ABSTRACT

The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC) was established in 1906 by the Qing government of China for the purpose of uniting the overseas Chinese and protecting their commercial interests. From its founding to Singapore’s independence, SCCC was known by the public to be the supreme organization of the Chinese community in Singapore, as it was also involved in taking care of the Chinese's political, social and cultural welfare, regardless of their different dialect groups.

In particular, the first two decades after the end of World War II was a crucial period for Singapore in gaining self-rule and independence; it was also a period of transition for the Chinese community in Singapore. Since SCCC was a leading Chinese organization of the time, its relations to the development of the Chinese society in Singapore would be a topic worth discussing.

To date, there has been a lack of critical analysis on this issue, except a few in-depth studies in the political aspect. This thesis therefore aims to examine the role of SCCC in the social, cultural and economic development of the Chinese society in this transitional period. Materials are basically drawn from commemorative magazines and newspaper reports on SCCC and books on Singapore. This study reveals that as the society progresses during these twenty years, SCCC moderated itself constantly to satisfy different demands required by the society and has made great contributions to the well-being of the Chinese community, such as rebuilding the war-torn society, conserving Chinese culture and assisting the government in promoting economic growth.

It is hoped that this thesis will enhance a greater understanding of SCCC’s role in Singapore Chinese society in transition and contribute to the study of the history of Chinese community in Singapore.