

# CHINESE EPIGRAPHY IN SINGAPORE 1819-1911

Volume 1



新加坡華文銘刻彙編  
1819-1911  
上冊

Kenneth Dean | Hue Guan Thye

丁荷生 | 許源泰



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This book is dedicated to the people of Singapore

謹將此書獻予所有的新加坡人

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We have been inspired in our research by the lifelong work of David Chng in gathering and preserving the epigraphic record of Singapore. He kindly lent us his copy of Chen Ching-ho's (1917–95) and Mr. Tan Yeok Seong's (1903–84) volumes on the Chinese epigraphy of Singapore, filled with his painstaking notes and corrections. We would like to thank him for writing an elegant preface for this volume.

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This book has been shaped by the laborious typesetting and design work, including the creation of countless variant Chinese characters, of YK Lee and his staff at I Design Work in Johor, Malaysia. They have accomplished miracles. We would like to thank Peter Schoppert, Director of NUS Press, and Paul Kratoska, Publishing Director, and Lena Qua, Managing Editor, for their guidance of this publication.

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We are deeply indebted to the work of Singaporean, Chinese and Western scholars who have led the way in the study of local historical materials. We have learned a great deal from the work of Jao Tsung-i, Chen Ching-ho, Tan Yeok Seong and Lee Yik Chee, as well as the research of Lim How Seng, Kua Bak Lim, Ngow Wah, and David Chng. The collections of Chinese inscriptions from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand gathered and edited by Wolfgang Franke, Chen Tieh Fan, Claudine Salmon, Anthony Siu, Pornipan Juntaronanont and their assistants have been a key inspiration for this volume. The works of these scholars are cited throughout this volume. We appreciate the early efforts of Leon Comber (see the recent Chinese translation of his study of his *Chinese Temples of Singapore* by Xu Liling 2011), and the exceptional dedication of the members of the Silat Society, and the many people working to preserve the historical legacy of Bukit Brown cemetery and other heritage sites, including Raymond Goh, Kevin Tan, Victor Yue and Hong Yihan. We have also drawn on their important research in this volume. Any errors remaining in the text are our own.

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我們要向本書所記載的廟宇、會館和組織之負責人致上誠懇的謝意。因為有這群仁人志士的熱情款待和耐心分享，讓我們在過去四年的田野調查中獲益良多，本書也因此得以付梓問世。同時，正因為看到他們的真心誠意和無私奉獻，讓我們強烈地感受到華族廟宇、宗鄉會館或業緣等組織，依然在時下的新加坡華人日常生活中占據著相當重要的份量。我們希望本書的出版，能夠報答他們的恩情於萬分之一，並希望他們在這塊島國上維護華族文化符號的忘我精神，得以繼續發揚光大，讓全新加坡人都能從這份寶貴的文化遺產中鑑往知來，獲得無限啟發。

我們也感激莊欽永博士為本書撰文題序。莊博士繼陳荊和與陳育崧之後，長期默默耕耘，苦心補充新加坡和馬六甲的華文碑文輯錄，令我們由衷欽佩。尤其是莊博士得知我們正在編撰此書時，不僅傾其所學，不吝賜教，還慷慨地借出他耗費多時親臨現場根據文物實體勘察的陳荊和、陳育崧《新加坡華文碑銘集錄》校對版作為本書的參照，甚至是在百忙之中抽空詳細閱讀和校對本書，更是令我們感動不已。莊博士成人之美、為學無私的精神，值得發揚光大。

本項研究計劃很榮幸地獲得新加坡國立大學中文系、亞洲研究中心和文學社會學院的支持。我們也感激加拿大社會科學與人文研究委員會的鼎力支援。在新加坡國立大學方面，亞洲研究中心主任杜贊奇教授過去多年來強力支持這項研究計劃，也是我們很感激的。我們也感謝新國大副校長兼副教務長江莉莉教授和文學社會學院院長 Brenda Yeoh 的支持與鼓勵，她們在新加坡宗教地理學和歷史地理學上的卓越研究，也令我們獲益匪淺。在中文系方面，我們要感激容世誠教授、黃賢強教授和李焯然教授的鼎力支持和提供支援；以及感激蘇瑞隆教授、王昌偉教授和許齊雄教授對我們搜集新加坡華文碑銘的關心與勉勵。中文系經理李美茱女士長期支持這項研究計劃，以及辦公室職員們在多方面的照應和協助，也是讓我們難以忘懷的。新國大中文圖書館的前館長李金生先生和現任館長沈俊平博士積極搜集與數碼化東南亞華人歷史資料，也為我們的研究計劃提供了顯著的幫助。

本書所搜集的珍貴銘文能以接近石碑原貌的格式排版印刷，全賴我們的合作夥伴馬來西亞柔佛州 I Design Work 公司的李勇強和梁麗梅伉儷的全方位配合。尤其是諸多石碑、匾額、楹聯所鐫刻的異體字已是屬於死文字或瀕危文字，現代電腦字型都不予收錄，幸賴他們的公司同仁嘔心瀝血，一筆一劃按照原碑字型造出大量的異體字，這些奇形異字才得以重見天日。簡言之，他們是在為本書創造奇蹟。與此同時，積極協助我們聯繫和鼓勵他們堅持完成這項艱巨任務的幕後功臣，是柔佛新山 Sondotech 公司的董事經理楊芳儀小姐。若沒有她的居中斡旋，耐心協調，這項跨越加拿大、新加坡和馬來西亞的編輯、排版、造字、校對等繁瑣至極的工作，恐怕會胎死腹中。因此，我們特別想向 I Design Work 上下同仁和楊芳儀小姐致上最誠懇的謝意。至於新加坡國立大學出版社的董事 Peter Schoppert 和出版總監 Paul Kratoska 提供的專業指導，以及郭莉娜為本書做最後的審閱定稿，也是我們必須由衷感激的。

新加坡國立大學中文系的研究生協助校對本書的初稿，我們也想向這些青年學子致上謝意。她們是賀晏然、李秀萍、吉凌、柳懿，以及正在佛光大學留學深造的經濟學本科生張英杰。剛畢業自地理系的 Brian Liu，也通過地理衛星系統為這項研究規劃出早期的新加坡廟宇和會館地理位置圖。加拿大麥基爾大學歷史系的博士生黃文儀協助整合資料、參與英

文翻譯、挖掘銘文典故和校對最後定稿等卓越貢獻，也令我們非常感激。

在過去的三年裡，熱心協助我們拍攝古老文物和搜集資料的廟宇、會館之領導和助理，更是我們由衷感激的。尤其是雙林禪寺住持惟儼大師再三在百忙中抽空接待我們，多次在艷陽天下親自陪我們巡視全寺，挖掘出我們平時難以察覺的百年文物，都是令我們感動不已的慈心慈行。協助我們緊密聯繫雙林禪寺的何秀娟小姐，以及雙林禪寺的經理蒙佩玲小姐、余映敏小姐不但非常關注本書的編輯進程，也為本書的資料搜集和編輯工作提供了很多方便。我們也謹此向這幾位善良的小姐致上誠懇的謝意。

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我們能有機會拍攝粵海清廟的古老匾額和楹聯等百年文物，最初是獲得廟祝郭維洲和郭順父子倆的多次協助，我們也謹此向這兩位先生致謝。然而，由於古廟的歷史悠久，文物長期被香煙熏染，拍攝出來的效果極差。幸有義安公司的翻新古廟工程業主代表陳秀英小姐居中斡旋和苦心安排，以及獲得義安公司的慷慨首肯，我們才有機會趁這座古廟最近翻新期間，補拍包括光緒皇帝欽賜御匾在內的百年古老文物。在補拍這些珍貴文物期間，義安公司的督工陳志偉，翻新工程的總包商創建機械私人有限公司、項目經理覃世豪，外籍勞工 Sekar 和 Rama；指定次承包商汕頭市紀傳英古建築裝飾設計有限公司，負責人紀雪山，施工長謝炎民和蔡雄生，工匠謝慶升、陳平福、劉璧豪、辛梓華等人都不惜停下翻新工程，全部出來幫助我們把所有已經包裝好的古老文物從儲藏室中搬運出來，並一一細心拆開，讓我們有補拍照片和測量尺寸的機會，最後再重新包裝，送回儲藏室中妥善收藏。陳秀英小姐和義安公司上下同仁的全力配合，至今還是令我們非常感動和感激的。粵海清廟另有其他文物是收藏在義安公司文物館內，幸有館長李燕琴女士慷慨應允，我們才得以補充這些文物照片和相關資料。謹此也借這個機會向李館長致謝。

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本書能以更全面的方式來搜集碑銘資料，完全是得力於古今中外學者們的心血傑作。國學大師饒宗頤、陳荊和、陳育崧、李業霖、莊欽永、林孝勝、張夏偉、柯木林、吳華、張清江、李奕志等人的大作，讓我們對早期的新加坡古蹟和文物有更深刻的認識。馬來西亞、印度尼西亞和泰國的華文銘刻資料集，主要是由傅吾康、陳鐵凡、劉麗芳、Claudine Salmon、Anthony Siu、Pornipan Juntaronanont 和他們的助理搜集，也對本書的編輯帶來很多啟發。石叻學會同仁對新加坡文物的熱忱和愛護，以及極力維護咖啡山義塚和其他歷史古蹟的仁人義士，包括法學專家陳有利教授、尤祥瑞、吳安龍和洪毅翰等人，都是令我們欽佩不已的。

本書若有出現任何疏忽，一概由我們承擔文責。



## Credits

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Chapter 2: No. 2.33 (Lin 1975: 206)

Chapter 3: Cover images: National Archives; 3.01, 3.09; (Lin 1975: 45, 46); Main god, 3.03, 3.07 (Toh 2013)

Chapter 4: Image of old temple and No. 4.06 (Lin 1975: 71, 65)

Chapter 6: The following images of now lost temple plaques from Toh 2010:

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萬物化育，頁 268，B — 23

澤被赤子，頁 270，B — 26

求神則靈，頁 271，B — 27

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Chapter 7: Image of old temple (Lin 1975: 204), Loke Yah Teng Association Old Building and four stalae (Special Commemorative Issue on the Historical Evolution of the Hok Tek Chi Loke Yah Teng, Singapore, 1963)

Chapter 13: Stelae rubbings (Chen 1970: 壹，肆)

Chapter 16: Display of six stalae (Singapore: The Hundred Years Commemorative Issue of the Char Yong (Dabu) Association, Singapore, 1958)

Chapter 17: No.17.03 (Chen 1970: 拾肆)

Chapter 18: Images of the demolished Guangfu gumiao temple from National Archives

Chapter 33: Altar, New Year Crowd, No.33.61, 33.10 (Tan 1997:16, 48, cover)

Chapter 35: Images of the demolished Qinyuan Zhenjun temple and gods from National Archives

Chapter 41: Rubbing of Cheang Hong Lim tomb epitaph (Chen 1970: 叁)

Chapter 52: No.52.11, National Archives

Chapter 53: Images of now demolished Dizangwang temple (Lin 1975: 71)

## 序

爲學之道，切忌游惰與心志紛張。學者有三絕：一、絕不攀附權貴，做無謂酬應，捧足獻淺，有褻筆墨；二、學術乃千秋之業，絕不與空學蟲豸之輩爭一日之勝，浪擲時光；三、絕不貪圖虛名高位，終生不學，一曲吹江湖。如此，學人始能摒絕塵氛，平居兀坐，心淨意專，全心鑽研。有此三絕外，學人尚須是“傻”人一介。國學大師饒宗頤教授曾云：“真正做學問的人很多，我不担心學問會中斷。但是像我這樣做學問的人就不一定會有，因為那麼‘傻’去鑽研一些連很多專家看起來都覺得無聊的問題究竟幹甚麼？又沒有錢賺。”<sup>1</sup> 饒先生一生確實做了諸多“傻”事，其一即於擔任新加坡大學（即今新加坡國立大學）中文系系主任期間，獨具慧眼，爲我國搜羅乏人問津、任其湮沒之華文碑銘文字，撰成《星馬華文碑刻繫年》長文，啟此風氣之先，掀新馬華人史研究之新篇章。

一八九二年，法國學者高第（Henri Cordier, 1849—1925）有言，漢學研究須兼顧文獻訓練與田野考察，於進行語文學研究之同時，亦得注重碑銘學與考古學之進展。誠然，檔案史書記載或有遺脫，以金石爲載體的碑刻文字時或可補紙質文獻之不足，或糾核其中之謬誤。一九七六年，余於澳洲國立大學治東漢安帝災異，取漢碑文字、馬王堆出土文獻與官方正史比讀，時有新發見與詮釋。一九七八年，余學成回叻，目睹城市重建，破廟朽宇相續夷爲平地，其內之碑刻文物相繼湮沒，無不深感痛惜。後得陳鐵凡（1912—1992）、傅吾康（Wolfgang Franke, 1912—2007）、日本日比野丈夫諸先生之激勵，出於公民與史學者之義職，余步饒、陳、傅等先生之後塵，幹此等“傻”事。勞形案牘之暇，隻身寡儔，走訪古廟舊宇，跋涉荒野墳陵，搜錄碑刻文字；於茫茫學海上，一葉扁舟，妄編《馬六甲、新加坡華文碑文輯錄》、《噴叻峨槽五虎祠義士新義》及撰論文多篇。

三十多年後，竟有學者願繼此寂寞之學，可敬可嘉。異域著名漢學家丁教授荷生博士多年專研道教與中國民間宗教，譽滿天下，著錄繁夥，精博可傳，曾與中國廈門大學教授鄭振滿先生進行長達二十多年之田野考察，合編《福建宗教碑銘彙編》七大冊。今又遠道南來，與我國佛教史家許博士源泰先生，費數年之心力，遍訪新加坡華人廟宇、會館等機構，搜羅碑刻文字，仿傅吾康、陳鐵凡《馬來西亞華文銘刻萃編》之體例，成此不朽偉構，以貽後賢。此誠震耀我國史壇之第一盛事。丁、許二君更以此鴻篇鉅製敬獻予所有新加坡人，國人之榮光，莫大于是。

《新加坡華文碑刻彙編：1819—1911》卷帙繁巨，厚達一千五百頁，輯錄金石文字凡一千二百多件，圖文并茂。展卷拜讀，驚嘆不已。要搜集數量如此之多、品種如此之雜的碑刻文字，良不易易。之所以能成就者，乃丁、許二君堅忍不拔之志。二君蒐羅裒輯之功，實不可沒。

《彙編》廣集散材，搜葺陳編，核其異同，訂誤補缺，發先賢未盡之蘊，繼往開來，傳播後世，爲他日學者構建雲屋之素材。其在新馬華文碑刻研究史上，雖非嚆矢，卻是曠世大著，可謂青出于藍而胜于藍也。其值得大書者有三：

<sup>1</sup>《附錄一：饒宗頤說》，饒宗頤《文化之旅》（北京：中華書局，2011），頁205。

一、傅、陳《馬來西亞華文銘刻萃編》中有關廟宇、會館等歷史與碑刻文字之內容均以中英雙語略做簡介。《彙編》尤進一步。丁君不辭勞瘁，以其精深中英文造詣及深厚學術積累，瀝血嘔心，揣情摩意，斟字酌句，盡譯出碑刻文字，俾不諳漢字者得以使用書中史料。用心之宏，實堪欽佩。書中譯文精潔莊雅，字字珠璣，句句錘煉，精彩非凡，絕非一般學者所能及。

二、為留存實物文字之原貌，全編盡照原件文字格式排版印刷。華人置懸碑碣匾刻，多請著名文士撰文，鼎鼎名家書丹。《彙編》中之清晰彩色照片，保留眾體兼備、風格紛呈的精湛書法藝術，為研究我國書法藝術史之素材。例如，粵海清廟、天福宮內光緒帝御筆之寶“曙海祥雲”、“波靖南溟”，應和會館內大清舉人、總理各國事務衙門章京汪大燮（1860—1929）所書之“聲教南暨”，及中華民國總統蔣中正（1887—1975）的“禮義廉恥”，寧陽會館內中國國民黨中央海外部部長吳鐵城（1888—1953）之“親愛精誠”等等。

三、在輯錄碑刻文字時，古代中國傳世文獻多將異體字易為通行字，假借字還原為本字，此於語言文字研究乃一大缺陷。<sup>2</sup>《彙編》保留碑刻文字真實原貌，舉凡異體字，均依原文造字，為史學家與語言學家留存原始資料。此屬創舉。

新加坡國立大學中文系秉承昔日饒先生治學之精神，鼎力支助丁、許二君是項工程；而大學出版社亦願耗鉅資刊刻是編，嘉惠士林，為新加坡史做出貢獻，更是功德無量。

竊聞丁君之學，起敬起慕。然丁君處己若虛，以余昔年傾心碑學，引為同道。前歲大駕光臨寒舍，索序於余。遇此殊榮重待，受寵若驚。自忖丁君之學力與成就，余望塵不及，何敢作佛頭之誚。是以謹承先生命，略書數言，非敢云序也。

莊欽永稽首謹識  
2013年11月22日

<sup>2</sup> 毛遠明：《碑刻文獻學通論》（北京：中華書局，2009），頁3。

## Preface

In the pursuit of scholarship one should guard against being undisciplined or allowing one's sense of purpose to be distracted. There are three things to be refused when it comes to scholarship: (1) refuse to rely on those with wealth and power, or do meaningless things just because you are asked to do so; (2) scholarship is a task timed for eternity so never compete for a moment of glory with vermin of empty learning, thereby wasting precious hours; (3) do not envy or aspire to empty titles and high positions, for such people learn nothing their entire lives, and all they sing in their masquerades are merely empty words. In this way, scholars can first push away distractions, live at peace and sit up straight. With one's heart calm and intention focused, one can carry out research wholeheartedly. In addition to these three refusals, a scholar must also be a "fool". The great sinologist Professor Jao Tsung-i once said, "There are many people who do true research. I am not worried that scholarship will come to an end. But there may not be many people who do the kind of scholarship that I do. Because after all what is one doing when being so foolish as to research topics that many specialists view as boring questions? And not to make any money at it!" Professor Jao indeed did many "foolish" things in his life. One of these was, while serving as the Head of the Chinese Studies Department of Singapore University (today's NUS), with unique vision, on behalf of this country to search for Chinese inscriptions. These were things that no one else cared about, but had instead simply let disappear. He compiled these sources into "A Chronological Account of Singapore and Malayan Chinese Inscriptions". With this act, he opened up a new chapter in the research of Chinese Singapore-Malayan Chinese history.

In 1892, the French scholar Henri Cordier said sinological research must simultaneously pursue literary training and field research. At the same time as developing linguistic research, it was also necessary to pay attention to epigraphy and archaeology. Truly, records in the archives can have gaps, and data from metal and stone inscriptions can fill in the gaps in the paper record, or can correct their errors. In 1967, while I was at ANU researching the disasters and omens of the reign of the Eastern Han Emperor An, I examined Han epigraphy, the archaeological texts from Mawangdui, and the official records and compared them all, leading to new discoveries and interpretations. In 1978, I returned after graduation and saw the urban re-development of Singapore, in which one after another the old and broken down temples of Singapore were destroyed. The stone inscriptions in these temples disappeared one after another. I felt great sorrow at this loss. Later Chen T'ieh-fan and Wolfgang Franke and the Japanese scholar Hibino Takeo encouraged me—it was my duty as a citizen and a historian to follow their path and do similar "foolish" things. In my spare time from my work with archival materials, all on my own, I visited old temples and buildings, and tramped across wild and deserted cemeteries, gathering and recording inscriptions. I was adrift in a small skiff on the vast sea of scholarship. I edited *Collected Records of Malaccan and Singaporean Chinese Stele Inscriptions* (1998) and *Heroic Images of Ming Loyalists: A*

*Study of the Spirit Tablets of the Ghee Hin Kongsi Leaders in Singapore* (1996), and wrote several articles on related topics.

Over 30 years later, there are finally some scholars who are willing to continue this lonely field of studies. This calls for respect and is most commendable. The foreign renowned Sinologist Professor Kenneth Dean has studied Daoism and Chinese popular religion for many years. His reputation is well-established, his publications are voluminous, and he is both refined and broad in his scholarship. He carried out over 20 years of fieldwork together with Professor Zheng Zhenman of Xiamen University, and they edited *Epigraphical Materials on the History of Religion in Fujian*, published in seven large volumes. Recently he has moved south, and together with the scholar of Singaporean Buddhism, Dr. Hue Guan Thye, has worked very hard over several years, visiting Singaporean Chinese temples, native-place associations, and other sites, collecting epigraphic materials. They followed the format of Wolfgang Franke and Chen T'ieh-fan's *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, completing this enduring grand model in order to pass it on to later scholars. This truly is a great event that shakes up and illumines our national historical field. Prof. Dean and Dr. Hue have moreover dedicated this great volume to all the people of Singapore; there is no greater honour for our people than this.

*Chinese Epigraphy in Singapore, 1819–1911* is a large volume of almost 1,500 pages, recording 1,200 inscriptions on stone and metal, all richly illustrated. Opening up this volume and reading through it, I was deeply impressed. To gather such a large number of different kinds of stelae and inscriptions is truly a difficult task. That they were able to complete this task is a testimony to the determination of Prof. Dean and Dr. Hue. The great efforts of these two scholars to gather and edit these materials will never be forgotten.

This volume's broad gathering of dispersed sources, the inclusion of earlier scholarly works, their verification of variant source and their correction of earlier mistakes, the filling in of omitted records, the completion of the dreams of earlier scholars—this will open these sources up to future researchers and transmit them to later generations. This will provide the materials for scholars of later ages to build their precious castles in the sky. Within the historical study of Singaporean and Malaysian Chinese epigraphy, although it is not the very first work in this field, it is still a major work of trans-historical importance. This is a case of “indigo emerging even bluer than the blue plant it comes from”.

There are three major points I would like to make about this book:

(1) Wolfgang Franke and Chen T'ieh-fan's *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia* included brief summaries of the epigraphic texts and the histories of the temples and native-place associations in which they were found. *Chinese Epigraphy of Singapore* advances one step. Prof. Dean has spared no effort, drawing upon his high attainments in Chinese and English and his deep scholarly accomplishments, painstakingly searching for the meanings and carefully crafting phrases to translate the epigraphic texts. Thus those who do not understand Chinese language can make



use of the historical materials included in this book. His thoughtfulness truly deserves respect. The translated texts in the book are clear and elegant. Each phrase is a gem, and each sentence is refined, so that the texts are wonderful and exceptional, which is something not every scholar can achieve.

(2) In order to preserve the original form of the texts, throughout the entire book the original layout of the inscriptions is reproduced. When Chinese commissioned stelae and plaques and had them carved, they usually invited famous literati to compose the text, and asked renowned artists to write the calligraphy. The colorful photography in this volume preserves the original format as well as the style and varied beauty of the exquisite calligraphy—thus becoming a major resource for the history of the calligraphy of Singapore. Important examples include the inscribed plaques composed in the calligraphy of the Guangxu Emperor in the Wak Hai Cheng Bio and the Tian Hock Keng, the plaques in the Ying Fo Fui Kun written by Wang Daxie (1860-1929), the late Qing Provisional Candidate and Secretary of the Qing Foreign Office, and that by President Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), and the plaque in the Ning Yeung Wui Kuan by Wu Tiecheng (1888-1953), Director of the KMT Central Overseas Affairs Bureau.

(3) In the process of recording stone inscriptions, traditional epigraphic scholarship has mostly altered variant characters into standard form, and restored phonetic loan characters to their standard original terms. This has actually been a great loss for linguistic research. This volume has preserved the true appearance of the original inscriptions. Each time variant characters were encountered, they had their printers design identical graphs, preserving original materials for historians and linguists. This can be considered a major innovation.

The Chinese Department of the National University of Singapore has carried forward the spirit of Professor Jao Tsung-i, and provided support for this project of Prof. Dean and Dr. Hue. NUS Press has been willing to take on the great costs of printing this major work, kindly providing support to the scholarly community, thus making a great contribution to Singapore Studies—this is an act of boundless beneficence.

I have long felt great respect for Prof. Dean's scholarship. But Prof. Dean is most humble—he thinks of me as a kindred spirit due to my delight in epigraphic research in earlier years. Last year when he visited my home, he asked me to write a preface for this volume. In the face of this courteous request, I felt honored and overwhelmed. Compared to Prof. Dean's academic standards and accomplishments, I felt left far behind, and unable to provide useful critique. Here I have done my best to respond to his request, and written out a few words, which I dare not consider as a preface.

**David Chng**, written with care and respect, 22 November 2013

(Trans. K. Dean)

## Introduction

*Chinese Epigraphy in Singapore 1819–1911* presents the epigraphic materials dating from 1819–1911 found in Chinese temples, native-place clans, and guild associations, as well as schools and hospitals of Singapore. In order to preserve the entire historical record of each site with inscriptions from this early period, all dated inscriptions found in the site, from the earliest times to the present day, are included. These cultural artifacts possess a high artistic and historical value. Many display beautiful calligraphy and fine stone or woodcarving. They represent a valuable, but under-appreciated repository of Singapore's historical and cultural heritage.

*Chinese Epigraphy in Singapore* presents a total of 1278 inscriptions, in the following categories: 395 inscriptions (stone, bronze, brass, wood, plastic and paper), 450 plaques (wood and stone), 268 couplets (wood and stone), 23 bronze bell inscriptions, 43 censers (stone and bronze), 8 inscriptions on temple beams, 6 “cloud-board” chimes, 2 placards, 27 altar-tables, 7 altarpieces, 1 pair of candlesticks, 1 theater-stage, 8 (bronze and wood) carvings, 2 god spirit-tablets, 3 carved stone temple lions, 1 temple drum, 3 weapons and 30 additional miscellaneous inscriptions.

These materials provide evidence of the central role of the early Chinese temples and associations of Singapore in the everyday life of the immigrant communities, as well as the networks of support underlying these temples. The more recent inscribed texts from each site detail the tremendous changes that the Chinese temples and other associations of Singapore had undergone due to the massive pressure of urban development. Some relate the process of the establishment of new “united temples”, combining several earlier temples that were forced to move from their original location and combine with other temples in what we believe is a unique Singaporean institution.<sup>1</sup> Taken altogether, these materials provide a foundation for future studies of the history of Chinese communities in Singapore. These sources provide many new perspectives for the study of the social and cultural history of Singapore.

These materials are presented here in a bilingual edition, making these sources available to those interested in the historical and cultural heritage of Singapore. There were many other early Chinese institutions in Singapore which did not leave behind inscriptions, but which left other records (such as land deeds, documents of registration, board room minutes). We include an Appendix listing these institutions at the end of this Introduction.

### Layout of the volume

In each chapter, we first provide: (1) a brief bilingual introduction to the temple or association, followed by: (2) the name of the principal deity (or ancestors) worshipped at the site, (3) a list of the cultural artifacts found in the site follows, arranged by date of the inscriptions.<sup>2</sup> The epigraphic materials are then presented as follows: (4) temple stelae (stone inscriptions and inscribed brass plates), (5) temple plaques on wood and stone, (6) temple couplets on wood and stone, and finally (7) other cultural artifacts (including temple bells, cloud-boards, censers, altar-

<sup>1</sup> Hue Guan Thye, “The Evolution of the Singapore United Temple: The Transformation of Chinese Temples” *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, Volume 5, 2011–12. Canberra: The Australian National University, pp. 157–74.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated dates are presented within square brackets.

tables, etc.) Within each chapter, each item is listed by chapter number, followed by the number of item arranged chronologically. Thus for example, the first temple plaque in the first chapter is listed as 1.01. For each item, we provide a color photograph of the original, a Chinese transcription of the full text of that item, including any variant characters (*yìhìzì*), and an English translation of the title (for stelae), or the text of the inscription or couplet, along with additional translations of the names or categories of the donors of plaques or couplets or other items. At the end of each chapter, the reader will find an English translation of the main text of the longer inscriptions.

It must be mentioned at the outset that the English translations included here are only one possible reading of these rich materials. In particular, the translations of the couplets do an injustice to the originals, which can and must be read (in a downward vertical flow) as two consecutive lines of verses, while they must also be read simultaneously horizontally, as paired phrases or expressions in parallel or antithetical relation to one another. This adds considerable tension and movement between the lines. The couplet form draws its extraordinary range and scope from the tradition of Chinese poetry, which endlessly works with parallelism and antithesis. Thus the English translations included in this book are only a bare summary of the main narrative movement of the couplet, but lack the back and forth vibrancy which is the essence of the art form.

For some chapters we have also added critical notes, to explain certain readings in our translations, or to provide additional information where necessary. For each entry, we cite earlier published versions of the text if they are known to us. We have not itemized the differences between these earlier editions of the epigraphic materials and our own version, as this would be too laborious and of little value. Instead, we present our own transcriptions of the stelae and other inscribed objects for interested readers to compare with earlier versions.

In the section providing translations of the main text of the stone inscriptions, we also include a punctuated text in modern Chinese (with variant characters amended to their current standard forms) to provide ease of reading for readers unfamiliar with the bewildering variety of variant characters found on stone inscriptions. Punctuating a text of Classical Chinese into modern grammatical units is tantamount to providing an interpretation of that text, and we hope this will assist readers of Modern Chinese as well. For some inscriptions which are already bilingual, and which are clearly legible, we have not provided transcriptions. Where we are unable to decipher a word, we have indicated this in the text of the transcription with an empty square icon. In principle, we do not try to guess the meaning of an unclear or effaced word, but leave it blank instead. Thus some damaged inscriptions will have many passages marked as illegible.

Names of temples and individuals in the English text are given according to their official spelling, which are usually based on transliterations of the pronunciation within their dialect group. Mandarin Chinese pronunciation of personal and place names is provided in *pinyin* transliteration within brackets on their first occurrence, along with English translations of the names of temples and other institutions. In some cases, we have not been able to locate the official spelling of individual personal names, and for this we apologize. Official Chinese titles are translated in accordance with Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford University Press, 1985).

## The nature of epigraphic materials

The inscriptions included in this volume were carved on hard and imperishable materials, such as stone, wood, brass or bronze. Epigraphic materials, as Franke (1982:1) stated, can be divided into two categories, those in which the inscription gives supplemental information about the object on which it is inscribed (for example, the names of the donor of a bell), and those for which the inscriptions exists for its own sake, or for the information it includes (in these cases the material inscribed, such as a slab of stone or a wooden board, has been prepared explicitly for this purpose). Both forms are found in this volume.

Tsuen-hsüan Tsien's *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of the Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) gives an overview of the key categories of epigraphic materials in China. Franke (1982) has briefly outlined the history of epigraphic research in China since the 12th century, noting that beginning with the works of Ou-yang Xiu (1007–72) and Zheng Qiao (1104–62) (who included a chapter on epigraphy in his *Tongzhi* (*Comprehensive Record*) of 1155, this field has resulted in hundreds of published studies, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Yenching Institute, 2013) for an overview of the field of epigraphic research.

Epigraphy as a branch of historical research began in the West only in the 18th century, focusing on Greek and Roman materials. The study of epigraphy in both China and Europe has made vital contributions to the study of ancient civilizations. In China however, *jinsbixue* (the study of inscriptions on stone and metal) paid less attention to the socio-historical materials found in temples and native-place associations across China. The focus was primarily on official inscriptions, or inscriptions of Confucian, Buddhist, or Daoist classics, or literary works, or inscriptions featuring rare or impressive calligraphy. Thus the bulk of local inscriptions were ignored, even in sections of local gazetteers dedicated to local epigraphy. One editor of such a gazetteer, the (Kangxi) *Ninghua xianzhi* stated that he felt it was his duty as an editor to improve the style and language of the original inscriptions that he chose to include. Even when the main texts were included, the lists of contributors, which provide vital sources for the analysis of local society, were usually left out. Needless to say, the accurate collection of stone inscriptions remains a basic and essential task for the study of local and regional history, as well as transregional and transnational histories.

Franke (1982) points out that the rise of capitalism and the expansion of the Chinese population from the mid-Ming onward led to the emergence of new social institutions, such as native-place associations, guilds, and various commercial associations. Such organizations spread rapidly in China in the 16th and 17th centuries. These institutions produced and preserved a large number of stone inscriptions. Written for people who were not members of the ruling official class, their scope, techniques, and styles varied considerably from official inscriptions.

“The inscriptions are at sight (i.e., on display and in view), ubiquitous in any Chinese social institution to the present day. They are not merely a decoration of aesthetic value, but the manifestation of the spirit of what is reckoned as good and worth perpetuating. It is not exaggeration to say that the enormous accretion of these inscriptions ‘mirrors’, to a certain extent, the change and continuity of the Chinese cultural tradition in the environment they live in.”  
(Franke and Ch'en, 1980:2)