T.C.
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MALAYSIAN CHINESE: AN ANALYSIS ON THEIR BELIEFS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

MASTER'S THESIS

Ahmad Tarmizi BIN MD ARIFFIN

Department : Philosophy and Religious Studies

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Muhammed Ali BAĞIR

MAY-2019

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This thesis has been approved by the following Jury, date 29/05/ 2019.

MEMBERS OF JURY	OPINION	SIGNATURE
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Tarih: 09.05.2019

İmza:

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis does not have any intellectual incorporation of any material previously submitted for any degree or diploma in any university without acknowledgement. It does not contain to the best of my knowledge any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is illustrated in the text.

Ahmad Tarmizi BIN MD ARIFFIN

29.05.2019

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Sakarya University
Institute of Social Sciences Abstract of Thesis

Master Degree	X	**Ph.D.**	
Title of Thesis: Malaysian Chinese: An Analysis on Their Beliefs and Religious Practices			
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Department: Philosophy and Religious Studies			

The title of the thesis is "Malaysian Chinese: An Analysis on Their Beliefs and Religious Practices". There are 3 chapters that will be discussed. The first chapter will focus on general information on Malaysia and Chinese in Malaysia. Inside this chapter, Malaysia's geographical status, population and varieties of religions dialects spoken by Chinese in Malaysia will be examined. In addition, history and origin of Malaysian Chinese will also be addressed.

In chapter 2, the beliefs among Chinese in Malaysia will be given utmost priority. The concept of gods and deities, angels and demons, cosmology and morality will be explained. Meanwhile, in chapter 3, religious practices among Malaysian Chinese will be evaluated. For example, in terms of prayers, religious festivals, marriage and funeral will be explored.Lastly, this thesis will also investigate the similarities and differences between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China both in terms of their beliefs and religious practices.

Keywords: Malaysian Chinese, Malaysia, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism

Sakarya Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Özeti

Yüksek Lisans	X	**Doktora**	

Tezin Başlığı: Malezyalı Çinliler İnançları ve Dini Uygulamaları Hakkında Bir İnceleme

Tezin Yazarı: Ahmad Tarmizi Bin Md Ariffin

Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Muhammed Muhammed Ali Bağır

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Anabilim Dalı: Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri

Tezin başlığı "Malezyalı Çinliler: İnançları ve Dini Uygulamaları Hakkında Bir İnceleme"dir. Tez üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde, Malezya ve Malezya'daki Çinliler hakkında genel bilgiler verilecektir. Bu bölümde, Malezya'nın coğrafi konumu, nüfusu ve dinsel çeşitliliği incelenecektir. Ayrıca, Malezyalı Çinlilerin tarihi ve menşei de ele alınacaktır.

İkinci bölümde, Malezya'daki Çinliler arasındaki inançlardan bahsedilecektir: Tanrı ve tanrılar, melek ve şeytan, kozmoloji ve ahlak kavramı açıklanacaktır. Üçüncü bölümde, Malezyalı Çinliler arasındaki dinsel uygulamalar değerlendirmeye tabi tutulacaktır. Örneğin, dualar, dini bayramlar, evlilik ve cenaze törenleri araştırılacaktır.Son olarak, Çin'deki Çinlilerle Malezyalı Çinliler arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıklar, hem inançlar hem de dinsel uygulamalar açısından da incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Malezyadaki Çinliler, Malezya, Budizm, Taoizm, Konfüçyanizm

INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the Study

The study of Chinese religions have long been conducted and fascinated the academics. However, the main differences between the study of Chinese religions and other religions lies on the methodologies of how to differentiate and categorize the religions. These problems have long perpetuated the academics on how to approach and conduct a research on Chinese religions.

There are three main religions of the Chinese, which are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Even though the theoretical aspects of these three religions can be differentiated, the practical aspects of these religions are overlapped. For example, there are the Chinese who never worshipped in a Buddhist temple, but they still entrust the soul of their deceased relatives to the Buddhist priests. Moreover, there are many gods worshipped by all, not only Buddhists god. It is known as 'syncretic pantheon'[1]. Based on this idea, it is believed that when discussing the Chinese religions, syncretism is the main aspect of it.

Furthermore, there are a few scholars whom also agreed with the idea that in order to understand the Chinese cultures, the threefold of these three religions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism) need to be evaluated. Teiser quoted the word of sixth century B.C of prominent scholar, Li Shiqiang, who wrote that "Buddhism is the sun, Daoism (Taoism) the moon and Confucianism the five planets"[2]. Thus, the trinitarian ideas of Chinese religions have long been discussed by the Chinese scholars. These threefold of religions have been called by the Western authors such as Plopper[3], Berling[4] and Brook[5] as 'the three teachings return to one'; 'the three teachings share one body'; and 'the three teachings merge into one'. In his introductionary chapter of the book, Teiser offered his ideas on why this religions should be discussed around these three religions. Firstly, he mentioned that the ideas of the Chinese religions that has come to us 'purely

[1] Matthias Eder, "Chinese Religion," *Asian Folklore Studies* no. 6 (1973): 186.
[2] Stephen F. Teiser, "Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late-Imperial China (1644-1911)," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Ronald S. Lopez, Jr. (United States: Princeton University Press, 1996), 1.
[3] Clifford H. Plopper, *Chinese Religion Seen through the Proverb* (Shanghai: The China Press, 1926), 15.
[4] Judith Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Li Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 8.
[5] Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religion* 21 (Fall 1993): 13-44.

or without mediation'[6]. Secondly, the idea that Chinese religions have long been dominated over by these three religions and they are an inescapable part of Chinese cultures.

Meanwhile, C. K. Yang argued that Chinese religions or popular religions can be understood by differentiating between institutional and diffused religion. He asserts that the differences between institutional and diffused religion lies in the aspect of where it is practiced. For example, institutional religion is where the implementation takes place in the private area such as temple and church while diffused religion can be initiated in a aocial environment such as in a community and family[7]. The idea is that as long as there are no religious settings in a community, it would be included as a diffused religion.

In addition, Brook, even though mentioned the Chinese religions as 'three teachings return to one', he argued that the word 'syncretism' need to be analyzed based on how the Chinese sees it, not based on how the Western scholars looked at it. Thus, in his article, he proposed that the working definition of 'syncretism' need to be analyzed[8]. His arguments lie on the definition of syncretism and either syncretism is the most appropriate term to describe Chinese religions. He mentioned in his article that in order to understand syncretism and Chinese religions, it is better to look based on antithesis of the definition of syncretism. Thus, he proposed the definition of syncretism by Gavin De Costa's reasoning of Christianity's interactions with other religions worldview.

First of all, he made indication that syncretism is not ecumenicism where ecumenicism is the philosophy that the truth is universal, thus, syncretism believes that the truth is not universal. Secondly, syncretism is not inclusivism. Inclusivism reduces the content of one religion to another which makes the non-dominant religion as inferior. Thirdly, syncretism is not compartmentalism. This perspective suggested that when there are syncretic elements in a religion, it will supports and complements each other, not niche every aspect of it into different categorization. Lastly, syncretism is not eclecticism, where the practice of adopting one's view not only from the single paradigm, but from multiple theories and ideas[9]. Based on this ideas, Brook concluded that syncretism did not fully describe the characteristic of Chinese religions. This is because the definitions

[6] Teiser, *Living in the Chinese Cosmos*, 2.
[7] C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1961), 28-57.
[8] Brook, *Rethinking Syncretism*, 14.
[9] Brook, *Rethinking Syncretism*, 14-15.

given by Costa on syncretism in some way failed to characterize the Chinese religions as syncretic religion. For example, the first, second and third definitions truely described the characteristics of Chinese religions while the fourth definition that syncretism is not eclecticism, obviously not in line when describing the Chinese religions. The reason is that the beliefs of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism among adherents of Chinese religions have been living harmoniously, equally in principle and equally available to all worshippers. Thus, he objected the use of syncretism and believed the word 'condominium of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism' was the most suitable word when describing Chinese religions as the religions complement each other in a harmonious way.

On the other hand, when handling the Chinese religions in Malaysia, the problems of syncretism and characteristics of the Chinese religions have also been discussed. Daniel Goh described that Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore can be characterized by the rationalisation of the Chinese religions. His argument is that modernity is not the superior factor that changed Chinese religions in its forms and essence, but people caught up with modernization and urbanization which led to hybridization and transfiguration of both Chinese religions and modernity[10]. For example, Tong Chee Kiong and L. Kong discussed how Chinese whom practiced a certain religions demand a modernization in their country while at the same time safeguard their religions[11]. Moreover, Jean DeBenardi in her study of Hungry Ghost Festival in Penang, Malaysia saw hybridization and ritual forms can be seen in that festival. For example, superstitious practices and static performances culturally and politically transformed the the identity of Chinese in Malaysia[12]. Thus, Goh believed that syncretism and rationalization of beliefs and ideas are among the identity of Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore.

Meanwhile, Tan Chee Beng saw that Chinese religions in Malaysia as syncretic, where he believes that the end product came from commingling of multitude of religions. The Chinese religions in Malaysia did not only subsists of Buddhist beliefs and endemic Chinese cults, but it also encompasses other Malaysian origin cults such as Nadu Kong

[10] Daniel P. S. Goh, "Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore: Syncretism, Hybridisation and Transfiguration," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37 (2009): 108.
[11] Tong Chee Kiong and L. Kong, "Religion and Modernity: Ritual Transformations and the Reconstruction of Space and Time," *Social and Cultural Geography* 1 no. 1 (2000): 40.
[12] Jean DeBernardi, *Rites of Belonging: Memory, Modernity and Identity in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 178-179.

(Datuk Gong) cults. Tan also argued that the manifestations of syncretic elements of Chinese temples can be seen in most Chinese temples such as the Taoist, Buddhist and traditional Chinese elements[13].

Lee Yok Fee and Chin Yee Mun also agreed that the syncretic elements of Chinese religions in Malaysia is obvious as he quoted from Tan that even though most Chinese in Malaysia is identified as Taoist and Buddhist, the syncretic elements can be seen in their home. For example, a Buddhist statues located next to the Taoist deities are prevalent at the home of Malaysian Chinese. Thus, to study the religion of Malaysian Chinese as exclusively Taoism or Buddhism is erroneously false[14]. The syncretic attitude among Malaysian Chinese can also be identified in a Chinese religious organization in Malaysia such as Dejiao[15]. Known as Moral Uplifting Society, this organization not only concerted the tutelages and liturgies of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, but they also ennoble Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad[16].

Therefore, a compartmentalized methodology cannot be used to study Chinese religions especially in Malaysia. We cannot describe and divide the study of Chinese religions into Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. The exclusivist approach of studying monotheistic religion cannot be used as the question of 'to which religion do you belong?' straighthforwardly cannot be answered by the Malaysian Chinese. Thus, a phenomenological and comparative methodologies are the best way to understand and research about Chinese religions especially in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, there are several scholars who had studied and wrote articles and books about China and its religions. First of all, we should adress that in Turkey, researches on China have began formally with the establishment of the Sinology department at Ankara University Faculty of Letters in 1935. Between 1937-1948,

[13] Chee-beng Tan, "Chinese Religion in Malaysia: A General View," *Asian Folklore Studies* 42 no. 2 (1983): 218.

[14] Yok Fee Lee and Chin Yee Mun, "Datuk Kong Worship and Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Reflections of Syncretism, Pragmatism and Inclusiveness," *After Migration and Religious Affiliation* (2014): 150.

[15] Dejiao is a religious organization originated from China in 1939. The organization rapidly spread among the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia following the Second World War. Zi Xin Ge was the first Dejiao association that was established in Malaysia and Singapore on 1952 However, in every Dejiao association, they each have different deities as the object of worship but they agree that all teachings are fundamentally unified based on five great teachings which are Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, Kazuo Yoshihara, "Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15 (1988)

[16] Bernard Formoso, *Dejiao: A Religious Movement in Contemporary China and Overseas: Purple Qi Coming From the East* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010), 35.

German Sinologist Prof. Wolfram Eberhard, who was a pioneer of works on China in Turkey, worked in the area of Chinese antiquity and culture and he wrote extensively using Chinese sources on Turkish history. Also, he trained distinguished Turkish scholars on this field. One of them is Muhaddere Nabi Özerdim, a professor of Sinology at Ankara University who wrote and translated a lot of articles and books on Chinese religions, culture and literature. Among the books and articles wrote and translated by him are:

1- "Büyük Bilgi. Müzik Hakkında Notlar. Konfuçyüs Felsefesine Ait Metinler.", (translation), Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Dünya Edebiyatı'ndan Tecümeler Serisi. Çin Klasikleri: 2, Ankara, 1945, XXVII-64.
2- "Lao Tzu: Taoizm. (Tao Te-Ching)",(translation), Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Ankara, 1963, XVII-46.
3- "Konfuçyüs: Konuşmalar. (Lun–yü)", (translation), Miili Eğitim Bakanlığı, Dünya Edebiyatı'ndan Tercümeler Serisi. Çin Klasikleri: 5, Ankara, 1963, 156 sayfa.
4- "M.S. 4-5. Asırlarda Çin'in Şimalinde Hanedan Kuran Türklerin Şiirleri: I", Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi, II/ 1. sayı, Ankara, 1943, s:89-98.
5- "Konfuçyanizm ve Batı Demokrasisi", D.T.C.F. Dergisi, XI / 2-4. Sayı, Ankara, 1953, s: 395-430.
6- "Filozof Meng Tzu'nun Halk ve Halkın Yönetimi Üzerindeki Düşünceleri", Doğu Dilleri Dergisi, II/ 2. Sayı, Ankara, 1975, s: 175-190.
7- "Kitaplar: Buda ve Konfuçyüs", Yurt ve Dünya Dergisi, I/ 6. sayı Ankara, 1941, s: 57-63 (Cemil Sena'nın Kitabı Üzerine).
8- "Çin Dininin Menşei Meselesi ve Dini İnançlar", Belleten, XXVI / 101. Sayı, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1962, s: 79-119.

Moreover, one of the most distinguished professor on study of religions is Fuat Aydın[17]. He wrote an introductory article on Chinese Religions. The title of the article is "Klasik Çin Düşüncesi: Bir Giriş Denemesi (Classical Chinese Thought: An Introductory Attempt)"[18]. In his article, he discussed on the formation and history of Mohism, Taoism and Confucianism. Furthermore, he also translated a book from Chinese author

[17] A Professor and Head of Department in History of Religions at Sakarya University, Turkey.
[18] Fuat Aydın, "Klasik Çin Düşüncesi: Bir Giriş Denemesi (Classical Chinese Thought: An Introductory Attempt)," *BEÜ Ilahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 3 no. 1 (2016): 29-56.

Fung Yu Lan on history of Chinese Philosophy[19]. The book was divided into 2 volumes. The first volume discussed on Chinese philosophers from the beginnings to 100 B.C. The second volume discussed on the period of classical learning which started from 200 B.C. to the 20th century. Meanwhile' in his latest book entitled Klasik Çin Düşüncesi Giriş (Introduction to Classical Chinese Thought)[20], he discussed his analysis on Chinese religions by citing on historical aspects of Confucianism and Taoism.

Furthermore, Mahmut Arslan[21] wrote on the denouement of Confucianism on Chinese work culture in accordance to Weberian ways. His article examined the constrasts between Protestant work ethic approaches and Weberian approaches on how a religion, which in this case Confucianism impact Chinese work culture theoretically[22]. On the other hand, Hüsamettin Karataş's article entitled "Türkiye'de Budizm Konusunda Yapılan Çalışmalar (Studies on Buddhism in Turkey)" provides an illuminating history on how Buddhism spread from Indian subcontinent to Asia. He also mentioned that in Turkey, the study on Buddhism is still in an early stages. For example, he said that most of the works done by Turkish scholars on Buddhism mostly related to the culture of Hindu people and Hinduism itself. However, recently, there are works on Buddhism as its own as how Buddhism itself separated from Hinduism[23].

In his article, he mentioned how the study of Hinduism and Indian origin religions came into fruition in the West with the introduction and translation of some popular books. For example, Shahrastani's (d. 1153) *Al-Milal Wa An-Nihal* (The Book of Sects and Creeds) and Biruni's *Kitab Tahqiq ma li'l Hind* (Verifying All That the Indians Recount, the Reasonable and the Unreasonable. Şemsettin Sami, Albanian origin in 1878 in his article called "Esatir" also discussed on Buddhism and its origin. Furthermore, at the same time during Sami's period, Ahmet Mithat Efendi published a

[19] Yu Lan Fung, *Çin Felsefesi Tarihi (History of Chinese Philosophy)*, trans. Fuat Aydın (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi Yayınları, 2009).
[20] Fuat Aydın, *Klasik Çin Düşüncesi Giriş* (Introduction to Classical Chinese Thought) (Ankara: Aydan Basım ve Yayın Ltd., 2018).
[21] An assistant Professor in Business Faculty at Hacettepe University.
[22] Mahmut Arslan, "Weberci Görüşlere Göre Konfüçyüsçülüğün Çin Iş Kültürü Üzerine Etkileri (Effects of Confucianism on Chinese Work Culture in terms of Weberian Approaches)," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences of Hacettepe University* 26 no. 1 (2008):59-83.
[23] Hüsamettin Karataş, "Türkiye'de Budizm Konusunda Yapılan Çalışmalar (Studies on Buddhism in Turkey)," *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları* no, 7 (2009): 498.

book called Tarih-i Edyan (History of Religions) which he focused more on morality in Buddhism[24].

In 1935, Hilmi Ömer book on Buddhism led to a significant increase of study in Buddhism. His book called "Dinler Tarihi" (History of Religions)[25] discussed on all aspects of Buddhism such as Buddha's life, metaphysics and morality. Moreover, Ömer also explained on the historical part of the Hindu religions such as from the period of the Aryans to the Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa settlements. In recent years, among the most influential works on Buddhism is Ali Ihsan Yitik's thesis called "Hint Kökenli Dinlerde Karma ve Tenasüh Inancı" (Karma and Transmigration in the Religions of Indian Origin). In his thesis which later produced into a book[26], Yitik discussed on the origins of the terminologies. Then, he examined these two concepts based on the Religions of Indian Origins. In hıs book, the discussion centred on Karma and Transmigration in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism and the relationship and differences of those concepts. Moreover. He also make comparison of those concepts with the scholars of Islam such as Ibn-Hazm and al-Bagdadi.

In addition, Asife Ünal[27] gives an introductory studies for Turkish scholars about women in Chinese Religions according to the sacred texts. In her book entitled "Kutsal Metinlere Göre Çin Dinlerinde Kadın (Women in Chinese Religions according to the Sacred Texts)"[28] provides an illuminating account on how women was treated according to Confucius and Tao. Firstly, she provides a historical background on the history of Chinese Religions focusing on Confucianism and Taoism and its canonical texts. Consequently, she discussed on how women was treated according to Confucius and Tao. For example, when she elaborated on women in Confucianism based on her study on the authoritative canonical texts in Confucianism which are known as The Four Books and Five Classics.

[24] Karataş, *Türkiye'de Budizm*, 499-500.
[25] A. Hilmi Ömer, *Dinler Tarihi (History of Religions)* (Istanbul: Gazete Matbaa Kutuphane, 1935).
[26] Ali Ihsan Yitik, Hint Kökenli Dinlerde Karma Inancının Tenasüh Inancıyla Ilişkisi (The Relationship between Karma and Transmigration in the Religions of Indian Origin) (Istanbul: Ruh ve Madde Yayınları, 1996).
[27] A Professor and Head of Department in Philosophy and Religious Studies at Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Bartın University, Turkey.
[28] Asife Ünal, Kutsal Metinlere Göre Çin Dinlerinde Kadın (Women in Chinese Religions according to the Sacred Texts), (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2017).

Objectives of the Study

1. To introduce and explain equitably to the Turkish scholars and anyone who is interested in Chinese religions particularly in the case of Malaysia;
2. To describe and give analysis on religions of Malaysian Chinese within the scope of academic framework;
3. To classify and develop certain mechanisms on how to study and evaluate Chinese religions in Malaysia properly;
4. To analyze on the similarities and differences in terms of beliefs and religious practices among Malaysian Chinese and Chines in China.

In order to grasp the beliefs and religious practices of Malaysian Chinese, certain measurements and methodologies need to be developed in order for the study to be accommodate into the proper academic framework and within the context of study of religions.

Relevance and Actuality of This Research

In order for the research to be relevant and actual, the methodologies and fact-stated research must be in coherence within the scope of academic framework of study of religions. Thus, methodology/methodologies of research will not only relevant to the scholars and anyone who are studying in religions, but also it must be relevant and actual to the policymakers. Moreover, an explanation based on facts and figures must be evaluated so that a proper mechanism can be developed. This will not only benefit the scholars of religions, but also for ordinary people and policymakers whom interested to adopt and utilise this study.

First and foremost, the history of Chinese in Malaysia need to be research based on facts and historical books. The historical background of this study need to be understood in order to understand the present events. Thus, historical books, facts and figures will be given utmost priority in order for the audience to understand the history of Chinese religions in Malaysia.

Secondly, in order to discern the beliefs and practices among Chinese in Malaysia, plausible manoeuvres need to be exerted. The purpose of this study not only to understand the religions within the scope of outsiders, but also within the scope of the adherents of that particular religions.

Thirdly, in every religions, there are a lot of differences and similarites between beliefs, doctrines and religious practices. Even within the same religions there are denominations and groups that differs among each other. As we know, religion is considered as a solace for the adherents, thus different events and places can led to different interpretation of the religion itself. Thus, this thesis also seeks to understand the differences and similarities among Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China.

To conclude, the points mentioned above will make the study of Chinese religion in Malaysia not only relevant, but also can be as a guide to the policymakers on how to accomplish on harmonization between religions.

Research Design, Methodologies and Limitations of the Research

This research will focus on using the qualitative methodology to properly analyze and investigate on Chinese religions in Malaysia. The descriptive methodology will be used in order to write and corroborate the facts and figures on Chinese region in Malaysia. Thus, the collection of the data will be utilised.

The evaluation of past and present records and archives will be used. Therefore, secondary source materials will be applied in order to accomplish and compose a meticulous and methodical research. Among the secondary source materials that will be accounted for such as journal articles, books, review of books, magazines and historical books. Also, a few selected photographs will be displayed to illuminate and suggest a pictorial perspectives of the information and argumentation to the readers.

Moreover, this research will also follow one of the main methodologies of study of religions. The method is called phenomenology of religion. This method will focus on studying the religions from the standpoint of the believers or worshippers of that particular religion. Thus, this method will seek to uncover the essence, reasons of the events happened in that religion through investigations that are free from any outside influences and prejudices.

As all studies have limitations, this study also contains the limitation. Firstly, this research lack of available and reliable data. In fact, there are only a few reliable journals and books that discuss on Chinese religions in Malaysia. Thus, the scope of the analysis particularly on Malaysian Chinese's beliefs and religious practices will be limited to a

particular issues and certain cases. Thus, the need for future research on this particular topic is relevant.

Secondly, this research topic lack of prior research studies especially on Malaysian Chinese beliefs and religious practices. There are a few prior research that can be rely upon. However, most of the past research focused on a specific topic within the scope of Chinese religions. Thus, a reliable and composed analysis on the topic cannot be obtained mostly.

Thirdly, there are also limitations of the researcher. Firstly, in terms of accessibility of the peoples, organizations and documents, it is very limited as the researcher is not currently doing research in his own country, thus, the accessibility of certain informations are limited. Secondly, the researcher also have limited accessibility in terms of the language. As the researcher studying on Malaysian Chinese, a lot of the articles and books are written in Mandarin. The researcher does not know Mandarin at all. Thus, the informations and analysis of the research topic will only focusing on the information in English and Malay language.

Program of Study

The aim of this study is to analyze the history of Chinese in Malaysia, examine the concept of their beliefs and religios practices and provide an honest account on similarites and differences between beliefs and religious practices among Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China.

This thesis is structured as follows:

The first chapter will focus on general information on Malaysia and Chinese in Malaysia. Inside this chapter, Malaysia's geographical status, population, religions and dialects among the Malaysian Chinese will be addressed. In addition, the history, origin, dialects and places of residence of Malaysian Chinese will also be examined.

In chapter two, the beliefs among Chinese in Malaysia will be analyzed. The concept of gods and deities, angels and demons, sacred texts and morality will be explained. Meanwhile, in chapter three, religious practices among Malaysian Chinese will be evaluated. For example, in terms of prayers, religious festivals, marriage and funeral will be discussed.

Lastly, this thesis will investigate the similarities and differences between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China both in terms of beliefs and religious practices.

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON MALAYSIA AND CHINESE IN MALAYSIA

1.1. Malaysia's Geographical Status

Malaysia, a multi-racial and multi-religious country divided into two regions that partitioned by 640 miles of South China Sea. There are thirteen states and three federal territories[29]. In peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) which can be subdivided into eleven states (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor and Terengganu) and two federal territories (Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya), it frontiered by Thailand on the north and Singapore on the South. Meanwhile, in Malaysian Borneo (East Malaysia), there are two states (Sabah and Sarawak) and a federal territory (Federal Territory of Labuan) where it separated by Indonesia on the east and the Sultanate of Brunei. Malaysia also coasts along the maritime borders with the Philippines and Vietnam.

The total size of Malaysia is approximately 329,750 square km. In terms of size comparison, Malaysia is a bit bigger than Norway. The general climate in Malaysia is tropical which is constituted of two seasons, wet and dry seasons. However, from October to February, there are monsoon season in the northeast part of Malaysia. The perennial temperature ranges from 23 Celcius minimum to 34 Celcius maximum[30].

In August 31, 1957, Malaya became independent from the British colony. In 1963, it joined with Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo to form the Federation of Malaysia. Later, North Borneo changed its name to Sabah and in 1965, Singapore is expelled from the federation and became an independent nation over political and racial concerns[31]. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj became the first prime minister of Malaysia.

The capital city of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur which was recognized for numerous landmarks such as Petronas Twin Tower and Batu Caves.

[29] Federal Constitution of Malaysia, part 1, article 1, 19.
[30] Nedhal Ahmed M. Al-Tamimi and Sharifah Fairuz Syed Fadzil, "Thermal Performance Analysis for Ventilated and Unventilated Glazed Rooms in Malaysia (Comparing Simulated and Field Data)," *Indoor and Built Environment* 20 (2011), 535.
[31] Beng Huat Chua, "Taking Group Rights Seriously: Multiracialism in Singapore," *Asia Research Centre Working Paper* no. 124 (October 2005): 2-3.

1.2. Malaysia's Demographics

According to the official portal of Department of Statistics Malaysia, it was estimated based on the adjusted Population and Housing Census of Malaysia that in 2017, the total population of people in Malaysia was 32.05 million. Male accounted for 16.56 million while female was accounted to 15.49 million. Life expectancy for male was estimated at 72,7 years while female 77,4 years[32]. The average annual population growth rate between 2016 and 2017 was at 1,3%.

In terms of percentage of population based on ethnic group, Bumiputera or Malaysian indigenous origin accounted for 67,4%. Meanwhile, Chinese (24,6%), Indians (7,3%) and others (0,7%)[33].

1.3. Religions in Malaysia

According to Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Report in 2010 by Department of Statistics Malaysia, Islam is considered as the largest professed religion in Malaysia with the proportion of 61,3%. Furthermore, Budhhism stands at 19,8%, Christianity (9,2%), Hinduism (6,3%), Confucianism, Taoism, folk and tribal religions (1,3%), unknown religion (1,0%), no religion (0,7%) and other religions (0,4%).

1.4. History and Origin of Malaysian Chinese

The history of emigration of Chinese to Malaysia (old name: Malaya) can be classified into 4 major waves.

1.4.1. During the Fifteenth Century

The first wave of Chinese emigration to Malacca (Malay Peninsula) can be traced back during the fifteenth century. Even though Malacca was not the first state that was officiated in the Malay Peninsula, however, during the 15th century, Malacca was one of the most important port and recorded in the Malay and foreign sources[34]. Among the well known sources on Malacca are Chinese sources (Ming-Shih, Ming Shih-lu, Ying

[32] "Malaysia at a Glance." *Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)*, last modified January 8, 2018, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cone&menu_id=dDM2enNvM09oTGtQemZPVzRTWENmZz09, accessed on March 3, 2019.

[33] "Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010," *Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)*, last modified May 7, 2015, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/ctheme&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09&bul_id=MDMxdHZjWTk1SjFzTzNkRXYzcVZjdz09, accessed on March 3, 2019.

[34] Yahaya Abu Bakar, "Foreign Documents And The Descriptions Of Melaka Between A.D. 1505-1511" (Seminar, UNESCO, Malacca, Malaysia, 1991), 1.

Yai Sheng-lan, Hsing-cha cheng-lan, etc.) the Arab-Persian documents including the description by Ahmad Ibn Majid; the Ryukyuan sources; and, naturally; the Indian and Portuguese sources on the Sultanate[35].

Between 1405-1435, the ruler of Malacca sent twenty messengers to the Ming Dynasty to seek protection from the Kingdom of Siam[36]. In Ying Yai Sheng-lan (1451) which was penned by Ma-Huan, amongst Admiral Cheng Ho (Zheng He) chief assistant mentioned that in 1409, at that time was ruled by the Siam (nowadays: Thailand). However, after Malacca pay tribute to the Emperor Yung-lo in China, with a pair of silver seals, a girdle, a head-dress and a long robe, the Siamese did not bother to attack Malacca again[37]. Moreover, The Ming Shi-lu recorded that Bai-li-mi-su-la (Parameswara) on 3 October 1405 sent an emissary to China to offer tribute. Furthermore, everytime the new ruler of Malacca acquired the throne, a Chinese envoy from China will be sent in order to make certain that the new ruler will pay the tribute[38].

So, the relationship between China and Malaysia had been more than 600 years old. Until the 13th century, the religion of the Malay people was Hinduism. This is because during that time, the Hindu beliefs and cultures were gazed as the higher culture wher it was associated with the high status of it, thus, it was instinctive for the Malays to adopt Hindu culture into their own[39]. It was until 1414 Parameswara announced his conversion to Islam when he married Princess of Pasai and changed his name to Sultan Iskandar Shah[40]. The reasons why he converted to Islam because of economic and political reasons. When Parameswara made peace with Siam and his policy of making peace with neighboring powers, he sent ambassadors to Pasai where they asked the Sultan of Pasai to allow traders to go to Malacca. The Sultan replied that he did not mind provided Parameswara become a Muslim[41]. Parameswara ruled as the last ruler of Singapore and the founder of the Kingdom of Malacca. In 1396, a vassal of the Siamese empire of Ayutthaya attacked Singapore to punish Parameswara for killing the previous

[35] Abu Bakar, *Foreign Documents*, 1.
[36] Zakaria Ahmad, *Sekitar Kerajaan Acheh* (Medan: Penerbit Manora, 1977), 29-31.
[37] John Bastin and Robin W. Winks, *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings*, 1st ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), 6-7.
[38] Geoff Wade, "Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts," *Journal of Malaysian Brand of the Royal Asiatic Society* 70, no. 1 (1977): 62.
[39] Peter Tze Ming Ng, "Globalization and Religion: The Case of Malacca and and the Work of Robert Robinson," *Religions* 3 (2012): 1076.
[40] Howard M. Ferderspiel, *Sultan, Shamans and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (United States: Hawai'i University Press, 2007), 49.
[41] Horace Stone, *From Malacca to Malaysia 1400-1965* (Britain: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1966), 20.

ruler of Singapore. However, Parameswara evaded capture, fled to Muar and then founded Malacca. The reason why the Siamese vassal attacked Singapore is because the murdered chief of Singapore had been married to a princess of Malay Kingdom of Pattani (Southern Thailand)[42].

Thus, during Admiral Yin Ching first visit to Malacca in 1403 expedition to Malacca and Admiral Cheng Ho expeditions to Southeast Asia and Malacca (1408), the Malay people during that time still adopted Hinduism as their religion. The delegations of the Ming admirals from China not only for the purpose of trade, but also some of them married and assimilated with the Malay people[43]. Thus, the syncretic and mixture of Malay-Chinese people was called 'Peranakan (Straits Born)' or 'Baba Nyonya'[44].

Moreover, in the Sejarah Melayu (The Malay Annals), it was documented that there are an intermarriage between Malacca ruler at that time, Sultan Mansur Shah (1458-1477) with a princess from China named Hang Li Po or also known as Hang-liu. In the Annals, the Chinese Emperor assigned her to Sultan Mansur Shah and when she converted to Islam, the Sultan married her[45]. It was also recorded when Hang Li Po came to Malacca, she was escorted by 500 male followers and several hundred noble maidens. Therefore, based on these facts, the Peranakan Chinese claimed that they are descendants from Hang Li Po[46].

There are also documentation on an intermarriage between Chinese and Malay people. According to a Portuguese man named Tome Pires, he had recorded in his writings that there was a marriage between Xaquan Darxa (probably Sultan Iskandar) with the daughter of a Chinese leader who had accompanied him back when the he had visited China. According to Tome Pires notes, from their marriage, they were blessed with a prince named Raja Putih[47]. Thus, the intermarriage between the Malays and the Chinese from China have been recorded as early as 1300 A.D.

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[42] John N. Miksic, *Singapore and The Silk Road of the Sea 1300-1800* (Singapore NUS Press, 2013), 156.
[43] Peter Tze, *Globalization*, 1077.
[44] Su Kim Lee, "The Peranakan Baba Nyonya Culture: Resurgence or Dissapearance?," *Sari* 26 (2008): 162.
[45] Tun Sri Lanang, *Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals)*, trans. C.C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), 82.
[46] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Peranakan Heritage in Malaysia and Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Vivar Printing Sdn Bhd, 1993), 61.
[47] Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, trans. Armando Cortesao (London: The Hakluyt Society:1967), 238.

1.4.2. Between 17-18th Century

The second impact of Chinese exodus to Malaysia materialized between 1644 to 1840s. When the Manchus massacred the Ming dynasty and established the Qing Dynasty in 1644, there were an egress of Ming royalists to Southeast Asia such as in South Vietnam, Siam and Indonesia[48]. Eventually, Malacca was one of the place where this royalists settled in such as Li Wei King (1614-1688) or known as Li Kap where he sheltered in Malacca and eventually was given the Kapitan[49] post by the Dutch ruler. He went into business and made a lot of money where he joined together with Tay Kap in order to build the Cheng Hoon Teng Temple. This temple served as the headquarters of the Chinese community at that time[50]. In 1675, 2 years after the establishment of the temple, the Chinese community was about 100 people. However, in 1678, there were 140 women, 127 men and 159 children totaling 426 people in the Chinese community[51].

These royalists were the leaders of the Melaka Chinese Society. Because of their contributions to the establishment of the temple, the Chinese community in Malacca increased significantly and at the same time, the Chinese cultures and beliefs which was brought up from Fujian and Guandong provinces of China continued to flourish in Malacca.

Furthermore, in Fujian province in 1651, the Manchus troops who arrived there faced unyielding intransigence of Ming loyalist known in the West as Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong)[52]. At that time, a massacre was erupted in Yangzhou in which the Manchu leadership allowed their troops to inflict any kind of violence and pillage to the local people there[53]. This lead to a great inflow of refugees from Yangzhou, as some of them eventually arrived at the northern part of the Malay peninsula such as Penang, and from

[48] Anthony Reid, *The Chinese Diaspora in the Pacific* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2016), xix.
[49] A title given to leaders of overseas Chinese shelters in Southeast Asia.In order to compromise with each ethnic in the region such a Malacca, the local leader choose to corporate with a single individual within each ethnic group under their administration. This administrative modus operandi of indirect rule later used by the Portuguese when they took over Melaka in the 16th century, as well as the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies, and the English in British Malaya.
[50] Mei Qing."A Historic Research on the Architecture of of Fujianese in the Malacca Straits: Temple and Huiguan." (master's thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, October, 1999), 57.
[51] Gang Deng, *Chinese Maritime Activites and Socioeconomic Development c. 2100 B.C.-1900 A.D.* (United States: Greenwood Press, 1997), 146.
[52] Ronald C. Po, "Shi Lang: Hero or Villain? His Evolving Legacy in China and Taiwan," *Modern Asian Studies* (2017): 2.
[53] Dzengseo, *The Diary of a Manchu Soldier in Seventeenth-Century China*, trans. Nicola Di Cosmo (London; Routledge, 2006), 38.

Prai northwards to Phuket and west to Medan[54].

1.4.3. During the 19th Century

The third wave of Chinese emigration to Malacca was due to political turmoil in China and unfair treatment in terms of economic by the British and Dutch colonies in Malaya and Indonesia. Taiping Rebellion (December 1850), First Opium War (1839-1842) and Second Opium War (1856-1860) led to a massive influx of the China-born Chinese to Malaya[55]. At the same time during the hardships and economic turmoils in China, the discovery of the large deposits of tin in the Larut district in 1848 led to the economic turnover for the people in Malay Peninsula. Also, new tin mines were opened in Selangor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan leading to the foundation of new towns such as Kampar, Ipoh, Gompeng, Seremban and Malaysia capital city, Kuala Lumpur. There are a few reasons led to the Chinese emigrants to the tin mines.

First of all, because of the large deposits of the ore, the Malay inhabitants were unable to extract it by themselves, thus, they need help from outside. So, Malay rulers invited Chinese entrepeneurs to import labour for mining by imposing heavy tax[56]. Among the reasons the Chinese was recruited is because they the Chinese entrepeneurs whose recruited the labours can provide a highly competitive and cheap labours. There are two systems introduced by the recruiters. Firstly, the immigrants was brought to the Straits settlements where they were contracted as a Coolies to the employers with a legal-binding contract. This system was known as Credit-Ticket System. Secondly, another system call Hun System was used based on the operation of the mining venture either it was fruitful or fail. The Hun System was riskier compared to the Credit-Ticket System[57].

Secondly, the Malay rulers worried over the spread of the severe plagues into the communities. Thus, the company hesitated to employ local Malay. However, if they employed the Chinese, the Chinese will work and stay at the mines and if the plagues

[54] Timothy Tye, "Arrivals of the Chinese in the Malay Peninsula," *Penang Traveltips* (blog), http://www.penang-traveltips.com/arrivals-of-the-chinese-in-the-malay-peninsula.htm, accessed on March 7, 2019.
[55] Verithe Luxley, "The History of Immigrant Labor & the Malaysian Tin Industry," *Research Development Series 2006-09* (2006), 3.
[56] Peter Drake, *Merchants, Bankers, Governors: British Enterprise in Singapore and Malaya 1786-1920* (New Jersey: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2018), 32.
[57] Luxley, *The History of Immigrant Labor*, 3.

happened, it will not spread into the local community[58].

On the other hand, the economics and conditions at China at that time served as a reason for them to migrate to Malaya. British was a super-colonial power, thus they want to impose a free trade. However, the Qing ruler only open the port in Guangdong for the foreigners which give a reason for the British to attack China and forced them to buy opium with exchange of the silver. Those days, silver was used as a monetary base trade such as for buying tea, silk, porcelain an other luxury goods[59]. This led to domestic price for silver increased. As the tax payments must be made in silver, this led the tax to increase significantly and led to social unrest[60]. Consequently, this led to large scale of migration of Chinese to Malaya.

1.4.4. Current Situation

In 2002, Malaysian governent launched a programme called Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H). This programme was introduced as a part of the programme where the non-Malaysians can stay in Malaysia as long as they want to provide that they meet certain criteria imposed by the Malaysian government where they will be given a multiple entry visa. The rise of Chinese medium class led to an influx of Chinese to migrate to Malaysia. The reasons why the Chinese considered migrating to Malaysia are because of the environment and culture. It was estimated around 20% of Malaysian population are Chinese. Thus, in terms of culture and environment, the differences are almost to unknown existence. For examples, Malaysians love to eat Chinese foods. There are a lot of Chinese and Muslim Chinese restaurants that can be found especially in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

Moreover, some of the applicants believed that air quality was their deciding factor to move to Malaysia. Others believe that the culture is not so different than in China[61]. As we know, rapid development in China contributed to the air pollution. Thus, those applicants whose concern about the quality of the air will definitely move to Malaysia.

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[58] Raja Petra Kamarudin, "The True History of Chinese and Indians in Malaysia," *Malaysian Indian 1* (blog), http://malaysianindian1.blogspot.com.tr/2011/01/true-history-of-chinese-indians-in.html, accessed on March 9, 2019.

[59] Sean Gabb, *The Opium Wars: Some Lessons for Europe* (London: Libertarian Alliance, 1988).

[60] Harry G. Gelber, "China as Victim? The Opium War that Wasn't," *Center for European Studies Working Paper Series* 136, 2.

[61] FMT Reporters, "The 3rd wave of Chinese migrants: Rich and happy," *Free Malaysia Today* (blog), March 27, 2017, http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/03/27/the-3rd-wave-of-chinese-migrants-rich-and-happy/.

1.5. Religions of Malaysian Chinese

1.5.1. Overview

First of all, it is impossible to differentiate the religions among Chinese in Malaysia. This is because most of the Chinese in Malaysia adopted a syncretic religion, where they combined the elements of some religions to become a system of belief. Tan Chee Beng[62], an expert in religions of Malaysian Chinese said that it is a serious error if we try to classify Chinese religion and conform them to adhere into one basic religion[63]. However, it is possible to give readers an understanding what type of religions or ethics adhered by the Chinese in Malaysia. First of all, Malaysian Chinese adhered to Confucianism. Confucianism is not considered as a religion for the Malaysian Chinese. Confucius during his lifetime only focus on philosophy and the ethical system, not on creating the religious system[64]. The Confucian movement in Singapore and Malaysia began on 1899 where the early movement centred on buiding temples and schools[65]. Today, Confucius is considered as minor deity in Malaysia associated with education[66].

Secondly, Taoist religion. Taoist religion or Taoism, unlike its origin in China, is very much alive in Malaysia. In Malaysia, the Taoist priests are not apprehended as the practitioners of separate Taoist sects, but as a practitioners within the Chinese religions itself. However, it was noted that Taoism is not considered as popular religion among Chinese in Malaysia, but it enriches the popular religion[67].

Thirdly, Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia hardly exist as an independent system of religion. Similar to Confucianism and Taoism, it is heavily a mixture of these

[62] Professor Tan Chee Beng is an anthropologist and also an expert in Southeast Asia. In 1979, he received his Ph. D from the Department of Socology and Anthropology, Cornell University . Later, he exercised his expertise at University Malaya and National University of Singapore. Now, he worked as a Professor in Sociology and Anthropology at Sun Yat Sen University.
[63] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 220.
[64] There are a lot of articles on Confucianism as an ethical conduct, not as a religion. Among the propogators of Confucianism as an ethical conduct are; Grace Hui-Chen Huang and Mary Gove, "Confucianism and Chinese Families: Values and Practices in Education," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 3 (February 2012): 10-14 and David Y. F. Ho, "Selfhood and Identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism: Contrasts With the West," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 25, no. 2, 115-139. Moreover, Joseph A. Adler in his paper presentation in Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, National Taiwan University (Taipei) entitled "Confucianism as a Religious Tradition: Linguistic and Methodological Problems" discussed on definition of 'Confucianism' and 'religion' and how the West and the Chinese view both terms.
[65] Ching-Hwang Yen, "The Confucian Revival Movement in Singapore and Malaya, 1899-1911," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 7, no. 1 (1976):37.
[66] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 223.
[67] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 233-234.

religions and ethics. The concept of Karma is one of the example and expressed by Malaysian Chinese. Buddhism in Malaysia can be categorized as deriving from a school within Buddhist denomination known as Mahayana Buddhism[68] as the expression 'I devote myself entirely to Amitabha Buddha' is well known among Chinese in Malaysia and there are a few of pure Chinese Mahayana Buddhist temples in Malaysia such as in Puh Toh Sze in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. There are 2 statues inside this temple. The one in the main altar is the statue of Amitabha Buddha while the one at the back of the main altar is the Sakyamuni Buddha. In order to differentiate between the Pure Land tradition and non-pure Land tradition, normally the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha is not visible from the main altar[69].

Therefore, religions of Malaysian Chinese need to be understood as a hybrid and syncretic, not as a separate and independent entity.

1.5.2. Places of Residence, Occupations and Dialects Spoken by Malaysian Chinese

When the Chinese immigrants came to Malaya, there were various occupations worked by them. The occupation was divided according to the dialects spoken by the Chinese immigrants. Also, the geographical location of the immigrants were divided based on the dialects spoken by them. Table 1 below shows the type of occupation, dialects groups and geographical settlements of the Chinese immigrants in the British Straits Settlements/Malaya between 1795-1931.

Table 1
Groups Dialects and its Relation with Ocupational Patterns and Location in Malaya Between 1795-1931

Group Dialects	Occupational Patterns	Locations	Periods
Hokkien	Pawnbroking	Malacca	1847-1910
	Restaurant	Malacca	1795
	Herbal/Medical Store	Malacca, Penang, Singapore, Taiping and Teluk Anson	1795-1931
	Brickwork	Ipoh	1898
	Shipping	Singapore	1850
Hakka	Pawnbrowking	Malacca and Singapore	1810-1869
	Herbal/Medical Store	Malacca, Penang and Singapore	1870
	Bookstore	Penang	1921
Cantonese	Pawnbrowking	Singapore	1890-1901
	Restaurant	Penang, Singapore and Taiping	1880-1904
	Herbal/Medical Store	Penang, Singapore and Taiping	1880-1909
	Tea/Coffee Shop	Singapore	1890
	Brickwork	Ipoh	1898

[68] Pure Land Mahayana Buddhism is a denomination within Mahayana Buddhism where mos of its followers can be found in Southeast Asia. The main features of this group is that rebirth in Amitabha's Sukhavati or known as Pure Land can be achieved for those who invoke Amitabha's name with devotion vocally or mentally with or without Buddhist prayer beads.
[69] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 236-237.

	Sawmill	Taiping	1909
Teochiu (Teochew)	Restaurant	Penang	1795
Hainanese	Herbal/Medical Store	Malacca, Penang and Singapore	1880-1920
	Tea/Coffee Shop	Penang	1870
	Tailoring/Clothings	Penang	1870

Source: The data above derived from Mak Lau Fong and Him M. Lai, "Occupational Structures of Chinese Immigrants in Early Malaya and North America," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 20, no. 1 (1992):56.

As we can see from the Table 1, there are five main dialects spoken by the immigrant Chinese between 1795-1931 in Malaya. They were Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochiu and Hainanese. Moreover, there were nine main occupations occupied by the Chinese immigrants which were pawnbrowking, restaurant, herbal or medical store, tea or coffee shop, tailoring or clothings, brickwork, shipping, bookstore and sawmill.

For the Hokkien, the main occupation was working in herbal or medical store between 1795-1931. The Hokkien can be found in almost of big cities immigrated by the Chinese immigrants such as in Singapore, Penang and Malacca. Moreover, the Hakka also concentrate more on medicine as their group dialects can be found in Malacca, Penang and Singapore.

However, the Hakka also can be found working in a bookstore in Penang in 1921. Meanwhile, the Cantonese were among the most various and diverse in terms of occupation occupied by them. For example, they worked as pawnbrowker, in a restaurant, medical store, brickwork and sawmill. Most of them concentrated in Penang, Singapore and Taiping. In addition, Teochiu can be found working in Penang in 1795 in the restaurant. Lastly, the Hainanese more focus on medicine, shop and tailoring and clothings as their main occupation. They were more concentrated in Malacca, Penang and Singapore.

In terms of demography, Hokkien is the largest dialect group in Malaysia which represented by one-third of the population followed by Hakka, Cantonese and Teochiu (Teochew). At the early stages, Chinese immigrants tended to settle down with people from the same dialect group and formed their clan to safeguard their welfare. However, with rapid urbanization and industrialization, the barriers between the dialects group have been broken down. Among the reasons are intermarriage between the groups and changes of mode of settlement[70].

[70] Xiaomei Wang,"The Chinese Language in the Asian Diaspora: A Malaysian Experience," in *Communicating With Asia: The Future of English as a Global Language, eds. Gerhard Leitner*, Azirah Hashim and Hans-Georg Wolf, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 206.

To conclude, the Cantonese were more diverse in terms of doing a job while the Teochiu was the least. Most of the occupations were concentrated in Penang, Malacca and Singapore, thus the reason nowadays there are a lot of Chinese in these areas.

CHAPTER 2. MALAYSIAN CHINESE AND THEIR BELIEFS

In this chapter, focuses will be given to the Malaysian Chinese and their beliefs. Among the topics that will be discussed are on Malaysian Chinese gods and deities, ghosts and spirits, cosmology and morality. The purpose of these discussions is to know how the Malaysian Chinese and their beliefs shaped their daily lives. This section will focus on the phenomenological aspect of Malaysian Chinese.

2.1. On Gods and Deities

In Chinese religion, various deities are worshipped by the Chinese. However, among the Malaysian Chinese, the deities worshipped by them are imported from the Chinese religions in China.

Among the famous deities worshipped by them are Guanyin or Kuan Yin. The genealogy of the name Guanyin comes from the Sanskrit, means 'the one who hears (the world pains)'[71]. Guanyin was known as Avalokitesvara in India[72]. During the Tang dynasty (618-907), Guanyin wore a robe in white and then from around the tenth century, Guanyin was started to be portrayed as a female figure, becoming Chinese Goddess of Mercy and Compassion[73]. In the twelfth century, the depiction of Guanyin as a female figure were common in China and Japan[74]. In Chinese Buddhism, Guanyin became the central devotion and worshipped as the most important shrines inside the house. The devotees would hold an image of Guanyin and in the temples, most of the people will pray to Guanyin before praying to Amida and Shakyamuni Buddhas[75].

[71] C. N. Tay, "Kuan-Yin: The Cult of Half Asia," *History of Religions* 16, no. 2 (1976): 148.
[72] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities* (Leiden: Koninklijke Bill, 2018), 31.
[73] Paul Hedges, "The Identity of Guanyin: Religion, Convention and Subversion*," Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2012): 95.
[74] Cathryn Bailey, "Embracing the Icon: The Feminist Potential of the Trans Bodhisattva, Kuan Yin," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (2009), 179.
[75] Hedges, *Guanyin*, 95.

Figure 1
The Image of Guanyin

Source: Paul Hedges, The Identity of Guanyin, 17

The story of Princess Miaoshan was important to understand the stage where Guanyin was portrayed as a female figure. Miaoshan was a third daughter of a king. She wears only soiled clothes, no adornments and eats once a day which later led her father to reprimanded her for her refusal to marry and her desire to follow the Buddhist interests[76]. The king was really mad and he tried to send someone to kill her and at the same time ordered the convent where she isolated herself to be burnt and nuns to be killed. However, she was helped by the dragon spirit, Later, her father grew ill because of his karma. One day, a monk entered king's palace and told him that by gouging out the eyes and taking someone's hands which does not make the person's angry, he can be cured instantly. The monk mentioned that there is a hermit who can help with that. Thus, the king sent an envoy and the hermit who was Miaoshan and without hesitation, she did exactly like the monk mentioned to the king. She also said that the king was ill because he did not want to follow the Buddha Dharma. Later, when the king was cured, he pay homage to his daughter and Miaoshan later disappeared and replaced with a 1000-armed and eyed Guanyin. The king vowed to follow the Buddhist paths and later he restored the temples and followed the Dharma[77].

[76] Glen Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miaoshan* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 25.
[77] Hedges, *Guanyin*, 98,

As early as seventeenth century, the Hokkien merchants in Malacca established a temple known as Blue Clouds Pavilion (Qingyun Ting) in 1673 to worship Guanyin. The temple acted not only as a place for deification, but also as a centre where sacrifices can be made and the tablets of the deceased migrants can be stored[78]. The Great Way of the Former Heaven is an example of organization that is shroud with secrecy which played an important role during the nineteenth and twentieth century to proclaim the deification of Guanyin in Southeast Asia. For example, a wealthy members among their sect contributed the money and land to build the Guanyin temple such as Waterloo Kuanyin Temple in 1884 in Singapore[79].At the same time, the members also contributed to the establishment known as "vegetarian halls". The purpose of this halls is to help the widowed or the woman who do not want to get married in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore[80]. In Malaysia and Singapore, the deity is also worshipped as a patron deity of a temple[81].

The Goddess of mercy temple in Penang was probably one of the most famous Guanyin temple in Malaysia. It was built in 1728. There have been unverified stories about the temple. For example, when the Japanese army bombed and destroyed all the area around the temple, the temple itself sustained from the destruction by the Japanese[82].

Secondly, Mazu (or Matsu) considered as one of the most important deity for Malaysian Chinese. Also known as Tianhou (Heavenly Queen), Mazu began as a local deity in Meizhou, Fujian and her worship spread along the coast. As a sea deity, Mazu became famous among the Chinese migrants and becoming popular as Guanyin and Guandi among Chinese worshippers not only in Malaysia, but also in Taiwan, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia. She had two famous legendary assistants, Qianliyan and Shunfenger. The former had the abilities to see many miles away while the latter can hear from afar. Mazu was an important deity to sailors and migrants as she was prayed for safety and safe voyage and her statue was carried abroad[83]. Mazu was probably a

[78] Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 67-69.
[79] Arthur C. K. Chia,"Inclusive Spirituality: The Bodhisattva Kuan-Yin as Moral exemplar and and Self-Cultivation in a Malaysia Dharma House," *Southeast Asian Studies* 4, no. 3 (2015): 593.
[80] Roxanne Prazniak, "Chuansha, Jiangsu: Ding Fei and Her Vegetarian Sisterhood in Resistance to Reform," in *Of Camel Kings and Other Things: Rural Rebels against Modernity in Late Imperial China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 229.
[81] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions*, 32.
[82] Jean deBernardi, *Penang: Rites of Belonging in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 17.
[83] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 13.

shaman and came from a humble origin. After her death, it was a normal custom for the Chinese to deify and promote a man or woman to the state or local communities as virtuous persons[84].

Figure 2
Mazu (in the middle) with her assistants Qianliyan (right) and Shunfenger (left)

Source: Taken from https://www.girlmuseum.org/mythological-girls-mazu-of-china/, last modified February 27, 2015

As early as eighteenth century, the Dutch admiral, J. S. Stavorinus observed in the East Indies (today's Indonesia) that the Chinese sailors always brought an idol with them. It was mentioned that Mazu was made of gold, and about for inches high. It was also told that the Chinese sailors constantly burn the incense and silver papers for the idol[85]. When she was a mortal, she was known as a women called Lin Moniang. With Lin as her surname, she has become the patron deity of Lin clan associations in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. In Malaysia, Mazu is a deity which was closely related to the Hainanese as the early Hainanese migrants organized their communities around the cult of Mazu. And the goddess shrines or temples were lead by the Hainanese associations where generally, Hainanese associations have an altar and a hall that honours Mazu[86]. For example, in Terengganu, the earliest temple dedicated to Mazu was built in 1895[87]. In Mazu temples of the Hainanese such as in Sarawak and Terengganu, one can usually finds the tablets for 108 souls. There are two versions of the story. The former stated that the 108 souls related to the massacre of 108 Hainanese settlers by pirates in

[84] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 32.
[85] J. S. Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies* (London: Dawsons of Paul Mall, 1969), 288.
[86] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 32-36.
[87]Chee-beng Tan, *The Chinese Minority in Malay State: The Case of Terengganu in Malaysia* (Singapore: Eastern University Press. 2012), 29.

Indochina. Another version stated that the tablet was the honour of 108 Hainanese migrants who died at sea on their way to the Southeast Asia[88].

Furthermore, with the opening up of China and the greater ease of transport, temples from overseas have been sending representatives to the ancestral temples in China. Jinxiang (pilgrimage) from Malaysia to China has become a religious connection between the Chinese temples overseas and the communities such as Mazu temples associations in Malaysia organize such pilgrimage trips regularly[89]. According to statistic provided by Mazu Cultural Park Office in 2009, there were 347 groups from Malaysia which accounted for 12634 people visited the Meizhou Mazu temple in Putia City, China[90].

Thirdly, Guan Sheng Dijun or known as Guan Di Ye or Guan Gong by the Malaysian Chinese. He was originally a war hero by the name of Guan Yu where later he was deified by the Chinese for his action not only for the war that he participated, but also in his daily life[91]. Guan Yu was a military general in the period of Three Kingdom and widely known for his bravery and loyalty. In China, between the second and seventeeth century, he had followers all around the world. Buddhists revered him as a defender of their faith as his fierce statue stands at the gate of every Chinese Buddhist monastery. Soldiers respected him as the god who oversees the oath of loyalty binding them to their commanders, making him the god of war. For merchants, he was devoted as the god of wealth. This is because he always honor the contracts and punish those who defy the contract. Over the time, the Chinese state equalized him with loyalty, particularly in the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). Later, the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) granting him, in 1615, the supreme title of "Emperor"[92]. The cult of Guandi not only was deified by the Ming dynasty, but it also was spread to the Manchus and the Mongols[93].

[88] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 36.
[89] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religions in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 125.
[90] Chee-beng Tan, "Tianhou and the Chinese in Diaspora," in *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora*, eds. Tan Chee Beng, (New York: US, 2013), 426.
[91] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 241.
[92] Timothy Brook, "The Batttle of Christ and Lord Guan: A Sino-European Religious Conflict in the Philippines, 1640," in *Religious Conflict and Accommodation in the Early Modern World*, eds. William D. Phillips, Jr. and Marguerite Ragnow, (Minneapolis: Center for Early Modern History, 2011), 128.
[93] Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (1988): 785.

Figure 3
Bronze Sculpture of Guan Di from 15th Century Early Ming Dynasty

Source: Taken from https://www.imgrumweb.com/post/BvyfTs-HcRs, accessed on April 15, 2019

The story of loyalty of Guan Yu was mentioned in Three Kingdom story. In the book, there was a story about the sworn brotherhood between Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. The main event of the book is that three of them met coincidentally where they eventually become a good friends and treat one another as brothers[94]. The Three Kingdom period (184-280 A.D.) was an interval in the history of China where it was ended with the coalescence of the land under Sui dynasty in 589 A.D[95]. Before the reunification, the land was split into three part where the Wei was ruled under Cao Cao, the Shu under Liu Bei and the Wu under Su Quan. Guan Yu served as the general under Liu Bei. When Cao Cao noticed that Liu Bei is becoming nuisance to him, he captured Guan Yu as not only he knew that Guan Yu and Liu Bei is a best friend, but also Cao Cao aware that Guan Yu is also skillful in the battle. However, Guan Yu always thought of returning to his brother side as they are sworn brothers. Later, Cao Cao released him and in order to repay his kindness, Guan Yu beheaded Yan Liang, who was one of the

[94] Jesper Timmerman, "Guan Yu's Life after Death: The Religious and Literary Images of the Three Kingdoms Hero Guan Yu" (master's thesis, Leiden University, 2015), 3
[95] Timmerman, *Guan Yu's Life after Death*, 2.

greatest rivals of Cao Cao. Then, Guan Yu rejoins Liu Bei[96]. Cao Cao knew that Guan Yu do not have any intention of staying with Cao Cao for so long, thus he released him and gave him loads of gifts which Guan Yu left behind[97].

In Malaysia, Guan Di Ye was worshipped by the South Chinese immigrants as Guan Gong. Guan Gong is known as a deity of goodness, uprightness and also served as ward against evils[98]. In Malaysia, Guan Di (Guan Gong) is not worshipped alone. Usually, Guan Di was worshipped alongside other deities. For example, in Cheng Hoon Ten temple in Malacca, there are three altars that can be found in the temple. Usually, at the centre of the altar reserved for Guan Di while the left and right of the altars are to worship Taoist deities of Mazu and Tai Sui. However, there are statues of other deities also at that altars such as Guan Di Ye[99].

Furthermore, the worship of Guan Di Ye in Malaysia is famous among the Dejiao organizations in Malaysia. Dejiao organizaitons arrived from a place in Guangdong province in the southern China called Chaozhou[100]. It was narrated that a group of Teochiu small traders there started to communicate with the *fu ji* spirit in order to escape from the Sino-Japanese war. The traders looked for celestial beings as their advocate to release them from great starvation and epidemic of plague in 1943. The activities later enticed a large number of followers and crowds as it was believed that the predictions from the *fu ji* activites were successful. Among the earliest follower is Ma Han-Ru or known as Ma Gui-De.Ma Gui played an vital part for the modenization of Dejiao movement. This is because his academic background is related to the Confucian studies while at the same time he knows and trains in Chinese medicine including the western approaches of the study[101].

After the Communist takeover in 1949, De Jiao was legally prohibited and its leader was prisoned or fled overseas such as to Hong Kong and Singapore. During that time, Hong Kong and Singapore was highly influenced by Christianity and Islam. Thus, Ma Gui took an interest on these religions. Later, they incorporate and integrate Christianity

[96] Timmerman, *Guan Yu's Life after Death*, 13.
[97] Chen Shou, *Sangouzhi (Records of the Three Kingdoms)* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 939-940.
[98] Goh, *Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore*, 115.
[99] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 258.
[100] Kazuo, *Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia*, 199.
[101] Bernard Formoso, "A Wishful Thinking Claim of Global Expnasion? The Case of De Jiao," *Asia Research Institute of Working Paper Series* no. 96 (2007): 4.

and Islam into their teaching by placing Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ under the supreme command of Jade Emperor. The basic *san jiao* (Buddhism, Taosim and Confucianism) of Chinese religious system later extended to five, or known as *wu jiao* (include Christianity and Islam)[102].

The original Dejiao organization in the Malay region, was established in 1952 by the name of the Zi Xin Ge by Li Huaide. According to the narratives, he received an oracle from the necromatic ritual where he should propogate the teaching of Dejiao in Southeast Asia. Later, a few groups of Dejiao were founded in the Malay regions such as Johore, Penang, Malacca and Perak in 1954. Around ten years later, eight more groups were born and there were at least thirty Dejiao organizations in the Malay region in 1981[103]. The syncretic teachings are one of the highlights of this group. Among the object of worships of these group are, Lao-tzu, Guan Di Confucius, Sakyamuni Buddha followed by Muhammed and Jesus Christ[104]. Guan Di is an important figure for Dejiao. Dejiao followers deduced that Dejiao teachings have existed since the start of time and the advent of Dejiao in the twentieth century is part of the revival of Dejiao. They also believed that Guan Di will play a part in this restoration[105]. Even though the Dejiao followers believe in the syncretic elements of their teachings, in the ritual and liturgy, it was never integrated.

2.2. On Ghosts and Spirits

There are a few concepts adopted by the Malaysian Chinese in regards to ghosts and spirits. First of all, the concept of 'Gui-shen' is very popular among the Malaysian Chinese. Gui is the general terms for ghost in Chinese. Gui is considered as unfriendly, dangerous spirits of the dead where he or she died in an unnatural and extraordinary ways. For example, those for whom proper burial rites were not performed, their descendents have neglected them and leaves them in no place for social order both among the living and the dead[106].

Among the most important and famous ghosts for Malaysian Chinese are Tua Peh (First Uncle) and Ji Peh (Second Uncle). However, because they generally appear in pairs,

[102] Formoso, *A Wishful Thinking*, 6.
[103] Kazuo, *Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia*, 203.
[104] Kazuo, *Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia*, 213.
[105] Kazuo, *Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia*, 205.
[106] Brenda S. A. Yeoh, "The Control of Sacred Space: Conflicts over the Chinese Burial Grounds in Colonial Singapore, 1880-1930," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 22, no. 2 (1991), 302.

they are called Tua Ji Peh (First and Second Uncle). Nevertheless, in China, .Tua Peh and Ji Peh are considered as a figure whom lived in the hell realms and their job is to usher someone to the underworld. Meanwhile, among Malaysian Chinese, these two are known as intermediary as their traits are both from the ghosts and gods originally[107]. The origin of myths of Tua Ji Peh can be traced back from China. There were two famous narratives in regards to the myth of Tua Jı Peh. The first potrayal about Tua Peh ssuggested that he was a man of breeding, but ill-mannered. He would hit his mother sometimes and her mother ran away of worry that Tua Peh will strike her. One day, when his mother run away from him, his mother descended into a well and died where Tua Peh later regret about his past actions. Then, he attributed his life to remain grieving for the remains of his life. Ji Peh only mentioned as sworn brother to Tua Peh[108].

Meanwhile, in the second account of their story,, it ended with sadness and sorrow. The story started when there was a downpour. Tua Peh at that time tried to grab an umbrella and remind his friend that he need to stay under a bridge as to wait him to grab an umbrella. Unfortunately, because it was a hefty rainfall, the water risen quickly. Ji Peh, he remembered the words of his friend to stay there, thus, he did not move an inch and later submerged into the water. When Tua Peh foound out about this, he was despaired and killed himself. Because of the sense of loyalty in their story, they were given a job to escort the dead in the underworld.[109].

Both of their characteristics are dissimilar between each other, Tua Peh can be defined as a a high and slender person while Ji Peh was in contrast to Tua Peh. At the same time, Tua Peh dressed in white and Ji Peh in black.. Meanwhile, In his left hand, Ji Peh had a plaque with him to show that he had a legal jurisdiction to command the souls while his right hand he fetch with him a chain in order to pull the dead[110]. Tua Ji Peh was worshipped in regards to the wealth. The character of Tua Ji Peh at the same time associated with the God of wealth. The reason is because both of them are equivalent to

[107] Whitney Webb, "Tua Ji Peh: The Intricacies of Liminality of Deification of Chinese non-Buddhist Supernatural Beings in Chinese-Malaysian Communities," *Asia Network Exchange* 19, no. 2 (2012): 6.
[108] Jean DeBernardi, *The Way that Lives in the Heart: Chinese Popular Religion and Spirit Mediums in Penang, Malaysia* (Stanford: Stanford University press, 2006), 195.
[109] Margaret Chan, *Ritual is Theatre, Theatre is Ritual-Tang Ki: Chinese Spirit Medium Worship* (Singapore: SNP International Publishing, 2006), 127.
[110] Chan, *Ritual is Theatre*, 128.

each other[111]. Because Tua Ji Peh is considered low ranking in Chinese gods hierarchy, it is understood that they were closer to humankind. Thus, the Malaysian Chinese believes that Tua Ji Peh understand common man needs of extra income thus granting wealth to human.

Inside the temple and also through the act of mediator, Tua Ji Peh is presenting with dark beer and cigarettes. Sometimes, opium is also offered. This type of veneration considered as bribing to Tua Ji Peh[112].

When a mediatory acted in the name of Tua Ji Peh, the common actions are given to the people such as providing them with a counsel, help them with the lucky numbers and providing a luck charms[113]. Moweover, sometimes Tu Ji Peh is considered as a ghost because the events surrounding him related to the felonious activites such as narcotics and so on. Another reason why Tua Ji Peh can be associated with the ghost is because of the concept of Yin-yang. The hell realms are reviewed as Yin part in contrast to the heaven[114].

Meanwhile, 'Shen' or 'spirits' can be defined as someone who died in a natural way, without any attempt to kill themselves and at the same time their relatives made a proper benefactions[115]. Among the task of a Shen is to become a mediatory during the reverie. When a Shen enter into a state of hallucination, he is considered as to be possessed by the spirits which allow him undeviating contact to question the spirits on everything[116]. Thus, among the famous spirits worshipped by Malaysian Chinese are Datuk Gong and Tua Pek Kong which will be explained soon.

During the nineteenth century, when Chinese from China migrated to Malaya, not only they broght with them their clothes, but at the same time they cannot abandon their religious traditions and beliefs . However, after years of interaction with the local, the Chinese has adopted the local elements in their daily life. One of them is the belief of

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[111] Chan, *Ritual is Theatre*, 128.
[112] Webb, *Tua Ji Peh*, 8.
[113] Raymond Lee, "Continuity and Change in Chinese Spirit Mediumship in Urban Malaysia," *Bijdragen tot de*
Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 42 (1986): 201.
[114] Webb, *Tua Ji Peh*, 9.
[115] Joseph A Adler, "The Heritage of Non-theistic beliefs in China," *Presented in International Conference*, "Toward a Reasonable World: The Heritage of Western Humanism, Skepticism and Freethought" (San Diego, September 2011), 14.
[116] Amber Haque, "Culture-bound Syndromes and Healing Practices in Malaysia," *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 11, no. 7 (2008): 693.

the Datuk Gong (or also known as Datuk Keramat)[117]. The worship of Datuk Gong can be found in most of the Chinese home. Ordinarily, when a Chinese say prayers to the God of Heaven, at the same altar they worship, there are probably a small shrine next to the larger shrine of God of Heaven. Inside the smaller shrine, there is an idol of Datuk Gong which resembles the typical characteristics of Malay men[118].

Figure 4
Datuk Gong wearing a traditional Malay headgear and Malay traditional weapon in his hand

Source: Nicholas Yong, "Datuk Gong: The God of the Chinese, Indians and Malays," last modified December 3, 2015

There are a few suggestions argued by the scholars on why the Chinese during that time worshipped Datuk Gong. One of the main reasons suggested that the Chinese belief in the syncretic elements in their worship. So, whenever they went outside of their homeland, they need to find a local figure to worship as to keep them from any maladies. During that time, Datuk Keramat was like a celebrity to the Malays as he acted as a healer to alleviate any sickness[119]. Therefore, it was suggested that the Chinese have always believe in the syncretic aspects of their beliefs and worships[120]. Thus, it is understandable for the Malaysian Chinese to adapt the local deities when they

[117] Yee Mun Chin and Lee Yok Fee, "Chinese Malaysian's Worship of Datuk Gong," *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci & Hum* 22, no 3 (2014): 379.
[118] Chin and Lee, *Chinese Malaysian's Worship*, 381.
[119] Goh, Chinese *Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore*, 121.
[120] Xinping Zhuo, *Religious Faith of the Chinese*, (China: China Social Science Press, 2018), 20.

migrated to another part of the world such as to Malaya. Datuk Gong not only considered as the patron of health but he also provides them opportunities to amass wealth[121].

The concept of Datuk Gong came from the concept of 'Datuk Keramat' which derived from the thought of Islamic mysticism of giving great importance on saints[122]. Saints or Keramat in Malay were a pious men and believed to have semi-divine power. The word 'Keramat' comes from the Arabic word 'Karamah' which refers specifically to the close friend of God or a pious person[123]. The concept of Keramat has long been discussed by the scholars. For example, in his book, Skeat provides an idea that Keramat are probably one of the tomb for the man who in their lifetime were considered as blessed people. He also suggested that this Keramat probably one of the earliest followers of the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad when the teaching reached the Malay regions[124]. However, after the revival of Islam in 1970s, the Malay no longer maintain the belief of saints[125]. Thus, it can be concluded that even though the Malay deserted the belief, the Chinese on the other hand tried to preserve it. Initially, it is known as Datuk Keramat. When the Chinese synthesized the belief, it was known as Datuk Gong. Gong is an respected title affixed to Chinese deities[126].

The worship of the Datuk Gong is also practice in the temples. Based on an interview done by the researchers, there are two kinds of Datuk Gong, the Malay Datuk Gong and the non-Malay Datuk Gong[127]. In the temple where the Malay Datuk Gong is worshipped, the characteristics of the idol resemble the characterstics of a Malay men. For example, the Malay Datuk Gong can be found donning a Malay traditional black headgear know as songkok. At the same time, he also can be observed by wearing a traditional Malay headgear usually wear by the Sultan known as tengkolok or a white headgear know as kopiah. Some followers of Malay Datuk Gong opinionated that Datuk Gong must be a Malay man as the word 'Datuk' comes from the Malay word.

[121] Chin and Lee, *Chinese Malaysian's Worship*, 385.
[122] Fabian C. Graham, "Self-Perpetuating Technologies of Religious Synthesis: A Case Study of Socio-Political Developments and Religious Change in Singapore," *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 12, no. 1 (2016), 105.
[123] Cheu Hock Tong, "Malay Keramat, Chinese Worshippers: The Sinicization of Malay Keramats in Malaysia," *Seminar/Occasional Paper Series* no. (1996/1997): 3.
[124] Walter William Skeat, "*Malay Magic: Being An Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of Malay Peninsula*," (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 62.
[125] R. Lee, "Patterns of Religious Tension in Malaysia," *Asia Survey* 18, no. 4 (1988): 402.
[126] Chin and Lee, *Chinese Malaysian's Worship*, 386.
[127] Chin and Lee, *Chinese Malaysian's Worship*, 386.

Moreover, not only the idol resembles the character of a Malay men, but also the shrine. One can found that the shrine where the Malay Datuk Gong was worshipped have a dome on its ceiling which symbolizes a mosque built in a Malay-style architecture[128].

Also, in terms of ritual practices, the advocates celebrate a festival called Datuk Gong Dan as part of his birthday celebration. The offerings were consciously made such as the pork was not served as the Muslim does not eat pork. Usually, the offerings are chicken or mutton curry. Moreover, among the part of the ritual is to light a red candles and joss sticks. However, some worshippers suggested that white candles should be used as whiter represents purity while red represents bloodshed, which Datuk Gong abhor[129]. In addition, offering of biscuits and rice dumpling also represents the offering to Datuk Gong[130].

Meanwhile, there are differences on the characteristics of the non-Malay Datuk Gong's worshippers. In the non-Malay Datuk Gong temples, it is believed that Datuk Gong was not a Malay men but an Orang Asli (indigenous people). The non-Malay Datu Gong was deified as a war hero as when the Second World War began, he rendered a helping hand to the villagers during the Japanese occupation of Malaya[131]. The story have been circulated that he used his extramundane ability to conceal the villagers from the Japanese. Nowadays, the worship of Datuk Gong is diversified. For example, Datuk Gong is used in the property development. It is believed that the rationale of the worship is to keep the workers from any malicious events[132].

Secondly, Tua Pek Kong which literally means 'Grand Uncle' are among the most popular deities worshipped in the Southeast Asia. However, there are no agreements among the scholars in regards to the history of Tua Pek Kong. As early as 1940-1950s, scholars had researched on the origin of the Tua Pek Kong cult. Some scholars like Han Huaizun suggested that Tua Pek Kong was originated from the Southeast Asia. However, he believed that the deity was first mentioned in the Chinese records of the

[128] R. Lee, *Patterns of Religious Tension in Malaysia*, 412.
[129] Cheu Hock Tong, "*The Datuk Kong Spirit Cult Movement in Penang: Being and Belonging in Multi-ethnic Malaysia*," Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 23, no. 2 (2009): 389.
[130] Cheu Hock Tong, *Malay Keramat, Chinese Worshippers*, 11.
[131] Chin and Lee, *Chinese Malaysian's Worship*, 388.
[132] Beng-Lan Goh, "*Malay-Muslim Spirits and Malaysian Capitalist Modernity: A study of Keramat Propitiation among Property Developers in Penang,*" Asia Pasific Viewpoint 46, no. 3 (December 2005): 309.

Song dynasty, Han believed that Tua Pek Kong was a Sino-Malay deity whose name came from the Malay Word 'Tokong' means 'temple'[133].

Figure 5

Tua Pek Kong temple in Kusu Island, Singapore

Source: Taken from https://remembersingapore.org/2014/11/27/tour-of-kusu-st-johns-lazarus/, last modified November 27, 2014

On the other hand, Victor Purcell in his book advocates that Tua Pek Kong was not an exaltation of any specific person but he is an unimaginary person who happened to be a real person and one of the earliest to migrated to Southeast Asia[134]. Moreover, Rao Zongyi considers Tua Pek Kong as a deity that was popular among the Hakka and Teocheow communities in Southeast Asia[135]. Thus, it can be concluded that Tua Pek Kong is either a Sino-Malay deity or a deity akin to Chinese Earth God. Meanwhile, almost five decades later, Li Tianxi suggested that Tua Pek Kong was a Sino-Malay deity invented by Overseas Chinese in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, thus, he refuted the claim that Tua Pek Kong was a Chinese God[136].

However, Chinese in Penang considered Tua Pek Kong to be the spirit of Zhang Li. Zhang Li was believed to be a political refugee from a Hakka district in South China and was the first known Chinese settler in Penang before the arrival of the British colonist Francis Light. He was buried behind theTua Pek Kong Temple in Tanjong Tokong, near to the Sea Pearl Island, where there was a Chinese fishing village that was

[133] Huaizhun Han, "Dabogong Kao," *Nanyang Xuebao* 1, no. 2 (1940): 18-26.
[134] Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 39.
[135] Rao Zongyi, "Tan Dabogong," *Nanyang Xuebao* 8, no. 2 (1952):27.
[136] Tianxi Li, Huaqiao Huaren Minjian Xinyang yanjiu (Changsha: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2004), 219-22.

probably the earliest Chinese settlement on the island[137]. A story of Zhang Li was recorded by Poh Teh Teik in his book. Zhang Li was known as a teacher lived in a fishing village. He was known for his friendliness and kindness as the villagers never failed to seek his help when they have a problem. Chiu Hsiao Chian, a charcoal maker and Ma Fu Choon, a blacksmith became his sworn brothers. As Zhang Li was the eldest, he was known as Tua Pek Kong. When their work was done, they never failed to meet each other everyday. However, one day, when they went to meet each other, Chiu and Ma was shocked to find Zhang Li was sitting motionless beside a huge boulder. Eventually, because of sadness, Chiu and Ma died and were buried next to their sworn brother. Today, their graves can be found in Sea Pearl Island Tua Pek Kong Temple[138].

In Penang, Tua Pek Kong was venerated as the organization's patron deity. The Tua Pek Kong Society provides mutual assistance to its members and takes charge of governance, law and order in the diasporic communities. There were a lot of tribulations during the first day the Chinese settled in the new land. Among the hardships faced by them were isolation, maladies and incapability to adjust to a new surroundings[139].

Meanwhile, in Pahang, Tua Pek Kong inscription was found in Pekan, Pahang. Zhou Yizhen, a Chinese migrant from Shuangfeng dedicated a stele of Bentougong of the Great Tang. It was suggested that Bentougong was another name for Tua Pek Kong and the designation of the deity inscribed is unique in Malaysia, as the similar inscription cannot be found in other parts of Southeast Asia[140]. This suggest that Tua Pek Kong was also worshipped as Sino-Malay deity by the Chinese migrants in Malaysia. On the other hand, Han believed that because Tua Pek Kong was from Sino-Malay origin, the Malay phrase 'Tua Pek Kong tolong' literally translated as 'Tua Pek Kong, please help' was a popular phrase among the Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore[141].

In terms of worship, Jean DeBernardi believes that Malaysian Chinese's worship of Tua Pek Kong have similarities to the worship of Datuk Gong, which are animistic cults at sacred sites such as rocks, trees, hilltops and graves. Thus, he believes that Tua Pek Kong's cult infused Malay animistic worship with a Chinese tradition of sworn

[137] DeBernardi, *Penang*, 150.
[138] Poh Teh Teik, *Gods and Deities in Popular Chinese Worship* (Penang: Forda, 1973), 42-43.
[139] Goh Sang Seong, "Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions," *Kajian Malaysia* 33, no. 2 (2015):149.
[140] Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tian Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia* Vol. 2 (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1985), 497.
[141] Han, *Dabogong Kao*, 19.

brotherhood[142]. The presence of Tua Pek Kong as Sino-Malay deity can be found in its temple in Pulau Kusu (Kusu Island) in Singapore.

The story of Tua Pek Kong as Sino-Malay deity resembles the story of the loyalty and brotherhood of Tua Peh and Ji Peh. The story began when an Arab named Dato Syed Rahman an a Chinese called Yam made a contemplation trip to Kusu Island, Singapore. However, on the route of their voyage, Yam suddenly felt sick. Dato Syed Raman, who was a religious person make prayer to the God and eventually, a boat magically arrived with abundance of food and water. After some time, they pronounced their brotherhood[143]. According to the caretaker of the temple, Datuk Syed Abdul Rahman later became Datuk Kong while Yam was known as Tua Pek Kong[144]. Thus, the devotees of Tua Pek kong in Kusu island was told no to bring 'haram' foods to the island. They were also told not to consume pork before they make pilgrimage to the island as the relation between Syed and Yam as sworn brother considered as sacred.

2.3. On Cosmology

The cosmological belief is one of the most important aspects among the Chinese in Malaysia. The most important aspect that had been infused into the daily life of Malaysian Chinese is the concept of 'Yin and Yang'. The notion of Yin and Yang does not only apply to the stability of the cosmos, but for the Malaysian Chinese, Yin and Yang is considered as day-to-day part of their existence. Anything related to their daily life such as health, foods, politics, martial arts, science, beliefs and medicine will be based on the concept of Yin and Yang.

Yin and Yang can be indicated with three characteristics. Firstly, it entity cannot be full without both of it which is known as 'holistic duality'. Secondly, the characters of Yin and Yang are dynamic as it need to be in equiblirium. This aspect is known as 'dynamic duality'. Lastly, the last principle of Yin and Yang must possess holistic and dynamic characteristics as they are antithetical but interrelated to each other. This precept is

[142] DeBernardi, *Penang*, 152.
[143] Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "Managing the Tortoise Island: Tua Pek Kong Temple, Pilgrimage and Social Change in Pulau Kusu, 1965–2007," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (December 2009):78.
[144] Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "Who is Tua Pek Kong? The Cult of Grand Uncle in Malaysia and Singapore," *Archiv Orientální* 85 (2017): 453.

known as ‘dialectical duality’. [145].

Yin and Yang are two interdependent duality means if each of its part is separated, equlibrium cannot be achieved. The Yin and Yang symbol, probably one of the most recognized symbol in the world. Yin and Yang image can be indicated by a circle which is splitted into two part. One is black and the other is white. According to its ideology, every occurence that happened in this world is because of the consolidation of two contradictory energy. Yin can be signalize as having feminine facets such as darkness and weakness while Yang is a masculine identity such as strength and sun. The white dot in the black area and the black dot in the white area connotes coexistence and unity of the opposites to form the whole[146].

Conventionally, the notion of Yin and Yang can be seen as a part of everyday life of Malaysian Chinese. For example, Chinese women in Malaysia stick to special dietary practices and food taboos. The diet was in accordance to the Yin Yang (cold-hot) balance. There are two categories of foods which are food that is considered ‘hot’ and ‘cold’. During the labour, a woman will avoid a ‘cold’ food such as vegetables and fruits[147]. In terms of entrepreneurship, Malaysian Chines have a framework where it is better for them to include all of everything rather leave a part of it as they believed that a whole is better than a part[148]. The concept of Yin Yang can also be found in the daily worship and ritual of Malaysian Chinese. The daily ceremonial aspects of Chinese worship associated a lot such as can be found in the use of joss sticks. Yang, which signifies the odd number of the joss sticks are offered to the gods while the even numbers of the joss sticks are propose to the ghosts and ancestors worship [149].

2.4. On Morality

In regards to morality and moral consciousness practices performed by Malaysian Chinese, there are a few acts that are worth mentioning. As noted before, most of the Malaysian Chinese adhered to Buddhism. Thus, in terms of moral values, there are a lot

[145] P. P. Li, “Toward a Geocentric Framework of Trust: An Application to Organizational Trust,” *Manangement and organization Review* 4, no. 3 (2008): 416.
[146] T. Fang, “Yin Yang: A new perspective on Culture,” *Management and Organization Re*view 8, no. 1 (2012): 31-32.
[147] Poh Bee Koon, Wong Yuen Peng & Norimah A. Karim, “Postpartum Dietary Intakes and Food Taboos Among Chinese Women Attending Maternal and Child Health Clinics and Maternity Hospital, Kuala Lumpur,” *Mal J. Nutr* 11, no. 1 (2005):1.
[148] Shelen W H Ho, “Formal Strategic Planning: The Malaysian Chinese Business Perspective,” *Malaysian Management Review* 52, no. 1 (2017): 21.
[149] Chee-beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 218.

of acts practiced by Malaysian Chinese especially related to the acts in Mahayana Buddhism. As a pluralistic society, Malaysian Chinese not only focusing on their teachings only among them, but they also values the concept of plurality in religion in Malaysia. Thus, the concept of moral values are also extended to other religious sects and also to the animals.

First of all, among Malaysian Chinese, the practice of filial piety towards parent is one of the imperative aspects in their daily life. In the Upasaka Sutra, it was stated that "if someone makes offerings to his parents, such as clothing, food and drink, bedding, medicine, housing, and valuables, reverently makes obeisance to them, and respectfully praises them, he is making offerings to the east (east here refers to parents)". In the precepts, there are six directions mentioned which are east, south, west, north, below and above. East refers to parents, south refers to teachers, west refers to wives. Meanwhile, north refers to beneficient learned friends, below refers to slaves and servants and lastly, above refers to Brahmins or the priests. Later, the parents will reward him in five ways: (1) by truly endless love; (2) by never misguide him; (3) by providing to him the money; (4) by uniting him in the marriage with the higher caste; (5) by enlightening him with earthly matters."[150] According to the Venerable Sing Kan, The Malaysian Chinese who follows Mahayana sects, there are more focus on the parental aspects of their life[151]. Confucius is the first one who advocates that a child need to respect their parents and in contradiction parents need to make sure they know the needs of their children[152]. The concept of filial piety in Confucian tradition originally related to the concept of devotion to the spirits. However, later it evolved into devoutness to the parents also[153].

Among the festival celebrated by the Chinese from the Mahayana sects is Ullambana Festival. This festival is held as a part of commemoration of the deceased ones including the parents[154]. The origin of Ullambana festival was actually taken from Ullambana Sutra. Thus, the word 'Ullambana' is a Sanskrit word means 'release from

[150] Dharmaksema (trans), The Sutra on the Upasaka Precepts, Chapter 14, May 15, 2018, http://www.sutrasmantras.info/sutra33c.html
[151] Sing Kan, informal interview done by Nur Suriya Mohd Nor, the author of "Karuna (Compassion): The Practice and Its Impacts On Chinese Mahayana Buddhists in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor," *Prosiding Seminar Agama dan Pembangunan* IX (2016): 111.
[152] Ong Seng Huat, "History of Chinese religions in Malaysia," in *The Encyclopedia of Malaysia Volume 10*, (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2005), 70.
[153] Xun Zhou, *The Wisdom of the Confucians* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 23.
[154] Zhou, *Wisdom*, 22.

suffering'. The festival is held in during the day of the fifteen of the seven month where according to the Mahayana sects, this will be the time where there is a parallel bridge between the human and the ghostly domains[155]. Zhang Leng mentioned that the 15th of the 7th Lunar Month is meant for all filial piety children to practice filial piety towards their present parents, parents of the pass and future[156]. So, this sutra mentioned that Buddhists should not celebrate "Ghost Season" but they should celebrate "The Season of Filial Piety' or Ullambana Festival[157].

Based on a survey corresponding to the Mahayana Buddhist among Malaysian Chinese in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, a large number of the respondents applied the act of respect towards their parents in their daily life. At the same time, based on the question in regards to Ullambana festival, most of the respondents made offerings during the festival as they believes that the offerings will transfer the merits to their parents, thus, they will be free from worries, illness and disaster[158].

Furthermore, the concept of filial piety is also extended in the Malaysian Chinese's style of parenting. While western parents viewed authoritarian parenting as very negative and similar to militarilistic and regimented parenting, paradoxically, Chinese parents viewed it as a form of positive training and teaching to the children[159]. One of the main aspect of a Confucian theory is related to the process of a parent as the trendsetter for the excellent upbringing of their child[160]. Furthermore, in a Malaysian Chinese house, most of their children were already have been educate as early as eight months[161]. The mother usually read to the children everday and make the children interested in books. This is because Chinese parents believe that academic excellence can change to the better quality of life[162].

Secondly, Malaysian Chinese have been practicing the empathy towards other human beings and animals. Malaysian Chinese appreciates the living and non-living things as identical in merit as they believe that all the terrestial beings have their own inherent

[155] Edward A. Irons, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 528.
[156] Leng Zhang (trans.), *The Buddha Speaks on the Ullambana Sutra* (Ampang: Aug Printing, 1999), 3.
[157] Zhang, *The Buddha Speaks*, 3.
[158] Nur Suriya, *Karuna*, 119.
[159] Ruth K. Chao, "Extending Research on the Consequences of Parenting Style for Chinese Americans and European Americans," *Child Development* 72, no. 6 (2001), 18-33.
[160] M.H Bond, *The Handbook of Chinese Psychology*, (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996), 144.
[161] Yew Lie Koo and Soo Hoo Pin Lick, "The Social Construction Of Literacy By Malaysian Chinese Parents: Perceptions Of Parents Toward The Language And Literacy Practices Of Two Teenage Children," *The Reading Matrix* 7, no. 3 (2007):78.
[162] Georgina Tra Graman and Anuar Ahmad, "Eduation Inspirations Among Chinese Parents," *International Conference on Education and Regional Development* (2016): 244.

value and everthing have the Buddha identity inbred in them[163]. Thus, Mahayana Buddhist practices of vegeterianism show their compassion towards other beings and animals[164]. The concept of Avihimsa which was based from pan-Indian concept of Ahimsa is practiced by the Mahayana Buddhist. Avihimsa means 'harmlessness', 'non-violence' and 'absence of cruelty'[165]. However, in Theravada tradition, there are several reasons why meat was allowable by Buddha. The main reason is because Buddha clearly declared that when a person kill and eat fish and meat, there is no retribution to his action[166]. Secondly, vegetarianism is not compatible with the Buddhist monks' lifestyle. This is because when a monks beg for foods, they cannot ask a person to give them any specific kind of food and throw the one that they did not wanted. Thus, the positions of the monks itself cannot afford them just to be a vegetarian in their cloistered life.

Thirdly, when a person become a vegan, they might not need to kill any animals. However, for those who involved in providing the vegetables and fruits, they must have been directly or indirectly killing the animals or insects. For example, when a farmer try to protect his crops from any insects and animals, he will be using pesticides, This will led to elimination of any insects or animals in order for the farmer to protect his crops[167]. Meanwhile, according to the survey done by Nur Suriya, one-third of the respondents strongly against meat-eating. Meanwhile, on the question of wearing animal products, majority of them strongly agree that they did not wear animal products[168].

To reiterate, most of the Malaysian Chinese undergoes massive changing when it comes to the beliefs and practices. The Malaysian Chinese they try to mix between their traditional beliefs that they inherited from China especially in terms of gods, deities, ghosts and spirits whilst at the same time they try to accommodate the local beliefs especially from the Malay people who inhabited the Malay Peninsular for centuries. However, some of the beliefs and practices still equivalent as the beliefs and practices that were practiced among the Chinese in the Mainland China. Multiculturalism and

[163] Alastair S. Gunn and Ruth Walker, *Buddhism and Environmental Ethics in Context* (Petaling Jaya: Centre for Civilisational Dialogue, 2003), 36-39.
[164] Nur Suriya, *Karuna*, 112.
[165] Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrine*s, edited by Nyanaponika (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1980), 31.
[166] Nur Suriya, *Karuna*, 114.
[167] Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*, 8.
[168] Nur Suriya, *Karuna*, 122.

multireligious aspects emote paramount necessities for the Chinese in order to co-habitate and lives in Malaysia peacefully.

CHAPTER 3. MALAYSIAN CHINESE AND THEIR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

In terms of religious practices, the Chinese who migrated to the Malay regions at that time fetched with them their religious practices. However, as the time passing by, the characteristics of their beliefs have also undergone notable metamorphosis and modernization. The influences from the modern education and geographical environments led the Chinese in Malaysia had their own distinctive and peculiar characteristics which can be found only among them[169]. Thus, this chapter try to illuminate on how the Chinese practices their religious aspects in terms of prayers, religious festivals, marriage and funeral.

3.1. On Prayers

There are varieties of prayers among the Malaysian Chinese and there are a lot of equipments involved. Difference equipments led to diffferent types of prayers. Generally, paper charms and prayer sheets are used especially to cover the misfortunes which the people may be encountered such as ill health, bad luck, poverty, barrenness, protection from evil spirits and to remove uncleanliness after sickness or death of someone in the house. Moreover, the paper sheets are also used in order to receive the pardons of gods. On the other hand, paper charms which can be in Sanskrit or Pali translated into Chinese characters while some have the drawing of gods or saints appealed to are also used. The most common kind of paper charm is called the 'fu' amulet. This charm usually written in a usually long strip of paper and is composed of mystic writing and symbols. The paper charms can be bought from the temples and shops or the hand made of these can be obtained from the priests living in a temple or in a private practice[170].

[169] Goh Sang Seong, "Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions," 136.
[170] Marjorie Topley, "Paper Charms, and Prayer Sheets as adjuncts to Chinese Worship," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26, no. 1 (1953), 63.

Figure 6

Paper charm uses as a worship to the God who protects the family

Source: Marjorie Topley, Paper Charms, 10

Paper charms can be divided into five categories. Firstly, it is used for burning. These charms, the name and address of the person whom benefit is to accrue first being written on them, usually incantations and prayers with the god worshipped depicted on them, are burnt at the end of the ceremonies. These charms are usually for special purpose. For example, the Buddhists used this to record the number of times a sutra has been said by the devotees. Secondly, for the medicine. These charms are the smallest among all. These charms may be reduced to pellets and swallowed. It can also be burnt and their ash added to water or tea. Thus, for the purpose of digestion, these type of charms usually will be printed on a finer paper to ensure proper digestion. Thirdly, as an amulets. The charms usually folded into triangular shape or rolled into a strip and tied in a bow. These charms are obtained from the temples on feast days or after the performance of a rite. Fourthly, for fastening to wall. This type of charms usually are stuck into the wall of a building or a tree during or after the commencement of a rite. Lastly, for fastening above the door of a house. These types are stuck up to ensure the protection against the evil spirits. They can be obtained during New Year and last throughout the current year. It also can be used after there were sickness and death in a house[171].

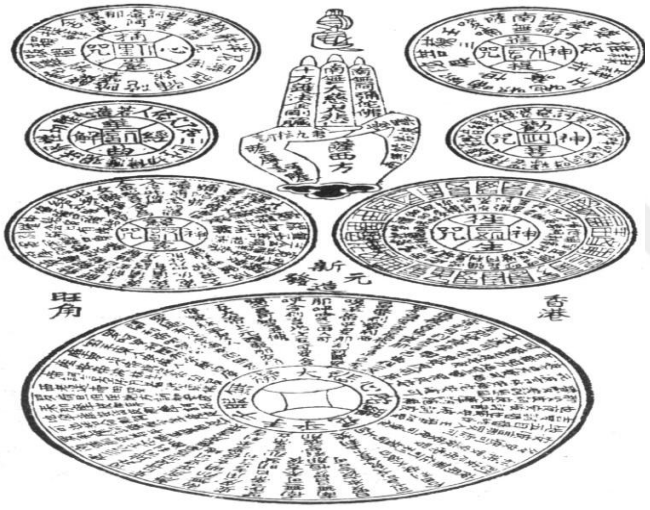
Meanwhile, prayer sheets are famous among the Buddhist. They are usually printed in black or red on a white paper and a re-representations of popular Buddhist saints. These

[171] Topley, *Paper Charms*, 69-70.

prayer sheets are used in home and temples while some of the worshippers have their own blocks. Usually, paper sheets are used to record the number of sutras and prayers recited. This is done by filling the small circles which makes up part of the design. Red dots or holes made with a burning joss stick are put in each circle at a completion of one or each number of prayers. When a sheet is completed, it is taken down to the shore, burnt and the ashes sent out to the sea. The purpose of the paper sheets are to enable the dead to clear a way out of hell. Thus, paper sheets acted as passport for the dead. Moreover, paper sheets also operate as money for rebirth and relief from the ghostly debtors during the Hungry Ghost Festival[172].

Figure 7

An example of paper sheets



Source: Marjorie Topley, Paper Charms, 79

Apart from paper charms, joss stick or incense stick have been traditionally an important element among the Taoist religious practices. In Malaysia, the practices of offering joss stick not only limited to the Taoist, but it is also extended to the Confucian and Buddhist Chinese. The daily aspect of Malaysian Chinese necessitates the needs of worshipping the deities by placing an odd number of joss sticks. Different deities have different functions, thus, it depends on the worshippers. For instance, in a Malaysian Chinese house, they can worshipped not only a deity, but also as many deities as they want. So, they will probably have the main deities worshipped in the main altar and minor deities below or in a smaller shrine than the main deity. In principle, one has to

[172] Topley, *Paper Charms*, 78-80.

offer joss sticks in the morning and evening[173].

For ancestral worship, two joss sticks or more in even number is offered in ancestral altars. The odd and even numbers represent the concept of ying and yang. Deities are always represented with the odd numbers while ancestors and ghosts represented the even numbers. Ancestors are ranked lower than the deities. Thus, in Chinese religion, the altar of the ancestors must be place in the right side of the principal altars of the deities. The left side of the altar is considered as the honour seat[174]. Thus, the deities must be place in the left side of the altar.

However, in the case of no altar, an impromptu altar can be build when they wanted to worship any deities Usually, a table will be set up for joss sticks holder. After that, the worshipper will go outside of the house with a lighting joss sticks in order to welcome their ancestors for the worship session. Then he or she will placed the joss sticks inside the holder where the altar was built. A drink is to be offered to the deity such as tea. The ritual is ended when the meal to the deities are over. In order to determine whether it is over or not, a pair of blocks were used in the session. If one of the blocks facing in contradictory direction to each other, then it is supposed to be finished[175].

Inside the temples, especially the major temples, usually they have a counter selling a joss sticks, candles and joss papers. Worshippers can burn joss papers with incense burners stationed at the temple's stage left front corner. At a communal temples, usually during the Chinese New Year, worshippers can buy lanterns and spiral joss sticks and have their family members names written on the lanterns or papers. A temple keeper called *miaozhu* takes care of the temple such as removing the offered joss sticks if there were too many of them inside the incense pots. The temple assistant will hang the lantern or joss sticks in the temple during the celebration[176]. By providing this kind of services, temples continue to be relevant to the worshippers and also can earn some money. Worshippers also do not have to waste their time to buy the accessories such as joss sticks and incences elsewhere outside the temple.

[173] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Overseas: Comparative Cultural Issues*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 17.
[174] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia*, 218.
[175] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Overseas*, 17-18.
[176] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 49.

An example of the famous practice using joss sticks is called "Qian". Qian or known as 'divining stick' is a practice of asking gods advice and blessing. At a communal temples, there is usually a bamboo container holding a number of divine sticks. After offering joss sticks, a worshipper will kneel in front of the altar while holding a bamboo container and at the same time, ask the deity for blessing or any advice that he or she needed. Then, he or she tilts the container and shakes it until one of the divining sticks drop out. Then, he or she throws two divining blocks for the answer. If the shaped blocks have one face up and another one face down, it is a yes from a deity. The answer is no if both blocks land on the flat side showing the arched sides. Thus, he or she need to make request again and shake the bamboo container until the answer is a yes. If it is a yes, she need to look at the number and go to the counter to get the revelation note. Usually, the worshipper will ask the temple clerk to help interpret the meaning as the note is written in poetic Chinese. The first and fifteenth of a month in Chinese calendar are important days for offering joss sticks to the deities both at home or at the temples[177].

3.2. On Religious Festivals

There are abundance of religious festivals celebrated among the Malaysian Chinese. In fact, different ethnic among the Chinese have their own main festivals and celebrations. Among the famous festivals consecrated by the Malaysian Chinese are Chinese New Year, The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods, Hungry Ghost Festival, Yuen Xiao and Mid Autumn Festival.

3.2.1. Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is one of the prominent celebrations among the Chinese in Malaysia. The first day of the first month marked the celebration of this festival[178] for fifteen days until the arrival of Yuen Xiao celebration or also known as Chap Goh Meh[179].During this festival, Chinese families will hold a celebration among them for the gathering[180]. It is believed that the celebration was inspired by the story of their struggle against the

[177] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 50.
[178] Chinese calendar or known as Chinese Lunar Calendar consists of twelve or thirteen months. The lunar months of Chinese calendar are obtained from calculated new moons. 12 ordinary lunar months being approximately 10 to 13 days less than a solar year of 365 days while an intercalary 13 lunar months has either 383, 384 or 385 days as it depends on the various cases.
[179] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 137.
[180] Gregory Leong, *Festivals of Malaysia*, (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), 15.

mythical dragon called Nien. The story of Nien will be told during the festival. Nien as a mythical dragon that eat on everyting that it can see. Thus, all the people were scared of it. In order to avoid making any contact with the dragon, the people will offer foods to the dragon. If the dragon satisfied with the foods given, it will eventually go away. There are also a story that Nien scared of anything with red color. One of the story mentioned that a boy with red clothes successfully chased away the dragon. Thus, anything related with red considered as lucky to Chinese. Also, a fireworks considered to be potent to the dragon. During the eve of the celebration, because the people feared from the attack of the dagon, they usually did not sleep during that night and continuously safeguard their house. However, this tradition is not practice anymore[181].

Figure 8

A red envelope of Ang Pow

Source: Taken from Rasdi Abdul Rahman, https://www.123rf.com/photo_36202831_chinese-new-year-red-packets-of-ang-pow.html, accessed on April 15, 2019

A typical day of the celebration usually begin at the temple where the Chinese will worship the God of Prosperity[182]. Later, to show cooperation, the family will have a banquet[183]. Normally, the Malaysian Chinese will show their new attire and meet and greet their relatives and friends with Kung Hei Fatt Choi (Gong Xi Fa Chai in Malaysian Hokkien dialect) as it means prosperity and happiness[184]. During the day of the festivals, the wedded couple will handed out the red envelope Ang Pow to the

[181] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 138.
[182] Mohd Shuhaimi bin Haji Ishak, "Cultural and Religious Festivals: A Malaysian Experience," *Jati* 15 (2010), 101.
[183] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 138.
[184] Gregory Leong, *Festivals of Malaysia*, 19.

children and also to the single. Usually, the money given is in even numbers except number four as in the Chinese langauge, the word four can be associated with the word 'death'[185].There are a few celebrations that are going to be held during the festivals. Firstly the lion dance performance as it is an act to chase evil spirits and bring prosperity. Secondly, Yam Seng celebration which means 'to drink to one's victory and success' as a part of toasting among Malaysian Chinese[186]. The burning of firecrackers were the noisiest on the first, second and the fifteenth day[187]. However because of there are casualties and injuries among the children and adult, the firecracker and bamboo canon were eventually prohibited by the authority[188].

3.2.2. Yuen Xiao or Chap Goh Meh

Yuen Xiao or notably known as Chap Goh Meh is celebrated among the Hokkien Chinese in Malaysia on the fifteenth of the first month or also known as the last day of the New Year celebration. Chap Goh Meh is dedicated mostly for young woman as this day is considered as lucky day for young woman and the appropraite time for a young woman to search for a companion[189]. The original purpose of Chap Goh Meh is to embrace the sunshine during the winter period[190]. Chap Goh Meh is associated with Lantern Festival because during the old days, there were no electricity and the people will use an oil-based lamps. Thus, the people and children will illuminate their house with the multi-coloured lanterns[191].

However, this Lantern Festival in China is celebrated on the different month than in Malaysia. The Lantern Festival in Malaysia is celebrated as the Mid Autumn Festival. Yuen Xiao or Chap Goh Meh in Malaysia can be associated as the Chinese version of Valentine's Day but with a different ways of celebrating it. At night, a young woman will write their name and details on the oranges and throw it into the river or sea. Eventually, the man will be using a boat to collect the oranges and after that, they will start making contact and changing personal information if there happened to be any connection between them. Chap Goh Meh also act as an opportunity for the charity

[185] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 138.
[186] Pham Duc Thanh, *Traditional Festivals of Asean*, (Hanoi: The Gidi Publishers, 2003), 117.
[187] Gregory Leong, *Festivals of Malaysia*, 19.
[188] Mohd Shuhaimi, *Cultural and Religious Festivals*, 102.
[189] Pham Duc Thanh, *Traditional Festivals of Asean*, 117.
[190] Khoo Joo Ee, *The Straits Chinese: A Cultural History*, (Amsterdam: The Pepin Press, 1996), 106.
[191] Mohd Shuhaimi, *Cultural and Religious Festivals*, 102.

groups. The charity will be selling oranges in order to collect donation[192].

3.2.3. Mid Autumn Festival

Mid Autumn Festival occurs during the full moon in the Chinese calendar The festival is celebrated in the eigth month of the calendar. The festival is identify with the Moon Cake Festival and Lantern Festival in Malaysia as it is a part of the main celebrations here[193]. Originally, the festival started around 2000 years ago as post-autumn harvest celebration as a way of thanking the gods[194]. The scholars have indicated that the festival probably connected to the moon worshipping during the Song dynasty[195]. The fixed date of the celebration probably derived from the Northern Song Dynasty when Emperor Tai officiated the festival[196].

The origins of Mid Autumn Festival were associated with many myths. However, the most famous among all was the tale of Chang'er, also known as Moon Lady and her husband, Hou Yi[197]. Hou Yi was a famous archer who shot down nine suns out of ten and Chang'er was his beautiful wife. As a reward, he is chosen to become the king and in his possession is the elixir of life. Even though he had the elixir in his hand, he did not touch it becasue if he drink it, he will become immortal. Thus, he passed the elixir to his wife for protection against anyone. Unfortunately, the thieves heard about it and tried to find the elixir, which led the wife to drink it. As a consequence, the wife disappeared from the earth. Because his wife missed him very much, she decided to stay on the moon, where it was the closest thing to the earth. When Hou Yi knew abot this, he tried to get his wife but he failed eventually. Later, when the people knew about this, they brought fruits and foods for her and began to deify her[198].

The festival was also related to the worship of God of Heaven. At the same time, lanterns were illuminated and moon cakes were distributed. The month is also famous for the activities such as moon viewing and lantern carrying[199]. Moon cake is

[192] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 139.
[193] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 143.
[194] Chunjiang Fu, *Origins of Chinese Festivals*, trans. Koh Kok, (Singapore: Asiapac Books, 2004), 133.
[195] Dongye Qi, *Dissapearing Customs of China*, trans. Chen Fuming, (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2007), 87.
[196] Guoliang Gai, Exploring Traditional Chinese Festivals in China, trans. Cao Ying and Wang Shanjiang, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009), 77.
[197] Marie Luise Latsch, *Traditional Chinese Festivals*, (Singapore: G. Brash, 1985, 71.
[198] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 143.
[199] Jaime Koh and Stephanie Ho, *Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia*, (California: Greenwood press, 2009), 134.

considered as an important aspect in the festival. This is becasue it played a major role during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1341 A.D.) where the dynasty tried to subjugated themselves from the Mongols invasion. During that time, a large meeting was prohibited by the authority. Eventually, the leaders among the Yuan devised a plan to use the moon cake in order to send the secret messages and schemed an attack between their comrades. The attack was launched during the Mid-Autumn Festival[200].

In order to make a moon cake, a mixture of flour was used. Inside it, the fillings can be red bean or lotus seed staffed with salted egg yolk. Normally, a moon cake is round in shape and have the size of a clenched hand. However, in Malaysia especially the northern part, some of the Chinese still worshipped the moon by using the water caltrop (water chestnut). Water caltrop then will be feed to their children as they believed that it will make the children become brilliant[201]. The types of offerings to the moon are thirteen as it is in accordance to the thirteen months in the Chinese lunar calendar. Only the female mebers of the family can prepare the offerings. Some of the offerings can include the new things such as cosmetics. This is becasue it is presumed that it can enhance the beauty of its user[202]. The purpose of the festival is to gather the people, saying prayer to the deceased ones and be thankful for their life. However, with the development of the way of thinking, some aspects of this tradition can be non-identical to the old days[203].

3.2.4. Hungry Ghost Festival

Zhongyuan Jie or known in English as Hungry Ghost Festival is the second most widely celebrated Chinese festivals in Malaysia after Chinese New Year[204]. The reason why this festival is known as Hungry Ghost Festival is because of the belief that during the seventh moon (around August or September), the deceased and all kinds of ghosts visit the human world[205]. Based on the understanding of the festival, when the festival began, the ghosts will be emancipated from the hell realms and strayed among the living[206]. The name Zhongyuan is Taoist, and the date for the hungry ghost festival related to the

[200] Gregory Leong, *Festivals of Malaysia*, 63.
[201] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 144.
[202] Gregory Leong, Festivals of Malaysia, 64.
[203] Kin Wai Michael Siu, "Lanterns of the Mid Autumn Festival: A reflection of Hong Kong Cultural Change," *Journal of Popular Culture* 33, no. 2 (1999), 68.
[204] Choon San Wong, *A Cycle of Chinese Activities*, (Singapore: Malaysia Publishing House Limited, 1967), 136.
[205] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 86.
[206] Fu Chunjiang, *Origins of Chinese Festivals*, 127.

anniversary of one of the Taoist god known as Diguan. Diguan is in charge of absolving the living and the dead from the sin committed, thus, a Taoist rites are performed during this festival[207]. However, in Malaysia, the fusion elements betweeen Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism with the Chinese common beliefs is highlighted during the festival[208]. Hungry Ghost Festival is one of the most important celebration and good example of syncretical elements of Chinese religions in Malaysia.

For Chinese Buddhist in Malaysia, the festival is known as Yu Lan Pen Festival. Yu Lan means to hang upside down while Pen here means a box where there are offerings inside it [209]. The myth behind the festival originated from the story of Mu Lian to rescue his mother from the hell[210]. Mu Lian's mother unconsciously ate the meat where late she was deported to hell[211]. Mu Lian tried to find his mother and eventually saw her remained with other hungry ghosts. Thus, he tried to give her foods but unfortnately the food became a coal[212]. In desperation, Mu Lian seek the help of Buddha and Buddha taught him how to make ammendment by saying prayers and so on. Later, his mother was emancipated as a hungry ghost[213].

There are two aspects that need to be observed in the hungry ghost festival. Firstly the rituals that need to be performed in household or privately and secondly, the rituals among the communities or communally. In the ritual, the entertainment was in fact acted as commendatory as it helps to create the unison among the people which is the basic concept in Confucianism[214]. The privates rites are conducted on the fifteeenth of the seventh month and it involves family gathering who conducted domestic worship that includes offerings to deities, ancestors and wandering ghosts[215]. There are technical aspects that need to be remarked when doing a worship during the festival. Firstly, the most important is the gods and deities that need to be worshipped. Ghost are also considered to be worshipped but at the back of the house. Meanwhile, there are also

[207] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 86
[208] Chee Beng Tan, "The Religions of the Chinese in Malaysia," in *The Chinese in Malaysia*, eds. Kam Hing Lee and Tan Chee Beng , (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 2000), 283.
[209] Tan Huay Peng, *Fun With Chinese Festivals*, (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1991), 70.
[210] Choon San Wong, *An Illustrated Cycle of Chinese Festivities in Malaysia and Singapore*, (Singapore: Jack Chia-MPH, 1987), 162.
[211] Choon San Wong, *An Illustrated Cycle of Chinese Festivities in Malaysia and Singapore*, 162.
[212] Stephen F. Teiser, "Ghosts and Ancestors in Medieval Chinese Religion: The Yu Lan Pen Festival as Mortuary Ritual," *History of Religions* 26, no. 1 (1986), 247.
[213] Tan Huay Peng, *Fun With Chinese Festivals*, 70.
[214] Jean Debernardi, "The Hungry Ghosts Festival: A Convergence of Religion and Politics in the Chinese Community of Penang, Malaysia," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 2, (1984), 27.
[215] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 83.

stray ghost that need to be given attention. However, the stray ghost cannot be worshipped at the altar. Instead, they can be worshipped at the road and the offerings can be left on the ground[216].

The communal worship usually is conducted during the second half of the seventh lunar month where Hungry Ghost Festival happened as the private worship should be done earlier than the communal worship. The festival started from the morning as some people started to begin the preparations in the village temple for the worship and also for the communal dinner in the evening. The worship had nothing to do with the temple but for the worship, the Chinese use the temple ground. Giant incense sticks are placed in front of the people[217]. An ad hoc shelter will be build and functioned as the place to hold the paper charms and offerings. At the same time, a big stage is built in order to organiza a performance there[218]. Nearby, a simple toilet and a washroom is constructed for the use of the visiting ghosts[219].

At the hall of the temple, there are bamboo sticks and life size paper placed at the corner of the hall. At the center of the hall, there are a huge paper figure of Daisuya, The Great Lord or commonly known among the Hokkien in Malaysia as King of Ghost. Sometimes, Guan Yin is also placed at on top of the head of the Great Lord as some people interpret it as Guan Yin controlling the King of Ghosts. The Taoist priest preformed the Kaiguang ritual. Kaiguang is the dotting ritual to officiate the statue. The priest will climb the small ladder to dot the eye and other parts of the face of the Daisuya. The priest also performed the Kaiguang for the lucky items that will be available for the bidding on the evening. After the dotting ritual, the priest, his main assistant and his four companions will ride a a motorbike four main directions of the village for another rite called Zhengqi which means 'guarding the flags'. At each corner, the assistant will arrange some candles and joss papers on the ground. After the candles were lit, the priest performs a brief rite to ward the evil spirits by warding his buffulo horn and whip his lash a few times. At the end of the rite, the main assistant burn the joss papers[220].

[216] Jean Debernardi, *The Hungry Ghosts Festival*, 27-28.
[217] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 84.
[218] Jean Debernardi, *The Hungry Ghosts Festival*, 28.
[219] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 84.
[220] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 85.

Then, the priest will perform rituals at the altar back at the hall. The pictures of the Taoist trinity gods are hung in the place where the priest perform the rite. The priest is accompanied by a person who beat the drum and and played the Chinese shawm (suona). In the evening, the celebration will become festive as more people will become for the evening bidding[221]. The reason why the offerings are presented to the ghost is because the people do not want the ghost to disturb them. Thus, some of the offerings can include fruit, tea, cake and so on[222]. Meanwhile, during the evening, the fujin or lucky items will be available for the bidding. A special attention will be given to the decorated charcoal and the decorated rice bucket. These items usually fetch the highest bids and well beyond the normal price. The blessed charcoal and the rice bucket are believed to bring good luck to the person who wins the bid. Thus, individuals bid hundreds or thousands of Malaysian dollars for these items. Successful bidders also win prestige as they show themselves to be financially successful and trustworthy. Among the other items bid during the dinner can be ranged from the farm products such as bananas, jackfruit and pineapples to all kinds of food such as porcelain figurines of Maitreya or a horse portrayed as hongyun baoma (horse of good fortune). The money collected during the auction will be directed to the Hungry Ghost Festival committees which they will use it to pay for the celebration and donate the rest to the local Chinese schools[223].

Late at night, after the final Taoist rites at the hall, the Diasuya is carried outside and placed on a big stack of joss papers. The Taoist will perform the sending off rite, where the statue will be burnt by the lighting of the joss papers. The boat carrying the statue was carried on the vehicle to the selected riverside. After the priest conducted a brief rite, he will led the people to circumambulate the boat for three times. Then, the boat is set alight. The sending of the boat away to sea is an important part of the communal cleansing rite, symbolizing that the bad luck and evil spirits have been warded off[224]. During the the seventh lunar month, special care need to be taken to avoid the attention of wandering souls. There are a few prohibitions need to be given attention by the one who is celebrating the festival. Firstly, it is important for the people not to walk or

[221] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 86.
[222] Ryoko Sakurada, "Emerging Chinese Public Sphere in Multi-ethnic Malaysia: A Case Study of Hungry Ghost Festival and Philanthropic Activities," *The Proceeding of Kyoto University-Nanjing University Sociology and Anthropology Workshop* (2013), 55.
[223] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 85-86
[224] Chee Beng Tan, *Chinese Religion in Malaysia: Temples and Communities*, 86-87.

wander around in the middle of the night as to eludes them from confronting the evil spirit[225]. In addition, the people also need to avoid some places because some of the ghosts love to hang out in a specific places such as walls. Moreover, a few advice should be taken seriously such as prohibition to hang clothes outside of the house at night, cutting and shaving and a joyous celebrations such as wedding should be refrain temporarily[226].

3.2.5. The Nine Emperor Gods Festival

Among the Southeast Asian Chinese, this festival is celebrated in the ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar[227]. The major aspects of this festival is highlighted with its temple procession[228]. There are omnifarious versions in regards to the myth of the Nine Emperor Gods Festival. The classical version suggested that the Nine Emperor of Gods were a reincarnation from nine human ruler. These nine sovereigns are Tianying, Tianren, Tianzhu, Tianxin, Tianqin, Tianfu, Tianchong, Tianrui and Tianpeng and they were the sons of Doumu. The myth circulated that Doumu was given a wisdom where she passed it to the nine of his sons[229]. Meanwhile, the Malaysian Chinese version suggested that this festival is a part of the commemoration of nine brothers related to the prince of the Ming dynasty. According to the belief, this nine brother had helped the Ming's prince escaped from tribulations where he landed at Songkhla, Thailand. It is believed that the vessel carrying the nine brothers were found floating at the sea in Songkhla. Vessels are regarded as the chariot of the Nine Emperor Gods and are still in use in the welcoming and sending off ceremonies of the festival[230].

There are multitudes of rituals surrounding this festival. The festival begins when the nine oil lamps were lit [231]. The lamps are raised to invite the divines to the temple ground for the festival. In order to attract the divine presence, the candles need to be

[225] Leon Comber, *Through the Bamboo Window. Chinese Life &Culture in 1950s, Singapore and Malaya*, (Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, 2009), 33.
[226] Fu Chunjiang, *Origins of Chinese Festivals*, 132.
[227] Cheu Hock Tong, *A Study of Chinese Spirit Medium Cults*, (Singapore: Times Book İnternational, 1988), 15.
[228] Ruth Inge Heinze, "The Nine Imperial Gods in Singapore," *Asian Folklore Studies* 40, no 2 (1981), 162.
[229] Cheu Hock Tong, "The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia: Myth, Ritual and Symbol," *Asian Folklore Studies* 55, no. 1 (1996), 52.
[230] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia*, 54.
[231] Cheu Hock Tong, *A Study of Chinese Spirit Medium Cults*, 33.

continuously lit for nine days[232]. The same day the festival began, those who want to participate in the festival need to abstain themselves from meat and become vegan which lead to purification of their body[233]. Overall, the rituals can be divided into seven categories which are the welcoming, worship, trance, luck, purification and sending off rituals.

First of all, there will be a street procession as part of the welcoming ritual. The procession will be lead by the two disciples. The procession continues with the traditional musical choir, gongs, cymbals and oboes followed by a procession of carrying the portrait of the local deity in a six sedan chairs and palanquins. Behind them there will be a male and female devotees including the committees that will hold nine lighted joss sticks. There are also holding lighted white candle and incense papers. The procession ritual is completed when the procession stop at the river. The ritual occurs hidden from the public where the priest says a prayer and incantations, calling the star deities to come down. After the ritual, the procession will return back to the temple where the spirits of the Divine Nine are supposed to be held. Secondly, there are also a worship ritual. This ritual involves oneself coming to the temple to be in touch with the deities by exhibiting a greeting gestures, saying prayers and making vows. Worship ritual also include offerings of tea, fruits, flowers, money and the burning of joss sticks, charm papers and white candles[234].

During the trance rituals, trance dances carry by spirit mediums are performed. The trance dances acted as to decontaminating the surroundings for the sake of the community. A lion dance is performed in order to provides a Yin and Yang energy to the environment. The exhalation of the lion is to driven of the Yin forces while the inhalation of the lion is to attract the Yang forces[235]. A medium who is in trance is believed to ward the evil spirits. Thus, some people will catch this opportunity to do a dangerous act when they were in the state of trance such as inserting a long needle in their mouth and walking in a hot coal[236]. While the trance dances are conducted, another ritual called the luck rituals are demonstrated by the Taoist priests. Among the luck

[232] Cheu Hock Tong, *A Study of Chinese Spirit Medium Cults*, 35.
[233] Cheu Hock Teng, "The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Peninsular Southeast Asia," in *Chinese Beliefs and Practices in Southeast Asia: Studies on the Chinese Religion in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*, eds. Cheu Hock Teng, (Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1993), 28.
[234] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia*, 56-57.
[235] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia*, 58.
[236] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 149.

rituals are dissolving ill luck and thanksgiving ritual as a way of devotees appreciation to the heaven's blessings. These rituals involved burning of the incense papers[237].

The purification rituals involved bridge crossing and fire walking by the devotees, spirit mediums and Taoist priests. The ritual symbolizes the transition of purification from the state of yin to yang. During the eigth day of the celebration, an unsteady bridge is built for the bridge crossing ceremony and everyone can join regardless of age and sex. When a devotees try to cross the bridge, a priest will stamp a read seal in the forehead of the devotees as to symbolizes that the devotees crossing the bridge with the blessing of the Divine Nine. When the devotees crossed the bridge, a priest will providea to the devotees a yellow charm papers which acted as an amulets to the devotees against any evil. The devotees can burn the paper and its ashes can be mixed with a drink and it can be drink[238]. As an act of offering, the devotees can give money.

Meanwhile, the fire crossing is held on the ninth day of the festival. There are approximately one hundred of charcoal bag used for the fire crossing ceremony. The bed is paved with incense papers and joss sticks. A few seconds before the procession, a salt mixed with some temperature-reducing chemical is thrown into the bed includes the tea leaves and uncooked rice. The rice gives a harmless spark. The procession is led by spirit mediums followed by bearers of the sedan chairs loaded with idols, charm papers and other precious objects such as jewelleries. There will be fifty people in white shirts and pants, yellow headbands and barefoot follow behind, each carrying a rolled-up yellow pendant of Nine Emperor Gods for protection. In order to participate in the procession, they must abstain from having sex become vegan during the nine days of celebration[239].

Lastly, the sending off ceremony involves dispatching the Emperor Gods in a miniature boat loaded with items such as beans, rice, sugar, salt, flour and incense. The ashes from the incese are casted into the river when the boat is embarked. This is to signify the departure of gods. The tall lamp is lowered at noon on the tenth day of festival and it marks the end of the festival[240].

[237] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia*, 59.
[238] Ruth Inge Heinze, *The Nine İmperial Gods in Singapore*, 158-159.
[239] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Festival of Nine Emperor Gods in Malaysia*, 60-61.
[240] Cheu Hock Tong, *A Study of Chinese Spirit Medium Cults*, 154.

3.3. On Marriage

The Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 which came into force on 1 March 1982 stated that in order for a person to get married, both of them must be a minimum of eighteen years of age. However, if they are under the age of twenty one, they need to get the approval of their father in order to marry. However, if a person already married even though he or she is under age before, he or she does not need permission to marry again. Moreover, the law also prohibited a person to marry any blood-related relatives such as parent, grandparent, children or anyone who had blood relation. Furthermore, it is prohibited to force and pressure someone to get married[241].

Among the Amalysian Chinese, two types of wedding has been acknowledged. The first type is a traditional wedding where the parents arranged the wedding and everything while the second one is where the couples can have the freedom to choose their beloved ones[242]. Generally, in Malaysia, the tradition that have been brought down from generation to generation have been adapted and modernized over the years by the Malaysian Chinese. Traditionally, the first thing practiced by Malaysian Chinese's wedding is selecting the date for the wedding. This is because a correct and luck dates need to be determined first for the couple to have a blessful wedding[243]. Discussion of the marriage is initiated by the future groom's family when it presents its horoscopic data to the bride's family. The compatibility of the couple is sought by consulting the spirit medium or an elderly person who is well versed in Chinese Almanac or Tung Shu. Tung Shu which means 'book of everything' is an almanac which contains information on auspicious or inauspicious dates for carrying out important event. However, many prefer to consult spirit medium as they believed that mediums are more accurate and reliable. Examples for inauspicious months of marriage are the third, sixth and seventh month of Chinese lunar calendar as a sign of respect to the ancestors. The third month coincides with the Ching Ming Festival while the seventh month is the Hungry Ghost Festival[244].

[241] Carol G.S. Tan, "The Twilight of Chinese Customary Law Relating to Marriage in Malaysia," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1993), 147-148.
[242] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 145.
[243] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 145.
[244] Elena Gregoria Chai Chin Fern, "Ancestor Power: Marriage Rituals of a Hakka Community in Sarawak, Malaysia," *Malaysian Journal of Chinese Studies* 2, no. 1 (2013), 144.

After selecting the auspicious date, a ritual known as 'guo da li' is performed. Guo da li is an appreciation ceremony when the grooms family presents to the brides family a gift. The Chinese customs dictated that it is compulsory for this ceremony to be taken place in an auspicious date prior to the wedding ceremony. During Guo da li, the groom's family will give to the brides a gift that symbolizes good luck and success[245]. At the same time, the bride's family will received a dowry in the red envelope as part of the acknowledgement by the groom's family for the role played by the bride's parents for her upbringing. The betrothal gifts usually includes tea, fruits, coconuts, money and delicacies. However, the gifts depend on the family status and local customs[246].

Next, during the night before the wedding ceremony, the bride-to-be is brought to the groom's residence while the groom-to-be leaves his own house to stay at his friends or relatives house. Later at the fixed time during the night, the grooms will be initiated with the hair combing ceremony in his house by adorning in a Chinese traditional costume. He then returned to his temporary residence after the offerings to the gods and ancestors were made. Then, the bride-to-be need to perform the hair combing ceremony[247]. The hair combing ceremony is undertaken by the older relatives of each respected families. The ceremony symbolizes that the couple already reached the age of maturity and will received congratulations from others. However, certain rules must be observed to participate in this ceremony. For examples, both of the parents need to have a blissful marriage. Secondly, prior to the bride's ceremony, the groom need to finished his ceremony first. There must be a congratulatory and best wishes utterances among the crowds. This steps must be carried out in order for the bride and groom to have a happy and blissful wedding as the one who combs her or his hair[248].

In the early morning, the bride firstly need to performed her wedding rite, followed by the grooms. After that, the bride need to greet the man whom she just have been married to and escorted him to the bridal room. The the grooms will unveils the veil of the bride[249]. After that, a tea ceremony for the groom's family is held. Friends and relatives of the groom will express congratulations when the tea is served. The reason behind the

[245] Seong Chee Tham, *Religion and Modernization: A Study of Changing Rituals among Singapore's Chinese, Malays and Indians*, (Singapore: Graham Brasch, 1985), 56.
[246] Lei Guo and Lan Wang, "Comparison Between Chinese Traditional Marriage Customs and American Marriage Customs," *Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 4, (2016), 124.
[247] Chee Beng Tan, "Structure and Change: Cultural Identity of the Baba of Melaka," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Deel 144, 2/3de Afl (1988), 310.
[248] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 145.
[249] Chee Beng Tan, *Structure and Change*, 310.

tea ceremony is to meet and greet the relatives of both sides. After the ceremony, the newlywed will started doing their duty to distribute the money in the red envelope to the children.

The wedding reception will take its place in the evening. However, the wedding reception depends on the financial means of the couple. Usually, because of the invitation, the wedding guests will give the money to the couple. In Chinese customary, the number of dishes need to be in even numbers as even numbers are considered pairings. There are several taboos need to be follow during the wedding day. If there is death in either sides of the family members, a wedding should be postpone for the following year or after 100 days of the death of the family members. Moreover, a woman who is pregnant should not involve in any part of the wedding to prevent any mishaps[250].

3.4. On Funeral

Funeral ceremony is regarded one of the most important aspect that need to be observed by the Chinese. The Chinese funeral ceremony involves the philosophy of unity of heavens and humans or known as 'tianrenheyi'. 'Tian' or heaven may be interpreted as the environment itself. The notion of tianrenheyi related to the harmonious aspects between the living and the dead[251]. There are three cultural values that underlie the concept of the unity of nature and humans. These values are filial piety, fengshui and yi or justice and righteousness[252]. Filial piety can be considered as respecting the elders. Thus, the philosophy behind the funeral ceremony suggested that the concept of love and respect is everlasting even after the beloved ones died.

Meanwhile, the concept of Fengshui is related to the cooperation and harmonization of the house in accordance to the nature. The basic aspect of Fengshui is to provide a way for the human to harmonize and unite with the heaven. The practical aspect of Fengshui is related to the residence of a person in unison with the concept of Yin and Yang[253]. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Chinese can choose any sites for the proper burial as long as it

[250] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 145.
[251] Colin A. Ronan, "The Shorter Science and Civilizsation in China," in *An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text Vol. 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 306.
[252] Pik Wah Fan, Phin Keong Voon et al., "Chinese Cemeteries and Environmental Ethics: Some Insights from Malaysia, *哲學與文化* ***第四十一卷第七期*** *Philosophy and Culture* 41, no. 7, (2014), 91.
[253] Pik Wah Fan, *Chinese Cemeteries*, 92.

is inside the cemetary and not passing through the private lands[254]. Thirdly, the concept of Yi or righteousness stressed on the community aspect of the funeral ceremony and cemetery. Not only the family members of the dead have moral obligation to their family members, but also they have obligatiion for the community. Among the first duties of Chinese associations are to concern with providing a proper burial for the members[255]. Through the practice of yi, they need to act as part of the common good for the community that does justice to the living and the dead.

According to the Chinese belief, the death of a person can disrupt the balance of the universe. Therefore, a ritual need to be observed to recreate the link between them. In addition, the Chinese thought that the dead will likely affect the living in terms of the wealth. Thus, it is to be understood that the ritual not only as a sign of rescpect, but also to atone against the dead [256]. The rites for the death vary according to where the deceased died. If the deceased died at home, the first thing to do is to cover the the deities at home with a red paper and the deities must not touch the deceased or the coffin of the deceased. All the mirrors inside the house need to be concealed or removed because if a person saw the coffin from the mirror, a mishaps might happened. Moreover, a white cloth need to be put on the door outside the house to indicate that the people inside the house is in lamentation. However, if the deceased died outside of the house, he or she need to be immediately taken to the burial sites[257].

When the family members gathered in the deceased bed, it marks the start of the funeral preparations. Usually, a brown coloured coffin is reserved by the family members. Before the decesed is put inside the coffin, the decesed will be dressed in a new clothes and make up will be given to the women. A the same time, if the decesed involved in any accident, the deceased will be given an appropriate cosmetic service in order to hide the irregularities of the deceased. A red and black cloth is forbidden to be adorned by the members of the family. This is because red signifies revenge while black is a sign of harbinger[258]. Wailing or crying is considered appropriate as a part of grief and sadness. Crying and wailing is expected from the family members. Sometimes, a professional

[254] Pik Wah Fan, *Chinese Cemeteries*, 93.
[255] Pik Wah Fan, *Chinese Cemeteries*, 94.
[256] Seong Chee Tham, *Religion and Modernization*, 61.
[257] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 146.
[258] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 147.

wailers were called to gratify the needs of the dead that the living mourned for the deceased[259].

The Chinese still maintain the tradition of staying awake during the night of the death. The head of the deceased need to face outside of the house and food is put in front of the coffin as part of the offerings. Meanwhile, the portraits need to be put at the end of the coffin. Anything about jewelleries need to be put off. There was a tradition that when a person died in a family, the members of the family prohibited to cut their hair for forty nine days. However, this tradition is dismissed[260]. Usually, the stay awake ceremony last longer if a person considered as influential[261].

There are two ways for the Malaysian Chinese to bury the deceased, either funeral by burial or by cremation. If a family members chose to have funeral by burial, they need to be ready for the rites during the seventh day of the death. However, if the family members chose to have funeral by cremation, they need to collect the ashes and safekeeping it inside the urn in the family shrine. However, the death of a young person such as baby and children are different. Usually, they will be buried or cremated immediately. If the parents are still alive and the baby or children is dead, the parents are forbidden to pay the respect, offering their prayers and sometimes are not allowed to atttend the funeral ceremony. The reason is becasue the young ones did not contribute a lot to the life of their family while the elder is consider as bestowing a lot in their life for the family members. Thus, the elder a person, the bigger the funeral ceremony will be[262]. After the ceremony, the portrait of the deceased will be brought to home as later it will be settled at the family ancestral shrine[263].

In a nutshell, the Malaysian Chinese religious practices focus on transcendental aspects of the rites. In every movements, rites, numbers, there are significant, sensible and cognizant symbolism for them. Every festivals celebrated usually correlated to the tradition which was inherited from from one to another or adopted from the traditions from the Mainland China. However, with the advance of the modern sciences and the state of the art technology, Malaysian Chinese adopted and tried to amalgamate the

[259] Lokasundari Vijaya Sankar, David Hock Jin Neo and Antoon De Rycker, "Chinese Culture and Customs in Peranakan Funerals in Malaysia and Singapore," *SEARCH: The Journal of South East Asia Research Centre for Communications and Humanities* 8, no 1, (2016), 27.
[260] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 147.
[261] Lokasundari Vijaya Sankar, *Chinese Culture and Customs in Peranakan Funerals*, 25.
[262] Goh Sang Seong, *Penang Chinese Customs and Traditions*, 148.
[263] Lokasundari Vijaya Sankar, *Chinese Culture and Customs in Peranakan Funerals*, 29.

rituals, rites and movements of their celebration to elucidate the critical and analytical aspects of the reasoning. However, some of the reformers among Malaysian Chinese tried to put logical reasoning first than their ancestral tradition. For example, in Penang, Malaysia, a 1907 conference of Straits Chinese leaders tried to remove the Chingay procession[264] where it is attributed to Guanyin because it did not "conform to the scientific reality"[265]. In Penang and Singapore, a reform movement was carried out by Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang by inseminating their refine views through their Street Chinese Magazine (SCM), which ran from 1897 to 1907. The essential discussion of the magazine was the purity of Chinese religion. One of the reasons of the 'exaltation' of the critical and analytical aspects of the Chinese religion is because the reformers received their education from the Western perspectives thus created a mixed-breed of Chinese and Western identity[266].

Thus, like any other religions exist in the world nowadays, Chinese Religions in Malaysia also faced the same issues and must undergo transformation and reformation in order for it to survive and adapt the contemporary worldview.

3.5. The Similarities And Differences Between Malaysian Chinese And Chinese In China In Terms Of Beliefs And Religious Practices

There are several aspects that akin and differ between the Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in Mainland China. The major factor that need to be discussed first is the ethnicity. Ethinicity is not intrinsic and primal, but it is a social construct and is defined based on the language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry or regionality[267]. Even though these factors can be considered as significant, however, certain can change the views of those factors such as regular activites and surroundings can change someone

[264] Chingay procession was a mixed version of procession when the Hokkien Chinese arrived in Malaya. During the nineteenth century, the Fujian migrants brought the practice to Penang. The earliest documented Chingay street procession is said to has taken place in 1919 in Georgetown, Penang. It was organized by market traders to appease the Taoist deities such as Guanyin. The signature of Chingay is the carrying the gigantic bamboo flags in street processions and during the processions, the image of Guanyin were carried. Accompanying them were stilt walkers, floats, lion and dragon dances. The second Chingay procession took place in 1926 in Georgetown also. The purpose of the procession was to celebrate the birthday of Tua Pek Kong, the God of Prosperity. Today, the procession is held as a part to boost tourism and also to show the multiethnics of the Malaysian.

[265] DeBernardi, *Rites of Belonging*, 31.

[266] Philip Holden, *Modern Subjects/Colonial Texts: Hugh Clifford and the Discipline of English Literature in the Straits Settlements and Malaya, 1895-1907*, (Grensboro: North Carolina ELT Pres, 2000), 118-134.

[267] Joane Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems* 41, no 1, (1994), 152–53.

perspectives [268]. Among the effects that can be perceived are even though same ethnicities or groups no matter how far they are from each other can have similar perspectives towards something but at the same time, because of the new milieu, they can change their outlook about something gradually[269]. Thus, this chapter will focus on what consider the similarities and differences perceives by the Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China.

In terms of similarities, one of the paramount differences between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China is languages. There are many categorization of Chinese languages and constitutes seven types which are Beifang, Wu, Xiang, Northern and Southern Min, Kejia and Yue[270]. Later, because of the need to standardize multitude of langauges, and official language known as Putonghua was officiated in the 1950s[271]. Later, because of the necessity to use a standardize language instead of many for official businesses, this type of language dispersed to the Chinese abroad such as in Malaysia and Singapore where it became formal language[272]. Nevertheless, most of the Malaysian Chinese have been introduced to the Malay and English since child[273]. Thus, Mandarin is considered as lesser language compared to the Malay and English where both are utilize as medium for teaching[274].

However, because of the localization and assimilation of the immigrant Chinese, language is also as a dividing aspect between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China. Because the immigrated Chinese need to localized with the local Malay people in Malaysia and the by product of extensive socialization with the Malays, these products of hybridization is known as Baba[275]. Originally, they are the newcomer to the Malay

[268] Christian Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 17.
[269] Kevin Zi-Hao Wong and Ying-Ying Tan, "Being Chinese in a Global Context: Linguistic Construction of Chinese Ethnicity," *Global Chinese* 3, no. 1, (2017), 2.
[270] Sihua Liang, *Langauage Attitudes and Identities in Multilingual China: A Linguistic Ethnography*, (Cham: Springer, 2015), 14-17.
[271] Ping Chen, *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolingusitics*, (Cambridge & New York, 1999), 14-20.
[272] Ching Hwang Yen, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya, 1800-1911*, (Singapore: Oxford University press, 1986), 303-04.
[273] Kevin Zi-Hao Wong, *Being Chinese in a Global Context*, 4.
[274] Pei Keng Yang, "Constitutional and Legal Provision for Mother Tongue Education in Malaysia," in *Mother Tongue Education of Malaysian Ethnic Minorities*, eds. Kia Soong Kua, (Kajang, Selangor: Dong Jiao Zong Higher Learning Centre, 1998), 55.
[275] Baba or also known as Baba Nyonya is a community as the result of acculturation process (acceptance of foreign culture without losing it's own) betweeen a male Chinese to female Malay. This community displayed the intermixng elements of Chinese and Malay cultures. For examples, the male is still donning the Chinese attire such as shirts and pants while the female, known as Nyonya prefer donning the Malay attire. The food prepared the their women are the same as the Malay tradtional style where the use of hot pepper and shrimp paste is a must.

land and they wed the native Malay women resulted their progenies to use Malay language as lingua franca. They merged their differences by adorning to the Malay clothes and consuming both Malay and Chinese foods. For example, in the northern part of Malaysia and southern part of Thailand, the Chinese there can speak local dialects and wear the tradtional Malay dress..

As in Terengganu, they are impacted with the local Terengganu tongue[276]. However, for their ancestral prayer foods, the influence of Chinese foods are dominant. For the Peranakan (locally born) Chinese in Kelantan and Terengganu, they celebrated four occasions in a year which are Cheng Beng festival (grave cleaning), the Hungry Ghost Festival, the commemoration of their predecessor and also a celebration a night before Chinese New Year. The way they make offerings are the same with the Chinese in another parts of Malaysia where Mandarin oranges and moon cake are given out. Like the conventional Chinese, the lineal foods of Peranakan Chinese of Terengaanu and Kelantan comprise of rice, Chinese tea, Seng Lay (assortments of meat) and main dishes such as pork, desserts and fruits[277]. In terms of Baba from Malacca, most of them practice folk religion[278]. They are generally subscribe to Chinese beliefs system such as Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. For instance, the concept of respect of their lineage is given the utmost priority[279].

The similarities of Malaysian Chinese and Mainland China also can be seen in the business field. The Chinese cultural concepts of 'Bingfa' and 'Guanxi' are the most common words used for the overseas Chinese as the key recipe for their success in business. 'Bingfa' means skill or law soldier. The concept derives from the book called Art of War by Sun Tzu which according to him, warfare is a form of art, which, when perfected, allows one to win without ever fighting. The tools used in the business for the Malaysian Chinese is psychological such as how to tackle the opponent and on the

[276] Chee Beng Tan, "Chinese Identities in Malaysia," *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 25, no. 2, (1997), 105-06.
[277] Yao Sua Tan, Kamarudin Ngah & Mohd Shahrul Imran Lim Abdullah, "Negotiation of Identity and Internal Contradictions: The Terengganu and Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Foodways Compared," *Asian Ethnicity* 16, no. 4, (2015), 419.
[278] Chee Beng Tan, *The Baba of Melaka: Culture and Identity of a Chinese Peranakaan Community in Malaysia*, (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1988), 219.
[279] Hanafi Hussin, "Bridgıng The Past And Present Through Food Heritage Among Peranakan Chinese Of The Straits Of Malacca," *Jati* 19, (2014), 219-220.

matter of transforming deficiency into adequacy. The path to success according to Sun Tzu is indirect, which means knowing others without being known themselves[280].

Meanwhile, the concept of 'Guanxi' or relationship based is one of the important elements for the success of business. In contrast with the western transaction-based business, Chinese allocated a notable amount of hours to acknowldge their partners. From Malaysian Chinese perspectives, a sucessful business person is described as having a well-connected relationship. Relationship is also the the most intangible assets and the key to sustainable business[281]. However, in Malaysia, the older generation of Chinese posed a contrasting viewpoints as they valued the concept 'guanzi' considerably. However, for the younger generation of Chinese, they opinionated that the notion of 'guanxi' can be an obstacle for the economic activities[282].

The differences occured between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China in terms of festivals and celebrations. The most obvious is the Lantern Festival. In China, the Lantern Festival is known as Yuen Xiao. Yuen Xiao in China is acknowledged on the first month of the lunar calendar[283]. During the festival, parents and their childrens will set lanterns in the corner of their house. There are usually a few activites carried out during the celebration such as lion and dragon dance. However, the most well-received activity is the lantern riddles. This activity became prevalent when the people in the Song Dynasty wrote the riddles and at the same time appreciated its craftmanship[284]. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, Lantern Festival is celebrated on another occasion known as Mid Autumn Festival. The moon worship is considered as the objective of this festival. Even though lanter festivals is favoured during the festival, it is hard to trace the interrelation between the lantern and the moon worship[285].

Furthermore, the differences between Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China can be examined through the aspect of worship especially in terms of ghosts and spirits worship. Even though there are a lot of influences from China, Malaysian Chinese are able to disparate themselves from the ancestral traditions brought down from China. As

[280] Shelen W H Ho, Formal Strategic Planning, 15.
[281] Shelen W H Ho, Formal Strategic Planning, 16.
[282] Michael Jacobsen, "Living in the Shadow of Mainland China: On Delineating Social and Political Constraints Among Southeast Asian Chinese Enterpreneurs," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 25 (2007), 45.
[283] Shaorong Huang, "Chinese Traditional Festivals," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 25, no. 3, (1991), 169.
[284] Shaorong Huang, *Chinese Traditional Festivals*, 170-71.
[285] Kin Wai Michael Siu, *Lanterns of the Mid Autumn Festival*, 69.

previously explained in chapter 2, we can conclude that the worship of gods, deities, ghosts and spirits were brought down from the Chinese ancestral tradtions from China. However, localization of religion have become a necessary part of immigrant Chinese, thus, it creates a synthesis of the worship between Chinese religions and local religion.

Datuk Kong probably one of the most influential character that exist between integration of Chinese religions and local religion. At the start of thirteenth century, a large-scale of reversion encountered by the Malays to convert to Islam. Before conversion happened, the Malays at that time subscribed to paganism or incorporated paganistic beliefs with Budddhism and Hinduism[286]. The conversion to Islam especially in the peninsular and insular Southeast Asia took place without disrupting the existing societies. Sufis were the one who evangelized to the Malays on the teachings of Islam. The transcendentalist view of God among Sufis, which acclaims that there are a private metaphysical unification with the God. This view also stressed on the manifestations of God in living and non-living things which provides Islam the capacity of leniency towards the pre-Islam period in the Malay regions[287].

Even though the conversion to Islam led the Malays to go along with the new teaching, reverence given to the local spirits, ghosts and saints were still executed such as fusion between Islam and pre-Islam teachimgs. Although the imam functioned as a leader in the community, the responsibility of the healers for a good fortunes and health were still sustained[288]. Even it had been suggested that seventy four years after the conversion of Parameswara, the first King of Malacca to Islam in 1414 A.D., the foundation of Sufism had already been well laid. In fact, as early as 1488 A.D. in Malacca, teachers of Sufism had already made their presence known and the influence of their teachings felt[289].

The Malays believed that the God-fearing leader among the Sufis known as the Sheikh was not only tasked to disseminate his knowlodge, but at the same time, the Sheikh was conjectured to have the semi-divine ability[290]. Thus, the story circulated that the pious saints revealed themselves as spirits incarnation. For examples, the tombs of Habib Noh

[286] Gordon P. Means, "The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia," *Comparative Politics* 1, no. 2, (1969), 266.
[287] Gordon P. Means, *The Role of Islam*, 266.
[288] Gordon P. Means, *The Role of Islam*, 267.
[289] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufiam as Understood and Practiced among the Malays*, (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institiute Ltd., 1963), 51-52.
[290] Cheu Hock Tong, "The Sinicization of Malay Keramats in Malaysia," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 71, no. 2, (1998), 32.

in Singapore, Dato' Machap in Malacca, Mahsuri in Langkawi and Sunan Kalijaga in Indonesia are still visited and worshipped today by Malays although Muslim scholars have frequently spoken against such practices[291].

When the Chinese immigrated from China to Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysian Peninsular, they need to assimilate with the cultural and religious elements of the local Malay people and for the sake of local protection, local saints need to be revered[292]. In addition, the immigrant Chinese needed the local forces that would able to provide them with opportunities to amass wealth and prosperity[293]. Thus, Datuk Kong worship incorporates both elements of Chinese religions and local religion.

Moreover, ancestors worship differs among Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China, albeit the traditions were passed down from China. In ancestor worship and as many other aspects of Chinese religion, meaning takes second place after participation; the opinions behind the elucidation of traditional Chinese ideologies are freely to be judged[294]. The similarities of ancestors worship among Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China lies on the the occasion and form consisting of food, drink, spirit money the hypercritical ehre the funeral ceremony, wedding or the birth of a new-born baby happened[295]. However, the differences can be found based on its significance within the cultural context in which it is found.

As Malaysian Chinese community exists within a society radically different than rural southern China where the state-sanctioned Confucian tradition and Taoist religious traditions are absent and led to a major impact on nature of Malaysian Chinese culture[296]. Ancestors worships remain an important aspect of Malaysian Chinese but its symbolic meanings attached to it and role its practice plays in social relations is different than mainland Chinese culture. Based on the data gathered by Ian Clarke in the city of Ipoh for his masters degree and interviews done by him on ritual, religion and identity of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia for his doctoral degree, he found that many of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia was uncertain or at least highly sceptical that ancestor

[291] Cheu Hock Tong, *The Sinicization of Malay Keramats*, 34.
[292] Daniel P. S. Goh, *Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore*, 121.
[293] Chin Yee Mun and Lee Yok Fee, "Settling Down Spiritually: Chinese Malaysian Worship of Datuk Gong," *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 22, no. 3, (2014), 385.
[294] Ian Clarke, "Ancestor Worship and Identity: Ritual, Interpretation, and Social Normalization in the Malaysian Chinese Community," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 15, no. 2, (2000), 277.
[295] Ian Clarke, *Ancestor Worship and Identity*, 278.
[296] Ian Clarke, *Ancestor Worship and Identity*, 278-79.

worship was in any way a part of religious activity. Ancestor worship for them was simply worship, a custom, "a tradition that we just follow", as well as "i do not understand any reasons behind the traditions, we ust do it[297].It can be interpreted that ancestor worship is more of 'cultural' than 'religious' in nature, devoid of any religious significance.

Furthermore, there are also differences in terms of place of worship among the Malaysian Chinese and Chinese in China. A significant differences can be seen in terms of the safekeeping of the ancestral tablets. Among the Malaysian Chinese Buddhist, the temple will provide a particular for it, whilst in the tradition of the Chinse in China, the ancestral halls would be the place to store the tablets[298]. Among the reasons that have been suggested that in nineteenth century, the immigrants Chinese did not contemplated to live in the Southeast Asia. They were only thinking to multiply their fortunes and money, thus, to build an ancestor halls probably did not come to their mind. The Chinese had in their mind that once they were to go back to their country, they can use the one that have already been built there. Furthermore, a large amount of money needed to build it thus provided them a justifiable reason not to build the ancestral halls[299].

[297] Ian Clarke, *Ancestor Worship and Identity*, 280.
[298] Hu Jin Kok, "*Chinese Malaysian Folk Religion with Special Reference to Weizhan Gong in Kuala Lumpur*," in Chinese Beliefs and Practices in Southeast Asia, eds. Hock Tong Cheu, (Petaling Jaya, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1997), 119.
[299] Chin Yee Mun, *Settling Down Spiritually*, 380.

CONCLUSION

Based on the facts and ideas aforementioned above, there are no dominant religions among the Chinese religions in Malaysia. Even though most of the Chinese in Malaysia are considered as Buddhist, when people asked them about their religion, they will only said they practice Chinese religions. The Malaysian Chinese practices their religions according to the practices of their ancestors. However, because of modernization, there are some practices that was left because some Chinese considered it as illogical and irrational.

Moreover, the practices of Chinese religions among the Malaysian Chinese can be concluded as syncretical. Because of the various intermingling of cults and beliefs brought by the Chinese to Malaysia, there are no specific religions perceived by Malaysian Chinese. However, to Timothy Brooks's explanation on syncretism in Chinese religions definitely one of the appropriate term to use to describe the Chinese religions in Malaysia. As Brooks considered that syncretism in Chinese religions among Malaysian Chinese is not the same as the West understood the word 'syncretic'. Syncretism in Chinese religions among the Malaysian Chinese need to be analyzed based on how the Chinese sees their religions. Thus, among the relevent approach to study Chinese religions in Malaysia is by doing phenomenologist study of Chinese religions.

In order to understand Chinese religions, the most important aspects of it is to taking part and participate in all the celebrations and rituals of the Chinese religions. The phenomenologist will faithfully deal the phenomena inside the Chinese religions as phenomena, as opposed to noumena. So, everything that happened during the rituals and celebrations of the Chinese religions, phenomenologist must deal with it by bracketing, which is suspension of judgement and abstension. The reasons why bracketing is important to study Chinese religion is because in every aspects off Chinese religions, there are myths, stories and folklores behind it. A student or scholar who want to study Chinese religions need to deal and describe Chinese religions based on the 'natural standpoint', not from the positivist and rationalist point of view.

Furthermore, a compartmentalized methodology of Chinese religions cannot be used. Even though syncretical elements can be detected and classified, but among the Malaysian Chinese themselves they did not classify their religions into a single and

dominant religion. In addition, if the Malaysian Chinese said that they are Buddhist or Taoist for example, they must practice only the Buddhist or Taoist aspects of the rituals and celebrations, which among the Malaysian Chinese, it never had happened. This is because the hybridization of the rituals and celebrations among the Malaysian Chinese can be seen clearly such as in the Hungry Ghost Festival which incorporates Tao, Buddhist and Confucian elements.

The similarities and differences also can be seen such as in the rituals and celebrations among the Malaysian Chinese and Mainland Chinese. However, there are no major differences among both of them as Malaysian Chinese considered China as the birth of their religions. Nonetheless, as previously discussed in the thesis, because of hybridization and intermixing among the native people and the Chinese, especially the Malay, there are a few differences that can be seen especially in terms of worship of the ghosts and ancestors among the Malaysian Chinese.

To conclude, the history of migration of the Chinese to Malaysia that happened a few centuries ago led to form the multisociety and multiracial communities in Malaysia. The cities where the Chinese first landed in Malaya such as Penang and Singapore is still being dominated by them. Majority of the Chinese lives in these cities. The multiracial aspects of this cities led to form a plural society where Malaysians no matter they are Malay, Chinese, Indians or other ethnics, they respect and learn from each other.

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RESUME

My name is Ahmad Tarmizi bin Md Ariffin. I was born in a city in Malaysia called Terengganu. I received my education in primary school when i was seven years old. When i was thirteen years old, i entered to a boarding school until i was eighteen. Later, i have got a letter to continue my tertiary studies in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) where i studied Usuluddin and Comparative Religion focusing on Comparative Religion. I have finished my bachelor degree which I graduated in 2015. In 2016, I received Turkish government scholarship where I currently pursuing my master degree at Sakarya University in the Institute of Social Sciences in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

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