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Values and Chinese Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Singapore¹⁾

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This essay intends to examine the interrelationships between early socialisation into Chinese cultural values, international migration and Chinese immigrant entrepreneurship. The scholarly discourse on what contributes to successful Chinese entrepreneurship has identified a number of factors, ranging from historical, macro socio-structural variables to cultural, organisational, and interpersonal ones (For a critical review of the literature, see Chan and Chiang [1994a, 1994b]). Our essay adds to the discourse by conceptualising cultural values as dynamic, internal resources nurturing and structuring Chinese capitalism. This approach examines culture as creative resources immigrant entrepreneurs have learnt to exploit to transform their environment. Only when cultural values intrinsic to a people are activated and used—not simply “lived” in a “rule-like” manner—for the purpose of wealth creating, would they in reality contribute to entrepreneurship. It is through a developmental socialisation process by which these values are articulated in family and kin network dynamics that social organisations begin to develop and define what is popularly understood as the “Chinese way of doing business.” We argue that among the overseas Chinese, this way of doing business must be viewed historically and developmentally, as it is intimately intertwined with transmigration experiences and their consequences in shaping values necessary for the development of entrepreneurship.

In this essay, we look closely at the entrepreneur himself, as an actor, a

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social product of a long process that has socialised him into adopting a set of values that will enable him to carry out his project of entrepreneurship in a step-by-step, developmental way. To say that man is the driving force is stating the obvious. Yet viewing man as an agent of social actions and socio-economic change is a perspective which has received little attention in the scholarly discourse on Chinese entrepreneurship. How did the entrepreneurs in our study who had no previous experience in profit-seeking or risk-taking in their homeland, learn to do business in Singapore? Our essay looks back to their early socialisation experiences, their acquisition of values, their efforts that led to success.

As a fundamental principle in the sociology of action, ours is a view that positions the individual as an active agent capable of structuring and reconstructing his social references. The entrepreneur, an actor at the centre of life, is seen always structuring and “using” his social structure as much as he is being constrained by it. “Freedom” and “choice” are both personal and beyond the actor, allowing him autonomy to construct, image and negotiate his social world [CHAN and CHIANG 1994a: 1–18]. Nevertheless, his social actions are shaped in turn by a moralist world view that constrains him and requires him to conform to the “society” he inhabits. This world view, whether called Confucianism, or the “Chinese merchant culture,” is a decidedly relevant one in inducting him into the “Chinese way of doing business.”

This essay is organised into four themes: First, migration and the familial calculus, noting the centrality and salience of the family in Confucian philosophy as well as the role of the family in the deliberations of migration; second, articulation of central Confucian values (self-control, hard work, frugality, attitudes toward learning, and trustworthiness) that underpinned the making of a Chinese entrepreneur; third, the world view or cognition of a Chinese entrepreneur—specifically in terms of his propensity to “family-ize” social relations as an interpersonal as well as business stratagem; and fourth, Chinese entrepreneurs thinking about, talking, and doing good—the language, morality, and etiquette of merchants as a class of social actors. In delineating these four themes, we wish in this essay to attempt a characterisation of the “Confucian merchant” as a personality type. This essay draws from in-depth interviews with fifty-one Chinese businessman conducted in 1980 (See Appendix for the methodology of this oral history research project and our own study).

MIGRATION AS FAMILY CALCULUS

Why and how did the Chinese migrate from China, their homeland? In answering this question, Wang [1983: XIX], a historian and leading authority on the overseas Chinese, posed a most complex dilemma. On the one hand is

the "Chinese ideal of not leaving the ancestral village, of the self-sufficient rural community held together by strong kinship ties and especially by filial loyalty to parents." On the other hand was the enormous impact of the migratory "southward expansion" of millions of Chinese at the beginning of this century. Among the push and pull factors associated with the emigration of Chinese from the Southern provinces of China to Southeast Asia, the demographic and economic ones were the most prominent [CHAN 1991: 11-13]. Over-population, shortage of basic food staples and inflation combined to force Chinese peasants to look elsewhere for their livelihood. These problems were aggravated by disastrous natural calamities and civil wars [YEN 1986: 1-22], "which plagued the southern and central provinces for more than a decade, greatly dislocated agricultural production and drove tens of thousands off the land" [CHAN 1991: 5-11].

In order to meet their daily subsistence needs, peasants were willing to pay very high rents to till the farmland of big landowners; share cropping rents were so exorbitant that they sometimes amounted to 60 percent of the harvested crop [YEN 1986: 2]. On top of this, there was very little governmental relief. Instead, increasing land and head taxes placed further pressure on the already heavily indebted peasants. The tax policy was enforced with widespread injustice against the peasant class, particularly during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century when China had to collect funds from its people to pay off huge war indemnities incurred after defeat by foreign powers.

It was against this background of a distressed society that the desire to emigrate germinated. Compared to some Western countries in a similar stage of growth, Chinese industrial development was fragmentary and lacking in overall focus. The path toward industrial capitalism was truncated by the intrusion of imperialistic capitalism, leaving China economically deficient. Such underdevelopment was characterised by a great disparity in economic development between cities and the countryside, as well as the persistence of cottage industries and small trading businesses which, nevertheless, were not equipped to serve as an impetus for economic growth.

Among those who had left China earlier, some managed to come back to their villages to build bigger houses and buy up more land. For those who did not return, regular remittances sent back to China were telling signs of prosperity and hope overseas. Upward social mobility began to take shape among those families who had relatives abroad, thus creating a situation of relative deprivation among those families without migrants overseas. The benefits of emigration thus became discernible in the subsequent creation of economic inequities between families. Families that received remittances were more comfortable in their livelihood than those who had no sons abroad. A new social status system was created alongside the old one based on land ownership, in-

heritance, age and sex. Emigration equalised to some degree traditional social status by providing opportunities for social mobility to sons of poorer families, a condition not readily attainable earlier. It then became possible to envisage a situation where a poor farmer's son could one day become "nouveau riche" alongside his landlord's son. It thus became the hope of many fathers and mothers to break through the class barriers by having a son abroad.

Our entrepreneurs' accounts of the conditions of life in their villages were one of chaos, insecurity, and tumultuous changes in family and village organisations. However, ironically, in more ways than one, this disorderly state encouraged a collective search for a new way of life, for new ideas, new role models, new behavioural norms and scripts, and new challenges. Sociologically speaking, it is always contradictions and conflicts, not conformity or homeostasis, that lead to change. The great leap overseas was psychologically traumatic because the migrant had to break away emotionally "from an intertwining network of relations" [HSU 1963: 155]. Ironically, this same experience of disengagement was a precondition for liberation, for "stepping out" of history and social structure, for "unbonding" so as to "bond with" a new frontier environment [CHAN and CHIANG 1994a: 4]. This act of disengagement from the familiar was indeed a necessary precondition for reconstituting a new identity.

However, we must hasten to point out that this disengagement was never total; the male migrant *did not go overseas as an individual*, free, autonomous and unfettered by social structure, tradition, ancestry, history and culture. He was "under the ancestors' shadow," bounded and bonded to family and kinship. His achievement and glory would also be his family's; his shame and downfall would also be his family's. The desire to protect and further the name of the family was his higher priority. In so far as this "family phantom" continued to haunt, shame, and remonstrate him, it became ironically, in turn, a powerful ideology, an effective means of social control, an unyielding source of motivation. In the Confucian tradition, the living and the dead locate the individual in his family, culture, and history—he will carry "the family phantom" with him and his responsibility will always be *familial* rather than personal.

Migration was thus as much a familial as a personal experience: the decision to migrate or not, and the deliberations on who to migrate, when and how, were all undertaken within a broader familial context—the family arranged for the passage money, sent the son overseas to join another family or kin member, and integrated him into pre-existing family, kin or clan networks which had a "watchdog" responsibility to "keep an eye" on him—thus enacting and discharging an all-important role of social control.

The son-migrant was to send remittances home to uphold the family left behind, to thus discharge his filial duties and avoid incurring his parents' con-

tempt. His obligations to the family collective continued whilst overseas. He was to seek betterment and improvement of the conditions of life of the family, to ensure its prosperity. Migration was thus his first step toward change, progress and outward expansion—the migrant was to begin to engage in his “transformative” functions, which, to the Confucianist Yu [1987: 61], are at the core of the Confucian ethic. As such, the Confucian ethic is intrinsically active, not passive; optimistic, not pessimistic; dynamic, not stagnant. Contrary to Weber’s [1951: 152–154, 227–228] position, Confucianism, especially neo-Confucianism, is not a mere adjustment or adaptation to life or environment; it strives for transformation and improvement [Yu 1987: 43–94].

The practical and ontological importance of the family, a key tenet of Confucianism, was deeply embedded in the migration process as well as in the overseas migrant communities. The family spirit straddled between old China and the quickly emerging migrant communities overseas, provided the lone migrant with support, usually got him his first job as a migrant labourer, haunted him, shamed him and infused him with guilt when the young migrant momentarily lapsed into acts of sins, vices, and filial negligence. The Confucian spirit of the family would bring him back in line and keep him there.

CONFUCIAN VALUES: PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

The Confucian ethic is in many respects a code of ethics on work and working. Man makes an entry into this world to suffer, to work, to manage and negotiate the affairs of the living, not the dead. The problematic of living demands a high level of tension, mental concentration and devotion of the heart. The Confucian ethic is informed by an urgent desire to gain personal control over time, or, more specifically, against the wastage of time and other vital life resources such as energy, spirit and emotions—idleness and laziness are thus seen as sinful lapses. In the same vein, diligence and frugality are often elevated by the Confucianists to the status of being central virtues of the Confucian ethic [Yu 1986: 37–38].

Whilst diligence and frugality as values are located *within* the individual, guiding his self-conduct, and are therefore *personal* in nature, there are other values such as trustworthiness that guide transactions with his social environment, and are thus *interpersonal* in essence. We note here three salient personal values: self-control, ability to accept hard work, and the willingness to learn.

Self-control entails control of one’s temperament, time, habits, feelings and emotions in order to manage and master oneself effectively—in other words, personal competence as self-mastery. Numerous episodes in the lives of our nascent entrepreneurs illustrate their awareness, since childhood, of the need to exert self-control. In their early years in Singapore, migrant workers

who were away from their parents could easily fall prey to the temptations of gambling, opium and prostitutes. If they managed to resist these temptations, they could well use their energy and time in better pursuits. Money saved from these diversions could then be used as initial capital for developing their business at a later stage. Hence, self-control learnt in childhood continued in their early adaptation to Singapore's society and was particularly important when they decided to start their own business.

One entrepreneur-interviewee, Ong Sing Pang,²⁾ prided himself as a "puritanical man." Underlining this self-restraint was the notion of frugality. Having learnt what poverty in childhood was like, our interviewees grew up with a habit of saving. Ong Sing Pang continued to stress the need to save, not only for starting a business but even after one had become successful. Reflecting on his entrepreneurial efforts, he regarded his habit of saving as one of his more important personal assets. Not only did he stress frugality in business, he conscientiously applied it in his everyday life, in things as simple as eating habits.

The other central personal value was the ability to take hard work. This was closely related to a belief that work expressed man's fundamental obligation and dignity. "A day without work is a day which does not deserve rest" was a common axiom which encouraged diligence and industry. "Long hours of work," "working till one dies," "it's important to be working" were related axioms in the manufacturing of a work ethic which defined learning in utilitarian terms, thus leaving little room for idle pursuits. There was also a strong belief among our interviewees that hard work would bring results. If an individual was unwilling to put in hard work, he could blame only himself for his misfortune. Working hard, however, one may stand to gain what has been set out to be achieved. The ability to "work like a buffalo" was considered as an important value, its pursuit indicating individual determination toward work and life. When asked why so many others in the same business had failed while he had succeeded, an interviewee, Png Yen San, attributed his success to his ability to work hard:

I think among the Teochews, I was the first to be in this (second hand vehicle and repair) business. After me, there were a few who tried to do it but failed. I could only say that these people (who failed) were not persevering and focused... Whereas for us, we steadily plodded on, when times were good, we worked hard, when times were bad, we persisted, we never stopped working...³⁾

2) ONG Sing Pang, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000155/19.

3) PNG Yen San, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, ↗

The third central personal value was one's willingness to learn. To learn was to internalise knowledge from outside, to make it one's own, to possess it. What was more important was the related notion of control. To learn was to have control over oneself and others. To learn was to acquire, conserve and use knowledge in order to control the world around, a world made up of oneself, family, business community, and the country.

The attitude towards learning involved a personal predisposition toward life, an awareness of one's limitations and an inclination to overcome them. It was a continual, life-long process, a multi-dimensional experience of acquiring, conserving and using knowledge. One learned from practical daily problems, from work, and people. Knowledge was not confined only to the acquisition of "technical know-how," but also included an array of "insights," "wisdom" and ideas which helped mould a personality. Our interviewees typically lacked specialised, technical knowledge. They compensated for this by accentuating "worldly knowledge" which taught them how to interact with others. Immersed in worldly Confucian inculcation in everyday life, moral lessons were stressed for their value in relating to people. The emphasis was often on the pragmatic value of learning; learning for learning's sake, in its abstract form, was not regarded as useful. The willingness to learn new things and equip oneself with the tools of self-advancement marked the character of a self-made man.

Interpersonal values pertain to everyday, person-to-person relationships in the context of norms and values then prevalent in community and business relations. Such norms and values included mutual obligations and reciprocity, trustworthiness and righteousness with which our interviewees were imbued since childhood. One interviewee, Chew Choo Keng, on reflecting what he was taught in school, singled out learning about people and social relationships as most valuable.⁴⁾

"Doing work" as a businessman involved not only a better way of manufacturing, marketing and selling a product, it also concerned itself with the many ways in which to cooperate and share with other fellow workers, competitors and customers in the business world. The values of mutual respect, reciprocity and fairness frequently cut across employer-employee and buyer-seller relationships. Seen in this light, these values could also be construed as "strategies," as means for achieving specific ends. For example, an employer would believe in extending reciprocity and goodwill as good values in themselves, but the outcome of continuing to practise these values assured him of the commitment of

↘ Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1981: 18. Interview conducted in Teochew by Png Qing He. Reference No. 000062/03.

4) CHEW Choo Keng, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1980: 197. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim Choo Hoon. Reference No. A 00045/24.

his workers.

The one common interpersonal value repeatedly mentioned and discussed in our interview transcripts was trustworthiness. In the minds of our nascent entrepreneurs, it was indeed seen as the most important building block in a business relationship between employer and workers, among businessmen, and between bankers and businessmen. It helped our entrepreneurs to build up personal reputation, obtain loans, preserve the loyalty of their workers, and establish a business network.

Another interviewee, Tay Kia Hong, reaffirmed the importance of trust and reiterated how it was built into a social web of mutuality, reciprocity and loyalty:

A person must know his gratitude. If he does not return a good deed he has received, he is not a man. If there is any human kindness and affection in this world, we have to repay kindness extended to us. They must not be forgotten. Trust and loyalty—these are two important beliefs I have in life. I may not have studied very much, the old man who taught me when I was little in my uncle's house was not educated either, but we are decent and we respect and understand our tradition.⁵⁾

School contacts constituted another important resource for forging business links. Ong Sing Pang stressed the importance of having friends in doing business.⁶⁾ His business in Indonesia was primarily based on his friendship with another clansman which had developed during their schooling in China. His subsequent business ventures were mostly formed out of partnerships with friends chosen from an interlocking network. Ong might not know a third party in the venture, but as long as the second partner whom he knew well recommended the third one, the latter would be considered reliable. Financial resources were scarce; the more funds they could mobilise, the faster they could expand. There was no reason why anyone should be turned away, particularly investors who shared lineage and kin affiliations. In such ties, trustworthiness was tacitly assumed to exist among them, until proven otherwise.

Before he established himself, an entrepreneur had to prove his trustworthiness in order to ensure a steady source of loans to finance his projects. Obtaining a loan from a bank was not an easy matter, often depending very much on "whether one knows somebody there."⁷⁾ Clients who were tight in cash

5) TAY Kia Hong, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982: 55. Interview conducted in Teochew by Cai Rong Hua. Reference No. A 000061/13.

6) ONG Sing Pang, 1982: 67.

7) YAP Ee Chian, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1980: 44. Interview conducted in Hokkien by Lim Choo Hoon. Reference No. 000043/08.

flows could benefit from an extended credit loan period provided they too had "proven" their trustworthiness in previous transactions. Once a person's trustworthiness was established, it became an even more vital resource or commodity in business transactions than banking contracts or any other formal documents.

"FAMILY-IZATION" AS BUSINESS STRATAGEM

At the time when the Chinese migrant workers were starting their own businesses, they relied heavily on their family as the earliest source of labour, exerting various forms of paternalism on it. When our nascent entrepreneurs' businesses proceeded to grow and expand, their immediate family members continued to form the inner core of ownership, with relatives forming the outer rings of management.

Their pattern of social organization was aimed at transforming secondary relationships into primary ones in order to establish a form of paternalistic control underlined by mutual reciprocity, commitment and loyalty. Our entrepreneurs could not be contented with doing business only with their family or lineage members, being handicapped by numbers. They had to select and recruit, from wider networks, non-kin, preferably people from the same district or province, people who could be trusted. Our entrepreneurs had to exercise a high degree of flexibility and willingness to assimilate others in order to establish these extraparochial connections.

As a leader, the entrepreneur continually hunted for talent by bringing people in through marriages and offering them positions and status. His business empire was basically an extension of self, as well as an *incorporation* of talented "others" *into* family. The "family phantom" effect, twenty years or so after the teenagers' departure from their villages, exerted itself again on our post-migrant entrepreneurs, who, by then, were busy creating their own families after their physical disengagement from their family homes.

When social relations fell out of the orbit of family and kin, it became all the more difficult to control them. Our entrepreneurs solved this problem by "*family-izing*" these social relations, which was articulated by Tay Kia Hong this way:

My thinking is not like the old ways, it is wrong to treat workers only as productive digits whom you pay monthly salaries to. Every worker will have a day when he can make good for himself. In our treatment of our workers, we have to treat them like our own family members, like our own brothers.⁸⁾

8) TAY Kia Hong, 1982: 55.

Another entrepreneur, Ho Rih Hwa, spoke of his foreign employees in an overseas business venture in an intimate, family-like manner, echoing a degree of familiarity built up from many years of business association and trust. His basic dictum of interpersonal management was: "If you suspect a man, don't use him; if you use a man, don't suspect him." Trustworthiness was an important attribute he wanted to cultivate in an employee; equally important was the need for his own over-arching "paternalistic" role in overseeing, if not directly supervising, his employees' business decisions and development.⁹⁾

While an entrepreneur would "modernise" by introducing new technology, learning new competencies, and rationalizing and re-organising his administrative and wage structures, it was not completely evident that he would, or wanted to, "modernise" his social relations. In fact, what he seemed to have done continually was to "family-ize" social relations in an overall attempt to reaffirm the "old-fashioned," traditional values of mutual reciprocity and feelings for each other.

Benevolent paternalism was seen by the entrepreneur as one vehicle for binding workers' allegiance to himself, especially workers who owed no kin obligations to him, the "pater." Hence, one had to be kind to be successful. Ong Sing Pang attributed his company's low labour turnover to the "family-like business" environment in his company:

The main factor (for low labour turnover rate) was the absence of differences between the employees and the boss. We are like a big family, sharing close feelings for one another. This I can vouch for. In my life, in whatever company I was working, my staff and I act like we belong to a large family...I act like a big brother.¹⁰⁾

With growing enterprises, however, the forms of personalised, family-like paternalism toward workers were sustained, admittedly, with difficulty. They had to meet the continual challenge of having to modernise and rationalise the enterprise according to more universal criteria—nepotism must be relegated to a smaller role. Yet, these were "paters" who had previously been socialised into a more personalised leadership role. How did they handle such norms and values as reciprocity, benevolence, protection and the need for personal trust, loyalty and trustworthiness in the context of employment conditions, which now require redefining in order to cope with the growth of their enterprises? A contradiction thus became apparent. How was it that our entrepreneurs managed to strike a balance in their treatment of workers in a manner that

9) Ho Rih Hwa, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1980: 69–70. Interview conducted in English by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000033/11.

10) ONG Sing Pang, 1982: 32.

would not eliminate all the “traditional” interpersonal values they had learnt and treasured?

Our entrepreneurs resolved these problems in various ways—by rationalising the organisation structure and by adopting different management strategies and wage policies in order to reach a middle path between the “old” and “new” ways. However “modern” enterprises would become, our entrepreneurs seemed to exhibit a tenacious adherence to the family-type organisation, a form of Confucian collectivism noted in early farming communities in old China.

Since new employees had no kin obligations toward their employers, it became all the more necessary that our entrepreneurs offered them incentives to make them stay. One way was to incorporate non-kin employees into the family business’s ownership or management core. New workers were trained with a strong possibility of eventually being included into “the main cadre”; when the company made money, bonuses and incentive awards were to be given in order to make the workers stay. The prospering entrepreneur, contrary to popular belief, was not hesitant to help his workers to also prosper, sometimes to the extent of helping them to set up their own businesses and become entrepreneurs themselves.

Our interviewees did not choose between the “traditional-Chinese” and “modern-Western” modes of management. Instead, they maximised the advantages of both systems by combining a “modern” structural organisation with a “traditional” mode of interpersonal communication pattern. They organised workers along rational principles of complementarity and division of labour (structure) while, at the same time, appealing to their cultural values and emotions (culture) to obtain their allegiance.

Apart from father and son forming the nucleus in terms of ownership, decision-making and succession, other trusted relatives and friends were also brought into the nucleus. The entrepreneurs always faced the need to procure reliable talents and incorporate them into their family business. Kin obligations made it easier for a patriarch to obtain and give personal trust to a “relative” who was also a competent employee.

Seen in this manner, family business was an extension of the person as entrepreneur, and the community, an extension of the family. There was some degree of elasticity in defining who was included and who was not in the authority and ownership core. Fundamentally, it seemed that the father-and-son nucleus was the unquestioned core, followed by trusted kin, then trusted non-kin. The entrepreneur aimed to transform public into private relations by bringing the community into the core of the family and self. “Family-ization” became a stratagem of interpersonal and business relationships—it was a utilitarian process enabling entrepreneurs to exploit prevailing cultural and social resources.

THINKING, TALKING, AND DOING GOOD

Our entrepreneurs defined someone as morally wrong when he employed deceitful means to obtain his profits. As long as profit-seeking was done in a law-abiding manner, a good businessman would also be a successful businessman, and vice versa.

Tay Kia Hong contributed important sums of money to charitable organisations.¹¹⁾ He established a scholarship for the poor in Muar, where he spent his childhood. His annual fund of fifteen thousand dollars was open to all races, and he resolved to manage the fund till he died. For him, there was no conflict between doing business and being moral. In fact, a “happy” businessman was one who would not engage in unscrupulous deals. Ultimately, it was more important to be a “good” person than to be successful, but dishonest, businessman.

In our analysis, we separate the *ideational* aspects of moralising about business ethics from the *actual* conduct of business. Our businessman had to believe in the existence of a code of ethics that would normatively direct and regulate egotistic impulses. Notions of propriety, reciprocity, decency, and mutual respect for favours given and received were some of the many components in this business creed which were defined and edified not only as the “proper way” of doing business but also implicitly as the “righteous,” “honourable” and “moral” way. In short, business ethics and moral values were not conceived as distinct and separate but as applicable to their everyday living, to their personal, family, and community living just as work and home were not distinct and separate in the village in old China.

One entrepreneur, Teng See Koon, set up an association for his Hakka kinsmen, mainly construction workers, in order to promote clan solidarity and give help to those who needed shelter, job placements, or premises to hold meetings or simply to socialise.¹²⁾ Lim Pang Gan championed the right to education for girls by being actively involved in committees responsible for the setting up of Chung Hwa Girls’ High and Nanyang Girls’ High.

Gestures of goodwill toward the disadvantaged reflected some of the fundamental moral values taught to our entrepreneurs when young, either through schools or by role models such as parents, teachers, elders, older friends or employers. These values were deeply embedded in our entrepreneurs’ early socialisation experiences and were later shaped into powerful ideas influencing everyday thinking and behaviour. While not always poised to put these ideas

11) TAY Kia Hong, 1982: 83–87.

12) TENG See Koon, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982: 106–109. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000192/09.

into practice, they nevertheless moralised about them. Ho Rih Hwa recalled how he was affected by the “teaching of all these Chinese moral stories about what one should do, should not do, all these things.” Frequently, moral education was imparted by Chinese parents not through reasoning, but by behavioural discipline and by words clearly instructing the “oughts” and the “ought-nots.” Call it “conscience”¹³⁾ or simply “being good,”¹⁴⁾ our entrepreneurs had compelling sanctions against “doing evil” to others and an even stronger fear that “a person doing evil will have evil things befall on him one day.” Ong Sing Pang lived by the faith that “you treat that fellow right, in due course they would extend the same to you”—an essential attitude to have in business, which he called “common sense.”¹⁵⁾ It was through this process of moralising about their lives that our entrepreneurs expressed attempts to integrate with the community which was more likely than not to view their profit-seeking efforts with jealousy and scepticism.

While moralising about morals and ethics, businessmen had, on occasions, deviated in practice. Indeed, it was often easy or tempting to commit the deviations and make a profit, thus making a code of ethics in commerce all the more necessary. Among other functions, it served as an evaluative standard for judging and sanctioning commercial behaviour as well as arbitrating and moderating commercial conflicts. Otherwise, business life would have become unpredictable and anomic, as in everyday life when no norms and values prevail, social relations would become precarious. In business life, perhaps more than in any other sphere of social activity, deviations and disorder are likely to be more rampant because of its highly individualistic and competitive nature. A moral code in business serves to curb extreme immoralities and control otherwise unfettered individualism. Apart from subscribing to the premise that morals are intrinsically good, there was also this belief, according to one entrepreneur-interviewee, Chew Choo Keng, that “if you do good to others, they too will do good to you in the future...the small favour one does for one’s friends may one day turn out to be a great reciprocation to oneself.”¹⁶⁾

It seems to us that every entrepreneur held two agendas in the presentation of their moral self: the ideational and the practical. Ideationally, there was a set of morals whose relevance and applicability in everyday living other than in

13) SOON Peng Yam, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1981: 77. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000012/07; ANG See, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1981: 63. Interview conducted in Hokkien by Gno Cing He. Reference No. A 000141/08.

14) CHOONG Keow Chye, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1980: 26. Interview conducted in Khek by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000015/02.

15) ONG Sing Pang, 1982: 139–140.

16) CHEW Choo Keng, 1980: 106.

business forged a link between the personal and occupational worlds, and between the personal and social worlds. This morality acknowledged the overarching role of interpersonal communication in doing business as well as in “doing things together” in everyday living; it also acknowledged the need to curb individualism for the common interest of the community as well as the need for mutual reciprocity, for favours given and received in a web of mutual obligations.

In practice, the ideationalized code of ethics could have been occasionally ignored. It was a real challenge as to how businessmen negotiated between these two modes of thinking and doing. It called for imagination, innovativeness and creative responses to difficult challenges. Like everyday behaviour which could sometimes become too individualistic and disorderly, so could businessmen sometimes lapse into “occasions of sin”—an understandable tendency in the human condition as long as individuals conduct themselves following, among others, self-interest.

Nevertheless, the social reality and morality of our entrepreneurs was characterised by the need to establish a “good reputation,” cultivate “useful” networks, and work for the good of others. One quick and fool-proof strategy for achieving good reputation was by doing public service. Confucian teachings stress benevolence and compassion—“a good ruler is one who is both benevolent and compassionate”—as a corollary, a successful and good person is one who is also benevolent and compassionate to his suffering and deprived fellow men. These values are not necessarily relevant for commercial purposes alone, they reflect the moral sentiments and expectations society has about businessmen and their relations with society. Accordingly, our entrepreneurs strived to strike a balance between their egoistic motivation and social integration.

There was among the Chinese merchant community a sense of “noblesse oblige,” a feeling of reciprocity which expressed a moral need by individuals to “return (in kind or in service) what they got from society.” People in the community expected office-bearing businessmen to discharge their duty of service to the community in return for the support and respect accorded to them. Evidently, concomitant with mutual help and reciprocity were notions of instrumentalism, economic manipulation and exploitation. In short, “doing good” helped sow seeds of manipulation, negotiation and influence in interpersonal relations as well as in business transactions. “Doing good” will eventually “pay off.”

Tan Kah Kee used the position of his son-in-law, Lee Kong Chian, as President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to influence its members to raise money for the Relief Fund. Lee Kong Chian was offered bank loans because of his connections to Tan Kah Kee, his father-in-law, as well as his position as President of the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁷⁾ By “doing good” as

members of the Chinese merchant community, our business pioneers reaped equally personal and commercial benefits, a process leading us to coin the seemingly self-contradictory paradoxical concept of “*Confucian merchant*” to conceptualise their role as entrepreneurs in the business world, as well as in the larger community. The person most well-known in the region and corresponding most closely to our conception of a “Confucian merchant” was Tan Kah Kee. His phenomenal entrepreneurial success and his long and intense involvement in education both in Singapore and in China made it an even more convincing argument that profit-seeking and moral conduct are not necessarily mutually exclusive of each other; they do not need to be two contradictory, irreconcilable activities.

Most of our entrepreneurs were involved either in actually giving service or providing monetary support for educational programmes. Education was seen as the “pulse of life” in a nation which provided the people literacy, peace, stability and strength. It was a similar view of wanting to make this society a better place to live, that had motivated many Singapore entrepreneurs, such as Tan Keong Choon, Wee Cho Yaw, Tan Lark Sye, Koh Teck Kin and Ng Quee Lam, to help raise funds and contribute their time and energy toward building such institutions as Tong Zi Hospital, Nanyang University, Nanyang Girls’ School, and Hua Zhong School.

As our entrepreneurs lived in a community which stressed and relied upon reciprocity, a Confucian morality of interpersonal relations was necessary to order, stabilize and normalise an otherwise anomic business world—this was particularly so during the pioneering stages of business development when transactions were dependent on interpersonal trust rather than legal contracts. The Confucian ethic was proven *socially useful* and *functional*. “Trustworthiness is more important than life,” Soon Peng Yam proclaimed.¹⁷⁾ Tan Yan Huan put trustworthiness above all other values, including diligence.¹⁸⁾ In a business transaction, the two parties were exchanging both the tangibles (goods, money) and the intangibles (reputation, reliability, trustworthiness); the latter in turn determined the probability of continuing a relationship, or any relationship. Evidently, a moral order guided by Confucian values was preferable and desirable; it was a pre-requisite to order interpersonal perceptions and social actions. It was functional; our Confucian merchants wanted it, needed it, made use of it, perpetuated and enhanced it, and benefitted from it. They were expected by the masses to re-channel their wealth back to society. This sense of “moral duty” on the part of the business pioneers and the

17) CHEW Choo Keng, 1980: 120–126.

18) SOON Peng Yam, 1981: 54.

19) TAN Yan Huan, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982: 66. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Png Qing He. Reference No. 000075/10.

“moral expectation” on the part of the masses together formed the basis of a social order. The entrepreneur, being an egoistic, self-interested, and instrumental economic man on the one hand, was also allowing himself to be morally directed on the other hand. Both modes of consciousness prevailed simultaneously and the self-directed entrepreneur mediated tactically between the two. In the final analysis, a good person is a moral person; and a moral person is a successful person. A successful entrepreneur is one who is good and moral as well as competent in exploiting and appropriating the resources *in and around* him.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Migrations are best seen as transitions, a series of steps moving through varied situations in time, in emotions, in physical spaces, in life spaces. In moving, in motion, the migrant *turns away from* stifling social structures and blocked opportunities, creates new social structures, and, in turn, *turns to*, attends to opportunity structures thus created. The social structure is oppressive to many, so is history. But the *idea* of social structure, and the idea of history, do not appear so to many, especially the immigrant entrepreneurs. Social structures are limiting *and* enabling. Certain transitions in life, like migrations, act as liberating influence on elements of lifestyle, prompting cognitive alterations and structural modifications. Stepping out by an individual from one frame of action to *reach out* to another frame of action, because of a combination of personal, family, situational and historical factors—in order to gear himself toward the accomplishment of a plan or a project in his paramount reality of work—makes him *an actor* on the social scene, changing and modifying objects in his life world and their various relations, and expresses his causal efficacy and productive role in creating values and ends that he seeks to realize.

A transition is always experienced by the immigrant as more or less a “shock” (or a “leap” in Kierkegaard’s sense), a stressful life event or situation which requires him to be *in grip with* the problematic, to *gear himself to* the world. He has to learn the new tasks, to transform himself, in the meanwhile, transforming others.

Thus, what is central is this *transformative spirit* embodied in the Confucian ethic that propels one to seek for oneself and, more importantly, for the family, a better way of life, through migration overseas. Migration is thus as much a flight from aggravation as a convincing, positive step toward transformation, in the midst of which a myriad of migration-related decisions are made *by the family* for the chosen migrant. Migration is in essence a family matter; it is too momentous to be left to the individual. The migrant leaves the family in order to uphold the family—through remittances from overseas. The centrality of the family, now edified in “the family phantom,” in the Chinese character, and

in his entire existence, continues. The family back home continues to exert remote control through the enactment of guilt and shame.

In striving toward self-betterment in the socialization and learning process, our nascent immigrant entrepreneurs stressed five central Confucian values or "virtues": self-control, frugality, hard work, trustworthiness, and positive attitudes toward learning. Learning is a continued, cumulative, and, for some, life-long process. Learning is acquisition, appropriation and internalisation—it transforms the person, it makes what is "out there" "in here", and it lends itself to exploitation. Self-control, frugality and hard work are personal values—when acquired and used to guide, shape or inspire conduct and action, they become resources or competences. Nascent immigrant entrepreneurs needed to work hard, conserve and refrain from excessive expenditures to enable themselves to send remittances back home, and to save up for business start-up capital. As a value, trustworthiness mediates and informs transactions between individuals, and is thus interpersonal in nature. Among Chinese entrepreneurs, it is often codified and has become a core component of the "language and etiquette of the merchant."

Our immigrant entrepreneurs have for long subscribed to a *world view* that locates them in the centre of a number of outwardly extending concentric circles. The institution of the family exerts almost a primordial and existential influence on their cognitions. For many, family as a social structure has an all-pervasive or omnipresent equality. The nascent immigrant entrepreneurs, by necessity because of cultural influence or meagre resources in their initial stage of business development, and by choice because family is a reliable source of socio-emotional support, continued to run their business "like a family." They thus resorted to "*family-ization*" as a time-tested, familiar and useful strategy to *transform* a wide variety of socio-economic relations into primary, family relations. The family thus continued to exert its influence on the individual whilst discharging its many practical, utilitarian functions. Yet, seen from another angle, the entrepreneur himself is actively using or exploiting the family as resources.

If men are by nature egoistic and utilitarian, it follows that all social actions, unless vigilantly controlled and tempered by reason and the conscience, would be self-serving, self-preserving, and self-perpetuating; even social institutions such as family and clan would need to be conceived in terms of the motive of economic exploitation on the part of the powerful over the helpless, and of the calculated usefulness of the "have-nots" for the "haves." If the issue at hand was in terms of our entrepreneurs' drive for commercial conquests, how did they go about striking a balance between the egoistic need for wealth accumulation and the social need for equality and mutual respect, between competitive individualism and shared group norms, between frugality and wastefulness, between moral righteousness and self-interest?

We conceptualise the entrepreneur at two levels. On one level, we highlight his *individualistic* inclinations in always having to be in control in order to make things happen. This is largely rooted in his immigrant conditions—low capital, low skills, disfranchised colonial experience—rendering human resources the only element readily available for exploration. He is all that there is to start capitalism with, next on line is his family, then the rest of the employees whom he “family-izes” and controls by adopting a mode of work ethics; he sets an exemplary role model for others to follow or emulate. This is particularly important at the nascent stage of entrepreneurship.

On the other level, our immigrant entrepreneurs operate within a *collectivistic* tradition of values and economic behaviour which binds the boss and his workers, the entrepreneur and his partners—a bond that is necessary in an economy poor in capital and technology, but based on trust or “reputation” for its success. Whether these entrepreneurs actually adhere to the values they espouse, whether they only subscribe to them ritually, or even breach them at varying times of their business expansion, is another question hard to validate empirically. But once an entrepreneur’s “reputation” in business dealings is questioned due to repeated deceptions, he will be sanctioned and isolated from the merchant community—indeed a costly outcome to be best avoided.

It was not altogether clear that our entrepreneurs were unceasingly concerned only with the accumulation of wealth. They also seemed to be frequently engaged in talking, thinking, and putting moral values into practice by getting involved in a wide range of philanthropic activities. In their code of ethics, what seemed particularly remarkable was the notion of self-restraint, of keeping human greed at bay, as the first step toward creating a predictable, controllable and normative social and moral order.

Indeed our business entrepreneurs often talked like Confucian scholars! The integration of thinking, talking and putting moral values into practice *in the person of an entrepreneur* has sometimes become so total and complete that it is difficult to differentiate the language, conduct and etiquette of a businessman from that of a Confucian scholar. While the Confucian scholars examine and use the classic texts in their learning about Confucianism, the merchants acquire their Confucian values from everyday life experiences and from many other popular, folkloric, or worldly sources—thus the need to differentiate between two tiers of Confucianism, scholarly and elitist on the one hand, and worldly and popular on the other hand. Our entrepreneurs continue to use lessons learned from life in their own conduct.

When merchants begin to engage not only in moral rhetoric but also in moral conduct and philanthropy, when, *as a class*, they begin to build hospitals, roads, schools, universities, discharging functions typically belonging to the state, they force a re-evaluation of their moral worth and their collective functional utility to the community and the country. In a personal drive

towards self-transformation and self-betterment, these Confucian merchants transform the lives of many others. When the Chinese migrants traverse boundaries of history, geography, and culture to create, transform, and achieve something for themselves *and* for others, can the scholars and the social scientists still be blind and not give credit where it is due? Our entrepreneurs see themselves as the pioneering moral leader, the dominant driving force, always in the forefront, and certainly not hesitant in attributing their business success to themselves—that is, their charisma and leadership. Will the social analyst then view the entrepreneurs in the same way the latter view themselves? If an accomplished entrepreneur, after a life-long personal history of self-perfection, says, in a moment of pride, that “the world begins with me,” is he very far from the truth?

Viewed from another equally important vantage point, our entrepreneur-interviewees, in retrospect, during the oral history interviews, can be understood as constructing and reconstructing attributions about their business success—when confronted with an interviewer, they were solicited to “explain their successes away,” so to speak. Of course, as shown in our foregoing analysis, these attributions and explanations were typically moralistic in tone and content—the interviewees frequently anchoring themselves securely in a discourse grounded in the Confucian tradition in general, and the Chinese merchant culture in particular. Evidently, our entrepreneurs have learned, been socialised into, and internalised such a constellation of core cultural values; find them of much practical utility; and thus put them to use. Believing that such efforts in putting core Chinese cultural values to use has resulted in their entrepreneurial success, our entrepreneurs, in their moralistic rhetoric, are possibly inadvertently reconstructing as well as reproducing entrepreneurial ideologies under the auspices of Confucianism. They have thus become myth-makers. In myth making and in (re)constructing their public image within a Confucian tradition, they are reproducing themselves and thus their own culture *as a group or class*, i.e. the merchant class—hence the apparent similarity and homogeneity in their espoused beliefs, values, moralistic utterances, and presentations of self to the world.

While our entrepreneurs, as individuals and as members of the merchant class, strive, as we all do, for internal coherence between words and deeds, verbalisations and behaviours, they also model themselves after the ideal type of the “Confucian merchant”; in these deliberations they become assimilated and homogenised, primarily because they have come to realize that such a process of character transformation “pays off,” in a materialist sense.

Of course, we may want to recall that our entrepreneurs first came to Singapore as sojourners, uprooted from their former *gemeinschaft*-like, ancestral home in old China and found themselves in a liminal, anomic, sometimes hostile migrant condition. Now in Nanyang, they suddenly found

themselves in limbo, in transition to nowhere, leading a billiard ball-like existence [CHAN 1990: 5–6]. Like refugees or other involuntary migrants uprooted from their familiar past, our entrepreneurs had to learn to cope with the stress of transition by striving for a personal sense of coherence in values and beliefs. They found this coherence in the “old-fashioned,” earth-bound village peasant values. In a rather important way, such a framework of core values lessened the pain and absorbed the shock of the migration trauma. Values inform, guide and moderate behaviour.

In re-creating and reconstructing their personal value coherence, the migrants had “thrown themselves into” a cultural tradition and, as a consequence, had inadvertently inserted or transplanted an “old world,” albeit adapted, into a new sociological order, into a new, unfamiliar existence in the host society. Existentially speaking, our overseas Chinese entrepreneurs, through their words, cognitions and behaviour, had found themselves an identity as overseas Chinese merchants. Such an identity requires incessant affirmation and upkeep, by self *and* others. In integrating themselves back into society at large through provisions of charitable services as well as contributions to society’s economic growth and development, the entrepreneurs strive to gain an entry into the upper-stratum elite which is often blocked by the literati and the state.

The homogeneity displayed in how our entrepreneurs articulated the values and beliefs points to a perceived shared reality. Whether these values are followed through in everyday life or only being paid lip service to, is an outcome of an interaction between personal commitment, self-cultivation, and particular prevailing circumstances. A few entrepreneurs expressed their disappointment at the gradual attrition of these values and lamented that kin relations can be cruel, unsupportive and lacking in nurturance;²⁰⁾ that clan associations are elitist social organisations which only help the wealthy;²¹⁾ that employer-worker relationships can be exploitative, conflict-ridden, and abusive;²²⁾ that business ethics are absent in the younger generation;²³⁾ that money is the only vehicle to success;²⁴⁾ and that entrepreneurial success is a

20) TAY Kia Hong, 1982: 26–29.

21) ONG Tjor Kim, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982: 14–16. Interview conducted in Hokkien by Guo Qing He. Reference No. A 000151/04.

22) CHAN Kee Tong, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1983: 3. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000198/05; Ho Yeow Koon, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1981: 10. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000034/06; TAN Yan Huan, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982: 34–35. Interview conducted in Mandarin by Guo Qing He. Reference No. A 000075/10.

23) Ho Yeow Koon, 1981: 49–50.

chance factor, or a stroke of luck, beyond the control of man.²⁵⁾

These discrepant sentiments and lamentations do not nevertheless dilute their belief that a moral order nurturing and controlling economic behaviour prevails. Precisely because our entrepreneurs themselves have suffered losses on occasions where these values have been breached, they are all the more eager to affirm and verbalise them. Entrepreneurs may on occasions breach business ethics and exploit their social relationships. Yet, they also know that their reputation in the marketplace will catch up with them, ostracise them from the business community, or even ruin them commercially. To avoid all these problems, they *must* conform.

In this sense, an entrepreneur is simultaneously an individualist (in his economic adventure and pioneering endeavour) and a conformist (in his exposition, transmission and reproduction of merchant cultural ideologies or mythologies). As many a sociologist would now wish to state, the entrepreneur as an individual is simultaneously free *and* constrained. He perhaps exercises a higher degree of freedom than most would in his risk-taking, economic activities, but he is nevertheless operating in conformity with group values and tradition. In a poignant sense, the sociologist finds within the entrepreneur the dynamic dialectics of continuity and change, conformity and independence.

Appendix The Study and the Samples

The Oral History Department of the Singapore Government's then Ministry of Community Development (now Ministry of Information and the Arts) completed an oral history project on Singapore's business pioneers in 1980. Of the total of seventy-three interviewees, fifty-one were Chinese, the remaining being Indians, Arabs, Sri Lankans and Persians. The interviews were conducted following a list of preconstructed questions. Topics covered in the list included: family background, life in homeland, motivations and circumstances of emigration, preparation for departure, journey to Singapore, arrival and reception in Singapore, early life in Singapore, early work experience, turning points in life (starting first business, and subsequent business development in each case), family life, social/recreational life, public/political life, citizenship and relationship with the Chinese community in Singapore. The data was collected following "an autobiographical or life history approach, guiding the interviewees through the gamut of personal, family, business and public life in chronological sequence" [LIM 1984: vi-vii].

The Business Pioneers Project was aimed at "interviewing and tape recording the reminiscences of business pioneers about their legendary from-rags-to-riches success stories and their contributions to Singapore's economic, social and educational developments" [LIM 1984: vi-vii]. It was also the aspiration of the project to "capture the pioneering spirit of Singapore's successful entrepreneurs and their role in the economic and socio-cultural transformation of the nation" [ORAL

24) ONG Sing Pang, 1982: 141.

25) ANG Keong Lan, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1980: 25. Interview conducted in Hokkien by Tan Ban Huat. Reference No. A 000042/05.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT 1988: 5].

Our own study, on which this essay is based, attempted to analyse the content and interpret the verbatim responses of forty-seven of these fifty-one Chinese business pioneers in the interview transcripts in order to reconstruct the processes involved in the making of a Chinese entrepreneur.²⁶⁾ An analysis of this type will enlighten our knowledge of the social and economic history of early Singapore.

The entire set of raw interview data in the form of typed transcripts (in Chinese and English) and audio tapes is made available by the Oral History Department for outside researchers. As in all research interviews where factors leading to a successful dialogue are multiple and complex—thus hard to control—it was difficult for the Business Pioneers Project to cover satisfactorily all the substantive areas of a person's life. The resultant interview transcripts thus sometimes left gaps in specific areas of an interviewee's life. We therefore found it necessary to supplement our analysis of the data with our own interpretation and extrapolation, albeit in a controlled and cautious manner. The historical gaps concerning Singapore society as a whole in a given time period did not pose a serious problem. The interview data, as a composite whole, provided for a comparative study geared at highlighting shared reflections and interpretations of society by our entrepreneur-interviewees.

Of the forty-seven entrepreneurs in our study, twelve were born in Singapore or elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Five of them were entrepreneurs who inherited family businesses. The thirty-five entrepreneurs who arrived from China came in their adolescence, between age ten and twenty-one, thus suggesting a bias in the selection process in favour of the younger, more energetic youths, thus more able to adapt to foreign conditions. Most of them came with little social capital to start with, as their parents were in general uneducated. Twelve of the forty-seven entrepreneurs had tertiary education. The rest had at least primary education, a few having completed secondary education.

Nine entrepreneurs carried out the interviews in English, twenty in Mandarin, twelve in Hokkien, three in Teochew, two in Cantonese and one in Hakka. The majority of the entrepreneurs in this study were Chinese-educated. Those who conversed in English were mainly Singapore-born entrepreneurs.

The forty-seven entrepreneurs, generally above sixty years old at the time of the interviews, were carefully selected by the Oral History Department for their reputation in specific business activities. Some of them were well-known household names; others were less well-known in the lay community but well established in the business world.

As most of them came from China before World War Two, between 1921 and 1939, a large part of their nascent business development occurred in the late 1930s, only to be disrupted by the Japanese invasion in 1941. Their fledgling businesses took off only slowly after the Japanese surrender in 1945, and developed in response to the post-war reconstruction activities and commercial opportunities arising from growing affluence and the new government's nation building efforts. The peak of their business growth came about in post-independence Singapore, when a young nation charting its own political and economic destiny provided unprecedented opportunities for its citizens. It was after the entrepreneurs' decision to settle in Singapore and become its citizens in the 1960s that their business activities consolidated in a new found "home," and became more pros-

26) Every interview is reel recorded, transcribed and stored in the Oral History Archives for public use. The transcript bears a reference number as indicated and listed in *Pioneers of Singapore: A Catalogue of Oral History Interviews* (Singapore: Archives and Oral History Department, 1984). There are altogether fifty-one Chinese pioneers in the Catalogue. We did not include four individuals in our sample of entrepreneurs: LIEN Ying Chow, whose interview transcript is not accessible; Datin AW Kow, a housewife; TAN Ee Leong, a bank manager; and SNG Choon Yee, a civil servant. Their interview data have been selectively used, where possible, to provide more in-depth information about the Chinese community. Runme SHAW and LEE Seng Gee's transcripts are accessible but permission to use their interview data for publication is with held.

perous. Although we do not have specific information regarding these entrepreneurs' corporate scale in terms of, say, capital assets or employment size, the oral history interviews clearly established the fact that their companies grew substantially in the 1970s. Furthermore, some of the companies succeeded not only in Singapore, but also expanded their operations into the region.

For a long time, successful entrepreneurs' links with China entailed frequent remittances back home to build bridges, hospitals and schools.²⁷⁾ Our interview transcripts do not have information on the business involvement of our entrepreneurs with China. However, long before Singapore actively promoted during recent years economic linkages with China, industrialists like Chew Choo Keng, one of our interviewees, had gone back to China to establish factories.

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27) QUEK Kai Teng, Oral History Interview Transcript. Singapore: Oral History Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 1982. Interview conducted in Mandarin and English by Lim How Seng. Reference No. A 000238/09.

シンガポールにおける価値観と中国人移民の企業家精神

陳 国 賁・張 齊 娥

シンガポールにおける初期の企業家を対象としたこの研究では、儒教的価値観が移民である彼らの企業家精神の発展に次の2点で重要な機能を果たしてきたことがわかる。内面的には、儒教的価値観が個々人の生活への指針を方向づけ、外面的にはコミュニティの中での個人間の関係や商業的活動を規制していく役割を果たした。倫理や文化的価値観は、仕事の上だけでなく、個人、家族、そしてコミュニティでの日常生活の中にあてはめられてきた。中国の村々に根ざしたこの価値観は異国の土地でも適用され、ダイナミックな民族的源泉として機能し、異国における企業家精神を育み、彼らはそれを利用し最大限活用することで、中国流の資本主義の発展に貢献した。自営と自製は成功に対する重要な個人的指針であった。しかし、移民である企業家の彼らは、この世でだけ成功した孤独な英雄として語られるのではなく、「儒教的商人」と概念化できる。そこでは、自己は、一次的および二次的關係において、「他者」つまり、家族、親族、宗族およびコミュニティに結びつけられ、特に後者の二次的關係においては「家族化」をうまく成し遂げることで、尊敬、信頼、忠誠、義務關係が生じている。