

**Flows and changes : A Comparison between Singapore & Malaya Overseas
Chinese Women
and Fujian & Cantonese Women during the first half of 20th century**

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This dissertation, using education, economic participation, social participation, marriage & family and procreating health as indexes, makes a comparison between Singapore & Malaya Overseas Chinese Women and Chinese local women (mainly Fujian & Cantonese Women) during the first half of 20th century, henceforth points out that basic education of Chinese women in Singapore & Malaya was better than that of those women in the rural areas and some cities in China, the economic participation activities, especially industrial and commercial activities of Chinese women in Singapore & Malaya, were more frequent than Fujian & Cantonese women. But the social activities of Singapore & Malaya Chinese women were lagged behind by urban Chinese women. As to marriage and family, the process of the reform of Overseas Chinese Society was slower than the big Chinese cities, but faster than those Fujian & Cantonese rural areas, also the status of Overseas Chinese Women in their family was higher than those country women in Fujian and Canton. In the aspect of procreating health, the mortality of Overseas Chinese infants and Overseas Chinese pregnant women were both far lower than those in Chinese urban and rural areas. The general rising of the status of Chinese women was due to the flow and migration of people. Immigration, colony, urbanization, and the disequilibrium of sex were the four characteristics of Overseas Chinese Society in Singapore & Malaya, that differentiate it from the Fujian & Cantonese Chinese Society. The living condition and the transformation of the status of Overseas Chinese Women were closely related to the above mentioned four characteristics. On one hand, Chinese women had tremendous impact on the change of the economy, marriage and family, and the gender relationship of Chinese society; on the other hand, the living conditions of Chinese women were also deeply effected by the society, political and economic environment in which they lived.