

Notes on Cantonese as spoken in the Cambodia Chinese diaspora

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There has been a Chinese population in Cambodia for more than 500 years and Chinese emigration to Cambodia was first mentioned by emissary Zhou Daguan as early as 1296. Despite a relatively high degree of integration into the majority Cambodia culture, ethnic Chinese have maintained their own cultural organizations, news media, and schools. The Cambodian Chinese population is organized around five *Huiguan* (会馆) ‘congregations’ corresponding to the southern-origin Chinese groups that comprise it: 潮州会馆, 广肇会馆, 客属会馆, 福建会馆, and 海南会馆. Until the Khmer Rouge forced closure of Chinese schools in the mid seventies, there was a major Cantonese medium school in Phnom Penh and the Cantonese cultural association persists today to support Cantonese culture and language.

Through examination of recorded interviews, this paper outlines key features of Cantonese as spoken in contemporary Cambodia, with special emphasis on the phonological. The study also examines more generally the influences of other Chinese dialects and of Khmer on the local variety of Cantonese.