ABSTRACT

The "charitable institution" (Shantang) in Singapore is originated from the Teochew province of China. One of the first Shantang in Singapore is the Seu Teck Sean Tong Yang Sin Sia, which was founded in 1916. Although, its history is relatively short, its function of charity is quite well known within the Teochew community in Singapore.

Nevertheless, there has not been any systematic and in-depth study of "charitable institution" in Singapore till now. Since the written documents of the "charitable institution" are very limited, this thesis is mainly based on the fieldwork of several interviews with members from the "charitable institutions" in Singapore. Another method of collecting the data of "memorial rituals" was through fieldwork observation.

The various aspects dealt with in this thesis are the historical development and the organization of "charitable institution" in Singapore. The second half of this thesis is devoted to the "memorial rituals" and the characteristics of its music.

The "charitable institution" performs three main functions for the Singapore Chinese community: charity, recreation and religion. Although these three functions can be separated, but they had been united since the last fifty years. Therefore, now we are unable to differentiate these three functions so easily.

The "memorial rituals" is performed by the "charitable institution", which helps to spread and publicize the doctrine of "filial piety". Although many people do not bother about the process of ritual, and also do not understand about the content of scripture, it has its own special valuation in this modern society. Finally, this study proves that the "charitable institution" is an important organization in which preserving traditional "Teochew ritual music" can be found. It assumes a major position of Teochew music in Singapore.