The Residential Segregation of Chinese Dialect Groups in Singapore : with Focus on the Period before ca. 1970

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This paper aims to clarify the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore, and to examine the main factors contributing to the formation of residential segregation.

In Singapore, population statistics data necessary to grasp residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups are not available. Therefore, the distribution of Chinese temples, associations, and their members are considered important indexes reflecting residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups. By making distribution maps of the temples, associations and their members for each period, the author identifies the changing residential segregation patterns.

Residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups in the south bank district differed from those of the north bank district. The Singapore River separated the two districts. The three major dialect groups, the Hokkiens, Teochews and Cantonese, segregated themselves in three different areas along the south bank. On the other hand, minor dialect groups such as the Hainanese, Foo-chows, Henghuas, and so on, segregated themselves with the major dialect groups in mosaic fashion in the north bank district.

Factors in the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups are considered on the basis of an analysis of the residential segregation patterns involved. The chains of territorial relation involved in the process of Chinese immigration can be regarded as factors in promoting the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups. Internal factors in the formation of the residential segregation can be found inside the Chinese dialect groups. They expected mutual help inside their society, and wanted to maintain their traditional culture including such aspects as language, religion and eating customs. As a result, they came to form their own urban villages. It was found that the Chinese dialect groups clearly had a tendency to specialize in and dominate certain trades. This promoted area concentration of a specific dialect group.

I. Introduction

This study is a geographical inquiry into the residential segregation of ethnic groups in cities, particularly the Chinese dialect groups in Singapore. An attempt is made to clarify the residential segregation patterns of ethnic groups in cities, and to examine the main factors contributing to the formation of residential segregation.

Differences between dialects are such that people in different dialect groups have difficulty communicating with each other. Therefore, it is possible to regard a Chinese dialect group as being an ethnic group.

Among relatively recent studies on the residential segregation of ethnic groups in Singapore, the one carried out by HODDER (1953) is valuable. HODDER clarified the residential segregation patterns of ethnic groups and Chinese dialect groups in the central area of Singapore by using the data obtained by means of his field survey.

Grasping the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore is not as easy as it is in advanced cities of Europe or America. Although population statistics of Chinese dialect groups at the national level are published, census tract statistics, necessary in considering residential segregation patterns are not available.

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In this study the author pays attention to Chinese bonds based on territorial and kin relationships. The distribution of Chinese associations and their members are considered important indexes reflecting the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups. Furthermore, the author supplementarily refers to the distribution of temples established by the Chinese.

Chinese associations and temples were generally established in areas where many members of the groups lived. That is, a Chinese association, consisting of members belonging to the same dialect group, tended to be organized in the area where the dialect group concerned was concentrated. Otherwise, since most of the members were lower class laborers, they would not have had enough money to pay transportation fees to visit the association. The associations thus well reflected the residential distribution of their groups.

On the other hand, the Chinese in Singapore worshipped a variety of gods which were originally sacred in their homes in China. The location of such temples, like the associations stated above, may reflect the distribution of the Chinese dialect groups at the time of their construction.

As stated above, the location of the associations and temples established by a specific dialect group can be regarded as a valuable

index reflecting the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups. It serves as an excellent substitute for statistical data on the population distribution of Chinese dialect groups.

In this study, Chinese associations and temples are first divided according to the lineage of each of the dialect groups. Then, after confirming their locations by means of documentary records¹⁾ and field surveys, distribution maps of the associations and temples will be presented for each period. For residential segregation patterns after World War II, distribution maps of the dialect group members will be presented, as the membership lists of some Chinese associations are available. The author will analyze the distribution maps on the basis of data obtained by interviewing people in charge of associations and temples and in this way, will try to grasp the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups.

II. Chinese dialect groups in Singapore

Singapore society is a typical multi-ethnic society, consisting of three major ethnic groups: Chinese, Malays, and Indians. In particular, Singapore society is characterized by having an extremely large proportion of Chinese in the total population of the country

Fig. 1 Changing composition of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore, 1881-1931.

1. Hokkien 2. Teochew 3. Cantonese 4. Hainanese 5. Hakka 6. Fuzhou
7. Hokchia 8. Henghua 9. Strait-born Chinese 10. Others

Note: Number in the graph shows the dialect group's percentage to the total Chinese population.

Source: VRIELAND (1932): p. 181, Mantestu Toa Keizai Chosakyoku (1941): p. 61, and ZHANG (1941).

Table 1 Change of ethnic composition in Singapore, 1824-1980.

Year	Chinese		Malays		Indians		Others		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
1824	3,317	31.0	6,431	60.2	756	7.1	179	1.7	10,683	100.0
1830	6,555	39.4	7,640	45.9	1,913	11.5	526	3.2	16,634	100.0
1836	13,749	45.9	12,538	41.8	2,932	9.8	765	2.5	29,984	100.0
1840	17,704	50.0	13,200	37.3	3,375	9.6	1,110	3.1	35,389	100.0
1849	27,988	52.9	17,039	32.2	6,284	11.9	1,580	3.0	52,891	100.0
1860	50,043	61.2	16,202	19.8	12,973	15.9	2,516	3.1	81,734	100.0
1871	54,572	57.5	26,141	27.6	10,313	10.9	3,790	4.0	94,816	100.0
1881	86,766	63.0	33,012	24.0	12,086	8.8	5,858	4.2	137,722	100.0
1891	121,908	67.1	35,956	19.8	16,009	8.8	7,727	4.3	181,602	100.0
1901	164,041	72.1	35,988	15.8	17,047	7.8	9,768	4.3	226,842	100.0
1911	219,577	72.4	41,806	13.8	27,755	9.1	14,183	4.7	303,321	100.0
1921	315,151	75.3	53,595	12.8	32,314	7.7	17,298	4.2	418,358	100.0
1931	418,640	75.1	65,014	11.6	50,014	9.1	23,280	4.2	557,745	100.0
1939	569,280	77.1	80,428	10.9	60,033	8.1	28,818	3.9	738,559	100.0
1947	729,473	77.8	113,803	12.1	91,927	7.7	22,941	2.4	938,144	100.0
1957	1,090,596	75.4	197,059	13.6	129,510	9.0	28,764	2.0	1,445,929	100.0
1970	1,579,866	76.2	311,379	15.0	145,169	7.0	38,093	1.8	2,074,507	100.0
1980	1,856,237	76.9	351,508	14.6	154,632	6.4	51,568	2.1	2,413,945	100.0

Source : Saw (1970, p. 57) and Population Census of each year. Population in only in 1939 is according to ZHANG (1941).

Table 2 Population composition of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore, 1947-1980.

Dialect group	1947		1957		1970		1980	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hokkien	289,109	(39.6)	442,707	(40.6)	666,944	(42.2)	799,202	(43.1)
Teochew	157,186	(21.6)	245,190	(22.5)	352,971	(22.4)	409,269	(22.0)
Cantonese	157,598	(21.6)	205,773	(18.9)	268,548	(17.0)	305,956	(16.5)
Hainanese	52,117	(7.1)	78,081	(7.2)	115,460	(7.3)	131,975	(7.1)
Hakka	39,988	(5.5)	73,072	(6.7)	110,746	(7.0)	137,428	(7.4)
Foochow	9,461	(1.3)	16,828	(1.5)	27,075	(1.7)	31,391	(1.7)
Shanghainese	—		11,034	(1.0)	13,427	(0.9)	14,732	(0.8)
Henghua	7,445	(1.0)	8,757	(0.8)	13,026	(0.8)	12,902	(0.7)
Hokchia	6,323	(0.9)	7,614	(0.7)	—		—	
Kwongai	681	(0.1)	292	(0.0)	—		—	
Others	9,565	(1.3)	1,248	(0.1)	11,669	(0.7)	13,372	(0.7)
Total	729,473	(100.0)	1,090,596	(100.0)	1,579,966	(100.0)	1,856,237	(100.0)

Source : Population Census of each year.

(Table 1).

Most Chinese immigrants were from southern China, mainly the Fujian and Guangdong provinces. There are significant differences among dialects spoken in such emigration districts. Chinese people are classified into several dialect groups according to the dialects

they speak.

The population composition of Chinese dialect groups is shown in Figure 1 and Table 2 shows the population composition by Chinese dialect groups after World War II. A comparison of the figures for the pre- and post-World War II periods, respectively, shows that

great change in the population composition. In this study, the Hokkiens, Teochews and Cantonese are called the three major dialect groups, and other groups are called the minor dialect groups.

Among the minor dialect groups, the Hainanese and Hakkas are almost the same in population size. Other minority dialect groups include Foochows, Samkiangs, Henghuas, and so forth. Figure 2 shows the emigration areas of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore.

Chinese society in Singapore is organized on the basis of very tight bond kin and territorial relations. Various Chinese social organizations

generally take the forms of associations (*huiguan* 會館) and temples (*miao* 廟). Chinese associations can be broadly classified into three main types; namely, territorial associations (*tongxiang huiguan* 同鄉會館), clan associations (*zongqinhui* 宗親會), and trade associations (*hanghui* 行會). It is natural that territorial associations are organized by the members who belong to the same dialect group. It is also true for clan associations and trade associations that most of their members belong to the same dialect groups.²⁾

Under the circumstances of insufficient protection and support by the governments of their home country and the colony, Chinese

Fig. 2 Emigration areas and population size of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore, 1980.

1. Shanghai 上海 2. Ningbo 寧波 3. Wenzhou 溫州 4. Fuzhou 福州 5. Fuqing 福清
6. Putian 莆田 7. Xianyou 仙遊 8. Anxi 安溪 9. Xiamen (Amoy) 廈門 10. Dapu 大埔
11. Chaonan 潮安 12. Shantou (Swatow) 汕頭 13. Chaoyang 潮陽 14. Hong Kong 香港
15. Aomen (Macao) 澳門 16. Guangzhou 廣州 17. Zhaoqing 肇慶 18. Sanshui 三水
19. Haikou 海口

Source : Census of Population 1980, Singapore.

associations were not only self-defense organizations; but, also, important mutual aid organizations for dialect groups who were far away from their homes and living in an unfamiliar environment. Chinese associations helped their members find jobs, established and managed public cemeteries, temples, hospitals, and senior citizens' homes and mediated troubles among members. They also ran schools for the members' children, and offered scholarships to the talented children. Moreover, they gave economic support to the poor and the aged. Buildings of the associations themselves were places for the members to promote mutual friendship and to exchange

information.

III. Residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups

1. Residential segregation patterns before World War II

1) **Just after the opening of the port :** Stamford RAFFLES opened Singapore in 1819 as a free port. The population of this island reached three thousand in three months after its opening, and exceeded ten thousand by April, 1820 (SHINOBU, 1968, pp. 343-358).

Fig. 3 Distribution of Chinese associations and temples, ca. 1850.

(1) Hokkien (2) Teochew (3) Cantonese (4) Hakka (5) Chinese temple

a: Tian Fu Gong 天福宮 (Hokkien) b: Jin Lan Miao 金蘭廟 (Hokkien)

c: Feng Shan Si 鳳山寺 (Hokkien) d: Yue Hai Qing Miao 粵海清廟 (Teochew)

e: Hai Chun Fu De Ci 海唇福德祠 (Cantonese and Hakka)

f: Tanjong Pagar Fu De Ci 丹戎百葛福德祠 (Hakka)

Source : *jinian tekan* published by each Chinese associations, and Ngow (1975a, b, 1977), LIN *et al.* (1975), and the author's field survey.

RAFFLES devoted his energies to constructing a new colonial city. He was very much concerned about big differences in languages, ways of life, jobs, and so forth, among the various ethnic groups such as the Malays, Bugis, Chinese, and Indians. Therefore, he did not allow the different ethnic groups to reside together, but allocated residential areas to each ethnic group.

The south bank district (*Dafu*) of the Singapore River was allocated to the Chinese immigrant settlement.³⁾ In 1821, two years after the opening of the port, a small temple, the predecessor of Hokkien Temple of Tian Fu Gong (Thian Hok Keng), was established on Telok Ayer Street (LIN *et al.*, 1975, pp. 47–56). In the neighborhood of Tian Fu Gong, many

Hokkiens resided. In addition, on Telok Ayer Street, Cantonese and Hakkas, in co-operation, established Hai Chun Fu De Ci (Fut Tak Ch'i) in about 1820 (LIN *et al.*, 1975, pp. 197–206).

The Teochew central residential area, just after the opening of the port, was located from the neighborhood of Yue Hai Qing Miao (Wak Hai Cheng Biao) to Boat Quay on the south bank of the Singapore River (PHUA *ed.*, 1950, pp. 39–41). Besides trading, Teochews engaged in cultivating gambier and pepper in the hilly areas around River Valley Road, Bukit Timah and Thomson Road.

2) **Around 1850:** Upon consideration of the distribution of associations and temples of the Chinese dialect groups in about 1850, it

Fig. 4 Distribution of Chinese associations and temples, ca. 1890.

- (1) Hokkien (2) Teochew (3) Cantonese (4) Hainanese (5) Hakka (6) Chinese temple
 g: Wu Jiang Fu Ji Miao 滬江孚濟廟 (Hokkien)
 h: Qing Yuan Zhen Qun Miao 清元真君廟 (Hokkien)
 i: Tian Hou Gong 天后宮 (Hainanese)
 Source : Same as Figure 3.

was found that all of them were located in the south bank district of the Singapore River (Fig. 3). At that time, Chinese associations and temples were only those of the Hokkiens, Teochews, Cantonese and Hakkas. Associations of other dialect groups did not yet exist.

Judging from the location of the associations and temples, it is certain that the center of the Chinese settlements was situated in the south bank district of the Singapore River at that time. However, in the area of the north bank district (*Xiapo*) which was originally allocated to European residents, many Chinese were

already living.

3) **Around 1890 :** An examination of the distribution of Chinese associations in about 1890 shows that Chinese associations and temples came to be found also in the north bank district (Fig. 4). Qiongzhou Huiguan (Kheng Chew Hwee Kuan 瓊州會館), the first Hainanese association, was founded on Malabar Street in 1857, and moved to the present place on Beach Road in 1880. As for the Hainanese associations and temples, they were established in the north bank district thirty or forty years later than those of the Hokkiens, Teochews,

Fig. 5 Distribution of Chinese associations and temples, ca. 1940.

(1) Hokkien (2) Teochew (3) Cantonese (4) Hainanese (5) Hakka (6) Fookchow
(7) Samkiang (8) Henghua (9) Hokchia (10) Chinese temple
j : Guang Fu Gu Miao 廣福古廟 (Cantonese)

Source : Same as Figure 3 and GUAN *et al.* eds. (1940) : pp. 929—950.

Cantonese and Hakkas.

On the other hand, in the south bank district, Hokkien's Teochews', Cantonese and Hakkas' associations had increased. In particular, many Cantonese associations were constructed around South Bridge Road and New Bridge Road.

4) **Around 1940 :** According to an examination of the distribution of Chinese associations in about 1940 (Fig. 5), it was found that the number of Chinese associations increased greatly in comparison to the number in existence around 1890. Many new Chinese associations also appeared in the north bank district. Some of them were established along the north bank of the Rochor River. Concentration of each dialect group in specific areas came to be more notable.

Next, the author will examine the characteristics of the residential segregation patterns of each Chinese dialect group in Singapore. Hokkien associations concentrated all over Telok Ayer Street to South Bridge Road. Compared with Figures 3 and 4, it can be found in Figure 5 that the location of the Hokkien associations expanded from Telok Ayer Street to the inland area. This reflected the expansion of the Hokkien residential areas.

Teochew associations rapidly increased between 1890 and 1940. They were concentrated along both banks of the Singapore River, particularly the south bank.

However, Cantonese associations, centering on the Hokkiens and Teochew groups, were clustered on the inland side. The neighborhood of South Bridge Road and New Bridge Road centering around Kreta Ayer, and called *Niucheshui* 牛車水, was the Cantonese area of concentration.

As for the Hainanese, they also lived together around a specific area in the north bank district of the Singapore River. Hainanese associations gathered around Beach Road and Middle Road.

On the other hand, though the Hakka associations were distributed in both the south and the north bank districts, areas where they were notably concentrated were not to be found.

Foochow associations could be found around Tanjong Pagar Road in the south bank district,

and around Victoria Street in the north bank district. From the 1920s to the 1930s, many Foochows lived together around New Bridge Road and Tanjong Pagar Road in the north bank district (Nanyang University, Department of History, 1970a, p. 15).

It was at the end of the nineteenth century that Henghua immigration became active. Most of them resided around Queen Street, Albert Street, and Rochor Canal Road in the north bank district, and on the north bank of the Rochor River. The Samkiang associations were located around the Cantonese area of concentration in the south bank district, and on Japan Besar along the north bank of the Rochor River.

2. Residential segregation patterns after World War II

1) Just after the end of World War II :

HODDER (1953) analyzed residential segregation of ethnic groups, including Chinese dialect groups as of 1952. At that time, about 80 percent of the population in the central area of Singapore were Chinese. As a result of examining Chinese residential areas by dialect group, clear residential segregation patterns of the three major dialect groups could be found in the south bank district of the Singapore River. Moreover, upon detailed examination, it was found that more than 90 percent of the residents in many blocks belonged to the same dialect groups. On the other hand, in the north bank district, the minor groups as well as the major groups were distributed in mosaic fashion.

2) Residential segregation patterns viewed from the distribution of Chinese association members :

In order to clarify residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups in the central area of Singapore (Fig. 6), the author collected membership lists of the main local associations of each Chinese dialect group. According to those lists, he made dot maps showing the residences of those Chinese associations' members (Fig. 7). For the Hokkiens, Teochews and Cantonese, membership lists of integrated associations could not be obtained. Therefore, some major local associations at prefectural (*fu* 府) and county (*xian* 縣) levels, that is, Anxi Huiguan (Ann Kway Association

Fig. 6 Street names in the central area of Singapore, ca. 1970.

1. Hokkien Street	2. China Street	3. Cross Street	4. New Market Street
5. Mosque Street	6. Pagoda Street	7. Tras Street	8. Purvis Street
9. Seah Street	10. Malay Street	11. Queen Street	12. Holloway Lane

安溪会馆), Chaoyang Huiguan (Teo Yeonh Huai Kuan 潮陽会馆), and Zhaoqing Huiguan (Siu Heng Wui Kun 肇慶会馆), were selected, respectively, as representatives of each dialect group, and their membership lists were used.

It would have been better if all membership lists had been published in the same year; as it is, those used in the present study have some differences in their year of publication. However, it is possible to assume that all of them show general patterns of the residential distribution of each Chinese dialect group before urban renewal began.

Figure 7 clearly indicates that the members of each association are distributed unevenly, and that there are some areas of those member's concentration. Characteristics of membership distribution by dialect group will be examined in the following:

Anxi 安溪 people⁴⁾ were concentrated in the center of the old postal district No. 1 in the south bank district of the Singapore River.

Moreover, they were concentrated, to some extent, in the northern part of the old postal district No. 7, in the north bank district.

Chaoyang 潮陽 people⁵⁾ were notably concentrated along the banks of the Singapore River, especially the south bank. In the north bank district, unlike other dialect groups, many Chaoyang people also lived in the old postal district No. 6.

Many Zhaoqing 肇慶 people⁶⁾ lived around the west side of the border of the old postal districts No. 1 and No. 2. In particular, notable concentrations of them could be found in Kreta Ayer (牛車水). Although most residents in the central area of Singapore are Chinese, it is this area that is generally called Singapore's Chinatown. This area is also an important sightseeing spot.

The concentration area of the Hainanese was the most notable. Most Hainanese were extremely concentrated in a part of the old postal district No. 7.⁷⁾

Fig. 7 Distribution of Chinese associations' members in the central area of Singapore.

a: Anxi (Hokkien), 1972 b: Chaoyang (Teochew), 1954 c: Zhaoqing (Cantonese), 1968

d: Hainanese, 1964 e: Hakka, 1956 f: Foochow, 1972

Note: Numbers in Figure 7-a show old postal codes.

Source: Membership lists of each Chinese association.

Xinjiapo Anxi Huiguan ed. (1973), Xinjiapo Chaoyang Huiguan ed. (1954), Xinjiapo Zhaoqing Huiguan ed. (1968), Xinjiapo Qiongzhou Tianhougong, Qiongzhou Huiguan ed. (1965), Xinjiapo Nanyang Keshu Zonghui ed. (1956), Xinjiapo Fuzhou Huiguan ed. (1972).

Some Hakkas lived in both the south bank district and the north bank district. In particular, many Hakkas resided in the old postal districts No. 7 and No. 1.

Foochows were distributed widely all over the central area of Singapore, except for the old postal district No. 6, where the distribution was much thinner. Many Foochows lived in the north bank district, around the crossing of Rochor Road and Queen Street; and in the south bank district, around Tanjong Pagar Road, Tras Street, and Telok Ayer Street.

As examined above, comparing the residen-

tial distribution of association members, there were notable differences in their residential distribution. Each Chinese dialect group formed distinct areas of concentration, and showed patterns of the mutual segregation of dialect groups.

3) **Residential segregation patterns viewed from the distribution of Chinese associations:** Figure 8 shows the distribution of Chinese associations by dialect group in about 1968.⁸⁾ This time period was selected partly because of the availability of materials; and partly because it was before urban renewal was

Fig. 8 Distribution of Chinese associations and temples, ca. 1968.

promoted on a large scale, and the traditional residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups were still preserved.

The author now examines the distribution of the Chinese associations by dialect group. As stated above, the establishment of Hokkien associations was almost always limited to the south bank district before World War II. This basic pattern had not undergone any great changes even by around 1968. However, Hokkien associations were also established along the north side of the Rochor Canal.

Before World War II, Teochew associations were concentrated in the area between New Bridge Road and South Bridge Road in the south bank district. However, many Teochew associations were also established in that area after World War II. The places where Teochew associations were established expanded to the areas around River Valley Road, Orchard Road and Clemenceau Avenue, which were located northwest of the original Teochew concentration area.

After World War II, it was the Cantonese associations that increased most notably among all the Chinese associations of dialect groups. Before World War II, the establishment of Cantonese associations was limited to the area around Kreta Ayer. After the war, however, many Cantonese associations were established in the area around Neil Road, Tanjong Pagar Road and Ann Sian Hill, adjacent to Kreta Ayer and the surrounding neighborhood.

On the other hand, minor dialect groups have been centered on Middle Road and its neighborhood in the north bank district since World War II. Moreover, Hainanese associations were also established close together in that area. Although the area of concentration remained almost the same around 1968, the number of Hainanese associations increased substantially.

Both Hakka and Foochow associations were distributed along both banks of the Singapore River. The number of association members increased substantially compared to the number prior to World War II. Hakka associations did not form a clearly defined concentration area like that before World War II, and were

distributed among other dialect group associations. Examining the Foochow case, three Foochow associations were established around Queen Street. Indeed, many Foochows lived in this neighborhood. Moreover, three Foochow associations could be found on the north side of the Rochor Canal.

Regarding Henghua associations before World War II, only Xingan Huiguan 興安會館 and Ziyouchu Shanghai 自由車商會 were established on Waterloo Street and Jalan Besar, respectively. After World War II, however, four Henghua associations were founded by about 1968. In the neighborhood where these associations were located, many Henghuas were concentrated. As with Hokchia associations, before World War II, there was Fuqing Huiguan (福清會館) on Queen Street. In this neighborhood, a new Hokchia association was established after World War II. Moreover, in this area there are Foochow and Henghua associations. This strongly reflects the cohesive relationship between the Hokchia and other dialect groups such as the Foochow and Henghua.

Samkiang associations were established, not near the central area but on River Valley Road, Jalan Besar, and their neighborhoods. The areas were newly built-up outside the original and traditional Chinese residential areas. This reflects the fact that the population size of the Samkiangs was smaller and that they had immigrated to Singapore much later than the other dialect groups.

As the above examination indicates, the memberships of Chinese associations increased quite substantially after World War II. Establishment of Chinese associations was limited to the central area of Singapore before World War II. As the built-up area expanded, the Chinese associations became established on the north side of the Rochor Canal, as well as in the River Valley Road and Orchard Road areas which used to be residential areas. In general, the distribution of Chinese dialect group associations clearly reflects the residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups, observed before World War II.

IV. Factors contributing to the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups

As already mentioned in the former chapter, from the time of the opening of Singapore port up to recent years, the Chinese dialect groups have segregated themselves from one another. In this chapter, the factors that promoted the formation of such residential segregation will be analyzed.

1. Chains of territorial relation in the process of migration

Through examining changes in the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups, it seems that the factors promoting the formation of the residential segregation may be inherent in the immigrant processes of Chinese dialect groups. Therefore, the process of Chinese immigration by dialect group needs to be examined.

Chinese immigration into Singapore was carried out as follows. There were migrant agents called *ketou* 客頭 in the native places of Chinese migrants. *Ketou* collected emigrants, while keeping in communication with *kezhan* 客棧, which were inns for emigrants established in emigration ports such as Xiamen (Amoy) and Shantou (Swatow). Therefore, native places of collected emigrants were generally apt to be localized. Many Chinese immigrants were summoned by their families, relatives, and acquaintances. These Chinese immigrants, in turn, called their families, relatives, and acquaintances to come up to Singapore. The connection between the native place of Chinese immigrants and Singapore became closer and closer by "chain migration."

Newcomers to Singapore, called *xinke* 新客, first settled in lodgings for single laborers, if they had no one to depend on, such as family, relatives, and friends. Such lodgings were called *zhuzaiguan* 豬仔館 or *gulijian* 估俚 (苦力) 間. These *zhuzaiguan* were established by persons from the same province. Newcomers settling in *zhuzaiguan* looked for jobs with the help of persons from the same province, or migrated again to other places such as the

Malay Peninsula, Java, Sumatra, or Borneo.

As mentioned above, it is understood that Chinese immigrants were totally held together by territorial bonds; this was so from the time of their departure from their homeland to their arrival at Singapore, and even during the time they settled down and obtained jobs. In this study, such series of relationships are called "chains of territorial relation." These chains of territorial relation can be regarded as a factor promoting residential concentration in a specific area, and the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect group members.

2. Internal factors

In general, the first residential areas of any immigrant group perform a function of cushioning newcomers as they adapt to new environments. Then, these districts attract more newcomers and become cores of their residential areas, thus promoting residential segregation.

GANS, who studied the Italian quarter in West End, Boston, called the district where immigrant groups tried to adapt their non-urban institutions and culture to the urban environments "urban villages" (GANS, 1962). This concept may be applicable to the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups. Many Chinese immigrants were originally from rural areas centering around Fujian and Guangdong Provinces. A consideration of the urban villages of Chinese dialect groups may offer significant clues for the clarification of internal factors in the formation of residential segregation.

Chinese dialect groups, having different cultures at home, formed urban villages in the process of adapting to Singapore's environment. Some of those urban villages remained clearly definable, and others did not. The distinctness and size of the urban villages differed according to dialect group.

Chinese dialect groups which formed clearly definable villages were the Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hainanese. The Hokkien urban village was around Telok Ayer Street, and the Teochew was in the district along the south bank of the Singapore River, and the Cantonese, around Kreta Ayer between South

Bridge Road and New Bridge Road. All of them were located in the south bank district. The Hainanese urban village was located around Beach Road and Middle Road in the north bank district.

On the other hand, the Hakkas and the Samkiangs did not form clearly defined urban villages. Concerning the Foochows, the Henghuas and the Hokchias, the neighborhood at the crossing of Rochor Road and Queen Street in the north bank district assumed an aspect of their urban villages (Fig. 5 and 7).

In the urban villages, Chinese who belonged to the same dialect groups resided together. Also, there were various organizations such as territorial, clan, trade, amusement and charitable associations, along with *xinju* 信局, which were facilities of remittance and mail

transfer between Singapore and immigrants' homes. There were lodgings called *zhuzaiguan* or *gulijian* already mentioned, temples where people could worship their gods, schools which offered education in the Chinese language, and so on. In other words, various institutions which served to help the Chinese dialect groups maintain their traditional culture were concentrated in the urban villages.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of *xinju* by Chinese dialect group in about 1940. According to this map, it can be very clearly recognized that *xinju* of each Chinese dialect group were concentrated in specific districts. In comparison with a series of distribution maps for Chinese associations and temples which have been examined, the distribution of *xinju* shows very similar patterns.

Fig. 9 Distribution of *xinju* by Chinese dialect group, ca. 1940.

(1) Hokkien (2) Teochew (3) Cantonese (4) Hakka (5) Hainanese

Source: GUAN *et al.*, eds (1940): pp. 578-590.

The foregoing examination verifies the fact that the urban villages of Chinese dialect groups have served as their social, economical and cultural centers. In other words, Chinese dialect groups expected mutual help inside their society, and wanted to maintain their traditional culture in the form of language, religion, and eating customs. Therefore, they came to live together in specific districts. As a result, each Chinese dialect group became segregated, and centered around its own urban village.

3. Economic factors

The author will next clarify factors contributing to the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups, from the aspect of their economic activities. It is necessary to consider what kind of characteristics the economic activities of Chinese dialect groups are distinguished by.

In economic activities, the Chinese dialect groups had a tendency to specialize and dominate in certain trades (CHENG, 1985, pp. 89-123). Characteristics of economic activities for each Chinese dialect group are examined in the following.

a. The Hokkiens : As Telok Ayer Street, where the Hokkiens lived together, faced the coast at that time, the neighborhood was a good location for engaging in foreign trade. Hokkiens contributed a great deal to the development of the rubber industry in the Malay Peninsula. A lot of banks established by Chinese were founded by Hokkiens. They were at the pivot and held the reins of economic activities such as foreign trade, the shipping business, and the banking business. Therefore, the Hokkien urban village was also the central area of Singapore's economic activities.

b. The Teochews : It is the Teochews that have held strong economic power, next to the Hokkiens. Many Teochews were also engaged in foreign trade like Hokkiens. Characteristic foreign trade activities involved dealing in local products, such as gambier, pepper, sea foods, vegetables, fruits, and in rice from various countries around Singapore. In particular, the importation and sale of rice from Thailand were the Teochews' special business. Rice produced in Thailand, carried by cargo boats,

was shipped to sampans called *tongkang*, and put in rice warehouses on the banks of the Singapore River. In Chinese society in Thailand, the Teochews are still the largest dialect group.

The majority of the Teochew rice traders were concentrated on the south bank of the Singapore River. This district was the Teochews' urban village. New Market and its neighborhood near the Singapore River became the market for perishable foods such as fish, vegetables and eggs. The concentration of Teochews along the Singapore River banks was chiefly due to the fact that most of their business utilized water transportation.

c. The Cantonese : Many Cantonese were engaged in the restaurant business, hotel operations, the jewelry business, rattan working, the building industry and woodwork, watch repairing, the machine and metal industry, the brick industry, and so forth. However, a few Cantonese played a very active part in pivotal fields of economic activities, such as foreign trade and the banking business. In comparison with that of the Hokkiens and the Teochews, Cantonese capital power was weak. Therefore, Cantonese business was concentrated in fields like crafts which could be managed with a small amount of capital, and private enterprise.

Cantonese economic activities were different from those of Hokkiens and Teochews, which needed good access to water transportation. It will be recognized that this was partly because the Cantonese urban village was established somewhat inland.

d. The Hainanese and Foochows : The symbolic Hainanese business has been the management of coffee shops called *kafeidian* 咖啡店. The management of coffee shops yielded little profit in relation to working time. However, because the venture, did not require much capital to start, the Chinese could gain a cash income from it relatively easily. Thus, it was popular.

The reason many Hainanese engaged in such work was that they immigrated to Singapore later than the three major dialect groups. It was very difficult to find other jobs better than the management of coffee shops. However, after having accumulated some capital,

many coffee shop owners gradually shifted to more profitable activities.

Besides coffee shops, many Hainanese were engaged in the restaurant business and the management of bakeries. Moreover, there were many Hainanese domestic servants and cooks in British houses and military bases (YAMASHITA 1985).

Although, at first, the managers of coffee shops were almost all Hainanese, Foochows notably advanced into this business after the 1900s. In about 1940, there were more than one thousand coffee shops in Singapore. Over five hundred of them were owned by the Foochows, and over three hundred of them were owned by the Hainanese (GUAN *et al.* eds., 1940, pp. 638–639).

Moreover, many Foochows were engaged in the hairdressing business. Before 1921, Cantonese constituted the majority of hairdressing salon managers. However, Henghua hairdressing salons increased afterwards. Since about 1930, when many Foochows immigrated into Singapore, they have dominated this business (Nanyang University, Department of History, 1970a, pp. 1–20). Chinese who had immigrated earlier than the Foochows were already engaged in more profitable businesses.

e. The Hakkas: There were certain characteristics that marked the economic activities of the Hakkas, too. Many pawnshops, called *dangdian* 當店, were owned by the Hakkas, especially Hakkas from Dapu in Guangdong Province. Moreover, in the management of Chinese herbal medicine stores, the Hakkas from Dapu were dominant (GUAN *et al.* eds., 1940, pp. 603–606, p. 633). Besides, the Hakkas made notable advances into the management of shoe stores, jewelry shops, and professions that called for expert knowledge, such as teaching, medicine, law, and politics.

Professional businesses, as stated above, gain little profit from area concentration. This may be one of the reasons why the Hakkas did not form marked areas of concentration.

f. The Henghuas: The characteristics of the Henghuas' economic activities were very marked. Many Henghuas were engaged in traffic and transportation businesses such as rickshaw-pulling, the repairing and dismantling of bicycles and motor cars, the selling of tires,

along with managing bus and taxi companies, and their drivers (Nanyang University, Department of History, 1971).

The Henghuas immigrated into Singapore after the 1880s, later than other dialect groups. By then, previously arrived immigrant groups had already established firm foundations in economic activities.

After motorcars were introduced, dealers in auto parts and tires appeared. Moreover, in compliance with the proposal by the colonial government to introduce public bus service into Singapore, the Henghuas advanced into this field (YAN, 1972). As a result, a bus terminal was constructed near the Henghua urban village in the north bank district of the Singapore River.

g. The Samkiangs: People from Shanghai, the so-called Shanghainese, played the central role among the Samkiangs. Shanghai Xishi Nüfu Tongyehui 上海西式女服同業會 was established in 1939 as a Shanghainese trade association for western style women's dress makers. Moreover, many people from Wenzhou, in Zhejiang Province, were in the wooden furniture industry (Nanyang University, Department of History, 1970b), many people from Yongxing 永興, in Hunan Province, engaged in metallurgical work, and many people from Tianmen 天門, in Hubei Province, engaged in dental treatment. In every case, the success of pioneers from the same provinces was one of the important reasons why people from these areas became specialized in these economic fields.

As examined above, the Chinese dialect groups established a sort of division of labor among the Chinese, and maintained it for a long time. In Chinese enterprises, the family-like nature of the business was easily recognizable. In general, there were many enterprises formed by the very close bonds based on the territorial and kin relation. The language used inside a given enterprise and in business was, in most cases, a specific Chinese dialect. It was very difficult for the members of other dialect groups to advance into economic activities in which a specific dialect group was specialized and was superior. As a result, the same kind of occupation accumulated in the concentration area of a specific dialect group.

It can be pointed out that this is one of the important factors in the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups.

V. Conclusion

In this study, the author has attempted to clarify the residential segregation patterns of Chinese dialect groups in Singapore, and inquire into the contributing factors that formed their segregation.

The results, found in residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups, are summarized as follows:

The Chinese began to reside in the Chinese residential area, along the south bank of the Singapore River (*Dapo*), allocated by RAFFLES' city planning. The three major dialect groups, the Hokkiens, Teochews and Cantonese, segregated themselves respectively in three different areas along the south bank of the Singapore River. Although the Hakkas, the first minor dialect group to immigrate, also resided in the south bank district, a clear concentration was not found.

On the other hand, minor dialect groups, such as the Hainanese, Foochow, Henghuas, and so on, who migrated much later than the above listed dialect groups, mainly resided in the area that had been chiefly allocated to European residents in the north district of the Singapore River (*Xiaopo*). In particular, the Hainanese formed a notably concentrated groups in the area. In the north bank district, a large number of the three major dialect groups also lived, segregating themselves with minor dialect groups in mosaic fashion.

Thus, residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups in the south bank district differed from those in the north bank district, the two districts being separated by the Singapore River.

After World War II, the built-up areas expanded with the increasing population. However, residential segregation patterns of the Chinese dialect groups in the central area of Singapore showed no great fundamental change, even by 1968, compared with the situation before World War II.

Next, on the basis of an analysis of residen-

tial segregation patterns in Chinese dialect groups, factors in the formation of residential segregation were considered. The results are as follows:

Chinese immigrants were united by a series of territorial chains from the time of leaving their homes to settling and obtaining jobs after arriving in Singapore, through *ketou*, *kezhan*, *zhuzhaiguan*, and so on. Such chains of territorial relation in the process of Chinese immigration could be regarded as a factor in promoting residential concentration, and the formation of the residential segregation of Chinese dialect groups.

Being without any substantial protection and support from the Chinese and colonial governments, the Chinese had to extend mutual help inside their dialect group society, and they also wanted to maintain their traditional culture in the forms of language, religion and eating customs. As a result, they came to live together and form their own urban villages. In other words, internal factors in the formation of the residential segregation could be found inside the Chinese dialect groups. A variety of institutions established by the Chinese dialect groups, including associations, temples, and so on, were concentrated in urban villages. Those areas were the social, cultural, and economic centers of the Chinese dialect groups in Singapore. The Chinese dialect groups came to build up residential segregation, centering around their urban villages.

In order to analyze the formation of the residential segregation of the Chinese dialect groups from an economic point of view, characteristics of economic activities of each Chinese dialect group were examined. As a result, it was clearly found that the Chinese dialect groups had a tendency to specialize in and dominate certain trades. In other words, the Chinese dialect groups established a sort of division of labor inside the Chinese society. This promoted area concentration of a specific dialect group. This was one of the important factors in the formation of the residential segregation of the Chinese by dialect group.

The residential segregation patterns identified in this study have since undergone great

changes due to the recent economic development in Singapore. This theme will be explored in another study (YAMASHITA, 1987).

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Notes

- 1) Many Chinese associations in Singapore have published special publications, generally called *jinian tekan* 紀念特刊, on memorable days such as an anniversary of their establishment. These publications include brief history and notes on changes in location of the associations, movements and activities of the members, the introduction of other friend associations, and so forth. Beside *jinian tekan*, the main reference books used for confirmation of the changes in location of the Chinese associations and temples are Ngow (1975a, b, 1977) and LIM, *et al.* (1975).
- 2) In this study, Chinese associations and temples, which do not belong to any specific Chinese dialect group, will be excluded.
- 3) In the central area of Singapore, the south bank district of the Singapore River has been called *Dapo* 大坡, and the north bank district, *Xiapo* 小坡, by the Chinese. Some European and American reseachers call the Chinese-concentrated district of the south bank "old Chinatown," and that of the north bank "new Chinatown."
- 4) Anxi people are Hokkiens from Anxi County, the former Quanzhou Prefecture 泉州府 of Fujian Province. In a survey carried out in 1952, Anxi people were estimated to account for 6.1 percent of the total Chinese population in Singapore (Xinjiapo Anxi Huiguan ed., 1973, pp. 353-354).
- 5) Chaoyang people are Teochews from Chaoyang County, the former Chaozhou Prefecture 潮州府 of Guangdong Province. Of Teochews in Singapore, the Chaoyang people number as many as

Teochews from Chaoan and Tenghai Counties.

- 6) The Cantonese are divided into two major groups; *Wuyi* 五邑 or five counties (Nanhai, Shunde, Dongguan, Panyü, and Zhongshan or former Xiangshan), in the Zhujiang delta around Guangzhou, and *Siyi* 四邑 or four counties (Taishan, former Xinning or Ningyang, Xinhui, Enping, and Kaiping) at the upper river. Zhaoqing Huiguan was established in 1879 by Siyi people from Enping and Kaiping Counties.
- 7) According to LIM (1958), one half of Singapore's Hainanese lived around Beach Road and Middle Road. That area was a center of commercial and social activities for the Hainanese.
- 8) This distribution map of Chinese associations was made in the following manner. First, Chinese associations were listed on the basis of CHEN ed. (1969), Ngow (1975a, b, 1977), Republic of Singapore (1980), and so forth. Afterword, these associations were divided into dialect groups according to the documentary records of Chinese associations and the data mentioned above. Associations which did not belong to specific groups were excluded. Next, the location of these Chinese associations in a certain period of time was confirmed on the basis of documentary records and the author's field surveys.

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シンガポールにおける華人方言集団のすみわけ

—1970年頃以前を中心にして—

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本稿は、シンガポールにおける華人方言集団のすみわけパターンとその形成要因について考察した。すみわけパターンを把握するために、華人会館や廟の分布、および華人会館会員の分布を、いくつかの時期ごとに地図化した。その結果、次のようなすみわけパターンが明らかになった。

華人の居住はシンガポール川の南岸地区（大坡）から始まり、福建人、潮州人、および広東人の三大方言集団が、そこを大きく3つの地区にすみわけた。一方、移住時期が遅れた海南人、福州人、興化人などの少数方言集団がおもに居住したのは、シンガポール川の北岸地区（小坡）であった。そこには3大方言集団も多数居住し、少数方言集団と互いにモザイク状にすみわけた。

このように、華人方言集団のすみわけパターンは、シンガポール川を挟み、その南岸と北岸で著しい対照をなした。これらのすみわけパターンは、1968年頃においても大きな変化はなかった。

以上のすみわけパターンの分析に基づいて、次にすみ

わけパターンの形成要因について考察した。華人移民は故郷を出発する時からシンガポールで生活を始めるまで、客頭、客棧、猪仔館などをおとして、一連の地縁的な鎖によって結ばれていた。このような地縁的連鎖は、すみわけを促す要因の1つであった。

華人方言集団の内部には、すみわけを形成する内的要因が認められた。華人は方言集団内部の相互扶助に期待して、また、言語、宗教、食事習慣をはじめ、自己の伝統文化を保持したいという欲求を抱いて集中居住し、アーバン・ヴィレッジを形成した。このようなアーバン・ヴィレッジを核として、華人方言集団のすみわけは拡大していった。

華人の経済活動の特色について検討した結果、それぞれの華人方言集団は、特定の職業分野で卓越し、専門化する傾向が顕著に認められた。このことは、特定の華人方言集団の地域的集中を強める結果となり、すみわけを助長した。

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