

Cultural Encounters between People of Chinese Origin and Local People:

Case Studies from the Philippines and Vietnam

—Proceedings of International Workshop—



Edited by **Yuko MIO**

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA)
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

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This volume is the proceedings of the international workshop, “Indigenization/ Creolization/ Sinicization of the Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and the Philippines,” held on October 28–29, 2006, at the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka.

The workshop was a part of the academic activities of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research Project entitled “Anthropological Research on Indigenization and Creolization of the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia,” sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and a joint research project of Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa entitled “Anthropological Study of Indigenization/Creolization/Sinicization of the Ethnic Chinese.”

Our project aims at clarifying the process of the Chinese migration from Mainland China abroad and the process of their social contact with and their integration into the host societies. We also draw attention to preservation or change of those immigrants’ and their descendents’ cultures and identities. The project has attached special weight to anthropological field studies and historical studies based on investigation of documents written by immigrants or by successive host governments.

Because of our way of research, we also place much value on collaborative investigation between local researchers and Japanese scholars. Because we consider mutual understanding and academic exchange between us is very important, we have invited local scholars to Japan several times and, together with their Japanese counterparts, had them introduce their research results. This time we invited five scholars, three from the Philippines and two from Vietnam. All of them are important partners in our research project.

The official language used at the workshop was English and most papers in this book are also written in English. However, considering the given conditions, Dr. Tran Hong Lien wrote the Vietnamese revised paper for this book and we translated her paper in Japanese. So, we put this Japanese version in this book.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the speakers at the workshop for their valuable contribution to the meeting and publication. We learnt much from their excellent presentations and papers, and benefited greatly from the many discussions all the participants had at the meeting.

Yuko MIO

Introduction

Cultural Encounters between People of Chinese Origin and Local People: Case Studies from the Philippines and Vietnam

Yuko MIO

This workshop forms a part of the academic activities of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research Project entitled “Anthropological Research on Indigenization and Creolization of the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia,” sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and a joint research project titled “Anthropological Study of Indigenization/Creolization/Sinicization of the Ethnic Chinese.” This project intends to critically re-examine the preceding research and discourses on people of Chinese origin in the humanities and the social science.

Several characteristics emerge when we survey the previous research on *Huaqiao-Huaren* (the overseas Chinese and the ethnic Chinese). Among them, the most problematic, I think, is the discussions over identity of Chinese immigrants, because they commonly assume an essentialist theory of invariance that Chinese immigrants have maintained some kind of ‘Chineseness’ throughout all ages, whether in the period when they retained Chinese nationality, or in the period in which they acquired the nationality of the host countries, or in today’s transnational age. This assumption of ‘Chineseness’ can be briefly described as the idea that the society and culture of people of Chinese origin has markedly different characteristics in comparison with other cultures and civilizations, and that these people who share the awareness of ‘maintaining a unique culture’ have a sense of belonging to the same virtual community (e.g [Tan 2004]).

Since the mid-nineteenth century Chinese immigrants have been put in situations where they have had to be conscious of where they belong in the context of establishment of divisions between different nations and peoples. The immigrants have had to form organizations of mutual support amongst themselves within certain limits in cases where they had no means of integrating with the colonizers or the local society in the place of migration. As it has also been pointed out, the Overseas Chinese (*Huaqiao*) provided enormous support for movements to overthrow the weakened Qing dynasty and create a modern state in China in response to the rise of nationalism, and for resistance to the invasion of China by the western powers and Japan.

However, many previous studies have tended to focus just on how Chinese immigrants continued to maintain their culture and awareness as Chinese in the place of migration. That is to say, they have made people who outwardly seem to have the characteristics of *Huaqiao-Huaren* and those who call themselves *Huaqiao-Huaren* the objects of research. Such studies are tautological, since having thus restricted the objects of research they go on to discover the ‘Chineseness’ of these people by studying their culture, society and identity.

Here, I would like to stress that Chinese immigrants are not automatically so-called *Huaqiao-*

Huaren but rather become *Huaqiao-Huaren* under certain social and historical conditions. That is to say, *Huaqiao-Huaren* is not a state of 'being', but rather a process of 'becoming' [Ueda 1996]. To put it the other way around, this implies that some Chinese immigrants become *Huaqiao-Huaren* while others choose not to do so. Previous studies on *Huaqiao-Huaren* have discussed the multiplicity, plurality and dynamic nature of *Huaqiao-Huaren* identity, but they have all argued that the *Huaqiao-Huaren* retain their 'Chineseness' as an important core of identity. However, if we can show that the preservation of 'Chineseness' is merely one of the choices open to Chinese immigrants, we can get away from the discourse that automatically defines Chinese immigrants as *Huaqiao-Huaren* in an essentialist manner, and demonstrate a holistic picture of the diversity of transformation of society and culture of Chinese immigrants. This kind of study will also contribute toward theoretically investigating the process in which an ethnic group becomes essentialized.

Based on the above concept, members of this research group conducted intensive field research in Vietnam and the Philippines. The reasons for selection of these two nations are as follows: Compared with other Southeast Asian countries, where immigrants from China increased since the second half of the 19th century, the Philippines and Vietnam received a quite large number of Chinese immigrants from South China, especially from Fujian, before the 19th century. Nevertheless, their patterns of adaptation to local communities were different because of the difference of the respective political systems. In Vietnam, the Nguyen dynasty had managed to survive until the end of WWII, although the political authority had been grabbed by the French colonial government. On the contrary, there had not been any kind of local authority ruling the area that corresponded to the present territory of the Philippines. In my view, those two regions are worth comparing because of the above similarities and differences.

For this workshop we invited five scholars, two from Vietnam, and three from the Philippines. All of them have been conducting empirical research on the ethnic Chinese. Some members of our research group, such as Prof. Serizawa, Prof. Nakanishi, and Prof. Miyabara, are indebted to them for help in conducting their fieldwork. So, we were very happy that we had a chance to learn fruits of those scholars' work. We were also able to hold fulfilling discussions and had the opportunity to share our awareness of problems and our joint-research results.

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- Ueda Makoto (上田信), 1996. 「華人の動態的把握」可児弘明編『僑郷 華南－華僑・華人研究の現在』行路社 ("Dynamic Understanding of the Ethnic Chinese" Hiroaki Kani (ed.), *Homeland of the Overseas Chinese: South China- Studies of Chinese Overseas Today*.)



An Old Tomb in 1905 at Cebu Chinese Cemetery



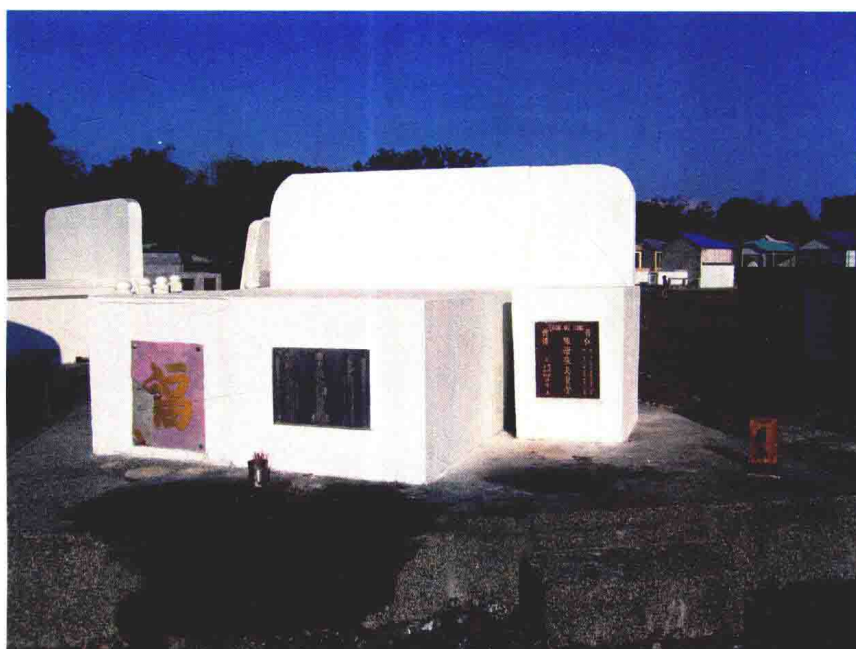
Apartment Type at Cebu Chinese Cemetery



A Tomb for a Son, a Mother and a Daughter in Law (Cebu Memorial Park)



Chinese from Hosoa, Amoy (Tobago, Albay)



A Tomb following Feng Shui (Vigan Public Cemetery)



Chinese Cemetery built in 1896 (Tobaco, Albay)



A Cantonese Tombstone in Baguio



ĐÓN CHẠM NỔI NHÂN VẬT TÍCH TRUNG QUỐC. Cao: 71cm, Đk: 30cm

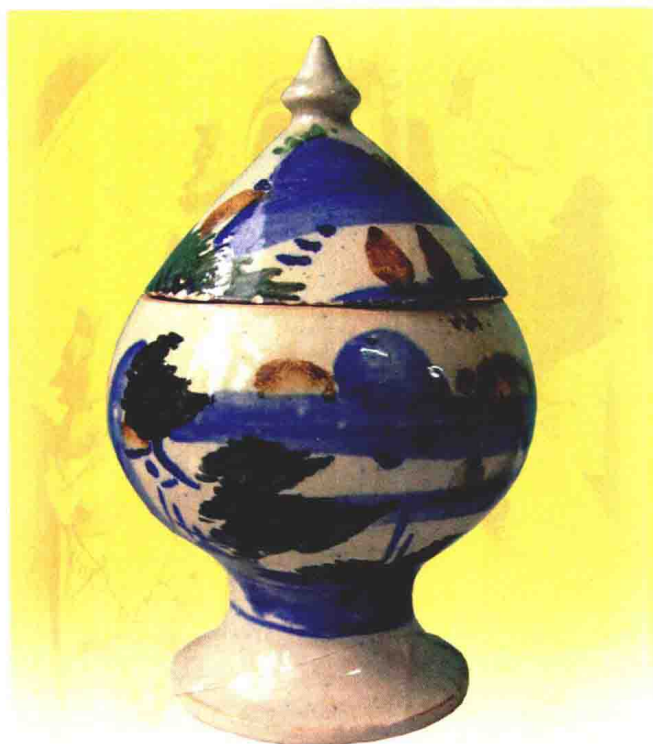
Pedestals with Chinese figures and monuments



GÀ GỐM MEN DA BÒ

D: 6cm
R: 12cm
C: 18cm

Ceramic chicken glazed with cattle skin color



Lọ

Men nhiều màu, hình tháp

Giữa TK XX. C: 16cm. Đk: 8.8cm. Đđ: 7.5cm

Multiple color glazed jar



Cao Tang Chan Si, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



Miao Fa Si, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



Trang trí trong miếu Hoa ở T.P. HCM có hình vẽ và thơ Lục Vân Tiên của người Việt.
ホーチミン市の華人廟の装飾に見られる、越人の『陸雲仙』の情景と詩



(from Left to Right) Prof. Yuji Nakanishi, Prof. Satohiro Serizawa, Prof. Tran Hong Lien,
Prof. Dang Van Thang (29th, October 2006, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan)

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