

# ORIGIN

The term “Teochew” as it is used in Singapore and many other places around the world takes on several different meanings. Simply put, it is an English-language romanisation of the Chinese characters 潮州 as pronounced in the Teochew or Chaozhou dialect, a term which first entered historical records in AD 591 as the name of a prefecture in southern China. Other variant spellings include “Tiochiu” and “Teochiu” (also in the Teochew dialect), “Chiu Chow” in the Cantonese dialect, and of course, “Chaozhou” in Mandarin or hanyu pinyin.

“Teochew” also refers to the Chinese people who trace their ancestry to the Teochew prefecture and the same term is again used for the Chinese dialect spoken by this group of people. In other words, the term “Teochew” is used as a geographical, ethnic and linguistic term depending on the context. The Chinese language, however, establishes clearer distinctions. People who are “*diê ziu nang*” (潮州人, Teochews) speak “*diê ziu uê*” (潮州话, Teochew dialect) and they share an ancestry and culture linked to a former prefecture known as “*diê ziu hu*” (潮州府, Chaozhoufu) or “*diê ziu*” (潮州, Chaozhou) located within the Guangdong province.

Chaozhou was one of the several prefectures that made up the Guangdong province in imperial China and shared a border with Fujian province to its northeast. Within the old Chaozhou prefecture

were also several counties such as Chenghai (澄海) and Jieyang (揭阳), and most Teochews around the world can trace their ancestry to the villages or towns located in these counties. After the opening of the Shantou (汕头) port to foreign trade in 1860, many Teochews in search of a better living left their villages for Shantou (then located within Chenghai county) where they boarded vessels to take them to various locations in Southeast Asia or what was then known as Nanyang, with the majority settling in Siam, the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya and Singapore.

While many overseas Teochews continue to refer to this land of their ancestry as Chaozhou, it is known in China today as the Chaoshan region (潮汕地区), or more specifically, the “Three Cities of the Chaoshan region” (潮汕三市), comprising Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang. The term “Chaoshan”, coined by taking the first characters of the names Chaozhou and Shantou and joining them together, was first publicly known via the name of the Chao Chow and Swatow Railway Company (潮汕铁路有限公司) of 1904 which was set up to build and run the rail route between the historical city of Chaozhou and the port city of Shantou. It came into popular use as the Shantou port grew and overtook the old Chaozhou prefectural city as the major population centre of the entire Teochew dialect-speaking region in China during the first half of the 20th century. With the elevation



of the former Jieyang county to the status of city and putting it on par with Shantou and Chaozhou in 1991, the region began to be collectively referred to as the “Three Cities of the Chaoshan region”, but still “Chaoshan” in short. Essentially retaining the geographical boundaries of the now-defunct Chaozhou prefecture, their populations share a common culture known as Chaoshan culture. At the end of 2010, the total permanent population of the three cities stood at 15,037,945. One estimate puts the population of overseas Teochews to be equivalent to that number.

Located in eastern Guangdong with latitude spanning 22°53’ to 24°14’N and longitude 115°20’ to 117°20’E, the Chaoshan region is 10,451 sq km in size, of which approximately one third or 3,207 sq km consists of flatland. It has a subtropical climate where winters are short and mild and summers are long and humid. Annual rainfall ranges from 1300 to 2200 mm and occurs mostly between April to September and the region is subjected to tropical typhoons in summer. The Chaoshan region faces the South China Sea with a long coastline of 325.6 km that is dotted with bays, inlets and islands, the largest island being Nan’ao Island.

Described as “high on the northwest and low at the southeast” the region’s physical landscape is defined by two mountain ranges and three inland rivers. Its backbone is made up of highlands on the west, the most notable being the Fenghuangshan (凤凰山, Phoenix Mountain Range) and the Lianhuashan (莲花山, Lotus Mountain Range). Lianhuashan separates the region from the predominantly Cantonese-speaking Pearl Delta region in the west while Fenghuangshan forms a natural boundary to the Hakka-speaking region in the north. Chaoshan region’s flatland terrain is served by three major rivers and their tributaries: the Hanjiang (韩江, Han River), the Rongjiang (榕江, Rong River) and the Lianjiang (练江, Lian River). The Hanjiang, which flows through Chaozhou city to Shantou city before pouring into the South China Sea, forms the vital Hanjiang Delta (韩江三角洲, Han River Delta) where the largest concentration of settlements are located.

The Chaoshan region is bordered by the Hokkien-speaking Zhangzhou (漳州) to its east and northeast, the Hakka-speaking

Meizhou (梅州) in the northwest and the South China Sea in the southeast. This simultaneously open and enclosed terrain allows the region to absorb and integrate external cultural influences and yet is self-contained enough to cultivate its own unique cultural identity. Although historically governed as part of Guangdong province, the Chaoshan region’s distance from the Cantonese culture hub of Guangzhou meant lesser interaction with the Cantonese people, resulting in reduced similarities between the Cantonese and Teochew cultures. Instead, closer proximity and the lack of geographical barriers between the Chaoshan region and southern Fujian province allowed for the people of both areas to interact easily, resulting in the closeness of Chaoshan culture with southern Fujian or Southern Min (闽南) culture — commonly known as Hokkien culture in Singapore and Malaysia.

## Historical Administration

When the first Chinese Emperor, Qin Shihuang, established the Qin dynasty (221 - 206 BC) to rule over China, he set up an administrative system governed on two levels, commanderies (郡) and counties (县). In 214 BC three commanderies — Xiangjun (象郡), Guilin (桂林) and Nanhai (南海) — were established in southern China. Sometime between the end of the Qin dynasty and the beginning of the Han dynasty, a Qin official Zhao Tuo (赵佗) established the Nanyue Kingdom (南越国) which ruled over a large swath of southern China and a Jieyang county (揭阳县) was believed to be first established during this Nanyue Kingdom period. This was the very first time a locale name of Chaozhou was mentioned in official Chinese history, although historians remain unclear as to the exact location of this first Jieyang or whether it shared the same geographical boundaries as its present-day namesake. In 111 BC, Emperor Han Wudi of the Han dynasty (206 BC – AD 220) conquered the region and brought the Nanyue Kingdom under Han rule. He then went about enlarging the Nanhai commandery to administer the six counties of Panyu (番禺), Boluo (博罗), Zhongsu (中宿), Longchuan (龙川), Sihui (四会) and Jieyang (揭阳).



Map of Guangdong province and its prefectures during the Qing dynasty. The four major dialect groups in the Guangzhou province are the Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakkas and Teochews. Chaozhou prefecture, where the Teochews hailed from, is located at the eastern end of the province and shares a border with Fujian province.



During the Eastern Jin dynasty (AD 317 - 420), a three-tier administrative system consisting of prefecture, commandery and county was adopted. In AD 413, the Yi'an commandery (义安郡) was established in what is today the Chaoshan region. Governed by Guangzhou prefecture (广州) and with five counties under its jurisdiction - namely Haiyang (海阳), which doubled as its capital, Sui'an (绥安), Haining (海宁), Chaoyang (潮阳) and Yizhao (义招), the term Yi'an would be source of inspiration for Singapore Teochew pioneer Seah Eu Chin when he named the organisation he founded in 1845 the Ngee Ann Kongsi, Ngee Ann being the Teochew dialect rendition of the term Yi'an.

The Sui dynasty (AD 581 – 618) abolished the commandery but retained the prefecture - which it called *zhou* (州) – as well as the county, and in AD 591, the region comprising of what was formerly the Yi'an commandery was renamed Chaozhou (潮州) or “Tidal Prefecture”, named after the flowing *chao* (潮, tides) of the waters surrounding the prefecture (在潮之洲, 潮水往复). This would be the first time the name Chaozhou came into being, albeit for a short period, as it reverted to Yi'an in AD 607 when the Sui government restored the commandery system.

The name Chaozhou was revived in AD 622 during the reign of Tang Emperor Gaozu, only to be dropped in favour of Chaoyang commandery (潮阳郡) in AD 742, before finally reverting to Chaozhou in AD 758. From this point onwards, the name Chaozhou would be used throughout Chinese history.

Chaozhou retained its name throughout the rest of the Tang dynasty and the entire Song dynasty (960 – 1279). During the Yuan dynasty (1271 – 1368), Chaozhou became known as Chaozhoudao (潮州道) when the Mongol government decided to use the term *dao* (道) to name its prefectures. Dao was changed to *fu* (府) in the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), resulting in the name Chaozhoufu (潮州府), a name which was retained during the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911).

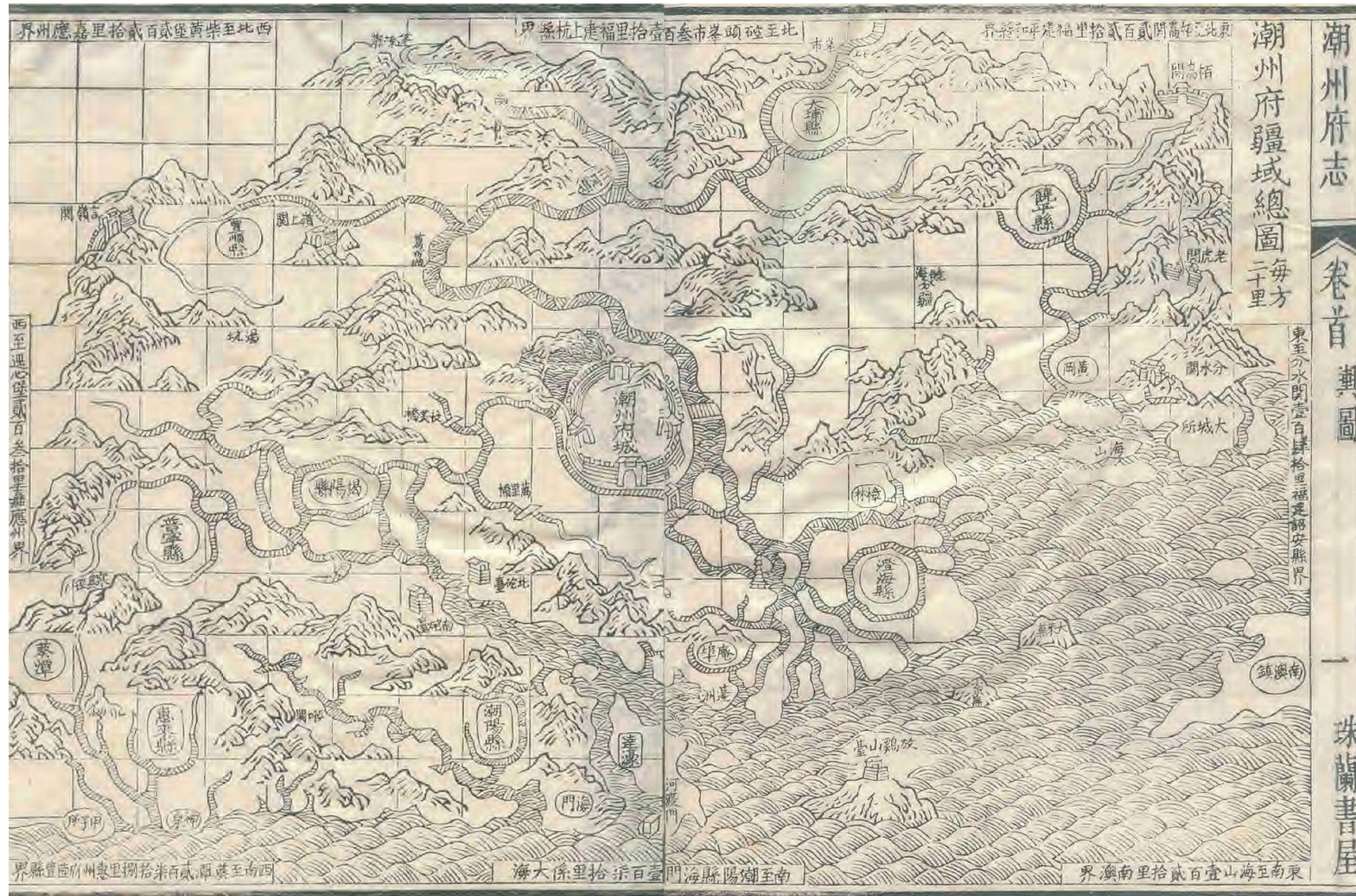
By 1634, Chaozhoufu administered a total of eleven counties: Haiyang (海阳), Chaoyang (潮阳), Jieyang (揭阳), Raoping (饶平), Huilai (惠来), Chenghai (澄海), Puning (普宁), Pingyuan (平远), Chenxiang (程

乡), Dabu (大埔) and Zhengping (镇平), the largest number of counties in the history of Chaozhou. In 1733, Pingyuan (平远), Chenxiang (程乡) and Zhengping (镇平) were merged into a new prefecture Jiayingzhou (嘉应州). The geographical boundaries of Chaozhou as we know it today came into being around 1738 when Fengshun (丰顺) was added to the remaining eight counties administrated under the Chaozhou prefecture, namely Haiyang (海阳), Chaoyang (潮阳), Jieyang (揭阳), Raoping (饶平), Huilai (惠来), Chenghai (澄海), Puning (普宁) as well as Dabu (大埔). This composition of nine counties in Chaozhou would remain throughout the Qing dynasty until the establishment of the Republic in 1912.

The Republic period (1912 – 1949) saw numerous changes to the administrative structure of the Chaoshan region. Nan'ao was established as a county in 1912 and Haiyang was renamed Chao'an in 1914. Shantou, which opened as a port city in 1860, was separated from Chenghai county in 1921 and elevated to the status of a city in 1930. From then on, the term “Chaoshan” began to gain prominence.

After the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chaoshan Zone (潮汕专区) was established in 1950 with one city, Shantou, and eight counties: Chao'an (潮安), Chaoyang (潮阳), Jieyang (揭阳), Raoping (饶平), Huilai (惠来), Chenghai (澄海), Puning (普宁) and Nan'ao (南澳). There were other changes from 1950 to 1983 when the Chaoshan region and combination of other nearby counties formed the Yuedong Administrative Zone (粤东行政区) and Shantou Region (汕头地区). In December 1983, the Shantou Region was replaced by the Shantou administrative city (汕头市) which managed the eight counties and one city. A final redrawing and restructuring of the Chaoshan region took place in November 1991 which saw Shantou city divided into three prefectural-level cities (地级市): Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang. These three cities became collectively referred to as the “Three cities of the Chaoshan region” (潮汕三市), or “Chaoshan” in short. The region has a combined population of 15,037,945 (2010 figures) covering a land area of some 10,451 sq km in size. As of 2014, the three cities oversaw jurisdiction over the following areas:





Map of Chaozhoufu from the Chaozhou Gazetteer during Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (乾隆潮州府疆域總圖). In the centre is the prefecture capital Chaozhou city (潮州府城) and Shantou is marked with its old location Pengzhou (蓬洲).





- Shantou** 6 Districts: Chenghai (澄海区), Chaoyang (潮阳区), Jinping (金平区), Longhu (龙湖区), Haojiang (濠江区) and Chaonan (潮南区)  
1 County: Nan'ao (南澳县)
- Chaozhou** 3 Districts: Chao'an (潮安区), Fengxi (枫溪区), Xiangqiao (湘桥区)  
1 County: Raoping (饶平县)
- Jieyang** 2 Districts: Rongcheng (榕城区), Jiedong (揭东区)  
2 Counties: Huilai (惠来县), Jiexi (揭西县)  
1 County-level city: Puning (普宁市)

The Chaoshan region has taken many names over the course of its history: Yi'an commandery during the Jin dynasty and Southern and Northern dynasties, Chaozhou commandery during the dynasties of Sui, Tang and Song, Chaozhoulu during the Yuan dynasty and Chaozhoufu during the Ming and Qing dynasties. After the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1912, the region became the Chaoshan Special Zone, Shantou Zone, Shantou City before taking on its current three prefecture-level cities state consisting of Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang. While it is common practice today for some to use the term "Chaoshan" interchangeably with or even in place of "Chaozhou", it is useful to note that "Chaoshan" is a contemporary term coined in the 20th century while the term "Chaozhou" dates back to AD 591 and has long been associated with the Teochew language and culture which evolved and came into being during the Ming period (1368–1644).

## The Teochew Eight Districts

"Ip" or *yi* (邑) is an historical term for county or xian (县) and the number of counties in Chaozhou's history varied according to the dynasties and imperial reigns over the centuries. Two of the most historically well-known grouping of these counties are the *Chaozhou Sanyang* (潮州三阳, "Teochew Three Yangs") and *Chaozhou Bayi* (潮州八邑, "Teochew Eight Districts"). Chaozhou Sanyang originated from the Southern Song period and refers to Haiyang (海阳), Chaoyang (潮

阳) and Jieyang (揭阳) as these were the three counties in Chaozhou for a large part of the Song and Yuan period.

In 1738, under the reign of Emperor Qianlong, a total of nine counties were established in Chaozhou, which remained unchanged until the end of the Qing period: Haiyang (海阳), Chaoyang (潮阳), Jieyang (揭阳), Chenghai (澄海), Raoping (饶平), Puning (普宁), Huilai (惠来), Fengshun (丰顺) and Dabu (大埔). Haiyang became Chao'an (潮安) in 1914. The traditional "Teochew Eight Districts" generally refers to these counties excluding Dabu. The term's origin can be traced to the trade guilds formed by Chaozhou merchants during the Qing period. Chaozhou merchants had been trading in different parts of China for centuries, but it was during the Qing period when they became more active and formed sizeable business communities in various Chinese cities. Chaozhou associations or *Chaozhou Huiguan* (潮州会馆) were established in places such as Suzhou in 1708 and Shanghai in 1810 as a means for Chaozhou merchants to meet and network while they were away from their hometown. Members of Shanghai's Chaozhou guild hailed from eight counties and excluded Dabu, an indication that the guild's membership was primarily Teochews as Dabu's population was overwhelmingly Hakka. While Fengshun also had a large Hakka population, there was still a sizeable population of Teochews residing in the county and hence its inclusion in the "Teochew Eight Districts".

The *Guangzhou Chaozhou Bayi Huiguan* (广州潮州八邑会馆) and the *Lugang Chaozhou Bayi Shanghui* (旅港潮州八邑商會) were formed in 1875 and 1921 respectively with the exclusion of Dabu and Nan'ao (南澳). Nan'ao is an island which was part of Haiyang and Raoping during different periods and it was made an independent county after the founding of the Republic of China in 1912. The Lugang Chaozhou Bayi Shanghui became the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Chamber of Commerce (香港潮州商会) in 1946. When the Singapore Teochew Poit Ip Huay Kuan (潮州八邑会馆) was formed in 1929, it continued the tradition of using the term "Teochew Eight Districts" but Fengshun was replaced by Nan'ao in the line-up of the eight counties. The founding directors of the Huay Kuan consisted of representatives from all these eight counties. In Singapore, the Foong

## 潮州八邑的沿革

潮州位于中國廣東省東部，晉代（距今一千五百餘年）置義安郡，隋代（公元六世紀）改置潮州，宋代改潮州為郡，明清兩代則稱潮州府，轄九邑（縣）即潮陽、海陽（即潮安）、澄海、饒平、普寧、揭陽、惠來、南澳、豐順與大埔，其中豐順與大埔講客家話地區，其他八縣講潮州話，後來講潮語的八縣人則稱為潮州八邑。此潮州八邑舊地圖，其界限以公元一九六九年為根據。



# 廣東省潮州八邑簡圖

Map of Teochew Eight Districts (1969) as popularly adopted by the Singapore Teochew Poit Ip Huay Kuan.





Shoon Fui Kuan (丰顺会馆) was formed in 1875 to cater primarily to the Hakkas from the Fengshun county.

For the Teochews, the county represents a more intimate sense of shared identity at the county level due to variation in the Teochew dialect, food and cultural practices across counties as well as a sense of closeness due to the proximity of ancestral villages. This county identifier is used to foster a deeper layer of affinity with fellow clansmen and it is not uncommon for one Teochew to ask another Teochew acquaintance about his county identity. In places where there is a sizeable population of Teochews, clan associations are formed at the county level. In Singapore, the county-based clan associations are the Teo Yeonh Huai Kuan (潮阳会馆), Nanyang Pho Leng Hui Kuan (南洋普宁会馆), Singapore Kityang Huay Kwan (新加坡揭阳会馆), Huilai Countrymen Association (惠来同乡会), Teo Ann Huay Kuan (潮安会馆), Theng Hai Huay Kuan (澄海会馆) and Raoping Association (新加坡饶平会馆).

The concept of the “Teochew Eight Districts” was a form of cultural identity for the Teochews and it is similar to the contemporary term “Chaoshan Region” in that it is a geographical grouping based on a shared ethnic and culture identity irrespective of the geopolitical boundaries. Today, the administrative structure of a Chaozhou prefecture with counties no longer exists. Instead, the administrative structure in the Chaoshan region is a combination of cities, counties and districts. Nevertheless, many overseas Teochews continue to identify and recognize their ancestries based on the counties known to their forefathers before they left China. The changing administrative boundaries and names imply that one’s ancestral hometown may be designated to a county or district different from that known to his or her forefather, posing challenges for overseas Teochews attempting to locate their roots in China.

## Teochew Ethnicity

Teochew or Chaozhou culture, a regional branch of Han Chinese culture unique to the Chaoshan region in eastern Guangdong province, is the product of centuries of evolution and interaction with external

influences especially from the southern Fujian province. There are many elements to this culture and it is distinctive from the Hakka as well as the She minority (畲族) culture which are also found in the same region. Also known today in mainland China as Chaoshan culture, Chaozhou culture spread beyond its traditional borders in recent times following the massive waves of Teochews that migrated to Southeast Asia during the 19th and 20th centuries, and was further enriched when some of these sojourners returned home and brought back with them the habits and customs of their temporary land of abode. The Teochews can be seen as a sub-ethnic group within the majority Han Chinese population in China, with an identity centred on the Teochew dialect and a distinctive culture that grew out of the Chaoshan region.

Historically, the Chaoshan region was once populated by various groups of non-Han ethnic minority groups origins, but over time, many of these ethnic minorities groups either died out or were assimilated by the Han Chinese who migrated to the region from northern China during the various dynasties. Even today, the main non-Han She ethnic minority group which is concentrated in the *Fenghuangshan* (凤凰山) region is also on the verge of losing its culture after years of close interaction with the culture of the majority Han group.

Archaeological findings have dated human activities in the Chaoshan region to about 8,000 years ago with the 1991 discovery of stone tools at Xiangshan (象山) on the island of Nan’ao. In



Neolithic artefacts from the Chenqiaocun site in Chao'an county.



the 1930s, Father Maglioni, an Italian missionary, was the first to discover traces of Neolithic culture in the Lufeng (陆丰) region. In the 1950s, Chinese archaeologists also uncovered major Neolithic sites within the Chaoshan region, the most significant being the ones at Chenqiaocun (陈桥村) and Shiweishan (石尾山) in Chao'an county. The primitive pottery found at the Chenqiaocun site included some coarse sand-tempered pots decorated with incised patterns in the neck and shoulder area.

In 1974, Chinese archaeologists uncovered more than 300 late Neolithic artefacts consisting of mainly stone tools and pottery wares from 21 sites within the vicinity of Fubin, Raoping. Amongst these artefacts was a bronze dagger-axe (戈) with some characteristics associated with the late Shang period. Similar discoveries of late Neolithic artefacts with traces of Bronze Age wares in other sites led scholars in the 1990s to use the term "Fubin Culture" (浮滨文化) to describe this late Neolithic/early Bronze Age civilization located in eastern Guangdong province and southern Fujian province 2,800 to 3,500 years ago. The transition from the Neolithic Age to the Bronze Age was slower in the south compared to the central plains of northern China and there is insufficient evidence to support the presence of any state or kingdom, although a tribal form of government is possible.

During the Warring States period in China, the State of Chu defeated the State of Yue and some Yue people moved south. Over the next few centuries, the Yue people would displace the Fubin Culture and become the dominant cultural influence in southern China, producing what is known today as the Southern Yue culture (南越文化), as evidenced by the discovery of bronze weapons and pottery with Yue culture symbols in modern Jieyang and Jiexi areas.

In 204 BC, soon after the collapse of the Qin empire, a Qin military officer Zhao Tuo (赵佗) founded the Southern Yue or Nanyue Kingdom (南越国) with its capital in Panyu in modern-day Guangdong province. Zhaotuo adopted the local Southern Yue culture while implementing the Qin commandery-county administrative structures. The Nanyue Kingdom fell in 111 BC after it was conquered by Emperor Wu Di of the Han dynasty and the whole of south-eastern



Undated photo of She natives (畲族) at work. The natives of the Chaoshan region comprised two main groups: the *Liao* people (僚人) and the *Li* people (俚人). The *Liao* people mostly lived on the Guangdong-Fujian-Jiangxi borders and were the ancestors of the She and *Dan* (蛋族). They kept a distance from the Han Chinese immigrants and were often engaged in confrontation with the latter group. The *Li* people lived on the plains of southern China and they were the ancestors of present day Zhuang people (壮族). They adopted Han culture at an early stage and a number of their tribe leaders were Han Chinese. The *Li* people were militarily powerful and played vital roles in the political stability of the region during the Sui and Tang periods.

China, including modern-day Chaoshan region, came directly under central government rule, laying the foundation for the spread of Han Chinese civilisation into the region. Yet despite increased interaction between northern and southern China, full-scale sinicisation of the Chaoshan region remained slow and limited compared with the Pearl River Delta region located further south.

The "Yongjia Disturbance" (永嘉之乱) in the early 4th century – in which Xiongnu nomads from the north attacked Luoyang, the capital of the Western Jin dynasty – and the subsequent political unrest in the region resulted in the first mass movement of ethnic Han Chinese nobility class and their culture from north to south China,



known in history as the “Southward Movement of Han Civilisation” (衣冠南渡). Members of the Jin imperial family and court officials who fled south helped established the Eastern Jin dynasty (AD 317 – 420) with its capital in modern day Nanjing. During the Eastern Jin period, the need to provide direct administration over a growing population in the Chaoshan region due to the influx of Han Chinese saw the establishment of the Yi’an commandery in AD 413. Nevertheless, these Han Chinese immigrants and the natives of the Chaoshan region would continue to remain culturally distinct from one another.

Further population growth in the Chaoshan region during the Sui period (AD 589 – 618) saw its status elevated to that of a prefecture (州) in the year AD 591 and the debut of the name Chaozhou (潮州) - or “*diê ziu*” as pronounced in the Teochew dialect, “Chao” meaning “tide” and referring to the tides or waves that lapped at the region’s coastlines. Han Chinese political and cultural influence increased during the Tang period (AD 618 – 907) after the Tang General *Chen Zheng* (陈政) and his descendants helped suppress a series of rebellions in southern China and brought the region under Tang rule. The uprisings, staged mainly by natives in Chaozhou and Quanzhou in neighbouring Fujian province and took place over a period of nearly 50 years from AD 669 to 715, were put down by first Chen Zheng, then his son *Chen Yuanguang* (陈元光) and finally his grandson *Chen Xiang* (陈向) with the help of other northern migrants, resulting in a further consolidation of Han Chinese culture in the conquered territories.

Chaozhou’s distance from the Tang capital of Chang’an and its sparse population made it an ideal location to exile errant court officials as a form of punishment for offending the imperial order. During the Tang dynasty, a total of twelve officials were exiled to Chaozhou, the most prominent being a member of the renowned Tang literati and Confucian scholar *Han Yu* (韩愈), who was sent to Chaozhou in AD 819 for daring to criticise the Tang Emperor’s devotion to a bone-relic said to be that of Buddha’s. By the end of the Tang dynasty in AD 901, the population of Chaozhou had grown to nearly 80,000 people, up from 37,000 at the beginning of the dynasty in AD 618.



*Han Yu* (韩愈) promoted education and carried out a series of reforms like the abolishment of slavery, and was even said to have helped rid the main river in Chaozhou of crocodiles during his period of exile in the city. He was credited for the spread of sinification and literacy in Chaozhou and later generations honoured him by naming the main waterway and the hill overlooking the city from across the river Hanjiang (韩江) and Hanshan (韩山) respectively.

Chaozhou culture, as we know it today, took root during the Song period (AD 960 - 1279) when large waves of immigrants from the Fujian province moved into the Chaoshan region, bringing along with them the Min (闽) culture, Min being the abbreviation for Fujian. This migrant culture from Fujian soon occupied mainstream position in the Chaoshan region, out of which eventually evolved the Chaozhou culture that one is familiar with today, with its strong Minnan or southern Fujian influence and close similarities in the areas of language, religious practices as well as culture and customs.

By the period of the Song dynasty (AD 960 - 1279), Fujian province had become a major economic and cultural centre in southern China, thanks to the huge influx of Han Chinese from northern and central China – the cradle of Chinese civilisation – who had been seeking refuge in the southern province starting from the Yongjia Disturbance in the 4th century. Over time, rapid population growth in Fujian province especially in Putian and Quanzhou put intense pressure on land that was available for economic activities and this in turn caused the people from these overcrowded regions to move further south into the relatively underpopulated Chaozhou.

Compared with past migrations, there was a larger degree of assimilation between the newcomers and the locals this time. This massive wave of migrants from neighbouring Fujian caused the population of Chaozhou to surge from 135,000 people in AD 976 to 612,000 people by the year 1246, with the total number of households





Table 1: Settlement Formation in Chaozhou

By Period	Song & earlier		Yuan		Ming		Qing		Total	
Jieyang (294 villages)	61	25.8%	30	12.7%	107	45.3%	38	16.1%	236	100.0%
Fuyangzhen, Chao'an (94 villages)	25	26.6%	7	7.4%	61	64.9%	1	1.1%	94	100.0%
Chenghai (311 villages)	76	24.4%	11	3.5%	116	37.3%	108	34.7%	311	100.0%

By Founders' Origin	Fujian		Local		Guangdong		Others		Unknown		Total	
Jieyang (294 villages)	100	42.4%	42	17.8%	0	0.0%	13	5.5%	81	34.3%	236	100%
Fuyangzhen, Chaoan (94 villages)	50	53.2%	21	22.3%	3	3.2%	0	0.0%	20	21.3%	94	100%

Source: Huang Ting, Du Jingguo (2001). *Chaoshan Shi Shang Ce*. China: Guangdong People's Publishing House

also going up from some 30,000 in 968 to around 135,000 households by 1236. Among those who migrated to Chaozhou during the Song period were many from the noble and official classes, and many Teochew clans today can trace their ancestry to these migrants from Fujian province.

During the Song period, many officials of Fujian descent appointed by the imperial court to govern Chaozhou were strong advocates of education. Through the establishment of schools and the provision of funds to help students in their educational pursuits, these officials made education more widespread and accessible in Chaozhou. Bearing testimony to the growth in sinification and literacy rate in Chaozhou is the fact that more than 10,000 people (or one in every 70 people) registered and sat for the imperial examinations in the year 1267 alone, up from 3,000 in 1174.

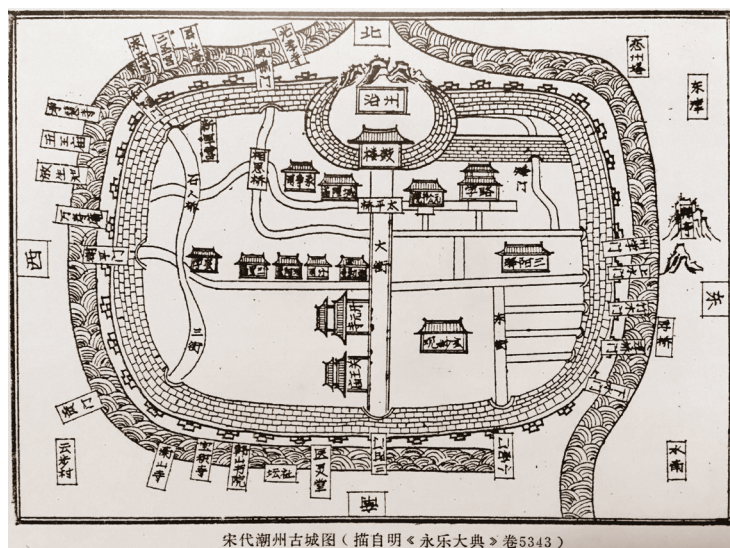
Save for the chaotic initial years and turbulent last days of the Yuan period (AD 1278 - 1368), Chaozhou remained relatively stable during the Mongol rule, with substantial economic and cultural progress. A study by a leading Chaozhou studies scholar Professor Huang Ting, placed the population of Chaozhou at between 580,000 to 633,000 in the year 1350.

The Chaozhou population grew rapidly during the Ming dynasty (AD 1368 - 1644) due to another large wave of migrants from Fujian

province. According to a Qing period edition of "The Chaozhou Gazetteer" (潮州府志), the prefecture's registered population grew from 96,784 in 1391 to 540,850 in 1592, while another study by Professor Huang Ting estimated that the population in Chaozhou grew from some 428,000 people during the transition period between the Yuan and Ming periods, to peak at around 950,000 in the year 1551. The increase in population together with improved irrigation saw higher productivity in agriculture to the extent that Chaozhou was now able to produce excess food items for export. There were also other economic activities such as the production of salt, textile, and metal which led to the growth of trade with other parts of China and even outside of China despite the Ming ban on maritime commerce. With economic prosperity came the expansion of education and cultural development and it was during the Ming period that Chaozhou culture became distinct from Minnan culture. Many key elements of Chaozhou culture such as its dialect, opera, music and tea culture came into being during this period.

Chaozhou's population and economy grew further during the Qing period (1644 - 1912) especially after the Qing government cemented its control of China with the suppression of the Formosa rebellion in 1684. As the production of rice was no longer sufficient to feed the growing population in the Chaoshan region, Chaozhou

traders were now permitted to travel to Siam to import rice. At the same time, growers in Chaozhou also intensified the cultivation of cash crops like sugar and cotton in order to achieve higher returns from the land. Trade became an important economic activities and Chaozhou merchants were found in many cities in China. Overseas emigration increased after the signing of the Treaty of Tien-tsin in 1858 following China's defeat in the Second Opium War – which opened up more ports in China including Shantou to foreign trade and also legalized Chinese emigration. Noteworthy is the fact that wealth from trade and money remitted by overseas Teochews actually helped fund the development of the Chaozhou culture, which was further refined during the Qing period into the form that all of us are familiar with today.



Prefecture capital city of Chaozhou during the Song dynasty (960-1279) as illustrated in the Ming Encyclopedia Volume 5343. The development of Chaozhou culture and ethnicity took root during this period.



Ming painting of Longhu Guzai (龙湖古寨), a township located south of the prefecture capital city. The settlement came into being during the Song dynasty and prospered during the Ming dynasty as a trading centre. Such mature townships were not uncommon in Chaozhou during the Ming dynasty.