

NEWS FROM THE MOTHERLAND: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EXISTENTIAL TOURISM MAGAZINES IN SOUTHERN CHINA

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Ethnic Chinese who reside outside of mainland China proper constitute an enormous opportunity for tourism and economic development in China (Lew & Wong, 2003). Overseas Chinese have a strong sense of common origin, based on both racial and cultural grounds, which are further enhanced by business, social, and familial ties. These ties often take the form of existential tourism, which Cohen (1979) defined as travel back to a personal or spiritual "center" located away from one's home. This article presents the results of a content analysis of publications from Guangdong Province in China for ethnic Chinese residing outside of China. The content analysis results indicated that very strong existential tourism ties exist between Guangdong Province and the US and Canada in North America, and to adjacent Hong Kong and Macau. Examples of efforts to strengthen common origins included 56 articles on biographies of overseas Chinese individuals and 24 articles on overseas Chinese society and culture (out of 176 articles examined). Other major topics included efforts to build networks and investments, domestic news articles, donation story articles, education-related articles, investment-related articles, and articles on activities of local Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices. Stories of root-finding visits and the theme of "Love of Country" were also prominent. These magazines indicated how local Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices are proactive in strengthening ties with overseas Chinese through travel and tourism, upon which social and then business networks can be established.

Existential tourism	Overseas Chinese	Diaspora	Economic impacts	Social impacts
Ethnic networks	Guangdong Province	China		

Eric Cohen (1979) coined the term "existential tourism" to describe tourists who traveled in search of a personal or spiritual "center" that is located beyond their immediate place of residence. For some, their destinations are places that have been

adopted because they have played a significant role in the traveler's personal life experience. For others, these are places of family genealogy and racial heritage. For both of these groups, they are places that have played a formative role i

velopment of the traveler's self-identity (Lew & Wong, 2004).

There are many examples of cultural and ethnic-based existential tourism, especially among "hyphenated" or "third space" citizens of the world (Bhabha, 1990, 1994). In the US, Irish-Americans travel to family surname reunions in Ireland, Black-Americans visit the slave origin countries of West Africa, and many Mexican-Americans maintain close ties to their home communities in Mexico (O'Mara, 2002; Rice, 2001; Teye, 1999). Kotkin (1993) saw this phenomenon as the formation of "global tribes," which he described as being (1) geographically dispersed culture groups that (2) have a strong sense of common origin and (3) maintain ancestral homeland relationships through a network of business and cultural ties. He identified the five most significant global tribes today as the Jews, the Japanese, Asian Indians, the English-speaking nations, and the Chinese. These tribes tend to create networks based on ethnicity, which provide social capital for group members (Portes, 1994) and "extends the group's identity spatially" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 392).

The emerging borderless global economy of the late 20th century has both allowed for an increase in international migration and strengthened the ability of migrants to foster and maintain transnational relationships (Ohmae, 2000). Ethnic Chinese who reside outside of China are well situated both in terms of wealth and social institutions to benefit from the new global economic order (Lew, 1995). No other major world culture has had the long and continuous history of genealogical record keeping that China has—in many cases extending from the smallest rural village back several thousand years (Lew & Wong, 2002). And few other cultures have developed the range of both governmental and nongovernmental organizations, both inside China and outside of China, to support the maintenance of diasporic relationships, as have the Chinese (Lim, 2000). Clan surname-based, dialect-based, and regional-based voluntary organizations, for example, have been common in Chinatowns throughout the world since the earliest migrations from China; while in the People's Republic of China (PRC), provincial and county level Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices were established immediately after the PRC's founding in October 1949 (R. Huang, 2000).

This study was undertaken to better understand how the relationship between overseas ethnic Chinese and China is structured and understood, especially among those in mainland China. To do this, we undertook a content analysis of magazines published by several Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices in Taishan County and Zhongshan County in Guangdong Province, China. These magazines have probably been the single most important form of communication by Overseas Chinese organizations in China to Chinese residing outside of China for most of the past century. They, therefore, represent an official view on the proper relationship that should exist between mainland China and diasporic Chinese around the world.

The two counties chosen for this study are both located on the coast of Guangdong Province, to the west of Hong Kong. Zhongshan lies to the north of Macau, adjacent to the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone, while Taishan is due west of Macau (Lew, 2002). These two counties were among the largest source areas for Chinese migrants to the Americas in the mid to late 1800s. Other areas of the Guangdong Province and neighboring Fujian Province were also significant migration sources for the Chinese diaspora (Lew, 1995), and Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices tend to be more common and more active in these areas than in other parts of China. The following summary of overseas Chinese activities in Taishan County is illustrative of similar experiences in other major migration sources areas of southern China. (The term "compatriots" is used on China's mainland to refer to Chinese residing in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. For the purposes of this research, compatriots are included in the definition of "overseas Chinese.")

Taishan County: An Example

The Taishan Overseas Chinese Affairs Office was formed in October 1949 to perform two tasks. The first was to implement policies passed by the Communist Party of China (CPC) related to overseas Chinese. These included the "Protect Overseas Chinese Property" policy, the "Favored Treatment to Overseas Chinese and Compatriots for Investment in National Companies" policy, and the "Policy on Establishing Schools and Educational Institutions by Overseas Chinese" (R. Huang, 2000). All of these

policies and regulations were passed in the 1950s. The second major task of the local Overseas Chinese Affairs Office was to strengthen relationships with overseas Chinese. Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices in southern China today continue to undertake these two tasks (Douw, 2000). For example, they assist overseas Chinese in establishing claims to village property that their forefathers owned, and even in finding their home village if ties have not been well maintained over the years. They also publish magazines (the focus of this study) to keep overseas Chinese informed of local news in China and, more importantly, to encourage home visits and investments.

China's Culture Revolution (which lasted from the late 1960s until Mao Zedong's death in 1976) was not a good time for overseas Chinese relations in China. In Taishan, 6453 families with close ties to their overseas Chinese relations were denounced as landlords and rich farmers and accused of exploiting the poor (R. Huang, 2000). They were forced to sever their relationships with their overseas relatives and their property was often confiscated, as was the property of their overseas relatives. After Deng Xiaoping's rise to CPC leadership in 1978, these families were rehabilitated, and by 1982 all confiscated properties were returned. Along with these changes came a rapid increase in home village visits by overseas Chinese, who for 30 years had built up a strong pent up demand for such trips.

The 1990s also saw considerable growth in promotional trips by local mainland government officials, under the auspices of Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices, to Southeast Asia and North America to encourage tourism and investment to China. Their primary audiences were the Chinese surname and regional voluntary associations that continue to serve the older generations of Chinese immigrants overseas. In 1997, the First World Taishan Overseas Chinese Meeting was held in Taishan City and was attended by some 1800 participants from 30 countries and places outside of China (R. Huang, 2000, p. 320).

According to records maintained by the Taishan Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, as of 1998 (R. Huang, 2000, p. 100):

- 867,000 overseas Taishan Chinese resided in 88 countries (the 1998 population of Taishan County was about 1 million);

- 429,000 additional compatriot Taishan Chinese resided in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan;
- 80% of Taishan residents had migrant relatives: 527,000 had overseas relatives, and 276,000 had compatriot relatives.

The strength of the existential tie to China among overseas and compatriot Chinese can be seen in the level of donations recorded by the Taishan Overseas Chinese Affairs Office from 1978 to 1998, which amounted to some 16,550 projects and US\$14 million (these figures do not include remittances sent to individual family numbers). Major areas of donations included:

- 577 school improvement projects;
- 40 hospitals and medical projects;
- 19 residential building blocks;
- 282 technology, culture, and sports facilities;
- 118 bridges;
- 1040 km of roads built or paved.

A similar story could be told for Zhongshan County. According to the Zhongshan-Window (2002) Web site, there are some 600,000 overseas ethnic Chinese from Zhongshan County (excluding compatriots), with a quarter residing in the US, followed by Australia and Panama (at 49,000 each). The Web site indicated that, as of 1990, overseas Chinese had entirely built two secondary schools, 104 primary schools, and 31 kindergartens in Zhongshan County. Zhongshan, Taishan, and several other coastal communities in Guangdong and Fujian provinces view themselves as "the" hometown of ethnic Chinese living abroad.

While not entirely within the focus of this article, there are clearly many different overseas ethnic Chinese, in terms of where they come from, where they live, and what their relationships are to China. At the same time, many have had similar histories and cultural experiences, which allow some degree of generalization to be made based upon data from selected case studies. While this study focused on Taishan and Zhongshan Counties, we believe that the results are applicable to the larger experience of overseas ethnic Chinese relationships in southern China. A cursory survey of Overseas Chinese Affairs Office Web sites for other regions over 1000 indicate that our findings may also be generalizable to other regions.

much of the rest of Han Chinese China, as well (links to various province-level Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices can be found on the Guangdong Overseas Chinese Web site at <http://www.gdoverseaschn.com.cn/>).

Methodology

The methodology used in this study consisted of a content analysis of three similar publications produced by Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices in Guangdong Province. The objectives were: (1) to identify the activities and interests of overseas Chinese as they relate to their home areas in China, and (2) to explore the relationship between existential tourism and the concept of a global Chinese tribe. Because the sources of the data were government agencies, the analysis presents a somewhat narrowly defined "official" view of these activities and relationships. The information resulting from such a content analysis would help in understanding how local and regional Chinese governmental agencies define and structure the relationship between China and its migrant populations so as to best benefit the homeland. This can provide further insight into the global dimensions of the Chinese diaspora, the global tribe phenomenon, and the range of opportunities and challenges for other migrant populations throughout the world. And last, but not least, the study aims to explicate the significant role of tourism in diasporic and migrant relationships with existential homelands.

The three magazines that were analyzed, all of which were published entirely in Chinese, included:

1. *Taishan Xinning*—published by the Taishan City and County Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (Issue 1, 2001; 44 pages and cover);
2. *Dajiang*—published by the Dajiang Township Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, which covers a smaller region within Taishan County (Issue 37, December 2000; 44 pages, cover, and a 4-page insert);
3. *Zhongshan*—published by the Zhongshan City and County Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (Issue 46, December 2000; 48 pages, cover, and a 4-page insert).

Each separate item within these magazines was categorized and summarized. This included articles,

photographs, other graphics, announcements, and advertisements. The lengths of text items and the sizes of nontext items were also coded, though this aspect was not assessed in the results presented here. Categories were derived from a preliminary review of the contents by the authors and a research assistant. All of the coding was done by a single research assistant, and only one refinement was made as a result of the coding of the first magazine.

There were a total of 243 separate magazine items that were coded in one or more categories. The most basic category was the item type (Table 1). Over 70% of the items consisted of stories and articles. Since these were all government publications, there were only two commercial advertisements among all of the categorized items. A second way that the items were viewed was in terms of their topical function within the overall structure of the magazine, such as domestic and overseas news items, fiction and nonfiction stories, and announcements. Some of the articles provided basic characteristics of visitors and visitor groups, which were extracted in the analysis. A good number of the articles and photos also covered visits by overseas Chinese to their ancestral villages. Finally, items were categorized into one or more "themes." These themes covered the range of general and specific subjects that expressed the interests and activities of overseas ethnic Chinese and Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices:

- *Societal Development*, consisting of articles in which overseas Chinese contributed to: education-related accomplishments, especially the building of new schools; improvements in medical care and medical facilities; the building of recreation facilities; and other forms of building and construction, including public buildings,

Table 1
Item Format and Number of Items

Format	# Items	%
Story/article	119	48.4
Story & photo	57	23.2
Public announcement	40	16.3
Photo with caption	28	11.4
Advertisement	2	0.8
Total items	243	100.0

residential buildings, and transportation (roads and bridges).

- *Culture*, consisting of articles that: retell traditional and historical Chinese stories and legends; describe contemporary cultural events and the arts; and relate stories of overseas Chinese societies and experiences in different parts of the world.
- *Biographies*, consisting of stories of individuals residing both in China and abroad, but most of whom are related to the home village area in some way, and stories of overseas Chinese who come to China in search of their ancestral roots.
- *Government Activities*, consisting of articles and announcements of: infrastructure improvements (roads and buildings funded by local governments, not overseas Chinese); other government-driven economic development activities, such as new factories and industrial parks; and activities of Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices to promote tourism and investment in the home village area.
- *Economic Development and Investment*, consisting of articles in which overseas Chinese are directly involved in the local economy through whole or partial investments in factories, companies, and other activities.

Overseas Visitor Characteristics

Some of the articles discussed visits by specific individuals (14 total) and groups of visitors (10 groups). Most of the groups were informal travel parties consisting of friends and family members. Two formal groups that were listed were the Hong Kong Taishan Commercial Association and the Hong Kong Rescue Association. When the gender of the visitor was indicated, it was overwhelmingly male (35 total) rather than female (8 total). The country of residence was indicated for many of these individuals, with the US and Hong Kong clearly dominating, followed by Canada and Macau (Table 2). Clearly, the relatives and descendants of Taishan County and Zhongshan County opted primarily for North America and the former European colonies of the Pearl River Delta. Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, had historically served as China's gateway to the rest of the world, so there has been a longer tradition in this area of southern-

Table 2
Home Country of Visitors and "Love of China" Articles

Home Country	# of Visitors	"Love of China" Article
US	31	12
Hong Kong	28	10
Canada	7	1
Macau	5	
Australia	4	
Panama	4	
Costa Rica	3	
Peru	2	1
Columbia, England, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Taiwan (1 each)	6	2

most coastal China in associating with foreigners. Following the establishment of Hong Kong as a British colony in 1842, as a result of the first Opium War, it quickly came to serve as a source of coolie labor throughout the Pacific Rim. Extended familial and home village relations, however, played a big part in who was going where. The Taishan and Zhongshan people went primarily to North America, though many also went to Latin America and a few to Europe and the Pacific. Until the 1950s, the largest group of the ethnic Chinese residing in the US originated from Taishan County and spoke the distinct Taishan dialect of Chinese (Wong, 1997). Southeast Asia, where the majority of the world's overseas Chinese reside, was the main destination for migrants from Fujian Province, which lies on the coast to the north of Guangdong Province and across from Taiwan (Lew, 1995).

Also shown in Table 2 is the number of stories about overseas Chinese visitors that referred to their "Love of China" as motivating their visit. This was a fairly common phrase that appeared in many of the articles about visitors to China. Showing overseas Chinese expressing an existential "love" for their home village was a direct way of encouraging magazine readers to also visit, and contribute to help improve the welfare of their home village.

Functional Topics

General functional topics are the major ways that items are organized in magazines, as often reflected in a Table of Contents (Table 3). The two topics that

Table 3
Function Topics

Functional Topic	# Items	%
County/township domestic news	69	25.7
Donation news	59	22.0
Chinese history & culture articles	36	13.4
News of visits to China	23	8.6
Service articles/announcements	21	7.8
Overseas Chinese news & activities	14	5.2
Overseas Chinese investment news	13	4.9
Table of contents & publisher information	13	4.9
Other (not listed elsewhere)	13	4.9
News of visits out of China	7	2.6
Total*	268	100.0

*Some items were covered in more than one topic.

were most discussed were local news items and news of donations by overseas Chinese. Local news items help to strengthen the relationship to the home village area by making the overseas reader familiar with changes taking place there. The stories of donations refer to those that are made above and beyond remittances to relatives in China. Such remittances have a long tradition in this region, but were not discussed in the magazines.

Chinese history and culture articles, the third major category, also serve to strengthen the Chinese and local identities of the overseas readers, many of whom may not be exposed to Chinese culture on a regular basis. News of visits to China comprised only 9% of the items in the magazines. The number of visits covered were only a sampling of the total overseas Chinese visitors that Taishan and Zhongshan Counties receive, and the magazines cannot be used to estimate the total visitation rate to these areas. Using data from the 1980s, Lew (1995) estimated that 15% of China's total international arrivals (excluding Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau compatriots) were overseas ethnic Chinese, though they comprised only about 0.6% of the world's population. In rural areas of Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, the proportion is closer to 100%, as these are not destinations for non-Chinese visitors to China.

Possibly more than anything else, the counties and townships of China would like to encourage overseas Chinese to invest in industries and other economic development projects (C. Huang, 2000). News of such investments, however, only comprised 5%

of the total items in the magazines. Items covering international trips by local officials to encourage such investments (along with tourism) were even less, at about 3%. While not evident in the magazines, Zhongshan has benefited more from overseas (and especially compatriot) economic investments due to its being geographically closer to Hong Kong and Macau. Zhongshan also benefits from tourism related to its being the home of the founder of the Republic of China, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who is honored by both the CPC and the Kuomintang Party in Taiwan for overthrowing the Qing Dynasty in 1912.

Content Themes

A more detailed, yet also more interpretative, categorization of the magazine items examined them from the perspective of the major themes of interest for readers. Table 4 shows the results of this analysis. Many of the articles appeared in more than one theme context, such as a biography of an overseas Chinese who was an active contributor to the schools in his or her village area.

About a third of the items dealt with social development themes, with education being the most common of these. Only biographies of overseas Chinese comprised a larger number of items than did education-related items. From a thematic viewpoint, education items included donations by overseas Chinese, academic accomplishments and student awards, alumni gatherings, and school construction projects (both government and donation funded). A similar range of functional topics related to most of the other social development theme items, especially the recreation, transportation, and medical categories. The medical category was lower than anticipated, given that the contributions of overseas Chinese to this area were emphasized in other materials published by the Taishan County government (R. Huang, 2000). A sample of the titles that articles with the social development theme encompassed include:

- Overseas Chinese and Taishan People Donate to Build San She Primary School
- Yu Clan Donate for Education Again
- Examination Results of Dajiang Middle School
- Famous Professional Educator Visits Wu Shi Chang Memorial Primary School

Table 4
Content Themes

	No.	Subtotal (%)	Total (%)
Social development themes			
Education	52	47.4	
Parks, recreation, leisure	22	20.4	
Transportation	13	12.0	
Medical	9	8.3	
Elderly care	5	4.6	
Building construction (unspecified)	5	4.6	
General charity	2	1.9	
Subtotal	108	100.0	36.4
Biographies			
Of overseas Chinese	56	72.7	
Of domestic Chinese	12	15.6	
Root finding stories	9	11.7	
Subtotal	77	100.0	25.9
History & culture/society			
Overseas Chinese	24	66.7	
Taishan/Zhongshan areas	7	19.4	
China	5	13.9	
Subtotal	36	100.0	12.1
Government activity themes			
Infrastructure development	13	32.5	
Economic development	11	27.5	
Overseas Chinese affairs office	4	10.0	
Legal affairs topics	3	7.5	
Other (Fund raising, Frugal life of officials, Army welfare, Census, National development, Housing problems)	9	22.5	
Subtotal	40	100.0	13.5
Investments by overseas Chinese themes			
Food products	11	30.6	
Transportation	8	22.2	
Electronics	3	8.3	
Textiles & clothing	3	8.3	
Hotel & restaurant	2	5.6	
Banking	2	5.6	
Other (Plastics, Metal, Trading, Business, General economic development)	7	19.4	
Subtotal	36	100.0	12.1
Total*	297		100.0

*Some items were covered in more than one theme.

- Xin Chang Home of Respect for the Aged Opened
- Golf Practice Field in Xiao Lan Town
- Wu Xi Xun Couple Donated for the Dajiang Garden
- Charitable Activities by Hong Kong Taishan Commercial Association
- Three Buildings in Wu Guang Village Finished

China has had a long history of placing value on education, with a civil service examination system dating back over a thousand years. The traditional Chinese saying that "education is above all else in life" is certainly evident in the priorities of overseas Chinese philanthropic behavior toward home villages.

Biographies comprised the second largest thematic item (26%), almost all of which were about overseas Chinese, including stories of root-finding trips to China. These articles served several roles, including providing recognition from the ancestral homeland for overseas Chinese who have made major contributions back in China or have been highly successful abroad, and demonstrating ways that others can contribute to enhancing the welfare of their ancestral home areas. Also included among the root-finding items were announcements placed by individuals who were searching for relatives with whom they had lost contact over the years. Examples of the biographical and root-finding article titles include:

- Famous Piano Teacher Lee Visits Hometown and Holds Seminar
- Director of a City Water Department
- Leader of Many Overseas Chinese Organizations in Toronto, Keen on Charity
- Miss California
- The First Ethnic Chinese in Space on US Space Shuttle
- Kung Fu Master, Zhang Cun-Lao
- Cai Nuan-Qiu Visited Hometown and Worshipped Ancestors

The following is typical of announcements for lost relatives, and demonstrates some of special problems that Chinese face in this situation, such as the tradition of using different names at different stages of life and the use of the Chinese lunar calendar for birth dates and holidays. At the same time, the detailed information on names and major life events is also characteristic of Chinese cultural affinities toward genealogical knowledge.

Huang Qin-Yei is looking for his brother Huang Ma-Ming who he has not seen in 50 years. Huang Ma-Ming, also named Huang Xuan-Shan, and Huang Ru-Ming, was born in Pan Li Village of Taishan on the first day of the first month of the

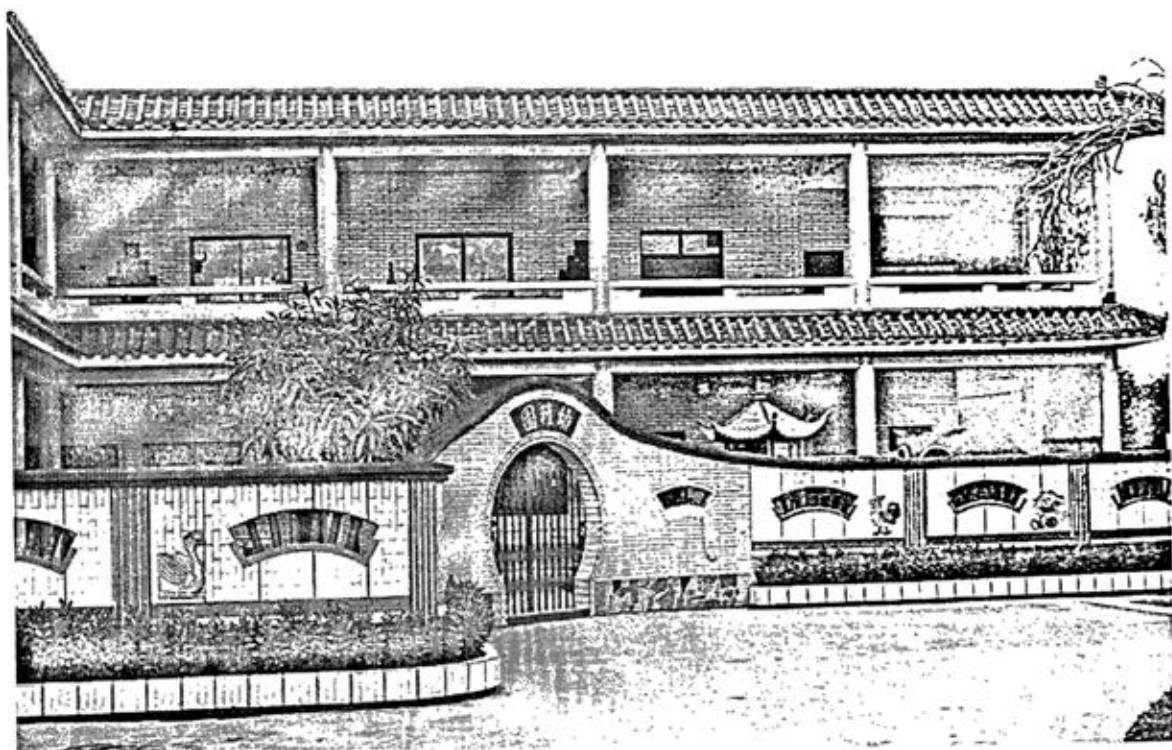


Figure 1. Preschool and kindergarten built by overseas Chinese funds in Zhongshan County, China. Source: Author.

Lunar Year 1938. His father was Huang Rui-Jing, also called Huang Hua. Huang Ma-Ming was the third child of the family. He was adopted by Huang Hua-Lian and Kuang Mei from the Heng Sui Village of Taishan in 1943. He passed through Hong Kong, and he went to study in Canada in 1953. His known address in the 1950s was xxxxx, Sudbury, Ontario; in the 1960s it was xxxxx, Capreol, Ontario, and in the 1980s it was xxxxx, Vancouver, B.C. In recent years he is believed to have been living in Toronto. If you have any information about Huang Ma-Ming, please contact Huang Xun-Ke at xxxxx, Shenzhen, China; Telephone: xxxxx; E-mail: xxxxx.

The three remaining thematic categories had roughly the same number of items each. The history, culture, and society category is discussed first, as it is more closely related to the biographies theme, above, than are the other two. Two thirds of these items dealt with the history and culture of overseas Chinese, with the remainder being split between stories related to the local home areas and those related

to China in general. Many of the China articles were travelogues, such as "A Visit to Hangzhou City," while the cultural articles often dealt with poetry, including one on "New Hakka Songs." Examples of overseas Chinese culture articles include:

- Patriotism of Zhongshan Overseas Chinese in San Francisco
- Roots in Guangdong, Links With the World—The First Conference of Guangdong Overseas Chinese
- Overseas Chinese Youth Association in Vietnam

News of local government activities formed another major theme among the items in these magazines for overseas ethnic Chinese readers. Most of these told of how local governments are working to build new roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects, as well as their involvement in economic development activities, such as the construction of industrial parks and the signing of joint venture

agreements between government bodies and foreign business interests. Legal affairs dealt primarily with the issue of property rights for overseas Chinese, with which Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices are sometimes involved.

Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices also organized other activities, including trips abroad to promote tourism and investments. The article, "Reaching Out to Overseas Chinese" (in *Taishan Xinning*), described a trip to Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand in December 2000 by Taishan City/County's mayor, vice-mayor, Overseas Chinese Affairs deputy director, and 13 other government officials. The stated purposes were to promote investment in Taishan County and to strengthen communication and relations between Taishan County and overseas Chinese. They conducted promotional seminars and met with overseas Chinese associations in all three countries, but especially in Malaysia where the groups included:

- Kuala Lumpur Taishan Association
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Si Yi Association
- Ci Xi Association
- Tan clan Association
- Wong clan Association
- *China Daily* (a Chinese newspaper)

The travel party also visited some factories and companies, but mostly they went to tourism sites to study their facilities, management, operations, and promotion. The article reported that the overseas Chinese they met responded with a strong desire to visit their hometowns in China and an interest in supporting the Taishan area through joint ventures. A leading Chinese businessman in Malaysia promised to organize an investment trip to China in the near future.

Since the 1990s, some overseas Chinese have been moving back to China. Some are retiring there, others own second homes, and many have started businesses. Local officials are keen to encourage business investments (C. Huang, 2000; Lew & Wong, 2002), and a good number of items in the magazines covered stories of overseas Chinese involvement in local economic ventures. Food-related industries, primarily food processing, were the leading area of investment, reflecting the largely rural nature of Taishan and Zhongshan counties. This was

followed by transportation investments, which were mostly bus and related transport companies, and some road construction company investments.

Reflections and Conclusions

The two most significant concepts defining Kotkin's (1993) international "global tribes" were a strong sense of common origin and the building of networks of business and cultural ties based upon those common origins. The study discussed here found that for coastal Guangdong Province, China, those networks were strongly tied to North America (the US and Canada) and Hong Kong and Macau.

A good proportion of the magazines assessed here were devoted to strengthening a sense of common origin with their readers. This was especially seen in the biographies of overseas Chinese (56 items) and items related to overseas Chinese society and culture (24 items), the latter of which often discussed gatherings of overseas Chinese in a particular county. Most of the items in the magazines, however, were focused on the building of social and economic networks. These included articles on county and township news (69 items), which empowers the reader with a feeling of insider knowledge about his or her home area. Most of these items were related to infrastructure and economic development. Education items (49 in total) served a similar function. Articles on donations (59 items), investments (36 items), and visits to China (23 items) more directly demonstrate how overseas Chinese are networked to their home area, and how readers may similarly develop closer ties. News of Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices activities also typically highlighted networking activity.

The ultimate purpose of China's county and township-based publications for overseas ethnic Chinese is to build upon existing networks of ethnicity (Mitchell, 2000) that will better the economic lot of the homeland. Figure 2 shows the process by which ethnic networks are constructed, as demonstrated by the content topics of the magazine reviewed in this study (cf. Table 3). The basic stage upon which such networks are built is the sense of common origin. This is something that cannot be taken for granted and most of the effort, in terms of the number of items, was placed on creating and maintaining this base.

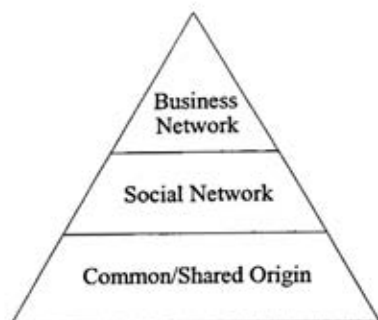


Figure 2. Building a global tribe network.

The next step is to create a social network that builds upon the established common origin. For overseas Chinese, the social ties to the home village areas are made tangible through the acts of donating money and through tourism. Tourism, therefore, is one of the two major ways that overseas Chinese turn their existential impulse into action. Tourism becomes an enabling device for creating a full sense of individual identity. For some, especially those who have not maintained close relationships to their ancestral areas, tourism would be an initial "safe" step, which might be followed by monetary donations. Alternatively, a history of donations can lay the basis for a very rewarding trip to see the benefits of one's actions. Schools, in particular, pay special respect to their benefactors by celebrating their visits.

The social network provides a basis for building a business network. Social networks, in essence, are a form of "social capital," which ethnic group members can use to build financial capital (Portes, 1994). Business agreements are a qualitative and quantitative level above social relationships in terms of their complexity and commitment. Throughout Asia, social ties tend to come before business contracts, and it makes sense that social networking items appear considerably more in the magazines than do business networking items.

China has gone through tremendous changes over the past 200 years. The migrations of Chinese to other parts of the world have had an especially significant impact on the social and physical development of coastal southern China. Institutional structures that have served the needs of overseas and home area Chinese in the past, however, may

Overseas Chinese Magazine Topics (# of items)

Overseas Chinese Investment News (13)
News of Visits Out of China (7)

Donation News (59)
News of Visits To China (23)

County / Township Domestic News (69)
Chinese History & Culture Articles (36)
Service Articles / Announcements (21)
Overseas Chinese News & Activities (14)

not serve their needs in the future. Today, the clan and regional support associations found in the Chinatowns of the world mostly serve elderly overseas Chinese. The efforts of Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices in China, including the publications examined in this study, tend to be oriented toward first-generation immigrants—those who lived at least their early lives in China. Many of these are older generation (pre-1949) migrants, though a small percentage of younger, more recent migrants are interested in homeland activities (cf. Fong, 1994; Sanders & Nee, 1987).

A recent trend has been to publish overseas Chinese news magazines on the World Wide Web (cf. Guangdong Overseas Chinese, <http://www.gdoverseaschn.com.cn/>). This is mostly done by provincial level Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices, though local level information is also expanding (cf. Zhongshan-Window, <http://www.zhongshan-window.com.cn/>), as are those set up by the private sector (cf. Taishan.com, <http://www.taishan.com/english/>). Although most of these are in Chinese, especially the government-based Web sites, they can be translated into many other languages using translation Web sites (e.g., AltaVista Bable Fish, <http://babel.altavista.com/>).

While some generalization can be made from the data presented here, differences are known to exist among ethnic Chinese from different parts of China, from different overseas countries, and within overseas communities themselves (Chan, 1999; Chang, 1995; Wong, 1997). Overseas ethnic Chinese communities are clearly diverse. Mitchell (2000) noted that

the idea of ethnic "solidarity," where each member of the community unilaterally advances the fortunes of co-ethnics [other members of the same ethnic group] both economically and socially, is shown to be a facile, romanticized depiction. While ethnic solidarity may occur in some contexts, particularly in the confrontation with forces hostile to the communities, there are numerous other examples where class, gender, and generational divides operate equally powerfully. (p. 399)

These generational, gender, and economic divides are likely to increase with time and as overseas ethnic Chinese communities become larger and more complex. They are unlikely to dissipate, however, as globalization trends towards transnational communities, multinational neighborhoods, and social capital building networks replicate in new ways the pioneering structures that overseas Chinese networks of ethnicity were built upon. Many have argued that these traditional support structures have given the extended Chinese family a distinct advantage in the global marketplace, by providing more flexible means of capital formation and production (Mitchell, 1995; Redding, 1990; Seagrave, 1995; Weidenbaum & Hughes, 1996). The new global economy, despite its Asian hiccup in 1997, is more likely to support the expansion of overseas Chinese existential travel than to interfere with it.

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