



**CHINESE SETTLEMENT IN THAILAND : FORM, CHARACTER, AND  
CULTURAL INFLUENCE.**

**By  
Paramaporn Sirikulchayanont**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
Program of Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism  
(International Program)  
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This research focuses on the relationship between place and people that reflect on the Chinese settlement in Thailand. It concentrates on cultural ideologies: ways of believing, ways of doing things, and ways of living, that people put into their place and shape it. Place is shaped through time by its people and reflects in its form and character. Through place making process, it becomes enriched with meanings that lead to sense of place, sense of belonging, attachment, and concern for that place. Place is full of messages, representing values from past, for present and future generations, that can be read.

The term “settlement” is used in the geographical sense that places are occupied by people and have particular forms, components and patterns, which are shaped by people living in them. The research approach of this work is based on cultural approach, combining documentation and cross-sectional survey of different Chinese settlements in Thailand. This research explored and revealed various aspects of place significance of Chinese settlement in Thailand, which reflects the relationship between people and place, and is expressed in the settlement pattern, form, and development of tangible structures through time. It reveals that Chinese settlement in Thailand is a social and cultural construct with its people as a key. This dissertation contributes to the study of place significance of Chinese settlement in Thailand, which enables the realising of its meaning and character. Meanwhile, it also suggested a role of tourism to enhance the sense of belonging of the community, which will lead to the heritage conservation of Chinese settlement in Thailand.

Student’s signature.....

Thesis Advisor’s signature.....

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Statements and Significances of the Problems**

Since the ancient times, people have shaped their place using natural elements as a key. In this connection, many societies applied the spiritual and sacred sense into the place, by combining their own cultures with the nature. Place embraces variety of life as people settled and shaped that place, as well as adding their patterns over time. It is the cultural value that people bring into the place that plays a key role, not only affecting the form, but also adding life and character to that place. Place acts as a cultural clue that reveals human ideologies, meaning, values, as well as activities, which all involved human life. Since “All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage”<sup>1</sup>, tangible heritage can reveal cultural values of our predecessors: philosophy, ideologies, and practices that have accumulated through time. All places – urban or suburban area, towns, villages, communities, and house – are full of messages that not only notify the values of our ancestors of the past, our own at present, but are also valuable for future generations.

Everyday space of the Chinese is the “living symbol” to them. It does not only represent layers of meanings to life, but also reflect the social structures of the Chinese society. These meanings are communicated through settlement form, building sites, built form, spatial structure, orientation, as well as ornamentation. When they migrated to new lands, they gradually developed cultural ideologies and unique characteristic through the local social environment and their cultural background. Thailand is one of those new lands that have been a new home for the Chinese for centuries and is one of the countries in which the most Chinese ethnic population has settled. Chinese people have been a significant element of Thai society and economic development since the old time and the close relation between these two peoples has paralleled development of the country. Similarly, through Thailand’s social history, the Chinese in Thailand have developed a ‘Chineseness’ that is different and unique from the Chinese elsewhere. Therefore, Chinese settlements in Thailand are full of the messages, representing values from past, for present and future generations. They are of cultural significance, according to the concept of Cultural Significance set out in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999: ‘the places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations’<sup>2</sup>. It does not only tell us about the past, but also how it had been changed until present, and its value towards the future.

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<sup>1</sup> On Cultural Diversity and Heritage Diversity in "The Nara Document on Authenticity," (Nara, Japan: 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia Icomos Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999*. p.12.

The researches on the topic related to place are still very limited and are discussed within specific groups of scholars or practitioners. Even though there are considerable literatures on the topic of overseas Chinese, those literatures on Chinese in Thailand mostly concentrated on separate subjects of socio-economic, politics and international relations, anthropology, language and literature, traditions and cultures, and architecture. Existing researches that have the closest relevance to this dissertation topic are about cultural influences on Chinese architecture in Thailand. However, all of them are limited to certain groups of structures that are located in certain district, mostly in the Southern province of Thailand, like Songkhla, Pattani and Phuket.<sup>3</sup> Few of them focus on Chinese influenced architecture in other parts of Thailand, and are not concerned with cultural meaning and values. The researches in field of Chinese architecture are mainly architectural survey that concentrates on architectural details and conservation practice.<sup>4</sup> Among these categories of researches, most of them are about Chinese shrines. The researches about Chinese settlement, on the other hand, focus only on socio-economic aspects and give definition of 'settlement' from an anthropological aspect.<sup>5</sup> Although these existing researches cover wide range of topics and different aspects of Chinese in Thailand, very little of them relate the tangible form of Chinese settlement to the cultural values of the people, and define it as being of cultural significance.

At the same time, throughout the world there has been increasing attention on historic areas or districts because urban development has put impacts on many historic urban areas of various countries around the world. Many historic urban areas are facing threats and loss of identity and character. These concerns are shown in several documents. The ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, 1987, was adopted at the meeting of the ICOMOS General Assembly in Washington DC, known as "Washington Charter".<sup>6</sup> It defined the term "urban communities" as an expression of the diversity of societies throughout history. The historic urban areas indicated in this charter include cities, towns and historic centres or quarters, together with their natural and man-made environments. These historic urban areas, either large or small, represent the values of traditional urban cultures.

<sup>3</sup>See Sompong Yodmani, "The Traditions of Construction in Chinese Architecture at Muang District, Songkhla Province (คตินิยมการก่อสร้างที่ปรากฏในสถาปัตยกรรมจีนในเขตอำเภอเมืองสงขลา จังหวัดสงขลา)" (M.Ed. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot Southern Campus, 1992)., Wilat Parinyaniyom, "The Dwelling's Belief System of Chinese-Thai in Phuket (ความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับที่อยู่อาศัยของชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนในจังหวัดภูเก็ต)" (M.Ed. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot Southern Campus, 1995)., and Supawadi Chueaphram, "Shophouse: Physical and Cultural Evolution of Vernacular Architecture in the Old Community of Songkhla (ศึกแกผลผลิตทางกายภาพและวัฒนธรรมในชุมชนเมืองเก่าสงขลา)" (M.Arch Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2003).

<sup>4</sup>See Thanarat Thawarot, "A Study of Shophouse in Old Commercial Districts of Eastern Seaports at Thailand's Southern Peninsula (การศึกษาดึกแถวบริเวณย่านการค้าเก่าในเมืองท่าชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันออกของคาบสมุทรภาคใต้ประเทศไทย)" (M.Arch Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2004)., and (Nirat Srikhaorot, "The Development of Chinese Dwellings in Muang District, Roiet Province (พัฒนาการของรูปแบบที่อยู่อาศัยของชาวจีนในเขตเทศบาลเมืองร้อยเอ็ดจังหวัดร้อยเอ็ด)" (M.A. Thesis, Mahasarakham, 1998).

<sup>5</sup>See Rungchit Pratyasanti, "Settlement, Ways of Life, and Roles of Chinese People in Prathai District, Nakhonratchasima Province, 1947-1996 (การตั้งถิ่นฐาน วิถีชีวิต และบทบาทของชาวจีนในอำเภอประทาย จังหวัดนครราชสีมา 2490-2539)" (M.A. Thesis, Mahasarakham, 1999)., and Thamonwan Tangwongcharoen, "Ethnic Identity of Chinese Thai in Omyai Community (เอกลักษณ์ชาติพันธุ์ของคนไทยเชื้อสายจีนในชุมชนอ้อมใหญ่)" (M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn, 1999).

<sup>6</sup>ICOMOS, "Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas" (paper presented at the ICOMOS General Assembly, Washington DC, October 1987).

The principle of this charter is to state the significance of historic towns and historic urban areas' conservation, including the historic character of the town or urban area and the material and spiritual elements expressed in its character. In the Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage, 2000, it stressed the importance of built vernacular heritage that it is "the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory and, at the same time, the expression of the world's cultural diversity".<sup>7</sup> The Hoi An Declaration on Conservation of Historic Districts of Asia was adopted after the International Symposium on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites and International Cooperation in Hoi An, 2003.<sup>8</sup> It stated the significance of historic districts as a major part of the living cultural heritage of Asian countries. The "historic districts" referred in this document includes historic villages and city quarters. In year 2009, the UNESCO General Assembly has also focused on the conservation of historic urban area with increasing attention to the concept of Historic Urban Landscape (HULS). The 12<sup>th</sup> International Seminar of Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage (FUUH) was held in Hanoi under the theme, "Historic Urban Landscapes: a New Concept? A New Category of World Heritage Sites?". This concept does not limit to the historic centres but include sustainable physical, social, cultural, environmental and economic development. The Hanoi Declaration on Historic Urban Landscapes, under the section 2.0 *Considering that in particular, with regard to Historic Urban Landscape*, stated that Historic Urban Landscapes are "a fundamental and integral part of the environment of communities who live within them or who have association with them..." and "an expression of cultural diversity resulting from a permanent and continuous process of cultural layering that has tangible form to which symbolic and intangible values are attached and understood through sensory perception, local knowledge and investigation of the interconnections between these layers."<sup>9</sup> It clearly indicated that the lifestyles of communities living and working within the historic urban landscapes represent a significant component of their intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, this study on Chinese settlement in Thailand is also reflecting this movement.

Place is a cultural clue that reveals the cultural ideology of its people. The meaning, values, living ways, and ideologies of people have shaped a place and reflected through its form and character. The Chinese settlement in Thailand is a place that is full of messages, meanings, and values that people have put in, shaped, and characterised through time, and is a representative of a historic urban district that reflects relationship between the place and the people. Through place making process, it becomes enriched with meanings that lead to sense of place, sense of belonging, attachment, and concern for that place. This dissertation attempts to add another aspect in the heritage conservation of historic urban districts through the place making

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<sup>7</sup> ———, "Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage" (paper presented at the ICOMOS 12th General Assembly, Mexico, October 2000).

<sup>8</sup> "The Hoi an Declaration on Conservation of Historic Districts of Asia," in *International Symposium and the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites and International Cooperation organized to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Vietnam* (Hoi An, Vietnam: September 2003).

<sup>9</sup> "Hanoi Declaration on Historic Urban Landscapes", (paper presented at the The 12th International Seminar of Forum UNESCO - University and Heritage entitled "Historic Urban Landscapes: A New Concept? A New Category of World Heritage Sites?", Hanoi, Vietnam, 5-10 April 2009).

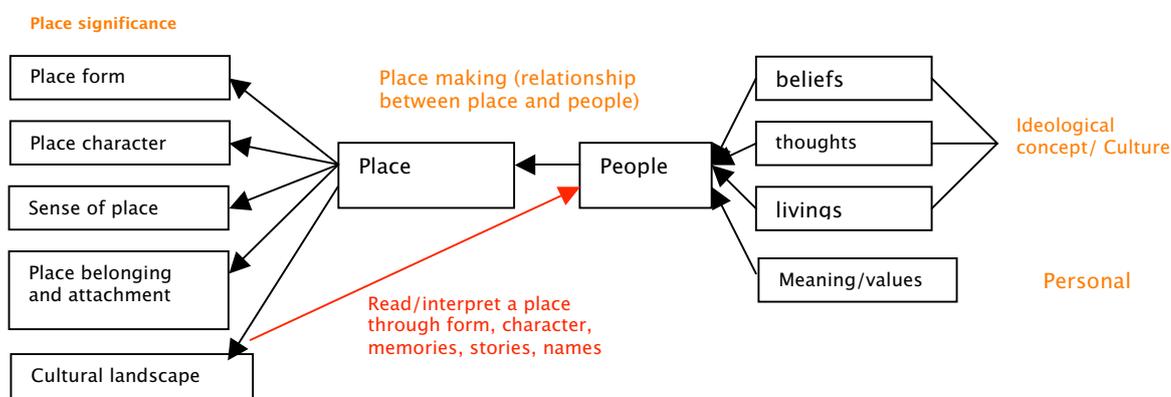
of Chinese settlements in Thailand. It is with hope that this research will also add a contribution to the study of Siamese Chineseness, in which this knowledge tends to be disappearing, and ensure that it will be preserved.

## 1.2 Objectives

1. To study the relationship between people and place that reflects on the tangible aspect and intangible values of place.
2. To study the cultural ideology that affects the form and character of Chinese settlements, with a focus on Chinese settlement in Thailand.
3. To explore various aspects of place significance of Chinese settlement in Thailand.
4. To enhance the significance of Chinese settlement in Thailand as a historic urban landscape for protection and conservation purposes.

## 1.3 Conceptual Framework

Chinese settlement in Thailand is distinct historic urban districts with cultural significance, in which its form and character reveal the relationship between place and its people. People put meaning, values, ideology in the place, shaped it through their ways of living, and characterised it. Place became significant for its people, and full of messages that can be read.



## 1.4 Scope and Structure of the Study

1. The study content focuses on the relationship between people and place, and the way cultural ideologies (meanings, values, beliefs, thoughts, living ways) reflect on the settlement form and character. Even though forms of place are affected by several factors, such as climate, economics, and materials, this dissertation concentrates on cultural ideologies: ways of believing, ways of doing things, and ways of living that people put into their place. The term "settlement" is used in the geographical sense that places are occupied by people and have particular forms, components and patterns, which are shaped by people living in them. Through all chapters, critical review of literature in all related topics are made, including the idea

of place, relationship between cultural values and place, and its reflection on Chinese settlement with a focus on Chinese settlement in Thailand. The immigration and geography of Chinese settlement in Thailand, including the five dialect groups, and Chinese descendants and Chineseness in Thailand, are explained. Distinctive examples of Chinese settlement in Thailand are then elaborated.

2. The area of the study covers only major Chinese settlements in Thailand, according to the background of migration and the geography of different dialect groups of Chinese in Thailand. Since the study is based on documentation, the site selection is random and limited to the areas where there are documentations supported. It focuses on Chinese immigrants, who migrated into the South, the East, and the Central part of Thailand by sea from the seventeenth century to early twentieth century, and moved to different parts of the country following river and train routes. This includes major Chinese settlements in the river basins, the coastal towns, the market junctions, the commercial centres, and the urban areas of different parts of Thailand. However, it does not include the Chinese ethnic locals from Laos and Vietnam, who migrated into some parts of the Northeastern provinces of Thailand through the Northeastern border. The criteria of site selection limits to only living settlement that reveal unique character and must be supported with adequate documents.

### **1.5 Research Methodology**

It is to be noted that the research approach of this work is not architectural, but focused on the cultural aspect, primarily through documentation. It is a critical review of related documents, primary and secondary resources, along with cross-sectional survey. The documentation includes print materials, electronic resources, journals, memoirs, old maps and photo archives. Stories, memoirs, names of place, historical records and old documents are used to identify place character and cultural ideology that is associated with its people, and illustrate place significances. Alongside the critical review, cross-sectional survey of different Chinese settlements in Thailand have been made by photography, mapping, sketching, observation, and non-structured interviews. These materials are used together with the documentation to indicate the settlement form and character of each settlement in order to analyse and compare. For non-structured interviews, they were conducted through informal conversation with the local dwellers in order to attain the story, memory, and ideology behind that certain settlement from the point of view of the local people.

### **1.6 Definition**

#### ***Chinese***

Among the works in Chinese study, it has been widely discussed about the most appropriate way to call Chinese descendants in Thailand. The first generation of Chinese immigrants in Thailand are known as Chinese people. After having been mingled with local people through intermarriage, their descendants are called Lukchin and Sino-Thai, who generally were born from Chinese father and Thai mother. The term, Sino-Thai, also refers to the specific characteristics that have been developed in

Thai society. However, nowadays both terms are generally applied to all generations of Chinese descendants in Thailand. Therefore, to avoid the misunderstanding and without any bias intention, the term ‘Chinese’ in this dissertation refers to the overall characteristic and cultural ideologies of Chinese immigrants, Chinese descendants, Lukchin, as well as Sino-Thai in Thailand.

### ***Thailand and Siam***

In explaining about the historical background of Chinese settlement in Thailand and its geography of settlement, the term ‘Siam’ will be used referring to historical events dated back prior to year 1939 before the name was changed to Thailand.<sup>10</sup> The term ‘Thailand’ is used to refer to this country in general. Even though it has been widely argued among scholars in the use of the term ‘Thailand’ as representing Nationalism concept, the term ‘Thailand’ found in this research has no intention of taking any particular side or bias.

There are also some key words used in this dissertation with specific definition as listed below.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Cultural significance***

Aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of value for different individuals or groups. (Burra Charter Article 1.2)

### ***Historic urban sites and Heritage groups***

Made up of a number of related and spatially adjacent, or at least proximate, resources, all of which are individually of heritage value and/or which contribute to the overall heritage significance of all. (Hoi An Protocols)

### ***Intangible cultural heritage***

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (World Heritage Convention)

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<sup>10</sup> The name “Siam” was changed to “Thailand” on 24 June 1939 during the government of Marshal Phibunsongkhram. The name of people, as well as nationality are also called “Thai”.

<sup>11</sup> These definitions are according to the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999, the Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia, 2001, World Heritage Convention, 1972 and Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, 2003.

***Interpretation***

All the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place. (Burra Charter Article 1.17)

***Meanings***

What a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses. (Burra Charter Article 1.16)

***Place***

Site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and view. (Burra Charter Article 1.1)

***Setting***

The area around a place, which may include the visual catchment. (Burra Charter Article 1.12)

***Sites***

Works of human groups or individuals or the combined works of humans and nature and areas including archaeological sites, cultural landscapes planned or evolved over time through use or human events, environments of cultural significance, sacred geographies, and landscapes religious, artistic, historical or other cultural associations. (World Heritage Convention)

***Use***

The functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place. (Burra Charter Article 1.10)

**1.7 Note on Romanization of Chinese and Thai Words**

Chinese words and names appearing in this research are following the *Pin Yin* system, without tonetic symbols. Some of them might appear in their original references in Wade-Giles system. There are only names of different dialect groups that are specified as Teochiu (refers to *Teochew* or people from *Chaozhou*), Cantonese (*Guangdong*), Hokkien (*Fukienese*), Hakka, and Hainanese. The place names of their origins are also written in *Pin Yin* system without tonetic symbol.

For Thai names, they are transcribed in Romanization according to the Transcription Rules of the Royal Institute (revised version,1999). However, there are some specific names that might not follow this system.

**1.8 Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of 6 chapters including the introduction (chapter 1). The rest is divided into the following five chapters.

- **Chapter 2 Place and people**

This chapter explains the idea of “settlement”, “place”, and “cultural landscape” and their relationship with people. The argument leads to the concept of ideology reflecting in human values, beliefs, thoughts and practices, that are reflected in the tangible form of place, and finally lead to the place character and sense of place. The topics that are included are:

- 2.1 *The Notion of Place*

- 2.1.1 *Place and Space*

- 2.1.2 *Place Character, Place Identity, Sense of Place, and Spirit of Place*

- 2.2 *Place and Ideologies*

- 2.2.1 *Cultural Ideology*

- 2.2.2 *Ideology and Dwellings*

- 2.3 *Cultural Landscape*

- 2.3.1 *The Meaning of Cultural Landscape*

- 2.3.2 *Reading the Landscape*

- **Chapter 3 Chinese settlement and its ideologies**

The connection of Chinese beliefs, thoughts, and practices and the way settlement developed and looked are discussed in this chapter. It is clarified in following topics:

- 3.1 *Daoism, Confucianism, and Fengshui*

- 3.2 *Chinese Kinship Structure: Family, Home, and Clan Association*

- 3.2.1 *Jia: Home and Family*

- 3.2.2 *Family and Kin*

- 3.2.3 *Kinship and Clan*

- 3.3 *Chinese Domestic Architecture and Ornamentation*

- 3.3.1 *The Architecture of Chinese House*

- 3.3.2 *The Household Ornamentation*

- 3.4 *Chinese Settlement Form and Chinatown*

- 3.4.1 *The Settlement Form*

- 3.4.2 *The Chinatown*

#### **4 Chapter 4 The Chinese in Thailand: Emigration and Character**

This chapter acts as the background study to the Chinese settlement in Thailand.

The included topics are:

- 4.1 *Southeast Asia and Chinese Emigration*

- 4.1.1 *Overseas Chinese*

- 4.1.2 *Chinese Maritime History and Its Emigration*

- 4.2 *Background and Geography of Chinese Settlement in Thailand*

- 4.2.1 *The Five Dialect Groups*

- 4.2.2 *Dispersion of Chinese Settlement around Thailand*

- 4.1.1 *The Capital*

- 4.1.2 *The Central and the West*

- 4.1.3 *The East*

- 4.1.4 *The Northeast*

4.1.5 *The North*

4.1.6 *The South*

4.3 *The Chinese in Thailand – Lukchin in Thai Society*

- **Chapter 5 Chinese settlement in Thailand – Relationships between Ideologies and Forms**

This chapter gives some distinctive examples of Chinese settlement in Thailand to elaborate the main idea of this study. The examples are as follows:

- *The Capital*
- *Trade Junction to Commercial District*
- *Riverside Market*
- *Tin Mining Settlement*
- *Ancient Entrepot*

- **Chapter 6 Conclusion: the present and the future**

This chapter contains the dissertation conclusion. It also discusses the present situation on conservation aspect of the Chinese settlement in Thailand, as historic urban landscape, and the possibility of enhancing place significance for conserving such heritage. Recommendation for further research is also proposed.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Place and People**

As the topics of this dissertation evolve around the central idea of settlement, it is important to understand this subject in different aspects. The term “settlement” here refers in a geographical sense to places occupied by people and filled with tangible forms, which are the result of people’s ideology. “Settlement” denotes different ideas of place. This chapter will give better understanding around the idea of place, in referring specifically to the term “settlement”.

#### **2.1 The Notion of Place**

##### **2.1.1 Place and Space**

An ordinary space became a place when we look at it through multifaceted phenomenon of experience and assess it through various properties, as Relph suggested. This includes location, landscape, time, and personal involvement.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Gieryn believed that place involve three components, which are geographic location, material form and investment with meaning and value.<sup>2</sup> It becomes meaningful because of individuals, as well as, social groups. He also explained that a place could be of any spatial scale from a favourite armchair to a city, a region, a province, and even a planet. As in Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Space and Place*, he noted the differences between space and place that “place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other.”<sup>3</sup> This can imply that the attachment to a place concerns itself with the interaction between people. It is underpinned by the significant relationship between human beings and a certain space.<sup>4</sup> Relph believed in the relationship between people and place in that people are actually their place and the place is actually its people. Therefore, a place is full of meanings that both individuals and communities put in and it became a socially constructed. Place can have personalised meaning, which is distinguished by personal attachment and experience, and collectivised meaning, as a social site.<sup>5</sup> However, both emphasise the significance of human experience and interaction in that place. Similarly to Low and Altman that place can be held or experienced by individuals and social or cultural groups.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 3rd ed. (London: Pion Limited, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas F. Gieryn, "A Space for Place in Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000).

<sup>3</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The term ‘space’ here is in morphological sense referring to space between buildings, around buildings and inside buildings.

<sup>5</sup> Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh, "The Meaning and Making of Place: Exploring History, Community and Identity."

<sup>6</sup> Irwin Altman Setha M. Low, ed., *Place Attachment (Human Behavior and Environment)* (New York: Plenum, 1992).

Parsons and Shils also agreed that a place is also a symbolic representation of culture, and is endowed with meanings.<sup>7</sup>

Localized stories, images, as well as memories enhance meaningful cultural and historical value for both individuals and the communities.<sup>8</sup> The bonds that people have with their homelands shaped a sense of place and sense of belongings and constructed a new home for the migrants. Home is full of meanings and experiences that create sense of belonging to them.<sup>9</sup> Scholars from multi-disciplinary looked at the meaning of place differently. However, Rotenburg pointed that all of those meanings are historically based because the meaning of place consists of memories of the past and experience of the present. Rotenburg also noted that the “inherited understandings of the past” and present experiences are the basis of how people interpret their places and that is central to the understanding of the place meaning.<sup>10</sup> Since a place consists of layers of times and uses, it is like a story. Similarly as the city of Tallinn, it expresses a ‘collage of memory’ through its tangible fabric of urban form.<sup>11</sup> These concepts create the sense of belonging and the bonds between people and their place, which is also discussed as place attachment. Edward Relph classified the kinds of spaces that carry meaning and significance for human beings, which are not separated by the human mind, but they are linked in thought and experience. They are:<sup>12</sup>

**Pragmatic or Primitive Space:** structured unselfconsciously by basic individual experience. It is “Organic Space” where we feel safe; may have biological roots in our need for shelter and home.

**Perceptual Space:** involves direct emotional encounters with the spaces of the earth, sea, sky, or with built and created spaces. (refer to the space under cosmological belief, e.g. Mandala construct of Borobudur)

**Existential/ Lived in Space:** where we create patterns and structures of significance through building towns, villages, houses and whole business of landscape making. “Culturally defined” space. E.g. the Kedu Plains of Borobudur that are culturally defined by strong belief of Mahayana Buddhism, which reflects in the relation to the landscape setting.

### **Architectural and Planning Space**

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<sup>7</sup> Talcott Parsons Edward A. Shils, ed., *Toward a General Theory of Action: Theoretical Foundations for the Social Sciences Social Science Classic Series* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

<sup>8</sup> Walter F. Lalich, "Chinese Collective Memories in Sydney," in *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*, ed. Andrew P. Davidson Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng (Chippenham and Eastbourne: Palgrave Macmillan).

<sup>9</sup> Lucille Ngan, "Generational Identities through Time: Identities and Homelands of the Abcs," in *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*, ed. Andrew P. Davidson Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng (Chippenham and Eastbourne: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Robert Rotenberg, "Introduction," in *The Cultural Meaning of Urban Space*, ed. Robert Rotenberg and Gary McDonogh (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Klaske Maria Havik, "Towards a Site-Specific Practice - Reflections on Identity of Place" (paper presented at the KOHT ja PAIK/ Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics III, Tallinn, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*.

**Cognitive Space:** with its reflective qualities referenced in maps, plans, and designs. E.g. Borobudur and the holistic landscape setting with Mount Merapi, rivers of the Kedu Plains and the fringing mountains and the monuments as mandala representation.

**Abstract Space:** a creation of human imagination and logical relations that allows us to describe space without necessarily founding these descriptions and observations. E.g the concept of Mandala at Borobudur, which permeates and excites the imagination.

### 2.1.2 Place Character, Place Identity, Sense of Place, and Spirit of Place

In the paper, *The Meaning and Making of Place: Exploring History, Community, and Identity*, it reveals three categories of place characteristics, which are built environment, unique combination of different elements of non-material culture, and *genius loci* – spirit of place. Central to this paper is the idea that place meanings are constructed by people through everyday experiences and collective memories. The character of place is related to the modification of that place and people's sense of attachment or association. It can either be persistent or not, due to the significance of the site or activity within that place. This refers to intangible aspect of a place like tradition, ritual, or custom that enhances the continuity of a place despite the changing time. Therefore, the essence of place does not depend on time<sup>13</sup> or on the physical aspects only, but also on the intangible aspect of the place.

Tuan believed in the role of language, narrative, and story that give character to a place.<sup>14</sup> The character of place is enriched through oral history, personal memory, and even the way local community named their place. Narrative can reflect individuals and communities' experiences and memories that they have with that certain places. Amy Lee Wai-sum interestingly pointed that "memories are our keys to becoming and ultimately to belonging", as she explained the use of individual narratives to handle the relationship with the people and the society.<sup>15</sup> For example, shared memory of the *Pak Phraek* community in Kanchanaburi town in Thailand reveals their experience of the World War II while living in this area. The relations they have with their place are enhanced when they started to talk about their shared memory. Oral history illustrates various meanings of the place to the people living in.<sup>16</sup> The oral history of the local nourishes the sense of belonging among the local communities. The period and historical novels similarly give picture of life, thoughts, and traditions back then that can evoke the feelings of nostalgia to the present readers. This feeling simply show that this kind of story is a powerful method to emphasize

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Yi Fu Tuan, "Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-Descriptive Approach," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81 (1991).

<sup>15</sup> Amy Lee Wai-sum, "Look Who's Talking: Migrating Narratives and Identity Construction," in *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*, ed. Andrew P. Davidson Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng (Chippenham and Eastbourne: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor. "Moving Histories of Class and Community: Identity, Place and Belonging in Contemporary England." (Place Published: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), <http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doi/10.1057/9780230236868>.

memory and meaning about a place. Story about a certain place, including oral history and historical novels, has the role in provoking the memory of people and revealing the layers of place and how it develops. Community might call their local district differently from what it is officially named and that simply reflects the attachment that the community have with their place. Whatever it was called, it reveals various memories, activities, and experiences that people have in that place. It unconsciously added the meaning to the place and also characterised it. All types of narratives helped to enhance the character of the place and strengthen the community's tie. Therefore, place is not only physical form, but it also exists in memories, stories and names. Personal memories are key aspect that are linked to particular places and shaped the character of those places.

Taylor refers to the Australian and international growth of heritage value awareness in that nowadays there has been growing movement in valuing cultural landscapes as the story of 'people', 'events' and 'places'. They also realised that their national culture promote a sense of identity, which lead to having a sense of place. The heritage enthusiasm in Australia also involved valuing ordinary or everyday places significant as the iconic places of the country as this is not only a place with important physical objects, but also the place that has symbolic or meanings and reveals the association between people and place. This relationship between human and place does not create a separate dot on a map, instead, it is a continuous or interrelated physical and mental place maps, which enhances the sense of belonging, identity of place, and sense of place.<sup>17</sup> Thus, place represents association between space and people and it is a vital source of individual and cultural identity. Korpela suggested that a necessary basis of place identity is place-belongingness.<sup>18</sup> Kong and Yeoh identified two interconnections in the place and identity relationship: the place has its own identity; and people identify with a place and have a sense of attachment to it.<sup>19</sup> Relph proposes that identity is fundamental in human life that all places have identity.<sup>20</sup> However, the term 'identity of a place' and 'identity with a place' are different as the identity of a place is the unity that allows that place to be different from others, while identity with a place is the sharing of some kind of characteristic that a person or a group has with particular place.

The model of Relph's Place identity and its component<sup>21</sup> reveals the interrelations between physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meaning or symbol. The physical features are, for example, landscape of buildings, streets, hills, rivers, and other physical components. The activities are those that occur within the physical appearance. For meaning, it bases mainly on human experiences with the places. Meanings are different from physical setting or activities that Relph believed they are, in face, a property of places. The meanings also involve a sense of having one's own identity tied to the physical and activities.

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<sup>17</sup> Ken Taylor, "Making Spaces into Places: Exploring the Ordinarily Sacred," *Landscape Australia* 2/ 1999 (1999).

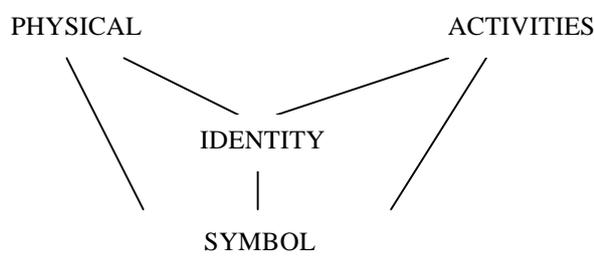
<sup>18</sup> Kalevi M. Korpela, "Place-Identity as a Product of Environmental Self-Regulation," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 9 (1989).

<sup>19</sup> Kong and Yeoh, "The Meaning and Making of Place: Exploring History, Community and Identity."

<sup>20</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*.

<sup>21</sup> From Edward Relph's model (1976)

The idea of place identity and its component can be explained in the diagram below.



The identity of place also involves ‘spirit of place’ or ‘genius loci’. It is an attribute of identity that can persist despite change. Nevertheless, Relph also added that apart from these three components, identity is also social structured that in order to understand the identity of a place, one needs to understand the social structure of images first. This kind of image related to experiences of individuals and groups to that place. The image of a place is different to different person, different communities.<sup>22</sup>

The term ‘Genius Loci’ literary means *spirit of place*. It originally appeared in a Roman myth in a symbol of snakes that protects a certain place referring to the guardian spirit of place. In Romanticism and Neo-Romanticism, it was concerned with the idea that each place in the world has its own spirit creating cultural forms that gave identity to those places. The term ‘spirit of place’ in contemporary use refers to the distinctive identity of a place, which is the weave of cultures and intangible aspects of a place, rather than being a guardian of place as it used to be. It has been used mostly with natural landmarks or outstanding built forms, such as the Pyramid and the Grand Canyon. These places are attractive that often valued by artists and writers through their works, celebrations, folk tales, or festivals. However, it is impossible to point out which characters made it attractive. Spirit of place resides in the authenticity of a place. It represents the cultural essence of the site with meanings that are enriched through time and expressed through tangible heritage.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast, ‘sense of place’ has opposite meaning to ‘spirit of place’, in which although an urban high street does not have a spirit of place, it can still have a sense of place. This term refers to a social phenomenon that exists independently of anyone’s perception or experience. Yan Xu explained this term as ‘a sense of beauty and the wealth of phenomena that comprise a particular place’, and elaborated it into 4 components, which are: 1. Toponymic – related to naming place 2. Narrative –

<sup>22</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*.

<sup>23</sup> "Hoi an Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia: Professional Guidelines for Assuring and Preserving the Authenticity of Heritage Sites in the Context of the Cultures of Asia," (Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2009).

involving personal or group's stories 3. Experiential – associated particularly with dependence or survival 4. Numinous – spiritual characters.<sup>24</sup>

Sense of place also leads to the idea of Topophilia by Yi Fu Tuan, in which he refers to it as the relations, perceptions, attitudes, values and world view that bond people and place together.<sup>25</sup> Literally, it comes from Greek word – topo and phillia, place and love of/for, which means 'love of place'. It is always used to describe a strong sense of place or identity among people. Edward Relph referred to 'sense of place' that it is "the ability to grasp and appreciate the distinctive qualities of places".<sup>26</sup> Sense of place combines all aspects of senses together with memory, imagination and anticipation. It is different among each individual, as people who pay close attention to the character of places they visit will have better-developed sense of place. However, 'sense of place' and 'spirit of place' also affect each other, in which the place with strong spirit of place will generally enhance a stronger sense of place. Meanwhile, community with strong sense of place can also create a distinctive spirit of place to their place.

## 2.2 Place and Ideologies

### 2.2.1 Cultural Ideology

The term "ideology" has variable connotations. It was coined by Comte Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy as "science of ideas" concept.<sup>27</sup> However, it is notably developed in the Marxist tradition referring to the ways cultures are structured to enable the powerful group to have maximum control with the minimum of conflict.<sup>28</sup> It aims to show how the ideas about the way things are, the way things should be and the way the world should work are oriented people's thinking. It is a socialization process and is called "hegemony", which is carried out through cultural forms by the one who has power in that society, e.g. the State, the church, the school, the society, and the family. His concept of ideology is used to describe the world-view of the dominant, associated with power relations, in which power relies in every relationship and social practice. Although there are several theorists that have developed this concept of ideology, it remains mostly unchanged as an instrument to justify power until the twentieth century. Marxist concept of ideology became challenged by some sociologists, such as Karl Mannheim and Max Weber. Mannheim identified the concept of ideology as shared by a particular social group and Marxist theory could represent only one part of the ideology concept.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Marxist theory had been largely followed in a way that ideology was distorting and became an

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<sup>24</sup> Yan Xu, "Sense of Place and Identity," <http://www.eslarp.uiuc.edu/la/LA437-F95/reports/yards/main.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscape of Fear* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

<sup>26</sup> Edward Relph, "Spirit of Place and Sense of Place in Virtual Realities," <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/SPT/v10n3/pdf/relph.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> "Destutt De Tracy," in *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> John Lye, "Ideology: A Brief Guide," <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/ideology.html>

<sup>29</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1955).

instrument of power. On the other hand, ideology for others can be applied to non-political ideas. Every society has an ideology that forms the basis of its group. Similarly as in the field of anthropology, the anthropologists defined the term, ideology, in opposite direction from the power relationships. In early 1970, Clifford Geertz redefined ideology that it both formulates and communicates social reality.<sup>30</sup> He looked at ideology in the context of culture that it provides integrated system of symbols, values, and beliefs, which is expressed publicly and found in the rituals and symbols of a society. Also, the scholars in other disciplinary also looked at ideology as it goes along with culture and in the cultural context of the society. Therefore, in the field of culture, ideology illustrates the truth of culture and that society through the understanding of its experiences, daily lives, and identities. It is a wide-range system of beliefs, way of thought, way of practices, reflecting the manner of thinking characteristic of a person, a group, a culture, which is also referred in this dissertation.

### 2.2.2 Ideology and Dwellings

Cosgrove believed that landscape is an ideological concept and all landscapes are symbolic and reflect human ideologies.<sup>31</sup> This idea is underpinned by Baker, as he also indicated that understanding of landscapes need the historical recovery of ideologies.<sup>32</sup> This idea reflects on the architecture of dwellings, which has been considered as “the most meaningful of architectural forms”.<sup>33</sup> The notion of dwellings is the linkage between home, place, and identity. It is a “form of existence – a desirable state of being in which a person over time develops a deeply rooted sense of place and identity, a feeling of being ‘at home’ and ‘in place’”.<sup>34</sup> In Rapoport’s *House Form and Culture*,<sup>35</sup> he believes that there are several factors to shape the form of a dwelling, from materials, built technology, site, defensive purpose, economics, to religion. Even though both physical and socio-cultural aspects are both the influential factors that shaped the form of a house and settlement, the socio-cultural aspect is the most important influence, as he believes that a house is ‘a cultural phenomenon’<sup>36</sup> and its form is a consequence of all socio-cultural factors. As he pointed, the buildings and settlements are ‘the visible expression’ of human’s aspects of life, on the other hand, the cultural values of the society. Within the type of settlements, urban settlement is also believed to be a particular spatial form, in which the social meaning

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<sup>30</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter (New York: 1964).

<sup>31</sup> Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> Alan R.H. Baker and Gideon Biger, "Introduction: On Ideology and Landscape," in *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the Meanings of Some Places in the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> Xing Ruan, *Allegorical Architecture: Living Myth and Architectonics*, ed. Xing Ruan Ronald G. Knapp, *Spatial Habitus: Making and Meaning in Asia's Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006)., 2.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel R. Williams Norman McIntyre, Kevin E. McHugh, ed., *Multiple Dwelling and Tourism: Negotiating Place, Home and Identity* (King's Lynn: CAB International, 2006)., 313-314.

<sup>35</sup> Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, ed. Philip L. Wagner, *Foundations of Cultural Geography Series* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

is added to it by a historically defined society.<sup>37</sup> Max Sorre used the term 'genre de vie' to refer to cultural, spiritual, material and social aspects that shape the geography and condition the character of an area.<sup>38</sup>

The relationship between domestic space and the ideologies can be seen clearly in Betsileo, one of the eighteen recognized ethnic groups that inhabit Madagascar.<sup>39</sup> The people of Betsileo apply the belief of seniority, gender and cardinal directions to symbolic spatial organisation of their dwelling. Traditionally, they associated mostly with cosmological principles, which reflected in the spatial system of their dwellings. Their belief of twelve months are associated with twelve 'vintana' or destinies that apply to the spatial layout. One major belief of the Betsileo is the influence of the ancestors through the house and tomb construction. Similarly, the Merina, another ethnic group in Madagascar rely mostly with the cosmological principles for their daily activities and of course, their dwellings. The traditional settlement in the islands of Indonesia clearly represents the ideological concept of cosmology.<sup>40</sup> Cosmology reflects on the orientation of house setting, house plan, and the ornamentation. They believe that house is the representative of the universe, the society, as well as, human body. The Indonesian archipelago's indigenous belief system is the concept of three-tiered cosmos. The middle world is inhabited by humans and located in between the upper and lower world. This cosmological concept reflects on the architecture of a house. The sacred upper world is represented in the ancestral shrine of a house, where is the abode of the gods. The middle world is represented in the dwelling space of human. The lower world is the area beneath the house, where animals are kept.

Some settlement might follow the concept of orientation, in referring to geographical components. In Toraja, the houses face to the north, as it is believed to be 'the head of the sky' and the abode of major deity, who created human. The south is 'the tail of the sky', which is the direction of life after death. The east is the direction of life, as the sun rises at this direction, while the west is related to death. The cosmological concept also appeared in the town planning as the plan of ancient capital of Southeast Asia always reflects the powerful centre through the location of the King's palace. However, when the society has changed its type from the agricultural one, cosmological belief has also been changed from being a symbol of natural power to the symbol of ruling power. This interestingly shows the development of ideology and architecture over time. The earthen dwellings or *Tulou* in the Southeast of China show an example of the Chinese cosmological concept. These types of dwellings are thought to be of Hakka people only, but actually they were also found among Chaozhou people. There were more than six hundred *Tulous* in Yaoping district in Chaozhou. These *Tulous* were built in octagonal shape

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<sup>37</sup> Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, California Series in Urban Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

<sup>38</sup> Max Sorre, "The Concept of Genre De Vie," in *Readings in Cultural Geography*, ed. P.L. Wagner and M. Mikesell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

<sup>39</sup> Susan Kent, ed., *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Roxana Waterson, *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

reflecting the concept of cosmology.<sup>41</sup> *Dao Yun Lou* is the oldest Tulou in China, which was built in Ching dynasty. The name of this building refers to the idea of *Dao*, which means nature or the law of nature, and the word *Yun* means the harmony, rhythm, rhymes. Its name is also associated with the cosmological symbol. It is the connection between cosmology and architecture, showing the ideology of Chaozhou people that dwelled inside.



**Figure 1** Different shapes of Hakka Tulous in Fujian represent the idea of cosmology.

Source: Author

Ideological concept in dwellings does not limit only to the belief in cosmology, but it also refers to the way people think, including the social pattern. The *longhouse community* is one of the examples showing the kinship system that is reflected in architecture. In some society, the house might not be found in long shape as the name indicated, but it was built for several kinship families of patrilineage, to dwell together. So, there are many small rooms for each family joined by a long hall way or an open veranda for the whole house's activities. The word "house" in Southeast Asia covers the whole kinship families that dwell together. Sometimes, the construction of longhouse also symbolises the social hierarchy that is expressed through elaborate decorative ornaments. In the Northeast of Thailand, the matriarchal society is also expressed in the dwellings. In the same compound, there are several houses of three generations that are descended along the female line locating together.

Onsiri Panin believed that activities conducted in a place are the result of inner

<sup>41</sup> Thawon Sikkhakoson, "Dao Yun Lou: The Meeting Point of Cosmology and Chinese Architecture (เต้ายุ่นไหลว: จุดบรรจบของจักรวาลวิทยา กับสถาปัตยกรรมจีน)," *Art and Culture* 27/323, no. 11 Sep 2006 (2006).

and outer conditions.<sup>42</sup> The inner conditions are religious belief, religious practice, disciplinary, and doctrines of the people, who use that space. The outer conditions are the space available and the activities. The village plan, house environment, house plan, form, building materials, and local wisdom of the Tai-ethnic villages reflect the relationship with natural environment. However, they still share some similarities, which are the regard of water well to life and the location of village along the waterway. The water source must be accessible to every parts of the village. Their settlement form and architecture well reflect the unity of natural and built environment. In Chiang Mai town, Thailand, traditional belief system of cosmology and the representation of human body to the town planning lie in the square shape of town plan. This concept is derived from the *Maha Thaksa* manuscript that specify each position of the nine sectional square of Chiang Mai with different symbolic meanings. Built structures must be located according to these symbolic orientations to ensure the well-being and prosperity of people and town.

## 2.3 Cultural Landscape

### 2.3.1 The Meaning of Cultural Landscape

The idea of place leads to the study of what we refer to as “landscape”, which literary means all the visible features of land or countryside, including natural landscape elements. However, when humans attach to their cultural meanings and values, landscape becomes a cultural construct – a man-made landscape, which is known by geographers as “cultural landscape”. Earlier geographers or scholars on cultural landscape limited the idea of cultural landscape to only countryside or rural area. In contrast, contemporary scholars concentrate not only the countryside, but also the city, urban, or suburb area because all of them are cultural construct that are a result of human intervention. As Sauer believed, “The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape is the result”.<sup>43</sup> Peirce Lewis, a geographer, stated that “If we want to understand ourselves, we would do well to take a searching look at landscapes” because they are like an “autobiography” and “all human landscape has cultural meaning, no matter how ordinary that landscape may be.”<sup>44</sup> The term “cultural landscape” is now accepted internationally.

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention defines Cultural Landscape in Article 47 that, they are

“cultural properties and represent the ‘combined works of nature and of man’ designated in Article 1 of the *Convention*. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical

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<sup>42</sup> Onsiri Panin, "Tai Ethnic Village in Suvarnabhumi (Keynote Lecture)" (paper presented at the International Symposium on Architecture in the Land of Suvarnabhumi, The Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," *The University of California Publications in Geography* 2, no. 2 (1925)., 19-53.

<sup>44</sup> Peirce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in *Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.”<sup>45</sup>

It mostly refers to living people and living landscape, and can be a place that people still live their lives in traditional way. Recognition was extended in 1992 to World Heritage status with three categories of cultural landscapes of outstanding universal value. They are:

- Clearly defined landscapes designed and intentionally created by man. This category includes garden and parkland landscapes that are constructed for aesthetic purpose.
- Organically evolved landscapes in 2 categories:
  - A relict or fossil landscape, where an evolutionary process has come to an end but distinguished features can still be seen.
  - Continuing landscape which retains an active social role in contemporary society associated with a traditional way of life and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress and where it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time.
- Associative cultural landscapes: justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic, or cultural associations of the natural element rather than the material cultural evidence.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (USA) defined the cultural landscape as a geographic area that includes natural and cultural resources, and divides it into four types.

1. Historic Landscape: related to historic events, activities, people.
2. Historic Designed Landscape: designed or laid out by architect or master gardener according to design principle.
3. Historic Vernacular Landscape: evolved through activities, occupancy, social and cultural attitudes of people, and represent cultural character of everyday lives.
4. Ethnographic Landscape: associated with natural and cultural resources that are defined as heritage resources by people living in.

The Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia gives definition of Cultural Landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic events, activity, person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.” It also divides types of Cultural Landscape into three types similarly to the World Heritage Convention. Since it arises from a continual process of human and natural environment’s interaction, cultural landscape reflects philosophies and ideologies of

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<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" (2005).

different cultures. The spatial form of a cultural landscape can always change over time, as it is a culturally constructed place.

Ken Taylor explained the term cultural landscape as a natural landscape that is a result of human intervention, which is evidence of human activity, human values and ideology over time that reflects relationship between human and the surroundings.<sup>46</sup> Taylor refers to landscape in a wide sense of places where human activities occur. For him, it also includes urban areas, special places, iconic sites and ordinary or everyday vernacular places, such as Georgetown in Penang. There are meanings, values and ideologies lie within human made landscape, in which if these are translated, they can reveal the ways of seeing it. He also states the equal significance of everyday landscapes that made by ordinary people for daily activities to the iconographic landscapes.<sup>47</sup> These everyday landscapes are designed landscapes “in a sense of setting things for particular purpose responding to circumstances and cultural practice, in which cultural patterns emerge within a cultural context”.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, this cultural context communicates the symbolism and meaning of places, as well as associations that people have with that place. Taylor has also raised up a theme that human constructions of landscapes are built up of layers and memory. He explained that this is a significant factor of people’s relationship to ordinary places and also our involved feeling.<sup>49</sup>

Srisak Vallibhodom believed that cultural landscape is actually related directly to myth, which is a tool that the community created to explain about the origins, meanings, and significance of their place. It leads to the way the community named various components of the place, such as mountain, hill, lake, and river. These names are the symbols of community that share same social, economic, and political status.<sup>50</sup> The example of this idea is the naming of the same line of river differently according to the community like Chao Phraya River that is called differently in different places it runs through.

Through historical cultural landscape study, there has been a growing understanding that cultural landscapes as an imprint of human history are the richest historical record we possess.<sup>51</sup> They can tell the stories and values of our predecessors and inform our everyday values and the values of future generations. Cultural landscapes are literally most of what surrounds us. They are not only the landscapes but the “places”- which we live, work and recreate. They embrace the lives that settled in and modified by people over time. We create and shape the human landscape over time according to our ideologies and in this way historical landscapes reflect our cultural traditions and intangible values. So, we shape & modify natural landscape elements to create cultural landscapes. These human patterns we put into the natural landscapes represent a montage of layers through time. Therefore, when

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor, "Making Spaces into Places: Exploring the Ordinarily Sacred."

<sup>47</sup> Ken Taylor, "On What Grounds Do Landscapes Mean?," *SAHANZ* 1997 (1997).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Srisak Vallibhodom, *Thai Household and Thai Village (เรือนไทย บ้านไทย)*, 72 Years: Srisak Vallibhodom (Bangkok: Muang Boran Publisher, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955).

looking at a cultural landscape, we have to look at it as a whole montage of layers, or through time of its existence. We cannot look at a certain landscape at specific point of time only because the landscape comprises of intangible values and human meanings, which humans put into it over time.

The significance of intangible values is underpinned in the Hoi An Protocols that the cultural landscapes in Asia are “influenced by and imbued with value systems and abstract frameworks, such as cosmology, geomancy and feng shui, as well as traditional, technological and economic systems” and “tangible cultural expressions derive their origin, value, and continuing significance from intangible cultural practices”<sup>52</sup> because most of the cultural landscapes in Asia are inhabited and culturally constructed by people. The intangible cultural practices might appear in forms of oral traditions, social practices, rituals, festivities, arts and traditional craftsmanship. Hence, in order to understand the tangible form of landscapes, built structures, and settlement, these intangible cultural aspects must be understood.

### **2.3.2 Reading the Landscape**

When the study on cultural landscape had just been introduced, the idea of reading a landscape seems to be impossible at all, not only because it had never previously occurred, but also because it was not a simple well-structured book to be read. Later on, many institutes started to teach the students to read and understand the significance of cultural landscape study. Reading the landscape is the cultural geographer’s way of understanding the cultural landscape as something where culture is on display, replete with human meaning and association of ideas. As Lewis stated, reading a landscape is not as easy as reading books because they were not meant to be read. However, he had set some “axioms”, as the guides to help reading the landscape, in particular to the reading of America’s cultural landscape. They can be divided into seven “axioms” as follow.<sup>53</sup>

1. The axiom of landscape as clue to culture

Everyday landscapes reflect the culture of any nation. Culture is reflected through the major change in the look of the landscape, the difference of culture according to location, the convergence of different cultures on the converging landscape, the diffusion or imitation of culture shown in a certain landscape, and the different tastes of each culture reflected on ordinary landscapes.

2. The axiom of cultural unity and landscape equality

All items in a landscape are equally important. Culture is a unity or a whole, that is composite of different parts, but each of them is part of the whole composition.

3. The axiom of common things

Common things and common landscapes are ironically difficult to study. They are unlike the famous sites, architecture, or buildings that have been recorded in many

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<sup>52</sup> "Hoi an Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia: Professional Guidelines for Assuring and Preserving the Authenticity of Heritage Sites in the Context of the Cultures of Asia."

<sup>53</sup> Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene.", 11-32.

books. Therefore, information about these common things can be gained through non-academic literature, such as the writings of new journalists, trade journals, commercial advertisement, promotional travel literature, and some rare books in specific topics about the common landscapes.

#### 4. The historic axiom

In order to understand the meaning of contemporary landscapes, as well as their objects, it is necessary to look to the past to the people who built them and caused them to be like that, on the other hand – our cultural ancestors. Two important aspects to understand the cultural significance of the landscape and its elements are the historic leaps and the mechanics of technology or communication of those elements of the landscape. Mostly, cultural change occur by great historic events, which caused historic leaps that affected the landscapes, while the mechanics of technology and communications made some elements of a certain landscape as they are at present.

#### 5. The geographic (or ecologic) axiom

It is important to study the elements of landscape in their geographic context, rather than looking at single element, because it is the way that certain element looks.

#### 6. The axiom of environmental control

Because most of the landscapes are related to the physical environment, it is necessary to know the basic physical condition of the landscape whether it's located in what kind of geography or environmental condition as these can affect the element of the landscape.

#### 7. The axiom of landscape obscurity

Since landscape cannot speak to us directly or tell us obviously about its meanings and messages, we must ask some questions and find answers through the alternation of looking, reading and thinking.

Waterson also believes in socio-cultural aspects that can be read from the architecture.<sup>54</sup> She does not look at architecture in the aspect of its method of built, but towards its social aspects underneath that built form. In order to understand each type of society, she grouped similar style of domestic architectures found on the islands of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, by looking at these places in geographical sense, rather than as a nation. The similar style of house and settlement can illustrate the social image and cultural practice of the people who dwell there. Architecture, whether it is vernacular or contemporary, is like a mirror that can reflect the society and that society and its context can also reflect various aspects of that architecture.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it is necessary not to disregard people when studying about vernacular architecture, as people and physical form of dwelling and settlement cannot be separate.

<sup>54</sup> Waterson, *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*.

<sup>55</sup> Chatri Prakitnonthakan, *Politics and Society in Archictural Art* (การเมืองและสังคมในศิลปะสถาปัตยกรรมสยามสมัยไทยประยุกต์ชาตินิยม) (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2004)., 6.

Chapter 3 will explain about the cultural ideology, belief, and thought system of the Chinese and how they relate that to the dwellings, in term of architecture and house ornamentation. This also includes the ideology of family, kinship, and clan, in relations to their settlement when migrating to new countries.

## Chapter 3

### Chinese Settlement and Its Ideologies

As already explained in the previous chapter human dwelling and settlement is a cultural constructed unit that reflect the ideologies of the people who live there. Chinese settlement reflects this idea greatly. Therefore, it is important to understand the belief and thought system of the Chinese and how it developed when they moved to other countries. In this chapter, it will elaborate the traditional belief of the Chinese, including the ideology of kinship system, and the architecture and ornamentation of Chinese dwelling and settlement both in their homeland and in Thailand.

#### 3.1 Daoism, Confucianism, and Feng-shui

Throughout the history of Chinese culture, Chinese philosophy plays a vital role in the Chinese living. Daoism (道家) is one of the most important and influential philosophy of the Chinese in many ways, especially in their living and dwellings, apart from Confucianism (儒家). These two doctrines are found alongside of each other in Chinese thoughts and literature. While Confucianism talks about man in his office or study duty, Daoism talks about the same man in his private retreat. While Confucianism concerns with matters of family and society, Daoism concerns with departing from the official life.<sup>1</sup> Basically, Daoism places emphasis on compassion, moderation, and humbleness. Daoist or the school of Dao is known as the teachings of Laozi. His teaching is based on the Dao, or the Way, meaning “the source of all being, the governor of all life, human and natural, and the basic, undivided unity in which all the contradictions and distinctions of existence are ultimately resolved” and his oldest texts have become known as *Daodejing* (道德經).<sup>2</sup> One of eighty-one sections of *Daodejing* gives significant view on the ultimate force and the universe, and can reveal the whole image of the relationships between things in the Chinese concept and the way architectural space lays. It is the idea of one-becomes-two, which can be seen also in the idea of *Yijing* (易經) or the Classic of Changes, which derives from the Zhou period and is the source of traditional wisdom.

“The Way gives birth to the One;  
The One gives birth to two;  
Two give birth to three;  
And three give birth to all things.  
All beings support the yin and embrace the yang;

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<sup>1</sup> William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, from Earliest Times to 1600* 2nd ed., 2 vols., vol. 1, Introductions to Asian Civilizations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> There’s been a dispute about the original writer and the age of *Daodejing*, however, it’s agreeable among contemporary scholars that it’s a collection of Laozi teachings compiled and edited by several editors.

And through the blending of *qi* they create harmony.”<sup>3</sup>

One is the original force or the force of universe. The original force consists of Yin and Yang (陰陽)<sup>4</sup>, in which Yin is the earth and Yang is the heaven. When Yin and Yang are together, four seasons are existed. When there are four seasons, eight natural phenomena then exist. Yin is represented by broken lines, while Yang is represented by an unbroken line. The symbolic lines of Yin and Yang are arranged atop the other created *gua* (卦) in eight different types, which are the eight natural phenomena: sky, earth, water, wind, fire, lightening, mountain, and stream. When eight *gua* connected in octagonal shape, with the symbol of Yin and Yang in the middle, it becomes a *Bagua* (八卦) sign, representing the symbol of the universe and the pattern of things, ideas, and events (figure 2). *Qi* or *shengqi* (生氣) literary means life breath or cosmic energy. It is a life process that forms part of living things. The fundamental concept of Daoism is if things in the universe go as they are without interruption to their natural flow, the society is in harmony. Therefore, man has duty to let the nature be as it is, as man follows the earth, the earth follows the heaven, the heaven follows Dao, and Dao follows its nature.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 2 Bagua sign

On contrary, the core idea of Confucianism is "li" (禮), which has a connotation of etiquette, rites, or social norms. "Li" implies to an appropriate practice of one's duty, covering the smallest society like a family to the largest society of the country. In a family, son has the duty to respect his father, while father has a duty to take care of the family. Similarly, in larger community like a country, everybody has

<sup>3</sup> From the section no.43 of *Daodejing*, Laozi (from Bary and Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, from Earliest Times to 1600.*)

<sup>4</sup> The symbol of Yin and Yang is in a circle divided into black and white parts, known as "Taiji"(太極)

<sup>5</sup> Bary and Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, from Earliest Times to 1600.*

duty of their own, while the Emperor has to take care and protect his people. If people make sure that they are doing their duties right and followed the idea of "li", it can assure the peacefulness and security of that society, because under "li", orderliness is a correct conduct. Moreover, "li" also implies to the humbleness of oneself in order to honour others. According to Confucianism, Chinese society is like a triangle shape, where the Emperor is at the top, followed by lower ranked officers and peasants at the bottom. Each member in the society has role of relationship to perform, in order to ensure the stability and status quo of that society. It is called "Five layers of relationship" or *wulun* (五倫), which refers to the relationships between employer and employee, father and son, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, and friends and friends. Confucius believed in the peaceful and structured society once the member of that society performs their duty according to this teaching and in protecting one's home is like protecting one's country. This belief was a standard morality of a Chinese family and was developed into the kinship structure of Chinese society.

The relationship between man and nature always laid in the construction of architecture, from common people's dwelling, royal palace, temple, to town planning. Their ideas of the relationship between man and nature are rooted from the interrelatedness of three layers, which are heaven above, earth below, and man in the middle. The earliest evidence of this idea was found in Shang dynasty (1600-1066BC) through the bone oracles in the shape of tortoise's shell and the square plan of the inner town, outer town, and vassal states. Wu clarified the idea of Chinese universe by comparing it to Indian view of universe, in which the Chinese universe is a cube, or six-sided world, while Indian universe is infinite and revolves around the cosmic axis in circular shape. In the cube universe of the Chinese, man places himself in the middle. The cube universe is identified with round shape, as the saying 'the universe is round and the earth is square'<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, traditional Chinese architectures are always seen in rectangular pattern, with the core of that structure located in the middle, e.g. city planning, palaces, houses, and tombs. In the Book of Change, it indicates the idea of architectural pattern that comprises of Three Powers (*san cai* 三才): heaven, man, earth. These interrelations of powers are expressed in the idea of knowable and unknowable patterns: visual and verbal, through the forms of geomancy, cosmology, building rites, building deities, numerology, and cultural symbols, known as "embodied images".

The role of traditional belief in building structure and landscape site is reflected in the idea of *Feng-shui* (風水), which literary means wind and water. Many scholars give meaning to the term, *Feng-shui* differently. Some of them called it as simply as the art of geomancy, but there have been a lot of arguments in this word. *Feng-shui* for Knapp is mystical ecology<sup>7</sup>, for Feuchtwang is topomancy<sup>8</sup>, and for

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson I. Wu, *Chinese and Indian Architecture*, 2nd ed. (New York: George Braziller, 1963).

<sup>7</sup> Ronald G. Knapp, *China's Traditional Rural Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 108-109.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Feuchtwang, *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geoancy* (Vientiane, Laos: Vithagna, 1974).

Smith is citing<sup>9</sup>. In general, its concept and practice refers to the auspicious location and the situating of a site or building. *Feng-shui* appeared in the Book of Songs and the Book of Documents, dated back to around one thousand B.C. It is practiced throughout China but most adopted around the Southern province. Not only had the wealthy Chinese applied *Feng-shui* in their dwelling, but also the common people of all levels adopted this belief in their everyday space.

The essence of *Feng-shui* is the dualistic quality of *yin* and *yang*, and the *qi* property of the universe that gives character and meaning to a place. *Yin* represents the darkness, female, passivity, and the moon, while *Yang* represents the lightness, male, activity, and the sun. Earlier, *Feng-shui* had many forms of theories and conventions, however, in late imperial era, the approaches of *Feng-shui* could be divided into two approaches. They are the cosmic patterns and the manifestations on the surface of the earth. The first approach is also known as the Analytical School that is focuses on complicated calculations, including the Compass school and the use of *luopan* (羅盤), which is a saucer-like wood with magnetised south-pointing needle at the centre, and imprinted with *Yin-Yang* symbol, *Bagua* symbol, and *Taiji* symbol. The other approach includes the Forms school that focuses on the topographical landscape features. Basically, appropriate landscape sites are described as comfortable and suitable, and also beautiful. Later on, both approaches merged with the traditional practices of Southern China and became mingled in practice, and both focus on the *qi* concentrated node that is called *xue* (穴) meaning hole or cave. *Qi*, in *Feng-shui* practice is vital force or vital energy that is relating to the construction, form and layout of the building, as it can affect the well-being, luck, and energy level of people, who live in that building. The building must be placed at a *xue* to enable the flow of *qi* in the above and below direction.

Whether it is a graveyard site, a single house, a village, or a whole city, *xue* node is found at different scales and is not only a *qi* concentration, but a converging spot of a horizontal spatial composition and an embraced space of protective armchair-like topographic structure, such as the shape of a single grave yard as shown in figure 3, and a landscape with high back, left and right arms, and low, open front. This pattern of landscape goes along with the balance of *yin* and *yang*, and the cardinal order that is identified with *Wuxing* (五行) or the five agents: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, which is related to the five planets and is symbolised by four spiritual animals, or *si shen* (四神)/ *si shou* (四獸)<sup>10</sup> The East is wood element and the azure dragon (*qinglong*/ 青龍), indicating the birth of *yang* and the spring season. The South is fire element and the vermilion phoenix (*zhuqu*/ 朱雀), indicating the maximum of *yang* and the summer season. The West is metal element and the white tiger (*baihu*/ 白虎), indicating the birth of *yin* and the autumn season. The North is water element and the black tortoise (*xuanwu*/ 玄武), indicating the maximum of *yin* and the winter. The fifth element is at the centre of the cycle, which is the earth and man (*huanglong*/ 黃龍). However, the most prominent direction in a building site is

<sup>9</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Fortune-Tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*.

the east and the west, or *qinglong-baihu* (青龍白虎) the birth of *yin* and *yang*. *Wuxing* and the cardinal direction are expressed on the shape of hills as indicated in the figure below. Thus, an ideal building site is where the watercourse occupies the front and the mountain ridge runs protectively at the back, creating an armchair-like pattern.

**Table 1** The representation of Five Agents

Five Agents ( <i>Wu Xing</i> )	Cardinal Direction	Spiritual Animal	Season	Yin and Yang	Shape of Hills
Wood 木	East 東	Azure Dragon 青龍	Spring 春	Birth of Yang	
Fire 火	South 南	Vermilion Bird 朱雀	Summer 夏	Maximum Yang	
Metal 金	West 西	White Tiger 白虎	Autumn 秋	Birth of Yin	
Water 水	North 北	Black Tortoise 玄武	Winter 冬	Maximum Yin	
Earth 土	Centre 中	Man (Emperor) 黃 龍	Midsummer 仲夏	Balance of Yin and Yang	

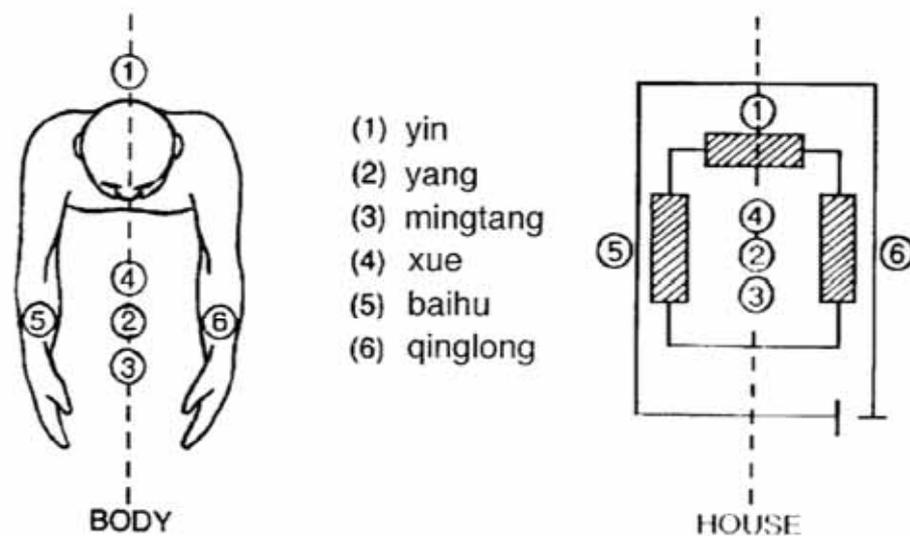


**Figure 3** Protective armchair-liked graveyard

Source: <http://www.naranong.net/index.html>

In having an auspicious building site or landscape, the spatial patterns can be altered to ensure proper *Feng-shui*, such as planting tall hedges along the rear of the

house to replicate the mountain ridge. However, the modification must be done with concern to the natural features. Since *yin-yang* and *qi* are the essence of *Feng-shui*, the appearance of *yin* and *yang* must be appropriately enhanced. Therefore, it is believed that no part of a building is shaded by hills on the east, west, and south direction, to enable the sunlight. On contrary, the hills are allowed only at the rear of a building, in order to protect the building from the rear of other building. In general, the fundamental siting of houses in China is facing to the south. Apart from the benefit of appropriate *yin* and *yang*, it also protects the dwelling from cold winds and gets the warm sun throughout the year. After the auspicious site is selected, the construction of the building itself is also concerned. Similar to the larger picture of armchair-like landscape, the features of dwelling are identified with a shape of human body with two arms stretching on both sides (figure 4). This pattern of dwelling is actually what courtyard dwelling is developed from. In addition to the selection of building site and the dwelling spatial layout, details of dwelling construction and furnishing are also crucial to the *Feng-shui* practice, as recorded in the *Lu Ban Jing* *Feng-shui* manuals and carpenter's handbooks that also include the house construction rituals.



**Figure 4** The features of dwelling and armchair-like human body

Source: Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*.



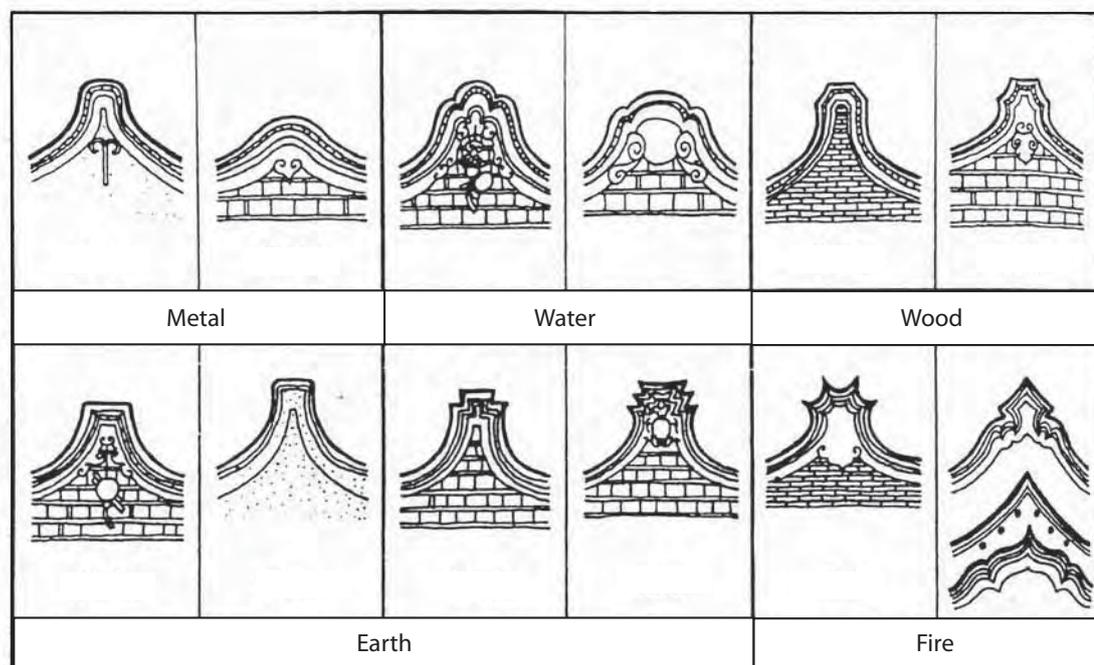
**Figure 5 Mountain shape and Wuxing**

Source: Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*.

*Feng-shui* is not only about the situating of a site, but also cover the structure of the building too. The width, the length, and the height of a house is calculated carefully using *Lu Ban chi* (魯班尺) or calibrated rule, traditionally made of wood or metal showing favourable and unfavourable metric unit. Nowadays, it can be found in form of measure tape. Certain colour is also used in *Feng-shui* practice of building construction, in which different colour symbolises different elements and have different meanings. Green colour and Blue colour symbolise wood element, and represent elegance and luxury. Brown colour, including reddish brown, red, dark orange, and pink colour, symbolise fire element, and represent fortune, prosperity, and nobility. Yellow colour symbolises earth element, and represents power. This colour is the royal colour that can be used for the emperor. White colour symbolises gold element, and represents melancholy and sadness. Last of all, black colour symbolises water element, and represents destruction and finality.<sup>11</sup> Apart from correct situating, auspicious dimension and colour, five types of the gable ends, or *shanqiang* (山牆), representing five shapes of hills according to the *Wuxing* (figure 5) are applied to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the dwellers. The round and smooth shape denotes metal; straight shape denotes wood; curved shape denotes water; pointed shape denotes fire; and square shape denotes earth (figure 6). The round-shape gable end denoting metal is always found in Hokkien dwellings, while

<sup>11</sup> Pornphan Chantharonant, *Hok Lok Siu: Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity* (ฮอก ลก ซิว : โชคลาภ อายุมั่น) (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2003)., 7-8.

the square-shape gable end of wood element is favourite one among the Hakka and the Teochiu people. The application of *Feng-shui* in the construction of dwelling can be seen largely in the old buildings of Southern provinces in China, such as Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong that reflect the prosperity of *Feng-shui* belief in that period. It can also be found practiced among the Chinese, who migrated in Southeast Asia, Hongkong, and Taiwan, along the waves of migrations during the sixteenth to early twentieth century. A good example is the construction of Cheong Fatt Tze mansion in Penang that greatly adopted *Feng-shui* practice in the spatial layout, construction, and ornamentation of the house. Five separate skywell are located in the house plan and at the centre skywell is where the *xue* node is located, which is believed to be where the movement of *qi* is. Therefore, auspicious symbols were placed in accordance to the *xue*, to ensure good fortune (figure 7).



**Figure 6** Shapes of gable end in accordance to the five elements (*Wuxing*) and different shapes of gable end in Penang.

Source: (above) Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation.* (below) Author



**Figure 7** Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang and its plan showing five separate skywells. *Xue* node is located at the centre one, where auspicious symbols are also used to ensure the welcoming of fortune.

Source: (above left) Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion archive/ (above right/ below) Author

### 3.2 Chinese Kinship Structure: Family, Home, and Clan Association

For the Chinese, their aesthetic principle is different from the western world. The Western idea of beauty is about the visual appearance - of what our eyes can see, while the Chinese gives importance to the cultural imprints, or cultural symbols, which are embodied in the built structures through visual, physical, ritual, names, ornamentation, and spatial patterns. Nancy Berliner interestingly denoted the term, 'archiculture' to refers to the cultural characteristics within the architecture, linking 'artifactual elements and experiential elements', such as building structure, spatial layout, orientation, ornamentation, rituals, beliefs, social ideology, and activities.<sup>12</sup> She refers specially to Chinese architecture, in which it fully embraces the cultural characteristics. Chinese architecture cannot be defined into a single style or be looked

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Berliner, *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House* (Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2003).

at it as a mere structure. On the other hand, it is full of social meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and values that the dwellers gave to it, and it is important to look at it as a cultural construct structure. Similarly as what Nelson Wu suggested to the students of Chinese architecture that the student “will miss the point if he does not focus his attention on the space and the impalpable relationships between members of this complex, but rather, fixed his eyes on the solids of the building alone”.<sup>13</sup> In old records missionaries who travelled to remote areas of China indicated disconnected pictures of the houses in different parts of the country. However, the cultural structures influenced similar elements of these Chinese houses, which is the spatial conceptualisation. Knapp stated in his book that the fundamental elements of Chinese architecture are enclosure, axial, hierarchy and symmetry.<sup>14</sup>

The word, *jia* 家, in Chinese language simply means house, but it also connotes the meaning of multigenerational household, an architectural structure of house, family members, and home. The Chinese character is derived from the picture symbol of a roof with a pig underneath that roof, or a pig inside a dwelling. It is a combination of the radicals, 豕 (*shi*/ pig) and 宀 (*mian*/ roof). This shows the Chinese domestic society that each family has one pig and eat together from that one pig. For the Chinese, family is the microcosm of the Chinese society, house is basic cell in the organism of Chinese architecture, and settlement is a broader cell in the same organism. Ames believed that in the Chinese world all relationships are familial, as can be seen in the words for the ruler that is referred to *tianzi* 天子 - the son of heaven, who is identified as father and mother or *fumu* 父母 to the people children, or *minzi* 民子.<sup>15</sup> This clearly shows the importance of kinship and family system in the Chinese society. Knapp divided Chinese families into three main types.<sup>16</sup> The first one is conjugal family that are comprised of only a husband, a wife, and their children. The second one is stem family that is comprised of a husband, a wife, children, and the father and/or mother of one married pair. Last type of Chinese families is joint family or extended family that includes one or more related conjugal families of the same generation. This last type is believed to be the Chinese ideal type of family, but is also believed to consist of several wives and concubines. The most found type of families in the Chinese society until nowadays is the stem family.

### 3.2.1 *Jia*: Home and Family

As a place is socially shaped, a home is also shaped by a family life. Chinese family is always tied with the life-cycle rituals, from birth to death, and domestic rituals. Therefore, a Chinese house became a place for conducting family rituals and serves like a part of people’s living experience. Nelson Wu believed that, “the dual quality of the house, as a setting for ceremony and as a home, is a most important characteristic of the house as an image of human relationship”.<sup>17</sup> Knapp also believed

<sup>13</sup> Wu, *Chinese and Indian Architecture*.

<sup>14</sup> Ronald G. Knapp, *Chinese Houses, the Architectural Heritage of a Nation* (Singapore: 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Roger Ames, "Introduction," in *An Introduction to Chinese Culture through the Family*, ed. Howard Giskin and Bettye S. Walsh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 1-8.

<sup>16</sup> Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*, 223-224.

<sup>17</sup> Wu, *Chinese and Indian Architecture*, 32.

that, “a house or home was a humanized space, structured to shape family organisation, and an instrument for weaving the web of Chinese social and ethnical norms”.<sup>18</sup> The spatial layout of a Chinese house reflects the human relationship, as what Wu believed.<sup>19</sup> It is a culturally constructed living structure. In smaller scale, it reflects the hierarchy of generations, genders, and age, between parents and children, men and women, and deceased ancestors and living descendants, expressed through the placement of rooms, buildings, and structures. However, in larger scale, it reflects the social relationship between the family and the world outside.

Therefore, a Chinese house represents specific status and obligations of each member, which is the application of Confucius teachings on the Five Relationships (*wulun*) and the *li*. The components of *li* can be seen clearly in the courtyard dwellings, where hierarchy of upper and lower, left and right, and inner and outer are applied to the placement of structures. As soon as stepping in the house, sequence of structures and increasing height of floor and roof are experienced. The building with door facing to the front of the house, as well as locating at the central axis are in higher status than other accompanied buildings and occupied by older generation of the family. As a result, the space at the innermost is for the oldest generation of the family and the ancestor’s altar. Even in a smallest courtyard house, and in the Southern style enclosed courtyard house, hierarchy is also applied along the axis of the house from public to private space. In Huizhou dwellings, the house consists of two halls that are separated by skywell. The front hall is the lower one, and is facing the north, carrying less status. The inner hall is higher as it is more significant and is facing the South.

The separation of gender, identified with *yin* and *yang*, is also applied to the inner and outer of the house. The activities of men and women are always separate and that also lies in the spatial layout of the dwelling. The U shaped dwellings that is developed from a simple I shape can represent the continuity of extended family in the Chinese society very well. The simple I shaped dwelling is comprised of a central room with one or two rooms on both sides, it expanded to L and U shapes, as family also expanded. In general, the central room is used as reception hall, which is the most important room because of its location, facing south and centrally located. The Southern style dwelling is very common to arrange the furniture in this room symmetrical and standardized. The symmetry and pair arrangement are identified with the dualism concept, such as *yin* and *yang*, and *xu* and *shi*, tangible and intangible. There is an altar table locating along the back wall with a square table and two chairs at its front. There might be other chairs and tables that are normally placed along sidewall on the east and west of the room. On the altar always located a vase (*ping*/瓶) and a mirror (*jing*/鏡), as they are homonym to the saying ‘*dong ping, xi jing*’ (東平西靜), which means the east is peace and the west is calm, or the east is vase and the west is mirror. In many houses, clock (*zhong*/鐘) is placed at the middle, with homonym to ‘*zhong zhong*’ (中忠) or the middle is loyalty (figure 8).

<sup>18</sup> Knapp, *Chinese Houses, the Architectural Heritage of a Nation*.

<sup>19</sup> Wu, *Chinese and Indian Architecture*, 32-34.



**Figure 8** “dong ping, xi jing” and “zhong zhong” arrangement, common arrangement in the reception hall of Chinese home in China

Source: Author, Hongcun - China

### 3.2.2 Family and Kin

The importance of family and kin in the Chinese society is also expressed through the core of Chinese society’s tradition, which are, being grateful to parents, respecting them while they are alive, and worshipping them after they passed away. This tradition also refers to showing deep sorrow for the deceased parents, worshipping them in the ancestral halls or in front of their memorial tablets, as well as visiting and paying respect to their cemeteries. In a house of ordinary Chinese people in China, memorial tablet of deceased ancestors can always be seen in the middle room, which is usually located at the interior of the house. This is core room of the house that symbolises unity and continuity of the family. However, larger house of rich people, the memorial tablets and the worshipped altar are placed in the upper room or inner room, to avoid the sight of the guests. In Thailand, memorial tablets were kept at the Chinese temples instead; while there was only ancestral altar displayed the photos of deceased ancestors inside a house.

Being grateful to the ancestors includes holding a respectful funeral for deceased parents and visiting the cemeteries, it is almost impossible to do so as overseas Chinese. As memorial tablets of deceased ancestors can be seen in a house, ancestral hall also found in each clan family, where housed the memorial tablets of the deceased ancestors from different generations. Ancestral hall symbolises social unit extended from the individual family to large community sharing common patrilineal descent.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Knapp interestingly noted that the Chinese web of

<sup>20</sup> Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese.*, 295.

blood relationship is formed with a family at the centre, and extended around the centre point with extended family, segment, lineage, and clan.<sup>21</sup> The ancestral hall is where all members of the whole family gather once or twice a year to worship their ancestors and many times, the family's activities are conducted there. This ritual aims to create the feeling of being part of the clan name, as well as maintaining continual clan and family unity.



**Figure 9** Ancestral altar in an ordinary Chinese home in Thailand

Source: Author



**Figure 10** Ancestral temple and clan hall of Yap Kongsu in Penang

Source: Author

The building of ancestral halls can be seen mostly at the Chinese settlements of the Malaka peninsula, such as in Penang. Since most of the first generation of the Chinese immigrants left their homeland with the feelings of always wanting to go back, their relatives would try to transfer their dead body back to bury in its hometown after they passed away. However, it was recorded that in 1892, there were only 200 corpses sent back from Siam to Southern China. Most of the rest were buried in the cemeteries here, while some of them were even cremated like in Thai traditions.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 300.

Cemetery is also another element that shows the separation of different dialects. Around the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, different cemetery was limited to different dialect group of people. The first one that was built in 1884 belongs to Cantonese people, while the latest one in 1899 belongs to Chaozhou people. This pattern of cemetery can also be found in many provinces, such as Lampang and Nakhonratchasima. Within the same dialect group, each cemetery is also limited to people from different prefectures. The most important rituals that can mostly reflect the idea of being grateful to parents and all Chinese give importance to is, *gongde* funeral ritual (功德) or *kongtek* in local dialect. It also acts as a tool of socialization because the full ritual is like a kind of performance that aims to teach about gratefulness.<sup>22</sup> Many detailed practices of this *Kongtek* ritual also reflects the feelings of being grateful that the descendants have to their parents.

### 3.2.3 Kinship and Clan

Patriarchal society of the Chinese puts man in higher status than woman. In old Chinese shops, large round table is always seen located at the back of the shop front. It is a dining table, where all male members of the family, along with the male workers, have meal together at once. Female members would have meal later. Nowadays, when coolies are no longer important in a Chinese shop or business, dining table still maintains its significance in a Chinese family as a place where all members gather. The tight organisation of Chinese family set definite status for each member, as well as the role of relationships between each member. All responsibilities of the family fall upon the first son's shoulder, including marriage. The first son should get married first and bring the wife to live in his family. This enhances the importance of family system for the Chinese.

This is different from Thai society, which is a matriarchal society. For Thai family, it is a loose organisation with adjustable roles of each member of the family. Woman in Thai family also have better position than woman in Chinese family. Even though there are some basic similarities in each Chinese family, it is interesting to see that many Chinese families nowadays allow woman to have higher status in the family, which is influenced from the matriarchal society of the Thai. Another interesting aspect of kinship relations in the Chinese society is the naming of person. Normally, the Chinese have three-character name, in which the first character refers to the clan name, the second refers to the generation, and the third is the given name. The generation name always has good and prosperous meaning. Therefore, when these words appeared in each person's name, it can also remind that person to behave in morality for the flourishing of his clan. The tradition of naming person in this way also assists the organising of the kinship structure. Not only different dialect group that have different traditions and practices, within the same dialect group, those who came from different districts also have different traditions. In general, the Chinese in Thailand had brought with them the traditional practice and belief from the homeland. However, they only chose to bring with them the one that was suitable with their living in each social environment. A good example that can support this opinion is the

<sup>22</sup> Saeng-Arun Kanokphongchai, *Bo Bad Bo Yong Kong* (บ่บ่บ่บ่บ่บ่บ่) (Bangkok: Bangkok Press, 2004), 27.

selection of worshipping the deity. The overseas Chinese all worshipped Tian Hou Goddess (天后) because she is related directly to the sailors and sea travellers and is the spiritual centre for the overseas Chinese, who travelled from their homeland by boat. Saeng-arun Kanokphongchai believed that belief system is a creation of human-being to fulfil his own need. Therefore, belief system can be changed according to the social trend. Similarly, the traditional practice is only a man-made tool to harmonise people and organise the society.<sup>23</sup> Because the state of the society in Thailand and China are different, together with the Cultural Revolution in China after big wave of migration, the traditional practices of the Chinese in Thailand and the Chinese in mainland China are also different. It is interesting to see that some of the practices among the Chinese in Thailand no longer exist in China. Nevertheless, among those slightly different traditional practices of different groups of Chinese in Thailand, standard moralities that lie in most of them are 'being thrifty and grateful'. It lies in the first generation of Chinese immigrants and also passed down to the second generation. When there were more waves of migrations with new comers, the identity and characteristic of that Chinese settlement then became stronger and more distinct because there was a thin separating line between the older and the newer immigrants.<sup>24</sup>

In looking at larger scale of Chinese kinship structure, the clan system is the important part of the whole circle and also plays significant role in the Chinese settlements, especially in new lands, as its core relies on the term "*Jia Ji Ren*" (家己人) or *Gaginang* in Teochiu dialect.<sup>25</sup> It is the idea of taking care of each other like being relatives. This term draws the Chinese together and creates the tie between old and new comers, even though they are not relatives by blood. The proper structure of clan system relies on common dialect group that the members must be descended along the male line, sharing the same bloodline, clan name and village. The administration of clan's village district, according to Praphruet Sakunrattanamethi,<sup>26</sup> has some important aspects. First of all, the members must have the same clan name, are descended from the same bloodline of the same clan, or are descended from any family line of the village leader. The leader is selected among the old aged member of the family. The social system of the village district requires morality, virtues, and gratefulness to tie each member together, as all members are part of the same family tree.

Each clan's village district also adopts its own regulations and community law, so it is also a way of organising the society. Ancestral hall is a predominant religious function of the clan's village district; therefore, this type of organisation is more a

<sup>23</sup> Saeng-arun Kanokphongchai, *The Chinese-Thai Ways in the Society of Siam* (วิถีจีน-ไทย ในสังคมสยาม), 1st ed. (Bangkok: Matichon, 2007), 150.

<sup>24</sup> In the Straits Settlements, the word, '*sinkeh*' or 新客 (*xin ke*) is regularly used to call these new comers.

<sup>25</sup> *Jia Ji Ren* (家己人) or *Gaginang* in Teochiu dialect literary means people of oneself's family. It refers to intimate and familiar friends of the same group that are counted as relatives and should be taken care of. This term represents the importance of Chinese clan system among the overseas Chinese.

<sup>26</sup> Praphruet Sakunrattanamethi, "The Thai and Chinese Cultural Relations " (Faculty of Liberal Arts, Huachiew Chalermprakiat University).

religious character rather than a social character. Lynn Pan noted that migrations to new lands made the uprooted immigrants yearn to know about their ancestors and can simply feel proud of their cultural roots. Therefore, the most distinguished social structure of the overseas Chinese is the clan associations. Clan associations are different from the village district organisation in the Southern China as they welcome Chinese descendants of the same clan name, regardless the bloodline and origin of hometown. Even though the members speak different dialect and came from different areas, they are united as brothers of the common ancestors.

In the clan associations in Thailand, there is no memorial tablet inside the association but the photos of members who donated money for the association are displayed instead. It reflects social character rather than religious character. The leader of the association is mostly a successful businessman. The objective of these clan associations is mainly to give the overseas Chinese a chance to get together, enhance the social power of overseas Chinese, and strengthen the cultural ties with China. It can be said that for the overseas Chinese, clan association is like a home for them, where it does not only help them out through their living in new lands, but also provoke the old memory of their homeland, so that their identity still maintains.

In Penang, where early Chinese settlers from Fujian and Guangdong provinces headed, many kinship organisations were also formed during the end of the nineteenth century. However, there are also various categories of voluntary associations that had been initiated by the Chinese in Penang under different principles. They are 1) kinship – surname, clan, lineage 2) locality – province, prefecture, district, village 3) dialect 4) craft.<sup>27</sup> These associations aim to assist the members regarding accommodation and employment. These associations are widely known as *kongsi*<sup>28</sup> (公司). *Kongsi* is a kind of social system that can be found among overseas Chinese and adopted mostly among the Chinese in Southeast Asia during the eighteenth century. There, it was rooted in both Chinese partnership and brotherhood traditions.

There are various views among the writers and historians on the definition of *kongsi*. Wan Tai Peng, who studied about the origins of Chinese *kongsi* concluded that it is not a partnership, a brotherhood, or a combination of both. Instead, it is a form of administration, where all have equal partner.<sup>29</sup> In general, each *kongsi* has the head of *kongsi*, who take care of the expenses, the activities, and the living of all members. All incomes go to *kongsi* and could be withdrawn from the central budget. However, *kongsi* in the Southeast Asia mostly have evolved from a form of a union, or *hui*<sup>30</sup> (會), involving with overseas mining industries and partnership system and later on expanded into a large organisation of *kongsi*. Among overseas Chinese communities, almost every Chinese institution in the Strait Settlements during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from a temple to vocational club, was called

<sup>27</sup> Hong, *The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History*.

<sup>28</sup> 公司 (*gong si*) nowadays refers to a business company.

<sup>29</sup> Wang Tai Peng, *The Origins of Chinese Kongsi*, 2nd ed. (Selangor Darul Ehsan: Pelanduk Publications, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> 會 (*hui*) literary means union or brotherhood, as seen in the famous *Tian Ti Hui* (Heaven and Earth Brotherhood).

*kongsi*. However, in many places *kongsi* was partial administrative organisation, partial cooperation and partial secret society.



**Figure 11** Various types of unions and clan associations in Malacca and Penang

Source: Author



**Figure 12** Elaborate ancestors temple of Khoo Kongsi and the replica of Chinese opera scene as performed on the permanent stage opposite to the temple in the ancestor's ceremony of the clan

Source: (left) Author/ (right) Khoo Kongsi Museum



**Figure 13** Common element of Chinese ancestral hall is the memorial tablets of deceased ancestors. In this photo is the Teochiu temple association in Penang.

Source: Author

In Penang, the *kongsi* of each clan was built elaborately in Fujian architectural style, similar to Chinese shrine of Fujian. These embellished clan *kongsi* represent the social status of each clan. It is where the memorial tablets of deceased ancestors were housed. Opposite to the *kongsi* building is found the permanent stage for Chinese opera or other types of performances that were performed at the annual ritual ceremony of that clan. There are also non-kin structure, which leads to other types of associations, including regional, dialect, and business group.<sup>31</sup> In Thailand, *kongsi* also appeared in the way that wealthy Chinese, who had been resided in Thailand earlier gave patronage to the new comers of the same clan or same place of origin. Assistance from this prosperous ‘brother’ (*Tua Hia* – in Teochiu dialect) came in form of loan for labour recruitment tax, pocket money, jobs, and accommodation. The new comers then pay back by labour and loyalty to the *kongsi*. This is also the origin of the secret societies, as well as other type of kin and non-kin associations among the overseas Chinese.

The dialect association is common non-kin association found in every country that the Chinese settled. The objectives of dialect associations are first of all, dealing with the occupation of new immigrants. Secondly, they built and maintained their regional shrines. Thirdly, they built the cemetery for the overseas Chinese, whose

<sup>31</sup> Richard J. Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960). P36.

families did not have enough money to transport the corpse back to the mainland. Last of all, they were formed up to organise all types of activities to unite the members who came from the same district or prefecture. In Thailand, the first dialect association was Contonese Association, known as Kwangsiu Association, which was founded in 1877. The Hainanese Association was founded in 1900, following by Hokkien Association in few years after. The Hakka Association was founded in 1909, and left the Teochiu Association<sup>32</sup>, in which Teochiu people took the largest number of all. It is interesting to see that the dialect group, who had less power and resources, formed up the association first. Another interesting activity of the clan includes the building of Chinese school, such as Jin Te school of the Hakka, and Ming Te school of the Cantonese. Even though the existence of these social structural associations greatly assisted the overseas immigrants, it also obstructed the unity of all overseas Chinese. Together with the chained migration pattern that drew the individual to one's clan, dialect, and regional group, the separation between overseas Chinese became more distinct. There were many times in the history that one dialect group opposed another dialect group badly. Nevertheless, the dividing of different dialect group had been decreased after the end of World War II. The change of settlement distribution in Bangkok and big towns made different dialect groups to live together and it became impossible to locate settlements of different dialect group upon the regional shrines. The bias between different dialects somehow remains, even though it is not as intense as it was in the early days.



**Figure 14** New building of Teochiu Association in Bangkok, mainly being venues for various social functions of the members and public.

Source: Author



**Figure 15** Regular member meeting and social function of the clan association in Thailand (in this photo, the ceremony of 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Liu Clan Foundation in Thailand)

Source: Author

<sup>32</sup> Official spelling as “Tiochew Association”

The world of Chinese in Thailand nowadays still relies on family and kin. Nevertheless, it may not longer exist in some of the present generation of Chinese descendants in Thailand. Not only the traditional practices that are changed, the traditional activities also developed and adapted according to the social environment. Traditional rituals in a single family might be reduced to suit with fast pace trend. The difference of gender is not as strong as it used to be, as in many Chinese families nowadays, the son is not required to bring in his wife to live together with the parents anymore. On the contrary, it is very common to see a family with son-in-law living together with the wife's parents. In community scale, the strength of cultural bonds between individuals in the community can still be seen through community's ritual, such as the vegetarian festivals and the worship of local deity through the performance of Chinese opera. There is a saying about three generations of the immigrants in that; the first generation worked very hard because of the poverty, the second generation learned to work hard from their parents and could do even better, but the third generation grew up in wealthy family and did not work hard, so all the money normally ran out within this generation and have to build all over again in the next generation.<sup>33</sup> This can also apply to the way certain morality might exist mostly only at the first and second generation of the Chinese immigrants and faded in the third generation of the Chinese, and possibly revitalised in the next generation.

### 3.3 Chinese Domestic Architecture and Ornamentation

#### 3.3.1 The Architecture of Chinese House

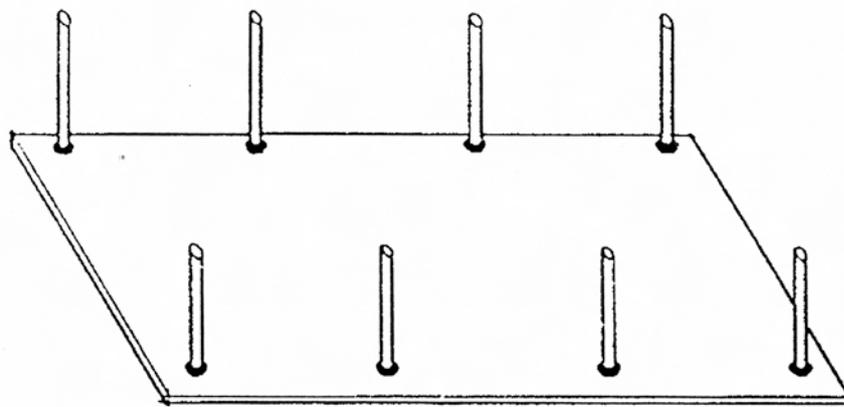
Even though there is no standard style of Chinese architecture, especially the dwelling, there are some certain similar elements. As already explained, that in the Chinese cosmological concept, the universe is round and the earth is square. Buildings, whether they are palaces, religious buildings, or dwellings, are typically formed in square pattern, with north-south orientation and central axis, similar to the cosmic pattern. The idea of Chinese spatial form also influenced the spatial conceptualisation of Japanese and Korean traditional buildings. Basically, each building is divided into modular unit that is called *jian* (間), as shown in figure 16. In western architecture, one bay equals a span between two lateral columns, while *Jian*, in Chinese architecture, equals two-dimensional floor space bounded by four columns. Therefore, the space of *jian* can form a room and on the other hand, a room can also be formed up by several *jian*. The number of *jian* is always odd, in which the central one must be wider to create the symbol of unity and continuity.

The fundamental element of Chinese house is the open space that is expressed in two forms, which are courtyard and skywell. In China, the courtyard of Northern dwellings is expansive, while the courtyard of Southern dwellings is condensed. The Northern style of dwelling always expands from a simple three *jian* into I shape, L shape, U shape, and finally an enclosed *siheyuan* (四合院) (figure 17). *Siheyuan* is a traditional Northern courtyard house in square-shaped with an open space at its core and surrounded by connected buildings forming like walls (figure 18). The form of courtyard house is flexible and varied according regional and climate condition

<sup>33</sup> Kanokphongchai, *Bo Bad Bo Yong Kong* (บันทึกบั้งก้อง).

(figure 19). Because of the cold climate in the North, the courtyard house is open and facing to the South to receive maximum sun throughout the day. In a courtyard house, the open space takes thirty percent of the building lot. The archaeological evidence revealed that the courtyard has existed for over three thousand years old. These opposing elements illustrate the Chinese social relationship that mostly found in a form of courtyard dwelling.<sup>34</sup> Large open space like this is very rare in the South of China. Instead, it is created at the centre of closely spaced buildings in the form of enclosed courtyard, known as *Tian Jing* (天井) or skywell.

The Southern style of dwelling expands from three-*jian* unit in different direction. When *jian* unit is expanded, the skywell can also be duplicated (figure 20, 21, 22). Window are minimal at the outer façade of the building, therefore the skywell is an essential mean of ventilating and allowing light to get through the house. The skywell can respond to the hot and humid climate as it allows certain amount of wind, rain, and light to get into the house. Hot air rises, while cool air gets through the first storey of the house. It is believed that if a house has no courtyard, it could not be called a house.<sup>35</sup> The open space of courtyard and skywell both reflect the idea of enabling the flow of *qi* in above and below direction, and both are the fundamental space of Chinese house. The enclosed form of Chinese dwelling reflects the idea of the significant centre, which separates inside from outside.

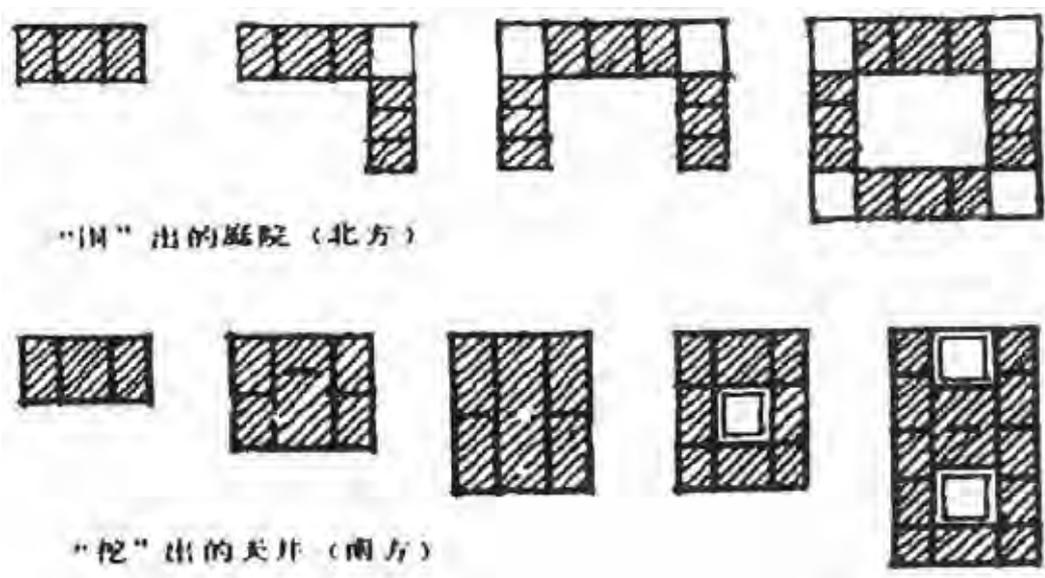


**Figure 16 The division of *jian* (bay) in Chinese architecture**

Source: Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.

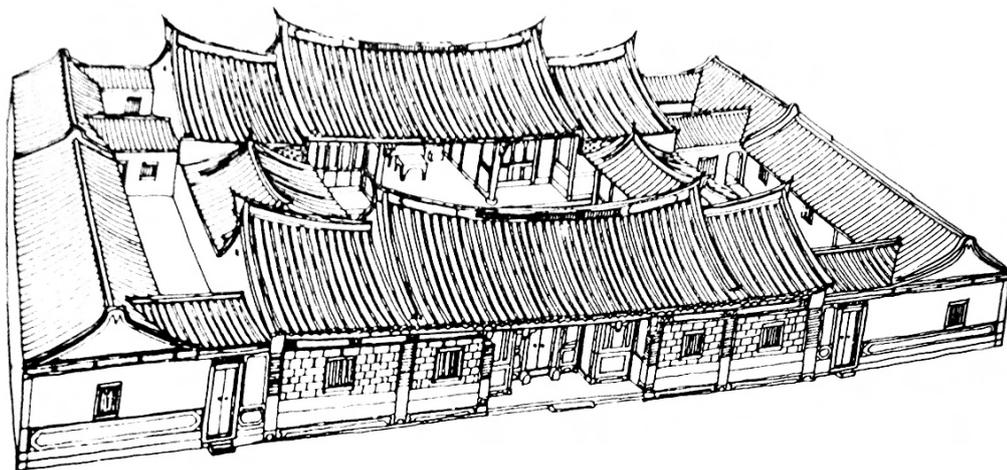
<sup>34</sup> Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.

<sup>35</sup> Berliner, *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House*.



**Figure 17** The expansion of simple I-shaped dwelling in different pattern of the North and South architectural style

Source: Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.



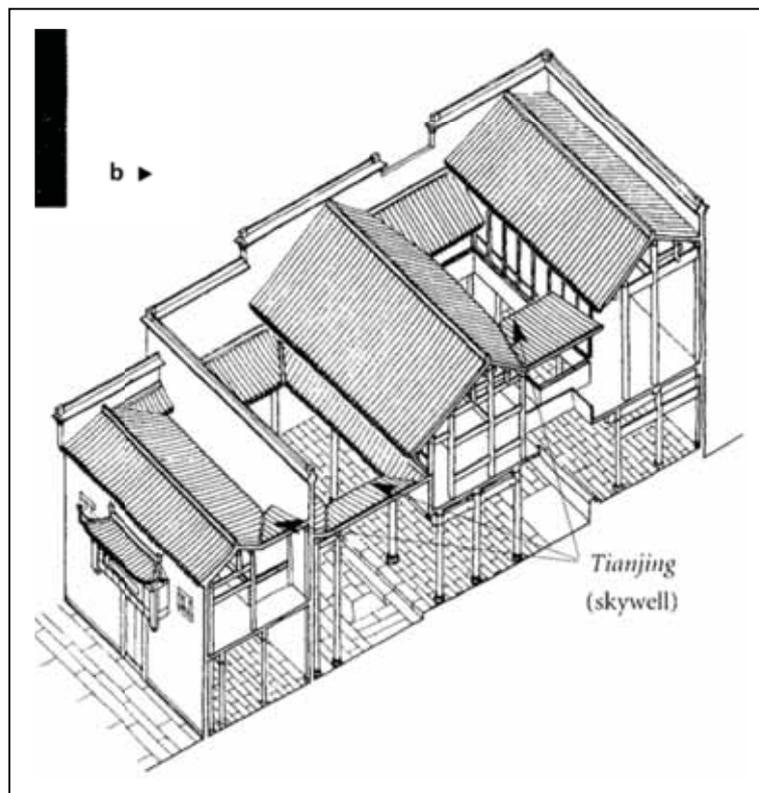
**Figure 18** Northern style of courtyard dwelling

Source: Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.



**Figure 19** Courtyard in the middle of the house in Shaanxi, Northern China

Source: Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.



**Figure 20** The southern style of dwellings with two skywells separating three halls of a house (Huizhou dwelling)

Source: Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.



**Figure 21** The southern style dwelling of Hongcun, Huizhou

Source: Author



**Figure 22** Skywell inside a southern style dwelling of Huizhou

Source: Author

When the Chinese migrated to new lands, they also adopted their built wisdom in building the dwelling to suit with their occupation, local climate and social surrounding. Since the Chinese always occupy the trade and the business in anywhere they migrated to, their dwellings were then developed into a long building divided into several units, known as shophouse. The Straits of Malacca was where the overseas Chinese settled mostly; therefore, shophouse architecture is dominant in the area and has great influence on the shophouse architecture of Thailand, especially in the Southern coast.

The shophouse architecture of the Straits can be divided into five periods that reflect different styles. The earliest style is a one or two-storey shophouse with five-footway in the front that dates 1790s-1850s (figure 23). It is simple, low, squat, and has simple square pillars supporting slanting beam. Shophouse of residential purpose, door is located in the centre with two square windows at the side, while shophouse of commercial purpose has vertical timber panels that are used to cover the shop front. The second style is Southern Chinese eclectic style that dates 1840s-1900s (figure 24). It is a simple two to three-storey shophouse also with five-footway paved with terracotta floor tiles at the front but is taller than the earlier type. Below roof beam are decorative panel and louvered shutters. Under the louvered shutters are typically three decorated panels of plastered moulding or Chinese ceramic air vent. The residential

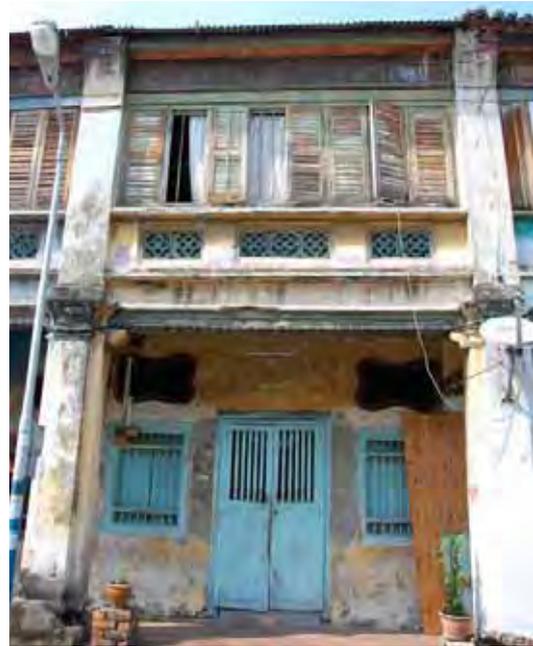
type has central carved ventilated door with solid inner door and two square windows with air-vents above. The commercial type also has vertical timber panels as door. The third style was early Strait eclectic style that dates 1880s-1910s (figure 25). It has the same height and same footpath as the Southern Chinese eclectic style but the footway is paved with geometric pattern floor tiles. The gable end varies in different shapes. The louvered shutters are in Venetian style, which is full-length and composed of two or three of them inside the plastered arches. The ground floor façade is almost similar to the Southern Chinese eclectic style except the decorative wooden signs hung above the door and at its sides. The next style is late Strait eclectic style that dates 1910s-1940s (figure 26, 27). It has elaborate decoration of mixed Chinese and European styles, with five-footway at the front and sometimes with compound garden. Full-length louvered windows are found with glass fanlights and internal balustrade, and decorated elaborately with decorative pastured works of pilasters, cornice, garlands, keystones in flora motifs. The ground floor façade of this style is decorated with ceramic tiles under the curved top windows. The air vent panels above the windows are sometimes replaced with symbolic ornaments. The fourth style is Art Deco style that dates 1930s-1960s (figure 28). It reflects the Art Deco style of involving horizontal and vertical lines. The building is finished with Shanghai plaster and generally has year of built located on the centre of the parapet wall. This style of shophouse is always found as commercial type and has metal folding panels with ventilation grill as door of the shop front. The last style is early modernism style that dates 1950s-1970s (figure 29). It can be found as two-storey shophouse, three-storey corner shophouse, or three-storey individual building. It almost has the same proportion as Art Deco style but cleaner features with shading canopies and fins. The windows and doors are simplified.

These shophouses have several units that are separated by thick party wall but all share common arcade along the front of the building. This arcade footway was the result of British building regulation in its colonial country of Singapore, in that all shophouses must leave five-feet footway in the front (figure 30, 31). Each unit of the shophouse is narrow at the width but very long towards the rear of the building. This was also influenced from the Dutch colonial country that collected tax according to the width of the house front. Normally, each unit comprises of two buildings, one at the front and one at the back, and are connected by an open court. It can be noted that the first three styles of shophouse were the most influenced styles on shophouses in the Southern part of Thailand. The spatial layout of the typical shophouse in the Straits settlement are shown in figure 32. The ancestor's altar is generally found located in the front hall of the shophouse. Open courtyard in form of skywell is located in between each hall.



**Figure 23** Earliest style of shophouse, Penang

Source: Penang Heritage Centre



**Figure 24** Southern Chinese eclectic style of shophouse, Penang

Source: Author



**Figure 25** Early Straits eclectic style of shophouse, Penang

Source: Penang Heritage Centre



**Figure 26** Elaborate façade of late Straits eclectic style of shophouse, Penang and Singapore  
Source: Author



**Figure 27** Late Straits eclectic style of shophouse with compound garden, Penang  
Source: Author



**Figure 28** Art Deco style of shophouse, Penang  
Source: Author



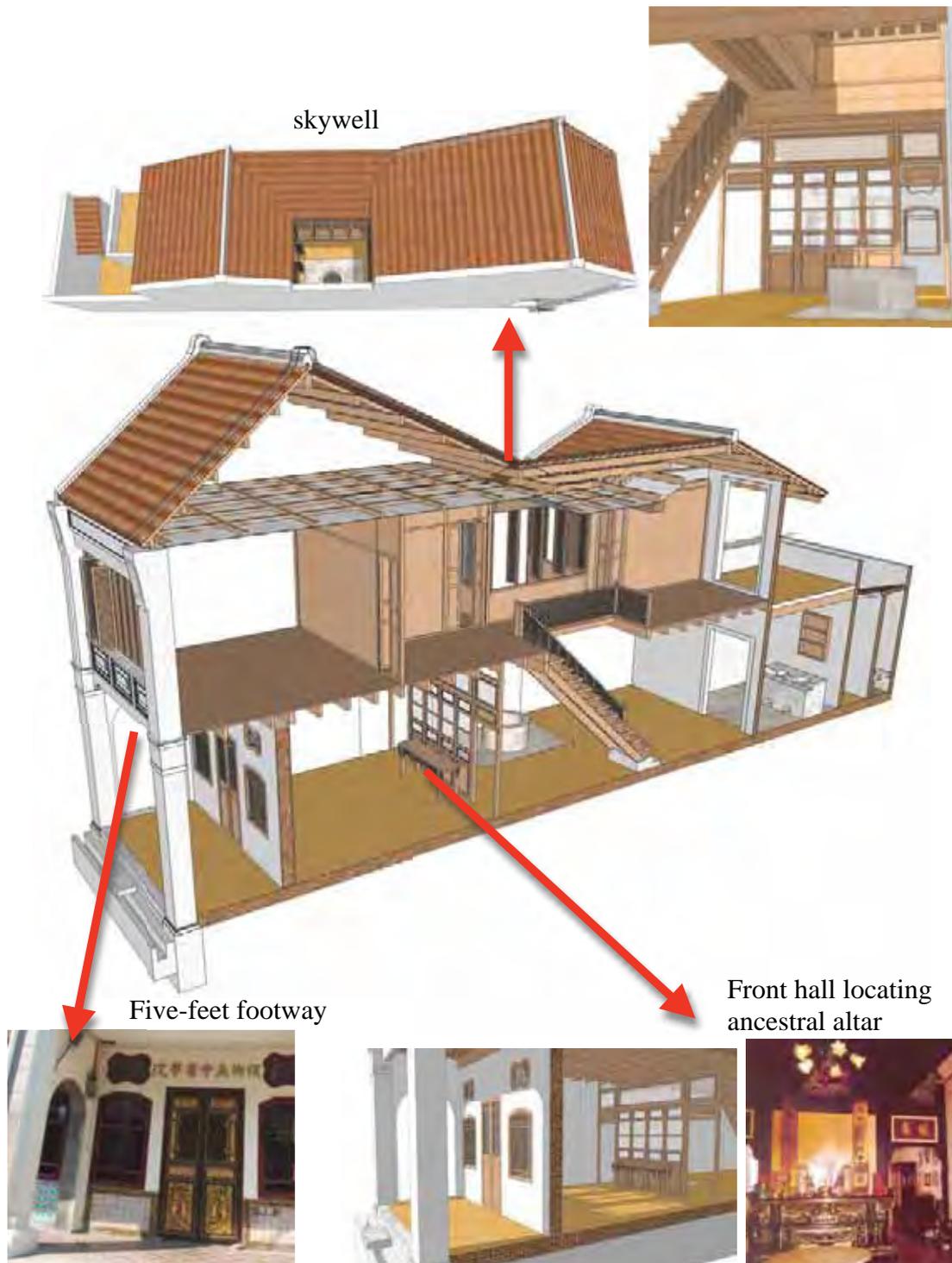
**Figure 29** Early Modernism style of shophouse, Penang  
Source: Author



**Figure 30** Image of Chinese life along the five-foot footway in front of the shophouse  
Source: Singapore's Chinese Heritage Museum



**Figure 31** Five-foot footway at present, Penang  
Source: Author



**Figure 32** Spatial layout of typical shophouse in the Straits settlement that influences the style of shophouse in Thailand. The figure shows courtyard in form of skywell with a waterwell, ancestral altar in the front hall, and five-foot footway in front of the house.

Source: Author

The construction of shophouses along both sides of the road and the shophouse architecture of the Straits settlement - Malacca, Penang and Singapore influenced a lot on the Chinese dwellings in the South of Thailand, especially in Phuket, Songkhla, Pattani, Trang, Takuapa, and Ranong, and also spread to the construction of new shophouses in Bangkok in the nineteenth century, which was very distinct development of the country. It is interesting to see that typical shophouse in Phuket that also imitated the style of Straits shophouses can be divided into five parts, which is shop front, guest reception, living hall, dining room, and kitchen, which is longer than the original form of Straits shophouse. The spatial layout is not different from the old style earthen building. Open court in the form of skywell and water well is located in between. It is two to three-storey high with a wooden sign engraved the clan name locating above the door. The decorative ornaments are in traditional Chinese style, such as the use of auspicious motif at the window frame. The distinct detail is the construction of arcade walkway along the front of the building.



**Figure 33** View of Georgetown, Penang in the nineteenth century with rows of shophouses along the street

Source: Tan Kim Hong, *The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History* (Penang: Areca Books, 2007).

**Figure 34** View of Phuket in the early twentieth century with rows of shophouses, similar to Georgetown in Penang

Source: Old postcard from Chanchai shop, Phuket



**Figure 35** Spatial layout of typical shophouse in Phuket as influenced by the shophouse architecture of the Straits settlement

Source: Jiamjit Khwamsuk in Kusun Eiam-arun, *A Traveler's Guide Phuket*, 1 ed. (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2000).

When looking at the dwelling of Chinese people in Thailand, it can be noticed that while Thai people like to dwell in an elevated house with open yard and located nearby their farms or fields or rafting houses along the river, the Chinese like to settle on ground, especially where there are trade and business opportunities, similar to other Chinese settlements in Southeast Asia. However, Coughlin believed that it is difficult to find stereotype of a Chinese home or family because of the different economic, occupational, and regional background of the Chinese in Thailand.<sup>36</sup> The period of building also influenced the architectural style of Chinese dwellings in Thailand. The earliest style of one-storey shophouse replicates traditional Chinese houses in the Southern China, where they came from. Open courtyard that connects two separate buildings together are typically found in the earliest type of Chinese house in Southeast Asia. Later on, it is transformed into the form of skywell in the middle of enclosed shophouse. Around early twentieth century, shophouse became more common type of dwelling, as there were also more markets as new urban centre.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 36** Vernacular dwellings of the Teochiu people can still be seen in Shantou and Chaozhou, China, where was home of the Teochiu in Thailand.

Source: Author

*Ruenrong* refers to a house that was built on ground and normally belongs to the Chinese, who open the front part as a shop and live at the rear part. Several of *Ruenrong* situate next to each other became *Hongthaew* or rowhouse. These houses are built in clay. The wood is taken part only at door and window, and beam and floor for two-storey house. Roof is paved with half-circle-shape clay tile. It is a three-bay unit of shophouse with door locating at the centre bay and windows at sided bays. The roof is paved with ceramic tiles. It was developed into one and a half storey and two-storey building afterwards. Some buildings were decorated nicely with fresco and

<sup>36</sup> Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand.*, 67.

<sup>37</sup> Srisak Vallibhodom, *Thai Household and Thai Village (เรือนไทย บ้านไทย)*, 72 Years: Srisak Vallibhodom (Bangkok: Muang Boran Publisher, 2009).

stucco works in Chinese traditional motifs. It is common to see two, three, and four units of this type of shophouse. The front part is used as shop front or living area. The next part of the house is stairs hall and normally has water well located in this part. It can be said that in the first half of the nineteenth century, shophouses were built mainly by the Chinese craftsmen, therefore, architectural style, materials, and construction technique all reflect construction skills of the Chinese. The traditional Chinese shophouse can be seen in Pattani, in which its oldest form was a one-storey and three bays unit shophouse. Within one unit, the spatial layout was divided into three distinguished parts. The first part is front terrace with half raised floor used as a stall for displaying goods. The second part is living room with ancestor's altar. There was attic space above the living room for storing goods. Open space above the altar enabled the moving of goods also symbolises virtual courtyard connecting the ancestor's altar with the heaven.<sup>38</sup> The third part is sleeping area. Backyard area, which was the area for washing, cleaning, cooking, and bathing, was connected to the house via rear walkway, and normally located a waterwell. At one side of the building is an open space left as walkway linking to the backyard or for ventilation purpose. Two-storey shophouses have few different floor plans according to the number of house bay and the style of house.



**Figure 37** Early type of one and two-storey Chinese shophouse in the South of Thailand. Traditional painting on the façade can still be seen. (Above: Songkhla/ Below: Takuapa, Phang-nga)

Source: Author

<sup>38</sup> Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*.

Typical shophouses in Thailand is built right on the ground and is generally located along both sides of the road and facing to each other. The business section is at the front part of the building, and behind the shop front is a family space or family room, that reflects the kinship value of the Chinese that preserves this space for family, kin, and close friends only. Dining table for all members to have meal together, as well as ancestral altar is located at this part of the house. It can be said that this is the most important part of a Chinese house. The rear part is open area for cooking and toilet, and the bedrooms are located on the second or third floor.

The style of shophouses in Bangkok can illustrates the majority of Chinese in Thailand because the Chinese community in Bangkok is the centre of commercial and organisational interests.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it can possibly imply that what the Chinese in Bangkok do can also be the standard of practice for other Chinese communities in other parts of the country. For instance, the tradition of building small shophouses in Sampeng district, Bangkok, also reflects on the shophouses in the old trade centre of Nakhonsawan province. The rise of shophouses tradition came with the construction of new roads. New styles of shophouses were built along Charoenkrung Road or New Road, which was cut in the reign of King Rama IV, imitated those styles found in Singapore and Penang (figure 38). The letter from Prince Damrongrathanuphap to Prince Naritsaranuwattiwong dated 27 May 1941 that was collected in “*San Somdet*” mentioned the shophouses along Charoenkrung road that imitated the style of buildings in Singapore.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 38** New Road in the early twentieth century

Source: <http://www.2Bangkok.com>

Prince Damrongrathanuphap also divided the type of residential buildings in Bangkok into three different periods. The first one was the original style that had no influences from other foreign styles. The second one was a mixture between local,

<sup>39</sup> Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand.*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> Prince Damrongrathanuphap, *San Somdet* (สารสนสมเด็จฯ), vol. 22 (Bangkok: Kurusapha, 1962).

western and Chinese, as could be seen largely in the shophouses of late King Rama IV to beginning of King Rama V era, which was around the mid of the nineteenth century. The last one were the buildings during the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910) that were in western style. In the reign of King Rama V, the Privy Purse had built two-storied shophouses on both sides of Yaowarat, Sampeng, and Ratchawong Roads for rent replacing old bamboo row houses with thatched roof in Sampeng area that was destroyed by big fire. One-storey buildings were built at Anuwong Road towards Ratchawong Road to be rent out as a warehouse. After all eighteen roads were cut in and around Sampeng area, there were more shophouses built for rental purpose. In some areas, there was a footway along the front of the building that enabled a sharing arcade, similar to the shophouse architecture in the Straits settlement, for instance, group of shophouses on Charoenkrung Road and Bumrungruang Road (figure 39).



**Figure 39** Shophouse with footway (arcade) on the left side of Bamrungruang Road

Source: <http://www.2Bangkok.com>

In Bangkok, early type of shophouse is one storey high and at maximum seven metres long and around two and a half metres wide only (figure 41). The ground was raised about one foot and paved with wooden planks. There was no window but only a ventilation panel above the door. Normally, all residents living in these shophouses shared communal toilet at the back of the building. Since there was almost no free space, bamboo stick was hung out from the eave for hanging clothes. These shophouses were built on both sides of a dead-end alley and the example of this type of shophouses can be seen at the area near Kusonsamakhon temple. Another old type of shophouses in Bangkok's Chinatown is a two-storey small and narrow shophouse, which are only four metres long and two and a half metres wide. There are two small windows on each floor. Four pieces of wooden planks made a door of the house. The façade was decorated with beautiful stucco and ornamental motifs. Communal toilets are sometimes located underneath the staircase, and sometimes at the back of the building. Space for hanging out clothes was located on the rooftop.

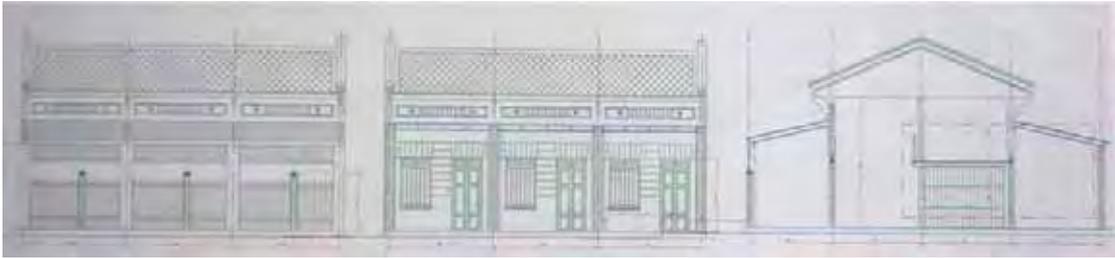
It can be noticed that the development of dwelling style is also the result of the transportation development, especially the construction of railway to different parts of Thailand because new built technology and materials are also introduced. After the complete construction of railway and road to several market districts and towns, concrete buildings of two and three storeys for business purpose have been built. An interesting example is in Lampang province, in which the Chinese settlement had relocated to the train station area and two to four-storey concrete buildings were built.

No matter how varies the exterior architecture is, most of the shophouses in Thailand also share common element of open space in form of open court or skywell as already mentioned. The open court or skywell for the Hokkien, especially at the South of Thailand, is believed to welcome prosperity and luck to the family by the flow of *qi*. It also enables ventilation through the enclosed building. The size of open space depends on the size of the house. Shophouse can be found as a single building with open space at the rear for cooking, washing, and cleaning purpose, and connecting buildings with open court between buildings.



**Figure 40** Early shophouse of the Chinese in Bangkok

Source: Author



**Figure 41** One-storey early shophouse in Bangkok, can still be seen located on Dinso Road

Source: "Jodmai Hed Kan Anurak Krung Rattanakosin (the Annals of the Conservation of Rattanakosin Kingdom)," (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 1982).



**Figure 42** New construction technique came with the arrival of railway to the provincial town. In this photo is three-storey commercial shophouse on Prasanmaitri Road near train station, Lampang.

Source: Author

Chinese shophouses can be identified through the door. According to the *Feng-shui* belief, door is where the ventilation of the house exists and creates the flow of *qi* through the house. It is assumed that originally front door of a Chinese shophouse was rail-type, which was not that private, so wooden panels were brought

in to cover the entrance (figure 43).<sup>41</sup> This type of door is called *Fa Na Thang*, which is a simple way of putting vertical wooden panel next to each other to cover the entrance of the shop. It was the wisdom of Chinese merchants, in that during daytime, these wooden panels could be removed and used as shelves for displaying goods inside the shop. Above the *Fa Na Thang* door panel was air vent panels that enables ventilation during the night. This simple way of making door to protect their shophouses was developed into the making of *Ban Fiam* or *Fa Fiam*, which is a set of wooden panels that are fixed to each other and can be kept in parallel folds. Both types of these wooden doors enabled complete opening of the front entrance and are suitable for shophouses (figure 44). This wooden-partition type of door creates privacy and harmonious feelings of living together in their own world, where custom and traditions are still performed. There is another type of door that is commonly found in the Southern part of Thailand and was influenced greatly from the Strait settlement's architecture. It is the style of a single door in the middle and two windows at both sides of the door. It is known as *Na Pisat* or demon's face, referring to the symbolic meaning of a protection face that can protect evil spirits and bad things to enter the house, as door symbolises a mouth and windows symbolise eyes. This pattern of door and window can be found in both one-bay shophouse and three-bay shophouse. Commonly, building with *Na Pisat* pattern is used as dwelling only, unless a three-bay shophouse that can be opened for wholesales trade (figure 45).



**Figure 43** Rail-type door with wooden panels, early type of shophouse door found in Thamuang, Kanchanaburi

Source: Author

<sup>41</sup> Thanarat Thawarot, "A Study of Shophouse in Old Commercial Districts of Eastern Seaports at Thailand's Southern Peninsula (การศึกษาตึกแถวบริเวณย่านการค้าเก่าในเมืองท่าชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันออกของคาบสมุทรภาคใต้ประเทศไทย)" (M.Arch Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2004).



**Figure 44** The evolution of *Ban Fiam* door on various types of shophouse

Source: Author



**Figure 45** *Na Pisat* pattern of door and windows

Source: Author

The decorative stuccos on the building reflect the social and living pattern of the Chinese in different periods. One of the examples is the set of shophouses on Songwad Road in Bangkok (figure 46). Stuccos of fruits and vegetables on the façade represent the business of selling fruits and vegetables seeds at those buildings (figure 47). Sometimes, stuccos of Chinese auspicious symbols, such as bats and endless robes are also used. Some of the shophouses are also decorated elaborately with the motif of Chinese scrolls and words over the door, while some only have the year of built located over the window (figure 48). Shophouses that were built during the reign of King Rama V were mostly influenced by western architecture in having pilaster as decorative ornament and imitated the shophouses in Penang and Singapore.



**Figure 46** Beautiful decoration on the façade of shophouses on Songwad (above) and Mangkon Road (below), Bangkok

Source: Author



**Figure 47** Decorative stuccos of fruits and vegetables motif on the façade of Songwad shophouses

Source: Author



**Figure 48** Chinese scroll motif in different styles on the ground floor's façade above the windows

Source: Author

When the Chinese merchants in Thailand became wealthier, their houses were developed into large western style mansion that can still be seen in many places. *Ang Mor Lao*<sup>42</sup> is this mansion style dwelling found mainly in the South of Thailand, mostly in Phuket (figure 49). The construction of *Ang Mor Lao* was influenced from the Strait eccentric styles of the mansions in the Straits settlement. It is a mix of western and Chinese architectural styles and can still be seen in a lot in Penang. *Ang Mor Lao* was owned by rich Chinese merchants, who mostly involved in the mining business. Open courtyard is also found inside this type of dwelling. There were several large *Ang Mor Lao* in the town of Phuket and most of them are still left at present. Apart from being a private dwelling, it was also used as a merchant club, known among Phuket people as *Gongguan* (公館), which was influenced by the club

<sup>42</sup> “*Angmorlao*” (紅毛樓) is a Hokkien dialect refers to a western style mansion in the Southern part of Thailand. The word *Angmor* literary means red-haired, and is used for the meaning of foreigner, while *Lao* means concrete building.

culture of the West. The mansion of Phra Phitakchinpracha at the end of Krabi Road in Phuket town is an example (figure 50). It was used as a club for his friends to gather and party. It was known among the local as young people's club. Another example is the mansion of Yom Phisonyabut, entitled Luang Sathonrachayuk, who was an officer in the royal court of King Rama V and was responsible in cutting Sathon canal . He was among the first property developer of Thailand, who also managed the land along both sides of Sathon canal. In 1914, he built a large mansion for his family with separate kitchen building and maid building. His mansion had later been used as the Hotel Royal in 1927 and the Russian embassy in late twentieth century. It is currently part of a condominium complex (figure 51).



**Figure 49** Several *Angkor Lao* are still left to see in Phuket town, in both good and bad condition

Source: Author



**Figure 50** Grandeur *Angkor Lao* of Phra Phitakchinpracha on Dibuk Road, Phuket

Source: Author



**Figure 51** *Angmor Lao* of Luang Sathonrachayuk as Hotel Royal in 1927 and after renovation in 2008

Source: <http://www.2Bangkok.com>

### 3.3.2 The Household Ornamentation

Even though when *Feng-shui* practice is no longer taking large part in the construction of a Chinese house nowadays, ornamentation is still necessary as it is a tool to protect the house from any inimical events and reduce bad luck caused by wrong situating and constructing of the house, and bring more luck and fortune to the dwellers. When a house was built with unavoidable circumstances from surrounding buildings and structures, defensive ornamentation take part in preventing misfortune and possibly evil spirits. In the Chinese minds, not only protecting their houses and countering antagonistic events are necessary, but adding auspicious symbols where can ensure good fortune and prosperity to the dwellers are equally important.

For the Chinese, no matter what type of house it is, the main door is the important element because it symbolises the passage, where good fortune can access. Therefore, it must be ensured that nothing is obstructed the fortune passage of the main door. The most unfortunate circumstances are a house with road, which runs against it, a house with road direction pointed towards the main door, and two main doors are located across each other. In these cases, the defensive ornamentation is crucial and the use of *bagua* symbol is very common. This eight trigrams symbol is generally placed above the main door or right on the leaves of the door in form of door pulls.

Apart from the *bagua*, there are also other types of defensive objects used. Ordinary mirrors are also found locating above the main door, as it is believed to deflect the harmful influences and frighten the evil spirit away. In some houses, drawing of animal's face is used together with *bagua* symbol to double the protection, among which the smiling tiger is commonly found representing *yang*. Drawing of tiger and dragon are also found together, symbolises *qinglong-baihu* in cardinal direction. These above defensive ornaments are largely applied to the Chinese houses with false location, which can be seen in Chinese houses, both in China and Chinese settlements elsewhere (figure 52, 53). Apart from the first three defensive ornaments, the drawings of door Gods or *menshen* are another protective ornamentation of the

house, however, more often found on the doors of temples in much larger scale and elaborately painted. The pair of door guardians are in full costume and are always equipped with auspicious symbolic motifs, such as mirror. Although they appeared in different mythical figures, they are believed to help banishing evil spirits (figure 54, 55).



**Figure 52** Bagua and smiling tiger symbol on the reflective mirrors are always found above the door frame on the shophouse building, as well as on the gate of a house.

Source: Author



**Figure 53** Many types of defensive ornaments are always seen on the shophouse of the Chinese

Source: Author



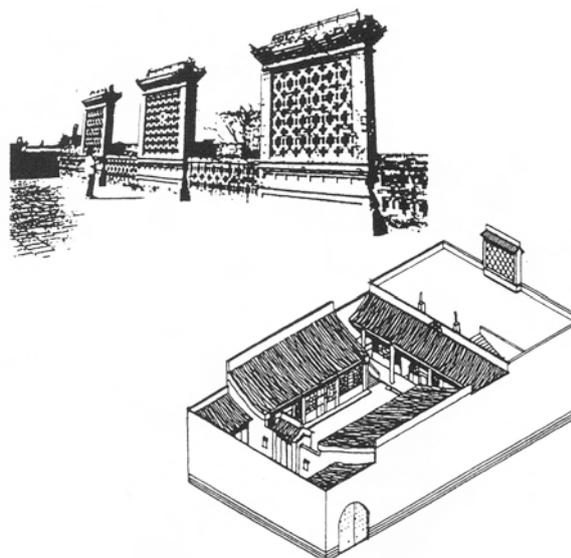
**Figure 54** *Menshen* on the door panel of a Chinese temple, Talad Thachin, Samutsakhon

Source: Author



**Figure 55** *Menshen* at ordinary Chinese shophouse in Thailand is represented as incense holder, located beside the door on the outside wall of a house

Source: Author



**Figure 56** *Yingbi* as a screen wall and as a symbolic ornament

Source: Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*.

In traditional Chinese houses, a protective ornament comes in the form of *yingbi* or screen wall that is typical element in courtyard houses. In practical sense, it is a protective system of any houses that hide the interior of the house from the passers-by and is also decorated nicely to represent the social status of the house's owner. In some provinces of China, *yingbi* does not perform any protection of the interior view against the outsiders, but rather a symbolic ornament to defend evil spirits (figure 56).

Since harmony and happiness in the family are essential in Chinese traditional living, household deities are the most common elements found in Chinese house. In the Chinese houses of late imperial era of China, the stove God or God of Kitchen (*Zaojun*) was the most found household deity in common people's houses to the royal palace. He symbolises the unity of family and guarantee the harmony of household. He is rarely represented in statue form, but always in printing image of himself or with wife and attendants to symbolise the flourished household. Sometimes he is represented in only Chinese written words of auspicious meaning and always placed above the kitchen stove. Today, *Zaojun* is more the guardian God of the household in general. Since for the Chinese, red colour is believed to represent the element fire, the maximum yang, the summer, and the south cardinal direction; therefore, red paper is always used for all auspicious purposes, including representing deity and having auspicious phrases written on. In a house of Chinese in Thailand, there is also the worship of other Gods, namely God of the house, God of the earth, and God of the sky. They are represented in form of wooden sculpture, drawings, and written words. Generally, The God of the earth (*Di Zhu Shen* 地主神) is commonly found in the form of wooden sculpture, but can also be represented in framed and non-framed red paper with Chinese words of auspicious meaning or put on the wall near the ground, or under the table, and face towards the road. The God of the sky (*Tian Gong* 天公) is represented in red paper with the name of the God in Chinese writing and placed on the back wall of the house or on the high altar. For a house with business, *Ben Tou Gong*<sup>43</sup> (*Pun Thao Gong* in Teochiu dialect, also known as *Tu Di Gong* 土地公) altar is commonly found putting up above the inner wall.

Apart from the household deities, auspicious symbols, either symbolic motifs or emblems, have always been large parts in the Chinese's life until now. Auspicious couplets, known as *duilian* or *menlian*<sup>44</sup>, are commonly found in a Chinese house, especially during New Year. It is a pair of phrases written on red paper that is placed vertically on both sides of the house's main door. Phrases written on the couplets always have auspicious meaning. Often, another piece of red paper is placed horizontal above the door accompanying the pair of couplets, creating the character of *men* (門) which means door or gate. There is also a single inscription, known as *danlian* (單聯), that is placed on the wall and other parts of the house, but also with auspicious meaning of phrases. Normally, these couplets and inscriptions are changed

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<sup>43</sup> He was the deity who in charge of the local affairs within a village and widely worshipped among the overseas Chinese. His shrine was always found located in each Chinese community in Thailand. That can be compared to the *Di Zhu Shen* (God of Earth), who is worshipped in individual house.

<sup>44</sup> 對聯 *duilian*, meaning antithetical couplets and 門聯 *menlian*, meaning door couplets.

when the New Year comes. Nevertheless, these auspicious couplets are not limited to only the New Year occasion, but also found as part of other occasions, such as wedding, funeral, and birth too. In many wealthy families, the couplets are decorated and written nicely, and hung at the main hall and sometimes, a pair of auspicious phrases are carved on the interior columns of the house to ensure good fortune throughout the year and also play a decorative part of the house. Apart from the written phrases, single characters with good meaning are also found as calligraphy, in combination with symbolic motifs, and symbolic pictographic objects. The most influenced character is *fu*<sup>45</sup> (福), which covers the meaning of happiness, good fortune, blessing, and luck. The character of *fu* commonly found as calligraphy on a square paper that is hung on the wall in diamond-shaped appearance. Although it can be placed in a house without occasions, it is more often to see it newly hung upside down at New Year. The reason is that it is expected for the passers-by to mention, “*fu daole*” (福倒了), which means *fu* is upside down. It is a homonym to the meaning “*fu* has arrived” (福到了). *Fu* also appears in the form of symbolic motif, in which the most common one is bat because in Chinese, bat is homonym for *fu*. Therefore, with upside down image of bat, it also leads to the same expression, “*fu dao le*” (figure 62). Apart from bat, butterfly and tiger are also pictographic representation of *fu*, because of their near homonym to *fu* (蝠). The second most found auspicious character used in household decorations is *shou* (壽) or longevity.



**Figure 57** God of the kitchen in a Hakka house, Fujian

Source: Author



**Figure 58** Common location of God of the sky altar and God of the earth altar at the Hokkien shophouse.

Source: Author

<sup>45</sup> Knapp, *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*.



**Figure 59** God of the Earth altar in a Teochiu house in Thailand, which can also be found in every Teochiu houses.

Source: Author



**Figure 60** Ben Tou Gong altar is found worshipped in commercial shophouses

Source: Author



**Figure 61** Duilian and Danlian at the door entrance

Source: Author, Fujian - China



**Figure 62** *fu dao le* (the upside down image of *fu* character) in traditional Chinese home in China and contemporary overseas Chinese home in Bangkok

Source: Author



**Figure 63** Different types of *fu lu shou* ornaments, in which the image and the sculpture are the most common among the Chinese in Thailand

Source: Author

There are other auspicious characters used, such as *lu* (祿) that nowadays means wealth and prosperity, and *shuangxi* 雙喜 or double happiness, which is always found at a newlywed's house. In the Chinese life, various objects and living things that have homonym to auspicious words have always been used as auspicious symbols in their houses. Pornphan Chantaranonont divided these auspicious motifs into four different groups, which are fruits, plants, and flowers, animals, everyday's items, and mythical and human figures.<sup>46</sup> These symbolic motifs are applied to everyday's life, as well as during rituals, such as New Year, birth of a child, and wedding celebration. They are expressed in various forms, such as illustration, building decorative ornaments, sculpture, and real object. Most common auspicious figures are the Stellar Triad of *fu*, *lu*, and *shou* (福祿壽), or as pronounced in Teochiu dialect as Hok-Lok-Siu, referring to good fortune, emolument, and longevity (figure 63). *Baxian* (八仙) or the Eight Immortals are also common symbolic images. Their images are found in group, as well as individual. In Thailand, although house construction of a Chinese family does not really rely much on traditional *Feng-shui* practice, some auspicious and defensive ornamentation can still be seen but expressed more or less according to the social environment of that family.

### 3.4 Chinese Settlement Form and Chinatown

Because kinship system has such significant role in Chinese society, their traditional settlements also reflect the importance of kinship. In China, there are two types of village settlements, which are the village of different surname lineages, and the village of single-surname lineage.<sup>47</sup> In the village of single-surname lineage, ancestral hall is the focal point of the village and is always located prominently in the village, either at the centre, at the outer edge, near a graveyard site, or at best *Feng-shui* site. The size of this type of village varies according to the length of settlement, the number of village members, and most of all the wealth of the clan. The village of multi-surname lineage generally have separate ancestral halls of each lineage. The form of ancestral hall is influenced by the style of local vernacular architecture. For instance, the ancestral halls of the Hakka's defensive dwellings in the South of China are always found located at the core of the structure, like the ancestral hall of *Zhengchenglou* earthen dwelling shown in figure 64. The lineage and ancestral devotion is much stronger in Huizhou than other parts of China and can be seen through large number of ancestral halls that were the most prominent structures in the village and were built in elaborated Huizhou architecture. In many multi-surname lineage villages, ancestral halls reflect the social status and prosperity of each lineage and are commonly built as complex of two or three buildings with opera stage as the main hall and courtyards in between. Chinese settlement in Thailand does not rely on this pattern as much due to the differences of local social environment.

The settlement of Chinese in Thailand does not belong to the single-surname lineage or multi-surname lineage, but more spread out, originated from same dialect group of Chinese and developed into a mixed dialect community. Ancestral hall is

<sup>46</sup> Chantharanonont, *Hok Lok Siu: Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity* (ฮก ลก ซิว : โชคลาภ อายุมั่น).

<sup>47</sup> Knapp and Lo, eds., *House Home Family, Living and Being Chinese*.

replaced by shrine for different deity of different dialect group. Lynn Pan believed that the awareness of one's roots is taken much stronger among those who have left their own homelands.<sup>48</sup> At first, it appeared in the form of a small community's shrine, holding the same dialect group or village group together under the same deity. Among the old shrines, the deity enshrined there can tell the dialect group of that original Chinese settlement because they firstly settled with familiar people from the same region or with the same speaking dialect, who worshipped the same deity.

Each dialect group built shrines or Chinese temples for the deities that they worshipped once their settlement were strong. This reflects the feelings of being alien in different land. The Chinese shrines, therefore, became the spiritual centre of Chinese people in Thailand. They also support all religious and cultural activities and became the socio-cultural centre of the Chinese as well. Some of the Chinese shrines were built according to the ancient traditions and replicated the shrine in China, while some of them were built as the clan's shrines for worshipping the deceased ancestors. Overall, the Chinese shrines were built after the Daoism and local belief that can reflect the ideology of overseas Chinese. In the Hokkien shrines, the image of *Tian Hou* (天后) goddess and *Qing Shui Zhou Si* (清水祖師) that is commonly known as *Zho Sue Gong* deity. *Tian Hou* goddess is also worshipped largely among the sea travellers and fishermen by Teochiu and Hainanese people, but is called differently.<sup>49</sup> In Teochiu settlement, the shrine of *Ben Tou Gong* is commonly found.



**Figure 64** Zhengchenglou ancestral hall

Source: Author

<sup>48</sup> Lynn Pan, *Ueng Ti Kia, Rueangrao Khong Chao Chin Phon Thale Thua Lok (Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese)*, trans. Kasian Techapira, 1st ed. (Bangkok: Kobfai's Publishing Work, 1997).

<sup>49</sup> This Goddess is called *Ma Zu* (媽祖) by the Teochiu, and *Jiu Buoy Sia Nia* by the Hainanese.



**Figure 65** The shrine of *Ben Tou Gong* that is very common in a Chinese community (Jedsamian, Ratchaburi)

Source: Author



**Figure 66** A Chinese shrine in the middle of community, Fueangnakhon area, Bangkok

Source: Author



**Figure 67** A vegetarian hall in large Chinese settlement, Samutsakhon

Source: Author



**Figure 68** Festival of the local shrine at Nangloeng market community, Bangkok

Source: Author

Prior to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, it can be said that the Chinese shrines are the symbol of dialect differences. Since a shrine or temple wasn't built by one man, the settlement is located nearby that shrines or temples.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, in Thailand, the distribution of Chinese shrines also reflects the distribution of overseas Chinese settlement. There are one hundred and four Chinese shrines in Bangkok, in which the oldest one dates back to over 300 years ago. The shrines that were built in Bangkok over the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century belong to the Teochiu and the Hokkien. Nevertheless, the development and growth of the society attracted various dialect groups to settle together, therefore, in a single shrine, there might be several deities of different dialect group. This also reduced the dialect adherence of the Chinese. Nowadays, a reason of building a shrine has shifted from being spiritual centre of the Chinese community to the donation of Chinese associations. As a result, it is almost impossible to specify the dialect relations of the community surrounded. Nevertheless, the familial society of the Chinese in Thailand appears through the tight physical structure of their settlement. Kanokwan Hiranrat called this environment as a 'place of life'<sup>51</sup> that reveals the significant idea of family organisation of the Chinese through narrow alleys and districts with examples taken in Saphanhun area in Bangkok. This Chinese settlement is not much different from other Chinese settlement in Bangkok, in which daily activities and festivities of the local dwellers reflect the ideology of web of families, the local Chinese shrines strengthen the unity of their settlement, and the identity and meaning of place can be seen.

<sup>50</sup> Duan Li Sheng and Bunying Raisuksiri, *Khwapenma Khong Watchin Lae Sanchaochin Nai Prathet Thai (the Origins of Chinese Temples and Shrines in Thailand)* (Bangkok: Song Siam, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Kanokwan Hiranrat, "Identity and Meaning of Place in the District of Klong Ong-Ang - Sapanhun" (Chulalongkorn University, 2004).

### 3.4.1 The Settlement Form

In Thailand, there are two types of settlement form that can be found, as noted by Srisak Vallibhodom.<sup>52</sup> The first type is river linear or road linear settlement, and the second type is cluster settlement. The settlement at the river plain in the central part of Thailand is similar to the settlement in the south because they are located at the river plain with waterway as major transportation route. The settlement is located along the waterway. On the contrary, cluster settlement is common form of settlement found in the northeast of Thailand. It is normally a multi household compound with not lower than four or five houses of the extended family. Waterway in form of moat is surrounded the settlement in the centre. A group of houses formed a community or village and there is always a temple or religious place as a community centre. Schools and shops are the social linkage of the community. Social and economic relations of the community create “the sense of community”<sup>53</sup> and sense of attachment to the people. In the South of Thailand, most of the settlement form of the east coast always lies parallel to the beachfront and the road. Most of them are fisherman and farmer’s communities. Major settlement form of the west coast started from the town centres, where are centre of mining activity, fishery, and rubber plantation. Therefore, the dwellings appear in one and two storey shophouses of traditional Chinese and western influenced style.

The form of Chinese settlement in Thailand is commonly found in the market area that is normally located in land and at river transportation hub. Markets are always occupied by the Chinese, similarly to farms that are always occupied by the Thais. The economic and social developments also made the market community expanded into a large settlement. This type of settlement is formed by economic and social force and is expressed through the locating of Chinese shrine, which symbolises urban community that is mainly occupied by the Chinese. In large urban community, vegetarian hall is commonly built as a venue to conduct rituals. Since the Chinese travel to different parts of the country along the river, market settlements were also found where the ports were. They are rows of wooden shophouses located at the dock front and perpendicular to the river. The settlement in land always existed where there are trade opportunities. Therefore, shophouses were built as both dwelling and business venue. Rows of shophouses are located first on both sides of the main road and expanded outward. Typical Chinese settlement form comprises of dwellings, Chinese shrine, and market, located at the same site. Chinese shrine is the spiritual centre of the community and is always found after the settlement is formed. Settlements along the river and the coast also have a boat dock as significant element.

In Bangkok, shophouses are mostly located along main roads in business districts or community area. However, shophouses along the canal has access to the waterfront to enable the delivery of goods when water transportation was dominant in the city (figure 70). There is also a type of shophouses that were built surrounded the market, as mentioned in *Kanchanakhaphan’s* in that there were shophouses located on four direction of the market at Giant Swing in Bangkok, which formed up like a

<sup>52</sup> Vallibhodom, *Thai Household and Thai Village* (เรือนไทย บ้านไทย).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

square with an open space in the middle as a market.<sup>54</sup> Nangloeng market<sup>55</sup>, one of the oldest markets in Bangkok, is also another example. Old style shophouses were surrounded in four directions of the market itself, and spread out towards the entrance at Nakhonsawan Road and Padungkrungkasem canal on the other side (figure 71). Shophouses in Bangkok reveals interesting business pattern in that, similar type of retails business can be found in the same district. For instance, the area of Talad Noi has been the location of machine workshop; the area of Bumrungruang has been the location of shops selling Buddhist items and scriptures. In many districts and alleys, type of retails business is represented through the name of the place that were known and called among the community and many times in Teochiu dialect.



**Figure 69** The example of common settlement form of river market community that composed of wooden row houses located in perpendicular to the riverfront with walkway in between, and connected directly to the boat dock (Kao Hong market settlement, Suphanburi)

Source: Author

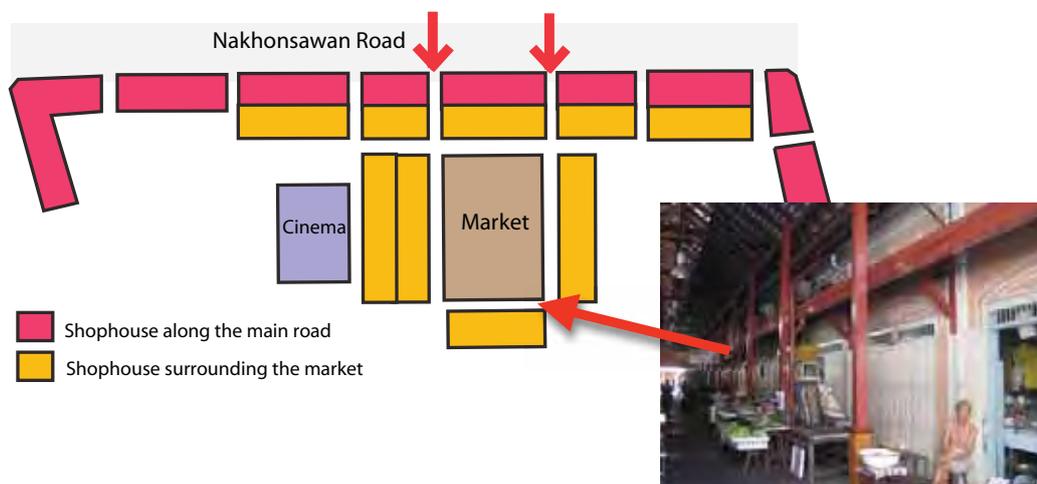


**Figure 70** Plan of shophouses with access to the canal for commercial purpose (shophouses along Rop Krung canal)

Source: "Jodmai Hed Kan Anurak Krung Rattanakosin (the Annals of the Conservation of Rattanakosin Kingdom),"

<sup>54</sup> Kanchanakhaphan, *Yesterday of Bangkok* (กรุงเทพฯ เมื่อวานนี้), 100 Years of Khun Vajitmattra (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2002).

<sup>55</sup> It was built during the reign of King Rama V, and currently belongs to the Royal Treasury.



**Figure 71** Shophouses surrounded the market in four direction leaving a square space for the market at the middle, Nangloeng Market, Bangkok

Source: Author

### 3.4.2 The Chinatown

In large cities, since the Chinese ethnic immigrants always live together and formed up their own ethnic enclave, together with the result of administrative classification that put together the Chinese immigrants to settle in the same district, it has led to the existence of Chinatown. In the area at the southwest of Singapore River was provided for the Chinese during the administration of Stamford Raffles. In Bangkok, the area called '*Sampeng*' that was located at the southwest outside the city gate was also provided for the Chinese. In general, Chinatown is a section in urban district in other countries outside Mainland China that is home to a number of Chinese. *Pai fang*<sup>56</sup> or the entrance arch can be normally found as soon as stepping in the Chinatown district (figure 72). Chinese restaurants, grocery stores, Chinese dispensary, and street vendors are typically scene of Chinatowns.

The overall character of every Chinatowns is somehow similar, but in details, none of them is the same. In some cities, there is more than one Chinatown within a single city, such as at least six Chinatown districts in New York. Chinatown in Yokohama, Japan is very elegant, while Chinatown in a suburban district of Los Angeles has the least character of Chinatown but more like a simply Chinese residential area. Chinatown in Chinatown district in San Francisco is claimed to be the largest one outside China dated back to the nineteenth century. Back then, it was described in Genthe's photography book as Guangzhou town of the western world with all Chinese signs, lanterns, and Chinese men in pigtailed and dark Chinese gown

<sup>56</sup> 牌坊 (Pai Fang) is a memorial arch or arch entrance structure.

walking around.<sup>57</sup> Shops selling all types of goods, from imported dry food from Guangdong to fresh vegetables and meats, as well as peddlers selling various types of snacks and toys, fortune tellers sitting at each folding table, vendor showing his martial arts skill while selling muscle's ointment, and street barbers who are skilful in shaving facial hairs, were regular scenes of this district. Street merchants with entrails and meats from their slaughterhouse pulled their carts to sell along the street. There was not only a picture of Chinese bustling market scene here, but there were also two Chinese opera theatres and other business venues local. Publishing house, pawnshop, as well as Chinese herbal medicine shops and dispensaries, were also found in this Chinatown. Chinese shrine, similar to other Chinese settlements, was also the spiritual centre of Chinese people of San Francisco's Chinatown. Chinese people lived together in communal way by sharing facilities to make their living easier. All available spaces in a building were used for sleeping with folding beds, while rich Chinese merchants lived comfortably in large apartment. Old Chinatown of San Francisco illustrates not much different pictures from busy Chinatown elsewhere.



**Figure 72** Traditional *Paifang* in Xidi, Huizhou - China and the adapted version of *Paifang* at the entrance of Chinatown in San Francisco

Source: (left) Author/ (right) [www.flickr.com/photos/toprankblog/2387931356/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/toprankblog/2387931356/)

*Sampeng* in Bangkok is a highly active Chinatown with all sorts of business on the main road and at the back alley, as well as, small lanes, and have a very distinct characteristic. Bangkok's Chinatown replicates the stage for all types of Chinese occupations, from a street vendor, fortune-teller, pawnshop's clerk, Chinese-Thai dictionary seller, to a travel agent. Gold shops, the uniqueness of Bangkok's Chinatown, are located side by side along the main road, as well as traditional style of pharmacy equipped with rows of cabinet for storing various kinds of herbal medicines. At small alleys at the back of bustling main road of Chinatown, familiar

<sup>57</sup> Jack Kuo-wei Tchen, *Gentle's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover, 1984).

picture of rural Southern China life can always be seen. A number of Chinese shrines dedicated to different deities according to each speaking dialects are located around the Chinatown, and also dispersed to other districts. In the old days, Chinese opera theatres that were later changed into cinemas showing Chinese movies from Hong Kong, were also found in Bangkok's Chinatown, similar to gambling hall and prostitute house that were located at the corner of Chinatown district. However, many Chinatowns in the world were also known a dangerous district.

Interestingly, in most Chinatowns nowadays, the residential part has gradually decreased when people started to move out of the urban area. In many Chinatowns in the west, they have become merely tourist attractions, rather than a home of different generations of the Chinese immigrants or the centre of colourful activities like they used to be. The creative tool of arts and culture has increasingly taken the role in the place making process and the developing of urban economy, such as tourism activities like Explore Chinatown campaign in New York's Chinatown, and Chinatown's Heritage Trails in Singapore.

The following chapter will discuss the background of Chinese embarkation to Southeast Asia and Thailand, as well as illustrate their background of settlement in various parts of the country.

## Chapter 4

### The Chinese in Thailand: Emigration and Character

Following the review on Chinese ideologies and how these relate to the settlement form of the Chinese, chapter 4 illustrates the background of Chinese settlement in Thailand in the aspects of its emigration and its people. This addresses how Chinese in Thailand developed their unique culture, which will lead to the understanding of the relationships between Chinese ideologies and tangible forms of Chinese settlements in the next chapter.

#### 4.1 Southeast Asia and Chinese Emigration

##### 4.1.1 Overseas Chinese

The term “overseas Chinese” has been used widely referring to the people or descendants of Chinese origin living outside the Mainland China. However, this term creates some arguments about the Han or non-Han Chinese, whether it can refer to all ethnic groups of Chinese. It has been widely accepted that the term, ‘overseas Chinese’ can be used with the Chinese peoples, who must be identified with Chinese culture. Nevertheless, in some countries, like USA, they prefer using the word, Chinese American, to avoid any racial conflicts. Chinese language probably gives more appropriate terms for these groups of people. The term *Hua Qiao* (华侨) literary means overseas Chinese and refers to the Chinese citizens who reside in other countries than the Mainland China. This term was used politically by the Chinese government and the hostile government for overseas migrants, who are under protection of the Chinese government. It aims to make them politically and culturally loyal to the homeland China. Even though it enriched the nationalism awareness within the *Hua Qiao*, it pushed them an awkward position in their new country.<sup>1</sup> Later on, the term *Hua Ren* (华人) evolved to imply all ethnic Chinese, while *Hua Yi* (华裔) refers to people of Chinese descent.<sup>2</sup> *Hua Yi* does not only refer to Chinese descendants, but also to those educated Chinese, who migrated from the second country, such as Southeast Asian country, to United States, Canada, Australia, or Europe.

Since there are a large number of Chinese communities around the world, the People’s Republic of China’s Government specified the term *Haiwai Huaren* (海外华人), which has literal translation as Overseas Chinese, with reference to the people of Chinese ethnicity living outside the People’s Republic of China, regardless of citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, some of the overseas Chinese who sees themselves as of

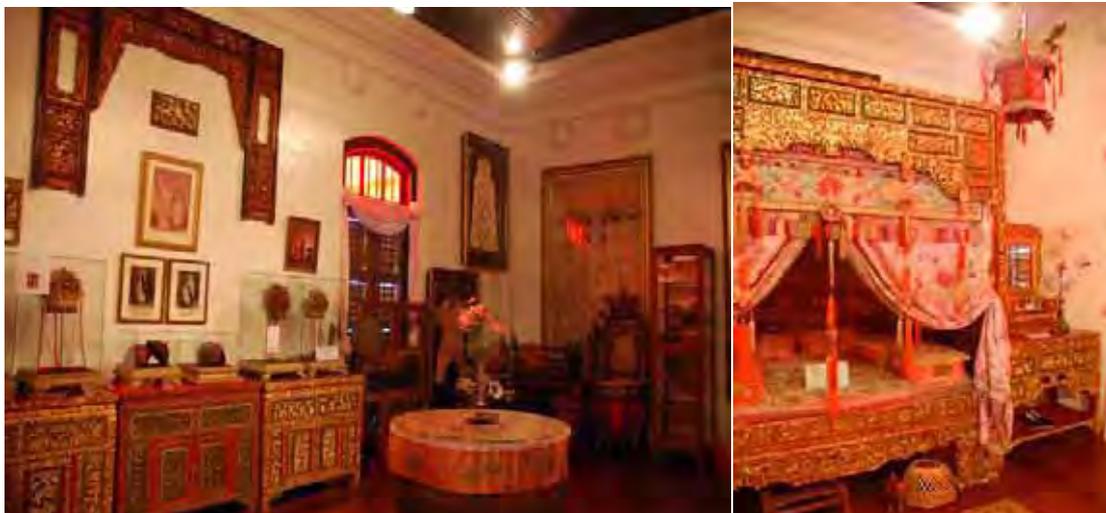
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<sup>1</sup> *Asian Affairs Interview with Wang Gungwu: Diaspora, a Much Abused Word* [the interview between Laurent Malvezin and Wang Gungwu] (Asian Affairs [cited Jun 2009]; available from <http://www.asian-affairs.com/Diasporas/wanggungwu.html>).

<sup>2</sup> Vincent K. Pollard, "From Southern Seas to Cyberspace: Chinese Diaspora Websites in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific," *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 1 (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, Overseas Chinese. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/overseas\\_chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/overseas_chinese)

Chinese descent do not necessarily have bonds with their China Mainland. Another important group of overseas Chinese descendants is the *Peranakans*<sup>4</sup>, who are not a dialect group but the descendants of early Chinese settlers in the Malay Archipelago and the non-Muslim natives since the fourteenth to fifteenth century. The male descendants are known as *Babas*, while female descendants are known as *Nyonyas*. They are the prominent community of Chinese descendants in the Straits settlement, especially in Malacca, Penang, Indonesia, Singapore, and Phuket in the South of Thailand. They also have their own speaking dialect, similar to the Malay. The *Babas* and *Ngonyas* counted themselves as Chinese descendants, and that can be seen through their traditional wedding ceremony. The figure below shows the traditional wedding items and the wedding chamber and of a Peranakan couple exhibited in the Peranakan museum in Penang.



**Figure 73** Wedding items, furniture, accessories, and wedding chamber of the Peranakans

Source: Author, Peranakan Museum in Penang

Another English phrase that sometimes combined all these meanings is Chinese Diaspora. It has roots in the Greek term, *scattered*, which carries a sense of displacement and literally means the dispersing of people from their original homeland. Diaspora can be applied to those who are forced to leave their country, as well as those who voluntarily settled in another country. However, in the opinion of Wang Gungwu, he denied to apply this term to the migration of the Chinese out of their home country.<sup>5</sup> He saw this term being politicized and having a misleading social content. Wang Gungwu believed that the term diaspora has a sense of being cohesive and a rather prejudiced term, while in fact, there is no single Chinese diaspora and not all Chinese migrants achieved similar social position. Even though this term has been widely argued about its political bias, it can still be found with its broadest sense referring to the dispersing of Chinese people to other lands. However,

<sup>4</sup> It is common that the terms Peranakan, Peranakan-Chinese, Baba, Straits-Chinese, and Straits-born Chinese are taken as synonymously although they literally have slightly different meaning.

<sup>5</sup> *Asian Affairs Interview with Wang Gungwu: Diaspora, a Much Abused Word.*

when people re-rooted in different country, they took with them their native culture and sometimes assimilate themselves to the dominant culture, retain their ethnic culture, or eventually adapt new distinct culture.

When people of one culture, who move into another country, adopt all or parts of that dominant culture, it is cultural assimilation. It occurs under three types of influences: force from surrounding people, force from government, or voluntarily. Cultural assimilation has different degrees and reflects different characteristics of different groups. Sometimes the term 'melting pot' is used for cultural assimilation aspects, whereas it has been largely disregarded by modern sociologists and replaced by the idea of multiculturalism. Once there was a belief that the immigrants in the United States could be assimilated with the American society and became totally American in their third generation. However, that did not happen. The idea of multiculturalism arose and leads to a better image of salad bowl theory, referring to a mosaic of colours that are put besides each other like tomato, celery, and lettuce, but still retain their characters in a bowl of salad. In the United States, there are big discussions in the adaptation of assimilation approach or *salad bowl theory* – multiculturalism approach in the migration aspect.<sup>6</sup> The term salad bowl has been widely used among the sociologists there to indicate the mixture of different native cultures that are not merged into a single dominant culture. The multicultural society is where different cultural group retain their cultural identity but can live together.

The migration of Southern Chinese was always made among Chinese men. Although they have got wives back in their villages in China, they chose to seek new opportunity on their own. Due to the location of Fujian and Guangdong provinces located on the southern coast of the country, it naturally forces the people to develop the marine skills and sail out to the southern lands. The Chinese migrants chose to go to new lands where there were familiar people who also spoke the same dialect and came from the same village, if possible. Therefore, the Chinese migrated to new countries in a chained migration pattern, which means they would migrate in groups within the same speaking dialect, same clan, or same village. When one of them succeeds in doing business in the new country, he would asked his fellows from his village to share this luck. It is very common to find Chinese people of the same clan name or same speaking dialect living together in the same settlement. In some countries, such as the Philippines and Singapore, only a few Chinese surnames of these Chinese immigrants are found. One example of this is in Nakhonpathom town in the central Thailand, where Lim clan name is dominant in the town, as can be seen in the old structure and location of Lim clan association of Thailand in Nakhonpathom in the figure below.

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<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia, "Melting Pot," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melting\\_pot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melting_pot).



**Figure 74** Lim Clan Association of Thailand, located in Nakhonpathom province

Source : Author

In addition, another factor influencing the pattern of emigration is the historical geography and maritime background. Since almost none of the Chinese immigrants came from the west, far west, and north of China, very few of them spoke Mandarin Chinese, which is the official language of the north of China. Lynn Pan noticed that this probably was the reason why the world of overseas Chinese is far from the world of major Chinese population in the mainland China.<sup>7</sup> Skinner also believed that the goal of these overseas Chinese is not to build a new Chinese society imitating the society in mainland China, but to make a lot of money.<sup>8</sup>

Since traditionally, Confucianism does not implant the idea of admiring merchants who can make a lot of profits to the Chinese, only the port towns in the Southern China are the centre of trades, instead of being centre of public administration like elsewhere in the country. This attracted not only merchants, clerks, accountants, craftsmen, and coolies, but also the poor to seek jobs and a better life. Since the Southern ports had occupied international trades for centuries, their people had more chances to develop business skills. Wang Gungwu believed that the Chinese can always adapt themselves to the environment, therefore, it is impossible to say that all overseas Chinese are the same or have stereotype of character. As the examples that he gave, the Chinese in the United States are different from the Chinese who left to settle in Thailand or other places.<sup>9</sup> The socio-economic and political background of different country affected the way different Chinese communities developed their culture. In almost every country in Southeast Asia, where Chinese people migrated,

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Pan, *Ueng Ti Kia, Rueangrao Khong Chao Chin Phon Thale Thua Lok (Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese)*, trans. Kasian Techapira, 1st ed. (Bangkok: Kobfai's Publishing Work, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> William G. Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์), trans. Phanni Chatphonrak and others (Bangkok: 2005).

<sup>9</sup> *Asian Affairs Interview with Wang Gungwu: Diaspora, a Much Abused Word.*

they always make up large scale of the merchant population in that country. A lot of them also played a leading role in local business and the economic facet of the country. It can be said that where trade opportunity arises, Chinese migrants would go. Vaughan mentioned that the Chinese are in every occupation in the Strait of Malaka; he counted one hundred and ten occupations.<sup>10</sup> Also, due to the hard-working character of overseas Chinese, they are willing to do any kinds of work and hardly take days off. So, it is very common to see the number of overseas Chinese settled in almost everywhere in Southeast Asia.

#### 4.1.2 Chinese Maritime History and Its Emigration

The Chinese maritime history dates far back beyond the first century. Several archaeological sites have been found indicating the importance of Guangzhou as a trade centre, including a site of shipyard dating back to the Qin dynasty that gradually developed into China's largest foreign trade ports in later centuries.<sup>11</sup> India, at that time, dominated the trade centre linking China to the Roman land. All rare and precious goods from China could be found at the trade centre in India's port town. During the first century (in Han dynasty), maritime relations between China and India had already started with envoys and officers being sent to South Asia, Southeast Asia and Persia in order to spread the power of Han emperor and seek for precious items. Around the early third century when the shipbuilding skill of Han imperial was well known, regular maritime contact between China and Roman Empire was made. The maritime route did not exist with the sole purpose of trade and international relations, it was also the route of transferring Buddhism from India to China during early fifth century. A century afterwards, Guangzhou became a prosperous and busy port with a number of merchants, envoys, Buddhist monks coming from India and waiting to travel far west. Around the sixth to eighth centuries, the development of the country spread to the southern coast.

The southern peninsula of Thailand was located on the marine trade route between China and India. Firstly, the Indian merchants, who sailed to China, made a stop at the coastal ports on the west coast of this peninsula during their journey to China. The entrepot was gradually developed into an urban settlement, which attracted Chinese merchants. Even though there is no evidence of Chinese settlement dating back to that era, it can be assumed that some of the Chinese merchants must also have settled in the area instead of just visiting briefly for trade.<sup>12</sup> As recorded in the chronicle of Ehein Han shu in Han dynasty, the Chinese envoys sailed along Guangdong coast to Vietnam, Cambodia and Southern peninsula of Thailand. Then, they travelled on foot to *Khokhodkra* (Isthmus of Kra), the narrowest land of Malaya peninsula that currently covers the area of Ranong and Chumporn province in Thailand, and continued the journey to India by Arab-Persian or Indian boats.

<sup>10</sup> J.D. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements, 1879* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> *Asian Maritime & Trade Chronology to 1700ce* (Maritime Archaeology Malaysia, 17/3/09 [cited 3/2/09 2009]); available from <http://www.maritimeasia.ws/topic/chronology.html>.

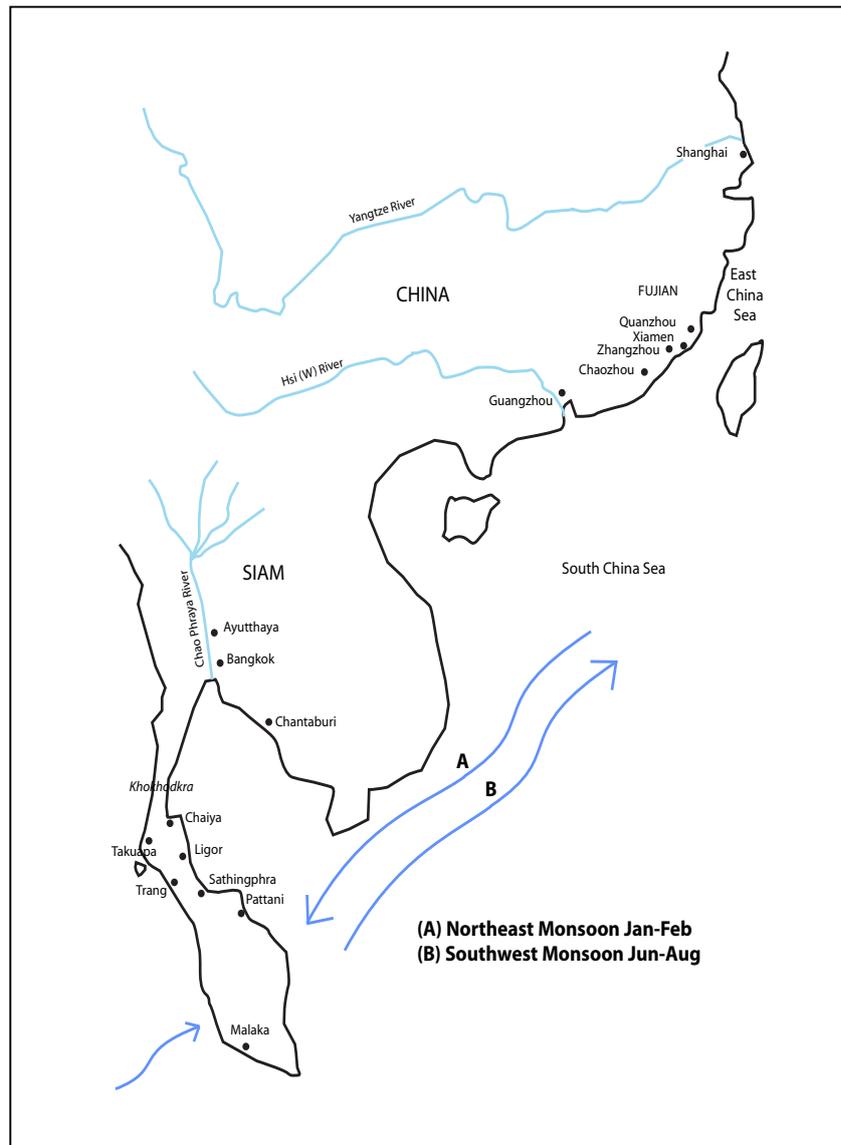
<sup>12</sup> Suthiwong Phongphaibun, Dilok Wuttipanit, and Prasit Chinakarn, *The Southern Chinese, Ways and Powers* (จีนทักษิณ วิถีและพลัง) (Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund, 2001).

The importance of the Southern peninsula as a passage route between China and India as early as Han dynasty was confirmed by a bronze mirror of that period that was excavated at Phipun district in Nakhonsithammarat. The spread of Mahayana Buddhism to China enabled a religious route between India and China that added more important roles to the Southern peninsula. This also accords with the fact of the Northeast and Southwest monsoon enabled the sailing to and from China only once a year. Boats from China could sail as far as the Southern peninsula following the Northeast monsoon between January and February and return by the Southwest monsoon between June and August. The Indian merchants followed the Southeast monsoon between April and August to the Southern peninsula of Thailand and returned by the Northeast monsoon in December. Also, the Southern Peninsula of Thailand is located near the doldrums line, all boats must sail close to the shore. Together with the boat construction technology of those days, it did not allow a long sea journal. All boats had to stop for services at the Southern Peninsula of Thailand while waiting for the monsoon. This resulted in the existence of trade stations along the Southern peninsula's port towns. These port towns became bigger and played important roles in the international trades during the sixth and eleventh centuries. In an old Chinese document, the name of these towns is given in the Chinese language, such as *Chi Tu* or *Sathingphra* (in Phattalung province), and *Kanto Li* or *Thachana* (in Suratthani province).

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the Straits of Malaka became importance as all the maritime traffic went through on the way to and from China. It led to the rise of Srivijaya kingdom (Nakhonsithammarat), who became a middleman in transporting goods across the Malaka Straits for over 500 years. New towns were built along the coast, in which those on the eastern coast had better relations with Chinese junk trades. They were Chaiya, Nakhonsithammarat, Sathingphra, and Pattani on the east, and Trang and Takuapa on the west. These maritime port towns were founded after the arrival of the immigrants. While native inhabitants lived inland, new immigrants settled near the coast.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Johannes Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*, ed. Johannes Widodo, *Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities Series* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005).



**Figure 75** Trade winds and the port towns during 5th - 12th century

Source: Adapted from Sarasin Virapol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade 1652-1853*, trans. Rangsi Hansopha Phan-ngam Ngaothammasan, Samaporn Lakso (Bangkok: 2005), 34.

Around the thirteenth century, Kublai Khan who was the emperor of Yuan Dynasty, tried to combine Sukhothai into one of their tributary states (*Hsien state*). The visits of Yuan ambassadors had been recorded in the Chinese chronicle for the years 1282, 1293, and 1294, while Siam sent ambassadors to Beijing in order to tighten the tributary relations between the two kingdoms in 1296, 1297, 1299, 1314, 1319, and 1323 respectively. Although there were exchanges of trade and international relations between Siam and China during that day, none of the evidence regarding Chinese settlement in Siam has been found.

The fall of Yuan Dynasty affected international trade, which had stopped until the third century of Ming Dynasty. During that period, there was an increasing number of private traders from China coming into Siam. China had started the tributary system again around the beginning of the fifteenth century, in which there was an evidence of Siam sending tributary ambassadors to Nanjing. Boats that came to Ayutthaya must stop along the Southern peninsula of Thailand, namely Pattani, Nakhonsithammarat, Chaiya, and Chumphon due to the trade winds and the prosperity of local goods.<sup>14</sup> Although China's sea trade had been well known since early twelfth century in South Song Dynasty towards Yuan Dynasty in the thirteenth century, the Ming court had showed the world the mighty naval expedition by sending out a huge fleet with armed force for the expeditions during the first part of Ming dynasty (1405-1433). The objective of these naval expeditions was to show the imperial control over sea trades and probably to look for more opportunity to extend the tributary system. These famous expeditions were lead by admiral Zheng He, who sailed along south China coast across the South China Sea to Java, Malaka, Siam, Ceylon, India and went as far as the Arabian Peninsula and east Africa. From the record of Ma Huan, Hung Bao, and Fei Xin<sup>15</sup>, the members of Zheng He's troop, they described the lands they visited and how impressed they were, which motivated more sea trade and migrations to Nanyang<sup>16</sup>. Even though it was mainly the Emperor or the royal court's international trade, it can be said to be the great influence on numerous Chinese junk trade during fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> A lot of overseas Chinese settlements were the consequence of the Chinese junk trade. Not only was the aim for trade opportunity, another reason for Chinese emigration was a result of warfare when the Manchu overruled the Ming dynasty, and the Qing dynasty was then established. Many Chinese people, who supported the old dynasty, took refuge in Southeast Asia and Indochina area. The fight against Manchu rulers forced the royal court to move all coastal settlements inland and prohibited any travels to the southern coast area.

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<sup>14</sup> Phongphaibun, Wuttipanit, and Chinakarn, *The Southern Chinese, Ways and Powers* (จีนที่กษัตริย์ วรียและพลัง).

<sup>15</sup> Pariwat Chanthorn, *Zheng He, the Eunuch Admiral "Sam Po Gong"* (เจิ้งเหอ แม่ทัพชั้นที่ "ซำปอกง") (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> *Nanyang* means the Southern land, which refers to countries in Southeast Asian region.

<sup>17</sup> Pan, *Ueng Ti Kia, Rueangrao Khong Chao Chin Phon Thale Thua Lok (Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese)*.



**Figure 76** Zheng He's seven voyages

Source:

([http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0507/feature2/images/mp\\_download.2.pdf](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0507/feature2/images/mp_download.2.pdf))



**Figure 77** Emergence of entrepôts in Southeast Asia in 15th-16th centuries

Source: Reid 1993 as referred in Johannes Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*, ed. Johannes Widodo, Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities Series (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), 42.

Around the end of seventeenth century, the Qing court issued the royal command that all Chinese people who travelled overseas for trade or settlement, were guilty of a crime and must received a death sentence. This did not stop the Chinese junk trade, as all the sea trade routes in Southeast Asian were still occupied by the Chinese junks. However, later on in the eighteenth century, the royal court of Qing had seen both positive and negative consequences from stopping the trade relations between Chinese merchants and Nanyang and the trading relation with Siam was seen as a very important trade because Siam was rich in natural resources, such as rice, fabric, and wood. Therefore, just before the mid-eighteenth century, the Qing emperors had accepted the trades with Nanyang, especially Siam and even encouraged the merchants to have their junk built in Thailand and sail back to China with full of woods.

Not only that some local products of the southern countries were in need of the Chinese court, there was also bribery at the Guangdong port to maintain the trades and insecure position of the Qing dynasty from anti-Qing overseas communities. Therefore, strong policy against the overseas trade and Nanyang migration was replaced by a softer approach. Western merchants and officers started to sail into Southeast Asia and started the trade relations in different port towns. Noticeably, Chinese people could be found wherever the Westerners were. Nevertheless, this cannot be applied with Siam, where large number of Chinese settlements had been founded in the country in sixteenth century and long before the Westerners stepped in. Most of the first generation of Chinese immigrants left their homeland with hopes to return their homeland with a lot of money. Some of them temporary reside in Siam and might regularly travel back and forth between two lands, while some of them chose to settle permanently here.<sup>18</sup>

Until the nineteenth century, at the peak of colonisation period, the wave of Chinese emigration also came to its highest point. Western empire at the colonies was seen as a trading symbol and opportunity for the Chinese migrants. Large numbers of coolies were demanded in many colonised lands, and it opened up the coolie trades among Shantou port in Guangdong province and several countries, including the colonies. Migration from Fujian also came from the changing role of major tea sellers of the Western market to India and Lanka. Warfare and famine around the Southern province of China also motivated a number of Chinese people from Guangdong province to seek a better life elsewhere. The power of the West over China in trade and political aspects influenced people in Southern China to leave their homeland. In addition, the conflict between peoples like Hakka people, who settled in Fujian and Guangdong province much later than other dialect groups, tragically fought with local Guangdong people for the land of settlement and eventually chose to migrate. Famine from natural perils in Chaozhou, Guangdong and Hainan Island that occurred over and over again also drove the Southern people and the Hainanese to migrate to the Southern land. Apart from expecting trade opportunity in their new lands, all sorts of

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<sup>18</sup> The first generation of Chinese immigrants, who temporary leave their homeland only to make money are known as “Chin Chon”, while those who permanently settle here are known as “Chin Khong Muang”.

coolie works were available. Mining was one of the works that the Chinese were looking for, including tin mining in Southeast Asia, gold mining in Australia and America, and silver mining in South America. During the early twentieth century, after the fall of Qing Dynasty (1911), another big wave of Chinese emigration took place. It was recorded that during early twentieth century (1918-1931), the number of Chinese immigrants entering the port of Bangkok reached a million.

**Table 2** The number of Chinese immigrants entering the port of Bangkok

Period of arrival (year)	Number of Chinese immigrants
1882-1892	177,500
1893-1905	455,100
1906-1917	815,700
1918-1931	1,327,600
1932-1945	475,700
1946-1955	267,800

Source: Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre



**Figure 78** View of the ports of Bangkok in early nineteenth century

Source: *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D. 1932*, (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1982).



**Figure 79** Chinese mining coolies in the Straits

Source: Tan Kim Hong, *The Chinese in Penang: A Pictorial History* (Penang: Areca Books, 2007).

## 4.2 Background and Geography of Chinese Settlement in Thailand

The emigration force of Southern Chinese people to Southeast Asia is both internal and external, similarly to their choice of settling in Siam. The sea trades between China and Southeast Asia enabled the port towns in Siam to act as a new emporium that attracted Chinese merchants to settle there. While Siam had already entered a peaceful period and was about to rebuild new tranquil kingdom, the Southern China region had come to the end of peaceful and prosperous era as there was both internal and external warfare, as well as famine throughout the region. Siam after year 1855 was a peaceful country and progressed in economic aspects. Better economic stability of Siam in the nineteenth century, friendly policy from the Siamese court towards Chinese immigrants, and similar social and environmental aspects had attracted constant Chinese migration.

The economic and urban development demanded a number of workers in various fields, such as canal, road, and railway construction, tin mines, rice mill, wood mill, and ports. Even though the free trade system from the Bowring Treaty had left both negative and positive impact on Thailand, it can be said that this Treaty had expanded great economic opportunities of both Chinese and Europeans. This included not only the economic influences that enabled the migrations of the Chinese, but also the development of transportation between both countries, with the replacement of junk boats by steamers in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some scholars who studied Chinese in Thailand estimated the number of overseas Chinese in the country during the nineteenth century could equal one third of the whole population.

### 4.2.1 The Five Dialect Groups

The important and most common way to study about the overseas Chinese is to divide them according to their dialect background. In Thailand, there are various dialect groups of the Chinese but only five major dialect groups play significant roles in the development of overseas Chinese in Thailand.



**Figure 80** The major dialect groups of overseas Chinese in Thailand and their place of origins

Source: Adapted from Prawit Phanwirot, ed., *Sanemuangjiu Thamle Mangkonthong (the Charm of Little City, Golden Dragon Location)*, 1st ed., (Bangkok: Plan Printing Co.,Ltd., 2002).

The first group is Cantonese group, or Kwangtung<sup>19</sup> people. They are currently the largest dialect group in Southern China and mostly came from Guangdong province. The second group is Hokkien<sup>20</sup> group, who came from Fujian province and speak Hokkien dialect. They mainly came from Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, and Xiamen<sup>21</sup>. Teochiu group lives mainly in Northeast of Guangdong province and South Fujian, and came from six districts of Chaozhou prefecture: Chao An, Chao

<sup>19</sup> Guangdong Ren (广东人) in Mandarin Chinese

<sup>20</sup> Fujian Ren (福建人) in Mandarin Chinese

<sup>21</sup> The old name of Xiamen is Amoy, which always found in old documents.

Yang, Chenghai, Puning, Jiayang, Raoping<sup>22</sup>. This group of people speaks Teochiu<sup>23</sup> dialect and are also known as Teochiu people. The Hakka<sup>24</sup> group originally settled in the Yellow River Basin and relocated to the Northwest of Guangdong province. They can be found in some towns of Guangdong province and in some highlands. The last group is Hainanese speaking group or Hailam<sup>25</sup> people who had been settled in the plain and along the coast of Hainan since Han dynasty. All these five dialect groups of people have migrated to Southeast Asia for at least two centuries.

Prior to mid-eighteenth century, the Hokkien and Cantonese group of people took up the highest number of Chinese immigrants in Nanyang, especially in Siam. In Yuan dynasty, there were international ports in Fujian located at Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, and Xiamen, while in Ming dynasty, international ports were located mainly in Guangdong. Guangdong ports received vessels from various countries and generally were not active in expanding Chinese junk trades. On the contrary, ports in Fujian were not always open for international trades. Therefore, Chinese merchants were motivated to develop their junk trade instead. Also, when the court had been against foreign trade and controlled Guangzhou port, Fujian port was freer to set out any maritime trips and Siam had always been the trade destination of these merchants. The development of Southern China's port towns influenced the pattern of migration of different dialect group. During the rise of junk trade, most of the port towns were located inland from the coast. Nevertheless, in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, these inland ports obviously lost their importance as sailing ship replaced junk boats and fully entered Chinese trade scene. New ports for sailing ship were found and relocated to the coastal area. Old ports in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou were replaced by Xiamen port, while ports in Guangdong were replaced by Hongkong port. Old Zhanglin port of Chaozhou was faded and gave way to a new Treaty port of Shantou. This enabled the Teochiu and Hakka people to travel easily.

The Cantonese people migrated to Hongkong increasingly after Hongkong was ceded to Britain in 1842 before which the number of Cantonese immigrants had been gradually declined. Not long after that, steamers were introduced on some important routes, such as Singapore and Hongkong, and competed strongly with junk boats and sailing ships. In 1860, scheduled steamers operated between Hongkong and three important ports of Guangdong, Shantou, and Xiamen, which allowed the journey from these Chinese port towns to Singapore and South of Thailand eventually. By late 1860 to early 1870, some steamer services between Hongkong, as well as other official ports in Southern China and Bangkok were found but they did not provide regular service. However, in 1873, scheduled steamer services between Bangkok and Hongkong were started. A few years afterwards, the new Treaty port in Haikou in the north of Hainan Island was opened.

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<sup>22</sup> These towns are called Tie Ang, Tie Eia, Tenghai, Poleng, Kik Eia, Yiaopeng in Teochiu dialect.

<sup>23</sup> Sometimes found with the spelling of Tiuchiu, Tiochiu, or Diojiu and since it is used mainly in Chaozhou prefecture, it is called Chaozhou dialect. People speaking this dialect is known as Chaozhou Ren (潮州人) in Mandarin Chinese.

<sup>24</sup> Hakka or Kejia (客家) in Mandarin means guest family. This speaking group called themselves, Ke Ren (客人).

<sup>25</sup> Hainan Ren (海南人) in Mandarin Chinese



**Figure 81** Operation of steamer service in the late nineteenth century

Source: Author

In 1882, the Bangkok Passenger Steamer Company started its regular service from Shantou to Bangkok and Bangkok to Shantou via Hongkong and launched direct service between Bangkok and Haikou in 1886. Skinner noted that it was one of the most important drives of the successful migration of the Chinese in Thailand.<sup>26</sup> As shown in figure 82 below is the first commercial wharf supporting the business of the Chino-Siam Steam Navigation Ltd. that provided steamer service between Bangkok-Shantou. The number of Chinese entering Bangkok port rapidly increased each year. It clearly shows that the opening of these steamer services had enabled the migration of all five-dialect groups to Thailand. This also made Bangkok a major Chinese settlement centre during the first half of the nineteenth century. Among the Chinese in

<sup>26</sup> Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์).

Bangkok, Teochiu people were the largest group, while Hokkien people were the second largest group.



**Figure 82** Regular steamer services of Chino-Siam Steam Navigation at its port in Bangkok, taken around 1930s

Source: Wang Lee community  
 (<http://www.sarakadee.com/web/modules.php?name=Sections&op=printpage&artid=664>)



**Figure 83** “Siawa” steamer in the nineteenth century, Bangkok

Source: Steve Van Beek, *Bangkok Then and Now* (Nonthaburi: AB Publications, 1999).



In looking at the settlement location of each dialect group, it is necessary to understand their different characteristics. The major settlements of Teochius were divided into three groups - along the Eastern coast of Thailand, along Chaophraya River in Bangkok, and along lower part of Chaophraya River basin, as referred in figure 84. Different locations of Teochius' settlement in Bangkok were relevant to the types of business they performed. Sampeng, Yaowarat, and Ratchawong area in Bangkok that were close to the main port of Ratchawong, were the settlement of Teochiu people whose business was related to foreign countries, involving banking and *Poi Kuan*<sup>27</sup> or money transferring business. They can also be found taking all sorts of labour works, such as rickshaw puller, waste carrier, and coolies of all sorts. Since they had background in agriculture, they can also be found in countryside around where they settled firstly, such as along the East coast in Chantaburi, Bangpakong, and lower part of Chaophraya River basin. Talad Phlu, which was a suburb-like district in Thonburi district. It was also the settlement of Teochiu people growing beetle nut to sell to Thai people. It was also a Chinatown of Thonburi district, but with a rural character.



**Figure 85** Diorama showing *Poi Kuan* business of the Chinese in Bangkok's Chinatown

Source: Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center

<sup>27</sup> *Poi Kuan* was a postal service business of sending money or letter from the Chinese in Thailand to their families back in the mainland China. It was originally run by Cantonese merchants and later became Teochiu business. The amount of money was indicated in a white paper with certified stamp of the shop from Bangkok. It was sent to the destination together with a letter. Once it reached the destination, the receiver could cash up that money draft. Meanwhile, small piece of paper was provided, so that the sender could write the message or dictate to the staff if he is illiterate.



**Figure 86** The construction of Northern rail and Chinese coolies

Source: Beek, *Bangkok Then and Now*.

Hokkien people are good at travel by boat, so most of them became merchants or sailors and settled at big towns around the gulf or river. They settled mainly in Ranong, Phuket, Nakhonsithammarat, Yala, Songkhla, and occupied the tin mining industry and rubber plantation. Most of the first generation Hokkien in the South of Thailand migrated from the Strait Settlements and brought with them their *Babas* and *Nyonyas* culture, as can be seen in their settlements in Phuket. Since they expertise in doing tea plantation in Fujian, they took control of tea business in Bangkok too.

Cantonese people can be found in big city or where there were employment opportunities in being turners in machine workshop and being car mechanic. In Bangkok, machine workshops of the Cantonese were located mainly around Talad Noi area, and Bangrak district, such as *Wong Wai Wit* machine workshop and *Wan Fa Long* machine workshop. Later the business was expanded and spread to the area of Sathupradit and Thonburi district. With the famous Cantonese cuisine, Cantonese can always be found in the kitchen of Chinese restaurants and big family house. It is believed that Chinese cuisine is well-known all over the world because of the Cantonese, who brought with them the culinary skills and introduced to the world.<sup>28</sup> In Bangkok, the Cantonese founded restaurants and retails shop, which can still be seen at Bangkok's Bangrak district and the *Leng Buai Eia* market of Chinatown with the shop names in Cantonese dialect, as shown in figure 87. It is very common in the

<sup>28</sup> Pan, *Ueng Ti Kia, Rueangrao Khong Chao Chin Phon Thale Thua Lok (Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese)*.

colonised Strait settlements to find female Cantonese maid or nanny. They are known among the western employers as *Ama*. These Cantonese maids either stay with their employers in the same house or live together with other fellows in a *kongsi*-typed accommodation.



**Figure 87** Shops belong to the Cantonese, selling Chinese food, dried food, and groceries in *Leng Buai Eia* market, Chinatown

Source: Author

Hainanese people are good at fishery, wood works, and boat construction. They travelled north along Chaophraya River and built the boat yard in Pak Nampho area.<sup>29</sup> Skinner believed that the Hainanese was the first dialect group of Chinese people who travelled to remote area and formed small settlements earlier than other groups and always left to other remote areas when other dialect groups arrived.<sup>30</sup> Since the inconvenient landscape of where they came from, they mostly settled in less competing location, away from comforts and facilities, such as Phichit province, and Phitsanulok province. Hainanese people were also found in hotel business, wood furniture making, and western food restaurants, including coffee shops. Since a lot of their fellows went up north to work, most of Hainanese people in Bangkok settled at Bangpho area, where was close to the log dock linking to the northern part of the country. Therefore, they occupied the wood mill and furniture business there. There are also not less than three Hainanese shrines located in Bangpho area.

<sup>29</sup> Viyada Thongmit, "The Labour Work of Chinese People in Thai Society, 1782-1910 (การใช้แรงงานของชาวจีนในสังคมไทย 2325-2453)" (Master of Arts in Southeast Asian History Thesis, Silpakorn University, 1984), 39.

<sup>30</sup> Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์).



**Figure 88** Log dock and wood mills on the Chaophraya River at Bang-Or near Bang-Pho

Source: Hunt, *Bangkok 1946-1996*.

The Hakkas specialised in crafting work, such as shoe making, and tailoring. They also introduced the percussion looms to textiles weaving industry during the reign of King Rama VI at Trok Phut, Saphanlueong area, in Bangkok.<sup>31</sup> The production of percussion loom expanded into textiles weaving industry, both small and large, of the Hakka.<sup>32</sup> It also spread to the nearby area of Banthatthong and Charoenmuang roads. Shoes shops of Hakka people could also be found in Phraeng Sapphasat district in Bangkok. It also includes leather tanning, which later developed into large leather industry of the country. The Hakkas also came to Siam as railway builders, who travelled with the construction of railway towards different parts of the country. Hakka and Teochiu builders stopped where the railway stations were and built new settlement there. In many cases, they settled where the Hainanese had been earlier.

<sup>31</sup> Thomrat Siwaranon, "The History of Thai Textiles Trade and Industry (ประวัติการค้าและอุตสาหกรรมสิ่งทอไทย)," *Utsahakam San (Industry Journal)* December 1982 (1982), 28.

<sup>32</sup> The Hakka, who were specialised in textiles weaving using the percussion looms came from Hin Nan district in Southern China. This area of Trok Phut is currently located behind Bangkok Bank, Saphanlueong branch.



**Figure 89** Hakka shoes makers at Phraeng Sapphasat district and tailor shops along Banthatthong area.

Source : Author

Similarly, after the construction of the Southern railway line was complete, Teochiu, Hakka, and Hainanese people started to settle in the Southern part of Thailand, where Hokkien and Cantonese were. The arrival of Chinese in Thailand had brought in new knowledge that influenced greatly to Thai society, such as the construction of earthen dwellings, *Yok Rong* technique of growing vegetables, the introduction of Chinese vegetable and food like Pak Choy and noodles, the use of organic fertilizer in rice field, and the method of butchering pig.

When facilities development and business expanded to upcountry, Chinese people could also be found there. Trade centres were found in various provinces where there are rivers and railways. The economic development of Thailand required greater number of coolies, which lead to another big wave of migration of Chinese labour during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Chinese coolies for tin mining in the South of Thailand, especially in Phuket, were officially supported. New facilities in and around Bangkok, such as canals, railways and roads, all required Chinese coolies. Bangkok in its early 20<sup>th</sup> century had changed from a town on the riverbank to the inland city. New roads linking different districts were cut. New shophouses and western residences were built. These were all in need of Chinese coolies.



**Figure 90** Old photos and the diorama showing various occupations of Chinese in Bangkok in the early days

Source : Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center

## 4.2.2 Dispersion of Chinese Settlement Around Thailand

### 1) The Capital

The physical trace of Chinese settlement in Thailand can be found as early as Ayutthaya period, since seventeenth century. Chinese settlement in Ayutthaya had been mentioned in various records and memoirs of western officers and merchants who visited Ayutthaya during those days. They indicated that there are pig farms around the town and the Chinese craftsmen settled in a market area. It was also written in a chronicle of a French missionary that there were a lot of junks mooring in front of *Pom Phet* and *Phananchoen temple*. In 1638, the memoir of Van Veliet<sup>33</sup> indicated that a lot of Chinese people resided in Thailand with appropriate freedom in trades and most of the Chinese merchants are Hokkien from Xiamen, a big port town of the Hokkien people. There was also a Portuguese record indicating the settlements of Chinese people that were widespread around the country.<sup>34</sup> The most important evidence that best illustrated the life and settlement of the Chinese community in Ayutthaya is *the Statement of Khunluang Wat Pradusongtham*.<sup>35</sup> In year 1724, Yongzheng Emperor of the Ming court had granted the permission to 96 Chinese crews that worked in Siam tributary boat to settle in Ayutthaya.<sup>36</sup> It can be said that Chinese people in Ayutthaya were not only merchants, but they could be found being craftsmen, farmers, entertainers, doctors, and even court officers. Skinner estimated that at the second half of seventeenth century, there should be approximately 10,000 Chinese settled in Thailand.<sup>37</sup>

In the Thonburi era of King Taksin's reign (1768-1782), his policy in supporting Teochiu Chinese drew a lot of Chinese from Chaozhou to Bangkok. Chinese historians believed that Zheng Yong, a Teochiu man from Cheng Hai town, migrated to Thailand around the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His son, Zheng Zhao, later became King Taksin of Thonburi Kingdom (1767-1782). Crawford recorded that King Taksin specially supported Chinese people, so they were consequently welcomed into the country and settled here largely.<sup>38</sup> The Teochiu people in King Taksin era were even called "Chin Luang" or the royal court's Chinese people. They settled mainly on the east of Chaophraya River at Tha Tian area, where the Grand Palace is located at present, in which it was known as "Bang Chin" in that era. Turpan also recorded that there were a lot of Chinese settlements and they were the most prosperous groups because of their trades and their privileges.<sup>39</sup> Since the reign of King Taksin, the

<sup>33</sup> Jeremias van Vliet, *The Ayutthaya Historical Records of Van Vliet* (รวมบันทึกประวัติศาสตร์ร้อยยี่สิบของวันวลิต), trans. Wanasri Samonsen Nantha Woraneti Wong (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Survey journal of the Portuguese by De Cumbos in the 16th century. It said that Chinese merchants settled everywhere in the country.

<sup>35</sup> The Fine Arts Department, *The Statement of Khunluang Wat Pradusongtham* (คำให้การขุนหลวงวัดประดู่ทรงธรรม) (Bangkok: Klangwitthaya Publishing, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Suepsaeng Phrombun, *Kwamsamphan Nai Rabop Bannakan Rawang Chin Kap Thai* (Tributary Relations between China and Siam) (Bangkok: Thai Wattanaphanit Publisher, 1982).

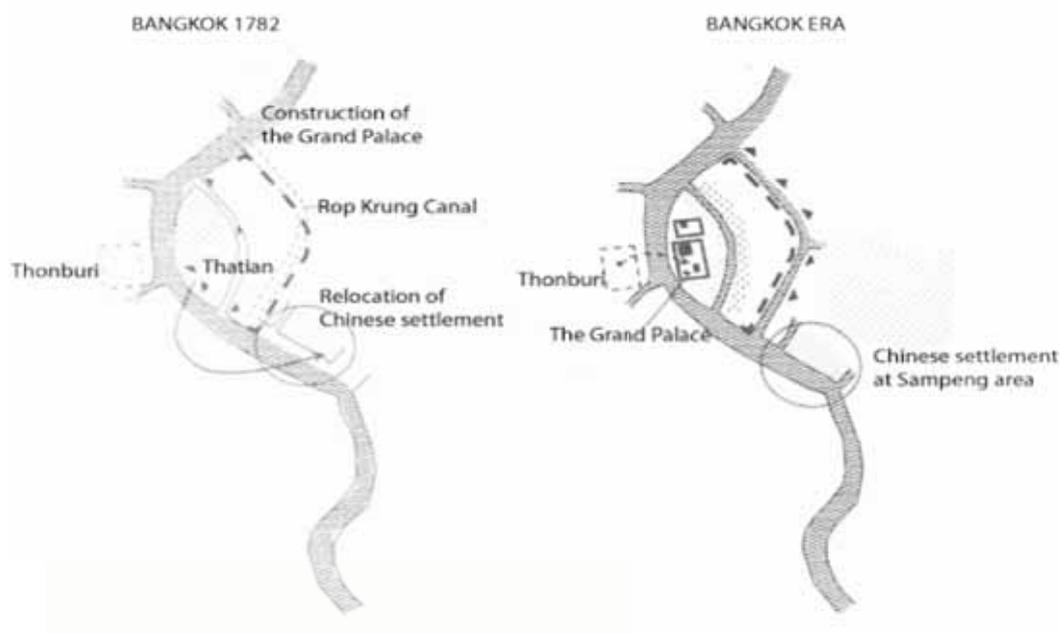
<sup>37</sup> Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์).

<sup>38</sup> John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>39</sup> Francois Henri Turpin, *History of the Kingdom of Siam* trans. B.O. Cartwright (Bangkok: American Presby Mission Press, 1908).

number of Chinese immigrants had been increasing until around the nineteenth century.

Since Bangkok became the capital of the country in 1782, in Rattanakosin era, Chinese settlement at Thatian area was moved to locate outside the city's gate at the Southwest, as shown in figure 91. It covers the area of Wat Sam Pluem canal to Wat Sampeng canal, and is called Sampeng.<sup>40</sup> The map of early Rattanakosin shown in figure 92 also indicates the location of Chinese settlement with red symbol.



**Figure 91** The relocation of Chinese settlement from Tha Tian area to Sampeng at the beginning of Bangkok era

Source : Adapted from Loeckx 1986 as referred in Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*.00

<sup>40</sup> Wat Sam Pluem or Chakkrawatrachawat Temple, and Wat Sampeng or Pathumkhongkha Temple. Sampeng was mentioned in several period documents, such as *Nirat Chom Talad Sampeng*, and *Nirat Muang Klaeng*.





**Figure 93** View of Bangkok in 1823

Source : George Finlayson, as referred in *Bangkok: The Historical Background* (กรุงเทพฯ มาจากไหน), (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 1821-1822).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Chinese population settled around the river plains and in every coastal towns of the Gulf of Thailand. Between 1800-1850, Bangkok was the centre of Chinese settlement in Thailand. During the reign of King Rama III, which was around year 1827, great number of Chinese coolies was in need to help the construction of palace, temple, canal, and road. The memoir of Jacob Tomlin indicated that in 1827, the number of population in Bangkok was 77,300 within which were 31,000 Chinese people and 5,000 *Luk Chin*.<sup>43</sup> This number shows 47% of Chinese people and Chinese descendants in Thailand at that time. In addition, the number of Chinese population in Thailand was 25% of all population, which were 800,000 from 3,252,650.<sup>44</sup> The political chaos in Southern China, especially of the Opium war, affected more migration of the Southern Chinese to other countries, especially to the southern countries. Also, in the *Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries* of John Crawfurd, it shows that Bangkok was occupied by the Chinese and the Chinese descendants, as “The present reputed population of Bangkok is 404,000, composed of the following nationalities, namely, Siamese, 120,000; Laos, 25,000; Malays, 15,000; Peguans, 12,000; Burmese, 3,000; Portuguese Chistians, 4,000; and Chinese of the whole, or mixed-blood, 200,000.”<sup>45</sup> During the end of nineteenth century, the Chinese could be seen in almost every streets of Bangkok doing all sorts of occupation, as Smyth noted that “...But everywhere the Chinaman is advancing, and the Siamese is handicapped by the corvee customs of this country”.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Campbell also spotted that the Chinese took over labour jobs in Bangkok as, “In Bangkok all the hard labour is done by

<sup>43</sup> Chanwit Kasetsiri, "Look at the History of Early Rattanakosin (มองประวัติศาสตร์ต้นรัตนโกสินทร์)," *Art & Culture*, 6 April 1981.

<sup>44</sup> Thongmit, "The Labour Work of Chinese People in Thai Society, 1782-1910 (การใช้แรงงานของชาวจีนในสังคมไทย 2325-2453)".

<sup>45</sup> John Crawfurd, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries*, reprinted Kuala Lumpur ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1856).

<sup>46</sup> H. Warrington Smyth, "Five Years in Siam," in *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D.1932* (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1982).

Chinese. The coolies in the rice mills and in the private houses of the Europeans, those who make and mend the roads, who pull the jin rickshaws<sup>47</sup>, carry burdens, and water the streets, are all the Chinamen”.<sup>48</sup> Kanchanakhaphan also agreed that the Chinese almost occupied everywhere in Siam during early twentieth century and they performed all occupations: selling things, carrying waste, watering the road, cleaning the road, pulling the rickshaw, delivering water bucket at home, being coolies, and being street vendors.<sup>49</sup>

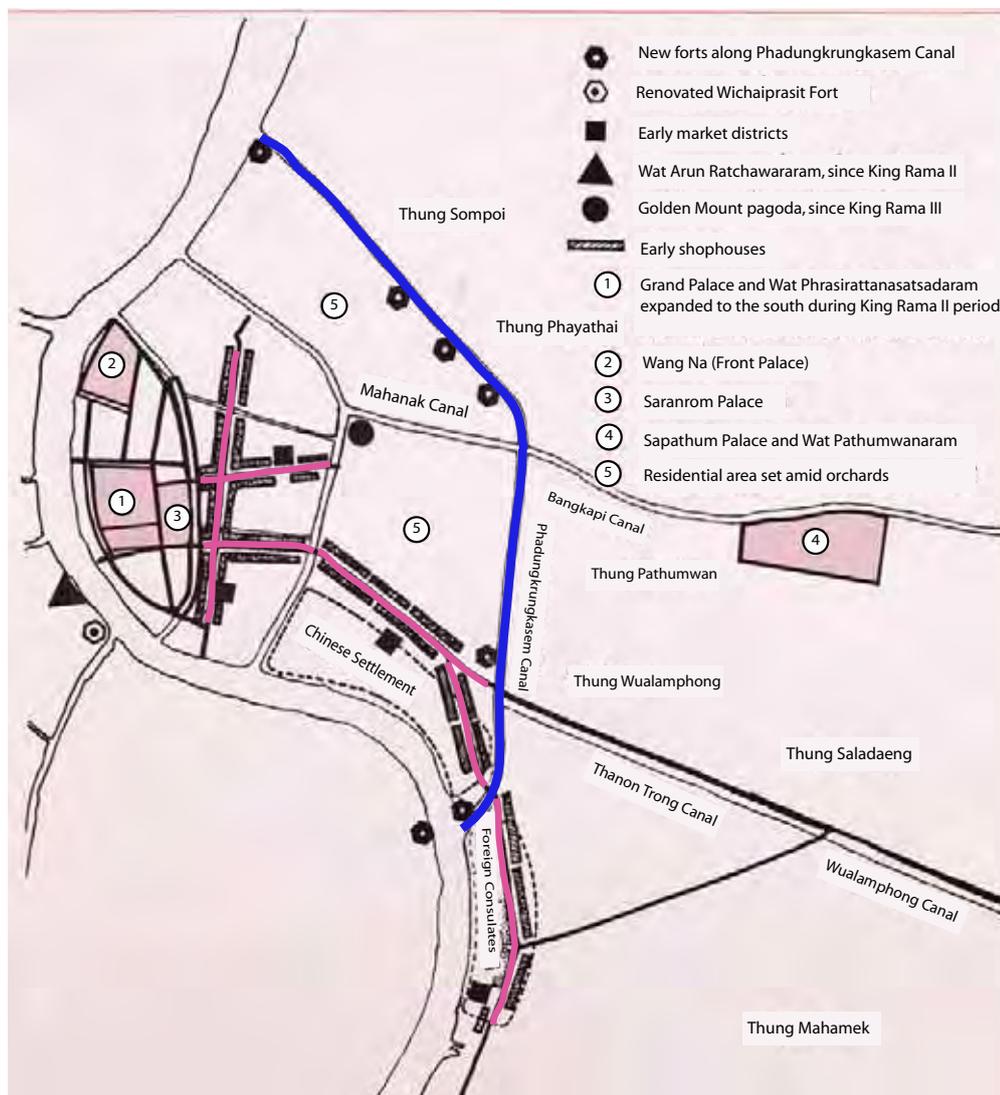
While Sampeng had developed quickly because it is not only a residential area, but also a centre of trades, and it always welcomed new Chinese immigrants. Sampeng had become the most important trade hub of Bangkok until early twentieth century. All types of wholesales and retails products from China could be found there. The construction of Phadungkrungkasem canal or Ropkrung canal that started in year 1851 had switched Chinese settlement from outside the city’s gate into the city’s gate. It was the major transportation route of Bangkok that welcomed a number of boats selling various types of goods. New markets and settlements expanded towards Phadungkrungkasem canal. “New Road” or Charoenkrung Road was cut and had brought with it a great number of Chinese coolies, shophouses, and new settlements along this road. Bamrungmuang and Fuengnakhon Road that were the trendy roads of the era with rows of shops and stores, were also cut and new arcade style of shophouses were built alongside. The map of Bangkok during late King Rama IV period (the end of nineteenth century), as shown in figure 94, indicated the existence of Phadungkrungkasem canal (in blue line) and new roads. It also marked the location of early shophouses that were built along these roads.

In 1891, the development of Sampeng area was started with the construction of Yaowarat road and took around 10 years to complete. The construction of Yaowarat road started first from the centre of Sampeng towards Charoenkrung road (New Road) at Wat Trimit. Together with Yaowarat road, there were also Ratchawong road, Chakkrawat road, Anuwong road, and Worachak road. In 1900, 1906, 1907, and 1908, there were big fires at Sampeng that caused great damage to the houses and lifes of the people. Therefore, Plaengnam road, Phlubphlachai road, Songwad road, Samphanthawong road, Phadsai road, Pathumkhongkha road, and Talad Noi road were cut at the north and south of Sampeng, along with the renovating of Sampeng road. As a result, all new roads cut through the settlements must be at least ten metres wide and thatched-roof house was strongly prohibited. Chinese settlement at Sampeng, therefore, expanded along these new roads. Shown in figure 97 is new road structure of Bangkok by early twentieth century. It can be seen that more roads were cut in and around Sampeng district.

<sup>47</sup> *Jin rickshaw* refers to Chinese typed rickshaw.

<sup>48</sup> J.G.D. Campbell, "Siam in the Xxth Century," in *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D.1932* (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1982).

<sup>49</sup> Kanchanakhaphan, *Yesterday of Bangkok* (กรุงเทพฯ เมื่อวานนี้), 100 Years of Khun Vjittmattra (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2002).



**Map 94** Map of Bangkok during late King Rama IV period (end of nineteenth century)

Source: Silpakorn University Journal, special edition 1982, page 231 as referred in Hunt, *Bangkok 1946-1996*.



**Figure 95** *Si Kak junction* of Bamrungmuang – Fuengnakhon Road in late nineteenth century with neatly constructed shophouses

Source: Kanchanakhaphan, *Krungthep Muawanni (Yesterday of Bangkok)*, 100 Years of Khun Vjittmattra (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2002).



**Figure 96** Early days of Yaowarat Road

Source: Beek, *Bangkok Then and Now*.



**Figure 97** Map showing road structure around Sampeng by the end of King Rama V period (early twentieth century)

Source: Silpakorn University Journal, special edition 1982, 235 as referred in Hunt, "Bangkok 1946-1996."

By the end of King Rama V's reign, the Chinese settlement in Bangkok had largely expanded and covered the area from the South of the city's gate to the mouth of Phadungkrungkasem canal. It can be said that Sampeng in the period of King Rama V was the most developed district in Bangkok.<sup>50</sup> The condensed settlement of Sampeng enabled the expansion of Chinese settlement to different areas of Bangkok, including Talad Noi, Phlaphlachai, Hualamphong, Khlongsan, Taladphlu, and further away at Yannawa and Bangkholaem.

The tributary system had come to the end in the reign of King Rama IV. The last tributary ambassadors were sent to China in 1853 and 1855. From 1855, Thailand came to its most prosperous era, peaceful, and advanced in economics. The economic development required a number of workers in various fields such as mining, rice mill, wood mill, seaport, and infrastructures building. It can be said that during the early Rattanakosin era, Chinese people occupied most trades of the country. There were various types of works of the Chinese people that covered almost every industry, from business to services. They were merchants, trade representative of the noblemen or

<sup>50</sup> Suphang Chanthawanit, ed., *Sampeng: History of Chinese Settlement in Bangkok* (สำหรับประวัติศาสตร์ชุมชนชาวจีนในกรุงเทพฯ), 1st ed. (Bangkok: Chinese Study Centre, Institute of Asian Study, Chulanlongkorn University, 2006).

high rank officers, middleman in business, rickshaw puller, waste carrier<sup>51</sup>, craftsmen<sup>52</sup>, builders<sup>53</sup>, and agriculture<sup>54</sup>. In 1828, it was recorded that there were 36,000 Chinese people in Sampeng district, which was even greater than the Thai population in the whole Bangkok. In 1954, the number of Chinese people and Lukchin who dwelled in Sampeng and nearby area was 265,441.<sup>55</sup>

## 2) The Central and the West

The *index of Chinese concentration in 1947*, as shown in figure 98, indicated that the most concentrated Chinese settlements were around the lower Central part and continued towards the north along the rail line. *Pak Nampho* in Nakhonsawan is where the branches of Chaophraya River join. Large urban Chinese settlements were formed there. *Pak Nampho* was the market junction, where local merchants from the North travelled along the four branches of Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan River to meet with other merchants. Some merchants brought goods from Bangkok to sell there and brought back the local goods to sell in Bangkok. Another important commercial area in Nakhonsawan was *Tha Sud*, which was far away from *Pak Nampho*, but was the centre of trades between nearby provinces. After the Northern rail line was completed, *Pak Nampho* became more lively and the number of Chinese people in Nakhonsawan had gradually increased. It was believed that the first group of Chinese settled in Nakhonsawan was Hainanese people. Saeng-arun Kanokphongchai believed that if Yaowarat is Bangkok's Chinatown, *Pak Nampho* is Nakhonsawan's Chinatown.<sup>56</sup>

Chaophraya River was converged from four main rivers, Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan, at Paknampho in Nakhonsawan province. Chao Phraya River runs through Uthaitani, Chainat, Singburi, Angthong, Ayutthaya, Pathumthani, Nonthaburi, Bangkok, and Paknam district in Samutprakan to the Gulf of Thailand. Chaophraya River also split into another two lines at Chainat, which are Thachin River on the left and Noi River on the right. Thachin River is 315 kilometres long. It has different names referring to different part of it that runs through different provinces, which are *Makhamthao River* in Chainat province, *Suphanburi River* in Suphanburi province, *Nakhonchaisi River* in Nakhonpathom, and *Thachin River* in Samutsakhon, which is also the end of the line. Noi River runs through Singburi, Angthong, and joins with the main Chaophraya River at Ayutthaya. Mae Klong River runs from Kanchanaburi through Ratchaburi and Samutsongkhrum to the Gulf of Thailand. Riverside markets were located along these rivers where they are home of Chinese communities. Large Teochiu settlements were found at the lower part of Chaophraya River basin and along major rivers in the Central and Western part of the country, mainly in

<sup>51</sup> Both rickshaw pullers and waste carriers were mostly found during 1887-1890, in King Rama V era

<sup>52</sup> Especially the Cantonese, and the types of craftsmanship varied from metal work, boat craft, woodwork, paint, and brickwork.

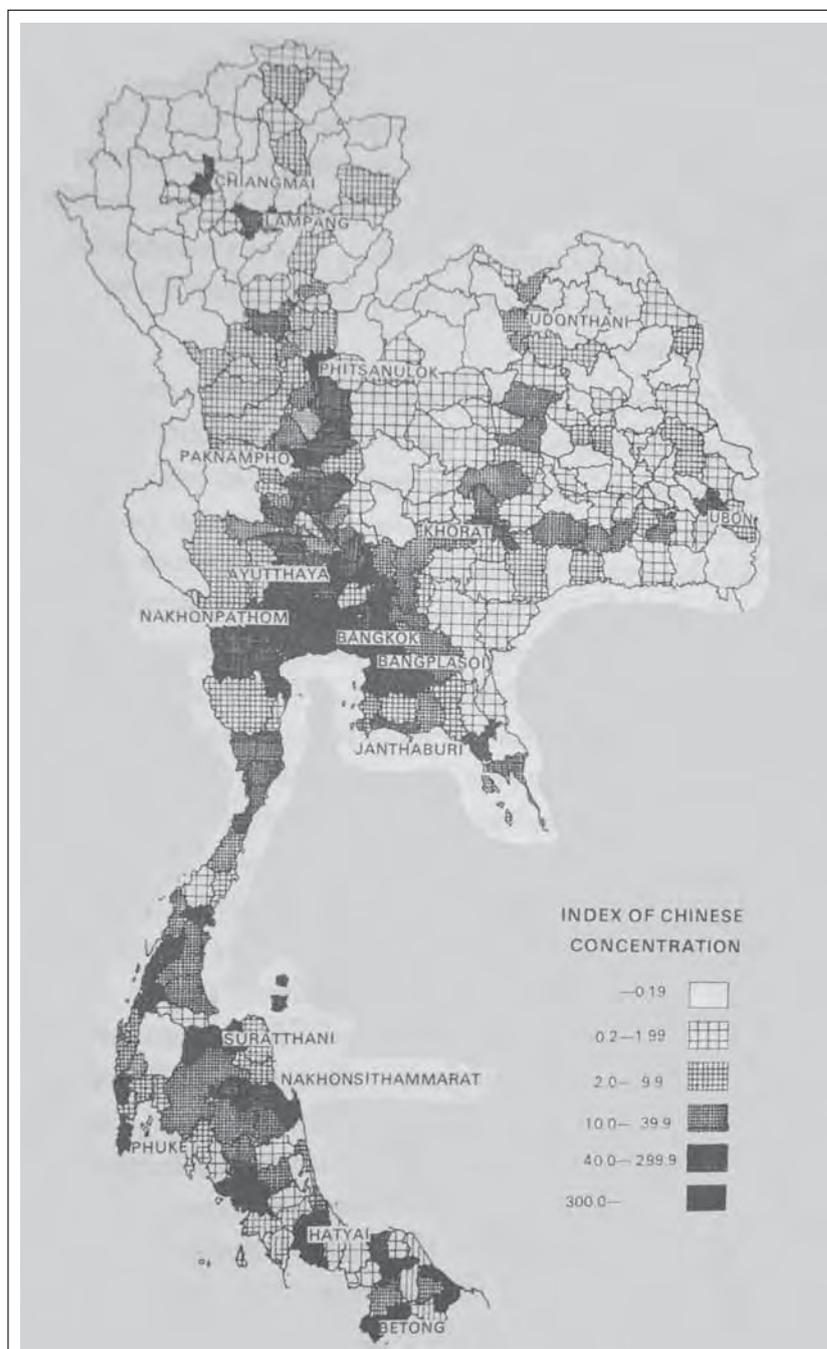
<sup>53</sup> The builders of road, railway, and canal were in great demand, especially during between King Rama V and King Rama VI era when the country required a lot of facilities development

<sup>54</sup> The Teochiew brought with them the sugar cane to plant in the South of Thailand and around Chaophraya basin at Bangkok Yai and Bangkok Noi districts, while Hainanese brought cotton to grow here

<sup>55</sup> Chanthawanit, ed., *Sampeng: History of Chinese Settlement in Bangkok* (สำนักพิมพ์ประวัติศาสตร์ชุมชนชาวจีนในกรุงเทพฯ).

<sup>56</sup> Saeng-arun Kanokphongchai, *The Chinese-Thai Ways in the Society of Siam* (วิถีจีน-ไทย ในสังคมสยาม), 1st ed. (Bangkok: Matichon, 2007), 84.

Nakhonchaisi and Banglen districts in Nakhonpathom province; Muang, Ban Pong and Photharam districts in Ratchaburi province; Muang and Thamuang districts in Kanchanaburi province; Suphanburi province; Anghong province; Singburi province; Chainat province.



**Figure 98** Index of Chinese Concentration in Thailand 1947

Source: Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมนจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์), 206.



**Figure 99** Old market settlement of the Chinese at Bangluang district, Nakhonpathom

Source: Author

Apart from being merchants or shop owners, many of these Chinese also do various types of agriculture, such as growing vegetables, sugarcanes, and tobaccos, own pig barns. In Nakhonpathom area, original barns for keeping pigs, as well as the *Yok Rong* technique of Chinese vegetables farming can still be seen. Tobacco plantations were firstly clustered at Muang, Tha Muang, and Thamaka districts in Kanchanaburi, in which most of the farmers were Hakka people and the sellers were Teochiu people.<sup>57</sup> Later on, the tobacco plantations were expanded south to Banpong district in Ratchaburi and north to Phetchabun and the northern part of Thailand, and are hardly found in the same districts of Kanchanaburi province at present. Chinese people also occupied the sugar cane agricultural communities in Nakhonpathom and lower part of Kanchanaburi, in which large number of sugar factories can still be seen located along the main road. Similarly, Bangyirong and Ronghip sub-districts in Ratchaburi province had also been the location of sugarcane plantations and factories owned by Chinese people over a period until the sugar industry began to decline.

*Pak Nam* area in Samutprakarn province housed the important ports during Ayutthaya period. It was known as “New Amsterdam” among the western merchants.<sup>58</sup> Eight shrines in the market area and by Chaophraya River were found, indicating the expansion of Chinese settlements.

<sup>57</sup> Sudara Sujachaya, "Tobacco Farm, Only Name Survived "Trok Ya Chun" (ไร่ยาเหลือเพียงแค่ชื่อ "ตรอกยาฉุน")," <http://www.lek-prapai.org/web%20lek-prapai/bangkok/bangkok-trokyachun.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> Saeng-Arun Kanokphongchai, *Bo Bad Bo Yong Kong* (บ๊อบบี้ยังก้ง) (Bangkok: Bangkok Press, 2004), 66.



**Figure 100** *Yok Rong* method of vegetables farming, local knowledge of the Chinese, Nakhonpathom

Source: Author



**Figure 101** Traditional barns for keeping pigs in Nakhonpathom province

Source: Author



**Figure 102** *Paknam on the Menam*, illustration of the foreign officer during early twentieth century showing Pak Nam area at the mouth of Chaophraya River

Source: *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D. 1932.*

### 3) The East

The east coast of Thailand attracted mainly Teochiu people who had migrated from the Southern China since the Ayutthaya period. Their settlements were found mainly in Bangplasoï district in Chachoengsao, Bangpakong basin, Banglamung district in Chonburi, Paedriu district in Chachoengsao, and Chantaburi town. Bangplasoï district in Chonburi is a big fishing village with Teochiu people being business owners, boat captains and fishermen. Paed-Riu district in Chachoengsao is a big Chinese community, which was even ruled by Chinese committees of different positions. Since the location of Chantaburi was on the maritime trade route, it had developed as a major port town.

The Chinese settlements in Chantaburi were located along the coast in Khlung, Laemsing, Tha Mai, and Muang district. During Thonburi era, Chantaburi was well-known because of its junk yard. During the early Rattanakosin era, the port in Muang district was called Tha Luang area, which was mentioned in the journal of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn during his visit to *Ploy Waen Hill* in 1876 noting that there were tens of Chinese shops located along sides of the road, two Chinese shrines, many Chinese cemeteries, Chinese opera hall, and there were mainly Chinese people there. Since the Teochiu people were capable of doing all types of agriculture, they could be found in the countryside of the east coast lived their lives similarly to when they were in the Southern China. Pepper fields were found mostly in Chantaburi and Trat, and it can be said that during the beginning of the twentieth century, pepper was one of the agricultural products that demanded a lot of Chinese labour and Chantaburi became the major production district for pepper and spices. Sugar cane was also brought into the country by the Teochiu immigrants. The largest sugar can plantations were located in Chonburi and Chachoengsao provinces of the east coast.



**Figure 103** Tha Luang district in Chantaburi, from the nineteenth century and at present

Source: (left) National Archive/ (right) Author

### 4) The Northeast

The dispersion of Chinese in the Northeastern part of Thailand can be divided into three periods. The first group of immigrants were the ethnic Chinese Laotian and Vietnamese, who moved into the area from Laos and Vietnam due to the political factors around early twentieth century prior to the construction of the Northeast

railway. The second group was the Chinese immigrants, who travelled by train from Bangkok to settle in the provincial towns of the Northeast during and after the Northeast railway was complete. The number of this second group had increased greatly after the construction of the railway was complete. The Korat-Ubonratchathani line was complete by the end of 1920, while the Korat-Udonthani was complete in 1930. Prior to 1930, Chinese immigrants would travel from Bangkok by railway to Korat (in Nakhonratchasima), where the rail line ended, and continued by ox cart to Udonthani. The last group was those, who moved to this region after Thai government had declared the first National Economic Development Plan (1961), which also covered the facilities development of Northeast region, including the highway linking Banphai-Borabue-Mahasarakham-Roi-ed-Yasothon-Ubonratchathani. This had attracted more business and trade activities into the Northeast region and also attracted more Chinese to move to this part of the country. A number of Chinese merchants moved from village area to live in town centre for better trade opportunity. It is interesting to see that earlier, the trade activity of Northeast region was involved with ox cart caravan, but the Chinese had introduced new type of market and town community, where all people could trade and exchanged their goods. In Surin, which the Chinese called *Su Ling town*, a large Chinese community had been settled there since the first part of railway from Bangkok was completed. The Chinese immigrants, who travelled from Bangkok, could travel as far as Korat, Nakhonratchasima and continue on foot to Surin and resided near the city pillar shrine. The market in Surin town was gradually developed, until the completion of the second part of the railway to Surin, the commercial area was then moved to the railway station area. Roi-Ed was suitable destination of the Chinese as it was administrative centre of the central part of Chi River basin, covering the provinces of Roi-ed, Mahasarakham, and Kalasin. The Chinese in Roi-Ed province settled in various districts and mostly were the middleman. The Teochiu people made the highest dialect group in the Northeastern part of Thailand (70% of the Chinese people). This was because of the railway construction in 1920 and 1930 that drew mainly the new immigrants who came into Thailand with the wave of emigration during 1918-1931 from Shantou port. The Teochiu people made up 80% of Chinese in Nongkhai and Kalasin.<sup>59</sup>

### 5) The North

It seems that the Hainanese were the first group of Chinese who settled in every towns from Phichit to Nan along the Nan River, and from Sukhothai to Phrae along the Yom River. The Hainanese did not only settle there firstly, but also opened permanent markets there. Since the Hainanese specialised in fishery and operating the sawmills, they travelled mostly towards the north of Thailand and occupied the teak wood and boatyards business, such as the sawmill in Lampang and the boatyard in Paknampho, Nakhonsawan. The teak wood business area in Lampang took up the whole road that runs parallel to the river and was known as Chinese market, or *Kad Kongta* in local language.

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<sup>59</sup> Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์).



**Figure 104** Hang Maengpong Boat, major transportation of river trade along the Northern Rivers

Source: Suwaporn Chuto



**Figure 105** *Yian Si Tai Lee Kee* Building since 1918 in *Kadkongta* (Talat Chin), Lampang - the first big department store in the province

Source: Author

However, in big towns like Tak and Chiangmai, where were large trade junctions between Yunna, Luangprabang, Moulmein, and the market towns along the river to Nakhonsawan, attracted Teochiu and Hokkien merchants mostly. In Chiangmai, the original Chinese settlement could be found located in Wat Ketkarm district, where the old port was. Teochiu people still made the highest number of Chinese people in these provinces: 70% in Tak and 60% in Chiangmai.<sup>60</sup> Apart from the settlements that were formed along the river and alongside the teak wood business, the construction of the Northern rail line also brought more Teochiu, Cantonese, and Hakka peoples to settle in the provincial towns along the route. The Hakka settled mainly in Nan, Chiangrai, and most part of Phrae and Lampang. The distilled factories owned by the Hakka were found in these provinces. The number of Chinese in the North increased considerably after the transportation facilities, including the railway running through Lampang, Lamphun, and Chiangmai, and the highway between Lampang and Chiangrai, and Prae and Nan, were developed.

## 6) The South

The relationship between Chinese maritime and the Southern peninsula of Thailand had been established for over centuries. The location of the Southern

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

peninsula that was the entrepot for cultural and trade exchange between India and China enhanced the town development. Pattani was the entrepot of goods from China to other places in Southeast Asia in the fourteenth century. Both Chinese chronicles and local legend from the sixteenth century talked about Pattani town as a developed port town and a home of many Chinese immigrants. In the seventeenth century, around 1616, the Dutch visited Pattani and recorded that the number of Chinese people in Pattani was far more than the native, while a Chinese record from the same year also indicated that the number of Chinese people in Pattani was very high. Even until the century after, a lot of Chinese architectural style buildings were still found in *Hua Talad* commercial district in Pattani as can be seen in figure 106.<sup>61</sup>



**Figure 106** Chinese traditional house in Hua Talad area, Pattani, in 1985

Source: superbblackpig  
(<http://www.thai-heritage-building.com/>)

With the centre of trade located in Malaka, a number of Strait settlements linking to Malaka were also founded. A Chinese writer of that period also wrote that Siamese people even welcomed Chinese people warmly, and much more than they did to local people.<sup>62</sup> Until year 1688, the Chinese took over all trade relationship with Thailand, so it was difficult to cut them off from the trade systems in the later reigns. When Ming dynasty overruled by Qing dynasty, it motivated more migrations to leave the mainland China to other countries. Secret societies formed up to conduct activities to support Ming dynasty were also found located in the Southern part of Thailand in Ranong, Takuapa, Phang-nga, Phuket, Nakhonsithammarat, and Krabi. The settlements in the Southern part of Thailand were not only for political purpose, but were also formed up by the Chinese coolies. Before 1870, the steamer took Chinese coolies directly from Xiamen to Phuket three times a year.

The amount of natural resources, especially tin, made Phuket one of the largest tin mining areas in the world. The tin business had expanded greatly during early Rattanakosin era. This required a number of coolies, especially during around the end of the nineteenth century when the Chinese immigrants entered the west coast of Southern peninsula directly. In the first half of the twentieth century when the local

<sup>61</sup> Vassan Cheewasarth, *Chinese Architecture in Pattani Town* (สถาปัตยกรรมจีนในเมืองปัตตานี) (Pattani: Songkhlanakarin University, Pattani Campus, 1986).

<sup>62</sup> Phongphaibun, Wutipanit, and Chinakarn, *The Southern Chinese, Ways and Powers* (จีนทักษิณวิถีและพลัง).

government promoted the rubber plantation, a great number of Chinese coolies was demanded, which led to the construction of the Southern line railway. According to the economic development, the settlement on the east and west coast of Southern peninsula developed differently. The east coast settlements, except Songkhla, were developed alongside the central part of the country, where they were tied to the junk trades mainly. For the west coast, it attracted coolies for tin mining and had strong relations to the trades within the Straits, therefore they were mainly Hokkien people.



**Figure 107** Phuket's tin mine in the mid twentieth century

Source: Old postcard of Chanchai shop, Phuket



**Figure 108** Chinese shophouses along Thalang Road in Phuket town (early twentieth century)

Source: Old postcard of Chanchai shop, Phuket

The character of Chinese migrations to the Southern part of Thailand can be divided into four groups.<sup>63</sup> The first group was the immigrants, who came to seek out opportunities for a better life. This group of Chinese immigrants dwelled mainly around the east coast of the Southern peninsula and came with the junk trade. In Ayutthaya period, they were attracted to Pattani mostly, while in early Rattanakosin period, Songkhla became a new home of the Hokkien, and Ban Don district, Suratthani was a new home of the Hainanese. The second group of Chinese immigrants moved from the Straits settlement along the Malaka Straits. Most of them were familiar with western lifestyles, similarly to the life in colonised land. These people travelled north to settle in Phuket and west coast mainly to start the mining industry and business. They were also closer to the Chinese in Penang and Singapore than to Chinese in the central part of Thailand. The third group of Chinese immigrants were those who travelled to Bangkok and the central part of Thailand first. They moved down to the South as the railway builders with the construction of the southern rail line (1909-1924). This group initiated the rubber plantation work and settled either around the railway stations or along the rail line in Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, Hadyai, and Nakhonsithammarat. The last group of Chinese immigrants were the mine coolies, who migrated during the lack of labour period around the end of the nineteenth century to beginning of the twentieth century. Some of them were sold through the coolie agent, while some of them were willing to work as coolies. In the memoir of Smyth, he wrote that different towns in the Southern peninsula of Siam had accepted thousands of Chinese immigrants who came directly by junks from the east and through the Straits from the west every year.<sup>64</sup> Around the end of the nineteenth century until 1917, Hokkien was the major immigrants who migrated to the Straits settlements along with Phuket, Trang and Ranong.

It is difficult to indicate the exact number of Chinese immigrants during the early Rattanakosin era but it can be said that they could be found near the tin mines, rubber plantations, train stations, and the business districts of each towns. However, the tax collection in 1846 can indicate the amount of 1,567 Chinese people, who were divided into 850 from Phang-nga, 88 from Thalang, 98 from Phuket, 216 from Takuathung, and 315 from Takuapa. In addition, the population research in year 1903 revealed that there were 32,408 Chinese people in Phuket, 9,303 in Nakhonsithammarat, and 3,129 in Chumporn.<sup>65</sup> Over time, the area where Chinese people settled mainly and strongly are Ranong, Phang-nga, Phuket, and some districts in Krabi.

It can be concluded that the dispersion of Chinese people to different parts of the country was influenced by the accessibility between local ports and China's ports, the development of countrywide transportation facilities, the expertise of different dialect background, the inner and outer political force, and the employment and economic opportunities.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 47-49.

<sup>64</sup> H. Warrington Smyth, *Five Years in Siam*, vol. 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1898), 286-287.

<sup>65</sup> Phongphaibun, Wuttipanit, and Chinakarn, *The Southern Chinese, Ways and Powers* (จีนที่กษัตริย์วิธีและพลัง).

### 4.3 The Chinese in Thailand – Lukchin in Thai Society

Since most of the Chinese, who migrated into Thailand, were male immigrants, most of them got married to Thai women and their children, half Thai half Chinese, were known as “Lukchin”, a product from intermarriage between a Chinese and a Thai parents.<sup>66</sup> Sometimes, this first generation of Chinese immigrants brought with them their Chinese wives and had children, who grew up in Thailand. Their children, as well as Lukchin are counted as second generation of Chinese in Thailand, and once they married with another Lukchin or another Chinese, their children became the third generation of Chinese in Thailand. Lukchin mingled with Chinese people well and were also acceptable to Thai people and had freedom to follow either tradition but the traditions that Lukchin holds are neither totally Chinese nor Thai. Coughlin called Lukchin, as a Sino-Thai and believed that a Sino-Thai is neither a Chinese, nor a Thai, but a marginal man.<sup>67</sup> They are not a distinct group that can be indicated, however, they are well accepted by both Thai and Chinese born people. Nowadays, no matter if they were descended from intermarried parents or only Chinese parents, both terms Lukchin and Sino-Thai are used commonly to refer to all of the Chinese descendants in Thailand. Gutzlaff interestingly noted in his journal in early nineteenth century about the Chinese in Siam that

“[the Chinese] even throw away their jackets and trowsers [sic], and become Siamese in their very dress... if they have children, these frequently cut off their queues, and become for a certain time Siamese priests. Within two or three generations, all the distinguishing marks of the Chinese character dwindle entirely away; and a nation which adheres so obstinately to its national customs becomes wholly changed to Siamese.”<sup>68</sup>

In the early Rattanakosin era until the end of King Chulalongkorn Rama V reign, the status of Chinese in Siam was incredibly high. Some of them became the governor of the port towns along the Gulf of Thailand’s coast, while some of them were given high ranks and social positions. Some scholars, including Gutzlaff commented that in giving these rich Chinese men high ranks and social positions, the country benefited in two ways. First one is that they also gave their money back to support the Royal court and secondly, in receiving high positions and ranks like this would just only make them become loyal to the court of Siam.<sup>69</sup> It can be said that in general, Siamese court during the first five reigns had friendly policy towards the Chinese immigrants. There was no limitation in the number of Chinese immigrants into the country. They had freedom to travel around, pay less duty<sup>70</sup>, and had

<sup>66</sup> Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์).

<sup>67</sup> Richard J. Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 80.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Gutzlaff, *Journal of Three Voyages Along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833, with the Notices of Siam, Corea and the Loo-Choo Islands, to Which Is Prefixed an Introductory Essay on the Policy, Religion, Etc., of China*, 3rd ed. (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1840).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> The tax payment of labour recruitment from the Chinese was collected at two baht per year per person at first. The Chinese taxpayers would be tied with a string sealed by wax around their wrists known as “Phuk Pi”. The rate was later lowered to four baht per three years per persons, which was even lower than the work duty collected from Thai citizens.

monopoly over a specific type of goods. Nevertheless, severe riots took place in 1848 when the tax for sugar factory was increased. The Siamese court strictly suppressed the uprising and that had controlled the Chinese not to fight publicly against the government again. However, the conflict between Thai and Chinese became strong and open once the foreigner's duty was increased during the end of King Rama V era. Instead of paying the duty once every three years, Chinese immigrants had to pay yearly like other nations who resided in the country. This created unsatisfactory feelings among all overseas Chinese labours. Not long after that when King Vajiravudh entered the throne after his father, he realised that most of the economic activities were in the Chinese hands. At the same time, the anti-Qing and nationalism movement was also highly active. Chinese trade associations were founded as a way to fight for their own benefits against local people. Therefore, together with the political movement of these overseas Chinese, King Vajiravudh believed that it might not be good to the country. He had given his negative opinion towards the Chinese by comparing them to the Jews as can be found in his work, "the Jews of the Orient"<sup>71</sup>, referring to the smart characters of Chinese in making money and getting rich.<sup>72</sup> He believed that there is no middle position for the Chinese in Siam and they had to choose either to be Thai or Chinese. In order to accomplish his nationalism policy, he had launched the act of nationality with the content that covers all people who were born of a Thai father and all Chinese descendants who were born in Thailand must hold Thai nationality. The Chinese, who want to present their Thai being, had to have their pigtail cut, in which it was the symbol of Qing dynasty. Interestingly, a lot of them chose to have their pigtail cut only to represent their anti-Qing government, not because they wanted to become Thai.

However, when it came to the reign of King Prachathipok Rama VII, his policy towards Chinese in Thailand was much softer. He wanted to see the assimilation without using law enforcement. This resulted in another Chinese emigration to Thailand. At the same time, with the purpose of supporting revolution in China, Chinese-Thai bank, Chinese newspapers, as well as Chinese schools were founded. *Guoyu*<sup>73</sup> or Mandarin Chinese was strongly promoted in every Chinese school and community in order to unite all Chinese overseas together. The conflict between Thai and Chinese had also created several clan and dialect associations in many provinces. These associations, both public and underground, had built close relationship between all overseas Chinese. By that time, the Chinese in Siam fully had awareness of their Chinese origins and the ties between them and their homeland were also increased. In the middle years of the early twentieth century when Thailand had stepped into the democracy system, assimilation policy was brought up again. Strong feelings for nationalism created critical conflict between Thai and Chinese. Many types of activities from the Chinese side that were against Thai law were held. Secret associations were also founded and became highly active during 1938-1939. The

<sup>71</sup> His Majesty the King Vajiravudh, *The Jews of the Orient and Wake up Siam!* (พวกยิวแห่งบูรพาทิศและเมืองไทยจึงตื่นเกิด) (Bangkok: The Foundation of His Majesty King Vajiravudh, 1985).

<sup>72</sup> Pannee Bualek, *The Characters of Thai Capitalist Between 1914-1939, the Lessons from Prosperity to Tragedy* (ลักษณะของนายทุนไทยในช่วงระหว่าง 2457-2482 บทเรียนจากความสำเร็จสู่โศกนาฏกรรม) (Bangkok: Phanthakit, 2002).

<sup>73</sup> 国语, the language spoken in the northern part of China and is used as the official language.

compulsive education, as well as the limitation of Chinese migration was used as a tool to turn Chinese into Thai. This also includes the expansion of Thai culture policy of Marshal Phibunsongkhram, which was a way to close down many Chinese schools and Chinese newspaper in the country. Thailand also chose to be on the same side as Japan during the World War. The stronger relationship between both countries had pushed Chinese people to the opposite side, which severely influenced the living of Chinese in Thailand. Several policies against the Chinese were launched during this era, controlling the Chinese in different aspects. The government did not only try to take away the rice trade from Chinese hands, but also the rubber plantation in the South of Thailand as well. On 23 May 1941, the government had declared Lopburi province, Prachinburi province, and Sattahip district as prohibited areas where foreigners could not reside and must leave within 90 days after the announcement. A few months afterwards, another three districts in the Northeast, Korat, Ubonratchathani, and Warinchamrap districts were added in the list. In the same year, when Japan had settled its troops in Thailand, more prohibited districts were declared. In the beginning of 1943, six provinces in the Northern part of the country, Chiangmai, Lamphun, Lampang, Chiangrai, Phrae, and Uttaradit, were included in the prohibited districts decree. The declaration of prohibited districts affected not only the new immigrants, but also the Chinese who had been settled in those areas since the beginning. Meanwhile in 1942, Thai government had announced 27 occupations that were limited for Thai people. Moreover, the most important act launched in 1943 prohibited the Chinese to buy land in Thailand. This also included the wife and children of Chinese people. The details of this act prohibited all foreigners in buying any lands in the country, except those who came from the Treaty countries. It also prohibited Thai people to buy a piece of land for the Chinese; otherwise the government could take possession of that piece of land. This act leads to the leasehold of the property that is very common way among the Chinese. The price and period of the land's rent is upon both sides' agreement, but mostly it is for thirty or fifty years. Then, the Chinese could build shop houses for rent afterwards. The leasehold of shop houses is very common among the Chinese in Thailand. Normally, the renter pays large amount of money at once to buy the rental rights and continue paying monthly rent. The contract normally lasts for twelve years, fifteen years, and twenty years. The Royal Treasury is the owner of most shop houses in Thailand.

Towards the mid-twentieth century, after the victory of World War II was on the China allies, the conflict between Thai and Chinese had also worsened. Thai government decided to exchange the diplomatic relations between Thailand and China by signing the Treaty of Amity between the Kingdom of Siam and the Republic of China in 23 January 1946 to ensure forever peace and cordiality. Nevertheless, a few years after that when China was governed by Communist party, Thailand also returned to the era of Marshal Pibunsongkram once again. He felt uncertain about the rise of communism and its great influence. His policy focused on the control of all activities that were done by the Chinese in Thailand. In 1947, the number of Chinese immigrants was limited to only 10,000 people a year and reduced greatly in few years afterwards. The tension between two groups of peoples was increased once again. Until the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, Thai government had realised that China was not as terrifying as expected and that built up a chance to

start the relations between two countries again. The real turning point was when Mainland China had opened its diplomatic relations with the American government and replaced the representative of Taiwan as a member state of the United Nations in 1971. Both Thai and Chinese government showed their intentions to make friends with each other and this led to the official diplomatic relations exchange between two countries in 1975, which was the beginning of cooperation in all aspects until the present.

Skinner, as well as some scholars believed that the attempts to assimilate Chinese people to Thai society since the reign of King Vajiravudh until after World War II, was largely successful. Eventually, Skinner believed that Lukchin are living in the middle society, where they can choose to be on Thai side sometimes and on Chinese side sometimes. On the contrary, Kasian Techapira argued that being Thai or being Chinese are all the political result and are the products of nationalism policy, and there has been no successful assimilation.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the term, cultural assimilation, cannot be used with the Chinese in Thailand, as they might mix but do not combine into one. He believed that it is not Thainess, Chineseness, half-Thai, or half-Chinese, but it is “Siamese Chineseness”<sup>75</sup>, which has been created from the cultural integration and exchange between Thai and Chinese. It was motivated by two-dimensional forces, sense of place and sense of time. While sense of place refers to all Chinese settlements in Thailand, sense of time refers to different times and eras that overseas Chinese have to go through in Thai history. These forces enhanced awareness, meanings, memory, and value to this identity. Different incidents and experiences of the Chinese in Thailand had developed the characters of Chinese in Thailand. “Chineseness” in Thailand is special character and is totally different from “Chineseness” in the mainland China and elsewhere.<sup>76</sup> Nithi Eiaosriwong looked at the “Siamese Chineseness” as a result of its own experience that can be found only in the context of Thai society and is the significant factor of the middle-class Thai society nowadays.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Coughlin believed that Sino-Thai is actually resulted from the cultural exchange between Thai and Chinese and is developed into a unique cultural characteristic.<sup>78</sup> It can be said that the identity of Chinese in Thailand is blended between original Chinese characteristic and local characteristic with influences from social factor, especially education and politics. Similarly to what Nareerat Parisuthiwithiporn found in her research on “Chinese and the Expansion of Cities on Chi River” that the combination between Chineseness, locality, and education by overseas Chinese firstly become the characteristic of being Chinese in

<sup>74</sup> Kasian Techapira, "Lae Lod Lai Mangkon (แลลลอคลายมังกร)," in *Lae Lod Lai Mangkon : A Collection of Essays on Being Chinese in Siam* (แลลลอคลายมังกร: รวมข้อเขียนว่าด้วยความเป็นจีนในสยาม) (Bangkok: Kobfai's Publishing Work, 1994), 13-18.

<sup>75</sup> ———, "Being Chinese in Siam (ความเป็นจีนในสยาม)," in *Lae Lod Lai Mangkon : A Collection of Essays on Being Chinese in Siam* (แลลลอคลายมังกร: รวมข้อเขียนว่าด้วยความเป็นจีนในสยาม) (Bangkok: Kobfai's Publishing Work, 1994), 52-56.

<sup>76</sup> Kasian Techapira, *Imagined Uncommunity : Middle Class Sino-Chinese and Thai Official Nationalism* (จินตนาการชาติที่ไม่เป็นชุมชน: คนชั้นกลางลูกจีนกับชาตินิยมโดยรัฐของไทย) (Bangkok: Press training and development institute (Idea Square), 1994).

<sup>77</sup> Nithi Eiaosriwong, "Introduction," in *Lae Lod Lai Mangkon : A Collection of Essays on Being Chinese in Siam* (แลลลอคลายมังกร: รวมข้อเขียนว่าด้วยความเป็นจีนในสยาม) (Bangkok: Kobfai's Publishing Work, 1994).

<sup>78</sup> Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand*.



The personal and collective memories are expressed in the form of Chinese social institutions of family, kinship organisation, social network, and traditional festivities. The meaning of Chineseness for different generations of overseas Chinese varies according to different periods of migration process that affected the memories of the overseas Chinese. Nostalgic memories are the major influence to maintain the meaning of Chineseness.

In the next chapter, some examples of distinct Chinese settlements in Thailand will be elaborated to explain about the form, character, and cultural influence on the Chinese settlement in Thailand.

## Chapter 5 Chinese Settlements in Thailand

As outlined in Chapter 4 “Chineseness” in Thailand has developed its unique characteristics through political, economic, environment, and cultural influences of Thai society. Further, the characters of Chinese community here are not similar to those in other countries or in China. Since the Chinese settlement in Thailand is the centre of Chinese life, it is “a concentration of retail and wholesale business houses, shops, banks, markets, and factories”<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it does not necessarily always portrays urban lifestyles like those Chinatowns in other big cities of London, San Francisco, New York or Sydney, but it can also be a small economic centre of the community, as can be found in several provinces of Thailand. Different Chinese settlements in Thailand may have different architectural forms, but they all share similar characteristics representing Siamese Chineseness. This chapter will elaborate the relationship between the form of Chinese settlement, its characters and the cultural ideologies that influenced the tangible and intangible aspect of the Chinese settlement, through different samples of Chinese settlement in Thailand.

The Chinese migrated to Siam in different periods. Some of them decided to settle in Bangkok, while some travelled further towards different parts of the country. Some of them travelled directly to that area and formed a settlement around the same time as the major settlement in Bangkok. Bangkok is major Chinese settlement of the country, however, it does not represent standard settlement pattern to all Chinese settlement in Thailand. Different location, different social background, and different locality influenced different settlement forms. Nevertheless, and significantly, all of them share similar characters and can illustrate the relationship between the place and its people.

### The Capitals

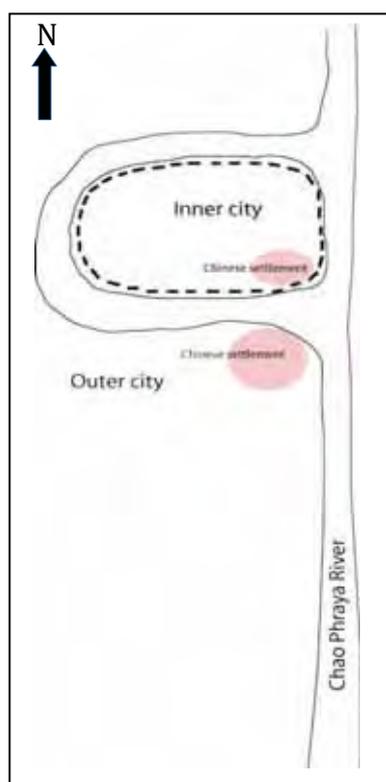
Large number of Chinese were found settled in Ayutthaya since the seventeenth century, their settlements were located at the east of the inner city, as well as outside the city, as can be seen in figure 109. In *the Statement of Khunluang Wat Pradusongtham*,<sup>2</sup> it illustrated the life of people and physical characteristics of Ayutthaya, with the names of different districts and markets where various trades and occupations of the Chinese could be found. The markets and communities that can clearly specify as Chinese settlement inside the city gate are *Talad Khanom Chin*, which appeared in the document referring to the district that housed Chinese sweets and snacks shops, *Talad Yai in Yan Nai Kai area*, which referred to large market where the Chinese set up shops along both sides of the road selling gold and brass

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<sup>1</sup>Richard J. Coughlin, *Double Identity : Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960)., 32.

<sup>2</sup> The Fine Arts Department, *The Statement of Khunluang Wat Pradusongtham* (คำให้การขุนหลวงวัดประดู่ทรงธรรม) (Bangkok: Klangwitthaya Publishing, 1991).

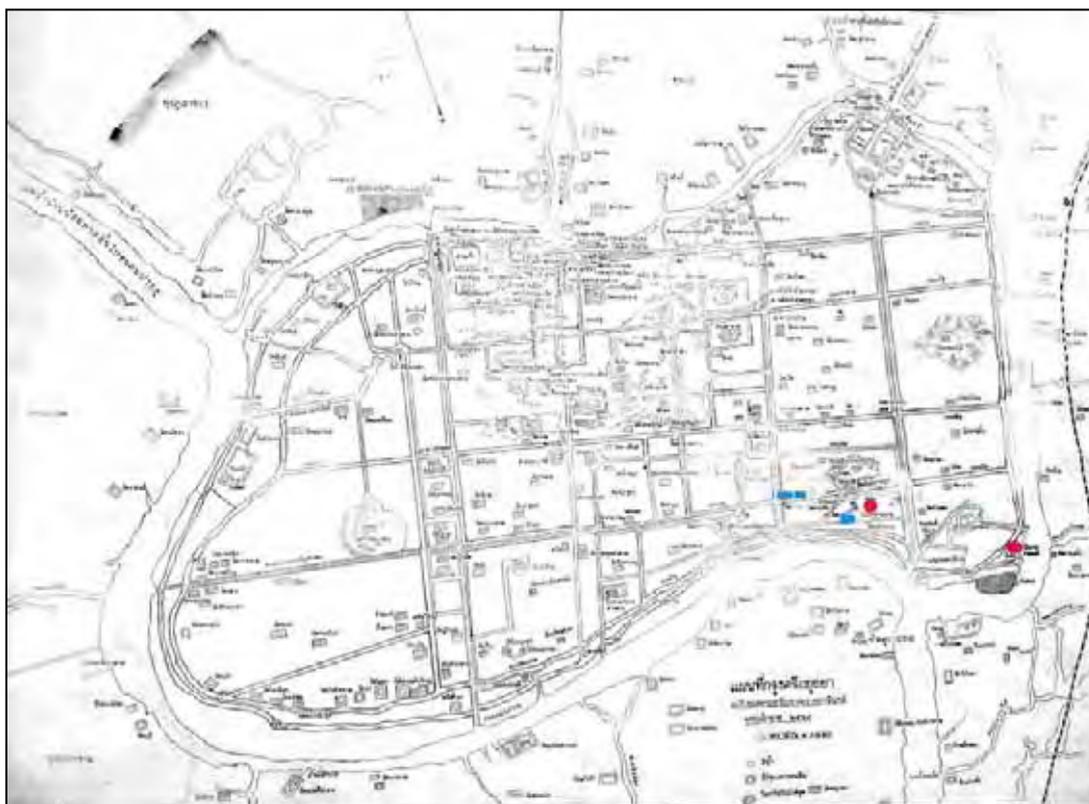
wares, ceramics, Chinese silk, Chinese iron tools, food and fruits from China, as well as other fresh ingredients. Next to *Talad Yai* was *Talad Noi in Yan Sam Ma area*, where the Chinese set up shops making several types of Chinese snacks, furniture, various wooden buckets, iron works, and fresh food and ingredients in the morning and evening. Also, *Talad Yan Triang* was where the Chinese made rattan chairs for sale. The names of markets outside the city gate also included the names, *Talad Ban Chin* at the mouth of Khun Lakhon Chai Canal, which referred to a large market with a lot of Chinese shops selling more Chinese goods than local goods and a Chinese shrine nearby, and *Talad Wat Tharap*, where there were a row of 16 two-storied shop houses that opened for business on the ground floor. Chinese people resided inside the city gate, as well as outside the city gate. In addition, it also described there is a description of the commercial areas along the river bank, including *Ban Khao Luang* where the Chinese opened liquor hall, *Ban Wat Namwon* where the Chinese set up the forge for making steel headed axe, *Ban Pak Khaosan* where the Chinese bred pigs and opened a liquor hall, and *Ban Nai Khlong Suanphlu* where the Chinese bred pigs, set up a liquor hall, and made dried noodles. From old documents and old maps, it shows that the location of Chinese settlements of Ayutthaya were at the southeast of the inner city and the southern riverbank of the outer city<sup>3</sup> as shown in figure 109.



**Figure 109** The location of Chinese settlements in Ayutthaya Kingdom

Source: adapted from the Fine Arts Department, 2002 and Widodo, 2004

<sup>3</sup> "Ancient Markets and Commercial Districts of Ayutthaya (ตลาดและย่านการค้าสมัยโบราณกรุงศรีอยุธยา)," ed. Ayutthaya Historical Park Fine Arts Department (Prachacon Co.,Ltd., 2002).



**Figure 110** Ayutthaya Map of Phraya Boranratchathanin in 1926

Source: Ayutthaya Historical Park, Ayutthaya

Suphang Chantawanit also explained that since a lot of Chinese people lived in Ayutthaya, the local administration had announced the existence of six Chinese settlements in Ayutthaya city.<sup>4</sup> They were:

(1) Four river markets: *Talad Namwon Bangkacha* in front of Phananchong temple, *Talad Pakkhlongkhu Cham Thai Surao Khaek*, *Talad Pakkhongkhu Mairong*, and *Talad Pakkhlong Wat Doem* at the south of *Pun Tao Gong*<sup>5</sup> shrine

(2) Settlement at *Talad Tharap temple*, in front of *Chao Sua Chi*'s residence, in which it was described in the chronicle that this residence was a two storey sixteen-compartment shop house opened as shop at the ground floor and used as residence in the upper floor. There were also blacksmith workshop, shoes making shop, and shop selling tobacco.

(3) *Talad Khanom Chin* area, which was described that there were several Chinese snacks shops.

(4) Settlement at *Nai Kai* district, from *Pratu Naikai* canal passing *Hoi* port to *Pratu Chin* canal, in which this area was a large market with lots of Chinese shop

<sup>4</sup> Suphang Chantawanit and others, eds., *Chaozhou Chinese in Thailand and Their Origins at Chaoshan: The 2nd Period, Shantou Port (1860-1949)* (Bangkok: Asia Study Institute, Chulalongkorn University, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> *Ben Tou Gong* (Mandarin) or *Tudi Gong* (土地公), as already explained in Chapter 3.

houses along both sides of the road. Both Thai and Chinese merchants sold brassware, ceramics wares, silk, and Chinese imported fruits and food. *Talad Mai Thai Phranakhon* was located in this area and it was a large market of Ayuttaya.

(5) Settlement at *Sanamma* area, which was located next to Nai Kai area. It was where the Chinese set up their snacks factories, and made furniture and wooden buckets.

(6) *Talad Pakkhlongkhud Lakhonchai*, which was a big market located near the road and the river. There were Chinese shop houses selling goods from China. A Chinese pavilion and four brothel houses were located behind the market.

It should be noted that the shrine of *Tudi Gong* was also mentioned in these Chinese settlement during Ayutthaya period. It supports the idea that local deity shrine had been the spiritual centre of the Chinese since the beginning. Main road of the Chinese community area of Ayutthaya was called “China Row” by English writers who admired its most beautiful buildings of the city.<sup>6</sup> Since the main transportation of people in Ayutthaya is the river, the settlement form is located by the river, and mainly where there are ports and markets. At present, none of the dwellings are left because all of them were built in wood. The Ayutthaya Historical Park under the Fine Arts Department had conducted a survey to compare these ancient districts to the current location.<sup>7</sup> Some of the old Chinese settlement area can be identified. *Yan Nai Kai* area is the location at the foot of Pratu Chin Bridge at *Pratu Chin* and *Pratu Khaopluek* canal. *Yan Sam Ma* is currently the area behind Suwandaram temple, and currently a residential area. The map of *Phraya Boranratchathanin* in 1926, as shown in figure 110, indicated the name of *Wat Thachin*, *Wat Khanomchin*, and *Wat Samchin* in blue colour, and two Chinese temples in red colour. They were located at the eastern bank of the inner city of Ayutthaya. This is consistent with the name mentioned in the old chronicle of Ayutthaya period as mentioned above and shows that the settlement of Chinese people must have been locating at the same side of Ayutthaya town until early twentieth century.

Ayutthaya was the capital city and economic centre of the country during that era with port linking river transportation to all parts of the country and foreign lands. Bangkok in Rattanakosin period also reflected similar characteristic of being the centre of all business activities and hub of river transportation to other countries and other parts of Thailand. The major Chinese settlement in Bangkok was originally located at Thatian area, where the Grand Palace is at present, during mid-eighteenth century. However, when the Grand Palace was built at the beginning of Rattanakosin Period with Bangkok as the capital city, Chinese settlement was relocated to Sampeng district just outside the city as outlined in the previous chapter. Since the settlement had direct access to the river, all trade activities were conducted and started at Sampeng. It can be said that between 1782 and 1874, Sampeng was the centre of junk trade of the country. Junk trade became most prosperous in the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) until the end of nineteenth century. Thousands vessels of all shapes, sizes, and types occupied the river of Bangkok, as it was the only traffic of the city.

<sup>6</sup> William G. Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (สังคมจีนในประเทศไทย: ประวัติศาสตร์เชิงวิเคราะห์), trans. Phanni Chatphonrak and others (Bangkok: 2005).

<sup>7</sup> "Ancient Markets and Commercial Districts of Ayutthaya (ตลาดและย่านการค้าสมัยโบราณกรุงศรีอยุธยา)", 29-33.

The river transportation regulation indicated that the junks could moor along Chaophraya River from the mouth of Bangkrabue Canal to the mouth of Banglumphu Canal. Small boats would then transport the goods from these junks to be stored in warehouses at each port. Large sized goods or raw materials were stored at the warehouse at Songwad port, and later expanded to *Huaijunlong* steamer port on the other side of Chaophraya River (opposite Sampeng port). Small consumer's goods would be transferred to the store at *Gongsilong* port<sup>8</sup> (Ratchawong port). Ratchawong port became very active and lively, similar to *Huaijunlong* port on Thonburi district. Towards the end of nineteenth century, more ports were built along Chaophraya River to support the river traffic, such as *Hua Siem* port at Ban Thawai (Yannawa district at present). As a result, there were also other small settlements formed up outside Sampeng. However, Sampeng was still the major Chinese settlement of Bangkok. Rows of wooden floating houses were located along the riverfront. As can be seen in the illustration of a foreign visitor, rows of wooden floating houses lie side by side along Bangkok's riverfront (figure 111).<sup>9</sup> It was also confirmed by Smyth:

A little higher up begin the floating houses: here a colony of Malays, with their graceful little fishing canoes lying in front; there, a row of Chinese-owned shops, displaying their goods to the passingboat-people. And many tongues are heard and many colours seen among the floating Asiatic population of the upperrivers. The coolies, boat-builders, carpenters, and sawyers are all Chinese, and Chinamen from the majority of the market-gardeners, smiths, and tradesmen...<sup>10</sup>

Sampeng lane runs through the middle of the community parallel to the Chaophraya River. There were several small alleys on the right side of the lane linked to the river. Along those small alleys were rows of wooden houses built in groups and leaving space for port access only. On the left side of Sampeng lane were also wooden houses built along the alleys but not as crowded. The settlement at the riverfront expanded inland and connected with the settlement along Sampeng lane, and eventually made it a large Chinese settlement of the city. Since waterway was major path of transportation for the people in Bangkok at that time, the riverfront settlement also extended towards the inner waterway, especially Ong-ang canal, which was a border-canal of the inner city, and later to Phadungkrungkasem canal. Instead of floating house, the Chinese lived in row houses that were located along the waterway. They imitated the original settlement at *Zhanglin* village in *Tenghai*, China.<sup>11</sup> The front of the houses faced to the road for business purpose, while the back faced to the waterway in order to deliver goods from the boat to be kept at the upper storey of the house. After the road structure around Sampeng was developed, the

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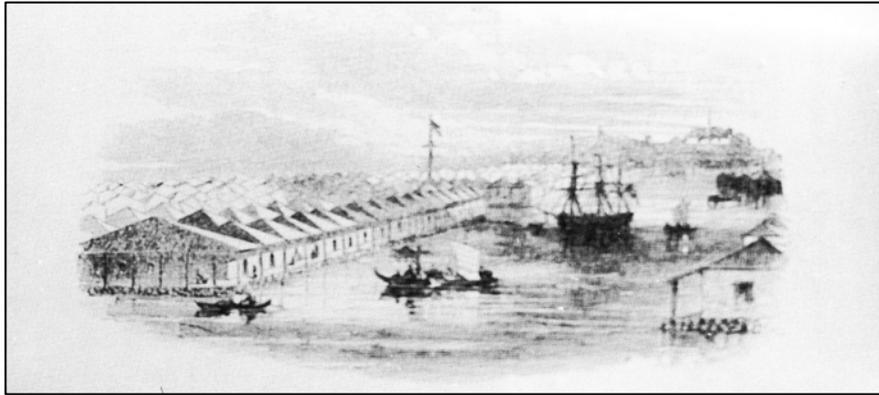
<sup>8</sup> The word *Gonsilong* (Teochiu) originally means the company's halls for storing goods (warehouse) that were located at Songwad-Ratchawong ports. Since at that time, there was no attached toilet in ordinary people's house, the service company of collecting waste bucket was found and located at Ratchawong port. As a result, the word *Gongsilong* had shifted the meaning to 'toilet' and was used to refer to Ratchawong port.

<sup>9</sup> Phimpraphai Phisanbut, *Nai Mae, Good Stories of Siamese Women* (นายแม่ เรื่องดีๆของนารีสยาม) (Bangkok: Nanmee, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> H. Warrington Smyth, *Five Years in Siam*, vol. 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1898).

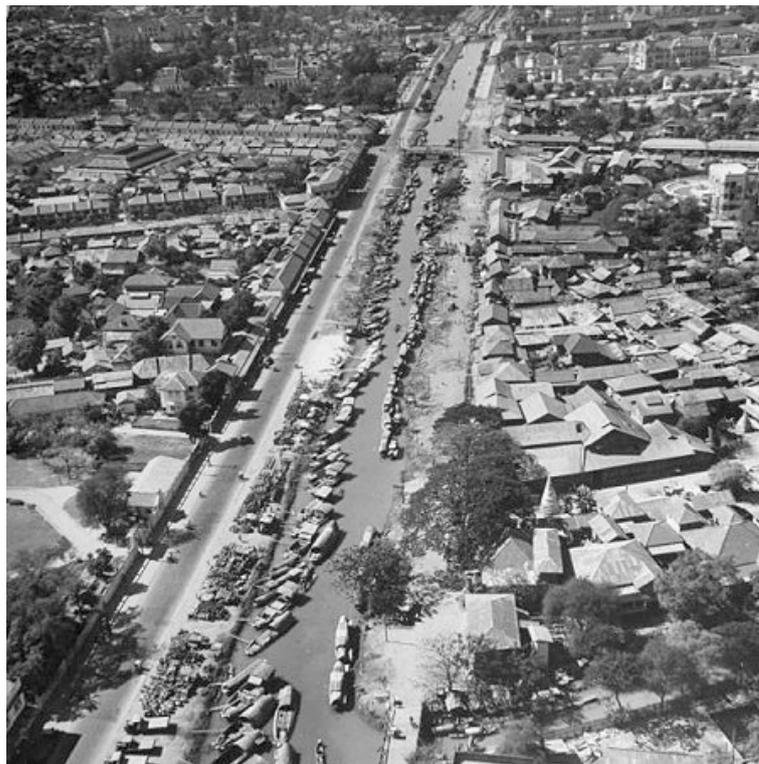
<sup>11</sup> Suphang Chanthawanit and others, eds., *Chaozhou Chinese in Thailand and Their Origins at Chaoshan: The 1st Period, Zhanglin Port (1767-1850)* (Bangkok: Asia Study Institute, Chulalongkorn University, 1991).

Chinese residents moved from the riverfront to live in shophouses along those new roads. It can be said that the area of Sampeng was developed from a small site by Chaophraya River to a large square area.



**Figure 111** The floating city – Bangkok

Source: *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D.1932*



**Figure 112** Lines of boats filled the whole path of Phadungkrungkasem Canal around Nangloeng market, which can be spotted at the top left corner. It shows the important of waterway as major path of transportation (in 1946).

Source: Hunt, *Bangkok 1946-1996*



**Figure 113** Ariel photo showing row of wooden houses with shared corridor that provides direct access to the canal front for transferring goods to and from the boats. This canal was Mahanak canal that continued from Ropkrung canal and stretched out of Bangkok towards Chachoengsao province.

Source: Hunt, *Bangkok 1946-1996*



**Figure 114** Shophouse replaced wooden row houses but still have similar access to the canal for trade purpose (1956, Bangkok).

Source: Terry Mc T (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/terrymct/>)

By the end of nineteenth century after Charoenkrung Road was cut, Chinese settlement at Sampeng expanded towards Charoenkrung Road at the north, Ong-ang Canal at the West, Phadungkrungkasem Canal at the East. The western border was marked by Saphan Han gate (Han bridge's gate)<sup>12</sup>, which was located at the other side of Ong-ang canal. It was connected to Sampeng via Saphan Han Bridge,<sup>13</sup> which was by that time a roofed bridge that composed of several shops locating on left and right side. *Kanchanakhaphan* noted in his childhood memoir that it looked like “a well-built bridge in China.”<sup>14</sup> Imported fruits from China could be found in shops at the foot of this bridge. Crossing this bridge lead to Sampeng district, where Chinese silk and fabric, teashop, and various types of shops could be found along both sides of the lane. Since Sampeng was the major Chinese settlement and the prior destination of the Chinese immigrants in Siam, the settlement at Sampeng became more and more crowded. In the early days of Sampeng, most of the houses were wooden houses with thatched roof. The lane was narrow but was packed with Chinese men. Even though Sampeng was the centre of the country's trade activity, it was still given an unpleasant image through the eyes of visitors. Sampeng was known as a filthy, wet, and dirty district with very poor hygiene. It was full of waste and decease as no one could imagine.<sup>15</sup> This is not different from what Smyth recorded in that

“My business, however, soon took me to the other Bangkok that are yet to mention. A long drive along an unutterably filthy road, where thrive the most unsurpassed of smells, to which dead dogs, diseased Chinamen, or festering drains all give their contribution; where Chinese cook stalls, and rickety gharries; where those receivers of stolen goods called pawn-shop offer valuable watches, curios, or pistols for a song; and where such gentlemen as HANG ON, dentist, and SAW LONG, carpenter, display their boards. This is Chinese Bangkok, malodorous and ill-mannered...”<sup>16</sup>

Due to the poor hygiene of Sampeng, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) decided to develop Sampeng district by cutting the new main road – Yaowarat Road, and other five roads linking Sampeng to the city wall. They are Ratchawong Road, Anuwong Road, Chakkrawat Road, Worachak Road, and Yotha Road. Map of Bangkok in 1897 (figure 115) shows the location of Chinese settlement in Bangkok that is located by the river and Sampeng lane was the centre of the settlement. Charoenkrung Road was already finished and made it run parallel with Sampeng lane. At that time, Yaowarat Road was still under construction, as it took ten years to complete. At that time, Ratchawong Road was already complete.

<sup>12</sup> This gate was demolished since early twentieth century.

<sup>13</sup> Saphan Han was named after its original form that was a wooden bridge that could be turned aside for letting the boat passed by. Then, it was rebuilt as a roofed bridge with shops locating alongside, which was again removed and replaced by a simple concrete one.

<sup>14</sup> Kanchanakhaphan, *Khokhid...Khokhian* (คอกคืด ขอกเขียน) (Bangkok: Vichitmattra Foundation, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Charles Buls, *Siamese Sketches*, trans. Walter E.J. Tips (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994)..

<sup>16</sup> Smyth, *Five Years in Siam.*, 136-139.



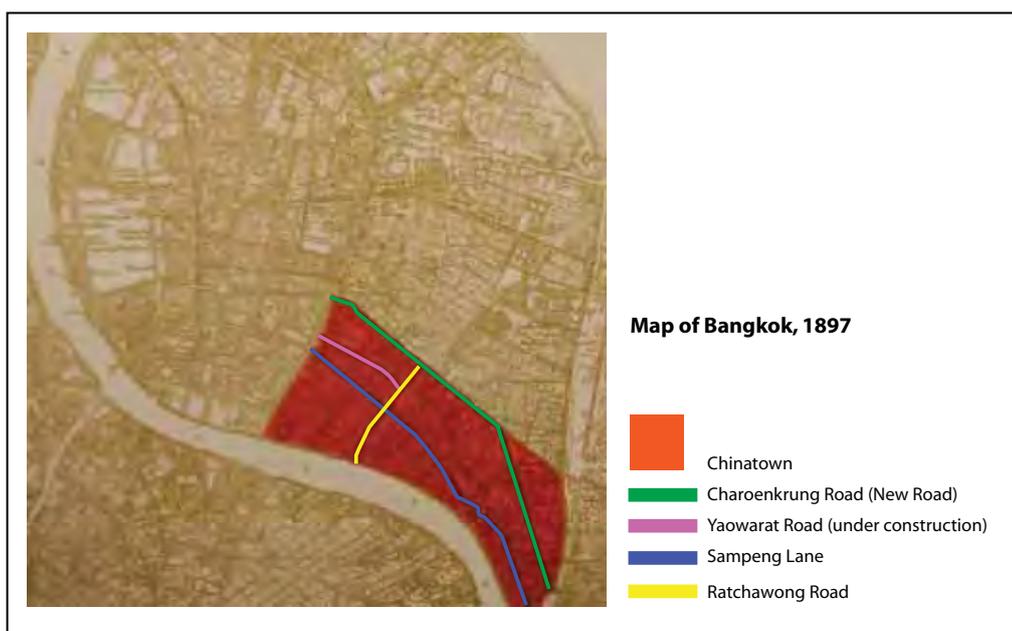
**Figure 115** Saphan Han Gate marking the border between the west of Sampeng and the city wall

Source: *Bangkok: the Historical Background* (กรุงเทพฯ มาจากไหน)



**Figure 116** Saphan Han (Han Bridge) crossing Ong-ang Canal, in early twentieth century and at present

Source: Beek, *Bangkok then and now*



**Figure 117** Map of Bangkok in 1897, showing Sampeng lane as the centre of Chinese settlement with the newly cut Charoenkrung and Ratchawong Road. Yaowarat Road was still under construction.

Source: Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center

Crowded wooden houses enabled several fires in Sampeng. As a result, Plaengnam Road and Phluphlachai Road were cut to open the area of Sampeng to the further north. After big fires in 1906, 1907, and 1908, Sampeng lane was improved and wooden houses were replaced by rows of shophouses. More roads were cut at the South of the area, which were Songwad Road, Songsawad Road, Padsai Road, Pathumkhongkha Road, and Taladnoi Road. Small alleys that linked Sampeng with the riverfront extended towards Yaowarat and Charoenkrung Road in the North.

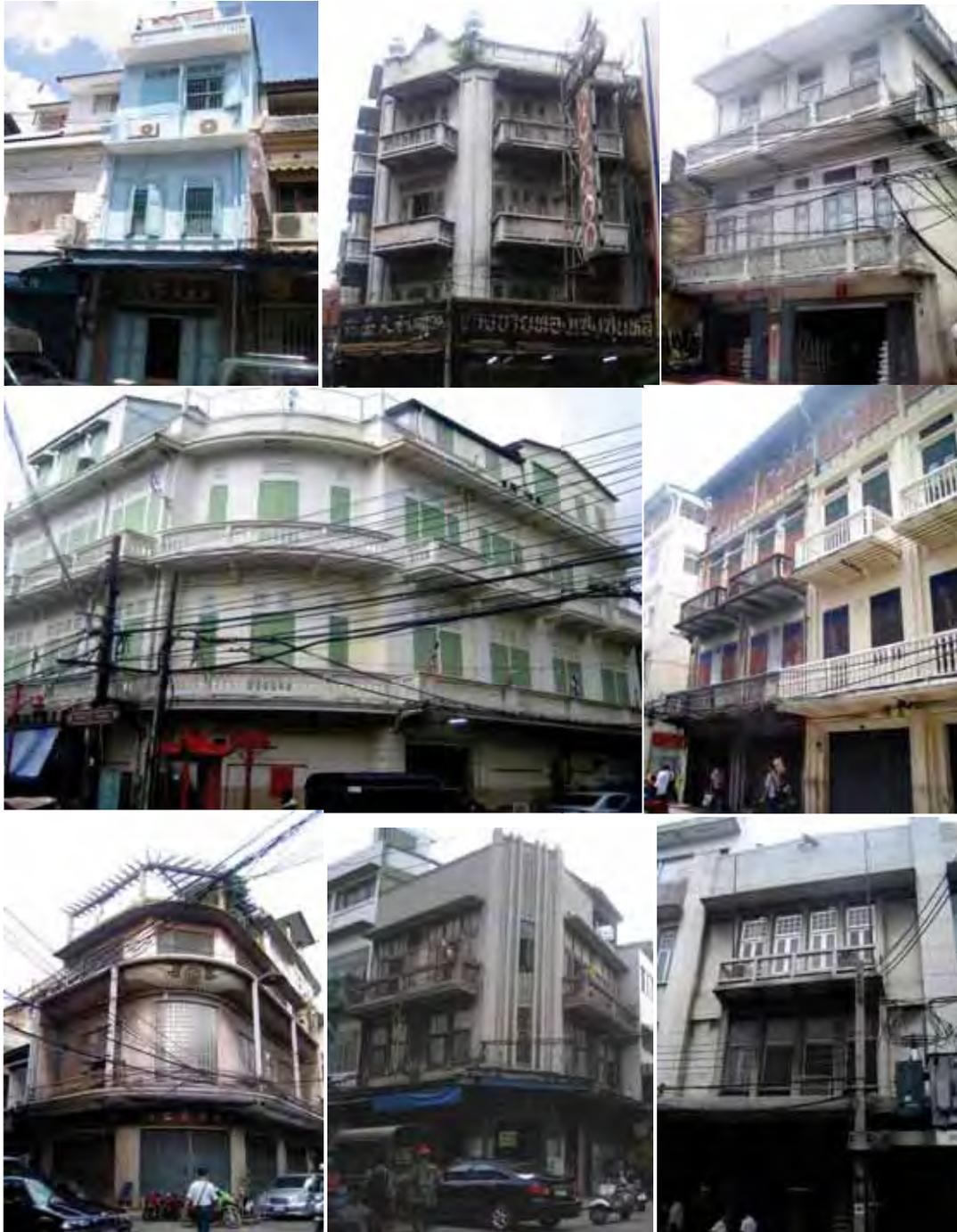
Whenever new roads were cut, shophouses were also constructed for rent alongside for supporting the trade expansion. The Privy Purse would consider type of shophouse that suit each road and take responsibility in building and letting these shophouses. Some royal relatives, who owned the land around Sampeng, also built row houses for rent, such as shophouses of Lueanrit community. In many back alleys of Sampeng, old style of shophouses, essentially small and narrow units, can still be seen. Songwad Road is the location of most elaborate shophouses in Sampeng area that were influenced from the Straits eclectic style. Pilasters, decorative stuccowork, scrollwork on window and ventilation panel, as well as painting were included. Some of the old shophouses in Sampeng were influenced from traditional Chinese style architecture, like those at Chakkrawat pier.

From the settlement along Sampeng lane and those small alleys, Chinese settlement expanded in all direction and towards the new city canal of Phadungkrungkasem canal. In the early twentieth century, Sampeng district was the largest urban settlement in the country and since then, it has become the largest Chinese settlement in Thailand. Two-storey shophouse was developed into three and four-storey shophouses.



**Figure 118** Early sets of shophouses that were built for rent in Sampeng, showing different architectural influences: (above left) Ratchawong Road (above centre) Lueanrit community (above right) Soi Vanit 1 (below left/ centre) Songwad Road (below right) Chakkrawat port.

Source: Author



**Figure 119** Development of shophouses in Sampeng area during first half of twentieth century. The first one on top shows early two-storey and three-storey shophouses on Padsai Road locating side by side.

Source: Author

The scene of Sampeng had been described in a number of old documents, both local literatures and foreign records. It was also described in those records as a place, where street vendors in various types of business, Chinese men in all sorts of occupations, and Chinese goods from China could be seen everywhere. In the journal of John Crawford during his service in Siam in early nineteenth century described that, his excursion in Bangkok along the canal lead him to

“a very extensive bazaar, paved throughout with the brick, and with a row of very good shops on each side, chiefly on the occupation of the Chinese. Among the articles exposed for sale, were large quantities of Chinese crapes, which are much worn by the Siamese women, principally in the form of scarfs. These shops also contained considerable quantities of Indian printed goods and English chintz and broadcloths”.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Fournereau, who visited Siam at the end of nineteenth century, also stated that Chinese goods, as well as Chinese elements of decoration could be found in Sampeng market, as

“Then comes Talat Sampeng where the true Chinese element and the products of his country are met with: teas, long-leaf cabbages, dried and salted turnips, turtle eggs, swallow nests, hams, local cakes, porcelain and papier-mache, toys, paintings, mirrors in mother-of-pearl encrusted frames, ebony chairs with back adorned with gray marble, copper bowls, incense burners and chandeliers. This enormous display, truly curious, serves as the scenery, ..., for a gambling house”.<sup>18</sup>

This shows the character of Sampeng at that time as a real centre of Chinese settlement. Therefore, it was like being in a small town in China, as Ernest Young noticed that

“So many of the native houses with their quaint gables and double or triple roofs have been pulled down, and brick ones of European pattern erected instead, that scarcely and purely native street remains, the one truly native quarter is a long narrow bazaar known as Sampeng. It is about a mile and a quarter in length, and contains a very mixed population of Indians, Siamese, and Chinese. **It resembles somewhat a street in Canton**<sup>19</sup>, **but lacks the wealth of elaborately carved and gilded sign-boards**, that gives such a decidedly local atmosphere to a purely Chinese street... This long narrow bazaar, however, is not without its own attractions. Here are gathered together specimens of all the native produce, and here too work a few exponents of each of the native crafts”.<sup>20</sup>

Similar to *Kanchanakhaphan*, who described Sampeng district in those days that it was like being in China because there were Chinese people, Chinese food, and

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<sup>17</sup> John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*, trans. Walter E.J. Tips (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> *Canton* is known as Guangdong.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest Young, "Kingdom of the Yellow Robe," in *Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D.1932* (Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister, 1982).

Chinese goods everywhere, and Chinese language was used all around.<sup>21</sup> He also noted that no Thai people could be seen in Sampeng at all.<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 120** Sampeng lane or Chinese bazaar as mentioned in the foreign records. The right figure is beginning of Sampeng lane around Indian district (Phahurat at present)

Source: (left) Bulkley, *Siam Was Our Home* (สยามคือบ้านของเรา)/ (right) Beek, *Bangkok Now and Then*

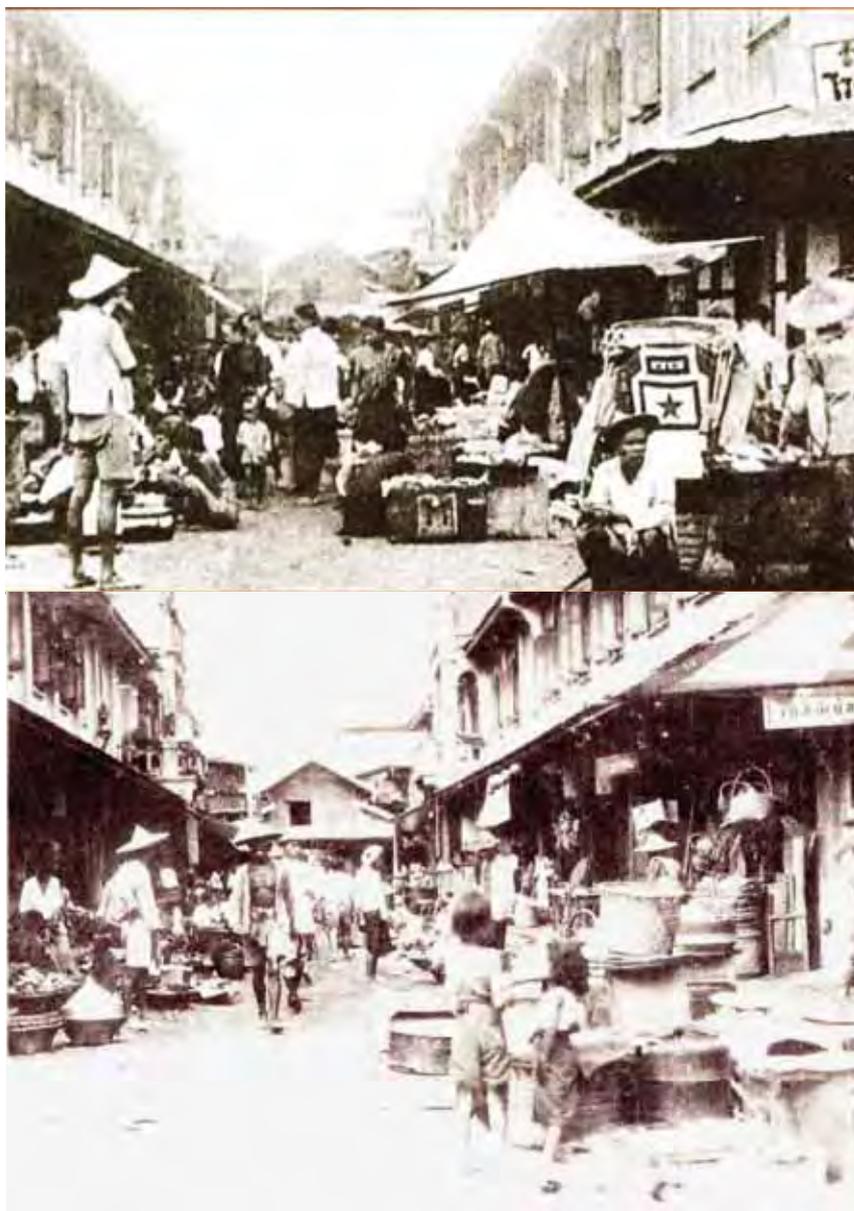


**Figure 121** Chinese shop selling earthenware and ceramics from China. Sign of shop name in Chinese language can be noticed as well.

Source: Geoffrey Hack (www.tibetanpost.com)

<sup>21</sup> Kanchanakhaphan, *Yesterday of Bangkok* (กรุงเทพฯ เมื่อวานนี้), 100 Years of Khun Vijitmattra (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2002).

<sup>22</sup> ———, *Khokhid...Khokhian* (คอกิด ขอกเขียน), 97.



**Figure 122** Typical scene of Sampeng settlement during early twentieth century

Source: (above) *Bangkok: the Historical Background* (กรุงเทพฯ มาจากไหน) / (below) Bulkley, *Siam Was Our Home*

After the construction and expansion of road structures in and around Sampeng, and the completion of Yaowarat Road, the centre of Bangkok's Chinatown had then shifted from Sampeng lane to Yaowarat Road. Bangkok's Chinatown was known as Yaowarat, rather than Sampeng. The construction of Yaowarat Road took ten years to complete because of the difficulties in cutting the road through private property. As a result, Yaowarat Road became a curvy stretch of road as can be seen in the figure below. It was, therefore, compared to the symbolic shape of dragon, according to the Teochiu belief. New and taller buildings were built along Yaowarat Road for specific type of business. Any types of entertainment and venues could also

be found there. Yaowarat Road was then compared to the big, flourishing street of Guangdong or Shanghai, as it was lit with colourful lights around signboards and occupied by all sorts of entertainments in Chinese restaurants and teahouses. Also, during the night, you could find ladies in *Qi Pao* (旗袍) decorated with thick make-up walked along the road.<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 123** Curvy stretch of Yaowarat Road with big buildings along both sides of the road (in 1946).

Source: Hunt, *Bangkok 1946-1996*



**Figure 124** Early days of Yaowarat Road and newly built shophouses for rent along the road.

Source: Beek, *Bangkok Now and Then*

<sup>23</sup> Yuwadee Tonsakunrungrueang, *Walking through the Spring* (รอยวสันต์) (Bangkok: Woman Publisher, 2008).



**Figure 125** New tall buildings were built, as Yaowarat Road became new commercial road of Bangkok, 1950s.

Source: The National Archive

Prostitute halls could be seen in almost every alley of Sampeng. The scene of these halls was recognised by green lanterns that were hung as a symbol of the halls that had already been legally registered. An old man, who lived in Trok Taeng, recalled that there were three opium halls and two prostitute halls of the Guangdong people in this alley.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, this alley was also known as *Huang Liu Koi*, which refers to the place for people who go out for fun. Nowadays, there is no prostitute hall left, as the hall was demolished and replaced by rental shophouse of the Royal Property. Apart from the prostitute halls, opium halls were also commonly found there. It was also common to find the prostitute service, which was known as ‘massage service’. However, when opium hall business was prohibited in 1959, it led to teahouse business that also offers the same type of massage service. In those days, there were a number of teahouses opening in Sampeng area, in which the famous one was besides Mangkonkamalawat temple. Gambling houses were also located around Sampeng. Wherever the gambling house was, other types of business, such as liquor shop, food shop, snacks shop, pawnshop, opium hall and prostitute hall, were found around it. Sampeng was not only well known for these illicit activities, it was also famous for being Chinese opera venue, especially after the China’s cultural revolution that forced Chinese opera troops to migrate into Thailand. By the mid-twentieth century, there were over eighty opera troops for service and five Chinese opera halls in Bangkok’s Chinatown. Finally in 1966, all Chinese opera halls were closed down and renovated into cinema. In addition, leading department stores of Bangkok could be found in here.

<sup>24</sup> Yuwadee Watcharangura, "The Records of Bangkok in 220 Rattanakosin Era (บันทึกบางกอก ร.ศ.220)," *Bangkok BizNews*, 9 September 2002.



**Figure 126** Entertainment venues on Yaowarat Road by 1950s. (above left) The replica of a Chinese opera hall in Sampeng, which later was turned into a cinema showing movies from Hong Kong (above right). There were several cinemas in Yaowarat, such as *Tian Kua Tian* at the corner (below left) and leading department stores (below right), but both of them no longer exist.

Source: (above left) Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center/ (the others) Terry McT (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/terrymct/>)

Sampeng lane had been developed and the name was changed to Soi Vanit 1. From the beginning of Sampeng lane at Saphan Han bridge to the end at Songsawat Road, new and old business can still be seen and same type of business are grouped at the same location. The first part of Soi Vanit 1 that runs from Saphan Han bridge to Chakkrawat Road is still the location of shops selling fabric, imported household decorations, and jewellery. The second part that runs from Chakkrawat Road to Ratchawong Road is the location of traditional medicines shops, wholesales and retails leatherwear and fabric shops. The third part that runs from Ratchawong Road to Issaranuphap alley is wholesales shops for gifts and stationary. The last part of Soi Vanit 1 continues to Songsawat Road and is where wholesale shops sell textiles products and half-industrial products, such as umbrella, hat, handbag, shoes, and robes. The area further from Soi Vanit 1 is the location for wholesale shops selling canvas bags that has been supporting other wholesale business around the port since the old days. At the middle of Sampeng lane is a small crossroad of Issaranuphap alley (Trok Rong Khom) that runs from Songwad Road across Sampeng lane towards Charoenkrung Road. At the middle of the alley located Sampeng's fresh market known as Talad Kao (*Lao Taklak*, in Teochiu). Before the cut of Yaowarat Road, this market connected to the area of *Leng Buai Eia* alley, on the other side of Issaranuphap alley. However, it was then separated once Yaowarat Road was cut. Talad Kao is still

a large fresh market of Sampeng community, while *Leng Buai Eia* alley has become the centre of imported dried food and Chinese food ingredients of the city.

Due to the chained migration pattern, the Chinese either migrated in groups with people from their origins, dialect, and clan village, or followed the migration pattern of the previous immigrants. Upon arrival, they would seek assistance from their fellows of the same localities. This is how *gongsi* pattern became involved. The patron, known as Eldest Brother, would take care of the new comers in exchange of loyalty and labour work. Together with the chained migration pattern, their ideology of “*Gaginang*” or intimate friends, as already mentioned in chapter 3, made it common for the Chinese, who arrived in Bangkok, to settle together with people who shared the same dialect or place of origin. Even in Sampeng district, Teochiu people clustered around the harbours and Sampeng lane, Cantonese people clustered mainly around Charoenkrung Road at three-way junction to Phlapphlachai and Plaengnam, and Hokkien people settled mainly at the edge of Sampeng at Talad Noi district. Since the Chinese immigrants settled in groups according to the speaking dialect, they eventually formed their own districts of settlement. The location of each dialect group also influenced the characteristic of settlement form. Each district represented the expertise of its people. It can be said that the same type of business could be found located in the same district, and generally owned by the same dialect group of the Chinese. The settlement of Cantonese people on Charoenkrung Road, around Guangdong association and Guangxiu hospital, was the centre of Cantonese restaurant community. Rows of narrow and small shophouses, which imitated the architectural style of Chinese house in Guangdong, were home for the Cantonese cooks, waiters, waitress, and maids. At the rear of these shophouses was a small empty space for putting a big water jar. Clothes were hung over a long bamboo stick that was placed above two opposite houses.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, each alley of Sampeng also reflects this characteristic of settlement.

In early twentieth century when Sampeng reached its most flourishing era, different alleys of Sampeng also represented different types of business. It was also referred to in informal names that the local gave to those places. They all refer to the type of business conducted there. The way the Chinese named these places does not only indicate the location in geographical sense, but also illustrates the character of the place in the historical sense. Trok Rong Katha or *Tia Long Thang* (Teochiu) was the alley where the metal pans were made. Trok Vet or Trok A-chom was where people went to defecate into the river because there was hardly any attached toilet in the house at that time. Trok Rong Khien was named after the prostitute hall inside this alley that had painting depicted the story of Three Kingdoms on the building wall to attract Chinese customers. Trok Khao San or *Bi Koi Huay* was where big rice exporters and rice mills companies were located. Trok Tao or *Huang Lou Koi* was where the stoves were produced and sold. Trok Rong Khom or *Kok Teng* was where the Chinese made paper lanterns (*Teng Lang*), for sale. This alley was also described in the memoir of *Sathienkoset* that it was full of Chinese artists sitting at each table creating paper lanterns, Chinese calligraphy, and Chinese paintings. Any kinds of deity pictures and auspicious ornaments could be found here. Illiterate Chinese could

<sup>25</sup> Tonsakunrungrueang, *Walking through the Spring* (รอยาวสันต์).

also hire these artists to write a letter to their relatives in China.<sup>26</sup> There were also Trok Rong Khram where the indigo dyed halls were found, and Trok Rong Kueak, where horseshoes were made. In addition, there were also the alleys that were the location of Chinese shrines and were named after the shrines, such as Trok Sanchao Kao (old shrine alley), Trok Sanchao Mai (new shrine alley), and Trok *Leng Buai Eia* (*Leng Buai Eia* shrine's alley). Names of places like this recall the memories of people who have once lived or been there. Once the name is called, it also enriched the sense of place the people have with that place. Therefore, names of places that were given by the locals and called among the local are the significant means to understand the meaning that people give to the place and feel attached to it, as place also lies in the memories.

Another interesting type of business that is formed neither because of the chained migration nor the result of settlement pattern, but because of the economic growth of the country, is gold shop. The popularity of it came with the prosperity of Chinese merchants in Bangkok. Since alien's status prevented them from buying property, money was invested in buying gold instead. The oldest gold shop that has been operating until now is *Tang To Kang*. *Tang To Kang* was a name of the Teochiu founder who migrated into Siam in the reign of King Rama V. The first shop was located on different location of Sampeng lane and later relocated to the corner of Sampeng lane (Soi Vanit 1) and Issaranuphap alley (Trok Rong Khom), where it is at present. The seven-storey building of *Tang To Kang* was constructed during the reign of King Rama VI, at the beginning of twentieth century. The architecture reflects western influence, but the interior was done by Shanghai craftsmen. Around mid twentieth century at the most thriving era of Yaowarat Road, more gold shops were found, in which the biggest four shops of the era's gold industry were *Seng Heng Lee*, *Hua Seng Heng*, *Tang Jin Heng*, and *Tang To Kang*. It can be said that the flourish of gold shop on Yaowarat Road also set the role model of interior decoration for gold shops elsewhere, which was indigo blue paint with red light decoration. At present, there are more than hundred gold shops located on Yaowarat Road, in which some of the big ones have been closed down and many new shops are also opened. Yaowarat Road with gold shops locating side by side has become the symbol of Bangkok's Chinatown. However, *Tang To Kang* building still stands grandly at the back alley of Yaowarat Road and amidst the busy and crowded Vanit 1, which becomes part of Sampeng cultural landscape.

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<sup>26</sup> Sathienkoset, *Recall of the Past* (พื้นความหลัง), 4th ed., vol. 1 (Bangkok: Siam Press, 2004).



**Figure 127** *Tang To Kang* gold shop and museum inside its heritage building at a corner of Soi Vanit 1 (Sampeng lane) and Issaranuphap alley and the building of Bangkok Bank at the other corner stand grandly amidst the busy Sampeng market, which is the centre of wholesales and retails trade nowadays.

Source: Author



**Figure 128** *Seng Heng Lee* brand of gold shop that was once one of the biggest gold shops in Yaowarat left only its elegant buildings as a reminder of its prosperous past.

Source: Author



**Figure 129** Yaowarat Road lid with various signboards of gold shops. It is the centre of Bangkok's Chinatown and the centre of gold trade.

Source: Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center

The settlement pattern of the Chinese immigrants in Bangkok had been strongly associated with dialect background and chained migration like this at least until 1960s when the country's economic and social development project was launched.<sup>27</sup> Many settlements are no longer a representation of a single dialect community even though similar types of business may be found. Same type of business can still be seen located within the same district because most of them have been carried forward from generation to generation. For example, the business of rice and agricultural products are still found along Songwad Road, as well as the old warehouse that was used for storing goods; *Leng Buai Eia* alley has still been the centre of imported Chinese dried food and groceries; the district between the Sampeng and Talad Noi is still full of shops selling machine, parts, and scraps, although not as many as there were; the end of Sampeng lane (Soi Vanit 1 at present) is still the district of robe and fishing net business; Padsai road is the district of printing houses; and Soi Wiwatwiang at Charoenkrung Road is still the district that one can find shops selling salon equipments. However, the urban development also enabled the expansion of Chinese settlement from Sampeng to other districts. New settlements are also formed. For example, Xienggong area (part of Talad Noi) became too crowded and the property cost of Yaowarat was getting steep, many Cantonese people in machinery and foundry business started to relocate to new location outside Sampeng, mostly at Sathupradit and Thonburi district. Business of used machine parts

<sup>27</sup> Worasak Mahatthanobon, *Being "Hakka"* (คือ "ฮากกา" คือ "จีนแคะ") (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2004).

was also expanded to other districts of Bangkok under the name Xienggong, in which the second biggest one is at Charoenphon Xienggong at the back of Chulalongkorn University. From a single location, several new locations were formed around Bangkok for a certain type of business. It can be said that Chinese community can be found in any commercial districts of Bangkok.

Settlements merged and expanded everywhere in Bangkok. Apart from the settlement pattern like this, another common element of Chinese commercial settlement is the signboard of the shop. It is normally written in Chinese character, with Thai name and sometimes with Romanised name together. The first word is taken from the clansname. The second and third have consonant with Thai name, or have auspicious meaning for the business, such as good trade, money comes, and good luck. The example is the shop called *Lao Chai Lee*, which is owned by a Lao clan family. *Chai Lee* means the trade is prosperous. Thai name of this shop has similar consonant to the Chinese name, which is *Chaiyarnit*. Thai name might indicate the type of business conducted there, such as *Uan Charoen*, refers to the shop selling fishing net, or have consonant to the Chinese name that was given first. This way of naming the business is very common among the Chinese, even in new community. The way of giving Chinese name to the shop reflects the strong identity of the community. It is also the way to identify themselves as having Chinese heritage.



**Figure 130** Business of rice and agricultural products, as well as old warehouse marked the continuing activities on Songwad Road.

Source: Author



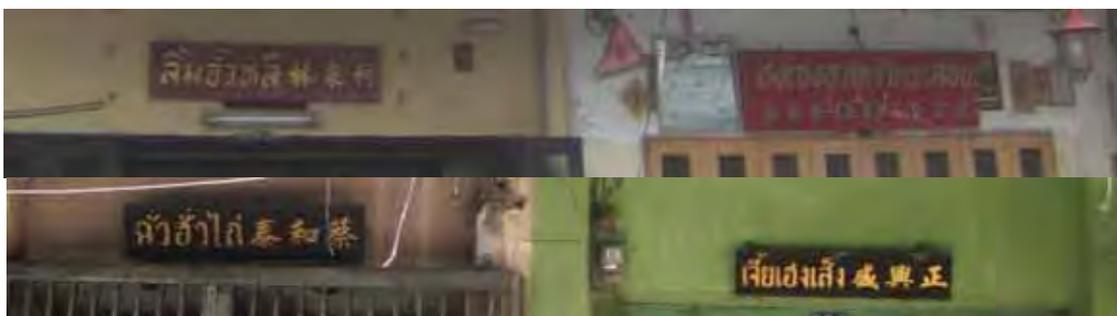
**Figure 131** Padsai Road as the centre of printing houses, both old and new.

Source: Author



**Figure 132** Wiwatwiang district at Charoenkrung Road with various shops of the Hainanese, selling salon equipments, as can be seen on the signboard.

Source: Author



**Figure 133** Signboard in Thai and Chinese name is very common element in the commercial settlement of the Chinese in Bangkok.

Source: Author

As a foreigner in new land, after the settlement was formed, small shrines of the local deity were also built to serve as spiritual refuge for the community. These shrines housed local deity that were commonly worshipped among the Chinese of that certain dialect group, such as *Pun Thao Gong* (*Ben Tou Gong*) shrine for the Teochiu people, and *Tian Hou* (*Ma Zhu*) shrine for the Hokkien. Chinese shrine was also a social venue, where the Chinese in that community gathered. The construction of Mangkonkamalawat Temple (*Leng Nei Yee* Temple) was complete in 1879. It is the first Chinese temple of the country. The ground in front of the temple was where street vendors with various types of goods for sale could be found. Worshipped items, fresh food, vegetables, Chinese snacks, and other commodities were displayed on each stall. Fortune-tellers sat at their tables offering the service to the passer-by, and different types of street performance could be seen here during the temple's festivals. Therefore, the role of Chinese shrine and temples in the Chinese settlement was not limited to the spiritual aspect, as they also reflect the social value.

At present, these religious venues hold the community together via traditional festivals and events. For example, Chinese temple and shrines in Sampeng attract countless number of the Chinese to worship during this important religious festival. It can be said that even those, who live far away from Sampeng, have to come to these venues for once to during the festival. Similarly, Chinese New Year is also another period of the year that these places are crowded. Figure 140 shows the area of Bangkok's Chinatown at present, where Chinese shrines, temples, and vegetarian halls are located in almost every road and alley. The map also indicates the location of markets, hospitals, Chinese schools, and association. Once the Chinese community became stronger, they cooperated in conducting some kinds of social welfare. The merchants of Sampeng cooperated in forming Chinese schools and hospitals to serve the local Chinese, as well as the Chinese elsewhere, as can be seen in Tian Fa hospital on Charoenkrung Road that was formed in 1903 by a group of Chinese merchants. The purpose of this hospital is to take care and medicate poor and unfortunate overseas Chinese without bias on the dialect differences. It reflects the idea of being in the same Chinese society, regardless of origin background.



**Figure 134** Local Chinese shrines in the middle of community. (left) Guan-yin shrine on Padsai Road/ (right) Guanwu shrine on Issaranuphap alley

Source: Author



**Figure 135** The replica of market at Mangkonkamalawat temple in the old days.

Source: Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Center



**Figure 136** Lao Pun Thao Gong shrine on Songwad Road with Pei Ing Chinese school located behind.

Source: Author



**Figure 137** Mangkonkamalawat temple, as a major venue for the Chinese during Vegetarian festival

Source: Author

Chinese shrine serves as spiritual centre that weaves all Chinese minds together. Another interesting element of Chinese settlement at Sampeng that connects individual experience together is coffee shop. *Eia Sae* coffee shop and *Ek Teng Phu Ki* coffee shop are currently located on Padsai Road.<sup>28</sup> Both of them were relative but opened separate business. *Eia Sae* has been with Sampeng for around eighty years old but was originally situated in different location. Back to forty years ago, *Eia Sae* coffee shop was a meeting place of the Chinese in all occupations, especially in the restaurant service. Those who were looking for cook, waiter, waitress, or Chinese dinner service, could find one there. Also, those who just arrived in Thailand could also find job opportunity here. *Ek Teng Phu Ki* was not different, as it was also the meeting place for amulet experts. It was very common to see the rich restaurant owners sitting at the same table as the poor mechanic and having coffee together in these shops. It can be said that these places were like a coffee klatch of Sampeng. Many aged customers have been regular customers of these shops for more than thirty years. At *Eia Sae* coffee shop, some of the old customers came in the shop because it is part of their daily life, which some of them came in to see the familiar faces. Some

<sup>28</sup> Suphang Chanthawanit, ed., *Sampeng: History of Chinese Settlement in Bangkok* (สำเพ็ง ประวัติศาสตร์ชุมชนชาวจีนในกรุงเทพฯ), 1st ed. (Bangkok: Chinese Study Centre, Institute of Asian Study, Chulanlongkorn University, 2006).

faces are also seen many times a day. Life of the Chinese in Sampeng evolves in these coffee shops. Stories, anecdotes, lives, and experiences of the people have been recalled and told there.

A coffee shop, like *Eia Sae* and *Ek Teng Phu Ki*, has high social value, as it is not only a shop selling coffee and drinks, but it is also a cultural space, where life and memories of the overseas Chinese in Bangkok were recorded and passed on, and where community bonds were strengthened. Apart from coffee shop, market is also another social centre of Chinese community but in larger aspect. Market connects people through their daily activities. It is where people, both local and others, meet and share common ways of living. *Talad Kao* (old market) at the centre of Sampeng has been an important market of the Chinese for over hundred years. In the past, it was a well-known market for any imported dried food from China and salted fish due to its close proximity to the port. It was also the largest slaughterhouse of Bangkok. Main customers were from Chinese restaurants in Bangkok who come to buy fresh and dried ingredients. After Yaowarat Road was cut, it separated the market into two. *Leng Buai Eia* market on opposite side of Yaowarat Road became the place to find all sorts of ingredients and groceries for cooking Chinese cuisine instead. During Chinese New Year and other similar festivity, *Leng Buai Eia* market is crowded with Chinese shoppers, who come to buy ingredients for preparing special meals. It can be noticed that this market does not only serve for the local community, but also the Chinese in other parts of Bangkok. It becomes another significant element of Chinese settlement in Bangkok with high social value.



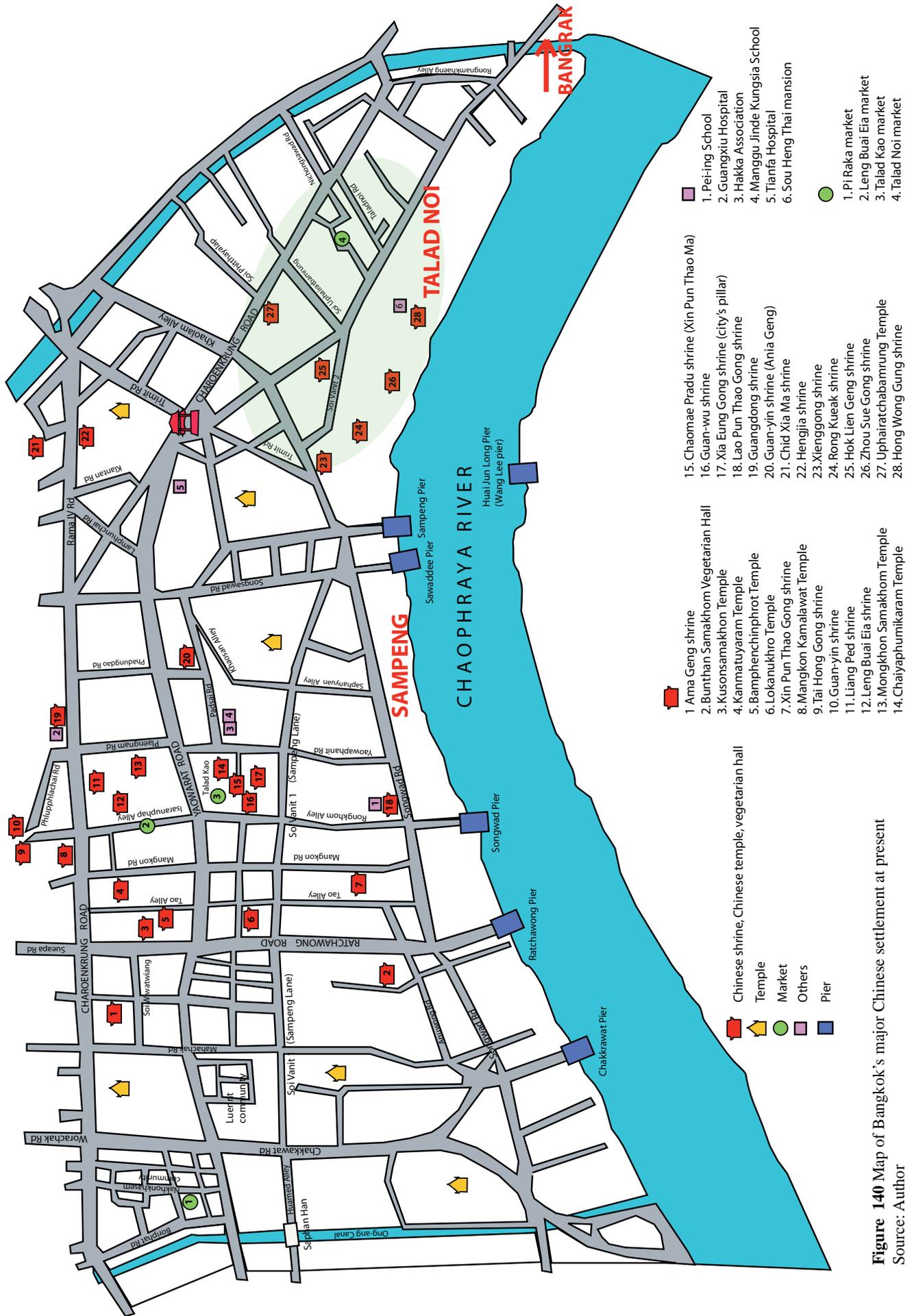
**Figure 138** *Eia Sae* coffee shop, the coffee klatch of Sampeng's Chinese community on Padsai Road.

Source: <http://mali.diaryis.com/> 2009/06/22



**Figure 139** The entrance of Talad Kao on busy Issaranuphap alley (left) and *Leng Buai Eia* market (right)

Source: Author



**Figure 140** Map of Bangkok's major Chinese settlement at present  
Source: Author

Meanwhile, Talad Noi district, where most Hokkien people in Bangkok settled, had also developed the character of being another distinct Chinese settlement in Bangkok together with Sampeng. It was originally a small Hokkien community located by Chaophraya River. Talad Noi was called among the local Chinese as *Taklak Kia* (little market), while the market at Sampeng was known as *Lao Taklak* (old market). Although it was smaller than Sampeng market in size, it was still recognized as another big Chinese market of Bangkok. Talat Noi was described in the memoir of Fournereau as the great market of the Chinese, where all kinds of goods could be found, in that

“... to arrive at the great market of Bangkok, *Talat Noi* which stretches out over a five kilometer route, taking the different names of the quarters it traverses and only stopping at the wall of the Siamese city. This market is so narrow that one can walk between its two rows of stalls on foot only... This market is the greatest of Bangkok. One finds anything one desires here and naturally, by preference, things from English or German origin. Like in France, in the Middle Ages, each type of business has its special quarter here: in the first part, called *Talat Noi*, one finds the carpenters, the coopers, the basket makers, the bottle merchants, haberdashers, a few government operated pawnshops, Chinese restaurants and, finally, small stalls in which low quality silks, cloths with flower patterns used for making sarongs, Indian cloths, cotton threads, hats, etc., are sold. The majority of these stalls belong to Chinese. In the middle of the market there stands a gambling house, run, this too, by Chinese...”<sup>29</sup>

The area of Talad Noi covers the location of Xienggong at the far west of Sampeng lane, where machine shops, used parts, machine parts can be found. The name of Xienggong district derived from the name of Xienggong shrine that was located there. In early Rattanakosin era, it was also known among the westerner as “fonderie Chinoise”, or Chinese foundry.<sup>30</sup> The community dwelled inside two-storey shophouses that lie along the small alley. Some of these shophouses are private property that was built for rent, such as the set of *Phaulim* shophouse. The owner, generally a rich Chinese merchant, would build a set of shophouse along the entrance of his mansion, leaving the entrance at the middle. This form of private owned shophouse for rent is also common. Vanit 2 Road that was cut passed this Hokkien settlement in early twentieth century became major transportation route of the settlement and physically combined this Hokkien settlement together. It also connected Talad Noi district with Sampeng at the east and Bangrak district at the west. Symbolically, the Hokkien believe that Vanit 2 road also represents the living symbol - ‘green dragon’ in the ideology of the Hokkien. This symbolic green dragon can be compared to the Red dragon of the Teochiu in the Sampeng district (Yaowarat Road). It symbolises the idea of being the same family and sharing the same cultural root.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*.

<sup>30</sup> Phisanbut, *Nai Mae, Good Stories of Siamese Women* (นายแม่ เรื่องดีๆของনারีสยาม).

<sup>31</sup> Thitiwat Nongnut, "Semiotics of Place, Case Study: Talad-Noi; the Living Chinese Place in Bangkok (สัญลักษณ์แห่งสถานที่ กรณีศึกษา: ชุมชนชาวจีนย่านตลาดน้อย กรุงเทพมหานคร," ASA April-May (2007).



**Figure 141** Xienggong area of Talad Noi, where used parts, scraps, machinery business are.

Source: Author



**Figure 142** Phaulim group of building with entrance gate to Phaulim mansion at the centre of its shophouses. This is an example of private shophouses that are built in conjunction to the owner's mansion at the back and can be seen in several places of Thailand.

Source: Author

The centre of Talad Noi settlement is *Zhou Sue Gong* shrine, dedicated to *Qing Shui Zhou Si* deity (清水祖師) who has been widely worshipped among the Hokkien people. This shrine had been built in the early Rattanakosin era. *Zhou Sue Gong* shrine still plays a role of being a spiritual centre that ties all Chinese in Talad Noi district together through regular religious festivities and rituals, especially the biggest Vegetarian festival at this shrine. The history of Talad Noi district developed along the history of *Sou Heng Thai* mansion. The *Sou Heng Thai* belongs to the Sou family, who came from Fujian, China in the Ayutthaya period and relocated to this area in early Rattanakosin era. Sou family was a rich and powerful merchant family in those days. *Sou Heng Thai* mansion was built in traditional *Siheyuan* architecture (四合院) and located by the Chaophraya River. It is assumed that the family owned at

least one-third of the land property of Talad Noi district in the early days, occupied it with row houses for the family members, relatives, and servants to dwell. However, those row houses were demolished and replaced by commercial buildings as can be seen at present. Meanwhile, the community around *Sou Heng Thai* mansion expanded and attracted more Hokkien people to settle together at this district. Despite the change in physical form of the landscape around *Sou Heng Thai*, this mansion is still able to reflect the social history of this Hokkien settlement. As *Zhou Sue Gong* shrine is the community's spiritual centre, *Sou Heng Thai* mansion is also the community's landmark that enhances the sense of attachment that people have with their place. Conversation with a seventy year old man at Zhou Sue Gong shrine shows that Sou Heng Thai mansion is part of his life, as it is always there whenever he walks along that alley and it would be different if it was demolished. At present, the surrounding landscape of *Sou Heng Thai* have been changed and new buildings were built around. *Sou Heng Thai* is opening its compound to the public as a diving school but the building itself still shows its past grandeur. Talad Noi is still a lively and busy commercial community. Same type of business can still be seen inside old style shophouses, which made it one of few Chinese settlements in Bangkok that original forms of dwellings are left to see. This Hokkien community has been living here for generations and is attached to their place by the belief system, as well as the strong cultural ties among its people.



**Figure 143** Zhou Sue Gong shrine, the spiritual centre of Talad Noi community, located by Chaophraya River

Source: Author



**Figure 144** *Sou Heng Thai* mansion at the centre of Talad Noi Hokkien settlement that is opened as a diving school currently but still remains its traditional Chinese architecture well.

Source: Author

Across the Chaophraya River to another side of the city locates one of the major port of Bangkok, known as *Huaijunlong*. *Huaijunlong* was built in late nineteenth century as a boatyard and port of steamers. When rice trade was dominated by Teochiu merchants in early twentieth century, it became a major rice warehouse port of Wang Lee rice mill, and its name was changed to Wang Lee port in 1919, which was associated to the Wanglee port at Yannawa district. *Huaijunlong* is the private property of Wanglee family comprises of the wharf, Wanglee's mansion, and *Huaijunlong* building. The Wanglee's mansion was built in traditional *sanheyuan* style composed of three wings located in symmetrical balance. The two-storey building faces to the riverfront. Courtyard at the centre was paved with Chinese clay tiles. The main gate at the centre was for honoured guests, while two accompanied gates at the sides were the gates for ordinary people, including family members. The mansion was beautifully decorated with traditional Chinese motif, not much different from *Sou Heng Thai* mansion at Talad Noi. At the back of the wharf is *Huaijunlong* building, which was the residence of the Chinese workers of Wanglee rice mill and port.



**Figure 145** *Huaijunlong* port and Wanglee mansion by Chaophraya River nowadays. The warehouse by the river was once the location of Wanglee rice mill. *Huaijunlong* building as worker's residence is located behind the port. Traditional style of Chinese home can be seen in each unit. At the centre locates Tian Hou shrine.

Source: Author

It was built imitating Chinese traditional house, which was in a shape of horseshoe, leaving an open courtyard in the middle similar to the mansion. The left

and right wings of the horseshoe building were divided into several compartments with a door between each room and large gate open to a linking corridor in front of the room. At the centre of the second floor is where Tian Hou goddess is enshrined. Tian Hou shrine is the spiritual centre for the residents of Huaijunlong. However, it is also significant to the Chinese in Khlongsan district. Unlike a private mansion of *Sou Heng Thai* that is one element of the whole settlement, *Huaijunlong* is like a small settlement of its own. Pusadee Thipathat believed that the Chinese dwellings in Siam during early Rattanakosin era can be divided into two types; the mansion of rich merchants, and the shophouse of ordinary Chinese and coolies,<sup>32</sup> as reflected in the architecture of *Sou Heng Thai*, Wanglee mansion, and shophouses in small alley of Talad Noi.

Further south along Chaophraya River are several Chinese communities that settled along Charoenkrung Road. Bangrak district at the far south of Talad Noi has been the settlement of Cantonese and Hainanese community. It was the community of restaurant and food business. The business flourished around mid-twentieth century. All types of western ingredients, dried food, canned food, and proper meal could be found here. Cantonese shops selling dried food, similar to those in *Leng Buai Eia* market in Sampeng, can be seen on Charoenkrung Road, similar to Cantonese restaurants and food vendors. Meanwhile, Hainanese formed a small community at a nearby alley, which is indicated by Hainanese shrine and association. Back in those days, *Chom Sui Hong* was the most famous restaurant offering Chinese and Western cuisine, pastry, bakery, and home-made ice-cream. *Fu Mui Ki* and Silom restaurant offered western style Hainanese food, which the Hainanese specialised. Groceries and coffee shop, like *Tung Hu*, that offered canned food, groceries, imported ingredients, and coffee was very famous here. The business there was adjusted for the western community on Charoenkrung and the customers from international company nearby. These shops reveal a page of Bangkok's modern era.

Nowadays, many old shophouses have been knocked down and replaced by new commercial buildings to serve for larger business. Some old buildings have been redecorated with commercial signs on the façade and hide away the original architecture. These Chinese settlements of Bangkok can represent the character of historic urban area, even though their forms may be altered. These settlements are characterised and shaped by their people. Even though some of these settlements are located in the enclosed setting, such as *Huaijunlong* and Wanglee community and some are extended and spread out without exact border, they all share similar significance as a part of the cultural landscape of Bangkok's Chinese settlement. In many corners of Sampeng district, the contrast picture of old shophouse and new commercial buildings are common. It shows the tangible form of Sampeng district that have been developed through time. Despite the change in tangible form, Sampeng still holds distinct character as the largest Chinese commercial settlement of Bangkok and strong sense of place. The continuity of living and doing business there reveal on the tangible form of buildings and shophouses. *Leng Buai Eia* alley is still a place for

<sup>32</sup> Phutsadee Thipathat, *Houses in Rattanakosin Kingdom I: From the Reign of King Rama I to King Rama III, 1782-1851* (บ้านในกรุงรัตนโกสินทร์ 1: รัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระพุทธยอดฟ้าจุฬาโลกมหาราช ถึงรัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระนั่งเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว พ.ศ.2325-พ.ศ.2394) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2002).

the Chinese to find all ingredients and materials whenever they want to prepare Chinese meals. Sampeng lane or Soi Vanit 1 nowadays is the hub of wholesales and retails business for various kinds of goods, from textile to gifts. Songwad Road that was once the major rice trade centre is currently the hub of agricultural products and old warehouses that were used for storing goods can still be seen along the road. Yaowarat Road is the centre of gold trade and gives picture of Bangkok's Chinatown as the Gold Street. Chinese shrines and temple at Sampeng are still the major Chinese religious venue of the Chinese in Bangkok.

In conclusion, even though the form of Sampeng district may be different, it still has the same characteristic and its sense of place is enriched by the continuity of the community. As *Kanchanakhaphan* believed, Sampeng is still the largest Chinese bazaar and market as we always know but what made Sampeng extended further than its form is the story behind it that has been told through the memories of its people.



**Figure 146** Old businesses that have been with Sampeng since the early days. (left) Shop selling traditional medicine ingredients on Chakkrawat Road, which is traditional Chinese medicine district / (centre) Shop selling noodles pot and oil lamp at Nakhonkhasem community in Sampeng / (left) Shop selling Chinese snacks for auspicious events, such as wedding.

Source: Author



**Figure 147** Present scene of Sampeng tangible form with old shophouses standing in between new commercial buildings, and some shophouses were refurbished and added another floor to.

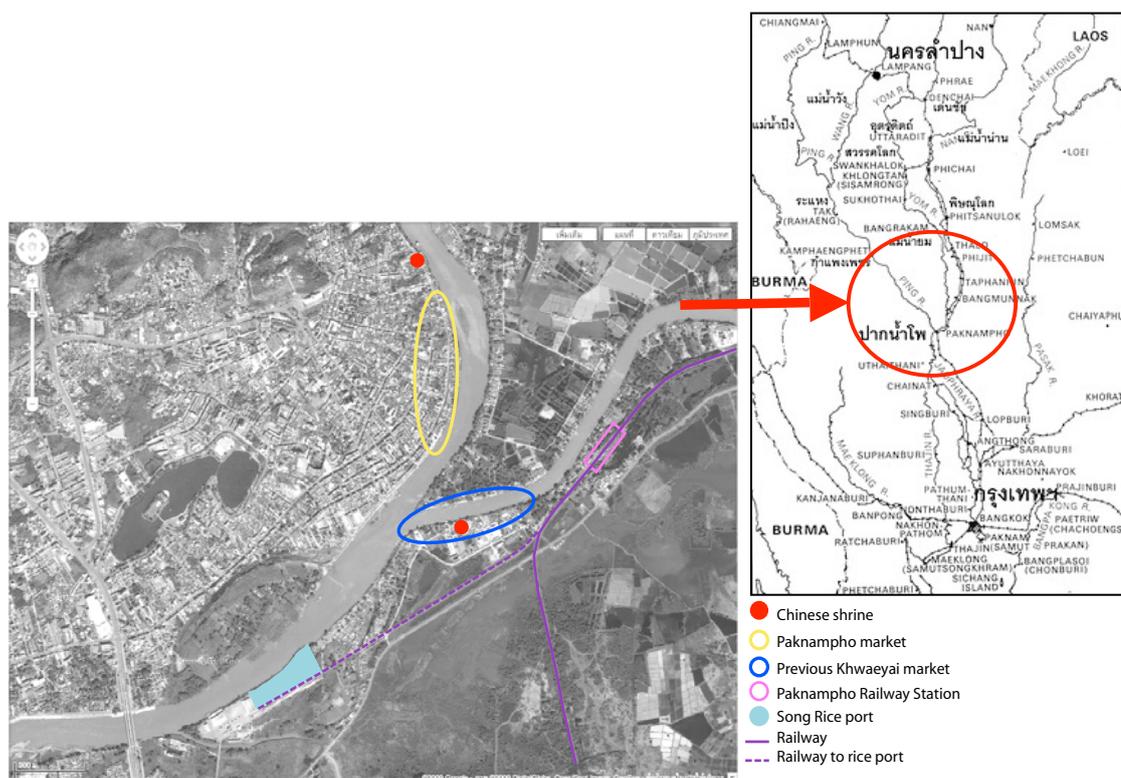
Source: Author

### Trade Junction to Commercial District

In other provincial towns, the Chinese also occupied most of the trade and settled mainly in the commercial quarter of the town. These settlements were developed in two major periods, which are before the construction of the railway, and after the construction of the railway, in which the Chinese travelled by train to different part of the country as railway coolies and for commercial purpose. The Northern settlement relies mainly on the river transportation, as they travelled by boat along Chaophraya River and settle at the trade junctions. Paknampho in Nakhonsawan, where branched river of Chaophraya River join, is the major commercial settlement of the Chinese, who have been there since early nineteenth century. It is the market junction between the lower North, the Northeast, and the upper Central of the country. Boats loaded with goods from Bangkok and the Northern towns moored at Paknampho before distributing other areas of the country.

There were two main docks locating at Paknampho market on the west of Chaophraya River, where Ping and Wang River end, and Kwaeyai district, where

Yom and Nan River end.<sup>33</sup> The port of Paknampho became the biggest rice trade junction of the country during the mid-nineteenth century, as can be seen by the trace of *Song* rice port indicating in the below figure. Rafterhouses at Khwaeyai were then relocated to the Song rice port market. However, the settlement at Paknampho market has continued to develop because it was the market where logs from the North were transferred along the river. Paknampho became busier and bigger when Paknampho railway station opened in 1899, which was the end of the Northern rail line. The line also split to the left towards the rice port. It made Paknampho the real transportation hub serving both river and train transportation. When railway became more developed, the rice port was declined. Rafterhouses that were once located along the rice ports were replaced by shophouses around Paknampho railway station. It was once the most crowded area, where hotel, shops, restaurants, and school were located. Nevertheless, after the Northern rail extended to the further North, it gradually became quiet and finally become only a sub-station along the line. Business at the station were also declined and finally closed down.



**Figure 148** Map showing locations of Paknampho, and the connection of Paknampho market and Khwaeyai settlements to the railway station, rice port, and shrines.

Source: Author (adapted from google map)

Paknampho market on the other side has been continually developed, as it is the major junction of the river trade from Bangkok along Chaophraya River. Since there were several fires at the market community, old wooden houses were replaced

<sup>33</sup> "The Story of Chinese in Paknampho (เล่าขานตำนานคนจีนในปากน้ำโพ)," The Committee of Paknampho Chinese New Year, [http://www.chinesenewyear.in.th/cgi-bin/chinesenewyear/news.pl?id\\_news=0014](http://www.chinesenewyear.in.th/cgi-bin/chinesenewyear/news.pl?id_news=0014).

by big concrete buildings, as can still be seen nowadays. More than 70% of Paknampho residents are Chinese, whose families have been settling at Paknampho for over generation. The oldest Hainanese shrine, dated back to 1870, was located at Kwaeyai area. Another shrine of Teochiu Pun Thao Gong was located at the north of Paknampho market community. Both of them are regarded as the most significant spiritual centre of the Chinese in Paknampho. At present, Paknampho is a busy commercial centre that despite its growth can illustrate its long trade history and its relations with the Chinese settlement. The continuity of trading activity and living ways enhance strong character of the Chinese settlement, despite the growth of the town. It also reflects on the strong traditional practices and events, similar to the Chinese community in Bangkok, which is the Chinese New Year festival. Dragon procession of Paknampho, originated in 1963, reflects strong community bond, and sense of belongings that the Chinese in Paknampho have.

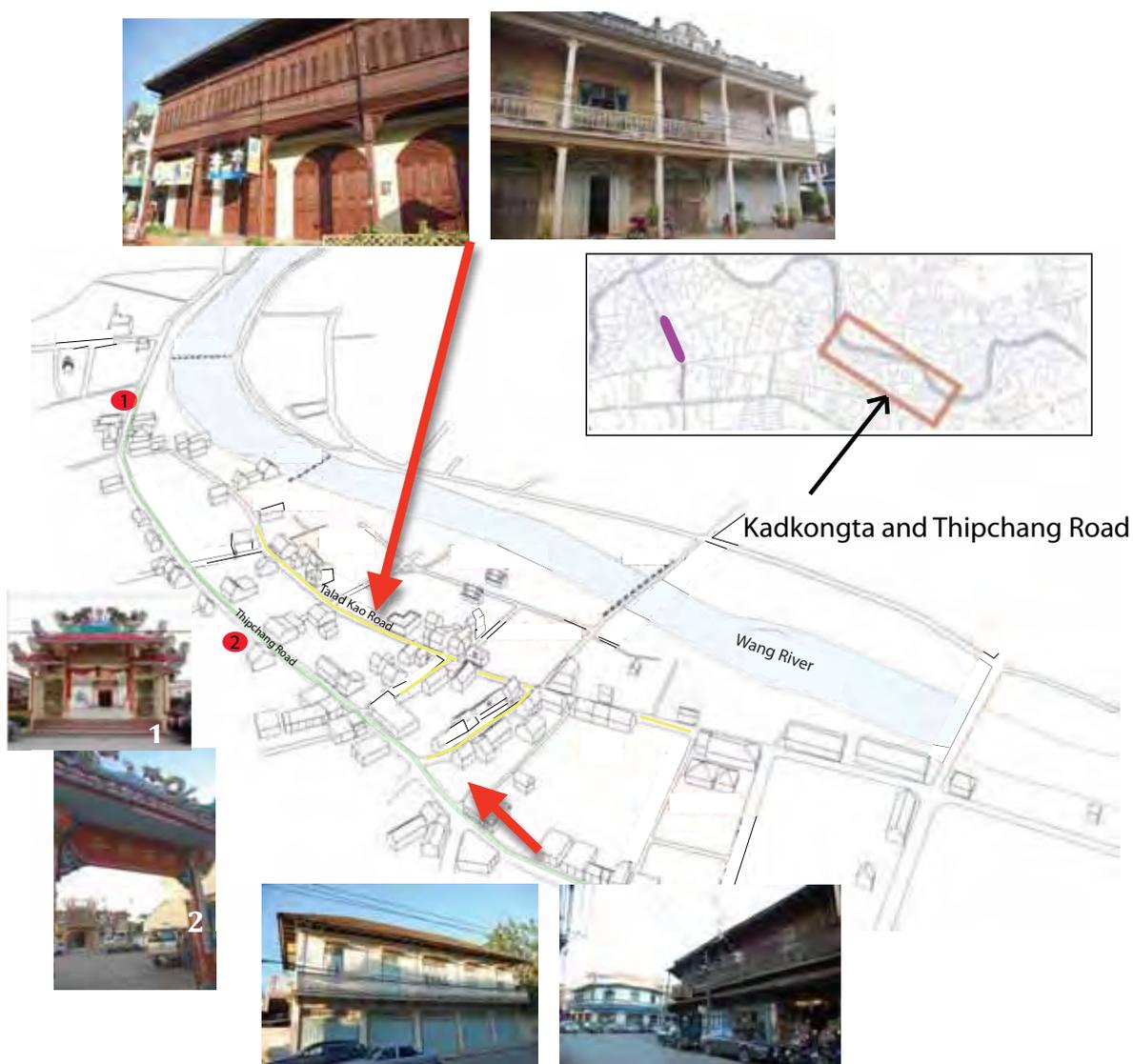


**Figure 149** Paknampho commercial centre at present with lots of signage advertising the coming Chinese New Year festival (above left). The old Teochiu shrine is the learning centre of dragon dance (above right). Old building and dialect association can still be seen (below left/ right).

Source: Author

Other Chinese travelled further north and were involved in the river trade between Paknampho and the Northern port. Two important settlements that share similar settlement pattern are the Chinese Settlement in Chiang Mai town and Lampang town. The Chinese settled in these towns in two major periods as well, which are before the arrival of the Northern railway and after the construction of Northern railway that reached Lampang and Chiangmai in 1916 and 1926 respectively. The Chinese settlement in Lampang was formed as a result of river trade between Paknampho and Lampang, where at that time was the major port of the Northern area. The settlement was located at the side of Wang River and known as *Kad Kong Ta* community, in which *Kad* means market, *Kong Ta* means road by the

pier. This area was selected because it was low land that was convenient to transfer goods between the boats and the warehouse. Alongside of the road are thatched stalls for selling various goods. The history of Kad Kong Ta dated to early nineteenth century. The Chinese merchants came with Hang Maeng Pong boats that loaded with goods from Paknampho and moored here. Most of the cargo boats would travel as far as Lampang and transferred the goods on ox carts to the further North. Between 1887-1897, Kad Kong Ta reached its most flourishing era as reflected in the elaborate architectural style of the buildings that were built for different business along the road, such as big department store, teak company, agricultural stores, and wholesale and retail shops. The Chinese merchants of Kad Kong Ta became prosperous because of the river trade and teak business.



**Figure 150** Map showing the location of Chinese settlement along Talad Kao Road or Kadkongta (yellow colour) and Thipchang Road (green colour), where old buildings are still found. Tian Hou shrine (no.1) and Pun Thao Gong shrines (no.2) are located on Thipchang Road.

Source: Map is adapted from *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Nakhon Lampang* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมนครลำปาง)

However, in 1916 when the Northern rail reached Lampang, land transportation replaced river transportation. Kad Kong Ta gradually became quiet, as the trade centre had shifted to train station area. However, the previous settlement at Kad Kong Ta has started to move to the parallel Thipchang Road because it was closer to Boribun market and Ratchawong market that was built around the same time. Shophouses were also built to serve the commercial activity, but they are not as elaborate as those at Kad Kong Ta due to the economic factor. The settlement on Thipchang Road built two Chinese shrines, which are the Teochiu Pun Thao Gong shrine that was built in 1893 and the Hainanese Tian Hou Goddess shrine that was built in 1945, as indicated with red dots in the map above. After the Northern railway reached Lampang, it brought another group of Chinese with the rail and settled along Prasanmaitri Road in the train station district. Two-storey shophouses were built along Prasanmaitri road at the beginning. In addition, new construction technology was introduced in the building of big concrete shophouses.<sup>34</sup> Most of them reflect the prosperity of the Chinese merchants living in this area in those days. Beautiful decorations and construction of the buildings also reflect traditional Chinese craftsmanship. There is also the Pun Thao Gong shrine located in this area. This area became the hub of distributing goods that came by rail to different areas within Lampang, as well as to other provinces nearby. Cinema, opium hall, and soft-drink factory were once located on this road. Apart from being new commercial district, it also welcomed more activities in this area, such as the opium hall, cinema, and banks. Since two separate communities were expanded at the same time, Bunyawad Road that connects the train station area to Thipchang Road became more important. It was where Tong Kok cinema, Phatthanako cinema, Sua Li hotel, and even the prostitute house were located.



**Figure 151** Settlement of the Chinese on Prasanmaitri Road at Lampang Railway Station. Mark in brown colour are heritage buildings. At the end of the road locates Pun Thao Gong shrine (red colour), and it was once the location of cinema, opium hall, and soft-drink factory (yellow colour)

Source: *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Tub-Tieng* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมทับเที่ยง)

<sup>34</sup> *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Nakhon Lampang* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมนครลำปาง), (Bangkok: Office of National Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 2006).

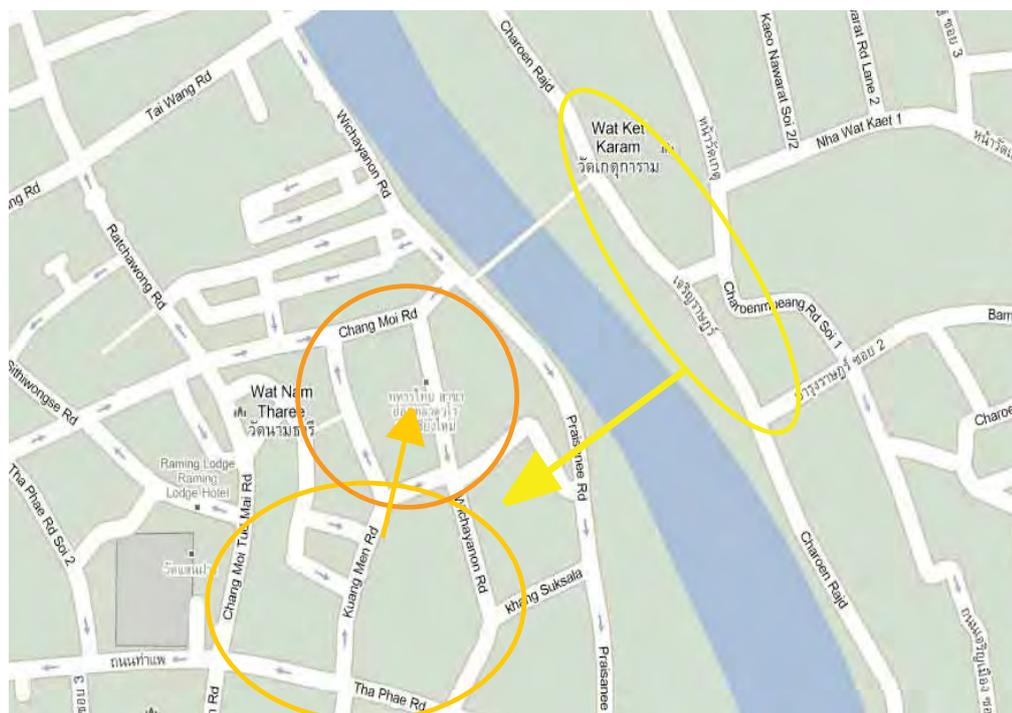


**Figure 152** Prasanmaitri Road, major Chinese settlement of Lampang after Kad Kong Ta. The green shophouse in the below left figure was once the opium hall. The shrine of Pun Thao Gong is found located at the end of the road.

Source: Author

The prosperity of the Chinese merchants in Lampang enabled the formation of educational institutes. In 1923, the Hainanese in Lampang found the Yok Sai School, which was the first Chinese school outside Bangkok. Kong Li Yi Wa school or Prachawit school was found in 1927 by the Teochiu, Hakka, and Cantonese in Lampang. Similar to other big Chinese settlements in Thailand the cooperation of overseas Chinese eventually represented in form of social associations and foundations, there were also several foundations formed in Lampang for social welfare activities. It is interesting that there are three Chinese cemetery grounds in Lampang too. It can be said that Lampang was the second largest trade centre of the North apart from Chiang Mai. The first Chinese settlement in Chiangmai was similarly located by the river. It was found by the side of Ping River around Ketkaram temple and known as *Ban Tha Chang*, however, it was locally called Ketkaram temple community. This community dated back to the second half of eighteenth century. However, it became more active in early nineteenth century, when the river trade between Bangkok and Chiangmai was developed. It attracted merchants from various places, especially the Chinese merchants, and reached its most thriving era in 1921, as can be seen on the name list of donators in the renovation work of Ketkaram temple. It indicated that most of the donators were Chinese merchants, living at this district.<sup>35</sup> The prosperity of the area also reflects on the houses and shophouses with beautiful Chinese motifs and decorations. One of them is *Liao Yong Nguan* store that was once a big wholesale store, selling clothes, threads, and agricultural products. Nowadays, these buildings become restaurants, antique shops, and accommodations.

<sup>35</sup> Anu Noenhat, *The Third* (รุ่น ๓), vol. 3, The Society of Chiangmai (สังคมเมืองเชียงใหม่) (Chiangmai: Nopburi Printing, 2003).



**Figure 153** Map showing the relocation of Chinese settlement from Ketkaram district to Thapphae and Changmoi behind Warorot market.

Source: Author (adapted from maps.google.com)



**Figure 154** (above) Ketkaram district in 1969 with Ketkaram temple at the centre. (below left) Ketkaram district and the temple today. (below right) Old *Liao Yong Nguan* store, with Chinese traditional ornaments on the building façade, is now the Gallery restaurant.

Source: (above) Boonserm Satraphai / (below) Author

During the same period, the Northern railway was finally complete. River trade consequently came to an end, as all trades were switched to the rail transportation. Nevertheless, instead of expanding the settlement towards the train station like other provincial town, Chinese settlement expanded across Ping River to Tha Phae area and around *Kadluang* or Warorot market, and later towards Changmoi Road. Along Tha Phae Road, elaborate single buildings and wooden row houses were built and became homes for different business, such as big department store, photo shop, coffee shop, dispensary, and others, and most of them belong to the Chinese merchants.<sup>36</sup> Figure 156 shows *Liao Yong Nguan* store (far left), which was relocated from Ketkaram district. Three-unit house next to it was *Heng Hua Chiang* bicycle shop, *Lo Kok Eng* photo shop, and *Si Suan* shoes shop, which was later demolished and became Siam Commercial Bank as it is at present. The picture on the right shows same part of Tha Phae Road with Kiti Phanit store located next to the bank. This store was one of the biggest stores of Chiangmai in 1920s and also belongs to a big Chinese family. The shophouses along Changmoi Road near Tonlamyai market were built afterwards. Nowadays, same old business can still be seen in these shophouses. Pun Thao Gong shrine is also located at the middle of the community at the back of Warorot market, which is known as Lao Zhou alley. This shrine is also the venue of a small Chinese music classroom. The crowded of this community lead to several fires, in which the big one was in 1968. Therefore, new type of commercial buildings can be seen together with the old aged buildings. This area is now the major Chinese settlement of Chiangmai where the Chinese still hold on to their commercial activity and traditional practices. Although Ketkaram community can no longer represent the Chinese character, its architectural form can still reflect its illustrated past.



**Figure 155** Tha Phae Road at Uppakhut junction in 1954 with shops of the Chinese located on both sides.

Source: Boonserm Satraphai (<http://library.cmu.ac.th/ntic/picturelanna>)

<sup>36</sup> ———, *Thaphae Tawa* (ท่าแพ ตะเวจ), vol. 14, The Society of Muang Chiangmai (สังคมเมืองเชียงใหม่) (Chiangmai: Nopburi Printing, 2003).



**Figure 156** (left) *Liao Yong Nguan* store and Chinese shops on Tha Phae Road in 1954 and (right) Tha Phae Road at present.

Source: (left) Boonserm Satraphai/ (right) Author



**Figure 157** (left) Pun Thao Gong shrine at Lao Zhou alley survived the big fire in 1968 but the fire burnt down Kad Luang market. (right) Pun Thao Gong shrine at present and new buildings that were built for the market.

Source: (left) Boonserm Satraphai/ (right) Author

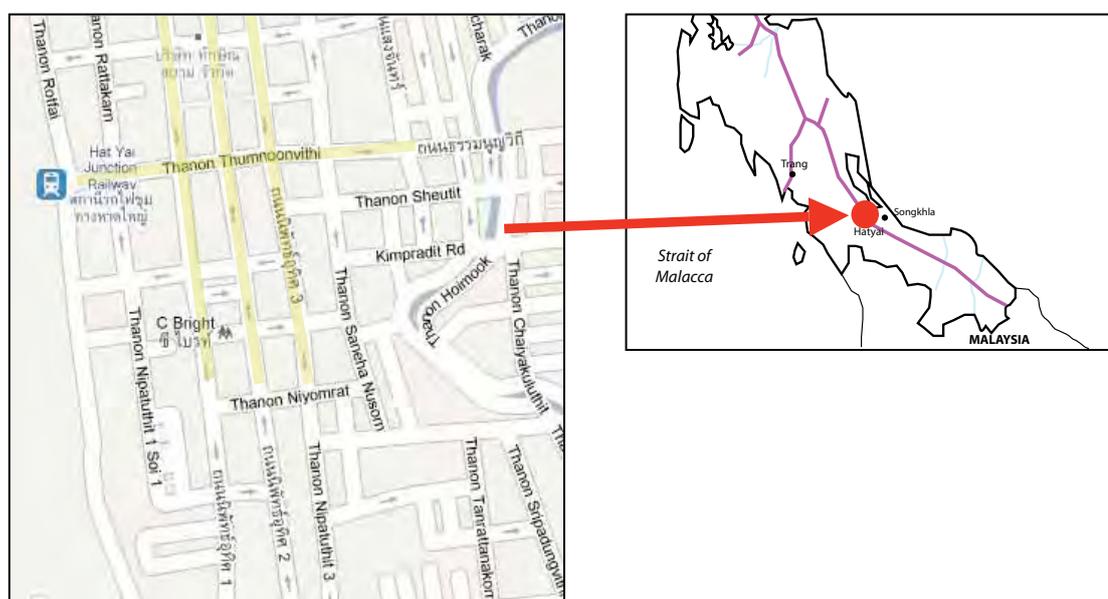


**Figure 158** (left) Ruins of shophouses in Kad Luang area after the fire. (right) Kad Luang area at present with gold shops along the road.

Source: (left) Boonserm Satraphai/ (right) Author

After the construction of railway to all parts of the country, many new settlements were formed. The Northeastern rail line in early twentieth century also brought many Chinese to settle in the Northeast of Thailand, especially at Korat (Nakhonratchasima) and Khonkaen province. Commercial quarter was developed at the area around the train station, and later expanded to other area within the town. Nowadays, Chinese settlement at Korat and Khonkaen still play important role in the economic aspect of these towns. It can be said that the Chinese occupied trade activity of most provincial towns, and settled mostly at the commercial district of that town. Similar examples are also found in the centre of Singburi, Photharam, and Banpong area in the Central part of Thailand.

Hatyai also reflect the influence of railway development and the settlement of the Chinese. The Chinese settlement in Hatyai, which is currently one of the big Chinese settlements in the country, had just been formed largely after the arrival of Southern railway. Hatyai was only a small district of Songkhla province with only few families living there. Southern railway reached Hatyai in 1915 and in 1924, Hatyai became the converging station to Songkhla, Padang Bazar, and Sungaikolok. After that, the population in Hatyai was increased to 654 families, with 2,950 residents, and 10,104 residents by 1945.<sup>37</sup> The number confirmed the fast development of Hatyai after the construction of railway. Not only the Chinese coolies that arrived in Hatyai as the railway builders, they also came for work in the rubber plantation and tin mining. The Chinese had played important role in the fast economic development of Hatyai and made it become the commercial centre of the Southern peninsula.



**Figure 159** Map showing the location of Hatyai city and its grid pattern of early roads that were cut after the Southern railway reached Hatyai.

Source: Author (adapted from map.google.com)

<sup>37</sup> Laksamee Jiranakhon, "Khun Nipat Chinnakhon (Jia Kee See)," in *Encyclopedia of the Southern Culture* (สารานุกรมวัฒนธรรมภาคใต้) (Bangkok: The Encyclopedia of the Southern Culture Foundation 1986).

The town of Hatyai was developed mostly by Jia Kee See, a Cantonese man who was responsible for the construction of Southern railway. After the railway was complete, he bought large pieces of land and developed them into “station district” with the construction of roads and shophouses. The first road was cut behind the station and named after himself as *Jia Kee See* Road. Another three roads were cut across afterwards making grid pattern. They were named Jia Kee See 1, 2, and 3 Road. Five-unit one storey of row houses was also built on Jia Kee See Road. The first and second units were opened as Yian Tai hotel and Lee Kee hotel. The third and the fourth units were his resident and a grocery’s store. The last unit was also a hotel named See Fat. Later, Jia Kee See Road was renamed as Thammanunwithi, and Jia Kee See 1,2,3 were renamed as Niphathutit 1,2, and 3 Road. At the same time, he also invested in the rubber plantation just outside Hatyai, which brought more Chinese labours to settle and work in Hatyai. As a result, the first two-storey wooden row houses of Hatyai were built on the opposite side of the first five units, and opened as his rubber plantation office and a hotel called Wan On For.

Around 1920, more units of row houses were added to the first five units and the land along the other three roads were sold to the Chinese merchants in Malaya, who developed shophouses for rent afterwards. At the same time, other roads and new shophouses were constructed by other Chinese merchants and located around the station area. Chinese shrines, market, and hospital were also built. It can be said that the tangible form of Hatyai during its early days reflect vernacular Chinese architecture and Hatyai itself is a reflection of a small Chinese town, as can be seen in the old photo of Hatyai. Various groups of Chinese formed small and large social associations, such as dialect association and Chinese foundation, and eventually formed Chinese schools and hospitals. These associations and foundations have a role as the social centre of the Chinese that united them together. Hatyai market has developed into the centre of trade connecting to the Northern provinces and the Southern neighbouring countries. The significance of Hatyai can be seen through several cinemas and other types of entertainment venues, such as traditional dance hall, nightclub, and shows. Small wooden buildings of early hotels in Hatyai were developed into large concrete buildings, in which some of them can still be seen. Until 1961, when the first national economic development plan was declared, Hatyai was promoted as the commercial hub of the Southern part of Thailand. As a result, various types of business and entertainments were found to support tourism industry. Hatyai nowadays is still able to represent Chinese character, even though economic development and fast-pace growing environment have changed its tangible form from the past.



**Figure 160** Old photo of Khoksamedchun or Thammanunwithi Road in 1924, taken from the railway station. Chinese signs can be seen in front of the houses.

Source: *The Picture Book of Songkha Maha Vajiravudh* (สมุดภาพสงขลามาหาพระเจ้าวรวงศ์)



**Figure 161** Jia Kee See or Thammanunwithi Road with rows of wooden shophouses alongside, taken in 1931 and 1947 respectively. Shops with Chinese signage can be seen.

Source: *The Picture Book of Songkha Maha Vajiravudh* (สมุดภาพสงขลามาหาพระเจ้าวรวงศ์)



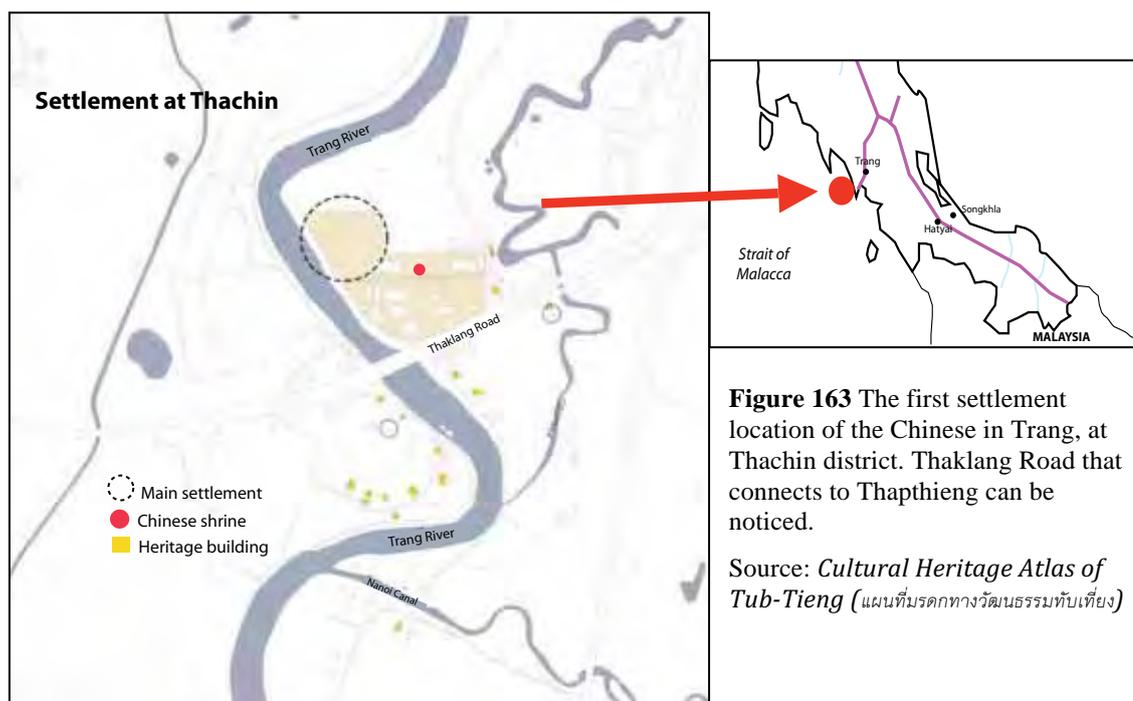
**Figure 162** Thammanunwithi Road looking towards Hatyai Railway Station in 2005. Big commercial buildings can be seen instead.

Source: <http://portal.rotfaithai.com>

Trang province has attracted immigrants who came by boat from the Straits and travelled into the Mouth of Trang River, since the nineteenth century. A large settlement was formed by the side of Trang River, and named *Ban Tha Chin*, meaning the port of the Chinese. The settlement was also marked with the building of Pun Thao Gong shrine that was located by Tha Chin Bridge. Most of the early Chinese settlers in Trang worked in the pepper fields at Thapthieng district, which was connected to Tha Chin area via Thaklang Road. Thaklang Road was the major

transportation route for transporting goods from the port at *Thachin* to Thapthieng district, as well as other towns. Along that road, there were a local Chinese shrine, ice factory, rice mill, and market. In late nineteenth century, pepper fields occupied most areas of Thapthieng and enabled the increase number of expansion of the Chinese to Thapthieng district.<sup>38</sup> Bulkley described the Chinese settlement at Thapthieng during the late nineteenth century that the Chinese have been settling in this area for a long time and have brought prosperity to this land too. They worked on pepper field, coconut plantation, and rubber plantation. They were also good pig breeder that the pork here was honoured as the best in the Far East.<sup>39</sup> This breed of pig was brought with the Chinese immigrants. It was made a famous dish of grilled pork by a Cantonese cook, who moved into Thapthieng district later. Since then, this dish of grilled pork became traditional breakfast of the Chinese and Thai in Trang. As they worked in the farm, their dwelling occupied large piece of land and had a shape like farmhouse with compressed earthen floor.

One part of Bulkley memoir also confirmed that typical Chinese houses are located right on the ground with compressed earthen floor. It can be said that the Chinese dwellings at rural community, where farming dominated, was residential type rather than commercial type. Nevertheless, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) visited Thapthieng district in early twentieth century and noted that there were rows of one-storey shophouses of the Chinese along the road. This refers to the dwellings of Chinese merchants.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 163** The first settlement location of the Chinese in Trang, at Thachin district. Thaklang Road that connects to Thapthieng can be noticed.

Source: *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Tub-Tieng* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมทับเที่ยง)

<sup>38</sup> *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Tub-Tieng* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมทับเที่ยง), (Bangkok: Office of National Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Edna Bruner Bulkley, *Siam Was Our Home* (สยามคือบ้านของเรา), trans. Wattana Withthayalai 100 Alumni, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Wattana 100 Group, 2008).360.

<sup>40</sup> *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Tub-Tieng* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมทับเที่ยง).

In the past, the administrative centre of Trang was relocated to several districts. However, it was finally moved to Thapthieng district in early twentieth century. The name was changed to Bangrak, Thapthieng, and Trang consequently. Meanwhile, the arrival of the Southern railway in 1913 brought with it urban development. Another group of Chinese, who arrived at Bangkok port, travelled with the rail to settle in Trang, where there were high trade opportunities. Therefore, the quarter of Chinese people was moved from Thachin area to Thapthieng station, or Trang city at present. A lot of tea shops, restaurants, cinemas, and hotels were found, which reflected the active economic activity of this area and the way it was once the centre of trade in the past.



**Figure 164** Map showing Thapthieng or Trang city and main settlement of the Chinese along Kantang Road, and Thaklang Road towards Ratchadamnoen Road (yellow lines) with old shophouses and old hotels. Red and blue colour indicates old hotels.

Sour: Map is adapted from *Cultural Heritage Atlas of Tub-Tieng* (แผนที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมทับเที่ยง)

Much of the shophouse architectural styles in Trang were influenced by the Straits architecture of Penang. However, some of them have combined with local architecture and western architecture in different parts. Large three to five storey shophouses can also be seen. The Chinese style shophouses are not limited to only train station district but can be seen around the city of Trang. Since there are a lot of overseas Chinese living here, dialect associations can also be seen. In 1919, Chinese merchants in Thapthieng built the first Chinese language school called “Sanwa Hokkao”. Old Pun Thao Gong shrine that was originally located at Tha Chin settlement was later relocated to Trang town. Other old Chinese shrines were also built as settlement was formed. The continuity of Chinese community in Trang is represented through religious festivity, in which the major and largest one is Vegetarian Festival. Similar to Chinese community in Bangkok, this traditional festival strengthens the sense of place and tightens the bonds between people and their place.

Trang and Hatyai both reflect similar characteristic as a large commercial Chinese settlement in the provincial town of the South. Nevertheless, while Trang’s economic activity was thriving at most during the first half of twentieth century and now is associated mainly within local trade scene, Hatyai’s economic activity has gradually been developed and represented as the commercial centre of the South linking to neighbouring provinces and country. In addition, the Chinese settlement in Trang was formed during the second part of the nineteenth century, but Chinese settlement in Hatyai just formed up along the arrival of Southern railway in early twentieth century.

It is interesting to see that the longer history of the Chinese settlement in Trang has enhanced the sense of attachment of the Chinese community and expressed it through the traditional practices and festivals. On the other hand, these traditional festivals and events also enhanced the sense of attachment and belonging to the Chinese, as it can also notice in Paknampho. Provincial towns are developed from a small rural trade junction to big provincial town after the railway was constructed, and made it the centre of trade of the region. The Chinese generally formed a settlement first by the main port as it was the major mode of transportation, and it was where trade opportunity was found. The development of railway expanded the settlement and sometimes relocated it, but towards the centre of town. Although some settlements at the Southern part of the county have been formed before the arrival of railway, they were much expanded and became larger as a result of such development. Eventually, these settlements become commercial centre that play important role in the economic activity of that province.

### **Riverside Market**

Some of the Chinese immigrants travelled from Bangkok along the rivers and settled by the port area not far from Bangkok. They formed a small river market settlement by these rivers. As already mentioned in Chapter 3 Chaophraya River is formed by the convergence of four main rivers: Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan, at Paknampho in Nakhonsawan province. It runs past Uthaihani, Chainat, Singburi,

Angthong, Ayutthaya, Pathumthani, Nonthaburi, Bangkok, and Paknam, Samutprakan to the Gulf of Thailand. Chaophraya River also split to three lines at Chainat, including Thachin River on the left and Noi River on the right. Mae Klong River, on the other hand, originated from Kwaenoi and Kwaeyai Rivers at the west of the country that join at Pak Phraek district in Kanchanaburi. Mae Klong then runs through Ratchaburi and Samutsongkham. Thachin River has different names referring to different part of it that runs through different provinces, which are Makhamthao River in Chainat province, Suphanburi River in Suphanburi province, Nakhonchaisi River in Nakhonpathom, and Thachin River in Samutsakhon.



**Figure 165** Tha Chin River Basin and the location of riverside market settlements of the Chinese from Suphanburi to Samutsakhon.

Source: Author

Thachin River that runs through Chainat, Suphanburi, Nakhonpathom and Samutsakhon is the location of several large Chinese settlements. Chinese played important role in the economic and social aspects of Thachin River Basin at Nakhonpathom, as they dominated four major economic crops, which are cotton, pepper, tobacco, and sugar cane. The Chinese travelled from Bangkok to Nakhonchaisi to work as coolies in the sugar plantation and the rice mill. The Teochiu workers occupied the whole sugar industry, from labour to manager, because they were skilful in the production of sugar since they were at their hometown. The sugar industry had become very prosperous around the end of King Rama III era towards early King Rama IV era. In the memoir of Pallegoix, he recorded that there were around twenty to thirty sugar factories in Nakhonchaisi with two-hundred to three-hundred Chinese workers.<sup>41</sup> Sir John Bowring also noted that the sugar industry in Thailand was occupied mainly by the Chinese. At the end of King Rama IV era when the sugar industry declined, Chinese workers turned to work as vegetables farmers,

<sup>41</sup> Pallegoix, *The Story of Siam* (เล่าเรื่องกรุงสยาม), trans. San T. Komolbut (Bangkok: Kaona Printing, 1977).

pig breeders, merchants, railway builders, and canal coolies, and settled around the river basin towards Suphanburi, Ratchaburi, and Samutsakhon. When they became richer, they set up their own business in opening opium hall, gambling hall, market, and rice mill. The Chinese settled both along the river and in farms, which was close to their occupations. The Chinese had gained control over the local economy and resided mainly in the market area, which saw it become a large community area. Prior to the period of King Rama V, market centres were located only at Muang district of both Suphanburi and Nakhonpathom. However, since the period of King Rama V, there were market communities located along the river line and most of them belong to rich Chinese merchants. The population survey during the end of King Rama V period reveals that the number of Chinese in Thachin Basin was around 33 percent of the whole population in that area.<sup>42</sup>

The rail line linking Bangkok and Phetchaburi province that was built between 1899 and 1904 and the line between Bangkok and Mahachai that was built in 1911 added more importance to Nakhonpathom and Samutsakhon as they were located on the rail route. At the same time, Ngiu-rai railway station was opened, and following by the opening of Ngiu-rai port for the scheduled boat to Bangkok. The market at Ngiu-rai was then formed, however, it is no longer active. After Chedibucha canal and other branched canals were dug, more settlements were also formed along the canal. New market settlements were found along the pier where Chinese boats stopped to load rice, as there were large numbers of rice mills run by the Chinese merchants located around Thachin Basin. Tonson market that was located at the Mouth of Chedibucha canal and Nakhonchaisi River (part of Thachin River) was also where majority of Chinese residents lived. Various kinds of shops were located in this market. Apart from rows of wooden houses that lie perpendicular to the river from the pier; there is also long connecting houses face to the river and share common balcony. At the middle of this settlement also locate a local Chinese shrine. At present, there is no market there but there is still very little number of residents living there. Most of the houses are closed and some are deteriorated.



**Figure 166** Tonson market in Nakhonchaisi River Basin (Thachin), once a big market community of the Chinese, is now deteriorated. However, big Chinese shrine is still found at the centre of the settlement.

Source: Author

<sup>42</sup> Supaporn Jindamaneerot, "Social History of the Communities in the Chine Basin (รายงานการวิจัยประวัติศาสตร์สังคมของชุมชนในลุ่มน้ำท่าจีน)," (Bangkok: Silpakorn University, 1989).

The character of market community in the Thachin basin is wooden structured row houses that face towards each other. They opened as shop doing various types of business. Near the market buildings is located the gambling hall, the opium hall, the Chinese shrine, the vegetarian hall, and the fish and chicken slaughter's house.<sup>43</sup> By the side of the river are typical floating houses that sometimes also open as shop. In Suphanburi, Bangli district was a large district and a border district of the province in the reign of King Rama V. It was a market community where the houses were built in two-storey wooden house with raised floor. This type of market is called *Talad Song Nam* or two-water market. During the dry season, the selling activity occupied the ground floor of the house but in wet season when it was flooded, the shop was moved to the second floor. However, these old market buildings are now replaced by concrete buildings.

Bangluang market (1923) is located by Thachin River. It was once a market junction of hundred carts carrying local goods from the forest areas in the west of the river and exchanged here to sell them at Thatian market in Bangkok. It was one of the most active Chinese communities in the Central plain, where Chinese school, Chinese instrumental band, old opium hall, iron cast shop, and various types of shops and businesses were found. At first, there were only a few Chinese families living there, after a while, other families followed and formed a big market community. Rows of wooden houses were built and the market then expanded. There were also several rice mills in the area and nearby. Most of the settlers found that this area was peaceful and provided good trade opportunity. Old Chinese shrine is also located at the mouth of Bangluang canal.



**Figure 167** Bangluang market, a big riverside Chinese community in Nakhonpathom, where various shops of the Chinese can be seen. Tian Hou Goddess shrine is located in the community. At the entrance to market locate another Tian Hou Goddess shrine and vegetarian hall, and Jianhua Chinese school.

Source: Author

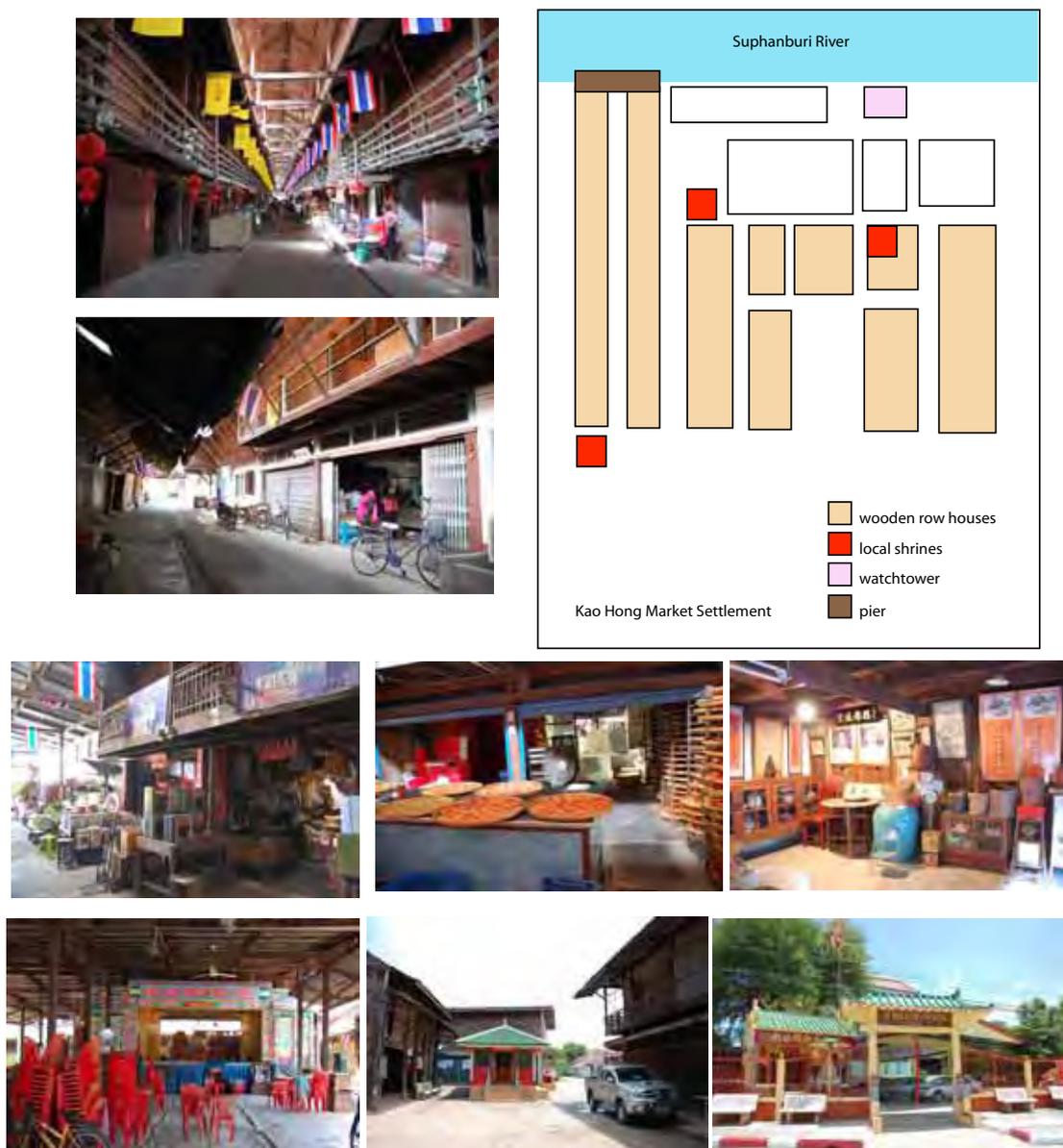
<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Although the river trade has already ended, Bangluang is still a lively Chinese community with several shops opened to serve its local people. There are more than 50 Chinese clans in Bangluang district, in which most of them are Teochiu people. There are three main groups of them according to their occupation, which are merchants in the market, farmers who grow vegetables, and pig farm's owner and seller. In 1953, Yok Khiew Chinese school was found, which later changed the name to Jianhua. It was a very famous Chinese school of the area. Interestingly, the number of Chinese language teachers at this school is even the highest in the country. There is also local Chinese instrumental band formed up and played at the vegetarian hall besides this school.

This form of market settlement can also be seen in other place along the river, such as Samchuk market, Siprachan market, and Kaohong market. Samchuk market by the end of nineteenth century was also an important market for the rice trades. Because it was the port for the cargo boats and the passenger boats, it attracted a lot of people, especially the Chinese merchants to settle there. Rows of shophouses were built along four alleys, in which at the end of it locates a row of shophouse that is located along the riverfront leaving few exits to the piers. Together with the architectural form, there were also various types of business in Samchuk, in which they were photo shop, coffee shop, salon, grocery's store, Chinese traditional medicine shop, hotel, and others. This confirms that Samchuk market was once an important river market settlement on Suphanburi River. Chinese formed the majority of the merchants in Samchuk, as can be seen through the type of business and the Chinese signboards of those shops. Most of the shops and business at Samchuk has been operating since mid twentieth century, but some have been there earlier. Similar to other Chinese settlement, there are also a local Chinese shrine and a coffee shop, which are still the spiritual and social centre of the community. Although the role of Samchuk market at present is also a tourist destination, the physical form and character of the Chinese market settlement can still be seen.

Another interesting example is Kaohong market that is located on the west of Suphanburi River, in Bangplama district, Suphanburi. It was once a big port and market on the route of the scheduled boat between Suphanburi province and Ngiu-rai in Nakhonpathom province. Kaohong market was built after the name of the house on another side of the river. It was a private market built by a Chinese merchant in early twentieth century. Kaohong market represents common layout of riverside market of the central plain in that rows of wooden shophouses are built along the path facing to each other and lie perpendicular to the river from the market pier. Kaohong comprises two groups of the buildings called the upper market (*Talad Bon*) and the lower market (*Talad Lang*). Major activity was found at the upper market, where several types of shops and trades were formed. Its glorious past is revealed through the number of shops and types of business that were once located there. Within the upper market area, there were two gold shops, four coffee shops, noodles factory, Chinese pasta factory, and Chinese snacks factory. There was also a large rice mill located by the river, and a printing house at the lower market. At the middle of the community locates local shrines too. When river transportation is no longer important and the highway was cut far out from the market area, Kaohong market has become quiet.

Even though the market itself is not active anymore, the Chinese settlement at Kaohong still has strong attachment to their place and their community as shown in the local shrine festival that is regularly held each year. The river settlement of the Chinese like this can also be seen in other places, such as Pakbang market in Singburi, Thana market in Nakhonpathom, and Ladchado market in Ayutthaya.



**Figure 168** Settlement plan of Kaohong settlement by Suphanburi River. Old business is still carried on, while some shops are opened as a small museum displaying old items from the ancestors. Three Chinese shrines are found. The Chinese still hold their traditional practice strongly, which can be seen through the local festivity.

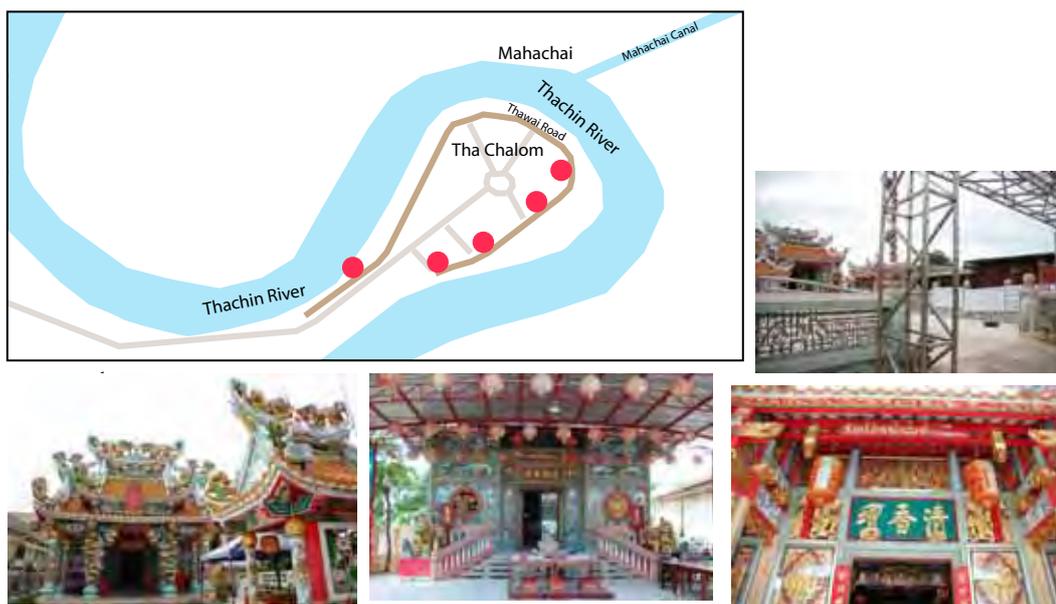
Source: Author

Another form of Chinese settlement by the river does not have similar form as the riverside market settlement in along Thachin River. Instead of building wooden shophouses in perpendicular to the river in an enclosed land, shophouses were built parallel to the riverfront and developed towards the left and the right direction. A large Chinese settlement that represents this form of settlement is *Talad Thachin* community or known as Tha Chalom community at present. The settlement was formed at the mouth of Thachin River, where it exits to the Gulf of Thailand. The majority of this community were Chinese people, who were fishermen and worked in fishing industry. Old photos of the second visit of King Chulalongkorn in 1905 (Rama V) to this market area show that majority of the people were Chinese and there was also dragon dance at the reception. Three Chinese shrines can be seen at the community to confirm the continuity of being a big Chinese settlement of *Thachin*. Since the Chinese residents mostly involved in fishery, rows of houses were built along Thawai Road, which is the main road. By mid twentieth century, the district market was formally opened at the North of the original settlement. It made the settlement expanded along Thawai Road to the north. A big vegetarian hall was also built in this quarter. Shophouses that were built for commercial activity around the market are found. One-storey traditional farmhouse style for drying squids is still left to see. Chinese shrines and vegetarian halls confirm the continuity of being a big Chinese settlement of *Thachin*.



**Figure 169** Community at Thawai Road received the visit of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) with dragon dance. Chinese residents can be noticed at the right of the dragon. (1905)

Source: Pun Thao Gong Temple, Thawai Road



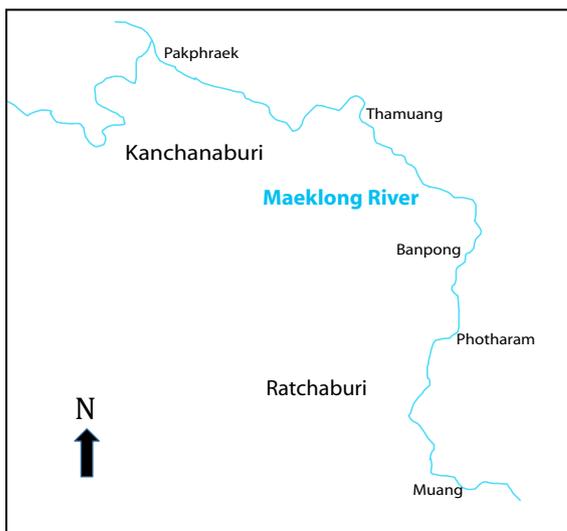
**Figure 170** Thawai Road, another major Chinese settlement at the mouth of Thachin River, where a lot of Chinese shrines can be found.

Source: Author

Similarly, Thamuang district by the side of Mae Klong River in Kanchanaburi also developed the settlement form that stretched from the pier and was located along the road on both sides. Map of the district in 1955 with road structures around this area shows that the centre of Thamuang district was once located at this area, before the arrival of railway. The conversation with the local community reveals that this settlement was once a large Chinese market settlement by Maeklong River. It was where cargo boats transferred goods to and from Ratchaburi. Apart from the market quarter, big shops could also be found along the road. It was also confirmed with various architectural styles of shophouses that are located alongside of the road. Early type of one-storey shophouse and elaborate Chinese influenced shophouses are still left. They are the evidence of several periods that this settlement has been through. Most of these shophouses are private property of only few families of Thamuang for rent. At the end of the road is a ruin of a mansion gate that shows the prosperity of Chinese merchant of Thamuang in the past.

The decline of Thamuang market resulted from the construction of a dam at the ox-shape of Mae Klong River at Thamuang, as well as the cut of Saengchuto Road linking to Kanchanaburi town. Around the same period, another nearby Chinese settlement has also developed. It is located at the meeting point between Kwaeyai and Kwainoi River in Kanchanaburi, where Maeklong River starts. It was called Pakphraek area. The settlement there was actually found since early nineteenth century; however, it was formed as a big Chinese settlement since middle of the nineteenth century when Chinese merchants started to settle there. The architectural style of Pakphraek building is also varied and covers several period of built. Even though there is no one-storey shophouse left like in Thamuang, traditional Chinese elements and architectural styles are found in many buildings. Shophouses were built

for commercial purpose, while single mansion was built for residential purpose. This shows not only the prosperity of the Chinese merchants of Pakphraek, but also the strong Chinese identity of the early Chinese settlers. At the middle of Pakphraek also locates Guan-yin shrine, which reflects the continuity of Chinese settlement at this place. The settlement along the river like this is also similar to *Khoy Kee* area in Ratchaburi town, Rayong town, and Chantaburi town.



**Figure 171** Major Chinese settlements along Maeklong River from Kanchanaburi to Ratchaburi

Source: Author



**Figure 172** Map of Thamuang district in 1955 showing that main settlement was still located by Maeklong River, as marked in yellow.

Source: <http://portal.rotfaithai.com>



**Figure 173** Pakphraek district in Kanchanaburi. Settlements are located along the main road with Chinese shrine at the middle (red dot).

Source: Author



**Figure 174** Thamuang community at present. Various styles of shophouses can be found but many of them are in bad conditions. Traditional Chinese ornamentation is seen on most buildings.

Source: Author



**Figure 175** Various styles of shophouses at Pakphraek district in Kanchanaburi. Great Chinese influences can be seen on the buildings to confirm that once it was a major Chinese settlement of this region.

Source: Author

## Tin Mining Settlement

As explained in the previous chapter about the background of the Chinese immigration to the Southern part of Thailand, some of them travelled from the Straits to settle along the western coast of Thailand. The settlement at Phuket, Phang-nga, and Ranong are mainly the result of tin mining. Actually, the Chinese travelled to Phuket long before the tin era. However, Hokkien Chinese from the Straits started to migrate to Phuket from the beginning of nineteenth century to undertake tin mining, trades, agriculture, and be craftsman respectively. Some of them were rich merchants who also had connection with relatives and friends in Penang and Malaka and relocated to Phuket to invest in the tin business. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, direct sea route enabled the Chinese to travel directly to Phuket. It was another big wave of Chinese immigrants to Phuket. Therefore, it can be said that the Chinese who migrated to Phuket expected to settle there and they had developed distinct characteristic strongly, which reflects on the way the settlement was formed.

The Chinese settlement in Phuket town was relocated from Krathu district, the previous tin mining area. The evidence of settlement was confirmed by the founding of old Chinese shrine, where the Vegetarian festival originated. However, the settlement was moved to the present location after new tin route was discovered. The settlement at Phuket town covered the area of four parallel roads of Dibuk, Thalang, Phang-nga and Ranong Roads, and the Yaowarat Road. The early type of Chinese dwelling in Phuket was one-storey earthen house that was divided into several units like present shophouse.<sup>44</sup> However, after the Chinese merchants became richer, these houses were demolished and replaced by eclectic style of shophouses imitating the shophouses of Penang which was also developed from the traditional Chinese architecture and western architecture, as already explained in chapter 3. It can be seen on the shophouses at Dibuk Road that were built in set composing of several units. Most of the shophouses on Dibuk Road were not built for commercial purpose as the residents mostly worked in the tin-mining industry. Thalang Road was where various types of business could be found. Rommani alley on Thalang Road was once the district of prostitutes from Guangdong. Several *Angmor Lao*,<sup>45</sup> or the merchant club, are found located around Phuket town in different roads. This illustrates life of Chinese community at Phuket very well that it was once a prosperous town that relied mostly on the international business. Since the Chinese in Phuket migrated there from the Straits and directly from China, it also enhanced the strong identity of the Chinese community and expressed through the tangible form and intangible practices. Also, since most of the residents were Hokkien origins, they still hold on to their traditional belief, such as the religious festivals. Coffee shop is still the significant place that local people regularly visit and exchange memories and stories. Dialect association also plays such role. The Hokkien Association, located on Dibuk Road, is where the Chinese descendants visit and meet with others regardless of clan's origins.

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<sup>44</sup> Suleeman Narumon Wongsuphap, *The Family Of "Nghanthawee": The Southern Power and Ways* (สาวโยตระกูล "งานทวี" แลวิถีและพลังมังกรใต้) (Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> As already explained in chapter 3.

Similar to the settlement in Phuket but in smaller scale is the Chinese settlement in Takuapa, Phang-nga. It was also a big Chinese settlement that was also involved in the tin mining. Chinese settlement in Takuapa has been settling there since early nineteenth century at least. Takuapa in those days was a big trade centre, where boats carrying goods from Penang, China, and Singapore to trade with tin from Takuapa. It was also recorded in the journal of King Vajiravudh during his visit here in early twentieth century that Takuapa is rather civilised because there are four Norah halls, and four shadow puppet halls here. Old traditional dwellings can still be found locating side by side with shophouses of later period. These shophouses reflect continuing past of Takuapa as there are also various style of shophouses from different period. Early type of shophouses is in traditional Chinese style with beautiful craftsmanship that was expressed on the decoration on the buildings. Unlike Phuket, the shophouses at Takuapa were mostly built for commercial purpose and not many of them that reflects the eclectic Straits architecture. Takuapa also have four Chinese shrines located at the community centre. Coffee shop also plays important part in the community's social aspect. Even though the centre and administrative district is located in other area, the Chinese settlement at Takuapa can still reflect the significant character and illustrate its past glory through the architectural form. Meanwhile, strong cultural ties held the Chinese community in Takuapa together, especially during the vegetarian festival.



**Figure 176** Map showing settlement of the Chinese in Phuket in all major roads of the old town.

Source: *The Family Of "Nganthawee": The Southern Power and Ways*  
(สาวโยตระกูล "งานทรี" แลวิถีและพลังมังกรโต)



**Figure 177** Early style of one-storey Chinese houses on the way to be demolished, (at the back of old municipal market, Phuket, taken in 2007).

Source: Author



**Figure 178** (left) Yaowarat Road in 1929, Chinese rickshaw pullers can still be seen. (right) Yaowarat Road at present.

Source: (left) postcard from Chanchai shop, Phuket/ (right) author



**Figure 179** Early style of two-storey shophouse in Takuapa. Some of them still have traditional Chinese paintings on the façade.

Source: Author



**Figure 180** Takuapa today. Traditional practice of the Chinese in Takuapa still has significant role even though the town itself becomes quiet and deserted.

Source: (left) Author/ (right) <http://roikamhom.blogspot.com/>

## Ancient Entrepot

These above examples are the result of the migration pattern of the Chinese and the commercial development of the country between eighteenth to twentieth century with Ayutthaya as earliest tangible evidence of the settlement, dated back to seventeenth century. Nevertheless, entrepot at the east coast of Thailand has also been formed and gradually developed largely prior to the eighteenth century. Pattani, located on the east coast of Thailand, had been an important entrepot of Southeast Asia during the fourteenth to seventeenth century. It was one of old important port towns in Southeast Asia as well. Maritime trade attracted a number of Chinese merchants and sailors to settle in Southeast Asia, especially in the east coast of Siam.

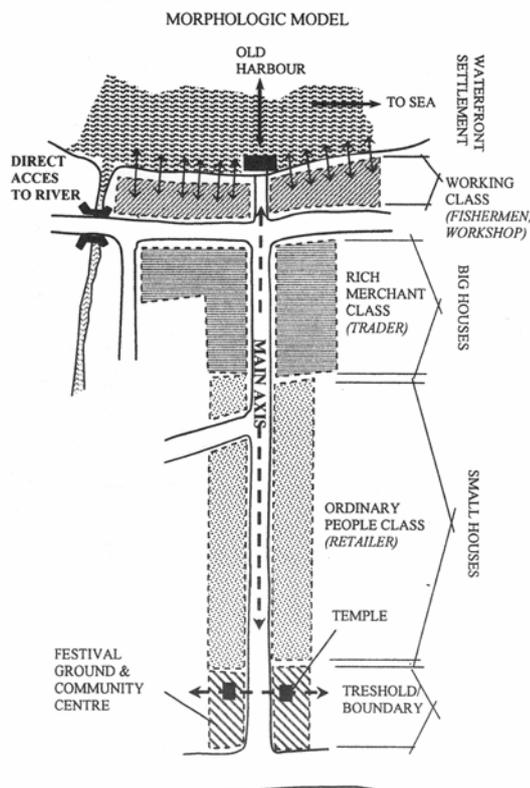
Around early sixteenth century, Pattani played an important role as a port town welcoming Portuguese trade vessels from Malaka. Since then, Pattani had become well known among international merchants and attracted Chinese merchants to settle in. Apart from being merchants, the Chinese also worked as craftsmen, officers, and coolies. It was recorded in a memoir of British officer, who visited Pattani in 1617 that, "Pattani is a town in the South of Siam. Houses were built by wood and elephant grass, but with artistic skill. There are several mosques. There are more Chinese people than the local. Three languages are among the people. The Chinese built Chinese shrines. The Thais built Buddha images..."<sup>46</sup> The languages mentioned in this piece of work are Malay, Thai, and Chinese. At the same time, the history of Songkhla town in relations to the Chinese settlement dated to late eighteenth century. Trades between the south of China and Songkhla introduced a lot of Chinese merchants to come to Songkhla and Chinese immigrants to settle in this land, especially Hokkien people. In 1769, King Taksin entitled Yieng Hao, a Hokkien guy who originated the family name Na Songkhla, as the governor of Songkhla. Since then, another 7 governors of Songkhla all belong to this family until 1901. This also drew a lot of Chinese immigrants to settle in Songkhla.

The Chinese settlement in Pattani was located along Pattani River, close to the pier, which is a good location for doing business. It was known as *Hua Talad* district. It is very similar to the Chinese settlement in Songkhla, in that the settlement expanded from the river towards the land, and linked to the sea by the river. It was assumed that the settlement here was found since early nineteenth century, similar to Songkhla town.<sup>47</sup> The settlement runs along side two main roads, which are Anoru Road and Pattaniphrom Road. Anoru Road is a short line of road but was connected directly to Pattani River and old harbour. Pattaniphrom Road runs parallel on the east of the riverfront. A lot of shops were crowded along this area. The research of Widodo reveals the form of Chinese settlement in Pattani that it is located inland from the old harbour with shophouses organised perpendicular to the river showing the significant role of Chinese community in Pattani. The settlement started from the

<sup>46</sup> Khrongchai Hattha, *The History of Pattani from the Ancient Kingdom to the Administration of 7 Provinces* (ประวัติศาสตร์ปัตตานีสันยอาณาจนินคมถึงการปกครองเจ็ดหัวเมือง) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Publishing, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Vassan Cheewasarth, *Chinese Architecture in Pattani Town* (สถาปัตยกรรมจีนในเมืองปัตตานี) (Pattani: Songkhlanakarin University, Pattani Campus, 1986).

main harbour and ended where the Lin Kuniang temple is, as shown in figure 182, which is similar to Songkhla. Parallel to the riverfront is where fishermen workshops were. The Chinese upper class lived in the next section in big courtyard house, the lower class lived in next section near the temple, and leader of the community lived in the centre of the town.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 181** Morphological and social structure of Chinese settlement in Pattani.

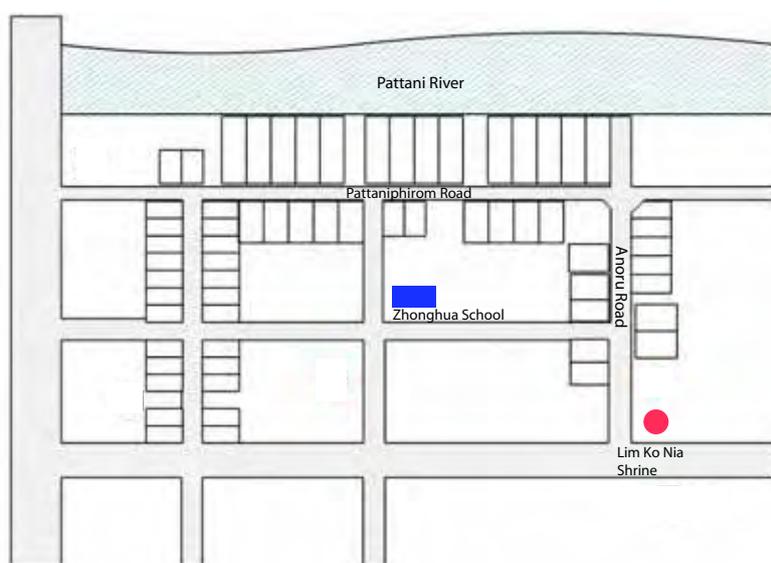
Source: Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*, 56.

In 1881, William Cameron travelled to Pattani and illustrated the Chinese settlement in Pattani that, the dwellings of Chinese are at better location than the Malay, and the road from shops and houses runs directly to the river. He also described that from the river, there is a town gate that was built strongly and at the Chinese village, most of the dwellings are also opened as a shop and were built perfectly with excellent materials.<sup>49</sup> This *Hua Talad* district is also mentioned in several old documents of late nineteenth century displaying the image of Chinese community with rows of shophouses selling various goods, Chinese traditional style

<sup>48</sup> Johannes Widodo, *The Boat and the City: Chinese Diaspora and the Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities*, ed. Johannes Widodo, *Architecture of Southeast Asian Coastal Cities Series* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> William Cameron, "On the Patani," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1883).

buildings, and Chinese shrine. While in Songkhla, the Chinese also brought with them traditional skills in making bricks, tiles and earthenwares, that can be seen on the traditional dwellings on Nakhon Nai Road. Chinese settlement in Songkhla was located in the old town area, covering Nakhon Nok, Nakhon Nai, and Nang-ngam Road that run parallel to the Songkhla Lake. Row of shophouses faces towards each other on both sides of Nang-ngam and Nakhon Nai Road. Buildings on Nakhon Nok Road were located only on one side of the road but outside the old town wall.



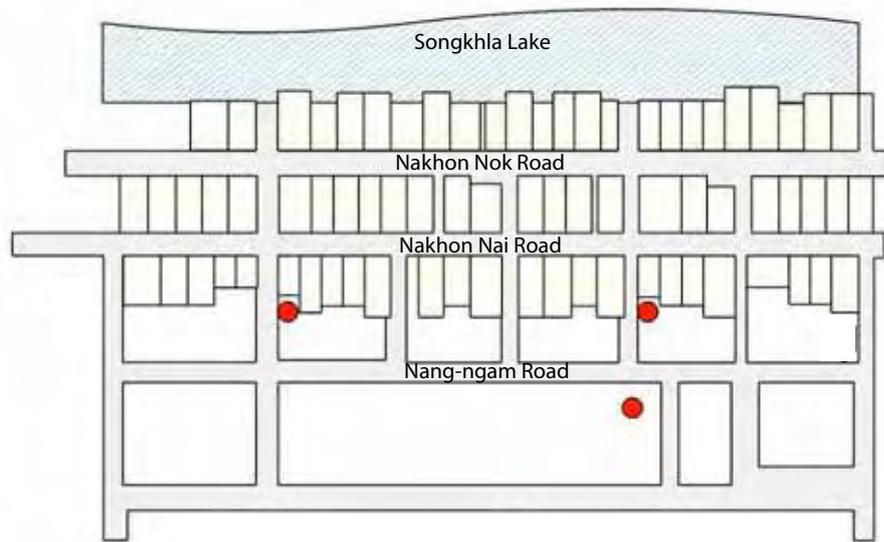
**Figure 182** Map showing orientation of Pattani with Chinese shrine at the end of Anoru Road

Source: Author



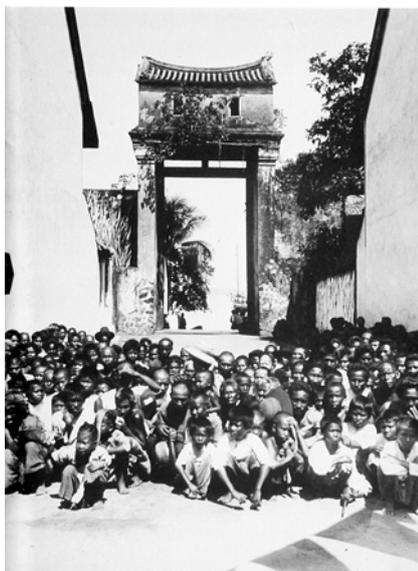
**Figure 183** Single house of Chinese merchants in Pattani (1985 and 2007)

Source: <http://thai-heritage-building.org/forums/index.php/topic,42.0.html>



**Figure 184** Map showing old town Songkhla that composed of three main roads run in parallel to each other. There are also three Chinese shrines found, as indicated by red dots.

Source: Author



**Figure 185** (left) Songkhla residents received the visit of King Chulalongkorn in 1905, it can be noticed that most of the residents were Chinese. (above right) Chinese style buildings in Songkhla, taken in the beginning of twentieth century. (below right) View over Nakhon Nok Road in 1934-1935, with Chinese buildings located along the route.

Source: *The Picture Book of Songkha Maha Vajiravudh* (สมุดภาพสงครามท้าวชิราวุธ)



**Figure 186** Songkhla at present. Old traditional Chinese buildings can still be seen. Chinese school, shrine and local Chinese restaurant are also found.

Source: Author

Since Pattani was a prosperous town, single houses of one or two storeys are commonly built by the rich Chinese merchants and officers. In contrary, most residents of Songkhla were ordinary merchants and labourers, most of the dwellings were built in form of continuing shophouses and some with attached residential buildings at the rear. However, all share similar spatial pattern with the business section at the front part, while backyard is for cooking, dining, washing, and cleaning, with water well locating at this open space.<sup>50</sup> In Songkhla, several traditional Chinese style of dwellings can still be seen. However, since the economic development of Songkhla was based on the local trade, the town has been continuing to develop and reflect on various periods of buildings. Mix of architectural styles can be found locating next to each other on the same road, while buildings on each road of Hua Talad district represents only one style.

## Conclusion

These examples show that generally in settlements that the Chinese migrated directly from China, such as Songkhla, Pattani, and Bangkok, traditional cultural ideology can be seen in the early form of architecture. However, in the settlement

<sup>50</sup> Thanarat Thawarot, "A Study of Shophouse in Old Commercial Districts of Eastern Seaports at Thailand's Southern Peninsula (การศึกษาดั้งเดิมบริเวณย่านการค้าเก่าในเมืองท่าชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันออกของคาบสมุทรภาคใต้ประเทศไทย)" (M.Arch Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2004).

where the Chinese mingled with the local like the river settlement, they have instead developed the dwellings to suit the social environment. Although chained migration influenced the settlement pattern of each group of Chinese, only Chinese settlement in Bangkok can reflect this influence strongly. At present, settlement pattern of the Chinese is no longer based on dialect similarity and background of origin.

The Chinese, regardless of dialect background, still prefer to settle within the same neighbourhood. Chinese shrines are still the spiritual centre of the community. Market and coffee shop are commonly found, as it is the social venue, where people share common experience and story. These elements can also be seen in other new Chinese settlement as well, even though they might not have such long history as those in Sampeng or Phuket. The continuity of the settlement is the result of economic factor mostly. Nevertheless, it is also shown in the previous examples that the settlement can continue by common activity and practices, which is discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Prospects: A Chinese Sense of Place in Thailand

“Chinatown is the truth and is the life, the Chinese did not build the scene.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **Place is a Social and Cultural Construct**

Place is a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon, as people put in their cultural ideology – the beliefs, the ways of living, the ways of thinking, and the ways of doing things that give meaning to places. The cultural ideology and meaning both characterise the place and reflect tangible and intangible aspects. Thus, place acts as a cultural clue that reveals human ideologies, meaning, values, as well as activities, which all involved human life.

The Chinese have been a significant element in Thai social history for centuries. The location of Chinese settlement in Thailand spreads around the country where there are opportunities for trade and better opportunities of life. Chinese settlement also reflects the idea of place that reveals cultural clues. It is full of history, life, memories, beliefs, meanings, and values, in which these cultural ideologies have been uniquely formed and developed. It is not a mirror to a certain period of the past, but it is a mirror reflecting montage of layers through time.

Through the study of Chinese settlement in Thailand, with a focus on its place significance as discussed in previous chapters, it can be appreciated that chained migration has influenced greatly the settlement pattern of the Chinese immigrants. They would migrate together with people from the same clan, village, and locality, and live in the same settlement. As a result, same type of expertise and business are commonly found within the same district. Kinship structure still plays the significant role among the Chinese and represents in various forms. In early periods of Chinese emigration, clan and dialect association are the most distinguished social structure of the overseas Chinese. They reflect the kinship system strongly. Later came the development of other activities and social welfare, such as Chinese school, foundation, public cemetery, and hospital. The core of kinship structure of the overseas Chinese in Thailand is encapsulated by the term “*Jia Ji Ren*” (家己人 or *Gaginang*), or the idea of taking care of each other like being relatives, despite the dialect differences, as explained in Chapter 3. At present, even though settlements according to similar dialects or clans are not commonly found, this idea still relies on the way Chinese chose to live in Chinese neighbourhood. Similar type of business can still be seen in a certain district; however, it is not the result of dialect expertise anymore.

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<sup>1</sup> Rong Wongsawan, *Yiwa Chinatown*, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Openbooks, 2009).

Within a settlement such things as Chinese shrine, market, and coffee shop are still the common element of Chinese settlement in Thailand. As Chinese shrine is a spiritual shelter that ties the community together through religious and traditional practices, market and coffee shop are of high social value that enhances the sense of belonging of the community through story and memories. Certain traditional practice and ways of living have been carried on from generation to generation and expressed in the local festivity. Similarly, standard moralities of “thrifty and grateful” can still be seen in some families and represented on the ancestral altars inside a house. However, many traditions have been adapted to suit local environs and lifestyles.

After the end of China’s imperial era in 1911, traditional practices and beliefs, including Feng-shui, have gradually declined and greatly suppressed in the Cultural Revolution period between 1966-1976. That was around the same period as when a big wave of Chinese migration occurred. Since these immigrants came from Southern China, where Feng-shui belief had largely adopted, they have carried with them the traditional beliefs from their homeland. As a result, it is interesting to see the aged Chinese, who have been settling in Hongkong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asian countries, are more familiar with the traditional beliefs and practices. On contrary, traditional belief and Feng-shui for the Chinese in China have not been practised as much. Large number of old buildings with auspicious symbols according to the Feng-shui remains, but they have no relations to the present generation of the Chinese, who dwell in those buildings.

For the Chinese elsewhere, even though the traditional practices and beliefs were carried along with them to new countries, they had gradually faded through time because of the social development and local culture’s influences. Nevertheless, the present trend of cultural revival also made old traditions and beliefs rise again in these countries, as well as in big towns and cities of China. But these are expressed in new forms. Simple and comprehensive auspicious motifs and ornaments are used, and many of them are developed to suit the current era, such as the Chinese New Year’s greetings phrase with western style cartoon characters, and modern style auspicious home decoration. This also applies to the practice of Feng-shui in the construction of new buildings, as always found in Hong Kong and Singapore. The pride of Chineseness in Thailand also reflects similar situation. Through Thailand’s social history and environs, the Siamese Chineseness has evolved. In some period of the time, it declines and in some period, it rises. When the China rises in the world scene, the pride of Chineseness among the Chinese in Thailand also rises, even though it might seems to decline in the past century. The rises of Chineseness also reflects on the Chinese decorative ornaments and the application of Feng-shui in newly constructed buildings and houses in big cities of Thailand. While settlement merges, Thai and Chinese are also found living together harmoniously.

### **People and Place: Common Threads**

Chinese settlements in Thailand, despite differences of physical forms, all share similar character of place shaped by the Chinese as a result of their cultural

ideologies, which in turn give meaning to places. The form of each Chinese settlement reflects ordinary people's lives and illustrates the past as a part of Thailand's social history. It is a place of life, where people have strong attachment to it and is represented through the continuity of the settlement. Understanding place phenomena and its people can enhance the protection of it and be an alternative way to minimise the changes from urban development, as well as maintain the authenticity and integrity of the districts. It is stated clearly in the Hoi An Protocols that the conservation of cultural landscape is "to safeguard them, not just as historical evidence, but as living systems and possible future templates for cultural development".<sup>2</sup>

Strong attachment to place is a commitment that people have with their place, as a home and as a cultural root of one's self, which will lead to sense of protection. With strong bonds that community has, it creates a sense of place that can assist the community to live in the fast growing social environment. The place can continue to be lively and active because the cultural and social ties are strong within the community. Cultural and social ties can be motivated through the activities. Activities include those that are related to the community's daily life, and those of tourism. The activities that are related to everyday life can be found as local tradition, such as religious activity and cultural tradition.

Cultural tradition within a family can reveal the ideology of family organisation. Community religious activity and practice is a key to binding the community's member together and bringing out their experiences and memories that they share in the same place. Good example is the festivity of the local shrine. Each local shrine of a Chinese community regularly holds a festival to worship the deity that is housed in that shrine. Within a year, there are two to five big events at each shrine holding in various dates. They are the deity's birthday, the anniversary of the shrine, the seventh month festival, the ninth month's vegetarian festival, and the deity's thank you festival during the tenth and eleventh month. Apart from the worship and religious ritual, there is also the performance of Teochiu Chinese opera. In some places, the showing of outdoor movie can be seen. These activities still bring in the cooperation of the people in the community and create the sense of belonging among the people and their place. The maintaining of such activities can preserve the identity and meaning of place even though the tangible structure is changed.

### **A Role for Tourism: Key Issues**

Apart from the local activities, tourism can also be a tool to enhance the sense of belonging of the community, especially at the community that there is hardly any shared activity among the people. Those communities shared common problems where urban development has gradually replaced the traditional ways of living and urges their new generation of community's members to move out. Several river market settlements in the central part of Thailand also faced this problem.

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<sup>2</sup> "Hoi an Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia: Professional Guidelines for Assuring and Preserving the Authenticity of Heritage Sites in the Context of the Cultures of Asia," (Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2009).

Interestingly, tourism had become a helping hand that revitalise the life of these settlements. Samchuk market settlement in Suphanburi is an interesting example. It is another major Chinese settlement of the river market. It was awarded the UNESCO (award of merit) Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation in 2009. When the road was cut, river transportation declined, as did the community. The old buildings deteriorated. The local residents then formed up Sam Chuk Market Conservation Committee to work on the revitalization of Samchuk. Old wooden houses and shophouses were restored and converted into shops and museums. The market totally serves for tourism purpose

When Samchuk was successful in conserving the old market and also become a busy tourist attraction of Suphanburi province, other old market communities followed. Kaohong market settlement that is located at the lower part of Suphanburi province was getting quieter each day because it is no longer located at the main transportation route. Local people in the market community started to move out to work in other districts and towns. Nevertheless, the significance of old riverside market community were realised and ways were devised to promote it to the public. The community started to open their home to public. They displayed items that belong to their ancestors and showed people how that place was in the old days. Some families even opened their homes without having to sell any food or goods. The experience of the tourists walking in Kaohong market today is like visiting a small museum but it is full of life and is not too commercialised. From a conversation with the owner of an old coffee shop in Kaohong market, it is clear that the local people are happy to cooperate in revitalising their community and makes it well known to the public. It can be said that visits to old local markets are like a tourist trend nowadays. Tourists come in small groups, preferably in their own family. The feelings of being able to walk around by themselves and get various experiences through real objects are different from visiting a single attraction. Local activity and local food become the attractions of the sites, apart from the old vernacular architecture of the market itself. Through the tourism like this, they can participate in showing the public their roots and what their ancestors did in the past. When the local started to tell the story about their ancestors, it simply increased the sense of belonging and sense of place that they have with Kaohong market.

There is a similar outcome from the celebration of various cultural activities, such as Chinese New Year festival, that have been held at major Chinese settlements around the country. The conversation with a local shop owner in Sampeng reveals that a successful Chinese New Year festival must be organised by the local community, not by other outside organisations, because the local is the one who knows and understands Chinese traditions and cultures best. Heavily marketing of the place can also bring danger to the authenticity of the place and community. While Samchuk received the award of merit for best conservation, it does not necessarily give such pleasant experience to the visitors, especially when it is too commercialised for the tourists.

While the previous examples are about bringing in tourists from other places to create the sense of belonging to the host community, another interesting example is

encouraging local people to become tourist of their local area. It is a group of “walk Yaowarat”, bringing in students from local schools in Bangkok’s Chinatown district and local people to have a walking tour and bicycle tour along various roads of Yaowarat. It is the way that makes the local people know and understand about the significance of their local area.

Media, such as television and magazine, can also be the way to help conserving the ways of life and activities of the local people. This can be done by involving young people from the community to be a host of the television program that introduce about the traditional heritage of his local area, such as traditional food, traditional occupation, and attractions. Local story and oral history can also be involved, as they reveal people’s memories and life.

### **In Conclusion**

In conclusion, Chinese settlement reflects well the relationship between Chinese people and their place and is expressed in the settlement pattern, form, and development of tangible structures through time. The Chinese immigrants brought with them traditional cultural ideology, however, adapted to suit the local society. These ideologies were expressed through their everyday living and reflect the form and character of settlement in Thailand. The character of a place remains the same, even though the form of it has been changed over time. Chinese settlement in Thailand represents a living heritage where people are the key of the settlement. The commercial quarters and urban settlement of the Chinese in Thailand also reflects the concept of Historic Urban Landscapes that the community is the major component that put in cultural values. The place becomes distinct because of the cultural ideology that people have and shared through story and memories. When people shared their memory about a certain place, it then enhanced the significance of that place. On the other hand, it also increased the sense of belonging that they have with their local area. Hence, what make Chinese settlement become as it is and have such character is the people and ways of life that are expressed and evolved around their place.

This dissertation contributes to the study of place significance of the Chinese settlement in Thailand, which enables the realising of its meaning and characters. It is with hope that it can add another aspect in the field of heritage conservation, as well as contributes to the study on Chineseness in Thailand. Nevertheless, some notes on future research and further study in these following points are recommended.

- The in-depth architectural research and conservation study of some settlements that are in risk of deterioration are strongly recommended, as they are significant archives to the country’s social history. From the author’s ground investigation, they are Talad Noi district in Bangkok, Thamuang district in Kanchanaburi, Takuapa district in Phang-nga, Thaluang district in Chantaburi, and riverside market community of Tonson market.

- Further study in the historical and sociological aspect of the mentioned settlements above is suggested.
- The future research on the role of local history, story, memoirs, and names is suggested, as it will add the complete circle of the study of Chinese settlement in Thailand and extend the body knowledge of Chineseness in Thailand.
- Involving tourism in the community is a two-sided coin that can give positive and negative impact to the settlement. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to involve the participation of local community. Benefits from such activity should belong to the community.
- Prior to any tourism management or development decisions of these settlements, thorough research with focus on the people and its living heritage should be carried out.
- Cultural impact assessment of the settlements that are tourist attractions should be undertaken, in order to mitigate the impact.
- Any future research and management plan should be carried out and implemented with most respect to the living of the community.

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## **Appendix**

### Appendix A: Timeline of Major Events in China and Thailand

Thailand era	The situation of Chinese in Thailand	Chinese dynasty	Major situation in China
Ayutthaya 1351-1767	China started the tributary system with Siam again around the beginning of fifteenth century.	Ming 1368-1644 Qing 1644-	Zheng He naval expedition took place between 1405-1433. After Qing overruled Ming dynasty, many Ming supporters publicly fight against the Manchu rulers and many of them took refuge in Southeast Asia.
Thonburi 1767-1782	The King's policy in supporting Teochiu Chinese drew a lot of Chinese from Chaochou to Bangkok.	Qing	
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama I/ 1782-1809	Junk trade under the tributary system continued from previous reign. Bangkok became important junk trade centre of Southeast Asia.	Qing	The Qing Court firstly forbade the migration of the Chinese due to the political unstable by the Ming supporter. However, the poverty and natural disaster in the Southern coast had enabled a lot of sea trade and migration of the Chinese. The Anglo-Chinese Opium War that lasted in 1842 with the defeat of China resulted in series of increasing tax, inner war, and chaos, which caused another wave of migration to other countries.
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama II/ 1809-1824	Bangkok was the centre of junk building for the maritime trade between Siam and China. A lot of Chinese skilled labourers were in demand.	Qing	
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama III/ 1824-1850	Junk trade became huge source of income for the Royal Treasury. Authorization of monopoly holders of tax/duty was launched that made Chinese merchants had significant role in Thai economic scene.	Qing	Opium war 1839-1842 (First opium war) The Anglo-Chinese Opium War that in 1842 with the defeat of China resulted in series of increasing tax, inner war, and chaos, which caused another wave of migration to other countries.
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama IV/ 1850-1868	State monopoly on trade was abolished. Free trade policy put the Chinese in more significant role as a middleman in trade with the west and had higher demand on labour.	Qing	Opium war 1856-1860 (second opium war) Taiping rebellion 1850-1864
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama V/ 1868-1910	The authorization of tax collection was almost totally abandoned, but the Chinese managed to become prosperous in the rice trade instead. Various types of Chinese associations were formed.	Qing	Boxer rebellion 1899-1901

<b>Thailand era</b>	<b>The situation of Chinese in Thailand</b>	<b>Chinese dynasty</b>	<b>Major situation in China</b>
	Development of city's infrastructure also expanded Sompeng area and resulted in the emergence of Chinese temple, hospitals, schools, and newspaper.		
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama VI/ 1910-1925	With the rise of Thai nationalism, the assimilation policy was launched with the enforcement of Citizenship Act. Thai language and history were forced to conduct in Chinese schools. Rice trades became more prosperous with emergence of rice enterprises in Sompeng area.	Qing -1911 end of imperial era	Qing dynasty was overthrown by the revolution in 1911. China became the republic under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen of Kuomintang party. However, the communist party was found in 1920 and later opposed the ideology of Kuomintang party.
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama VII/ 1925-1934	The number of Chinese immigrants reached the highest and led to the restriction of incoming immigrants. Conflict between China and Japan created strong political movement among the Chinese in Thailand, which leads to the existence of secret society. Thailand also adopted the constitutional monarchy during this era.		Civil war between Kuomintang and communist party spread all over the country. While Kuomintang party established its government in Nanjing, communist party was forced to reside in the inner mountains of the South. Meanwhile, Japan invaded the Northeast of the country.
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama VIII/ 1934-1946	Marshal Phibunsongkhram further adopted the policy of assimilating the Chinese. Several enactments to restrict the living of Chinese in Thailand had been launched. Activities against Japan had strongly conducted among the Chinese in Thailand.		The war between China and Japan officially started in 1937. Two parties joined hand to fight against Japan. It created high tension of anti-Japanese among overseas Chinese as well. After Japan had defeated, both parties resumed their conflict again.
Rattanakosin The reign of King Rama IX/ 1946-present	During the early period of the reign, cold war made the contact between people in Thailand and China impossible and also halted the Chinese immigration in Thailand. However, in 1975, Thailand had established the diplomatic relations with China that resumed the relations between the people.		Communist party, under the leadership of Mao Zedong finally gained victory over Kuomintang party and established the People's Republic of China in 1949. The communist party administered a closed country and went over the economic reform, as well as the cultural revolution, which completely stopped the communication between the Chinese of both countries. After the death of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping opened the door of China once again and retrieved the diplomatic relations with other countries.

Source: Adapted from the exhibition at Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Museum

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