Pockets of Empire: Integrating the Studies on Social Organizations in Southeast China and Southeast Asia

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When central historical issues regarding late imperial China are juxtaposed with those on early modern Southeast Asia, a very interesting peculiarity, almost an oxymoron, presents itself. As Sinologists preoccupy themselves with questions on why China fell, or, more precisely, fell back behind Western Europe, various scholars are struck by the general Chinese economic success in the history of Southeast Asia.

The situation is an indication of how far both fields of study—early modern Southeast Asia and late imperial southeast China—have ignored each other. In the English-language scholarship, the study of the history of Asia is generally broken up into area studies as Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and so on, where academics tend to become specialists in one or two countries in each sphere of study. With regard to China and Southeast Asia, various historians like Hsu Yun-chiao, Chen Ching-ho, Lo Hsiang-lin, and Denys Lombard, who, interestingly, were operating predominantly in non-English academia, had long examined the historical interaction between the two regions. Lombard, who had applied Fernand Braudel's *longue durée* and Mediterranean Sea paradigms in his analysis of Southeast Asian history, was especially a strong advocate for the integration of south China and Southeast Asia as a field of study. In his words, "Wanting to understand Southeast Asia without integrating a good part of southern China into one's thinking is like wanting to give an account of the Mediterranean world by abstracting Turkey, the Levant, Palestine and Egypt."[1]

These doyens have passed on, however, and new-generation Sinologists and Southeast Asianists generally fail to engage one another. The dissociation between Southeast Asian studies and China studies is very unfortunate, particularly since the historical evidence yielded and the research methodologies developed in both fields in the past two decades could arguably help understand various issues on the other side and stimulate new research directions.[2] To

1. Cited in N. Cooke and Li Tana, *Water Frontier: Commerce and the Chinese in the Lower Mekong Region, 1750–1880* (Singapore: Singapore University Press; Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 2.

2. G. Evans, C. Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng, eds., *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Region* (New York: St. Martin's; Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000). The articles in the anthology, however, are mainly on contemporary observations. Only that by G. Wade, "The Southern Chinese Borders in History" (28–50), is a more his-

illustrate how integrating the two fields of study would be mutually beneficial and inspire innovative inquiries, this essay compares and analyzes the research on the history of social groupings of the people of Fujian and Guangdong—particularly those termed lineage or clan organizations, and brotherhood societies—both at home and in Southeast Asia.

The topic of Chinese organizations has been of substantial research concern to historians of Southeast Asia, particularly when they look at the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This focus has come into being no less because the colonial states had been fearful of various Chinese brotherhood groupings, or what they coined "secret" and/or "dangerous" societies, and generated much discussion on the subject in the nineteenth century. To contest the negative image by colonial historians, various historians render sympathetic readings to these societies as brotherhood and mutual-help organizations. Generally, the way most scholars have explained how these institutions had arisen in Southeast Asia is along the lines that the Chinese migrants were following traditions from home and that they needed these organizations to survive the challenges in the alien environment.

Since the 1940s, Chinese and Japanese historians doing research on the southeastern parts of China have been interested in clan organizations to answer grander questions on why capitalism did not arise in China. Their general conclusion is that such institutions obfuscated class struggles and thus impeded capitalist developments.[3] Historians and anthropologists trained in Western scholarship also began to study these patrilineal kinship organizations in the past two to three decades. Their analyses are oriented toward state-society tensions, that is, how far the Confucianist Chinese state could impose its will on the populace in the very formation of such agnatic kinship institutions.

All in all, aside from some cursory acknowledgments from some historians that the Chinese societies in Southeast Asia were formed along the lines of those in their home societies, both research fields have advanced in a fairly isolated way and remained relatively unnoted by scholars in the other field.

This essay seeks to integrate the research on the social organizations by historians on southeast China and Southeast Asia. The aim is to show that by doing so both fields of study would be further enriched and developed, specifically, that assumptions of timeless traditions need to be qualified and arguments that Chinese kinship organization inhibited the development of capitalism in China should be reconsidered.

I also propose that the integration offers a new perspective on the nature and development of Chinese economic expansion in Southeast Asia. In this regard, a study of these social organizations is an imperative project on its own considering that the Chinese in Southeast Asia, despite their economic dominance in the region, were "merchants without empire." Compared to the Europeans, they operated without assistance from the Chinese state, which at times even persecuted their maritime trade activities. Over the centuries, and particularly from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, they had managed to emerge as paramount players among the Asian and European mercantile groups. How they organized labor and capital *by themselves* would thus be of great historical import.

By way of providing a context and to show why the recent developments in organizational studies in both fields are interesting, the following section summarizes the findings on the economic interaction between coastal China and Southeast Asia in history, indicating how the late seventeenth century presented a crucial watershed and also why the explanations forwarded for the development are necessary but insuffi-

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torical one. See also L. Douw, Cen Huang, and M. Godley, eds., *Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to "Cultural Capitalism" in South China* (London: Kegan Paul, 1999); L. Douw, ed., *Unsettled Frontiers and Transnational Linkages: New Tasks for the Historian of Modern Asia* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1997); L. Douw, Cen Huang, and David Ip, eds., *Rethinking Chinese Transnational Enterprises: Cultural Affinity and Business Strategies* (Richmond, UK: Curzon; Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, 2001).

3. Fu Yiling was the most representative scholar pursuing this line of argument. See his representative works: *Ming-Qing Fujian shehui yu xiangcun jingji* (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 1987) and *Ming-Qing shehui jingji bianqian lun* (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1989).

cient. Subsequent sections look at the studies on lineage organizations in southeast China and on Chinese organizations in Southeast Asia and indicate how they might be integrated.

The Production Turn:
Seventeenth-Century Watershed
in Southeast Asia–China Interaction

It is well recognized that there were trading links between China and Southeast Asia since the first millennium AD. The Chinese market had craved Southeast Asian products such as rhinoceros horns, sea cucumbers, birds' nests, pepper, sandalwood, and sappanwood.[4] The period from the late seventeenth century is remarkable in the long history of Southeast Asia–China interaction as it saw the unprecedented movements of the Chinese into the production process in the South Seas (Nanyang). Aside from the urban merchant settlements, colonies of people from Fujian and Guangdong began to move into and populate the more interior parts of Southeast Asia.[5] They were engaged either in ventures of mining for gold, tin, and copper or in the cultivation of commercial crops like rice, sugar, pepper, and gambier.

   In the seventeenth century, people from southeastern parts of China were moving to the Philippines, the Mekong Delta region and the Gulf of Siam, and Batavia. Subsequently in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were also going to Borneo, Bangka, Riau, parts of the Malay Peninsula, and so on. Estimates were that by the 1770s there were ten thousand Chinese in west Borneo; by 1825 the figure climbed to about thirty-three thousand.[6] Cases made famous by the works of Chen Chingho were (1) Yang Yandi and about three thousand Ming loy-

alists who fled to central Vietnam in the early 1680s when Taiwan was falling to the Qing army; (2) Mac Cuu (d. 1735), who arrived in Cambodia with some followers in 1671 and together with his son Mac Thien-tu (1700–1780) subsequently made it big in the Mekong Delta; (3) Taksin (1734–82), whose father Zheng Yong arrived in Siam in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, became the king of Siam in 1767 after Burmese attacks and revived the Siamese economy overnight with the Teochew connections he inherited from his father; (4) Wu Rang (1717–84), who arrived in Songkla, in present-day south Thailand, with some of his countrymen in 1750 and started a plantation in nearby Khao Deng—he submitted to Taksin as his vassal after the latter became the Siamese king; and (5) Luo Fangbo (1738–95), who came to mine gold in Pontianak in western Borneo with a group of Hakkas and subsequently formed the Lanfang Kongsi.[7] In Chen's words, these Chinese immigrant groups were "helping native rulers reclaim virgin lands, serving them as local governors, establishing their own settlements with autonomous governments, or even running an independent state."[8] Chen's study inspired Anthony Reid, Carl Trocki, and Leonard Blussé to study the phenomenon of Chinese economic expansion in the eighteenth century, or what Reid and Blussé called the "Chinese Century" in Southeast Asia.

   Trocki aptly referred to this phenomenon as a "system of offshore production which was linked to a Chinese trading system and intended for consumption in China."[9] Indeed, the seventeenth century was a time when China was looking toward the South Seas not only for luxury items such as spices, forest commodities,

4. R. Ptak, *China's Seaborne Trade with South and Southeast Asia (1200–1750)* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999); Ng Chin Keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683–1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983); S. Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China: Peasants, Technology, and the World Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998); W. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984).

5. A. Reid, "Introduction," and C. Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering in Eighteenth-Century Southeast Asia," in *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies: Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1750–1900*, ed. A. Reid (London: Macmillan Press;

New York: St Martin's, 1997), 1–25, 83–101; L. Blussé, "Chinese Century: The Eighteenth Century in the China Sea Region," *Archipel* 58 (1999): 107–29.

6. Yuan Bingling, *Chinese Democracies: A Study of the Kongsis of West Borneo (1776–1884)* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2000), 45, 120.

7. Chen Chingho, "Mac Thien Tu and Phrayataksin: A Survey on Their Political Stand, Conflicts, and Background," *Proceedings of the Seventh International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) Conference* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1979), 2:1534–75; and Chen, "Hexian zhen yezhen Moshi jiapu zhushi," *Wenshizhe xuebao* (Taipei) 7 (1956): 77–139. *Kongsi* is defined in various ways by a number

of scholars. For two most recent syntheses of how the term has been understood by various Sinologists and Southeast Asian historians, see Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, introduction; Chiang Bien, "The *Kongsi*'s Past as a Foreign Country" (paper presented at the "New Perspectives on the Study of Chinese Culture and Society" workshop, 24–26 March 2003, Princeton University), www.cckf.org/PrincetonWorkshop/Bien%20Chiang.doc (accessed 5 October 2006). For the purposes of this essay, the term *kongsi* should be understood as "organization."

8. Chen, "Mac Thien Tu and Phrayataksin," 2:1534.

9. Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering," 86–87. Meanwhile, both Reid and Blussé coined "Chinese Century" to

and precious sea products but also for minerals such as gold, tin, and copper as well as bulk goods, the most crucial ones being rice and sugar. Advancing from Evelyn Rawski and Ch'uan Han-sheng, whose focus on south China has been on the rural economy or individual commodities like rice, scholars such as Ng Chin Keong, Sucheta Mazumdar, and Robert Marks have identified that by the seventeenth century, commercialized cores such as Guangdong and Fujian provinces could no longer sustain their populations without imports of foodstuff from the outside.[10] In the case of Guangdong province, the Guangxi region was literally drained to support the center at the Pearl River Delta.[11]

The need for external supplies of foodstuff was caused not so much by ecological insustainability but rather by the rapid commercialization of agriculture in the two provinces. It became more profitable for the Fujian and Guangdong people to grow more cash crops like fruit trees, sugar, and cotton and to import foodstuff.

The people from these regions also began to move to the peripheral parts of China proper such as Yunnan and neighboring areas like Taiwan and north Vietnam to exploit the mines and lands there.[12] Sarasin Viraphol and Jennifer Cushman's research has brought notice to how southeast China's need for external supplies of rice motivated emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng to implement incentives for merchants importing rice from Southeast Asia.[13]

It also appears that as China's needs for rice and other products like pepper, tin, and so on increased, rulers in the Indonesian archipelago region seeking to augment their wealth, status, and power welcomed the Chinese to engage in the production process in their realms. With the help of locally based Chinese merchants, they recruited a workforce from Fujian and Guangdong to mine, cultivate, and manufacture the commodities destined for markets in China. This happened in the case of Palembang, Java, Johor, Riau, Siam, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In the case of Borneo and Johor-Riau, it appears that opportunistic groups such as the Malays and Bugis, who could harness sufficient coercive force, would "colonize" areas in the Indonesian archipelago by gaining control and then introduce Chinese labor to exploit the region.[14]

These political aspirants had to look outside because manpower was a scarce commodity in early modern Southeast Asia. The well-tried method was to import slave labor.[15] Sources of slaves included those obtained through wars or raiding in the eastern Indonesian archipelago regions. By comparison, cooperating with the Chinese would be a cheaper option. Moreover, the Chinese, as aliens in the region, were probably preferred because they were fairly isolated and relied extensively on the courts for provisions and support, at least in the initial period. Compared with local groups, they were hardly in a position to resist demands for higher taxes or disadvantageous pricing systems.[16]

Blussé and Reid have also explained the flow of Chinese to Southeast Asia from the late seventeenth century as a factor of European arrival. To develop newly established cities such as Manila and Batavia, the Spanish and Dutch welcomed settlers to build the towns. In Dutch Formosa, or present-day Taiwan, the Dutch East India Company administrators also farmed out

refer to this dynamic period of Chinese overseas expansion into the South China Sea. See A. Reid, "Introduction," in Reid, *Asian Autonomies*; and Blussé, "Chinese Century." Trocki sees the phenomenon of "the regular settlement of sizeable communities of Chinese labourers in parts of the Malay world" to have started from the mid-eighteenth century. Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering," 83. He is dealing with the Malay world, of course, while I am looking at the whole of Southeast Asia.

10. E. Rawski, *Agricultural Change and the Peasant Economy of South China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972); and Ch'uan Han-sheng and R. Kraus, *Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade: An Essay in Price History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

11. Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society*; R. Marks, *Tiger, Rice, Silk, and Silt: Environment and Economy in Late Imperial South China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

12. Ng, *Trade and Society*; J. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering," 85–87.

13. S. Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652–1853* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); and J. Cushman, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993).

14. See C. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784–1885* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1979).

15. A. Reid, "'Closed' and 'Open' Slave Systems in Precolonial Southeast Asia," in *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. A. Reid and J. Brewster (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press; New York: St. Martin, 1983), 156–81.

16. Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering," 90–92.

lands to Chinese from Fujian to produce sugar.[17] Southeast Asia was also experiencing, with the arrival of Europeans, a greater demand for many of the region's products such as fine spices, pepper, sugar, rice, and timber.[18]

The above discusses the demand side of the mass migration story. Historians have accounted for the supply side as a matter of the Qing government's repeal of *haijin*, or ban, against maritime travel and trade in 1684, which enabled greater facility of movement for the Chinese. Another commonly cited reason for the "spurt" in Chinese migration after the 1680s was the chaotic situation in southeast China during the Ming-Qing transition. In this instance, there were two groups of migrants involved: the first were the political refugees among the Ming loyalists, and the second were the people whose lives were disrupted when the Qing state decreed the evacuation of residents along the southeast Chinese coast and their relocation and resettlement to inland areas.[19]

To explain labor flow as the imposition or repeal of *haijin* is inadequate, however, as it is with the theory on the chaotic situation of China. There had been such repeals of *haijin* before but not the massive out-migration. To account for the large outflow of population in terms of a peaceful or chaotic home situation is also problematic. Ironically, the eighteenth century—the time when historians observed an even bigger outflow of Chinese—saw one of the most glorious golden ages in Chinese history, that is, in the Qianlong reign (1735–96).

Based on the cases in Palembang, Riau, and Perak, Trocki has also suggested that "locally based Chinese merchants, often peranakan, were instrumental in initiating these settlements" and that they "probably acted as intermediaries between colonial rulers or indigenous Southeast Asian rulers and individuals in China who organized the recruitment of

Chinese labour forces."[20] The merchants were middlemen at most, and a history of mercantile activities alone could not explain the move into production activities, mostly in the more interior areas of the region, even if circumstances so allowed.

An essential question is, what made the Fujian and Guangdong people bold enough to venture out into such foreign areas? Aside from the goodwill from local authorities and Chinese merchants, what else were they equipped with to accomplish such feats? What I suggest is that the particular organizational pattern in southeast Chinese societies, which became especially dominant in the seventeenth century, constituted an important factor.

Patrilineal Kinship Organizations in Ming-Qing Southeast China

It is well established that patrilineal kinship organizations in the Fujian and Guangdong regions not only exercised judicial powers over their members but also were well trained in fighting, possessed weapons, and could thus exercise powers of coercion. Intervillage warfare in these provinces was commonly regarded as interlineage warfare. In other words, patrilineal kinship organizations functioned like mini-states. They thus attracted attention from Chinese and Japanese academics since the 1940s.[21] These historians see institutionalized agnatic kinship as an impediment to social and economic transformation and hence China's path to capitalism and also as a feudal remnant that should be eliminated or can be expected to dissolve.

The method of studying Chinese lineages in Fujian and Guangdong proposed by Maurice Freedman in the 1960s marked a paradigmatic shift in the subject. He turned attention to the issue of control over resources and away from the general focus among anthropologists of Chinese people on the rules governing the

17. Blussé, "Chinese Century," 119–21; L. Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1986), 73–96; A. Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), vol. 2.

18. D. Bulbeck, A. Reid, Tan L., and Wu Y., eds., *Southeast Asian Exports since the Fourteenth Century: Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998).

19. Reid, *Last Stand*, 11–14, 41–43; Blussé, "Chinese Century," 113–14.

20. Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering," 94, 88. In the case of Bangka and Borneo, the rulers attempted to control these Chinese colonists through food supplies. B. Andaya, *To Live as Brothers: Southeast Sumatra in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993); Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*.

21. E. Rawski, "Research Themes in Ming-Qing Socioeconomic History: The State of the Field," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50 (1991): 84–111.

principles of descent and the classification of kin. He also argued that because institutionalized patrilineal kinship served to promote mutual assistance and unity, lineages flourished in south China, where the weakness of state power encouraged the formation of social structures for mutual protection and defense.

In the past three decades, scholars studying the lineage organizations in Fujian, Guangdong, Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta, and Taiwan have advanced their research on the basis of Freedman's perspectives.[22] Inspired by Fu Yiling's approach, some of these historians collected from village to village materials such as local histories, genealogies, epigraphic materials, contracts, and so on and used them for their studies. One of their most important contributions is to historicize the lineage institution. The Confucianist literati might have espoused agnatic kinship as a social ideal for the Chinese society for centuries, but the institution became popularly adopted as a principle for social organization only from the mid-Ming period. That is, the Chinese did not generally use common descent along the male line to organize themselves since time immemorial but did so only beginning in the past few centuries.

Various reasons have been forwarded for why organization along patrifocal lineages became a general practice in southeast China by the late Ming. The belief in ancestral worship was the basis of the lineage institution in the Ming-Qing period. David Faure, Liu Zhiwei, Patricia Ebrey, and James Watson have argued that increased literacy in these societies from the Ming dynasty on enabled the more effective trickling down of neo-Confucian ideas of ancestral worship from the state and literati to the populace. It also allowed for more general use of written genealogies to certify patrilineal kinship ties.[23] Countering Freedman's views that the absence of state motivated the construction of kinship organization in the southeastern parts of China, Faure, Michael Szonyi, and Zheng Zhenman show how the Ming state's military and taxation regulations, based on the *lijia* system, which centered on the male head in every household, drove the descendents to organize themselves along agnatic kinship to share the state-imposed burden of taxation, labor service levies, and/or military conscription.[24]

It was possible for people not to register themselves with the state, as was the case with many She and Dan people in Fujian and Guangdong, and hence not be burdened by tax payment and labor service levies for the state. But members of a registered household, in exchange for shouldering these duties, enjoyed benefits the state provided, such as legal occupation of land and participation in imperial examinations, and also insulated themselves from extortion by local officials. Those whose households were not registered had no access to these privileges.[25]

Increased commercialization of agriculture in the southeastern provinces also created more pressure to reclaim alluvial lands for cultivation purposes. This situation promoted organization along the male line for people living in the coastal regions of Fujian whose household estates consisted of the rights to a stretch of foreshore or to alluvial land. Such lands were constantly altering in size and value because of flooding and reclamation efforts, hence main-

22. On Ming-Qing Fujian province, see Zheng Zhenman, *Family and Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming-Qing Fujian*, trans. Michael Szonyi (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); and Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Strategies of Descent and Lineage in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002). On Pearl River Delta and Guangdong in general, see Liu Zhiwei, *Zai guojia yu shehui zhi jian: Ming-Qing Guandong lijia fuyi zhidu yanjiu* (Guangzhou: Sun Yat-sen University, 1997); and Helen Siu and David Faure, eds., *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). On Hong Kong, see David Faure, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society: Lineage in the Eastern New Territories of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1986);

and James L. Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage: The Mans in Hong Kong and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). On Taiwan, see Burton Pasternak, *Kinship and Community in Two Chinese Villages* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972). More general works include P. Steven Sangren, "Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship," *Journal of Asian Studies* 43 (1984): 391–415; and Patricia Ebrey and James L. Watson, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

23. D. Faure, "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta," *Modern China* 15 (1989): 4–36; D. Faure and Liu Zhiwei, "Zongzu yu difang shehui de guojia rentong: Ming-Qing Huanan diqu zongzu fazhan de yishi xingtai jichu," *Lishi yan-*

jiu, no. 3 (2000): 3–14; Ebrey and Watson, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China*, especially the introduction and the essay by P. Ebrey, "The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization," 1–61. See also E. Ahern, "Segmentation in Chinese Lineages: A View through Written Genealogies," *American Ethnologist* 3 (1976): 1–16.

24. Faure, "Lineage as a Cultural Invention"; Zheng, *Family and Lineage Organization and Social Change*.

25. For elaboration on this system, see Liu Zhiwei, *Zai guojia yu shehui zhijian: Ming-Qing Guangdong lijia fuyi zhidu yanjiu* (Guangzhou, China: Sun Yat-Sen University Press, 1997).

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taining ownership through lineage organization was more viable than trying to divide the estate into equal shares.[26] In the case of Guangdong, from the mid-Ming period, rich people who owned land would lease it to tenants and profit indirectly from the cash crop cultivation. Here, groups of lineage members associated with these estates formed alliances to defend their interests, impose policing, extend their holdings, or collect rent from their tenants.[27]

Several scholars like Szonyi, Faure, and Liu have also demonstrated that as more and more people adopted patrilineal kinship as a common form of organization after the mid-Ming, new ideas and forms of institutionalizing such associations also started to spread in the southeastern parts of China. The ancestral halls—used mainly by high officials as symbols to assert their exclusivity prior to the fifteenth century—served increasingly as the sites where notions of fostering solidarity among kinsmen were played out.[28] As new rituals like *beimang*—the burning of lanterns in the ancestral hall, keeping company with the ancestral spirits through the night, and so forth—were developed for ancestral sacrifice in these halls, earlier antecedents such as mutual greetings at the Chinese lunar new year and the Lantern Festival held on the fifteenth day of the new year were not discarded but incorporated into these new rituals. Some other rituals that had been practiced in earlier times to build more cohesive kinship groups, like visiting ancestral tombs and conducting the spring (*chunji*) and autumn (*qiuji*) sacrifices, persisted.[29]

Another crucial way to enhance bonding among kinsmen was through religious rituals. By the late Ming, it became a common practice to parade the deities associated with a lineage to their ancestral hall, as manifest expression of the lineage's claim to the special protection of the deity. This phenomenon was largely a function of Ming regulations. To control popular

religious practices, the Ming state, at the outset of its existence, tied such practices to the *lijia* system and hence to the lineage. That is, the right to construct an altar to the God of the Soil (*shetan*) was devolved to the individual *lijia* household (or registered household), and hence the construction and maintenance of a deity altar or temple could become the obligation of a single lineage group.[30]

By the late seventeenth century, there emerged possibilities of multiple-lineage alliances or forms of fictive lineages. A Lan family of Wangchuan, Fuzhou, was a case in point. After the Qing tax reforms in 1690, the Lan family formed a "lineage group" together with twelve other lineages, to buy over Wu's place as a registered household in 1708. They drew up a contract specifying the distribution of ownership of the registration according to the initial investments of the thirteen participating groups. In his study of armed conflicts in local societies in coastal Fujian, Zheng also notes the formation of groupings based on principles beyond patrilineal kinship ones, that is, of multiple lineages in different villages from the late Ming to the end of the Qing dynasty. He demonstrates that the main means by which people were organized transformed from the alliance of multiple surnames in the early Qing; to the formations of *hui*, *xinghui*, and *huibang* in the mid-Qing; and to the formations of transvillage formations as the "black-white flag" versus "red-white flag" in the late Qing.

In the last case, the organizations were mobilized around deity cults like the worship of Mazu and Guandiye.[31] Indeed, while agnatic kinship came to be the principle around which individuals who had acquired registered household status in the Ming-Qing period organized themselves, religious groupings played an important role in structuring local society for all. People like the Dan who did not acquire registered household status would especially need

26. See Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship*, chap. 3; Faure, "Lineage as a Cultural Invention," 27–28.

27. D. Faure, "The Lineage as Business Company: Patronage versus Law in the Development of Chinese Business," in *Chinese Business Enterprise*, vol. 1, ed. R. Brown (New York: Routledge, 1996).

28. The establishment of ancestral halls became very common after the official endorsement during the reign of Jiajing (1521–66). See Faure and Liu, "Zongzu yu difang shehui"; and D. Faure, "Guojia yu liyi: Song zhi Qing zhongye Sanjiaozhou difang shehui de guojia rentong," *Zhongshan daxue xuebao*, no. 5 (1995): 65–72.

29. Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship*, chaps. 2, 4–5.

30. Ibid., chap. 6; Chen Chunsheng, "Xinyang kongjian yu shequ lishi de yanbian: Yi Zhanglin shenmiao xitong de yanjiu wei zhongxin," *Qingshi yanjiu*, no. 2 (1999): 1–13.

31. Zheng Zhenman, "Qingdai Minnan xiangzu xiedou de yanbian," *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi yanjiu*, no. 1 (1998): 16–23.

temple organizations as channels to dialogue with the state. In the early nineteenth century for instance, through the Shangshu Miao (Temple of the Minister) located in Yangqi village, Fuzhou, the Dan people in Fuzhou, Fujian, petitioned to the local magistrate against a local bully who demanded money from them.[32] In his study of two key temples—the Dongyue Guan and Donglai Si—in the Jiangkou plains in Putian, Fujian, Zheng also demonstrates how these not only were entities for religious worship but also served as social institutions during the Qing and Republican period. They managed the irrigation system, resolved disputes, and established schools, orphanages, elderly homes, burial societies, and other cultural and charitable activities in the Jiangkou plains.[33]

The first Ming emperor had decreed that only the officially sponsored deity cults such as Baosheng Dadi (Great Emperor Protecting Life), Qingshui Zushi (Patriarch of the Clear Stream), Wenchang Dijun (Imperial Sovereign Wenchang or God of Literature), Mazu or Tianhou (Goddess of the Sea), Guandi (God of War), Shuangzhong Gong (God of Double Loyalty), and so on were legal. He also limited the worship of cosmic spirits such as the grain and soil spirits, and those "wandering spirits" that did not have anyone to attend to them, to the registered households. Nonetheless, these regulations did not stop other forms of belief completely. Though Sanshan Guowang (King of the Three Mountains) was never admitted as an orthodox cult throughout the Ming-Qing period, it was not destroyed either during the various official raids and suppression of "unorthodox cults" and continued to be very popular among the Hoklo- and Hakka-speaking peoples in east

Guangdong. Deity cults sponsored by the state were embraced by the populace only if the latter considered that the deities had displayed their prowess. Witness for instance the popularity of the Shuangzhong Gong Temple as opposed to Wenchang Temple in the Chaozhou prefecture during the late Qing period. Dean and Chen Chunsheng also note that the people probably saw deities as closer to them than were the state and the emperor, as beings they could converse with and from whom they could seek help more directly in the forms of praying, divination, mediation through spirit medium, and so on.[34]

Both ancestral and deity worship thus functioned as crucial institutions around which the Fujian and Guangdong people were organized during the Ming-Qing period. Zheng also traced how they began to be equipped with means of violence from the mid-Ming period. The increase in piracy and banditry at the coastal regions of southeast China from the mid-sixteenth century, lasting for about six decades, forced the populations to arm and defend themselves. The militarization process was further enhanced when the local societies in Fujian and Guangdong were involved in the battles between the emerging Qing state power and Ming loyalists like the Zheng Chenggong family. The people generally organized themselves through the structures of lineage and temple organizations.[35]

To sum up, what historians on Chinese social groupings collectively show is how patrilineal kinship or common descent along the male line *became* a dominant organizational principle, real or fictive, based on the worship of imagined or real ancestors as well as particular deities, during the Ming-Qing period.[36] Basically, the

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32. Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship*, 191–94.

33. Zheng Zhenman, "Shenmiao jidian yu shequ fazhan moshi: Putian Jiangkou pingyuan de lizheng," *Shilin*, no. 1 (1995): 33–47, 111.

34. Some of these deities were worshipped by people across the southeastern region, while others had more specific constituencies in specific prefectures and counties. For details, see K. Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); J. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: the Promotion of Tien Hou (Empress of Heaven) along the South China Coast, 960–1960," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. D. Johnson, A. Nathan, and E. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 292–324; Chen Chunsheng, "Mingmo

Dongnan yanhai shehui zhongjian yu xiangshen zhijuese: Yi Lin Dachun yu Chaozhou Shuangzhong gong xinyang de guanxi wei zhongxin," *Zhongshan daxue xuebao*, no. 4 (2002): 35–43; and Chen Chunsheng, "Zhengtong xing, difang hua yu wenhua de chuangzhi: Chaozhou minjian shen xinyang de xiangzheng yu lishi yiyi," *Shixue yuekan*, no. 1 (2001): 123–33.

35. Zheng Zhenman. "Qingdai Minnan xiangzu jiedou de yanbian," *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi yanjiu*, no. 1 (1998): 16–23. Zheng has argued that there was an apparent transition in the forms of groupings from patrilineal kinship lineages to temple organizations, though he has qualified that one should observe how the actual historical circumstances unfold in different spaces and times.

36. Comparative research of the social organizations in various parts of China also shows that the popularization of agnatic kinship for organizational purposes occurred only in the southeast Chinese region. Patrilineal kinship institution experienced a different historical trajectory in North China. See M. Cohen, "Lineage Organization in North China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 49 (1990): 509–34.

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main direction taken in these recent studies on patrilineal kinship organization in Fujian and Guangdong is to discuss relations between the state and society, between the elite—including the gentry and commercial elite—and commoners. Although some of these scholars have identified the movement of some of these people overseas and the importance of financial contribution from the migrants, there is not much exploration of the impact of lineage organization beyond the research in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.[37] Still, for the purposes of this discussion, the works by the Sinologists in recent decades give various insights on lineage organizations, beyond how they operated like mini-states. First, they historicize lineage, showing that rather than being an essential quality from time immemorial, it *acquired* predominance in southeast Chinese societies in the Ming-Qing period. Second, they show how both ancestral worship and deity cults were integral to the institutionalization of lineage ties. These scholars also demonstrate that there developed the possibility for fictive kinship from the late seventeenth century and that both ancestral and deity worship operated as key galvanizing forces in Chinese society by the late Qing dynasty.

Chinese Organizations in Southeast Asia

Studies on various Chinese groupings—clan associations, *hui*s, *huiguan*s, *kongsi*s, secret societies, and temple organizations—in Southeast Asia are basically broken up in terms of the regions and historical periods. Research is mostly done on those groupings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, admittedly because of the availability of more sources, and not much comparison is made with the little that is written on the developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moreover, what is known about these organizations in British-ruled Singapore-Malaya is hardly interpreted along with that in Dutch-ruled Indonesia and also the French-

dominated Indochinese peninsula. As such, a lot of case studies have been accumulated, but works collating the findings of these associations and analyzing them as a whole across broader time and space are few.

To explain why the Chinese had formed these organizations, various scholars proposed that they were following "tradition" or that they did so for purposes of mutual support, which was especially necessary to survive under the rule of foreign governments and among people whose languages and cultures were unintelligible and so on.[38] Wang Tai Peng, Trocki, and Yuan have especially tried to contest the negative image cast by various colonial administrators on the Ngee Heng Kongsi, Lanfang Kongsi, the Heshun Assembly (Heshun Zongting), and other societies, arguing that they were self-help groups providing mutual support equivalent to present-day social welfare agencies. Wang and Yuan also celebrated these organizations as "incipient democracies" that Chinese people were capable of in contexts where there were no terrorizing state powers at work.[39]

In this section I offer a synthesis of existing studies on the Chinese organizations in Southeast Asia from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth century, specifically, to delineate their main characteristics and discern the principles of their formation. More focus is placed on integrating materials on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries since these centuries are better discussed and known. At the end of this section and in the next, I propose ways to understand how these organizations came about beyond reasons of "tradition" and "democratic" spirit, which some historians have proposed.

With regard to the Chinese migration to the Philippines, Batavia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Siam in the seventeenth century, not much is documented about where they came from and how they were organized. What is known is that Mac Cuu was from Leizhou, Guangdong; Tak-

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37. Szonyi, for instance, has noted the overseas Chinese financial support for the ancestral halls and lineage organizations in Fuzhou. See Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship*, 90–91. Also see Chen, "Zhengtong xing," 126, 131.

38. Yen Ching-hwang, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations in Singapore and Malaya, 1819–1911," in *Early Chinese Immigrant Societies: Case Studies from North America and British Southeast Asia*, ed. Lee Lai To (Singapore: Heinemann, 1988), 186–87. Maurice Freedman, "Immigrants and Associations in Nineteenth Century Singapore," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3 (1960/1961): 25–48.

39. Wang Tai Peng, *The Origins of Chinese Kongsi* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelandok, 1994); C. Trocki, "The Rise and Fall of the Ngee Heng Kongsi in Singapore," in *Secret Societies Reconsidered: Perspectives on the Social History of Modern South China and Southeast Asia*, ed. D. Ownby and M. Heidhues (Armonk, NJ: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 89–119; and Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*.

sin's father, Zheng Yong, was a native of Huafu village in Chenghai, Chaozhou; Wu Rang was from Xixing village in Haicheng, Zhangzhou; and their followers tended to be Cantonese, Teochews, and Hokkiens, respectively.[40] Starting only from the mid-eighteenth century does one have a better sense of the origins of the Chinese migrants and how they were organized.

For instance, many Chinese who went to west Borneo in the 1760s and 1770s were from Chaozhou, Jiayingzhou, and Huizhou in eastern Guangdong and southern Fujian.[41] In a 1858 census by the Dutch colonial state, the Chinese settlers in west Borneo were mainly of Hakka, Hoklo, Bendi (the original people of Guangdong province), and Hokkien origin. They came from very specific regions in Guangdong and Fujian, namely, the districts of Jieyang, Huilai, Puning, Fengshun, Dapu, and Chaozhou in Chaozhou prefecture; the districts of Lufeng, Haifeng, Guishan, Heyuan, Longzhuan, and Wengyuan in Huizhou prefecture; the districts of Jiaying, Zhenping, Changle, and Pingyuan in Jiayingzhou prefecture; the districts of Guangzhou, Xinning, Panyu, and Conghua from Guangzhou prefecture, and so on.

Equally interesting is how these men were organized into a number of *kongsi*s occupying very specific areas in west Borneo. Dagang Kongsi, based west and southwest of Montrado in the 1770s, was made up mostly of people bearing the surnames Wu, Huang, and Zheng and originating from Huilai and Lufeng; Lintian Kongsi, based in Budok, consisted of people with the family names Zhang, Cai, Liu, and Huang from Jieyang, and so on.[42] More details could also be derived from the cases of the Malay Peninsula in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Late-nineteenth-century Singapore, as the regional commercial center and also the transit point for Chinese workers going to plantations and mines in the region and also other parts of the world, had a more diversified Chinese community. But, otherwise, Chinese populations appeared to arrive in pockets and largely settled near people from their same village and even lineage. This was certainly the case for Sarawak.[43] Whereas the dominant population in the First and Second Divisions of Sarawak was the Hakkas in the early twentieth century, the people living in the Third Division were mostly Foochow and Cantonese people. The last two groups were introduced in the 1900s when the second white rajah of Sarawak signed contracts with Wong Nei Siang and Tan Chia Shang separately to open up the district. Wong, a Foochow man, brought about 970 people, many of his own surname and all from Foochow. Tan, who was granted eight thousand acres to grow peppers, brought in about five hundred Cantonese in four groups. In 1911 a Methodist missionary named Brest also arrived with a group of 105 Henghua people and subsequently another group of Foochow people.[44]

While there appears to be a dialect division at play, closer study reveals that in almost every dialect group, a number of lineages were in dominance. In the Chao An Association in the First Division, people bearing the surnames T'ien, Shen, and Chen dominated the association. Moreover, the T'iens were mainly from the same lineage. In the Henghua Association, people with surnames Chen, Cheng, Ho, Kuo, Chang, Fang, and Cho dominated the association. Moreover, though the name of the organization connoted that they were from the same county, they in fact came from the same village in China.[45]

In general, it is fairly well documented that these Chinese social organizations provided welfare services. Data from the eighteenth century show that the organizations provided food and shelter for newcomers for a certain period of time. From the nineteenth- and twentieth-century cases, it is seen that these societies pro-

40. Chen, "Mac Thien Tu and Phrayataksin," 1535–39.

41. Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 27, 41.

42. See ibid., 30–31; cited in S. H. Schaank, "De kongsis van Montrado: Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de kennis van het wezen der Chinesche vereeninigen op de westkust van Borneou," *Tijdschrift voor Indische taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 35 (1893): 498–612.

43. Readers might be wondering why I keep focusing on certain works. Whereas many researchers working on the history of the Chinese in the Southeast Asian region tend to classify "Chinese" as an analytic category on its own, T'ien Ju-kang, probably because he is Chinese himself, is more aware of the divisions among the Chinese and examines carefully the precise prefecture, village, lineage, and so on of the subjects. There are also many good works on the Chinese in Singapore. Unfortunately, as I have explained, the case in Singapore is not so representative because of its highly urban nature, with a very dense and fluid Chinese population.

44. T'ien Ju-kang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure* (London: London School of Economics, 1953), 146–47.

45. Ibid., 29.

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vided material support for the members in times of illness, unemployment, and death. They also sent back poor and old migrants or provided for their burials. Material assistance was also given to new members who just arrived in Southeast Asia. The associations would provide for their lodging, food, and clothes and help them find employment. They also settled disputes on their members' behalf. As there arrived more women migrants and more families were formed, some of these organizations also mediated marriage certification and promoted education. In general, the premises of these societies were centers of social activities where migrants could play mahjong, read newspapers, and so on.[46]

While these organizations provided protection and support for Chinese migrants, they also held sway over them. Not only did the leaders of the groups administer jurisdiction, and at times even death sentences, but they also mobilized their members to protect the groups' politico-economic interests.[47] In other words, many of these organizations possessed realpolitik strength. So strong was the power of such organizations that when one group had occupied a region, the other would not be able to touch it without much conflict. The Heshun Assembly, an alliance of fourteen mining organizations in Montrado including Dagang and Lintian Kongsis, was formed in 1776 to resist the pressure from agriculturalists in west Borneo. The miners had to buy foodstuff from these agriculturalists, who were apparently members of the Tiandihui society and allegedly monopolized the sales of provisions, behaved in a domineering way toward the miners, and even abducted the miners' local wives.[48] The mining organizations joined forces to attack the Tiandihui, killing the leader and five hundred of their members. They subsequently competed for gold mines with the Lanfang Kongsi Assembly, when armed conflicts were common. The latter, also an alliance of mining organizations, was formed in 1777 and based in Mandor.[49]

Some nineteenth-century Dutch colonial officials like Andresen also suggested that these mining organizations were established to bind themselves against the coastal rulers and Dayak people. The gold mines were generally situated inland, and some of these places were settled and cultivated by the Dayak people. Conflicts became unavoidable. In principle, the coastal rulers, usually Malays and Bugis, who had sold the license to the Chinese miners, were also responsible for their safety and helped to resolve disputes over mining sites. During times of conflict, however, the rulers would sometimes play the two groups against each other and reap advantages from the situation. Any request for help from the Chinese, it was understood, had to be accompanied by gifts.[50]

Certainly, when the contestation was against powerful interests like the colonial state, these societies sought to avoid open conflict where possible. However, in cases when the European authorities tried to take over immovable assets such as gold and tin mines, the Chinese organizations would not let them go without a good fight. Witness for instance what happened when the Dutch tried to take over the west Borneo gold mines and also when the British tried to take over the tin mines in the Malay Peninsula.

It was the organizations' ability to exercise coercive powers and also to mobilize the Chinese masses, an equivalent to mini-state authorities, which was alarming to the colonial powers in the late nineteenth century. At this juncture, the European authorities were generally interested in taking greater control over Southeast Asia in line with their aims for more direct economic exploitation in plantation agriculture and mining ventures. The colonial coinage of *imperium in imperio* for these Chinese societies is not coincidental. Considering that these organizations had existed since the late seventeenth century, they had in fact survived for two centuries before the colonial crackdown. After the European suppression, their abilities to wield

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46. Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 206–17; Freedman, "Immigrants and Associations," 72–75. See, for instance, T'ien, *Chinese of Sarawak*, 10–11, which provides an account of an individual who remained poor in Sarawak despite having labored for twenty-four years.

47. Freedman, "Immigrants and Associations."

48. Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 42–44.

49. Ibid.

50. Cited in ibid., 39–40.

coercive powers were played down but did not completely disappear.[51]

The question is, what were the principles of organization for these Chinese groupings? How did they bind people together, and what means did they use to mobilize people? Based on the studies on the Chinese groupings in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, and French Indochina, Freedman argued that the Chinese organizations were mainly formed upon the solidarity between men bearing the same surname and between men originating from the same area or dialect group in China, or what he called the "surname" and "territorial-dialect" loyalties.[52] These categorizations are problematic, however, since numerous cross-surname, cross-territorial, and cross-dialect organizations existed and the cases were too numerous to be mere anomalies and exceptions. The fact that hybrids could be formed shows that while "surname" and "territorial-dialect" associations might be more common types, they certainly were not the principles that bound these groupings.

I suggest that there were two principles of organization. The first is deity worship. Central to these organizations are the cult and rituals around particular deities such as the Tudi Gong (Earth God), Fude Zhengshen or Dabo Gong, Sanshan Guowang, Mazu or Tianhou, Guandi, Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy), and so on. Practically all the Chinese organizations, be they clan associations, secret societies, *huis*, or *kongsis*, had temples that worshipped particular deities, what Yen termed the "protector gods."[53] "The [Chinese] people firmly believed that if they did not worship appropriate protectors, protection would not be rendered when it was needed."[54]

The deity cult bound people in several ways. It is around the belief in various Chinese deities that sanctions and discipline were imposed and important activities conducted. According to studies of west Borneo and Singapore in the

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, disciplinary measures imposed on cult members and important decisions such as dates to go to war were "dictated" by the deities, "conveyed" through the spirit mediums as *jitong*.[55] That is, it was the gods' will that legitimized these acts. Recruitment ceremonies also tended to be held as part of cult rituals. Dutch colonial officials E. A. Francis and S. H. Schaank noted that in nineteenth-century west Borneo, the mining organizations would organize an entrance ceremony for new members and demand that they swear an oath of allegiance to the Dabo Gong of the association and also contribute a sum of money to the treasury. The entrance ceremony took place once a year, on the dates of the annual rituals of the various cults.[56]

In cases when various organizations formed an alliance or when a society had various branches, the establishment of a mother temple was a must. With the amalgamation of the fourteen *kongsis* to establish the Heshun Assembly in Montrado, the mother temple of the assembly housed Guangong as the main deity, and all new recruits were admitted on the thirteenth day of the fifth month, the birthday of the deity.[57] The mother temple of the Ghee Hin Kongsi—shifted to Rochor Road in the 1870s—held its nine branches together, even when they subsequently formed their own temples. It was in the temple where the settlement of disputes among the members and branches as well as trials of offenders from among the group took place. Named the Five Tiger Shrine (Wuhu Ci), this temple remained the center of Ghee Hin's life until the latter was suppressed under the colonial law in 1890.[58]

Present-day ethnographic accounts of temple rituals in Tainan also suggest that they had social performative functions. Fiorella Allio's discussion of the *koah-hiu* processions in Tainan describes how these rituals foster solidarity among the members, carve out territo-

51. Further tension with the newly formed nation-states after the 1950s would diminish their prowess even more, though this is not the center of discussion in this section.

52. Freedman, "Immigrants and Associations."

53. W. Franke, "Notes on Chinese Temples and Deities in Northwestern Borneo," in *Religion and Philosophie in Ostasien*, ed. G. Naundorf, K. Pohl, and H. Schmidt

(Würzburg: Konigshausen, 1985), 267–90; Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 9–10, 33–37; Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations."

54. Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 210.

55. See Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 35–36.

56. Schaank, *De kongsis van Montrado*, 85–90. Cited in Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 21–22, 33, 38.

57. Yuan, *Chinese Democracies*, 38. Here Yuan wrongly stated that the birth date of Guangong was in the eighth month.

58. Freedman, "Immigrants and Associations," 68, 71; David K. Y. Chng, *Heroic Images of Ming Loyalists: A Study of the Spirit Tablets of the Ghee Hin Kongsi Leaders in Singapore* (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1999).

ries for the temple communities, and reaffirm relationships of alliance with other communities—both symbolically and sociologically.[59] The Chenghuang temple rituals in contemporary Singapore and Malaysia appear to conduct similar processions.[60] Documents from nineteenth-century Singapore also show reports that ritualistic processions by various societies often sparked off conflicts, particularly when they crossed over the symbolic boundaries of other temples and societies.[61]

The second principle of organization of Chinese societies in Southeast Asia is the recognition of common ancestors. The ancestral worship in a clan is not the same as that at individual home altars in Chinese families. The former involves the worship of clan ancestors, whereas the latter worship direct ancestors, usually determined by the grandparents or great-grandparents. Commenting on the difference between the two, Yen remarks, "Unlike ancestral worship in the family shrine which was used as a device for emotional relief, ancestral worship in the clan represented efforts to bring all clansmen spiritually closer to their origins, and to express their gratitude to the progenitor. At the same time, the worship produced a psychological impact on the members' attitudes towards the descent line, and helped them to increase their awareness of their duty to the clan."[62] Their most important activities were the biannual sacrifices—the spring and autumn sacrifices. These rituals were held in the clan temple, usually located within the premises of the clan association, and followed by a feast attended by all members. For those with clan cemeteries, they would also organize group pilgrimages to these sites during the Qingming (Clear and Bright) festival. At times of *crises de passage*,

such as weddings and funerals, representatives of all members must be invited, too.[63]

The above paragraph is derived from discussions on clan associations, but the information in fact describes the situation in all the organizations that endorsed a form of ancestral worship. Organizations formed on the basis of real clans, that is, whose members were descendants of a common male ancestor, would worship their common ancestor, usually the founder of the parental clans in south China, and also other prominent ancestors and their wives.[64]

They were not the only ones to do so, however. Surname groupings might be called "fictive clans" as they were normally formed among people of the same surname but not the same lineage. In many instances, they were also from different parts of Fujian and Guangdong provinces and spoke different dialects. What happened was that the members would name a figure bearing the same surname as the members to be the "ancestor," or what Zeng Ling calls the "fictitious ancestor."[65]

Under what circumstances did people from different lineages and backgrounds decide to acknowledge a common forefather? T'ien Ju-kang's findings in Sarawak in the late 1940s offer the most elaborate details. A clan association was formed between two T'ien lineages in Sarawak in the early twentieth century.[66] These two lineages were not related by blood. They even came from different parts of south China and spoke different languages. One of the T'ien lineages originated from Zhao'an, Fujian, and spoke a mixed Hokkien-Teochew language called the Zhao'an dialect. Most of them were wharf-labourers but a number of them engaged in commerce and were relatively wealthy and powerful in Sarawak. Members of

59. F. Allio, "Spatial Organization in a Ritual Context: A Preliminary Analysis of the *Koah-hiu* Processional System of the Tainan Region and Its Social Significance," in *Belief, Ritual, and Society*, ed. Lin Meirong (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 2003), 131–77.

60. Xu Liying, "Xinjiapo qiucai ba Chenghuang miao de zongjiao wenhua" (master's thesis, National University of Singapore, 2002); Cheu Hock Tong, "Analysis of the Nine Emperor Gods Spirit-Medium Cult in Malaysia" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1982).

61. Edwin Lee, *The British as Rulers Governing Multiracial Singapore, 1867–1914* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1991).

62. Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 207.

63. T'ien, *Chinese of Sarawak*, 38–39; Zeng Ling, "Fenshan zuzhi, shequn gongzu yu bangqun zhenghe: Shijiu shiji de Xinjiapo Huaren shehui," *Asian Culture* 24 (2000): 122–37; Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 197, 207–9. Yen also noted that in Southeast Asia, because there were no seasonal changes, the sacrifices took place in months ranging from March to October.

64. Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 206–7.

65. Zeng Ling, "Xuni xianren yu shijiu shiji Xinjiapo Huaren shehui: Jianlun haiwai Huaren de 'qingshu' gainian," *Huaqiao Huaren lishi yanjiu*, no. 4 (2001): 30–39.

66. The fact that T'ien has the same surname as them made it easier for him to win their trust and conduct interviews with them.

the other T'ien lineage originated from Hui-lai, Guangdong, and spoke the Hakka dialect. These Huilai T'iens were mostly agriculturalists or engaged in small-scale trade.[67]

> At the Qingming festival, for example, it is always a joint Zhao'an and Huilai party that performs the ceremony of sweeping the ancestral tombs. It appears that this linkage was first made several years ago at the instigation of the Huilai group who desired to cash in on their connexion with the rich and influential T'iens [among the members of the Zhao'an lineage] in Kuching. As the two groups do not possess a common ancestor (and even if such a one had existed he would not have died in Sarawak), there cannot possibly be a common ancestral tomb.
>
> The difficulty was not insurmountable. In 1925 a special mock tomb—containing, of course, no corpse—was constructed in the Zhao'an cemetery. This monument was carefully inscribed with a reference to the origin of the T'ien surname group in China, and an expression of hope for continued prosperity "by all the descendants who worshipped here together and erected this tomb in the 7th lunar month of the year 1923."[68]

T'ien Ju-kang does not tell the personal details of the individual acknowledged as ancestor by the two lineages and how far his qualities enabled his ascension as a forefather to both groups. What this case does show in a most explicit way is that whoever the individual might be, so long as different groups of people regarded him so, he would be their ancestor. The person, or rather the rituals surrounding the worship of the individual, could be a galvanizing force. This case also shows that it was not the ancestor per se who was important but the socioeconomic aims such connections of brotherhood, through the recognition of a common forefather, could achieve that were desirable.

What is also very interesting is that organizations formed on the basis of multiple affiliations also installed their ancestors. These included associations that some British colonial officials had classified as "secret societies"—that is, a category outside of clan associations. For instance, the Ngee Hin Kongsi—named as one of the most notorious secret societies in nineteenth-century colonial Singapore—worshipped their leaders and also some officeholders as ancestors in the shrines of the main and branch societies.[69] More research is needed. A preliminary survey shows that they were not quite the same as the others. It seems to be a form of heroic worship rather than ancestor worship but still had all the trappings of the latter.

The centrality of the institutions of deity and ancestral cults is accentuated by the fact that many Chinese associations and societies in Southeast Asia started off as temples or as ancestral worship or burial organizations. For instance, the predecessor of the Sanshui clan association was the Sanshui burial organization, while that for the Hainanese clan association in Singapore was a temple worshipping Mazu and was named Qiongzhou (Hainan) Tianhou gong (Hainanese Temple for the Goddess of the Sea). A Huang clan in Melaka started out as the Kang Har Ancestral Temple.[70] In newly established ports that attracted Chinese migrants, their first meeting points were temples, for instance, Yue-hai Qingmiao and Tianfu Gong (Thian Hock Kheng) in early-nineteenth-century Singapore and also the Duong Thuong Hoi Quan (Temple of the Ocean Merchants) in Hoi An in the seventeenth century. This last temple also served as the channel through which regulations were made known to the Chinese newcomers.[71]

What is noteworthy is that the endorsement of the deity and ancestral cults was not mutually exclusive. Most Chinese organizations embraced both aspects rather than chose one against the other. By definition, very few of these organizations were real clans in the sense that they were from the same lineage. Very few members were real kinsmen. But all of them formed

67. T'ien Ju-kang has used the Wade-Giles system for transliteration of Chinese words in his book. In this essay, I have used pinyin for the transliteration of place-names but retained the Wade-Giles transliteration for the surnames because I could not verify the exact Chinese characters for these names.

68. T'ien, *Chinese of Sarawak*, 40–41.

69. Chng, *Heroic Images*.

70. Ibid., 9; Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations," 188–90; Zeng, "Fenshan zuzhi."

71. Li Tana, "Eighteenth Century Cash-Crop Production and the Chinese in the Lower Mekong Region" (paper presented at the Second Water Frontier workshop, Phuket, Thailand, February 2006).

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a brotherhood connection, whether via the lineage principle—be it fictive or real—and/or via a deity cult.[72] That is, fraternal linkages were forged through worship rituals to a common ancestor, fictive or otherwise, and/or to a common deity. This sense of brotherhood in turn provided the migrants with immediate support and help in an alien environment.

In the earlier historical period, it appears to have enabled and emboldened the Fujian and Guangdong people to leave their homeland together for Southeast Asia. By the nineteenth century, many of these institutions had consolidated sufficiently to enable migrants who left on their own to find immediate help when they arrived in a foreign place.[73] The usual case seems to be those who came knowing their brothers, cousins, fathers, uncles, and the like were there, and they would tend to join the groupings of which their relatives were members. Thus, aside from the help from direct kinsmen, there would also be support from a larger network.

From the way they developed through history, such brotherhood networks appear to have had the flexibility to grow or shrink as befitted the circumstances. The smaller mining organizations could amalgamate and form alliances in the likes of Heshun Zongting and Lanfang Kongsi to defend their politico-economic interests against the menacing Dayak cultivators and coastal rulers, while the Huilai T'ien men could seek the T'ien people from Zhao'an to form a clan association, if only for reasons of getting security from big *towkays*. Some branch groupings of Ngee Hin Kongsi could also promptly break away and transform themselves into "friendly associations" when the British colonial authorities labeled the mother organization "dangerous" and persecuted it in 1890. The Hainanese branch of Ghee Hin, which survived as the Hainan clan association, was a case in point.[74]

Indeed, the very basis of politico-economic interests is a warning against oversanguinity toward the encompassment of these organizations. They were not all inclusive, and not meant to be. The very formation of groups entails that there was an attempt to shut some out as much as to allow some in, to establish an in-group versus an out-group. In this regard, Wang, Trocki, and Yuan would seem to have romanticized these organizations as "democracies" that Chinese people were capable of establishing overseas. Perhaps a more fruitful exercise would be to analyze how they facilitated the mobility and economic expansion of Fujian and Guangdong migrants in Southeast Asia.

Integration

Synthesizing the information above, it is observed that the period from the late seventeenth century saw the confluence of various developments. First, as a result of the rapid commercialization of agriculture, it became more profitable for the people in southeast China to grow more cash crops like fruit trees, sugar, and cotton and to import foodstuff. They did so, not only from other Chinese provinces, but also from outside China. At this point, the Middle Kingdom needed not only luxury items such as birds' nests and sea cucumbers from the South Seas but also bulk goods such as rice and sugar. The period from the late seventeenth century was also a juncture when Southeast Asia was experiencing, with the European arrival, a greater demand for many of the region's products, such as fine spices, pepper, sugar, rice, and timber.

These circumstances coincided with the predominance of organizations formed along agnatic kinship lines in the Fujian and Guangdong provinces during the Ming period. By the early Qing, people in these regions organized and mobilized themselves along not only patrifocal lineage but also by pseudo-lineage affiliations and temple cult communities.

This combination of factors arguably fired the massive migration of Fujian and Guangdong people from the seventeenth century, not only to the border areas of China such as Yunnan, Taiwan, and Vietnam, but also to the Philippines, the Mekong Delta region, Batavia, Borneo, the

72. Note that it is "brotherhood" because only males were allowed to be members. In Singapore, this situation changed after the 1970s, when women were allowed to be members provided they fulfilled other membership criteria.

73. Here of course the reference is to free migrants and not to those coerced to become coolies. But free migrants rather than indentured laborers would appear to be the majority based on oral archival records.

74. Chng, *Heroic Images*, 3–58.

Gulf of Siam, Bangka, Riau, Palembang, the Malay Peninsula, and so on. While economic interaction between coastal China and Southeast Asia had been ongoing for centuries, the period from the late seventeenth century witnessed the movements of labor and capital from southeast China into the production process in Southeast Asia, specifically in mining and cash-crop production.

Various rulers and other political aspirants in Southeast Asia, striving to augment their wealth, status, and power in these times of opportunities, not only opened their doors to the Chinese workforce but also were actively procuring them. Compared with slave laborers from the region, the Chinese were more easily acquired and ultimately cheaper. Compared with the regional free migrants like the Bugis and Mandarese from Sulawesi, these East Asian counterparts were seen to be easier to manage and less likely to revolt against heavy taxation or attempt to topple the regime. This was true at least during the initial period.

Indeed, the way early labor migrants from Fujian and Guangdong to Southeast Asia organized themselves bore very definite features. More specifically, these groupings had a package deal similar to that offered by the lineage organizations in the southeastern parts of China: they provided welfare for their members, exercised judicial authority over them, and also had the powers to mobilize them for the groups' interests—whether through military or unarmed means. Compared with China, there were probably more formations based on cross-dialect, cross-territorial, cross-surname organizations than on real clan organizations in Southeast Asia. That is, there were more pseudo-lineage rather than real lineage organizations. But all these centered on a sense of brotherhood, fraternal relations, hinged on deity and/or ancestral worship and performed through rituals around them.

Looking at the developments in southeast China, it makes sense why there was a particular timing of a more massive outflow of Chinese to Southeast Asia, why they tended to stick to certain affiliations, and why they had the ability to exercise coercion. Contrary to what many Southeast Asianists and overseas Chinese historians have argued, the organizations the Chinese formed were not a matter of their following traditions from time immemorial or a question of their self-defense in a hostile, alien environment. Rather, such formations, especially the agnatic kinship organizations, became predominant in the southeast Chinese societies in the Ming-Qing period. They were the strategies developed in response to the Chinese state's demands on taxation, military conscription, and labor service levies as well as the rapid commercialization leading to various economic opportunities. They lent themselves beautifully for movements of larger groups of people to work in foreign lands. Following the historical trajectory, they enabled Fujian and Guangdong Chinese to open up and exploit new mines and reclaim lands, whether in the provinces themselves or in Yunnan, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. If there was any "tradition" involved in the way the Chinese formed such organizations, there was a history to it.

Sinologists in recent decades have tended to study social groupings such as patrilineal kinship and temple organizations to understand the nature and evolution of the relationship and contestation between the Chinese state and society, between the elite and the commoner. The implications of what they found are larger than state-society and gentry-populace contestations, however. On the basis of agnatic kinship, pseudo-agnatic kinship, and/or temple organizations, the Fujian and Guangdong Chinese could engage in a kind of economic expansion. Comparing the notes of Sinologists with those of Southeast Asian historians, these associations had apparently facilitated economic activities, especially for massive labor movements, whether to other parts of China or overseas.

Whatever forms they took and whatever names they called themselves or were given—*huiguan, hui, kongsi, zongting,* secret societies, or friendly associations—these organizations centered on a sense of fraternity, hinged on deity and/or ancestral worship, and performed through rituals around these cults. The structure of self-help and mutual support they provided made it conceivable for people to go to foreign places where they did not speak the languages or understand the cultures. The mechanisms to exercise discipline and jurisdiction over the members and to mobilize them for

coercive purposes empowered these organizations to hold their own, to a large extent, against repressive regimes and other competing forces. These elements developed into maturity in the Ming-Qing period in Fujian and Guangdong and gave rise to the phenomenon of what some scholars have called the "Chinese Century" in Southeast Asia.

Putting these research findings together also enables a semblance of understanding how the Chinese had been able to acquire economic dominance in Southeast Asia. They might not have enjoyed support from the state. However, the package deal provided by such organizations—welfare services, judicial authority, armed forces—rendered them equivalent to mini-state authorities. Anthropological works on contemporary Taiwanese and Southeast Asian societies also indicate how temple rituals and processions not only are ways to bind members but also serve to carve out the territories of the ritual communities, both symbolically and sociologically.

In other words, what seems to have happened was that the Fujian and Guangdong migrants ventured out to other parts of China and Southeast Asia in "pockets of empire." One sees here a kind of sociocultural capital that enabled them to form small tribelike groups, organized around various forms of loyalties (lineage, surname, locality, dialect, etc.), all centering around a kind of fraternal imagination and institutionalized through mechanisms of deity and ancestral worship. And the Chinese from the two provinces did so, in great numbers, over the course of two to three centuries. This multitude of small groups spread across Southeast Asia over time, forming many *imperium in imperio* in the region. This form of organization had a particular flexibility. It enabled expansion through the formation of alliances with other groups, via the construction of fictive kinship or brotherhood ties, as in the case of the establishment of Heshun Assembly and Lanfang Zongting Assembly in west Borneo in the 1770s. The reverse was also true: this form of organization let ties fade away when they were no longer necessary, as in the disintegration of Ngee Hin in Singapore through British colonial suppression in the late nineteenth century.

Thus, without state sponsorship as in the case of European traders and companies, the Fujian and Guangdong people could expand their economic activities on an extensive scale to Southeast Asia from the seventeenth century on. The particular social organizational ability that became widespread in seventeenth-century Fujian and Guangdong, hinged on ancestral and deity worship, was the engine that fired their expansion. It allowed for their expansion without the aid of the Chinese state.

This essay is only a preliminary attempt to sketch the broad outlines and indicate the significance of the inquiries in the direction of integrating studies of social organizations in the southeastern parts of China and Southeast Asia. Certainly, one must still look into the exact developments in the southeastern parts of China that enabled the migration of the Fujian and Guangdong people to Southeast Asia in groups from the seventeenth century and possibly discern the intermediate institutions that facilitated the movements. Also observed in this essay is that both in southeast China and Southeast Asia, alliances of multiple surnames and territorial-dialect groupings started to evolve from the mid-Qing period. Detailed research is needed to systematically compare the phenomenon in these two regions to sort out the possible relations and differences between them. More could also be done to investigate how far a kind of "organizational revolution" had occurred in southeastern China, which enabled a different form of capitalism than did the industrial revolution in Western Europe, and to examine the contrast and implications of the pocketlike diffusion of the capital and labor from southeast China versus the East India Company structural forms of the European economic expansion to Southeast Asia. ꙅ