

3 DECEMBER 2024 • TUESDAY

09:30 – 09:40	WELCOME REMARKS
	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
09:40 – 10:40	PANEL 1
<i>Chairperson</i>	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
09:40	Heritage Narration and the Creation of Cultural Identity: A Case Study of the Grand Universal Salvation Rituals of Singapore Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng CHI-CHEUNG CHOI , The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Xiamen University
10:00	A Collaborative Cultural Basin Model: Understanding CVAs in the Global Chinese and China Universes KHUN ENG KUAH , National University of Singapore
10:20	Traditional Networks from the Perspective of Stone Inscriptions ZHENMAN ZHENG , Xiamen University
10:40 – 11:10	MORNING TEA
11:10 – 12:50	PANEL 2
<i>Chairperson</i>	ZHENMAN ZHENG , Xiamen University
11:10	Journey to the East: The Roots Searching of Dejiachui QI WU , Singapore University of Social Sciences
11:30	Henghua Ritual Networks in Southeast Asia LI ZHENG , Xiamen University
11:50	Buddha's English Teacher: Fei Yechao and the Globalization of Mount Jiuhua since 1978 SISI WANG , National University of Singapore
12:10	Old Tradition is New Fashion: Emerging Youth Religious Practices in Fujian and their Cross-Border Connections since the Recent Past XINCHENG HONG , National University of Singapore
12:30	Questions & Answers
12:50 – 13:50	LUNCH
13:50 – 15:10	PANEL 3
<i>Chairperson</i>	DEAN WANG , National University of Singapore
13:50	A Preliminary Study on Malaysian Chinese Businessmen Still Continue Contributing Back to Hometown in the 21st Century: A Case Study on Ye Changpeng, Descendant from Yangnei Village, Jingu Town, Anxi County, Fujian Province SIEW WAH YAP , Xiamen University Malaysia
14:10	The Transformation of Malaysian Chinese Entrepreneurs' Emotional Connection to their Hometown: A Case Study of Ng Yoon Kin and his Father WEI KAI KUI , Xiamen University Malaysia
14:30	The Modern Interaction Model of Malaysian Teochew Businessmen and the Ancestral Hometown: A Case Study of Dato' Goh Wan Sing and Malaysia Teochew Chamber of Commerce (MTCC) YI-HONG NG , Xiamen University Malaysia
14:50	Questions & Answers
15:10 – 15:40	AFTERNOON TEA

15:40 – 17:00	PANEL 4
<i>Chairperson</i>	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
<i>15:40</i>	Culture of Relatedness in Chinese Religio-Capitalist Movements DEAN WANG , National University of Singapore
<i>16:00</i>	Company Operated by Home-Place Association: The History of the Fujian Jinmen Steamship Company in the First Half of the 20th Century KANG YU , National University of Singapore
<i>16:20</i>	Anxi Lineage Networks in Singaporean Villages and Temples RUO LIN , National University of Singapore
<i>16:40</i>	Questions & Answers
17:00 – 18:00	ONLINE SESSION WITH HOKKIEN LANGUAGE RESEARCH TEAM
18:00	END OF DAY 1
18:00 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (For Presenters, Chairpersons and Organisers Only)

4 DECEMBER 2024 • WEDNESDAY

10:00 – 11:30	PANEL 5
<i>Chairperson</i>	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
10:00	New Chinese Voluntary Associations in Indonesia: Indonesian People's Organization (<i>Organisasi Masyarakat di Indonesia</i>) or Transnational Social Institution? EMILY HERTZMAN , University of Toronto
10:20	A Study on the Long-Term Contributions of Malaysian Chinese Immigrants to their Ancestral Hometowns: A Case Study of the Huang Family Association of Teng Chin in Yongchun, Fujian GUAN THYE HUE , National University of Singapore JOSEPHINE XIN DE FONG , Xiamen University Malaysia <i>Presenter</i> SIEW WAH YAP , Xiamen University Malaysia
10:40	Research on the Henghua Community in Melaka: A Case Study of People with Ancestral Roots in Etou Village, Putian TEK SOON LING , University of Malaya
11:00	Questions & Answers
11:30 – 12:00	MORNING TEA
12:00 – 13:00	PANEL 6
<i>Chairperson</i>	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
12:00	From Benefactors to Householders: The Emergence of the Lay Buddhist Community in Colonial Singapore, 1927-1945 WEIKAI DONG , National University of Singapore
12:20	Confrontation and Integration: The Role of Chinese Associations in Shaping Malacca's Chinese Community, 1780-1910 JUHN KHAI KLAN CHOO , National University of Singapore
12:40	Questions & Answers
13:00 – 13:15	CLOSING REMARKS
	KENNETH DEAN , National University of Singapore
13:15	END OF WORKSHOP
13:15 – 14:15	LUNCH

Heritage Narration and the Creation of Cultural Identity: A Case Study of the Grand Universal Salvation Rituals of Singapore Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng

Chi-cheung CHOI

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This paper will attempt to demonstrate how a community continues to adjust and adapt ritual details and interpretations in response to changing macro-environment by studying the Grand Universal Salvation Rituals (Wan Yuan Sheng Hui) organized by the Singapore Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng (PST). It will further discuss how national and cultural identities are negotiated through the community's narration of heritage.

The periodically celebrated event is commonly associated with the Cantonese-Hakka community in Singapore. Like many religious communal festivals, it has faced many challenges throughout the 20th century. These challenges, such as the anti-superstition campaign since the late 19th century, the global economic crisis in the 1920s and 30s, and the Japanese occupation during the Pacific War period prompted community members to modify, reinterpret and justify the event as and whenever they were held.

PST, the organizers of the Ritual also carefully recorded ritual details, meanings and objections from time to time since 1922 when it was first organized. An analysis of these records shows the community's choices of national and cultural affiliations as a response to (1) the relations with China, (2) the process of localization and (3) the Singapore government's state building.

Chi-cheung Choi received his doctoral degree from the University of Tokyo. He is Adjunct Professor of the History Department at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Chair Professor of the History Department of Xiamen University, and Hong Kong Government's Museum expert advisor (ethnography). He has published on Chinese festivals and popular religion, family and lineage, and business history. His major publications include *Continuity and Change: Ethnographies of the Communal Jiao Festivals in Hong Kong* (CUHK Press, 2014), *Repay the Deities and Redeem the Spirits: Traditional Chinese festivals in Hong Kong, a Historical Anthropology perspective* (Chung Wah, 2019); (co-ed) *Chinese and Indian Merchants in Modern Asia: Networking Businesses and Formation of Regional Economy*, Brill's series on Modern East Asia in a Global Historical Perspective, volume: 8, Leiden; Boston: Brill (2019) and *Strenuous Decades: Global Challenges and Transformation of Chinese Societies in Modern Asia*, De Gruyter (2022).

A Collaborative Cultural Basin Model: Understanding CVAs in the Global Chinese and China Universes

Khun Eng KUAH

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In earlier research on Voluntary Organisations in the Chinese Diaspora, we have argued that Chinese voluntary organisations today comprised a wide array of Chinese social institutions that include traditional Chinese social organisations such as clan, lineage and territorial-based associations, religious organisations, cultural organisations, alumni associations, professional associations, and chambers of commerce. In the 21st C, CVAs have undergone various phases of development and have established complex and dynamic relationship within the local Chinese community and other ethnicities within the nation-state that they are located in, among the other global Chinese communities and an economically and politically powerful Mainland China.

Focusing on the centrality of ancestor and ancestor worship within the Chinese lineage, this paper will advance a collaborative cultural basin model to understand the continued significance of Chinese lineage as an important CVA in the Global Diaspora Chinese and China Universes.

Khun Eng Kuah is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore; Visiting Professor at the School of International Studies/Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies, Jinan University and an academic adviser to Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, South China Normal University. Her research specializations include: (1) global and diaspora Chinese and China connections (2) society, state and religion including the following: state, society and reformist Buddhism; Buddhist compassion and philanthropy in East and Southeast and Asia, ancestor worship in Chinese societies; Chinese popular religions; and Christian philanthropy and charity. She is the sole author of 5 books; editor/co-editor of 10 edited books and 7 special journal issues; and numerous journal articles and book chapters. Her latest books are *Ancestor Worship in the Diaspora Chinese and China Universes: The Making of a Collaborative Cultural Basin* (Routledge, 2024), and *The Social Production of Buddhist Compassion in Chinese Society* (Routledge, 2022).

Journey to the East: The Roots Searching of Dejiachui

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This article examines the development and evolution of Dejiachui's transnational network, with a focus on its "Tracing Roots" initiative and the establishment of Zixiang Congregation, the first modern congregation of Dejiachui in mainland China. The tracing of roots, a significant mission since the 1990s, reflects Dejiachui's efforts to reconnect with its origins in China while expanding its influence globally. The article explores key milestones, including the formation of the Tracing Roots Committee, the role of spirit-writing in guiding this endeavor, and the cultural significance of affirming Dejiachui's lineage within Chinese civilization. By combining fieldwork and historical analysis, the study highlights the cultural, religious, and socio-economic dimensions of Dejiachui's modern resurgence.

Qi Wu is a lecturer in the Chinese Studies Department at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. She previously served as a research fellow at the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore (NUS) and as an adjunct lecturer in the Chinese Studies Department at NUS. Dr Wu's research focuses on overseas Chinese society and Chinese religions, with a keen interest in the transregional network of Chinese religious and charity organizations. Her new project on kampong heritage and local Chinese temples in Singapore has been funded by the National Heritage Board. Dr Wu's book, *Looking at the Flying Clouds from the South: Transregional Network of the Dejiao Charity Organization in Southeast Asia*, has just been published in 2024.

Buddha's English Teacher: Fei Yechao and the Globalization of Mount Jiuhua since 1978

Sisi WANG

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This paper explores the revival and globalization of a famous Buddhist site and natural scenic spot in China, Mount Jiuhua, over the past decades of reform and opening-up, by integrating the career of Mr. Fei Yechao who had receiving numerous domestic and international tourists. It aims to demonstrate how transnational interactions, along with flow of people and capital, have supported the Buddhist revival in non-migrant hometowns in post-Cultural Revolution era. These intensive interactions were launched and back by governmental policies and economic planning, but inseparable from mobile and local individuals. Hence, this paper argues that transnational religious pilgrimage and tourist exchange have become forms of non-traditional diplomacy. Meanwhile, it distills and summarizes a key concept, "grassroot diplomat", referring to individuals like Mr Fei who has been actively engaged in transnational exchange, mainly at the grassroots level. Grassroot diplomat's activities aligns with government policies basically, and strategically severs as a soft complement.

Sisi Wang is Postdoctoral Fellow in Buddhist Studies at the Department of History, National University of Singapore. Her research interests include Chinese Buddhism, sacred space, pilgrimage, social history of late imperial and modern China, and overseas Chinese. She obtained a PhD in Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore, with a dissertation on Mount Jiuhua in late imperial and Republican China. Her current research focuses on transnational Buddhist interactions between China and the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

Old Tradition is New Fashion: Emerging Youth Religious Practices in Fujian and their Cross-border Connections since the Recent Past

Xincheng HONG

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Existing research on Chinese youth culture mainly focuses on films, music and literature, while less attention is paid to religion. Past scholarships also tend to prioritize youth cultures in large cities than those in smaller places. Regarding religious studies, cases of Chinese youth participation in traditional religions are relatively limited. This paper looks closely into the recent rise of a youth Taoist group in Fujian, which is influenced by popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan while has its roots in the longer history of local religions. Cross-border cultural exchanges, grassroots religious revival and governmental ambitions of capitalizing local heritage, all contribute to a relatively favorable environment for the group to create their collective space.

Combining fieldwork observations and in-depth interviews, this study bridges popular culture and religious traditions in the field of Chinese youth studies; it also provides a rare latest story demonstrating the motivation and strategy of contemporary Chinese youth participating in Taoism and folk religions. Considering the long tradition of religious practices in southern Fujian where the studied group is based, as well as its socio-cultural ties to Taiwan and overseas Chinese societies. This study offers a new perspective to understand transnational religious networks and their localization process, which is particularly relevant to debates on youth religious participation under globalization and urbanization. A common trend in contemporary Fujian and Singapore has been the influence from Taiwan regarding creative performing arts of traditional Chinese religions, with young people in all three places playing an important role.

Xincheng Hong is a PhD candidate at the Department of Chinese Studies in the National University of Singapore (NUS). His research interests lie at the intersection of South China and Southeast Asian history with special focus on multi-directional migration across the Hokkien maritime world. He is working on the PhD thesis, tentatively entitled "Livelihoods, Kinship Adaptations, and the Transformation of Migrants' Hometown: Local Life and Mobility from a Chinese Village in and beyond Quanzhou". Combining historical and anthropological works from Fujian, Hong Kong to Singapore, the thesis traces the history of internal and external migration to and from southern Fujian, as well as the interrelated changing local landscapes, ecology and socio-economic life back in a village at the land-sea transition area of Quanzhou since late imperial China. His research has been supported by the NUS Research Scholarship, the NUS Graduate Research Support Scheme and the Han Tan Juan Award. He is the author of a book based on his master's thesis (Nanyang Technological University, 2018) and several peer-reviewed journal papers.

A Preliminary Study on Malaysian Chinese Businessmen Still Continue Contributing Back to Hometown in the 21st Century: A Case Study on Ye Changpeng, Descendant from Yangnei Village, Jingu Town, Anxi County, Fujian Province

Siew Wah YAP
Xiamen University Malaysia

In the late 19th and early 20th Century, which is a period of turbulent times in China, some members of the Ye clan of Yangnei Village, Jingu Town, Anxi County, travelled across the ocean to Kuala Lumpur, Malaya. For close to hundred years, their original goals were to make a living to support family members, repair houses in the hometown, and with an intention to return to their hometown eventually. Though they were then forced to take root in this foreign country, they never forget to continue contribute back to hometown in the form of public welfare undertakings.

Based on the above-mentioned as a background, this article is focusing and researching on Ye Changpeng, a first-generation immigrant, who had moved to Kuala Lumpur and upon achieving success in his career, began to contribute back to hometown on various aspects and large-scale basis since early 1990s.

This article examines the details of continuous contributing back to his hometown in the past 30 years by Ye Changpeng and analyses the driving force and factors behind his persistence in this kind gesture. In addition, after preliminary research and exploration, it revealed, somewhat unexpectedly, that while China has become one of the world's leading economic powers in this new era, overseas Chinese continue to contribute back to their hometowns as before.

Siew Wah Yap was born in Kuala Lumpur, and his ancestral home is Anxi County, Fujian Province. He graduated from the London School of Economics and Political Science in his early years with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science. In 2023, he completed the Master's Degree program in the Department of Chinese Studies at Xiamen University Malaysia. He is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Chinese Studies at Xiamen University Malaysia, and his research interest is the spread of Huize Zunwang's belief in southern Fujian and Southeast Asia, as well as the Ye clan in southern Fujian. Currently, he is Secretary General of Confucian Private Secondary School in Kuala Lumpur, Honorary Assistant General Secretary of Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies, and Vice Chairman of Association of Ye Clan, Yangnei, Anxi (Nanyang Zhuminggong).

The Transformation of Malaysian Chinese Entrepreneurs' Emotional Connection to their Hometown: A Case Study of Ng Yoon Kin and his Father

Wei Kai KUI

Xiamen University Malaysia

This paper compares the contributions of Ng Yoon Kin and his father, Ng Ho Yiat, to their ancestral homeland, exploring differences in homeland attachment across two generations of Chinese entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The study finds that their motivation to return was not driven by economic gain but by a deep-rooted sense of emotional and cultural identity tied to their place of origin. However, this sense of connection differs between father and son. Having grown up in China, Ng Ho Yiat had a profound attachment to his hometown, frequently returning after retirement and making significant contributions to its development through philanthropy. Influenced by his father, Ng Yoon Kin also regarded charity as a personal duty, making several donations to his hometown and encouraging his children to stay connected with their ancestral roots. However, compared to his father, Ng Yoon Kin placed a greater emphasis on supporting Chinese-language education and other charitable causes in Malaysia, reflecting a shift in philanthropic focus between the two generations. Overall, the experiences of the Ng family suggest that, without broader cultural and economic exchanges, the sense of homeland identity maintained solely through familial bonds may continue to wane in future generations.

Wei Kai Kui is a master's student at Xiamen University Malaysia, specializing in the study of Chinese religious beliefs. His current research focuses on faith studies in Klang, the economic and historical development of Chinese communities in Sepang, and Datuk Gong worship. He is also serving as a research assistant at the Centre for Research on Southeast Asian Chinese Documents, contributing to the temple data and images from Johor and MHGIS. His published works include *The Malaysian Historical Geographical Information System (MHGIS): The Case of Chinese Temples in Johor* (co-authored with Hue Guan et al.) and *The Characteristics and Differences of Datuk Gong Beliefs in Sepang and Sungai Pelek New Villages*, among other academic papers.

**The Modern Interaction Model of
Malaysian Teochew Businessmen and the Ancestral Homeland:
A Case Study of Dato' Goh Wan Sing and
Malaysia Teochew Chamber of Commerce (MTCC)**

Yi-Hong NG
Xiamen University Malaysia

This paper takes Dato' Goh Wan Sing and the Malaysia Teochew Chamber of Commerce (MTCC) as a case study to explore the new model of interaction between contemporary Malaysian Teochew merchants and their ancestral home, and its characteristics. The study reveals that Dato' Goh Wan Sing's family upbringing, entrepreneurial and association experiences have cultivated his strong sense of ancestral homeland, while his sensitivity and vision as a businessman have led him to found the Malaysia Teochew Chamber of Commerce. The characteristics of the interaction pattern between contemporary Teochew businessmen and their ancestral homeland can be summarized as follows: using business as a bridge; valuing mutually beneficial ties; forming a broader social network by radiating outward from the ancestral homeland as a base; and the dual embeddedness of businessmen in both their home country and the Malaysia society. Based on the motivation of the Malaysia Teochew Chamber of Commerce and the attraction of business opportunities in China, the interaction between the contemporary Malaysian Teochew businessmen and their ancestral home will continue to develop in the future and have the tendency of becoming closer, which will bring great benefits to the economic development of Malaysia and China.

Yi-Hong Ng graduated from Xiamen University Malaysia with a Bachelor's Degree in Chinese Studies (Honours). She is currently a Master's student in the Department of Chinese Studies at Xiamen University Malaysia. Her research interests are mainly focused in the history of the Malaysian Chinese and Chinese organisations.

Culture of Relatedness in Chinese Religio-Capitalist Movements

Dean WANG

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Doing religion in Singapore is costly, and people, specifically business leaders, do not engage in activities that are not productive and profitable. Based on these two assumptions, this paper studies the modalities of doing religion by prominent Chinese businessman, and how their religious doings illustrate a culture of relatedness that serves to enforce, enchant, and ultimately encash their activities. The notion of relatedness is defined in two ways, first on the level of kinship relations – biological ties, marriage, and shared experience – and second, manifested in *guanxi* in the traditional business context. Temples serve as the main sites of study for this paper, where the various types of relatedness are vividly manifested. Three case studies presented include Poh Tiong Beo Temple, Poh Ming Tze Temple, and Hong San See Temple, which showcases the intricate culture of relatedness in the management of and doing religion in the temple. As we rethink the sustainability and practicality of Chinese voluntarily associations in contemporary Singapore, the religio-capitalist movements within the local and translocal religious networks are key considering factors in addressing the multifaceted issues.

Dean Wang is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Chinese Studies in the National University of Singapore. His main research interest is on Chinese religion, specifically on the iconography and material culture of Daoism.

**Company Operated by Home-Place Association:
The History of the Fujian Jinmen Steamship Company
in the First Half of the 20th Century**

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This paper examines how home-place associations utilized limited companies to sustain welfare initiatives and maintain influence in their hometowns. Like many areas in the Hokkien region, Jinmen experienced significant migration as locals sought new opportunities overseas. To facilitate travel for these migrants, members of the Singapore Jinmen Association established a joint stock limited company in 1922. This company, named the Jinmen Steamship Company, was managed by a board of directors in Singapore, with a local agency handling daily operations in Xiamen. The company owned a steamship, *Jinxing*, which provided passenger services and remittance transport between Jinmen and Xiamen. It also operated an inn that offered accommodations and ticketing services for overseas travel. Rather than distributing profits to shareholders, the company reinvested its earnings into public welfare projects in Jinmen, such as supporting education, constructing roads, providing loans to local governments, maintaining social order, and offering wartime refugee relief. While the Singapore Jinmen Association demonstrated considerable influence over local affairs through the company, local authorities also sought to intervene in its management. The outbreak of World War II disrupted the company's operations, and the Cold War transformed Jinmen into a military frontier. As a result, the Singapore Jinmen Association lost control of the company and its influence over local society diminished.

Kang Yu is Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute in the National University of Singapore (NUS). He obtained his PhD in Chinese Studies at NUS with a thesis focusing on Huizhou merchants and their transregional trade institutions. His current research interests include business history and overseas Chinese.

New Chinese Voluntary Associations in Indonesia: Indonesian People's Organization (*Organisasi Masyarakat di Indonesia*) or Transnational Social Institution?

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Chinese Voluntary Associations in Indonesia have forcefully reemerged since the fall of Suharto and the retraction of the new order's anti-Chinese discriminatory legislation. While some associations are re-inaugurated versions of older 19th century associations that had temporarily closed during the Suharto era, including surname, clan, dialect and hometown associations, others represent more modern groupings such as alumni, temple, and interest-based associations. As membership associations, these groups function as a way of bringing together people with shared identity features for some common purpose, whether it is social, recreational, spiritual or political. The ability for Chinese Indonesians to form these kinds of groups, after a long period of prohibition, constitutes an important form of social recognition of the collective identities of Chinese Indonesian citizen-subjects. In this paper I discuss the significance of the reemergence of Chinese Associations in Indonesia for social and ethnic belonging and I connect this type of association to an Indonesian form of association called people's organizations (*Organisasi Masyarakat- Ormas*). I argue that identifying Chinese Indonesian Voluntary Associations not only as a traditional and transnational Chinese social institution, but also as a type of Indonesian *Ormas* allows us to understand the ways that these new groups are seeking political voice, and organizing for collective action in Indonesia. By viewing them as *Ormas*—an indigenous Indonesia social formation that has been in existence since the revolutionary era- Chinese Indonesian Associations- are rupturing the long—held stereotype of their communities being foreign within the body politic of the nation. Tapping into the symbolic power and legitimacy of being a type of *Ormas* is an important way to stake claims to ethnic belonging and cultivate social and political influence.

Emily Hertzman works as Research Associate at the Ethnography Lab in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. She is a sociocultural anthropologist who conducts research in Indonesia, with members of Chinese Indonesian communities, investigating how peoples' concepts of home and belonging get transformed under broader shifting social conditions, including migration and mobility, religious expression, and inter-ethnic politics. She completed her PhD in anthropology at the University of Toronto (2017) and held the Richard Charles Lee Post-Doctoral Fellowship (2017-2019) at the Asian Institute, where she spearheaded the Asian Pathways Research Lab. Most recently she was a research fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore (2020-2023), where she was a co-editor of the research blog *CoronoAsur: Religion and Covid19*. She is an editor of the book *CoronoAsur: Asian Religions in the Covidian Age* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2023) and her articles have been published in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Indonesia*, *HAU: Journal of Anthropological Theory*, *Global Networks*, *Asian Pacific Perspectives*, and *Modern Asian Studies*.

A Study on the Long-Term Contributions of Malaysian Chinese Immigrants to their Ancestral Hometowns: A Case Study of the Huang Family Association of Teng Chin in Yongchun, Fujian

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Josephine Xin De FONG

Xiamen University Malaysia

This study examines the Teng Chin Huang Clan Association of Yongchun, Fujian, to explore the pathways and practices through which Malaysian Chinese immigrants give back to their ancestral homeland. Established in 1911 by 12 founders, the association now has over 3,000 members. Beyond its focus on Malaysia, the association actively funds infrastructure development in the ancestral region, including ancestral house restoration, school construction, and square development, efforts that continue to this day. These practices reflect the deep attachment of clan members to their homeland and the driving force of the clan organization.

On an operational level, the association organizes annual ancestor worship trips to strengthen family cohesion. It also raises funds by leasing and managing historical assets, which are reinvested in cultural preservation and public welfare in the hometown. Through a systematic analysis of the Teng Chin Huang Clan Association, this paper reveals how Malaysian Chinese immigrants sustain ties to their ancestral homeland and give back in diverse ways within globalization, offering a valuable case study for research on Southeast Asian Chinese immigrant communities.

Guan Thye Hue is Director of the Research Center for Southeast Asian Chinese Documents, Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore, Research Fellow at the Fo Guang Shan Humanistic Buddhism Research Center in Taiwan, and Deputy Chairperson of the Academic Committee of the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations. He is the author of several monographs, including *Chinese Epigraphy in Singapore 1819-1911*, *The Buddha Lights of Lion City: The Hundred-Year Development of Buddhism in Singapore*, and *Evolution and Model: The Propagation of Taism and Buddhism in Singapore*.

Josephine Xin De Fong, a Malaysian, is an assistant at the Research Center for Southeast Asian Chinese Documents. She holds an honors bachelor's degree in Chinese Studies from Xiamen University Malaysia and is currently a master's student in the same department. Her research interests include Malaysian Chinese migration and folk beliefs.

Research on the Henghua Community in Melaka: A Case Study of People with Ancestral Roots in Etou Village, Putian

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A significant portion of the Henghua community in Melaka, Malaysia, consists of villagers and descendants from Etou Village, Daitou Town, Putian City, China. Upon arriving in Nanyang in earlier times, they settled together, forming a local self-protection mechanism to support new immigrants. Simultaneously, they preserved the economic and cultural traditions of their homeland, passing down a strong sense of ancestral identity to future generations. This study examines how several Henghua individuals in Melaka, who trace their ancestral roots to Etou Village, actively practice and preserve the economic model and cultural traditions of their hometown. Drawing on collective family memories spanning generations, these practices demonstrate their efforts to sustain their heritage. Their frequent visits to their ancestral village and participation in various activities underscore the enduring influence of their forebears' sense of local identity. This ancestral identity has also expanded to encompass a broader identification with the "Henghua" ethnic group. Members of this community are actively involved in organizations such as the Melaka Heng Ann Association and the Melaka Heng Ann Thean Hou Temple. Through these platforms, they unite Henghua people across different professions and contribute to the promotion of Henghua culture in Malaysia.

Tek Soon Ling is Senior Lecturer at the Institute of China Studies and Deputy Director of Institute of China Studies, Universiti Malaya. He received his PhD at Tsinghua University, Beijing in 2011. Dr Ling's research interests include Malaysia-China relations, Belt and Road Initiative in Malaysia and Malaysia Hokkien community. At the present time, Dr Ling is examining and exploring how the China investment is impacting the Malaysia economy and culture development.

From Benefactors to Householders: The Emergence of the Lay Buddhist Community in Colonial Singapore, 1927-1945

Weikai DONG

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In the late 19th century, Chinese Buddhism began to take root in the overseas Chinese communities of maritime Southeast Asia, facilitated by Buddhist networks across the South China Sea and within Singapore. Influenced by the growing activities of Chinese monks and householders within the overseas Chinese community, the “householder” (*jushi* 居士) gradually replaced the historical “benefactor” (*shizhu* 施主) as the primary lay Buddhist community in these areas. A landmark event was the establishment of the Singapore Chinese Buddhist Association (SCBA) in 1927, the first Buddhist organization in Singapore, encouraged by the reformer Venerable Taixu. The householders led and promoted Buddhist modernization practices in the overseas Chinese community of colonial Singapore through collective participation, with the SCBA at its core, from 1927 until the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945. Drawing on a range of historical materials, such as meeting minutes and correspondence records preserved within the organization, this paper aims to examine the overlap between Buddhist networks and the broader Chinese immigrant dialect groups, commerce, and popular religious forces. It argues that the circulation of Buddhist knowledge, money, and people within the Buddhist networks across the South China Sea and within Singapore contributed to the rise of the “householder” community in the Chinese diaspora in colonial Singapore. The research will illustrate that, while Buddhist organizations served as key nodes in this diasporic network, they also facilitated the formation of the “Human Life Buddhism Alliance” in Singapore.

Weikai Dong is a master’s student in the Department of History and the Buddhist Studies Group at the National University of Singapore. His research interests include Chinese popular religion, Chinese Buddhism, Buddhist modernization, and overseas Chinese history. In 2022, he graduated with an Honorary Bachelor of Arts degree from the Xiamen University Malaysia. In 2023, he graduated from the Department of History at the National University of Singapore, earning a Master’s degree in Asian and Global History. He is also a research assistant at the Centre for Research on Southeast Asian Chinese Documents. He co-authored and published “A Study of United Temple in Singapore—Analysis of Union from the Perspective of Sub-Temple” and “The Malaysian Historical Geographical Information System (MHGIS): The Case of Chinese Temples in Johor”, both published in *Religions*. He is currently conducting research for his thesis, which is tentatively titled “Dharma for the Lay: The Singapore Chinese Buddhist Association, 1927-Present”.

Confrontation and Integration: The Role of Chinese Associations in Shaping Malacca's Chinese Community, 1780-1910

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This study focuses on the formation and development of Chinese associations in Malacca between 1780 and 1880, analyzing the connections and interactions within Chinese dialect groups (bang), and revealing the social changes of the Chinese community. In the 19th century, the Malacca Chinese community did not experience a two-tiered opposition between dialect groups. The Cheng Hoon Teng temple and Sam Poh Hill served as organizations for the entire Chinese community. Additionally, the people of the Guangbang (Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew, and Hainanese) also supported the Fujianese temples. During this period, the Chinese community remained united under the leadership of the Kapitan Cina/Tengchu. However, Chinese associations were often formed based on their dialect group, and the leadership of these associations continued to follow the standards set by the bang, with strong bang affiliation remaining despite cross-bang activities. The Fujianese community, dominated by Peranakan Chinese families, maintained control over the leadership of Cheng Hoon Teng. By the mid-19th century, Hakka leader Liao Baiqi established a Guangbang-led power center through the San Duo Temple, altering the power structure of the Malacca Chinese community. Furthermore, different bang societies and their associations formed relationships of opposition, conflict, and cooperation in economic activities such as tin mining and agriculture. The process of confrontation and integration among various Chinese bang societies contributed to the development of the Chinese community in Malacca.

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