. Based on archival and ethnographic research, we suggest that such changes are both in response to the changing desires of Chinese New Zealanders as well as funding from the New Zealand government that expects a new role from such organizations. We argue that a rising sense of cosmopolitan citizenship among Chinese in New Zealand is the motor for new changes in the CVA.

Krista McJarrow-Keller is an undergraduate student at Duke Kunshan University, majoring in Cultures and Movements in the Anthropology track. She has been undertaking research in her New Zealand hometown with the local Chinese association for the past five months.

Keping Wu is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Duke Kunshan University. Her research interests include religious charitable organizations, urbanization, gender and ethnic diversity in China. She is the co-author of *Religion and Charity: Social Life of Goodness in Chinese Societies* (Cambridge 2017).

Sometimes 'Us,' Other Times 'Others': Identity Politics within 'Chinese' Voluntary Associations in Australia

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Migration and transnational studies have suggested that it is common to form co-ethnic associations in an immigration context. Other research also notices the heterogeneity within overseas Chinese communities. Yet, not much research has examined the internal dynamics and conflicts within Chinese voluntary associations (CVAs) based on specific contexts and considerations. This article focuses on CVAs formed by two Chinese subgroups—Taiwanese and Hong Kongers in Australia, and argues that homeland identity politics influences association participation and the day-to-day lives of migrants residing overseas. Using ethnographic data, including participant observations and in-depth interviews, I illuminate the complexity of a situation where Taiwanese and Hong Konger voluntary associations infuse with mainland Chinese ones sometimes, while other times they maintain identity boundaries and reject a broader Chinese identity shared with migrants from China. This article highlights how identity differences are minimized or substantiated in overseas CVAs, and how Taiwanese and Hong Konger voluntary associations play different roles of sustaining ethnic connections, distinctions, and solidarity among Chinese migrants in Australia.

Yao-Tai Li is a lecturer of School of Social Sciences at University of New South Wales, Australia. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of California, San Diego. His research interests include migration, youth labor, social movement, and social media. His work has been published in several scholarly journals including *British Journal of Sociology*, *World Development*, *Urban Studies*, *Work, Employment and Society*, *Global Networks*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *Current Sociology*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Chinese Sociological Review*, *Critical Sociology*, *International Migration*, *International Sociology*, *Discourse & Society*, *Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, among others.

Women as Affective Volunteers in the Evolution of Chinese Voluntary Associations in the White Australia Era

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The discourses on diasporic Chinese voluntary associations have been dominated by approaches of patriarchal culture and network (guanxi) perspectives, giving little space to the discussions of experience and role of Chinese women. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining the development of Chinese voluntary associations in the White Australia era. The key research question addressed in the article is to what extent and how Chinese women influence the development of Chinese voluntary associations in Australia. The paper is basically argued that we need a new framework to consider emotional experiences and engagements influenced by women in organizing modern Chinese voluntary associations. Theoretical and empirical analyses facilitated a concept of "philanthropic sociability" (cishan jiaoyi) is introduced in this paper to credit the impacts of women and argue that Chinese voluntary organizations overseas build on emotional dynamics in concert with others. Philanthropic sociability singles women as affective volunteers characterized by innovating social activities and emphasizing affects (such as joy, happiness and compassion) and everyday life experience when Chinese voluntary organizations in Australia seemed most under evolution struggle against racial discrimination.

Mei-fen Kuo is Lecturer in Contemporary Chinese Culture and History at Macquarie University where she teaches and researches in the area of modern Chinese history with a focus on diaspora identity and transnational mobility. Before she moves to Macquarie University, she was an ARC DECRA fellow in the University of Queensland (Australia) and research fellow in National Chengchi University under the scheme of Taiwan Fellowship. She is the author of *Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspapers & Chinese-Australian Identity During Federation* (Monash University Publishing) and *Unlocking the History of the Australasian Kuo Min Tang 1911-2013* (Australian Scholarly Publishing).

Women in Singapore's Cantonese Clan Associations: Leadership Roles and Rituals

Lynn WONG

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Clan associations or *huiguan*, established along the lines of kinship ties, ancestral hometown locality, or a mixture of both, are traditionally patriarchal and male dominated. This is especially so in kinship-based clan associations which follow the patrilineal family name (surname) and most dictate that important rituals such as ancestral veneration must be performed by male descents.

Such symbolic portrayal however runs counter to practice where women are involved in key decision-making roles and the partaking of rituals, especially in Singapore's Cantonese clan associations. In this paper, I call for greater attention to examine gender as a variable and demonstrate how it sheds new perspectives on the study of clan associations. Complementing archival data with case studies and fieldwork observations at both kinship-based and locality-based organisations, I explore factors contributing to the rise of women representation in Cantonese clan associations from three dimensions: functional, structural and existential.

Lynn Wong is on a mission to uncover, document, and revive Singapore's disappearing foods, festivals, and heritage. Her research focuses on the Chinese diaspora and their involvement in historical places of worship, clan associations, as well as everyday customs. She is the inaugural Outstanding Youth Award recipient conferred by the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations in 2017 in recognition of her dedication and innovative efforts to revive clan associations. She currently holds leadership positions in five clan associations in Singapore and has worked closely with over 30 such organisations.

Patriarchal Necrosociality in the Transnational Memorial Network between China and Myanmar

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This article explores how the patrilineal ideology of the Chinese lineage landscape shapes the transnational commemoration of the Chinese fallen soldiers who died in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theatre during the Second World War. After being displaced in foreign lands for more than half a century, the remains of these Chinese soldiers have become bones of contention between the clan associations in Myanmar offering limited worship since the war ended in 1945 and the grassroots activists from the People's Republic of China (PRC) attempting to repatriate the war dead as *their* national forefathers in the 2000s. Bridging studies on the revival of the lineage culture in contemporary China and literature of gendered nationalism, this study examines how the competing constructions of Chinese forefatherhood facilitate the memorial network between the PRC and Myanmar. Using participant observation, in-depth interview, content analysis, and digital ethnography, it theorises the gender politics in the transnational memorial network between an association of fellow provincials in Myanmar and the memory activists in the PRC, which I call "*patriarchal necrosociality*." Contentions between the two groups take roots in the competition for Chinese forefatherhood in the moral and cultural aspects of remembering the dead. With sensitivity to women's active role in commemorating the fallen soldiers as national heroes and Chinese forefathers, this paper underlines the gendered experience of actors who participate in the underexplored form of transnational networking in remembrance.

Jacqueline Zhenru Lin earned her PhD in Asian Studies from the University of Cambridge this July and joins the Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as Research Assistant Professor in September. Her work focuses on what she theorises as "e-commercialise charity" in contemporary China. Through an anthropological lens, her research examines how online platforms and the e-commerce models they design shape the institutionalisation process of grassroots charitable NGOs in China. Based on her long-term fieldwork in charitable associations in China, She has published two journal articles on Chinese volunteers in *Memory Studies* and *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. She is now working on her first monography based on her master dissertation on gendered nationalism in Asia and a co-authored book with Dr Adam Yuet Chau on the constitution of modern China polity. She is invited to contribute as a reviewer by editors from *New Media and Society* and *Memory Studies* since 2019.

Gender Politics and Situated Belonging: Grassroots Buddhism and Chinese Voluntary Associations in Singapore

Ying Ruo SHOW

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In studies of Chinese Buddhism, monk-led Buddhist monastic institutions are often assumed to be the most authoritative entity in propagating dharma, generating Buddhist social networks, and (re)narrating Buddhist history. The problem with this assumption is the apparent neglect of a wide range of “other” organizations that are just as important that could generate social change, but not necessarily spatial-bound or male-led. Whereas in studies of Chinese voluntary associations (CVAs), attention gravitates towards men, especially renowned figures or elites, as network-binding agents in many such community-bound associations, represented by Chinese associations such as *huiguan* (clan associations), *gonghui* (general associations), *tongxianghui* (same-village associations), and *lianyishe* (leisure-activities societies), which are centralized in their management. Often subordinated and outside the whole social structure are women who found support and visibility in a variety of religious-affiliated associations where decentralized networks empowered them with greater flexibility and relatively autonomous roles. This paper provides insights into how women Buddhists navigated a wide range of Buddhist-inclined Chinese voluntary associations in Singapore, and argues for the need to reconsider the disciplinary boundary of CVAs in which gendered religious orthopraxy is often negotiated. By integrating gender into the study of Buddhist communities in Southeast Asia, I consider grassroots women’s responses to Buddhist modernity and reformation, and suggest that their belonging in CVAs is situated upon their negotiation of “right faith” (zhengxin 正信) and “right practice” (zhengxing 正行).

Ying Ruo Show is Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Her research interests lie in the intersection of women and gender in Chinese religions, transnational religious networks, Asian diaspora and Sino-Southeast Asia historical connectivity. Her recent works appeared in *Journal of Chinese Religions*, *Studies in Chinese Religions*, *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History and Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series*. Dr Show is currently leading a research team conducting fieldwork on Chinese temples in Singapore that were established and maintained by women since the late 19th century until today. Her ongoing book project examines the tradition, religious networks and textual corpora of Chinese vegetarian nuns and their temples in contemporary Singapore, in order to tell a new history of Chinese Buddhism and gender across the South China Sea.

The Chee Kung Tong: A Voluntary Sworn Brotherhood across the Cantonese World

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This paper will chronicle the remarkable rise and spread of the Chee Kung Tong (致公堂), one of the largest and most significant voluntary associations in the Cantonese diaspora. From its roots in the mining towns of California and British Columbia in the mid-nineteenth century, the Chee Kung Tong by the early twentieth century boasted hundreds of chapters located throughout North and Latin America, at least as far south as Peru; in Western Europe and southeastern Africa; and throughout Australia and New Zealand. Although lodges were far apart from one another, they communicated and collaborated for mutual aid and political purposes. The paper will illustrate how Chee Kung Tong members built a transnational community through the circulation of people, resources, and ideas, making it important to examine the sworn brotherhood on a global scale.

Fredy González is Associate Professor of Global Asian Studies and History at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author of *Paisanos Chinos: Transpacific Politics among Chinese Immigrants in Mexico* (University of California Press, 2017), and has published articles in *Western Historical Quarterly* and *PRC History Review*. His current project is a global history of the Chinese sworn brotherhood, the Hong Men Chee Kung Tong. A fraternal organization with chapters around the world, the Chee Kung Tong helped far-flung members of the Cantonese diaspora acclimate to their places of settlement. His work has been supported by a Fulbright Scholar Fellowship in Taiwan, as well as an IIE Fellowship for Graduate Study and a Fox Fellowship in Mexico.

The Non-traditional Features of Thai-Chinese Clan Associations in Thai Contemporary Society

Ying ZHANG

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The Thai-Chinese clan association (TCCAs) originated as Chinese secret societies in the 19th century. Before 1949, most of the Thai-Chinese surname associations belonged to the branches of their ancestral home in Thailand. However, due to the Cold War and Thailand's management policy on NGOs, since 1960, the Thai Chinese began to establish TCCAs which were independent from their ancestral home. Today, the United Chinese Clans Association of Thailand (UCCAT) has 64 single-surname clan associations and 6 multi-surname clan associations members. The study of the paper found that TCCAs not only carry the ancestral worship, but their more distinctive feature is their non-traditional. The non-traditional features of TCCAs are mainly manifested in (1) Fading of the male centered profile; (2) Its management adopts a democratically elected council system; (3) Not only established a network within the clan association, but also established a network with other Thai-Chinese communities and Thai general public; (4) Mixed with more and more local Thai culture; (5) Served as important platforms that help support the globalization of the Thai-Chinese. The study data mainly sources from reviewing the journals and websites published by TCCAs and related dialect and territorial-based associations, surveying seventeen clan associations, and interviewing their members.

Ying Zhang obtained her degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Chulalongkorn University in 2020. She read for PhD in Thai Studies Center, Faculty of Arts Chulalongkorn University, Thailand from 2014. The title of her doctoral thesis is "The role of ancestral halls and ancestral worship in Chinese Clan associations in Thailand as forms of cultural integration in the age of globalization". Her main publications include *The Income of Thai-Chinese Clan Association and Thai Capitalist Economy*, *A Short History of the Transformation of Ethnic Chinese Organizations in Thailand: From Seditious Secret Societies to Patriotic Cultural NGOs* and prepare to publish *Mixed Culture of Traditional Chinese and Thai in the Ritual of Ancestral Worship of Thai-Chinese Community: A Case Study of the Xu Clan Association of Thailand*. Now, as an independent researcher, Zhang Ying mainly engaged in the study of the history and restoration of Chinese ancestral worship. The Chinese communities in Southeast Asia involve its management model, source of income, cultivation of the younger generation, relationship with local culture, relationship with ancestral home, etc.

Chinese Indonesian Voluntary Associations and Hometown Development within Indonesia

Emily HERTZMAN

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After the fall of Suharto and the retraction of discriminatory laws in Indonesia, many different kinds of Chinese Indonesian Voluntary Associations (CIVAs) returned after over 30 years of prohibition. While some of these CIVAs have taken a role in cultural and economic brokering of transnational relationships with mainland China, now a global economic superpower, many have very different visions and missions for their membership and activities. In this paper, I explore the rise specifically of hometown associations that have proliferated in the past two decades in order to channel support to, express love for and identification with the *kampung halaman*, or hometown. These hometown associations do not refer to *qiaoxiang* (侨乡), or ancestral villages of overseas Chinese, but rather hometowns around Indonesia, and members consisted of local, Jakarta, or overseas-based Chinese Indonesians who engage in developing their hometowns socially, culturally, politically and economically via a series of activities ranging from practical to symbolic. I argue that, despite a period of cultural repression, the rapid revival of CIVAs in the Indonesian contexts indicates the resiliency of this particular form of social organization, which is based on the ways which it can give structure to other cultural elements that are important within the current cultural identity politics in Indonesia. These include creating community and belonging through membership in peoples' organizations (*Organisasi Masyarakat*), participating in a (trans)local social economy of prestige and name-making activities, and contributing to networks of social assistances redistribution (i.e. charity and mutual aid) in ways that respect and reinforce locally-meaning forms of authority and hierarchy.

Emily Hertzman is a sociocultural anthropologist whose research focuses on mobilities, identities, religious practices, and politics. She is Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute in the Religion and Globalisation cluster at the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Toronto in 2017. Her theoretical and empirical research is centered around understanding how peoples' concepts of home and belonging are transformed under broader shifting social conditions.

Bridging Ethnic Harmony: A Tale of Two Temples

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This paper aims to compare the management/role of two major temples located in Kuching City, Malaysia namely, *Siew San Teng* (寿山亭) or better known as *Tua Pek Kong Temple* (大伯公庙) and *Ching San Yen* (青山岩). The former is the oldest temple established since 1843, located at the heart of the city; whereas the latter perhaps can be dated back to two centuries ago (though no official records have been found) in a Malay village called Muara Tebas. Tua Pek Kong Temple is collaboratively administered by five local Chinese dialect groups (Hokkien, Hakka, Teochew, Hainan and Cantonese) through the Kuching Chinese Community Charitable Trust Board since 2003. Funds collected through religious activities are mainly for Chinese-related activities like donations to the Chung Hua (Chinese) series schools. There are six Chinese (subsidised) primary schools and three private Chinese secondary schools in total. In contrast to the Tua Pek Kong Temple, the Kuching Hokkien Association took over the management of Ching San Yen in 1984, sharing this responsibility with the village's *Jawatankuasa Kemajuan & Keselamatan* (Development & Security Committee). This collaboration was quoted as "the most religious tolerance in Malaysia" (The Star, 31st August 1995). The dichotomy of management/role between the two temples allows further examination of the issue of ethnic/religious relationships amongst the Chinese communities in Kuching – extending these temple-related activities and management to the non-Chinese communities through Benedict Anderson's proposal of an imagined political community.

Yun Seh Lee is currently a PhD candidate with Flinders University working on the impact of policies pursued by the PRC and Taiwan on local Chinese communities in Sarawak, Malaysia. She has a background in economics and public policy, with degrees from the Universiti Sains Malaysia and the University of Auckland. Her oral history experiences have included being an intern and then volunteering with George Town World Heritage Incorporation based in Penang, Malaysia. She can speak and write Chinese/Mandarin, English, and Malay; and is familiar with Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Hakka, and Cantonese. She is a keen observer of international relations and societal change.

From Undertakers to *Doujyuns* (道院): A Development of *Nahm Mouh* (喃嘸)’s Voluntary Associations in Singapore

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This paper aims at a historical study of the development of *Naam Mou* community in Singapore. Through an archival study on the activities and the vicissitudes of the *Naam Mou* related organizations, it focuses on how the *Naam Mou* masters attached to the funeral industry and adapted to the changing social circumstance under the rapid urban development program. *Naam Mou* master is a colloquial term for Cantonese Taoist priest, they are praised by being called *Nam Mou Sifu* (喃嘸師傅) or *Nam Mou Sinsang* (喃嘸先生), and denigrated by referring to *Nam Mou Lo* (喃嘸佬). According to the publications of Cantonese clan associations, *Naam Mou* masters were attached to death houses and undertakers in Sago lane, Chinatown. They also founded many *Doujyuns* (道院) to facilitate their work as ritual specialists and provide religious services to the Cantonese community. They had established an industrial guide, *Thong Sow Hong* (同壽行), in the early 20th century. In the 4th pavilion (第四亭廣字模範山) of Peck San Theng cemetery, a collective grave “*Naam Mou Guide* (喃嘸行)” was also built. The founding of these occupational associations revealed a federation among the *Naam Mou* masters before the mid 20th century. However, urban pilot developments have gradually transformed the landscape of Singapore since the 1960s. These death houses and undertakers were forced to dissolve in the 1980s, which indicated the shrinkage of the *Naam Mou* master community. This paper attempts to delineate the history of the *Naam Mou* masters by emphasizing the development of the relevant organizations. It also reveals that the affiliations of the *Naam Mou* community were commercialized and further institutionalized, based in the undertakers and the *Doujyuns*.

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The Remaking of Global Hakka Associations in the Contemporary World

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There are Hakka associations all over the world. The purpose of the establishment of the Hakka society are closely related to the time when it was established. The main purpose of the Hakka society in the early ages of its establishment was to help the Hakka people here to find a job and provide temporary shelter. The Hakka associations established in recent years are mainly based on friendship, as well as expanding commercial and political relations. This study proposes a matrix of Hakka association types, which can be divided into four types of Hakka communities according to the period of immigration and their relationship with the hometown. There are new Taiwan Hakka associations, new China Hakka associations, old Chinese Hakka associations and old migrant Chinese Hakka associations. With the development of the Internet, that is, the connection of globalization, modern immigrants no longer need the help of the Hakka associations. At present, the main function of the Hakka community has been changed to the function of leisure and friendship. This article interviewed Hakka associations in Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Canada, the United States and other countries, and found that Hakka associations in different regions have the problem of aging members, and there are also different development problems that need to be solved urgently. A further development is that the contemporary Hakka community expands its activities to the online community. Through the connection of the online community, they can contact not only the local Hakka people, but also the Hakka people in more different areas. The online community can communicate further. Therefore, whether in the Taiwan or other regions, more and more Hakka associations have been established, and these Hakka associations have also demonstrated their huge social influence all over the world.

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Han-Pi Chang is currently Distinguished Professor in Department of Hakka Language and Social Sciences, National Central University, Taiwan. She received her PhD in Sociology from Bielefeld University, Germany. Her research has focused on the following three fields: Southeast Asia and ethnic economy of Hakka, female marriage migrants from Southeast Asia and Taiwan, and Taiwan Hakka society and sustainable development. She has published books and over a dozen of papers on Southeast Asia.

Chinese Secret Societies and the Unmaking of Tin-Mining in a Southern Burmese Village in the Late Nineteenth Century

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Secret society, a transnational grassroots institution among Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia, was perceived a persistent threat to law and order by local and colonial authorities, yet also a vital factor of regulating labour force and redistributing resources, especially in labour-intensive sectors such as tin and gold mines across colonial Southeast Asia. This paper looks at the tin-mining in Maliwun, a small seaside Burmese village near the Thai-Burmese border with rich tin deposit. The village was eventually unable to materialise its economic potentials in the late nineteenth century, to the annoyance of British authorities and investors, Chinese miners and Siamese/Malay residents. This was in sharp contrast to its neighbour across the border, Ranong in Siam, and in general, the many thriving tin mines in northern Malaya, all of which were extensively operated by the Chinese and maintained intricate links to Chinese capitals and communal headquarters in regional centres such as Penang and Singapore. Acknowledging Maliwun's administratively peripheral position at the edge of British India, British Malaya and the Siamese kingdom, this paper focuses on the integrated network of Chinese secret societies along the tin belt of the Malay Peninsula. It hopes to understand to what extent did this Chinese grassroots institution contribute to the failure of Malinwun, while it was almost always successful in the making of other great tin mines in the same region under similar conditions.

Yi Li is Lecturer in East and South East Asian History at Aberystwyth University in Wales, United Kingdom. Prior to joining Aberystwyth University, she worked as Postdoctoral Fellow at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS, University of London. She is the author of *Chinese in Colonial Burma: A Migrant Community in A Multiethnic State* (2017). Her research interests include migration and diaspora in modern Southeast and East Asia, with a particular focus on the colonial and postcolonial history of Chinese community in Burma/Myanmar.

The Role of Chinese Voluntary Associations in Chinese Outward Invest in Southeast Asia

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With the implementation of the “Go Global” strategy and the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese companies have gradually grown into the main force of outward foreign direct investment. Chinese voluntary associations have played an active role in promoting inward foreign direct investment in China, but its role in helping Chinese companies invest abroad has not been fully revealed. To digest this situation, this paper explores the role and differences of Chinese voluntary associations in the foreign investment of Chinese enterprises in Southeast Asia. Through the analysis of the network structure of Chinese voluntary associations, we find that the current global Chinese voluntary association network presents the structural characteristics of “Internet”, with openness and regional core nodes. In addition, from the perspective of “global-local” interactions, enterprises can effectively connect with global resources and information through the global connectivity network formed by communication between Chinese voluntary associations, and can successfully achieve local embedded through the two-way localization service ability formed by Chinese voluntary associations after years of deep cultivation in local areas. In the comparative study, this paper holds that firstly overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese communities in Singapore, Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia have strong political influence; Secondly, the government-cooperative Chinese voluntary association and the private Chinese voluntary association have their own advantages and disadvantages; Thirdly, the “new” Chinese voluntary association generally plays a more significant role in helping Chinese enterprises’ outward FDI.

Yutian Liang is Associate Professor of School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University. He received his PhD from Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences. His research interests cover economic geography and regional development. In recent years, he focuses his research field on: (1) the relationship between social network and China's OFDI in Southeast Asia, (2) the development modes of overseas industrial parks in Southeast Asia, and (3) the transition of Southeast Asia's development. He also serves as the Vice director of Youth Working Committee and the member of the Committee of Economic Geography, the Geographical Society of China (GSC).

Zhengke Zhou is a PhD student from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Department of Geography and Resource Management. His research interest is economic geography, urban and regional development/governance in China. He is particularly focusing on the green industrial development in the Pearl River Delta region in his PhD research.

Identity, Business and Transnational Networks: A Study on Chinese Associations in Brunei Darussalam

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Drawing on documentary research and interviews data, this paper aims to analyze the historical landscape and social context of Chinese associations in Brunei Darussalam. Through the perspective of their historical and contemporary development, the paper discusses how Chinese associations serve as a way to understand the cultural identity, economic practice and transnational connection of the Chinese Bruneian community. As a cultural institution, Chinese associations have preserved the history of the ethnic group and maintained the cultural heritage of the Chinese society in Brunei. Furthermore, the intertwined networks of the members in the organizations and the interactions among them have maintained the function of the associations as a site for Chinese economic activities in Brunei. With the rise of China and the arrival of new Chinese capital in Brunei, Chinese associations in Brunei have become a resource to establish economic ties and cultural exchanges with China. The complexity and differences among these associations are foregrounded by their diverse outlook, social interaction and transnational mobility. These dynamics continue to influence the positionality of the Chinese community in the Bruneian society.

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Kai Li Zhao is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Her research focuses on the Chinese community and emerging Chinese FDIs in Brunei. She holds a BA in Cultural Industry Management from Nanjing University of the Arts and has completed an MA in ASEAN studies at Guangxi University for Nationalities where she conducted a research on the Chinese temple in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. She is currently also a part-time research assistant at Brunei Research Institute at the College of ASEAN Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities, China.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chinese Voluntary Organisation: A Global Chinese-China Dialectical Interconnectivity Framework

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Chinese Voluntary organisation (CVA), *huaren shetuan* was and is still considered as an important social institution in the global Chinese communities as well as in mainland China. Today, the definition of Chinese voluntary organisation has expanded and includes chambers of commerce, vernacular schools, clan and lineage associations, religious organisations, school alumni, charitable groups and foundations that continue to have its root links with Chinese community, Chinese businesses, Chinese individuals but have increasingly moved beyond the Chinese ethnic boundary into local and global society. At another level, the CVAs traditionally have and continued to have strong socio-cultural and economic links with the mainland Chinese counterpart at the social group and individual levels. At the same time, mainland Chinese state has also traditionally regarded the CVAs as important cultural-economic resources that they could tapped on for economic and political support during the various historical/political epochs. Today, CVAs are regarded as even more significant to the mainland Chinese state as an important part of its cultural diplomacy in its promotion of the Humanity's shared destiny 人类命运共同体 and Chinese's shared humanity and shared cultural values 中华民族共同体; 中华民族文化共同体. This paper will explore how CVAs become an important tool in the understanding of the global-Chinese-China dialectical interconnectivity.

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

More than Survival: Conceptualizing the Adaptations of Chinese Voluntary Associations amid Change

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The contributions made by Chinese voluntary associations have often been viewed through a survival lens either by members of these associations or in academic scholarship. The survival lens has notably been used to frame the support such organizations have provided historically to overseas Chinese communities and more recent calls for renewal in contemporary times (Shih 2016; Tong 2010). My reflection is one against survivalization, the process by which the contributions of such organizations are interpreted through a rigid sense of community, a fixed institutional framework and set teleological goals. I highlight how survivalization limit our conceptualization of their contributions and I propose instead centering their “orientation” as they “reside in space” and adapt amid change (Ahmed 2006: 1). By reflecting on the activities of selected language-based Chinese voluntary associations in Singapore, I explore key principles for understanding how such associations navigate change, without succumbing to the allure of survivalization.

Jean Michel Montsion is Associate Professor in the Department of Multidisciplinary Studies at York University, which is located on the ancestral territories of the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat and the Métis (Toronto, Canada). He researches questions of ethnicity and mobility in gateway cities like Singapore and Vancouver, with a specific focus on the activities of Chinese voluntary associations. He has published in *Asian Ethnicity*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chinese Voluntary Associations and Diaspora Politics

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This commentary draws on the examples of Chinese Voluntary Associations (CVAs) in Singapore and Myanmar to reflect on China's growing presence in Southeast Asia. Such associations have long existed in both countries where Chinese migrants have moved to and settled in historically. These forms of organizational activity continue to feature prominently today in the light of efforts by the members of the Chinese diaspora—which is by no means uniform—to maintain cultural roots as well as, in some cases, as a means for newer waves of Chinese migrants to cultivate a sense of community. Such CVAs are dual-facing, on the one hand oriented towards the ancestral land (i.e. China), and on the other hand, oriented towards the country of immigration (i.e. Singapore and Myanmar). This commentary reflects on, first, how CVAs are embedded in the nation-building efforts of both the ancestral land and the destination country which can at times be at odds with one another. Second, it draws on research done with members of the Chinese diaspora in Singapore and Myanmar to discuss how these migrants—as contextualized in the different waves of migration found in these countries—situate themselves in the national and transnational domains. In so doing, this commentary underlines the active maneuvering of multiple state and diaspora actors in the arenas of diaspora politics.

Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho is Associate Professor at the Department of Geography and Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. Her research addresses how citizenship is changing as a result of multi-directional migration in the Asia-Pacific. She has conducted research and published widely on migration trends in Singapore, China and Myanmar. She is the author of *Citizens in Motion: Emigration, Immigration and Re-migration Across China's Borders* (Stanford University Press), which received the American Sociological Association's (ASA) award for "Best Book in Global and Transnational Sociology by an International Scholar" in 2019.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Searching for Relevance in a New Age: Chinese Voluntary Associations in Indonesia

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Chinese Voluntary Associations (CVAs) in Indonesia have proven themselves to be resilient. Having had to largely go 'underground' during the New Order's assimilation policy from 1967-1998, Indonesia's CVAs re-emerged in the post-Suharto era, keen to re-assert their previous roles as the unifier, cultural gatekeeper, representative, and protector of ethnic Chinese communities. Since 1998, CVAs in their various forms and function have sprung up in multitudes. Mostly spearheaded by male 'elders' who were either Chinese educated or were members of defunct CVAs, post-Suharto CVAs enthusiastically embraced newfound cultural freedoms by promoting Chinese culture, re-establishing ancestral links with hometowns in China, and promoting the teaching and learning of Mandarin in Indonesia. However, after more than two decades of post-Suharto reforms, Indonesian CVAs are now struggling to establish their relevance among a younger generation of ethnic Chinese, most of whom do not speak Chinese (Mandarin or otherwise) and only have a vague sense of Chinese cultural identity. In this paper, I will discuss some of the strategies that have been employed by Indonesian CVAs to navigate the evolving terrain of post-Suharto socio-political landscape while simultaneously trying to capitalise on China's global rise.

Charlotte Setijadi is Assistant Professor of Humanities at the School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University. She researches ethnic Chinese identity politics in Indonesia and the Indonesian diaspora worldwide. Charlotte's research has been published in academic journals such as *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Asian Survey*, and *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*. Her first book *Memories of Unbelonging: Ethnic Chinese Identity Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia* will be published by University of Hawai'i Press in 2023.

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Yang YANG is Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Human Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on transnational religious networks and the politics of ethno-religious identity in northwestern China. Her dissertation thus adopts an ethnographic approach to analyzing the impacts of Hui Muslims' grass-roots connections to non-Chinese Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and the Middle East in the Hui's everyday lives in Xi'an, China. Her current research examines how the Hui diaspora in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia contributes to grass-roots connections between China and Malaysia, and how Malaysia becomes Hui's new Muslim role model through serving as their preferred destination for halal tourism and their style references for Muslim fashion. Notably, this project analyses how ethno-religious identities and mobility intersect in the contexts of migration and the recentering of Islamic teachings in both cultural and political contexts on a global scale.

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