British Policy Towards the Chinese in the Straits Settlements: Protection and Control 1877-1900 (With Special Reference To Singapore)

by

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Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

Chapter 1. Introduction

A. Methodological considerations pg.1

B. Historical Background pg.4

C. The Problem pg.17

Chapter 2. A Policy of Protection and Control: 1877-1900 pg.66

Chapter 3. Relations with the Chinese Consulate pg.135

Chapter 4. The Straits Government and the Chinese Consulate-General: A Deteriorating Relationship: 1891-1894 pg.179

Chapter 5. British Policy Vis-a-vis the Chinese and China Politics: 1895-1900 pg.239

Conclusion pg.291

Appendices pg.301

Bibliography pg.330

Appendices

Appendix 1	Rules for the Society for the Protection of Women and Children	pg.301
Appendix 2	Regulations for the Guidance of The Chinese Advisory Board, Singapore	pg.303
Appendix 3A	Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor of H.B.M.'s Straits Settlements forbidding the Masters of Chinese Tongkangs to apply to their Consul for sailing certificates	pg. 306
Appendix 3B	A Humble Petition Presented by Owners of Tongkangs and Boats Residing within the Jurisdiction of the Straits Government	pg. 307
Appendix 4	Revised Opium Regulations	pg. 309
Appendix 5	Summary of Petition to Consul-General	pg. 310
Appendix 6	Translation given by Huang, Consul-General, on the subject of Transit Dues	pg. 312
Appendix 7	Statement by Chua Bun Po of Chop "Sui Chiang Seng"	pg. 313
Appendix 8	Abridged translation of a Memorial by Minister Hsüeh recommending the abolition of certain old prohibitions so as to encourage Chinese subjects to return to China	pg. 314
Appendix 9	Names of Chinese officials who have come to the Straits to sell official titles and honours	pg. 318
Appendix 10	Remarks by Mr. G.T. Hare	pg. 322

Abstract

This dissertation is basically an examination of the development and formulation of British policy, in terms of protection and control, towards the ethnic Chinese in the Straits Settlements during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. An attempt is also made to evaluate that policy.

The British had established themselves in the Straits primarily for commercial and economic objectives and had encouraged large scale Chinese immigration as a means of developing their newly acquired possessions. However as soon as the Chinese population reached a significant number problems of a complex nature emerged. The colonial authorities had had little experience in governing an alien population whose customs, traditions, systems and methods they had no conception of. There was cause for concern when it was realised that unless the Chinese were governed in an effective and knowledgeable manner, they could pose a threat to British presence in the area. One result of this concern was the establishment of the Chinese Protectorate which in general proved to be an especially effective government agency of control. Another result was the establishment of the Chinese Consulate which was conceived originally as a valuable ally in the containment of unruly Chinese elements. The irony of this assumption was that the consulate's activities developed to the detriment of British interests and became suspect. A major part of this study is the analysis of British reaction to the problems posed by the Chinese.

A successful British policy would have had far-reaching implications and importance but the issues involved were only partially resolved and the situation was to deteriorate in the 1920s and 1930s.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCWCSL	Ch'ing-chi wai-chiao shih-liao
CO	Colonial Office
COD	Colonial Office Despatches
CPIWSM	Ch'ou-pan i-wu shih-mo
ARCP	Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate
ARIGP	Annual Report of the Inspector-General of Police
FO	Foreign Office
GD	Governor's Despatches
HKGG	Hong Kong Government Gazette
JIA	Journal of the Indian Archipelago
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSBRAS	Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSEAH	Journal of South East Asian History
OAG	Officer Administering the Government
SCM	Straits Chinese Magazine
SFP	Singapore Free Press
S of S	Secretary of State
SS	Straits Settlements
SSGG	Straits Settlements Government Gazette
SSLCP	Straits Settlements Legislative Council Proceedings
SSR	Straits Settlements Records
THHL	Tung-hua hsu-lu

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Methodological Considerations

1. The Scope of this Study

The nineteenth century British Empire was demographically diverse and lacked either ethnic, geographical or cultural cohesion; and nowhere were these factors more in evidence than in the Straits Settlements, an area acquired through a method resembling that known to commerce as the 'hire-purchase' system. Since mid-Victorian Britain, like other colonial powers of the day, enjoyed the advantage of an unchallenged title to rule over dependent peoples, the British were unconscious of restraints other than those which were self-imposed. Throughout most of the British Empire and in relation to the method of governing the various ethnic groups, the British had from the outset adapted a practice of indirect rule or a policy of institutional tolerance whereby the administration of government was through the medium of existing institutions. But this institutional tolerance had its shortcomings as well as its aberrations, especially in economic matters. For this reason, British policy reluctantly shifted to one more realistic direct rule within the system of representative government.

In the Straits Settlements, the so-called representative government was introduced after the area became a Crown Colony, but this was in fact only authoritarian government in disguise since there was no surrender of imperial control. Representative government conferred no responsibilities on the accredited representatives - it only conceded the right of suggestion or remonstrance, and it was never intended to foreshadow any real transfer of power from the home

government to some local authority. The granting of legislative authority to unofficial representatives of local interests, on the other hand, provided a useful restraint on the actions of any governor. It also gave officialdom access to useful local knowledge so that the colonial government could implement the stable constitutional development of the Colony. In matters of policy-decision, friction between the home government and the colonial government was not infrequent -- although a governor could become restive under directives and restraints from London which he considered to be ill-judged, he was nevertheless expected to obey them. Where the Colonial Office did not exert strong pressure, a governor was free to use his initiative in formulating policy. The main concern of the home government regarding the Colony's economic development was with continuous vigilance rather than with continuous interference. In short, the British Government's anxiety was with the maintenance of the Colony's internal security so that the growth of economic enterprise and prosperity would not be hindered.

This thesis is a case study of how the British reacted to a specific problem after it had been identified in the Straits during the third-quarter of the nineteenth century. Since the common denominator of both the British and the Chinese presence in the Colony was for economic gain, the security-conscious British authorities were understandably concerned with the emergence of a Chinese problem which, if unresolved, could result in a disruptive force and jeopardise the British presence in the area. In view of this generalization, an attempt has been made to demonstrate how the British policy of protection and control towards the Chinese was evolved under direct and indirect internal as well as external pressure.

The scope of this study is limited by the definition of the Chinese problem itself. Initially, the British officials were confronted with the inter-related problems of Chinese immigration and Chinese secret societies but a further problem emerged after the establishment of the Chinese Consulate. The limits of the period chosen have been

dictated on the one hand by the creation of the Chinese Protectorate and the Chinese Consulate in 1877, and on the other by the rapid changes which resulted from the advent of active China politics to the Straits in the years immediately after 1900.

2. A Note on the Evaluation of Sources

In the preparation of this study, use has been made of official manuscripts of the British Colonial Office, the British Foreign Office and the various Straits Settlements Government records, reports and gazettes; the limited availability of the Chinese official documents has also been advantageous. It should be noted that in several instances the General Despatches (both open and confidential) were not, for some unknown reason, included in the Public Records Office CO 273 Series. In view of this inadequacy, General Despatches have frequently been cited in the text instead of the CO 273 manuscripts. Although I have been able to obtain photostats and microfilms on a number of specific topics, Chinese official sources were not readily accessible.

A further source of valuable material was the English and Chinese press; but whereas the former is characterized by its reliability, the latter's accuracy in the 1880s and 1890s is frequently suspect. Certain English and Chinese journals and magazines were also found to be of particular value; most of the contemporary issues are satisfactory but those published in the late nineteenth century have to be used with a degree of discrimination.

Of the secondary sources, the most pertinent are the unpublished academic theses submitted to the University of Malaya (Singapore) and the Australian National University. The books in English and Chinese are, with a few exceptions, not particularly useful because they have been too general.*

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*This study was commenced a year before the publication of W. Blythe's: The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Historical Study (O.U.P. 1969); this work has been useful, but contains several not unimportant errors and omissions.

In the course of research for this subject, the sources consulted are located in the following places; the National Library of Australia, the National Library of Singapore, the University of Singapore Library, the Menzies Library (A.N.U.), the Nanyang University Library and the Straits Times Library in Singapore.

B. The Historical Background

An analysis of British policy towards the Chinese in the Straits Settlements in the period under discussion necessitates an understanding of the evolution of the policies of both the British and Chinese Governments towards the Chinese in Nanyang before 1877.

1. Background to the British and Chinese Positions in the Early Straits Settlements

Late eighteenth century trade between British India and China compelled Great Britain to explore the possibilities of establishing trading centres in the Straits of Malacca to prevent the Dutch from monopolizing trade in the Eastern Archipelago.[1] These objectives were realized between 1786 and 1824 when Britain took possession of Penang, Singapore and Malacca; in this way the nucleus of the Straits Settlements was formed, with Singapore being the centre of government after 1832. In 1858, the British East India Company was abolished and control of the Settlements was passed to the India Office. Transferred to the Colonial Office in 1867, they were then formally established as the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements.[2]

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1 C.E. Wurtzburg Raffles of the Eastern Isles (London, 1954) pp.461-4.

2 L.A. Mills British Malaya 1824-67 (London, 1966) Chpts 2-3.

The Chinese in South East Asia (also known as Nanyang Chinese),[1] arrived long before the Europeans.[2] Before the sixteenth century, Chinese traders sojourned in the Malay Peninsula for profitable commercial activities, and after 1511, during the Portuguese and Dutch rule of Malacca, large permanent settlements were set up by them.[3] Their numbers remained relatively insignificant (approximately 2,500 in 1750), but their economic status was growing when compared with that of other ethnic groups. The establishment of British power in the Straits was a landmark in the history of the Chinese in Nanyang because the Malay Peninsula became the central geographical focus of Chinese economic activity. Under a system of unrestricted immigration, a constant stream of Chinese came to the Peninsula and prevailing conditions in China later increased this to a significant influx. The increase in numbers coupled with an increasing rate of wealth moulded the Chinese into the most economically powerful ethnic group in the Straits' Asian population.

From the outset, the British promoted a liberal trade policy in the Straits Settlements,[4] an area which within a short time dominated all commerce in South East Asia.

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1 Nanyang 南洋 was originally an economic-geographic term which embraced the coastal areas of South East Asia, including the Philippine Islands and the whole of the Eastern Archipelago. This term placed emphasis on the sea trade routes with China. Feng (1937) said that the Indian Ocean or the Nanyang was formerly known as Nan Hai (南海 Southern Sea) or the Nan-hsi Hai (南西海 Southwestern Sea). The sea south of the Gulf of Siam was named Ch'ang Hai (漲海 The (洪英大辭典 and Matthews' Chinese-English Dictionary both list 漲海 to mean Gulf of Tonkin). Feng Ch'eng-chün (馮承鈞) Chung-kuo Nan-yang chiao-tung shih 中國南洋交通史 (Shangai, Commercial Press, 1937) p.91 (Chung-kuo wen-hua-chih tsung-shu ser.) A History of Chinese Communications with South East Asia.

2 Wang Gung-wu A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese (Singapore, 1959) p.3.

3 Ibid. pp.9-10.

4 Lady S. Raffles Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles Vol. II (London, 1835) p.242.

Important factors that contributed to this domination were: an advantageous geographical location; a free port status with a free trade policy (two completely new institutions in the region); and the fact that the Straits was on the receiving end of a continuous flow of British manufactured products, which gave it the role of a 'prime mover'[1] and regional distribution centre. In this way the Straits was directly linked, politically and economically, with the fastest expanding country in the world. The establishment of the Straits symbolized the beginnings of a new kind of colonial policy by the British, which encouraged and welcomed all newcomers with potential to develop and improve the Settlements, especially Singapore and Penang which were marked for the role of entrepot ports.[2] The Chinese were particularly encouraged because of their business acumen, energy and initiative, and their ability to act as intermediaries between Europeans and natives.[3] It has been claimed that the British welcomed the Chinese partly because of the latter's vices such as gambling and opium smoking which the rulers taxed heavily to finance their administration.[4] British policy provided further incentives such as unlimited economic opportunities, provision of security, equal rights, and freedom from government interference and political suppression.[5] This policy could

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1 C.D. Cowan Nineteenth Century Malaya (London, 1962) p.22. The term means a trans-shipment base for cargo carriers.

2 R. Allen Malaysia; Prospect and Retrospect (London, 1968) p.33.

3 J.L.L. Duyvendak 'Chinese in the Dutch East Indies', Chinese Social and Political Science Review 1927, Vol. II, pp.1-15.
In 1794, Francis Light pointed out that Chinese in Penang were 'the most valuable part of our inhabitants', a view endorsed by Raffles in 1819. C.f. Mills op. cit. p.204.

4 Wong Lin Ken 'The Trade of Singapore, 1819-1869', J.M.B.R.A.S., Vol. 33, Part 4, December 1960, p.112.

5 Cowan, op. cit., Prelude.

justifiably be described as laissez-faire in the Straits Settlements, and a similar policy of non-intervention was pursued in the Malay States.

The Chinese, with innate commercial instincts, were not slow to realize that a wide new horizon was opened to them. Vast economic possibilities enhanced by a policy of enticement were exciting attractions. Decades of maltreatment under the Spanish in the Philippines and the Dutch in the Netherlands Indies had convinced the Nanyang Chinese that British rule in the Straits of Malacca was a welcome change. For the first time, the Chinese enjoyed legal equality with their rulers and this feature was significantly new in colonial practice.[1] Using the Straits as commercial bases, the Chinese probed and penetrated the Malay States and the Netherlands Indies, including the Rhiau-Lingga and Bangka-Billiton islands.[2]

Emigration from China became increasingly significant after 1842 primarily as a result of a weakened Chinese economy. Also contributing to the influx were the decline of imperial authority; unstable political conditions; bureaucratic corruption; administrative inefficiency; and natural calamities. To a large extent, some of the factors could be attributed to the Anglo-Chinese Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860).[3] The Ch'ing Government had been on the decline since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Emigration was intensified further when Britain acquired Hong Kong in 1842 and forced open the treaty ports of Canton and Amoy, followed by Swatow in 1858.[4] Hong Kong as a British port provided an important exit and port of re-entry for the Chinese to and from Nanyang.[5] With the suppression of the

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1 Allen, op. cit. p.33.

2 Wang Gung-wu, op. cit. p.23.

3 Reischauer and Fairbank, East Asia, the Modern Transformation (London, 1965) pp.116-22.

4 G.W. Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (New York, 1957) p.31.

5 Wang, op. cit. p.22.

T'ai-p'ing Rebellion in 1864 many supporters and survivors were forced to flee South China and seek refuge overseas. Nanyang was a favoured choice since secret societies there, like their counterparts in China, had supported the rebellion.[1] In 1860, the Imperial Government officially relaxed its ban on emigration, helping to relieve the pressure in over-populated areas of South China.[2]

Mounting British dominance in nineteenth century Southeast Asia was correlated with rising Chinese economic power. This power did not come easily. Through sheer hard work and personal sacrifice, combined with the respect for success and frugality inherent in Chinese values, the often penniless immigrant developed the unlimited economic possibilities in the Straits into realities.[3] The colony shortly evolved into a state of economic dependence on the Chinese, as was illustrated in J.D. Vaughan's list of over a hundred occupations in which they were engaged.[4] Sir Charles Lucas considered it 'impossible to over-estimate the importance of their share in the development of the Straits'.[5] When British power was extended over the Malay States after 1874, Chinese economic activity expanded and it was not long before trade with the Malay States was in the hands of the Chinese domiciled in the Straits Settlements.[6] The Colony's Chinese merchants were the middlemen in a middleman's economy, exchanging Western manufactures imported by European merchants for the primary commodities of South East Asian producers. A history of long association with the natives in

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1 Ibid., p.25.

2 H.F. MacNair, The Chinese Abroad (Shanghai, 1925).

3 'Notices of Singapore', J.I.A. Vol. VIII 1854, p.40. Also Skinner, op. cit., pp.31-2.

4 J.D. Vaughan, The Manners and Customs of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements, Singapore, 1879, p.8.

5 Mills, op. cit., p.219, quoting Lucas, Historical Geography I.

6 V. Purcell, 'A Malayan Union', Pacific Affairs, Vol. 19, 1946, p.20.

Nanyang, together with a knowledge of European languages and trading techniques, invariably placed Chinese merchants in an enviable position. Partnerships of varying kinds between European and Chinese merchants were soon formed. As pioneers of shipping in the region,[1] Chinese merchants were encouraged further by legislation passed in the Colony in 1852, whereby long residing Chinese could qualify as naturalized British subjects. The next two decades saw an increasing number of Chinese-owned steamships flying the British flag, carrying goods between ports in South East Asia.[2] By the end of the nineteenth century, old economic interests were even more intensively and extensively pursued. A clear illustration of the adaptability of the enterprising Chinese was their establishment of Western-method institutions such as mercantile houses, storage godowns, modern banks, financial and insurance agencies, light industries for local needs and complex import-export firms.[3] Through their domination of economic life, the Chinese were not only increasingly important and indispensable, but also more influential than ever before.[4]

Considering the experience encountered under other colonial powers in the region, the Chinese attitude towards the Straits Settlements Government was one of comparative satisfaction. All their energies were concentrated on economic gain and personal survival; neither administrative nor political power interested them. For decades, the poor immigrants were absorbed in the mere mechanics of making a living, and for the more determined, a fortune.[5] It had been

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1 G.C. Allen & A. Donnithorne, Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya: A Study of Economic Development (London, 1957) pp.107, 272-5.

2 Wong Lin Ken, op. cit., pp.80-2, 166.

3 Wang Gung-wu, op. cit., p.26. Also Allen & Donnithorne, op. cit., pp.236-7.

4 Mills, op. cit., p.206.

5 Purcell, 'A Malayan Union', p.32.

an accepted truism that as long as a relatively free hand in economic pursuits was given, the Chinese who were involved in commerce readily accepted government by the British. This attitude of amassing wealth without assuming responsibility could best be described in the words of a contemporary writer - 'they were willing to let other people hold the cow while they milked it.'[1]

The concept of kinship was of paramount importance to the achievement-oriented and highly motivated Chinese. His cultural values, embodied in Confucian ethics, demanded that he work for the elevation of his family's fortunes. Responsibility to the family could never be disregarded. Rewards and benefits resulting from his sacrifices and industry should be kin-centered rather than self-indulged. The primary goal was therefore directed towards lineage survival and advancement rather than individual salvation.[2] To this end, Chinese immigrants remitted large sums to China annually for the support of their families and kin. Most of them arrived in the Colony to labour for a few years before returning to China[3] and were regarded as mere 'birds of passage'.[4] Others remained to settle but records are unavailable to give a precise statistical account. With the passing years a new group emerged. Known as the Straits Babas or Straits Chinese, they were local-born, many of whom acquired European habits and an English education.[5] These Straits Chinese evolved partly from those immigrants who were, through ill-fortune, forced to remain. Not

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1 Quoted by Rupert Emerson, 'The Chinese in Malaysia', Pacific Affairs, Vol. 7, 1934, p.260.

2 Skinner, op. cit., p.93.

3 W. Willmott, 'The Overseas Chinese Today and Tomorrow', Pacific Affairs, Vol. LXIII, 1969, p.208.

4 W.L. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch of Chinese Labour in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S. Vol. XX, Part 1, June 1947. Hereafter cited as 'Historical Sketch'. Also Mills, op. cit., pp.206-9.

5 J.D. Vaughan, op. cit., pp.4-5.

surprisingly, in view of the scarcity of Chinese women, some married Malay women and settled permanently. Opulent merchants were also reluctant to return to China, since their well-established businesses made them look upon the Straits Settlements as their home. It was not unusual for these merchants to possess two wives; one in the Colony and the other in China. Those who wished to return often waited until retirement when their local-born sons could take over the on-going business.[1]

Towards the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the British government's policy of non-intervention in the Malay States was undergoing revision. One important economic consideration was the accumulated capital from the Straits Settlements which called for larger areas of investment, particularly in the Malay States because past trade ties were increasingly being strengthened.[2] Rapid political deterioration within the Peninsula had lent new urgency to the British re-examination of their policy. From 1857 to 1871, civil wars raged among rival claimants to the thrones of Perak, Pahang, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. Indefinite boundaries among these States frequently led to wars and the Chinese engaged in tin-mining in the Larut district of Perak incessantly clashed with the Malays. Perpetual faction fights among the Chinese secret societies and a recrudescence of piracy along the West coast contributed to chronic instability. For more than fifty years, the British refused to intervene to restore order in the Peninsula, even though frequently petitioned by the Straits Settlements merchants.[3] These merchants were painfully aware of the serious consequences they would have to face should political anarchy and rivalries among the secret societies remained unchecked.

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1 V. Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya (London, 1948) pp.85-6. Also Willmott, op. cit., p.210.

2 Chai Hon-Chan, The Development of British Malaya 1896-1909 (O.U.P., 1964) p.3.

3 V. Purcell, 'A Malayan Union', op. cit., p.21.

Outbreaks of violence became so frequent that the Straits Government was forced to scrutinize the matter closely.

During the same period, Anglo-French rivalry provided impetus for the British to extend their Burma policy into the Malay States; the policy endeavoured to avoid a common frontier with the French should they decide to move into Siam from Indo-China. British anxiety was heightened in 1873 by Siamese attempts to coax Perak to come under its control.[1] In Britain there emerged the imperial idea of Pax Britannica which proved to be the antithesis of the Liberal doctrine of 'laissez-faire'. The idea promoted the reversal of the non-intervention policy.[2] These varying influences, in Britain as well as in the Malay Peninsula, virtually dictated a new approach.

The dramatic change came in a despatch from the Colonial Office of 20 September 1873, addressed to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Andrew Clarke. The Secretary of State, Lord Kimberly, wrote:

> Her Majesty's Government have, it need hardly be said, no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay States, but, looking to the long and intimate connection between them and the British Government, Her Majesty's Government find it incumbent to employ such influence as they may possess with the native princes to rescue, if possible, these fertile and productive countries from the ruin which must befall them if the present disorders continue unchecked.

The despatch further instructed the Governor to consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British officer to reside in any of the States. Such an appointment could, of course, only be made with the consent of the native Government.[3]

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1 C. Northcote Parkinson, British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-1877 (Singapore, 1960) pp.199-206.

2 A.P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and its Enemies (London, 1959) pp.ix-x.

3 C.O.D. 20 Sept. 1873.

As a result of the above direction from London, the British forward policy was initiated in the Malay States. Between 1874 and 1888, British indirect rule evolved through the Residential System whereby British Residents were appointed in the Malay States of Perak, Pahang, Negri Sembilan and Selangor. In 1896 they were formally established as the Federated Malay States.

The British, before 1867, did not have a definite policy towards the Chinese in the Straits Settlements; neither did the Chinese Government until 1877. Before discussing the change in attitude of the Chinese Government towards her overseas subjects, a brief reference of the early Ch'ing Government's policy towards the Nanyang Chinese is deemed necessary.

2. Early Ch'ing Government Policy towards the Chinese in Nanyang

Traditionally the Chinese attitude towards emigration was one of social and official disapproval. The Chinese view of filial piety in ancestor worship demanded that living descendants attend the graves and spirits of the deceased, and failure to do so was considered indefensible conduct.[1] Those forced to emigrate were regarded as tramps and outcasts, and this attitude was supported by a strong sentiment that those outside the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom were uncivilized savages with whom the Chinese should not fraternize. Naturally a great many who emigrated were refugees and criminals.[2]

While the Sung and Yüan Dynasties encouraged trade by both official policy and official capital, the Ming restricted trade. The Ming Government prohibited unauthorized individuals from travelling overseas because trading was despised as an unproductive occupation which did

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1 V. Purcell, The Chinese in South East Asia (London, 1965) p.26.

2 Ibid., pp.17-18.

not compensate for the loss of subjects who emigrated.[1] The naval power of the Ming was designed for imperial prestige and for operating against rebels who had taken refuge in Nanyang rather than for the protection of Chinese commercial interests overseas.[2] When the Manchus seized Peking in 1644, they continued the Ming policy and enforced it even more stringently. The 'tough line' was dictated by suspicion of Chinese activity and opposition outside China to the alien Manchus.[3] In view of the fact that many Chinese sought refuge in Nanyang, this fear was not without foundation. For many decades, the Ch'ing Government had to contend with resistance from the disaffected south; in particular from a rebel group led by the patriot Cheng Ch'eng-kung (鄭成功 otherwise known as Koxinga),[4] whose power was derived partly from Nanyang shipping, trade and finance. When Koxinga's followers surrendered in 1682, resistance was continued in the institutionalized secret societies - the Heaven and Earth Societies (T'ien-ti Hui 天地会) or Triad Societies,[5] which were partly responsible for the downfall of the Manchus in 1911. These secret societies were formed in 1674 (reign of Emperor K'ang Hsi) for the sole purpose of overthrowing the Ch'ing Dynasty but later deviated into protection and criminal organizations that became historically significant

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1 Reischauer and Fairbank, op. cit., pp.92-8.

2 Purcell, The Chinese in South East Asia, pp.17-18.

3. Wang, op. cit., p.13.

4 Liu (1942) and Wei (1948) claimed Cheng Ch'eng-kung had secret society connections, being a member himself of the Triad Society and reputed to have formed one in Formosa known as the Ming Yüan T'ang 明遠堂 (Society of Far-a-way Mings). Liu Lien-k'o (劉聯珂：幫会三百年革命史) Three Hundred Years' Revolutionary History of Secret Societies (Macao Liu Yüan Pub. Co., 1942) pp.9-24. Also Wei Ta-fah (偉大法：袍哥八門) Sworn Brothers' Society (Shanghai Literature Co., 1947, pp.1-2, 18.

5 Wang, op. cit., p.14. The word 'societies' included the branches.

in the social life of the Nanyang Chinese. Perhaps this development could be attributed to the large scale influx of refugees and criminals from China, as one historian has insisted that 'only the scum of the Chinese went abroad'.[1]

From the outset, the Ch'ing Government proclaimed death penalties for Chinese of all levels[2] who illegally traded or emigrated overseas. The penalty was also imposed on those who communicated with enemies and rebels; emigrants were thus equated with rebels. To stamp out Ming resistance, the Manchus adopted a 'barren earth' policy which involved the removal of the population from the coastal areas and the razing of towns and villages in order to deprive the Ming loyalists and pirates of their sources of supplies.[3] This forced many loyalists and traders to the Nanyang. An imperial edict of 1712 explicitly prohibited travel to the Nanyang by threat of execution, and another edict of 1728 banned illegal emigrants from returning.[4] Despite persecution of Chinese overseas by European powers, the Ch'ing attitude towards these Chinese remained completely indifferent. The massacres of Chinese by the Spanish in the Philippines in 1603 and 1639 were officially ignored, if not encouraged.[5] Similar acts by the Dutch in Java in 1740 evoked only a remark of 'no concern to our court' from Emperor Ch'ien-lung.[6] Fearful of strong repercussions from home officials if they returned, the Chinese traders settled in the Nanyang in partibus infidelium whereas previously they

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1 H. Gottwaldt, Die Überseeische Auswanderung der Chinesen (Max Noessler, Bremen, 1903). Quoted by Purcell, Chinese in Malaya, op. cit., p.8.

2 Except city governors of the first order.

3 Wang, op. cit., p.15.

4 Fang Hao et al. (方豪) Hua-ch'iao-chih 華僑志 (An Account of Overseas Chinese) Taipeh, 1956, pp.93-5. Also H.F. MacNair, op. cit., pp.1-3.

5 Ibid., pp.5-7.

6 Fang Hao, op. cit., p.96.

merely sojourned to trade.[1] Ironically, an unintended consequence of the imperial enactments was that they actually promoted the overseas settlements which they categorically forbade. Economic exigency and personal gain being the more powerful forces, the Ch'ing laws failed to prevent emigration. By the nineteenth century, many who went abroad managed to return undetected by the ineffectual government although those caught were severely punished.[2]

The Treaty of Tientsin at the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Chinese War in 1860 impelled a total change in Ch'ing policy. In the Burlingame Treaty of 1870 with the United States, the Chinese emperor 'cordially recognized the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of aliens and subjects respectively from one country to another for the purpose of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents'.[3]

The attitude of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements towards the Ch'ing Government was one of apathy. China as a nation meant little to them. This was amply illustrated by an event during the Second Anglo-Chinese War when British soldiers on the way to China were camped in Singapore. Local Chinese organised entertainments for the troops and even made speeches of welcome: these were done with the full knowledge that the troops were en route to fight a war against their fellow Chinese.[4] Apparently the Chinese in the Straits regarded the war as a private matter between the Manchus and the British, and therefore considered that it was of no

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1 M. Freedman, The Chinese in South East Asia: A Longer View (London, 1965) p.6.

2 Ta Chen, Emigrant Communities in South China (New York, 1940) p.51.

3 Quoted by Purcell, The Chinese in South East Asia, p.11.

4 Purcell, 'A Malayan Union', p.32. When Lord Elgin arrived on 6 June 1857, on his way to China as British Ambassador and Plenipotentiary, he was also presented with an address of welcome by the Chinese merchants.

concern to them. The anti-Ch'ing activities of the Straits Settlements secret societies met with little success until the mid-nineteenth century, when the establishment of Hong Kong as a British colony and a continuing series of Chinese military defeats convinced many overseas Chinese that the downfall of the Ch'ing Dynasty was only a matter of time.[1] It was not surprising that the developments led to an intensity of resistance to the Ch'ing and a nascent nationalism in the Settlements. Chinese commercial enterprises in the Nanyang were soon operating from protected home bases in Hong Kong and other treaty ports. This was a decisive blow to the Ch'ing policy of isolation from the non-Chinese world. Nanyang Chinese who returned to the mother country after having lived under various colonial governments in South East Asia soon advocated changes in the outmoded Chinese Weltanschauung. Revolutionary activities, aimed at the downfall of the Ch'ing Dynasty, operated from many overseas bases. With its large Chinese population, British Malaya became an important centre of political dissidence.

C. The Problem

1. The Structure of Chinese Society in the Straits Settlements

British policy in the nineteenth century was one of 'institutional conservatism' or 'institutional tolerance' in relation to the various ethnic groups overseas, and colonial practice pivoted on precedent rather than on principle. In the light of this generalization, it is possible to examine the evolution of Chinese society under British rule in the Straits Settlements.

Before 1867, the Straits Settlements were administered by officers seconded from the Indian Civil Service who had everything to learn about the language, habits and customs of the Malays and Chinese - it was the latter who proved the

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1 Wang, op. cit., p.26.

most difficult problem. In India, British officials dealt with the natives through a system of village headmen or elders, and a similar and convenient system was continued in the Straits Settlements with headmen or 'Capitans China' being appointed for the Chinese.[1] The Capitans were given power and authority to deal with minor offences and disputes within their own communities. Such an arrangement particularly suited the Chinese who could enjoy the benefits of British rule and at the same time live their own lives subject to minimum interference from the government; hence an imperium in imperio situation.[2] Under the shortlived system of indirect rule (1819-1826)in Singapore), the 'Capitans China' were the only contacts between the Chinese communities and the authorities. When this system was abandoned in 1826, there was no official institution for administrative contact between the Government and the Chinese. The latter were left mainly to their own devices until 1877 when the Chinese Protectorate was formed to bridge the chasm and attempts were made to apply more effective control. Before that date, the Chinese, who were under the jurisdiction of their own headmen, readily organized themselves into social, economic and political groups.

The figures below give an indication of the increase in the Chinese population in each of the three settlements:-

PENANG

Year	Total Population	Chinese	% of Total
1812	26,107	7,558	28.95
1833	86,275	11,010	12.76
1851	107,914	24,188	22.41
1881	188,245	67,354	35.77

Reference: del Tufo, Appendix C, p.584[3]

1 The system of indirect rule through the headmen of various ethnic communities existed in the East long before the arrival of the British, and had been adopted by the Portuguese in Malacca in the sixteenth century.

2 Mills, op. cit., pp.209, 213. Purcell, Chinese in Malaya, pp.72-3.

3 M.B. del Tufo, Malaya (Federation) Superintendent of Census (London, 1949) Appendix C, p.584

MALACCA

Year	Total Population	Chinese	% of Total
1827	33,162	5,006	15.09
1852	62,514	10,608	16.96
1881	93,579	19,701	21.05

Reference: del Tufo, Appendix C, p.584 *

SINGAPORE

Year	Total Population	Chinese	% of Total
1821	4,727	1,159	24.51
1836	29,984	13,749	45.85
1850	52,891	27,988	52.91
1860	81,734	50,043	61.22
1881	139,208	86,766	62.32

Reference: del Tufo, Appendix C, p.588[1] *

The Chinese immigrants to the Straits came mainly from the two maritime provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien, both of which were notorious for turbulence and disorderliness;[2] many also came from Kwangsi province. The immigrants were categorized into five main groups - the Cantonese from the old prefectures of Kuang-chou-fu and Chao-ch'ing-fu in Kwangtung province; the Hokkiens from the old prefectures of Ch'üan-chou and Chang-chou, including Amoy, in Fukien province; the Teochius (or Hoklo) from the coastal regions and the delta areas of the Han River (including Swatow and Ch'ao-yang) in northeastern Kwangtung Province; the Hakkas (or Khehs) from all three provinces and also the southernmost parts of Kiangsi and Hunan; and the Hailams (or Hainanese) from the island of Hainan.[3] From this varied and diffused background in dialects and customs, the immigrants brought

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1 I have been unable to locate figures for comparable years in each Settlement.

2 W.A. Pickering, 'The Chinese in the Straits of Malacca', Fraser's Magazine, October 1876, p.440.

3 Skinner, op. cit. pp.37-9.

* M.B. del Tufo, Malaya (Federation) Superintendent of Census (London, 1949) Appendix C, pp.584 & 588

with them their environmental attitude towards each other which was one of clannishness and suspicion combined with antipathies and jealousies.[1] One of the few attitudes they had in common was a prejudice against all kinds of governmental authority. The Mandarin-administered law in China was equated with extortion, torture and injustice;[2] as a result, parti pris from past experience had an important bearing in shaping the behaviour of the Chinese population in the Straits. Under the alien Manchu rule, the contentious Chinese had no national sentiment and loyalties were strictly district and/or clan-centered. Friction between the Teochius and Hokkiens as well as between Cantonese and Hakkas had gone on for a long time in China[3] and immigration to the Straits meant that the parties engaged in petty feuds found yet another geographical area for the continuation of their enmity towards each other.

Just as the regions from which the Chinese immigrants came differed widely, so also did the ways in which they travelled to the Straits. Some paid for their voyage south but many coolies were recruited from China's rural areas.[4] Under a credit-ticket system, active recruitment of coolies or the 'pig business' was carried on by coolie-brokers who were often unscrupulous. The system provided brokers to pay the coolies' emigration expenses and in return, the coolies had to work off the cost or debt so incurred under any employer of labour for a pre-arranged period of time. Not surprisingly, this system lent itself to many abuses, and the coolies were often mercilessly exploited during their period

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1 W. Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Historical Study (London, 1969) pp.43-4.

2 Pickering, op. cit., p.440.

3 Pickering, op. cit., p.440.

4 M. Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations: Chinese in Nineteenth Century Singapore', Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. III, 1960-61, p.26.

of obligation.[1] The influx of these penniless coolie-immigrants soon moulded the Chinese into the most forceful, turbulent and problematical population which confronted the British authorities in the Straits Settlements.

There were several other factors that predominated in shaping the Chinese behaviour and outlook. One of the most notable was the disproportionate number of refugees, paupers and criminals of the lowest classes who found their way to the Straits - a situation which was aggravated by China and neighbouring countries when they took the opportunity to dump their destitutes and undesirables in the Straits.[2] Others who came were mostly the young, adventurous and reckless who had no family directions or influences from village elders to restrain them. Since emigration was socially and officially frowned upon, most arrived in the Straits as individuals rather than as members of families or communities. The almost total lack of womenfolk as well as the acute shortage of the upper and middle classes exacerbated the young immigrants' temerarious behaviour.[3] Upon arrival, the immigrants from different backgrounds found themselves grouped together for the first time and conflict between them

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1 Under the credit-ticket system, the 'Sinkehs' (new guests or new arrivals) came to the Straits by agreement with junk-masters or with 'Kheh-taus' (coolie-headmen) during the Northeast Monsoon, that is, from November to December. The contract coolies then had to work at any location for anyone who was willing to pay for their passage and the middleman's commission. The coolies had no say in the transaction between the broker and the intending employer. T.J. Newbold, Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, Vol. I (London, 1839) p.282. For discussion on the procedure involved in coolie recruitment in China, see P.C. Campbell, Chinese Coolie Emigration (London, 1903) pp.2-10.

2 E. Thio, The Singapore Chinese Protectorate - Events and Conditions Leading to its Establishment, 1823-77, University of Malaya (Singapore) B.A. Hons Thesis, 1952, p.4. This has since been published in the Journal of the South Seas Society (1960). Also Mills, op. cit., p.209.

3 Seah Eu Chin, 'The Chinese in Singapore', J.I.A., Vol. II, 1848, p.286. Also 'Notes on the Chinese in the Straits', J.I.A., Vol. IX, 1855, p.113.

was almost inevitable. Besides being ignorant, they showed little or no inclination to respect British law and justice.[1] Until they initiated a system of communal government, the immigrants were nothing more than a mass, unassimilated without and unintegrated within.

When the immigrants began arriving in significant numbers in the Straits, the Triad societies and other social organizations followed. Reliance on these societies and similar organizations was unavoidable because pressure exerted on the Chinese was so great that it was impossible not to join. It could be claimed that the Chinese immigrant society was one vast network of social organizations which were formed in the wake of the immigration waves to the Straits. Through the societies, the individual immigrant found satisfaction and security in a new country that was alien to him in every respect; membership provided him with assistance, spiritual guidance, protection, authority, representation and a sense of kinship and belonging.[2] The criteria for membership eligibility were determined by dialects, districts and clans in the mother country and by occupational and residential groups in the Straits.[3] These criteria, however, were ill-defined and interchangeable. The main importance of the societies was that they helped the newly arrived immigrant to orientate himself to the new surroundings.

The Chinese society was shapeless because divisions were by dialect differences rather than by class lines, i.e. vertical stratification was more significant than horizontal. Social stratification was not rigid and social mobility was high; nevertheless, distinctions in status and prestige were

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1 W.A. Pickering, 'Chinese Secret Societies', J.R.A.S.S.B., No. III, July 1879, pp. 10-11.

2 Blythe, The Impact of Chinese..., pp.1-2.

3 Freedman, Immigrants and Associations, pp.37, 39.

clearly in evidence.[1] Contrary to Confucian teachings in China, where priority status was given to the mandarin-scholar[2] followed by the farmer, in the urban commercial economy of the Straits Settlements, social differentiation was correlated with the distribution of wealth, and those with the highest status and prestige were the wealthy merchants who were often illiterate or semi-literate.[3] Lack of education did not stop them from making their financial worlds and their success-stories provided stimulus for imitative behaviour from the recently arrived immigrants who were usually highly motivated. The penniless coolie's goal was to own a small shop eventually or to attain a higher status in his native village in China. To these ends he directed his energy, hard work and thrifty habits. In the Chinese immigrant society, there was an absence of horizontal class solidarity because everyone was striving for a higher status. Social organizations were almost entirely vertical, each embracing members from different strata, and guilds were organized along occupational lines which included both employers and employees.[4] Since the British authorities relied on the wealthy Chinese to act as spokesmen for their fellow Chinese, the structure of control between employer and employee and between creditor and debtor was a politico-economic one.[5]

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1 Skinner, op. cit., p.135. Mr Tan Yeok Seong (陳育崧) and Professor Hsu Yün-ch'iao (許雲樵) shared the opinion that the Chinese society in the Straits Settlements in the nineteenth century was very similar in many respects to the Chinese society in Thailand. (Interviews 14.8.68 and 22.9.68 respectively.) For this reason Skinner's work is pertinent to the study of the Chinese society in the Straits.

2 In China, the scholar-officials (士 Shih) were the traditional ruling class.

3 Freedman, op. cit., p.28.

4 Skinner, op. cit., p.138.

5 Freedman, op. cit., p.29.

Chinese social organizations fell into two main categories - the secret societies and the voluntary associations.[1] The interests of these two often overlapped and together they dominated every aspect of Chinese life, operating a system of control more acceptable to the Chinese than that of the Government. In this system of domination the societies wielded powers based upon their own disciplinary codes which included the death penalty and non-recognition of any authority superior to themselves. Each society was a sufficient government for its members and interference from outside was very much resented. The British authorities had difficulty in separating fraternities that were considered harmful from those volunteer associations which exercised considerable control over their large memberships and were genuine welfare societies,[2] partly because the 'harmful' fraternities or secret societies often claimed to be 'friendly societies'.[3] As Blythe puts it:

> Societies may be 'secret' in two different ways: they may be clandestine organizations working underground with the identities of their leaders and members carefully concealed, or they may be 'open' societies whose officials are known or knowable, but which have a secret ritual (usually of initiation) and an oath of secrecy binding the members not to reveal the affairs of the society to non-members or, above all, to the authorities. It is, of course, possible for a society to be 'secret' in both these ways.[4]

Strictly speaking, there was nothing secret about the Chinese secret societies in the Straits because the local authorities possessed full knowledge of their existence; only the societies' rituals and oaths were secret.

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1 Ibid.

2 Blythe, The Impact of Chinese..., pp.3-4.

3 E. Thio, op. cit., p.7.

4 Blythe, The Impact of Chinese..., p.3.

The Triad or T'ien-ti Hui,[1] especially strong in South China, was originally a benevolent-religious organization with Buddhist affiliations, whose raison d'etre was to 'Obey Heaven and Act Righteously' (顺天行道), but this was changed to 'Overthrow the Ch'ings - Restore the Mings' (反清復明) when it adopted a revolutionary political attitude and its activities were directed towards the downfall of the Manchu Government in China. To maintain solidarity of membership, impressive rituals were performed and severe penalties for infringement of society rules imposed.[2] The Triad society went overseas with the emigrating Chinese, and in South East Asia, new groups of secret societies emerged with constant rivalry amongst them. Although the societies retained their anti-dynastic ideology, their revolutionary spirit was minimized and they quickly degenerated into criminal and 'protection' organizations which were geared for oppression and extortion. Wherever and whenever these societies appeared, they proved inimical to law and order, and the antithesis of efficient government. Any newcomer to the Straits who refused to join was immediately persecuted.[3] One estimate had it that sixty percent of the Chinese were sworn members of secret societies, with the remaining forty percent subjected to their influences.[4] During the first half of the Nineteenth century,

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1 The 'hui' 会 was derived from T'ien-ti Hui天地会 (Heaven and Earth Society). 'Triad' meant the 'Three United' - a trinity of Heaven, Earth and Man (天地人). The Chinese theory held that if these three elements were in harmony, then everything was progressing satisfactorily. The Triad was also known as San Ho Hui (三合会 Three United Society) or San Tien Hui (三点会 Three Dots Society). This concept was expressed in the form of an equilateral triangle within a triangular flag.

2 G. Schlegel, Thian Ti Hui (Batavia, 1866). Also, S.M. Ward and W.G. Stirling, The Hung Society, 3 vols (London, 1925). These works give a detailed account of the society's origin, rituals, oaths etc.

3 M. Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations', p.30.

4 Pickering, 'The Chinese in the Straits...', p.440.

there appeared five main secret societies: the Ghee Hin Society (義興会); Hai San Society (海山会); Ho Seng Society (和成会); Wah Sang Society (華生会); and Toh Peh Kong Society (大伯公会).[1] The first two were principal societies diametrically opposed to each other, which resulted in frequent clashes and 'if you belonged to the one and not to the other, you were equally persecuted'.[2] Their activities included the stirring up of anti-foreign feeling; organisation of opposition to the government; operation of criminal rings and rackets; settling disputes between themselves as well as between rival gangs; participation in coolie traffic; formation of self-defence units against robber and rival groups; terrorization by force and blackmail; kidnapping for ransom; and the 'protection' of and extortion of money from hawkers, shopkeepers, labourers, hotelkeepers, brothelkeepers, prostitutes, and opium and gambling dens[3] - all these activities thrived in the almost entirely male Chinese society. Whenever a secret society established or claimed 'control' over an area (a kind of territorial jurisdiction), the entire locality became enmeshed and anyone who wanted to be left alone and had a source of income found it worthwhile to pay 'protection' money to the society. Adding to the intense rancour and tension caused by dialect differences, the system of spheres of control by the different secret societies exacerbated rivalries and conflicts which were all to frequent as each society competed fiercely for privileges and fought bitterly to 'protect' members from outside encroachment and intrusions.

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1 M.L. Wynne, Triad and Tabut, A Survey of the Origins and Diffusion of Chinese and Mohammedan Secret Societies in the Malay Peninsula A.D. 1800-1935 (Singapore, 1941) unpublished, confidential, p.71. In 1841, the Ghee Hok Society (義福会) appeared. Composed mainly of Hokkiens, this society later proved the biggest rival to the Ghee Hin Society.

2 'Chinese Emigrants', The Chinese Repository II, No. 5 (Canton, Sept. 1833) p.230f, quoted by Freedman, op. cit., p.31.

3 A.R.C.P. 1878

The secret societies were a divisive force within the Chinese society, but nevertheless constituted a framework of law within the membership of an organized group, and thus provided the immigrants with a form of replacement for the traditional kinship and district systems.[1]

The 'inimical' fraternities reflected the lack of class solidarity of the Chinese society in the Straits. Organization was based on a vertical principle of membership in which the wealthy and influential were the powerful (in their terminology 'Elder Brother') and on top of the scale; the coolie and/or the professional thug was at the bottom. The structure was rigidly hierarchical, using 'degrees' and various other systems of classification.[2] Members at all levels were sworn to secrecy and blood brotherhood.

It would be difficult to differentiate the headmen of secret societies from the wealthy merchants who preferred to pose outwardly as being unassociated with the societies' activities.[3] Most of the leaders in the Chinese communities had connections with the secret societies,[4] and many were drawn from the wealthy merchants who were also headmen of the secret societies. The success of the merchants as businessmen and as leaders depended on both business acumen and secret society affiliations.[5] However, the reverse was also possible when headmen of the secret societies secured business for themselves by threatening and terrorizing rivals who proved too competitive. Using other forms of the societies' power, they too became leaders of communities and through this method many leaders were self-nominated. While

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1 Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations...', p.35.

2 Skinner, op. cit., p.140.

3 L. Comber, Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Survey of the Triad Society from 1800 to 1900 (N.Y., 1959) p.71.

4 Ibid. Also Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations', p.38.

5 M.L. Wynne, op. cit., pp.351, 359.

providing protection for members against the very evils promoted by the secret societies themselves, the fraternities were simultaneously serving the ends of the leaders.

To further their personal prestige and status, some wealthy Chinese leaders were involved in charitable work and organisations. This was done to show their public spiritedness and generosity - virtues admired by the British authorities and the Chinese population. Philanthropy was partly used as a means of public relations, since the Chinese press did not appear until the third quarter of the nineteenth century. By founding institutions of public charity and contributing funds for charitable works, the wealthy merchants led the way in mutual assistance; for example, the Tan Tock Seng Hospital and the Gan Eng Seng School were opened to all ethnic groups.[1] Charitable activities which furthered the status of the leaders also increased their influence with the authorities, and in many cases, for example the Chinese revenue farmers, this meant an increase in economic gain.

There were other social organizations in the Straits apart from the secret societies. As Latourette pointed out, the Chinese had always displayed a 'great capacity for extra-political organization'.[2] Known generally as voluntary associations,[3] these were formed for mutual assistance;

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1 Song Ong Siang, One Hundred Years History of the Chinese in Singapore (Singapore, 1967) pp.49-66, 168, 273, 424.

2 K.S. Latourette, The Chinese - Their History and Culture (New York, 1946) pp.36-9. Different names were used by the Chinese for the various organizations but the purposes and interests were more or less similar. Attempts have been made in the past to draw distinctions between 'hui' (societies considered by the Straits' officials as subversive) and 'kongsi' (a business or any form of partnership or group of persons with common interests) but little is known how much interaction there was between the two or, if there were interchangeable terms or, if one exercised control over the other, e.g. 義興公司 and 義興会

3 For example the 'Hang' 行 (Craft guild or Agency House); 'Pang' 幫 (Regional guild or fraternity); and 'Tong' 堂 (Hall).

ancestor and religious worship; arbitrating disputes within the membership; and opposing government measures which might affect the interests of those concerned. Nominally these were 'friendly societies', but in fact they proved extremely encumbering to efficient government.[1] The associations were based on dialect, surname and district groupings;[2] some others were based along commercial, industrial, professional, craft and welfare lines; finally there were the provincial social clubs and economic associations.[3] The district associations came to be known as 'hui kuan' (会館) and they expanded while the secret societies were suppressed. Immigrants with similar interests and backgrounds were brought together by the associations and an individual could become a member of both kinds of organizations (surname, and territorial or dialect), whose socio-economic impact was widened to include the members' immediate and extended families. Negishi was of the opinion that there were three modes in Chinese social life: the clan, the neighbourhood and the guild. A Chinese would be happy if his clan was prosperous, his neighbourhood peaceful and his guild firmly established. If such an environment existed, an individual could enjoy it while he lived and be buried ceremoniously when he died.[4]

During the nineteenth century, the associations tended to express social, economic and political links in an

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1 A Straits Chinese, 'Local Chinese Social Organizations', Straits Chinese Magazine (S.C.M.) III, No. 10, June 1899, p.43.

2 Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations', p.39.

3 C. Gamba, 'Chinese Associations in Singapore', J.M.B.R.A.S., Vol. 39, Part 2, July 1966, p.126.

4 Hiroshi Negishi (根岸浩：支那ギルドの研究 Shina girudo no Kenkyū) A Study of the Chinese Guild (Shibun Shoin Publishing Co., 1940) p.2. Also Taku Suyama (須山拓) Pang (幇) Societies and the Economy of Chinese Immigrants in Southeast Asia, K.G. Tregonning (Ed.), Papers on Malayan History (Singapore, 1962) p.197. Although this was the description of the Chinese in China, it was also certainly true of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements.

undifferentiated form while simultaneously providing a degree of social insurance with some sort of political coordination in the Chinese society. The Chinese in the Straits to a large extent constructed their Landsmannschaften by dividing into lines which expressed solidarity with ties in China.[1] The Chinese facility and passion to form organizations were both useful and dangerous qualities. By grouping themselves into unamalgamated organizations, they dealt with each other and with the local authorities.

While the China-born Chinese population increased, a permanent group of local-born Chinese emerged early in the nineteenth century. Known as the Straits Chinese,[2] they were local subjects without a second homeland. Culturally, linguistically and ethnically, they were linked with the Malacca-born Babas,[3] and it was not unusual to regard Straits Chinese as synonymous with Straits Babas. When compared with the China-born Chinese population, the local-born Chinese were a small minority but in wealth and education they stood high above the immigrants from China. The high socio-economic position of the Straits Chinese during the nineteenth century was achieved by an accumulation of wealth which was passed to succeeding generations and also through marriage, by which they absorbed successful immigrants from China into their society.[4] The Straits Chinese had a culture

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1 Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations', p.43. Also Taku Suyama, op. cit., pp.194, 198, 201-2.

2 Png Poh-Seng, 'The Straits Chinese in Singapore: A Case of Local Identity and Socio-cultural Accommodation', Journal of Southeast Asian History (J.S.E.A.H.) Vol. X, No. 1, March 1969, pp.95-114

3 The Malacca-born Babas were descendants of early Chinese who settled even before the arrival of the Europeans. These were mainly immigrants from Fukien who married local Malay women and settled permanently in increasing numbers after the Portuguese came. Although not of pure Chinese blood, the Babas were brought up in the ways of their fathers. They spoke a Malay patois called 'Baba Malay' but adhered rigidly to many aspects of traditional Chinese culture and customs.

4 Freedman, 'Immigrants and Associations', p.27. Also Purcell, Chinese in Malaya, pp.37, 61-2.

of their own which was essentially Sino-Malay but with strong Western influences. In this way they formed a distinct entity and as a special socio-political group among the ethnic Chinese they showed no political loyalty towards China. The Straits Chinese were immensely proud of their status as British subjects, who had been divided into two categories, viz. the natural-born and the naturalized. Any Chinese born in the Straits after the establishment of British rule automatically became a natural-born subject of the British monarch as defined in Section 8 of the Naturalization Ordinance (VIII of 1867). The same Ordinance also entailed provision for the immigrant Chinese with certain residential and language qualifications to become naturalized British subjects.[1] Consequently, a class of Straits Chinese British subjects was created which enjoyed the special rights and privileges which accrued to British political nationality. They often demonstrated their local identity as British subjects by making declarations of allegiance to the British Crown. Their leaders, motivated by a desire for status, co-operated and identified themselves with the British authorities.[2] One historian considered that the Straits Chinese leaders formed the ethnic Chinese elite in Singapore and that the local-born 'were at home with the languages and the political and commercial environments of the colony. They also had the capital to launch profitable enterprises. For a century, these baba Chinese...commanded great respect and authority'.[3] Considered as the most influential, best educated and wealthiest in the Chinese population, their leaders were often consulted by the British

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1 S.C.M. Vol. III, No. 91, March 1899, p.63; S.S.G.G. 1867.

2 Yong Ching Fatt, 'Chinese Leadership in Nineteenth Century Singapore', Hsin-she Hsueh-pao (Journal of the Island Society) Singapore, Vol. I, 1968, p.16. Also Png, op. cit., pp.99, 114.

3 Lea E. Williams, 'The Dynamism of Early Singapore', Second Biennial Conference Proceedings of the International Association of Historians of Asia (Taipeh, 1962) p.689.

authorities and some of the prominent Straits Chinese sat as unofficial members in the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements. In brief, they mediated between the Chinese population and the British administration.

2. British Attitudes and Policy vis-a-vis the Chinese before 1867

The main concern of the British for the first three quarters of the nineteenth century was to increase the importance of the Straits Settlements for serving the cause of trade and commerce. Interest in the various ethnic communities was basically economic and not political. The attitude of the authorities was that as long as the Asian population, principally the Chinese, brought in wealth and did not upset internal peace they were to be left to themselves. From the beginning, the British found a congenial method of administering the ethnic groups in the Straits; this was done through the medium of existing institutions - appropriately named 'indirect rule'. The policy of institutional tolerance, as it was otherwise known, involved neither surrender of imperial control nor conflict with British national interests but it entailed some adaptation, generally gradual and not too harsh, of existing institutions to the purposes of British rule. A climate of liberalism prevailed in England and a similar 'laissez faire' atmosphere predominated in the Straits. The Home Government's main preoccupation was with the maintenance of internal security so that economic enterprise would not be disrupted; and with the avoidance of expenditure which might make demands on the British tax-payer. The Home Government therefore adopted an attitude of continuous vigilance rather than constant interference, while economic development progressed, stagnated or retrogressed in accordance with the prevailing practice of 'laissez faire'.

In the Straits, the absence of interference from the authorities with the Asian population resulted in the Chinese leading a separate existence. Before the mid-nineteenth century the British attitude was one of acceptance of the

secret societies as an inevitable and integral part of the Chinese social structure.[1] The ungovernable societies were allowed to exist while the trouble-instigating leaders focused their attention on the formation of an *imperium in imperio* for the fulfilment of their own private ends. The situation was incompatible with security and good government. Buckley referred to Singapore as a very lawless state in 1831.[2] Under a policy of 'laissez faire', the indifferent officials confined themselves to quelling open riots among the Chinese. The riots[3] were never directed against the Europeans; they were expressions of disapproval of unpopular legislation or of rivalry between secret societies.[4] Ironically, every riot seemed to be a source of profit for the societies' headmen. Fees were levied for the payment of lawyers or false witnesses, and in the case of men who were killed or sentenced to penal servitude, for the support of their families in China. The money collected for those reasons usually never went beyond the pockets of the headmen.[5] This state of affairs was intolerable although it was extraordinarily difficult to alter.

Until 1871,[6] there was no British official in the Straits Settlements who could understand either the Chinese language or customs, let alone the complex structure of the Chinese society. An essential requirement of effective government was a knowledge of the people governed, but for

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1 Mills, *op. cit.*, p.213.

2 C.B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore* (Singapore, 1902) Vol. 1, p.213.

3 Serious clashes occurred in Singapore in 1846, 1851, 1854 and in Penang in 1867.

4 Mills, *op. cit.*, p.209.

5 Pickering, 'The Chinese in the Straits', p.441.

6 In 1871 W.A. Pickering, destined to be the first Protector of Chinese, was the first Englishman to be appointed Chinese Interpreter in the Straits Settlements Government.

about half a century, the British were 'content to go on in almost total ignorance of the languages, habits and feelings of...the most important part of the population (the Chinese)'.[1] Ignorance of the multi-dialect Chinese vernacular presented the authorities with administrative difficulties, and although attempts were made to understand the Chinese, none was seriously pursued. A minute by the Governor[2] in 1826 stated that Civil Servants were expected to pass examinations in the Chinese language.[3] Nothing came of this. Two years later, the demand for Chinese-speaking interpreters was again apparent when the Governor wrote to China for such personnel. The reply was that there were no acceptable trustworthy men who could speak English as well as the necessary three or four Chinese dialects.[4] In a remarkably able minute on the proposed transfer of the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office, Lord Canning wrote in November 1859,

> ...Indian officers have no opportunities of acquiring experience of the habits or the language of either Malays or Chinese....The Government of India is unable to keep a close watch upon their efficiency...and there is consequently so complete an absence of stimulus to exertion, that it may well be doubted whether Indian civil officers sent to the Straits ever become thoroughly well qualified, or heartily interested in the duties they had to discharge. The character of the Chinese, the most important and at times a very unmanageable part of the population of the Straits Settlements, is quite different from that of any people with which Indian officers have to deal. Democratic in spite of the outward form of their own government, enterprising and preserving, the Chinese are imbued with a strong tendency to self-government.[5]

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1 Pickering, 'The Chinese in the Straits', pp.439-40.

2 In 1826 Robert Fullerton was appointed the first Governor of the Incorporated Settlements.

3 Buckley, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.195.

4 Ibid., p.205.

5 Correspondence respecting the Transfer of the Control of the Straits Settlements from the India Office to the Colonial Department, 1858-1866, p.13. Also extensively quoted by Buckley, op. cit., Vol. 2, p.765.

As late as 1860, the Singapore Free Press questioned the wisdom of the prolonged absence of any official who could communicate with the Chinese.[1]

The secret societies were quick to take advantage of the liberality of British rule in the Straits. Where the authorities displayed weaknesses, the societies flourished, and in no aspect of policy was this more obvious than in immigration. Under the British policy of unrestricted immigration, the societies manipulated and exploited the credit-ticket system of coolie recruitment. Abuses were prevalent in this system because government supervision of immigration was almost non-existent. Since the coolie-brokers' prime motive was profit, there was little interest in the condition of the vessels which transported the coolies, and the coolie-ships had been described as 'floating hells'.[2] Ill-treatment of the coolies continued after their arrival in the Straits where they were detained on board the vessels for three or four days until an employer was found; at other times, the coolies were locked in houses which were specially rented for the purpose.[3] As early as 1823, Raffles had attempted to introduce measures for the protection of coolie-immigrants but these had no practical results.[4] Governor Fullerton commented in 1825 and again in 1827, that profits derived from the 'importation of human beings' closely resembled those of slave-trading and he vainly proposed that experts ought to be consulted as to whether such practices should be continued.[5] Because of malpractices, such as

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1 S.F.P., 28 June 1860.

2 R.B. Morse, International Relations of the Chinese Empire, Vol. II (London, 1910) p.170.

3 'Notes on the Chinese in the Straits', J.I.A., Vol. IX, 1855, pp.114-5.

4 Lady S. Raffles, Memoir of Sir T.S. Raffles (London, 1830) Appendix, p.48.

5 S.S.R. (A.30) 2 Jan. 1827.

kidnapping, associated with coolie recruitment in China,[1] the Resident of Singapore in 1827 (Mr Prince) requested that the Governor of Macao be informed that 'no Chinese shall be allowed to land from a Portuguese ship unless accompanied by a certificate that all passengers on such ship are voluntarily embarked on her'.[2] More than instructions were needed, however, to control immigration. In 1850, Governor Butterworth noted that 'a system of registration has several times been mooted, and always recognized as desirable, if it could [only] be introduced without interfering with the entire freedom of the Port, which is viewed with great jealousy....'[3] The Indian Government was willing to pass Acts preventing 'diseased and destitute persons' being landed in the Settlements, but otherwise no action was taken which imposed any restrictions on the flow of immigrants.[4] Impediments to the free flow of immigrants were opposed by the vested interests, viz. shipowners, junk masters, merchants and planters. From 1853, however, attempts were made by the British to ameliorate the conditions of coolie-emigrants in Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports.[5] The Chinese Government in 1859 also took cognizance of the coolie-trade and co-operated with British Consuls in China to prevent abuses. Despite the change in official attitudes, newly-promulgated regulations were either evaded or ignored.

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1 There were involuntary immigrants under this system in which every means, fair or foul, was used to fill the coolie-ships. The proportion of involuntary immigrants increased after the mid-nineteenth century because of an increasing demand for cheap Chinese labour in different parts of the world. For a full discussion on the sources of supply of involuntary immigration, cf. R.B. Morse, op. cit., p.178.

2 S.S.R. (A.30) 2 Jan. 1827.

3 S.S.R. (U.19) 26 Jan. 1850.

4 S.S.R. (U.20) 4 June 1850.

5 E.J. Eitel, Europe in China (London, 1895) pp.273, 344. It should be noted that in 1855, the Chinese Passenger Act was passed whereby any British ship carrying Chinese to the Straits Settlements were to be examined so as to ascertain if all the emigrants were voluntary.

Another striking feature of the Chinese population in the Straits was the significantly disproportionate sex ratio.[1] Official and social barriers in China prevented women from emigrating and consequently the scarcity of Chinese women in the Straits had a drastic effect on the social conditions of the coolie-immigrants. Some Chinese women were brought in by brothelkeepers as prostitutes.[2] Rackets operated by secret societies also existed whereby young girls were imported for immoral purposes; they were treated like slaves and many died from disease.[3] At that time there was no Government body responsible for the protection of women and children. While attempting to make a living in an alien environment, the unsettled immigrants needed some form of psychological and physical outlet. Many indulged in vice and the little they earned was indifferently spent on opium-smoking, gambling, prostitution and drinking.[4] Since the secret societies thrived on these activities, gang-fights were only too common; this resulted in a state of near-anarchy. The highly motivated immigrant was frequently frustrated in his drive to attain parvenu status and violence evoked by frustration was part of the prevalent crime waves. Searching for a solution to the situation, Vaughan wrote:

> Female immigration should be encouraged...to prevent the fearful crimes that prevail amongst the Chinese in consequence of the paucity of females...

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1 Vaughan, The Manners and Customs..., p.10. In 1856, when Vaughan went to Singapore, he estimated that the sex-ratio was one Chinese female to every eighteen males.

2 Ibid., pp.7-8.

3 S.F.P., 3 December 1863. It was estimated in 1863 that there were no fewer than 2,000 to 2,500 of these unfortunate women in Singapore, which was a significant number when the total population of Chinese women could not have exceeded 4,000.

4 Mills, op. cit., p.215; Vaughan, The Manners and Customs..., pp.8-15.

> The introduction of women would materially conduce to peacefulness...[1]

British revenue policy did little to improve matters as there were practically no taxes in the Straits. The British were concerned with raising adequate sources of revenue to meet the costs of maintaining the Settlements and, to initiate a system of public finance, revenue farms were introduced. Referring to Penang in 1788, Francis Light said that the Chinese were undoubtedly the best source of revenue and the obvious method to tax them was through their appetites.[2] This statement paved the way for the appearance of gambling, opium, spirit and other revenue farms[3] which were almost invariably controlled by Chinese.[4] To obtain the rights to a farm meant immediate success in terms of wealth, power and prestige; the secret societies figured prominently in this struggle. Although the gambling farms were abolished in 1826 as 'immoral nuisances',[5] the authorities were probably unaware that other heads of revenue were controlled largely by Chinese with secret society affiliations.[6]

The societies' rule of terror and complete disdain for the laws of the administration turned public opinion, led by the European community, against them. In 1845, a public

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1 Vaughan, op. cit., p.9. On the subject of wives and families (of respectable Chinese merchants) who were among the new arrivals from Amoy, the Singapore Free Press in September 1853 commented that should the practice be continued, it might be expected to exercise a measure of beneficial influence on the Chinese population in the Straits. Buckley, op. cit., p.580.

2 'Notices of Pinang', J.I.A., 1850, Vol. IV, p.646.

3 A revenue farmer was one 'who by public tender obtained from the de facto, if embryo, British Government the monopoly of the right to collect duty or revenue under certain fixed heads, in exchange for a fixed sum per annum tendered or 'bid' and paid to the Government'. Wynne, op. cit., pp.347-8.

4 Ibid. Also Blythe, The Impact of Chinese..., p.55.

5 Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, pp.75-76.

6 Wynne, op. cit., pp.348-9.

meeting held by the European merchants and respectable Chinese demanded the suppression of the secret societies.[1] Prominent individuals, newspapers and journals also denounced their existence as social evils.[2] By 1859 the Grand Jury had presented them as nuisances for the tenth time and urged the enactment of legislation to empower the police to curtail their pernicious and growing influence.[3] Impervious to the mounting pressure, the Government continued a policy of conciliation and negotiation which was detrimental to its own prestige. The Chinese regarded such an approach as symptomatic of administrative weakness. It should, however, be emphasized that had the authorities decided to exercise effective control, they would have lacked the means to achieve it. Successive governors looked upon the secret societies as primarily a police problem but the Police Force was still too small and inefficient to handle the situation even though its numbers were increased from 188 in 1845 to 385 in 1865.[4] Low salaries made the Force susceptible to corruption and the baneful influence of the societies.[5] Police surveillance of the societies was in any case confined to the populated areas, and little was known about their activities in Singapore's interior. Reliance on the translation of police documents and other work was perforce placed upon Chinese interpreters. There was no method of checking and the clerks were either members of the secret societies or subject to their pressure.[6] Between 1859 and

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1 S.F.P. 16 February 1843.

2 Straits Times (S.T.) 9 May 1854. The editorial castigated the authorities for their enduring 'laisse-faire' attitude in dealing with the truculence of the secret societies.

3 Thio, op. cit., p.14. Successive Grand Juries frequently complained about the societies' tampering with court justice.

4 S.F.P. 5 February 1846 and 22 February 1865.

5 S.F.P. 30 April 1846 and 10 August 1864.

6 Comber, op. cit., p.98. Blythe, op. cit., pp.2-3.

1867, the Governor[1] resorted to an ingenious device in dealing with disturbances. By establishing a modus vivendi with the headmen, a system was adopted whereby the societies functioned as an illegal police force. Headmen were sworn in as special constables so that in times of trouble, pacification could be achieved through arbitration or conciliation.[2] Some regarded this initiative as a palliative,[3] but in fact the activities of the societies expanded since their power was unchallenged and they could execute their orders with despatch without bothing about the niceties of the law.[4]

Occasionally, proposals were made by various individuals to strengthen the powers of the Governors and the police in times of disturbance. The proposals included the granting of banishment powers to the Governor; the registration of all secret societies and their membership; the registration of all non-European inhabitants of the Settlements; and the appointment of headmen as District Peace Officials.[5] None of these suggestions was acceptable to the Government of India[6] whose attitude was antipathetic to restrictive legislation and was reinforced by ignorance of the conditions in the Straits.

Before 1869, their inability to deal effectively with the Chinese led the Straits authorities to rely on influential Chinese leaders to act as intermediaries between

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1 Governor Orfeur Cavenagh.

2 O. Cavenagh, Reminiscences of an Indian Official (London, 1884) p.256.

3 R.N. Jackson, 'First Successes in the Struggle to Govern the Chinese', J.M.B.R.A.S., Vol. 40, Part 1, 1967, p.134. Also Thio, op. cit., p.15.

4 Comber, op. cit., p.62. Vaughan estimated that 75% of the Chinese in Singapore were members of the secret societies. Vaughan, op. cit., p.108.

5 Thio, op. cit., pp.14-17.

6 The Government of India exercised supreme authority over the Straits Settlements Government before 1867. All legislation had to be sanctioned by the former before it could become effective in the Straits.

the Administration and the Chinese. Some of the early outstanding leaders included Tan Che Sang (陳志生), Choa Chong Long (蔡滄浪), Tan Tock Seng (陳篤生), Seah Eu Chin (余有進), Tan Kim Seng (陳金聲), Ho Ah Kay (胡亞基), Cheang Hong Lim (章芳林), Tan Beng Swee (陳明水), Tan Kim Ching (陳金鐘) and Tan Seng Poh (陳成寶). Among these leaders, Ho Ah Kay was particularly highly regarded by the British officials and the European mercantile community.[1] He had the distinction of being both the first Chinese Unofficial Member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council in 1867, and the first Chinese Consul in Singapore in 1877.[2] Most of the leaders tended to identify themselves with the authorities, realizing that any disruption of internal order would inevitably affect trade and commerce.[3] To a large extent, the leaders were motivated by self interest and their declarations of loyalty to the British Administration were merely goodwill gestures and bids for influence with the authorities. Working for charitable causes,[4] and towards pacification in times of rioting,[5] they often pooled their influence and authority. Tan Tock Seng frequently arbitrated faction fights among the Chinese. Tan Kim Seng and Seah Eu Chin assisted the authorities in stopping the 1854 riots,[6] and in the 1857 disturbances, Ho Ah Kay and Tan Kim Ching were appointed to assist the Governor in preventing further bloodshed.[7] It cannot be doubted that certain

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1 Ho Ah Kay (or Hu Ya-chi 胡亞基) was also popularly known as Whampoa or Huang P'u (黃埔 - the port of Canton was his birthplace) alias Hu Hsuan-tse (胡璇潭). Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.52-7. Also Buckley, op. cit., Vol. 2, p.658.

2 Ho Ah Kay was also Consul for Russia in 1867, and in 1869 he was appointed Vice Consul for Japan.

3 Yong, op. cit., pp.4, 14.

4 Buckley, op. cit., p.411.

5 Ibid., p.577.

6 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.21, 88.

7 Buckley, op. cit., p.644.

leaders mentioned had secret society affiliations. Ho Ah Kay was apparently involved in the riots which occurred on the 3 March 1846, although he published a denial in the press that he or anyone connected with him belonged to a secret society.[1] Towards the end of his career, Tan Kim Ching[2] was acquitted of slavery charges by the Court.[3] On the other hand, it must be emphasized that some leaders were worthy of admiration. Seah Eu Chin, for instance, commanded great respect as a scholar.[4]

After the transfer of the Straits Settlements in 1867, the problem of the secret societies and their activities came under the constant vigilance of the Colonial Office. This marked the beginning of the end of the 'laissez-faire' policy.

3. British Attempts to Solve the 'Chinese Problem': 1867-1877

The inauguration of Sir Harry Ord as Governor in April 1867 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Straits Settlements. In August that year, Penang experienced a serious outbreak of secret society rioting. The Straits Government, which had recently been empowered to pass legislation to meet the requirements of the Colony, was determined to take strong action against the secret fraternities. The immediate sequel was the introduction of

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1 Comber, op. cit., p.71.

2 Widely regarded as a philanthropist and Anglophile, Tan Kim Ching wielded strong power over the Chinese in the northern Malay States where he controlled revenue farms.

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.93. Song maintained that Tan Kim Ching was styled 'Captain China' when he headed the Hokkien Hui Kuan. Also Wynne, op. cit., p.35. Wynne also made references to the secret society affiliations of Cheang Hong Lim, Tan Seng Poh and Tan Beng Swee. Also Buckley, op. cit., Vol. I, p.216. Buckley mentioned Tan Che Sang's close relations with the secret societies.

4 Buckley, op. cit., p.503. Also Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.21.

Act XX of 1867, an Act for the Better Preservation of the Peace.[1] Under this Act, the Governor was empowered to issue a proclamation of emergency whenever disturbances were feared; and to deport any Chinese alien or naturalized British subject without a hearing or right of appeal. Furthermore, the practice adopted since 1863 of appointing headmen of societies as special constables was also legalized; hence in one move, the Government obtained many of the powers which it had unsuccessfully sought in the past, although the authority to register and outlaw secret societies was not included. The passage of this legislation met severe criticism in the Colony, and the Straits Times condemned it as 'a grave legislative blunder',[2] a view shared by the Chief Justice, Sir Peter Maxwell, who claimed that the societies problem did not warrant a departure from British constitutional principles.[3] Although the Act was initially intended as a temporary measure, the Straits Government found it so useful that it was renewed annually until it became permanent law in 1872.[4]

When the riots subsided, a petition was sent to the Straits Governor by a large number of residents from various ethnic groups in Penang urging that immediate steps be taken to deal with the Chinese secret societies. Even members of some of the societies called for their suppression because of the internecine conflicts.[5] In the previous year, the publication of G. Schlegel's book, which was based on documentary evidence of the Triad Society, had given the colonial authorities an unprecedented insight into the infra-

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1 S.S.L.C.P., 1869, p.22.

2 Straits Times, 10 April 1869.

3 S.S.L.C.P., 1869, pp.21-3.

4 Maxwell's protests resulted in amendments to certain provisions of Act XX of 1867 by Ordinance VII of 1869. The Act became a permanent measure by Ordinance VI of 1872.

5 G.D. No. 143, 7 December 1867, Ord to S. of S.

structure of the societies. The Report of the Penang Riots Commission of 1867 also shed light on the nature of the societies and the threat which they constituted to the community. It recommended their suppression because their real object was to form de facto governments.[1]

On 6 October 1868, Ord appointed a Select Committee to analyse the Chinese problem;[2] the result was the passage of Ordinance XIX of 1869 'to provide for the suppression of dangerous societies'.[3] This Ordinance was 'the first attempt ever made to furnish the Government with the means of controlling Dangerous Societies'.[4] Total suppression of the societies was the Government's ultimate aim, but it simply did not possess the power to achieve this goal.[5] Although he did not contemplate taking action under this ordinance, Ord intended to impress upon the Chinese that the Government was armed with wider powers than it had previously wielded. Handicapped as he was with a totally inadequate police force to contend with an ever-growing Chinese population, Ord had the sanction of the Colonial Office to bide his time until effective measures could be enforced.[6]

Registration did not dissuade the secret societies from regarding the law as ineffective and the Government as inept. Although the societies ostensibly complied with the new regulation, they were only too willing to submit false information when it suited their purposes, and there was nothing the authorities could do to stop them doing so. In September 1871, the Inspector-General of Police, C.B. Plunket,

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1 S.S.L.C.P. 1867, pp.1-134; Appendix, pp.I-XVI.

2 S.S.L.C.P. 1869, p.31; Appendix Y - Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Nature of Secret Societies, 1869.

3 S.S.L.C.P. 1869, pp.63, 128.

4 S.S.L.C.P. 1869, Appendix U.U.

5 G.D. No. 62, 22 July 1869; No. 267, 20 December 1869, Ord to S. of S.

6 COD No. 42, 17 March 1870.

who had also been the Registering Officer charged with the responsibility of supervising the societies under the 'suppression' Ordinance of 1869, said that it had been discovered that persons registered as headmen were merely 'men of straw'. To rectify the situation, he obtained all the societies' books and with assistance from prominent Chinese such as Whampoa, Tan Kim Ching and Tan Seng Poh, Plunket made the headmen sign sworn statements that they were the actual chiefs.[1] Considerable doubt, however, exists as to whether the authorities made any real progress because Tan Kim Cheng and Tan Seng Poh have been described as heads of the Ghee Hin and the Ghee Hock Societies respectively.[2]

On 2 March 1871, just before he left for a year's leave from the Straits, Ord reported to the Secretary of State that since the 'suppression' ordinance had come into operation, there had been a notable absence of riots.[3] No sooner was this despatch sent than the Straits authorities were confronted with yet another series of disturbances[4] which continued throughout the following year.[5] Despite the outbreaks of violence, Ord in successive despatches to London reaffirmed his faith in the efficacy of registration; on 4 November 1872, however, he set up a Commission of Enquiry into the riots which had occurred in October. The Report of the Commission was little short of alarming and could not have questioned the reputation of the police more sharply.[6]

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1 Report of the Inspector-General of Police on the Working of Ordinance XIX of 1869, S.S.L.C.P., 1872, Appendix 19.

2 M.L. Wynne, op. cit., pp.358-359.

3 G.D. No. 51, 2 March 1871, Ord to S. of S.

4 G.D. No. 59, 25 March 1871, Anson to S. of S. In one riot between the Ghee Hin and the Hok Hin (a branch of the Ghee Hok) societies, even the police were fired upon, indicating that little respect was shown to the authorities.

5 Report of the Straits Settlements Police for 1873.

6 Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Riots of October 1872, S.S.L.C.P., 1873. Appendix.

The Commission felt that unless the secret society evil was firmly suppressed immediately, the peace and prosperity of the Straits would be affected. In its conclusion, the Commission asserted that the most effective method of governing the Chinese was through the Chinese themselves, and advocated the adoption of a system which had been successfully used by the French in Indo-China and by the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies. Under this scheme, the Straits Settlements were to be divided into districts in the charge of Chinese headmen who would be directly responsible to the Government for the maintenance of law and order.[1] This proposal was rejected, but even had it been accepted, it would have given official sanction to the wielding of authority by the secret societies. It is inconceivable that any persons other than the society leaders themselves would have been appointed as district headmen.

This report was followed by the findings of another Commission appointed on 18 July 1872 to consider the desirability of recruiting Chinese into the police force.[2] While all the members, with one exception, considered that it would be desirable if it were possible to employ Chinese as ordinary members of the force, they declared that because of the influence of the secret societies, Chinese should be employed only as detectives.[3] It was felt that Chinese as uniformed police would be more vulnerable to corruption by the societies than detectives would be. Ord disagreed with this proposal and vetoed it.[4] Despite the legislative measures introduced since 1867 to deal with the secret society problem, by 1873 the situation seemed no better than it had been immediately after the Transfer, and headmen could

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1 G.D. No. 14, 18 January 1873, Ord to S. of S.

2 S.S.L.C.P., 1873, p.20.

3 Ibid.

4 S.S.L.C.P., 1873, p.85.

still boast that '[we] are the rulers...instead of the British'.[1] For the next few years, secret society riots continued almost unchecked in the Settlements.

As has been indicated earlier, the problem of secret societies was inextricably interwoven with that of coolie-immigration, and after 1867 the latter also came under the scrutiny of the Colonial Office. Towards the end of the 1860s and throughout the 1870s, Chinese coolies were in great demand in almost every part of the Malay Archipelago. The secret societies had become so involved in the abuses of the highly competitive coolie-traffic that the protection of immigrants and emigrants could no longer be ignored.[2] The first indication of a change in the attitude of the Straits Government occurred in 1868 when an attempt was made to introduce regulations for immigration. Because of the objections of local Europeans to any move which might constrict the 'life-line' of the Straits economy, the Straits Government was able to pass only a law to regulate vessels taking Chinese emigrants out of the Colony.[3] Concerned with the maintenance of internal peace and security, the Straits authorities made various suggestions during the next few years for some form of restriction or registration of emigrants but such proposals were not acted upon.

Between March 1871 and May 1873, one petition after another was presented to the Straits Government from a number

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1 S.S.L.C.P., 1872, p.106.

2 Report of the Inspector General of Police for the year 1874, S.S.L.C.P., 1875, Appendix 39; Eitel, op. cit., p.502.

3 Ordinance XIV of 1868: The Chinese Passenger Ships Ordinance, S.S.L.C.P., 2 July 1873, p.81. In a memorandum to Governor Clarke in 1874, the Chamber of Commerce said: 'At no time did the prosperity and progress of the Colony depend more upon an abundant supply of labour than it does now; for such labour the Colony has no resources of supply within itself; and if immigration be cut off or discouraged, enterprises of great moment that are now developing must wither and collapse'. S.S.L.C.P., 1874, Appendix 33.

of prominent local residents, mostly Chinese, urging that the coolie traffic be regulated on the grounds of humanitarianism.[1] In general, the petitioners requested a scheme which would assure immigrants protection from kidnapping to the Netherlands East Indies where there was an acute shortage of labour. Attention was drawn to the necessity of establishing depots where the coolie-immigrants could be lodged and registered, and where prospective employers could engage labourers on 'ironclad' contracts. It was also proposed that government officers be appointed as labour inspectors to ensure the welfare of coolies after they had been engaged in contract work.[2] The moves for the protection of 'sinkehs' were not made entirely for altruistic reasons by the various Chinese merchants and other Straits residents, some of whom were motivated by self-interest since the demand for labour in the Colony exceeded the supply.[3] The petitioners' proposals were supported by the Commission of Enquiry of 1872 which had also recommended that a system of registration be adopted for the coolie-immigrants because neither the Government nor the police had any way of exercising control over them after their arrival. As the Commission put it, the 'sinkehs' knew of 'no governing authority but that of the secret societies, to which they are soon affiliated, or of these employers of labour who make their own terms with them....'[4]

When the Colonial Office was informed of the Commission's report,[5] the Secretary of State was of the opinion that the recommendation was 'well worthy of consideration' and asked that the proposal be implemented with minimum delay.[6] In

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1 S.S.L.C.P., 1871, Appendix 31; 1873, p.39; G.D. No. 289, 30 September 1873, Ord to S. of S.

2 Ibid.

3 S.S.L.C.P., 1874, Appendix 33.

4 S.S.L.C.P., 1873, p.139.

5 G.D. No. 14, 18 January 1873, Ord to S. of S.

6 COD No. 72, 9 April 1873.

view of reports from Hong Kong-based newspapers which deprecated the overcrowding of steamers and other abuses associated with the coolie trade, the Colonial Office in another despatch on 27 April 1873 instructed the Straits Governor to formulate legislation which would specify minimum space requirements per passenger in ships, and prohibit the landing of immigrants until an inspection had been carried out by a Government officer.[1]

Prompted by both the Colonial Office and the Chinese merchants, the Straits Government on 9 October 1873 legislated Ordinance X of 1873: the Chinese Immigration Ordinance.[2] Under this Ordinance, provisions were made to protect immigrants from slavery and emigrants from being kidnapped, and to deter 'sinkehs' from being drafted into secret societies. A system of registration was to enable the 'sinkehs' to become cognizant of the existence of a Government other than that of the secret societies. There was, however, opposition from the European residents on the grounds that the Ordinance would lead to increases in the price of labour and deleterious effects on Singapore's trade.[3] Ord criticized their hesitant attitude to the problem because they attached more importance 'to obtaining the coolie at a cheap rate than to the means by which his services were secured'.[4] Nor was the Ordinance completely acceptable to the Colonial Office, which considered that some amendments were necessary to secure the immigrant free access

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1 COD No. 81, 27 April 1873.

2 S.S.L.C.P., 1873, pp.140-41.

3 G.D. No. 291, 1 October 1873, Ord to S. of S.; S.S.L.C.P., 1873, pp.140-49. The European community had always supported the control of emigration from the Straits, but resented any moves to check immigration on the grounds that the Straits' prosperity was dependent on an abundant supply of cheap labour and this could be obtained only through immigration.

4 G.D. No. 289, 30 September 1873, Ord to S. of S.

to the magistrates and to enable the Registrar to interfere if the terms of contract were unfair to the labourer.[1]

On 4 November 1873, Sir Andrew Clarke replaced Ord as Governor. When the Ordinance was returned for further amendments, the Chamber of Commerce quickly persuaded Clarke to shelve it because of its inexpediency. A substitute law was suggested to control emigration and to suppress the secret societies since it was widely acknowledged that the latter's influence over the 'sinkehs' was great.[2] Not long after Clarke assumed office, Ordinance VI of 1874 for the regulation of passenger ships (regulating the number of immigrants in proportion to the size of the vessel on which they travel so as to overcome the overcrowding problem) was passed with the support of the European mercantile community, an indication that humanitarian legislation was desirable as long as the Europeans' interests were not threatened.[3] Before Clarke was transferred from the Straits in May 1875, he proposed to meet the Chinese problem with a plan suggested by W. Pickering in which Singapore was to be divided into wards and subdivisions under Chinese Wardmasters and Custodians.[4] This plan, which reflected the attitude of the Commission of Enquiry of 1872, did not materialize since Clarke's successor, Sir William Jervois,[5] believed that such a policy was impracticable because it could lead to the consolidation of the secret societies and the creation of an unofficial organization which could spread disorder as well

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1 COD No. 253, 17 November 1873.

2 G.D. No. 127, 29 April 1875, Clarke to S. of S.; S.S.L.C.P. 1874, Appendix 33.

3 Daily Times, 18 December 1873.

4 G.D. No. 127, 29 April 1875, op. cit. On 26 December 1871, W.A. Pickering was appointed by Ord as Chinese Interpreter to the Straits Government. Three years later he was appointed Police Magistrate. His suggestion was published in 'The Chinese in the Straits of Malacca', Fraser's Magazine, op. cit.

5 Sir William Jervois became Governor on 10 May 1875.

as it could maintain order. The new Governor further objected to the scheme on the grounds that the Colony's Chinese population lacked homogeneity.[1]

After Clarke's scheme was rejected, Governor Jervois was under considerable pressure from London to quickly devise a new plan to alleviate the continued abuses suffered by the coolie-immigrants.[2] In June 1876, he appointed a Committee to enquire into the condition of Chinese labourers in the Colony, and to ascertain whether any legislation was necessary for the protection of immigrants.[3] The Report of the Committee, released on 3 November 1876, stated:

> The Government knows little or nothing of the Chinese, who are the industrial backbone of these Settlements; and the immense majority of them know still less of the Government....With the exception of two interpreters, Pickering and Karl, there is no other officer of any standing in the Public Service who can hold the most ordinary conversation with the Chinese in their own language....It is not surprising, therefore, that the mass of our Chinese population bringing with them as they do from their own country the leading idea that the main function of Government is to squeeze money by fair means or foul, know even less of our Government than it does of them...and we believe that the vast majority of Chinamen who come to work in these Settlements return to their country not knowing clearly whether there is a Government in them or not. Soon after his arrival the immigrant becomes, in all probability, a member of a secret society....If he gets into any trouble...it never enters his head to apply to a Government Officer [for help].[4]

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1 G.D. No. 238, 20 August 1875, Jervois to S. of S. Whereas the system worked well in Hong Kong which was predominantly Cantonese, Jervois believed that it would work the opposite way in the Straits which had several dialect-groupings as well as the various ethnic groups.

2 COD No. 74, 3 May 1875; No. 114, 26 June 1875. It would seem that the Colonial Office was more concerned than were the Straits authorities with the need to resolve the coolie-immigrant problem.

3 G.D. No. 99, 29 March 1877, Jervois to S. of S.

4 Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider into and take Evidence upon the Condition of Chinese Labour in the Colony. S.S.L.C.P., 1876, Appendix 22. Hereafter cited as Report of Committee of 1876.

The Committee recommended that Protectors of Chinese, who were to be Europeans conversant with Chinese dialects, should be appointed at Singapore and Penang. For the control of immigrants, coolie-brokers were to be licensed and depots established for the reception of immigrants on arrival and emigrants on departure, all of whom were to 'pass before the Protector' for scrutiny of the terms of their contracts.[1] The British had eventually realized that before the secret societies could be suppressed, the fundamental source of their strength must be removed. Credit for these proposals was due to the Inspector General of Police, S. Dunlop, who had stated in 1875 that there ought to be 'a strong personal Government in which the administrators were brought into intimate relations with the people.'[2] What was urgently needed, he argued, was the appointment of Protectors of Chinese with offices in the centres of population in the Settlements so that anyone requiring their assistance or advice would have ready access to them. The Protector's office was to be the channel of communication between the Government and the Chinese population.[3] Dunlop was of the opinion that the information gathered by the Protector in the performance of his duties would be invaluable in directing official policy. Other events in 1876 and 1877 demonstrated the necessity for the establishment of such an office. No sooner was the report released than the 'Post Office Riots' started in Singapore on 15 December 1876; these were not inter-society feuds but were directed against the Straits Government for attempting to introduce a new system of sending letters and remittances to China to the families of the Chinese resident in Singapore who had hitherto relied on

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1 Ibid.

2 A.R.I.G.P., 1875. S.S.L.C.P., 1876, Appendix 19.

3 Ibid.; S.S.G.G., 4 May 1877.

letter-shops.[1] The riots began as the result of an incorrectly worded notice in Chinese, and vested interests in the 'letter-shop' system immediately led coolies to believe that the new arrangements were intended to 'squeeze' them. It was clearly a case of the coolies lacking confidence in the Government, but the authorities, provided by Pickering and Dunlop with accurate information, quickly curbed the unruly elements.[2] On 17 February 1877, Pickering submitted another report concerning the kidnapping of coolies in Singapore and urged that protection be given to Chinese immigrants.[3] The Government by this time was already preparing legislation to meet the problem, and on 23 March the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance (II of 1877) and the Crimping Ordinance (III of 1877), both based on the recommendations of the Commission of 1876, were passed. These Ordinances provided for the appointment of a Protector of Chinese Immigrants and a Protector of Chinese Emigrants in each of the Settlements.[4]

In London, the Secretary of State, Lord Carnavon, had no hesitation in approving the establishment of a Chinese Protectorate. He remarked that the abuses connected with Chinese immigration in the Straits were hardly to the credit of the authorities, and that 'it is humiliating that it should be possible in a British Colony for free persons

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1 S.S.L.C.P., 1876, Appendix 31; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.184-8. The letter-shops sent letters and remittances to the appropriate port in South China, where an agent forwarded them to the sender's representatives in the main towns, who then transferred them to sub-agents in smaller towns and villages. The exploitation rampant in this system induced the Straits Governor in 1876 to open a sub-post office from which Chinese letters and remittances could be sent directly to China, thus bypassing the letter-shop merchants.

2 G.D. No. 444, 27 December 1876; No. 34, January 1877, Jervois to S. of S.

3 Report of Pickering on kidnapping of Sinkehs, 1877. S.S.L.C.P., 1877, Appendix 1.

4 G.D. No. 99, 23 March 1877; No. 177, 4 August 1877, Jervois to S. of S.

having committed no offence to be imprisoned and confined in large numbers against their will, and that special legislation should have been found necessary for their protection'.[1] Although the Colonial Office was concerned with this aspect of the Protectorate's responsibilities, the European community in the Straits regarded a solution to the secret society problem as a more immediate consideration. It was in these circumstances that the European residents reluctantly approved the creation of 'an expensive new Chinese Department'.[2]

On 14 May 1877, the Crimping Ordinance was put into effect, and was followed on 24 September by the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance. W.A. Pickering was appointed the first Protector of Chinese in Singapore, and E. Karl to the position of Assistant Protector in Penang.[3] The Chinese Protectorate was formally opened on 1 June 1877.[4] Its establishment marked a positive step towards the control of the twofold 'Chinese problem' which involved the immigrants as well as the secret societies. After the creation of a Chinese consular establishment, the Protectorate was to assume the further role of a counterbalance to the indirect threat which this official Chinese institution posed to British rule in the Straits.

4. The Chinese Government's Changing Policy towards the Overseas Chinese to 1877 with Reference to the Straits Settlements

A further problem which confronted the British in the Straits after 1877 was the existence of the Chinese Consulate. To understand the intense rivalry which developed between the

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1 COD No. 146, 15 July 1877.

2 Daily Times, 9 November 1876; G.D. No. 99, 29 March 1877, Jervois to S. of S.

3 G.D. Nos 99 & 100, 29 March 1877; No. 168, 18 May 1877. Jervois to S. of S.

4 S.S.G.G., 22 February 1878.

Chinese Protectorate and the Chinese Consulate in their attempts to exert influence over the Chinese in the Straits, it is essential to examine some of the reasons for the establishment of Chinese consulates overseas.

It was the partial British success in adopting a more determined policy towards the Chinese in the Straits after 1867 which enabled the Government to permit the establishment of a Chinese Consulate. One of the first indications of a change in attitude in China towards emigration occurred in 1859. By mid nineteenth century there was a big demand for cheap Chinese coolie labour in several areas including the Malay Peninsula. The method of coolie recruitment for contract labour overseas included kidnapping, violence and deception. In depots and ships, conditions were characterized by heavy mortality, ill-treatment, overcrowding and mutinies. Frequently petitioned by the families of kidnapped Chinese, the successive acting Governor-Generals of Liang Kuang (Kwangtung and Kwangsi), Po-kuei 柏貴 and Lao Ch'ung-kuang 勞崇光 restricted the activities of crimps or collecting agents by issuing proclamations prohibiting kidnapping and by threats of decapitation.[1] By his proclamation of 9 April 1859, Po-kuei legalized voluntary or 'free' emigration and the coolie trade.[2] A few months later Lao Ch'ung-kuang introduced a system of regulated emigration under the joint supervision of Chinese officials and foreign consuls, through licensed depots near Canton. The temporary system was partly initiated by advice from the Anglo-French Military Commission which supervised the administation of Canton from 1858 to 1861.[3] The Ch'ing Government had

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1 Li Ch'ang-fu (李長傅) Chung-kuo Chih-min Shih 中國殖民史 (A History of Chinese Emigration) Shanghai, 1937, pp.294-5. MacNair, op. cit., pp.13-15.

2 Ta Chen, op. cit., p.17. MacNair, op. cit., p.14.

3 By 1858, the foreign powers were firmly entrenched on Chinese soil and were making frequent attempts to exert their influence. In 1860 the system of emigration was extended to Swatow.

reluctantly endorsed emigration from China in 1860 because it was incorporated in the Conventions of Peking with Britain and France.[1]

In 1861, the son of the empress dowager, T'ung-chih (同治) ascended to the throne and his uncle Prince Kung (恭親王), as Prince Counsellor, headed the Grand Council and directed the newly-established Tsungli-Yamen.[2] Prince Kung's assistants included the able Grand Secretary Kuei-liang (桂良) and the Vice-Minister of Revenue Wen-hsiang (文祥). Together with several others, this group advocated the adaptation of Western principles and methods of diplomacy. Their enlightened attitude meant a change in China's domestic and foreign policies; thus a new aspect of China's self-strengthening movement was soon underway.[3]

In 1862, the T'ung-wen Kuan 同文館 was opened as a foreign language school to meet the needs of modern

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1 H.B. Morse, International Relations of the Chinese Empire (London, 1910), Vol. II, pp.174-7. Also Treaties, Conventions, etc. between China and Foreign States (Shanghai, 1917), Vol. I, pp.240, 677.* Article V, British Convention, and Article IX, French Convention, gave the system of emigration official recognition by Peking. *(Hereafter cited as Treaties).

2 A.W. Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, 1644-1912 (Washington, 1943) Vol. I, pp.380-4. Also Li Chien-nung, The Political History of China, 1840-1928 (translated by Ssu-yu Teng and J. Ingalls) (New Jersey, 5th printing, 1966), pp.87-8.

The Tsungli-Yamen was established on 20 January 1861. Its full name was Tsung-li ke-kuo shih-wu ya-men 總理各國事務衙門 (Office in General Charge of Affairs Concerning All Foreign Nations) or Tsung-li ke-kuo t'ung-shang shih-wu ya-men 總理各國通商事務衙門 (Office in General Charge of Commercial Affairs Concerning All Foreign Nations).

3 Li Chien-nung, op. cit., pp.95-109. The new approach called for China's scrupulous observance of her treaty obligations instead of her previous policy of complete disregard of them.

diplomacy.[1] Supported by many powerful provincial officials including Tseng Kuo-fan曾国藩, Li Hung-chang李鴻章 and Tso Tsung-t'ang左宗棠, Prince Kung brought in other innovations as part of the self-strengthening movement.[2] China's attitude towards consular representation abroad was changing, although there was some opposition from strong forces of prejudice and conservatism. For four years after 1860, the Chinese Government did not draft any regulations regarding the protection of emigrants. Wen Chung-chi is of the opinion that China was 'probably at heart still opposed to emigration and therefore unwilling to discuss the matter with foreign powers'.[3] Measures enforced by the Chinese Government to suppress coolie crimping proved ineffective. In October 1864 the Governor-General (Mao Hung-pin毛鴻賓) of Liang Kuang sent a memorandum to Prince Kung on the subject of the lamentable state of affairs in the coolie trade. Under instruction from Prince Kung, the Tsungli-Yamen advised the Emperor of the importance of foreign assistance in the suppression of intensified crimping activity.[4]

The Tsungli-Yamen, in a tripartite convention with the British and French Legations, on 5 March 1866 agreed to a final draft of twenty-two articles primarily concerned with

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1 M.C. Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung Chih Restoration, 1862-1874 (Stanford, 1957) p.242. In 1864, Wheaton's Elements of International Law was translated by W.A.P. Martin who was the director of the T'ung-wen Kuan. The book was published under Prince Kung's patronage and distributed to the provincial authorities. I.C.Y. Hsu, op. cit., p.128.

2 Ibid., passim. The movement aimed at restoring traditional institutions and also at adopting Western concepts provided that they did not undermine the fundamentals of Chinese civilization.

3 Wen Chung-chi, The Nineteenth Century Imperial Chinese Consulate in the Straits Settlements: Origins and Development. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1964, p.41.

4 Ibid., p.42. Also, Ch'ou-pan i-wu shih-mo籌辦夷務始末 (A Complete Account of Our Management of Barbarian Affairs), CPIWSM - TC 39/4b-6a; 6b.

the protection of Chinese emigrants.[1] Two of Prince Kung's proposals were that regulations be drafted to ensure that coolie employers abroad honoured their contracts; and that the Chinese Government be allowed to send officials intermittently to the British and French colonies to investigate Chinese labour conditions.[2] Prince Kung met implied criticisms from the Counsellor of the British Legation, Thomas Wade, and from the French Charge d'affairs, Henri de Bellonet, because he omitted reference to the 'free' emigrants in his proposals.[3] Bellonet urged that Chinese consulates be established to look after the overseas Chinese, 'free' emigrants as well as contract labourers.[4] Although the idea of establishing consulates abroad was welcomed by some Chinese officials, it was almost a decade before this possibility materialized. China ignored the right, accorded her by the Treaties of Tientsin and the Convention of Peking, to have legations in Paris and London.[5] The main reason for this lay in the traditional attitude towards the concept of exchanging envoys, which was regarded as a violation of China's 'fundamental rules or system' known as t'i-chih .[6] Foreign legations were accepted in Peking only after China was defeated militarily. Nevertheless, the sending to Europe of a semi-official mission led by Sir

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1 The convention was not ratified by Britain and France because some of its clauses were unacceptable to them.

2 CPIWSM - TC 39/7b-8a.

3 Ibid., 6a-b.

4 Ibid., 8b-11a; 11b-12a; 11b-13b.

5 Treaties, p.213 (Article 2 of British Treaty) and p.603 (Article 2 of French Treaty).

6 J.K. Fairbank, Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast, the Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953) Vol. 1, pp.23-38. I.C.Y. Hsu, China's Entrance into the Family of Nations: The Diplomatic Phase, 1858-1880 (Cambridge, Mass. 1960), pp.109-118. In the past, vassal states under China's sphere of influence had to make periodic payments to China under a tributary system. It had been China's policy to surround itself by vassal states to form a protective cordon sanitaire.

Robert Hart and Pin-ch'un 彬椿 in 1866 was an indication of changing attitudes within the Chinese Government towards consular and diplomatic representation overseas. The mission had nothing to do with the protection of emigrants or with exploring the value to China of the overseas Chinese; it was an attempt to 'get-to-know' the Europeans in their own countries.[1] One of the students of the T'ung-wen kuan who accompanied the mission was Chang Te-i 張德彝 or Te-ming 德明. He noted in his diary on 3 April 1866 that there were thousands of Chinese traders in Singapore. On his return voyage, he wrote on 19 September 1866, 'There are many opium dens...there are about 60,000 Chinese trading there [Singapore], among whom is one by the name of Whampoa (Huang-p'u 黃埔) who is a British official for the control of Chinese there'.[2]

The Tsungli-Yamen's attitude towards diplomatic representation became more definite in 1867 when it began to press for the establishment of Chinese legations overseas. Some reasons for its adopting this approach included the representation of Chinese attitudes and policies in foreign countries; the enlistment of foreign support in times of conflict; the acquisition of information on foreign countries; the recruitment of Western technicians and the training of Chinese in foreign technology; and the attraction of foreign-trained overseas Chinese into the Chinese Government Civil Service.[3] On the issue of Chinese

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1 L. Tung, China and Some Phases of International Law (London and New York, 1940), p.111. Sir Robert Hart was Inspector General of the Chinese Maritime Customs and Pin-ch'un 彬椿 or 文武椿 was a Manchu ex-prefect. K. Biggerstaff, 'Permanent Chinese Diplomatic Missions Abroad', The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Vol. XX, 1936-37, pp.6-10.

2 Chang Te-i 張德彝 Hang-hai shu-ch'i 航海述奇 (Strange Tales of a Voyage) 4 chüan, Shanghai, 1867. Quoted by Wen Chung-chi, op. cit., pp.52-3. Another student on this mission was Feng-i 鳳儀 who later became Consul General in Singapore.

3 I.C.Y. Hsu, op. cit., pp.160-2.

representation overseas, the Tsungli-Yamen was firmly supported by viceroys Li Hung-chang, Tseng Kuo-fan and Tso Tsung-t'ang and by noted Chinese officials such as Li Fu-t'ai 李福泰 (Governor of Fukien) and Ting Jih-ch'ang (the financial commissioner of Kiangsu). Li Fu-t'ai stated that Chinese envoys (Shih-ch'en 使臣) abroad could obtain valuable information, encourage trade and promote friendship whilst Ting Jih-ch'ang went further to express the view that Chinese overseas were 'additional enemies' for the foreign countries. Ting maintained that overseas Chinese and their leaders should be cultivated for their friendship and loyalty to assist China and that it would not be difficult to utilize their services. To illustrate his point, he mentioned that the Chinese in Singapore were ready to give instant obedience to a person named Hu (胡) who came from P'an-yu (潘禺); obviously Ting meant Whampoa.[1] The officials agreed that China should select only dedicated, capable and loyal men as the country's representatives abroad.

The Chinese officials were further familiarised with the notion of consular representation overseas by the Burlingame Mission of 1868; the Alcock Convention in 1869; the Treaty with Japan in 1871; the Treaty with Peru in 1874; and a Convention with Spain in 1877.[2] Despite the missions she sent overseas and the treaties she signed, however, China was reluctant to have consulates abroad. This could to some extent be attributed to the prevailing popular anti-foreign feeling combined with official distrust of non-ratified conventions. It cannot be denied that China's attitude towards consular representation had undergone change but she was not yet willing to pursue a determined and practical policy to have consulates established. The Formosa Incident of 1874 and the Margary Affair of 1875 made new demands for

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1 CPIWSM - TC 55/21b-22a; 29b-41b; 34a; 39a. P'an-yu is an ancient name for Canton.

2 Chung-wai t'iao-yo hui-pien 中外條約彙編 (A Collection of Treaties between China and Foreign Countries) Shanghai, 1933. K. Biggerstaff, op. cit., pp.10-20.

the shaping of that policy. As a result of the Formosa Incident, Li Hung-chang and Wang K'ai-t'ai 王凱泰 (the Governor of Fukien) pressed firmly for envoys and consuls overseas as a matter of self-interest.[1] The Governor-General of Liang Kuang, Li Tsung-hsi 李宗羲 pointed out in 1875 that consulates in Singapore and elsewhere could serve China's interests by exercising influence over the headmen of overseas Chinese, almost all of whom were culturally attached to China. One incentive he suggested was the giving of awards and honours to headmen to ensure that they felt they were sharing China's destiny.[2] The Margary Affair resulted in further concessions demanded from China by the British as an indemnity, thus opening new negotiations. A definite policy of overseas representation materialized after this affair when the Tsungli-Yamen recommended nine men as envoys on 17 June 1875.[3]

Led by Kuo Sung-t'ao 郭嵩燾 , a Chinese mission was sent to London on 18 September 1876 to set up a permanent legation and to apologize for the Margary Affair. Kuo was the first Chinese Minister appointed to a foreign country and he was also given the task of finalizing arrangements for the first Chinese consulate abroad, viz. Singapore. En route to England, on 13 December 1876 Kuo stopped in Singapore where

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1 CPIWSM - TC99/33b; 48b-50a.

2 Ibid., TC100/8b-10b.

3 S.T. Wang, The Margary Affair and the Chefoo Convention (London, 1940) pp.45-53. Also I.C.Y. Hsu, op. cit., p.176. In November 1874, fifty-four shipwrecked sailors were killed by aborigines on the east coast of Formosa. When Liu-ch'iu 琉球 turned to Japan for help on the question of the murdered sailors, China found herself militarily unprepared to resist a Japanese punitive expedition to Formosa. Eventually China agreed to pay an indemnity, after interventions were made by Sir Thomas Wade. On 21 February 1875, a British consular officer, Augustus R. Margary, was murdered in Yunan and Sir Thomas Wade exploited the event to extort further concessions from China. G.H. Kerr, Okinawa - The History of an Island People (Tokyo, 1959), pp.356-60.

he was met by Ho·Ah Kay (or Whampoa). Kuo was impressed by Ho's official and social standing in the Colony. The idea of appointing Ho as the first Chinese Consul in Singapore had already entered Kuo's mind,[1] for he later recommended Ho to the Tsungli-Yamen as 'highly respected by the local population...The British authorities and merchants held him in high esteem'.[2] In order to avoid extravagance, Kuo informed Ho that the Chinese Government might be prepared only to meet the initial cost of establishing a consulate in Singapore in response to popular demand and that the expenses for maintenance and other costs must be met by Ho and the Chinese population. Ho agreed to these terms[3] and the Tsungli-Yamen approved Kuo's proposals when they arrived on 3 October 1877.[4]

Soon after his arrival in Britain on 21 January 1877, Kuo sounded out the Foreign Office in an interview with Lord Derby on 23 February on the question of a Chinese consulate in the Straits Settlements. Kuo felt that a Chinese consulate was essential in view of the extensive commercial relations between China and the Straits Settlements.[5] He

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1 Kuo Sung-t'ao郭嵩燾 Shih-hsi chi-ch'eng使西記程 (The Chronicle of an Envoy to the West) pp.147b-148b of Series 11 of Hsiao-fang-hu-chai yü-ti ts'ung-ch'ao小方壺齋輿地叢鈔 Li Shu-ch'ang黎庶昌 Feng-shih lun-tun chi奉使倫敦記 (My Mission to London) p.1a in Additional Supplement 9 of Series 11 of Hsiao-fang-hu-chai yü-ti ts'ung-ch'ao.

2 Ch'ing-chi wai-chiao shih-liao清季外交史料 (CCWCSL) (Historical materials concerning foreign relations in the late Ch'ing period, 1875-1911) Peiping, 1932-1935. Kuang-hsü period, 218 chüan; Hsüan-t'ung period, 24 chüan. CCWCSL - KH 11/13b (Compiled by Wang Hsi-yin王希隱).

3 CCWCSL - KH 11/15a. Also Ch'en Yu-sung (陳育崧 Tan Yeok Seong) 'Hsin-chia-p'o chung-kuo ling-shih she-chih shih新加坡中國領事設置史 (History of the Establishment of the Chinese Consulate in Singapore). The Nanyang Miscellany (南洋雜誌 Nan-yang cha-chih) Vol. 1, No. 6, April 1946, pp.122-3.

4 CCWCSL - KH 11/13b-14a; 30b-32a.

5 Ch'en Yü-sung, op. cit., p.122.

told Lord Derby, 'The Chinese residents in Singapore and other places in the Straits Settlements...at times gave much trouble...as they had hitherto not been looked after by a consul' and that the establishment of a consulate would 'tend very materially to the maintenance of order' among the Chinese. Kuo further suggested the nomination of Whampoa as Consul with power to elect a deputy to reside in Penang. In reply, Lord Derby stated bluntly that a consul would have no authority over the Chinese; only the British law had this jurisdiction.[1] When the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, referred the matter to the Straits Settlements Government for its opinion, his despatch mentioned only the possibility of a Chinese consul in Singapore. The question of a consulate in Penang was completely ignored.[2] Apparently the Colonial Office preferred to await the outcome of the experiment in Singapore before fully committing itself to the acceptance of Kuo's proposals. Consultations with some leading Chinese residents had convinced the acting-governor of Singapore, Colonel Anson, that should a local Chinese of 'high character and standing' such as Whampoa be appointed, the appointment would be beneficial to the government as well as to the Chinese population. Anson was, however, concerned about the Chinese Government's lack of familiarity 'with the powers and responsibilities of consular officers, [hence] the appointment of a Chinese Mandarin from China might lead to abuses and trouble'. His view on this matter was shared by W. Pickering who was then a Chinese interpreter in the Colony. They agreed that if Whampoa died or resigned because of ill-health, the

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1 'Extracts from minutes of an interview between the Chinese Minister and the Earl of Derby at the Foreign Office, 23 February 1877', COD No. 49, 8 March 1877. On 24 February 1877, Kuo Sung-t'ao made a formal application to the British Foreign Office on the need to have a consulate established in Singapore. Kuo Sung-t'ao to Foreign Office, 24 February 1877 enclosed in COD No. 49, 8 March 1877.

2 Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 3 March 1877 enclosed in COD No. 49, 8 March 1877.

question of his successor should be left open.[1] Although Anson had no objection to the proposed appointment of Whampoa, he was opposed to the idea of giving general authorization for the establishment of a Chinese consulate. He feared that when the consul's post became vacant, the Chinese Government would want to fill it without consulting the British. This fear stemmed from the virtual imperium in imperio situation which the Chinese were enjoying in the Colony and from the awkward relationship between the British authorities and the Chinese population. The Chinese Protectorate was not established until a few months later and the Government possessed neither the organization to obtain systematic information about the Chinese nor the means to control them.

Anson's views on the appointment of Whampoa as Chinese Consul in Singapore were readily accepted by Lord Carnarvon as 'an exceptional and tentative measure' on the understanding that if Whampoa vacated his office, the question of whether any other person would be allowed to succeed him should be left open.[2] Lord Carnarvon was of the opinion that in his capacity as Consul, Whampoa would be a valuable ally of the Government in the Colony. The Colonial Office expressed the view that Whampoa could become an intermediary between the Government and the Chinese, especially at a time when the Government was enacting laws to neutralize the influence of the Chinese secret societies.[3] It is doubtful that Britain would have accepted Kuo Sung-t'ao's proposals had he insisted upon a Chinese official from China as the first Consul in Singapore. His nomination of Whampoa was approved by the Colonial Office because Whampoa was personally

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1 CO 273/91, No. 142, 27 April 1877, Acting Governor Anson to Secretary of State.

2 Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 27 June 1877, enclosed in COD No. 164, 19 July 1877.

3 Minutes from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office enclosed in CO 273/91, No. 142, 27 April 1877.

on good terms with the local authorities and exercised considerable influence over the local Chinese population.[1]

On 23 July 1877, Britain formally approved Kuo's application,[2] and on 31 October 1877, the Chinese Government granted its imperial approval.[3] It was of some significance that Britain had permitted the existence of a Chinese Consulate in a British colony by courtesy rather than by treaty rights; and that the first Chinese Consulate overseas was established in Singapore. Since Whampoa was an unofficial member of the Colonial Government as well as a Chinese Consul, relations between the Consulate and the Straits Government were off to a good start, with the British envisaging the Chinese Consulate as a beneficial but harmless and temporary institution.

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1 Whampoa (Ho Ah Kay) had an impressive record with the British. He was appointed an unofficial member of the Legislative Council on 29 December 1869 and a few years later was appointed an extraordinary member of the Executive Council. In 1876, he was made a C.M.G. by the British Government, becoming the first Chinese in the Colony to be so honoured.

2 Kuo Sung-t'ao to the Earl of Derby, 2 January 1878, enclosed in COD No. 11, 16 January 1878.

3 CCWCSL - KH 11/30b-32a. The provisional recognition of Ho Ah Kay as Consul was gazetted on 5 October 1877, S.S.G.G. No. 249. S.S.G.G. No. 23, 1879, gave Ho Ah Kay full recognition after the arrival of his Exaquatur.

CHAPTER 2

A POLICY OF PROTECTION AND CONTROL: 1877-1900

After the establishment of British rule in the Straits of Malacca, conscious attempts were made by the authorities to promote Chinese immigration in considerable numbers for the development of the newly acquired possessions. Consequently, no sooner had the numbers of Chinese in the Straits become significant than the 'Chinese problem' emerged; it was to remain a thorn in the flesh of the British administrators for more than half a century. From 1877, the authorities introduced a more permanent and effective system of coping with the problem to supersdede the unsatisfactory 'imperium-in-imperio' arrangement which was then in existence. Known as the Chinese Protectorate, this special government agency's overriding responsibility was the protection and control of the Chinese population in the Straits Settlements. Its inauguration marked the transition from indirect to direct rule.

The Status of the Chinese Protectorate in its Formative Years

The Chinese Protectorate when it was created was a unique institution with no comparable counterpart in the history of the British colonial administration. As an intermediary between the Government and the Chinese in the Straits, the head of the Protectorate was immediately looked upon as the official adviser to the colonial authorities on all Chinese affairs. In fact, the Straits Government came to regard the status of the Protector as equal to that of the Inspector-General; after all, the two positions were in the same salary-scale in the Straits Settlements Civil Service.[1] The Protector was, furthermore, under the direct supervision

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[1] Straits Settlements Civil Service List of 1884.

of the Governor and the Colonial Secretary. The first appointments to the Protectorate were W.A. Pickering as the Protector, and Dr N.B. Dennys and E. Karl who became Assistant Protectors in Singapore and Penang respectively.[1]

From the Straits Government's point of view, Pickering was the ideal choice for the new position, mainly because of his experience in China[2] and the influence he exercised with the Chinese both in the Straits and in the Malay States.[3] Three years earlier, the British officials had been impressed by Pickering when he succeeded in preventing the unruly Chinese secret societies in Larut (Perak) from engaging in further bloodshed; this was followed by his important pacificatory role in Sungei Ujong where he utilized his influence to keep the Chinese out of a domestic dispute between two Malay rulers.[4] In the Straits, the Governor was full of praise for the creditable manner in which Pickering had conducted himself, and in London[5] the Secretary of State, Lord Carnarvon, commended Pickering for 'the energy and courage he showed under the very difficult circumstances' associated with the latter event.[6] In other words, Pickering

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1 G.D. Nos 99 and 100, 29 March 1877; No. 168, 18 May 1877, Jervois to S. of S.; S.S.G.G., 4 May 1877.

2 W.A. Pickering, Pioneering in Formosa (London, 1898) pp.1-9.

3 There was never any doubt that Pickering's facility in four main Chinese dialects was of considerable value to the Straits Government. A period as Chinese Interpreter-in-Court also brought him into closer contact with the Chinese. For several years after his arrival in the Straits, it was his 'unofficial' duty to acquaint himself with the sentiments of the Chinese and to act as the channel of communication between the Government and the Chinese societies. G.D. No. 84, 27 March 1873, Ord to S. of S.

4 Dato Bandar and Dato Klana. E. Sadka, The Protected Malay States 1874-1895 (Kuala Lumpur 1968) pp.66; 70-71.

5 R.N. Jackson, Pickering: Protector of Chinese (Kuala Lumpur, 1965) pp.47-8. Hereafter cited as Pickering.

6 Parliamentary Papers C1111 No. 39, 26 January 1874; No. 8, 29 December 1874; No. 11, 4 March 1875.

had been tried and tested, but despite Carnarvon's favourable opinion, there were some doubts within the Colonial Office on the wisdom of appointing Pickering as the first Protector because he had not started his career in the Straits Settlements Civil Service and did not possess Dennys' qualifications and general experience. Such objections were overruled by the higher officials who realized that Pickering was 'one of the very few who can write Chinese and his services are therefore invaluable, and as long as there are no cadets who can speak, write or translate Chinese, they have...no grounds for complaint if an outsider is put over them to transact business which cannot otherwise be provided for'.[1] It was also noted by an observer in 1885 that Pickering's qualifications for the post were so exceptional that it was extremely unlikely that the office could ever be filled by another.[2] The best description of Pickering's attitude towards the Chinese in relation to his continuous endeavours to maintain law and order and respect for British rule was that:

> Although an expert in things Chinese, he was not pro-Chinese. He sought fair treatment for the Chinese, but did not regard them with affection. His attitude was of understanding (stopping short at the point of empathy) and fundamental disagreement. The Chinese must toe the line, accept control, and conduct themselves in accordance with British ideas. He respected their strength of purpose and astuteness but at the bottom looked down upon them - as he realized that they at bottom looked down upon him and his fellow-countrymen - as barbarians. He indulged in no sentimentalism towards them. He found their culture deficient and unsatisfying....His sympathies lay wholly with his own country and its values...[3]

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1 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/92, No. 378, 24 December 1877, Robinson to S. of S. It is inconveivable that any other person could hold this specialist post without the special experience and training which Pickering had.

2 Quoted by W. Makepeace, G. Brooke and R. Braddell, One Hundred Years of Singapore (London, 1921) Vol. 1, pp.98-9. Hereafter cited as Singapore. The other alternative was E. Karl who, although a Chinese-speaking British official, did not possess Pickering's experience.

3 R.N. Jackson, Pickering, op. cit., pp.119-20.

Subsequent events in the Straits were to prove that the Straits Government had made a wise decision in selecting Pickering because it was he who moulded the Protectorate in its formative years. It has been pointed out that the Colony's Chinese readily adopted the Protectorate as an institution for the settlement of their own private and domestic troubles; advice and assistance were sought from the Protector on innumerable matters although the Chinese realized that in many instances he had no power to redress their grievances or to adjudicate their disputes. So appreciative were the Chinese of Pickering's counselling in his 'unofficial court' that they came to regard him as the Ta Jen (大人 the great man) - a title of respect which was synonymous with that accorded to village elders and officials in China.[1] Pickering's assistant in Singapore, the scholarly Dr Dennys, however, was not an official of the same calibre.

In late March 1877 when the Legislative Council's debates on the immigration and crimping issues were drawing to a conclusion, Governor Jervois wrote to London on the need to appoint another Chinese-speaking European as Assistant Protector to Pickering's staff in Singapore.[2] Without awaiting its approval, Jervois reported to the Colonial Office on 23 April the same year that he had secured the services of Dennys on the recommendation of Sir A.E. Kennedy,[3] who had described Dennys, then a resident of Hong Kong, as one of the foremost European scholars of Chinese and as having intimated an eagerness to join the civil service

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1 V. Purcell, Chinese in Malaya, op. cit., pp.151-2.

2 G.D. No. 99, 29 March 1877, op. cit. Pickering's staff included other subordinate officers, such as the Boarding Officer, Chinese interpreters, clerks and several miscellaneous employees.

3 Governor of Hong Kong 1872-1877 who was then in Singapore en route to Queensland.

in the Straits.[1] The press in Hong Kong as well as in the Straits was enthusiastic about the acquisition of Dennys' valuable services in view of his experience and qualifications,[2] but in London, the Secretary of State initially reprimanded Jervois for being hasty concerning Dennys's appointment and for 'exceeding his powers as Governor' by acting without the consent of the Home Government.[3] It was not until August 1877 that Dennys' appointment was gazetted.[4]

Involved in too many literary pursuits, he did not remain in the Protectorate for long[5] and in December 1880, he became a temporary replacement to the senior magistrate (Mr

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1 G.D. No. 168, 18 May 1877, op. cit. Dr N.B. Dennys, who held a Ph.D. from a German university, had been in China since 1863 and had held several important positions with the British Consular Service before he left in 1865 to assume the editorship of the China Mail and the China Review until 1876. It was with the China Mail that he distinguished himself for contributing to the suppression of the Macao Coolie Trade, and for this effort the Chinese Government in 1878 awarded him the 'Kung Pai' 功牌 (Meritorious Medal - award for outstanding achievement). By this time, he had already joined the Straits Civil Service and the British Government forbade him to accept the foreign order on the grounds that it was against the Queen's Regulations. A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright, Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1902) p.750; CO 273/95 No. 229, 3 August 1878, Robinson to S. of S.; CO 273/97 F.O., 18 September 1878; COD No. 170, 25 September 1878. On 25 March 1882, Dennys made another appeal to the Secretary of State for permission to accept the Chinese order but was again rejected. CO 273/117 Individuals, 25 March 1882, Dennys to S. of S.; COD No. 110, 3 May 1882.

2 Straits Times, 21 April 1877.

3 COD No. 163, 18 July 1877.

4 S.S.G.G., 24 August 1877. Dennys arrived in the Straits from Hong Kong at the end of May 1877.

5 By August 1877, Dennys's extra-curricular activities included the curatorship and librarianship of the Raffles Museum and Library in Singapore. He was also a foundation member as well as the first honorary secretary of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and was an enthusiastic contributor of papers to it, mostly on zoological subjects concerning the Malay Archipelago. R.N. Jackson, Pickering, op. cit., p.84; J.S.B.R.A.S., Vol. 35, p.106.

R.S. O'Conor) who was on leave. Early in 1881, however, Dennys sought official confirmation as a permanent magistrate ostensibly because he had not been able, as an Assistant Protector, to master a Chinese dialect other than Cantonese[1] or to acquire any facility in colloquial Chinese. He remained unmoved by Pickering's every argument to induce him not to resign and later admitted that consultations with the Colonial Secretary had convinced him of the dim prospects of promotion within the Protectorate; this admission immediately prompted Pickering to advocate his removal. That Dennys was competent was beyond question but his knowledge of Chinese, as Pickering had observed, 'did not quite come up to the expectations which were formed of him. Dr Dennys possesses a knowledge of Cantonese...and Chinese affairs which for some' months after his arrival made him most useful, and which if he had decided to stay in his appointment, and take advantage of the facilities in the office for improving his knowledge would have made him invaluable to the Government'.[2] It is ironical to note that when the appointment of Dennys was first reported to London, one official in the Colonial Office had speculated that Pickering would be doing the odd jobs whereas Dennys would be concentrating on the 'real work' as specified in the 1877 Ordinances; the official went so far as to propose that the entire responsibility for the execution of the Protectorate's duties should be given to Dennys, but this suggestion was rejected by the senior bureaucrats.[3] Pickering believed that, despite his superior qualifications, Dennys's suitability as an Assistant Protector did not match

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1 After his appointment to the Protectorate, Dennys began the study of the Teochiu dialect at Government expense but he was not very successful. CO 273/104, No. 198, 21 October 1880, Weld to S. of S.

2 Memorial by W.A. Pickering to the Earl of Kimberley, 8 January 1881, enclosed in CO 273/107, No. 14, 17 January 1881. After his resignation, Dennys became the Third Magistrate and Commissioner of the Court of Requests and several years later was appointed the Protector of Chinese in British North Borneo, J.S.B.R.A.S., Vol. 35, p.107.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/92, No. 378, 24 December 1877, op. cit.

that of E. Karl. His anticipations of Karl's attributes, however, were also shortlived.

A Straits official of German origins, Ernest Karl had been a Chinese interpreter-in-court since 1873 and had spent many years living amongst the Chinese in the East before his appointment to the Protectorate where he was held in high regard for his 'great talents and ability' to acquire 'knowledge of the Chinese and their character'.[1] In 1879, Pickering commended him for his unaided efforts, despite inadequate organization and supervision, in carrying out the difficult tasks assigned to the Protectorate's Penang branch where the area of jurisdiction was very wide[2] and the amount of work enormous.[3] For this reason as well as that of the added responsibilities which Karl had had to assume during the following two years, Pickering strenuously pleaded for an increase in the former's salary in 1881.[4] By 1885, however, Karl showed signs of insubordination which led Pickering to remark after an investigation that Karl had 'expressed determination that he would only obey the Head of his Department just so far as it suited his own pleasure' and had performed unsatisfactorily in his work.[5] The Straits Governor then summoned Karl to Singapore to attend an inquiry into his conduct after Pickering had made a report against him, but Karl opted to resign on 18 December 1885.[6]

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1 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit.

2 It included Province Wellesley with its many plantations which employed large numbers of Chinese labourers.

3 Pickering to Colonial Secretary, 17 April 1879, enclosed in CO 273/99, No. 202, 10 June 1879.

4 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit. Karl succeeded in obtaining a raise in his salary. Straits Settlements Civil Service List of 1884.

5 Report by Pickering enclosed in G.D. No. 237, 5 June 1885; R.N. Jackson, Pickering, op. cit., p.85.

6 G.D. No. 237, 5 June 1885, Weld to S. of S.; CO 273/139 No. 4, 4 January 1886, Weld to S. of S.; COD 18 July 1886.

During its formative years when attempts were consciously made to attain renown for bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness, the Chinese Protectorate was constantly beset with organizational problems within the structure of the colonial government. One of the immediate questions which confronted the Protector was that of devising a scheme which would ensure a steady supply of Chinese-speaking cadet-officials not only to the Protectorate per se but also to the Straits civil service in general.[1] The Straits Government had intended for some time to induce its cadets to acquire a measure of competence in either Malay or Chinese, but had little success with the latter language until after 1877 when a programme of instruction in Hokkien (considered the most important dialect in the Straits) was launched under the supervision of the Protectorate. For this purpose, a class was formed for interested local students from any ethnic group other than Chinese. The experiment progressed reasonably satisfactorily and on 6 February 1878, in view of the conspicuous lack of Straits officials who were conversant in Chinese and presumably on Pickering's advice, Governor Robinson[2] informed London that he had introduced a system of scholarships and rewards for the students in Chinese in the hope that he could train a class of interpreters-in-court who would be able to translate directly from Chinese into English and would be free from Chinese clan, family and secret society influence.[3] In the same despatch, the Straits Governor also suggested the selection for service in the Straits of two cadets from Britain who had special aptitude

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1 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/104, No. 175, 23 September 1880, Weld to S. of S.; G.D. 29 November 1876, Jervois to S. of S.

2 Sir William Robinson assumed the governorship on 30 October 1877 and his term lasted only two years. CO 273/91, No. 311, 30 October 1877, Robinson to S. of S.; W. Makepeace, et al., Singapore, Vol. 1, p.105.

3 CO 273/93 No. 36, 6 February 1878, Robinson to S. of S. Apparently the system of interpretation in existence was for the Chinese interpreter to translate from Chinese to Malay and the Malay interpreter to translate from Malay to English. This system was highly unsatisfactory.

for acquiring languages. It was emphasized that they should be young because Chinese, unlike Malay which could be learnt in about two years, could not be mastered in less than four years. The cadets in Chinese would spend their first three years in the Straits where they would be attached to the Protectorate but it was proposed that in their fourth year they be sent to Fukien Province in China to acquire 'some familiarity with the Chinese in their own country'.[1]

In London, the Colonial Office approved Robinson's first proposal because it was aware that if Eurasian students could learn to translate Chinese to English with sufficient facility it would be unnecessary for the Straits Government to maintain a costly staff of European interpreters. The Home Government also met the Governor's second request and sent two cadets, H.G. Cooper and F. Powell, to the Straits on the assumption that it was highly desirable that some cadets should learn Chinese since none had done so in the past.[2] The Secretary of State, however, would not approve the sending of cadets to China for one year because it was difficult to secure adequate supervision for them there.

On 30 July 1880, the Examiners of the Cadets in the Colony reported that it was a farce for the cadets to continue 'pretending to learn Chinese in the Straits' because

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1 CO 273/93 No. 36, ibid.

2 COD No. 38, 12 April 1878. The Colonial Office realized the difficulties involved in studying a language such as Chinese and it suggested to the Governor that as a practical inducement, the cadets should be given some reward for proficiency at definite intervals throughout the period of their training.
In 1879, after a Report by Pickering and Smith on the 'defective and highly unsatisfactory state of Chinese interpretation in the Colony's Courts', Governor Robinson succeeded in establishing a staff of regular and efficient Chinese interpreters. CO 273/99 No. 202, 10 June 1879, Robinson to S. of S.

no progress had been made.[1] Acting on this information, Governor Weld[2] asked the Colonial Office to reverse its earlier decision so that cadets could be sent for training to Amoy where they would be supervised by the British Consul (Mr Giles). Sending cadets to China could hardly be regarded as an experiment because the Dutch Government, as was pointed out, had been doing this for several years and for similar reasons.[3] The Home Government relented and sanctioned Weld's request after it realized that 'a colloquial knowledge of any language, and especially such a language as Chinese, can only be obtained in the country itself'.[4] With this approval, the Straits Government began to send a steady stream of cadets to China, mainly to Swatow and Amoy, to acquire practical proficiency in both spoken and written Chinese. There were five cadets training in China in 1883 when the Acting Protector, F. Powell, reported that the study of Chinese was unpopular with the cadets in the Straits because the language was so difficult that they had to work very hard and about twice as long as the cadets studying Malay; the cadets in Chinese were 'losing extra pay and the chance of any acting

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1 Report by Pickering and Grant to Colonial Secretary, 30 July 1880, enclosed in CO 273/104 No. 175, op. cit. The cadets were H.G. Cooper and F. Powell. The latter was appointed to the Protectorate in 1878, and after a year in Singapore and Penang, departed for Amoy where he learned Hokkien for a year before passing his final Chinese examinations in 1881. He then became Assistant Protector, and was made Acting Protector in Singapore in 1883 while Pickering was on leave. In 1885, Powell replaced Karl in Penang and three years later was made Protector in Singapore.

2 Sir Frederick Weld assumed the governorship on 6 May 1880 and left the Colony in 1887. Makepeace, et al., Singapore, Vol. 1, pp.106-7.

3 CO 273/104 No. 175, 23 September 1880, Weld to S. of S. Robinson had earlier suggested that the Straits Government follow the example of the Netherlands East Indies Government in sending cadets to China for one year. CO 273/93, No. 36, op. cit.

4 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/104, No. 175, ibid; COD No. 151, 10 November 1880.

or permanent appointment that may be vacant'.[1] Despite the complaints of the cadets, the Chinese Protectorate succeeded in inaugurating a system within the Straits civil service in which there was an assured source of supply of qualified personnel to join an elite corps of British officials who were capable of dealing with Chinese affairs without the assistance of interpreters.

Another problem with which the Protectorate officials had to contend was the difficulty of obtaining recognition of the importance of their work as a means of elevating the institution's status. It has been said that 'Pickering did not work for love of his subject but for love of working. It mattered little what the subject was so long as it was attuned to his peculiar mental capacities, and won for him some recognition, and placed him in an unassailable position of authority in a competitive world'.[2] Since its inception, nevertheless, the Protectorate had been undertaking an ever-increasing amount of responsibility but was handicapped initially, as has been shown, by a lack of competent staff, particularly of the more senior members. Governor Robinson was somehow oblivious to this predicament of the Protectorate and in 1879 suggested to the Colonial Secretary (C.C. Smith)[3]

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1 A.R.C.P. for 1883. Powell had a legitimate grievance because each cadet, regardless of which language he was learning, received $948 per annum, and the cadet who qualified in Malay in less than eighteen months could draw $1416 per annum. Attempts had been made to remedy this situation by increasing the salary of cadets in Chinese provided that they passed their examinations every six months, but such attempts were apparently unsuccessful although a small number of cadets continued to study Chinese each year. By October 1888, there were twenty-one British officials in the Straits Civil Service who either had a basic knowledge of or were studying Chinese. A.R.C.P. for 1888.

2 D. and J. Moore, The First One Hundred and Fifty Years of Singapore (Singapore, 1969) p.430.

3 Cecil Clementi Smith had seen service in Hong Kong where he had acquired a knowledge of the Chinese before he was appointed Colonial Secretary in the Straits Settlements from 1878 to 1885. He spent a brief period of service in Ceylon before returning in 1877 to succeed Weld as governor. W. Makepeace, et al., Singapore, Vol. 1, pp.107, 110.

the possibility of terminating the services of Dennys.[1] The economy-minded Robinson was concerned with the costs of the Assistant Protector's Office and hoped to achieve a level of cost-effectiveness by streamlining even the necessary expenses so as to keep within the limits of the colonial revenue.[2] What the Governor failed to comprehend was that staff-shortages within the Protectorate would curtail its effectiveness, especially when the establishment was still so new and struggling for influence over the Colony's Chinese. After consultations with Pickering, Smith impressed upon the Governor the necessity of retaining Dennys and added that if any extra funds should be spent, then they ought to be channelled to the Protectorate because of the good it was doing for the public.[3] The Home Government, which had earlier stressed the importance of training more Chinese-speaking officials in the Straits,[4] concurred with Smith when it stated that it was 'highly inadvisable to weaken the department'.[5]

Unconvinced of the importance of the Protectorate in the eyes of the Straits and Home Governments, Pickering repeatedly hinted that he was overworked as a result of having had to resolve the continuous exigencies and disputes within the Chinese society.[6] The colonial authorities responded to his complaints by establishing a regular staff

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1 Robinson to Smith, 27 January 1879, enclosed in CO 273/98 No. 52, 5 February 1879.

2 Blue Book for 1877; CO 273/96 No. 314, 7 November 1877, Robinson to S. of S.; Ordinance 9 (1878) To Make Final Provision for Services of the year 1877 enclosed in CO 273/98 No. 50, 5 February 1879, Anson to S. of S.

3 Smith to Robinson, 5 February 1879, enclosed in CO 273/98 No. 52, op. cit.

4 Minutes enclosed within CO 273/98 No. 50, op. cit.

5 COD No. 81, 5 April 1879.

6 Pickering to Robinson, 17 April 1879, enclosed in CO 273/99 No. 202, op. cit.

of Chinese interpreters to assist him in his duties;[1] thus his tactics assured the Protectorate of a large staff and concomitant increased prestige, but these additions did not pacify him for long.

In early 1881, the release of a recent report by the finance committee on the Estimates for 1881,[2] which recommended that the Assistant Protector's Office would be abolished if possible, evoked a protest from Pickering. He interpreted any attempt to reduce the Protectorate's size as evidential of a diminishing appreciation of its arduous tasks, and displayed anxiety concerning the replacement of senior staff in view of the loss of Dennys who was about to be gazetted magistrate, and of Powell and Cooper who were about to be sent to China for special training. So concerned was Pickering that on 8 January that year he went over the heads of the Governor and the Colonial Secretary by submitting a long memorial to the Secretary of State on the general lack of perception of the value of the Protectorate's role in public security and welfare.[3] His main objection to the finance committee's proposal was that it was unwise to decrease his senior staff since the Protectorate's work, which had multiplied since 1877, would be beset with administrative problems. Pointing out that his 'department has become one of the most important in the Colony', Pickering went to great lengths to justify the credit which he claimed to be due to Karl and himself for their contributions to the Government's increased knowledge of the Chinese under its rule. The importance of Karl and himself, he claimed, did not stem from their fluency in Chinese dialects but from their experience accumulated after many years spent 'amongst Chinese, living as themselves'.[4]

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1 CO 273/99 No. 202, 10 June 1879, Robinson to S. of S.

2 Ordinance 10: Appropriation for 1881 enclosed in CO 273/105 No. 238, 20 November 1880, Weld to S. of S.

3 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit.

4 Ibid.

Pickering did not disagree with the report's second proposal, i.e. that funds should be diverted for providing more Chinese-speaking assistants in his department, but insisted that an Assistant Protector who 'should be a European and a gentleman, above suspicion as to what is well-known to be the great danger in Departments dealing with a venal and corrupt Asiatic population' was an absolute necessity. In short, Pickering felt he could not rely completely on the experience, integrity and competence of the assistants to manage the 'turbulent' Chinese affairs.[1] He disputed the financial committee's assessment of the high expenses of the Protectorate by claiming that the cost of his department was minimal both in relation to the 'monumental' duties it had to execute and in comparison with the cost of somewhat similar institutions for the Indians in Penang as well as for the Chinese in Mauritius. Pickering also complained about the unsatisfactory state of the buildings in which the Protectorate was housed and of the almost total ignorance of his work on the part of his superiors, the Legislative Council and the press. C.C. Smith's ability was denigrated by Pickering's comment that:

> [Smith] from his advanced knowledge of the Cantonese dialect and the written character and also from his having held the appointment of Chief of what may be called the Chinese Department at Hong Kong, is no doubt entitled to speak with authority on things Chinese....But the apparent analogy and real difference between Hong Kong and the Straits is, I fear, liable to mislead any official from the former Colony who may attempt to make a fair estimate of the Chinese Protectorate here.[2]

The Protector went on to define the differences between the two Colonies' methods of governing the Chinese. As well

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1 Pickering was correct here because there had been cases of corruption in the past and in 1885 two assistants in the Protectorate were charged with bribery. One (Tychicus) absconded and the other (Madden) was gaoled. CO 273/154 No. 306, 4 July 1888.

2 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit.

as a population conversant in a common dialect viz. Cantonese, for many years Hong Kong had had special repressive legislative measures to overcome the 'Chinese problem', whereas the Straits was noted for its multi-dialect Chinese population which had been ruled for some time by a comparatively lax government. The Hong Kong police force, furthermore, had many officers with a knowledge of Cantonese, but in the Straits, the situation was dissimilar and the Chinese were prepared to resort to violence over petty secret society quarrels. In his conclusion, Pickering stated that his reason for taking the unusual step of addressing the Earl of Kimberley was a desire to see the Protectorate encouraged and made more useful; his motive was to assist the Straits Government in obtaining the necessary means for the proper functioning of his department.

Governor Weld, who was duty-bound to convey Pickering's memorial to the Colonial Office, remarked that he failed to understand its purpose since the Straits Government was fully cognizant of the value of the Protector's services and the Protectorate's reputation for maintaining public order. It appears that Pickering's memorial was hardly necessary in view of the fact that he had not pressed Weld on the urgent necessity of remedying the Protectorate's internal problems when the Estimates were being prepared; moreover, Pickering had also assured the Governor verbally that his department's premises were the best he could obtain in a convenient location for the service of the public.[1] Assurances were given by the Governor that the Protectorate would be provided with new buildings in the not too distant future, and that he would try to ease the staffing situation. In its reply, the

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1 CO 273/107 No. 14, 14 January 1881, Weld to S. of S. There is little reason to believe that Weld had been oblivious to the Protectorate's importance because on 1 May 1882, he remarked to the Secretary of State that one of the best results of a strengthened Protectorate was that every Chinese, who was inadequate with the English language to address the Colonial Secretary, could be assured of free assistance to submit any representation to the Government. CO 273/114 No. 168, 1 May 1882, Weld to S. of S.

Colonial Office confirmed its recognition of the Protectorate's importance and cautioned Weld never to permit its staff to be unduly weakened.[1] It is ironical that less than two years later there were signs of exasperation in London with Pickering since he 'seems rather fond of advertising his department in a general and discussive manner...[these] assertions need to be watered down to some extent'. He was criticized for continuing to describe the Chinese as so important a part of the population of the Straits that compared with them 'the Malays and Klings [Indians] need scarcely be taken into consideration'.[2] Despite these comments, however, there was never any doubt that by 1883 the Chinese Protectorate had firmly established itself, and in May that year, Pickering was able to take a year's leave in Britain where he was awarded the C.M.G. in recognition of his services to the Straits Settlements.[3]

The Control of Chinese Immigration and Labour

It has been demonstrated in the previous chapter that direct pressure from the Colonial Office, the local officials and also some of the Colony's Chinese population had resulted in an intense desire on the part of the Colonial Government to actively supervise and control the Chinese migrant trade. The realization of the Government's inadequacy in this matter led to the creation of the Chinese Protectorate - the most congenial alternative to the previous apathetic official attitude towards the regulation of immigration. Fully aware that the presence of Chinese labour was one of the main factors responsible for the rapid economic development of the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, the British were unlikely to abolish the credit-ticket system despite its notoriety.

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1 COD No. 53, 7 March 1881.

2 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/121 No. 274, 27 June 1883, Weld to S. of S.

3 R.N. Jackson, Pickering , p.92.

In 1877, the enactment of the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance (II of 1877) had made provision for the Protector of Chinese to be informed by the Harbour Master of every incoming Chinese migrant ship and thus ensure that the Protector or one of his officers would board it immediately to ascertain from every immigrant the exact nature of the payment of his passage money. Depots were to be built for receiving and housing immigrants and also for the registration of contracts between the employers and the employees. It was stipulated that all immigrants whose passages had been pre-paid or paid immediately after arrival were to be landed at once and questioned at the depot about the labour contract into which they had entered; the Protector's duty was to explain the liabilities and terms of contract to them. In other words, the coolies would be informed of their legal rights before they were released from the depot. Those immigrants whose passages were not paid within twenty-four hours after their arrival were to be detained at a depot and placed in the charge of the Protector until arrangements were made for the payment of their passages and for their employment. All contracts for the engagement of labour had to be registered with the Protectorate in a prescribed form so that they could be enforced by law.[1] This ordinance, however, was only partially implemented because the Colonial Office considered it inexpedient to establish Government depots, especially when 'it was thought we were not in possession of such knowledge as would allow a step involving so much responsiblity to be taken'.[2]

Although partially hindered as a result of London's objection to Government depots, the new measure did not prove

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1 Ordinance II of 1877. 'An Ordinance to make provision by law for the Protection of Chinese Immigrants'. The Acts and Ordinances of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements from 1 April 1867 to 7 March 1898. 2 Vols (London, 1898). Compiled by C.G. Garrard. Vol. 1, p.403. Hereafter cited as The Acts and Ordinances.

2 COD No. 258, 27 November 1877.

too difficult to enforce. Large Chinese firms engaged in the coolie trade applied for licences to establish depots, making easier the tasks of the Protectorate's officers. In 1878, Pickering gave a brief description of the working of the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance during its first year:

> On the arrival of a vessel with immigrants from China, she is boarded by an officer of the Department and handbills are distributed among the passengers to the effect that although each immigrant ought to pay a reasonable amount for his passage money (estimated between $5-$8 depending on competition)[1] no restraint or confinement will be allowed, and that in the case of any grievance the sufferer should report it to the boarding officer, and that the Government will protect him against any oppression.
>
> On arriving at a Depot on shore, the immigrants are visited by the Protector or Assistant Protector and enquiries are made as to whether any of the new arrivals have relations or friends in Singapore expecting them; if so, the names of the relations or friends are taken down and every exertion is made to find them.
>
> On engagements for labour being made, or in the event of their passage money being paid by their relations or friends, the immigrants are brought before the Protector in his office, and informed that there is no necessity to join any Secret Society for the sake of protection, but that the Government is ready at all times to listen to them and to protect them in any lawful employment.
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> Each labourer and employer receives a copy of Contract numbered according to the Registration Books kept in the office; the terms of the Contract are explained to the immigrant, and he is told that while the employer will not be allowed to defraud or ill-treat him in any way, he himself will be punished according to law for any breaches of the engagement.[2]

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1 Rates on credit ranged from $7-$12. The number of credit passages which shipping agents were prepared to give varied according to the state of the labour market in the Malay Archipelago.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1877; S.S.G.G. 1878, p.8.

The impact of the new ordinance certainly had an immediate effect on the Colony's Chinese. Pickering remarked that one of the main objects of the legislation was to bring the newly arrived Chinese into immediate contact with the Government and to make them feel that there was the power both to protect them and keep them in order; this objective was satisfactorily carried out. After one week's residence, he continued, the immigrants in Singapore were quite ready to appreciate and take advantage of the new situation.[1] Some coolies in 1877 in fact made direct complaints to the Protectorate against their employers whereas others took advantage of the new-found protection to avoid work. The employer-employee relationship was changing because employers found themselves requiring more protection than their employees. In the past, employers could effectively use the rattan but from 1877 this kind of method could no longer be applied because they were 'subject to complaints before a magistrate if they venture to even use a cross word or inflict a trifling blow'.[2] Pickering was able to claim in 1878 that the Chinese Protectorate had 'materially altered the business formerly carried on by importers of coolies'. The table below demonstrates the decrease in the percentage of credit-ticket immigrants between 1877 and 1890:[3]

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Compiled from appendices of Labour Commission Report of 1891. From the figures, it can be seen that in 1877 the unpaid passengers formed about 27% of the total number of immigrants to Singapore. By 1890, the percentage of unpaid passengers had decreased to 8.4. Figures for immigration after 1890 are not available to the writer, but it has been said that 'during the last decade of the nineteenth century, the number of free migrants increased with a corresponding decrease in the number of credit-ticket migrants'. Chai Hon-Chan, op. cit., p.109.

	Total Arrivals		Number of Unpaid Passengers	
	Singapore	Penang	Singapore	Penang
1877	9,776	-	2,653	-
1878	34,088	-	6,405	-
1879	35,272	21,523	4,527	-
1880	46,744	30,886	8,631	13,484
1881	47,747	42,056	11,522	20,794
1882	55,887	45,122	11,404	17,011
1883	61,206	47,930	10,249	16,197
1884	68,517	38,231	9,690	15,181
1885	69,414	42,142	9,359	17,034
1886	87,331	57,186	15,733	23,459
1887	101,094	65,348	19,496	22,904
1888	103,541	78,175	18,421	16,186
1889	102,429	44,441	11,962	9,251
1890	96,230	36,044	8,152	6,813

The Protectorate did, however, meet with many initial difficulties. As has been pointed out, its staff was small and incapable of attending immediately to vessels which arrived day and night. When the cargo was unloaded, it was practically impossible to question every one of the immigrants satisfactorily. Another problem was that the licensed depots were poorly ventilated houses in the 'crowded by-streets of the Chinese quarter', and were often over-crowded with as many as two hundred men for whom there was insufficient water. Furthermore, Hainanese junks often evated the Protector's jurisdiction by anchoring off the port limits and discharging their human cargo at several points along the coastline, far beyond the reach of the boarding Protectorate officer in his single boat. These vessels were noted for shipping the greatest number of immigrants from the Lui Chiu, Kau Chiu, Lim Chiu, Yam Chiu and Kwangsi districts. Since they were also known to carry many young boys 'for the vilest of purposes', Pickering reported in 1878 that the Hainanese junks were badly in need of supervision.[1] In view of the staff-shortage crisis in the Protectorate, such a suggestion could not be carried out immediately, as was

1 A.R.C.P. for 1878.

indicated in a letter written by Pickering to Governor Robinson on 17 April 1879:

> The inspection of depots, witnessing the signature of contracts and enquiry into minor cases, fill up the office hours of my assistant and the clerks have as much as they can do in making out contracts, registering immigrants and emigrants, and also in the half-yearly registration of the Dangerous Societies. With regard to Penang...Mr Karl's duties continually take him away from office and while I was in Penang, he was in the Province [Wellesley] several times for a whole day, being called to give evidence at the different Police Courts, during his absence the Protector's Office is left in charge of the Chinese clerk who speaks no English.[1]

The period from 1877 to 1880 was one of experimentation in immigration control and the added experience gained by the colonial authorities indicated the need for amendments to the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance. As a result, Ordinance IV of 1880[2] was passed on 13 July 1880 to provide more efficient regulations for the examination of the immigrants on arrival by the officers of the Protectorate. Immigrants whose passages had been paid were to be released at once and those unpaid passengers who declared themselves voluntary immigrants were to be landed immediately on arrival and taken to depots which might be provided either by the Government or by persons licensed by the Government - such licensed depots were subject to all the rules and supervision of a Government depot. Although a Government depot was established at Penang, in Singapore the inspection of immigrants continued to be carried out on board ship despite the unsatisfactory conditions.[3] The Ordinance stipulated that inspections of the licensed depots were to be carried out regularly by the Protectorate's officers, but however frequent the inspections, its very nature rendered this system of

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1 Pickering to Robinson, 17 April 1879, enclosed in CO 273/99 No. 202, op. cit.

2 Ordinance IV of 1880: 'An Ordinance to make provision by law for the protection of Chinese immigrants', The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. 1, p.692.

3 Labour Commission Report of 1891. S.S.L.C.P. 1891, Appendix 37, p.171.

detention vulnerable to abuse. Despite its shortcomings, the Ordinance was designed to assure the immigrants of an opportunity to start their careers 'without any burden of debt, instead of having a heavy drag upon them, not for services rendered to the immigrant, but to afford a profit to middlemen, who bring them into the Colony as a speculation. They will start fairly, with no other debt upon them than the exact amount of their passage-money, to be worked off by regular deduction from their wages, under engagements entered into with the supervision of the Protector'.[1]

The ordinance was legislated in spite of the considerable opposition from the Legislative Council's unofficial members on the grounds that it was too restrictive and that the tax of a dollar per head on the immigrants, leviable against the ship-owner, was an interference with the freedom of the port and would injure the shipping interests. Since many of the unofficial members were involved with the Colony's commerce, such objections were not unreasonable, and the clause imposing this tax was eventually withdrawn. As an alternative, a fee payable on signing the contract was imposed.[2]

In early 1881, Pickering indicated that the procedures of immigration control were operating so well that it was no longer necessary for the Chinese-speaking European officers to do the work. The task of supervision, he believed, could be assigned to cadet officers who had no thorough knowledge of Chinese, linguistic contact between them and the immigrants being provided by the Protectorate's subordinate Chinese clerks.[3] In Penang, however, the continued shortage of staff resulted in the vessels not being properly boarded and the coolies not supplied with copies of their contracts.

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1 Quoted by W.L. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch', p.76.

2 S.S.L.C.P. 1880, p.42.

3 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit.

Apparently the work was far behind schedule and the boarding of vessels as well as the examination of passengers was only nominal.[1] Abuses connected with the credit-ticket system were by no means completely eliminated, but it cannot be denied that the authorities had made improvements by conducting official inspections of the immigration procedures. By 1883, the Acting Protector, F. Powell, reported that although immigration was increasing annually, the number of unpaid passengers was steadily diminishing, and that in both Penang and Singapore, the examination of passengers on arrival was carefully carried out. Furthermore, the entire business of importing unpaid-passage coolies from China was confined to a few firms and the trade itself was not 'held in estimation by respectable Chinese'.[2]

Apart from affording protection to the newly arrived immigrants, the Straits Government also legislated measures to safeguard the interests of the employers and the coolie-emigrants; the first of these was the Crimping Ordinance (III of 1877).[3] There was an increasing demand in the mid-nineteenth century for Chinese labour in the tobacco plantations at Deli in the Netherlands East Indies, and the planters frequently offered liberal terms to those coolies in the Straits who were prepared to be engaged, including offers of a sum of $24 advanced immediately after the contract was signed. Few immigrants to the Straits, however, were willing to go because of Deli's notorious working conditions.[4] As the labour market tightened, the Crimping Ordinance was brought into force in the Straits to prevent abuses perpetrated in the kidnapping of coolies to the Dutch possessions where a profitable field existed if labour

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1 Ibid.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1882 and 1883.

3 Ordinance III of 1877. 'An Ordinance to amend the law relating to crimping and to make better provision for the protection of emigrants'. The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. 1, p.403.

4 See Chapter 1, Section C, No. 3, pp.47-8.

recruiters in the Straits could induce coolies to abscond or desert their places of employment. It became an offence under this Ordinance for any recruiter to engage labour by force, fraud, deceit, intimidation and other means of false representations; nor was it legal to employ or harbour a deserter. The recruitment of labour was permitted only after licences had been secured from the Protectorate and written contracts signed before the Protector. Once engaged, no labourer could be confined to any house without his consent, and the labourer was committed to the fulfilment of his contract, i.e. if he had already received a sum of money advanced from his employer.[1]

Pickering reported in 1878 that in view of the relative ineffectiveness of the Protectorate's branch in Penang, little could be done to prevent coolie-headmen from continuing to make 'exorbitant squeezes' after they had disembarked coolie-immigrants on the island.[2] The immigrant had almost no choice on his arrival because 'he was at the end of the line and has no other resource than to submit to the terms of the headman who brought him from home'.[3] A man whose debt to the headman was $16 would refuse an advance of $24 in Singapore for contract work in Deli but on arrival in Penang would be pressured to accept a similar contract with an advance of $30, of which the headman would pocket $26.[4] The coolie-brokers

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1 Ibid.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1878.

3 The system of labour recruitment from China to the Straits in the late nineteenth century was as follows: The recruiter or agent paid the passage and expenses of the intending immigrant and, in some cases, gave him a small advance as well. The condition was that the coolie 'worked off' the expenses so incurred. Usually the China agent recovered his outlay, plus a profit, from an agent or broker in Singapore or Penang, to whom the coolie was consigned and who remitted the necessary sum to China on receipt of the coolie. This second agent then disposed of his coolie to the employer or his agent, making the best terms he could, to recoup his outlay and secure himself a huge profit. Labour Commission Report of 1891.

4 A.R.C.P. for 1878.

and headmen had considerable success in their 'business transactions', particularly when they continued to use the authority of the secret societies to exert maximum pressure on the immigrants to accept the engagements which brought the highest profits. The signing of contracts before the Protector provided a check on whether they were voluntary or involuntary, but it is doubtful whether the Protector's own influence was great enough to overcome the terror inspired by the brokers.

Another problem which confronted the Protectorate was that the Deli planters frequently repudiated contracts made in the Straits by their agents because the coolies were often found to be physically incapable of undertaking the arduous jobs assigned to them. To counter the growing concern of the employers, Pickering ordered medical examinations to be conducted in the depots before the contracts were signed because several cases were detected in 1878 in which the planter's agent had substituted inferior men for those who had signed the contract. This move was effective since the agents were held responsible, under the threat of prosecution, for the fulfilment of the contracts which they signed on behalf of the planters. In 1881, Pickering insisted that some check was needed to resolve the emigration problem and 'only by strict cohesion and unanimous determination can the planters hope to be able to cope with men so astute as are the Chinese who get their livelihood by the coolie traffic'.[1] The planters responded to this appeal by restricting the maximum amount of money paid to recruiters for each labourer in order to prevent coolie-recruitment from being completely in the latter's hands. Five years later, the fee for contracts was raised to $1 and to prevent substitution by agents, the Protectorate furnished the employers with a photograph of each labourer.[2] The abuses, however, continued. As Pickering said in 1886, 'None but the

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1 A.R.C.P. for 1881.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1886.

worst class of Chinese will engage in the business of recruiting coolies for foreign countries and it takes all our time to watch over and guard the labourers from extortion and misrepresentation'.[1]

A further measure, the Labour Contracts Ordinance (I of 1882),[2] was legislated in 1882 for the protection of the employers. It provided for written contracts for a term of five years and imposed 'rigorous' imprisonment for breaches by the labourers.[3] The British Government, however, felt that the penalties imposed by Section 14 of the Ordinance were too severe and would not approve any imprisonment without the option of a fine. London also believed that imprisonment in default of payment of a fine should not be 'rigorous', except in the case of a labourer who received an advance and absconded or refused to fulfil his contract, and the Secretary of State insisted that the period of contracts of service should be limited to one year.[4] In reply, Governor Weld stated that a strong feeling had manifested itself against the proposed amendments. He argued for a three year contract as a compromise on the grounds that a new employee was often of little use to his employer at the beginning of his contract, at which time the coolie was likely to be in needy circumstances. Within the period of a three year contract, on the other hand, the coolie would be able to find another engagement on terms which would enable him to feed himself properly and put something aside. Weld considered it doubtful that the coolie could do so on a one year's engagement, since the employer would naturally decline

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1 Ibid.

2 Ordinance I of 1882. 'An Ordinance to amend the law relating to Employers and Labourers under Contracts of Service'. The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. 1, p.762. Under this Ordinance, verbal contracts exceeding one month were not recognized and a verbal contract could be terminated at any time by either party by a month's notice or a month's wages.

3 CO 273/113 No. 93, 9 March 1882, Weld to S. of S.

4 COD No. 116, 15 May 1882.

to give the same wages when he knew that by the time the labourer had become efficient his term would have expired. On the question of penalties, Weld asserted that it was no punishment at all to a Chinese who came to work on the estates if he was sentenced to a 'simple' imprisonment, i.e. for a term of one year. He was certain that if the employers availed themselves of the power to prevent their Chinese coolies from refusing to work or for improper absence, the penal clauses would have no deterrent effect whatever, and the Colony's gaols would become overcrowded.[1] Lord Kimberley concurred with Weld's first argument but insisted that no-one should be imprisoned without the option of a fine, and that imprisonment should be either 'simple' or 'rigorous' at the discretion of the Magistrate.[2] In view of the Colonial Office's latest instructions, the Legislative Council unanimously voted in Ordinance III of 1883: An Ordinance to amend the Labour Contracts Ordinance.[3] By drafting legislation favourable to the employers, however, the Government did not overlook the plight of the employees.

Agricultural enterprises in the Straits absorbed an increasing number of immigrants in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There was wider cultivation of spices, pepper, and gambier in Penang, Singapore and Province Wellesley after British rule was established, although the sugar cane plantations in Province Wellesley became the most important concern in later years. In Malacca, tapioca was widely planted by the Chinese and there was also one tea-estate.[4] Labour conditions in these estates were extremely severe and abuses to the labourers were rife. The terms of employment for the coolies varied, but the common denominator was that they were generally manipulated by the headmen. In

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1 CO 273/117 No. 455, 30 December 1882, Weld to S. of S.

2 COD No. 35, 3 February 1883.

3 CO 273/120 No. 166, 23 April 1883, Weld to S. of S.

4 W.L. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch', pp.66-8.

the Straits, an estate labourer had to work 360 days for an estimated $30, of which $20 was deducted for his passage from China and other expenses; in fact, he received no wages in his first year because of the debt he had contracted to repay his employer. During this initial year, the labourer worked for his food and shelter, and by the end of the year was deemed to have paid off the cost of his importation. In the meantime, however, he might have incurred further debts to his employer, binding him to a further period of service. The conditions of labour had several disadvantages to the coolies which restricted their earnings and frequently plunged them into debt. One instance was the settlement of wages being customarily made twice a year so that the labourer was forced to receive his supplies from the advancer on credit. These supplies were provided at 20-30% higher cost than the market price, and the monetary advances carried an interest rate of 10% a month.[1] The addiction of the labourers to opium, furthermore, led many of them into a state of indebtedness to the employer which closely resembled a debt-bondage. In the large agricultural plantations where contract labour was utilized, the payment of labourers, whether on the basis of time-wages or piece-work, was left entirely in the hands of the contractors who invariably exploited the coolies. Often when the labourers fell ill or contacted diseases, little or no medical attention was provided, and many died in 'kongsi houses' or at the pauper hospitals. Cases of flogging and general maltreatment of the 'sinkhehs' in both the European and Chinese estates were numerous.[2] Unless a proper system of official inspection of the sinkhehs' working conditions was introduced, abuses were likely to continue, and contracts unprofitable to them could only provide the labourers with incentives to abscond. Since

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1 The process in which the labourers bought their provisions from employers was known as the 'Truck System', cf. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch', pp.104-6.

2 Labour Commission Report of 1891; E. Sadka, op. cit., pp. 310-12.

the economies of the Straits and the Malay States were expanding rapidly, there were unlimited opportunities for an increase in abuses and consequently in absconding. Some attempts, however, were made to protect the labourers.

On 21 March 1884, the Secretary of State informed the Straits Governor that the Protector of Chinese should make some effort to visit estates where Chinese labour was employed for the purpose of investigating working conditions.[1] In view of the shortage of staff in the Protectorate, this request was not carried out until early 1887. On 6 September 1886, the Second Magistrate of Penang (W. Egerton) remarked in a minute to the Colonial Secretary that he had on many occasions sentenced coolies who had already undergone several terms of imprisonment[2] for persistent refusal to return to the estates where they were employed. Egerton claimed that in large estates the control of coolie-gangs was invariably in the hands of 'kongsi headmen', and that the coolies' frequent refusals to return to work after they had deserted their places of employment were mainly caused by the treatment they were liable to suffer from the 'tindals' (or foremen of coolie-gangs) who were put over the coolies by the 'kongsi headmen'. To remedy this situation, Egerton suggested that an officer of the Chinese Protectorate should conduct frequent inspections of the 'kongsis'. This duty, he believed, should be discharged along lines similar to those used to control Tamil labour; as he pointed out, there had never been a case in his court of a Tamil coolie who had persistently refused to work.[3] The Indian Immigration Agent in the Straits, A.M. MacGregor, supported Egerton's proposal and confirmed that, in his experience, many Chinese coolies preferred death to the treatment meted out by the headmen.[4]

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1 COD 21 March 1884.

2 In Section 28 of Ordinance I of 1882 it was stated that any failure to fulfil a contract should be punished.

3 Minute by W. Egerton, 6 September 1886, enclosed in CO 273/143, No. 11, 10 January 1887.

4 Minute by A.M. MacGregor, 11 October 1886, enclosed in CO 273/143, No. 11, ibid.

When Pickering and Dennys were consulted on the matter, they concurred with Egerton. In a minute to the Colonial Secretary, Pickering observed that the Chinese had greater endurance and hardiness than the Klings (Indians) provided that they were given fair treatment. Whereas the Tamils worked under the watchful eye of the Protector of Indian Immigrants, the Chinese labourers were left to the mercy of the unscrupulous foremen in the plantations, where little or no assistance could be sought from the Protectorate or the European planters. The planters or their agents in Penang signed contracts to protect their own rights and interests; they did not hesitate to object to any steps taken by the Protectorate to alleviate the coolies' conditions. Pickering commented:

> The real masters are the Mandors or the heads of the working gangs (kongsis) who contract for the piece-work of the plantations. The Chinese Sinkheh is left entirely in the hands of these men and it is not the interest of the planter, European or Chinese, to interfere with these kongsi headmen so long as the work is done satisfactorily and sugar is produced. Nothing can alter for the better, the present state of things but a change of the law by which the Protector of Chinese will have the same powers as those of the Protector of Indian Immigrants. No insisting without such powers would be effective, however hospitable the planters of the Province may be, any attempts to make enquiries which might prove troublesome would be opposed by them.
>
> I am acquainted with a leading English and a leading Chinese Plantation Manager (of the Province) and am sorry to say that the former is entirely guided by the latter. During the past 6 or 7 years these two gentlemen have devoted their energies towards getting the Chinese Sinkheh as cheaply as possible making him work as much and as long as possible and having him punished for desertion etc. as severely as possible, yet these Sinkhehs are away from the personal supervision of these plantation-managers, and are left in the power of taskmasters who have never had any rate of guidance but their own interests or passions, and who away from the eye of the European planter and secure from interference on the part of the Chinese Protectorate, can make life unendurable to any coolie who will not submit to their tyranny or comply with their brutal desires.

> Instead of us having received assistance from the planters towards ascertaining, and if necessary, ameliorating the condition of the Chinese labourer, the two gentlemen I have mentioned, have opposed us in every way, and...in pursuance of their own objects they have made the same kind of random statements against the Chinese Protectorate as they have made regarding the exceptionally lenient treatment of Estate Coolies in our Prisons.[1]

Pickering advocated additional power for the Protector to visit and examine Chinese contract labourers as a means of ending the abuses. On 24 November, he had written to the Colonial Secretary, J.F. Dickson,[2] on the necessity of appointing a permanent Second Assistant Protector of Chinese at Penang for the purpose of relieving some of the work done by the Protectorate's hard-pressed staff there.[3] Pickering was protesting against the Straits Government's omission of a Second Assistant Protector's salary statement from the Estimates for 1887 since in 1886, there had been a temporary appointment to that post in Penang which was sanctioned by the then Colonial Secretary, Cecil C. Smith. Not long before he departed for Ceylon in 1885, Smith had realized that in the interests of security and good order in the Colony, another European officer should be appointed to the Protectorate's branch in Penang. Smith's intention was that the appointee, with the title of Second Assistant Protector, would be stationed in the south of Province Wellesley as a District Officer to keep an eye on the numerous plantations and large numbers of Chinese coolies there,[4] and a Straits cadet was loaned to the Protectorate for the task.[5]

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1 Minute by W.A. Pickering, 29 November 1886, enclosed in CO 273/143 No. 11, ibid.

2 John Frederick Dickson succeeded Cecil C. Smith as Colonial Secretary in 1885 and remained in this post until 1892. In 1888, Dickson was awarded the KCMG. W. Makepeace et al., Singapore, Vol. 1, p.112.

3 Pickering to Colonial Secretary, 24 November 1886, enclosed in CO 273/143 No. 11, ibid.

4 Extract of speech on the Supply Bill for 1886 by the Colonial Secretary, 20 October 1885, enclosed in CO 273/143 No. 11, ibid; S.S.L.C.P. 1886, p.57.

5 Pickering to Colonial Secretary, 24 November 1886, op. cit.

Acting on the proposals of the various departmental officers to end the abuses connected with Chinese coolie labour, Governor Weld promptly launched an enquiry into the conditions of the Chinese coolies on the estates and the Protectorate's powers for their protection. The result was that the Executive Council recommended that the Protectorate be strengthened by the addition of two assistants, one for Penang and the other for Singapore, so that the Protector would be free to travel about the Colony for the purposes of inspecting the estates in the Colony.[1] Weld agreed to this recommendation but was not prepared to grant legal powers of inspection and control to the Protector until further enquiries had revealed that such powers were actually required. In seeking London's immediate approval, Weld stressed that the matter was of 'very grave importance', since the welfare and peace of the Straits depended largely on Pickering personally, and that without the additional staff, the Protectorate faced 'real danger of collapse' because it could not work at high pressure and remained dependent on the health of one or two individuals.[2]

The Colonial Office's reply to Weld was not one of entire agreement - it sanctioned the re-appointment of the Second Assistant Protector at Penang on a permanent basis but deferred its decision concerning a similar appointment in Singapore. The Secretary of State (E. Stanhope) expressed astonishment that the provision made for the Protectorate in the Estimates for 1886 should have been discontinued without any explanation in the Estimates for 1887, and that immediately afterwards, the Straits Government should propose to restore the same office and create another of the same description.[3] In short, the Straits authorities were

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1 The second recommendation was that Pickering's personal allowance be increased from $600 to $1200.

2 CO 273/143 No. 11, 10 January 1887, Weld to S. of S.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/143 No. 11, ibid; COD 19 March 1887.

criticized for their inconsistent attitude towards maintaining the Protectorate's maximum efficiency. There was, however, no justification for Stanhope's strictures because the Colonial Office had apparently drawn an erroneous inference from Pickering's minute. What the Straits Government had done was to appoint a District Officer (for Bukit Mertajarm, in the south of the Province) whose duties would include that of the Assistant Protector's Office which was provided for in the Estimates for 1886. The request for a Second Assistant Protector in Penang in 1887 was an entirely different proposition.[1] After this matter was clarified, the Secretary of State sanctioned the appointments of Second Assistant Protectors for both Singapore and Penang should the Protector's work increase.[2] On 25 May 1887, Weld announced that W. Evans had been appointed Second Assistant in Penang.[3]

The necessity of appointing a European officer in the Province, however, proved one point, that is, that the enquiry conducted into the conditions of the Chinese coolies in the Colony and the Malay States by two Chinese Government-appointed Commissioners in October 1886 could not have been exhaustive. If this had been so, they would not have 'expressed themselves much pleased with the conditions of the Chinese' as reported by Pickering.[4] It would appear that the Commissioners were not shown places where conditions were really bad or that they had not stayed long enough in any one place to realize the extent of the abuses to coolies. There is in fact no evidence to suggest that they visited Province Wellesley at all.

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1 CO 273/145 No. 177, 2 May 1887, Weld to S. of S.

2 COD No. 132, 5 July 1887; an increase in Pickering's personal allowance was also approved.

3 CO 273/145 No. 217, 23 May 1887, Weld to S. of S.; W. Makepeace et al. Singapore, Vol. I, pp.140-1.

4 A.R.C.P. for 1886; cf. Chapter 3, pp.45-8 for discussion of the Commissioner's visit to Nanyang.

Throughout the 188os, the competition of employers in the labour market of the Straits rapidly increased. Singapore and Penang became large distributing ports for Chinese coolies, and the demand for Chinese labour grew everywhere in the Nanyang as economic activity quickened.[1] As the labour requirements of the profitable tobacco estates increased, the cost of the 'sinkheh' to the employer became exorbitant. By 1890, the expenses incurred in bringing a coolie to the Straits Settlements probably did not exceed between $14 and $16. To this sum must be added the advances of $30 paid to coolies to induce them to go to Sumatra or Borneo; most of that sum, however, was pocketed by the brokers. The difference between this cost and the price paid by the planters ($80-$90 for Sumatra and $85-$90 for Borneo) represented a high rate of profit accruing to the traffic. Even the planters in Province Wellesley, who gave no advances to their coolies, had to pay for their services a sum varying from $35 to $38.[2]

The rise in costs was partly the result of the increased risks of recruitment because the Chinese Government had been alerted since the 1860s to the abuses attached to the system of Chinese emigration under foreign contract.[3] The vigilance of the Chinese authorities increased and during the 1880s several impediments were designed to slow the rate of coolie-recruitment under the credit-ticket system. At times the Chinese Government's opposition was so strong that the broker's agents hesitated in paying the usual advances to the 'kheh-taus'.[4] As the Labour Commission's Report of 1891 put it:

> It is probable that no definite role on the subject has been laid down by the Chinese Government but that the Governor-General of the Two-Kwang (Liang-

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1 E. Sadka, op. cit., p.318.

2 Labour Commission Report of 1891, op. cit.

3 Cf. Chapter 1.

4 Labour Commission Report of 1891, op. cit.

> Kuang) is personally strongly opposed to the credit-ticket system and does all in his power...to prevent unpaid passengers from emigrating.[1]

The Acting Protector of Chinese (Powell) had indicated in 1883 that the Chinese authorities were bent on suppressing kidnapping,[2] and in 1890 the Chinese Consul-General, Huang T'sun-hsien, testified before the Labour Commission that 'protection against kidnapping should be absolutely guaranteed....It is a point on which the Chinese Government is more sensitive than on any other'.[3] In China, the penalty for kidnapping was death by decapitation, so that if relatives complained that one of their number had been decoyed away, the headman responsible for his recruitment had to secure his return or flee for his life unless the relatives and minor Chinese officials were prepared to accept the 'price of peace'. This law, however, was subject to abuse.

In 1886, Pickering reported that because of pressure which was brought to bear in Swatow, the local Chinese firm E-Kee in the Straits, who were the main importers of Teochew coolies, had been obliged to discourage in every possible way the 'sinkhehs' they brought down from accepting employment in Deli. The reason behind this move was that taking advantage of the proclamations issued by the Mandarins in Swatow in 1885,[4] several Chinese there had accused the E-Kee partners of kidnapping their relatives, shipping them to Singapore, and then selling them to the planters in Sumatra. Consequently, the Swatow house had been forced to order their agents in Singapore to recover these men and restore them at all costs to their friends in China. Investigations carried out by Pickering revealed that in every instance, the charge

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1 Ibid. See Chapter 1, p.55 and Chapter 3, p.167.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1883.

3 Labour Commission Report of 1891.

4 Proclamations banning further emigration of contract coolies. S.F.P. 29 August 1885.

of kidnapping was false, and invented for the purpose of extortion, the men being willing emigrants; on their return to Singapire, the men expressed no wish to return to China,[1] as some of them were doing well in Deli and wished to stay there. Through fear of a public outcry and the extortions of the lower Chinese officials, E-Kee was only too glad to pay large sums for the recovery of the men and even for bribing them to return to their relations.[2]

The Chinese Government, however, continued its drive against contract emigration, and on 29 December 1888, a coolie-broker named Sian Khai was beheaded in Swatow on a charge of having kidnapped two men and sent them to the Straits *via* Hong Kong. The immigrants in question had had the opportunity to make a complaint in either of the two Colonies but had not done so, and the Protector in Singapore remarked, after an enquiry, that they had left China willingly.[3] In his annual report, Powell stressed that the official interference in China with emigration to the Straits was felt most strongly by the planters in Province Wellesley.[4] Even in these circumstances, brokers continued to import coolies, but to minimize the risks, had to resort to 'the bribing of subordinates, the purchase of the silence of parents, the tutoring of the emigrants to lie to those in authority'. By forming monopolistic rings or syndicates, the brokers were able to force prices up to a level limited only

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1 In 1887, 167,906 Chinese arrived in the Straits and only 79,913 returned to China. CO 273/152 No. 215, 17 May 1888, Smith to S. of S.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1886.

3 A.R.C.P. for 1888. The Protector of Chinese cited numerous incidents similar to the one quoted above.

4 Ibid. Even the Colonial Office expressed annoyance when one of the officials commented that the 'Chinese authorities in Swatow had checked emigration to the detriment of the Province Wellesley Planters'. Minutes enclosed in CO 273/159 No. 106, 9 March 1889.

by the inability of the employers to pay more.[1] The employers made several attempts to break the power of the monopoly by recruiting and importing coolies on their own initiative, but the broker's rings were generally sufficiently powerful to render these efforts abortive.

In 1890, the Colony's employers pressed for the appointment of a Commission to 'devise means for increasing the supply and reducing the price of labour'.[2] The Labour Commission was appointed in that year and its report released in 1891.[3] Its findings indicated that, despite the existence of the Chinese Protectorate since 1877, the immigration system had not materially improved. As the Commission stated:

> Scenes of disorder, amounting almost to riot, sometimes occur on the arrival of coolie-ships, rowdies from the shore assaulting the Boarding Officers, boatmen, and depot-keepers, snatching ear-rings and bangles from the women passengers, and endeavouring to persuade the 'unpaid' passengers to run away. To prevent a recurrence of such scenes, several of which took place in 1890, special police have been quartered near the docks, but this cannot ensure the space and quiet necessary for an effective examination.[4]

In presenting his case before the Commission, the Protector of Chinese stated that the 'sinkhehs' were often forced to go to Deli by threats of legal proceedings for debts incurred. He was also of the opinion that the power which was placed in the hands of the depot-keepers 'who are agreed on all sides to be unscrupulous, appears to us greater than should be entrusted to private individuals'.[5] The Report

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1 Labour Commission Report of 1891; A.R.C.P. 1888.

2 W.L. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch', p.77.

3 Report of Commissioners appointed to Enquire into the State of Labour in the Straits Settlements and Protected Native States 1891. S.S.L.C.P. 1891, Appendix 37, p.171.

4 Ibid.

5 Evidence No. 2861 by F. Powell, Labour Commission Report of 1891. Before the suppression of the secret societies in the Colony in 1890, many of the depot-keepers were known secret-society headmen.

elaborated other abuses involved with the arrival of the coolies, and with the unsatisfactory working conditions during their contracts. Attention was drawn to the fact that in the Straits, the Protectorate's officers did not enjoy legal powers of inspection similar to those given to Perak's Chinese Department personnel. Whereas the unsatisfactory conditions of the Chinese labourer in the Straits were due almost entirely to the absence of inspection, those working in Perak had the assurance of constant supervision by the Department's officers.[1]

The Commission's recommendations were of a sweeping nature. They emphasized that attempts should be made to establish Government inspection in areas in the Colony and the Malay States where Chinese coolies were employed, and that more severe penalties be imposed on employers guilty of maltreating labourers. Magistrates or the Protector of Chinese were to be given powers to cancel a contract should there be evidence of maltreatment. The Report also stated that endeavours should be made to obtain the Chinese Government's approval for a system of credit-ticket emigration on an entirely new basis in which coolie-brokerage would no longer be a speculative business.[2] Government depots, the Commission continued, ought to be established in China with a Chinese Government official in complete control; labourers should be recruited for some specific employment, and recruiting should be confined to recruiters licensed by the Chinese Government. In this way, recruiters would act under orders from employers rather than from brokers, and consequently speculation would be abandoned, thus considerably reducing the price of labour. Recommendations were also made for new coolie arrivals in the Straits to be examined and detained in Government lodging depots because the system of

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1 Labour Commission Report of 1891.

2 For a discussion of the proposed points for negotiations, see Chai Hon-Chan, op. cit., pp.111-12.

licensed depots was subject to immeasurable abuse.[1] The Report concluded with the following observations:

> In conclusion, we would repeat....There is no royal road to plentiful and cheap labour. What the community, represented by the Government, can do is to eliminate cheating, illegitimate profits, misrepresentation and every such bar to immigration; by inspection to ensure that the Straits shall offer an attractive field for labour; and to encourage by grants of land or other means, our immigrant population to remain here instead of being birds of passage; but beyond this the matter is in the hands of those interested. We have other countries to compete against, and if we are to induce labourers to come here in large numbers and to remain as settlers, employers must make their service such as first to attract and then to retain the labour they desire.[2]

The Protector of Chinese, F. Powell, however, added a rider to the Report. He expressed the view that the Commission's recommendations were impracticable because an extensive inquiry would have to be made into the conditions of recruitment in China. To this end, the co-operation of both the Chinese and Hong Kong governments would have to be assured. His chief objection was that any system of Government depots in China or in the Straits could easily be evaded. Once the licensed depots were abolished, the depot-keepers and their staff would have no incentive for reporting unlicensed depots which were receiving credit-ticket passengers. Powell argued that the difficulties of preventing irregularities had already been proven and that such a course as abandoning licensed depots for a Government depot would be followed by still more serious abuses.[3]

The major recommendations of the Commission were not adopted and no action was taken on the credit-ticket system until 1904 when the Emigration Convention was signed by

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1 The Government examination depots, which should have been established in Singapore under Ordinance IV of 1880, did not exist.

2 Labour Commission Report of 1891.

3 Report by F. Powell in Labour Commission Report of 1891.

Britain and China to institute a system of official recruitment; in fact no significant changes were effected in the credit-ticket system until its abolition in 1914. Some legislative and administrative improvements were, however, made before the turn of the century. In 1891, a temporary measure was taken to protect Chinese labourers when the Chinese Agricultural Labourers' Protection Ordinance was legislated.[1] This Ordinance made provision for adequate accommodation and medical attention for the coolies. The working period in a twelve-month contract was reduced to 330 days, with a nine-hour limit to each working day; holidays were also set aside without loss of pay. The most important provision was that the Protectorate's officers would inspect working conditions in the estates at least once a year.[2]

As indicated earlier, the Protector of Chinese had insisted in 1890 on the need for the establishment of a Government Examination and Detention Depot at Singapore which would be similar to that in Penang. This request was urged in every Annual Report of the Protectorate during the 1890s. In March 1895, the Acting Assistant Protector in Singapore, G.T. Hare, argued that a Government depot would bring in revenue because the entrance fee, which was levied on the employer by the licensed depot-keepers for every incoming coolie, would then accrue to the Government. Fees should also be collected, Hare continued, for licenses issued to depot-keepers and to labour-recruiters. Furthermore, the proposed Government depot could rent out its 'cubicles'[3] to replace the existing system in which depot-keepers paid between $13 and $40 a month for rent of private houses which they used as detention depots. Hare also suggested two other

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1 Ordinance 8 of 1891. 'An Ordinance to regulate Chinese labour on Agricultural Estates'. The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. 2, p.1268.

2 W.L. Blythe, 'Historical Sketch', pp.85-6.

3 The proposed Government depot was to consist of 30 cubicles or divisions each to contain 50 coolies.

methods which could be used to collect revenue if the Government had a depot of its own. The first was to have the 'sinkhehs' examined by a Colonial Surgeon and photographed by someone (whether a civil servant or a man under Government contract) over whom the Protectorate had control. Charges for these procedures would then be billed to the employers. In this way, the Government could ensure that the coolie was fit to labour and that impersonation of coolies was not practised. The second source of income would be to charge employers for the contract forms.[1] Hare felt that with an estimated revenue of $26,000 to $30,000 a year (if the complete scale of fees as suggested was charged), a Government depot could pay its own way and bring in revenue which would grow with the increase of the immigration of credit-ticket coolies to the Colony.

In another memorandum, Hare emphasized that the cost of such a building would be borne mainly by those China-born Chinese in whose interests the Chinese Immigration Ordinance (IV of 1880) was passed.[2] He then suggested the further collection of fees from all Chinese deck passengers coming from Hong Kong or China by Chinese Immigrant Steamers; these fees would be collected through the local owners or charterers of the steamers. Even shipping interests ought to pay something, Hare felt, but he feared that any tax imposed would 'infallibly fall' on the immigrant. He had to exercise restraint because of his awareness that there was some diffidence on the part of the Government as well as the public about imposing what some people might stigmatize as a 'poll-tax' on Chinese entering the Straits.

Hare contended that the collection of fees for the proposed project would be only for a limited period; hence as a collection for a special purpose, it differed completely

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1 Memorandum of Proposed Government Examination Depot by G.T. Hare, March 1895, enclosed in CO 273/224 No. 13, 20 January 1897.

2 This Ordinance had provided for the establishment of a Government Detention and Examination Dept.

from the poll-taxes imposed on the Chinese in the Dutch, French, Spanish, Australian and American colonies. As he pointed out, the implementation of the Chinese Immigration Ordinance was very expensive, and to run the Protectorate, the Colony had to pay $27,360 a year. Hare commented that the Chinese Protectorate was a unique Anglo-Chinese institution which 'is really like a Chinese Consulate run by Anglo-Chinese officials for the protection of the interests of the Chinese. This protection too is always necessary for every year brings down crowds of ignorant sinkhehs from South China....It is because the Straits coolie population is so migratory that this protection is so constantly necessary'.[1] On the other hand, foreign Governments imposed direct poll-taxes on Chinese immigrants and yet did nothing in return for the money they took; thus such poll-taxes were 'squeezes'. In Australia, Annam, Cochin-China and the Philippines where poll-taxes on Chinese were imposed, there was not even a Government Department that knew anything about 'things Chinese', and there were no officials trained in Chinese dialects and customs appointed to safeguard Chinese interests. Nor did these Governments allow Chinese Consuls to reside in their territories.

It should be borne in mind, Hare added, that the Chinese population in the Straits was an essentially migratory one and that every year there were large numbers of new arrivals requiring protection and care. On an estimated yearly average, the influx was 100,000 to 120,000, with some 30,000 to 70,000 returning annually to China. The irony was that the majority of this great army of passing manual labour paid next to nothing to the Colony for all the privileges, opportunities and pleasures they enjoyed. Hare claimed that

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1 Memorandum on how to meet the necessary expenditure on building a Government Wharf and Examination and Detention Depot, by G.T. Hare, 14 April 1895, enclosed in CO 273/224 No. 13, 20 January 1897.

it was the opium smokers amongst the Chinese working classes (approximately 20% to 30% of the population) who made any significant contribution to the local revenues.[1] Since the flow of Chinese immigration to the Colony and the Malay States was so steady in the late nineteenth century,[2] Hare argued that small charges of about 50 cents levied on new arrivals at the port would hardly be noticed. With the United States and Australia having banned the entry of Chinese coolies, there was a strong possibility that the rate of immigration to the Colony would increase, bringing additional benefits to the already prosperous Settlements.

Attention was also drawn by Hare to the system in which steamship companies sold their tickets for deck passages from China and Hong Kong to the Straits. In the 'Chinese passenger broker system', the broker would buy a number of tickets from the company and resell them to deck passengers at whatever profit he could make. Competition between the brokers was intense, although at times they would unite to keep the prices up. It appeared that these brokers (who needed to pay no expenses because the shipping companies took back all unsold tickets) made very large profits without risk. Hare estimated that if the charges he recommended were imposed on the steamship companies, the Chinese brokers, who would then be charged 50 cents more per ticket by the companies, would have to relinquish some of this large profit and sell their tickets more cheaply, especially if the competition was keen. To support his argument, Hare quoted the example of the Hong Kong Government, which imposed direct taxation on the European and Chinese ship-owners as well as on the passenger

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1 For a discussion on the Government's opium policy, see Cheng U Wen, 'Opium in the Straits Settlements, 1867-1910', J.S.E.A.H., Vol. 2, No. 1, March 1961, pp.53-6; Chiang Hai-Ding, A History of Straits Settlements Foreign Trade 1870-1915. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U., 1963, Chapter 4.

2 To illustrate this point, Hare stated that in 1877, 16,668 Chinese arrived in the Settlements; in 1893, almost 190,000 landed in Singapore alone.

brokers.[1] Although many steamers connected with the coolie trade came direct from Amoy and Swatow to the Straits and thus escaped paying anything to the Hong Kong Government, that Government in 1893 collected approximately $23,000 for direct taxation on the various forms of licenses and fees for medical examinations.[2] At this point, Hare stressed that he did not advocate collecting revenue from Chinese immigration to the Straits since that would be a great mistake, but that he wished to demonstrate that shipping interests which did not escape taxation in Hong Kong had never paid one cent towards the Straits Government revenue.

To safeguard himself from the possible charge that he was proposing to increase colonial revenue by charging fees on immigrants, Hare commented:

> But even supposing that the Government does not wish to make the Protectorate self-supporting or to raise money to pay for the new necessary works, as a matter of sound general principle alone, I think the Government would be justified in providing capital out of current revenue for the erection of the proposed wharf and Examination and Detention Depots. No one can doubt that the future prosperity of these Settlements depends chiefly on the labour and enterprise of our Chinese colonists. Granting this, anything tending to improve, increase and regulate in a a better way than now, the introduction of Chinese immigration should...be supported and carried out at any cost. The more secure and safe the Straits Government makes immigration for the Chinese, the greater will be the confidence of the Chinese in the ability of the Government to look after their interests and the greater their liking for the Colony...I have little doubt that if Chinese immigration was properly checked and controlled, so as to prevent any possibility of abuses, (and this can only be done

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1 Under the Chinese Emigration Ordinance (I of 1889) in Hong Kong, the Government there charged the following fees: (a) A fee of $5 whenever a Chinese passenger ship puts to sea or a charge of $50 for a general license for this purpose. (b) A fee of $200 a year to be paid by all emigration passage brokers.

2 A Crown medical fee at the rate of $25 for every 100 passengers on board ship examined to be paid by the owner or charterer of the steamer.

> by having a Government Wharf and Examination Depot) the Chinese female immigration to the Straits would considerably increase. Generally speaking I doubt whether the Government could find a better investment for capital than in the improvement and extension of Chinese immigration to the Straits.[1]

In short, Hare advocated that a Government wharf and depot should be built at all costs since the 'existing system of private depots was bad in every way, in name, in principle and in practice'.[2] He claimed that the proposed project was unanimously supported by all Chinese Protectorate officials as well as the prominent local merchants and Chinese leaders.[3] Unless this examination depot was built, Hare continued, the Straits Government would not be in a position to challenge the Chinese Government 'to show cause why "advance-ticket" emigration should not be freely permitted and even encouraged, and only by this means can it be taken out of the hands of the unprincipled rascals who now control it'.[4]

In response to pressure from the Protectorate, in 1897 the Straits Government sanctioned the construction of a Government Examination Depot, the cost of which was to be defrayed by the General Revenue, the stamp duty on contracts being increased to a uniform rate of $1.[5] Two years later, in April 1899, the depot was successfully established. No Government detention depot was built, primarily because of lack of finance, despite the urgent request made for its establishment by the Protector, who said that 'no going round visiting depots can be equal to residing under the same

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1 Memorandum by G.T. Hare, 4 April 1895, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

3 Report by the Protector of Chinese on a Government Chinese Immigration Examination Depot and Government Wharf, 8 April 1895, enclosed in CO 273/224 No. 13, 20 January 1897.

4 A.R.C.P. for 1896.

5 CO 273/224 No. 13, 20 January 1897, Mitchell to S. of S.; CO 273/225 No. 173, 25 May 1897, Mitchell to S. of S.; COD No. 63, 5 March 1897; No. 186, 25 June 1897.

roof'.[1] In 1902, after an unfortunate incident in one of the licensed depots during which the Protector was assaulted and two of the ringleaders shot, a similar request was made but was also ignored by the Straits Government.[2] Nor was Hare's proposal regarding a temporary tax on immigrants accepted because of Government fears that it might affect the inflow of immigrants.

Although abuses connected with Chinese immigration and labour continued well into the twentieth century, they were considerably ameliorated as a result of constant Government interference. The British authorities, however, met with more apparent success in the containment of the secret societies and their associated problems.

Inconsistent Approach towards the Containment of the Secret Societies

It has been demonstrated that the 'Chinese problem' required the governance of the Chinese population in a competent and perceptive manner since this was a pre-requisite to the security and prosperity of the Colony. Not surprisingly, after the Chinese Protectorate was formed, this pressing task was immediately assigned to the new Government institution when Pickering was made a Registrar of Societies in September 1877, with Karl being given similar responsibility in Penang.[3] The Government thus commenced its attempts to undermine the power and influence of the secret societies. As Registrar, Pickering 'at once took from the police the initiative in dealing with the secret societies and set out to control them and loosen the stranglehold which prolonged Government inattention and ineffectiveness had enabled them to gain over the population. Now for the first

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1 A.R.C.P. for 1897.

2 A.R.C.P. for 1903.

3 CO 273/92 No. 378, 24 December 1877, Robinson to S. of S.; COD No. 31, 13 March 1878. Since there are enough secondary sources on the subject of secret societies in Malaya, this section will not be discussed in detail.

time, continuous, systematic, direct and effective interest was taken in the problem'.[1] From 1877, the Chinese Protectorate produced annual reports which were concise and comprehensive accounts of the state of the Chinese population in general and of the activities of the secret societies in particular. This data undoubtedly led the Straits Government to a better understanding of the Chinese and to the subsequent formulation of policy towards their control and protection.

Pickering's first move as Registrar in dealing with the socio-politico problem of the societies, which had generated so much pressure on the authorities in the past, was to re-register the dangerous societies since the earlier effort had been a 'mere farce'. The revised procedure called for the recording of all particulars of the members and office-bearers under the headmen who were in charge of each district. In this way, a member of any society could easily be located through his headmen.[2] It was revealed in the Protectorate's inaugural report that there were ten dangerous Chinese secret societies registered in Singapore, with 618 office-bearers and 12,371 ordinary members; by 1883, the membership of these societies had risen to more than 43,000.[3] The possession of such detailed information permitted Pickering to exercise better control over the societies and he utilized these organizations whenever possible as instruments of the Government's rule. From the beginning, Pickering made it clear that the Protectorate would give priority to the

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1 R.N. Jackson, Pickering, p.73.

2 The only incident during the re-registration in Singapore occurred when the Hokkien branch of the Ghee Hin Society, whose headmen were mainly Straits-born Chinese, refused to do as ordered, but when summoned before a magistrate, they quickly complied.

3 A.R.C.P. for 1877, 1878 and 1879. In 1879 the figures were:

	Singapore	Penang	Malacca
Dangerous societies	10	6	5
Membership	23,858	39,627	3,500

arbitration of disputes, since if these were unresolved, they would invariably result in disturbances. He also indicated that the authorities would banish without compunction any person who was found guilty of instigating or being involved in violence.[1]

The impact of re-registration was almost immediate on both the authorities and the societies. Whereas the Straits Government's concern decreased as more was known about the societies, the headmen's anxiety increased as the official scrutiny of their activities intensified. Confronted with Government threats of deportation, the headmen were made to realize that complete control over their members and co-operation with the authorities were essential to the welfare of the Chinese in the Straits, hence the headmen were careful to make every effort to prevent incidents likely to develop into riots. Since they were acting in self-interest, the headmen also rendered prompt and efficient assistance to the authorities in the settling of disputes that had been referred to the Protectorate. Pickering reported in 1879 that there were more than 2,600 disputes of various kinds which had been settled by his department's officers and that the headmen showed an increasing willingness to submit their quarrels to the Government instead of 'fighting on every possible occasion'.[2] Largely as a result of this development, it could be said that the Protectorate had replaced the secret societies in the protection of the individual as he became less reticent about appealing to the law.

Deportation or the threat of it was the Government's most powerful weapon which had forced the headmen into submission. Banishment was more feared than imprisonment because the deportee was not only separated from his source of power and profit, but he also risked trial in China as a secret society member; the penalty for conviction was decapitation. In

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1 A.R.C.P. 1877.

2 A.R.C.P. 1879.

Ordinance V of 1877,[1] provisions were made whereby the Governor, after an enquiry, could banish any person[2] from the Colony when such action was deemed necessary for public safety, provided that the offender was not a natural-born British subject. In August 1878, a disturbance occurred in Province Wellesley and consequently two Ghee Hin Society leaders were banished. Governor Robinson, in his report to the Secretary of State (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) observed the 'improbability, amounting to almost an impossibility of procuring a verdict against the present and similar offenders in the regular court...The difficulty in procuring sufficient evidence to secure the conviction of the Head of a wealthy and numerous Chinese Society is almost insuperable where testimony has to be sought from Chinese sources, and I believe it was principally to meet this difficulty that the Ordinance (V of 1877) under which I have now acted was passed'.[3] Other headmen were deported in 1879 for instigating or participating in serious violence in both Singapore and Penang.[4] The Colonial Office, although it sanctioned the Governor's action, warned that the power to deport should be used sparingly and only in exceptional cases.[5] London clearly did not fully comprehend the Straits Government's problems or its methods of resolving them. Pickering apparently did not consider the Governor's power to banish as adequate since in 1878 he remarked that it was all very well to call the Chinese 'the backbone of the Colony', but it must be remembered that it was the British flag which had established the Straits and that the Chinese came in

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1 CO 273/90 No. 109, 31 March 1877, Anson to S. of S.

2 By the terms of the Preservation of the Peace Act, only office-bearers of the dangerous societies could be deported.

3 CO 273/95 No. 281, 28 September 1878, Robinson to S. of S.

4 CO 273/99 No. 169, 12 May 1879; CO 273/100 No. 300, 26 September 1879, Robinson to S. of S.

5 COD No. 157, 9 July 1879.

masses only for their own advantage; hence it was not justifiable that the public peace in the Colony should be subjected to the 'defiance of semi-savages' who were forced to seek protection given by the lenient British authorities. If there was no British rule, he continued, a state of anarchy would result, of which Larut was the perfect example.[1] Pickering considered that even wider powers should be invested in the Straits Government to enable it to deal with each society as a whole and not only with its headmen. This could be achieved by either suspending or cancelling the registration of a society if it had showed itself unamenable to the control of the Protectorate.[2] This proposal, however, was not acceptable to the Straits Government.

At this juncture it would be appropriate to note that Pickering's attitude towards the dissolution of the dangerous societies was completely inconsistent. Whereas in 1876 he had pressed for the total suppression of such societies, within two years he had changed his mind and stated that the dangerous societies had become nothing more than large 'friendly' societies.[3] In his 1879 annual report Pickering commented that, with a few exceptions, peace and order had been maintained after the police had convinced the Chinese that no-one was beyond the jurisdiction of the law; thus in general, the headmen had exerted their influence to keep their members within legal limits. As a result, he claimed, the societies' power was considerably weakened if not wholly destroyed.[4] On 9 June 1879 he continued to expound his radically altered views when he insisted that the secret societies were without political objectives and were dangerous only because each contained some lawless

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1 A.R.C.P. 1878. Apparently Pickering's remark was made because of the murder of Captain Lloyd, the Superintendent of the Dindings, in October 1878.

2 A.R.C.P. 1878.

3 L. Comber, op. cit., p.248; A.R.C.P. 1877 and 1879.

4 A.R.C.P. 1879.

characters. Despite such membership, the authorities had been able to exercise 'wholesome control' over the headmen. Should such secret societies be made illegal, he went on, there would be no means 'whereby the lower orders of the Chinese can be kept in hand'.[1] Pickering believed that the Chinese societies, if supervised by a competent staff with a penetrating knowledge of things Chinese, could easily be controlled. The reason for his change of heart was that the Straits Government had dismally failed to formulate more stringent legislation for ruling an 'exceptional population'[2] whose numbers were 'kept up by an annual immigration of from forty to sixty thousand adults of the lowest classes from China'.[3] It has been observed that:

> Although he [Pickering] advocated this indirect rule through emasculated secret societies, it became clear that emasculated societies could not in the last resort rule. The taming of the headmen had decreased their power and authority over the incorrigibly disorderly part of the membership. The inferior office-bearers and members, knowing that there is always an appeal from any injustice perpetrated by their chiefs, are apt to obey them only when their orders coincide with their own wishes; and feeling that no serious punishment can follow, they are exceedingly lax in the payment of the half-yearly subscriptions.[4]

The policy that had proved useful in containing the societies had thus paradoxically resulted in the decline of the headmen's coercive powers, and because of this trend, a few societies in Singapore became nuisances and required constant supervision.[5] The first positive sign of a

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1 Ibid.; W.A. Pickering 'Chinese Secret Societies', J.S.B.R.A.S. Part II, No. 3, July 1879, pp.1, 10-11.

2 Ibid., p.11.

3 Memorial by Pickering, 8 January 1881, op. cit., cf. R.N. Jackson, Pickering, pp.77-85.

4 Ibid., p.81; A.R.C.P. 1879.

5 A.R.C.P. 1880.

disintegration of the larger societies, however, did not occur until 1882 when the troublesome Hai San Society was dissolved.[1]

Public attention was also drawn to the problem of the secret societies in the report of a Commission Appointed to Examine the State of the Police Force, which was released in August 1879.[2] The Commission, chaired by the Colonial Secretary (C.C. Smith) mildly criticized the rather distasteful but nevertheless congenial liaison between the police and the societies, and the absence of other channels of communication between the police and the Chinese population. Its recommendations were that Chinese Officers who were proficient in several Chinese dialects as well as in Malay should be appointed in the larger police stations and that the detective force should be considerably increased, with half of its enlistment being Chinese. The significance of this administrative-oriented report was that it revealed differences of opinion within government circles concerning the formulation of policy towards the societies. Despite the general consensus that the societies' influence was baneful, there were two schools of thought concerning their future. While Dunlop and Pickering feared that if the influence of the headmen continued to wane, the Chinese population might become uncontrollable, Cecil Smith, who had recently arrived from Hong Kong where Triad societies were banned, favoured the following of that Colony's example or at least the continuation of the undermining of the headmen's position.[3] Smith did not press his argument and until June 1880 maintained that as a newcomer, he preferred to defer to the views of the more seasoned officials.[4] Such a frank admission must have delighted Pickering.

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1 A.R.C.P. 1882; A.R.I.G.P. 1882; M.L. Wynne, op. cit., p.366.

2 S.S.L.C.P. 1879, Appendix 32.

3 Ibid., pp.24-8.

4 S.S.L.C.P. 1880, p.47.

Primarily based on Pickering's annual reports regarding his growing concern about the increasing number of Straits-born Chinese who were joining secret societies and who, being British subjects, were immune from banishment, Ordinance IV of 1882 was legislated on 7 March of that year. Under this law, it became illegal for persons of non-Chinese descent and for British subjects, whether natural-born or naturalized, to become members of a Chinese secret society; in this way, only China-born Chinese could be members of the societies. A more important provision was that the Governor could suppress a secret society if he was convinced that it constituted a threat to public order. To give 'teeth' to this provision, penalties of either fines or imprisonment were to be imposed.[1] In his report to London, Governor Weld indicated that he favoured the gradual suppression policy which was being put into effect, despite strong opposition from the unofficial members who demanded the immediate abolition of the societies. On this occasion, the Secretary of State expressed sympathy with the views of the unofficial members.[2]

On 11 November 1884, a combined Protectorate-Police memorandum was submitted to the Officer Administering Government[3] (C.C. Smith), claiming that a policy of immediate suppression of the societies would be disastrous because the existing system of registration and supervision had satisfactorily prevented the Triad from becoming dangerous and had enabled its utilization by the Government for the

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1 S.S.L.C.P. March 1882.

2 CO 273/113 No. 108, 14 March 1882, Weld to S. of S.; COD No. 115, 15 May 1882; A.R.C.P. 1882 also enclosed in CO 273/121, No. 274, 27 June 1883, Weld to S. of S. For a more detailed account of the gradual suppression of the societies, cf. W.L. Blythe, 'The Impact of Chinese', pp.214-5.

3 Hereafter cited as O.A.G. This term was used interchangeably with those of 'Acting-Governor' and 'Administrator'.

purpose of governing the Chinese.[1] Smith informed the Colonial Office that anxious as he was to abolish the dangerous societies, he would continue to defer to the experience of the registering officers although he favoured the increasingly rigorous control of the societies.[2] The result was the enactment of Ordinance IV of 1885, the main purpose of which was to strengthen minor aspects of the 1882 Ordinance. It remained based, nevertheless, on the Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance of 1869.

Not long after this matter was temporarily settled, a related issue was re-opened. In his report for 1884, Pickering made statements critical of the restrictions on the powers of banishment, which he believed should be more effectively used against the habitual criminals - 'the alien Chinese who merely made use of our Colony as a scene of their lawless exploits. At present these men overflow our gaols and are for long periods fed at the public expense, but though they are well known as dangerous to the peace of the Colony, it is impossible to banish them unless they are found guilty of what may be called a semi-political offence'.[3] The immediate sequel was the legislation of Ordinance VI of 1885[4] which prepared the way for the total dissolution of the societies. By this time, it was apparent that although the Straits Government was intent upon the ultimate destruction of the societies, the methods and procedures to be employed had not yet been clearly formulated.

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1 Memorandum by the Registering Officers, 11 November 1884, enclosed in CO 273/134 No. 195, 5 May 1885, Smith to S. of S.; A.R.C.P. 1884; S.S.G.G. 1885, p.151.

2 CO 273/130 No. 502, 17 November 1884, Smith to S. of S. CO 273/134 No. 193, 4 May 1885, Smith to S. of S. S.S.G.G. 1885, pp.65-8. Ordinance IV of 1885: Dangerous Societies, The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. I, p.831.

3 A.R.C.P. 1884.

4 Ordinance VI of 1885: To repeal and re-enact with wider powers the Dangerous Societies' Suppression Ordinance of 1869, enclosed in CO 273/134 No. 195, 5 May 1885, Smith to S. of S.; A.R.C.P. 1885; G.N. 61/1886.

Between 1882 and 1886, a new picture emerged as the stringent control by the Protectorate over the dangerous societies resulted in an ever-increasing number of splinter-groups which were known as Friendly or Mutual Benefit Societies and whose apparently innocuous aims enabled them to evade registration. For this reason, it was impossible for the Protectorate to obtain any particulars about their organization, membership and activities, and it was not surprising that the Straits-born Chinese joined them in large numbers. In every way except nomenclature, the Friendly Societies resembled the dangerous societies, and their power and influence increased as that of the latter declined. In 1885, Pickering observed that on several occasions that year, clashes had occurred between the Friendly Societies, composed mainly of Straits-born Chinese, apparently because of conflict between spheres of influence and interests; these would of course include brothel 'squeezes' and extortion from gambling houses.[1] The Government was alerted to this development and that year had suppressed two Friendly Societies and forced three to register as dangerous.[2] Apart from these measures used to try to prevent the local-born Chinese from joining the societies, other methods of control were sought.

On 18 January 1883 and again on 22 October 1884, the Colonial Office sent Circular Despatches to all Colonial Governors calling for reports on the prohibition of public flogging.[3] In his reply to London, Cecil Smith suggested that such a practice should not be entirely forbidden since

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1 A.R.C.P. 1885. In fact Wynne pointed out that by 1885, Pickering's faith in registration was wavering because of continuous deceit by the secret societies. M.L. Wynne, op. cit., p.368.

2 A.R.C.P. 1885 and 1886.

3 C.D. 18 January 1883, 22 October 1884. As early as 1872, the Secretary of State had decided against public flogging, but the Straits Legislature opposed his suggestion. W.L. Blythe, The Impact of Chinese, p.217.

his long experience in the East had convinced him that flogging in public served as an effective deterrent to rioting.[1] The Secretary of State, however, insisted that no discretion should be left to the colonial authorities in this matter.[2] He obviously did not understand that although deportation was an effective measure against the Colony's undesirables, it was completely useless against any unwanted Chinese British subject. The Secretary of State was, in fact, severely criticized by several unofficial members for being authoritarian without being authoritative on the Colony's conditions and needs.[3] The Colonial Office relented and did not force the passage of an ordinance on the issue, but it instructed the Straits Governor to ensure that no whipping would be conducted in public.[4] Such orders did not make the Straits Government's task of dealing with the Chinese any easier, but its day of reckoning with the secret societies problem was soon to come.

As was demonstrated earlier, the Chinese in the Straits, or for that matter everywhere in the world, were generally fond of gambling.[5] In 1879, Anson reported that there were 400 to 500 common gaming houses in Singapore alone, and a law was passed (the Common Gaming Houses Ordinance, XIII of 1879) in which such houses and all forms of gambling were

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1 CO 273/133 No. 13, 12 January 1885, Smith to S. of S.

2 COD No. 42, 18 February 1885.

3 S.S.L.C.P. April 1885.

4 COD No. 22, 10 July 1885.

5 For a detailed account of the various kinds of gambling that existed in the Colony, cf. C.T. Dobree, Gambling Games of Malaya (K.L. 1955); C.W.D. Kynnersley, 'A Description of the Chinese Lottery known as "Hua-Hoey" (花会)'; J.S.B.R.A.S. No. 16, December 1885. Enclosed in this article is a Memorial by Penang and Province Wellesley residents to O.A.G. (C.C. Smith) (dated 30 September 1885) on the need to suppress this form of lottery, pp.247-50.

declared illegal.[1] This ordinance did not prove satisfactory, and Pickering claimed in 1883 that some changes in it were urgently required because public gambling was flourishing.[2] Two years later he drew attention to the open existence of gaming houses which were detrimental to the welfare of the Chinese as well as demoralizing to the police force. Pickering advocated the introduction of more severe measures to stamp out the practice because 'nothing is more likely to create quarrels and jealousy between the secret societies than the emulation which is aroused to share in the great profits accruing from the establishment of gaming houses in the various sections of the Settlement'.[3] Burglaries, gambling and secret society clashes were interacting forces which had created an unenviable problem for the police and the Protectorate. Because the 'law was set at nought and [of] its apparent impotence to prevent the growth of these evils', Governor Weld was pressured into appointing a Commission for the investigation of public gaming in April 1886.[4] The Secretary of State suggested that the Hong Kong Government ought to be consulted in view of its experience on the matter.[5]

The Commission's report in January 1887 concluded that in Singapore as well as in Penang, there had been organized and systematic corruption of the police;[6] the result was that

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1 CO 273/100 No. 344, 10 October 1879; CO 273/102 No. 93, 31 March 1880, Anson to S. of S.; COD No. 267, 24 November 1879; No. 3, 7 May 1880. Ordinance XIII of 1879 banned all common gaming houses as well as any form of public gambling or lotteries. The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. I, p.678.

2 A.R.C.P. 1883.

3 Ibid., 1885; G.N. 61/1886.

4 CO 273/139 No. 94, 18 March 1886, Weld to S. of S.

5 COD No. 91, 19 May 1886.

6 CO 273/143 No. 66, 22 February 1887, Weld to S. of S.; G.N. 50/1887.

Ordinance V of 1888 was legislated to deal effectively with gambling offences, mainly by deportation and rigorous imprisonment of offenders.[1] Provision was also made in the Ordinance for the establishment in June 1888 of a Special Agency for the Suppression of Gambling in Singapore, with Mr Falkner appointed as its first director.[2] Completely independent of the police, this agency apparently met with instant success, since a few months later Smith claimed that the result was on the whole satisfactory and that there had actually been a decrease in the number of gambling offenders prosecuated.[3] Smith was seemingly unaware, however, that a falling off in the number of arrests and prosecutions did not necessarily imply that there was less gambling in the Colony.

In the formulation of the revised policy towards gambling, Pickering played a very influential role, and those he had sought to destroy were determined to counter-attack. Since the Ghee Hok Society's interests were the most injured in view of the extent of its involvement with gambling promotion and protection, it was not surprising that it plotted against Pickering. On 18 July 1887 an assassination attempt was made by one Chua Ah Siok who failed in his intention but inflicted a severe wound on Pickering's forehead.[4] The Singapore Free Press commented that the British officials and the Chinese population in general were

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1 CO 273/151 No. 75, 18 February 1888; CO 273/152 No. 121, 20 March 1888; COD No. 3, 5 January; COD No. 100, 10 April 1888. Ordinance V of 1888: 'An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact with amendments The Common Gaming Houses Ordinance of 1879', The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. II, p.1090.

2 CO 273/153 No. 261, 8 June 1888, Smith to S. of S.; COD No. 223, 19 July 1888.

3 CO 273/158 No. 65, 16 February 1889, Smith to S. of S.

4 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.231; Report of Commission into the attempted murder of Pickering enclosed in CO 273/148 No. 445, 17 October 1887, Smith to S. of S.

incensed at the outrageous attack.[1] A Commission appointed to enquire into the incident expressed the opinion that the attempt was the result of a conspiracy planned by the Ghee Hok Society as vengeance for Pickering's efforts to suppress gambling.[2] Despite clamourings in the legislature for a review of the Government's policy towards the societies, however, Pickering and Dunlop continued to maintain that the dangerous societies must be retained in order to detect and repress crimes. The only demand which Pickering made was for the suppression of the Ghee Hok Society as a warning to others; and the subsequent banishment of some of its headmen later led to a reduction in gambling.[3]

After the attack on him, however, Pickering's attitude underwent some changes and his public statements enabled the 'old Asian hand' Sir Cecil C. Smith[4] to act. In his annual report for 1887, Pickering remarked that:

> ...considering that they [the secret societies] had been allowed to flourish here unchecked since the establishment of the Colony, and that by cordial co-operation between the heads of the Police and the Chinese Protectorate Departments we have not only been able for some years to keep them in order but also in many ways to make them useful to the Government, I have not, since 1878, urged their suppression. Late experience has shown me that, in the absence of the above-mentioned co-operation these societies would soon become as dangerous as ever, and for this reason I am obliged to recommend their suppression.[5]

What Pickering was advocating was gradual suppression rather than abolition by one swift stroke, since in the latter case the police would have to assume the full

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1 S.F.P. 18-20 July 1887; CO 273/146 No. 353, 28 August 1888, Smith to S. of S.

2 CO 273/148 No. 445, 17 October 1888, Smith to S. of S.

3 A.R.C.P. 1887; CO 273/153 No. 239, 2 June 188, Smith to S. of S.

4 Smith assumed Governorship on 20 October 1887.

5 A.R.C.P. 1887.

responsibility as the Protectorate would have been deprived of its powers to control and supervise. On the other hand, Dunlop stated that the police were quite prepared to accept the responsibility suggested by Pickering and pressed for the Government to 'make a bold stroke and suppress all the existing dangerous societies at once'.[1] Confronted with these conflicting suggestions, Governor Smith, who had been dissatisfied with the status quo, informed the Colonial Office that the opportunity had arisen to commence the complete suppression of the dangerous societies. Whatever the temporary inconvenience, he argued, the Government must be the paramount power, and it already possessed the Protectorate to replace the societies as the institution to which the Colony's Chinese could go for protection.[2] Smith was at last exerting his powers to put a stop to the policy of vacillation which had impaired the British reputation for efficiency in colonial administration. The tolerant policy of restricted registration and partial suppression of the societies, he claimed, was a weak one and detrimental to the public interest.[3]

Smith's uncompromising attitude was also due to the occurrence of two events in 1888 which had convinced him that the Government must act against the societies. In January that year, the law which provided for the registration of domestic servants had come into effect.[4] The legislation was designed to provide some means of identification of domestic servants 'so as to check the time-honoured habit of passing testimonials from one to the other', but the servants were strongly resentful of such restrictions; since many were members of the Hailam Ghee Hin Society, they created civil

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1 A.R.I.G.P. 1887.

2 CO 273/153 No. 292, 20 June 1888, Smith to S. of S.

3 Ibid.

4 Ordinance 23 of 1886 (The Domestic Servants Ordinance) enclosed in CO 273/143 No. 30, 22 January 1887, Weld to S. of S.; The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. II, p.977.

disturbances. The Straits Government immediately suppressed that society and banished nine of its members. In his report to London, Smith sought to repeal the law concerning the registration of servants on the grounds that it was impractical. The Colonial Office agreed and the restriction on the servants was lifted in October 1888.[1] The other event which convinced Smith of the need for the complete abolition of the societies was the 'Veranda Riot' of February 1888. This disturbance arose from an attempt to prohibit verandas from abutting onto public streets with goods or stalls. Since some shopkeepers were opposed to this ban, they closed their premises in protest; this action was followed by anti-Government riots in which the secret societies were involved. In response, the Municipal officials decided upon a compromise measure which would allow three feet wide passage along the verandas for pedestrians, and the riots subsided.[2]

Early in 1888, the Straits Government made a further move for the better control of the Colony's Chinese. In the new Banishment Ordinance (IV of 1888) which came into force on 1 March, statements by the Protector of Chinese as well as from the Chief Police Officer could lead to banishment proceedings. Furthermore, a person who had not violated the peace could be banished if the Governor considered his removal was necessary for the Colony's welfare. Although the law was still only applicable to aliens, it significantly enlarged the scope of the banishment provisions whereby undesirable persons, such as gambling-promoters, traffickers in women and girls, and members of secret societies whose presence was deemed undesirable, could be ejected.[3]

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1 CO 273/151 No. 79, 20 February 1888, Smith to S. of S.; COD No. 92, 28 March 1888; CO 273/155 No. 484, 5 November 1888, Smith to S. of S.

2 CO 273/151 No. 83, 27 February 1888, Smith to S. of S.

3 Ordinance IV of 1888 (Banishment Ordinance) enclosed in CO 273/152 No. 119, 20 March 1888, Smith to S. of S.; The Acts and Ordinances, Vol. II, p.977.

It would be appropriate to point out that British policy towards the problems of trafficking in women and children and of prostitution had not been entirely effective. Since 1870, the Contagious Diseases Ordinance (XXIII of 1870) had legalized prostitution in the Straits so as to enable the authorities to exercise some control over the women who were brought to the Colony from China to practise their profession. This legislation had provided for the registration and licensing of brothels, inspections by medical officers for the prevention of venereal disease, and the compulsory removal to hospital of those suspected of having contagious infections. All prostitutes had to apply for a license from the Registrar. In February 1877, a Committee appointed in the previous year to investigate the working of the ordinance reported the 'highly objectionable influence' of the secret societies in connection with the brothels.[1] Apparently most of the Chinese women were purchased from their parents in China by 'bawds and panders' and had to repay their purchase money and other advances by prostitution for a considerable length of time. They were forced to lead lives of slavery and degradation, yet the law made no provision for the protection of women against the traffickers. In 1878, with the assistance of some wealthy local Chinese, Pickering set up a 'home' for women who were reluctant to engage in prostitution; this move was ineffective because the women were afraid to accept such help.[2] After the administration of the Contagious Diseases Ordinance was transferred to the Protectorate, which was given the additional title of Pai Kwun (牌 食官 Licence Office), Pickering became the Registering Officer and systematically sought to control the problem. His efforts resulted in the passage of the Penal Code (Protection of Women) III of 1882, in which protection was extended to women

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1 CO 273/91 No. 132, 21 April 1877, Jervois to S. of S.

2 A.R.C.P. 1878 and 1879.

of all ages.[1] Terms of imprisonment and fines were to be imposed on persons found guilty of making a profit in women-trafficking through fraud and other devious means; moreover, punishment was also to be meted out to those who kidnapped or seduced women for immoral purposes. There were, however, too many loopholes in this law, and Pickering remarked in his report of 1882 that in the Colony's brothels, there existed a 'system of slavery compared with which the system of debt-slavery in the Native States is innocent and just'.[2] It has been pointed out that Pickering discovered that there were four main methods by which prostitutes were recruited to Singapore:

> First were women who came freely from Hong Kong and Canton to make a living by prostitution; they needed neither sympathy nor protection. Second were women who were tricked into prostitution, 'induced to leave China on the promise of good wages as seamstresses, nurses or hairdressers' or brought down by men who induced them to come as wives, only to be sold by their importers at high prices to brothel keepers. Third were girls 'purchased when very young by procurers or brothel keepers and brought up carefully for the purpose of prostitution - chiefly by women whom the girls call "mother" and regard as such'. These 'mothers' brought the girls from China and either sold them to brothelkeepers or took the girls from brothel to brothel, residing there nominally as servants but receiving their earnings and paying a commission to the brothel owners. Last were the female children born in the brothels, who were invariably claimed by the brothel-keeper to whom the prostitute was bound and were reared for a life of prostitution.[3]

The Colonial Office had not been oblivious to the plight of such women and suggested in September 1884 that a Society for the Protection of Women and Children, similar to the one in Hong Kong, be established in the Straits Settlements.[4] On

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1 CO 273/113 No. 90, 7 May 1882, Weld to S. of S.

2 A.R.C.P. 1882.

3 R.N. Jackson, Pickering, p.95; A.R.C.P. 1882.

4 COD No. 261, 30 September 1884.

26 May 1885, Smith informed London that such a society, known to the Chinese as the Po Leung Kuk (保良局 Protect Virtue Office) was formed. Its object was 'to aid in the suppression of the crime of kidnapping and to provide for the rescue and restoration to their families or friends of women and children who may require assistance or protection'.[1] The Home for Women which had already been established was to be placed at the disposal of the Society. In 1887, Ordinance I (for the Protection of Women and Children) was passed to increase the Protector's powers to take positive measures for the protection of women. Should any female be suspected of having been brought to the Colony for immoral purposes, the Protector could remove her to a place of safety viz. the Po Leung Kuk,[2] for which the Government had provided a subsidy.[3]

At the end of 1887, although the problem of trafficking in women and children was not eradicated, the Colony was witnessing signs of a new policy in which official recognition was withdrawn from the brothels, and the collection of registration fees as well as the compulsory medical examinations was stopped.[4] This trend was to continue well into the twentieth century, before prostitution was officially prohibited. For the remainder of the nineteenth century, however, changes in the policy towards prostitution were mainly confined to matters of detail, although it could be assumed that after the complete suppression of the secret societies in 1889 the protection of women was made somewhat easier.

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1 CO 273/130 No. 475, 31 October 1884; CO 273/134 No. 220, 26 May 1885, Smith to S. of S.; COD No. 82, 5 September 1885; see Appendix 1.

2 CO 273/145 No. 197, 11 May 1887, Weld to S. of S.; COD No. 125, 30 June 1887.

3 A.R.C.P. 1887.

4 R.N. Jackson, Pickering, p.98; CO 273/156 No. 568, 31 December 1888, Smith to S. of S.

As has been indicated earlier, Governor Smith, by June 1888, was bent on the total abolition of the secret societies. He informed the Secretary of State that the existing legislation was inadequate, and a draft Bill was submitted to terminate the policy of tacit tolerance of the societies.[1] Whether Smith had consulted both Pickering and Dunlop before making such a dramatic move cannot be established, but on 9 July 1888, the two senior officials sent a memorandum to the Governor protesting against the decision. They were dismayed that Smith's proposal did not reflect their own views. On the other hand, they had only themselves to blame because of their past inconsistency and the vacillating advice they had given to the Government. Whereas in the past each had advocated complete suppression, they were content now to advocate the continuation of a system of registration and control. Gradual abolition over a long period was their idea of a sound policy and they stressed that 'to suppose that such organizations can be got rid of by mere legal dissolution is to assume what is impossible. Something to take their place must be devised, and this can only be arrived at after full enquiry from those best acquainted with the question of controlling the Chinese'.[2] Smith was not' deterred and proceeded with the formulation of a new policy. He had the support of the Secretary of State (Lord Knutsford) who regretted that moves towards suppression had not been made earlier. Knutsford was in fact elated to be informed that the Straits Government was capable of handling the situation. His opinion was that Pickering and Dunlop had criticized the proposed mode of suppression rather than the suppression itself, but he cautioned Smith to make an early

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1 CO 273/153 No. 292, 20 June 1888, Smith to S. of S.

2 Memorandum by W.A. Pickering and S. Dunlop, 9 July 1888, enclosed in CO 273/154 No. 347, 30 July 1888, Smith to S. of S. It should be noted that because he was seriously hurt in the attempt on his life, Pickering was granted leave on 19 July 1888, but never returned to the Colony.

decision concerning the methods to be used to control the Chinese after the societies had been suppressed.[1]

When the debate began on 12 December 1888, the general attitude of the unofficial members was that under the existing legislation the Straits Government had adequate power to control the Chinese secret societies, and that the decision to suppress them completely should be viewed cautiously until there was some other institution to replace them.[2] Nothing could alter Smith's mind and on 1 January 1890, the Societies Ordinance (I of 1890) came into force. It provided for the total abolition of the secret societies, giving them six months' grace to wind up their businesses.[3] No longer were secret societies permitted as an essential organization in the Chinese society. It has been said, however,

> Although the Societies Ordinance, 1889, made all Chinese secret societies, ipso facto unlawful societies it still left them with a loophole for survival by designating societies formed for 'Recreational, Charity, Religion and Literature' eligible for exemption from registration. In the years that followed, many of these seemingly harmless clubs and associations became the outward masks of undercover secret society activity. It does not seem that enough allowance was made for the ingenuity of Chinese secret societies in evading the law.[4]

Although Governor Smith was determined to proscribe the secret societies, he also took steps to provide alternative arrangements for the Colony's Chinese. In December 1888 the Straits Times published a letter from a local born Chinese named Tan Kong Saik which suggested that a Board of Chinese

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1 COD No. 342, 22 October 1888.

2 S.S.L.C.P. 1889, p.B8. For a discussion on the debate of the Bill 'to amend the law relating to Societies' cf. W.L. Blythe, The Impact of Chinese, pp.225-32.

3 Ibid., p.233.

4 L. Comber, op. cit., p.266.

be created to tender advice and assistance to the Government in all matters concerning the Chinese.[1] Similar ideas were expressed in London where a deputation from the Straits Settlements Association suggested to the Secretary of State the merits of creating a Consultative Board to include the Colony's leading Chinese and perhaps some Europeans; this proposal was communicated to Smith.[2] Consequently, in December a system of Chinese Advisory Boards (華人參事局) was instituted by the Straits Government so that there would be an organization in existence almost as soon as the new Societies' Ordinance came into effect.[3] When informed of this development, the Colonial Office expressed its approval and instructed that matters in dispute between the Chinese be referred to the Board for arbitration. It also inquired whether the Po Leung Kuk could be incorporated into the Chinese Advisory Board.[4] In his reply, Smith remarked that in order to merge the two bodies, it would have been necessary to abolish the Po Leung Kuk because there were members on its committee who were not prepared to sit on the latter; hence their services would have been lost to the Colony. The members of the Po Leung Kuk were men of standing, and although they were ready to assist in purely philanthropic schemes, they would not participate in the varied work of the Advisory Board. Smith was also afraid that he might lose the valuable assistance of the Chinese Consul to the Po Leung Kuk because it was impossible to allot him a seat on the Advisory Board.[5]

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1 Straits Times, 19 December 1888.

2 COD Confidential, 25 January; No. 255, 17 August 1889.

3 CO 273/162 No. 367, 20 December 1889, Smith to S. of S.; S.F.P. 23 December 1889; Straits Times, 24 December 1889, S.C.M. Vol. 1, 1897, pp.60-2. See Appendix 2 for the Board's Regulations and Duties.

4 COD No. 30, 31 January 1890.

5 CO 273/165 No. 90, 3 March 1890, Smith to S. of S.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, a policy of constant vigilance was maintained by the Straits authorities to guard against the revival of old secret societies and the emergence of new ones. Information could be derived from several sources, but the tasks of gathering 'intelligence' still remained with the Chinese Protectorate and the Police Force. Should the Straits Government be forced into prompt action, it could do so with its two strongest weapons, namely the Societies and Banishment Ordinances. Official suspicion was in fact aroused in mid-1890 when the secret societies readily complied with the order of suppression. The O.A.G., Sir Frederick Dickson, informed London that the utmost vigilence was required to ensure that the secret societies had not gone underground.[1] The Chinese Protectorate's annual reports for several years after 1890 revealed an increasing number of 'harmless' societies and it was obvious that not all of them could be genuine.[2] The authorities had yet to learn that societies with innocuous titles which applied for exemption from registration were capable of exercising both malevolent and benevolent functions.

In 1894, the Colonial Secretary observed that extensive public gaming had resulted in an increase in crime and that the struggle for control of the brothels had led to many faction fights.[3] A concerned Secretary of State enquired if there had been a resurgence of secret society activity and was given an affirmative reply by Governor Mitchell, who added that measures taken in 1895 and 1896 to meet the situation were taking effect.[4] The struggle by the British to resolve the problem of the secret societies had met with

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1 CO 273/167 No. 340, 21 August 1890, Dickson to S. of S.

2 A.R.C.P. 1890-1893.

3 A.R.C.P. 1895.

4 COD No. 355, 4 September 1896; CO 273/218 No. 464, 6 October 1896, Mitchell to S. of S.

only partial success, and in this task the authorities had received little assistance from the Chinese consular establishment.

CHAPTER 3

RELATIONS WITH THE CHINESE CONSULATE

It has been argued in previous chapters that the Straits Government was slowly but surely gaining stronger control over the Chinese population. After June 1877, the acquisition of information about the structure of the Chinese society became more systematic when the Chinese Protectorate was formed. It has been shown that the primary objective of the Protectorate with its small Chinese-speaking staff was to handle the Chinese problems more effectively, especially those of the secret societies and immigration. The British initially looked upon the Chinese Consulate as a valuable ally which would assist in the control of the Chinese population. On the other hand, British suspicion of the Consulate's activities should not be underestimated. It would be difficult to determine whether this suspicion was formed consciously or unconsciously but it was to some extent justified. Until the Straits Government gained a measure of confidence in its own ability to govern the Chinese, it was natural that the authorities should be apprehensive about the establishment of a Chinese Consulate in Singapore. After the Consulate was set up, British officials continued to fear that it would attempt to manipulate the Colony's large Chinese population by interfering in their trading activities, immigration problems and labour conditions. These suspicions were reinforced by the fact that most of the Chinese were recent arrivals and susceptible to the potential advances and threats, real or imaginary, of the Consulate. With this dubious attitude towards the Consulate, the British were unlikely to default in their policy of vigilance towards its activities. It was obvious that should the Consulate be given a free hand in its pursuits, some of which might have disruptive tendencies, British authority would be undermined. In this event, the Chinese would look upon the Consulate for counsel and protection, thus jeopardising the British

presence in the Straits. The activities of the Consulate in its attempts to exert influence over the Chinese therefore had an important bearing on the shaping of British policy towards the Chinese.

The Chinese Consulate's Position within the Tsungli-Yamen

On 30 September 1876, the Tsungli-Yamen presented a memorial to the Throne outlining a plan for the salaries and rankings of officials in the Chinese Foreign Service. Senior envoys were divided into three classes: those of the first class who were in the first or second official rank received fourteen hundred taels per month; those of the second class who were of the second or third rank received twelve hundred taels; those of the third class who acted in the third rank received one thousand taels and those in the fourth rank received eight hundred taels. Consuls-general were to be paid six hundred taels per month; consuls five hundred taels; and vice-consuls and acting-consuls four hundred taels.[1] The memorial stipulated that a fund which the Tsungli-Yamen derived from import duties collected by the Maritime Customs should provide money for the maintenance of the Chinese Foreign Service.[2]

The Tsungli-Yamen presented for Imperial approval twelve regulations for the Foreign Service on the 28 October 1876.[3] Some of the regulations stipulated that: (i) the number of secretaries, consuls, interpreters and attachés in each legation was to be determined by the envoys themselves, although they were to submit a list to the Tsungli-Yamen for

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1 Kuang-hsü ch'ao Tung-hua lu 光緒朝東華錄 or Tung-hua hsu-lu 東華續錄 (Tung-hua records of the Kuang-hsü period or Tung-hua supplementary records), compiled by Chu Shou-p'eng 朱壽朋 5 Vols, Peking 1958 (hereafter cited as THHL-KH) XI, 9a. The tael was worth approx. US$1.50 in gold in 1876. H.B. Morse, Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire (Shanghai, 1908) p.XV.

2 THHL-KH, XI, 8b.

3 Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs (U.S.) 1877, pp.85-6.

its information. The members of the legation staff should accompany the envoys abroad, and their terms of office, like those of the envoys, were for three years. Those showing competence might be retained in office by the new envoy;[1] (ii) Envoys could memorialize the Throne directly on matters of particular importance, but in ordinary matters, they should communicate with the Tsungli-Yamen which would report the information received to the Emperor; (iii) Envoys must send in to the Tsungli-Yamen detailed annual reports of salaries and all other expenses in connection with their missions; and (iv) The Shanghai Office of the Maritime Customs should keep the salary and expense accounts of all envoys and of the members of all legation and consular staff, and it should annually remit the amounts necessary to meet these.[2] By the Collected Statutes of the Ch'ing Dynasty 大清会典, Chinese envoys must protect and control Chinese nationals overseas as well as their trade in foreign countries.[3] Subject to imperial approval, the ministers could select their own consular officers for their own areas of jurisdiction. The Chinese Consulate in Singapore was created under the control of the Minister in London and it was on the latter's recommendations that the former's consuls were appointed. The consul's term of office would normally be for three years but the regulation was flexible.

The Collected Statutes stated that the Tsungli-Yamen was established to deal with foreign affairs. This was, however, only partly correct. In reality, the Yamen's authority was rather restricted and its powers ill-defined when compared with those of other executive bodies also dealing with

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1 See Chapter 2. This was in line with the system in China, where provincial officials ordinarily served only three years in any particular post and they chose their own subordinates.

2 THHL-KH, XII, 5a-5b.

3 Ch'ing Hui-tien 清会典 (Collected Statutes of the Ch'ing Dynasty) Wan-yu wen-k'u edition 萬有文庫 10 Vols (Shanghai 1936) Vol. X, pp.1158-9.

foreign matters.[1] From 1861 to 1884, a period in which it had close ties with the Grand Council (Chün-chi-ch'u 軍機處), the Yamen was authoritative in policy planning. During this period, Prince Kung was head of the Council and President of the Tsungli-Yamen, and several other Grand Councillors were also concurrently ministers in the Yamen. After 1884 when Prince Kung fell from favour, the Yamen's power dramatically declined[2] and it became insignificant in policy decisions. Priority was given to provincial authorities, the two superintendants of trade for the Northern and Southern ports, and several specially appointed imperial commissioners. The Yamen's prestige fell to the point where it was not always informed of foreign affairs. Subject to imperial sanction, the Grand Council was the most important body for the formulation of foreign as well as domestic policies.[3] The Consulate in Singapore could report either to the Chinese Minister in London or to the provincial authorities including the Grand Secretary Li Hung-chang who, as concurrently Governor General of Chihli and Superintendant of trade for the Northern Ports, exercised considerable influence in the shaping of China's foreign policy.[4] The consuls frequently acted under instructions from the provincial authorities because overseas Chinese often made direct appeals to the Chinese Government. Such appeals went either to the Tsungli-Yamen or to the governor-generals, especially those of Liang-Kuang and Chihli.[5]

The financial position of the Consulate in Singapore when it started was depressing. Money collected annually, amounting to a few hundred taels, was inadequate to meet the

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1 S.M. Meng, The Tsungli-Yamen: Its Organization and Functions (Cambridge, Mass., 1962) p.38.

2 Ibid., pp.50-1, 53.

3 Ibid., pp.38-47.

4 I.C.Y. Hsu, op. cit., p.194.

5 CCWCSL-KH, 63/18 a-b, 26 a-b; KH 77/25b, 17b.

Consulate's annual expenditure.[1] Attempts were made by the Consulate to levy shipping fees as a means to meet expenses but this method evoked a hostile reaction from the Straits Government and strong criticism from the Chinese in the Colony. After recommendations were submitted by Kuo Sung-t'ao and Li Hung-chang, the Chinese Government in 1878 assented to pay a salary of five hundred taels per month to Whampoa which was in accordance with the regulations stated previously. The difference between the Consulate's expenditure and revenue derived from fees collected locally was met by the Chinese Legation in London.[2]

Whampoa (or Ho Ah Kay 胡亞基) as the First Consul for China

During the years immediately following its establishment, relations between the Chinese Consulate and the Straits Government were marked by a degree of uncertainty and caution because both the British and Chinese Governments were doubtful about the future of the Consulate. The Colonial Office had regarded the establishment of the Consulate with Whampoa as the first Consul as an exceptional and tentative measure. The Chinese Government looked upon the Consulate only as an experiment. However, if relations were fraught with uncertainty, this was alleviated by an air of placidity and restraint through a mutual exercise of tact and diplomacy. Friction between the Straits Government and the Chinese Consulate could be anticipated but was never permitted to become serious or deteriorate into a crisis. Such attempts towards cordial relationships with a genuine desire to co-operate by both sides were made possible by Whampoa, who in his position as the first Chinese Consul was setting a valuable precedent towards better Anglo-Chinese relationships in the Straits.

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1 Estimated at between 7,000 and 8,000 taels per year. CCWCSL-KH 75/18b-21b.

2 CCWCSL-KH 14/20 a-b.

To the British, Whampoa was certainly the best known and the most liked Chinese resident in the Straits. He came to Singapore in 1830 from Whampoa (near Canton where he was born in or around 1816) to assist his father in business. It has been claimed that Whampoa was the only Chinese in the Straits during the early years who spoke good English.[1] Song was of the opinion that 'his knowledge of English undoubtedly gave him a distinct advantage over other Chinese merchants'[2] and this helped give him the opportunity to become one of the leading merchants in the Straits. Whampoa's firm were contractors for the Royal Navy, a business which led him to develop close friendships with some naval officers, including Admiral H. Keppel. To the Straits Government, Whampoa's services proved invaluable because he exercised considerable influence over the Chinese population. He was indeed an able arbitrator in times of disturbances between rival secret societies as well as between the local government and the societies. Appointed as unofficial member to the Legislative Council on 29 December 1869 and as an extraordinary member of the Executive Council a few years later, Whampoa provided a source of information on Chinese activities to the Straits Government. In his official capacity, he also acted as the voice of the Chinese population in the government. Since he was liked and trusted by the European and Chinese communities alike, the Straits Government naturally looked to him for advice on matters concerning the Colony and the Chinese. In 1876, the British Government awarded him the C.M.G. as an official recognition of his services to the Colony. It may be added that this was an honour never awarded to any other Chinese resident in the Straits during the nineteenth century.

The Chinese Government approved Whampoa's nomination as the first Consul for China primarily for reasons similar to those of the British. However, from the Chinese Government's point of view, finance was an important consideration. In

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1 Buckley, op. cit., p.659.

2 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.52.

Whampoa the Tsungli-Yamen, concerned about the high expenditure involved in maintaining consulates abroad, found an expedient candidate who was willing to establish a consulate operating at minimum cost.[1]

From the viewpoints of both the Chinese and British Governments, Whampoa was an ideal choice as first Chinese Consul in Singapore. One obvious criticism which could be levelled at him was that he was very ambitious, with a flair for publicity and power. It is inconceivable that he could have simultaneously served four countries loyally and efficiently. Besides being a Straits Government official, Whampoa was a Consul for China, a Consul for Russia and a Vice-Consul for Japan. On the other hand, there was never any doubt that he was very much a Chinese at heart[2] and when he died on the 27 March 1880, his remains were buried on Danes Island, opposite Canton. In an obituary, the Daily Times commented:

> ...[Whampoa] remained true to his own nationality and sometimes jealous in asserting it....Ever a friend of order, his influence, advice and services were always at the command and were often availed of by the successive Governors who have ruled in the Straits during his career. His tact and judgement were shown by the fact that while regarded with respect and esteem by all classes of the community - natives and Europeans alike - he enjoyed the confidence and personal friendship of each successive governor and all the officials.[3]

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1 The Chinese Minister in London, Kuo Sung-t'ao, an able official who proved very cautious with Government finance, told Whampoa that consular expenditure should be covered by dues and fees collected locally.

2 Admiral Keppel wrote of Whampoa's 'eldest son [Ho Ah Yip] who was sent to England for education, and while there became a Presbyterian. When...the young man returned, and had the assurance to reappear before his father, fresh and well, but minus a tail, and consequently was banished to Canton until it regrew and he consented to worship the gods of his fathers'. Quoted by Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.54.

3 Daily Times, 29 March 1880.

The Problem of the Consul Vacancy

The aftermath of Whampoa's death saw a struggle of rights between the Straits Government and the Chinese Government over the nomination of a candidate to fill the vacant post. It was a struggle which showed the fear still harboured by the former and the insecure position of the latter. Compared to the stand taken by the British Government, the Straits authorities were uncompromising although the Chinese Government displayed a willingness to co-operate. A cloud of uncertainty prevailed among the anxious Straits officials as to whether there should be a new Chinese Consul. Acting-Governor Anson stressed that there could be only disadvantage to the Straits Government should the Chinese Government be permitted to appoint a successor to Whampoa.[1]

Under instructions from the Minister in London (Tseng Chi-tse 曾紀澤), the First Assistant of the Consulate Su Kuei-ch'ing (蘇桂清) requested recognition from the authorities as being provisionally in charge.[2] This was promptly rejected, ostensibly on the grounds that the Consulate had not been sanctioned as a permanent institution. The actual reason for this rejection, however, was Anson's fear that a new Consul might become involved with the secret societies unless he enjoyed the confidence of the British authorities.[3] Tseng noted that the rejection was for a 'somewhat extraordinary reason'; after all, a Chinese consular presence in British possessions should be regarded as a manifestation of friendly relations rather than as a mere temporary arrangement. He felt that possible injury to diplomatic relations would occur if the unexpected interruption of Chinese consular relations was allowed to

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1 CO 273/102 No. 91, 30 March 1880, Anson to S. of S.

2 Su Kuei-ch'ing to Colonial Secretary, S.S., 1 April 1880, enclosed in CO 273/103 No. 103, 12 April 1880.

3 CO 273/103 No. 103, Anson to S. of S.

continue in the Straits.[1] Clearly Tseng was making a subtle threat to support Su's request at a time when Chinese interests in the Straits were altogether unrepresented. Lord Granville[2] conceded to Tseng's argument and agreed that Anson's sudden withdrawal of the consular concession without reasonable grounds was an unfriendly proceeding. The Foreign Office took this stand because of its anxiety to maintain friendly relations with the Chinese Government. While accepting Lord Granville's suggestion that immediate provisional recognition be given to Su,[3] Lord Kimberley[4] made it clear that the next Consul-appointee should be acceptable to the Straits authorities; furthermore, the British Government reserved the right to request a replacement if personal or other difficulties arose.[5] There was little doubt that London was annoyed by Anson's acting without instructions.[6]

Instructed by the Colonial Office, Governor Weld gave Su Kuei-ch'ing provisional recognition[7] but advocated the deferment of further action regarding a permanent appointment until the duties of the Consul had been more clearly defined. It was on this point that Weld revealed his suspicions of the Consulate's irregular activity. He regarded its issuing of certificates of registry for vessels owned by Chinese nationals to trade under the Chinese flag between the Colony and neighbouring ports as an interference with local

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1 Chinese Legation to F.O., 4 May 1880, enclosed in CO 273/106 F.O. 14 May 1880.

2 Secretary of State for Foreign Office.

3 F.O. to C.O., CO 273/106 F.O. 14 May 1880.

4 Secretary of State for Colonial Office.

5 C.O. to F.O., CO 273/106, 26 May 1880.

6 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/106, 14 May 1880.

7 Through an administrative error, Weld thought if Seah Eu Chin or someone of equal standing was nominated as a possible candidate, there would be no objection. Seah, however, was never nominated nor had he the desire to take the job.

shipping.[1] He also expressed fears that unless preference was given to someone of 'high character', a serious situation could develop if the new consul became involved in the intrigues of the secret societies. In his view, Su did not possess the necessary influence or sufficient standing of a Consul.[2] The British Government, however, realized that no conditions could be imposed regarding the Consulate's future because the British had insisted on the Chinese Government's receiving British ministers and consuls; thus it was impossible to deny the Chinese a consul in Singapore. A suggestion was made that China might send someone for the post if no Chinese in the Colony was found suitable.[3] The Chinese Legation was accordingly informed of the British Government's recommendations.[4]

Tseng was now in a position to nominate a candidate but gave an assurance that care would be taken in selecting a man who would not exceed Whampoa's power or do anything inconsistent with consular practice.[5] The commercial importance of the Colony led Tseng to offer the job to Chang Te-i, a secretary in the Chinese Legation in London, but the latter declined. The Legation's translator, Tso Ping-lung 左秉隆 or Tzu-hsing 子興 was then selected.[6] The appointment of Tso marked the beginning of a more secure

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1 CO 273/103 No. 32, 29 May 1880, Weld to S. of S.

2 CO 273/103 No. 66, 21 June 1880, Weld to S. of S.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/103 No. 66.

4 F.O. to Wen Yüan-chi, 26 October 1880, enclosed in CO 273/106. F.O. 13 December 1880.

5 Chinese Legation to F.O., 13 November 1880, enclosed in CO 273/106. F.O. 13 December 1880.

6 Tseng Chi-tse, Tseng hui-min-kung tsou-su 曾惠敏公奏疏 (Memorials of Tseng Chi-tse) Chüan 3 p.4b in Tseng Kuo-fan Tseng Wen-cheng kung Ch'uan-chi 曾文正公全集 (Complete Works of Tseng Kuo-fan). Also Chang Te-i 張德彝 Shih-huan jih-chi 使還日記 (Diary on return from a foreign mission) p.351b in Hsiao-fang-hu-chai Series II.

Consulate and an expansion of its activities. Tso arrived in Singapore on 18 August and took up his post on 29 September 1881.[1] A trained and experienced diplomat, he was better equipped than Whampoa to execute the Chinese Government's policies. Although the Straits authorities still maintained a cautious attitude, Tso's appointment was indicative of the British Government's policy of giving full recognition to China's diplomatic prerogatives. A spell in Europe under Tseng had given Tso an enlightened attitude which, together with his liberal education, was to draw him wide respect and the support of the Straits Government as well as that of the Chinese population. Several senior Chinese officials held him in high regard for his ability and intelligence.[2] Weld was certainly impressed by Tso's youth, travels, ambitions and intelligence.[3]

Formulation of the Shipping Legislation

One of the Consulate's activities which exerted indirect pressure on the Straits Government to formulate legislation dealing with the Chinese was its deliberate involvement with Chinese-owned shipping. Originally conceived as a financially independent establishment, the Consulate resorted to various means of acquiring funds to meet its annual expenses. One method employed was the registration of Chinese-owned shipping, which brought the Consulate into a legal collision with the Straits Government.

Chinese vessels had traded for centuries in the Malay Archipelago to obtain 'Straits produce' for the lucrative China market. With the establishment of British power in the Straits, many small vessels criss-crossed between the

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1 S.S. Blue Book, 1881. 'Foreign Consuls'.

2 Tseng Chi-tse, Ch'u-shih Ying-fa jih-chi 出使英法日記 (A Diary of a Mission to England and France) pp.367a-b, 371a-b in Hsiao-fang-hu-chai, Series II.

3 CO 273/115 No. 235, 17 June 1882, Weld to S. of S.

innumerable islands to collect produce to bring to Singapore from where bigger vessels could tranship them to China. Another purpose of the vessels was to supply the needs of the growing number of Chinese settlements in the region.[1] The vessels belonging to the Colony were mainly owned by Chinese nationals rather than by British subjects of Chinese descent. For that reason, the colonial government made no attempt to provide legislation for their registration or protection; consequently, the vessels were plying between ports without any kind of identification to show whether they were engaged in legal trade. Since the Straits' vessels traded extensively in the Netherlands East Indies, the Dutch authorities frequently complained that such vessels entered their ports without possessing either Certificates of Registration or the customary shipping documents. Obviously some form of registration was deemed necessary and the Chinese Consulate took the initiative.

During the first nine months of 1879, fifty-six Chinese Certificates of Registry were issued by Whampoa to Chinese-owned vessels. The Chinese flag was carried in their trade between the Colony and the neighbouring ports; a procedure authorized by the Grand Secretary Li Hung-chang. When informed of the Consulate's action, the Straits authorities raised immediate objections. The Consulate was notified that it had adopted an irregular practice neither in accordance with international law nor within consular power.[2] When the Consul-General for the Netherlands East Indies indicated that his government would not recognize the Chinese Consulate's certificates,[3] Whampoa was advised that the Straits Government had taken similar action because he was

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1 Wong Lin Ken, op. cit., pp.106-8. The term 'Straits produce' included every item of primary produce - marine, vegetable and mineral - found throughout the Archipelago.

2 Colonial Secretary to Chinese Consul, 9 September 1879, enclosed in CO 273/103 No. 32, 29 May 1880.

3 Weld to Wade, 10 September 1879, enclosed in CO 273/103, ibid.

acting ultra vires and that he should abstain from issuing further certificates until he had consulted the Chinese Government. The Chinese Consul complied when he saw that possible complications were likely to arise with the Dutch authorities, but contended that his power was based on a principle similar to the British Merchant Shipping Act[1] which empowered British consuls to grant provisional certificates of registry to British ships in foreign ports. He dwelt on the need to provide protection in the form of a national flag to prevent Chinese shipowners from being 'exposed to unjust suspicion and perilous consequences'.[2] The tongkangs (small Chinese vessels) were singled out for reference because they were confined mainly to the Archipelago; their size and peculiar construction made it difficult for them to proceed to China for repairs or for registration. As a result, they could secure only local Consular certificates. Anson's opinion, on the other hand, was that the provision in the Shipping Act[3] merely mentioned a 'provisional certificate enabling a vessel which has become at a foreign port, the property of a person qualified to be the owner of a British vessel, to sail under British colours for six months or until her arrival at a port where there is a British Registrar - upon the happening of either of which events the certificates become void'. He therefore categorically refused to recognize the Chinese Consul's power to issue certificates because no other consul exercised the same power.[4]

Governor Weld was more conciliatory in his attitude since he not only understood the second half of Whampoa's

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1 To be precise, Whampoa meant the Colonial Shipping Act of 1868 which related to the registration of British ships and was inapplicable to aliens.

2 Chinese Consul to Colonial Secretary, 19 September 1879, enclosed in CO 273/103, ibid.

3 Contained in Section 54, Colonial Shipping Act (1868).

4 Anson to Wade, 3 October 1879, enclosed in CO 273/103, ibid.

assertion but also felt it was manifestly advantageous to the Colony's general interests to foster every legitimate trade among the various communities. He advocated the substitution of the Consulate's certificates by some other arrangements. The Straits officials were aware that Chinese nationals residing in the Colony could not acquire the right to obtain British Certificates of Registry unless they took out naturalization papers, a condition they would not readily comply with because of the implied provisions.[1] The Government could resort to another line of action based on the Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Ordinance which empowered the Governor to grant a Colonial Register to any Chinese resident of the Colony provided that person was a registered lessee of Crown lands.[2] This was obviously the best solution for it could be altered or abolished if desired or advised. One proposal Weld strongly opposed, however, was that made by Wade in Peking. Whilst agreeing that Whampoa's practice was outside his consular jurisdiction, Wade suggested the establishment by the Chinese Government of an Office of Registry in Singapore similar to that opened recently by the British in Shanghai. He had earlier consulted the Tsungli-Yamen on this but Weld argued there was no analogy between the two: though a British concession, Shanghai remained an integral part of China, and the sole object of the British office was to facilitate the business operations of British subjects; but in Singapore, a British colony, the desire was to protect the interests of persons other than British subjects who were benefiting the settlement by making it the base of their trade.[3]

In London, Tseng was very apologetic about the whole matter after being informed of British vexation. He complained of the manner in which the somewhat inexperienced Whampoa had

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1 One provision was that they had to be permanent residents of the Colony.

2 Ordinance No. 8 of 1879, H.K.G.G.

3 CO 273/104 No. 132, 28 August 1880, Weld to S. of S.

exercised his functions, and gave assurances against the future recurrence of such actions. He proved to be insincere because while instructing Whampoa to submit a comprehensive report on the legal aspects of the case, he requested the Tsungli-Yamen to delay negotiations with Wade.[1] Wade remained under the impression that the Yamen had overlooked the question, probably considering it to be of minor significance; hence a settlement was delayed.[2] No instructions were sent and the Consulate's interference continued. In fact, Tseng was bidding for time to prepare his case legally against the British.

Hampered by the absence of Colonial Office approval, Weld deferred further action until 1882 when he was appraised of increased consular interference with shipping. It was reported to Lord Kimberley that the Consulate had been levying a fee of two dollars for issuing a so-called 'Port Clearance' to junks together with dues at the rate of four and a half cents per ton.[3] In the last three months of 1881, seventy-nine Chinese vessels were cleared from Singapore under this practice. The clearance system was begun by Whampoa when he requested the Master Attendant to deny Port Clearances to Chinese vessels not registered in China unless they produced a paper from the Consulate. It was evident that he was acting without instructions. Exercising his own authority, Weld directed the Master Attendant to proclaim that future Port Clearances would be issued without the required papers from the Consulate.[4] Complaints from Chinese shipowners were partly responsible for this authoritative

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1 San Hsing-shih shu-tu 三星使書牘 (Correspondence of the three envoys) 6 chüan (Shanghai 1910) ch. 2, pp.12-14. Chinese Legation to F.O. enclosed in CO 273/106 F.O., 5 November 1880.

2 Wade to Weld, 8 May 1882, enclosed in CO 273/115 No. 235, 17 June 1882.

3 CO 273/113 No. 106, 14 March 1882, Weld to S. of S.

4 See Appendix IIIa.

action.[1] The frustration of the local authorities at London's procrastination in resolving the shipping dispute became apparent when Weld firmly requested that a prompt decision be reached. The Chinese petitioners were opposed to a Chinese Registry for the same reason that the Chinese Government desired it viz. the payment of fees. Weld was adamant against the adoption of Wade's scheme[2] for 'it would be a dangerous precedent but it would be especially disadvantageous to the interests of this Colony, where it is of the utmost importance to heap within the narrowest limits, justifiable by international law and courtesy, the powers and duties of the Chinese Consul....If his powers and jurisdiction are abnormally extended...I should be greatly afraid that, while little good could result from the arrangement, much harm would accrue to our resident Chinese community in all sorts of different ways....'[3] Such strong terms were a clear indication of the fears and suspicions which underlay the Straits Government's policies.

The British Government's attitude was more moderate. Lord Granville advised the Colonial Office that although the practice of registry was irregular, no inconvenience was caused to any parties concerned, nor did it act in any way prejudicially to the Colony's interests. He seemed satisfied to allow the Consulate to continue its practice in view of the impracticability of the vessels resorting to a Chinese port for registration or of putting them under the British flag.[4] Lord Kimberley, however, approved Weld's request for an ordinance to enable him to issue certificates of registration to Chinese shipowners resident in Singapore.[5]

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1 See Appendix IIIb.

2 Wade to Weld, 8 May 1882, CO 273/115, No. 235, op. cit. (On a suggestion that Tso Ping-lung should be made Shipping Registrar).

3 CO 273/115 No. 235, 17 June 1882, Weld to S. of S.

4 CO 273/118 F.O. to C.O., 14 June 1882.

5 CO 273/115 No. 235, op. cit.

In the event of refusal by the Dutch authorities to recognize British colonial certificates, Weld was instructed to allow the Consulate to continue its practice.[1]

For his part, Tseng was still playing for time when he was again approached by the Foreign Office on this issue. He protested that Weld's action in not consulting Tso and in issuing the proclamation was calculated to prevent the Consul from efficiently exercising his functions. Tso was instructed to discontinue issuing certificates pending possible legal proceedings. Should the outcome be unfavourable to the Consulate, Tseng assured the British Government that all Chinese certificates would be cancelled but made it clear that he would hold the Straits authorities responsible for the future of the vessels.[2]

Armed with Kimberley's authorization, Weld introduced a bill to provide for the issue of licenses to junks and tongkangs belonging to the Straits Settlements.[3] The vessels were to carry a colonial flag rather than the British flag[4] since it was feared that they might commit piracy or other outrages on the seas.[5] This ordinance, legislated in July 1885, effectively deprived the Chinese Consul of legal authority over Chinese-owned shipping in the Colony.[6]

The British Government, although aware of the legal problems involved, was primarily concerned with the economic

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1 COD No. 161, 30 June 1882.

2 Chinese Minister to F.O., 31 May 1882, enclosed in CO 273/118, op. cit.

3 CO 273/116 No. 376, 6 October 1882, Weld to S. of S.

4 CO 273/115 No. 298, 18 August 1882, Weld to S. of S. COD 30 June 1882.

5 COD 16 March 1883.

6 Ordinance V of 1883, 'An Ordinance to provide for the Issue of Licenses to Junks and Tongkangs belonging to the Straits Settlements', The Acts and Ordinances of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements from 1 April 1867 to 7 March 1898. 2 Vols (London 1898) Vol. 1, pp.804-5.

and diplomatic aspects of the shipping dispute. On the other hand, the Straits authorities and the Chinese Government saw the issue basically in terms of a struggle emanating from the Consulate's claims to wider powers. The Straits Government had been so fearful of an expansion of the Consulate's powers that a mere seventeen-signature petition had prompted it to act without consulting either London or the Consulate. The Colonial Office was informed only after the action had been taken. It was surprising that Weld was not reprimanded for this behaviour as Anson had been for his part in the dispute over Whampoa's successor. The Colonial Office was aware of Weld's problems and fears, and was content to remain silent, partly because of the attitude of the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office had expressed no annoyance at Weld's action although Lord Granville had indicated that he regarded as unsubstantiated Weld's charge that Tso Ping-lung was attempting to substitute his own authority for that of the Colonial Administration.[1]

Consular Attempts to Influence Chinese

In terms of his accomplishments in promoting overseas Chinese support for China, Whampoa was a rather insipid Consul. The Chinese Government certainly gave him no credit for achievement.[2] First and foremost a businessman, he was untrained and visibly lacked skill in the consular field. There was also the question of his problem of role-conflict due to the multifarious appointments he held concurrently. Li Hung-chang described Whampoa, in his role as Chinese Consul, as a mere host to European and Chinese officals in transit to and from China.[3]

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1 CO 273/118, F.O. to C.O., 16 August 1882.

2 See Chapter 2.

3 Li Hung-chang, Li-Wen-chung kung ch'uan-chi 李文忠公全集 Series 3 I-shu han-kao 譯署函稿 (Letters to friends and colleagues) 20 chüan, ch. 8, pp.37a-39a.

Tso Ping-lung, on the other hand, would have been more effective in carrying out the Chinese Government's policies had it not been for the constant vigilance and periodic interference of the Straits authorities who limited his powers and curtailed his activities whenever possible. The actions of the Straits Government were, however, subject to sanction by the British Government. Tso made such an impact on the overseas Chinese that their latent interest in China was swiftly aroused. The Consulate became an established avenue for the expression of loyalty to China. Striving for personal popularity as a means of achieving influence, Tso made extensive efforts to organize educational, cultural and social programs. The nascent Chinese press was to prove an effective medium for the propagation of these activities.

It would be difficult to assert that the appearance of the first Chinese newspaper in the Colony, the Lat Pau 叻報 was connected with the appointment of Tso, but from the very beginning the relationship between them was very close. It has been contended that the two events were probably more than coincidental.[1] Tso arrived in Singapore on 18 August 1881[2] and the first issue of Lat Pau appeared on 3 December 1881. Less than a year after Tso assumed his post, Weld confidentially reported to Lord Kimberley on 17 June 1882:

> Soon after the arrival in this Colony of Mr Tso Ping-lung the Chinese Consul, a Chinese newspaper was established which contained in one of its first issues a well written article calling on the Chinese Government to keep up a sea-going fleet to protect its subjects and uphold the dignity of its Consular Agents. The tendency of the article was doubtless disquieting, though to Europeans it would appear impracticable rather than objectionable. This however was followed by an article of so obscure and filthy a nature, written with the clear intention of holding up Europeans to contempt and odium that I brought it under the Attorney-General's notice.[3]

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1 Wen Chung-chi, op. cit., pp.98-9.

2 Straits Settlements Blue Book 1881, 'Foreign Consuls'.

3 CO 273/115 Confidential, 17 June 1882, Weld to S. of S.

The article mentioned in the Governor's despatch apparently advocated not only the collection of taxes from Chinese merchants overseas for the purpose of financing the proposed fleet but also the establishment of a Chinese Consulate in any country with a significant Chinese population.[1] It will be seen later that the viceroy Chang Chih-tung 張之洞 actually put this suggestion into practice, although it is impossible to determine whether he had seen the Lat Pau article.

After the appearance of the article, Weld unofficially summoned Tso for an explanation of its origin and motive. The Consul admitted sending flattering letters under his own name to the newspaper but firmly denied any other connection with it. No stern measure, such as demanding a public apology, was taken in this instance but a warning was issued by the authorities, after which the newspaper was more discreet.[2] Lat Pau was started by a Straits-born Chinese named See Ewe Lay 薛有禮 who had been a comprador of the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank in Singapore.[3] Two important motives for his commencing the newspaper were patriotism towards China and a desire to revive Chinese moral-religious beliefs.[4] The newspaper in fact noted a few years later the great improvement in the atmosphere of Singapore since its own establishment. The editorial commented with satisfaction on the increasing number of overseas Chinese who had resumed the

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1 S.F.P. 4 July 1885. There is evidence that both the Chinese and English press in those days often commented on and translated each other's articles.

2 CO 273/115 Confidential, op. cit.

3 His father, See Eng Wat (薛榮越) was one of the first Chinese British-subject merchants who traded in Amoy. The renewed contact with China had a profound effect on the patriotism of the elder See and his son.

4 Chen Mong Hock, The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore 1881-1912 (Singapore, University of Malaya Press, 1967) pp.28-9.

habits and customs of China.[1] Imperial Edicts and extracts from Peking Gazettes appeared regularly in the Lat Pau, probably more for their patriotic and sentimental value than for their political significance. It is impossible to determine to what extent the Chinese Consul had been furnishing official news on China but there is no question that he had been doing this. Lat Pau's policy was to a large degree determined by See Ewe Lay's connections and status in the Colony as a respectable member of the Straits-born community as well as a loyal Chinese British subject. Not surprisingly, the newspaper was pro-British from the outset. On the other hand, with inspiration provided by the Chinese Government, the newspaper was not deterred from being pro-Chinese when Chinese interests were concerned.[2] Tso found useful Lat Pau's display of strong sentiments towards China, especially its willingness to publish official Chinese notices whenever overseas Chinese co-operation was desired. Prominent publicity was frequently accorded to Tso's learned socio-cultural activities which were designed to inculcate an awareness of China's problems. The Consul founded and maintained literary societies, the first of which was the Hui Hsien She会賢社 , inaugurated in 1882. It has been said that he so regretted that increasing numbers of Chinese were forgetting their old ways that he attempted to promote their knowledge of Chinese classics in order to revive their interest in traditional customs.[3] The society, which was directed at the Chinese-educated, held monthly essay and poetry contests. Tso's comments on them were frequently

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1 Lat Pau Editorial, 4 February 1888.

2 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., pp.34, 45. Its pro-Ch'ing Government attitude continued late into 1909.

3 Ch'en Yu-sung, 'Tso-Tzu-hsing ling shih tui Hsin-chia-po hua ch'iao te kung hsien'左子興領事對星加坡華僑的貢献 (Tso Tzu-hsing's Contribution to the Singapore Chinese) in Tso Ping-lung, Chin-mien-t'ang shih ch'ao. Also in Nanyang hsüeh pao (J.S.S.S.) Vol. XV, Part 1, June 1959, pp.18-21.

printed in Lat Pau;[1] topics varied but they were always on a socio-political-cultural theme, for example, 'A good government shares the likes and dislikes of the people'.[2] To reach out to the Straits-born Chinese, Tso founded a debating society called the 'Celestial Reasoning Association' on 27 May 1882. Fortnightly meetings were held for the purposes of improving the members' English as well as stimulating learning and morality through discussions on socio-political problems. The literary society was the first formed among the Straits-born Chinese.[3] To a degree, Tso succeeded in imparting a sense of loyalty to China. Some wealthy Chinese merchants were persuaded to give generous grants to his scheme for the expansion of Chinese educational facilities.[4] Nor were the poor and uneducated ignored. With financial support mainly from the Cantonese community, Tso started the Tung-chai Hsia (T'ung-chi She 同濟社 which was a medical dispensary) to aid the poor.[5] He soon commanded such wide respect from both the China-born and the local-born Chinese that they made him guest-of-honour on many special occasions.[6] In honour of the accession of Emperor Kwang-hsu, the local-born Chinese presented him with the following address on 4 March 1889:

> In Singapore, which though but a small colony has among its inhabitants hundreds of thousands of your Chinese subjects, industriously toiling for their daily food, your presence here as the worthy representative of His Imperial Majesty has contributed, not a little, to remind them of their connection with home and stimulate them to display the great marks of loyalty and deep respect which

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1 Lat Pau, 27 July 1889. Pecuniary awards made to the winning entrants.

2 Lat Pau, 17 September 1887.

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.209.

4 Tseng Chi-tse, Memorials, ch. 5, 6a-b.

5 Tso Ping-lung 左秉隆 Ch'in-mien t'ang shih-ch'ao 勤免堂詩鈔 (Collected Poems of Tso-Ping Lung) Singapore 1959, p.2.

6 S.F.P. 4 March 1889. Also Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.226-7.

> have been shown on this auspicious occasion by the numerous tribes now residing in this distant spot of the world...thank you...for the much good and sound advice you have so often given us in all important social and educational matters.[1]

The direction of Tso's activities towards achieving his objectives were never anti-British in any way, although it cannot be denied that, to some extent at least, his attempts to bind closer ties between overseas Chinese and China threatened to impair effective British rule. In 1882, Weld observed that a Chinese club had been founded with 'somewhat ambitious aspirations' under the presidency of the Chinese Consul. A dinner was held for the members, during which they drank to the health of the Emperor of China rather than to the Queen of England. What Weld found so disturbing was the presence of many Chinese British subjects, probably all of whom had amassed their fortunes under the British flag. The Governor, in other words, felt that those who had benefited from British rule were obliged to be pro-British. He also suspected on other grounds that there was a desire to form a local Chinese party which would tend to encourage Chinese in the Colony to look to their Consul and not to the British authorities for leadership.[2] In another report, Weld pointed out that Tso had on several occasions gone beyond the ordinary duties of a Consul in inquiring into and adjudicating on matters which should properly have been left to the Straits Government. Such apprehensions explained his strong objections to the British Government's contemplating the extension of Tso's powers and jurisdiction - a possibility which almost eventuated when Wade proposed to make the Chinese Consul a Registrar of Shipping.[3] Weld continued at length to explain that the Consul undertook activities which were certain to accentuate differences of ethnic groupings

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1 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.250.

2 CO 273/115 Confidential, 17 June 1882. Weld to S. of S.

3 CO 273/115 No. 235, 17 June 1882, Weld to S. of S.

and origins among the British subjects in the Colony.[1] In the 1885 Annual Report, Pickering forewarned of the importance of maintaining vigilance of Chinese dispensaries, giving as an example the Tung-hua Hospital 東華 in Hong Kong which had meddled in politics.[2] Despite its fears and suspicions, the Straits Government took no action either to counter the influence of the Consulate or to limit its activities, but did intensify its scrutiny of those activities. Had the authorities decided to plan some form of action, one positive method undoubtedly would have been the subtle censorship of the Chinese press. The Straits officials, however, regarded the Chinese press as the proper channel of communication to the Chinese community, even though they suspected it of being the mouthpiece of the Consulate. The Lat Pau and another newspaper, the Sing Po 星報 frequently printed municipal and government notices and tenders. Founded in 1890 by Lin Heng-nan 林衡南, the Sing Po spoke out very often against westernization among the Chinese in the Colony. The editor even considered it part of the newspaper's duty to bring the local-born Chinese back to the old ways of China.[3] At times the authorities were annoyed by articles in the Chinese newspapers, but there was little interference with the Chinese press since the official attitude was one of freedom of censorship. Chinese press opinion was generally ignored because it seldom, if ever, reflected Government thinking. On the other hand, given freedom from government censorship, the press had to conform to local laws, particularly libel laws, which were entirely different from those in China. No laws existed in China to prevent the printing of material libellous to organizations or individuals. At this time, the Chinese press in the Straits was known to be partial and uncritical. An accepted notion was that one of the newspapers' functions was to

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1 CO 273/115 Confidential, op. cit.

2 S.S.G.G. 1886 Annual Report of the Chinese Protectorate (for 1885).

3 Sing Po Editorial, 13 March 1894.

'report whatever is heard'有聞必錄; hence casual and careless reports often occurred because little or no trouble was taken to establish facts. The Sing Po was involved in a libel suit because of an article it printed on 8 July 1891, probably in total ignorance of the law.[1] The case was minor but significant in the journalistic history of the Straits as it marked the beginning of the impact of British laws on the Chinese press.[2]

During the Franco-Chinese hostilities of 1884, the Lat Pau published a proclamation issued by the high authorities at Canton calling upon the Chinese in the Colony and other nearby places to destroy or cripple French vessels and machinery and to kill French subjects by selling them poisonous provisions.[3] The proclamation was probably printed with Tso Ping-lung's knowledge, if not at his direction. Overseas Chinese who rendered the stated services to the Chinese Government were promised promotions, rewards, honours and refunds of expenses incurred during the actions they undertook against the French. The actions suggested were in retaliation against the unjust acts committed by the French in China. When Acting Governor Sir Cecil Smith learned of this, he telegraphed the British Minister in Peking to demand that the Chinese Government issue an Imperial Decree withdrawing the proclamation and censuring the authorities in Canton. The Straits Government considered the proclamation a grave offence against British sovereignty and humanity.[4] Smith noted with satisfaction, however, that the proclamation

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1 Sing Po, 8 July 1891.

2 It has been pointed out that the British press was not free from censorship, although this was done in an arbitrary and indeterminate way. Some newspapers employed several barristers to avoid printing libels and criticism of any kind which could become risky. S.T. 6 June 1962.

3 Lat Pau 10 October 1884; S.F.P. 4 July 1885; CCWCSL-KH 47/11a.

4 British Minister to Acting Governor, 26 September 1884, enclosed in CO 273/130 No. 441.

did not appear to have attracted any notice in the Colony.[1] After the Imperial Decree was published in the Peking Gazette, Smith called upon Lat Pau's editor to follow suit.[2] The Straits authorities were particularly anxious that China's conflicts with other powers should be kept out of the Colony. It will be seen later that political activity by the Consulate was discouraged by the Straits Government which was struggling to exert its own influence on the Chinese population.

After the Chinese Government demonstrated a new willingness to protect its overseas subjects by adopting a policy which actively pursued the extension of consular representation abroad, it soon realized the material value of the emigrant communities. One of the most significant achievements of the Consulate in Singapore was that it made frequent appeals on behalf of the Chinese Government to the Chinese in the Colony to give monetary contributions for China's various relief funds.[3] As far as the British were concerned, fund raising for relief purposes was acceptable, but when the Consulate began raising funds for political purposes, the Straits Government took swift action to halt the practice. In 1877, after a great famine struck in the provinces of Shansi and Honan in North China, relief committees were organized throughout Nanyang by Ting Jih-ch'ang who was originally sent by Li Hung-chang to Hong Kong and Ch'ao-chou to solicit relief contributions.[4] An agent

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1 CO 273/130 No. 441, 2 October 1884, Smith to S. of S.

2 Lat Pau, 21 October 1884; CO 273/130 No. 470, 20 October 1884, Smith to S. of S.

3 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Ch'u-shih Ying fa i pi she-kuo jih-chi 出使英法義比四國日記 (Diary of Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's mission to England, France, Italy and Belgium) in Hsiao-fang-hu-chai yu-ti ts'ung-ch'ao, Series 11, p.8b. An eminent Chinese diplomat, Hsüeh calculated in 1890 that the Consulate's total expenditure for 13 years after its establishment did not exceed half the total amount of monetary contributions given by Singapore's Chinese to China's relief funds.

4 CCWCSL-KH 13/19b-20a.

was despatched to Singapore to collect funds[1] and in April 1877, Tan Beng Swee, Tan Seng Poh and Ho Ah Kay, respective leaders of the Hokien, Teochiu and Cantonese sections of the Chinese in Singapore, raised a total sum of $17,178. In January 1878, Ho Ah Kay alone raised another sum of $11,000 in two days.[2] Even the Straits authorities contributed to this cause,[3] probably to show their sympathy for the victims in China; the Governor gave $5,000. On the 11 July another sum of $65,000 was collected to be remitted to China.[4]

In 1885, appeals for monetary funds for victims of natural calamities took a different course when the Chinese Consulate began collecting funds to aid the Chinese Government during the Franco-Chinese War. This was the first and last time the Chinese Government was to be allowed to make appeals for political purposes in the Colony during the nineteenth century. On June 30 1885, Lat Pau published two notices. The first was a letter from the Fukien authorities ordering two Chinese in the Colony, Tan Kim Cheng 陳金鏜 and Ng Kwei Po 吳斐甫 (Wu K'uei-fu) to collect subscriptions for compensating the families of soldiers, people and officers killed by the French in Fukien. It further announced the enactment of an 'Ordinance for the purchase of titles' by the Board of Revenue. Chinese who loved their country and intended to purchase a title were invited to contact Tan and Ng. Anyone who subscribed an amount exceeding the price of a title was promised a special favour by the Emperor of China to ennoble himself and spread his fame throughout the world. The letter continued:

> Amounts which were insufficient to purchase any title would not be rejected as being small, but they would be received and a list of them made out and reported to the Emperor by the Marquis in concert with the General and Viceroy. Special

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1 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, op. cit., p.5b.

2 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.193.

3 CCWCSL-KH 13/19b-20a.

4 S.F.P. 11 July 1888.

> testimonial would be granted these subscribers and the local authorities of the sub-prefectures and districts of such subscribers would be ordered to erect inscribed stone tablets in the colleges to preserve their loyal names. The authorities would also be ordered to remove at once all former delinquencies and protect from time to time the families of those that had such testimonials hung at their doors. Then the wicked would not dare to oppress them and the local authorities also would not dare to raise any pretext and squeeze their money so that when they had made money in the foreign parts and returned to China, they would live in peace.[1]

The second article in Lat Pau was a Chinese Government notification issued by Tso Ping-lung giving authenticity to the above letter and encouraging the Chinese community 'to jointly submit to and carry out the order' because it was on record.[2] This form of persuasion quickly induced both the local and China-born Chinese to contribute large sums and to buy the titles.[3] When the Straits Government raised objections to such methods of soliciting contributions, Tso's reply was that he had been acting under pressure from his superiors and that he was personally averse to such practices. In a letter to the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking, Acting-Governor Smith requested the former to seek solutions to relieve this evil which would be fraught with grave consequences unless it was checked immediately.[4] The authorities felt it was not customary for consuls to collect subscriptions for political purposes. The amount raised by this appeal was considerable, and they feared that its success would encourage future levies. What prompted the Straits Government to interfere with the Consul's action was the suspicion that these appeals for contributions could lead to the oppression of the families in China of those Chinese

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1 Lat Pau, 30 June 1885.

2 Ibid.

3 SSGG 1886. A.R.C.P. (for 1885).

4 Acting Governor to Charge d'Affaires (Peking), 3 July 1885, enclosed in CO 273/135 No. 284, 7 July 1885.

residing in the Colony. In short, when an official like Tso called on the Chinese to subscribe for any purpose the Chinese Government was interested in, it was tantamount to an order which few would dare to disobey; hence, in the opinion of the Straits Government, the Chinese Consulate was degraded to the status of a money-squeezing machine which was detrimental to public interests.

When Li Hung-chang was approached on this issue, he claimed that Tso was acting under instructions from authorities in Fukien and Kwangtung. While disclaiming all connection with Tso's action, Li defended the practice, pointing out that foreign consuls in China were at liberty to collect subscriptions from their nationals for any purpose they chose.[1] The matter was then referred to Chang Chih-tung, the viceroy at Canton. Chang informed the British Consul in Canton that Tso had no authority to apply pressure on the Chinese in the Straits to contribute money; however, by Chinese law, Chinese overseas could obtain certain decorations when they contributed to national objectives. For that reason, Chang could not forbid Tso to advertise but if the Consul went beyond this by applying pressure through the use of threats or other means, he would be strongly reprimanded by the viceroy.[2] In this set of correspondence, it could be said that Chinese diplomatic skill had reached a level of sophistication in international relations.

The British Government's opinion of the matter was that no objection could be raised against subscriptions being solicited in time of national distress such as war and that unless the money was raised for some objectionable purpose, no representation of the Straits Government's complaint could be made to the Chinese Government.[3] The British Government

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1 British Consul (Tientsin) to Charge d'Affaires (Peking), 22 August 1885, enclosed in CO 273/135 No. 361, 12 September 1885.

2 Charge d'Affaires (Peking) to Governor, 26 October 1885, enclosed in CO 273/136 No. 436, 20 November 1885.

3 CO 273/137 F.O. to C.O., 29 August 1885.

did not oppose the collection of subscriptions in principle but it agreed that the methods applied by the Chinese Consulate to achieve its ends were inimical to the Colony's interests.

In a move to thwart the Consulate's awards of honours and titles to Chinese, the Acting-Governor sought instructions as to whether regulations dealing with the wearing of Foreign Orders were applicable to Chinese British subjects. He wanted to draw public attention to the matter in view of the increasing tendency of wealthy Chinese to purchase titles and wear their insignia.[1] The Home Government, however, observed that if Chinese British subjects were not 'in service of the Crown', they could not be prevented from wearing foreign insignia or from accepting foreign orders. While rejecting the Straits Government's proposal to call public attention to such a delicate question, the Foreign Office suggested that the objective might be attained by prohibiting the wearing of insignia at any official function.[2] The above case was yet another example of the Straits authorities' promptness in countering the Consulate's influence among the Chinese population when that influence appeared to be potentially inimical to British interests.

After the Colonial Office had endorsed the Acting-Governor's action in objecting to the Chinese Consul's method of extracting funds,[3] future subscriptions were raised only for charitable causes. The late 1880s saw the rapid expansion of the Consulate's non-political financial activities throughout the Colony and into the Malay States.[4]

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1 CO 273/135 No. 303, 4 August 1885, Smith to S. of S.

2 CO 273/137 F.O. to C.O., 21 October 1885. The insignia was in the form of buttons of different materials and colours, peacock's feathers and embroidered badges worn on the coat.

3 COD 1 September 1885.

4 S.F.P. 25 April, 9 May and 8 August 1885; Lat Pau, 29 February and 23 May 1888.

When natural calamities struck in 1889 in the provinces of Anhui, Shantung, Honan and Kiangsu, the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, under the direction of Governor Smith, voted a sum of $25,000 towards the Chinese Famine Fund. It was reported in March 1889 that the Chinese community subscribed liberally to an amount of $101,049, inclusive of the Government Grant.[1] On this occasion the Governor permitted the publication of a Chinese official proclamation promising rewards and honours.[2] The sale of titles was made attractive by a 20% discount in 1885[3] and a further price reduction in 1887,[4] and many were purchased by Chinese in the Colony. In October 1889, the Chinese Government made available honours which extended three generations back for those subscribers who desired to honour their ancestors.[5] Lat Pau reported a fortnight later that even the highest honours were on sale.[6] Whenever provincial authorities appealed for monetary contributions from the overseas Chinese, the Chinese Consulate either played an active role or gave ready assistance. The co-operation of the local Chinese leaders, both Straits born and China-born, was invariably sought. The financial activities of the Consulate led Pickering to make the caustic comment in 1886 that the Chinese Consul had never exercised his power in any way other than for the pecuniary benefit of his government and for the

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1 CO 273/159 No. 123, 24 March 1889, Smith to S. of S. S.F.P. 25 June 1889. When the subscriptions closed in June 1889, the amount had reached $109,067. Most of this came from Chinese individuals and associations, although other ethnic groups also contributed.

2 L.P. 25, 26 and 27 February 1889.

3 L.P. 30 June 1885.

4 Chang Chung-li, op. cit., p.108. This included the kung-sheng 貢生 and chien-sheng 監生 for students. Lat Pau, 24 August 1889.

5 L.P. 3 October 1889.

6 Lat Pau, 17 October 1889. A Chinese merchant, Cheang Hong Lim, who was also an opium and spirit farmer, acted as agent. Also, Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.168-170.

propagation of the belief that both the local and China-born Chinese were under the power and control of the Emperor of China.[1] He was only partly correct, however, in his earlier assumption that sums contributed were merely forms of protection money to ensure that the subscribers' families in China would be free from official oppression.[2] This judgement underrated not only the patriotic motives for the contributions but also the desire of the wealthy Chinese to attain an outward form of social distinction.[3] In the nineteenth century, the British Government did not give any awards to Chinese leaders, with the exception of Whampoa, for their services to the community or for philanthropy. Those wealthy Chinese with exhibitionist tendencies had to turn to the Chinese Government for honours which could be purchased. The purchase of honours also had other values; for example, the chien-sheng title exempted the holder-candidate from examinations. Such an arrangement was attractive to many local-born sons of wealthy Chinese merchants when they returned to China and sat for the civil service examinations.[4] The passion of the overseas Chinese for honours and titles thus proved a source of financial gain to the Chinese Government.

Other Consular Fields of Activity

It was part of the Consul's role to protect the interests of Chinese nationals in the Straits, but Tso Ping-lung met with only partial success in this aspect of his

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1 Memorandum of the Protector of Chinese enclosed in CO 273/140 Confidential, 5 July 1886, Weld to S. of S.

2 S.S.G.G. 1886. A.R.C.P. (for 1885).

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.159. In 1869 some Chinese issued a circular advocating a system of social differentiation by the wearing of different coloured stockings.

4 Wen Chung-chi, op. cit., p.118. The Kung-sheng automatically permitted admission to minor administrative posts.

responsibilities. The British authorities accepted the Consul's advice and heeded his protests only when it suited them to do so. Tso unsuccessfully made repeated attempts to negotiate with the Straits Government for a plan to abolish the coolie-traffic. Since he could make no headway, he resorted to investigating the source of contract immigration.[1] He wrote to China in June 1885 on the subject of maltreatment of coolie immigrants in the Colony and alleged that they were sold into slavery. Consequently, the high authorities in Swatow issued a proclamation banning further emigration of contract coolies.[2] The British authorities demanded an explanation of this move after Pickering reported that Tso had made no representations to the British Government nor could he substantiate his allegations. The proclamation was eventually withdrawn when Chinese officials relented to constant pressure from the British.[3] Bearing in mind that contract immigration was a vital source of labour supply to the economy of British Malaya, the British Government would never agree with Tso on this issue. Tso was not permitted to interfere with coolie welfare or with the coolie traffic since the British regarded these matters as the primary responsibility of the Protector of Chinese. With assistance from the Protector, the authorities assumed full responsibility in dealing with immigration problems. Consular interference, in view of the rapid rate of immigration, could mean a possible attempt to influence official policy decisions within the government. Such attempts could lead to a widening of the Consul's powers - something the British clearly had no intention of doing. Furthermore, the authorities were already fearful of the Consul's motives in some of his activities. It was felt that

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1 Ch'en Yu-sung, 'Tso Tzu-hsing ling shih...' in Tso Ping-lung, Collected Poems, p.6.

2 S.F.P. 29 August 1885. Memorandum of the Protector of Chinese enclosed in CO 273/140 Confidential, 5 July 1886.

3 S.S.G.G. 1886. A.R.C.P. (for 1885).

interference by the Consul might get out of hand if it were officially tolerated. The authorities' main concern, however, was with the Malay States where the majority of the coolies were; if interference extended there, the exercise of British authority could be seriously undermined.

Anxious as the Straits Government was to limit the Consul's powers, it did not hesitate to seek his assistance and co-operation in matters of minor significance. He sat as an automatic member in the semi-official body, the Po Leung Kuk (保良局 Pao-liang Chü), and the valuable advice he contributed was much appreciated by the authorities.[1] When a Singapore Chinese appealed to Tso for assistance in November 1887, he helped to free the petitioner's son from gangsters in Johore with the co-operation of the Sultan.[2] He was able to secure the ruler's aid because they were personally on friendly terms.[3] In August 1891, Tso advised the Governor that serious consequences would follow if the Supreme Court released Lu Thien, leader of the Tong Beng Society (同盟会) and some of the Society's members;[4] eventually two leaders were banished. In the same year, Tso testified before a commission of inquiry into Chinese labour. In 1892, after he had personally investigated the activities of the Coffin-Breakers' Society (or the Shiu Lok Peng On Society水陸平安), Tso co-operated with the Chinese Protectorate and the Chinese authorities in Canton, helping

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1 CO 273/165 No. 90, 3 March 1890. In 1887, the authorities consulted Tso when a controversy arose regarding the amendment of the ordinance dealing with Chinese burial grounds. S.F.P. 21 December 1887.

2 Lat Pau, 25 November 1887.

3 S.F.P. 16 November 1887. Also Tso Ping-lung, Collected Poems, pp.66, 67, 111.

4 CO 273/174 No. 340, 24 August 1891, Smith to S. of S. The society had dissolved itself in 1886 to evade prosecution but reappeared in June 1891 and caused disturbances through its attempts to recruit rickshaw pullers.

to bring several members of the society under arrest.[1] The British did not overlook the 'better' side of the Consul's less publicized activities and gratitude was officially expressed. The authorities felt that Tso had performed the duties of his office with excellent tact, discretion and ability, and acknowledged that he had given them ready and valuable assistance in many matters aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the poorer and more helpless classes of his compatriots.[2]

One potential aspect of co-operation between the Straits Government and the Chinese Consulate which could have been extremely beneficial to both governments was that of the mutual extradition of criminals. Although the first move was initiated by the Straits Government, neither side pursued the matter forcefully enough to see it through. The matter was raised when the Straits Government charged Hsieh Kung-ch'ao with murder in the Colony on 16 December 1880. Hsieh had since absconded to Amoy. The Straits Government applied for an exchange of communications with the Chinese authorities towards obtaining his arrest, stating that it would be more convenient if the accused could be returned to the Colony for trial. Should such a course prove impractical, witnesses could be sent to China for a trial there. Evidently the Chinese authorities were not prepared to give up the accused because he was a Chinese national residing in his own country. Nor would the Taotai (Ling Chang-lung) in Amoy put the accused on trial for a crime committed in a foreign country where the formalities required by Chinese law could not be observed.[3] In a letter to Wade, the Governor said that this case presented a favourable opportunity to

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1 Chen Yu-sang, 'Tso Tzu-hsing ling shih...' in Tso Ping-lung, Collected Poems, p.7. The society specialised in robbery and murder, often of Chinese passengers on ships plying between the Malay Peninsula, Burma and China.

2 CO 273/172 No. 42, 28 January 1891, Smith to S. of S.

3 British Consul (Amoy) to Colonial Secretary, 23 June 1882, enclosed in CO 273/116 No. 382, 9 October 1882.

ascertain the views of the Chinese Government on the question of reciprocal arrangements between China and the Colony. The authorities were convinced that as long as criminals could return to China, knowing that they could not be touched there, Weld's endeavours to suppress crime would be of little avail.[1] In reply Wade stated that since no treaty existed on mutual extradition, not only would the Chinese Government refuse the surrender of a Chinese subject, but the British Government would support that refusal. When a similar case had occurred in Hong Kong in 1849, the British Foreign Secretary (Lord Palmerston) had informed Governor George Bonham that the Chinese Government was not bound under international law to give up any Chinese subject who had committed crimes in Hong Kong. The surrender could rest only on grounds of general comity and not on right.[2] When Prince Kung was approached by the British Minister in Peking on the Straits Government's suggestions, he thought a reciprocal arrangement so necessary that he immediately instructed the Chinese Minister in London to discuss the matter with the Foreign Office. At the same time, the Tsungli-Yamen wrote to the authorities in Fukien to instruct officers in the local Board of Foreign Affairs to consult with the British Consul on the proper course to pursue.[3] The Chinese Government, sensing advantages in an arrangement of this kind, was obviously ready to consider the issue in a friendly spirit. Its display of willingness prompted Weld to write to London hoping for an early treaty.[4] The British Government, however, hesitated in moving towards negotiations when Minister Tseng informed the Foreign Office that the Chinese

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1 Weld to Wade, 17 July 1882, enclosed in CO 273/116 No. 382, ibid.

2 Wade to Weld, 16 August 1882; Lord Palmerston to George Bonham, 24 January 1850, enclosed in CO 273/116 No. 382, ibid.

3 British Minister to Governor, 1 September 1882; Prince Kung to British Minister, 30 August 1882, enclosed in CO 273/116 No. 382, ibid.

4 CO 273/116 No. 382, 9 October 1882, Weld to S. of S.

Government was prepared for a Treaty of Extradition.[1] Before negotiations could commence, the British wanted some form of guarantee that fugitives surrendered to China would not be subjected to torture. The practice of judicial torture in China was repugnant to English legal procedures. It was suggested that a British officer be allowed to attend the trial of fugitives surrendered to the Chinese Government; after all, the Chinese Consul in Singapore was at liberty to attend the trial of Chinese subjects before British courts.[2] Apparently the Chinese Government had no intention of meeting this condition. In the meantime, Weld was instructed to send a witness to China for the trial of Hsieh Kung-ch'ao, who was arrested by the high authorities in Fukien on instructions from the Tsungli-Yamen.[3] For some unknown reason, the witness (Hsieh Yün-hsieh 謝允協) left China after having waited for six months without giving his testimony.[4] The case was brought to an end on 26 October 1886 when the Chinese Minister in London, Liu Shui-fen 劉瑞芬, informed the British Government that Hsieh Kung-ch'ao had died in prison.[5] No action was taken towards the proposed treaty after that announcement. There is no evidence to indicate why the Straits authorities did not pressure the Chinese Consul to influence his government on such an important matter. The basic impediment to an agreement on mutual extradition lay in the difference between British law and Chinese legal procedures, since the latter permitted the use of torture to extract information; a method strongly

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1 Chinese Legation to F.O., 12 July 1882, enclosed in CO 273/124 F.O., 27 July 1883.

2 F.O. to Chinese Legation, 27 July 1883, enclosed in CO 273/124 F.O., ibid.

3 COD 14 August 1883.

4 CO 273/140 No. 266, 27 August 1886; CO 273/141 No. 301, 22 September 1886, Weld to S. of S.

5 Chinese Legation to F.O., 26 October 1886, enclosed in CO 273/142 F.O., 4 November 1886.

condemned by the former. As late as 1906, the two countries were still referring to the need for such a treaty.[1]

Moves Towards the Establishment of the Consulate-General

It has been established that the Chinese Government pursued a forward consular policy to protect the overseas Chinese. By the late 1880s it seemed reasonably certain that the policy had been successful. The next step taken by the Chinese Government was the appointment of a commission of enquiry in 1886 to investigate the 'social relations' and welfare of the Chinese communities in Nanyang and Australasia. Before the British attitude towards the commission is examined, it is proposed to look briefly into the nature and origins of that commission.

In China itself after 1877, the self-strengthening movement was increasingly placing emphasis on military rather than economic preparedness. A naval college was established in Tientsin in 1880, followed by the founding of an army academy in the same year. Students were sent to several European countries for training in the techniques of modern warfare. In 1882, Port Arthur was developed into a naval base, and the Nanyang 南洋 (Southern) and the 北洋 (Northern) fleets, based respectively in Fukien and Chihli, were considerably enlarged to provide China with the status of a naval power.[2]

One of the most influential Chinese officials who advocated a militant policy to protect overseas Chinese in countries where there was no Chinese consular representation was Chang Chih-tung, Governor-General of Liang Kuang from 1884 to 1889. A noted administrator and advocate of the

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1 CO 273/323 F.O., 26 June 1906.

2 Chiang T'ing-fu (Tsiang T'ing-fu 蔣廷黻) Chung-kuo chin-tai shih 中國近代史 (A History of Modern China) (Hong Kong, 1954) pp.60-1. J.L. Rawlinson, China's Struggle for Naval Development, 1839-1895 (Massachusetts, 1967) cf. chapters 5 and 7.

military, he was considered one of the most outstanding champions of reform and modernization in China.[1] His 'grand design' was to strengthen the ties between the overseas Chinese and China through naval and consular expansion; hence he was the first Chinese statesman to expound the use of naval power in diplomatic strategy.[2] To achieve what he had in mind, a special commission of enquiry was to be despatched in 1886 to Nanyang and Australasia. Its purposes were to investigate the conditions of the overseas Chinese communities and the prospects of establishing more consulates in that area, as well as to gather financial support for the maintenance of a fleet which was to be built for the protection of overseas Chinese. There is no question that the officials in China had learned to appreciate the material value of binding closer ties with the Chinese abroad.

In a memorial to the throne on 11 October 1885, Chang Chih-tung outlined a plan for providing naval protection to the overseas Chinese, proposing that the Chinese Government build the fleet with the voluntary financial support of the Chinese abroad.[3] He argued that since the latter had been so liberal with relief subscriptions in recent years, they would surely be prepared to raise funds for the maintenance of a fleet that was to be built for their own benefit. Able men would be sent to coordinate with Chinese Consuls and Chinese community leaders overseas in the raising of funds.[4] Imperial approval was eventually given after a memorial arrived from Chung Te-hsiang 鍾德祥 (a Hanlin compiler 翰林院編修) stressing the importance of establishing more consulates in Nanyang.[5] With the assistance of Chang

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1 Charlton M. Lewis, 'The Reform Movement in Hunan, 1896-1898', Papers on China, Vol. 15, p.64.

2 This idea had already been suggested by the Lat Pau towards the end of 1881.

3 Chang Chih-tung, Memorials, chüan 10, pp.13a-14a.

4 Chang Chih-tung, Memorials, chüan 10, pp.13a-14a.

5 Hsü T'ung-hsin 許同莘 Chang Wen-hsiang-kung nien-p'u 張文襄公年譜 (A Chronological Biography of Chang Chih-tung) (Chungking, 1944) p.52.

Yin-huan張蔭桓, Chang Chih-tung drew up a practical plan for the anticipated naval-consular strategy in Nanyang. Following a joint recommendation on 10 March 1886 by the two Chang, General Wang Yung-ho王榮和 (a Penang-born Hokien) and a Cantonese consular officer, Yu Tsing余王嘏, were appointed special commissioners to Nanyang. Officially their mission was to investigate the conditions of overseas Chinese and to promote goodwill. The more important aspects of the mission, however, were to prepare for the establishment of more consulates and to raise funds for the naval project. The British Foreign Office was accordingly informed of the impending visit of the commission of inquiry under the pretext that it was merely an investigation into Chinese socio-economic conditions.[1]

In reply to the Colonial Office's despatch seeking his opinion,[2] Governor Weld strongly opposed the visit of the commission to the Colony.[3] The Straits authorities were convinced that no possible good could accrue to the local Chinese from such a visit. They also feared that unless the commission's status was defined and placed under proper restrictions, incalculable injury might result to the free trade of the Colony because the Chinese Government had been known to attempt to exercise indirect jurisdiction over the Chinese settlers. The commission was also considered unnecessary since the Chinese Consul in the Colony could supply all information sought by the Chinese Government. Pickering was perceptive when he sensed that there were other motives involved. He reported:

> Conditions of the Straits Settlements are widely different. Owing to protection of the British flag and the immunity from squeezes and oppressions of their own mandarins, the Chinese have flocked to the Straits Settlements and prospered....[the

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1 CCWCSL-KH 66/14a-b, 14b; KH 67/12b; KH-68/7a; KH 67/20a-b CO 273/142, F.O., 19 May 1886.

2 COD 25 May 1886.

3 CO 273/140 Confidential, 5 July 1886, Weld to S. of S.

> purpose] of the Commission is only to find out the relatives of the immigrants who have made fortunes here and the ancestors of Chinese British subjects so that mandarins may by pressure being put on their feelings of filial piety, draw a revenue from the Chinese community and thus place a heavy indirect tax on trade and a prosperity of free ports which if proposed by the British Government would be resisted as an attempt to burden and ultimately ruin the commerce on which the Colony depends.[1]

Weld added in his despatch that if his advice was not accepted, the alternative was to have Pickering accompany the commission. This would give the Protector of Chinese an opportunity to observe the movements of the commissioners and their proceedings at close quarters. If possible, Weld wanted no interference from Chinese officials because he felt that the Consul's line of action had been steadily directed at fostering a distinct Chinese national feeling amongst the Chinese in the Colony, a feeling the proposed commission would certainly aim at promoting. To stress his point, Weld again referred to meetings held under Tso's auspices during which the health of the Emperor of China was toasted but that of the Queen of England ignored.[2]

The Foreign Office, anxious to maintain friendly relations with the Chinese Government overcame the opposition of the Straits authorities to the visit of the Chinese commissioners. The British Government nonetheless decided that the Protector of Chinese would accompany the commissioners and that their enquiry would not include British subjects of Chinese descent. Governor Weld was instructed to treat the two commissioners with the greatest courtesy.[3]

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1 Memorandum of the Protector of Chinese enclosed in CO 273/140, Confidential, ibid.

2 CO 273/140, Confidential, 5 July 1886, Weld to S. of S.

3 CO 273/142 F.O., 3 September 1886; COD Confidential, 10 September 1886.

Upon arrival in the Colony and the two Malay States of Selangor and Perak, the commissioners made thorough investigations of all aspects of the coolies' lives. The Chinese officials were certainly impressed with the kindness shown them by the British officials and the Chinese residents. Pickering reported that the Chinese residents told the commissioners there was nothing to enquire about because they were perfectly satisfied with their environment. Apparently the Chinese were very civil and showed no excitement at the commissioners' visit. The authorities, however, feared that the commissioners would attempt to 'squeeze' the Chinese, especially those who were not naturalized.[1] At the end of their visit, the two Chinese officials thanked Pickering for the hospitality they had received everywhere. The Chinese Government also expressed its gratitude to the Straits authorities through Tso Ping-lung.[2] While the two Chinese officials were generally satisfied with what they had seen, they pointed out some abuses which existed in contract immigration. A proposal was made to the Chinese Government for the extension of Chinese consular protection to Penang, Malacca and the Malay States; in effect, the commissioners were suggesting the establishment of a consulate-general in Singapore, from where its activities could spread out to the stated areas.[3]

This proposal materialized when Admiral Ting Ju-ch'ang 丁汝昌 returned to China after a visit to the Straits Settlements in 1890. On the admiral's recommendation that the consulate in Singapore be expanded, the Tsungli-Yamen instructed Minister Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng 薛福成 to negotiate with the British Government.[4] The negotiations were based on

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1 CO 273/141, Confidential, 28 October 1886, Weld to S. of S.

2 CO 273/141 No. 376, 15 November 1886, Weld to S. of S.

3 Chang Chih-tung, Memorial, ch. 16, pp.2b-6b. Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, p.38a.

4 Ibid., pp.51a-b.

a report Tso Ping-lung had earlier made to the Tsungli-Yamen; it proposed the creation of a consulate-general in Singapore with jurisdiction over the entire Straits Settlements and those Protected Malay States with British residents. Consuls were to be appointed for the settlements of Penang and Malacca; and Capitans China were to be appointed consular agents in the states of Perak, Negri Sembilan and Selangor where there were large numbers of Chinese.[1]

Hsüeh's proposals[2] evoked a mixed reaction from the British Government which, although doubtful of the Chinese Government's motives, acceded to his requests on the 29 November 1890 on the condition that it would have the right to object to the establishment of Chinese consulates in certain places. Eager to show he meant well, Hsüeh nominated Tso Ping-lung, who had proved his worth to the Straits Colonial Administration, to head the consulate in Hong Kong. A seasoned diplomat, Huang Tsun-hsien 黃遵憲, from the Chinese Legation in London was chosen to fill Tso's vacant position. The selection of consular officers for other parts of the Straits who would act under Huang was a matter for future consideration.[3] Governor Sir Cecil Smith did not oppose the proposed creation of a consulate general, but the Straits authorities regretted Tso Ping-lung's transfer to Hong Kong since they had been impressed by his ability.[4] That this proposal evoked no objections from the British authorities was a clear indication that the colonial

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1 Ibid., pp.60b-61a.

2 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's proposals in the negotiations also included China's right to create a consulate in Hong Kong and other places within the British Empire.

3 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, pp.63a-b. Hsüeh to Lord Salisbury, 11 December 1890, enclosed in COD No. 2, 2 January 1891.

4 CO 273/172 No. 42, 28 January 1891, Smith to S. of S. Chinese consular representation in Hong Kong never materialized because of strong opposition from the local European community.

government had attained a certain level of success in its attempts to control the Chinese population in the Straits Settlements. In areas in which British authority was not firmly established, such as the Malay States with their large Chinese coolie population and concomitant problems, the Chinese Government's suggestion of consular representation was quietly dropped by the British.

By 1890, the Chinese Consulate appeared to have been considered a successful institution by the Chinese Government. Its position was so firmly established that in the following year it was elevated to a Consulate General. From the Straits Government's point of view, however, it remained a potential threat because of the pressure, direct and indirect, which it constantly exerted on the Straits authorities. As will be shown in the next chapter, this pressure was to become an increasingly important determinant of British policy after the arrival of the first Chinese Consul General.

CHAPTER 4

THE STRAITS GOVERNMENT AND THE CHINESE CONSULATE-GENERAL: A DETERIORATING RELATIONSHIP 1891-1894

Between 1877 and 1895, the Chinese diplomatic service underwent a period of rapid expansion with a consular service following closely in its wake. The opening of Chinese legations in Japan (1877) and the United States (1878) soon led to the establishment of consulates in several ports and cities of these countries in which there were significant numbers of Chinese.[1] Consulates were also opened in Hawaii (1881), Cuba (1879) and Peru (1884) to look after the Chinese residing in those places.[2] Upon its return to China in 1887, the commission of inquiry to Nanyang, led by Wang Yung-ho and Yu-sing, also strongly recommended more consular representation in the region visited by the special commissioners.[3]

It was to the satisfaction of the Chinese Government when reports came in from its overseas representatives that the Chinese emigrant communities were not a lost cause; hence contrary to its earlier apathetic attitude, China created a consular service as a direct response to the overseas Chinese appeals for official protection. This change in imperial policy certainly had its desired results, since Chinese abroad were encouraged to increase their remittances to China, thereby constituting an important source of revenue to the economy of the country. The Chinese Government was soon to discover that emigration was a source of political as well as economic strength. Through the application of diplomacy,

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1 CCWCSL-KH 14/32a-33b; KH 31/22a-23a; KH 63/21a-22a; KH 84/7b-8b; 27a-28b.

2 CCWCSL-KH 21/1a-2a; KH 25/22a-23b; KH 76/12b-13b.

3 CCWCSL-KH 74/22a-27a. Chang Chih-tung, Memorials, chüan 16, pp.2b-6b.

education and the traditional Chinese ideology of ethnocentristic culturalism, extensive efforts were made to kindle patriotism among overseas Chinese towards China and to develop a sense of loyalty to the Chinese emperor. Such a policy was shaped from an official desire throughout the 1880s to regain imperial control over those Chinese residing abroad by strengthening their cultural attachments to China. It has been pointed out that the immediate practical purpose was to meet the military, industrial and diplomatic requirements of the self-strengthening movement.[1] In short, it could be said that by formulating and pursuing a forward consular policy, the Chinese Government sought to extend active protection to the overseas Chinese as well as to foster their goodwill. In the Straits Settlements, Tso Ping-lung's activities, although by no means unique, were certainly evidential of China's forward consular policy. The elevation of the Chinese consulate in Singapore to a consulate-general was also a clear indication of an intensification of this policy.

The first Chinese Consul-General, Huang Tsun-hsien, arrived in Singapore on 31 October 1891, bringing with him a wealth of experience and the ability of an accomplished diplomat and consul. Huang was considered a man of progressive ideas[2] with some advanced political views. It cannot be disputed that his status as a political reformer and literary scholar was considerable. After a classical Chinese education, in 1877 he embarked on a diplomatic career which led him to several countries before his appointment to the Straits.[3] His acute national

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1 Wen Chung-chi, op. cit., p.158; J.L. Rawlinson, op. cit., cf. Chapters III and V.

2 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.115.

3 Cheng Tzu-yü (ed.) 鄭子玉俞(編) Jen-ching-lu ts'ung-k'ao 人境廬叢考 (Collected Studies on Huang Tsun-hsien) (Singapore 1959). Ch'ien E-sun 錢萼孫 'Huang Kung-tu nien-p'u' 黃公度年譜 (Chronological biography of Huang Tsun-hsien) in Huang Tsun-hsien, Jen-ching-lu shih-ts'ao Chien-tzu 人境廬詩草箋注 (Collected poems with Commentaries), Commentaries by Ch'ien E-sun. J. Chey, 'Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese influence on the 1898 Reforms', Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 and 2, 1968-1969, pp.16-24.

consciousness was to some extent the result of having spent many years in foreign countries. Huang firmly believed in the modernization and advancement of China and supported those with similar ideas. In his position as consul-general in the Straits, his actions were marked by an aggressive dynamism; indeed so forceful was he in carrying out a vigorous policy of protection of overseas Chinese that there developed a certain amount of animosity between the consulate-general and the Straits Government. By his widespread activities and by developing his office into the sole avenue for the expression of loyalty from the overseas Chinese, Huang indirectly exerted strong pressure on the Straits authorities to adopt a policy which would be one of more than mere vigilance. To counter his influence, the highly suspicious and anxious British officials took effective steps to initiate a policy of constant interference with his actions.

The Policies of Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng and Huang Tsun-hsien towards the Overseas Chinese

Before his arrival in Singapore, Huang Tsun-hsien served as a counsellor (1890-1891) at the Chinese Legation in London under Minister Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng.[1] He was much influenced by Hsüeh's attitudes and ideas; Hsüeh himself had served under Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang in China. As one of a number of enlightened Chinese officials who continuously pressed for economic reform,[2] Hsüeh advocated official encouragement of emigration as an answer to China's socio-economic problems as well as a source of politico-economic strength. With that concept of emigration in mind, Hsüeh in 1890 recommended to the Chinese Government that more

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1 A.W. Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912) (2 Vols.) (Washington, 1943) pp.350-1. Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng was Chinese Minister to Britain, France, Italy and Belgium from 1890 to 1894.

2 A. Feuerwerker, China's Early Industrialization, Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) pp.32-3; 36.

consulates be opened in Nanyang.[1] In the following year, he noted in his diary that in some large and underpopulated South American countries, particularly Brazil, where there was an acute shortage of labour, active emigration from China would be a positive advantage. He strongly emphasized, however, that the Chinese Government could encourage such emigration only if favourable treaty terms could be obtained to ensure that Chinese emigrants would be entitled to adequate protection and consular representation.[2] On 21 August 1893, Hsüeh was audacious enough to seek imperial sanction for the abrogation of the prohibition on emigration, which had been revoked in practice if not in official policy.[3] He argued that Chinese had been permitted to emigrate for many years and large numbers of those who did had amassed fortunes abroad. Many had contributed generously to numerous funds initiated by the Chinese Government, which had also sold them the much demanded and prestigious titles and honours as a politico-economic venture. In short, the overseas Chinese had been responsive to the Chinese Government's moves to re-establish direct contact with them. What was even more convincing was the fact that in outlook and behaviour, the Chinese abroad had rigidly adhered to the Chinese culture. Despite such tendencies, overseas Chinese were reluctant to return to China openly because of the likelihood of oppression from provincial authorities. For this reason, Hsüeh advocated not only the repeal of the emigration ban but also official protection for returned emigrants.[4] Hsüeh's proposals were part of a wider awareness among Chinese officials of the importance of emigration to

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1 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, pp.51a-b.

2 Ibid., pp.80-1. In his diary, Hsüeh was in fact putting forward the idea of an imperium in imperio among overseas Chinese based on common culture and language.

3 CCWCSL-KH 87/14b-17b. Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Hai-wai wen-pien 海外文編 (Collection of Writings Abroad) chüan 1, pp.5b-8b, 17b-20a. See Appendix VIII.

4 CCWCSL-KH 87/14b-17b; see Appendix 1.

China's national interests.[1] On the subject of the Chinese Government's re-shaping of its policy towards the overseas Chinese, one shrewd British consular official (E.H. Parker) in China remarked in 1888:

> The Chinese Ministers who were originally dragged to Europe by the Peking Legations have now begun to find out, not only their power abroad, but also the latent power possessed by China in having subjects abroad....Instead of treating her emigrant subjects as enemies and supplying grist to the foreign mill, she wishes to gather them into the fold, and make them stones in the foreign querns. By affecting to defend the rights of her subjects in Russia, Japan, Corea and the European colonies, she not only prevents sympathy from growing up in favour of foreign rule, but she gives a new fillip to the 'Chinese idea', strengthens the hands of the reigning dynasty and instils a new feeling of patriotism into the Chinese breast....[2]

While in London Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng was advocating Chinese emigration reforms, Huang Tsun-hsien was sparing little effort to establish his own influence among the Chinese in the Straits. Shortly after he took up his post in Singapore, on 5 November 1891 Huang issued a proclamation which was published in Lat Pau, giving a general coverage of the areas of his responsibility, the purposes of consular representation and the constant awareness of the overseas Chinese of their duties towards China.[3] When Huang declared that he was 'responsible for the protection of all Chinese residents in all the places under the rule of the Governor of Singapore', it was obvious he identified the areas of his consular responsibility with those under the jurisdiction of the Straits Governor; hence this would include not only the Straits Settlements but also the Protected Malay States which were under the British Residential System. Probably Huang's inclusion of the latter stemmed primarily from the vague

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1 See p.189 for the result of this note.

2 Paper on China, 24867, pp.12-13, enclosed in COD Confidential 8 February 1889.

3 Lat Pau, 10 November 1891. Notice of the Consulate-General.

agreements concluded during Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's earlier negotiations with the British Government regarding Chinese consular representation in the British possessions in the East.[1] After eagerly defining the wider geographical limits of his responsibility, Huang went on to praise the overseas Chinese for not having forgotten their homeland, as was shown in the style of their dress; and for the large sums of money they had contributed in previous years for the relief of distress in China. For this reason, officials in China had highly esteemed the overseas Chinese display of loyalty towards China. Another significant point made in the Lat Pau notice was the desire of the Consul-General to be treated by the Chinese in the Straits as a village elder or as the head of their clan or community; thus if they could unite wholeheartedly with him to carry on the good work being done for China, their reputation would also be enhanced.[2] Huang was undoubtedly seeking political leadership as a means of achieving his ends viz. the execution of China's new policy towards its subjects abroad.

After a month in his post, Huang submitted a report regarding the existing situation of the Nanyang Chinese to Minister Hsüeh, requesting him to communicate it to the Governor-Generals of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and of Fukien and Chekiang, and to the Governor of Kwangtung.[3] In the five observations made, Huang re-opened many closed issues, indicating his dissatisfaction with the limitations of the

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1 See Chapter 5.

2 Lat Pau, 10 November 1891.

3 Report by Huang Tsun-hsien to Chinese Minister in London (dated about the end of 1891) enclosed in CO 273/182 Confidential, 22 July 1892. This report, after it was circulated to minor officials, fell into the hands of the British Acting Consul-General (Canton), T. Watters, who in turn confidentially communicated it to the Colonial Secretary, S.S. on 2 July 1892. The Lat Pau, however, on 28 and 29 October published the full text of the report. Ch'en Yü-sung, 'The Creation of the Chinese Consulate in Singapore', Nanyang Miscellany, Vol. 1, No. 6, April 1947, pp.122-3, quoted the report in an abridged form.

consulate-general's powers and its control over the overseas Chinese. He reported:[1] (a) In recent years, there was a proclivity of rich Chinese merchants to use foreign built sailing vessels or steamers for trading under British protection. In reality, however, the vessels remained Chinese property and were therefore subject to Chinese control: when in China, to the jurisdiction of the local provincial officials and when abroad to the control of Chinese consuls. (b) There were endless contentions and enmity between partners and between members of the same families over property and businesses both in China and abroad. Family fortunes were dissipated in ruinous litigation and often these law-suits lasted many years. Claims to property were often difficult to verify because of the distances involved and because there were no reliable account books, witnesses or evidence. (c) The absence of an extradition treaty between China and Great Britain had enabled absconding criminals to escape justice. After they had fled abroad, fugitives involved in swindling, plundering, robbery, murder and embezzlement were difficult to capture; even when such a criminal had been discovered, a prosecution would fail for lack of evidence. (d) Innumerable Chinese had been kidnapped in the past but the British, who had strict laws against slavery, made it a point to send those kidnapped back to China as soon as they were discovered. Unfortunately, because of a lack of official liaison between China and the foreign countries, there were no means of capturing the kidnappers. (e) Many returned emigrants who had amassed some wealth abroad were frequently subjected to blackmail by their neighbours and relatives. If such tactics were unsuccessful, false charges were brought against the returned emigrants for various heinous crimes. The local authorities, however well-intentioned, had no access to information from abroad, and often found difficulty in vindicating the innocent and

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1 Summary made from Huang Tsun-hsien's Report enclosed in CO 273/182 Confidential, 22 July 1892.

punishing the guilty. In conclusion, Huang proposed that in future the high authorities of the southern provinces should communicate with him through Minister Hsüeh on important matters concerning overseas Chinese; and in matters of lesser significance, he could correspond directly with the local minor officials involved. Huang's ultimate aim, which had the full support of Hsüeh, was to bind closer relations between the Chinese officials and the Chinese abroad. In this way, they could guard each other's interests.[1]

When the British Acting Consul-General in Canton (T. Watters) confidentially communicated Huang's report to the Straits Government,[2] he took the opportunity to warn the colonial authorities that the Chinese Consul-General's opinions reflected those of the Chinese Minister in London. Watters claimed that Hsüeh was known to hold strong anti-foreign views and was opposed to the Chinese Government's yielding to the demands of foreign powers even if these demands were based on treaty stipulations. Hsüeh apparently believed that the Chinese Government should be supreme within its own boundaries and should exercise authority over all Chinese wherever they were living. This attitude, it was reported, had been held in official circles since 1884 and Watters suspected that it enjoyed supreme sanction. The Acting Protector of Chinese (G.C. Wray) agreed with Watters that it was noteworthy that the Report was silent about the existence in the Colony of the Chinese Protectorate and the other government institutions for the protection of Chinese.[3] The Straits authorities decided not to take any action against Huang for the moment because he had as yet done nothing. Governor Smith, however, expressed the fear that trouble

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1 Report by Huang Tsun-hsien enclosed in CO 273/182 Confidential, ibid.

2 British Acting Consul-General (Canton) to Colonial Secretary S.S. Confidential, 2 July 1892, enclosed in CO 273/182 Confidential, ibid.

3 Minute by Acting Protector of Chinese (G.C. Wray), 18 July 1892, enclosed in CO 273/182, Confidential, ibid.

might arise in the near future if the Chinese Consul-General interfered with the Colony's Chinese-owned shipping (i.e. when those vessels were in Chinese ports); or with the property and families in China of those Chinese who were residing in the Straits.[1] In Smith's opinion, the Chinese in the Colony did not look favourably upon Huang's over-zealous efforts.

Of the five points Huang had mentioned in his report, the first and the last, which referred to the control and protection of Chinese, were the most important. The other points merely called for closer co-operation between the British officials and the Chinese Consul-General; and between the Consulate-General and the Chinese provincial authorities. In the first point of his report, Huang deliberately re-opened the issue of registration of Chinese vessels. He wanted to regain control over Chinese-owned shipping but nothing positive resulted from his suggestion. This, however, was not the end of the matter. On 11 August 1894 the British Consul at Canton (B. Brenan) sent to the Straits authorities a precis of another report from Huang to Minister Hsüeh.[2] From their intelligence sources, the British had acquired this interesting document written by the two 'businesslike' Chinese officials.[3] In this correspondence, Huang reported that he felt that the existing arrangement for the registration of Chinese-owned shipping was detrimental to China's prestige,[4] but there seemed no other solution to this basically local problem. If Hsüeh could not obtain better terms from the British Government, Huang advised that the question be dropped for there would be no great financial loss, since the fees collected from the ship-owners were

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1 CO 273/182 Confidential, 22 July 1892, Smith to S. of S.

2 British Consul (Canton) to Colonial Secretary S.S., 11 July 1894, enclosed in CO 273/197 Confidential, 4 August 1894.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/200 F.O. 16 August 1894.

4 Ordinance V of 1883. See Chapter 5. Vessels owned by Chinese nationals could not fly the Chinese flag.

rather small. Huang's preoccupation with financial considerations suggests that the professed sincerity of his policy towards the overseas Chinese is open to considerable doubt. The Chinese Minister's view was that the British officials' continuous reference to International Law during the earlier shipping dispute[1] was merely an excuse to 'cut down the jurisdiction of the Chinese officials'. His contention was that the British would not have maintained a Registrar of Shipping in Shanghai if they were so preoccupied with International Law because it was an internationally accepted practice that Shipping Registrars should always reside within the territorial limits of their own countries. In other words, he regarded British policy as perfidious.[2] Soon after he was informed of this Chinese document, Governor Mitchell made it clear to the British Minister in Peking that Hsüeh's desire to call for further inquiries into the shipping issue would meet strong objections from the Straits Government.[3]

The Colonial Office was quick to downgrade the importance of the 1894 correspondence between Huang and Hsüeh because it realized the complete mistrust the Straits authorities had for the Chinese Consul-General; hence any reaction from London would only create more tension in the Straits Government. Another reason for London's equanimity was that since the correspondence had been exchanged between two Chinese officials and was obviously not intended for British perusal, it was felt it would be improper to initiate action.[4] The document, however, gave the British some idea of Chinese opinion on the subject, although the Colonial Office was prepared to respond only if the views contained in the report were to become official policy.

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1 See Chapter 3,pp.146-7.

2 Precis of a Report from Huang Tsun-hsien to Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng enclosed in CO 273/197 Confidential, 4 August 1894, op. cit.

3 CO 273/197 Confidential, 4 August 1894, Mitchell to S. of S. (Ripon).

4 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/200 F.O., 16 August 1894.

As has been indicated, Huang's last point in his 1891 report to Hsüeh, referring to the need to protect returned emigrants in China, indubitably reflected Hsüeh's own ideas. Huang Tsun-hsien's role in Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's memorial, which was submitted to the Throne in August 1893 and resulted in the abrogation of the Chinese Government's prohibition on emigration a month later, can be seen in the following paragraph:

> The only successful remedy for these abuses (by the Chinese towards the returned emigrants in China), the consul-general says, is to issue proclamations throughout the length and breadth of the land announcing that new regulations will shortly be drawn up...[Huang] begs that the Tsungli-Yamen be instructed to devise some efficient means of protection for this class of people, that it be publicly announced that the old law has been changed so that an end may be made to exactions by officials and others, and that every consul be authorized to issue a pass to all such returning emigrants...[1]

After the Tsungli-Yamen had agreed to the above proposals, extensive publicity was given in China to the final revocation of the emigration ban and instructions were issued to Chinese diplomats and consuls abroad to provide passports for returning Chinese emigrants.[2] It will be shown that the question of passports issued by the Consulate-General in the Colony was later to prove extremely irritating to the Straits Government and led to a serious deterioration in relations between the Colonial authorities and the Chinese Consul-General.

Huang Tsun-hsien's Drive for Influence and Power

When Huang Tsun-hsien arrived in the Straits Settlements, the Celestial Reasoning Association, which had been founded

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1 Straits Budget, 6 February 1894. CCWCSL-KH 87/14b-17b. Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Collected Writings from Abroad, ch. 1, pp.17b-20a. See Appendix VIII.

2 Straits Budget, 6 February 1894. CCWCSL-KH 87/21b-22a. THHL-KH, Vol. III, pp.3243-4.

by Tso Ping-lung for the intellectual development and advancement of the Straits Chinese community, had become defunct after a few years of vigorous existence.[1] Since Huang did not speak English, no attempt was made to revive the Association. He did, however, reinvigorate the Hui Hsien She and in January 1892, renamed it the To-nan Society (T'u Nan She). An accomplished scholar with progressive ideas, Huang introduced a new spirit into the society by organizing literary contests for a more immediate and practical purpose. The award for the first prize was doubled, and helped to stimulate an increase in the popularity of literary pursuits.[2] The topics suggested by Huang for the essay competitions often touched on local and overseas Chinese affairs as well as China's foreign and domestic policies. Some examples were: 'Discuss how the British Government should protect Chinese interests in settling the Siamese question';[3] 'The need to establish Chinese chambers of commerce among overseas Chinese';[4] 'Explain why European governments ban prostitution and gambling in their own countries but not in their colonies';[5] and 'The necessity of providing naval protection to the overseas Chinese in Siam'.[6] On 7 May 1894, the candidates were requested to comment on the implementation of the Consul-General's proposals to reduce prostitution and immorality among the overseas Chinese women.[7] Huang not only displayed interest in promoting the exchange of progressive ideas and in cultivating a more intense interest in China's welfare; he also gave considerable

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1 Lat Pau, 1 January 1892. Some wealthy individuals frequently donated money to increase the prizes awarded by Huang.

2 Lat Pau, 10 and 21 November 1892.

3 Sing Po, 12 March 1894.

4 Lat Pau, 19 January 1892.

5 Sing Po, 23 October 1893.

6 Lat Pau, 13 July 1893.

7 Ibid., 7 May 1894.

attention to the problem of prostitution. As was previously pointed out, the sex-ratio imbalance was the primary cause of this widespread social evil among the Chinese in the Straits. To improve the moral standard of the Chinese women, Huang decided to reward those who displayed exemplary conduct. A notice in Lat Pau on 11 August 1894 announced that the Consul-General would, on the recommendation of the respectable local Chinese, seek special awards and honours from the Chinese Government for those Chinese or non-Chinese women in the Colony who had remained faithful after their husbands had died.[1] The idea behind such a move was seemingly part of a wider policy to motivate overseas Chinese towards the acceptance of China's traditional moralistic socio-cultural mores and showed Huang's attitude to be that of a local provincial official in China.[2]

Huang also strove for influence in other fields. It was his suggestions which led to an unsuccessful attempt in 1896 by leaders of all the dialect groups in Singapore to form a Chinese chamber of commerce.[3] The failure to arouse adequate response could be attributed to the prevailing sectional differences among the Chinese merchants and traders.[4] It was not until a decade later that the Chinese involved in commerce shelved their differences and successfully established the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Singapore.[5] Throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century, Lat Pau's editorials constantly pressed for popular and modern Chinese education;[6] the emancipation of Chinese women;[7] and

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1 Ibid., 11 August 1894.

2 The problem of prostitution was one important reason for Huang's involvement with the work of the Po Leung Kuk, CO 273/198 No. 324, 8 October 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

3 Lat Pau, 3 February 1896.

4 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.387.

5 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.79.

6 Lat Pau, 29 February and 8 March 1892; 25 and 28 November 1895; 6 July 1896.

7 Ibid., 10 May 1893; 23 November 1895.

the development of commerce and industry in China by the Chinese Government.[1] Most of these editorials were probably written under the direct or indirect influence of Huang Tsun-hsien, and it was also apparent that China-orientated reformist ideas in the Colony were beginning to take shape under his guidance.

Nor did Huang overlook charity work. The Thong-chai Hospital (同濟醫院 T'ung-chi) which had been established in 1867 was faced with numerous financial difficulties and the Lat Pau, together with the Sing Po in later years, frequently campaigned for public donations.[2] In 1892, Huang set an essay topic on an appeal for subscriptions towards the cost of a new Thong-chai Hospital which was opened in the following year.[3] It is interesting to note that between 1893 and 1905, the hospital managed to buy fifteen pieces of land, a record unbroken by subsequent efforts.[4] The publicity given by Huang was obviously effective and so grateful was the hospital's board of management that he was invited to open the new premises. Although the hospital was primarily a Cantonese concern, it was built for the benefit of all Chinese dialect-groups in the Colony.[5] In his other activities, Huang helped to demonstrate the loyalty of the overseas Chinese towards China; for example, on 2 March 1892, Huang and several local Chinese leaders sent a joint cable to Li Hung-chang on his birthday expressing their gratitude for the visit in 1890 of a Chinese naval squadron to the Straits.[6]

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1 Ibid., 27 February 1892; 16 January and 25 November 1893; 28 December 1895; 24 and 28 March 1896; 6 August 1897.

2 Sing Po, 18 September 1891; Lat Pau, 19 September and 29 December 1891.

3 S.F.P., 25 April 1893.

4 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.117.

5 S.F.P., 25 April 1893.

6 Lat Pau, 21 March 1892.

One of Huang Tsun-hsien's most significant achievements as Consul-General was his successful attempt to establish the Straits Settlements, particularly Singapore, as the centre of the Chinese Government's extensive network of financial operations in Nanyang. This success, however, antagonized the Straits Government which suspected that Huang did not restrict himself to clearly consular duties but seemed to 'regard himself rather as a territorial official in communication with the viceroys (Governors-General) of Kwangtung and Fukien provinces'. Furthermore, his primary business appeared to be that of a Chinese Government agent for the collection of subscriptions from all strata of the Chinese society for various charitable purposes in China.[1] Between 1891 and 1894, the Chinese Government spared no effort in appealing for contributions from abroad for the relief of natural calamities in China; and in his drive to raise money for these causes Huang left no stone unturned throughout Southeast Asia wherever Chinese communities were located. Funds were launched for Shantung in early 1892[2] and 1894,[3] and towards the end of 1892 and in the first half of 1893 there were appeals for Chihli,[4] Chekiang and Kiangsu.[5] It was not unusual for some of these appeals to be maintained over a number of years,[6] and contacts established by Huang's predecessor were extensively utilized. Chinese merchants acted as collecting agents in the Colony and the Malay States and also exploited their business connections elsewhere in

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1 CO 273/189 No. 302, 15 September 1893, Maxwell to S. of S. (Ripon).

2 Lat Pau, 4 February, 19 May and 2 June 1892.

3 Ibid., 9 January 1894.

4 Ibid., 17 November and 13 December 1892; 13 March 1893.

5 Ibid., 12 May 1893.

6 To co-ordinate the collection of funds for Shantung, an office was opened in Singapore in February 1892 by some Chinese merchants acting under direct instructions from the Chinese Government. Lat Pau, 4 February 1892.

the region, especially the Netherlands East Indies, for the purpose of extending the Chinese Government's financial network.[1] Besides appointing local merchants as collection agents, Chinese provincial authorities also frequently sent their own officials to Nanyang to collect subscriptions, and assistance was readily provided by the consulate-general.[2]

To increase the monetary contributions, titles and honours were sold on a large scale, with prices frequently fluctuating. The Chien-sheng which sold for $38 was clearly intended for men of average means, but the honorary ranks of an assistant departmental magistrate, Chou-t'ung (州同) at $100 and of a first class sub-prefect, T'ung-chih (同知) at $690 could easily be obtained by wealthy merchants.[3] Even higher ranks were sold or awarded to those who had contributed without outstanding generosity.[4] Between 1891 and 1894, there were so many who bought the titles and ranks that both the Lat Pau and the Sing Po made a point of publishing, on the average of once a month, the names of the purchasers and the awards they had been given. Since the fund-raising appeals were launched at different times and by different Chinese provincial officials, many of their collection agents failed to release lists of names of the purchasers to the Chinese press; undoubtedly there was some element of corruption entailed in such financial ventures.[5] Corruption, however, was not all that was involved. In 1896 the Assistant Protector of Chinese (G.T. Hare) reported that

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1 Ibid., 2 June 1892; 13 March 1893.

2 Ibid., 5 August and 10 November 1893; 9 January 1894; 6 February 1895.

3 Lat Pau, 7 March 1894.

4 Wen Chung-chi, op. cit., p.196.

5 Lat Pau, 9 January 1895. An article was published describing the honesty of an official named Hsieh Pin-men (謝賓門) who regularly gave the names of purchasers to the press for publication. The obvious intention was to draw attention to those officials who had failed to do likewise.

Huang went as far as to grant, on his own authority, official credentials to collect money to the various Chinese officials who came to the Straits to exploit the Chinese.[1] Officers of the Protectorate were fully aware that the Consulate-General and its collection agents had exercised undue pressure to procure subscriptions. As Administrator Maxwell reported:

> A Chinese who is in business in this Colony is naturally concerned for the safety of his friends and relations in China who may be subject to annoyance on the part of the officials if he does not submit to be 'squeezed'. Rather than risk this he pays. It is said that the most extravagant notions are entertained in China as to the wealth of the Chinese who are settled in the Eastern Archipelago and the Colony is seldom free from the pressure of Chinese officials of some sort deputed by governors of provinces, where famine or inundation can be alleged as a reason to collect subscriptions and raise money by the sale of titles and official rank....Since the present Consul-General [Huang] has been in Singapore, this exaction of subscriptions has been practised more industriously than at any previous period.[2]

It would be difficult to determine the extent of pressure applied but there was never any question that it had been used for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions. Such procedures, apart from the one used by Chinese officials, were possible because of the politico-economic situation within the Chinese society's structure of control, that is, between the employer and employee and between creditor and debtor.[3] It could be taken for granted that the employer and the creditor were not infrequently the wealthy and the influential who coveted the titles and honours. Not surprisingly, they could pressure those under obligation to them to contribute money; in this way, they furthered their own ends.

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1 Report by G.T. Hare, 30 September 1896 enclosed in CO 273/218 No. 464, 6 October 1896.

2 CO 273/189 No. 302, op. cit.

3 See Chapter 1.

By focusing on the fund-raising drive of 1893 for the relief of natural disasters in Shansi, it is possible to examine in some detail Huang Tsun-hsien's extraordinary personal triumph. On 30 June 1893, Lat Pau reported that the Governor-General of Chihli, Li Hung-chang, had instructed Huang to launch an appeal for relief contributions to Shansi from the Chinese in Nanyang. Voluntary donations in any amount and in any form were welcomed but there would be no sale of titles and honours. Those who contributed over a thousand taels, however, were entitled to seek approval from the Chinese Government for the erection of commemorative testimonials in their own villages in China. Huang suggested that the Cantonese and the Hokkien dialect-groupings, after they had made handsome contributions, might desire to apply for plaques bearing imperial inscriptions to decorate their respective temples, the Yuat Hai Miow (粤海廟 Yueh-hai miao) and the Thien Hok Keng (天福宮 T'ien-fu kung); similar plaques could also be sought for the Tung-chai Hospital in Singapore and the P'ing-chang hui-kuan (平章会館) in Penang.[1] The sale of titles and ranks was later permitted by the Chinese Government because Li Hung-chang felt it was necessary to induce further subscriptions.[2] Huang's success in his intensive drive to achieve maximum results could be attributed to a systematically organized campaign in which willing co-operation was provided by the Nanyang Chinese merchants.[3] The extensive knowledge of the archipelago possessed by the Chinese Vice-Consul in Penang also contributed materially to Huang's achievement.[4]

The returns of Huang's drive were quite beyond expectations, especially as the campaign was conducted in a

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1 Lat Pau, 30 June 1893.

2 Ibid., 21 July 1893.

3 Ibid., 9 November 1893. Subscription books were distributed by the Consul-General to those merchants who acted as collection agents.

4 CO 273/189 No. 302, op. cit.

comparatively short time. From every part of Nanyang, money poured in to the Consulate-General in Singapore. A careful perusal of the Lat Pau for the year 1893 reveals that nearly every Chinese community of significance contributed and these included the whole of the Malay Peninsula, the Bangka-Billiton islands, Bali, Ampenan, Rhio islands, almost all the well-known trading ports and towns of the Netherlands East Indies, Celebes, Siam, French Indo-China, Sarawak and the Philippines.[1] The Straits Governor estimated the total sum at more than $100,000, which was collected within a few months and at a time when there was supposedly a trade recession in the region.[2] Of the places in which Chinese communities responded to Huang's appeal, the support given by the Chinese in Siam deserves special mention. In 1893, tension arose between Siam and France because of border disputes, and the French sent armed vessels up the Menam River to blockade Bangkok. Trade was affected and rather than add to the strain on the Chinese merchants there, Huang did not issue subscription books to them. In July and August 1893, however, the Chinese in Siam delegated representatives to meet Huang in Singapore to discuss whether a Chinese naval squadron could be despatched to Bangkok to protect the overseas Chinese should the anticipated war break out between France and Siam.[3] When assured by the Consul-General that their petition had been relayed to the Chinese Government, the Chinese in Bangkok contributed a sum of more than $10,000 towards the Shansi relief funds as an expression of their gratitude.[4] The dispute, however, ended in October 1893 when the Siamese agreed to accept the Franch terms. This event indicated that, as Huang had desired, the Consulate-

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1 Lat Pau, June-October 1893; CO 273/189 No. 302, op. cit.

2 CO 273/189 No. 302, op. cit.

3 Lat Pau, 26, 27 and 28 July; 9 November 1893.

4 Ibid., 9 November 1893.

General in the Straits was becoming an important link between the Nanyang Chinese and the Chinese Government.

The apparent ease with which Huang secured the loyalty and financial support of the overseas Chinese towards China led G.T. Hare to report in his memorandum to the Governor in 1896:

> It is not unknown to you that the general tendency of Chinese official policy in the Malay archipelago is to keep alive in the minds of all Chinese living here (whether they are British subjects by birth or aliens) a belief that they live under the fostering care of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China.
>
> However incredible this may appear to the authorities in the West, the fact is none the less real...[of] the growth of a sentimental imperium in imperio amongst the Chinese settled here....
>
> No little wealth has been acquired here by the Chinese traders of all classes during this long period (the past five decades) and the greater part of this has been sunk in the Colony or in the Native States. Year after year the number of China-born Chinese who come to remain permanently here increases. Some of them are naturalized, nearly all their children are born here, even Chinese from other places who have no ties in China, come, (when they have made a competency in the Dutch or French Colonies) to reside here because they can enjoy here privileges and rights that are not allowed to the Chinese in other foreign colonies.
>
> In short the China-born Chinese settled here are increasing in number, wealth, influence and weight. The Chinese Government is well acquainted with this fact, and has been for some years doing its best to detach the Chinese British-born subjects as well as Chinese aliens settled here, as much as possible from the influence of the English Government. This policy was inaugurated by the last Consul-General, Huang Tsun-hsien, under direct orders from the Chinese Government....[1]

This document showed how seriously the Chinese Protectorate regarded Huang's widespread influence, which prevailed not only in the Straits Settlements and the Malay States but also in other parts of the Nanyang.

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1 Memorandum by G.T. Hare, op. cit.

Not all of Huang's activities were directed towards cultivating the loyalty of the Chinese to the Emperor or towards promoting their financial support for China. There was one field of productive co-operation, even if it was only temporary, between the Consul-General and the Straits authorities. Joint efforts were made to curb opium-smuggling in 1893 at the direct request of the Chinese Maritime Customs, which had for some time been concerned with the increase of that kind of smuggling along the Chinese coast. In 1886 China and Britain reached an agreement to check opium-smuggling by means of initiating a very stringent system of control of the opium traffic in and out of Hong Kong.[1] One unexpected result of the introduction of a control system was the encouragement of illegal opium traffic borne by junks from the Straits to Hainan island and the coastal areas of Southern China. It was reported in 1891 that junk-borne opium from Singapore alone to the non-treaty ports in Hainan amounted to 1,000 to 1,200 chests annually.[2] By sailing into non-treaty ports, the junks could avoid payment of duties to the foreign-controlled Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs in the Hainan treaty port of Kiangchow. In fact the Chinese authorities in Hainan were promoting opium-smuggling so that they could obtain the money, levied on the junks by the Maritime Customs, which would otherwise have gone to Peking.[3] In a further attempt to check the illicit traffic in opium from the Straits to Hainan and Southern China, in 1888 the Chinese and British Governments agreed upon a rigorous procedure. According to this agreement, after the Straits authorities had informed the Chinese Consul of the quantities of opium being shipped by the junks to China, the Consul would telegraph to the Commissioner of Customs at a district port the names of the junks, their destinations, and the

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1 S.F. Wright, Hart and the Chinese Customs (Belfast, 1950) pp.586-7. H.B. Morse, op. cit., Vol. II, pp.384-5.

2 S.F.P., 21 July 1891.

3 Ibid.

amount of opium carried. With this information, customs vessels could report all junks sighted off Hainan. The Chinese Government's objective was the collection of tariff duty on the junk-borne opium trade. In a letter to Governor Smith in February 1892, however, the Inspector-General of Customs in China (Sir Robert Hart) complained that the objective of the 1888 agreement had not been accomplished because not more than a third of the junks reported their arrival in Chinese ports while the other two-thirds had completely escaped tax on their cargoes.[1] Some modification was therefore deemed necessary, especially as duty-paying traders were clamouring about their sustained losses and the harm done by the smugglers to the legitimate trade of the Treaty ports as well as to the districts they supplied. The figures on page 201 supplied by Hart showed the extent to which the junk-borne opium from Singapore had escaped taxation in China and driven duty-paid opium out of certain markets.

Hart made it clear that the Chinese authorities had no intention of prohibiting the junk trade to and from Singapore, but to safeguard the mutual interests of China and Britain consideration would have to be given to all the measures affecting the opium trade. Between 1888 and 1891, the shipment of over 4,000 chests of opium by junks from Singapore had cost China at least 450,000 taels (U.S. $675,000). On 3 April 1893, Hart again wrote to the Straits authorities on the immediate need for an effective method of curbing smuggling.[2] So concerned was Hart that he despatched his private secretary (Mr Ludlow) to the Straits with a list of proposals.

Realizing that an opportunity had arisen to check smuggling in the Colony as well as the peripheral areas, the Straits Governor held lengthy discussions with Huang, Ludlow

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1 Sir Robert Hart to Governor Smith, 20 February 1892 enclosed in CO 273/188 No. 181, 10 June 1893.

2 Sir Robert Hart to Governor Smith, 3 April 1893, enclosed in CO 273/188 No. 181, ibid.

Year	No. of Chests of Opium which Paid Duty at the Custom Houses				Singapore Junk-borne Opium	Increase
	Kiangchow	Pakhoi	Total	Decrease		
1888	1106	1100	2206	-	600	-
1889	811	1001	1812	394	831	231
1890	535	985	1520	292	1038	207
1891	419	912	1331	189	1603	565
			Total Decrease	875	Total Increase	1003

(Kiangchow and Pakhoi were places mainly affected by the Singapore junk trade).[1]

1 Table supplied by Sir Robert Hart to Governor Smith, 20 February 1892, enclosed in CO 273/188 No. 181, ibid. These figures showed that the junk-borne opium had increased in volume annually from 600 chests in 1888 to 1,603 chests in 1891, while the duty-paying opium at the Chinese Customs at Kiangchow and Pakhoi had decreased from 2,206 chests in 1888 to 1,331 chests in 1891 - 'the decrease on one side being evidently made up for by increase on the other'.

and officers of the Chinese Protectorate. A tentative list of revised regulations was drafted, based on Hart's proposals, and sent to the Colonial Office for approval.[1] Apart from feeling that it was the duty of the Colonial Administration to assist the Chinese Government to prevent smuggling to Chinese ports from a British colony, Governor Smith also thought that it was clearly in the interests of the Straits Government to stop smugglers from making the Straits the base of their operations. Chinese smugglers were widely considered to be among the most dangerous criminals in the region; if they were not engaged in their recognized trade, they would be involved in piracy or other crimes likely to result in plunder. The Straits Government's policy was therefore to give maximum co-operation to any neighbouring country which was attempting to suppress smuggling. In Smith's opinion, the immediate effect of the new regulations[2] could be that no opium would be shipped by junks from Singapore to the ports of Hainan and Southern China because the traders who purchased the opium in the Colony to send it to those Chinese ports were not agents of recognized firms in China, hence they would be unwilling to enter into the requisite bonds. The purchase of opium was in fact a speculative venture in which several partners participated. If the junks successfully eluded the Chinese customs, the profits were enormous and the opium would then reach Hong Kong and come under the control of highly organized smuggling rings. The island of Hong Kong, as a base for the smuggling of opium into mainland China by Chinese traders, had been a constant source of concern to the Chinese authorities.

Smith's decision to adopt revised regulations for the opium trade was to some extent influenced by the belief that considerable quantities of opium which Hart said should be properly entered at Chinese ports really went to the

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1 CO 273/188 No. 181, 10 June 1893, Smith to S. of S.

2 See Appendix IV.

neighbouring Dutch ports and was smuggled back to the Straits in the form of prepared opium (or chandhu) which could be easily concealed. The Governor reasoned that if this had not been the case, it would be extremely difficult to account for the huge quantities of illicit chandhu which were seized in the Colony.[1]

The Secretary of State, Lord Ripon, readily approved Smith's revised rules as a measure which could materially reduce opium smuggling to the Straits from nearby islands.[2] Having received many previous reminders from the Foreign Office on the need to maintain friendly relations with China, the Colonial Office felt inclined to approve any measures which would assist the Chinese Government; furthermore, as a matter of self-interest, one result of the revised rules would be a long-desired increase in trade between Hong Kong and China.[3]

When he assisted Smith with the revised scheme to cope with smuggling, Huang developed a potential field of co-operation with the British. The results, however, were most disappointing to the Straits authorities. It will be shown later that soon after the introduction of the revised arrangement, Huang was charged by the Colonial Administration with collusion with opium importers for the purposes of defrauding Colonial Revenue as well as the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs.

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1 It is probable, as an example, that after a permit was issued in the Straits to ship opium to Hainan, the junk, instead of sailing to its approved destination, would land the drug in one of the innumerable islands of the Archipelago where it was prepared and smuggled back to the Straits in small and easily managed native sailing boats.

2 COD 27 July 1893.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/188 No. 181, op. cit. By co-operating with the Chinese Government, the Colonial Office hoped that the Chinese would permit more trade into China from Hong Kong.

Wider Chinese Consular Representation: The British Dilemma

During the negotiations of 1891 in London with the Chinese Minister, the British Government reluctantly agreed to allow the Chinese Government more consulates within the British Empire on condition that the British reserved the right to refuse the posting of Chinese consuls to certain areas.[1] The Consul-General in Singapore was given the prerogative of nominating consular officers for other parts of the Straits Settlements and this arrangement was accepted by Governor Smith.[2] Even before the departure of the first Consul in Singapore, there was a move in Penang in 1891, led by a group of Penang-born Chinese who had achieved a measure of popular support, for a petition to be sent to the Consulate. The petition appealed to the Tsungli-Yamen to appoint a vice-consul in Penang,[3] and was promptly accepted by the Chinese Government. In 1892 an official application was made to the British Government, nominating a well-known Chinese millionaire in the Straits Settlements, Chang Chen-hsün (張振勳 Thio Tiaw Siat) for the position.[4] The Chinese Government could not have agreed to a more suitable appointee. There is reason to believe that this appointment was a calculated step in the Chinese Government's forward consular policy, because the colonial governments of the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies had categorically forbidden the establishment of Chinese consulates in their territories. An affluent Hakka merchant with businesses both in the Straits and the Netherlands East Indies, Chang possessed an extensive knowledge of the whole Malay Archipelago and exercised considerable influence over the Nanyang Chinese.

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1 See Chapter 5.

2 Hsüeh to F.O., 11 December 1890, enclosed in COD No. 2, 2 January 1891; CO 273/172 No. 42, op. cit.

3 Lat Pau, 14 December 1891.

4 COD No. 309, 21 October 1892; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.387, describes Chang Chen-hsün as a Penang and Deli millionaire.

The Administrator Maxwell went as far as to claim that Chang had business connections 'all over the East' and had resided for a long time in Java.[1] The best account of Chang's commercial ties was given by the Straits Budget in February 1895:

> In 1859 he traded in Batavia, and was also contractor to the Dutch army and navy there. In 1876, he went to Penang, and was a merchant there, and also contractor to the Dutch army and navy at Acheen, and farmer of the opium and spirit farms and the pawnbroker's farm there. In 1877, Mr Chang's business had extended to half of the Northern portion of the island of Sumatra, farming the principal Government farms, such as opium, spirit and pawnbrokers at Edi, Tanrian, Deli and Bangkalis, and in 1893, the farms at Rhio and Indragirir. In 1886, Mr Chang obtained the Penang pawnbrokers' farm, and in 1889 the Penang opium and spirits farm, and the Singapore opium and spirit farms, Mr Chang having large interests up to the present day. Mr Chang also owns a place called Karatan, near Batavia,...inhabited by about seven or eight thousand [people]. The place is chiefly planted with paddy, and fish is also amongst the products. Mr Chang also farms from a Dutch Limited Company the districts called Tjebaroesa, Tjelengsa, Klapa, Moengal, Kongbong, and Boyong. The area... inhabited by over 100,000 [people]....In 1879, Mr Chang owned the Steamer Rajah Kongsi Acheen....In 1893 Mr Chang started a steamship company at Penang called the Hong Hock Kiok Ltd., Coy. [sic] and at present this company has nine steamers running to Perak, Tongkah, Klang, Asabtan, and Deli. Mr Chang [also] has a large business at Penang....[2]

To show that he enjoyed the complete confidence of the Chinese Government, Chang was reportedly offered, by Li Hung-chang himself, the post of manager of the Chin Siong Kuk (中商局 Chung Shang Chü, China Trading Company), considered to be the largest Chinese trading concern in China. Chang, however, declined the offer.[3] His appointment as vice-consul provided

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1 CO 273/189 No. 302, 15 September 1893, Maxwell to S. of S.

2 Straits Budget, 19 February 1895.

3 CO 273/189 No. 302, 15 September 1893, Maxwell to S. of S.; Straits Budget, 19 February 1895. The article here referred to the Chung Shang Chü as China Merchant Steam Navigation Company.

the Chinese Government with the opportunity of establishing a direct, even if unofficial tie with the Chinese residing in the Netherlands East Indies; hence an official agreement with the Netherlands Government to open a consulate in its Eastern possessions appeared unnecessary. Huang's success in gaining the financial support of the Nanyang Chinese demonstrated that the Chinese Government had partly realized its objectives. In February 1893, the Straits Government formally recognized Chang Chen-hsün as vice-consul of Penang.[1]

The Chinese Government's elevation of its consulate in the Straits to the status of a consulate-general was motivated by the desire to extend its protection to a greater number of overseas Chinese residing over a wider area. Consuls would be posted to Penang and Malacca, and the authorities were particularly interested in the Protected Malay States where Capitans China could be appointed and given the status of consular agents in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan.[2] The desire to extend its protection of its subjects was not the only factor involved in the Chinese Government's policy on consular representation; considerations of material gain and imperial prestige were certainly not overlooked. It is very doubtful whether the appointment of leading local Chinese as consular agents, as suggested by Admiral Ting Ju-ch'ang upon his return to China after visiting the Straits in 1890,[3] could provide protection to overseas Chinese on a similar level as that achieved by the Consulate in Singapore. The semi-literate or illiterate local Chinese leaders (otherwise known as Capitans China) were unlikely to obtain legal redress for the Chinese coolies' grievances because, being themselves employers of immigrant labourers, they would be working against their own interests.

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1 G.D. No. 29, 3 February 1893, Smith to S. of S.

2 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, pp.60b-61a. As pointed out earlier, the bulk of Chinese coolie-immigrants were in the Malay States.

3 Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, Diary, pp.51a-b.

Chinese policy was also influenced by the desire to increase the subscriptions of the overseas Chinese to the various relief funds. It has been demonstrated that the collection of subscriptions was the most important of the consulate's activities, and through the sale of official titles and ranks, the Chinese Government had succeeded in binding the overseas Chinese to China. Without the co-operation of the local leaders, the consul's work would not have been as successful,[1] and it could be said that such leaders actually helped the Chinese Government to extend its influence. The Chinese Government estimated that the appointment of Capitans China would not incur extra expenditure and their influence could also be better utilized. The mere fact that the Government was prepared to accept those leaders, who were also heads of secret societies, as consular agents amply showed that the Chinese authorities were willing to ignore the societies' anti-Manchu ideology which, under a colonial government, had almost disappeared. Those leaders, for example Capitan Chang Keng Kui, head of the powerful Hai San Society in Larut, who had attained the highest positions in the Chinese society, were keen to acquire any form of respectable responsibility with its concomitant social status. There was no better method of achieving this than to associate themselves with the Chinese Government, and they regarded the arrangement initiated by the Imperial Government as mutually beneficial.

In June 1893, the Chinese Legation in London officially asked the British Government whether Chinese Agents not bearing the title of vice-consul could be appointed in the Protected Malay States and whether a vice-consul could be posted to Selangor.[2] Through the nomination of Capitans China as Chinese Agents, the Chinese Government hoped to

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1 Two noted Capitans China who helped to raise funds for China included Yap Chih Ying of Kuala Lumpur and Chang Keng Kui. Lat Pau, 23 May 1888, 12 August 1889.

2 COD No. 162, 8 July 1893 with an enclosure from F.O., 30 June 1893. Also CO 273/192 F.O., 30 June 1893.

consolidate its influence in the Malay states but by mid-1893, the Straits Government was considerably irritated by the activities of the consul-general, and Maxwell strongly objected to the Chinese Government's request, stressing that the British residents in Perak and Selangor were adamantly opposed to the appointment of Chinese Agents whatever their titles might be. It seemed to the British that the Chinese officials did not understand the real duties of consular officers and despite the large numbers of Chinese residing in the Straits Settlements, it was 'almost an unknown thing to receive from the Consulate-General any communication respecting any of them'. The Administrator also claimed that the Consul-General not only misunderstood his functions but did not confine himself to purely consular duties, as was clearly shown by his preoccupation with the collection of subscriptions from overseas Chinese.[1] From Perak, the British Resident advised that Chinese Agents were not at all desirable since their duties were rather vague.[2] The Resident in Selangor concurred with this judgement, adding that the Chinese residing there already had their own headmen and an officially recognized Capitan China. The Sultan's Government also had an officer known as the Chinese Secretary whose duty was to look after Chinese interests, and there were two Chinese members of the Selangor State Council. When the Acting Chinese Secretary (Mr Welman) confidentially consulted some leading Chinese in the state on the subject, he discovered that they unanimously deprecated the appointment of consular agents. Among other things, these Chinese feared that the knowledge of the wealth they had acquired might be used against them by unscrupulous Chinese officials if they returned to China, or against their friends who were residing in China.[3]

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1 CO 273/189 No. 302, 15 September 1893, Maxwell to S. of S.

2 British Resident (Perak) to Colonial Secretary, S.S., 9 September 1893, enclosed in CO 273/189 No. 302, ibid.

3 British Resident (Selangor) to Colonial Secretary, S.S., 21 August 1893, enclosed in CO 273/189 No. 302, ibid.

In the conclusion of his despatch, Maxwell argued that the Chinese consular establishment in the Straits was both unnecessary and prejudicial to the Colony's interests. Expanding its authority would only aggravate the situation. In the opinion of the Straits Government, industrious Chinese residing in the settlements should not be exposed to exactions from which they were supposed to have escaped by leaving China.[1] In November 1893, the Chinese Minister in London was accordingly informed of the British Government's decision to refuse his Government's request for the appointment of Chinese Agents in the Malay States on the pretext that since there was no direct trade between China and the Malay States and that since Chinese vessels flying the Chinese flag did not frequent the ports of Selangor, an extension of the Chinese consular establishment was unnecessary.[2]

After studying Maxwell's observations, the Foreign Office informed the Straits authorities that should they intend to make any formal and specific charges against Huang, the Foreign Secretary was prepared to withdraw the Consul-General's Exequatur.[3] This statement was indicative of the rapidly deteriorating relations between the Consulate-General and the Straits Government. This relationship was to reach its nadir in December 1893 when the Straits Administrator found it necessary to request the official withdrawal of Huang's Exequatur.

Overt Discord between the Straits Government and the Consulate-General

In June 1893, Governor Cecil Smith yielded to the solicitations of Sir Robert Hart by initiating action to curb

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1 CO 273/189 No. 302, ibid.

2 C.O. to F.O., 31 October 1893, enclosed in CO 273/189 No. 302, ibid. Also F.O. to Chinese Legation, 20 November 1893 enclosed in CO 273/192 F.O., 20 November 1893.

3 C.O.D. Confidential, 24 November 1893. Also CO 273/192 F.O., ibid.

smuggling in the Straits and to facilitate a more effective means for the Chinese Government's collection of opium duties in Hainan at 110 taels per chest from the Agency of Hainan Junks. The Straits Governor, without consulting the British Minister in Peking on the nature of the problem involved, had unhesitatingly drafted a list of revised regulations for a more rigid control of junk-borne opium traffic from Singapore to Hainan and Southern China. Although the tentative rules were revised with Huang Tsun-hsien's assistance, the entire arrangement was unexpectedly disrupted before it could be effectively implemented.[1] The essence of the procedure which Smith proposed was that junk-owners, before their departure from the Colony, should first secure permits for exporting opium from the Master Attendant's Office. These permits were to be referred to the Chinese Consul-General for counter-signature and all particulars regarding the payment of customs duty on opium at the destined ports had to be disclosed. Opium-traders were also required to sign a document as a form of guarantee that such payments would be ensured at the declared ports.[2] It was on this basis that the Consul-General was supposedly to have made a genuine effort to co-operate with the British authorities. The opium regulations, however, were doomed to failure after having been sabotaged by Huang Tsun-hsien, and the British promptly charged him with abusing his powers in pursuit of personal gain. Completely different versions of the fiasco were given by the Straits authorities and by Huang.

About three months before he wrote to London and laid formal charges against Huang, the Straits Administrator indicated his personal opinion of the Chinese Consul-General in a private letter to a senior Colonial Office official (Mr Fairfield). In that letter, Maxwell expressed the view that Huang was only an ordinary but extremely voracious Chinese

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1 See pp.199-203.

2 CO 273/188 No. 181, 10 June 1893, Smith to S. of S. COD No. 193, 21 June 1894. Also see Appendix IV.

official who was very much feared by the Colony's Chinese. He felt that the British Government's policy in permitting a Chinese consular official in the Straits to 'squeeze' the Chinese was illogical and incomprehensive.[1] Maxwell described Huang as a confirmed opium-smoker who was never 'in view before midday'. The British authorities suspected that he received a sum in the vicinity of $10,000 from Chang Chen-hsün in return for appointing Chang as Chinese Vice-Consul in Penang. Furthermore, a similar handsome payment was believed to be forthcoming for the Consul-General if MacCartney's request for the appointment of Chinese Agents in the Malay States was approved by the British Government.[2] In this correspondence, Maxwell revealed for the first time that he suspected Huang of deceiving his own government through the manipulation of Sir Cecil Smith's revised regulations, that is, by exacting certain payments on account and issuing certain passes.[3] Part of the contents of Maxwell's letter was corroborated by the Foreign Office, which had notified the Colonial Office that the British Consul in Hainan (Parker) had information regarding an existing unofficial arrangement between Huang and the Hainan authorities concerning the exportation of opium to the island.[4]

On 27 December 1893, the Straits Administrator made official charges against Huang Tsun-hsien for complicity in attempts to defraud the Chinese Government. In a lengthy despatch to the Secretary of State (Lord Ripon), Maxwell meticulously analysed Huang's conduct and motives to demonstrate that he had definitely exceeded his authority, stating:

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1 A Private Correspondence from Maxwell to Fairfield, 20 September 1893 enclosed in CO 273/192 F.O., 12 October 1893.

2 Sir Halliday MacCartney, Secretary of the Chinese Legation in London. See previous section.

3 A Private Correspondence from Maxwell to Fairfield, 20 September 1893, op. cit.

4 CO 273/192 F.O., 12 October 1893.

...
(4) The regulations required that henceforth the issue of permits for the export of opium by means of Chinese junks should be conducted by the Master Attendants Office with the cognizance of the Chinese Consul-General on whom the duty was cast of counter-signing all applications for permits as well as the permits themselves. He was empowered, at his discretion, before doing so, to require the Master of the Junk or supercargo to sign a document giving all necessary particulars concerning the junk, her destination and cargo and purporting to guarantee the payment at the port of destination of the Customs charges leviable (duty and likin).

(5) The trade of the smugglers, carried on no doubt with the connivance of the Hainan-Mandarins, was obviously too lucrative to be surrendered without a struggle and it would seem from what has followed that the Chinese Consul General has sought to obtain some pecuniary advantage for himself by not carrying out the Regulations and thus enabling the junk-owners to continue their trade in the profits of which he intended to participate.

(6) He began by exceeding his authority in requiring not the junk-masters or supercargoes, but the vendors of opium in Singapore to guarantee the payment of the duty. This led to references to the Government during which the export of opium by junks was at a standstill. The complainants were informed by the Protector of Chinese that the Consul-General had no authority to demand a guarantee from other persons than the Junk Masters or Supercargoes.

(7) The persons connected with the Hainan trade being of course dissatisfied with the new Regulations then approached the Consul-General with whom it was arranged that in lieu of the strict carrying out of the official system agreed upon by Sir Cecil Smith and Mr Ludlow, the Consul-General should allow the export of opium on receiving $40 a chest and should dispense with all guarantee from Singapore traders. I have the honour to transmit, as bearing upon this arrangement, translations of a petition to the Consul-General dated 16th July 1893 and of his reply of the same date, but too much importance must not be attached to these documents, as it is possible that they may have been prepared expressly for production to the authorities should investigations be made.

(8) I have already stated above that the import charges in China are 110 taels per chest, or about $150. No evidence has reached me as to the manner in which the payment of the balance of the duty at the ports of destination was to be secured, and the

Consul at Kiuungchow reports that it has not been paid. The theory, therefore, is that the Consul-General was a party to a plot to defraud the Customs Revenue of his own Country by means of the very Regulations which had been devised for its protection. On payment of $40 per chest in Singapore the Master of a Junk conveying opium was put in possession of an official permit which freed him from molestation by Custom Cruisers. He was of course careful to proceed to a port where there were no European Customs officers and where the local Chinese officials were in collusion with the smugglers and the Singapore traders. On payment of 'squeeze' to the local Chinese officials in addition to the $40 per chest paid in Singapore he would import his opium at about half the recognized charges. This is the opinion of Consul Parker, Kiang-chow, who in a letter to the Foreign Office dated the 7th August last, says:

> 'In consideration of the Consul-General being paid 30 taels a chest, the junkman will be allowed to land his opium in any part of Hainan (and perhaps China) he likes, without a risk, so long as he pays the Tao-tai and other local officials their perquisites.... Thus instead of paying 80 taels a chest likin, the junkman pays about $48 in squeeze and saves from $60 to $70'.

(9) It is supposed that the sum paid in Singapore was intended to be the Consul-General's own share, but he did not of course venture to receive it direct, or at once. Its ultimate payment to him depended also, probably, upon the conduct of the Tao-tai or other Mandarins at the port of destination in China, where favourable disposition towards the smuggler it would be the part of the Consul-General to secure as part of the scheme. The money was, therefore, deposited, as received, with one Choa Bun Poh, as a representative of the Hainan traders in Singapore....

(10) Had this money been intended <u>bona-fide</u> for remittance to the Inspector of Customs I do not know why it was kept in Singapore, but as a matter of fact the sum of $36,760 has since the 6th of December been deposited with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank at the call of either Choa Bun Poh or the Consul-General, the receipt, however, being held by the Consul-General. A document was delivered to the Bank with the money. It is in the handwriting of one Nasan, an employee in the Chinese Consulate, and the statements it contains must be taken as not necessarily true but as the view of the transaction which the Consul-General is desirous of having accepted.

(11) I am not of course, aware of the explanation of all these transactions which may have been given by the Consul-General to his own Government and to Sir Robert Hart. I have learned, however, from a letter of Consul Parker's that Sir Robert Hart in August last informed one of the Commissioners of Customs that 'the Consul-General reports that the Chinese have subscribed $35,000 to contest the legality of Sir Cecil Smith's scheme, but to stop litigation he has ordered them to deposit that sum with him as security for the taxes to be paid in China'.

This report is altogether inconsistent with the Consul-General's own reply to the Hainan traders to which I have referred above in paragraph 7.

(12) In view of the suspicious character of all the circumstances connected with the collection and retention of this money I have authorized its deposit in the Colonial Treasury and the Hainan Traders, on learning that the possession of the receipt would enable the Consul-General to draw the whole sum at any time, were easily induced to entrust it to the Government. Choa Bun Poh was instructed therefore to obtain the receipt from the Consul-General and the sum of $36,760 was paid into the Treasury on the 13th instant.

(13) I submit that any unauthorized departure on the part of the Consul-General from the Regulations sanctioned by this Government...is an act of misbehaviour of which this Government must necessarily take notice. And when...this departure from regulations takes the form of the collection of a tax for a Foreign Power in one of the British Colonies, the actions which I now report seem to me to be altogether intolerable. I...ask Your Lordship to bring the question of withdrawing his Exequatur before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.[1]

This despatch was one of the outstanding achievements of the Chinese Protectorate's superbly efficient machinery for acquiring information. A report on the conspiracy by the Protector of Chinese, G.T. Hare, on 23 July 1896 not only strengthened Maxwell's charge but also disclosed the process whereby the Protectorate had discovered the embezzlement.[2]

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1 CO 273/190 No. 419, 27 December 1893, Maxwell to S. of S.

2 Report by G.T. Hare, 23 July 1896 enclosed in CO 273/216 Confidential, 30 July 1896.

The agreement in the conspiracy between Huang, the Tao-tai in Hainan and Choa Bun Poh who acted as a middleman was that the Consul-General would receive $40 for every chest of opium exported while other employees in the Consulte-General would receive about $1 per chest. Choa would get an extra 'squeeze' of $5 and the Hainan Tao-tai was to be paid a further sum of $40 for each chest. According to this arrangement, Huang would knowingly telegraph the false destinations of the opium exports given him by the junk-masters to the Chinese Customs at Hai-k'ou (海口) in Hainan.[1]

The Straits authorities credited the British Consul in Hainan for first notifying the Protectorate in private of an existing conspiracy. Armed with this evidence, the authorities detained Choa and 'by persuasive measures of one kind or another' induced him to relate the whole truth. It seemed that Huang was afraid to claim the $36,000 but pressured Choa to keep it under Choa's name in the account of C. Meyer, a well-known opium merchant and a Municipal Commissioner. Choa, however, was advised by the Straits authorities to deposit the money in the Colonial Treasury. When Huang learned of this, he threatened Choa if the Colonial Treasurer's receipt were not surrendered to him. Upon his recall to China, Huang had two reasons for taking with him the receipt suspected by the Protectorate officials: firstly in the vain hope that at some future date, he might recover the 'squeeze'; and secondly in fear that the Chinese Government would demand that the money be refunded. The exposure of the fraud just before Huang returned to China prompted him to deny in a telegram to the Tsungli-Yamen that he had collected the money; he claimed it was a voluntary subscription from the Colony's Hainan community to defray legal expenses connected with challenging the new opium regulations in court.[2]

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1 Ibid.

2 Report by G.T. Hare, 23 July 1896, ibid.; British Minister (Peking) to Acting Governor, 31 January 1894, enclosed in CO 273/194 No. 81, 23 March 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

Huang belatedly explained his conduct in this unsavoury affair in a letter to the then ex-Governor Smith on 18 January 1897. Extensive press publicity was given in China to this letter which showed a considerable discrepancy from the Straits Government's version of the conspiracy.[1] Huang claimed that the revised regulations could not be enforced because although the Colony's merchants had given bonds for the payment of opium dues, the fact remained that the junkmen were the real buyers of the drug. Smith realized the difficulties involved in this problem but he reluctantly agreed to extend the duration of the trial-regulations at the insistence of Sir Robert Hart. The junkmen had bought an estimated 800 to 900 chests of opium before Smith's regulations were issued; however, a month after these were published no-one had come forward to sign the documents. Consequently, some fifty junks were anchored off Singapore and 1500 junkmen were unable to export their goods because of prompt action taken by Huang. Unsuccessful petitions were sent to the Consul-General and the Protector of Chinese on the need to withdraw the regulations. The merchants' contemplated next step was to challenge the legality of the regulations in court, and a 'fund for legal proceedings' was initiated. Swift intervention by Huang, however, prevented the intended prosecution of the Straits Governor. To overcome this irksome checkmate, Huang continued, another petition was presented to him on 6 July 1893 declaring the merchants' readiness to comply temporarily with the regulations. At the same time, the merchants also pointed out the absurdity of one of the rules which required that all shops paying opium duty in China must be named; since it was the junkmen who furnished this information, the merchants had no way of verifying the authenticity of such shops or whether they were able to pay the tax. Fearful of the situation they were in, the merchants brought pressure to bear upon the junkmen who had reluctantly agreed to pay $40 in advance for every chest of opium as a guarantee for the duty. The main

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1 S.F.P. 2 March 1897.

point stressed in the petition was that once the opium had arrived in China and irrespective of whether the specified duty could be collected, the Straits merchants who had originally signed the documents should be freed from further obligation.[1] After studying the petition, Huang agreed to issue permits to the junkmen to export opium but he cautioned the merchants that granting them exemptions from further obligation was beyond his authority. On the other hand, the Consul-General promised to secure imperial sanction for their request; in the meantime, he instructed a leading local Hainanese opium merchant named Tsai Mon-pow (Choa Bun Poh) of the Kheng Chiu Hui Kuan to take charge of the money collected until further notice was received from the Tsungli-Yamen.[2] Huang insisted that Governor Smith had raised no objections when informed of the developments on 10 July 1893 but the misunderstanding arose only after the Governor's departure from the Colony, thereby giving the Protector of Chinese (G. Wray) an opportunity to 'frame' Huang. Huang's explanation to ex-Governor Smith contained several glaring flaws which the British authorities had detected three years earlier.

Governor Mitchell reported on 23 March 1894 that both Maxwell and Wray had considered Huang's explanation to the Tsungli-Yamen about the proposed legislation as a sheer fabrication because a matter of such importance could not have escaped the notice of the Chinese Protectorates' officials.[3] Although the revised opium regulations were enforced primarily in the interests of the Chinese Imperial Customs, the Consul-General failed to inform the Straits authorities of the intended legal action. Subsequent

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1 Ibid.; cf. also Summary of Petition to Consul-General (Petition presented by nineteen Chinese merchants), 6 July 1893, enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419, 27 December 1893. See Appendix V.

2 S.F.P. 2 March 1897; cf. also Translation of the Transit Dues given by Huang Tsun-hsien, 6 July 1893, enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419, ibid. See Appendix VI.

3 CO 273/194 No. 81, 23 March 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

inquiries conducted by the colonial government revealed that none of the Colony's legal firms was consulted and the amount collected for legal fees was far in excess of that required for litigation of this nature; the estimated cost was no more than a few hundred dollars. What was considered even more suspicious was that the sum Huang had collected corresponded exactly with the value of the number of opium chests exported between 19 July and 13 August 1893 at $40 per chest. This indicated that the subscription was not voluntary, since the sums paid by individual traders would have varied according to the means of the subscribers if the money had been given willingly. The Straits authorities felt certain that Huang's telegram to the Tsungli-Yamen was subsequent in date to the Chinese Protectorate's discovery of the existence of the irregular collections; hence they inferred that Huang's story was invented only after he became aware that the Protector of Chinese was already in possession of information supplied by Choa Bun Poh. The fact that Choa was persuaded to deposit the money in the Treasury strengthened British doubts that the merchant's subscriptions had not been entirely voluntary. It was inconceivable that they would have allowed the money to be delivered to the very authority against whom they were directing their legal proceedings.[1]

These were not the only defects in Huang's arguments. His report to Hart concerning the original purposes intended for the $36,760 was completely inconsistent with his reply to the merchants, which made no mention of the proposed litigation.[2] Yet when the merchants later approached Huang to return the receipt so that the money could be given to public benefit funds, he abused and threatened them.[3] The Consul-General's guilt was further confirmed when on a number of occasions he obstructed Hart's efforts to investigate the

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1 Ibid. See Appendix VII.

2 Translation of the Transit Dues given by Huang Tsun-hsien, 6 July 1893, op. cit.; also G.D. No. 419, 27 December 1894. See Appendix VI.

3 Report by G.T. Hare, 23 July 1896, op. cit.

colonial authorities' charges; and when he failed to take legal action against the Straits Government for retaining the money in the Colonial Treasury.[1]

Surprisingly enough, not only did the Chinese Government decline to reprimand the Consul-General, but the Tsungli-Yamen upheld his version of the incident.[2] One possible explanation of the Chinese Government's stance was that it was influenced by the indecision of the British Government. The British Minister in Peking (N.R. O'Conor) had informed the Foreign Office that in view of the 'merely semi-official character of the arrangement', it was inadvisable to withdraw the Consul-General's exequatur.[3] O'Conor stressed that such a withdrawal would be a severe blow to Huang and a serious rebuff to the Chinese Government which would certainly be resented by the Tsungli-Yamen.[4] The endorsement of O'Conor's views by the Foreign Secretary was yet another example of the primacy of the Foreign Office's role in decision-making.[5]

Since this shady affair had clearly indicated loopholes in the opium regulations, the Chinese Government was compelled to seek other arrangements. Sir Robert Hart submitted new proposals whereby all junks clearing for

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1 Tan Yeok Seong, 'Rejection of Hwang Tzuan Shiann's appointment as Ambassador to Germany by Kaiser Wilhelm II', J.S.S.S., Vol. 17, Part I, 1961, p.27.

2 CO 273/194 No. 81, 23 March 1894, Mitchell to S. of S. On the advice of the Chinese Protector, Governor Mitchell suggested to the Colonial Office that the $36,760 be invested for the benefit of education and of the Po Leung Kuk in the Colony. The Secretary of State, Chamberlain, rejected this proposal because he thought the Chinese Government had the best claim to the money. On 4 January 1898, the sum was officially remitted to the Chinese Maritime Customs through Sir Claude MacDonald. CO 273/216, Confidential, 30 July 1896, Mitchell to S. of S.; COD, Confidential, 18 September 1896; CO 273/235 No. 3, 4 January 1898, Kinnersley to S. of S.

3 CO 273/200 F.O., 6 July 1894.

4 British Minister (Peking) to Acting Governor, 31 January 1894, op. cit.

5 CO 273/200 F.O., 6 July 1894; COD No. 212, 13 July 1894.

Singapore were to receive a permit from a Customs Station to be opened at Sam-a-Kong (Yaihsien) in the extreme south of Hainan; bonds were also to be given as security for the payment of duty on any opium these junks might ship back on their return journey. Hart also suggested to the Straits authorities that they permit a Chinese Customs staff member (Mr A. Miickie) to be stationed in Singapore during the Southwest Monsoon to assist the Consul-General in supervising the junks. The British Consul at Canton (B. Brennan) through intelligence sources believed that the latter proposal was intended as a means of checking on the Consul-General.[1] The alternative plan forwarded by Hart was that the Straits Government collect the opium duty on China's behalf and remit it monthly through Hong Kong.

Hart's proposal that a Chinese Government officer be stationed in Singapore was not accepted, since the Straits authorities were resolutely opposed to any system that would in effect create a branch of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs in Singapore which was uncontrolled by the Colonial Government; the British feared that such a situation would irrevocably lower their prestige in the eyes of the Colony's Chinese.[2] On 2 April 1894, Governor Mitchell informed Hart of the Straits Government's decision by explaining that:

> [The proposal] would convey to the Chinese the idea of a sort of dual government [imperium in imperio] and to confirm the more ignorant among them the idea that we are a sort of province of the Celestial Empire.[3]

The British Government accepted Mitchell's decision but favoured Hart's proposal to involve the Straits Government in the collection of opium dues on China's behalf. London, however, was prepared to open fresh negotiations only on a

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1 British Consul (Canton) to Colonial Secretary, 27 February 1894, enclosed in CO 273/194 No. 81, 23 March 1894.

2 CO 273/194 No. 81, 23 March 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

3 Mitchell to Hart, 2 April 1894, enclosed in CO 273/194, Confidential, 3 April 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

quid pro quo basis.[1] O'Conor was interested in seeking the opening of the West River in Kwangtung to general trade[2] but Mitchell felt it might be even better if China were asked to offer no impediment to the return of hundreds of Chinese lunatics, lepers and paupers who were being maintained at great cost by the Straits Government.[3] Mitchell regarded with distaste the prospect of having his government acting as an agent of the Chinese Government. In a despatch to the Secretary of State in August 1894, he pointed out that the Chinese Government did all in its power not only to extend its influence in the Colony and elsewhere in the Eastern Seas, but also to keep alive in the minds of the Chinese residents the idea that all these territories were tributaries of the Chinese Empire. Should the British Government insist on the Straits authorities' collecting the dues, Mitchell wanted an assurance that the Consul-General would not have the power to interfere; the matter was to be conducted entirely between the British and Chinese Governments acting in direct communication.[4] His views, however, were fairly moderate when compared with those of the Protector of Chinese, who had insisted that a quid pro quo should be the withdrawal of all Chinese Consular officers in the British Eastern possessions, following the example of Hong Kong which did not have a Chinese consulate.[5]

Mitchell's unwillingness to act as an agent of the Chinese Government apparently led to the British Government's failure to implement any of Hart's proposals for a more

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1 COD No. 212, 13 July 1894.

2 O'Conor to Kimberley, 8 April 1894, enclosed in CO 273/200 F.O., 1 June 1894. O'Conor's decision was influenced by pressure from European, particularly British, merchants in China who wanted extended areas of trade.

3 CO 273/197, Confidential, 11 August 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

4 Ibid.

5 Minute by Protector of Chinese, 9 August 1894, enclosed in CO 273/197, Confidential, op. cit.

stringent control of the junk-borne opium trade between Singapore and China. The reluctance of the Straits authorities to co-operate with the Chinese Government on this matter was clearly a product of their exasperation with the Consul-General.

Continuing Friction: The Problem of Passports

On 27 December 1893, when he first officially notified London of the Chinese Consul-General's misdemeanours in the Colony, Administrator Maxwell had also mentioned that Huang proposed to issue passports to wealthy overseas Chinese who were returning to China. The ostensible purposes of the passports were to secure their immunity from improper 'squeezes' by Chinese officials and to prevent them from attempting to acquire British or Dutch nationality. The Straits authorities, however, suspected that Huang's underlying motives were to establish closer ties between Chinese officials and the returning Chinese; to utilize the services of the overseas Chinese by regarding them as allies; and to take advantage of their hard-earned wealth.[1] Since the Straits Government professed a policy of protection over the Chinese in the Colony, it had cause for consternation at the Consul-General's proposal to issue passports. It is also likely that the local officials believed a continuous demonstration of fear and anxiety on their part might evoke the desired response from the home officials, i.e. the immediate withdrawal of Huang's exequatur. There was in fact a strong school of opinion within the Colonial Office which felt that Huang ought to be relieved;[2] this conviction, however, decreased in intensity with the passage of time.

It is impossible to fully comprehend the British authorities' exasperation with Huang on the passports problem

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1 CO 273/190 No. 419, op. cit; see Appendix VIII As was previously pointed out, in September 1893 the Chinese Government had abrogated the ban on immigration, and had empowered Chinese diplomats and consuls overseas to issue passports to those Chinese immigrants who wanted to return.

2 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419, op. cit.

without discussing in some detail the inadequacy of British policy regarding the status in China of Chinese British subjects. An analysis of this policy sheds light on the origins of Chinese passports and the demand for them by overseas Chinese.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, European square-rigged vessels were giving stiff competition to Chinese junks trading between Singapore and China. With the opening of the Treaty Ports in 1842, an increasing number of Straits merchants of Chinese descent shipped their cargoes to China in the square-rigged vessels. By giving European vessels preference, the merchants undermined the livelihood of the Chinese junk-traders and created much dissatisfaction in China.[1] In 1844, a Chinese merchant from the Colony who accompanied his cargo in a British vessel to Ningpo (寧波) was almost detained by the Chinese authorities there, ostensibly for travelling abroad in violation of the Chinese Imperial Edict which prohibited emigration; the real reason was for 'patronizing a Foreign Vessel to the detriment of his own countrymen'.[2] This incident prompted the British Government to issue a statement on 18 September 1844 that all Chinese merchants from the Straits who were British subjects would be provided with British documents for identification and protection. The documents were to be lodged with the British Consul upon arrival at any of the Treaty Ports in China.[3]

In 1865, the British Minister in Peking, Sir Rutherford Alcock, held negotiations with the Chinese Government to determine the status and protection in China of British subjects who were of Chinese descent. On the basis of international law the Chinese Government claimed as its subjects the children born abroad of immigrant-parents who

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1 Wong Lin Ken, op. cit., pp.122-3.

2 British Consul (Ningpo) to Sir J.F. Davis, 3 July 1844 enclosed in S.S.R. (S.12) 11 April 1845.

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.68-9.

had remained Chinese subjects; nevertheless, that government consented to waive its rights regarding persons of Chinese origin born in British dominions of parents who were British subjects.[1] The outcome of the negotiations was a notification issued by Alcock on 6 October 1868 requiring Chinese British subjects to discard their Chinese costumes while travelling in China so that they could be entitled to British protection.[2] The costume regulation was to provide the British consuls and the Chinese authorities with a form of identification. British protection was to be accorded only to a particular class of Chinese British subjects which was defined in 1866 by Sir Edmund Hornby, Chief Judge of the British Supreme Court for China and Japan:

> A person of Chinese race born in a British possession, of parents born there or naturalized there, is undeniably a British subject, but [that] Her Majesty's Government have wisely laid down the rule that, as against the authorities of China, children of Chinese parents, who were not themselves naturalized or born British subjects, are not entitled in China to be considered or treated as British subjects, notwithstanding they may have been born in a British Colony or possession.[3]

Hornby's instructions to the British consuls in China were clear beyond any possibility of misconstruction but in later years, British policy tended to merge all classes of Chinese British subjects into one category and assert jurisdiction over all of them. Although Prince Kung was reported to have told Wade in June 1871 that China had never made it legal for her subjects to transfer their allegiance to foreign countries,[4] this statement was contradicted in

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1 Memorandum (on Negotiations with the Chinese Government) by F.H.E. Streatfield, F.O., March 18, 1886 enclosed in CO 273/142 F.O. Confidential, 15 December 1886.

2 Ibid.

3 Memorandum by Sir Julian Pauncefote F.O., 15 March 1879 enclosed in CO 273/142 F.O. Confidential, op. cit.

4 British Charge d'Affaires (Peking) to F.O., 26 December 1885 enclosed in CO 273/156 F.O., 1 October 1888.

1872 when Lord Granville asserted that all persons of Chinese origin whose status as British subjects had been properly established owed no allegiance to the Chinese Government and were entitled to British protection; no distinction was made between the different classes of British subjects.[1] A pressing problem thus emerged regarding the validity of passports which were issued by the Straits Government according to the British Government's latest instructions, but which were refused recognition by British consular officers who were following the old instructions. Evidently the British consuls were confused about Lord Granville's despatch to Wade which had merged all classes of Chinese British subjects into a single group. Consequently, the Straits authorities continually urged London to provide a clearer definition of the status of the Chinese British subjects outside the Colony.

Many Chinese in the Straits who became naturalized did so because of a desire to own ships and fly the British flag on their vessels. Anson reported in 1877 that several shipping companies were formed by Chinese British subjects whose vessels were making runs to China, Rangoon and Bangkok. The question posed to the Acting-Governor was whether and in what circumstances such vessels could claim protection from British consuls in foreign ports.[2] The Colonial Office's reply was the same as the rules laid down by Lord Granville in 1872.[3] In 1882, Weld wrote to Lord Kimberley of the Colonial Office on the same issue after the British consul in Shanghai refused registration to two Penang-born Chinese merchants unless they could furnish satisfactory proof that they were the children of British subjects.[4] The policy of

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1 Lord Granville's assertion was based on the advice of the British Crown Law Office on 29 May 1872. Memorandum by Sir J. Pauncefote, op. cit.

2 CO 273/91 No. 278, 15 September 1877, Anson to S. of S.

3 CO 273/92 F.O. 16 November 1877; COD 22 November 1877.

4 CO 273/116 No. 354, 27 September 1882, Weld to S. of S.

the Straits Government was that persons born in a British colony were ipso facto British subjects and were to be so regarded in the Straits and elsewhere. In reply to Weld's complaint, the Home Government reiterated that as long as the costume regulation was followed, the merchants were entitled to British protection. Lord Granville considered that a passport which was granted by the government of any British colony to a Chinese British subject should be sufficient evidence to the British consuls of the holder's claim to British nationality, registration and protection.[1]

It should be pointed out that the costume regulation imposed by the British Government as a condition of protection had always been regarded as a very sensitive issue by British subjects of Chinese descent. Many simply did not comply with the regulation, and this was one of the constant complaints of the British consuls in China. Refusal to discard the Chinese costume while travelling in China had involved many Chinese British subjects in legal difficulties with the Chinese authorities in which little could be done by the British consular officials. The British subjects, when they wore other than Chinese kinds of costume in China, were frequently ridiculed by their fellow Chinese. In 1869, when the Straits Government objected to the notification of the costume regulation on the grounds that it inflicted psychological hardship on the Chinese British subjects, Sir Rutherford Alcock defended his decision by stating:

> As a rule, they [British subjects of Chinese descent] have no desire to be identified with British nationality, or to be known as anything but Chinese. They go freely into the interior, trade, or travel, visit their ancestral tombs and return, or otherwise domicile themselves, but always as Chinese. If ever the desire arises to put themselves under British protection, with Treaty immunities and instructions, it is only when they have got into trouble, political or commercial, and wish to be saved by British officials from the consequences of their acts while living and acting as Chinese subjects. In many such cases their sudden transmutation into British subjects only proves a new source of danger. If away from a

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1 CO 273/124 F.O., 15 February 1883; COD 22 February 1883.

> Consular district, long before any British authority can effectively interfere the Chinese officials, knowing the danger of a rescue, make short work with them. Even at the ports, and under the eye of the Consul, as it were, the attempt to save has only made their destruction more swift and certain....The Chinese Government regard these returned Colonists from the British settlements as among the most dangerous and troublesome of their race....They allege, and I believe with reason, that the majority are affiliated to secret societies, against which this Government is engaged in a war to the death, as plotting against the peace of the country and the Manchu Dynasty; and that many of them are active agents, keeping up communications between the different heads and branches, under the disguise of trading natives, with a title to British protection in their sleeves when discovered and seized.[1]

In 1878, Wade was petitioned by some Chinese British subjects on the problem of the costume regulation. He confirmed Alcock's remarks on their behaviour and motives but recommended to the Home Government that the existing arrangement be modified so that no other peculiarity of dress should be enforced beyond the adoption of a distinctive badge coupled with a system of registration.[2] This could not be done without the consent of the Chinese Government, which viewed the granting of British protection to Chinese British subjects as an extremely irritating matter. A case was cited by J. Pauncefote, a senior official of the Foreign Office, in which a Chinese from Singapore was murdered by the authorities in Amoy in 1872, mainly because he claimed to be a British subject.[3] In 1879 the Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office made two recommendations in a confidential memorandum. The first was that Alcock and Wade's testimonies indicated that the Chinese British subjects who sought

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1 Despatch by Sir Rutherford Alcock, No. 49, 6 May 1869. Quoted by Sir Julian Pauncefote's Memorandum, 15 March 1879 enclosed in CO 273/142 Confidential, op. cit.

2 Minute by Sir Thomas Wade, 9 July 1878, F.O. enclosed in CO 273/142 F.O. Confidential, op. cit.

3 Memorandum by Sir Julian Pauncefote, 15 March 1879, enclosed in CO 273/142 F.O. Confidential, ibid.

British protection in China belonged to a class of people whom it was by no means desirable to protect and that it would be inexpedient to alter the existing system which had the merit of keeping British protection at a minimum. The second recommendation, which was given more emphasis, was that ten years had elapsed since the costume regulation was promulgated and great changes had occurred regarding communication facilities and commercial intercourse between China and the British possessions in the East. It was suggested that if the Colonial Office consented, a Convention might be reached with China to amend the existing arrangement.[1] No action, however, was taken on Pauncefote's memorandum and complications continued between the Straits authorities and the British consuls in China.

In a despatch to London on 11 April 1883, Weld changed his view and advised that Chinese born of parents who were Chinese subjects residing in a British territory should not be issued with passports because of an increasing tendency of expectant Chinese mothers to give birth in British territory so that the child would have the advantages of a British subject. It was a procedure adopted by Chinese parents even if they had no intention of taking on permanent residence or naturalization in British territory.[2] By refusing recognition as British subjects to this class of Chinese, the Straits Government hoped to lighten British responsibilities. On the other hand, it was affirmed that Chinese British subjects of British-born parents should continue to receive passports and full protection on condition that they rigidly observed the dress regulation when in China. Weld felt that such recognition would raise their status as real Chinese British subjects, a move which was intended to gradually wean the British subjects from their foreign Chinese habits. Lord Derby, the Secretary of State, rejected Weld's advice on the grounds that it would be impossible to deprive any person

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1 Ibid.

2 CO 273/120 No. 154, 11 April 1883, Weld to S. of S.

born in British territory of the rights of a British subject.[1] At the same time, Lord Granville instructed the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking that he had expressed his 'concurrence in the view which the Earl of Derby takes of the question'. Any British subject of Chinese descent who wore a distinctive dress, therefore, was entitled to protection and recognition from British consuls in China.[2] The stand taken by the British Government was that no distinction should be drawn between the two classes of Chinese British subjects; hence the Straits Government was to continue to issue all of them with passports, although Weld informed London that Lord Derby's instructions were in conflict with those followed by the British consuls in China.[3]

Despite Lord Granville's instructions, British consular officials in China remained confused. N.R. O'Conor, the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking, wrote to the Foreign Secretary in December 1885 stressing the importance of making a 'clear and authoritative' decision on the matter; it was confirmed that Sir Richard Rennie, successor to Hornby, had reissued the instructions given by his predecessor. In this despatch, O'Conor specified the two classes the British consuls did not recognize: the first was the naturalized British subjects and the second was the children born in a British possession of immigrant parents who were subjects of the Emperor of China. He continued:

> These Chinese are, for the most part, small traders or dealers, whose connection with the British Colony is purely commercial, and whose families are often domiciled in China. They are...and remain aliens in every sense of the word. From the moment they return to China, the Chinese Government will not...look upon them as other than Chinese subjects, while all efforts to protect them as British subjects will be opposed on every occasion, and will eventually create an amount of ill-will

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1 C.O. to F.O., 4 June 1883, enclosed in CO 273/120, ibid.; CO 273/124 F.O., 11 June 1883; COD 15 June 1883.

2 F.O. Papers No. 89, 11 June 1883, Granville to Grosvenor.

3 CO 273/141 No. 311, 30 September 1886, Weld to S. of S.

> between the Colony and the Chinese authorities which it is not in the interest of Great Britain either to excite or support.[1]

In 1886 the British Government decided to initiate action on the matter, and the Foreign Secretary instructed the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Walsham, to induce the Chinese Government to reach a modus vivendi agreement.[2] The basis of negotiation suggested was that the system of passports and consular registration be established in the case of every Chinese British subject visiting China. The two classes of Chinese British subjects named by O'Conor were to be given passports and British protection of limited duration. Those born in a British territory of parents who were British subjects could not be claimed in China as Chinese; they were to be furnished with passports of unlimited duration. On their arrival in China, all passport holders were to appear immediately at the nearest British consulate for identification and registration. The British Government had hoped that a successful outcome of negotiations might lead to the abandonment of the costume regulation but until 1889, Walsham had had no opportunity to open negotiations with the Chinese Government. Such an opportunity was likely to arise only when there was a case of disputed nationality.[3]

While the British Government was seeking a solution with the Chinese authorities, complications on the matter with the Straits Government did not seem to diminish. Governor Smith complained in 1888 that documents which were issued to a Penang-born Chinese merchant by the Straits Government were

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1 British Charge d'Affaires (Peking) to F.O., 26 December 1885, enclosed in CO 273/156 F.O., op. cit. Although O'Conor was specifically referring to Hong Kong, the situation was equally applicable to the Straits Settlements.

2 F.O. Papers No. 107, 19 April 1886, Rosebery to Walsham, enclosed in CO 273/156 F.O., op. cit.

3 Telegram from British Minister at Peking, 7 May 1888, enclosed in CO 273/156 F.O., 14 July 1888; Minutes enclosed in CO 273/169 No. 440, 7 November 1890.

refused recognition by the British consul in Amoy.[1] The consul, R. Forrest, claimed that the merchant Ong Beng Tek went into business and took up residence in Amoy; Ong spoke no English and was dressed in Chinese clothes, thus he was required to produce evidence that both his parents were British subjects.[2] The consul's explanation epitomized the predicament faced by most, if not all, British consuls in China. In Forrest's opinion, Sir Richard Rennie's instructions were not sufficiently known in all the colonies sending back British subjects of Chinese origin. It was discovered that a large number of passport or certificate holders from Mauritius, the Seychelles, Penang, Singapore and other colonies could not be recognized in China as British subjects if the rule was applied. Many confessed that they were bought or adopted children and were illegitimate by English law because they didn't know the identity of their parents. There were a number of tricks practised with colonial passports: many had done duty for more than one person; a great many had no portraits, and some had the photographs mutilated or bearing no resemblance to the holder. Many applicants for registration were people who had become wealthy in a British colony and wanted to retire to China with an exemption from the control of Chinese officials. To discover the correct status of an applicant for British protection was not considered difficult but the process was lengthy; hence the method favoured by the Consul was to have each applicant produce with his passport some evidence that both his parents were British subjects and that he was not an adopted or bought child.

The Home Government's reply to Smith was that future passports issued to Chinese British subjects would specify the exact nature of the holder's status and that of his parents.[3] This decision reflected a change in the attitude

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1 CO 273/152 No. 109, 14 March 1888, Smith to S. of S.

2 British Consul (Amoy) to Colonial Secretary, 21 February 1888, enclosed in CO 273/152 No. 109, ibid.

3 COD 11 May 1888.

of the British Government in which Lord Knutsford was now the Secretary of State for the Colonial Office and Lord Salisbury the Foreign Secretary. In formulating that decision, Salisbury was defending the actions of the British consul in Amoy who had taken precautions against the abuse of passports by British subjects of Chinese origin.[1] The Foreign Office nevertheless overlooked the Colonial Office's suggestion of issuing definite instructions to the British consuls in China because it was still awaiting the outcome of Walsham's anticipated negotiations with the Chinese Government. It was apparent that the British Government had revised its attitude and was again drawing a distinction in status between Chinese British subjects; this distinction, however, was not clearly defined.

Apart from pressing for an authoritative decision on the subject of passports and the status of Chinese British subjects in China, the Straits authorities sought wider powers to cancel the certificates of naturalization of those Chinese who had taken up permanent residence outside the Colony.[2] The British Government was aware that although naturalization did not confer upon the recipient the rights of a British subject when he was outside the Colony, by obtaining from the Governor a passport which might be of limited duration, a person so naturalized virtually obtained British protection except in the state of which he was originally a subject. In order to prevent the abuse of this privilege, Lord Knutsford suggested that the Governor should grant passports to persons naturalized in the Colony only for a limited period and on condition that they intended to make the Colony their permanent place of residence.[3] In other

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1 CO 273/156 F.O., 7 May 1888.

2 CO 273/153 No. 344, 27 July 1888, Smith to S. of S.

3 COD 22 December 1888. Knutsford would not grant the power sought by the Straits authorities because Section 10 of the 1867 Naturalization Act as amended by the Ordinance of 1870 gave no authority to cancel a naturalization certificate on any ground other than that of a material false statement declared in a memorial.

words, naturalized Chinese British subjects with passports of limited duration would be given British protection in countries other than China.

By 1890, the position of the Straits Government was reasonably clear regarding its policy towards the Chinese British subjects outside the Colony whose passports had the subject's status stamped in them. The British consuls in China, however, were still dissatisfied and demanded evidence of the parents' status from the passport-holders.[1] It was this inconsistency of British policy in providing protection that led overseas Chinese who held British passports to acquire second ones viz. those endorsed by the Chinese Government and issued by the Consulate-General. The Chinese Government's policy in granting passports was consistent with its avowed principle of exercising authority over all Chinese wherever they were. By their indecision, the British had themselves created a demand in the Colony for Chinese passports, and the Chinese could not be blamed for acting in self-interest.

When the Chinese Government in September 1893 authorized its consular personnel overseas to grant passports, the Straits Government regarded this development as a serious one but not grave enough to warrant immediate action. The Protector of Chinese (Wray) viewed the matter essentially as the investment in the Consul General of additional powers that would enable him to arbitrarily grant or refuse passports. Such powers were likely to prove lucrative to Huang and his subordinates, all of whom were suspected to being influenced by pecuniary considerations in the exercise of their duties.[2] The Chinese Government's new policy was interpreted as an attempt to 'reap beneficial results in the end' because every returning emigrant would find it necessary

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1 CO 273/169 No. 440, 7 November 1890, Acting Gov. Dickson to S. of S.

2 Minute by Protector of Chinese (G. Wray), 16 March 1894 enclosed in CO 273/194, Confidential, 31 March 1894.

to possess a Chinese passport for his own protection.[1] The Straits Governor and the British Minister at Peking reinforced this view by stating that a system of blackmail could evolve under the disguise of China's professed policy of benevolence.[2] They conceded, however, that the Chinese Government had the unquestionable right to draft its own passport regulations, and unless specific cases of abuses occurred, no attempts at intervention should be made by the British Government.[3] In short, the British were prepared to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude at this stage. Huang introduced the passport system with fees ranging from $1 to $4, varying in accordance with the financial status of the applicant, and on 15 May 1894, Wray reported that the staff of the Consulate-General had been expanded recently, presumably to implement Peking's decision more efficiently. He protested against the British Government's continued recognition of the Chinese Consular officials in the Straits because of the damage they were suspected of having caused to British interests.[4] The Governor, however, refrained from sanctioning action but did express apprehension that the vigour with which Huang was carrying out his task would tend to confirm in the minds of the more ignorant Chinese the idea that the Chinese Emperor's authority extended to the Colony and the Malay States. With large numbers of emigrants returning to China, he also suspected that Huang would enrich himself at their expense.[5] The Governor, who had been unwilling to act, seemed to be reversing his attitude and preparing the Colonial Office for the possibility of a further clash with the Consul General.

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1 Ibid.

2 CO 273/194, Confidential, 31 March 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

3 Ibid.; also CO 273/200 F.O., 27 August 1894.

4 Memorandum by Protector of Chinese (G. Wray), 15 May 1894, enclosed in CO 273/195, Confidential, 28 May 1894.

5 CO 273/195, Confidential, 28 May 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

After Huang had commenced the passport system, there were no applicants at all, and he was compelled to send out Yü-tan 諭單 (Ju-tan) or letters of instruction to certain noted Hokkien merchants in Singapore whom he had appointed as his agents to familiarize the local Chinese with the new regulations of the Consulate-General.[1] The issue of the Yü-tan immediately provoked the Straits Government into action. In October 1894, the Colonial Secretary informed the Consul-General that such interference would not be tolerated. Huang gave verbal assurances that the instructions would be withdrawn, but this was not done.[2] After some delay, Governor Mitchell found cause for intervention. He approved a proclamation issued by the Chinese Protectorate on 3 December 1894 which read:

> Recently, without any reference to the local Government, the Chinese Consul-General has taken on himself to act ultra vires and go beyond the rights and privileges of his consular position. As this is a matter that may lead to serious misunderstanding amongst Chinese traders and others, ...it is necessary to explain to you that Chinese consular officers are appointed in the Straits Settlements as commercial agents on behalf of China, and that they can in no way exercise any local power or issue notices with reference to local affairs, or like local officers give official commands to Chinese living here under English rule. It is their duty to foster trade and encourage and assist their countrymen in all commercial undertakings. With reference to the matters of the Chinese Consul-General issuing Ju-tans or letters of instructions to Chinese living in this colony, it is beyond the power of the Chinese consul to act in this way. This is putting himself on a footing with the local officers of Her Majesty's Government, and taking upon himself to give Chinese Government instructions in an English-governed country to Chinese living under English rule. Still further, in issuing Ju-tans to Chinese who are British subjects by birth, the Chinese Consul-General has committed a grave mistake and gone still further

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1 Straits Budget, 4 December 1894, Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p. 282.

2 CO 273/199 No. 416, 22 December 1894, Mitchel to S. of S.

> beyond his legitimate powers. In order to make this matter clear, it is my duty to explain fully to the Chinese living here, that they are, as long as they reside here, under the control and rule of Her Majesty's Government, and that the Chinese Consul-General can in no way be allowed to come between the Chinese and the local Government. It will be wrong to be under the misapprehension that the Chinese consul is able to interpose in any way in local affairs, where Chinese are interested, except in conjunction with and with the knowledge and consent of the local Government.[1]

The Times reported on 9 January 1895 that the Straits Government had placarded the Colony with the proclamation in Chinese. The British authorities further informed the Chinese population of Huang's misconduct by citing as an example his ability to extract more than $200,000 from the Consulate-General during his four-year term in the Straits.[2] Although the efficacy of the proclamation is difficult to ascertain, there was no doubt that Chinese passports continued to be issued, as G.T. Hare pointed out in 1896.[3]

It has been demonstrated that the Straits Government objected to Huang's conduct in the opium conspiracy and his action in issuing passports; in fact, the Chinese Protectorate would have liked nothing better than the complete withdrawal of recognition of the Chinese consular officials in the Colony. The Protectorate had always considered the consular establishment as a fierce rival if not a direct political threat. Fortunately for Huang, the British Government regarded the future of Anglo-Chinese relationships in the East as an over-riding priority and chose to ignore the constant warning emanating from the Protectorate. The British Government, however, warned the Tsungli-Yamen that should Huang persist in his objectionable

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1 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.282-3; Straits Budget, 11 December 1894.

2 Times, 9 January 1895; CO 273/210, 9 January 1895.

3 This point will be illustrated in the following chapter.

activities, his Exequatur might be withdrawn.[1] It is difficult to determine whether this open threat had substance. In any case, the strained relations between the Straits Government and the Consulate-General were terminated when Huang was recalled to China by Chang Chih-tung at the end of 1894.[2] Immediately before his departure, Huang wrote a letter to the Colonial Secretary which attested his respect for the Straits Government. He said:

> It is three years since I arrived here, I have always found the British Government's policy benevolent and liberal, and the Chinese here observe the rules and laws, and are well protected by the local authorities; and they are living happily. Chinese in other parts of Nanyang are not so well treated.[3]

Such testimony must have delighted officials of the Chinese Protectorate, for here was a departing adversary freely admitting the success of British policy concerning the well-being of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements. Although the rivalry for influence had been intense, the Chinese Protectorate had a healthy respect for Huang's ability. Two years after his return to China, Huang's influence continued to be felt in the Colony, resulting in a recommendation by the Assistant Protector of Chinese (G.T. Hare) on the need for counter-action. Hare was convinced that had Huang stayed for another five years, the loyalty of the Chinese and their amicable relations with the British would have been seriously affected.[4]

Huang's recall marked the end of a period of active confrontation between the consular establishment and the Straits Government, but the decrease in tension did not prevent the intensification of the British policy of

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1 CO 273/200 F.O., 2 November 1894; CO 273/195, Confidential, 23 June 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

2 Hummel, op. cit., p.351; Straits Budget, 4 December 1894.

3 CO 273/199 No. 402, 7 December 1894, Mitchell to S. of S.

4 Memorandum by G.T. Hare, 30 September 1896, op. cit.

fostering the loyalty of the Chinese towards the Crown after the Chinese Government's attempts to cultivate loyalty to Peking had become too obvious to be ignored. The pressure exerted by the Chinese Government through its Consulate-General was to continue to have a direct bearing on the formulation of British policy, a policy which was constantly being shaped by a process of 'trial and error'.

CHAPTER 5

BRITISH POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE CHINESE AND CHINA POLITICS (1895-1900)

It has been established that from 1877 to 1894, selected Chinese consular personnel of considerable skill and ability were conducting various activities to further China's influence and implement the imperial Government's new policy towards the overseas Chinese. One notable result of this policy was the material response of the Nanyang Chinese to the China cause; a response which was deemed extremely beneficial by the Chinese Government. The departure of Huang Tsun-hsien from the Straits marked the end of an era of the Chinese consuls' forceful presence in which so much emphasis was placed on financial support for China. For the remaining six years before the turn of the century, relations between the Chinese Consulate-General and the Straits Government were relatively quiescent. This was a period, however, in which the forces shaping the course of history in China were also wittingly or unwittingly drawn into the Straits, where the attitudes and awareness of the Chinese population, the Chinese consular officials and the colonial authorities were affected in one form or another. It is therefore proposed at this point to make a brief reference to the events occurring in China in the mid 1890's and to the response of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements to these events.

Nascent Chinese Nationalism and its Effects on the Colony's Chinese.

In the last five years of the nineteenth century, the increasingly rapid degeneration of the imperial Government was reflected both in China's inability to cope with the growing ambitions of the Western powers in Asia and in widespread internal chaos. Since 1870, some Western nations had adopted new tactics of seeking special rights and privileges in designated areas of China; as a first step,

attempts were made to weaken or destroy China's political control over its vassals and neighbours. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in August 1894 hastened China's decline to the level of a stake in diplomacy and prize in war. Many contemporary observers had assumed that the sheer size of China would win that war but the outcome was startling as Japan emerged victorious. China was branded a 'paper dragon' because its inherent weaknesses were revealed.[1] As a result of the failure of 'Self-Strengthening' against Japan, China was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki with the victor. As soon as the terms of the agreements became known, Russia, Germany and France, working in concert under the pretext of diplomatic intervention against Japan on China's behalf, started a scramble for concessions which soon taught China a lesson in Western political ethics. For the next five years, China was subjected to a series of demands to grant compensation not only to these three European powers but also to Britain and Japan, and the breakup of China was under way.

In response to the foreigners' feverish activities, many Chinese began to feel the need for counteraction against aggression. The restoration movement had provided a false sense of security and its collapse was an experience as traumatic as the defeat of 1895 which had evoked deep anxiety over the survival of the country. A consequence of this was the emergence of nationalism in China, with some pressing for reform whereas others advocated a thorough-going revolution. Yet there remained a substantial number of conservatives who felt that China's salvation lay in resistance and reaction. In 1894, the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen had plotted the Canton uprising which ended in dismal failure, forcing him to seek

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1 N. Peffer, The Far East: A Modern History (Ann Arbor, 1958), chapters 6, 12 and 15; S.K. Hornbeck, Contemporary Politics in the Far East (N.Y. 1916), pp.47-61.

2 Tatsuji Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire (New York, 1935), pp.51-8; 72-5; Reischauer and Fairbank, op. cit., pp.468-75.

refuge abroad. A more dynamic personality in China at this time, however, was the radical reformer K'ang Yu-wei who led a group of more than twelve hundred provincial graduates (chü-jen) in presenting to the Throne on 2 May 1895 what became known as the 'Ten Thousand Word Memorial'. This move marked the inauguration of the Reform Movement which was to absorb the attention of the scholar-official class during the next four years.[1]

The Kuang-hsü Emperor's party at court espoused the cause of reform and for a hundred days after 11 June 1898, imperial decrees were issued one after another dealing with almost every conceivable subject: remodelling the examination system and setting up modern schools; revising laws as a preliminary step in the abolition of extraterritoriality; promoting newspapers, commerce, inventions, mining, agriculture, medicine and study abroad; and modernising the army, navy, police and the postal system.[2] As a climax, the obscurantist Empress Dowager was to be imprisoned. On 21

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1 K'ang Yu-wei was an eminent scholar of Chinese classics and his style was felicitous. Brought up in an old family noted for its neo-Confucian scholarship, K'ang's attitude towards the Ch'ing Emperor was one of deep-rooted loyalty. The reforms he suggested were presented as a revival of the classical tradition, a reinterpretation of the past, rather than an innovation; and his ability to quote the past to demonstrate the need for change strengthened his position against the reactionaries. For this reason, K'ang's supporters acknowledged him as the 'great reformist' and his opponents called him the 'modern sage'. In Confucius' basic teachings, 'loyalty to the emperor and the nation' (忠君愛國) had been strongly stressed by the Ch'ing Government since the seventeenth century.

O. Lang, Chinese Family and Society (London, 1946), p.10; Hsiao Kung-chuan, Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century (Seattle and London, 1967), p.185.

2 The motive of these reforms was made clear in one of the earliest of the mandates: it was not the desire to modernize Chinese society but mainly a desire to strengthen it against the external onslaught. M.E. Cameron, The Reform Movement in China, 1898-1912 (N.Y. 1931), pp.42-9; A.N. Holcombe, The Chinese Revolution (N.Y. 1930), chapters 1-4.

September 1898, however, she staged a counter coup when it was ascertained that conservative opposition to the reform movement was vociferous. The abrupt collapse of this paper revolution compelled K'ang and another reformer, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, to escape to Japan. The initiative in responding to the foreign menace immediately shifted to the naive and reactionary Manchu princes who felt they could confront the danger to national existence by ejecting all foreigners. A dramatic sequel of the court's reaction was reflected in the Boxer Movement, which aroused the entire country in varying degrees of intensity. The movement manifested itself in anti-foreignism and a mounting resentment against the Ch'ing Government not only because it was itself alien but because it was unable to protect the country. In the summer of 1900 the outrages of anti-foreignism heightened when the Boxers occupied Peking and besieged the foreign legations. China was once again headed towards national disaster as an international military expedition was prepared for an imminent invasion to relieve the legations.[1] What followed was one of the most hideous episodes in the history of East-West relations, but it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate further.

The aftermath of the fateful year of 1894 had a marked effect on the Chinese in the Straits. It was only in March of the same year that the Nanyang Chinese had appreciated the sight of several new warships of the Pei-yang fleet which, under Admiral T'ing's command, had visited Singapore and Penang. The enthusiasm of the local Chinese was reflected in the extravagant praises of the Chinese press,[2] and an exceptionally warm welcome was given to all personnel of the

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1 J.O.P. Bland and E. Backhouse, China under the Empress Dowager (London, 1910), pp.132-47; Chiang T'ing-fu, op. cit., p.106; Wu hsü pien fa (戊戌變法) (Historical Sources on the Coup D'etat of 1898) compiled by the Chinese Historical Society (中國史学会編) Shanghai, 1953 and 1955, 4 vols: Hu Pin, Wu-hsü pien-fa (Shanghai, 1956), p.25.

2 Cf. Sing Po (ed.), 12 April 1894; Lat Pau, 8, 10, 15 March 1894.

vessels by the consular officials, leading businessmen and Chinese associations. Ironically, this same fleet was annihilated seven months later during the Sino-Japanese conflict. The destruction of the inefficient fleet meant the end of China as a naval power which in the past had used its prestigious warships to display the imperial government's concern for the Nanyang Chinese and to arouse their patriotic sentiments. In the Straits, the Chinese viewed the tragic end of the Pei-yang fleet with stunned disbelief.[1] One local English newspaper editorialized:

> When last March for many days...The Chinese gaz[ed] in admiration at the squadron at anchor in the roads, what would have seemed the last thing in the world to happen has been precisely what has happened - the squadron was defeated and Admiral T'ing preferred suicide to surrender....[2]

The defeat of the fleet prompted many of the Nanyang Chinese to regard reform in China as a dire necessity. Whereas they had previously felt confident in China's apparent military strength, they now were keenly aware of its manifest weakness. It was in this atmosphere of consternation that Chinese nationalism and concern with China politics emerged in the Straits One of the first significant signs of this nascent national consciousness in the Colony was the Chinese boycott in November 1894 of the use of Japanese lanterns to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of the Empress Dowager.[3] A further indication occurred when Li Hung-chang visited the Straits in April 1896. Li, who had lost his high posts in China after the Sino-Japanese War, was

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1 The optimism of the Colony's Chinese during the 1894-5 war could be at least partly attributed to the inaccurate reporting of Lat Pau and Sing Po; both were later accused of publishing 'disgraceful concoctions' that glorified China's victories in the war. The Chinese Consulate-General bore most responsibility becaude it had issued the press with distorted news. S.C.M., Vol. II, 1898, p.77; Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., pp.62-3.

2 S.F.P. editorial, 20 February 1895; J.L. Rawlinson, op. cit., pp.167-197.

3 Straits Budget, 7 November 1894.

on his way to Russia as Chinese Ambassador. The Straits authorities had to provide him with very strict security measures during his stop-over because they realized that sections of the Chinese population bore bitter animosity towards Li for his role in the 1894-5 war and the subsequent Treaty of Shimonoseki.[1] In 1898, the appearance of another Chinese newspaper, The Thien Nan Shin Pao (天南新報) which championed reform, could be attributed to the rising tide of Chinese nationalism.[2]

As the turn of the century approached, the Chinese in the Colony were becoming openly hostile towards the incompetence of the moribund Chinese imperial government. There were mounting indications that traditional Chinese values could not be accepted in toto because the Nanyang Chinese, living in a colonial environment, could constantly feel themselves subjected to foreign ridicule. The move for reform in the Straits to rally behind the Chinese nation came from two distinct groups. One group, led by Khoo Seok Wan (邱菽園) drew its support mainly from immigrant Chinese who were well-versed in Chinese classics; the other, represented by Lim Boon Keng (林文慶) was mainly supported by the English-educated Straits Chinese.[3] As the local reform movement gathered momentum, K'ang Yu-wei and Sun Yat-

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1 CO 273/214 No. 140, 6 April 1896, Mitchell to S. of S.; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.289.

2 S.C.M., Vol. II, 1898, p.77.

3 Khoo Seok Wan was the proprietor-cum-chief writer of the Thien Nan Shin Pao after he graduated in China with a literary degree. A noted classical poet as well as a literary scholar, Khoo became a popular personality among the Chinese in the Nanyang. Su Hsiao-hsien (ed.)蘇孝先(編): Chang-chou shih shu lu hsing t'ung hsiang lu 漳州十屬旅星同鄉錄 (A list of Chang Chou People in Singapore) (Singapore 1948), p.64.

Dr Lim Boon Keng was the first Straits Chinese to acquire a Queen's Scholarship for study in Britain. He graduated in 1892 with a medical degree from Edinburgh University. After returning to the Straits, he was appointed as a Chinese member in the Colony's Legislative Council. Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.234-5.

sen appeared in the Straits in 1900 to compete for political and financial support.[1] By 1894, the political influence of the Chinese Consulate-General had reached an asymptotic level followed by a slow but steady decline after 1895; the advent of K'ang and Sun to the Colony in 1900 accelerated the declining process because new political causes were providing fresh stimuli to the Colony's Chinese and challenging the influence of the Consulate-General.

The Chinese Government's Further Attempts to Utilize the Goodwill of the Nanyang Chinese

As early as 1890, there seemed to be a shift in the imperial government's policy towards the overseas Chinese. Not only was the government interested in the relief funds from Chinese abroad, but it was also showing other interest in the overseas Chinese - in their wealth as a possible source of investment in the economic ventures sponsored by the Chinese Government; and in the attraction of overseas Chinese for government service. Towards these ends, the Chinese diplomatic and consular personnel overseas increased their efforts to act as links between the Chinese Government and the Chinese abroad. Before discussing the Chinese Government's redoubled efforts to utilize the goodwill of the Nanyang Chinese, it is necessary to briefly examine the personnel of the consular establishment in the period between 1895 and 1900.

After Huang's departure, the consular establishment in the Straits was comparatively quiet. The former Chinese vice-consul in Penang, Chang Chen-hsün, was appointed Acting Consul-General in Singapore from 3 January 1895[2] to 2 April 1897 when he was made Consul-General.[3] Chang was probably

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1 Wang Gung-wu, Chinese Reformists and Revolutionaries in the Straits Settlements, 1900-1911, B.A. Hons Thesis (unpublished) University of Malaya, Singapore, 1953, cf. Chapters 1-2.

2 Lat Pau and SFP, 4 January 1895.

3 SSGG No. 235, 2 April 1897.

approved for the key post because of his extensive influence in Nanyang and because he had had a measure of success in advancing China's interests. It is possible, however, that Chang may have brought his enormous wealth into play, since in 1893 ex-Administrator Maxwell had privately alleged that he had purchased his vice-consul's post in Penang.[1] In any case, the Chinese Government had confidence in Chang and he was frequently recalled to China for consultations. During his periods of absence, charge of the consulate-general was given to Na-san (那三) and later to Liu Yü-lin (瀏毓霖).[2] Chang Chen-hsün vacated the post in 1898 and it was not until February 1900 that Lo Tsung-yao (羅宗堯), a former secretary of the Chinese Legation in London who had been working in Singapore since 1899, was appointed Consul-General.[3]

The Chinese Government's new interest in attracting overseas Chinese capital manifested itself in 1890 when Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng requested the well-known Straits merchant, Tan Kim Cheng, to persuade some of his business associates to invest in the newly established Shanghai Cotton Mill.[4] In 1894, Li Hung-chang unsuccessfully offered the management of the China Merchant Steam Navigation Company to Chang Chen-hsün.[5] In the following year, the Governor of Min-Tse (Fukien and Chekiang) was reported to have made a widely publicized offer to opulent Chinese merchants in the Nanyang to take over the commercial management of the Foochow armoury and dockyards.[6] The desire of the Chinese Government to

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1 Cf. Chapter 5, pp. 205, 211.

2 CO 273/235 No. 26, 29 January 1898; COD No. 196, 30 June 1899; SSGG No. 70, 28 January 1898.

3 CO 273/264 F.O., 6 January 1900; COD No. 196, 30 June 1899; CO 273/256 No. 41, 21 February 1900.

4 Lat Pau, 6 March 1890.

5 Straits Budget, 19 February 1895; see chapter 5, pp. 205, 211.

6 Straits Budget, 31 December 1895.

recruit western-educated overseas Chinese into its service was indicated by the well-known case of a Malacca-born Chinese, Wu T'ing-fang (伍廷芳 or Ng Ah Choy as he was known in the Straits) who was trained in the legal profession in Britain. He joined the Chinese Government service in 1894 and two years later was appointed as Chinese Minister to Washington. As an assistant to Li Hung-chang in the drafting of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Wu must have impressed the senior Chinese official.[1] His rise to prominence was acclaimed by the Chinese in the Straits as a brilliant example of a successful Straits-born Chinese.[2]

From 1895, the financially-drained Chinese Government demonstrated an even greater willingness to accommodate the services of overseas Chinese into its economy. The Treaty of Shimonoseki and the subsequent agreements had given the foreign powers the right to start new enterprises in China, particularly in the treaty ports. Almost immediately there developed the classic imperialist situation: foreign powers were only too eager to make loans to China, not for altruistic reasons but for economic self-interest. Huge loans to China resulted in the country's hypothecation of its sovereignty. Confronted with this escalating danger, the Chinese Government initiated new plans for its economy, and one of the steps taken was the accelerated promotion of privately-owned modern Chinese economic and commercial enterprises. Capital from overseas Chinese was encouraged as an important source of investment. Examples of the attempts to entice overseas Chinese capital were numerous, and it will suffice to refer to a few significant instances.

In April 1896, Chang Chen-hsün, the acting Consul-General in Singapore, was summoned to Shanghai by the taotai of Tientsin, Sheng Hsuan-huai (盛宣懷) who was also the chairman of the board of directors of the China Merchant

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1 S.F.P. 25 March 1897; S.C.M. Vol. VII, No. 2, 1903, p.108.

2 S.C.M. Vol. 1, No. 1, 1897, p.29.

Steam Navigation Company and director of the Imperial Telegraph. The purpose of Chang's recall was for consultations on a proposed Peking-Hankow Railway project as well as other financial ventures. Chang appeared disinterested in the railway proposal but advised Sheng that if there was a railway line in Kwangtung province, the Nanyang Chinese would be prepared to invest.[1] While in China Chang was persuaded to become the largest private shareholder in the China Commercial Bank which was founded in 1886 with government funds.[2] He returned to Singapore in February 1897, but early in the following year departed again for China after having been appointed the Canton general manager of the new Hankow-Canton railway.[3] Several months later Chang successfully raised a sum of two million taels from the Colony's Chinese for the projected railway in Canton, and a local Chinese merchant, acting under his instructions, opened a branch office in Singapore to sell shares in the railway undertakings.[4]

As a consul-general who was personally involved in China's new economic policy, Chang played a vital role in encouraging the financial support of the Nanyang Chinese. Although sources are inadequate to accurately assess the response of the overseas Chinese, it would not be erroneous to assume that their enthusiasm was merely lukewarm. It is inconceivable that the wily overseas Chinese merchants, hardened by their experience in business competition, could have readily invested their money in a degenerating Chinese government renowned for corruption and inefficiency. On the

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1 Lat Pau, 28 April 1896; A. Feuerwerker, China's Early Industrialization, Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise (Mass., 1958), pp.61-6.

2 Ibid., p.69; Tan Ee-Leong, 'The Chinese Banks Incorporated in Singapore and the Federation of Malaya', JMBRAS, Vol. XXVI, Part I, No. 161, July 1953, p.113.

3 Lat Pau, 1 February 1898; 23 February 1899.

4 Ibid., 23 February 1899; Straits Budget, 30 September 1898.

other hand, it would seem that the imperial government's drive to obtain the services of capable Western-trained overseas Chinese met with more success. With their Western education, some of the Chinese from abroad returned because they tended to be more nationalistic and to some extent more ambitious for public distinction, something which could never be achieved by Asians in a colonial environment. The Chinese Government's attempt to absorb overseas Chinese into its bureaucracy was a timely and wise manoeuvre. In the Straits, young Straits-Chinese who had been educated in Britain under the Queen's Scholarship scheme initiated by Sir Cecil Smith in 1885[1] were beginning to return in the mid 1890's. If they had political ambitions, the highest position to which they could aspire was membership in the Colony's Legislative Council. An example of the desire of the Western-educated Chinese for prominence was that of Dr Ho Kai who had been a member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council. When Sheng Hsüan-huai succeeded in recruiting him into the staff of the Imperial Railway Administration and the China Commercial Bank, the Chinese in the Straits were exultant.[2] One local English newspaper cautioned:

> The future of China promises many a brilliant opening to Chinamen who are in full touch and sympathy with progressive ideas. Who knows but that we may lose Dr Lim Boon Keng in the same way by and by.[3]

The newspaper also observed that the gateway to a career of almost unlimited possibilities stood open to well-qualified overseas Chinese in whom the Chinese Government could have complete confidence.[4] On 23 March it wryly commented that Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements promised

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1 CO 273/133 No. 82, 5 March 1884, Smith to S. of S.; CO 273/141 No. 386, 25 September 1886, Smith to S. of S.

2 Lat Pau, 11 February 1897.

3 S.F.P., 16 March 1897.

4 Ibid.

to become training grounds for Chinese officials who would graduate through the colonies' legislative councils.[1]

Further evidence of this aspect of the Chinese Government's policy was given in 1898 when the acting Consul-General in Singapore, Liu Yü-lin (or Lew Yuk-lin) publicly encouraged the return to China of Western-educated overseas Chinese. Referring to the Reform of 1898 which was then in progress, Liu stated:

> To the Straits-born Chinese, the promulgation of the recent edicts referring to educational matters gives one cause for congratulation, in that it offers to them a good opportunity for seeking employment in China. With a tolerably good knowledge of English, and with the advantage of having come into contact with Europeans, the Straits-born Chinese now working as clerks on poor and inadequate salaries would find lucrative employment in the railway, mining and other new enterprises now being opened up in China. The only drawback is that they lack knowledge of the Chinese language....To supply this need, a school is to be started in Singapore to provide Chinese education ....Then, for the encouragement of worthy students, scholarships will be awarded in order to enable these promising youths to take up some useful profession in some university in Great Britain.[2]

Liu gave assurances that Straits Chinese could retain their status as British subjects while they were working in China and acquire British protection in the treaty ports. In conclusion, he implored young, promising and well-educated Straits Chinese to look to China for their future.

To ensure that overseas Chinese who returned to China were given special protection by the Chinese officials, Liu Yü-lin repeatedly urged the Governor of Fukien province, Hsü Ying-kuei (許應騤), to implement such measures as an added attraction in China's policy of inviting overseas Chinese back to the country. As a result of a successful memorial from Governor Hsü to the throne, the Bureau for the

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1 Ibid., 23 March 1897.

2 SCM Vol. II, 1898, 'China - A New Field for Straits Enterprise: An interview with Mr Lew Yuk-lin', pp.102-4.

Protection of Commerce (Pao-shang chü 保商局) was established in Amoy in 1899. Despite its name, the Bureau was charged with multifarious tasks including the responsibility for investigating grievances from returning overseas Chinese who had been oppressed or 'squeezed', and the protection of women and children against kidnapping.[1] A similar bureau was subsequently opened in Canton in 1900. The Chinese Government also displayed its willingness to protect the overseas Chinese by attempting to enlarge its consular representation in the Nanyang. The fall of the Spanish Colonial regime in the Philippines enabled the establishment of a Chinese Consulate-General in Manila in 1899.[2] The Dutch Government, however, refused in 1896 a personal appeal by Li Hung-chang to permit the opening of a Chinese consulate in the Netherlands East Indies. Its objection was that Chinese consular officials were interested only in squeeze and blackmail; the Straits Settlements being conveniently cited as an example.[3]

While the consular establishment in the Straits was advancing China's new interests towards the Nanyang Chinese, its concern with fund-raising for relief purposes in China was also continued. In late 1896, natural disasters occurred in Hupeh, and Chang Chen-hsün, who was then acting Consul-General, utilized his business connections in the Straits and the Netherlands East Indies to open immediate relief funds. Titles and honours were sold in the Straits, and officials sent from China were issued with credentials by the Consulate-General to assist in fund-raising.[4] Two years later, subscriptions were still being collected. The

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1 Lat Pau, 12 and 14 June 1899; 25 April 1900.

2 E. Wickberg, The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898 (New Haven, 1965), p.188.

3 CO 273/221 F.O., 15 July 1896.

4 Lat Pau, 21 January and 16 June 1897, 5 March 1898.

consulate-general also launched a charitable fund for Szechuan in August 1897 and for Kiangsu in April 1898.[1]

After 1895, the Chinese in the Straits began to initiate appeals for subscriptions without regard for titles and honours. Their voluntary work could be attributed to a new awareness of China. One example was that of the T'ung-chai Hospital which privately raised subscriptions for Honan in 1895, Kwangsi in 1896 and Kwangtung two years later.[2] When Kwangtung and Fukien provinces were famine-stricken between 1898 and 1899, merchants in the Straits voluntarily formed themselves into committees to raise funds;[3] a rare achievement because the merchants were from different dialect groups.

The role of the consular officials in the private charity appeals was merely to assist in their organization whereas previously the initiative in launching subscriptions had been taken by the consulate-general itself. The Chinese Government's declining reputation compelled the officials themselves to make contributions as a means of enlisting sympathy.[4] From 1895 there was a general tendency of the Nanyang Chinese to display unwillingness to contribute to consular-sponsored appeals. In fact, Lat Pau in October 1896 launched a scathing attack on the Chinese Government's hypocritical attitude towards the Chinese in Nanyang and denounced the avaricious Chinese officials who came to the Straits for the purposes of 'squeeze'. The newspaper further criticized the corrupt officials for wasting the hard-earned money which the overseas Chinese had subscribed,[5] and the

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1 Ibid., 5 August 1897, 14 April 1898.

2 Lat Pau, 21 September 1895, 18 May 1896, 23 March 1898.

3 Lat Pau, May 1898-November 1899, passim.

4 Ibid., 12 April to 17 May 1899.

5 Ibid., 2 October 1896. There were other editorials in Lat Pau with similar comments between 1896-1899.

public outcry in the Straits against official incompetence in China prompted the consulate-general to sponsor fewer appeals.[1]

British policy during the period from 1895 to 1900 was primarily directed at actively cultivating the loyalty of the Chinese in the Straits. Although there was no open confrontation between the Straits authorities and the consulate-general, this policy ipso facto meant that the British were attempting to undermine the influence of the consular establishment.

British Efforts to Cultivate Chinese Loyalty and Undermine the Influence of the Consulate-General

Between 1895 and 1900, the Chinese Consulate-General in the Straits was advancing the Chinese Government's new interest in overseas Chinese capital and talent, as well as its continuing interest in relief subscriptions from abroad. The Straits Government had not been oblivious to these activities, particularly as the Chinese Protectorate had reason to suspect that the efforts of the consular officials had had some impact on the Colony's Chinese. In the past the Protectorate had never dissembled its deep resentment of the consular establishment; after all, one of the primary duties of that Straits Government institution was to keep constant vigil on the Chinese population. The Protectorate viewed the success of the consulate-general in exercising influence as a political threat to effective British rule, and in the last years of the nineteenth century the colonial authorities decided it was time to take counter-action.

On 30 September 1896, the Assistant Protector of Chinese, G.T. Hare, submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Straits Governor in which he expressed his 'sentimental grievance' against the consulate-general and recommended that the

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1 In 1897 and 1900, consular officials hesitated to act on behalf of China ostensibly on the grounds that local resources were exhausted. Lat Pau, 5 August 1897, 14 August 1900.

Straits Government should curb its widespread influence.[1]

Hare's arguments are worth quoting in extenso:

> It cannot, I think, be doubted that a mistake was made by [the British] Government in ever consenting to the appointment of Chinese Consular Officers in the Straits Settlements...As by far the greater portion of the trade and property of the Colony is in Chinese hands...this naturally gives Chinese officials great opportunity of interfering with local affairs through the Chinese Consulate. The only reason why this interference has been confined within limits hitherto, is that the Chinese Consuls have shrunk from coming into collision with the Chinese Protectorate and thus with the local Government.
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> The influence of the Chinese Government, however, is felt in the Straits much more than is apparent to the Colonial authorities. It is exercised indirectly in many ways. I might refer to the collection of subscriptions for charitable or political objects in China, through the medium of the Chinese Consuls and their agents here. This system has increased of late years and is tending to degenerate into a kind of forced loan. To show that these men sending appeals for money on one pretext or another are more or less political squeezes, one has but to remember that in China proper one province never interferes with the affairs of another. The Straits Chinese all come from the Southern provinces, and the appeals made to them nearly always come from the Northern Chinese....
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> The number of Chinese Officials sent from China to collect money from the Chinese in the Straits Settlements and Malay Peninsula, has increased of late[2]....But the Chinese Consul-General never reports the arrival of these Officials to the local Government. I admit it would be very difficult to stop this polite form of Chinese Official extortion by legislation, but the Chinese Consul-General might well...be asked to make it a practice to report the arrival of these Officials. The Government might ask that, I think, in order to protect Chinese colonists from being imposed on by officials with forged or stolen credentials....

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1 See Chapter 5, p.198.

2 See Appendix XIX

It has occurred to me that perhaps the Colonial Government is not altogether free from blame in allowing this upgrowth of pro-China Chinese feeling amongst our British-born Chinese subjects. My experience of the reason why British-born Chinese subjects of wealth and standing hunger and thirst after Chinese honorific titles, red buttons and peacock feathers, is because the local authorities never make any recognition...to local Chinese for political services or special acts of assistance to Government or generosity to the public in carrying out useful works.

As a matter of policy alone, I think there may be room for improvement here. No other Eastern nations attach such importance to official distinctions and honours as the Chinese. I am of opinion that the Colonial Government might do more to cultivate the loyalty and good-will of its Chinese citizens by devising some methods of recognising such services as they may perform. I am certain that Chinese British subjects would not ...hanker so much after Chinese titles and honours if more notice was taken of them here by our Government. It must be remembered that the British-born Chinese subject has a difficult part to play. If he is a man of position and English education, much is expected of him by the local Government. But he has to keep in touch with and humour the great majority here - the China-born Chinese. He has to wear two faces...one side to the Europeans and one side to the Chinese. As the Chinese are in great majority here, it is not surprising therefore that he should go over to the Chinese side ...[and] it is not unknown that advances have been made...to various prominent Straits-born Chinese with a view to inducing them to take up the post of Chinese Consul-General here. As a further illustration...that it is not unusual for British-born Chinese, of position, going to China, to first get a pass-port from the local Government, and then subsequently also a second Chinese one from the Chinese Consulate. This and many other things... show the drift of Chinese feeling and the tendency amongst our Chinese subjects to own allegiance in public to Her Majesty the Queen, and in private, to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China. The last words spoken to the Chinese of the Straits Settlements by Sir Cecil C. Smith was an appeal to them to remember that this was a British Colony and that they owed allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen before all others.

I venture to think that the Government might do more to cultivate the loyalty of the Chinese settled and born in these parts. It is peculiar but none the less true, that just as the Chinese have the

commercial instinct implanted in them more strongly than in any other nation, so they have developed as great a consuming hunger and thirst for notoriety. The Colonial Government has not yet adequately considered whether this legitimate craving after name and fame might not be satisfied to some degree...for nothing would do more to change the pro-China and anti-Colonial tendencies of the Chinese settled here or induce them to spend their money more freely on local charities and public works than some system of official recognition of political or local services....

It is curious to notice too that the Government of Netherlands India, although it treats Chinese on the whole in a far less liberal spirit than H.M. Government, admits the principle of the expediency of promoting Chinese good-will and recognises local services by a graduated system of official rewards and honours....Orders given in the form of medals...are often given to Dutch-born Chinese subjects. This order was specially created for Dutch Colonial settlers, of Asiatic descent. Occasionally too the home order of the Lion of Netherlands is presented for special long continued political services. Services rendered to Government are further recognised in the Dutch Colonies by the bestowal of the honorary titles of 'Lieutenant', 'Captain', or 'Major' of the Chinese. These are merely brevet titles and do not of course confer substantive offices....

It must be remembered by Government that all Chinese of position and wealth settled here do much to assist Government in preserving order amongst the lower classes of the Chinese. The Chinese that take an intelligent interest in local affairs, are a very valuable medium of communication between Government and the vast masses of Chinese who know nothing of our laws and customs. I might add too that the Chinaman is just as much a sealed book to most Europeans and such Chinese as do come forward and...expound him are discharging a meritorious... task to Society....

It would not be difficult to devise means for rewarding Chinese Colonial services. Such a system could be devised and be brought into force by local legislation or the matter might be left to the Colonial Office to carry out....

I have no doubt that any system of rewarding Chinese services to the public or to the Chinese would be popular here and lead to emulation amongst the Chinese in doing good, and that nothing would do more to counteract, and keep within bounds, the

> hold of the Chinese Government on our Chinese subjects in the Colony and Peninsula, and lead to a healthier and more patriotic Anglo-Chinese spirit and feeling.[1]

Governor Mitchell concurred with Hare and suggested to the Home Government that the Governors in the Straits Settlements as well as in Hong Kong should be empowered to confer on the Chinese in those colonies 'certain degrees of rank and marks of honour' which would be somewhat analagous to those bestowed by the Emperor of China.[2] The 'interesting proposal'[3] was referred by the Colonial Office to Sir Cecil Smith for advice in view of the ex-Governor's extensive experience in the eastern colonies and his intimate knowledge of the Chinese.[4] It is significant to note that Pickering's name was not mentioned as a possible consultant in this issue.

In his reply, Sir Cecil vehemently disagreed with the Straits authorities and strongly criticized their proposition. He began by asserting that titles and ranks for Chinese in the Straits ceased when the establishment of the Chinese Protectorate superceded the 'Capitan China' system which had been subject to gross abuse in the past.[5] Capitans China continued to exist in the Protected Malay States because of government weakness in dealing with Chinese matters, but as British control grew stronger, limited rule by the Chinese headmen would be abolished. In the Netherlands East Indies, the Dutch Government held those principal Chinese who were appointed Lieutenant, Captain or Major as directly responsible for the conduct of their

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1 Report by G.T. Hare, 30 September 1896, enclosed in CO 273/218 No. 464, 6 October 1896. See Appendix IX

2 CO 273/218 No. 464, 6 October 1896, Mitchell to S. of S.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/218 No. 464, Ibid.

4 C.O. to Sir Cecil Smith, 12 November 1896, enclosed in CO 273/218 No. 464, ibid.

5 See Chapter 1.

fellow-countrymen. Despite the threat of fines or imprisonment if there was misconduct among the Chinese, appointments for ranks were nevertheless widely sought because of lucrative 'squeezes' which could be made. Smith pointed out that no British colony could tolerate the Dutch system, especially when the Chinese themselves preferred British officials to 'Capitans China'; hence it would be impossible to bestow ranks or titles in the Colony without the Chinese abusing them as means of oppression. Hare's reference to the collection of subscriptions by the Chinese Government as 'political squeezes' was also viewed with disdain by Smith. His explanation was that North China with its teeming population suffered most from droughts and floods, and the distress could be so appalling that every agency to secure relief had to be utilized. Consequently, the most effective method, viz. the sale of official titles, was actively promoted among the overseas Chinese who were mainly from South China. For this reason, no political significance should be attached to such proceedings. On the other hand, Smith deprecated the devious ways the subscriptions were sometimes raised. Although the ex-Governor agreed that the Chinese consular establishment was doing everything possible to increase its influence, he did not think that the sale of honours was a means toward that end. Even if it were, he would not advise the British Government to compete with the Chinese Government as Hare had suggested. His assumption was that no Chinese decorated by the British would be any more attached to Britain or detached from China. A British-decorated Chinese would unquestionably be proud of his decoration, but it was doubtful whether he would display his title in the presence of Chinese officials or, except in China where British protection was needed, indicate that he was no longer a Chinese subject. Moreover, influential Chinese in the Colony continued to prefer to be buried in China.

Considered even more inadvisable by Smith was the idea of creating an exclusive British title for the Chinese because such a decoration would not be as valued as the

rarely-conferred C.M.G., which was highly esteemed by the pro-British Chinese and by the British officials; in short, it would be inexpedient to create any new order because its value would be doubted. Citing Whampoa as an example - the only Chinese recipient of the C.M.G. as well as the 'most English' of all the Chinese in the Straits, who was yet lacking in British ideas and sympathies - Smith asserted that no decoration of any kind could bind the Chinese to the British Crown. Smith also emphasized that the British had only begun to understand the Chinese in recent years, and with the passage of time the Chinese who were ignorant of China would increase in numbers. Any recognition of public service by influential and respectable Chinese should be made only when they had demonstrated 'outward signs of throwing in their lot with the British'.

In his conclusion, the ex-Governor forwarded an alternative plan by suggesting that academic degrees be given for higher learning in law, medicine and engineering, which would be of great value to the Colony and would in effect surpass honorary distinctions; he was referring to the possibility of establishing a university for the eastern colonies.[1]

On 18 December 1896, the Straits Governor was informed by the Colonial Office that it had accepted Smith's sound advice on the matter but would be prepared to consider other suggestions from the Straits authorities.[2] The Home Government, however, was silent concerning the proposal that a university be built. It felt that the Colony was not ready for such an institution and that young Chinese in pursuit of higher education should be encouraged to attend British universities.[3]

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1 CO 273/223. Individual Correspondence, 8 December 1896, Sir Cecil Smith to Colonial Office.

2 COD No. 499, 18 December 1896.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/223, 8 December 1896, op. cit.

Although Sir Cecil Smith had convinced the Colonial Office of the soundness of his arguments, the Straits authorities were unimpressed with his 'misleading' information.[1] One point which they regarded as evidential of the ex-Governor's inadequacy was that of Chinese burials in the Colony. He was unaware of a growing tendency among the Colony's Chinese, both local-born and China-born, to be interred in the Straits unless they attached special importance to the geomantic influence of the graves in China. The passage of the Burials Bill in 1896 was in fact necessitated by an increasing demand for private burial grounds from the wealthy Chinese. In order to prevent the Colony from developing into a 'huge cemetery', the colonial authorities had designated selected areas for burials.[2]

The Assistant Protector of Chinese also 'pulverized' Smith for failing to make a distinction between the two kinds of 'Capitans China' in the Dutch East Indies. One class was conferred rights and duties and the other was merely honorific whereby it would be difficult to assert that the position could be used for 'squeezing' purposes. Hare ridiculed the notion that a decoration confined to the Chinese would be lightly valued. He did not make any observations on Smith's proposal for a university because the real issue was one of giving honorific distinctions for service to the government and to the community; an institution of higher learning was obviously quite another matter. Smith was also criticized by Hare for being vague in his use of the term 'outward signs'. The latter insisted that the Chinese who were born and raised in the Colony could simultaneously show loyalty towards the British and yet remain Chinese in their way of life and mental processes;

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1 Remarks by G.T. Hare (undated) enclosed in CO 273/224 No. 82, 13 March 1897. Only the more important points made by Hare are mentioned here. See Appendix X for complete transcript.

2 CO 273/219 No. 579, 18 December 1896, Mitchell to S. of S.; S.S.G.G., December 1896; Ordinance 19 of 1896: the Burials Bill; S.C.M., Vol. 2, No. 7, September 1898, pp.82-4.

after all, Indians in India were given decorations without reference to their attire or hair-styles. Nor did distinguished Indians become less Hindu or Islamic because of their pro-British sentiments. The Assistant Chinese Protector felt it would be expecting too much to require Straits-born Chinese to abandon their own tradition and customs for European ways. He continued:

> The force of circumstances is too strong to enable Chinese born here to develop otherwise than on Chinese lines. The very key note to a proper understanding of the leading characteristics of the Straits-born Chinese is a recognition of the fact that he is a person whom the necessities of his situation compel to look with one face, as it were, to the west and with another face to the east. He has to be friends with both Europeans and China-born Chinese. His commercial relations, his social life, the education of his children, his political relations, are all influenced by this dual environment. In the face of the overwhelming China-born Chinese community around him, yearly recruited by new arrivals from China, it would be strange indeed if the Straits born Chinese could free themselves entirely from Chinese ideas....
>
> All their interests are bound up with the welfare of the Colony and shew that the Chinese appreciate the benefits of British administration. Nor are the Chinese of this Colony who own these great interests slow to show their loyalty to H.M. Government. On all public occasions when their loyalty is appealed to, they have responded....
>
> I believe that Chinese loyalty is a healthy plant that will flourish and grow if it is fostered with care. If the wisdom and expediency of cultivating it is admitted, I can see no material reason advanced in Sir Cecil Smith's letter for postponing the matter indefinitely.[1]

Hare had a strong following in the Colonial Office who believed he was more authoritative on Chinese matters than Smith. The ex-Governor was respected because he had considerable experience in governing Chinese. On the other hand, Hare had married a Chinese and had become almost

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[1] Remarks by G.T. Hare, op. cit.; SCM, Vol. 1, 1897, p.71; see Appendix X.

'orientalized' by speaking Chinese more fluently than English and by living as far as was possible in the Chinese manner. The Colonial Office believed that he came nearer to understanding the Chinese than any other official the British had ever had.[1]

After consultations with Hare, Governor Mitchell wrote to London again on 13 March 1897 and firmly stressed that something ought to be done to counteract the efforts of the Chinese Government to retain its influence on the Straits-born Chinese. The Straits Governor claimed that titles and decorations were peculiarly pleasing to Chinese sentiment and it would be difficult to believe that any decoration of British origin would not have an effect on those Chinese who were proud to owe allegiance to the British Crown. He urged the British Government to institute an order which would be confined to the eastern colonies and be somewhat similar to the 'Star of India' which was reserved for services in and to the Indian Peninsula. His reason for pressing this view was that the Straits Chinese had exhibited goodwill in their desire to celebrate the anniversary of Queen Victoria's sixtieth year of reign and the occasion was deemed as appropriate for announcing the founding of an Order of Merit for the Eastern Colonies.[2] Although the Colonial Office agreed to acknowledge public services by the Chinese in the eastern colonies, Mitchell's proposal was rejected.[3] The Secretary of State decided instead that a certain number of

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1 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/326, Confidential, 21 February 1907, Anderson to S. of S.

2 CO 273/224 No. 82, 13 March 1897, Mitchell to S. of S.

3 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/224, No. 82, ibid.

CMG's and KCMG's would be awarded to eminent persons in the Straits on the Governor's recommendation.[1]

A further indication of the efforts of the Straits authorities to counter the influence of the Chinese consular establishment was a public speech by the Assistant Protector of Chinese on 22 January 1897. He told the Straits-born Chinese that the colonial government was doing its utmost to teach them the principles of liberty and freedom and to appreciate the benefits of justice and equal rights. As British subjects by birth, the local-born Chinese were enjoying these privileges which were unavailable to China-born Chinese. Hare reminded the Straits Chinese that although they had wisely retained their traditional ways and customs, they should not forget their status as British subjects. He continued:

> I would warn you not to be influenced by the Chinese view of Government....The Chinese people are constitutionally slaves. They have no political rights and very few privileges as citizens. Their one duty is to obey. We all know what the result of that system is, mutual distrust among the people, dishonesty and extortion among the official classes, endless disorders everywhere. All the Chinese that come to this colony from China have suffered from the effects of this system; and they bring the same ideas that they have in China about government and officials to bear on our own Government here and its officers....
>
> Although bound by customs, traditions and often by relationship and connections with China, I would

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1 COD No. 157, 14 May 1897. In 1903, Hare again raised the matter by referring to numerous services rendered by the Chinese to the Government, and to the growth of Western habits and ideas among the Colony's Chinese. He was of the opinion that the Chinese would be more gratified by a distinction from the King than from a Colonial Government.
In 1905, Sir John Anderson, ignorant of previous correspondence on the issue, privately suggested to a senior official in the Colonial Office (Mr C. Lucas) that Chinese should be rewarded by some sort of decoration 'like the gorgeous collars they used to give to West African chiefs.' Both suggestions, however, were rejected by the Secretary of State. Minutes enclosed in CO 273/326, Confidential, op. cit.; CO 273/292, No. 551, 10 October 1903, Swettenham to S. of S.

> advise you not to attempt to serve two masters. Any attempt to sail under two flags is always a mistake. Be the best of friends with your Chinese neighbours, but do not try to be a Straits-born British citizen in Singapore and a Chinese subject in China....The British Government would not tolerate any open interference with you by the Chinese Government. Nor would the Chinese Government venture to patronise you except indirectly and in an underhand manner....[1]

By continuously reminding the Chinese British subjects in the Colony of their obligations towards the Crown, the Straits Government was undermining the Chinese Consulate-General's efforts to utilize their goodwill. The Chinese Protectorate's tactic of dividing the Chinese population in the Colony on the basis of British subject status may have been a reflection of the British colonial policy of 'divide and rule'. There is little doubt that the Straits Government realized that it could not prevent China-born Chinese who had retained their Chinese nationality from responding to appeals by the consular establishment.

Despite the attempts of the Straits Government to cultivate the loyalty of the Straits Chinese, the British continued to lack a definite policy for the protection of the Chinese British subjects in China. After having been pressed for six years by the Foreign Office to conclude an agreement with the Chinese Government on the exact status in China of British subjects of Chinese descent, the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Walsham, wrote a memorandum to London on 23 January 1892.[2] The document concerned Walsham's communications with the Tsungli-Yamen since 1889 on the need to replace the objectionable Costume Regulations with a scheme to register and protect those Chinese with British passports. Walsham proposed that Chinese who were residing within British colonial territories should be able to divest

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1 S.C.M., Vol. I, 1897, 'The Straits-born Chinese' by G.T. Hare, pp.3-8.

2 Memorandum by Sir John Walsham, No. 6, 23 January 1892, to Foreign Office enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., 22 July 1899.

themselves of Chinese nationality because they had been born in the territories, or by naturalization. All Chinese British subjects returning to China should be obliged to enter the country through a treaty port and should be issued with certificates showing their status. British consuls in the open ports, if satisfied, should supply them with registration papers countersigned by the local Chinese officials; such certificates would be of limited duration. Furthermore, those Chinese who were born in a British colony, the children of natural-born or naturalized British subjects, should be subject to the same rules, except that their certificates should be of unlimited duration. Walsham's efforts, however, were futile because of lack of co-operation from the Chinese Government, and after 30 April 1891 he dropped the matter without notifying the Foreign Office.[1]

On 3 October 1893, Walsham's successor, N.R. O'Conor, reported the arrest of a Straits Chinese, Wang Ju-yü, by the Chinese authorities at Chinkiang in spite of his possession of an expired British passport. The Chinese Government refused British demands that the Penang-born merchant be released on the grounds that he was a member of the Fukien Guild to which only Chinese nationals could subscribe, and his grandfather's name remained on the register of his native district. It had been repeatedly asserted by the Chinese officials that no matter where a Chinese and his parents had been born, their allegiance to China was indelible and revived the moment they re-entered the country; but the same officials admitted that, if the name of a man's ancestor had been expunged from the register of his district, his allegiance might be dissolved.[2] There was an irreconcilable conflict between British and Chinese law on the status in China of Chinese British subjects, although the Chinese

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1 F.O. to Sir John Walsham, No. 96, 16 June 1892, F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., op. cit.

2 N.R. O'Conor to F.O., No. 221, 3 October 1893 and No. 277, 6 December 1893, F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., ibid.

Government did not stress Wang's failure to observe the Costume Regulations which was considered as theoretically still in force in China.[1] In December 1893, the British Legation in Peking succeeded in securing Wang's release, but he was fined by a British Consul for failing to register himself and for travelling to China's interior without a passport. With regard to the protection of Chinese British subjects, O'Conor then proposed to resume negotiations with the Tsungli-Yamen based on the Foreign Office's instructions to Walsham in 1886. The British Minister, however, limited himself to the following three points: registration, which was to be a sine qua non of British protection; the supply of a list of registered subjects to the local Chinese authorities (the list was considered a necessary concession to meet the claim of the Chinese Government that it had authority to punish those who concealed their British nationality); and the use of annually-renewed passports - British protection was to be refused unless passports were produced.[2] Nothing positive, however, resulted from O'Conor's proposals.

The British Government's view of the matter, which was conveyed to O'Conor on 21 February 1894, was that any Chinese with double nationality, as in Wang's case, was entitled, in the absence of any special arrangement with China, to British protection in China only insofar as it did not conflict with Chinese law.[3] For some unknown reason, the Straits Government was not informed of this instruction to the British Legation in Peking, and continued to issue passports indiscriminately to all British subjects. The communication breakdown within the British Government soon created problems.

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1 Memorandum by F. Bertie, 7 February 1894, F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., ibid.

2 N.R. O'Conor to F.O., No. 299 and 300, 31 December 1893. F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., ibid.

3 F.O. to N.R. O'Conor, No. 281, 9 December 1893 and No. 33, 21 February 1894, F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., ibid.

In December 1897 a Straits Chinese, Oh Khun Yiong, who had held a British passport, was detained by the Chinese authorities in Amoy for a debt due to a German firm, and his property in China was sequestrated. The Chinese who were born in the Straits became very indignant over this affair and there was widespread sympathy for them in the Colony.[1] Investigations by the British Consul in Amoy revealed that Oh was born in Singapore of parents alleged to have been British subjects, but for thirty years since the age of five, he had passed as a subject of China. Without registering himself as a British subject until 1 October 1897, he traded in China and maintained a family there. Oh also owned landed property in the interior of China, which was strictly forbidden to British subjects. When he got into trouble, he apparently absconded to Singapore where he obtained a Straits passport as a natural-born British subject; upon his return to Amoy, he claimed British protection after securing a certificate of nationality from the British Consul there. In view of the instructions issued by the Foreign Office on 21 February 1894, the British Minister in Peking, Sir Claude MacDonald, refrained from pressing for Oh's release because his case was considered a particularly flagrant example of a Chinese British subject who had claimed British nationality and protection only after getting into trouble in China.[2] MacDonald cautioned when he wrote to the Foreign Office that care should be exercised by the Straits Government when issuing British passports to the Straits Chinese. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, concurred with MacDonald and the Straits Government was informed of the Home Government's decision.[3] The British Government's attitude on the matter was influenced to some degree by a letter from the

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1 The Times, 8 and 17 December 1897.

2 Precis of Oh Khun Yiong's Case enclosed in CO 273/235, No. 61, 4 March 1898.

3 Sir Claude MacDonald to F.O., No. 174, 16 December 1897, F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/253 F.O., op. cit.; CO 273/243 F.O., 14 February 1896; COD 25 February 1898.

ex-Protector of Chinese in the Straits, W.A. Pickering, to the Colonial Office on 9 December 1897. In support of MacDonald's stance, Pickering explained in detail the 'frivolous' objections of the Straits-born Chinese to the Costume Regulations of 1867. He also considered that the Chinese authorities were justified in regarding as Chinese subjects those who had refused to discard the 'pigtail' (or queue) which was known as the unequivocal sign of allegiance to Peking.[1] Although the Colonial Office felt that the ex-Protector had a point to contribute, it did not approve the suggestion that all the Straits Chinese should desist from the practice of tonsure in order to identify themselves as British subjects.[2]

Unaware of the Foreign Office's instructions of 21 February 1894, the authorities in the Straits were convinced that Oh Khun Yiong's British subject status was beyond dispute and protested against the denial to him of British protection in China.[3] Governor Mitchell claimed that, with the assistance of the Chinese Protectorate, a firm of lawyers in the Straits had produced evidence that Oh had been known for many years in Singapore as a trader and was in the Colony when he heard of the seizure of his property in China; this revelation disproved MacDonald's allegation.[4] The Home Government's approval of MacDonald's explanation resulted in a dissatisfied Straits Government bitterly complaining to the Colonial Office on 4 March 1898 that the status quo regarding the protection of Straits Chinese in China was most unsatisfactory in view of the indefinite and unfavourable arrangement with the Chinese Government. Mitchell criticized Pickering's remarks as unjustified because there were many Straits Chinese who were unquestionably loyal subjects of the

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1 CO 273/234, Individuals - W.A. Pickering, 9 December 1897.

2 Minutes enclosed within CO 273/234, ibid.

3 The Times, 8 December 1897; SCM, Vol. I, 1897, p.156.

4 Precis of Oh Khun Yiong's Case, op. cit.

British Crown and yet at the same time felt proud of their Chinese origins. Furthermore, the Straits officials appealed to London that protection should not be denied to a large number of local-born Chinese simply because their parents were Chinese subjects, and that consideration should also be given to naturalized British subjects of Chinese descent;[1] in other words, that the Home Government should consider Chinese British subjects in China as one class without any distinction. Due to the pressure from London, however, the Government Gazette stated in July 1898 that:

> H.M. Government cannot allow persons of Chinese race, born in this Colony, to enjoy the benefits of a double nationality - this is to say, it cannot permit them after acting as [Oh Khun Yiong] has done as if they were subjects of the Emperor of China by residing and owning property in the interior forbidden to British subjects, afterwards to deny Chinese nationality and obtain as British subjects that full protection and counternance which can be accorded only to those who have consistently from their birth conducted themselves and been registered as British subjects.[2]

Until after the creation of the Chinese Republic, the question of the exact status in China of Chinese British subjects was not resolved by the British Government.[3] The British were indubitably confronted with a difficult problem because British and Chinese law were in conflict, and the Chinese Government unfavourably viewed British attempts to grant protection to any Chinese British subject in China. The futility of the British efforts to establish a system of registration was also due to the insurmountable difficulty of preventing the fraudulent use of British birth certificates by the Chinese in China, who only declared their British nationality and claimed British protection when they found themselves in difficulties; at other times it suited their

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1 CO 273/235, No. 61, 4 March 1898, Mitchell to S. of S.

2 S.S.G.G., 15 July 1898; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.302.

3 C.O. to F.O., 19 April 1898 and F.O. to C.O., 25 April 1898 enclosed in CO 273/253, F.O., op. cit.; COD 27 April 1898.

convenience to live, trade and own property as Chinese subjects.

Inability on the part of the British Government to resolve the long standing problem of defining the status in China of Chinese British subjects proved as vexing to the Straits Chinese as to the colonial authorities. In fact, one of their leaders, Song Ong Siang, mordaciously attacked London's indecisive and inconsistent approach to the matter. Song was an outspoken English-educated Malay-speaking Chinese who, as a Queen's Scholar from 1888 to 1893, took honours in Cambridge after having read law. In March 1899 in a Straits Chinese Magazine article, he claimed that by English law, any Chinese who was born in the Colony was ipso facto invested with British nationality, and that by Section 8 of the Straits Settlements Naturalization Ordinance of 1867, any Chinese who was naturalized a British subject would be 'deemed a natural born subject of Her Majesty, as if he had been born in the Colony', hence all Straits Chinese who were either locally-born or naturalized were British subjects. The only Chinese in the Colony not considered British subjects were those immigrants who had firmly held on to their Chinese nationality. Song ridiculed the Foreign Office for conceding the Chinese Government's claim that a child of a Chinese subject born abroad retained Chinese nationality; the irony was that although the Chinese Government had gone so far as to claim as Chinese subjects the fourth generation of Chinese born in the Straits, the Colonial authorities had not clarified this point to the Colony's Chinese. The Chinese Government's motive, he pointed out, was to enlist the support of the foreign-born Chinese for the maintenance of the political power of the ruling Government, especially after the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. Had the British Government any concern for the welfare of the Straits Chinese, Song asserted, it would not have readily favoured the Chinese Government's claim. He also alleged that it was the Straits Government which had, by its own conduct and legislative

enactments, admitted the Straits Chinese to British nationality.[1]

The British ignored Song's allegations; in any case, the Colony's Chinese and the Straits Government were engrossed with another issue, viz. China politics and Chinese nationalism.

The Advent of China Politics

During the last five years of the nineteenth century, the Chinese in the Straits Settlements experienced a transitional period in which a cultural reform movement, based on Confucian revivalism, evolved under the leadership of an elite group of influential and well-educated Straits Chinese. The local Chinese leaders were former Queen's Scholars who had successfully completed their studies in the United Kingdom. Upon their return to the Colony in the 1890's, they advocated social reforms, educational progress and the dissemination of the Western liberal ideas which they had acquired abroad. The movement they initiated synthesized overt pro-British sentiments with 'soul-searching' attempts to find answers to China's problems. In their efforts to gain influence, it was not surprising that the Western-educated Chinese leaders competed with the Chinese consular establishment and its China-orientated activities.[2] It should also be noted that events in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 had brought to the Straits large numbers of Chinese political exiles as well as many immigrants who were not as politically apathetic as those who had come in the past.[3] The presence in the Straits of these recent arrivals strengthened the local belief that

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1 Song Ong Siang, 'Are the Straits Chinese British Subjects?', S.C.M., Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1899, pp.61-7.

2 S.C.M., Vol. 2, No. 8, December 1898, pp.172-5.

3 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.115.

reform in China and for Nanyang Chinese could no longer be postponed indefinitely.

It was in an atmosphere of reform in 1896 that Lim Boon Keng founded the Chinese Philomathic Society (Hao-hsüeh hui 好学会) in Singapore.[1] Two years earlier, he had started a series of lectures on the concept of Confucian revival which continued for more than sixteen years. In an address to the society in March 1897, the British-trained physician commented that the Straits Settlements' Chinese British subjects were in a state of transition, socially and intellectually, between the old ways of their country of origin and the new doctrines of the European nations. He went on to deal with education, social life and religion, and in his conclusion asserted that the best religion for the Chinese was 'pure Confucianism'.[2] After a few years of vigorous existence, the society, which was started initially to promote intellectual discussions, expanded its membership not only among the English-educated but also among the Chinese-educated. Interest at its meetings was frequently directed towards ideas of reform, politics and current affairs. Lim and another Straits progressive, Song Ong Siang, in 1897 launched the Straits Chinese Magazine as a quarterly journal to 'promote intellectual activity within the occidental and oriental culture'. In the first issue, the editors congratulated themselves for starting the periodical 'in the most auspicious and memorable year of the Victorian era'[3] (they were of course referring to 1897, which marked Queen Victoria's sixtieth year of reign). The local Chinese leaders, in their drive for reform, were undoubtedly aware of the apparent superiority of Western technology, but

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1 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.236.

2 S.C.M., Vol. 1, No. 2, June 1897.

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.235; S.C.M., Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1897, pp.1-2. The motto of the journal, however, was a quotation from Confucius: 改憚勿則過 (If you have faults, do not fear to abandon them).

for prestige and ethnocentric reasons, they resorted to the writings of the ancient Chinese sages, viz. Confucius and Mencius, as symbols for their cause. Such was the enthusiasm for reform that the Singapore Free Press editorialized:

> A strong party among the educated Chinese of the Straits Settlements have decided to introduce reform amongst themselves in such a way that they may stand in the same position as the subjects of other civilized peoples....An immensely strong point in favour of the promoters of the reform movement is that they take their stand on the sacred writings of Confucius and Mencius, in which the vital principles of social and national progress are laid down in clear and well-defined declarations....It is only in such a movement as this, social to begin with, that will be found any chance of inducing a real improvement in the administration of the Chinese Government and as a result of that, the social and political condition of the Chinese race.[1]

By expounding Confucian revivalism, the Straits Chinese leaders were reflecting the views of reformers in China which were epitomized by Chang Chih-tung's classic phrase 'Chinese learning for fundamental principles, Western learning for practical utility' (中学為體,西学為用 Chung hsueh wei t'i, hsi hsueh wei yung). In other words, Western methods were to be adapted to serve the traditional Chinese structure of Government.

Attempts to implement reforms were not unhindered by others in the Colony. Early in 1898, the conservative Lat Pau and Sing Po condemned the 'queue-cutting campaign' initiated by a group of young Straits Chinese under the leadership of Lim Boon Keng. The editors of the two Chinese newspapers insisted that without his queue, a Chinese could no longer be considered a Chinese because queue-cutting was an act of alienation from one's ancestors as well as from one's country of origin.[2] The Protector of Chinese reported

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1 SFP, editorial, 27 January 1898.

2 Lat Pau, 1 and 3 February 1898; Sing Po, 2 February 1898.

that by March 1898, emotional discussions between the conservatives and 'young Chinese' had become bitter and even personal.[1] Despite strong opposition from the conservative and influential Chinese teachers, Lim continued his crusade against the 'pigtail' and in March 1899 declared that 'we [the Straits Chinese] are subjects of the Queen-Empress who governs the British Empire on constitutional principles....In view of those great and inestimable privileges we declare that it is unpatriotic and unwise on our part to allow the prejudices of our forefathers, who were not British subjects, to deter us from pursuing the only course to advancement socially and intellectually - to wit, from the abandonment or alteration of ways and customs opposed to progress as well as from the formation or adoption of views and doctrines in consonance with the culture of civilised nations'.[2] In November 1899, the local reform party received a fillip from an unexpected quarter. As a result of representations made by the Chinese Government to the Foreign Office, strict instructions were issued from the Home Government to the Straits authorities that 'no Chinaman proceeding from the Straits...to China will get a passport as a British subject unless he cuts off his queue'.[3] The significance of the campaign against the queue was that it marked the first notable disagreement between the conservatives and the reformers. Despite some opposition within the Colony, the Confucian revival reform movement continued its pace, with new institutions being organized for the propagation of a new synthesis of Western ideas and traditional values.

In 1899, the K'ung-chiao hui (孔教会 a Confucianist religious society)[4] and the Singapore Chinese Girls School

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1 A.R.C.P., 1898.

2 Lim Boon Keng, 'Straits Chinese Reform', S.C.M., Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1899; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.236, 303. In subsequent articles in the S.C.M., Lim went on to deal with other problems such as modes of dress, education, religion, filial piety and funeral rites.

3 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.312.

4 S.F.P., 21 October 1899.

were started;[1] the latter was the first Chinese girls' school founded by the English-educated Straits Chinese whose aim was 'to demonstrate the feasibility of reforming Chinese, conducting the education of their children on improved and modern systems, distinctively in consonance with Chinese principles as laid down in the classical works of Confucius but entirely at variance with existing methods'.[2] Another institution was the Tao Nan Wen She (道南文社 Tao Nan Literary Society) formed in 1900 by the celebrated Straits-born Chinese scholar, Khoo Seok Wan, who had given pecuniary prizes to winners of monthly essay competitions on current affairs.[3] It was Khoo's generosity and eagerness for reform that brought him into contact with the English-educated progressives. Song Ong Siang described him as 'a man of enlightened views...[whose] generous gift of $3,000 towards the fund for starting the Singapore Chinese Girls' School in 1899 is worthy of more than a passing mention, for at that time our leading Straits Chinese were apathetic if not inimical, to the cause of female education and refused to contribute anything towards that fund.[4]

The Straits reformers were also aware of the value of journalism as a potential avenue for propaganda. In 1898, a momentous year in Chinese history, Khoo Seok Wan started the publication of the Thien Nan Shin Pao with the assistance of other English-educated progressives. The Straits Chinese Magazine noted that the appearance of the Thien Nan was aimed at giving 'every facility for the expression of progressive ideas and the elucidation of the methods which have lifted up the European nations from the empiricism and follies of the past. In politics it takes the standpoint of Chinese nationalism and thus is a most fitting medium for the

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1 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.124.

2 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.305.

3 Jit Shin Pau, 15 October 1900.

4 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.101; Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.67.

propagation of patriotic views. Being conducted by men who have studied Western systems and are yet fully alive to the great need of the Chinese people for some plain speaking in matters domestic and foreign, we feel confident that the readers of this daily will not be supplied with time-worn platitudes which minimise the erros, follies and incompetences of the nation'.[1] The Free Press commented that the Thien Nan would be a means of keeping the Colony's Chinese informed of world events and of the advancement of modern science.[2] By being the first publisher of a 'reform newspaper' in Nanyang, Khoo could also claim to be the first open supporter in the region of that distinguished reformist in China, K'ang Yu-wei. At that time K'ang was pressing the Ch'ing Emperor, Kuang Hsü, to issue a substantial number of decrees directed towards reform in China. On 25 May 1898, Khoo stressed the importance of improving the knowledge of the common people. To achieve this goal, modern schools had to be established to overcome illiteracy. He also noted that the enlightenment of public opinion should be the responsibility of the press and that a representative parliament should be set up along Western lines so that the interests of the people would not be disregarded.[3] The failure of the Hundred Days Reform in China prompted him to protest against the suppression of the press and the arrest of journalists by the Chinese Government.[4] With widespread support in the Colony, he also sent telegrams to Peking, urging the Dowager Empress to abdicate, and to the Tsungli-Yamen, intimating that the reform party would do its utmost to restore the Emperor to the Throne.[5] Khoo successfully

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1 S.C.M., Vol. 2, No. 5, March 1898, p.77.

2 SFP, 2 June 1898. This was the first time that the appearance of a Chinese newspaper had drawn comments from the English-language Free Press.

3 Thien Nan Shin Pao, 25 May 1898.

4 Ibid., 2 November 1898.

5 Ibid., 7 and 11 October 1899; Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.313.

established the Thien Nan as an exponent of Chinese nationalism and reform; even after the Kuang Hsü Emperor was toppled, the newspaper remained so vociferous for his cause that it earned the respect of many reformists in China.[1]

In 1899, Lim Boon Keng assumed proprietorship of the Sing Po. Renamed the Jit Shin Pau (日新報), it publicized the activities of the Chinese Philomathic Society and the response of the Colony's Chinese to the Confucian revival movement, as well as Lim's translations of European scientific and academic writings. The Jit Shin was politically orientated towards reformism and Chinese nationalism.[2] Lim became involved in Chinese journalism partly because he had been mortified by having been unable to read or write the Chinese language while he was a medical student in England.[3] When he returned to the Colony, he became a diligent student of Chinese classics and later an energetic exponent of Confucianism and Chinese nationalism. An 'enthusiast in all moral, social and educational reforms among the Chinese in the Colony',[4] Lim did not profess to be actively interested in politics; in this he differed from Khoo Seok Wan who was more directly involved in seeking a political solution to China's problems.

In 1900, the Straits Chinese Magazine was able to comment that the Chinese in the Straits were 'slowly but surely going ahead' with their reforms. It ridiculed the critics of reform for lacking 'knowledge of the force requisite to overcome the mere inertia of Chinese conservatism' because

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1 Chih Hsin Pao 知新報 editorial, 10 February 1899, quoted in Wu hsu pien fa, op. cit., Vol. III, p.311.

2 Chen Mong Hock, op. cit., p.78.

3 Interview with Tan Yeok Seong, quoted by Khor Eng Hee, The Public Life of Dr Lim Boon Keng. Unpublished B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1958, p.4.

4 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.235; S.C.M., Vol. II, 1898, and Vol. III, 1899. Lim had declared in various articles in the S.C.M. that the Confucian revival movement was basically social and intellectual and devoid of all politics.

'if the party of progress do nothing, the fossilised section will remain as inactive as fossils'. The journal also noted that the Straits Chinese were beginning to change their costumes, and some had already discarded the queue. Although much remained to be done, 'the change of dress, and the abolition of the Manchu badge of slavery mean above all things full liberty to follow in the path of European advancement, unrestrained by false delicacy, and by puerile paralogism'.[1] By late 1900, one result of the Confucian revival was that almost all educated Chinese in the Straits had taken an interest in Confucius' teachings. The reform movement has been described as one 'that reformed the teaching of Mandarin, and made way for the introduction of more and more Chinese books and periodicals on current problems of China. Thus the revival cleared the way for the propagation of ideas developed in China, Japan and Hong Kong. Most of these ideas were to prepare the Colony for the coming of the political thinkers and agitations of the time'.[2] The movement also began to gather momentum in the Netherlands East Indies soon after K'ang Yu-wei's arrival in the Straits. Spreading the gospel of cultural reform, the Confucian revival became the 'starting gun' of Chinese nationalism in the Malay archipelago.[3] In short, the failure of the Hundred Days Reform in China did not hinder the reform movement in Nanyang; on the contrary, the advent of political exiles from China strengthened the latter.

While the Chinese in the Straits were becoming involved in reform programmes and China politics, the colonial authorities remained aloof. Their attitude, however, was probably reflected in an article in the Straits Times in October 1899 which reported that certain injudicious telegrams were being sent to Peking to the effect that the

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1 S.C.M., Vol. IV, No. 14, June 1900.

2 Wang Gung-wu, Reformists and Revolutionaries, op. cit., p.10.

3 Lea Williams, op. cit., pp.54-63.

Chinese in Singapore would defend the Emperor with their lives. The Chinese in the Colony were promptly warned that 'such extravagant assertions only jeopardized their relatives and friends in China and that any attempt to wage war with any asiatic power in alliance or at peace with the Queen would be punishable with penal servitude for life'.[1] It was not until the arrival of K'ang Yu-wei to the Colony in the following year that evidence of covert British sympathies towards the reform movement began to emerge.

K'ang was invited to the Straits by Khoo Seok Wan, and news of his impending visit preceded his arrival.[2] The day before he landed, the Chinese Consul-General, Lo Tsung-yao, who was acting under instructions from Li Hung-chang through the Chinese Legation in London, had requested the Administrator to banish him.[3] Lo was informed by the authorities that such requests must be submitted in writing for the consideration of the Executive Council. As a provisional reply, the Administrator, J.A. Swettenham, referred him to Section Three of the Banishment Ordinance of 1882,[4] and stated that 'unless it can be shown that his removal from the Colony is necessary for the public safety or welfare, the law in this Colony will not warrant the banishment of any man.[5] On 2 February, K'ang landed in Singapore without further consular opposition because Lo had confidentially withdrawn his request after telegraphing the

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1 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.313; Straits Times, 13 and 15 October 1899.

2 Feng Tzu-yu (馮自由): Chung-hua-min-kuo K'ai Kuo ch'ien ko min shih (中華民國開國前革命史 History of the Revolution Prior to the Founding of the Republic) (Taipeh, 1954), (2 Vols), Vol. I, pp.79-80.

3 Chinese Legation to Chinese Consulate-General, Telegram, 31 January 1900 enclosed in CO 273/256. Secret, 3 February 1900.

4 Ordinance IV of 1888, The Banishment Ordinance. CO 273/152, No. 119, 20 March 1888, Smith to S. of S.

5 CO 273/256 Secret, 3 February 1900, Mitchell to S. of S.

Straits Government's reply to the Chinese Legation in London.[1]

In view of reports from several local newspapers that four assassins had left Peking, Swettenham, Evans (the Protector of Chinese) and Dr Lim Boon Keng advised K'ang to leave the Colony and seek refuge elsewhere.[2] Although appreciative of the officials' concern for his welfare, K'ang rejected their appeals and was noncommital about his future plans. He emphasized that he had not left Hong Kong in fear of arrest or assassination, but had simply wanted to visit friends in the Straits; for this reason, the duration of his sojourn was uncertain.[3] It is noteworthy that the colonial authorities did not pressure K'ang to leave and that, after he insisted on staying, a Sikh police detachment was provided to guard him.[4] During the first month of his visit, K'ang was co-operative towards the Straits officials. He had given verbal assurances to the Protector of Chinese that he would not plot against the Chinese Government while he was residing in the Colony.[5] Subsequent events revealed that he failed to keep his word since he soon began to collect money to foment an uprising in Hankow.[6] On 23 February, with the assistance of the Chinese Protectorate, K'ang foiled alleged attempts to kill him by announcing that

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1 Chinese Consul-General to Straits Administrator, 3 February 1900, enclosed in CO 273/256, 3 February 1900, ibid.

2 CO 273/256, 3 February 1900, ibid.; Lim Boon Keng to Swettenham, 15 February 1900 and Evans to Swettenham, 15 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/256. Secret, 24 February 1900, Swettenham to S. of S.

3 CO 273/256, 24 February 1900.

4 CO 273/256, Telegrams (deciphered) C.O. to Swettenham, 1 February 1900 and Swettenham to C.O., 7 February 1900; C.O.D. (Confidential), 17 February 1900.

5 K'ang believed that the deposed Emperor would look to Britain for aid as soon as the South African War was over. CO 273/256, 24 February 1900, op. cit.

6 Feng Tzu-yu, Ko min i shih (革命逸史) (Reminiscences of the Revolution) 5 Vols., Vol. 1, Shanghai, pp.73-9.

he was departing for Europe. He boarded a liner, but by prior arrangement, quietly slipped back to the Colony.[1]

In a private letter to C. Lucas of the Colonial Office on 10 March 1900, the Straits Administrator reported that newspapers in the Colony had published offers of a reward by the Empress Dowager and the Acting Governor-General of Liang Kuang, amounting to a total of 140,000 taels, for the heads of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao.[2] Swettenham felt that such rewards for political refugees residing in British territories were a direct incitement to murder and violations of British law, and that the Chinese Government should be informed that 'unless they publish unmistakably that no rewards will be payable for outrages committed on British soil, their agents will be held responsible. China ought to be told to behave like a civilized nation'.[3] If this could not be done, Swettenham suggested that the Chinese Government should at least proclaim that no reward would be paid 'for heads obtained in a foreign country'.[4] The Home Government, however, failed to induce the Chinese Government to withdraw the offers of rewards.

The British Government had been subjected to considerable pressure from the Chinese Government to refuse K'ang asylum in the Straits. Sir Claude MacDonald, the British Minister in Peking, had initially notified the Foreign Office on 22 December 1899 of an Imperial Decree[5] which had been promulgated two days earlier commanding the capture of K'ang and Liang; rewards were to be given for

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1 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., pp.313-4; CO 273/256, 24 February 1900, op. cit.

2 Straits Times, 8 March 1900; Lat Pau, 7 and 8 March 1900.

3 Private Correspondence from Swettenham to Lucas, 10 March 1900, enclosed in CO 273/256, Secret, 10 March 1900, Swettenham to S. of S.

4 CO 273/256, Secret, 10 March 1900, ibid.

5 Imperial Decree, 20 December 1899, enclosed in CO 273/258, F.O., 15 March 1900.

their arrest or assassination. The decree testified to the relentless hatred which the Empress Dowager nursed towards the Chinese reformers. A high Chinese official confided to MacDonald that the Empress had been incensed when she learned of the political asylum granted to K'ang in Hong Kong. At China's request, both Japan and the United States had earlier refused to harbour him. The same Chinese official also said that Li Hung-chang's appointment as Commercial High Commissioner was intended to give him the opportunity of arresting K'ang because the latter was known to be colluding with disaffected elements in Kwangtung Province. MacDonald concluded that Li's subsequent appointment as Acting Governor-General in Canton seemed to support the above 'intelligence'.[1] Acting on MacDonald's despatch, the Home Government instructed the Straits authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure K'ang's well-being and to persuade him to leave the Colony.[2] The Colonial Office was aware that, despite every precaution taken by the colonial police, K'ang would still face a grave risk of assassination because the Colony's large Chinese population had mixed feelings towards contemporary events in China.[3] Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary, meanwhile instructed the British Minister in Peking to convince the Tsungli-Yamen of the advisability of withdrawing the decree. Should K'ang be molested within British territory and under British protection, the British Government would take a serious view of the matter.[4]

MacDonald, however, referred Salisbury's warnings to Li Hung-chang instead of the Tsungli-Yamen, partly because he

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1 Sir Claude MacDonald to F.O., 22 December 1899, Confidential F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/258, 15 March 1900, ibid.

2 Telegram, 1 February 1900, C.O. to Swettenham enclosed in CO 273/256, 3 February 1900, op. cit.

3 CO 273/264, F.O., 30 January 1900.

4 F.O. to Sir Claude MacDonald, 7 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/264, F.O., 7 February 1900; C.O. to F.O., 8 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/256, 7 February 1900, op. cit.

believed that the decree presented no basis for an official complaint since national interests were not affected, and partly because he was aware that no remonstrance could mitigate the Empress Dowager's hatred and fear of K'ang and the other reformists.[1] On 16 February 1900, MacDonald notified the Foreign Office of a second decree on a somewhat similar subject which was published on 14 February.[2] This decree commanded that a specific sum, amounting to approximately 140,000 taels, would be appropriated as a reward for the capture of the two leading reformists. The incitement to assassination implied in the first decree was carefully avoided, or at least veiled, by offering the reward for proof that K'ang and Liang had 'already fallen by the vengeance of heaven'. The purchase or perusal of newspapers on K'ang's writings was also forbidden under the threat of severe penalties because the 'progressive' party's publications were noted for bitter attacks on the Empress Dowager's personal reputation as well as her policy. MacDonald concluded that it was extremely unlikely that the Empress would be able to carry out her intentions, but that the British request for the formal withdrawal of the two imperial decrees would not be met without the 'very strongest pressure' from the British Government. As long as the Empress remained in power as 'adviser' in the Chinese Government, he doubted the Tsungli-Yamen would dare to propose that the two decrees be rescinded. In MacDonald's opinion, 'nothing short of a concentration of the fleet, followed by actively hostile measures' would suffice to make the Empress change her mind about the offers of reward.[3] This suggestion pointed to the possibility of a further display of British 'gunboat diplomacy' in China, but Lord Salisbury declined to follow such a course of action and

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1 Sir Claude MacDonald to F.O., 16 February 1900, Confidential. F.O. Papers enclosed in CO 273/264, F.O., 4 May 1900.

2 Imperial Decree, 14 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/264, ibid.

3 Sir Claude MacDonald to F.O., 16 February 1900, op. cit.

instructed MacDonald to suspend the orders which the Foreign Office had issued earlier.[1] The British Government clearly was not prepared to jeopardize friendly Anglo-Chinese relations because of a reformer who had fallen from official favour in Peking and whose future was in very grave doubt. In these circumstances, the Colonial Office decided that the Straits Government should not apply further pressure on K'ang to depart from Singapore and that he should continue to enjoy police protection.[2] The Colonial Office's sympathy for K'ang was demonstrated when the Chinese Legation in London informed the Foreign Office on 7 February 1900 that, as a result of inquiries made into K'ang's visit to British Columbia, the Chinese officials were convinced that he was unworthy of British protection. They alleged that when he was in Vancouver in the previous year, K'ang had practised the art of a 'Chevalier d'industrie', and under the pretext of collecting funds for the purpose of raising an army to protect the Ch'ing Emperor, had used the money for his own private purposes. Considered even more contemptible was K'ang's alleged attempt to rape the wife of a Chinese fisherman who had been his host. For these reasons, the Chinese Minister Lo Feng-lu (羅豐祿) requested the British Government to refuse K'ang the privilege of remaining in the Straits.[3] Lord Salisbury was not prepared to accede to this request, and replied that the British Government could not prevent K'ang from residing in Singapore unless he was proven guilty of illegal acts.[4] The Colonial Office was even more sceptical of the Chinese Minister's allegations and there was a consensus of opinion that 'the charges of rape and

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1 CO 273/264 F.O., 17 February 1900; COD, Secret, 21 March 1900.

2 COD Confidential, 17 February 1900; Telegram, 23 February 1900, C.O. to Swettenham and Minutes enclosed in CO 273/256, 7 February 1900, op. cit.

3 Chinese Legation to F.O., 7 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/259, F.O., 14 February 1900.

4 F.O. to Chinese Legation, 14 February 1900 enclosed in CO 273/259, ibid.

embezzlement are presumably thrown in as a make-weight and even if true, have no bearing on his position as a political refugee'.[1] In other words, the Colonial Office was prepared to grant political asylum to K'ang even if he had committed crimes in other countries.

Five months after K'ang's arrival, an incident which seemed to be an assassination attempt permanently marred the relationship between the reformers and revolutionaries in the Straits. Two Japanese revolutionaries from China, named Miyasaki (alias Kong Ki Yin Chang) and Kiyofugi (alias Chin Tan), landed in Singapore on 29 June and attracted police attention by their endeavours to procure an interview with K'ang, who had been forewarned of the impending arrival of these Japanese.[2] On 6 July, Miyasaki and Kiyofugi were arrested without having accomplished their mission, and were found 'in possession of $27,000 and two very sharp swords'. An inquiry by the Straits Government, however, revealed that the two men had intended not to harm K'ang but to plan a civil war in China. Swettenham believed that their purpose was to disturb public peace and start riots amongst the Colony's Chinese population.[3] As friends of Sun Yat-sen, the two Japanese had sought K'ang's support for an uprising in October at Hueichow. K'ang was unco-operative, partly because he was raising funds for an uprising at Hankow which he had scheduled for July.[4] Whereas K'ang and his associates were working towards reform in China and the reinstatement of the Ch'ing Emperor Kuang-hsü, the revolutionaries plotted the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty and the establishment of a

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1 Minutes enclosed in CO 273/259, ibid.

2 CO 273/257 No. 266, 26 July 1900, Swettenham to S. of S.; Feng Tzu-yü, Ko min i shih, op. cit., Vol. IV, Chungking, 1946, p.97.

3 CO 273/257 No. 266, op. cit. The revolutionaries were also known to be anxious to purchase arms in Singapore.

4 Feng Tzu-yü, Ko min i shih, op. cit., Vol. IV, p.97; Wang Gung-wu, Reformists and Revolutionaries..., op. cit., p.15.

republic. On 26 July, the Straits Administrator reported to London that the revolutionaries had failed in their attempts to persuade K'ang to join forces with them, but it was not known if he had interfered with their schemes.

When Sun Yat-sen learned of the arrest of his two Japanese friends, he hurried to Singapore from Hong Kong and sought the help of his two former class-mates, Drs Wu Tsieh-moh and Huang K'ang-chu in persuading Lim Boon Keng to interfere so that the Straits Government would not banish the two Japanese.[1] Sun's endeavours were futile, and he and his banished friends left the Colony on 12 July.[2] For the remainder of K'ang's stay in the Colony, there were no further incidents involving attempts on his life, indicating that the colonial police had provided adequate measures to ensure his safety.[3] The fact that K'ang's visit was free from incident may also have been due to widespread sympathy for his cause. The Straits Administrator had remarked that K'ang was highly respected by the majority of the Chinese and appeared to be 'a man of intelligence with good intentions',[4] whereas Sun Yat-sen had 'hardly any followers'.[5] A further possible explanation for the uneventfulness of K'ang's sojourn is that although many of their leaders were still very conservative and pro-dynastic,[6] the Colony's Chinese were not sufficiently enthusiastic for the Empress Dowager's cause to attempt a political assassination; nor were they

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1 Ibid., p.16.

2 CO 273/267 Secret, 23 January 1901, Swettenham to S. of S.

3 CO 273/270, Confidential, 5 August 1901, Swettenham to S. of S.

4 CO 273/270, Confidential, ibid.

5 CO 273/267, 23 January 1901, op. cit.

6 Feng Tzu-yu, Ko min i shih, op. cit., Vol. I, p.27.

sufficiently confident that the reward would be paid by a government not noted for honesty or efficiency.[1]

There were several indications in 1900 that the reformists intended to establish the Straits Settlements as their overseas headquarters. In that year, two other noted reformists came to the Colony. One was Liang Ch'i-ch'ao who stopped briefly in Singapore on his way to Sydney to attend a meeting of the Chinese Empire Reform Association.[2] The other was Yung Wing, a former Chinese Ambassador to the United States, who came to the Straits to plot the Hankow uprising with K'ang and to seek the financial support of the Colony's Chinese.[3] In a letter to London, Swettenham reported that the 'reform' party 'meant business' and that Yung Wing had earlier asked him whether the British Government would support a rising in China. The Administrator had given a negative reply because China was considered by the British as a 'friendly power'.[4] After the failure of the Hankow rising, Khoo Seok Wan blamed K'ang for the disaster and the latter left Singapore for Penang in early 1901 never to return.[5] Police protection was provided for him in Penang until December, when he left for a tour of South Asia and the Malay Archipelago.[6]

At the turn of the century, the colonial authorities were dealing with two distinct groups of Chinese in the

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1 Cf. Wang Gung-wu, Reformists and Revolutionaries..., op. cit., p.17.

2 CO 273/267 Secret, 23 January 1901, Swettenham to S. of S.

3 CO 273/267 Secret, ibid.; CO 273/256 Secret, 29 March 1900, Swettenham to S. of S.

4 Swettenham to F.O., 29 March 1900, F.O. Papers, enclosed in CO 273/264 F.O., 30 May 1900.

5 Feng Tzu-yü, Ko min i shih, op. cit., Vol. III, p.183.

6 CO 273/267 Secret, 23 January and 5 August 1901, op. cit.; CO 273/271, Confidential, 15 December 1901, Swettenham to S. of S.

Straits, viz. the immigrants and the local-born Straits-Chinese, which were drifting apart in interests and in political orientation. The arrival of more Chinese political exiles in the next few years was to widen this chasm. As the two Chinese political factions, the reformists and the revolutionaries, competed for support in the Straits to influence political developments in China, the British were beginning to become involved in intricate diplomacy with the Chinese Government. In view of the cordiality of Anglo-Chinese relations, the British were reluctant to permit any political activity in the Straits which was directed towards the overthrow of the Chinese Government, but could not prevent such activities as long as they persisted in the practice of granting asylum to Chinese political exiles, who were arriving in increasing numbers.[1] The increasing interest in China politics in the Straits did not prevent the Chinese consular establishment from attempting to utilize the goodwill of the Nanyang Chinese. As the Straits authorities were aware, however, the Consulate's success was minimal because its influence was being challenged by new political forces.[2]

These new political currents were dominated by the reformist faction. The revolutionaries themselves admitted that the reformists and their propaganda organs, the Thien Nan in particular, had influenced many of the Chinese in the Straits and that the Nanyang was virtually a 'spiritual

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1 This ambivalent policy continued until the creation of the Chinese Republic. The Straits Governor in 1908 wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Office. 'Your Lordships will have no objection to the banishment from the Colony of any alien who is proved on inquiry to have been responsible for the publication of articles inciting intrigue or sedition against the established government of China....' CO 273/337, Confidential, 27 August 1908, Gov. to S. of S.

2 In 1907 when Tso Ping-lung returned to the Straits to commence a term as Consul-General, he no longer exercised influence over the Colony's Chinese; those sympathetic to the reformist cause ignored him and those associated with the revolutionary movement violently attacked him. Chong Shing Yit Pao (中興日報), 1 September 1909.

colony' of K'ang Yu-wei.[1] It would not be mistaken to assume that most of K'ang's supporters and sympathisers in the Straits were drawn mainly from the immigrants who were generally conservative, pro-dynastic and very ethnocentristically-oriented. The immigrants' attitude towards the Manchus was ambivalent: although they had no love for the Manchus, they did not consider them foreigners and had declared loyalty to the Manchu Emperor.[2] This group of Chinese was beginning to feel the effects of socio-politico changes brought about by Chinese nationalism.

The second group, the local-born Straits Chinese, were also involved with national consciousness but professed neutralism in China politics. To them, nationalism meant an effort of their own towards social and educational changes so that they could match the more technologically advanced ethnic groups in other parts of the world.[3] They were politically oriented towards the British Crown, partly because of their English education and partly because of their status as British subjects.[4] It was asserted that English education in the Colony was making them believe that the 'Chinaman qua a Chinaman is vile' and that 'Europa becomes Utopia where love reigns, poverty is unknown and all is good'.[5] Convinced that the Chinese Government did not care for them,[6] the Straits Chinese attempted to identify themselves as 'true

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1 Feng Tzu-yü, Hua chiao ko min k'ai kuo shih (華僑革命開國史 The Overseas Chinese, the Revolution and the Establishment of the Republic) Shanghai, 1947, pp.72-9; Teo Eng Hock (張永福) Nanyang yu chuang tsao min kuo (南洋與創造民國 Nanyang and the Establishment of the Republic), Shanghai, 1933, p.7.

2 Feng Tzu-yü, Ko min i shih, op. cit., Vol. I, p.27.

3 SFP, 27 January 1898.

4 S.C.M., 1897-1908, passim.

5 Ibid., Vol. IV, No. 13, March 1900, pp.27-8.

6 S.F.P., 28 February 1899.

British, heart and soul'.[1] For these reasons, the Straits Chinese British Association was formed on 17 August 1900.[2] Although its members professed loyalty to the British Empire, an analysis of the Association's aims reveals that it was not opposed to the concept of Chinese nationalism. The Straits Chinese appreciated the benevolence of British rule which had resulted in material progress, but were not prepared to renounce their cultural ties with China. It would appear that the Association was a self-interest group which soon pressured the Straits Government to redress their grievances and meet their requests.[3] By the beginning of the new century, the Straits Government's policy towards the Chinese had to deal with pressure not only from the Chinese consular establishment but also from the increasing influence of China politics and the newly established Straits Chinese British Association.

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1 S.C.M., Vol. IV, No. 14, June 1900, p.36.

2 Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.320; Straits Times, 18 August 1900.

3 In view of the discriminatory treatment of Chinese British subjects in the colonies of other European nations, the Straits Chinese were anxious that their rights and privileges as British subjects should be defended by the British. Song Ong Siang, op. cit., p.320; cf. Lee Yong Hock, A History of the Straits Chinese British Association, unpublished B.A. (Hons) thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1959.

Conclusion

From the examination of British policy of protection and control towards the Chinese in the Straits Settlements in the preceding chapters, it is possible to draw a number of general conclusions. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, the main concern of the British in the Straits of Malacca was to develop the newly-acquired settlements as a regional focus for trade and commerce. As economic pragmatists, the British authorities were bent on the exhaustive exploitation of these strategically-located possessions. They measured their success by the number of Chinese they induced to come to the settlements. Interest in the Chinese was thus basically economic and not political, the attitude of the local officials being that as long as large-scale immigration of the Chinese was contributing to the material development of the Straits and did not undermine internal stability, the immigrants were to be left to themselves. This absence of government interference resulted in the Chinese leading a separate existence and in the development of an *imperium in imperio* situation which was incompatible with efficient government.

A pre-requisite of effective rule was a knowledge of the people governed but for more than half a century, the authorities displayed apathy and dangerous ignorance of the Chinese. This led to serious errors in the government's attempts to control them. As the problem became progressively more severe, vested interests in the Straits pressured the government to bridge the gap between the authorities and the Chinese. Such efforts, however, were in vain because the government continued to exhibit misconceptions of the Chinese and failed to develop the necessary administrative machinery.

After the transfer of the Straits Settlements in 1867, the Chinese problem came under the constant scrutiny of the Colonial Office. This marked the beginnings of a change in attitude as the colonial authorities became aware that unless schemes were devised to deal with the Chinese, British presence in the Straits would be jeopardized. When prompted by various

local interests, departmental officials and the Colonial Office, the government on several occasions appointed select committees and commissions. Their reports led to extensive powers being vested in the governor to cope with the unruly Chinese elements. Nevertheless, disturbances by the Chinese continued. The reports also provided the officials with an unprecedented insight into the Chinese social structure. For a decade, however, the situation showed no marked improvement as plans to resolve the complex problem were only partially accepted or even totally rejected depending on changes in governorship. The indecisions within the government were related to the incessant clashes between Chinese and European interests in the Colony. Both parties were motivated by desire for personal gain and came to be diametrically opposed on the question of an appropriate policy to be pursued by the government. In their differing attitudes, displayed mostly in the Legislative Council and in the form of petitions, the Chinese merchants seemed to have the more convincing moral justification. The one positive aspect of the government's attitude at this time was that while it was open to suggestions from all sectors, the authorities were weighing up the possibilities of forming an official channel of communications with the Chinese.

In 1877, a definite policy towards the Chinese was introduced. When subjected to further pressures from within and without, in particular from the Colonial Office, the local government established a more permanent and effective system of coping with the problem than the unsatisfactory arrangements hitherto in existence. Known as the Chinese Protectorate, this special government agency had responsibility for the protection and control of the Chinese population in the Colony. Its inauguration marked the transition from indirect to direct rule. It is significant to note here that the successful creation of the Protectorate could also be partly attributed to the Chinese government's new policy of protection and influence towards the overseas Chinese.

The Protectorate when it was established was a unique government institution with no comparable counterpart in the history of British colonial administration. As an intermediary between the government and the Chinese, the head of the Protectorate and his immediate assistants were immediately looked upon as official advisers to the colonial government on all Chinese affairs. In this way, the Protectorate played an important role in all policy matters concerning the future of the Colony's Chinese.

Bearing in mind that the presence of Chinese labour was one of the main factors responsible for the rapid development of the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, the British were unlikely to abolish the credit-ticket system of immigration despite its notoriety. As a result, the primary role of the Protectorate was not to alter existing arrangements of labour employment and immigration but rather to minimize the abuses that were involved in them. With the Protectorate's recommendations the Straits Government was able to legislate and enforce more exacting laws improving the conditions of employers, coolie-labourers and newly-arrived immigrants. Although abuses connected with Chinese immigration and labour continued well into the twentieth century, they were considerably reduced as a result of constant government intervention. The authorities, however, met with more apparent success in the curtailment of secret societies and their associated problems.

From 1877, the Protectorate produced annual reports which were concise and comprehensive accounts of the State of the Chinese population in general and of the activities of the secret societies in particular. This data undoubtedly led the Straits Government to a better understanding of the Chinese and to the subsequent formulation of a perceptive policy towards their protection and control. Although it was apparent that the local government was intent upon the early and ultimate destruction of the secret societies, the methods and procedures to be employed were yet to be decided. The government's irresolution stemmed directly from the

inconsistent attitudes of the Chinese Protectorate and the police force, the two main determinants of policy. On the other hand, the colonial officials spared little time and effort to control associated activities of the societies such as gambling and prostitution. It was not until 1890 that the government succeeded in moving for the total abolition of the secret societies. The struggle by the British, who were constantly learning and re-adjusting their methods of approach, to resolve the problem of the secret societies met with only partial success and in this task the authorities received practically no assistance from the Chinese consular establishment.

The British Government had already accepted the Chinese Government's request to establish a Chinese Consulate in the Straits. The underlying assumption of the home government was that an official Chinese institution would be of immeasurable assistance to the local authorities, especially at a time when they were attempting to neutralize the influence of undesirable Chinese secret societies. In the Straits, the apprehensive officials did not raise any objections to the presence of a Chinese Consulate because they regarded it as a tentative measure, an extra source of information for the government and a valuable ally of the Protectorate.

Until the Straits Government gained a measure of confidence in its own ability to govern the Chinese, it was natural that the authorities should be anxious about the Chinese consulate in Singapore. The officials feared that the consulate would attempt to manipulate the Colony's large Chinese population by interfering in its trading activities, immigration patterns and labour conditions. With this attitude of caution towards the consulate, the British were unlikely to lessen their vigilance and they were not proven wrong.

Instead of confining themselves strictly to consular duties, the Chinese consuls in the Straits were more interested in developing and exploiting the goodwill of the Nanyang

Chinese towards China. Various types of techniques were utilized by the consuls to achieve their goal. As a result no sooner was the consulate firmly established than it too became a problem to the local authorities. While the consulate competed with the Protectorate for influence amongst the Chinese, the Straits Government's policy of vigilance intensified and there were several instances of interference with the consulate's activities. It was obvious to the authorities that should the consulate be given a free hand, British rule in the Straits could be undermined. The activities of the consulate therefore had an important bearing on the shaping of British policy towards the Chinese in the Straits.

There was, however, one aspect of the consulate's activities which exposed the superficiality of the British policy of protection towards the Chinese. Despite the lack of any real assistance to the Chinese emigrants, the consulate nevertheless successfully played the role of mediator between the Chinese imperial government and the Nanyang Chinese. One example of this role was the consul-general's appeal to the Chinese government on the need to repeal the imperial ban on emigration and to issue Chinese passports for the protection of returned emigrants in China. In connection with the issue of passports, an examination has been made of British policy towards the protection in China of Chinese British subjects, showing the shallowness and inconsistency of the British attitudes. Local colonial interests had obviously clashed with imperial interests here. Since the British Foreign Office was able to overrule the Colonial Office on policy matters in the British Government, there was never any question that local colonial policy remained subordinate to the wider and long-range objectives of British foreign relations.

Established as a dubious experiment, the consular establishment in the Straits was regarded as a highly successful institution by the Chinese Government in 1890. The

new Chinese imperial policy of so-called 'protection' towards the overseas Chinese certainly had its desired results. Remittances to China from Chinese abroad increased sharply thereby constituting an important economic gain to China. The Chinese Government also discovered that emigration was a source of politico-economic strength. Consequently, extensive efforts were made by the Chinese consuls to kindle patriotism and to develop a sense of loyalty to the Chinese emperor amongst overseas Chinese. This was done through the wider application of diplomacy, education, cultural attachment and the traditional Chinese ethnocentric appeals. From the Straits authorities' point of view, however, the consular establishment was no longer a potential ally but a real threat because of the constant pressure, which it exerted directly and indirectly, on the colonial government. So concerned were the British that in 1898, the Straits Government intensified its own policy of fostering the loyalty of the Colony's Chinese towards the Crown. Perhaps such a move was unnecessary because in the last few years of the nineteenth century, the attitude of overseas Chinese towards the moribund Chinese Government was definitely changing. Signs of Chinese nationalism had emerged. In its policy towards the Chinese, the Straits Government soon found itself dealing with pressures not only from the consular establishment but also from the influence of active China politics and the newly established Straits Chinese British Association. These trends were to become even more significant in the twentieth century.

Some Comments on Process of Policy Formulation

Under the British Empire, the Colonial Office had become the central focus of colonial administration by the mid-nineteenth century, when British constitutional principles were clarified and special metropolitan agencies formed to govern the colonies. The management of colonial affairs was henceforth theoretically organized by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and assisted by the parliamentary under-

secretary, both politicians, who rarely possessed detailed knowledge of or strong opinions on colonial matters. A systematic perusal of the minutes enclosed in the official manuscripts reveals that with the exception of a very few doctrinnaire enthusiasts, most of the elected politicians relied on the permanent officials to set the general tone of official policy. Although the career bureaucrats were "grands fonctionnaires" in the tradition of European bureaucracy under the "aucien regime", they were nevertheless appointed on merit and by competitive examination after the 1870s. In terms of requirements for decision-making, the personnel in the Colonial Office seemed well-informed, educated, intelligent and efficient but they were also at the same time legalistically inclined to prevent trouble rather than to shape policy. The torrents of correspondence which continuously flowed into the office were unquestionably processed with conscientious diligence, yet all too frequently the same officials were unable to decide what to do. Major decisions on policy matters were in fact based on factual reporting and advice from the man on the spot, but were often only finalised a long time after the reports had been tendered, owing to slow and cumbersome procedures within the office itself; moreover primarily because they lacked specialized knowledge of the problems with which they had to deal, the officials never had time to think or plan ahead.

By 1874, it had become reasonably clear that the Home Government's position vis-a-vis the Straits Government's policy towards the ethnic Chinese was to respond to particular crises rather than to make preconceived plans; hence the most crucial element in such a response was the attitude and personality of the man on the spot i.e. the colonial governor - during the mid-Victorian years an isolated and autocratic functionary. This situation, changed slightly after 1871 when the cable to Singapore was opened, allowing more intensive and immediate supervision from London whenever the need arose. Despite the innovation of modern communications, personal consultation on important matters of policy between the Straits

Governor and the Home Govt. continued to be confined to interviews at the Colonial Office during the former's occasional leave of absence. It should be borne in mind that none of the Secretaries of State for the Colonies visited the Straits Settlements or any of the British eastern possessions during the nineteenth-century. Since official correspondence between the Straits settlements and Britain had to travel half-way across the globe and that instructions in the form of despatches from the Secretary of State took months to arrive, an energetic, strong-willed or authoritarian governor had an enormous influence on the development of policy, and not infrequently exercised wider powers than were formally allotted to him. The governor's position of influence was underlined by that important element of discretion which was intentionally incorporated into his instructions. While British policy from the home government's viewpoint was generally one of restraint and minimum intervention, combined with continuous vigilance, a loophole always existed for local action in particular circumstances whereby the governor had the authority to use his own judgement as well as to act on his own initiative. But where the local authorities appeared to be abusing their discretion, the Colonial Office was prepared to interfere. The Colonial Office, however, seemed content to take the assurances of the governor on important matters at their face value and as a rule the differences between the home officials and the local authorities were on matters of timing, rather than principle.

In the Straits Settlements, the governor was the highest-ranking British officer and being at the apex of the constitutional structure, he was directly responsible to the Secretary of State on the local government's actions. The position of the chief executive officer was without exception given to an appointee from outside the Colony on the underlying assumption that he would introduce new ideas. Since a governor generally remained in the Colony for a quinquennial period, he was more inclined to avoid errors and to assure himself pensions rather than to improve his temporary charge.

The result was that, unless he possessed special experience and knowledge, he tended to accept the advice of the local authorities and to adjust his ignorance to their more intimate acquaintance with the problems involved. Assistance in the form of advice and recommendations was given to the governor both by the Colonial Secretariat and the Executive Council.

From the study made in the preceding chapters, it would seem that the Colonial Secretary was officially the outstanding figure in policy decisions because all official papers and matters of importance, particularly from the Protectorate and the police force, had to pass through his office, either for final decision or for submission to the governor. Among his multifarious functions, one significant role was to act as a channel of communications through which both the departmental officials and the public at large could contact the governor. The Executive Council, on the other hand, served as a cabinet to the governor in which official matters were resolved in private and in advance of any open statements of policy or action. In practice virtually all official business was examined to some extent by the Council before further action was undertaken; hence it acted as a check on the governor, despite the latter's extensive powers.

As a Crown Colony, the Straits Settlements had representative government in the form of a Legislative Council under the presidency of the governor. This official institution was a somewhat cumbrous piece of machinery dominated by the official majority, although it had the power to initiate legislation on most domestic matters. In cases where the unofficials disagreed with authority, the official bloc would vote as a single unit with a pre-determined and inescapable majority. In all the legislature's ordinances, Colonial Office approval was an utmost necessity and provided that no British interest or principle was offended assent was normally given. The Council was intended to fulfill the dual function of advising the government as to the needs, wants and sentiments of the Straits population and of providing the government a public platform from which to announce its policies in order to fathom public reaction.

It has been argued in this thesis that local action was initiated by the Straits officials and by nominated local notables who were in the Legislative Council. These people usually did what they were told by the governor. On the other hand, the governor's directives were often subjected to pressure from local interests, heads of departments and the Colonial Office. It cannot be denied that to some extent autonomy existed in the Colony but it was administrative rather than constitutional because it did not imply control of government by colonial subjects. In other words, colonial autonomy meant no more than the devolution of authority to agents of the imperial power (i.e. instead of direct control by the Colonial Office), and thus the appearance of representative government, served only to disguise authoritarianism, for it involved no surrender of imperial control.

The preceding analysis has shown that inconsistencies operated within the British policy of protection and control towards the Chinese. One explanation of such tendencies lies in the fact that the simple sounding resultant of British policy was produced by the interplay of a complex of personalities, interpretations of law, long-term national objectives and short-term local needs and pressures, over which no one appeared to have more than a partial control. In all these considerations, one thing is certain, that is, the safeguarding of colonial and imperial interests had overriding priority over principles and precedence.

Appendix 1

Rules for the Society for the Protection of Women and Children

1. The object of the Society is to aid in the suppression of the crime of kidnapping and to provide for the rescue and restoration to their families or friends of women and children who may require assistance or protection.

2. The Society shall consist of members who, being residents of the Colony, subscribe two dollars a year.

3. The Society shall be managed by a Head Committee sitting in Singapore and by Sub-Committees in Penang and Malacca. Each Committee shall consist of not less than five nor more than ten Members. Three Members shall form a quorum.

4. The Protector of Chinese in Singapore and the Assistant Protector of Chinese in Penang shall be ex-officio Members and Chairmen of the Committees in those Settlements, and the Chief Police Officer shall occupy the same position in Malacca.

5. The Committees (with the exception of the ex-officio Members) shall be elected annually by subscribers of the Society at a meeting to be called in January in each year. Vacancies, in default of election, may be filled up by nomination of the Governor.

6. The Committee shall elect one of its Members to be Secretary and Treasurer, who shall keep a record of the working of the Society, Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee, and the accounts of the Society, which shall be submitted to the Government to be annually audited.

7. The Society will endeavour by correspondence and enquiry to assist in the detection and bringing to justice of persons guilty of kidnapping and kindred offences. It will adopt all available means to restore rescued women and children to their relations, and in case of those who are friendless to make such provision as may be proper for their welfare. The Home already established by the Government in Singapore will be at the disposal of the Society.

8. The Committee may, from time to time, make, vary, or revoke rules for the management of the affairs of the Society and its servants: but no rule shall have effect until it has received the approval of the Governor.

Enclosed in CO 273/134 No. 220,26 May 1885 Smith to S. of S.

Appendix 2

Regulations for the Guidance of The Chinese Advisory Board, Singapore

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Name.

1. The Board shall be known as "The Chinese Advisory Board" or in Chinese as

Constitution.

2. The Board shall consist of not more than eighteen members to be nominated by the Governor, viz:- not more than

6 Hokkiens
5 Techius
2 Cantonese
2 Khehs
2 Hailams

and the Protector of Chinese.

3. The President of the Board shall be elected yearly by the members subject to the approval of the Governor the President for the first year being the Officer for the time being performing the duties of Protector of Chinese.

4. The Governor may at any time remove a member from the Board and fill up the vacancy so caused.

Meetings.

5. The ordinary meetings of the Board shall be held once in every month.

6. Notice of every ordinary meeting shall be given by the President to each member then resident in Singapore, stating the date and hour and business to be put before the Board.

All meetings shall be held at the Chinese Protectorate or such other place as may be approved by the Governor but not less than three days' notice shall be given.

7. Five members shall form a quorum.

8. Any member wishing to bring forward a subject for consideration shall give notice thereof to the President. Such notice must be sent in at least four days before the meeting is held at which it is to be discussed but any subject may without previous notice be discussed by the members of the Board then present provided that no resolution (except with the approval of the President) be made nor any vote taken unless every member resident in Singapore has received three days' notice as to what is to be proposed.

9. A special meeting may be called at any time at the request of any three members of the Board provided that the subject or subjects for discussion be circulated to all members then resident in Singapore at least three days before such special meeting is held.

10. The President may in case of emergency at any time call an extraordinary meeting of the Board to which each member resident in Singapore shall be summoned and informed of the subjects for consideration.

11. Minutes of the proceedings of the Board shall be recorded and signed by the President and copies of all resolutions with a statement of the votes for and against shall be transmitted to the Governor. Minutes must be confirmed at the next meeting by a majority present and a copy of the Minute shall be sent to each member as soon as possible after the meeting but in these only the number of votes and not the names of those voting shall be recorded.

12. Each member present at a meeting shall have one vote and where the votes are equal the President shall have a casting vote as well as an original vote.

13. No member shall vote by proxy.

14. Any member who without reasonable excuse to be approved by the Board and recorded in the proceedings of the Board shall be absent from three of the ordinary meetings consecutively shall vacate his place on the Board and the President shall ask the Governor to fill the vacancy.

Subjects for Discussion.

15. The following subjects may be discussed by the Board and resolutions proposed and vote taken thereon:-

(1) - Any matter specially affecting the general interests of the Chinese community under the following heads:-

(a) Legislation

(b) Regulations to be passed under any Ordinance by the Governor in Council

(c) Rites and ceremonies

(2) - Any matter specially affecting any particular section of the Chinese community.

(3) - Any matter connected with the promoting of education among the Chinese.

(4) - Any scheme for giving help to the poor and sick Chinese.

(5) - Any matter which members of the Chinese community may agree to submit for the arbitration of the Board where both sides agree to such arbitration and the Board by a resolution determine to consider it. For the purpose of investigating the matter of such arbitration a Committee of three members may be appointed by the Board who shall report to it the result of their inquiries.

(6) - Any individual case of hardship in regard to which a member of the Chinese community may wish to seek the assistance of the Board in order to bring the matter to the notice of the Government.

Enclosed in CO 273/162 No. 367, 20 December 1889 Smith to S. of S.

Appendix IIIA

(Translated from Chinese)

Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor of H.B.M.'s Straits Settlements forbidding the Masters of Chinese Tongkangs to apply to their Consul for sailing certificates.

Whereas the Masters of the Chinese Tongkangs built in the Straits Settlements have of late years, before going to sea been in the habit of applying to the Chinese Consul for Certificates and then going to the Port Authorities for sailing papers, I, the Governor of the said Settlements, do hereby forbid the Captains or officers of Chinese Tongkangs built within the Government of Her Majesty's Straits Settlements do apply to the Chinese Consul for such Certificates in future.

Singapore 16 March 1882.

Proclamation published in Lat Pau 17 March 1882

Appendix IIIB

A Humble Petition Presented by Owners of Tongkangs and Boats Residing within the Jurisdiction of the Straits Government.

We your Petitioners have dwelt many years in Singapore and have built Tongkangs and other vessels for the purposes of our trade; we have gratefully appreciated the paternal benevolence of the British Government, and at all times on clearing and entering our vessels, we have conformed to the rules, and paid the dues fixed by the Government; this of course is our duty, and the regulations are also very convenient, displaying the pure and loving reputation of this Government, which has spread to foreign states, while its own subjects regard it with the utmost veneration. But within the last two or three years there has suddenly sprung up a Chinese Consulate, which has established extra rules and taxes, so that now on clearing our vessels at the Harbour Master's Office every voyage, we find great difficulty. When we wish to despatch our vessels speedily to other Ports for the purposes of trade, we must first go to the Consulate for a document. The Consul makes us go back to bring the grant of our Tongkangs so that he may examine and record the registered tonnage. After his clerk has copied this, we must pay the clerk a fee of $2 and besides this we are charged a tax of 4½ cents per ton. When these fees are fined in full, then only are we allowed to receive our Port Clearance, and to sail.

We your Petitioners on careful consideration think that having lived so long and carried on our business in Singapore we are really subjects of Great Britain and not under the Government of the Consul; moreover our Tongkangs are English-built and are not Chinese sea-going vessels; if they were Chinese vessels arriving at Singapore, then of course it would be quite reasonable that the Consul should charge the fees and fix the duties. We traders being of the opinion that considering the smallness of our vessels and trade, we cannot really afford these extra charges, and have no other resource than to venture boldly to approach Your Excellency, humbly begging that the port clearance may as formerly be issued by the Harbour Masters, so that we Your Petitioners may have

no need to go to the Consulate for a document and we also urgently pray that we may be absolved from the payment to the Consulate of Tonnage dues.

7 March 1882
(17 signatures)

Enclosed in CO 273/115 No.235,17 June 1882 Weld to S. of S.

Appendix IV

Revised Opium Regulations

1. Application for permits to ship opium to places in China by Junk must be counter-signed by the Chinese Consul-General in Singapore before being presented to the Master Attendant.
   Without such counter-signature no permit will be issued.

2. When a permit has been issued the Master Attendant will inform the Chinese Consul-General, as at present, of the name of the junk, the quantity of opium it is authorized to ship, and its destination.

3. Before counter-signing any permit the Chinese Consul-General is authorized to require the applicant for a permit, together with the Master of the junk or Supercargo, to sign a document, specifying

   (a) the name of the junk,
   (b) the name of the Owner,
   (c) the Port of Registry,
   (d) the Port or Ports for which the junk is bound,
   (e) the quantity of opium to be carried.

   Such document shall purport to guarantee the payment at the port of destination of all the Customs' duty leviable on the opium. On execution it shall be forwarded by the Consul-General to the Commissioner of Customs in China for "presentation" and collection on the entry of the opium specified in such document.

4. The Government of the Straits Settlements reserves to itself the right - to be exercised by the Colonial Secretary - of allowing any shipment of opium otherwise than in accordance with the foregoing regulations. Should such right be at any time exercised the Chinese Consul-General shall be informed.

5. It is to be understood that this arrangement is tentative only - that it may be stopped by the Government - and that it is subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

Penang
8 May 1893

Enclosed in CO 273/188 No. 181 10 June 1893 Smith to S. of S.

Appendix V

Summary of Petition to Consul-General. (Petition presented by nineteen Chinese merchants.)

The Petitions lately presented a petition pointing out the inconvenience and difficulty in carrying out the new opium regulations and suggesting another scheme for dealing with the matter. In that petition they intimated their willingness to pay before (Exportation) a sum of $80 for each chest but requested that the system should come into operation after the 6th Moon. Your Honour consented to report this to the Tsungli Yamen and Petitioners are very grateful to you for it.

But Singapore is at a considerable distance from Peking and it generally takes 2 months for letters to come and go. On the other hand the junk owners had bought several hundred chests of opium, in the middle of the 4th Moon, before the publication of the new Regulations, and consequently there are now 50 Chinese Junks anchored on the sea unable to export their goods. On each junk there are, the Petitioners reckon, 30 people and the total number comes up to 1,500 men, all of whom are in a perfect dilemma and do not know what to do.

After considering the matter thoroughly the Petitioners made up their mind to comply temporarily with the (new) Regulations so as to be able to export the goods, but these Regulations require the shops which are to pay the duty and the Likin in the districts in China to be pointed out. Now these particulars are furnished to the Petitioners by the junk owners and the Petitioners have no means to find out whether or not such shops do exist and are able to pay the tax. At the same time Petitioners were afraid that if they did not devise a scheme to deal with the matter now they might get into trouble in the future.

They therefore tried to collect ready money from the junk owners to pay off the tax, but the junk owners persisted in saying that after buying goods with their money they had no cash left. Several consultations were held and the junk owners only consented to pay $40 a chest and leave the money to be kept in the Hue Kwan (guild) of the Kheng Chiu Community.

Considering that the usual time for the Hylam junks is between the 3rd and the 8th Moons and that the new Regulations were suddenly put in force in the 4th Moon, it is a fact that the junk owners when they left

China were not prepared for the change and under these circumstances, Petitioners request that Your Honour will take into consideration the hardships of these men and kindly allow their goods to be exported by consenting to the arrangement that all the local trading firms which have executed bonds to be exempted from every investigation after paying a sum of $40 on each chest, and that any (new) regulations no matter what they are be not carried out until the new year.

The Petitioners are in pressing circumstances and they are forced to impress their chops on this petition, and request Your Honour to report the matter to the Tsungli Yamen for their favourable consideration.

Dated 6 July 1893

Enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419 27 December 1893

Appendix VI

Translation given by Huang, Consul-General, on the subject of Transit Dues.

Dated 6 July 1893

(This subject arose from a petition presented by Chop Sui Chiang Seng and others, merchants of the Kheng Chiu Community, stating that they are obediently carrying out the new opium Regulations and at the same time suggesting another scheme for dealing with the matter).

The petition has been understood. As the Petitioners are acting obediently in accordance with the Regulations, it is expedient to issue the Permits and allow them to export the goods. As to the question of paying $40 on each chest and exempting (the exporters) from investigation, as stated in the petition, I the Consul-General am not able to act without authority, but having understood that the merchants are in difficulties it is expedient for me, in compliance with the petition to ask for the necessary sanction. I find that Chua Bun Po, the leading merchant of the Kheng Chiu community is just, upright, honest and careful and has hitherto been respected by the other members of the Community. It is therefore ordered that the said money be, for the present, delivered to him and he is to take care of it until the matter has been reported to and considered by the Tsungli Yamen, when further instructions will be given to him to be carried out.

Enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419 27 December 1893

Appendix VII

Statement by Chua Bun Po of Chop "Sui Chiang Seng"

Dated 20 July 1893

The Consul-General on 6 July 1893 asked me to collect $40 a chest for him on the opium then being exported by junks. I produce the document (translation herewith.) This $40 is on account of the Customs Duty to be collected in China. It is to be sent to the Tsungli Yamen by the Consul-General when all the junks have cleared. I am to pay it to him then and I have collected over $8,000. The total amount to be collected is $28,480 on 712 chests. I am to pay all that to the Consul-General whenever he asks me for it. I have nothing whatever to do with this money which is the China tax collected here by the Consul-General.

I lent $15,000 on 3 July 1893 to the Consul General. He wanted it in connection with the Shansi Famine Fund for which he is now collecting subscriptions. He wanted to remit in anticipation of further subscriptions coming in. He has not yet repaid me. I am going to deduct it from the $28,000 odd if he does not pay me before. I did not sign the bonds; the actual exporters (not local firms) did so.

Witness is sent to fetch and produces unstamped Promissory Notes sealed by the Consul-General

$10,000 on 5 July 1893
$ 2,000 on 7 July 1893
$ 3,000 on 11 July 1893

Translation

Mr $ Chua Bun Po, the Chairman of Kiungchow Club hereby deposits in the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation here the sum of $36,760. The set amount has been paid voluntarily by the Hainan Opium Exporters this year at the rate of $40 per chest of opium as deposited money for the duties liable to pay.

So soon as official instructions shall have been received from the Chinese Government, then this money will be drawn either by Mr Chua Bun Po himself or by Mr Huang Tsun-hsien, the Chinese Consul-General, taking this signed paper by Chua Bun Po, and the money will be paid accordingly.

(Signed) Chua Bun Po.

Enclosed in CO 273/194 No. 81 23 March 1894

Appendix VIII

Abridged translation of a Memorial by Minister Hsüeh recommending the abolition of certain old prohibitions so as to encourage Chinese subjects to return to China.

After referring to the causes which led to the prohibitions being imposed the Memorialist continues:

Your Minister, in the 17th year of Kwong Sui, after presenting a Memorial appointed Hwang Tsun-hsien, a Consul-General at Singapore, and instructed him, on arrival at his office, to carefully inquire into the circumstances of the Chinese subjects temporarily residing in that Colony and send up a true report thereon.

The Consul-General has now reported as follows:

There are more than a million Chinese subjects in the various islands in the Southern Ocean. The Europeans, the Arabians and the Malays own about three-tenths of the coasting trade, the landed property and other sources of profit, while the Chinese own about seven-tenths. Of this seven-tenths, two-sevenths belong to the Kwong Chius (Cantonese), the Kheng Chius (Hylams) and the Fui Chius and Ka Ying Chius (Khehs), and the other five-sevenths belong to the Teo Chius of the Yüt (Kwang-tung) Province and the Chiang Chius and Chuan Chius of the Man (Hokkien) Province. Most of the Yüt people travel to and fro as they please and about half of the Teo Chius remain abroad. The Man people are the most substantial and wealthy but the majority of them are local-borns and few are temporary residents. They buy fields and plantations and bring up their children, and though their families in foreign parts for over a hundred years, yet their new years day and their dress are still those of the Chinese, and the same old ceremonies are observed on the occasion of marriages, deaths and sacrificial festivities. They have subscribed large sums during the last few years towards the funds raised by the various provinces for relief and defensive works and are very anxious to obtain an honorary title, a feather, or a button to decorate themselves. Looking at this warm regard for their own country it is obvious that the kindness of Your Imperial Majesty has penetrated deeply into their minds. When they are questioned, however, as to their return home, they all knit their eye-brows and speak of the investigations by the officials, the oppression of the clerks

and writers, the extortion by their own clansmen and neighbours, and numerous other troubles too many to be described. Those who actually return to China with their fortunes are either pointed out as runaway robbers or accused as national traitors. Some are charged with secretly transporting arms and ammunition to supply pirates and some with buying and selling "little pigs" (emigrants) to obtain the favours of foreign evil-doers. Some have their own boxes and chests forcibly taken away from them and divided between the oppressors, some have their houses pulled down and not allowed to be built again, and some have old false promissory notes drawn up against them for money alleged to be due. Having been resident beyond the sea they are friendless and alone (in China) and being all at once falsely accused have no resources to complain or appeal to. On this account they do not wish to return to their country and sometimes when they do go for the purpose of trade they either call themselves English or Dutch subjects and relying on the power and strength of these nations transgress our law to the detriment of the local authorities. In order to do away with these firmly-established evils public proclamations should be placarded clearly notifying that the old rules (prohibitions) have been abolished and that new regulations will be fixed on at an early date. This will open the eyes and ears of the public and beneficial results will be produced.

It appears that Huang Tsun-hsien has made extensive inquiries and acquired complete information and is therefore able to make such a minute and particular statement as above.

Your Minister is of opinion that the disposition of the masses is such that they rally round and depend on those who are able to protect their life and property. The number of Chinese subjects who have emigrated to the foreign parts amount to several millions. The Yüt emigrants are mostly labourers and though they are looked down upon by their fellow provincials (in China), yet they are free to do as they like. Besides paying for their food and clothing they save a little money and the present rather substantial condition of the prefectures and districts bordering on the sea is not improbably due to this. The Man people have many wealthy and great merchants. Their fellow provincials (in China), however, treat them very cruelly and give strong resistance to their returning. Hence many millionaires have to reside beyond the sea and not one out of ten return (to China).

It is not true that the Chinese have no attachment to their native land, neither is it true that the Government drives them out and prohibits them from returning. The reason is that when the treaties were made (with the foreign nations) they had not been sufficiently widely proclaimed for the information of the general public and this enables the crafty clerks and the dishonest members of the gentry to take advantage of any weak points to raise trouble "like the others which aid the deep waters be driving the fish into them, and the hawks which aid the thickets by driving the little birds to them", (that is to say the Clerks and gentry aid the foreign parts by driving the returned emigrants back to them.) What a mistake this is!

Now the English, the Dutch and the other nations by encouraging Chinese immigration transform desolate islands into great ports; they are thus able to derive benefits from us. Our Chinese subjects (in foreign parts) possess smart abilities and hold the balance of profit, yet we do not think of acquiring them for our assistance but expel and alienate them. We are thus not able to derive benefits from the foreign nations. If timely arrangements are made now we may yet reap beneficial results in the end, but if we do not do so we will have occasion to regret our neglect.

Formerly the Viceroy Shin Pao Ching memorialized the Throne and requested that the old regulations prohibiting secret passage to Formosa be abolished. This request was granted by a special Imperial Decree and it did away with a mere matter of form to the benefit of the Government. Until the present day, the people on this side of the sea are speaking of the convenience that the abolition gives. The question of our Chinese subjects emigrating to the foreign parts is a case similar to this and (the Memorialist) therefore respectfully requests that Your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to issue an edict to the Tsungli Yamen ordering it to devise a good plan for the protection of Chinese emigrants to foreign parts and promulgating that the old rules have been altered so as to take away the means by which the Clerks commit extortions and raise troubles. (At the same time) the Viceroys and Governors of the Provinces along the Coast and the Ministers to the foreign Courts should proclaim in all directions the kind intentions of the Emperor for the general information of the public and the Consuls at the various

ports should also be allowed to issue passports (lit. warrants of protection) to those persons who are found after inquiry to have hitherto been noted for their honesty and good conduct. If this is done we will win back the hearts of the people, which are about to be lost to us, and emigrants who think of their old country will return without interruption. The Government also will reap the benefits of "keeping its treasures in the possession of the people" (i.e. having many rich subjects), and when an emergency occurs the saying that "the trunk is strong if the branches are luxurient" will prove to be but too true.

A respectful memorial to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

Enclosed in CO 273/190 No. 419 27 December 1893

Appendix IX

Names of Chinese officials who have come to the Straits to sell official titles and honours.

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1. Wan Fai Shan. A Kheh. Lived in a lodging house in Singapore. Did do not do a large business locally but sold a great deal in Penang and the Dutch colonies. Was assisted on by Teou Tiau Siat in whose shop he lived in Penang.

2. Ho Lung Kan. A Northerner. Lived in Chop "Kwong Sang Lung" in South Bridge Rd. Did a large business in Singapore and Penang. Was assisted on by Ng Wai Pho and Teou Tiau Siat. Stopped here two or three years.

3. Wong Chuk Chai. A Northerner. Lived here about a year. Did a considerable business in Singapore. Was assisted on by Consul Tso Ping Lung, Ng Kwai Pho and a Teochiu named Chan Tiau Nam.

4. Li Chi Thin. A Cantonese. Lived in Chop "Chu Kwong Lan", Market Street. Did a considerable business in Singapore and Penang. Was assisted by Consul Tso who went to Penang with him. Stopped here about a year.

5. Che Pan Mun. A Hupeh. Lived in Bun Hin & Co., Malacca Street for five years. Now stays in Chop "An Ho" Telok Ayer St. Came to Singapore about 5½ years ago. Has done a good business during the first 3 or 4 years of his arrival. Visits Penang, the Native States, Rangoon, Annam and the Dutch Colonies occasionally. Has an agent in Perak and three agents in Singapore, viz: Ng Kwai Pho, Go Sin Kho, and Chan Tiau Nam (now in China).

6. Wong Fung and two others - Hokkines? Came from Amoy. Stopped in Kim Cheng & Co. for a short time. Did little business.

7. Ko Hok Lun. A Teochiu. Stopped in Chop "Seng Huat" Upper Circular Road (now South Bridge Road) for a short time only. Did not do much business.

8. Moi Chi San. A Cantonese. Son of Moi Sam of Chop "Sui Wo" Singapore. Did not do much business.

9. Tho Chung Wai. A Northerner. Lived in the "Wan Pao Hin" lodging house, Cecil Street. Was assisted on by Consul Hwang Tsun Hsien. Did a fair business here. Stopped about 2 years.

10. Thang Kan Sin. A Northerner. Lived for some time in Wayang Street, then moved to Hill Street opposite to Chinese Consulate. Did a good business here. Was assisted by Consul Hwang and Consul Hwang and Consul Teou Tiau Siat. Had a collector in Perak.

11. Li Chung Nin. Kheh. Came together with Tang Kan Sin (10) and went on to Perak.

12. Local firms:-

Wan Seng (Cheang Hong Lim)
Tek Guan (Go Sin Kho)
Man Hang Thong (Ng Kwai Pho)
Sian Hing (Chan Tiau Nam)
Chu Kwong Lan
Kai Fuk Thong
Kwong Hang

Many buyers of titles, particularly those who bought from Wan Fai Shan and Ho Lung Kan have not received their diploma from the Board of Offices. This is attributed by those concerned in title selling partly to the carelessness of the Chung Kuk ( ) in China and partly to the delay of the board in Pekin.

Li Chung Nin (II) the partner of Tang Kan Sin (I0) is probably still in Perak. Che Pan Mun also has an agent there called Lai Hiong Sim. They sell the titles at a higher rate than that required by the Board of Offices.

China-born Chinese buy most. Many Straits born have also bought. The titles are also bought for parents, uncles, elder brothers, wives and children.

List of Chinese officials and graduates who came to the Straits and Native States for the purposes of "Ta Chan Fung" (raising money) during the last few years.

Ho Lung Kan	Prefect
Ma Thang Wan	Major
Cheng Kun Ying	Taotai
Yun Tsung Pho	Magistrate
Chung Tak Tsung	Han-lin
Thiu Kuan	Taotai
Li Chung Kuk	Magistrate
Chan Kwok King	B.A.
Yeung Kwok Cheung	Board Secretary
Ling Phang Nin	Han-lin
Moi Kai Fong	B.A. (Military)
Lik Kuan	M.A.
Wong Tsun Kai	M.A. (Consul Wong's brother)
Lo Mong Tseung	Major General
Ng Chun Siu	Han-lin
Lan Kwak Kang	Han-lin
Yiu Chan	Board Secretary (LL.D.)
Chi Pak Wai	Han-lin
Wong Tsun Mo	Sub-Magistrate (Consul Wong's brother)
Cheou Kan Wong	Magistrate (Consul Teou Tiau Siat's nephew, degraded)
Thong U Choi	M.A.
Wong Sing Phoi	M.A.
Yeung Cheong Seng	General
Liu Fung Cheong	Magistrate
Chan Thai Khwan	Prefect

Chinese officials who came on commissions:

Wong Wing Wo	Major General
U Tsung	Prefect
Chan Pak Tho	Han-lin
Lu Shui Kwong	Han-lin

There are doubts as to the bona fide of these two Han-lins as regards their commissions.

Pseudo Officials

Thong Yau Cheng	Han-lin
Yik Hok Tsun	Prefect
Cheong Yan Hop	Sub-Prefect
Mg Lin Chi	Captain
Ngai Shui Kui	Han-lin

Officials who came to collect subscriptions for famines.

Ho Lun Kan	Prefect
Wan Fai Shan	Magistrate
Yip Ching Peng	Taotai
Wong Chi Ki	Sub-Magistrate
Li Theng Yuk	Sub-Prefect
Che Kwan Hung	Magistrate
Wing Fun	Sub-Magistrate
Ko Hok Nang	M.A.
Moi Chi San	Magistrate
Tho Chung Wai	Magistrate
Tang Thing Kwan	Sub-Magistrate
Li Chung Nin	Sub-Magistrate

)port by G. T. Hare, 30 September 1896, enclosed in CO 273/218 No. 464
6 October 1896

Appendix X

Remarks by Mr G.T. Hare

I beg to submit the following remarks on Sir C. Smith's letter. The numbers in the margin refer to that letter.

2 2. Sir C. Smith is in error on this point. There never has been any Capitan China with executive powers in the Straits Settlements or in Hongkong. The Hokkien Community here years ago called their headman Capitan China, but the Colonial Government never officially recognised him and certainly never allowed this headman to exercise any executive powers.

3 3. Sir C. Smith has not distinguished between the two classes of 'Capitan Chinas', 'Majors' and 'Lieutenants'. One class (to which Sir C. Smith evidently refers) has extensive executive powers and a very considerable territorial jurisdiction, and, as Chief Assessor with the Magistrates in the Dutch District Courts, has great influence. No one disputes that this system is bad in principle and practice, and leads to innumerable abuses. The other class of 'Capitan Chinas', 'Majors', &c. is purely honorific. No real power or position is attached to these titles, and I have never heard of the holders of them having in any way abused these distinctions.

I, with all due respect, cannot subscribe to Sir C. Smith's final conclusion that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to devise any title or "bestow any rank on "a Chinese which will not be liable to be used as a means of "oppression by the possessor". Personally (as a mere matter of opinion which, I feel sure, would be shared by the Protector of Chinese, Singapore, and Registrar General, Hongkong,) I do not think that the bestowing of honorific titles on Chinese would be in any way abused by the holders. Leaving personal opinion, however, out of the question, as a matter of fact, evidence exists to shew that the fears entertained by Sir C. Smith are not likely to be realised. Over twenty years have passed in Hongkong and in the Straits Settlements since representative influential Chinese have been nominated Honourable Members of the Legislative Councils. This position (which is certainly liable to be used for improper purposes) has, as far as I know, never been in any way abused by the Chinese who have represented the interests of their fellow-countrymen in the Legislative Council in Hongkong and

in the Straits Settlements. Neither, as far as I know, have the Chinese, who have been nominated by Her Majesty's Government, Municipal Commissioners or Justices of the Peace in this Colony and Hongkong, Honorary Magistrates in Burmah, or Members of the State Councils in the Federated Malay States, ever abused their trust and attempted to use their official position in an improper or irregular way. I might add that the Honourable U Ki (commonly called Whampoa) on whom the Order of the St. Michael and St. George was conferred, did not, in any way, as far as is known, take improper advantage of the position this special distinction conferred on him. It was regarded by him and by his fellow-countrymen as a mark of favour and esteem on the part of Her Britannic Majesty's Government in very much the same way as a native gentleman in the Indian Empire looks upon the giving of the Order of the Star of India for distinguished services. It means no more and no less than this.

4. Sir C. Smith, to my mind, appears to have misunderstood this point. It is true that most of the appeals that are made for subscriptions to the Chinese in the Straits are for distress in the North of China. It is also true that the Chinese in the Straits come from the south of China. Sir C. Smith seems to say that I think these subscriptions are 'political squeezes' because the southern Chinese are appealed to help the northern Chinese. I do not say this. I say generally that the Straits Settlements is tending to become a semi-official basis of operations to the Chinese Government for raising subscriptions for distresses in China and for collecting capital for official enterprises in China; and that this is a matter of common knowledge amongst the Chinese. Appeals such as are made here for calamities by land or water in any particular one of the 18 provinces of China, are very rarely made in China proper - the rule being that charity must begin at home. In the face of famines, inundations and such disasters every province in China has to help itself and this is in fact the common practice. During the last twelve years I know of only one case (the great floods on the Yellow River) when an appeal for help was made by the Chinese Government to all the provinces.

6. 5. In paragraph 6 of his letter, Sir C. Smith first deprecates the undue influence that the Chinese Government is obtaining over the Chinese here through the Chinese Consul General, and denounces the underhand means in which subscriptions are collected from the Chinese, and yet he states that in his opinion the sale of these Chinese official titles has

"no political significance". I cannot reconcile this conclusion with the strong views expressed by Sir C. Smith in the paragraph I have quoted above as to the establishment of Chinese Consulates in the Colony. It is well known that the whole of the business in connection with the sale of Chinese honours in this Colony is engineered by the Mandarins who come here from China, through the influence and support of the Chinese Consuls in the Colony. In Hongkong where Her Britannic Majesty's Government has not allowed Chinese Consulates to be established, the sale of these official honours is very small because the Chinese Mandarins who go there to raise money, have no means, as here, of forcing their claims.

6. In paragraph 7 Sir C. Smith says he does not think that an English decoration or title would make a Chinaman any more attached to British rule. I cannot reconcile Sir C. Smith's statements in paragraphs 7 and 8. In the first he says that no English decoration would make a Chinaman more attached to British rule. In paragraph 8 Sir C. Smith admits that the Chinese think very highly of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. What Sir C. Smith says, after this admission, as to a new order being less valued by the Chinese is, I think, somewhat beside the question. The great majority of Chinese know little about the Orders given by Her Majesty's Government, and rarely distinguish between them. It is sufficient for them to know that it is given by the Crown as a 'pao hsing' (保星) a 'precious star'. Sir C. Smith states that Chinese presented with an English Order would not wear it in the presence of Chinese Mandarins visiting the Straits. I feel sure that these Orders would be worn on all State occasions both in the presence of English or Chinese Officials. It is well known that the late U Ki (Whampoa) invariably wore the Order of St. Michael and St. George at all public Chinese functions. The Chinese abroad generally and in the Straits in particular are not half so submissive or complaisant in their bearing towards Chinese Officials abroad as in China. As an illustration of this, I might point out that in China few merchants who purchase titular ranks will ever wear their official robes and hats in the presence of Chinese Officials holding substantive office, whether acquired by purchase or by success at the Civil Service Examination. In the Straits Settlements no such diffidence exists, and I personally have seen Chinese Officials who have held office in China express displeasure at having to meet

Chinese merchants here in official robes which they are only entitled to wear by purchase.

9 7. Sir C. Smith refers to two facts to shew that in his opinion the Chinese in this Colony are not yet sufficiently English in their ideas and sympathies. He says that the Honourable U Ki (Whampoa) C.M.G. made his son, on his return from China some fifteen years ago, grow his queue again and that he himself directed that his own body should be buried in China. I propose to shew that the conclusions Sir C. Smith draws from these two facts are misleading. It is now generally admitted on all sides that the Chinese as a race, both in China and wherever they may settle as Colonists abroad, will never now abandon their national custom of dressing the hair in a queue. It is undoubtedly a peculiarly appropriate appendage to the Chinese type of features and eyes, and one that they are no little proud of as a personal adornment. The Chinese of most advanced English sympathies and ideas in Calcutta, Rangoon, the Straits, Siam, Tonquin, America and Hongkong are all agreed on this point, and have, in my opinion, very wisely abandoned the idea of ceasing to wear the queue. In Palembang and in Malacca where the Chinese go as far back as eight generations and where many of them can no longer speak Chinese, no one has suggested cutting off the queue. As to the Honourable U Ki being buried in China, it is necessary to remember that he was born there. No doubt special religious importance was attached to Whampoa's grave. In the majority of cases the original ancestor of most of the oldest Chinese British-born families has been buried in China, and his family have been the first to be buried in the Straits. To-day, however, unless very special importance is attached to the geomantic influence of the grave in China, even the China-born Chinese of long residence here, are in most cases now interred here. The Burials Bill of 1896 is intended to deal with the burials of wealthy Chinese in private graves. This Bill was made necessary by the increasing demand of the Chinese for private burial grounds. As to wearing European clothing and cutting off the queue, I might note that there are only four or five Chinese who have done this in the Far East. As a matter of taste and comfort, I am sure that the Chinese will always prefer their Chinese dress because it is cooler and easier in hot weather, and offers more protection against the cold than the European style of clothing. Surely a Chinese bred and born here may be at once loyal and patriotic towards Her Majesty's Government and yet remain Chinese in his mode of

life and peculiar forms of thought? I admit I cannot see the force of Sir C. Smith's argument. In India orders and honours are given to distinguished natives of the Indian Empire without any reference to the pattern of their coats, the dressing of their hair, or the particular method of their interment. Why should the Chinese, born here, be expected to change their eastern characteristics for western forms? In India the most distinguished Princes and natives do not really become less Mahommedans or Hindoos because they may have strong British sympathies.

8. I should like to say one or two words in conclusion. I must admit that I fail to see that Sir C. Smith has said anything material against the proposal that has been made. I confess too that I cannot entirely understand what his objections are. His chief point seems to be that the influential wealthy Chinese in the Colony do not as yet shew "signs outwardly" of throwing in their lot with the British. (see end of para.8 in Sir C. Smith's letter). I do not know exactly to what Sir C. Smith refers when he speaks of outward signs. I have pointed out that the Chinese whether in China or abroad are never likely to abandon the tonsure, wear western clothing and cease to grow the queue. Perhaps Sir C. Smith means that the Chinese born in the Colony are not yet sufficiently British in their ideas and sympathies. If such are Sir C. Smith's views, I am not in accord with them. It would be well that there should be no misunderstanding on this point. I think that Sir C. Smith expects too much if he requires the Chinese born here to abandon Chinese tradition and Chinese modes and expects them to follow European customs and ways. Personally I feel sure that the Chinese born or settled permanently in this Colony and in the Malay Peninsula will never become aliens in thought or in mode of life to Chinese models. The force of circumstances is too strong to enable Chinese born here to develop otherwise than on Chinese lines. The very key note to a proper understanding of the leading characteristics of the Straits born British Chinaman is a recognition of the fact that he is a person whom the necessities of his situation compel to look with one face, as it were, to the west and with another face to the east. He has to be friends with both Europeans and China born Chinese. His commercial relations, his social life, the education of his children, his political relations, are all influenced by this dual environment. In the face of the overwhelming China born Chinese Community around him, yearly recruited by new arrivals from China, it would be strange indeed if the Straits born Chinese could

free themselves entirely from Chinese ideas. If, therefore, before considering the suggestions, I have ventured to make, Her Majesty's Government proposes to wait till the Chinese born and settled here revolutionise their social economy and adopt British modes of thought and British customs, I feel sure I am justified in saying that this question must be postponed for several centuries, for under present circumstances mere lapse of time cannot affect the position occupied by the Straits born Chinese.

9. In considering the question raised by Sir C. Smith I submit that it is only fair to direct the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the great interests that the Chinese of British birth together with those Chinese that are permanently settled here, have in these Settlements and in the Malay Peninsula. Roughly speaking nearly two? thirds of the landed property and other real estate is held by these Chinese. Their trade can be valued at many millions sterling, and as rate-payers they contribute two thirds of the Municipal assessment raised. More than one half of the local shipping is owned by them, and about one half of the yearly immigration from China is carried in ocean-going steamers owned or chartered by them.

10. All their interests are bound up with the welfare of the Colony and shew that the Chinese appreciate the benefits of British administration. If this Colony were governed like French Indo-China is, would the Chinese throw in their lot with us in this way? Nor are the Chinese of this Colony who own these great interests slow to shew their loyalty to Her Majesty's Government. On all public occasions when their loyalty is appealed to, they have responded. The only statue of Her Majesty the Queen owned by the Colony is a marble one presented to Government by the leading Chinese of Singapore in commemoration of the many benefits they have enjoyed during Her Majesty's reign. These Chinese too have enriched the Colony with gifts of public parks, public hospitals, English and Chinese free schools, public dispensaries, Chinese places of worship, guild halls and many Chinese charitable institutions. Some two thousand Chinese boys are learning English in our schools.

11. Although all the Chinese who have these interests at stake in this Colony may not be British in their ideas in the way that I understand Sir C. Smith to mean, yet they are all friendly towards the Colonial Government and fully appreciate the benefits enjoyed under British rule.

The most practical proof of their having thrown in their lot with us is that they have sunk their capital in the Colony and Malay States. Nor should it be forgotten (as one reading the last part of paragraph 8 in Sir C. Smith's letter might be pardoned for forgetting) that the leading influential Chinese born here are not new arrivals in the Colony. At the present time the great bulk of these have reached the second generation and many the third. Many of the Penang and Malacca families have been localised there for a hundred years. Even the British born Chinese traders of high standing and position in Burmah are all offshoots of the Straits born Chinese families from Penang - just as large numbers of the leading Chinese of British birth in Siam and Indo-China spring from the Chinese families born and settled in Singapore and Hongkong.

12. Sir C. Smith in the same paragraph states that it is only within the last few years that we have obtained any real knowledge of the Chinese. I do not know exactly the meaning that Sir C. Smith attaches to this, but I might in reply point out that England and China are now rapidly closing the first century of their international intercourse and that the history of the Chinese Colonists who have done so much to develop the Crown Colonies of Hongkong and the Straits Settlements began with Her Majesty's reign. The leading characteristics of any race can, I submit, be fairly accurately gauged after nearly a century has lapsed.

13. I have little to add to what I have already said in my former report as to the good likely to follow from what has been suggested. I believe that Chinese loyalty is a healthy plant that will flourish and grow if it is fostered with care. If the wisdom and expediency of cultivating it is admitted, I can see no material reason advanced in Sir C. Smith's letter for postponing the matter indefinitely.

14. As to the form that the proposed decoration is to take I would, with all due diffidence, venture to suggest that a new order should be created, and that this new order should be conferred indifferently for distinguished services on Colonists (who would be mainly other than of British descent) born or settled in any of the Crown Colonies throughout Her Majesty's dominions. Or if this is considered too wide the Order might be confined to the Eastern Crown Colonies of Ceylon, the Straits Settlements with the Federated Malay States and Hongkong. The creation of this new Order mainly for rewarding local services in the Crown Colonies might be a graceful and not unfitting act on the great occasion

of the completion of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty the Queen's most august reign.

(Sd.) G.T. Hare,
Assistant Protector of Chinese,
Singapore.

Enclosed in CO 273/224 No. 82, 13 March 1897

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