

University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of History

A Thesis  
Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng:  
A Comparative Study of Tripartite Loyalty  
of Colonial Chinese Elite (1895-1912)

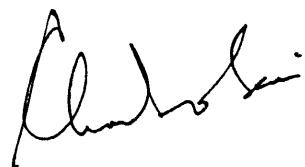
Submitted by  
Chow Lo Sai, Pauline  
In partial fulfillment for the  
Degree of Master of Arts  
in Comparative Asian Studies

December 1987

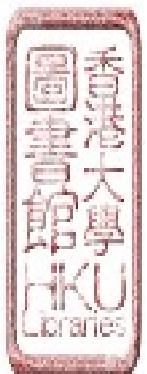


DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted to this University or other institutions in application for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

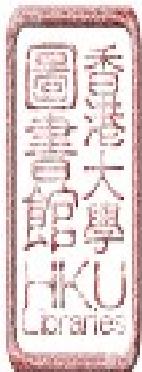


Chow Lo Sai, Pauline



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

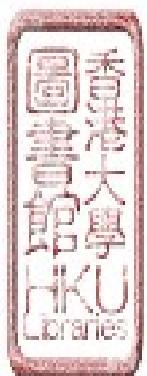
This M.A. dissertation is only possible because of the patient guidance and immense toleration of my supervisor, Professor Mary Turnbull and the kind consideration of the M.A. Committee in granting me extensions for submission. So to them all, especially Professor Turnbull, Dr. Skeldon, Dr. Owen, Dr. Hill, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Cribbin, I wish to express my deepest gratitude. Special votes of thanks are also due to the Dean of Faculty of Arts, Professor Chiu Ling-yeong for introducing me to the work of Lee Guan Kin, "The Thought of Lim Boon Keng -- Convergency and Contradictions between Chinese and Western Culture", to Dr. Elizabeth Sinn not only for her constantly alerting me to useful source materials but also for her kind support during those moments when I was on the verge of giving up, to my friend, Miss Wendy Lo for her sweet encouragement and of course to Miss Christine Fung for having this paper typed so efficiently at short notice. And last but definitely not the least, I wish to thank my husband, Ravel, and my son, Vincent, for loving this negligent wife and mother.



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ABSTRACT of thesis entitled "Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng: A Comparative Study of Tripartite Loyalty of Colonial Chinese Elite (1895-1912)" submitted by Chow Lo Sai, Pauline, for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Hong Kong in December 1987.

The period 1895-1912 was a fast changing era in China. While the country was suffering humiliations of defeats, occupation of the capital and other erosions of sovereignty, China was salvaging herself. Many Chinese, both at home and abroad, became concerned with China's future. Even those Chinese, such as colonial Chinese elites, who appeared to have severed all attachments from China also showed much enthusiasm. These were Chinese who were serving as Legislative Councillors in their colonial governments and at the same time, keen on promoting the well-being of their own Chinese communities, sometimes even to the point of strongly opposing government policies. Yet amidst their commitments, they were equally dedicated to improving China's situation. They wrote to publicise their reform views and even acted to intervene in developments in the Mainland. While they were shifting or distributing their allegiances and dedications with seeming ease and confidence, they were in fact carefully compromising and balancing so as not to upset their own status bases in the colonial bulwarks. Such tripartite role-playing was only possible when these Chinese were in relatively liberal colonial regimes and when they were manipulating and balancing conscientiously. Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim

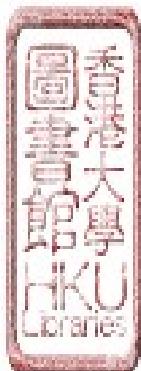


Boon Keng in the Straits Settlements were two such Chinese elites.



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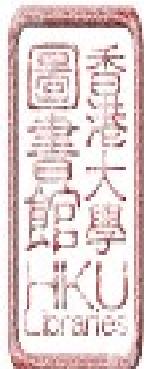
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## PREFACE

Born in Shanghai in 1947 and brought by parents to Hong Kong in 1949, I have always loved Hong Kong as my homeland. Never for one moment have I doubted the potential of this little city especially its people. I have witnessed it in social turmoils in 1957 and 1967 and in economic upheavals in 1973, 1983 and recently in 1987. Yet in all these crises, Hong Kong has survived though not without casualties. I am now looking forward to seeing it crossing the hurdles of 1997.

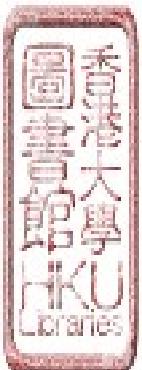
Hong Kong is what it is today, a prosperous colony of peace and stability because of the interplay of many objective situations and subjective factors. But no one can deny that one major contributing force behind this remarkably peaceful and in many respects successful British colonial rule is the service rendered by local Chinese elites to the colonial government. These are especially those Chinese who have been appointed to the Legislative Council since 1880 and to the Executive Council since 1926 to represent Chinese interests. Although they swear allegiance to the British Crown, they do speak and act on behalf of local Chinese interests, if not always for the whole of the community at least for sectional good. This is the government expectation of their function - a bridge between the alien minority British rulers and the vast Chinese subjects so as to smooth away whatever



misunderstandings or miscalculations that may exist. These Chinese councillors do not necessarily endorse all government policies unreservedly. Scenes of councillors' open opposition to government measures are not recent phenomena. They often find themselves caught in the dilemma of whether to advance interests of the colonial government which appoints them or those of the local Chinese whom they represent.

To make this loyalty issue more complicated, some of these Chinese councillors in Hong Kong are also enthusiasts in promoting the general good of China, their country of origin. They may be local Chinese for several generations and may even be baptized Christians. Nevertheless, their sentiments for China are so strong that they not only observe developments in the Mainland, but actually initiate or become involved in the events themselves. Some even claim influential positions in the history of China. These acts of interference in affairs of China are certainly a deviation from their sworn allegiance to the British Crown, and sometimes more seriously in contradiction with the declared diplomatic principles of the British government.

By thus variously allocating their concerns, attention and efforts, these Chinese councillors in Hong Kong are playing three apparently contradictory roles, namely, supporters of the British colonial government, caretakers of local Chinese interests and observers and promoters of China's general well-being. No doubt, situations arise that call forth decisions and choices. This tripartite

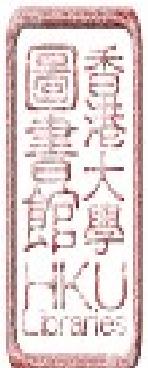


involvement<sup>1</sup> of varying degree and extent is observable throughout the history of over a century of Chinese appointment to the Legislative Council. Generally speaking, when crisis situations occur in China, this tripartite concern of Chinese elites is most obviously manifested. Here is one case of a Hong Kong Chinese councillor being so involved at the turn of the last century. It was the period when intense activities were taking place in the Mainland after China's defeat by Japan and the signing of The Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895 to January 1912 when the Ch'ing Dynasty abdicated and the Chinese Republic was established. The Chinese councillor of Hong Kong involved in this tumultuous period was Ho Kai (1859-1914).

Tripartite loyalty complex is not just found among appointed Chinese councillors in Hong Kong. Similar mentality and involvement was also evident among Chinese councillors of Singapore of the Straits Settlements. Singapore then resembled Hong Kong in its colonial structure, and in its Chinese majority population with ties attached to the Mainland.

Here is one concluding remark on a Chinese Legislative Councillor in Singapore being so tripartitely committed.

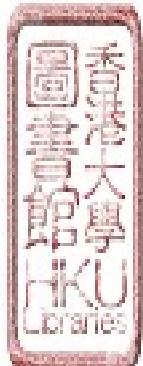
"His whole life presents a picture of great variety, revolving as it did around different ties - ties to his sovereign country, Britain, to the land of his forefathers, China, and to the land of his birth, Singapore."<sup>2</sup>



Aside from the name of the place, Singapore, this description can well be used to sum up any cases of Chinese elites who have their loyalty so contradictorily pledged. The author of the above remark, Lee Guan Kin, is concluding his study of Lim Boon Keng (1869-1957), one such Chinese elite in Singapore.

Therefore, it occurs that the objective situations of the times, that is, a Chinese society under British colonial rule at a time when China is in change, may have nurtured this loyalty complex. To be able to arrive at such a conclusion, a comparative study of two contemporary Chinese elites in two different British colonies is necessary. This present study is a comparative review of the tripartite loyalty issue of Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim Boon Keng in Singapore. They were not exact contemporaries. But during that turbulent period from 1895 to 1912, both had their emotions aroused and from their colonial bulwarks influenced developments in the Mainland. At the same time, Ho and Lim were also serving as appointed Chinese representatives in the Legislative Councils of Hong Kong and Singapore respectively.<sup>3</sup>

The choice of these two persons is not a matter of convenience. Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim Boon Keng in Singapore were unique in their own societies at that time to be so actively and tripartitely involved. Therefore although Lim outlived Ho for almost half a century, this comparative study is still valid. For clarity of argument,

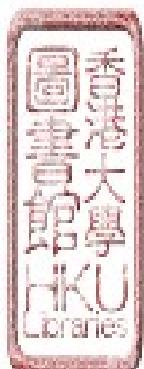


this work does not exhaust their biographies and only focuses on their loyalty complex.

By studying the two cases of Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim Boon Keng in Singapore in the period 1895-1912, this work aims to analyse, compare and contrast the various factors and situations leading to the formation of tripartite loyalty, the contradictions involved and the compromises reached. It is hoped that conclusions can be drawn from the findings.

This author does not claim to be original both in the conception of the terminology "tripartite" and to the use of source material. "Tripartite" involvement is the theme of Lee Guan Kin's study of Lim Boon Keng in "The Thought of Lim Boon Keng - Convergency and Contradiction Between Chinese and Western Culture". As to materials utilized, much is relied upon previous works already done on Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng. When the writer first drafted this work, there was the intention of claiming originality in the choice of these two characters for the comparative study of tripartite loyalty. And yet during the course of research, the writer read the following from Harold Z. Schiffriin's Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution,

"...Ho Kai, as well as some of the Anglicized Chinese like Dr. Lim Boon Keng (Lin Wen-ch'ing) of Singapore, are worthy of individual study. By background and training these men were eminently fitted for leadership roles in this difficult transitional period in Chinese history, yet their influence was limited by their conflicting loyalties...."<sup>4</sup>



Schiffelin's mentioning of Ho Kai along with Lim Boon Keng thus ends this writer's any claim to originality of the topic.

The present study though titled "Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng: A Comparative Study of Tripartite Loyalty of Colonial Chinese Elite (1895-1912)" lays particular stress on Ho Kai. As this work is done in Hong Kong, literature on Ho Kai rather than Lim Boon Keng is more available. Aside from Lee Guan Kin's thesis already referred to, other works on Lim tend to be either sketchy or repetitive and even complimentary. The Straits Chinese Magazines co-founded by Lim Boon Keng were not available in Hong Kong at the time of writing this paper.

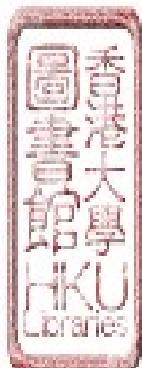
The following chapters do not only concentrate on the period 1895 to 1912 for the examination of tripartite loyalty. Chapter One provides a brief introduction for the understanding of the topic by explaining the significance of the period 1895 to 1912, overseas Chinese mentality as well as situations in China, Hong Kong and Singapore. Chapter Two examines Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng's family background and education in Britain. Chapter Three sees Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng in their pre-1895 involvement showing that tripartite orientations were taking shape in Lim's case and as for Ho Kai, tripartite moves were already launched. Chapter Four details their activities during those turbulent years of 1895 to 1912. Chapter Five tries to draw some conclusions from the findings of the previous chapters.



Transliteration of Chinese names follows the Wade-Giles system or commonly accepted forms.

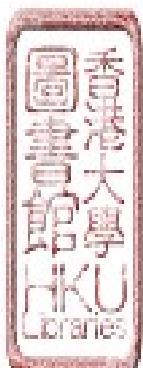
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## NOTES

1. 'Tripartite nationality complex' is the theme of Lee Guan Kin's study of Lim Boon Keng titled "The Thought of Lim Boon Keng -- Convergency and Contradiction Between Chinese and Western Culture." (Singapore, 1974). 'Triple loyalty' is also the description for Lim Boon Keng's 'confused cultural identity' in Turnbull, C.M., A History of Singapore 1819-1975 (Kuala Lumpur, 1977), p. 106.
2. Lee Guan Kin, op. cit., English Abstract p.i.
3. Ho Kai was Legislative Councillor from 1890 to 1914. Lim Boon Keng only served from 1895 to 1903.
4. Schiffрин, H.Z., Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), p. 212.

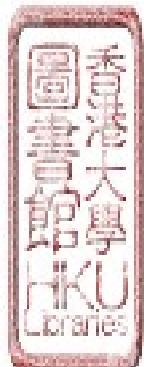


## BIOGRAPHIES

### Ho Kai (1859-1914)

Born in Hong Kong in 1859, Ho Kai was a third generation overseas Chinese. Being tied to foreign missionaries, the Hos were the most unorthodox Chinese family. Ho Kai was the fourth son of Rev. Ho Fuk-tong or Ho Tsun-cheen of the London Missionary Society. Ho Kai was educated at the Government Central School in Hong Kong. Then he received university education in Britain, with degrees in both medicine and law. After a decade-long stay in Britain, and just before returning to Hong Kong in 1882, he took Alice Walkden as wife. Back in Hong Kong, he found Western medicine not yet accepted and therefore practised as a barrister-at-law.

Soon Ho Kai became an active figure. He was appointed to various government bodies, first to the Sanitary Board, then to the Legislative Council, the Medical Board and several others. It was in the Legislative Council that he performed long-term services from 1890 to 1914 under six governors. As Chinese spokesman in the Council, he did not hesitate to oppose government policies. But at the same time his allegiance to the colonial regime should not be doubted, being most appreciative that the British administration brought stability and prosperity to the colony. Generally speaking, he was of the opinion that the life of the Chinese population should be the least disturbed.



Ho Kai was also a keen supporter of local welfare. He was the first Chinese to pioneer the promotion of Western medicine among the Chinese community. He donated to the building of Alice Memorial Hospital and helped found the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese in 1887. These two have both expanded since then. The former is today's Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital and the latter is now the University of Hong Kong. Ho's efforts did not stop at the founding of these institutions. He had always been involved with the management and fund-raising of these two institutions.

Although a Westernized Chinese, Ho Kai was most concerned with the fate of his country of origin -- China. As early as 1887, he started writing and publishing his reform ideas. His name was also involved with Sun Yat-sen. Together with others, Ho and Sun plotted the 1895 Canton coup. Then in 1900, Ho Kai even won Governor Blake of Hong Kong into a plan of persuading Li Hung-chang to declare southern independence. But after much consideration, Li turned down the offer. On the whole, Ho Kai's solutions for China's problems were from his Western experiences. He even urged Britain to impose reforms on China.

Ho Kai was awarded C.M.G. (Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George) in 1902 and a Knighthood in 1912. He was the first local Chinese to be awarded both these two honours. His English wife died in 1884. He married again and had ten sons and seven daughters. He

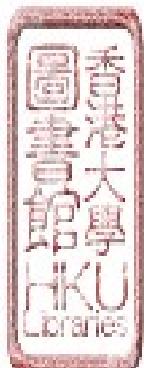


died on July 21, 1914, soon after his retirement from the Legislative Council.

Lim Boon Keng (1889-1957)

Lim Boon Keng was born in Singapore in 1869. He was a third generation overseas Chinese. The grandfather came from Fukien province. At an early age of ten, Lim began to receive formal English education. Upon awarded Queen's Scholarship, he went to Britain to study medicine. After five years, he qualified as a medical doctor and returned to Singapore in 1893. As a Westernized Christian Chinese, Lim was ready to take up the elitist role assigned to him. It was soon the post-1895 period when the Chinese leadership circle in the Straits Settlements especially in Singapore was competed for by several Chinese forces, namely, Ch'ing, reform and revolutionary efforts. Lim also found himself involved in this vortex. Earlier experiences in Britain made him realise his inadequacy in his own culture. This first awakened in him a consciousness of his Chinese identity to which he responded most actively and soon found himself tripartitely involved in loyalty and allegiance.

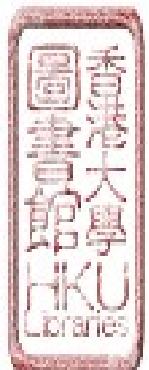
Lim performed zealously those government posts he had been appointed to such as in the Legislative Council, the Raffles Library and Museum Committee, Singapore Municipal Commission and Chinese Advisory Board. He was appointed unofficial Legislative Councillor in 1895, 1898, 1901 and 1915. Lim was most articulate and instrumental in expressing and organizing loyalty of Straits Chinese to the



British administration. Not only did he speak and write to glorify British colonial administration but also founded the Straits Chinese Magazine for the study of English among local Chinese in 1897, the Straits Chinese British Association in 1900 for the promotion of loyalty to the British and helped set up a Chinese Company in the Singapore Volunteer Infantry. He also encouraged local Chinese to support British war-efforts during the First World War.

Lim Boon Keng enthusiastically dedicated himself to improving Straits Chinese society. He found it too divided, ignorant and corrupt. He lamented that local Chinese were so deprived of knowledge of their own culture like he himself once was. So education was his greatest concern. He promoted it alongside with efforts to publicize Mandarin which he hoped would unite the Chinese society so seriously divided along dialect lines. He also tried most painstakingly to reform the society by campaigning to remove vices and more positively by promoting Confucianism to the position of a religion.

Lim Boon Keng's self-consciousness as a Chinese despite his Westernized upbringing and closeness to the British administration nurtured in him a strong concern for China's declining fate. He found himself supporting at different times and sometimes simultaneously various causes he believed could save China. At first, he supported K'ang Yu-wei's reform ideas, but he also sympathised with Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary cause. Later, when both reform and



revolution movements appeared spent forces, and the Ch'ing government was vigorously launching reform programmes, he also endorsed those measures.

With the establishment of the Chinese Republic, Lim assumed important posts in Sun Yat-sen's government during the transitional period. Once Yuan Shih-k'ai assumed power, Lim returned to Singapore. During the 1920s, he became more involved with the promotion of education. He was the first President of Tan Kah Kee's personal project, the Amoy University founded in 1921. The University aimed to provide an all-round higher education for all Chinese, whether overseas or at home. But those were years of mass movements in China. So as President of the University, not only did Lim find himself involved in political and economic difficulties, he himself also came to be attacked by students. Again he returned to Singapore. When Singapore was occupied by the Japanese in the 1940s, Lim Boon Keng was unfortunately picked out to serve as the chairman in organizing Chinese contributions to the Japanese. Lim Boon Keng died in Singapore on New Year's Day in 1957.





Sir Kai Ho Kai, Kt., C.M.G., M.B., C.M.,  
M.R.C.S., Barrister-at-law





Dr. Lim Boon Keng



## Chapter One

### THE SETTING (1895-1912)

The period started with China's defeat by Japan and the subsequent signing of The Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895 which ushered in a period of accelerated foreign imperialism and ended with the abdication of the 268-year old Ch'ing Dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Republic in January 1912.

"The decade and a half following the Japanese War was a very turbulent era, in which the old intellectual, social and economic order passed away and the new struggled toward birth. The rapid transition presaged a major political upheaval in the offing. The Manchu dynasty, already two and a half centuries old, stood at the critical point in history. If it could not keep abreast of the times and offer an alternative to violent change, it would be doomed to extinction."

Those were turbulent years when China's impending demise strongly provoked not only the Manchus but a growing number of concerned Chinese whether at home or abroad into a determination to search for effective prescriptions to arrest her decline but most important of all to rejuvenate her. Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng, though both third generation overseas Chinese and colonial Legislative Councillors, had their hearts so attached to China that developments in the Mainland during these years never escaped their attention. They both made various and at times self-contradictory attempts out of a genuine conviction that these were the timely and appropriate



measures to be adopted for China's salvation. Through an analysis of their activities during this period, it is hoped that these two cases of tripartite loyalty can be understood.

The following are brief explanations on topics necessary for the understanding of the background covered in this study.

#### Foreign activities in China (1895-1912)

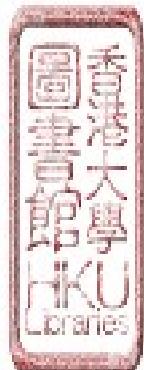
Although China had been subjected to defeats and economic domination by the European Powers since the First Anglo-Chinese War (1839-1842) or as the Chinese prefer to name it, the Opium War, the 1895 defeat of China by Japan, the Asian neighbour of much smaller size, was a great humiliation. Moreover, the Treaty of Shimonoseki which was harsher than all other previous 'unequal treaties', further eroded China's remaining sovereignty and aggravated her already weakening economy. Besides the opening of treaty ports, this time Chungking, Soochow, Hangchow and Shashih, and the payment of 200 million taels of silver as indemnity, China also had to cede Taiwan, Pescadores and Liaotung Peninsula to Japan as well as giving up her claims in Korea. There was a new privilege granted first to Japan and then through the "most-favoured nation clause" also passed onto all other Treaty Powers. This was the right to open factories and engage in industry and manufacturing in China. Goods produced were free from all custom duties. This was a



definite inhibition to the growth of China's native industries.

China's easy defeat by Japan after her over three-decade long Self-strengthening Movement which heavily emphasised military and technological modernization exposed the shallowness of these reform efforts, thus revealing the decadence of the ruling Manchus. This Manchu impotence was to upset the originally rather settled state of Western activities in China.

Up till 1895, while keen on expanding their economic interests in China, the Treaty Powers had been acting more or less as a joint front with neither of them seeking any exclusive rights and privileges from China. But China's obvious helplessness in front of Japanese attacks alarmed them. They feared that the Manchu Dynasaty would soon collapse. If that were to happen, then Japan and Russia, because of their geographical proximity would be in advantageous positions to grab more concessions from China. Therefore, in order not to be left behind in this scramble and to secure both the protection and expansion of decades of vested interests, European Powers began to establish footholds in various parts of China. They sliced the China melon into leased territories and spheres of influence, within which they were engaged in railway construction, opening of mines, establishment of factories, operation of banks and all other kinds of exploitative activities. Therefore by the end of the century, China was virtually a semi-colony although the Manchu rulers still held sway.



France obtained mining and railway rights in Southwest China, leased Kwangchow Bay and obtained the non-alienation of Hainan Island. Britain also had her share of railway rights in Yunnan, the non-alienation of Yangtze Valley and the lease of the areas to the north of the Kowloon Peninsula. Russia extended her Trans-Siberian Railway through Manchuria. Germany leased Kiaochow Bay in Shantung. All these encroachments of Chinese sovereign rights took place within only a span of four years 1895-1898.

To climax all these was the Allied occupation of Peking in summer 1900 after widespread anti-foreign Boxer activities in the north and the declaration of war against Treaty Powers by the Empress Dowager, the head of the Manchu regime. The Empress herself and the Court had to flee the capital for Sian. The Allied troops only ended the occupation when China agreed to very humiliating settlement terms of the Boxer Protocol in 1901. Besides an indemnity of 450 million taels of silver, China was also subjected to more erosion of her sovereignty such as the destruction of her forts between Taku and Peking, the stationing of foreign troops from Peking to the sea and the suspension of Civil Service Examination for 5 years in all those pro-Boxer provinces. Moreover, China was not allowed to import arms for 3 years.

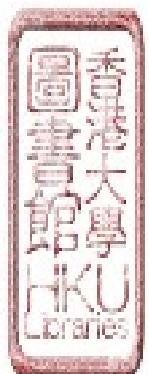
China was not at all in control of foreign activities within her boundaries. From 1904 to 1905, China had to see



a war waged between Russia and Japan on her soil and for her territories. Severe battles were fought in Mukden, ending with Japanese victories and the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905. Former Russian mining and railway concessions in Liaotung Peninsula were transferred to Japan. With this war, big power rivalries over Chinese soil were temporarily settled. Meanwhile, foreigners continued to exercise a dominating role in China's economy. "Their degree of control and scope of activities is seldom seen in independent states; hence late Ch'ing economy has been appropriately dubbed 'semicolonial'."<sup>2</sup> At that time, situations in Europe were getting tense and therefore deviated some of the Treaty Powers' attention.

#### China's attempts to save herself

During this period, China as a nation showed unprecedented awareness of the situation. The easy defeat by Japan in 1895 demonstrated beyond doubt the failure of the Self-strengthening Reform Movement. Cries for more radical measures to save China came from far and wide, constituting the two main currents of reform and revolution. In the post-1895 years, reform was to mean more extensive institutional changes to modernize China in all aspects, and revolution aimed to overthrow the ruling Manchus and later to include the desire of setting up a republic.



## Reform movement

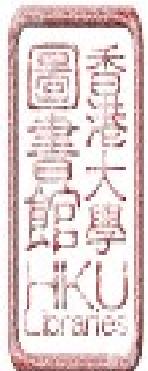
Since the inadequacy of the ongoing reform measures was revealed by China's defeat in 1895, the need for more extensive reforms was recognized by all even the conservatives including the Empress Dowager, the officials and the scholar-gentry. But reform advocates could not agree on the nature, scope and leadership. The moderates were still only for limited measures along Western lines without upsetting the basic Chinese structures. Others were already promoting drastic institutional changes. Chang Chih-tung 張之洞, the Wuhan governor-general and Weng T'ung-ho 翁同龢, the tutor of Emperor Kuang-hsü 光緒 headed the moderates. K'ang Yu-wei 康有為 was the leader of the radicals. Besides proposing revision of existing systems and establishment of new bureaux, K'ang was advocating such measures as the adoption of a constitution and the creation of a national assembly. In short, K'ang was designing a constitutional monarchy to replace the Confucian conception of dynastic Emperor.

After winning the Emperor's favour in June 1898, K'ang in his position as the Secretary of the Tsungli Yamen, began to forge bold programmes of reforms. About 40 to 50 reform decrees were issued during the 103 days from June 11 to September 20. Different areas such as administration, industry, education and diplomacy were covered. Notable measures included abolition of the eight-legged essay, the establishment of the Imperial University at Peking and appointment of progressives to important posts.



But soon this 1898 reform movement turned into political strife. Empress Dowager was afraid that her son, Emperor Kuang-hsü was trying to rid her of power once and for all. This court struggle culminated in the palace coup on September 21 when the Emperor was dethroned and the Empress returned to administer state affairs. K'ang escaped abroad in time to save his own head. Thus ended the 1898 Hundred-Day Reform Movement. The Empress had yet to learn the hard way the urgency of such institutional reforms. It took the traumatic experiences of the Allied occupation of the capital, her own humiliating flight to Sian and the exacting peace negotiation to convince her that comprehensive and institutional not piecemeal and superficial reforms had to be adopted to save her Empire. In the post-1900 years, the institutional reforms which she initiated were not too different from those she had aborted in 1898. Yet, by then, even these reforms were too late and too ineffectively executed for a country which was already so disintegrated that the central government did not really hold sway over too large a territory except the immediate neighbourhood of the capital.

In 1905, a new development occurred in the Ch'ing reform programmes. First of all, this year saw the victory of Japan over Russia in Russo-Japanese War. This was at once interpreted as the triumph of constitutional monarchy over autocracy. A constitution was then the long sought after prescription for China's weakness. This began the constitutional movement which at home and abroad among the

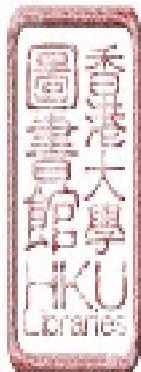


overseas Chinese community became a powerful force counteracting the growing popularity of the anti-Manchu revolutionaries. K'ang in exile was naturally the recognized leader of this movement and the dethroned Emperor its deemed enlightened monarch. Finally the Empress, after weighing the seriousness of the situation, decided to accept constitutionalism to forestall revolution. In August 1908, Hsien-fa ta-kang, an Outline of Constitution, scheduling a nine-year tutelage period was announced. At the same time, steps to restore and consolidate Manchu power over Han Chinese were also taken. With the death of the Dowager on November 15, 1908, a day after Emperor Kuang-hsü's death, the regent, Prince Chün, accelerated those pro-Manchu policies to the disillusionment of many Chinese who had pledged hope on the constitutional movement.

#### Revolutionary movement

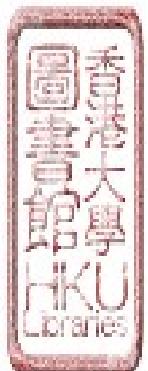
Besides this strong current of institutional reform movement first led by K'ang Yu-wei in 1898, then taken up by the Empress in 1900 and finally expanded into the constitutional movement of 1900s, the other opposing force was the revolutionary movement centred round Sun Yat-sen. These two forces clashed commanding different degrees of support at different times of the period. Disappointment with one usually but not necessarily led to popularity of the other.

Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866-1925), a native of Kwangtung, educated in Honolulu and Hong Kong organized his first



revolutionary society in Honolulu. He staged the first of a series of anti-Ch'ing uprisings in October 1895 at the same time while K'ang Yu-wei was promoting his reform ideas with the publication of a daily called Wan-kuo kung-pao (The Globe Magazine). But at that early year of Sun's revolutionary career, his leadership position was not yet established and neither was his revolutionary philosophy, San Min Chu I (Three Principles of the People).<sup>3</sup> Basically, Sun's revolutionary movement had its funds, weapons, manpower, theoretical origin and, in a word, almost all its aspects based overseas. With the failure of the 1898 Hundred-Day Reform Movement and the leaders K'ang and his disciple, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao overseas, Sun had to compete with them for support among overseas Chinese societies and foreign sympathisers. The outbreak of the Boxer activities presented Sun with another opportunity for uprising but unfortunately it again ended in failure. Only in 1905, when Sun became the recognized leader of all anti-Manchu revolutionary activities with the formation of the T'ung-meng hui, did the revolution pick up momentum again. Then uprisings followed one another in the years between 1906 and 1911 - six in Kwangtung, one in Kwangsi and one in Yunnan. But continued failures especially the one in Canton in April 1911 frustrated much spirit and exhausted both funds and manpower.

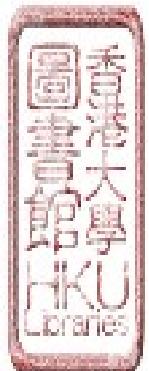
Both forces of reform and revolution had attracted attention and support. But on the eve of the 1911



Revolution, they appeared to be spent forces while the Ch'ing government under Prince Chün still pressed hard with the pro-Manchu measures in a country which was already fermenting.

#### Pro-China mentality among overseas Chinese

During the post-1895 years while China was suffering defeats, exploitative treaty terms, slicing up of her territories and military occupation of her capital city, while reforms were launched, aborted and re-launched or while uprisings broke out in succession, the overseas Chinese communities were not at all unaware. Those in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements, because of geographical closeness to the Mainland and because of the large size of the Chinese population, were specially attached. Overseas Chinese of various backgrounds were watchful of developments in the Mainland. These included some who were most unexpected to be so perturbed by the fate of the very country which they had seemingly forsaken. They might be those who had just arrived to scrape a living, those who were already several generations overseas and those who were Western-educated or were even Christians. Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim Boon Keng in Singapore were such Western-educated Christian Chinese. They threw in whatever strength they had, be it in the form of donations or expertise for the causes they believed to be able to save China. At home in their own societies they laboured to

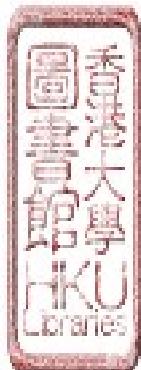


arouse the national consciousness of fellow Chinese and to organize them into useful assets for the motherland.

This overseas Chinese mentality seemed puzzling at first sight. They were Chinese who had already settled or rooted in foreign soil under foreign rule. They appeared to have no tangible interests involved in China. Yet they were genuinely and deeply concerned over China's future. This Chinese nationalism should never be interpreted as a local Chinese movement for a separate Chinese political entity in the host countries. Except for a very few educated elites, Chinese were generally not interested in local politics. So whatever nationalism they might feel, it was limited to feelings for Mainland China. Moreover, these pro-China sentiments were not necessarily pro-Ch'ing or pro-government. At different times of the period (1895-1912), pro-China loyalty found itself two other causes, namely reform and revolution. In fact, loyalty to one cause did not always remain constant, rather it fluctuated according to both objective situations such as the achievements of the movements, the fate of China and other subjective considerations such as one's beliefs. Besides, while overseas Chinese mentality is taken as a collective term, not all Chinese responded so enthusiastically. Some might even be totally unaware of or unaffected at all.

Factors causing pro-China mentality among overseas Chinese

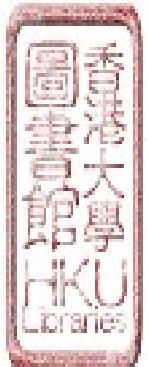
Positively speaking, overseas Chinese had been exposed to Western institutions, had experienced their efficiency



and had directly or indirectly benefited from Westernization. They might have amassed immense fortunes, or been well-established in business or professions or had simply managed a decent, peaceful life. They sincerely wished to see that these benefits of the West be extended to their fellow Chinese on the Mainland.

Negatively speaking, life of the Chinese in foreign soil under foreign rule was not all that advantageous. There were naturally discriminations and in some cases atrocities such as what happened in the Philippines in 1898 when 25,000 Chinese were killed.<sup>4</sup> They had to endure all these without their mother country being either strong enough or willing enough to back up their cases or redress their grievances. Besides, they were also informed of foreign imperialist activities in China either through the press or by word of mouth. This knowledge frustrated their confidence in the Christian foreigners who while preaching justice and righteousness were at the same time claiming undue privileges and enormous advantages from China through unfair treaty settlements. Thus overseas Chinese earnestly wished to see China restored to her own feet, and be able to champion their local grievances or simply be the country they could proudly claim as natives. And for those Chinese living in hostile foreign countries, a strong country could undoubtedly be used as a weapon to counter brutality.

Moreover, even when overseas Chinese did not actually care about the fate of China as a country, they were concerned over the well-being of their families and

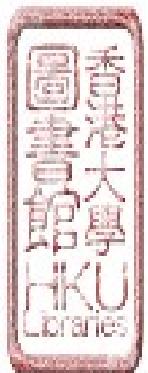


relatives in their home villages in China. Large sums of money arduously saved had all the time been remitted. A strong China would certainly mean better living for their loved ones at home.

'These pro-China sentiments among overseas Chinese were not entirely spontaneous expressions. They were in part responses to the changed overseas Chinese policy of the Ch'ing government and partly reactions to those two strong currents of reform and revolution in the post-1895 years.

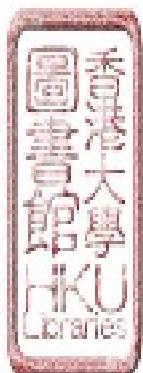
The Ch'ing Dynasty had inherited the long-held prejudice of regarding overseas Chinese as deserters or even traitors, especially because overseas Chinese had been involved or implicated in early anti-Manchu resistance movement. The policy of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) of prohibiting emigration had been continued. But 1860 saw the change in Ch'ing attitude. This was brought about by Western military victory. Westerners' need for regulated Chinese emigrants made them force the Chinese government to include legislation of emigration in the treaty settlement. But the ban on emigration was not formally lifted until 1893. Yet already in the 1870s Chinese envoys began to be sent first to Britain and subsequently to other countries such as the United States, Japan, Germany, France and Russia. The protection of overseas Chinese was at the same time paid attention to.

Since 1877, Chinese consulates began to be set up, first in Singapore, and then subsequently in other



established overseas Chinese communities. These Ch'ing Consuls were skilful in cultivating loyalty and mobilizing support by first enticing local community leaders. The Consulate became almost a pseudo-Chinese government.<sup>5</sup> Other activities aiming to cultivate Chinese consciousness of their identity and culture among the mass Chinese population included the formation of literary societies for the study of Chinese classics and organization of fund-raising movements.

It was only in 1893 that Ch'ing Imperial Government formally repealed the emigration ban and gave wide publicity to it. Consuls were also upgraded to Consul-General. "The most important factor in ending the age-old rules in 1893 was a realisation of the economic potential of overseas Chinese"<sup>6</sup> resulting from the two decades of contacts between the Ch'ing consuls or visiting diplomats and the overseas Chinese communities. Remittances sent home amounted to about 14,400,000 taels, an equivalent to 65% of annual customs collected in 1890s. These were net gains for China in foreign exchange and even helped China to pay off huge trade deficits and to stabilize China's currency.<sup>7</sup> Knowledge of the immense wealth of these Chinese was gathered by Ch'ing officials who envisaged this wealth best utilized for the funding of China's modernization programmes. In the 1900s, Chinese Chambers of Commerce began to be established, again first in Singapore in 1905. These Chambers strove to unite local Chinese communities so as to serve the immediate needs of China's reform movement



by recruiting funds and technical know-how. Thus, pro-Ch'ing feelings were purposely fostered and channelled towards the Manchu government.

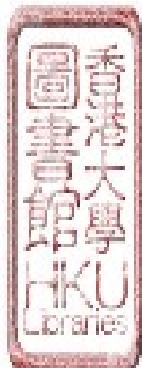
These intense overseas Chinese sentiments were not solely brought into being by Ch'ing policies but also by efforts of both the reformists and revolutionaries. At the same time when Emperor Kuang-hsü was pushing forward the institutional reforms as advocated by K'ang Yu-wei, concerned overseas Chinese like Lim Boon Keng were also attracted. They launched reform movements among local Chinese communities to further promote consciousness, unity and strength. This was partly the aim of Lim's Confucian Revival Movement. With the failure of the Hundred-Day Reform Movement in 1898 and K'ang in flight, overseas Chinese communities became K'ang's only valuable assets in his attempt to return to China and to restore the dethroned Emperor. Extensive propaganda and fund-raising campaigns were organized and launched. All these again nurtured Chinese nationalism though not towards the government in power.

The revolutionaries, too, both benefited from and helped to foster this pro-China mentality among the overseas Chinese. As explained, the revolutionary movement around Sun was chiefly an overseas Chinese endeavour to avert the ill-fate of China. Of course, the nationalism cultivated by these revolutionaries was anti-Manchu. In fact, they were not the first ones to preach such. After all, anti-



Manchuism had been the declared aim of almost all secret societies and anti-government uprisings. But it was Sun's revolutionary movement which fully exploited and utilized these anti-Manchu hostilities to their advantage. Whenever the Manchus showed themselves to be incapable of handling foreign pressure and internal problems, they played into the hands of the revolutionaries. Manchus being the suppressors of Han Chinese and traitors in trading off China's sovereignty for Manchu rule of China to continue were images of the Ch'ing Dynasty as propagated by the revolutionaries.

Although the revolutionaries emerged as a force two decades after Ch'ing consular expansion and cultivation of nationalist consciousness among overseas Chinese, they were not able to capitalize on these already provoked nationalist sentiments. After all, involvement in a revolution against the government of China which had diplomatic relations with the countries in which they sojourned would bring them into trouble with the local government. This might jeopardize whatever they had already established or wished to build up locally. Besides, many overseas Chinese had left their families or relatives whom they cared at home. Once they were involved or implicated in revolutionary activities, their loved ones at home would be hunted down or punished. "This fear of reprisal served as the main deterrent to overseas Chinese involvement in the modern Chinese revolutions."<sup>8</sup> Moreover with the increasing solicitation of overseas Chinese coming from the Ch'ing government since



1890s and then with the declaration of institutional reforms after 1900, the Ch'ing government appeared to be all vigorous for a regeneration.

Yet, though the images of the Manchus might have been improved, practical difficulties often rendered the Ch'ing government incapable to live up to its promised obligations such as against the Exclusion Laws of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The declining ability of the Ch'ing government to protect its nationals gave further opportunities for the Chinese revolutionaries to exploit the anti-Manchu feelings among the overseas Chinese. And as the Ch'ing constitutional movement in the 1900s unveiled itself to be half-hearted while measures strengthening Manchu rule over the Hans were enforced, those who had once had hopes in the Ch'ing government gave up their illusions. Of course, not all these former government supporters turned to endorse the revolutionary movement, but at least they became more receptive to the revolutionary cause.

With all these overtures to the overseas Chinese coming first from the ruling Ch'ing government, then from the exiled reformists and revolutionaries, the long neglected overseas Chinese were responding vigorously. The skilful and systematic use of various propaganda means succeeded first in stimulating then in sustaining pro-China attachment and enthusiasm and most important of all in utilizing and organizing overseas Chinese wealth and expertise for China.



Among these overseas Chinese who had cultivated such pro-China mentality, the most interesting group were those who had their loyalty variously and contradictorily pledged. They could be serving as councillors in the host governments and yet they were at the same time supporting China in rejuvenating herself to meet the challenges of the foreign powers which they happened to be serving and supporting in their own communities. Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were two such cases.

Here two questions arise. Firstly, the fact that Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng could have done what they did might have been because of tolerant objective conditions of their societies. Both lived under British rule which must have somehow acquiesced or even nurtured and promoted this multiple commitment. Secondly, with loyalty so contradictorily and ambivalently entangled, situations arose when priorities had to be decided. Or in fact, there were no set priorities at all, Ho and Lim were simply responding to situations and doing what they thought right without stopping for a moment to assess this loyalty complex of theirs.

#### British handling of Chinese in Hong Kong

The island of Hong Kong, which also gave its name to the colony itself, became a British Crown Colony by the Treaty of Nanking on August 29, 1842. The small Kowloon Peninsula opposite to it was acquired in 1860 while the large stretch of land north to the Peninsula and named as



the New Territories was leased for 99 years in 1898 when Britain scrambled with the other Powers for concessions in China.

There is no intention to trace the development of Hong Kong in all its various aspects. Only those issues of relevance to the understanding of this study of tripartite loyalty are given emphasis.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning of British rule, the Chineseness of the society had been given special consideration. The instructions to the governor on June 3, 1843 provided that in Hong Kong the laws and customs of the Chinese should supersede English law except where a Chinese law was "repugnant to those immutable principles of morality which Christians must regard as binding on themselves at all times and in all places."<sup>10</sup> In fact, the policy was as long as the Chinese did not create trouble, the government was content to keep interference at the lowest level and let the Chinese community manage its own affairs. What existed was actually two little worlds of their own, the Chinese one and the British one with a "radical hiatus"<sup>11</sup> between them. The proclaimed liberal principles were more an idealism than a practice. Racial discrimination of all kinds though not to a serious or inhuman extent was an everyday phenomenon. The delayed appointment of Chinese to the Legislative Council was one such illustration. Since June 1850, unofficials had been brought into the Legislative Council. But it was only in 1880 and upon the insistence of Governor



Sir John Pope Hennessy whose liberal tendency was well ahead of his times, was then a Chinese, Ng Choy<sup>12</sup>, brought into the Council but only on temporary basis. It was in the 1884 reformed Legislative Council when it became a government policy that among the three nominated unofficials, one was to be a Chinese. The first Chinese to be so nominated was Wong Shing<sup>13</sup> who served from 1884 to 1890 when Ho Kai took up his position. Ho served until 1914. In 1896, one more Chinese representative was added to the Legislative Council. He was Wei Yuk<sup>14</sup> who served till 1917. To a great extent, by the time of the period under review, 1895 to 1912, the 'radical hiatus' between the British government and the Chinese subjects was much modified with the emergence of these Chinese elites serving in their advisory capacity to the Legislative Council.

These Chinese favoured by the colonial government with such elitist positions had to be "British subjects... a native gentleman combining in his own person the popular social position, independent means and education."<sup>15</sup> They were usually English-speaking and professionally qualified abroad. Utilization of their bi-lingual skill and knowledge of both cultures facilitated the alien British rulers who were in absolute minority to rule the Chinese majority with greater ease and efficiency. These Chinese were generally more appreciative and accommodating of Western values and practices. The colonial government was most willing to deal with them because their services were assured since after all, they were in one way or another part and parcel



of the establishment being either products or beneficiary of British colonial rule. In the eyes of the Chinese community, although these councillors were not elected, they still commanded respect and co-operation because of their intimate knowledge of and association with the ruling foreigners. Besides being appointed to the Legislative Council and later to the Executive Council, they were also appointed to various other government boards and committees such as the Sanitary Board where again their bi-lingual abilities and knowledge of both cultures were of definite value in the decision-making process.

The government also sought advice from other Chinese leaders who might not be government nominees or appointees to any official institutions, for example, the directors of the Tung Wah Hospital, a charitable organization set up in 1870 which also functioned as a liaison structure between the government and the Chinese community.<sup>16</sup>

During the period of great upheavals following the 1895 defeat of China by Japan, Hong Kong was also affected. The geographical proximity of the colony to the Mainland and the relatively liberal or acquiescent attitude of the British government turned Hong Kong into an ideal place for organization of anti-Ch'ing activities. Besides, the leaders of both the reform and revolutionary movements, K'ang Yu-wei and Sun Yat-sen were natives of Kwangtung, the southern province closest to Hong Kong. Most of the Hong Kong Chinese were also from that province. In fact when



their activities failed, both leaders attempted to take sanctuary in Hong Kong, Sun in 1895 and K'ang in 1900.

The colonial government usually ignored these Chinese activities as long as they kept to a low profile and the leaders paid cautious respect to local law and order. But the British were careful that such activities did not offend the Ch'ing government with which Britain had a formal diplomatic relationship. After all, the British government had no intention to see Hong Kong turn into the operational base of such anti-Ch'ing movements. Therefore, in 1896 Sun Yat-sen was banished from Hong Kong for five years for conspiracy against the Canton government. But sometimes, the governors in office did not concur with decisions of the home government and took matters into their own hands. Sir Henry Blake, Governor of Hong Kong from November 1898 to November 1903 was one such example. He actually interfered with development in China by trying to arrange a meeting between Sun Yat-sen and Li hung-chang in 1900.

Generally speaking, Hong Kong Chinese were docile and peaceful subjects and Hong Kong remained very stable while the economy prospered.

#### British handling of Chinese in Singapore

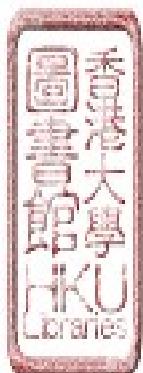
The Straits Settlements, of which Singapore was the capital, only became a British Crown Colony in 1867. But actually for almost fifty years since 1819, Singapore had been under the British administration of the East India Company.<sup>17</sup> By 1867 when the colonial status was formally



assumed, Singapore was already a prosperous commercial city of relative peace and calm. Although the Straits Settlements comprised Singapore, Penang and Malacca with more districts to be added to the list from time to time, the government was Singapore-oriented and Singapore-dominated.

The Chinese population in Singapore was not as predominant as it was in Hong Kong. By 1900, it was about 75% of Singapore's population, while in the case of Hong Kong it was about 95%. In Singapore, other sizeable minorities included Malays and Indians. Moreover, even within the Chinese population, there were further divisions into Straits-born or China-born and more importantly into different dialect groups. So the British colonial government was dealing with a more heterogeneous society, taking care that different sectional interests were all given due consideration and integrated into various government policies. Again the British utilized local Chinese community leaders in the rule of the Chinese population. In fact, the first Asian non-official appointed to the Legislative Council in 1869, two years after its formation, was a rich Chinese merchant named Hoo Ah Kay or as he was commonly known to the Westerners, Whampoa.<sup>18</sup> Wealth was the criterion of importance within the Chinese society.

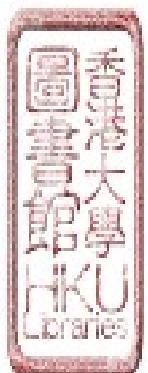
By the time of the period under review, 1895 to 1912, a new generation of Western-educated Chinese elites was



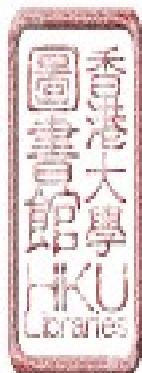
emerging. One typical example was Lim Boon Keng, a Straits-born Chinese and a Queen's Scholarship recipient educated in Britain. These Chinese were products of decades of British rule and were beginning to be preferred as appointees to positions ascribed to Chinese within the colonial government.

Some of these Chinese elites were caught in the vortex of late Ch'ing developments. As described earlier, the wealth and expertise of the Chinese community in the South Seas had attracted the attention and efforts of the Ch'ing government, the reformists and the revolutionaries. Again, the British colonial government kept a watchful eye on all these involvements of the Chinese elites. As long as the activities were not anti-foreign or anti-British, the government tolerated. But when activities became so open and the local Chinese population was responding too enthusiastically, the British government became alarmed. For example in 1894, when the Chinese Consul-General in Singapore, Huang Tsun-hsien 黃遵憲, started to issue letters of introduction to local Chinese returning to visit in China, "the British immediately called foul and complained that the Consul-General was really issuing 'passports' thereby claiming Chinese citizenship for subjects of the Crown."<sup>19</sup>

Generally speaking, Singapore Chinese were more reform-minded rather than being attracted by the revolutionary movement, but again the number of Chinese involved in whichever way was still very small. Like their



counterparts in Hong Kong, the Chinese in Singapore were also easy subjects to rule.

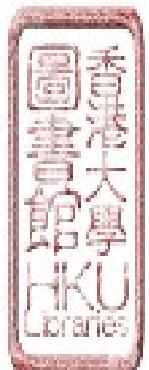


NOTES

1. Hsu, I.C.Y., The Rise of Modern China, (Hong Kong, 1975), p. 536.
2. Ibid., p. 530.
3. Sun Yat-sen had these ideas developed in the post-1897 years while in Europe. The Three Principles of the People became the revolutionary philosophy with the establishment of the T'ung-meng hui (The Revolutionary Alliance) in 1905. The first principle, nationalism, was both anti-Manchu and anti-imperialist. The second principle was democracy which granted the people the four rights of initiative, referendum, election and recall over the government with authority balanced among executive, legislative, judicial, examination and control. The third principle was socialism which promised the regulation of capital and equalization of land. Thus, Sun hoped to solve China's political and socio-economic problems all in one philosophy - The Three Principles of the People.

For details on the evolution of these ideas, read Schiffrin, H.Z., op. cit.

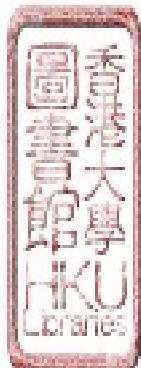
4. Purcell, V., The Chinese in Southeast Asia, (London, 1965), pp. 513-514.
5. At these consulates, solemn ceremonies during which the Chinese rites of prostration were performed such as on occasions of the Empress Dowager's birthdays. Consulate notices urging the people to honour the monarchy were also issued. Overseas Chinese even celebrated Emperor Kuang-hsü's marriage and his accession to the throne with public holidays and elaborate celebrations. See Yen, C.H., Coolies and Mandarins: China's Protection of Overseas Chinese During the Late Ch'ing Period (1851-1911), (Singapore, 1985).
6. Ibid., p. 249.
7. Ibid., p. 251.
8. Yen, C.H., The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution (Kuala Lumpur, 1976), p. xviii.
9. For a general picture of Hong Kong, see Endacott, G.B., A History of Hong Kong, second edition, (Hong Kong, 1983).
10. Ibid., p. 39.



11. Smith, C., "The Emergence of a Chinese Elite in Hong Kong," Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. 11, 1971, pp. 74-115.
12. Ng Choy 伍廷芳 (1842-1922) was born in Singapore in 1842. He was educated in both Canton and Hong Kong. In 1862, he became an interpreter in the Supreme Court. In 1863, he married Ho Miu Ling, Ho Kai's sister, who was only seventeen. With the support of his wife's dowry, he went to London to study law in 1874 and was admitted into Lincoln's Inn. After three years, he was called to the bar. In the same year, he returned to Hong Kong and became the first Chinese admitted as barrister in the Supreme Court. In 1880, he became the first appointed Chinese Legislative Councillor. In 1882, he left Hong Kong for China to start his diplomatic career. He assisted Li Hung-chang in foreign affairs such as in the negotiation of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Later, he acted as the Chinese Minister to the United States, Spain and Peru. He continued to serve in several ministerial posts in Republican China.
13. Wong Shing 黃勝 was born in 1825 near Macao. He had been educated at the Morrison Institution in Hong Kong, and later entered Monson Academy at Monson, Massachusetts, in the United States. He directed the printing establishment under Dr. James Legge for the London Missionary Society. He had served Li Hung-chang in China, and had been a member of the Chinese legation staff in Washington. It was not known when he died.
14. Wei Yuk 單玉, later Sir Boshan Wei Yuk 單寶珊 (1849-1912) was the first Hong Kong Chinese to study in Britain. In 1867, he went to Leicester Stonygate School. A year later, he proceeded to the Dollar Academy in Edinburgh. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1896 and knighted in 1919.
15. Endacott, G.B., op. cit., p. 98.
16. The Tung Wah Hospital had even been criticized as "forming an official Chinese Legislative Council alongside the British administration." Smith, C., op. cit., p. 86.
17. For details on the development of Singapore, read Turnbull, C.M., op. cit..



18. Hoo Ah Kay 何亞基 was nicknamed Whampoa after the place where he was born in 1815. He went to Singapore at the age of 15 in 1830. He established a successful ship's chandling business. Then he invested in a department store, a bakery, an icehouse and on land. He became very wealthy and was the most well-known Chinese to the Europeans. He became the first Asian member of the Legislative Council in 1869. He died in 1880.
19. Godley, Michael R., "The Late Ch'ing Courtship of the Chinese in Southeast Asia", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, February 1975, pp. 369.

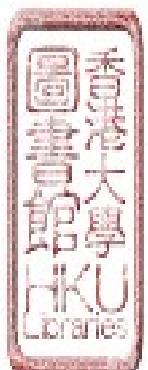


## Chapter Two FORMATIVE YEARS

This chapter traces first Ho Kai and then Lim Boon Keng through their family, childhood and school days locally as well as abroad in order to understand the kind of society they grew up in. Since Ho and Lim were not exact contemporaries, therefore the years covered were not identical, 1859 to 1882 for Ho and 1869 to 1893 for Lim. The chapter ends with Ho aged 23 in 1882 and Lim aged 24 in 1893 returning as Western-educated professionals to the British colonies where they were born, ready to assume the leadership role designated for them.

### Ho Kai (1859-1882)

Ho Kai 何啟 as pronounced in Cantonese or Ho Ch'i in Mandarin, was born in Hong Kong on March 21, 1859. 'Ho' was the family name while his given name was originally 'Shan Kai' meaning 'God's enlightenment'. But Ho Kai preferred to drop the first character of his given name, 'Shan' and simply be known as 'Kai'. His other names were 'Ti-chih' 達之 and 'Yuk Sang' 沂生. After he was knighted, he used the designation Sir Kai Ho Kai. Here in this study, he will be referred to as Ho Kai or simply as Ho whenever it does not cause ambiguity.



### The grandfather

Ho Kai's family from the generation of his grandfather exemplified a very small minority of Christian Chinese.<sup>1</sup> It was most unbecoming and even treasonous for a Chinese to be baptized as Christian. After all, this would mean giving up the most important aspect of Confucianism-ancestor worship. Moreover, Christianity was labelled as a by-product of foreign imperialism. Thus even among overseas communities, Christian families were exceptional rather than representative.

The grandfather whose name remained unknown<sup>2</sup> came from Sai Chiu village of Nam Hoi county in Kwangtung. He brought his son, Fuk Tang or Fuk-tong 福堂 alias Tsun-cheen to work with him in Malacca.<sup>3</sup> The old Ho worked as one of the two block-cutters of the Chinese Monthly Magazine 察世俗每月統紀傳(1815-1820) of the Anglo-Chinese College.<sup>4</sup> Not much is known of him.

### The father: Ho Fuk-tong

It was about Ho Fuk-tong that much more is known. But here only a brief summary is given.

Ho Fuk-tong was born in the native village of Sai Chiu in 1818. He went with his father to Malacca. While old Ho worked in the press, the son, Fuk-tong had the chance to receive an education immensely different from that of the other Chinese youth. "He had gone off to Calcutta where he learnt English.... Returning to Malacca, he entered the Anglo-Chinese College as a student in 1840."<sup>5</sup> Then he was

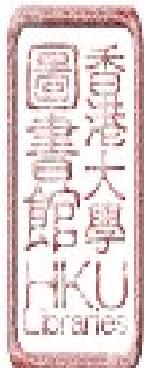


already a Christian, having been baptized in 1839. Also in 1840, James Legge<sup>6</sup>, with whom Fuk-tong was to become great friends, arrived. When the Principal of the College, John Evans, died, Legge took his place. Legge had evidently grown fond of the young Chinese student, Ho Fuk-tong, who was three years his junior.

"Legge's daughter recalled years later how her father had taken Ho under his wing, educated him in Western knowledge, especially in history, general and ecclesiastical..., and also taught him both Greek and Hebrew, being astonished at his progress in those languages."<sup>7</sup>

In 1843 when Hong Kong, the island closer to the heart of China, was colonized by the British, James Legge was instructed to dissolve the College at Malacca and transfer it to Hong Kong. This he did and reached Hong Kong on August 10.<sup>8</sup> "A handful of students and others connected with the College went with Legge to Hong Kong in 1843 or followed him there not long afterwards."<sup>9</sup> Among the students was Ho Fuk-tong.

Though a thoroughly Westernized Christian Chinese, Fuk-tong agreed to an arranged marriage in the home village, with a girl to whom he had been betrothed as a child. But he insisted that the wedding ceremony had to take place according to church rites. And when he returned to find out that it was not, he absconded to Hong Kong on his wedding day. In the end, the ceremony did take place in a church in Hong Kong.<sup>10</sup> "With her, he lived happily in Hong Kong until his death, taking great pains in teaching her."<sup>11</sup>

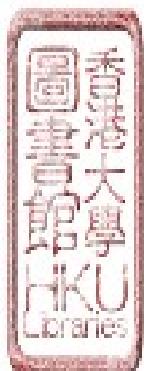


In 1846, Ho Fuk-tong was ordained as the minister of the London Missionary Society's Chinese Congregation. He had the reputation of being a very remarkable preacher. "In preparing his sermons he only made some notes on a piece of paper but when he started to speak, thoughts readily flowed in his mind and words also came to him easily." "His fame soon spread from Hong Kong to the neighbouring districts in Kwangtung Province."<sup>12</sup> He even had a follower in Pok Lu who was not accepted by the locals and martyred.

Ho Fuk-tong wrote, too. He published a popular monthly exhortation and wrote explanatory notes on St. Mark and St. Matthew's Gospels. His busy missionary life kept him from finishing the cycle.

Though a man of God since 1846, Ho Fuk-tong was also engaged in the property market. With profits made in real estate, he started a money-lending business charging 20% per month. He died on April 2, 1871, aged 53.

A few obvious assumptions can be drawn from the above about the kind of man Ho Fuk-tong was - the man whose influence Ho Kai had been exposed to till the age of 13. First of all, Ho Kai had an eloquent preacher as his father. This same oratory skill was picked up by Ho Kai. Fuk-tong did not have any formal Chinese education but instead he learned English and even Hebrew and Greek under missionary influences. Yet he still kept traces of his Chineseness, such as illustrated by his going back to the native village for a Chinese girl as wife. In fact, most respectable overseas Chinese did so rather than marrying one of the



local Malay girls. He was also a shrewd businessman, leaving his children a rich estate estimated to be over HK\$100,000.<sup>13</sup>

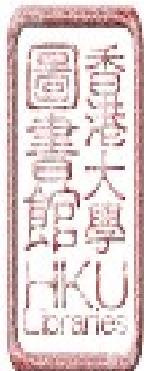
In short, Ho Fuk-tong provided a rich, Westernized missionary family life for his children.

#### The son - Ho Kai

In Hong Kong 1859-1872

Ho Kai was the first generation of the family born outside China. But by then the family had been living abroad and associated with the Western missionaries for forty years. It was a very unorthodox Chinese family, belonging to none of the four classes of traditional Chinese social stratification - scholar-gentry (shih), farmer (nung), artisan (kung) and merchant (shang). Even in the colonial situation of Hong Kong, this missionary family background was very distinct from the rest of the Chinese community.

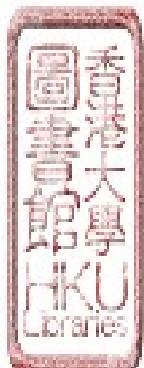
Ho Kai was born on March 21, 1859. He was the fourth son of a large family of eleven children, five sons and six daughters. The family wealth enabled Ho Kai to receive the best education. He first attended school in 1870 at the age of eleven when he joined class 4 of Central School. This was the most important government school in Hong Kong with the students eagerly sought after by the commercial firms.<sup>14</sup> The school was opened in 1862 largely due the efforts of James Legge.<sup>15</sup> Both Chinese and English



subjects were each taught four hours every day. There were eight grades with class 8 as the lowest. Ho was admitted to class 4. After a year, he was in class 1, the top class, with distinguished results. After Central School, Ho Kai had the good fortune of pursuing his studies abroad while other students usually left school and made use of their bilingual expertise to become clerks or interpreters in commercial firms.

#### In Britain 1872-1882

In 1872, the same year when Ho Fuk-tong died, Ho Kai left for Britain. While he had only two years of education in Hong Kong, he was to stay in Britain for a decade from age 13 to 23. Thus, he had spent the most formative years in Victorian England when the Empire was at its height of power and prosperity. It was rare for a Hong Kong Chinese to study in Britain, Ho Kai being the second. Wei Yuk who went there in 1867 was the first. From 1872 to 1875, Ho studied for three years in Palmer House School in Margate. Then at the age of only 14 in 1875, he registered in the Aberdeen University in Scotland to study medicine, being again the second Hong Kong Chinese to be so trained. The first was Wong Foon.<sup>16</sup> Ho Kai did his practical work at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. During these four years, he scored very good results, getting certificates of honour and a prize. In 1879, he graduated as Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery (M.B.C.M.) and was accepted as a member of the Royal College of Surgeon of London.



Also in 1879, Ho Kai met Alice Walkden who was to be his future wife. She was the daughter of John Walkden, a Member of Parliament. Alice was born in 1852, being seven years older than Ho Kai. Ho Kai did not return to Hong Kong after getting his medical degree. Instead, he took up law and was admitted into Lincoln's Inn. His reasons for qualifying himself in two professions were not known. From 1879 to 1881, Ho was Senior Equity Scholar and Senior Scholar in Real and Personal Property. In 1881, he was called to the bar with flying colours. Just before returning to Hong Kong in 1882, he married Alice and brought her with him to Hong Kong. While he was on his way home, he was highly honoured by the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Pope Hennessy, with a very complimentary speech.

"...This young gentleman who was expected to arrive in the Colony had taken the highest honours at Lincoln's Inn. It was something that a gentleman belonging to the Colony should have gained such honours."<sup>17</sup>

There has not been any written record of Ho Kai's decade-long experiences in Britain. But when he returned to Hong Kong in 1882, he was definitely different from the rest of the Chinese population in several aspects. He had received almost entirely formal Western education and had been professionally qualified in Britain first in medicine and then in law. He had married an English lady older than he was. He had witnessed the magnificence of the colonial master and felt the atmosphere of laissez-faire which was then predominant in Britain. The Governor's welcoming



speech did signify that the government was ready and anxious for this very Westernized Chinese young man of 23. But was the Chinese community ready to accept him?

### Lim Boon Keng (1869-1893)

Lim Boon Keng 林文慶 as pronounced in Hokkien or Lin Wen Ch'ing in Mandarin was, as Ho Kai, a third generation overseas Chinese.

### The grandfather, Lim Mah Ping and the father, Lim Thean Geow

The Lim family like the Hos also emigrated at the time of the grandfather, Lim Mah Ping 林鴻輝 from the county of Hai-cheng 海澄 in Fukien in 1839. He first settled in Penang where he married a local Baba Chinese girl.<sup>18</sup> They gave birth to only one boy named Thean Geow 天堯.

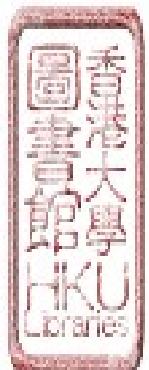
When Thean Geow was old enough to work, Lim Mah Ping brought him to work for Cheang Hong Lim in Singapore.<sup>19</sup> Mah Ping worked in his winery and Thean Geow in his opium farm.

### The son - Lim Boon Keng

In Singapore 1869-1887

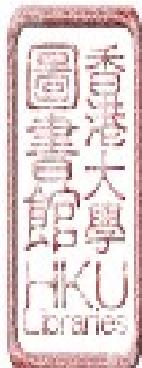
Born in 1869, Lim Boon Keng was the second son of the family which was quite poor. He grew up among more Chinese influence as the family had been serving Chinese masters. This was a very different family background from Ho's.

Lim Boon Keng's first education was in Chinese. He studied classical Chinese in one of those classes attached



to the Hokkien association. He might probably just be learning to recognize the Chinese characters as he was still a very small child of less than ten years old. Then he attended an English class at Cross Street before enrolling himself in Raffles Institution in 1879. The Institution could be regarded as a Singapore equivalent of Central School in Hong Kong. It was an English-medium secondary school but with vernacular languages taught in the lower classes. So both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng had the best formal English education then available. This was rare for other children of their times.

Unlike Ho, whose father died rich leaving him a large inheritance and thus enabling him to receive overseas education in Britain, the death of his father in 1885 almost ended Lim Boon Keng's schooling. The grandparents asked Lim to quit school and help with the family's livelihood. After all, among the common folks of the overseas Chinese communities, education was regarded as a luxury both because of the money spent on it but more importantly because of the amount not earned when one was at school. In Lim's case, it was the family's employer, Cheang Hong Lim, who managed to persuade the grandparents to change their mind.<sup>20</sup> Lim must have been most impressive in his academic performance to win this endorsement. Besides, he also attracted the attention and favour of the Principal of the Raffles Institution, R.W. Hullett, who gave him special tutoring. In 1886, Lim became the first Chinese recipient of a Queen's



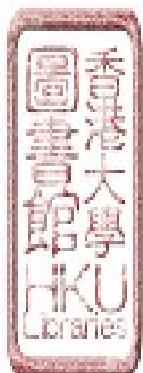
Scholarship. This was to enable him to proceed to Britain for university education.

#### In Britain 1887-1892

Lim Boon Keng went to Britain in 1887 at the age of 18. So he started his school life on foreign soil at an age much more mature than Ho Kai who was only 13 when he arrived in Britain. Lim was to stay until 1892.

Lim Boon Keng took up his medical studies in Edinburgh University in Scotland. He, too, achieved excellent academic records, being awarded first class honours when he graduated as M.B.C.M. in 1891. He stayed on for about half a year more under Professor Roy at Cambridge University. During this period, he published two papers which won him much acclaim. The papers were "On the Cardiac Nerves of the Dog" and "the Colemic Fluid of Lumbricus Terrestris in Reference to a Protective Mechanism." In 1892, he set off to return to Singapore.

Again as in Ho Kai's case, not much is known of Lim Boon Keng's life in Britain. It was known that he was baptized there. Besides, there are two other anecdotes often repeated in almost all academic or biographical works on Lim. Here is one story. One day, he was talked to by an Englishman in Mandarin, the standard spoken Chinese language but usually only spoken in the northern provinces. Lim could not reply. The second story is about how Lim failed to translate an article into Chinese as requested by his professor.



The following inferences can be safely drawn from the above accounts. The fact that Lim was baptized in Britain at an adult age could have been due to one or more of the following reasons. He could have been genuinely attracted to Christianity or he might have been influenced by his peer group or he might simply have been so practical-minded as to get baptized so as to fit himself into the Christian Western world he was in. But then to his great disillusionment, though thoroughly Westernized in all aspects such as attire, behaviour, language, education, profession and even religion, he was nevertheless not identified as one of their own by the Englishmen surrounding him. He was still expected to be familiar with the Chinese language and culture. In 1893 Lim returned to Singapore as a Christian Chinese and a Western-trained medical doctor. Then he was aged 22.

#### Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng's formative years in perspective

With the benefit of historical hindsight, it can be said that basic differences between Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng did cause them different experiences in Britain. First of all, there was the age difference. While Ho Kai spent all his teenage years and early twenties in Britain, Lim Boon Keng was already 18 when he arrived in Britain. This could have resulted in the sensitivity to and acceptance of the English culture. Being younger, Ho could have been more easily attracted to new ideas. As for Lim, at the age of



18, he should have certain values formed such as a cultivated sense of pride.

Then there was the difference in family background. Ho's family wealth enabled him to enjoy an extended stay in Britain. During his decade-long stay, he had lived in Margate, Aberdeen and London. His missionary family background had also helped to alleviate his Chineseness. As for Lim Boon Keng, he was in Britain as a scholarship recipient. He could not have been able to afford travels or other extravagant expenses. During most of those five years, he was in Scotland. The greatest difference was in Ho Kai's marrying an English lady as a wife before his return to the Chinese community of Hong Kong. Even his father, Fuk-tong, a preacher, followed the traditional practice of getting a native Chinese village girl as wife. There is no substantiation to support the rarity of mixed marriages. But judging from the present-day still critical Chinese attitude to such marriage, it is not too far-fetched to say that Ho Kai and his English wife made a very unusual couple when they arrived in Hong Kong in 1882.

Despite these differences, Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng did show similarities in several aspects even at this formative period. Both were third generation overseas Chinese, living in Chinese communities under the relatively liberal British colonial administration. As such, they were more detached than Mainland Chinese from traditional Chinese culture. But of course, this was especially the case of Ho Kai with a Christian preacher as father. Secondly, both Ho and Lim



belonged to the privileged class of their societies. Being formally educated in English at home and then professionally qualified in Britain, they were certainly very distinct among their fellow Chinese. This closeness to the ruling British was to qualify them in the taking up of the elitist role. Lim Boon Keng was, in fact, a cultivated product of the colonial regime. He was to usher in a new generation of elites in Singapore when previously wealth was the only arbiter of elitist status. Thirdly, these two young men had been brought up to admire Western institutions especially those of Britain, for example, the parliamentary system and the laissez-faire economic policy. Their having lived in Britain, the heart of the Empire, reinforced their respect for British wealth and power. Lim Boon Keng was in Britain in 1887 - the year celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. So in the years to come, when Ho and Lim lamented over China's weakening situation, they tended to prescribe Western institutions and British assistance as the remedies. Yet, at the same time, while they admired and benefited from British administration, they could not have been unaware of the fact that Britain was the very country that had led the exploitation of China with the imposition of "unequal" treaty terms. These ambivalent feelings towards the West should have brought along feelings of frustration.

As emphasised, both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were closer and more intimate to the West than to their Chinese



origins. In fact, neither had ever been formally educated in the traditional Chinese classics. Their knowledge and acquaintance with the Chinese civilization should have been acquired and cultivated in the later years when they genuinely felt that urge for it. Lim Boon Keng even wrote extensively in Chinese.

It was such Westernized upbringing that qualified Ho Kai in 1886 and Lim Boon Keng in 1893 to take up the elitist status assigned to them.



NOTES

1. There were no clear estimates of the number of Christian Chinese in this period of history. But here is one evidence of the rarity of conversion.

"It has been estimated that Morrison's work in Canton (1807-1813) resulted directly in no more than 10 Christian conversions. It took the American missionaries working later in Foochow nine years (1847-1856) to win a single convert."

Harrison, B., Waiting for China, (Hong Kong, 1979), p. 159.

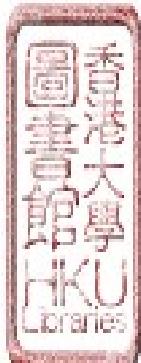
2. In Harrison, B., op. cit., Appendix I, "Anglo-Chinese College, Malacca, Staff 1818-1843," the names of five printers were given. They were Leung Ah Fah, Kew Ah Gung alias Wat Ngong, Ah Chaou, Ah Tsieh and Ah Sun or Ho Ah Sun alias Ho Ye-tong. Also included is a brief description on each. For the only printer surnamed Ho, it is said that he accompanied James Legge to Hong Kong in 1843 and that he died in 1869. But there is no mention of him having any relationship with Ho Fuk - tong, Ho Kai's father.

In the description of the students going to Hong Kong with James Legge on pp. 130-131,

"A handful of students and others connected with the College went with Legge to Hong Kong in 1843 or followed him there not long afterwards. Besides the printers Leung Ah Fah, Kew Ah Gung and Ho Ah Sun, at least four students seemed to have joined Legge in Hong Kong. One, named Ho Tsun-chen, was the son of a printer at the College Press."

There is no linkage between the printer Ho Ah Sun and the student, Ho Tsun-chen or Tsun-cheen.

Elsewhere in other works done on Ho Kai, for examples, Chiu, L.Y., "The Life and Thought of Sir Kai Ho Kai", (Sydney, Ph.D. thesis, 1968) and Choa, G.H., The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai (Hong Kong, 1981), there is also no mention of the name of Ho Kai's grandfather.



3. Malacca had been an important centre of overseas Chinese settlement and commerce for centuries. Under successive Malay, Portuguese, Dutch and English regimes, the Chinese merchants (mostly Hokkien-speaking, from the South China provinces of Fukien) had always provided the essential elements of capital and skill in Malacca's traditional exchange trade. "In 1813 when Milne visited Malacca, he had been informed that the population of Malacca town was about 17,000, of which some nine or ten thousand were Chinese." Harrison, B., op. cit., pp. 16-17.

William Milne was Robert Morrison's missionary partner. Together they designed and built the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca. But Milne's name was very much overshadowed by that of Morrison.

4. The Anglo-Chinese College was the long-cherished dream of an English Protestant missionary belonging to the London Missionary Society, Robert Morrison. In 1807, he was sent out by the Society to preach the Christian faith to Asia. At first, Morrison went to Macau and then China but as the Chinese doors were still closed then, so he was not able to achieve much. In 1813, William Milne was sent to assist him. Then both went to Malacca and founded the Anglo-Chinese College there. The College was to serve as a Chinese language school but most important of all to be the training centre of missionaries for Asia.

"I wish that we had an institution at Malacca for the training of missionaries, European and native, and designed for all the countries beyond the Ganges...."

Ibid., p. 21.

At the same time, the Chinese press, the Chinese Monthly Magazine was also produced. The objective was to promote Christianity. It lasted from 1815 to 1822.

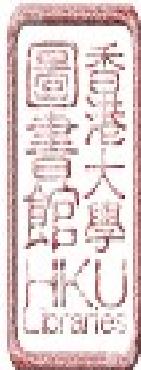
5. Ibid., p. 131.

6. James Legge was then a very well qualified young man sent by the London Missionary Society to assist John Evans, the Principal of the College and successor of Robert Morrison who died in 1834. In less than a month after Legge's arrival, Evans died. Legge then became the Principal.

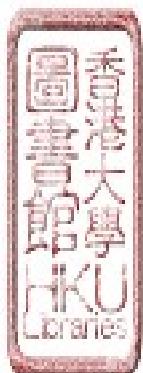
7. Ibid., pp. 130-131.

8. Ibid., p. 110.

9. Ibid., p. 130.



10. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 10.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 11.
13. Ibid.
14. "By 1870, the students were beginning to take posts in California, Japan and the Treaty Ports, as well as in business houses in Hong Kong. The pressure to take appointments was such that in 1870, 29 out of 36 in the top class left before the end of the year and 134 out of an average of 249 left during the year." Endacott, G.B., op. cit., p. 231.
15. Ibid., Chapter XIII.
16. Wong Foon 黃覲 (1827-1879) was taken by the missionary to the United States. He first attended Monson Academy in Massachusetts and then he studied medicine at the Edinburgh University, graduating in 1857. Later, he practised medicine both in Hong Kong and Canton. He was at one time the medical adviser to Li Hung-chang. He died in 1879.
17. Choa, G.B., op. cit., p. 17.
18. Baba Chinese are Chinese born of Chinese fathers and local mothers, though not necessarily Malay. It is, therefore, a community of mixed-blood, Straits-born Chinese.
19. Cheang Hong Lim 章芳琳 was a rich Chinese. He had generously contributed to the defence funds of Fukien and was therefore honoured with the title of tao yuan, a senior assistant chief of staff of a division. This practice of honouring contributing overseas Chinese was part of late Ch'ing courtship of Chinese communities for their wealth and expertise. Cheang was the first Chinese to receive such title.  
Mei Ching(ed.), Ma-hua ming-jen chuan (Biography of famous Malayan Chinese), (Singapore, 1961), pp. 119-131.
20. Ibid.



### Chapter Three

#### EARLY YEARS OF TRIPARTITE LOYALTY (PRE-1895 INVOLVEMENT)

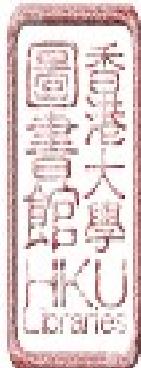
Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng did not suddenly become concerned over China's fate in 1895. All their un-Chinese traits did not, as might have been expected, diminish their attachment to their mother country, China. Even at this earlier period before China's decline was unveiled by the traumatic defeat of 1895, both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng, but especially Ho Kai who was ten years senior, were most aware of their Chinese identity and were already each in his own way doing what he thought was his obligation to his own country, China.

The chapter below examines Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng first as loyal British subjects, then as promoters of local Chinese welfare and finally as nationalist overseas Chinese. This sequence is for neatness of presentation and is not to imply priority or clear compartmentalization. Details irrelevant to this thematic study are not included. The period covered in this chapter would be after their return from Britain to 1894, that is 1882 to 1894 for Ho Kai and only 1893 and 1894 for Lim Boon Keng.

##### Ho Kai 1882-1894

###### As loyal British subject

Ho Kai returned to Hong Kong in 1882. He was immediately appointed as Justice of Peace, almost a

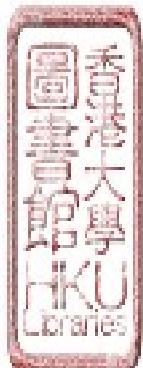


preliminary step for any future appointments. But he did not become a public figure until four years later when he was appointed as the only Chinese representative in the reconstituted Sanitary Board. Little was known of his activities during those four years from 1882 to 1886 except that his wife died in 1884.

In 1890, Sir William Des Voeux, Governor of Hong Kong from 1887 to 1891, appointed Ho Kai as the Chinese unofficial member in the Legislative Council.<sup>1</sup> Ho was to serve in such capacity until 1914 under six governors.<sup>2</sup> He was to represent Chinese interests to the government. Yet, his Western attire, education and orientation seemed to render him in every aspect ineligible as the representative of those Chinese so different from him. But this was also his appeal to the Chinese community. His fluency in the language and culture of the colonial administration and more importantly his professional knowledge both in medicine and law were definite assets.

The following are some observations drawn from Ho Kai's speeches and voting behaviour in the Legislative Council in the pre-1895 years. The intention is to discover where Ho's priorities and orientations lay when he was deliberating his public duties as Legislative Councillor.

Generally speaking, Ho Kai appeared comfortable with the colonial status of Hong Kong. This was a subtle expression of his confidence in the British Crown. And yet in 1894, Ho Kai joined the other unofficials, namely C.P. Chater, T. Jackson and T.H. Whitehead, in a petition asking



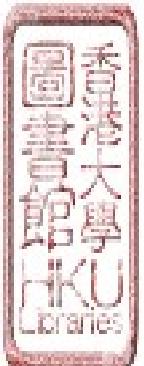
for constitutional change. They demanded the free election of representatives of British nationality in the Legislative Council. In fact what was advocated in 1894 was an oligarchy of British and naturalized Chinese interests. This was never intended to include the mass. Ho had always believed that the rule of the elites could best ensure security and prosperity.

Although an appointed member, Ho Kai insisted that his representativeness in the Legislative Council be respected. It was most frequent for him to introduce his speeches with statements like "...I have very much pleasure in rising as the representative of the Chinese in this Council"<sup>3</sup> or adding in the middle of a speech with much dignity that "...I am doing so with the full concurrence of my constituents, the Chinese in this colony..."<sup>4</sup>

Ho Kai's advice to the government in regard to policies dealing with the Chinese population frequently stressed that the Chinese were people very different from the European nationalities. He himself showed a profound knowledge of local Chinese ways of life. On November 17, 1890, when discussing an amendment aiming to make the adulteration of food punishable, Ho pointed out,

"...there was sold in the colony a great deal of food which in a European point of view was tainted, such as preserved eggs and eggs which had been hatched, and which a great number of Chinese used as food...."<sup>5</sup>

Since Ho Kai held onto this principle that Chinese people were different from the Europeans, he advised that the



colonial government should be the least interfering. He showed himself a faithful adherent to the ideas of laissez-faire. He was especially against imposing European notions of health upon the Chinese. This was his rationalization for opposing the Gaol Extension Bill in 1890 and 1893. In view of the fact that he had been trained in Western medicine, his tolerance of overcrowdedness could hardly be understood. He insisted that expenditure for gaol extension was "unnecessary" and "as to overcrowding and the fear of epidemics, that is also without foundation."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, Ho's earlier written protest to the Legislative Council on December 2, 1886 against the Public Health Bill was almost in itself an open manifesto of all his convictions. Then he was acting in the capacity of the Chinese representative in the Sanitary Board. This protest won him much limelight because it was his first year as a public figure. He rejected "the leaving of a ten feet wide backyard and the establishing of a 3/6 feet brick privy and spacious kitchen."<sup>7</sup> He argued articulately to support his opposition. Some of these arguments were later very often repeated in the Legislative Council deliberations.

"Some Sanitarians are constantly making the mistake of treating Chinese as if they were Europeans. They appear to forget that there are wide constitutional differences between a native of China and one who hails from Europe. They do not allow for the differences of habits, usage, mode of living and a host of other things between the two."<sup>8</sup>



Later in 1894 when the plague death toll was raging, reaching 450 by May 28, Ho Kai still insisted that overcrowded housing condition was not the cause but rather "starvation and want". He claimed that any restrictions imposed on housing would raise rent to the point that "labourers would not be able to spare cash to buy enough food for themselves"<sup>9</sup> and thus worsened the situation.

Such inexplicable tolerance of overcrowdedness and objection to government amendments to improve living conditions could only be understood by accepting the then contemporary view that Ho Kai was loyal to none but the landowners. In this 1894 speech against the Public Health Bill, he openly admitted this but defended that property should be respected.

"....I feel it fair to those who have acquired by industry, by success in business, or otherwise large sums of money which they have invested in this colony, that they should receive due consideration and not be treated with utter disregard to their interests."<sup>10</sup>

He even went on to threaten

"....if you are to pass laws to interfere too much with their domestic peace, to allow their enjoyment of their properties to be interfered with... they would quietly leave the colony, and will leave us...."<sup>11</sup>

But Ho Kai did on other issues defend the interests of the whole colony to the point of defying those of the Empire to which he had pledged his allegiance. In 1891, while he was still young in his office, he joined the other unofficials in a protest against the doubling of military



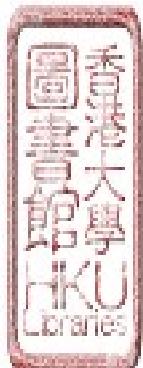
contributions to HK\$233,572 without sending the promised additional garrison.<sup>12</sup> In 1894, he again joined the other unofficial councillors in a unanimous protest against the same issue. He was always of the opinion that the government purse must be carefully guarded. In 1892, Ho Kai spoke both powerfully and cynically against salary increase and compensation of civil service owing to dollar depreciation.

"Instead of paying as it were \$5 to the £ we are now paying something over \$10, and for that and other considerations it is impossible for us here, as guardians of the public purse, to consent - however much inclined we may be - to vote any increase.... It seems very ungrateful on our part and perhaps some of the official members would think that we are very mean - (laughter) - but still I assure them that we are not mean at all - (laughter) - and we fully sympathise with them. I would like to do the thing right handsomely if we had the means. (Renewed laughter.)<sup>13</sup>

Ho Kai was wary that because the Chinese mass were unaware of their legal rights, therefore the authority of the police should be carefully monitored. His practice as a barrister no doubt made him sensitive to this issue. In a discussion over the Gambling Bill on December 8, 1890, he claimed

"....one effect of it will be that it will increase the power of the police enormously for good or for evil."<sup>14</sup>

Ho Kai was most ready to stand by Chinese institutions such as Po Leung Kuk, the Chinese society for the protection of girls and women. He defended it most indignantly against charges made by T.H. Whitehead, the representative



of the Chamber of Commerce in the Legislative Council. The speech on June 2, 1893 was over 3,000 words long.

"....such a Society as this, I submit, deserves well of the government. They deserve, in fact, the support and encouragement of every right-minded man in this Colony. (Hear, hear) And we are now introducing this Ordinance to give to them a more definite legal status and also to sympathise and encourage and help them in carrying on their good work by an endowment of \$20,000...."<sup>15</sup>

Another example of Ho Kai defending public interest as against those of the privileged few during this 1890-1894 period was his succeeding in 1894 to have an amendment passed shortening the period of news monopoly of the Chamber of Commerce from 48 hours to 38 hours after the first publication of the telegram and from 72 hours to 48 hours after its receipt. During his speech proposing the amendment, Ho concluded that "I am sure the general public would be pleased to have views of the outside world as soon as possible."<sup>16</sup>

During these first four years of his 24-year service as Legislative Councillor, Ho Kai had already made his grounds very clear. As a Chinese representative, he took his duties seriously in reflecting as well as defending Chinese interests, although seemingly more often for sectional rather than general good. He was more ready to speak on behalf of the interests of the ratepayers such as in opposing unnecessary government expenditure and restrictions on land-development. It has yet to be discovered whether his long-term service would later soften his pro-property

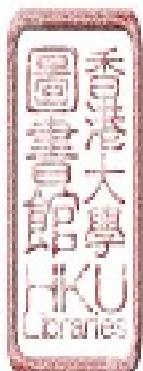


stand and bring him closer to the mass population. In this period, it was outside the Legislative Council that his loyalty and dedication to his fellow Chinese was more evidently displayed.

#### As promoter of local Chinese welfare

Having been trained in Western medicine, Ho Kai surely appreciated its merits. Therefore when he returned from Britain to find that the local population was still not ready for it, he realised that the most urgent task was to popularize it through the provision of free Western medicine and by training local Chinese youth. So although he himself did not actually go into the medical practice, his name has long been remembered for his contribution firstly to the building and management of the now Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital and secondly along with the Hospital, the founding of the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese which in 1912 was incorporated into the Faculty of Medicine of the now University of Hong Kong.

The idea of a Western medical hospital for the Chinese was not conceived by Ho Kai. Already since 1881 in Tai Ping Shan districts, that is, the districts around the present day Hollywood Road, where most Chinese lived, there was already the Nethersole Dispensary opened in 1881. This was the joint effort of two individuals, H.W. Davis of an accountant firm and William Young, a medical doctor, together with the London Missionary Society.<sup>17</sup> The Dispensary was named Nethersole in memory of Davis's mother.



It had been rather popular in its treatment of out-patients.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the idea of improving and expanding it into a hospital occurred. The Committee was enlarged to include more members and Chinese representatives were also invited. Ho Kai then became the only Chinese among the new members added. He immediately offered to donate the building costs of the proposed hospital in memory of his deceased wife, Alice. Finally, this generosity of Ho's together with the concerted efforts of the London Missionary Society and donations from E.R. Bellicos, another unofficial Legislative Councillor as well as public subscriptions, the Alice Memorial Hospital was opened at Hollywood Road on February 16, 1887. The Hospital was managed by the London Missionary Society but with a Finance Committee chaired by Ho Kai. This Committee was to be responsible for fund-raising. The Hospital proved to be a success, even more so than the Government Civil Hospital.

Because of such encouraging response, the idea of founding a college to train local Chinese in Western medicine was given a spur. Supporters of this project included some illustrious figures in the history of Western medicine in Hong Kong. They were Patrick Manson, James Cantlie, G.P. Jordan, Francis Clark and Ho Kai, Ho being the only Chinese at this meeting. They were all of the opinion that only when Chinese youth were taught to practise Western medicine could it ever be popularized. But for the time being, while the idea of the college was being put into action, there was neither the intention nor the funds to



erect a college building. Finally half a year later on October 1, 1887, the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese was formally inaugurated at the hospital building.<sup>19</sup>

As to Ho's role in the establishment and management of the College, there was no mention of his donating any subscription. But in the management, he was appointed as the Honorary Secretary and the Rector's Assessor. Besides, he was also among the teaching staff, lecturing on medical jurisprudence or forensic medicine, that is the application of medical knowledge to legal problems to third year students. Since he had been trained first in medicine and then in law in Britain, no other available candidate could have been more qualified. He also taught physiology to first and second year students.

The first class of 1887 started with twelve students. Among them only two graduated at the end of five years in July 1892. They were Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 and Kong Ying Wa 江英華. The graduation ceremony was held on July 23, 1892 in the City Hall. Sir William Robinson, the Governor of Hong Kong, officiated at the ceremony. Ho Kai was among the distinguished guests gathered for the occasion.

If during these years Ho had not achieved much for the Chinese he represented in the Legislative Council, he had helped to take two important pioneering steps in the history of Western medicine in Hong Kong - establishing a hospital and founding a college of Western medicine.

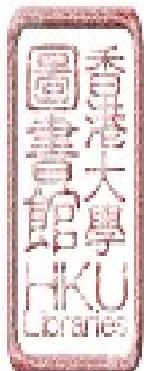


As nationalist overseas Chinese

Even in this period before great upheavals were to be brought about by China's 1895 defeat, Ho Kai had already had his attention upon China's problems. It was then the 1880s when China was engaged in the seemingly optimistic Self-strengthening Movement. In modern Chinese history, Ho Kai's name has always been mentioned in association with his reform essays and his relationship with Sun Yat-sen. Both these two undertakings started in 1887.

Ho Kai's reform essays were written in English and sometimes published under the pseudonym "Sinensis" in the Hong Kong China Mail. Hu Li-yuan 胡禮垣<sup>20</sup> translated the essays into Chinese and published them in the local Chinese newspaper, The Chinese Mail or Hua-tzu Jih-pao 华字日报.

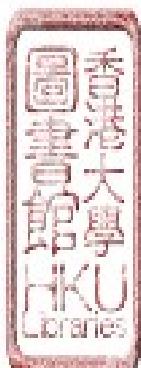
However, there are two different versions to this Ho-Hu collaboration.<sup>21</sup> Chiu Ling-yeong is of the opinion that "Ho Kai and Hu Li-yuan appeared as joint authors of many articles, even though Hu merely translated Ho's work into Chinese"<sup>22</sup> and that Hu could hardly be considered as a reformer, nor could he be ranked among the reformers of his period. He could, at best, be described as a sympathizer of the reform movement.<sup>23</sup> But G.H. Choa thinks otherwise. "Hu was very much a collaborator because in these essays he had his own ideas freely besides expanding on Ho's."<sup>24</sup> It seems that this difference of opinion in regard to Hu's contribution to the reform movement is because of Chiu and Choa's different concept of "contribution". Chiu is of the



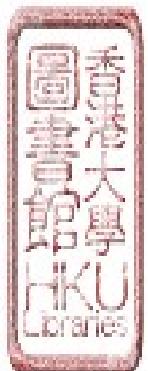
opinion that Hu did not have any original ideas on reform. Choa believes that what Hu added to Ho's work as commentary was already contribution to the reform movement. Both Chiu and Choa are justified in their conclusions regarding this joint reform effort of Ho and Hu.

During these pre-1895 years, Ho Kai published two essays to express his views on China's reform movement, one in 1887 and another in 1894. He showed that although he was a Legislative Councillor of the Hong Kong colonial regime with sworn allegiance to the British Crown, he still earnestly "watched over conditions in China with much hope and anxiety" and that he was ready "to put my shoulder to the wheel along with those who are more gifted than I am."<sup>25</sup>

Ho Kai wrote his first reform essay on February 12, 1887. Then under the pseudonym "Sinensis", he had his article published on February 16 in the Hong Kong China Mail. The essay was a rejoinder to Tseng Chi-tse's "China -- the Sleep and the Awakening" which first appeared in the January issue of Asiatic Quarterly Review and was subsequently published in Hong Kong China Mail on February 8. Ho Kai wrote his "a few humble words"<sup>26</sup> which in fact numbered over 4,500 four days after Tseng's article had appeared in Hongkong newspapers. Ho Kai stressed that his article was not intended to be a review and that he was only offering his opinions which "are the results of years of study."<sup>27</sup>



There is no intention here to review either Tseng Chitse<sup>28</sup> or Ho Kai's articles in length, but a brief summary of both is necessary. Tseng wrote this certainly controversial and almost sensational article before he left London for China. His main argument was that China was not yet over and done with. Her seeming weakness during the past years was because she was asleep. But now it was time for her to wake up because "she commenced to see that she had been asleep whilst all the world was up and doing; that she had been sleeping in the vacuous vortex of the storm of forces wildly whirling around her." He then assured that "the awakening of 300 million to a consciousness of their strength"<sup>29</sup> would not be dangerous because China had always been a peaceful people. Then the article followed with explanation of how China would maintain peaceful relationship with the Treaty Powers. He also warned that at the same time, China would exercise a more effective supervision over her vassal states. Any hostile movements against these countries, or any interference with their affairs, would be viewed at Peking "as a declaration, on the part of the Power committing it, of a desire to discontinue its friendly relations with the Chinese Government."<sup>30</sup> The article ended optimistically with "The world is not so near its end that she (China) need hurry, nor the circles of the sun so nearly done that she will not have time to play the role assigned her in the world of nations."<sup>31</sup> On the whole, Tseng sounded most optimistic of China's future to the point that she still had an important role to play.



Tseng's article was widely reprinted, translated and published. Certainly, it aroused much response. Chiu Ling-yeong is of the opinion that "of all the comments and criticisms, none were as constructive and concrete as Ho Kai's."<sup>32</sup> Ho's rejoinder was in the form of an open letter to the editor. When compared to Tseng's article, Ho's was not only longer but also more penetrating in problem-detecting, candid in presentation and thorough in problem-solving. After expressing his sincerity of purpose, Ho at once refuted Tseng's argument that China was awake.

"The exertions and energy which are alleged as being put forward and which she (China) is now presumed to bring to bear, are like the convulsive strugglings of a sleeping man suffering from a nightmare or delirium, utterly illogical and without the shadow of guiding principles."<sup>33</sup>

But this did not mean that Ho Kai was pessimistic. After all, said Ho, "all the materials essential to the building up of a mighty nation are there and in abundance."<sup>34</sup> He went on to reveal what went wrong with China and at the same time he presented his solutions, pointing out all the efforts so far were not enough to be of effect. His prescription was simple. "It may be summed up in a sentence, viz., equitable rule and right government."<sup>35</sup> Ho attacked ferociously China's malpractices in the recruitment and promotion of officers which had deprived China of many good and faithful servants who otherwise would have served her with loyalty and distinction.<sup>36</sup> Such corruption in the army and navy had led to disastrous military defeats.



But, the real problem of China lay in "her loose morality and evil habits, both social and political."<sup>37</sup> Ho then warned against Tseng Chi-tse's argument that China would be taking up increased responsibility over her vassal states for Ho believed that this would mean trouble.

As to the funds needed for the reform programmes, China should raise "a national debt in which her own people can also invest."<sup>38</sup> There was, of course, difficulty because "private enterprise will not be undertaken without much encouragement from and confidence in the government."<sup>39</sup> Ho Kai concluded the essay by acknowledging Tseng's contribution but not without once again criticizing his mistaking "the effort for the cause".<sup>40</sup> The very last paragraph was in Chinese with a quotation from Mencius echoing what Ho Kai had prescribed for China -- equitable rule and right government.

Several deductions can be drawn from this first exposition of Ho Kai's reform views. Firstly, Ho's loyalty and attachment to China was strong though he was physically and culturally detached from it. After exposing the problems, he offered the right solutions. He also showed off his familiarity with the Chinese culture by quoting from various Chinese texts most aptly five times throughout the essay, thus adding stress, dignity but most important of all Chinese flavour to his English essay. Yet, at the same time, he was divulging very openly his Western-orientation. Indeed, his evaluation of the Chinese situation and the policies he advocated were all based on his experiences and



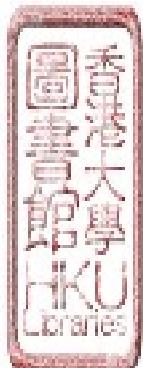
admiration of the Western institutions. One very clear example was his proposal to utilize private capital.

"Nearly every European nation has a national debt in which her people freely invest in spite of the low rate of interest. Why should China not have a national debt also in which her own people can also invest?"<sup>41</sup>

Ho's exaltation of the effectiveness of private enterprises in rescuing China from economic difficulties was certainly contrary to traditional Chinese contempt of merchants.

"Should the Government have much difficulty in securing sufficient funds to carry out all the contemplated improvements, they might be forced to leave much to be done by private enterprise. This after all is the best way, as has long ago been found out in other countries."<sup>42</sup>

In this article, Ho Kai's ambivalent love-and-hate feelings towards the West were again disclosed. At the same time while he realized that Western institutions were effective in remedying China's weaknesses, he was also aware that Western pressure of all forms was the one major cause. This paradoxical experience was observable when Ho remarked on China's army. He recalled nostalgically how Chinese soldiers fought very admirably "under the distinguished leadership of that renowned chief, the late lamented General C.G. Gordon"<sup>43</sup> of England. But this glorification of the West was immediately followed by a lamentation on how China as a nation had her sovereign rights and dignity infringed and her people brutally abused by foreign nations. "I deeply sympathise with China in every wrong which she has



suffered, and I long with every true-hearted Chinaman for the time to come when China shall take her place among the foremost nations and her people be welcomed and esteemed everywhere."<sup>44</sup> Ho Kai's love for and hope in the mother country could not have been given a more vivid expression.

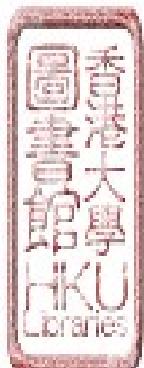
Ho's 1887 essay was clearly reformist in tone and motivation while still pledging faith in the Manchu regime. About seven years were to elapse before he was to write again on his reform views.

Also in 1887, Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen met for the first time. Since then their names had been intimately associated till 1900. It is indeed difficult to establish whether Ho Kai as a teacher influenced the student, Sun Yat-sen or vice versa or the influence was mutual. Harold Z. Schiffrian, author of Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution, is of the opinion that Ho had a long-lasting impact on Sun.<sup>45</sup> The influence was in fact mutual depending on the stage of their relationship. During the five years 1887-1892 when Sun was in the Hong Kong College of Medicine, he had not yet developed revolutionary thoughts although he was already resentful of the corrupt Manchu practices and had loose connections with triad societies. Sun was enrolled in the College about half a year after the publication of Ho's review article of Tseng Chi-tse's "China -- The Sleep and the Awakening". So Sun who shared Ho's criticism of the Manchu government could not have failed to notice, admire and respect this only Chinese lecturer for his professional status as well as his outspoken behaviour



and should find his "sweeping condemnation of Chinese traditional institutions most appealing."<sup>46</sup> After all, there were only twelve students in the College in 1887. It was but natural that Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen, with similar overseas and Christian background<sup>47</sup> should have the desire and the chances to exchange their views of the Chinese government and thus gradually cultivate a close relationship. During this period, it was definitely Ho who exerted much influence on Sun. Until then, Sun had not had any Chinese friends with Ho Kai's standing who shared his discontent against the ruling Manchus. Ho was "probably Sun's first contact among those attempting to modernize China along western lines".<sup>48</sup> Ho certainly found in this bright youth, seven years his junior, much of his own likeness so as to become fond of him. Only a few years later, the teacher, Ho Kai, was to take up the student's idea of a coup to overthrow the Ch'ing government.

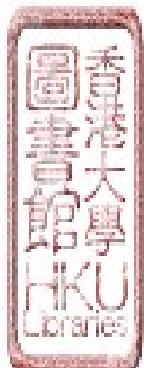
In fact as late as in 1894 when the Sino-Japanese War was already waging in the north, both Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen still hoped that despite their overseas background and their lack of the necessary scholar-gentry qualifications, they could, nevertheless, be enlisted as reformers and be given the opportunities to launch those programmes that they had designed to save China. In 1894, both Ho and Sun each separately made an attempt to win the patronage or at least attention of the Chinese reformist officials. Ho wrote his second reform essay which was in the form of a letter to Hu



Li-yüan in Kobe, Japan. This was published in 1895 titled "Discourse on the New Government", Hsin-cheng lun-i with introductions added by both Ho Kai and Hu Li-yüan.<sup>49</sup> Also in 1894, Sun Yat-sen suddenly gave up his drug-store business in Canton to compose a lengthy petition to Li Hung-chang. Afterwards, he utilized all his personal contacts so as to have an interview with Li arranged. But unfortunately for Ho and Sun or for China, both failed to have their efforts accepted by Chinese officials.

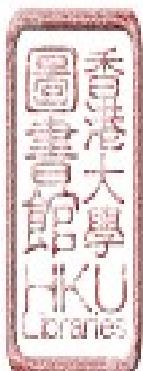
For the purpose of this exercise, neither the full text nor detailed discussion of Ho Kai's essay and Sun Yat-sen's petition are given here. The former will be examined for its orientation while the latter will only be considered in the light of Ho Kai's influence.

Ho Kai's "Discourse on the New Government" was of two parts. The first part elaborated several proposals to reform China's administration. They included appointment of a reform-minded prime-minister, better payment of all officials, abolition of sale of government posts, training of various talents while not neglecting literary studies and establishment of elected councils at all levels including a national assembly. The second part offered suggestions to strengthen China in all aspects such as in transportation with national railway network, expansion of shipping, national exploitation of China's resources by encouraging private capital, registration for census purpose, setting up of new ministries, reforms in the army and navy, drafting of annual budget and publication of newspapers.<sup>50</sup>



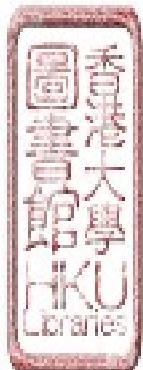
This "Discourse on the New Government" was in many ways an expansion of Ho's 1887 proposals, such as those related to administration, army and navy. At the time of writing, Ho was feeling most disheartened that the Chinese government had not taken his 1887 warning that China should not meddle in vassal states' affairs before she had rectified her own internal problems because he saw Chinese intervention in the Korean palace as the cause of Sino-Japanese conflict. He felt sorry that his prediction had sadly come true. "What I aimed to say in my previous article has all become a fact."<sup>51</sup> He exclaimed that "as the political situation (in China) is so critical that everyone is bound to express one's view to share the national burden."<sup>52</sup> Ho Kai's credentials were his many years of experience "as a member of the Legislative Council (in British ruled Hong Kong)."<sup>53</sup> This was his open proclamation of his dual loyalty so that although he swore allegiance to the British Crown, he could still be genuinely worried about China's fate.

Despite Ho's foreign identity, his revision of the Chinese system was not totally iconoclastic and his acceptance of Western or even British practices was also not wholesale. He saw "nothing wrong or evil with the K'o-chü examination system as long as it was not used for government appointment purposes"<sup>54</sup> but for the preservation of Chinese culture. Then when he was elaborating on how a capable prime minister should head the Chinese government, he insisted that the Emperor should be vested with the power of selection. So Ho Kai's Chinese prime minister was in fact



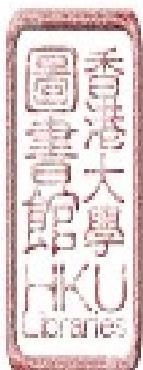
appointed and not elected as was practised in Britain. At the local level, Ho advocated universal male suffrage. This obviously showed that his confidence in the mass was limited. He had always held the same conviction of the Hong Kong public. Ho was highly critical of China's discriminatory policies towards her own nationals, such as in the levying of heavy taxes of all kinds on Chinese products and Chinese ships while foreign ones enjoyed every privilege. He expressed yearnings for the protection of overseas Chinese by the Chinese government. Ho Kai's programmes for China were undoubtedly very comprehensive and constructive, being carefully designed to retain what was tolerable and include what was attainable.

Also in 1894, Sun Yat-sen made his last attempt to be ranked as one of the Chinese reformers. His 1894 petition to Li Hung-chang was an ensemble of reform ideas by earlier as well as contemporary scholars, such as Feng Kuei-fen 馮桂芬, Wang T'ao 王鰲, Cheng Kuan-ying 鄭觀應, and of course Ho Kai. There was not much originality in Sun's essay.<sup>55</sup> Briefly, he was advocating full exploitation and maximization of four things namely, talents, land and resources and swift flow of commodities. He was particularly concerned with promotion of education and agriculture. All these reflected Ho Kai's influences because already in 1887, Ho had made these recommendations in his refutation of Tseng Chi-tse's "China -- The Sleep and the Awakening".



Thus, both Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen were arguing from their western experiences, holding onto their intimacy of the foreign knowledge as their only credentials. Yet, till then, China was not ready to accept people of just this calibre. If talents of Western knowledge were needed, the Chinese government would rather resort to foreigners. Moreover, Ho and Sun's open advocacy of institutional reforms made them too aggressive to be utilized.<sup>56</sup>

In a word, Ho Kai was already actively engaged in all three concerns before 1895. Being a Legislative Councillor since 1890, he swore allegiance to the Crown and served dutifully. He was also dedicated to promoting the well-being of the Chinese community. He was the only Chinese gentleman who joined the foreign medical men in publicizing Western medicine among his fellow Chinese. But while engaged in public duties in Hong Kong, his loyalty to the motherland never diminished. He was most concerned with China's reform movement and responded almost instantaneously to reform proposals by openly publishing his ideas. This won him an admirer in Sun Yat-sen, the man who was to be honoured as "The Father of the Chinese Republic". So far, Ho was still reformist in approach and therefore found himself not too much rejected by either the Chinese or the colonial regime. But already, Ho Kai distinguished himself among men of his background and status as unique in such tripartite involvements.



### Lim Boon Keng 1893-1894

#### As loyal British subject

In 1893, Lim Boon Keng, a medical doctor together with Song Ong Siang 宋旺相, a lawyer, both Queen's Scholarship recipients returned to Singapore heralding "a new breed" of social leaders among the Singapore Chinese.<sup>57</sup> They were not wealthy as earlier Straits Chinese leaders were. Instead, they were university-educated usually in Britain and were very often baptized Christians. Their asset lay in their closeness to the ruling colonial regime. But such Western-orientation did not necessarily sever all attachments from their Chinese roots.

By 1893 when Lim Boon Keng returned to the city where he was born, Singapore was already a settled colony. Since the establishment of the Chinese Protectorate in 1877, the 1889 banning of the Chinese secret societies which had been responsible for various organized vices, and the establishment of the Chinese Advisory Board, the Chinese majority in Singapore had become a much more orderly community. In fact, a Chinese representative had been in the Legislative Council since 1869, the year Lim Boon Keng was born and two years after the establishment of the Council.

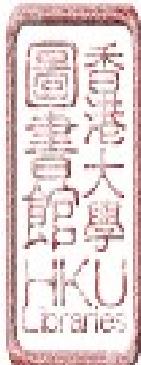
Not much of Lim Boon Keng's tripartite involvement can be deduced from these first two years of his life as Singapore's public figure. Still traces of such tendency are detectable. Of course, Lim was not yet appointed to any official posts. But with his Westernized, Christian



and professional background, he was already moving with ease among the group of Chinese elites close to the ruling British. He was quick to express gratitude to his benefactor and Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, who had founded the Queen's Scholarship in 1887 which enabled Lim to have university education in Britain. On the occasion of the Governor's retirement in 1893, the Chinese elites gathered to discuss setting up the Sir C.C. Smith Scholarship "as a vote of thanks to H.E. the Governor for his services in promoting higher education in the Colony."<sup>58</sup> Lim immediately gave the proposal his "hearty support."<sup>59</sup> Again, in the farewell banquet, Lim Boon Keng was among the twenty-one Chinese gentlemen present.<sup>60</sup> His attachment to the British colonial regime was evident.

#### As promoter of local Chinese welfare

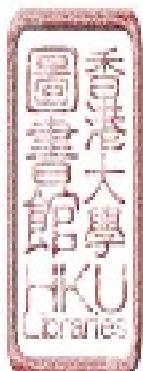
Lim Boon Keng's awareness of his Chinese identity while abroad became a strong incentive and stimulant for his zealous pursuit of the Chinese culture especially Confucianism. Almost immediately after his return from Singapore, he spent his daily spare hours upgrading himself in his long-neglected Chinese.<sup>61</sup> While regretting and making up his own deficiency in the Chinese culture, he discovered the same ignorance among the local Chinese community. Thus in 1894, Lim started to preach Confucianism among his fellow Chinese in Singapore and the whole of the Malay Peninsula.<sup>62</sup> This was Lim's dilemma.



He himself had earlier embraced Christianity in Britain - a deed considered by the Chinese as a renunciation of one's Chinese identity and a total acceptance of the West. When back in Singapore, Lim went to Sunday church. But at the same time he was promoting Confucianism and was actually arousing and cultivating a separate consciousness among the Chinese subjects of the colonial regime to which he himself had sworn allegiance. At this early stage, Lim's tripartite loyalty was not yet conspicuous. But already while Lim was moving with ease among his English friends in the Sunday church, he was feeling the contradictions he was in.

#### As nationalist overseas Chinese

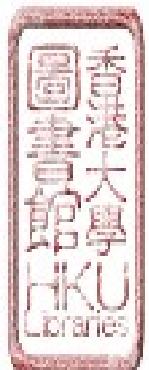
In these two years 1893 and 1894, Lim was not yet critical of the Chinese government. China's weaknesses were still not obvious to him. This was mainly an effect of the optimistic atmosphere towards the ruling Manchus among the Chinese community in Singapore. It was the high time of Ch'ing efforts to solicit the rich South Seas Chinese. This changed attitude of the Chinese government was well-received by the influential Chinese elites in Singapore, not only because such recognition by their own government gave them much pride in front of aliens but also when among their own people. Lim Boon Keng was no exception to this ethos.



So while Ho Kai had already attracted attention for his critical and Western-oriented reform essays, Lim was not yet moving in this direction. And while Ho Kai seldom befriended Ch'ing officials, Lim was at this stage, like other Singapore Chinese elites, quite close to the then Chinese Consul-General, Huang Tsun-hsien. Here is one interesting anecdote. In 1894, Lim cured Huang of his serious tuberculosis by advising him to eat plenty of dog meat. Upon recovery, Huang personally delivered a plaque to Lim, with detailed inscriptions of his disease and cure, ending with lavish praises of Lim's remarkable healing power.<sup>63</sup>

Lim Boon Keng who wrote so abundantly especially at the turn of the century, had not yet produced any articles in the pre-1895 years.

Manifestations of Lim's tripartite involvement were not yet evident as in the case of Ho Kai. Several factors explained this difference. Lim was back in Singapore for only two years. He was establishing himself both in his career and in his social status. He was not holding any official post which entailed contradictions between loyalty to the Crown and to the local Chinese population. He was not yet personally meddling in the Chinese reform movement. After all, he was still sharing the same mentality of the local Chinese community, that of optimism towards the Ch'ing government which was on a seemingly very energetic path of self-strengthening. Yet Lim's enthusiasm for the Chinese culture which was a clear diversion from his Westernized



background, was already discernible. It is indeed too crude to draw any conclusion from this very unbalanced comparison of Ho Kai's decade-long engagements with Lim Boon Keng's two-year activities.



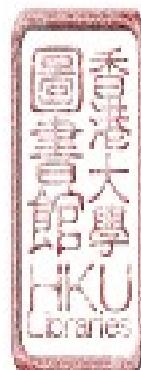
NOTES

1. Legislative Council Constitution during Ho Kai's service (1890-1914)

Year	Number of official members exclusive of the governor	Number of unofficial members
1890	6	5
1896-1914	7	6 (an addition of the second Chinese representative - Wei Yuk)

2. Governors of Hong Kong during Ho Kai's service as Legislative Councillor

Governor	Term of Office
Sir George William Des Voeux	10.1887 - 5.1891
Sir William Robinson	12.1891 - 1.1898
Sir Henry Arthur Blake	11.1898 - 11.1903
Sir Matthew Nathan	7.1904 - 4.1907
Sir Frederick John Lugard	7.1907 - 3.1912
Sir Francis Henry May	7.1912 - 2.1919



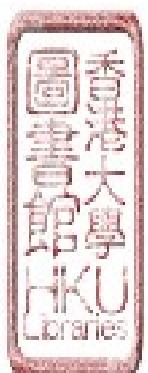
3. Hansard, July 3, 1891, p. 197.
4. Hansard, January 11, 1893, p. 60.
5. Hansard, November 17, 1890, p. 53.
6. Hansard, December 6, 1890, p. 73.
7. "Dr. Ho Kai's Protest Against the Public Health Bill", No. 30, Hong Kong Sessional Papers, 1887, p. 2.
8. Ibid.
9. Hansard, December 22, 1894, p. 26.
10. Ibid., p. 24.
11. Ibid., p. 25.
12. Hansard, March 19, 1891, p. 145.
13. Hansard, November 25, 1892, p. 23.
14. Hansard, December 8, 1890, p. 80.
15. Hansard, June 2, 1893, p. 91.
16. Hansard, December 12, 1894, p. 12.
17. Here again Ho Kai got himself related to activities of the London Missionary Society.
18. The fact that the Nethersole Dispensary was accepted seemed to be contradictory with the fact that Ho Kai was not successful with his medical practice after his return to Hong Kong in 1882. In fact, this contradiction could be resolved because the Dispensary was offering limited free medical treatment. This Dispensary and the later Alice Memorial Hospital proved to be greater successes than the Government Civil Hospital opened in 1850. In the 1881 Colonial Surgeon's Report, the Superintendent of the Government Civil Hospital wrote that very few Chinese private patients sought admission. This might have been due to the fees charged, \$1 per day. But as to the Nethersole Dispensary and the Alice Memorial, they were free of charge. Besides, these were not government institutions, and therefore less austere. Moreover, Chinese participation in the Hospital management might have also drawn the people into accepting it. "...the beds were at once filled and crowds of out-patients came for treatment. Its success was established within a month of its being opened." Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital 1887-1967, (Hong Kong, 1967), p. 4.



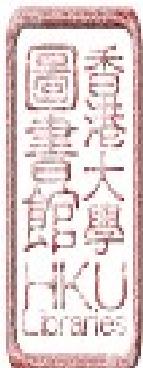
19. The Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese offered a five-year course taught in the medium of English. The tuition fees were \$60 a year. At the end of the course, there were four professional examinations to be passed. Graduates would be awarded the diploma of Licentiate of Medicine and Surgery College for Chinese (L.M.S.C.C.). But at this initial period, the diploma was not yet recognized by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.
20. Hu Li-yuan or Hu I-nam 胡翼南 was born in Hong Kong in 1848. He had a traditional education in Chinese. When he failed in his Civil Service Examination, he enrolled himself in the Hong Kong Central School and studied there from 1862 to 1872. Thus Hu and Ho Kai came to be schoolmates. After Hu left school, he became a shipping merchant but still kept his literary interest. He was the editor of a Chinese newspaper and also compiler of A Comprehensive Book in English Law 英例全書. Between 1872 to 1881, he turned down requests from Chinese diplomats such as Ch'en Lan-pin 陳蘭彬 and Cheng Tsao-ju 廖藻如 for his services in counselling them on foreign affairs. In 1885, Hu acted as adviser to a group of British businessmen in the development of British North Borneo. He was even favoured by the Sultan of Sulu who wanted to abdicate in his favour. In 1894 when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, he was in Japan and was honoured by the Chinese community in Kobe with the title of honorary consul. In 1895, he returned to Hong Kong. For three years, he acted as the interpreter of Literary Society. Since 1887 when Ho Kai started his reform essay-writing, Hu Li-yuan had been engaged in the translation of Ho's essays. After editing The True Meaning of the New Government 新政真詮 (Hsin-cheng chen-ch'uan) was published in Shanghai in 1901. Later these essays together with some of Hu Li Yuan's own articles and poems were all included in The Complete Works of Hu I-nam 胡翼南全集. Hu died in 1916, aged 68.

The above has been adapted from Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., pp. 257-259.

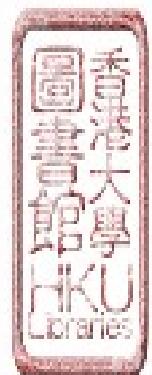
21. Chiu, L.Y. and Choa, G.H. both did works on Ho Kai. Chiu's was a Doctor of Philosophy thesis on Ho Kai titled "The Life and Thought of Sir Kai Ho Kai", (Sydney, 1968). Choa's was a book titled The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai - A Prominent Figure in Nineteenth Century Hong Kong, (Hong Kong, 1981).
22. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 259.
23. Ibid., p. 260.



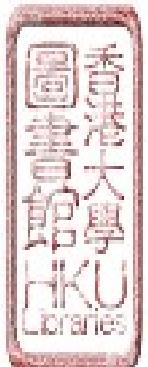
24. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 135.
25. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 316.
26. For a full text of Ho Kai's essay, see Chiu, L.Y., Appendix III, pp. 315-338.
27. Ibid., p. 315.
28. Tseng Chi-tse 曾紀澤, was the son of Tseng Kuo-fan 曾國藩 who was one of the leaders of the Self-strengthening Movement. Tseng Chi-tse was Minister to France and Great Britain from 1878 to 1885. In 1881, he successfully recovered for China the territory of Ili in Sinkiang by concluding The Treaty of St. Petersburg with Russia. For a full text of Tseng Chi-tse's article, see Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., pp. 297-313.
29. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 301.
30. Ibid., p. 311.
31. Ibid., p. 313.
32. Ibid., p. 110.
33. Ibid., p. 318.
34. Ibid., p. 319.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., p. 326.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 334.
39. Ibid., p. 335.
40. Ibid., p. 337.
41. Ibid., p. 334.
42. Ibid., p. 335.
43. Ibid., p. 330.
44. Ibid., pp. 330-331.
45. Schiffрин, H.Z., op. cit., p. 24.
46. Ibid., p. 26 n.



47. Sun Yat-sen was born in Hsiang-shan in Kwangtung in 1866. His given name was Wen. In 1879, he went to stay with his eldest brother, Sun Mei, in Hawaii. Sun Mei had successfully established himself in Honolulu. Sun Yat-sen attended Iolani School, an Anglican institution. Then he entered Oahu College, the highest centre of learning in the Islands. In 1883, Sun Mei sent Sun Yat-sen home for fear he would be baptized. But soon Sun Yat-sen was expelled from the village for misbehaviour. Sun then went to Hong Kong, attended first the Diocesan Home and later the Government Central School. In 1884, he was baptized and named Yat-sen.
48. Schiffрин, H.Z., op. cit., p. 2.  
But there has never been any substantial written records of the two men referring to each other.
49. This second essay was published in 1895, but because it was written in 1894 before China's defeat by Japan and before the Treaty of Shimonoseki was concluded, it is therefore here considered as part of Ho Kai's pre-1895 involvement.
50. For details of Ho Kai's "Discourse on the New Government", see Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., pp. 150-197.
51. Ibid., p. 153.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 154.
54. Ibid., p. 161.
55. For a critical review of Sun Yat-sen's petition to Li Hung-chang, read Schiffрин, H.Z., op. cit., pp., 34-40.
56. Having argued that their un-Chinese ness rendered Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen ineligible to Chinese officialdom, it immediately occurred that other persons of similar overseas and Western background such as Ng Choy, Ho Kai's brother-in-law, were highly relied upon by the Chinese government. In fact, even Ho Kai was also invited to take up a post in Shanghai in 1897.
57. Turnbull, C.M., op. cit., p. 103.
58. Song, O.S., One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore (London, 1923, 1967 edition) p. 276.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.



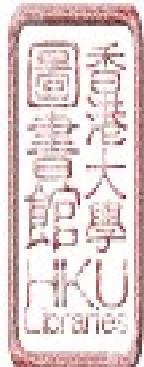
61. Lee, G.K., op. cit., p. 27.
62. Ibid., p. 76 n.
63. Tan Yeok Seong, "How Lim Boon Keng cured Huang Tzuen Shiann's tuberculosis by dog's meat," Journal of South Seas Society, Vol. XVII, Pt. 1, April 1962, pp. 29-30.



Chapter Four  
YEARS OF INTENSE TRIPARTITE LOYALTY  
(1890-1912 INVOLVEMENT)

Following the 1895 defeat of China by Japan, events in the Mainland took up speed. There were the scramble for concessions among the Treaty Powers to the extent of virtually slicing up China, the anti-foreign Boxer activities, the Ch'ing declaration of war, the Allied occupation of Peking and the signing of Boxer Protocol. During all these upheavals, various reformist and revolutionary attempts were launched. Finally, in October 1911, the revolutionary efforts first inspired and long sustained by Sun Yat-sen finally paid off. The Wuchang Uprising on October 10 sparked off widespread provincial declaration of independence. This left the Manchus with no alternative but to abdicate in February 1912 ending 268-year Ch'ing rule.

All these changes that took place in China did not escape the watchful eyes of those concerned overseas Chinese. Sun Yat-sen was definitely not the lone overseas Chinese in possessing such China-oriented affections and in interfering to influence China's course. Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were two other who took it as their duties to promulgate what they believed to be the right solutions of China's problems. Besides being essayists, they also supported promising candidates to bid for decision-making



and better still, if possible, sovereign positions in China. But though they were only two individuals among the multitude of Chinese nationals who were involved directly or indirectly in this one and a half decade long quest of China for self-salvation, their uniqueness was not to be drowned in their commonality. They were the one and only, each in his own community at that time, being so tripartitely engaged.

During the period 1895 to 1912 Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng's already aroused consciousness of Chinese identity was growing more acute. Yet this was only one aspect of their tripartite loyalty. They continued to be most vigorously engaged in servicing their colonial government and promoting the welfare of their fellow Chinese. They appeared to be at perfect ease shifting allegiances or even being simultaneously engaged in all three involvements. In fact, they were constantly making concessions and yielding to compromises. There was neither fair distribution nor monopoly of these men's allegiances. But there were definite bottom-lines to this kind of contradictory involvements. Both men were conscious that their bases in the colonies were never to be jeopardized not to say uprooted. Any actions that might lead to such results would surely not be pursued.

The following paragraphs first deal with Ho Kai's tripartite involvement during the period 1895-1912 with an aim to investigate the contradictions he faced and the compromises he made. Then Lim Boon Keng's activities in



the same period will be compared to and contrasted with Ho's. Similarities and differences of the two cases will be analysed for conclusions to be drawn.

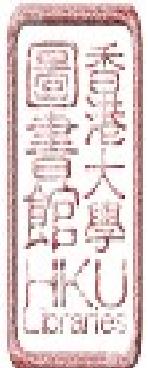
### Ho Kai 1895-1912

As loyal British subject

In this period 1895-1912, Ho Kai became increasingly involved in his public duties but none could match his long-term service in the Legislative Council. So this section continues to assess Ho's loyalty to the British Crown by examining his behaviour in the Council.

Although from 1896 onward, one more Chinese representative, Wei Yuk, was appointed to the Council, Ho's position as the spokesman of the Chinese remained intact because Wei seldom spoke and did so usually to concur with Ho's argument. Several of Ho Kai's pre-1895 attitudes in the Council were unchanged. His expressions of "loyalty and devotion" to the Crown remained only what were discreet. "...Though we are comparatively a small community living in a Far Eastern Colony, yet I may venture to say without fear of contradiction that we are behind none in loyalty and devotion to our Gracious King (King Edward VII)...."<sup>1</sup> was almost the most enthusiastic of such speeches.

Reference has earlier been made to Ho Kai being comfortable with the colonial status. In fact, except for co-signing the petition demanding elected representatives in the Legislative and Executive Councils in 1894, never again did he advocate any similar demands. In fact on April 30,



1908 in association with the creation of a government-appointed administrative head and President of the Sanitary Department, Ho actually said that he favoured such an arrangement rather than inadequate and wretched representation in the Board. "Better the present arrangement than a quasi-municipality".<sup>2</sup> His 1894 involvement could be interpreted as an act of endorsing his colleagues in the Legislative Council and not out of his own initiatives. Perhaps then in 1894, as a relatively new member, he saw it prudent to be part of the unanimous unofficial voice rather than acting differently.

Yet, Ho was very insistent that the British government had to behave properly to win his vote of confidence and support. Should any misdemeanour occur, he was never hesitant to expose it. His legal expertise would then become most useful in focusing the core of the problems. One such incident was over the issue of closing down the opium dens in Hong Kong. Having been trained in medicine and having witnessed the miseries of drug-addiction, he was definitely not ignorant of the harm caused by opium. But he was resentful that the British Home Government arrived at such a decision unilaterally without first confiding and consulting the Hong Kong Legislative Council. On May 28, 1908, he demanded,

"...this Council should be consulted on all matters affecting the finances and the welfare of this fair colony of ours, and in maintaining also the right of the public of Hongkong to have a consultative voice in a matter which affects its prosperity and its revenues."<sup>3</sup>



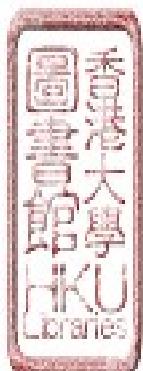
Again over the same opium issue, he charged the British government for not materializing its promise of grants to the colony as compensation for the loss of opium revenue.

On June 17, 1909, he pointed out,

"...the Home government have taken upon themselves a very great responsibility and their failure to ratify the promise would drag the fair name of Great Britain in the mire and would have a bad effect upon the Chinese population of this Colony, who will be led to believe that the promises of English statesmen are so many meaningless words."<sup>4</sup>

Then in 1911 when the Colonial Secretary wanted to rush an amendment to the 1909 Opium Ordinance by suspension of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council so that the amendment would go through all the three readings and become an ordinance at once, Ho Kai could not have been more blunt. "I hope that the Government will not place us in a position to simply echo their sentiments, and to give a decision upon a Bill of this nature without having considered it."<sup>5</sup> So Ho's respect and admiration of British institutions was not unquestioned or unconditional. To deserve his "loyalty and devotion", the colonial master had to behave right. This rationality of allegiance was definitely a result of Ho's Western training. It could not have been anything Chinese for the Chinese believed "when the monarch demands that the minister is to die, the latter just cannot be alive."

As before, Ho Kai's criticism of the British colonial policies continued to be most abrasive over the military contribution of Hong Kong to the British Empire. He had



been making speeches in opposition to unreasonable extractions for a decade. On June 1, 1911, he said,

"I had almost said that I was tired of discussions on this subject, but yet at the same time I don't see how we can avoid bringing it forward periodically so long as the military contribution is calculated and raised on an unfair basis."<sup>6</sup>

He again reminded the British government that promises made had to be kept.

"On one hand I think we all agree that we must as a British Colony, as a loyal Colony, contribute a just share towards the military expenditure of the Empire, and on the other hand it has been said by no less authority than Mr. Joseph Chamberlain that this military contribution should be calculated in a fair and just way, and the only fair and just basis on which it can be calculated is the ability of the inhabitants at any particular time to pay that amount of contribution...."<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, when loyalty to the British Crown came into conflict with the interests of the Chinese people of Hong Kong he had been appointed to represent, he took it upon his obligation that he had to be accountable to them and not to the government.

All these observations are not meant to imply that Ho Kai was an exceptionally critical unofficial member of the Legislative Council. After all, the British government set up such an institution of unofficial representation for the very purpose of hoping to be informed of responses and reactions of her colonial subjects towards her policies. Ho's behaviour was within expectations and therefore tolerated and even encouraged. Ho might have appeared to

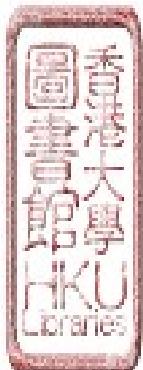


have spoken more often than the others in the Council because as a spokesman of the Chinese majority, his opinion was much sought after. And, with the increase of his years of service as Councillor, his respectability also increased. He was well aware of this and made the most of it not for the sake of attracting attention but because by being so outspoken, he was serving both the Crown and his fellow Chinese.

Ho's speeches on loyalty to the Crown might have been barely adequate, but his appreciation of the achievements of governors, the immediate representative of the British government in Hong Kong was certainly infused with the warmest sincerity and heartfelt gratitude. Ho had served under six governors. To three of them, namely, Sir William Robinson, Sir Henry Blake and Sir Frederick Lugard, Ho Kai offered the most personalized votes of thanks on the occasions of their departure from the colony. To Robinson who had added the second Chinese representative in the Legislative Council, he spoke on January 25, 1898,

"...Now, Sir, in bidding you farewell today I wish to tender you my personal thanks for unvarying kind assistance I have received at your hands as the senior representative of the Chinese community. ...I wish to thank you further for the interest you have always taken in Chinese affairs and most especially for the increased representation which you have given to them on this Council...."<sup>8</sup>

To Blake with whom Ho Kai had conspired over developments in South China in 1900, and whose office term he had petitioned



to extend, he was even more affectionate in his farewell speech on November 19, 1903.

"....Personally, I cannot bid you farewell today without thanking you for your invariable kindness and consideration to myself and my colleagues in this Council, Mr. Wei Yuk, in our capacity as representatives of the Chinese...."<sup>9</sup>

To Lugard whose administration saw the founding of the University of Hong Kong, Ho Kai became very generous in his compliments on the occasion of the farewell speech on March 7, 1912.

"....Sir, it does not need a prophet to predict that you will be long remembered by future generations as the eminent promoter of education, and with the University your name will be handed down and cherished with loving and grateful memories. I cannot conclude, Sir, without expressing my great admiration of the able and successful way you have preserved the good order and peace of this Colony when the neighbouring provinces were in a disturbed condition. In my humble opinion no one could have succeeded so well and completely as your Excellency, and this is due largely to your having won the respect and confidence of the Chinese and to your great sympathy with them in all their legitimate aspirations and undertakings...."<sup>10</sup>

Generally speaking, in the post-1895 period here under review, Ho Kai was becoming more Hong Kong-oriented, that is, he took the welfare of the whole colony as his priority. Many aspects of his behaviour in the Council can be more easily understood when viewed from this perspective. He was speaking less for any particular class of Chinese in Hong Kong. He became most concerned with the preservation



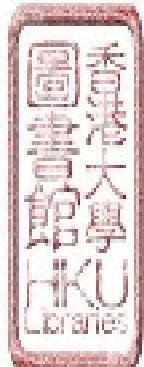
and promotion of the stability and prosperity of this Crown Colony. Thus, he might be very critical and even blunt in his speeches, but he was never radical or destructive. On his retirement from the Council after 24 years of service, he said proudly,

"....There is one thing, and one only, that I can claim for myself, and that is, that I have always during the past tried to do my best in the discharge of my public duties, and in no instance have I permitted my personal inclination or self-interest to interfere in the discharge of my duties both inside and outside this Council."<sup>11</sup>

In fact, when Ho Kai was defending the welfare of the colony as a whole, Ho was at the same time protecting the Chinese community which after all constituted an absolute majority if not almost the whole of Hong Kong. He was most far-sighted when he came to consider the future of Hong Kong, demonstrating that he had the greatest confidence in the continuous growth and prosperity of the colony.

For example, on the occasion when Ho Kai asked for the preservation of "Sung Wong Toi"<sup>12</sup> as an open space at Kowloon on August 15, 1898, he said,

"....My principal motive is to preserve an additional open space for the colony of Hongkong and its dependencies. It may seem to be looking too far ahead, as it were, at this time of the day to reserve an open space for British Kowloon, where the population is not very great, but taking into consideration that rapid growth of Hongkong itself, from the barren rock of 50 years ago to a most thickly-populated place - more thickly populated per square mile, I should say, than any other city in the world - I do not think we are looking so far ahead after all in preserving this piece of



ground for the benefit of the public of Hongkong and Kowloon."<sup>13</sup>

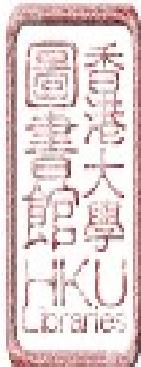
When Ho Kai was criticising the budget for 1912, again his optimism in Hong Kong was most obvious. He attacked government education policies as being short-sighted.

"....I do not advocate compulsory education in this Colony at the present moment, but as the number of children demanding educational facilities is so very great, ...it will soon become a serious question for the government whether they ought to allow more than half of the children in Hongkong to grow up without even an elementary education for want of such facilities. ....I regret also to find that no additional provision is made for the education of girls whose training and schooling are particularly liable to be neglected in this Colony..."<sup>14</sup>

He continued to explain the benefits of vernacular technical education which

"will repay a thousandfold the money and labour involved, and if Hongkong and the New Territories were ever to become great industrial and manufacturing centres, the technical training of its mechanics, artisans and skilled labourers cannot any longer be postponed or neglected."<sup>15</sup>

However Ho Kai's preoccupation with the general well-being of the colony did not outweigh his attention on the interests of the very Chinese people he represented. Ho continued to see to it that the ignorance of his fellow Chinese would not expose them to abuses. Such was the case in 1899 when he demanded that the people of the newly-acquired New Territories would not be unreasonably summoned before the Registrar-General for information. He emphasised that this affected



"the Chinese and the Chinese alone, whether a British subject or otherwise - and this makes the Bill very much more objectionable - it may be considered as class legislation, and as a general rule the legislature regard such legislation with a great deal of disfavour and suspicion."<sup>16</sup>

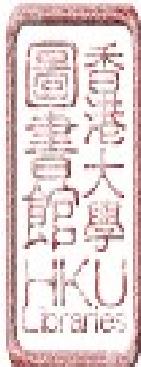
This was but one example of many other cases when Ho was defending the Chinese as against claims to privileges by the Europeans. In 1907, he was against the imposition of stocks for Chinese criminals alone. His biting remarks were,

"If the imposition of stocks were made universal, to apply not only to Chinese but others as well, it would take away a great deal of the opposition of the majority of the Chinese to this mode of punishment."<sup>17</sup>

Ho Kai continued to be wary of excessive police authority. When he was speaking in opposition to the penalising of spitting in 1908, he said

"Again if we are to leave the discretion to common police officers we are in danger of placing in their hands a powerful instrument of oppression."<sup>18</sup>

Ho also saw to it that Hong Kong Chinese were to be protected from any possible harassment by the Ch'ing government which he distrusted. In 1897, an amendment was to be passed to the Chinese Extradition Bill that "six months immediately prior to the date of his so being brought before the Magistrate"<sup>19</sup> should determine the period of residence in the Colony. But Ho Kai argued that since the Chinese population in Hong Kong then was most transient, an accused person who had resided in the colony continuously



during the preceding twelve months was not to be deported even if he might have left the colony on and off.

Despite all these examples of Ho Kai defending the public good and upholding the principles of justice and equality, there were at the same time other cases of his yielding to class legislation which violated the sacredness of those values he claimed to cherish. No case can be more typical than Ho's agreeing to the Peak Reservation Bill of 1904. It was proposed on April 19 that the Peak was to be reserved as a place of residence for persons other than Chinese. He admitted that the Bill "has a decided savour of the nature of class legislation, and especially against the Chinese", and that he was "quite convinced of the reasonableness and expediency of such a measure."<sup>20</sup> He remedied himself from the awkward situation of subserviency by arguing that yielding to the Bill meant promoting the welfare of not just the Europeans but that of the whole colony. The European administrators would then be kept healthy and sound if they alone were to live in the cooler and less crowded Peak district. The only rationalization of Ho's compromising attitude was that he genuinely believed the interests of the colony were most important.

Ho Kai's earlier advocacy of the least government interference in the lives of the Chinese people persisted throughout his service as Legislative Councillor. Such was still his attitude to the sanitary issue. On May 28, 1900, there was the discussion over an amendment which empowered search parties to commence visitations of houses at five



o'clock in the morning. Those were years of plague horror. The number of deaths had risen from 21 in 1897 to 1175 in 1898 and 1428 in 1899. Mortality rate fluctuated from as high as 100% in 1897 to 89% in 1898.<sup>21</sup> Search inspection was proposed to be made earlier from eight o'clock to five o'clock in the morning so as to catch the infected people before they went out to work and spread the disease. Ho Kai had the following argument to support his opposition.

"A visit from a search party composed of persons who are not properly qualified medical men, and the fact that they have to examine a patient to a certain extent to find out whether there is anything the matter with him or not, are enough to alarm anyone - not merely women and children, but even grown-up men.... this will cause the Chinese population of Hongkong such inconvenience and alarm that they would be far better away from here in a much better place than Hongkong. It seems to me that the plague would not make half as much mischief as the search parties under the amended By-law...."<sup>22</sup>

So, Ho's preference for stability to disturbance precluded his concern for improved health conditions. Here he even repeated the same threat of 1894, that the most valuable asset of Hong Kong - its people would leave the colony if legislation was toughened.

Not only did Ho Kai allow his priority for public health be compromised, but also disapproved of penalising in 1908 minor offences such as spitting. He argued persuasively,

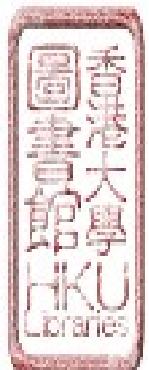


"Habit is second nature and becomes a sort of involuntary act, and a provision of this kind would, I am quite sure deter a great number of Chinese from visiting this Colony or regarding it as a desirable place in which to live."<sup>23</sup>

All these obvious contradictions can only be explained by his generally laissez-faire attitude, his fear of upsetting the peace and prosperity of the colony if the frugal people of Hong Kong began to leave and his perpetual mistrust of the law-enforcing machine -- the police. Ho's awareness of the public naivety of law must have cautioned him to be tolerant even of bad habits such as spitting.

Ho's dedication to the welfare of the Chinese mass was not limited to protecting them from possible mal-treatment. In the Legislative Council, he positively promoted measures that would improve standards of living. When the Tramways were proposed in 1901, Ho declared that "he would support the bill through thick and thin if the promoters could meet him on the grounds he had indicated."<sup>24</sup> That is, one cent per trip and the number of cars run to be determined by the governor. Ho wanted to make sure that the general public would be provided with cheap transportation. In this case, he even proposed government interference in private enterprises, a behaviour quite contrary to his laissez-faire orientation. Perhaps, all these years of service in the Council had lured him closer to the mass.

For the Chinese public, Ho Kai fought against the Water Bill of 1902. Government charged "the main waste is in Chinese houses, and that is the evil we have to fight



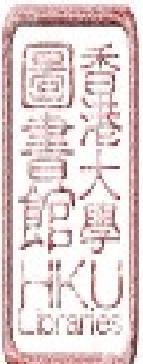
with."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the installation of a water-meter was to be made compulsory with any amount of water "in excess of a quarterly allowance which, at 50 cents per 1,000 gallons, would be equal to one-third per centum on the rating valuation of the said tenement."<sup>26</sup> Ho Kai rebutted that not only the allowance allotted was too small to meet sanitary demand, but the cost of the installation of the meter would naturally fall upon the tenants. He strongly attacked the government for charging the Chinese as being responsible.

"....in European quarters a large amount of water is used for watering the garden and watering the lawn - quite as much perhaps as would suffice for the requirements of two or three tenement houses."<sup>27</sup>

Though a Western-educated and government-appointed Legislative Councillor, Ho Kai was definitely not blindly pro-European.

And yet, Ho Kai's earlier respect for property was still very conspicuous alongside with his sympathy towards the general public. This could, perhaps, be explained by assuming that he was working for all Chinese, regardless of their class and wealth. Against charges of his being pro-property, he defended most convincingly,

"I say that it is an aspersion which I take the first opportunity to publicly deny. So far as concerns myself, I am not a large landowner, nor am I interested largely in landed property, but those whom I have represented for the last few years, as his Excellency the Governor has appointed me, have large landed interests in the colony, and it is my duty to look after their interests and



weigh them in conjunction with other interests, but I entirely repudiate the charge that I have acted for private and interested motives...."<sup>28</sup>

It has been demonstrated that Ho Kai's speeches in the Legislative Council revealed both compromises and contradictions. His dual loyalty to the British Crown and to the Chinese people was most obvious. While he was most appreciative of British rule, he expected the British government to award the colony its due dignity and respect so as to justify his reciprocating it with his allegiance. As to his dedication to the Chinese, he took it that as representative of the Chinese, he had to speak for the interests of all Chinese, rich and poor, the generation then and in future. Although he was in principle against Europeans being privileged as a different class, he was not a die-hard to insist upon the principle should it interfere with interests of the community as a whole. He still favoured laissez-faire or the least government intervention in the lives of the Chinese. Yet he expected the government to provide the general mass with expanded welfare, such as water, education facilities, open spaces and cheap transportation.

As promotor of the welfare of the Chinese

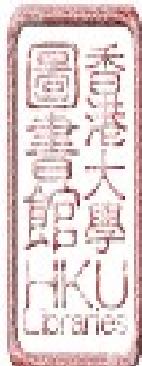
If Ho Kai was becoming more active in the Legislative Council promoting the welfare of the Hong Kong Chinese, he was even more so outside the Council. As for the motivation of his being so engrossed, it could have been one or all of the following not too far-fetched conjectures.



He could have been acting out of a missionary heart. Or quite the contrary, he could have been painstakingly building up himself honour and reputation. Or since he was the Chinese representative in the Legislative Council, he was therefore honoured with many public posts which he could not turn down. But definitely he was not working for any tangible personal good because when he died on July 21, 1914, he not only did not leave any wealth to his family of ten sons and seven daughters born to him by his second wife, Lai Yuk Hing 黎玉卿, but the family financial conditions were so pathetic that the government of Hong Kong had to undertake the cost of his sons' education.<sup>29</sup>

Despite Ho's concern over the fate of China, he was never negligent of the needs of his fellow people in Hong Kong. His most prized contribution to the community would be the part he played in promoting and publicizing Western medicine. His earlier efforts in helping to set up the Alice Memorial Hospital and the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese were further pursued during this period.

First of all, here is Ho Kai's connections with the Alice Memorial Hospital during the period 1895 to 1912. Since his initial donation to the cost of building the Hospital in 1887, there was not any other mention of him again financially contributing to the Hospital. But judging from the continuous expansion of the Hospital, he was most successful in his office as the Chairman of the



Finance Committee. Soon after its opening, beds for in-patients were increased from 80 to 90. When the site in Hollywood Road could not be further expanded, the London Missionary Society gave the site on Bonham Road for a second hospital. The cost of the building was covered by H.W. Davis who had also never ceased in his concern for the Hospital. In 1893, the new hospital named the Nethersole Hospital to commemorate Davis's mother was opened. This very much relieved the pressure on the Alice Memorial Hospital which at the same time had to provide lecture rooms for the students of the Hong Kong College of Medicine. The London Missionary Society also managed the Nethersole Hospital which admitted only women and children in-patients. Men in-patients were to be accepted by Alice Memorial Hospital.

As for maternity cases, only one small ward in the Nethersole Hospital was used. Soon, the demand grew. Again Ho Kai started fund-raising. Assisted by Chau Siu Ki 周少基, Ho was able to raise the building costs from among the Chinese community. Then on June 7, 1904, the maternity hospital again named after Ho Kai's first wife, the Alice Memorial Maternity Hospital, built on land also granted by the London Missionary Society, was opened. It was the first of its kind in the colony.

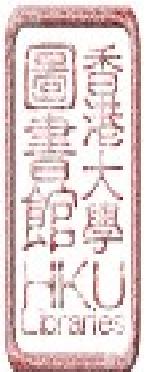
In 1906, the London Missionary Society had a fourth hospital added to its group of hospitals. But this time the land in Breezy Path was provided by the Hong Kong government. It was to be for male patients. The building



costs were donated by Ho Kai's sister, Ho Miu Ling or Madam Wu Ting Fang. The hospital was thus named the Ho Miu Ling Hospital.

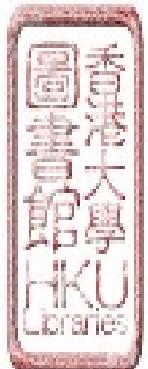
To manage all four missionary hospitals, large funds were needed. The Finance Committee became increasingly important in the operations of the hospital work. Just for the year 1906, the budget was \$13,732.17. About 35% of this, that is, \$4,766.04, was for salaries and wages.<sup>30</sup> "His able Chairmanship of the Finance Committee had made possible the steady development of the Hospital's work."<sup>31</sup> Ho Kai held this Chairmanship post for twenty-seven years from his first donation in 1887 to his death in 1914.

Secondly, Ho Kai became even more involved in the operation of the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese which simultaneously opened with the Alice Memorial Hospital in 1887. Here is a survey of Ho Kai's efforts in promoting the College and the subsequent University of Hong Kong during the period 1895 to 1912. In his capacity as Honorary Secretary and the Rector's Assessor, Ho was not only engaged in fund-raising among the rich Chinese but also in campaigning for the recognition of the professional qualifications of the college graduates as well as in the setting up of the University of Hong Kong. It should be noticed that whereas in the earlier years, Ho Kai was the only Chinese involved, since the turn of the century, more and more Chinese efforts of various forms were put in.



In 1896, Ho Kai forwarded a draft ordinance to the government on behalf of the College of Medicine. He petitioned for government recognition of the professional status of graduates but he failed. Only in 1904 was the professional status of the graduates fully recognized.

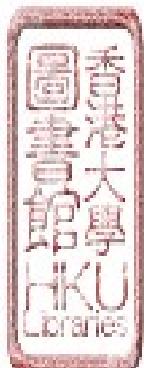
As to the funding of the College, Ho Kai himself gave a very detailed narration when he was showing the objects and reasons for the Bill entitled "An Ordinance for the Incorporation of the Hongkong College of Medicine" in the Legislative Council on May 16, 1907. He explained how for twenty years, the College had to rely almost entirely on the fees, twenty dollars a year per student, to meet its various expenses. As to donations, there was \$1 000 generously granted by the Tung Wah Hospital in 1887 when Wei Yuk was the Chairman. This timely donation started the College off with the purchase of all the necessary books, models, diagrams and specimens required. The College could survive only because all the lecturers, recruited mostly from the Civil Service, the Army and Navy and from the professional gentlemen practising the medical profession, had given their services voluntarily and honourably. In 1900, the Government began to come to its aid with an annual grant of \$2,500. In about 1905, Ng Li Hing 吳理卿, a prominent Chinese merchant offered to erect the College buildings on grounds reserved by the government for such purposes. The site was in the Tai Ping Shan district famous for the bubonic plague epidemic. Estimations for the building costs and fund-raising plans were made. Ho Kai was requested by



the College to draft a bill for introduction in the Legislative Council for the incorporation of the College and changing the name to "The Hong Kong College of Medicine" dropping "for Chinese" so as to accept students of other nationalities. In 1906, a rich Chinese, Tang Chuk-hai died. In his will, he bequeathed about \$10,000 to the College. In order to enable the College to acquire this property and manage the fund placed under its control, the Incorporation Ordinance was therefore moved in May 1907.

But in 1907 just when plans for the College buildings were being drawn up and tenders called for, the suggestion of a university was very much in the air. The Governor, Sir Frederick Lugard, made the first public suggestion of a university at St. Stephen's College speech day. It was the time when university movement was strong throughout the British Empire. As to university schemes in the East, plans were to join forces with the religious groups already working in China. But Lugard was of the opinion that university education was to be secular, practical and utilitarian. And he pressed forward his scheme.

By 1908, plans were going ahead, H.N. Mody, a wealthy local Parsee merchant offered \$30,000 as an endowment. Lugard formed a committee to promote the scheme. The first meeting was on March 13, 1908. It was suggested that there should be two faculties, medicine and engineering, incorporating the already existing College of Medicine and the Technical Institute, with a faculty of arts to be added



later. The Court of the College of Medicine decided that it would join the university. A new site was proposed for the university at the junction of Pokfulam Road and Bonham Road. Mody favoured this site to the one at Tai Ping Shan district for there would be more room for future expansion. Ho Kai consulted the views of both the past and present students of the College and found that they all concurred on the new site proposed. Then he persuaded Ng Li Hing also to agree to this proposal. At a meeting in which Ho Kai was the only Chinese present, the details were worked out. It was a meeting called by the Governor, Lugard. Those present were Mody's representative, A.H. Rennie, F.H. May, Colonial Secretary and Rector of the College, Drs. Ho Kai, J.C. Thomson and R.M. Gibson and I.W. Noble. The decision was for the College of Medicine to continue to issue diplomas to qualified students until it was fully incorporated into the Faculty of Medicine of the new university.

And yet, at this initial stage, besides the two philanthropists mentioned, Mody and Ng, and the others concerned, the general public including both the foreign and Chinese merchants as well as the Colonial Office were not too enthusiastic. The situation became acute when Mody's offer of donation would expire by the end of 1909. Therefore, public appeals for subscriptions had to be made in order to make up the balance of the total cost, otherwise, Mody would not honour his promise of donations. The British Government announced that Britain would only



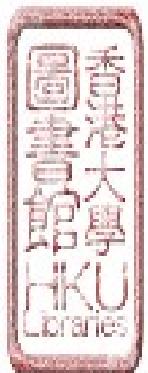
help if the Chinese Government also contributed. It was then left for Ho Kai as the only Chinese represented in the planning committee to appeal for donations from his fellow Chinese in Hong Kong and the Chinese Government. Through his influence and advocacy, the local Chinese enthusiastically raised funds in support of the scheme. In January 1909, a Committee for such purpose was formed under the chairmanship of Ho Kai. The first meeting was held on February 15. Governor Lugard honoured the Committee by addressing this first meeting. Weekly meetings were held regularly. And the most effective fund-raising publicity was the circulation of 10,000 copies of the Chinese version of Lugard's appeal for donation. This stimulated the most encouraging responses from Chinese everywhere. According to the 1909 Hong Kong Annual Report, Chinese subscriptions alone amounted to HK\$528,434.<sup>32</sup> Ho Kai had indeed played most successfully his role as the Chairman of the Committee. In fact, donations were often successfully solicited due to the personal efforts and influence of Ho and his colleagues. In one example, as recorded in the despatch by Chang Jen-chün or Cheung Yan-tsun, the Liang-kuang Governor-General, to the chief officials of the various government bureaux under his jurisdiction requesting them to meet for discussion of fund-raising for the university, he wrote,

"I have also received a joint communication from certain Hong Kong Chinese merchants, Ho Kai, Wei Yuk and others couched in earnest terms for my support."<sup>33</sup>



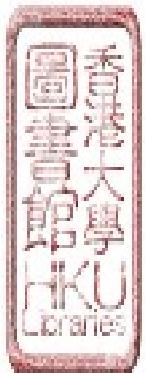
"And in order to strengthen the financial situation of the proposed University, Ho Kai again personally assured the Council of a further \$27,000."<sup>34</sup> Everything then went smoothly. Thus by the expiration date, December 31, 1909, of Mody's offer, "\$1,279,164 had been subscribed as promised."<sup>35</sup>

In fact in 1908 when fund-raising was not yet running smoothly, Ho Kai submitted a long memorandum to Lugard on how the university project could be made attractive to the Chinese public so as to successfully solicit subscriptions. Although Ho's proposals in the memorandum were in the end rejected by Lugard, they were still worth noting. In the main, Ho advocated the establishment of subsidiary courses taught in the Chinese language. Students qualified in the course were to be awarded licences or certificates. Degrees would only be awarded to students qualified in the courses taught in English. Ho had strong arguments to support his proposal. First of all, if Chinese was the medium of instruction, then Chinese communities everywhere would be more willing to subscribe. Moreover, the convenient location of this institution which offered professional and technical education in the Chinese medium would attract Chinese students from far and wide. The prestige and influence of the British Empire would be greatly enhanced and extended in China and throughout Asia. Thirdly, the colony itself would also benefit when more families of wealth and influence would bring their sons and relatives to Hong Kong to be educated and by the



availability of so many men of various talents. In this memorandum, Ho's tripartite loyalty was clearly manifested. His advocacy of courses in Chinese was no doubt to benefit not only the Chinese of Hong Kong but also those from Mainland China. It had always been his belief that Western-trained Chinese were the very talents China needed to strengthen herself. Ho saw that a university established in the British Crown Colony offering British-style professional and technical courses would be the ideal breeding-ground of talents for China's reforms. Yet at the same time, he envisaged the university as an extension of the British Imperial influence. He also had the welfare of his fellow Chinese in Hong Kong or that of the whole colony in mind. When more rich and influential people came to Hong Kong while bringing in their children for education, the commerce and industry would prosper with the inflow of wealth and people. In drafting this memorandum, Ho was trying to satisfy all his three allegiances. He must have been most disappointed when Lugard rejected his proposal.

Even though his memorandum was not accepted by Lugard in 1908, Ho Kai still continued to give the university his greatest support. The Committee to raise funds from among the Chinese communities was set up in January 1909, that is after Ho's proposal had already been rejected. Although his ideas had not been accepted, he still appreciated the value of the university scheme. After all, courses taught in English could still benefit China, Hong Kong and the



British Empire if not so directly and instantly. The foundation stone of the university was laid on March 16, 1910. About 1,300 persons attended the ceremony. Ho Kai was among the guests of honour. Governor Lugard gave a speech, mentioning Ho Kai's name several times. Yet Ho Kai was fully aware of what force had contributed to his successful fund-raising - the enthusiasm of the Chinese communities everywhere. In 1911, when Ho Kai endorsed "the Ordinance for the Incorporation and Regulation of the University of Hongkong" on March 9, he expressed these sentiments.

"The total contributions from the Chinese up to the present time are close upon \$700,000, and I venture to say that it would be hard to find that such a vast sum of money has ever been subscribed by the Chinese towards one single institution within such a short space of time."<sup>36</sup>

In this speech, Ho was exhilarated when he looked forward to seeing how people educated by the University of Hong Kong went to China to develop the motherland.

"When the University has turned out a number of engineers, for example, where do you suppose they would go? Of course, they would go to the interior of China and open mines, build railways, establish factories all over the Empire...."<sup>37</sup>

So, as the first Chinese involved in the promotion of Western medicine and higher education through the establishment of hospitals, a college to train doctors and a university, Ho Kai certainly commanded a place of respect. This year while we are celebrating the centenary of the Medical Faculty of the University of Hong Kong, Ho Kai and

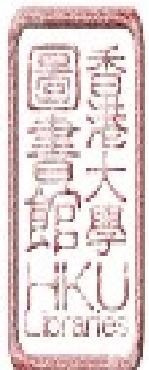


all those enthusiasts whether Chinese or not should be duly remembered and appreciated for all that they had so painstakingly put in for generations of this Chinese community to benefit. With the establishment of the University in 1912, Ho Kai's admiration of Western institutions and loyalty to his fellow Chinese was given physical embodiment. On the occasion of his retirement from the Legislative Council, in February 1914 the Governor, Henry May, bid him a very honoured farewell.

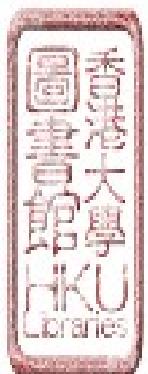
"....he has devoted his intellect and his energies to the advancement of the best interests of the Chinese community and for the good of the Colony as a whole.... This council desires to record its heartfelt thanks to Sir Kai Ho Kai for the assistance which he has at all times ungrudgingly rendered in the work of the Council, and its deep appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him to the Colony throughout the twenty-four years of his service as a member of the Legislature."<sup>38</sup>

#### As nationalist overseas Chinese

According to available records, even during this period when Ho Kai was so zealously observing and scrutinizing whatever was happening in China, he was rarely away from Hong Kong.<sup>39</sup> But he was responding sometimes mildly while other times even radically to the fast changing fate of China as it unfolded. On the whole, he did not deviate very much from his pre-1895 activities, that is, essay writing and support of Sun Yat-sen. But it would be observed that Ho never steadfastly held on to any principles. His tactics were most flexible so long as they



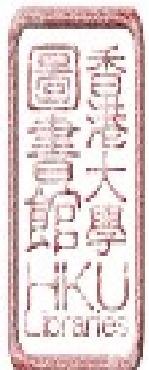
could achieve a China reformed according to his plans. If Ch'ing demonstrated willingness to reform, the Manchus could stay. Otherwise, they would have to go. Even the substitution of Manchus need not necessarily be Sun Yat-sen. It could be Li Hung-chang. One constant factor in Ho Kai's calculation was that the British should best be won over, or at least her quiescence had to be assured. Once he was doubtful of British favour, he withheld. In fact, he kept his radical profile very low while promoting his reformist programmes which were Western-oriented not only in the measures themselves but also in motivation. Thus, although Ho Kai's connections with revolutionary Sun Yat-sen were open secrets, he could still move among British, Hong Kong and even at times Ch'ing dignitaries. But his tripartite loyalty was not without costs. "During the governorship of Sir William Robinson in 1895, there was some talk about appointing a Chinese to the Executive Council and his name was in the mind of the governor. However, he never received this appointment."<sup>40</sup> It was no coincidence that it was in 1895 that Ho had the closest relationship with Sun Yat-sen. The British government was not entirely unaware of Ho's activities. Even behind the "vote of heartfelt thanks" for his long service in the Legislative Council extended to him by the governor, Henry May, on the occasion of his retirement, there was serious British dissatisfaction with Ho's various involvements. So what appeared as a retirement in 1914 was in fact a non-recommendation of Ho



Kai for further reappointment.<sup>41</sup> So after all, tripartite loyalty did not pay.

Here is a brief chronological survey of Ho Kai's involvement, paying particular attention to the motivation and compromises behind his activities. Although his responses showed obvious inconsistencies, they would appear less so under careful consideration.

In early 1895 just as Ho had his reformist essay, "Discourse on the New Government" published, he was at the same time deeply involved in Sun Yat-sen's first of a series of uprisings which were to erupt on and off until the collapse of the Ch'ing in 1911.<sup>42</sup> If the pre-1895 Ho-Sun relationship had never been too strongly substantiated and only implied, then 1895 would be the beginning of a much closer and recorded connection. Ho Kai was never a member of the Hsing Chung Hui but his involvement with the 1895 Canton seizure was definite. It seemed a coincidence that Sun Yat-sen and Ho Kai had turned revolutionary or anti-Ch'ing at the same time. Both had earlier failed to have their reformist ideas accepted by the Chinese authority at about the same time when China was suffering humiliating defeats at the hands of Japan. Both were then subsequently in collaboration for plots to overthrow the Manchus. Thus these two zealous overseas Chinese who had their reform solutions to save China ready and yet were deprived of the opportunities had finally resorted to creating such opportunities by themselves.

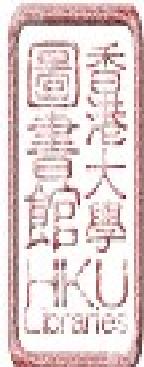


Therefore in 1895 at the same time when Ho Kai was attending Legislative Council meetings, he was also present at Hsing Chung Hui meetings held at Ch'ien-heng Hong  
乾亨行 at 13, Staunton Street. He was in fact pledging support to overthrow the very Chinese government which his colonial master had decided to boost. Though actively involved, he kept a very low profile, afraid to upset his other role-playing. It was precisely because of his many-faceted life that he was of crucial service to Hsing Chung Hui. First of all, Sun's group was counting on foreign passivity if not support for their anti-Ch'ing activities if they were to succeed. Thus foreign merchants in various treaty-ports in China had to be assured that the Hsing Chung Hui was not an anti-foreign group. And if these merchants could be won over, then the sympathies and better still the endorsement of their home governments could be assured. No other candidate could better perform these roles of pacifying and soliciting the foreigners than Ho Kai. After all, he was the only Hsing Chung Hui sympathizer who was well-versed in English and held the respectable post of government-appointed Hong Kong Legislative Councillor. Moreover, his earlier essays on reforms had also cast him as a moderate, not a revolutionary and therefore a less threatening image. These assets of Ho's could only be fully utilized if he remained behind-the-scenes. Once openly connected with clearly subversive activities, his respectable status would be tarnished and his service to the Hsing Chung Hui would be much weakened. As to Ho Kai



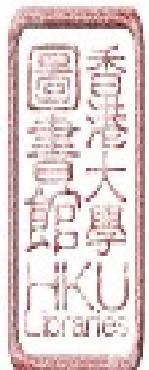
himself, this 'grey eminence'<sup>43</sup> role also suited him. Being spokesman of the Hong Kong Chinese, especially that of the merchants, he was expected to be an upholder of law and order. Both his patron, the Hong Kong government, and his clients, the Hong Kong Chinese, would at once terminate their trust in him if he were ever openly involved in anti-Ch'ing uprisings. Therefore, since he himself could not lead such a movement, he was most willing to support any other candidate who shared his desperate distrust of the Ch'ing government. He found this person in Sun Yat-sen who was most enthusiastic in radical actions being taken. So if the Ho-Sun relationship was of exploitative nature, it was mutual. Sun made use of Ho's status while Ho of Sun as the front man. There was still another reason for Ho Kai's low profile. If this uprising were to fail, the very inconspicuous role he played would facilitate him washing his hands off any connections with an aborted subversion. In a word, while eagerly supporting a scheme he believed to be able to save China, he was careful not to jeopardize his other engagements.

Ho Kai made two definite contributions to Sun Yat-sen's 1895 coup attempt. Firstly, Ho succeeded to win pro-Hsing Chung Hui coverage in the foreign press of Hong Kong. Secondly, he helped draft the Hsing Chung Hui proclamation which was to be publicized if the uprising were to succeed. To achieve both objectives, Ho made use of two arenas, the Hong Kong China Mail and the Hongkong Telegraph, the editors



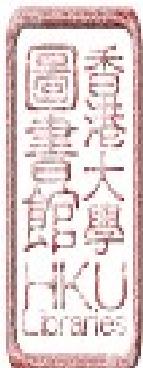
of which, Thomas A. Reid and Chesney Duncan were his personal friends. Ho's association with the Hong Kong China Mail was particularly close, having had his very first reformist essay, the review article of Tseng Chi-tse's "China - the Sleep and the Awakening" published in it on February 12, 1887. Without Ho Kai's connections, the Hsing Chung Hui would never have had such a chance of clarifying themselves to foreigners. Of course, whether such exposure did indeed benefit Sun's efforts was hard to establish. But endorsement by the foreign press definitely distinguished Sun's Canton uprising in 1895 from all other previous anti-Ch'ing secret society revolts. And this was made possible all because of Ho Kai's influence. But what was published in these foreign papers was a very different version of the nature of the Hsing Chung Hui and Canton uprising - that which appealed to the interests and played upon the fears of the foreign merchants.

For three days, March 12, March 16 and again March 18, 1895, the Hong Kong China Mail reported on the possibility of uprisings in Canton which would result in a reformed China much more receptive of Western influences and therefore of greater benefits of the Westerners. The rebels were depicted as Westernized reformers and the group as a moderate reformist party. There was not only no mention of any anti-dynastic or republican intentions, but also not even the name of the group, Hsing Chung Hui. These three editorials were in Thomas A. Reid's hands but clearly under the influence of Ho Kai's reform ideas earlier



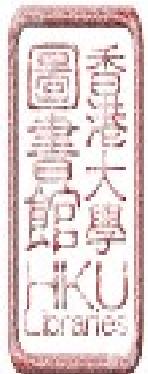
published. In fact, almost the same views but in more elaborate discussions and openly authored by Ho Kai were published in the same paper on May 23. This was a translated version of Ho's "Discourse on New Government" in 1894. He was outlining political reforms under the leadership of an enlightened constitutional monarch. So while Sun and Hsing Chung Hui might secretly cherish such aims as 'ousting the Manchus and establishing the Republic', these were definitely not what Ho saw fit to support. It would not be over speculating to say that Ho was making use of this uprising to impose his reformist programmes on China. If the uprising succeeded in sparking off provincial secession, then Ho Kai as the only supporter around with a definite political programme and influence among foreigners especially the British, his views would surely be adopted. And even if the uprising failed, Ho might have hoped that he would have attracted enough attention as to be offered posts by the Chinese government. These could have been Ho's wishful thinking while he was involving himself with Sun's Canton Uprising.

After six months of plotting, that is, from March to October, 1895, the uprising finally fell flat disastrously. Not only lives and funds were sacrificed, even the leaders were also hunted down with prices on their heads. Sun Yat-sen began his life as a fugitive, never to return to China until the target for which he fought paid off - the collapse of the Manchus following the Wuchang Uprising of October,



1911. Nonetheless, the Canton Uprising started off Sun's revolutionary career. But at the same time, Ho's revolutionary activities ended. It seemed as though Ho had enough of such experience and he was never again involved in any of Sun's subsequent uprisings. He reverted to essay writing.

It would seem that Ho Kai was trying, searching and learning to find a way of having his reform programmes executed. So when Sun failed him, he would not hesitate to seek other means or other candidates who would enable himself to exert an influence in reforming China. In March, 1897, despite his Western education, his bitter attack of Manchu government practices and his dubious loyalty to the Ch'ing dynasty, Ho Kai was given a chance to participate in the Chinese government. He was to take up an important appointment in Shanghai, handling matters in connection with railway and banking. He left Hong Kong with his brother-in-law, Ng Choy or Wu T'ing-fang who had been newly appointed as the Chinese Minister to the United States, Spain and Peru. The Chinese community in Hong Kong presented their honourable spokesman, Ho Kai, with a valuable plate as a souvenir on the occasion of sending him off to his new appointment in the Chinese government. But Ho was in China for only two months, that is, March to May and was back again in Hong Kong. Hu Li-yüan wrote that He was not used to the weather and had fallen ill. Therefore he returned so quickly.<sup>44</sup> But more could have been deduced from this brief episode of Ho with the Chinese government.



The 'weather' reason could have been but a convenient excuse. First of all, despite all his disqualifications, he was finally recruited by the Manchu government. This could mean that his talents and his views were appreciated and he was therefore appointed. At the same time, Ho Kai should have felt most excited that finally he had a chance to serve his mother country which he had been so anxiously observing and criticizing in the hope of helping to check its declining fate. The fact that this long-anticipated appointment lasted only two months could have been caused by more than the climatic factor. There was never any record of Ho explaining the case, "Nevertheless, it was believed that Ho Kai realised he could hardly manage external and financial affairs, if he were not given freedom to carry out his duties."<sup>45</sup> Ho Kai must have high hopes of designing reform programmes once he was in office. Finding that he was not so empowered, he immediately withdrew himself and returned to serve the Hong Kong government, which though not his own native government, offered him more room for expression and manipulation. Thus Ho fared a far less fortunate fate than K'ang Yu-wei who in 1898 succeeded to gain the favour of the Emperor himself and K'ang could therefore influence policy-making.

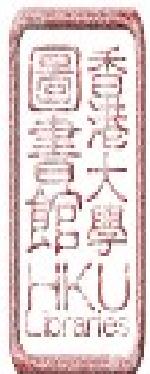
By 1897, Ho Kai had had experiences of both for and against the Manchu government. He attempted to overthrow it in 1895 by supporting Sun Yat-sen's Canton uprising. He tried to assist it in 1897 by joining the government. He



was disappointed on both occasions. Yet his loyalty to the motherland was not the least frustrated and his efforts persisted. After returning from Shanghai, he again dedicated himself to essay-writing. He was to produce two essays in 1897. The first was "Foundation of the New Government" dealing with national finance. The second was "Administration of the New Government" on government administrative measures.

In "Foundation of the New Government", Ho Kai first listed the problems of China, such as corruption and the misuse of talents. He carefully calculated China's foreign loans and the interests incurred. To meet these huge payments, Ho was of the opinion that China had to resort to the double measures of cutting expenditure and efficient exploitation of new revenue resources such as opening mines, banks, railways and industries. Foreign investors need not be barred but put on competitive terms. The taxation system was also attacked. With reference to people's livelihood in the West, Ho lamented how the poor Chinese were extorted to the benefit not of the nation as a whole but of the corrupt government officials. New taxes and new sources of revenues were proposed. Social services were to be provided. The Finance Ministry was to be reorganized with departments in all provinces. Foreign advisers were to be employed at least until sufficient Chinese officials were trained.<sup>46</sup>

In the second essay, "Administration of the New Government", Ho Kai was repeating many of the ideas he had



exposed in the very first of his reform essays - "Discourse on the New Government" in 1894. But this time, he put special emphasis on the need of a benevolent government abiding by the principles of law, applying clemency, sharing public feeling and facilitating the course of justice. The British government was quoted as a model to show that it was so omnipotent as to be able to rule even far-away colonies most efficiently. Besides, Ho again stressed the urgency of administrative reforms such as in organization, staffing and recruitment. He repeated his argument on the significance of utilizing foreign or foreign-trained Chinese professionals and specialists.<sup>47</sup>

In these essays, Ho Kai did not deviate from but only detailed his early reform proposals. He continued to scrutinize Chinese problems through his Westernized eyes. The two-month Shanghai episode should have given him personal experience of the corrupt and inefficient administrative practices. And for all these ills, he prescribed Western physicians and medications. He strongly objected to severing relationships with foreign powers. On the contrary, he advised otherwise. With these reform ideas published, Ho became part of that loud cry in post-1895 China demanding institutional reforms.

Besides being engaged in essay-writing, Ho continued to monitor reform movements as they developed in China. In April 1898, K'ang Yu-wei, the leader for institutional reforms, made a speech at a meeting of the Pao-kuo hui or



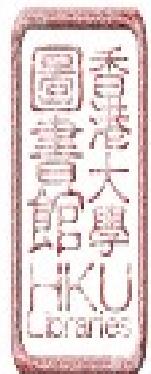
the National Protection Society which he had just organized among several hundred provincial graduates and government officials in Peking. In this speech, K'ang criticised comprador mentality of urging co-operation with foreign powers to strengthen China. In fact, K'ang was attacking what Ho Kai had been advocating for over ten years. K'ang also made particular references to the Chinese in Hong Kong, lamenting that all they could become were but compradors. A review article of K'ang's speech authored by Hu Li-yüan was soon published. Although it was not in Ho's hands, Hu openly acknowledged that it incorporated Ho's ideas. It was mainly a defence of what K'ang attacked. Foreign imperialism was not the cause of China's declining fate. The British administration in Hong Kong was much supported because it treated the Chinese as equals. Therefore, the Chinese in Hong Kong were not being servile towards the British. What existed between the Chinese and the British in Hong Kong was in fact mutual respect. Hu concluded by endorsing Confucian and Mencian principles which K'ang had been promoting but he was of the opinion that rationalization of reform efforts with these principles was unnecessary and outdated.<sup>48</sup> Ho Kai himself did not review K'ang's speech but trusted it to the hands of Hu Li-yüan probably to avoid downgrading the polemics into personal attacks since he himself had earlier been implicated by K'ang.

The next year in 1898, a major reform work was published in China. It was Chang Chih-tung's Ch'wan-hsüeh



p'ien or "Exhortation to Study". It was a collection of twenty-four essays divided into "The Inner Section" dealing with "rectification of the human mind", and "the Outer Section" on "the introduction of new learning". These chapters could be summarized into what became known as Chang Chi-tung's "Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function" 中學為本，西學為用 . In other words, Chang was still advocating gradual and moderate reforms and opposing radical institutional changes of Kang Yu-wei's group around the Emperor. Chang debased the parliamentary practices for he believed that the only one way to strengthen China was to unite all Chinese under the majestic spiritual power of the Imperial Court.<sup>49</sup>

Ho Kai again reviewed Chang Chi-tung's "Exhortation to Study" as he did to Tseng Chi-tse's in 1887. There is controversy as to whether Ho Kai or Hu Li-yüan was the author of this review article.<sup>50</sup> But whether it was out of Ho's hands did not make much difference. The ideas were definitely Ho Kai's. Ho defended those Western institutions attacked by Chang claiming that he was much more qualified than Chang to discuss them. After condemning Chang for being sweet-tongued to win Imperial favour for self-promotion, Ho again listed those corrupt practices which he had always believed to be China's problems. Then he refuted in detail Chang's attitudes towards the Western doctrine of people's rights. What Chang found as a source of disorder, Ho recommended as a



panacea to rejuvenate China. Ho wrote that the parliament could successfully harmonize relations between the government and the people, while at the same time enabling the people to serve their country. He made it clear that though Western-educated, he was not anti-Confucian but he saw that revival of Confucianism could only worsen China's situation. This review article was Ho Kai's last address to the ruling Manchus.

A year later in 1899, while the scramble for concessions was at its peak and anti-foreign activities which were secretly encouraged by the Chinese officials were mounting in China, Ho Kai began to address his reform programmes designed for China directly to Britain. This was the joint address of Ho Kai and Wei Yuk to Rear-Admiral Lord Beresford who was leading a trade mission to China. On his way back to England after the mission, he arrived at Hong Kong on December 25, 1898, and was entertained by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. It was on the merchants' behalf that Ho and Wei presented him the address after he was back in England. It was dated January 20, 1899. The joint signature was for no other obvious reason than the fact that they were both serving as Chinese spokesmen in the Legislative Council. Ho Kai was undoubtedly the master-mind behind this address.

In this presentation, besides advocating his reform measures, Ho Kai was making a strong plea for Britain to interfere for the sake of her own commercial interests and for China. Statements amounting to treason filled the



letter. He was inviting Britain to rule or at least dictate policies in China.

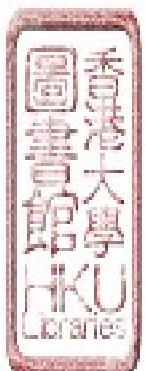
"It is quite apparent that immediate reformation must be inaugurated. It is also clear that without external aid or pressure China is unable to effect her own regeneration. In this predicament we venture to think that England, having the predominant interest in China and being the country most looked up to and trusted by the Chinese, should come forward and furnish the assistance and apply the requisite pressure.... We recommend further that if China be unable or unwilling to undertake these absolutely necessary reforms, Great Britain, either single-handedly or in conjunction with some other Power, should render China substantial assistance, and, if need be, apply firm pressure on the central authorities in Peking."<sup>51</sup>

The British commercial interests in China were enticed.

"...there would be such a ramification of British commercial interests in the whole Chinese Empire that China, in its entirety, would become a complete sphere of British influence, ...We are hopeful of seeing the day when Great Britain will emerge from this commercial and political conflict with untarnished lustre and unsullied glory."<sup>52</sup>

Loyalty of naturalized British-Chinese like Ho Kai and Wei Yuk themselves were proudly proclaimed, while demanding the British government to award them their due respect, protection and greater utilization of their "middle-men" role.

"By a proper system of organisation and greater empowerment to British subjects of Chinese parentage, they can be made an arm of strength of Great Britain commercially, and that proud position which she has held in China can yet be maintained despite the rivalry and underhand schemes of her enemies. We humbly suggest that Britain's Chinese



subjects be sent to the interior to occupy every possible source of trade and to act as commercial scouts or living channels of communication to the different Chambers of Commerce."<sup>53</sup>

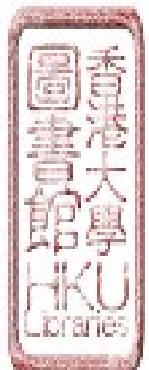
Such invitation of foreign interference can be differently interpreted. Of course, there is the version of Ho Kai and Wei Yuk being shameless and servile running dogs and henchmen of Western imperialism begging for foreign assistance to back up their own selfish motives in China. The patronage these Westernized Chinese could not get from the Chinese government was now sought after from the foreigners. Or there can also be the very opposite explanation. Having experienced and benefited from the liberal, benevolent and prosperous British administration in Hong Kong, they sincerely wanted to share such advantages with their fellow Chinese who were suffering under the corrupt Ch'ing Dynasty. After all, the Manchus were now squandering away Chinese resources and territories to the foreign rulers to trade off for their continued rule. Therefore instead of gradually falling into the hands of various foreign powers, China might as well be handed over to the British. Although profits might be scraped away by the British, at least their rule would rejuvenate the country. In fact, Ho Kai could have been motivated by both rationalizations.

It was clear that by 1899 Ho Kai had failed in all his various attempts to have his reform programmes adopted. Firstly his reform essays did not attract Chinese attention. Then his support of Sun Yat-sen had also been frustrated.



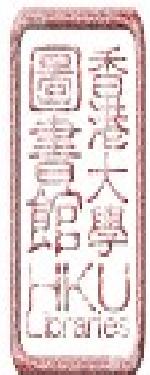
Participation in the Chinese government in 1897 only disappointed him. It was out of desperation that Ho Kai threw himself before the British whom he had the confidence of trusting China to. Of course, having lived under British administration for decades, he was not ignorant of the existence of unfair practices on racial grounds. But after all, these, too, could be found in China on an even larger scale. Moreover, if the British could really reform China, the loss of some concessions to the British were but for efficient managerial performance.

In 1900, an opportunity arose for Ho Kai to actually execute his 1899 plan of inviting the British to determine the Chinese course. It was the time when anti-foreign Boxer activities under Imperial patronage were rising high in the North and spreading out. But anti-Boxer officials under the leadership of Li Hung-chang, then the Governor-General of Liang-Kwang Provinces, had refused to comply to Imperial call for assistance. The South even proclaimed neutrality and announced that all anti-foreign activities within their jurisdiction would be suppressed. This disguised open defiance of Peking rekindled Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen's hope in Li Hung-chang. At such moment of discord with the Manchus, Li Hung-chang might be won over to declare the independence of the South. "On June 18, 1900 - three days before the declaration of war (against the Treaty Powers) - he received a court summons to come to Peking. Initially disposed to respond affirmatively, Li changed his



mind, deciding instead to stall, and if necessary to go only as far as Shanghai, there to await further development."<sup>54</sup> But once the war was declared, the Court urged Li to move North with Imperial edicts issued on July 3, July 6 and July 8. On July 8, the Court announced that Li Hung-chang would be restored to his former positions of Governor-General of Chihli and the Superintendent of Trade for the northern ports.<sup>55</sup> Being thus appeased, Li decided to set out on the journey north but still deliberately tardily scheduling to arrive at Shanghai on July 21. It was this ambiguous attitude of Li that attracted Ho Kai. An intrigue was to go on in Hong Kong in the months of June and July before Li was to arrive in Hong Kong on July 18, 1900.

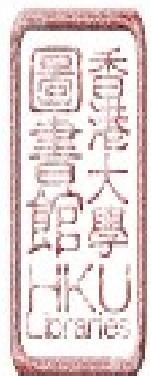
Ho Kai carefully assessed the situation. Just the year before, he had failed to attract the attention of the British by his open address. But this time, he tried to win over the immediate British representative in Hong Kong - Governor Sir Henry A. Blake. The good office of Governor Blake was to persuade Li Hung-chang personally to declare the independence of the South with the support of Sun Yat-sen's forces and the patronage of the British. Once he had clearly thought out his plan, Ho Kai moved fast. This time, he instigated the whole drama. What he was manipulating in 1900 was, when carefully examined, not much different from his role in 1895. Only then in 1895 he supported Sun as the candidate. This time, he was betting China's fate on Li Hung-chang with Sun as Li's aide-de-camp. The strategy and the end-product would still be the same.



First an independent South was to be established, then a chain reaction was to occur with other provinces declaring similar independence. Finally the Manchus, finding themselves no longer wielding any control, would abdicate.

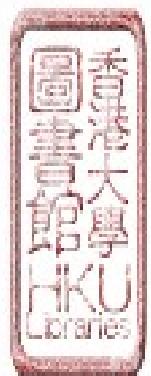
Ho Kai's first move was to draft a proclamation in English which briefly explained the rationalization for establishing a new regime with its political programmes listed. Then he submitted this draft to Governor Blake who approved it. It was Blake who passed this to Li Hung-chang, who at the time was still undecided whether to set off north or not. Li responded to the draft favourably. This endorsement of Ho Kai's scheme by Blake and Li could easily be understood. After all, the Hong Kong colonial government was really alarmed by situations in China since the New Territories neighbouring South China had only been put under British administration a year ago. If a friendly government under British protection were to be set up in South China, it would do no harm but good to the colony. As to Li Hung-chang, he might be secretly entertaining the dream of becoming Emperor himself.<sup>56</sup> If the plot paid off, he could not only avenge the shame of being removed from his long-held post in 1895, but could also build his posterity a dynasty. If he failed, with his great age of 77, he would not live long to suffer the shame.

Ho Kai had impressed Governor Blake so much that the latter even began his telegraphic appeals to London on behalf of Sun Yat-sen. Blake also reported favourably on



the possible development in South China disclosing Li Hung-chang's concurrence and ambitions. With all the upheavals going on in China, this scheme seemed the only way out of the confusion. Sun was therefore on the verge of regaining the favour of the very British government which had in the 1880s educated him but had also banished him from Hong Kong in 1895. But came July 8 and the whole situation was changed. Li was offered his pre-1895 posts, at once his enthusiasm for the Hong Kong offer abated. Not even British pressure from London could convince him to stay in Canton. Blake was eager that the plan was to succeed. He even recommended to London that when Li arrived in Hong Kong, he be permitted to use force to detain Li. Telegraphic communications flashed back and forth between London, Hong Kong and Canton, for almost a month from late June to mid-July. On the very day before Li's arrival, July 17, Blake informed London that he was ready to forcibly detain Li once permission was granted. But that same day, Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, sent Blake a telegram forbidding any interference of Li's moves. Also on that day, Sun Yat-sen arrived in Hong Kong on board the "Sado Maru", ready for the meeting with Li Hung-chang which he thought should have been arranged by then. And on that day, Ho Kai and Wei Yuk called upon Blake hoping to persuade him into detaining Li despite London's decision.

On July 18, the interview between Li Hung-chang and Blake took place. All Blake's persuasion and all his argument could not keep Li from leaving for the North. "Li



even urged the Governor to prevent subversive elements from using Hong Kong as a base."<sup>57</sup> Thus ended over a month's conspiracy of the southern independence movement. Sun Yat-sen never met Li Hung-chang. Meantime, he stayed on board and waited in vain only to leave for Japan in disappointment on July 20.

Ho Kai had played a multiple role in this 1900 intrigue. His function did not stop at the drafting of the proclamation. He was the very force boosting Blake in convincing London of the possibility and feasibility of the plan. He was also the liaison between Blake and Sun. And during those days while Sun was on board the "Sado Maru" outside Hong Kong from July 17 to July 20, Ho could have been meeting Sun Yat-sen and exchanging views. They could have been "charting an approach to the governor in the hope of ensuring a friendly base at Hong Kong, and perhaps even more positive British support when the attack succeeded."<sup>58</sup> It can be safely assumed that even though this Ho-Sun-Blake collaboration fell flat, in the later days, Ho Kai could still have called on Blake to discuss developments in China. In fact, both had not given up the hope of south independence movement. Blake continued his telegrams to London urging the Home Government to grant him permission to negotiate with Chinese agitators be they reformists like K'ang Yu-wei or revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen. On September 24, Blake even sent the Colonial Secretary a petition from anonymous Hong Kong Chinese demanding that the



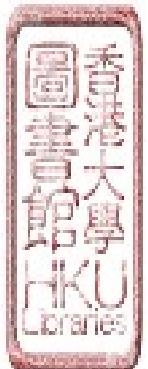
Allied powers should force institutional reforms upon China. A possible uprising in the South was also warned.<sup>59</sup> Besides working on Blake to keep up the latter's enthusiasm. Ho Kai continued with his literary appeal to the foreigners in Hong Kong China Mail. It was in August that two editorials probably influenced by Ho Kai and an open letter signed in Ho's pen-name, "Sinensis", were published. It was the very month when the Allied forces were storming from Tientsin to Peking, finally occupying the capital on August 14. The editorial on August 1 carried the same cry for the need of foreign interference to impose reforms on China.

"An Advisory Board formed of the foreign ministers or some other representatives from each of the powers should sit at the capital to control the government...." The supreme power would be vested in the central governor with his foreign dictators and their control would be somewhat similar to that held by the central authority of the United States at Washington...."<sup>60</sup>

Almost the same message was again the emphasis of August 4 editorial.

"....The only chance for emancipation of the common hordes of China is by the reform of the system of government under the direction of the foreign powers...."<sup>61</sup>

Then on August 22 with the capital, Peking, under siege and the Ch'ing court in flight, "An Open Letter on the Situation" dated August 21 addressed to Mr. John Bull and signed "Sinensis" was published in the Hong Kong China Mail. Ho Kai was now writing in the strongest tone of indignation



that the Westerners were still boasting the hopeless Manchus.

"....you did not know that your meekness has been regarded by the Chinese government as weakness and that your generosity and forbearance as signs of timidity and cowardice. Hence of late years you have had a succession of mishaps culminating in the present crisis."<sup>62</sup>

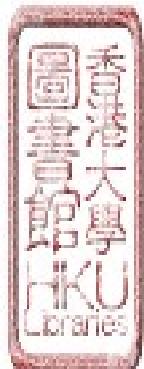
Ho Kai was actually complaining that the Treaty Powers were too lenient to the Manchu government. He was of the opinion that the disasters ensuing from the rise of Boxers should never have happened had the foreigners especially Britain forced the Ch'ing government to carry out institutional reforms. He claimed that the outbreak of such anti-foreign atrocities was purposely instigated by the high Ch'ing officials to drive out the missionaries. He strongly urged the Allies to make use of this opportunity.

"....to capture not only Peking, but also the lawless band of mandarins and their confederates the leading Boxers."<sup>63</sup>

The one statement carrying nationalist favour would be

"....I take it that you are well agreed upon the principles so fearlessly propounded by your Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs that China shall be for the Chinese, and there will be no partition of the Middle Kingdom by the Foreign Powers."<sup>64</sup>

After all, Ho Kai did have the integrity of China very much at heart. But he was willing to trade off the Manchus for the foreign powers. He began to sound as anti-Manchu as his student, Sun Yat-sen had been for several years. He emphasised that those Manchus who had plunged China into



such a pathetic state were not Chinese at all. Therefore the West should not allow Manchus to continue their rule in China merely to ensure the selfish motives of the West in the further exploitation of Chinese resources.

"The Indianising of China you will not have, but then you must not go to the other extreme to leave China severely alone and permit her to get along as before.... The present rotten and corrupt system of government must go and radical reforms should be introduced. It will not do after having vindicated your honour to make a hollow peace with the Chinese Government, exact an indemnity, sign a new treaty, have some more ports opened to trade, get more concessions, and then let the Manchu Government do as they like thereafter. Pray remember that Manchus are not Chinese and it will only be fair to leave China for the Chinese and Manchuria for the Manchus."<sup>65</sup>

With these words, Ho Kai was at the same time openly indicting the Western Powers. But such charges were not against all Powers.

"All the enlightened sons of China are earnestly looking to and praying Great Britain and United States of America for deliverance from the yoke of an oppressive and corrupt government."<sup>66</sup>

He envisaged that if these two Powers would take up the assignment, then all oppositions whether from within China or from the other Powers would melt away.

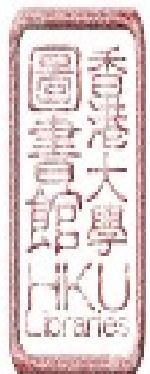
In this letter, Ho Kai did not even bother to repeat his reform programmes. He simply concluded by saying,

"Lastly, as regards the sort of reform you should introduce into China and the form of government you might establish, I regret that I have neither the time nor space here to touch upon them but I may refer you to the two leading articles



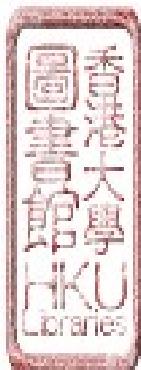
published in the China Mail on the 1st and 4th of August 1900 respectively. In them you will find many suggestions for your consideration and adoption."<sup>67</sup>

With this letter of 1900, Ho Kai was to stop his over a decade long essay-writing and was almost to end all his involvement in regard to the 'China Affair'. He stepped back into an observer's role at the time when his reform ideas were beginning to attract greater attention since Ying Lien-chih<sup>68</sup> published Ho Kai's ideas as edited and translated by Hu Li-yuan in the form of a pamphlet, The True Meaning of the New Government 新政真諺. It was a collection of seven essays, six of which were Ho's works.<sup>69</sup> But as explained earlier, there has not been consensus as to whether Ho Kai or Hu Li-yuan or both were the authors of these essays. By 1900, Ho Kai had exhausted all channels within his means to try and influence the course of the reform movement in China. He had tried proposing reform ideas since 1887, supported Sun Yat-sen's Canton coup in 1895, participated in the Ch'ing government for two months in 1897, lured the Hong Kong Governor into influencing Li Hung-chang to accept an independent South China government though in vain in 1900, and also in that year openly pleaded with the Western Powers to abolish the Manchu government. In all these attempts, his efforts did not pay off. This could be one reason for his relative passivity after 1900. But another reason could have been because of promising developments in China. After the dust stirred up by the Boxer activities had been settled and the



Court back in Peking, the Empress Dowager in her shame and humiliation announced a series of institutional reforms. Some of these reform measures were very similar to what Ho Kai had been advocating for over a decade. So he might have become once more hopeful in the Manchus and decided to adopt the attitude of "wait and see" while praying that this time China had at last woken up. Although he was not able to personally participate in this reform movement in the Mainland, at least he could comfort himself that China was finally on the road to recovery. As to his support of Sun Yat-sen, that too seemed to have ended. Sun was getting more radical especially after the forming of T'ung Meng Hui and the Proclamation of the Three Principles of the People. Ho withdrew his support. After all, Ho had never been a proponent of republican ideas. The Western Powers including Britain had also failed him when they allowed Manchus to continue ruling China after they had been bribed off with the terms of the Boxer Protocol.

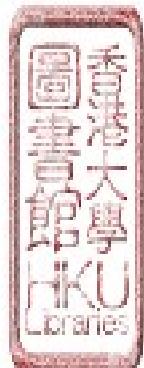
Ho Kai's various involvement in the 'China Affair' was not as unprincipled as it appeared to be. The means varied but not the objective. He was determined in what he wanted - a reformed China able to rule equitably and efficiently and able to uphold Chinese sovereignty. And so whatever or whenever the possibilities arose, he would utilize them at once to arrive at his objective. The nature of the candidature did not bother him as long as he could serve his purpose.



For his tripartite endeavours, Ho Kai was not duly rewarded at his times. The Chinese government turned a deaf ear to his ideas. Contemporary Chinese reformers, too, did not have too much regard for him although he is today ranked among late Ch'ing Chinese reformers. Even the British colonial government found his loyalty ambiguous. For this, Ho lost the chance to be appointed the first Chinese to the Executive Council in 1895 and had to retire from the Legislative Council in 1914 because he was not considered for re-appointment. When he died in 1914, at least Ho Kai could find consolation in the fact that the Alice Memorial and Affiliated Hospitals managed by the London Missionary Society had expanded to consist of four hospitals and the University of Hong Kong offering courses in Medicine, Engineering and Arts was attended by students from China and the Straits Settlements. As to China where his heart and soul lay, it had been most disappointing. Even with the Manchus gone and the establishment of the Republic, there was not a new strong China but power struggle and further decline. He could even have his heart broken had he lived long enough to see how China was subjected to greater erosion of sovereignty by Japan in 1915. So after all, tripartite loyalty did have more costs than rewards.

Lim Boon Keng (1895-1912)

The following section looks at Lim Boon Keng's tripartite loyalty as compared to and contrasted with Ho



Kai's in the period 1895-1912. All other materials irrelevant to this thematic study are discarded. But the overall situation in the Straits Settlements will be given due emphasis.

#### As loyal British subject

During this period 1895-1912 under review, Lim Boon Keng was appointed Legislative Councillor in 1895, 1898 and 1901. Unlike Ho Kai who served throughout this period for over two decades as Legislative Councillor, Lim served only for eight years. Moreover, here in Hong Kong, the Hansard of the Straits Settlements are not available. It is therefore not possible just to assess Lim's loyalty to the British Crown merely from his behaviour in the Legislative Council. Other manifestations of his pro-British mentality will also be considered in order to present a less unbalanced comparative study.

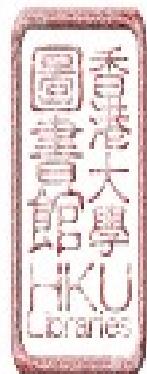
In June 1895, Lim Boon Keng was appointed the Chinese representative in the Legislative Council to replace Seah Liang Seah 余連城.<sup>70</sup> But while Ho Kai could claim that he represented an almost homogeneous Chinese community except for differences in wealth, Lim Boon Keng was representing a Chinese community much more heterogeneous along dialect lines, namely Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and Hakka and also between China-born and Straits-born, not to say differences in wealth and occupation. Therefore, there would not be a Chinese Legislative Councillor in the Straits



situation with such long term services as Ho Kai. Lim Boon Keng was a Singapore-born Hokkien.

Lim Boon Keng was appointed as Legislative Councillor at the high time of several years of struggle between the unofficial members of the Legislative Council and the Straits government over again the same issue as was in the case of Hong Kong - military contribution. In fact, "throughout the period 1891-4, the persistent representations made by this Colony for substantial relief owing to bad financial times were unheeded."<sup>71</sup> In 1891 and in 1895, meetings had been held in the Town Hall to protest against the levying of such exactions. The 1895 meeting was held on January 11, after "the resignation of the Singapore unofficial members of the Legislative Council, the Justices of Peace and the Chinese Advisory Board from their respective public offices."<sup>72</sup> Lim was not yet appointed to his office. But he was already very active in the Chinese community. At this meeting, he seconded the resolution moved - "all those present heartily approved of the action taken by the unofficial members in resigning from their posts."<sup>73</sup>

Like Ho Kai, Lim Boon Keng was also very appreciative that British administration of the colony had brought the Chinese stability and prosperity. Lim even demonstrated greater enthusiasm in openly glorifying the fair and square British rule which had provided opportunities for the Chinese to develop their talents.<sup>74</sup> After all, Lim Boon Keng himself had personally enjoyed such benefit. It was a



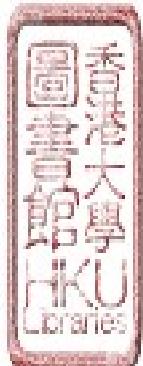
government scholarship that had enabled him to become professionally qualified as a Western medical doctor. Expressions of loyalty and gratitude were most frequent. One such occasion was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. On June 22, 1897, the Legislative Council held a special meeting to pass a loyal resolution to Queen Victoria. Lim Boon Keng assured the colonial government that the Chinese in the Straits Settlements would render their loyalty solely to the Queen and no other and certainly not to the Chinese government.

"....I can assure Your Excellency that to no other of Her Majesty's subjects will the Chinese of Singapore yield in loyalty and adhesion to Her Majesty...."<sup>75</sup>

Then at the Town Hall, another vote of gratitude and allegiance was expressed by Lim Boon Keng on behalf of the Chinese community.

"....For all these blessings we most humbly and heartily thank your Majesty, while assuring Your Majesty of our undying loyalty, and praying that Your Majesty may be long spared to reign over us in peace, happiness and glory."<sup>76</sup>

In fact, the Chinese community most energetically celebrated this Diamond Jubilee of their alien rulers. The Straits-born Chinese community initiated schemes that would materially symbolize their sentiments. Lim Boon Keng together with other Chinese leaders proposed to set up an institution for the aged and the infirm poor and a scholarship in the name of the Queen. But the government rejected both schemes. Besides, the Chinese also held a

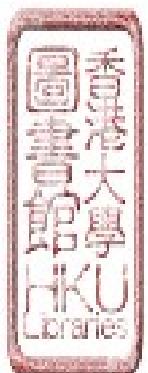


monster procession "which took an hour and a half to pass a given point and was two miles in length."<sup>77</sup>

On other similar occasions of celebration, Lim Boon Keng as the Chinese representative was most zealous to demonstrate his allegiance as well as that of the Chinese community. In April 1901, Lim supported in the Legislative Council a motion for \$20,000 fund for the welcoming of the Duke and Duchess of York.<sup>78</sup> In March 1902, Lim went to England to attend the Coronation ceremony of Edward VII.<sup>79</sup>

Lim Boon Keng's loyalty as a grateful British subject could not have been more vividly and ardently demonstrated than his efforts in helping to set up the Straits Chinese Magazine in 1897, the Straits Chinese British Association in 1900 and the Chinese Company of the Volunteer Force in 1901.

The Straits Chinese Magazine proclaimed itself "as a Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture."<sup>80</sup> It operated for ten years from 1897 to 1907. It was founded and edited by Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang, both Queen's Scholarship winners educated in Britain. This Magazine became an arena for the promotion of English to other Chinese. This was a formal expression of their gratitude to and appreciation of the British colonial rule in that they wished their fellow Chinese could share these benefits with them. It was also an effort to assimilate fellow Chinese into the language and culture of their colonial master and should therefore be regarded as the most positive step of showing their support of the British Crown. There was a special column in the Magazine which encouraged



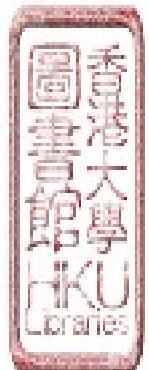
"Chinese readers to study the English classics for their educational, cultural and intellectual values."<sup>81</sup> And in 1900 with the formation of the Straits Chinese British Association, this Magazine was to serve as the voice of Chinese subjects loyal to the British Empire.

The Straits Chinese British Association was formed in August 1900 by Tan Jiak Kim<sup>82</sup>, Seah Liang Seah and again Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang. It was, in fact, a formal institutionalisation of Straits-born Chinese loyalty to the British. It was just the time when the British were celebrating victories in South Africa. The Straits Chinese enthusiasm on this occasion won the respect of the local English community.

"The Straits Times says 'We must legitimately applaud, in the name of the Empire, the zeal and enthusiasm of the Straits-born Chinese.'"<sup>83</sup>

The Association was even named as the "immediate sequel of all this celebration of British victories."<sup>84</sup> But in Mainland China, it was the heat of the anti-foreign Boxer activities. In fact, the Allied forces had just charged into Peking on August 14. Yet the Straits Chinese were openly and formally pledging allegiance to the British who headed the very forces invading the capital of their motherland.

The objectives of the Association were for the promotion of intelligent interest in affairs of the British Empire, encouragement and maintenance of loyalty as subjects of the Queen and promotion of welfare of the Chinese in the



colony. The English community was looking at this Chinese association openly professing loyalty to the British with appreciative hopes saying that the association was "capable of doing great things for the Chinese and the colony."<sup>85</sup> It was clearly an association formed by the very "upper crust" of the Straits-Chinese who were English-educated and Westernized in life. "The vast majority of the Straits Chinese were no better educated, affluent or oriented towards Britain than their immigrant China-born contemporaries."<sup>86</sup> These Chinese, including Lim Boon Keng were all conscious of their very paradoxical identity. They could never rid themselves of their Chinese ethnic origins and yet they had never been brought up or lived as Chinese but as English. The problem was that neither the English nor the Chinese community fully accepted them. They were a class apart created by the very colonial government to whom they were so eager to pledge their allegiance. But as different from the other leaders, Lim's identity problem was even more complicated.

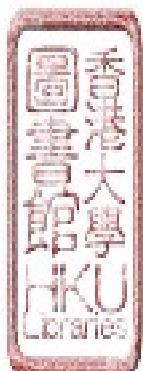
The Straits Chinese British Association at once became instrumental in expressions of pro-British loyalty. On occasions of royal celebrations and visits of the British, the Association was most articulate in voicing allegiance and in proposing schemes. In April 1901, when the Duke and Duchess of York visited the colony, the newly formed association "conceived and carried out the idea of erecting a Chinese pagoda surmounted by a figure of Britannia holding



a torch in her uplifted hand -- an emblem of the Chinese social fabric illuminated by the light of science and western progress."<sup>87</sup> Then about five years later in 1906, the visit of Prince Arthur of Connaught to Singapore en route to Japan provided these Straits-born Chinese with another opportunity to express their gratitude, loyalty and glorification. Lim Boon Keng as the President of the Association extended the following address to the gathered Chinese procession celebrating the occasion.

"We pray that Your Royal Highness will be pleased to convey an humble expression of loyalty to His Majesty the King-Emperor."<sup>88</sup>

One major effort of the Straits Chinese British Association was to support the claims of Straits-born Chinese in their wish to be enrolled as volunteers for local defence. In fact, Lim Boon Keng had personally tried to convince the colonial government of the practicability of such an organization since 1897.<sup>89</sup> He clearly saw it as an expression of the government trust in the Chinese community. In April 1901, the memorial of a number of Straits-born Chinese endorsed by the Straits Chinese British Association was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies through the colonial government. The Chinese were making use of the chance when the Commandant of the Singapore Volunteer Rifles announced that the government intended to increase the strength of the corps by the addition of two Eurasian companies.<sup>90</sup> A year later in November 1901, the Colonial Secretary's reply came stating that



"His Majesty's government has received with much gratification this evidence of the patriotic and loyal spirit which animates the Straits-born Chinese and hopes that it will be possible to utilize their services as volunteers."<sup>91</sup>

A month earlier before this formal approval was to come, Lim Boon Keng was already speaking enthusiastically in the Legislative Council on it, though he first expressed his frustration at the delay.

"....after a good many vain applications to government the appeal of the British subjects born in this Colony to become Volunteers had received recognition and reply."

He was confident that

"....the proposed formation of the Singapore Volunteer Infantry would be hailed with enthusiasm and gratitude by a very large number of the intelligent and progressive subjects of His Majesty who have had the good fortune to be born and brought up here.... they would prove worthy of the island and worthy of the education the British government had given them."<sup>92</sup>

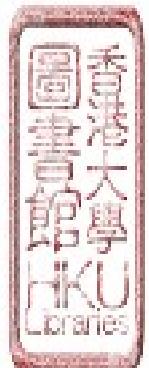
But to this warm vote of gratitude, the governor only replied that personally he would always hesitate to enter the field of prophesy.<sup>93</sup> Clearly no matter how Westernized and ardently loyal these Straits-born Chinese were, there would always be a 'gulf' between them and the colonial master. Immediately after the formal approval came through, 100 Straits Chinese British subjects were enrolled and sworn in as volunteers. This company was then known as No. 2 Company, Singapore Volunteer Infantry. Among those first enlisted was Lim Boon Keng who was eager to give the rest of the community an example. He was to serve until



1905. In March 1902, Lim as Sergeant and Song Ong Siang as Corporal were representatives of this Company among altogether 50 members selected from the whole of the Volunteer Corps in the Colony "to proceed to represent the Straits Settlements at the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII".<sup>94</sup> They also attended the dinner on June 18 of the Straits Settlements Association at the Hotel Metropole. This was "the only occasion in the century on which one batch of Straits Chinese were present at an annual dinner of the Straits Settlements Association in England," wrote Song Ong Siang.<sup>95</sup>

With the Legislative Council Proceedings unavailable here in Hong Kong, it is therefore difficult to establish how Lim Boon Keng discharged his duties as an Unofficial Legislative Councillor during his eight years of office. Here is some more meagre information.

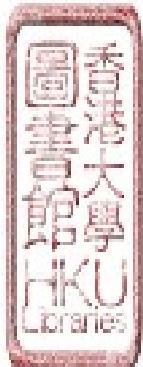
In September 1899, "a very sweeping clause"<sup>96</sup> was introduced to the Banishment Ordinance (1888). The amendment said that "a banishment order should be conclusive evidence for all purposes" and "that the person to be banished was not a British subject."<sup>97</sup> Lim Boon Keng led the opposition to the amendment on behalf of the Straits-born Chinese. He pointed out that "such an order might be made against a British subject who would be deprived of his constitutional right of appealing to the Supreme Court to determine his nationality."<sup>98</sup> In committee at the next council meeting, the governor accepted Lim's amendment in



the form of a promise that "nothing herein contained shall prevent the person against whom the banishment order has been issued from submitting fresh evidence to the governor in Council to prove his nationality: and if, after hearing such evidence, the governor in Council is satisfied that such person is a natural-born subject of the Queen, the governor in Council shall forthwith cancel the order of banishment."<sup>99</sup> So, Lim had won a case for his group of Chinese - Straits-born Chinese.

At the Legislative Council meeting on April 24, 1900, Lim Boon Keng supported his colleague, Walter Napier, in moving a resolution to revoke a government notification which cancelled two scholarships of \$200 each and instead offered only one Queen's Scholarship of \$250 for competition. Although the resolution was carried unanimously, the government still refused to make any pledge.<sup>100</sup> As a Queen's Scholarship recipient, he surely appreciated the benefits it brought and would like to share them with more young people.

In October 1901, Lim Boon Keng was again speaking on behalf of education over the Supply Bill. He said that "he hoped government would do something to help Raffles Institution in its endeavour to improve education in that institution."<sup>101</sup> He was worried that it would not be able to survive if the government did not help it. But to this, the governor advised Lim to approach the wealthy Chinese for donations so as to establish some school or give the government enough funds to make "Raffles Institution a



better institution than it had hitherto been."<sup>102</sup> So Lim was given almost the same task as Ho Kai was in raising funds for the university. The Chinese, as they always did, responded most zealously and generously. By January 1902, that is only about three months after Lim's plea in the Council, \$100,000 had been paid and \$280,000 had been promised by the Chinese.<sup>103</sup>

Judging from the little information available, the following conclusions can be drawn in regard to Lim Boon Keng's loyalty to the British Crown and his role as a Legislative Councillor. When compared to Ho Kai, Lim appeared much more appreciative of and grateful to British rule and that he felt lucky to be a British subject. All his deeds, speeches and writings fully demonstrated such sentiments. He also made extra efforts to cultivate similar feelings among his fellow Chinese towards the colonial regime. This enthusiastic manifestation of loyalty to the British rulers could have been caused by one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, it was the British colonial rule that had brought him all the privileges he was enjoying, namely, his education, career and social status. Therefore he felt obliged out of genuine gratitude or mere practical-mindedness or both to express his loyalty to his benefactor and sincerely wished that more Chinese would be brought under the patronage of the British rulers. Secondly, Lim Boon Keng was moving around in Singapore - a society different from Ho Kai's.



The Chinese population were not the only British colonial subjects. There were also Malays and Indians. Thus, there was a need to convince the British of Chinese loyalty so as to compete for favour from the administrators. Moreover, increasing courtship of rich Chinese community leaders by Ch'ing government officials, Chinese reformist and revolutionary leaders much more so in Singapore than in Hong Kong had to a great extent alarmed the British into thinking that the Chinese subjects were shifting their allegiance, wealth and expertise to the Mainland. Lim Boon Keng in his office as the Legislative Councillor or as the President of the Straits Chinese British Association, that is, as the spokesman of the Chinese, found it his duty to reassure the British that the Chinese community would always remain the most loyal subjects of the British Empire and that whatever feelings the Chinese might have towards China, their country of origin, would remain cultural and emotional. As to Lim Boon Keng himself, he was not unaware that his promotion of Confucianism among his fellow Chinese was creating British discomforts towards himself, so he found it extremely necessary to demonstrate by all means his loyalty and support of the British and that whatever involvement he was engaged in would never allay his strong dedication to the colonial regime.

Like Ho Kai, Lim Boon Keng was also fluent in his English. In fact, Lim's "command of English was better than his predecessors on the legislative council and argued more outspokenly".<sup>104</sup> But he suffered more or less the



same fate "with little success against certain government measures."<sup>105</sup> Lim echoed the same complaint that unofficial voices in the Council were very often discarded. Lim also insisted, as Ho Kai did, that education especially higher education should be subsidized to maintain standards, that the colonial military contribution should be fairly extracted and that banishment order should take into consideration the local communities. Had the Legislative Council Proceedings been available, more parallels could have been drawn.

#### As promoter of local Chinese welfare

Unlike Ho Kai, Lim Boon Keng's promotion of local Chinese welfare was much more diversified in motivations and engagements. While Ho was chiefly engaged in promoting Western medicine among the local community and in defending Chinese interests in the Legislative Council, Lim Boon Keng had dedicated himself to much heavier commitments. Geographically, his efforts were also not merely limited to Singapore but beyond.

As already emphasised, Lim Boon Keng was in a very heterogeneous Chinese society. It was divided along dialect, wealth, religion, place of origin and whether Straits-born. Even within this group of Straits-born Chinese to which Lim Boon Keng belonged, there was no "entirely homogeneous culture".<sup>106</sup> There were again the same divisions. But basically the Straits-born Chinese was a group of local born Western-educated and sometimes



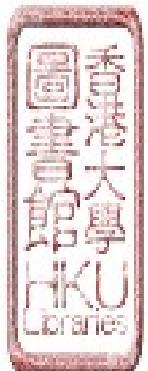
Anglicized Chinese. It had come into being because of "the existence of a colonial environment which provided status, employment, security, prosperity and peace."<sup>107</sup> In a word, they were closer to the British administration than to their Chinese origins. Lim Boon Keng saw his own group as suffering from an identity crisis. They were ignorant of the Chinese culture and thus were detached from their own roots. Yet, they were not fully accepted by the Westerners no matter how assimilated they were. Thus, he tried to cultivate among his own group a 'syncretic' nature of identity<sup>108</sup>, smooth away the differences within the group itself and eradicate their vices. The Straits Chinese Magazine founded in 1897 was to serve as the arena of Straits-born Chinese culture and the Straits Chinese British Association in 1900 was to unify the group. It is clear that Lim Boon Keng took this identity problem seriously and tried hard to solve it for himself and his own group. Ho Kai did not appear to suffer from this same problem. He seemed perfectly at ease with his own identity of being the spokesman of the Chinese and moving around the Westerners whom he befriended and co-operated with in his public and private engagements.

Lim's efforts to establish an identity for the Straits-born Chinese society was at the same time accompanied by a drive to unite the whole Chinese society. He believed that "language was an important element of Chinese identity and a means to Chinese unity."<sup>109</sup> Mandarin was to do this job.



It was the very language Lim Boon Keng was spoken to by a foreigner in Britain and to which he could not reply. Lim offered the first Mandarin class to Straits-born Chinese in 1898. This five years' lapse after Lim's return from Britain in 1893 could be easily explained. Though his Chinese consciousness was aroused in Britain, it took contacts with his own society in Singapore to make him realise that his ignorance of the Chinese language and culture was not exceptional but a norm. Moreover, coming into acquaintance with Huang Nai-shang<sup>110</sup>, a Chinese scholar and reformer and marrying Huang's daughter, Tuan Chiung 論璇 gave Lim added spur to his quest for the Chinese language and culture. The marriage with Huang Tuan Chiung took place in 1896. "She was a refined, enlightened and well-educated gentle-woman. The experiences which she had gained through her visit to England and America, prior to her marriage, enabled her to take a sympathetic and active interest in all the reform movements of this period, in which her husband played the chief role."<sup>111</sup> In fact, during her visits to the United States, she met Li Hung-chang who invited her to represent China and give talks at the American Congress of Representative Women.<sup>112</sup>

After first offering Mandarin classes to a limited number of Chinese at his own house in 1898, Lim extended the facilities to a wider circle by holding bigger classes at the Straits Chinese Recreation Club. Later when the Ch'ing Consul endorsed his movement, classes were also held at the Consulate. "This campaign to popularize Mandarin



contributed directly to the break down of the dialect barriers in education, because the use of Mandarin as the medium of instruction made possible the enrolment of children of different dialect groups."<sup>113</sup> But more importantly, he was striving to break down the deep-rooted prejudice which had always existed among the different dialect groups and thus contributed to forging a more harmonious Chinese society. But such effect was not instant. In 1906, eight years after the first Mandarin class started, Lim was still working hard. "He convened a meeting of clan leaders and exhorted them to introduce Mandarin as a subject in the temple schools."<sup>114</sup> Three more years were to pass for Lim to witness some concrete success of his efforts. In August 1909, the Fukien Tao Nan School and the Cantonese Yang Cheng School in Singapore dropped the requirement "children from our group" in enrolment circulars. In 1910, the Hakka Ch'i Fa and the Cantonese Bacon Girl School also did the same.<sup>115</sup>

Promoting Mandarin as the common Chinese language was only one aspect of his many-faceted reform movement to correct the long-time problems of the Straits Chinese society. It should be emphasised that Lim's reform movement in the Straits Settlements was part and parcel of that post-1895 vast reform current of China. If K'ang Yu-wei's Confucian Revival Movement provided Lim the means and the solutions, it was the social problems and vices Lim saw in his own Chinese society in Singapore that provided the



stimulus. He was certainly "an enthusiast in all moral, social and educational reforms among the Chinese in the Colony."<sup>116</sup> First of all, he abhorred the wretched state of education and then the degree and extent of various other social vices. He was determined to rectify the situation.

Education was Lim Boon Keng's chief concern. He wrote extensively and gave many speeches on his view points of education. The Straits Chinese Magazine served as his mouthpiece.<sup>117</sup> Basically, he believed that education delivered man from his weaknesses and perfected him. He lamented that education was neglected by both the Straits government and Chinese society. The Chinese took the education of their children most lightly. Even if they did send their children to school, it would be to English classes because a knowledge of English meant greater chances of employment and more income. In these English classes, there was never any attention given to the cultivation of moral virtues. As to the state of Chinese education, it was even more pathetic. Classes run by the government were all closed down by 1894 , owing to poor attendance. Other classes sponsored by the rich Chinese philanthropists were poorly staffed and taught in dialects. Lim Boon Keng was of the opinion that the whole educational system had to be reformed in its orientation, curricula and organization. Mandarin should be the one and only medium of Chinese instruction. The objectives of education were for both academic as well as moral enlightenment. Curricula should be modernized to include new subjects and should be bi-



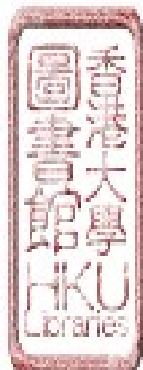
lingual that is, English and Mandarin. Women's education should also be promoted for the benefit of not just the females but the enrichment of the whole society.

Efforts to establish a school for girls went ahead. In April 1899, a provisional committee was set up. The circular inviting financial aid stated that "the object of the school is 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." \$6,000 were raised. Half of this came from Khoo Seok Wan 邱叔國.<sup>118</sup> Lim was among the nine-men committee headed by the Singapore Chinese Consul who was President. The curricula included Romanized Malay, Chinese, English, Arithmetic, Geography, Music and Sewing. In June 1899, the school was opened. There were only seven girls on the register but in two months' time, thirty girls were attending.<sup>119</sup> Mrs. Lim Boon Keng gave lessons in Chinese two times a week. The school soon ran into financial difficulties because subscriptions came slow. The older and more conservative Chinese refused to support the cause. Writing in 1920, Song Ong Siang proudly remarks, "It is worthy of note.... Dr. Lim Boon Keng (President), Mr. Song Ong Siang (Vice President).... have for twenty years worked incessantly in the interests of the school."<sup>120</sup>



Lim Boon Keng also set up the Chinese Philomathic Society to encourage both English and Chinese literary studies. He utilized the Chinese press to supplement the Straits Chinese Magazine as his arena in the promotion of his various reform ideas. Here Lim worked closely with Khoo Seok-wan who was the proprietor of the Thien Nan Shin Pao 天南新報 set up in 1898. Lim was the adviser on European and foreign affairs. The next year, Lim took over Sing Pao and renamed it Jit Shin Pau 日新報. That became Lim's Chinese mouthpiece. "Not only could he publish his translations of European scientific and education treatises and his own original articles, but he could also publicize the activities of the Chinese Philomathic Society."<sup>121</sup>

Education was a long-term solution to reforming the Straits Chinese society, Lim Boon Keng aimed to see more immediate successes. He toured and gave speeches to campaign for his reform ideas. He was of the opinion that obsolete traditional practices or beliefs should be abolished. He was against such customs as the keeping of the queue or the towchang for men,<sup>122</sup> foot-binding for women and elaborate funeral, marriage and ancestor-worship rituals. Of course, he was also strongly against opium-smoking. He believed that life of the Straits Chinese should no longer conform to the traditional Chinese practices. They should live much more simply by abolishing all unnecessary customs.



The most controversial of Lim's activities was his 1898 queue-cutting campaign. Lim was criticized as trying to totally Westernize the Straits Chinese by shedding them of all their Chinese identity. The subject became so bitter that two placards of scandalous nature were found posted near Lim's residence. Later in that year, when Lim's term of office was about to expire, his supporters and opponents "crossed swords in the columns of the daily papers as to whether the Governor should renominate him for a fresh term of three years."<sup>123</sup> After all, the British administration would only appoint those Chinese who could command co-operation from their own people. However, in the end, Lim was re-appointed.

Another of Lim's efforts in reforming the Chinese society was his anti-opium campaign in the 1900s. In this activity, he teamed up with another doctor, Yin Suat Chuan 耶穌村, a China-born but American, Canadian and British-educated medical doctor. Yin joined Lim in the practice of his profession. Again in this campaign, Lim did not receive too enthusiastic a support from his fellow Chinese because many of them had vested interests in opium money.

In 1899, Lim Boon Keng who was a Christian became converted to Confucianism as re-interpreted by K'ang Yu-wei. Lim was a typical product of the West, yet he embraced China's most traditional beliefs - Confucianism. Since then, Lim was to devote about five years to spreading Confucianism among not only the Chinese in Singapore but throughout Malaya. This was the Confucian Revival



Movement. But because the movement was heavily-related to Lim's China-orientation, detailed discussion on the movement would be done in the following section. Here, briefly explained is how Lim attempted to utilize Confucianism to reform the Straits Chinese society.

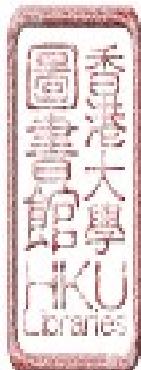
Lim Boon Keng wrote very extensively on Confucianism in all his arenas, Straits Chinese Magazine, Jit Shin Pau and Thien Nam Shin Pao but especially in English in the Straits Chinese Magazine<sup>124</sup> perhaps with an aim to convince those Westernized Chinese to reconsider their beliefs. Briefly, Lim believed that Confucianism should be the very motivating force behind all reforms.<sup>125</sup> It should be cultivated as a code of moral ethics for good behaviour in schools, at home and in society. Children should be so brought up from an early age. He also utilized Confucian teaching to attack such extravagant practices as ancestor worship, marriage and funeral. For all these moral reasons as well as to support K'ang Yu-wei, Lim Boon Keng was to push ahead steadfastly with his Confucian Revival Movement.

As to Lim Boon Keng's other less spectacular though not less significant activities in the promotion of local Chinese welfare would be the role he played in settling disputes and in promoting rubber economy among Chinese. In November 1906, a serious riot broke out between the Hokkiens and Teochews which lasted four days. Lim was among the five-man conference held at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Besides Lim, the other Chinese present was Tan Jiak Kim,



apparently him and Tan were to serve as spokesmen of the two contending dialect groups. Even soldiers were called for to settle the dispute. Finally it ended after 300 rioters were arrested. As to rubber plantation, Lim was the first Chinese who believed in its feasibility and profitability in the Malay Peninsula. The first big plantation at Malacca owned by Tan Ki Hien 陳齊賢 was set up with Lim's encouragement.<sup>126</sup> And rubber was to bring great wealth to the Singapore Chinese community.

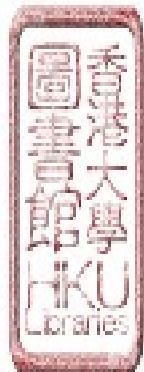
So whether in his capacity as a Legislative Councillor or not, Lim Boon Keng had dedicated much of his attention to his fellow Chinese community in the Straits Settlements. Although his plans did not always carry off with great achievements, he had at least stirred up attentions to the problems and thus gave concerned leaders of the later generations some objectives to work for. Such were his efforts in the promotion of Mandarin, education, and social reforms such as anti-smoking and anti-extravagant ritual campaigns. He had always envisaged a unified, upright and simple Chinese society in Singapore. Thanks to his and other Chinese of equal ambitions, the Chinese community in Singapore is more or less so. And in trying to achieve his targets, Lim had along the way jeopardized his own status and even the colonial government's trust in him such as in considering his re-appointment to the Legislative Council in 1898. While cultivating unity and a sense of identity among his fellow Chinese, Lim was cautious to show that his loyalty to the British was always strong as ever. It was



at the heat of the Confucian Revival Movement at the turn of the century that he helped set up the very pro-British Straits Chinese British Association. In all his various activities, Lim Boon Keng was teamed up with various friends, the promotion of education largely with Song Ong Siang and the Confucian Revival Movement with Khoo Seok-wan. That is to say, Lim was unique as a man of his background, and status to be so engaged in various and even contradictory causes for his community.

#### As nationalist overseas Chinese

Before 1895, Lim Boon Keng was not yet aware of the deep-rooted weaknesses of his home country, China. It took China's 1895 defeat, the humiliating treaty terms, the subsequent scramble of the foreign powers in China together with the reactions of some Chinese at home and abroad in demanding reforms and in instigating revolutions to expose the seriousness of situations to him. Only then did he begin to focus his attentions on China. This was not to mean that Lim was not patriotic or nationalist before 1895. With his acute consciousness as a Chinese and his newly-acquired interest in the Chinese language and culture, he could not be indifferent to China's demise. But the generally optimistic illusion in the Manchu government among Straits Chinese must have blinded his sensitivity. Once awakened, he exerted tremendous energy for the cause - a reformed motherland. Lim's name was largely associated with the Confucian Revival Movements, his support of K'ang Yu-wei



and his vague relationship with Sun Yat-sen. For neatness of discussion, no factual details are here given. Only the bare minimum necessary for the discussion is included. The focus is on Lim's loyalty problem and those contradictions and compromises that arose. Lim's attitude and solutions to post-1900 China will also be considered.

The name "Lim Boon Keng" was almost identical with the Straits Confucian Revival Movement. There is this credit attributed to him. "Mainly through his lectures delivered between 1894 and 1910, there has been a Confucian revival movement throughout Malaya, with its reflex action upon China herself."<sup>127</sup> But this is over-simplification of a movement very complicated both in motivation and in development. Lim Boon Keng's involvement was not consistant throughout the whole course of the movement.

The Confucian Revival Movement in Singapore and Malaya was sparked off by the movement in Mainland China at a time when overseas Chinese consciousness and sentiments had already been strongly aroused and sustained by both Ch'ing and local Chinese efforts. Of course, the Confucian Revival Movement had heavy political overtures. It could be interpreted as an effort of overseas Chinese to add muscle to K'ang Yu-wei's demands for institutional reforms. And even after K'ang was already ousted, the movement could still be explained as a force to restore the reform-minded Emperor Kuang-hsu and K'ang. Moreover, The Thien Nan Shin Pao of which Lim was the political adviser and the Jit Shin

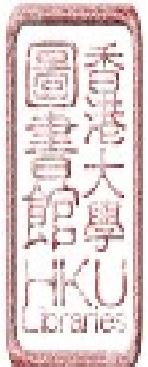


Pau of which he was the proprietor both strongly attacked the Ch'ing government along lines of K'ang's criticisms. To reach the illiterate mass, Lim toured to give talks. In October 1899, he was in Kuala Lumpur preaching Confucianism. And when K'ang Yu-wei was in Singapore upon the invitation and hospitality of Lim and Khoo Seok-wan in 1900, the political connotation of the movement was most vividly demonstrated to all, including the Ch'ing and British governments. A visiting Ch'ing degree-holder announced that any supporters of the movement would be implicated as a supporter of the escaped K'ang Yu-wei. In fact around 1901, the Consul-General in Singapore was instructed to investigate both Khoo and Lim. Khoo had to pay large sums of money to buy an honourary Ch'ing official title to show his allegiance to Ch'ing so as to have his kinsmen in the home village freed from confinement. As to Lim whose involvement was less heavy than Khoo's, he was let off lightly.<sup>128</sup> At once, Lim made compromises and shed the movement of all political motives. After all, leading a pro-China political movement while he was still Legislative Councillor not only aroused British suspicion but also that of his fellow Chinese who were generally apathetic to all politics, be they Chinese or colonial. That ended the first phase of the largely politically-oriented Confucian Revival Movement (1899-1900).

Then a socially and culturally laden Confucian Revival Movement was to begin. The objective was no longer to support any political intentions or programmes in China but

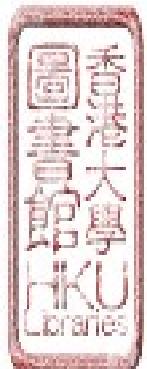


to promote a Confucianized way of life among the Chinese. This immediately became the theme of the articles published in the reformist press, namely, Straits Chinese Magazine, Thien Nan Shin Pao and Jit Shin Pau. The Ch'ing government was no longer under attack. The movement then became a combination of cultural, religious and social ferment. This allayed the fears and suspicion of all parties concerned, the Chinese community, the colonial administration and the Ch'ing government. Lim became more active than before for two more years (1901-1902). On October 9, 1901, anniversary of Confucius' birthday, Lim Boon Keng and some other leaders held a preliminary meeting attended by a few hundred representatives of various dialect groups including many rich merchants. The Ch'ing Consul-General was also present to show official endorsement. The purpose of the meeting was to appeal to the public for funds to build Confucian temples. Lim called for two more meetings at the Thong Chai Hospital in February and March 1902 to organize a committee for the co-ordination of all activities. "A committee of 195 members was set up, a public notice appealing to all Chinese was published; and regulations for establishing Confucian temples and modern schools were issued.<sup>129</sup> Various tactics were utilized for fund-raising. Chinese aspirations to fame were fully manipulated. By the middle of 1902, more than S\$200,000 had been raised.<sup>130</sup> But almost suddenly the whole enthusiasm for the movement cooled off only to resurge again



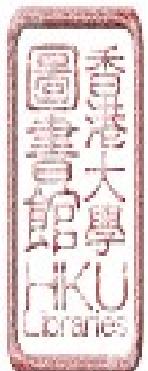
in 1908 but by then it had become almost completely a Ch'ing official operation. In mid-1902, Lim Boon Keng left for London to attend the coronation of King Edward the Seventh. This seemed to signify a very sarcastic conclusion to the one movement he had put his heart and soul to. But this writer is of the opinion that 1902 only ended Lim Boon Keng's active role in the movement. His enthusiasm for Confucianism did not die with his journey to London. One clear evidence is that Lim continued writing articles on Confucianism in the period 1904 to 1907. He might have quitted fund-raising, committee work and tour talks, but his belief in Confucianism as the unifying force of all Chinese did not subside. It only grew stronger with time.

Lim's initial objective in promoting the Confucian Revival Movement among overseas Chines was to back up K'ang Yu-wei's institutional reform efforts. This had fallen flat. Then whether out of genuine change of attitude or as a compromise to situations, he loaded the movement with heavy social, cultural and religious implications and worked to spread it throughout the Straits Settlements. If he did not personally succeed to get a temple erected for Confucius, he had at least provided the otherwise divided Chinese community with a cause to co-operate and thus helped to build up a more unified and nationalist Chinese community. Lim's involvement in the early leadership role of the movement was most outstanding for there was no other



person of his Westernized and non-merchant background in the leadership group.<sup>131</sup>

As to Lim Boon Keng's attitude to the Ch'ing government, it was rather ambivalent. He might have appeared anti-Manchu. But he was not always so. He was no different from his other fellow Chinese. He preferred gradual changes to revolutions. In fact, he befriended Ch'ing officials. But he also wrote to criticize the corrupt practices of the Manchu government in his newspapers so as to endorse K'uang's reforms. And when the 1898 Reform Movement was crushed by the Empress Dowager with the Emperor dethroned, Lim solicited signatures to urge for the Emperor's restoration. He even eulogized the crushed reform movement with a poem "A Voice Heard in Canton." But when the Manchu regime was showing signs of optimism in the post-1900 period, Lim acted very pro-Ch'ing such as going to Peking in 1903 to pledge loyalty to the Regent, Prince Chun. In 1907, he accompanied Yang Shih-ch'i, a vice president of the newly established Board of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, in a tour of the South Seas, including much of Malaya and Java to solicit overseas Chinese investment in China's modernization programmes. Chinese youth were also recruited to the Mainland for the nationalist cause. In 1911 when the anti-Ch'ing revolution was going on, Lim was representative of China at an international medical conference. Yet the moment when Ch'ing abdicated and the Provisional Republican Government was set up, he acted as Sun Yat-sen's confidential secretary and medical officer.



He also helped draft the proclamation of the infant Chinese Republic to the foreign powers.

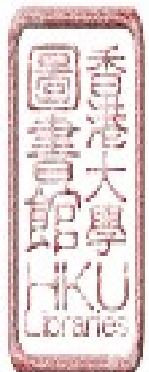
Lim Boon Keng's association with Sun Yat-sen started in 1900. Sun was in Singapore on July 9, 1900 to save his Japanese friends Miyazaki and Kiyofuji who had been sent there to arrange talks with K'ang Yu-wei. Instead K'ang had them arrested. It was with the help of Lim that Sun's friends were released. The meeting with Sun had impressed both Lim Boon Keng and his father-in-law, Huang Nai-sheng. Although Lim was never a member of Sun's Hsing Chung Hui or the later Tung Meng Hui, his sympathies for the revolutionary cause was there.

Therefore, Lim Boon Keng was again showing the same kind of inconsistency as Ho Kai in his pro-China allegiance. Lim had supported K'ang Yu-wei, deserted him, rescued Sun Yat-sen in distress and supported Manchu courtship of overseas Chinese wealth and talents. But in fact though tactics changed, his objective never flickered - a reformed China able to stand on her own feet. After all, it was a period of uncertainty and probability. Thus only in his earliest involvement with the China affair, that is, in 1898 and 1899 was he steadfastly holding onto his candidate, K'ang Yu-wei. Since then, he had matured and learned to be practical by keeping all doors open. Perhaps, it is not too crude to say that he would pledge his allegiance to whatever form of government capable of ruling China efficiently.



Having earlier shown that in the immediate post-Boxer year Ho Kai's solution for the China case was foreign imposition of reforms on China, it is interesting to see how Lim Boon Keng reacted to the same conspicuous Manchu impotency and national humiliations. The coincidence that both wrote at about the same time to express their reactions makes the comparison easier. In 1901, Lim Boon Keng's articles published in Singapore Free Press were collected, edited<sup>132</sup> and published as Chinese Crisis from Within. What will be considered here is Lim's attitude towards the foreign powers and the Manchu court, the solutions he offered and where his loyalty lay.

The editor of Chinese Crisis from Within, Reith, G.M., remarked that the book was "a powerful indictment of Manchu Court".<sup>133</sup> He should have added "as well as of the foreign imperialist powers". While Ho Kai felt sorry that the Manchus had tolerated and boosted the Boxer anti-foreign activities, Lim Boon Keng analysed painstakingly that such anti-foreign emotions and activities were justified. His argument with lavish examples and parallels drawn from the West was clear. His tone was loaded with dignified anger. He explained that the Chinese were only trying to address their commercial, communal and religious grievances which had been caused by the "utter disregard by the framers of treaties for the interests of the natives - the real possessors of the Chinese Empire."<sup>134</sup> Lim even coined this threat of the West to the Chinese as "White Peril" as



against the foreigners calling the Chinese as "Yellow Peril".

"....The dangers which the White Man's presence involve are more terrible than those of the Yellow Peril. The Chinese have competed with the Christian nations with their industry, their inborn frugality, their dogged perseverance and their simple habits and for these really great virtues, begotten of the res angustal domi, the unfortunate Chinese have been made the objects of calumny and ridicule, and have been shut out from places where they could seriously compete with white laborers. On the other hand, the Christian nations force upon the unwilling Chinese the acceptance of the Christian missionary and his promising impudence (from the native view point), impress upon the nation an unfair tariff, compel the Imperial government to protect foreign enterprise to the detriment of native commerce, and support the tyrannous Manchus against the Chinese, who are struggling to free themselves from the intolerable yoke already borne so long by them. The Chinese demand their right to have their grievances redressed by the Government, and failing to obtain a hearing, they will, in accordance with the precepts of the sages, rise against the powers that be."<sup>135</sup>

Thus Lim Boon Keng had stated most clearly, bluntly and directly China's half-a-decade long grievances. To him, the foreigners who had suffered at the hands of the anti-foreign rebels had themselves, in fact, asked for and invited those humiliations and disasters.

Several times Lim referred cynically to the fact that while claiming themselves as Christian nations, these foreign powers had never acted with a Christian spirit.



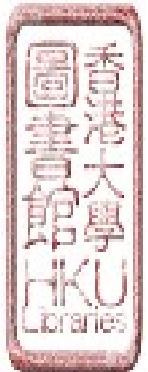
"....The Chinese have not yet seen the superior sense of justice claimed by missionaries for all Christian nations...."<sup>136</sup>

So what Ho Kai had subtly implied, Lim had put it frankly that China was justified in her anti-foreign attitude. The Westerners were themselves to blame. This is the difference between Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng in their post-1900 attitude to the Western Powers.

Lim Boon Keng shared Ho Kai and Sun Yat-sen's insistence that Manchus were not Chinese. Lim argued that the Boxer episode was a Manchu-instigated conspiracy.

"The extensive anti-foreign propagandism in North China is not a sudden momentary outbreak of a band of fanatics, but the outcome of a deliberate scheme elaborated by the reactionary Manchus for the expulsion of foreigners and the vindication of the prowess of the Tsing dynasty."<sup>137</sup>

As to the Chinese administration, Lim, likewise, criticized the inadequacy of reforms so far adopted, saying that the reformers were but trying "to engraft the new branches of learning on the decayed trunk of the old."<sup>138</sup> He made an evaluation of Chinese reformers, sharing Ho Kai's condemnation of Chang Chi-tung even complimenting Ho Kai for his having "completely shown up the Hyde and Jekyll"<sup>139</sup> of Chang's "Exhortation to study". In fact Lim's evaluation of current Chinese reformers was to extol K'ang Yu-wei as Voltaire of China and Kang's Shi Wu Pao as the immortal Encyclopedie.<sup>140</sup> This was one difference between Ho and Lim. While Lim elevated K'ang, Ho considered him disqualified to talk of Western institutions. But on the



whole, Ho and Lim were not too far away from their assessment of Manchu administrative measures including the disgust over "the unreasonable suspicion which the officials of the Tsungli Yamen have always entertained against those Chinese who have become friendly to foreigners and who have acquired a knowledge of some foreign tongue,"<sup>141</sup> that is, men like Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng.

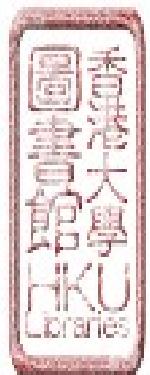
But the striking similarity lies in Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng extending the same plea to the foreign powers for intervention in China's politics and in entrusting the leadership role to Britain.

"It will be the obvious duty of the Allies to procure for the country such an administration as will save it from further anti-foreign troubles."<sup>142</sup>

"....Pekin ought to be well garrisoned with foreign troops until a settled government has been inaugurated. If the foreign powers are sincere in maintaining the integrity of the old Empire, now is their chance of enforcing upon the rulers a new policy which, while giving full privileges to foreigners, does not overlook the right of the sons of the soil."<sup>143</sup>

So like Ho Kai, Lim entertained the wishful thinking that these foreign powers would act as "honest brokers" when they administered China. In the concluding paragraph, Lim wrote emphatically,

"We must now conclude, the only further remark to be made is that the Allies have at present a rare opportunity of setting a firm basis the relation between foreigners and Chinese. If independence is to be granted to the Chinese Empire, then let one Power be deputed to prop it up on sound principles. Preferably,



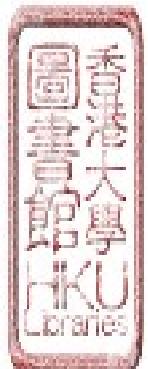
England should be that Power, eligible alike on account of her vast experience and on account of the undisputed success of her policy in Egypt. Otherwise let the Allies fight the Manchus to the bitter end. Let them remove the dynasty and proclaim a new government by the people themselves, after consultation with the friendly viceroys, the literati and the reformers.... and with the aid of foreign powers, a constitutional oligarchy elected by the officials and the literati....<sup>144</sup>

At the time when China, the mother country, was humiliated with foreign occupation, both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were not in uproar but instead calling this a golden opportunity, were pleading for more foreign intervention so as to solve China's problem once and all. They both believed that China was incapable of reforming herself without foreign imposition or assistance. They were, in fact, recommending Western medication and operations by Western surgeons for this sick Chinaman with fees to be charged on Western terms. There can be no clearer explanation for this great confidence in the West but that both Ho and Lim had been brought up under these and no other ideologies or institutions.

#### Intense tripartite involvement of Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng in perspective

The chapter has considered Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng's tripartite role-playing during those turbulent years of 1895 to 1912. Here is a brief summary.

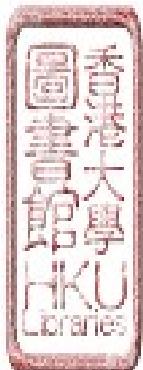
As a loyal British subject, Ho Kai served the Crown by faithfully bringing the government closer to the Chinese



population in his capacity as the Chinese spokesman in the Legislative Council. He was generally only critical of the government over expenditure issues and those policies he considered as violating the sacredness of the Chinese ways of life. When conflicts arose between interests of the Crown and those of the Chinese, he made compromises depending on the issues involved but generally he allowed interests of the whole colony to come first. Outside the Legislative Council, Ho Kai dedicated much of his time, energy and money to promoting Western medicine among his fellow Chinese. In fact, he had been thus engaged almost immediately after his return to Hong Kong from England in 1882. So during this period while Ho was anxiously seeking various means to solve the problems of China's demise, his attentions to his public duties were not at all lessened. As to his concern for China, it also surfaced very early starting from his review of Tseng Chi-tse's article in 1887. Since then, he was in a permanent and persistent quest for ways to have his mother country reformed. He tried writing reform essays hoping to have his voice heard. Although he was writing in English and proposing Western prescriptions, he showed a genuine understanding of China's problems. He also took other active measures in the years after 1895 when China's final collapse seemed imminent. He supported Sun Yat-sen's very first uprising in 1895. For that, Ho Kai had always been branded as a revolutionary. But in fact he was not because he did not support Sun for his republican

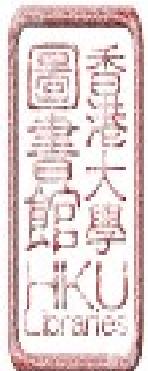


ideas. Not only because at such an early stage, Sun had not yet formulated those ideas but because to Ho Kai, Sun's coup was but a means for Ho himself to impose his reform ideas which were not revolutionary at all. He even worked for Ch'ing government for two months. With the outbreak of the Boxers and the Allied occupation of Peking in 1900, Ho Kai was feeling so desperate that he resorted to his final option - throwing China's fate into the hands of the foreigners. He succeeded to persuade the Governor of Hong Kong to go into conspiracy with him for an independent South China movement. He wrote to plead for foreign imposition and domination of the Chinese government. Then when all had failed, Ho Kai quitted to see whether the Manchu reforms announced after 1901 would really save China. In all these involvements, Ho Kai seemed to be moving very freely from one means to another. In a word, Ho Kai had a rather pathetic tripartite role-playing. Although he was bidden a very honoured farewell in 1914, it was in fact a forced retirement. He had been pleading for foreign assistance to China's problems but this never came. The Manchus were not abandoned by the foreigners in 1900 and instead were bolstered up. Of course, he could congratulate himself when he saw that the Chinese youth, Sun Yat-sen, whom he had once inspired and supported became the President of the Chinese Republic but again Sun failed to deliver China in 1912 and had to yield to Yuan Shih-k'ai. The embodiments of his life-long career would be the Alice Ho Miu Ling Hospital and the University of Hong Kong. At least these



two institutions did not fail him.

As to Lim Boon Keng, who was exercising his tripartite role-playing in a more heterogeneous society, the nature of his loyalty complex was more complicated. Lim suffered from an identity problem not found in Ho Kai. He also appeared to be very conscious of his contradictory allegiances and tried to harmonize them. While he was attempting to bring the Western culture and civilization closer to the Straits Chinese, he was also advocating a Confucian Revival Movement. And when his dedication to the promotion of a Chinese identity among his fellow Chinese was getting so conspicuous and extensive, he remedied the situation by openly pledging and institutionalising his loyalty to the British through the formation of Straits Chinese British Association. While Ho Kai generally advocated laissez-faire in regard to the life of local Chinese population, Lim Boon Keng was trying to reform it altogether. As to concern over China, Lim Boon Keng was generally branded as reformist because of his connection with K'ang Yu-wei. But in the post-Boxer period, he offered the same solution as Ho Kai to China's demise - foreign domination of China. Lim had a much involved tripartite role-playing than Ho Kai because he was more conscious of his paradoxical identity and because he was functioning in a more complicated society. Besides, Lim started his various activities after 1895, that is, he was thrown into the vortex of actions without too much preparation and

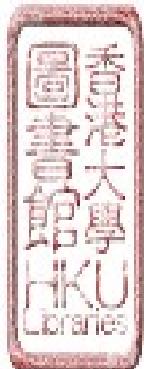


experience. Besides, Lim lived a much longer life, dying at the great age of 88. He was both blessed and cursed in the sense that he could witness how his life-long concerns such as the Chinese society in Singapore, the British Empire and China developed or degenerated before his very eyes.



NOTES

1. Hansard, August 29, 1901, p. 46.
2. Hansard, April 30, 1908, p. 38.
3. Hansard, May 28, 1908, p. 50.
4. Hansard, June 17, 1909, p. 47.
5. Hansard, August 24, 1911, p. 171.
6. Hansard, June 1, 1911, p. 106.
7. Ibid.
8. Hansard, January 25, 1898, pp. 24-25.
9. Hansard, September 17, 1903, p. 56.
10. Hansard, March 7, 1912, p. 18.
11. Hansard, February 26, 1914, p. 29.
12. "Sung Wong Toi" were the words inscribed on a rock by an Emperor of the Sung Dynasty before he threw himself into the water and killed himself to avoid his captors.
13. Hansard, August 15, 1898, p. 49.
14. Hansard, November 9, 1911, p. 218.
15. Ibid., p. 219.
16. Hansard, December 21, 1899, p. 40.
17. Hansard, October 19, 1907, p. 59.
18. Hansard, December 10, 1908, p. 156.
19. Hansard, November 8, 1897, pp. 16-17.
20. Hansard, April 19, 1904, p. 18.
21. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 200.
22. Hansard, May 28, 1900, pp. 79-80.
23. Hansard, December 19, 1908, p. 157.
24. Hansard, July 29, 1901, p. 40.
25. Hansard, June 23, 1902, p. 28.



26. Ibid.,
27. Ibid.
28. Hansard, December 3, 1896, p. 2.
29. C.O. 129 412/280, July 31, 1914.

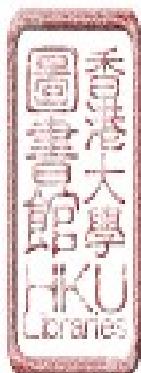
This information has not been utilized by either Chiu, L.Y. or Choa, G.H., and has been brought to this writer's attention by Dr. Elizabeth Sinn of History Department, University of Hong Kong.

30. Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital 1887-1967, p. 10.
31. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 66.
32. Breakdown of Chinese donations:

Chinese Government	\$ 13,608
Liang-kuang Government	\$200,000
Weichow Residents	\$ 92,764
Hongkong Chinese	\$198,000
Canton Chinese	\$ 13,971
Saigon Chinese	\$ 10,000
	<hr/>
	\$528,343

Annual Report 1909, pp. 27-28.

33. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 66.
34. Ibid., p. 60.
35. Endacott, G.B., op. cit., p. 283.
36. Hansard, March 9, 1911, p. 21.
37. Ibid., p. 22.
38. Hansard, February 26, 1914, pp. 28-29.
39. According to available records, Ho Kai was seldom away from Hong Kong. During his 24 years in Legislative Council, he was seldom absent from meetings: two times in February 1891, once in September 1893, nine times in 1910 and once in April 1912. The frequent absence in 1901 was for health reasons. Recorded evidence of his being in Mainland China was November 1897.
40. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 19.

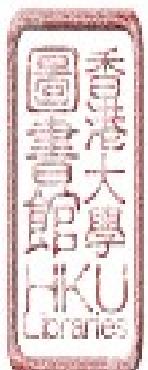


41. CO 129 401/Confidential, June 16, 1913. This material has again been brought to attention by Dr. E. Sinn.
42. After failing to get Li Hung-chang's attention, Sun began to organize his followers. In 1894, he formed Hsing Chung Hui or Revive China Society in Hawaii. At this early stage, republican ideas were not yet clearly thought out. In January 1895, Sun set out for Hong Kong to plot for the seizure of Canton. The strategy was to seize the two southern provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi so as to set up an independent government. Once successful, similar provincial secession would be sparked off and the Ch'ing rulers would have no choice but to abdicate. Hong Kong, with its proximity to South China and its immunity from Chinese jurisdiction under the protection of the liberal British colonial government, would be most ideal to serve as the rallying point for men, arms and funds. In fact it was for this very purpose of preparing for the coup that the Hong Kong branch of the Hsing Hung Hui was formed in February, 1895. The same ambiguity of purposes as in Hawaii was pursued. No clear political programmes were made explicit. Thus, it appeared more as "an ad hoc conspiracy geared for an immediate thrust of regional dimensions rather than as a broadly based political movement with a long-range program."

Schiffelin, H.Z., op. cit., p. 54.

For more details, see Chapter III.

43. Ibid.
44. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 142.
45. Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 35.
46. Summarized from Choa, G.H., op. cit., pp. 142-144.
47. Summarized from ibid., pp. 144-146.
48. Ibid., pp. 146-148.
49. For details, see Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., Chapter VII.
50. Choa, G.H. is of the opinion that Hu Li-yuan wrote this review article. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 149 ff.  
Chiu, L.Y. is of the opinion that Ho Kai wrote it.  
Chiu, L.Y., op. cit., p. 215 ff.
51. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 157.
52. Ibid., p. 158.



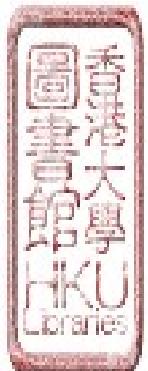
53. Ibid.
54. Hsu, I., op. cit., p. 487.
55. Li Hung-chang held these posts from 1870 to 1895. But for his failing to negotiate easier terms with Japan in 1895, he was removed from these posts.
56. Schiffelin, H.Z., op. cit., p. 204.
57. Ibid., p. 199.
58. Ibid., p. 202.
59. Ibid., p. 206.
60. Choa, G.H., op. cit., p. 159.
61. Ibid., p. 161.
62. Ibid., p. 161.
63. Ibid., p. 162.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., pp. 162-163.
67. Ibid., p. 163.
68. Ying Lien-chih 蔡鍊之 (1867-1926) was a Manchu military man. He had no proper school training. He was baptized in 1888. He was most impressed by Ho Kai's works especially after meeting Ho in 1900. He honoured Ho as the man to lead the reform movement. The next year, he established Ta Kung Pao in Shanghai. It was then that he published The True Meaning of the New Government.
69. Ho Kai's six articles were
1. 1887 - A Review of Tseng Chi-tse's Article
  2. 1894 - Discourse on the New Government
  3. 1897 - Foundation of the New Government
  4. 1897 - Administration of the New Government
  5. 1898 - A Review of K'ang Yu-wei's Speech
  6. 1898 - A Review of "Exhortation To Study"



70. Seah Liang Seah 奈連城 (1850-1925), was a rich Teochew. He had inherited large inheritances from his father. He served as Legislative Councillor and was one of the founders of Straits Chinese British Association.
71. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 283.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 284.
74. Lee, G.K., op. cit., p. 25.
75. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 298.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., p. 297.
78. Lee, G.K., op. cit., p. 96.
79. Ibid.
80. Clammer, J.R., op. cit., p. 63.
81. Ibid.
82. Tan Jiak Kim was a rich Chinese who helped found the Straits Steamship Company. He had inherited large fortune. He was also a Legislative Councillor.
83. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 319.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Turnbull, C.M., op. cit., p. 105.
87. Song, O.S., op. cit., pp. 323-324.
88. Ibid., p. 387.
89. Lee, G.K., op. cit., p. 25.
90. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 327.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 308.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., p. 333.



95. Ibid., p. 334.
96. Ibid., p. 310.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid., p. 318.
101. Ibid., p. 320.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., pp. 330-331.
104. Turnbull, C.M., op. cit., p. 107.
105. Ibid.
106. Clammer, J.R., op. cit., p. 5.
107. Ibid., p. 127.
108. Ibid., p. 5.
109. Yen, C.H., The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution (Kuala Lumpur, 1976), p. 288.
110. Huang Nai-shang 黃乃裳 was born in 1848 in the Min-ch'ing district of Fukien province. At the age of 18, he was baptized as Christian. In 1894, he passed the provincial examination and obtained his chü-jen degree. But then he was already 46. So, he did not pursue his Chinese classics. He had all the time been concerned with China's unrest. The same year saw Huang in Singapore. He became the chief editor of Sing Po 星報, promoting K'ang Yu-wei's reform ideas. Since his meeting with Sun Yat-sen in 1900, he was gradually won over by the revolutionary cause and became an active supporter of Sun. Huang was also well-known for recruiting his native people to develop Sibu.
111. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 236.
112. Lee, G.K., op. cit., p. 14.
113. Yen, C.H., op. cit., p. 289.
114. Ibid.



115. Ibid., p. 300, n. 101.
116. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 235.
117. The Straits Chinese Magazines are unfortunately not available in Hong Kong at the time of research and writing of this thesis. To get a glimpse of Lim's writings, here are the titles of those articles on education:
- "Our Enemies", Straits Chinese Magazine, Vol. I, No. 2, June 1897, p. 54.
  - "Straits Chinese Reform 3: The Education of Children", Ibid., Vol. III, No. 11, September 1899, p. 102.
  - "Ethical Education for the Straits Chinese", Ibid., Vol. VIII, No. 1, March 1904, pp. 25-30.
  - "Thinking and Observation in relation to National Progress", Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 4, December 1904, pp. 184-188.
- Lee, G.K., op. cit., Appendix I.
118. Khoo Seok-wan was born in China in 1874. He was a traditional Chinese scholar obtaining his chü-jen degree at 21. He inherited rich fortune from his father. He was among the reformist leaders of Singapore. Later, he shifted to support Ch'ing government.
119. Song, O.S., op. cit., pp. 305-306.
120. Ibid., p. 306.
121. Chen, M.H., The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore 1881-1912, (Singapore, 1967), p. 76.
122. This had been the hair-style for men since the establishment of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1644.
123. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 303.
124. Some titles on Confucianism published on the Straits Chinese Magazine were: -
- "Confucian Cosmogony and Theism", Vol. VIII, No. 2, June 1904.
  - "Confucian View of Human Nature", Vol. VII, No. 3, September 1904.



- "Basis of Confucian Ethics", Vol. VIII, No. 4, December 1904.
- "The Confucian Code of Filial Piety", Vol. IX, No. 1, March 1905.
- "The Confucian Cult", Vo. IX, No. 2, June 1905.
- "The Confucian Ideal", Vol. IX, No. 3, September 1905.
- "The Confucian Doctrine of Brotherly Love", Vol. IX, No. 4, December 1905.
- "The Status of Chinese Women Under a Confucian Regime", Vo. X, No. 4, December 1906.
- "The Confucian Ethics of Friendship", Vo. XI, No. 2, June 1907.

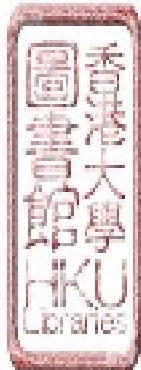
Lim also wrote two books on Confucianism, The Great War from the Confucian Point of View (1918) and The Quintessence of Chinese Culture (1931).

Lee, G.K., op. cit., Appendix II.

125. For detailed discussion on Lim Boon Keng's interpretation of Confucianism, see Lee, G.K., op. cit., Chapter III.
126. Mei Ching, op. cit., p. 125.
127. Song, O.S., op. cit., p. 235.
128. Yen, C.H., "The Confucian Revival Movement in Singapore and Malaya, 1899-1911", p. 42.
129. Ibid., p. 44.
130. Ibid., p. 45.
131. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
132. Reith, G.M.. was the editor. He highly recommended the book as instructive, informative, peculiar and unique.
133. Wen Ching, Chinese Crisis from Within, (Singapore, 1901), Preface.
134. Ibid., p. 307.
135. Ibid., pp. 326-327.
136. Ibid., p. 288.



137. Ibid., p. 49.
138. Ibid., p. 39.
139. Ibid., p. 22.
140. Ibid., Chapter III.
141. Ibid., p. 260.
142. Ibid., p. 287.
143. Ibid., p. 67.
144. Ibid., p. 260.

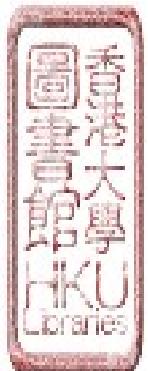


## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

The tripartite loyalty phenomenon of Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng was both a product of the times and of their own making. Tripartite loyalty is here to sum up their three roles, as loyal British subjects, as promoters of local Chinese welfare and as overseas Chinese concerned with China's fate.

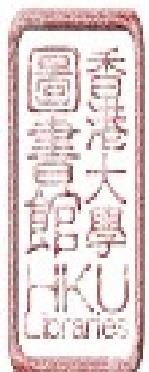
Ho Kai in Hong Kong and Lim Boon Keng in Singapore were able to become elites of the colonial regimes because they themselves were products of colonialism. They received a Western education and adopted the Western faith. They were appointed to serve the colonial governments by bridging the gap between the Chinese subjects and the British rulers. In the eyes of their fellow Chinese, they were respected because of their closeness with the governments. As social leaders, they took it onto themselves to promote local welfare. At the same time, when they saw China in trouble, they immediately recommended what they were enjoying - Western institutions as the remedies. They carried on such contradictory role-playing of sometimes defying their colonial masters by fighting for local communal good and other times by interfering in the affairs of a country they had given up their own nationality because the British colonial masters tolerated. All these were only possible because the British were lenient though wary and they were cautious not to step overboard.



Both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were unique in that at their own times and in their own societies, there were no other Chinese of their status and background being so tripartitely involved. There were men who were Legislative Councillors and enthusiasts in promoting local Chinese welfare and might even be generous philanthropists in donations to help victims of natural disasters in China, but there were no Chinese Legislative Councillors like Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng who got themselves so heavily and enthusiastically involved in the fate of China.

Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng did demonstrate differences in their tripartite involvement. Ho was less conscious of his own peculiar identity - a Westernized Chinese elite and therefore did not have to work hard to resolve it. But Lim Boon Keng was acutely aware of his own identity and strove to remedy his ignorance of the Chinese culture. He projected these sentiments onto his own fellow Chinese and sought to reform the whole society by promoting the Confucian Revival Movement. This could have resulted from their different family background and different experiences in Britain.

Both Ho Kai and Lim Boon Keng were men to be respected because their tripartite involvement was not to serve any tangible self interests of their own.



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