

Identity Of The Hoa¹ In Ho Chi Minh City Under Government Policies Since Immigration

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Abstract

Due to varied reasons, the Chinese left their homeland migrating to Vietnam, especially to Ho Chi Minh City. Since immigrated in different times, the Chinese diaspora in Ho Chi Minh City identified themselves differently through the years. This identity has been affected by not only the mentality of immigrants but local government policies as well.

Residing in new land, the Hoa had their social life situation changed gradually. With the hope that all things go back to their source eventually, Chinese immigrants first identified themselves as expatriates. They believed that someday, when homeland became peaceful and their life got better, they would return home. However, situation of economy, politics and society of both local region and homeland changed their mind. Chinese diaspora then turned to be a “half expatriate – half citizen”, and finally they identified themselves and publicly admitted as Vietnamese citizens. The changes in local government policies are main factors which directly influenced identity of the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City.

Key words: Chinese diaspora, identity, government policies.

1. New issue of an old research: identity of the Chinese diaspora

Issues of Chinese diaspora have been ones that took concerns from many scholars for years. To Vietnamese scholars, we have those named “the Hoa’s issues”. As an important part of multi-ethnic countries, the Hoa takes significant roles in the countries’ economy development and culture spread-out. Doing research on the Hoa helps not only social science but economics and politics as well.

Researchs on the Hoa during early period were parts of Chinese diaspora in South East Asian countries. The contents were mostly about migration history and inhabitation in the initial stage. By 19th century, western scholars started to theoretically research the overseas Chinese issues. As a Dutch sinologist, scholar on Chinese history and religion, J.J.M de Groot wrote about system of sino-company in Borneo by 1885. Embassies and Consulates of China in South East Asian countries by late Qing period began to collect and sort documents of Chinese diaspora in area systematically. The documents became reliable and important sources for doing research on Chinese diaspora in South East Asia, made it have more theoretical standpoint. Those about history of Chinese diaspora were popular. Some scholars adopted Western learning returned, their research had eastern and western style linked. “Chinese diaspora in Nanyang and society of Min-Yue” written by Chen Da (1938) was notable work.

After reforming and opening to the outside world, research on Chinese diaspora had new developing orientation. Institutes for researching South East Asia were opened in many universities, projects on studying Chinese diaspora in this area have been continuously launching. Professor Zhuang Guotu of Xiamen University is a name that must be mentioned in the study of Chinese in Southeast Asia. Many publications under his name are related to Southeast Asian countries’ diaspora, including “General history of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia” (《东南亚华侨通史》1994), “Overseas Chinese at the turn of the century” (《世纪之交的海外华人》1998), “Relationship between overseas Chinese and China” (《华侨华人与中国的关系》2001), “The formation

and development of Chinese diaspora's society in East Asia: Network of Chinese Entrepreneurs, Immigration and Integration Trends" (《东亚华人社会的形成和发展：华商网络、移民与一体化趋势》2009), "New Changes in East Asian Chinese Associations in the past 30 years" (《近 30 年来东亚华人社团的新变化》2010). While other books discussing migrating and developing history of Chinese diaspora in South East Asian countries, the book "New Changes in East Asian Chinese Associations in the past 30 years" (2010) describes the changes of Chinese communities in East Asian countries in the past 30 years. It shows the basic overview and latest changes among Chinese diaspora's communities. A theoretical discussion started on Chinese associations and a study of Chinese associations in East Asia. With historical background, following contexts were developed into South East Asian countries' basic situations affected Chinese diaspora's communities. The book focused on new changes since 1980s, mainly conducted case studies on Chinese associations from the perspective of ancestral home or original residence.

The research team of the Nanyang Research Institute of Xiamen University, led by Zhuang Guotu, has made great achievements in the field of overseas Chinese research in Southeast Asia over the years. Research projects are based on grasping the latest research trends, discovering new data, and reinterpreting old data. Based on historical records and on-site interviews, it makes a detailed analysis of the origins and fate of Chinese and overseas Chinese. The changes in the whole process from immigration to settlement are conducive to promoting further research on the social relationship between Chinese and settlements, and giving scholars a lot of inspiration.

Academic circles around the world also link the issue of the Hoa in Vietnam with the Chinese diaspora's communities in Southeast Asia. While talking about the Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, they also raised the issue of Vietnam. British scholar Victor Purcell once said in his description of the process of Chinese immigration

to Southeast Asian countries and their settlement history that "the Chinese in Southeast Asia have a certain economic, political and social importance to this region; their influence is more or less Contaminate the countries of the world".

"Variation and Conservation: Cultural Adaptation of Southeast Asian Chinese" (《变异与保持：东南亚华人的文化适应》2001) published by Cao Yunhua is also a reliable reference. Author focused on the acculturation process of the Chinese diaspora, and what kind of changes occurred when they came across with the local culture. Since then, Cao Yunhua also pointed out the mutual influences between Chinese culture and other cultures. In order to integrate into the local life, the Chinese diaspora accept the local culture on the one hand, and on the other hand, developed their own culture, thus enriching the local culture. During the adaptation period, the Chinese diaspora actually faced many problems, both good and bad, influenced by local policies. In addition, "Political participation of Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia" (《东南亚华人的政治参与》2004) co-authored by Cao Yunhua discussed the ability of Chinese diaspora to participate in politics in Southeast Asian countries and the improvement of Chinese in this country. The book argued that the participation of Chinese diaspora in politics in Southeast Asia is to reconcile the relationship between the Chinese and the locals and solve some chronic problems, so that the Chinese diaspora also have the opportunity to live and work in peace and contentment, join local people in building up the country.

Kong Feili's "Chinese among others: A History of Chinese Immigration in Modern Times" (《他者中的华人：中国近现代移民史》) is the most important study in the field of overseas Chinese research in the past ten years. It describes the modern immigration in the context of world history. A comprehensive discussion on Chinese diaspora' issues were conducted in the framework of time – space – subject axis, then describing changes of Chinese immigrant by reasons, ways and

other local conditions. By using different methods to approach the issues of Chinese diaspora, Kong Feili believes that in the process of integrating into the new environment, the relationship between the Chinese and the surrounding "others" is the intricate and complex interactive relationships, as outsiders, the Chinese need to constantly know the "other" and gradually understand the "other" to live and coexist.

In Vietnam, the Hoa's issues get certain attention among scholars. As an important group that contributed to the reclamation and establishment of this place, the relevant history of the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City can be found in the book "History and description of Gia Dinh city" (嘉定城通志) edited by Zheng Huaide. "History and description of Gia Dinh city" is the most reliable reference material in the existing historical records for the geographical borders, the distribution characteristics of the residents in the early settlement of overseas Chinese, and the initial social organization. Zheng Huaide is not only a witness of Chinese history, but also the first generation of Chinese-Vietnamese, that is, the first generation of Mingxiang people, and was once the most important hero in the Nguyen Dynasty. Zheng Huaide recorded information about the Hoa as a descendant of overseas Chinese and as citizen of the Nguyen Dynasty, so these materials are objective, true and detailed. Ancient books have the historical value of ancient books, recording the life of overseas Chinese in the early days. However, those scenery are hard to find now. "History and description of Gia Dinh city" is therefore limited to the time factor. The Hoa's environment was just those of the old days.

Tsai Maw Kuey's 1968 doctoral dissertation "Chinese in Southern Vietnam" is a precious preference for those who doing research on the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City. This is the earliest comprehensive project to study the Hoa here. Published by the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, it is a thesis in French that the author successfully defended at the Faculty of Literature and Humanities in Paris in 1965. Tsai Maw Kuey is an

overseas Chinese in Saigon. He studied at Saigon Law-Huazhong School, and then continued his studies at the Sorbonne School of Theology (the predecessor of the University of Paris). Tsai Maw Kuey, growing up in Saigon, among Chinese diaspora, understanding the characteristics of this place and the living environment of this ethnic group, wrote a paper with great research value. The author is a researcher, but also a member of the research object. "Chinese in Southern Vietnam" drew a panorama of the Hoa from the early settlement to their achievements. To study current Chinese Vietnamese in Ho Chi Minh City needs to go back to the roots of history, and the data in Tsai Maw Kuey's thesis is an indispensable and precious parameter. With the author's research results, modern scholars can conduct investigation and comparison, and conduct longitudinal research.

Recent reseaches on the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh have been led by professor Phan An – scholar of Southern Institute of Social Sciences. Together with several scholars such as Tran Khanh and Chau Thi Hai in the north, he built a system of Chinese studies in Vietnam. He is a leading scholar in the study of oversea Chinesees' issue in southern Vietnam during 1980s and 1990s. For years, Prof. Phan An has done fieldwork in the Chinese diaspora's community of Ho Chi Minh City, and has written many related academic works. He paid attention their encouragement activities and labor issues in Ho Chi Minh City. His earliest monograph on the Hoa issues was "Temples of the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City" published in 1990. The book was published with the approval of the Committee of the Hoa Ethnicity and the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee. This is a comprehensive, descriptive work that was researched and written by several scholars under the guidance of prof. Phan An. "Temples of the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City" examined traditional Chinese folk belief activities through studying temples system of the Hoa in the city. Although the research object of this book is temples, it has great reference for the study of Chinese clans and ancestral halls, contributing to understand the Hoa identity's history.

In 2005, Social Science Press published Phan An's "Chinese in South Vietnam". This book is the comprehensive result of the professor's years of research on the Chinese in southern Vietnam. It adopted the research results of the Sino-Vietnamese Tsai Maw Kuey's doctoral dissertation. The Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City are regarded as part of the interpretation of the Chinese community in Southeast Asia, and at the same time understand the relationship between the Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City and the Hoa in Soc Trang, a southwest city of Vietnam. The book specifically reproduces the process of Chinese immigration to Saigon - Cho Lon, and the establishment of various cultural, educational, social and other fields here.

With the development of society and the constant changes in life, the Chinese in Ho Chi Minh City have also changed themselves along with the historical flow, making appropriate adjustments to the changes around them, and gradually adapting to the real conditions. Phan An and his students interviewed Chinese people continuously, stepped into the Chinese society, and deeply understood every corner of life of this ethnic group. In 2006, Phan An and the Ho Chi Minh City Ethnic Minority Literature and Art Association jointly published the anthology "Research on Chinese Culture in Southern Vietnam". Based on this anthology, the book "The Culture of the Chinese in Southern Vietnam" was published in early 2016. This book introduces to readers how the the Hoa retain and develop their cultural essence during the process of localization and participation in local revolutionary activities.

Professor Phan An not only went deep into Chinese social life many times, but also collaborated with various Chinese groups and organizations to write many books about this ethnic group, and also published many articles in different academic journals. Phan An's Chinese studies put the Chinese group in the space of the local expanded group for general analysis, including all ethnological and anthropological aspects of Chinese society, life, economy, and politics. Through his research

and published works, recent scholars can have reliable base to analyze the Hoa's identity.

2. Concise history of Chinese diaspora in the south of Vietnam

Derived from subjective and objective reasons, both historical factors and socio-political situations, there had soon been many migrations of the Chinese to different countries and areas around the world. The Chinese immigrants had established themselves a separated community there; moreover, they had been continuously interacting with native community, integrating in indigenous socio-cultural life. Hence, they have created themselves a specific Chinese culture out over the China's boundary.

Vietnam and China have long-standing diplomatic relations; close connections in bloodline and racial origin. In the range of economy, culture, and politic, Vietnam and China have total interactive effects. The relation between Vietnam and China, regarded as diplomatic relations between two countries, is in fact in a very specific and really rare situation. As a result of that, Vietnam is one of the many Southeast Asian countries receiving earlier Chinese migrants and mass migration waves. The Chinese migrants residing in Vietnam varied from class origin, region and historical periods; they lived everywhere from the north to the south of Vietnam.

Especially, in the south of Vietnam, the appearance of Chinese migrants dated back to Water Chenla era. The maritime trade with Chinese (Tang dynasty) merchants had developed there then. Merchant ships, loading full of goods on the way from Guangdong, China to Persia and vice versa always docked at Chenla. Merchants and shipmen of those ships had stayed in Chenla for a period time, on one hand they needed to stop for merchandizing and preparing for the next trip back to homeland, on the other hand, they had to wait for the seasonal winds. The Chinese merchant ships usually took the south-western wind to ship back to China. The Chinese merchants and shipmen almost didn't intend to live here long but some exceptions. They found out the

advantages of merchandizing here and that the life conditions were so interesting. According to “The customs of Cambodia” of Tcheou Ta-kouan, the Tang, they almost were shipmen, considering of paying no tax, easy conditions to earn livings and to build houses, fulfill of women, well-equipped situation in Chenla, they often stayed here longer, having no intension to return to homeland².

By the era following, because of mainly political problems, the Chinese migrating to south of Vietnam widened in the range of class origin, including both merchants, shipmen and commanders, soldiers, deportees.... By the end of Ming dynasty and the beginning of Qing dynasty, there were mass migrations to south of Vietnam, pointing out the rising of Qing dynasty. In the middle of 17th century, a large number of Chinese peoples, including the government officials and civilians, originally loyal to Ming dynasty, dissatisfied with new regime, had decided to leave their homeland for new one. The two biggest groups, residing in south of Vietnam this period were headed by Mac Cuu³ and Tran Thuong Xuyen⁴.

Mac Cuu, was born in Leizhou, Guangdong. He was a commander of Zheng Chenggong⁵ troops against Qing dynasty. He firstly arrived in Cambodia, Cambodian king especially trusted him, appointed him to important post; however, considering to peaceful life, he took the permission from Cambodian king, together with about 400 people, including relatives, soldiers, confucian scholars... moved to Peam (Ha Tien) by 1967. The Chinese migrants leaded by Mac Cuu were almost born in Guangzhou and Fukien.

²<https://www.baidu.com/ebook> 《真腊风土记》——流寓：“唐人之为水手者，利其国中不出衣裳，且米浪易求，妇女易得，屋室易办，器用易足，买卖易为，往往皆逃避于彼”

³ 鄭玖

⁴ 陳上川

⁵ 鄭成功

The second group headed to Da Nang by 1679 with the number of 3000 peoples. This group derived from two different groups from Guangdong, they, with arms and luggages on more than 50 ships, moved towards Da Nang at the same time. They were seperatedly leaded by Tran Thuong Xuyen and Duong Ngan Dich⁶, moving to Da Nang asking for the help from Nguyen lord. The Nguyen Lord were worried about northern government, so that the Lord required them to ship towards southern area, reclaiming the land of Water Chenla. Tran Thuong Xuyen along with his group resided in Tran Bien (Bien Hoa, Dong Nai); while the group of Duong Ngan Dich once again divided into two branches, one stayed in Phan Tran (Gia Dinh) with him, the other was headed by Hoang Tien (second-in-command of Duong Ngan Dich) moving towards south-western, breaking the fresh land of Mekong Delta area (Phan An, 2005, 9).

By 1689, the population of Water Chenla increased, mainly due to the increasing number of Chinese migrants here, they had the area broken up to 1000 miles. The Nguyen government assigned Nguyen Cu Trinh⁷ into special envoy, in charge of marking the frontier and statistifying the population here. Nguyen Cu Trinh decided to group the large size of population of Chinese diaspora into specific areas, hence, the Thanh Ha village and Minh Huong village came to existence. Under the push of contradictions between Tay Son insurgent army and the Chinese migrates supporting Nguyen dynasty, Thanh Ha village and Minh Huong village joined into one, the Cho Lon city accordingly appeared in 1778.

The existence of Chinese diaspora group as an independent community, having almost no influences from indigenous group attracted special concern of native government. It pushed the government officials to have immediate solutions. The result was that self-controlled bands or associations in which the members used the same dialect had been established. In 1787, it was the first time in the history of Chinese migration that

⁶ 楊岸迪

⁷ 阮居貞

four bands of Chinese migrants, including Guangzhou, Fukien, Teochew, Hainan appeared. Through the name of each band, we can recognize the regional origin of the diaspora in the south of Viet Nam at that time; but it doesn't mean that there were only four types of dialect. The reason why was clear that there were some whose population size was too small to make up one separated band, they were permitted to freely join one of the four bands. After 1787, the mass migration of Chinese into south of Vietnam made other dialect groups rapidly develop. Therefore, local government had to rearrange the Chinese migrants suitably. By 1814, the original four bands were rearranged into seven according to regional origin of the migrants, including Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, Chaozhou, Guangzhou, Wenzhou, Jingzhou and Suizhou.

At the dawn of reclaiming period, Nguyen dynasty gave the Chinese diaspora many of privilege, thanked to their contribution in breaking the fresh land and their loyalty to the court. Since Minh Mạng era (1791 -1840), the court limited the privilege to the Chinese. Since then, facing to the discrimination in tax policies of the court urged the Chinese diaspora intergrate into indigenous life, gradually adopted the effects of indigenous group; their descent had been leaving the Minh Huong group for incorporating with indigenous community.

Since 1862, with the Treaty of Saigon, French step by step conquered the south of Vietnam. At the beginning, the French colonial government need a huge number of cheap manpower, and Chinese labour met their need. The French government eased the immigrant policy so as to attract mass migration of Chinese to south of Vietnam. The immigration size was so huge that government had to rearrange the seven bands again to suit new situation by 1871. This time, they considered the linguistic origin of immigrants for grouping; the number of bands was still seven, but their names somehow changed (Table 1). To the ones who used the very different language to other seven, the government required them all to join Hakka group.

Table 1 – List of seven bands of Chinese diaspora in south Vietnam since 1871 (Tsai Maw Kuey, 1968, 43)

Band	Dialect	Regional origin
Guangzhou	Cantonese	North-west of Guangzhou, Xijiang delta
Fuzhou	Fuzhou	Shantou
Qiongzhou	Hainan	Haikou (Hainan island)
Fukien	Macao, Minnan	Macao, Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, south of Fujian
Hainan	Wenchang	Wenchang (Hainan island)
Fuzhou	Fuzhou	Fuzhou, north of Fujian
Hakka	Hakka	North of Guangzhou, south of Hunan, Guangxi

By 1885, the French colonial government rearranged the Chinese bands again. Fuzhou band joined into Fukien, Qiongzhou joined into Hainan; hence, there were only 5 bands: Canton, Teochew, Fukien, Hainan and Hakka. The government from China were not satisfied the arrangement of Chinese migrants into bands and associations. The China believed that it had been a discrimination against Chinese migrants to sow division, not the grouping or linking those who mostly came from Canton and Fukien. However, the China had no actions to change the situation until 1946 when the agreement between China and France was signed. Then, Chinese bands and associations were replaced by “Chinese administrative group of regional origin”. Actually, the administrative groups were named as the names of previous bands (table 2).

Table 2 – Chinese administrative groups of regional origin in Saigon – ChoLon by 1948 (Tsai Maw Kuey, 1968, 74)

Group	Dialect	Population	Rate
Canton	Cantonese	128.050	41.3%
Teochew	Teochew	114.390	36.9%
Fukien	Macao, Fuzhou	24.180	7.8%
Hakka	Hakka	32.860	10.6%
Hainan	Hainan, Wen-Zhang	10.510	3.4%

The Hakka group had not only the ones who originally spoke Hakka dialect but also those who use other dialects, they were because of small size of population that had to join the Hakka group. These small groups usually came from Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunan, Guangxi and Guizhou. The Chinese who came from Canton and Fukien often called them “outsider” – the ones who came from other provinces.

The organization of Bands and Associations of the Chinese in south of Vietnam had been stopped by 1954 when southern Vietnam government took the rules. In spite of that, the so-called “band – association” had been rooted in local community that the Chinese diaspora in south of Vietnam up to now still adopt the old model to manage their own activities.

3. As Tang descendants we speak our mother tongue

The Chinese diaspora living in Viet Nam and all around the world are mostly originated from the Han ethnic in China. Their language is academically called “Hanyu”, however, maybe in order to unify the name of the ethnic group and the language they used, in Viet Nam, we often name it “the Hoa language” (Huayu).

Huayu of the Hoa in Vietnam is the transnational variant of Hanyu in China. Hanyu in China has both the common system and dialect system used in different environment and communicating situations. The common one is the standard Chinese, known as Mandarin Chinese (普通話), it is standard language of China, commonly used by Chinese of all regions in China in administrative communication, education and cultural activities.

Dialect is used in other situations and there is also the separation into common dialect and patois; in where, the common one becomes a bridge connecting two or more communities when there is no positive result in communicating with patois. The reason is that to oral communication, the differ between patois of various groups appears to be independent language system. For example, Shunde (順德) and Huizhou (惠州) are two

regions in Canton, China; the residents of these two areas in administrative communication, education and cultural activities of course use standard Chinese; but in daily life they can also use other language, the patois of Shunde and patois of Huizhou; however, when residents from one area need to communicate to the other, they have to use common dialect, the Cantonese as a bridge for inter-communication. Cantonese is the representative of Yue dialect system (粤 方 言). Yue dialect system is one of the many dialects in Hanyu dialect system, distributed mainly in Canton, the east of Guangxi. The Cantonese, therefore can use standard Chinese and Cantonese, in this case, Cantonese is their patois. People living in other part of China are engaged in the same situation, and one Chinese can use at least two or more than two kinds of Hanyu, three kinds is the popular result.

When the Chinese migrants came to Vietnam, Mandarin Chinese still continued its original role as a common language used in education and cultural activities of the community up to now. In other communicating situations, Chinese diaspora always uses their own dialects. This is one important factor to have the Chinese diaspora in Vietnam divided into disparate smaller groups as we used to discuss above. Now, there are five groups, including Canton, Teochew, Fukien, Hanan and Hakka. Every group has their own common hall (會 館). In the common hall, they use common dialect and patois too. It is appeared clearly to those of the first generation who use skillfully both dialect and patois at the same time.

After long period of residing, the area of using common dialect was enlarged gradually and hence common dialect became language of the hall, the use of patois therefore had certain limits. To the diaspora of second generation on, we can easily recognize this situation. Most of second generation can listen but not many of them can speak patois, the patois had been replaced with language of the hall, common dialect. The third generation on is hardly able to use patois, they

totally use language of the hall, and some how need help from parents when they want to communicate to grandparents, who knows the patois only. The separating between common dialect and patois disappeared, so the triangle structure “patois – common dialect – Mandarin Chinese” in the community of Chinese diaspora became just two-factor structure “dialect – Mandarin Chinese”. For instance, a Hoa originated in Chenghai (程海), China, can use the patois of Chenghai, also has to be able to speak Teochew dialect – language of their hall and of course Mandarin Chinese too. Still, his second generation – his children mostly used Teochew dialect, had been gradually incapable of using Chenghai patois; then, his grandchildren totally know nothing about Chenghai patois but Teochew dialect and Mandarin Chinese.

The recent situation of dialect system of Chinese diaspora in Ho Chi Minh city as we show below:

Group (Hall)	Dialect		Dialect system
	Academic name	Common name	
Canton	Cantonese (Guangzhou, Guangfu)	Cantonese (Guangdong)	Yue (粵)
Teochew	Teochew	Teochew, the Tieu	Min (閩)
Fukien	Xiamen	Fukien	
Hainan	Haikou	Hainan	
Hakka	Meizhou	Hakka	Hakka (客家)

(Du Quế Tiên, 2010, 31-56)

Different groups of the Hoa used to hold their own activities in their own places like common hall, school, hospital, graveyard, funeral parlour...; but, in fact, Chinese diaspora of different groups can also take part in many of activities that other groups held; so, the use of varied kind of dialect is as followed:

- Language of common hall: the dialect that officially used in the social activities of whom of the same hall; for example, the Hainan people speak Hainan dialect (Haikou) in their common life, especially in the Hainan hall.

- Language of family: family that all members are of one group will of course use the language of common

hall. Nevertheless, every Hoa family is always a combination of two or more different small groups of the Hoa; there is usually one common dialect used at home only, and hence, it must depend on the language of common hall of the father; few of them use the one of mother. For example, in a Hoa family, father is originated from Teochew, mother is the Fukien, the Teochew dialect is often set as default language in this family daily life, the Fukien dialect is commonly used when they are in maternal family.

- Common language: Chinese diaspora in Ho Chi Minh city is good at economic activities, especially Canton group, whose population is the largest one. Cantonese, therefore, get advantage over other groups in communication. As a result of that, Cantonese has been the common dialect of the whole Chinese diaspora community in Ho Chi Minh city. And hence, those who are not of Canton group can speak Cantonese to communicate beside their own patois.

- Language at Chinese diaspora' schools: although all groups of the Hoa wanted to have their descendants mastered listening – speaking – reading and writing patois skillfully, they had not been professional indeed because of oral method. Only the Mandarin Chinese, which had been continued the original tradition from China, had been systematically taught and used at school with all curriculum, training plans and textbooks... As a whole, the kind of language that is maintained traditionally and systematically with all aims in the Chinese diaspora community must be Mandarin Chinese, but not any other dialects or patois. Mandarin Chinese is also the official language that Chinese diaspora in Vietnam uses to communicate with Chinese diaspora all over the world, including the one living in China mainland, Taiwan, South East Asia, South America...

In conclusion, subject and environment of communication are the direct impacts on choosing which kind of languages to use in Chinese diaspora community; one member of this group is able to use many different kinds of Chinese, of Chinese dialects; it means that he can

speak 2 to 4 languages. This is the popular characteristic of Chinese diaspora in Ho Chi Minh city. Language is the specialty of Chinese diaspora in both Ho Chi Minh city and all around the world. They speak their mother tongue and make it popular. Many local people living in Chinatown area in just one month can speak Chinese language. Chinese has become an identified signal of Chinese diaspora and their descendants.

4. As “half expatriate – half citizen” we proceeded Vietnamese – Chinese in naming business and education

Chinese immigrants are those who made Saigon – Cho Lon become a famous active city in area. During first half of 20th century, Chinese diaspora were half of the whole population in Sai Gon – Cho Lon. Economy of this region mainly depended on trade and commerce of Chinese diaspora. Those of different dialect groups occupied a dominant position in certain business during initial period of immigration. Depending on the varied social and political situations through the years, their business expanded and enriched. During French colonial time, most of SME units were belong to Chinese diaspora. The diaspora controlled 40% of wholesale business and 70% of retail merchant (Du Quế Tiên, 2010, 22).

Under many government policies, Chinese diaspora's economic activities had come across lots of difficulties. A large part of them decided to leave for new place during French colonial time and the administration of Republic of Vietnam. Because of the fact that it was so expensive to move abroad again, returning back to homeland was not better choice either, many of Chinese diaspora decided to stay in southern Vietnam. Staying meant that they had to adopt policies toward foreigners at that time.

Edict n^o53 promulgated by president Ngo Dinh Diem on October 3rd 1956 forbade foreigners do business in 11 trades, including fish and meat, bazaar, charcoal, fuel, popular pawnbroker, fabric, scrap, rice-husking factory, cereal, logistics and passengers, middleman. Being those who controlled most of the SME market,

edict n^o53 forced Chinese diaspora to be naturalized to continue the business.

Turning to be a citizen of Republic of Vietnam was, in fact, not a realistic choice to Chinese diaspora in south Vietnam those years. They were still waiting for results from the negotiating between government of Southern Vietnam and Taiwan about citizenship issues. However, supportive ways from government of Southern Vietnam fastly and productively urged foreigners, especially Chinese diaspora to proceed naturalized procedures. In order to maintain normal business, many diaspora had become Vietnamese citizen on paper. Their “jì” (記), began to have Vietnamese names on the signs beside Chinese charaters. As the fact that, more than 70% of Vietnamese words are sino-vietnamese.

The names somehow are not far different from Chinese ones by oral way, but by writing. Most of their brand signs along Chinatown streets are in both Vietnam and traditional characters. The Vietnamese names were big capital letters in the middle of the signs. Chinese characters were smaller ones to the right or seperated into both sides of the Vietnamese words. These signs have been becoming a specific characteristic of Chinese diaporas' businesses. Number of Vietnamese families in the Chinatown area nowadays is as many as those of Chinese diaspora, however, making brand signs in both Vietnamese and Chinese has becoming a specialty here, Vietnamese businesses think of it as something beautiful and attractive.

In education, since 1956 education for students of Chinese diaspora community started to change curriculum under new policies of Republic of Vietnam. Through directive N^o518 GD/PC/M on July 16th 1956 from Ministry of Education about controlling schools of Chinese diaspora and altering curriculum in elementary schools, the government firstly had some contents about system of Southern Vietnam and responsibility of foreigners to Vietnam added into higher class' civic education course. These contents were printed shortly in Vietnamese or Chinese.

By the year 1958, through secret paper n^o257-THSV/M on November 6th 1958 from Office of Chinese Affairs to governors, signs of school's name, class' name, banners, maps... all were requested to change into Vietnamese. All students must be able to speak in Vietnamese and remember Vietnamese National Anthem. During transition period, Chinese was allowed but must be minified. The transition started since 1958-1959 academic year to 1961-1962 academic year. Local governments aimed at making all Chinese diaspora's schools into totally Vietnamese schools. Office of Chinese Affairs had also requested to increase Vietnamese credits, to add Chinese courses as one foreign language into Chinese middle schools' curriculum beside English and French. The Chinese Vietnamese descendants were able to choose two out of three foreign languages.

Besides, the old system of Chinese diaspora' schools in Saigon – Cholon had been taken over by government of Southern Vietnam. In order to administrate the schools, government of Southern Vietnam executed series of methods: limit Chinese Vietnamese to open an individual school, force Chinese diaspora's schools to have Vietnamese principles and to make sure that at least 51% of professeurs, teachers and students are Vietnamese, force Chinese Vietnamese professeurs to get same education level as Vietnamese native ones, require Chinese to be regarded as a foreign language which low credit, ask students to wear Vietnamese students' uniforms and to sing National Anthem everyday under national flag (Trịnh Thị Mai Linh, 2014, 140).

The policies toward Chinese diaspora' schools were mostly executed during 1955 to 1970. Government of Southern Vietnam basically achieved their purpose to localize the schools into Vietnamese schools. Since 1970s, although policies of the government had been slackened, but effects from previous period had Chinese diaspora' education changed dramatically. The demand to study in Vietnamese and master Vietnamese at a high level made studying hard. Many Chinese descendants had

to quit school, then turned back to family education style like their parents used to in the years when having no Chinese schools. But, the teachers who can teach them, some had moved abroad or back to China earlier, others were too old to continue the job.

One other reason that affected Chinese diasporas' descendants to be educated is reference books. In the past, they used to have books sent from China mainland or Hongkong, Taiwan. After Vietnam declared independence in 1945, the North and South of Vietnam were under two different political system. The Chinese descendants living in the North got concerned by the Peoples' Republic of China, while those in the South received supports from Hongkong and Taiwan. Since government of Southern Vietnam were in power, the supports became more and more difficult. Chinese diaspora' descendants have to study with old books or photocopied ones. The black and white books were printed with low quality, it made the students unwilling to go to schools.

New generation of Chinese diaspora who were born in Saigon-Cholon gradually adapted new conditions. They accepted Chinese as a foreign language at school and took the Vietnamese curriculum with Vietnamese students and teachers. The Chinese are originally studios and smart, therefore, once adapted they turn out to be outstanding students. The studying at first was obliged to change from Chinese into Vietnamese, that were not agreed by most of the Chinese diaspora. However, forced assimilation is one unavoidable reality in the development of one immigrants' community. When decided not to leave Vietnam for any other areas, they also decided to adjust to the new while trying their best to keep their traditional characteristics.

The Chinese diaspora since French colonial times to Southern Vietnam government had faced many unfair and unreasonable policies that limited both their businesses and education. Many had left for new land, the rest because of varied reasons continued to stay and integrated into local life. The integration primarily were

not rooted from their own wish, but by the assimilated policies. Number of the Chinese immigrants since 1950s also decreased. Marriage among Chinese immigrants and marriage of Chinese immigrants with local women increased. Population of the Chinese community increased by the birth from these marriages. Their children had characteristics from both father and mother. The ability to adapt local culture, especially language had become stronger. Vietnamese were no longer the fearsome to Chinese community.

Language is the principle method of human communication. Once local language integrated into a community, their adaption to local society becomes more powerful. The literacy ability had given Chinese diaspora chances to sustain their business and to live in peace. In spite the fact that Chinese diaspora had stepped forward to accept Saigon-Cholon as a new homeland, they still took precautions on local government and somehow looked forward to hearing something expected from hometown. Therefore, indentity of being a “half expatriate-half citizen” was profound.

5. As Vietnamse citizen we have had our ancestral hall built and developed

During the past decades, the Chinese diaspora had come to the south of Vietnam for earning living and avoid political wars. At dawn of the immigration, number of immigrants was not too many, moreover, they were not all relatives. It was hard to identify ancestral roots. Chinese diaspora firstly gathered in groups of geopolitical relations. The organization of each group was made like the modal of traditional lineage organization. They had leaders of the group and made regulations to operate; they bought their own estates and had own funds, they built common halls for group affairs, common ancestral halls for ancestor worship, cemeteries; they also had their own hospitals. The dawn of Chinese diaspora in south of Vietnam was praiseworthy.

Traditional lineage organization was the key for Chinese diaspora to gather and develop themselves as an independent community. However, because of having no blood relations, they didn't call this type of organization traditional lineage, but it is known as common hall. While the Chinese diaspora still indentified themselves as expatriates, the awareness of lineage was limited by economic conditions and the mindset of returning to the homeland one day. Common ancestral halls had become common worship area for all families of one group – one band. After obsequies, memorial tablets of ancestors were sent to common ancestral halls. The worship was also entrusted to the care of the halls' administrators.

Since 1950s to 1970s, Chinese diaspora faced up with many unfair policies, common halls activities gradually weakened and were managed by local government. The public properties of each Chinese group were retaken, cemeteries were asked to move away, common ancestral halls turned out to be difficult to operate. Many families had their ancestors' memorial tablets brought home for worship.

After 1975, Vietnam unified, the south of Vietnam changed. Vietnam Communist Party led the whole country into social republic era. Life of the Chinese Vietnamese in the southern area has changed day by day. In 1985, Secretary of Ho Chi Minh City Municipal Party Committee, Mr. Nguyen Van Linh had made a speech in traditional meeting with Chinese compatriots, he said: "The Chinese compatriots of Ho Chi Minh City and in the whole country have fought side by side with other ethnic groups, suffered the hard periods, sacrificed themselves for a victory of Ho Chi Minh battle, for an independent Saigon, as far as a united Vietnam; made Vietnam step into social democracy." He also said that, "In nearly 50,000 Chinese compatriots of Ho Chi Minh City, many were born and grew up in Vietnam, used to endure lots of oppression, difficulties; used to cooperate with Vietnamese labours to fight for reasonable rights and country's liberation. This action is the sign of realistic

blood connection, of enthusiasm and creativity of a citizen to the homeland.” (Nghị Đoàn, 1987, 33)

In the book “Some issues of social democracy reformation” published by Ho Chi Minh Press, Mr. Nguyen Van Linh also wrote that, “Chinese compatriots, regarding Vietnam as their own home country, should have the same rights and responsibilities as the Vietnamese. Chinese compatriots are trying their best to contribute to and protect the socialism.” (Nghị Đoàn, 1987, 33)

Nghị Đoàn, a Chinese revolutionary soldier, also said that, “Today’s Chinese compatriots in our city has no longer been those ‘Chinese expatriates’ or ‘visitors’..., but are citizen of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Constitution of our country had them treated equally like many other ethnic groups and provided with total citizenship’s rights and responsibilities. Vietnamese law guaranteed their equal rights in the society” (Nghị Đoàn, 1987, 34)

The Chinese diaspora since then have been publicly known as Vietnamese citizen, they also regarded themselves as citizen of Social Republic of Vietnam. Chinese activities in Ho Chi Minh City have recovered. The stability in politic gives chances to develop. The Hoa families started to allow exogamy. They as a result of that widen their living area to out of Chinatown. Besides, new policies made opportunities for Chinese Vietnamese to regain connection with overseas relatives. It is also convenient for overseas relatives to send supportive materials into Vietnam. Finding origin and ancestors has become easier since the diplomatic relation between Vietnam and the Peoples’ Republic of China back to normal. Lineage awareness and traditional worship to ancestor have been becoming one of the first concern.

Clan connection has been rebuilt, number of ancestral halls increased. In comparing with the last period, the ancestral halls now are those of each clan, not the common ones of the big group anymore. This type of ancestral halls must have existed by the dawn of immigration. However, because of political and

economic reasons, activities of these halls were not open. Besides, the connection of Chinese diaspora's clans in Ho Chi Minh city mostly depended on geopolitical relations but parentage ones, connection at first was hard. Since indentifying as a Vietnamese citizen, traditional culture of the ethnic group have been strengthened. However, new modal of society has changed traditional extended family into nuclear family. These have led to unfirm link of lineage organization. It is so-called "the safety and arbitrary" (Qianhang, 2009, 33) in joint modal of nowadays' lineage organization. Although traditional functions of lineage organization in society administration, economy, education... are not as completed as they used to be in the past, recent activities still have certain roles in social organizing.

Ancestor worship have always been the precious tradition of Chinese people. The worship shows descedants spirit of gratitude toward ancestors. Chinese people believes that ancestors have always been around to protect descedants in life. Ancestor worship brings them peaceful and prosperous life. The Chinese Vietnamese now gather in a clan organization so as to know origin of family and to help each other. Each year, activities of an ancestral hall just limit in two or three main ones: ancestor worship, student support in autumn and respect for the elderly in spring. Clan organization and its traditions have been contributing to stabilize social order and politic, educate members and give supports on economy.

In spite of the fact that there are not too much activities, the existence of ancestral halls and the increasing number (more than 40 till 2020) have shown the spirit of preserving tradition of Chinese ethnic group. Moreover, it is also the expression of trust in government and in Communist Party. The fearsome from the last period has turned to be the trust, the hope of a citizen to their home country. The Chinese Vietnamese become totally rely on local government. Although Chinese Vietnamese have started to live open and adopt local culture, the pain and unfair during 1978 – 1979 have made them live and work carefully, even in cultural life.

New policies towards Chinese Vietnamese show changes of government from transition period to sustainable developing time. Life of Chinese Vietnamese have continuously been developing under the management of local governors. Many of them hold important posts in national institutions and become the representatives for the whole community. They timely update new situations and publicize into community, regulate wrong informations and prevent unexpected incidents. Chinese Vietnamese, as new society's citizens always try hard to study and to work for a better life, a better country. The existence of clan organization marks love of Chinese Vietnamese towards their mother country, Vietnam. The appearing of many new ancestral halls symbolize awareness of lineage development, ethnic tradition's inheritance. These are the symbols of citizen awareness to one country.

Conclusion

Identity of an ethnic group can be expressed by varied factors. The way that it is expressed also depends on different causes. Identity of the Chinese immigrants in Ho Chi Minh City has mostly been affected by political problems, especially policies of local government towards foreigners by the years.

Chinese immigrants by dawn came to the south of Vietnam for finding political asylum or finding new livelihood. They didn't think of living in this new land for too long. Therefore, they used to identify themselves as a "guest". Local people think of them as "outsider" too. Chinese expatriate was their name tag those years. While realizing that it was not realistic to return homeland and being forced by local government, the Chinese diaspora need to make a choice. Some decided to leave for new land, others stayed. Deciding to stay meant that they have to adopt naturalization and citizenship. However, because it had not been derived from their own wish, the identity to be citizen was still not thorough. Therefore, we have this period called "half citizen – half expatriate" time of Chinese diaspora. After independence of southern Vietnam, socialist republic country has changed

a lot. The Chinese diaspora one again faced many difficulties and chances. After reforming period, the Chinese Vietnamese have been officially regarded as Vietnam one of 53 minorities. New policies towards minorities, including Chinese Vietnamese changed their own identity. The whole identity of citizenship has been established. The Chinese Vietnamese have been publicly known as Vietnamese citizen with completed rights and responsibilities.

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