

**The Origin of the Kinship between
the Chew and Lum Families
(林趙一家親)**

China, long known as the sleeping giant because it had always enjoyed isolation, has seen alternating periods of peace and war. That famous chapter in Chinese history known as the Song Dynasty (宋朝) was one long succession of eighteen emperors of the Chew family that ruled China for 319 years from 960 to 1279 A. D.

In 1215, the Mongol emperor Genghis Khan (1162-1227) invaded China from the north and occupied the capital Bianjing (汴京) (or Kaifeng (開封)) near present day Beijing (北京). From there, the Mongols created an empire that ultimately stretched from the China Sea to the Black Sea in Europe.

The reigning Song emperor moved his capital to present day Hangzhou (杭州) (near Shanghai) from which he retreated southward with the armies of Kublai Khan (忽必烈) (1216-1294) in relentless pursuit. Battles raged in Fujian (福建) and Guangdong (廣東) provinces. On reaching the Pearl River delta, Emperor Di Bing (帝昺) conferred with his ministers. Knowing the end was inevitable and that to be captured would be the ultimate disgrace, he ordered his followers to follow him into the sea in mass suicide at Ngai Moon (崖門).

One of his followers, Chew Bit Chi (趙必次) (an eleventh generation descendant of the first Song Emperor Tai Jo, born Chew Hong Yun) had befriended a stranger named Lum Yuen Foo (元輔), a high official of state in Fujian. Their friendship had grown so strong that Lum agreed to take care of Chew Bit Chi's two young sons, Leung Kum (良黔) and Leung Jung (良聰), after their father's death. Furthermore, in a gesture of extreme loyalty, Lum Yuen Foo, in order to save Chew's two sons, had his own two sons take the place of Chew's two sons under the Mongol emperor's orders to execute all Chew's.

Upon the fall of the Sung Dynasty in 1279, Lum Yuen Foo moved his family to Sun Wuey, Guangdong province, where he acquired 200 hectares (頃) (500 acres) of land that he farmed. Renaming his adopted children as Lum Dai Noe (林大奴) and Lum Yee Noe (林二奴), he treated them as his own – housing, clothing, and feeding them. As they grew older, he schooled them and even arranged for their marriage.

In 1299, Lum Gwai Fong (林桂芳), the second son of Lum Yuen Foo, assembled a militia of 10,000 troops with Chew Leung Kum in an abortive attempt to overthrow the Mongol rulers and re-establish the Sung Dynasty. The revolt failed miserably and all were killed.

During the reign of the Mongols, all persons named Chew used other surnames to hide their true identity. Not until the fourth year (1372) of the reign of Hung Moe (洪武), Ming (明) Dynasty (1368-1643) did the Chews dare to resume use of the real surnames.

As he lay on his deathbed, Lum Yuen Foo summoned his children and instructed them that his adopted children must someday resume their real name Chew. He left instructions that all his worldly belongings must be equally divided among his offspring and his adopted children.

In the 21st year of Hung Moe, Ming Dynasty, Chew Jone Yuen (趙宗遠) moved to Ful Shek (浮石), Toi Shan (台山) and became its first Chew patriarch. His younger brothers Chew Jone Ching remained in Har Loe (霞路), county of Sun Wuey (新會), and became its Chew patriarch. Other Chews began moving into other counties of Kwangtung (廣東) province and started other branches of the Chew family.

Descendants of Lum Yuen Foo also moved to the suburb around Sun Wuey and maintained close friendly ties with the Chew there, honoring each other as brothers. Not only did they help and protect one another, they celebrated feasts and memorials together.

At annual celebrations, the Chews traditionally toasted their benefactors – the Lum's – first, then their own. To memorialize this debt of gratitude, the Chews have always honored the Lum's in this way at festivals.

Originally written by Lawrence Jue