

# Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 60

## Ancestors from the Far East

### 1. Beginning

Firstly, refer to our leaflet called *Uncovering Immigrant Ancestry*. Once you have got to the stage of needing to research resources relating specifically to the Far East, this leaflet contains pointers and links.

### 2. When and from where did your ancestors come and why did they come to Britain?

Hopefully, oral family history will have told you where your ancestors came from and when and why they moved to Britain. It is useful to know why they came, because certain groups of people have particular records associated with them. The history of migration to Britain from the Far East goes back some 200 years. The majority of early migrants were seaman. More recently, migrants from the Far East came mainly from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. If your family still have contacts with family members who have stayed in the country of origin, making contact with them may provide all sorts of interesting information. If you do not know where your family originated, hopefully, census details, naturalisation or denization papers can provide the answers.

### 3. Sources in the UK

There are several institutions here in the UK that are worth contacting. They hold some specific records which may be able to help your family research and also hold more information about sources and archives which are held in the country of origin. These are:

- **The Oriental and India Office Archives** – This is part of the British Library in London. They hold a large collection of material relating to the parts of the Far East which were under British control. The East India Company ran the ships that sailed the trade routes between Britain and the Far East and there is an extensive collection of their records held here Their website is <[www.bl.uk/collections/asiapacificafrika.html](http://www.bl.uk/collections/asiapacificafrika.html)>.
- **The School of African and Oriental Studies** – This is part of the University of London, but has an extensive library which members of the public can visit. They have an online guide to their holdings at <[www.soas.ac.uk/library](http://www.soas.ac.uk/library)>.
- **The National Archives** – Formerly known as the Public Record Office, The National Archives are in Kew. If your ancestor was a merchant seaman who enlisted with British vessels there may be a record amongst the 5<sup>th</sup> Register of Seamen. If your ancestor served in branches of the British Military, there may be records. Some of their records can be searched on their online catalogue, which can be found at <[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)>.
- **LDS Family History Centres** – the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have filmed a number of Chinese genealogical sources which you should be able to view at their local family history centres. There is a facility to search their holdings of filmed material at their website <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>.

## 4. Chinese Ancestors

**4.1 *Jai Pu* or *Zu Pu*** - This is the Chinese genealogical record and it contains the origins of a surname, the family tree, information on migration and a certain amount of biographical information. These records can go back as far as the Shang dynasty and were written, recorded with a system of objects and knots and/or passed down orally. A *Jai Pu* usually begins when a man moves to a new place and starts a family there, and it should continue to a current generation. It records names, aliases, dates of birth and death and also notes of achievement, education, occupation, etc. Sons and brothers are recorded for each generation. Sadly, women do not feature prominently on a traditional *Jai Pu*, as they are considered to join their husband's family upon marriage. Nevertheless, their names, at least, should appear on both the *Jai Pu* of their birth family and that of their husband's family.

**4.2 Surnames** - Chinese surnames can be very useful for helping identify the region from which your ancestor came. Once you have established a likely region, it will be easier to find a regional library or archive which may be able to help you make a link to your family's *Jai Pu*. The following websites contain information about the origins of Chinese surnames:

- [http://genealogy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=genealogy&cdn=parenting&tm=64&gps=73\\_6\\_1276\\_592&f=11&su=p284.8.150.ip\\_&tt=14&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A/www.geocities.com/Tokyo/3919/hundred.html](http://genealogy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=genealogy&cdn=parenting&tm=64&gps=73_6_1276_592&f=11&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=14&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A/www.geocities.com/Tokyo/3919/hundred.html)
- [www.yutopian.com/names/nametree.html](http://www.yutopian.com/names/nametree.html)

**4.3 Calendar Converter** - An essential tool for any family historian trying to trace events in China is the calendar converter. There is one at [www.mandarintools.com/calendar.html](http://www.mandarintools.com/calendar.html).

**4.4 China Page from WorldGenWeb** [www.rootsweb.com/~chnwgv/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~chnwgv/).

**4.5 China Forum** - A message board where you can ask questions and perhaps meet other people researching the same family as you: <http://genforum.genealogy.com/china/>.

**4.6 National Library of China** – English website at [www.lib.tsinghua.edu.cn/english/](http://www.lib.tsinghua.edu.cn/english/).

### 4.7 More Useful websites:

- [www.asiawind.com](http://www.asiawind.com) has some interesting articles of Chinese communities and culture, including a good article on Hakka genealogy.
- [www.legacy1.net/link\\_gsites.html](http://www.legacy1.net/link_gsites.html) is good collection of Chinese genealogy sites.
- [www.genealogylinks.net/country/china/index.html](http://www.genealogylinks.net/country/china/index.html) is another website full of useful links

## 5. Ancestors from Hong Kong

**5.1 Hong Kong Forum** <http://genforum.genealogy.com/hongkong/>.

**5.2 Hong Kong Virtual Library** [www.asiawind.com/hkwwwvl/](http://www.asiawind.com/hkwwwvl/).

**5.3 Catholic Church in Hong Kong** [www.catholic.org.hk/engindex.html](http://www.catholic.org.hk/engindex.html).

## 6. Vietnamese Ancestors

### 6.1 Genealogical Society of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

<[http://bachhong-truongdinh.tripod.com/HCM\\_city/index.html](http://bachhong-truongdinh.tripod.com/HCM_city/index.html)>.

### 6.2 Vietnam Page from WorldGenWeb <[www.rootsweb.com/~vnmwggw](http://www.rootsweb.com/~vnmwggw)>.

## 7. Malaysian Ancestors

### 7.1 Malaysian Forum <<http://genforum.genealogy.com/malaysia>>.

### 7.2 National Library of Malaysia <[www.pnm.my](http://www.pnm.my)>.

### 7.3 Birth and Death Certificates - Contact:

Registration Department Headquarters  
No 2 Jal an 52/4  
Petaling Jaya  
Selangor  
West Malaysia  
Malaysia

### 7.4 Marriage Certificates (from mid 1800s onwards) - Contact:

National Registration Department  
Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Wisma Pendaftaran  
Jal an Persiaran Barat  
46551 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor  
Malaysia  
Website: <[www.jpn.gov.my](http://www.jpn.gov.my)>

### 7.5 Catholic Church in Malaysia

<[http://home.att.net/~Local\\_Catholic/Catholic-International.htm#Malaysia](http://home.att.net/~Local_Catholic/Catholic-International.htm#Malaysia)>.

## 8. Ancestors from Singapore

**8.1 Singapore Family Tree** - This is a website for Singaporean families, past and present, to share their family trees and make contacts and hopefully find other relatives:  
<<http://www.sft.com.sg/sft/home/Home.aspx>>.

### 8.2 Singapore page from WorldGenWeb <[www.rootsweb.com/~sgpwggw](http://www.rootsweb.com/~sgpwggw)>.

### 8.3 Singapore Forum <<http://genforum.genealogy.com/singapore>>.

### 8.4 National Archives of Singapore <[www.nhb.gov.sg/NAS](http://www.nhb.gov.sg/NAS)>.

### 8.5 Catholic Church in Singapore

<[http://home.att.net/~Local\\_Catholic/Catholic-International.htm#Singapore](http://home.att.net/~Local_Catholic/Catholic-International.htm#Singapore)>.



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