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Chinese Buddhist Missionaries in the Malay Peninsula

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ABSTRACT

The late prime minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew said that, “The Chinese should not be poor in education.” As the founding father of Singapore, he had dedicated himself to improve the educational system at all levels as he believed that by developing the people, the progress of the country will be followed naturally. In fact, Mr. Lee’s vision was not at all a new idea among the Chinese generally. The question was rather how to realize his vision in a practical way. Mr. Lee thought that ethics and moral education were important for young Singaporeans. To accomplish his vision, distinguished Buddhist and Confucian Scholars were invited to Singapore for the purpose of educating the young people to understand why it is important to think and act rightly. Through my field research in Malaysia and Singapore, I had learnt that long before Mr. Lee Chinese Buddhist missionaries had taken the tough role to educate both the indigenous Malays and the immigrant Chinese in different periods of time. This paper focuses on the work of

prominent Buddhist monks and nuns who had taken on the remarkable role of stabilizing Dharma teachings in contemporary times in the Malay Peninsula from the time of British colonization upto the present. The paper is divided into 3 parts ; i) Historical background of Chinese immigration to the Malay Peninsula, ii) Psychology of the Sinkhae (visitor) , iii) Chinese Buddhist Missionary contribution to social development and education . The life and work of prominent monks in the early period up to the present such as Venerable Master Miao Lian, Venerable Chuk Mor, Venerable Bo Yuan, Venerable Jihuang , Venerable Yuan Chan, Venerable Gao Chan, Venerable Xianglia and the distinguished Venerable Sumankala and Venerable Wei Wu are elaborated in detail. The Venerable Masters had gone through much hardship of lives and work to reap the fruits of Buddha's dharma for the sake of all living beings. It was a blessing that the masters could work together and successfully established various Buddhist Associations and Institutes such as schools, hospice, libraries, and hospitals to provide quality of living in both mind and body for the many without race and nationality. Buddhist teachings can heal the mind and lighten up the weak to become strong. Buddhist moral education was a means to support Overseas Chinese's psychology when they were confronted with anguish, anxiety, and alienation in their lives as foreigners in a new place. The moral concept of loving kindness along with toleration helped the newcomers to view their future with clarity. Justice was held in high regard. The virtues of unity and integrity became personal characteristics which moulded a Chinaman to integrate and merge himself to live in a new society. The success of Overseas Chinese in preserving their culture had deep connections with the work of Buddhist missionaries from past up to the present. They should not be forgotten because they had laid strong foundations for the right education that united people to take part in building the nation.

Key words: Malay Peninsula, Overseas Chinese, Chinese Psychology, Buddhist Missionaries, education

Introduction

Geographically, Malay Peninsula is in Asia, lying between the Andaman Sea of Indian Ocean and Strait of Malacca on the west, the Gulf of Thailand on the north, and the South China Sea on the east. The Strait of Malacca and Johor separates the Malay Peninsula from Sumatra in Indonesia and Singapore, respectively. If we look at the map we shall see Northern part of the Peninsula stretches straight to Kra Isthmus in Southern Thailand. Malay Peninsula shares borders with the Tibetan plateau in Northern China. The indigenous Malays were Australo-Melanesian by ethnicity and race, and they lived scattered in Indonesia Archipelago, Philippines, East Malaysia and Australia. Culturally, the Malays was closed link to the ancient culture of the mainland Asian countries such as India, China, Ancient Indonesia and the Arab countries in Middle East. The Malay language has an etiology from Sanskrit

and Arabic words but the script is Roman, similar to modern Vietnamese language. During the power of Srivijaya Kingdom in Java, South Indian script was borrowed in old Malay written language found in the royal administrative documents.

Early Modern Malay language used many words in Arabic language due to Islamic studies, especially from the Koran. Arab culture penetrated to Malays by the conversion of Malacca Sultan to Islam. Under the umbrella of brotherhood, the state of Malacca was protected from the aggressive Siamese Kingdom. Much later, around the 16th Century; European culture was introduced and assimilated with Malay culture by Portugal, Dutch, and Britain, respectively. Therefore, Malaysia or the land of Malayan people is considered a melting pot where people with different cultures are connected. Nowadays Malaysia is a country in SEA which has progressed continuously in economics after independence in 1956. How she came to be an economic tiger is worth investigation. It is quite interesting to understand causes which lay underneath the success of the nation during the transition period from Malay States to Malaysian Federation. Further, it is worth examining the nation's unusual record of cultural unity, despite considerable diversity (e.g., indigenous Malays, Chinese, Indians, Singhalese, Javanese, Burmese, Eurasian, Persian). In this paper, I examine the people's ability to face life's challenges with patience, dignity, empathy, and self-sacrifice. It is true to say that every race must have the heroes and heroines who had made glories to the country. As I could not cover in my work to study all ethnic races, the scope of the my research is focused as a case study of the Overseas Chinese and their descendants. The paper reveals the miracle work of Chinese Buddhist missionary, especially for those who assumed the duty to spread Mahayana Buddhism and construct the environment suitable for developing Human's goodness and preparing them to take part in uniting Malaysian Federation, befitting the description, "One nation but many races."

Malaya Peninsula was a special term used by the British to differentiate the Malay states when ruled by Sultans. At that time, Malay Peninsula was divided into small states similar to the Greek City States and then the tiger came and seized power from Malay Sultans and hold on as a supreme governor. But not all Malay states ruled by Britain-- some of them were under British protection. Nevertheless, little power still remained with Sultans over their subordinate, and Sultans exercised power economically by investment with foreigners. For instance, Malay Sultans used their privilege in joint venture projects in tin mining, spices or rubber plantation, and related investment. Malay Sultans shared profits with the British government under the guidance of East India Company based in Calcutta, India. Singapore appeared in the map in 1665 B.C. Temasek or Singapore was under the rule of Sultan of Jahor before being conquered by the British. The city was doomed for more than two centuries due to the settlement being burned by Portugal troops. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, a leader of People's Action Party (PAP) during partition of Malaya, was seen in tears on television when the separation of Singapore from Malaysian Federation was declared. The partition of the two countries and separation of the two cities, K L and Singapore would have never arisen in his mind at his early age. Lee Kuan Yew along with his party had to put a

yoke on their shoulder on how to lead a new country. Singapore emerged as a new country evolved in the map of SEA. Some people might forget the fact of Singapore was once annexed to Malaya Federation.

Malaya under British colonization was a melting pot of mixed races but the dominant groups were the Malays and Chinese. The other races such as Indian, Singhalese, Eurasia and so on were small segments of the population. English government used the divide and rule policy as principle to administrate the ethnic races in the colony, permitting each race to have their own settlement and cultural practices. Cultural pluralism, separation of races and language, division of labors and class ruled with iron law and kept order in the society. As long as the immigrants were secure under the British rule, they would compromise to live closely together without discord. Economically, the Chinese had more power than other races and British ruler gave the prestigious Chinese man the highest titled position of Kapitan. Kapitan Chinese had responsibilities in the welfare of their fellow countrymen and as tax collectors. Besides the ransom money donating from rich Chinamen was used for the cost of the infrastructure of British Malaya. Apart from restricted rules and regulations turned towards the immigrants Chinese, the British were kind enough to let the Chinese and other races carry on their lifestyles and expanded business and housing areas. They did not impose Christianity or even European culture by force to the Asian subordinate. On the contrary, British Governor wanted them to learn English for the benefit of ruling Malaya in peace and prosperity. To accomplish this aim, English established free government schools, as well as European Missionaries schools, and Chinese/Indian school. French missionary operated many good schools in Penang town such as the Convent of Holy Jesus Infant, La Salle Boy School, and St. Xavier Institution, among others. European missionaries took pride and received fame in education and care of orphaned young boys and girls. The poor were not left out from society because they were look after equally without gender and races bias. It was counted by numbers and found over 100 Christian schools operated all over Malaya during colonization. Their work should not also be forgotten in education and social activities. Among missionaries' group, the French was less admired by British governors because the French tended to involve more in politics. Interestingly, Overseas Chinese and the Chinese Straits Settlements seemed to compromise with Christianity and European cultures. They preferred sending their children to missionaries schools for better future. Education was imprinted in the Chinese mind through generations and they took it seriously whenever chances opened up for them. Kwangtung Association in Penang during the late 19th century was an apprentice company; many young Chinese men sought to enroll and train in technical skills. One could transform technical skills for money. Apart from learning technical skill, the immigrants Chinese must have learned how to live in a pluralistic society in order to avoid conflict and violence. In reality, the newcomers were vulnerable people; some of them faced anxiety, despair, insecurity, loneliness, alienation, and emptiness. Psychological trauma could lead a person to commit suicide or make trouble in the society to release their anguish and anger. Often, they were exploited in prostitution or persuaded to become members of gangs or illegal societies, out of their naive ignorance of law. The causes of crime and violence within a person usually come from mental problems or bad

environment, or bad experiences. The oral histories of individuals revealed the remarkable work of Buddhist missionaries in Malaya, and we could name them as a group of social activists in modern term. They filled the hole in people's heart, fought poverty, took care of the homeless, and educated the young and the old, regardless of race and frontier. Buddhist meditation was introduced to suffering people to heal the mental pain and inspire right thought as guide for a way to live happily. In those days, temple was psychotherapy clinic and monks or nun were psychiatrists. Buddhist missionary work was known to the Chinese since the Tang Dynasty. Chinese Buddhist missionary worked for people for very long time and they received structure from being ascetic and worked hard to cultivate others. In cultivating the others, they also cultivated themselves. Confucius' ethic explains about the value of education, and it will and always will for the next generation Chinese to be educated in Malaya. The competition in plural society in the people's mind formed a collective energy of different races in Malaya. Human Resources Development (HRD) conception wasn't known yet but the Chinese has an aim for that ideal. The glorious time of Overseas Chinese in Malaya was before W.W.II., the remaining of the old town within the big cities had shown the styles and patterns of Chinese architecture integrating with European style of architecture, was a witness to the high peak of Overseas Chinese glory during that period. I have been to Malaysia and Singapore several times for different purposes but my last visit was two years ago for field research work. I had visited many Mahayana Temples in Penang, Ipoh, KL, and Malacca for geographic mapping and gathering the oral history. It was a wonderful time for me to see the old Chinese Sutras in a private library of the late Lord Abbot in Singapore. Many temples in Malaysia and Singapore were well kept and the constructions were amazing in various old patterns and styles. I was speechless by spectacle beauty of old temples, and the beauty itself described the hardship and generous donation of the Overseas Chinese in the past. It was not beyond truth to say; the progress and success of Malaya before and after independence and became known today as Malaysia was certainly indebted to the impossible mission of missionaries, either Christian or Buddhist.

1. Trace back from Past to Present: Junk Boat and Overseas Chinese

Chinese Ancient maps show the path of the Junk boats started from the harbors which connected to Main Land China toward SEA across South China Sea, laid the ports names along the coastal seashore of the small countries and their Archipelago, which the Chinese named Nan Yang. This area was the asylum of illegal Chinamen who escaped severe punishment from their mother land. Chinese historians had recorded that there was a cluster of Chinese people who lived there and become local people. The legendary visit of General Zhang and his convoy to Nan Yang rescued some Chinamen from ill treated by the indigenous peoples. In the past, Chinese women were prohibited to go abroad, and rich Chinese merchants married local woman which created mixed races with exquisite beauty. The beauty of Chinese Malay girl was impressed the European traveler in 16th century and he noted this in his book.

When the Chinese migrated to Malay Peninsula began is difficult to indicate accurately, but we knew that it was a long time ago. The group of Hokkian merchants were the pioneer people exploring Nan Yang; they did commerce with both indigenous and royal families. They used to come on time in winter and avoided making a journey in the raining season. Chinese merchants anchored their junk boats afar from the sea shore but close to the harbor. A wise merchant would not leave from his junk boat or stayed overnight in the main land, he was aware of the danger which might happen to his crew and himself. Luckily, the indigenous Malays were honest and stealing was considered a bad act. In spite of being success in international business in Malay Peninsula and the surrounding areas, some of the rich merchants were settled down and built their company along the coast line. They boosted the economic progress in this area where junk boats were anchored and second homes located. The goods in Chinese Junk boat were excellent in quality and it created feeling of envy among the European, Indian, and Japanese merchants. China's products which were in demand and fast sold in Brunei, Java, Sumatra, Malacca, and other places were kitchen wares and agricultural tools. Chinese methods of soil cultivation such as pruning soil, spreading the seeds, etc, were introduced; archeologists have found Chinese tools in many places all over SEA. Chinese merchants were one of the pioneer groups of foreigners who roamed around South China Sea and they had contact with Nan Yang people for long time. The influences of Chinese cultures and religion in old Malays states were large area discovered in the peninsula. For instance; Kelantan, Terengganu, Malacca, and Ipoh, among others, mainly in northern and western Malay Peninsula. Archeologists' team delighted when Ming Chinaware and Chinese tools for land cultivation were found in Malay Archipelago and inner land of the Peninsula. Overseas Chinese migration to Nan Yang from my study was divided into 3 waves, which are before the journey of General Zhang, his expenditure to SEA, and other parts of the Globe by sea voyage. The Chinese lived clustered on the islands, separated from the islanders, and limited in numbers. The fall of the Majapahid Kingdom in Java around 15th century opened the way to the glories of Malacca before Portugal captured the city during 1511-1641 B.C. Malacca was the Asian trading centre of spices and the port found the multitude of Asian ships from India, Arabia, Persia, China, and Japan. It was said that the royal marriage between Sultan Manshah Shah (1456-1477) and Chinese Princess Hang Li Po, daughter of Ming emperor, protected Malacca from Siamese invasion. The rich Princess came to Malacca with more than five hundred attendants. She converted to Islam before marriage and became his fifth wives. However, it is still in debate whether the Princess story was a true one as historian did not find any record of her name in Ming history. We do not know whether the story is true but second wave of Chinese migration in 15th century to Malacca was found. The Chinese settled down in old Malacca town and their descendants were named, "Straits Settlements Born". There emerged the type of cultural assimilation which was called, "Peranakans Culture", which took root from descendents born in Malacca and Sumatra. A group of Chinese Malacca merchants was important and held high position in public because they boosted economic progress and co-operated with power and prestige of Malays Sultans. They were royalty to their birth place or home city in helping to protect the city during the Portugal and Dutch invasions by joining the Junk boats in a line as a defensive barricade. Politically, the Chinese were not involved unless there was direct discrimination or unfairness in rules and regulation. Ethnic and cultural groups assimilated long before the visit of General Zhang. The highest peak of assimilating Peranakans culture might be in second wave and third wave of Chinese migrations. Traditionally, Chinese culture was preserved and practiced in daily living, especially the culinary arts. My observation found the Peranakans Culture comprised of Chinese, along with Malay and European cultures.

Peranakans Culture represented the elite merchant group of the mixed race more than ordinary customs, even though mixed race lived in the Straits Settlements.

The third wave of Chinese migration to Malay states was in the late 18th, 19th and early 20th century. There were many causes which forced the Chinese left the country: the need of laborers in Nan Yang, severe poverty in China, natural disaster, civil war, instability of the Qing Dynasty which never recovered, opium war, famine, unemployment, Japanese invasion, and communist rule. They came to the new land to earn a living and some of them faced life with hardship. They worked for little money in tin mines, and on spice, sugar, and rubber plantations. The wise Chinaman invested his savings in small business and later became an entrepreneur. Where we found Chinese in large numbers we also found Chinese Associations (Kongsi). The Association formed many types of interactions between apprentice schools for special skill, dialectic surnames and families, areas of living in China, religion beliefs, and groups of merchant. Besides, Associations acted as the body of consensus of the Malaya Chinese's voice, where the people exited under British rule, negotiated Chinese problems with the governor, gave money to the widows of the members, granted scholarship money, and found jobs for the newcomers. British government passed down news and rules and regulations to the Chinese citizens through Associations, and engage in public relations. Chinese Association represented as a European club where people come for enjoyment as well as for traditional education. British colonial have had enough tolerance for religion and Chinese life style, which was totally different from them. The Chinese wanted the scenic places for funerals and the death, while the British wanted these areas for the living. The Chinese people were happy and secure under British law, as Chinese ethnic group gave more money to the empire. Interestingly, British Governor commented about the Chinese cult as noisy, superstitious, and waste of money. Sometime cultural differences caused trouble also to both sides, and to solve the problem British took side with European Culture. Francis Light held the following attitude towards the Chinese;

“ The Chinese constitute the most valuable part of our inhabitants, they are men, women, children, above 3,000, they pursue the different trades and carpenters, masons and smith, are traders, shop keepers and planters. They employ small vessels called prows and adventure to the surrounding countries. They are the only people of the East in the most secret manner against any regulation from whom a revenue may be raised without expense and extraordinary efforts of government. They are valuable acquisition, but speaking a language which no other people understand, they are able to form parties and combinations in the most secret manner against any regulation of government which they disapprove, and were they as brave as intelligent, they would be dangerous subject, but their want of courage will make them bear many impositions before they rebel. They are indefatigable in the pursuit of money, and like the European they spend it in purchasing those articles which gratify their appetites.” (Francis Light ,1793 dispatch cited in Jean De Bernardi, P.54)

Analyzed from Captain Light's perspective, the Chinese character caused admiration and at the same time the British fear for their rebellious nature. They had to keep watching them. The colonial allowed the Chinese to run their Association (Kongsi) freely and not to interfere. As long as the coolies was kept paying money and the Empress was good, the Chinese would be loyal to the colonial rule. In those days, it was essential for every Chinaman to be a member of the Kongsi because of collectivism which meant the

group ruled. Individualism was difficult to practice in multi-culture of plural society as it was in Malaya. When ruled and regulations were not fair to all races, individual could not stand alone without supported by the people. The change of time and environment reduced the important of Kongsis. Modern society allowed people to become Individualist because we believe the law is good. Citizenship means security and it could loosen the knot of collectivism in the case of Overseas Chinese. The feeling of being foreigner was ended. Chinese descendants identified themselves close to the nation and loosened the knot of belonging to the culture and people of China. They were secure as citizens and enjoyed rights equally to the Malays and others races under federal law. It was a long road for Overseas Chinese to make themselves and their people worthy of respect as part of building up the nation. Economic and Political success of the Overseas Chinese and Chinese descendants might come from the good work of the best Chinese organizations in the past, the transformation of the old type of Kongsis to the current modernity of Associations, administered and directed the Overseas Chinese with foresight and clear conceptions to form the concept of unity, fraternity, sodality, honesty, into practicality until they could be integrated and apply the conceptions to fight until they become fully respected as citizens equally to other races in one nation.

It was more than three centuries for the Chinese migrations to Malay Peninsula. The populations were decreasing each year. See the table below:

Malaysian Chinese Historical Demographics (%)

1957	1970	1980	1991	2000	2010
2,667,452 (45%)	3,564,400 (35%)	3,564,400 (33%)	4,623,900(31.7%)	5,691,900(25%)	6,390,900(24.6%)

Source: (Malaysia <http://www.huaren.org/chinese-communities/malaysia>)

The above table explained the statistics of Chinese population during years 1957-2010, and found the population decreased in 2010 from year 1957 in the percentage of Chinese. Another way round, the numbers of Malaysian Chinese population increased in raw number in 2010 compared to numbers of population in 1957. Malaysian Chinese are large in population even today. Huge population means power to negotiate, vote for election, voices for change, or even rebellion. They can force change to Malaysian government if something which relates to their group happen. Nowadays, China is one of the super powers of the world, and keeps pathways to the descendants of Overseas Chinese. How do descendants of Overseas Chinese relate to people in mainland China? Chinese Malays connected to China only in language and traditional culture but they are not pure Chinese in terms of circumstances and environment. They identify with the place they live rather than the land of their ancestry. They protected their home land in times of peace and war. Malay History recorded name of Chinese Malay heroes during W.W.II who had fought bravery to free Malaya from Japanese invasion. The Fact is that cultural and economic progress of the nation was grounded under the labor of Overseas Chinese and their descendants. The story of one's life is worth to be repeated and remembered. It is better for people in our time to divide the past history from the present, direct our life with a clear mind and right action as a good

member of the place where we belong. Nothing is wrong with double identity or transnationality as long as we understand our situation where we live. Imagine the world without nation or boundary: every place on the earth planet is for human beings and other living things. It must be a pleasant world. But it may sound unrealistic as long as plural society exists and racism, segregation, discrimination, separation are real. Why shouldn't we try to abolish words of injustice in our modern Asian languages for the unthinkable unity? Then love and peace will replace them naturally.

3. Overseas Chinese Psychology; Triumph or Defeat

Psychology was a subject used as an instrument to understand Overseas Chinese disposition all over SEA. Ambition and sturdy work supported the wise Chinamen to rise up and gained public reputation. The values of traditional philosophy which influenced common Chinese people were filial piety, honesty, justice. For those who practiced sincerely, their lives will be virtuous life. The story of the well known Philanthropists like Tan Kha Kee, Wong Ah Fu, Ah Boon Hua, Yeap Chor Eew, Khoo, Yap Ah Loy, and many more in Malaya history since the beginning of Chinese immigration. People may believe that fortune may come by luck, but it is realistic to believe fortune comes with hardworking and right way of thinking as lucks tend to be a superstitious or unknown incident. All the persons above were wealthy and known as leaders, philanthropist or nationalist in Malaya. Life before fame and wealth of Kapitan Yap Ah Loy, the founder of Malaysia capital KL, was similar to the legend of Chinese hero in children's books. He had a dream to come to Malaya for fortune since he was young. It was said if he was in Fujian, he would have become a bandit and joined the boxer group of rebellion against foreigners supported by the Empress. He was poor and borrowed money for a ticket to Malacca at the age of 17. He suffered with psychological emptiness after trying hard for a living but failed. His uncle felt pity on him, gave him a ticket to go back to China but he lost it gambling. It might be his destiny; he stayed back and fought with the Malays. He was in the losing side, was wounded and hid in the forest and then a charcoal shop. His unlucky boss, Kapitan China who ran to the wrong lane, was arrested and beheaded by the Malays. It was said his blood which flew out from his body was white, and after death he become a protected spirit. Yap Ah Loy built a temple devoted for him to show his gratitude and loyalty. It was a belief among the Chinese, spirits must have a place otherwise they will be hungry ghosts. Yap had a charismatic person and not long he joined again another tin mine and involved more with the workers and shared sympathy in their life, got reputation for wisdom to set down the conflict, and appointed as head of the coolies. During the serious conflict of the tin mine in Klang and KL, he succeeded in ending the fighting which last for 3 years in 1870-1873, and the sultan appointed him to be a protected Kapitan, and gave an enormous piece of land to him. It was observed that his achievement was gained from generosity, intelligence, ending dispute, chivalrous, and philanthropy. He built shop houses, roads, schools, and temples, which made the city prosperous. His life was up and down, but he wasn't defeated. The legend was wise to estimate his power which could not match the British militant. He left KL and died after few days of sickness at the age of 48 years, leaving a wife and two sons behind. The other legend of the wealthy Overseas Chinese was Wong Ah Fu. He was a self made man and worked in the shop as an apprentice in Jahor when first came. He started saving money, ambitious for a good living and independence as a

businessman. He used his skill in repair and later was an owner of a construction company, signing contracts with Sultan of Jahor to build most of the government buildings including Sultan's palace. The story of him as a young man who returned to China for a marriage showed his benevolence and belief in traditional ethics. The story goes like this; on his journey, he found many dead bodies of Hakka and Kwang Tung people who were killed fighting in the Punti war (the war between Hakka and Kwang Tung groups), and instead of exposing the dead bodies, he used his dowry to pay for their burial. He was in fact the richest man in Jahor and his fortune should be sound if his money wasn't lost with the Kwong Yik Bank. He was one of the founders of Kwong Wai Shui hospital in Jarhor. His body was buried in Singapore, dead at age of 82. Buddhism explains the cause of wealth comes from giving. The one who gives will never be poor.

A wealthy immigrant, Yeap Cho Eew, came to Penang in 1890 at the age of 17, and passed away in 1952. Though poor but he had possessed many qualities of a good man; integrity, hard working, and simplicity in life. He was one of the legendary Chinese finding success in founding Ban Hin Lee Bank. A famous philanthropist in the town, he shared his wealth in education, donated money for building schools, hospitals and public works. He was serious in education and donated his grand mansion for Wawasan Education Foundation. The ethic of benevolence evolved into a system of brotherhood that practiced among groups everywhere found in SEA. The principle of helping the others by sharing formed the sense of group belonging, solidarity was grounded in collectivism. There he discovered security. It had positive results for wealthy people to fulfill lives in charity apart from distributed wealth for hedonist purpose. Because of giving, people will be immortal, they will always be remembered.

Another distinguished Overseas Chinese Penangites was named Boon Appoo, the Ghee Hin head man who supported a leper hospital and provided coffins to the poor. He has a charismatic character and the local people respected him. There was a time in the street of George Town where people came out and gathered to symbolize the power to protest the colonialization. The police sent Boon Appoo to talk to people on the street and soon the street was empty and peace has come back again.

Tan Kha Kee was a nationalist and philanthropist, the largest donor of funds to save lives of his fellow countrymen during Japanese invasion. He spent more money than his siblings. He spent money on impoverish people and education at all levels. He passed away in China after trying to make an appeal for Singapore during transition period of the colonial after W.W.II.

All those I selected and retold their stories were people who received the reward because of hard work. Unfortunately, there were many Chinese immigrants to Malay Peninsula who lost and failed, faced life with agony, anxiety, grief, and loneliness. The early Chinese coolies and rickshaw pullers were exploited by their employer. They were at risk for opium addiction and alcoholism, slept on the street, begged for food, and mind and body ruination. Hope disappeared. When life had nothing interesting, they committed suicides. Life is a game, we will find the ones who win and the ones who loose. Triumph or defeat. I found more books written about the fabulous Overseas Chinese wealthy people in SEA but less books about life of the middle class and the poor. We found injustice, inequality, class rule, and freedom of speech was limited in the society where power was exercised by one body, as in British Malaya. British people had bad attitudes towards wealthy Chinese in

Malaya for the reasons explained. Chinese wealth was given to them from security guards and military power of Her Majesty the Queen. China under the Qing Dynasty despised the Overseas Chinese for their disloyalty and support of the Ming Dynasty. Without the strength of British navy power in subduing the coastal pirates, Chinese merchant enterprise could not roam around South China Sea. Therefore, colonialism left the responsibilities in welfare and hygiene of the community to the leader of the Chinese ethnic races.

British internal policy of Malaya towards Overseas Chinese had tremendous impact on Associations, secret societies, temples, wealthy Chinese Kapitans and ordinary people from various sectors to come out and donate money for developing the city concerning to quality of life of the Chinese communities in Malaya cities. They built new hospitals and Chinese schools, town halls, religious temples, and public parks. There were many conditions ripe for the Chinese to work hand in hand, not only for fighting poverty but also in education, health care, orphanage, and sanitation. Social activities were compulsory before and after W.W.II. Psychological need for individual happiness and quality of living opened the peoples' heart to have an interest in religious studies, and school curriculum put moral and ethics as essential subject for children. Missionary groups (either Christian or Buddhist) had been serving people in the time of crisis such as offering a place to stay; the care of women and unemployed people, opened dharma class, and the rescue of the Chinese during invasion of Malaya. Therefore, Chinese residents were willing to support temples; their supportive actions symbolized a sense of belonging, unity, brotherhood, care, and peaceful life. If we are good to our neighbor, we shall not get trouble from them. Missionary work can help create peaceful living environment with the people who normally live separately. Buddhist teachings explain self cultivation in terms of giving (dhana) and by way of giving we reduce our selfishness. Buddhist teachings explain a way of life that relate to the past life karma. There is no luck or destiny, karmic energy of a person is moved to the energy of life force. In this context, triumph or defeat of one's life interrelates to what he/she does in the past. Before and after Malaysian Federation, poverty and education were the crisis of Overseas Chinese in SEA, not only in Malaya. The basic condition of human beings opened up the bridge for missionary works. As a matter of fact, Christian missionaries also did very good works and researchers studied their work and books were written more than found in Buddhist missionaries. The next part of the article focuses on the work of prominent monks in Malaya during the colonial period and after independence.

3. Chinese Buddhist Missionaries in the Malay Peninsula; Social and Education

The third wave of Oversea Chinese was a crucial period in the success of Oversea Chinese in Malaya. It was also a turbulent time of rebellion and fighting for freedom, torture and harassment, freedom for Malaya, war, equality, citizenship, and the representation of the many races. Overseas Chinese in Malaya was the strongest group in economic side. So, fundraising for infrastructure was meant for public utility from past up to present. Mentality of the Chinese was geared to the need of the group and the wealthy people were generous to the city and the people. Chinese civilization formed a model of the prosperous and beautiful city in China and it inspired Overseas Chinese to imitate and

designed architecture of the building, building a new home city similar to the city in China. I have seen pictures of the old city of Hong Kong, Shanghai including the buildings along the river where port was nearby in China especially in European territories, the buildings were grand with nice patterns. Certainly, some of Overseas Chinese must have been there. Chinese shophouses found in Malacca, KL, Penang and Ipoh towns were examples of the Chinese qualities in intelligence, stylish, ambitious and wealth. The Overseas Chinese businessmen built beautiful mansions along beach Street with uniqueness in style and pattern gained a lot of impression to the visitors though many buildings were left out for many years. Certainly, we can use our imagination to bring back beauty of the old building from looking to the structure and detail interior outside the building. When the city developed in full form of construction pattern and infrastructure was laid down orderly in good condition, the city itself invited more people to come and lived. Many Chinese cities such as, Penang, Ipoh, KL, Old Malacca, Johor, and old Singapore were well received by old and new visitors. Structurally, the city comprised many activities and role of the temple was also one activity within the city life of the people. Many types of temples such as clan temple, Taoist temple, Buddhist temple, Sri Lanka Temple, Burmese or Siamese Temple were built at different periods of time by fundraising to support activities of the city. The City itself is similar to living beings in the sense of growing and dying. To protect the city from devastation, the dwellers must behave properly in religious or ethical direction. This is perhaps my personal belief; we have heard about the fallen town in Bible, Buddhist Tripitaka, and in history books of many nations. The old China towns in big cities in Malaysia today confront with the stage of decay and polluted environment. No one interested to invest for rebuild or restore the glory of the past any more except some little area for cultural heritage. Many old buildings in old Chinese areas have to be demolished and the cost of renovating the building was too high for the owner. New patterns and styles replaced the old ones. I think Change by time is the rule and we have to comply with it for the sake of inner peace. In the near future, the outlook of old China towns in Malaya will fade away, the new style with intelligently blend and balance in proportion for keeping the memorable look of the old architecture should replace the old China town. I hope the integrating pattern and design for the old Chinese residence compound in Malaysia can preserve the outlook of the old China town.

In Penang, KL and Malacca, each Buddhist temple had its role to serve people in education with the guidance of Buddha teachings. Sometime, the clan temple invited monks to come and recite the Kwanyin Sutras during Chinese ritual ceremonies on the Lunar calendar. It was a yearly arrangement for the family to reunite and pay respect to the ancestors and monks again were invited to chant for blessing the spirit. Therefore, the role of temple was directed by functionalism for one reason, and another reason is a place to form a religious group to continue Buddha teachings in modern term social activity. It should flow from understanding dharma to transforming it into practice. Lord Abbot takes role as a teacher more than a leader, made decision and guidance. Many temples have dharma teaching classes where monks, nuns and lay persons are chanting together in one big hall in Malaysia. There is no hierarchy system, no one supposed to be higher and they are a team in a chanting hall. I observed that Buddhist Malaysian Chinese love chanting very much compare to the Thais. Besides, women were more interested to work for the temple rather than men. When asked a group of women about men's roles in dealing with the temple, the answers were: donating money, helping renovate temple, supporting temple education. There was no gender bias among the supporters generally in this respect and division of labor was found. Interestingly, Mahayana temple was different from Theravada tradition in rules of temple; monks and nuns allowed to stay in the same temple but separated in the living compound,

which Theravada tradition prohibited. Bhikkuni in Theravada tradition is Mahayana nun but it was in debate whether it has a possibility to ordain as Bhikkuni in Siamese Theravada tradition. The nuns in Mahayana tradition worked equally in serving the temple, with nuns holding quite positions in the temple. I had made appointment to interview Lady Abbots of Mahayana temples in Ipoh, KL, and Malacca; I was impressed by their quality of being women in the temples: brave, intelligence, generous, compassionate and sincerely devoted to the work of the Buddha. Lady Abbot were outstanding ladies in our time, they were lovely human beings and received respect from men as well as women. They worked in a large scale, covered many functions in education, operated vegetarian food restaurant, took temple roles, consultants, fund raising, Dharma teaching, and fighting for the poverty, They were active in their roles as female Buddhist missionaries in contemporary Malaysia.

History of SEA recorded the journey of famous monks who made their journey by sea route from China, stopped over Srivijaya Kingdom before embarking to the India subcontinent for the purpose of Buddhist study at Nalanda Buddhist University for centuries. There were places in Sumatra and Srivijaya Kingdom offering food and lodging to Chinese monks and Sanskrit lessons were provided. Ancient Kingdom of Malay Peninsula before the coming of Islam, people believed in Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Buddha statues were found by Indian merchants settlement in Northern and Eastern Malaya and local accepted Buddhism from many reasons such as the islanders migrations, power of Buddhist Kingdom, and personal beliefs. These were passed down to the family line.

Chinese Buddhism had been spreading outside the mainland China into two routes. First, from Chinese immigrants who travelled overseas to Nan Yang covered Malaya and the surrounding areas. Secondly, the journey of Chinese monks began around middle of the 18th century. But the great impact of the movement to Buddhism in Malay peninsula was in 19th century. The initiator of Chan master named Miao Lian or Miao Lian Lao who came from He Shang (妙莲老和尚) of the Yongquan temple on Mount Gu (鼓山), the Fuzhou area of Fujian Province, travelling overseas at the age of 50 for fundraising. He visited Formosa island and after then visited many Islands in South China Sea. He collected the donation money to rebuilt his temple in Fuzhou, renovated the Lin Yang temple (林阳寺), and Nanshan Temple in Fujian province. In 1889 Venerable master visited Penang (檳榔嶼) for collecting donations and gave Dharma teaching in Penang. He was invited and become abbot of Guangfu temple (广福宫). This temple was built by early Overseas Chinese settlers to accommodate Chinese devotees. Unfortunately, the town area was noisy and not a conducive place for practiced meditation. That was a reason for the master to find a new place and he found the place in the countryside owned by a Fujian wealthy man named Yang Xiu Miao (杨秀苗). After consulting with a Fujian man named Zang Bishi (张弼士) and others, they agreed to buy nine British acres, and build Jia Lou (极乐寺) temple. The temple was built from donations of many Fujian and the outstanding fundraising was Zhang Bishi. It had taken 14 years to complete Jia Lou temple. After then master went back to Youngquan Temple and took the Abbot post. In 1904, Venerable master went to Beijing at the age of 81 for official meetings with Emperor Quang Xu (光绪 1875-1908) for his consent to pass down the 2 copies of Tripitaka or the entire cannon of Mahayana Buddhism called, “Dragon Store (龙藏)” to be kept as mother pearl of Southern Sea in Jia Lou and Nanshan Temple in Zhang Zhou province. The success was made from the advices of Princess Wang Gong and Great Minister Da Chen, to the Emperor. The Tripitaka was transported to the temples by Imperial carriage. In 1906, Emperor Guang Xu passed down the Tipitaka text collection to Ven. Xu

Yu. The Emperor was a Buddhist and patronized Buddhism in China. It was a believe that his temple possessed auspicious energy to embrace Chinese Buddhism in South China Sea area and beyond. The Dragon Store connected Chinese people in a distant land with the Emperor and let the light of Lord Buddha protected them.

Venrable Master Mio Lian was a Chan master and he was indefatigable in protective dharma and built, rebuilt, and restored the temples in China. He had expressed his vision on cultivating self and took responsibility in connection with the precepts. He said, “*If the Buddha Darma (in the Southern Sea area) is to greatly flourish, the monastic discipline (Vinaya) must be followed with a firm attitude. Without the monastic discipline being followed firmly, the Dharma will not spread or endure for long. Deep roots must be firmly planted so that the people have conviction in the Dharma. It is not good to tolerate ill discipline. Ill discipline with regard to practice will make things difficult to achieve.*” The master returned to Yougquan temple again and rebuilt the temple on Mount Gui, which took more than a year to complete. Early in the year 1907, Ven. Master sat crossed legged on mount Gu and said to his supervisor; “*Send a message throughout the temple that the (practice of Dharma) must be firm and strong. This will protect and sustain the practitioners. My time is now past, and I have spent my life upholding the Dharma.*” The Great master passed away in China; half of this relic was kept in Jia Lou temple in Penang and the other half was put in the pagoda in Yougquan Temple.

The Great master Miao Lian who brought the light of dharma to Penang Island, introduced Overseas Chinese in his environment to followed Buddhism. He was a dharma teacher and devoted himself to cultivate human nature. Another Great master in contemporary time was Ven. Bo Yuan, Ven. Master ordained at Yougquan temple and came to Penang in 1947 and served Hesan Jeli in monastic management post. Ven. Master was a devoted Buddhist monk and gifted in Chinese painting and calligraphy. He taught dharma with his painting, passed away at age 96 in year 2000. Venerable Chuk Mor was a Penang prominent monk who was one of the founder of Buddhist College and the Malaya Buddhist Association. He was a learned monk and gave many lectures to children and adult. He taught Buddhism text and sutras to students in Buddhist College in Penang and Poh Tai elementary school. He established Buddhist education in Malaysia and was highly respected.

In Malacca I found the well known Chinese medical doctor and master; Venerable Jihuang (1902-), Ven. master came to Malacca in 1952 and served as the supervisor of Qing Yun Ting temple before going to KL to study Chinese medicine at Malayan Chinese Medical School for 4 years and one year practice. Then after he completed his studies; he went back to Malacca and opened free medical clinic at the temple. Not long, Ven. master set up more free medical clinics and with helped from National Buddhist Association in Penang, the clinic was operated in Wellesley, Negri Sembilana, and other places. He opened schools close to his temple and was one of the founders of Malaya Buddhist Association and Buddhist College in Penang where Monks, Nuns, and Laypersons could come to study Buddhism. The Institute invited Buddhist scholars to come and delivered lectures. I interviewed Lord Abbot and 2 lady Abbots who graduated from Buddhist College, students of Ven. Chuk Mor and Ven. Jihuang. Master Jihuang held many post inside and outside the country. As a person, he was a hardy and kind man and as a monk, he was a learned Buddhist monk. I visited his temple and surprised with his studious dharma study; he kept many sutras books in his private library. He was well known in education and social activities.

Life and work of Ven. Master Yuan Chan is also good to mention. He focused on dharma study, teaching and promoting quality of living. He came to SEA spreading modern Buddhism in 1918. Ven. Master promoted Lotus Sutras as the major text for modern people. That time he failed in teaching, because there were not many people interested. After then, he went to Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and was invited to remain in Malaya by Ven. Ming Miao. He visited Ipoh and gave dharma lectures, preached Lotus Sutra and discourse on nature of self. He was invited to give dharma talks in many places in China. In 1952, he came back to Malaya and gave dharma talked at Klang and spent one month in Malacca to complete his work on three traditions in Buddhism. He passed away in Hong Kong in 1966.

The Kung Fu monk from China who came to Malaya and gained a reputation and spread the art of Kung Fu to descendant of Overseas Chinese was Ven. Master Gao Chan, and Ven Xianglia. Ven. Gao Chan was Lord Abbot of Temples in Madan and Singapore before coming to set up the Kung Fu center in Penang and Singapore. He came to Malaya in 1907 during colonial period. Ven. Master served people by teaching martial art, dharma advices, and gave treatment in Chinese medication. Ven. taught Kong Fu to locals people during Japanese occupied Malaya for self defended, kept body fit for young boys, and less stress in the mind and body ready for dharma teaching. Shoulin Kung Fu became popular in Malaya because of Ven. Masters. The mission of Chinese Buddhist monks in Malaya during colonization was active, religion sect was accepted and the monks were quite willing to serve the need of the community. The famous Ven. Sumanggalo, an American Theravada monk who become teacher in Buddhist College. His mission focused on Youth Buddhist lay people. He organized the Youth meeting and formed the Malayan Buddhist Youth Federation. He passed away in 1963 in Penang. He spent life in Malaya in a very beautiful and useful way. His remarkable work was still carried on by the young Buddhist Malaysian Chinese. Venerable promoted English dharma teachings and translations. His life and work in Malaya was short, only 5 years but he supported the Youth Buddhist Association all over Malaya. The last Ven. in our time who fits to be name as a Buddhist Missionary in contemporary was Venerable master Wei Wu, He was a penangit, former engineer, a successful consultant in American Company, an educator and Lord Abbott of Than Sieng Temple. Ven. served Lord Buddha by serving the people. He set up many sectors of social work for people who are living and dying. Education is his vision and mission. He was the founder of kindergartens schools, home care units for elderly, International Buddhist College, temples, dharma services, and a vegetarian canteen. His teaching stresses on benevolence and right action. I think Ven. Wei Wu is a pure land master and he taught modern Buddhism. There are more names of Monks and Nun whom I can't namely due to limit pages; they are all beautiful people whom we can follow their path.

Chinese Buddhist missionaries came to the Malay Peninsula during 18th century but they worked actively in 19th century until the present time. The success of Buddhist missionaries comes from good will and characters of monks, such as patience, wisdom, toleration, courage, and loving kindness. Buddhist missionaries are a group of remarkable people who respect deeply in Buddha teachings and put their effort in education. The healthy environment for quality living in a pluralistic society can be real because of hard working of Buddhist missionaries in advocating moral education in the Malay Peninsula.

4. Conclusion

Population of Chinese community in Malaysia is considered the largest group. Seventy five percent of the population are Buddhist devotees, 10.6% Taoist, 9.6% Christianity, 1% Islam, 0.3% folk religion, and 2.3 % not believe in any religion. Therefore, the work of Chinese Buddhist missionary in the Malay Peninsula since 18th century has successfully converted the Malaysian Chinese to proclaim themselves as Buddhist laypersons in large numbers. We live in a modern big capitalist society where money rules and International politics are unstable. The work of Buddhist missionary is not yet finalized; more challenges are waiting for them to dealing with in our times. Anyhow, we have to let go; Triumph or Defeat. Work wholeheartedly without expectation similar to the work of the deceased Masters whose life was like a shadow.

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