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The Dilemma of Belonging:

Aspects of Cultural Memory in *Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási*

Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium

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The Dilemma of Belonging:

Aspects of Cultural Memory in *Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium*

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I, the undersigned Liu Meng, in full awareness of my liability, I declare that the dissertation submitted is my original academic work, which was prepared with attention to the international norms of copyright, and the references included in it are clear and complete. I further declare that I am not currently subject to a procedure aimed at the revocation of a doctoral degree, and that a doctoral degree already awarded has not been revoked from me in the past 5 years. I have not submitted the present dissertation at another institute before, and it has not been rejected.

LIU MENG

August 26, 2025

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction	3
Chapter1: Cultural memory and Diaspora	16
1.1 Floating “Home”: The Chinese Diaspora and the Dynamics of Travel	16
1.2 Chineseness and Its Expression in the Diaspora	29
Chapter2: Chinese Migration to Europe and Hungary	46
2.1 Migratory Memory and Identity of the Diaspora: Chinese Migration to Hungary	47
2.2 Negotiating Memory and Belonging: The Chinese Cultural Space in Hungary	59
Chapter3: The School as a Community and Memory Space	70
3.1 Budapest Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School as a Memory Space	70
3.2 The Symbolic Field of the Memory Space in the Budapest Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School	94
3.3 The Functional Sites of “Sites of Memory” in Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School in Budapest	114
Chapter4: Cultural Memory as a Cultural Dilemma	125
4.1 The Use of Chinese Characters as “mnémotechnique”	125
4.2 Mnemonics Method in the Calligraphy Classes	135
4.3 Language as a Memory aid and the Flux of Memory	156
Conclusion: Flow, Hybridization, Reconstruction - Dynamic Practices of Non-Stop Identity Formation	180
References	192
Research Ethics and Ethical Considerations	215
Appendix: List of Figures	216

Abstract

The economic development of the Chinese community in Hungary began in the 1980s and 1990s following the signing of a visa-free agreement between China and Hungary. At that time, Hungary was the only European country to implement a visa-free policy for Chinese nationals, enabling the Chinese community to grow rapidly. Early immigrants primarily made a living by setting up market stalls. At the same time, Chinese merchants centered around “Chinatown” (Monori Center) to establish a unique transnational community, forming a supply chain encompassing import, wholesale, and retail activities. Unlike classic immigration cases, Chinese immigrants in Hungary exhibit characteristics of short-term duration, rapid development, substantial autonomy, and significant heterogeneity.

To explore the diversity of immigrant identity among the Chinese community in Hungary, I selected the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school as the subject of my research. This choice is based on the school’s publicly-funded Character — it was jointly established by the Hungarian and Chinese governments, making it a unique institution. In this study, my research focus is divided into two aspects. The first is to talk about how Chinese immigrants reconstruct and reinterpret their memories in the host country within the immigration context. Second, I examine cultural memory to study Chinese identity and observe the dynamics of Chinese immigrants’ identity through the school as a memory container.

The central argument of this research is that the unique pattern of Chinese immigration to Hungary reflects the multiplicity or fluidity of Chinese identity in Hungary. This dynamism, mediated through the transmission and reconstruction of cultural memory, influences how Chinese immigrants in Hungary shape their cultural spaces. As a representative cultural space, the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school provides a venue for studying how Chinese immigrants in Hungary negotiate and express their identities. This research aims to supplement and deepen existing immigration studies through the unique case of Chinese immigrants in Hungary. In this research, I draw on theories related to Chinese immigration studies and interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks from cultural memory studies and identity studies. I incorporate other necessary theoretical threads relevant to my talk in each

subchapter. Cultural memory research runs throughout my study. Its primary function in my thesis is to anchor identity. However, the reinterpretation of cultural memory is closely tied to the Chinese concept of the “floating home.” I argue in my thesis that the homes of Chinese immigrants are constantly undergoing change and transformation. In this process, the fluidity of memory becomes a strategy for identity formation, continuously updating the perspectives through which Chinese immigrants perceive their identities.

My conclusions revolve around the following four points: First, Chinese immigrants cannot define their identity uniformly in a cross-cultural environment. They are constantly seeking points of contact between difference and sameness to reflect on their identity. Their identity is influenced by multicultural forces, which in turn shape their ability to integrate into immigrant culture. Second, their sense of identity exhibits strategic and situational characteristics due to the fluidity of memory. Immigrants’ individual identity is shaped by personal agency, while their collective identity is rooted in the group’s shared past and selective memories. Third, despite the emergence of hybrid and fluid identity recognition within the immigrant community, this does not prevent them from forming a cohesive collective that embraces unity and diversity. Finally, given the complexity of cross-cultural integration among Chinese immigrants in Hungary, their identity navigates and blends across multiple cultures, representing a multidimensional, multi-layered, and complex cultural integration and interaction process.

Key Words: Dilemma of Belonging; Cultural Memory; Chinese immigrants; Diaspora; Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium

Introduction

In the late 20th century, a large number of Chinese immigrants traveled to Hungary, quickly opened up markets through the stalled economy and small goods trading activities. To help Chinese immigrants adapt to a new environment different from that of their home country, a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, the *Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium* came into being. The school became not only a place of education for the children of Chinese immigrants but also a carrier of cultural memory and a site of identity negotiation. The practice of these early immigrants, the memories of the Chinese home country, and the memories generated in the new environment form a conflict between the memories, leading to the confusion of the Chinese immigrant identity. The process provides a typical case for exploring the relationship between cultural memory and dynamic identity construction. By examining the interactive relationship between cultural memory and identity among the Chinese, I intend to observe the dynamic change of Chinese identity in this dissertation by taking the Hungarian-Chinese community, especially the community of Chinese students in the bilingual school, as the object of my research.

The Chinese in Hungary started to form a community in the changing political climate effected by the new emerging Eastern European politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The economic crisis caused by the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe made Hungary look for a better solution to overcome the crisis by attracting foreign investment. In order to offer a stronger investment environment, Hungary implemented a more flexible solution with the short-lived Hungarian-Chinese visa-free agreement (Yang 1996, 40). Catching this message, some Chinese who were skilled at doing business came to Eastern Europe to make a breakthrough. Due to its special geographical location, Hungary was considered an important port of entry for Chinese and their goods into Western Europe. It was, at one time, one of the most economically active regions for the Chinese in Central Europe and even Europe as a whole. The reason for this can be traced back to the fact that Hungary is a country of only 10 million people, and the number of Chinese gathered in Hungary peaked at 50,000. 80% of the population was in Hungary for the exclusive purpose of doing business, and in 1998 the number of Chinese doing business in Hungary reached about 10,000 people (Yang 1998, 43),

and they initially set up stalls and started their business. The no-longer-existing “Four Tigers Market” became their first battlefield (Xiongyali Chinese Community History, n.d.). The stalled economy gradually opened up the Hungarian market.

Chinese in Hungary are engaged in a relatively narrow range of occupations, most of which are focused on various economic activities (mainly in the form of restaurants, trade companies, and grocery stores). Especially in 1998, the number of Chinese trading companies registered in Hungary reached about 3,000 (Yang 1998, 43). These trading companies are expanding economic activity on a large scale, and many Chinese are traveling from China through Moscow and Russia to Hungary by train with suitcases and snakeskin bags on their backs. Low-priced Chinese goods quickly opened up the market in Hungary within a couple of years and attracted businessmen from neighboring countries to buy the goods. By the end of 1994, according to Hungarian customs statistics, the value of imports amounted to 390 million US dollars, and the variety of goods reached more than 50 series and 400 varieties (Xiu 1997, 47).

In contrast to migration patterns in other areas of the world, Chinese migration in Hungary has a history of only 30 years or so and has developed very quickly. The pattern of migration shows a great degree of independence. This is shown by the fact that the first generation of Chinese immigrants did not emigrate on the basis of a family history of emigration but were driven by their own personal will. They saw their migration to Hungary as a special opportunity for their own development. This independence has been present throughout the history of emigration. At the start of the emigration period, Chinese authorities sent 48 large state-run companies, most of them well-educated, to Hungary to carry out international trade (Xiu 1997, 46). After arriving in Hungary and witnessing the new opportunities for development, some of the Chinese chose to stay and become their own bosses. The visa-free policy also allowed some of the Chinese from the north of China to see the opportunity to become rich. They did not come from the same place nor from the same group, and thus, their migration behavior was not homogeneous. As Frank N. Pieke noted when he talked about whether the Chinese community was uniform or not, the core group migrated and distributed relatively independently throughout the whole of Europe. They only

contact each other when there is some special circumstance in the political, economic, or social environment, and such actions sometimes create the illusion of the existence of a united Chinese community (Pieke 1997, 12). Frank N. Pieke's discussion is based on the whole European context, and when talking about Hungarian immigrants in a separate discussion, the Chinese immigrants in Hungary present a similar level of independence. Their independence is not only expressed in the unity of action in particular situations but also in the fact that they did not migrate in the early stages of their migratory action due to the linkage of blood and geographic migrants; rather they were more concerned with their own will and choice. They do not belong to the homogeneous Chinese group and will not be easily assimilated into the local culture. This pattern of immigration is more likely to produce cultural heterogeneity within the Chinese community.

The Hungarian-Chinese community itself enjoys inner heterogeneity by now. Because of the ongoing immigration and the strengthening of the local Chinese community, Chinese immigrant families can be divided into four categories according to the nationality and the place of birth of their children: HBH children (Hungarian born Hungarian), CBC children (Chinese born Chinese), CBH children (Chinese born Hungarian), HBC children (Hungarian born Chinese). A CBC child is a child with Chinese nationality who was born in China and followed his or her working parents to Hungary. A CBH child is a child whose parents have a permanent residence permit and do not possess Hungarian nationality. In contrast, HBH children are children born in Hungary whose parents have been naturalized and raised their children in Hungary. HBH children may have been born in China and eventually acquired Hungarian citizenship together with their parents due to their parents' completed immigration. Most of them have been living abroad for several years and are now of school age. The education these children receive takes place in the context of Hungarian educational culture, and the adaptation and integration of the cultural environment in an environment different from that of China also becomes a matter of concern. As a result, HBH children, CBC children, CBH children, HBC children, and BCB children are culturally and psychologically different.

To understand the diversity of the Chinese community in Hungary and to examine the development of its relationship to the wider Hungarian cultural environment, the study of the schooling of their children lends itself naturally, as children represent a central cultural concern for Chinese people. Institutionalized education as a sphere in which Chinese and Hungarian children learn side by side illuminates the modes of interaction well, denoting different identity concerns. As any institutionalized education is the establishment of a structurally strong and centralized school system with a universal mission (Feng 2009, 23), cultural heterogeneity can be easily revealed in the school. The Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium (Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual Primary and Secondary School) in Budapest is one unique example:

The school is a full-day school, which is part of the Hungarian public education system. The school is a public elementary and secondary school that uses both Chinese and Hungarian as the medium of instruction. The children of those who have been granted residence in Hungary (both non-permanent and permanent residence) can attend the Hungarian Bilingual School free of charge, where they can learn Chinese, Hungarian, and English in a relaxed atmosphere (Chinese Community 2021)¹.

Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school is a 12-year full-time public school jointly organized by the governments of China and Hungary. In 2011, the Hungarian government officially included Chinese as a second foreign language in the Hungarian secondary school graduation examination system. The total number of students in the school is around 500, with the number of Chinese students accounting for one-third of the total number of students. (Wang 2000)²

¹ All translations from Chinese are the author's LM.

² Information from the interviewer, Ms. Wang of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school.

Based on the facts listed, the school represents an institutionalized form of cooperative education funded by the Hungarian state and supported by the Chinese government to establish an educational space in which both cultures are enhanced. As it is stated on the school's official website,

The main goal of the school is to provide children from the Chinese community with a loving education and high-quality education in line with the Hungarian tradition, in addition to preserving their roots, learning their mother tongue according to the family curriculum, as well as learning the Chinese language and the millennium Chinese culture. (Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium n.d.)

Specifically, taking the school as the crystallization of the presence of the Chinese community in Hungary with a distinct cultural identity dynamically engaging with and shaping the school community, my research focuses, firstly, on Chinese immigrants' uniqueness; this uniqueness is the independence of the immigration history of the Chinese community from previous immigrant countries. In this cultural context, it is easier to examine the heterogeneity of the Chinese community's culture, which is different from that of other communities. Secondly, cultural memory is a means to maintain Chinese identity, and the school is a site of memory. The research can show how immigrants reconstruct and reinterpret their past and recent memories in the context of their immigrant identity. In such a context, some cultural heterogeneity is thus more visible in the school, and this determines the specificity of the school as a site of cultural memory different from other sites of memory. The background of the establishment of the school and the political and cultural factors are taken into account to arrive at the uniqueness of the school as an object of study. Therefore, in the dissertation, I will discuss the use of cultural memory as a medium and cultural memory in the "school" as a site of memory and to reconstruct recent cultural memory as the reinterpretation of the past, with the aim of observing the changes in the identity of Chinese immigrants in the mesh of

their cross-cultural existence, and to what extent the Chinese segment of their identity is maintained or reconstructed.

Hence, in the historically unique migration pattern that the Hungarian-Chinese community devises, the hyphenated identity of Chinese Hungarian people expresses a dynamic duality (or, rather, multiplicity) that can be grasped through the cultural memory of the community, which comes to expression in how they define their life in the context of Hungary, how they relate to their immediate environment, and how they shape their cultural spaces. The bilingual school offers and constructs a cultural space in which Chinese students express and negotiate identities and, in that way, interpret and reinterpret their cultural memories in the vortex of the evolving relational identity within the school community. Their cultural memory, therefore, demarcates the nature and possibilities of intercultural relations.

To research my research foci, I conducted fieldwork in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school several times over a period of 4 years between 2020 and 2024. By observing students' behavior in the classroom and real-life scenarios of student-to-student interactions outside the classroom, I observed how they interacted with their home country's cultural memories in the school environment and how the memories they carried from their home country interacted with those they generated in their new environment. I employed questionnaires designed to investigate the research objectives and I selected 86 Chinese students and students with partial Chinese ancestry as the research subjects. In order to minimize the influence of the parents of Chinese students on the results of the questionnaire, this questionnaire was conducted mainly in grades 5-12. Because students in grades 5 and above were able to read and complete the questionnaire independently. A total of two questionnaire surveys were conducted for this thesis. The results of the collected data were analyzed statistically, mainly using descriptive statistics. As a result, a large amount of structured data was collected, laying a quantitative research foundation for analyzing the relationship between cultural memory and mobility of identity in the Chinese community. In addition, I interviewed 25 Chinese students and 30 teachers and parents in semi-structured interviews to understand their perceptions of identity, subjective experiences of cross-cultural adaptation, and perceptions of Chinese cultural heritage.

My involvement in this research is in the interdisciplinary frameworks of cultural memory, intercultural studies, diaspora studies and identity studies in relation to Chinese migrants, and I embroiled in additional theoretical threads deemed necessary in the various subsections of the research.

When studying the Chinese diaspora as a community in Hungary, I believe that there is no term that better captures the situation of Chinese migrants in Hungary than ‘floating diaspora.’ Floating implies mobility, not only geographical mobility, but also uncertainty of cultural identity and sense of belonging. John Urry, through his extensive mobility research, has considered mobility to be a globalization that transcends traditionally defined social outcomes. He defined mobility as the various movements of people across time and space, and the global flow of ideas, images, information, waste, and money. Mobility theory provides a theoretical basis for understanding the mobility of Chinese immigrants. He further notes that mobility applies to multiple subjects of action and does not only refer to people (Urry 2000b, 186). This perspective sees the Chinese diaspora as not only mobile themselves but also using their home as a symbolic and operational subject. Urry’s theory provides academic justification for the notion of the Chinese diaspora’s ‘floating home.’

In a similar vein, Zygmunt Bauman, in his exploration of modernity, theorized the solid and fluid stages of society. In the ‘solid stage’ of modernity, society is centered on sedentarism, and human identity is usually closely linked to a fixed address. In the ‘fluid stage’ of modernity, nomadism is pushing back against the principles of sedentarism, and nomadic and exterritorial elites are taking over (2000, 13). Modernity is thus shifting from a solid stage to a mobility stage. This means that the common forces represented by the community and the state are gradually shrinking and are increasingly unable to provide individuals with a sense of belonging and security. Individuals are given more freedom in their lives and choices, and social structures are not as tight and collectivized as they used to be. Thus, as Bauman argues, we live in a modernity that is a mixture of the ‘individualised’ and the ‘privatised’ (2000, 7). Individuals have been given more freedom in their lives and choices, and the social structure is not as tightly knit and collectivized as it used to be. In this context, individuals are expected to weave “pattern-weaving” and fulfill “responsibility for failure falling primarily on the

individual's shoulders" (2000, 8). Human interactions have become more volatile, akin to "liquid." They are "like all fluids. They do not keep their shape for long" (8). Bauman argues that it is easier to be fluid than to remain fixed and that fluidity has thus become the norm in modern societies(8). This theory of Bauman provides a theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon of the Chinese diaspora "floating" in Hungary. It shows that as societies enter a phase of mobility, identity and belonging become increasingly dependent on mobility and change rather than on fixed geographic and social structures.

Bauman tries to show us that the era of mobility caused by the disintegration of social structures implies continuous new beginnings. It is for this reason that the reconfiguration of postmodernity often leads to the most disturbing worries (2005, 2). Because in such an age and living situation that is constantly beginning, constantly changing, constantly ending, and then constantly beginning again, it is difficult to accurately find oneself in the coordinates of life constructed by historical events and social space, and the individual is usually at a loss in the face of a multitude of possibilities. All this has changed in the era of fluidity. As Bauman puts it about fluids,

fluids travel easily. They 'flow,' 'spill,' 'run out,' 'splash,' 'pour over,' 'leak,' 'flood,' 'spray,' 'drip,' 'seep,' 'ooze;' unlike solids, they are not easily stopped - they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and bore or soak their way through others still. (2000, 2)

Just as fluids are ever-changing, the self that people once relied on to sustain themselves and thought to be unchanging has also become elusive. Particularly in the case of the Chinese diaspora, this uncertainty has meant the dismantling of all the last vestiges of stability, belonging and security. It has forced them to re-face their own perceptions of the situations in which they find themselves. In the case of Chinese diaspora migration to Hungary, one can take a cue from Eric Hobsbawm's comments, "Men and women look for groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world in which all else is moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain" (40). That is - in a world in constant motion - people are constantly

searching for groups to which they are sure to belong. If one's community affiliation fails, then one's identity of self also suffers a setback. So, Jock Young echoes Hobsbawm's comment, "Just as community collapses, identity is invented" (1999, 164). For the Chinese diaspora in Hungary, the relationship between the individual and the group becomes fluid as the diaspora moves. With the deconstruction of the sense of belonging to the community, people have to face the crisis of identity.

With the disintegration of the community, Chinese expatriates are trying to find a new identity in a changing world. In this study, I found that 'Chineseness' plays a key role in the Chinese diaspora's search for a new identity. This is due to the fact that 'Chineseness' has become part of the Chinese character. According to Ching-I Tu, the concept of "Chineseness" was already formed in the early Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771BC). The emergence of the teachings of Confucius (551-479BC) represents the maturity of the concept of "Chineseness." Although the specific date is still debated, it is recognized that with the evolution of the Chinese nation and the development of ancient cultures, the Chinese people have long since developed an awareness of "Chineseness" (2007, 54). Therefore, Chineseness has a long history of origin along with the survival and development of the Chinese people. It can be described as having been cultivated through history and engraved into the bones of every Chinese person. Chineseness is not only related to the understanding of the self and the other but also to the Chinese cultural traditions, memories, and values that have become their unique spiritual home in an era of mobility. It helps them to maintain themselves in the midst of mobility and uncertainty. With the migration of the Chinese diaspora, the concept and meaning of 'Chineseness' has been enriched in the diaspora community. Their Chineseness is characterized by mobility. They need an identity to face the new environment, but this also proves that they are unable to complete an effective identity. Thus, Chineseness serves as a tool for them to fulfill their identity, and Ching-I Tu points out that

No matter how different their specific positions are in the study of "Chineseness," local Chinese thinkers have a common starting point. Whether they are expounding on the strengths of the national culture or criticizing the shortcomings

of the national character, they all want to establish a national consciousness or national character for China that meets the requirements of the modern age by analyzing and organizing national traditions and in this way promote the process of modernization of Chinese society. They study 'Chineseness' precisely to transform 'Chineseness' (2007, 155).

Tu's viewpoint confirms the instrumental role of 'Chineseness' in different eras. That is, it is often full of pressing relevance to reality. In the Hungarian-Chinese diaspora's view, the understanding of China and Chinese people has become blurred and diversified as a result of migration. However, they summarise an abstract ethnicity with regard to Chinese culture. Borrowing Tu's point of view, Chineseness is based on abstract ethnicity, and through various methods such as affirmation, negation, transplantation, and transformation, they realize their ideals of revitalizing the nation and renovating the country (2007, 156). The Chinese diaspora has a similar approach to the construction of the Chinese community.

In the case of the Chinese diaspora in Hungary, 'Chineseness' is a tool to establish the differentiation of Chinese people from other people abroad. It is closely related to identity. However, the concept of Chineseness is not always consistent, and in different times and situations, we cannot find 'any one simple answer that will satisfy' (1991, 1). Thus, the concept of Chineseness is not a concept that can be determined in a systematic and planned way. Thus, the recognition of identity is not a process that can find its beginning and its end and be understood with the help of a timeline. At this level, Chinese identity can only be dynamic for Chinese people who use 'Chineseness' to realize their identity in a group. They can only build up a mobile view of identity and complete their group identification by continuously recognizing and accepting the "Chineseness" of the new immigrants. As the meaning of Chineseness is constantly enriched, this often confirms the "fluidity" of Chineseness, whose real meaning cannot be fixed. Wang Gungwu argues that if we want to understand the true meaning of Chineseness, we have to include "all the ideas, values, and institutions that have been produced and developed in China, then we need to explore a very complex mechanism that must be mastered as a whole" (1991, 2).

The fluidity of ‘Chineseness’ and ‘Identity’ is characterized by the same nature of memory. In this research, cultural memory is the fundamental theoretical tool, which is interspersed in each chapter. We believe that memory is a process of sifting, reorganizing, and reinterpreting the past according to the needs of reality. Memory happens in individual identity and collective identity. Individual identity is based on an individual's choice of past memories, while collective identity is based on the memories shared by the group. The group shared memory is supported by the abstract Chineseness that realizes the core of self-identity and group identity. This process, as Jan Assmann emphasizes, is one in which many people share a common cultural memory, which conveys to them a sense of collective identity (2011, 17). Individual and collective memories cannot be viewed in isolation, and Assmann summarises Halbwachs’ findings that memory can be active as a “function of social life (2011, 16)” between individual and collective memory. Halbwachs suggests that individual and collective memory are intertwined, that individual memories are sublimated in the collective, and that living in the collective creates new memories (Assmann 2011, 16). This study uses memory theory as a mediating condition, involving aspects of research on memory from the relationship between individual and collective memory.

The first thing that is clarified in this study is that the school is a ‘memory place’ that is used to construct cultural memory. All the cultural activities that take place in this place, such as festivals and rituals that take place in the school, are considered to be memory sites. which is actually the vehicle of history and memory activation and the context in which it is embedded (Nora 1998). In this way, cultural memory is able to transcend the limited lifespan of human beings by means of materially stable and institutionally solid symbolic carriers; in other words, it is able to break free from the temporal constraints of communicative memory so that it can extend infinitely in the temporal dimension and realize the various potentials of memory; finally, cultural memory presents a developmental sequence of constantly absorbing and mastering new and active memories. This can be said to be a culture that has been objectified through organized and ritualized interactions. Thus, the vehicle of memory is particularly important in this case. Or, in other words, cultural memory creates the medium for understanding the nature and possibilities of cross-cultural relations.

In this study, I focus on some of the main premises and concepts identified in cultural memory, discuss how cultural memory is reinterpreted and reconstructed in various memory fields in specific elaborations, and talk about the relationship between cultural memory and identity. This serves as a foundational theory for the study of Chinese student groups' perceptions of their own identities in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual schools. This study argues that in the case of students' individual memories, which are constantly fluid with their migration experiences, family education, etc., collective memory, which is the total of activities in school, plays a role in reinterpreting students' individual memories. The fluidity of memory results in the mixed and fluid nature of Chinese students' identities in Hungary.

In order to respond to the aspect of Chinese students' memory and identity in Hungary, I have divided this thesis into five parts to talk about. Each part discusses a specific aspect related to migration, memory, and identity. The first chapter is a synthesis of the theoretical part. In this chapter, I divide the discussion into two specific sub-chapters. In the first subchapter, I define the Chinese home as "floating" by talking about the ever-travelling nature of Chinese migration. The second subchapter distinguishes Chinese migrants from other migrant groups in the world by bringing in the concept of 'Chineseness.' This chapter concludes that the Chinese diaspora group is different from all other migrant groups in the world in that their migratory experience is characterized by the practices of 'traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling' (Clifford 1992, 108). The discussion about the Chineseness of being involved serves as a complement to the expression of how Chinese people maintain and transform their own markers of Chinese cultural elements while traveling. The aim is to use the fluidity of 'Chineseness' to clarify one's liquid identity.

The second chapter relies on diaspora theory to give a general overview of Chinese migration to Hungary and to state why the 'Chinese diaspora in Hungary distinguishes itself from diaspora groups in the world. I present this chapter in two parts. In the first part, I test the role of diaspora theory and cultural memory theory in the study of Chinese groups, starting with a discussion of the economic life of Chinese in Hungary. In the second part, the focus is on the dynamic relationship between Chinese migrants' memory and identity change in Hungary. Here, their cultural space is labeled as a memory-aided space for negotiating and

reconstructing a sense of belonging. The uniqueness of the most representative Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school as a Hungarian cultural space is thus elicited by examining the uniqueness of the Hungarian-Chinese immigrant community.

In the third chapter, from Pierre Nora's point of view, it was argued that the school space can be used as a unique memory space. This memory space contains three meanings, namely, the material field of memory, the symbolic field of memory, and the functional field of memory. This chapter divides these three aspects into three sub-chapters. The purpose of this research is to determine how Chinese cultural memory is expressed in these three memory sites.

The fourth chapter explains that language is both an important component of knowledge passed down from generation to generation within a group and a carrier of cultural memory. Therefore, the teaching of Chinese language and calligraphy in bilingual schools is seen as a way to demonstrate Chinese cultural memory in bilingual education. As visual 'memory traces' of socio-spatial memory and cultural-spiritual tensions, this chapter examines how the Chinese language as a mnemonic technique affects individual and collective memory. I have divided this chapter into three sections. The first part focuses on how calligraphy, as a typical representative of Chinese character acquisition, acts as a mnemonic, and this part lays the theoretical foundation for the second subchapter. In the second part I specify how calligraphy acts as a mnemonic in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual schools for both individual and groups of students. The third part elaborates on the uniqueness of thinking in Chinese characters that are different from other languages in the world, as derived from Chinese language acquisition. It leads to the fact that the degree of Chinese character acquisition shapes the impact on identity. The degree of language acquisition also plays a role in mediating the identity of Chinese students who dynamically adjust their identity through language and memory.

In the conclusion of the last chapter, I conclude that Chinese students' identity change is an unfinished dynamic practice of identity shaping. I focus on the changing identities of Chinese students in terms of fluid memories and identities. I consider Chinese students' identities to have "in-between, hybrid, ambiguous" characteristics (Bhabha 1994). Unlike the 'in-between' identity proposed by Homi Bhabha, however, the identity of Chinese students

may also be in-among, based on the specificity of the Hungarian-Chinese diaspora community in intercultural interactions, which is characterized by their deep interaction and participation in multicultural networks. Therefore, we argue that identity can be seen as a “vapor structure,” shaped by the constant negotiation and interaction of multicultural forces, shaping the creativity of diasporic cultural integration.

Chapter1: Cultural memory and Diaspora

The phenomena of migration and diaspora are becoming more common in the context of globalization, and the idea of “home” has taken on several dimensions and complexity for dispersed populations. In order to investigate how the concept of “home” is recreated in the diaspora, this study focuses on Chinese immigrants. The study examines how culture and geography interact to define “home,” drawing on the idea of “diaspora,” and how travel affects “homemaking” in Chinese Migratory Movements. Additionally, the study discusses maintaining cultural continuity in globalization and reshaping individual and collective identities in the practices of “travelling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-travelling” (Clifford 1992,108).

In addition to increasing population mobility physically, the deepening of global migrations has had a noteworthy effect on how diasporic cultures understand and experience “home.” This study looks at how Chinese immigrants, who make up one of the biggest diasporic flows in the modern world, dynamically reconstruct “home.” Through examining the relationship between travel, diaspora, and the idea of “home,” this study advances our knowledge of the challenges encountered by transnational communities. It also provides a critical analysis of how travel functions in the continual process of creating a home, arguing that “home” is a fluid concept created by constant movement and cross-cultural interactions rather than a static location in the diaspora.

1.1 Floating “Home”: The Chinese Diaspora and the Dynamics of Travel

Home in Diaspora

The term “Diaspora” emerged as a result of Jewish immigration and the spread of religious culture. As scholar Martin Baumann points out that in its original context, “the ‘diaspora’ turned out to be an integral part of a pattern consisting of a fourfold process of sin or disobedience, dispersion and exile as punishment, repentance, and finally return and gathering” (Baumann 2000, 316). The concept of the Diaspora, which clearly transgressed the boundaries of the Jewish community, began in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of the African American civil rights movement. The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements on the African continent gave rise to the new term “African Diaspora” (African Diaspora) with a distinctly political meaning, which demonstrated the political sensibilities of the leaders and scholars of the African civil rights movement of the time (Melvin 2004, 430). The academic flow that began with the diaspora as a specific life form did not stop there. In the 1970s and 1980s, with the unprecedented expansion of the number of people, scale and distance of global cross-border mobility, cross-border survival gradually became the norm. The word diaspora, which is full of rich connotations such as migration, hometown, memory, imagination, etc., has been more and more commonly transplanted to various migrant groups under the pen of scholars. As Gabi Shefer explicitly puts it a minority group known as the “modern diaspora” is made up of immigrants and their offspring who work and live in the nation from which they left but have close material and emotional ties to their home country (1986, 3). This one highlights the gradual characterization of modern diaspora groups as communities with transgressive characteristics. It is thus clear that the terms that were once primarily used to describe the Jewish, Greek and Armenian diasporas have taken on broader connotations, encompassing such diverse terms as “immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community” (Khachig 1991, 4-5). According to Clifford, the primary traits of the diaspora are “history of dispersal, myths/ memories of the homeland, alienation in the host (bad host?) country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship” (1994, 305).

Furthermore, William Safran discusses the traditional elements of diasporas, emphasizing themes of dispersion, exile, and the idealization of the homeland. Taking

“homeland” and “return” as an important basis, Safran proposes six characteristics of contemporary diaspora groups:

- 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions;
- 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements;
- 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
- 4) they regard their ancestral home- land as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are ap propriate;
- 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
- 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship(1991, 83-84).

According to Safran, the memory of home and the myth of return are essential features of contemporary diaspora, and for the diaspora in a foreign land, the bond of “home” can have a cohesive effect on the diaspora. The collective consciousness and solidarity of ethnic minority diaspora groups can provide a defense mechanism against unfair treatment by the country of removal.

The “return” is largely mythological in nature and can be seen as an eschatological concept (similar to the second coming of Christ) in which the majority of the diaspora do not actually or intentionally return to their homelands, and which is presented as a utopia -- or heterotopia -- to make life in a foreign country more bearable (Safran 1991, 84-85).

Gabriel Sheffer similarly emphasizes the importance of the homeland for diaspora groups, pointing out that although diaspora communities, represented by Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, have different reasons for leaving their homelands to survive in a foreign country, these communities share a common characteristic: they have always maintained a connection with their homeland and have a desire to return to it (2003, 55).

Thus, the essence of diaspora is centered on “home.” However, the desire to return home should not be confused with the desire for a homeland, and this is where the distinction between ‘mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination’ and ‘the lived experience of a locality’ is made (Brah 1996, 192). Brah argues that at the heart of the concept of diaspora is the image of a remembered home at a distance in both time and space. This “place of origin” may be the subject of a continuing “ideology of return” (ibid., 180). Additionally, despite their occasional attachments to certain locations or social groups, migrants may feel unable to see these locations as home due to practical issues like housing, language barriers, etc., ‘yet the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home’ (Ibid., 193).

However, the concept of diaspora has in fact been expanded to include situations not related to forced dispersion or a desire to return. The Hungarian diaspora, for example, is not characterized by a search for roots in the Chinese community in Hungary or a desire to return permanently to the motherland. They put down roots in the Chinese community to do business to sustain their livelihoods, and they maintain their relationship with their homeland through regular visits to it.

As Vijay Agnew and Rishma Dunlop argue, diaspora is defined by its ability to rebuild culture in different locations. And diaspora can denote a transnational sense of self and community and create an understanding of ethnic and racial bonds that transcends nation-state

boundaries and borders. People who live in the diaspora have constant tensions between their physical and metaphorical homes, between living “here” and remembering “there,” and between their memory of their birthplace and their connection to it (2005,4).

This tension forms the genesis of hybrid identities. Clifford’s intervention suggests that rather than being rooted in a singular origin, diasporic identities are produced through multiple attachments, often characterized by a sense of hybridity and cultural mixture (Clifford 1994, 302-338). Hybrid identities are a response to the realities of living between, or among, multiple cultural traditions, negotiating belonging, and navigating the often-fluid boundaries of cultural norms and expectations. As Bhabha argues being excluded and undergoing perpetual change are the sources of hybridity. He argues that “the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference from the minority perspective is a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformations” (qtd. in Jussawalla 1997, 29).

As Clifford and Bhabha have articulated, identity is no longer fixed or defined by a single culture; it has instead become hybrid and fluid. This pervasive hybridity renders traditional cultural concepts—as George Marcus noted—inapplicable as analytical tools in contemporary contexts. In other words, they are “no longer viable analytically and have been appropriated everywhere and by everybody” (2008, 3).

Beyond this, the environment has also emerged as a significant factor shaping identity construction. As Michael Fischer observes, “people increasingly construct their sense of self out of pieces that come from many different cultural environments”(2003, 182). He explicitly points out that individuals no longer derive their identity from a single, homogeneous cultural environment. Instead, they actively navigate diverse cultures, engaging in a fluid process of assembling their self-identity.

It is worth noting that this fluid identity construction does not occur in a vacuum; it is accompanied by an ongoing process of negotiation. Negotiated negotiation in the group makes the self a flexible region, where the self is linked by memories of the past and anticipated memories of the future of the ever-changing present (Hall, 2015, 226). This

process exacerbates the blurring of group boundaries comprising the self. Ethnic and racial groups are gradually assimilated and minority identities will eventually disappear (Cornell and Hartmann 1998, 44).

Thus, we should acknowledge that the concept of diaspora is shifting towards discussions about “home” rather than remaining a static, definitive paradigm. In addressing this topic, we discover that travel emerges as an undeniable factor. We should recognize that the notion of diaspora is evolving rather than solidifying into a definitive paradigm. Clifford notes that the Jewish (as well as the Greek and Armenian) diasporas can be viewed as non-normative starting points for discourses on travel or hybridization in new global contexts (1994, 306). Building on this, the concept is further extended and expanded. We should also concur with Safran’s six features defining diaspora but acknowledge that the significance of “travel” in this concept has been overlooked. In this subchapter, we propose to underscore the importance of travel and discuss it within the broader context of diaspora characteristics, while preserving the essence of Safran’s definition of diaspora.

Chinese Dwelling-in-Travel

The literature on diaspora and home has increasingly focused on the transient and fluid experiences of migrants as they navigate identities across borders. The traditional understanding of “home” is based on a static description, often associated with static, boundary, identity, and immutability. However, we still need to acknowledge that these traditional concepts continue to influence people. For instance, Bachelard describes how the home becomes the original space in which people’s earliest experiences take place and how this shapes their perceptions of the external world (2009, 2). This phenomenon highlights the role of sensory memory in reconstructing one’s home, even in the context of immigration. More than that, the home is not just a physical or a geographical place, but often an emotional space, an amalgamation of multiple emotions associated with a special place (Easthope 2004, 128-138). Thus, people’s emotional attachment to special places is often a key factor in the formation of “home” (Tuan 1974, 4).

Attachment is not a static emotion, but rather one that is reinforced through continuous, repetitive practice. And the experience of place is repeated through daily habitation and habituation (Massey 1992, 65-84). The home thus becomes the most important spatial scale to which a place is attached (Papastergiadis 1998, 2). However, the stable “home” practices of fixed locations have been disrupted by mobility. When the definition of home is discussed in the context of migration, the mobility of family members has broken the fixed spatio-temporality of home (Minh-ha 1994, 14). Home is no longer a fixed location, and along with traveling, home can be home-making by moving.

While Heidegger argues that dwelling is an essential feature of existence, and that space is given meaning by the act of dwelling, and that people acquire a sense of real existence (Heidegger 1971, 161). Heidegger’s concept seems to suggest that “dwelling” has stability, but the act of creating meaning through daily practice and interaction with the world provides us with a key analytical perspective. This perspective allows us to view the immigrant experience not as a departure from home, but as a new way of constructing home.

In the interaction between “home,” “travel,” and “dwelling,” modern mobility has drastically altered migrants’ “sedentary lifestyles” (Bauman 2000, 13). For the Chinese diaspora, travel is more than just the physical movement from one location to another; it may also be a way to improve the financial conditions of families. Chinese migrants do not stay in one home forever, and their notion of “dwelling” in the field of travel encompasses a wide range of experiences. The economic situation of Chinese immigrants has always been a major factor driving the mobility of Chinese people. Throughout Chinese history, people have left their homes to survive and develop, and this has always been shaped by mobility. “Migration” or “mobility” has been the basic survival strategy of the Chinese people (Li 2009, 75). Therefore, Chinese migrants move “in search of better living conditions for themselves and for their loved ones or escaping dramatic situations in their homeland” (Lee 1966, 47-57). Thus, the traditional link between home and the fixed space of the house is slowly disintegrating (Wardhaugh 1999, 92). The meaning of travel for Chinese migrants is actually, what James Clifford calls, “dwelling-in-travel” (Clifford 1992, 108).

However, even when Chinese people establish their homes while traveling, they still show attachments and material ties to their original hometowns. The migrants often carry with them the desire to revitalize their families and even clans, and their “roots” remain firmly planted in the land where they were born. What the Chinese call a family may live in different places thousands of miles away from each other, but through economic reciprocity, they still regard each other as a family. Thus, Chinese migration is not a separation from their birthplace and innate blood group, but rather a geographic expansion of existing ties (Li 2009, 75). When these migrants earn money, they send it back home to build houses and land for their families, to support the elderly and relatives who are unable to migrate with them, and even to support the construction of their hometowns. In a series of interviews, respondents testified:

Taking advantage of my children’s summer vacation to have two months of free time, I went back to China to help my parents rebuild their house, two months I do not dare to delay at all, the whole day at home to keep an eye on the progress of the construction. I will go back to China this summer to continue to help my parents rebuild their house [...] I went abroad to earn money in order to support my family’s living (Li 2022).³

I’ve been abroad for 20 years and I’ve been sending money to my family every year, and now I’m 60 years old, so I’ve kept this habit for 20 years. I work to make my family’s life better (Yang 2021).⁴

I think Chinese people are used to supporting their hometowns when they make money in foreign countries. Those who have done well in their hometowns donate

³ The source of the information comes from the author’s interviews with Hungarian- Chinese immigrants in the context of immigrant interviews being embedded in the global context.

⁴ Ibid.

money to the construction of their hometowns, repair temples, and help the poor and needy (Liu 2022).⁵

It is thus clear that Chinese migrants are not only keeping their “roots” in their hearts but also moving with their “homes” on their backs. This has also formed the characteristics of Chinese migration culture, which is characterized by both “keeping” and “leaving,” and the coexistence of geographical separation and attachments and economic connection.

In the context of Chinese migration, the concept of “home” is extended, as Chinese migrants are often on the move and their homes “float” with them. This suggests that Chinese migration is an ongoing process rather than a one-time event. Clifford concluded that “Dwelling was understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel a supplement; roots always precede routes” (1997, 3). The home of Chinese immigrants is constantly constructed in the process of mobility, and a certain compromise is reached through their daily lives and taking into account past and present conditions (Ahmed 1999, 329-347). This makes “dwelling” dynamic.

The dynamism of “dwelling” is manifested in the form of transnational travel of the Chinese, which keeps the Chinese as travelers stuck between the “place of emigration” and the “place of immigration.” In order to travel smoothly and continuously, Chinese migrants create “channels” between places of emigration and places of immigration. Such channels are not physically real spaces but are woven by underlying kinship networks (Li 2009, 79). One section of the channel connects the place of origin, and the other end connects the various places of migration. People in the place of origin are influenced by relatives working in other countries and have higher expectations of “earning money” and want to follow the example of the “successful” people around them to work abroad (Lin 2002a, 9). Migrants in the sending country have formed a network of migrants organized in the form of an “acquaintance society.” Through the migrant network, it is easy to borrow large sums of money to go abroad, and the migrant network can continue to assist the migrants to get employment and live in other

⁵ Ibid.

countries after they arrive (Myers et al. 1997, 93-134). As Mr. Chen, who owns a merchandise store in Hungarian Chinatown, said:

The Hometown Association has been of much help to me in settling here. When I first came here, I had a serious illness that almost killed me. My compatriots from my hometown association made donations to me in our hometown association's WeChat group. I didn't really know many people at that time, but everyone in my hometown association transferred money to me and donated to help me get better. (Chen 2021)⁶

The nostalgic feeling of being away from home makes it easy for migrants to integrate into migrant networks in the sending country. Migrant networks accelerate the exchange of people, money, and culture in the sending country, which makes more Chinese people choose to travel. As the respondents testify, once the migrant network is formed, young people who stay and work in their place of origin can easily be regarded as “unproductive” and discriminated against by other people in the same community. In this environment, some young people are forced to “travel.”

However, Chinese migrants traveling does not stay in one place all the time. Migration has actually become a way of life for migrants from the diaspora, with laborers moving through space in search of higher returns whenever conditions permit (Li 2009, 80). For example, in New Zealand's census ethnic group classification, “Chinese” includes “Cambodian Chinese,” “Malaysian Chinese,” “Vietnamese Chinese,” “Singaporean Chinese” and other subcategories (Kang 2015, 169-214). The hyphenated features of these names reflect the continuous migration of Chinese. In addition to the economy as a driving force, environmental factors have also become the reason for the continuous travel of migrants. For example, due to the exclusionary policies for the Chinese of the Indian government in the

⁶ The source of the information comes from the author's interviews with Hungarian-Chinese immigrants in the context of immigrant interviews being embedded in the global context.

1960s, many Indian Chinese migrated to Canada, the United States, and Australia to seek development (Zhang 2008, 13-17).

The first batch of Chinese people who went abroad to “seek gold” after earning money, in addition to supporting their hometowns will also focus on the education of their children. Educational migrants have become an important group of Chinese overseas immigrants. Based on the Chinese family values—namely, “everything is for the children”—they change the purpose of emigration after the birth of their children to better education for their children. The desire for higher quality education and better opportunities for their children has prompted Chinese migrants to consider continuing to move to countries that offer a quality education system, and China remains the top source of international students in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Germany, New Zealand, South Korea, and Malaysia in the 2022/23 academic year (China News Service 2024). As a result, their travel patterns are not simply transformed from “rootedness” to “returning home,” instead, it shows a transnational pattern between “rootedness” and “returning home” (Liu 2003, 234). As Clifford claims, the traveler is not a “intercultural” or “native” cultural figure (1992, 101). Travelers do not intend to clarify their relationship between themselves and their place of residence (see Gaál-Szabó 2023, 132-133); they are simply stuck between the place from which they moved out and the place to which they moved in order to keep traveling for their own migratory purposes.

In the process of traveling, the migration of people is accompanied by a person’s active choice of the purpose of the migration. Just as Bhabha answers how one’s subjective will must accompany the formation of a home,

People often use very distinct narratives, choices, and judgments to assess whether or not a particular place qualifies as a home, and then create a home in certain places. My hometown is in Mumbai, my work-related home is in the United States, and London used to be the ‘in-between’ space for a home, but all of that has

changed. So I think change is ongoing. It depends a lot on the decisions you make.
(Chang and Shi 2009, 16)

It can be seen that despite the fact that the home keeps transforming with different situations, the home can be differentiated into the center and the periphery. However, the individual has always played a major role in this process, which is attributed to the individual's active choice. The Chinese migrants' choice of travel destination in this process also determines where the "home-making" takes place. In addition to traveling for economic and educational reasons, a small number of people are traveling for a variety of purposes. The continued growth of Chinese immigration can be attributed to a confluence of factors, including skilled migration, family reunification, and others. Skilled migrants usually emigrate after living in a place for a period of time in search of a country that offers better treatment. For example, two-thirds of Chinese immigrants in Germany are skilled migrants, leading all countries. These people tend to work in technical jobs such as information technology, engineering, mathematics and natural sciences (Peng 2019, 201). Often detached from the traditional Chinese network of vernacular migrants, they work on their own in order to realize their careers. Migration for family reunification purposes occurs on the basis of migration networks, where one person in a family goes out to work and picks up his or her own family after stabilizing. Or when one's family has stabilized, one picks up one's close relatives to work as a group. So, it often happens that in Chinatown, the stores next to each other are probably owned by their own relatives. As Mr. Yeh, the owner of a curtain store in Hungary's Chinatown, said,

My sister and I have our stores together, so often, my daughter and my sister's daughter go to school together, and my sister and I pick up and drop off the kids from whoever has the time. That's how we all helped each other get by. When our

daughters grow up we agreed to send our children to study in England together.
(Ye 2023)⁷

The example of Mr. Ye is just a microcosm of the lives of millions of Chinese living in expatriate communities. When they arrive in a place, they don't stay there forever; they change their place of dwelling depending on the purpose of their migration. The continuity of the corridors between places of emigration and places of immigration ensures that the Chinese are not confined to one place. But they don't always move to countries with better economic conditions; in a twist of angle, they choose to move in the opposite direction. Chen Rushing's research on "Little Americans" born in the United States, who have U.S. citizenship and are sent back to their hometown of Fuzhou to be raised shortly after birth. He suggests that transnational fostering in the diaspora is in fact the formation and extension of an international migration network (2006,14-21). They essentially do not travel anywhere they want to go and will choose to travel in the reverse direction of some members of their families when they felt that the conditions for travel were not met. But each act of migration creates migration incentives for later migrants by accumulating migration capital (Massey and Espinosa 1997, 939-999). So once migration has started it is difficult to stop it, and even if it returns there is a tendency to migrate again (Amelie F. Constant, Klaus and F. Zimmermann 2011, 495-515).

Thus, Chinese immigrants are a diasporic group, and their attachment and loyalty to their homeland is deeply rooted in the group's consciousness. The Chinese migrants' view of the "ties with hometown" and the idea of "honoring the ancestors" have made their connection with home even stronger. The concept of diaspora is shifting to talk about "home."

Mobility has become the main form of continuous contact with different spaces at different geographical scales in the process of migration, which has a unique role in the construction and reconstruction of "home." From this perspective, migration can be seen as the process of constructing and reconstructing home through mobility. Home is the most basic

⁷ The source of the information comes from the author's interviews with Hungarian-Chinese immigrants in the context of immigrant interviews being embedded in the global context.

place of social practice, which is expressed by mobility or embedded in mobility through daily life (Nowicka 2007,71). Earlier studies of home are often associated with staticity, boundaries, identity, and immutability. In this study, however, we argue that “home” can actually inhabit more than just one place. Transnational families are completely separated geospatially. Faced with a divided family, individual family members try to reconfigure their “home” life. Various efforts or adjustments are made to maintain their “home.” As Blunt et al. remind us: “Home is not a simple existence, but a made one” (Blunt and Aowing 2006, 23).

This study borrows from Clifford’s concept of “dwelling in travel (Clifford 1992, 108).” It talks about the relationship between home and travel and residence. It is argued that the family is not only the unit of accounting for international migration decisions, but also the point of destination for their migration decisions. And they are actively integrated into the diaspora community under the influence of home ties. The diaspora community network also provides various supports for those who want to “travel” from hometown. But Chinese migrants do not stop traveling once they arrive in a place. The reasons for traveling include economic opportunities, educational pursuits, skilled migration in search of a better salary, family reunion, etc. For Chinese migrants, the purpose of travel does not remain unchanged. As the purpose of migration changes, migrants may continue to travel. However, traveling does not always remain a migration to other countries but is also accompanied by the phenomenon of return. This is because, with the role of family ties, migrants cannot just go away and never return but remain inextricably linked to the place of export after they have moved out.

“Home” signifies more than a geographic location in the transnational context; it is an embodiment of cultural identity and emotional anchorage. The findings show that traveling is not merely a physical movement but also facilitates the flow of cultural elements, allowing Chinese immigrants in diaspora to find their “home” within a multicultural context.

1.2 Chineseness and Its Expression in the Diaspora

“Chineseness” involves a series of culturally marked expressions with elements of Chinese culture, which are maintained and transformed in diaspora communities. The purpose of this

subchapter is to critically analyze the cultural continuity that underpins Chinese diasporic expression and the strategic mechanisms that result in the evolution of Chineseness. The present discussion elaborates on how Chinese diasporas take advantage of the fluidity of Chineseness to maintain their cultural identity. At the same time, it explores how the concept of Chineseness adapts to the multicultural context of diaspora and contributes to the everchanging nature of Chineseness. The findings suggest that Chineseness is tidal identity. A fluidic concept which is continuously reshaped; enriched in meaning as being passed down to the next generation and practiced creatively. Chineseness proves to be a survival strategy of Chinese settlements abroad and a tool for not surrendering to full assimilation.

Adjustment of Chinese identity

Culture, diaspora, and the identity of host countries need to be studied with regard to national identity. Faced with the new environment of immigration, individual immigrants need to reconsider how they define themselves and how they are defined by their surroundings; how immigrants see themselves as aliens to their new destination and how they encounter marginalization from the external environment. How they form part of the society and become part of the multiculturalism of the host country in terms of language acquisition and expression of experiences has to be expressed and maintained through the forging of immigrant identities. Migrant identity cannot be decontextualized from “cultural identity” Which Cultural identity consists of multiple cultural elements and is a dynamic process based on history. Understanding and interpretation of cultural identity must be shed a light on by history and reality. That is to say, “in the dimension of history, we should maintain the cultural emotion of the ethnic group from the origin, while in the dimension of reality, we should make the origin emotion more flexible and not rigid, and recognize that the attributes are subject to the constraints of the real political, economic, and cultural situations, so as to establish the concept of identity construction that starts from the origin and creatively reshapes it” (Liu 2000, 9)⁸. On the one hand, transmutation of the sense of origins not only, implies that cultural globalization has strengthened the mobility of identity, hybridization and

⁸ All Chinese translations are mine.

the formation of a global perspective, but also stimulates and strengthens the demand for local and regional identities. As Zygmunt Bauman argues, “if the ‘problem of identity’ in the modern era is how to construct an identity and keep it strong and stable, the ‘problem of identity’ in the postmodern era is, first and foremost, how to avoid fixation and keep the options open.” (2002, 87). Hence for the process of exploring cultural identity is in fact a question of exploring the strategic operation of diasporic identities.

Stuart Hall argues that diasporic cultural identity and various modes of representation are linked to positioning, which emphasizes the significance of the angle from which the subject looks, a question of enunciation. Failing into two ways of thinking about the concept of cultural identity, namely “being” and “becoming.” In an attempt to explain our concept of interest, the former holds a collective view, calling it “one true self” which is shared by all the members of community and hides behind many superficial, inauthentic selves; The latter recognizes that in addition to these many commonalities, some key understanding deviations lie based on which “what we really are” and “what we have become” stem from (1990, 222-237). The strategies of reproduction Hall refers to are not in the establishment of a mature and affirmative identity, but rather as a strategy in which identity becomes a form of reproduction that can mold people into new subjects. Chinese scholar Wu Qianjin explains immigrant identity,

This immigrant-specific identity mainly refers to the collective identity choice of a cultural subject between the strong and weak cultures, and its distinctive feature can be summarized as a subjective experience of anxiety and hope, pain and joy. It concerns cultural identity, national identity, and their interrelationship. In other words, “identity” means the question of individuals and groups searching for the designation of their own identity in order to determine “who I am.” (2020,8)

Identity can be perceived as a steaming structure, shaped by the constant negotiation and interplay of multicultural forces, which in turn shape the creativity of integration in diasporic cultures. Ien Ang argues that critical diasporic cultural politics should not be biased in favor

of either the country of residence or the homeland (real or imagined), but rather should maintain a creative tension between the two. She points out that under the dichotomy of “where you come from” and “where you are,” when culture shifts from one side to the other, all space for the position in the middle is crushed. However, her so-called creativity is able to fill this space with new cultural forms under the impact of the two cultures (2001, 21-36). In other words, it is the merging feature of integration in diasporic cultures that makes Chinese attributes no longer the absolute benchmark for measuring diasporic Chinese cultures.

Likewise, Identity is a way of distinguishing oneself from other people or groups through and endeavor to search for a constant trait in the fluctuating life experience of an individual or group. In this process, “identity” is determined by the process of construction, while cultural identity and difference are simultaneously embodied by the constructor (Wu 2020, 8). The construction of Chinese immigrants’ identities and their changes have been chosen and emphasized differently by different Chinese communities in different countries and regions during different periods of Chinese immigrants’ history. A mutual spectrum for members of these immigrant groups to posit anywhere from any extreme of identifying with the country of origin to that of identifying with the country of residence, which is usually a natural transition with the realization of the immigrant’s intergenerational turnover. There are also groups of immigrants who have a pluralistic and compatible identity, identifying with both exhibiting a merge of their country of residence and their country of origin. Notwithstanding the flex, when it comes to immigrants leaving China, insuring is reported regarding the immediate explanation is their own identity. The immediate explanation is that it touches on the topic of identity and the separation of the Chinese community from their country of origin. Nowadays, with most Chinese being naturalized in the host country and their second and third generations have already integrated and become part of the local society, not so many are left to identify as Chinese. Where are the boundaries between the group and individual aspects of their identity?

This relates to the identity perspective of ethnic essentialism. A view of identity observes it that a firm, unchanging, and permanent auspice frame of reference and meaning for a people, implying a collective true self, where they have access to a fixed source and a sense of

self in the historical traditions of the people to which they belong (Hall 2000, 211-215, qtd. in Wang [2013, 34]). For example, overseas Chinese use of Chinese lanterns, dragons, yin and yang Taiji symbols, and other decorations in restaurants are samples of commercial branding displays where economic benefits are obvious. Employment of in the same manner, Chinatown's arches, Chinese character signs, and festive ways support this economic utility, showing that the restaurant industry not only sustained the livelihood of immigrant laborers who survived on the margins, but it was also a symbol and signifier of racial economy and culture (Chen 2015, 197). The Chinese gain economic benefits in their favor through the use of some elements that symbolize Chinese identity recognition; The dislocated Chinese continue to manipulate these elements more and more for their benefit. Through the process of "recycling," the Chinese continue to strengthen their cultural identity.

Although the identities of Chinese immigrants vary greatly depending on their place of birth, educational background, and occupational and economic status, they still cannot deny the indelible racial identity markers and cultural commonalities that are basic and enduring elements of their identities and which, in different ways, to a greater or lesser extent, unite and maintain the mutual identity of the Chinese in the diaspora. Rey Chow defines this desire to preserve cultural identity within the community as "prescribed 'otherness'" (1991: xvi). Chinese identity is confined to the notion of absolute Chineseness; that is, its origin can only be from China, and Chinese subjects living in overseas countries can only ensure that they are screened out from discrete groups as being Chinese by persevering.

Therefore, "Chineseness" can be understood as an externalization of a Bourdieuan "habitus," that is, a system of schemas generated by practices, which systematically expresses the necessity and freedom inherent in its class conditions (Bourdieu 1984, 167). These habits continue to generate a series of "classified and classifying practices" (practices that are already classified—such as foreigners immediately recognizing someone as Chinese—and practices that are in the process of classification—using this set of standards to judge everything in the new environment) in the new social field after transnational migration. In the process of practice, these Chinese immigrants grasp the differences between conditions in the form of differences (Bourdieu 1984, 167), actively distinguishing themselves from the

host country's mainstream culture to maintain group identity and uphold consensus within the Chinese community.

However, Judith Butler's groundbreaking theory on gender identity provides a more dynamic analytical perspective on this issue. She pointed out that "if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (Butler 1988, 520). When applied to the context of Chinese immigrants, we can see that the maintenance of "Chineseness" does not stem from a stable cultural core, but rather from the active "performance" and construction of diverse, repetitive, and everyday practices within the Chinese community—such as wholesale and retail trade, food and beverage operations, and festival celebrations. It is precisely through these performative actions that Hungarian society and the Chinese community themselves have come to collectively believe in and reinforce "Chineseness" as a genuine and substantive identity.

The Chineseness of Mobility

Chinese people's identification with their own identity has shaped the discussion about Chinese sexuality. A multidimensional discussion which has emerged on the topic of Chineseness. According to Guo Qiumei, Chineseness refers to the preservation of one's inherent qualities as a Chinese person (Guo 2010, 56). That is to say, all people with Chinese blood who can maintain traditional Chinese customs, inherit Chinese culture, and so on. In terms of emotional appeal, it is "often accompanied by a self-identification of self-uniqueness or superiority" (Qin 2015, 61-67). In terms of ethnic and regional complexity, the content of "Chineseness" is also very multifaceted and complex. Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong discusses the pluralistic and individual pattern of Chinese ethnicity, and that China's individual integration is based on the pluralistic identities of 56 ethnic groups (Fei 1989, 3-21). Cultural absorption and borrowing involve a dynamic and interactive process at the level of the actors, and the response to cultural diffusion at the macro level is open at the micro level. Whether it is a vertical historical flow of various kinds of integration or a horizontal

geographical difference of ethnic groups, “Chineseness” is determined to be pluralistic and complex.

Based on this complexity, in order to compare Chineseness fully, we introduce Professor Wang Gungwu’s more concise and clear explanation of “Chineseness.” He says that “Chineseness” refers to those characteristics associated with China that are not found in other ethnic groups. He also pointed out that there has never been a notion of Chinese individuality but that of attributes, i.e., being Chinese and not being Chinese; some Chinese have more Chinese compartments, others have less. Therefore, “Chineseness” should encompass a number of dimensions and indicators, such as Chinese ancestry (having Chinese blood), maintaining traditional Chinese cultural norms, speaking Chinese or the languages of Chinese minorities, subjectively identifying as Chinese, having social ties with China, etc. That being said, almost all immigrants have a Chinese identity. However, almost all Chinese migrants inevitably experience a weakening of their “Chineseness,” with only the degree and timing of the weakening varying (Wang 2016, 150).

Obviously, the identity of “Chinese” was neither monolithic nor homogeneous but was adapted to the surrounding socio-political situation. Allen Chun goes further to point out that the concepts of China and Chineseness were not defined until the emergence of the nation state in early 20th century. Chineseness as “material culture, ethnicity, or residence was never clearly defined.” As a novelty, national identity and any concept drawn out of it (however deeply rooted in the past) has undergone some sort of manipulation, giving way to a apparitional entity which is “authorized and institutionalized” by power (1996, 114). “Cultural discourse” involves “not only symbols of national identity and icons of patriotic fervor but more importantly,” authoritative statements of shared values embodied in language, ethnicity, traditions, histories, ideas, and beliefs encoded in various types of knowledge (1996, 115). “In the context of the state, such discourses rarely emanate directly from the people themselves but (rather), are articulated by the state, (the) intellectuals, and (the) beneficiaries, all claiming to speak on behalf of society as a whole” (1996, 111-138).

Chineseness has been essentialized as a positioning coordinate of cultural identity. At the same time, it is also interpreted as a critical dimension. Even if the subject is patriotic enough,

the judge of this dimension is not in his or her own hands, thus turning it into a kind of violence caused by deep-rooted bonding emotions.

In scholar Rey Chow's view, "Chineseness" is an empty myth of consanguinity and Greater China-centrism. She cites the history of Hong Kong to emphasize that despite the obvious differences between Hong Kong's and the mainland's histories, they have often been erased by the myth of consanguinity, which is seen as requiring absolute submission to blood ties and the abandonment of the dynamic forces of community governance. Chow attempts to show that Chineseness is the nature represented by the call for "Chinese racial oneness" as a return to fulfillment, albeit one that is both illusory and operative (1995, 36). Through her discourse, Chineseness becomes a judgmental party with power in its hands, and neither patriotic subject can define the extent of his nor her loyalty to the motherland. Chow talked about Chineseness further in 1998. She examining it in terms of globalization, postcolonialism, race, and modernity, Arguing that Chineseness is a kind of Greater China-centrism, a culture that works to lock individuals and groups, and a priori into an immutable and invisible genealogy of origins. She problematizes Chineseness by talking about the exact relationship between the terms "Chinese language, literature, culture, and research" when moving from Chinese language and literature to the field of Chinese literary studies or Chinese cultural studies (Chow 1998, 23). It can be seen that from Chow onwards, we find that Chineseness is more of a concept that is constantly being interpreted. Changing from a value judgment to a problematic consciousness. In order to explore the logic behind, it is necessary to use postmodern perspectives, including discrete studies to dismantle the wholeness and flatness of the concept of China. Chineseness somehow justifies diaspora legitimacy. Because it brings what should be heterogeneous voices into a homogeneous discourse, it contributes to a unified cultural identity.

The "diaspora" is seen as a discourse of nativism, which presupposes a center (China) where diasporic Chinese are seen as such due to their Chineseness. A prime illustration of this would be Shi Shumei suggesting that when talking about the involvement of Chinese language writing in the notion of discrete, overseas is a highly nativistic concept— "we (subjects) are here, you (diaspora) are overseas" (Shi 2017, 270). By making a distinction

between the “we” as the center and the “you” as the discrete, the Chinese language families of Chinese living abroad usually hold a “decentered” position. But this is not a purely oppositional attitude; it is, in fact, a strategy for changing identity. It is a strategy to change identities by proposing “heterogeneity” that is different from the “center” in order to dissolve “identities” that can be associated with the “center”. such as dissolving the “heterogeneity” of the “center,” for example, dissolving the “heterogeneity” of the “center.” For example, by dissolving the “Chineseness” that is the essential identity of the “Chinese language” and “discrete Chinese,” the “marginalized” identity is used to unite the “marginalized and disadvantaged” in order to resist the “center.” The purpose of resisting the “center” is to use a local, marginal identity to unite the marginalized and the disadvantaged. However, “Chineseness” insists on the centrality of China with its inescapable essential existence and makes diaspora Chinese always look back to the center of China, not only as a factor of identity but also as a glue for the center to summon the margins (Shi 2013, 5). We can say that only the form of expressing Chineseness has changed, but the essence is still seeking identity.

If we try to sort out the genealogy of the construction of “Chineseness,” outlined of the works of “Orientalism”, “Imagined Communities”, “Saving History from the Nation-State”, We can find that the discussion of Chineseness cannot escape the shadow of post-colonial and post-modern theories. The concept of Chineseness is a derivative of the postcolonial critique in China. Postcolonial criticism was initially aimed at abolishing the essentialist tendency of Western superiority. In terms of theoretical starting point, Chineseness comes from the postmodern mode of thinking, but its manifestation of essentialist pursuits departs from the postmodern mode of thinking (Deng 2016, 91-97). To be specific,

Edward Said analyzes in detail how Western “Orientalism” has “Orientalized” the East, constructing it as an eternal, essentialized expression of the “other”. The Orient is constructed as an eternal and essentialized manifestation of the Other. Even the Oriental world “self-colonizes” itself and participates in its own orientalization under Western “Orientalism”, and this self-construction is presented as “anti-colonial nationalism” (1999, 8). What laid the functions for picturing and reflecting on the orient was the curious investigation and

following publications by a group of 19 century western orientalists as a result of which an entirety of visual, lexical, and conceptual resources was introduced to the academic. That diffusion is the undeniable building block of any further interpretation of the orient, regardless of the individual or the mindset underlying; Any attempt at reproduction in the regard, is merely an unconscious remodeling of the same discourse using the same old puzzle pieces of jurisdiction (8-12). Similar to Said's "Orientalist" view, the concept of "Chineseness" is also based on imagined differences and oppositions. If the former refers more to an external Orientalist dilemma in which the West imagines the East, the latter is more of an internal Orientalist dilemma in which the East imagines the East. As social and cultural interactions between China and the West become more frequent, China is increasingly influenced by Western culture, and this influence has given rise to various forms of internal Orientalism, the core of which is in fact Chineseness in all its formal variations.

Unlike Said, Benedict Anderson takes a communitarian perspective, arguing that "nation-states" in today's world are mostly "Imagined Communities," which are not meant to be "imaginary," but rather a way of relating to each other. "Imagined" does not mean 'fictional', but rather a way of relating to each other. Because in a nation-state, each member does not know most of the others, how to include different members from all over the world into a community. And this requires a kind of associated imagery, through a kind of "homogeneous" discourse to "imagine" oneself and others as "fellow citizens," this kind of "imagination" is associated with language rituals, memory, knowledge structures, history and culture, and is facilitated through the media of literature, the press, newspapers, and so on. In other words, "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Seton-Watson, Nations and States, 5, quoted in Anderson, Imagined Communities, 2006, 6). It can be seen that all existing or former national identities are products of history, and the means of distinguishing different communities is the way they are "imagined". Therefore, in the Chinese context, the main reference that supports the Chinese to categorize themselves more clearly are the "imagined Chineseness." Invisible identities are important in identifying Chinese identity categories around the world, and the multiple

identity constructions of Chinese immigrant communities, although established or opposed by identities, are ultimately dependent on tools for measuring belonging in order to form a clearer self-categorization.

In addition to this, Prasenjit Duara extends his talk about the identity model of the modern nation-state by combining what Said calls “self-colonization” with Anderson’s “imagined community.” That is, “the territorial form of sovereignty of the modern nation-state is shaped by the global system of nation-states and its discourse” (2009, 81). Modern historiography shapes national identity by choosing a homogenous, linear historical education that explains that all members of a nation share a long history and a common myth that constitutes the emotional and intellectual structure inherent in a “community,” which dictates which histories are to be presented, so that “What we see in early twentieth-century China is never a powerful nation, but only a powerful discourse of nationalism” (2009, 164).

Under the influence of postcolonial theories, the discussion about Chineseness has changed from “what Chineseness is” to “deconstructing Chineseness.” We find that there has never been a stable concept of Chineseness. The boundaries of people’s identification with the community have shifted from objective boundaries to the boundaries of subjective identification. In this process, Chineseness actually becomes a kind of self-construction of Chinese cognition. By storing memories of Chinese-related knowledge, Chinese people focus on how this knowledge they are exposed to on a daily basis is used or processed to make people think they are Chinese (Zheng 2009). For Chinese distributed all over the world, the continued use of the same cultural resources in response to the local contexts and the local-specific perceptions and memories (collective memories) ensures that Chinese-Chinese patterns of living together, working with each other, and feelings about China to have a certain readily shared common concepts, rituals, and values (Shi and Li 2017, 49).

For example, food culture is at the center of cultural identity, and through our identification with “Chinese food,” we can see the changing constants and unchanging roots of identity (Guo 2019, 103). In traditional China, the matter of food is the same as that of managing the family, the country, and the state. Chinese history is replete with politicians and gourmets who were not only well versed in food and drink, but also particularly adept at

applying culinary principles to political maneuvering. The tripod and the dirk, which were used as symbols of power and status in ancient times, were originally cooking utensils and drinking utensils (Guo 2006, 99). As Zhang Guangzhi found in his study of Shang and Zhou bronzes, the use of ceremonial vessels (ritual vessels) is related to the use of food and drink in the context of offerings, and it is difficult to understand them in the original context of the bronzes without understanding those basic food variables (Zhang 1977, 4). The multifaceted implication of food and its cultural objects in China is well reviewed by Guo: “differentiating hierarchies, establishing relationships, bridging conflicts, integrating groups, honoring ancestors, and communicating with ghosts and gods.....” (2006, 99). For the multifunctionality of Chinese food, depending on the social context, social carriers have strategically created and borrowed different cultural elements and identified with them.

The Chinese character is a prime example. The Chinese place great emphasis on the cultivation of interpersonal relationships. From Fei’s viewpoint, relationships among individuals of a conventional Chinese society are “differential patterns” where relationships increase as personal connections, stimulated to the “ripples that occur when a stone is thrown on the surface of the water and pushed out in a circle” (Fei 2011, 27). In the network of “differential order pattern,” the boundaries of “family” are not clear, and they have the “ability to expand and contract” or even to “expand and contract freely.” “Family members’ can include anyone who wants to be included in their circle and show affection. The scope of “self-family” is scalable according to the time and place and can be so large that it can be counted, and the whole world can become one family (2011, 41-45). The concept of family is rooted in Chinese concepts, and there is a great sense of dependence on the family. Personal behavior, education, and social relationships are often nurtured by the family, and when they encounter frustration, they will take refuge in the family. Therefore, in such an environment, parents are often more authoritative for Chinese children. Parents are also stricter with their children. From an early age, children know that they should listen to their parents, follow their parents’ instructions, study hard in Chinese, keep their daily behavior in line with the traditional moral code, etc. Older siblings will help their parents to discipline their younger siblings. However, compared to traditional Chinese education, Chinese education emphasizes

not only traditional ethics, parental authority, and discipline but also the spirit of cooperation (Li and Gu 2012, 62). This is due to the survival experience of the Chinese immigrant community, which has been brought about by their experience in overseas business. Undoubtedly, the experience of cooperation and win-win situations becomes “a common concept that can be shared,” thus forming the identity of the collective experience.

Deconstructing Chinese Chineseness is not just limited to the above two examples, in fact, it involves a much broader scope. But no matter how it is discussed, it seems to be impossible to talk about immigrant identity and cultural identity. In fact, the characterization of the concept of Chineseness draws on these two discussions to form a more specific strategy for Chinese identity.

To address this issue, “Identity grafting” as put forward by Daphnee Hui Lin Lee is proposed. Identity grafting refers to a strategy for reconstructing one’s identity (2016,6). This strategy can harmonize Western and Chinese identities. In the space of dual hegemonic influence, identity grafting implies a strategy that encompasses the tension between the global and the local and strikes a balance between self-identity and external trends by reorganizing one’s own experience in terms of cultural identities. Identity grafting falls into four categories the way Lee sees it: integrated, repressed, born-again, and situational identities.

In the case of integrated Chineseness, Chinese people with this type of identity are expected to build cultural bridges by merging multicultural knowledge. In the case of Singapore mentioned by Lee, where the majority of Singaporean Chinese speak the dialect and live in a diverse Chinese community with different family and linguistic ties, a good relationship between cultures sustains the expansion of the margins of inclusiveness in the Chinese community. The growth of the Chinese community, the more the endeavors China makes to mandarinize, the higher probability of intergraded Chineseness to be experienced in the current century (2016, 238). In the Chinese community, language reform has developed powerful responses to deal with cultural divides in business activities.

Regarding Repressed Chinese, the public-private distinction of such Chinese is characteristic of their identity grafting strategies (Yan 220, 233). Lee found that participants who grew up in families with low socio-economic status were more likely to display

repressive identity grafting strategies (2016, 126). They needed to work harder to adapt to their location as they developed and changed accordingly. This has similarities with the concept of indigenization. The localization of immigrant societies refers to a series of policies adopted by the government to make immigrants identify with the local society and some strategies adopted by the immigrants themselves to integrate into the local mainstream society (Zeng 2004, 246).

As for Born-Again Chinese, Chinese with this identity still retain a strong sense of Chineseness and do not believe that immigration will change them. In the case of Singapore, “they would see their culturally homogenous colleagues as ‘near family’ rather than ‘overseas’ Singaporean Chinese. When a regenerative Chinese identity strategy is adopted, staff who possess this trait will proactively represent Chinese interests to ensure that the parent company continues to earn the trust of its customers, especially Chinese customers, even at the expense of their Western colleagues” (Yan 2020, 233).

Last but not least, Situational Chinese, Chinese people with this type of identity are constantly changing their cultural identity to match the expectations of others. Like chameleons, these people believe that cultural divisions are identities shaped by people in response to different environmental trends, and that changing one’s cultural identity should be a basic human potential for survival (Yan 2020, 232).

These four meanings enrich the connotation of identity grafting, and at the same time enrich the meaning and strategy of Chineseness very specifically from the perspective of identity as a starting point. It breaks the theoretical discussion about Chineseness only and reorganizes one’s own experience with cultural characteristics to strike a balance between self-identity and external trends. Overall, the integrated Chinese identity allows them to play both insider and outsider in each culture in order to reconcile conflicts. Situational Chinese identity allows for better adaptation to and across cultural domains, as well as the freedom to switch one’s cultural identity in response to changing situations. Here it makes the Chinese identity demand to exhibit behaviors that conform to the inherent concepts of Chinese culture. The Born-again Chinese Identity easily gains the trust of Chinese clients by retaining strong traditional Chinese cultural traits. They see this as a necessary part of the enrichment of

Chineseness, i.e., it is expressed as cultural loyalty in the regenerative identity strategy. The repressed Chinese identity demands the importance of separating personal identity from business.

Identity characterization strategies are not a static variable or a single dimension. The four identity grafting strategies for expressing Chineseness are intertwined and mixed or even combined for the Chinese according to different times and different people. Thus, the definition of Chineseness is not fixed, but very flexible, extensible, and constantly configured according to needs. This also means that Chineseness has become psycho-emotionally limited. That is to say that Chineseness no longer constitutes the totality of diaspora migrants' emotional identity and psychological activities. In addition to the expansion, enrichment and fluidization of the meaning of Chineseness, the most important imagined meaning of "Chineseness" is actually "not to return to China," but to become a livelihood strategy for people settling in a foreign country.

Moreover, it is essential to note that the choices reflecting the distinctiveness of Chineseness of this livelihood strategy are not "free" choices. We believe that the experiences gained in the host country environment—including immigrants' choices, intentions, and behavioral activities—are determined by the combined influence of past experiences and personal ideas, rather than arising from an independent, free self. As Spencer argues:

"[...]readers must have perceived that the doctrines developed [here][...] are at variance with the current tenets respecting the freedom of the will [...] [T]hat every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire, which is the real proposition involved in the dogma of free will, is negatived [sic]by the analysis of consciousness [...] From the universal law that, other things being equal, the cohesion of psychic states is proportionate to the frequency with which they followed each other in experience, it is an inevitable corollary that all actions whatever must be determined by those psychical connexions which experience has generated[...]. Considered as an internal perception, the illusion results from supposing that at each moment the ego, present as such in consciousness [...] is

something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas which then exists (1987, 500 – 501)”.

He believes our experiences and psychological associations constrain our decisions. What we perceive as “freedom” is not truly free in essence. The essence of being Chinese is that traditional cultural heritage pre-implants experiences into individuals, influencing their actions in various real-world situations.

Applying this to the case of Chinese immigrants, seemingly free choices are actually the optimal solutions calculated by Chinese individuals within specific environments, integrating their experiences with personal thought and cognitive frameworks. Thus, the meaning of “Chineseness” is essentially the final, most suitable answer for living in the host country, calculated through comprehensive consideration within specific contexts. It can be understood that the essence of Chineseness possesses its own unique cultural knowledge system.

Considering Chineseness as the platform discussion to analyze identity and its cultural counterparts, seemingly, Chinese people need a “tool” to differentiate between “us (Chinese)” and “you (Native residents of the country of destination of immigration).” In addition to the need to be identified within the Chinese community through this identity, it is also through this identity that differentiation is emphasized, highlighting the fact that there is always some distance between our world and your world, without being completely assimilated. Chineseness becomes a tool for them to keep from being completely assimilated. As Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) mentions, identity is motivated by two human needs: the need for integration and acceptance, which refers to people’s psychological attachment to a particular group, and the need to differentiate themselves from others (Brewer 1991, 1-47; Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 475-482). After satisfying these two needs, people can both gain a sense of belonging and ensure that they clearly define themselves in the masses. The complexity of the concept of Chinese-ness and its representations is thus evident, and interpretations will vary depending on the focus. However, Chineseness always realizes its own identity in solving the problem of identity and cultural identity.

Discussions about Chinese people have been inseparable from the topic of identity and identification. Cultural identity is a product of a shared historical experience for Chineseness. Identity is multifaceted, with elements of conservatism and creativity, and identity is in a constant state of practice, negotiation, and change. Identity emphasizes the discussion between the concepts of seeking common ground and existing differences, and it also emphasizes the self-construction of individual or group perceptions of Chineseness. Thus, evolving to become a strategy. On the one hand, early socialization lays down the base tone of their cultural identity; on the other hand, under the influence of heterogeneous cultures and the challenges encountered by immigrants, they strategically create and adjust their identities to cope with the needs of multicultural contexts.

Chineseness is always in a state of flux, and it takes on different forms depending on the context. The concept has been talked about by different scholars, but the general meaning is similar- it is regarded as an intrinsic trait of the Chinese people and refers to all people of Chinese descent who are able to maintain traditional Chinese customs, inherit Chinese culture, etc. At the same time, Chineseness is not static, it is even fluid. Chineseness is a question that Chinese culture poses to itself in the face of a new world, a world in which Western culture is the dominant culture and in which all major cultures coexist and interact. In the context of postcolonial theory and postmodernity, for China, modernity refers to the project of enlightenment and salvation in which it is forced to rebuild its center by using Western modernity as a frame of reference after losing its center. Postcolonial theory promotes cultural pluralism in an attempt to break the dichotomy between East and West. Chineseness is a derivative of the postcolonial critique in China, but the various representations of Chineseness run counter to the postmodern mindset. Therefore, it is particularly important to deconstruct Chineseness.

The discussion about deconstructing Chineseness reveals that the problem of self-construction of Chinese cognition has to be solved first. The solution strategy is for the Chinese to establish and enhance the relationship among themselves by sharing the common experience of the group. This common experience includes summarizing the common

Chinese view of food and culture, the Chinese character, and so on and involves a broader range of representations of Chineseness.

However, the discussion of Chineseness cannot get around the discussion about identity and identification, and in turn, Chineseness forms a more specific strategy by centering on these two aspects. By introducing Daphnee Hui Lin Lee's concept of identity grafting, it is found that identity characterization is the process of dynamically enriching the connotation of Chineseness. The four types of identity grafting strategies do not only work independently but can also be used cooperatively according to different contexts. Moreover, the manifestations of Chineseness are diverse and complex; in addition to the shaping of different social contexts, the imprinting of culture on different actors varies from subject to subject. But the mobility of Chineseness does not aim to help Chinese abroad to return home, which may not be related to "returning." Its purpose is to serve as a means for the Chinese to live better abroad and as a strategy to avoid being completely assimilated. Moreover, while immigrants appear to employ Chinese-specific strategies to seek collective means, this is not fundamentally a matter of free choice. Rather, it is the result of high environmental adaptability within a unique cultural system—a complex interplay of pre-existing cultural experiences and psychological connections.

Chapter2: Chinese Migration to Europe and Hungary

Starting from the discussion of the economic life of Chinese immigrants in Hungary, the chapter discusses the use of memory of migration to survive in the new environment, the creation of cultural traditions, and the formation of Chinese communities through the construction of hybrid identities. Relying on diaspora theory, I will examine migratory and diasporic memory in the Chinese community in Hungary to test the usefulness of "diaspora" and "cultural memory" as concepts in the study of the Chinese community.

What is more, the second part of this chapter explores the relationship between memory dynamics and identity changes of Chinese immigrants in Hungary after 1988. In this part of the study, I will analyze cultural space as a memory space to negotiate and reconstruct the sense of belonging of Chinese immigrants. By analyzing the relationship between memory,

adaptation, and integration of Chinese immigrants in Hungary, the purpose is to explore how their individual and collective identities are shaped and influenced by memory in cultural space.

2.1 Migratory Memory and Identity of the Diaspora: Chinese Migration to Hungary

Chinese Immigration to Hungary

In just over a decade, from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, waves of ambitious new Chinese immigrants flowed from mainland China to Hungary. The uniqueness of the Chinese immigration in Hungary lies in that it consists mainly of business new immigrant (商业移民) belonging to no traditional communities, unlike the clans, blood relatives, and secret societies that control the American and British Tang communities (Nie and Linda 1993). In other words, the previous flow of immigrants to Western Europe that emerged after the reform and opening up of mainland China was a chain of immigrant networks that began with migrants who settled in Western Europe before WWII and continued to expand. In contrast, contemporary migration to Eastern Europe was spearheaded by a group of people engaged in long-distance trafficking of small goods (e.g., clothing, shoes, hats, toys, textiles, etc.) between China and the Soviet Union, and the initial migration was dominated by people with a strong economic consciousness, most of whom were engaged in commerce and settled in Eastern Europe. One of the most representative Eastern European immigrant countries is Hungary.

Significant migration to Hungary began in the early 1990s with a change in the political environment. At that time, the social systems of Hungary and Eastern European countries changed one after another, and to escape from the economic crisis, these countries adopted a more flexible policy in attracting foreign investment. Some Chinese who were good at conducting business responded to this message and came to try their fortune in Eastern Europe. But at that time, only Hungary and China had signed a mutual visa-free agreement. Therefore, Hungary naturally became the first target destination for those leaving China. The years 1991-1992 were the peak years for the Chinese to travel to Hungary. Since the

implementation of China's reform and opening-up policy in 1978 and especially after China relaxed its rules for approving people leaving the country in 1985, "the number of border crossings into Hungary by Chinese citizens jumped from nearly zero in the mid-1980s to 11,621 in 1990 and 27,330 in 1991" (qtd. in Nyíri 2003, 242). In 1991, the Hungarian police issued Hungarian "blue cards" (Permanent Residence Permit) to 398 holders of People's Republic of China citizenship, and another 5,000 Chinese received "yellow cards" (Temporary Residence Permit) (Nyíri 1998, 355). From 1989 to the beginning of 1992, within a short period of two or three years, Hungary was home to at least 30,000 Chinese (Li 2002, 553). Later, Hungary and China resumed the visa system. Coupled with the Hungarian government's relatively harsh economic policies toward the Chinese, Chinese immigration began to decline. The Chinese in Hungary can be said to come from all over China, but especially the Zhejiangese and Fujianese are more numerous. Among them, there are quite a few people with university degrees. They are engaged in a narrow range of occupations with the majority of them being in business, except for a very small number of people who run newspapers, accounting firms, and medical practices.

Memories of Conducting Business: From the Snakeskin Bag to the Container

Already in the early days of Chinese merchants starting to do business in Hungary, Chinese people often shared information about business and life, forming a community of the Hungarian-Chinese diaspora. Arguably, the Chinese community living in Hungary can be defined as a diaspora. The term diaspora refers to the scattering of people away from the ancestral homeland (Cohen 1997, 10). Robin Cohen further argues that,

Though often conceived in terms of a catastrophic dispersion, widening the notion of diaspora to include trade, imperial labor and cultural diasporas can provide a more nuanced understanding of the often positive relationships between migrants' homelands and their places of work and settlement. (2003, 3)

Thus, the term “diaspora” refers to the Chinese community engaged in trade in Hungary and the Chinese immigrant mobility in Hungary in all walks of life as “The new Chinese immigrants who entered Hungary in the early 1990s may have been cadres, students, workers or farmers before they left the country, but after arriving in Hungary, most of them went into business” (Li 2002, 654). By 1997, there were nearly 3,000 other Chinese private enterprises in Hungary. The process shows that private interests have developed rapidly in Hungary.

The Chinese migrants in Budapest constitute a diaspora community. In this community, the sense of community is sustained by various ties, including kinship, trade, and shared culture (Peters 1999, 20). To make a better living, Chinese entrepreneurs in Hungary started as a family unit, using kinship ties and a common cultural background to expand their trade. When the Chinese businessmen first arrived, they found sites in Hungary where they could start their business. They set up stalls to sell small goods at bus stops, subway stations, and next to food markets where there was a lot of traffic. Most of the goods such as essential balm, cool oil, hairpins, headbands, brooches, pearl necklaces, leather jackets, and needlework were brought by train from China through Moscow to Hungary in snakeskin bags. As Lin Muwei, a Chinese restaurant owner in Debrecen, remembers,

In the 90s we went to Hungary together to start a business, almost every three to five months we have to board the west to east train, from China to a dozen or even dozens of snakeskin bags or suitcases, carried to Hungary to set up a stall for sale. It was a hard time, where there was a home, where to sell things, where is home. Later when times were better, I stayed with everyone and rented an apartment in partnership. We worked from dawn to dusk, and in the evenings we would get together to learn the extremely difficult Hungarian language, like a family gathering in the evenings at home. At that time, we were like a big family, we all came from Fujian, our cultural backgrounds were similar, we all spoke the Fujian

dialect, even for the winter solstice, whoever made “XI”⁹ would share it with each other, and we didn’t feel lonely. (2020)

In the process of trade, the memory of the Chinese homeland is a medium of interpretation for the Chinese in Hungary, identifying a common culture in the Chinese community. The Hungarian-Chinese diaspora in the 1990s, which carried their “home” with them, implies a sense of belonging and collective identity of the Hungarian diaspora. This sense of belonging and collective identity precipitated in the family in the first place, where the expatriates adhered to the traditional Chinese “family culture,” i.e., a family-based economic and cultural structure, representing the family or clan. In traditional Chinese culture, doing well is “glorious to the ancestors,” while doing anything wrong may be a disgrace to the “family honor.” As “all Chinese culture is built on the concept of family, and the concept of family comes before the concept of humanity” (Liu 1994, 50), the Hungarian-Chinese diaspora functioned in the same way. This reflects the fact that the diaspora is settled and active in Hungary, but maintains strong emotional ties with the country of origin (Sheffer 1986, 3). William Safran argues that “diaspora” applies to minority communities living outside of their home country, claiming that one of the characteristics of members of these communities is the maintenance of collective consciousness, vision, or shared mythology about the true location and history of their ancestral homeland (1991, 83–99). The “home culture” is here transformed into a collective consciousness, constituting a collective identity that influences the construction of the group’s identity.

However, diasporic identities are not fixed, but fluid and changing as they are often “creolized, syncretized, and hybridized” (Gilroy 2000, 122–32). To study the identity of the Hungarian diaspora, it is necessary to examine “identity” in the context of Hungarian society. Even as identity is “socially situated, socially maintained and socially transformed” (Berger 1967, 194). Much in a Heideggerian framework, “Familiarity with the world is the way the world comes into being for the subject, that is, the way the subject encounters and makes

⁹ “XI” is a traditional dish for the winter solstice festival in Fujian Province, different from the custom of eating dumplings in most Chinese provinces.

sense of the surrounding world through his/her place- world” (Gaál-Szabó 2011, 3). Familiarity is maintained by memory, and memory maintains the coherence and integrity of the self (Grygar 2004, 31). Thus, we must examine social events associated with memory to understand identity—events that are not individually experienced but collectively constructed collective memories (Paez, Basabe, and Gonzalez 1997, 150).

Collective memory is always about a common past associated with a particular group. This commonality and the meaning it holds allows group members to distinguish themselves from other groups and to develop a special affection for the group to which they belong and a sense of solidarity among its members. Chinese businessmen’s stall business was maintained until the end of 1990, and in 1992, when the Hungarian government enforced the centralized management of market places, local Hungarian companies established several places with simple houses, stalls, and venues in Budapest, which they rented to Chinese businessmen. Chinese markets were formed in this way, such as the Four Tigers Market, Copania Market, Shanghai Market, of which Four Tigers Market is the largest and most representative, covering an area of 40,000 square meters. The Four Tigers market marked the beginning of the formation of a sizeable Chinese market. It was located in the 8th district of Budapest, in an open space between a train track and a street. The name derives from the name of the 8th district called “József,” which sounds similar to “Four Tigers” in Chinese. The renaming of the “Four Tigers Market” by the Chinese marks the process of inhabitation of the place through tethering it to what is familiar to them. The name was taken over by Hungarians as they simply call it the “Chinese Tiger Market” (Nie 2021).

In the 1990s, the “Four Tigers Market” alone was home to thousands of Chinese merchants and was the largest distribution center for Chinese goods in Hungary. In this marketplace, the business habits of the Chinese in Hungary provide ample evidence of this commonality of the Chinese business community in the past. Stores and markets in European countries usually close from Saturday afternoon and do not open for business until the following Monday. In China, holidays are a good time to do business. Therefore, when a large number of Chinese came to Hungary to do business, they did not follow European customs. Markets such as the “Four Tigers” were naturally open on weekends. Although no one forced

a Chinese businessman to do business on holidays, it was as if they did business as usual. Except for a few holidays such as Christmas, the Chinese merchants who sell in the market can be said to be busy all year round. As Yang Liyan confesses,

Day after day, year after year, we all felt physically and mentally exhausted, but no one wanted to lose a day's turnover, those days were very unforgettable, and now and then I will tell my son about the 90s in Hungary business story, I use this story to remind him of the difficulties of life and to continue to carry forward the fine traditional culture of "hard work" in China. That's how the days go by! (2021).

The habit of hard work is a reproduction of traditional Chinese work habits in a new living environment. The understanding of the self through work and the difference in work habits allow the Chinese business community to distinguish itself from other groups, inspiring and enhancing the special feelings that the expatriates generate for the group to which they belong and the sense of solidarity among members of the expatriate community with each other.

The entrepreneurial past of the Chinese businessmen in Hungary has come to be crystallized in their desire to repeatedly tell their descendants about their past. They sublimate the group values of diaspora based on which Chinese immigrants could construct their identity. Diaspora in Hungary in the 90s, "the ability to suffer" was mentioned and emphasized by them, and in their words, "That's how the days go by!" These views of "living a good life," refined by the collective memory of the diaspora, have become the common sentiment and value orientation. The experience of engaging in business activities to "settle down" during the migration process has enabled them to develop the ability to "endure hardship," which is one of the elements in the process of their identity construction.

In addition, the Chinese diaspora's life in the 90s of "Hungarian literacy" is also noteworthy. Just like the experience of Lin Muwei, the Chinese community gathered at night to learn the Hungarian language, and this process formed the evaluation index of the community identity of the expatriates. As Yuan Long said, "When I first came to Hungary, I couldn't speak the language, so I used to gesture with my hands and carry an electronic

calculator with me when I sold my goods. At that time, to exchange market information, I had to learn Hungarian with a hard head. More than ten years have passed, and now I can speak it quite well” (2020). In the memories of the expatriates, those who could speak Hungarian were more likely to be accepted in the marketplace and to be recognized by the expatriate community.

In the decade, the Chinese businessmen continued to learn and improve, and their business expanded. With the expansion of Chinese business, Chinese businessmen got rid of the snakeskin bag, turning to containers. By the end of 1990, a company named Hua Lun sent the first batch of Chinese small goods to Hungary by air. This company became the first Chinese importer; from then on, the Chinese business began to substitute the lifting box for the container, which is a huge turn in business for the Chinese in Hungary. Since then, the “small commodity container economy” from China to Hungary has developed rapidly. Yuan Long described,

Now it’s all about shipping in containers, but back in the 90s, everyone used boxes or snakeskin bags for their cargo. One of the boxes I used to move goods in those days is still in my house, the box I used when I first set foot on Hungarian territory with my luggage, and later I bought other boxes and put them together to move goods from China. Now this suitcase is leathery old and broken, but every time I see it reminds me of those years when I started my business. (2021)

The economic shift from the “bag” to the container not only documents the past but also pushes diaspora life toward settlement in the new land. In this process of moving between China and Hungary, memory transcends territorial logic and becomes a catalyst for diasporic identity building and diasporic community building as “Memory, rather than territory, is the principal ground of identity formation in diaspora cultures, where ‘territory’ is decentered and exploded into multiple settings” (Fortier 2005, 184). Memories generated in the transforming setting in Hungary support the construction of the Chinese diaspora community.

Nostalgic Memories and Identity of the Chinese in Hungary

The life of Chinese expatriates in Hungary has not always been glamorous. Between 1995 and 2000, the Hungarian government imposed a supplementary tariff on imported goods as a unilateral evaluation policy on goods from China to stabilize the economy. The so-called “evaluation” means that regardless of the actual price of the goods, they are all taxed according to the Hungarian customs valuation. In this way, the customs declaration price of a container was roughly between 20,000 and 50,000 U.S. dollars, and even if the cheapest goods were loaded, the customs declaration price of a container was close to 20,000 U.S. dollars. This means that the price of customs clearance increased eight times compared to the previous one. Yang Yongqian believes that this situation was largely of the Chinese’s own making. Before the implementation of the “tax assessment” policy, some Hungarian customs officers were taking bribes, and many Chinese people were taking advantage of them to under-declare customs duties. As a result of this widespread phenomenon, the Hungarian customs did not believe in the bill of lading at all, so the “tax estimation” began. On the other hand, Chinese companies risked all the benefits they had gained by understating the tariffs in the competition for a limited market. The market retail price of some textiles was often lower than the domestic retail price (1998). In the long run, this kind of vicious competition led to difficulties in the operation of many Chinese enterprises, and some Chinese faced unemployment and bankruptcy.

Such financial difficulties have left an imprint on Chinese memory. As Lin Muwei, who has lived in Hungary for 15 years, describes,

Generally speaking, Chinese expatriates living in Hungary usually describe their lives over the phone, including the good education their children receive, and their own work and living environment. Telling their families that they have a car and a house in Hungary, that they have a discretionary income compared to subsistence families in urban China, that they are able to secure spending and travel, and reinforcing the image of the affluent West. Even the children are trilingual in Hungarian, Chinese, and English at the same time. The attraction of such excellent

educational resources and environment also becomes a kind of bragging capital. But the truth is that there was a time when I was missing my home country every day and thinking about returning to it every moment due to financial pressure. (Lin 2021)

Despite the mobility and possibilities in Hungary, the ambiguous situation has prompted Chinese people in Hungary to look for a “sense of home” in nostalgia. Svetlana Boym argues that restorative nostalgia manifests itself in attempts to return home, rebuild a home, and fill the memory gap (2010, 4). Nostalgia arises when Chinese people in Hungary try to trace the continuity of their self-identity after experiencing changes in their lives, due to cultural and social differences. Although nostalgia cannot fill the lack in their actual lives, it can salvage the lack emotionally and let people feel a sense of belonging again through remembering. As Yang Liyan says, “I have lived in Hungary for 20 years, and my home in Hungary now is not like my childhood home in China, but my childhood memories of home remind me every time as if my memories of playing at home happened yesterday, which also reminds me of who I am and where I came from” (Yang 2020). Memory and nostalgia are the emotive threads that help weave the way to identity, which often attempts to recreate the fabric of the community of origin in new contexts (Portelli 2016, 1–10). Nostalgia is usually not an isolated recollection of the past, but a series of imagery to express oneself. As Lin’s account illuminates, the landscape, the food, the joy of childhood, and the warmth of family are all important parts of the narrative. Many Chinese in Hungary decorate their homes with pictures of their hometown, cook hometown-style food, and seek out hometown associations in which they use the dialect of their hometown. These practices can help them build up the courage to live in a foreign country. There are also group Chinese activities to help them adapt to life in Hungary.

These collective Chinese activities are inseparable from the traditional Chinese culture. Each nation has its own unique traditional culture, and the transmission of tradition is inevitably tinged with nostalgia. But in fact, tradition is not a passively accepted content handed down from the past, but reconstruction and reinvention in and based on the present,

through which people reproduce their culture and shape their cultural memory and collective identity. Hobsbawm and Ranger argue that such “invented traditions” include both traditions that are invented, constructed, and formalized, and those that emerge in an indistinguishable way in a short, chronologically identifiable period of time (2004, 1). Specifically, these are traditions that enhance communal cohesion or define membership.

One palpable example is offered by the Chinese Lunar New Year (“Kínai Tavaszünnepe”). According to the Chinese cultural tradition, the Chinese Lunar New Year is celebrated every year. Since 2017, the festival has been jointly organized by Chinatown and the Hungarian-Chinese Cultural Association in Hungary. For the Chinese community in Hungary, this has become an expected program during the Chinese Lunar New Year period every year. The festival usually lasts 2 to 3 days and consists of a parade, a food exhibition, a display of traditional cultural elements, and several shows. According to the news posted by the Hungarian media xpatloop, in 2019, the cultural festival lasted three days, “The three-day festival features a long list of cultural and entertainment programs, including a panda show, traditional Chinese medicine with free on-site diagnosis and treatment, tea art, kung-fu, costumes (Qipao, Hanfu), musical instruments (Erhu, Guzheng, Waist drum), calligraphy, and drawings” (XpatLoop 2019). The 2020 cultural festival was temporarily canceled due to the epidemic, but according to the news posted on the website earlier, the festival was set up full of traditional Chinese cultural elements, especially the setting off of firecrackers, the parade in traditional Chinese costumes, the hanging of red ribbons on the wishing tree, dragon and lion dances, folk music and musical instruments, folk dances, kung fu, cheongsam, and many other cultural performances, as well as Chinese tea-making and tasting, Chinese food and Chinese calligraphy and painting and paper cutting, Chinese medicine consultation and other programs (XpatLoop 2020). Every year the festival is like a traditional Chinese “temple fair (庙会),”¹⁰ where the Chinese in Hungary actively participate in the biggest annual Chinese festival. The Chinese New Year Festival 2019 had more than 30,000 participants, more than 50 Chinese cultural experiences, more than 500 paintings and calligraphies, more than 900 stage performances, and 300 volunteers, 90 percent of whom were Chinese (XpatLoop 2019).

¹⁰ Temple fair (庙会): commonly known as a Chinese rally.

The festival is now an important event in the Chinese New Year celebrations, where Chinese people are physically present and emotionally connected, reinforcing the cultural meaning, and understanding of the Chinese New Year. It offers the possibility to promote and pass on the concept of the homogeneity¹¹ of family and nation and the best traditional culture.

The Chinese Lunar New Year Festival has become a tradition in the Hungarian-Chinese community to celebrate the Chinese New Year, which is a social nostalgia act. In social nostalgia, cultural symbols of the past are often re-adopted. When Chinese people in Hungary talk about traditions, the purpose is not to pursue the meaning of the past, but to emphasize their uniqueness and enhance their sense of identity through them. Their identity can be thought of as the identity that is formed when their cultural collective is defined through the use of shared traditional cultural elements. Similarly to people in China celebrating their traditional Chinese culture, Hungarian-Chinese people put up spring scrolls on the eve of New Year's Eve to welcome the Chinese New Year. They write luck briefs on the left and right, glued vertically to the sides of the door. Spring festival scrolls are considered a spiritual symbol to protect families from spiritual harm, and it is an indispensable annual New Year's Eve costume for the Chinese community in Hungary, too. The fifth day of the Chinese New Year is also the birthday of the God of Wealth. On this day, Chinese people eat dumplings because they are shaped like a golden yuan-bao in the hope that the God of Wealth will stop by their house for a while. The God of Wealth is widely worshiped in Taoism and Chinese folk religion. He is typically depicted holding a golden yuan-bao in his hand. The shape of the golden yuan-bao is very unique and represents the highest value during the Chinese Empire.

¹¹ The idea of homogeneity of family and state originated from the blood kinship in the political system of feudal society in China, “the king, the minister, the father, the son” but with the changes of the times, the connotation of homogeneity of family and state has changed significantly, which reflects more of a collective consciousness and ethical concept, “the small state is everyone.” The family here has gone beyond the concept of “family” (family of three) in the general sense, and even extends to the family of blood relatives, the family of friends, the family of the community, the family of the city, and the country as a national community. The values conveyed through the idea of the family and the state as one structure have been the fine traditional virtues that the Chinese people uphold a—family harmony, neighborly harmony, kindness to others, patriotism, etc.

The symbolism behind collective Chinese activities like the Chinese Lunar New Year is of particular importance. Assmann refers to the synthesis of symbolism as a cultural form, arguing that “a cultural identity conforms to, consolidates and, above all, reproduces a cultural form. Through the medium of cultural forms, collective identities are constructed and passed on from generation to generation” (Assmann 2015, 145), partly as the reproduction of cultural forms represent identity negotiation and the protection of the self:

the intercultural communication act always already entails identity negotiation in a more heightened way, while the outcome of negotiation does not primarily denote reconciliation or harmonization of differences, i.e., identity juxtaposition; but the protection of the cultural self, blending into the dominant culture with some degree of the old cultural self retained, or even the risk of losing identity. (Gaál-Szabó 2018, 175)

The reproduction of cultural identity as part of identity negotiation is further supported by Alfred Grosser, who argues that identity comes from the memories of the past and the traces it leaves in the body and consciousness (2010, 33). Every time memory of traditional Chinese culture is involved in the construction of the identity of the Hungarian-Chinese. Thus, individual memories do not only comprise individual memory but also are mixed with collective memory.

Starting from the discussion of the economic life of Chinese immigrants in Hungary, I argue that the Chinese community as a diaspora group gains identity through efforts to maintain ties with kinship communities in China as the ancestral country of origin (Tölölyan 2007). As a social construction itself, it has struggled to establish itself as a visible community, while both maintaining Chinese identity and creating a new identity meaningful in Hungary. In this process, there is a collective concern and expression for the well-being of the Chinese ancestral homeland, which plays an important role in the lives of Chinese immigrants both at the symbolic and normative levels (Morawska 2011). The presence of the ancestral homeland is reflected in the memories of Chinese culture. Memory always plays an

important role in the formation of identity, and identity is maintained by memory as it “connective function carries over into an interpretative horizon of future events” (Gaál-Szabó 2019, 120). In the process of identity formation, the memories of the Chinese in Hungary show the colors of Chinese culture, such as the spiritual guidance of “family culture” and the values of “hard work” in life. The Chinese communities “conscientiously seek to retrieve and reproduce some of [the] social practices and cultural icons in order that migrants ‘remember’ and reconstruct the customary meanings migrants find in their daily lives” (Andrew P. Davidson and Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng 2008, 3). In this process, Chinese Hungarian identity is constantly being shaped in ways that transmit and develop immigrants’ attitudes towards life as, for example, in the case of the reproduction of traditional culture in cultural festivals, the display of traditional foods, the performance of traditional customs, etc. while forming new memories. In this subchapter, I found that the Chinese immigrant experience in Hungary works as a catalyst to form a new identity through oscillating between old and new memories. The openness and fluidity of memory allow Chinese migrants in Hungary to reconceptualize themselves in the present, and memory shapes personal identity and belonging by generating meaning in the process (Davidson 2008,13).

2.2 Negotiating Memory and Belonging: The Chinese Cultural Space in Hungary

The subchapter offers insight into the cultural space of the Hungarian-Chinese community based on some of its relevant aspects, combining the unique cultural activities and the functionality of the Chinese community space. The corporate space of associations and organizations, the cultural space mediated through the Chinese media, and the commercial space represented by the Chinatown in Budapest are selected to discuss the relationship between each spatial imagery and Chinese identity. The subchapter argues that regardless of the space in which Chinese immigrants move, they negotiate their memory and activities of belonging in that space.

Chinese immigration to Hungary started at a larger scale after 1988 with an influx of Chinese, soon to become one of the largest Chinese communities in continental Europe (Chinese Community 2021). The uniqueness of the Chinese community in Hungary lies in that it consists mainly of new immigrants belonging to no traditional communities (新移民) like the clans, communities based on kinship, and secret societies that control the American and British Tang communities (Nie & Linda 1993). The Chinese homeland bears little influence here compared to the traditional Chinatown(唐人街)¹² elsewhere. Therefore, the composition and internal as well as external relations of the Hungarian-Chinese community are different from those of other communities with a longer history.

The uniqueness is first of all reflected in the fact that the Hungarian-Chinese community is composed differently from previous Chinese communities in Western Europe. It may be due to its temporary and transitional nature. From 1988, when China and Hungary signed a mutual visa waiver agreement (Yang 2017), Hungary became the only visa-free country in Europe for Chinese people at that time. “Gold seekers”¹³ came from northern region, represented for Beijing, or from the southern and central province such as Wenzhou, Fujian, Henan, and other parts of the country. Hungary was the first stop for new immigrants from mainland China after the reform and opening up of China, and the majority of overseas Chinese went to other European countries from Hungary (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council 2016).

In the following decade, “the Chinese in Hungary have taken root in the region and have accumulated strong economic strength and a wide social network” (2016). It is clear that this new group of immigrants is a group of entrepreneurial immigrants; thus, there is no connection to the early Chinese immigration history of the Chinese community in Western

¹² Chinatown, refers to the area where people of Chinese descent live in cities in countries other than Chinese areas. Chinatown is not limited to a particular street, but can be extended to a city, and is more appropriately called Chinatown or Chinese Quarter. Chinatown was first formed in the United States and Canada in the 19th century. At that time, discriminatory land laws prohibited Chinese and other people of color from participating in the land market or only allowed Chinese to buy land in certain areas, thus forming the first generation of Chinese immigrants’ settlements.

¹³ Chinese people who come to Hungary in search of a better life are specially designated.

Europe. The reason for thousands of Chinese coming to Hungary in the late 1980s by train across Siberia with small commodities (小商品) like clothes, shoes, accessories, etc. in search of business opportunities is that Chinese immigrants enjoyed relatively many benefits in China and Hungary as a direct result of the liberalization of China's migration policy in the 1980s. Since the implementation of China's "reform and opening-up policy"¹⁴ in 1978 and especially after China relaxed its rules for approving people leaving the country in 1985, "the number of border crossings into Hungary by Chinese citizens jumped from nearly zero in the mid-1980s to 11,621 in 1990 and 27,330 in 1991" (qtd. in Nyíri 2003, 242). In the decades prior to this, China had imposed very strict and effective regulations and controls on population migration. This provided the conditions for Chinese emigration out of the country; secondly, Hungary's relatively relaxed immigration environment at that time attracted Chinese immigrants, which was related to the political environment in Hungary at the time, the overall changes in Eastern Europe, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Most of these immigrants were well-educated and their backgrounds were very different from those of the Chinese in other parts of Europe. Most Chinese in Western and Southern Europe came from rural areas, from traditional diasporas with generations of migration history, and going abroad seems to be a tradition-driven behavior; these people have no obvious economic ties to China, except for sending remittances to their families and donating money and goods to their hometowns. The Northern Chinese people migrating to Eastern Europe, however, are markedly different (the trend becomes more pronounced the further east one goes in Europe) as their migration is motivated by economic reasons. The new immigrants from mainland China in Hungary are relatively homogeneous. The Chinese who stay in Hungary can be described as almost all businessmen, and more than 80% of them are engaged in business. There are the places where Chinese businessmen engaging in wholesale trade gather such as the "Euro Square" (欧洲广场) and the "Milky Way Square"(银河广场).

¹⁴ "The policy of reform and opening up" was proposed and established by Deng Xiaoping, the second generation of the top leaders of the People's Republic of China, after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee on December 18, 1978, when a series of economic-oriented reform measures were initiated, which can be summarized as "internal reform and external opening up". After the implementation of this policy, China's immigration policy was gradually liberalized, and an immigration boom was launched.

In addition, the Chinese mainly from Fujian have opened a number of retail stores all over Hungary, and it is said that nowadays there is probably a Chinese retail store in every Hungarian village with a population of more than 2000 (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council 2016). According to Nyíri Pál(1999), “In early 1992, 1,400 Chinese-owned businesses were registered in Hungary, with total invested capital of US\$ 20 million”(1999, 50).

Among them, many have ties to Chinese state enterprises or trade networks from which they obtain goods or some kind of easy access to Eastern European markets where goods are in short supply. Their migration patterns are no longer the same as those of the traditional Chinese diaspora. There are two patterns of migration to Hungary, one is based directly on migrants to Hungary, most of whom have been living in Hungary for many years and are keeping their businesses there; The other type is the immigrant who moves from Moscow to Hungary in search of better business opportunities and becomes a re-immigrant status. These immigrants retain their business in Hungary, usually under the care of a recently arrived relative or friend and continue to visit Hungary regularly seeking to maintain their residence permit or obtain a new one (Nyíri 1998). For the moment, their behavior remains very independent.

The history of the Chinese in Hungary is approximately 32 years old now. Nyíri Pál believes that political policies are only the primary reason for the existence of the Hungarian community, but more importantly, after the Tiananmen Square events in Beijing, some businessmen chose to live in Hungary first in order to escape the economic reversal and intellectuals to escape the repressive atmosphere (2003). As a result, Two main subgroups within the Chinese migrants before entering Hungary were subsequently formed: merchants, and intellectuals. Firstly, these immigrants arrived in Hungary hoping to achieve better living conditions and to become “gold seekers.” The biggest attraction of Hungary for businessmen leaving China was the fact that no visa was required and that overseas residents did not have to pay taxes. Also, Hungary was in a period of social transition and Chinese companies were struggling in the recession at that time, which became a factor for businessmen to change their horizons. Secondly, Intellectuals were more interested in getting free space. Some literary

artists and even professors and TV professionals went to settle in Hungary. These groups make up the Chinese community in Hungary and are the basic group conditions for the formation of cultural spaces.

Associations and Organizations— Institutionalized Practice of Cultural Space

For the Chinese immigrants in Hungary, the formation of associations is the initial attempt to institutionalize relational ties and construct their cultural space. There are two main associations and more than ten small associations of Chinese communities in Hungary. According to their functions, they are roughly divided into business organizations, hometown organizations, clansmen organizations, professional organizations, Chinese language education organizations, hobby organizations, women's, senior, and youth organizations, as well as religious fellowship organizations.

Diverse as the range of associations is, it is kinship and ethnic ties that underlie their formation. The concept “blood is thicker than water(血浓于水)”¹⁵ is very familiar to Chinese people, especially to cross-border immigrants who live in a different ethnic group. Immigrants related through kinship or ethnicity often have a natural affinity to gather together in groups, and then consciously or unconsciously rely on their ethnic and kinship ties to shape their community.

According to the traditional Chinese concept of kinship or ethnicity, those who can contribute to the development of their own clan and township will naturally be respected by their clan and township relatives. Fei Xiaotong proposed the concept of “the differential mode of association” in his “From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society,” that is, in the social pattern that occurs in social relations such as kinship and geographical relations, centering on oneself allows producing different circles according to the change of time and space in which one is located. According to the pattern, each person forms a network centered on himself (1992). In the network of self-centered social relations, the Chinese have a

¹⁵ A Chinese idiom meaning that people who are related by blood should be closer to each other than to people who are not related by blood.

complex kinship network, in which often hundreds or thousands of people in a village or township are related to each other. Furthermore, although people live in different places, they come from the same group and are still connected by blood. As a link, this kind of kinship establishes a snowball-like chain, which depends on migration. Such ties often develop or manifest themselves in the formation of an association. Therefore, influenced by this background, the various types of hometown associations provided for the earliest and strongest cohesion at all levels.

The associations can be divided into bottom-up and top-down organizational approaches based on kinship. In Hungary, the former type centers on the ties deriving from a common geographical origin. The geopolitical origin is connected to the common ancestral land of China. Voluntary associations institutionalize thus the originally loose folk network. For example, the European Qingtian Hometown Association was established in March 1996. After the establishment of the hometown association, it continued to establish Qingtian hometown associations in various European countries, Hungary being among them.

The Chinese regional ties have enabled the Chinese migrating to Hungary to maintain their cultural memories of China. The regional ties in the Chinese concept are somewhat flexible: it can be either a province, a township, or a village in the ancestral homeland. Essentially, regional ties represent different dialectal practices, similar customs, or personal encounters in the midst of economic changes, enabling the reproduction and reinterpretation of cultural memories. However, following Halbwachs (1992), the reproduction of social memory is at best a fragmented process. It follows that immigrant memory is no monolith but represents a heterogeneous entity entailing diverse individual memories of the same social, cultural, etc., phenomena. The regional tie as cultural memory is constantly reinterpreted, processed, and fixed institutionally, further establishing it as a social resource. It is thus clear that this practice of institutionalizing geographic relations as cultural memory is necessary for individual Chinese immigrants to re-establish their identity and sense of self in a foreign country. For the Chinese community itself, it establishes cultural continuity, which is essentially the result of a negotiation between cultural memory and a sense of regional belonging.

The top-down organizational form often manifests itself in the creation of an organization in order to achieve functionalization and specialization. For example, the Hungarian-Chinese Association (HCA; Magyarországi Kínaiak Egyesülete, MKE) established in October 1992 does not build on regional ties, which shows the partial disintegration of traditional regional ties in the process of reinterpreting the traditional sense of belonging among some Chinese. In a typical top-down organization, some groups choose to disassociate from regional ties and integrate into the local area, unlike others that stick to traditional regional ties. The associations begin to move toward specialization and functionalization. But either way, the creation of associations reflects the practical effort that the Chinese put into forming their own cultural space in an institutionalized way.

Chinese Media---A Cultural Space for the Imagination¹⁶

Since the establishment of the Chinese community, the Chinese media has matured and increasingly developed into an important force in “transforming” the space of the Chinese community. Chinese cultural space has also been produced through various processes of meaning-production, rendering the media productive of social space, i.e., the Chinese community’s cultural space is also constructed through the media. Within this cultural space, the Chinese in Hungary use the local Chinese media to belong culturally.

The Chinese media in Hungary are roughly divided into three categories. The first category comprises the two official Chinese media in Hungary, the Xinhua News *Agency* and *the Economic Daily*. The former was established in 1956 and focuses on all aspects of Hungarian politics, economy, culture and sports, while the latter was established in 1985 and focuses on economic reports. Magazines form the second category. In the 1990s, when tens of thousands of people came to Hungary to start their own businesses, Chinese newspapers and magazines developed rapidly. The heyday of newspaper development reached as many as

¹⁶ Although this chapter primarily talks about the role and influence of Chinese media in Hungary, supplementary information indicates that the media environment for Chinese youth in Hungary is predominantly shaped by digital media and popular culture. Field research reveals that the impact of digital media manifests as an everyday, subtle mechanism. At this level, digital media enables young people to consolidate a shared cultural world.

eleven titles, surviving five as of 2016. Magazines were also established by senior Hungarian editors who screened the topics and then had them translated into Chinese by professional translators. These Chinese-language media mainly convey Hungarian political, economic, cultural, and social dynamics to the Chinese. They are used for Chinese people to screen information, such as finding a job, checking holidays, facilitating life and business trips, etc. For example, the *New Guide*(*新导报*) is the only Asian (ethnic) media in Hungary that regularly participates in covering various national and government events. Under the recent pandemic of the new crown epidemic, the newspaper published ways to register for the vaccine in Hungary, helping to facilitate Chinese immigrants who do not speak Hungarian or English. During the peak days of the epidemic, the newspaper, in conjunction with Dr. Chen's Pharmacy, published frequent practical guides on the prevention and treatment of Newcastle pneumonia. The Chinese language media focused on how to help Chinese people better adapt to life in Hungary. The third category is represented by the Chinese TV channel. It has been broadcasting Hungarian news in Chinese-to-Chinese people living and working in Hungary since 2016.

In general, these Chinese media have several sections: Hungarian news, Hungarian history and humanities, a guide to living in Hungary, and news on cultural exchange between Hungary and China. Although the Chinese language media has made a great contribution to the integration of Chinese immigrants into local life, it has strengthened some of the Chinese regional and other identities, as well as those related to China as a whole. In a sense, the Chinese-language media gives readers the opportunity to recognize themselves as, for example, a Chinese woman, a Fujianese, or a Xianese. As Fang Lingling of Zhejiang University pointed out in her doctoral dissertation, today's society is a media society, and the city we live in is a "city of media" (2007). In this information society, we are increasingly living in a "web of media," and the mass media are the real weavers of meaning. As a corollary, it is possible for the Chinese media to be deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the community, showing the community environment in which the Chinese in Hungary live in various forms, such as text, sound, images or pictures, and influencing the spatial perception of the Chinese in all aspects. The Chinese media has become the "mirror" of the Chinese

community, a mirror that shows a “mimetic environment.” People outside the community need it to understand the life of the Chinese community, while people inside the community use it to strengthen their perception of their social and cultural space and to further develop a collective identity.

The media of the Hungarian-Chinese is somewhat similar to Foucault’s concept of “heterotopia,” as it “establishes a network of spatialities overlapping with [the Hungarian] abstract space” (Gaál-Szabó 2011, 31). They are alien to the Hungarian social order and rules, reflecting Hungarian society while confronting it, and making it heterogeneous from within. The Chinese media presents a space of “otherness” which, on the one hand, juxtaposes diverse and heterogeneous cultures in the space of Chinese communities, and builds the cultural imagination of Chinese communities through the acceptance of the Hungarian culture; on the other hand, it contributes to the collective memory of communities through the integration of intra-community cultures and the reproduction of community landscapes.

Chinatown Shopping District — A Commercial and Cultural Space

The early Chinese immigrants established themselves mainly through stalls in marketplaces. They established a business district with “Chinatown” (the Monori Center) as the core, forming a chain of import, wholesale, and retail activities. Chinatown is located in the 10th district of Budapest and has close to 300 traders with products such as clothing, shoes, bags, home textiles, home appliances, and other household goods, as well as service providers such as restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, accounting firms, law firms, clinics, media, travel agencies, and logistics companies (Monori Center 1992).

The formation of the cultural space in Chinatown is the result of the interaction between the capital, local authorities, and the Chinese in the community. Chinatown aims to cater to the diverse demands of the Chinese in the community. The Chinese businesspeople in this commercial and cultural space play two roles: on the one hand, they participate in the production of the Chinese community by creating employment opportunities through their enterprises, “Chinatown now has over 70 employees” (Monori Center 1992). According to the description of the head of a local Chinese community, most people working in the Chinese

community are Chinese, with a small number of Hungarians and, on the other hand, they create a space for leisure and consumption for the Chinese community. As described on the Monori Center website,

In addition to commercial functions, Chinatown also has mature Chinese community support, including 18 Chinese restaurants, 2 Asian supermarkets, as well as Chinese media, Chinese schools, Chinese hospitals, KTV, beauty salons and massage, offices, travel agencies, summer night market stalls, and other cultural and recreational support. It has become a truly integrated Chinese living area. The local government has allocated land and buildings to Chinese enterprises, serving as the basis for the spatial production of the Chinese community (1992).

Chinatown sits on three main streets of Budapest's 10th district. It is an important field of cultural interchange between East and West, as well as a field of cultural memory for the cultural interchange. As a place of cultural exchange between East and West in Hungary, Chinatown is not only a unique physical space but, as a place where the Chinese community lives, it also preserves Chinese history and culture and shapes an authentic Chinese way of life for people from China. These authentic lifestyles with elements of traditional Chinese culture are reflected in the various events and festivals that take place in Chinatown. As David Holzer argues, "Women from the Budapest Chinese community perform traditional dance on February 17, celebrating Chinese New Year in the Budapest China Market shopping mall at Szentmihályi út 171, District XV" (2018). In 2019 on the occasion of the Chinese Lunar New Year and the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Hungary, the Chinese community hosted a great cultural and culinary event. The three-day event included cultural activities and performances with Chinese traditional cultural features. A wide range of traditional Chinese food, for example, "steamed stuffed buns, dumplings, Sichuan food, noodle soups, Peking duck, Asian pastry and desserts, etc.," was served during the show (XPATLOOP 2019). The 2019 Chinatown Food Night Market runs from May 7 to September. The opening ceremony "feature[d] 22 Chinese kung fu professionals from the Xuzhou Martial

Arts Association, performing various kung fu techniques with traditional weapons” (XPATLOOP 2019). The main performances were the “Lion dance by Hungarian Chan Wu Cultural Center” and the Kung fu shows by Xuzhou Martial Arts Association (XPATLOOP 2019). There are more than just festivals and events in Chinatown and all the events that take place in this space shine with elements of traditional Chinese culture. The traditional cultural elements are the concentration of the cultural memory of the Chinese people in Hungary, so it is a spiritual place where the Chinese community’s soul and memories are nurtured. The social space tends to function as a symbolic space, a space formed by a way of life and the Chinese as the status group with a different way of life (see Bourdieu 1979), and as a spatial construction with distinct ethnic characteristics. Chinatown has become a geographic representation of Chinese cultural traditions and an identity point for the Hungarian-Chinese. Its significance goes beyond the naming of a mere Chinese community to become a spatial symbol of the cultural coordinates, ethnic identity, and spiritual belonging of the Chinese community.

According to Lefebvre, space is pervaded by social relations; it is not only supported by them but also produced by them (1991). In other words, space itself is formed in various processes of human behavior and social production, “creat[ing] a transparent, homogenous space” (Gaál-Szabó 2012, 479), which, in turn, influences, changes, and even directs the way people behave in society. This provides a theoretical basis for discussing memory in space, changes in identity, and the negotiation of memory and belonging. Above, the relationship between spatial imagery and Chinese identity is discussed, one by one, based on the theory of spatial production and the physical, mental, and social spaces that constitute the cultural space of Chinese communities. This study argues that regardless of the space in which Chinese immigrants move, they will negotiate their memory and belonging activities in that space. The first generation of Chinese immigrants, having personally experienced the geographical migration from China to Hungary, have a deep sense of cultural dislocation brought about by spatial migration, which is the direct cause of the formation of the cultural space of the Chinese community, while the perception of second-generation immigrants of their living space is essentially orientated by their Chinese identity. The cultural space of the Chinese

community makes most newly arriving first-generation immigrants depend on it, and their identity is in line with the identity promoted by the core group in this cultural space. On the other hand, second-generation immigrants have integrated elements of Hungarian memory into their identities to form complex identities, and their groups are broken down into formal and informal networks that partly overlap and partly separate, nurtured by cultural spaces shaped by different cultural, economic, and educational institutions and activities. The current study suggests that Chinese immigrants negotiate their identities through oscillations and integration within spaces that reflect both Chinese and Hungarian cultural memory.

Chapter3: The School as a Community and Memory Space

The study was conducted in the public Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School (Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium) in the 15th district of Budapest in the course of 2022. According to Pierre Nora's point of view, we treat the Budapest Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School (Magyar-Kínai Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola és Gimnázium) as a typical memory site. It connects three meanings: the material field of memory, the symbolic field of memory, and the functional field of memory (Nora 1989, 18). These fields of memory reconstruct and reinterpret the past, shaping Chinese Hungarian cultural memory today. The focus of this chapter is on the material field of memory in the school space. In this field, material symbols constitute the symbols of expression of memory. This study is concerned with how these material symbols work to express Chinese cultural memory in this material space.

3.1 Budapest Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School as a Memory Space

The school was established after former Hungarian Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy proposed the establishment of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School during his visit to China in 2003. In June 2004, during Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Hungary, China and Hungary signed a memorandum on the establishment of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, aiming to provide a platform for Chinese children and Hungarian children to learn the Chinese language. The Hungarian government supported the establishment of the school by

lending the campus to the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School for 50 years free of charge, and 60% of the school's annual budget comes from the Hungarian government (Wang 2007). The Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School uses both Chinese and Hungarian as languages of instruction and is currently the only primary school in Hungary and indeed in Europe, where both Chinese and the host country's language are used (Wang, 2006).¹⁷ Since its founding, the school has developed into a community with a unique cultural space. The study aims at exploring the spatial and cultural memory of the school. In his discussion of the "lieu de memoire," Pierre Nora argues that "lieux in three senses of the word-material, symbolic, and functional" (Nora 1989, 18). Following Nora's concept, school spaces constitute "sites of memory," and the cultural memory is expressed in the form of its material carriers in these spaces. The subchapter focuses on the physical environment of the bilingual school as a site of memory. The physical environment here refers to the architectural environment of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school and the material symbols in the architectural environment. The subchapter explores how Chinese cultural memory is reflected in the physical environment of the school.

The composition of school space as cultural space

School space is usually composed of basic school equipment and facilities, various supplies for education and teaching, decorations including objects and wall decorations, and people fulfilling different activities and tasks within the school. Many components make up the school space, with various objects varying greatly in volume, nature, and condition. It is through the placement of objects and activities in the school building that the school space is constituted or produced.

Edward Hall divides space into three types: fixed-feature, semifixed-feature, and informal space (Hall 1966, 101–111). Edward's view of space is a concept grounded in proximity communication. He considers fixed-feature space as consisting of some stable objects, such as buildings and walls. Semifixed-feature space, on the other hand, consists of a number of movable objects. Informal space, on the other hand, is a personal space that

¹⁷ All translations from Chinese are mine.

involves people in a changing interaction with space. He believes that all three can facilitate or hinder human interaction and communication in space (Hall 1966, 101–111). On this basis, Amos Rapoport has revised the concept of spatial type, extending the scheme of spatial classification. Rapoport identifies three types of communicative spaces in society: “fixed-feature, semifixed-feature, and nonfixed-feature space”(Rapoport 2000, 107–140).

Edward and Rapoport’s research focuses on the types of interpersonal space in society. When it comes to school space, Chinese scholar Su Shangfeng classifies three types of school space: fixed space, semi-fixed space, and indefinite space (Su 2012, 29). These three produce results directly through objects and activities related to the school, and the result of their production is the school space. Fixed space is material space formed by the material carriers conveying the school culture, not simply their functional use. In semi-fixed spaces, people inhabiting the school space in some ways often imagine and understand the school space differently due to subjective interpretations incorporating diverse concepts of, for example, schooling or community. They always bring some of the school material space closer to themselves and appropriate it according to their ideas to match their understanding of the school space. Indefinite space describes interpersonal space as it always changes along with the change of the relationship between people.

This tripartite division of space also applies to the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. The bilingual school’s fixed space entails the space formed by the material symbols that carry the school’s culture; in its semi-fixed space, the members’ views merge into a heterogeneous yet intact cultural space; and in the indefinite space, the school’s cultural space is dynamically formed by the bodies of school members.

Fixed-feature space contains surrounding objects that are relatively permanent. Its “fixed features include immovable walls, doors, trees, sidewalks, roads, and highways. Such features help guide and control our actions” (“Studyfiles” 2009). School buildings and land as fixed spaces are not subject to change. Generally, the design and construction of a school building to represent space is the production of space. This means that “space is productive by nature, influencing physical activity, behavior, and habits through the characteristics of its physical environment and the cultural environment it creates, which in turn shapes people” (Su 2012,

30). The construction of school buildings is intertwined with the school's philosophy, the possible background of political factors, and the influence of cultural practices. These architectural elements justify their existence, status, and function through material characteristics. In the case of school buildings, one of the ways to pass on memories in the process of renovation or renewal is to preserve the overall form.

Buildings on the campus can preserve a continuous materialized narrative theme and cultural core, increasing the sense of campus identity and memory for the entire school community. Using the functionalist building of the former printing technology school, the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School has retained its original overall shape, which coincides with the typical modern Chinese school layout. The school entrance foyer leading to the public hall of the bilingual school increases the opportunity for student-to-student and student-to-parent communication. The fence clarifies the school's physical boundaries and limits contact for students with the outside world temporarily while in school. Most classrooms have windows on one side and are rectangular in shape, usually with the window set to the left of the student. As can be seen from the above example, fixed spaces in school “refer to the characteristic arrangement of rooms by function” (Hall 1966, 101–111).

However, the material manifestation of the school culture is a dynamic process, whether it is buildings, grounds, or greenery, that changes over time. School architecture expresses campus culture in an ongoing process, as culture is subject to change (Yin 2009, 27). In the process of construction, the school used materials to create a material narrative of cultural expression by employing elements of local and foreign cultures. In this process, culture can be a collaboration between foreign cultures and local cultures. Ge Jingguo believes foreign culture can also be a condition for adaptive cultural development (2006, 72). Take the example of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. The local Hungarian cultural background of the school building meets Chinese culture. For example, the lobby of the school is decorated with various elements of Chinese culture. Chinese red lanterns are hung from the ceiling of the lobby. These lanterns have a traditional Chinese red body with yellow spikes. The shape is similar to that of the lanterns used at the founding ceremony of New China in 1949. The red lanterns that appear in the school symbolize good fortune and the

passing on of the flame. Similar cultural elements can be found on the doors and walls of the lobby and the plants placed in the lobby. The school hangs firecracker-style pendants on the doors that symbolize good luck. Firecrackers have been used for over 2,000 years in Chinese history. The *Jing Chu Sui Shi Ji* contains: “the first day of the first month, the rooster crowing and get up, first in front of the court firecrackers, to avoid the evil spirits” (Song 1987). This record shows that firecrackers in ancient times were a tool to drive away evil. Later in Chinese folklore, they turned into a tool to drive away the “New Year beast(年兽).”¹⁸ Therefore, Chinese folklore has the “Kai Men Pao(开门炮)”¹⁹ saying. This means that families celebrate the start of a new year by opening the door and setting off firecrackers to blast out the old and welcome the new. Firecrackers hangs appear on the school’s front door, which signifies the good fortune of welcoming the old and the new. Similarly, there are Chinese knots on the wall in the lobby. Chinese knots have origins in the history of China from the Stone Age when clothes were sewn and knotted. The *Xi Ci* contains: “In ancient times, knots were used to remember things” (“Xi Ci Xia” 2022). The knot has been used as a memory aid throughout history, carrying the memory of ancient Chinese civilization and becoming the representative symbol of Chinese culture. Today, the Chinese knot still carries the ancient civilization of Chinese culture and represents unity, happiness, and peace in traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, the Chinese knot is hung in the corridor near the lobby entrance and is not placed randomly. In addition, the small Chinese lanterns and Chinese knots hanging on the potted plants in the lobby show that the school has integrated Chinese culture into the cultural space of the school and turned it into a space with Chinese elements.

¹⁸Legend has it that in ancient China, at the end of the year, the New Year’s Beast would attack villages at midnight. All towns occupied by the beast were brutally slaughtered, and the horns on the beast’s head were the weapons. People took advantage of the three weaknesses of the New Year Beast to repel its attacks by playing with firecrackers (which would scare the Beast) and putting up spring scrolls..

¹⁹It is a traditional Chinese New Year custom. In the early morning of the first day of the Lunar New Year, just after dawn, people get up, and the first thing that every family does is scramble to set off firecrackers. This means the door’s opening is auspicious, but it also announces the start of the New Year.



Figure 1: The Lobby Decorated with Lanterns



Figure 2: The Entrance Lobby Decorated with Chinese Knots and Firecracker Ornaments



Figure 3: Decorative Chinese Paper Dragon on the Ceiling

In contrast to fixed spaces, the school’s semi-fixed spaces “employ [] objects to create distance” to demarcate places in the school space (“Studyfiles” 2009). The objects including tables, chairs, plants, and even sculptures can be adjusted and changed in various ways as needed. Semi-fixed spaces in schools, therefore, refer to the placement of objects in the school environment. Pictures of graduating students are hung in the hallways of the school, and these pictures appear on the walls according to the year of graduation. Communicative memory is maintained by pictures being replaced by new ones year after year. According to Su Shangfeng, a Semi-fixed space is the place in school where people and things interact the most. The semi-fixed space is the richest place in the school, where people and objects interact with each other. It is full of concrete and tangible material properties, as well as the school’s vision and understanding of the education of the users or deployers, and it also hides interpersonal interactions, competitions, and battles caused by the deployment of objects (Su 2012, 31).

The material and the symbolic, as cultural representations, often then become the concentrated expression of imagery in the schoolyard. The symbolic expressions visible on

campus are first expressed in the theme sculptures outside the main building—stone lions and figure statues—statues of Confucius and terracotta warriors and horses.

The school strategically placed these statues in prominent locations within the lobby to reinforce a tangible connection to traditional culture at all times. For instance, the Confucius statue signifies the school’s commitment to preserving Confucian heritage; stone lions create an atmosphere of solemnity and authority, also symbolizing the institution's discipline of instilling respect in students upon entering its gates; replicas of terracotta warriors represent the rich diversity of Chinese history and culture, aiming to inspire students' national pride. As summarized by Ms. Ruan of the school, the institution attaches abstract cultural values to tangible, physical objects, achieving subtle, pervasive education through spatial discipline (Ruan 2022).



Figure 4: Replica Terracotta Warriors Statues in the School Lobby



Figure 5: Stone lion statues at the entrance

Next came the group photos carrying students' memories, Chinese calligraphy, and Chinese paintings adorning the walls of the corridors, public school areas, and classrooms. These symbols reflect the continuity of Chinese cultural memory. It is worth emphasizing that imagery maintains an integrated feeling of the environment, as do the elements mentioned above, making it meaningless to single out any of these symbols in isolation from the school context as the material symbols in the semi-fixed space remind people of the memory of a specific sense of place. When students see these material symbols, memories come to mind, and the pairing of place and material symbols becomes particularly meaningful.

Indeterminate space "use[s] no physical objects to mark the boundaries of our 'personal space' because these boundaries are invisible" ("The Concept of Space in Proxemic Communication" 2002). moreover, indeterminate space is a highly fluid and rapidly changing space ("Studyfiles" 2009). It focuses on the spatial relationship between bodies, the most productive parts of the school space (Su 2012, 31). Lefebvre notes, "The whole (social) space

begins with the body, no matter how it deforms the body to the point of completely forgetting it, or how it breaks with it” so thoroughly that it wants to annihilate it (Lefebvre 2012, 81-84). For students and teachers, the space of the school provides places, objects, institutions, etc., while people are interwoven in complex ways of activity. As Gatens Moira argues, by becoming a member of a space, the body becomes a symbolic actor. Students circulate in this place, come and go, and return. Individuals become actors in such a situation (2013, 21-38). The relationship that occurs between one actor after another and the surrounding environment is the very thing that explains the dynamic process of memory. This speaks volumes about the importance of the body as a medium of indeterminate space. It contributes to the continuity of spatial production in the school.



Figure 6: The Classroom Decorated with Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy



Figure 7: Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy Decorative Elements Displayed on the Classroom Walls

School Space and Cultural Memory

School as a social organization is a special form of cultural space. When the walls, school buildings, podiums, tables, chairs, etc., are separated to demarcate a separate functional space of activity, the school becomes a spatial construct with boundaries enlivened by its educational activities in a specific time and space. At the physical level, the school space is

born out of the interrelation between the different elements. It is the spatial logic invested in them that constructs the fixed space of the school.

However, this is only part of what constitutes the school space. To a great extent, a school space is represented by the behaviors that occur in the school by the people inhabiting the space. For example, the characteristics of the space are marked not only by the positioning of bodies as it follows from the role they fulfill in the school space but also by postures, the accent of their voices, and the members' behavioral preferences (Shi 2006, 23-25). The school wall serves as a physical boundary that separates school life from life outside the school. At the same time, in the school space, students have a different pattern of interaction from life outside the school, allowing this pattern of behavior to constitute a "boundary" as well. This boundary separates the school space from the non-educational space. It is through the management of the space that the activities of the school can be carried out successfully.

The school as a unique space is first emphasized by the school logo covering the blank wall at the entrance to the main building. The main body of the logo consists of the Chinese character "中" with the center of the character divided into two white boxes with the Hungarian flag icon on the left and the Chinese flag icon on the right. The rest of the logo is accompanied by the words "Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School" in English and Chinese. The icon shows a state of mixed interculturality, where there is an active form of interaction between the spatial elements as the space itself is being transformed into a state of 'hybridized transculturality,' representing a state of equality, perhaps even a state of the community (Lie 2002, 20). In Liu Dawei's argument, icons "convey [] a meaning and value through word symbols or images [...] that contribute to the construction of value memories of the younger generation" (Liu and Zhou 2021, 59). In the bilingual school, the icon is taken from the Chinese character "中," which is also the character "中" in the word "中国" (China). It symbolizes the cultural significance of the country for the school community. The flag symbol reminds students of where their ancestral lineage is.



Figure 8: Main Entrance Featuring the School Logo

From the entrance of the main building, one enters the small lobby of the school's main building, which connects four sub-buildings. Two display cases in the school lobby are like little memory museums. It contains certificates of donations from Chinese donors and cultural artifacts representing Chinese culture. Small memory museums in school can be explained by borrowing Jan Assmann's theory that cultural memories can be 'reusable texts, images, and rituals' that every society can use to stabilize and transmit a collective image (1995, 132). In these display cases, each donation certificate becomes a mnemonic symbol, telling a story about Chinese memory with the information provided by the text on the certificate. As Assmann argues, in cultural memory, it is not the past that is preserved but expressed in symbols (2011, 16).

With the small main lobby as the center, the space of the Budapest Bilingual School is divided into smaller units. The lobby runs through all four buildings and constitutes an informal public space. In the main part of the lobby, a public activity platform is set up to enable cultural and social events to be held there. With this activity platform placed in the

center, the nearby large lobby space forms a space for interaction among school members, which can be linked to the overall campus cultural activities. The lobby is entirely lined with glass windows, and this permeable and open interface increases the possibility of visual communication and the organization of cultural events. The small space connecting the four buildings in the lobby gives students and faculty the possibility to walk and communicate with each other. Through the combination pattern of large and small spaces, we see that different areas define different environments and behavioral norms of the members.

In addition, functionalized specifications are set for classrooms. The school allocates the three main buildings to different grade levels. Each building of the school is equipped with language rooms, which are allocated for the teaching of the Hungarian and Chinese languages. In addition, there is a music room, a computer room, a gymnasium, a library, a medical room, a small cafeteria, a playground, a stage, a Confucius classroom, and a Chinese tearoom, depending on the teaching.

The classroom is the place where students attend classes. Knowing what to do on what occasion is one of the most basic requirements for the actors in the specific space. Each student has his or her seat in the classroom for a fixed period, which may be a class period, a week, or a month, depending on the specific daily situation of the class. The advantage of this seating system is that when the teacher walks into the classroom, he or she can see at a glance if any students are absent. In the classroom, the teacher expects the students to be in their seats during the lesson, which creates a classroom norm that regulates student behavior.

In the classroom space, the furnishings of the classroom facilities also express invisible norms of Chinese culture. The teacher has space at the podium, and the arrangement of the podium is necessary to ensure that classroom behavior is regulated. The podium area is the focal point of the classroom space, often serving as the visual center of the classroom with the blackboard as the backdrop. The location of the podium dictates that students tend to be centered on the teacher when interacting with him/her in the classroom. Seating arrangement often leaves students with a very limited range of motion. Students in the front row who intend to communicate with students in the back row must turn around to do so. However, this movement is often easily detected by the teacher, which means that students often have no

space to move around the classroom. At the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, there is no desk format for small group work; most classrooms use a podium placed in front of the student's desks. This invisible norm, combined with the plug-in arrangement of the Chinese classroom, ensures that teacher-student interaction in the classroom is teacher-centered and student-student interaction is effectively monitored. The spatial square formed by the plug-in arrangement of desks and chairs is based on the principle of unitary positioning and segmentation, where each person has his or her place—each position corresponding to a person—i.e., there are as many spatial segments as there are students in the disciplinary space.

The classroom structure of the Chinese-Hungarian Bilingual School is mostly overlapping with that of a regular Chinese school classroom. However, the school community has arranged some Chinese cultural elements in the classroom space. Most classroom doors have some Chinese cultural ornamentation; for example, a Chinese couplet is posted outside the door of one of the Chinese classrooms in the school. The color of the couplet is Chinese red, a traditional Chinese color. Red couplets are different from other colors and symbolize good luck and ward off evil spirits. The couplets have the traditional cultural elements of Chinese traditional New Year paintings—lotus flower and carp motifs, which symbolize a year of prosperity and good luck. The couplets follow the traditional Chinese way of posting couplets, with the upper couplet on the right and the lower couplet on the left, and the horizontal Scroll is centered on top of the two couplets. The couplet reads: “Good luck and all things will go as you wish, and a big fortune and smooth sailing.” The horizontal Scroll reads: “All things are as they should be.” The couplet expresses the wish for good things in traditional Chinese culture, wishing people to have everything as they wish, to yet succeed when things go wrong, and to have good luck in doing things. Chinese cultural memory is activated in this way as Chinese couplets are put on door frames in traditional Chinese culture. As the classroom doors in the Chinese-Hungarian bilingual school are constructed differently from the traditional Chinese buildings with door frames, the Chinese teachers put the Chinese couplets directly on the doors. It can be seen that this is not a wholesale reproduction of the cultural memory of the past, as the couplets become symbols to which memories can be attached (Assmann 2011, 17).

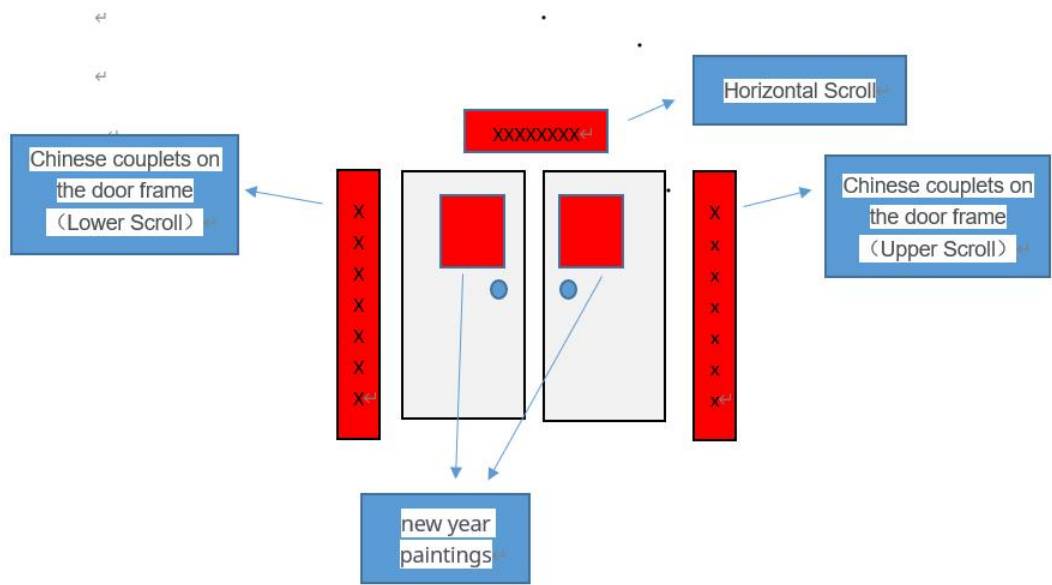


Figure 9: The Traditional Way of Pasting Chinese Couplets



Figure 10: The Couplets on the Door of the Chinese Classroom of Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School

In the classrooms, calligraphy and Chinese paintings are placed on the walls. Most of these calligraphic works are based on the essence of Chinese traditional culture and contain traditional Chinese educational ideas. For example, one of the calligraphy works in the Chinese classroom consists of four characters: Hou De Zai Fu (厚德载福). The font of this calligraphy work is in seal script, and the four characters are taken from *Guo Yu - Jin Yu VI*: “I have heard that only those who are generous in virtue can receive many blessings, but those who serve many without virtue will hurt themselves” (“Jin Yu Liu” 2022). Such educational and philosophical works are not only found on the walls of homerooms but also in the classrooms where students attend classes. Calligraphic works are transformed into symbols for the class that convey meaning and value—constructing the students’ Chinese cultural memory. As Jan Assmann argues, cultural memory is fixed through objective externalizers such as words, images, and dances and becomes a dedicated bearer of tradition (Assmann 2011, 17). So, memory can be reconstructed again through these objective externalizers. In addition to writing as symbols, there are paintings as symbols of memory. On the walls of the classrooms, there are some traditional Chinese paintings made with brushes. The elements of the paintings are mostly based on landscapes and plants, which is inseparable from the Confucian cultural tradition. Confucian culture is accustomed to combining natural phenomena with moral elements. As early as in *The Book of Odes*, there is a tradition of using natural objects to symbolize the spiritual character of human beings and plants such as herbs are used as a metaphor for the personality of a gentleman. Confucius put forward the idea that “the one who knows is happy with water, the one who is benevolent is happy with mountains,” and “the one who knows moves, the one who is benevolent is quiet, the one who knows is happy, the one who is benevolent is long-lived” (Confucius 2022). Confucius advocated that people have different personality types and different preferences for natural scenery. This aesthetic attitude also has a bearing on the aesthetic character of landscape painting. Landscape painting, either mountain-based or water-based, or both, is based on Confucius’ idea of benevolence and wisdom and on the Confucian practice of comparing virtue to crops. One of the classrooms of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School has bamboo and mountain-based Chinese paintings. The magnificent quiet and solemn character of the

mountain symbolizes the benevolence of human beings. Bamboo has been used since ancient China as one of the Four Gentlemen of Flowers, signifying that students should develop a steadfast character and eventually become true gentlemen.

In the territory enclosed by the school fence, the children of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, mainly from China and Hungary, carry traces of their original cultural memory. These cultural traces are placed in a space where they are “known, accepted, shared and lived by the community. These cultural traces are considered to be characteristic of differences rather than emphasizing similarities.”(Welsch 1999, 97). Students will bring game tools brought from China with traditional Chinese history and culture, as one student interviewed said: “When I first came to school, I felt that everything here was very strange, and I took my ‘Klotski’ to play by myself during class break.”²⁰ Compared with the Chinese children who have been integrated into the school, these new immigrants have more prominent Chinese national cultural characteristics and maintain closer ties with their ancestral hometowns. In the process of integrating with Chinese children born in Hungary, they also invisibly evoke the group memory and cultural identity of Hungarian-Chinese children:

Chinese children come here with their original Chinese habits, and the establishment of this school stands at the cultural differences, opens its embrace to Chinese children, and provides a place where they can develop a sense of belonging.²¹

In migration, the definition of a place’s identity is based largely on the interplay of memory and objectification. The materialization of culture takes many forms: physical buildings and

²⁰ Klotski is a sliding block puzzle. It is the name of an ancient Chinese place where Cao Cao, a great general during the Three Kingdoms period, is said to have been defeated. Cao Cao’s army had to mow the ground and many of his soldiers were even buried alive. By moving each piece around, players help Cao Cao move from his initial position to the lower centre of the board and escape through the exit..

²¹ The content comes from the interviewee, Mr. Zhu, who works at the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school—interviewed in 2022.

spaces can be transformed into cultural objects, and the results of bodily movements can serve as symbols of collective identity. This is used to identify the link between memory, the body, and objectification. For a place to be considered a habitual space, a certain assurance is needed through the material organization of space so that it inspires users and calls them to feel at home in the environment (Fortier 2000, 112). We can see this in the decoration of the school. Red lanterns, symbolizing traditional Chinese culture, are hung at intervals from the ceiling of the school's main hall. Even on the greenery of the promenade, there are hanging objects like Chinese knots. Not only that, in the staircase gallery, there are some Chinese brush writing works and Chinese painting works hanging. Even elements of Chinese dragons and Chinese cultural motifs, symbolizing Chinese culture, can be seen in the student's graduation:

The school did its best to reflect some of the traditional Chinese culture and history on the campus and to work together with the Hungarian culture like a cog. We carry the traditional Chinese culture 10,000 kilometers away from the motherland. When we tell the 'Chinese story' with our practical actions in the school, we can see the traditional Chinese culture proudly recognized before the host country.²²

The establishment of spaces is based on memories of the homeland in the form of replicas donated to the school. For example, in 2004, when the school was founded, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council of China donated two stone lion statues. The character of the lion as a spiritual animal has gradually developed in Chinese culture over time. The lion symbolizes wealth, prosperity, and guardianship (Liu 2000, 69). This pair of lions serves as one of the main symbols of the school, majestically guarding the students:

²² The content comes from the interviewee, Mr. Wang, who works at the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school—interviewed in 2022.

Every semester at the beginning of the school year, students participate in the maintenance and cleaning of the stone lions. I used to participate in cleaning activities. The school would give us brushes and clothes, and then after the teacher's instruction, we would start the work of cleaning the stone lion's body.²³

The stone lion is placed at the heart of the school and has become a landmark of the school. As the above-mentioned interviewee says, a group of students is assigned to clean and maintain the lions at the beginning of each semester. According to Italian scholars Juri Meda and Antonio Vinnao, school memory should contain two layers: "first, the process of reflection by individuals on their own school experience, and [...] Second, the process of commemoration by individuals, collectives or the public, of a shared school experience" (Yanes-Cabrera, Meda, and Antonio 2017, 2). We see this as a way for schools to deepen students' memories about the cultural meaning, etc., related to the stone lion as the main symbol of the school as they experience conservation work. In this way, an educational memory was formed for the students. According to Chinese scholars Liu Dawei and Zhou Hongyu, "educational memory has become an important part of the national consciousness" (2021, 59). As Bourdieu, Passeron, and Bruner argue, "social memory [is] transmitted or constructed by the school or education system of a given country" (Yanes-Cabrera, Meda, and Antonio 2017, 2).

Similarly, in December 2017, the school received a statue of Confucius presented to the Confucius classroom of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School by the State Hanban of China. These sculptures have been installed in the school as important memory bearers to shape the school into a habitual space with Chinese cultural elements. In this space, Chinese children can find a sense of belonging and, at the same time, a part where they can explore new knowledge. The new immigrant Chinese students with Chinese memories relate to everything in this school space, generating their mnemonic world in their host country. As

²³ The content comes from the interviewee, Mr. Chen, who works at the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school—interviewed in 2021.

they weave their lives within this cognitive world, they come to recognize the negotiability of their identity.



Figure 11: The Confucius Statue at the School

Not only is the establishment of customary space conducive to the continuity of cultural memory, but memory permeates the physical environment of the school with the imprint of history and culture. This everyday mode of permeation is articulated through Michael Billig's concept of banal nationalism. Banal nationalism is continuously reproduced through a set of everyday, almost imperceptible habits and practices (1995, 6). This allows the school community to feel the cultural lineage and historical heritage through various memory carriers and internalize it as their memory. For example, in terms of naming, the school usually considers people or events that had a significant impact on Chinese culture in giving a name to the physical objects in the school space. The mnemonic politics of naming is reflected in the school's garden, playground, and even in the names of classes. The school gardens and classes are given the names of Chinese provinces. The school playground built with a donation from the Bank of China is also named after a Chinese company. The Zhejiang public garden outside the campus was donated by the Zhejiang Overseas Chinese Association. As a result of the cultural cooperation between the youth of Hubei Province and Hungary, a class named after the Chinese province was established in 2013. The background of this class is to promote Hungarian-Chinese friendship and exchange, to deepen the cooperation between the People's Government of Xianning City, Hubei Province, and the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. The purpose of the class is to explore effective ways of exchange and deeper cooperation in education for young students. The class that received a donation of multimedia touchscreen teaching machines from the Xianning government will keep the name of this class.

As seen in the rules of naming, the objects in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual schools are usually named with the name of the Chinese province and the name of the company that donated the object. When a school object is named, it is enplaced in the memory. The names of provinces present a direct link to China so that memory emerges as, through the names, Chinese culture appears mapped in space. China is reproduced in the school space in a concise way. Through naming, the Chinese children who migrate to Hungary strengthen their memory of China or re-establish a Chinese identity in the school. These entities are integrated into the school space with their names, and in turn, something of the Chinese identity is

integrated into the school space. For example, the establishment of the “Hubei Chinese Language Class” in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school exemplifies the process of Chinese memory in action. In 2020, after learning about the Coronavirus epidemic in Wuhan, China, the students of the “Hubei class” recorded a video encouraging Wuhan to fight the epidemic. This video is not only a reminder for the students of the Hubei class to pay attention to their “family” in Hubei, China but also a re-presentation of the memories that the students of the Hubei class have of Hubei Province, China. As Assmann argues, things don’t have their memories, but they can trigger our memories because they carry the memories, we put into them (Assmann 2011, 17). The name “Hubei class” is not just a name for the students but an implantation of Chinese memories. Thus, in the case of the school, giving an identity to a specific object construct and maintains identity for the school community. By introducing Chinese provinces into the school space, they are integrated into the identity of the school community. The integration in the bilingual school makes the school’s hybrid intercultural nature pronounced. The bilingual school is a new reterritorialized cultural space in its hybrid intercultural state, making it a new, well-known, shared, and accepted cultural space.

Space “has an evocative and reshaping effect on memory” (Jing 2015, 80). In this space, different object carriers are used as metaphors for memory. In turn, “whether it is the memory of sensory scene experience or memory of thought process or memory of the emotional experience, it is done in the way of identification, dismantling, and storage; and memory is the process of reconstruction” (Jing 2015, 80). Thus, cultural memory and space are symbiotic, complementing each other. Memory is reflected in physical space, turning it into memory space, so cultural memory is spatial memory. At the same time, the materialized memory discussed in this The physical environment here refers to the architectural environment of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school and the material symbols in the architectural environment. The subchapter explores how Chinese cultural memory is reflected in the physical environment of the school.

The materialized memory discussed in this subchapter is the memory triggered by the material carriers of the school. That is, the objectified memory unites school memory as the material symbols through naming, the erection of monuments and statues, as well as the

construction of buildings and playgrounds, and many other aspects that provide the texture of the cultural space of the school. These material carriers, which support the perception of the symbolic space, “have a technical role in supporting recollection and identity” (Assmann 2011, 46). Recollection may be substantiated by persons, objects, incidents, games, or even by an emotional experience or an abstract concept related to past Chinese memories in the physical environment. The relationship between students’ bodily movements and the occurrence of objects in the school forms the subject’s memory. Students circulate, come and go, and return to this site, and individuals become actors in this situation (Gatens 2013, 21–38; 2017, 227–234). That is to say, the correlation between physical objects and behavior related to them triggers the subject’s memory. It denotes a dynamic process formed by the interaction between the remembering subject and the mnemonic object in a specific space-time, inspired and evoked not only by the physical objects but also by the affective thinking, values, organizational systems, and cultural practices of the remembering subject, also reflecting the social group relations in the space-time sphere. As Halbwachs says, “The dynamics of memory—even the most personal memories—can be explained by the changes taking place in our relations with various collective milieus: that is to say by the transformations taking place in each of these milieus and within these milieus as a whole”(Halbwachs 1997, 63).

3.2 The Symbolic Field of the Memory Space in the Budapest Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School

As for the symbolic field of memory, one can agree with Paul Connerton that past imagery and memory knowledge are conveyed and maintained through (more or less ritualistic) performances (Connerton 1989, 58). As Connerton argues, ritual performances require festivals because “the regular repetition of festivals and rituals ensures the transmission of knowledge that consolidates identity and thus reproduces it in a cultural sense” (Connerton 1989, 66). The bilingual school transmits cultural memory by organizing activities such as traditional Chinese festivals and rituals and integrating practices. The subchapter focus on the Festive ritual elements and rituals that constitute this school’s symbolic field of memory and

discuss how these rituals and festivals have reconstructed or reinterpreted Chinese cultural memory.

The Rituals of the symbolic field of Memory

Pierre Nora, in discussing the “*lieu de memoire*,” argues that “*lieux* in three senses of the word-material, symbolic, and functional” (Nora 1989,18). In talking about the symbolic field of the sites of Memory, Nora argues, “Since memories are crystallized and transmitted from one generation to the next, but it is also symbolic. Since it characterizes, by referring to events or experiences shared by a small minority, a larger group that may not have participated in them” (Nora 1989,19). In the case of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, the “events and experiences” are the festivals and rituals. The symbolic field of memory is embodied in the school through various festivals and rituals. In other words, cultural memory serves to condense the past into a system of symbols. Through festivals and rituals, the image of memory is presented in the present, thus transmitting its stored values and behavioral norms to the collective members to consolidate the collective identity.

To explain how the condensed symbol system works, Ann Rigney introduces “the term ‘convergence’ into the discourse of cultural memory studies. Cultural memories tend to ‘converge and coalesce’ into a *lieu de mémoire*” (1990). For example, the school rituals of national commemorations include drama performances that bring together stories, iconic images, and themes from the past to form a site of memory. The meaning generated by the play is then brought together and condensed into this site of memory. But, for each rememberer, this place of memory is not a static, fixed repository or storehouse of memory. In this process, memory is dynamic. People reconfigure their relationship to the past while remembering and reorienting their relationship to established and emergent sites of memory. Relationships mean that memory becomes an active symbol of connection between the past and the present; it is both a symbol that preserves earlier stories and relates to the past from a particular point in the present. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney argued, “‘remembering’ is better seen as an active engagement with the past, as performative rather than as reproductive” (Erll and Rigney 2012,2).

Not only this, but it is worth noting that different memory individuals behave differently regarding script replication. When I asked one of the Chinese students who participated in the performance, all she knew was that it was a drama performance on 23 October to celebrate a revolution in Hungary. It is possible to face other Hungarian students and stand on the stage, watch the performance, or just hear about the 23 October revolution to unfold the meaning or connect it to a specific image, narrative, film, etc. But as Ann Rignery puts it, memory sites “are defined by the fact that they attract the intense attention of the person doing the remembering, thus creating a self-perpetuating vortex of symbolic investment” (2005, 14). That is, whether Chinese or Hungarian students, “When individuals and groups express or embody or interpret or repeat a script about the past, they galvanize the ties that bind groups together and deposit additional memory traces about the past in their minds. These renewed and revamped memories frequently vary from and overlay earlier memories, creating a complex palimpsest about the past each of us carries with us” (Winter 2010,11).

The work of the symbolic system in the ritual elements of a ritual or festival event is the work of the symbolic field of memory. Rituals are symbolic systems, and as Victor Witter Turner argues (1973), the ritual symbol is “the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour.” That is, ritual is a symbolic aggregate. The symbolic object and the symbolic behaviour in the symbolic form are the basic units that constitute the ritual pattern. It is evident that in these sites of memory, ritual conveys meaning primarily through its symbolic presence. As Pierre Nora puts it, “Even an apparently purely material site, like an archive, becomes *lieu de mémoire* only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura. A purely functional site, like a classroom manual, a testament, or a veterans’ reunion belongs to the category only in as much as it is also the object of a ritual” (1989, 19).

Applied to school rituals, and symbolism consists of a cluster of symbols hung in a physical object. It becomes “a world of meaning, a system of symbols using sensual means as symbols of meaning” (Xue 2003, 39)²⁴.

From this perspective, following Clifford Geertz’s interpretive approach, we can view school consciousness not only as a ritualized activity but also as a core cultural text. Geertz

²⁴ All Chinese translations are mine.

sees ritual as a system of symbols around which people construct their own cultural stories and through which they can know the world by interpreting and explaining rituals. In other words, ritual is a unique knowledge system that uses symbols to perform symbolic acts and symbolic thoughts to achieve symbolic meanings (1973, 11).

Ritual symbols reflect not only the requirements of the ritual itself but also the basic requirements of social existence and the values shared by people. In the process of identifying and cognizing ritual symbols, participants can obtain subtle indoctrination from the symbols. School rituals are the process of performing a series of symbolic acts according to certain cultural traditions, following certain norms and procedures. The cultural meaning can only be stored in the symbols, so the display and interpretation of typical symbols in the rituals help the students understand the cultural context of the rituals. For example, the cultural connotations of flags, ribbons, and emblems are explained during the graduation ceremony for Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School; the cultural connotations of Chinese red decorations and the Chinese Lunar New Year are introduced during the Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration.

In commemorative ceremonies, events, times, and people are told through drama. All of these contribute to the students' gaining an understanding of the cultural connotations. Some of the symbols in school rituals point to known facts, and some are condensed forms. Turner states that condensed symbols' meaning touches the deeper and deeper roots of the subconscious and spreads their emotional qualities to all kinds of actions and situations that are far removed from the original meaning of the symbols. It is evident that the presentation and interpretation of symbols of school rituals not only help students understand the cultural context of rituals but also stimulate their emotions and cultural memory. As Turner (1967) points out, crude, primitive emotions become noble because they are associated with social values, and in this case, tiresome moral constraints are transformed into "a love of virtue." Thus, the meaning of the existence of school rituals is not limited to the influence of the moment but points to the entire daily life of the students in school. And rituals exist to influence reality through symbols. For example, the national anthem and the standing posture of teachers and students during the school's celebration of the Chinese National Day, as well

as certificates and body postures in award ceremonies, are all symbolic prototypes of educational rituals.

In addition to the symbolic narrative of ritual, we should also be concerned with the performative nature of ritual. Performative acts rehearse and complement emotions, and such emotions give the initial memory or story embedded in them an adhesive power that resists the erasure of memory or forgetting. Thus, emotions are permanently inscribed in the performative act in general and the performance of memory in particular. Another example is the line on the play performed on 30 October 2022, which reads,

valami szálló ragyogás kél,
valami szent lobogás készül.
Zászlóink föl, újjongva csapnak,
kiborulnak a széles útra,
selyem-színei kidagadnak:
ismét mienk a pesti utca!²⁵

The lines are described in descriptive language light and fire rising, flags flying, and colours swelling. The lines define the light and fire that represent the light in descriptive language as if a sacred baptism. Along with the lines, the students held red flags, and then a crowd appeared on stage to show the flag flies on the road. And someone shouted a slogan, “ismét mienk a pesti utca!”.

The performative utterances with costumes, music, and body movements bring the atmosphere to the story’s time. That is, the emotions are embedded in the story and the act of performing. Further, in addition to the symbolic utterances described above, the ritual is narrated as a speech act. Most rituals have a verbal component, such as the oral school ritual, which is an obvious speech act. J.L. Austin developed a celebrated theory of performativity in speech acts. This theory argues that performativity is not just descriptive or performative.

²⁵ Sources from the fieldwork site, recorded by the author on October 23, 2022, at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.

Performativity describes the reiterative power of discourse to create and produce the phenomena it regulates and constrains (1962,1970). For example, in the 2016 Chinese Ambassadorial Scholarship award ceremony at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, the Ambassadorial Scholarship was announced by the principal officer of the school. As the theory holds, at the time of the announcement of the Ambassadorial Fellowship, this event indicated that it had happened.

School rituals have taken on a much richer meaning. At this point, it is time to define the ritual or ritual elements of the symbolic field in school, the main object of study in this research. Turner believes that “A ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors’ goals and interests” (1973,1100). It can be seen that the ceremony involves events, people, and places to carry out activities.

The ritual elements in school ceremonies or festivals described in this subchapter are activities centrally arranged or programmed to be performed in the school memory space with the help of symbolic cultural symbols (body movements, objects, speech acts) that reflect Chinese cultural memory.

School Rituals and Cultural Memory

There are various rituals in the school field. Chinese scholar Wang Haiying classified school rituals into four categories, ① ritualization. It includes a flag-raising ceremony, initiation ceremony of the team, adult ceremony, etc. ② Educational rituals, for example, classroom teaching rituals between teachers and students and daily educational ritual activities. ③ Ceremonies. There are new students opening ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, etc. ④ Celebrations in festivals. There are festivals, school celebrations, special events, etc., which are both entertaining and educational (2007,14). The same applies when applied to the case of the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school.

Further, in this study, I divided the rituals into three categories: transitional rituals, daily rituals, and festive rituals. Transition rituals, in this case, are mainly rituals that involve the change of students’ identity, such as the opening and graduation ceremonies. Daily rituals are

the rituals of interaction between students and teachers and even include the rituals of class dismissal. Festival traditions refer to the ceremonies that will be held based on traditional cultural festivals. As an organizational form of cultural memory, school rituals consciously shape collective identity and guide the production of cultural actions by storing, accessing, and communicating culture.

In the ritual exhibition, the cultural memory attached to the media, such as images, texts, costumes, dances, music, body movements, and facial expressions, is presented in a concentrated way to provide markers for group members to carry out their identity. In terms of the characteristics and mechanisms of ritual storage of cultural memory, rituals in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual schools can activate students' cultural memory through the following ways. The first is to deepen students' impressions of the ceremony through proceduralization. In the view of Connerton (1989), ritual is a formalized language. For the speaking and use of this language, there is a tendency to stylize and typify it, consisting of a largely unchanging series of words. To some extent, the stylization of these languages is the programmatization of ritual language. The programmatic style of ritual language does not originate with the current performers but is already present in such ritual practices. According to previous codes and rules, words and actions are performed as in previous ritual situations. The program of the ritual is predictable from the beginning of the speech act to its end, and as soon as it begins, you can only continue in a proper ritual sequence (58).

Taking the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School graduation ceremony as an example, comparing the three 12th-grade graduation ceremonies in 2020, 2021, and 2022, there are incredibly similar processes. In the 2021 12th-grade graduation ceremony as an example, the following is the manuscript of the fieldwork record of the author²⁶,

1. The host made an opening speech and introduced the purpose of the meeting.

²⁶ The subsequent description of the ceremony is derived from the notes of the fieldwork conducted during the event.

2. Entrance of the 12th-grade graduates. (The flag bearer raises the flag, and the two deputy flag bearers guard the flag. Afterwards, the class teachers led the 12th graders to enter in line with the music in full dress.)
3. Speeches by the principals of both schools.
4. The host invited the representatives of the graduating class to tie the white ribbon of the graduating class on the flag of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.
5. Representatives of the graduates put on the school badges for the principals and vice-principals of both Hungarian and Chinese schools.
6. The Hungarian principal put on the school emblem for the class teachers of the 12th grade.
7. As the first step towards the end of the graduation school year, the class teachers put on the badges for the students one by one. As the students' photos and names were shown on the big screen, students walked from the stage to the front of the stage, where the class teachers put on their badges. The student stood slightly sideways and faced the teacher. When the pin was placed, the student and the teacher stood together for a few seconds in front of the stage, and then the teacher stepped back to the front side of the stage and watched the student walk from the front to the side of the stage. At the centre of the stage, the student took a picture with their picture and name and stood for a few seconds before retreating to the upper side of the stage. The teacher watched the student push into the side and then stood forward, looked ahead, and greeted the next student to repeat the process of wearing the badge. A student's badge-wearing lasts for 30 seconds, and then the previous step is repeated.
8. After the completion of the badge-wearing ceremony, male students stand on the left side of the stage together with the three flag bearers, and female students stand on the right side of the stage, standing sideways. In the end, a group photo of the whole graduating class and a group photo of each individual's headshot is displayed on the screen. The photo was bilingual in Hungarian and Chinese. The

titles are Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School 2017-2021, each person's mugshot noting their name, the class teacher's photo and name, and the group photo.

9. A representative of the 10th-grade students sang a song to give birthday wishes to the 12th-grade students. During the performance, the graduating class students stand on the stage in the same position.

10. The teachers of the Chinese Embassy will present the souvenirs of the Embassy to the teachers and students of the graduating class.

11. The host gave the curtain call speech.

12. The class teachers led the 12th-grade students to follow the rhythm of the music clockwise on the stage and leave the stage in order. In the end, the class teachers led the students to form a single line, with the primary flag bearer and two secondary flag bearers following at the end of the line to leave the stage. All teachers on the field watched the students leave.

The above ceremony was the second graduation ceremony for the 12th grade at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. It was held against the backdrop of the pandemic, and students wore masks to the ceremony, and the school curtailed the celebratory performances, eliminating parental attendance and dances. The graduation parade and the wearing of the badge was retained as a major part of the graduation ceremony.

Compared to 2022, the graduation ceremony was expanded to more than two hours after the epidemic subsided. The ceremony consisted of a graduation parade, badge-wearing, a graduation program, and a graduation dance. However, by comparing the graduation ceremony process over the three years, the general process is similar, and the programmed language of the ceremony is also determined to a certain extent through the process or procedure of the ceremony.

The graduation ceremony's name is "XX Hungarian Bilingual School Graduation Ceremony." The programmed language of the ceremony tends to be stylized and consistent, and the performance of the ceremony only needs to follow the rules and progress step by step. So as Connerton argues, "the limited resources of ritual posture, gesture, and movement strip

communication clean of many hermeneutic puzzles” (1989, 59). Thus, the rituals are performed only under the procedures and in a step-by-step procedure. It is worth noting that during the ceremony, the procedural language throughout the ceremony was bilingual Hungarian and Chinese.

From the presiding officer’s speech, the principal’s speech, and the students’ speeches, the language was Chinese and Hungarian together. Using Chinese characters in this school ceremony sets it apart from other schools in the area. Chinese characters are inscribed with the long-standing cultural memory of the Chinese people. The sense of community of the Chinese nation, which is embedded in the symbolic system of Chinese characters, is first and foremost characterized as an identity. Through the ideographic system of Chinese characters, students can look back on history and feel the splendour of Chinese culture, constantly evoking the collective memory and emotion of the Chinese nation.

In other words, symbols not only have the function of expressing meaning but also can evoke human emotions (Hülst 1999). Unlike the Western system of epigraphic writing, Chinese symbols carry meaning in form and lead the human mind to cultural, philosophical, and value levels through visual intuition. It takes the collective memory of the Chinese nation’s sense of community identity. In particular, when the 12th-grade student representatives came on stage, one tied the ribbon representing the class to the flag. Another student stood at the centre of the stage and explained the meaning of the ribbon tied to the flag in Chinese: “The ribbon tied to the flag also ties our memory of this school. The motto on the ribbon is, ‘Wherever we go, we will do our best.’” In this process, the Chinese characters act as ideograms for cultural memory, creating an atmosphere that invites memories and acting as a catalyst to activate students to carry them. Chinese characters carry the idea of language and remind Chinese memory. Students learn about China’s culture and traditions over thousands of years through Chinese characters, a medium with a long history of symbols.

Also noteworthy in the graduation ceremony program was the presentation of gifts to the graduating students by the representative teacher of the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, which became a distinctive feature of the graduation ceremony process. When the host reads out the presence representing the state’s power, the embassy’s representative teacher comes up to the

stage to hand out the gifts to the students and shake hands with them. The body posture and movement formed when the student receives the gift create a body memory. In this regard, “as the material base of the subject of memory, memory is the most basic, and primarily a bodily memory, the subject of memory is essentially embodied as a conscious and emotional body.” (Zhao 2013, 89). It can be seen that as the material basis of memory, the experience of the body is perceptible and recognizable. It is centred on bodily experience from the objective and real physical world, and memory is preserved through body language. And in rituals, with the symbolic culture constructed by the symbolic system, school rituals can accomplish the transmission of the national voice and humanistic values. The symbolic power of the state encourages the participants of the ritual. This means that the students will also feel the great hope and blessing of the Chinese Embassy for the graduates when they receive the gifts. The ceremony participants can acquire the cultural meaning symbolized by the ceremony through their participation. In this case, it means the cultural memory that is officially transmitted, the Chinese memory.

The programmatic nature of school rituals can be seen to reinterpret Chinese cultural memory. From this, we realize that cultural memory cannot be spontaneous. Instead, cultural memory is formed in schools with the help of ritual system symbols. The communicative space as a cycle of cultural meaning involves, first and foremost, festivals, celebrations, and other elements of ritualistic, celebratory behaviour. In such celebratory communicative acts, cultural memory is displayed through the totality of multimedia with symbolic forms. The primary purpose of these acts is to secure and perpetuate social identity (Erll, Nünning, and Young 2010). By bringing traditions to life through reminiscence, school rituals bring knowledge systems and cultural memories that must be transmitted into the present and guide participants to understand their cultural significance. By relying on various traditional festivals, various school rituals are conducted to not only recreate the scenes of traditional festivals but also to convey the idea of their traditional cultural connotations. For example, the traditional festivals represented by the Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and National Day convey traditional cultural concepts such as family reunion, respect for ancestors, and patriotism. Shils (1971) states that „tradition is a way of doing

things that have been passed down from generation to generation around different areas of humanity. It is a cultural force that has a normative effect on social behaviour and a moral appeal, as well as a deposit of creative human imagination over the course of history". Traditional cultural symbols highly condense the cultural tradition of a country or nation and have a tenacious vitality and a broad social foundation. Using traditional cultural symbols to activate cultural memory requires school ceremonies to express traditional cultural symbols in a contextual and exhibitionistic way. Among them, contextuality emphasizes that school ceremonies evoke analogous associations or memories of traditional cultural symbols through specific situations. For example, the first item of the Chinese National Day commemorative ceremony was playing the Chinese national anthem, "March of the Righteous and the Brave," with all standing. Students stand and are placed in a unique musical situation, which can easily evoke emotional belonging.

Students and teachers stand at attention when the Chinese national anthem is played. As a symbol of cultural memory, the national anthem conveys the voice of the state and symbolizes the state's indoctrination of students. Students are attentive in this context and solemnly participate in the ritual performance. During this time, those things that belong to the self are quietly concealed, allowing the mysterious forces behind the ritual to paint and transform their memories. The ritual generates a passionate public emotion, a solid collective emotion that, because of its resonance, evolves into the common memory of the group. It is not only the memory of the school but also the memory of the political symbols of the ritual, which eventually evolves into the cultural memory and identity of the educated. It can be seen that school rituals are a series of symbolic acts performed according to certain cultural traditions, following certain norms and procedures. Cultural meaning can only be stored in symbols, so the typical ceremony symbols are displayed and interpreted. For example, at the graduation ceremony, the cultural significance of the badge was explained - the custom of wearing the badge began in 1830 as a tradition, and 12th-grade graduates were eligible to wear the badge belonging to the graduate in the second year of school. At the Chinese Culture Day, the lion dance was explained as a traditional Chinese folklore activity Chinese folklore tradition believes that the lion dance can ward off evil spirits. Therefore, lion dances were

held during the festive season to celebrate the occasion. In the New Year celebration party of the Year of the Ox, the meaning of the ox in traditional Chinese culture was explained - the totem of the pastoral. Also, the custom of the New Year was described - red decorations are a traditional Chinese custom, which holds the desire for beauty and abundance (the interpretations of the ritual symbols are all from the field notes of the author's fieldwork.).

This series of ritual elements are interpreted in addition to the festivals, and the transmission of cultural memory of education is achieved with the help of physical practices. For example, during the Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Dragon Boat Festival, students are arranged to wrap dumplings, write brush characters and wrap Zongzi, among other activities that are distinctive to the festivals. On the eve of the Chinese New Year, Ms Hao from the school led the students to experience and learn about the traditional food of Chinese New Year, dumpling making. It is also to enhance students' cultural identity through cultural experience. Hans-Georg Gadamer states, "Something is experienced if it is not only experienced but if its experiential presence also acquires a character that gives itself a continuing significance." Engaging students in ritual-enhancing cultural experiences reflects the nurturing value of school rituals. Specifically, the national anthem creates a solemn ritual atmosphere in political and commemorative ceremonies. The national anthem tells the nation's history, shapes the country's collective image, and students gain an experience of national identity.

Daily school rituals through classroom rituals Chinese primary and secondary schools have classroom rituals. For example:

When the teacher enters the classroom door, the class leader calls out,
"Students stand up!"

Then the students stand up and collectively say out loud, "Hello, teacher!"

The teacher responds, "Hello, class!"

The class leader then says, "Sit down!"

When the bell rings, the teacher says, "Class dismissed,"

and the students stand up and say, "Goodbye, teacher!"

This experience is practiced in a class at Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. And in the daily interaction rituals of students, every student will say, “Hello teacher” in Chinese when they meet their Chinese teachers. When they meet their Hungarian teachers, they say hello in Hungarian. Through the daily rituals, students gain experience of the differences between Hungarian and Chinese cultural habits.

The graduation and commencement ceremonies are identity-transformation confirmation ceremonies designed to confer a clearly defined right and obligation to the new role. The solemn and straightforward atmosphere of the ceremonies allows students to gain the experience of approaching the awareness of their new role.

By adding traditional cultural experiences to the traditional festival-style rituals, students can perceive the wisdom of the ancients in dealing with human relationships and human-nature relationships through folklore experiences. For example, at the 2017 Ambassadorial Scholarship Award Ceremony, Chinese cultural backgrounds were set up to draw pandas, paint panda paper-cutting art, and give pandas eyes. 2020 Chinese National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival were celebrated with experiences of painting the national flag and pandas in the lower grades. Chinese calligraphy, paper-cutting, and Chinese painting experiences were held on the 2022 Chinese National Day.

These ritual cultural experiences have become strategic cultural performances for the school. The institution consciously transforms certain values—such as filial piety, solidarity, and patriotism—into experiential emotional rituals by infusing symbolic representations with sentiment, thereby shaping collective memory. The experience of ritual culture is a reinterpretation of Chinese cultural memory and condensation of individual and collective memories. Thus school rituals that are repeated at specific times can provide a marker for the identity of the collective members.

Regarding the symbolic field of memory, according to Nora, in schools’ ritual or ritual elements serve as representatives of the symbolic field. Paul Connerton’s (1989) view of the imagery of the past and knowledge of memory is conveyed and maintained through ritual performance. Ritual performance requires opportunity, which compels attention to festivals

and festival elements (58). This is because, as Connerton argues, the regular repetition of festivals and rituals ensures the transmission of knowledge, consolidates identity, and thus reproduces it in a cultural sense (66). Bilingual schools transmit cultural memory by organizing events such as traditional Chinese festivals and rituals and integrating practices. School festivals and rituals are important vectors of symbolic forms of cultural memory. These vehicles condense the past into a system of symbols and present images of memory for representation and interpretation through festivals, ritual celebrations, and other forms. As Assmann (2011) argues, cultural memory is fixed through objective externalizers such as words, images, and dances due to its reliance on highly formed rituals, festivals, etc., and it has a dedicated traditional bearer. The regular repetition of rituals and festivals ensures the spatial and temporal cohesion of the participating ritual groups and consolidates the transmission of identity knowledge. This process transmits the stored cultural essence of the past to collective members to consolidate identity. As with this act of celebration, cultural memory is displayed through diversity with symbolic forms whose primary purpose is to secure and perpetuate social identity.



Figure 12: The Banners for the High School Graduation Parade Are Adorned with Ribbons



Figure 13: Chinese Red Lanterns Conveying Chinese Values and Culture



Figure 14: Fortune Cards Signed by Graduates in Hungarian and Chinese



Figure 15: Graduation Packages for 12th Graders



Figure 16: Ties Designed by the Graduating Class of Year 12, 2023



Figure 17: Year 2023 12th Grade Graduation Class Self-Designed Neckerchiefs

3.3 The Functional Sites of “Sites of Memory” in Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School in Budapest

Nora offers a narrow conceptualization of “sites of memory,” defining it as “memory crystallizes and secretes itself,” focusing on monuments, museums, archives, slogans, and commemorative ceremonies, which have a palpable cross-relationship with reality (1989, 7, 19). In his broader understanding of the term, he defined “sites of memory” as enshrining cultural memories until they are needed again (Nora 1989, preface XVII). These sites transport people to different times and places or speak of their connection to the past. Sites help people to maintain their identity and serve real, symbolic, and functional purposes (Nora 1989, 18). This subchapter argues that school is also a site of memory. The subchapter was conducted at the *Budapest Bilingual School*, located in District 15, the only school with Chinese and Hungarian as official languages of instruction. There are other schools in Budapest with Chinese as the official language, such as the *Chinese Canadian Bilingual School*, the *Chinese-German Bilingual School*, and the *Chinese Hua Wen School*. However, these schools are not part of the official Hungarian education system. This feature distinguishes the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school from the other schools. Through the discussion, we say that the functional sites of the school site of memory are the physical subjects of the school, the non-physical subjects, and the school activities that carry the transmission and preservation of collective memory. Fieldwork revealed that school textbooks, educational drama, and educational rituals serve as typical representatives of the functions of reconstructing, reinterpreting, and transmitting memory. Functional memory fields enable the school's daily operations through the strategic use of pre-established material and symbolic resources, ensuring that specific cultural practices are transmitted and internalized by students.

Functional Sites of Memory

The concept of “sites of memory” was introduced by French historian Pierre Nora in his seminal work *“Les Lieux de Mémoire”* (1984–1992). According to Nora, “sites of memory”

are places where the memory of a particular community or nation is preserved, transmitted, and celebrated. These sites can be physical, symbolic, or functional (Nora 1989, 18). Real and symbolic references to the physical spaces and cultural artifacts evoke memory. Functional sites refer to the social practices that ensure the transmission and preservation of collective memories. That is, functional sites of memory refer to the processes and practices that enable the creation, dissemination, and preservation of collective memories. These sites are not static. They are dynamic and evolve as societies change and new forms of memory emerge. This dynamic is because collective memory is a dynamic concept that has evolved and developed over time and in history (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 129). Functional sites serve as symbolic nodes connecting memory and history to the present. They are places where collective memory is performed and enacted rather than stored. These sites are not fixed in time or space but constantly evolve and adapt to changing social and cultural contexts, reflecting “an interdependence between space and social relations” (Gaál-Szabó 2012, 481).

Examples of functional sites of memory include museums, archives, memorials, and commemorative practices such as holidays and anniversaries. Museums, for instance, are not merely repositories of artifacts but are also important sites for producing and disseminating knowledge about the past (Nora 1989, 18). On the other hand, archives serve as repositories of historical records, enabling researchers to study and interpret past events. In addition to these institutional sites, functional sites of memory include practices and traditions passed down through generations, such as oral history, storytelling, and rituals. These practices serve as a means of transmitting cultural values, beliefs, and memories across time and space (Halbwachs 1992, 32).

However, functional sites of memory are not without their challenges. As societies change, the significance of certain practices and institutions may shift, leading to the potential loss or erasure of specific memories. Furthermore, the interpretation and representation of past events in functional sites of memory can be contentious, leading to debates about whose memories are being preserved and whose are being silenced. Marita Sturken supports this perspective. In her book *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, Sturken explores the challenges of memory and its representation,

arguing that memory is not a fixed entity but rather a complex and contested process that is shaped by cultural, political, and social factors. Sturken's work illustrates how the significance of certain practices and institutions can shift as societies change, leading to the potential loss or erasure of specific memories (1997, 13).

Based on the above, one critical aspect of functional sites of memory is their role in providing access to information and knowledge. Archives, for example, are essential for preserving historical documents and making them available for research and study. Libraries and universities also play a critical role in disseminating knowledge and promoting intellectual inquiry. Another critical aspect of functional sites of memory is their role in shaping our collective memory and identity. Archives, museums, and universities are not neutral institutions but are shaped by the social contexts in which they operate according to what to preserve and how to interpret the past.

Therefore, functional sites of memory in Pierre Nora's theory refer to the social practices and institutions that ensure the transmission and preservation of collective memories. They are dynamic and can evolve as societies change and new forms of memory emerge, but they also face challenges related to the interpretation and representation of the past. In Nora's words, "A lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (Nora 2009, preface, xvii). Thus, the school can be understood itself as a site of memory. The functional sites of Pierre Nora's sites of memory embodied in the bilingual school can be seen in the social practices and institutional structures that transmit and preserve cultural heritage and collective memories. So, in this study, the functional sites of the school site of memory are treated as the physical subjects of the school, the non-physical subjects, and the school activities that carry the transmission and preservation of collective memory. In Budapest Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, it was found through fieldwork that the most representative functional sites are school textbooks, educational dramas, and educational rituals.

School Textbooks

Chinese scholars Liu Dawei and Zhou Hongyu have clearly put forward the view that textbooks and educational dramas can serve as functional sites of the site of memory. They argue that functional memory is generally carried in textbooks, educational pictures, and educational dramas in schools. They also suggest that schools can make textbooks a critical site of memory by playing the role of textbooks and writing textbooks with local and school characteristics (Liu and Zhou 2021, 63).

Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School differentiates between groups of students based on whether Chinese is their native language or not and on their proficiency in Chinese. For Chinese students whose mother tongue is Chinese, the school uses the practical textbooks of the compulsory education curriculum standards, compiled by the China Institute of Curriculum and Textbook and the Primary Language Curriculum and Textbook Research and Development Center, and published by the People's Education Publishing House. This type of textbook is written entirely in Chinese. This textbook type is intended for immigrant students who have just immigrated to Hungary and are not fluent in Hungarian. The aim is to help the children to establish a connection with their home country and to adapt more quickly to school life after immigration while learning other languages, such as Hungarian. The other type of textbook is for non-native Chinese speakers. Depending on the grade level, Kuaile Hanyu (快乐汉语) is used for Grade 1, Easy Steps to Chinese Textbook (轻松学中文) for Grades 2 to 8, and New Practical Chinese Reader (新实用汉语) for Grades 9 to 12.²⁷

²⁷ Sources are from the author's fieldwork in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school in Budapest.

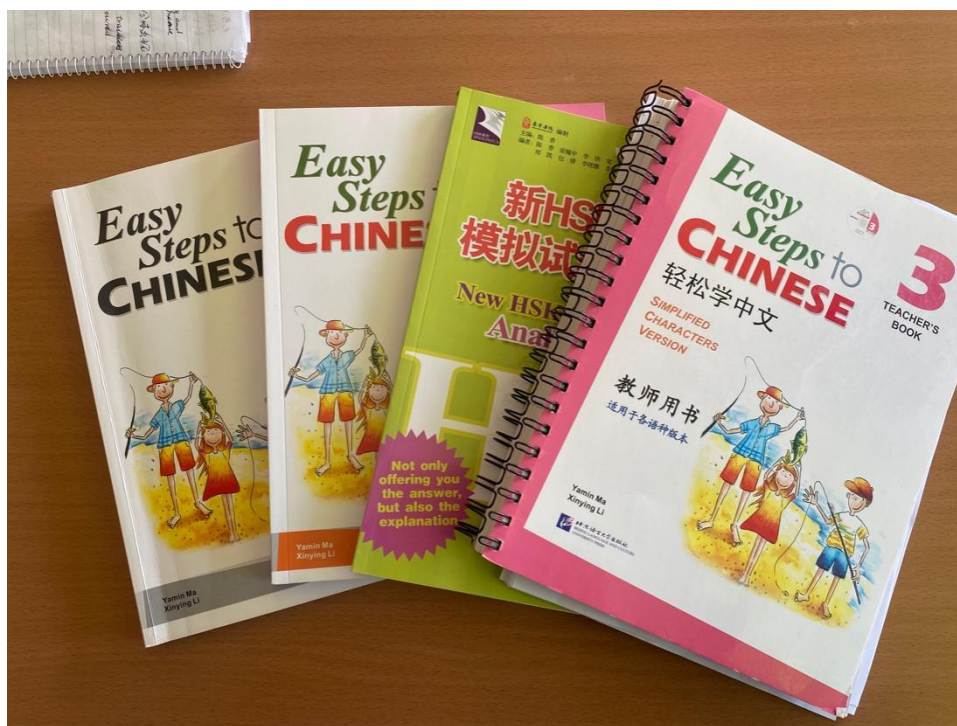


Figure 18: The Collection of Textbooks in Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School

Especially in Confucian culture, the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school has set up a Confucius classroom. And the school also has a statue of Confucius in the hall. Therefore, students learn quotes by and stories about Confucius, and about Confucian culture. When students come to the school's public lobby for play and see the Confucius statue, they will consciously or unconsciously recall memories related to Confucian culture. When students interact with others, they are also regulated in their behavior by the cultural values taught in the Confucius classroom.

An example is presented by the Confucius quote that students learn in class: “When three people walk, there is a teacher in them.”²⁸ Students are taught to learn humility when interacting with others. There must be something to learn from the words and actions of others. Choose the good things to learn from others, and when you see their flaws, reflect on whether you have the same flaws, and if so, correct them. After taking such a lesson, students will be consciously influenced by the class. In addition, in the textbook, the chapter content contains Chinese cultural knowledge with Chinese characteristics. For example, in “Kuaile Hanyu (快乐汉语),” there is a chapter on “Where is your home.” There are two children in

²⁸ Sources are from the author's fieldwork in Hungary-Chinese bilingual school in Budapest.

the picture in the textbook with the text:

“One child asks, ‘Where is your home?’

The other child answers, ‘My home is in Beijing.’” (Li and Luo 2003, 8).

Then the teacher asks the students where they are from based on the text- book content. When Chinese students talk about their hometowns, they easily substitute their memories with China.²⁹ Through the classroom discussion, it was easy for the children from China to tell their memories of their hometown. This form of classroom interaction through collective participation is the same as Maurice Halbwachs’s argument that memory is produced collectively. It is only through participation in concrete social interactions and interactions that individuals can create memories.

With regard to the relationship between individual and collective memory, individuals recall by placing themselves in the position of the group. Still, it is also certain that the group’s memory is realized through individual memory and crystalizes itself within individual memory (Halbwachs 1992, 71). The essence of collective memory is the reconstruction of the “past” based on present needs with “the capacity to convey [...] to consolidate and retain individual and group identity” (Gaál-Szabó 2019, 120). According to Halbwachs, how people construct and narrate the past depends mainly on contemporary ideas, interests, and expectations. The construction of memory is subject to the control of power (1992, 43–45). Collective memory is always a reconstruction of the past based on the needs of the present, on specific existing ideas, interests, and demands. In this sense, collective memory is also called “social memory” by Halbwachs. Harald Welzer defines social memory as the sum of the social experiences of all members of an ego group (2007, 111). The purpose of the materials used in bilingual schools is to enable students to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture. These materials also help students understand and deepen their impressions of Chinese culture and awaken their own “Chineseness”. The social memory of the group also gives Chinese students a deeper understanding of their identity.

²⁹ Sources are from the author’s fieldwork in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school in Budapest.

Using textbooks, we draw on the cultural coherence gained by interpreting and annotating the text. Texts are cultural carriers that appear after the creation of texts. The text is not a form of transmission but an object to be transmitted, and “meaning is present only when one transmits the text. Once a text ceases to be used, it ceases to be a carrier of meaning. It becomes its tomb when only the exegete has the possibility of reviving meaning by means of the art of exegesis and annotation” (Assmann 2011, 89–90). Jan Assmann argues that the classical texts of great faith value and intellectual significance produced in the history of the nation, which were widely disseminated through recitation, copying, and printing, became normative documents that shaped the beliefs, ideas, and behavior of the country, and were thus considered religious sacred texts or classics of philosophy, history, and literature. Each subsequent generation has maintained a consistent understanding of these holy texts or classics through interpretation and annotation, thus ensuring the continuity of national culture (Assmann 2011, 87–88). The way cultural memory is preserved requires the interpretation of texts.

For example, in the Chinese culture class at the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, the teacher searched for a text that tells the story and legend of the Chinese New Year to make the students understand the origin of the Chinese New Year. The main storyline is:

According to legend, a monster called ‘Nian 年’ in ancient China had a long green face and fangs, sharp horns and claws, and viciousness. The Nian beast lives in the mountains. Every New Year’s Eve, to come down to the hills to eat livestock to harm people. Therefore, every New Year’s Eve on this day, every family people are away from home to avoid the harm of the beast; this is called ‘New Year.’

One New Year’s Eve, people are taking refuge in the mountains with their young and old, and from outside the village came an older man begging. Some people sealed the windows and locked the doors, some packing, everywhere a scene of panic, and no one cared about the praying older man. Only an old woman at the east end of the village wrapped dumplings for the older man to eat and persuaded

him to go to the mountains to escape the beast. In return for the old woman's kindness, the older man told her that the beast feared red, fire, and explosions. And he asked her to wear red clothes, red paper on the door, red candles, and burning bamboo in the yard to make explosions.

The year beast broke into the village in the middle of the night. Found the village lights, its eyes were blinding red and forced to open, and heard loud firecrackers from home, so the body trembled and fled. Since then, people have known how to drive the Nian beast away. At every New Year's Eve, every family pastes red couplets, firecrackers, and household candlelight. Early in the morning of the first day, but also to visit friends and relatives to say hello and congratulate each other over the ravages of the year beast. Later, this custom became more and more widespread and became the grandest traditional festival of Chinese folk.³⁰

As a household story in China, the story contains cultural elements of the Chinese New Year tradition. The name of the Chinese New Year comes from the Chinese character “Nian” (年). Dumplings, red couplets, and firecrackers can all be found in this story. This story easily recalls the collective memory of students who have just immigrated to Hungary. As Maurice Halbwachs argues, memory is a social construct shaped by collective experiences and social interactions (1992, 120–121, 188). In other words, memory is not solely an individual phenomenon but is embedded in collective identities and shared experiences. This is consistent with the idea that Pierre Nora's sites of memory are physical and functional sites created and maintained by social groups to preserve their collective identities and histories. The textbook is the physical memory site, while the “New Year” story is the non-physical memory site. Even the dumplings and the red couplets in the story serve as physical memory sites, while the Chinese red serves as the non-physical memory site for Chinese students. It is evident that textbooks with Chinese characteristics, and the Chinese cultural course that

³⁰ Sources are from the author's fieldwork in Hungarian–Chinese bilingual school in Budapest. The text was obtained from the website provided by the school teachers. <http://hmcc.hu-hnews.com/p/229419.html>

serves them, are integrated into the student's lifeworld and imprinted into their memories through collective experiences.

Educational Dramas and Rituals

Drama can also be thought of as a special school ritual. As Liu and Zhou argue, educational dramas can also be performed for the functional memory of the sites of memory. In their perspective, through the integration of historical performance dramas, by passing on the performance from generation to generation, a historical and cultural identity is thus formed (Liu and Zhou 2021, 63). For example, on October 23, 2022, and March 14, 2023, the school held drama performances commemorating the Hungarian Revolutions. The two performances were performed at different grade levels, and the costumes for the performances were styled differently. But what is the same is that in order to involve both Hungarian and Chinese students in the theatrical performances, the school designed the drama performances in such a way that Chinese students would also be involved in the commemoration of the Hungarian Revolution. And by holding such theatrical performances every year, different grades participate in the performances, and the actors change, but it becomes a representative site of memory for the school. According to Assmann, cultural memory is fixed by objective externalizers such as words, images, dances, etc. It serves as a dedicated bearer of tradition due to the reliance on highly formed rituals, festivals, etc. Therefore, educational dramas become "ritual forms that through repetition inscribe cultural memory in the identity" (Gaál-Szabó 2017, 78) and serve as containers for preserving memories in the sites of memory (Assmann 2011, 74). As Assmann and Czaplicka say, "Sites of memory are places where groups of people engage in public activity through which they express a collectively shared knowledge of the past, on which a group's sense of unity and individuality is based" (1995, 132). Therefore, we can assume that Chinese students' collective memory is rewritten by participating in school plays and watching drama performances. Since most of the plays performed in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school are about historical events in Hungary, when Chinese students participate in these activities, new elements are added to the cultural memory of the Chinese students. In this way, the cultural memory of the Chinese students is

reinterpreted – it becomes a synthesis of Chinese and Hungarian cultural memory.

The educational drama performances mentioned above can be seen as special educational rituals. As Emile Durkheim proposes, the social function of ritual suggests that rituals have collective and symbolic significance and can help individuals establish social connections and a sense of belonging (1912, 56). Through contextualized scenarios, role-playing, and emotional experiences, educational dramas can help students develop knowledge and emotional relationships and promote identity development.

Assmann argues that cultural memory can be embodied through rituals and that it fixes in some form the experiences and memories that should be engraved in mind and kept relevant (Assmann 2011, 42). This is done by drawing scenes and histories that occurred in a previous period into the framework of the present that continues to move forward, thus producing memories. Therefore, cultural memory is not just about recalling the culture of the past but, more importantly, about establishing its connection to the present and seeking its meaning for the gift. This provides the conditions for cultural memory to be reinterpreted. Educational dramas pull the students' memory back to the last time through their performance and viewing, which provides the scene and space for the students to reconstruct their memory. In addition to educational drama, other school rituals in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school undergo construction in the context and needs of the present. The rituals are equipped to store, retrieve, and communicate in such a way that the knowledge that consolidates identity is preserved in a solid, living, and lasting way. An example is the annual "Chinese Ambassador's Scholarship Award Ritual", which is unique to the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. This is a ritual that distinguishes the school from local schools based on the particular context in which it was established. The use of Hungarian and bilingual interpretations of the rituals in the course of the rituals makes them more characteristic of the school. This reflects the function of the cultural memory of the ceremony and the need to dynamically reconstruct the procedure of the ritual in the course of the ritual in order to keep it consistent with the present.

By discussing the functional sites of memory, the subchapter argues that the school is also a site of memory. There are a number of functional sites that exist within this site of

memory. The functional sites of memory in the school are the physical subjects of the school, the non-physical subjects, and the school activities that carry the transmission and preservation of collective memory. The fieldwork revealed that school textbooks, educational drama, and educational rituals as typical representatives carry the functions of reconstructing, reinterpreting, and transmitting memory. The textbooks serve as the functional site of the physical sites of memory, while the content related to Chinese culture presented in the book serves as the functional site of the non-physical sites of memory. In the Chinese cultural courses, the textbooks serve thus to foster the students' understanding of and identification with Chinese culture. These physical and non-physical functional mnemonics enter students' memories through collective memory experiences and, in the process, awaken Chinese students' Chineseness and deepen their cultural memories in China.

Educational dramas serve as an additional functional site of memory in the school. The background of the dramas in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school is Hungarian historical events. The research reveals that the school consciously included Chinese students in the drama performances, changing the cultural memory of the Chinese students. In this way, the culture of the Chinese students as well is reinterpreted as having a combination of Chinese and Hungarian cultural memory. According to the survey, it was found that the school has one-third of Chinese students, so the number is not as high as the number of Hungarian students. However, the school consciously controls the ratio of Hungarian and Chinese students' participation in the activities. It is ensured that Chinese students are also involved in various school activities. In this context, new elements are added to the cultural memory of Chinese students, and their memory is reconstructed and reinterpreted in Hungary.

Educational dramas can be seen as educational rituals. Rituals are the functional sites of the school's typical sites of memory. School rituals are constructed through the context and needs of the moment, which makes them have the role of storing and transmitting memories. This means that the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school offers some rituals to take place in the school by combining the characteristics of both the Hungarian and Chinese contexts. For example, the school does not only hold plays with Hungarian background events but also cultural events with Chinese characteristics. For example, the Chinese Lunar New Year

celebration, the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, Chinese National Day, and other ceremonial events.

In this subchapter, by discussing the functional sites of memory in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, I argue that these functional sites carry the role of storing and transmitting memories. Through these functional sites, Chinese students are either awakened to the “Chineseness” of their memories or reconstructed and reinterpreted in Hungary during their school life.

Chapter4: Cultural Memory as a Cultural Dilemma

4.1 The Use of Chinese Characters as “mnémotechnique”

Language is an integral part of the knowledge passed down from generation to generation within a group and one of the vehicles of group communication. As Heidegger profoundly observed, it is even more “the house of Being” (2000, 83). It is a dwelling where Chinese culture manifests and endures. From this perspective, Chinese calligraphy transcends its functional role. Chinese calligraphic texts—as linguistic symbols and cultural memory carriers—and calligraphy instruction have become mnemonics to embody Chinese cultural memory. Chinese calligraphy has formed a visible form within which Chinese culture finds its home.

As a means of socio-spatial memory and a visual trace of cultural memory depicting cultural and spiritual dynamism, calligraphic texts can trigger historical imagination and contextual restoration of the visualizer’s memory.

Additionally, the teaching of calligraphy has a fixed order, fixed forms of stationery for learning calligraphy, physical movements, etc. Students memorize by imprinting scenes and images in their minds, following a “mnemonic technique.” Through writing, memories are reinforced. The subchapter investigates how Chinese characters are used as a mnémotechnique for individual and group memory.

Chinese Characters and Chinese Calligraphy

The origin and formation of known Chinese characters have not been agreed upon until today. What is clear, however, is that the earliest known Chinese characters were carved on the shoulder bones of large animals and tortoise shells (called oracle bones) and were used for divination purposes. These writings show that people made different symbols for different things. In the time of the Shennongs, people tied knots to keep records. On the other hand, the sages of later generations used writing for the same purpose (Rutt 2002, 23) *Shuowen Jiezi* Xu thinks that back when Cangjie initially began drawing characters, the majority of them were dubbed “wen” (文; “word, culture, or literature”) and were made to resemble objects. Afterward, each character became pronunciation-based, and it was called a “zi” (字; “word”) (2012, 5). As Shi Hu said, “Chinese characters have a way; the way gives birth to images, and images give birth to sounds and meanings. With images placed alongside each other, all things are embodied within them” (1996, 8). From this, Chinese characters are more than mere symbols; they represent the process of the Chinese nation’s spirit infusing into and interacting with the physical world. This process is described as one in which the Dao generates images, images give rise to sounds and meanings, and through the combination of these images, the entirety of existence is encapsulated within Chinese characters.

Furthermore, Xu Shen of the Eastern Han Dynasty said in his *Shuo Wen Jie Zi Xu* that the character is the basis of the scriptures and the arts, the beginning of the king’s government, and it is the reason why people in the past were able to recognize the past and the reason why people in the future will be able to recognize the past (1773). The Chinese characters have shown their unique, edifying function with their vital inclusiveness. The concept of the “Chinese character cultural circle” (汉字文化圈) (He 2001, 174) is formed based on the Chinese language and script, and the Chinese characters serve as the inner spiritual power. It is evident that humans create symbols, and in turn, symbols create human nature (Cassirer 1985, 35).

The essence of cultural symbols is a medium capable of carrying, expressing, conveying, and storing certain cultural messages and ideas. The German philosopher Ernst Alfred Cassirer emphasized that the various forms of symbols, such as myth, language, art, and science, are the true mediators of human creation, through which humans are able to separate

themselves from the world, and it is precise because of this separation that he has made himself intimately connected with the world (2000, 25). The cultural symbols of a country or nation are never single but rich in systems. For example, the cultural symbols of the Chinese nation include calligraphy, Chinese painting, traditional Chinese medicine, Peking Opera, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, silk, ceramics, and so on. Especially Chinese calligraphy, with China's history, continues to develop and move forward. It has a six-thousand-year history and is a significant cultural symbol of the Chinese nation.

Calligraphy, as the ideogram of Chinese characters, is an art form used to convey emotional attitudes and embody imagery through the writing of Chinese characters. Through the ages, calligraphy has undergone many changes in definition, each from a different perspective. The representative ancient theories of calligraphy include, for example, Yang Xiong of the Han Dynasty, for whom “calligraphy is a kind of externalization of the inner cultivation of people” (n.d.). During the Tang dynasty (618–907), Zhang Huaiguan in *Liu Ti Shu Lun* said, “The calligraphy, all things in nature.” For Hao Jing of the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), “calligraphy is the law of the heart.”

Similarly, Liu Xizai of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) contended in *Yi Gai — Shu Gai* that “calligraphy is a kind of appearance, showing the aspirations of the writer, his learning, his talent. In short, it is the book as the person.” Contemporary calligraphy theories include Xu Liming, who asserts that “Calligraphy is an abstract art that takes Chinese characters as its material, and lines and their constituent movements as its form, to express the realm of the spirit of nature and to embody the ideal of aesthetics” (2020, 2). When discussing the definition of calligraphy, Wo Xinghua claimed that calligraphy is the method of writing brush characters (2019, 3). Zhao Jiashi believes calligraphy is originally the method of writing and the law of writing. The word ‘书’ here is written, and ‘法’ is the meaning of method/rule (1996, 3). Hu Chuanhai defines it “as taking Chinese square hieroglyphs as the basis for occurrence and existence. With Chinese unique pen, ink, paper, and ink as the creation tool, a class of art formed under the guidance of traditional Chinese aesthetic thought and aesthetic way” (1978, 74). Whether the definition of calligraphy is discussed in ancient times by means of abstraction, analogy, or symbolism or in modern times by the straightforward discussion of

calligraphy as the art of writing with a brush, there is a lack of readiness to reflect on the connotations and symbolic extensions of calligraphy. Thus, calligraphy seems to have been reduced to an art that uses a brush and ink to shape Chinese characters uniquely.

However, Calligraphy remains closely related to Confucianism. Calligraphy is the representative art image of the abstract art of the East, as Chinese scholar Xiong Bingming called it, “the core of the core of Chinese culture,” the national art of China, with the unique function of passing down the history and civilization of China (1991, 261). This is also consistent with the philosophical outlook of Confucianism. Confucianism attaches importance to the indoctrination of human beings, and the highest ideal of Confucianism is to enable everyone to attain a state of benevolence. To reach a state of benevolence in the world, Confucianism directly links calligraphy to civilizing and education, emphasizing the orderliness of rites.

On the one hand, Calligraphy requires straight, upright, and robust lines, consistent with the Confucian pursuit of uprightness and integrity. Confucianism emphasizes etiquette, i.e., order. Stressing the proverb “The emperor is the emperor, the minister is the minister, the father is the father, and the son is the son” highlights the harmony of the social order (de Bary and Bloom 1999, 44). On the other hand, calligraphy emphasizes norms and programs, such as the Small Seal Script, Clerical Script, and Regular Script, which highlights the standards of the strokes, the rigorous structure, and the unity of the chapters. This unity of strokes, form, and branches reflects traditional social relations, harmony, and unity. In conventional social relations emphasizing dominance and obedience, calligraphy emphasizes the main and subsidiary strokes. Traditional society emphasizes courtesy and concession, and calligraphy does the same. Just as traditional culture emphasizes order and norms, calligraphy emphasizes the brush standards and the structure’s coordination. Calligraphy displays social norms and “ethical relationships.” For example, the main text should be large, the inscription should be small, the main text should be the main, and the inscription should be complementary. The paragraph should be attached to the main text. The upper paragraph of the paragraph should be higher than the lower paragraph, and so on. Not only that, in the way of writing, the

movement of each stroke contains the significance of Confucian philosophical indoctrination. As a calligraphy teacher in Hungary, Mr. Zheng claims,³¹

Each stroke in the Regular Script consists of a starting stroke, a traveling stroke, and a finishing stroke. In the Regular Script, the start of a brush stroke (the beginning of a stroke) is usually a reverse-front start, which is squarer in shape. In other words, the direction of the starting strokes follows “left before right, up before down,” which is the opposite of the direction of the strokes. This also symbolizes the good and bad times in life. When things go wrong, you should “start the brush against the trend” and face them with courage. When you are in good times, you need to be vigilant and take the good times as the bad times. [. . .] The left pointed horizontal, and the right pointed horizontal writing method of writing from thick to thin or from thin to thick, close the penlight. The writing style of “big head vertical” and “small head vertical” is similar to that of “horizontal,” also from thick to thin or from thin to thick, with a light closing stroke. It is also written from thick to thin or thin to thick, with a light finish. This style is usually written with the thin end closer to a stroke, reflecting the humility of the strokes. The Chinese often say that a character is like a person, which also reflects the need to be humble. (2023)

As a result, calligraphy became central to the construction of personality in Chinese culture. Calligraphy serves as a tool for nurturing people as a means of harmonizing individuality, the individual, and the group. Similarly, calligraphy is expressed in Taoist doctrine as the tracing of nature. At the time when Taoism was prevalent, the expression of calligraphic aesthetic standards favored the expression of natural individuality. The resulting classic texts and styles of calligraphy that have been handed down to subvert tradition express the Chinese concept of freedom at that time. Therefore, whether it is the calligraphic styles influenced by

³¹ The resource comes from the author’s interview with Mr. Zheng at a Chinese-German bilingual school in Hungary.

Confucianism or the calligraphic texts handed down by Taoism, the Chinese “person” is labeled and formulated through writing (Yen 2004, 74). Writing expresses the idea that words are like people. By practicing writing, the Chinese practitioner is convinced that handwriting can reveal certain aspects of a person (morals, character traits, appearance, etc.). In addition, people distrust beautiful, deft handwriting and prefer clumsy, ugly, but authentic handwriting. Finally, scribbled or ugly handwriting is sometimes perceived as misrepresenting the better person. In short, handwriting can be either revelatory or deceptive, and according to Yuehping Yen, characters are considered to be extensions of the “human” body. In addition, the Chinese habit of reading symbols from body shapes has contributed to the constant desire to read symbols as handwritten characters (2004, 75). The Chinese exegesis on the link between the handwriting and the person teems with bodily images, which means the “body” enters the discourse of Chinese graphology (75).

Since calligraphy uses a fixed form of writing posture, it suggests that the practice of calligraphy “indicates the inscription and encoding of memory in somatic and somatized forms” (Lambek and Strathern 1998, 13). Indeed, literature in the Confucian tradition repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the body in the learning process. Self-cultivation in the literary sense means “Xiu Shen” (cultivation of the body). In other words, calligraphy training is considered to be the training of the body. The field of anthropology of the body has advanced significantly since Marcel Mauss ([1936] 1979) brought attention to “body techniques.” The body has been reframed as “the locus of social practice” (Csordas 1993, 135; see also Lock 1993; Bourdieu 1977; Comaroff and Comaroff 1985) rather than as the source of symbols (Hertz 1973; Douglas 1973) or as a template for social classification (Lock 1993, 136). In the meantime, the “socially informed body” (Bourdieu 1977) is seen to be the place where subjectivity is formed and from which social identity is produced, rather than only the place where discipline or power leaves its mark (Turner 1995, 145). It is worth noting that the body has been central to Confucianism for over two thousand years (Bray 1997, 41; see also Tu 1983) since bodily action is seen as shaping identity. As Weiming Tu puts it, its goal is to transform the body into an appropriate expression of the self in our daily existence (1983, 60). The practice of calligraphy, therefore, shows the dynamic embodiment of memories. Through

the somatization of memories, “the relationship between the memory material and the subject is renegotiated, re-contextualized and concomitantly, actualized” (Gaál-Szabó 2022, 135).

Calligraphy as a Mnemonic Device

Calligraphy, a significant symbol of Chinese culture, is considered a tool for representing Chinese collective memory. According to Halbwachs, objects of memory have a dual nature. They are not only material objects depicting a material reality, such as a statue, a monument, or a place in space, but they are also symbols, or something with spiritual meaning, something attached to and imposed on this material reality, which is shared by the group (2002, 40). That is, when matter is given a specific symbolic meaning by humans, it is transformed into a symbol. Regardless of whether the object of memory is a material object or an immaterial symbol, in the end, they can be remembered by people because they are endowed with a certain symbolic meaning, i.e., the material object no longer exists as a pure material (Feng and Wang 2022, 54–60).

However, not all symbolic meanings make their way into the Chinese collective memory because “memory is a series of symbols that are selected, commandeered, and given meaning” (Zhao 2015, 43). Aleida Assmann believes that those elements in the memory material that are potential, inactive, or subject to certain historical and cultural constraints do not enter into the framework of people’s memory because of the nature of the metasemiotic activity, the form and meaning of which have been significantly altered after the re-narrated symbolic text generates a new symbol (2012, 27). As a meta-symbol, however, calligraphy has existed in shaping Chinese cultural memory by constantly returning to the traditional symbolism embedded in the ancient classics. In other words, calligraphy, as a symbol of cultural memory, functions in a similar way to what Juri Lotman understands by the symbolic process:

As an important mechanism of cultural memory, symbols carry over texts, plotlines, and semiotic formations from one cultural stratum to another. An immutable set of symbols passing diachronically through a culture assumes to a significant degree the

function of unifying that culture; as a culture's memory of itself, symbols prevent a culture from disintegrating into isolated temporal strata. (2019, 163)

Lotman believes that, on the one hand, symbols achieve their invariance by crossing all levels of culture; on the other hand, they are actively associated with new cultural contexts. In influencing new cultural contexts, they also change: "Its invariable essence is realized in its variations," as Lotman puts it (2019, 164).

The process transmits cultural meaning layer by layer and creates a shared space of memory. The main symbols are inevitably accompanied by other symbols and are closely related to them. These symbolic relationships constitute the Chinese cultural picture. Chinese culture is characterized by a high degree of integration of ancient symbols into all areas of life (Ma 2015, 196). The meaning represented by the calligraphic symbols, as well as the interactions and dynamics of calligraphy as "folded generators of cultural memory" (Prots 2008, 95) with the accompanying other symbols, are ingrained in Confucian values, the Chinese characters themselves, the calligraphy-learning process, and the relationships with other symbols. For example, in *The Psychology of Chinese Handwriting* Ma Pengcheng, when talking about the unity of Chinese characters in the characteristics of phonic notes, points out that Chinese characters are symbols for recording language and that each character is an independent whole and is harmonious, balanced, proportional, and neat in appearance. The writing of Chinese characters is always permeated by the way of thinking in traditional Chinese culture, which always contains the way, reason, and law of seeking overall harmony (2006, 6). Chinese characters, in this way, have a strict logical and systematic symbol system, reflecting a way of thinking, results of thinking, and habits of thinking (Wang 2008, 114–118). It can be traced back to the ancient Shang and Zhou periods when calligraphy was largely a reflection of the socio-political, cultural, and other aspects of the time. Both the oracle bone inscriptions and the gold inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou periods, as well as the clerical scripts of the Han Dynasty, were used to record social activities, which included ceremonies held at that time, including a series of religious rituals and war campaigning ceremonies. The ceremonial activities reflected the passionate feelings of the people of that era towards

religion. Because the art of calligraphy itself has the connotation of ritual, the combination of these ceremonial activities and time gave the memory space the role of expressing meaning. Whether it was a religious ceremony or a war marching ceremony, when these activities connected to the real space, people put their passion for religion and love for the country in common ground to form a momentary reality, thus forming a symbol of group regiment and group membership (Collins 2012, 24).

In the ritual practice of calligraphy, the arousing energy of symbols serving emotional mobilization is realized through the setting of space-time scenarios and the value of auditory symbols and visual symbols in the process of ritual interaction. The visualization of Chinese common consciousness appeals to emotion as well. As in the case of rituals in general, appealing to emotions begins with the physical sensations of emotional arousal. It continues with the emotional experiences through the interactions of the members of the community (Turner 2009, 151). Rituals aggregate these emotional experiences through the participants' mutual attention and communication. The emotional connectivity in calligraphy is stimulated through imbuing its emotional content through visual/technical representation, revealing shared experience and immersion of mental processes and mental constructions, linking impressions and ideas (Hume 1996, 317–319). For example, oracle bones used to record the activities of people's lives covered a wide range of topics, from national events to the lives of ordinary people, showing that these contents cut into the emotional hooks of people's cognitive practices.

The ritual activities embodied in calligraphy even today reflect how Chinese cultural memory is at work. Calligraphy, especially in the form of end-of-the-year decorations and prayers for good fortune and disaster, constitutes an important part of Chinese folklore life (Tao 2012, 93–94). For example, Li Jiang notes that the culture of fortune has a strong symbolic nature in calligraphy, and the expression of the character “福” (“fortune”) in calligraphy is not only the writing of words but also reflects the wishes for prosperity, happiness, and longevity. Through different calligraphic styles, the character of Fu in calligraphy reflects the deep cultural values and aesthetic preferences of Chinese society (2019, 9–10). During the Chinese New Year, every family will put “Fu” characters in various

calligraphic styles on the house's door, wall, and lintel. It is a long-standing custom in China to post the Chinese character “福” on the doors of houses and walls. And there are lucky words to such a sticker, indicating good fortune to the family. The most common form of calligraphy in folk culture is pillar calligraphy. As a unique way of expressing Chinese culture, pillar calligraphy expresses the ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in traditional Chinese culture in a very popular, visual way. Confucian couplets and their calligraphy are the embodiment of Confucian culture and have the function of spreading Confucian enlightenment. The purpose of Buddhist couplets engraved or hung in temples is to increase people's understanding of Buddhist culture, from the content of these couplets to promote the Buddhist doctrine, to praise the virtues of Buddhism, or to reveal the practice of the Dharma. The calligraphy of Taoist couplets is based on Taoist thought, which persuades people to accumulate virtues and do good deeds, to be free and open-minded, to change customs, and finally to achieve the purpose of educating people's hearts. In a word, the couplets indirectly convey the meaning of spreading culture and indoctrination. Calligraphy, as a symbol loaded with people's communal thoughts, interprets the psychologizing mechanism of Chinese people's emotional resonance through the chain of the relationship between the content of the words of the couplets and the configuration of the field of memory. Calligraphy, as a symbol of memory, triggers the sense of identity of Chinese people, thus stimulating their thinking through spontaneous emotional relations, cognition, and experience of revisiting the past. The process triggers the recognition of the common consciousness of Chinese people and the reproduction of the former history and common experience.

Calligraphy is a cultural practice that is reflected in the human mind. It is also an activity of the human spirit and mind, an understanding of the objective world through aesthetics, and a way of thinking and spirituality that allows people to transform both the objective and subjective realms. It intuitively expresses philosophical essence and connotations by ordering and beautifying the writing of Chinese characters and using pen and ink lines to record words in a relatively fixed order. Through the square structure of Chinese characters and their characteristic distribution of dots and lines, writers can express human temperament, personality, and sentiment through strokes, forms, and the art of composition.

The study of calligraphy and Chinese cultural memory cannot be separated from Chinese Confucianism. As Liang Shuming said, “Almost all Chinese culture before Confucius was in the hands of Confucius, and almost all Chinese culture after Confucius came out from Confucius” (qtd. in Fang 2018). Confucian culture has a deep-rooted influence on the cultural psychology and structure of Chinese people. The spiritual connotation reflected in calligraphy complements the spirit of Confucianism.

It can be seen that calligraphy is the crystallization of traditional Chinese culture and a typical representative of Chinese art. Because of this, calligraphy, as the unique art form and cultural symbol of traditional Chinese culture, profoundly reflects the unique cultural psychology of the Chinese people and thus has become a mnemonic expression of Chinese identity, reflecting the unique role of Chinese characters being used as a mnemonic technique for individual and group memory.

4.2 Mnemonics Method in the Calligraphy Classes

The core of calligraphy and mnemonics is transforming complex writing skills into automated body memory through repeated physical practice. Through regular and coordinated movements of the hands, wrists, arms, etc., this process gradually transforms the writing action from conscious imitation to natural and smooth movements, reflecting mnemonics’ role as dynamics.

A survey conducted in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school aimed to further determine the connection between mnemonics and calligraphy. The survey was conducted among 50 Chinese students in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school or students of partial Chinese origin. The results showed that students were unaware of the handwriting gestures and their cultural value. They more often viewed calligraphy writing as the mastery of an instrumental skill. This suggests the important role of mnemonics in calligraphy education: internalizing calligraphy skills into physical memory through systematic training, thereby automating the writing process.

The school manifests the importance of regularity, rhythm, and power in calligraphy movements through writing posture training and teacher demonstration. Students gradually

transition from skill learning to unconscious manipulation through revision and repeated practice. They also improve their ability to use the writing system in a bilingual environment. This educational model combines Bourdieu’s theories of practicality and body memory. It further illustrates calligraphy as a mnemonic practice, transforming skills from concrete movements to deep memory internalization through creating and repeating rules.

The Use of Mnemonics in the Calligraphy Classes

The survey mainly targeted people with Chinese nationality or identity, 85% of whom chose ‘I am Chinese,’ while only 9.52% chose ‘I am Hungarian-Chinese’ and 0% chose ‘I am Hungarian.’ Only 9.52 % chose ‘I am Hungarian-Chinese,’and 0 % chose ‘I am Hungarian.’ The proportion of respondents in the ‘other’ category is smaller, at 4.76 %, indicating that although there are some alternative identities (other nationalities or Chinese of other national origins), they are not widespread.

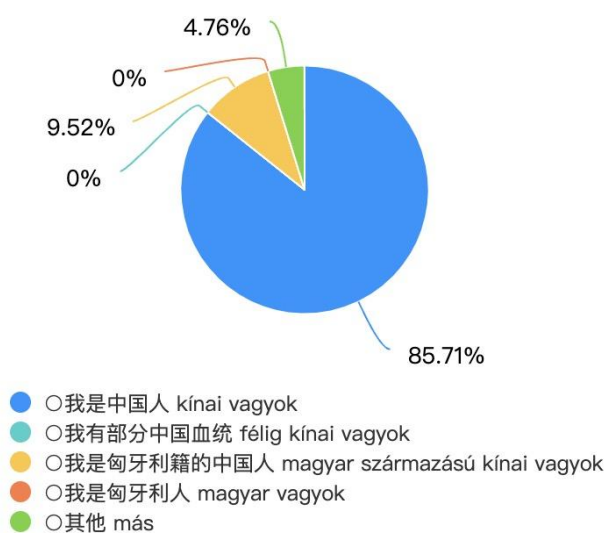


Figure 19: Pie Chart Results Showing Information about Surveyed Student Identities in the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School

Respondents were equally divided into grades 5-8 and 9-12, with each group comprising 50 % of the total respondents. Notably, there were no respondents in grades 1-4, suggesting that students in the lower grades are underrepresented. This may be due to the lack of specialized hands-on calligraphy classes in the lower grades or the fact that calligraphy

classes are less frequently offered in the lower grades. As Ms. Wang³², a Chinese teacher at a bilingual Chinese school in Hungary, stated,

As the children in the lower grades are too young, we do not teach calligraphy in the classroom, but only audio-visual teaching materials of calligraphy in the classroom. For example, in Grade 1, although they start learning Chinese characters from Pinyin, they cannot write the characters. But listening and reading have become important ways for them to learn Chinese. After Grade 3, students are introduced to brush strokes when they know how to write Chinese characters. Until Grade 4, the focus is on watching informative videos about the culture of calligraphy. However, combining language teaching with the culture of calligraphy can give children a deeper understanding of Chinese characters and calligraphy culture. (Wang 2021)



³² Ms. Wang is a teacher at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School who teaches Chinese language, but at the same time also teaches calligraphy and Chinese painting.

Figure 20: A Teacher at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School is Tutoring Students in Calligraphy



Figure 21: Teachers at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School Demonstrate Calligraphic Strokes on the Blackboard

Ms. Wang's words proved that the typicality of teaching calligraphy was not prominent in grades 1-4. Through classroom observation, I have found that "copying 临摹 (a model of calligraphy or painting etc.)" is the way for students to learn calligraphy. In Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School's classroom, the teacher either demonstrates the strokes on the blackboard and draws the path of the strokes or uses a magnet to attach a cotton paper to the blackboard and demonstrates the strokes with a brush. In the latter case, in order to prevent too much ink from ruining the beauty of the writing, the teacher is often very careful to dip a small amount of ink into the cotton paper that is attached to the blackboard. When

teachers demonstrates, they usually “disassembles (部首拆解)”³³ the characters one by one, and then draw each radical in a specific way. At the end of the writing, each radical is combined. When students imitate writing, they practice one by one, mainly by referring to the teacher’s examples.

Teacher Ruan³⁴ explains that disassembling Chinese characters with reference to the Chinese Character Radicals³⁵ in *Xinhua Dictionary* is not only a way to experience the beauty of the structure of Chinese characters, but also an effective way to strengthen memory. When students disassemble the radicals in sequence, they recognize and copy each component one by one, and the repetition increases the depth of the brain’s memory of the dismantled structure. This repetitive process causes the structure of the Chinese character to form a deep transient memory in the student’s mind, which gradually deepens into a lasting memory. (2023)

As observed in the classroom, the structure of the character “家(home)” can be divided into several parts, such as “宀” and “豕”. The disassembling of the character “家” is actually a meticulous process of writing, and each time the details and information points are slightly different, this kind of multi-faceted attention can effectively activate the learner’s decentralized and centralized memory, avoiding the tediousness caused by monotonous repetition.

宀 indicates a house or just a roof, which symbolizes a house. 豕 is the pictogram for a pig, which was often kept at home in ancient times to represent the

³³ The composition of a Chinese character consists of dots and strokes that form radicals and radicals according to a certain stroke order, which are then combined to form the whole character according to the structural rules. Using radicals as a clue to decompose and summarize Chinese characters, we can complete the identification of Chinese characters from multiple perspectives.

³⁴ Ruan is a teacher who teaches Chinese at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.

³⁵ The *Xinhua Dictionary* contains a Radical Index of Chinese Characters, which is an important part of the dictionary that helps users find Chinese characters quickly by using radicals.

wealth and life of the family. When we make them together, 宀 means “a place with a roof in which pigs are kept”, which is extended to mean family and residence (Ruan 2023).

Knowing the meanings of the components of the radical structure of a character in this way, students can mobilize some of their stored memories of the parts in the brain to reassemble the new character. The radical structure of Chinese characters helps to enhance the hierarchy and depth of memorization. And in the process of disassembling, due to the different number and arrangement of the radicals of each character, a variable writing rhythm is formed, which not only helps to deepen the learner’s impression of the character, but also keeps the memory fresh and energetic.

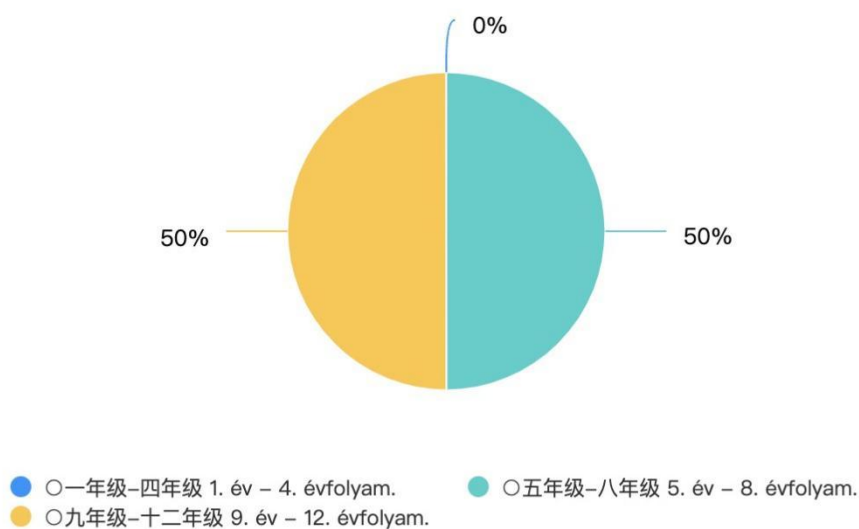


Figure 22: Pie Chart Results on the Grade Level of the Students Covered by the Survey

Disassembling and reconstructing can lead to the gradual transformation of From short-term to long-term memory, thus strengthening the memorization of Chinese characters. Under the impetus of long-term memory, a huge number of radical components will appear in students’ memory through the deconstruction of Chinese characters in their minds. Each radical part can be composed of several different structures, i.e., the “same component, different structure” characters. For example, the two components of the character “安” can be used to form a number of other characters. 安= 宀 + 女; 宜 = 宀 + 且; 容 = 宀 + 谷;

豚 = 豕 + 月; 象 = 豕 + 口 + 一. In the process of disassembling, these model characters invariably strengthen the students' knowledge of the individual radicals, resulting in the formation of a large, memorized character bank in the minds of that learning calligraphy. By systematizing the fragmented parts and then imitating the writing, the writing memory of the copied examples can be enhanced. This process confirms the existence of the key chain of Chinese character learning, which is “recognize Chinese character→ recognize character shape→ recognize structure→ recognize the law of character construction→ recognize the law of character construction in a specific context” (Dai 1997, 27-28). Moreover, the stroke is the smallest visual processing unit in Chinese character recognition. The process of Chinese character recognition goes through the three levels of strokes, parts, and whole characters sequentially (Peng and Wang 1997, 28-29). In this study, stroke order, structural analysis, and decomposition of radicals often appeared in the interviews. Especially when the children were not able to recognize the whole character, but they could still analyze the character with the help of strokes and components, which showed that strokes and components are the basic units for recognizing Chinese characters. However, when a person becomes proficient in a particular character, the cognitive unit becomes blocked, the stroke layer processing is reduced, and the stroke information is integrated into the radicals layer (Liu 2008, 89-96).

Instantaneous memory for decomposing Chinese characters is integrated in the radicals layer. While disassembling a Chinese character creates a decentralized transient memory, copying each radical by scrolling through it with a brush is a way of focusing on a single radical. Writing with a brush not only further promotes detailed observation of the characters, but also awakens the transient memory latent in the mind, thus deepening the memorization effect on another level. The process of summarizing and then writing on the brush creates a sense of immediacy, which makes it easier for students to work with their hands and minds in creating the characters.

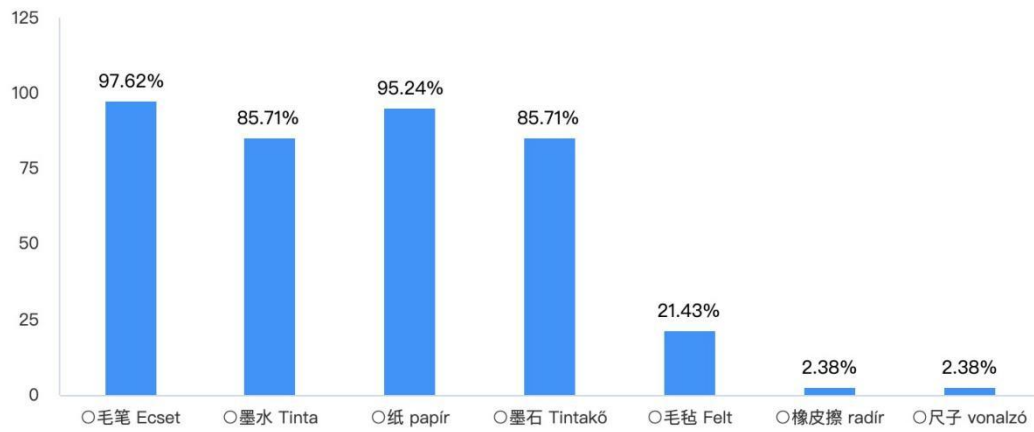


Figure 23: Bar Graph Results about Whether Students Know about the Mandatory Tools Used for Writing Calligraphy

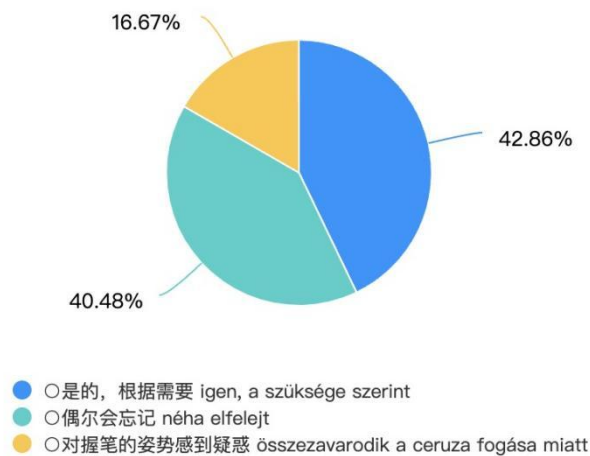


Figure 24: Pie Chart Results About Students' Familiarity with Brush Grip Posture

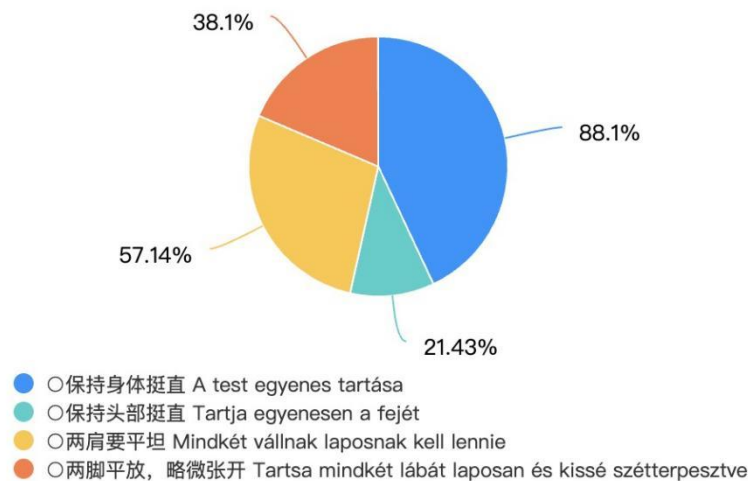


Figure 25: Pie Chart Results Regarding Students' Familiarity with Calligraphy Posture

In the practice of brush calligraphy, in addition to the concentrated training on the radicals of Chinese characters, students need to be guided to pay attention to the standardization of writing posture. This not only improves the efficiency of practice, but also helps students to coordinate better their hand-brain coordination, so that they can gain a deeper level of memory and skill enhancement in calligraphy learning. In the results of the questionnaire survey, more than 50 percent of the 42 students were very familiar with the stationery needed to prepare for calligraphy, as well as the work needed to be done after writing. More than 85% of the students were familiar with the four stationeries needed for calligraphy (pen, ink, paper and ink stone). 43.86% of the students could remember how to hold the brush, 40.48% of the students may forget it occasionally, and 16.67% of the students were puzzled by the posture of holding the brush. This confusion was also reflected in the writing posture of brush strokes. Of the four mandatory choices for writing posture, 88.1% of the students believed in keeping the body straight, 21.43% believed in keeping the head straight, 57.14% believed in keeping the shoulders flat, and 38.1% believed in keeping the feet flat and slightly open. This shows that not all students are familiar with all writing postures.

The findings tell the story of how calligraphy learning strategies based on mnemonic aids were not fully integrated into the students' thinking. This confusion also proves the importance of posture training in calligraphy. Regular instruction in correct posture training and continuous reminders by teachers in the classroom not only help students to gradually master the technical essentials of these postures in practice, but also promote the internalization of these postures as part of motor memory for further understanding and application of calligraphic skills. In fact, this process contributes to the effective integration of mnemonic aids in calligraphy learning. It enables students to build a memory palace in which they do not just memorize the structure of Chinese characters visually and cognitively, but in which the coordination of body postures and movements can improve the memorization of writing and the mastery of skills.

Just as Marcel Mauss proposes that the body's various techniques are conditioned by cultural traditions, the most natural and primary instrument of man in the world is the human body (1979, 104). Calligraphy's motor memory is a form of memory centered on the body's actions, movements, and techniques, which profoundly reflects the close connection between the body and calligraphic writing. As a point of force, the body is no longer just a superficial record of cultural laws that are silently etched with socio-cultural meanings, but a dynamic practice of "habitus" (Bourdieu 2013, 87). The process of transferring calligraphic skills remains highly dependent on the accumulation of physicalized practice and memory. This learning process is not accomplished exclusively through meticulous verbal explanations, but more through imitation and bodily memory in practice. As Pierre Bourdieu puts it, "The essential part of the *modus operandi* which defines practical mastery is transmitted in practice, in its practical state, without attaining the level of discourse. without attaining the level of discourse. The child imitates not 'models' but other people's actions" (2013, 87). This idea suggests that the key to learning calligraphy is not simply understanding the theoretical rules but internalizing calligraphic movements directly into memory through actual physical manipulation. Through repeated practice, students gradually memorize the rise and fall of specific strokes, the weight and urgency of the strokes, and the proportions and layout of the structure of the script. These memories are not superficial imitations but are deeply rooted in the body and consciousness through repetition, forming the core mechanism of mnemonics: the repetitive movements of the body that make complex skills and rules into automatic behaviors.

The process of memorization in calligraphy also involves the generation of a rule-based memory. Bourdieu states, "The material which the Kabyle child has to assimilate is the product of the systematic application of principles coherent in practice...in making it his own in the form of a principle generating conduct organized in accordance with the same rationale" (2013, 88). Through repeated observation and copying of font structure, stroke order, and overall layout, calligraphy learners not only memorize the details of individual glyphs but also gradually form an implicit memory of rules. This kind of mnemonic technique does not require deliberate memorization word by word and stroke by stroke, but rather the

internalization of writing rules through grasping the logic of the overall structure of calligraphy. Such internalized rules not only help students to apply them freely in different contexts but also reflect consistency and fluency in their creations, thus avoiding falling into the limitations of mechanical memorization.

In addition, mnemonics in calligraphy rely on the memory of somatized techniques, reflecting what Bourdieu calls the relevance of “body hexis” to the motor system: “Body hexis speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic” (2013, 87). In calligraphy practice, the way of holding the brush, the flexibility of the wrist, the trajectory of the brush and the distribution of power are all motor memories formed through repeated practice of the body. movement memory formed by repeated practice of the body. This kind of body memory is characterized by systematization and automation, and students do not need to deliberately think about each step of the movement during the writing process but rely on muscle memory to complete the fluency and stability of writing. The effect of this kind of mnemonics enables the learner to gradually transition from the imitation stage to the creation stage, and to complete the complex writing process naturally through the body’s inertia and memory of rules. In calligraphy practice, this body habitus is manifested through standardized postures and movements of the brush. For example, the tightness of the brush grip, the flexibility of the wrist and the coordination of the body as a whole have gradually formed a “systematic movement pattern” through long-term training. This pattern is not only closely related to the tools of calligraphy (e.g., brushes and ink) but also reflects the core values of the culture of calligraphy, such as the aesthetic concept of “lively rhythm” and the mental state of “sitting upright”. Through repeated practice, such patterned physical movements are internalized into muscle memory, enabling students to apply calligraphic techniques naturally, rather than relying on rational analysis of each step.

As observed the details of the calligraphy teachers’ instruction of their students in the calligraphy classroom at Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, every teacher unanimously emphasized at the beginning of the class that posture is the first step to good writing. They reminded the students of this at all times during the calligraphy teaching process. The

reminders were similar: keep your upper body straight, chest not pressed against the table, back not leaning on the chair, shoulders flat, feet apart and flat on the ground, elbows out, left hand pressing the paper, right hand holding the pen, brush straight and in line with the right eye. Ruan³⁶, who teaches Chinese at the school, explained that

Maintaining the correct body posture keeps the students free from any hindrance in writing, keeps the back muscles relaxed, and allows the students to write freely and fluently at all times. This posture also helps the student to build up a memory of writing habits differentiated from ordinary writing. (Ruan 2022)

Ruan emphasized the fundamental role of correct writing posture in calligraphy practice, pointing out that it not only helps students to stay comfortable and fluent in the writing process but also plays a key role in forming memory. This observation coincides with the results of related studies, further revealing the close relationship between posture regulation and memory. Therefore, while maintaining correct posture, practitioners are strengthening the cultivation of concentration, which leads to more efficient memory and internalization of skills in calligraphy learning.

Practitioners must maintain postures such as a straight body, relaxed armrests, and a smooth head posture to maximize concentration, thereby reducing physical discomfort and fatigue. When the practitioner is in this state of concentration, it is easier for the human brain to focus on the calligraphic movements and the structure of the Chinese characters, which helps the student form a memory during the writing process. In a state of concentration, students can better understand the structure of Chinese characters and gradually memorize the position and order of each stroke. Posture adjustments can improve concentration and help the brain to remember better and store data.

Practicing calligraphy also often involves using the same strokes and character shapes. When writing in the correct posture, the practitioner can repeat each movement more easily. With this repetition, the writer begins to develop a “body memory,” i.e., the ability to

³⁶ Ruan is a teacher at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.

remember strokes and structures through the pattern of movement in a particular posture. When practicing calligraphy, the wrist and the fingers are pulled to make each stroke move more smoothly. Over time, the writer's body begins to use the extracted memory to "unconsciously" memorize the stroke order of the text. This "body memory" allows the brain to better remember the overall structure of the characters. However, the complexity of the writing posture and the process of practicing it is not easy, as Shan³⁷ complains,

It was really painful to write at first. When I first time started writing with a brush, I didn't even know which side my nib was going to go. Not only did I have to worry about the wrong side of the nib, but I also had to pay attention to the correct posture of my body. When I was writing, I always had to remind myself that my head should not be too crooked, my upper body must be straight, and my shoulders should be flat, and when I stood up at the end of a lesson, I felt that my whole body was stiff (Shan 2023).

In fact, this is not an isolated case. According to the results of the survey, 71.43% of the students think that calligraphy is not easy for them. But this initially painful practice actually gradually builds up a deep body memory. Despite the initial discomfort and stiffness, the repetitive movements and strict postural adjustments help the brain and body form a stable "body memory." This memory not only allows calligraphy to become progressively smoother, but also enables the practitioner to remember and execute each stroke more naturally without relying on too much conscious control. This synergistic effect of physical and cognitive memory is an effective embodiment of the aid to memorization in calligraphy practice.

For the purpose of integrating calligraphic learning strategies more effectively into students' thought processes, the final step in helping to memorize words should include the layout of mental images. This approach helps students deepen their understanding of the structure and meaning of Chinese characters through visualization and association. For example, the character "众 (crowds)" means many people and has a variety of derived meanings. This character consists of three "人(person)," and imagining three people gathered together, can help learners memorize the composition and meaning of the character "众" in a more visual way. To further enhance this mental image, imagine that the three people are

³⁷ Shan is a 9th grade student at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School.

performing acrobatics to make the scene more vivid and interesting. This kind of visualization not only helps students to establish associations in their memory but also makes the learning process more attractive.

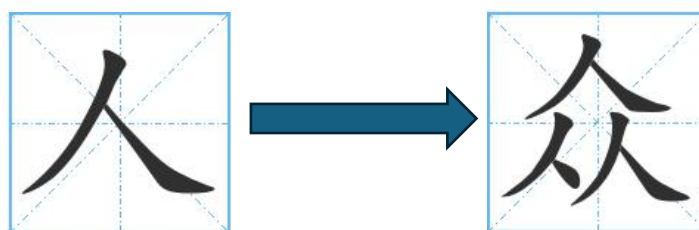


Figure 26: Characters “人” and “众” in Calligraphic Paper Fonts

The above example is the method of learning calligraphy-assisted mnemonics as observed by the author while conducting the experiment. The places mentioned in the examples are the classrooms of the school and the homes of the students, and this place is known as the memory palace. Aimed at recalling the Chinese characters, it is necessary to recall the physical objects in the place and the people and events that happened in the place. For example, in which classroom and at which table the calligraphy was practiced. This creates a more prominent mental image. The order in which the heart images are arranged in the house correlates with the structure of the character so that the student does not forget where the constituent parts are located. Once the character is memorized, the student can follow the route of the mental images that have already been established, and when he or she re-enters the characters’s memory palace, he or she will recall the mental images of the house. The method of mental imagery layout memorization is also demonstrated by the students’ calligraphy “Chinese Hungarian Friendship,” which is posted in the classrooms of the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. The students constructed a meaningful mental imagery story by drawing pandas, bamboo leaves, and other Chinese cultural features next to the calligraphy. This method not only helped them to memorize the writing content better but also played an auxiliary role in the writing process, enhancing the integrity and expressive effect of the work. As Ms. Wang put it,

Calligraphy helps students build cultural memory perceptions of China. Standardized movements and special materials for stationery allow students to distinguish calligraphy from other forms of writing. As they learn to write, they become familiar with Chinese culture through our explanations and through the calligraphic memory process that students build on their own. Our goal is not necessarily for students to learn to a rigid standard but simply to understand Chinese identity.³⁸

The results of the survey conducted in Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School show that the application of the mnemonic method in the study of calligraphy not only effectively enhances students' mastery of the art of calligraphy but also deepens their understanding of the structure of the Chinese characters and their cultural connotations through the combination of visualization and physical memory. Although the initial practice process is accompanied by some physical discomfort in posture adjustment and movement memory building, this "painful" training process helps students internalize the correct writing posture and movement patterns into long-term stable memories. In addition, the use of mental image layout enables students to memorize the structure and meaning of Chinese characters in a more intuitive way. By Integrating calligraphy practice with the "memory palace" strategy, students not only mastered their writing skills but also deepened their awareness of Chinese culture and identity unconsciously.

Manifesting though phenomenon that calligraphy is more than just the learning of a skill; it is a deep cultural activity that shapes the body through specific patterns and cultural values. As Yan Yueping (2016) points out, this particular kind of physical training is an important part of forming Chinese personhood and subjectivity (65). By incorporating the aid to notation method in calligraphy learning, students not only gained progress in their skills but also gradually formed an internalized knowledge of Chinese characters and culture, which enabled them to create a deep connection with Chinese culture at both the physical and spiritual levels.

³⁸ Information from fieldwork interviews.

Specifically, the components in a calligraphic character harmonize with each other in shape, size, and spacing to maintain the boundaries of the character. An interplay of influences between the components results in a dynamic balance. The nature of the structural principles of calligraphic characters is like social codes of conduct. They treat each stroke as an individual that collaborates with each other, and each part must work together to achieve overall unity. Not only does it harmonize the integration and adaptation between the evolving strokes, but this also reveals the response and interaction between people, demonstrating a relationship of order and harmony. Thus, each stroke in calligraphy, like each person in society, gradually develops a state of harmony through mutual imitation and ritualistic mimicry (Yan 2006, 59). It reflects the core values in Confucianism, which are order, harmony, and etiquette. Confucianism emphasizes that relationships between people should be based on etiquette, respect, and mutual coordination and that social harmony and stability can only be achieved when each adheres to etiquette and cooperates with the other. In calligraphy, each brushstroke is like an individual in the society, through mutual influence and cooperation to achieve the balance of the whole, which is an embodiment of Confucianism's "Harmony and Difference."

However, on the question of the relevance of calligraphy to Confucian culture, there is a clear divergence in the perceptions of the respondents. The option "Calligraphy draws straight, upright and strong lines, which is in line with Confucianism's character of pursuing uprightness" accounted for 28.57%. "Confucianism is concerned with etiquette and harmony, which is in line with the etiquette program and inner spiritual core of calligraphy" accounted for 26.19%. The option "Calligraphy is concerned with norms and rigor, embodies harmony and unity, and is in line with the spirit of Confucianism" accounted for 30.95%. 47.62% of the respondents said they did not associate calligraphy with Confucianism and lacked an understanding of calligraphy. This is a sizable percentage, indicating a gap in students' understanding or connection between the two concepts (Calligraphy and Confucianism) .

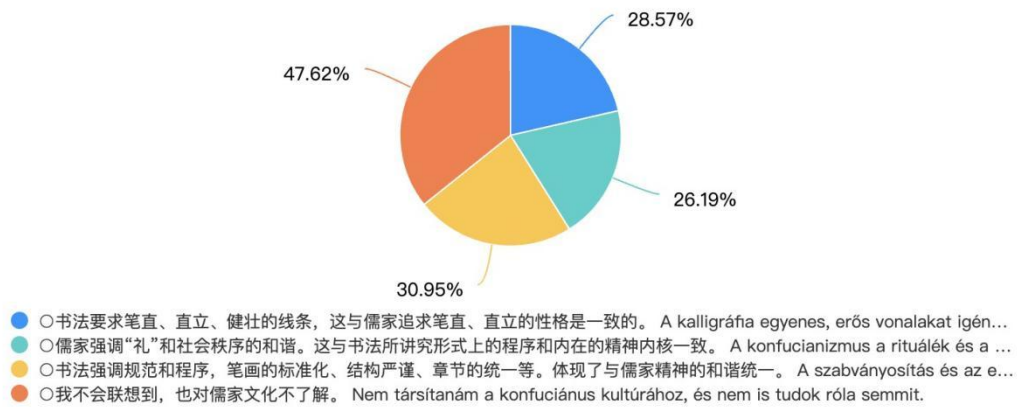


Figure 27: Pie Chart Results Regarding Students’ Familiarity with the Relationship Between Calligraphy and Confucianism

As the data indicates, when the teaching of calligraphy becomes overly detached from individual life experiences, or when the transmission of repetitive experiences becomes mechanical, it leads to the phenomenon of “ritual emptiness.” This creates a scenario where emotional and physical teaching become disconnected.

Consequently, the process of teaching through the “Mnemonics” becomes more meaningful. In this process, it seeks to create a unified, stable cultural memory subject that serves collective identity. Individuals interpret, negotiate, or even resist disciplined memories in their own ways. Despite internal contradictions in negotiation, repetitive discipline provides community members with consistent expectations of consequences and established behavioral norms—that is, unified goals and legitimate pathways to achieve them. As David Israel Kertzer observes, “ritual activities are not merely one possible way of creating social solidarity, but a necessary one” (2015, 72). Only through regular gatherings and collective participation in such symbolic activities can collective ideals and emotions be continually cultivated.

Mnemonics in writing can be used not only for technical skills but also as a device for understanding what is embedded in its deeper culture. Survey results indicate that many people do not yet fully understand the connection between writing and Confucian culture. With the help of the use of mnemonics’ “mental visualization,” learners can internalize Confucian spirit such as “integrity, strategy, and harmony” as specific characteristics of

calligraphy when practicing calligraphy. For example, the “straightness” and “uprightness” of the strokes are symbols of “uprightness of character.” These images are deeply rooted through repeated observation and memorization. Similarly, the “normality” and “rigor” of calligraphy can be constructed through the repetition of mnemonics, linking it to the Confucian emphasis on order and etiquette.

The postures and movements in calligraphy directly reflect the Confucian concept of etiquette. In Confucian culture, “etiquette” is a kind of code of conduct that regulates people’s speech and behavior, and the strict requirements on sitting posture, brush grip, and brush movement in calligraphy practice are a concrete practice of “etiquette.” By maintaining a dignified sitting posture and standardized writing movements, the calligrapher not only embodies respect for the rules at the technical level but also cultivates a dignified and humble attitude at the spiritual level. This process of emphasizing form and order is highly compatible with the Confucian concept of “respect.” When talking about classroom etiquette, Ruan says,

Students are able to remain seated during the calligraphy class, and even after the calligraphy class is over, their proper sitting posture affects the rest of their classroom etiquette.(2022)

In addition, the practice of calligraphy is closely related to the cultivation of the mind in Confucianism. Confucianism advocates “quieting the mind” and “cultivating the qi,” believing that inner peace and vividness of qi are the keys to cultivating one's body. In calligraphy practice, it was observed that students need to adjust their breathing, stabilize their emotions, and focus on the rhythm of the strokes for the purpose of completing their work, a process that is not only a manifestation of skill but also a cultivation of the mind. As Zheng, who specializes in teaching calligraphy at the school, observed when he mentioned the relationship between calligraphy practice and Confucian culture,

In calligraphy practice, the calligrapher consolidates the brush-handling rules through repeated memorization while writing Confucian classics. This process Integrates technical memory with moral memory. While students strengthen their memory of the classics through

writing, they also internalize the ethics and values of Confucianism, subtly achieving the educational goal of “teaching people with words” (Zheng 2023).

Physical training and personality development are also closely related. Confucianism has always emphasized the place that the body plays in the cultivation of life. As a matter of fact, it is a kind of conversion work for both the person and the body (Bray 1997, 41; Tu 1983, 60). That is to say that physical training is often a necessary pathway to personality cultivation. One of the most obvious and direct forms of body shaping is the requirement of the writing posture. These requirements contribute to the memorization of calligraphic writing.

Using these mnemonic methods not only helps students to better master their calligraphic skills but also helps them to understand the cultural connotations of calligraphy gradually. By practicing these associations with Confucianism, learners are able to insight deep artistic core of calligraphy and refine the gaps in their understanding of the connection between calligraphy and Confucian culture. Calligraphy internalizes both technique and cultural memory. Bourdieu holds the view that children not only remember specific actions when imitating movements but also internalize the social meaning and cultural values behind the actions at the same time: “Children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their Children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult—a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements” (2013, 87). Body memory in calligraphy practice has the same characteristics as the transmission of cultural values. For example, the teacher’s demonstration regarding the calligraphy writing not only conveyed the skills but also conveyed the cultural spirituality of the art of calligraphy to the students through the calm demeanor, dignified sitting posture, and elegant movement of the brush. This spirituality is internalized through students’ imitation, thus completing the double memory transmission of skills and culture. Specifically, the physical memory of calligraphy not only includes techniques but also carries a sense of etiquette, aesthetic value, and traditional heritage. For example, the posture of sitting upright reflects the focus and solemnity of the calligrapher’s attitude towards creation; the lightness and urgency of the strokes and the rhythm of the ups and downs of the strokes reflect the aesthetics of calligraphy,

which is “strong and soft”; these actions and mental states are passed down through the body’s memory from one generation to the next so that calligraphy becomes a powerful tool for the continuation of culture.

The core link between calligraphy and mnemonics lies in the transformation of the complex art of writing into a highly automated physical memory through repeated physical practice. This kind of memory is not only limited to the imitation and repetition of specific movements but also lies in the gradual formation of habitus—an internalized tendency to write—through continuous copying and practice. Through the training of brushwork, brush strength, and rhythm, the calligrapher embeds these skills into his or her body movements and eventually reaches a state where writing can be accomplished naturally without intentional thinking. The transition of calligraphic movements from conscious imitation to unconscious fluent expression demonstrates the key role of mnemonics in the practice of calligraphy.

The formation of this memory relies on the coordinated movement of the hand, wrist, arm, and even the whole body. Repeated writing practice is not only a proficiency of skills but also a reinforcement of the body’s memory. The rhythm, strength, and trajectory of each writing will be deeply embedded in the memory through the body movement, making the creation of calligraphy a synergistic process of body perception and mind. The mnemonic art of calligraphy is essentially an accumulation of motor memory. Through intensive training in basic skills, the calligrapher is able to build up a proficient mastery of complex writing techniques in the process of constantly mobilizing the body to participate in the process. This process directly reflects the essential relationship between calligraphy and mnemonics—memory is not a single cerebral activity but a dynamic mechanism that is generated, consolidated, and utilized through physical practice.

Calligraphy education is used as an important part of the practical teaching in Hung Chung Bilingual School, demonstrating not only the close connection between the study of calligraphy and mnemonics but also revealing the central role of mnemonics in the internalization of skills. The school's calligraphy curriculum is based on systematic training, aiming to help students master writing skills and transform these skills into physicalized memory through repeated practice. Calligraphy is not only a process of learning a skill, but

also a way of practicing to deepen cognitive and expressive abilities through motor memorization. Through the coordinated movement and repetition of the hand, wrist, and arm, students are able to better perceive and utilize different writing systems in two linguistic environments.

Surveys show that Chinese students are less familiar with the writing posture of calligraphy and the Confucian values behind it, reflecting that current students prefer the instrumental learning of calligraphy. This phenomenon has driven school to pay more attention to the central role of body memory in the teaching of calligraphy and to advocate standardized training to help students strengthen the internalization of the memory of writing movements. In the calligraphy classroom, teachers help students understand the importance of rhythm, strength, and trajectory through demonstration and guidance, while students transform calligraphic skills from conscious imitation to natural and fluent movement memory through imitation and repetitive practice. The school believes that this training method based on body memory not only enhances students' mastery of writing skills but also strengthens their ability to switch writing systems in a bilingual learning environment.

Calligraphy education in schools further emphasizes the quintessential nature of calligraphy as a dynamic mnemonic practice, arguing that through intensive training students can gradually systematize and automate complex movements. This pedagogical philosophy states that the central link between calligraphy and mnemonics is that through physical engagement and internalization of rules, students are able to make a natural transition from learning to skill acquisition.

Thus, mnemonics is a core mechanism that runs through the whole process of calligraphy learning. Through repetitive practice and rule generation, students can deeply embed the art of writing in their body's memory, making the transition from deliberate imitation to mastery. This process demonstrates how calligraphy education as a model of mnemonic practice is centered on collaboration through the body and memory. Through countless hours of practice and feedback, the calligraphic technique is able to make the transition from conscious learning to unconscious proficiency. The learning process of calligraphy can be seen as the practical embodiment of mnemonics, a classic example of skill

mastery through repetition. Bourdieu's theories on practical and embodied memory provide an important explanatory framework for the mnemonics of calligraphic learning, illustrating how calligraphic skills can be internalized through imitation, repetition, and rule generation to achieve a deeper level of memory that extends from specific actions to overall skills. This role of mnemonics not only serves as an illustration of the methodology of learning calligraphic skills but also reveals the nature of memory as a central mechanism in calligraphic practice.

4.3 Language as a Memory aid and the Flux of Memory

As the symbols of Chinese civilization, Chinese characters are different from the alphabetic scripts of Western countries in that they are the basis of Chinese cultural identity because of their genitive imagery. In the process of Chinese character acquisition, Chinese character thinking not only provides Chinese students with the foundation of cultural identification, but also demonstrates great adaptability and flexibility in a diversified cultural context, playing an important role in the dynamic construction of identity. The degree of language learning becomes an important factor in distinguishing the depth of cultural identity, and also serves as a medium for Chinese students to dynamically adjust their identity through language and memory. A dynamic balance is created by retaining the emotional attachment to the culture of origin and at the same time re-engaging with the culture of the host country. Ultimately, the Chinese students' identities are fluid and hybrid.

Thinking in Chinese Characters

The structure of language determines the different ways of thinking that language users use to observe and perceive the world. This is because language, in the process of its birth, already contains various concepts that the maker of the word understands and holds about the world around it. It also reflects the behavior of the maker in a particular natural and social environment. Due to the mutual influence and determination of language and thinking, the meaning of thinking in a language does not depend only on grammar, but more on the laws of logic or reasoning inherent in the language, which are common to all peoples (Chen 2007, 29). Chen Changlai, a Chinese scholar, further elevates the "logical laws common to all peoples"

to people's thinking. He argues that "language expresses culture, determines culture, governs people's thinking, and shapes their worldview" (2007, 69-370). Thus, different languages and characters produce different ways of thinking and values. This explains the significant high and low differences in students' Chinese character proficiency among the different groups of Chinese students in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school.

Specifically, Chinese characters are image-based scripts. Chinese characters can directly relate concepts to their objects through images. As the Chinese scholar Rao Zongyi argues, "Chinese characters originated from pictures, and have always been in the same lineage without interruption; the characters are mainly ideograms, supplemented by sound symbols to represent sounds. Although there have been variations in the shape of the characters since then, they are only small differences in appearance. There is no change in the nature of the character, and it is not a qualitative change." Therefore, Chinese characters have an openness to image and an infinity of meaning, hence figurative thinking (1998, 361). As an example, in the classrooms of Hungarian Bilingual School, the teachers usually use figurative associations with physical objects in nature to express their meanings when compiling teaching materials. And they show the characteristics of the objects through simple drawings. After students receive the information, they show their processing of the information. Firstly, they associate Chinese characters with pictorial information and go through a series of perception, recognition, processing and cognition, thus forming a memory of the visualization of Chinese characters. Moreover, the basic structure of Chinese characters emphasizes the unity of the shape of the character and its meaning. Chinese characters directly express the concepts of things through the shapes of the characters themselves. For example, in the bilingual school classroom, Chinese teacher Ms. Ruan cited the example of the character "人(people)," citing both the oracle bone inscriptions and the modern Chinese character "人(people)." From the evolution of the ancient script to the modern script, the shape of the Chinese character has not changed much. The overall image of the character "人(people)" is that of a man standing on two legs. The oracle bone inscriptions are very reminiscent of the side of a person plowing in a field. This shape directly conveys the concept of "man". The combination of shape and meaning makes the Chinese characters more visual and intuitive in conveying meaning. This

associative approach makes it easy to form an image memory in the brain, helping students to firmly memorize the shapes and meanings of the characters in the long-term learning process.

This coincides with Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who points out that the language of primitive peoples tends to be a form of direct presentation of things and actions. The specific way in which their ideas are expressed is by presenting them to the eyes and ears. These languages often “do not depict the impressions acquired by the perceiving subject but rather the way in which the object is shaped, contoured, moved, and acted in space;” rather, these languages in their early stages of formation often seek to “combine what they want to show with what is mouldable” (1981, 151).

For example, when bilingual school teachers want to explain the concept of “山 (mountain),” they draw the external features that characterize a mountain (high and low, uneven), thus linking the shape and meaning of the mountain to the word “山(mountain).” In the lower grades, the teacher will ask the students to take out a piece of blank paper and draw a sketch of a mountain before explaining how to write the word mountain(山). Thus, the word “mountain(山)” acquires a general, ordinary symbolic meaning.

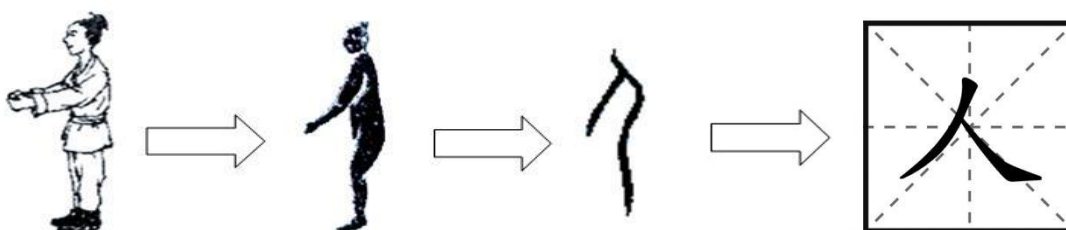


Figure 28: The Evolution of the Character “人” from Concretization to the Formation of Modern Writing

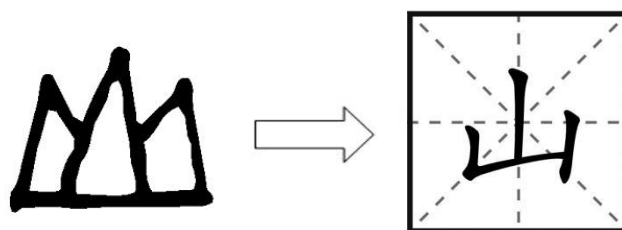


Figure 29: The Oracle Bone Character for “Mountain” and the Modern Character for “Mountain”

Moreover, in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, Chinese characters are not only a linguistic task for students to learn, but also a central vehicle for cultural transmission. Every Chinese character has a rich cultural and historical meaning, as “every Chinese character is a microcosm of cultural information” (Shen 2004, 357). When teachers teach Chinese characters, they will talk about the meanings of the characters in specific contexts. For example, the character “礼 (etiquette)” encompasses the etiquette and morality of a culture, and the character “家 (home)” is closely related to the concept of family. By memorizing these characters, the essence of the culture is inherited and passed on without people even realizing it. 2024, at the graduation ceremony for high school students, the students hang their Chinese name tags which they call “fortune cards,” on the “tree of happiness” that everyone calls “家 (home).” Through this ceremony, students complete the blessing of the school (“home”) and deepen their understanding of the Confucian philosophy associated with the concept of “家 (home).” This process is not limited to special, occasional ceremonies. In specific teaching sessions, Chinese teachers will assign practical homework to help students deepen their understanding of the meaning of the characters. For example, by teaching the character “孝 (filial piety),” students are encouraged to help their parents with household chores at home, to cook a meal, and so on, as a sign of “filial piety.” Thus, due to the ideographic nature of Chinese characters, which directly connects external images with internal meanings, this form of writing exercises students minds tending towards “figurative thinking gradually.”



Figure 30: Students Are Hanging Fortune Cards with Their Names on the “Tree Of Happiness” at the 2024 High School Graduation Ceremony

Western alphabetic thinking is completely different from figurative thinking, which “focuses on analyzing and dissecting things and studying them individually” (Jing 2006, 2). As Robert K. Logan, talking about the instrumental role of the alphabet, believes, Western thinking is logical-analytical in style (1986, 20). Western logical thinking is very abstract compared to the East, and the phonetic alphabet (or phonetic syllabaries) plays a special

“dynamic role,” and it is the basis or framework for all Western theoretical and legislative innovations (1986, 23).

Specifically, the phonetic alphabet uses a separate set of letters or symbols to represent the basic phonemes in speech (e.g., consonants and vowels). The letters themselves are not dependent on images or concrete objects. The phonetic alphabet uses several “letters or visual signs (22 to 40)” to represent “the basic sounds or phonemes “in spoken language (Logan 1986, 19). The letters are usually used to code each word and have a less direct connection with the characteristics and nature of things. As a result, differences between Eastern and Western thinking may arise in the process of word acquisition. Alphabetic words usually lack “object” characterization. The relationship between alphabetic words and objects is not established through direct imitation of object images but rather is based on conventions or regulations. Specifically, letters or syllables represent specific sounds that are agreed upon and combined to form the fixed meaning of a word. Through the disassembly and reorganization of different letters, i.e., the conventions of symbols and rules, alphabetic writing transforms linguistic expression into a simpler, clearer, and more easily disassembled and calculated writing system. Therefore, Western thinking prefers to express things through rules.

Based on the realization of the difference between Eastern and Western linguistic thinking, there is an inevitable difference in Chinese language proficiency among Chinese students in the Chinese language situation in the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. When Hungarian-born children enter the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school after graduating from a Hungarian kindergarten or after a few years of education in a local Hungarian school, their linguistic construction system differs significantly from that of Chinese children educated in China. S³⁹, a student who grew up in Hungary, stated when confronted with this problem:

Chinese writing is so difficult to “draw” that it often requires more time and effort to practice. Unlike ordinary drawing, Chinese writing also follows a fixed writing order. In my opinion, Chinese writing is very ritualistic. (2023)

³⁹ Name is blurred according to the respondent’s wishes.

At the beginning of learning Chinese, our teachers would give us “TianZiGe” (田字格) paper to help standardize our writing, and we needed to “draw” a copy of the Chinese characters that the teacher had written on the blackboard in the grid. Each character corresponded to a grid and could not be written outside the grid. My first impression of the Chinese characters was that each one looked like a square pattern. Teachers would also emphasize the importance of putting the Chinese character in the field character grid. This represents the importance of following the rules. (2023)

S argues that Chinese is not written but “drawn.” This expression significantly distinguishes Chinese from other alphabetic scripts. Chinese is written in a fixed order, either from top to bottom (top-down characters) or from left to right (left-right characters). No matter what the structure is, it is necessary to do beginner’s practice in a square field grid. This is rooted in the philosophy of square and round in traditional Chinese culture. Wang, a Chinese teacher who teaches high school grades in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, was interviewed and stated that,

When practicing, it is common for students to think that Chinese characters are square characters, but in fact, the square characters we always talk about are for the printed form. The structure of Chinese characters in handwriting calligraphy follows the outer circle and inner square. Because at each stage of the transmutation of Chinese characters, the outlines of various fonts are not pure squares but mostly irregular polygons. The claim that Chinese characters are square characters is not accurate and does not reveal the common features of Chinese character structure. For example, the seal script has a vertical oval outline and a vertical rectangle inside; the official script has a horizontal oval outline and a horizontal rectangle inside; the regular script and the running script have a square outline and a square inside, etc. (2024).

The shapes of various calligraphic fonts of Chinese characters explain that “square” and “round” have always regulated the morphological structure of Chinese characters. The structure provides a true and profound mirror image of traditional Chinese culture (Lin 2006, 2). The theory of squareness and roundness embedded in the morphological structure of written Chinese characters has its roots in the traditional Chinese philosophical culture of “heaven is round, and earth is square.” Zeng Zi paraphrases Confucius: “Zi said, the way of heaven is round, and the way of the earth is square” (Liu 2012, 105). “Square” and “round” themselves, as manifestations of natural phenomena, were later extended to the writing style of Chinese characters. Xiang Mu, in his “Calligraphy in Elegant Words – Rules,” puts forward the idea that round and square symbolize the laws of heaven and earth in the writing of Chinese characters. The “circle” has infinite extensibility and inclusiveness. Therefore, when writing Chinese characters, the strokes should be round and smooth. “Square” has a clear boundary and framework. Therefore, the strokes should be square and rigorous. The relationship between square and round complements each other in calligraphy (Xiang 2007, 521). “Heaven, roundness, and squareness” was the earliest rule in the thinking of the ancients, with the circle as the rule and the square as the rule, and everything should follow the rule. As the ideas in “Calligraphy elegant words – rules,”

The nests of birds, the nests of bees, the webs of spiders, are all round and neat and delicate. Is the axiom of calligraphy like these? It is a law of nature and even intelligible knowledge. Then there is the freshness and colorfulness of flowers, the staggering of stamens and petals, and their shapes are always round and neat and in harmony with each other (2007, 522).

This statement suggests that there are rules and regulations for everything between heaven and earth, and that birds, fish and insects create the beauty of nature by being neat and tidy, and that the rules should be observed even more in the writing of calligraphy. Thus, the Chinese characters “concepts of squareness and roundness” symbolize the importance of

understanding and observing rules in Confucian philosophy. The process of teaching Confucianism to students and helping them to understand Confucianism is implied in the use of Tianzige paper and the writing of standardized strokes in Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School. This is used as a base to emphasize that morality and ethics are the basis of the rules of calligraphy, and at the same time the teacher is teaching the students how to conduct themselves.

However, in such profound writing exercises, students' reception of Confucian philosophy is uneven. The different educational backgrounds of the students and the differences between Eastern and Western thinking resulted in the simultaneous existence of two different modes of linguistic thinking in the process of cognitive and linguistic construction. To cope with such cognitive differences in linguistic thinking, Mrs. Hao, who teaches Chinese at Hungarian Bilingual School, used the Chinese textbooks as an example to illustrate the school's strategy of adapting to the needs of different groups of students. She further explained that,

The school provides both local Hungarian students and Chinese students who grew up in Hungary with textbooks for foreign children to learn Chinese. The newly immigrated Chinese children are taught Chinese lessons according to books from Chinese educational publishers to keep up with their domestic education. This grouping is intended to alleviate the discomfort caused by perceived differences in language and to create a transitional space for the children to bridge the language gap (2024).

Even with this grouping and teaching methodology, the differences in thinking about Chinese characters between children of different Chinese backgrounds in bilingual school are still evident. This difference stems from their different ways of perceiving Chinese characters, language habits, and educational backgrounds, resulting in different ways of thinking and learning progress when children who are also learning Chinese deal with Chinese characters. When students from different language backgrounds learn Chinese characters, there are time

differences in their understanding and mastery of Chinese characters due to differences in culture and language habits. Some students may be able to master the composition and writing of basic Chinese characters in a short period of time, while others may need a longer time to adapt. When teaching Chinese in elementary school, the teacher Ruan mentioned that children often need to be taught with concrete images because they are too young. However, it was found in the classroom that Chinese children tend to understand faster than other children due to the assistance of family education.

The situation can be more complicated in mixed-race families. S Sixth-grade Student B, who is half-Chinese, did not grow up in a Chinese-language environment, even though her parents are Vietnamese and Chinese. Instead, homeschooling was opened by Vietnamese. So, with three languages, three quantum changes, and a triple mindset, B, who was in the mind-shaping stage, had a difficult time adjusting to bilingual school life. As he expressed it, “I think it’s weird that I’m in this school because my Chinese is poor compared to other Chinese. But my Asian face makes them judge me just a little bit off” (2023). The process of navigating this complex mode of information processing has not been easy for B. His mixed-race identity brought him confusion in communicating with other students. In the school society dominated by both Chinese and Hungarian cultures, he still had to constantly renegotiate and even recreate his own identity. Behind the many commonalities of Chinese backgrounds, there are still differences that need to be carefully negotiated. Student B’s background is not universal, when it comes to the school discourse on the division of immigrant groups into ‘old and new,’ the common issue of ‘group identity’ comes to the fore.

The terms “new immigrants” and “old immigrants” appeared frequently in the dialogues of the interviewed students. According to the results of the interviews, it is generally recognized among the student body that Chinese people whose parents landed in Hungary since the 1990s are considered old immigrants by Chinese students, and their children are automatically defined as old immigrants. On the other hand, Chinese people who immigrated to Hungary in recent years, no matter if they stayed for 8 or 11 years or even longer, are automatically categorized as “new immigrants” in the perception of the student body. The

duration of immigration is not only a criterion for group classification. Differences in ways of thinking and habits are also one of the bases of their judgment.

Students who grew up in China or those who received a basic Chinese education tend to have a strong sense of integrated planning⁴⁰. They make plans and set goals before doing anything. As a result, Chinese students who grew up in Hungary often have a stereotypical image⁴¹ of “new immigrants” when interviewed: they’re a little more purposeful in what they do and more willing to focus on reaching one thing. Of course, when interacting with ‘old immigrants,’ such stereotypes can lead to a lot of ‘problems,’ as happened to K., who has been in Hungary for four years.

I heard the word “new immigrant” from a Chinese student at a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. Although I came here with my parents four years ago, I still feel different from those students who have lived here for many years. (2024)

As a so-called new immigrant, I am always excluded from both groups. This shows itself in the fact that I only speak Chinese in my daily interactions because my Hungarian is not good enough for me to communicate smoothly with my friends. When my friends used to communicate in Hungarian, my inner timidity prevented me from asking them about what they were talking about, but once they realized that I didn’t understand, they would kindly switch to Chinese to communicate with me. But in fact, I clearly learned that I was not accepted by both groups (the Chinese group or the Hungarian student group). (2024)

Chinese planning, goal orientation and action patterns are influenced by Chinese characters and Chinese education, and this mindset may lead to identity difficulties in cross-cultural environments. In particular, “new immigrants” may face marginalization or misunderstanding

⁴⁰ According to the interviews, children raised in China are more inclined to focus on planning, whereas children raised in Hungary are more inclined to show more freedom.

⁴¹ When interviewed, Chinese students who grew up in Hungary often believe that ‘new immigrants’ show a stronger tendency to be goal orientated and to focus on one thing at a time.

in their interactions with the local community and other immigrant groups. Although they show great dedication and purpose in carrying out their tasks, difficulties in daily communication and acculturation may exacerbate their feelings of loneliness and exclusion. Thus, cultural and linguistic differences affect Chinese people's way of thinking and their integration and interaction in a foreign country. In the final analysis, identity becomes the main issue.

Chinese Character Acquisition and Cultural Identity - 'Who Am I' - Cultural Memory and Suspended Identity as a Dilemma

I was born in Hungary and my parents made a lot of efforts to turn me into a Hungarian on the level of nationality. On the level of everyday experience, I only occasionally face the fact of my Chinese identity in Hungary. My family lives next to a high school in the 7th district in Budapest, and there have been times when students have passed by me and out of the blue said to me 'Chink or ching chang chong.' They have always been very subjective in assuming that I'm Chinese out of the fact that I'm Asian looking. Or when I'm asked to join a welcome party for a week-long exchange student from China, the dialogue often goes something like this when faced with a Chinese student who doesn't know me,

'Are you Chinese?'

'I'm not, but I am.'

In response to this originating survey dialogue, I often explain 'I was born in Hungary, but my parents are from China.' But this answer always reminds me that no matter how hard I try, it seems that I can never fully integrate into the mainstream culture (Chen 2022).

The interview with a 16-year-old Chinese girl who has been studying at a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school since primary school. She was born in Hungary and at the age of 5 she was given Hungarian citizenship. When she introduced herself to me and showed me her student

card, I learned that her name is Chen Jingjing Victoria, and just as her name, which is a hybrid, the Chinese students studying here, or those who are partly of Chinese origin, are experiencing varying degrees of cultural identity struggles.

The acquisition of Chinese characters creates a boundary of cultural identity between native speakers and those who are not proficient in Chinese at Hungarian-Chinese school. Anthony P. Cohen believes that the core concept of “community” lies in the demarcation of “boundaries” (2001, 118). By distinguishing “us” from “them,” “us” is defined as a group with common characteristics, which is different from “them.” Therefore, this boundary is manifested in both “us” excluding “them” and “them” excluding “us.”

As Barth argues, the maintenance of group identity depends on how people continuously mark and reinforce the boundaries between “us” and “them” (1969, 15). It manifests in the fact that native speakers tend to exclude poorly communicating non-native speakers when constructing their own boundaries. They do not readily accommodate people who want to enter their circle of friends in their inherent circles. Non-native speakers inevitably negotiate their own identity. Such negotiations are sometimes inexorable and even painful. Just as when talking about the impact of Chinese language proficiency, interviewee Adam referred to his own Chinese language learning experience, expressing the differences in cultural identity between native and non-native speakers due to the level of language mastery:

If the donated Chinese textbooks are not used in class, I will have a hard time reading them at home because of the language barrier. Although I have 8 years of education experience in school, because my mother is Hungarian, I basically do not use Chinese except when I am in school. Due to the lack of extensive use of the Chinese language, I can't understand slightly complex characters. There are only four or five people in my class who can fully understand and communicate more deeply with native speaker Chinese people. To the extent that Chinese language proficiency was acquired, I was excluded from the circle of Chinese identity (Adam 2024).

The above cases reflect that language proficiency largely determines an individual's position in ethnic identity. Language proficiency has a direct impact on an individual's cultural identity, especially in intercultural environments. Language barriers not only make communication difficult for non-native speakers, but also affect their cultural identity with their native-speaking communities. For immigrant groups, this identity dilemma is particularly acute. As interviewee Adam experienced, the language barrier made him feel ostracized outside the Chinese identity circle. However, the language barrier is not the only factor; the deeper issue of cultural identity also lies in how individuals maintain or reconstruct their sense of cultural belonging in a foreign country.

Not only that, proficiency in Chinese language proficiency also affects Chinese students' perception of kinship. Chinese people who grew up in China are able to recognize generational relationships very clearly. In Chinese, "brother" may be relative blood brother, blood younger brother, first cousin, second cousin. Similarly, "sister" may mean blood sister, blood younger sister, first cousin, middle sister. Uncle can mean uncle, great-uncle, second uncle, brother-in-law. The same goes for aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers. For children growing up in Hungary, their perception of generation is often vague. Due to the complexity of kinship relations, the Hungarian children's perception of kinship is often ambiguous, even though during their limited visits to China they can quickly learn about kinship terms from their parents, but this understanding remains ambiguous. Only with their relatives who have lived in Hungary for a long time and with whom they are in regular contact do they have a clearer idea of what generational titles are called. Whenever they witnessed their parents' attachment to their homeland, they often showed incomprehension or indifference. They are not comfortable with the surrounding relatives and their comments. They are treated as "outsiders" and are watched by relatives everywhere they go. The perception of kinship is not only an understanding of family structure, but also reflects the multi-layered nature of cultural identity. In different cultural contexts, kinship terms carry family values and social order, which is particularly important for the Chinese community.

In this context, Chinese identity is not only a reflection of language ability, but also a profound reflection of cultural background and traditional habits. Chinese identity problems,

especially the loss of identity in cross-cultural environments, are often related to the absence or re-creation of cultural memory. As Chinese scholar Zhuang Guotu believes, Chinese cultural identity is the core of Chinese ethnic identity (2002, 3), and this identity cannot be shaped without the transmission and re-creation of cultural elements (Zhou 2001, 2).

And cultural elements carry cultural memories and are the containers of cultural memories. The cultural memory of the interviewed Chinese students is not only a recollection of the past, but its memory also participates in the construction of identity in the present. Thus, cultural memory is not static but is transmitted and recreated through these elements. The transmission and re-creation of cultural memory not only gives meaning and history to cultural elements, but also provides the necessary perspective and methodology for the study of identity. In this process, cultural memory, as a carrier of identity, plays an instrumental role in shaping an individual's self-perception. The process of passing on and recreating cultural memory enables individuals to maintain their cultural identity in a foreign country, and language proficiency is the key link in the recreating of cultural memory.

To further explore how Chinese character acquisition affects Chinese students' identity in cross-cultural environments, this study will focus on factors such as cultural memory, acculturation factors, and language barriers, and analyze how they shape distinctive thinking patterns and social adaptation behaviors among new immigrant groups. To this end, in September 2024, I conducted a questionnaire survey among 44 Chinese students and Chinese-mixed students in a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey, I used a structured questionnaire combined with observation and interviews, and 95% of the questions were quantitative. In order to ensure the objectivity and authenticity of the results, the questionnaire was administered to all Chinese and partially Chinese students from grade 6 to grade 12 who were able to read and answer the questions on their own.

The findings show that many students have significant diversity in language use and cultural identity. Most of the respondents reported that they mainly use Hungarian and Chinese to communicate at school, but that they prefer Chinese at home. At the same time, several of them also reported confusion and challenges in terms of cultural adaptation and

identity. In response to the results of the questionnaire and checking the answers to the open-ended questions one by one, interviews were conducted. It was found that there were differences in cultural identity and identification depending on the level of language acquisition. Language education plays a crucial role in Chinese people's view of identity.

Specifically, I conducted a detailed survey and statistical analysis of students' language use habits in the school and home contexts to bring to light specific manifestations of this diversity. The survey collected the spoken language usage habits of Chinese students and some Chinese blood groups at home and at school. The results show that Hungarian is the most common language used by students at school with 59.09%, followed by Chinese with 50%. All other languages were used at 0%. This shows that Hungarian and Chinese dominate the language environment at school. The results of language usage habits at home favor the use of Chinese. Chinese is used by 88.64%, followed by Hungarian by 11.36% and other languages by 4.55%.

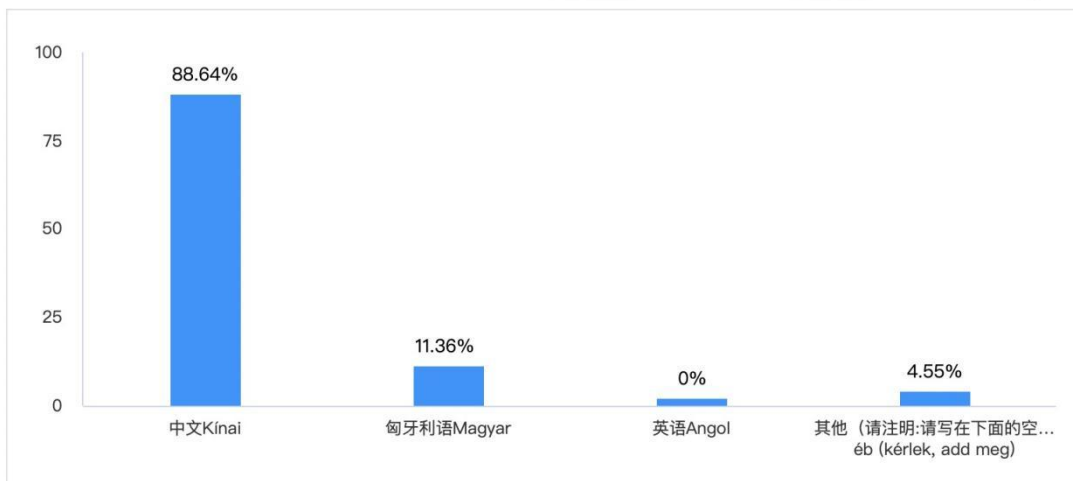


Figure 31: Result Statistics of Which Language Chinese Students Use Frequently at Home

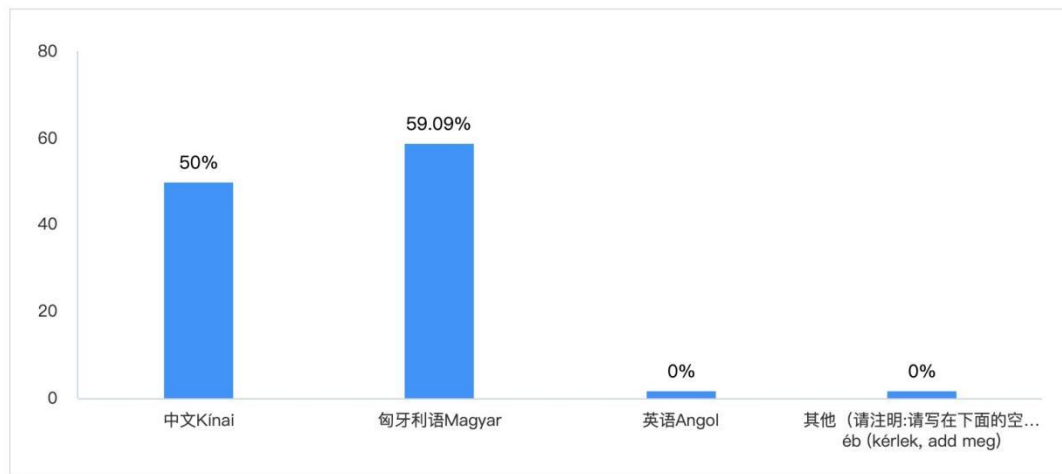


Figure 32: Results of Which Language Chinese Students Spend a Lot of Time Using at School

The statistical results of the survey show that the frequency of use of the language of everyday communication of Chinese students varies according to the occasion. Hungarian and Chinese are used as official languages at school in equal proportions. At school, Chinese students interact bilingually with students and teachers from different places. The use of each spoken language is related to identity. Claire Kramsch argues the form of language communication of a social group is closely related to its cultural characteristics, and this closeness can be regarded as a “natural connection” (1998, 65). Speech acts are not only tools of communication, but also reflect the speaker's role and status in a specific culture and social system. Through various forms of code-switching and language shifting, speakers indicate their cultural identity. Speakers identify themselves or others as language group members by using different accents, vocabulary, grammar, and speech patterns. In other words, group members usually share certain “social conventions” (Kramsch 1998, 6).

Social customs divide the group by the same topics, similar expressions, and similar linguistic habits. For example, whether the group communicates in Chinese or Hungarian, what is communicated and what is not communicated. In this way, a linguistic community of people with the same linguistic code is formed. In this linguistic community, the members use the decided language to fulfill common needs. For example, in the old immigrant Chinese student community, students are generally used to communicate in Hungarian. They are more

accustomed to Hungarian because their educational background is like that of Hungarian students. Due to the lack of time spent in China, when they were talking about a limited trip to visit China. They Chinese idiomatic expressions:

我暑假去了中国。

‘I went to China in summer vacation.’

And the native speakers’ expression is,

我暑假回国了。

‘I went back to my home country for the summer vacation.’

Both are grammatically correct. The former expression is more focused on the standardization of written Chinese. It gives people the impression that they have gone to another country and not returned to their home country. The latter expression emphasizes that China is “motherland.” The flexibility of the words used is more native. These two expressions are in fact based on the different values of the two cultures.

Indeed, within the Chinese student body, students viewed the ability to speak Mandarin as a tool to unite members of the community. Related to this view, these responses emerged from the interviews,

Being a Chinese one needs to learn Chinese. Because it’s one of the main communication tools for us to pass on any ideas and culture. So if we don’t learn it, it will have a big impact on our future generations (B 2023).

A person is only Chinese if he/she can speak Chinese. If you don’t speak Chinese, then you are not “pure” Chinese (Chen 2024).

Thus, among the Chinese student body, speaking Chinese is seen as a key tool for identity and community solidarity. Students generally believe that the Chinese language is not only an

important means of passing on culture and ideas, but also the essence of being purely Chinese. Moreover, in the results of the questionnaire survey, the frequency of Chinese language usage also took a decisive position when investigating the family's language habits. But this view is not always solid. It appears fluid with different situations.

This fluidity is reflected in the fact that the identification of culture and identity is not always an either/or affair. Identities are often hybridized in the context of growing up in a bilingual background. For example, a person born in China who immigrates to Hungary changes his/her nationality to Hungarian. The problem is that this kind of identity, imposed on the individual from the outside, is often not equal to one's own perceived view of belonging. Or the protagonist of the story is often unable to stand alone in the role of a mere Chinese or a mere Hungarian. As Kramsch argues despite the deep-seated belief in the equation of one language = one culture. Individuals, however, have multiple collective identities, which may not only change because of conversations with others, but may also conflict with each other (1998, 67).

Such a statement puts Chinese students' definition of their identity into an "imagined dilemma."⁴² As language proficiency increases over time, so do experiences of perceived identity, and students find that their perceptions of their identities are characterized by "imagined identities". This is because identity is not a natural fact, but depends on a cultural perception (Kramsch 1998, 67). Chinese people with Hungarian nationality living in the Hungarian circle of friends are legally Hungarian when they are with Hungarians but may prefer to be regarded as Chinese in actual interactions. This reflects the fluidity of identity: it depends on the context in which individuals find themselves and their different needs for identity. It really depends on which group she/he prefers to be identified with at the time. Identity also becomes fluid as one's perceptions and thoughts change. When confronted with the question of one's group affiliation, Chen, the interviewee, believes that

⁴² The "imagined dilemma" here refers to the inability of Chinese students to define themselves clearly or unsure when faced with identity issues, resulting in inner confusion and contradictions. Here, the source of confusion should often be limited to current knowledge and experience, so when faced with a new or unfamiliar situation, it may not be possible to imagine all possible solutions, leading to a dilemma in thinking.

I am not sure about my point of view on this matter because when I am with Hungarians, I don't feel that I am different in any way other than my looks are different from theirs, but when I go back home to my parents, the strong accent will bring me back to the feeling of China instantly. (Chen 2023)

Thus, identity is not fixed, but changes according to their life experiences, the improvement of their language skills and the social context in which they live. Interviewee Chen's point of view is very representative. She mentioned that when she interacted with Hungarians, she did not feel different from them, but when she returned home and spent time with her parents, the strong accent would immediately make her feel a sense of belonging to the "Chinese" identity. This experience reflects the fluidity of identity: it changes according to the social environment, cultural background and personal feelings of individuals. Identity is fluid: it changes with the social environment, cultural background and personal feelings of individuals.

There is some correspondence between perceptions of identity mobility and the results of the survey on respondents' attitudes towards the importance of identity in China. In the Hungarian Bilingual School's survey on "whether identity is important or not," however, it was shown that 41.86% of the respondents chose "neutral". This is followed by 25.58% of respondents who chose "more important" and only 18.6% who chose "very important." Comparatively speaking, the number of respondents who consider this status "not very important" or "not important at all" is relatively small, amounting to 6.98% respectively. The overall data show that most respondents do not have a strong sense of identity as Chinese students, probably reflecting their neutral experience of adapting to life in Hungary. This reflects the fact that Chinese students show adaptability and flexibility in a multicultural context. Or they have developed a flexible identity strategy to adapt to the Hungarian society in a multicultural environment. They can navigate through different cultural contexts without completely cutting off their Chinese cultural memories or become totally attached to a single identity.

They were actively involved in various activities about Chinese culture organised by the school, showing great enthusiasm in exploring their identity. According to the data, the participation in Chinese cultural activities organised by the school shows a clear tendency: 46.51% of the respondents said ‘often’, which indicates that the majority of students have a positive attitude towards these activities and are willing to participate in them. Secondly, 23.26% of the respondents indicated that they participated ‘occasionally,’ which means that some students are interested in participating in the activities to a certain extent, but the frequency is low. Comparatively speaking, the proportions of respondents who chose ‘seldom participate’ and ‘never participate’ are smaller, 16.28% and 13.95% respectively, which indicates that the majority of students have at least had the experience of participating in Chinese cultural activities. This shows their concern and recognition of Chinese culture.

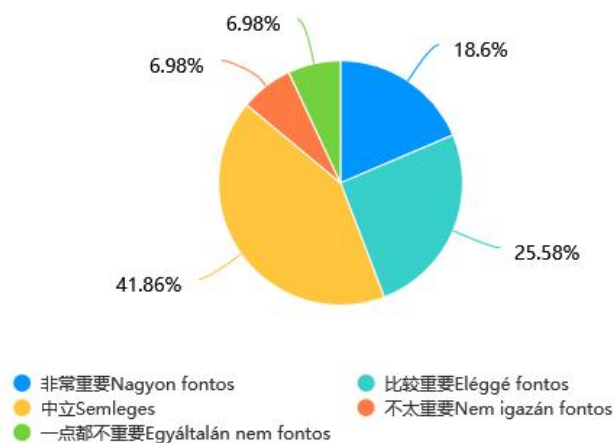


Figure 33: The Results of the Survey on the Importance of Identity as a Chinese Student

Living in Hungary

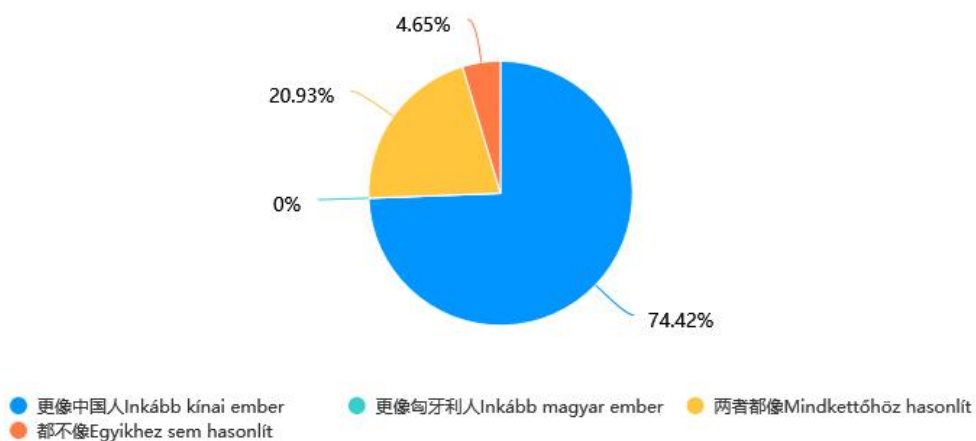


Figure 34: Results On Whether One Is More Chinese Or More Hungarian

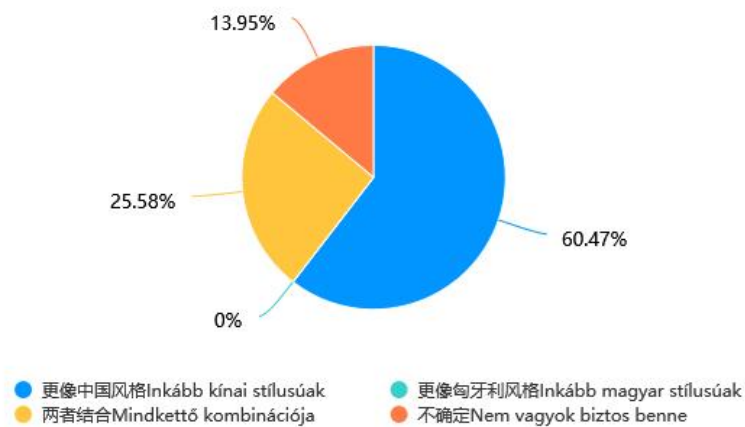


Figure 35: Results of the Study on Whether Parents' Parenting Style at Home More Chinese or Hungarian Style

It also shows a high degree of adaptation of Chinese students in the Hungarian multicultural context, which does not aim at erasing cultural memories from Chinese students. On the contrary, Chinese students continue to play a role in their personal identity species through factors such as Chinese language acquisition, Chinese-style family habits, etc. as a strong potential support for cultural identity. As in response to the question of “whether their parents’ education is more Chinese or Hungarian,” the results of the study show that 60.47% of Chinese students believe that they receive a more Chinese style of education at home. 25.58 % of the students thought that their home education was a combination of both. 13.85% of the students were not sure how to define the kind of homeschooling they are receiving. No students thought their homeschooling was ‘more like the Hungarian style.’ This result further validates the ability of Chinese students to maintain a deep and strong identification with Chinese culture in a multicultural context. As Chen said about his parents’ language education for his early childhood:

There is a very famous song in Fujian -Success comes to those who strive - that almost everyone knows. My parents played me a CD from China when I was very

young, and my father had it on the player in his car. The lyrics were very impressive.

‘Three parts are destined; seven parts depend on hard work.’

‘It’s only through hard work that you can succeed.’ (Interviewee singing) (Chen 2023)

Chen also added that until today, Fujianese would chant this song whenever we are in various gatherings. It is a common memory for us Fujianese and a true portrayal of the Fujianese spirit of hard work (Chen 2023).

By actively participating in Chinese cultural activities and preserving the tradition of Chinese-style family education, Chinese students further strengthen their sense of belonging to their own culture. This cultural identity is not in conflict with identity mobility, but rather reflects a dynamic balance: they are able to adapt to the Hungarian social environment while maintaining a deep connection to Chinese culture through language, customs and family education. This suggests that in multicultural integration, cultural memory is not only an important support for identity, but also a central force for their adaptability and flexibility. As Maurice Halbwachs argues, memory is a remodelling mechanism through which the self can be reconstructed, “we keep memories of all periods of our lives, which keep resurfacing; through them, as if through a continuum of relationships, our sense of identity survives throughout our lives” (2002, 82).

In this dynamic balance, language plays a key role as an important framework for memory. Because memory travels back and forth between the past and reality, parts may be repeated over and over again, parts are erased and wiped out, and parts are broken and reorganised. Specifically, “the framework of linguistic recollection is not the body, but social interaction. Halbwachs has clarified that memories are constructed in linguistic communication with others and their memories. We recall much of what we can find opportunities to tell. Telling is an exhaustive encoding, a translation that makes the experience into a story” (2012, 149). This suggests that the use of language plays an integral role in the transmission of cultural identity and memory.

It follows that language acquisition is not only an important way for Chinese students to remain connected to Chinese culture in their interactions with their homeschooling families, but also a port of call to touch Chinese traditions and culture more directly. By this port it has become a key player in re-identifying, integrating and reconstructing Chinese identity.

Specifically, when answering the question "Are you more like the Chinese or the Hungarians?", most people (74.42%) thought they were more like the Chinese, no one thought they were more like the Hungarians, 20.93% thought they were more like these two countries, and 4.65% thought they were more like either of the two countries. As can be seen from the data, the perception of one's similarity to a Chinese person is absolutely dominant among those who participated in the survey. This explains why most Chinese students still maintain their fundamental identification with Chinese culture. Even in a different social environment, language learning and use, as well as other factors (family education, cultural memory), are still shaping their deep connection with Chinese traditions in Hungary, a multicultural country.

20.93% of people think they belong to both countries at the same time, and 4.65% think they belong to neither country. This confusion is a concrete manifestation of the fluidity of identity verification. The dynamics and complexity of identity show that they are trying to strike a balance between the two cultures. In other words, their understanding of their identity is not stopped, but in a suspended state.

As an important carrier of traditional Chinese culture, Chinese character thinking plays an important mediating role in Chinese students' identity mobility. On the one hand, Chinese characters provide Chinese students with the foundation of their cultural identity through language and writing, through their visualisation features and the philosophical connotations they contain. No matter where you grew up, as long as you are Chinese, thinking in Chinese characters provides a view of Chinese culture when facing the issue of cultural identity. On the other hand, Chinese character thinking shows great adaptability and flexibility in the face of multiculturalism. In the context of multiculturalism, Chinese characters are not just symbols of cultural memory, but also provide deep thinking support for the dynamics of Chinese students' identity.

In the process of intercultural interaction, new immigrants and old immigrants show significantly different characteristics. Although the new immigrants have broken through the boundary limitations in intercultural interaction, which is reflected in language learning and cultural adaptation. However, the cognitive differences between new immigrants and old immigrants have not disappeared. This difference stems from the fact that the acquisition of Chinese characters establishes a boundary of cultural identity between native speakers in Hungarian-Chinese schools and those who are not proficient in Chinese. In other words, students who are fluent in Chinese in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school are more able to engage more deeply with Chinese culture through the acquisition of Chinese characters, whereas students with weak language skills have difficulties in establishing the depth of their cultural identity. These are several effects that make it impossible for Chinese students to constantly re-negotiate their diasporic identities and readjust their Chinese identity.

It was found that Chinese students' identities are not fixed, and that the perception of identity comes not only from language acquisition but also from the perception of culture, which is closely related to family education, and one's own cultural memory. But whatever the reason, migrants renegotiate and recreate their diasporic identities. In the process of adapting to the life of transnational migrants and integrating into the local society, the diasporic identity of new immigrants presents strategic and situational characteristics. These characteristics are reflected in the fact that while maintaining their attachment to their country of origin (China), new migrants have different understandings of their own 'Chineseness', resulting in a mixed and fluid identity.

Conclusion: Flow, Hybridization, Reconstruction - Dynamic Practices of Non-Stop Identity Formation

Memory as a Tool for Analysis

In my dissertation, memory appears at the beginning and end of my thesis as a tool for my argument. I try to take the application of cultural memory in the framework of Chinese

diaspora studies as a foothold, use the conceptual evolution of identity as a basis for theoretical construction of the paradigm of memory, the construction of identity and its interrelationships, and conduct research through fieldwork.

It is specifically framed as follows: the theoretical scope of the full paper is framed by talking about the keywords diaspora, Chineseness, and traveling culture. Then, using mobility as the problematic situation and starting from people's different interpretations of memory, the research space is focused on Hungary Chinese Bilingual School as a memory space. In this memory space, I observe the relationship between Chinese students' memories and identity mobility in order to explore the dilemma of Chinese students' identities.

The main function of cultural memory in this essay is to "position identity." On the one hand, it ensures cultural continuity (transmission) through the preservation of collective knowledge passed on from generation to generation. Furthermore, Cultural memory is an important tool for group members to re-identify and reaffirm their group identity by constructing a common past. Thus, cultural memory becomes an excellent entry point for this study to talk about identity. Cultural memory describes coherence in this process. This coherence preserves and inscribes the past life of the Chinese diaspora in memory, activates and reorganizes it as it migrates, and incorporates it into the semantics of the present society (Asmann 1997, 16).

Cultural memory, as a tool for identity positioning, not only ensures cultural continuity through the preservation and transmission of Chinese culture, but also continuously adapts to new contexts in the process of memory reorganization. The coherence of memory is closely linked to the fluidity of "home". Just as memory is able to integrate past experiences into the present, diasporic "home" is redefined in the process of mobility. In my dissertation, the diaspora's home is transformed from a fixed geographical location into a container of identity. Thus, in the case of the Hungarian diaspora, cultural memory and the fluidity of "home" are closely related, and together they contribute to the dynamic construction of identity.

The Concept of a 'Traveling Home' in the Theoretical Practice of Identity Construction

In my dissertation, I argue that modern diasporic life is inseparable from traveling. And I cite Clifford's notion of "traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-travelling" to point out that "home" is closely related to the establishment of individual identity (Clifford 1992, 108). So home is not necessarily the place one leaves but can also be a place one attaches to cultural identity (Tong 2006, 116). In this study, the case of the Chinese diaspora in Hungary goes beyond a single definition of "home" and is "in a continuous process of change and transformation" (Hall 2010, 4). Behind the mobile home is a sign of the constant shifting of the Chinese diaspora's identity in Hungary, which prevents them from developing a fixed identity.

Their families initially constructed the Chinese diaspora's sense of home. Chinese family education enriches their imagination of home through the perception of their culture in China. After moving to Hungary, the Chinese diaspora started a new identity construction. The Chinese diaspora in Hungary sees the differences in their identity and refers to themselves as "outsiders." To integrate into the life of the host country, the "home" cultural attributes of the Chinese diaspora in Hungary have been blended with the artistic components of both Hungary and China.

In this process of integration, I argue that diaspora identity work is implicated in the understanding of the concept of "traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling" (Clifford 1992, 108). Starting from the identity of the Chinese diaspora in Hungary, the Chinese diaspora in Hungary differs from other migrant groups in the world in that they still maintain a separate identity as migrants. The Chinese diaspora in Hungary is not traditionally dispersed; they are not pursuing amphibianism and are no longer overly concerned with place, roots, and stability, nor is the home used as a symbol of cultural roots.

Their identity takes on a non-fixed form as they move through the places of their home. As Bhabha argues, the dispersed are unharmed, but because of the "unhomely," the dispersed are not in fact homeless (Bhabha 1994, quoted in Tong 2006, 123). For the Chinese diaspora, home becomes an object or an idea that has special significance as a marker of identity (Dam 2018, 111).

For the Chinese diaspora in Hungary, their migration routes are more complex; they may move through several countries before landing in Hungary. Today, a significant part of them

maintains the character of constant travelers—they always keep the habit of visiting China or other countries in stages. According to the results of the field research, Hungary may not have been their final settlement. In this process, they are constantly searching for a home, which takes on the appearance of mobility. Home is not a fixed place for them, but a place where they carry their memories of home from the past.

The “mobility” of Chinese diaspora life implies an inability of identify positioning in the space of "home." Traveling allows the Chinese diaspora to move out of the space of the home and explore more space. "This space is the last thing one would expect to find at home" (Ho 2012, 39). Traveling thus becomes a way of defining space for the self (Tao 2008, 97). Chinese diaspora's travels have gradually enabled them to define their cultural identity positioning within social space.

At the beginning of my study, I noted that the traveling nature of the Chinese diaspora's home provides a theoretical basis for talking about the mobility of identity. To further observe the changing identities of the Chinese diaspora in Hungary, I chose Chinese students from a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school as the subjects of my study. The identity problem of this group is particularly significant because they inherit the traveling nature of the Chinese diaspora group and the mobility of their identity. The Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, however, plays the role of an East-West cultural crossroads, providing a unique cultural space for this research. Chinese students' identity work may be more easily observed in the context of a combination of educational activities and social adaptation. As a result of the fieldwork, Chinese students' perplexing tendency towards identity stems from the emergence of imbalance issues at different aspects. This is manifested in the following:

1. The imbalance of Chinese immigrants' choice of settlement preference. There are two trends in Chinese immigrants' choice of residence, one of which is characterized by a sense of compulsion and helplessness, and the other by a sense of initiative in choosing residence according to one's own needs as one's economic power rises. Bowlby John's attachment theory suggests that an individual's affective tendencies and his or her contact with the outside world tend to begin with absolute dependency on familiar situations, followed by a gradual shift from a primitive condition of absolute dependency on familiar situations to one

of independence and autonomy (1982, 228-229). I borrowed this theory to explain the choice preferences of Chinese immigrants in Hungary to live in specific neighborhoods. Their residential areas are generally centered on the places where the first immigrants lived, such as the Sihu Market in the early days to the European Square and Chinatown in the later years. Although these immigrant neighborhoods provide immigrants with places of psychological and emotional dependence, this kind of “labeling” of immigrant neighborhoods has inadvertently exacerbated the gap between the cultures of different countries.

The Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, as a cultural space for multicultural cohesion, offers the possibility of solving this problem. As I pointed out in the previous chapters, the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School is independent of other private bilingual schools in terms of the nature of the school. It is the only officially accredited public bilingual school in Hungary. The cultural equality of the Hungarian and Chinese languages is officially regulated in this school. Thus, in this space, the negotiation of hybrid cultural subjects is given a stronger institutional guarantee, and the officially recognized equality creates a unique environment for cultural negotiation and dialogue. Kristen Maclean emphasizes that the space for negotiation of cultural hybridity needs to be a place where there are no implicit or explicit power relations to reinforce any narrative or discourse; all individuals and interest groups must transcend the past. advocacy groups must move beyond previous preconceptions of the other and listen to others in good faith (Maclean 2015, 193). In the school, the dialogues between the newcomer Chinese immigrants and the natives are also the process of negotiating between Chinese and local cultures, and in essence, produce hybrid cultural spaces of negotiated identities.

In addition, the school was initially established to help Chinese students to better integrate into Hungarian life. The purpose of the school is closely related to the needs of Chinese immigrants. Thus, the school provides a space for the exchange of Chinese culture with the culture of the host country. In this space, intercultural communication is actively practiced, offering new possibilities for the identity work of the Chinese immigrant community.

2. The lack of language education in the host country affects the process of integrating Chinese students from immigrant backgrounds into the host culture. Language, as the most important communicative tool for human beings, “is a complex system of symbols and a tool for human beings to think and convey information” (Xing 2002, 2). Language reflects not only what people think, but also how they think and the depth of their thinking (Li and Yang 1993, 93). Not only that, language responds to its corresponding culture, and one of the ways in which this is manifested is in lexical content or vocabulary (Ember and Ember 1988, 68). In other words, the content of the lexicon and vocabulary are not only tools for human beings to convey information and thinking but also become important carriers and centers of culture. Language thus plays a key role in the construction and identification of identity. Language not only helps individuals and groups to locate themselves in the culture but also reflects the group's cultural identity at the same time. Language is thus a key and indispensable factor in the study of diaspora identity.

As I noted in the chapter, Chinese and Hungarian are taught as official languages in Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school. Chinese can be the language of examination as an official language. Although the current schools emphasize the common status of bilingualism, students of Chinese origin with a weak knowledge of Hungarian are often excluded from the mainstream group of the school due to the lack of education of Chinese immigrants about the language of the host country. The contradiction created by the lack of education in the host country's language and the fidelity to the mother tongue creates an obstacle to the identity work of Chinese students.

Thus, the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school provides a space to study the impact of the degree of language acquisition on identity work. As a space that recognizes Chinese and Hungarian as official languages, it both preserves the possibility of cultural identity support in the mother tongue for Chinese students and attempts to help Chinese immigrants to better integrate into mainstream Hungarian culture through the teaching of the host country's language.

At the same time language acquisition is itself a memory practice. Linguistic differences and relationships constitute meaning and identity (Morley and Robins 1995, 45). Memory is

also constructed in a fluid manner through such comparison and interaction. I have argued that the school not only serves as a vehicle for memory but also as a site for the dynamic practice of memory. In my dissertation, I address the rationalization of school space as a space for memory. Starting from Pierre Nora's concept of the memory site, I talked about the three fields of memory presented in schools, namely the material field of memory, the symbolic field of memory, and the functional field of memory (1989, 18). By examining the three fields of memory, I found that mobility became the main feature regardless of the spatial representation of memory.

Mobility as a strategy for identity work

The mobility of memory practices not only acts as the process of cultural reproduction in the school space but also has a profound impact on the individual's perception of identity. In Hungarian-Chinese bilingual schools, the characteristics of dynamic practices of memory form an intertwined relationship with the mobility of Chinese students' identities, providing new analytical perspectives for Chinese students to perceive their changing identities.

In the case of this study, I use the term "dilemma of belonging" to describe the problem that I want to address in this subchapter - the confusion of Chinese students' perceptions of identity belonging. When there is a need for identity among expatriates, it means that there is an individual cognitive imbalance in the group. When Chinese immigrants ask themselves the question, "Who am I?", it is not only an act of self-inquiry by the migrants but also a questioning of their identity by the host country's native population, asking, "Who are you?". Migrants are compelled to answer these questions for themselves, as it implies whether and how they will be able to negotiate and integrate into the new community.

When Chinese students immigrate to Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, their self-perception begins to change, unlike their education in their homeland. After a brief period of emotional and geographical dislocation, they became "ex-centric natives" (Clifford 1997, 25). Their identities did not stop flowing because their self-perceptions were constantly under liquid construction. As Bauman argues self-identity essentially requires the aid of self-pointing in order to be accomplished (Bauman 2005, 16-17). That is to say, individuals

cannot rely on distancing themselves from others in the group or creating differences but have to resort to a reconceptualization of their self-perception.

In this study, I involved in the articulation of Chineseness. The reason for this is that for Chinese immigrants, Chineseness is considered to be an innate perception. It is closely related to their ongoing experience of being shared with Chinese history and culture. Despite the fact that some Chinese students were born in Hungary, according to the results of the questionnaire, they are still influenced by their family education to actively participate in Chinese family gatherings and Chinese festivals. At school they are constantly educated about Chinese culture and the Chinese language. These Chinese cultural activities actively reproduce Chineseness, bringing their memories into the present and rethinking “who I am.” No matter what the situation is, they keep on firmly denying that they are Hungarian, despite the fact that some of them are already legally Hungarian. This active or passive participation in Chinese cultural activities is interwoven with the fluidity of memory, which implicitly reinforces their identification with Chinese culture. These cultural experiences acted on their identity perceptions in the long term. In the words of Singaporean scholar Sung Ming Soon, Chinese diasporas develop a psychological and emotional bonding with China, that is, through the internalization of the psyche, they encompass this external object within the ‘self’ and become part of the self. As a result, subconsciously, one sees oneself as part of the object and acts as part of the object (Song 1980, 225). Thus, Chinese diaspora continues to contribute to the change of diasporic identity through the centripetal effect of “Chineseness”. In this study, the fluidity of memory mediates the persistence of Chineseness in the diaspora’s identity, making Chineseness an important component of identity. Chineseness not only became a central part of Chinese students’ identities, but also prompted them to redefine the composition of their identities. As J. G. Droysen points out, the memory of the past is the key to group identity. The creation of group identity is based on experiences that occurred in the past, and its central point is to provide individuals with a basis for self-understanding and solidarity (1997, 10, 45).

In addition, the dynamic nature of memory also keeps individual cognition multiple and open. In this study, the fluidity of memory allows the concept of “Chineseness” to be

constantly enriched. Not only that, but Chinese diasporas also create new memories in new environments. They see the Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school as a “contact zone” between old and new identities, “a space in which they recognize and confirm their own identity” (Friedman 2014, 22). However, it is important to recognize that mobility is not the same as chaos, and that mobility itself needs to be supported by multiple stabilizations, i.e. moorings. In this case, the bilingual school plays the role of mooring. The relationship between mobility and moorings acted to emerge as an unfixed, fluid cognition (Urry qtd. in Outhwaite and Ray [2005, 127]). Therefore, we need to find a universally accepted way of balancing between different subjects and negotiating identities.

In my dissertation, I discuss how the process of memory re-generation and identity is closely related to the degree of language acquisition and use. The reconstruction of memory is essentially a process of constructing and narrating individual linguistic symbols. The degree of language acquisition thus directly affects the symbolic construction of memory. As Maurice Halbwachs pointed out when talking about the effects of aphasia on the construction of memory, the problem of aphasic people is not the absence of memory, but the lack of the ability to comprehend and socialize conventional symbols (Halbwachs 1925, 76-77, qtd. in Erll [2010, 143]). And language is a key part of helping people organize, understand, and communicate their memories.

Memory is thus built into human verbal communication. Much of what a person remembers is expressed through the language in which it is told. The degree of language acquisition also decisively influences the construction of memory. In this case, the Chinese students’ memories were reproduced and expressed through Chinese language acquisition and textualized Chinese (e.g., calligraphy texts). However, the degree of language acquisition also establishes differences in cultural identity between Hungarian-Chinese school students and those who are not familiar with Chinese characters.

To argue for this difference, I talk about the role of Chinese character thinking in memory mobility in my dissertation. I argue that Chinese characters provide the basis for Chinese students to construct their identities through their visualization and the philosophical connotations they contain. At the same time, in the face of multiculturalism in schools,

Chinese character thinking shows great adaptability and flexibility, providing deep thinking support for Chinese students' identity dynamics. As Maurice Halbwachs emphasizes, any memory arises from the way a group acquires knowledge, focusing on how it is exchanged and shared (Assmann 1999, 132, qtd. in Erll 2010). Chinese character acquisition helps Chinese students to find their place in a multicultural context and also promotes the possibility of cultural negotiation.

From my interviews with many Chinese students, I realized that, for them, the negotiation of culture does not have a fixed process and does not even really end. When it comes to questions of identity, the word “mobility” appears frequently in their answers. For the question “Who am I?”, the word “fluid” was interpreted as “the most apt description.” Such answers were often followed by a sense of relief as if the word “mobility” had become an important tool for understanding and accepting the complexity of their identity.

As the spatial memory of school is an important component of identity, Chinese students' anxiety in the process of identity construction is reflected in the fact that they keep swinging between their own culture and the host culture. The “relationality discourse” developed from the discourse of contradictory subject positions gives another way of thinking about identity discourse. To understand their identity, it is necessary to relate it to other frames of reference, such as the construction of individual memories, the extent to which Chineseness is visible, and the definition of immigrants' “home,” etc. All the identities embodied in Chinese students are the same. All identities embodied in the Chinese students are interrelated and are not “a fluid essence” but “something fluid” (Friedman 2014, 26). This fluidity of identity is constructed from “different points of reference and the material conditions of history” (Friedman 2014, 28).

Furthermore, the flux of identities is contextual, as the examination of identities behind the discourse needs to be geopolitical. Friedman points out that by “traveling” to another country, people re-examine their “homeland” from an external perspective, thus making it less familiar (2014, 156). Chinese immigrants see their life in Hungary as a journey of sorts, thus reconciling the contradiction between the native and the other, no longer seeing the native or

the other as opposing poles, which also means that their anxiety about identity construction is slowly being cleared up in a way that they have found themselves to be able to rely on.

In this study, Chinese immigrants want to establish their identity position through the “contact zone” (Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school), which seeks difference and homogeneity, and to experience the world from their own unique space. In an intercultural environment, Chinese migrants’ identities cannot be uniformly defined. Their identity can be viewed as a vapor structure, shaped by the constant negotiation and interaction of multicultural forces, which in turn shapes the creativity of diasporic cultural integration.

The diasporic identities of new immigrants exhibit strategic and contextual features. This is because, while maintaining their attachment to their country of origin (China), new immigrants have different understandings of their own “Chineseness” based on the memory embodied in these characteristics, resulting in a hybrid and fluid identity.

Along with the fluid nature of identity, the cultural fragments of immigrants form a mixed whole. Although the various cultural fragments are superficially fused into a whole, there is always conflict within them. To a large extent, migrants have only acquired the appearance of an identity with homogeneity, but in reality, they are a mixture of different discourses, voices, habits or needs, a collage of individuals made up of a combination of multiple cultural identities and self-identities. This seems to imply that immigrants become a sort of “all-inclusive” assemblage as they gradually depart from earlier modes of existence and imitate those of others (Gergen 1991, 71).

Nevertheless, the identity of the Chinese students still reveals “in-between, hybrid, ambiguous” (Bhabha 1994) qualities. However, unlike Bhabha’s notion of “in-between,” Chinese diaspora identity in Hungary is more complex. Migrants always try to find a transcendental spiritual belonging that is “de-territorialized” and “de-identified,” but the collision and intersection of two (or more) cultures essentially plunges them into new confusions and wanderings.

Therefore, based on the complexity of the Hungarian-Chinese diaspora community in cross-cultural integration, the identity of Chinese students may also be “in-among.” their identity is not just in the middle of two cultures (in-between), but also complexly navigating

and intermingling between multiple cultures (in-among). This state of affairs goes beyond a simple cultural sandwich to a multidimensional and multilayered interaction of cultural integration.

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Research Ethics and Ethical Considerations

This research strictly adheres to ethical standards in academic research, with key ethical practices outlined below:

1. Adherence to the Principle of Informed Consent

I provided participants with a Statement of Consent for each interview, participant observation, or questionnaire administration. This document informed participants about the research content, confidentiality, and procedures. Research commenced only after participants signed written consent. This study was conducted entirely voluntarily.

2. Adherence to Confidentiality

All names appearing in the article are replaced with surnames or obscured using pseudonyms.

Interview recordings, transcripts, and notes are stored on an encrypted hard drive accessible only to the author.

Data will be permanently deleted upon completion of the research.

3. Reflective Statement

As an integral part of the research methodology, the researcher maintains continuous self-reflection and exercises caution throughout the data collection process. This commitment aims to ensure fair and impartial research outcomes.

Appendix: List of Figures



Figure 1: Examples Demonstrated by the Teacher to Students in The Chinese Painting Class



Figure 2: Teacher Provides Individual Guidance on Traditional Chinese Painting Techniques



Figure 3: Teachers Deliver Lessons to Students Through Audiovisual Materials and Practical Demonstrations



Figure 4: The Teacher Demonstrated to the Students How to Use the Drawing Tools

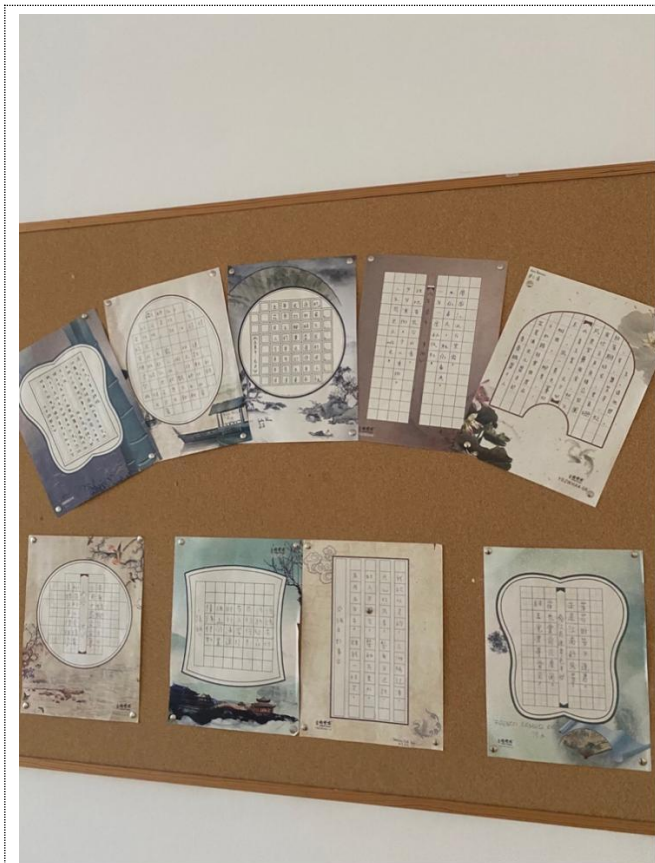


Figure 5: Student Chinese Character Writing Showcase



Figure 6: Confucius Classroom Sign at the School



Figure 7: The Stage in the School Lobby

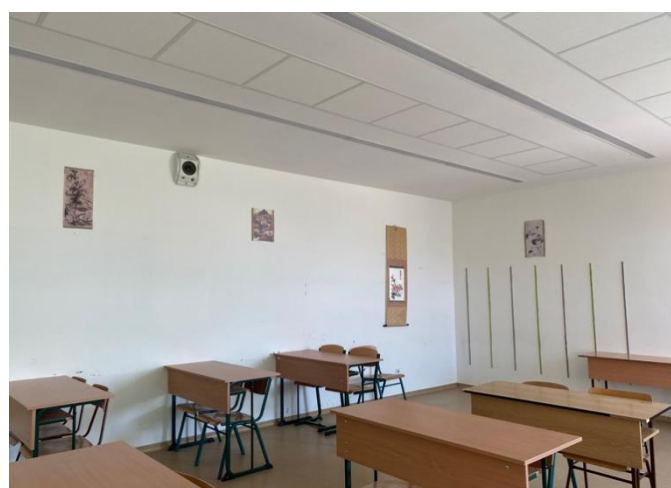


Figure 8: The Classroom Decorated with Chinese Paintings



Figure 9: Students Tied Ribbons onto the Flags Representing Their Graduation at The Graduation Dance



Figure 10: Students Singing for the Commemorative Event



Figure 11: The Banner Representing Graduation



Figure 12: The School Lobby



Figure 13: Graduation Parade



Figure 14: Tie a Ribbon Bearing the Class Motto to the Graduation Flag



Figure 15: Decorate The Stage for The School' s 20th Anniversary Celebration



Figure 16: Students Perform a Chinese-Themed Dance to Celebrate the School' s 20th Anniversary



Figure 17: Students Performed a Xinjiang Dance to Celebrate the School' s 20th Anniversary



Figure 18: Graduation Banner