

มรดกทางสถาปัตยกรรมจีน

ทางชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันตก ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย

Chinese Architectural Heritage on the West Coast of Southern Thailand

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บทคัดย่อ

Opposite page:

Map of the West Coast
of Southern Thailand
including Ranong,
Phang-nga, Phuket,
and Trang.

Source:

Kawi Warakawin,

Knowledgeable Thai

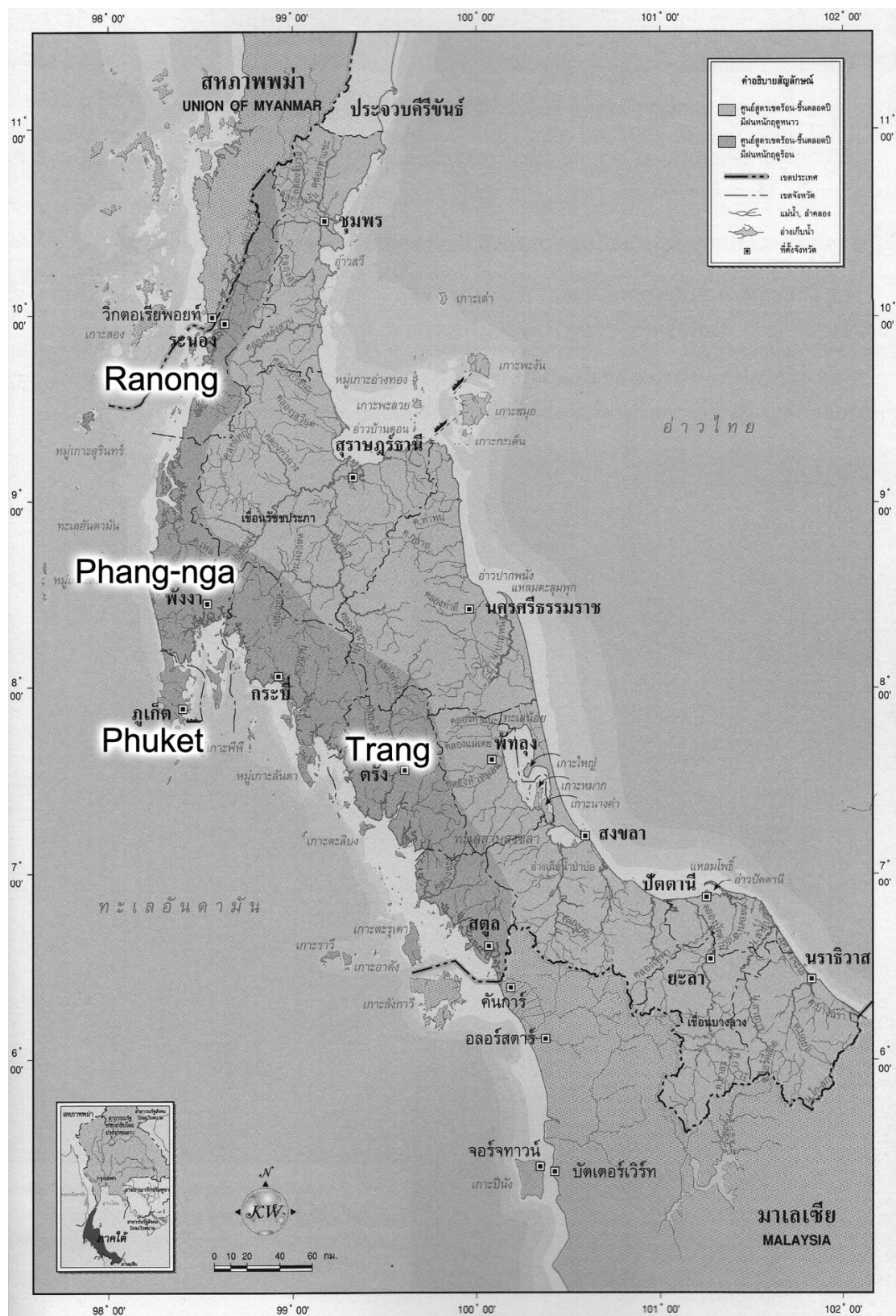
local map: Southern

part (Bangkok:

Institute of Academic

Development), 2010.

บทความนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของดัชนีพนธ์ซึ่งมีชื่อว่า “มรดกจีนทางชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันตก ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย: องค์รวมของวิธีการเข้าสู่การระบุเอกลักษณ์และการอนุรักษ์” มรดกทางสถาปัตยกรรมจีนทางชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันตกหรือชายฝั่งทะเลอันดามัน ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย มีประวัติศาสตร์ที่ยาวนานและมีลักษณะเด่นเฉพาะที่สำคัญในภูมิภาคนี้ ซึ่งแบ่งออกเป็นประเภทได้ดังนี้คือ ตึกแถวจีน, ศาลเจ้าจีน และสุสานจีน บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาประวัติศาสตร์ของชาวจีนและมรดกวัฒนธรรมของชาวจีน รวมถึงภูมิหลังของชุมชนชาวจีนต่าง ๆ ชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันตกภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย โดยมีการศึกษาตัวอย่าง ได้แก่ ตึกแถวจีน 2 ชั้นในเมืองเก่าตะกั่วป่า จังหวัดพังงา, ศาลเจ้ามาจู่หรือมาจ้อโป๋ เมืองพังงา, ศาลเจ้าแสงธรรม เมืองเก่าภูเก็ต, ศาลเจ้ากั๋วหองเอี้ย ในเมืองทับเที่ยงหรือเมืองตรัง และสุสานคอซู้เจียง ในบริเวณเมืองระนอง



ตึกแถวจีน 2 ชั้นเมืองเก่าตะกั่วป่าสร้างมามากกว่า 100 ปี ซึ่งแตกต่างจากตึกแถวโดยทั่วไปของท้องถิ่นและนับว่าหายากในปัจจุบัน ส่วนศาลเจ้ามาจ้อโป๋ในเมืองพังงามีจิตรกรรมฝาผนังที่อธิบายตำนานวีรบุรุษของชาวจีนและเรื่องเล่าหรือนิยายที่นิยมของชาวจีน เช่น เรื่องห้องสิน หรือตำนานสถาปนาเทพเจ้าและเรื่องสามก๊ก ศาลเจ้าแสงธรรมในเมืองเก่าภูเก็ตซึ่งมีหลังคาตามรูปแบบลักษณะที่นิยมในบริเวณภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย ยังมีจิตรกรรมฝาผนังภายในศาลเจ้าอธิบายถึงเรื่องชียนก๊วย ซึ่งคือตำนานวีรบุรุษของชาวจีนในสมัยราชวงศ์ถัง ทั้งศาลเจ้ามาจ้อโป๋และศาลเจ้าแสงธรรมสร้างขึ้นมามากกว่า 100 ปี ศาลเจ้าทั้ง 2 แห่งนี้ได้ก่อสร้างขึ้นโดยใช้วิธีการแบบประเพณีดั้งเดิมที่สืบทอดกันมาทางภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย คือมีระบบโครงสร้างไม่รับน้ำหนักอาคารเหมือนกับศาลเจ้ากั๋วหงเอี้ยของเมืองตรัง ภายในของศาลเจ้ากั๋วหงเอี้ยยังมีช่องเปิดโล่งตรงกลางของอาคารเป็นส่วนที่ระบายอากาศและเป็นช่องแสงสว่าง สุสานคอซู้เจียงหรือสุสานของเจ้าเมืองระนองคนแรกตั้งอยู่ในบริเวณเมืองระนองมีอายุมากกว่า 100 ปีเช่นกัน ออกแบบโดยใช้หลักฮวงจุ้ย บริเวณสุสานแตกต่างจากสุสานโดยทั่ว ๆ ไป

การศึกษาพบว่าชาวจีนได้เข้ามาตั้งถิ่นฐานในบริเวณนี้เป็นเวลามากกว่า 100 ปี โดยชาวจีนเหล่านี้มาจากบริเวณภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย เช่น มณฑลฮกเกี้ยน, กวางตุ้ง และไหหลำ อีกทั้งยังพบว่าชาวจีนนิยมนำเรื่องต่าง ๆ ที่เป็นตำนานวีรบุรุษมาเขียนเป็นจิตรกรรมฝาผนังภายในศาลเจ้า และนำภูมิปัญญาการก่อสร้างที่ใช้วิธีการแบบประเพณีดั้งเดิมที่สืบทอดกันมาทางภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย รวมถึงความเชื่อในหลักฮวงจุ้ยที่สืบทอดกันมายาวนานมาใช้ในบริเวณภูมิภาคนี้อย่างต่อเนื่อง สอดคล้องกับลักษณะของชุมชนไปสู่รุ่นต่อไปในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: ตึกแถวจีน, ศาลเจ้าจีน, สุสานจีน, ชายฝั่งทะเลตะวันตก ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย

Abstract

This article is a part of a dissertation entitled “Chinese Heritage on the West Coast of Southern Thailand: A Holistic Approach to Identification and Conservation”. Chinese architectural heritage on the West Coast or the Andaman Sea Coast of Southern Thailand has a long history and has great significance, namely,

Chinese shophouses, shrines, and tombs. Case studies include Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town, Phang-nga province; Mazhu or Ma Zhor Po Shrine in Phang-nga city; Sang Tham Shrine in Phuket old town; Kew Hong Ear Shrine in Tubtiang Town or Trang city; and Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb in Ranong city area. The aim of this study is to explore Chinese heritage as well as the backgrounds of their communities.

The two-storey Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town were built more than one hundred years and are unique and different from other places. Ma Zhor Po Shrine in Phang-nga city has mural paintings which depict several stories of legendary Chinese folk heroes and popular Chinese stories, such as Hongsin or the Creation of the Gods and the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Sang Tham Shrine in Phuket old towns is famous for its roof decorated in style popular in Southern China, and the interior mural paintings depict the story of Xue Ren Gui, a legendary Chinese folk hero of the Tang Dynasty. Ma Zhor Po and Sang Tham Shrines were built for over one hundred years ago. These two Chinese shrines and Kew Hong Ear Shrine in Trang city had been constructed by using traditional building techniques of Southern China. Kew Hong Ear Shrine has a sky well at the centre bringing light and ventilation into the shrine, while Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb or the First Governor of Ranong's Tomb in Ranong city has existed for over one hundred years and was designed based on Fengshui Principles with unique characteristics differing from other tombs.

The finding is that Chinese people came to settle in this area for over one hundred years. They came from Hokkien or Fujian, Guangdong, and Hainan provinces in Southern China. They popularly depicted legendary Chinese folk heroes in mural paintings of Chinese shrines while applied traditional building techniques of Southern China and belief in Fengshui Principles in

order to preserve their Chinese identity and pass the community heritage on to future generations.

Keywords: Chinese shophouses, Chinese shrines, The Chinese tomb, The West Coast of Southern Thailand.

Introduction

The West Coast or Andaman Sea Coast of Southern Thailand has Chinese settlement mainly from Southern China such as Hokkien or Fujian, Guangdong, and Hainan provinces and they settled in this region for over one hundred years ago.¹ Overseas Chinese who reside outside mainland China brought Chinese cultural heritage to establish in this area.² There are very fine examples of Chinese architectural heritage, such as Chinese shophouses, Chinese shrines, and the tomb that have significant features in this region. They include the two-storey Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town, Mazhu or Ma Zhor Po Shrine in Phang-nga city, Sang Tham Shrine in Phuket old town, Kew Hong Ear Shrine in Trang city, and Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb in Ranong city area. The criteria for assessment of Chinese architectural heritage in this area based on the Burra Charter. They have historic, scientific, aesthetic, and social values. For historic value, a place has influenced by a historic, figure, event, phase or activities. For scientific value, a place depends on the importance of the data involved on its rarity, quality or representativeness, and on the degree to which the place may contribute further substantial information. For aesthetic value, it is considered by the form, scale, color, texture, and material of the fabric and sounds associated with the place and its usage. Lastly social value, it embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to minority groups.

The two-storey Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town were built for over one hundred years ago and have narrow facades. On the upper storey, there is only one wooden window for each of the buildings.³ While the exquisite Chinese shrines abound with elaborate murals created by artisans from the past and have been built using traditional building techniques. They include Mazhu or Ma Zhor Po Shrine in Phang-nga city, Sang Tham Shrine in Phuket old town, and Kew Hong Ear Shrine in Tubtiang Town or Trang city. Ma Zhu and Sang Tham Shrines have interior murals which depict many stories of legendary Chinese folk heroes, such as the Creation of the Gods, the Romance of the Three Kingdoms and the story of Xue Ren Gui. These two Chinese shrines have existed for more than one hundred years.⁴ Another equally significant feature in this area is Khaw Su jiang'Tomb for the First Governor of Ranong province called Phraya Damrong Sucharit Mahisonphakdi who was a native of Zhangzhou Prefecture in Fujian province, China.⁵ Inducted into the nobility, he became a significant role in the Siamese court. He died in 1882 and his tomb which is located in Rakang Tong Mountain or Golden Bell Mountain in Ranong city area has existed for over one hundred years. It is designed based on Fengshui Principles. As a result, the landscape matches harmoniously with the natural surroundings.⁶

This article starts from Chinese shophouses, following Chinese shrines, and lastly, the Tomb. This Chinese architectural heritage contains history, significant features, and background of Chinese communities. The conclusion shows the result of Chinese cultural heritage in this region that has significant values such as historic, scientific, aesthetic, and social values. This article also helps to educate this awareness to others in order to conserve the Chinese architectural heritage in this region.

Goals and Objectives.

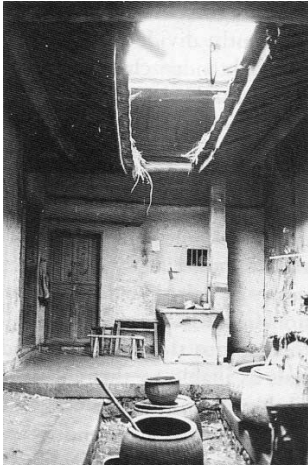
To understand the history, Chinese cultural heritage, and the background of the Chinese Communities on the West Coast of Southern Thailand and to provide awareness to others.

Research Methodology.

- Collect and analyze data from existing publications, old maps, Journals, articles, letters of Chinese heritage on the West Coast of Southern Thailand.
- Site visits would focus on Chinese architectural heritage, such as Chinese shophouses, Chinese shrines, and the tomb that have significant features on the West Coast of Southern Thailand. The criteria for assessment of Chinese architectural heritage in this region based on historic, scientific, aesthetic, and social values.

1. Chinese shophouses.

The fundamental element of Chinese house is the open space that is expressed in two forms that are courtyard and skywell. In China, the courtyard of northern dwellings is expansive. On the contrary, the courtyard of southern dwellings is condensed. Large open space is very rare in Southern China. Instead, it is created at the center of closely spaced buildings in the form of enclosed courtyard, known as Tian Jing or skywell. Furthermore, the Southern Chinese style of dwellings have minimal windows at the outer façade of the building. As a result, the skywell is an essential means of ventilating and allowing light to get through the house. The skywell can respond to the hot and humid climate as it allows certain amounts of wind, rain, and light to get into the house. Hot air rises, while cool air get through the first storey



Tian Jing or skywell.

Source: Ronald G.

Knapp, **The Chinese House: Craft, symbol and folk tradition**

(Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990), 21.

of the house. When the Chinese migrated to new lands, they also adopted their wisdom in building to suit with their occupation, local climate, and social surroundings. Since the Chinese always occupy trade and the business anywhere that they migrated to. Their dwellings were then developed into a long building divided into several units, which are known as shophouses.⁷

Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town, Phang-nga province.

In 1825, Phraya Senanuchit or Nuch Na Nakhon, Takuapa governor, moved the town from Kockian Town to a new town which was located on the opposite side. The town became known as “Takuapa Town” where many tin mines were located.⁸ In 1890, when King Rama V visited Takuapa town, the king mentioned about two-story Chinese shophouses on a street built in 1871. At present, this street is called Udomtara Road and close to the Takuapa Canal. At that time, Chinese people called this area “Jabsae” which literally means “custom house”. It was said that these rows of Chinese shophouses were built by Phraya Senanuchit or Nuch Na Nakhon, Takuapa governor, for his descendant to reside. Some of these Chinese shophouses were rented by other local people.

These two-storey Chinese shophouses have narrow facades with only one wooden window on the upper floor. Moreover, the facades show no signs of decoration except for just one of them, which is adorned with traditional Chinese paintings. There is a shed roof that is supported by two columns called a front porch for each of the buildings. The ground floor plan includes a front room that could serve as shop or residential space with a smaller room behind it, and a small kitchen in the rear of the building. Furthermore, the second floor provides space for bedrooms.⁹



Above: Takuapa town in the past.

Source: Sudara Sutchaya, "Talad Yai Area, Takuapa old town," **Muang Boran** 44, 2 (April-June 2018): cover.

Right: Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town.



2. Chinese shrine.

Chinese shrines usually serve as a center of Chinese community. They are basically with importance of a particular building determining its extent and grander. Chinese religious buildings incorporate the fundamental belief that every aspect of life is closely related to nature and expressed symbolically in terms of design and color.¹⁰ Chinese shrines have certain distinctive features; especially, on the façade and roof that is decorated with dragons and other auspicious animals.¹¹

Left: Er-Shaped Plan in three-dimensional drawing

Source: Achirat Chaiyapotpanit, **Chinese shrines in Bangkok** (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2018), 50.

Right: The Chinese letter of “er” (two)

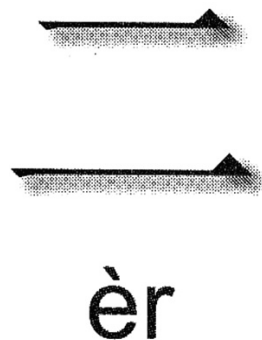
Source: Kitichai Surmsuwittayawong, **500 Chinese letters should know** (Chaing Mai: Ormika Press, 2007), 57.

Most Chinese shrines have their front on the long side while the shorter sides are sides of shrines. Chinese shrines have the main building, and some structures symmetrically rise on the same line. The main building sits behind the entrance hall that is at the front. The main building enshrines the main Chinese God images.

Architectural plan of Chinese shrines is based on various Chinese characters, namely, Er-Shaped, San-Shaped, Ding-Shaped, and Gong-Shaped Plans.

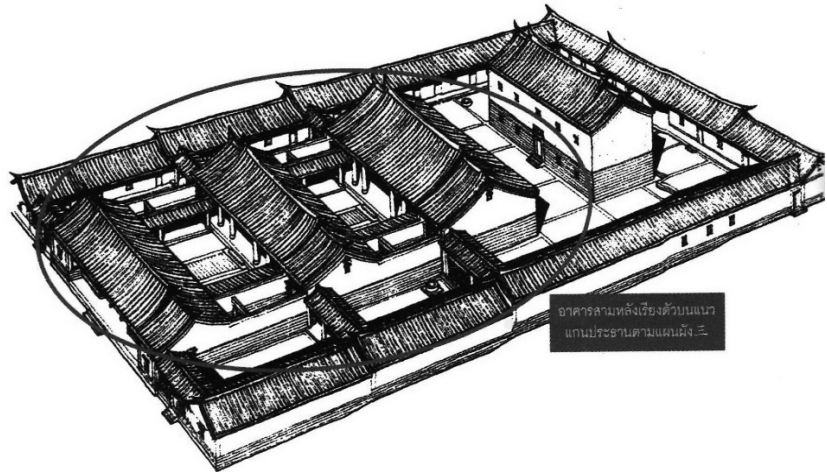
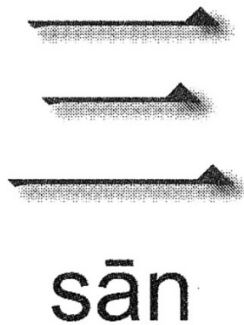
- **Er-Shaped Plan.**

The term “Er” in Chinese literally means “two”. As a result, this kind of architectural plan has two main rows of buildings inside a compound.



- **San-Shaped Plan.**

The term “San” in Chinese literally means “three”. Therefore, this kind of architectural plan has three rows of buildings.



Above right: San-Shaped Plan in three-dimensional drawing

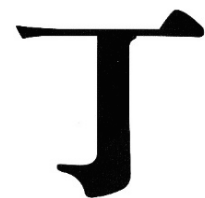
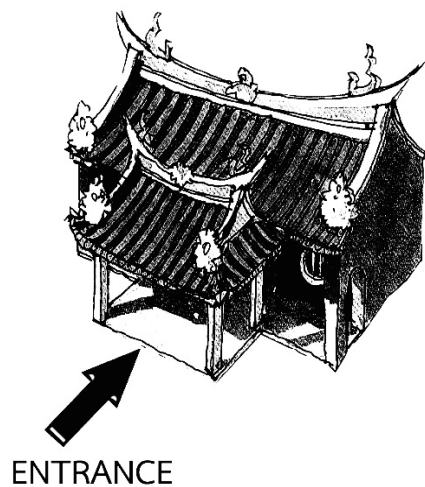
Source: Achirat Chaiyapotpanit, **Chinese shrines in Bangkok** (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2018), 50.

Above left: The Chinese letter of “san” (three)

Source: Kitichai Surmsuwittayawong, **500 Chinese letters should know** (Chaing Mai: Ormika Press, 2007), 25.

- **Ding-Shaped Plan.**

Architectural plan of the main building which has a main Chinese god image’s altar located behind another connected building in a “T” shape. This “T” shape is similar to the Chinese character of “Ding”. A hall of the front building is wide and serves as the entrance to the shrine.



Left: Gong-Shaped

Plan in three-dimensional drawing

Source: Achirat Chaiya-potpanit, **Chinese shrines in Bangkok** (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2018), 51.

Right: The Chinese letter of “gong”

Opposite page, below

right: The Chinese letter of “ding”

Source: Jitrada Lojanatorn, **Drawing Chinese word:**

Studying Chinese Language by art

(Bangkok: Chuanan Press, 2010), 162.

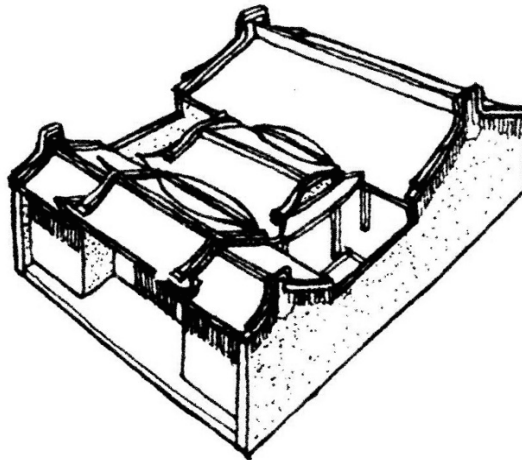
Opposite page, below

left: Ding-Shaped Plan in three-dimensional drawing

Source: Trustees of Leong San Tong Khoo Kongs (Penang) Registered, **Leang San Tong Khoo Kongs: The history and architecture** (Penang: Trustees of Leong San Tong Khoo Kongs (Penang) Registered, 2004), 61.

- **Gong-Shaped Plan.**

This kind of architectural plan comprises an entrance hall, a main building, and a connected structure. The entrance hall and the main building use one of their longer sides as their front. Moreover, they are positioned in the same way and the connecting structure that is smaller sits between them.¹²



The most common structure for Chinese shrines is weight-bearing structure.

- **Chinese shrine’s Weight-Bearing Structures.**

Weight-bearing structures of Chinese shrines apparently rely on several sets of complicated wood substructures that each set is called in Chinese as “Gou Jia”. In addition, each set comprises pillars and crossbeams of various sizes which are put together to support the weight of the buildings. Moreover, a kind of weight-bearing structure that is most common in Southern China, such as Fujian, Guangdong, and Hainan provinces called “Cha Liang”. This term literally means “insert crossbeam”. This kind of weight-bearing structure of Southern Chinese shrines have four prominent features: 1) they have several sets of “Gou Jia” and each set has



Above: Mazhu Image and her servants in Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city.

Right: Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city.



Mazhu or Ma Zhor Po Shrine in Phang-nga city was first established at northern market area, which is close to Phang-nga canal. Later many houses and the shrine caught fire, local people moved Mazhu, Shen-feng Erh and Chien-lin Yen images to worship at Borirak Bumproong Road area. A new Mazhu Shrine was built and included an incense burner to the front of the Mazhu image. The burner includes an engraving made by King Rama VI to devote merit to King Rama V who passed away in 1910. Furthermore, the evidence of the plaque above the main door of the shrine provides information that the shrine was established in 1913 and it is called “Fu Yu Gong,” the shrine of plenty of wealthy and happiness.¹⁶

- **Architectural Characteristic.**

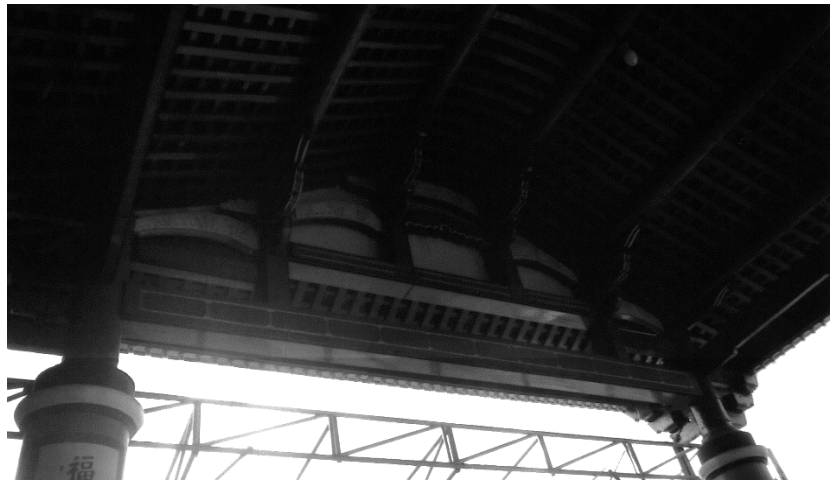
Mazhu Shrine has a main building connecting to the front building that serves as an entrance hall. The shrine’s plan looks like a “T” shape which has a shape similar to “Ding,” one of Chinese characters. Consequently, this architectural plan called Ding-shaped plan. The shrine has interior roof structure employs wooden weight-bearing components called “Cha Liang,” insert crossbeam. Roofing material of the shrine is terracotta roof tiles.¹⁷



Above: The incense burner in front of the Mazhu Image, Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city, that explained how king Rama VI devoted merit to King Rama V in 1910.



Above right: The plaque which has Chinese characters, shows Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city was established in 1913.



Right: “Chaliang”, insert crossbeam, at Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city.

● Interior Wall Murals.

The shrine contains interior mural paintings that show the event of the birthday celebration including a pair of children symbolize auspicious signs located above the main door of the shrine. There are Chinese characters indicated interior wall murals painted with Chinese ink in 1913. Beside these murals on the left and the right sides show the murals of Eight Immortals.¹⁸ Above the left and the right doors besides the main door of the shrine is depicted Chinese stories, namely, “Ear Hiang” or “Yang Xiang Da Jiu Fu”; Fighting with the Tiger to Save the

Right: The interior wall mural show event of the birthday including a pair of children and Eight Immortals

Source: Rittidate Thongchan, **The Study of Chinese literature and conservation of mural: Inside of Mazhu Shrine Phang-nga province, by using method of moving murals (2015-2017)** (n.p., 2018), 66.

Below left: Wall murals inside Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city, tell the story of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

Below right: Wall murals inside Mazhu Shrine, Phang-nga city, tell the story of “Hongsin”, the creation of the Gods.

Father¹⁹; and one of twenty four stories of filial piety, “Xiao Gan Dong Tian,” Filial Piety Moving Heaven.²⁰

On the left wall murals picture tell a story of legendary Chinese folk heroes , namely, “Hongsin” or the Creation of the Gods.²¹On the right wall murals is a story of legendary Chinese folk heroes, namely, “San Guo Yan Yi” or the Romance of the Three Kingdoms.²² The left and the right wall murals depict not only stories of the Creation of the Gods and the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, but also the Legend of the White Snake.²³ Above of those murals, are murals of twenty-eight important people of a Chinese history symbolizing twenty-eight groups of fixed star that influence aspects of life.²⁴





Sang Tham Shrine



Ong Sun Tai Sai Image in Sang Tham Shrine, Phuket old town.

2.2 Sang Tham Shrine (The Shrine of Serene light), Phuket old town.

Sang Tham Shrine or Shrine of Serene light built in 1891 is located at Phang-nga Road, Phuket old town, Phuket province. This shrine has two main Chinese gods which one of them is called Ong Sun Tai Sai or Xia Xuan, a famous general of Jin Dynasty.²⁵ Another main Chinese god called Tan Sheng Ong or Chen Yuan Guang was born in Chen Clan or Tan Clan during Tang Dynasty in 657 C.E. and later was a general of Tang Dynasty army.²⁶ Sang Tham Shrine has a name in Hokkien Chinese dialect as “Teng Gong Tong”.²⁷ The shrine is built by Luang Amnatnararak or Tan Yokkaid Tandaves, a local wealthy man, who persuaded and helped to finance the Chinese “Tan” clan in order to install Chinese God images of the Tan family in Phuket old town.²⁸

● Architectural Characteristics.

Architectural plan of Sang Tham Shrine has a “T” shape that is called “Ding-Shaped Plan”. The front building has the roof structure employing the wood weight-bearing components or “Cha Liang” system. The roof of the shrine uses terracotta roof tiles.²⁹ The main building has bearing walls that support the roof structure of the shrine.³⁰ Architecture of Sang Tham Shrine; especially, the roof reflects a style of the shrine’s roof in Southern Fujian province, China. Ornaments in the middle of the main ridge of the shrine, the stucco roof are a deity that riding on a horse and a coiling dragon under the deity. A pair of dragons with their heads turning backward at the left and the right tips of the main ridge.³¹

● Interior Wall Murals.

On the left and the right interior wall murals depict a story of Xue Ren Gui, a legendary Chinese folk hero in Tang



Above: Inside of Sang Tham Shrine



Above right: Roof of Sang Tham Shrine

Below right: Wall murals describe Xue Ren Gui Story in Sang Tham Shrine.



Dynasty.³² Wall murals also depict 36 generals who are heroes and heroines from ancient and mythological periods of Chinese history. They are located above on the left and right sides of the interior wall murals of Xue Ren Gui story.³³



Dou Mu Tian Jun,
The Goddess of North
Stars, and Kew Ong Tai
Tay, Nine Emperor Gods.

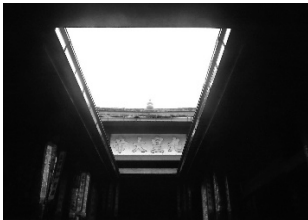
Source: Tanat Suwat-
thanamahat, **Vegetarian
festival in the ninth
lunar month** (Bangkok:
Song Siam Co., Ltd.,
2008.)

2.3 Kew Hong Ear Shrine, Trang city.

Tao Bo Giong or Dou Mu Gong Shrine is usually called Kew Hong Ear Shrine by local people. It is located on Taglang Road, Trang city or Tubtiang Town, Trang province. The main gods of this shrine are Tao Bo Tian Jun or Dou Mu Tian Jun, and Kew Hong Tai Tay or Jiu Huang Da Di, the Nine Emperor Gods, who are the sons of Dou Mu Tian Jun, Goddess of North Stars. Dou Mu Tian Jun and her sons control the book of life and death, all who wish to prolong their days worship at Dou Mu Tian Jun's shrine.³⁴

In 1889, local Chinese in Tubtiang Town or Trang city, Trang province, purchased land in order to prepare to build Tao Bo Giong or Kew Hong Ear Shrine. Around 1904, it was built and located at the big stairway of the present shrine.³⁵ An old picture of the shrine shows the plaque above the main door of the shrine that had four Chinese characters, "Wan Gu Ying Ling," literally meaning "Great Immortal Ancient Outstanding Spirit". Another Chinese characters indicate the year 1918. As a result, this evidence proves that this shrine was established for a hundred years. In 1952, the committees of Kew Hong Ear Shrine built the new shrine because the old one was decayed. This new shrine was built on a different position because it sits to the back of the old shrine. The new shrine still stands until present.³⁶





Above: Cha Liang,
insert crossbeam, in
Kew Hong Ear Shrine

Below: the skywell and
the bottle gourd on
the roof of Kew Hong
Ear Shrine

Right: Kew Hong Ear
Shrine Building



● Architectural Characteristics.

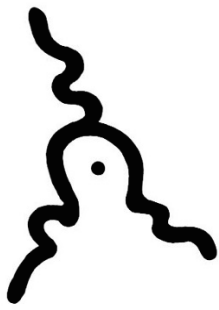
Architectural plan of Kew Hong Ear Shrine has two main rows of buildings inside the compound. This kind of architectural plan is called “Er-Shaped Plan”.³⁷ Tian Jing or skywell, located at the center of the shrine ventilates and allows light to get through the shrine and release the smoke of incense.³⁸ Moreover, roof structure of this shrine employs wooden weight-bearing components called “Cha Liang,” insert crossbeam. Terracotta roof tiles were used for roofing material.³⁹ Ornament in the middle of the main ridge of the main building is the stucco roof that is a bottle gourd. This bottle gourd symbolizes a charm for longevity and to dissipate or ward off pernicious influences or very harmful effects. Façade of the shrine reveals stucco of phoenixes that is connected to the roof on the left and the right sides. These phoenixes symbolize beauty, peace, and prosperity. There are dragons joining parts of left and right pillars in front of the façade of the shrine. While an ornament of the main ridge of the front building has a row of equally-spaced Chinese bows.⁴⁰

Opposite page, left:

Old photograph of
Kew Hong Ear Shrine

Opposite page, right:

Kew Hong Ear Shrine,
Trang city, in 2016



Watercourse in good
Fengshui principle.

Source: Laiad Silanoi,
**Fengshui: The prophetic
landscape** (Bangkok:
Odeon Store Press,
1987), 107.

3. Chinese Tomb or Grave and Fengshui Principle.

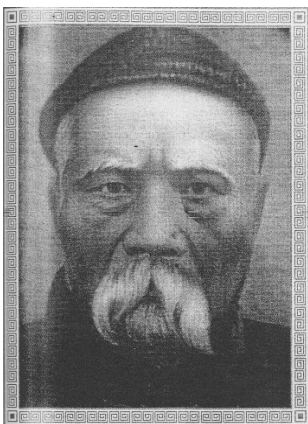
Most Chinese believe that Fengshui is powerful in life. It is based on Yin and Yang, dualism and balance, and the five elements including “qi,” breath of life or matter energy.⁴¹ The essence of Fengshui is dualistic quality of Yin and Yang and the “qi”, property of the universe that gives character and meaning to the place. “Qi,” in Fengshui practice is vital force or vital energy that is related to the construction, form, and layout of the building including the grave or the tomb. It is not only a “qi” concentration, but also a converging spot of a horizontal spatial composition and embraced space of protective armchair such as the shape of a single graveyard or tomb that has a landscape with high back, left and right arms, and low, open front. An idea of building site and graveyard site or tomb site are where the water course occupies the front and the mountain ridge run protectively at the back creating and armchair-like pattern.⁴²

Khaw Su Jiang’s Tomb (The First Governor of Ranong’s Tomb) Ranong city.

Khaw Su Jiang was the head of Na Ranong family who was born in 1797 in Zhang Zhou Prefecture, Fujian province, China. He left China for Penang in Malaysia when he was twenty five years old in 1822 and worked as a laborer there. Later on, he started off as a pedlar of fruit and vegetables in Penang and also acquired some land.⁴³ In 1828, he left Penang, for Takuapa Town, Thailand, and began business. After Khaw Su Jiang’s trading business grow, he moved his family and company, Koe Guan Company, to Phang-nga city. He acquired tin monopoly rights in Ranong and became a tax collector for tin in the district. In 1854, Khaw Su Jiang was given the title of “Phra Rattanasetthi”, the Governor of Ranong by King Rama IV. Twenty-three years later, he was given

Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb
at Rakang Tong
Mountain in Ranong
city area.

Khaw Su Jiang or
Phraya Damrong
Sucharit Mahison
Phakdi, a former
governor of Ranong.
Source: Suwanney
Na Ranong, ed., **The
monument of Phraya
Damrong Sucharit
Mahison Phakdi
(Khaw Su Jiang)
Ranong's Governor**
(Bangkok: Pradipat
Press, 2003), 67.



the title of “Phraya Damrong Sucharit Mahisonphakdi” by King Rama V. Khaw Su Jiang died in 1882 when he was eighty six years old and King Rama V gave the land in order to bury his body in a tomb in Rakang Tong Mountain, Ranong city area.⁴⁴ King Rama VI, VII, and IX also visited his tomb.⁴⁵ Up until now, Khaw Su Jiang’s Tomb still sits at Rakang Tong Mountain, Ranong province.⁴⁶

● Characteristics of Khaw Su Jiang’s Tomb.

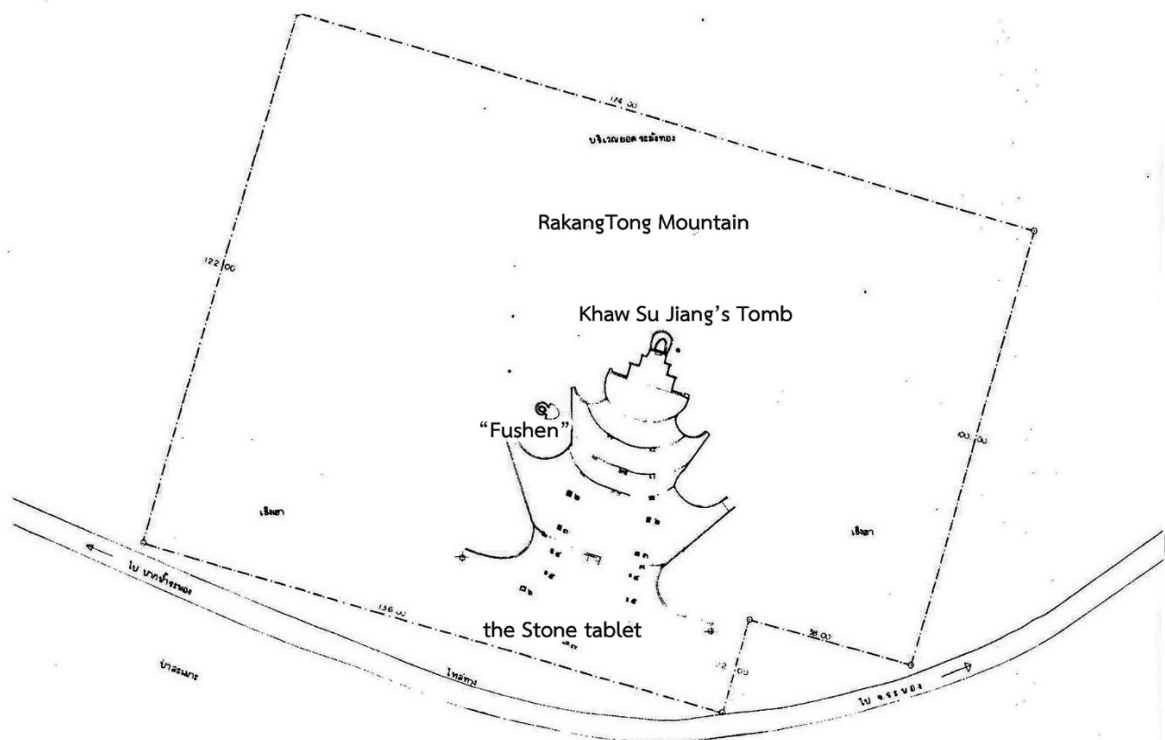
Khaw Su Jiang’s Tomb is located at Rakang Tong Mountain, Golden Bell Mountain, Ranong province. The road to its front has a curb shape that is similar to the jade belt of a Chinese high officer and the main tomb is back by Mount Rakang Tong. It has been considered a good location according to Fengshui Principles because the road in a curb shape symbolizes descendant who would become high officers and wealthy, and a mountain to the back indicates supporters.⁴⁷

The tomb-stone, altar, and arms were made of high quality stone and each block of stone was carved in fine human figures, animals, and plants.⁴⁸ At the back of the stone tablet of the tomb-stone reveal a shell of a tortoise that symbolizes

Map of Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb, Ranong city area.

Source: The Fine Arts Department,
The information of ancient places of Phang-nga, Trang, Ranong, Phuket, and Krabi (n.p.: n.d.), n. pag.

longevity.⁴⁹ There is a spirit that protects the tomb on the right side of tomb which is called “Fushen”.⁵⁰ In addition, there are a pair of stone-carved human statues and group of six stone-carved statues of animals, namely, horses, tigers, and sheep or goats, line up on the left and the right sides to front of the tomb-stone. A pair of stone-carved human statues on the left side represents a scholar and on the right side represents a warrior. In front of that are a pair of horses, tigers, and sheep or goats. Horses symbolize speed including a quick-witted youth. Tigers represent military powers while goats signify filial piety as it is said to kneel respect fully when taking their mother’s milk.⁵¹ A pair of stone posts to the front of a group of six stone-carved





Left: 3 of 6 stone-carved statues of horses, tiger, and sheeps or goats including a warrior statue in Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb.



Right: The stone posts and the stone tablet in front of Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb.

animal statues has a couplet stating that Rakang Tong Mountain, Ranong area has beautiful scenery and is prosperity. The stone tablet in front of the pair of stone posts tells about Khaw Su Jiang's story.⁵²

Conclusion

The West Coast of Southern Thailand has an established tradition of Chinese settlement mainly from Southern China, such as Hokkien or Fujian, Guangdong, and Hainan provinces. Overseas Chinese who reside outside mainland China brought Chinese cultural heritage to establish in this region. Chinese architectural heritage in this area such as two-storey Chinese shophouses in Takuapa old town; Mazhu or Ma Zhor Po Shrine, Phang-nga city; Sang Tham Shrine, Phuket old town; Kew Hong Ear Shrine, Trang city; and Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb, Ranong city, make the significant values on the West Coast of Southern Thailand. Most of these Chinese architectural heritage were built for over one hundred years. Therefore, they have historic value. They also have been built using traditional building techniques of Southern China. They thus have scientific value. Mazhu, Sang Tham and Kew Hong Ear Shrines have unique characteristics and serve as a center of Chinese communities.

Both of Mazhu and Sang Tham Shrines have mural paintings that depict several stories of legendary Chinese folk heroes and popular Chinese stories. Whereas Khaw Su Jiang's Tomb has landscape matches harmoniously with natural surroundings and the tomb was carved with fine human figures, animals, and plants. Because Khaw Su Jiang had significant role in the Siamese court, several kings of Thailand visited his tomb. Consequently, they have aesthetic value and social value.

This study contributed to collect information of Chinese heritage on the West Coast of Southern Thailand for the basis of further work and it should be useful for other studies of Chinese heritage on the West Coast of Southern Thailand in the future.

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