

# Migration and Commercial Network

—Chao-Zhou group in Thailand and  
their Home Remittance—

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Large-scale migration occurred from the late 19th century to the 1930's. There were 3 directions: from north to northeast, from inland areas to the coastal big cities, and from the south to southeast Asia; the southward and northward labor migrations being roughly equal. There was a short-term, periodic migration of farm workers and the like along with long-term or permanent abode-oriented (immigration) type of migration. Agriculture and mining in the northeastern region, industry in the coastal region, and commerce and sugar or rubber plantations in southeast Asia, were popular. In each of these cases, the provincial, affiliated relations of the migrants' native places were maintained without interruption and, based on the development of various organizations mediating the migration, labor migration was made easy. However, in terms of proficiency of the labor force and the relatively low correlation with industry should be noted.

With regard to the transfer of funds, there existed locally a country-wide remittance network of Shanxi bankers and the Remitting Houses directing remittances of Chinese merchants residing abroad in southeast Asia, which formed an international remittance network. The latter possessed several remittance routes based on Singapore and Hong Kong along with diverse exchange remittance functions.

The client in southeast Asia pays into the Remitting Houses with local currency. It is then remitted to the agent in Hong Kong by

Hong Kong dollars, exchanged for the currency of the People's Republic of China, and sent to agents in Fujian and Guangdong from where it is submitted to the remittee through the agent at home. This route was the established mode of the Remitting Houses, but even within this process there existed such forms as cancellation by countervailing by exchange trading in Singapore and Hong Kong, the abbreviation of cash remittance through merchandise transactions, and countervailing through trade connections by forming directly a settling connection with Guangdong and Amoy where remittances were concentrated. Selection was made among these, depending upon the price of merchandise and exchange rate in the market, and involved a close relationship between the southern Chinese economy and the money markets in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Based on these general background, this paper tried to examine the history of emigration of Chao-Zhou people in the east Guangdong province and their relationship with their home land.