



# “檳城夜香工友 的生命地景”

## The Lives of Penang Night Soil Workers

李嘉霓 Lee Cheah Ni

Source by Sin Chew Daily

# 檳城夜香工友的生命地景 The Lives of Penang Night Soil Workers

李嘉霓 Lee Cheah Ni  
陽明交通大學 亞際文化研究碩士生  
Master student,  
International Master's Program in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, NYCU

## 摘要

2017年我和當時組成的團隊與夜香工友以視覺再現的創作方法共同完成了《去污：檳城夜香工友勞動記錄 (Purge: Documenting the Labours of Penang's Night Soil Workers)》(簡稱：《去污 (Purge)》)計劃。此計畫透過約30多分鐘長的紀錄片來重現這段不被重視的城市公共衛生史和工友們的生命故事，也將彙整的口述訪談和資料展示於所設立的線上檔案館。

此次田野則嘗試從夜香工友勞動路徑中所曾遭逢的人事物，希望更貼近他們的多感官認知，並延伸看到勞動的身體所承載的、於地方的實踐，以及其交織而成的生命地景。以人類學家 Tim Ingold 所提出的“走動式 (Walking)”田野方法，關注走動的身體、工友們腳下的足跡和他們依靠移動勞作所走出的生命路徑。由工友阿朱伯帶領，我尾隨著他們的腳步，啟程回到過去生活的“潮興公司 (Teoh Heng Kongsi)”，再跟著工友搭上運輸糞穢的“36門車”穿梭在喬治市中。在吉林仔和文叔的陪伴下，從兒子的視角出發，走在過去他們父親的工作路徑。

田野初步的成果，除了報導人侃侃而談父輩南遷的路徑和過去生活的點滴，也遇見了沈默不語、止步不前的路。作為員工宿舍的“潮興公司”，原來還是工友接濟同鄉的地方，更是過去喬治市苦力的集合點。工友非常熟悉溜口的工作路徑則帶我們看到了喬治市面貌的發展與變化，而透過兒子視角為我們勾勒出市政府管治以外的地區，看見他們與父親在崎嶇不平的路上挑著扁擔勞作。夜香工友其實身兼多職，涉略其他的勞力工作，也透過與中國的網路進行兩地的貨物買賣等。緊跟著工友的腳步，出現在前方的是交疊、複雜、多重且不同跨度的路徑。

關鍵字：檳城，夜香工友，走動，路徑，生命地景

# The Lives of Penang Night Soil Workers

## Abstract

In 2017, we completed the project “Purge: Documenting the Labours of Penang’s Night Soil Workers” in collaboration with a documentation team and a group of night soil workers. In the form of visual representation, we presented the overlooked history of urban sanitation and the untold stories of the workers in a 30-minute documentary. We also established an online archive to curate oral histories and artifacts.

Our ensuing field research attempts to approach the workers’ multi-sensory experience through revisiting their work routes. We aim to map the lifescape of the night soil workers, whose sensory and bodily experience is formed as they engage in their daily practices in different parts of George Town. We adopted the “walking” field research methodology as proposed by the anthropologist Tim Ingold, focusing on the walking body, the footprints of the workers, and the life paths that they shaped through their labour. We were led by our main informant night soil worker, Uncle Zhu, into the past of Teoh Heng Kongsì. We roamed the streets of George Town with the workers on the “36-door truck” which was used to transport excretions. We were also accompanied by Uncle Keling and Uncle Boon to revisit the routes of their fathers, through the viewpoint of the sons of former night soil workers.

In the initial findings of the field research, apart from the migration experience and life histories of their forefathers generously shared by the informant night soil worker, we have also encountered the unspoken and the untold. Teoh Heng Kongsì is not only a hostel for workers, it is also where they host their fellow countrymen, as well as a gathering place for the coolies of George Town. The work route which the workers are familiar with also reveal to us the changes and development of George Town. The viewpoint of the sons helps to map areas outside of George Town which they had once plodded alongside their fathers laden with shoulder-poles. Night soil workers often took on many jobs, tried their hand in many areas, and partook in many trades through their network of associates in China. Following the footsteps of the night soil workers, we embark on a journey that is intertwined, complex, manifold and multitudinous.

Keywords: Penang, Night Soil Worker, Walking, Routes, Lifescape