

## 从“行”单说起 The “Hong” List in 1880

1880年的 Singapore & Straits Directory 登录了十八页的『中西通贸易之新加坡华人名录』，英文标题是『The Singapore Hong List』。这里的“Hong”字，猜想是广东话里的“行”，“商行”的“行”，“行业”的“行”。名录里的商行英文名字看上去几乎清一色是闽南/潮语拼音，足以证明这段时期新加坡的闽/潮商势力。

为什么用“Hong”而不是闽南拼音的“Hang”？这里猜想也许英殖民政府在香港早就有这样的名录，这里的英籍官员哪懂粤行“Hong”对不上闽行的“Hang”，沿袭照用了。

名录里有两处登记了“恒茂”，一处地址是 5, Synagogue Street，另一处地址是 91 Upper Boat Quay；后者注明是米商。

1886年、1887年，恒茂分别登上了 Singapore & Straits Directory 里主要华商(『The Principal Chinese Firms』)的名单。

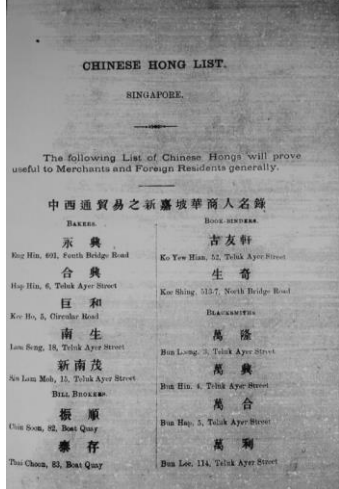
位于天福宫旁侧的崇文阁始建于 1868 年，是华社最早有组织、持续性的公众知识传播场所，十几年后重修，刻有捐款者名字的石碑立于 1887 年。曾祖楊本铭有合伙的商号“恒茂”与“楊恒茂”均出现其上，实非偶然。“楊恒茂”在更早的 1879 年，也响应了重修恒山亭的筹募号召，捐献了十二元。

1888 年至 1896 年期间，主要华商名单里没有“恒茂”或“楊恒茂”。不过，1896 年立的萃英书院募捐芳名碑上又记录了楊恒茂号喜捐大银一百大元。1897 年，楊恒茂登上了主要华商的名单。然后自 1898 年起到 1907 年，除了 1905 年，祖父楊昭固合伙(\*)的楊集茂号就连续出现在这个名单上，注明是米商。1907 年的义勇演武亭 (Beach Road Chinese Volunteer Club) 创建碑上有楊集茂号捐一百元的记录。

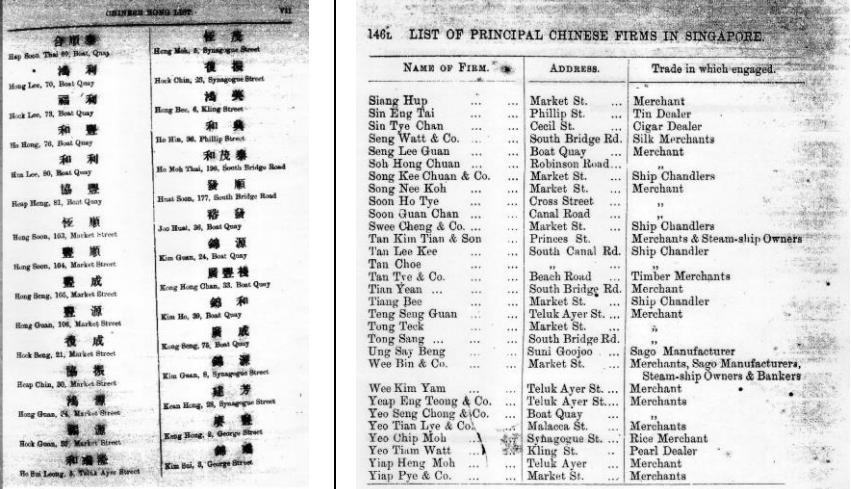
上面提到祖辈们在新加坡的捐献，是自陈荆和、陈育崧编著的《新加坡华文碑铭集录》书里查阅而知。比起著名侨领如陈篤生、陈金声等，先祖的成就堪称微不足道；但是能看到代表他们的名字出现在历史文述里，还是让我们后辈激动不已，深深感念那个时代人物的社会精神值鉴仿效。三个相关的石碑当中，除了重修崇文阁的石碑，还保留在崇文阁旧址的音乐盒博物院园子里，义勇演武亭创建碑已知被毁，萃英书院募捐芳名碑却不知去向。

2016 年一月 6 日，三姐宜权，堂妹 AyeAye 和我，与自广州来的大姐宜珍，在崇文阁旧址的音乐盒博物院园子里的石碑前拍照留念。

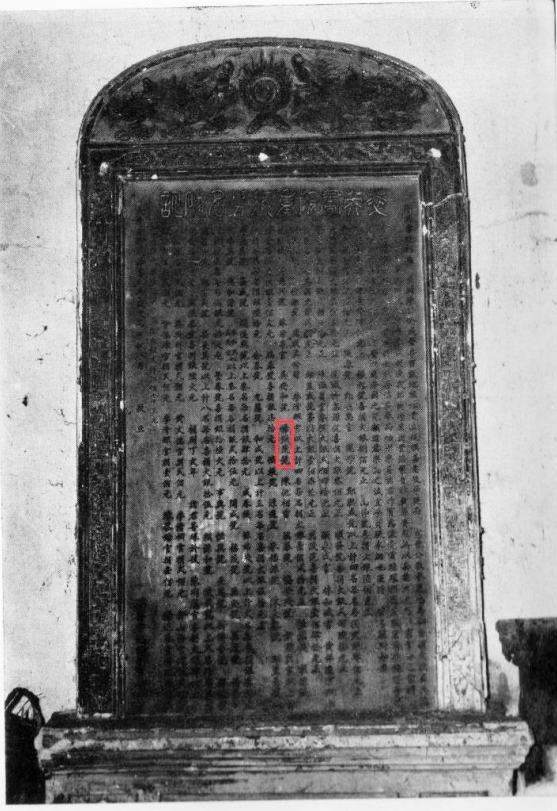
(\*新加坡合伙人楊清海，曾是 1904 年创建的中华总商会首任董事之一。



The 1880 Hong List with Heng Moh, merchant, on page vii



Yeo Chip Moh on List of Principal Chinese Firms in Singapore, 1898



“Yeo Heng Moh” shown on the Cui Eng Schoo donors’ list on the 1896 stele



Photo taken at the stele erected in 1887 to commemorate the rebuilding of Chong Boon Pavilion, on January 06, 2016

The Singapore Hong List ran a total of eighteen pages in the 1880's Singapore & Straits Directory. It was introduced as a list that "will prove useful to Merchants and Foreign Residents generally". The word "Hong" sounds more Cantonese and relates more to 'business' in Cantonese, to correspond to the nature of those named in the List. In the List, almost all, if not all, of the names appeared to be Hokkien or Teochew. The List thus supports the already-established history that Hokkien and Teochew merchants dominated the businesses among the Singapore Chinese during the turn of the century before the 20th.

Why was "Hong" used to entitle the list instead of "Hang", which is the correct English transliteration of 'business' or 'profession' in Hokkien? It is likely that the term was copied from contemporary Hong Kong directories as the colonial governments exchanged records and documents between the British officials. One should not over-criticize them for not knowing the difference between "Hong" and "Hang".

There are two entries of "Heng Moh" in this Hong List. The first appeared under the category of 'General Merchants' with an address at 5, Synagogue Street. The second appeared under the category of 'Rice Merchants' with an address at 91 Upper Boat Quay.

Later, Heng Moh was listed as one of the Principal Chinese Firms in the Singapore & Straits Directory for two successive years, in 1886 and 1887.

Chong Boon Pavilion, first built in 1868 beside the Thian Hock Kheng on Telok Ayer Street, was the first organised formal learning place for the larger Chinese community, as noted in written Singapore history. A stele was erected in 1887 after the Pavilion's rebuilding to record the donors. Heng Moh and Yeo Heng Moh, appeared in the donor list. Both were believed to be businesses partner-owned by our Great-Grandfather Yeo Poon Myah. Earlier in 1879, Yeo Heng Moh had also answered call to donate to the rebuilding of Heng San Teng Cemetery.

Between 1888 and 1896, Heng Moh did not appear in the list of Principal Chinese Firms. But the stele erected in 1896 to list the donors for the building of Cui Eng School included the name of Yeo Heng Moh with an amount of 100 silver dollars. Then in 1897, Yeo Heng Moh emerged as one of the Principal Chinese Firms in the Singapore and Straits Directory. After that, from 1898 to 1907, with the exception of 1905, Yeo Chip Moh, the business co-owned by Yeo Cheow Kaw (with Singapore-based Yeo Cheng Hai) was present in the list in the Directory. The firm was noted to be running a rice business. On the 1907 stele for the founding of the Beach Road Chinese Volunteer Club, there was a record of 100 dollars donation from Yeo Chip Moh.

The above tracks and records were first obtained from the Singapore and Settlements Directory and after, from a book by Chen and Tan. Our great-grandfather and grandfather's achievements are humbled when compared with famous philanthropists such as Tan Tock Seng and Tan Kim Seng. However, the discovery of their names in historical records gave us a deep sense of pride and immense gratitude in knowing that they were among many of our pioneers who had selflessly and generously contributed to the community as and when they could in that early difficult period.

Of the three steles mentioned, with two in pictures in Chen and Tan's book, only one remains in Singapore today. The founding stone for the Volunteer Club was known to have been destroyed. The Cui Eng donation stele cannot be found.

On January 6th 2016, third sister Kuan, cousin AyeAye, eldest sister Tin from Guangzhou, and I took a picture in front of the stele, which fortunately remains in the garden of Chong Boon Pavilion, on the right side of Thian Hock Kheng on Telok Ayer Street, nevertheless now occupied as the Singapore Musical Box Museum.

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