

UNDERSTANDING THE THAI-CHINESE COMMUNITY IN HAT YAI
THROUGH THE ROLE OF ETHNIC CHINESE-AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)

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การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้ค้นหาความจริงเกี่ยวกับลักษณะวัฒนธรรมทางสังคม เศรษฐกิจ และการเมืองของชุมชนชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนในเขตเทศบาลนครหาดใหญ่ผ่านบทบาทองค์กรในเครือข่ายชาตินิยมจีน โดยการวิเคราะห์บทบาทขององค์กรเหล่านี้ในแง่ของการมีอิทธิพล และการบำรุงรักษาชุมชน รวมถึงการสนับสนุนเครือข่ายต่างๆ ทั้งในและนอกชุมชน

การวิจัยยึดข้อมูลปฐมภูมิและทุติยภูมิเป็นหลัก และมีการเข้าร่วมสังเกตการณ์โดยตรงหลายครั้งระหว่างเดือนพฤศจิกายน 2554 ถึงเดือนสิงหาคม 2556 ตลอดถึงการสัมภาษณ์ในเชิงลึกและแบบสอบถาม

ผลการศึกษพบว่า ชุมชนชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนในภาคใหญ่ยังคงรักษาลักษณะวัฒนธรรมทางสังคม เศรษฐกิจ และการเมืองที่ได้รับอิทธิพลมาจากวัฒนธรรมจีน และองค์ระบอบการปกครองของกลุ่มชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนเหล่านี้ มีบทบาทสำคัญในการรักษาเอกลักษณ์ความเป็นไทย-จีน ด้วยการเสริมสร้างศักยภาพของชุมชนผ่านโครงสร้างเครือข่าย เพื่อจัดหาทรัพยากรให้กับส่วนรวม ขณะเดียวกันองค์กรเหล่านี้ยังร่วมมือกับหน่วยงานต่างๆ ของภาครัฐเพื่อปกป้องมรดกทางชาติพันธุ์และส่งเสริมผลประโยชน์ทางเศรษฐกิจของชุมชน

อีกทั้งยังพบว่า ลักษณะทางวัฒนธรรมของจีนที่แตกต่างจากลักษณะทางวัฒนธรรมของไทย คือ การหลีกเลี่ยงความไม่แน่นอนต่ำ การแข่งขันสูง และการมีเป้าหมายระยะยาวที่เน้นการปฏิบัติ ขณะที่ลักษณะดั้งเดิมของชาวจีน ประกอบด้วย การบูชาบรรพบุรุษ การยึดมั่นกับเทศกาลต่างๆ และค่านิยมที่ยกย่องอำนาจ ความมั่งคั่ง และความขยัน

อย่างไรก็ดี ไทยและจีนมีลักษณะทางวัฒนธรรมที่เหมือนกันในเรื่องการมีระยะห่างในเชิงอำนาจสูง และความรู้สึกผูกพันกับกลุ่ม เห็นได้ชัดจากทัศนคติเรื่องการยอมรับอำนาจของรัฐบาลในทางเศรษฐกิจ การส่งเสริมการจัดสวัสดิการสังคมและการกระจายความมั่งคั่ง การแสดงออกถึงความจงรักภักดีที่มีให้กับประเทศและพระมหากษัตริย์ รวมถึงการมีความคิดและวิธีปฏิบัติเกี่ยวกับเรื่อง “ประชาธิปไตย” ที่ไม่เป็นไปตามแบบแผนของสังคม และองค์กรไทย-จีนเหล่านี้มีความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมและเศรษฐกิจอย่างแนบแน่นกับกลุ่มชาตินิยมจีนในมาเลเซียและจีน

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ยังพบว่า สิ่งที่ทำลายเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของชุมชน คือ การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางเศรษฐกิจ และโลกาภิวัตน์ ขณะที่การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้ทำทนาย “กระบวนการที่สั่นคลอน” และแสดงให้เห็นถึงอิทธิพลของลักษณะวัฒนธรรมทางสังคม เศรษฐกิจ และการเมืองของจีนที่ซับซ้อนมากขึ้น

การวิจัยนี้มีประโยชน์ต่อการศึกษาสภาพแวดล้อมทางวัฒนธรรมในภาคใต้ของไทย และชุมชนชาวจีนโพ้นทะเล

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This study investigates the social, economic and political cultural characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in the municipal Hat Yai area via ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations. It analyzes the role of these organizations in influencing and maintaining the community, and supporting networks within and outside the community. Research is based on primary and secondary sources, multiple direct observation visits from November 2011 to August 2013, and in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The study argues that the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community maintains social, economic and political cultural characteristics derived from Chinese cultural influence. The Thai-Chinese voluntary organizations play a significant role in maintaining a Thai-Chinese identity by empowering the community through a networking structure that provides collective resources. They have managed to co opt government forces to protect the ethnic heritage and promote community economic interests. Chinese cultural characteristics differing from Thai are low uncertainty avoidance, high competitiveness, and pragmatic long-term orientation. Distinguishing Chinese traditional characteristics also include ancestor worship, adherence to Chinese festivals, and ideals that extol power, wealth and industriousness. Thai and Chinese shared characteristics of high power distance and collectivism are evident in attitudes toward the acceptance of government power in the market, promotion of social welfare and redistribution of wealth, expressions of loyalty to state and monarchy, and unconventional conceptions and practice of "democracy." Thai-Chinese organizations provide strong social and economic networking with ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and China. Challenges to community cultural identity include economic changes and globalization. This study challenges the "assimilation paradigm" and demonstrates a more complex influence of Chinese social, economic and political characteristics. The study better informs the field of research into the Southern Thailand cultural environment and Overseas Chinese communities.

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Student's Signature.....
Advisor's Signature.....

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Hat Yai is a vibrant commercial center of Southern Thailand, a regional transportation hub less than 60 kilometers from the Malaysian border and sitting astride two cultural regions where Thai Buddhist transitions to Malaysian Muslim culture. The population of the city center itself, due to historical circumstances, is neither 100% Thai Buddhist nor Malay Muslim—it is composed largely of ethnic Chinese. Chinese, whether as shipping merchants and laborers, the builders of the Southern Thailand railroad line, tin miners, rubber plantation workers and developers, or local merchants, played a vital role in building the town from a small backwater at the turn of the twentieth century into a competitive powerhouse on the Malay isthmus.

The Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai are part of a bigger story of centuries of undulating waves of emigrant Chinese establishing communities among foreign peoples and cultures. These settlers and their descendants have maintained varying degrees of enduring cultural characteristics blended with local environmental influences, all while profoundly impacting their host nations. Often these communities establish organizational structures, such as lineage or regional associations, mutual aid societies, religious organizations and temples, schools, and trade and professional organizations, which not only preserve the community and its identity, but also provide a national and multinational network structure that allows for organized activity and development of civic society. Thailand is no exception to this phenomenon. The Thai-Chinese community in southern Thailand, co-existing in a distinct religious, ethnic and cultural milieu of Theravada Buddhism, Islam, ethnic Thais, and Malays, has a rich network of associations and organizations easily distinguishable as Thai-Chinese. These include dialect and region-of-origin associations, charity

foundations (*munnithi* มุณนิธิ), religious associations and temples, Chinese-associated schools, and trade and professional organizations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Scholars studying emigrant ethnic Chinese communities around the world often focus on the degree to which those communities fit into the indigenous cultures in which they settle. Thailand's ethnic Chinese have generally been regarded as one of the most "successful" assimilations of Chinese into a host culture, with scholars often attributing the success to commonality of religion and other cultural factors. However, not as much attention has been given to specific characteristics of Chinese culture that differ from Thai culture, and which distinct elements of the Chinese culture tend to be maintained. If Thai-Chinese are truly assimilated into Thai culture, how does one explain the continued public practice of Chinese festivals and religion, or the sustainment of Chinese regional, language, and other organizations?

The challenge was to explain the concepts of Chinese and Thai culture, and then determine how much influence of Chinese culture survives in this community as it exists in the Thai cultural environment. This research uses expert scholar descriptions of Chinese and Thai culture, including a data-based model that describes "dimensions of national culture," to analyze Chinese and Thai cultures. To solve the problem of identifying the specific cultural characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, I was able to use the local ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations as a portal to access and assess the community. My initial observations of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai at the beginning of this project revealed that indeed, the local community could still be identified as a Chinese cultural-influenced community, with an active network of Thai-Chinese voluntary organizations. I thus set out with the following research objectives aiming to address the phenomena of lingering and influential Chinese cultural attitudes and practices.

1.3 Objectives of the thesis

1. To investigate the social, economic and political cultural characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.
2. To analyze the role of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in influencing and maintaining the community.
3. To examine the role of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in supporting networks among community members, and between the Thai-Chinese community and external entities.

1.4 Major Arguments

As per the original research proposal, the following were the proposed major arguments to be made:

1. Ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in Hat Yai serve an important networking function that reinforces distinguishing social, economic and political cultural characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.
2. The organizations also serve to connect members of the community to one another and to other communities outside of Hat Yai.
3. The effects of globalization and regional economic development, particularly since the 1997 Asian financial crisis and growing Chinese influence in the region, may reinforce the networking functions as well as re-strengthen cultural characteristics of the community.

After gathering and analyzing the data, I have found that the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai maintains distinguishing characteristics derived from Chinese cultural influence, facilitated by Thai-Chinese voluntary organizations that have empowered the community by providing a networking structure, cultural maintenance, and collective resources. Historical Thai government assimilationist policies and actions have tended to draw the community away

from its Chinese roots, but the organization-empowered community has also managed to coopt government forces. Some facets of economic development and modernization have also pulled the community, especially the younger generation, away from its heritage, yet the local tourism trade, Chinese-influenced economic growth, and regional relations with other ethnic Chinese groups provide motivation for maintaining continuity with a Chinese past.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This is a latitudinal study that provides a contemporary observation of municipal Hat Yai, analyzing several key ethnic Chinese-affiliated volunteer organizations, examining the mutual impacts between those organizations and the local Thai-Chinese community. I include a brief history of the Chinese community and organizations in Hat Yai, in order to give context to the primary focus, which is the current status of the Hat Yai community—its social, economic and political cultural characteristics that set it apart as a community. This description relies mostly on extended observation visits, interviews, and questionnaires of current community members taken over the period from October 2011 through August of 2013.

What are “ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations”? According to organizational behavior specialist Dr. Stephen P. Robbins, an organization is “a consciously coordinated social unit, composed of two or more people, that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals.”³(Robbins, 2005, p. 3) The structure of an organization defines relationships by establishing functions and positions of management and members, and defining roles and responsibilities in carrying out designated tasks. An organization is also an open system in the sense that it interacts with its external environment. The common elements of the organizations examined by this study are the *membership* and *purpose*. Succinctly, I define an ethnic Chinese-affiliated organization as an organized social unit with defined relationships establishing functions and management working toward a common

goal or set of goals that is of major significance to the ethnic Chinese community, with a membership base populated by a majority of ethnic Chinese.

This study focuses on sixteen key organizations in the Hat Yai municipal area populated either entirely by Thai-Chinese, or which have significant Thai-Chinese association. These organizations are:

- Chinese Regional Dialect Associations
 - Hat Yai Teo Chew Association สมาคมแต้จิ๋วหาดใหญ่ 合艾潮州會館
 - Songkhla Hokkien Association สมาคมฮกเกี้ยนแห่งจังหวัดสงขลา 泰南福建公會
 - Hat Yai Hakka Association สมาคมฮากกาหาดใหญ่ 合艾客家會館
 - Southern Region Hailam Association สมาคมไหหลำแห่งภาคใต้ 泰南海南會館
 - Hat Yai Kwong Siew Association สมาคมกวางสีหาดใหญ่ 合艾廣肇會館
 - Pun Sun Khak Association of Thailand สมาคมป็นซันขัก 泰國半山客會館
- Religious and Charity Organizations
 - Hat Yai Foundation of Friendship and Harmony Siang Teung มูลนิธิมิตรภาพสามัคคี ทุ่งเขี่ยเซียงตั้ง หาดใหญ่ 泰國合艾同聲善堂
 - Chung Hua Charity Home มูลนิธิจงฮั่วสงเคราะห์คนชราอนาถา หาดใหญ่ 合艾中華慈善院
 - Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok มูลนิธิเทิดคุณธรรม 德教會紫南閣
- Thai-Chinese Sponsored Schools
 - Srinakorn Foundation School โรงเรียนศรีนคร หาดใหญ่ 合艾國光中學
 - Kobkarnsuksa Foundation School โรงเรียนกอบกาญจน์ศึกษา มูลนิธิ 合艾陶化教育慈善中學
 - Khunnatham Wittaya School โรงเรียนคุณธรรมวิทยา
- Professional and Trade Organizations
 - Thai Chamber of Commerce of Songkhla

- Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand
- Hat Yai-Songkhla Hoteliers Association
- Thai Rubber Association

The organizations under study have various purposes, but all share a common membership element that is Thai-Chinese. By Thai-Chinese, I mean those with Chinese ethnicity. These could be first, second, third, or subsequent generations of original Chinese immigrants (*lukjin*). The Thai-Chinese community includes first-generation ethnic Chinese immigrants (whether from mainland China, Taiwan, or elsewhere), and their descendants living in Thailand. Inter-marriage with Thais, Malays, or other groups may produce mixed ethnicities, but most *lukjin*, at least through the first several generations, will retain an awareness of their ancestry and some degree of ethnic identification. Being “Thai-Chinese” can be considered a self-identification, although it can largely be observed by cultural practices and family traditions. Not all the organizations are populated by 100% Thai-Chinese. For example, the “Chinese” schools accept many ethnic Thai or Malay students, and the trade organizations are joined by many non-Thai-Chinese. However, the organizations all have a significant population of Thai-Chinese, and were founded by Thai-Chinese.

Although seemingly diverse in purpose, in fact these organizations all serve a role in preserving community through creating social bonds and networks of mutual assistance. This study includes the most important organizations, divided into four categories by function, to describe the cultural characteristics of the Chinese community in Hat Yai. The first category includes regional dialect associations. Historically, overseas Chinese emigrating from a particular area of China spoke a common dialect and shared an attachment to the land of their ancestors. As these compatriots settled in various areas of Southeast Asia, they established organizations for mutual protection, and to help subsequent immigrants from their ancestral home region adjust to their overseas environment. Hat Yai has five major regional dialect groups—Teo Chew, Hokkien, Hakka, Hailam and Kwong Siew--with several other smaller

associations, such as the Pun Sun Khak Association, based on both region of origin and lineage.

The regional dialect associations were instrumental in founding charities and religious organizations, which comprise the second category of organizations, in order to offer welfare options to poorer members of the society. The scope of charity activities focused on ethnic Chinese at first, although the foundations expanded their charitable activities as a way for ethnic Chinese to improve community relations and receive religious merit. The charity foundations tend to have a strong religious element, in the Mahayana Buddhist and Taoist traditions, that are often part of a larger network of similar associations. Besides providing welfare for poor and elderly, disaster relief, or other community services, the charity and religious organizations serve to preserve and practice the Chinese-origin religious rites which serve to bless and protect the community. The subjects of this study include the Chung Hua Charity Home, which was founded independently early in Hat Yai's history, *Munnithi Mitraphap Samakdi Tong Sia Siang Teung Hat Yai*, or most commonly shortened to "Siang Teung," and the *Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok* Foundation. Siang Teung is a regional organization that serves as the central coordinator for affiliated organizations in the 14 provinces of Southern Thailand, while Teik Kha Hui is an international religious organization (known in English by the moniker "The 8th World Moral Divine Pen Meeting"), and the Chee Nam Kok chapter is the local Hat Yai organization that is a subject of this study.

The dialect associations have also been concerned to maintain ethnic community identity and quality education among subsequent generations, and have done so by founding schools intended to teach Chinese language and traditions. Hat Yai has three schools identified with ethnic Chinese. Srinakon is the oldest, founded in 1924, Kobkarnsuksa shares its campus with the Teo Chew Association, while Khunnatham Wittaya was established only recently in 2007. Although these schools enroll Thai, Thai-Chinese, and a few other ethnic groups

of students, they share the common goal of promoting Chinese language and culture as one element of their curriculum.

The fourth category of organizations under examination are prominent trade and professional organizations. Due to circumstances clearly elaborated by previous scholars (Chansiri, 2007; Cushman, 1989; Skinner, 1957; Tong & Bun, 2001), ethnic Chinese have occupied particular economic niches in Thai society, particularly in retail trade and other business areas. Often supported by networks established through the dialect associations, groups of mostly Thai-Chinese businessmen have formed trade organizations, such as the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce, to protect and promote their business interests. Two of the most important business areas in Hat Yai are tourism (which includes the hotel industry) and the rubber industry, and this study's examination of the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand, the Hat Yai-Songkhla Hoteliers Association, and Thai Rubber Association adds an important economic dimension to fully understand the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. In summary, the organizations to be studied all have a close association with Thai Chinese in Hat Yai, and share a common purpose of taking advantage of the power of networking via ethnic and other ties to preserve and promote social and economic welfare in the community.

1.6 Methodology

This study takes a multi-disciplinary approach, using methods from the fields of historical research, anthropology and social science. As per the original research proposal, the methodology falls into three main categories—historical analysis of primary and secondary documents; observation of Thai-Chinese community cultural activities; in-depth interviews and surveys. The following discussion elaborates on these methods as I carried them out in the research.

1.6.1 Historical analysis of primary and secondary documents

Sources included English, Thai, and Chinese primary and secondary works on this subject. Secondary source works are available both in Bangkok via Chulalongkorn

University and in several southern institutions, such as Taksin and Prince of Songkhla Universities. Primary documentation came from anniversary and commemorative books; historical accounts of the organization; directories with positions, names and contact information of committee members and leaders; organizational promotional material (particularly in the case of the trade and professional organizations); historical photographs and documents, such as official registration papers, publicly displayed inside the organization and religious buildings; and other material kept by the Thai-Chinese organizations. The anniversary and commemorative books were all professionally printed, and consist of congratulatory messages from dignitaries and fellow Thai-Chinese organizations, histories of associated religious figures, histories of the organizations, biographies of distinguished members, lists of donors, photographs of current and former committee members and leadership, photographs of organizational activities, related news stories, and usually a substantial advertising section of sponsors of the publication.

1.6.2 Observation of Thai-Chinese community cultural activities

I traveled to Hat Yai multiple times between October 2011 and August 2013 to make direct observations of significant cultural events and religious practices, such as Chinese New Year, the Cheng Meng (Tomb Sweeping) festival, *Sad Jin* (Ghost Month), and the Vegetarian Festival, noting the involvement of Thai-Chinese organizations, the activities associated with the cultural events, and the level of participation and characteristics of participants. I visited the offices of all the organizations under study, and interacted with organizational leadership and staff, although I was not able to observe any organizational formal meetings. I recorded my observations with photographs and video, which I later translated and analyzed for more in-depth understanding. I did not formally participate in any of the traditional or religious activities, although I had unrestricted access to make my direct observations. My visit schedule was as follows:

Dates	Length	Activities
18 October 2011 – 20 November 2011	34 days	Visit Thai-Chinese Organizations, conduct interviews
21 January 2012 – 1 February 2012	12 days	Direct observation of Chinese New Year Activities, conduct interviews
13 October 2012 – 28 October 2012	16 days	Direct observation of Vegetarian Festival, conduct interviews
7 February 2013 – 27 February 2013	21 days	Direct observation of Chinese New Year activities, conduct interviews
5 March 2013 – 10 March 2013	6 days	Conduct interviews
4 April 2013 – 21 April 2013	18 days	Direct observation of Cheng Meng Festival, conduct interviews
19 August 2013 – 26 August 2013	8 days	Direct observation of Sad Jin, conduct interviews

1.6.3 In-depth interviews and surveys

In total, I conducted 46 interview sessions with organizational and community members. These interviews were all guided and interactive. In many cases I was able to give a set of interview questions beforehand, or handed the interview subjects a list of questions during the interview to help focus the subject matter. Aided by directories of local Thai-Chinese association leaders and members, I scheduled in-depth interviews addressing cultural identity, community activities and interactions, and political culture. I also conducted interviews with various shopkeepers in Hat Yai, as well as participants in Chinese festivals such as Chinese New Year and Qing Ming (Tomb Sweeping Festival). The interviews, all of which I recorded, transcribed and translated, add depth and color to the written questionnaire, discussed below. Almost all interviews were recorded, with the interviewees' knowledge and permission. The detailed list of interview subjects and their positions or status is included in the appendices.

- ***Questionnaire***

The objective of the questionnaire was to measure and describe the strength and distinguishing characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. It focuses on the role of Chinese-related organizations in the Hat Yai community, as well as self-identity and social, political and economic attitudes. The advantage of questionnaires over other approaches is that it goes beyond providing anecdotal evidence. The larger number of subjects and objective nature of the questions enhances the picture of the general attitude and cohesiveness of the community. Combined with insight gained from the detailed interviews and observation of cultural practices, as well as information from primary and secondary sources, a clearer, more comprehensive, and more accurate picture of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai emerges.

- ***Questionnaire structure and design***

This research relied on several sources for designing the structure and content of the questionnaire. Most valuable was Louis M. Rea and Richard A. Parker's *Designing & Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*, published in 2005. Another helpful source was the "Survey Methods and Practices" document produced by Statistics Canada. Content, particularly on identity and political culture, was inspired by several professional surveys regarding these topics. The most important sources were "2007-08 Citizenship Survey: Identity and Values Topic Report," produced by the National Centre for Social Research, British Government, and the "World Values Survey." A network of social scientists with a coordinating central body, the World Values Survey Association, publishes the latter. The content of the questionnaire was designed in the English language, and went through a rigorous process of translation with the assistance of several well-qualified Thai individuals and academics.

Questionnaires are valuable in providing three types of information: descriptive, behavioral and attitudinal. The descriptive data is composed of demographic data, including a record of lineage and language affiliation—it

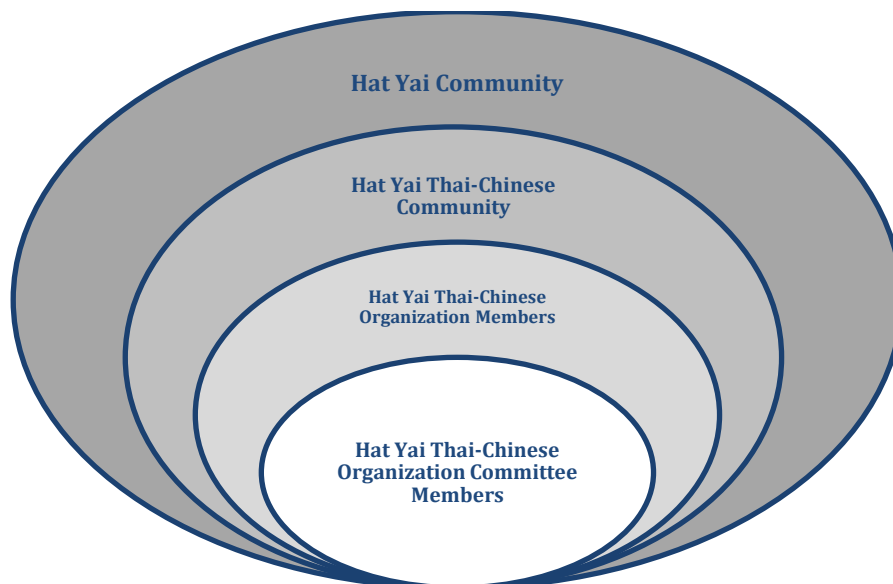
describes who people *are*. To my knowledge, there has been no scientifically designed study in Hat Yai that has attempted to record this type of demographic data. Behavioral information describes what people *do*. These types of questions are intended to have the respondent describe ways they act in daily life. Behavioral information questions in the questionnaire focus on the role of organizations in networking among friends and business contacts, as well as activities engaged in through the organizations. The attitudinal information in this questionnaire can be divided into two categories: ethnic and community identity, and attitudes toward political and economic culture.

The questionnaire is designed to be as quantitative and as self-explanatory as possible. Most questions are close-ended, with any scales of agreement/disagreement, etc. being along a continuum of one to five. Each question is designed so that the spectrum of possible answers clearly match the actual question. To make it clearer for the respondent, many of the questions were repeated in summary form in the answer matrix. This was especially important in the questions regarding political culture attitudes, as they tended to be more complex. Additionally, questions were sometimes phrased with explanatory material or examples. This method attempts to strike a proper balance between being too concise, leaving too much room for individual interpretation, and providing too much information, or biasing information, that affects or leads the respondent to answer in a particular way. The questions were tested and reviewed by numerous subjects before being approved for the final version to discover any introduced biasing. The questionnaire ends with four open-ended questions for respondents to freely discuss the importance of the community, the Thai-Chinese organizations, and the characteristics associated with being ethnically or culturally Chinese. The designed goal was to require a respondent to take no more than 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

- ***Questionnaire target population***

My choice of the target audience for the questionnaire was a balance between a solution to provide viable results, while still being feasible for successful execution. Primary materials from various Thai-Chinese organizations in the community--lists of organization committee members that included addresses—provided one appropriate target audience. From this list I received 110 completed questionnaires from the following organizations:

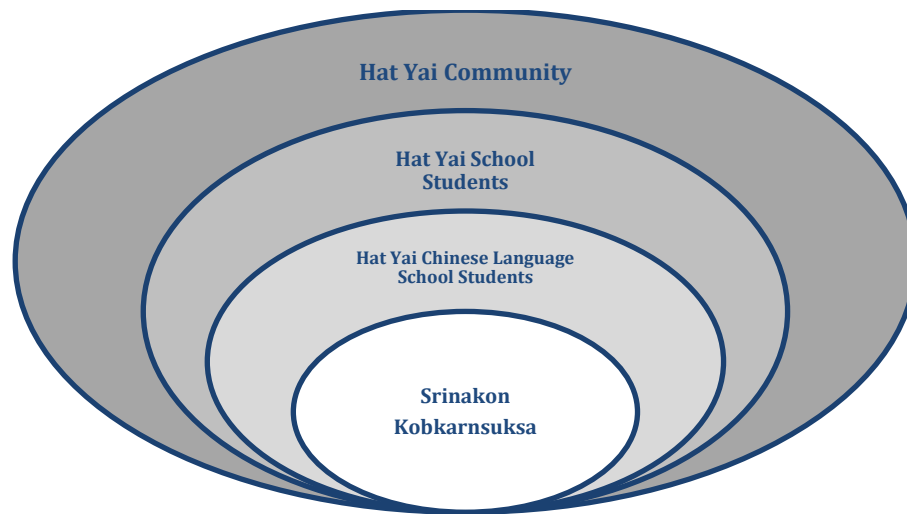
- The six language associations (Teo Chew, Hokkien, Hakka, Kwong Siew, Hailam, Pun Sun Khak)
- Chung Hua Charity Home
- Teik Kha Hui Chee Man Nam Kok Charity Organization
- Songkhla Chamber of Commerce (Hat Yai members)
- Thai Rubber Association (Hat Yai members)



Using these lists did not produce a random sample questionnaire. Organizational committee members are more senior, wealthier, and perhaps identify more strongly with the Thai-Chinese community than the Thai-Chinese population at large. Nonetheless, the questionnaire results are useful for gauging the attitude of a group who make up the community leaders.

In addition to questionnaires sent to Thai-Chinese organization members, in order to balance the views of this group, I also distributed a slightly modified

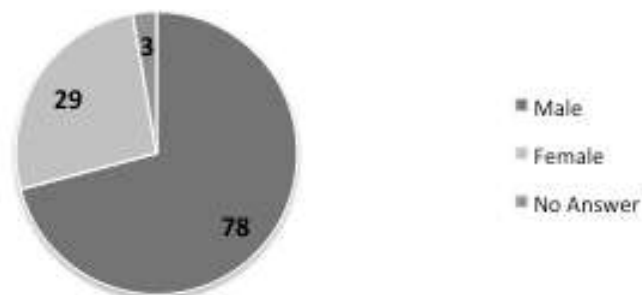
questionnaire given to 9th and 10th grade students at two Chinese schools of Srinakon and Kobkarnsuksa. 175 students completed the questionnaire.

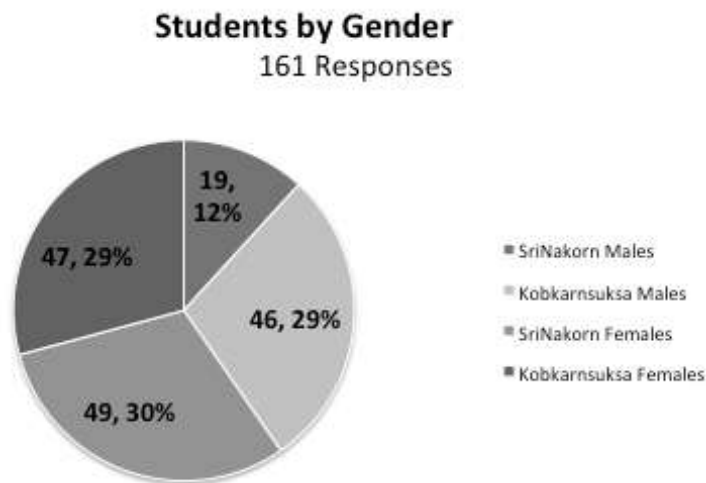


The population of questionnaire respondents for the Thai-Chinese organization members was very heavily weighted to males, while the student population favored females.

Organization Members by Gender

107 Responses

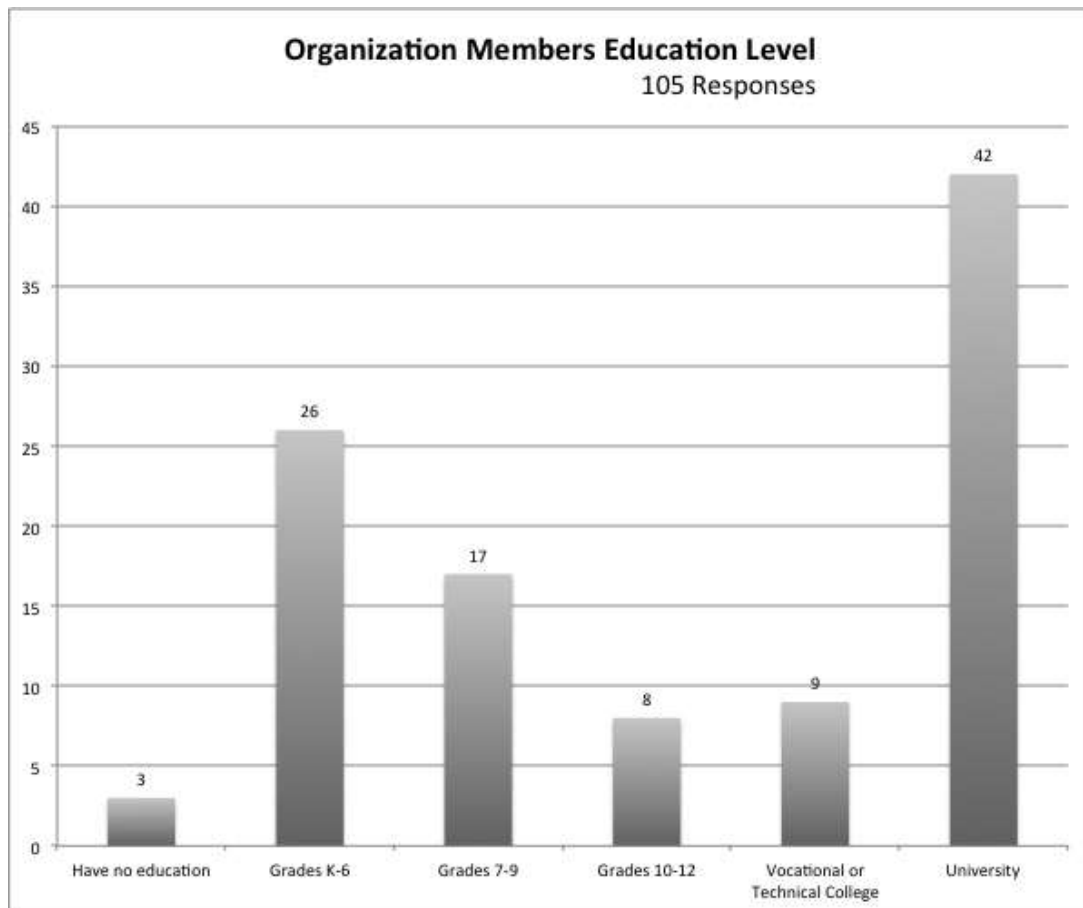




The age range for organizational members was from 27 to 97, with the average age at 60.8. Age is likely to have a significant influence on the results of the data. The older generation can be expected to have a stronger ethnic identity than the younger generation.

Questionnaire Responses Organization Members and Students Age				
	Organization Members (102 Responses)	Students (161 Responses)	Srinakon	Kobkarnsuksa
Average Age	61	15.12	15.91	14.54
Maximum Age	97	18	18	16
Minimum Age	27	12	15	12

As might be expected, the organization members were mostly highly educated, with 39% having a college education. The data shows a dip however, in that 42% of the members had only up to 9th grade education.



Organization members' higher status is also reflected in the occupations and income levels. 54% of the respondents own their private enterprise while 31% are in administration or management. Forty-five percent of the respondents reported monthly household income over 75,000 baht. This compares to the Thailand national average (2009) of merely 20,903 baht.(National Statistical Office and Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2013) This reflects that committee members are often chosen for their wealth and status, as they are often expected to be leading donors in various projects.

- ***Questionnaire Challenges and Solutions***

Despite these attempts to make the questionnaire as simple, yet informative, as possible, several challenges occurred. Although the researcher's contact information was included in the cover letter, respondents did not have the benefit of being able to ask an interviewer regarding any areas of confusion.

Added to this difficulty is the fact that questionnaires are not common in Thai society, so that respondents were unlikely to have much experience with questionnaires asking for opinions and levels of agreement-disagreement with cultural concepts.

The student questionnaire omitted questions regarding association membership, adding one question on intention to join a voluntary organization in the future. The researcher explained the purpose and context of the questionnaire to school administrators, but was not present at the time questionnaires were distributed to the students. Teachers handed out the questionnaires during “homeroom” or during non-study times in class. As one would expect with a younger and captive audience, some of the questionnaire responses appeared to be invalid. The researcher used judgment to eliminate suspect questionnaires, relying on indicators such as all responses being in one column, or nonsense comments or idle doodling written on the questionnaires.

To measure a nebulous and sometimes confusing concept such as identity poses a serious challenge to the researcher. The questionnaire attempts to help solidify the concept for the respondent by providing elements of culture, such as associations, religion, language, etc. and allowing the respondent to rate the importance of each element to themselves on a scale of one through five. One drawback to this method was introducing respondent fatigue by presenting numerous categories and asking for a ranking of each category. The matrices, even with alternately shaded rows, may have been a challenge to some respondents, and some respondents unintentionally filled in two responses on one row, rather than moving down to the next row. In these instances the results were not counted.

Other areas required judgment in handling the data, relying upon a crosscheck of consistencies within a single respondent’s answers. For example, identification as Chinese or Thai-Chinese was determined by observing several responses. The first question asked addressing this area was “Are your parents or ancestors immigrants?” with a table asking for identification of which

generation and regional origin of the three preceding generations. A significant number of respondents did not respond to this question, or responded in confusing ways. Students, for example, responded “yes” to ancestors as immigrants, but in the space for land of origin, wrote in answers such as “Thailand” or “Southern Thailand.” Given that such students continued to answer questions directed at Thai-Chinese, it may be reasonable to assume that they knew that their ancestors were Chinese, but were not clear on specific origin. The second question addressing identification as Thai-Chinese was a direct question, “Would you describe yourself as Chinese or Thai-Chinese?” Even some members of the Chinese regional dialect associations neglected to check either “yes” or “no” to this question. If the respondents continued on to answer the questions specifically directed at ethnic Chinese, these were counted as positive responses. Another cross-check to determine identification as ethnic Chinese was the questionnaire regarding languages spoken at home. Respondents speaking one or more Chinese languages at home could more confidently be identified as Thai-Chinese.

Other areas requiring judgment of the data were the questions relating a respondent’s declared membership in organizations and following questions regarding the importance of the organizations to friend, business, and political networks. Some respondents indicated membership in only one or several organizations, but then made marks for all categories of organizations in describing their importance to their networks. Answers for categories of organizations in which the respondent did not indicate current or former membership were eliminated.

The most misunderstood question was asking respondents to rank what they saw as the top three priorities of government, from one to three. The vast majority did not in fact respond correctly to this question, many recording multiple number “one” “two,” or “three” priorities. Eliciting useful information from this data was still possible, but required some particular analysis of the data that is discussed in the results analysis section.

Because they deal with a human element, questionnaires cannot be a perfect instrument for sociological measurement. As illustrated above, respondents will misunderstand questions, will have their answers affected by the circumstances at the time of their response, and will make errors in completing a questionnaire. Nevertheless, the questionnaire provides a valuable point of reference for determining the true situation of a community. The questionnaire questions are attached in the appendix, grouped by category (not in the order presented on the original questionnaire) and with English language translation.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The topic of “understanding the characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai through the role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations” may be broken down into two major component parts—1. Community characteristics, and 2. The role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations. My approach in this dissertation will be to describe, first, the overall characteristics of Chinese culture from which Chinese immigrants came, as compared to general characteristics of Thai culture into which they and their descendants are transplanted. I will then present, from my own data, what I have observed and analyzed as the social, economic and political cultural characteristics of the community. These observed characteristics can then be compared to the Chinese and Thai cultural characteristics to analyze the extent to which Thai-Chinese maintain Chinese or Thai cultural traits. Finally, I will analyze the role that the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations play in influencing and maintaining those distinguishing characteristics. The discussion below examines the theoretical background to my use of the term “culture,” and scholarly analysis of the roles that ethnic Chinese organizations play in Overseas Chinese communities.

1.7.1 Theoretical approaches to culture.

I argue that the Hat Yai Chinese community has “distinguishing social, economic and political cultural characteristics.” By “distinguishing,” I mean that the community, as a local ethnic Thai-Chinese community, has cultural

characteristics that set it apart as a culturally distinct community—distinct but influenced by both Chinese and indigenous Thai culture. Determining the truth of this assertion requires establishing the theoretical basis and definition of culture in general. A more thorough discussion, relying on expert scholars in the fields of Chinese and Thai studies, addresses the characteristics of Chinese and Thai culture in the following chapter.

- ***Definition of culture***

Culture is a broad and elusive concept that can be applied to all facets of human organization—social, political, and economic. Definitions of culture in Western literature have emphasized observable manifestations of cultural practices in the activities of a defined group, while recognizing the importance of the mental processes behind the activities. Anthropologist Franz Boaz, publishing in 1911, stated

Culture may be defined as the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterize the behavior of individuals composing a social group collectively and individually in relations to their natural environment, to other groups, to members of the group itself and of each individual to himself. It also includes the products of these activities and their role in the life of the groups. The mere enumerations of these various aspects of life, however, does not constitute culture. It is more, for its elements are not independent, they have a structure.(Boaz, 1938)

Margaret Mead also emphasized the behaviors that are produced by a culture when she wrote

Culture means the whole complex of traditional behavior which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation. A culture is less precise. It can mean the forms of traditional behavior which are characteristics of a given society, or of a group of societies, or of a certain race, or of a certain area, or of a certain period of time.(Mead, 1937)

For anthropologist Clifford Geertz, culture is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life.” (Geertz, 1973) Geertz also states, “Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative in search of meaning.”(Geertz, 1973) Culture is also not a causal agent in the world, but it provides the context in which people act. Geertz made a distinction between social structure and culture, in which culture is the pattern of meanings embedded in symbols, while social structure is the “economic, political, and social relations among individuals and groups.”(Geertz, 1973)

French sociologist Guy Oliver Faure, on the other hand, takes a comprehensive view of culture. He also emphasizes the relational and pervasive nature of culture. He argues that in society, “social interactions among members, relationship between the group and its environment, the way people consider nature, space, time or major events of one’s life lead to elaborate beliefs and assumptions widely shared by members of the group.”(Faure, 1999) Those beliefs and assumptions are what make up culture, which he defines as “a set of shared and enduring meanings, values and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, or other groups and orient their behavior.”(Faure, 1999) Culture is not a separate sector of human activity, but a part of every sector of human activity. Thus, we can speak of social, political or economic culture. If there is a distinguishable Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, it will have “shared and enduring meanings, values and beliefs” that orient social, political and economic behavior.

Canadian authors Jacqueline Best and Matthew Paterson, taking a trans-disciplinary approach in examining global political economy, demonstrate the importance of culture in analyzing political and economic structures. They argue

that understanding culture is essential to understanding political economy, and that “...attention to the concrete cultural constitution of the political economy has significant intellectual and practical advantages.”(Best & Paterson, 2010) The practical advantage of taking a *cultural* political economy approach to analysis of a community can be seen in their discussion of the effect of culture:

...culture is a force that works to demarcate divisions between self and other—distinctions between identity and difference that can easily translate into logics of inclusion and exclusion, good and evil, powerful and powerless....a focus on cultural political economy...contributes to our understanding of the core questions of political economy: the nature of production, trade and finance, the global patterns of distribution and inequality, and the power relations that sustain and constrain them all.(Best & Paterson, 2010)

It is worth noting that this discussion so far has centered on Western concepts of culture. Culture in traditional Chinese thinking has a different emphasis. According to Kenneth J. DeWoskin, in the introduction to the “Culture” section of the text *The Chinese: Adapting the Past, Facing the Future*, “Ancient Chinese described ‘culture’ as an embroidery....The patterns of culture give meaning to events, understanding of the world, and order to the people in it.”(DeWoskin, 1991) The first character “*wen*” of the Chinese word for culture, *wenhua*, 文化 is an ancient character that conveys the idea of a “pattern,” “organization,” or “order.” The pieces of the embroidery making up Chinese culture, then, are “a population defined by a common ethnic heritage, in possession of a writing system, distinguished by a political functions of writing and a corpus of canonical texts, and characterizing itself as a center of order and civility amidst a sea of less ‘cultured’ peoples.”(DeWoskin, 1991) This emphasis on written language very narrowly defines culture, and would imply that a Chinese group that no longer writes or reads Chinese has lost its Chinese culture. This study proposes that a distinct Chinese-influenced culture exists in the Hat

Yai Thai-Chinese community, despite the finding that most members of that community use Thai as their primary language, and many are not literate in Chinese.

Considering the above discussion, I define culture as the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, communication patterns, and established norms of personal interaction, to include family relations, relations with immediate neighbors and co-workers, and relations with the larger external world, including government. Culture encompasses a particular group's idea of what "should be," generally accepted priorities, and agreed upon meanings of symbols and gestures. Culture is what distinguishes others that a person knows into categories of "us" and "them." Culture is passed on from generation to generation both deliberately and subconsciously. It is what children learn in the temple or church, in school, and in the family. It is what children imitate from the other people they perceive as "us." It is taught as a particular view of history, social interaction, role and responsibility of citizen and government. So my emphasis will be about culture as relationship—how people interact together as a community of "us" as distinguished from "them," set apart by different religious practices, attitudes toward family and work, attitudes about business, and attitudes and interaction with government. As Faure argued, culture is pervasive in each facet of human activity, whether social, economic, or political.

- ***Political culture***

One key dimension and characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai that I explore in this research is the political dimension. The term “political culture” was introduced and popularized as a scholarly study in the 1950s by political scientist Gabriel Almond. In a widely influential collaborative 1963 publication with Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Almond described political culture as “the specifically political orientations -- attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system.” (Almond & Verba, 1963) Almond and Verba tended to look at political culture strictly in terms of whether a society was on the road to democracy--making democracy the measure of political cultural development. In their study of five nations, they identified three general categories of political culture: parochial, subject, and participant. In a parochial culture, they found little differentiation in political roles and expectations—a relatively “backwards” culture in relation to democratic development. In the subject culture, they found institutional and role differentiation, but a relatively passive role played by the average citizen. The highest culture in their scheme was the participant culture. According to Almond and Verba, “A participant is assumed to be aware of and informed about the political system in both its governmental and political aspects. A subject tends to be cognitively oriented primarily to the output side of government: the executive, bureaucracy, and judiciary. The parochial tends to be unaware, or only dimly aware, of the political system in all its aspects.” (Almond & Verba, 1963)

Asian Scholar Lucian W. Pye was another early developer of the concept of political culture. In a 1968 article for the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Pye described political culture as “the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity.” (Pye, 1968) Pye’s explanation of the concept in an earlier work

with Verba provides yet more depth: “The notion of political culture assumes that the attitudes, sentiments, and cognitions that inform and govern political behavior in any society are not just random congeries but represent coherent patterns which fit together and are mutually reinforcing. In spite of the great potentialities for diversity in political orientations, in any particular community there is a limited and distinct political culture which gives meaning, predictability, and form to the political process.”(Pye & Verba, 1965) In other words, the political culture sets the boundaries of what is expected or acceptable behavior in the political arena.

Another political scientist, Mark Gose, researching the political cultures of East and West Germany, summarizes political culture as “collectively shared norms and values relative to political ideology, definitions of citizenship, the ‘proper’ structure of the polity, beliefs about the appropriate relationship between individual and government, and the general relationships between political institutions and the overall society.”(Gose, 1995) That definition can be broken down into several areas for examination: ideological orientation, structure of the polity, and role of the citizen vis-à-vis the state.

Political Culture Tool of Analysis		
Ideological Orientation	Structure of the Polity	Role of the Citizen
With what political norms and values -- i.e., ideology? -- do most of the populace identify (e.g., Socialist, Communist, Democracy)?	What form of government and what types of political institutions/political groups do most people prefer?	What is the proper relationship of the citizen to the polity (e.g., the nature of political participation, role of the individual in elite selection, the extent of political knowledge, etc.)?(Gose, 1995)

Political culture is about the values, attitudes and knowledge of a people group toward political processes, and establishes the accepted parameters of political activity. Although political culture may be described by ideological

orientation, it is more than a specific political ideology-- a group of people in a single political culture can have widely differing political opinions and ideologies, such as the current "conservative" versus "liberal" political camps in the United States, or the "yellow shirts" and "red shirts" in Thailand. Despite those differences, however, a group belonging to a distinct political culture will share the same values and expectations of the political process, such as the amount of participation of the citizenry in the political processes, and what their contributions actually mean; the acceptance or rejection of the legitimacy of various forms of government--democracy, socialist, military dictatorship; or even the acceptance or rejection of political practices such as vote buying, or paybacks to supporters.

- ***Dimensions of national culture***

Geert Hofstede's "Dimensions of National Culture" provide a particularly interesting and useful tool of comparative cultural analysis. In 1980, Dr. Hofstede published *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. His work provides a unique framework for comparing national cultures mostly based on scientific surveys that have been expanded over the years to eventually cover 76 countries. His work has great value for comparing cultural characteristics, for as he asserts, "Culture only exists by comparison." (Hofstede, 2012)

Hofstede identifies at least five "dimensions of national culture":

1. High Versus Low Uncertainty Avoidance
2. Masculinity versus Femininity
3. Long-Term Pragmatic Versus Short-Term Normative Orientation
4. High Versus Low Power Distance
5. Individualism Versus Collectivism(Hofstede, 1983)

Why do these categories, describing national culture, deserve consideration in examining a local community culture? Distinctive cultures, or norms of behavior and relationships, exist in various layers—from the national level to regional level, within ethnic or religious groups, or even within

generations and socio-economic classes. Hofstede notes that “strictly speaking, the concept of a common culture applies to societies, not to nations,” but his organization analyzes culture on a national level as a “matter of expediency.” He notes that “where it *is* possible to separate results by regional, ethnic, or linguistic group, this is useful.”(Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) Hofstede’s data cannot be applied directly to the enclave of ethnic Chinese living in Hat Yai without scientific polling of that local population; however, the categories that describe cultural characteristics are useful in conceptualizing subtle differences in the Chinese and Thai cultures that make up the environment of the Hat Yai community. Although the Thai-Chinese are not part of the current Chinese national culture, the families and individuals that make up Thai-Chinese have a historical cultural connection to China. Even in a local Thai environment, some Chinese cultural characteristics are passed on through deliberate education and through socialization of children as they learn from older generations. Examining the dimensions of national culture in the country of origin of most Thai-Chinese, that is, Mainland China, I believe makes a useful comparison to illuminate shades of similarities and differences between Thai and Chinese culture. Using these categories, and other characteristics noted by experts on Chinese and Thai culture, provides the necessary background to understand the degree to which elements of the Hat Yai community characteristics are derived from Chinese or indigenous Thai influence. The following discussion describes each of the dimensions of national culture as used in Hofstede’s model.

- **Uncertainty avoidance**

Uncertainty Avoidance is a term coined by James G. March in his studies of US organization sociology. It concerns how people deal with the anxiety of ambiguity. Technology, law, and religion are the main ways of dealing with this anxiety of uncertainty. Per Hofstede, uncertainty avoidance is defined as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other manifestations, expressed

through nervous stress and in need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules.”(Hofstede et al., 2010)

Governments in countries with a high score in collectivism, combined with high uncertainty avoidance, tend to deny intergroup conflict and often either try to assimilate or suppress minorities.(Hofstede et al., 2010) Citizens in high uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be less optimistic about being able to influence decisions by authorities. Any public protests tend to be less radical, such as petitions or demonstrations. Moreover, citizens in this type of culture depend more on and are more willing to follow government “expertise.” High uncertainty cultures tend to have fewer entrepreneurs, and those mentally programmed with this cultural characteristic tend to be less optimistic about affecting society; consequently, they don’t join organizations as much as those in low uncertainty avoidance countries.

On the other hand, low uncertainty avoidance cultures feel more confident about changing society. Citizens might protest against government or social injustices with more radical actions such as boycotts and sit-ins.(Hofstede et al., 2010) Hofstede’s research indicates that citizens of low uncertainty-avoidance countries participate more often in voluntary associations for the benefit of their society, perhaps due to a sense of being able to affect an uncertain situation.(Hofstede et al., 2010)

- **Masculinity versus femininity, or competitiveness versus cooperativeness**

Masculinity versus femininity compares cultures with a preference for assertive behavior versus those that extol modest behavior. According to Hofstede,

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles

overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

Because using terms “masculine” and “feminine” can be confusing and emotionally charged, this author will use the terms “competitive” and “cooperative.” A key difference in a high competitive culture versus a high cooperative culture is the primary motivation for and measure of success in life. A high competitive culture measures success as being the best at something, being first in class; consequently, there is heavy family and social pressure to succeed in school, work, or even leisure activities such as music or sports competitions. More cooperative cultures --“feminine” in Hofstede’s scheme-- value quality of life and caring for others. This type of culture tends to be less aggressive and avoids conflict. Standing out from the crowd as a high achiever is not as valued as in a competitive culture.

- **Long-Term pragmatic versus short-term normative orientation**

Canadian researcher Michael Bond, working in Hong Kong, added a fifth cultural dimension upon determining that Hofstede’s original four categories failed to capture what he saw as a key characteristic of Asian cultures. According to Hofstede’s adoption of this dimension, “Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift....short-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present—in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face,’ and fulfilling social obligations.”(Hofstede et al., 2010) The actual meaning of this index is somewhat complex; however, some key differences between short-term and long-term oriented cultures that are relevant in distinguishing Chinese-related cultures from Thai culture are as follows:

Short-Term Orientation	Long-Term Orientation
Social Pressure Toward Spending	Thrift, preserving resources
Efforts should produce quick results	Perseverance, sustained efforts toward slow results

Reverence for tradition	Respect for circumstances-- pragmatism
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- **Power Distance**

Power distance is defined by Hofstede as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”(Hofstede et al., 2010) High power distance cultures accept inequalities, feel comfortable with strictly hierarchical organizations, and tend to respect and trust leadership. An ideal leader in a high power distance culture is a “benevolent autocrat,” and challenges to leadership are frowned upon. In exchange for loyalty, respect, and acceptance of the power inequalities, the superior is expected to provide protection and benevolence.

- **Individualism versus collectivism**

As Hofstede describes, “Individualism’ pertains to societies in which the tie between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.”(Hofstede et al., 2010) Highly collectivist societies can produce enormous pressure for conformity, and members tend to value security over individual freedom.

1.7.2 The Role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in overseas Chinese communities

Several scholars have noted how Chinese organizations serve important functions in Chinese overseas communities. Philip Kuhn classifies four types of overseas Chinese associations according to their functions, though admitting in practice they overlap.

1. compatriotism (common regional origin in particular provinces, counties, towns, and villages, typically distinguished by dialect)
2. kinship (real or notional)
3. corituality (shared devotion to particular deity cults)

4. brotherhood (as manifested in secret societies)(Kuhn, 2008)

According to Kuhn, shared dialect and compatriotism have been the strongest bonds of community identity, indicating that organizations based upon these ties may play a significant role in building and maintaining community. But belonging to a dialect or compatriot association does not preclude members from forming other layers of affiliations and identity. Kuhn sees any pan-Chinese movement as secondary to the compatriot identity, but the identities are nested within one another, not seen as alternatives. “An individual’s identity reflects his belonging simultaneously to communities with differing functions and on ascending scales of organization.”(Kuhn, 2008) Associations can also link two or more of the Kuhn’s four categories, and community leadership is often interlocking with individuals prominent in more than one association.

Dr. Edgar Wickberg, a former professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of British Columbia, contends that examining the number, kind, and functions of Chinese organizations can communicate information regarding the status of ethnicity and degree of assimilation or integration into a community. Wickberg describes a more inclusive list of organizations, breaking them down into eight types:

1. clan and district associations
2. trade associations
3. professional organizations
4. political associations
5. educational and journalistic bodies
6. recreational-cultural associations
7. religious bodies
8. community-wide coordinating and representative associations
(including “umbrella” organizations)(Wickberg, 1988)

Wickberg notes the persistence of Chinese organizations in overseas communities, despite pressures of assimilation, and suggests that categorizing

the associations based on major needs in the overseas Chinese communities can help explain why they still exist and function. These functional categories are:

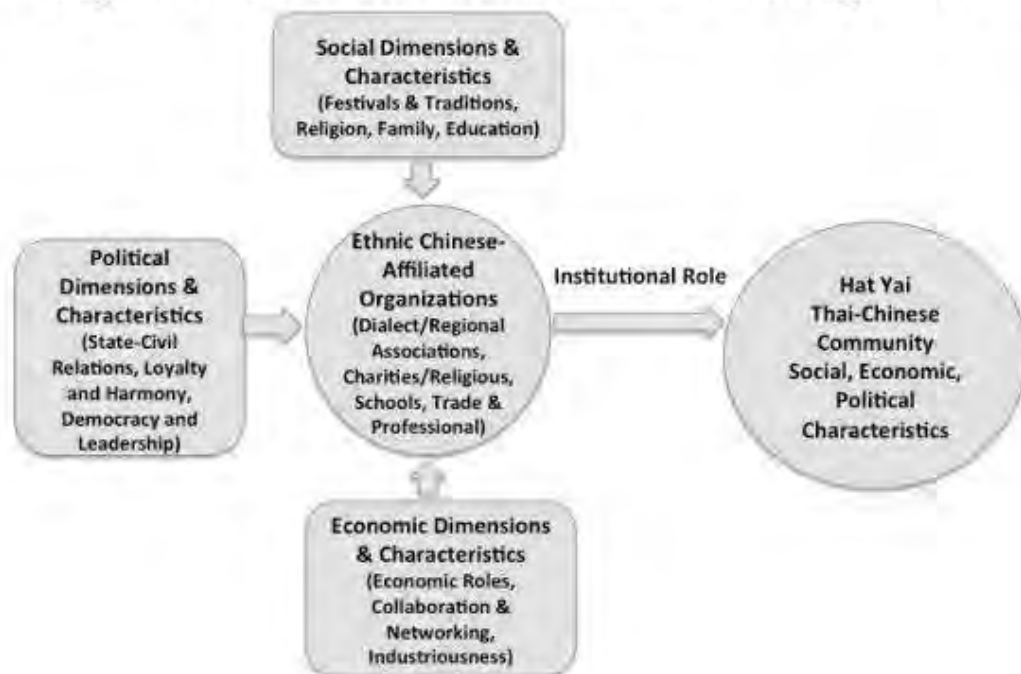
1. competitive interest articulation
2. social services
3. expression
4. resinification
5. relations with larger society

In fact, the functions of these organizations may frequently overlap, and are often linked to business networking. Businessmen in imperial China were expected to contribute to the social good through charity foundations, schools, or special disaster relief situations. This gave them status close to the literati (the Mandarins) that was not attainable to them due to lack of education or ability to pass the government examination system.(Kuhn, 2008)

1.7.3 Structure of argument

The diagram below provides a visual representation of this dissertation's argument:

Understanding the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai Through the Role of Ethnic Chinese-affiliated Organizations



This model illustrates the logical sequence of demonstrating the distinguishing characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai through the role of the ethnic-Chinese affiliated organizations. Chapter two will provide more detailed analysis of the cultural environment in Hat Yai, comparing Chinese and Thai cultural characteristics. Chapter three will give historical background to the formation of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations as well as the current status of the dialect/regional and charity/religious organizations. Chapters four, five and six describe and analyze the social, economic and political dimensions and characteristics of the members of the organizations and community as derived from the field research. Chapter seven will then discuss the roles that these institutions have played in establishing networks within and outside the community, as well as the role in maintaining community traditions and identity.

The model is an organizing concept that attempts to capture and analyze a multifaceted picture of the dynamic Hat Yai community. Culture and community are not static; at the same time, they are neither quickly nor easily changed in character. Residual Chinese cultural influences continue to affect the

community, while Thai, as well as other, cultural influences also help shape the society's character. The arrows on the model represent the social, economic and political norms and expectations. These affect the way people view the world, think, and behave. Different norms and expectations in different communities create the distinguishing characteristics that separate one group from another. The resulting distinguishing characteristics are what allow an observer to say, "That group certainly acts like Chinese" or "That's a very Thai way of acting." Those distinguishing characteristics are what make the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai worth examination.

1.8 Research Context and Literature Review

Research produced in English language on Chinese in Hat Yai is quite rare. Jovan Maud has produced an interesting study describing the commercial promotion of the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai in "The Nine Emperor Gods at the Border: Transnational Culture, Alternate Modes of Practice, and the Expansion of the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai." His study, focused on developments since 2001, finds that

...the changing significance of the Chinese-ness as an identity and the status of the Chinese 'minority' in the South of Thailand are two factors of prime importance for understanding the relocation and production of the festival in Hat Yai....the festival is emerging in the context of a local tourist industry in which Chinese-ness as an identity is mobilized as a resource, and is actively used to facilitate transnational connection, particularly with Chinese from Malaysia and Singapore.(Maud, 2005)

Although extremely useful in understanding the conscious manipulation of Chinese religious practice, beyond this narrow focus the study offers little additional insight into the economic, political or other social aspects of the Thai Chinese community in Hat Yai.

A few works in Thai language have covered the topic of Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai more directly. A Ministry of Culture-sponsored research article in 2005

entitled “Societal and Cultural Changes of the Hat Yai Chinese Community From Past to Present” (ความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรม ของชุมชนชาวจีน เมืองหาดใหญ่จากอดีตถึงปัจจุบัน) relies on a theoretical background that is sociologically and anthropologically based, referencing Franz Boas’ “historical particularism and cultural diffusion,” Everett M. Rogers’ “diffusion of innovation theory” and Daniel Lerner’s “communication theory of modernization.” “Historical particularism” examines environmental conditions, psychological factors, and historical context to explain unique cultural customs, and rejects any idea of parallel evolutionism which sees all cultures as on a parallel path of development. Roger’s “diffusion of innovation theory” tries to explain how new ideas and technology spread through a culture, although the work does little to incorporate this theory to explain how Thai culture infiltrates Chinese culture. Lerner’s theory is more concerned with the process of modernization than with ethnicity or culture, emphasizing the role of mass communication as the key to pushing traditional societies into modern societies. The authors make the argument that mass communication can help explain the changes in society and culture of the Chinese in Hat Yai. (สิริไพศาล, กาญจนดิฐ, นาคสีทอง, & ทองดี, 2005)

The research relies most heavily on interviews of members of the Chinese community in Hat Yai, thus providing a very useful oral history. The study also uses qualitative analysis of historical documents and secondary research. Their story begins with an historical account of Chinese in Thailand. The authors make some general observations about the composition of the Chinese community in Hat Yai, although unfortunately they have no specific data on the total Chinese or Thai-Chinese population, relative percentages of dialect groups, or other ethnic identity characteristics of the community. The oral histories provide many interesting and valuable stories of the effect of government policies on Chinese life. The authors contend that although the policies or laws of the state, or other social conditions, affected and threatened the Thai-Chinese way of life, ideas, beliefs, traditional culture and jobs, they proved that Chinese “have had high potential to ‘build’ or ‘be one part’ of the change process or the harmonious

process in society and culture to be one part of the government and Thai society.”(สิริไพศาล et al., 2005) The emphasis of the study is on the interaction of state and society, with only indirect economic analysis. The authors discuss the general role and development of the dialect societies, but with no details such as membership population, networking connections, etc. Although they use evidence from the interviews to conclude that “being Chinese” is fading away toward “being Thai,” in support of an assimilation paradigm, they did not perform any cultural identity questionnaires of a broad sample size.

Another useful research work regarding Chinese in Hat Yai is Maliwan Rukong’s Master’s thesis work at Chulalongkorn University, “The Emergence and Development of Hat Yai, 1915-1941.” Although not specifically targeted at studying the Chinese community, her work has a much more detailed analysis of economic conditions, with excellent use of sources describing the role of Chinese in the economy. Her study shows that

...tin and rubber trading...significantly affected the economy of Hat Yai which eventually transformed itself from [a] self-sufficient economy to [a] commercial one in which Chinese traders took control...villagers turned themselves to be small vendors, rubber plantation workers or employees of Chinese businessmen.(Rukwong, 2000)

Maliwan’s work provides an excellent historical background to the development of the Chinese community in Hat Yai, which is useful as a benchmark of comparison to my proposed research on the contemporary development of the Chinese community in Hat Yai.

Somphorn Dechkaewphakdi produced a master’s thesis in 1999 on the “The Establishment of Organizations and Social Role of Associations and Charitable Foundations in Hat Yai District, Hat Yai Amphoe, Songkhla Province.”(เดชแก้วศักดิ์, 1999) This is a fairly thorough description of the organizational structure and functions of the dialect associations, charity

organizations, and two of the Chinese schools in Hat Yai. Somphorn concludes that the roles of Chinese associations in Hat Yai can be categorized as follows:

- Sponsorship of Education
- Promotion of Religion, Custom, and Culture
- Contribution to Public Health Services
- Provision of Social Welfare Services.

While the thesis provides a very good description of the contemporary Chinese organization, it provides little analysis of the impact on community regarding economic or political culture, and does not include trade or professional organizations.

Aside from this work, Professors Danuvat Suwanvong and Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana have done a more contemporary study comparing political trust and participation in Hat Yai and Pattani. However, their statistical data based on questionnaire distinguishes only religion, education level, and income level of respondents, not distinguishing ethnicity.(สุวรรณวงศ์ & ชัยเจริญวัฒน์, 2011) Nonetheless, the work provides good solid information on the political culture of the city. Although not focused on ethnic identity or the Chinese community *per se*, Marc Askew's work *Performing Political Identity: The Democratic Party in Southern Thailand* provides an anthropological study of Songkhla political campaigns and elections in 2004-2005 that heavily involves the ethnic Chinese community. His discussion on Thai political culture, and consolidation of Southern Thai studies in a way that describes a Southern Thai political culture provides a valuable background for understanding the political culture of Hat Yai.

Many scholars have recognized the significance of the Thai-Chinese community in Southern Thailand, whose work provides a useful context for the Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai. Professor Phuwadol Songprasert has made considerable contributions to understanding the political economy of Southern Thailand, and particularly the relationship of Overseas Chinese capital to Southern Thailand's economic development. His work *Singaporean Capital: Monopoly of the Thai*

Rubber and Tin Markets provides valuable information on the network of Chinese capitalists that affected Hat Yai. (ทรงประเสริฐ, 1992) Unfortunately very little of his excellent work is available in English. Phuwadol's work fits very nicely with work done by Jennifer Cushman on the Chinese Khaw family, in *Family and State: The Formation of a Sino-Thai Tin-mining dynasty, 1797-1932*, and related articles. Although this dynasty mostly concerns the society and economy on the Andaman coast of the Malay Peninsula, the Khaw family had investments and connections with Hat Yai. Michael J. Montesano takes an innovative approach to examining the southern Thai-Chinese community in "Capital, State, and Society in the History of Chinese-Sponsored Education in Trang." (Montesano, 2008) By examining the evolution of Chinese education in this southern Thai city, Montesano demonstrates how the educational institutions were influenced by and shaped the local community. Montesano's work illustrates the value of examining the history and functions of the three major Chinese schools in Hat Yai, in order to broaden understanding of the role of Chinese educational organizations in the Thai-Chinese community and local society.

In relation to Maud's work on the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai, Annette Hamilton of the University of New South Wales has produced an informative essay on "Performing Identities: Two Chinese Rites in Southern Thailand." (Hamilton, 2008) She studies the Vegetarian Festival in Phuket, and the rites of the Goddess Lim Ko Niao in Pattani from an anthropological viewpoint. Her work gives much insight into issues of Chinese identity in a unique Southern Thailand cultural context.

Moving outside the scope of Chinese in Southern Thailand, works on Chinese in other parts, particularly Bangkok, have been more numerous. Of the general works on Chinese throughout Thailand, Kenneth Perry Landon produced perhaps the first in 1941 with *The Chinese in Thailand*. (Landon, 1941) This work was written in a time of intense fascism-nationalism worldwide, which manifested itself in Thailand by strict anti-Chinese measures, and much of Landon's sympathetic work focuses on the effects on the Chinese of government

policies. Aside from the wealth of supporting documentation he uses, his research is valuable in giving first-hand accounts of the contemporary situation, including via travels throughout Southern Thailand.

The most influential work on Chinese in Thailand has no doubt been that of G. William Skinner, in his *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*, published in 1957, followed the next year by a Bangkok-focused *Leadership and Power in a Chinese Community in Thailand*. Skinner was best known as a China scholar and anthropologist, who developed the concept of “macroregions” in his quest to provide regional analysis of China. Thus, his analytical history of Chinese society in Thailand relies on the methods, such as field work, of social scientists, as well as the more traditional methods of the humanities. In accordance with his regard for spatial analysis, Skinner emphasized the regional patterns of Chinese society settlement in Thailand, and concentrated his work in the core area of Bangkok. His work is highly regarded as meticulous and well-researched. Subsequent scholars on Chinese in Thailand and Southeast Asia concentrated less on the spatial dimensions advocated by Skinner, and more on his conclusion that because of the common elements of Thai and Chinese culture, the Chinese community would become fully assimilated into Thai society; this “assimilation paradigm” became *the* dominant paradigm throughout the following several decades. From an historical perspective, his work has a definite flavor of having been composed during the Cold War, when Mainland China was seen as a rising communist threat by Thailand and the US. In US academia, perhaps due to the US emerging global presence, area studies and sociological methods used to analyze foreign cultures were becoming quite popular. Thus a main concern was the relationship of overseas Chinese communities and the communist “Motherland,” so that Skinner’s work seems to address these concerns. As for his treatment of Chinese in Southern Thailand, Skinner acknowledges that his knowledge of Southern Thailand is second hand, as opposed to his research elsewhere. He notes “estimates are based on descriptions of Chinese communities found in the

Chinese press and other local publications, and on data from informants who have traveled or resided there.”(Skinner, 1957)

Contemporary Yale scholar Richard J. Coughlin, relying mostly on his 1953 PhD research on Chinese in Bangkok, came to a nearly opposite conclusion regarding Chinese assimilation into Thai society in his work *Double Identity, the Chinese in Modern Thailand*. Coughlin states that “the outstanding fact about the Chinese in Thailand is not their stubborn retention of Chinese cultural forms, but their ability to participate successfully, without evidence of social or psychological disorganisation or feelings of marginality, as dual members of their own community and of Thai society as well.”(Coughlin, 2012) Coughlin’s work is also ensconced in the Cold War atmosphere, so that his focus discusses the same issue of the “problem” of the Chinese and whether or not they would fit into Thai society. His work is much more narrow than Skinner’s, without the broader historical background, but provides an excellent contemporary picture of the family and social life of Bangkok Chinese.

In the 1960s and 1970s, several focused studies were accomplished as Masters or Doctoral research projects that continued to focus on the “problem” of assimilation, such as Alan Edward Guskin’s *Changing Identity: The Assimilation of Chinese in Thailand* in 1968, Boonsanong Punyodyana’s *Chinese-Thai Differential Assimilation in Bangkok* in 1971, William Maxwell’s 1972 study of *The Ethnic Assimilation of Chinese Students into the Thai Medical Elite* and Jirawat Wongswadiwat’s *The Psychological Assimilation of Chinese University Students in Thailand* produced in 1973. These studies were all done in Bangkok involving questionnaires, the first, third and fourth of students, and Boonsanong’s of Bangkok and Thonburi residents that he rather arbitrarily divides into Chinese in trade and commerce, students, and Chinese government employees. His classification into Chinese government employees in particular begs the question of whether those Chinese show signs of assimilation because they were government employees, or whether becoming government employees changed their identity. Overall, these works tended to confirm the assimilation tendency

of Chinese in Thai society, at least for second and third generation students attending school in Bangkok.

Another academic trend starting, or being revived, in the 1970s was to approach the study of Thai society from a Marxist or political economy angle. If Thai-Chinese were studied, it was in their role as Chinese “bureaucratic capitalists.” While bringing a different perspective to the Thai-Chinese role in capital formation and collusion with the Thai ruling class, this academic trend tended to de-emphasize ethnic studies, and little was produced specifically on Thai-Chinese communities. The studies from this economic viewpoint, however, such as Phuwadol Songprasert’s work, often provide rich information about Chinese communities. Thammasat professor Kasian Tejapira’s various works, such as his essays “Imagined Uncommunity: The *Lookjin* Middle Class and Thai Official Nationalism” and “The misbehaving *jeks*: the evolving regime of Thainess and Sino-Thai Challenges” also provide excellent insight into Thai-Chinese social, economic and political interaction with the state.(Tejapira, 1997) The latter in particular shows that ethnic identification of Chinese over time has yielded to class and political identities influenced by a variety of socio-economic and political environmental factors. However, much of the work in this genre in the 1970s and 1980s was oriented to explaining Thailand’s “underdevelopment” or exploitation, which colors the treatment of Chinese.

More recently, William Callahan takes an economic-cultural approach to the study of Thai-Chinese that also examines the role of the Chinese “diaspora” in globalization and defining provincial, national and transnational borders in his “Beyond Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: Diasporic Chinese and Neo-Nationalism in China and Thailand.” Callahan believes that a purely sociological approach that looks at national identity only in terms of norms and institutions misses important economic-cultural aspects. He attempts to go beyond the assimilation paradigm by asserting that, “Rather than assimilating or separating themselves from mainstream life, the evidence shows that Sino-Thai communities tend to colonize identity formation in the various local economic

cultures, both responding to and developing the prevailing economic context.”(Callahan, 2003) Of particular note is Callahan’s field research conducted on Phuket as a node in the international economy closely connected to Penang and Singapore. His work shows the Chinese community in Phuket as a society and culture distinct from the central part of Thailand—a conclusion that applies to Hat Yai as well. Callahan’s perspective that deals with globalization trends provides fresh direction for further research involving Overseas Chinese, highlighting the importance of fully taking into account economic factors in community development, and maintaining an economic-cultural perspective in the context of globalization.

Beginning with her pioneering PhD work on the Chinese junk trade with Siam in the 18th and 19th centuries, completed in 1975, Jennifer Cushman became a leading expert in the field of Overseas Chinese in Thailand and helped to push the field beyond the singular assimilation paradigm. In the 1989 edited volume *The Ethnic Chinese in the ASEAN States: Bibliographic Essays*, she provides an excellent questionnaire of the contemporary scholarship on the Thai-Chinese in her chapter entitled “*The Chinese in Thailand.*” In fact the article is not about Chinese in Thailand, but about the state of scholarship *about* Chinese in Thailand. She suggests, among other areas, micro-studies of individual Chinese communities (i.e. Hat Yai), as well as cross-regional studies, to populate the data available to understand the Chinese experience in Thailand. Scholar Christina Szanton is one of the authors who has done just that, conducting an anthropological study of the Chinese community in Sri Racha in the early 1980s. Her work included questionnaires that continued the focus on assimilation, documenting factors such as occupation, intermarriage rates and identity. Her conclusions pointed to a Thai-Chinese middle class that was forming along ethnic lines with an *increase* in Chinese characteristics, rather than a trend toward assimilation.(Szanton, 1983)

Other narrowly-focused works have added to the body of knowledge of Thai-Chinese communities as well. Ann Hill studied Chinese funeral rites in

Chiang Mai in the early 1990s, finding that these rites, when taken with a broader picture of Chinese organizations such as the dialect associations, demonstrate a strong persistence of Chinese culture, at least in Chiang Mai. (Hill, 1992) Hill provides an even more penetrating analysis of the Chinese community in Northern Thailand with her study of the Yunnanese published in 1998. As an anthropologist, she relies on the theoretical foundation of Edmund Leach to contrast with the assimilationist paradigm of Skinner. As Hill explains, Leach “see changes in ethnic identities and in what marks them arising from adaptations to developments in politics, economics, and other circumstances that affect intergroup relations.” (Hill, 1998) She finds the Skinnerian model of the inexorable assimilation of Chinese does not account for the dynamic and relational nature of culture, objecting that “real people, especially the Chinese in Thailand, are distributed discontinuously across these cultural ‘boxes’; no one group displays or possesses the complete list of traits of one culture....[Skinner’s assimilationist model] doesn’t account for the fact that an individual over the life course may identify with any one of several ethnic categories, with any one of several cultural traditions.” (Hill, 1998) Based on her study of the Yunnanese, which she extrapolates to the Chinese of Northern Thailand with whom she is quite familiar, she rejects the notion of an inevitable assimilation of Chinese into Thai culture.

Other academic efforts have explored Chinese in Thailand in relation to political culture and institutions. In 1993, Curtis Thomson published a study on the political identity of Chinese in Thailand. The purpose of his article was “to analyze relationships among ethnicity, economic activity, and political identity and to detail the factors that are important to successful and continued integration of the Chinese into Thai society.” (Thomson, 1993) His data relies on questionnaires of the attitudes of businesspersons from the main trade associations, although these are concentrated in Bangkok. Thomson’s work was published shortly after the military coup of 1991, followed by the democratic protests of 1992 and what was hoped would be an era of democratic reform. The

question at the time, then, would have been how the Chinese, either as a separate ethnic entity or as assimilated Thais, would fit into the changing participatory political system. Thomson cites other work that showed that ideological, regional, personal and kinship ties affected party loyalty, but not ethnicity. At any rate, his questionnaire concluded that “the ethnic Chinese have adapted to and integrated into Thai society to such an extent that they increasingly identify themselves as Thai.”(Thomson, 1993)

Supang Chantavich, in his 1997 essay “From Siamese-Chinese to Chinese Thai: Political Conditions and Identity Shifts Among the Chinese in Thailand,” also addressed the issue of identity and political culture. Supang notes that historically, Chinese have had two types of identity: “one was a politically-focused identity while the other was a culturally focused one,” which changed over time.(Chantavanich, 1997) Supang believed that Chinese in 1997 were living comfortably in Thai society because they could keep their ethnic Chinese identity and use a national Thai identity for their acceptance and advantage.(Chantavanich, 1997)

Bernard Formosa’s work on Chinese temples and philanthropic associations in Thailand in 1996 gives excellent insight into the role these foundations play in society, as well as their connections with one another around Asia. He makes direct observations and analyzes primary documents from the associations that are all rooted in mother-temples of south China. He finds that “...their numerous activities give them an important role...in maintaining a specific religious tradition, and in the social integration of the Chinese minority.”(Formosa, 1996) Most of his work is concentrated on Bangkok and Khon Khaen, where he did field work.

In 1993, scholars Chan Kwok Bun and Tong Chee Kiong took their opening shot on the assimilation paradigm with their article “Rethinking Assimilation and Ethnicity: The Chinese in Thailand,” in *International Migration Review*, concluding that strong elements of Chinese culture existed in the Thai-Chinese community, and that assimilation was not happening as rapidly as had

been assumed. Some of their research, however, was based on the somewhat flawed work of Boonsanong in 1971. Eight years following, in 2001, the pair produced an edited volume *Alternate Identities: The Chinese in Contemporary Thailand* that continued to develop the challenge to the assimilation paradigm. Rather than seeing Chinese in Thai society as undergoing a complete assimilation process, the collection of essays supports a pluralist-multicultural model, which Tong and Chan call a “third ethnicity idea.”(Tong & Bun, 2001) One of the shortcomings of this collection of essays is a lack of statistical analysis that updates the growth and composition of the Chinese population in Thailand.

In his PhD work for a Tufts University School of Law and Diplomacy degree, Dr. Disaphol Chansiri attempts a comprehensive examination of Chinese in Thailand in his work, *The Chinese Émigrés of Thailand in the Twentieth Century*, centered on validating Skinner “assimilation paradigm.” Chansiri does an impressive job of examining public documents, as well as primary and secondary sources in Thai, Chinese, and English. He conducted extensive interviews of ethnic Chinese, both in Thailand and Mainland China, but primarily in the Bangkok region. He also surveyed 200 ethnic Chinese in Bangkok. His work should be considered one of the most focused, in-depth studies on this subject since Skinner’s work (without the spatial analysis) and he brings new supporting evidence, from Bangkok, for his argument that validates the assimilation of ethnic Chinese in Thailand. He performs some comparison with Thai-Muslim communities, through secondary source research, claiming to be “the first to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Chinese assimilation experience by contrasting the assimilation experience between the Chinese and the Thai-Muslims....” He also finds “in today’s Thailand, fourth generation Chinese do not exist.”(Chansiri, 2007) However, focusing on the “assimilation paradigm” may be missing a major point. No one has recently argued that ethnic Chinese are not loyal Thai citizens that don’t fit into Thai society. But finding that ethnic Chinese of any generation speak Thai, or identify themselves as Thai, doesn’t explain the continued existence of Chinese-associated organizations and schools, the

continued practice of Chinese New Year rituals and other traditions, and most importantly, the connections of people and organizations based on intertwined ethnic and economic ties, particularly in Southern Thailand.

One useful perspective available to break out of the assimilationist paradigm comes from Skinner himself, via Michael Montesano's work "Beyond the Assimilation Fixation: Skinner and the Possibility of a Spatial Approach to Twentieth-Century Thai History." Montesano re-visits Skinner, reminding us that in fact Skinner's great intellectual contribution to scholarship was his regional-systems approach to studying society, which identifies core and periphery characteristics of "macroregions." Many overlooked examples in *Chinese Society in Thailand* actually show "Skinner's interest in relating the spatial feature of Chinese society in Thailand to a process of ongoing integration of the country's provinces ever more tightly with its commercial core and chief Chinese center of Bangkok." (Montesano, 2005) Montesano proceeds to apply his own regional-systems approach to Thai history using factor analysis, his factors including such things as population densities, Chinese population densities, size of administrative districts, and commercial bank density. The results reveal local variations of the pattern of integration into a Bangkok core, (such as in the south), as well as the "centrality of Chinese populations in this sequence of developments." (Montesano, 2005)

The study of Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia saw significant activity since the 1980s, in conjunction with Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms and eased emigration and immigration policies, as well as changing power relationships within the region. Collected works such as *The Chinese in Southeast Asia, Volume 1: Ethnicity and Economic Activity*, edited by Linda Y. C. Lim and L. A. Peter Gosling in 1983, *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, edited by Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu in 1988, and Leo Suryadinata's collection of his selected essays in *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia* are representative of this literature. This body of research, however, strikes one as being heavily focused

on the experience of Chinese communities in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, especially true of Suryadinata's collection. Although the other Southeast Asian nations are included, the research is not nearly as abundant.

The first work on the link between ethnicity and economic activity by Lim and Gosling contains case studies of Chinese in particular occupations throughout Southeast Asia, the Thailand-related case being James Hafner's study of market gardening in Thailand and L. A. Peter Gosling's comparative study of Chinese crop dealers in Malaysia and Thailand. The collection of essays speaks to the entanglement of identity as Chinese and economic class experienced by Overseas Chinese communities throughout the region. The work provides insight into the following questions:

- Why do Chinese dominate in certain industries and occupations in Southeast Asia?
- How do they relate and compare to indigenous and foreign groups in their economic activity, and why?
- How are local Chinese communities in Southeast Asia divided within themselves by economic activity (class or occupation), and how have they been affected by economic development and government policies with an ethnic dimension?
- Have ethnic dimensions in economic activity been increasing or decreasing through time, and why?(Lim & Gosling, 1983)

The critical role of Chinese-affiliated organizations is evident throughout the works, in their ability to form networks and extend credit among members. However, Linda Lim maintains that "Chinese social organization is neither necessary nor sufficient as an explanation of Chinese economic dominance or monopoly of particular lines of business in Southeast Asia" and access to Chinese community associations did not guarantee business success.(Lim & Gosling, 1983) Chinese economic behavior, according to the collective results of the

essays, appeared to be determined more by socio-economic and political factors versus any ethnic socio-cultural factors.

Wang Gungwu is a well-recognized leader in the study of Overseas Chinese. He asserts that Southeast Asian Chinese can have multiple identities, all of which must be taken into consideration in order to fully understand this group of society. Dr. Wang believes focusing on the idea of norms, or binding standards for acceptable behavior as Chinese, is necessary to sort out the confusion of multiple identities. The multiple identities can be consolidated to four categories: ethnic, national, class, and cultural. Norms can be categorized into four corresponding types: physical, political, economic, and cultural.(Gungwu, 1988)

In a sort of dialogue with Wang Gungwu, Charles Hirschman posits “Chinese in Southeast Asia can be better understood as minority groups who happen to be Chinese rather than as Chinese who happen to be living outside of China.”(Hirschman, 1988) This subtle difference would result in a different emphasis and starting point for researchers looking into Overseas Chinese Communities. He implies that another approach might be useful, to “look at the position (inequalities, interethnic conflict and accommodation, levels of integration) of Chinese minorities in Southeast Asian countries relative to other multiethnic societies.”(Hirschman, 1988)

Another venerable Southeast Asian expert, J. A. C. Mackie, focuses on the ethnic dimension of economic development in a comparison of Indonesia and Thailand. Mackie posits that the economic roles of the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia have been relevant to intergroup relations. He asks “...in what ways do economic roles have a bearing upon Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic identities, or upon their dispositions to assimilate into their host societies, or their acceptability within those societies?”(Mackie, 1988) His article heavily emphasizes the “cooperation” of Chinese, Sino-Thai, and Thai elites, accepting the Skinnerian assimilationist paradigm that the ethnic distinction between Thai and Thai-Chinese “is becoming functionally irrelevant.”(Mackie, 1988) Mackie’s discussion raises the question, regarding study of the ethnic Chinese in Hat Yai,

“should studies of Thai-Chinese communities treat Chinese as a commercial bourgeoisie more so than an ethnic minority?” As Mackie examines specific cases of Indonesian merchants, he notes that “we must of course preserve a balance between the emphasis we give to their socio-cultural characteristics as members of an ethnic minority and the emphasis we attribute to ‘class’ considerations, or the ‘structural’ features of the political system” which affects the Chinese, their identity, and integration into the host society.(Mackie, 1988)

In this same volume of work, Dr. Edgar Wickberg, a former professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of British Columbia, provides a very useful overview of the organization and function of Chinese organizations. His basic premise is that the number, kind, and functions of Chinese organizations can communicate information regarding the status of ethnicity and degree of assimilation or integration into a community. Because of his expertise and available data, he focuses mostly on organizations in the Philippines, Singapore, and Canada. Some of his methods are self-admittedly unconventional—to obtain the number of associations, he uses the local telephone directory as source material. Nonetheless, his classifications of Chinese-associated organizations based on major needs of Overseas Chinese communities is helpful. He names five categories:

- Competitive Interest Articulation
- Social Services
- Expression
- Resinification
- Relations With Larger Society(Wickberg, 1988)

A final genre of academic work applicable to this research has to do with Overseas Chinese as global capitalists in an age of globalization. Two fairly recent works are pertinent—Darryl Crawford’s “Chinese Capitalism: Cultures, the Southeast Asian Region and Economic Globalisation” (2000) and Bruton, Ahlstrom and Wan’s “Turnaround in East Asian Firms: Evidence from Ethnic Overseas Chinese Communities.” (2003). The first argues for a “diversity of

capitalism” by looking at the unique mode of economic organization in Southeast Asian communities of Overseas Chinese as they deal with increasing globalization.(Crawford, 2000) The second, though business management-oriented, nevertheless puts Overseas Chinese communities into the globalization perspective. It shows how the role of strong owner-managers and personal relationship-oriented cultural norms necessarily change global business practices.(Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Wan, 2003)

1.9 Contributions to scholarship

As per the research proposal, the significance and usefulness of this research may be summarized as follows:

1. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic and political cultural characteristics of a southern Thailand Thai-Chinese community, Hat Yai, which has seen little attention in English-language research.
2. Investigating the role of the organizations in promoting a particular Thai-Chinese economic culture contributes to the field of study concerned with explaining the economic practices of ethnic Chinese overseas communities.
- 3 Analysis of a connection between the culture of Chinese-affiliated organizations and political culture has not been thoroughly explored by other works, and is significant in more fully understanding the influences of ethnic Chinese community organizations on Thai political culture.
4. The subject supplements an expanding database of knowledge of the experience and characteristics of ethnic Chinese communities around the globe. This proposed project provides a more complete picture of the changing nature of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community via political, economic, and social influences, ultimately adding to a more

complete view of Thai society and its place in the Southeast Asian region.

Academic works are all a product of their time and place. They are influenced by academic trends as well as more general historical trends. In the study of Thai society and ethnic groups such as Chinese, the main scholarship trend has been an anthropological and sociological approach concerned with identity, dominated by the Skinnerian assimilationist paradigm, which was initiated during the initial stages of the ideological conflict of the Cold War as well as post-colonial nation building. Beginning from the early 1970s, during a time of nascent economic development in Southeast Asia, as well as an aborted democracy movement in Thailand, Marxist and political-economy approaches became popular, often attempting to explain both economic and political underdevelopment. Most ethnic Chinese in Thailand, as they mostly occupied the business sector, were seen more as part of the bourgeoisie in this paradigm. As China opened up, from 1979 onwards, to embrace “market socialism” and the world economic system, development began to accelerate, bringing ethnic communities of Overseas Chinese to the fore once again. The 1980s and 1990s saw renewed interest in focused studies of ethnic Chinese communities, with particular attention to the economic roles of the communities, although attention to cultural practices and issues of identity were not abandoned. The most recent compelling story in the region has been the growth of ASEAN, regional cooperation, and globalization. At the same time, the current story of Southern Thailand is one of high economic growth and integration coupled with concerns over security, in the context of a national political atmosphere of military coups, mass demonstrations, and instability.

This work on the roles and changes of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in shaping the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai contributes to this tradition of scholarship. The study takes a new comparative look at Thai and Chinese cultural characteristics using a tool of cultural analysis not previously

used in this field. The work fills a significant gap in knowledge of social, economic and political developments in Hat Yai and Southern Thailand. Of the areas discussed above, some works have dealt with social and cultural issues, such as identity. Other works have dealt with politics and political culture, while others have been economic analyses. This project looks at the entire picture of the Hat Yai ethnic Chinese community that contributes to a broad, comprehensive understanding of that community and its role in Hat Yai, Southern Thailand, and regional integration. This research goes beyond an examination of self and community identity, to include an examination of economic, political and social dimensions of the community, including the networking and integration of the Chinese-associated institutions and community with entities external to Hat Yai. Future works examining the role and function of Overseas Chinese organizations in local communities may use this study as a comparative data point. The insights into this vibrant Southern Thai community can also be used to better understand the relationship of the Thai-Chinese community to other cultural communities in the region, such as the Malay Muslim community. This research ultimately provides a more complete picture of the changing nature of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community via political, economic, and social influences, and that community's place in Thai society and in the Southeast Asian region.

Chapter II

Chinese and Thai Cultures

2.1 Introduction

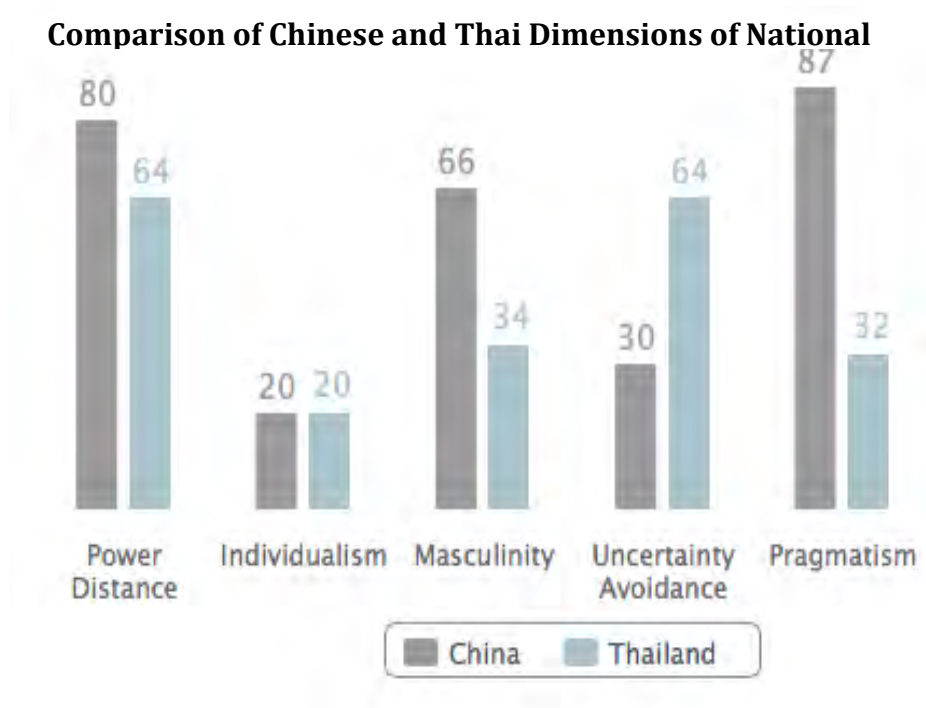
This study is primarily a story about community and culture. To what extent do “Chinese” or “Thai” cultural characteristics define the organizations and community of Hat Yai? What are the social, economic and political cultural characteristics that distinguish the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese as a community? The first step to understanding the influences of Chinese or Thai culture on the Hat Yai community is to understand the major characteristics of these two cultural traditions. Interpreting the nebulous concepts of cultural characteristics can be challenging; the following discussion attempts to make the concepts more concrete by using data describing dimensions of national culture, as well as expert scholarly opinion on the cultural characteristics.

The issue of identifying and discussing separate ethnic identities can be very sensitive in the Thai political and academic world. As a highly collectivist society with low tolerance for uncertainty (a high score on Hofstede’s dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance), government policy tends to cover up or deny differences among ethnic or cultural groups in the name of national unity. The government census figures, for example, do not track the population very clearly by ethnic background. I would like to emphasize that this study, in examining distinguishing characteristics of an ethnic-cultural group in Hat Yai, does not diminish or question the loyalty of that group to the Thai nation. The study does not deny the “Thainess” of Thai-Chinese. Instead, it intends to give a richer understanding of the diverse nature of the Thai landscape, particularly in this small but important enclave in the southern part of Thailand.

2.2 Characteristics of Chinese and Thai “Dimensions of National Culture”

One can see from the following graph of scores on the five dimensions of national culture that Thailand’s national culture differs from China’s national culture in the “Uncertainty Avoidance,” “Masculinity,” and “Pragmatism” dimensions, while scoring very close in “Power Distance” and “Individualism.”(Hofstede, 2012) An

examination of each of these dimensions provides valuable insight to cultural differences and similarities, including in the behaviors relating to organizations, applicable to the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.



2.2.1 Uncertainty avoidance in Chinese and Thai cultures

In this dimension of national culture characteristic, Chinese culture was found to have a low uncertainty avoidance score, while Thailand had a high uncertainty avoidance. One would expect the differences to be manifested in attitudes toward government, entrepreneurship, and religion. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be more active participants in the governing process, while high uncertainty avoidance cultures rely on what the people trust as the expertise of the government and bureaucratic rules. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be more entrepreneurial, while the opposite end of the spectrum feels more comfortable working in a formalized structure. The role of religion in daily life between low and high uncertainty avoidance cultures can also have subtle differences.

A popular Western interpretation of the Chinese two-character word for “crisis” purports that the ideogram includes two morphemes associated with the words for “danger” and “opportunity.” Although this is not an entirely linguistically accurate interpretation, the popularity of the idea, even in modern China, reflects the Chinese cultural trait of low uncertainty avoidance. In fact, Chinese have a well-known proverb, “muddy waters make it easy to catch fish” (“浑水摸鱼” húnshuǐmōyú), implying that uncertain situations are indeed opportunities to gain advantage. Guy Oliver Faure, writing on the cultural dimension of Chinese negotiation behavior, highlights the acceptance of ambiguity in Chinese culture. “Chinese culture, is based on an ‘associating logic’ that does not systematically oppose values [to] one another to show what is desirable but lays down complementary relationships between those values. Like the ‘yin’ and the ‘yang’ in the Taoist philosophy, black and white are not opposed; no more than socialism and market economy in today’s China.”(Faure, 1999) This also illustrates the characteristic of pragmatism in Chinese culture, as discussed below.

Chinese low uncertainty avoidance may lead to adaptability to foreign environments within Overseas Chinese communities. Sinologist Philip Kuhn, writing on emigrant Chinese culture, notes that “Chinese cultural capital is invested flexibly, opportunistically, and suitably for particular contexts.”(Kuhn, 2008) Scholarly studies done of overseas Chinese communities in the 1950s all share a common characteristic of “a flexible reassortment of elements of Chinese culture to meet conditions overseas.”(Kuhn, 2008) Relying primarily on the work of Chan Kwok Bun and Tong Chee Kiong performed in the 1990s, Kuhn argues that

...there was a widespread biculturalism and bilingualism among Chinese and Sino-Thai—a kind of Chineseness that resisted complete assimilation even while adding a layer of Thai behavior and speech to its cultural palette....Situational identity enabled Chinese and their descendants to dress, speak, and behave as Thai when dealing with the Thai majority but

remain culturally Chinese among kinsmen and compatriots.(Kuhn, 2008)

Other scholarly work has indicated that Thai-Chinese have been able to accommodate themselves into the Thai culture in a way that demonstrates this tolerance for uncertainty. Richard Coughlin, writing in 1960, proposed that Thai-Chinese held a “double identity,” maintaining key Chinese cultural traits while still blending into Thai society. Ethnographer Richard Basham describes Thai-Chinese as having been assimilated, or acculturated, into Thai society to a certain extent; however, he contends Sino-Thais preserve “largely Chinese minds within Thai bodies.”(Basham, 2001) The low uncertainty avoidance characteristic of Chinese culture allows Thai-Chinese to remain comfortable with this ambiguity of identity.

The area of religion may also illustrate the low uncertainty avoidance, or acceptance of ambiguity, of Chinese culture. Chinese Buddhism has been characterized by multiple sects equally accepted. Noted Chinese scholar Wm. Theodore DeBary finds that Chinese Buddhism confirms a “strong tendency toward syncretism which had long been a marked feature of Chinese thought” in which there was “... the absence of strong doctrinal tensions and sectarian conflict.”(DeBary, 1960) Thai culture and religion may be seen as syncretic as well, incorporating elements of Brahmanism, native animistic beliefs, etc. However, the main line of Theravada Buddhism, largely governed or heavily influenced by a monarchy, has remained the standard for much of Thai history.(Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005; Wyatt, 1982) The role of Thai Buddhism in Thai culture has been to provide a more unifying, stable (high uncertainty avoidance) presence in Thai society. As anthropologist Niels Mulder observes, “to most Thais, to be a Thai is equated to being a Buddhist...Buddhism is therefore the greatest of Thai institutions, expressive of and perpetuating the Thai nation, its traditions, its ritual, and its identity.”(Mulder, 1996) Thai Theravada Buddhism does not have a pantheon of gods, with different regions or

language groups associated with venerating particular gods, as is present in Chinese religion.

Thai-Chinese religious culture is quite syncretic and pragmatic. Chinese religion has been characterized by “an eclectic variety of deities and cults that can be worshipped according to need and preference, with no unitary church or national hierarchy.”(Dernberger, DeWoskin, Goldstein, Murphey, & Whyte, 1991) Arthur P. Wolf has extensively studied and recorded the popular Chinese culture of a bureaucratic system of Chinese gods, starting with the Stove God, associated with an individual family, who is “the lowest-ranking member of a supernatural bureaucracy.”(Wolf, 1978) The actual order of the bureaucracy can flexibly shift, according to region or lineage, with local gods taking higher positions in the bureaucracy.

2.2.2 Competitiveness versus cooperativeness in Chinese and Thai cultures

In Hofstede’s survey, supported by other research, Thailand scores as the most cooperative, or “feminine,” of the Asian countries. China, on the other hand, scores quite high as a competitive, or “masculine” culture. This implies that to the extent that Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai inherit this cultural trait, they will tend to be more aggressive in business and other areas of life. Families in competitive cultures pass on to their offspring a desire to be the best in whatever field one studies, works, or even plays. Cooperative cultures, on the other hand, pass on values of getting along with others and being satisfied with the quality of one’s life. Expert on Thai culture William J. Klausner emphasizes that “A core element of Thai culture is the avoidance of confrontation.”(Klausner, 1998) There is a subtle difference here between a “collective” culture, which describes both Chinese and Thai culture, and a cooperative culture. Both Chinese and Thai cultures place higher value on the collective than the individual, but Chinese culture tends to be more competitive. There are signs, however, that subsequent generations of Thai-Chinese may become more cooperative, or “feminine,” under the influence of Thai society. Basham describes Sino-Thais as having internalized Thai body language, being sensitive to Thai customs, which can be more gentle

and submissive than the more aggressive Chinese merchant culture.(Basham, 2001)

With this masculine trait of Chinese culture comes a significant pride in Chinese civilization, which may be shared even in overseas Chinese communities such as Hat Yai. Chinese mythology characters are not gods as in the Greek and Roman tradition, but cultural heroes who advanced Chinese civilization, such as in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Writing on the “Spirit of Chinese Capitalism,” Gordon Redding notes the persistence of pride in culture for Overseas Chinese communities. “The sense of Chinese-ness, based as it is on the immense weight of Chinese civilization, seems to diminish remarkably little over distance or with the passage of time. It is the cynosure of the Overseas Chinese, and also their definition.”(Redding, 1990) In the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community, it appears that this sense of pride connected to an accomplished civilization continues to distinguish the Thai-Chinese as a community. This is not to diminish Thai-Chinese pride in being loyal Thai citizens, but demonstrates that the masculine, competitive nature of Chinese culture persists.

Many scholars studying Overseas Chinese communities have noted the masculine, competitive nature embedded in Chinese culture. Redding asserts that because of circumstances that cast the Overseas Chinese as sojourners in foreign lands, many became entrepreneurs characterized by “opportunity seeking at a level of intensity higher than most other cultures.”(Goossen) According to Redding, four characteristics distinguish the “spirit of Overseas Chinese capitalism”:

1. Intense drive to get rich
2. Desire to access and protect privileged business information
3. Non-transparency and lack of trust beyond a close “in-group”
4. “Patrimonialism” or reliance on a paternalistic organizational structure

It is the first characteristic that most illustrates the masculine, competitive nature of Chinese culture. Redding notes that it is a moral duty to one’s family

and lineage to acquire wealth, and this wealth is commonly displayed with status symbols such as designer watches and luxury cars.(Goossen) One should note, however, that this materialistic cultural behavior is particularly associated with Southern Chinese in Mainland China.(Redding, 1990) As the source of the vast majority of Thai-Chinese ancestry comes from Southern China, this cultural characteristic remains quite relevant.

2.2.3 Pragmatic long-term versus normative short-term orientation in Chinese and Thai cultures

The national cultural dimension of Pragmatic Long-Term Orientation is another area in which Chinese culture differs from Thai. The meaning of Pragmatic Long-Term Orientation is relevant to comparing Chinese and Thai culture regarding attitudes toward thriftiness, perseverance, and pragmatism. According to World Bank data, the Thai savings rate is approximately 15% lower than the Chinese rate.(Databank.worldbank.org) Several popular books on Thai social and business culture, such as *Culture Shock Thailand* (written by an anthropologist trained in Thailand), *Working With the Thais*, and *Bridging the Gap* (both of which discuss Thai culture in the workplace) emphasize the concepts of “*sanook*,” “*sabai*” and “*mai pen rai*” when dealing with Thai workers. These terms, meaning “fun,” “relaxed,” and “it doesn’t matter” are culturally-loaded phrases that may illustrate the Short-Term Orientation of Thai culture. This is not to say that Thai culture promotes profligate spending, or lack of ambition or responsibility, but simply illustrates that Thai culture promotes the value of enjoying the present, coinciding with the “feminine” characteristic that emphasizes quality of life.

Perhaps influenced by Thai Buddhist concepts of karma and freeing one’s mind from worldly things, the short-term orientation of Thai culture contrasts with a key distinguishing characteristic that Thais use to describe Thai-Chinese: *khayan* (ขยัน), or “perseverant, industrious.” Philip Kuhn sees a time continuum in Chinese culture which relates every male to previous and future generations, compelling them to labor diligently for the family. “The time continuum meant

that every male inheritor was linked to his patriline over the long term by ritual and hard work.”(Kuhn, 2008) Redding notes that a Confucian-inspired work ethic exists that extols patient compliance with unequal power distribution for the long-term benefits. Overseas Chinese tend to be willing “to engage diligently in routine and possibly dull tasks, something one might term perseverance. This nebulous but nonetheless important component of Overseas Chinese work behavior, a kind of microform of the work ethic, pervades their factories and offices....”(Redding, 1990)

The Pragmatic Long-Term Orientation of the Chinese culture is also manifest in its pragmatism, in which respect for and adjustment to circumstances trumps reverence for tradition. The Book of Rites in ancient Chinese literature teaches that “The superior man goes through his life without any one preconceived action or any taboo. He merely decides for the moment what is the right thing to do.”(Watts, 1979) Many scholars of Chinese communities in Thailand have noted the pragmatic and adaptable nature of Thai-Chinese culture. For example, Ann Hill’s extensive study of northern Chinese practices shows a pragmatic adaptability in funeral practices, which are a combination of Chinese and local Thai elements.(Hill, 2001) Thriftiness, perseverance, and pragmatism are all characteristics associated with a Long-Term Orientation culture, and fit the observations of scholars regarding Thai-Chinese communities in Thailand.

2.2.4 Power distance in Chinese and Thai cultures

Despite the above differences, in many ways, Chinese traditional society is not unlike Thai society. Chinese and Thai societies are both high Power Distance, implying that the societies accept inequalities in status and power, and subordinates rarely challenge superiors in a hierarchical system. In the Confucian framework that was the traditional ideal, “the cement that held society together was supposed to be moral consensus, and the building blocks that were held together by this cement were human bonds and mutual obligations arranged in a vast hierarchy” such as ruler to subject, father to son, husband to

wife, older to younger brother.(Dernberger et al., 1991) The hierarchy within the Chinese family is especially important, centered on the patriarch.

Klausner identifies hierarchy as an element “absolutely essential” to Thai culture.(Klausner, 1998) This hierarchy extends throughout Thai society, embedded in the language with words of status used in addressing others, such as *khun*, *nai*, *phoe* and *nong*. Klausner points out that hierarchy is often expressed in patron-client relationships. Thai patron-client relationships were often not within the family, perhaps marking a subtle difference between Chinese and Thai expressions of high Power Distance--Commoner Thai families did not begin to acquire surnames until the 19th Century, whereas family lineage, and family-centered high power distance relationships, have been an essential part of Chinese culture for millennia. This difference in social structure between Thailand and China may be attributed to the fact that Thais were historically legally bound in a patron-client system not based on lineage. Thai subjects of the Kingdom of Thailand were required to register under a master, and perform corvee labor for a specific time per year. The patron-client system persists in today’s society and government.

2.2.5 Collectivism in Chinese and Thai cultures

Like nearly all Asian cultures, both Chinese and Thai cultures score very high as collectivist versus individualist. As such, both cultures emphasize an individual’s obligation to the group, whether it is family or the wider community, over individual license. Discussing late Imperial Chinese social order, author Martin Whyte remarks on the Chinese idea of collectivism, touching upon political culture as well:

...ideally Chinese society should have no autonomous individuals or deviant subcultures. Instead, all individuals should be members of one or more groups or social networks which would lock them into a chain of obligations that linked them ultimately to the state. Political order would rest not upon a sense of citizenship, but upon this hierarchical chain of personal ties and mutual obligations.(Dernberger et al., 1991)

The Chinese family was the key to a good society, and functioned in the same hierarchical way with proscribed roles. In the same way, Klausner notes the collective nature of Thai society—“...the individual is constantly under an obligation to sublimate his or her expression and rights to larger interests of family and social and community solidarity.”(Klausner, 1998) Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture provide a useful tool for comparing Chinese and Thai cultures; however, there are several other areas important to understanding the characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai that are not fully captured in that framework. To fully comprehend the ethnic Chinese communities, one must recognize the southern Chinese origin of the majority of immigrants into Thailand, the nature of the Chinese family as an enterprise, the relationship of Chinese culture to organization building and networking, and the influence of Chinese political culture.

2.3 Characteristics of Southern Chinese culture

Describing “Chinese” culture is a dangerous undertaking, as the concept of “China” is large and varied, especially as it is carried overseas by immigrants. As previously mentioned, Philip Kuhn demonstrates the flexibility that has been characteristic of Chinese culture. According to him, “...cultural elements have been reconfigured and recombined to undergird social groups far from their homeland contexts. It is the *‘processes and principles’* that bear watching.”(Kuhn, 2008)

One way to be more precise with describing the Chinese cultural characteristics retained in the Hat Yai ethnic Chinese community is to consider the origin of the majority of immigrants: Southern Coastal China. Overseas Chinese expert Wang Gungwu explains

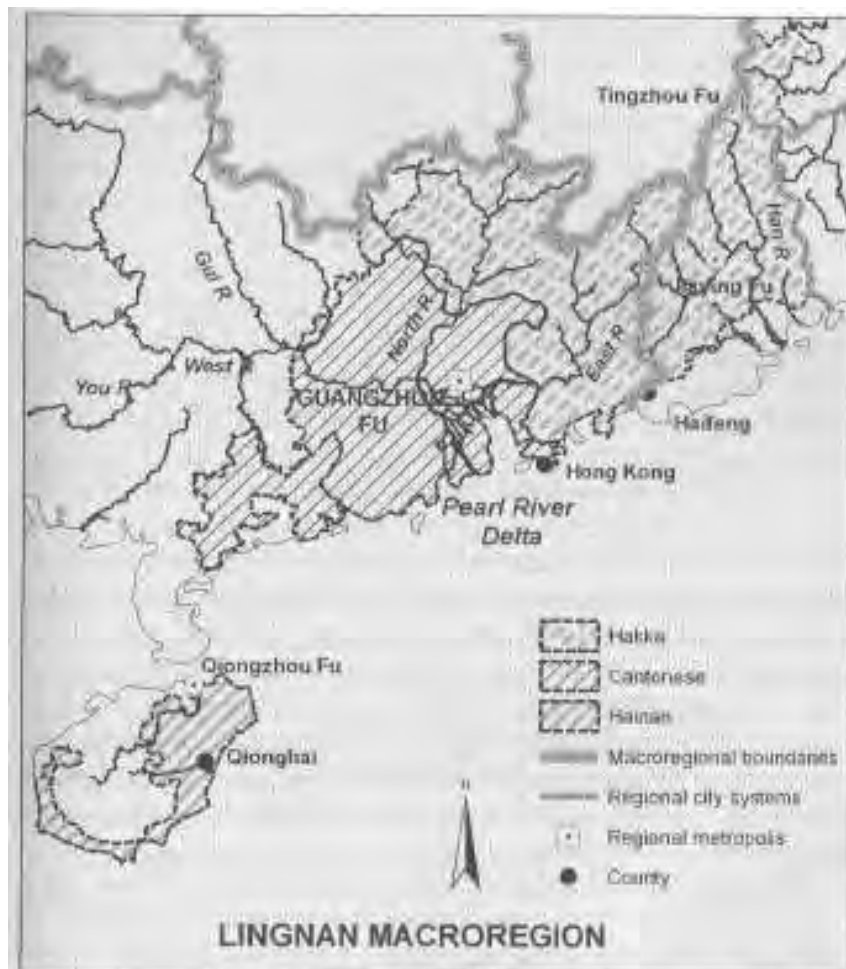
The close relationship between these Chinese and the South China Economic Periphery, therefore, can be described as organic and deep-rooted and yet, at the same time, ongoing and dynamic.... This is not to deny that there has always been a link with political and cultural China of the Great Tradition, of

the Empire and of the Confucian State, but for most Chinese overseas most of the time, it is South China which they know and care for.(Gungwu, 1993)

The maps below show the regions of origin of the vast majority of Thai-Chinese.(Kuhn, 2008)



Map 1.1. Southeast coast macroregion dialect groups. Produced after Skinner (1985) and Li Rong et al. (1988).



Map 1.2. Lingnan macroregion dialect groups. Produced after Skinner (1985) and Li Rong et al. (1988).



As previously mentioned, Redding notes that Southern Chinese have a reputation for being more aggressive in their “intensive drive for profit” compared to northern Chinese culture. J. Graham, writing on differences in negotiation behavior within China, found Northern Chinese culture to be cooperative and equity oriented. Southern culture was more competitive and tolerant of unbalanced outcomes.(Graham, 1996) Researchers Faure and Chen, also focusing on culture and negotiation behavior, divide the Chinese culture even further into three Chinese main subcultures--Northern, South-Coastal, South-West-- and relate them to very specific negotiation behaviors.(Faure & Chen, 1997) The South-Coastal culture and negotiating behavior is more competitive and direct, prone to see negotiation with outside elements as a type of “mobile warfare.”

Researcher Myron Cohen recounts the southern expansion of the Han Chinese, contending that Han Chinese cultural traits, including social organization, economic and agricultural practices, and religious ritual tended to dominate native cultures as they expanded. It was perhaps self-selective that the more aggressive, entrepreneurial people were the pioneers as Han civilization spread southward. According to Cohen, “The entrepreneurial orientation built into traditional Chinese family organization could facilitate Han economic dominance...”(Cohen, 1991) Cohen also distinguishes an “extreme linguistic heterogeneity” characterizing southeastern coastal provinces.(Cohen, 1991) This linguistic heterogeneity is reflected in the variety of language groups that populate the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.

It is also significant that many of the immigrants arriving from these southern coastal areas of China into Thailand were merchants. Historian Anthony Reid, citing Wang Gungwu, explains that “The Chinese who came to Southeast Asia were merchants (*shang* 商), not mandarin literati for the most part, and carried with them Taoist and Buddhist values more than Confucian ones—but above all ‘the values of trade.’”(Reid, 1996) As Skinner documented in his work describing macroregions, China had a well-developed market, with

large-scale circulation of merchants and goods. The emigration of southeastern coastal Chinese into Southeast Asia was simply an extension of this system. It is not entirely true that the Chinese who came to southern Thailand were merchants—many came as laborers in tin mines, the shipping industry, and as railroad construction workers. However, even of these laborers, a large number that continued to reside in Thailand did indeed enter into trade. For example, Maliwan Rukwong, researching the history and development of Hat Yai, describes an extensive peddler's network of Chinese, perhaps former laborers, that provided collection of rubber plantation products while distributing consumer goods throughout the countryside. (Rukwong, 2000) The values of trade held by these and other merchants support the concept of Chinese-derived cultural dimensions that include comfort with ambiguity which begets opportunity, aggressive competitiveness, and the long-term orientation characteristics of thriftiness, perseverance and pragmatism.

2.4 Characteristics of the family in Chinese and Thai cultures

Every culture places a high value on family, of course, including both Thai and Chinese cultures. Thai children are taught to revere their parents, and a major reason for Thai males to *buat*, or go into the monkhood for a certain time, is to earn merit for their parents. But there is a degree of difference between a traditional 100% Thai family and a Thai-Chinese family. Thai culture does not share, importantly, the religious and associated moral aspects of ancestor worship that exists in Chinese culture. As for lineage, in fact, Thais only started the mass practice of using surnames after the Surname Act of 1913, introduced by King Vajiravudh. A Thai-Chinese of the surname "Lim," for example, could trace his or her heritage back thousands of years, whereas a native Thai has no ancestral halls, nor records that provide that same family-centered continuity. Commoner Thai families have not establish ancestral tombs as in China--the Thai burial practices are cremation rather than burial, and Thai families do not keep family altars.

Esteemed China scholar Willam deBary, discussing the basic foundations of Chinese culture, explains that even though an earlier belief in spirits that intervene daily in life may have diminished, the “reverence for the spirits of ancestors continues to be a vital factor in the Chinese family system.”(DeBary, 1960) In discussing the concept of Long-Term Orientation and its significance in Chinese culture, Hofstede asserts that a fundamental characteristic embedded in the Chinese culture derived from Confucian thought is that “The family is the prototype of all social organizations.”(Hofstede et al., 2010) According to Redding, the Chinese concept of family is a broad one rooted deep in Chinese culture, and “extends beyond its members to encompass its property, its reputation, its internal traditions, its ancestor’s spirits, and even its unborn future generations.”(Redding, 1990) Central to this idea of family is the concept of filial piety, expressed both to one’s living and deceased ancestors. Cohen describes a key feature of a unified Chinese culture as being the acceptance of specific standardized rituals, such as in births, marriages, funerals, and religious practices, much of which is to illustrate filial piety.(Cohen, 1991) Ancestor worship meant that being around the ancestral home, taking care of the ancestral graves, made a connection to place quite strong. Cohen notes that place of origin, which links one to one’s ancestors, is one of the “major ascribed statuses” for Chinese society, and serves as a basis of organization.(Cohen, 1991) Thus the organization of regional, dialect associations in Overseas Chinese communities is related to this aspect of ancestor veneration. Kuhn demonstrates how intertwined Chinese lineage, dialect, and merchant associations can be with Chinese religious practice. He notes there is a large religious component to these types of groups – they perform the burial rituals for the common surnames, and many of the lineage groups drew financial support by “selling prominent positions for ancestral tablets around the altar of the surname group’s ‘ancestral hall.’”(Kuhn, 2008) This practice reinforces status differences in the community. The specifically religious organizations, what Kuhn calls corituality, could link a community across social classes, but tend to reinforce the status of the merchant

elite. One of the distinguishing customs of Chinese culture in Thailand is burial practice. According to Phillip Kuhn, “Burial ritual, requiring at least a graveyard, lay at the center of immigrant social structure.”(Kuhn, 2008)

Another characteristic of traditional Chinese culture is the importance of running the Chinese family as a sort of enterprise. Philip Kuhn points out that despite the strong connection to place inherent in Chinese culture, demographic change of rapid population growth led to land shortages, and encouraged migration, first internal to China, then outward beyond the shore. This led to what Kuhn labels as the “spatially extended family.”

Although families preferred to keep the household base in place, keeping it there paradoxically could require dispersing family members over space. Dispersal, however, did not imply family breakup: central to China’s family system has been the principle that the family estate is not compromised by the spatial dispersion of its members. The principle of the ‘estate household’ (*jia* 家) was that all contributed and all benefited.... The main point was that living away entailed both the moral obligation to contribute some part of one’s earnings to the family back home and the assurance that one’s stake in the estate did not diminish with time or distance. This system of joint family property was essential to labor export and accordingly to migration.(Kuhn, 2008)

Myron Cohen’s study of Chinese identity corroborates this idea of the family as something akin to a business venture. Family organization specified patrilineal, male-centered marriage arrangements, authority, social and economic roles in which the family was like an enterprise. In traditional households there were actually two roles for senior males—family head (*jiazhang* 家長) and family manager (*dangjia* 當家). The former was the senior male and represented the entire family, the latter was in charge of family work and assets. These might be combined in the senior male, but could often be split as well, usually with the management role given to a son. Property inheritance

was equally divided among male heirs, but practice was to pool family earnings. A high degree of commercialization and commoditization characterized late modern Chinese society, even in villages. Families were “distinctly entrepreneurial and market-oriented” and contracts were common even between family members.(Cohen, 1991)

The classic and probably still dominant business model among ethnic Chinese residing overseas is the Chinese family business, in which family and business interests are intimately intertwined. Redding uses the word “patrimonialism” to describe “the themes of paternalism, hierarchy, responsibility, mutual obligation, family atmosphere, personalism, and protection” in the Chinese family enterprise.(Redding, 1990) In business, Redding contends that family is more important than expertise, so that when starting a new venture an Overseas Chinese business would rather deal with those in the close, trusted in-group, even if they do not have expertise in the field. The preceding point illustrates an important concept in Chinese culture—relationship—that relates strongly to the Chinese cultural characteristic of organization formation. One might view a major *raison d’etre* for these organizations being to extend the family enterprise to include other trusted agents. Organization formation is also a key part of ethnic Chinese economic culture.

2.5 Characteristics of Chinese and Thai cultures in establishing voluntary organizations

Traditional Chinese culture that emphasized social order and close association with one’s patrilineal kin group also influenced a pattern of establishing social and economic organizations for community maintenance and protection. Chinese culture is an organizing culture. From the culture that built the Great Wall, the Grand Canal, to massive irrigation works in a rice agro-economy that sustains the world's largest population, the culture is embedded with the characteristic of organizing. This organizing tendency is manifested in Overseas Chinese communities by the civic organizations that Chinese emigrants

build. Describing traditional Chinese society, Martin Whyte writes “Where possible, peasants tried to cultivate personal ‘connections’ (*guanxi* 關係) and networks of mutual obligation with non-kin, rather than deal with strangers on an impersonal basis. Thus beyond the confines of the family and village, something like the Confucian picture of local society as a complex network of human bonds and obligations often materialized.”(Dernberger et al., 1991) Imperial Chinese cities provide a model for the formation of mutual assistance, voluntary organizations that currently exist in Hat Yai. Moving away from their local patrilineal kin group area to establish themselves in cities, though they still remained in Mainland China, people often bonded together in same surname associations, native place associations, temple associations, and trade guilds. “[T]hese forms of associations expressed the belief that individuals (and families) needed to seek support and protection in groups based on personal ties. Cities were definitely not seen as places in which rugged individualists competed in the impersonal marketplace.”(Dernberger et al., 1991) Traditional Thai culture does not establish organizations on the scale or depth as the Chinese. Although there are many internal Thai immigrants that move from region to region, Thais don’t tend to form the “Eesarn Language Association,” the “Natives of Ubon Ratchathani Association,” or the “Sucharitkul Lineage Association.”

The establishment of these types of organizations played a critical role in developing networks of mutual assistance and benefit. Redding labels the concept of “*guanxi*” as “network capitalism.” Networks are carefully cultivated for 1) gathering information 2) establishing reliable supply chains and markets 3) solidifying certain key strategic relationships in the organization and government. The carefully crafted networks greatly reduce transaction costs both in terms of time and money, as they work outside the norms of legal agreements. Redding asserts that “[Overseas] Chinese people will not do business with people they do not know, and network building for purposes of business deals has a high priority in their behavior.”(Redding, 1990) In

analyzing the “spirit of Overseas Chinese capitalism,” Redding identifies several distinguishing characteristics of Chinese economic culture, two of which particularly explain the need for organizational networking: a desire to access and protect privileged business information; and non-transparency and lack of trust beyond a close “in-group.” Business intelligence is key to working in the Asian context, particularly when there is heavy state involvement in the private business sector. Redding observes that “relationships are often built for the bartering of information on the grounds of mutual exploitation with a limited set of friends.”(Goossen) Behind the characteristic of non-transparency is likely a desire to maintain complete control of the business. As many ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs raise capital through a personalized system of trusted agents, complete transparency, to the public at least, is not necessary. Gathering business intelligence and developing a circle of trusted agents can be cultivated in voluntary organizations such as language and lineage associations, charity organizations, or professional and trade associations. These organizations all provide a forum for this network building that is a key to the functioning of Chinese capitalist enterprises.

Formation of voluntary organizations in Chinese culture extends beyond the practical matter of business networking as well. Philip Kuhn discusses the early formation of associations and their functions. Sojourning merchants and literati formed associations (*huiguan* 會館) usually based on native place, as centers for “socializing, for providing essential services, and for furthering common interests.”(Kuhn, 2008) These associations performed symbolic and practical services, arranging local burials or even shipping remains back to ancestral homes. They provided lodging for travelers, social gatherings for gossip exchange, and altars for regional deities that spread throughout Southeast Asia in a trade route- aligned network linked by shared incense. Merchant lodges were often associated with region-specific temples, “illustrating the closely interlocking spheres of compatriotism, occupation, and ritual.”(Kuhn, 2008) These associations did not prevent networking with other Chinese or local

groups, but formed a secure base for getting established in the local environment. They did at times, however, provide protection for a certain trade, resulting in a hazy line between a *huiguan* and an occupational guild.

The status that current organizations in Overseas Chinese communities give to leaders in the community is documented by Li Minghuan, who has coined the term “association credit” to describe the commercial advantage in dealing with mainland China enjoyed by leaders of overseas associations. (Minghuan, 1999) Research done in Holland and Wenzhou indicates that directors of overseas Chinese associations are viewed by mainland Chinese as equivalent to state officials. (Kuhn, 2008)

Liu Hong, writing on the globalization of Overseas Chinese voluntary associations, also documents this important role of Chinese associations in overseas communities. Liu observes that over the 80’s and 90’s, globalization brought about frequent, large-scale meetings of *shetuan*, or Chinese associations, the founding of permanent international associations, and “the extensive uses of such venues and organizations to facilitate business and socio-cultural ties among the Chinese diaspora as well as between them and their compatriots in *qiaoxiang* [region of origin].” (Hong, 1998) Liu comments that “the new international *shetuan* have from the outset positioned themselves to foster social and business networks as well as preserving and promoting specific localistic cultures.” (Hong, 1998)

On the other hand, there are indications that Chinese organizations may not survive in the future. In China, those migrating after the beginning of the reform era circa 1978 are referred to as the “New Migration” (*xin yimin* 新移民). These generally better educated and skilled emigrants are contrasted with older emigrants of the “feudal” culture who are characterized by “old-style business practices, old-fashioned organizations like native-place lodges, and dialect and kinship associations.” (Kuhn, 2008) Liu Hong discusses the attempt to “re-Sinify” or “re-culturize” the younger generations through the *shetuan*; however, these young people are more Western-educated and appear not to show much interest

in things Chinese. According to Liu, "... with the increasing integration of indigenous and Chinese capital, it has become more and more difficult to identify "pure" Chinese enterprises, making indigenous partners less likely to seek the accumulation of "symbolic capital" by leading or joining the wave of shetuan's globalization."(Hong, 1998)

2.6 Characteristics of Chinese and Thai political Cultures

2.6.1 Chinese political culture

The final aspect of the Chinese cultural heritage that may affect the characteristics of Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese are the political norms and expectations—a concept known as “political culture,” as discussed in the theoretical background section. Drawing from China's history, Thai-Chinese have a large repertoire of political models from which to draw their norms and expectations, the main categories coming from the following periods:

- The Qing and earlier dynasties
- An anti-imperialist movement that began in reaction to the Treaty of Shimonseki in 1895 and was eventually led by Sun Yat-sen
- Nationalist government under the Kuomintang
- Maoist era (to a much lesser extent)

The most deeply-rooted ideas on ideological orientation, structure of the polity, and role of the citizenry emanate from the dynastic legacy and the reform/revolutionary era.

The Chinese imperial legacy includes concepts of a deeply embedded Confucian ideology that upheld ideals of *li* (propriety) and *ren* (benevolence) in government, an elevated imperial ruler that was theoretically held in check by the mandate of heaven, and government by a bureaucracy which relied on a complex examination system. Kenneth Lieberthal writes, in *Governing China*, “the imperial tradition nurtured the idea of basing the state system on ideological commitment, strong personal leadership at the apex, and impressive nationwide governing bureaucracies.” (Lieberthal, 1995) Lieberthal identifies three core features of Confucian political ideology: its strongly conservative nature that held fast to a mythical state of the past; its politically and socially hierarchical structure, in which citizens were not equal; and its insistence that citizens must conduct themselves properly (with *li*, or propriety) in order to maintain a harmonious society as the ultimate end of governance. (Lieberthal, 1995) The

concept of *li* within Chinese culture starts with the family. From ancient times, the family was the key to a good society, and functioned in the same hierarchical way with proscribed roles. *The Great Learning*, one of the “Four Books” of Confucian thought, taught that “...when the individual is morally cultivated, the family is well regulated; when the family is well regulated, the state is properly governed; and when the state is properly governed, the world is at peace.” (Dernberger et al., 1991) Thus, the emphasis is on strict order and regulation of society, starting within the household.

The emperor himself, though a powerful figure through most of the dynasties, and supported by the hierarchical system that demanded obedience, was also constrained by this same system. The emperor was obligated to rule with benevolence (*ren*), and to properly fulfill his role as an intermediary between heaven and earth—the “son of heaven” — to provide moral guidance for the citizenry. He kept the throne only by the “mandate of heaven”. If he failed in his role, signified by large-scale social unrest, ineffectiveness of the military, or even by natural disasters, he risked losing his mandate to rule. In practice, this was more of an after-the-fact excuse for rebellion and claiming legitimacy for the succeeding ruler; nevertheless, the ideal remained that even powerful emperors were not all-powerful or immune to removal from leadership—an ideal absent in Thailand’s traditional political culture. In parallel with the Confucian ideology, which upheld the ideal that humans could be gently educated to perform their proper roles in society, China maintained a rather contradictory ideology known as Legalism, which assumed that humans were selfish beings that could only be controlled by harsh punishments or rewards. China’s unifying emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, employed legalist-inspired violence to establish his reign, setting a precedent for subsequent dynasties. Lieberthal observes that “China’s subsequent political system both extolled rule by virtue and example and made ready resort to cruel punishment.”(Lieberthal, 1995) While holding onto high-sounding Confucius ideology, the culture retained a pragmatic nature as well, in which the ends could justify whatever unsavory means were required.

The longstanding Chinese bureaucracy was the bulwark that kept this entire Confucius-Legalist imperial system in place. In a sense, the bureaucracy could be seen as the only “democratic” element of imperial China, as it was based upon a merit system of strictly regimented examinations for which anyone could apply. In practice, those with wealth and status held tremendous advantage in achieving success in the system, both in being able to prepare for the examinations, and in receiving desirable posts once inside the system. In some more corrupt periods, such as the late Qing period, wealth could even buy a degree, particularly in the wealthy trading communities, such as the southern coastal areas. What is most remarkable about the bureaucratic system, though, is its persistence through the dynastic cycles. Even when foreign, non-Han ethnicities conquered the Chinese territory, they soon succumbed to continuing governance of the large and populous land by means of the bureaucracy.

The Chinese Mahayana Buddhist and Taoist religious structure in many ways reinforced this system of bureaucratic dominance. The cosmology of the Chinese pantheon of gods—a supernatural bureaucracy-- presented a traditionally ideal social organization. The gods have ranks (which may vary by region), and perform duties reflective of Chinese social organization, such as managing certain areas or acting as a judge. This very likely has some influence on political expectations of Chinese who participate in this religious system. It models ideas of fairness and justice and proper behavior of leaders. Indeed, the Thai-Chinese organizations themselves, as self-governing organizations, can be seen as a sort of mini-bureaucracy, efficiently managed for a unified material and moral purpose.

The respect for the educated Mandarin as one who has a right to govern others is a cultural legacy with long-ranging impact. According to Lieberthal, the bureaucratic system “was a profoundly nonpluralistic system, based squarely on the notions of hierarchy, centralization, and the state as the propagator of the correct moral framework for the society. This centuries-long tradition of centralized bureaucratic rule was one of China’s most extraordinary

accomplishments. In this sphere, the legacies of China's past remain particularly strong." (Lieberthal, 1995) It was against this towering civilizational structure that early reformers, such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, followed most famously by Sun Yat-sen, struggled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

1895 was a pivotal year in China's political cultural development. After suffering humiliating defeat to the former tributary state, Japan, the Chinese government signed a treaty in Shimonoseki abdicating a great deal of sovereignty to the Japanese. In reaction to this, for the first time since the establishment of the Chinese bureaucracy, citizens, mostly from an economically privileged class and from Southern China, began to promote the idea that the people had a right to supervise government. Late Qing reformer Liang Qichao introduced the term "*guomin*," literally translated as "state people," and used to mean "citizen," in order to criticize Confucian political culture, which treated the people as subjects, rather than citizens. However, as experts in Chinese political culture Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman point out, "his aim was not the development of autonomous individuals, but rather the cultivation of full-fledged participation in the modern nation-state." (Perry & Goldman, 2002) Pre-modern Chinese may have felt a strong obligation to family, lineage, and government, and expected basic welfare guarantees, but they did not expect to have a voice in deciding the affairs of the community. "Chinese governments—and political activists—during most of the twentieth century have considered rights not as inherent and inalienable natural endowments, but as revocable privileges conferred by the state." (Perry & Goldman, 2002) Rights were a means to make a "rich and powerful" nation.

Thus, late nineteenth, early twentieth century developments in Chinese political culture were not a democratic movement in the Western sense of "democracy." As Columbia professor of political science Andrew J. Nathan writes, anti-imperialist reformers at this time began to accept the notion "the nation is the political unit of concern and that the nation's survival is the prime problem

for politics. Seeing wealth and power as the goals of the state, Confucian thinkers had already begun to view the active involvement of the people as one source of that power.”(Nathan, 2012) In other words, the movement to involve the populace in government was not borne of concern for natural rights for each citizen, but of mobilizing people for national power and survival. This notion of using “democracy” as a means to create a strong nation, rather than an end to itself, has made a long-lasting impression on Chinese political culture, and was picked up by the influential Sun Yat-sen.

Sun Yat-sen’s legacy in Southeast Asia is profound. He travelled extensively through the area, including to Thailand, to spread his political ideas and to raise funds for his struggle against the Qing Dynasty. Sun is the only major figure extolled by both the communist regime in Mainland China, and the remnants of the Kuomintang in Taiwan. Sun proselytized his political ideas under the term *sanminzhuyi*, or “three principles of the people”: most often translated as nationalism, democracy, and people’s livelihood. His idea of nationalism in its earliest form contained a somewhat racist element, as it implied a struggle between ethnic Han against the foreign ruling Manchus; it evolved, however, to encompass a struggle for self-determination that fit with a contemporary anti-colonialist movement. As for democracy, Sun believed that in fact, individual Chinese probably had too much freedom, and that a strong nation required a strong and deeply penetrating state apparatus. His idea of democracy was more in line with mobilizing the strength of a people’s movement in order to strengthen the state. As Michael Keane, in his essay “Redefining Chinese citizenship,” states, “Sun Yat-sen felt that the State was not strong enough, and did not penetrate deeply into society. Only with a strong State and a disciplined population could China modernize. In other words, the nation should have complete liberty, not the individual members.” (Keane, 2001) Sun’s third principle, people’s livelihood, fits very closely with traditional ideals of the state as being responsible for the general welfare, and moral guidance, of the population. The three principles of nationalism, democracy, and people’s

livelihood, in fact, fit with the principles extolled by many of the Thai-Chinese organizations. The principle of nationalism was apparent in interviewee's and survey respondent's expression of their patriotism and loyalty to the Thai monarchy and state. Respondents voiced strong support that their organizations should be democratic, and the idea that social welfare was a responsibility of most of the organizations was prominent.

Subsequent development in China's political cultural evolution has mostly been either in reaction to or inspired by these historical factors. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomintang (KMT), was a direct disciple of Sun Yat-sen and claimed to be promoting the three principles. Under the KMT, in the merchant class, some ideas of political participation did change. In mid-twentieth century Shanghai, for example, voluntary organizations such as the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce brought different concepts of citizenship, civil rights, and political representation. The rallying cry of the small shopkeepers was "no taxation without representation," and they pushed for voting rights. (Perry & Goldman, 2002) Such radical concepts, however, did not develop to become a mainstream concept of Chinese political culture.

Mao Zedong's communist rule was similar to Chiang's in that it viewed "democracy," or mass mobilization, as a means to the end of state power. The power of older patterns in Chinese culture, even long after the toppling of China's last emperor, could be seen in Maoist China. The "people's revolution" in fact retained the same characteristic politically and socially hierarchical structure, albeit turned upside down, in which former landlords or "capitalists" were at the bottom, and privileged Party cadre held irreproachable positions. And just like the obligation to act with *li* (proper conduct), in Mao's world, citizens had to mouth the proper ideology and conduct themselves according to the new communist rituals, most famously during the Great Cultural Revolution. Though the political culture that evolved during the Mao era doesn't greatly affect Thai-Chinese, the persistent influence of older patterns that that held sway into the Maoist era reveals the enduring strength of those cultural legacies.

That strong Chinese cultural inheritance also tends to promote the idea of harmony between the interests of the state and the individual. Unlike some legacies found in the classic liberal tradition in the West, the state is not so much a necessary evil with the capacity to become easily corrupted with power, that must be always held suspect and strictly limited; it is instead viewed as a preferred good with the capacity to bring a utopian society of harmony, if given the right resources. People's rights are not borne out of inherent Natural Rights, but are bestowed by the State, in the interest of the collective over the interest of the individual. Keane posits that "The distinctiveness of Chinese citizenship is embedded within an authoritarian mode of governance and a collectivist understanding of rights. Whereas the Western notion of 'natural' rights, best exemplified in the American Constitution, implies that rights spring from the dignity of the person, the Chinese idea of rights is founded on 'long-standing Chinese views on the relation between individual and collective interests.'" (Keane, 2001) In modern China, the legacies described above have affected both intended reformers and conservative state authorities alike. Elizabeth Perry, commenting on an essay by Ernest Young on "Imagining the *Ancien Regime*," highlights the confusing political discourse emanating from the repertoire of political models, "Thanks to 'the multitude of ghosts that China's modern history has conjured up,' reformers turn into repressors and democrats into elitists." (Perry & Wasserstrom, 1994) In summary, China's political cultural heritage bestows an ideology that supports a strong centralized state, the rights of the collective over the rights of the individual, strong respect for hierarchical relationships and governance by specialized, elite bureaucrats, a pragmatic "ends justify the means" approach, all tempered by a paternalistic, moral responsibility of government to oversee the welfare of the people.

2.6.2 Thai political culture

Compared to the multiple publications addressing China's political culture, not as much academic material has been written on Thailand's political culture. Especially among Western scholars who have commented on Thailand's

political culture, much of their discussion has been critical analysis of Thailand's "democratic underdevelopment problem," thus remaining within the paradigm of a Western-style modernization and democratic development. Additionally, the discussion has often been embroiled in or greatly affected by the contemporary political struggles. One of the first political scientists to account for cultural influences in politics was David Wilson, whose 1962 work helped establish an analytical model of Thai politics known as the "bureaucratic polity." Wilson saw a situation in which the civil and military bureaucracy had become the entire structure of the polity, while the bureaucracies were rife with competing powerful cliques fighting for key offices and their benefits, which they could distribute through their patron-client relationships. Meanwhile, the majority of the Thai citizenry played a passive role, which Wilson explained due to cultural factors. He saw Thais as generally secure with abundant natural resources. They were both individualistic and status-conscious, motivated by a Buddhist-inspired search for personal merit, and this situation brought about a sense of complacency and political unconcern, which allowed the bureaucratic polity to operate without interference. (Hewison, 1997) While the static bureaucratic polity model became outdated by changes in Thai society, economy and politics, Wilson's focus on the civil-military bureaucracy remains salient to understanding Thailand's political culture. The nature of the Thai government bureaucracy differs from the ideal of bureaucracy in the Chinese tradition. Thailand's bureaucracy, which has until only very recently been dominated by ethnic Thais, relied less on merit and more on connections through a large patron-client network.

Thai scholar Thinapan Nakata, basing his research on 1970s research of the same developmental paradigm, summarized in 1987 what he saw as key broad characteristics of Thai political culture. Although his conclusions have since been criticized by subsequent scholars as too static and out of date, his list is an instructive observation of an earlier political culture:

- A hierarchical social structure
- Patron-client personal relations
- Pragmatism over Idealism, leading to a preference for accommodation over confrontation
- Preference for absolute power
- Military and bureaucratic political elites who believed they had a right to rule due to their appointed positions and authority
- Political indifference of the masses
- A dual-natured split between westernized, educated elite and “traditional” rural and lower class
- Lack of extra-governmental organizations willing to exert pressure on the government(Askew, 2006)

The gist of these characteristics made Thinapan quite pessimistic about the prospects of democratic development in Thailand.

Another set of well-known analysts of Thai political culture, David Morell and Cha-anan Samudavanija, studying political changes in the 1970s, also produced a list related to Thai political cultural characteristics. To Morell and Chai-anan, “Thailand’s political culture is an amalgam of individualism, pragmatism, and resistance to social organization on the one hand, and elitist, hierarchically structured relationships on the other.” (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981) He saw five dominant influences in Thailand’s political culture:

- Family and social emphasis on a combination of both individualism and subordination, with the subordinate attitude more heavily affecting political attitudes.
- Elevated respect for the monarchy as a stabilizing institution
- Role of state bureaucracy in reinforcing social hierarchy based on status and obedience
- Buddhist teachings of self-cultivation and responsibility
- Rice-agriculture and village-based economy, where kinship and local ties predominated(Askew, 2006)

- ***Patronage***

Of the cultural characteristics above, many scholars have highlighted the importance of patronage (การอุปถัมภ์) to Thai political culture. As discussed in Chapter two, the patron-client relationship pervades Thai culture, and this is especially true of political networks. Thai political expert Marc R. Askew, who has produced tremendously insightful observations of southern Thailand's political culture and electoral politics based on extensive field research in Hat Yai, comments on the importance of patronage to the political arena: "Most political parties in Thailand have acted essentially as channels for patronage among dominant economic elites, and have not functioned to advocate or represent distinctive political or ideological positions. Parties are portrayed as largely pragmatic groupings whose frequent transformation, dissolution and change in leadership and membership highlights the opportunistic, materialistic and pragmatic nature of political contest in Thailand." (Askew, 2006)

- ***Duality of the Polity***

Another characteristic of Thai political culture that has remained relevant among scholars is the concept of a dual nature to Thai politics. Anek Laothamatas proposes an urban-rural split in political values and practices, with urban culture centering on Bangkok's middle class. Anek's duality finds two "democracies" associated with the split, which will be discussed shortly. In a 2012 work, "Some Observations on Democracy in Thailand," Professor Michael H. Nelson sees the basic model of the polity in Thailand as a paternalistic, strictly hierarchical system set up in a "dual structure." The structure consists of a "first set" of old power elite, which includes the monarchy, military and bureaucracy. The "second set" is the people, which he views as equal citizens, civil society organizations, politicians, and political parties. Thai scholar Suthachai Yimprasert's label for the political system -- "rabop ammatayathipattai thi mi kanlueaktang" (an aristocratic/bureaucratic system that has elections)." -- captures the essence of the dual structure for Nelson. (Nelson, 2012)

- ***Concept of Democracy***

A short-reigned but notable former Prime Minister, Kukrit Pramoj, who led the government for a short time during the violently-aborted democratic springtime (1973-1976), is said to have mused about empty talk given to democracy in Thailand: “The Swiss do not talk about democracy or politics at all, but they have democracy. The Thais on the other hand talk about democracy and their own politics non-stop, but they haven’t got democracy just the same.” (Connors, 2003) Many researchers have shown that “democracy” can mean different things to different people. Morell and Chai-anan performed an analysis of various political terms used in the Thai language. In particular, they found the use of the word “democracy” (ประชาธิปไตย) as unclear, and rarely used in a sense of “popular sovereignty.” (Askew, 2006) In Anek’s study that found “two democracies” between the urban and rural groups, he writes, “For the rural electorate, democracy is valued not as an ideal, but as a mechanism to draw greater benefits from the political elite to themselves...The rural voters do not expect abstract rewards such as laws, policies, or the public interest. To the educated middle class, elections are a means of recruiting honest and capable persons to serve as lawmakers and political executives.” (Laothamatas, 2013) While this analysis suffers from simplistically portraying the educated middle class as having what one might call “purer” motives, it illustrates that in Thailand, “democracy” can be seen as a means to some other end, rather than an end to itself. Professor Michael H. Nelson has been one of the more vocal critics of Thailand’s democratic underdevelopment, having articulated his view of key points of Thailand’s culture in his 2013 article “Elite Political Culture in Contemporary Thailand: Voters, Members of Parliament, and Political Parties in the Debates of the 2007 Constitution Drafting Committee.” Nelson points out that although the 2007 Constitution stipulates that “The sovereign power belongs to the Thai people,” it goes on to separate the authority of the monarchy as over and above the power of the people by its use of the subsequent phrase: “The King as Head of the State shall exercise such power through the National Assembly,

the Council of Ministers and the Courts in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.” As Nelson explains,

The Thai people thus cannot exercise their sovereignty directly as voters in elections. Moreover, in a practical political-administrative sense, the military (as most recently experienced in the coup of September 2006) and the bureaucracy have never subjected themselves under the sovereignty of the people. Rather, they have continued to see themselves as part of a supra-constitutional model of the Thai polity that subjects the people to the sovereignty of the official Thai state ideology of ‘Nation, Religion, Monarchy.’ (Nelson, 2013)

In this view, “democracy” in the Thai constitution does not truly give sovereignty to the common people. Finally, another critical observer of Thailand political culture, Michael Kelly Connors, in his 2003 publication *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, makes what might be considered controversial assertions about the meaning of democracy in Thailand. To Connors, intellectuals associated with state agencies “did not view democracy as a final product, but as a part of a statist developmental project from which the state could draw legitimacy.” (Connors, 2003) The statist have not so much suppressed democracy as put it on an elevated, rarified-air pedestal, to which only they as the elite paternal class can lead the people...at some point in the future when they determine the people mature enough for democracy. Connor says his book’s organizing theme is that “democracy has been deployed as a disciplining practice.” (Connors, 2003) His central argument is that “both liberal and statist moments of democracy in Thailand were/are projects of what may be termed ‘democrasubjection’: the subjection of people to imagined forms of self and collective rule.” (Connors, 2003) This basically portrays democracy as a deception hoisted upon the people to guarantee the legitimacy of the ruling elite. Connors’ use of the word “subjection” recalls that in fact, Thais are *subjects* of a monarchical system as much as they are *citizens* of a nation—an often-

overlooked shaping force of Thailand's political cultural landscape. While some of the viewpoints above may seem cynical, they illustrate that perceptions of what democracy is and how it should be executed vary widely among citizens in Thailand.

In summary, the following table compares the major themes found in Chinese and Thai political cultural heritage:

Comparison of Chinese and Thai Political Culture	
China's Political Cultural Legacy	Thailand's Political Culture
Ideology that supports a strong centralized state	Subjects of a monarchy and citizens of a nation—Monarchy, Nation, Religion
Rights of the collective over the rights of the individual	Monarchy and Civil-Military elite separate from "the people"
Strong respect for hierarchical relationships	Hierarchical social system
Governance by specialized, elite bureaucrats, ideally selected by merit	Bureaucracy based primarily on connections in a patron-client network
Pragmatic "ends justify the means" approach	Dual polity - urban/rural; old power elite/"the people"
Moral responsibility of government to oversee the welfare of the people	Patronage system of reciprocal relationships
Democracy as a means to a powerful and prosperous nation	Multiple meanings of Democracy-- as a means to legitimacy (for the state); as a means to redistribute power (to some elements of the population)

2.7 Conclusion

The preceding discussion started with an exploration and refinement of the nebulous concept of culture. Above all, culture is relationships--how people interact together as a community of "us" as distinguished from "them," set apart by different religious practices, attitudes toward family and work, attitudes about business, and attitudes and interaction with government. In order to clarify and make more concrete the elusive concept of culture, Chinese and Thai cultures were compared using the tools of Hofstede's dimensions of national culture and expert scholarly analysis of the two cultures. Examining the cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance, competitiveness versus cooperativeness (masculinity versus femininity) and pragmatic long-term orientation helps to unravel subtle differences between the national cultures. The southern Chinese and largely merchant origin of Chinese immigrants has had an influence on the characteristics of the community. The family as an enterprise is an essential

distinguishing characteristic of Thai-Chinese culture, and voluntary organizations play a significant role in developing a network of trusted agents beneficial to the family enterprise. The Chinese economic culture relies on trusted relationships for gathering business intelligence, raising capital, and developing a network of suppliers and markets, and voluntary organizations serve to support these requirements. The comparison of political cultures reveals quite a few similarities between traditional Chinese and Thai culture. The table below presents a summary comparing Chinese and Thai cultural traditions.

Traditional Chinese Compared to Thai Cultural Characteristics	
Chinese Culture	Thai Culture
Collectivist	Collectivist
High Power Distance	High Power Distance
High Tolerance for Uncertainty	Lower Tolerance for Uncertainty
Competitive	Cooperative
Pragmatic/Long-Term Orientation	Normative/Short-Term Orientation
Connection to South China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direct and Competitive Negotiation Styles ■ Linguistic Heterogeneity ■ Merchant Culture 	Comparable Indigenous Thai Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indirect Approach to Relationships ■ Some Linguistic Heterogeneity ■ Tendency to go into Agriculture, Civil Service and Military
Special Importance of Lineage and Family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filial Piety ■ Strong sense of place and family of origin ■ Family run as an enterprise ■ Patrimonialism 	Strong Core Family Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of Ancestor Worship or Lineage Associations ■ Less Pressure on Succeeding Generations to Join Family as Enterprise

<p>Proclivity for Establishing Social and Economic Volunteer Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of Personal Connections (<i>guanxi</i>) in Business – Network Capitalism ● Organizations for competitive interest articulation, social services, expression, resinification, and relations with larger society ● Use of organizations to foster global networks 	<p>Lack of Tendency to Form Volunteer Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of Patron-Client Relations
<p>Political Culture Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ideology that supports a strong centralized state ● Rights of the collective over the rights of the individual ● Strong respect for hierarchical relationships ● Governance by specialized, elite bureaucrats, ideally selected by merit ● Pragmatic “ends justify the means” approach ● Moral responsibility of government to oversee the welfare of the people ● Democracy as a means to a powerful and prosperous nation 	<p>Political Culture Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subjects of a monarchy and citizens of a nation—Monarchy, Nation, Religion ● Monarchy and Civil-Military elite separate from “the people” ● Hierarchical social system ● Bureaucracy based primarily on connections in a patron-client network ● Dual polity – urban/rural; old power elite/”the people” ● Patronage system of reciprocal relationships ● Multiple meanings of Democracy-- as a means to legitimacy (for the state); as a means to redistribute power (to some elements of the population)

Having established the cultural context of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, I will present the social, economic and political dimensions and cultural characteristics specific to the Hat Yai organizational and community members, as found through observation, questionnaires and interviews, which will demonstrate the relative strength of Chinese and Thai cultural elements that distinguish the Hat Yai community. First, however, the following chapter presents a local history, with an emphasis on the establishment and development of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations, as further background.

Chapter III

Historical Context of Ethnic Chinese and Chinese-Affiliated Organizations in Hat Yai

3.1 Introduction

Hat Yai is a relatively new city in Thai history, existing only since the arrival of the railroad circa 1912, whose story of development is intimately tied to ethnic Chinese and their organizations. Hat Yai would grow into a major economic center of southern Thailand due to a confluence of factors—geography, vision, planning, and entrepreneurial labor. The three-way split at Hat Yai junction made it into a potentially strategic location. It would be a Chinese immigrant who saw this potential and, in collaboration with other Chinese and Thai leaders, laid out a plan to develop that potential. As the laborers for the railroad construction, ethnic Chinese were the dominant population and drivers of the early growth of the community. The Chinese culture that they brought with them and passed down to subsequent generations is a main influence on the distinguishing characteristics of the community. It was under the influence of this cultural legacy that they established the regional and dialect associations, closely followed by religious and charity organizations. The roles that these organizations played evolved over time, expanding beyond a parochial mutual aid society with limited reach. The following historical background gives the context for that evolution, and helps in understanding how the social, economic, and political dimensions and characteristics, with their mix of Chinese and Thai influences, came to be. The history illustrates several important themes:

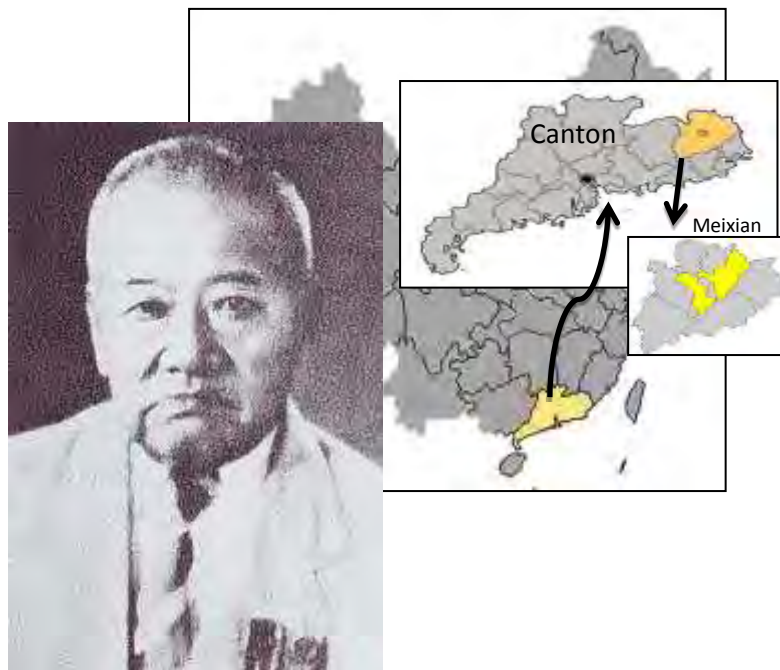
- The risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit of ethnic Chinese and its role in community development.
- The sometimes cooperative, sometimes antagonistic relationship between Thai government forces and the Chinese community, which would affect Thai-Chinese attitudes toward government.

- The resiliency and collective power provided by ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations, illustrated particularly in cooperative efforts to maintain Chinese education and encourage economic growth.
- The important networking connections of Hat Yai with other Overseas Chinese communities, particularly to the south in Malaysia and Singapore.

3.2 Historical context of the Hat Yai community

To a large extent, the story of Thailand's southern rail line is the story of the modern era of Chinese in southern Thailand. A prominent member of a Malay and Southwest Thailand Chinese tycoon family, Khaw Sim Bee, was involved heavily in the construction process of the railway. Seeing a chance to monopolize labor contracts for the construction, he persuaded the government to hire Chinese labor, which requirement would be approximately 10,000 men per year. Given the sparse population of the South, and much of it populated by Malay Muslims with a history of resistance to the Siam government, Khaw Sim Bee convinced the government to let him recruit directly from South China, with the probability that at least 50% of them would decide to immigrate to the South. This plan provided human resources for the political objective of halting the British advance that threatened to come up from Malaysia by developing Thailand's economy, and significantly changed the demographic composition of the South. (Blythe, 1969) During this period, in fact, the Siamese government changed laws on land ownership, allowing foreigners to purchase the land on either side of the rail lines, so that large numbers of Chinese were able to purchase plots to develop tin mines, rubber plantations, and commercial areas. Khaw Sim Bee allied with other close Chinese business associates, the Khean Guan Company and Chong Lee Company, to form the Bangkok-Southern Railway Construction Company in 1909. This company, aligned with their associated Eastern Shipping Company, monopolized the entire labor arrangements for the construction until its completion around 1918.(Songprasert, 2002) One of the

investors in this construction company would become the most influential figure in Hat Yai's history—Mr. Jia Ki Si.

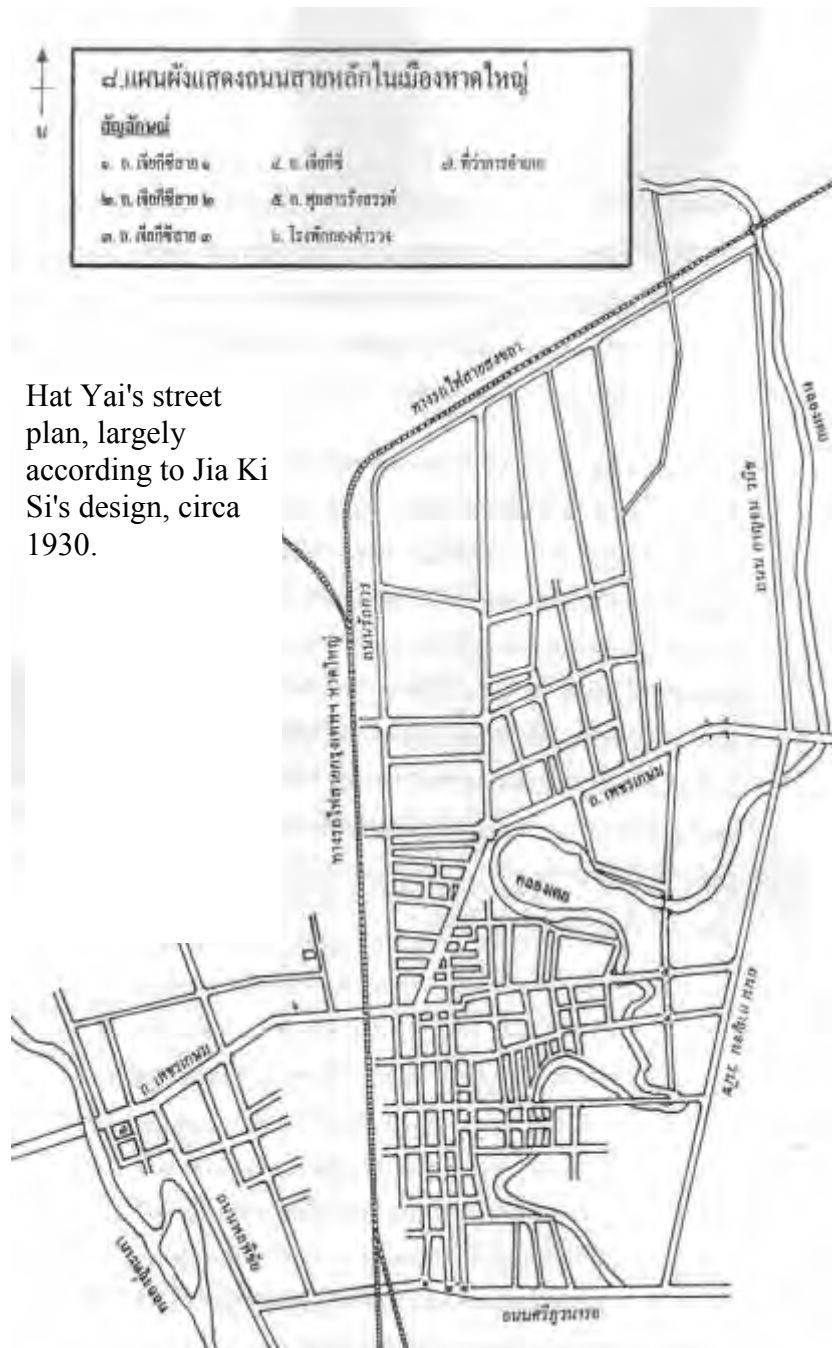


Jia Ki Si and Hometown

Mr. Jia Ki Si (เจียกีซี 謝樞泗), was a Hakka-dialect Cantonese, born in 1883 in Zhuhai, Meixian (梅县) County, Guangdong Province. He arrived in Bangkok, Thailand in 1905 and soon got a job in a liquor store, owned by a former student of his father. After four years, in 1909, Jia Ki Si found employment as an inspector and manager of the Chinese labor for the newly-announced second phase of the southern rail line, to extend it from Petchaburi south to the Malaysian border. (Rukwong, 2000) He turned out to be very adept at managing the work. His Chinese coolie charges cleared the jungle path approximately 40 meters wide, which then was built up with dirt and topped with a stone bed for the rail line. The work was divided into 30 kilometer segments. Each section had more than 10 large factories, and 200 workers. Jia Ki Si efficiently divided up the work by language groups: Hakka Chinese cleared the forest. Teo Chew Chinese had responsibility to shovel earth up to 4 meters high, while Cantonese hauled and scattered stone on the shoveled dirt for the rail line,

as well as provided mechanics and skilled artisans. (รัตน์, 2006) Studying from an Italian engineer and his two Asian assistants, Jia Ki Si learned to plan and build structures, including buildings and bridges. His most famous accomplishment while working on the rail line was in managing the completion of a tunnel near Ron Phibun, in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, where the well-known foreign construction company Berli-Jucker had failed. (Rukwong, 2000) Because of this success, he was awarded many other contracts related to the rail work until its completion in Thailand, including the contract for the remaining section from Hat Yai to the Malaysian border at Sungai Kolok (สุไหงโกลลก).

In 1912, after completing the work of hiring another set of workers for the railroad, he bought a house at the U Taphao junction, about 2-3 kilometers north of the present Hat Yai station. However, he saw that this area was a low-lying flood plain not suitable for permanent quarters, and moved to the Hat Yai area. At that time, the two districts around the current Hat Yai station location, Khok Samedchun and Hat Yai (see map), had only 14 households between them. He purchased 50 rai of land for 175 baht to the east of the current station. (Rukwong, 2000) (For comparison, the Hat Yai station master around 1917 was paid 20 baht per month as salary). He immediately began clearing the trees on the property, hiring many fellow Hakka *coolies* who had been clearing the jungle for the railway. Based on a careful plan, depicted in the accompanying map, (Rukwong, 2000) he began the process of laying down a grid work of roads and constructing buildings, the first being a row house with five units completed around 1917. He lived in one of the units and rented out the others.



Hat Yai's street plan, largely according to Jia Ki Si's design, circa 1930.

Jia Ki Si's business model is quite instructive in illustrating how Chinese were able to cooperate with government forces for mutual benefit and advantage. Jia Ki Si, and other contemporary developers, often "donated" the land to the government, and also donated capital to build the roads. This business model exchanged a few tracts of land for the roads that provided access to previously undeveloped land, bringing in ever increasing rental income and

opportunities for commerce. The donations of land to government, and even capital for road construction, easily repaid the investment, as the government became responsible for road maintenance while Jia Ki Si and his businesses, which included the first three hotels in the area, had access to a continuously developing transportation infrastructure. His initial effort produced about eight kilometers of roadway, forming the heart of the commercial district of modern Hat Yai.

He was soon joined by other pioneers of the city, both Thai government officials and Chinese investors, in this pattern of purchasing land, developing it, and immediately reinvesting in additional land and development. No doubt the involvement of Thai government officials who were also profiting from development eased the way for any necessary government procedures, regulations, etc. These men appeared to work in concert, forming a strong community that shared many business interests. One of these government officers was the *Nai Amphoe* in charge of the Hat Yai area (at that time called Amphoe Neuah) from 1914, *Phra Senaehamonthree* (พระเสน่หามนตรี). Close to the same time that Jia Ki Si purchased his land, *Phra Senaehamonthree* acquired 50 *rai* for 200 baht, also in the area of the Hat Yai junction. Originally intending to use this land for rubber plantations, he soon followed Jia Ki Si's pattern of clearing, developing, and renting buildings for shops and living quarters. (Rukwong, 2000)

Another Thai government official who became involved with the development of Hat Yai was *Phraya Athakravi Sunthorn*. His posts included serving as prosecuting attorney (อัยการ) in Songkhla for the Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. Following his assignment in Songkhla, he went on to several influential positions in the government, including Chief Inspector in the Ministry of Interior, and Inspector General, in which he reported directly to the Prime Minister. During his government tenure, he regularly purchased land in the various areas under his responsibility, and had purchased land directly from Jia Ki Si in the Hat Yai area beginning from Nanyang, to the intersection of

Thammnoonwithi and Niphat Uthit 2 roads. With this land he also rented out houses and shops. He also purchased wide areas of land in the foothills around Hat Yai.



See Kim Yong.

Another well-known “city father” was See Kim Yong (徐錦榮). See Kimyong was born in Zahopu city, Jiaoling Prefecture (蕉岭县) in Canton Province, one province to the north of Jia Ki Si’s birthplace, and was a fellow Hakka dialect group. He immigrated directly to Hat Yai after the railroad had already been built, following his father who had first immigrated to the area as a labor contractor for the Songkhla-Hat Yai rail line. Kimyong arrived in the region at about 20 years old, and felt that the environment, with its combination of flowing waters among the mountains, in the Chinese *fengshui* tradition, augured well for the area. Kimyong made his fortune in buying real estate in large quantities, as well, mostly west of the railroad tracks and around the present day area of Petchkasem Road. Kimyong donated two plots of land for the first Chinese school in the area, as well as contributing to various charities and organizations, such as Saenthong School, the Sun Yat-sen Foundation (Sun Yat-sen was also a Hakka), Hat Yai City Church, and *Rongje* Giuseu’am. He followed Jia Ki Si’s model of donating many plots of land for road construction, contributing to about ten roadways. (Rukwong, 2000)

The strategic location of Hat Yai as a railroad junction, this measured and deliberate development plan, and additional investment from ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia led to relatively rapid growth. By the 1920s, Jia Ki Si was the owner of over 1000 shops in Hat Yai. Expanding beyond this line of investment, Jia Ki Si took advantage of knowledge about tin and tungsten mining that he had learned while inspecting flood-damaged areas of the railroad, and established several tin mines in the Hat Yai area. Tin mining was a significant income source in southern Thailand during this period, and thus attracted outside investors as well. Because of the technical challenges of tin and tungsten mining, it requires significant amounts of capital and expertise, which often came from Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia. These included two overseas Chinese, Chi Jiu Thin ชีจื่อถึน and Chi Yok San ชียกซัน, who established the Tao Yian เต้าเหียยน companies in Ban Wangpha, upper Hat Yai. (Rukwong, 2002)

Of even more economic importance in the Hat Yai region was the growth of the rubber industry. Mostly Chinese took advantage of the liberalized government policies to purchase and develop the land for rubber plantations. From the 1920s, each individual foreigner could legally purchase up to 500 *rai* of land. In actuality, cultivated regions were from 50 to 3000 *rai* from the very beginning of this policy, growing in scale over time, but dominated by small-scale Chinese operations--only two Western companies were registered in the industry in the 1930s. In accordance with the government objective of blocking British influence, about 50,000 *rai* of rubber plantations were planted with Chinese investment on the Hat Yai-Sadao corridor and up to the border area of Padang Besar. (Sayamol & Bandita, n.d.) In this period the number of planters and tappers was estimated at 70,000, the majority being Chinese. (Skinner, 1957) The forest-clearing skills of the Hakka Chinese during the railroad construction was easily put to use in clearing land for rubber plantations, so that this dialect group dominated the industry in the early days. (Rukwong, 2002) Steps further down the value chain, such as sorting, grading, packing and exporting, were almost entirely a Hokkien operation. (Skinner, 1957) Much of

the capital for both tin mining and rubber plantation development came from Chinese from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Professor Phuwadol reports that Chang Kong Tad and Chee Ui Jiw, the son and son in law of the acting mayor of Medan, transferred a large amount of capital from the branch of Yat Lae Bank in Penang to open two rubber plantations in Songkhla. Another leading Malaysian Chinese entrepreneur, Tan Kah Kee, established several large plantations under the names Tai Tong Company and Nam Siam Company. (Songprasert, 2002) These plantations quickly grew in scale as more investors arrived and the regional infrastructure developed. Indonesian- and Penang-based companies, such as Jeng Jeng Plantation Company and the Wae Cheng Yen Plantation Company held 30,000 and 20,000 *rai* of land respectively. (Rukwong, 2002) Both of these companies employed Hakka who had mostly been coolies working on the railroad.

As the new central hub of overland transportation, Hat Yai gained in importance not only for the production of these raw materials, but for their storage and shipment. A Penang Hakka Chinese family that established the Yib In Tsoi Company built the first concrete brick building for this purpose in 1929 (Rukwong, 2000). This company used the Hat Yai junction as a center of commerce in tin, rubber, and other regional goods, exporting these materials worldwide and importing goods for the local market.



Hat Yai's first concrete structure, Yib In Tsoi Company, built 1929.

Accompanying this vigorous economic development, the social community of Hat Yai grew rapidly. See Kim Yong opened his still famous market in the 1920s, which became a bustling area of Chinese, Malays, and Westerners all trading together and supporting a growing entertainment industry, as Hat Yai became a regional destination for travelers. Contemporary scholar Kenneth Perry Landon described the southern dress of Chinese in the 1930s, noting the strong Malay influence. A Sarong and coat was frequently worn by Chinese men, and some women dressed in *Ba-ba* style, with many solid gold ornaments and buttons. (Landon, 1941) Other contemporary photos of Hat Yai, however, reveal urbanized, westernized style of dress as well. That the Chinese dominated the population of the region could be easily visualized by the preponderance of shop signs, all in Chinese, that filled the town's center. One large visible symbol of the Chinese presence was the Chinese Mahayana Buddhist Cheua Chang Temple วัดที่ อจาง founded 1936.

Following Jia Ki Si's lead, numerous hotels sprang up in the region to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors both business and leisure. The first movie theater opened in 1924, with several theaters appearing shortly afterwards. At that time, there were a little over 100 houses in the town. By

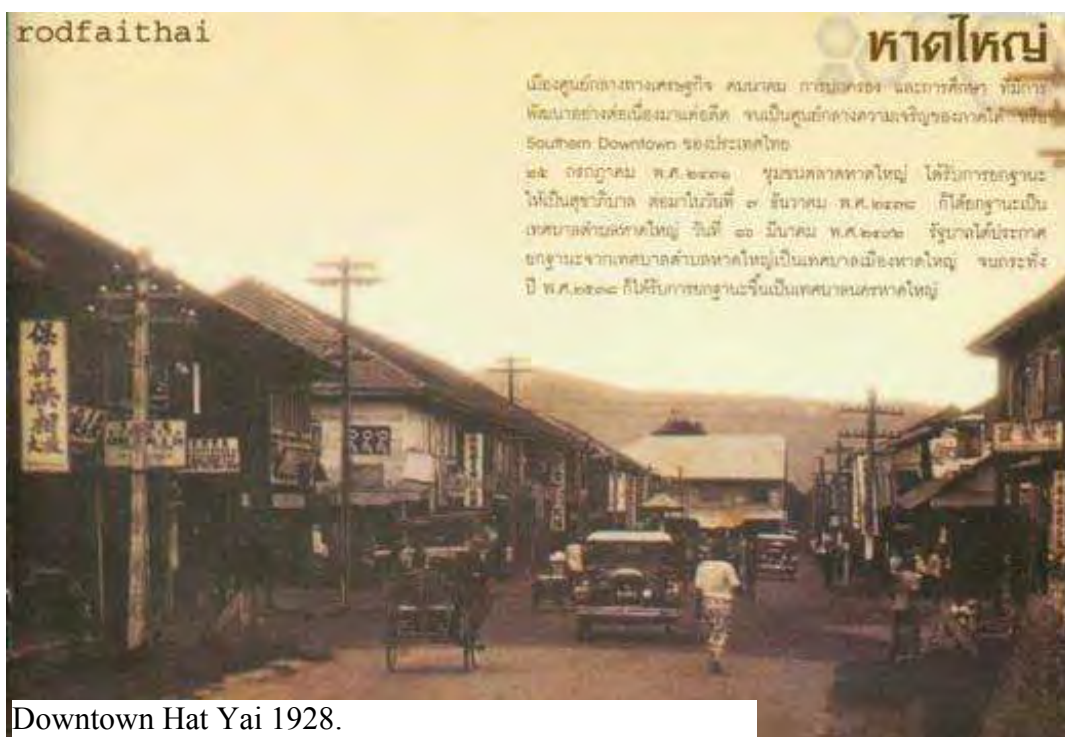
1928, there were 654 houses and a permanent population of 2,950, although affixing the population was difficult as there was constant in and outflow from Malaysia and elsewhere. (Rukwong, 2002) World trade agreements on rubber quotas, in effect around 1927, affected Malaysia more severely than Thailand, so that Thailand experienced a flood of Chinese rubber plantation workers and owners immigrating into the area, contributing to this population boom and further cementing the link between Hat Yai and Chinese to the south. Among this group of immigrants was a relatively new dialect group, Fuzhou people from Perak, particularly Sitiawan district, who settled along the railway line. (Landon, 1941) A Fuzhou dialect society of Hat Yai exists to this day.



Hat Yai's first movie theater, built 1924.

Hat Yai's reputation as an entertainment center of the South spread within a short time of its inception. In 1939 the Thai government announced that casinos would be opened in select areas of the country, including Songkhla and Hat Yai (the others were in Hua Hin and Phuket). The purpose was to increase tourism and foreign income, according to the Minister of Finance. (Landon, 1941) Aside from movie theaters and casinos, other forms of "entertainment" came with prosperity. In January of 1940, the Ministry of Interior abolished a system of registered brothels, but still attempted to control the trade by requiring medical checks of the women. Chinese hotels almost always had females available, many of whom were housed in the hotels. Woman shuttled back and forth from British Malaya with passports listed as "saleswoman."

Cantonese and Hainanese made up the majority of these women. The majority of their clients were Chinese. (Landon, 1941)



The story of Chinese schools in Hat Yai is quite illuminating regarding changes in government policy and society. Formal teaching of Chinese, in Chinese language, began in 1923 with 30 students. By 1925, community leaders organized to construct the town's first Chinese school, Jongfa Yichin (จงผ่ายีฉิน) on the donation of 300 *wa* of land from See Kim Yong. (SriNakon, 1999) The teaching was in both Teo Chew and Mandarin Chinese. The social and political atmosphere in Thailand, in the attitude toward Chinese, however, began to change dramatically. In a world atmosphere of fascism and nationalism, Chinese organizations became suspect, particularly since many were seen as promoting radical democratic/republican ideas such as the pro-Sun Yat-sen and Kuomintang (KMT) Tongmenghui society. Sun Yat-sen, as a Hakka, was likely popular among the Hat Yai Chinese population of the time. (Rukwong, 2000) The government was concerned not only about the politics of the democratic Tongmeng Hui and other Chinese individuals and groups, but also about remuneration to the Chinese homeland. The government estimated under Rama

6 and 7, between 1927-1932, more than 160 million baht left the country for China. (สิริไพศาล et al., 2005) This report came just as the World Depression was deepening its effects. The government began to pressure the Hat Yai Chinese schools to change the curriculum to Thai, even though the students could not easily understand. Organizations that were helping fund the schools, such as the Chung Hua Foundation, came under official investigation in 1928 and again in 1940. Under this pressure, the Jongfa Yichin school closed about 1935, and although Jia Ki Si led an effort to re-open it, by 1938 Phibul Songkhram's nationalist assault on Chinese officially closed all Chinese schools.

Phibul's war on Chinese significantly heated up from 1938, with laws that threatened to destroy Chinese livelihoods in areas such as bird's nest collection, salt selling, hawking food on school grounds, and even forcing an ethnic Thai takeover of the pork industry. The long list of hyper-nationalist laws included the following areas:

- Thai Rice Company formed to wrest control of rice milling and distribution from Chinese
- Government takeover of bird's nest concessions
- Salt and Tobacco act makes these government monopolies
- Ministry of Education prohibits non-Thai nationals from hawking foods on or near school grounds
- Slaughtering Industry reserved for Thai only
- Driving vehicles for hire restricted to Thais
- Siamese Vessel Act restricts ownership of ships in Thai waters to Thai nationals or companies with majority of Thais, and crew of 75% minimum Thai nationals
- Fishing Act reserves right to fish in Thai waters to Thais
- Liquid Fuels Act gave government control of processing and marketing of gas and oil (Landon, 1941)

An era of fear developed in the town. According to one interview of a Hat Yai resident, the interviewee's first generation Chinese grandmother, who ran a sundries store, had the habit of offering prayers at the *sanjao* Boysian (八仙 八 仙 The Eight Immortals) in Hat Yai. Police, however, were following worshippers into the temple and arresting them for questioning, so that people stopped going to the temple all together, secretly worshipping at home. (ศิริไพศาล et al., 2005)

Many Chinese in Hat Yai responded by increasing efforts to learn Thai, participate in Thai activities (especially religious activities and actions that showed support of the royal family) and by donating money and sponsoring charity activities, to prove their loyalty. As for education, however, a great many Chinese in Hat Yai sent their children elsewhere to study, such as Penang, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or even back to hometown areas in the Mainland.

In March 1939 the National Assembly debated a rubber quota bill that was also designed to give the government much more control over the rubber industry. Vehemently opposed by the Songkhla Member of Parliament, it passed anyway, especially with support of the Minister of Finance. According to Landon, the resulting quota system controlled by coupons issued by government "led to forgery, theft of coupons, and the smuggling of rubber." (Landon, 1941) By 1941 the laws that established the state-owned tin and rubber industries were affecting the local Hat Yai companies, to the point that businesses or capital assets were being seized. (Landon, 1941) But Chinese patience would eventually win out; as these businessmen realized, the Thai government and local populace was not prepared with the proper expertise to run these industries, so that Phibul had to retreat from these policies, and the business was about ready to return to normal.

"Normal", however, would have to wait until after the interruption of World War II. The war had a very direct impact on Hat Yai. Before the war, several unassuming Japanese moved into the Songkhla and Hat Yai area, secretly scouting the area for an invasion. Their professions included dentistry, photography, and pharmaceutical sales. The Japanese invaded Songkhla

simultaneously with their attacks throughout the Asia Pacific area, on December 8, 1941. As Japanese troops came ashore, the resident Japanese spies donned Japanese military uniforms with officer ranks. (Landon, 1941) Thai officials in Hat Yai handed out weapons to the locals, including the Chinese, for self-protection, although there wasn't an organized resistance movement being formed. To the inland side of Hat Yai, such as on the road down to Sadao, the southern line from Hat Yai to Penang, British soldiers were soon destroying bridges and transportation means to halt the Japanese advance. In Hat Yai and Songkhla, it appeared that Japanese were ready to execute Chinese in order to take over their property. Most Chinese fled the city area after the invasion, such as Jia Ki Si (Niphat Jiranakhon) and his family, and Mr. Suthin and family, Manager of the Bank Luang Thai, who fled to Khlong Hae *wat*. (ศิริไพศาล et al., 2005) Mr. Yib, of the Yib In Tsoi trading company and a prominent supporter of the Chinese cause against the Japanese, fled to Singapore and then England. (Charoenlap, 2012) The city became a ghost town, experiencing frequent blackouts. The Japanese seized government buildings, such as schools, for their operational use and to house soldiers.

Some Chinese residents stayed at first during the occupation, until a sabotage bombing of a housing area with Japanese soldiers near the railroad station killed a great many soldiers. According to an interview of a contemporary resident, this caused fear of being implicated as anti-Japanese supporters of China, so that most remaining Chinese fled the area. Many of these Chinese had their property that they could not take with them taken by the Japanese. (ศิริไพศาล et al., 2005)

The Hat Yai region experienced considerable hardship during the war years. There were shortages of nearly every good and food, including oil, clothing, toothpaste, medicine, rice, paper, soap, writing instruments, salt, tobacco products and even firewood. Tin mines and rubber plantations stopped or slowed production due to lack of workers and distributors, which had a cascading effect on the railway. The railway lost income, and was also subject to

bombings and other interruptions, which contributed to shortages or increased prices of rice, clothing, and oil. (Rukwong, 2002) Some merchants took advantage of the situation to hoard merchandise. Goods sent from central Thailand to alleviate shortages were sometimes smuggled out to Penang, Malaysia, and Singapore, by local merchants in cooperation with Thai officials. (สิริไพศาล et al., 2005) Nonetheless, for the majority of Chinese living through the period, they shared the rough experience with local Thais and organized mutual relief efforts through Chinese associations, which helped improve any anti-Chinese sentiment that had been fueled by Phibul's hyper-nationalist policies.

Immediately after the war, a freer atmosphere provided opportunity for the Chinese community in Hat Yai to more formally establish itself. This was an era of the official registration and activity of the various dialect organizations and schools. The same group that had established the Jongfa Yichin school reopened an evening school named Jongfa Yiasiw จงฟาเยี้ยเสี่ยว. Shortly thereafter, the five major dialect groups of the region established a full-time day school, named simply Jongfa จงฟา. These groups, and their initial contributions to the school project, were 10 classrooms each from the Teochiu and Hokkien Associations, 6 from Hakka, and 2 each from Hailam and Kwongsiew. Buying land and registering the school became an increasing problem for the community under changing government policies and attitudes; nonetheless, construction of the school building, a fairly simple thatched-roof structure, was completed in 1950, and the name was changed to Srinakorn School โรงเรียนศรีนคร (or, in Chinese, 合艾國光學校, "Hat Yai National Glory School"). (SriNakon, 1999)

The societies likely existed informally before the war, as in the case of the organized foundation that sponsored the opening of the Chinese school, but none had been registered with the government. In 1946 the Hat Yai Kwong Siew Association was formally established on Niphat Uthit 3 Road, in a wooden terraced house as the meeting site. The official history of the Kwong Siew Association begins with a discussion of the origins of Cantonese people in Hat Yai, particularly emphasizing the role of the railroad in the immigration process.

According to this account, all the carpentry, ironworks, and masonry for laying down the railway were given to Cantonese people. When all the railroad engineering work was finished, a portion of the Cantonese artisans were retained by the State Railway of Thailand to be public employees in the railway maintenance department. Another segment worked in mining, some went into horticulture and agriculture, while others went independently into carpentry, masonry, and work as technical experts. Waves of Cantonese immigrants continued to arrive along the newly improved lines of transportation, arriving from Bangkok and all the central provinces, with some doing business operating machinery factories, repairing tungsten, restaurants, watch stores, portrait and photography studios, gold shops, clinics, mining industry, or becoming carpenters, masonry workers, or mechanics. Cantonese carpenters and masonry workers contributed their skills during the construction work of the Kwong Siew Association meeting hall. After the construction was completed, the council founded a Health and Recreation activities group, which would eventually become the Hat Yai Kwong Siew Association Dancing Lion Troupe.

The post-World War II relationship between the Chinese community and government continued in an unstable cycle of cooperation and conflict. Renewed nationalistic fervor in the central government stifled the freedom of the organizations, as the government began scrutinizing Chinese associations and denying all registration applications, including the Kwong Siew Association's 1948 application. The association subsequently suspended activities. By 1953, however, the situation provided more opportunities for community activities. The associations turned to sponsoring sporting and charity activities, which undoubtedly offered a non-threatening social contribution not as easily opposed by the government. The Kwong Siew Association, for example, turned an empty lot next to the association into a basketball court, and established men's and woman's basketball teams. Their team combined with the Teo Chew team, the Chinese Newspaper Society team, and the Consolidated Hat Yai team, participating in 6 Thai-Malaysia Gold Cup competitions, capturing 3 trophies and

the gold cup. Evidence from all the association histories shows that such social sports activities were actively and cooperatively supported, and provided further opportunities for strengthening social relationships with external ethnic Chinese groups.

The Hakka Society was officially established, though still unregistered, in 1947 by a committee of 15 founders. They established five basic, permanent committees that illustrate the purpose and activities of the society: welfare, education, entertainment, temple, and assistance for Hakka in Thailand. Their first building was established in 1949 with a budget of 143,900 baht. In 1950 they built a community basketball court to promote sports and established the Hat Yai basketball team. (Hakka Society, 2007)

In the same year as the Hakka Association formation, the Hat Yai Teo Chew Society was formed by senior leaders of the community, temporarily located on the road in front of the railroad station (Thaamanoon Whithi). They invited nationally famous Teo Chew to help start the association, as well as Teo Chew members of the Hat Yai community. Mr. Hun Phong Hian, owner of a gold shop called Hun Lee Haeng, sold land for the permanent location at the agreed price of 110,000 baht, 10,000 of which Mr. Hun donated himself. On 3 September 1947 the Hat Yai Teo Chew Association was established formally, although still without registration.

The Hainan Association of South Thailand was also founded in 1947. Starting with a group of 18 primary and other Hainanese countrymen in 1946, the first head of the preparatory committee was Cai Bingding 蔡丙丁 (Mandarin pronunciation), and Mr. Cai's shop was the temporary office site. At the 1947 establishment, the association drafted its charter. In 1954 a new election was held according to the charter, and the session's leaders were Lin Tianhe 林天和, Yun Fengxuan 云缝轩, Xing Baoliang 邢保良 and Wang Luwei 王禄位. In 1963 the Hainan Association applied for and was granted official registration. It was perhaps the only Hainan association in Southern Thailand at the time, as the official history records that the association called on their countrymen from all

14 southern provinces to join and combine their strength as the Hainan Association of South Thailand. (Southern Region Hailam Association, 2011)

In 1948 several Teo Chew Association committee members proposed to start a Chinese school supported by a vote of approval from approximately 400 members, indicative of the strength in number of the association at the time. Construction actually began and was near completion when the government policy changed, allowing only two Chinese language teaching schools per province, so the project was set aside and the building was given to the association to use. As with the other Chinese associations during this time period, the government denied the formal registration request of the school. The Teo Chew Association's history records much interaction with Penang, and even trips to Mainland China by association leaders, which undoubtedly raised suspicions of anti-communists in the Thai government. (Teo Chew Association, 2009)

Nonetheless, in 1952, the school project was revived. Two members were tasked with establishing a primary school to be named Kobkarnsuksa. The following year, 1953, the school opened classes. Enrollment increased rapidly, and the association prospered along with its members. As had the Hakka association, they reached out to the community by building a large lighted basketball court with modern equipment with bleachers for seating 3,000 people in 1958. The opening competition, between a team from Bangkok (the "Little Tigers") versus a team from Yala, provides evidence of the social interconnections provided by this type of activity. The association formed a combined team with the Guangzhou Association and Hua Chiu to form a Hat Yai team, which traveled to Singapore, Malaysia and Bangkok. (Teo Chew Association, 2009)

By the early 1950s, yet another wave of anti-Chinese sentiment arose from the Thai government, this time associated with the fear of the rise of communism. Malaysian communists, mostly Chinese, crowded the border of Thailand, and had been united in their fight with Japanese during the war. In the

period after the war, most overseas Chinese felt appreciation towards the communists. In the period 1948-1950 the popularity of the Chinese communist party in Thailand was at its highest. But with the second coming of Phibul, Thai-Chinese communists began to catch the attention of the government again. The recently opened Srinakorn school was investigated for violating the strict rules regarding using a foreign language to teach, and was shut down by the government for the next 17 years, starting in 1953. Fortunately, most of the nationalist policies weren't as severe as before the war, particularly because the government needed the Chinese for the economic recovery from depression and war. (SriNakon, 1999)

Economically, rubber production from 1947 to 1954 showed rapid growth but declining share of Chinese production, in comparison to ethnic Thais and Malays. In 1949 the government registered 7,610 rubber holdings to Chinese nationals (less than 10% of holdings) but the area was 25.8% of total. The average Chinese holding was 61.7 *rai* as opposed to Thai average of 17.9 *rai*. Official numbers such as this tend to hide ethnic Thai-Chinese, but scholar G. Willim Skinner estimate that one-third to one-half of the Thai holdings were ethnic Chinese. At any rate, by 1954 Chinese holdings stayed nearly same at 7618 but Chinese share was down to 7.5% due to a large influx of Malay and Thai planters. The Chinese share of the area of land under cultivation was down to 20%, although the large holdings were still dominated by Chinese. Forty-two percent of plots that were 50 *rai* or more were owned by Chinese nationals. (Skinner, 1957)

The 1961 National Development Plan specifically named Hat Yai as a target area for economic development and foreign direct investment. The government encouraged investment and expansion of the tourist industry, and Hat Yai was designated as a center of commerce in the south. Sayaruamthang Nightclub and Cinema opened as the city's first modern nightclub in 1962. (ศิริไพศาล et al., 2005) By 1971 modern hotels such as King's Hotel, Metro, Laemthong, Yongdee, President, Hat Yai Motel provided lodging for thousands of visitors.

Growth continued to accelerate in the 1970s, with even larger scale construction of hotels, such as Sukhontha Hotel, which had a complete complement of entertainment venues, such as a nightclub, restaurant, and “Bathe, Dry, and Massage” Parlor (often a euphemism for prostitute service) and snooker club. (สิริไพศาล et al., 2005)

The era of growing prosperity extended to the Chinese associations in Hat Yai. Frequent renovation or new construction at the physical locations of the associations and the Chinese language schools is strong evidence of the power provided by the collaborative efforts of the organizations. In 1970 Hakka Society member Mr. Saweejinyong donated land to be an old folks home, which prompted the association leadership to evaluate the society’s building structures and situation. Chairman Mr. Liu Yuan Jao, proposed that, since the 20 year old structure was dilapidated, the society should construct a new building. Mr. Lin Mao Yuan, Owner of Chumphon Mine led the donations with 150,000 baht. The remaining budget for the 1.3 million baht project was quickly raised and the construction was completed in less than a year. (Hakka Society, 2007)

As for the Teo Chew Association, in 1972 a new president announced plans to speed up the new construction of the society building and school, which project had been foundering since 1960, donating 400,000 baht of his own money. Royal family came for a ceremony at the future school in 1973, but classes didn’t begin until 1975. The Songkhla governor presided over the association building’s opening ceremony, in the main hall that could seat over 1000 people in 1976. The Taiwanese ambassador also attended as well as the leader of a private Thai-Malaysia organization. (Teo Chew Association, 2009)

The official registration, although not by any means the foundation, of various Hat Yai associations are as follows:

- Siang Teung 19 December 1961
- Hailam 18 October 1963
- Hakka 24 Feb 1972

- Teo Chew 8 November 1973
- Chung Hua 10 April 1974
- Hokkien started the process in 1969 official registration 1 May 1974
- Kwong Siew 17 July 1974 (ศิริไพศาล et al., 2005)

The story of the Srinakon Foundation and purchase of land for additional buildings is instructive in Chinese political connections and methods in the region. After having been shut down in 1953, the school's alumni association committee met in 1968 to try to revive the school, but the policy was still that any school found with previous violations could not be re-opened. They were able to bypass the proscription by buying another school, grades 1-6, and then moving the students to the original location and changing the name back to Srinakon in 1970.

Another incident also illustrates the necessity, and ability, of the community to make use of government connections. In 1983, the President of the Alumni Association and Head of the Teo Chew Association, headed a committee that determined the current school facilities were dilapidated and dangerous, and determined to raise funds to rebuild the facilities. However, since only three of the Associations were listed on the title, the committee feared that some donors, perhaps the Hainan and Kwong Siew that were missing on the title, might be hesitant to contribute. But transferring names on the title at the assessed land value was going to be extremely expensive. The association president consulted with the Provincial Governor, the Provincial Attorney General, Head of the Provincial Revenue Department, and other government officials to gain their help and support. The 5 Societies sent a letter of appeal to the government to greatly lower the assessed land value, to which they agreed. They gained the cooperation of the long-time mayor of Hat Yai, Khreng Suwannawong, who registered his own name in the place of Kee Jiranakhon (son of Jia Ki Si).

The fundraising efforts of the Srinakorn Foundation for this renovation, as well as fundraising for Kobkarnsuksa Chinese-language school, are also indicative of the tremendous wealth, power and identity of the Chinese community had acquired in Hat Yai. Mr. Kangsaeng Srisawatnuphap (กั้งส์แสง ศรีวัดคี่นุภาพ 李更生), a Teo Chew Chinese, donated 10.3 million baht for the school. The next-highest donor gave five million baht; the top eleven donors all donated over 1 million each. Of the 775 donors listed, only 22 individual donors registered with Thai names, the rest using their Chinese names. It's also interesting to note the support of the PRC, whose consulate in Songkhla donated 50,000 baht, while the PRC Embassy in Thailand donated another 30,000. (SriNakon, 1999) In 1997, the Teo Chew Association's school, Kobkarnsuksa, was overcrowded and needed new classrooms. The association president led the organization in raising about 8 million baht for this project.



Phraphothsat Kuan'im Kohng Mountain
พระโพธิสัตว์ กวนอิม เขาคอหงส์.

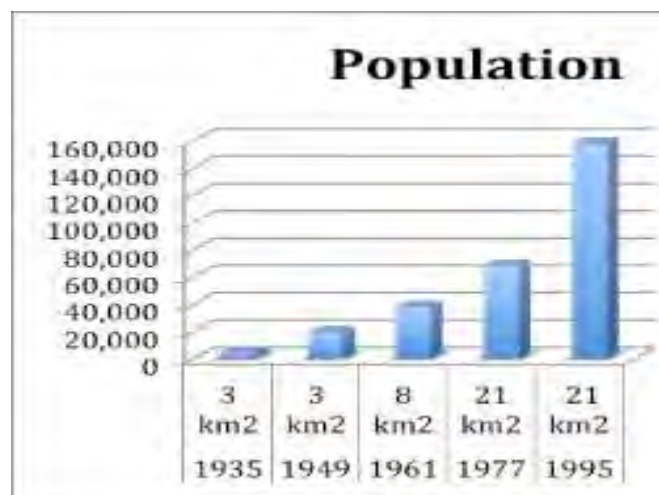
As the tourism trade has developed, so has the commercialization of religion in support of tourism. In addition to the older Cheu Chang Temple, an additional three major temples have been built since 1957: Kuan'im Kiuseua'am วัดกวนอิมกิ้วซ้ออัม, Sian Hua Gaw วัดเลี่ยนฮั่วเกาะ and Thawaruararam วัดถาวราราม . These have become large draws for overseas Chinese tourist groups from Southeast Asia, whose preference for visiting Theraveda Wats funds a bustling business in Buddhist charms and religious tattoos. The intentional exploitation of this

religion for tourism can be seen in the Phraphothsat Kuan'im Kohng Mountain พระโพธิสัตว์ กวนอิม เขาคอหงส์ project, an extravagantly Chinese-style temple which was initiated approximately 1998 by mostly Thai investors, with only a minority share of Chinese investors. (สิริไพศาล et al., 2005)

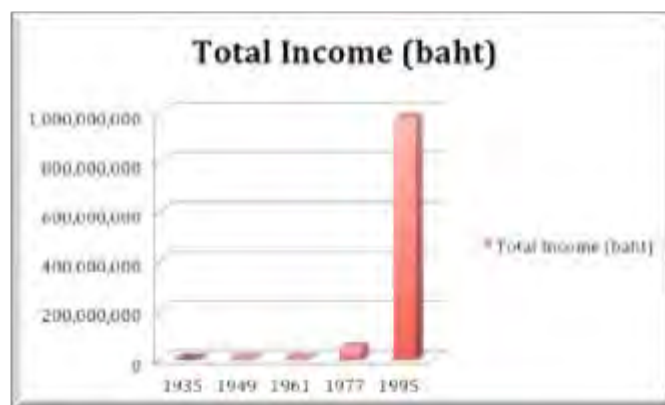
The recent story of Hat Yai is of growth, globalization and regional integration, which is linking the Hat Yai and Songkhla economy even more closely to its southern neighbors. The following charts demonstrate the rapid growth, not just in population, but in wealth of the city: (Hat Yai Municipal Government)

Year	Area	Population	Total Income (baht)
1935	3 km ²	5,000	60,000
1949	3 km ²	19,425	374,523
1961	8 km ²	38,162	3,854,964
1977	21 km ²	68,142	49,774,558
1995	21 km ²	157,881	978,796,627

Hat Yai Area Growth, Population and Income, 1935-1995.



Hat Yai Population Bar Graph, 1935-1995.



Hat Yai Total Income Bar Graph, 1935-1995.

1989 Prime Minister Chatichai emphasized regional trade with trans-border projects and turning “battlefields to marketplaces.” (King, 2005) In July 1993 state leaders signed the “Langkawi Accord” to establish the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). It seemed that the IMT-GT was good politically to push for Thai parties, like the Democrats, as it emphasized development for the poor southern region; however, there was much skepticism, especially among the extreme southern provinces, with big centralized projects. Some economists argued that the government should promote what they saw as the primary factor in southern economy, which was “small to medium enterprises with low levels of capitalization and personalistic (sic) entrepreneurial links,” (King, 2005) that would include Chinese middle class and Muslim merchants.

The Asian Development Bank projects focused more on Songkhla than any of the other southern border provinces. Fifteen of twenty-one major projects proposed by ADB for southern Thailand were concentrated on the Songkhla-Sadao corridor. By 1999 the Thai government was advocating reducing the broad scope of a “triangle” development to a more narrowly defined development scheme. The National Economic and Social Development Board published a survey *Preparation of Master and Action Plan: Development of the Penang-Songkhla Economic Zone Through the Utilization of Thailand’s Natural Gas Resources*. This called for rapid industrial development of a capital-intensive corridor mostly based on a natural gas pipeline from Gulf of Thailand sources to Penang. By 2001 the IMT-GT task force would transform the concept to a “Seamless Songkhla Penang Medan corridor (SSPM). (King, 2005)

Trouble started in 1998-99 when a series of secretive contracts regarding this industrialization plan were signed that allegedly violated the constitution. Thailand’s new constitution stipulated more community consultation for infrastructure projects and environmental safeguards, and this secret agreement seemed to fly in the face of that provision. Government held public hearings on the industrialization strategy in 2000, even though it appeared to have been a

“done deal”, and Hat Yai descended into riot in July, followed by another riot in September when another hearing was scheduled. The central issues of this dispute were defending small-scale enterprises and preserving the local identity, which some groups felt was threatened by a more globalized economy. (King, 2005) The protests appear to be heavily influenced by ethnic Thai-Malays, such as Malay fishermen who would be affected by the development. By 2001, Thaksin’s government appeared to abandon the industrialization of the south, emphasizing instead regional production, such as the “One Tambol One Product” (OTOP) project.

Over the past decade, Hat Yai’s history has been dominated by economic growth, particularly in the tourism trade. As of 2012, Hat Yai was receiving nearly three million visitors per year, mostly consisting of Malaysians (many of whom are ethnic Chinese), as well as substantial numbers of Singaporeans and Chinese. (keeratipatpong, 2013) The Thai-Chinese organizations of Hat Yai have played an active role in promoting this growth. The deliberate development of Hat Yai’s distinctive Vegetarian Festival for tourism purposes, described more fully in the following chapter, is a strong example of the interplay between maintaining cultural identity and promoting the economic advantages of an ethnic Chinese heritage. Building on what had previously been a more subdued traditional practice, the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand now promotes a multi-day event with food booths, entertainment, and a public parade spectacle featuring dedicated believers performing super-human feats, such as body piercings, as a sign of their spiritual purity.

3.3 Current status of the regional, dialect, charity and religious organizations

The above historical background of the Chinese experience in Hat Yai has shown that the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations have faced and overcome many challenges. The current status of the regional, dialect, charity and religious organizations shows that these organizations remain active in the community, as can be seen in the following brief assessments of their membership and

activities. A deeper analysis of the significance and community roles these organizations have played, along with more detailed discussion of Chinese language schools and trade and professional organizations, will be addressed in subsequent chapters. As the Hat Yai city pioneers were mostly Hakka, the Hat Yai Hakka Association enjoys a strong membership and prominent position in the community. With a membership of more than 1,200 people, it appears to be the largest of the regional associations. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013) This strong position perhaps influenced the decision to hold a meeting of the 36 Hakka associations of Thailand in Hat Yai in October 2013. Activities of the Hakka Association include sponsoring Chinese language instruction, promoting Chinese martial arts, and charity work. The current president notes that charity work is not as important as it was in the past, as prosperity in the region has made it less necessary, and the Association has encountered problems of people soliciting for aid in dishonest ways. The Association helps plan and fund traditional community activities such as Chinese New Years and the Vegetarian Festival, and supports Hakka-associated temples dedicated to Chinese gods Kuan U and Kuan Im.

Although the population of Teo Chew people in Hat Yai is not as proportionally large *vis-a-vis* other language groups as it is in Bangkok and other areas of Thailand, the Hat Yai Teo Chew Association holds a prominent position in the community. This is bolstered by the fact that the association president is also the long-time head of the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations (*Chomrom*), and heads the Srinakon School charity foundation. The Association boasts more than 600 members, not including family members. The two main activities of the organization are education, focused on the co-located Kobkarnsuksa school, and charity work, which is heavily focused on education and the school. For example, the association raised 10 million baht (approximately 333,000 USD) for the construction of a new classroom building. The manager expressed pride in the fact that the Teo Chew Association is the only single association to sponsor a school, and is the only association

conducting its meetings in Chinese as the primary language. (Teo Chew Association Manager, 2011)

As the Association has no initial or annual fee for membership, it raises funds for its charity and other activities in a way typical of the other associations in Hat Yai, mostly by receiving donations during cultural ceremonies such as weddings and funerals of members. Some of this income comes from rental of an Association-owned property for those cultural events, as well as from individual donations of the 65 committee members, who are often selected for their expected financial means and generosity. It is interesting to note that the Association also organizes an annual commemoration of the People's Republic of China national day.

Hokkien people and the associated Songkhla Hokkien Association share a long and prominent history in Songkhla Province. From 1775 to 1902, a single ethnic Chinese Hokkien family ruled as Governors for 126 years, which attracted other Hokkien-speaking people. Years later, many Hokkiens emigrated to Hat Yai during WWII as refugees, by boat from Mainland China via Malaysia. The language group has had a heavy involvement in the rubber industry and local politics as well. As of October 2011, the Association registered 506 members, and were in contact with about 300 by mail. Membership qualification is quite simple, and not even technically limited to Hokkien-speaking or related people. Members must be 20 years old, and willing to accept the association rules. They can pay a registration fee of 500 baht (about 17 USD), and an annual fee; or, one can pay a lifetime fee of 2,000 baht (approximately 67 USD). One must be a member for at least a year before the family is eligible for education scholarships that are a mainstay of the benefits of joining. As the fees are quite low, most funding comes through donations, many of which come during special occasions, such as weddings or funerals. The Association is physically located in a rather out-of-the-way place; even though it is in the centrally-located building that houses the Lee Garden Plaza hotel and shopping center, the entrance is via a humble-looking back door off of a small alley, and then by a small service-type

elevator to the meeting hall. The Hokkien Association meets in a large gathering and dinner every 2 years for elections. The manager noted that gatherings are usually conducted in Thai language, and if Chinese is spoken, it will normally be Mandarin and not Hokkien. (Southern Thailand Hokkien Association Manager, 2011)

The Hat Yai Kwong Siew Association has around 300 members. At the time of its official registration in 1974, it joined with the Teo Chew, Hainan, Hokkien and Hakka associations to administrate the Hat Yai Chung Hua Charity Foundation, which provides housing and care to the elderly in a facility adjacent to the Kwong Siew building. They also joined with the other four associations and the Srinakon Alumni Association to form the School Supervisory Association (校董會), together administrating the Srinakon School. It is also one of the 22 units (單位) of the Hat Yai United Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations (合艾橋團聯合會). (Kwong Siew Association, 2011)

The Hainan Association of South Thailand is also one of the 22 members of that Federation, and as of 2011 was the vice-chair.. The smallest of the main five regional associations, it has only a little over 200 members. As with the other associations, elections for each session of governing committee are held every two years; in the sessions since the foundation, there have been 7 leaders, suggesting a long-term continuity of leadership.

The Pun Sun Khak Association of Thailand is a unique regional association of a Hakka (客家人) people group founded in 1975 whose ancestors hail from a small area in Canton, Pun Sun (半山). Its impressive building situated directly across from the Srinakon Chinese School speaks to the influence of Hakka people in the history of Hat Yai. The Association registry lists 225 members, and according to the manager of Pun Sun Khak Association of Thailand for the past 10 years, 700 to 800 people will participate in the bi-annual banquet held during the Association committee election. As for the committee itself, approximately 50 to 60 will actively participate in various meetings. Activities of the Association include teaching Chinese to children of members, organizing karaoke singing

events for older people, and giving out scholarships, based on performance of children of members. As a member of the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations, it supports community cultural activities, including holding formal ceremonies for People's Republic of China national day, and the Thai-calendar mother's and father's day. (Pun Sun Khak Association Manager, 2013)

The Thong Sia Sieng Teung foundation operates and coordinates activities throughout all 14 southern Thai provinces. The temple associated with foundation honors a god with origins from the Teo Chew (潮州) region of China, which connects it with temples throughout Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. The charity's daily activities are the operation of an emergency response system. The Foundation has over 2,200 members, with the organization divided into the following departments:

- Administration Department
- Music and Entertainment Department
- Ceremonies Department
- Emergency Services Department
- Public Hazard Department
- Funeral Parlor Department

Although the administration, such as the governing committee, was formerly elected, the inconvenience of getting such a large group to vote evidently made the current system of "appointment" of members more favorable. With such a large organization and broad mission, a very large amount of donations are solicited and received, going to the assistance of up to 10,000 aid recipients. According to the Foundation staff, about 60% of donations to Sieng Teung come from outside the country, particularly Malaysia and Singapore. This networking with Malaysian and Singaporean ethnic Chinese results partly from two factors: Malaysian law that disfavors Chinese making merit in Malaysia, and the attraction of Thai temples as especially "lucky" and helpful for bestowing good

fortune. In fact, ceremonies exorcising bad luck are central features of temple activities. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011)

One of the oldest cultural landmarks in Hat Yai is the Chung Hua Charity Home, founded by city pioneer Jia Ki Si. This institution not only provides for elderly Thai-Chinese as a nursing home, its associated *sala* structure preserves traditional funeral rites of Chinese. Its structure is a small committee of six people nominated by the 5 major language organizations. The leadership revolves among those associations every 2 years. (Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation Manager, 2011)

The Teik Kha Hui is an international religious organization (known by the moniker “The 8th World Moral Divine Pen Meeting”), and Chee Nam Hok is the local Hat Yai chapter. The Chee Nam Kok branch of Teik Kha Hui was founded in 1971. In that year, “venerated masters” from Kedah, Malaysia’s Alor Setar society, known as Persatuan Pendidikan Akhlak Chee Yang Kor (吉打德教会濟陽閣) and Kedah’s Kangar society, Persatuan Pendidikan Akhlak Che Yang Khor (坡州德教会紫陽閣) came to establish the Hat Yai branch. These two societies have sent holy supplies monthly since the Hat Yai branch’s establishment, and the three societies have maintained a continuously close connection. The society added a building in 1980, at which a meeting of Teik Kha societies from Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand held a multinational conference. In 1989 the association invited Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong to join Thailand in a combined meeting, and these four countries agreed to form a world Teik Kha united association, with a large worldwide meeting, known as “World Divine Pen Meeting” (環球德教大會鸞) to be held every three years. In 1994, the society established a Teik Kha Ritual Cultural Center (德教禮樂文化中心) for the propagation of its religious teachings. (Chee Nam Kok Chapter, 2010; Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok Foundation President, 2013)

3.4 Conclusion

This account of Hat Yai’s development, intertwined with association histories and activities, illustrate several points about the Chinese community in Hat Yai.

- **The risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit of ethnic Chinese and its role in community development**

Pioneers such as Jia Ki Si and See Kim Yong persistently pursued economic development, diversifying activities and taking opportunities wherever they presented themselves. Ethnic Chinese business people took advantage of Hat Yai's strategic transportation connections to develop the area as a center for trade, including in products such as tin, rubber, and seafood products. They also developed Hat Yai as a tourist and entertainment center, attracting visitors from both Thailand and neighboring countries to the south.

- **The sometimes cooperative, sometimes antagonistic relationship between Thai government forces and the Chinese community, which would affect Thai-Chinese attitudes toward government**

This sometimes contentious relationship with government was manifested in struggles to officially register the organizations and conduct activities. Aggressive nationalistic anti-Chinese actions by the Thai government at various phases in modern Thai history has instilled a large measure of caution in the older generations of the community, and undoubtedly put on pressure for displays of loyalty and assimilation. Chinese organizations reacted to government pressure by promoting non-threatening social activities and charitable causes. To illustrate their loyalty and integration with the system, the organizations would often pull in prestigious royal or government officials (non-Chinese) to lend prestige to their activities.

- **The resiliency and collective power provided by ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations, illustrated particularly in cooperative efforts to maintain**

Chinese education and encourage economic growth

The struggles to maintain a Chinese language school in the community has been a key rallying point that has brought cooperative efforts from all the language

groups. As will be seen in the following chapter, the Srinakon school is an important cultural center of the community, providing a focus for collective action. At the same time, organizational support for group activities has promoted cohesion within the community, through sports, music, dance or cultural activities. These organizations help instill the pride that is maintained by the community in their origin and ethnicity, even in symbolic ways. A key concern of every association has been having proper facilities, which can become a symbol of their community, its unity and wealth, and prominent presence in the society. As will be discussed in chapter five, the trade and professional organizations founded by ethnic Chinese also illustrate the power and influence provided by collective action.

- **The important networking connections of Hat Yai with other Overseas Chinese communities, particularly to the south in Malaysia and Singapore**

From investment in tin and rubber, to the ongoing influx of ethnic Chinese tourists, the close economic relationship with Malaysia and other ethnic Chinese communities is apparent. The Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, followed by the development of a Seamless Songkhla Penang Medan corridor, orient the Hat Yai community to a southern economic axis which is characterized by strong ethnic Chinese involvement. Social relationships with these groups are also illustrated in the sports and activity exchanges. The historical context recounted above helps put into perspective the important role the Chinese community has played in the formation and development of Hat Yai. Before moving on to an analysis of the social, economic and political dimensions of the Thai-Chinese community, the following section introduces the key organizations, which serve as a window into the community. As the first formally-established organizations, the regional, dialect associations, religious and charity organizations are prominent in Hat Yai. More detailed discussion of the Chinese language schools will follow in the chapter on the social dimensions and characteristics of the Hat Yai community, with the

subsequent chapter on economic dimensions covering the professional and trade organizations.

This chapter has illustrated how the general cultural differences and similarities between the indigenous ethnic Thai population and the Chinese culture carried into Thailand by ethnic Chinese immigrants and their descendants, as discussed in chapter two, have played out in Hat Yai's history. The characteristics of low uncertainty avoidance, high competitiveness, pragmatic long-term orientation, organization formation and southern Chinese merchant values have contributed to Thai-Chinese entrepreneurial leadership in a vibrant economy. The imprint of previous Thai government treatment of ethnic Chinese as suspicious outsiders has left its own negative impression on the community, with the formation and sustainment of organizations playing a key role in giving the community strength in numbers to deal with challenges. At the same time, economic development has often been accomplished by Thai-Chinese merchants with close cooperation of government resources. The following chapters will further break down the analysis of the distinguishing characteristics of the community by exploring the social, economic, and political dimensions and characteristics of these Thai-Chinese organizations and the local community.

Chapter IV

Social Dimensions and Characteristics of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

4.1 Introduction

The previous discussion comparing Chinese and Thai culture used data from surveys on national culture and expert academic assessments to describe the context of Chinese culture from which Chinese immigrants into Thailand, and their descendants, came. The Chinese cultural heritage shares many similarities, but also some key differences from the indigenous Thai culture. Similarities include a collectivist culture that places the interests of the group above those of the individual, and a high tolerance for inequality in power, or high power distance. The key differences include Chinese culture's higher tolerance for uncertainty, higher emphasis on competitiveness, and a more pragmatic orientation. Other distinctive characteristics of Chinese culture come from a group's geographic origins, such as the southern coastal regions of Mainland China. Occupational roles, particularly commerce, also have an influence on Chinese culture. Finally, Chinese-influenced culture demonstrates a proclivity toward organizing a community in various types of regional, dialect, religious and trade associations. Having established this basis of Chinese cultural characteristics, we may examine to what extent those cultural influences remain within Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese community. The succeeding three chapters rely on local data collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews and questionnaires to describe and analyze the various dimensions and characteristics—social, economic, and political—of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, in order to understand its overall characteristics.

The term "social," having to do with relationships in society, may have a broad range of meanings, some of which may overlap with meanings that describe economic or political relationships. The term "social," as derived from Latin roots meaning "allied" and "friend," (The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language) points to the more informal nature of the term in describing

relationships between people, as opposed to more structured and institutional concepts of “economic” or “political”. Thus, I define “social dimensions and characteristics” as those characteristic expectations and norms that influence a group’s view of the world, thought processes, and behavior in their customs, religious beliefs, family values, and education.

4.2 Role and function of Chinese customs and festivals in understanding the social characteristics of Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

The strength of Chinese cultural characteristics existing in the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai can be in large part measured by the adherence to important Chinese rituals throughout the year. There is a rich tradition of special days and festivals in the Chinese calendar; although some events differ in importance depending on one's region of origin, for the ethnic Chinese in Hat Yai, the year is punctuated by four main festivals that remain well preserved by all language groups. The motivations for such preservation are both social and economic. The four festivals are, in chronological order, Chinese New Year, *Cheng Meng* (or Tomb Sweeping Festival), *Sat Jin* (or Ghost Month), and the Vegetarian Festival. With perhaps the exception of *Sat Jin*, Hat Yai Thai-Chinese organizations play a significant role in maintaining traditions and promoting the preservation of Chinese culture.

4.2.1 Chinese New Year in Hat Yai

The Chinese Lunar New Year celebration (Chinese 春节 *Chunjie*, Thai ตรุษจีน *Trut Chin*) in Hat Yai provides the most compelling evidence of the strong role of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in maintaining a sense of Thai-Chinese community. It also demonstrates the evolving changes in the relationship between ethnic Chinese and the Thai government, as the local government has come to promote the area’s Chinese heritage. The reason for the change is likely related to economics, as the festival plays a key role in tourism

promotion. On the other hand, the commercialization of the festival and some of the more popular activities, such as Thai pop star concerts, illustrate the influx of other influences and the challenge presented to the organizations in keeping Chinese cultural characteristics.

- ***Role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations***

There is perhaps no Chinese New Year celebration in Thailand that is longer and more full of activity than that in Hat Yai. Planning and producing the five-day festival at Srinakon is a major activity of the community Thai-Chinese organizations. According to the Thai Language Secretary of the Srinakon Foundation administration committee, the school foundation brings the various Thai-Chinese organizations together with government organizations to sponsor the New Year's activities. The Thai-Chinese organizations work cooperatively under the umbrella of the 22-member Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations (ชมรมสมาคมและมูลนิธิ หาดใหญ่), although the New Year festival at the school is primarily administered by the school's registered foundation. During the planning for the 2012 festival, the Srinakon Foundation committee members each donated 20,000 to 30,000 baht, while the local government contributed about 300,000 baht. The provincial government contributed as well. According to a public speech by Hat Yai mayor Dr. Prai Pattano (ดร. ไพโร พัฒโน), Hat Yai Municipality provided a total of 850,000 baht in 2012 given to support the commercial district and the school activities. (Pattano, 2012) Much of the cost was to bring in outside entertainment. The two popular Thai singers from Bangkok cost over 120,000 baht, while the Chinese acrobat troupe from Gansu cost about 200,000 baht. Total cost for the festival was planned to be about 1 million baht. (Srinakon School Alumni Association Thai Secretary, 2011) The stage backdrop at Srinakon, set with the seals of the following civic and government organizations, demonstrate the cooperative nature of the event: Songkhla Province, Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations, Provincial Administration Organization, Hat Yai Municipality,

Tourist Authority of Thailand, Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla, the PRC-sponsored Confucius Institute of Srinakon, and Srinakon Foundation School. The ubiquitous presence of sponsoring business logos evidence the additional commercial resources that help fund the event.

- ***Ethnic Chinese community and government relations***

The participation of organization and government officials in various activities, and their public speeches, gives further evidence of the dynamic civic-government relationship in Hat Yai. New Year's Day activities (the third day of the five-day Srinakon Festival) began with a ceremony at a specially created religious place in the commercial center of Hat Yai. Interspersed with dancing performances with a mix of modern and Chinese styles, officials lit incense and performed rituals of respect at this "invented" cultural site, and then led a parade of dignitaries and colorfully-dressed employees representing local business groups, walking from the commercial district of downtown to Srinakon School.

The first order of events at the school was a solemn and lengthy ceremony to pay respect to the king, led by the Songkhla Governor, Mr. Kritsada Bunrat. The emphasis given to such a grand public display of loyalty to state and crown serves an important role in establishing the Chinese community's loyalty. Following this ritual, the provincial governor and vice-governor, the mayor, an official from the Provincial Administration Organization, the Chinese consular stationed in Songkhla, the president of the Songkhla Tourists Business Association, and the presidents and officials of the twenty-two organizations in the Hat Yai Federation of Associations, in a conspicuous display of community unity, all filled the stage for a grand and glorious opening. Each of the speakers in the ceremony gave their own version of the significance of the festival.

Mayor Prai Pattano announced a lofty goal for the community--to make Hat Yai a cultural and economic center of the southern region of Thailand. "Hat Yai Chinese New Year 2012 this year is on a grand scale, second to no other provinces... The objective of the activities are to preserve, maintain, and pass on traditions of Thai-Chinese, to build the image of confidence for the tourists, in

order to make Hat Yai the "Chinatown" of the Southern Region." (Pattano, 2012) The vice director of the Provincial Administration Organization recognized the financial and security contributions made cooperatively by government and civic organizations, and emphasized the positive effect on tourism and consumer confidence in Hat Yai that the festival provided. Likewise, Mr. Surapol Kamparanonwat (สุรพล กำปาลานนท์วัฒน์) President, Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla, recognized the government-civil organization cooperation in bringing the tourist attractions such as the Gansu acrobatic troupe and the lion and dragon performers from Nakhon Sawan. "No matter if it's a confederation, an association, a club, or foundation, we think together that we must fight to make our tourism stable and continuously develop and grow." (Kamparanonwat, 2012) The Songkhla governor's remarks were particularly noteworthy in promoting the value of celebrating Chinese cultural heritage:

The year of the Golden Dragon is a year of great riches, prosperity, and smooth sailing. My commendation to the managing committee that saw the utility and worth of maintaining a beautiful culture, and of promoting happiness in the Chinese New Year festival. Often, culture is an important thing which expresses national identity, and Chinese (*chao jin*) are a people that securely hold fast to culture, even if they go base themselves in another country—to the point that there is a saying that "The sun has never set in the land of China." This illustrates that Chinese endlessly persist and maintain good and beautiful customs and traditions. Even if Chinese brothers and sisters go to a small *tambol*, they are still able to accept and assist the local culture by coming in and helping, by coming in to be an enhancement, by supporting the combining and harmonizing between the local culture and Chinese culture. This is a distinguishing characteristic of Chinese, that they come live in any country, and are able maintain their own cultural identity. As for Thailand, ethnic Thai-Chinese brothers and sisters have come to live together for a long time, making us to be a nation in

which Thai-Chinese are more numerous than other nationalities. And at the same time, if we turn and look back at Mainland China, it's something welcome, that some regions, some states, in the southern region of China, still use Thai language and Thai culture. That illustrates for us the relationship and friendship between Thai and Chinese brothers and sisters, who have shared both related blood and history for a very long time. This is a matter of pride for both of our countries, and both of our ethnicities. Today's festival was given birth because of cooperation, shared strength, and shared hearts of the brothers and sisters of Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, including both private and government organizations which cooperated together to produce a colorful Chinese New Year in *Amphoe* Hat Yai. Today the colorful hustle and bustle is an economic and tourist attraction for Thai and foreigners who come to visit Hat Yai, to have fun and happiness for this New Year. (Kritsada Bunrat, 2012)

The governor's speech is remarkable in that it promotes a diverse view of Thai society, in which the Chinese contribution is extolled as a positive addition. Such a speech would not likely have been made twenty or thirty years ago by a government official in Thailand. The characteristic of the Chinese, in which culture and traditions are preserved through time and across borders, is lauded as being helpful to local communities. The Governor also refers to areas in southern Yunan Province, such as XiShuangBangNa, in which a Chinese minority group speaks a dialect similar to the Thai language, to make an ethnic and linguistic connection between Thai and Chinese people. Publicly emphasizing this relationship highlights the connection, particularly in an economic aspect, at the local Hat Yai level between the community and Mainland China. In this as well as other speeches at Chinese cultural ceremonies, the Governor sometimes referred to the Thai-Chinese in the province as "*chao jin*," which translates as "Chinese;" though the use of this word may seem minor, it implicitly recognizes the Thai-Chinese as a group in Thai society distinct from "Thai." The Governor

also acknowledges the important role of the civic organizations, in cooperation with government organizations, developing and sustaining the tourist economy of Hat Yai.

- ***Mix of religious and commercial aspects***

The target audience of New Year activities is both the internal Thai-Chinese community, as well as foreign tourists—particularly neighboring ethnic Chinese Malaysians. The poster images produced by the Hat Yai Municipality and by the conglomerate of civic and government organizations involved in organizing the New Year's celebrations are cultural symbols that reflect the community strength, blending of cultures, and economic aspects of Chinese culture as it manifests in the event. The cartoonish nature of the city poster illustrates how Chinese symbols can be somewhat of a caricature of Chinese civilization and culture, that may not always reflect an historically accurate picture of Chinese heritage. The modern-looking figure in the poster on the left could easily be a city leader or local political figure, dressed in a red jacket and grasping a gold bar, symbolizing prosperity and the commercial importance of the celebration. The poster on the right, featuring mostly Thai language, targets more of a Thai audience, highlighting the non-Chinese, Thai pop stars scheduled to perform at Srinakon School. The Thai-Chinese sponsoring organizations use a blend of Chinese and non-Chinese attractive forces to increase interest toward the important cultural ritual of Chinese New Year.



Left: Hat Yai Municipality posters for Chinese New Year Festival hung throughout downtown Hat Yai. **Below:** Another poster used for marketing the festival, on billboards, Internet, etc. The main attractions advertised are the troupe from Gansu, PRC, and the Thai pop stars pictured. The seals represent both civic and government organizations.



The physical setting of the celebration also provides cultural symbols that help to capture the significance of the festival, as well as illustrate the mix of religious and commercial significance of the event. New Year activities occur at all of the Chinese temples, ancestral halls and vegetarian houses (rongjie โรงเจ), but the center of activities are at Srinakon School and Siang Teung. Srinakon School hosts a five-day extravaganza of Chinese and Thai traditional and popular culture, while Siang Teung's ten-day schedule of activities centers on religious ceremonies. Additionally, the commercial district on Saneha Nusorn Road holds activities targeted toward tourists and consumers. These physical locations are important social and economic centers of attraction for the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community—they represent the sustainment and passing on of culture via education, religion, and commerce. At both the Srinakon and Siang Teung locations, street markets are established and roads are closed to vehicular traffic for several days. The street markets provide a carnival-type atmosphere with Thai and Chinese food stands, hawkers of local goods and any

other assortment of merchandise, from toys to jewelry to clothes, furniture and vehicles. At Srinakon, food booths and promotional stalls occupy the school grounds, and the market sprawls along the streets in front of the main gate.



Location of Hat Yai Centers of New Year Festival Activity

The street market around Siang Teung is even larger, occupying the two roads that flank the south and east of the Foundation for several blocks. Siang Teung provides two stages within the Foundation grounds--one for traditional Thai performances known as *li kae* ลิเก, and another for song and dance performances mostly of area school children. Just outside the Foundation, to the east and nearly in line with the Chinese temple, *San Jao Tai Hong Jo Seu* (named after the central god of the temple), was another stage for the performance of traditional Chinese opera, in a Southern Chinese style, by a troupe from Bangkok. As the Assistant Head Public Hazard, Siang Teung Foundation, explained, the entertainment is as much for the gods as it is for the people. Hence, the stages are placed to be within viewing distance of the god images situated in the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* and Three Buddhist Treasures Temples. (Siang Teung Foundation Assistant Head Public Hazard, 2012) The numerous attendees at all of these locations included much more than local Thai-Chinese; it was a festival for the entire community of Thais and a significant tourist attraction, particularly for Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese who use their extended Chinese New Year vacation to travel to Hat Yai.

Activities continue for approximately twelve days, starting with stage performances at Srinakon two days before the New Year, proceeding through popular talent shows and big name Thai pop concerts, a parade of temple gods on the eighth day after the New Year, a good luck ceremony for people born in certain years on the ninth day after, and final religious events on the tenth day after the New Year. The language and lineage associations will also hold a special annual dinner within about two weeks of the New Year. The following is a sample schedule of activities from the 2012 New Year celebration:

Hat Yai Chinese New Year Schedule of Events		
Day	Srinakon	Siang Teung
New Year - 2	Stage Shows	
New Year - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stage Shows ▪ Children's Talent/Beauty Contest 	
New Year Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Ceremony ▪ Stage Shows ▪ Thai Pop Star Music Concert ▪ Beijing Lion Dance and Gold & Silver Dragon Performance 	Blessing and Stage Shows
New Year + 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stage Shows ▪ PRC Acrobat Troupe Performance ▪ Miss Hat Yai Chinese New Year Contest 	Stage Shows
New Year + 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stage Shows ▪ Thai Pop Star Music Concert 	Stage Shows
New Year + 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious Ceremonies Offering Food to Bodhisattvas ▪ Stage Shows ▪ Ceremony of Raising the <i>Bucha Fa Din</i> Pole
New Year + 4		Stage Shows
New Year + 5		Lion Dance Show
New Year + 6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Ceremony ▪ <i>Lo Go</i> Performance (Chinese Music) ▪ Beijing Lion Dance and Gold & Silver Dragon Performance ▪ Fireworks
New Year + 7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious Ceremony and Parade of Gods in Hat Yai ▪ Fire Walking Ceremony
New Year + 8		<i>Sado Phra Khro</i> Ceremony
New Year + 9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beijing Lion Dance and Gold & Silver Dragon Performance ▪ Holy Offerings to the Bodhisattvas and Holy Beings

- *Blending of cultures*

The entertainment provided during Srinakon's programming belies both the continued influence of Chinese culture as well as the influence of Thai, and even western, culture. The first day's entertainment included a local Thai pop band that headed the program, followed by student groups performing Chinese dance, Thai dancing to traditional music as well as Thai country music, and even modern break dancing. The program also had a bit of a "Chinese karaoke" atmosphere, as numerous amateur local Thai-Chinese, as well as Malaysian Chinese, took the stage to sing traditional and semi-modern Chinese songs. The second day, or New Year's Eve, was focused on young local area school children, male and female ages approximately six to twelve, competing for "Chinakids 2012." Contestants included not only children from the three Chinese schools in Hat Yai, but several other schools as well. This talent and dress-up image contest included wearing elaborate Chinese-looking costumes with towering wigs, demonstrating ability to speak some Chinese, and performing traditional Chinese dance and song. Chinese language was used by some of the children in their self-introduction, and in giving a rehearsed blessing for the New Year. The main language used by the children and announcers, however, was Thai, and the entertainment was not exclusively "Chinese" as it included Thai and modern dance.

New Year's Day entertainment included a fireworks show, various children's dance presentations, and the performance of the Nakhon Sawan lion and dragon troupe from central Thailand. The evening concluded with a singing performance of pop Thai songs by a model and actress of Thai-Norwegian descent, Urassaya Sperbund, who had no obvious connection with Thai-Chinese ethnic heritage or culture. Several thousands of mostly young teenagers filled the school grounds for that performance.

The fourth and fifth days of the Srinakon Festival integrated even more Thai cultural programming with the Chinese cultural program. The highlights of day four were the Gansu acrobatic and dance troupe performance, along with the

Miss Hat Yai Chinese New Year 2012 contest. The rewards for the top five contestants totaled 47,000 baht, mostly contributed by the Chinese language associations. The Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations and Teo Chew Association president, as well as the Federation's Vice President and Hakka Association president, and other association officials shared the stage with the beauties to give out these awards. The seating appeared completely full, with more than 2,000 people in attendance. The main attraction for the final night was a popular model and actor of Thai-Austrian descent, Nadech Kugimiya, who, like the actress of two days previous, had no obvious connection to Thai-Chinese either by ethnicity or by any roles played. Nadech's performance packed the school grounds with several thousands of fans.

- ***Emphasis on tradition at Siang Teung***

The Siang Teung activities overlapped the programming at Srinakon, as stage performances began on New Year's Day. The events did not seem to compete with Srinakon's program, but rather complemented it. Many of the school children groups of dancers and singers performed on stage at both locations. More importantly, as the site of a major communal temple and the gathering place for a collection of Chinese god images from local Chinese temples, the emphasis at Siang Teung was of a more religious nature.

Over the New Year period, Siang Teung and the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple are immersed in a sea of worshippers, young and old, female and male, individually and in families, flowing in a constant stream from the local community and outskirts, as well as from Malaysia and other sources of Chinese or Thai. The *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple at Siang Teung is considered particularly lucky and prosperous by many, and people come to ensure blessings upon their households and businesses for the coming year. Volunteers at the temple help to step the worshippers through the proper rituals, which includes lighting candles and incense, placing offerings at certain places, and saying the proper prayers. In the spirit of the origins of Siang Teung, musicians will often play traditional

southern Chinese instruments and songs in the temple, and at the various religious ceremonies.

Although there are several big attraction ceremonies and shows, the central event associated with Siang Teung is the parade of Chinese god images, which occurs on the seventh day after New Year's Day. The precursor to this event is the arrival of these images from local and regional Chinese temples and *wats*, around three days after New Year's Day. The images arrive randomly throughout the day, accompanied by the lighting of firecrackers and banging of drums and cymbals. According to a Siang Teung official, the Foundation invites over 30 temples to bring their temple gods for the festival every year. Invitations go out to communities in the southern border provinces of Yala and Pattani, as well, as the situation of unrest in those areas makes local celebrations more difficult. Another Siang Teung volunteer noted that most of the gods come in from smaller temples, not large ones. Each entourage includes the temple's own *luk sit*, or disciples. (Volunteer at Siang Teung Foundation, 2012)

One important New Year's tradition upheld by the Siang Teung Foundation is the raising of the *Bucha Fa Din* pole. This is a bamboo pole adorned with a lantern, spiritual papers, and gold foil applied by worshippers. During the third day after the New Year, a spiritual medium performs a ceremony on the tree with a spiritual writing instrument called a *mai ki* ไม้คี. In the evening, the Siang Teung volunteers hold a lively pole raising ceremony, accompanied by ample firecrackers, drumming and lion dancers, securing the pole vertically in front of the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple. The pole is believed to be a way to communicate between the heavens and earth, and the raising ceremony is symbolic of opening religious ceremonies and inviting the heavenly gods to join.

According to a temple volunteer, the medium at Siang Teung enjoys a widespread reputation and is in much demand to perform ceremonies for good luck, driving out bad spirits, finding bodies that have been buried without proper ceremony, or communicating with the gods. This last service offered by a medium is a communication ceremony called a *khui ki* คุยคี, and can be performed

throughout the New Year activities. Worshippers may ask the medium for answers to questions, like the cause of bad luck, or for advice on family or even business matters. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011; Siang Teung Foundation Assistant Head Public Hazard, 2012) The medium has at least one or two accomplices, one of whom will hold the second handle of the two-handled *mai ki* ไม้ก๊ี้. Another person will help interpret the motions of the *mai ki*, which are made on a table may be covered with sand, water, or simply left clean. Another assistant may help write the answers to questions, which come in Chinese characters, sometimes cryptically, and must be deciphered for meaning. The medium may also perform a ceremony to give a blessing to or drive out bad spirits out of worshippers.

The Siang Teung “opening ceremony” occurs six days after the New Year, and is part of the build up to the parade of god images. The differences between the Srinakon-centered festival and the more religious-centered Siang Teung activities can be seen in the focus of entertainment provided by the visiting lion and dragon troupe from Nakhon Sawan, along with a large costumed troupe from Yala. These performances were given in front of the god images that had been gathered in front of the “Three Buddhist Treasures” Temple, surrounded by a sizeable crowd of spectators. The opening ceremony included a band, composed of many younger generation members, playing traditional Chinese instruments. Part of the festive atmosphere included a cartoonish dressed up character in the form of a sort of “Confucius” character, who worked the crowd posing for pictures, but also soliciting donations for the charity.

The seventh day after the new year highlighted the Siang Teung schedule of events. Starting from approximately four a.m., the volunteers who carry the litters for the temple gods gathered in the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple, which quickly became a chaotic scene of clanging cymbals, banging drums, and groups carrying the litters frantically in circles around the tightly-packed temple, dipping and jumping and swerving for the gods' enjoyment. Carrying the litter for the god is an honor, and volunteers continually switched places to give everyone a chance

to participate, culminating in a ceremonial trip around the temple with the honored guests, the Siang Teung committee president and the regional military commander, carrying the litter. At approximately 5:30 am, these dignitaries performed a religious ritual in front of the closed temple doors, guided through the various steps by the previously mentioned medium and an assistant Siang Teung volunteer worker.

As the temple doors opened, the dignitaries led the parade of gods into a cacophonous melee of overhead strings of firecrackers, drums, cymbals and wild rides by exuberant litter-carriers dancing in the smoke-filled court. The volunteers then proceeded to carry the gods to the *li ke* stage and the Three Buddhist Treasures temple for the benefit of the gods, after which they began a day-long procession through the entire downtown area, where hundreds of shopkeepers had established tables for offerings and welcomed the gods into their shops and homes to receive blessings and luck, in exchange for donations to the litter-carrying teams. A community New Year's parade follows the parade of litter-borne gods through Hat Yai. The 2012 parade participants included local temple pickup trucks loaded with worshippers and god images from the Chinese pantheon of gods, as well as Brahmin-origin gods; walking troupes dressed in an imagined Chinese-style dress and make-up; a local marching band; and the guest performance troupes from Yala and Nakhon Sawan.

The parade of gods ended in the evening with a well-attended fire-walking ceremony in the court in front of the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple. Devotees of the various gods, who had been spiritually purifying themselves, lined up to cross the glowing coals in front of the crowd. The crowd was carefully managed by Siang Teung volunteers, who prepared the scene, and controlled the timing of the crossings with red and green flags. Some crossed in teams, carrying a god image on its litter across the coals, while others walked or ran across individually, many carrying sacred objects with them. Those that crossed steadily and slowly were lauded by cheers or applause from the crowd for this sign of their devotion, while others ran quite quickly across. The participants were of all ages, including

some children approximately twelve years old. Although in the morning ceremony inside the temple, some women had carried the litters, no females participated in the fire walking. Some of the participants were not local Hat Yai community, and included Chinese devotees from Malaysia.

The penultimate day of the Siang Teung festival is an important ceremony, called *Sado Phra Khro* สะเดาะพระเคราะห์ , particularly for those born in certain years that would make the coming year one of possible dangers and bad luck. According to a foundation volunteer, depending in which of the 12 Chinese horoscope years one is born, some years will be lucky, and some unlucky. For the unlucky years, individuals will make a special offering to help ward off the bad luck. Siang Teung prepares special baskets of goods for these worshippers, with the necessary items to bring good luck, including oranges, rice, coins, candles, and a *pha yan* prayer cloth. For the ceremony, Siang Teung hands out pamphlets with Chinese characters and Thai pronunciation of the characters (in the Teo Chew pronunciation) written alongside, to be used in a communal chant section of the ceremony. The Siang Teung loudspeaker system broadcasts announcements about the significance of the ceremony as the crowd of several hundreds gathers in the court. The court is prepared with white cloth strips that mark a path for the participants to walk behind a procession of nine Chinese Taoist priests. The Foundation's youth band plays for the ceremony, as well as a group of older generation musicians with traditional stringed instruments. The Taoist priests start the ceremony performing certain rituals at an altar arranged with pictures of the Chinese gods, leading chants and then leading the participants as they hold a candle and incense in a path through the Siang Teung area in front of the Three Buddhist Treasures Temple. Siang Teung activities close on the eighth day after the New Year with final performances and another religious ceremony at the *Tai Hong Jo Seu* Temple, ending the twelve-day flurry of Thai-Chinese organization-sponsored New Year activities for the community.

- ***Family participation in Chinese New Year***

The visible participation of Hat Yai families in the New Year's traditions are is notable evidence of the residual strength of Chinese culture throughout the community. The Thai-Chinese families in Hat Yai begin the New Year celebration with three traditional days: *wan jai*, *wan wai*, *wan thio*, or “a day to pay, a day to pray, and a day to play.” *Wan jai* is the day before New Year's Eve, when families prepare for the upcoming feast, buying many different kinds of food to prepare for the *wan wai*, or day of paying respect. Multiple interviews revealed, however, that modern life is affecting how the preparations for the New Year are carried out. For example, Ms. A, the wife of a religious artifacts store owner, noted that her parents' generation would spend many hours carefully gathering and preparing the food. Although she still prepares for the special days, she and her friends tend to buy prepared foods for convenience. (Religious Artifacts Store Owner, 2013)

On *wan wai*, the day of prayer or paying respects to the gods and the ancestors, families will get up very early in the morning to perform ceremonies to various gods, often represented in a small altar in the home. They will present various offerings, such as pork, duck, chicken, fish, tea, liquor, paper money or paper gold. Many families will set up a table outside their home or shop with offerings for the heavenly spirits and souls without families. Sometime before noon, usually about 11 a.m., the family performs a worship ceremony for the ancestors. Offerings include things that the ancestors may have liked, including coffee, a full regular meal, and various desserts. The family may also burn paper money, gold, or paper images of other items that might be useful in the afterlife. After this ceremony, the family will come gather together, and eat the food that they offered to the gods and ancestors. Throughout this day, neighbors and family, many from Malaysia, constantly come by to offer their greetings, sometimes bringing by gifts of food, making for a joyful reunion of eating and drinking together, chatting, and playing cards together.

In the evening, some families will make additional offerings to the "wandering souls" without family. Offerings may include *khanom khaeng* and *khanom thian*, which are treats made out of rice flour, taro and sugar. Worshippers will burn paper money and gold, and light firecrackers to drive out evil spirits and bad luck and to bring good luck to the family. Around midnight monks or Taoist priests proceed through areas of the city to give blessings on the homes of those that have made these preparations.

According to numerous conversations with worshippers in Hat Yai *sanjao*, it is important in the Chinese culture to start the New Year correctly, in order to ensure the rest of the year proceeds smoothly. Of primary importance is to pay respect to, give a blessing to, and ask for blessings from one's elders and highly respected people by giving four gold-colored oranges. In homes still keeping traditions, children may receive their return blessing in the form of red envelopes with a money gift inside. In the preparation for New Year, one should have made a "big sweep" of one's house to make a thorough cleaning, sweeping out bad luck; however, on the actual New Year's Day, one should not clean up or do anything that wouldn't be considered good or lucky. The streets of Hat Yai on New Year's Day are filled with people wearing a brand new set of clothes, often bright red, to symbolize a fresh start for the New Year.

4.2.2 Cheng Meng (Tomb Sweeping Festival)

The next major cultural event in the Chinese calendar for Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai is the Cheng Meng (เชงเม้ง, or in Chinese 清明 *Qing Ming*) Festival, also known as the Tomb Sweeping Festival. The celebration of Cheng Meng is family-centered, and does not involve any public ceremonies or entertainment. The adherence to this festival is most significant in demonstrating the continued strength of Chinese cultural practices, particularly the distinguishing characteristics of revering family ancestors. The evolution of practices in honoring the ancestors is also instructive of the effect of economic forces on Chinese tradition. Finally, the festival illustrates the role some of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations play in maintaining Chinese culture.

- ***Strength of Chinese cultural practices***

The timing of Cheng Meng is determined by the Chinese lunar calendar, and usually falls in March or April. This research shows that Chinese traditional practices associated with Cheng Meng are still being carried out by third and fourth generation ethnic Chinese families, but with significant adaptations. The physical center of Cheng Meng for Hat Yai Thai-Chinese is the Ban Phru graveyard, located on the road and rail line south from Hat Yai toward Sa Dao. This large plot of land was donated by Jia Ki Si with the intention of making it the central Chinese burial grounds of the community. Chung Hua Foundation and Siang Teung each manage separate areas of the burial grounds, with Chung Hua having the majority of land. With the help of a fund-raising campaign conducted by senior and younger members of the Thai-Chinese community, Chung Hua has improved the burial grounds over the last several years, to include the construction of concrete roads and a new temple building. According to a Chung Hua volunteer worker at Ban Phru, Siang Teung has also recently made improvements to their section of the graveyard.

(Chung Hua Charity Foundation Official, 2013)



Ban Phru in relation to Hat Yai city center, with the railway junction at top left.

The participation of families in the rituals associated with Cheng Meng has remained fairly steady over recent years, and according to one participant, the days allotted for families to perform ceremonies has actually expanded, mostly to accommodate schedules of a busier and more physically spread out population. (Hired Worker, 2013) Many family members working in Bangkok and elsewhere will try to make the trip back to Hat Yai during this period to pay respects to their ancestors, considered a major requirement of Chinese religious culture. If the Cheng Meng Festival is near the Thai New Year (13 April), more people will participate by simply extending their Thai New Year vacation. Other members, with enough time and wealth to afford it, will return to ancestral homes in China to pay respects at ancient family burial grounds and shrines. For

example, a Hat Yai gold store owner's second-generation family from Hailam, consisting of eleven brothers and sisters, sends one of those children to pay respects in Hailam every year, according to the convenience of individual schedules.(Gold Shop Merchant, 2012) Many families gathering at Ban Phru on Cheng Meng set up shading, chairs, food and other amenities to make the gathering a more pleasant family reunion. Chung Hua hosts a type of memorial ceremony in a recently constructed communal temple.

Chung Hua also manages a grave area for those that passed away without known relatives, and more traditional families will make offerings at this area as well. Some families bring a full complement of offerings, including whole roasted pigs, abundant food, and paper money and paper household objects to burn for the use of the ancestors. However, many interviewees admitted that they and others they know have reduced the amount of food and offerings brought to the gravesides; instead they buy prepared foods, or even simply bring flowers to place at the graves. One participant admitted to paying someone ahead of time to clean the gravesite, before bringing the family together for a reunion. A second generation Teo Chew Chinese and practitioner of Chinese medicine related that in his father's generation, Cheng Meng was extremely important. Families would arise at four or five o'clock in the morning to prepare an abundant array of food offerings, and then go together to have breakfast and clean the ancestral graves. Now, he admits that the offerings and participation is much smaller. Nonetheless, he has two daughters, both of whom learned Chinese as children, who return from their medical school studies in Bangkok for Cheng Meng every year. (Chinese Medicine Shop Owner, 2013)

- ***Economic pressures on tradition***

The main pressure affecting ability and will to maintain Chinese traditions associated with Cheng Meng is economic. As revealed in discussions with numerous community Thai-Chinese, the costs of Chinese burial rites and plots has become prohibitive for many families. Ban Phru has limited space now, so that burial plots can range anywhere from 100,000 to 4,000,000 baht --

equivalent to the cost of a fairly nice home. Other associated costs (in Thai baht) for a Chinese funeral were estimated by one knowledgeable Thai-Chinese as follows:

Digging the grave:	50,000
Grave marker:	100,000
Embalming:	55,000
Ceremony costs:	50,000
Food, Transportation:	50,000

Thus, apart from the price of a plot at Ban Phru, the total cost of a traditional Chinese funeral can be over 300,000 baht. (Construction Contractor, 2013) This was confirmed by several other Thai-Chinese, such as a Mr. Ta, a fourth generation of Teo Chew and Hakka ancestry, via Malaysia, and Hakka association member. His estimate of the minimum price of a Chinese burial started at 100,000 baht, while caskets alone can cost many tens of thousands of baht. He also lamented that space was a premium—his great grandfather is buried in a plot near the front of Ban Phru, whereas the only areas left now are up on the mountainside. (Siang Teung New Year Ceremony Participant, 2013) As a result of these increased costs, many interview subjects indicated that Thai-Chinese burial customs are changing as a matter of practicality. For example, a second generation Thai-Chinese, who volunteers every year at Ban Phru during Cheng Meng, has told her children that she prefers a cremation burial, in a Thai traditional style. (Ban Phru Temple Volunteer, 2013) Interviews with other Thai-Chinese in downtown Hat Yai revealed much the same attitude.

- ***Role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations***

Regional and language associations, along with Chung Hua and Siang Teung foundations, play a role in maintaining Chinese burial traditions in several ways. The associations all include some type of welfare benefit to members to assist with burial costs, taken out of dues collection. The assistance, however, is

minor compared to the costs cited above, amounting to no more than 10,000 baht. The associations may also help the families of members who have passed away to make memorial and funeral service arrangements as well. Aside from caring for the Ban Phru graveyard, the two foundations help coordinate with knowledgeable people who can perform the proper burial ceremonies. One such person is Ms. Latda, who works as a cook at Siang Teung and is a main point of contact for Chinese funeral ceremonies. Her funeral duties include instructing mourners in ceremonial procedures, such as lighting incense for the proper gods, instructing how to put clothes on the corpse, arranging ablutions for the body, determining the appropriate timing for transporting the casket, overseeing procedures for handling the casket, and even advising on what type of clothes the mourners should wear. Ms. Latda is a third generation Thai-Chinese, originally from Ratchaburi, who married a Hat Yai Thai-Chinese. Starting as an emergency response volunteer at Siang Teung, she became interested in Chinese language and traditions, and learned all of the ceremonies performed at Siang Teung from first generation Chinese. She worries that no one is interested in receiving this traditional information that she has to pass on...her daughter-in-law has assisted with some funerals, but is not willing to deal with the corpse. (Siang Teung Volunteer Cook, 2012) The lack of transferred knowledge could be another factor driving changes to traditional practices in the Hat Yai community; nonetheless, reverence for ancestors and adherence to traditions of paying respect is still very strong in the culture.

4.2.3 Sat Jin (สารทจีน, or Ghost Month)

The seventh lunar month in the Chinese calendar, usually July or August by the western calendar, is known as Ghost Month (鬼月 *gui yue*), and the new moon of that month is the occasion for the Ghost Festival (盂蘭節 *Yulan Jie*, or 中元節 *Zhongyuan Jie*). Chinese tradition believes that this is a special time of year when the gates of hell open and allow ghosts to wander the earth. In order to

avoid calamity, one should appease the "hungry ghosts" of souls that have passed way and do not have relatives to make the proper offerings for them in their

spiritual state. The steady participation rates in observing *Sat Jin* indicate the maintenance of Chinese cultural traditions in the community.

Sat Jin does not involve a large community ritual, and has no geographic center that attracts large gatherings; observance of the rituals is more personal, according to one's beliefs. Some area temples do take the opportunity of *Sat Jin*, however, to provide charity for underprivileged people. For example, a private temple downtown, Ratmirungrot Temple วัดรัศมีรุ่งโรจน์, handed out packages of food to scores of supplicants. Evidence of adherence to the *Sat Jin* tradition is quite visible throughout the Hat Yai downtown area, though the participation rate is obviously not as high as the Chinese New Year. Shopkeepers set up a table with offerings, which usually contain certain required *Sat Jin* elements for the offerings, such as rice, sugar, oil, and salt, in addition to different kinds of fruit, meat such as duck or chicken, candles, incense, and golden paper. Nearly every temple location in Hat Yai has one or more shops nearby selling items to offer to the spirits, such as the gold money, or modern versions of cash, including bank notes in the style of Chinese and US currencies. My informal survey of area shopkeepers indicates that consumption of these sacrificial items around *Sat Jin* has remained relatively steady over many years, though some were concerned about flagging interest in the future.

4.2.4 Vegetarian Festival

The final major Thai-Chinese cultural event of the annual cycle is the Vegetarian Festival, known in Thai as เทศกาลกินเจ *Thetsakan Kin Jae*. Much like the New Year celebration, the Vegetarian Festival is a combination of genuine traditional religious devotion and commercial exploitation. Previous to an effort to promote and exploit the tourist potential of the Vegetarian Festival, the rituals were less dramatic and were played out in local temples, usually in the form of gathering together for eating vegetarian meals. Jovan Maud's work, "The Nine Emperor Gods at the Border: Transnational Culture, Alternate Modes of Practice, and the Expansion of the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai," documents the

commercial origins of the public development of this festival in Hat Yai. This research basically confirms the conclusions of Maud, in that the Festival reflects a mobilization of Chinese identity as an economic resource. This mobilization occurs largely through the efforts of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations, which have also managed to co-opt government resources for common economic development. The commercialization of the festival, however, does not discount the religious devotion of festival participants, and the festival represents the lasting influence of Chinese cultural influences in the community.

- *Adherence to Chinese religious tradition.*

The geographic center of public activity for the Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival is a park across from Siang Teung, although Siang Teung is not in charge of the program nor the main supplier of the facilities. A central feature at this location is a collection of temple gods from the local area, displayed in the same manner as in the Three Buddhist Treasures Temple in Siang Teung on Chinese New Year. Smaller-scale events for the disciples or regular attendees of other temples occur in many other places, such as Cheuh Chang Temple วัดที่อฉาง 慈善寺, the Thawonwararam Hat Yai Temple วัดถาวราราม หาดใหญ่, Mahapanya Vidyalai มหาวิทยาลัย, and of course the *Rong Je* (Vegetarian Temples), each having their own schedule of activities. Additionally, exotic performances associated with the Vegetarian Festival, such as walking across a bridge of swords, are staged on various nights in the commercial area between the Central Department Store and Lee Garden Plaza. Most of the activity on the streets around Siang Teung occurs in the evening, during which numerous scenes of religious street theater can be enjoyed by disciples and tourists alike. The activities are flamboyant and dramatic, featuring demonstrations such as whirling dancers, disciples lying on and cutting themselves with broken glass, and young women entering into a kind of possessed trance. Of course, vegetarian food is a central feature of the festival, and many thousands of locals and tourists enjoy the wide variety of vegetarian food stalls made available at the site. The

central event of the Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival is a parade of devotees displaying their religious faith and discipline with self-piercings, cuttings, and possession by spirits.

- ***Commercialization of tradition***

Much like the New Year celebration, the streets adjacent to Siang Teung are blocked to passing traffic to accommodate Vegetarian food booths, vendors of religious and other assorted objects, and stalls devoted to certain gods or temples. Many of these booths, including the religious ones that promote a particular temple or god, have sponsorship logos, such as Coca Cola or Nok Air, adorning their stalls. Not all stalls are so commercialized, nor are all the displays of Chinese-related gods. In particular, several of the displays are of an Indian or Brahmin nature. A stage located in a very large covered dining hall and entertainment center is the center of the organized activities, many of which serve a commercial purpose. Stage entertainment included cooking shows which might promote products or vendors, lucky draws, government and private promotions of healthy eating and living, dancing and music.

- ***Role of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations***

The 2012 festival carried on for ten days in 2012, from 14 to 23 October. The Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla is the lead organizer of this event, while other local Thai-Chinese organizations, such as the dialect associations, provide some support. The Songkhla Foundations and Temples Association (สมาคม มูลนิธิ ศาลเจ้า จังหวัดสงขลา 宋卡府廟堂慈善會) provides some medical assistance during the ceremonies and parade, sterilizing the punctures or cuts. Much like the New Year celebration, it is a community effort of both civic and government organizations. At the 2012 festival, lists of over 120 individual and organizational sponsors were displayed on the stage and elsewhere around the venue. The partial list below of voluntary organization donors to the festival illustrates the multiplicity of civic organizations in Hat Yai.

Hat Yai Voluntary Organization Donors to Vegetarian Festival, 2012	
Hia Chai Retailer's Club	ชมรมค้าปลีก เอเชีย
Hat Yai Running Club	ชมรมวิ่งหาดใหญ่
Women's Group for the Development of Hat Yai Municipality	กลุ่มสตรีอาสาพัฒนาเทศบาลนครหาดใหญ่
Kim Yong Market Retail Merchant Club	ชมรมผู้ค้าปลีกตลาดกิมหยง
Hotelier's Association of Hat Yai and Songkhla	สมาคมโรงแรม หาดใหญ่ สงขลา
Gold Shop Club of Hat Yai	ชมรมร้านทองหาดใหญ่
Santisuk Market Club	ชมรมตลาดสันติสุข
Female Merchant's Group	กลุ่มแม่ค้า
Bowling Club of Songkhla Province	ชมรมกีฬาโบว์ลิ่ง จังหวัดสงขลา
Srinakon School Caretaker and Teachers Club	ชมรมผู้ปกครอง ครู โรงเรียนศรีนคร
Health Masseurs Club	ชมรมผู้ประกอบการนวดเพื่อสุขภาพ
Plaza Fresh Market Club	ชมรมผู้ค้าตลาดสดพลาซ่า
Hat Yai Retailer's Club	ชมรมผู้ค้าปลีกหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Restaurateur's Club	ชมรมผู้ประกอบการร้านอาหารหาดใหญ่

- ***Co-option of government resources***

As in the New Year festival, government officials are made an integral part of the public cultural activities, such as the opening ceremony. In the 2012 Vegetarian Festival, Songkhla Governor Kritsada Bunrat was given the honor to make a speech and pound the Chinese drum to signify the opening. The Governor's speech, as in his New Year's speech, extolled the maintenance of Chinese cultural traditions, also highlighting the benefit to families and society of the healthy lifestyle promoted by the vegetarian diet, and the promotion to tourism and the economy provided by the festival. A serious bombing incident had occurred in the commercial district in the Lee Garden Plaza in the interim between the 2012 Chinese New Year and the Vegetarian Festival, and a significant part of the Governor's speech was announcing security measures,

such as the establishment of three emergency radio stations, aimed at providing an air of assurance to visitors.

4.2.5 Other Chinese festivals

The Chinese calendar includes other special events which some members of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community will celebrate. These include the Lantern Festival, usually shortly after the New Year; the Dragon Boat Festival (in Chinese 端午节 *duanwu jie*, while Thais use several names-- เทศกาลตวนอู่ *thetsakan tuan'u* or พิธีไหว้แม่จ่าง *phithi wai bo'jang*) sometime around May; the Moon Festival in the early Autumn (in Chinese, 中秋节 *zhongqiu jie*, in Thai เทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ *thetsakan wai phrajan*); and the birthdays of the various patron saints of individual temples. Somphong Suphawiriyapraeut, manager at the Teo Chew Association, opined that participation in these other festivals has remained steady over the years, and in fact believed that food prices for "*jang* (粽子)," the leaf-wrapped savory rice treats associated with the Dragon Boat Festival rose during that time of year due to increased demand, and the moon cakes associated with the Moon Festival are also available for sale at commercial venues catering to tourists. (Teo Chew Association Manager, 2011) An official at the Chung Hua Charity Foundation said that his lineage association, the Chi lineage, will get together for a communal meal during the Moon Festival. (Chung Hua Charity Foundation Official, 2013) According to Srinakon teachers, the Chinese schools teach about these other festivals, and may promote some activities for the enjoyment of the children. Nonetheless, many other interviewees expressed a different view, that these weren't as regularly observed as before. The strength of celebration of these festivals in Hat Yai may be partially in response to economic demand. The Municipality of Hat Yai has promoted a Lantern Festival at the Municipal Park, in which brightly crafted lanterns in traditional shapes, such as the Chinese zodiac animals, were displayed...but there was little evidence that local Thai-Chinese participated in this ritual very much. The president of the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla, explained that the federation and city had tried to promote a Moon Festival celebration to promote tourism, but as it occurs during the rainy season, it was deemed logistically too difficult (and hence, not likely to be profitable.) (President of Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand, 2012)

4.2.6 Significance of Chinese festival celebrations in the Hat Yai community

The richness of the traditions kept in these Chinese festivals speak to both the strength of the Chinese organizations and the community that they reflect and support, as well as to the challenges faced in a changing world. Planning a twelve-day schedule of events requires a significant amount of preparation, coordination, and personnel, time and financial resources, all of which were provided by the Thai-Chinese community organizations with the support of government agencies. The cooperation of the language associations, under the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations (ชมรมสมาคมและมูลนิธิภาคใหญ่), as well as the Thai-Chinese populated trade associations, provided the people and resources necessary to carry out the spectacular and attractive cultural exhibitions. The governor's and mayor's office, the Office of Public Administration, and the local office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand all recognize the leadership and contribution to local society provided by the Thai-Chinese organizations and Chinese culture, and provide government resources that help sustain that culture. The involvement of the governor and other government officials in the ceremonies gives them honor and "face" in the community, and lends an air of pomp and importance to the events.

At the same time, the organizations benefit greatly by cooperation with the government. Not only do they receive financial support for events, but the involvement of the security apparatus of the state lends an air of stability and safety in the unstable Southern Thailand region. Cooperating with the government, emphasizing the economic development potential of Chinese cultural activities, has been a main avenue to guarantee the survival of a Chinese community culture within Hat Yai. The community has not been viewed with suspicion, as it had during the conflict with communism in the past, for many years. The Governor's New Year and Vegetarian speeches illustrate, in fact, that the situation is now quite reversed, so that the diversity and link to Mainland China provided by the community is extolled as a positive development.

The Chinese events provide an important opportunity for the Thai-Chinese leaders of the organizations to gain face as well. The high-level positions in these organizations demand much personal expenditure, which the leaders do for the sake of helping society; but the recognition gained at these public events is an important part of the remuneration for the time and money donated. The recognition reverts back to not only individuals on the stage as they present awards to contest winners and performers, but also to the Thai-Chinese organizations, which are promoted as the sponsors of the events repeatedly throughout the program. Such recognition in public of the role of Thai-Chinese organizations, creating a positive cultural experience attractive to the community and to outsiders, bringing economic benefit to the community, enhances their reputation greatly.

At the same time, some of the festival activity appears to be a response to economic demand, such as the invented Chinese altar cultural site in the commercial district, and the promotion of the more exotic, theatrical aspects of the Vegetarian Festival in order to promote tourism. Chinese-style cultural activities held in the commercial district, usually in the area between Central Department Store and the Lee Garden Plaza, cater not to the local Thai-Chinese community, but to tourists and local consumers. An official at Siang Teung revealed that previously, the Vegetarian festival was low-key and held inside the temples. The community has consciously promoted the current, more flamboyant version, as it has been particularly useful for increasing tourists from Malaysia and Singapore, who provide a large donation income for the foundation. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011) Jovan Maud observed in his 2001 research into the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai that “the festival is emerging in the context of a local tourist industry in which Chinese-ness as an identity is mobilized as a resource, and is actively used to facilitate transnational connections, particularly with Chinese from Malaysia and Singapore.” (Maud, 2005) Authors Wongduan Panuwattanakul and Surapong Yimlamai, in their article “Identities of Chinese-Thai People in Hat Yai,” take an even more cynical view of

what they see as the manipulation of cultural traditions and identity for economic benefit. Ignoring the Chinese New Year events at Srinakon, Siang Teung, and other Chinese religious sites, the authors point to the commercialized New Year production on the Saneha Nusorn road, proposing that the Chinese New Year festival in Hat Yai is now done strictly for the benefit of tourism and the economy, with “invented traditions” used for the community’s benefit. The authors go further in proposing that Thai-Chinese situationally invent and select their own identity, as either Thai or Chinese, according to economic benefit. (Panuwattanakul & Yimlamai, 2010) Their analysis is skewed by ignoring community celebrations of the New Year in traditional Chinese temples and in the homes; however, the commercialized nature of traditional Chinese events, and their deliberate use as tourist attractions, is readily apparent, and acknowledged by event organizers in the public pronouncements such as opening ceremonies.

One striking feature of the various festivals in Hat Yai is the participation of the younger generation. The festive atmosphere and warm feeling of family togetherness of these times is likely to make a lasting impression on childhood memories. Parents inculcate their children with the Chinese culture by bringing them to participate in or enjoy watching New Year stage shows at Srinakon and Siang Teung, by taking them to visit and pay respects at family gravesites, and by teaching them to *wai* (worship) the ancestors and Chinese gods at home and at the temple. Feasting and abundant meals shared with family are associated with most of these traditions, which provides a strong association with good and satisfying feelings with Chinese traditions. At the same time, some of the Chinese traditions appear as a stereotype--shallow and without much deep cultural significance. To the children, dressing up in Chinese-like clothes may be just a costume game, and does not relate to a true historical link with Chinese civilization and culture. Moreover, when children do perform Chinese dance and song, it is an imagined art form from a nebulous, ahistorical ancient time. There is no following of modern Chinese pop stars, movie stars, soap operas, or other

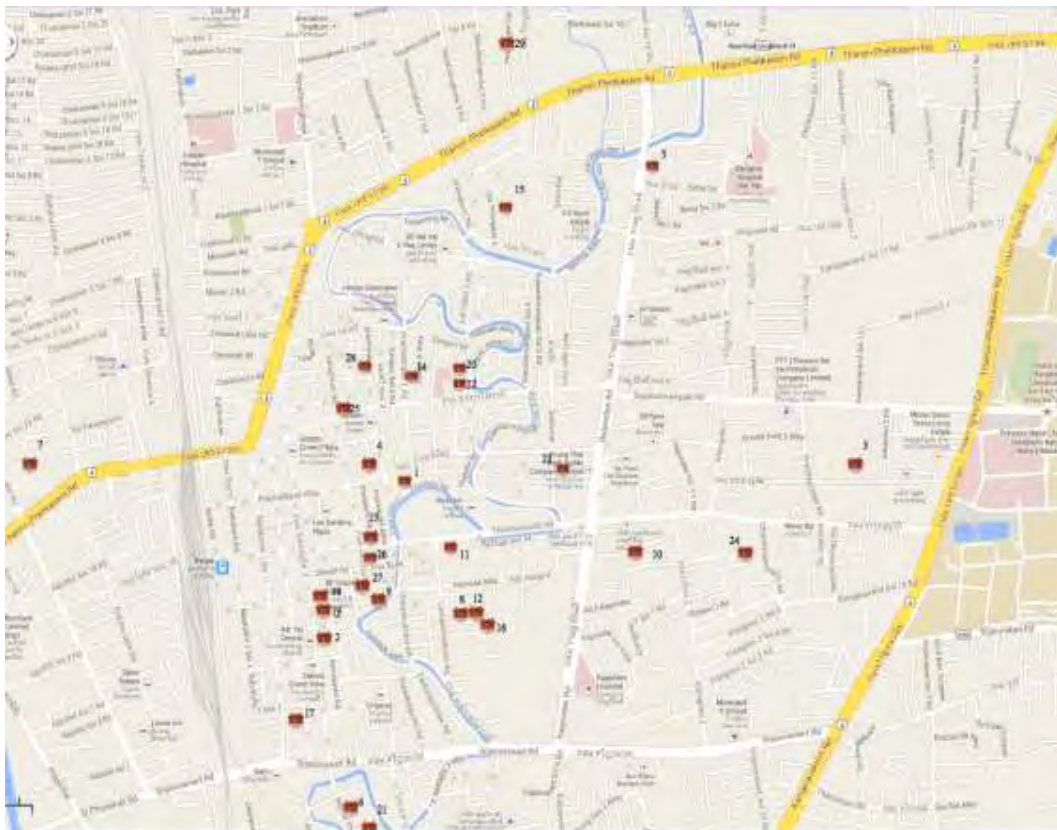
modern popular culture. Instead, the pop culture consists of US Hollywood, South Korean soap operas, and Thai television and singing stars. The big draws for the young crowds at the Srinakon New Year festival were Thai pop stars, with no Thai-Chinese link whatsoever. It thus appears that modern Chinese culture does not hold as much attractive power as it could. Trends may change in the future; with the growing economic influence of China, interest in a deeper understanding of Chinese culture may reemerge. Regardless of external influence, deep-seated practices of respect for ancestors, and cultural expectations of what it means to have a Chinese legacy in one's family background, are not likely to fade away quickly in the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.

4.3 Role and function of religion and religious sites in understanding the social characteristics of Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

As seen in the account of Chinese festivals celebrated in Hat Yai above, religion plays an important role in the life of the Thai-Chinese community. For many, religion is an essential part of the celebration of the Chinese culture. The constant flow of worshippers during Chinese festivals at Siang Teung, as well as area Chinese temples and *rong je*, bears witness to the continued importance of Chinese religious practice. In nearly every interview, and many of the written survey responses, community members indicated that they and their children maintain the rituals of worshipping, or paying respect to, the ancestors, which is seen as a core belief essential to identity. Not every community member adheres to the more exotic practices, such as the use of mediums or the possession of spirits as so dramatically exhibited in the Vegetarian Festival; but the community at large is not a secular or non-religious community. Evidence of shops and households, the vast majority of which contain altars to both Chinese gods and to the ancestors, indicate that Chinese culture-influenced religion is an important part of the community's social culture. The nearly ubiquitous presence of Chinese temples and religious sites, with their distinctive Chinese architecture, is a visible reminder of the influence of Chinese religion. One survey respondent

noted the presence of many Chinese temples (*sanjao*) as a distinguishing characteristic of Hat Yai in a response to the question of identity of the Thai-Chinese community. The 65-year-old female respondent wrote “One will see in Hat Yai that there are many Chinese temples, both big and small. In the middle of the city there will be more Chinese temples than Thai *wats*, and these are part of the community by having functions both on a regular basis and on various important days.” The list and map below, which is only a partial list of the many Thai-Chinese temples, shrines and holy places in or near downtown Hat Yai compiled by this researcher’s personal observations, gives some indication of the rich religious cultural heritage.

Map of Hat Yai Chinese religious sites



Hat Yai Municipality Chinese Religious Sites		
1	Ba Xian Ta Temple	八仙塔
2	Chapanakit Sala	ฌาปนกิจศาลา มูลนิธิสงเคราะห์คนชรา อนาถา
3	Mahapanya Vidyalai	มหาปัญญาวิทยาลัย
4	Mazu Gong Temple	媽祖宮
5	Munnithi Mongkhontham Songkhro Phracha	มูลนิธิมงคลธรรมสงเคราะห์ประชา
6	Munnithi Samakhdi Sitham Trakun Eung	มูลนิธิสามัคคีธรรมตระกูลอึ้ง
7	Munnithi Theud Khunatham (Chee Nam Kok)	มูลนิธิเทิดคุณธรรม
8	Rong Je Chong Siang Teung Hat Yai	โรงเจซ่งเซียงตั้ง หาดใหญ่
9	Rong Je Kuang Liang Thung	โรงเจกวางเลี่ยนทุ่ง
10	Sanjao Haeng Jia	ศาลเจ้าหั่งเจีย
11	Sanjao Jeun Khong Tao Thang	ศาลเจ้าจินกงต้าวถิง
12	Sanjao Kuan U	ศาลเจ้ากวนอู มูลนิธิมิตรภาพสงเคราะห์
13	Sanjao Mae Thabthim	ศาลเจ้าแม่ทับทิม
14	Sanjao Na Ja Thai Jeu Hat Yai	มูลนิธิเทพโกมินทร์ นางาไทเชื้อ หาดใหญ่
15	Sanjao Naja Sa Thai Jea	ศาลเจ้านางาซาไทเชื้อ
16	Sanjao Ong Yuo Thephtamkungya	ศาลเจ้าองค์ขุเวทพทามกุงหย่า มูลนิธิศิริธรรม
17	Sanjao Po Seua Munnithi Damrongtham	ศาลเจ้าพ่อเสือ มูลนิธิดำรงศีธรรม
18	Sanjao Rongje Jaomae Kuanim Lian Hua Kao	ศาลเจ้าโรงเจเจ้าแม่กวนอิมเลี่ยนฮัวเกะ
19	Sanjao Rongje Lian Hua Kao Kong Teu Tang Hat Yai	ศาลเจ้าโรงเจเลี่ยนฮัวเกะกงเดอะตั้ง หาดใหญ่
20	Sanjao San Bao Fo Gong (Siang Teung)	三寶佛公
21	Sanjao Tamnakmettatham	ตำหนักเมตตาศธรรม
22	Sanjao Thong Sia Siang Teung	ศาลเจ้าท่งเซียงเซียงตั้ง
23	Si Trakun Lungkang Songkhla	มูลนิธิศีตระกูลหุงกังสงขลา
24	Songkhla Bunsawang (Tia Ia) Foundation	มูลนิธิบุญสว่าง (เตี้ยเอี้ย) จังหวัดสงขลา
25	Wat Cheua Chang	วัดถ้อฉาง
26	Wat Kuan Im Kiu Seua Am	วัดกวนอิมกิวซ้ออัม
27	Wat Ratmirungrot	วัดรัศมีรุ่งโรจน์
28	Wat Thawonwararam Hat Yai	วัดถาวรวารามหาดใหญ่
29	SanBanphachon Munnithi Bamphenbunkankuson Taejiu	ศาลบรรพชน มูลนิธิบำเพ็ญบุญการกุศลแต่จิว

Many of the places have a collection of holy places co-located, such as at Siang Teung, and *Sanjao Rongje Lian Hua Kao Kong Teu Tang Hat Yai*. The English translation of these places, "temple," does not quite capture the subtle differences in nomenclature between these sites, nor does the Thai name always reflect different terminologies that are used in the original Chinese. The Chinese names (in Mandarin dialect) used for these places include the following:

塔 Ta, 堂 Tang, 宮 Gong, 殿 Dian, 閣 Ge, 廟 Miao, 寺 Si, 菴 An.

Nonetheless, the linguistic differences don't reflect any important differences in practice or function; terminology for the religious places is generally consolidated in the Thai-Chinese community as *wat*, *sanjao*, or *rongje*, explained separately below. All three categories can contain elements and practice rituals that are both Mahayana Buddhist and Taoist.

4.3.1 Chinese Wats

The Thai legal and religious doctrinal concept of a *wat* is very specific, whether it is a Thai or Chinese *wat*. Ms. Kittiporn, a nun at *Rongje Chong Siang Teung*, and well-versed in the matter of religious places in Thailand, explains that a Thai and Chinese *wat* must have territory defined by *luk nimit* underneath the foundation, which are nine balls that are placed with a special ceremony. Without these sacred items defining the *wat*, the believers may not enter the monkhood at that location. The Chinese *wats* in Hat Yai have these *luk nimit*, and thus house residential monks. The two larger *wats*, Cheua Chang and Thawonwararam, are quite large physical features of the Hat Yai cityscape. They are of different *nigai*, meaning sects or branches, of Mahayana Buddhism, Cheua Chang being the *Jin*, or Chinese *nigai* while Thawonwararam is the *Yuan*, or Vietnamese, *nigai*.

4.3.2 Sanjao

A *sanjao* will be dedicated to and have an image of a god or gods, and its purpose is to provide a place to worship that god. The gods or sacred images may originate from historical figures in Chinese history, or may be a heavenly figure. For example, worshippers of the image at *Poh Seua* Temple and *Damrongthaam* Foundation maintain a strong mental connection with their founding region and monk. When asked to describe the history of the Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation, rather than speak only of the structure in Hat Yai, the manager started by describing an 860 year history related back to the founding monk in Canton Province, illustrating the sense of history and continuity that Thai-Chinese believers feel with their Chinese roots. (Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation Manager, 2011) *Sanjaos* in Hat Yai can be classified under three categories: they may be associated with a charity organization, may be established by a lineage or regional association, or may be a more private venture.

- ***Charity Foundation Sanjao***

The Tai Hong Jo Seu Temple at Siang Teung, Munnithi Theud Khunatham (Chee Nam Kok), and the Munnithi Mongkhontham Songkhro Phracha are examples of *sanjao* associated with charity foundations. These *sanjao* tend to be larger, and several are grandly and flamboyantly decorated. As illustrated by its central role in Chinese festivals, Siang Teung temples figure heavily as centers of social cultural attraction. The site at Chee Nam Kok, especially as it is related to the accompanying Chinese school, also serves as an attractive force for Chinese culture. For some believers, part of this attractive force is the power believed to be held by associated mediums that communicate with their temple spirits. The mediums are important features of these two large *sanjao*, and play a constant role in the temples' activities. As the president of Munnithi Theud Khunatham explains, all decisions of that organization are made by consulting the temple spirit via a medium. The spirit is consulted for all types of details; for example, it has caused the organization's name to change three times since its foundation,

and the spirit is also the entity that chooses the organizational committee and leadership.

- ***Lineage and Regional Association Sanjao***

Lineage and regional association temples include San JaoMae Thabthim (part of the Hailam Association), Sanjao Kuan U (maintained by Hakka people), Songkhla Bunsawang (Tia Ia) Foundation, and Si Trakun Lungkang Songkhla. This type may serve as a sort of ancestral hall, as well, with memorials to deceased ancestors. The Hailam Association's San JaoMae Thabthim is co-located with the Association building, just around the corner from the central shopping area between Central Department Store and Lee Garden Plaza, on the second floor, where it is promoted by large signs as a tourist attraction. The Kuan U temple is located separately from the Hakka Association building, and is in a complex that includes several religious places. There are many more places associated with lineage associations, although these are not as public. According to Saran of Siang Teung, some lineage groups will have a registered charity foundation, or simply take collections for mutual aid, such as for education of children of the same lineage. More active lineage groups will be a center of social activity, with regularly scheduled dinners and activities such as "lucky draws," giving away prizes of televisions and other popular goods. Gold shop owner Cheanjit, a member of the Lim lineage association in Hat Yai, relates that the association has an annual social gathering, at which they give out scholarships for the children of members who have registered with the Lim Lineage Association. These activities make the organizations relevant in people's lives and help to maintain the sense of community in the ethnic Chinese context. (Gold Shop Merchant, 2012) As evidenced by the ancestral tablets, the lineage organizations also play an important role in keeping detailed records of family generations. According to Saran, some Chinese families still make a practice of giving traditional Chinese names in addition to one's official Thai surname, including giving specific traditional personal names which signify one's place in the ancestral lineage. Traditional Chinese names are most commonly the surname, followed by two characters that together make up one's personal name. In the local practice, someone surnamed Lim would have a specific second character to his or her Chinese name, such as "dek," which would correspond

to a particular generation of that line of the Lim family. (Siang Teung Foundation Assistant Head Public Hazard, 2012) This practice illustrates two points: that Chinese culture values organization and indicating one's proper place in the world of human relations, and that some members of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai maintain tradition through the continued use of Chinese surnames. Ancestor respect and worship is a central tenet of Chinese cultural belief, arguably of greater significance than the use of Chinese language; without keeping the record and memory of one's Chinese family name, even after the family has taken on a Thai surname, one would not be able to perform the proper rituals of gratitude toward one's ancestors. Thai-Chinese descendents who have forgotten or give no importance to their Chinese family name would be a sign of complete assimilation into Thai society and culture; however, evidence from numerous interviews suggests that the great majority of Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai are quite aware of their Chinese family lineage.

- ***Private Sanjao***

Finally, the Sanjao Tamnak mettatham, Sanjao Haeng Jia and Sanjao Naja Sa Thai Jea are examples of small private temples. Tamnak mettatham is run by a female, originally from Northeast Thailand. She maintains a vast collection of Buddhist figures closely packed in storage shelves that take up two floors of the small townhome-like building. She is able to sustain her place by donations of mostly Singaporean and Malaysian Chinese, who come to follow her guided rituals to ask for power and blessings. The accompanying photographs depict a ceremony conducted for two men from Singapore, who came to the temple to ask for power and luck.

A spirit medium and his wife manage *Sanjao Haeng Jia*, keeping a publicly posted schedule of times to receive supplicants with various troubles or requests. The medium enjoys a positive reputation, evidenced by the number of devotees queuing for his services, as well as articles and commemorative photographs about his rituals posted on the temple walls. One supplicant related that she had previously been at her mother's funeral, and inadvertently looked upon another corpse during the funeral ceremony. She believed that the spirit of that corpse must have followed her home, as she felt a presence in her home afterwards, even to the point of feeling someone push her while she slept in her

bed. She came to the medium who performed an exorcism of the spirit, and she no longer had problems. After that success, she was there at the temple during the time of the interview with her husband to perform an exorcism rite on their recently purchased used car, which they felt had some bad spirit from the previous owner. Several photographs on the temple wall commemorate the medium's participation in local police-sponsored volunteer training.

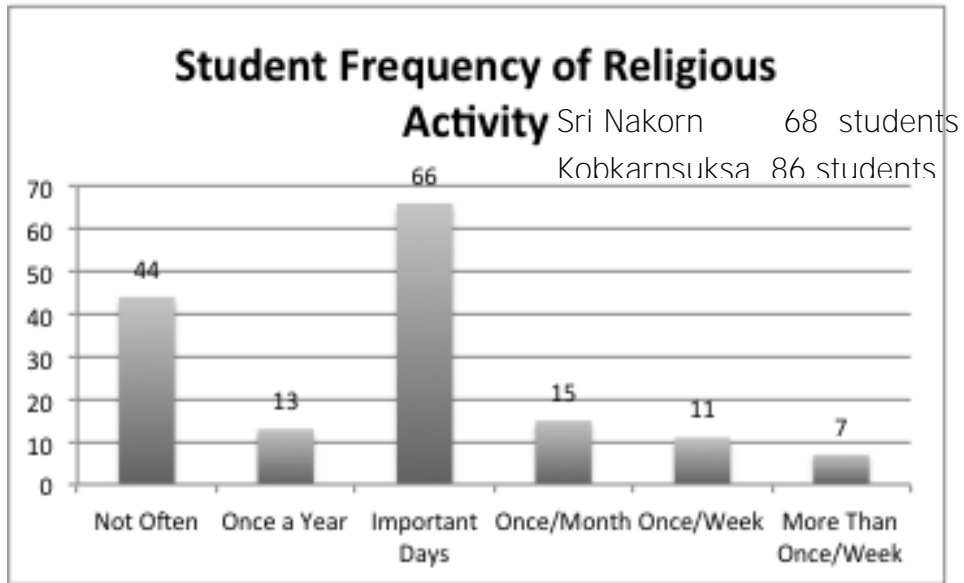
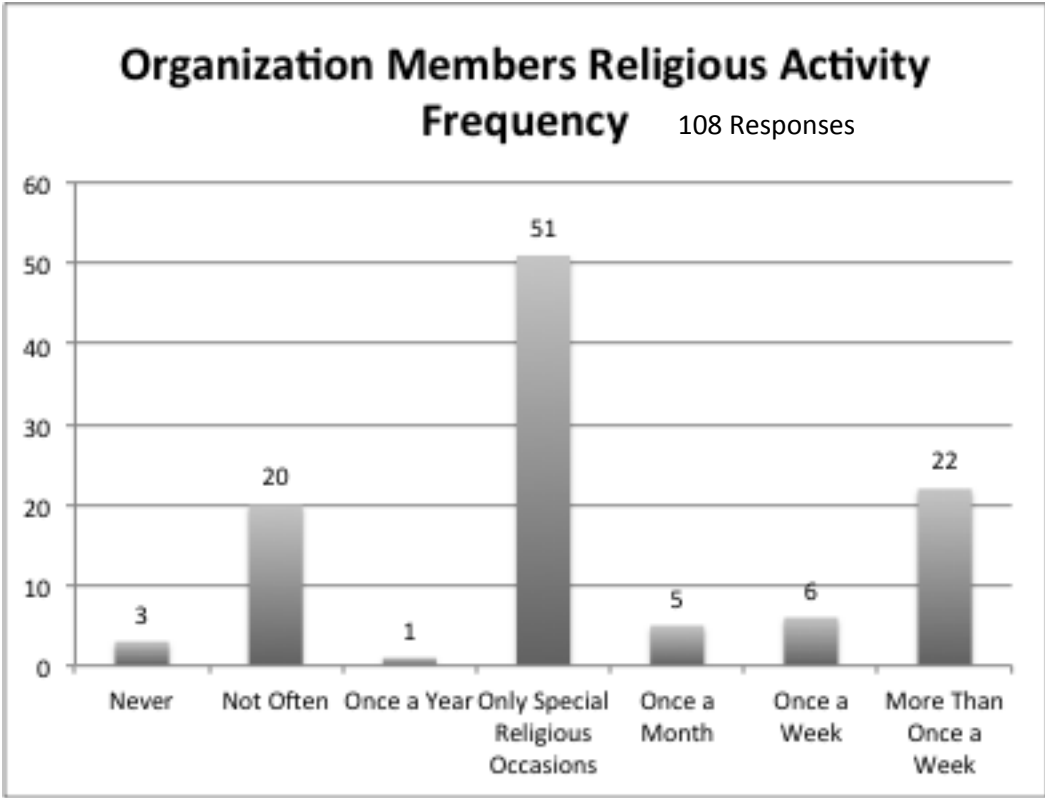
During the Vegetarian Festival, the *Naja Sa Thai Jeua* temple becomes a gathering place of many young people, mostly in their early twenties, who are attracted to the exotic possession rituals. The temple is in a small alley close to Siang Teung, housed in a humble structure of the type that is commonly used for small urban shops. During observations of the 2012 Vegetarian Festival, the group of disciples spent many days going through purification rituals before participating in the main parade described above.

4.3.3 Rongje

Rongje Chong Siang Teung Hat Yai and *Rongje Kuang Liang Thung* are a type of vegetarian temple, closely associated with Chinese Taoism, as the *Rongje* nun Kittiporn explains. In the ancient search for health and longevity, Taoism developed elaborate rituals and food behaviors, including vegetarianism, that are promoted by the *Rongje*. *Rongje* may or may not have an altar and Chinese god associated with them, although the Hat Yai locations listed above include god images. *Rongje* do not have monks; usually female nuns will provide caretaking services, as well as prepare and serve the vegetarian meals on special days. In Ms. Kittiporn's case, she was given to the *Rongje* as a child. In some traditional Chinese families, when girls were born into the family, they would consult an astrologer; if the stars indicated that a girl should be sent away, the family might "give" their daughters to Kuan Im or some other temple god. (Rongje Chong Siang Teung Nun, 2013) Unlike *Sanjao*, *Rongje* tend to be more of a social gathering place, at least on special days, particularly as the nuns prepare vegetarian meals to be shared by the public. The days for gathering may be associated with particular religious occasions, while some more strict believers maintain a vegetarian diet on the 1st and 15th of each lunar month.

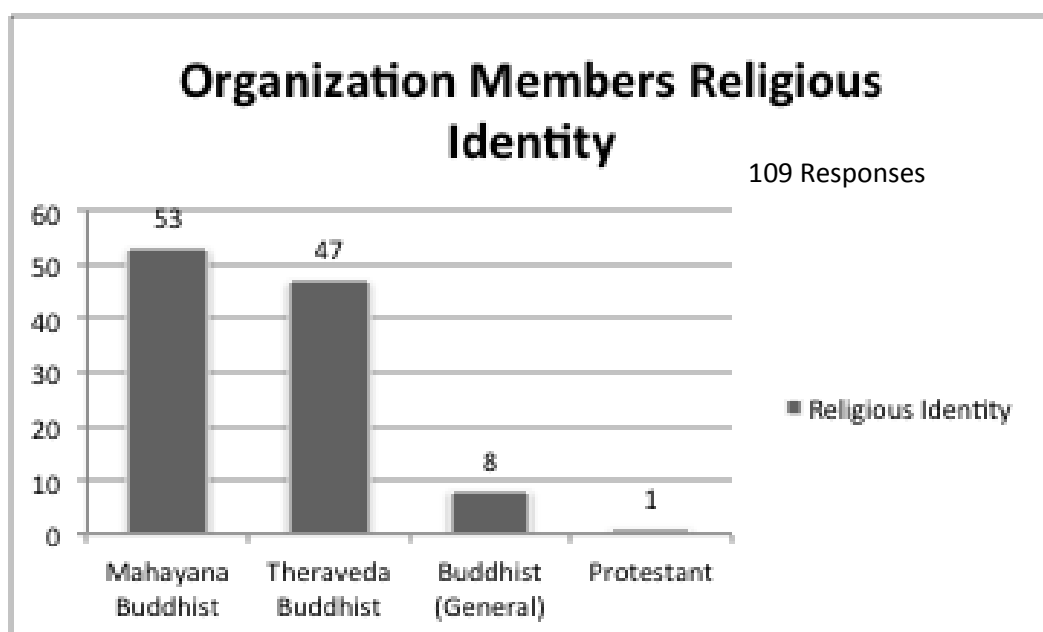
4.3.4 Level of religious activity in the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community

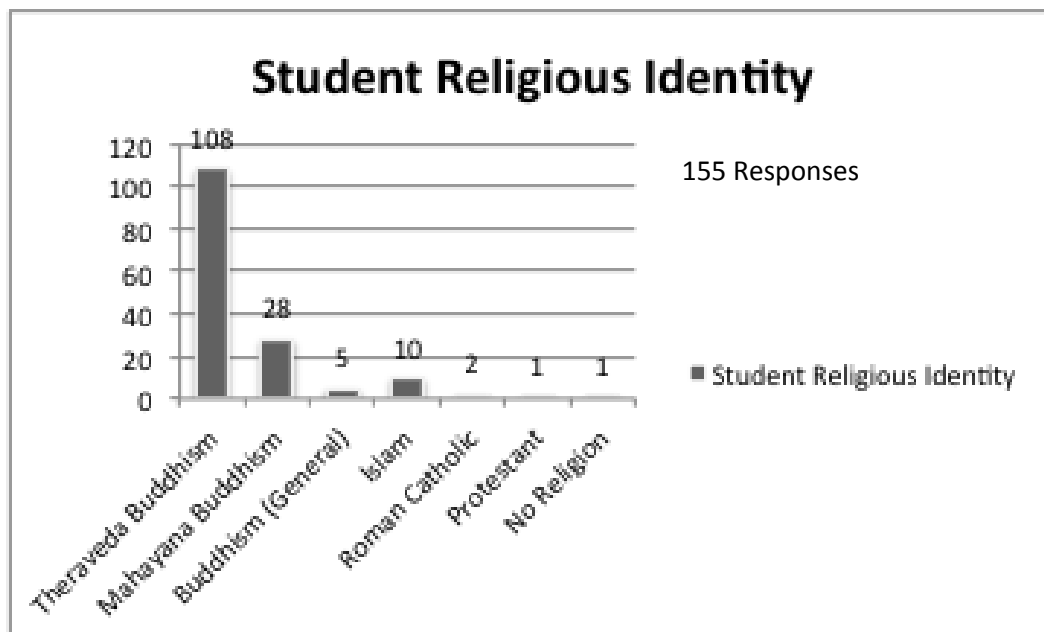
A significant level of Mahayana Buddhist and Taoist religious activity is evident throughout the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, although individual beliefs and devotion naturally vary. Several prominent community members expressed skepticism at some of the more mystical aspects of religion in the community, such as the spirit communication and exorcisms. For many in a Chinese culture, religion can be more of a practical than a spiritual matter, important for gaining material benefits and bringing good fortune to one's life or business. This may be a reason that a large majority of respondents to the survey of organization committee members and students indicated that they perform religious activities only on special occasions. Interviews indicated that it is mostly the older generation that performs daily or frequent ceremonies, such as some rituals associated with venerating ancestors. On the other hand, the Chinese calendar allows for several "special occasions," as described in the discussion above on festivals. The Chinese temples are not very crowded on regular days, but none appear to be abandoned, and their grounds become quite full of activity during Chinese festivals or holy days associated with the temple god.



4.3.5 Significance of Chinese religion and religious places in Hat Yai

A significant number of the older generation Thai-Chinese organization members identified as specifically Mahayana Buddhist, which may be taken as an indication that such respondents still strongly identify with ancestral roots and Chinese traditional religion. However, the distinction may have been lost on the students, as some students marked “Mahayana Buddhism” yet did not identify as Thai-Chinese. Unfortunately, the distinction between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism is also lost in many academic discussions of the Chinese communities in Thailand. A general assumption is that because Thais and Chinese are mostly both Buddhist, the Chinese immigrants blend more easily, and eventually assimilate into, the local culture. But this misses the significant fact that Mahayana and Taoist practices persist for many generations in the transplanted Chinese communities. Ethnic Chinese may add Thai Buddhist practices on top of this native religion, but they do not easily give up the original traditions and beliefs.





The Chinese religious sites are generally not meeting places where one might come listen to sermons teaching lessons about the Buddha or Bodhisattvas. Neither are they places for regularly scheduled communal activities. They are places for individuals or families to express gratitude to gods and ancestors, and to ask for power, good luck, or healing. Even though they do not hold many communal activities, many residents see them as a center of attraction, which helps bind the Thai-Chinese community. As one survey respondent said, she feels that temples play an important role in the community—“Chinese temples are a center for joining the hearts and minds of all ethnic Thai-Chinese and people everywhere.” A volunteer manager at *Poh Seua* Temple and head of the *Sala* at Siang Teung, feels the temple has an important role in preserving Chinese traditions and culture. For example, the *Poh Seua* Temple may provide religious lessons in newspapers, while the older generation often brings along the younger generation and steps them through the worship rituals. Of primary importance, in his view, is that the temple helps instill a continuing respect for the ancestors. (Poh Seua Temple and Damrongthaam Foundation Manager, 2011) A manager at the Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation sees the role of *sanjao* as teaching that being Chinese is being a good person, respecting the appropriate Chinese gods, not breaking

the rules, and helping other people. He also notes that younger people come to *wai*, or pay respect, and he feels that the traditions haven't changed much. (Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation Manager, 2011) The Deputy Head of Graveyard at Siang Teung Foundation thinks that Siang Teung is the only organization in the Chinese community that completely and faithfully preserves the Chinese cultural traditions and religion. He is very conscious of the intended role of Siang Teung in building and maintaining the Thai-Chinese community, pointing out that even if people don't know one another, they come together to worship the same god, such as *Tai Hong Jo Seu*. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011)

The role of gods and spirits in the Thai-Chinese social culture reveals interesting related characteristics, particularly in the practical, humanistic nature of the gods, as well as in the complex organizational structure of the pantheon. According to Formosa's study of Thai-Chinese philanthropic associations, "Far from being distant entities, the saints are systematically consulted, not only for solutions to individual problems such as illness, business misfortune and domestic crisis, but also for all choices engaging the future of the cult community." (Formosa, 1996, p. 251) As a Siang Teung volunteer explains, Chinese gods have moods (อารมณ์ *arom*), and can get angry or jealous, depending on the action of people and whether they do the proper worship. But if the gods are in a good mood, he believes that the gods will be more generous than the Buddha, since the Buddha doesn't have moods, either good or bad. He and others talk about the Chinese gods in humanistic terms--that the gods like to be entertained, they like to get out and have fun and travel around. This is one reason for the parade of gods in the New Year Festival. Many of the Chinese gods or Bodhisattvas are based on historical characters, and some of the gods are seen as having human-type emotions, needs, and even vices, such as drinking alcohol. This is a distinguishing characteristic of Chinese culture, indicative of a humanist and perhaps more material attitude toward life.

This volunteer confirms a belief, described in previous research works, that the gods have many levels. In this view of the heavens, the Heavenly Emperor rules (皇帝 *Huang Di* in Mandarin, or by Teo Chew pronunciation, *Hong Te* ฮ่องเต๋) in the primary spot, with an entire bureaucracy of different spiritual beings underneath. Gods may also change roles and rank according to a proper time. (Siang Teung Foundation Assistant Head Public Hazard, 2012) Sa'ngob Memaaphirak, in his 1994 Master's thesis on "Belief about the ritual of possession of human medium among Thai people of Chinese descent in the Haadyai District of Songkhla Province," found that Hat Yai Thai-Chinese mediums classified spirits into four groups: god, human, animal and devil spirits. God spirits are further divided into five groups: evil, human, earth, god of gods, heavenly gods, of which the last two groups were divided into low, middle and high levels. (เมฆมาอภีร์กษย์, 1994) Scholar Arthur Wolfe describes this same bureaucratic structure of the Chinese pantheon in Taiwanese society as well. This belief system reflects the organizing nature of Chinese culture--that human relations work best and are more powerful when arranged in a proper order. (Wolf, 1978) Volunteer organizations in the Thai-Chinese society are valued much for the power they bestow on the organizing group...an important concept that is also reflected in the role of gods and religion in the culture.

Aside from Sa'ngob's work mentioned above, several researchers have investigated various aspects of the religious culture of Hat Yai. In 1992, Somphong Sooksai studied the murals of twenty Thai-Chinese shrines in Hat Yai Municipality, finding that the Thai-Chinese relied on religion for goals fitting into six categories: longevity, peaceful life, good luck, power, begetting large families, and power to ward off danger and vice. (Sooksai, 1992) Similarly, Chalermrat Kanom found in a 2001 study of beliefs and rituals associated with the Chinese goddess Kuan Im that people believed the goddess' images could incur good fortune and charisma, cure people of illnesses, and afford protection against untoward incidents. (Kanom, 2001) In stark contrast to the more sublime and peaceful Thai Buddhist images, most of the images of Chinese gods strongly

depict this theme of power, whether power to rule by laws as Chinese style emperors, or rule by force as in the warrior images. Warrior gods with fierce faces, some brandishing weapons, occupy the altars of temples and adorn temple doors and woodwork.

Elaborate, golden-gilded images of Chinese gods, and even of the Buddha, often depict wealth in addition to power. In modern times this has been stylized and commercialized into the fat, happy Buddha images associated with Chinese Buddhism, but not Thai Buddhism. The Chinese blessings given by the children in the New Years' ChinaKids contest at Srinakon, or by Songkhla and Hat Yai officials and volunteer organization leaders, usually mention wealth and wishes for prosperity. The elevation of power in the culture is reflected in the architectural styles as well. Chinese temples, and some association buildings, tend to be overstated, grandiose, and showy. The colorful and elaborate dragons, other mythical features, god images and other features are intended to reflect the glory and power of resident gods. The Chinese religious cultural ideal or norm is not asceticism or renouncing the things of this world, even in the Vegetarian Festival when one renounces meat for a short time. One goes to the gods or the ancestors for power and wealth. The purification rituals that include vegetarianism and abstaining from sex or other unholy acts are a means to power, the obtaining of which believers demonstrate by their ability to withstand burning coals or piercings by sharp objects. Many don't subscribe to these more mystical displays of power, but the ostentatious display of wealth serves the same purpose. Power gives one control over the whims of nature and fate, and wealth is a visible sign that one has successfully obtained power.

At the same time, Chinese social culture and religious norms serve to keep power in check, so that those with power feel obligated to responsibly use it. These norms teach that one should share the wealth obtained by power; in fact, generous sharing of wealth serves a purpose of gaining public recognition of one's power. The leaders of the Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai are greatly respected for their power and wealth, and also spend large amounts of their personal wealth on charitable causes, such as social welfare and educational

scholarships and rewards. This sharing of wealth is evidence of the leaders' correct use of power. This principle of seeking power and wealth, to be used in a responsible way, applies to the Thai-Chinese organizations as well; the very purpose of the organizations is to increase the power and wealth of the community.

4.4 Role and function of family in understanding the social characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

How strongly maintained are inherited Chinese social cultural characteristics in Hat Yai families? When asked if they saw distinctions between pure Thai and Thai-Chinese families, most interview subjects responded that the cultures were nearly completely mixed. Many traditional Chinese practices have been dropped, usually as a practical matter because of expense, excessive complexity, or simply inconvenience of following ancient ritual, while Thai practices have been added. For example, periods of mourning following a family death are usually shortened or not strictly followed, and associated practices, such as not cutting fingernails or hair during a period of mourning, have been dropped. (Chung Hua Charity Foundation Official, 2013) On the other hand, evidence suggests that at least some distinct Chinese cultural influences persist within families, as indicated by the continued religious practice of worshipping ancestors, maintenance of some elements of Chinese culture in major life events such as marriages and funerals, and expectations for the next generation.

4.4.1 Ancestor Worship

The presence of a family altar in the majority of Thai-Chinese homes is a manifestation of the continued practice of respecting ancestors. Write-in survey responses from the organization committee members overwhelmingly referred to the important practice of ancestor worship as a central distinguishing characteristic of Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai. A typical example comes from a 65-year-

old female, a lineage association member and deputy head of the Hat Yai Prasan Mit Ladies' Society, in her response to the survey question, "What things are important to you in being Thai-Chinese?" The reply: "Maintaining the customs and traditions, but we must make more adjustment to fit with the modern times. We must stick to ancient basic principles, especially in our beliefs. We should not be naïve, but give careful consideration to the things we should believe or not believe. And the most important thing is worshipping the ancestors, because if we didn't have them in the past, we wouldn't be here in the present. We must not forget their merit and kindness."

4.4.2 Family life event traditions

When asked about marriage ceremonies, the majority of interviewees noted that weddings are now a mix of Chinese, Thai and western elements. As in changing funeral practices, however, economic forces may be driving a reduced practice of traditional Chinese weddings, which can be quite expensive if followed completely. One example of changing wedding traditions, according to a volunteer at Ban Phru during the Cheng Meng festival, is that the groom no longer follows tradition to go receive the bride at her home. Whereas many parts of the ceremony may have been performed at home, a single ceremony is often now performed in a hotel. Elements of Thai culture are often added, such as the pouring of water to signify the receiving of blessings. All interviewees indicated that one element of a Chinese wedding still being maintained is a tea ceremony, recognized as important in establishing the proper order of relationships in the new family structure.

4.4.3 Parental expectations

Of particular interest in the interviews were the expectations for succeeding generations regarding their Chinese heritage. Though many second or third generation Thai-Chinese cannot speak a Chinese language, many have aspirations that their children will be able to learn the language. A second-generation Chinese construction contractor of Cantonese origin, approximately 30-years-old, has married a Thai woman with whom he has a young infant son.

Although a member of the Kwong Siew Association and fluent in spoken Cantonese, he had a Thai-style wedding with his wife, which he admitted was more because that style was less expensive. Nonetheless, he sees the importance of passing on cultural traditions to his son. He believes that although the traditional steps may not be followed as strictly as in the past, Chinese people should still know the proper way to pay respects (wai) to the ancestors or Chinese gods. He intends to ensure that his son properly learns Chinese language and maintains the central traditions. (Construction Contractor, 2013) A gold store owner of Hailam Chinese descent also is careful to pass on his ethnic heritage. His fifteen-month-old child already knows to wai at the altars in the family home. This business person plans to send his son to a school that teaches three languages, Chinese, English and Thai, with Chinese as the main language, because he thinks it will be to his son's advantage. An elder second-generation Teo Chew Chinese owner of a toy store in downtown Hat Yai has successfully passed on Chinese traditions to his daughter. Although she married a Thai, they had a mixed Thai-Chinese-western wedding ceremony, with paying respect for the ancestors as a central feature. The daughter currently lives in Bangkok with her husband and ten-year-old daughter; she speaks fluent Teo Chew and has studied Mandarin, and carries on Chinese traditions of respecting the ancestors. This store owner and his daughter plan on giving this fourth-generation daughter full support in learning Chinese, even to the point of providing her opportunity to travel to China for study. (Toy Store Owner, 2013) These stories are typical of many Thai-Chinese families in Hat Yai. Although Chinese language instruction was suppressed during the anti-communist era in Thailand, and many second or third generation Thai-Chinese don't speak or read Chinese, they have not given up on the prospect of succeeding generations reacquiring language ability and maintaining Chinese traditions.

To a lesser extent, expectations for the succeeding generations often include carrying on a family business; alternatively, many business families are sending their children to colleges for advanced education, with an expectation

that these children will take up a profession according to their own desires. Mr. K, a second-generation Hailam Chinese and gold shop owner, pointed out that the influx of Chinese-speaking tourists has given an incentive for his children to learn Chinese language, as they follow him into the family gold business. (Gold Shop Merchant, 2013) The daughter of a female gold shop owner, though she currently is pursuing an advanced degree in Bangkok, plans to return to Hat Yai and help continue the family business. The daughter's expectations are likely influenced by her mother; when asked what differences she saw between Chinese and Thai families, the mother replied that Chinese parents push their kids more toward having an independent business, while Thai parents will tend to encourage children to be government officials. (Gold Shop Merchant, 2012) The Executive Secretary of the Thai Rubber Association and second-generation Chinese, has two grown daughters, who both attended the prestigious Thammasat University in Bangkok. With a bit of an air of resignation, the secretary describes his older daughter as very proud yet artistic--she has used her marketing degree to work in marketing at three businesses over the last two years. The younger daughter, who studied Chinese language, has followed him into the rubber business. In traditional Chinese society, large families were valued for the extra hands they could bring to a family farm or business. This requirement for extra labor is not as important in modern times, so that family size has become smaller. An example is the religious artifacts store owner. She is fourth generation Chinese, yet keeps many Chinese traditions, mixed with Thai traditions. She and her husband, also of Chinese ancestry, both come from large families--she has four siblings while her husband has three. However, they have consciously decided to have a smaller family in order to have more resources for the each individual child's education. They have a daughter in her second year of college studying food science in Kasetsat University in Bangkok, and a grade-school age son. (Religious Artifacts Store Owner, 2013) These are just a few examples of how Hat Yai Chinese families are changing. Many of the younger generation will maintain the family trade, albeit with higher education levels as

family prosperity has allowed. Whether the younger generation uses the education opportunities to carry on a family business, or to pursue other professions, a significant number appear to maintain at least some interest in their ethnic heritage.

Mr. K is a prominent member in the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community wearing many hats in Thai-Chinese organizations. Besides his chemical business, he has been the president of the Hakka Association for over nine years, he serves on the Federation of Associations and Foundations committee, and he is the school administrator for Srinakhon. The story of Mr. K and his family serves as one interesting example of the state of Chinese identity in Hat Yai families. Mr. K's father was from Guangdong, China, and his mother was an ethnic Chinese born in Thailand. His father started life as an immigrant in Penang, Malaysia, where he was a hired worker. Eventually moving to Songkhla Province, his father started a small business selling processed pork (*kha mu daeng*) in Nathawi, Songkhla Province, while still doing hired work on rubber plantations. Mr. K was born in Khlong Ngae, also in Songkhla Province, and grew up in Nathawi and Hat Yai. Following the industrious example of his father, Mr. K has been able to build a successful business producing chemicals including Calcium Dioxide, used for adjusting water chemistry in applications such as raising shrimp and smelting metal. As a child, he somewhat resisted his father's efforts to make him study Chinese; he had to study Chinese in secret, as the government had closed down the Chinese schools. Eventually, though, through self-study, he now speaks Mandarin, Hakka, Cantonese, and Hailam. As Mr. K explains, in his generation, formal school education was not seen as terribly important. Most Chinese were interested in getting enough education to be able to go into business. According to Mr. K, children now get bachelors, masters, or PhD degrees, but aren't entrepreneurial. When asked, "Do Chinese families have special characteristics?" he replies that they are ambitious, peace-loving, and entrepreneurial...they don't want to be just hired workers. But he also worries that younger generations are

not as ambitious. He has four children-- one son and three daughters, around 25 to 30 years old. He is concerned that they are not focused, and aren't as interested in being entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, his children are quite successful in their own way. Two of his daughters are studying in Beijing, China, on scholarship from the Chinese government, where they are working toward their PhD degrees in business administration. Mr. K himself, at 60 years old, recently completed a Masters Degree at Bangkok University, which he pursued in large part to improve his English language skills. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013) His story illustrates the culture of industriousness and entrepreneurialism in Chinese families, as well as changes in expectations and professional ambitions of the younger generations. And yet, with the changes, the third generation of his family maintains an important attachment to their Chinese heritage.

4.5 Role and function of education and schools in understanding the characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

After family, education plays the next most significant role in socializing the next generation with a particular cultural identity. The fact that Hat Yai supports three different Chinese-language teaching schools speaks loudly to the strength of Chinese identity in the community. On the other hand, the schools are, in reality, not "Chinese schools," but Thai schools that highlight teaching Chinese language (even in this aspect, they are not the only schools teaching Chinese language in Hat Yai now). Although these schools enroll Thai, Thai-Chinese, and a few other ethnic groups of students, they share the common goal of promoting Chinese language and culture as one element of their curriculum.

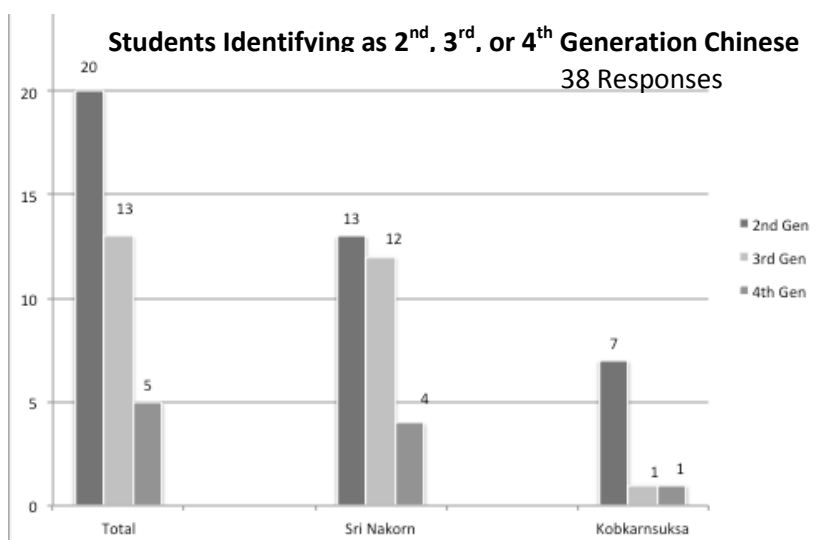
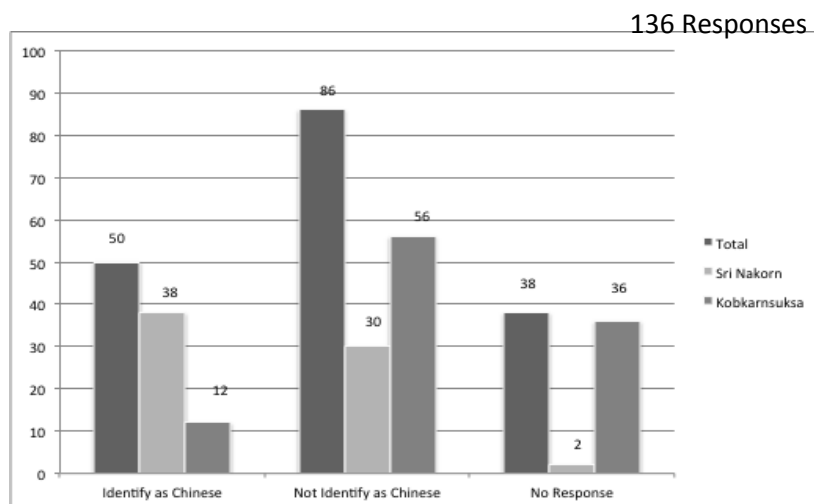
Comparison of Chinese-language Schools in Hat Yai as of 2011		
Student body		
Srinakon	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
2 to 3,000 Students Grades K-10 Up to 50% ethnic Chinese Some Muslim. Some students with Malay Chinese parents, some from Tai Yai ethnic Chinese minority group from northern Thailand.	1,700 Students Grades K-9 20-30% ethnic Chinese 20% Muslim	1,040 Students Grades 1-5 Up to 60% ethnic Chinese Some Muslim
Teaching staff		
Srinakon	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
Volunteer teachers from China: Huachaoban (5 teachers) and Hanban (11-13).	15 Chinese language teachers. 8 from China. Use Thai Office of the Private Education Commission to find teachers from China	15 Chinese language teachers. All from China.
Chinese language curriculum		
Srinakon	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
PRC textbooks, sent from the Chinese consulate in Songkhla. Origin is from the Beijing China Language and Culture School edition (北京中国语言文化学校编), published by Jinan University Publishing Society (暨南大学出版社). Every grade studies Chinese. Primary Grade school 10 x 45 minute periods per week. Middle school only 4 periods per week. 2014 will open an intensive language center in which students study Chinese ½ day. In 2560 (2017) will open a Chinese program.	Malaysian textbooks. 陶華教育慈善中學中文教材 All students study Chinese language, 7 periods per week @ 50 minutes per period.	Formerly used Malaysian, now use PRC texts. Based on the China Jinan University Chinese Language Institute edition (中国暨南大学华文学院编), and published by Jinan University Publishing Society (暨南大学出版社). Every grade studies Chinese, every day. Pre-schoolers learn one hour/day, other grades are 2 hours/day.
Activities		
Srinakon	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
Extracurricular cultural activities, such as teaching Kung Fu, Chinese calligraphy, and Chinese songs. Religious activities to do with Buddhism. Emphasize fun festivals, including New Years and Moon Festival. Less fun festivals, like Cheng Meng, will just discuss in the classroom. Confucius Institute.	Clubs: Music and character writing. Cultural activities during Chinese New Years, including contests for Chinese language learning, such as writing Chinese.	Multiple Chinese activities, including martial arts activities, dance, and music.

Language and Culture Exchanges		
Srinakon	Kobkanseuksa	Khunathaam Wittaya
4-5 students on exchange to China in 2011 to study at High School level, in GuangXi province. Foundation provides some scholarships to practice language in China for one or two weeks. They usually go to Nanning, Guangdong Province.	None.	Exchange with Penang school [Han Jiang 韓江]. Thai teachers were sent to Jinan, Shandong, China, to observe schools. Project to improve foreign language education, to allow 20 students in Southern Thailand to spend 2 weeks exchange in Malaysia, for students 12 years old and above.

4.5 Student body

From the table summarizing and comparing characteristics of the three Chinese schools above, one can see that the student bodies of the schools are not heavily Thai-Chinese, and language instruction takes only a portion of the curriculum; otherwise, classes are taught in Thai language with a Thai curriculum. The actual ethnic composition of the school population is a consolidated estimate from school administrators and instructors; none of the schools officially track the ethnic identity of their students. Results of this research questionnaire of 105 responding ninth graders at Kobkanseuksa, and 70 responding ninth and tenth graders at Srinakon, can give some confirmation to these estimates of Thai-Chinese students. Only 8.6% (9 of the 105 respondents) of the Kobkanseuksa students identified as Chinese, while a full 51% (36 of 70) of Srinakon students indicated ethnic Chinese status. The breakdown of generation of Chinese (2nd, 3rd or 4th) of these Thai-Chinese is depicted in the chart. Of the 57 total students who responded to the survey question regarding languages spoken at home, 7 identified Chinese as the primary language, while 18 indicated Chinese was being used as a second language at home.

Students Identifying as Chinese



4.5.2 Teaching Staff

All schools employ native Chinese speakers, all of whose salaries are subsidized for a three-year contract period by the People's Republic of China (PRC) government. The PRC consulate in Songkhla aids in coordinating with the Chinese government in arranging for teachers. Aside from the PRC teachers, Srinakon and Kobkanseuksa schools employ either local Thai-Chinese, or Malaysian Chinese, for language instruction.

4.5.3 Chinese Language Curriculum

None of the schools use the Thai Ministry of Education materials for teaching Chinese language; the government materials were deemed inadequate

for quality instruction. Kobkanseuksa uses texts from Malaysia, while Srinakon and Khunathaam Wittaya use PRC texts. According to the school principal, Khunathaam Wittaya had previously used Malaysian texts, but found Muslim content that was not relevant to the Thai context. (Khunathaam Wittaya Principal, 2011) All three schools teach the simplified characters used by the PRC, and not the traditional characters used in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The language textbook contents are the only direct classroom opportunity to pass on Chinese culture, as none of the schools offer any other courses particular to Chinese history or other subjects.

The study of Chinese language is an important factor in conveying culture from one generation to the next. Although Thai and Chinese languages share some similar properties (they are both uninflected, primarily monosyllabic, and tonal), the very nature of the written Chinese language, with its basis in ideographs rather than a phonemic alphabet, sets it apart and can help convey a different worldview to students. As pictographs, the characters embody Chinese cultural images of the things that the characters represent. Many of the characters the Hat Yai language textbooks teach at the beginning to students are elements, because they are simple and have the fewest strokes—sun 日, moon 月, fire 火, earth 土, water 水, mountain 山. These are also key elements the children will see when they attend Chinese temples or observe Taoist ceremonies with their parents, giving them a connection with the religious beliefs of their ancestors. The knowledge of even the simplest characters could help a child unlock the mysteries of a Chinese temple, promoting interest in their cultural heritage.

Learning to read and write the characters demands great discipline and memorization skills. The textbooks pay strict attention to stroke order, encouraging a way of thinking that is organized, requiring attention to detail. For example, exercises in the textbooks might ask the student to identify the ninth stroke out of a character that requires nine strokes, as in the example from a PRC-produced textbook used at Khunathaam Wittaya, below.

bā shuō de dì jiǔ huà zǎo hǎo de dì èr huà jiàn nǐ de dì sì huà tú hēi

2. 把“说”的第九画、“早”“好”的第二画、“见”“你”的第四画涂黑

(Blacken the ninth stroke of “说”, the second stroke of “早”, “好” and the fourth stroke of “见”, “你”.)

A first-year writing exercise from Khunathaam Wittaya's textbook, teaches attention to detail in writing characters. 中文练习册第1册B, Guangzhou: 暨南大学出版社, p. 46.

2. 汉字演变表

甲骨文 jiǎ gǔ wén	金文 jīn wén	籀文 zhòu wén	小篆 xiǎo sǎn	楷书 kǎi shū	
				繁体字 fán tǐ zì	简体字 jiǎn tǐ zì
亻	亻	亻	亻	人	人
𩺰	𩺰	𩺰	𩺰	魚	鱼
𣏟	𣏟	𣏟	𣏟	林	林
	國	國	國	國	国

The middle school texts at Srinakon feature tables like this that link to their evolution through Chinese history. Srinakon seventh grade textbook, 汉语课本初中教程, p. 18.



Srinakon's second year textbook helps children remember how to write characters by showing their origin. From Srinakon's second year textbook, p. 48. Hanyu 汉语 2

That exercise also demonstrates that there is a strong connection between Chinese writing and drawing. When students start learning to write Chinese, they learn as if using a brush (even if the instrument is a pen or pencil). In order for the characters to look standard, one needs to learn to lead the writing instrument across the paper in the correct way, such as left to right, top to bottom, sometimes with a certain flourish at the end as if pressing and lifting a brush from a canvas. Textbooks reinforce this connection between pictures and characters as they provide memory aids by giving the historical origin of the characters. The examples here from second and seventh year Chinese textbooks used at Srinakon show this method. Chinese characters evolved from pictographs chiseled into tortoise shells or bones, often used for divination, through characters inscribed into metals, and through various periods of standardization, most famously the standardization that occurred under the first unifying emperor of China. Thus, the characters embody a cultural history of the Chinese civilization, and Thai-Chinese students may find a connection with their cultural ancestral roots as they continue in the language, even if only subliminally. Another feature of Chinese language, which it shares with Thai language, is that exact family relations are embedded in the vocabulary. One cannot just say “uncle” in Chinese or Thai—one is forced to choose a word that will show the relationship to either the father’s or mother’s side. The textbooks used in the Hat Yai schools all emphasize family, as well as respect for teachers and community. The textbooks accomplish this transmission of cultural values through vocabulary and stories. A lesson from Khunathaam Wittaya’s first-year textbook provides several interesting examples. In the first example, children are taught that “Chinese school is my home,” and that the teacher should have the same love (and implied authority) of one’s mother. The lesson, pictured below, can be translated as follows:

“Chinese School is My Home
 Chinese school is my home,
 Teacher loves me, I love her (him).
 Your home, my home,
 Teacher is just like my mother (father).”



This first-year lesson emphasizes love for the Chinese school, teacher, and family. From Khunathaam Wittaya's first year Chinese textbook, p. 41

The second example from the same textbook provides a more subtle illustration of how cultural expectations are transmitted. In this lesson, a student goes home after school to sing a song for the grandparents, followed by a traditional Chinese bow, called a *ju gong*. The family picture shows the grandparents and father in Chinese-style clothing, happily listening as the child performs a song, backed up by his mother, who is wearing an apron, such as a type used for either cleaning or cooking. The scene reinforces the traditional concept of the extended family and their roles and relationships, as the mother performs her role of taking care of the household and executing responsibility for the child's achievements. The child's role is to perform for the ancestors, showing them respect afterwards by performing the *ju gong* bow. The lesson and translation are as follows:



Family receives great emphasis in the Chinese textbooks. This lesson in the first year textbook at Khunathaam Wittaya shows the student, apron-clad mother behind him, singing to his father and grandparents, whose dress appears in a Chinese style.

“After School Song

School’s out, go back home, I sing a song for everyone. After singing, I give a ju gong bow, Grandpa and Grandma laughs ha ha, Father and Mother boast about me.”

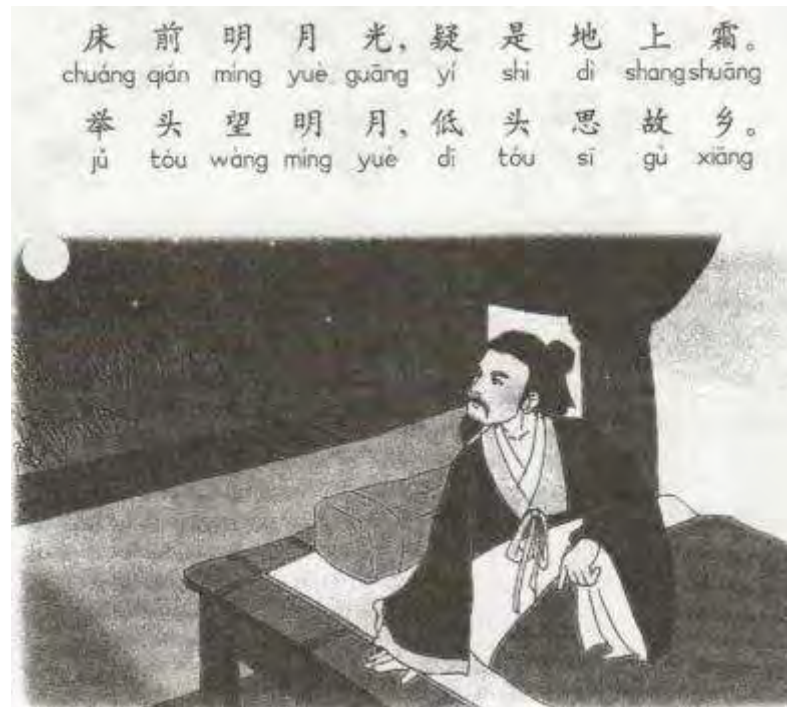
The textbooks used by Kobkanseuksa, which are photocopied from Malaysian textbooks, instill values by using morality stories, of both western and Asian origin. The western stories are ones that teach values also honored in the Chinese tradition. “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” tale, for example, is used to teach the value of honesty. The fifth-grade textbook used at Srinakon, in a similar vein, uses the story of young Albert Einstein, as a struggling student, to promote the idea of hard work and persistence. A Chinese-origin morality tale in the Kobkanseuksa fifth-grade text teaches, by negative example, this very important cultural value of hard work and perseverance. The story, shown below, is about a lazy husband who lies in bed all day and waits for his wife to feed him. When she goes on a trip to her home, he’s too lazy to eat the ring of bread his wife leaves around his neck, and he starves to death.



A Chinese origin morality story in Kobkanseuksa's fifth grade Chinese textbook about a lazy husband.

Srinakon's textbooks are modified from PRC texts, produced by the Beijing China Language and Culture School edition (北京中国语言文化学校编), and originally published by Jinan University Publishing Society (暨南大学出版). The modifications include instructions and vocabulary glossaries in Thai language (which is not provided in the books used by the other two schools), as well as local pictures and illustrations. They maintain a strong emphasis on teaching Chinese culture, however, by including traditional Chinese songs and poems in nearly every lesson. For example, the texts provide reading aloud exercises which include using Tang Dynasty poetry. Such poetry can be quite difficult to comprehend for students studying Chinese as a second language; in fact, the images that accompany the poems, or the distinctly Chinese rhythm of the poetry, may have a larger impact on impressing any Thai-Chinese students' memories and emotional attachment to Chinese heritage. The poetry contains ideograms with ancient and sometimes enigmatic usage and geo-cultural references, such as a well-known ancient pagoda on the Yellow River; it's unlikely that the Hat Yai seventh-grade students will fully understand or appreciate these cultural references. Nonetheless, they may be effective in sending a subtle message of the depth of Chinese culture, which is important for

some Thai-Chinese students, as indicated in their survey responses. Two of the Tang poems and accompanying illustrations are shown below:



A well-known Chinese poem by eighth century Tang poet Li Bai. It describes a scholar being on assignment far away from home, looking at the moonlight on the floor and mistaking it for frost, which makes him think of his hometown. From Srinakon's seventh grade Chinese textbook, p. 84.



Another Tang poet, Wang Zhi Huan, wrote this poem, "Climbing Crane Tower," about watching a friend sail away down the Yellow River. Srinakon seventh grade textbook, p. 118.

The textbooks at all three schools perform an important role of explaining and promoting Chinese (and some western) festivals. The second-grade book at Srinakon has lessons about the Chinese New Year, Autumn festival, and Christmas. The fifth-grade Srinakon text discusses the Tomb Sweeping festival, which includes vocabulary lessons on family relationships, followed by lessons on the Dragon Boat festival (*Duan Wu Jie*), and the Autumn Moon Festival. The table from the Srinakon seventh-grade text below shows a comparison of American and other western festivals (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, Valentine's Day) with Chinese festivals (New Year, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat, Autumn Festival).








เทศกาลของตะวันตก	เทศกาลจีน
 Shengdan Jie	 Chun Jie
 Gan'en Jie	 Yuanxiao Jie
 Fuhuo Jie	 Duanwu Jie
 Qingren Jie	 Zhongqiu Jie

Table comparing western holidays and Chinese festivals. Srinakhon seventh grade textbook, p. 118.

Not all lessons in the teaching of Chinese language, of course, are related to Chinese culture. Other lessons are about daily life, such as transportation, occupations, school, sports, or community. The Srinakon seventh-grade text features lessons with vocabulary about CD ROMs, and ordering food by phone from Pizza Hut. In the modified Srinakon textbooks, the school has tried to make images and subject matter relevant to the modern Hat Yai student. Like the festivals described in the previous sections, the subject matter of the text presents Thai, Chinese and western elements in a syncretic mix. It is difficult to know the actual effectiveness of the transmission of culture via these school

materials; as indicated in the interviews with Chinese teachers at Kobkanseuksa, Srinakon, and Khunathaam Wittaya, the ability of the students to become fluent in the language depends largely on the home environment. The results of the survey, however, indicate that Thai-Chinese children see the importance of education in defining their identity as Thai-Chinese.

4.5.4 Cultural activities and exchanges

All three Chinese-language schools try to supplement the language training with Chinese culture-related activities to generate interest and increase learning opportunities. The schools sponsor activities associated with the various Chinese festivals, especially the Chinese New Years. Martial arts, music and language clubs also promote Chinese culture. In Srinakon, several PRC-sponsored Chinese run a Confucius Classroom, which provides Chinese musical instruments and supplemental Chinese reading material. Srinakon and Khunathaam Wittaya both have active exchanges for a small portion of their students. The president of the Khunathaam Wittaya school is a former president of the alumni association of a Penang Chinese school, Hang Jiang. Combined with the fact that the Chee Nam Kok Foundation associated with the school has its mother organization in Malaysia, it is not surprising that the school has contracted for regular exchanges with the Hang Jiang school. The first exchange occurred for a one-week period in October of 2011. The Srinakon School Foundation is active in raising funding for scholarships, some of which are used to sponsor student language learning excursions in the PRC. These trips include one to two week trips into southern China, as well as high school level exchange opportunities with Guangxi Province.

4.5.5 Funding

Srinakon has established itself as one of the more affordable private schools in Hat Yai, largely by its ability to split funding of approximately 60% government support with 40% private funding. According to the Thai secretary of the Srinakon School Alumni Association, one student costs more than 11,000 baht per year. Of this, the student pays approximately 4,800 baht. (Srinakon

School Alumni Association Thai Secretary, 2011) Khunathaam Wittaya relies entirely on private donations and student tuition for its operations and growth. The significantly large portion of donations through 2011 had come from Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Mainland China. According to the Chee Nam Kok Foundation president, five to six million baht came from Malaysian branches of the organization. The Foundation continues to buy land to expand the school, with eventual goal to provide college-level education. (Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok Foundation President, 2013)

4.5.6 Thai-Chinese Cultural Center at Srinakon

Another indication of the strength of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai is the construction of a new Thai-Chinese Cultural Center in Srinakon. According to Somchat Pimthanapoonporn, president of the Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association, the idea originated from the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations. The president of the Kwong Siew Association, whose Chinese name (Mandarin pronunciation) is Ye Xingming (叶星明) donated 30 million of the 35 million baht budget, on the condition of the building being named after him. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013) The Hakka president is overseeing the project, which he explains will be a five-story structure. Its 2765 square meter floor space will house twelve classrooms, a large meeting room, and an exhibition room. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013) The PRC consulate in Songkhla has taken an active role in planning meetings for the center, and will provide a small budget and personnel. The Hoteliers Association President explains that the center is meant to be a connecting point with China, and will sponsor different inter-cultural activities, such as shows during New Year and performances from China. He expects the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to help promote the center. He estimates that the center will need about 1 - 2 million baht to bring in Chinese shows, and that the government may help with these activities via the TAT. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013)

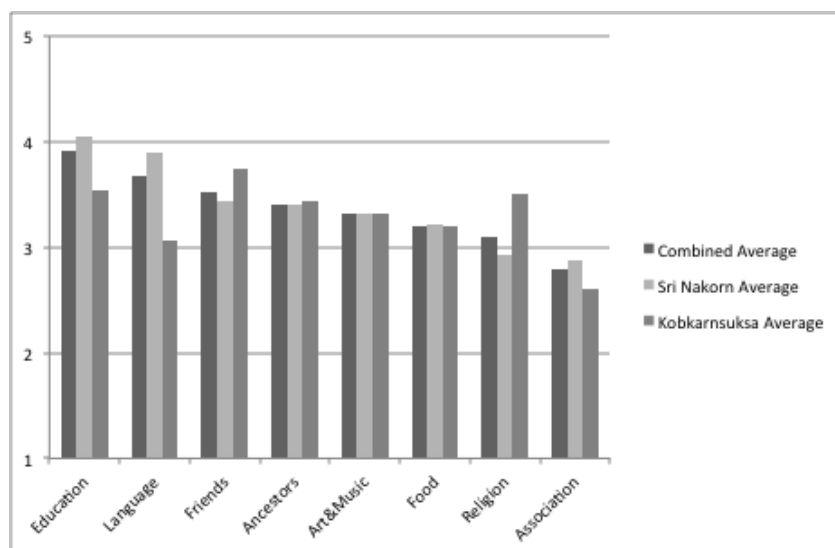
4.5.7 Social significance of schools

The Chinese-language teaching schools in Hat Yai play an important part in passing on an appreciation of Chinese traditions to the younger generation. As the venerated community leader and Srinakon Foundation president, Mr. Nikhom, said, one of the objectives of the school is to maintain cultural identity. While teachers expressed typical concerns that students weren't as industrious in learning the language as they would prefer, they still acknowledged that many students, especially the Thai-Chinese, were eager to learn the language and heritage. At Khunathaam Wittaya, Chinese teachers related that in the classroom, they try not to use Thai language at all. But this is only successful for students with families that support them to seriously learn Chinese. If they don't get the support at home, the students aren't interested. According to these Chinese teachers, many households are indeed emphasizing the language training with their children. These children are good at understanding the teachers in the classroom when they speak in Chinese, and are also learning to write in Chinese. (Khunathaam Wittaya Chinese language teacher, 2011)

Administrators at both Khunathaam Wittaya and Srinakon indicated that demand to get into the Chinese-language programs is currently greater than supply. The impact of the education at the schools can be seen in the survey results as well. In response to the question "How important are the following items (education, language, friends, ancestors, art and music, food, religion and associations) in making you feel that you are a part of the Thai-Chinese cultural group?" education ranked number one, followed by language and friends, all of which the students experience at the schools.

Students – Factors Making Them Feel a Part of Thai-Chinese Cultural Group

45 Responses



Srinakon has an alumni association, which one would expect to help maintain a sense of community among Thai-Chinese. However, compared to other alumni associations in Hat Yai, such as the neighboring Saeng Thong school which was built around the same time, the Srinakon alumni association isn't very strong, except among a much older age level. This is due to a long period of government-enforced closure, and until recently the school only went to grade 7. The older generation of Srinakon alumni is much closer, and the Alumni Association is filled with graduates from 50-60 years ago. Although small, the list of alumni could serve as a "who's who" list of prominent Thai-Chinese in the community. As the school expands its grade offerings and special programs, the alumni association may very well experience a revival among younger generations.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the various social cultural forces acting on, and being affected by, the Thai-Chinese organizations and community in Hat Yai. The research explored the areas of activities and cultural symbols in Chinese festivals, religious sites and practices, family practices and expectations, the

transmission of culture through education in the Chinese language schools, and ethnic, cultural and community identity. From the evidence presented, four main themes emerge:

- **Strength of social cultural centers of gravity in maintaining Chinese traditions and identity in the community**
- **Importance of the concept of power in the community**
- **Dynamism of the culture**
- **Economic influences on social cultural maintenance**

1. Strength of social cultural centers of gravity in maintaining Chinese traditions and identity in the community

Maintenance of Chinese festivals, traditions, and religious practices, both as a community and in individual households, indicates that important core beliefs and practices are being maintained. The community actively participates in the festivals, with significant involvement by the younger generation. Survey, observation and interview evidence points to a broad agreement that a sense of being a Chinese or distinctively Thai-Chinese community exists. The voluntary civil Thai-Chinese organizations have an active membership that consciously fulfills a role of maintaining cultural traditions. Many Thai-Chinese families in Hat Yai carry on the fundamentally Chinese practice of ancestor worship, with a strong awareness of their place in the long line of their lineage. Most importantly, these last two practices -- of creating and using civil organizations and maintaining rituals associated with lineage -- set the community apart as a Thai-Chinese community, versus a community that has been completely assimilated into Thai culture. The fact that so many Thai-Chinese families are acutely aware of their family heritage, and carry on practices of honoring the ancestors at the traditional times of the New Year, *Cheng Meng*, *Sad Jin*, and other times is the strongest evidence that Chinese-influenced cultural characteristics persist in the community.

Srinakon School and Siang Teung play critical roles in the maintenance of these Chinese traditions. They provide a focus for the gathering of people and resources, and promote the practices that still maintain a strong attractive force for the community. The construction of the new 35 million baht Thai-Chinese cultural center on the grounds of Srinakon, and continuous religious activity maintained at Siang Teung, reflect vitality in the Chinese community. Other locations, such as the numerous temples and other schools, benefit from this core gravitation-like pull, so that the community stays connected with its Chinese roots.

2. Importance of the concept of power in the community

Key to understanding why Chinese culture supports the founding of civil organizations, or why it carries out certain religious or other traditional practices, is the concept of power. Organizing the human society, harmonizing relationships by establishing and following proper roles, following Taoist practices, or supplicating to a pantheon of highly-organized gods is practiced because it gives power to the individual and community. This power has helped reverse the status of the Chinese community *vis-a-vis* the Thai government, as evidenced in the Songkhla governor's New Year speech. The combined strength of association members, cooperating in the 22-organization strong Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Charity Foundations, along with the strength of the trade associations, has given the Thai-Chinese a strong voice that no longer fears persecution for studying Chinese language or exhibiting cultural pride. The cooperative efforts have provided the resources to make a spectacular show of Chinese festivals, strengthening both social bonds and the local economy.

As previously discussed, Chinese religion is a pragmatic matter. Religious ideals, for the average person, are not about ascetic paths to a spiritual fulfillment on earth—they are about connecting to spiritual powers that bring good luck, physical health, or wealth. Elite society members are respected for their power, and their wealth is a symbol of power that they have obtained. The prominent roles that organizational leaders play in ceremonies give them “face”

and respect. At the same time, they are expected to, and through numerous Thai-Chinese charity organizations do, wield that power for the benefit of the community.

The importance of power fits well with the concept that Hat Yai ethnic Chinese have retained the Chinese “dimension of national culture” described by Hofstede as masculinity, or competitiveness. Hofstede asserts that masculine cultures promote a distinct role for men, to be “assertive, tough, and focused on material success.” (Hofstede et al., 2010) Competitive cultures encourage the younger generation to work hard and strive to be the best in any endeavor—a characteristic witnessed in the norms and expectations of many of the Hat Yai families. The legacy of a competitive culture accounts for a tendency to conspicuous displays of status & power. This drives some of the charity work that the organizations perform, as well as the construction of temple buildings in which the dignity and power of the temple god is reflected in the grandeur of the location. The grandeur reflects on the association members in a visible way, as well--nearly every temple or association building features majestic stone tablets with permanently engraved lists of donors and their contributions to the founding of the association or construction of the building. A masculine, competitive culture is thus one that venerates power, and Chinese cultural behaviors of forming organizations, carrying on traditions, and practicing Chinese religion are often oriented toward empowerment of the individual and community.

3. Dynamism of the culture

Another theme that emerges from this discussion of social cultural forces is the constantly, if slowly, changing nature of society in Hat Yai. The older generation of Thai-Chinese worries that the younger ones are becoming too “modernized,” and won’t want to continue Chinese traditions—that Chinese culture will be subsumed by Thai culture. Parental concerns that children are losing their entrepreneurial spirit associated with being Chinese are perhaps a concern that the “masculine” Chinese culture is being affected by the “feminine”

Thai culture. The Chinese language schools, and many households, continue to offer instruction in traditional Chinese ways, although it's unclear how receptive the younger generation will continue to be, as modern social networks, consumerism, and other elements vie for their attention. The evidence suggests, however, that while much of the local Chinese culture is mixing with Thai cultural elements, these are added on to core Chinese elements that have not disappeared. The result is a rich syncretic mix of cultural practices. The caricatured Chinese costumes worn by the children during New Year, or the mixed entertainment during the festival may seem superficial, but core practices are sincere and intact.

The Chinese cultural characteristic of "low uncertainty avoidance" might explain the willingness and ability of Thai-Chinese to combine various cultural elements. People in low uncertainty cultures, such as Chinese culture, tend to be more comfortable in uncertain situations, which could include accepting multiple cultural practices. Richard Coughlin's work explaining the "double identity" of Thai-Chinese, or Chan Kwok Bun and Tong Chee Kiong's work on "alternate identity," point to characteristic Thai-Chinese layering of multiple cultural identities. Hat Yai community culture is no exception to this mixing of cultures. The result is a dynamic culture that is likely to continue to blend elements in a pragmatic way.

4. Economic influences on social cultural maintenance

A final theme that may be drawn from this chapter is the importance of economic forces as they affect social cultural forces. We have seen that some economic factors can work against maintenance of traditions, such as in the spiraling costs of traditional Chinese funeral services or weddings. Economic development in a society tends to lead to smaller family sizes, which can also negatively affect the maintenance of Chinese culture. On the other hand, some economic forces, associated with economic growth, can be a motivating force to maintain traditions. The potential enhancement of tourist income has influenced the promotion of Chinese cultural activities, and the increasing economic

importance of knowing Chinese language has made the demand for a Chinese language education much higher than before. The Thai-Chinese organizations have not hidden the fact that promotion of traditional Chinese cultural festivals and traditions is partly intended to attract ethnic Chinese and other tourists to Hat Yai. But whether the motivation of the organizations to maintain a social culture with Chinese characteristics is economically motivated is largely irrelevant-- the end result is still the maintenance of Chinese traditions in the family and community. The social cultural forces examined in this chapter reveal a dynamic, colorful community with distinctive Chinese characteristics in their festivals, religion, families, schools, and self-identity. In the following chapter, we will further explore the economic dimensions and characteristics of the community, as it provides another perspective to answer the questions of the strength and nature of the Chinese cultural heritage remaining in the Hat Yai community.

Chapter V

Economic Dimensions and Characteristics of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

5.1 Introduction

Hat Yai's economy has been booming for several decades now, providing an engine of commercial growth for the southern Thailand region. As the president of the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand noted, Hat Yai has become the second largest holder of bank savings in Thailand, after Bangkok. In 2011 it was also the second largest provider of capital loans, the second largest equity exchange market in the country, and the second largest exporter in the country. (President of Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand, 2012) The focus of the following discussion, however, is not on specific economic activities and growth in Hat Yai; rather, this research explores the economic norms and expectations that form the environment of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. The local society, of both Chinese and non-Chinese ethnicity, widely recognizes the key role that the Thai-Chinese have played in bringing about economic prosperity. This researcher's interviews and survey confirm this recognition--as one survey respondent expressed, when asked to describe the important thing she felt about being Thai-Chinese, "Ethnic Thai-Chinese have a heart for helping one another. It doesn't have to be someone of the same ethnic background. Chinese are industrious, bringing development to any place where there is a Thai-Chinese community." This section explores some of the economic dimensions and characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community that appear to be related to the community's economic development.

5.2 Co-option of government forces as an economic characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

As discussed in the section comparing Chinese and Thai culture, distinctive characteristics of Chinese economic culture provide a necessary background for Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese community. Economic culture in the context of this research study refers to the beliefs, values and norms that are associated with the practice of economic activities. Economic activities refer to the production, trading and distribution of resources in society. In accordance with the emphasis on culture as relationship, economic culture encompasses expectations that community members bring into economic relationships with one another. Chinese scholar Gordon Redding highlighted the importance of "guanxi," or relationship, as "network capitalism" in Chinese economic culture. Historically, volunteer organizations in Chinese communities, both domestic and overseas, have provided a platform to form secure, trustworthy economic relationships. Before exploring more specifically the role of some of Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese trade and professional-related organizations in providing such a platform, it will be helpful to briefly sketch a more detailed picture of the Thai-Chinese experience in Thailand's overall economy.

Economic scholar Suehiro Akira documents the story of Chinese capitalists and their essential role in the Thai economy in *Capital Accumulation in Thailand, 1855-1985*. His work provides particular insight into two relevant points concerning Thai-Chinese and economic culture. First, Chinese entrepreneurs have had a sometimes delicate relationship with the Thai government, and yet have been able to adapt and co-opt. Second, Thai-Chinese volunteer organizations have played a valuable role in the establishment of business networks.

According to Akira, Chinese capitalists have maintained a close relationship with government for a long time in order to accumulate capital. A primary key to their success in the economy was political patronage.

Since Chinese capitalists generally had no advantage in technology and no linkage to the core centre (London) of worldwide capitalism, three elements became more crucial to them: political patronage, or dependence on the king's power, connections with foreign capital, and high educational achievement. The most significant of these elements was political patronage....[C]apitalist development in Thailand did not produce an independent domestic (or Chinese) capitalist class against the existing political power. Rather they expanded their business solely on their political connections. Privileged access to Thai bureaucrats as well as royalty...became the decisive instrument for their quick accumulation of capital. (Akira, 1989)

This pattern began from at least the early 20th century and continued after the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932. The economic system was modified starting from the late 1940s, after the world war, with the hyper-nationalist policies of Phibul Songkhram and increasing involvement of the state and military in the economy. This interference in the private sector led to the formation of a "bureaucrat capitalist class." Chinese business people (mostly men) in the major industries, in order for their businesses to survive, were forced to incorporate military and Thai government bureaucrats into their governing boards and operations. At a lower economic level, the omnipresent threat of interference of government officials meant that family-owned small and medium sized enterprises often had to co-opt government officials through payoffs or special favors.

Akira argues that this situation of bureaucrat capitalists and military-involved businesses in public and private enterprise was the most important factor to explain "underdevelopment and overspecialization" of Thailand's industrial sector during the 1950s. "Bureaucrat capitalists, by their nature, primarily aim at exploiting and appropriating the economic surplus for political purposes." (Akira, 1989) As Akira indicates, Thai economic culture can be predatory, with government officials using leverage of regulation, licensing, or the granting/denying of contracts to prey upon Chinese capitalists. That this

system of corruption continues to the present is apparent in the rather dismal rankings Thailand has received by Transparency International, a non-partisan non-government organization. Transparency International rates nations annually based on "how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be" and publishes the results in a "corruption perception index." In 2013, Thailand was ranked 102 of 177 countries. (Transparency International, 2014)

The fact that this system has also been largely Bangkok-centered has likely had significant implications for the Hat Yai community in the south, far from the center of power. Provincial business people, even the wealthy ones, do not have the access to gain advantage from the system; bureaucrat capitalists in or appointed by Bangkok could be a source of conflict and frustration. The growth and vitality of Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai has been in part a reaction to this system. As seen in the story of many self-made business families in Hat Yai, a dominant Thai-Chinese style of business and social organization is community self-reliant and boosted by lineage, regional, charity, and professional and trade organizations. The culture of self-reliance can be seen not just in business formation, but also in the provision of social welfare for the community. From the early pioneer days, rather than depend on government to provide social services such as public health, or assistance to the poor, the Hat Yai Chinese formed *munithi* and associations which provided hospital care, assistance to the poor, and disaster relief. As one area history expert pointed out, there is a strong tradition of the Chinese in the community providing social welfare via community organizations, since the days of Jia Ki Si. That founding pioneer, both through his own businesses and by encouraging the inter-language group cooperation of local organizations, provided housing, medical care and help for education for his employees. Jia Ki Si, at the same time that he donated the land for the city's Chinese graveyard, led in the foundation of the Chung Hua Foundation for taking care of elderly Chinese, which he deliberately formed as a collective effort by the five main language organizations--Hakka, Teo Chew, Hokkien, Hailam and Kwong Siew. (Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla

Thailand Member, 2012) The Siang Teung Foundation, although originally started by Teo Chew Chinese, has similarly been an inter-language group venture, such as in the cooperative fund-raising for the construction of the private hospital, *Mittrapap Samakee* Hospital.

In the same way, founding members of the various trade and professional associations did not wait for favorable government policies to establish their own organizations to formulate ways to improve the business environment. These organizations use the power of cooperation to share business knowledge, self-regulate the quality of their industries, or improve market infrastructure. In addition, joining forces protected businesses from any predatory government elements. According to several interviewees, at times the government has stepped in to encourage, work with and help these organizations; at other times, they have tried to extract advantage from them, forcing “donations” or interfering with preferred policies. For example, an official at the Thai Rubber Association (TRA) complained that the government has not been very responsive to TRA’s proposals, and has sometimes “taken advantage” of the group. (Thai Rubber Association Executive Secretary, 2013) The Hat Yai Songkhla Hotelier’s Association president mentioned a need for the association to protect against police interference in member hotel’s businesses. Finally, in response to this research’s survey, a 62-year-old male member of the Teo Chew Association stated

[We] have a big part helping the government. We Chinese feel proud, but sometimes the state, when it can't collect enough taxes will come dig it from Chinese. Sometimes it's very tiring. If we didn't have charity organizations, such as *Bo Tek Teung* and *Ruam Katanyu* the state would have to establish an annual budget of thousands of millions of baht.

This is not to overstate a case of animosity between the state and civil organizations--the relationship has been characterized as much by cooperation as antagonism--but the importance of the civil organizations in giving strength and voice to the minority group of Thai-Chinese is essential in understanding the

economic culture. The vice-president accounting inspection section of the Kwong Siew Association voiced the emphasis on strength in numbers provided by the civil organizations. When asked, "What is the most important role of the Association in the Chinese community?" he replied "We must join together... we Chinese still get along well together with harmony. If there is anything that comes along we will have *power* in communicating with others, like with government bureaucrats." Asked to elaborate on this concept of power, the Association vice-president explained that it was "power for having face in society, power in the circumstance that if anything happens anybody can contact us." (Kwong Siew Association Vice-President Accounting Inspection, 2011) Thus, in the same way that power is of key importance in Chinese religion, giving believers a measure of control over their lives, power in the economic sphere gives the business community more control over their environment. One might in fact say that, rather than facing the possibility of being exploited as an ethnic minority group by state forces, the combined power of the Thai-Chinese trade organizations allows the community to exploit available government resources.

The professional, trade, and other organizations have given the private commercial community a stronger voice, and have provided a venue by which the Chinese merchants could co-opt, rather than fight, the system. Mr. S has used his position in the Hotelier's Association to enlist government support for the industry. "I developed the organization by activities that brought people together with government agencies...the governor, bureaucrats, police, military, mayor..." all of whom might attend meetings of the association. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013) Indeed, the Prime Minister has previously attended a meeting and met Mr. S regularly when traveling to the area, and the Minister of the Interior appointed Mr. S as vice chairman of the Joint Government and Private Sector Committee to Solve Economic Problems of Songkhla Province (คณะกรรมการร่วมภาครัฐและเอกชนเพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาทาง

เศรษฐกิจ จังหวัดสงขลา). Particularly with the security situation in

southern Thailand, with the ethnic Malay Muslim insurgency and associated terrorist acts, directly affecting the tourism industry of Hat Yai, the cooperation with the forces of the state is a practical and necessary matter. Thus, despite the threat of exploitation by state forces, or perhaps in reaction to such a threat, the Thai-Chinese organizations attempt to enlist the cooperation of the state to improve the economic environment. The discussion below provides more detail regarding the specific functions of select professional and trade associations in Hat Yai.

5.3 Establishment of trade and professional organizations as an economic characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

Two of the most important business areas in Hat Yai are tourism and the rubber industry. Key civic organizations in Hat Yai associated with these industries are the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce, Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand, the Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association, and the Thai Rubber Association, all of which were mostly founded by and are presently populated by Thai-Chinese. The following section examines the formation and function of these organizations as important elements of Hat Yai's economic culture. The background of the trade organizations illustrates the relationship that has intentionally been cultivated by the Chinese business community with the Thai government. It also illustrates the importance of regional networks, particularly oriented toward Malaysia and Singapore.

5.3.1 Songkhla Chamber of Commerce

According to their official history, the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1983, in the midst of a national movement led by Songkhla native and Prime Minister General Prem to spur the stagnant economy through the formation of pro-business organizations. State promotion of the foundation of the Songkhla Chamber extended to the provincial level, as provincial commerce official Wisuth Salikhup (วิสูตร ศาลิกุลปต) aided in the search for an appropriate leader of the group.

Based on qualifying characteristics of "having assets, competency, and seniority," a committee chose Mr. Boonlert Lapharokij (บุญเลิศ ลาภาโรจน์กิจ) as the first president. The structure of the organization is meticulously laid out in their handbook, and includes the following sections and subsections. The list provides a good indication of the development and complexity of the Hat Yai economy, and the organized way in which the Chamber of Commerce addresses economic concerns:

- Office administration and membership relations section
 - President and Staff
 - Government and private coordination
- International business promotion section
 - Thai and Foreign Economy Promotion
 - Border trade promotion
 - Foreign affairs
- Business development section
 - Rubber industry
 - Industry promotion
 - Fishery industry
 - Agriculture and food
 - Tourism and Culture promotion
 - Foreign tourism promotion
 - Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) promotion
 - One *Tambol* One Product (OTOP) and craft industry
 - Construction and real estate business
 - Technology and communications
 - Hotel and service business
- Economic development section
 - Trade fair and exhibition
 - Energy promotion
 - Labor promotion
 - Special projects
 - Economy information
- Promotion of competitiveness section
 - Logistics

- Ethics promotion
- Human resources
- Social and environmental section
 - Society and health services
 - Resources and Environmental Conservation
 - Help fight global warming and ecological system

The organization exists to promote and improve the business environment in the province. This includes providing networking, lobbying the government for pro-business policies and regulations, mediating trade disputes, and providing business intelligence and statistics. Some specific projects have been the promotion of expanding rail and road capacity and quality, improving the canals, promoting the establishment of industrial parks, establishing a central goods and agricultural market, and establishing an ASEAN marine market. Organizationally, the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce falls under the Thai Chamber of Commerce headquartered in Bangkok. The Thai Chamber sends people for training in management, for jointly organizing events, and distributing awards, although they don't provide funding for local chambers. Of interest is the connection that the Chamber of Commerce shares with all other local Thailand Chambers. The Songkhla Chamber participates in promotional festivals and seminars not just in the South, such as the Nakhon Si Thammarat Mangosteen Festival or Trang Roast Pork Festival, but they have traveled as far afield as Sisaket to help solve problems of declining prices of red onions or bamboo products in Tak. (Noppanont Narupiyakul, 2009) The Chamber also actively communicates with the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in Malaysia and Singapore. According to former president Chan Leelaporn, the Chamber's funding comes mainly from member fees, and from fees for Certificates of Originality issued by the Chamber, especially to those in the rubber and fishing industries. (Songkhla Chamber of Commerce and Hat Yai Songkhla Hotels Association Former President, 2013)

5.3.2 Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand

The Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand has been a driving force in leveraging Hat Yai's ethnic heritage to promote business in the region. Before its foundation, there were several disparate trade associations, such as the tourist guide and hotel associations, which were not coordinating efforts at tourism promotion other than through informal contacts. In 1993, the mostly Thai-Chinese business leaders, with the encouragement of the provincial governor, organized the various associations to make a concerted effort at promoting the tourism industry. The first president was Mr. Phairot Rattagul, owner of southern Thailand's Coca Cola representative and distributor company "Haad Thip." The current president, Mr. Surapol Kamparanonwat, the owner of a business dealing with paper products, has used his term as president to bring in more organizations to the group. The structure is a loosely organized network of twenty-two organizations, the head of each forming the Federation's administration committee, as follows:

Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand Member Organizations	
Hat Yai-Songkhla Hoteliers Association	สมาคมโรงแรมหาดใหญ่-สงขลา
Songkhla Tourist Guide Association	สมาคมมัคคุเทศก์อาชีพจังหวัดสงขลา
Songkhla Entertainment Business Association	สมาคมธุรกิจบันเทิงจังหวัดสงขลา
Hat Yai Wittayalai Alumni Association	สมาคมศิษย์เก่าโรงเรียนหาดใหญ่วิทยาลัย
Songkhla Beauticians Association	สมาคมเสริมสวยแห่งประเทศไทยประจำจังหวัดสงขลา
Songkhla Art and Technique of Hairdressing Association	สมาคมศิลปะและเทคนิคการแต่งผมโลก C.A.T. ประจำจังหวัดสงขลา
Songkhla Association of <i>Munithi and Sanjao</i>	สมาคมมูลนิธิศาลเจ้าจังหวัดสงขลา
Southern Thailand Banker's Club	ชมรมธนาคารภาคใต้
Hat Yai Advisory Committee for Traffic	คณะกรรมการที่ปรึกษาจราจรอำเภอหาดใหญ่
Friends of Hat Yai Club	ชมรมเพื่อนสมาพันธ์ฯหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Runner's Club	ชมรมวิ่งหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Small Business Club	ชมรมผู้ค้าปลีกหาดใหญ่
Plaza Fresh Market Merchant's Club	ชมรมผู้ค้าตลาดสดปลาซา
Songkhla Bowling Club	ชมรมกีฬาโบว์ลิ่งจังหวัดสงขลา
Health Massage Club	ชมรมนวดเพื่อสุขภาพ
Southern Thailand Tailor's Club	ชมรมตัดเสื้อไทยภาคใต้
Hat Yai Dance Club	ชมรมลีลาศเทศบาลนครหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Restaurateurs Club	ชมรมผู้ประกอบการร้านอาหารเทศบาลนครหาดใหญ่และเมืองหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Computer SME Club	ชมรมคอมพิวเตอร์ เอส.เอ็ม.อี หาดใหญ่
Hat Yai "Ti" Offroad Club	ชมรมดีออฟโรด หาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Food Merchants Club	ชมรมผู้ประกอบการค้าอาหารหาดใหญ่
Hat Yai Gold Merchants Club	ชมรมร้านทอง หาดใหญ่

The Federation is active in sponsoring ethnic-related activities that are attractive to foreign tourists, including Thai festivals as well as Chinese. Their role in developing and promoting the Chinese New Year and the Vegetarian Festivals has been quite large. The organization works closely with various government agencies, such as the Provincial Administration Organization, the local Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Hat Yai mayor's office. For events such as the Vegetarian Festival, in fact, 60-70% of the budget comes from the government. (President of Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand, 2012)

5.3.3 Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association

The Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association was established in 1984, shortly after the founding of the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce, with Mr. Kangsaeng Sirisawatnuphap (กั้งส์แสง ศรีสวัสดิ์นุภาพ 李更生) as the first president. The current president, Mr. Somchat Pimthanapoonporn (สมชาติ พิมพ์ชนะพูนพร) has held his position for twelve years, over six election cycles of two-year terms. He heads an executive committee of eleven volunteers, who help coordinate activities of the approximately one hundred member hotels. The organization's budget derives from member dues, which are 30 baht per hotel room, so that larger hotels pay proportionately more.

The Association meets every month, and often joins the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla (of which Mr. Somchat is a vice-president) and the Provincial Administration Organization when there are special activities, such as road shows or promotional festivals. Mr. Somchat's reign as president began with a baptism of fire, of sorts, as a Southern Thailand insurgency-related bombing occurred at the Hat Yai Airport, threatening to devastate the tourism industry. Funded by the Provincial Administration Organization, and leading a committee that included the Tourism Authority of Thailand, he personally traveled to Singapore to successfully negotiate the continuation of international

flights into Hat Yai. Part of his strategy was to get the government-run Airports of Thailand (AOT) to reduce the landing fees at the airport, originally 10,000 baht, down to a mere 500 baht. The organization has continually been active in promoting foreign tourism into the city--they are currently in negotiations with Indonesia to open a Jakarta-Hat Yai air link, and long-term plans include opening air links to Mainland China. As the People's Republic of China annually invites local Thai-Chinese associations to observe Chinese National Day, Mr. Somchat joins and promotes the tourist connection with Mainland China. The vice-president of the association, owner of the President Hotel, serves as chairman of the Thai delegation to the Indonesia Malaysia Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) meetings as well. Finally, the Hotelier's Association has had a role in planning meetings for the Thai-Chinese Cultural Center being constructed at Srinakon School. Mr. Somchat sees the center as a potential connection with the burgeoning Chinese tourism trade. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013)

5.3.4 Thai Rubber Association

While the tourism trade in Hat Yai promotes regional connections, mostly within Asia, the rubber industry links Hat Yai closely with the entire global economy. The Thai Rubber Association was established in 1951 under the name of The Rubber Traders Association of Thailand as a cooperation of rubber producers and traders. The association is clearly not just a local Hat Yai Thai-Chinese organization; it was originally located with the Bangkok Chamber of Commerce, but moved to Hat Yai in 1992 due to Hat Yai's position as a major rubber production and transportation hub. By estimation of the association's executive secretary, membership is 90% ethnic Chinese, and the importance of rubber to Hat Yai's economy makes the organization relevant to this study. The association's main concern has been to help members deal with the hazards of trading in the global commodities market by fostering cooperation, as well as acting as a central point of contact for Thai government agencies. The association has dealt with problems of quality control, as well as contract compliance.

Historically, the Thai rubber trade was dominated by family-centered businesses, many of which originated in Singapore and Malaysia but which settled in various areas of Southern Thailand. The dominant rivalry in the early years (1950s) of the development of the rubber industry were Tai Tong, or Krung Saeng Group, and the Teck Bee Hang, or Thai Paktai Group. Local Chinese merchants have played a significant role in the production of rubber. Independent Thai rubber farmers tend to sell through Chinese middlemen, called Yi Bua (ยี่บัว) These people have very close connections with the plantation owners and rubber farmers, advancing them money in times of need, much as Chinese rice dealers have played a middleman role in Thailand's rice economy. But as Mr. Sujin Aekvanon, Executive Secretary of the Thai Rubber Association, points out, the downstream production and distribution business has changed from family-centered to operations heavily influenced by investment partners from Japan, Malay, China, and Australia, in part due to the increased globalization of the business. Whereas the industry formerly had to go through the market at Singapore, he estimates that 80% of rubber sales are direct market sales because of improved technology and world market communications. The market price is set mostly in Singapore and Japan, with the Shanghai market growing more influential. Since the world market price for rubber hit an historical low in 2001, Thailand has cooperated closely with Indonesia and Malaysia, who together make up 70% of world rubber production, to manage the supply system via an International Tripartite Rubber Council and a joint International Rubber Consortium. Thus, the Thai Rubber Association and industry connects the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese economic community closely with the world market.

The role of the TRA is instructive in examining the concept of civic organization-state relationships as well. Over the years, the Thai government has occasionally made market interventions to regulate rubber prices. For example, under the Chuan Leekpai and General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh governments, six interventions to regulate the price of 1.3 million tons of rubber, using a budget of 25.4 billion baht, were made. The Thai Rubber Association has sometimes

supported these interventions, while at others have argued against government intervention in the market; in fact, these interventions have been controversial, and included one case in the early 1990s of a rubber warehouse in Hat Yai being set on fire to get rid of 5,000 tons of “bogus stocks” of rubber. (Prapas Euanontat, 2011) The Thai Rubber Association provides an example of the sometimes cooperative, sometimes antagonistic relationship between the Thai-Chinese community and the Thai government, as well as the international networking function of Thai-Chinese organizations.

5.4 Perception of occupational categories by speech groups as an economic characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

Understanding how trade and professional organizations give the community collective bargaining power and networking opportunities provides insight into the economic culture of Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai. Another illuminating aspect of the economic culture can be found in the perceived differences in traditional economic roles of language groups. In his comprehensive and authoritative work on Thai society published in 1957, G. William Skinner, as part of an argument to demonstrate that “social relations are far more frequent within speech groups than among them,” documented occupational specialization by Chinese speech group in Bangkok as per the table below. (Skinner, 1957) The second table is derived from this researcher’s consolidated evidence from interviews in Hat Yai.

Skinner's estimate of occupational specialization by Chinese speech group, Bangkok, circa 1957				
Teo Chew	Hakka	Hokkien	Cantonese (Kwong Siew)	Hainanese (Hailam)
Bankers; Rice merchants and exporters; Insurance Brokers; Merchants in Gold and jewelry, Hardware, Textiles, Liquor, Timber; Pawnbrokers; Dealers in Canned-goods & grocery, local products, books and stationary; Rubber manufacturers; Chinese medicine doctors and druggists; Pork butchers; Actors; Rice-mill laborers; Dock Workers	Sundry-goods dealers; Newspapermen; Tobacco manufacturers; Tailors; Silversmiths; Leather workshop proprietors; Shoemakers; Shirtmakers; Barbers	Rubber exporters; Tea merchants	Printers; Machine-shop proprietors; Silk piece-goods dealers; Tailors; Restaurant proprietors; Machinists; Auto repairmen; Beef butchers; Construction workers; Furniture makers	Western pharmacists; Sawmillers; Proprietors of Ice-plants, Hotels, Remittance-shops, Machine-shop, Coffee-shop; Tailors; Contractors; Furniture makers; Goldsmiths; Hotel and restaurant employees; Domestic servants; Actors; Ship caulkers; Fishermen; Barbers; Lighterage "coolies;" Sawmill laborers

Perceptions of Hat Yai occupational specializations by Chinese speech group				
Teo Chew	Hakka	Hokkien	Kwong Siew	Hailam
Merchant; Trade; Seafood, frozen foods (cold storage); Textiles; Wholesale; "Do every profession or business where they can make money;" "push children into business more than the professions and willing to take risks."	Bankers, Professionals (lawyers, doctors), artisans, mechanics and technicians, foundries, metal workers, rubber industry	Rubber industry, Car part dealers, grocers and sellers of food, clothes and sundry items.	Sell commercial products from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Mechanics, lathes; carpentry, ironworks, and masonry; operating machinery factories, repairing tungsten, restaurants, watch stores, portrait and photography studios, gold shops, clinics, mining industry	Gold shops, Hotel, Retail sales

The lines between language groups and their associated professions, of course, are quite blurred, with perhaps the sharpest distinction being the ownership of gold shops--of the approximately eight shops surveyed around the central train station area, 100% were owned by Hailam families. Skinner noted in his publication over fifty years ago that traditional occupational specializations had been breaking down since the turn of the Twentieth Century. What is most interesting, however, is not whether there are actual occupational divisions by language group--the fact that some people still *perceive* differences between language groups, and have different expectations, shows that social and economic attachments still persist by language groups. The list is not intended to stereotype groups, but to point out that within the Chinese community, there is a general recognition that traditionally, language groups have been perceived to hold certain niches in economic sectors. Evidence of the economic cultural expectations regarding language groups and occupations exists not only in the interviews, but also in the official Kwong Siew Association history, which

proudly lists the Kwong Siew as talented mechanics and technicians. On the other hand, most interviewees did not place that much importance on language group divisions; on the contrary, many emphasized the cooperation demonstrated by the federation of 22 Thai-Chinese associations and charities. Nonetheless, perceived differences in occupational specialization show that Skinner's notion that socialization occurs more within rather than outside of language groups remains relevant even in contemporary Hat Yai.

5.5 Attitudes toward the market and property rights as an economic characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

Regardless of the existence or non-existence of a division of labor among language groups in Hat Yai, the general role of ethnic Chinese in the Thai economy as merchants is well documented. (Reid, 1996; Skinner, 1957; Suryadinata, 2007) The predominance of Thai-Chinese in commercial occupations in Hat Yai is supported by the survey demographics. 54% of the Thai-Chinese organization respondents reported owning a private enterprise while 31% were in some type of business administration or management. If Thai-Chinese occupy these commercial areas of the Thai economy, do the merchant backgrounds affect economic cultural expectations? From a western capitalist viewpoint, one might expect that those involved in commerce would heavily support free markets and emphasize private property rights; however, Thai-Chinese economic culture appears to have some elements that affect ideas about free markets as well as ideas about redistribution of wealth in society. When studying Chinese language in Shanghai in 1994, this researcher had a guest lecturer from Cornell University in the United States who taught for many years both in China and the US. This professor would take informal surveys of his Chinese and US students every year, asking the simple question, in an economic context, "What is the opposite of regulation?" Invariably over the years, the overwhelming majority of US students would reply "freedom," or some equivalent phrase, while the overwhelming majority of Chinese students

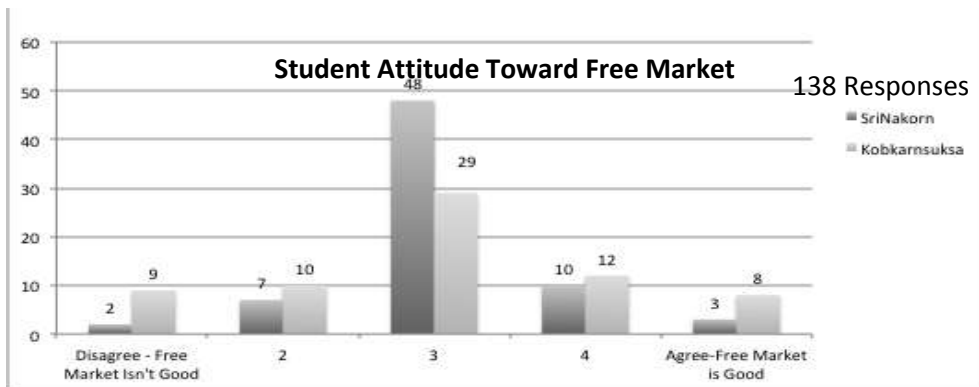
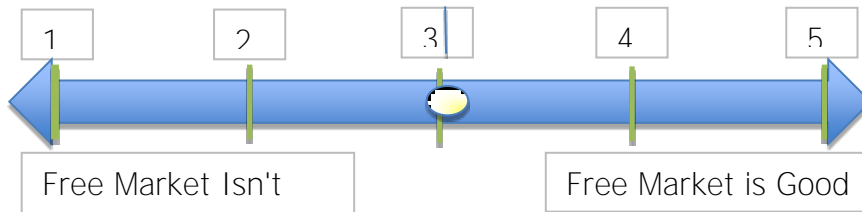
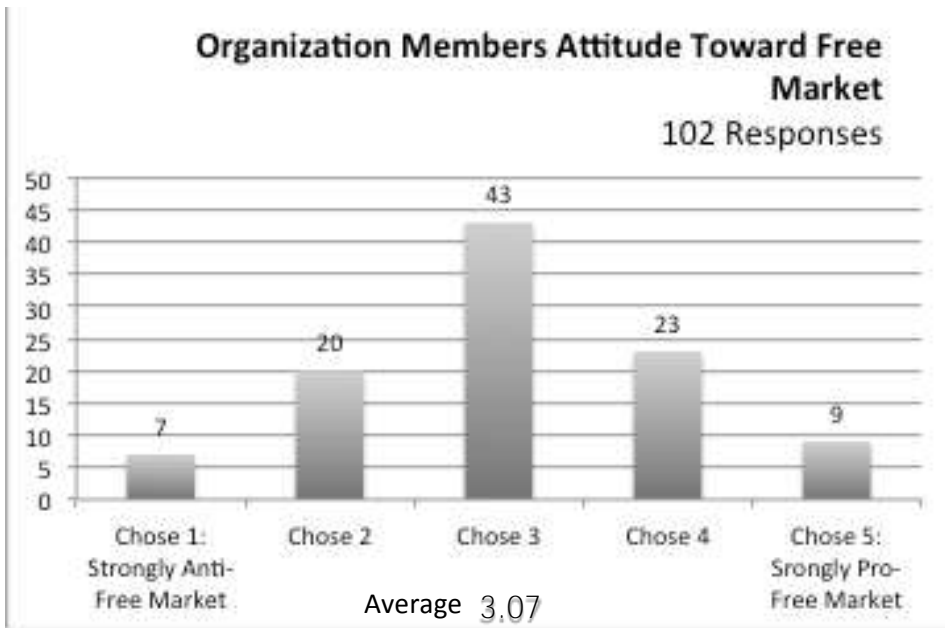
answered "chaos" or something similar. Although the story is anecdotal, it speaks to a Confucian or collectivist influence on economic culture, in which proper order of the universe and common welfare over individualism is highly valued. The acceptance of strong government involvement in and regulation of markets, and fear of "chaos" of unregulated markets, may of course be a result of decades of Chinese communist indoctrination, but also aligns with Asian culture as a collectivist culture. From the research survey results, it appears that Thai-Chinese capitalists have some economic cultural attitudes that reflect the collectivist aspect of Asian culture.

This research survey attempted to explore economic cultural values with two questions regarding the free market and personal property rights. The first question asked respondents the following:

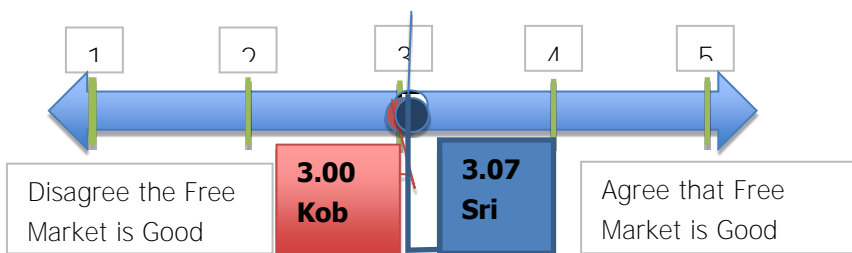
How much do you agree or disagree that free market competition with minimal controls is a good influence on society?

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai did not strongly support "free market competition with minimal controls." The organization members and Chinese language school responses were similar, both choosing a middle path between a regulated and unregulated market, with only a very slight tendency toward preferring a free market. The student average score was 3.04, while the organization members' was 3.07:



3.04 Combined

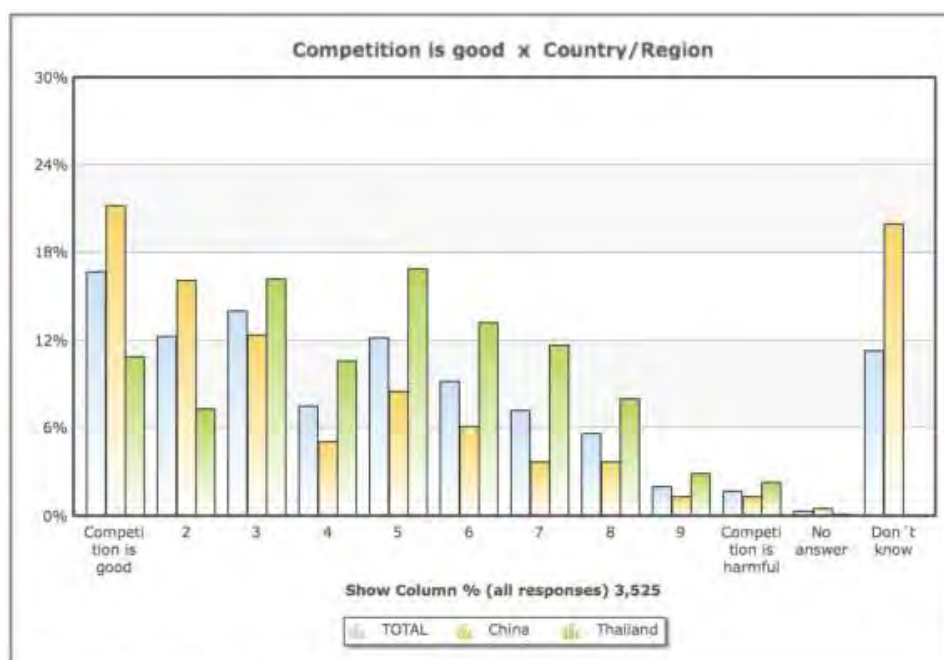


This survey data makes an interesting comparison with data collected by the World Values Survey. That survey is "a global research project that explores people's values and beliefs, their stability or change over time and their impact on social and political development of the societies in different countries of the world." (Survey, 2014) The survey has been conducted in a series of six "waves" since 1981. Although Thailand was not included in the latest wave, from 2010 to 2014, data is available for the 2005-2009 period. The question on attitude toward free market is similar to a World Values Survey question:

How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right...

'Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas'
 versus
 'Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people'

The World Values Survey results, based on 2007 data for Thailand and China, are as follows:



Selected sample: China 2007, Thailand 2007 (3,525)

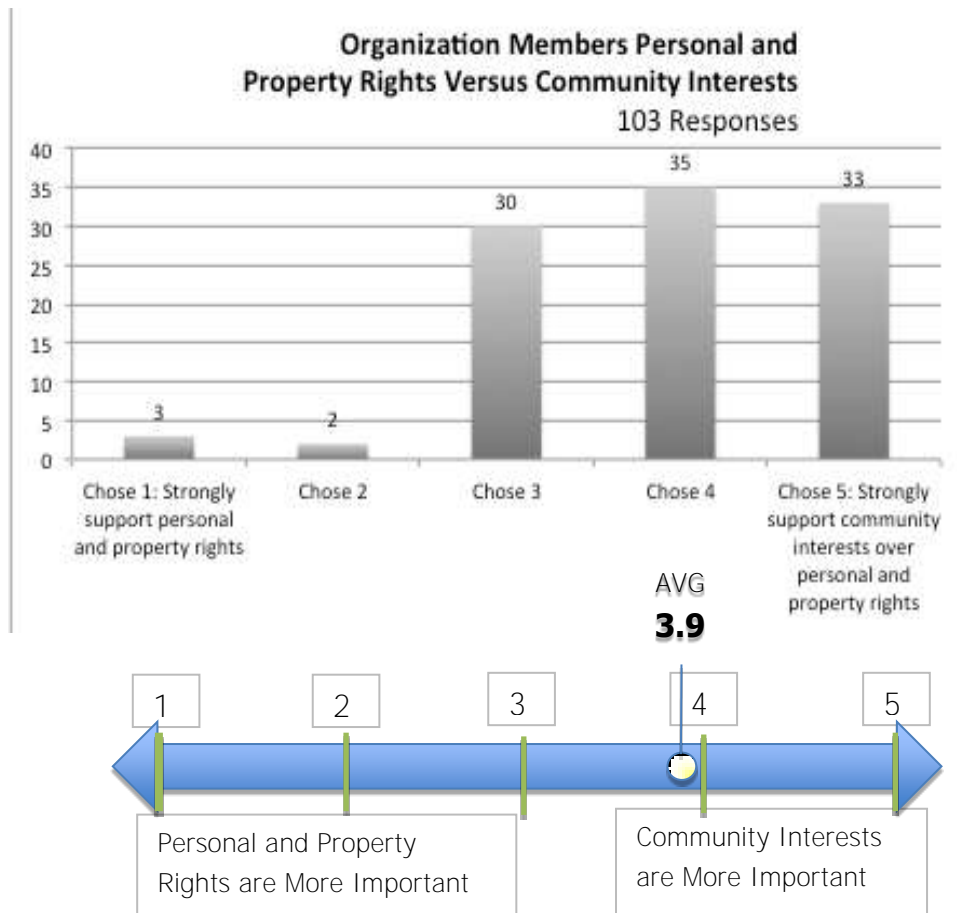
World Values Survey, 2007, on Chinese and Thai attitudes toward

One can see that Chinese respondents, even under a communist political system, rate the positive nature of competition higher than Thai respondents. This aligns with Hofstede's assessment of Chinese national culture as more "masculine" than "feminine." Without an ethnic Thai control group in this research's survey, it is not possible to compare if the Thai-Chinese value competitiveness more than ethnic Thais. However, my survey responses appear to not support free market competitiveness as strongly as one might expect from the sample group, composed of ethnic Chinese predominantly in business. Interview evidence does support that the Thai-Chinese culture upholds an ideal of hard work and competitiveness, while the older generation frequently expressed concern that younger generations were losing the entrepreneurial spirit. It could be that the adaptation to Thai cultural norms by Thai-Chinese is affecting the attitudes toward a competitive free market.

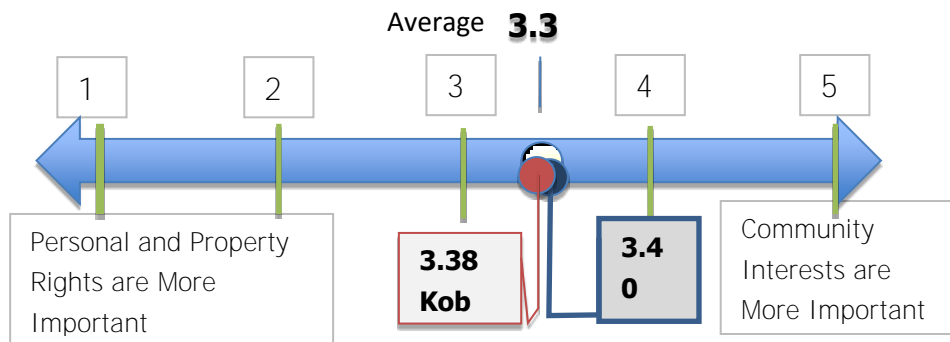
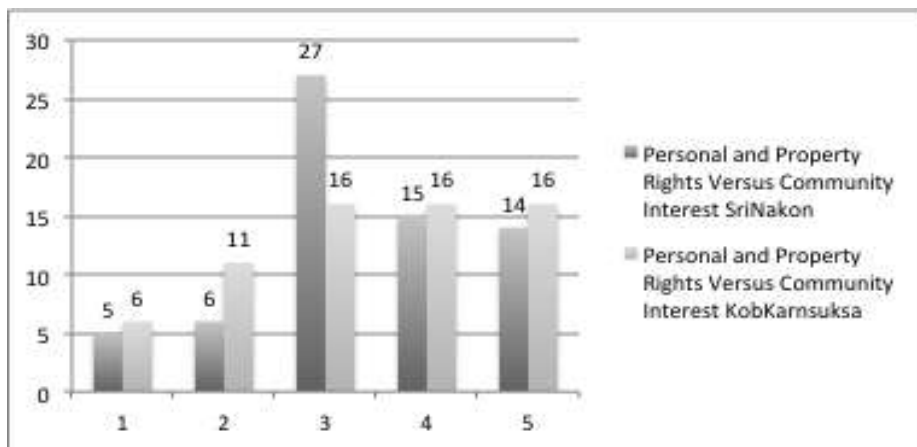
The second survey question attempted to measure attitudes toward the balance of personal and property rights versus the power of government to appropriate property for redistribution through society. One might expect that those in commerce, relying on a capitalist system, would support the protection of personal and property rights; although, as a counter-balance to any emphasis on individual property rights, the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai has a strong record of supporting charitable causes. This concept is a bit complicated, and to get useful results, the wording of the question must be carefully structured. The question attempted to clarify the concept for respondents by setting up a scenario, and by summarizing and repeating the opposing choices on the scale to be marked on the survey, as follows:

It is necessary to relinquish personal property to establish economic equality. For example, every person with income must pay taxes for the government to provide social welfare of fellow nationals. Which do you think is more important between personal and property rights versus common interest? 1 = Personal rights and property are more important, 5 = common interests are more important

Results indicated a fairly strong preference for "common interests" over "personal and property rights," with a slight difference between the older generation of organization members and the younger generation student population. The students tended slightly more toward supporting personal and property rights, although the average was still more in favor of common interests.



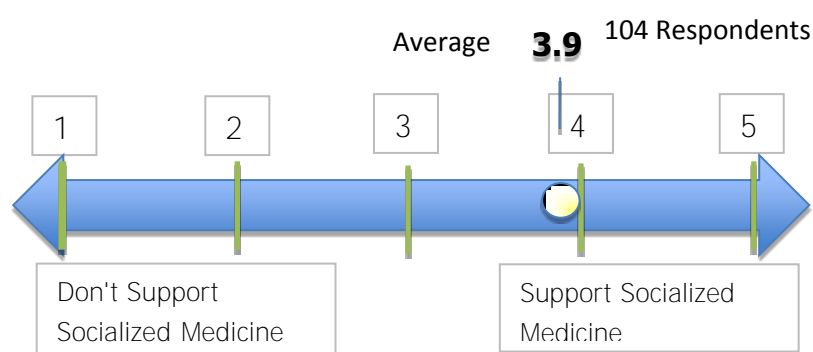
Student Personal and Property Rights Versus Community Interests
132 Responses



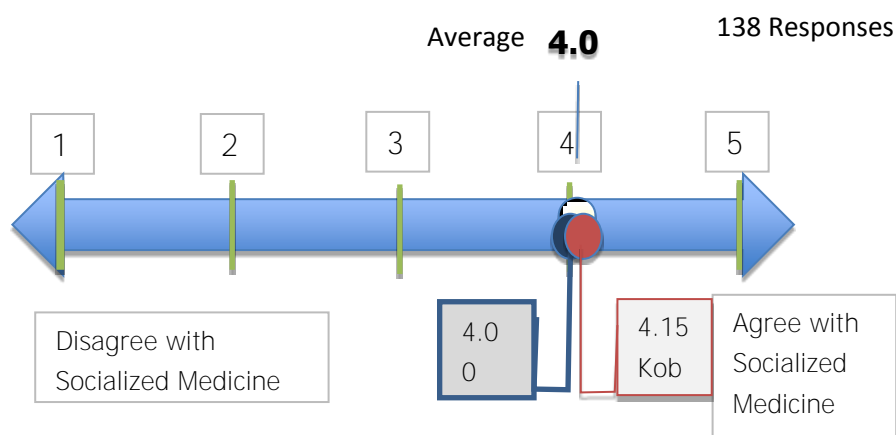
That the Thai-Chinese organization members support redistribution of wealth to support public welfare is also reflected in the response to a question regarding a populist policy of socialized medicine, known as the "30 Baht to take care of every disease." This program was instituted in the early 2000s by the populist leader Thaksin Shinawatra, and was one of the central platforms of Thaksin's party, Thai Rak Thai, later transformed into the Pheu Thai party. In fact, the original intent of including this question on the survey was to determine any party-affiliation tendencies in the community. Respondents' opposition to

Thaksin's policy might indicate an opposition to his party. As Hat Yai heavily supports the opposition Democrat party over Pheu Thai, I expected that the majority of responses would be opposed to this "30 baht" socialized medicine policy. In fact, the respondents quite heavily supported the policy, with an average score of approximately 4 out of 5 in agreement. Even though the district consistently votes in support of the Democrat party, it appears that does not preclude supporting populist policies such as socialized medicine.

Organization Members Support for Socialized Medicine



Students Support for Socialized Medicine



The survey results indicate that, although Thai-Chinese are predominately engaged in commercial activities, and might be expected to support free markets and strong property rights *vis a vis* government interference and redistribution of wealth, they in fact express a strong

collectivist attitude. This does not, however, preclude support for pro-business policies by Thai-Chinese. Kasin Jirotin, Thai Secretary of the Srinakon School Alumni Association believes that Thai-Chinese are indeed interested that the government allows a free market. In his view, the most important issue is that the government doesn't impose obstacles to trade. He compares Thailand's situation to Malaysia, which puts up trade barriers to Chinese, such as forcing Chinese business to share corporate ownership with ethnic Malays. (Srinakon School Alumni Association Thai Secretary, 2011) Another extremely important pro-business economic cultural concept in the Thai-Chinese community extols individual initiative, entrepreneurialism, and hard-work.

5.6 Entrepreneurialism and the Ideal of Industriousness as an Economic Characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

5.6.1 Community Leader Biographies

One can assess the values of a community by the models that are held up for emulation. The stories of various prominent individuals in the Thai-Chinese community are widely known via the civic organizations, particularly the language associations. These stories are often recounted in organizational commemorative and individual memorial books. The previous chapters have highlighted some of those distinguished people, both historical and contemporary--Jia Ki Si, See Kim Yong, Nikhom Preechawiragul, Kriangkrai Jiajinda--all demonstrating perseverance, talent, and active involvement in the community via leadership of organizations. The following stories, collected from interviews and commemorative books, provides further evidence of what may be regarded as the ideal of Thai-Chinese economic culture in Hat Yai. The list is certainly not exhaustive--the examples are limited to those who had published materials or who the researcher was able to interview. There are many other prominent community members whose stories could be told here--the main

point is to demonstrate those characteristics that are held in high esteem by the local economic culture.

The first example is the translation from Chinese language of one of the former presidents of the Siang Teung charity foundation, published in the Siang Teung commemorative book. The translation is produced as close as possible to the original to maintain the style of these published biographies.

Mr. W

Mr. W was born in 1920 in Canton Province, Chaoyang Prefecture (潮陽縣) Huayao county (華瑤鄉). His father did commercial trade in Thailand, establishing the Wang Bing Sheng General Goods store (王炳盛什貨行) in Bangkok. Mr. W's mother passed away in China while he was still young; without anyone to look after him, he followed relatives on a southern ferry to join his father. At age 30, he married a Chinese woman, Ms. M, (later to become the Chairwoman of the Southern Thailand Overseas Chinese Ladies Association 泰南華僑婦女會), and together they moved south to establish Bing Sheng Warehouse and General Goods store (炳盛棧什貨行).

In 1965, the Siang Teung foundation elected the fifth round of its council; as a member, Mr. W developed a supporting network, so that in 1967 he was unanimously nominated as Chairman for the sixth round of council. His accomplishments include:

1975 -- Founding the Thong Sia Clinic, providing free medical service and medicine.

1976 -- Established a scholarship fund

1977 -- Expanded the clinic structure, building the hospital completed in 1981

1987 -- Established a countryside mobile medical service team

Mr. W has also been elected the chairman of the "Helps Casualty Organization 14 Provinces South of Thailand" since its inception in 1971....

His biography goes on in more detail on arduous challenges of chairing this organization. It points out that,

...aside from having to control expenses, the representatives from the various areas all have different opinions and requirements. The casualty assistance organizations are gathered together on the basis of “righteousness” (義), with the cooperation and unity as the first order; even if there are “unreasonable” opinions, they must be tolerated and mediated. Mr. W has gained a reputation for his ability to mediate and show far-sightedness.

In 1975 there was a major flash flooding catastrophe in the eight southern provinces. Several tens of thousands of disaster victims were without food and shelter. Mr. W called an emergency meeting of the organization; however, because of the large scale of the disaster, some of the units had economic problems and were reluctant to proceed, and the meeting was about to be aborted. Mr. W made an impassioned plea, stating that money wasn’t an obstacle. If society just had the will to help, help would come. His comments were picked up in all the Bangkok Chinese language newspapers, and the relief started flooding in with the support of Chinese charity foundations from all over.

Mr. W has been elected successively not because he’s not willing to yield to a younger generation, but because the council feels that no suitable candidate has yet emerged. Aside from chairing the Siang Teung casualty assistance organization, Mr. W is also a council member of the Thailand United Charity council (泰國慈善機構聯盟), the Thai-Chinese Friendship Alliance (泰中友好協會) and chairman of the Southern Thai branch of this organization, chairman of the Thai royal charity organization, Songkhla volunteer committee (泰皇慈善機構宋卡志願委員會), council member of the National Scout Organization of Thailand (泰國童軍會 คณะลูกเสือแห่งชาติ) and the Scouting Organization of Songkhla, deputy director general of the Hat Yai Teochiu Association.

Mr. W and his wife have raised five sons and six daughters, some of whom studied in Europe and America, some of whom have entered politics, while others have made a name for themselves in business. (Siang Teung Foundation, 1989)

The second example comes from the Srinakon book commemorating the completion of a major renovation and construction project. The story recounts the life story and honors of a leading business figure in the community who was by far the major donor for the project.

Mr. K

Mr. K was originally from Canton Province, Jiexi Prefecture (揭西) Laogonglin County (老宮林). A bright lad, he came to Thailand at an early age as an apprentice at a shop dealing in galvanized iron. After working several places, in 1938 he held a position at the Bangkok “Xiangong” Port Fengyuan measurement company. Having been recognized for his talents, in three years he was sent to Songkhla as the Southern Region sales representative. But in less than a year, he joined with friends Mr. Lin Yingchun (林映春) and Zheng Guoqi (鄭國琦) to found the Wan Long Da Company (萬隆達公司) on Songkhla’s central street. However, that same year the Japanese invaded, causing the business to temporarily cease; however, the company was able to make timely purchases of merchandise to supply occupied places, turning the business around. After one year he moved to Hat Yai, and after the war, seeing that the construction industry was flourishing, he invested in the precision measurement and construction hardware & materials company, as Hat Yai’s first and only construction company. In business until 1956, Wan Long Da split into three branches, moving the companies to nearby locations and establishing a Kangsaeng combined company which thrived.

In 1966, he was the only survivor in a major car accident killing 9 others. After spending five months healing many broken bones, he felt a new lease on life and wanted to contribute to society. In 1972 he was elected to vice-chairman of the Siang Teung council, and

was also elected as the head of the Teo Chew Association Administrative council. From the beginning he had four aspirations:

- For the Association to register as a lawful organization.
- Reconstruct the Chinese school to become a modern school
- Renovate the Association building
- Take all private property of the association and convert it to the ownership of the association, to avoid any later trouble

Leading with his own assets and time, he was able to succeed in all of these goals.

In 1983, the Songkhla Nakharin University Steering Committee, for his accomplishments in industry, and contributions to society, through the college of commerce and industry management awarded him a Masters Degree.

In 1984 and 1986 he also received royal awards.

Positions held by Mr. K included

- Hat Yai Teo Chew Association honorary chairman
- Thailand Ban Shan Hakka honorary chairman
- Hat Yai De Jiao Association southern consultant
- Hat Yai Fu De Mutual Help Society consultant
- International Lions Club 301B District Steering Committee Member
- Songkhla Province Red Cross Member
- PSU Medical Charity Society Deputy Head

He was the CEO of Kangsaeng Ltd. Co. 更生有限公司, Kangsaeng Industrial Ltd. Co. 更生工業有限公司, Asia Pa Shi Industries Ltd. Co. 亞洲帕士的工業有限公司, and Asia Hotel 亞洲酒店 (SriNakon, 1999)

Mr. N

A significant figure in recent Hat Yai history associated with the school, as well as the Teo Chew Association, is Mr.N. He was born in 1937, and studied at Srinakorn until it closed in 1953. At 17 years old, he joined his father to work in the family import-export business, Hang Hun Suan Thai-Malay. During the 1960s, he expanded the business and founded his own Penang-Hat Yai Hai Hong seafood import-export company. Besides heading the aforementioned companies, he heads or has leading positions in Industrial Resource Development Company, Thai Union Palm Oil, Hat Yai Consolidated Association and Foundations, Hat Yai Teo Chew Association, Kobkarnsuksa School, Hat Yai Srinakon School, and Srinakon School Foundation. In 1999, the PRC President Jiang Zemin visited Phuket, receiving members of the Chinese community. Mr. N and a delegation from Hat Yai attended the events. In the same year, the Chairman and a large delegation attend 50-year anniversary celebrations in PRC. (SriNakon, 1999)

The next example features the inaugural president of the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce. The information is derived from a televised interview published on the Internet.

Mr. B

Mr. B hails from a Narathiwat family of eight children, headed by a Chinese merchant father and mother. His father sold vehicles and vehicle parts, as well as traded in rubber and rice. Mr. B studied in school to about 14 or 15 years old, at which time he began helping his father full time in the merchant business. He married at 23 years old to Miss K, a daughter of a Chinese father and Thai mother. By 28 years old, he had accumulated 3 million in baht as capital, and moved to Hat Yai to run motorcycle and automobile businesses with two other family members. Their main companies, Baan Suzuki and Toyota Songkhla, serve all fourteen southern provinces. The Suzuki Company was founded when Suzuki approached the family to make a joint investment in a motorcycle factory, and made Baan Suzuki the sole agent for all 14 southern provinces. Mr. B has been active in many other charities, particularly as head of an orphanage charity

organization. He became the head of the “Southern Thai Promotion of Morals Society” (สมาคมส่งเสริมศีลธรรมภาคใต้) through which he donated 45 rai of land for a center for promotion of morals in the south of Thailand. (DMC TV, 2012)

The last three examples are derived from interviews with the current president of the Hat Yai Songkhla Hotelier's Association, a past president of that same organization and of the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce, and the recently elected president of the Songkhla Hokkien Association. Although the information is not published, to my knowledge, these are prominent individuals widely recognized in the community for their success and contributions.

Mr. S

Mr. S was born in Nakhon Phatom (a province just west of Bangkok) to a former Chinese farmer from Swatow, China. As a young man he migrated down to southern Thailand, with no capital on hand, starting out by driving cars for a bank in the Thai-Malaysian border area of Narathiwat between 1970 and 1974. In 1975 he moved to Hat Yai, still penniless, working as a hired worker and driver. After taking up an occupation of selling used cars, he used accumulated capital and his network of friends to diversify into real estate, house construction, and finally into hotel construction and management. A group of his friends joined him in building the Sakura Hotel nearly forty years ago. Approximately twenty years later, his group was able to construct a larger and finer hotel across the street, the Sakura Grand View Hotel. He has engaged in many diverse activities, including new car sales; his sons now help him run Volvo dealerships throughout southern Thailand, including Hat Yai, Phuket, and Surat Thani. Along with this success in business, Mr. S has been very active in civil organizations. Aside from his position as the Hat Yai Songkhla Hotelier's Association president for the past eleven years, he is also the president of Tourism Council of Songkhla, and a vice-president of the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013)

Mr. C

Mr. C, owner of King's Hotel, Washington Restaurant, and a printing business, is a third-generation Chinese. His grandfather, a fisherman from the Teo Chew-speaking region of China, migrated to Nakhon Phatom province, where his father was born. Fluent in Teo Chew and Mandarin Chinese, his memories of Hat Yai look back to a time, nearly 60 years ago, when he believes 90% of the population regularly spoke Mandarin Chinese in the market. Like his father, Chan is a member of the Teo Chew Association, is a vice-president of the Sri Nakhon Alumni Association, and was a founding member of the Hotelier's Association. (Songkhla Chamber of Commerce and Hat Yai Songkhla Hotels Association Former President, 2013)

Mr. V

Mr. V, owner of Tong Hoe Motors Limited Partnership and current president of Songkhla Hokkien Association is a second-generation Thai-Chinese whose parents came from Futian, Fujian province. His father went by boat at around 13 years of age to Medan, Indonesia, where he worked as a servant. Escaping disease and a hostile local Muslim population there, he returned to China, then immigrated again to Singapore, where he started a business repairing bicycles. He took that business to Penang, and eventually to Hat Yai, where Mr. V was born. The ninth of fourteen children, Mr. V graduated in the 1965 class of Saeng Thong school. He learned Chinese both from his family, and through privately tutored studies. From his father's bicycle repair roots, he has built a very successful business in car parts, truck and tractor sales and industrial tools. He's been extremely active in the community, including holding the following positions:

- Former Rotary President 2533-2534 (1990-1991)
- Former Secretary Saeng Thong Alumni Association
- Former Committee Member, Juvenile and Family Welfare Court
- Vice President Haeng (Wang) Lineage Association, Songkhla

5.6.2 The Concept of Industriousness

The stories above share common characteristics that express ideal behavior and character traits of Chinese merchants and community leaders. These men mostly started from humble circumstances, overcoming numerous obstacles and difficulties to make their enterprises successful. They diversified their efforts, following opportunities as they arose. Many of them used their ethnic network to gather capital or human resources to achieve a common goal. They have all held multiple leadership positions in several organizations, evidence of their drive, energy, and dedication in community affairs. The idea that Chinese “dare to act,” or are willing to take risks, was one common theme expressed in interviews and survey responses. The community admires those who are proactive and who show initiative. Risk-taking aligns with the cultural characteristic of being low in Hofstede’s national cultural dimension of “uncertainty avoidance;” the threat of the unknown, or threat of failure, should (ideally) not easily deter one from acting in business endeavors.

Every one of the stories also demonstrates a critical concept in Thai-Chinese economic culture--the concept of *Khayan* (ขยัน). According to Dr. Wit’s Desk Edition Dictionary, *Khayan* can be defined as “diligent, industrious, persevering.” If asked to briefly describe the characteristics of Thai-Chinese, the most widely used phrase, both by Thai-Chinese themselves, ethnic Thais, and other ethnic groups, will be that they are “*khayan*.” This was borne out in the survey, particularly write-in answers. It was used fourteen times in the write-in answers, by far the most popular phrase, and in eight of twenty-nine person-to-person surveys taken at Siang Teung. For example, in response to the question,

"What things are important to you in being Thai-Chinese?" one respondent answered, "Being a people who: are industrious, fight for life, worship the ancestors, are good at doing business, have a heart for society. (เป็นคนขยัน ผู้ชีวิต มีไหวพริบ ทำธุรกิจได้ดี มีน้ำใจเพื่อแผ่ให้สังคม)." Another replied "1. The preservation of culture by the Chinese descendants 2. Chinese language 3. The hometown from overseas of our ancestors 4. The industriousness of the ancestors and

honesty/loyalty (*seuasat*). (1. การสืบทอดวัฒนธรรมของลูกหลานชาวจีน 2. ภาษาจีน 3. พื้นเพที่มาจากโพ้นทะเลของบรรพบุรุษ 4. ความขยันของบรรพบุรุษ และความซื่อสัตย์) " In response to the similar question, " What do you think is the important identity of the Thai-Chinese community?" another respondent highlighted the importance of industriousness by mentioning it twice--"[Thai-Chinese] regularly have industriousness, patience, and economizing ways...industrious in making a living. (ความขยัน อดทน เก็บหอมรอมริบ เป็นประจำ ... ขยันทำมาหากิน)"

The idea of industriousness or perseverance recalls the poor, sometimes destitute, status of the Chinese ancestors who immigrated from the southern regions of China into Thailand, and fought hard to make a living in their new home. Their story has been preserved and passed down through successive generations in order to promote the idea of being industrious. The survey responses quoted above illustrate that the concept is closely tied to ancestors. The weight of Chinese civilization and one's ancestors can press heavily on contemporary descendants...children are instilled with a sense of debt and gratitude for what the ancestors have suffered through to bring good things for the succeeding generations, and the response to that debt should be to work just as hard to bring honor to the family. One need not be clever, or full of money, to be industrious (*khayan*)...one simply needs to keep working at making a living, never giving up, to preserve the family.

Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai play a role in sustaining this cultural ideal of industriousness. In this sense, the associations and clubs are more than just social gathering places—the work on providing charity and disaster relief, promoting education, and celebrating people who have become successful through their industriousness all serve a purpose to promote the industrious nature of the community. The manager of the Pun Sun Khak Association of Thailand provides an interesting perspective on the organization's role in promoting industriousness. Mr. L, a second generation Chinese, a seventy-plus year-old father of 15 children, started a rubber plantation with his family,

and subsequently started his own restaurant business. A Srinakon Alumni Association member and consultant, as well as secretary of the Liu lineage association, Mr. L himself exemplifies the ideal of industriousness in his life. When asked, "Why do Chinese like to establish associations?" Liu conjectured that it is because Chinese aren't satisfied with "just enough"-- they keep working to get more money and increase family wealth through their whole life. (Pun Sun Khak Association Manager, 2013) Mr. L's response correlates with an economic culture that doesn't accept "just enough," but extols competition and striving—the "competitive" as well as "pragmatic long-term orientation" dimension of national culture that characterizes Chinese national culture, and that contrasts with Thailand's more cooperative, less competitive, and short-term orientation culture. And as Mr. L points out, the associations are one element of the culture that contributes to industrious striving for prosperity.

In a study published in 1990, author Suntaree Komin, of the National Institute of Development Administration, Bangkok, found that achievement, measured as the value ascribed to being "ambitious and hard-working" toward one's goals, was consistently ranked by Thais as the last of 23 measured work-related values. The study broke out Thai-Chinese, however, and found that this group in fact ranked achievement as 13th of the 23 values. According to Suntaree, "These findings substantiate certain attributes of the Chinese that have been used to account for their success story of 'rags-to-riches'." (Suntaree, 1990) Even though Thai-Chinese still ranked "hard work" below other values emphasizing social relationship, this data correlates with this research's findings that Thai-Chinese culture persists in Thailand and puts a significant importance upon the idea of industriousness (*khayan*).

Interestingly, on the same survey by Suntaree, government officials scored the lowest for valuing achievement and highest in preferring relationships over work, which has implications for the relationship between government and Thai-Chinese. According to Komin, in a government workplace, this can lead to conflict between values of work and social relationship. Hard

work may not be rewarded, and in fact it can be suppressed. "Generally, the task-achievement oriented subordinates do not please the boss, for they are often seen as hardheaded, disobedient, disrespectful, unhelpful, and inconsiderate, etc." (Suntaree, 1990) One might project this conflict outside of the workplace, to the government worker-public citizen relationship, to see how the Thai government system can be exploitive, and in conflict with achievement values. Thai-Chinese might not see government workers as being *khayan*, but instead as being more laid back (or *sabai*, meaning comfortable, in the Thai language), and not as industrious as they should be. In the extreme, government officials might be seen as simply living off of fruits of corruption, which is a concept in opposition to the idea of *khayan*. In fact, survey and interview results that address the problem of corruption provide evidence of this conflict.

One survey response asked respondents to rank, from one to three, the top three of six possible government priorities over the next ten years, as follows.

- Deal with government corruption
- Develop both urban and rural livability
- Provide equal distribution of wealth and social benefits
- See that people participate in the community and express opinions regarding administration of the government
- Expand the Economy
- Make Thailand have a strong military

Although some challenges to interpreting the data arose from misunderstood response procedures, analysis of the data clearly showed that "dealing with government corruption" was the top priority, for both the organization members surveyed as well as the student population. Some respondents also mentioned the issue of corruption in the write-in answer to the survey. In reply to the question, "What role in society, on a local and national level, do you think Hat Yai voluntary associations should play?" one respondent answered "Support

activities that are useful for the community. Join together in expressing opposition to corruption.” The fact that many respondents are concerned about corruption does not imply that Thai-Chinese are exempt from such corruption. In fact, the contemporary target for anti-corruption sentiment is a Thai-Chinese, ex-Prime Minister Thaksin. The main point here is that the idea of corruption is in conflict with the economic cultural values of community self-reliance and individual industrious persistence.

5.7 Conclusion

Thai-Chinese have undoubtedly contributed greatly to the prosperity of Hat Yai. This chapter has focused not on the statistics or patterns that describe that development, but on the economic cultural characteristics that describe the community. Thai-Chinese have formed economic-related civil organizations, and used the networking resources of social organizations such as regional and lineage associations, to have more power over their environment. That environment has included a sometimes-predatory state, to which the community has responded by banding together and co-opting state resources for economic growth and security. The economic cultural characteristics of the Chinese merchant class remains distinctly Asian in regards to attitudes toward market regulation and redistribution of wealth, showing alignment with a collectivist versus individualist cultural dimension. Most important, though, is the economic ideal of industriousness—the idea that Thai-Chinese should be hard-working, industrious, diligently working for prosperity of the family, both in gratitude toward the perseverant ancestors and for the continuation of the family line in the descendants. The Thai-Chinese organizations have played a key role in promoting the ideal of industriousness, particularly by the examples of their leadership. Many Thai-Chinese believe that the industrious spirit is what has brought economic prosperity to Hat Yai, and that non-Chinese recognize this as well. When this interviewer asked the Hotelier Association president “Do the various Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai still have an important role in the

community?" his reply neatly sums up the economic cultural beliefs of the community:

Yes, they have an important role in the community, because now the entire province gives them honor as the Chinese associations have helped the province. Because Songkhla province grew up by the Chinese; that is, Chinese are able to do business that makes the local area greatly advance. If it weren't for the Chinese, there wouldn't have been advancement like this. Chinese bring development in every aspect...one can't compete with Chinese in trading. Chinese are industrious (*khayan*), daring to think, daring to speak, and daring to act. (Hat Yai Songkhla Hoteliers Association President, 2013)

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THAI-CHINESE COMMUNITY IN HAT YAI

6.1 Introduction

Having explored some of the distinguishing economic characteristics of the ethnic Chinese population in Hat Yai, the following will delve into distinguishing political characteristics. The political dimension deals with the norms and expectations in the distribution of *power* in society. In fact, the relationship between distribution of resources and distribution of power in society is closely linked, so that the previous discourse on economic characteristics has already involved a political cultural element. The previous chapter demonstrated that the establishment of Thai-Chinese organizations has been in large part an effort to bring power and prosperity to the community through unified effort, and the relationship between the Thai-Chinese trade and professional organizations and government reveals some of the expectations and norms regarding the role of the citizen vis-à-vis the state. Thai-Chinese citizens in Hat Yai join and support associations and foundations as part of a civic consciousness, but also to guarantee mutual protection. They see government as either a potential adversary or a potential ally, and band together to co-opt the state to become the latter in joint pursuit of economic development.

In this continuation of discussion on political dimensions and characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai, the focus will not be on party affiliations, voting patterns, or other details of the political situation of Hat Yai, but on the broader picture of community attitudes, beliefs and expectations regarding the “proper” distribution of power in society. The expectations and norms for the distribution of power are influenced by both the Chinese cultural inheritance of the Thai-Chinese, as well as the indigenous Thai political cultural environment. The discussion comparing Chinese and Thai culture in Chapter Two demonstrated that Chinese and Thai political cultures share many characteristics, largely due to the characteristics of being collectivist and high

power distance cultures. Those characteristics are borne out in the local Hat Yai community, as provided by the evidence of the field research.

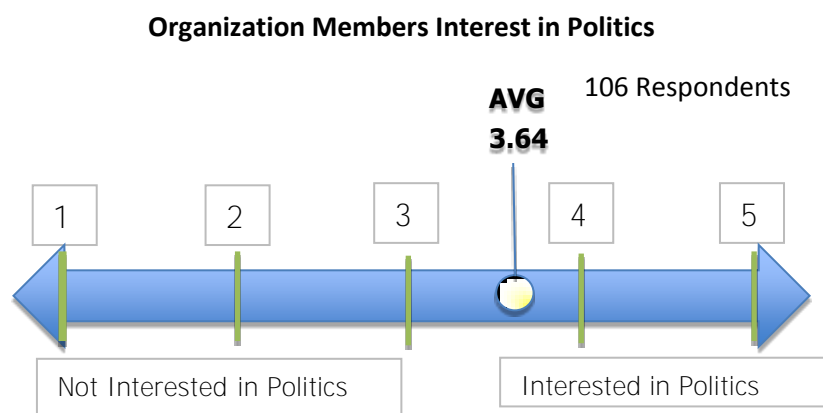
What can an examination of the Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai reveal about the community's political cultural characteristics? Do these revelations align with scholarly assessments that describe a Chinese legacy? The following will approach these questions via two methods. First, I will examine specific opinions on political expectations and norms via interviews and surveys. Second, I will provide observations, informed by interviews, on the actual operation and governance of the organizations to provide insight into the culture. All of the organizations have their own governing bodies; how they select that government and execute organizational activity can provide some clue to cultural expectations.

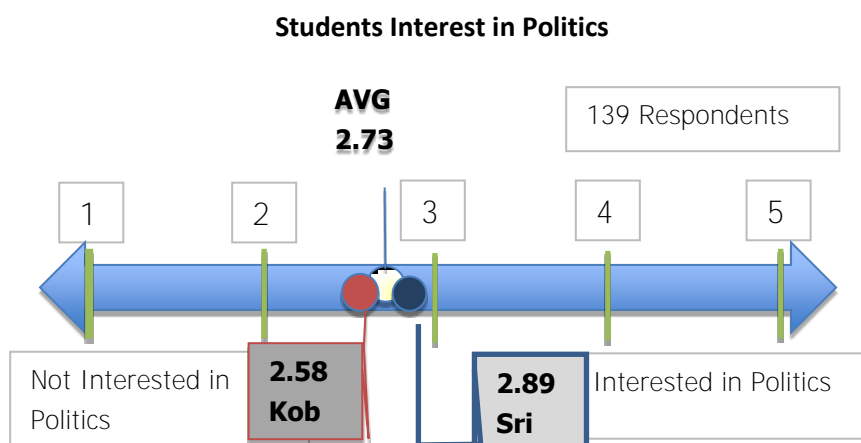
Collecting opinions directly on political attitudes proved to be challenging. In multiple interviews with organizational leaders and regular members, as well as area merchants, many were reluctant to discuss any subject with the words "politics" in it. This is likely borne of several factors: the history of Thai government and resident ethnic Chinese relations, strict laws on the activities of organizations, and the sensitivity of the current political situation in Thailand. For older community members with long memories, political discussion might conjure up a time when all Chinese were held as suspect communist sympathizers by the government. Members of a Chinese-affiliated organization could be easily targeted by the government. The Thai state tends to oversee civic organizations quite closely. The Civil and Commercial Code of 1925, as amended most recently in 1992, governs the establishment and oversight of non-government organizations. By that code, a National Cultural Commission, established in 1942, governs the establishment and provides oversight of foundations and associations. The Civil and Commercial Code gives the National Police Office Bureau responsibility for associations, and the Ministry of the Interior responsibility for foundations, listed as a separate category, adding to the bureaucratic complexity in which activity is regulated and monitored by the

Cultural Commission, National Police, and Ministry of the Interior. As Professor of Law Karla Simon observed, “Regulation of both associations and foundations has been highly subject to government discretion.” (Simon, 2002) Specifically political activity would not normally be allowed for organizations such as language and regional associations, or charity foundations, making members sensitive to a discussion of any political topic. This sensitivity was reinforced by an increasingly turbulent political situation in Thailand over the period of research, making the discussion of any topic of a political nature more challenging. Nonetheless, focusing on the cultural norms and expectations, rather than party politics, allows analysis of the political cultural environment in the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community.

6.2 Interest in politics and political activity as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

Nonetheless, many people expressed an interest in politics, which corroborated with survey results. When asked, “How much are you interested in politics?” organization members generally expressed an interest, averaging 3.64 of 5. The younger student population, however, was much less interested, as one would expect, with an average of only 2.73 of 5.





With generally increased democratic participation in Thai society, some association members apparently see an opportunity to increase involvement as part of their organization. A story in 2003 by a local news organization, *Focus PakTai*, indicated that a sea change in the political environment might be occurring. The story is derived from interviews with organization member "insiders," including a past Hokkien Association president, and is worth reproducing in length due to its frank discussion of politics and the organizations. Relevant parts of the interview, translated from the original Thai, are as follows:

In the cooperation in establishing a Chinese association, both in Hat Yai and elsewhere, the main objectives have the mutual intent to help society in gratefulness to Thailand, without becoming involved in politics. Nevertheless, if you follow the political development of Hat Hai from the past to present you'll see that Thai Chinese have a high political role in Hat Yai society. So it's not strange that the approaching election for the Hat Yai municipality level should come to this: the heads of various teams who have announced their candidacy in the municipality hope to invite administrative-level people of the Chinese Associations to be members of the team. If you look at the city's history you'll see that Chinese have had a heavy influence on social changes in Hat Yai, although now some people refuse to get involved in politics with

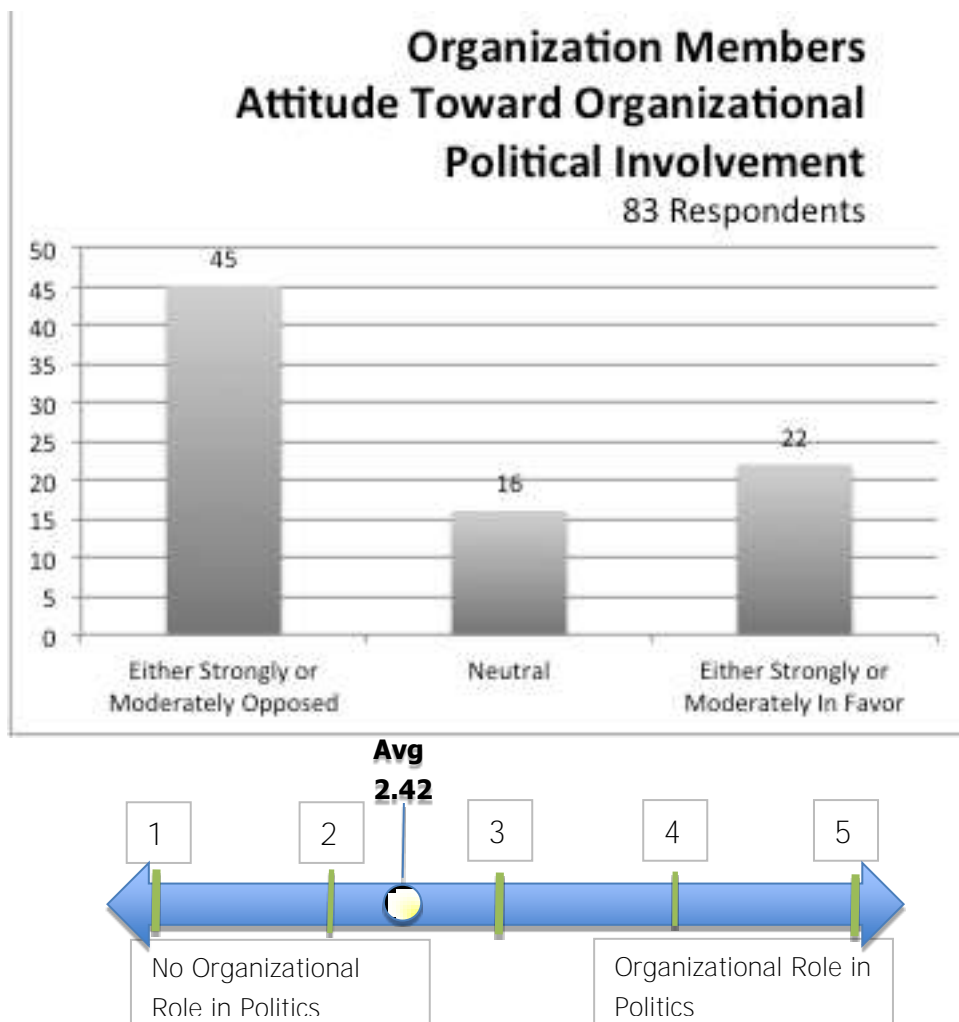
the reason that they want to work serving society without other conditions.

But some Chinese leaders are in the middle of deciding how to proceed together amidst the efforts of politicians who are trying to persuade to advance on that road. An informed source at the level of a local Hat Yai political team leader expressed his opinion that now local political groups in Hat Yai have turned to give increasing importance to Thai-Chinese Associations that's never been expressed. It's easy to see that it's a hopeful basis of votes that now all the various political groups are sending representatives to sound out the administrative committees of the Chinese Associations to have them send a representative to join the political group with a goal of one person each. Mr. Kornchid Thanisro, Vice President of the Hokkien Society, affiliated with the old team said the negotiations to look for people to join depends on the team leader, who will be the person to decide. He personally expressed his opinion that it probably wouldn't happen because of the political ethics.

On the other hand Mr. Prai Phattano, a lifetime Democrat Party parliament member who is in local politics and founder of the team "Hat Yai Prong Sai (Transparent Hat Yai)" sees Chinese Associations as an important base for votes in choosing a good hand from Chinese Associations to come join the team. He had Mr. Chan Leelapon be the person orchestrating the aforementioned process, owing to the fact that Mr. Chan is in the position of Vice President of the SriNakorn Alumni Association, and has a close relationship with the Association committee. The prestigious team which is led by Mr. Prayuth Wongprichagon has a direct advantage for Mr. Prayuth, who is the head of his own team which is close with the Hat Yai Hakka Association, and is one of another committee of the association, to pull people from the association to join the team, which has been done for a long time already, since the team was newly founded. And at this time, the people from the

Chinese associations who will apply for that prestigious team still haven't been formally revealed. (Focus Pak Tai, 2003)

One can see embedded in this interview a latent conflict between those supporting increased political involvement of the Thai-Chinese organizations and community, and those strongly opposing any such move. This 2003 interview and story was a time that Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai Party was trying to make inroads into the Democrat Party-controlled South. The dominant political cultural expectation was one of political non-involvement, at least at the organizational level. Tectonic shifts occurring at the national level of politics under Thaksin were affecting this culture; it may be that the quoted Democrat Party MP, Dr. Prai Pattano, (who is the current mayor of Hat Yai), feared the coming onslaught of the Thaksin movement, and wished to mobilize more votes. At any rate, this article inspired the following question in the questionnaire posed to organizational members, with interesting results: "In the past some political groups have tried to convince members of language or lineage associations to have a political role. How much do you agree or disagree that the organization to which you belong should have a role and participation in politics?"



Twenty-five percent refused to answer (most of the questions on the returned questionnaires had response rates above 90%), perhaps indicating that they didn't want to touch the topic. About forty percent of organization members either strongly or moderately opposed an increase in the role and participation of the organization in politics; a few even wrote in "Not involved in politics" to emphasize the point. In the survey write-in portion, responding to the question "What role in society, on a local and national level, do you think Hat Yai voluntary associations should play?" a retired judge and member of several Thai-Chinese organizations wrote, "[They] should expand the role in society at the local level much more and shouldn't be involved in politics, because that would

cause virtuousness (คุณธรรม) to decrease and become the end of operations." Most interesting, however, was that twenty percent either moderately or strongly favored an increased role—evidence of a potential point of contention within organizations. My interview with the senior community leader Mr. N made it very clear that he and his clique are strongly opposed to giving any hint of political involvement within any of the Thai-Chinese organizations. The interview occurred at Srinakon School, with an entourage of other senior organizational officials, all of whom stressed, repeatedly, that neither Srinakon nor the language associations were involved in politics, but only in giving scholarships and performing charity works. Interviews at other language associations, with either the resident managers or executive-level committee members, mostly drew the same response in denying political activity. At the same time, all organizations expressed that individual members were free to pursue their own political ambitions. The Hokkien Association, for example, has at least four members that are politicians, and about twenty that are government employees. (Southern Thailand Hokkien Association Manager, 2011) The Teo Chew Association manager emphasized the point that currently no association members are politicians (though there had been some in the past), and that there was strictly no political-related activity in the association. He then added, "It's the Hakkas who like to play politics." (Teo Chew Association Manager, 2011) The president of the Hakka Association, opined that Thai-Chinese were becoming more interested in politics, although he also made the point that association bylaws do not allow political participation within the organization. He did not address whether any members were politicians. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013) From the general outcome of association interviews, it appears that, since the 2003 article, little inroads were made by political parties to get official participation in political teams,

although Dr. Pattano, one of the advocates of increased involvement, succeeded in becoming elected mayor since that interview.

6.3 Thai-Chinese religious organizations' interaction with government as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

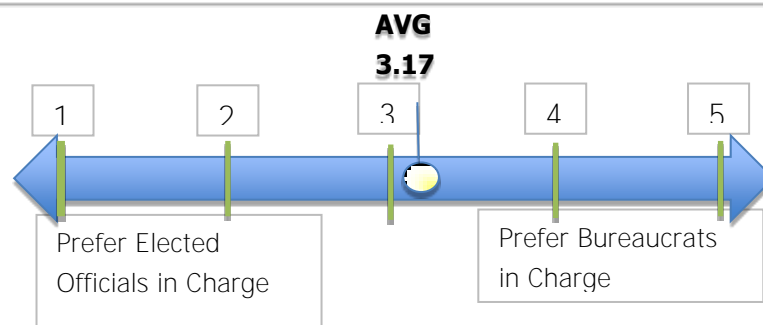
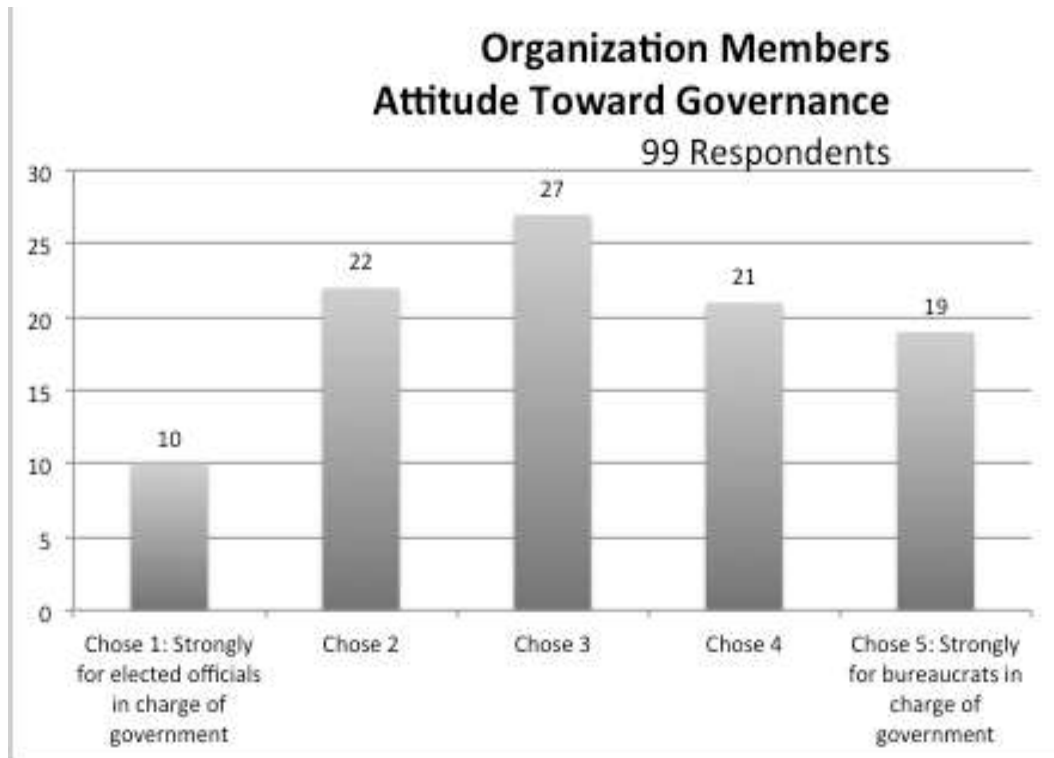
Chapter five discussed the topic of Thai-Chinese organizations and their evolving relationship with government, illustrating that the community has been able to co-opt government agencies to further their goals. Observations and interviews at Thai-Chinese religious sites also demonstrate that Thai government interaction with the private sector extends to religious organizations as well as secular. The manager at *Poh Seua* Temple and *Damrongthaam* Foundation, explains that the government religion department comes to inspect the foundation regularly. At times, this has been helpful. During a severe flooding of Hat Yai in 2010, in which the downtown area, including the temple, was inundated with nearly two meters of flood water, the temple coordinated with the Government of Songkhla and army in flood relief efforts. After the 2010 flood the Hat Yai government came to inspect damage and take pictures, and asked the temple if they needed support money. This assistance does not come without a price; according to the manager, the temple and foundation pay taxes of 1-200,000 baht per year. (Poh Seua Temple and Damrongthaam Foundation Manager, 2011) The attitude of organizational leaders toward this government involvement can be ambiguous. As previously discussed, the trade and professional organizations in Hat Yai have managed to co-opt the government into assisting the private sector with tourism promotion and security for promotional events. On the other hand, some interviewees expressed distrust or lack of confidence in government organization. For example, an official at Siang Teung who was involved with gathering and sending flood relief contributions for the Bangkok area, during a serious flooding situation in the fall of 2011, expressed dissatisfaction with government handling of the operation. According to this official, the foundation worked with The

National Municipal League of Thailand (สมาคมสันนิบาตเทศบาลแห่งประเทศไทย-ส.ท.ท.) and other agencies to provide assistance to flood victims. However, the government did not coordinate among various donating organizations very well, neglecting to register which organizations were helping and what they were doing. Moreover, the government agencies did not adequately oversee the safety of volunteers. (Siang Teung Volunteer, 2012) As Siang Teung's primary function now is as an emergency and disaster relief service, in which the foundation coordinates the disaster relief services of similar foundations in the fourteen provinces of Southern Thailand, this foundation official implied that his civic organization was more competent and skilled than government agencies at providing coordinated disaster relief. According to the Chinese cultural heritage discussed above, the government is expected to provide heavily for the welfare of the people, and government bureaucracies should be staffed by competent, meritoriously-selected officials. The attitude at Siang Teung appears to express disappointment in the perceived failure of government to live up to this expectation.

6.4 Organizational member attitudes toward government as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese Community in Hat Yai

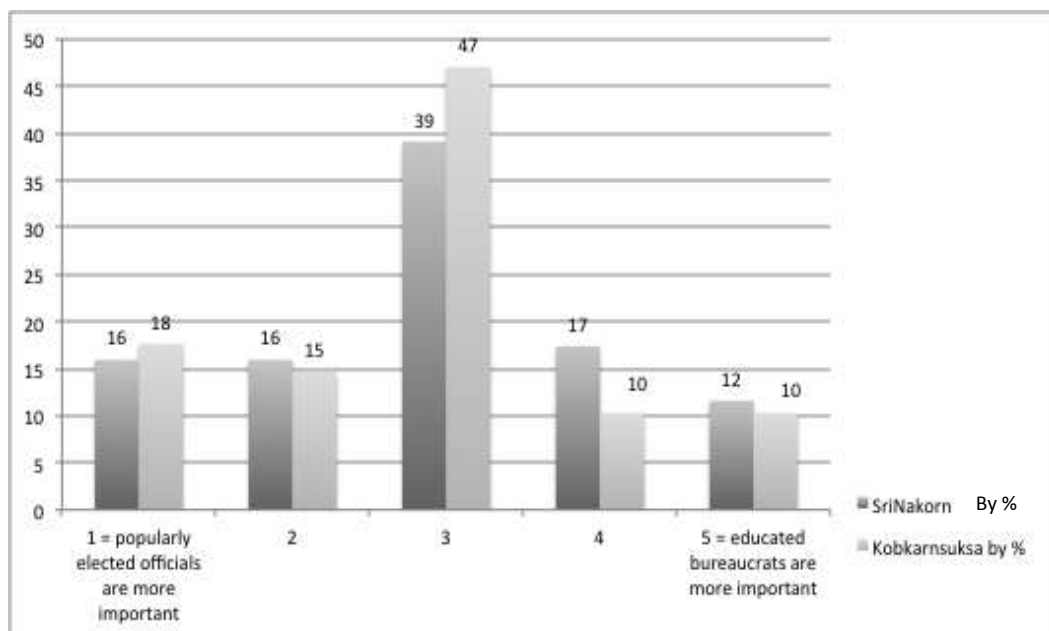
The two final multiple-choice questions asked on the survey regarding political-economic culture focused general attitudes toward governance, and the distribution of power in society. Some advocates of a more open democratic process in Thailand have observed that the current political culture puts a great deal of trust for governance in unelected bureaucrats. The Chinese cultural legacy similarly emphasized the key role of bureaucracy in governance. In that Chinese tradition, governance is often seen as a specialized endeavor that requires a highly organized, strictly-structured bureaucracy to operate effectively. The problem some democracy advocates see with this attitude is that bureaucrats are not elected, and thus not directly responsible to the general

population. To democratic advocates, it's more important to have elected, accountable officials in charge who can respond to the will of the people. The following survey question attempts to elicit attitudes, from both the student population and the organizational members, toward elected versus unelected officials being in charge of government: "There are two groups in administering government, such as making regulations and policies: popularly elected officials or educated, but unelected, bureaucrats. Between these two groups, which group do you think is more important in governing?" The results showed more of a balance in between the two extremes. The adult organizational members slightly tended toward preferring bureaucrats in charge, and it's worth noting that far more chose the extreme score toward bureaucrats than chose the extreme toward elected politicians. The student results are almost a mirror image, also grouped toward the middle, but tending toward elected officials, with more extreme votes for politicians than bureaucrats.

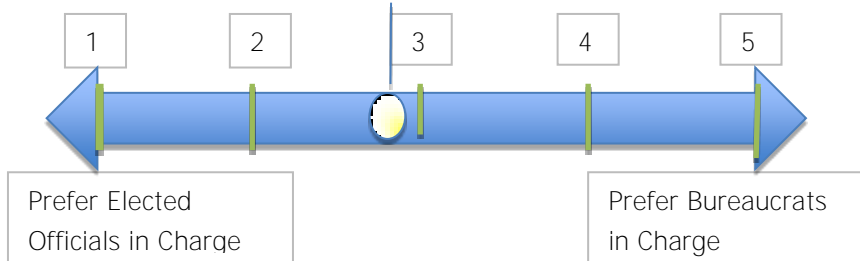


Students Attitude Toward Governance

137 Respondents

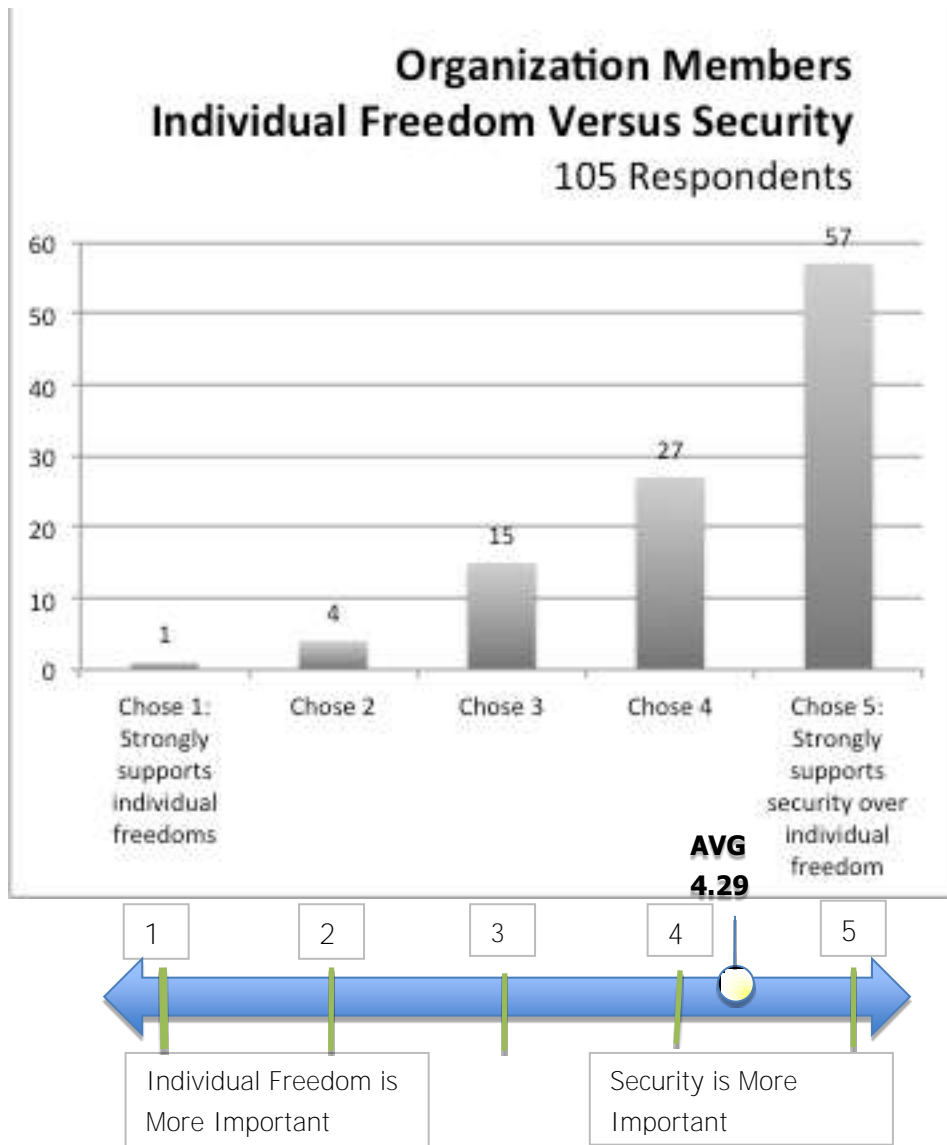


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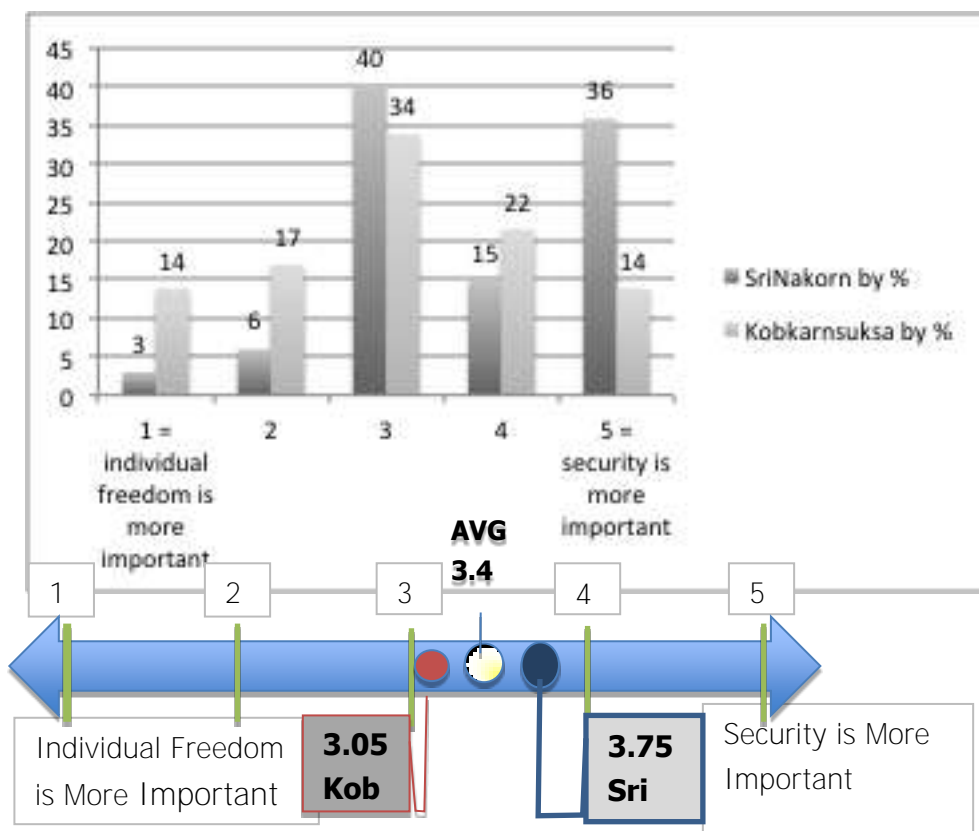
The final question on political and economic culture attempts to determine how respondents view the balance between two opposing concepts—individual freedom versus security. Made of a population of mostly merchants and business people, would the Thai-Chinese community favor more ‘liberal’ ideas of personal property rights and individual freedom? The security situation in Southern Thailand, in which Hat Yai has experienced terrorist attacks in its central commercial district, was probably a significant factor in the strong support of security over individual freedom. The example used in the question set-up, of searching vehicles, was in hindsight a poor one. Searches have already become an accepted practice that probably wasn’t seen as a “violation” of one’s

freedom—the right to freedom from random search and seizure is not strongly established in Thailand. Nonetheless, the extreme selection of security over freedom is consistent with other observations about Asian societies in general, which tend to value communalism over individualism and security over personal rights.



Students Individual Freedom Versus Security

132 Respondents



Before moving to a discussion of the Thai-Chinese organizations’ selection of their leadership and the implications for an understanding of “democracy,” survey results reveal two more points concerning the character of the Hat Yai Community—that is, the overt displays of patriotism and loyalty to Thailand and the monarchy, and the elevation of the ideas of peace and harmony (*kwamsa’ngop* ความสงบ, *samaki* สามัคคี) as self-descriptive by members of the community. These ideas were prominent both in write-in answers of the surveys and in interviews, and appear to reflect a desire of the members of the community to be seen as honest, loyal, and non-confrontational in Thai society.

6.5 Overt display of loyalty to country and King as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

As previously discussed, many community members, particularly those of the older generation with memories of more confrontational times between the government and Chinese, were hesitant to touch upon political topics. Perhaps rooted in the same concerns, many survey and interview subjects emphasized the loyalty of Chinese to the state and monarchy, and expressed their gratitude to the land in which they were born. A typical example is the following response by a 64-year-old male member of Hokkien, lineage, and Saeng Thong School alumni associations in response to the question, "Please give your reason for being a member of a voluntary association in Hat Yai." "To return the favor to my birthplace, Thailand." Other respondents expressed the same or similar sentiment when responding to the question, "What things are important to you in being Thai-Chinese?" as in the following examples:

[We] must understand obligations, rights and duties which one should maintain and carry out in order to maintain the Thai land of ours.

-- 74-year-old male, member of Hokkien Association and Consultant for Chamber of Commerce

We must think that we are Thai...probably maintain customs and traditions or culture which we can, but we must always think that we are Thai people.

-- 68-year-old male, member of Hokkien Association, charity, and college alumni associations

Being Chinese or ethnic Thai-Chinese isn't important. Just ask that we come to live in our Thailand. We must return benefit to our land that we depend on for our living.

-- 83-year-old male, Chinese secretary for Hailam Association, member of the Ngo lineage association

It's true we are ethnic Chinese Thai, but we were born in Thailand. We must certainly love Thailand, and recompense kindness (ตอบแทนบุญคุณ). Make the Thai nation progress, be people who must know kindness.

-- 82-year-old male, current member a charity organization, former member of language and alumni associations

The same 82-year-old member above re-emphasized the point in his response to the next question, "What do you think is the important identity of the Thai-Chinese community?" Following is his response, with several other responses to the same question.

We think we are born in Thailand, whatever ethnicity we are is not important--we are Thai. We must join hearts and bodies to make our land stable. We can live with happiness. The good in that is something which won't die.

-- Same as above.

Having pride in the country of one's birth, which is to say, having a nationality from birth in mainland China, and pride in being Thai, living under the grace (บารมี) of His Majesty the King.

-- 84-year-old male, member of language, profession and alumni associations

It's being Thai people 100%, take the way of life of Chinese people that belonged to the ancestors and the context of Chinese ways to make a living in Thailand.

-- 57-year-old male, member of language and alumni associations

Even though each of the respondents above clearly identify with being Thai-Chinese, given their positions in lineage, language and other Thai-Chinese organizations, they just as clearly want to forestall any doubts concerning their

patriotism. Observation of community ceremonies, businesses, and Chinese homes in Hat Yai confirm the concern for expressing loyalty to the state--displays of devotion to the monarchy are frequent and highly visible. For example, the organizations will organize grandiose ceremonies during royal occasions, such as birthdays of the royal family. Another typical example is the website SongkhlaChinesenews.com, which opens with tributes to the royal family, as illustrated below. In fact, displays of tributes to the monarchy are typical of many Thai websites, particularly government sites and large businesses, yet the abundance of tributes associated with this site, which I have observed regularly since 2011, is a striking reminder of the effort of Thai-Chinese to dispel any doubts of loyalty.



Opening page for songkhlaChinesenews.com, with multiple tributes to Her Majesty the Queen on her birthday, also celebrated as Mother's Day in Thailand.

The fact that Thai-Chinese attitudes express this overly conspicuous loyalty to the monarchy and Thai nation is a sign that they have fit into the Thai

polity, and appear as less of a threat to the Thai state than they were previously perceived to be. In the past, the un-Thai concepts of “mandate of heaven,” Sun Yat-sen’s anti-imperial *sanminzhuyi*, and finally Mao’s populist socialism (which resulted in ridding communist countries like Laos of its royal family), have all been seen by the Thai monarchy and state apparatus as a threat. The possibility that Chinese living in Thailand might subscribe to these Chinese political ideals made them potential enemies of the monarchical system and thus a target of government suspicion and repressive, discriminatory policies. The fixation with the extent of the assimilation of Chinese into Thai society that has been the subject of scholarly studies over the years was connected with this very concern. It is natural that, given this historical experience of anti-communist rhetoric and policies directed against Chinese, this generation seems quite anxious to prove their loyalty to nation and crown as a survival mechanism. The Thai-Chinese political culture appears to have rejected any part of that heritage that overthrew an imperial apparatus in the name of concepts like Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles or populist socialism. When one assesses that Chinese have fully assimilated into Thai society, it is thus probably more accurate to say that they have assimilated themselves into the Thai polity as Thai citizens. They have not, however, lost other distinguishing cultural attributes.

6.6 Emphasis on peace and harmony as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

Another often-repeated concept in the surveys and interviews was the Chinese love of peacefulness and harmony. This concept has deep Confucian roots in Chinese culture. The general idea in the Thai-Chinese context is to avoid conflict with the state or other ethnic groups; the emphasis is on everyone going about their own affairs, building their family businesses, and focusing on economic development. The Hokkien president, when asked what changes he’s observed in the Hat Yai Chinese community, began by stating the “Chinese love peace, love the nation.” (Songkhla Hokkien Association President, 2013) Some

interviewees implied a comparison of the peace-loving Chinese community with the radical Muslim elements in southern Thailand, who were seen as responsible for the years of violent struggle against the government. (Kwong Siew Association Vice-President Accounting Inspection, 2011; Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011) Survey respondents used several phrases, most commonly the word *sammakhi* (สามัคคี), for the concept of harmony, often combined with the idea of peacefulness, to describe the closeness of the community. Following are examples of the responses.

[The role Hat Yai voluntary associations should play is to] support development of a society which is peaceful and happy; and develop enduring establishment of harmony of people in society, both at the local level and national level.

-- 84-year-old female, consultant to Hokkien Association and to Hat Yai Prasan Mit Ladies' Society

The importance of being ethnic Thai-Chinese is being a person who can be harmonious with and integrate well with Thais. Not stick to being Chinese, which is different with Chinese who immigrated to other countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

-- 66-year-old male, Kwong Siew committee auditor, member Saeng Tong alumni association

Also in answer to "What is important about being Thai-Chinese?":

Bring about harmony together, help each other out, socializing.

-- 56-year-old male, member of Pun Sun Khak and lineage associations

Love one's nationality for the sake of harmony, but that doesn't mean that one doesn't think of their homeland and residence.

-- 69-year-old male, member of Pun Sun Khak Association and Songkhla Chamber of Commerce

In response to “What do you think is the important identity of the Thai-Chinese community?”

Mutual assistance, harmony... ethnic Thai-Chinese love everyone, reconcile together...whatever's missing, they'll help.

-- 50s male, worshipper at Siang Teung

We exist as a group, an association, no matter if Thai or ethnic Thai-Chinese. We are brothers & sisters together, able to join together well as a group. In the community we can join together with different languages. We have Chinese as another language, but all can join in our community, helping each other.

-- 61-year-old female, Hakka Association committee member, Tang Lineage Association committee member, Pun Sun Khak Association Committee member

Ethnic Thai-Chinese generously help each other and have togetherness; for example, Hailam, Hokkien, Teo Chew, Cantonese, Hakka, Kwong Siew Associations join together in the 13 Chinese associations in Hat Yai, joining in work and helping each other. The original Hat Yai community came from ethnic Thai-Chinese from many provinces, coming to settle down and make a living, until it was called Hat Yai junction, in which the majority of Hat Yai people spoke Mandarin Chinese in the previous times, because of the border with Malaysia and Singapore.

-- 48-year-old male, member and official of Hailam and multiple other associations.

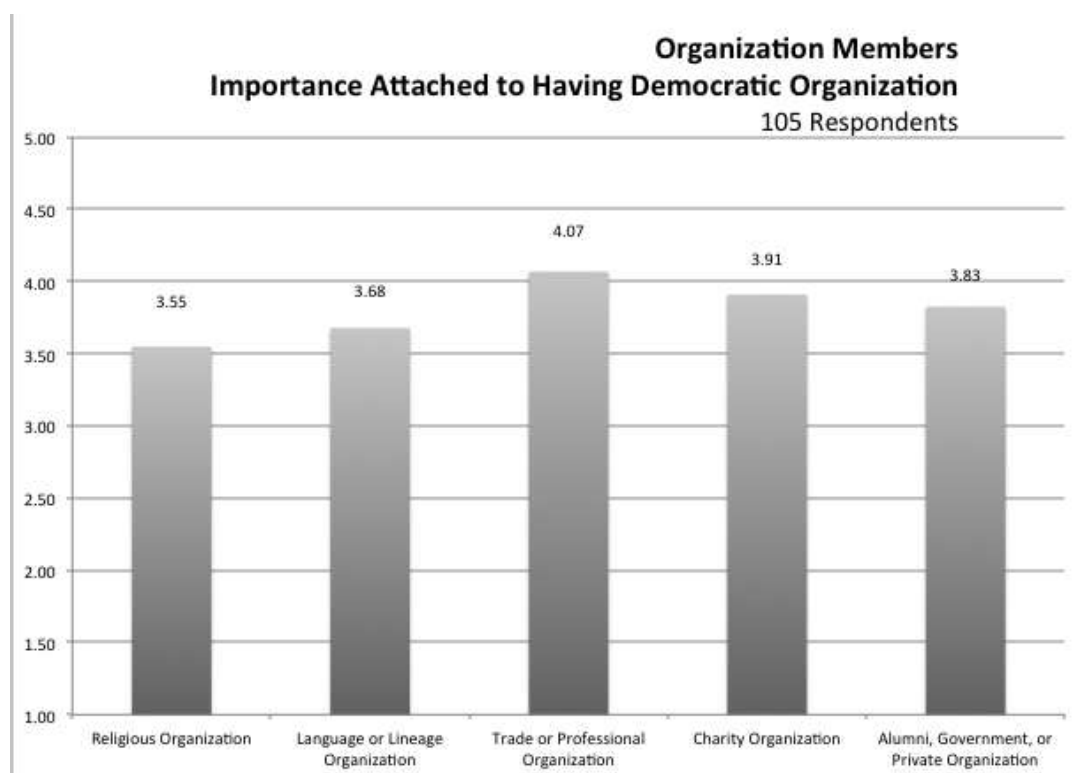
The concepts voiced by these Thai-Chinese community members demonstrate the importance to those members of being seen as cooperative, good members of society. Loyalty, honesty, peacefulness and harmony are extolled as the traits of a good citizen. Marc Askew, in exploring the existence of a “Southern Thai Political Culture,” cites Thai scholar Klin Khongmuangphet to list some typical Southern Thai cultural values that local Southerners allegedly use to evaluate the appropriateness of candidates for political leadership positions;

the list of values dovetails closely with characteristics identified above from surveys and interviews. These values include “honesty and faithfulness (*khwamsusat*); endurance (*khwamot-thon*) [An idea closely related to *khayan* discussed in the previous chapter]; fellowship (*sammakki*) [which I translated as harmony]; sacrifice (*khwamsia-sara*); attention to the collective good (*khwam hen kae prayot suan ruam*); respect for the rights of others (*khwam khaorop nai sitthi khong phu un*); gratitude (*kattanyu*); and generosity (*khwam me namchai pen mit maitri*).” (Askew, 2006) Naturally, these are ideals, and do not necessarily describe the character of actual political leaders; nonetheless, the research helps paint a portrait of an acceptable leader in Hat Yai’s political culture.

6.7 Conception and practice of “Democracy” as a political characteristic of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai

Voluntary civic organizations such as those in Hat Yai are self-governing bodies operating independently of the state. Political observers, such as the renowned Alex de Tocqueville, have conjectured that civic organizations can play a key role in developing a participatory citizenry that helps limit the tendency of states to become despotic. By practicing democratic self-governance, with the proper political institutional structure, citizens can help develop a functioning democracy. By outward appearances, Hat Yai’s Thai-Chinese organizations, with only a few exceptions, elect leaders and committee members by vote, making them appear to be “democratic” organizations. In fact, the survey shows that most organization committee members greatly prefer their organization to be (or to at least be perceived as) democratic. When asked, “How important is it that the association or organization to which you belong be a democracy?” (on a scale of one to five), average ratings by members of all five types of organizations were at or above 3.55, with the highest average (4.07) among the trade and professional association members, as per the graphed results. Could it be possible, then, that these voluntary civil organizations could play a leading role

in Thai society by promoting citizen participation in democratic structures? A deeper investigation of how these “democratic” organizations work in practice reveals a more complex picture, which illuminates the character of the community political culture.



The exact meaning that respondents embed in the word “democratic” is unclear, as evidenced in several interviews. A Chung Hua Charity Foundation, Hakka Association, and Chi lineage organization member expressed satisfaction that his organizations were sufficiently democratic. Interviewed during the *Cheng Meng* Festival as he volunteered at the Ban Phru graveyard, he described people consulting together, the committee acting as representatives of the entire membership, and voting on issues. On the other hand, the example he gave to illustrate his point had little to do with what most would see as “democracy:” he recounted that the Chung Hua president called community leaders together (implying that he hosted) for a golf tournament that raised money for the improvements at the Ban Phru cemetery. (Chung Hua Charity Foundation Official, 2013)

On further investigation through interviews of organization managers and leaders, the “democratic” nature of the organizations appears to have peculiar characteristics. According to one active full-time official at Siang Teung, elected leaders must be well known, for the practical reason that such people can draw interest, trust, and increase donations. He believes that leaders of all the Chinese organizations must be wealthy, and generous with their personal resources. The concept of *bunghun*, translated as “favor” or “kindness,” is important for the members to see in the leadership. By a principal of reciprocity, those with *bunghun*, which is evidenced by generous giving of money to the organization, will receive the most votes. But this Siang Teung official goes on to say that leaders must not be just those “full of money”—they must be a good person and capable. Why would someone with riches want to give away some of that wealth for the Thai-Chinese organizations? Because, as the official says, Thai-Chinese with money like to have the fame that goes with having money. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011)

The Teo Chew Association manager listed three important characteristics of the organization’s leadership. Leaders must

1. Be well known
2. Be action-oriented- “Dare to risk, dare to think, dare to do”
3. Donate large amounts of resources

One of the most important responsibilities of leaders is to use their influence to call for donations for various needs of the organization. For example, when the Teo Chew-association school KobkanSeuksa needed to raise a new building, the leadership was able to raise 10 million baht by reaching out to both the local community, and Teo Chew associations in Bangkok and around the country. Similarly, during the Bangkok flood situation in 2011, the Thai government asked for donations, through the federation of twenty-two associations and foundations in Hat Yai. The Teo Chew Association responded by raising several hundreds of thousands of baht in only a few days. (Teo Chew Association Manager, 2011)

This association between wealth and leadership was a constant theme of interviews with organization members. Beyond this aspect of leadership, interviews also revealed a less democratic picture of leadership “election.” The Kwong Siew Chinese secretary and office manager, for example, explained that before elections for committee positions, he has a direct role in selecting candidates. According to this secretary, other committee members “don’t really know who is who,” so he sees it as his duty to select candidates by his own criteria of who can and cannot help the organization (implying that they have enough wealth), and of who is or is not willing to contribute. The president of the Kwong Siew Association, a former Srinakon Chinese school classmate of the secretary, and the donor of the 30 million baht for the Thai-Chinese Cultural Center being constructed at Srinakon, has been in his position for over 12 years. His long tenure, according to the secretary, is because no other potential candidate has been willing to spend as much money as the president. (Kwong Siew Association Chinese Secretary, 2013) In fact, long tenures of organization leadership, even beyond formal term limits imposed by many organizational by-laws, is quite common--evidence that the democratic process is subject to the power and status of key players.

Some views of leadership selection in the Thai-Chinese organizations bordered on the cynical. According to a Tourists Business Federation member, leadership may be elected by member organizations, but in reality it must be someone well known and who has properly served their time in the Federation; in this way, he believes, it is much more like a bureaucracy. (Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand Member, 2012) On the other hand, a language Association president was frustrated that the Association wasn’t enough of a bureaucracy, in the sense that those with seniority were not getting elected into positions. He indicated that he had wanted to become president because his time had come—he felt that he had seniority, he had contributed much in volunteer work already, and he had sufficient wealth to take the position. When asked, “Does the association have the characteristic of being a democracy,” his reply

appeared to equate “democracy” with a system based on seniority. He replied, “Well, actually, it has, but not completely. There are still old heads there. The group that doesn't want to go by the existing seniority, they have a group that has too much pull.” He explained that this group seemed to control the committee of 50, who were elected from the membership, to keep electing the same president over and over again. (Association President 2013) The implication was that votes were biased, and that a selection by seniority would be more “democratic.” The idea that seniority obligates one to participate in the organizations surfaced in an interview with a Kwong Siew Association member and the younger brother of local optical and watch business owner. Interviewed while he was taking care of the shop, he indicated that his brother was a committee member of the association, not because he had aspirations to join the committee, but because he had seniority, and it was “his turn in the queue.” (Kwong Siew Association Member 2013) In other words, rank and privilege appear to be associated with seniority.

The former Hotelier's Association and Songkhla Chamber of Commerce president declares that all the leaders of the Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai have the same characteristic of being people with money and influence—wealth, fame and power are prerequisites to leadership. He does not see the organizations as real democracies. Instead, leaders are “invited” to become leaders, and elections are “fake.” In many cases, association managers will actually fill in ballots for members during elections. (Songkhla Chamber of Commerce and Hat Yai Songkhla Hotels Association Former President, 2013) Indeed, as noted, not all associations even have the pretense of being a democracy. For example, the Thai Secretary of the Srinakon School Foundation explains that the 24 committee members of the foundation are not elected. Whoever has power and money to donate become the members, and the president must be someone who has enough power and contacts in the community that if he asks for a donation, people will be compelled to contribute. The president may have to depend on the concept of the threat of losing face to

extract donations from people. The current president has been in the position over 20 years; even though the unelected committee appears to vote for president, no one else has the connections, respect and power to take his place. (Srinakon School Alumni Association Thai Secretary, 2011)

The picture emerges, then, of organizations led by people with connections and power, which also happen to have elections—perhaps akin to (though in a friendlier atmosphere) Suthachai Yimprasert’s “*rabop ammatayathipattai thi mi kanlueaktang*” (an aristocratic/bureaucratic system that has elections). Most of the organizations have biannual elections for their governing committees, which occur amidst a socializing event such as a large communal dinner. According to the evidence presented, many of these election results appear pre-determined. Despite this, interviews revealed few complaints about election results or organization leadership. The leadership appears well respected, exhibiting the characteristics of loyalty, honesty, generosity, capability, and industriousness—those characteristics held in esteem by the local political culture. However, the Thai-Chinese organizations do not appear to play a role as self-governing “classrooms” for developing a wider participatory democracy in Thai society.

6.8 Conclusion

The above discussion has examined the political dimensions and characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. China’s legacy of political culture differs in many aspects from Thailand’s political culture, but in fact, Thai-Chinese have largely adapted into the Thai polity. Similarities in Chinese and Thai cultural dimensions of “High Power Distance” and “Collectivism” result in an alignment of political cultural traits. Both cultures have distinctly “unconventional” views of democracy, which see democracy as a means to some end. Although the Thai-Chinese organizational governing structures are mostly “democratic,” and members say that it is important that their organizations are “democratic,” the actual practice of democracy has

different meanings to different members. The Chinese legacy of a strong centralized leadership; the sustainment of the collective over the rights of the individual; respect for hierarchical relationships; governance by specialized, elite bureaucrats; a more pragmatic versus ideological approach; and a belief that welfare of the people is a public, moral responsibility all have a continuing effect on Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese organizations and community, especially where those elements mesh with indigenous Thai political culture. The Chinese-influenced idea that society should be properly ordered and organized, managed by an elite bureaucracy of tested capability, manifests itself in the very establishment and structure of Thai-Chinese organizations as well, with an added criterion that the organizational leadership must be wealthy and generous. The expectation that society members should act properly according to their roles is evidenced by survey responses highlighting the values of peace and harmony. Finally, historical experience of the community has likely influenced many organization members in their desire to prominently display loyalty to country and king. Alternative political ideals that could be perceived as a threat to the Thai state, and thus inviting the wrath of government, such as the ancient concept of mandate of heaven, or any radical ideas associated with an anti-hierarchical, anti-status quo political system, have been abandoned or suppressed in order to fit in to the Thai polity.

Chapter VII

The Role of Ethnic Chinese-Affiliated Organizations in Hat Yai

7.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters have used data collected from ethnic Chinese-affiliated organization members, Chinese language schools students, and community members to explore the social, economic and political dimensions of the organization and community members. The narrative has already shown many instances of the roles that the organizations have played in shaping and maintaining the characteristics of the community, particularly in passing on the Chinese cultural tradition. The following discussion will focus even more closely on how the organizations sustain networks both within and without the community, as well as discuss the apparent effectiveness of the organizations in maintaining community identity. The discussion concludes by assessing the challenges faced by the organizations as they strive to maintain their relevancy to the community.

As discussed in Chapter One, Theoretical Approaches to Culture, Dr. Edgar Wickberg classified ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations by five functional types (Wickberg, 1988):

1. Competitive interest articulation
2. Social services
3. Expression
4. Resinification
5. Relations with larger society

These functions are useful for summarizing the roles that ethnic Chinese organizations play in a local society, and apply to the organizations in Hat Yai. Trade and professional organizations, such as the Songkhla Chamber of Commerce, the Tourists Business Federation, Hotelier's Association, and Thai

Rubber Association all serve the function of competitive interest articulation. Their role in protecting the economic interests of the community, as well as leveraging government resources, has been vital to development in Hat Yai. The social services category is quite broad, as nearly all the regional dialect, religious and charity organizations provide some type of social service. These organizations may supplement gaps in welfare provided by the state, and may also provide community building and religious functions represented by this type of organization. The regional dialect (as well as many lineage associations) often provide education scholarships as a social service, and many provide help with life event expenses, such as weddings or funerals. The Siang Teung Foundation in Hat Yai, for example, not only provides welfare services for the community, but serves as a community focal point of Chinese activity, such as during the Chinese New Year and Vegetarian Festival. The Chung Hua Charity Home, providing housing for elderly people without family to support them, is another example of an organization providing a social service function. Associations that serve the need of expression, in Wickberg's categorization scheme, include the regional dialect organizations, religious organizations for expressing religious faith, as well as alumni and professional associations that are useful for expressing boundaries of related networks (the "in" versus an "out" group). Although many of the regional dialect speakers are second or third generation living in Thailand, far removed from their ancestral homeland in China, it is significant that they maintain social networks with members from the same language group. As for the expression of religious faith, Siang Teung and the other Hat Yai ethnic Chinese-affiliated charity organizations are closely associated with merit-making for both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists. The Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok also fits into this category. Key resinification organizations in Hat Yai are the three Chinese schools, Srinakon, Kobkanseuksa, and Khunnatham Wittaya, as well as the regional dialect associations and charity foundations that support the schools. The schools serve functions both in inculcating values of the Thai-Chinese community to ethnic Chinese, and

promoting Chinese culture to external, non-Chinese groups. Organizations that serve the function of managing Chinese community relations with the larger society can include consolidated associations such as the Hat Yai comprehensive association (referred to locally as *chomrom*, which means club or association) representing 22 organizations, as well as business-oriented associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, or the Tourists Business Association Federation of Songkhla. With this summary of the functional roles of the Chinese organizations in Hat Yai, the following will explore the networking functions.

7.2 Ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizational role in supporting networks among the Community

Questionnaire data from organization members reveals the importance of the organizations in establishing a social network of friends. When asked to rate “How much of a role do the associations and organizations to which you belong play in maintaining a social network of friends?” members (particularly the language and charity organizations) identified their organization as being important to maintaining a social network of friends.



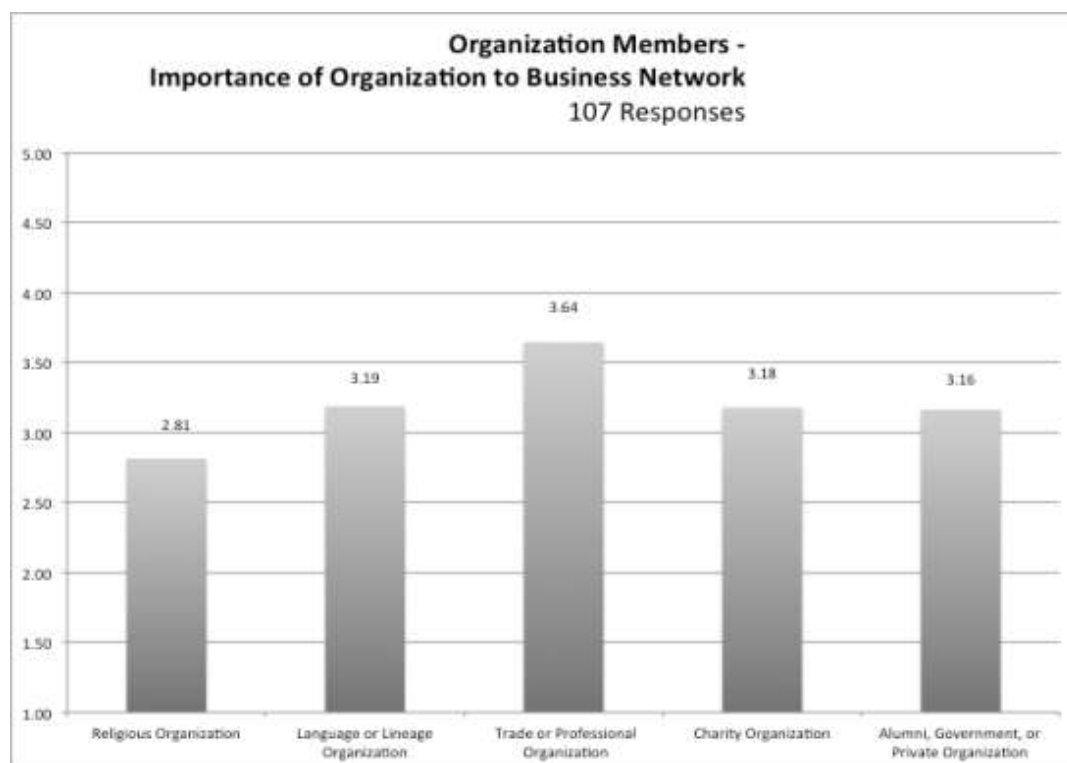
Evidence from interviews supports the key role of social interaction played by the organizations. According to officers in the Hokkien Association, in the past the associations have been a place to exchange ideas and views between Chinese who had any differences or grievances with each other, so that they could reconcile and avoid lawsuits. In this way, Chinese organizations have helped provide an alternative to any involvement with the government, which in Thailand's past has often been hostile to ethnic Chinese interests. (Focus Pak Tai, 2003) The manager's view of the Association is that its role in society is to give people a sense of being Hokkien, to promote the worship of the gods and ancestors (*waijao*, including practices particular to the Hokkien tradition such as the use of sugar cane as an item of sacrifice). According to Association manager, the main reasons that people become members are to share knowledge, to have a chance for scholarships for their children, and for friendship.

Another interesting informal activity engaged in by the members revealed by the Hakka Association president is "Share Playing" (*len share*). This is a

method of “investment” used in ethnic Chinese communities around the world in which a small group puts money in a common pot, and members take turns withdrawing from the pot. In other areas, this has been a method of mutual community assistance, or business investment; according to the president, the activity in the Hat Yai Hakka Association is purely for socializing, in which the pot is used for regularly scheduled dinners. Networking with other Hakka associations, particularly with Malaysia’s 74 Hakka Associations, is also strong.

Economically speaking, the networks provided by Thai-Chinese associations have played an historical role in establishing major business areas in Thailand. For example, Suehiro Akira’s work shows how Chinese-owned banks in the country were “principally incorporated on the basis of personal relations involving kinship and community ties.” (Akira, 1989) One example is the Thai Farmers Bank, Ltd. which was the only major non-Teo Chew commercial bank, established by leading members of the Hakka Association. One of these prominent families was the Chutrakun family, of the Yip In Tsoi group, formerly a prominent family in Hat Yai. In banking businesses, civil organizations played a key role. “The scope and degree of their business expansion were basically determined by the breadth of their personal relations, rather than their accumulated capital...They tended to utilize as much as possible the existing social organizations, such as dialect group associations and school boards.” (Akira, 1989) The recently elected president of the Hokkien association reaffirms the role of organizations in establishing trust relationships that are important for a Thai-Chinese style of business. In discussing the role of the language associations in establishing networks among members, he remarked that “Chinese form lots of business partnerships among their friends. Friendship is important to trust in doing business.” (Songkhla Hokkien Association President, 2013) Survey results of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese organizations confirm the continued importance of the associations to networking. When asked “How much of a role does the association or organization of which you are a member play in work or

business?" on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important), trade and professional organizations were rated significantly high, average of 3.64. Language or lineage, charity, and alumni organizations also rated as somewhat significant, with averages between 3.16 and 3.19, as graphed below.

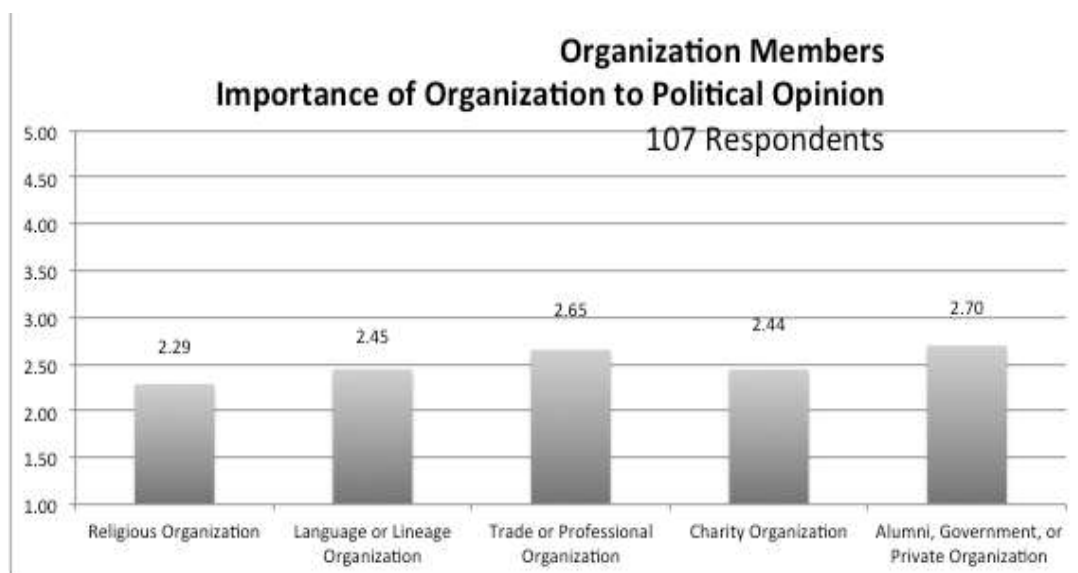


Survey results, "How much of a role does the association or organization of which you are a member play in work or business?" 1 = Not important, 5 = Very important

The merchant culture of the Chinese is opportunity-seeking, in the pragmatic sense that many business people will seek expansion in different areas that appear to have potential for profit, even if they are not experienced or knowledgeable about that area. As discussed in Chapter Two, Redding pointed out that family and reliable connections are more important than expertise in doing business. (Redding, 1990) The challenge for an entrepreneur is to discover new opportunities, and yet be confident of their viability by the trust one can put in others connected to that opportunity. This is the role that varied connections, through Thai-Chinese associations, can play. The associations don't have to be close knit, or hold frequent social activities, to be functional in this way. One isn't

likely to find fresh new opportunities within a close group of friends that all share the same interests. It is meeting people with different interests that opens new possible ventures. In fact, the future survival of the regional and language organizations could depend on this networking function-- younger generations may be motivated to join these associations for the connections, even though they no longer speak ancestral languages or have any physical connections with the ancestral homelands in China.

As opposed to social friendship and economic business network promotion, the exchange of political opinion appears to not often occur within the organizations—or at least respondents were not willing to divulge any talk related to politics. The question “How much of a role do the associations and organizations to which you belong play in supporting or exchanging political opinion?” was last in a three-part series asking the organization’s role in social and work networking. The results of the role of the organizations in political exchange were considerably lower, as illustrated below:



The background of the community’s various charity organizations demonstrates a remarkable cooperative spirit of the Chinese community in Hat Yai. Historically, Hat Yai has not experienced rivalries between language groups that occurred in other ethnic Chinese communities in Thailand. The foundation

of the Chung Hua Charity home provides one of the earliest examples of the cooperation between the major language groups, as well as long-term cooperation on sustaining Chinese language education. Even though Siang Teung was initiated by a group of Teo Chew speakers, it maintains a strong multi-dialect element of support and participation. In the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community, the existence of different local gods in Chinese pantheon also illustrates the inter-dialect cooperation. Although potential for rivalry exists, were followers of a particular god sensitive to the perceived position of their god in display areas or activities such as the parades, I found no evidence of conflict at the various festivals. During Chinese New Year and the Vegetarian Festival, temple gods hailing from all different regional associations and temples are displayed together in central locations such as the Siang Teung Charity Foundation, with no indication of hierarchical status. The important thing about the gods is that they bring luck and help to businesses and families in a pragmatic way.

7.3 Ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizational role in supporting external networks

7.3.1 Regional ties

The ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations play an important role in maintaining the historical connection with bordering Malaysia, and to a lesser extent Singapore and Indonesia, via economic and social ties. Evidence from Thai-Chinese organization commemorative books, news stories, and interviews particularly reveals the richness of the ties with Hat Yai's fellow Chinese communities in ASEAN, particularly with Thailand's southern neighbor, Malaysia. The Hat Yai office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) reported, for example, that around 3 million Malaysian tourists visited Hat Yai in 2013. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014) The Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand often coordinates with government agencies, such as TAT, to sponsor events specifically targeting Malaysian tourists; a "Hat Yai Bike Week" promotion, for example, attracted 300 Malaysian motorcycle enthusiasts in July,

2012. (KhonTai, 2012) The discussion in social cultural factors highlighted the close connection that Teik Kha Hui Chee Nam Kok Foundation and Khunnatham Wittaya School's close connection with Malaysia. Another example (pictured below) comes from the Hakka Association's 60th Anniversary commemorative book, which features photographs of combined social events, such as singing contests with a Malaysian Hakka association. (Hakka Society, 2007)



Hat Yai Hakka Association members hold a social singing contest with Malaysian Hakka people, 23 April 2006.

The Siang Teung foundation provides a highly-developed networking function by coordinating emergency service and rescue activities throughout all 14 southern provinces. The temples associated with these local emergency service organizations are interconnected throughout Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. A full-time official at Siang Teung admitted the financial importance of Malaysian Chinese in funding the charity's operations. He estimates that about 60% of donations to Siang Teung come from outside the country, mostly Malaysia and Singapore. He believes that Malaysian law discriminates against Chinese when they "make merit," so that donating in

Thailand is a more favorable option. He also notes the Malaysian Chinese penchant for purchasing religious artifacts in Thailand. Thai temples, both of Mahayana and Theravada traditions, have reputations for bringing good fortune to Malay Chinese groups, which has a significant effect on increasing donations. (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011) The Teik Kha Hui Foundation also provides regional networking, as it receives monthly exchanges from its “mother temple” in Kedah, Malaysia, and participates in a “world divine pen meeting” every three years with participants from around the globe. (Chee Nam Kok Chapter, 2010) Another example of the frequent and close cultural exchange with Malaysian groups comes from the online local news site, Songkhla Chinese News. In July 2012, a Penang “Friendship Charity Organization” (慈善組織聯誼總會) of approximately 40 members was personally welcomed by distinguished community leader and Siang Teung Foundation president Mr. Lee. They were there to attend the traditional *Hae Phra Sadoh Khroh* (แห่พระสะเดาะเคราะห์) ceremony for the ninth lunar month (Ghost Month). The Songkhla governor and Chinese consulate led the opening ceremony for this function as well. The group gathered for a cultural exchange dinner and karaoke at the Washington Restaurant, King’s Hotel that evening, as pictured below. (SongkhlaChineseNews, 2012b)



Penang Charity Organization visits Siang Teung during Ghost Month for a Sadoh Khroh ceremony. Siang Teung president is seated in the blue shirt, middle of the front row.



The Penang Charity organization gathers for a socializing and cultural exchange at King's Hotel's Washington Restaurant.

During the 2012 Vegetarian Festival, I encountered a large group of Malaysian worshippers at Cheu Chang Temple. This group explained that they make an annual pilgrimage to Hat Yai for the Vegetarian Festival, spending their time at the temple making vegetarian meals for other worshippers, presenting offerings, and receiving blessings from the resident monks. This provides further evidence that Malaysian Chinese interaction with the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community, especially in matters of Chinese religion, occurs frequently, and is likely an integral part of Malaysian tourism into the region.



Malaysian worshippers prepare a vegetarian meal for Mahayana Buddhist monks and receive their blessing at Cheu Chang Temple.

As the opening of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) approaches, relationships with other ASEAN countries, particularly potential economic relationships, grow in importance as well. The Thai-Chinese business community in Hat Yai has aggressively pursued making Hat Yai a regional leader in development of the Indonesian, Malaysian and Thai Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) by promoting infrastructure, such as the highly successful convention center at Prince of Songkhla University, and holding seminars, such as an August 2012 “Business Opportunities and Networking Promotion Between Southern Thailand and Sumatera [Sumatra] Island” seminar sponsored by the Indonesian government and Federation of Thai Industries, Songkhla chapter. (SongkhlaChineseNews, 2012a)



Songkhla governor speaks at the Indonesian and Federation of Thai Industries-sponsored seminar on promoting economic relations with Indonesia, August of 2012.

A business person and area expert who works with the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand and the Joint Business Council Thailand, IMT-GT, contends that Hat Yai and Thailand have actually long been a part of an ASEAN economic community that has included a flow of immigrants into the local area. He observes that many Malays have "infiltrated" Thailand and have changed their nationalities to be Thai, or made their second citizenship in Thailand. The reason for this, according to this source, is that Malay Chinese have suffered discriminatory policies by the Malay political elite and Muslim-dominated government, giving them an incentive to come into Thailand. Aside from his work with the IMT-GT, he has personal connections with Malaysia, via the Lim lineage association, which occasionally holds joint social gatherings. Interestingly, he describes the Thai and Malay Chinese relationship as a bit competitive. He insists that there is a strong sense of being *Thai-Chinese*, indicating that national pride carries more weight than any sense of ethnic solidarity. (Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla Thailand Member, 2012)

His comments recall the Hakka president's remarks about the Malaysian Hakka associations...although Malaysia boasts 74 Hakka associations, he proclaims that none of the physical structures match the outstanding nature of the Hat Yai Hakka Association building. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013)

7.3.2 Chinese Ties

While regional ties with other ethnic Chinese communities continue to shape the Hat Yai community, the relationship of the community with Mainland China is equally important. The active presence of the PRC Consulate in Songkhla at social and cultural events, the connection through the Chinese-language schools, and other exchanges highlight the continuing link shared with the Chinese heritage. Several scholars have noted that China has deliberately cultivated its relationship with Overseas Chinese communities both out of a sense of cultural similarity, and more importantly, for Chinese interests. In 1978, the PRC established the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (侨办 *Qiao Ban*) under the State Council. Official Chinese publications or statements dealing with Overseas Chinese often contain the phrase, "China has got 30 million Overseas Chinese worldwide (中国在全球各地有3000 万华侨华人)" indicating that the Chinese state feels some claim over the identity of Overseas Chinese. (Barabantseva, 2005) China specialist Elena Barabantseva argues that "Chinese leadership utilizes the global regimes of migration, trans-nationalism, media, and multiculturalism to affirm the CCP's political legitimacy, to extend China's political standing, to reassert Chinese culture, and to benefit China's economic performance," showing that the PRC's relationship with Overseas Chinese community is part of this strategy. (Barabantseva, 2005) Scholar Mette Thunø similarly finds that the PRC has passed through several phases of an overall strategy of reaching out to Overseas Chinese communities, first by trying to curry favor in the 1980s by "safeguarding special treatment of their relatives in the PRC," and then by focusing on "new migrants" in the 1990s. (Thunø, 2001) The latter period, which appears to continue into the present, saw a marked increase in promoting Chinese education and culture overseas, as well as efforts to

exchange invitations and delegations with influential ethnic Chinese in both academia and business. William Callahan describes how the People's Republic of China has not only tried to lure Overseas Chinese investment into the PRC, but also is making an effort to "reeducate the diaspora in National Humiliation history." (Callahan, 2003) The "National Humiliation" is the PRC version of the history of China from the mid-nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century, in which China suffered at the hands of a corrupt elite and imperial Western powers. This effort to spread the story of "National Humiliation" is one component of various factors that have seen a renewed rise of nationalism in both China and in Thailand, according to Callahan. He notes how the 1997 financial crisis saw a change in the role of the Chinese community in Thailand—rather than being the scapegoat "other" as they had been in the anti-communist era, the Chinese were included in a Thai national identity that created its own national humiliation myth, but with the West and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the new "other." He writes, "The evidence has shown how neo-nationalism in China and Thailand shares a similar logic: a highly territorialized identity, an economic-cultural understanding of neoimperialism, and an Othering of the West." (Callahan, 2003)

The overall effect of these efforts has been to solidify relations between the ethnic Thai-Chinese community and Mainland China. As the Southern Region Hailam Association official history states, they have a close rapport with the local government and the Songkhla PRC Consulate, "together deepening the Chinese-Thai people's friendship, promoting Chinese culture and benefits of social development, making a necessary contribution to our countrymen's well-being." (Southern Region Hailam Association, 2011) Hat Yai ethnic Chinese community leaders are extended invitations to attend PRC national day celebrations, or other international conferences, and are often given honor as dignitaries or cultural ambassadors, affirming Li Minghuan's concept of "association credit" that assigns a semi-diplomatic status to Overseas Chinese association officials. (Minghuan, 1999) Pictures in several Thai-Chinese organization commemorative

books give a visually striking image of the status accorded to Hat Yai Thai-Chinese organization leaders. The Siang Teung Foundation's 30th Anniversary book shows that when former PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang stopped in Bangkok in 1981, the Siang Teung president was included in the welcoming delegation at Bangkok's airport. In another undated photo, the Foundation president is seen honorably positioned at the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office in Beijing. (Siang Teung Foundation, 1989)



Siang Teung president greets PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang at Bangkok's Don Muang Airport.



Siang Teung president visits Beijing, the PRC's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, date unknown. He is in the front row, sixth from the left.

The Srinakon and Teo Chew anniversary books have remarkable images of a prominent community leader's numerous interactions with Chinese officials and events. To emphasize the honor given to the organization via this man's status, two pages of the Srinakon commemorative book are dedicated to grainy screen shots of Chinese TV and other photos covering President Jiang Zemin's 1999 visit to Phuket, where he greeted the dignitary. (SriNakon, 1999)



PRC President Jiang Zemin visits Thailand in 1999, and is greeted by Hat Yai's prominent Chinese community leader (shown shaking hands in the top right picture) and other Thai-Chinese organization representatives in Phuket.

Other photographs show leaders at the 50th and 55th anniversary celebrations of the PRC, attending other events in China, and receiving the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs deputy director at Srinakon School. The manager at the Teo Chew Association in Hat Yai indicates that the association is involved in organized trips to ancestral areas of China, such as "Paoleng" and "Puning." Some association members send their children to study in China, as well. During the interview he expressed his personal sentiment that the association should promote Chinese, because "America is far away, and China is growing in strength." (Teo Chew Association Manager, 2011)



方志雄董事長與本校贊助人梁冰女士等合影

Hat Yai Chinese association leaders visiting China for the 50th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.



Deputy Director of PRC's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council visits Srinakon, 19 February 1997.



Unlabeled pictures from the Hat Yai Teo Chew Association 60th Anniversary book show Hat Yai Chinese association leaders at various places in Mainland China. Top right background banner announces the Fourth Conference for Friendship of Overseas Chinese Associations. Middle right picture background banner indicates the 55th anniversary celebration of the PRC, dating the picture (Teo Chew Association, 2009)



Unlabeled pictures in the Teo Chew Association of Hat Yai 60th Anniversary commemorative book show the President and other association members at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, 2008.

Though perhaps not frequent, visits of Thai-Chinese delegations to events in China are considered significant by the members. Lineage associations, in particular, hold international conventions that function both as social venues and business networking opportunities. (Hong, 1998) Such visits and conventions maintain a connection with ancestral roots, and give the visitors a sense of their distinguished status as ethnic Chinese. Pictures below show members of the Pun Sun Khak Association traveling to a large economic exhibition in Kunming in 2000, and Hakka members, of the Miao lineage, visiting Macao for an international convention. (Hakka Society, 2007; Pun Sun Khak Association, 2008)



Delegates that include members of the Pun Sun Khak Association of Thailand visit the Kunming Export Commodities Fair, November 17 2000.



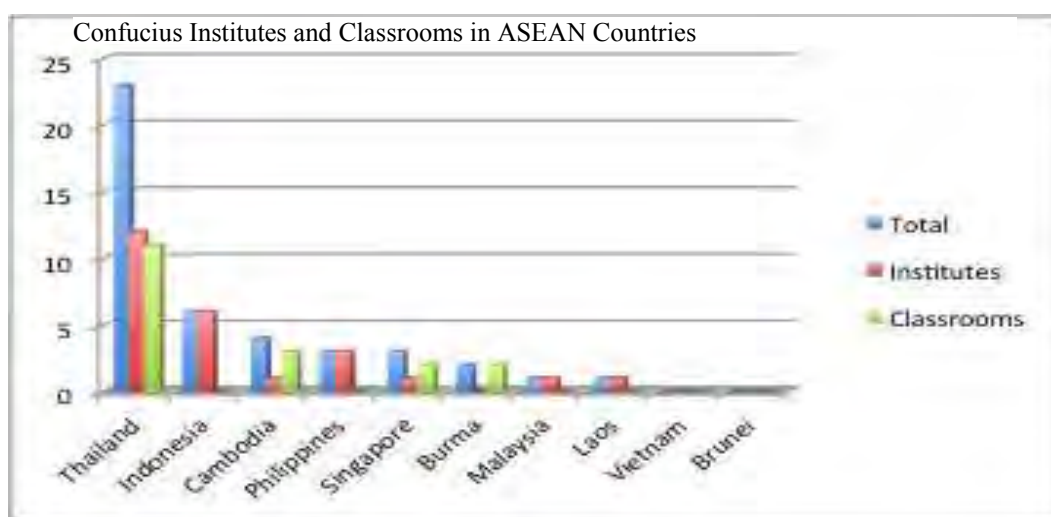
Hat Yai Hakka Association members who are members of the Miao lineage association visit Macao for the 18th World Miao Lineage Association meeting.

The Southern Thailand Hokkien Association manager indicated that their association gets direct invitations from the Chinese government to attend large

meetings in China. They keep in contact with the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and although incoming delegations from China usually visit Bangkok rather than southern Thailand, the association will send representatives to Bangkok to participate. (Southern Thailand Hokkien Association Manager, 2011) The Thai-Chinese organizations in Hat Yai also organize their own trips, independent of any PRC involvement, often associated with a religious or cultural purpose. The Chung Hua Charity organization, for example, in 2011 organized a tour for over 210 people to visit four large, famous *sanjao* in Swatow, the area from which most Teo Chew people migrated. (Chung Hua Charity Home Foundation Manager, 2011) Likewise, over the 38-year existence of the Pun Sun Khak Association, the members have organized at least two formal trips to their ancestral land in China.

A significant component of China's efforts to maintain good relations with foreign peoples, including Overseas Chinese communities, has been the Chinese Ministry of Education's Confucius Institute Headquarters (汉办 *Hanban*), which manages a global structure of 443 Confucius Institutes and 648 Confucius Classrooms. (Confucius Institute Headquarters (HanBan), 2014b) Prince of Songkhla University hosts an Institute, which is a cooperative effort with Guangxi Normal University, Guilin and Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan, while Srinakon has an active Confucius Classroom. Scholar James Paradise has explored the role of these institutes in promoting China's "soft power," a term coined by American sociologist Joseph Nye to describe the ability of a state apparatus to influence the behavior of others without resorting to violent or the threat of violent action, or without resorting to bribes such as payments of money, territorial concessions, etc. Paradise proposes that the Confucius Institute project of the PRC is "part of a broader soft power projection in which China is attempting to win hearts and minds for political purposes." (Paradise, 2009) While *Hanban* takes exception to being termed an instrument of soft power, Paradise notes that President Hu Jintao, in his keynote speech at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2007, called for

increasing China's soft power through cultural enhancement for reasons of national cohesion and overall national strength. (Paradise, 2009) *Hanban's* program director describes three main objectives of the Confucius Institutes as "to teach Chinese, to promote cultural exchange, and to facilitate business activity." (Paradise, 2009) The written requirements for an Institute director reflect the emphasis both on promoting the proper cultural image of China, as well as the economic connection. *Hanban's* constitution and by-laws state that "The Director of a Confucius Institute shall have in-depth comprehension of Chinese current national issues, a skillful command of the language of the country in which the Institute is located, suitable administrative experiences in this position, and a strong ability to promote public affiliation and market potential." (Confucius Institute Headquarters (HanBan), 2014b) In fact, the impressive effort of the *Hanban* to establish a presence in Thailand speaks to the importance given by the Chinese government to its relationship with Thailand. The following chart shows that the number of Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in Thailand far exceeds other ASEAN member nations. (Confucius Institute Headquarters (HanBan), 2014b)



The PSU Institute and Srinakon Classroom have been quite active in fulfilling their mission. In July 2012, Srinakon held the 2nd regional Chinese language volunteer teacher training. At this gathering of 80 teachers from 47 regional schools, the Srinakon Foundation president credited the leadership of

the Chinese consulate, and support of the *Hanban* and Thai education ministry in making Srinakon a Chinese language development center, as well as making the



Prince of Songhla University Confucius Institute holds a Dragon Boat Festival celebration for about 180 participants from area schools.

Confucius Institute a “Chinese Cultural Window.” (中国文化窗口) and “Southern Thailand Chinese Volunteer Language Teacher Family” (“泰南汉语教师志愿者之家”) (CNConfucius, 2012)



Volunteer Chinese language teacher training at Srinakon School, July 2012. The Chinese consulate stationed in Songkhla, 许明亮, is seated in the middle in the white shirt and tie. To his right is the President of the Srinakon School Charity Foundation.

In June of 2014, the Prince of Songkhla University Confucius Institute hosted a Dragon Boat Festival celebration for approximately 180 participants, which included students and teachers from 12 regional schools. (Confucius Institute Headquarters (HanBan), 2014a) The two organizations play key roles in the community planning for other various Chinese festivals, such as Chinese New Year, as well as help manage the Chinese language teachers.

As discussed in Chapter Two regarding the Chinese cultural characteristic of establishing global organizations, scholar Liu Hong's research into the internationalization of associations, or *shetuan*, reveals that these organizations perform the roles of promoting business and social networks, as well as preserving local cultures. The globalization of associations has directly affected Thailand--In 1993 the Third World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention attracted 1,500 delegates, representing 55 Chinese chambers of commerce in 23 nations, to Bangkok. (Hong, 1998) Liu notes that the networking function is closely related to Chinese business culture of family-centered organizations. To the extent that Hat Yai businesses evolve from a family-centered structure to a globalized corporate structure, the younger generation of business people may indeed not see much advantage to the "symbolic capital" of organization membership; however, the survey and interview evidence of this study indicates that the family-centered enterprise, and practical function of networking provided by organizations, still plays a strong role in Hat Yai's economic culture.

7.4 Ethnic Chinese-Affiliated Organizational Role in Influencing and Maintaining the Community

7.4.1 Cultural Centers of Gravity

Perhaps the most important function of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in Hat Yai is their role as guardians of the Chinese cultural heritage. One might view cultural forces as having an attractive quality, akin to a gravitational force in physics and mechanics. Chinese-influenced characteristics that continue to hold the interest of individuals will tend to pull people together as a distinctive Thai-Chinese community, enabling it to preserve its distinguishing identity; if that gravitational-type force weakens, Chinese values and traditions will fail to attract and pull the community together. Additionally, the native Thai culture may exert a stronger gravitational pull, regardless of the strength of Chinese-value attractive forces, causing the community to succumb to a complete assimilation into the majority Thai population. Other social cultural

attractive forces exist, such as those propagated through Hollywood and other sources of modernized, consumer-oriented, often westernized, cultural values; these will also tend to pull and shape the community in different ways that change its characteristics as one of distinctly Chinese heritage. The ethnic Chinese organizations consciously take on the role of maintaining the attractive quality of the Chinese heritage.

The community of Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai has some essential elements that define it as Thai-Chinese—what one might call “cultural centers of gravity.” These elements include adherence to Chinese festival traditions, continuation of Chinese religious practices such as worship of ancestors and Chinese gods, and recognition of one's Chinese lineage. Hat Yai's centers of gravity that sustain these practices can be located physically in key places that uphold Chinese culture in the community. Based on observations, interviews, surveys and primary document analysis, the following discussion on social cultural forces reveals two key physical social cultural centers of gravity in Hat Yai: the Srinakon Chinese school, and the Siang Teung temple and associated charity foundation. Other locations, including the language and regional associations, the other two Chinese-language schools, and other Thai-Chinese organizations, also hold attractive forces that maintain Chinese-ness, although none have the same powerful function as these two locations in gathering large numbers of the community in distinct Chinese cultural practices. The map below shows the physical location of these various social cultural centers of gravity.



Hat Yai's cultural centers of gravity, depicted as Yin/Yang symbols. Tigers represent the 5 major Regional/Language Associations, temples represent religious sites.

One can see from the map that the two main centers, as well as other cultural locations that act as centers of gravity, are concentrated in the downtown area of Hat Yai, in the general vicinity of the rail station, which played such an important role in the development of the community. This area is the traditional commercial heart of the city. The discussion on practices of traditional Chinese festivals and the maintenance of Chinese-origin religious ritual in Hat Yai indicates that, so far, the community has retained Chinese cultural centers of gravity strong enough to maintain a sense of community as Thai-Chinese.

These locations act as centers of gravity because of their role in supporting the essential Chinese cultural features. Of these, ancestor worship and practice of traditional religious rites appear to exert the strongest force to pull the community together as distinctly Thai-Chinese in its social culture. By

observation, one notes that traditional Chinese events, such as Chinese New Year and the Vegetarian Festival, attract many thousands of participants, both young and old. One also may observe that the majority of households in the area maintain home altars to Chinese gods and ancestors, even if they have adopted Thai cultural practices of displaying Buddha images or spirit houses as well. Interviews and surveys also confirm the key importance of ancestor worship and religious practice in making one feel a part of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community.

7.4.2 Community identity

Overall, it appears that the Chinese organizations have been rather successful in their role of instilling a sense of Chinese-influenced identity and characteristics. Results from interviews, an in-person survey conducted at Siang Teung during Chinese New Year 2012, and the attitudinal questionnaire of organization members and students affirm the strength of identity as both ethnic Chinese and Thai nationality. The questionnaire and a survey of families coming to worship at Siang Teung in January 2012, explored identity with two open-ended questions:

- 1) What things are important to you in being Thai-Chinese?
- 2) What do you think is the important identity of the Thai-Chinese community and how much do you feel a part of the community?

The responses ranged from those who took great pride in being Chinese and in the connection to Chinese civilization and culture, to those who wished to emphasize their Thai-ness and similarity to local Thai people. Of the former, as previously mentioned, respect for ancestors figured prominently among those who most strongly identified as Chinese. For example, to one 62-year-old male organization member, the importance of being Thai-Chinese is manifested in “Not forgetting the nationality of the ancestors and still being able to use the local language of the ancestors, to pass on to the descendants...or at least being familiar with lineage and spoken language of the ancestors. But we don't forget the people of the land in which we live, and are prepared to sacrifice for the

nation and community.” Another 57-year-old male member of the Hokkien Association also emphasized the blending of being both Chinese and Thai, in the following answer:

The important identity of the Thai Chinese community is harmony, perseverance and industriousness in making an honest living, maintaining the customs and traditions of the ancestors, and living together with Thais or Thais of other ethnicities harmoniously. Don't make a division in the community and be people who love peace. [The identity is also] respect for Buddhist religion, which teaches to live together with other religions, by not disturbing one another. Giving respect and honor to the king, and all the royal family, which brings honor to the ancestors and Thais of other ethnicities always up until the present. People will be able to live as if in the cool shade in happiness under the shade of the Buddha.

The second-generation, mid-fifties aged native Hat Yai owner of a Chinese pharmacy in downtown Hat Yai felt a strong identity with his cultural heritage—so much so that he has spent many years teaching himself Chinese language and researching traditional Chinese medicine, about which he intends to publish a book. He subscribes to a more radical, but not unheard of, view of the origins of Thai people, believing that the native Thais actually migrated from an area in Yunan Province in China. According to him, “In fact, Thai people are Chinese.” He laments that many of the younger generation of Thai-Chinese do not have the will or patience to learn to fluently write Chinese, and yet he believes that, “No matter how Chinese language develops, Thai people will not forget the value of being Chinese.” (Chinese Medicine Shop Owner, 2013)

The above comments were made by older generations; a striking characteristic about the surveys conducted at Siang Teung was the enthusiasm of some of the younger generation for their Chinese identity. A third-generation female, likely in her late twenties, back in Hat Yai from her Master's degree studies in Wuhan, PRC, wrote the following: “The community is a mixture of Thai and Chinese identity. You can still see Chinese language, Chinese food, and

various ceremonies of Chinese people in places with Thai people. Young people, including myself, grew up with training in both Chinese and Thai, so that we understand both cultures.” Another third-generation female in her mid to upper twenties, a dental student at the local Prince of Songkhla University (PSU), acknowledged her feeling of community, even though she has no knowledge of the Chinese language. “I’m proud of being ethnic Thai-Chinese, which has a diverse culture. I feel very happy and lucky to be a person to have the opportunity to learn two cultures which can exist harmoniously together.... ever since I grew up I had the feeling the culture in the community hasn’t changed a bit, and I feel I have a part in that community.” Another proud answer came from a second-generation female in her mid-thirties. She felt it was “very important” to identify with her Thai-Chinese heritage, “because in culture ethnic Thai-Chinese have customs passed on from the ancestors to the generation of the mother and father and succeeding generations. This is a beautiful thing, and should be preserved together into the future.” As for what she sees as the characteristics the Thai-Chinese community, they are “hard-working and diligent, honest, patient. Chinese who are Thai-Chinese nationality are a people who have patience and diligence so much that it has made Thai-Chinese in Thailand and China be number one in Asia.”

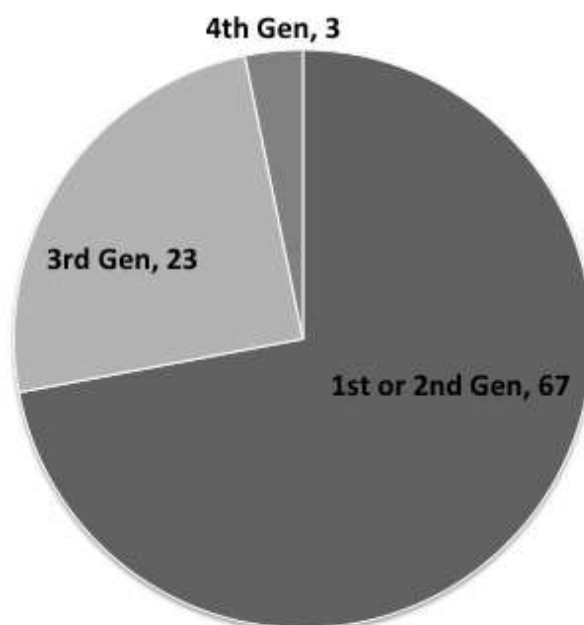
Interviews with Thai-Chinese community leaders indicated their consciousness of playing a role in maintaining a sense of ethnic identity. One of the most prominent leaders of the Chinese community believes that 10 to 20 years ago, Hat Yai was preserving Chinese culture more strongly than China itself. He remarks "Most of the Chinese culture is not in China anymore." (Hat Yai Confederation of Associations and Foundations - Hat Yai Teo Chew Association - Srinakon School Foundation President, 2012) The manager of Southern Thailand Hokkien Association explained that an important role of the association was “to give people a sense of being Hokkien, and to promote the worship of the gods and ancestors.” (Southern Thailand Hokkien Association Manager, 2011) On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Hat Yai Hakka Association, the Association

president wrote, 'The relations of the community' is a consciousness in the Chinese culture, a manifestation of ethnic Chinese civilization" (Hakka Society, 2007) The president's speech acknowledges a moral heritage possessed by ethnic Chinese in Hat Yai, which he sees as important to pass on. The Hakka Association promotes this moral heritage with its support of Chinese festivals, by providing the teaching of Chinese at the Association building, and even by promoting an early morning group of practitioners of *Tai Chi* martial arts. (Hat Yai Hakka Association President, 2013) These are small ways that the organizations, such as the language associations, promote community identity. Although there may not be a large amount of daily activity going on at the associations, results of the interviews and the organizational survey indicate that Thai-Chinese community, while fully integrated into Thai society, also maintains a substantial identity with the Chinese heritage.

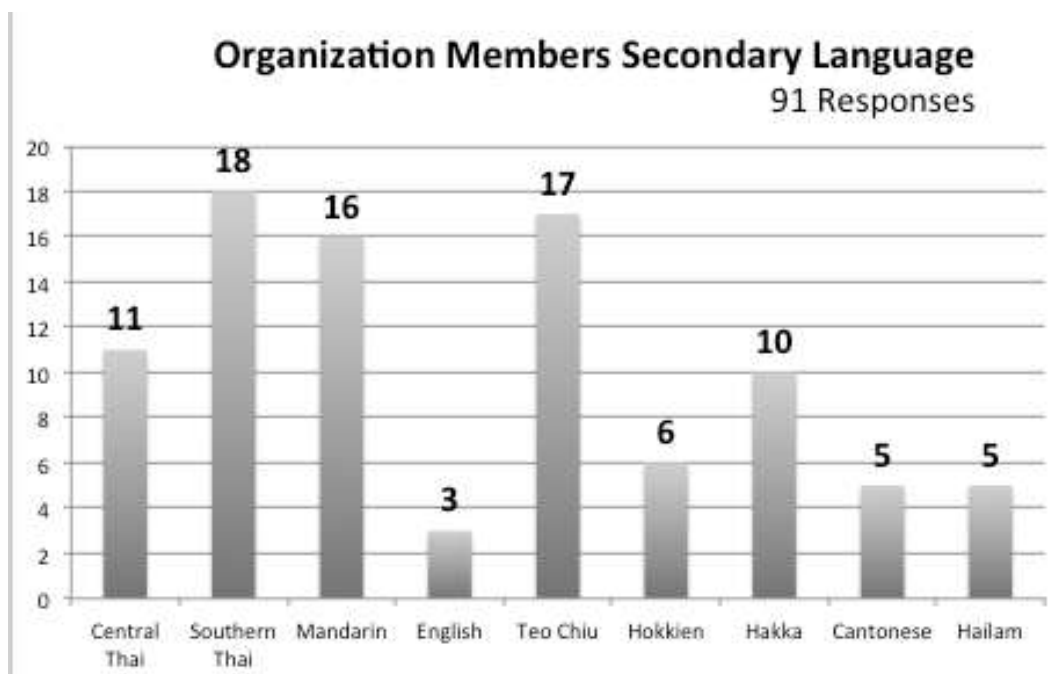
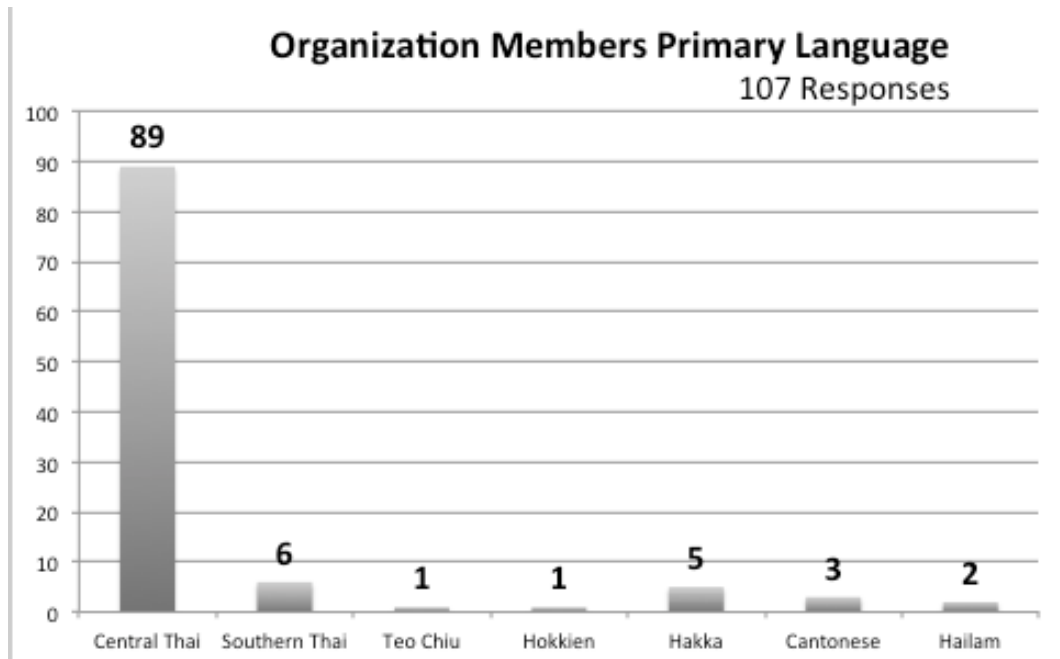
Aside from the open-ended questions regarding identity discussed above, several other areas of the questionnaire speak to respondents' ethnic identity. Nearly 100% of the organizational members could be identified as Thai-Chinese, and 93 of the 110 identified their Chinese ancestry by generation. 67 members identified as first or second generation, 23 as third generation, and three as fourth generation.

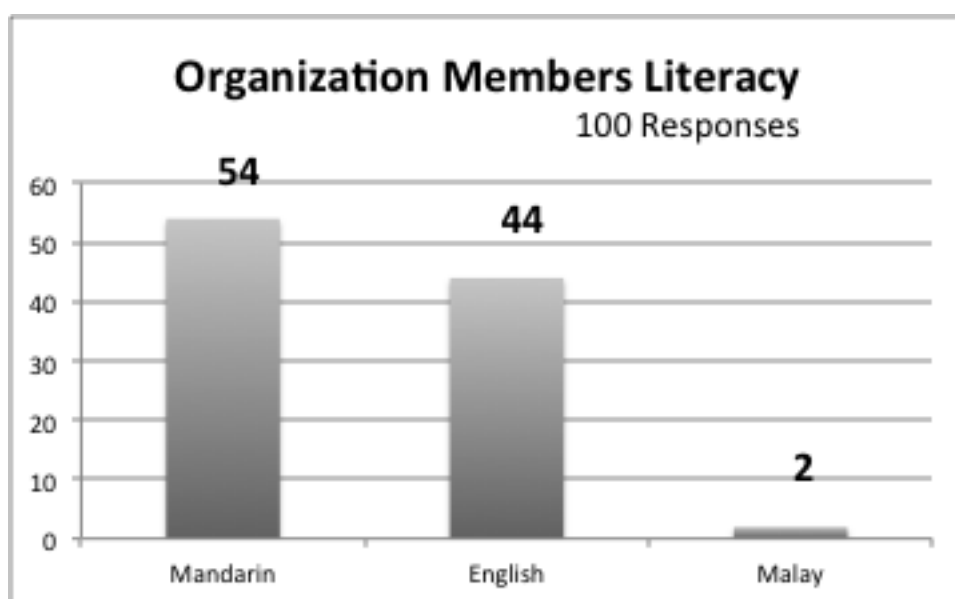
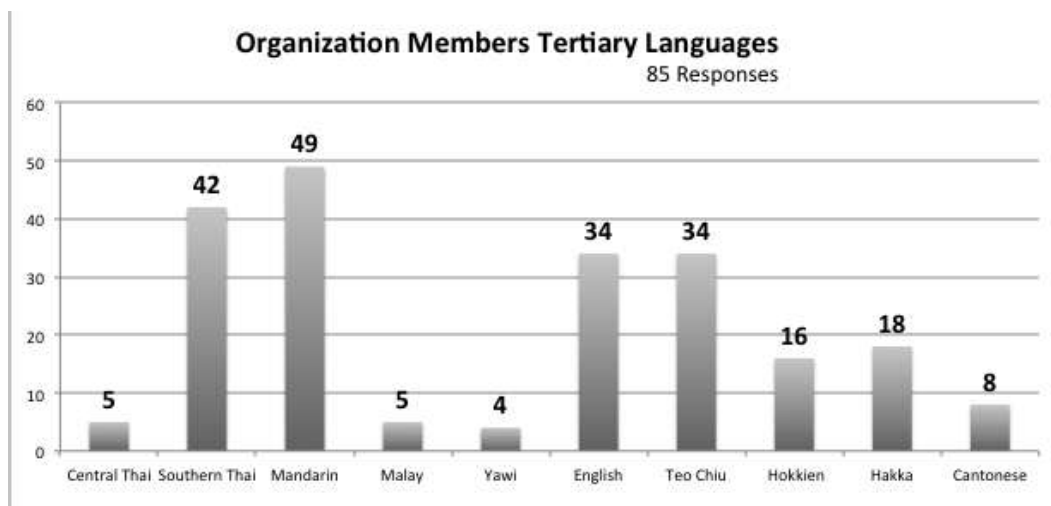
Organization Members by Chinese Generation

93 Responses



As discussed previously in the Chinese language education section of Chapter Four, 45 of the 175 students (51.4 % in Sri Nakorn, 8.6% in Kobkanseuksa) indicated their status as Thai-Chinese. Perhaps one of the biggest testaments to the ability of Thai-Chinese to integrate into Thai society, while maintaining a sense of being ethnic Chinese, lies in the statistics on languages spoken. Eighty-two percent of organization members reported Thai as their primary language at home, while 88% of the students spoke Thai or Southern Thai as the primary language. Nevertheless, 50% of organization members spoke some form of Chinese as a second language in the home, with many respondents speaking multiple dialects of Chinese. Seven of Fifty-seven responding students reported Chinese as the primary language at home, while another 31.6% identified Chinese as a second language at home.

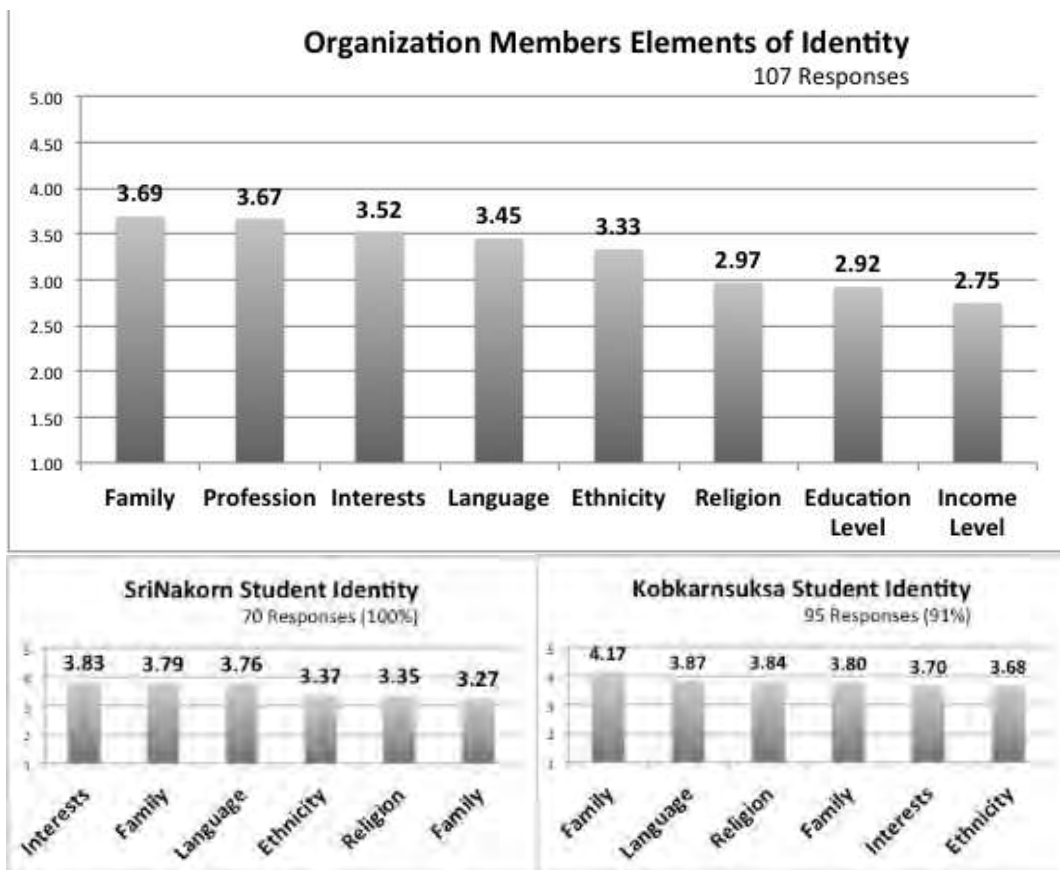


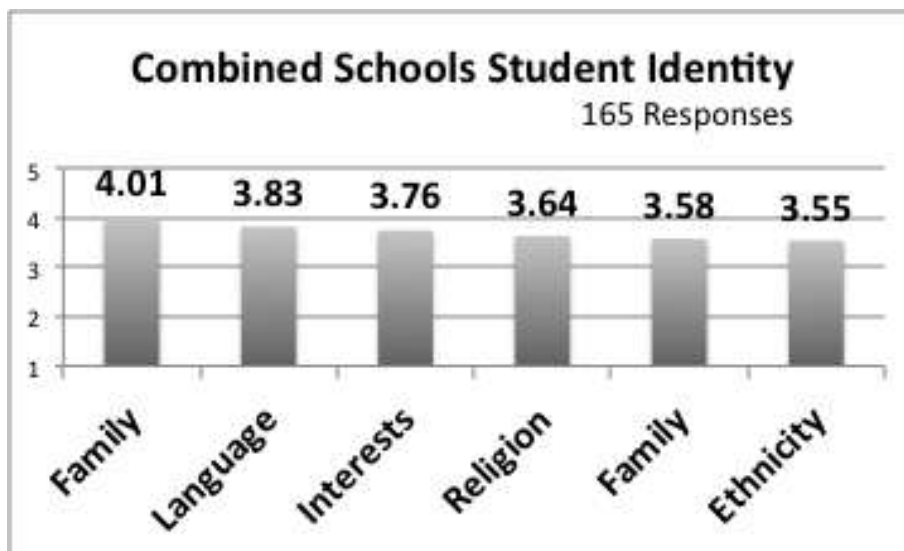


Students Identifying Primary and Second Language Spoken at Home	
57 Responses	
Primary Language at Home:	
Central Thai	42
Southern Thai	8
A Chinese Language	7
Second Language at Home	
A Chinese Language	18

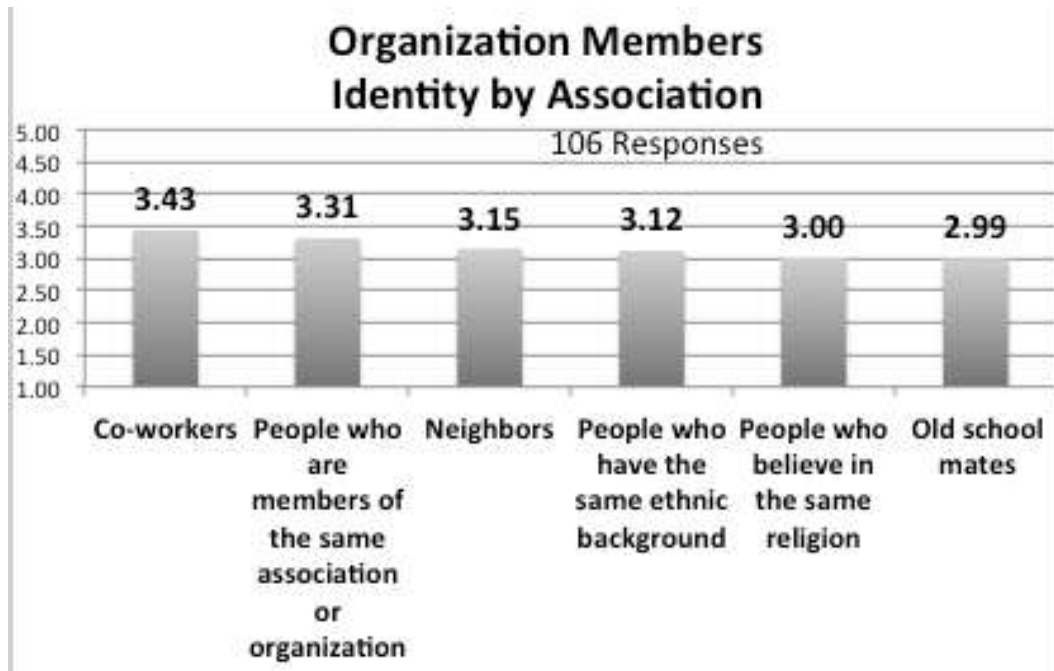
Discovering “identity” is an inexact science and art. The survey approached this task by asking identity-related questions from several angles. The first was to ask the question, “If you were to explain to others who you are,

which items are most important?” The results are represented in the graph. Unsurprisingly, both organization members and students strongly identified family as important. Identifying family as very important to one’s own identification, of course, doesn’t preclude an identity with one’s ethnicity. In fact, ethnicity as a separate category rated fairly high among all groups except the Kobkarseuksa students, who had a low percentage of Thai-Chinese in their population.



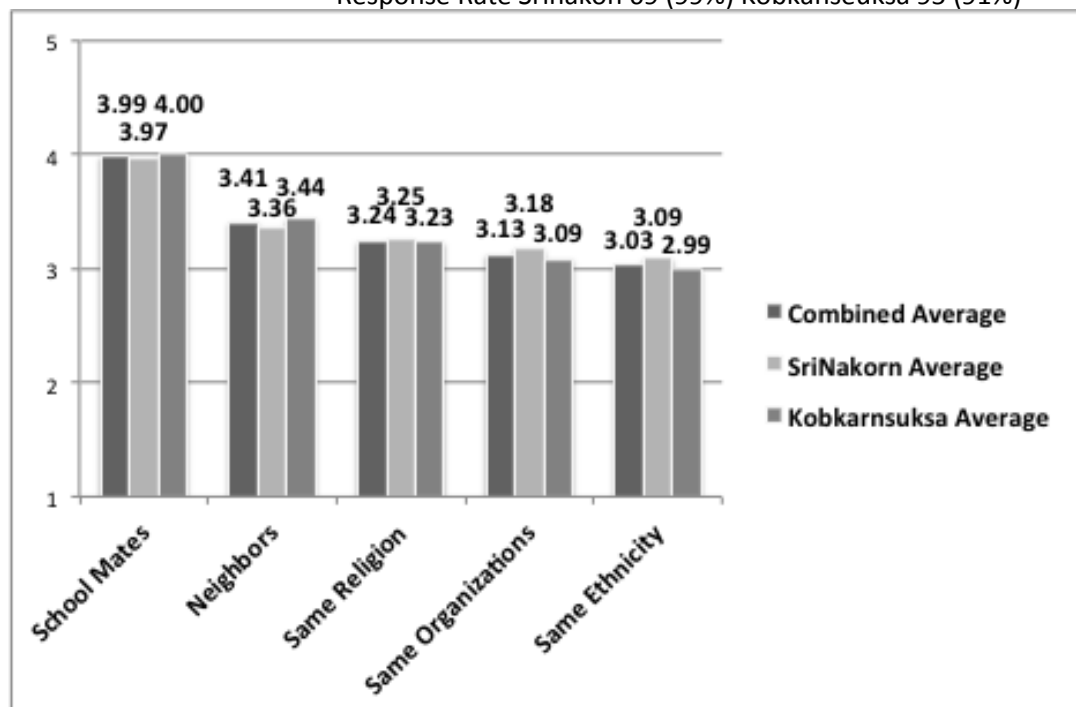


Another angle to measure the degree of identity a population feels with their ethnic heritage is to examine their daily associations. Marking the level of importance of several categories in reply to the question, “How much do you tend to spend time socializing with people from the following groups?” both adult and student respondents indicated that time spent socializing with members of the same ethnic group was not as important as time socializing with co-workers and school mates. Among the students, association with others of the same ethnicity was rated as the last category, which both schools rated as just under three out of five. As one would expect of school-age students still attending classes, time spent socializing with schoolmates came in a strong first. Also as expected, organization members, who mostly hold business occupations, identified time spent socializing with co-workers as the top rank, although differences in categories were not overly pronounced. Interestingly, they also indicated the importance of spending time socializing with fellow organization members as well. This is a further indication of the importance of the organizations to maintaining community.



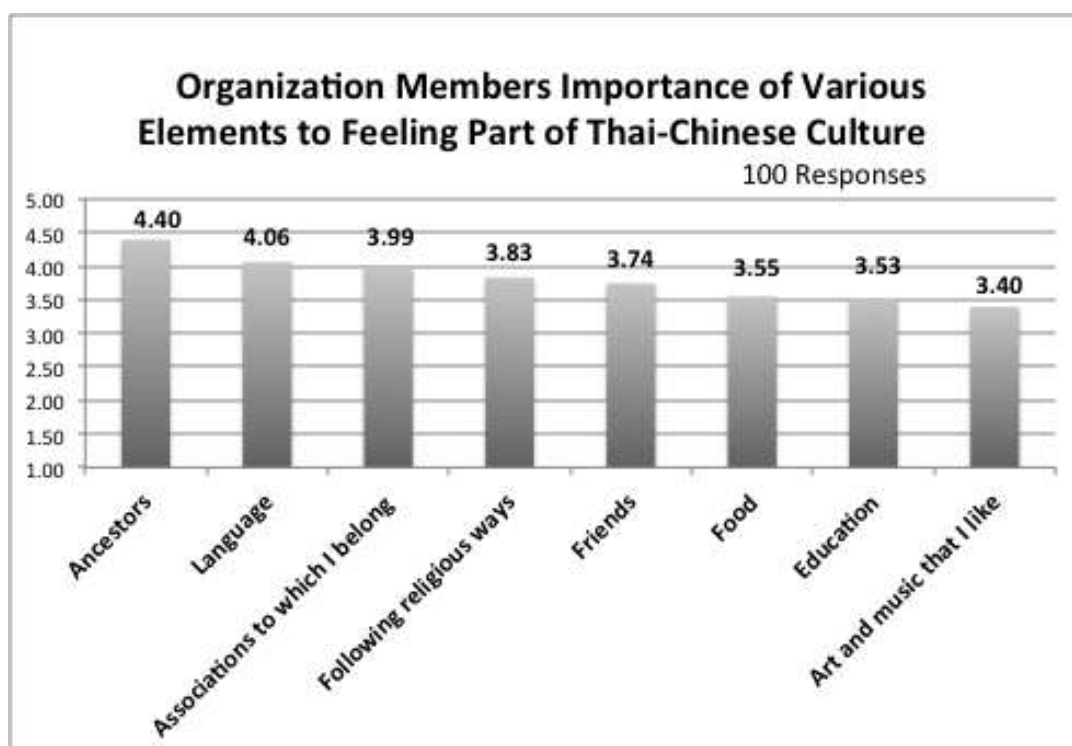
Students Identity by Association

Response Rate Srinakon 69 (99%) Kobkanseuksa 95 (91%)



Regarding the factors that make respondents identify with their Chinese heritage, interesting differences exist between the older organization members and the Thai-Chinese student population. When asked to rank the relative

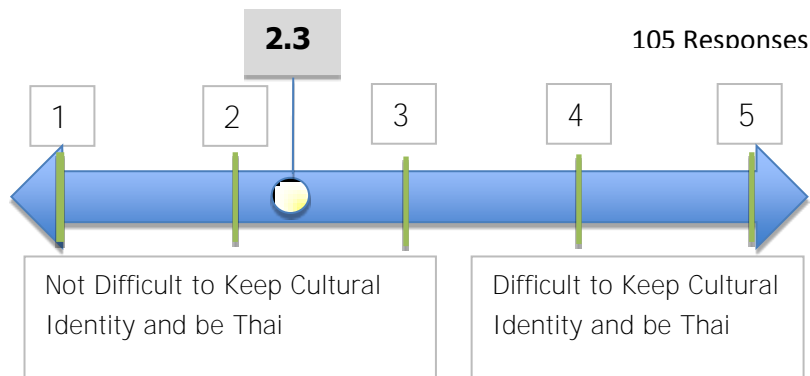
importance of various factors to one's feeling of being part of the Thai-Chinese cultural group, organization members strongly identified ancestors as being important to their identification as Thai-Chinese, followed by language, organization membership and religion, while the students on average rated education, language and friends higher, as discussed in the section on education. This may be an indication that students are still in the process of internalizing vital aspects of Chinese cultural identity. Such internalization would come from the external influences that help teach these values-- education and formal Chinese language training.



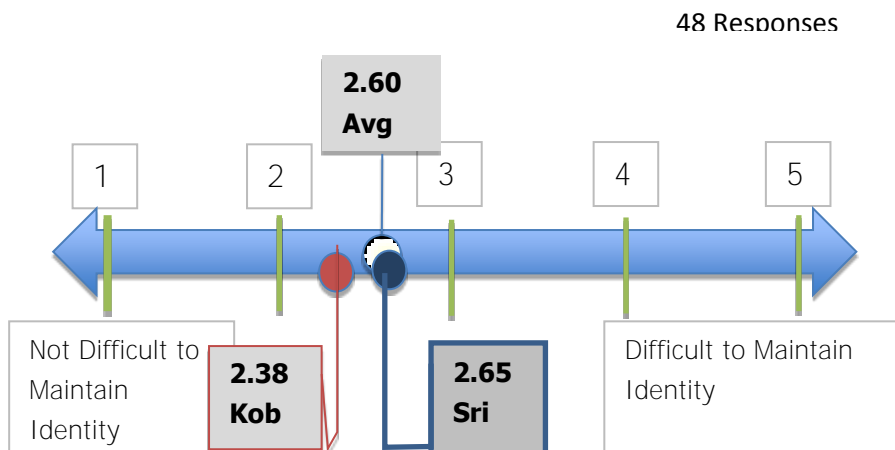
As discussed in Chapter Two, countries with a combination of high uncertainty avoidance, along with high collectivism, tend to emphasize assimilation and deny ethnic differences in society. This is partly manifested in the Thai government census figures, which largely ignore ethnic differences when measuring the population characteristics. In order to determine if this Thai government characteristic affected the Thai-Chinese population, the survey posed the question, "How difficult do you think it is to be a Thai national and still maintain your personal cultural and religious identity?" Most respondents did

not feel that it is very difficult to reconcile their ethnic identity with being a Thai national.

Organization Members Attitude Toward Difficulty of Maintaining Cultural Identity as a Thai National

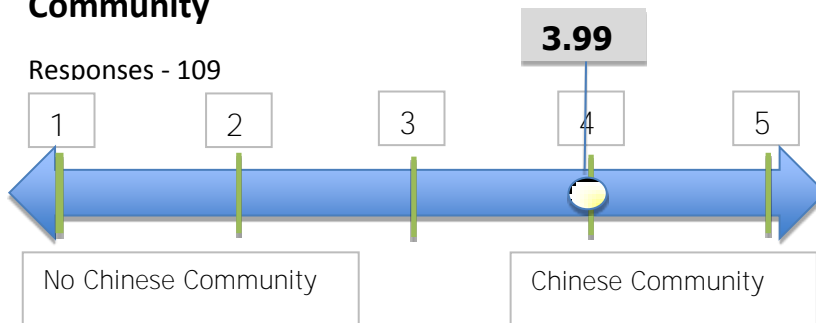


Students Attitude Toward Difficulty of Maintaining Cultural Identity as a Thai National



The success so far of ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in nurturing a sense of a Chinese heritage community in Hat Yai is evident in the responses to the following question: “How much do you feel there is a state of being a Chinese or Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai?” Both Thai-Chinese students and organization members felt fairly strongly that there is still a sense of Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.

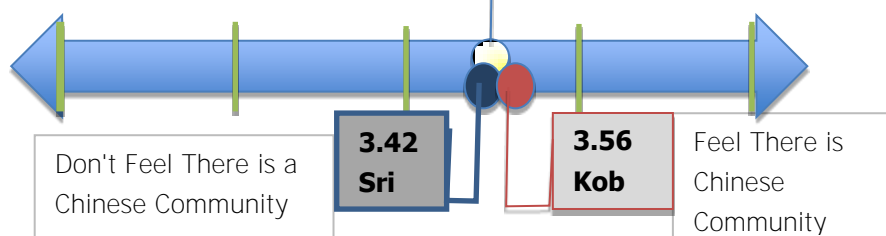
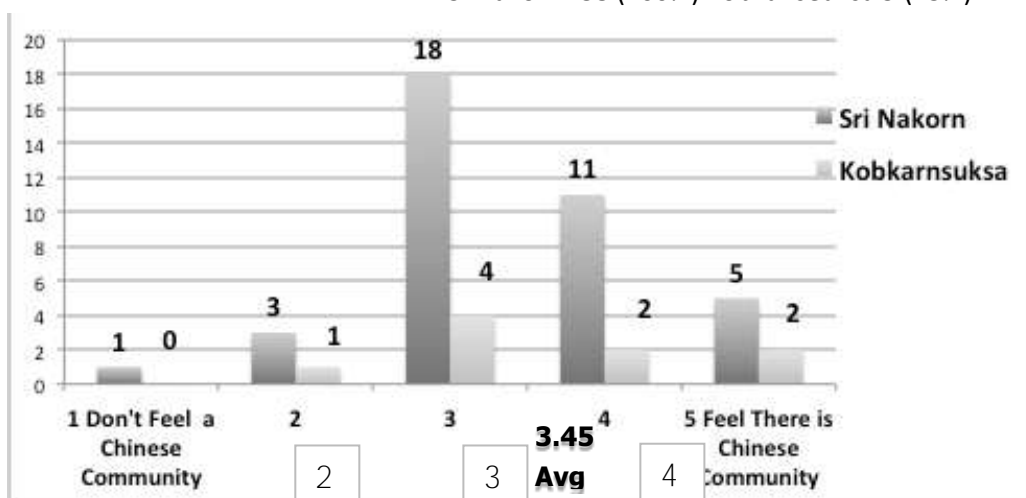
Organization Members Feeling of Thai-Chinese Community



Ethnic Chinese Students Feeling of Thai-Chinese Community

Response Rate, Students Identifying as Chinese

Srinakon – 38 (100%) Kobkanseuksa 9 (75%)

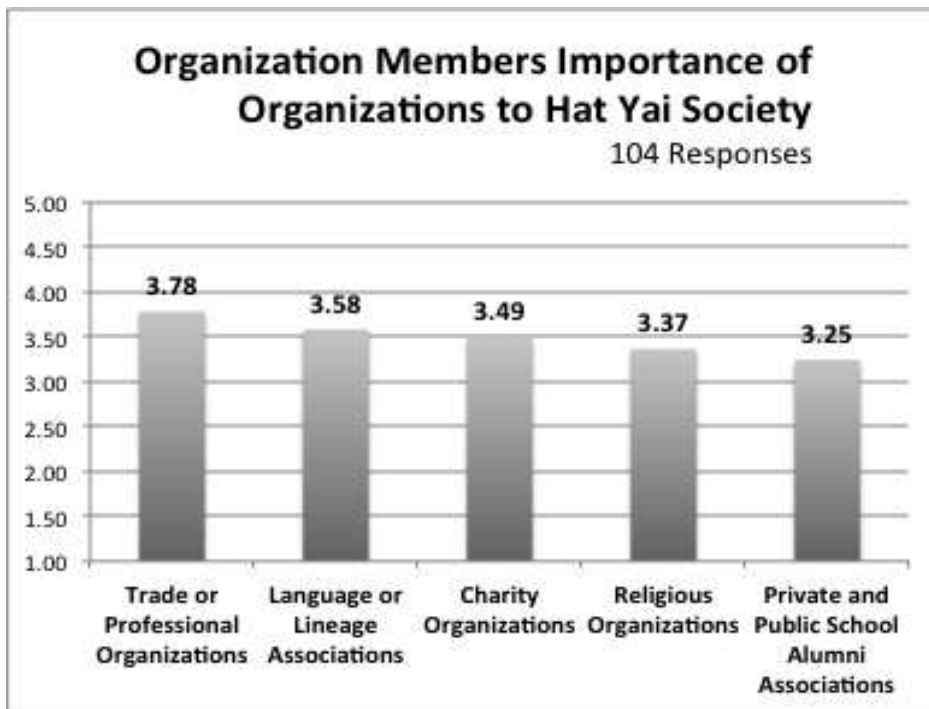


The dialect and religious organizations play an obvious role in producing this sense of community. The combined role of all categories of organizations is evident during Chinese New Years and the local Vegetarian Festivals. Siang Teung preserves other Chinese traditions as well, such as the annual *Lang Bachaa* Ceremony (งานพิธีล้างป่าช้า), carried out for corpses without relatives,

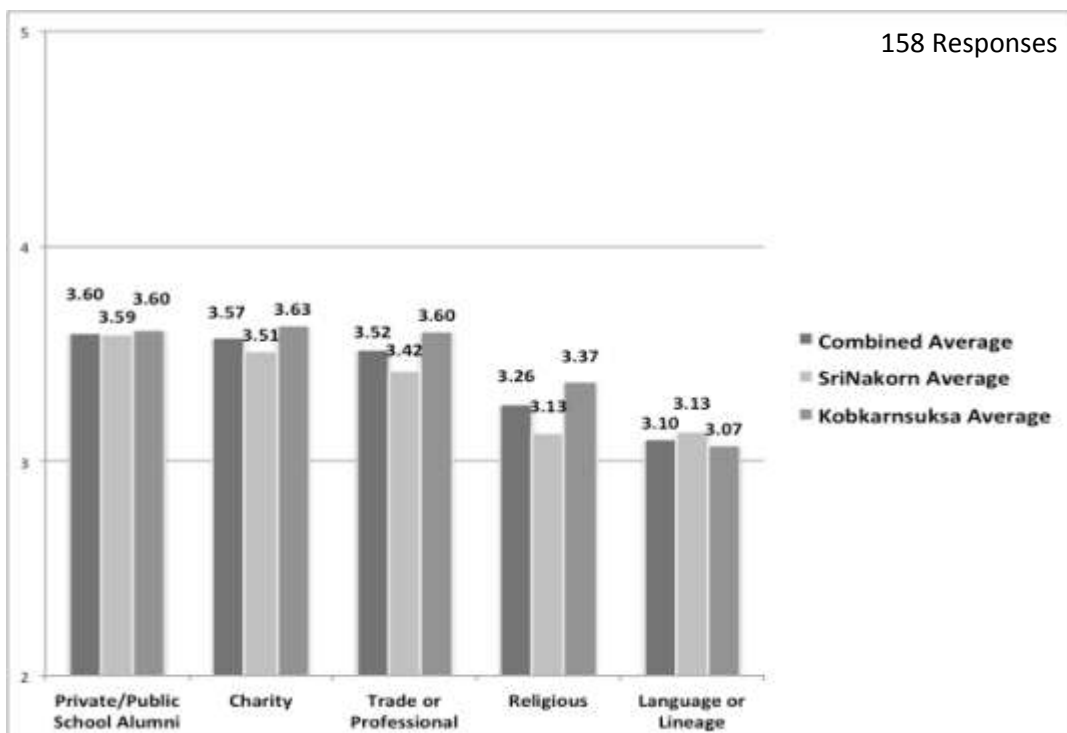
and the *Kongtek* Ceremony (พิธีกงเต็ก 功德). (Siang Teung Deputy Head of Graveyard, 2011) The religious places associated with regional dialect, lineage, and charity organizations all serve a heritage-preserving function by providing experts who maintain the proper ritual procedures, teach worshippers how to perform prayer and other rituals according to Chinese tradition, or ensure burial rituals are properly performed.

Both organizational members and students appeared to recognize the importance of the local Thai-Chinese organizations in contributing to Hat Yai's society, as well as maintaining values, culture and traditions of Chinese ancestors.

Two separate questions solicited opinions on the importance of the organizations. The first was general to the local society, without making specific reference to culture. The responses to this question, "How important do you think is the role of non-government organizations in Hat Yai society?" are depicted below. All organizations scored above three on the scale of one to five, though there are notable differences in the relative rankings between the organization members and the students. The organization members, 104 of whom responded to this question, ranked the trade or professional organizations as having the greatest importance, with language/lineage and charity organizations ranking second and third, and the schools, though at an average of 3.25, were ranked last. The students, on the other hand, ranked schools as the most important organization to society, while ranking the language/lineage associations as last. The students who identified as ethnic Chinese, however, had a higher opinion on the relevancy of the language organizations to instilling a sense of cultural identity, as seen further below.

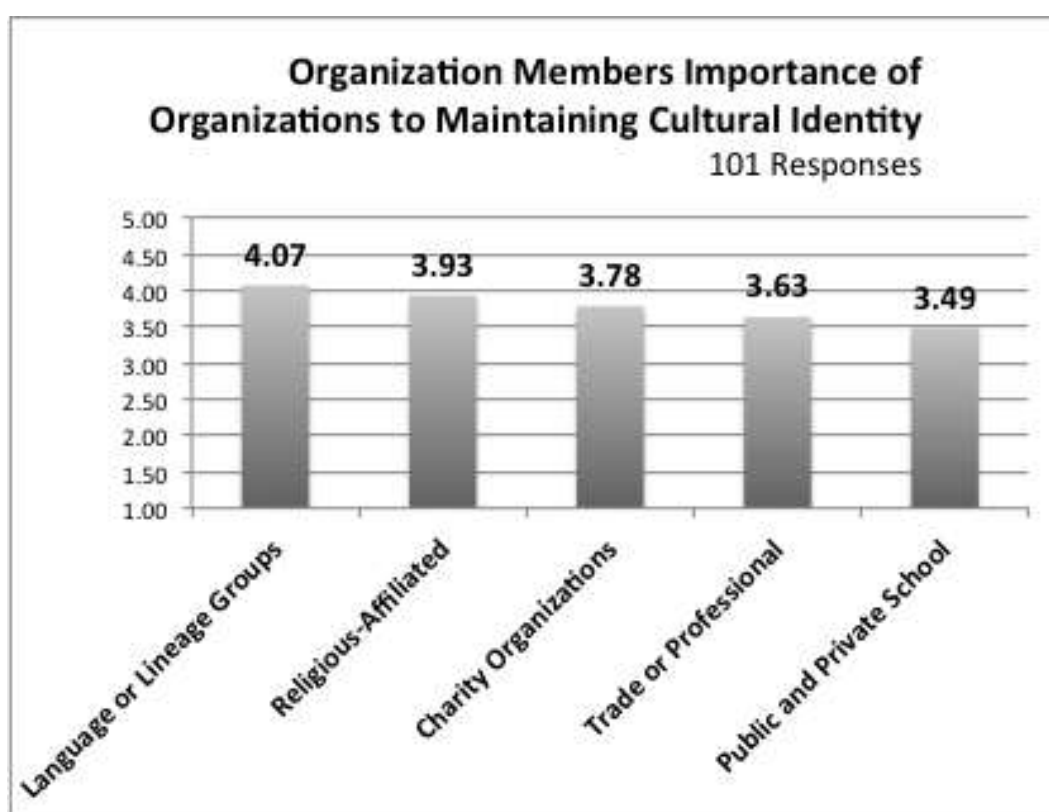


Students Importance of Organizations to Hat Yai Society



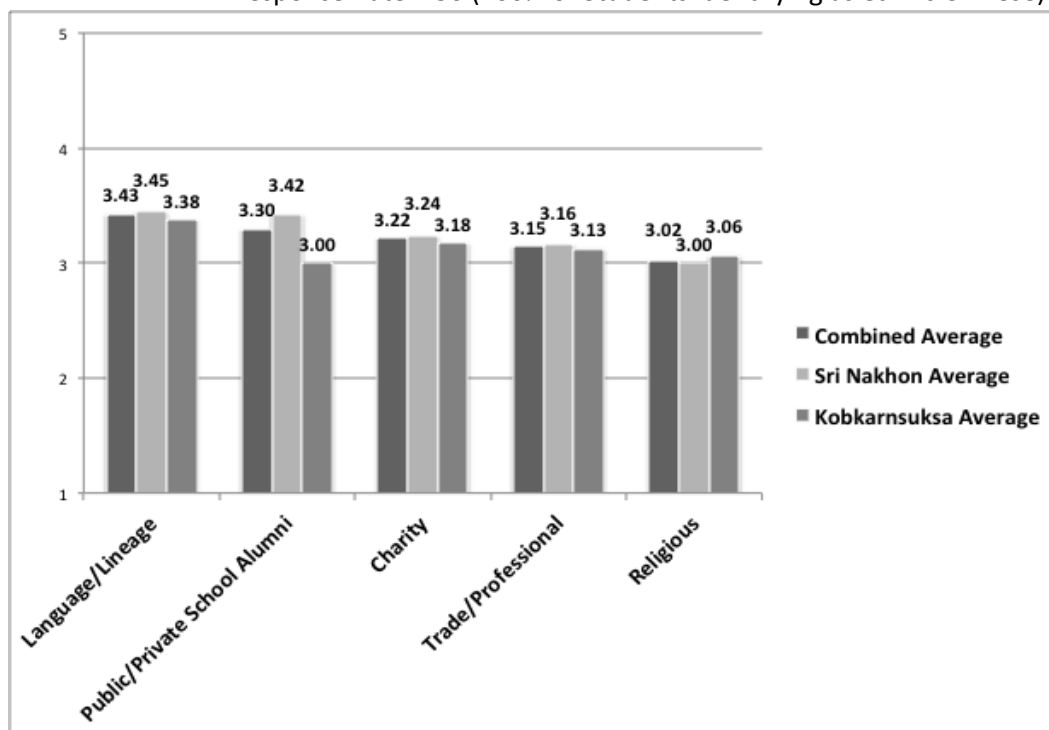
The second inquiry into the significance of the organizations to the community was directed at ethnic Chinese, to determine how relevant they saw

the organizations to instilling Chinese cultural values. When asked, “How important do you think the various organizations are in maintaining values, culture, and traditions of Chinese ancestors, all categories of organizations received an average from three to above four on the scale of one to five, with the language and lineage associations receiving the highest rating. These results indicate that both the organization members and the students still see ethnic Chinese organizations as playing a significant role in maintaining a Thai-Chinese community.



Students Importance of Organizations to Maintaining Cultural Identity

Response Rate – 50 (100% of Students Identifying as ethnic Chinese)



7.5 Challenges to the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations

Thus, the ethnic Chinese organizations appear to be effective in acting as guardians of a Chinese cultural heritage; and yet, a community's culture is not static. The organizations must contend with an array of challenges to maintain their relevancy. Hat Yai itself is a dynamic city, constantly changing in the social, economic and political spheres. Both methods and content of media and communication have changed, influencing the way community members interact. Social media and the Internet have potential to exert both attractive and repulsive forces in the community. On the one hand, electronic communication makes connection of particular interest groups easy and instantaneous. Hat Yai, in fact, has several websites, in the forms of blogs or community web boards, that cater to the local community, such as

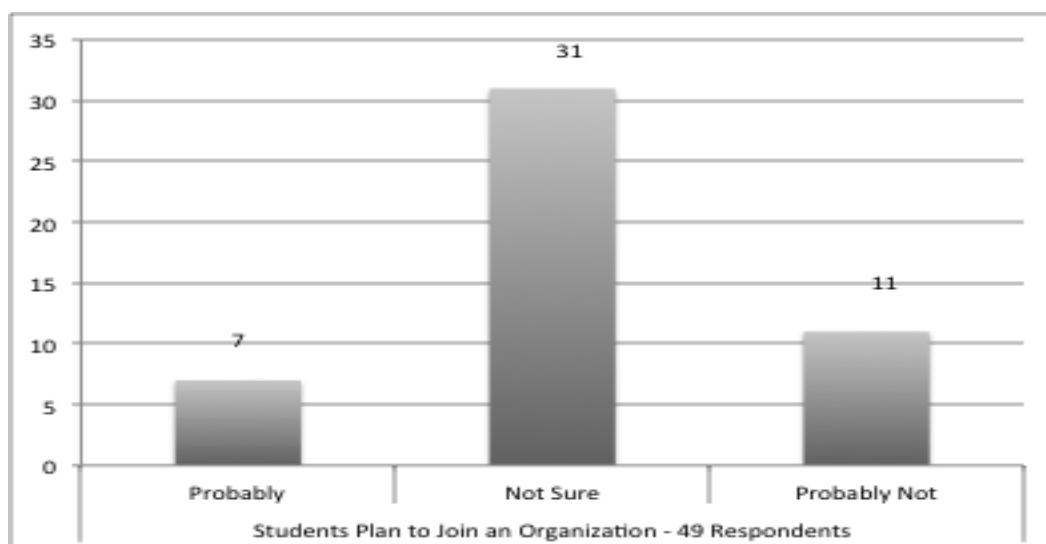
- gimyong.com

- khontai.com
- songkhla.chinesenews.com
- songkhlatoday.com
- hatyaiok.com.

Information Technology makes getting news from China and other parts of the world much easier and with more impact than traditional means; for example, volunteer workers at Siang Teung noted that news of earthquakes, floods, or other natural disasters in China draws immediate attention and charitable response from the local community. Some of the Thai-Chinese organizations are taking advantage of the available information technology, such as the Chinese language schools, which produce their own web pages, and the Siang Teung Foundation, which hosts an active Facebook page that advertises their emergency response and cultural activities. Other organizations, particularly the language associations, however, have no Internet presence, and few people of the younger generation evidently willing to take on a project to use the Internet to sustain association activities. Modern communication via social media and other Information Technology has potential to erode the intimacy of local communities, as well. The younger generation of Thai-Chinese is just as likely to connect with others outside the community as within, and be influenced by the myriad cultures circulating in the digital world. These other cultures have the potential to counter the local social cultural gravitational pull discussed in chapter four.

Another aspect of modernization affecting the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community is change to practices in and structure of the family. As an official of the Srinakon Foundation relates, first generation Chinese would usually marry within the same Chinese language group. By the second generation, they might still seek out Chinese marriage partners, but language group wasn't important; and some would marry Thai spouses. By the third generation, he saw that choice of marriage partners for most people had nothing to do with ethnicity...a sentiment shared by the majority of interviewees. (Srinakon School Alumni

Association Thai Secretary, 2011) The older generation of Thai-Chinese often expressed concern that key Chinese values were not being passed on to the younger generation. As previously mentioned, the Hakka president fretted that the younger generation was losing the entrepreneurial spirit, and Tourists Business Federation president Surapol observes a decreasing spirit of volunteerism among the younger generation. As family size has decreased, children of Thai-Chinese experience a family life that is able to focus more on them personally—without a large amount of siblings competing for family resources, these younger generation children are sent to private schools, given private tutoring lessons, and generally enjoy a greater wealth of attention and resources than was available to their parents' generation—perhaps a factor in producing a generation that is less interested in the communal activities of the Thai-Chinese volunteer organizations, which are probably seen as old fashioned and irrelevant to many of them. Of the 49 students who responded to the question of whether they planned to join a Thai-Chinese related organization in the future, just over 10% said that they probably would.



There is certainly concern manifest in the leadership ranks of the organizations for the future participation of the younger generation. According to officers in the Hokkien Association, many age groups still participate in the Association and feel the importance of being ethnic Chinese, although the newly elected Association president is concerned that the younger generations may not

find the Association relevant. The Association Manager also expressed that Chinese traditions have changed because people with the special knowledge pass away without passing the knowledge on.

A final aspect to modernization and its effect on the Thai-Chinese community is the physical pattern of economic development occurring in Hat Yai. The cultural centers of gravity previously discussed concentrate around Siang Teung and the Srinakon School, both close to the downtown district. However, Hat Yai runs the risk of suburban spread, leading eventually to urban decay, experienced by countless urban centers. For example, a large new commercial shopping complex, Central Festival, funded by outside interests, opened in early 2014 on the outskirts of what one would consider the downtown shopping district. This economic competition for consumers is bound to affect the traditional shopping areas, such as Kimyong market, or the area around Lee Garden Plaza, both of which are also physically close to the Thai-Chinese associations. In another development, housing developments are rapidly growing in the outer areas of Hat Yai, such as in the area around the airport. To the extent that younger generations of Hat Yai Thai-Chinese stay in the area, many are likely to find accommodation in newer developments, further away from the traditional centers of community gatherings. Business leaders in interviews, such as a former Songkhla Chamber of Commerce president and the Thai Rubber Association secretary, related economic changes to the community in which more outside forces are coming into the area to invest or establish competitive businesses. A physically spread-out and externally-funded economic development may bode ill for the future of Thai-Chinese organizations—or, economic prosperity could aid in their survival. President of the Srinakon Foundation and Teo Chew Association and his entourage maintained a positive attitude toward the future during their interview at Srinakon School. When asked whether the next generation was ready and willing to take over the work of the various associations that he leads, the president believed they were, and indicated he was grooming his vice presidents (อุปนายก) to take over the work.

They observed that participation rates in activities such as Chinese New Year festivities has remained steady, and that the continuing rise of China will guarantee the younger generation's interest. When taking the social, economic and political aspects of the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community's culture into perspective, which we have seen to retain certain Chinese cultural-influenced characteristics while it has still adapted to the Thai environment, it appears that the leadership's optimism about the future of that community as distinctively Thai-Chinese is well-founded.

Community social and economic ties with other ethnic Chinese groups in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and elsewhere provide motivation and strength to remain attached to a Chinese heritage as well. Probably more significant are active efforts of the PRC government to maintain relations with ethnic Chinese communities, with Thailand receiving a special focus of attention. Many Hat Yai Thai-Chinese feel a connection with Mainland China, whether for family or economic reasons, and the numerous records of exchange visits of organization leadership bear witness to the continued cultural connection. All those connections bode well for the maintenance of a Thai-Chinese community, with distinctly Chinese-influenced characteristics, and yet modernization and globalization provide alternative attractive forces that may pull the community in a different direction. It is difficult to foretell the future of the community, whether or not it will succumb to forces of assimilation; perhaps both local Thai and Chinese cultures will be so influenced by external forces that they both change into an alternate culture different than the original state of either one. What is certain is that the community will remain dynamic, and that presently, Chinese characteristics still remain clearly visible.

Chapter VIII

Summary and Recommendations

This research has taken an in-depth look at the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai to discover its distinguishing characteristics. In spite of previous studies purporting to validate G. William Skinner's assimilation paradigm, the evidence presented here shows that the picture of ethnic Chinese is more complex. Even as successive generations of Thai-Chinese have fit into the Thai polity, and although many in the younger generations may have lost Chinese language capabilities, the cultural legacy of China persists. Hat Yai boasts a vibrant Chinese culture-influenced community, with multiple Chinese associations, that has maintained many traditional and religious practices, and, more subtly, norms and expectations of behavior that have a Chinese origin.

This study focused on sixteen key organizations in the Hat Yai municipal area populated either entirely by Thai-Chinese, or which have significant Thai-Chinese association, under the following four categories:

- Chinese Regional Dialect Associations
- Religious and Charity Organizations
- Thai-Chinese Sponsored Schools
- Professional and Trade Organizations

By observing the community and those organizations, and letting the voices of the organization and other community members be heard, I was able to obtain the proposed objectives:

1. To investigate the social, economic and political cultural characteristics of the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai.
2. To analyze the role of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in influencing and maintaining the community.

3. To examine the role of the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations in supporting networks among community members, and between the Thai-Chinese community and external entities.

This research established that traditional Chinese and Thai cultures differed in some aspects, while they also had significant similarities. Based on field research that employed direct observation, in-depth interviews and questionnaires, I found particular social, economic and political characteristics. The summary of these findings, compared to traditional Chinese and Thai cultural characteristics, is depicted in the following table:

Cultural Characteristics of Traditional Chinese and Thai Compared to the Hat Yai's Ethnic Chinese Community		
Chinese Culture	Thai-Chinese Culture in Hat Yai	Thai Culture
Collectivist	Collectivist. Accepting attitudes toward market regulation and redistribution of wealth. Promotion of social welfare. Emphasis on peace, harmony, and loyalty to the nation and monarchy. Rights of the collective over rights of the individual.	Collectivist
High Power Distance	High Power Distance. Deference for seniority and authority. Trust in a non-elected bureaucratic system. Democracy as a "means to an end." Weak or no belief in Natural Rights.	High Power Distance

Chinese Culture	Thai-Chinese Culture in Hat Yai	Thai Culture
High Tolerance for Uncertainty	High Tolerance for Uncertainty. Risk-taking and Opportunity-seeking in business--“Dare to think, dare to act.” Banding together in civil organizations. Taking an active role in changing society through building charity organizations, hospitals, scholarship funds, etc. Adaptability and ability to layer cultures.	Lower Tolerance for Uncertainty
Competitive	Competitive. Focus on and striving for power. Value on continuously improving, become wealthier, and being the best in one’s endeavors. Not accepting of “just enough.” Conspicuous wealth. Conspicuous generosity through charity work. Commercialization of traditions. Concern That Younger Generation Showing Signs of Being Less Competitive	Cooperative
Pragmatic/Long-Term Orientation	Pragmatic. Industriousness and perseverance. Willing to change traditions for practical reasons.	Normative/Short-Term Orientation

<p>Connection to South China</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direct and Competitive Negotiation Styles ■ Linguistic Heterogeneity ■ Merchant Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Primarily Thai-speaking ■ Many Multi-Lingual ■ Rising Popularity of Learning Chinese ■ Merchant Culture ■ Increase in Professions Versus Merchant Livelihood 	<p>Comparable Indigenous Thai Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indirect Approach to Relationships ■ Some Linguistic Heterogeneity ■ Tendency to go into Agriculture, Civil Service and Military
<p>Special Importance of Lineage and Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filial Piety ■ Strong sense of place and family of origin ■ Family run as an enterprise ■ Patrimonialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ancestor Worship Traditions Remain Strong ■ Many Businesses Run as Family Enterprise But Modern Children Given More Freedom to Pursue Other Interests 	<p>Strong Core Family Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of Ancestor Worship or Lineage Associations ■ Less Pressure on Succeeding Generations to Join Family as Enterprise
<p>Proclivity for Establishing Social and Economic Volunteer Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of Personal Connections (<i>guanxi</i>) in Business – Network Capitalism ● Organizations for competitive interest articulation, social services, expression, resinification, and relations with larger society ● Use of organizations to foster global networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizations Remain Active, Some Concern About Future Relevancy ● Organizations Able to Protect Community Interests and Co-opt Government Resources ● Organizations Maintain Cultural Identity of the Community ● Organizations Foster Local, Inter-regional and Some Global Networks 	<p>Lack of Tendency to Form Volunteer Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of Patron-Client Relations

Chinese Culture	Thai-Chinese Culture in Hat Yai	Thai Culture
<p>Political Culture Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ideology that supports a strong centralized state ● Rights of the collective over the rights of the individual ● Strong respect for hierarchical relationships ● Governance by specialized, elite bureaucrats, ideally selected by merit ● Pragmatic “ends justify the means” approach ● Moral responsibility of government to oversee the welfare of the people ● Democracy as a means to a powerful and prosperous nation 	<p>Political Culture Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Split opinions on organizational role in politics, though mostly opposed ● Distrust in competency of government ● Slight tendency to trust bureaucrats versus elected officials ● Weak support for individual versus collective rights ● Expectation that government provide welfare ● Overt displays of national loyalty and emphasis on Peace and Harmony ● Weak practice of democracy with organization rule by wealthy and powerful 	<p>Political Culture Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subjects of a monarchy and citizens of a nation— Monarchy, Nation, Religion ● Monarchy and Civil-Military elite separate from “the people” ● Hierarchical social system ● Bureaucracy based primarily on connections in a patron-client network ● Dual polity – urban/rural; old power elite/“the people” ● Patronage system of reciprocal relationships <p>Multiple meanings of Democracy-- as a means to legitimacy; as a means to redistribute power</p>

The evidence from examining the social, economic and political dimensions and characteristics of the community suggests that the Chinese cultural heritage still exerts a significant amount of influence on the Hat Yai community. The most visible evidence lies in the lengthy and elaborate Chinese New Year celebrations, as well as continued respect for ancestors, Chinese gods, Mahayana Buddhist and Taoist beliefs in both daily life and at other special festivals. Of these practices, the most significant are those that carry out rituals that recognize the millennia-old connection with family lines that originated in China. Chinese culture has a long tradition of establishing organizations based on region of origin, language group, and common religious or commercial purposes; the continued existence and activities of the Thai-Chinese organizations also demonstrate a Chinese cultural heritage. The success and expansion of Chinese language schools indicates the rising demand for Chinese language and culture training. More subtly, expectations and values in the community also bear witness to the Chinese cultural heritage that distinguish the community from Thai culture—the high expectations in the family for the younger generation; the ability to organize and use the strength of numbers to co-opt state forces for the interests of the community; the focus on power and wealth in religious, economic, and political life; the spirit of being industrious and persevering. Other Chinese-influenced values are more in line with indigenous Thai culture, such as political values that are collectivist and hierarchical, and the emphasis on peace and harmony in society.

Significant differences between the Hat Yai Thai-Chinese community and the indigenous culture can be seen in social and economic characteristics that demonstrate low uncertainty avoidance, high competitiveness and a pragmatic long-term orientation. Low Uncertainty Avoidance is illustrated in the economic practices of risk-taking and opportunity-seeking in business. The phrase “Dare to think, dare to act” was frequently cited by community members when describing ethnic Chinese. Because members in a low uncertainty avoidance culture may

feel that organized human action can have a significant effect, they tend to band together in civil organizations as occurs in Hat Yai. Community members take an active role in changing society through building charity organizations, hospitals, scholarship funds, etc. Finally, low uncertainty avoidance allows community members to adapt to local cultures and situations, exhibiting a high tolerance for adding multiple layers of cultures. The Competitive cultural characteristic evident in the community contributes to the focus on and striving for power described in several areas of this research. The Hat Yai Chinese value those who are industrious, who continuously strive for improvement and greater wealth, and who try to be number one in whatever area they compete. Having “just enough” does not bring honor to the family or ancestors and is not a culturally accepted value. Conspicuous wealth is nothing to be ashamed of, but cultural norms also expect conspicuous generosity to accompany wealth. Finally, the Pragmatic Long-term Orientation as inherited in the Chinese culture extols the idea of industriousness or perseverance, as embodied in the concept of *khayan*. The long-term orientation also contributes to the pragmatic nature of the Thai-Chinese culture in Hat Yai, such as in the willingness to change funeral or wedding traditions based on economic costs.

The similarities between Chinese and Thai culture manifest themselves in Hat Yai particularly in the political culture, facilitating Thai-Chinese assimilation into the Thai polity for pragmatic reasons. Due to High Power Distance, the political cultures accept inequalities in status, with great deference given to those with seniority and authority. Though slight differences existed in the traditional nature of Chinese and Thai government bureaucratic systems, both cultures exhibit a high trust and deference to a non-elected bureaucratic system. Hat Yai’s Thai-Chinese organizations mostly have “democratic” structures, but in actual practice leadership is selected by wealth and status. The development of the concept of democracy in both cultures has not been about popular sovereignty and protection of Natural Rights as much as it has been a means to

an end. The Collectivist nature of Chinese and Thai culture is also evident in the prioritization of the interests of the collective good over individual rights. Hat Yai's Thai-Chinese collectivist culture accounts for acceptance of market regulation and redistribution of wealth, despite the status of many Thai-Chinese as merchants or business people. The long-time foundation of cooperative organizations to promote social welfare can be attributed to the collectivist culture, as well as the emphasis on peace, harmony, and loyalty to the nation and monarchy expressed by the Hat Yai community members. The investigation accomplished in this research, then, demonstrates that the local Hat Yai Thai-Chinese society indeed exhibits some of the same characteristics that were found at a national level.

Many Thai-Chinese expressed a belief that Thai and Chinese cultures are all mixed now, so that not many differences exist. However, survey and interview results showed that many citizens have a strong sense of belonging to a distinct Chinese or Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai. This included younger and middle-aged people as well as the older generation. The popularity of the New Year festival activities, and adherence to traditions and Chinese religious practices, also supports the continued existence of Thai-Chinese identity. This research has given voice to the community members, echoing the words of interviewees and survey respondents, many of whom were happy to express pride in their ethnic Chinese heritage. Expressions of pride in Chinese-ness take nothing away from their status as Thai citizens; they have assimilated into the Thai political system, but they retain cultural norms, expectations and practices with distinguishing characteristics.

The primary role of the Thai-Chinese organizations is to give a voice and power to the community. They accomplish this role by providing informal and formal networks for collective action, both within the community, and with other communities in the region, extending as far as Mainland China. The cooperative

efforts of the five major regional language organizations--Hakka, Teo Chew, Hokkien, Kwong Siew and Hailam--as well as the multiple other associations and foundations, have harnessed and organized resources that have contributed to economic prosperity, changed and elevated the status of Thai-Chinese vis-à-vis the state, and provided a networking function within and outside of the community. These organizations are very conscious of their role to preserve Chinese culture, and have been actively doing so by organizing, funding and promoting cultural festivals and providing a community infrastructure, such as Chinese schools and the new Thai-Chinese Cultural Center dedicated to cultural preservation. The regional and language organization's roles have changed over the years. Originally founded to help their fellow compatriots from a common homeland, they perform charity work more broadly and indirectly through support of the other foundations, while providing some scholarships for organizational members. Lineage associations still perform a social function, and all types of organizations provide a social and economic network. The organizations face challenges in the future, as the younger generation may not support as much volunteerism, nor see the relevance of organizations linked to a land they've never seen or a language that they don't speak, although signs of a possible revival of interest in the language, culture and heritage are also evident.

Some of the Chinese-influenced social cultural practices have undergone significant change, while others have remained steady. Traditions that have become more expensive or inconvenient have been adapted, such as switching to Thai-style funerals or weddings. Nonetheless, remnants of tradition remain, such as the tea ceremony in weddings, and more importantly, maintenance of rituals honoring ancestors. Economic development has provided resources to maintain or even build new culturally-related facilities. On the other hand, economic developments that cause the family to become more spread out and smaller have a negative effect on Thai-Chinese identity and maintenance of cultural characteristics. The evidence showed some signs that the younger generation might drift away from the more "masculine" characteristic of Chinese culture, to become more adapted to Thai culture. The most significant change in the political culture has been the relationship between citizen and

state. The Thai-Chinese organizations have been able to solve problems of previous state scrutiny and discrimination, to co-opt government agencies in the interests of the community. Some of the biggest forces that promise to affect the community in the future are the external forces from increased regional cooperation and economic development, the People's Republic of China promotion of economical and cultural influence, and modernization.

8.1 Significance of This Study and Recommendations for Further Exploration

This focused study on a significant Thai-Chinese community in southern Thailand has provided a perspective different than other Bangkok-centered studies. The significant ethnic Chinese population in the pluralist society of Southern Thailand has not received as much scholarly attention as the Bangkok area. Although most scholars agree that Thai-Chinese have more easily mixed into the indigenous Thai society and culture than other Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese have blended into their local environs, a distinctive Thai-Chinese character and community remains persistent. The picture that I have attempted to paint of the persistent Chinese-influenced culture of this community has included multiple aspects—social, economic, and political. The picture comparatively examines the similarities and differences between Chinese and Thai cultures to sort out those colors and patterns provided by the Chinese heritage. I have adorned the picture with the faces and stories of those who have shaped the community, allowing them to say in their own words what it means to be Thai-Chinese in Hat Yai. An assumption that Thai-Chinese have blended seamlessly into Thai culture would miss the subtle diversity of cultural differences. The recognition that cultures are both persistent and dynamic, and that Chinese culture maintains an influence in Hat Yai's society, helps take us

beyond the assimilation paradigm with its narrow concerns about whether ethnic Chinese make good Thai subjects or not.

Future studies can further explore surviving Chinese-influenced cultural traits and how they interact with Thai society. The use of Geert Hofstede's model has its limitations. Because it relies on national level data, it is intended to be a broad application on a *national* cultural scale. It can only be tested and applied on a local scale by collecting data locally, as this study has attempted to do. Future studies could hone in on applying the dimensions to different ethnic groups in the same limited area, using focused survey techniques. My own survey had limitations in being a limited target group, with limited personal interaction to ensure proper understanding of the questions. Random sampling of communities, and polling both indigenous groups and the ethnic Chinese would make useful comparisons. One especially interesting avenue of further study would be an examination of the Thai-Chinese and their interaction with the Muslim community. Would Thai-Chinese communities in southern Thailand have a greater potential role, for example, in solving the separatist Muslim insurgency? Beyond southern Thailand, this study can now be an additional data point for more general surveys of ethnic Chinese organizations and communities in Southeast Asia and the world.

In summary, this research has shown that the ethnic Chinese-affiliated organizations have played a significant role in maintaining distinguishing characteristics derived from Chinese cultural influence. They have done so by empowering the community with a networking structure, cultural maintenance, and collective resources. Historical Thai government assimilationist policies and actions have tended to draw the community away from its Chinese roots, but the organization-empowered community has also managed to coopt government forces. Some facets of economic development and modernization are challenging the community, especially the younger generation, pulling it away from its

heritage, yet the local tourism trade, Chinese-influenced economic growth, and regional relations with other ethnic Chinese groups provide motivation for maintaining continuity with a Chinese past. The legacy of Chinese culture is likely to remain influential in the Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai for many coming years.

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Appendix A

Organizational Member Mail-out Survey, Thai

Question frames a choice and gives an example

31. บางครั้งเสรีภาพส่วนบุคคลต้องสอดคล้องกับเรื่องการรักษาความปลอดภัย
ยกตัวอย่างเช่นเจ้าหน้าที่รักษาความปลอดภัยในห้างสรรพสินค้า ขอตรวจค้นรถยนต์
หรือรถจักรยานยนต์ ด้วยเหตุผลในการรักษาความปลอดภัย คุณคิดว่าเสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล
และการรักษาความปลอดภัย อย่างไม่ไหนสำคัญมากกว่ากัน

เปรียบเทียบความสำคัญระหว่าง เสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล และการรักษาความปลอดภัย	←	ให้ความสำคัญกับ เสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล	3	ให้ความสำคัญกับการ รักษาความปลอดภัย	→
	1	2	3	4	5

Question repeated in
summary form

Clear explanation of opposite ends of
spectrum of scale

Figure Sample Questionnaire Question as Presented to Respondent



สวัสดีครับ ผมชื่อโรเบิร์ต คัมมิงส์ เป็นนิสิตปริญญาเอกของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
ผมกำลังศึกษาเรื่องสังคมและวัฒนธรรมของทาดใหญ่
โดยเฉพาะที่เกี่ยวข้องกับชุมชนชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีน

เนื่องจากท่านเป็น สมาชิกขององค์การอาสาสมัครที่ทาดใหญ่
ผมใคร่ขอความร่วมมือท่านในการตอบแบบสอบถามในเรื่องต่างๆ ซึ่งใช้เวลาราว
10-30 นาที

ข้อมูลทั้งหมดที่ได้ในครั้งนี้ จะไม่มีการนำไปเปิดเผยที่ไหน
แต่จะช่วยให้เข้าใจเอกลักษณ์ วัฒนธรรมของชาวทาดใหญ่ได้ดียิ่งขึ้น

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ศูนย์ไทยศึกษา
คณะอักษรศาสตร์
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
ถ.พญาไท ปทุมวัน กทม 10330

5 ตุลาคม 2555

เรียน ท่านผู้เกี่ยวข้อง

ศูนย์ไทยศึกษา ขอรับรองว่า นาย Robert L. Cummings JR. เป็นนิสิตในหลักสูตรอักษรศาสตร
คุณวุฒิบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาไทยศึกษา คณะอักษรศาสตร์ โดยเริ่มเข้าศึกษาตั้งแต่ภาคต้นปีการศึกษา 2554 และมี
ระยะเวลาศึกษา 10 ภาคการศึกษา ขณะนี้อยู่ระหว่างการศึกษาเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลเพื่อประกอบการเขียน
วิทยานิพนธ์เกี่ยวกับ "ชุมชนเมืองของคนไทยเชื้อสายจีนในทาดใหญ่"

ในการนี้ ศูนย์ไทยศึกษาจึงขอความอนุเคราะห์ให้นิสิตรับผิดชอบได้เก็บข้อมูลหรือสัมภาษณ์บุคคล
ในหน่วยงานของท่าน หากท่านมีข้อสงสัยประการใด โปรดติดต่อสอบถามเพิ่มเติมได้ตามที่อยู่ข้างต้น

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดให้ความอนุเคราะห์ด้วย จักเป็นพระคุณยิ่ง

000990

1. คุณเป็นสมาชิกขององค์กรอาสาสมัครใดบ้าง

	ยังเป็นสมาชิกอยู่	เคยเป็นสมาชิก แต่เลิกเป็นไปแล้ว	ไม่เคยเป็นสมาชิก
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับศาสนา			
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศ์ตระกูล			
สมาคมการค้า หรือวิชาชีพ			
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม			
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียน ทั้งรัฐ และเอกชน			
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ):			

1.a. โปรดระบุว่าเป็นองค์กรใด มีตำแหน่งอะไรบ้าง และอธิบายกิจกรรมที่คุณทำร่วมกับองค์กรดังกล่าว

2. ชาย หญิง 3. อายุ _____ ปี

4. ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุด ถ้ากำลังศึกษาอยู่ให้ระบุการศึกษาที่คาดว่าจะจบ

- ไม่ได้เรียนหนังสือ มัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย (ม.6)
 ประถมศึกษา วิทยาลัยอาชีวศึกษา หรือวิทยาลัยเทคนิค
 มัธยมศึกษาตอน (ม. 3) มหาวิทยาลัย

5. อาชีพที่ประกอบอยู่ในปัจจุบัน ระบุ _____

หากตอนนี้ไม่ทำงานแล้วให้ระบุอาชีพที่เคยทำในอดีต _____

และเลือกลักษณะอาชีพที่ตรงกับอาชีพคุณ 1 ข้อ

- เจ้าของกิจการที่มีพนักงาน 10 คน โฟร์แมน และซูเปอร์ไวเซอร์
 เจ้าของกิจการที่มีพนักงานมากกว่า 10 คน คนงานมีทักษะ
 ลูกจ้างวิชาชีพ เช่น ครู หนายความ คนงานไม่มีทักษะ
พนักงานบัญชี และอื่นๆ ชาวสวน (มีส่วนเป็นของตัวเอง)
 ระดับบริหาร/ผู้จัดการ คนงานรับจ้างทำสวน (ไม่มีส่วนเป็นของตัวเอง)
 พนักงานออฟฟิศทั่วไป ไม่เคยทำงาน

6. รายได้รวมต่อเดือนของครอบครัวก่อนหักภาษี

- น้อยกว่า 5,000 บาท/เดือน 45,000 - 54,999 บาท/เดือน
 5,000 - 14,999 บาท/เดือน 55,000 - 64,999 บาท/เดือน
 15,000 - 24,999 บาท/เดือน 65,000 - 74,999 บาท/เดือน
 25,000 - 34,999 บาท/เดือน มากกว่า 75,000 บาท/เดือน
 35,000 - 44,999 บาท/เดือน

7. คุณคิดว่าสมาคม และองค์กรที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกอยู่ มีบทบาทในการรักษาเครือข่ายเพื่อนทางสังคม มากน้อยแค่ไหน โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความเป็นจริงมากที่สุด

ความสำคัญขององค์กรต่อการรักษาเครือข่ายเพื่อน	← ไม่มีความสำคัญในการรักษาเครือข่ายเพื่อน			มีความสำคัญกับการรักษาเครือข่ายเพื่อน →	
	1	2	3	4	5
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวกับศาสนา					
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศ์ตระกูล					
สมาคมการค้า หรือวิชาชีพ					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียนทั้งรัฐและเอกชน					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ):					

8. คุณคิดว่าสมาคม และองค์กรที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกอยู่ มีบทบาทต่องานหรือธุรกิจมากน้อยแค่ไหน

ความสำคัญขององค์กรต่องานหรือธุรกิจ	← ไม่มีความสำคัญ			มีความสำคัญ →	
	1	2	3	4	5
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวกับศาสนา					
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศ์ตระกูล					
สมาคมการค้า หรือวิชาชีพ					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียนทั้งรัฐและเอกชน					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ):					

9. คุณคิดว่าสมาคม และองค์กรที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกอยู่ มีบทบาทต่อการสนับสนุนและแลกเปลี่ยนความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองมากน้อยแค่ไหน

ความสำคัญขององค์กรต่อการสนับสนุนและแลกเปลี่ยนความคิดเห็นทางการเมือง	← ไม่มีความสำคัญ			มีความสำคัญ →	
	1	2	3	4	5
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวกับศาสนา					
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศ์ตระกูล					
สมาคมการค้า หรือวิชาชีพ					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียนทั้งรัฐและเอกชน					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ):					

10. คุณคิดว่าความเป็นประชาธิปไตย (อย่างเช่นเลือกตั้งคณะกรรมการ) ของสมาคม และองค์กรที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกอยู่ มีความสำคัญมากน้อยแค่ไหน

ความสำคัญขององค์กรที่มีความเป็นประชาธิปไตย	ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก	
	1	2	3	4	5
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับศาสนา					
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศักระดูล					
สมาคมเวรค้า หรือวิชาชีพ					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียนทั้งรัฐ และเอกชน					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ):					

11. ถ้าคุณเป็นสมาชิกของกลุ่มภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศักระดูล (ตัวอย่างเช่น สมาคมตักเกี้ยน แซ่จิว ไทหล่า ฮากก้า หรือควางเจ๊า) โปรดตอบคำถามข้อต่อไป ถ้าคุณไม่เป็นโปรดข้ามไปข้อ 12.

ที่ผ่านมาจะได้เห็นได้ว่ามีกลุ่มการเมืองพยายามห้ามสมาชิกของสมาคมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษา หรือวงศักระดูล ให้เข้าไปมีบทบาททางการเมือง คุณเห็นด้วยมากน้อยแค่ไหน ที่สมาคมที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกอยู่เข้าไปมีบทบาท และส่วนร่วมทางการเมือง

บทบาททางการเมืองของกลุ่มภาษา และสมาคมวงศักระดูลที่เป็นสมาชิก	ไม่เห็นด้วย			เห็นด้วย	
	1	2	3	4	5

12. บิดามารดา หรือบรรพบุรุษของคุณอพยพมาอยู่เมืองไทยใช่หรือไม่? ถ้าใช่โปรดตอบคำถามโดยแยกแต่ละคน

	ใช่ (ถ้าอพยพ โปรดระบุ ประเทศและภูมิภาค)	ไม่ใช่	ใช่ (ถ้าอพยพ โปรดระบุ ประเทศและภูมิภาค)	ไม่ใช่
พ่อ			แม่	
ปู่/ตา			ย่า/ยาย	
พรรค (ผู้ซอก)			พรรค (ผู้ซอก)	

13. ภาษาที่ใช้พูด และอ่านเมื่ออยู่ที่บ้าน โปรดกาอย่างน้อย 1 ข้อและให้เว้นว่างไว้หากไม่ได้พูด/อ่านภาษาที่ สอง หรือสาม

ภาษา	ไทยกลาง	ภาษาใต้	จีนกลาง	มาเลย์	ฮาวี	อังกฤษ	แต้จิ๋ว	ฮกเกี้ยน	ฮากก้า	ควางตุง	อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)
ภาษาหลักที่พูดที่บ้าน (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)											
ภาษาที่สองที่พูดที่บ้าน (เลือกเพียงข้อเดียว)											
ภาษาอื่นที่พูดได้ (เลือกได้หลายข้อ)											
ภาษาที่อ่านได้ (เลือกได้หลายข้อ)											

14. คุณจะอธิบายตัวคุณเองว่าเป็น คนจีน หรือ คนไทยเชื้อสายจีน (ลูกจีน)
 ใช่-เป็น คนจีน หรือ คนไทยเชื้อสายจีน (ลูกจีน) (ถ้าใช่ โปรดตอบคำถามข้อ 15-17)
 ไม่-ไม่ได้เป็น คนจีน หรือ คนไทยเชื้อสายจีน (ลูกจีน) (ถ้าไม่ใช่ โปรดข้ามไปข้อ 18)

จีนหรือคนไทยเชื้อสายจีน

15. คุณรู้สึกว่าเป็นชุมชนชาวจีน (หรือไทยเชื้อสายจีน - ลูกจีน) ที่หาดใหญ่มากน้อยแค่ไหน

ความรู้สึกเกี่ยวกับ ความเป็นชุมชนชาวจีนในหาดใหญ่	← ไม่รู้สึก			รู้สึกมาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5

16. คุณให้ความสำคัญกับสิ่งที่ทำให้คุณรู้สึกว่าเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของกลุ่มทางวัฒนธรรมของคนไทยเชื้อสายจีน ในรายการข้างล่าง มากน้อยแค่ไหน

สิ่งที่ทำให้รู้สึกว่าเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของกลุ่ม ทางวัฒนธรรมของคนไทยเชื้อสายจีน	← ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก →	
สมาคมที่เป็นสมาชิก	1	2	3	4	5
บรรพบุรุษ					
ภาษา					
การปฏิบัติตามหลักศาสนา					
การศึกษา					
เพื่อน					
อาหาร					
ศิลปะ และดนตรีที่ชอบ					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)					

17. คุณคิดว่าการท่องเที่ยวครั้งต่างๆที่คุณค่า วัฒนธรรมและประเพณีที่ตกทอดมาจากบรรพบุรุษของชาวจีน มีความสำคัญมากน้อยแค่ไหน (โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความเป็นจริงมากที่สุด)

ความสำคัญขององค์กรในการรักษาคุณค่าวัฒนธรรมและประเพณี	← ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก →	
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับศาสนา	1	2	3	4	5
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษา หรือสมาคมวงศ์ตระกูล					
สมาคมการค้าหรือวิชาชีพ(หอการค้า สมาคมการท่องเที่ยว เป็นต้น)					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของโรงเรียนทั้งรัฐ และเอกชน					

18. ผู้คนพิจารณาว่าตัวเองมีความแตกต่างจากคนอื่น และมีความรู้สึกเกี่ยวกับสมาคม ตามพื้นที่ที่อยู่อาศัย โปรดให้คะแนนแต่ละหัวข้อว่ามีความสำคัญในการอธิบายความเป็นตัวตนของคุณอย่างไร

การให้ความสำคัญกับเอกลักษณ์ของคุณ	← ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก →	
การเป็นคนหัวใหญ่	1	2	3	4	5
การเป็นคนภาคใต้					
การเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชาติไทย					
การเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของอาเซียน (ASEAN)					

19. คุณคิดว่าอยากแค่ไหนในการเป็นคนสัญชาติไทยแต่ยังคง รักษาเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมและศาสนา ของตัวเอง อย่างเช่น ภาษา เค้าใช้เหมือนเดิม

การเป็นคนสัญชาติไทยแต่ยังคงรักษา เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมและศาสนา ของตัวเองเหมือนเดิม	← ไม่อยาก			อยาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5

20. คุณมีแนวโน้มจะใช้เวลาในการพบปะพูดคุยสังสรรค์กับบุคคลในกลุ่มต่างๆเหล่านี้มากน้อยแค่ไหน โปรดเลือกตัวเลขเพื่อบอกการใช้เวลาร่วมโดยปกติของคุณ

คุณใช้เวลาว่างในการเข้าสังคม มากน้อยแค่ไหน	← ไม่ค่อยได้ใช้เวลามาก นัก			มีแนวโน้มว่า จะใช้เวลาเยอะมาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5
คนที่มีภูมิหลังทางชาติพันธุ์ เหมือนกัน					
คนที่มีนิสัยหรือศาสนาเดียวกัน (ศาสนาพุทธนิกายมหายาน หรือเถรวาท, อิสลาม, อื่นๆ)					
คนที่เป็นสมาชิกสมาคม และองค์กรเดียวกัน					
เพื่อนบ้าน					
เพื่อนร่วมงาน					
เพื่อนเก่าสมัยเรียน					

21. ถ้าคุณต้องอธิบายเกี่ยวกับตัวเองให้คนอื่นฟังเรื่องไหนในชีวิตดังต่อไปนี้มีความสำคัญมากที่สุดในการอธิบายว่าคุณคือใคร? โปรดอธิบายว่าแต่ละเรื่องมีความสำคัญอย่างไร ด้วยการเลือกตัวเลขตั้งแต่ 1 ถึง 6 โดยเลข 6 หมายถึงสำคัญมาก

สิ่งที่สำคัญต่อความเป็นตัวตน ของคุณ	← ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5
อาชีพ					
ภูมิหลังด้านเชื้อชาติหรือชาติพันธุ์ (ไทย, มลายู, จีน, อื่นๆ)					
ภาษาที่ใช้					
ศาสนา					
ความสนใจ					
ครอบครัว					
ระดับรายได้					
ระดับการศึกษา					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)					

22. การสร้างเครือข่ายในระดับต่างๆมีความสำคัญต่อหน้าที่การงาน หรือธุรกิจของคุณ และมากน้อยแค่ไหน

ความสำคัญของการสร้าง เครือข่ายเพื่องานหรือธุรกิจ	← ไม่สำคัญ ต่องานหรือธุรกิจ			สำคัญมาก → กับงานหรือธุรกิจ	
	1	2	3	4	5
ชุมชนท้องถิ่น					
ภาคใต้					
กรุงเทพ					
มาเลเซีย					
สิงคโปร์					
อินโดนีเซีย					
จีนแผ่นดินใหญ่					
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)					

23. คุณนับถือศาสนาใด

- ไม่นับถือศาสนาใด ศาสนาพุทธมหานิกาย อิสลาม ฮินดู
 ศาสนาพุทธเถรวาท โปรเตสแตนต์ โรมันคาทอลิก อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ).....

24. นอกเหนือจากงานแต่งงาน และงานศพแล้ว ทุกวันนี้ คุณเข้าร่วม หรือทำกิจกรรมทางศาสนาบ่อยแค่ไหน (เช่น สวดมนต์ ทำบุญ เคารพเทียนบูชา)

	ไม่ เคย	ไม่ บ่อย	ปีละ ครั้ง	เฉพาะวันสำคัญ ทางศาสนา	เดือนละ ครั้ง	สัปดาห์ละ ครั้ง	มากกว่า 1 ครั้ง/สัปดาห์
ทำกิจกรรมทางศาสนา บ่อยแค่ไหน							

25. โปรดเรียงลำดับความสำคัญรายการข้างล่างนี้ ว่าคุณอยากเห็นรัฐบาลทำสิ่งใดมากที่สุด ในอีก 10 ปีข้างหน้า โดยเลือกตัวเลขแสดงระดับความสำคัญตั้งแต่ 1-3 ซึ่ง 1 หมายถึงสำคัญมากที่สุด 2 หมายถึงลำดับความสำคัญที่ 2 ฯลฯ

	ระดับความสำคัญ 1-3
เศรษฐกิจขยายตัวมาก	
ประเทศไทยมีกองกำลังทหารที่แข็งแกร่ง	
การเห็นผู้คนมีส่วนร่วมทั้งในชุมชน และร่วมแสดงความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับกรบริหารงานของรัฐบาลมากขึ้น	
มีการกระจายความมั่งคั่งและผลประโยชน์ทางสังคมอย่างเท่าเทียมกัน	
พัฒนาให้ทั้งเมือง และชนบทพัฒนาขึ้น	
ต่อต้านการทุจริตของรัฐบาล	
อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ) _____	

26. คุณคิดว่าคุณมีความสนใจเรื่องการเมืองมากน้อยแค่ไหน

ระดับความสนใจการเมือง	← ไม่สนใจ			สนใจมาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5

27. คุณเห็นด้วยมากน้อยแค่ไหนกับนโยบาย 30 บาท รักษาทุกโรค

← ไม่เห็นด้วย					เห็นด้วย →	
1	2	3	4	5		

28. คุณเห็นด้วยมากน้อยแค่ไหน ว่าการแข่งขันทางเศรษฐกิจในตลาดเสรี ที่มีเพียงกฎระเบียบขั้นต่ำในการควบคุมดูแลนั้น ส่งผลดีกับสังคม

การแข่งขันทางเศรษฐกิจในตลาดเสรี กับสังคม	← ไม่เห็นด้วย			เห็นด้วย →	
	1	2	3	4	5

29. การบริหารบ้านเมือง อย่างเช่น กำหนดนโยบาย มีสองกลุ่มที่ทำได้ คือ กรมการที่รับเลือกจากประชาชน หรือ ข้าราชการที่มีการศึกษา แต่ไม่ได้รับเลือก ระหว่างสองกลุ่มนี้คุณคิดว่ากลุ่มไหนสำคัญกว่ากันในการบริหารบ้านเมือง

← กรมการที่รับเลือกจากประชาชน สำคัญกว่า					ข้าราชการที่มีการศึกษา สำคัญกว่า →	
1	2	3	4	5		

30. คุณคิดว่าองค์กรที่ไม่ใช่หน่วยงานของรัฐบาลมีบทบาทในสังคมขนาดใหญ่สำคัญมากน้อยแค่ไหน

บทบาทขององค์กรที่อิงเงินที่ต่อ หาได้ใหญ่	← ไม่สำคัญ			สำคัญมาก →	
	1	2	3	4	5
องค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับศาสนา					
กลุ่มที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษา หรือสมาคมทางศรัทธา					
สมาคมการค้า หรือวิชาชีพ					
องค์กรการกุศล หรือมนุษยธรรม					
สมาคมนักเรียนเก่าของ โรงเรียนทั้งรัฐ และเอกชน					

31. บางครั้งเสรีภาพส่วนบุคคลต้องขัดแย้งกับเรื่องการรักษาความปลอดภัย ยกตัวอย่างเช่นเจ้าหน้าที่รักษาความปลอดภัยในห้างสรรพสินค้า ขอตรวจค้นรถยนต์ หรือรถจักรยานยนต์ ด้วยเหตุผลในการรักษาความปลอดภัย คุณคิดว่าเสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล และการรักษาความปลอดภัย อย่างไหนสำคัญมากกว่ากัน

เปรียบเทียบความสำคัญระหว่าง เสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล และการรักษาความปลอดภัย	← ให้ความสำคัญกับ เสรีภาพส่วนบุคคล			ให้ความสำคัญกับการ รักษาความปลอดภัย →	
	1	2	3	4	5

32. ในกรณีที่ต้องเสียละสิทธิเหนือทรัพย์สินส่วนตัวเพื่อสร้างความเท่าเทียมกันทางเศรษฐกิจ ยกตัวอย่างเช่น ผู้มีรายได้ทุกคนต้องเสียภาษีเพื่อให้รัฐนำไปจัดสรรเป็นสวัสดิการทางสังคมให้กับเพื่อนร่วมชาติ คุณคิดว่าสิทธิหรือทรัพย์สินส่วนตัว และประโยชน์ส่วนรวม อย่างไหนสำคัญมากกว่ากัน

ความสำคัญขงสิทธิ หรือทรัพย์สินส่วนตัว และประโยชน์ส่วนรวม	← ให้ความสำคัญสิทธิ หรือทรัพย์สินส่วนตัว			ให้ความสำคัญกับ ประโยชน์ส่วนรวม →	
	1	2	3	4	5

33. โปรดให้เหตุผลที่คุณเป็นสมาชิกขององค์กรอาสาสมัครที่หาดีใหญ่

34. คุณเห็นว่าองค์กรอาสาสมัครที่หาดีใหญ่ควรจะมีบทบาทในสังคมระดับท้องถิ่นและระดับชาติอย่างไร

ถ้าตัวคุณเองเป็น คนจีน หรือ คนไทยเชื้อสายจีน (ลูกจีน) โปรดตอบคำถาม

35. สิ่งที่คุณคิดว่ามีความสำคัญต่อการเป็นคนไทยเชื้อสายจีนคืออะไร และอย่างไร

36. คุณคิดว่าอัตลักษณ์สำคัญของชุมชนคนไทยเชื้อสายจีนคืออะไร และรู้สึกว่าเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชุมชนมากน้อยแค่ไหน

โดยเฉพาะ คนจีน หรือ คนไทยเชื้อสายจีน

Appendix B English Language Translation of Organizational Member Survey

Hello. I am Robert Cummings, a PhD candidate from Chulalongkorn University. I am currently researching the subject of Hat Yai society and culture, particularly concerning the ethnic Thai-Chinese community. As you are a member of a voluntary organization in Hat Yai, I humbly ask your cooperation in answering this survey on various topics, which will take about 10-30 minutes. Your input will be treated strictly confidential but it will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the Hat Yai people’s culture.

1. In what organizations are you a member?

1.a. Please tell which organization, any positions held, and describe any organizational activities in which you participate.

Religious Organization	Language or Lineage Organization	Trade or Professional Organization	Charity Organization	Alumni, Government, or Private Organization	Other Organization
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2. Gender

3. Age

4. Highest level of education. If you are currently studying, please say which level you expect to complete.

Have no education	Grades K-6	Grades 7-9	Grades 10-12	Vocational or Technical College	University
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5. Present occupation. If not presently working, please describe your previous occupation.

5.a. Please select the one occupation that most closely matches your occupation.

Owner of enterprise with (up to) 10 employees	Owner of enterprise with more than 10 employees	Professional employee, such as teacher, lawyer, accountant, etc.	Administration or Management	General office worker	Foreman or Supervisor	Skilled Worker	Unskilled Laborer	Agriculturalist (with own land)	Hired agriculturalist (Do not own land)	Never worked
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6. Family monthly income before tax.

Less than 5,000 baht/month	5,000 - 14,999 baht/month	15,000 - 24,999 baht/month	25,000 - 34,999 baht/month	35,000 - 44,999 baht/month	45,000 - 54,999 baht/month	55,000 - 64,999 baht/month	65,000 - 74,999 baht/month	More than 75,000 baht/ month
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7. How much of a role do the associations and organizations to which you belong play in maintaining a social network of friends? Please check mark in the space closest to your opinion. 1 = Not important in maintaining a network of friends, 5 = Very important in maintaining a network of friends.

Religious Organizat ion	Language or Lineage Organization	Trade or Professional Organization	Charity Organization	Alumni, Government, or Private Organization	Other Organizati on
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8. How much of a role does the association or organization of which you are a member play in business? 1 = Not important 5 = Very important.

Religious Organization	Language or Lineage Organization	Trade or Professional Organization	Charity Organization	Alumni, Government, or Private Organization	Other Organization
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9. How much of a role does the association or organization to which you belong play in support or exchange of political opinion? 1 = Not important 5 = Very important.

Religious Organization	Language or Lineage Organization	Trade or Professional Organization	Charity Organization	Alumni, Government, or Private Organization	Other Organization
---------------------------	--	--	-------------------------	--	-----------------------

10. How important is it that the association or organization to which you belong be a democracy (such as the election of committee members)? 1 = not important 5 = important.

Religious Organization	Language or Lineage Organization	Trade or Professional Organization	Charity Organization	Alumni, Government, or Private Organization	Other Organization
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11. (For members of language or lineage organizations only) In the past some political groups have tried to convince members of language or lineage associations to have a political role. How much do you agree or disagree that the organization to which you belong should have a role and participation in politics? 1 = disagree 5 = agree.

12. Are your parents or ancestors immigrants? If so, please answer by marking each individual.

	Yes	If an immigrant, please describe country and region	No		Yes	If an immigrant, please describe country and region	No
Father				Mother			
Grandfather				Grandmother			
Great Grandfather				Great Grandmother			

13. Languages that you speak and read at home. Please mark at least one, and leave blank if there is no second or third language.

Languages	Standard Thai	Southern Thai	Mandarin	Malay	Yawi	English	Teochiu	Hokkien	Hakka	Cantonese	Other (please list)
Primary Language Spoken at Home (Choose only one)											
Second Language Spoken at Home (Choose only one)											
Other Languages Spoken at Home (Choose all that apply)											
Languages I can Read											

14. Would you describe yourself as Chinese or Thai-Chinese?

15. How much do you feel there is a state of being a Chinese or Thai-Chinese community in Hat Yai? 1 = Don't feel there is a community 5 = Feel there is a community.

16. How important are the following items in the list below in making you feel that you are a part of the Thai-Chinese cultural group? 1 = Not important 5 = Very important.

Association to which I belong	Ancestors	Language	Following religious ways	Education	Friends	Food	Art and music that I like	Other
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17. How important do you think the various organizations are in maintaining values, culture, and traditions of Chinese ancestors? 1 = Not Important 5 = Very Important

Religious-affiliated organizations	Language or Lineage Groups	Trade or Professional Associations (such as Chamber of Commerce or Tourist Association)	Charity Organizations	Public and Private School Alumni Associations
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18. People consider themselves to be different from other people and have a feeling toward society according to the region where they live. Please rate each category as to its importance in explaining your personal identity. 1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important

Being from Hat Yai	Being from the South	Being a Thai National	(ASEAN) Being part of ASEAN
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19. How difficult to you think that it is to be a Thai National and still maintain your personal cultural and religious identity. For example, maintaining an original language. 1 = Not Difficult 5 = Very Difficult.

20. How much do you tend to spend time socializing with people from the following groups? 1 = Not much time spent 5 = Spend a lot of time

People who have the same ethnic background	People who believe in the same religion (Mahayana Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Islam, etc.)	People who are members of the same association or organization	Neighbors	Co-workers	Old school mates
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21. If you were to explain to others who you are, which items below are most important? 1 = Not Important 5 = Important

Profession	Ethnicity (Thai, Malay, Chinese, etc.)	Language that you use	Religion	Interests	Family	Income Level	Education Level	Other
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22. How important are the following areas in your business and other networks? 1 = Not Important 5 = Important

Local Community	The Southern Region	Bangkok	Malaysia	Singapore	Indonesia	Mainland China	Other
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23. What is your religion?

No Religion	Theraveda Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism	Protestant	Islam	Roman Catholic	Hindu	Other
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24. Other than weddings and funerals, how often do you presently participate in religious activities (Such as meditation, making merit, making respect to ancestors)?

Never	Not Often	Once a year	Only on important days in my religion	Once a month	Once a week	More than once a week
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25. Please rate the order of importance of the following list as to what you most want the government to do in the next 10 years. Choose the ranking from 1 - 3 in which 1 is the most important, 2 is the second most important, etc.

Expand the economy	Make Thailand have a strong military	People participate in the community and express opinions regarding administration of the government	Equal distribution of wealth and social benefits	Develop both urban and rural livability	Deal with govern- ment corrupt ion	Other
-----------------------	--	---	--	---	---	-------

26. How much are you interested in politics? 1 = Not interested 5 = Very interested
27. How much do you agree with the policy of "30 Baht to take care of every illness" (a socialized medicine program of former PM Thaksin) 1 = Don't agree, 5 = Agree
28. How much do you agree or disagree that free market competition with minimal controls is a good influence on society? 1 = disagree, 5 = agree
29. There are two groups in administrating government, such as making regulations and policies: popularly elected officials or educated, but unelected, bureaucrats. Between these two groups, which group do you think is more important in governing? 1 = popularly elected officials are more important 5 = educated bureaucrats are more important
30. How important do you think is the role of non-government organizations in Hat Yai society? 1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important
31. Sometimes individual freedom must be "in line with" [this is a translation error. The intended phrase was "conflict with"] maintaining security. For example, security officials in commercial areas search vehicles or motorcycles in maintaining safety. Which do you feel is more important between individual freedom and maintaining security? 1 = individual freedom is more important, 5 = security is more important.
32. It is necessary to relinquish personal property to establish economic equality. For example, every person with income must pay taxes for the government to provide social welfare of fellow nationals. Which do you think is more important between personal rights and property versus common interest? 1 = Personal rights and property are more important, 5 = common interests are more important
33. Please give your reason for being a member of a voluntary association in Hat Yai.
34. What role in society, on a local and national level, do you think Hat Yai voluntary associations should play?

35. What things are important to you in being Thai-Chinese?

36. What do you think is the important identity of the Thai-Chinese community? How much do you feel a part of the community?

Appendix C
Hat Yai Chinese Culture Photographs

Chinese New Year



Entertainment stages at Siang Teung. Clockwise from top left: Opera troupe from Bangkok; Children performing in Chinese-style outfits and in Thai-style outfits; Thai "Li Kae" Opera.



Market area around Siang Teung, 2013. Top Left: Street view, with a live music stage on right. Top Right: Fortune Teller. Bottom Left: Marketing Toyota cars. Bottom Right: Floating icons of modern culture set against traditional hanging Chinese lanterns. Below, market around Srinakon.





Day two of the Srinakon Foundation School New Year Festival featured young children from many local area schools. In the middle picture, the Vice President of Hat Yai Federation of Associations & Foundations (who is also the Hakka Association President) gives the top award.



Parade and Opening Ceremony on New Year's Day. Organization presidents and other dignitaries. Songkhla governor and distinguished community members paying respect to the King. Bottom Left: Leading the parade from the commercial center to Srinakon School. Bottom Right: Cartoonish Chinese figures, with Lion Dancers and Dragon Performers from another well-known Chinese community in Nakhon Sawan, Northern-Central Thailand.



Dignitary-filled stage at Srinakon Chinese Festival Opening Ceremony, 2012. The president of the Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla is at the podium. Starting at third from left: Hat Yai mayor, President of the Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations, PRC Consular in Songkhla, Vice Governor, and other organization presidents and officials. The Songkhla Governor officially opened the festival.





Day Four of the Srinakon Chinese New Year Festival. Martial Arts Performances by a Local Club, Beauty and Talent Contest Fan Dance, and an Acrobatic & Dancing Troupe from Gansu Province, northern PRC.



Day four included children performing traditional Thai dance.





Thai teen heartthrob, a Thai-Austrian, Nadech Kugimiya performing on the final night, and the large attendant crowd.



Worshippers young and old, female and male, individually and in families, come to pray for New Year's blessing at Tai Hong Jo Seu Temple.



Outside on the grounds of Siang Teung, worshippers pay respects to spirits of the heavens (left). A Muslim woman sells birds to be released for merit, which is also a typical custom at Thai Buddhist temples (right).



Giving and Getting Recognition, Day Four of Srinakon Chinese New Year Festival. Left: Hat Yai Federation of Associations and Foundations' President Nikhom presents the top prize of 20,000 baht to Miss Hat Yai Chinese New Year winner. Top Right: Mr. Nikhom and other government and civic officials present gifts of thanks to the visiting acrobat and dance troupe. Bottom Right: Winners of the Miss Hat Yai Chinese New Year contest display their award amounts.



Large incense offerings at Siang Teung. List of combined donors for the incense sticks are displayed prominently on the sticks, and include local businesses and individuals.



Chinese god images arrive at Siang Teung from area temples.



After arrival, the images are kept at the "Three Buddha Treasure" Temple (三寶佛公) shown on the left, and labeled with their origin. The above group is from Chee Nam Kok Hat Yai.



The Bucha Fa Din pole. Top Left: A medium comes to bless the pole. Bottom Left: A worshipper applies gold leaf. Right: Raising the pole amidst firecrackers, drums, and lion dance.





Kui Ki medium ceremony conducted during New Year's Festival at Siang Teung's Tai Hong Jo Seu Temple, 13 February 2013. Left: The medium holds the left handle, his assistant is holding the right. To the left of the medium is an assistant who determines which Chinese character is being written. At least one other assistant writes down the Chinese characters. Right: Worshippers line up to be touched by the mai ki.



Opening ceremony at Siang Teung, 29 January 2012. Clockwise from top left: Yala troupe performs for the gods at the "Three Buddhist Treasures" Temple; a cartoonish "Confucius" character brings festivity and luck to the crowds in return for donations; litters prepared for carrying the temple gods in the parade of gods; band members pull out a decorated traditional drum.



The Procession Begins. From top, left to right: Regional military commander and Siang Teung president ceremoniously carry the litter; the medium lead leads the commander through the ceremony; dignitaries lead the procession out of the temple; a shower of firecrackers and wild dancing; visiting the li ke stage; volunteers posing in front of the temple before canvassing the town.



Many children participated in the parade of gods, dressed in lucky red colors, some in costumes of an imagined Chinese culture.



Performance troupe from Yala, and dragon performers from Nakhon Sawan.



A modern marching band, and a group of musicians from Pattani soliciting donations in the commercial area.



Devotees rush across hot coals to test their faith during Chinese New Year festivities.



Sado Phra Khro ceremony at Siang Teung. From top, left to right: Crowd gathers for the ceremony; Nine Taoist priests lead the ceremony; Siang Teung's traditional Chinese band accompanies, with Siang Teung volunteers standing nearby, assisting with set-up and crowd management; Priest-led procession with candles, incense, lucky coins, walking toward the Three Buddhist Treasures Temple; Young and old read the Thai-transliterated Chinese character chants.



At the Lim family restaurant and living quarters, resplendent food offerings to the gods (left) and to the ancestors (above). New Year's Eve.



Lim family gathering on New Year's Eve. The food offering is to heavenly spirits and souls without relatives (left). Friendly game of cards with relatives from Malaysia (right).



Offerings to the heavenly spirits and wandering souls. The woman on the right is preparing for a midnight ceremony in which monks will come and bless her home.



The younger generation participates by dressing up in Chinese-style clothes.

Cheng Meng



Graves at Ban Phru. The concrete structures are swept clean, although the lawn is not irrigated or manicured. Below, a Kwong Siew family gathers.





Families gather for a reunion at Ban Phru during the Cheng Meng Festival.

At the recently constructed temple facility at Ban Phru. (Top) Poster soliciting donations for electricity costs. (Bottom) Chung Hua organized a worship ceremony on Cheng Meng.





This fourth-generation Hakka Chinese family of rubber traders display a generous offering for the ancestors. The offering includes a roasted pig and many other types of food, a paper stereo, and even a paper Louis Vuitton bag with paper gold coins. The family splits their time on Cheng Meng in Pattalung as well, where the first generation of ancestors who arrived in Thailand are interred.

Sat Jin



A leather goods merchant in downtown Hat Yai prepares offerings for Sat Jin.



Hat Yai Thai-Chinese merchants make offerings to the "hungry ghosts." The barrel next to the woman is for burning the paper gold money.



"Heaven Bank Notes" for use in Sat Jin. Worshippers can choose between modern Chinese or US style currencies.



Sat Jin. Local fruits, such as pineapples and coconuts, are offered, and even fine whiskey.



Supplicants line up outside the private temple Ratmirungrot during Sat Jin.



Vegetarian Festival



Surapol Kamparanonwat สุรพล กำปาลานนท์วัฒน์ President, Tourists Business Federation of Songkhla, presents an award on stage during the 2012 Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival. Stage backdrop features seals of civic and government organizations, and the front is draped with the names of more than 120 individual, company and organizational donors.



Left: A national grocery chain sets up a mini-market at the Vegetarian Festival tent across from Siang Teung. Right: Numerous vegetarian food stalls occupy the cavernous tent-covered Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival venue, with more shops outside.



Young women offer incense to Chinese gods from local temples on display at the Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival grounds across from Siang Teung.



Left to Right: Vegetarian Festival Bhramin-influenced gods, and a whirling dancer putting on a street performance.



Vegetarian Festival Left: Woman in elaborate Chinese-style costume goes into a trance. Top Right: Devotee kneels on broken glass, performing a ritual self-cutting with the shards. Bottom Right: A street entertainer attracts a crowd in a more secular performance.



Opening ceremony of the 2012 Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival. Left: Songkhla Governor performs a candle-lighting ritual. Right: Mahayana Buddhist monks perform a chanting ceremony in front of the images of three Chinese gods.





Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival Parade Main Attractions. From Top (previous page): A member of The Songkhla Foundations and Temples Association provides assistance with sanitary preparation. A devotee displays an ad for a local company. The frontline contingent of the parade, posing for media pictures, after the passing of sponsoring bands such as Tops Market and Diana Department Store. On the right a participant has started soliciting donations from the onlookers.



Monks performing a chanting ceremony in *Wat Thawonwararam*





Hat Yai Vegetarian Festival parade. Top: Dragon troupe from Pattani performs. Bottom: Youth mark themselves to symbolize participation in the ceremonial cleansing of the Vegetarian Festival, while others carry signs for a government health agency promoting abstaining from alcohol. A Diana Department Store sign is part of the group.

Religious Places



Making an impression on Hat Yai's cityscape, Wats Cheua Chang (left) and Thawonwararam (right).



Sanjao associated with charity organizations. Munnithi Theud Khunatham (Chee Nam Kok) มูลนิธิเทิดคุณธรรม 德教會紫南閣 (left) and Munnithi Mongkhontham Songkhro Phracha มูลนิธิมงคลธรรมสงเคราะห์ประชาชน 合艾福德互助社 which houses the Da Xiong Bao Dian 大雄寶殿 temple (right).



Hailam Association advertises for tourists to come visit the Ruby Goddess temple



San Jao Kuan U ศาลเจ้ากวนอู มูลนิธิมิตรภาพสงเคราะห์ 忠義善堂 (關帝廟) is a collection of Thai-Chinese holy temples associated with Hakka. It includes an area that serves as an ancestral hall, where ancestral tablets are kept.



Munnithi Si Trakun Lungkang Songkhla มุณนิฐิ์สั้ตระกูลหล่งกั๊งสงขลา 宋卡府龍岡親義會 combines both regional and lineage association, as it encompasses four lineages (Liu 劉Guan關Zhang張 Zhao趙) of the Long Gang (龍岡) region of China.





In a secluded area between Rajindee Road and the Prince of Songkhla University, the Songkhla Bunswaang (Tia Ia) Foundation มูลนิธิบุญสว่าง (เตี้ยเอี้ย) จังหวัดสงขลา 宋卡府潮陽同鄉會 is a site for people of the Zhao Yang 潮陽 County of Canton, PRC. Like the Hakka Kuan U Temple, it also houses an area for ancestral tablets. The interior woodwork on the cabinet keeping the ancestral tablets, as well as the temple doors, are striking works of traditional Chinese woodworking art.



Private temple with an impressive collection of Buddha figures, Sanjao Tamnakmettatham. The two men are from Singapore, and wrote the accompanying note, with their names, asking for blessings.



Young disciples come to purify themselves and learn the exotic rituals associated with the Vegetarian Festival at the private Naja Sa Thai Jeua temple, which is housed in simple area normally used for small shops.



Sanjao Haeng Jia, an example of a private temple. Located at the end of a small alley, a crowd regularly gathers to consult the medium, who enjoys a reputation for being able to provide strong spiritual powers. Middle picture at left depicts the medium as he communicates with the temple god. He writes the communication down on sacred paper, called *Pha Yan*, in red lettering, which the supplicants take back to their homes. His wife stands by him to assist. Photograph below hangs in the temple, showing the medium performing a ceremony at a police-sponsored local volunteer training.



Rongje Chong Siang Teung Hat Yai features colorful artwork. The engraved stone images of Si Kim Yong and his wife indicate that the building was made possible by their generous donation. Si Kim Yong's picture adorns several other area temples, as well.



The Rongje Kuang Liang Thung is a beautifully appointed building featuring pink coral-colored stone. During festivals, such as the New Years gathering depicted on the right, the temple becomes a warm and lively gathering place for families.



Chinese gods can come in many different forms representing many different aspects. Most of them, however, represent some form of power, and many brandish weapons, as these gods from local temples displayed for the 2012 Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai.

Chinese Language Schools



Confucius Classroom and Chinese employees, with author, at Srinakon School.



(Top) Artist's conception and information on the new Thai-Chinese Cultural Center, being constructed for 35 million baht at Srinakon School.

(Below) Poster at the Khunthaam Wittaya school records the first International Cooperative Learning Project with Han Chiang High School, Penang, Malaysia.

VITA

Born in the small town of Greenfield, Indiana, United States, Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Cummings Jr. now calls the natural wonder of Krabi, Thailand home. His academic career began at the United States Air Force Academy, where in 1985 he graduated with the Zebulon Pike Award for the Outstanding Cadet in History with a Bachelor of Science degree. He later returned as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, garnering the Zook Award for Excellence in Teaching. Specializing in China and Asia, he earned a Master of Arts-International Studies from the University of Washington (1986) and Masters in Business Administration from the University of Hawaii, where he was given the David Bess Leadership Award (2006). He has produced research for the US Air Force on "Cultural Identity and the Taiwanese Independence Movement" in 1986 and "The Cultural Identity of Thai-Chinese in Chiang Mai" in 2001. Retired from a 25-year Air Force career, he was a command instructor pilot of the KC-135R air refueling tanker and various other aircraft, and served as the assistant air attache in the US Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand from 2001-2004.