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## **Chan She Shu Yuen: The Cantonese Ancestral Clan in Malaysia as Transnational Social Support Network**

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# **Chan She Shu Yuen: The Cantonese Ancestral Clan in Malaysia as Transnational Social Support Network**

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## **Abstract**

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Chinese clan associations can be found in many parts of the world, due to the Chinese emigration from mainland China in the 1800s. This paper contextualises the study of Chinese clan associations within the Asian approach to cultural heritage preservation. In particular, it takes the case of Cantonese clan associations, a dialect group of the Chinese, whose clan associations have been studied less extensively in comparison to other dialects such as Hokkien and Hakka. The case study used is the Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association Kuala Lumpur & Selangor (CSSYKL), which was originally set up by a founder of Cantonese origin, and now operates as a cultural centre as well as a tourist attraction in a strategic location in Malaysia's capital Kuala Lumpur. Fieldwork consisted of participant observation which included photography, videography, and focus group discussions with the clan association's board of trustees; and a content analysis of documents such as its yearbook, brochures, and the association's website. We identified the condition of transnationalism as outlined by Vertovec (1997), in which the clan association had undergone an evolution of its original functions and therefore remained relevant.

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**Keywords:** cultural heritage, Cantonese clan associations, place attachment, social cohesion, super-diversity

# **Chan She Shu Yuen: los Clanes Ancestrales Cantoneses en Malasia como Redes de Apoyo Transnacional**

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## **Resumen**

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Las asociaciones de clanes chinas se encuentran en muchas partes del mundo, debido a la emigración china desde la China continental durante los años 1800. Este artículo contextualiza el estudio de esas asociaciones desde el enfoque asiático a la preservación de la herencia cultural. En particular, se toma el caso de las asociaciones de clanes cantonesas, un grupo dialectal de las chinas cuyas asociaciones de clanes han sido estudiadas menos extensivamente en comparación con otros dialectos como el hokkien o el hakka. El estudio de caso utilizado es el Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association Kuala Lumpur & Selangor (CSYY), cuyo fundador era de origen cantonés y que ahora opera como un centro cultural además de una atracción turística en una localización estratégica en Kuala Lumpur, la capital de Malasia. El trabajo de campo consistió en una observación participante que incluyó fotografía, videografía y reuniones de grupos de debate con la junta directiva de la asociación, así como un análisis del contenido de documentos como el anuario, folletos o la web de la asociación. Identificamos la condición de transnacionalismo esbozada por Vertovec (1997), según la cual la asociación ha vivido una evolución en sus funciones originales y, así, ha seguido siendo relevante.

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**Palabras clave:** herencia cultural, asociaciones de clanes cantonesas, apego al lugar, cohesión social, superdiversidad

**S**tudies of cultural heritage and tourism in Malaysia took off circa 2008, after the listing of Malaysian cities George Town (Penang) and Malacca on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In Malaysia, the conservation of heritage buildings is initiated by the government and the public sector (Harun, 2011). The establishment of the National Heritage Department of Malaysia in 2006 demonstrated the Malaysian government's appreciation of tangible heritage (Harun, 2011).

The dominant discourse on what constitutes cultural heritage emerged in the West. Heritage has been defined as a social process, through which legitimate stakeholders attribute values to a particular object, space, and artefact, or to a manifestation of human expression (Amougou, 2004). There are tangible and intangible heritages. The construction of the idea of “World Heritage” was based on notions born and matured in Europe (Esposito and Gaulis, 2010). These notions gained international impact when they became the dominant discourse proposed by international organisations in the field of heritage, such as UNESCO (Esposito & Gaulis, 2010). However, Asian countries, especially Japan, who joined the Convention of World Heritage in the 1990s, have challenged the Western notion of authenticity, the introduction of cultural landscapes as a new heritage category, and intangible heritage as a UNESCO priority (Esposito & Gaulis, 2010). For example, Nagaoka (2015) charts the move to challenge European-dominated discourses of heritage and the concept of authenticity as having begun with the Nara Document in the early 1990s. The Nara Document articulated a developing Asian approach to authenticity, recognizing the ways and means to preserve cultural heritage with community participation and different understandings of heritage that existed outside Europe (Nagaoka, 2015).

### **Defining the Malaysian Chinese**

Malaysia is multicultural and is comprised of several main ethnic groups, often classified as the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians (Hirschman, 1987); as well as the indigenous groups whose majority is the Semai (Arabestani & Edo, 2011), and in East Malaysia the Kadazan-Dusun (Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2009). Currently many other ethnic groups

exist in the country as well, due to a high level of international migration fuelled by the search for job opportunities. Over two million migrant workers are found in Malaysia in industries such as plantation, construction and the domestic sector, coming largely from Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines (Lin, 2006). In total, Malaysia's population for the year 2014 is 30 097 900 (Statistics Department of Malaysia, 2014).

The Chinese form the second largest ethnic group among Malaysians (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014) and are part of a huge global Diaspora, making their issues of identity complex and noteworthy of study. The Chinese Diaspora covers approximately 40 million people across all continents of the world, originally leaving mainland China for other places in search of better economic opportunities (Jacques, 2008). Also termed the 'overseas Chinese', they continue to possess a strong sense of shared identity based on their powerful attachment to mainland China (Jacques, 2008). In Malaysia there are 6 601 000 people of Chinese ethnicity (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014).

Given the increased global influence of mainland China as well as Malaysia's close ties to it, the impact of these events on the identity of the Malaysian Chinese cannot be ignored. This is even more so given the past ties between Malaysian Chinese and mainland China during the British occupation of Malaya. The Cantonese, Hokkien and Hakka are the three largest dialect groups among the Chinese in Malaysia. Their initial relationship with each other shows there is a level of intra-ethnic diversity. The Cantonese and Hokkien tended to be urban merchants, while the Hakka tended to be tenant farmers or labourers (Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2009). However, among the second generation who were born in Malaysia itself, these differences eroded and they began to view themselves as Chinese collectively, viewing mainland China as an ancestral homeland and not their hometown (Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2009). In 1948, a lot of the ethnic Chinese migrants were resettled in New Villages by the British in order to stifle the communist insurgency which occurred after the Second World War. These villages were made up entirely of Chinese residents and pursued Chinese medium education such as the one we have today. Among these villagers, some later moved to

the cities to look for employment and underwent identity formation resulting in the existence of subcultures, such as the Ah Beng subculture which is based on conspicuous consumption and identification with the Chinese language (Chan, 2015a).

The British colonial authorities occupying Malaya were responsible for creating social constructs including racial categories such as the ‘Malay’, ‘Indian’, or ‘Chinese’ (Hirschman, 1986; in Sharmani, 2013). The notion of ‘Chineseness’ was also such a colonial-orientalist social construction based on place of origin and dialect groups (Shamsul, 1999). The British colonial administrators simplified their classification of what was essentially a complex network of identification based on attributes such as dialect group, occupation, class, gender and village (Carstens, 2005; in Sharmani, 2013). Thus, the concept of race, and further on, ‘Chineseness’, can be said to have been a lumping together of people based on certain perceived social factual similarities.

Purcell (1967) who wrote the landmark study of the Chinese in Malaya, outlined the composition of dialect groups migrating from Guangdong and Fujian in southern China to Malaya. Different economic activities were attributed to different dialect groups. The largest dialect groups, the Hokkiens and Teochews, were engaged in trading, real estate, large plantation-scale commercial agriculture, and retail shopkeeping. The Cantonese, a smaller dialect group, were engaged in artisans, retail, and “together with Malays, clearing the dense tropical jungle and thick undergrowth and preparing the land for cultivation” (Purcell, 1967, pp. 44, 60). The other smaller dialect groups included Hakkas and Hainanese who specialised in food preparation as cooks and proprietors in *kopitiam*s (Purcell, 1967; in Ooi, 2015).

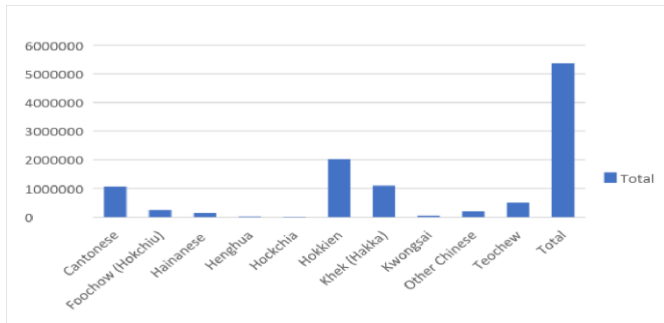


Figure 1. Chinese Dialects in Malaysia (Ember, Ember & Skoggard, 2004)

The aspect of imagined community was considered central to Chinese identity in Southeast Asia (Wang; in Hirschman, 1987). 'Older' and 'modern' Chinese identities were separated, where the 'older' identities referred to nationalist identification with mainland China, and 'modern' identities referred to localized national identities (Wang; in Hirschman, 1987). While some Chinese prioritized class identity, it did not override 'Chinese' identity (Wang; in Hirschman, 1987). In a lecture at the University of Malaya, Carstens (2014) echoed this argument, saying that Malaysian Chinese identity is reflexive and subjective. Intergenerational socialization was responsible for transmitting language, religion, values and beliefs (Hirschman, 1987).

Chinese cultural identity and social networks are generated overseas rather than in mainland China itself (Long & Han, 2008). Some examples of these are clan associations based in Southeast Asia, where its members' ancestors migrated from the Southern Chinese regions of Guangdong and Fujian originally (Long & Han, 2008). These networks exerted profound influence upon Chinese overseas, especially in business (Long & Han, 2008). Aside from this, they also provided lifelong social, cultural, and economic support through helping members find employment, providing basic necessities such as education and healthcare, helping destitute members, fostering traditional Chinese values, celebrating Chinese festivals, providing community representation, and even arranging funerals and burials (Ng, 2002).

According to Ma (2012), Cantonese temples and their associated organisations have become symbols that facilitate communication among the Chinese, as well as promoting social networking among Chinese communities in Malaysia and beyond. Currently, there are over 4000 Chinese clan associations in Malaysia, and they are keen on investment opportunities with mainland China due to its Belt and Road initiative (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2017).

As a starting point, one may use Carstens (1975)'s outline of the functions of clan associations in Singapore as a benchmark. According to Carstens (1975), Chinese associations in Singapore are among the most numerous and heterogeneous group of associations of any Chinese community in Southeast Asia. She compared the characteristics of two types of Chinese associations in Singapore, which include the clan association as well as district association.

Clans are made up of kinship-bound families (Yen, 1981). The clan is a group formed with a patrilineal blood relationship based on a common ancestor at its core (Sun, 2005). Hence, the Chinese clan association is an organisation whose membership includes individuals with the same surname (Ch'ng; in Makmur, 2018). In the past, Chinese clan associations possessed several main functions. These were preserving the family unit, which is of paramount importance to Chinese identity (Sun, 2005); affiliation with one's dialect group; maintaining Confucianism as their main value system, comprising concepts such as justice, work ethic, and respect for parents (Acs & Dana, 2001); operating as hybrid institutions combining British law and Chinese customs (Cheng, Li, & Ma, 2013); providing a vocational education system to transmit entrepreneurial knowledge and skills from successful to budding entrepreneurs (Loewen, 1971; Light, 1972; Wong, 1987; Dana et. al., 2000); responding to the growth of the nation state and changing socio-political environment besides taking care of its members' needs (Chan, 2003); and organising religious ceremonies such as celebrating Chinese festivals, providing community representation, and arranging funerals and burials (Ng, 2002; Tan, 2013).

However, in the present day with many new forms of social organisations, the existence of clan associations faces several challenges. These are the erosion of traditional values, a chasm between older Chinese-educated members and younger English educated members, lack of funding, and



diminishing roles (Ng, 2002). In the academic literature, Hokkien and Hakka clan associations have been widely studied, but less so are clan associations of other dialect groups, such as the Cantonese. Despite this, some of the founders of these Cantonese clan associations played a significant role in the economic and sociocultural life of Malaya during the British colonial period, such as in contributing to the formation of Chinese medium schools as well as in economic dealings with the British.

As trade increases between Malaysia and China, there is a need to examine how these links can assist in sustaining business networks. There are several reasons for this:

1. Social capital is important in promoting tourism in the case of overseas Chinese tourism to China (Lew & Wong, 2004).
2. Chinese clans have also been found to work as a model of wealth redistribution, similar to philanthropy (Acs & Dana, 2000).
3. Chinese clan jetties in Penang have been integrated into the UNESCO world heritage list (Bideau & Kilani, 2009).

The cut off point for defining whether clan associations possess continued functions would be the end of the Cultural Revolution in China, as observed by Carstens (1975). This is because the People's Republic of China is often taken as a benchmark given that it is the origin of clan associations. Overseas Chinese clan association also trace their linkages to mainland China. The analysis of these continued functions will support the case of preserving clan associations as a transnational social institution in the age of super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This aspect of community participation gives rise to the issue of “place attachment”, a theoretical framework that is commonly applied to studies of cultural heritage at present. It has since been adopted as a concept by many cultural heritage scholars in denoting the importance of maintaining heritage places as well as in achieving social cohesion. In addition, social networks may be even more important than the built environment in generating place attachment (Graham et. al., 2009).

The attachment of persons to a place is best captured through the idea of social capital; while the best measure of their community participation is through the notion of cultural capital, both concepts introduced by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Communities' cultural capital has had an important beneficial effect on development and social cohesion (Ilmonen, 2015; Radcliffe, 2006). Thus, cultural capital is no less important than social capital (Lewicka, 2005). The role of cultural elites in the stimulation of cultural interests, such as possession of books and involvement in nonprofit activities is also of importance (Lewicka, 2005).

To this end, our paper highlights the case study of Cantonese clans in Malaysia as a transnational social support network, amidst many other examples of cultural heritage in the country. We examine the notion of transnational Chinese clan networks as an example of a social institution transitioning from a period of 'old' diversity into the 'new' diversity (Vertovec, 2007). This is because Chinese clan networks have existed since the period of mass emigration from Qing Dynasty China into countries all over and continue to function up to today.

## **Research Questions and Method**

### **Have Clan Associations Persisted in Their Previous Roles at Present?**

This research question is answered through fieldwork consisting of participant observation which included photography, videography, and focus group discussions with the clan's board of trustees. Historical documents dating from 1896 from the establishment of Chan See Shu Yuen Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were examined, as well as its more recent counterparts including documents such as its yearbook, brochures, and the association's website. The analysis was verified with the clan's board of trustees in a series of focus group discussions.

## **Findings**

**The Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association (CSSYKL) 陈氏书院.**

To answer the research question above, this paper takes the case study of the Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (CSSY), originally a clan association set up by a Cantonese founder, the late Honorable Chan Sow Lin, who functioned as an equivalent to Chinese Kapitans such as Loke Yew. Chinese Kapitans, or Kapitan Cina, was a title given to Chinese entrepreneurs tasked with developing industrial activities in British colonial Malaya (Roda & Ahmad, 2010). At the time of Chan Sow Lin's appointment as Selangor State Council member, the Kapitan Cina system had been abolished by the British colonial powers. Chan Sow Lin was an important figure in contributing to the creation of many social institutions which facilitated the migration of the southern Chinese to Malaya, spanning "from one's birth to one's death". This was because he founded institutions which ranged from hospitals, schools, companies, as well as crematoriums and cemeteries. Sources cite that Chan played many roles including being "the inventor of the Nai Chiang tin mining system", being "the managing director of an engineering firm which was on par with European firms", being "peacemaker in the Larut Wars, receiving a medal from the Viceroy of Guangdong who was sent by the Emperor of China for his efforts in promoting Chinese education", receiving another "medal from the Chinese Ambassador to England for philanthropic work", and being an "appointed member of the Selangor State Council" (Overseas Chinese in the British Empire, 2011). Another three founders joined Chan Sow Lin in founding the CSSYKL, namely Chan Choon, Chin Sin Hee, and Chan Choy Thin (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016). The CSSY was established in 1896 (during the reign Emperor Guangxu of Qing Dynasty) as a Clan Consanguinity Organisation (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

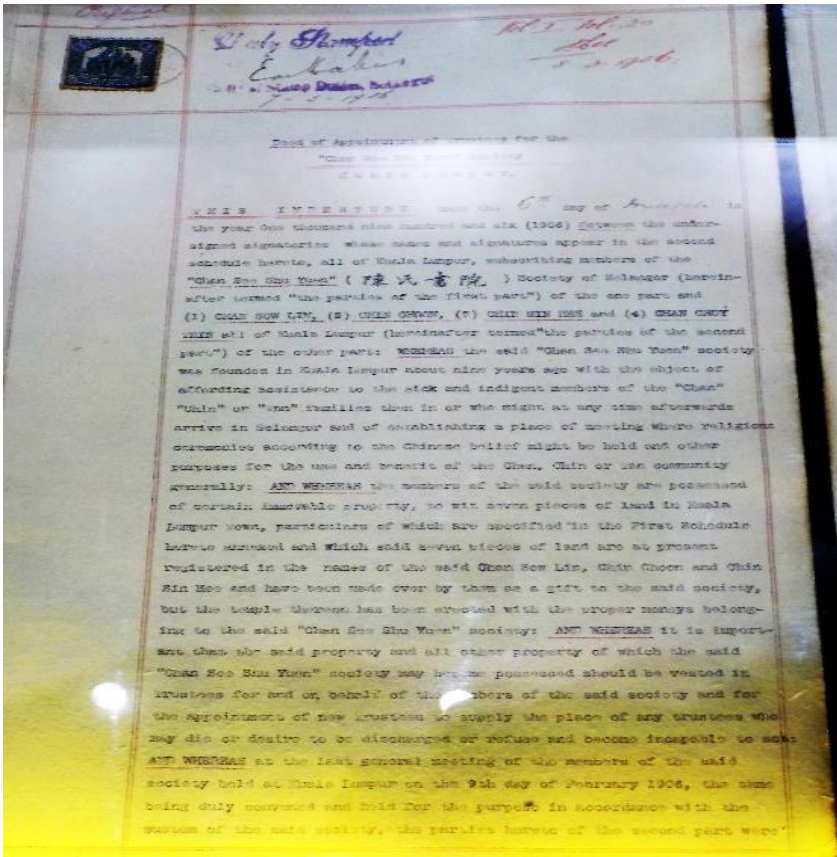


Figure 2. One of the official documents regarding the CSSYKL's founding and establishment. The Deed of Appointment of Trustees for the "Chan See Shu Yuen Society Kuala Lumpur", issued in 1906, mentions all four founders, Chan Sow Lin, Chin Choon, Chin Sin Hee, and Chan Choy Thin, and the original purpose of the CSSYKL's founding, which was "to afford assistance to the sick and indigent members of the "Chan", "Chin", or "Tan" families who might arrive in Selangor, or establishing a place of meeting where religious ceremonies according to the Chinese belief might be held and other purposes for the use and benefits of the Chan, Chin, or Tan community generally".



*Figure 3.* The CSSYKL Heritage Gallery, which functions as a mini museum hosting pieces of the original architecture, antiques, photographs, as well as official documents regarding its founding and establishment.

The clan association records its history as “it all started in 1897 when Honorable Chan Sow Lin managed to tender seven attached shop lots land from the British Colonial Government. The construction of CSSY Ancestor

Hall started in 1899 and the magnificent building was completed in 1906. Occupation approval was eventually granted by the British Resident of Selangor; Sir Henry Conway Belfield (1902-1910) on behalf of the Sultan of Selangor; Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah Ibni Al-marhum Yang Dipertuan Muda Musa (1898-1938) in 1908.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).



Figure 4. The founders of CSSYKL – Chan Choon, Chin Sin Hee, and Chan Choy Thin, and Chan Sow Lin.

The CSSYKL also has its headquarters in Guangzhou, Mainland China called the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall, upon which the Kuala Lumpur one is modelled, physically and organisationally. This hall originally functioned as an "academic temple" for candidates' preparation for the Qing Dynasty imperial examinations and was the template for the Chan See Shu Yuen built by its descendants in Malaysia. It prides itself on the inherited "Ling Nan Style



of Architecture” derived from Guangzhou, Guangdong. The “CSSY building was modelled after the Chan Clan Association in Xi Guan, Guangzhou China as a design blueprint, which Combined the characteristics of a family temple and an ancestral hall features, incorporating the ancient Cantonese-style art and Southern China architecture, which has a mix of Han and Bai Yue elements.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016). It has been listed as a historical relic in the protection of ancient buildings by the Malaysian government (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

The CSSYKL’s official website chronicles the history of the temple’s tangible heritage, beginning from its Guangzhou origins. “Chen's College, a historic building that has accompanied people of all ethnic groups for more than 100 years, is a household name in the Kuala Lumpur area. Many people think that Chen's College is a private school or school as its name suggests; some people think it is an ancient place. The temple is actually not.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

“The establishment of the Chen’s College in Kuala Lumpur originated from the Chen’s College in Xiguan, Guangzhou. In 1894 (Qing Guangxu Jiawu Year), the Sino-Japanese War of the Sino-Japanese War broke out. In the same year, the Guangzhou Xiguan Chen’s College was completed. The magnificent architecture, careful layout, exquisite wood carvings, stone carvings, pottery sculptures, gold castings and paintings made the famous Taixi miner Chen Xiulian (Chan Sow Lin), who was invited to attend the exhibition, marvel at it and left a deep impression.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

“Chen's College is not a private school, nor an ancient temple. It is an ancestral temple of the Chen dynasty. In ancient times, there were ancestral temples or family temples. The ancestral temples and family temples were not the same. The biggest difference between the two was that the roof of the family temple usually had dragon carvings, while the ancestral temple worshipped the turtle Ao 鳌 so that the children of the future generations would be top scholars. It is said that in ancient times, the stone steps of the Imperial Palace were engraved with the head of the turtle Ao 鳌.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

“After the Song Dynasty in China, especially in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, a large number of foreigners came to China, and Guangzhou was the first to receive them. It then became the place where most foreigners gathered, and was thus exposed to many foreign cultures. Moreover, Guangzhou also faced power struggles during the Qing dynasty, such as the Manchurian edict where men had to wear hair queues. This made the people of Guangzhou both fascinated and afraid of the outside world. There was an anti-Qing movement in Guangzhou which developed a strong anti-Qing style, leading to special attention from the Qing Court towards the activities of the clan organization in Guangzhou.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

“In order to avoid causing unnecessary suspicions in the Qing court, Guangzhou Chen’s Ancestral Hall was named as an “Scholarly Academy”. Strictly speaking, it was known as the Chen’s Ancestral Hall, but in terms of its architectural features, its structure resembles family temples. Upon close examination, on the roof of Chen's College, not only are there two dragons with detailed carvings, but also two dragonflies on the backs of the dragons.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).

The CSSYKL has persisted in functioning ever since. “For more than a century, the Chen’s descendants of CSSYKL had kept the tradition alive and upheld its core values generation after generation. Celebration and paying homage for the birth commemoration of Chen’s Great Grand Ancestors, Honourable Shun Di, Honourable Chen Shi, and Honourable Chen Yuan Guang, Spring and Autumn Festival Praying are the main occasion for CSSYKL. Other celebrations like CSSY anniversary, Lunar New Year, Duan Wu, Lanterns Festival, Winter Solstice Festival, etc. will not be missed yearly. These everlasting practices of CSSY is likened to the immortal of incenses.” (Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association, 2016).





*Figure 5.* The Honourable Chen Clan Ancestors – in the middle is Emperor Shun (Shun Di), of which the name Chen can be traced from; flanked by General Chen Yuan Guang, and Honourable Chen Shi. This clan temple is not an ordinary religious temple, but one that is meant to pay respects to the clan ancestors.

One of the present-day functions is also tourism potential. A great number of tourists come from various European countries as well as China and Malaysia itself. These are recorded in CSSYKL's guest record book, and also observed during participant observation where tourists trickle in daily with their cameras. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia has also initiated a Kuala Lumpur Must Visit Attractions project, where CSSY is one out of twelve places to visit on a tourist trail, in which the tourist can collect stamps on a card to be redeemed for a certificate (Malaysia Tourism Centre, 2017).

**马来西亚吉隆坡法院检察院警察署留名纪念**

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Figure 6. A sample page from the CSSYKL guestbook with international tourists. In the following table, we compare the present-day functions of the CSSY to that observed by Carstens in 1975:

Table 1.  
*Comparison of Clan Association Functions Then and Now.*

Features	Past Features of Clan Associations (Carstens, 1975).	Present Features of Clan Associations: Findings from fieldwork at Chan She Shu Yuen
Membership	<p>-Frequently cater to the working classes</p> <p>-May or may not limit their membership to people from a particular village, district, or dialect in China</p> <p>-For example, one common surname is represented by nineteen different clan associations and another by fourteen</p> <p>-clan, district, and dialect associations in general do seem to appeal to a specific segment of the Chinese community in Singapore</p> <p>-with the exception of a few Cantonese associations where female membership is emphasised, the great majority of the members are males</p> <p>-most members tend to be middle-aged although people can usually join from the age of twenty-one</p>	<p>-No longer strictly catering to the working classes, nor do they limit their membership to dialects. Members of other Chinese dialects are encouraged to join. Many members and even Board of Trustees' members have the surname "Tan" or "Chin", which are equivalent also to "Chen" in Mandarin.</p> <p>-As CSSYKL is based in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, members must originate from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.</p> <p>-Total membership is 2294 as of January 2019.</p> <p>-Membership applications are vetted by the Board of Trustees. There is a Head of Investigation who will also provide a background check on applicants' information.</p>

Table 1.

*Comparison of Clan Association Functions Then and Now. (Continued)*

<b>Features</b>	<b>Past Features of Clan Associations (Carstens, 1975).</b>	<b>Present Features of Clan Associations: Findings from fieldwork at Chan She Shu Yuen</b>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Major activity is ancestor worship</li> <li>-Provides welfare services for beneficiaries of deceased members eg. money, loan of funeral requisites, and attendance of fellow members at the funeral</li> <li>-A few offer unemployment or disability compensation</li> <li>-Provides scholarships for needy children</li> <li>-Invests money from sale of association's property into a separate organisation and controlled by trustees</li> <li>-But does not give money to charity and only provides for members of the clan</li> <li>-encourage importance of education</li> <li>-Used to assist members who desired to return to China (but has now ceased)</li> <li>-Welfare benefit assistance however has decreased with the increase on charitable activities eg. raising money for hospitals, schools, and old folks' homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The major activities are fund-raising, charity, facilitating visits by trade leaders and businesspeople from abroad such as China or Taiwan, hosting visits by local colleges, hosting academic talks, as well as ancestor worship. Also provides scholarships for members.</li> <li>-For income generation purposes, an ethnic Chinese Bahasa Malaysia tuition teacher rents the upper floor to conduct his classes.</li> <li>-There used to be Chinese language classes conducted at CSSYKL but they have now ceased as the teacher has retired due to old age.</li> </ul>

Table 1.

*Comparison of Clan Association Functions Then and Now. (Continued)*

<b>Features</b>	<b>Past Features of Clan Associations (Carstens, 1975).</b>	<b>Present Features of Clan Associations: Findings from fieldwork at Chan She Shu Yuen</b>
Leadership	<p>-Leaders are businessmen who serve because of their civic-mindedness and their pride in family tradition</p> <p>-In her fieldwork, interviewed a clan leader who noted that the system is archaic and does not suit the needs of today (in 1975)</p> <p>-But notes that the association is not political and only serves a social function in a multi-racial society</p>	<p>-Currently, the CSSYKL is managed by a board of trustees, which include businessmen (mostly male) who are also committee members of other Chinese associations, such as the board of directors of Chinese-medium schools. There is also a women’s wing and a youth wing. Members of the youth wing are 45 years and below.</p> <p>-Board of trustee members are elected every two years.</p> <p>-The Board of Trustees posts include the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen, a Secretary and a Deputy, a Treasurer and a Deputy, and a Director and Deputy for each of the following categories: Welfare, Education, Socio-economic Affairs, Investigation, Auditing, Youth and Communication, Entertainment and Healthcare, Prayers, Maintenance, two Legal Advisors, and several Directors with no specific portfolio.</p>

Education	-Association leaders estimated that between 75 to 100 percent of their members are Chinese-educated	-Several consultants are also hired, comprising ex-Board of Trustees members. -Upon initial participant observation at CSSYKL events, and conversation with members, it appears that most members are Chinese-educated. -The CSSY's official website and Facebook are in Chinese. -The CSSY brochures are in Chinese. -Events are conducted in the Chinese language. -Further connected research in this project will collect statistics on the members' medium of education.
Reasons for joining	-Members' reasons for joining were for fellowship and unity or for benefits and mutual aid	- To promote and uphold Chinese culture including values such as filial piety and honouring ancestors, to obtain scholarships, to participate in social activities such as camping, hiking, making friends, and international linkages with Malaysia and China. -In 2016, CSSYKL Kuala Lumpur and its headquarters CSSYKL Guangzhou signed a MOU namely: "Two-Nation, Two Consanguinity Organization, One Family", in line with China's One Belt, One Road.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Places and their cultural meanings are generated through one or a combination of three types of people–environment interactions (Memmott & Long, 2002). Originally a psychological concept, Bowlby's Attachment Theory explains the basis of trust developed through social bonding (Ram, Björk & Weidenfeld, 2016). It has since been adopted as a concept by many cultural heritage scholars in denoting the importance of maintaining heritage places as well as in achieving social cohesion. “Social cohesion” is a situation where there is peace, stability, prosperity, and wellbeing in a society, especially one that is multi-ethnic (Shamsul & Yusoff, 2014). The concept of “sense of place” is defined as comprising the “sense of loss”, “sense of justice”, and “sense of mission” (Tan, Tan, Kok & Choon, 2018). If the concept of place attachment were to be applied, it would suggest that members of the clan association retain their attachment to mainland China, but certainly also to other tangible and intangible aspects of the host country community in Malaysia. It would be possible to therefore attempt to encourage social cohesion of the clan members towards their host country.

Numerous studies have attempted to classify people of Chinese ethnic origin. Given mainland China's history of emigration, this is not unusual, as there is a historically embedded difference between mainland Chinese and the Chinese who have established themselves in new host countries. Scholars thus classified the differences of ethnic Chinese from the mainland who migrated abroad and later returned to the mainland; from those who had established themselves as citizens of the new host country and did not intend to return to the mainland; as well as those who were born in the host country.

Among these is the pioneer of discussion of the Chinese diaspora, Wang Gungwu, who highlighted the terms used in demarcating the ethnic Chinese. The term *huaqiao*, which meant ‘Overseas Chinese’, was used to identify Chinese nationals who became sojourners, living temporarily abroad (Wang, 1993). Another term, ‘Chinese diaspora’, was unsuitable according to Wang because of its Jewish connotation of exile, which was not applicable to Southeast Asian history (Wang, 1993). This brings to mind Safran's definition in 1991, which used the Jewish history of migration as an ideal type. Wang

thus suggested the term ‘Chinese Overseas’ to encapsulate everyone of Chinese descent living outside Greater China. In this case, Greater China referred to both Taiwan and Hong Kong (Wang, 1993). Under this classification, the Malaysian Chinese would fall under the category of the ‘Chinese overseas’.

In classifying the Chinese overseas based in Malaysia, scholars have proposed different frameworks. It is likely that the precedent was set by Wang (1993), who categorised the Chinese overseas into four groups, namely the *Huasheng* (traders), the *Huagong* (overseas worker), the *Huaqiao* (sojourner), and the *Huayi* (individuals with high mobility in the present global economy who may have discarded associations with the homeland), with the *Huaqiao* representing the Malaysian Chinese (Willmott, 2007). This was a categorisation based on geographical mobility and identification with the homeland. Tan (2001) however claimed that the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, especially the younger generations, had transformed “from sojourners to citizens”, embracing and mastering the national language.

Vertovec (1997) claimed that “diaspora is the term often used today to describe practically any population that is considered ‘deterritorialised’ or ‘transnational’ [...] and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of nation-states, or indeed, span the globe.” Interestingly, in a study on the diasporic Chinese in Singapore in the same year, Yeoh & Willis (1999) found that they preferred the “safety net of a fixed identity rather than a deterritorialised, diasporic allegiance”. Vertovec offered three conceptions of diaspora - the first, as social form invoking exile from one’s homeland; the second, as consciousness based on a feeling of differentiation and identification with a historical heritage; and the last, as a form of cultural production, based on the flow of cultural objects, images and meanings (Vertovec, 1997).

Tölölyan (2012), however, argues that we must be careful not to locate the diasporic’s home in the ancestral homeland too easily. Because of globalisation processes, the diasporic who is not committed to such former links is now a citizen in their new home country, possessing a new hybrid culture and identity (Tölölyan, 2012).



“Transnationalism” was a new term which then emerged to replace the concept of diaspora, meaning “migrants' durable ties across countries” (Faist, 2010). Studies prove that transnational cultural flows are increasing, with regards to the bilateral reciprocity between China and the Chinese overseas. Shi (2005) observed that within a global condition of “transnational flows of capital, global political and cultural interpenetrations, and advanced transportation”, Chinese diaspora members “constitute a major migratory population, yet are diverse in places of origin, geographic distributions, patterns of settlement, population sizes, and varieties of migrants.” Loubere (2010) found that China’s growth is expanding its global ‘cultural market share’, indicating a potential global ‘third culture’. Tan (2013) found that the nature of transnational networks between Chinese overseas and China, which has historically been closely intertwined, is influenced not only by China in the world political economy, but also by the national and transnational experiences of the Chinese overseas.

On the other hand, Pieke (2002) inquired if Chinese Fujianese migrants to other countries could actually be “integrated into an emerging Chinese economic and political world system”, given that globalisation studies usually have an implicit Western slant. Pieke (2002) called for the need to understand globalisation from rapidly rising China’s perspective, noting that globalisation could be directed towards different cosmopolitan cores.

In conclusion, we contend that the concept of Chinese diaspora in its original sense, based on Safran’s conception of an orientation towards ‘homeland’, has been replaced by a globally oriented outlook which manifests in an ‘everyday-defined’ concept of identity formation (Shamsul, 1996). Cultural globalization is bringing two formerly disparate value systems into the forefront, repackaging some of its attributes as desirable cultural capital (global habitus), and transmitting these values into the younger generation of Malaysian Chinese, who embrace it to remain competitively relevant, regardless of education background. This suggests a cultural convergence which augurs the possession of desirable cultural capital, or as Illouz and John (2003) terms it, ‘global habitus’ (Chan, 2018a). While the Malaysian Chinese now participate in transnational cultural exchanges with mainland China, they do so not due to such diasporic ‘homeland-oriented’ reasons, but due to

China's position as a global superpower parallel to the United States (Jacques, 2015). Hence, we can conceptualise the new function of Chinese clan associations as linkage points that span a gamut of social interactions, from the family to dialect groups, the economy, the legal system, the education system, politics, religion and most recently, tourism.

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