

Introduction: The border guard view

This thesis examines the movements of people between villages of the Pearl River Delta and destinations around the Pacific between 1849 and 1949. It is about links between ‘native places’ or *qiaoxiang* (僑鄉) and Pacific destinations that developed and sustained these movements over several generations.¹ To enable an in-depth investigation of this history, Zhongshan County (中山縣) and the sub-district of Long Du (隆都) within this county, have been chosen along with the three ‘Pacific Ports’ of Sydney, Hawaii and San Francisco. These three Pacific ports were the main destinations for people from *qiaoxiang* in Zhongshan County and particularly Long Du.

The title, ‘Destination *Qiaoxiang*’, was chosen to emphasise that movement and links between *qiaoxiang* and destinations were continuous and dynamic. It will be argued in this thesis that studies of the Chinese in the United States and Australia based on ‘nation-state’ perspectives have largely ignored origins and neglected or misinterpreted evidence of continuing links with the *qiaoxiang*. Assumptions about one-way entry, settlement and assimilation have neglected those who returned to the *qiaoxiang*, those who never left and those who had and made choices between the two. Studies of the Chinese diaspora also, despite their ‘trans-national’ approach, have tended to focus on minorities and to produce research with limited historical context.

This thesis proposes to adopt a ‘*qiaoxiang* perspective’ as an alternative to perspectives centered on the nation-state. Through this perspective it is hoped to be able to investigate a range of issues that have previously been obscured or misinterpreted. The emphasis is not, however, on the *qiaoxiang* as place, but rather on the links that developed between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations, the ‘*qiaoxiang* links’, links motivated and sustained for purposes largely based in the *qiaoxiang*. Beginning with an in-depth examination of the *qiaoxiang* of Long Du,

¹ *Qiaoxiang* (僑鄉) can be translated as, “native land of one who is away” and refers to a person’s home village, district or county, depending on which they choose to identify with as their place of origin. ‘Destination’ is adopted as a descriptive term in keeping with a perspective centred on the *qiaoxiang*; that is, the places to which people went from the *qiaoxiang*.



this thesis discusses the tangible mechanisms of the links, as well as motivations for these links to be found in destination incomes and prestige gained in the *qiaoxiang*. The *qiaoxiang* links created choices that in turn impacted on the links and the consequences of these choices and opportunities are also investigated. Finally the destinations themselves are examined to see how a *qiaoxiang* perspective provides the history of Chinese people in the destinations with interpretations different to those usually found in studies based on nation-state perspectives.

The Literature

The tendency for the movement of people from the Pearl River Delta to be interpreted almost exclusively from the perspective of nation-states began with their first arrival in the three destinations in the mid-19th century. Government reports wished to know who they were, what they were up to, how they were organised, if they were a threat and if so, how to deal with this threat. That is to say, they were part of a defence of their nation's borders. Missionaries, motivated by a desire to extend the borders of the Kingdom of Heaven, wished to know if these people could be converted to Christianity and what aspects of their culture and society could be used to achieve this aim. Materials of these types, dating from the earliest arrivals, are usually characterised as ‘sources’, but they also represent the first research of Chinese people in the destinations and are precursors to the sociological and historical research of the 20th century. These early works lay a foundation of ‘explanation’ that continued as an underlying attitude in later research and for this reason any review of the literature should include such material.

Numerous governmental commissions, parliamentary reports and investigations concerning Chinese people were produced at the provincial and national level in all three destinations in the second half of the 19th century.² Some of these were biased,

² Some significant examples are: United States – California State Legislature, *Report of Joint Select Committee Relative to the Chinese Population of the State of California* (Sacramento: State Printer, 1862; United States Senate, *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration* (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1877); Hawaii – *Board of Immigration Report, for the Biennial Period ending March 31st, A. D. 1882 to The Minister of the Interior* (Honolulu, 1882); *Report of the President of the Bureau of Immigration to the Legislative Assembly of 1886* (Honolulu, 1886) and Australia - *Gold Fields Commission of Enquiry*, Victorian Parliamentary Papers 1, 1855; *Reports upon Chinese Camps*, Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 11th Parliament, Vol.II, 1883-84, pp.559-666; *Report of the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling &*



with anti-Chinese political agendas, such as that of the San Francisco City Board in 1885.³ Others, like the United States Senate report of 1877 or the New South Wales (NSW) Royal Commission of 1892, were more objective in their approach. Investigations often heard from Chinese witnesses, as well as from missionaries who had spent time in China before taking up missionary work in the destinations. The NSW Royal Commission even had a Chinese person as one of its three commissioners. In addition to destination-based inquiries, the British Foreign Office, due to its general colonial interests in the ‘labour trade’ and the specific interests of its colony of Hong Kong, also required reports from officials on Chinese movements overseas. British officials are also a source of observations by people with Chinese cultural and language skills that are an alternative to those of missionaries.⁴ Good or bad, prejudiced or sympathetic, however, the aim of these reports and investigations was to define the extent of the ‘Chinese problem’. Their purpose was to determine such border related issues as; were there too many, did their presence present a danger, and how best to reduce any possible problems.

Missionaries appeared as witnesses before government committees, produced accounts of the Chinese Empire and its culture, and wrote refutations of attacks on the Chinese in the destinations, even on occasions providing information about the *qiaoxiang*.⁵ These missionary sources provided background not only to the government reports but to some of the early sociological studies that followed them.

Immorality and Charges of Bribery against Members of the Police Force (Sydney: Government Printer, 1892).

³ See, William B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1885), Part II, pp.1-95, for a copy of the San Francisco City Board report of 1885.

⁴ For example, J. Dundas Crawford, *Notes by Mr. Crawford on Chinese Immigration in the Australian Colonies*, Foreign Office Confidential Print, No.3742, 1877 and E. H. Parker, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, No.24867, December 15, 1888, pp.1-15. J. Dyer Ball, “The Höng Shán or Macao Dialect”, *The China Review*, Vol. XXII, 1896-1897, pp.501-531 and *The Chinese at Home or the Man of Tong and his Land* (London, 1912) was both an official and a missionary.

⁵ Examples include, S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: a survey of the geography, government, literature, social life, arts, and history of the Chinese empire and its inhabitants* (New York: Willey, 1857); Rev. Justus Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865); Russell Herman Conwell, *Why and How: why the Chinese emigrate, and the means they adopt for the purpose of reaching America, with sketches of travel, amusing incidents, social customs, &c* (New York: Lee and Shepard, 1871); Otis Gibson, *The Chinese in America* (Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1877); William Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States* (Hartford: Scranton and Co., 1870) and articles by Rev. A.W. Loomis in the *Overland Monthly*, see bibliography for details. Neither Australia or Hawaii can match the United States in these missionary outpourings, one in Australia is the Rev E.J. Eitel, “Social Life in China”, *Royal Geographic Society of Australia. S.A. Branch*, Proceedings 8, 1904-06 and in Hawaii, F. W. Damon writing in *The Friend*, see bibliography for details.



Some, such as Williams' *The Middle Kingdom*, were a major source of information on China for many years. Like the government reports, a consistent theme throughout these works is an attitude towards China and Chinese people that they are a problem, one which required an 'explanation'.

Despite these efforts by missionaries and government reports, the first academic investigation, that by Mary Coolidge, of the Chinese within a destination at the beginning of the 20th century felt that:

For half a century the curious customs and behavior of the Chinese in this country have been a mystery, subject to many explanations, distorted by ignorance and colored by prejudice and never fully understood.⁶

Although providing a good background to the history and motivations of the Chinese in the United States, Coolidge's prime interest was the impact of Chinese movement on United States immigration and the reasons for the hostile response to their presence in California. This was an interest and a perspective that continued that of the government investigations already mentioned and which dominated the early literature relating to Chinese in the United States, including Hawaii, as well as in Australia.

In the first half of the 20th century, most research of Chinese people in the United States continued the 'sociological' approach pioneered by Coolidge. In this research, which culminated in the work of the 'Chicago School', the Chinese (along with Japanese people with whom they were grouped under the label 'Oriental') were considered to be people in American society whose habits needed explaining.⁷ A central concern was, why had these people not become 'American'? Not, why did

⁶ Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing, [1909] 1968), p.3.

⁷ This school included, Clarence Glick, "Transition from Familism to Nationalism among the Chinese in Hawaii", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIII, March, No.5, 1938, pp.734-743; Rose Hum Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960) and Paul C. P. Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman A study in Social Isolation* (New York: New York University Press, 1987). This last based on research done in the 1930s. For a detailed examination of this literature in the United States see Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: migration, contact, and exoticism in modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Henry Yu also details the strong link, both intellectual and personal, between the interests of the missionaries and the sociologists in the "oriental problem".



they come and what were their purposes? Despite their concentration on Chinese people in America, these studies were aware of the existence of links with China but the evidence for such links were usually interpreted only in terms of their impact on ‘Americanization’.⁸

Hawaii also made a contribution to this ‘Chinese as problem’ literature, despite consideration of its Chinese communities and history usually being subsumed within United States history after its 1898 annexation. This was due largely to Clarence Glick, a member to the Chicago School, who in the 1930s took up residence in Hawaii and, with some of his students, researched the Chinese in Hawaii from a sociological perspective. Most of their studies appeared in the journal, *Social Process in Hawaii* and contributed much valuable historical material in the process.⁹

In Australia, it was not until the 1960s, that sociological studies began to ask similar questions about how the Chinese lived in Australia, how they responded to racial hostility and how they survived and adapted within the broader society.¹⁰ Before these studies, historical research had looked at the development of the ‘White Australia Policy’ and the role played by Chinese people in this. The first such study, Myra Willard’s *History of the White Australia Policy*, looked at the thinking behind restrictive immigration laws and the attitudes that characterised this policy.¹¹ In this work, Chinese people were alluded to only in so far as their presence and the reactions they invoked, provided insight into Australian policies and attitudes. Subsequent studies, using the records of the Immigration Restriction Act, revealed more about how the Chinese community responded to these restrictions, but little

⁸ Most notably Paul Siu’s *The Chinese Laundryman*, which is sub-titled, “A Study in Social Isolation”, meaning isolation from American society.

⁹ For example, Bung Chong Lee, “The Chinese Store as a Social Institution”, *Social Process in Hawaii*, Vol. II, May 1936, pp.35-38 and Elizabeth Wong, “Leaves from the Life History of a Chinese Immigrant”, *Social Process in Hawaii*, Vol. II, May 1936, pp.39-42. Glick’s own thesis on the Chinese in Hawaii was researched in the 1930s but not published until 1980, Clarence Elmer Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese migrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980). The work of Romanzo Adams such as, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937) was also a significant contribution at this time.

¹⁰ Such as, A. Huck, *Chinese in Australia* (Melbourne: Longmans, 1968) and C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975).

¹¹ Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, [1923] 1967).



about their intentions or how these intentions influenced their responses.¹² Further research of the White Australia Policy's origins, including one on the international pressures this policy placed on Australia, threw only an indirect light on Chinese Australian history and made no mention of the *qiaoxiang* or any links people may have had with them.¹³

In the United States, historical research was also interested in the development of racism and restrictive immigration laws and similarly cast Chinese people in roles incidental to such developments.¹⁴ Two comparative works, both originating in Australia, on the racist and restrictive immigration histories of Australia and the United States also revealed many details about the Chinese communities of NSW, Victoria and California.¹⁵ However, despite the range of sources used (only rarely are these Chinese language ones), such studies continued to give a restricted view of the history of the Chinese in both Australia and the United States. Often the impression given is that Chinese people existed only to inspire racial hostility and restrictive immigration policies. These historical studies in the United States and Australia are primarily histories of the development of national identity, of racism, of working class politics and of immigration laws. The opinions and motivations of the Chinese themselves are rarely mentioned or are assumed to be to, ‘get in’ and grateful for it.

In China, the Republican Government was interested in the activities of Chinese people overseas and this resulted in many reports, studies and even journals

¹² A. T. Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia: the background to exclusion* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1964) and A. C. Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967).

¹³ Herbert Ira London, *Non-white Immigration and the 'White Australia' Policy* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1970); Albert A. Hayden, *New South Wales Immigration Policy, 1856-1900* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, Vol. 61, Pt 5, 1971) and Sean Brawley, *The White Peril - Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America 1919-1978* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995).

¹⁴ The best examples being, Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese movement in California* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, [1939] 1991) and Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy. Labor and the anti-Chinese movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

¹⁵ Charles Price, *The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australasia, 1836-1888* (Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs in association with Australian National University Press, 1974) and Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979).



concerning them.¹⁶ This interest led to the first studies in which the *qiaoxiang* of those who travelled overseas featured, two sociological studies which undertook research in the *qiaoxiang* of Guangdong and Fujian provinces in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁷ These studies looked at the motivations within the *qiaoxiang* for going overseas and at the impact remittances from overseas had on the *qiaoxiang*. However, neither study looked at the links with the destinations over time and remained within the framework of the nation-state, this time that of China.

Several early studies did take a wider approach than that of individual nation-states to the investigation of Chinese people overseas.¹⁸ However the simple multiplication of nation-states that these studies entailed only emphasises that it was the perspective of those various separate states that dominated. Motivations of Chinese people beyond that of making money in an overseas location are entirely absent while the legal conditions they met with predominate.

It was not until many years after World War II that researchers of history in the destinations began to look at Chinese people in themselves, rather than as elements in the history of racism or the development of laws. In the United States, such studies for the first time used Chinese sources, and the presence and activities of the Chinese

¹⁶ Such as Chen Zhifu 陳直夫, *Aozhou ji lü ou huaqiao* 澳洲及旅澳華僑 (Australia and its Australian Overseas Chinese), (Shanghai: Shangwu Yin Shu Guan, 上海: 商務印書館, 民國 36 年, 1947); *Jujinshan Ningyang zong hui guan ya po zhongguo guomindang xuanchuan jiguan shaonian zhongguo chenbao shi lu* 舊金山寧陽總會館壓迫中國 國民黨宣傳機關少年中國晨報實錄 (True Record of San Francisco Ningyang Association intimidation of Zhongguo Guomindang Propaganda Office Youth Chinese Morning News), (Nanjing: Zhongyang Xuanchuanbu 南京: 中央宣傳部, 民 18, 1929); *Nanyang yanjiu* 南洋研究 (South-East Asia Studies); *Qiaowu yuebao* 僑務月報 (Overseas Affairs Monthly) and *Qiao deng* 僑燈 (The Overseas Chinese Monthly). For information on Republican era interest in the *huaqiao* I have relied on, with permission, Dr Glen Peterson, “Overseas Chinese Studies in the People’s Republic of China: An overview of the Field”, unpublished paper presented to the ISSCO Conference, Dec 10-12, 1999, Havana, Cuba. The county archives of Taishan and Zhongshan also contain numerous government files of the Republican period that provide evidence of the strong interest in the Overseas Chinese.

¹⁷ Chen Han-Seng, *Landlord and Peasant in China - A Study of the Agrarian Crisis in South China* (New York: International Publishers, 1936) and Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities in South China; A Study of Overseas Migration and its influence on standards of living and social change* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940).

¹⁸ Chen Ta, *Chinese Migrations, with special reference to labour conditions* (Washington: Govt Printing Office, 1923); H. F. Macnair, *Chinese abroad their position and protection* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1925) and Huang Tsen-ming, *Legal Status of the Chinese Abroad* (Taipei: China Cultural Service, 1936).



within a destination were related, to some extent, to their places of origin.¹⁹ These were followed in the 1980s by a number of studies (some joint United States/China investigations), on the impact of the movement on specific *qiaoxiang*.²⁰ However, neither the United States based studies or those conducting research in the *qiaoxiang*, developed beyond nation-state frameworks. In fact, by the end of the 1980s a reaction to the racist and assimilationist attitudes of the past began to dominate which had the effect of re-enforcing nation-state perspectives.

Much written that was racist or negative concerning Chinese people in the destinations was based on assumptions of the undesirability of Chinese people as citizens. This was re-enforced by the perception that they did not behave as ‘normal’ migrants, another concern of the ‘border guards’. However, in the last quarter of the 20th century, in the United States at least, studies of Chinese people began to assume that if these ‘border guard’ perceptions were wrong, then the opposite assumptions must be true. The aim became to demonstrate that Chinese people in the United States were the result of ‘normal’ migration patterns and any evidence to the contrary was proof that restrictive laws and racism had hindered the natural desire to become American. The concern was about a perceived, “failure to ‘become’ American” which resulted in a “need to either apologize or celebrate”.²¹ The question of importance was: “Why so few Asian immigrants?” the answer to which was, because restrictive laws made it “well-nigh impossible” for them to enter.²² The underlying assumption was that to enter, to become settlers was the aim, while links with

¹⁹ For example, Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength – A History of the Chinese in the United States 1850-1870* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964); Stanford M. Lyman, *Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 1974) and Zo Kil Young, *Chinese Emigration into the United States 1850-1880* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), based on her 1971 thesis.

²⁰ Such as, Yu Renqiu, “Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940”, *Amerasia Journal*, 10:1, 1983, pp. 47-72 and Lucie Cheng & Liu Yuzun, “Chinese emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Toisan”, *Amerasia Journal*, 9:1, 1982, pp. 59-74. One potentially significant study involved interviews with over 200 people in various Taishan villages, unfortunately the results seem never to have been written up or pursued further. They are described in Lucie Cheng, 成露西, “Meiguo huaren yenjiu” 美國華人研究 (American Chinese Researches), *Qiaoshi xuebao 僑史學報* (Journal of Overseas Chinese History), No.1 June 1989, pp.229-33. A very brief summary with some examples from this research was given in a conference paper, Lucie Cheng, “Those who stayed at Home: Emigration and the Women of Taishan”, unpublished paper at a conference entitled, Lucky Come Hawaii, East-West Centre, Honolulu, July 1988.

²¹ Madeline Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: transnationalism and migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp.6-7.

²² Sucheng Chan, “Preface” in Sucheng Chan (Ed.), *Entry Denied. Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p.vii.



families in the *qiaoxiang* were either ignored or felt to be exaggerations generated by past efforts to justify negative attitudes. The results were, “American-centered versions” of this history in which, “links beyond America” were seen as “by-products of exclusion and racism”.²³

One result of assumptions about the need to assert the essential ‘normalcy’ of Chinese ‘migration’ into the United States was that the history of anti-Chinese immigration laws continued to be examined in great detail. The difference in later studies, largely from the Asian-American school, is that the impact on Chinese communities and Chinese efforts to subvert or resist these laws is the focus.²⁴ Those who settled in the United States, despite these laws are considered in detail. However, as the laws are assumed to be “the ironclad parameters within which Chinese lived”, those who returned to their *qiaoxiang* or consideration of motives beyond that of the desire to ‘get in’ and settle, are neglected.²⁵

A concept especially rejected by this research is that of the ‘sojourner’. The implication this term has of temporary intention to stay in the United States was seen as racist and the invention of those who would reject the ‘Americaness’ of Chinese people. This rejection of the ‘sojourner’ is part of the denial of motivations beyond that of the desire to settle in the United States.²⁶ The purpose of this denial is to show that any deviation from the “normal” lives of “working immigrants” by Chinese people in the United States is the responsibility of white racism.²⁷ The study by Gunther Barth in particular, is often cited as the ‘worst’ example of the sojourner

²³ Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change - Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p.3, where a similar argument is given.

²⁴ Examples include, Chan, *Entry Denied*; Lucy E. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) and Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D., 1998). For a brief history of Asian-American literature see Roger Daniels, “Asian American History’s Overdue Emergence”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* December 7, 2001 (<http://chronicle.com>).

²⁵ Chan, “Preface”, *Entry Denied*, p.x.

²⁶ The most explicit example of this is George Peffer, *If They Don’t Bring their Women Here* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999) where the aims of Chinese people are seen as an “unusually persistent cultural impediment”, p.109.

²⁷ Roger Daniels, “Forward”, Peffer, *If They Don’t Bring their Women Here*, p.viii. For a more detailed discussion see, Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrants Among Ghosts: Chicago, Peru and Hawaii in the early twentieth century* (University of Chicago, Ph.D., 1997), where he states that this view sees all migrants as the same and rejects cultural origins, pp.35-40.



concept.²⁸ The categorisation of Chinese as “sojourners” is enough for Barth to be accused of having “redirected blame for anti-Chinese sentiment from white labourers and politicians to the Chinese”.²⁹ Barth’s sojourner “views” have even been consigned to the “rubbish heap” by some.³⁰

Hawaii, in the 1970s and 1980s, also produced historical studies similar to those of the mainland United States.³¹ Although less concerned with proving how “normal” the Chinese in Hawaii were as migrants, the focus of this material on activities in Hawaii means that references to the *qiaoxiang* are also rare or incidental. The exception to this was the work of Clarence Glick, based on research done in the 1930s, when the links of his interview subjects with their *qiaoxiang* were still strong. After this period, Hawaii again settles back as a minor part of the larger United States scene, with its differences often neglected in general research.³²

In Australia, the sociological studies, which by the 1970s had examined the Chinese in Australia in terms of their assimilation, have been mentioned.³³ The first major historical study of the Chinese in Australia was that by C. F. Yong, who was also the first to use Chinese language newspapers and the records of Chinese organisations.³⁴ Yong provided a history of the Chinese, not only as they dealt with the White Australia Policy, but also of how they conducted their business, religion, education,

²⁸ Examples of Barth rejections include: Daniels, “Asian American History’s Overdue Emergence”, in which sojourner is equated with “a classic case of blaming the victim”; Gary Y. Okihiro, *The Columbia guide to Asian American history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp.88-90, where the section on Barth is entitled “Blaming the Victim” and Charles J. McClain and Laurene Wu McClain, “The Chinese Contribution to the Development of American Law” in Chan, *Entry Denied*, p.4, where Barth is used as the stereotypical example of what it is considered should be rejected.

²⁹ Okihiro, *The Columbia guide to Asian American history*, p.76.

³⁰ Daniels, “Forward”, Peffer, *If They Don’t Bring their Women Here*, p.viii.

³¹ For example, Tin-Yuke Char, *The Sandalwood Mountains - Readings and Stories of the Early Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1975); Irma Soong and Ted Gong, *A Study of the Meeting records of the Ket Hing Society, Kula, Maui 1913-1947* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Chinese History Centre, 1979) and Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, based on his 1930s Ph.D. In Hawaii too, a major oral history project was undertaken by the Hawaii Chinese History Centre in the 1970s that also appears never to have been written up and which is now apparently lost.

³² McKeown, *Chinese Migrants Among Ghosts*, pp.45-46 discusses this point; “The histories of Asian migrants in Hawaii have largely been subsumed … as examples of regional variation”.

³³ Huck, *Chinese in Australia* and Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*.

³⁴ C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: the Chinese in Australia, 1901-1921* (South Australia: Raphael Arts, 1977). The first historical study of any kind was G. Oddie, “The Lower Class Chinese and the Merchant Elite in Victoria, 1870-1890”, *Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, Nov. 1961, No.37, pp. 65-69.



family life and politics. Despite this work, as late as 1984 researchers could still be justifiably criticised for failing to “relocate the Chinese experience within the Chinese community itself”.³⁵

The prominent image of Chinese people in Australia as gold miners led to research examining the origins of hostility to Chinese miners and their interactions with other miners. While the difficulty of providing a Chinese perspective from largely European sources is acknowledged by these studies, Chinese people continue to be presented merely as the victims of European hostility, and links to their *qiaoxiang* or their own motivations are rarely considered, if at all.³⁶ Other studies examined the history of Chinese indenture and labour importation in Australia that preceded their entry as gold seekers, again with little consideration as to why they came (beyond wanting the money) or what they did on return.³⁷ There is in these Australian studies no imperative, based on issues of national identity, to deny *qiaoxiang* links or to assert that Chinese people in Australia were “normal” migrants. Nevertheless, the limitations of a nation-state perspective ensured that little appeared in these works concerning links with the *qiaoxiang*.

In China, revival of interest in overseas connections in the late 1970s brought a revival in studies of the history of China’s overseas links. The impact of these links on a provincial level is the focus of this research with an emphasis on the large-scale evaluation of material such as remittance records, clan genealogies, tomb inscriptions and county publications.³⁸ The perspective of Chinese researchers is that the overseas

³⁵ J. W. Cushman, “A ‘Colonial Casualty’: The Chinese community in Australian Historiography”, *Asian Studies Association of Australia*, Vol. 7, No. 3, April, 1984, p.100. The value of doing this had been pointed out earlier by Arthur Huck, “A note on Hwuy-ung’s letters from Melbourne 1899-1912”, *Historical Studies*, Vol. 9, No.35, 1960, p.316.

³⁶ Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1982); Jean Gittins, *The Diggers from China: The story of the Chinese on the Goldfields* (Melbourne: Quartet Books, 1981). Gittins uses diaries of Chinese missionaries, but these add surprisingly little to the Chinese perspective.

³⁷ Kay Saunders (Ed.), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834-1920* (Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984); Anne Atkinson, “Chinese labour in Western Australia”, *Time Remembered*, 6, 1984, pp.164-178 and Maxine Darnell, *The Chinese Labour Trade to New South Wales 1783-1853* (University of New England, Ph.D., 1997).

³⁸ Examples of these include, on remittances: Feng Yuan 馮元, “Luelun jiefang qian guangdongsheng huaqiao huikuan” 略論解放前廣東省華僑匯款 (A brief discussion of Guangdong overseas Chinese remittances before liberation), *Qiaoshi xuebao* 僑史學報 (Journal of Overseas Chinese History), 1, 1989, pp.31-40.; Dai Yifeng 戴一峰, “Jindai Fujian huaqiao huaren chu ru guo guimo ji



Chinese represent a social phenomena within China's history and society, and their role in other countries is an aspect of China's history. Within this 'nation-state' framework, overseas Chinese connections, when not related directly to Sun Yat-sen and Republican politics, are in a sense 'local' studies. However, the provincial level at which this research was done, that is, Guangdong and Fujian, while raising the status of the work in China is not the level at which overseas links took place or had their major impact. A limitation of provincial level studies, for example, is that they obscure diversity in the participation rates in movement to the destinations among different *qiaoxiang*. They also fail to distinguish the impact on these *qiaoxiang* that were the result of their having links with different destinations. The few county level studies that have been done are of Taishan County (台山縣) and with no studies of other *qiaoxiang* to enable comparisons, Taishan is often accepted as 'typical' or representative.³⁹

Due to the lack of research at the *qiaoxiang* (county or village level), the existence of a great deal of local material produced by the *qiaoxiang* themselves is of great

qi fazhan bianhua" 近代福建華僑華人出入國規模及其發展變化 (Modern Fujian Overseas Chinese in/out flows, scale and changes in development), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), 2, 1988, pp.33-39; Huang Chongyan 黃重言, "Yanjiu huaqiao shi shang de jidian yijian" 研究華僑史上的幾點意見 (A few comments about researching overseas Chinese history), *Huaqiao lunwen shi* 華僑論文史 (Overseas Chinese History Thesis), No.1, April 1982, pp.24-28; on clan records: Lin Jinzhi 林金枝, "Cong zupu ziliao kan min yue renmin yiju haiwai de huodong ji qi dui jiaxiang de gongxian" 從族譜資料看閩粵人民移居海外的活動及其對家鄉的貢獻 (A look at clan records to see the overseas activities of Fujian and Guangdong people and their contribution to their hometowns), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), 1, 1991, pp.16-23; Zheng Shanyu 鄭山玉, "Luelun qiaoxiang zupu zai huaqiao lishi yanjiu shang de ziliaozhazhi" 略論僑鄉族譜在華僑歷史研究上的資料價值 (A brief discussion of the information value of overseas Chinese community Clan records in overseas Chinese historical research), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), No.1, 1991, pp.31-34; on publications: Zheng Dehua 鄭德華 & Wu Xingci 吳行賜, "Yipi youjiazhi de huaqiaoshi ziliao - Taishan jiefangqian chuban de zazhi, zukan pingjie" 一批有價值的華僑史資料 – 台山解放前出版的雜誌, 族刊評介 (A Collection of valuable overseas Chinese history information - A review of Pre-Liberation Taishan Magazines and Clan publications), *Huaqiao lunwen shi* 華僑論文史 (Overseas Chinese History Thesis), No.1, April 1982, pp.454-489.

³⁹ For example, Zheng Dehua 鄭德華, "Shiji shiji mo Taishan qiaoxiang de xingcheng ji qi pouxi" 十九世紀末台山僑鄉的形成及其剖析 (A analysis of the formation of overseas emigrant communities in Taishan in the late 19th century), *Qiaoshi xuebao* 僑史學報 (Journal of Overseas Chinese History), No.3, 1986, pp.33-39 and Huang Daoji 黃道記 & Liu Chongmin 劉重民, "Taishanren shewai jiaowang yu chuyang suyuan" 台山人涉外交往與出洋溯源 (The origin of Taishan people's overseas migration and their links), *Qiaoshi xuebao* 僑史學報 (Journal of Overseas Chinese History), No.1, 1989, pp.7-8.



interest, despite its non-academic nature.⁴⁰ This material varies in quality and type and requires a great deal of analysis but can be the basis of comparative studies among *qiaoxiang*. The best source of such ‘local’ material, both due to the quality of its output and the unique role it played in the overseas movement, is that from Hong Kong. The role of the Tung Wah Hospital, of Hong Kong based regional associations and the flow of remittances from the destinations to the *qiaoxiang* through Hong Kong, are just some aspects of the *qiaoxiang* links that have been examined by Hong Kong studies.⁴¹

Numerous regional and local studies have also been done in both the United States and Australia which, with their greater level of detail, contain much about *qiaoxiang* links that is absent in national studies.⁴² However, in the absence of comparative

⁴⁰ These include journals of local history such as the *Zhongshan wenshi* 中山文史 (Zhongshan Cultural History). Such ‘cultural history’ journals are produced by all counties, as well as magazines published at the county, district and even village level, aimed at ‘overseas Chinese’ and containing numerous historical items. There are also locally produced ‘overseas Chinese histories’ such as, *Taishanxian qiaowu bangongshi* 台山縣僑務辦公室 (Taishan County Overseas Affairs Office, Ed.), *Taishanxian huaqiao zhi* 台山縣華僑志 (Taishan County overseas Chinese Records), (Taishanxian qiaowu bangongshi 台山縣僑務辦公室 Taishan County Overseas Affairs Office, 1992); *Kaipingxian huaqiao bowuguan* 開平縣華僑博物館 (Kaiping Overseas Chinese Museum, Ed.), *Kaipingxian wenwu zhi* 開平縣文物志 (Kaiping County Cultural Records), (Guangdong renmin chubanshe 廣東人民出版社 Guangdong People Publishing House, 1989) and Zheng Jiarui 鄭嘉銳, Li Chengji 李承基, et al, *Zhongshanren zai Aozhou* 中山人在澳洲 (Zhongshan people in Australia), (Zhengxie Guangdong Zhongshansi weiyuanhui 政協廣東中山市委員會 Guangdong Zhongshan City Committee, 1992).

⁴¹ For example, Elizabeth Sinn, “Xin Xi Guxiang: A Study of Regional Associations as a Bonding Mechanism in the Chinese Diaspora. The Hong Kong Experience”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No.2, 1997, pp. 375-397; Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity – The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989); Stephanine Po-Yin Chung, “Mobilisation Politics: The Case of Siyi Businessmen in Hong Kong, 1809-1928”, in Leo Douw; Huang Cen & Michael Godley, *Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to ‘Cultural Capitalism’ in South China* (London: Kegan Paul, 1999), pp.45-66 and Tsai Jung-Fang, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

⁴² Examples in the United States include, James W. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese - Between Black & White* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971); Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region* (New York: Arno Press, 1978 [reprint of 1947 thesis]) and most recently Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943 A Trans-Pacific Community* (California: Stanford University Press, 2000). In Australia, Cathie May, *Topsawyers: the Chinese in Cairns 1870 to 1920* (Townsville: James Cook University, 1984); Diana Giese, *Beyond Chinatown* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1995); Jan Ryan, *Ancestors: Chinese in Colonial Australia* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre, 1995); Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors* (Sydney: State Library of NSW Press, 1997) and Janis Wilton, *Chinese Voices, Australian Lives* (University of New England, Ph.D., 1996).



studies bringing this material together, much evidence of *qiaoxiang* links and variations on this basis remains vague and inconclusive.⁴³

A technique often employed by local histories and one with great potential to by-pass the limitations of nation-state perspectives, is oral history. The techniques and value of oral history have been well developed in both the United States and Australia, and some excellent research has been done.⁴⁴ The impact of immigration restrictions on individuals who came through the United States Immigration station of Angel Island, the lives of Chinese women in the United States, and of communities such as the people of the Sacramento Delta town of Locke, have greatly added to our knowledge through the use of oral history techniques.⁴⁵ However, these studies suffer from similar limitations to those in the research referred to earlier with their focus on people as residents of a nation-state. The possibility of those interviewed revealing much about links with their *qiaoxiang* is usually excluded by the questions asked, the purpose of the research and a lack of awareness of alternative contexts on the part of the interviewer. It is usually assumed, for example, that the long-term residents of the United States being interviewed began with that intention. It is rarely assumed that such residence might have been one consequence of many in a history that is also worth exploring.

Interviews conducted within a limited context are not necessarily insurmountable for a good oral history researcher. The transcripts of interviews from the Angel Island Oral History Project in fact, contain a great deal of evidence concerning *qiaoxiang* and the motivations and original intentions of those that came to the United States

⁴³ Two exceptions are the works by Chen, *Chinese San Francisco* and Wilton, *Chinese Voices, Australian Lives*, both discussed below.

⁴⁴ The best demonstration of this has been a Canadian researcher who used oral history to reveal the significance of the *qiaoxiang* in the 1980s, in an example not followed in the United States or Australia, see Woon Yuen-Fong, “An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area, Southeastern China, 1885-1945: A Study in Social Change”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.18, No.2, 1984, pp. 273-306.

⁴⁵ Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim & Judy Yung, *Island. Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996); Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, *Linking Our Lives. Chinese American Women of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 1984) and Jeff Gillenkirk & James Motlow, *Bitter Melon. Stories from the Last Rural Chinese Town in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987).



through Angel Island in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁶ However, the aim of the project was to provide evidence of the hardship caused by the restrictive laws and their administration on those who became American. Exploring the range of motivations and intentions of those moving through Angel Island was not an option, as the intention to settle and become ‘American’ was assumed. The result was that much information about intentions to return and other aspects of links with the *qiaoxiang*, remained in the unpublished transcripts.

Another clear example of the constraints imposed by nation-state perspectives are the interviews conducted in the 1980s with the elderly residents of the small town of Locke, three hours drive from San Francisco, in the Sacramento Delta. Locke was, in the 1920s and 1930s, almost completely populated by people from Zhongshan County and their offspring. From the historical introduction to the excellent oral history of Locke, *Bitter Melon*, and the interviews themselves, it can be seen that the town was bachelor-dominated and that most of the residents remained poor agricultural labourers. What is less obvious, but perfectly possible to glean from the interviews, is that these men, when boys or young men, were sent from their Zhongshan villages for the purpose of earning money to send back to their families. It was expected that they would eventually return to these villages and families, and in fact, most people did exactly this. Those that remained in Locke long enough to be interviewed are a minority that, for various reasons, ‘failed’ to achieve this initial intention. In this case the interviews, and this is always the potential advantage of oral history, were wide ranging enough to allow this information to come out. The academic writer of the introduction, however, bringing nation-state assumptions of settlement and of battling the odds to become American, ignores this aspect of what the residents of Locke have to say about themselves. Instead, the primacy of the restrictive laws of the nation-state in determining the pattern of their lives is asserted. Locke is described as merely a, “model” of “towns that might have been,” “had Chinese laborers not been excluded from the United States after 1882.”⁴⁷ It is the ‘non-academic’ photographer of the project who clearly saw the, “single men … who

⁴⁶ The transcripts are to be found in the Asian-American Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley: ARC 2000/62, Judy Yung, Angel Island Oral History Project, 1975-1990.

⁴⁷ Gillenkirk, *Bitter Melon*, p.18.



planned one day to return to China” and how, “they were separated from their dreams.”⁴⁸

In Hawaii also, a number of major oral history projects were aimed specifically at people of Chinese background and therefore often interviewed the sons and daughters of people born in the *qiaoxiang*.⁴⁹ These interviews rarely reveal anything related to *qiaoxiang* links or the role these played in the lives of interviewee’s parents. The few references there are, only underling opportunities missed due to a focus within national (state) borders.⁵⁰

A number of works using oral history techniques have also appeared in Australia, including some that had success in eliciting details of *qiaoxiang* links. A study of the involvement of Chinese Australian’s in the defence forces and another investigating rural stores in northern New South Wales, by allowing participants to speak for themselves were, like the Locke interviews, able to reveal much about *qiaoxiang* links.⁵¹ The rural stores study in particular, was able to establish the significance of *qiaoxiang* links in the lives of the families and the stores over generations. This study concluded that “visits to and contacts with China were an integral part of the lives of Chinese-Australians living in the district”.⁵² Not all oral history studies in Australia have been as successful in this respect, however.⁵³

From the 1980s, studies of business and migrant networks, inspired by expanding Chinese economic and migratory activities began to appear.⁵⁴ New concepts such as,

⁴⁸ Gillenkirk, *Bitter Melon*, p.14 and p.16.

⁴⁹ Projects conducted by the Centre for Oral History, University of Hawaii such as, *Waikiki, 1900-1985: Oral Histories*, Vol. I-IV, June 1985; *Remembering Kakaako: 1910-1950*, Vol. I-II, Nov. 1978 and *Waipio: Mano Wai – An Oral History Collection*, Vol. I-II, Dec. 1978. Within each collection interviews are divided according to ethnic background.

⁵⁰ One can only speculate on what the missing interviews from the 1970s might have contained, see n.31 above.

⁵¹ Morag Jeanette Loh, *Dinky-di: the contributions of Chinese immigrants and Australians of Chinese descent to Australia's defence forces and war efforts 1899-1988* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989) and Wilton, Chinese Voices, Australian Lives.

⁵² Wilton, Chinese Voices, Australian Lives, p.34. Chapter 9 focuses on the relationship with China.

⁵³ For example, Diana Giese, *Astronauts, Lost Souls & Dragons* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), is an example of how a lack of context results in little about *qiaoxiang* links being revealed.

⁵⁴ For example, Wang Gungwu, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991) and Anthony Reid (Ed.), *Sojourners and Settlers: histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen & Unwin, 1996); Aihwa



‘Chinese diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’, were often adopted or adapted along with efforts to transcend ‘nation-state’ histories and assumptions.⁵⁵ In such studies, the historical background to the ‘Chinese diaspora’, particularly its non-economic aspects, received little attention, nor were links with the *qiaoxiang* or the motivations for the development of a Chinese diaspora considered.⁵⁶ In these works merchants are studied almost exclusively while the ‘diaspora’ concept itself is insufficient to enable the nation-state perspectives of the source material to be transcended.

Two examples can be given to illustrate the limitations of research focused upon merchants only and of the difficulties of using material based on ‘nation-state’ perspectives. A recent study of Chinese merchants in the Philippines and their impact on Amoy demonstrates the limitations of the ‘merchants only’ approach.⁵⁷ James Cook does excellent research to reveal the links between Fujian merchants who earned money in the Philippines and the city of Xiamen (廈門), to which many returned and invested. However, his focus on merchants gives the impression that only merchants went overseas from Fujian province and that on return these wealthy individuals had nothing to do with their *qiaoxiang*, preferring to settle only in Xiamen.⁵⁸ Continuing links with their *qiaoxiang* are ignored, or if they did have none, no reasons are given for this. No hint is given in this work of the proportions of merchants to non-merchants, nor of the proportion of either group who may have had links with their villages. The *qiaoxiang* are simply left out of account.⁵⁹

Ong and Donald M. Nonini (Eds), *Ungrounded Empires. The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Douw, *Qiaoxiang Ties*; Leo Douw and Peter Post (Ed.), *South China: State, Culture and Social Change during the 20th century* Proceedings of the Colloquium, Amsterdam 22-24/5/1995 (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996) and Pan Lynn, *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (London: Cuzon Press, 1999).

⁵⁵ For an account of the development of ‘transnational’ concepts see, Linda Basch, *Nations Unbound* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994), pp.3-9.

⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that these business network studies do not have a problem with the use of the term ‘sojourner’. In fact, they tend to emphasise this aspect of the movement as an explanation for the existence of the diaspora in the absence of more detailed historical background. See in particular, Douw, “The Chinese Sojourner Discourse”, *Qiaoxiang Ties*, pp.22-44 and Wang Gungwu, *Joining the Modern World. Inside and Outside China* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2000), p.17.

⁵⁷ James A. Cook, *Bridges to Modernity: Xiamen, overseas Chinese and Southeast Coastal Modernization, 1843-1937* (University of California, San Diego, Ph.D., 1998).

⁵⁸ He even states this explicitly at one point about those who went overseas in general, with no ‘merchant’ qualification, Cook, *Bridges to Modernity*, p.132.

⁵⁹ For an account that makes some mention of “Xiamen and its hinterland” see Yifeng Dai, “Overseas migration and the economic modernisation of Xiamen City during the twentieth century” in Douw *South China*, pp.159-168.



More recently, an effort was made to provide historical background to the Chinese diaspora in Australia.⁶⁰ This effort by Jock Collins, resulted, however, in no more than the juxtaposition in time of events and history either side of the division made by World War II. The nation-state perspectives of his sources for pre-WWII Chinese Australian history gave him no capacity, real or theoretical, to make connections with contemporary events or networks. He was unable to make references to *qiaoxiang* or to provide motivations and aims other than making money and an unexplained determination to settle in Australia. Australian laws and discrimination, as in most nation-state based studies, are seen as the main determinants of what people do. The only conclusion possible from such an account is that, apart from the ability to label the participants ‘Chinese’, there seemingly is no historical connection between Australia’s contemporary Chinese diaspora and its earlier Chinese history.

With their focus on contemporary global economics and lack of historical background, studies of the Chinese diaspora have paralleled but had little direct impact upon research of the Chinese within destinations such as Australia or the United States. These previously separate fields of research have begun to have more in common with consideration of the role of the *qiaoxiang* by researchers in the destinations. In particular, three recent works have begun to contribute much needed historical perspective and background in this area.⁶¹ Madeline Hsu has been the first to research the history of Chinese families in both their *qiaoxiang* and a destination. Adam McKeown attempts to escape nation-states through a global perspective with research among Chinese communities in Peru, Hawaii and Chicago. While Yong Chen has given us a detailed history of Chinese people in San Francisco that attempts to place this history within a ‘trans-Pacific’ context.

Hsu uses *qiaokan* (僑刊, magazines for Chinese overseas), published in the Pearl River Delta’s Taishan County in the 1920s and 1930s, to detail how families in this *qiaoxiang* fared while their sons, husbands, brothers and fathers were in the United

⁶⁰ Jock Collins, “Chinese Entrepreneurs The Chinese Diaspora in Australia”, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, Vol.8, No. 1/2, 2002, pp.113-133.

⁶¹ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*; McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change* and Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*.



States. For the first time glimpses are received of both sides of a history so often written from the perspective of a single nation. Unfortunately, Hsu does not entirely escape the boundaries of place, despite or perhaps because of, her adoption of transnationalism as a concept. Hsu's subject is Taishan families, yet her main conceptualisation is still the nation, leading to the nation defining the history, rather than the people themselves, their families or their *qiaoxiang*.⁶² As a result of this place-based (United States) perspective, Hsu places much emphasis on the impact of legal restrictions; “Exclusion laws trapped Taishanese Americans into an endless commute between jobs in the United States and families left behind in China.”⁶³ Hsu identifies the concern to be found in the literature of the Chinese in America about the “failure to ‘become’ American” but claims that this “need to either apologize or celebrate has dissipated”.⁶⁴ Despite this, Hsu still concludes that because, “Chinese found it difficult to settle permanently in such a hostile environment, they continued to look toward China as their home”.⁶⁵ This conclusion is still based on the ‘border guard’ view that, ‘getting in’ and settling is natural and that deviations from this must be ‘explained’ by something in a destination that prevents this from happening. For Hsu, *qiaoxiang* related motivations and circumstances are still not considered as significant as those in the United States.

McKeown also feels that nation-state concepts need to be escaped and attempts to do so through a global perspective. Three Chinese communities, Chicago, Hawaii and Peru, are examined in order to show that their history can only be understood as an interaction of local histories, migration networks and global trends. “Migration” for McKeown is a matter of networks and links across these networks that exist apart from the territories and nations in which their activities take place. The significance of China is recognised, but understanding solely in terms of “China-based assumptions” is firmly rejected.⁶⁶ The result is an interesting study that does much to avoid both the narrowness of nation-state studies and the ahistorical approach of “Diasporic Perspectives”. However, in saying little about the role of the *qiaoxiang*, McKeown cannot provide much in the way of motivation or explanation for

⁶² Her period is bounded for example by the enactment of laws in a nation-state, 1882 to 1943.

⁶³ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.89.

⁶⁴ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.6-7.

⁶⁵ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.88.



responses in various locations. His suggested broader context in which, “migration” for sojourners is seen as “a source of profit and a site of self-reproducing transnational circulation”, is certainly an improvement on most nation-state perspectives.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, much more needs to be said if motives for this “transnational circulation” are to be better understood.

Yong Chen, in writing a history of the Chinese in San Francisco, recognises that such a history cannot be understood without acknowledging that family and other ties with the *qiaoxiang* were significant. In doing so Chen is able to present a history of the Chinese in a single location that does more than make Chinese people victims of discriminatory laws and adds significant dimensions to our understanding of this history. However, Chen is reluctant to give the *qiaoxiang* any priority, he labels the ties ‘trans-Pacific’ and the Chinese community in San Francisco is referred to as a “Pacific Rim community”. These merely descriptive labels are seemingly designed to present the relationship between San Francisco and the other side of the Pacific, as equal. In fact, for Chen, the San Francisco community cannot be a “true Pacific Rim community” until sufficient roots are established in San Francisco. Those who leave San Francisco and of course those who never came are absent from this history. The result is that like McKeown, Chen cannot fully explain people’s motivations or why they bother maintaining these trans-Pacific ties.

Gaps in the Literature

It is of course unfair to simply accuse other researchers of not writing about ones own topic and a review of the literature against new or at least alternative perspectives run this risk. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to point out that certain aspects of history have not been given their full weight in otherwise excellent research. This it is argued is the case here. The works by Hsu, McKeown and Chen are valuable contributions to our understanding of the history of the movement of peoples to the Pacific destinations, each in their own way attempting to escape nation-state perspectives. However, none of the three give the *qiaoxiang* sufficient

⁶⁶ McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, p.4.

⁶⁷ McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, p.10.



weight and this is necessary before an adequate understanding of the role of the *qiaoxiang* and the links between them and the destinations can be achieved.

To achieve an adequate understanding of the role of the *qiaoxiang* it is necessary to consider and to draw upon sources in the *qiaoxiang*. Such sources will enable the development of a *qiaoxiang* perspective as a counter-balance to nation-state perspectives which have dominated Chinese American and Chinese Australian history. By doing so, those who returned to the *qiaoxiang*, motivations based on the *qiaoxiang*, and activities that only took place in the *qiaoxiang*, can all be incorporated into this history. National histories will continue to be written, but such histories can be better informed and not leave out sizeable proportions of people's lives simply because they lie across political borders.

The earliest ‘investigation and report’ literature of governments and missionaries adopted hostile or at best patronising attitudes, which revolved around border issues of Chinese access to certain politically defined territories. This literature saw the Chinese as a ‘problem’, social, political or religious, that needed to be ‘explained’, in order to deal with it. Sociological studies continued these attitudes by focusing on assimilation, a border issue of another kind. More recent researchers have striven to refute the racist assumptions and conclusions of previous literature, but rarely have they attempted to re-think the issues themselves. Chinese people could be victims of racist laws or heroic resisters, but not it seems, people who may have actually made choices for their own reasons that were offensive to the ‘border guards’.

An essential aspect of the *qiaoxiang* perspective therefore is the ‘legitimacy’ of the choices and motivations based on the *qiaoxiang*. To return or settle, to maintain a family in the *qiaoxiang* or to bring them by whatever means into a destination, are not activities that require defence or explanation in terms of national identity, migration norms or assimilation politics. Once this is accepted then broader and in many cases simpler explanations, for the attitudes and activities of those involved in the movement can be seen.



Research based on ‘border guard’ issues and the perspective of the nation-state also have a tendency to focus on activities within defined territories and to see the act of ‘getting in’ to a specific territory as all important. Continuing links with places of origin, including return, and motivations not centered on one-way migration and settlement, are either neglected or interpreted as the result of destination laws and prejudice. Rarely are these seen as choices that people might make according to their own ideals. The links that were set up between the *qiaoxiang* and destinations provided people with a range of choices. That these choices were influenced and limited by destination laws and prejudice cannot be denied. In this thesis, however, it will be argued that the role of destination laws and prejudice, while undoubtedly significant, are only part of an adequate interpretation of the history of the movement.

Research of the Chinese diaspora, by definition, is less confined by nation-state perspectives. Diaspora studies have revealed much about the movements of Chinese people, but in focusing on a minority who were merchants or directly involved in commercial networks, they have failed to consider the wider context. Those who returned without establishing businesses or families in the destinations are generally neglected, while merchants, settlers and the destination-born, dominate in studies of the Chinese diaspora. Often the impression given is that the Chinese diaspora was intended to set up a marketing and networking structure. In reality the diaspora was simply one result of the overall movement and it is a *qiaoxiang* perspective, it is argued, that provides the context within which the Chinese diaspora can be best understood.

Selecting a *qiaoxiang*

In order to achieve an adequate *qiaoxiang* perspective a single *qiaoxiang* has been chosen, that of the Pearl River Delta county of Zhongshan (中山), and within this, the district of Long Du (隆都).⁶⁸ By focusing on a narrow range of *qiaoxiang* the aim

⁶⁸ Zhongshan county or *xian* (縣) was known as Xiangshan (香山) until 1925 and Long Du district has also undergone many name changes. To avoid confusion, ‘Zhongshan’ and ‘Long Du’ will be the terms used throughout this thesis. For a complete list of these changes for Long Du from 1152 to 1986 see, Zhongshanshi Shaxizhen Renmin Zhengfu Bian 中山市沙溪鎮人民政府編, *Shaxizhen zhi* 沙溪鎮志 (Shaxi Town Gazetteer), (Zhongshanshi: Huacheng chubanshe, 中山市: 花城出版社, Zhongshan City Huacheng Publishing, 1999), p.56. *Xian* is usually translated as county but is also translated as district. Here county is used and district is used only as an area within a county.



is to provide depth and the capacity for sufficiently detailed analysis to allow a broad range of participants to be included in this history. Included by this approach are those often neglected, such as women in the villages, those who returned permanently and those who did not attain or aspire to attain, merchant status. A focus on a single *qiaoxiang* also allows time consuming oral history techniques to be utilised more effectively. In keeping with a *qiaoxiang* perspective, it follows that Sydney, San Francisco and Honolulu and their respective hinterlands are the main destinations to be investigated, just as they were the main destinations for the people of Zhongshan and Long Du between 1849 and 1949.⁶⁹

Long Du has many interesting features that make it a suitable choice for the in-depth research proposed by this thesis. Long Du is a distinct and easily identifiable *qiaoxiang*. The people of this area speak a dialect separate from the surrounding Cantonese speaking people of most of Zhongshan and have usually formed their own organisations in the destinations. Long Du was also a *qiaoxiang* that sent a high proportion of its people to the destinations and whose records and oral testimony can therefore be easily compared to records in the destinations. Records in the immigration files of Australia and the United States, for example, regularly mention Long Du villages such as Long Tou Wan (龍頭環) and Shen Ming Ting (申明亭).

Not only were the majority of *huaqiao* from Guangdong or Fujian Provinces but most travelled to the *Nanyang* (南洋, South-East Asia). The role of Australia and the United States (including Hawaii), in the movement of people from the Pearl River Delta, in terms of numbers, was relatively minor. Chinese people in Australia overall, were no more than 5% of the total movement, and the United States with Hawaii, not more than 15%.⁷⁰ However, figures at the provincial level can be misleading and Australia's proportion of a county such as Zhongshan may have been over 15%, and within Long Du and villages within this district, much higher. Zhongshan was the

⁶⁹ Pacific destinations such as Peru, Canada and Mexico were also of major significance to people of Zhongshan and by the 1920s there were probably many more Zhongshan people in Peru than the US and Australia combined. However these destinations did not have continuous links from the mid-nineteenth century and all were of much less significance for Long Du people. Comparative studies involving these destinations would be of great interest.

⁷⁰ Lynn Pan (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (London: Curzon Press, 1999), Table 2.2, p.62 and Zhu Guohong, "A Historical Demography of Chinese Migration", *Social Sciences in China*, No.4, Winter 1991, pp.57-84.



county of origin for nearly 80% of Hawaii's Chinese and Long Du provided around 25% of these.⁷¹ At times, from 20% to 40% of Sydney's *huaqiao* population were from Zhongshan with most of these from Long Du. Zhongshan people in San Francisco ranged from over 30% to 10% of the total Chinese population over the period under examination, with Long Du also a significant proportion of these.⁷² Such figures make the *qiaoxiang* of Zhongshan and Long Du sufficiently prominent players to make their study a worthwhile contribution to this overall history.

Finally, Zhongshan is not Taishan County or even part of the Siyi (四邑) group of Pearl River Delta counties.⁷³ This reason for focusing on Zhongshan is due to the relative abundance of studies on people from the Siyi and Taishan in particular.⁷⁴ This abundance has been because people from these counties predominate in the United States, especially California. The people of Zhongshan County and Long Du district, while a relatively small *qiaoxiang* group in the United States, are not insignificant and their presence in larger proportions in Hawaii and Sydney make them an excellent choice for “trans-Pacific” research.

Definitions

Before investigation of the *qiaoxiang* links can proceed, it is necessary to define a number of terms that will be used in this thesis. Firstly, who was it that did the moving? A *qiaoxiang* perspective suggests that generalisations about ‘the Chinese’ should not be made too freely. Among people from ten or so counties (out of 90), from a single province (out of 18), and for whom dialect, village and family groupings were considered of prime importance, how accurate or useful is a label such as ‘Chinese’? A Chinese word for those that travel and live outside their native place is *huaqiao* (華僑) in Mandarin or *wah kiu* in Cantonese. *Huaqiao* or “Chinese

⁷¹ Based on figures in *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929)

⁷² See Table 1.2: *Qiaoxiang* distribution as percentage of total *huaqiao*, p.62.

⁷³ See Map 1.2: Pearl River Delta Counties, p.66.

⁷⁴ For example, Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*; Woon, “An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area”; Yu, “Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940”; Cheng, “Chinese emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Toisan” and Zheng, “Shijiu shiji mo Taishan qiaoxiang de xingcheng ji qi pouxi”, pp.33-39. These do not include studies actually based on Taishan sources that simply refer to ‘the Chinese’.



who reside away from home” is the word that most closely corresponds to the English phrase ‘overseas Chinese’.⁷⁵

Another term people used to refer to themselves was simply *lü* (旅), to travel or be a traveler. This term, with its implications of temporary absence from home, was used to describe oneself as in, “a Sydney traveler” or to describe others as in, “a small Luson traveller”.⁷⁶ It was also used to describe the places to which people went, as in “traveler’s residences”, to head a list of overseas locations, and in titles of associations as in, “Sydney Merchant Travelers Association”.⁷⁷ To use the word ‘traveler’ to refer to people living for decades in one place may be stretching a point too far in English, however. Instead, *huaqiao* is used in its literal meaning, without regard for its historical and/or political usage, to refer to people of Chinese origin, largely from the Pearl River Delta, who moved to overseas destinations in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.⁷⁸

A feature of Australia and the United States is that they are and consider themselves to be ‘immigrant’ societies. People who step onto their shores are described as ‘migrants’ and most activities associated with their presence are perceived in these terms, including those of Chinese people. The assumption of this thesis, however, is that there was an intention to return to the *qiaoxiang* that does not easily fit within this traditional migrant/settler framework.⁷⁹ These considerations make the use of the term ‘migration’ and its associated terms ‘immigration’ and ‘emigration’ problematic. These terms often carry with them images derived from European migration of

⁷⁵ Huang Chongyan 黃重言, “Yanjiu huaqiao shi de jidian yijian” 研究華僑史上的幾點意見 (A few comments about researching overseas Chinese history), *Huaqiao lunwen shi* 華僑論文史 (Overseas Chinese History Thesis), No.1, April 1982, pp.24-28. Both *huaqiao* and ‘overseas Chinese’ have a variety of meanings with historical and political implications. The best discussion of the general history of the term *huaqiao*, its political implications and its changing meanings is by Wang Gungwu, “South China perspective’s on overseas Chinese” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* No.13, 1984, pp.69-84. Also Chung, “Mobilization Politics”, pp.46-7.

⁷⁶ *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 19 July 1899, p.2 and Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁷⁷ 隆都僑報 (*Long Du Overseas Chinese News*), No.4, May 1947, p.15 and Tan Renjie 譚仁杰, “Guo Shun Zhuanlue” 郭順傳略 (A brief biography of Guo Shun), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.24, 1992, p.88.

⁷⁸ An objection to my literal usage of the term *huaqiao* is the strong political overtones it carried due to its use by the Nationalists. However this could also be said of the English term ‘overseas Chinese’.

⁷⁹ A framework the validity of which is being challenged, see for example, Dirk Hoerder, and Leslie Page Moch, (Eds) *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives*. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996).



family movement, permanent settlement, assimilation and nation building. To use the same terms to discuss people not necessarily involved in any of these things is to begin with too many assumptions.

People who came from south China were not the only ones to return to their places of origin after a period of time in the United States or Australia. At the same time, many *huaqiao* from the earliest period did settle permanently in the destinations. Nevertheless, the intention of the majority of people, when departing their Pearl River Delta villages, was to permanently return at some point. While it is difficult and perhaps pedantic not to use the term ‘migration’ when discussing large-scale movements of people, this thesis will only use it as equivalent to ‘movement’ and in general, the term ‘movement’ is preferred. The terms immigration and emigration will not be used at all.

Problems associated with the use of nation-state concepts have been raised earlier including, as one researcher has stated, the “inability to go beyond nationalist concepts”.⁸⁰ In an attempt to go beyond these concepts and in keeping with the *qiaoxiang* perspective, ‘ports’ and their hinterlands will be the main conceptual focus in dealing with the destinations. The period 1849 to 1949 was dominated by ships and ports and it was to the *bu* (埠, port) or *fow* in Cantonese, that the *huaqiao* traveled.⁸¹ The term ‘Pacific Ports’ is used to refer to the three ports and their hinterlands under investigation: Honolulu (檀香山, *Tanxiangshan*) and the Hawaiian Islands; San Francisco (舊金山, Old Gold Mountain) and California; and Sydney (雪梨) and New South Wales/Queensland, rather than the nation-states, Australia or the United States.

Time frame

The timeframe of this thesis is the one hundred years from 1849 to 1949. That is, from the first major movements of Pearl River Delta residents to the Pacific Ports that began with the Californian gold rush, to the first major limiting of this

⁸⁰ McKeown, Chinese Migrants Among Ghosts, p.9.



movement, one that arose from China rather than destinations circumstances. The emphasis is on choices and decisions directly related to the *qiaoxiang*, rather than those of the destinations and their restrictive laws which have tended to determine the time frame of most studies.⁸² Time frames based on the enactment of restrictive legislation in the destinations assume the primacy of these laws and thereby downplay the role of *qiaoxiang* factors. Also, as the gradual evolution of *qiaoxiang* links is the subject of this thesis and this occurred over several generations, the long time frame allows these generational and *qiaoxiang* patterns to be more adequately explored.

Sources

A work such as this, spanning a long time period and many locations, necessarily utilises a wide range of sources. The early period of this thesis, from the mid to late 19th century must rely mainly on European observers in both the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations for information about the *huaqiao*. Sources based on the *huaqiao* themselves in this period are usually limited to occasional witness testimony in government inquiries. From the late 19th century to the end of the period, Chinese language sources become more plentiful, beginning with Chinese language newspapers published in the destinations and then local newspapers published in the *qiaoxiang*. Around 1920, *qiaokan*, magazines published in the *qiaoxiang* and aimed specifically at the *huaqiao*, become a major source.⁸³ Also from this period are the extensive archives generated by the administration of the restrictive laws that monitored the movement of the *huaqiao* in and out of the destinations. These provide not only evidence of bureaucratic procedures but glimpses of private aspects of the *huaqiao* not available elsewhere due to the existence in the files of letters, interviews and various other randomly collected individual materials.⁸⁴

⁸¹ For example, Samfow (三埠, No.3 Port or Sacramento), Sinifow (雪梨埠, Sydney Port) and even Wahfow (華埠, Chinatown) are terms regularly used. Modern Mandarin defines *bu* as port but Cantonese, certainly in the 19th century, defined *fow* more broadly as mart or place.

⁸² This period also covers the core period of ‘labouring’ *huaqiao* as defined by Wang. According to Wang previous to this period the merchants dominate and subsequent to this period begins migration in the ‘traditional’ sense. See n.74.

⁸³ Sydney’s *Tung Wah News* is the earliest complete example of a Chinese language paper from one of the Pacific Ports, although there are scattered examples of papers published in San Francisco as early as 1854. For titles of these and Zhongshan newspapers and *qiaokan* see the bibliography.

⁸⁴ Photos, statistical data on ages, patterns of movement and occupation are just a few examples of what can be found in these archives. For an analysis of Australian immigration files see Michael



There are also many sources that can be described as oral history, including the field notes of two representatives of the Chicago School, Paul Sui and Clarence Glick. Both of these researchers in the 1920s and 1930s, took verbatim notes of conversations with many *huaqiao*. Oral history is of course also available today and interviews were obtained with many sons and daughters of *huaqiao* in the villages of the *qiaoxiang* and in the destinations. In addition, oral sources are also available in many *qiaoxiang* based journals published since the late 1970s, in contemporary *qiaokan* and local *Wenshi* (文史), or ‘Cultural History’ journals.⁸⁵

Together, these sources provide evidence of *qiaoxiang* links stretching over generations and around the Pacific. Some have been used before and interpreted within the framework of nation-state histories. Interpreted from a ‘*qiaoxiang* perspective’, these sources can be used to develop a picture of intentions and motivations focused on the *qiaoxiang* and of choices and opportunities made available through the existence of the *qiaoxiang* links. Sources embedded in a nation-state perspective can be placed in a broader context and re-interpreted to provide a better understanding of the history of the *huaqiao* and their *qiaoxiang* links.

Thesis Outline

Destination Qiaoxiang is a history of the links that were established and maintained between the villages of the Pearl River Delta and the Pacific Ports from 1849 to 1949. It seeks to provide this history from the perspective of the *qiaoxiang* as an alternative to nation-state perspectives. Chapter 1, *Wading 10,000 li*, begins with an outline of the evolution of the links and interactions between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations over the period. Chapter 2, *Because in the Tang Mountains we have a big house*, examines the *qiaoxiang* of Long Du as a case-study of the impact of the *qiaoxiang* links on a *qiaoxiang*. *He would have to send money*, Chapter 3, investigates what the links consisted of, how they were established and the tangible mechanisms for maintaining them over distance and time. Tangible elements cannot explain

Williams, “Guide for tracing a Chinese ancestor: Using Australian Archives (NSW) files of the Immigration (Restriction) Act” (Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation, 2001, <http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/guide.shtml>) and for those of the United States, Lee, At America’s Gates.



everything about *qiaoxiang* links and so Chapter 4, *Returning Home with Glory*, examines the motivations for these links to be found in income and prestige, the one sustaining and the other justifying efforts over generations. The links created choices and Chapter 5, *Things did not work out that way*, investigates how these opportunities led to changes in the *qiaoxiang* links. The final chapter, *Anglo-Saxonizing Machines*, discusses the contributions an awareness of the *qiaoxiang* links makes to an understanding of the history of the *huaqiao* in the destinations that differ from those based on nation-state perspectives.

It is the argument of this thesis that the people of the villages of the Pearl River Delta developed, over the generations between 1849 and 1949, organisations and patterns of communication linking their families and *qiaoxiang* to the destinations to which they moved in search of income. These links were created not to ‘migrate’, to build up a ‘Chinese Diaspora’ or to establish ‘transnational’ families, but to ensure the survival and prosperity of the family in the *qiaoxiang*. To return was the goal for most on setting out and return a majority of people did, over the greater part of the period. Research based on nation-state concepts and their concerns with migration, national identity, racism and associated legal and social responses, it is argued, has obscured much about the movement of people and the *qiaoxiang* links. Additionally, the narrow scope of nation-state perspectives has meant that a range of issues significant in the history of Chinese people overseas have been neglected. This is because such nation-state perspectives are dominated by a view of the movement of peoples from the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* as a process of ‘getting in’ and ‘staying in’, the viewpoint of a border guard. Efforts to keep people out and efforts to settle permanently loom large, while efforts to return or to maintain links with the *qiaoxiang* are minimised or ignored. *Destination Qiaoxiang*, by adopting a *qiaoxiang* perspective hopes to broaden the view through which nation-state and diaspora studies have seen the history of the movement of Pearl River Delta people between 1849 and 1949. It is hoped that nation-state and border guard preoccupations with restrictive laws and levels of entry can be seen within a context of personal motivations and long-term intentions. A context not focused on nation-states but on the places of origin, the *qiaoxiang*.

⁸⁵ See bibliography for details.



Chapter 1: Wading 10,000 li

At the end of the 19th century, an article in the Sydney based *Tung Wah News*, referred to the “bitterness and sorrow” suffered by those who were “separated from family by wading 10,000 li to seek their fortune”.¹ At the time this was written Pearl River Delta *huaqiao* had been seeking their fortunes around the Pacific for two generations and many would continue to do so for at least another two generations. Who were these people who waded “10,000 li”? How many did so and to where did they go? This chapter begins to answer these questions by describing the movement as a whole and the position of the Pearl River Delta Counties and the three Pacific Ports within it. Some of the major characteristics of the movement are described, followed by a chronology of the *qiaoxiang* links, the purpose of which is to provide a background to developments in the *qiaoxiang* and the reactions of the societies of the Pacific Ports to the movement as a whole.

Numbers & distribution - by *qiaoxiang* & port

The movement of people from the Pearl River Delta that occurred in the century or so before 1949 was not exclusively an overseas movement, as: “Few outsiders realize the extent to which internal migration in China has in ‘normal’ times been a recourse of poverty-stricken and oppressed peasants.”² Nevertheless, within the broad context of mobility in search of income or escape from hardship, it is movement outside of China that is the main consideration of this thesis.

Two provinces, Guangdong and Fujian, consistently supplied the bulk of those who moved overseas. However, the places people from these provinces went to and the numbers who did so, varied greatly over time. However, even at their highest level, during the gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s, the three destinations of Australia, mainland United States and Hawaii were less than 20% of the total movement and significantly less at other times. By the late 1930s, there were over 8 million Chinese people living outside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Table 1.1 shows the estimated numbers at this time and their relative proportions.³ The three Pacific Ports

¹ *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 6 September 1899, p.2.

² Bruno Lasker, *Asia on the Move* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1945), p.36.

³ Table 1.1: Overseas Chinese, late 1930s, p.61.



considered in this thesis are a minor proportion of the total overseas movement. However, when these ‘China’ figures are looked at from a *qiaoxiang* perspective, a different picture emerges. Very few people from Fujian province went to Hawaii, the mainland United States or Australia. While within Guangdong province the regional variation in participation in the movement overseas was large.⁴ Those from Guangdong who went to the Pacific Ports came almost exclusively from 15 counties of the Pearl River Delta, with about 10 of these counties providing the great majority.⁵

Table 1.3 provides an estimate of the distribution by Pearl River Delta county of the *huaqiao* in the three Pacific Ports and Hong Kong.⁶ From this can be seen a number of significant variations. Hong Kong had a much wider range of Pearl River Delta counties represented compared to those in the Pacific Ports. People from Zhongshan County were by far the largest group in Hawaii; they also came to predominate in Sydney, but were always a minority in San Francisco. It is also interesting that the relative proportions of these Pearl River Delta counties did not remain the same throughout the period.

Between the three Pacific Ports under discussion the numbers of *huaqiao* also varied considerably and this is seen in Table 1.4.⁷ Although Sydney/NSW had much smaller numbers of *huaqiao* compared to Hawaii and California, it had a higher proportion of Zhongshan *huaqiao*. This meant that Sydney as a port played as significant role, as far as the *qiaoxiang* of Zhongshan County were concerned. By the 1920s the numbers of Zhongshan *huaqiao* in the Pacific Ports were about 18,000 in Hawaii, nearly 1,500 in NSW and more than 3,000 in California. Long Du *huaqiao* were the majority of Zhongshan people in both NSW and California but only 25% of the total of Zhongshan people in Hawaii.

From these figures it can be seen that the movement was not only large in numbers but also very diverse. This diversity was not random however and the people of specific *qiaoxiang* would usually focus on a relatively few destinations. Overall the

⁴ See Map 1.1: Guangdong counties participation in overseas movement, p.65.

⁵ See Map 1.2: Pearl River Delta Counties, p.66.

⁶ Table 1.2: *Qiaoxiang* distribution as percentage of total *huaqiao*, p.62.

⁷ Table 1.3: *Huaqiao* by Pacific Port, p.63.



huaqiao of the Pacific Ports were a small proportion of the total movement but were of significance for the Pearl River Delta counties and even more so for the county of Zhongshan. Zhongshan County and its *qiaoxiang* were also a small proportion of the *huaqiao* of San Francisco and California and studies using a nation-state perspective make little mention of them. But San Francisco, Sydney and Hawaii, from the perspective of Zhongshan County and even more so from that of the district of Long Du, were very significant.

Characteristics of the movement

Statistics can tell us more than how many people went where. One of the most significant characteristics of the movement was that it was of men, young men and men who mostly did not marry in the destinations, despite years spent living in them. Men, moreover, who regularly travelled back and forth and who often returned to the *qiaoxiang* after a life spent working in the destinations.

The maleness of the *huaqiao* was most obvious. Table 1.5 shows the slow growth in the proportion of females among the *huaqiao* in the three destinations.⁸ By 1910, for example, after more than two generations of movement, the percentage of women had only reached 20% in Hawaii and this was more than twice that of California and far higher than in NSW. Not only were the vast majority of *huaqiao* males, they were also young males. Good figures are not available for most of the destinations but a snapshot of the generation that arrived through Sydney Port prior to 1901 is available. According to these figures, on first arrival, almost 90% of *huaqiao* were aged between 16 and 30 years and 50% were aged between 11 and 20 years of age.⁹ A survey of United States immigration files found that 84% of entrants were aged between 14 and 44 years.¹⁰ For most *huaqiao*, the movement was a youthful enterprise to be undertaken, in a sense, as a lifetime career.

This movement of young men was also, unsurprisingly, a movement of unmarried men; men who usually waited until they could return to their villages to marry rather

⁸ Table 1.4: Proportions of female *huaqiao*, p.63.

⁹ Figures are based on immigration records analysed in Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, Appendix IV, Table 5, p.101. Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, Table 16, p.137, gives very similar figures for those going to the *nanyang*.

¹⁰ Lee, *At America's Gates*, p.46.



than seeking marriage in the destinations. One consequence of this was that the number of people born in the destinations, as a proportion of the *huaqiao*, remained low for most of the period and grew only gradually. As late as 1890, in all the Pacific Ports, less than 10% of the Chinese populations consisted of people who had been born there. Only in Hawaii did this figure grow fast enough to reach more than 50% by 1920, while it was still 20% or less in the other two Pacific Ports.¹¹

The most significant characteristic of the movement and one that complements the characteristics discussed so far, is that the *huaqiao* returned. This is to say, that the movement was throughout the period, a two-way movement. *Huaqiao* went back and forth regularly between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations. They did not flow in one direction and build up a community of settlers, though some certainly did this. Overall, most people travelled, stayed for a time and returned, then travelled again.

Clear figures are difficult to obtain but it is possible to get an idea of the extent of this two-way movement. Table 1.7 compares arrival and departure figures and departure figures with the total *huaqiao* population.¹² Arrival figures were often influenced by restrictive laws, but even during periods when they were not (before the 1880s), the departure figures are nearly always 60% or more of arrivals in all the Pacific Ports. Even fairly late in the period, in the 1920s and 1930s, in both Hawaii and the mainland United States, more than 25% of the *huaqiao* population was involved in movement back to the *qiaoxiang*. An appreciation of this two-way or interactive nature of the movement is essential to an understanding of the *qiaoxiang* links and is one often neglected by nation-state based studies.

Returnees and settlers

An aspect of this interactive or two-way movement is that most *huaqiao*, after living years in a destination, would return permanently to their *qiaoxiang*. Figures derived from the immigration statistics of the destinations are usually discussed only in terms of people attempting to enter the destinations or of restrictive laws stopping or at least reducing this. However, such interpretations ignore the underlying dynamic of the movement. This dynamic was a constant to-ing and fro-ing of people as they

¹¹ See Table 1.5: Births in destinations as percentage of total Chinese populations, p.64.

¹² Table 1.6: *Huaqiao* returns, p.64.



went about the business of the *qiaoxiang* links, including permanent return to the *qiaoxiang* as well as settlement in a destination.

Between 1882 and 1920, for example, *huaqiao* numbers in the United States fell from 105,000 to 61,000, a fall generally attributed to the introduction of restrictive immigration laws. However, the laws only reduced the number of new entries and did not directly cause departures. That the number of *huaqiao* fell was not due only to the restrictive laws but because many *huaqiao* were returning to their *qiaoxiang*, as they had always done. In the 1920s, the *huaqiao* population of the mainland United States began to rise again due to a combination of fewer *huaqiao* returning, more new arrivals and more destination-born. That is, the rise was the result of a combination of *qiaoxiang* and destination related factors. This rise occurred even though the restrictive laws were still in place and had in fact become more restrictive after 1924. Some of this growth is due to births in the destination but explanations for a reduced rate of return and increasing new arrivals, especially women, must also consider conditions in the *qiaoxiang*. Despite the fall in return rates, however, returns remained a significant aspect of the *qiaoxiang* links. As late as 1947, the Six Companies of San Francisco reported that of the 700 *huaqiao* a month going to China, a quarter did not come back to the United States.¹³

The steady return of *huaqiao* to their *qiaoxiang* is easiest to see in NSW due to the fewer number of new arrivals, legal or illegal, after 1901. In 1901, NSW had a Chinese population of 10,000 and between 1902 and 1949 a total of 4,800 people left and did not return despite holding the equivalent of a re-entry permit. In addition, a significant number of Chinese people regularly took ship out of Sydney without applying for this permit.¹⁴ In 1947, the total number of *huaqiao* who had been residents before 1901 was reported to be 1,900, and this figure would have included many who had been living in Queensland before 1901. A conservative estimate based on these figures, allowing for those who had died in NSW, suggests that at least 60% of *huaqiao* resident in NSW before 1901 ultimately retired to their villages. Another way of measuring rates of return is to compare the number of admissions over a period to the change in *huaqiao* numbers over that same period. Thus between

¹³ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 July 1947, p.11.

¹⁴ For the analysis of these figures see Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, p.64.



1910 and 1919 there were 50,000 admissions into the United States while the *huaqiao* population declined from 71,000 to 61,000. Between 1920 and 1929, nearly 76,000 *huaqiao* were admitted while the overall population rose by a little more than 13,000. These figures are even more remarkable when it is considered that in the same periods over 14,509 children and 3,182 wives entered. These wives and children undoubtedly contributed to the subsequent growth in the destination-born and a permanent population, but this was a growth limited by the number of returners to the *qiaoxiang*.

In NSW between 1871 and 1881, a period when no restrictions were in place, over 11,000 *huaqiao* arrived while the *huaqiao* population increased by less than three thousand from 7,220 to 10,205. Between 1881 and 1891 the population increased by less than another three thousand to 13,157 despite nearly 22,000 arrivals being recorded. In Hawaii, similar high rates of return can be seen. Between 1878 and 1884 the *huaqiao* population increased from 6,045 to 18,254 or by only 12,000 despite over 21,000 arrivals. Between 1885 and 1891, there were more than 9,000 arrivals but the *huaqiao* population of Hawaii declined by 1,500. From 1891 until 1900, this population increased by nearly 9,000, yet arrivals were over 22,000. From 1910 to 1930, Hawaii's population grew from 21,674 to 27,179 with most of this 5,500 increase attributed to those born in Hawaii, yet over this period nearly 8,000 arrivals are recorded.

Thus, a significant characteristic of the movement for most of the period considered by this thesis is that *huaqiao* were constantly returning to the *qiaoxiang*. This point is emphasised because it is an argument of this thesis that settlers or at least 'non-returnees' represent a minority throughout most of the period. That is, those who made up the 'permanent' Chinese residents of the destinations were those who, for various reasons, deviated from the predominant pattern of return to the *qiaoxiang*. It is within this context, rather than that of struggling permanent settlers, that the history of the *huaqiao* should be seen.



Chronological framework

The following chapters will examine the *qiaoxiang* links thematically and so it is useful to have a chronological framework. Discussed in particular are reasons for the responses of those in the Pacific Ports to the *huaqiao*, developments in China outside the Pearl River Delta and larger political and social developments of relevance to the *qiaoxiang* links. It is important also to keep in mind that the links between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations were not static but developed over time. Such developments this framework emphasises by dividing the years 1849 to 1949 into a number of periods.

The history of the *qiaoxiang* links begins with the gradual development of networks of movement and trade around the Pacific, including the Pearl River Delta, in the years before 1849. After 1849 the large-scale movement of *huaqiao* begins with the California gold rush and continues until the last large scale rush, that to the Palmer River in Queensland of 1877. Thereafter the movement begins to settle into a pattern built around the connections now established between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations. This stage is strongly influenced by the restrictions imposed by the destinations, as well as changes within China, which cumulate in the boycott and education reform year of 1905. The years between 1905 and the Japanese invasion in 1938 mark the high water mark of the *huaqiao* lifestyle. After this, the years of occupation and war bring the *qiaoxiang* links into crisis. The end of the Japanese War is followed by a period of renewal and rebuilding until the changes brought about by the new government in China after 1949.

Pacific Connections (before 1849)

The movement of thousands of Pearl River Delta villagers to the Californian and Australian gold fields after 1849 is the starting point of this history. But why were so many willing to leave their villages, why just then and why from only around the Pearl River Delta? Answers to these questions are to be found in developments in the Pearl River Delta and around the Pacific prior to 1849. The type of societies which dominated the Pacific Ports and hence the type of reaction they had to the arrival of large numbers of Chinese people, were also largely based on developments that occurred before 1849.



By the beginning of the 19th century, the Pearl River Delta region was already influenced by factors that would contribute to the movement of people after 1849. These included the links merchants from this area had established with the *Nanyang* (南洋, Southeast Asia) since the 12th century and the growth of the Canton Trade since the 16th century with Europeans who were restricted by Qing government policy to bases at Macao and Canton.¹⁵ In addition to merchants, many thousands of labourers had gone to the *Nanyang*, including to the British colony of Singapore, often using credit-tickets in order to do so.¹⁶ By the beginning of the 19th century the Pearl River Delta was an area where many lived who had a history of overseas travel. It was also an area in which a mechanism to enable those without money to travel was developed and for which contact with European traders was familiar. When trade networks in the Pacific began to include the north-west coast of America, the Hawaiian islands and the Australian colonies, it was unsurprising that traders and people of Canton and the Pearl River Delta were involved.

This involvement in Pacific trade networks included not only merchants but also seamen and others with skills, some of whom settled in these Pacific destinations. From Sydney's foundation trade with Canton was important, Commissioner Bigge, for example, reporting on this British colony in 1821, complained that the high level of tea drinking (considered a luxury by him), was due to "the existence of an intercourse with China from the foundation [in 1788] of the Colony ..." ¹⁷ A few years after Bigge's report, Mak Sai Ying (also known as John Shying), was the first Chinese person recorded to have arrived in Sydney Port. After a period spent farming,

¹⁵ For trade with the *Nanyang*, see Zheng Shanyu 鄭山玉, "Huaqiao yu hai shang sichou zhi lu - bufen qiaoxiang zupu zhong de haiwai yimin ziliaofenxi" 華僑與海上絲綢之路 – 部分僑鄉族譜中的海外移民資料分析 (Huaqiao and the Silk Road of the Sea - An analysis of overseas migration information of clan records in part of the emigrant communities), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), No.1, 1991, pp.23-30 and Wang Gungwu, *Short History of the Nanyang* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1959). On the 'Canton Trade', Cheong Weng Eang, *The Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese merchants in Sino-Western trade* (London: Curzon Press, 1997) and Wellington K.K. Chan, *Merchants, Mandarins, and Modern Enterprise in Late Ching China* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Centre, Harvard University, 1977)

¹⁶ Such "tickets" enabled people to take passage and repay the money after finding jobs on arrival. Wang Sing-wu, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration 1848-1888: with special reference to Chinese Emigration to Australia* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Centre, 1978), pp.5-6, cites a case of the use of credit-tickets in 1794 and of its use generally in Singapore in the 1820s and 1830s, pp.90-91, for an account of the 'ticket' itself and pp.112, that written contracts were "given up" due to British regulations.



Mak Sai Ying became in 1829, the publican of *The Lion*.¹⁸ At about this same time, on the opposite side of the Pacific, Chinese seamen and traders were in Monterey, Spanish California and Chinese Catholics were being buried in cemeteries on that coast.¹⁹ Chinese merchants had quickly shifted to the new centre of trade on the California coast after the 1847 annexation from Mexico, and hundreds were reported in San Francisco on the eve of the gold rush.²⁰ In the middle of the Pacific, the first production of sugar in Hawaii is credited to Chinese “sugar masters” as early 1802, and Chinese traders were plentiful there in the first half of the 19th century.²¹

While traders and others from Canton and the Pearl River Delta were making these Pacific connections, European traders were becoming more aggressive and determined to expand their trade with China, by force if necessary. When the Chinese government attempted to restrict the entry of opium this led to war with Britain, resulting in, among other things, the seizure of Hong Kong and the establishment of a number of treaty ports. The First Opium War (1839-1842) involved the presence of British troops in Zhongshan County, as well as the use of militia drawn from this and surrounding counties to undertake the defence of Canton. A number of clashes occurred between British troops and these local militias and their members would have carried tales of foreigners to their villages.²²

The most significant result of this increased interaction with Europeans was the British seizure of Hong Kong and the transfer to it of the European merchant houses previously based at Canton and Macao. A similar transfer of Chinese “shopmen” or

¹⁷ John Thomas Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales* (London: Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 1822), “Remarks on Distillation”, 28 January 1821.

¹⁸ Michael Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW* (Sydney: Heritage Office of NSW, 1999, <http://www.heritage.NSW.gov.au>), p.4.

¹⁹ “Chinese Catholics in America”, William Hoy Papers, Folder 33, ARC 2000/27, Asian-American Studies Library.

²⁰ *Chinese Repository*, Vol.XIX, June 1850, p.344 and *Alta California*, 10 May 1852, p.2.

²¹ Char Wai-Jane, “Chinese Merchant-Adventurers and Sugar Masters in Hawaii, 1802-1852”, *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Vol.VIII, 1974, pp.3-9 and Albert P. Taylor, “The Impress of Cathay in the Hawaiian Islands” *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), pp.5-6.

²² Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, fighting at “San-yuan-li” in Dongguan, pp.17-19; militia from Hsiang-shan (Zhongshan) defends Canton, p.38; local dislocation caused by war, p.62 and use of Tung-kuan and Hsin-an “braves” to fight the British, p.166. Also, Choi Chi-Cheng, Descent Group unification and segmentation in the coastal area of Southern China (University of Tokyo, Ph.D., 1987), British bombing in 1841, pp.41-42 and clashes in the war, pp.64-65.



small traders, who were used dealing with the European merchants, also followed.²³ As Hong Kong grew it offered opportunities not only to traders but also to labourers and so many people began to go to Hong Kong on a similar basis to those who had previously gone to Singapore and elsewhere in the *Nanyang*. That is, they were males seeking income to support families that remained in their *qiaoxiang*. By 1846, Hong Kong had a Chinese population of over 12,000.

Thus by the middle of the 19th century, the people of the Pearl River Delta had a knowledge of Europeans in both trade and war. They also had access to European shipping and to the colony of Hong Kong operating as a port independent of Chinese officials. Merchants, seamen and others from the Pearl River Delta had visited various Pacific Ports or were living in them. Such Pacific connections, running through Hong Kong and Canton, provide much of the explanation as to how the large scale movement of Pearl River Delta people to the Pacific Ports was able to occur after 1849. However, other factors are also needed to explain why people would have wished to participate in such travels.

Poverty, famine and flood would have provided ample motivations to seek outside incomes for the residents of the Pearl River Delta and such motivations have often been cited. However, such circumstances were not unique to the Pearl River Delta and so other factors more specific to the Pearl River Delta in the first half of the 19th century must be considered. These included the disruption caused by the foreign war, consequent heavier taxation, increased unemployment as the tea trade shifted north of Canton with the opening of the Treaty Ports and the impact of bankruptcy for many who had operated under the old Comprador system.²⁴ Revolts, said to be the result of triads, broke out in Zhongshan County and the county capital Shekki (石岐) was attacked in 1844.²⁵ These disturbances led to the first major influx of what the British described as a “better class” of Chinese into Hong Kong.²⁶

²³ Chan, *The Making of Hong Kong Society*, p.10.

²⁴ Freedman, *Lineage Organisation*, tea trade collapse, p.10; Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, unemployment and bankruptcy, p.100, revolts over tax collection, p.135.

²⁵ Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, triads strong in Zhongshan, p.136.

²⁶ “The Triad Society has committed fearful ravages, ... Many of the gentry have entered the community, ...” CO129/11, Davis to Stanley, 21 January 1845, pp.39-40.



Thus by 1849 a combination of factors meant that people of the Pearl River Delta were most likely to take up the opportunities offered by the California and Australian gold rushes. Poverty and serious disturbances alone, while always an aspect of motivation, cannot provide the whole explanation. Even when disturbances unique to the Pearl River Delta are considered, this area was not necessarily in a worse condition than most in China, including Fujian province, which also sent many people overseas. The most significant factor in establishing the link between the Pearl River Delta and the Pacific Ports would appear to be the developing network of trade and merchants located around the Pacific. As a result of these links, when the opportunities for income, labour recruitment or simply to assist impoverished relatives were created by the gold rushes, mechanisms, motives and opportunities coincided for the people of the Pearl River Delta to enable them to move around the Pacific. Shortly after the beginning of the Californian gold rush the number of Chinese people in California reached 17,000. By 1860, there were 25,000 Pearl River Delta people in Victoria, another 13,000 in NSW and nearly 35,000 in California.²⁷ The numbers of people from other regions of China were negligible.

That so few people from Fujian province in particular moved to the Pacific Ports also suggests the importance of merchant/trading links. Fujian merchants had long had links with overseas ports and merchants from this province had also early established themselves in Hong Kong. Also both Sydney and Hawaii imported contract labourers through Xiamen (Amoy). Fujian merchants however, including those who established themselves in Hong Kong, dealt mainly with the *Nanyang*, while the labourers had been contracted through non-Chinese trading firms. In the absence of merchants actually located in the Pacific Ports the mere existence of the gold rush opportunities, even when contract labourers were present, was insufficient to enable Fujian people to participate.

Arrival in the Pacific Ports was only part of the development of the *qiaoxiang* links, also of importance was the reaction to their arrival on the part of those who dominated these ports. What was the nature of the societies in the Pacific Ports to which these people travelled and why did they react the way that they did to the

²⁷ *Statistical View of the United States – Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854), pp.122-123 and Price, *The Great White Walls*, p.68 and p.77.



arrival of the *huaqiao*? By the middle of the 19th century, Europeans of mainly British decent dominated all three Pacific Ports politically and economically; they were Christian in religion and with a developing consciousness of being ‘white’. This had been true of Sydney since its foundation with the arrival of British settlers and convicts in 1788. New England missionaries and their planter descendants dominated Hawaii after they had turned the Hawaiian monarchy into a puppet under their control in the 1830s. And ‘Americans’ (again largely meaning white), had dominated California, politically and economically, after the seizure of this Mexican province in 1846 and its rapid incorporation into the United States federation.

In all three ports the politics of race and labour played an important role. All three had expropriated either native people or earlier settlers, and all three, prior to the gold rushes, were anxious to increase their wealth and productivity by utilising cheap, and if necessary, alien labour. Sydney and the colony of NSW, of which it was the capital, was the first to do so. NSW had been established as a prison with convicts providing the labour force for the first two generations. When convict transportation ceased in 1840, the colony began to suffer labour shortages, one solution to which was the contracting of Chinese labour. Contract labour had begun to arrive in the Colony of New South Wales in the 1840s and in Hawaii in the 1850s (in both cases through Xiamen) and it is probable that California also began to receive such labour.²⁸

Goldseekers (1849-1877)

By 1849, the scene was set, not only for the mass movement of Pearl River Delta people around the Pacific, but for the reaction to their arrival. In that year the developing contract labour trade was transformed by the discovery of gold which resulted in a large-scale movement of Chinese people not contracted to foreign

²⁸ Maxine Darnell, The Chinese Labour Trade to New South Wales, 1783-1853. (University of New England, Ph.D., 1997); Clarence E. Glick, “The Voyage of the Thetis and the First Chinese Contract Laborers brought to Hawaii”, *Hawaiian Journal of History*, 9 (1975) pp.135-39. There is evidence of scattered Chinese people contracted as servants, a cook and as miners in California, see for example, Ping Chui, Chinese Labour in California, 1850-1880 (University of Wisconsin, Ph.D., 1987), pp.11-12 and Barth, *Bitter Strength*, p.57, quotes an observer in 1849 reporting “numerous Chinese”, “bound by contract as laborers” to Americans in San Francisco. These three ports were not the only ones to which Chinese people went, Peru and Cuba are well recorded and between 1843 and 1853 a total of 2,107 “coolies” are reported to have gone to the British West Indies, see Fred Hitchens, *The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (Philadelphia, 1931), p.324.



employers but moving instead under various arrangements usually referred to as credit-ticket.²⁹

The first period of the *qiaoxiang* links and the first generation of *huaqiao* in the Pacific Ports can be defined as that which went in search of gold or associated income opportunities from 1849 to about 1877. The Californian gold rush (1849) was the first, followed by that in Victoria (1853), New South Wales (1859) and finally Queensland (1877). During this period, the *huaqiao* established links between the destinations and their *qiaoxiang*. *Huaqiao* numbers rose and fell in this period due as much to alternative income opportunities, as to hostility or restrictive laws in the destinations. *Huaqiao* numbers began to rise towards the end of this period, as business and occupational niches established in the Pacific Ports replaced declining income from mining.

In 1849, just prior to the gold rush, there were perhaps 300 Chinese people in San Francisco, merchants but also carpenters, house builders and hotel keepers.³⁰ By 1854, there were 17,000 Chinese, mostly from the Pearl River Delta, recorded in California.³¹ In Australia, apart from Mak Sai Ying, only a handful of Chinese people are recorded before the Amoy (Xiamen) contractors and the gold rush.³² With the discovery of gold, similar rapid rises in numbers occurred, by 1855 there were 18,000 Chinese people in Victoria and by 1862 nearly 15,000 in NSW.³³ Many of these *huaqiao* would have come on credit-tickets similar to those used to travel to Singapore and elsewhere earlier in the century. Honolulu also had a strong Chinese merchant community by 1849 but while Hawaii first began to import Chinese people

²⁹ See n.17 above.

³⁰ *Alta California*, 10 December 1849, p.1; *Chinese Repository*, Vol.XIX, September 1850, p.510 and Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado; or, Adventures in the path of empire: comprising a voyage to California, via Panama; life in San Francisco and Monterey; pictures of the gold region, and experiences of Mexican travel* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1861), p.111, p.139 and p.327.

³¹ *Statistical View of the United States*, pp.122-123.

³² See Wang, *The Organisation of Chinese Immigration*, pp.263-264 for a list. The Ou Yang family also claim to have sent a member to Australia in 1837, Ouyang Huantang 歐陽煥棠, “Dalingcun *huaqiao shilue*” 大嶺村華僑史略 (A brief history of Daling village overseas Chinese) *Zhongshan wenshi*, No.31, 1994, p.43.

³³ Price, *The Great White Walls*, p.68 and p.77.



as contract labourers in 1852, it was not until the 1860s, when Chinese merchants from Zhongshan became the agents, that numbers became significant.³⁴

The presence in the Pacific Ports of merchants and others from the Pearl River Delta and access to shipping and mechanisms for travel undoubtedly ensured that it was people from the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* who were able to travel to the Pacific Ports. However, events in China and the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* also continued to provide incentives to take up these opportunities. The Taiping rebellion (1850-64), killed millions, nearly destroyed the dynasty and disrupted law and order in many provinces. Although the Taiping themselves were unsuccessful in extending their rebellion into Guangdong, the Pearl River Delta was affected by related disturbances such as the Red Turban revolt (1854-55) and the Hakka-Punti War (1856-68).³⁵ The Red Turban revolt affected Zhongshan County in particular, while the Hakka-Punti War affected the nearby Siyi counties. The Hakka-Punti War lasted so long due to the government's preoccupation with the Taiping and resulted in many kidnappings and selling of prisoners to overseas contractors.³⁶

Regardless of motivations *huaqiao* had for leaving their *qiaoxiang*, an important aspect of their developing links with the destinations was the reaction of those who dominated the Pacific Ports. The first *huaqiao* arrivals in the Pacific Ports of Sydney and San Francisco were met with hostility and prejudice. The expropriation of native peoples that had taken place in all the territories of the destinations increased the fundamental racism underlying attitudes to Chinese people and others held by the dominant white settlers. In all the regions there was also a sense of isolation from their respective "cultural centres" which would have contributed a sense of insecurity to this racism. Before the transcontinental railway, San Francisco was nearly as

³⁴ Bob Dye, *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains: Afong and the Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p.85.

³⁵ Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, 50,000 Taiping invade Guangdong in 1850, p.132; Red Turbans revolt 1854-55, pp.139-148. For a description of the origins of the Hakka-Punti War see Zheng, "Shijiu shiji mo Taishan qiaoxiang de xingcheng ji qi pouxi", pp.33-39.

³⁶ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.28-29, mentions Peru and Cuba in this regard. See also Rev. A. W. Loomis, "Chinese Women in California", *The Overland Monthly*, Vol. II, 1869, p.347, for a San Francisco notice appealing for information about a sister who had been kidnapped and sold by "Hak Ka banditti".



isolated from the eastern United States as Sydney was from Britain, and both found it easier to communicate with Hong Kong or each other than with these centres.³⁷

This racism and fear of outsiders was exacerbated in California, compared to the Australian colonies, by a number of factors. Californians needed to consider if their new state should be a slave-state and even the size of the state had been partly determined by fear of the southern half being dominated by “Mexicans” if it was divided into two. Slavery and civil war presented race related issues that gave white identity greater urgency than in the Australian colonies. In California, native populations were in possession of large portions of the state and were often expropriated by the gold diggers themselves.³⁸ On the other hand, by the middle of the 19th century in NSW and Victoria the native people were not regarded as a threat but as a social problem, likely to disappear with time and disease.

Hawaii did not have a gold rush but California’s drew enough of Hawaii’s labour force away to make the need to import labour more urgent. Hawaii’s many missionaries were concerned with converting “heathens” and its planters with employing cheap labour. To both these dominant groups, Chinese labourers represented an opportunity to achieve their aims and so their arrival as contract workers was welcomed and encouraged.³⁹ The early non-Cantonese Chinese arrivals through Amoy did create some disquiet but this was generally a matter of concern over their value as labourers. It was not until many years later that growing numbers of Chinese labourers began to inspire hostility from the white residents of Hawaii.

A significant difference between early *huaqiao* arrivals in Hawaii and those in California and NSW was the use of contracts. Contracts, as opposed to credit-tickets, were easier for poorer people to make use of. Credit-tickets required having a connection with someone who could extend the credit and trust in repayment. Contracts on the other hand did not require mortgagable assets or someone willing to

³⁷ Carey McWilliams, *California The Great Exception* (California: University of California Press, [1949] 1990), p.41 discusses the idea of a “cultural centre” in relation to California but it is also applicable to Sydney and NSW.

³⁸ McWilliams, *California*, pp.51-52 and Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy. Labor and the anti-Chinese movement in California* (California: University of California Press, 1975), pp.19-37.



take a risk, instead they provided an advance payment with which debts could be paid off or the family provided for before departure. One result of this was that Hawaii's *huaqiao* are predominantly from a much wider range of *qiaoxiang* within Zhongshan than the Zhongshan *huaqiao* of either Sydney or San Francisco who are predominantly from the wealthy districts of Long Du and Liang Du.

In both NSW and California the arrival of Chinese people in large numbers led to restrictions and acts of violence. However, the reactions and laws of these two Pacific Ports were different in many respects and these differences had significant implications for the *huaqiao* in each and the development of their respective *qiaoxiang* links. The gold rushes and the rapid arrival of large numbers of new people into isolated areas, were a challenge to law and administration that would have placed stress on the most mature and efficient of governments. In this regard, California and the two Australian colonies differed greatly. The arrival of Chinese people and others in large numbers occurred just as California was granted statehood (1850) and only a few years after the territory had been seized from Mexico (1846). At the time of their gold rushes, Victoria and NSW had been established for more than half a century under tight British administration. First as military run penal colonies, by the middle of the 19th century they had developing parliamentary governments with a modest degree of democracy and self-government. San Francisco was virtually a creation of the gold rush, while Sydney and Melbourne were already established urban centres.⁴⁰

This difference in length of settlement and maturity of government institutions meant that the Australian colonies met the arrival of large numbers of *huaqiao* with a great deal of law and order compared to the sometimes chaotic Californian situation. In the colonies, after an initial period of disorder, "Gold Field" Acts imposed a form of martial law and police had wide powers of control. These general regulations were supplemented by various "Chinese on the Gold Fields" Acts that sought to avoid violence by isolating Chinese people, regulating the layout of their "camps" and

³⁹ *The Polynesian*, 10 January 1852, p.138 has a hopeful account of the "success" of the introduction of Chinese labour for Hawaiian agriculture combined with a reminder of the "obligation" to instruct the "idolaters".



appointing a “protector”.⁴¹ In California, by contrast, vigilantes operated even in San Francisco,⁴² and in the scattered placers (mining sites), hangings, mob rule and miners’ courts were common. In the years after the gold rushes California saw many acts of expulsion and massacre of Chinese people that had no comparison in the Australian colonies. In NSW, even the most famous story of anti-Chinese violence during the gold rushes, that of Lambing Flat, pales in comparison to the Californian record.⁴³

The levels and persistence of anti-Chinese violence in California may also be connected to the level of control each state or colony had over the entry of people within its territory. It is difficult to make a direct link between such control and levels of violence, though the differences in governmental maturity and ability to exercise law and order already mentioned probably provide most of the explanation. A more definite link can be made between the lack of control by Californians over immigration and the range of non-immigration laws that the administrations of California and San Francisco directed against their Chinese residents.⁴⁴ Laws such as these had no equivalent in Victoria or NSW until late in the 19th century, when Factory Acts and other laws designed to reduce Chinese competition in various industries were introduced.⁴⁵

At the time of the arrival of Chinese people in significant numbers, California was a relatively minor member of a federation that either did not regard Chinese immigration as a major problem or preferred the interests of cheap labour and trade with China. Thus for many years Californians agitated for, but could not effectively control, the entry of Chinese people. State and city laws were struck down in Federal

⁴⁰ For a more detailed comparison of Australia and the United States see Michael Williams, “Anglo-Saxonizing Machines: Exclusion America, White Australia”, *Chinese America – History and Perspectives*, Vol. 17, 2003, pp.23-33.

⁴¹ For examples of these regulations from 1850s Victoria see, Ian F. McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria: official reports and documents* (Victoria: Red Rooster Press, 1985), pp.15-18.

⁴² Directed not at Chinese people but at criminal elements including supposed “convicts” from Sydney, a gang of which was known as the “Sydney Ducks” or “Sydney Coves”.

⁴³ For various incidents of anti-Chinese violence see Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese movement in California*, pp.48-97 and Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: an interpretive history* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), pp.48-51. For a comparison with violence in Australia see Price, *The Great White Walls*, pp.78-83.

⁴⁴ For a summary of these laws, which ranged from “queue cutting ordinances” to various taxes and licensing laws, see McClain, “The Chinese Contribution to the Development of American Law”, pp.8-12.



courts as exceeding the powers of a state within the United States federation.⁴⁶ The first Federal legislation restricting Chinese people was the Page Law of 1875, aimed at the entry of prostitutes and others who were considered undesirable. It was not until the growth of its electoral strength gave it the balance of power in a presidential election that, in 1882, California was able to get laws restricting the entry of Chinese people enacted by the Federal Congress.⁴⁷

During these same years, the colonies of NSW and Victoria not only enacted but repealed legislation aimed at restricting the entry of Chinese people and re-imposed restrictions when it suited them.⁴⁸ The first restrictions were in Victoria in 1855 and NSW in 1861; these early laws were repealed by 1867 as numbers of Chinese residents fell. As numbers again increased restrictive laws were re-enacted in both these colonies and others by 1881. Although there was some pressure against this legislation from London in the interests of relations with China, the colonial governments were able to resist moves to stop their restrictions being passed.⁴⁹ The control that NSW and Victoria had over immigration was lessened only by the capacity of Chinese people to enter through other Australian colonies, particularly through Queensland into NSW.

Hawaii had begun to import contract labour in large numbers in the 1860s, not as previously through Xiamen but from the Pearl River Delta through Hong Kong. This was done using the connections of Hawaii's many Zhongshan merchants, as well as missionary connections with Hakka Christians to Hong Kong's north.⁵⁰ Women were also encouraged to come on the basis that families would lead to a more docile labour force, but despite incentives, few females came at this time.⁵¹

While *huaqiao* in Hawaii were steadily increasing, in both California and NSW the numbers of *huaqiao* declined before rising again. In California this rise occurred

⁴⁵ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, pp.59-79.

⁴⁶ McClain, "The Chinese Contribution to the Development of American Law", pp.3-24.

⁴⁷ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, pp.178-180.

⁴⁸ For a summary of anti-Chinese laws in all the Australian colonies up to 1889 see, Joseph Lee, "Anti-Chinese Legislation in Australasia. Notes and Memoranda", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol.3, No.2, January 1889, pp.218-224.

⁴⁹ Wang, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration*, pp.287-301, is particularly detailed on this.

⁵⁰ Dye, *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains*, p.85.

⁵¹ Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.14.



when large numbers of *huaqiao* were employed as contract workers to help build the trans-continental railway in the 1860s. In Australia, numbers rose when the last significant gold rush, that of the Palmer River in Northern Queensland in 1877, brought 20,000 *huaqiao* onto the fields at one point. When this short rush was exhausted, many of the gold seekers quickly spread throughout Queensland and down into NSW to work in a variety of agricultural occupations.⁵²

The three Pacific destinations responded differently to the *huaqiao* in this period, though the full implications of these differences for the *qiaoxiang* links would only develop later. By the late 1870s, despite hostility and violence there were relatively few legal restrictions on *huaqiao* entry and so the *huaqiao* of this first generation had established themselves in the destinations in a variety of ways. Over this period *huaqiao* moved, as Crawford observed in the Australian colonies, from “miner to artizan”, that is, into more settled and less speculative occupations.⁵³

Artizans (1877-1905)

In the last decades of the 19th century the Qing government of China began to enter into a number of international agreements and to send consuls and commissions to foreign countries. Treaties such as the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 with the United States had clauses for the regulation of immigration, in 1876 a special commission investigated the conditions of those in Cuba and in 1886 two commissioners visited Australia.⁵⁴ The consuls were interested in the *huaqiao* living in the destinations and sought both to protect them as subjects overseas and to encourage them to put their knowledge and capital at the disposal of their government.

It is also during this period that the major immigration restrictions of the entry of Chinese people that were to last until the middle of the 20th century were imposed. While the Qing government was concerned about these restrictions and the broader question of the treatment of its subjects overseas, it was willing to limit or even ban

⁵² Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.46.

⁵³ Crawford, *Notes*, p.4.

⁵⁴ For details of the role of treaty and trade in the exclusion laws, see Christian G. Fritz, “Due Process, Treaty Rights and Chinese Exclusion, 1882–1891,” in Chan, ed., *Entry Denied*, pp.25-56, and Delber L. McKee, *Chinese Exclusion versus the Open Door Policy, 1900-1906* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1977). For commissioners to Cuba, Helly, *The Cuban Commission Report* and on Australian commissioners, Wang, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration*, pp.287-290.,



the movement of labourers in order to ensure continuing merchant activity. In this it was following the preferences of the merchants themselves. Thus the United States restrictions of 1882 were brought in with the agreement under treaty of the Qing government and negotiations also took place with Britain on behalf of the Australian colonies.⁵⁵ With or without Qing government compliance, the *huaqiao* adapted to these restrictions. The *huaqiao* also resisted the restrictions, cumulating in a 1905 boycott aimed at the United States restrictions. By the end of this period many *huaqiao* had also become involved in reform and revolutionary politics.

While the intention was similar, the circumstances of each destination resulted in very different laws and implications for the development of the *qiaoxiang* links. NSW was the first to enact restrictions, imposing a £10 poll tax in 1881. However, NSW was vulnerable to illegal entry from other colonies and so by 1888, all the Australian colonies, under NSW prompting, had adopted anti-Chinese immigration laws.⁵⁶ When in 1901, the new Australian Federal government wished to pass the Immigration Restriction Act, London again resisted, this time in the interests of relations with Japan. As a compromise, the “Dictation Test” was adopted; a formula that allowed racially biased immigration restrictions to be imposed without referring to any race or country by name.⁵⁷ Who was to be admitted to Australia was left up to the discretion of administrators and exemptions were few and temporary. Chinese people already resident in Australia were allowed to remain and could travel in and out of Australia by obtaining a “Certificate Exempting from the Dictation Test” or CEDT.⁵⁸

In the United States the first major restrictive legislation was in 1882 with laws very different to those in NSW or Australia.⁵⁹ While identifying itself as “exclusion” legislation this was largely to impress those who desired such exclusion. In fact, the United States “Chinese Exclusion Acts” in their various forms, never excluded all Chinese people and the only category completely excluded in theory were “laborers”.

⁵⁵ Wang, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration*, pp.297-299, on treaty negotiations with the British concerning immigration to the Australian colonies.

⁵⁶ Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, pp.20-24.

⁵⁷ Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia*, p.22.

⁵⁸ For details see Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.30.



Merchants, students, teachers, their wives and minor children were all entitled to enter. While labourers were excluded, those with prior residence did have the right to leave and return.⁶⁰ The status of labourers was similar to pre-1901 residents in Australia, except that they were later required to have \$1,000 in assets or debts and the 12 month limit on their return certificates may have been seriously enforced at times.⁶¹ Merchants who wished to leave and return needed proof of partnership in a business and once granted this status, a merchant's wife and minor children also had a right of entry subject to proof of the relationship. Minor children could also acquire merchant status on reaching adulthood by becoming a partner in a business. Australia always limited the definition of a merchant to those involved in import/export businesses, and later to those with a certain level of turnover. In the United States, a "merchant" was simply a partner in a business, despite a gradual narrowing of the definition to eliminate laundries and restaurants, until 1924, when this was limited to "foreign" trade.⁶²

In Hawaii there was virtually no white working class and the remaining native Hawaiians did not feel as threatened by the presence of Chinese people, with whom they often intermarried, as by the politically dominant whites. European shopkeepers and small businessmen felt the greatest threat and in the 1880s began to lobby for a reduction in the number of Chinese allowed to enter. The numbers of Chinese people (they reached 22% of the total population in 1884) and their growing tendency to work for themselves led to restrictions on the entry of labourers in 1886. The Chinese Bureau administered "Enter and Return Permits" between 1884 and 1898, when its functions were taken over by United States Customs. In keeping with attitudes towards labourers that those with families were more 'controllable', women of any kind were allowed to enter; as well special permits were granted to teachers, clergymen and "colporteurs".⁶³ Merchants and traders who were previously resident could travel freely and others received six month certificates.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ For discussion of the 1875 Page Law, the first Federal restriction on Chinese entry, aimed at prostitutes and others considered undesirable, see Peffer, *If They Don't Bring their Women Here*.

For the United States restrictions in general see Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*.

⁶⁰ A right removed for a time by the Scott Act in 1888 and restored by a new treaty in 1894.

⁶¹ Australian CEDTs were for three years and this was extended as a matter of course.

⁶² Lee, *At America's Gate*, p.221 and p.250.

⁶³ Hawaiian State Archives: Chinese Bureau, 1884-1898

⁶⁴ W. H. Wright, "Chinese Immigration to the Hawaiian Islands", *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1894* (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrush, 1894), pp.76-78.



In 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii and the situation of Chinese people in Hawaii was transformed when it was insisted that the United States exclusion laws be applied in full to the islands. The planters lobbied for many years, as both the sugar and the rice industries of Hawaii went into decline, in the hope that more cheap Chinese labour could save them.⁶⁵ However, Hawaii never had the political impact of California and so these pleas were ignored. The relatively high proportion of Hawaii *huaqiao* who were citizens and/or Hawaiian-born meant, however, that many were exempt from the restrictive laws.

The complexity of United States exclusion laws, with their treaty based and trade inspired exemptions, combined with the operation of citizenship laws and court decisions, allowed far greater options for entry, both legal and illegal, to evolve than in Australia. The United States land borders with Canada and Mexico also meant that smuggling was more significant than in Australia. The only way to enter Australia was to be smuggled on board ship, or if ships' crew, to jump ship. If caught in Australia such a person needed to prove they had been resident since 1901, while the range of United States categories meant more opportunities to "fix" one's status.⁶⁶

For the *huaqiao*, restrictions introduced by the Pacific Ports meant, among other things, higher costs. Entry to the destinations after the 1880s meant the payment of poll taxes or smuggling fees or various costs entailed in proving one had the necessary merchant status. As E. H. Parker, a long time British official in China, put it, "the special restrictions they [America and Australia] impose call for a special class of emigrants, who circumvent the law in special ways."⁶⁷

This "special class" were those who had sufficient connections with the destinations to enable them to travel. The credit-ticket and contract methods of the earlier period could no longer be used as costs and risks were higher. Gradually, only those went to

⁶⁵ This lobbying effort climaxed in the early 1920s when a strike by Japanese workers sent planters anxiously looking for alternatives. See, John E. Reinecke, *Feigned Necessity. Hawaii's attempt to obtain Chinese contract labour, 1921-23* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Centre, 1979)

⁶⁶ For example, using mortuary records to claim a deceased person to have been one's citizen parent was just one of numerous such methods, NARA, RG85: Chinese Partnership Case Files, 1894-1944, 9190/2008B, Fong Ping.



the Pacific Ports who already had a relative or at least fellow villager in a destination. A form of credit-ticket may still have been used, but this was more closely tied to a family member providing the credit. As a result, the range of *qiaoxiang* participating in the links to the Pacific Ports narrowed as established links re-enforced themselves and the less established declined.

In the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang*, money in the form of trade, remittances, donations and investments were gradually increasing overall wealth along with the wealth of the individuals that had successfully returned. The Zhongshan County capital, Shekki, was considered at the end of the 19th century, to be wealthy due to the earnings of its merchant's abroad.⁶⁸ Degrees and ranks, which had always been a means of entering the “gentry” class of Imperial China, were increasingly purchased by wealthy *huaqiao*. These titles were a way of protecting earnings as well as entering the governing class, at least at the level of their *qiaoxiang*.⁶⁹

This *huaqiao* wealth the Qing government began to see as an alternative to growing dependence on European capital, a dependence that was partly the result of its efforts to acquire western technology.⁷⁰ Despite the efforts of the Qing to woo them, however, the experiences of the *huaqiao* in the destinations of the inability of the Qing government to protect them led many to join growing reform and revolutionary movements. The defeat of China by Japan in 1895 accelerated this tendency, as did both the Boxer movement in 1900 and the 1905 victory of Japan over Russia.

Expectations (1905-1938)

In 1905, many *huaqiao* began a boycott campaign against the United States restrictive laws. Although intended to improve access by merchants (the exclusion of labourers was accepted), to the United States, the boycott was couched in nationalist

⁶⁷ E. H. Parker, “The Economy of Chinese Labour”, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 14, No.54, June 1904, pp.254-258.

⁶⁸ Dyer Ball, *The Chinese at Home or the Man of Tong and his Land*, p.35.

⁶⁹ For the role of purchased degrees as an “irregular” means of entering the gentry see, Chang Chung Li, *The Chinese Gentry* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), pp.8-14. For a discussion of the purchase of “honors” by merchants see Michael Godley, *The Mandarin-capitalists from Nanyang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.41-42.

⁷⁰ An effort described as “a last-minute move”, Godley, *The Mandarin-capitalists from Nanyang*, p.1. See also Yen Ching-Hwang, “Chang Yu-nan and the Chaochow Railway (1904-1908): A Case Study of Overseas Chinese Involvement in China’s Modern Enterprise”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No.1. 1984, pp.119-135.



language and was enthusiastically supported by many who had no direct stake in the outcome. The boycott was inspired not so much by a change in the laws of the United States as a change in their administration.⁷¹ These changes meant that merchants who had adapted to the restrictions suddenly found themselves facing narrower definitions and harsher treatment. The boycott was intended to pressure the United States into returning to the status quo and in this it was largely successful.⁷²

The year 1905 can also be seen as beginning the high point of the *qiaoxiang* links. By 1905, despite restrictions, a relatively stable range of *qiaoxiang* links had evolved, consisting of well-developed mechanisms for maintaining them and rising expectations and dependence on them in the *qiaoxiang*. China at this time was transforming rapidly and many *huaqiao* became involved in national politics, including revolution. However, for most, the *qiaoxiang* remained the centre of their lives and donations and investments to the *qiaoxiang* grew. In the destinations the restrictive laws brought about a fall in numbers at first, but all the destinations *huaqiao* numbers began to grow again, though at widely differing times and rates.

The abolition of the traditional examination system in China also occurred in 1905.⁷³ This reform gave wider opportunities to those educated outside the traditional system and the *huaqiao*, or their children, had relatively good access to such non-traditional education. Paying for their children to attend school, making donations to village schools, sending children to Hong Kong or schools in the destinations, were all means to both education and status, ones in which the *huaqiao* strongly participated.

With the establishment of the republic in 1911, hopes for China's progress bloomed and many *huaqiao* returned with their foreign capital to invest not only locally in the *qiaoxiang* but in national projects also.⁷⁴ This period was one of increasing nationalism, anti-imperialism and anti-Japanese feeling and the *huaqiao* were involved in all of this. The successful revolution had been supported by the *huaqiao*,

⁷¹ McKee, *Chinese Exclusion versus the Open Door Policy*, pp.29-36 and pp.217-218. See also the account of the boycott in Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, pp.151-161.

⁷² McKee, *Chinese Exclusion versus the Open Door Policy*, pp.208-209 and pp.218-219.

⁷³ For an account of the impact of this reform on education, see Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, pp.207-209.

⁷⁴ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, p.20 and pp.214-226.



a fact recognised and relied on by Sun Yat-sen and the Nationalist Party in their struggles for control of China in the years after this revolution.

Despite the prominence given to those who played a role in national affairs, the bulk of *huaqiao* operated on a more local level. And it was on this level that the *huaqiao* lifestyle can be said to have reached its greatest development with whole villages increasingly dependent upon remittances and generations of families participating in earning overseas incomes. The banking system developed to meet their needs and there was widespread consumerism in the villages of the *huaqiao*. Newspapers, schools, reading rooms and medical clinics all flourished in the *qiaoxiang* due to the donations from *huaqiao*. Roads were built, bus lines established and gold shops and moneychangers were prominent in the *huaqiao* villages but little productive industry was established. Many villages became places where dependence on remittances were the norm and attitudes and expectations were shaped by opportunities to go overseas to earn more than could be expected by staying in the village.

Increasing political and social unrest greatly hampered efforts to improve the *qiaoxiang*. Bandits and soldiers and their role as factors in local affairs grew immensely in the years leading up to the Japanese invasion.⁷⁵ For those who preferred to keep their money safe, Hong Kong and Shanghai were favoured refuges from the insecurity and corruption of Republican China. Many *huaqiao* choose to settle in these places, or perhaps their county capital or Canton, for family reasons as well as in order to protect their investments.

In the destinations the restrictive laws remained largely unchanged as the *huaqiao* developed their role as a “special class of emigrants”. In the United States the major development was the “paper sons” system.⁷⁶ This became the most significant form of illegal entry into the United States and one with no Australian equivalent. In the United States, those with citizenship status could pass this status onto their children. Under United States citizenship law such people, regardless of birth, upbringing or

⁷⁵ Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1988), p.38 and Diana Lary, *Warlord Soldiers. Chinese Common Soldiers, 1911-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.59-62.



length of time outside the United States, had a right of entry.⁷⁷ These provisions were established for Chinese people by an 1898 court decision and lasted until 1940, when those born after 1934 ceased to be eligible.⁷⁸ It became a widespread practice for those with this “native” status, when returning from trips to China, to register the birth of a child (nearly always a son). This created a “slot”, which could be sold to those wishing to enter the United States. Entry by this means came to make up a major proportion of Chinese entries and between 1915 and 1924 an average of 30-40% of Chinese entries were on this basis. The “confession” program of the 1950s, designed to regularise the, by then, widely recognised presence of so many illegal residents, revealed at least 8,000 “paper sons”. At their peak in the 1920s, over 3,000 people a year entered the United States as “sons of American citizens”.⁷⁹

This open secret of “paper sons” and other means of avoiding the restrictions in turn stimulated massive efforts on the part of United States officials to limit such entries. The United States system evolved in such a manner that its administrators made little distinction between legitimate and illegal applicants. Consequently, for Chinese people also there was little to choose between the two as methods of entry. These attitudes led in turn to a vicious cycle of regulation and counter measures that caused delays, frustration and hostility on both sides. A comparison of the Australian and United States immigration files provides an illustration of the difference between the operation of the restrictive laws in the United States (including Hawaii) and Australia. The Australian files are typically at their most complex and thickest in the earliest years around 1901, as procedures for identification are established. As this is accomplished and identification becomes routine, the amount of paperwork needed for individual applications becomes less and less. The United States files generally

⁷⁶ For a detailed explanation see, Madeline Hsu, “Gold Mountain Dreams and Paper Son Schemes: Chinese Immigration Under Exclusion”, *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1997, pp.46-60.

⁷⁷ There were limits to this right such as the need to take an oath of allegiance by age 21, see Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, p.299, n.124 and 125.

⁷⁸ Rose Hum Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p.301 and Chen Wen-Hsien, Chinese under both Exclusion and Immigration Laws (University of Chicago, Ph.D., 1940), p.292.

⁷⁹ Lucy E. Salyer, “Laws Harsh as Tigers: Enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Laws, 1891-1924”, in Chan, *Entry Denied*, p.84, n.118 & p.71, n.67 and Chen, Chinese under both Exclusion and Immigration Laws, Table 7, p.29. Of course not all of these entries were necessarily false but estimates are that 90% were, see Lee, *At America’s Gates*, p.230.



show an opposite pattern, with the amount of documentation, the length of interviews and the number of investigations for each new file growing over the years.⁸⁰

The complex mechanisms of interviews and investigations that evolved in the United States system greatly heightened the impression of restriction and exclusiveness. The need to determine status and the relationship of dependants at the point of entry to the United States, combined with the fact that proof of that status or relationship often lay in China, was at the heart of this complexity. People generally boarded ships for San Francisco and other ports with a variety of documents that were only thoroughly examined in the United States. They were subjected to often lengthy investigations and interviews, with friends and relatives brought in to be interviewed by officers and interpreters, resulting in delays, disappointments and confrontation. Such examinations often took weeks or months and in some cases, with court appeals, years. The hostility and heartbreak for those brought so close to their goal only to be returned was consequently greatly heightened.⁸¹ Those leaving the United States also needed to go through a similar ordeal, a “pre-examination” of their status that it was hoped would make their re-entry easier. Many failed at this point, as when one applicant, Fong Hong, withdrawing his application retorted; “You ask too many questions, I won’t answer them”.⁸²

Various amendments and changes also attempted to narrow the categories for entry. Restaurant managers were declared not to be merchants, then defined as merchants again after 1914, and excluded again in 1924.⁸³ In 1924, when the specifically Chinese exclusion acts were incorporated into general immigration law, the wives of citizens were denied entry.⁸⁴ Amendments in 1924, also narrowed the definition of teachers and students and attempted to bar the entry of non-citizen wives of merchants until overturned by a court decision the following year.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Based on personal examination of a range of immigration files in Sydney and San Francisco.

⁸¹ Between 1904 and 1906 for example of 1,246 “section 6” merchants who attempted to enter the United States, 22% or over 270 people were denied and sent back to China, Lee, At America’s Gates, p.249. For impacts of the procedures on a personal level, see Lai, *Island*.

⁸² NARA, RG 85: Return Certificate Application, Lawfully Domiciled Labourers Departing, 1903-1911; 9180/1720, Fong Hong, record of interview, 20 September 1907.

⁸³ Lee, At America’s Gate, p.234.

⁸⁴ A 1930 court decision restored this right to marriages before 1924, Lee, At America’s Gates, p.69.

⁸⁵ Lee, At America’s Gate, p.221.



Yet despite this seeming harshness of the United States system compared to that of Australia, it was the Australia restrictions that were in fact the more ‘exclusive’. After the early 1880s, when both California and NSW introduced major restrictions and when the Chinese populations of each were at their height, the number of Chinese people in Australia fell to 25% of its maximum. In the United States by contrast, the fall in the size of the Chinese population was to only around 60% of its maximum.⁸⁶ In Hawaii, the fall was even less, to about 85% of its maximum and its *huaqiao* population began to grow again within ten years of annexation. The United States Chinese population began to rise again in the late 1920s, while in Australia, such a rise did not take place until the 1940s.

Where social and political disruptions had provided the motivation for overseas movement in the previous century they now had the effect of continuing the dependence of the *qiaoxiang* on the *huaqiao* in the destinations. Dependence upon outside income meant being vulnerable to outside forces and so the Great Depression hit the *qiaoxiang* hard. Unemployment caused many to return home, thousands were expelled from Mexico and the Dutch East Indies or simply driven out by increasing hostility or economic problems.⁸⁷ So many *huaqiao* returned to their *qiaoxiang* at this time, many with their life savings, that the result was a temporary boom in land prices followed by a crash when this inflow of overseas incomes ceased.⁸⁸ But this vulnerability to changes in the flow of outside income was demonstrated even more dramatically by the impact of the war with Japan.

War and Revolution (1938-1949)

Up until 1938 and despite the Depression and the immigration restrictions of the destinations, the *huaqiao* lifestyle had continued to sustain itself and even grow in many respects. However, with the Japanese war, the *qiaoxiang* suffered a number of blows which greatly affected their links with the destinations. Beginning their invasion in north China in 1937, the Japanese entered Guangdong province in force in 1938. Bombings and some destruction took place but organised resistance was minimal and Guangzhou was occupied without the savagery that occurred in Nanjing.

⁸⁶ McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, p.30, calculates the US drop as 57.3%.

⁸⁷ For examples, 華僑日報 (*Overseas Chinese Daily*), 6 May 1931, p.3 (return of unemployed from *nanyang*) and 16 May 1935, pp.2-3 (expulsions from the Dutch East Indies).

⁸⁸ Shozo, *With Sweat and Abacus*, pp.215-16 and *North China Daily News*, 9 April 1931, p.1.



However, the Japanese blockaded ports and greatly reduced the supply of rice on which Guangdong Province relied.

The Japanese were too thinly stretched to fully control the province nor could they prevent the collapse of the political infrastructure. Bandits, who had once hid in the mountains, became local bosses who attempted to protect their villages, for a price, from the depredations of neighbouring bosses.⁸⁹ The villagers of the Pearl River Delta often found themselves at the mercy of Nationalists, Communists, bandits and the Japanese at the same time. Many fled to Hong Kong or overseas if they could, helped by a *de facto* relaxing of restrictions in the destinations as sympathy for the Chinese against the Japanese grew. The greatest blow to the *qiaoxiang* came, however, when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong at the end of 1941. At this point *huaqiao* overseas lost all contact with their *qiaoxiang*, remittances were reduced to a trickle and starvation became the reality for many families. Those who were in the *qiaoxiang* at the time of the occupation could not return to provide overseas incomes and most of those who had taken refuge in Hong Kong were forced to leave by the Japanese and join their relatives in the *qiaoxiang*.

In the destinations at this time, the *huaqiao* became heavily involved in the anti-Japanese War effort and as the threat of war increased, attitudes in the destinations towards Chinese people and even to the restrictions began to change. By the end of the war the United States had made significant changes in its restrictions. The Chinese Exclusion Act was abolished in 1943 and War Brides Acts enabled thousands of former *huaqiao* veterans to bring in wives, dramatically altering the gender ratio. Australia had also accepted many new arrivals, but without changing its laws and the Immigration Restriction Act remained in force until 1958.

With the defeat of Japan in 1945, there was a rush of *huaqiao* returning to their *qiaoxiang* to seek lost relatives and to begin a rebuilding process. Many poured in money and attempted to rebuild the shattered *qiaoxiang*. While some took their

⁸⁹ Helen Siu, *Agents and Victims in South China - Accomplices in Rural Revolution* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp.88-112 for an account of “bosses” in Xinhui (新會) and other Pearl River Delta counties, also Helen Siu, “Subverting Lineage Power” in David Faure & Helen Siu, *Down to Earth. The Territorial Bond in South China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp.196-197.



families away from the *qiaoxiang* there was no large-scale movement of people out at this time. The fear of a new communist government, with the main battles of the civil war taking place in the north of China, was not felt until right up to 1949.⁹⁰

Broken links? (After 1949)

The establishment of the new China government in 1949 did most to transform the *qiaoxiang* links. Not so much because the new government immediately raised barriers but because the old aims of the *qiaoxiang* links were no longer possible. The flow of investments and remittances slowed dramatically although retiring *huaqiao* continued to return to their villages in the early 1950s despite the loss of the lands and houses that they had worked so long to obtain. The category “overseas Chinese landlord” saved some returnees from the fate of many of China’s landlords at this time, though they often underwent humiliation and hardship nonetheless.⁹¹ Many *huaqiao* either decided not to return to their *qiaoxiang* or at least to attribute their failure to return to the events in China. The *qiaoxiang* links maintained for so long fell away or were suspended. At the same time a flood of refugees began entering Hong Kong, many of these refugees using their *huaqiao* connections to enter the destinations in what now became a more obviously one-way movement.

Conclusion

Between 1849 and 1949 millions of people waded “10,000 li”. A relatively small proportion of these going to the Pacific Ports of Sydney, Hawaii and San Francisco from a handful of counties in the Pearl River Delta. Characteristic of this movement was that it was largely undertaken by young men who married in their *qiaoxiang* and who travelled back and forth between these destinations and their *qiaoxiang*. Final return to the *qiaoxiang* was the intention, if not always the achievement, of most. This, it has been argued, is the broad context within which the *qiaoxiang* links are best understood.

The *qiaoxiang* links were established during a period of mass movement in the generation or so after 1849. The conditions for this mass movement and the reactions

⁹⁰ Siu, *Agents and Victims*, pp.112-113 for an account of the transition in Xinhui, which seemed “vague and distant to those in the villages” even in 1949.

⁹¹ Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: a study of Peking's changing policy, 1949-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp.52-54.



to it having been set by the growth of Pacific networks that included the Pearl River Delta and the mostly ‘white’ dominated societies of the Pacific Ports. After the first generation and the fading of the gold rushes, the *qiaoxiang* links were maintained by successful *huaqiao* who had to deal with an increasing range of restrictions imposed by the destinations. Despite these difficulties, the *huaqiao* and their links continued to develop within a cycle of dependence which left their *qiaoxiang* vulnerable to outside factors, a vulnerability that became obvious with the Japanese occupation of South China and Hong Kong. Efforts to restore and maintain the *qiaoxiang* links were finally ended, however, after the establishment of the government of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

The history of the *huaqiao* between 1849 and 1949 is one of the rise and development of *qiaoxiang* links. Developments in the various destinations, in the *qiaoxiang* themselves and in China generally all provide elements that influenced this history. The *qiaoxiang* links evolved against a background of reactions and restrictive laws in the Pacific Ports and developments in the *qiaoxiang*. The links did not remain static but adapted to these developments. This background provides a framework within which the rest of this thesis can examine the *qiaoxiang* links. The motivations for these links, how they were maintained and how they were changed are the subject of the rest of this thesis. The following chapter, *Because in the Tang Mountains we have a Big House*, begins with a detailed look at a specific *qiaoxiang*. The Zhongshan County district of Long Du is used as a case-study of a *qiaoxiang* to illustrate the *qiaoxiang* element in the links between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations.



Table 1.1: Overseas Chinese, late 1930s.¹

Countries	Overseas Chinese	Percentage
Thailand	3,000,000	34.44
Malaya	2,358,335	27.07
Dutch East Indies	1,430,680	16.42
Indo-China	500,000	5.74
Burma	400,000	4.59
Soviet Union	250,000	2.87
Brazil	158,867	1.82
Philippines	117,463	1.35
Sarawak	86,000	0.99
Central America	85,400	0.98
United States	74,954	0.86
Borneo	47,799	0.55
Canada	42,100	0.48
Korea	41,303	0.47
Europe	32,000	0.37
Hawaii	27,179	0.31
Japan	20,050	0.23
India	15,000	0.17
Australia	12,500	0.14
Sth Africa	4,500	0.05
Timor	3,500	0.04
New Zealand	2,367	0.03
Fiji	1,751	0.02
Total	8,711,748	100.00

¹ Lasker, *Asia on the Move*, p.73.



Table 1.2: Qiaoxiang distribution as a percentage of total huqiao

San Francisco/California ¹				
Counties	1855	1869	1877	1942
Zhongshan	36	21	8	9
Sanyi	18	17	7	5
Hakka	5	2	3	2
Siyi	24	35	22	11
Taishan	18	26	50	49
Sun Hui			10	9
Mixed				15

Sydney/NSW ²			
Counties	1891	1913	1960s
Dongguan	15	31	20
Zengcheng/Dongguan	37	24	
Gaoyao	24	14	24
Siyi	7	10	10
Zhongshan	17	21	40
Sanyi			3
non-Cantonese			2

Honolulu/Hawaii ³		
Counties	1929	1936
Hakka	3	25
Siyi	14	11
Zhongshan	77	64
Other	5	

Hong Kong ⁴	
Counties	1901
Sanyi	29
Siyi	17
Dongguan	12
San-on	10
Zhongshan	5
Gao Yao	2
Zengcheng	1
Other	22

¹ *The Oriental*, 25 January 1855, p.1; 1869: *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27 November 1869, p.8; *The Chinese Record*, 15 January 1877, p.1 and William Hoy, *The Chinese Six Companies* (San Francisco: Californian Chinese Historical Society, 1948), pp.16-17.

² Report of the Royal Commission; Noel Butlin Archives Centre (ANU); Deposit 111, 111/2/3, Chinese Chamber of Commerce of NSW and other Chinese Associations, miscellaneous 1913-26, membership list, 1913 and Price, *The Great White Walls*, p.220.

³ *Chinese of Hawaii* (1929), scattered and *Chinese of Hawaii* (1936), pp.23-25.

⁴ *Report of the Hong Kong Census*, 1901, Table XI.



Table 1.3: Huaqiao by Pacific Port.¹

By Province			
Year	Hawaii	NSW	California
1850	364	1,806	17,000
1860	816	12,988	34,933
1870	2,038	7,220	49,277
1880	18,254	10,205	75,132
1890	16,752	13,157	72,472
1900	25,767	10,222	45,753
1910	21,674	8,226	36,248
1920	23,507	7,282	28,812
1930	27,179	3,665	37,361
1940	28,774	3,272	39,556
1950	32,376		58,324

By City			
Year	Honolulu	Sydney	San Francisco
1860	370	189	2,719
1870	632	336	12,022
1880	1,299	2,232	21,745
1890	4,407	3,499	18,000
1901	9,061	3,474	13,954
1910	9,574	3,334	10,582
1920	13,383	2,889	7,744
1930	19,334	1,891	16,303
1940	22,445	2,337	17,782
1950	26,724		24,813

Table 1.4: Proportions of female huaqiao.²

Year	Hawaii	NSW	California
1860	0.0	0.0	2.5
1870	5.3	0.2	7.9
1880	4.8	0.6	5.2
1890	6.2	0.8	4.3
1901	13.5	1.6	7.6
1910	20.9	3.5	9.0
1920	31.1	5.2	15.8
1930	39.0	5.3	25.1
1940	40.4	22.1	30.9

¹ Data compiled from Commonwealth of Australia Year Books and United States Census reports.² Based on: United States and Australian census data and figures found in Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*; Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*; Price, *The Great White Walls*; Choi, *Chinese in Australia*; Yong, *New Gold Mountain*; Lee, *At America's Gates* and Lee, *Chinese in the United States*.

Table 1.5: Births in destinations as percentage of total Chinese populations.¹

Year	Hawaii	NSW	United States
1890	8	7	2
1900	16	10	9
1910	33	14	16
1920	53	19	21
1930	73	33	28
1936	83		33

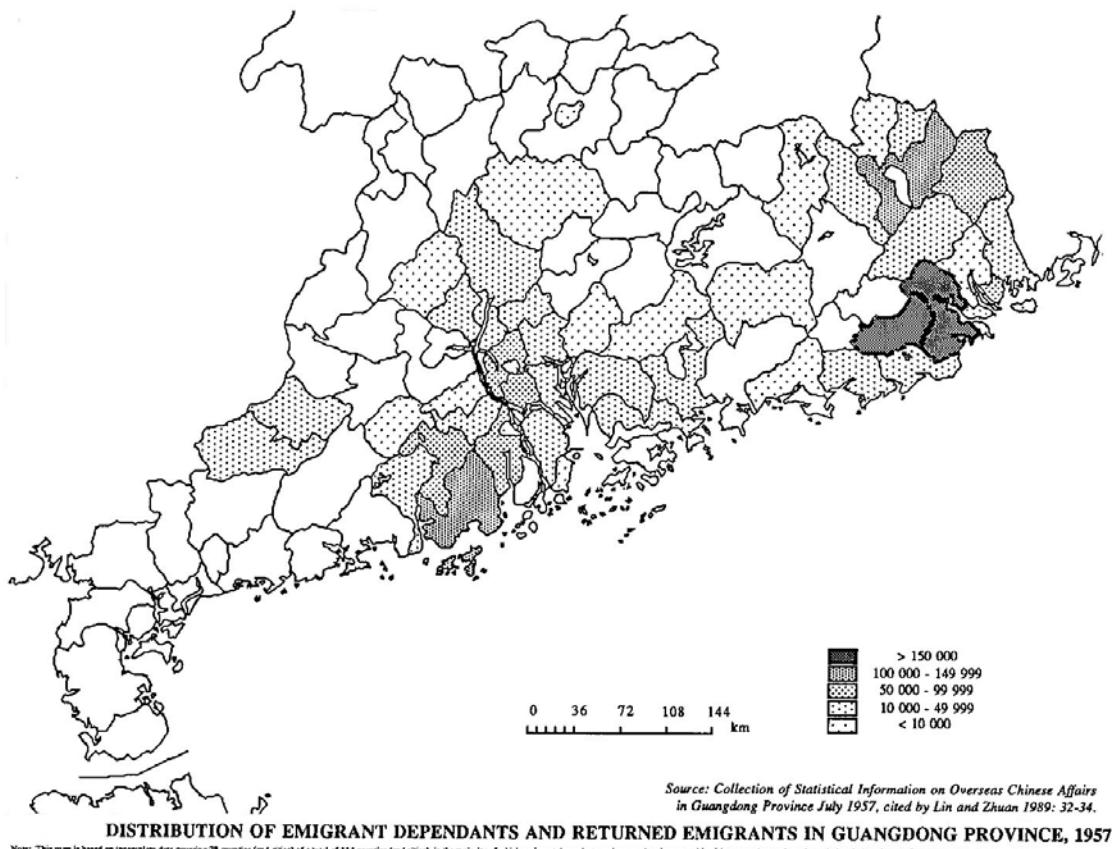
Table 1.6: Huaqiao returns.²

Destinations	Arrivals	Departures	Departures as % of arrivals	Departures as % of total huaqiao
California/ United States				
1855	48,949	8,889	18	22
1869	138,591	42,443	31	86
1870 to 1880	121,904	74,791	61	100
1881 to 1890	124,815	113,505	91	157
1910 to 1919	18,885	22,164	117	36
1920 to 1929	25,523	39,933	156	53
1930 to 1939	4,853	21,103	435	27
NSW				
1871 to 1880	11,535	8,003	69	78
1881 to 1889	21,904	12,197	56	93
1890 to 1900	533	5,696	1,069	56
1901 to 1910	3,057	7,429	243	90
1911 to 1919	8,465	8,853	105	122
Hawaii				
1880 to 1889	23,127	13,081	57	78
1890 to 1899	22,852	14,823	65	58
1910 to 1919	4,672	5,931	127	25
1920 to 1929	6,676	7,390	111	27

¹ From Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.275, Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.128 and Lee, *The Chinese in the United States*, p.40.

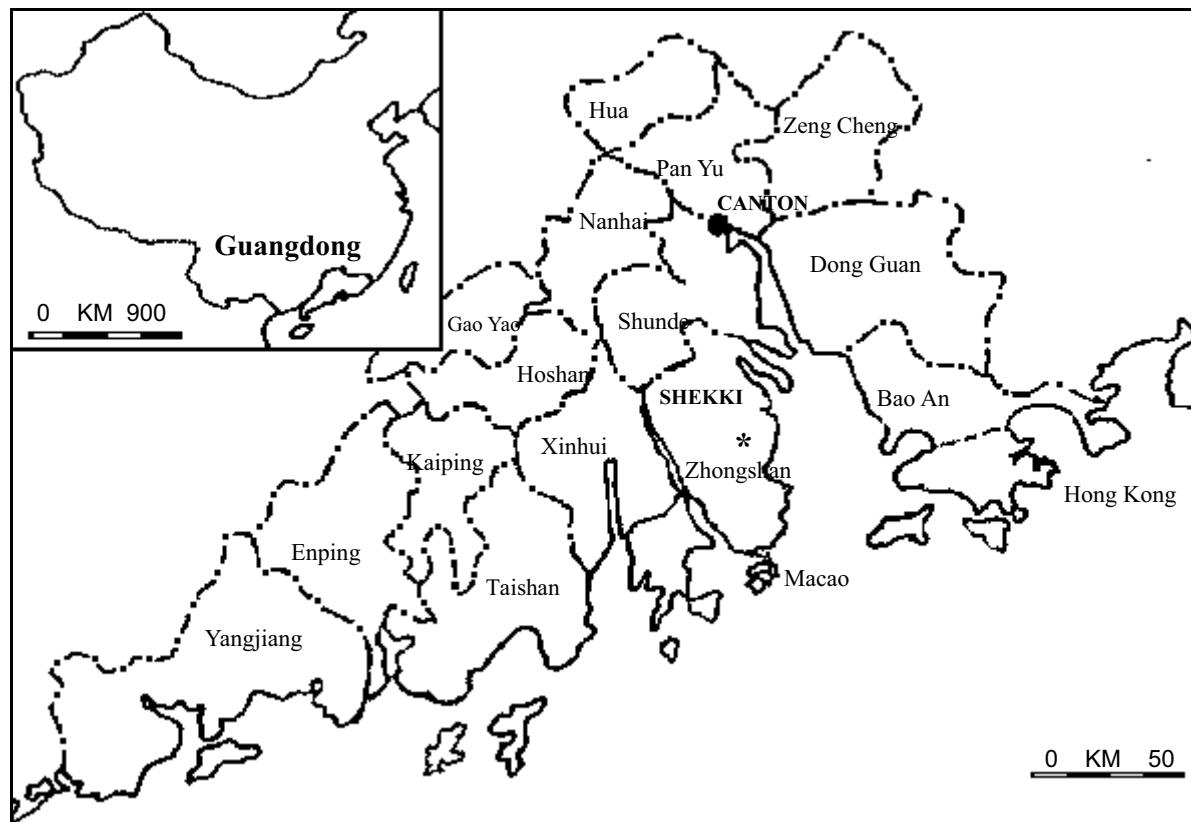
² Immigration statistics: NSW, Australia, United States and Hawaii.



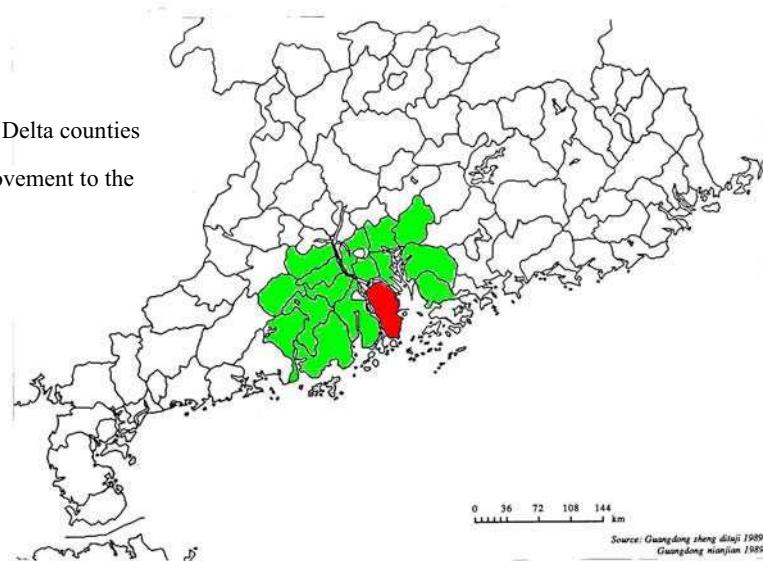
Map 1.1: Guangdong counties participation in overseas movement.¹

¹ Chan Ka Yan, The Role of Migration in China's Regional Development - A Local Study of Southern China, Taishan 1949-1989 (University of Hong Kong, M.Phil, 1990), p.40.

Map 1.2: Pearl River Delta Counties.¹



Major Pearl River Delta counties involved in the movement to the Pacific Ports.



¹ Map based on that in David Chuen-yan Lai, "An analysis of data on home journeys by Chinese immigrants in Canada, 1892-1915", *The Professional Geographer*, 29.4, 1977, p.362.

Chapter 2: Because in the Tang Mountains we have a big house

Support for and intention to return to the *qiaoxiang* was the basic motivating factor in the links between the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* and the Pacific Ports in the years after 1849. The history of *qiaoxiang* links is not only a history of movement outside the *qiaoxiang* but a history of efforts to survive, return to, retire in and improve the *qiaoxiang*. Their efforts were aimed at using the wealth and resources they could obtain in the destinations to improve the position of themselves, their families and possibly their clans and villages, in the *qiaoxiang*. This was an aim that not all fulfilled but this does not mean it did not exist, as Mrs. Leong who did spend most of her life in the United States expressed it, she and her family planned to return to Zhongshan “because in the Tang Mountains we have a big house”.¹ For most *huaqiao* the “big house”, in reality or dream, was in the *qiaoxiang*. A history of the links between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations, therefore, properly begins in the *qiaoxiang*.

This chapter will examine a single *qiaoxiang*, that of the Long Du district of Zhongshan County, in order to establish a ‘*qiaoxiang* perspective’. Such a perspective is needed to escape the limitations of nation-state perspectives that have dominated most studies. A focus in-depth on a single *qiaoxiang* also enables individual, family and local detail to be investigated that helps to avoid generalisations and to highlight the diversity and choices that are also significant elements in this history. The district of Long Du will be introduced and the impact of its *huaqiao* on this *qiaoxiang* will be examined. Family life, material contributions, investments and impacts on local politics will be discussed. What the results of their efforts were, how successful the *huaqiao* were and what difficulties they and their families faced will also be discussed, including negative influences resulting from dependence, over generations, on outside incomes.

¹ Judy Yung, Angel Island oral history project, 1975-1990: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/62; Mrs. Leong, interview 16 August 1980.



Zhongshan County & Long Du district

The previous chapter discussed the numbers of *huaqiao* who travelled from the Pearl River Delta counties to the Pacific Ports and some of the historical background to this movement. The Pearl River Delta was an area in which the majority of people lived in villages and pursued agricultural occupations. While rice was the main crop, Guangdong province had long imported rice as much land, particularly in the fertile Pearl River Delta, was devoted to cash crops such as silk, sugar cane and orchards.² Despite this, fields, fishponds and orchards surrounded most villages and many were largely self-sufficient as far as basic commodities were concerned.³

Life in the villages could be harsh and health hazards, bandits attacks, floods and famines were often recorded in south China villages.⁴ For most people, however, the greatest hazard was that life was lived close to the edge of poverty. Charitable organisations distributed food to the poor, not only at times of shortage, but regularly.⁵ Poverty in these villages meant going hungry for days at a time, picking rice grains from the fields after the harvest and perhaps being driven to suicide by the hardship. Meals could regularly consist of “one salted bean with each mouthful of rice”.⁶ Rice was not only the basic food but sometimes the only food and as late as 1921 it was reported that over 800 deaths had occurred among coolies in Hong Kong as the result of their rice only diet.⁷ Families in desperate circumstances would sell

² For the history of Guangdong Province's land use see Robert Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt: environment and economy in late imperial south China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For a description of such villages in south China, though not in the Pearl River Delta, see Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.65-73. For general accounts see, Hugh D.R. Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979). For an idea of the range of village types within China see, Ronald G. Knapp (Ed.), *Chinese Landscapes. The Village as Place*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992).

³ A survey of China villages between 1922 and 1925 (though not including Guangdong), estimated that on average, 83.2% of consumption was supplied from the farmland of a village and only 16.8% was purchased from a market. Feng Ho-fa, 馮和法, *Zhongguo nongcun jingji ziliao* 中國農村經濟資料 (Information on China's rural village economy) (上海: 黎明書局, Shanghai: Li ming shu ju, 1933), p.47.

⁴ Chen, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.175-180, analyses the prevalence of diseases in the villages of south China, though not the Pearl River Delta specifically. Choi, Descent Group unification, pp.142-3, on inter-family feuds as late as 1898-9 and Appendix 1, pp.490-492, gives a table of disasters, including floods, famines and bandit attacks in Zhongshan County.

⁵ *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 4 April 1900, p.2 and Ya Da 亞達, “Xiaaze xiang zhi Jin Xi” 下澤鄉之今昔 (Present and past of Xiaaze Village), *Zhongshan Monthly News*, No.2, 1946, p.27.

⁶ Violet Mebig Chan Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol.28, 1988, p.146.

⁷ Hong Kong, *Report on the Census of the Colony for 1921*.



their daughters and this was one of the methods by which some females arrived in the destinations.⁸

Village life was in general close knit, with villages usually populated by people who shared a single family name, or at most, three or four such family names.⁹ Relationships based on ‘clan’ or ‘lineage’ meant that members of the same ‘clan’ could expect to find support, enter into business arrangements and receive and make loans to others on the basis of this relationship.¹⁰ Marriages were arranged by obtaining wives from nearby villages and the county capital or nearest market town could be anything from a few hours to a few days walk distant. Transport and communications were slow and was, even as late as 1930 in an area as close to Hong Kong as Zhongshan, based on tracks and paths through the fields and boats on the waterways.

The majority of people in the Pearl River Delta spoke the Yue dialect (Cantonese) of Chinese, but with variations that made members of the different counties and sub-districts not only easy to distinguish but sometimes mutually incomprehensible. Other groups, such as the Hakka (客家) and people from Long Du, spoke non-Yue dialects that were even more unintelligible to the majority of Cantonese speakers.¹¹ Within, for example, the largely Cantonese speaking area of Taishan County, dialect variations could be found between villages only a few kilometres apart and Zhongshan is reported to have had up to six different dialect groups.¹²

⁸ Wong, “Leaves from the Life History of a Chinese Immigrant”, pp.39-40.

⁹ Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship*, p.65. Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.79, for example, defines “clansman” as those who belong “to the same village or the same native district”. For a detailed discussion of the difficulties of defining terms such as clan and lineage see Allen Chun, “The Lineage-Village Complex in Southeastern China: A Long Footnote in the Anthropology of Kinship”, *Current Anthropology*, Vol.37, No.3, June 1996, pp.429-450.

¹⁰ See Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, pp.94-184 for a detailed account over many generations of such a family and their interconnections.

¹¹ See Leo J. Moser, *The Chinese Mosaic. The Peoples and Provinces of China* (London: Westview, 1985), pp.203-5 & 215, for a general discussion of Pearl River Delta dialects, p.208, discusses the arrival of the Hakka in South China, p.216, their dialect enclaves and p.199, the dialect enclave of Long Du; J. M. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution – The Case of Kwangtung, 1895-1913* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp.12-14, discusses the tensions created by dialect differences; and Choi, Descent Group unification, pp.90-1, discusses the importance of dialect in unifying groups.

¹² William John McCoy, Szeyap data for a first approximation of proto-Cantonese. Survey of Szeyap districts and languages (Cornell University, Ph.D., 1966), p.39 and Choi, Descent Group unification, p.95, mentions six Zhongshan dialects and p.114, the Long Du dialect; also Li Zhaoyong 李兆永,



Within this general picture there is great diversity across the Pearl River Delta. Zhongshan County, for example, was famous for its *shatien* (沙田) or “sandy fields”.¹³ These fertile fields had been gradually reclaimed from the Pearl River over many generations.¹⁴ This ‘growth’ of Zhongshan County land meant that its population, recorded in 1910 by the first reliable figures available, at over 800,000, was of diverse origins with four main groups distinguished. These included the people of Shekki, the county capital who were reported to be originally from Dongguan (東莞) County. The area around Xiaolan (小欖) City, at the northern edge of the county, was dominated by people who spoke the dialect of Shunde (順德), the county to the immediate north of Zhongshan. A third group, called the “western village type” included the area of Long Du and was known for having many *huaqiao*. Finally there were those around Doumen (斗門), whose people came mainly from neighbouring Xinhui (新會) County.¹⁵ In addition to these broad geographical divisions, a small and scattered part of Zhongshan’s population was Hakka.¹⁶ Macao, at the southern tip of Zhongshan, under Portuguese administration for centuries, acted as a port of access to Hong Kong and in the 1930s had a population of around 12,000.

The northern plain around Xiaolan was the most fertile area and where the bulk of Zhongshan County’s population lived. The central area of the county, which included Shekki and the Long Du district, was hilly, relatively infertile and according to one geographer of Zhongshan, it was from such hilly districts that the surplus population left to become *huaqiao*.¹⁷ This distinction between the *huaqiao* of the hills and people of the more fertile *shatien* is confirmed by Bung Chung Lee.¹⁸ According to

Longduhua Lanlangcunhua Yuanshi Fuzhouhua 隆都話, 南朗村話原是福州話 (Long Du and Nam Long dialects origins in Fujian dialect), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.31, 1994, p.229.

¹³ Feng, *Zhongguo nongcun qing chi zu liao*, p.926 refers to the richness of the *shatien* of Zhongshan for example.

¹⁴ Siu, *Agents and Victims*, pp.24-26 for an account of the methods used.

¹⁵ See Map 1.2: Pearl River Delta Counties, p.66 and Map 2.1: Zhongshan County and Long Du district, p.102.

¹⁶ He Dazhang, 何大章, “Zhongshan Xian Dili Zhi Xin Renshi” 中山縣地理之新認識 (Zhongshan County new geographical perspective), *Guangdong Zhongshan Huaqiao* 廣東中山華僑 (Guangdong Zhongshan Overseas Chinese), July 1949, No.12, pp.28-29.

¹⁷ He Dazhang, “Zhongshan Xian Dili Zhi Xin Renshi”, p.28.

¹⁸ B. C. Lee was the Hawaiian-born son of a *huaqiao* of Buck Toy (北台) village in Liang Du (良都), a district bordering Long Du. He was a student and friend of Clarence Glick and wrote a number of papers on Chinese people in Hawaii, as well as assisting Glick in his field research.



Lee, the non-*huaqiao* villages or “peasant villages”, “occupy the low land” and their “villages are fairly well apart”; “emigrant villages on the other hand are closely located to one another on the foot of hills and in the valleys. The villages are so closely located near each other that sometimes it is hard for a stranger to distinguish one from the other.”¹⁹

These reports come from late in the period and while there is less evidence from the beginning of the period, in the late 19th century *huaqiao* numbers seem to have been sufficient to make them easily found, at least in Zhongshan. As a visitor to Zhongshan in 1884 reported:

*One long day's walk of many miles, enabled us to pass through village after village from which people have gone out to the Hawaiian Islands or other parts of the world. It was very strange every now and then to have a man look up from his work in the field, or run out from a shop to greet us in English or Hawaiian.*²⁰

Another observer reported a few years later that “Shek Kéé” (Shekki) had “many large towns and important centres of trade and influence” and was considered to be wealthy due to the earnings of its merchant’s abroad.²¹

Long Du makes up about 15% of Zhongshan County’s land area and at its northern end is only a few kilometers from the county capital of Shekki.²² Long Du begins on the opposite side of the river from Shekki and stretches as far as a day’s walk to the south.²³ In 1910, the total population of Zhongshan was reported to be 163,315

¹⁹ Glick Archive: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

²⁰ Damon, “Rambles in China”, 1884, p.45. The Rev. Frank Damon was an Hawaiian missionary who worked with the *huaqiao* on the plantations and who made a trip to Zhongshan in 1884. Another missionary reporting on nearby Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* reported in the 1870s, “returned emigrants are as thick as blackberries, and every third man on the road makes free to accost the missionary as ‘John.’” Thomas G. Selby, *Chinamen at Home* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), p.205.

²¹ Dyer Ball, “The Höng Shán or Macao Dialect”, p.503 and *The Chinese at Home or the Man of Tong and his Land*, p.35.

²² Map 2.1: Zhongshan County and Long Du district, p.102.

²³ See Map: 2.2: Long Du and its villages, p.103. Long Du was the official name of the district until the 1840s, it was also often referred to as Long Zhen. In the years after 1949 it was called No.2



households or 822,218 people. The population of Long Du was recorded as 27,992 households or around 140,000 people, which was 17% of Zhongshan's population.²⁴ Long Du consisted of about eighty villages at this time, varying in size from Chung Kok (象角) with 2,230 households (c.11,000 people) to Sun Ming Ting (申明亭) with only 378 households (c.1,800 people).²⁵

Long Du was known for having many *huaqiao*, but what proportion of such a district and its villages actually went overseas? Proportions are difficult to estimate due to variations between areas and the fact that most calculations have only been done on a provincial or at best a county level. At the village level statistics are rare but those that exist provide sufficient to give a rough figure. A village just across the river from Long Du, “Háng Míe” (恒美) of Liang Du sent, according to Dyer Ball in the 1890s, *huaqiao* “to Hawaii and Australia”, with one third of the village said to be returned from Sydney.²⁶ Not long after this estimate was made, the large Long Du village of Chung Kok with 2,300 households, compiled in 1913 a list of 220 of its members who were living overseas.²⁷ A generation later, in 1948, Chung Tou village (涌頭) in Long Du, which in 1910 had 1,345 households, reported 329 village members in destinations around the Pacific.²⁸ These figures, assuming that Dyer Ball is referring to the male population of “Háng Míe”, indicate an average of 20% to 30% of the working male population of many villages went overseas in search of income.

But such averages do not mean that all villages would have sent such proportions. There are also indications that villages varied greatly in their level of participation even within Long Du and certainly throughout the rest of Zhongshan. The people of

²⁴ District and its area is now divided into the two townships of Shaxi and Dachong. Throughout the villages today, however, the name Long Du is still recognised and used.

²⁵ Xiangshanxian Xiangtuzhi 香山縣鄉土志 (Xiangshan Local Gazetteer), (Guangzhou: Zhongshanshi Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui Bangongshi, 廣州: 中山市地方志編纂委員會辦公室, [c.1910] 1988), Vol.1. While census figures at this time are suspect in China, comparisons with other data when possible seems to confirm the accuracy of these figures, in Long Du at least.

²⁶ Xiangshanxian Xiangtuzhi, Vol.1. Households rather than numbers of individuals are the usual figures given, however, where both are given, as for the total Zhongshan population, a ratio of 1:5 seems usual and this is used to estimate village populations by head. See 中山民國日報 (*Zhongshan Republican Daily*), 1930, Special Issue, p.22 for a list of the eighty Long Du villages.

²⁷ Dyer Ball, “The Höng Shán or Macao Dialect”, p.505.

²⁸ Chung Kok (象角) village hall, Zhongshan County, Guangzhou: donors tablets, 1913.



the town of Shekki, for example, were not usually *huaqiao* themselves, according to a long time Shekki resident, but ended up working for Long Du people who were.²⁹ Mrs. Lim of Chew Kai village, Zhongshan, reported a high proportion of travellers from her small village of 100 families, claiming that only two families did not send members to the destinations.³⁰ B. C. Lee reported that 85 people from Buck Toy (北台) village, Liang Du, had left for Hawaii between 1920 and 1926.³¹ According to Peng Qiying (彭綺卿), Ling Ho Harng (嶺厚亨) the Long Du village where she was born, had many *huaqiao* connections (her own father had gone to Cairns, Queensland and her two brothers to San Francisco), with nearly every family having a *huaqiao* member. The village of Hao Tu (豪吐), however, only 4kms away and where she went to live after her marriage in the 1920s, was one with few *huaqiao* and those few mainly “young people” who went to Hong Kong.³² Hong Kong was certainly a destination many moved to, with the “Heong Shan” [Zhongshan] there described at the end of the 19th century as, “compradores, boys, house and godown coolies, and agents for, or dealers in, Californian goods principally ...”³³

A *huaqiao* village

The diversity, even within the eighty or so villages of Long Du, makes the development of a average picture difficult. Even so, descriptions of villages are rare enough that they cannot be ignored. A 1947 account of Xiaaze (下澤) village, as it was remembered just before the Japanese occupation gives a picture of a small prosperous *huaqiao* village in Long Du. Xiaaze is close to the main cluster of Long Du villages, immediately to the west of Shekki and probably represents a village of the wealthier type in the late 1930s.³⁴ In 1939, according to this account, Xiaaze had 775 households or 3,733 residents and a well-equipped school with over 330 pupils. There was a reading room with 23 regular subscribers, a women society’s publication to educate the public, a “National Skills Society” to promote traditional skills and a

²⁸ 涌頭月刊 (*Chung Tou Monthly*), No.2, September 1948.

²⁹ Interview, Zhao Yingxiong 趙應熊, Shekki, 8 December 2000.

³⁰ Judy Yung, Angel Island oral history project, 1975-1990: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/62; Mrs. Lim, interview 12 September 1976, pp.2-3.

³¹ Glick Archive, File 2: notes of Bung Chong Lee, n.d. (c.1935)

³² Peng Qiying (彭綺卿), Shekki, 6 December 2000, Tape A, 30.

³³ Dyer Ball, “The Höng Shán or Macao Dialect”, p.502.

³⁴ See Map: 2.2: Long Du and its villages, p.103.



“People Learning School” to teach people to read and write. Transportation to Shekki and other towns was good and ferries carried goods to and from the county capital. There was a self-defence troop and street lights were lit at short distances the whole night. The public granary often opened for those in need, orphans and widows received monthly benefits, a medical clinic gave out free medicines and the streets were clean and waterways flowed smoothly.³⁵

Another description, not necessarily of a less wealthy village but from someone brought up outside the *qiaoxiang* provides an alternative view. For a teenager born in Hawaii and visiting in the 1920s her family’s village of Buck Toy, Liang Du:

.... life was almost unbearable. There was no place to go to, and the swarms of flies during the day and mosquitoes at night made me yearn for dear Honolulu.

There is no transportation. The houses are very near together. Sanitation and sewage system are mere words. Illiteracy is the rule among the older people. Water must be drawn from wells or springs.

*How I survived it for nine months is still a mystery to me!*³⁶

Family life

Within these and other villages of Long Du and Zhongshan it was the family that was at the core of the *qiaoxiang* links and it was within the family that the effects of these links were felt the most. A major feature of the *huaqiao* lifestyle was the long periods husbands, fathers and sons spent away from the family. Many *huaqiao* began their life in the destinations as young men or even boys, returning after many years to marry and then leaving again after the wife was pregnant. Often two or more generations of men would be absent at the same time as sons joined their fathers in the destinations. The result was that many wives and mothers of *huaqiao* effectively headed families and children were raised in the absence of fathers. These women

³⁵ Ya Da “Xiaaze xiang zhi Jin Xi”, p.27.

³⁶ Glick Archive, Box 2: Bucktoy Villager Families in Hawaii, n.d. [c.1930], p.9.



were expected to look after the household, including elderly relatives, raise children and await the return of their husband or at least the regular remittance.³⁷

“Gold Mountain Women” (金山婆), as the wives and mothers of *huaqiao* were referred to in contemporary publications, were easily identified by their appearance and such habits as wearing jewelry, including gold accessories. The latter sometimes made from United States gold coins sent as remittances. Chin Tung Pok had a strong memory when, as a six year old boy in a Taishan village, he was frightened by the sudden appearance of “Gold Mountain wives”, “with gold bracelets, gold earrings, and gold rings set with precious stones” that made the farm wives envious.³⁸ An article written in 1920 in Zhongshan and lamenting changes in society generally, described *huaqiao* women as recognisable by their “speaking fancy vocabularies, have wasteful and arrogant manners, wear modern clothing and much jewelry, go once every three days to Shiqi, every piece of clothing is tailored, every thread and shoes are bought in the market, ...”³⁹ According to a male observer: “The wives would live comfortably in the village with the money they receive, performing only the daily household duties and spending the time leisurely.”⁴⁰ While the accounts of women who lived this lifestyle are similar, boredom rather than leisure is emphasised.⁴¹

Wives waiting faithfully if apprehensively, for their husbands return or for remittances, was an inherent part of the *huaqiao* lifestyle. Such dependence on remittances and being responsible for the family put women under great pressure should anything happen to stop that money. Law Shee Low described how her sister-in-law lived in Shekki with her mother-in-law, daughter-in-law and “slave girls” on

³⁷ Interviews in the villages give this impression, for a particularly clear example see interview with Liu Lin Yan (劉林然), Long Jui Wan (龍聚環), 4 December 2000. Also Cheng, “Those who stayed at Home”, for similar impressions based on interviews conducted in Taishan County. Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.118-123, also discusses this aspect of *huaqiao* families.

³⁸ Chin Tung Pok, *Paper son: one man's story* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), p.5. Long Du women may not have been as ostentatious but were still readily recognisable.

³⁹ Gan Hong 幹鴻, “Lun wo xiang funü zhi zuoshi” 論我鄉婦女之坐食 (Comments on the sitting and eating of my village women), *Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*, No.4, 1920, pp.8-9.

⁴⁰ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁴¹ For example, interview with Liu Lin Yan (劉林然), Long Jui Wan (龍聚環), 4 December 2000.



\$8 a month and reputedly went “crazy” when her husband failed to send money.⁴² Arthur Chang remembers the fear in his family when his father failed to send remittances for a period and the relief when they began again.⁴³ Li Zier, a courier in the 1920s whose job is was to deliver remittance letters for a gold mountain shop in Shekki to the villages, has left an account of one wife’s reaction to the absence of her husband. Li Zier regularly delivered remittance letters to a women of the Guo family whose husband had departed his village of Heng Mei within months of their marriage, promising to return soon. At first his arrival was as if he were the “God of Wealth” and smiles, cigarettes and tea greeted him. However, after a few years his delivery of a letter and money was met instead with tears and a refusal to sign the receipt. When Li Zier tried to find out the problem he was told by Mrs Guo that her “heartless man didn’t keep his promise and still was not returning home”. She was lonely, felt her life was meaningless and even swore excitedly that, “seeing money arrive here is like cutting my heart with a knife. It is selling my man for money, I’d rather not to have it.” This was the reaction whenever Li Zier delivered the remittances and he became afraid to visit this house.⁴⁴

The impression of most however, was that such women were well off, especially in times of shortage. A *qiaokan* article written after the end of the Japanese occupation described how the “lucky wife” of a “Gold Mountain Guest” would make special offerings on receiving a “gold letter” and if generous would prepare a family feast. Such a woman was envied by everyone according to the writer.⁴⁵ Peng Qiying, on the other hand, described a life of toil for a woman of a family where the remittances were low and infrequent; collecting wood in the mountains to sell and constant work in fields and house.⁴⁶

When men returned it was for relatively short periods (a matter of months, or perhaps 2-3 years) and they spent their time in leisure, handing out gifts and visiting the

⁴² Judy Yung, Angel Island oral history project, 1975-1990: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/62, Box 1, Law Shee Low, 20 October 1988, p.1.

⁴³ Interview Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998, Tape 1, A (14).

⁴⁴ Li Huari 李華日, “Qiao qing ji ku” 僑情紀苦 (Account of *huaqiao* hardships), *Zhongshan qiaokan* 中山僑刊 (Zhongshan overseas magazine), No.32, April 1996, p.29.

⁴⁵ Meng xuian 孟萱, “Zhuxiuyuan de funü” 竹秀園的婦女 (Women of Zhuxiuyuan) 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.19, 1949, p. 6-7.

⁴⁶ Interview, Peng Qiying (彭綺卿), Shekki, 3 December 2000 and 6 December 2000.



families of fellow *huaqiao* with messages.⁴⁷ This last perhaps in order to report on each others families when they were back in the destination. The impression given to the younger generation was of wealth and ease, and was an encouragement to adopt a similar lifestyle. “When others returned from America, their clothes were beautiful and they had money to spend, and they had cookies for the whole village. I envied them and thought going to America would be good.”⁴⁸

However, life overseas could be dangerous and many returns came only after death. Records of the return of bones from Sydney’s Rookwood Cemetery and elsewhere do not record the pain caused by their arrival in the villages. Young Koon Nuen remembers his uncle’s bones being returned from Australia and the father of Liu Rubin (劉汝彬) was dead in San Francisco three years before his family knew, having last left the village when his son was 3 months old.⁴⁹ A regular item in local newspapers was a list of “departed friends” whose bones were to be collected. Associations in the *qiaoxiang* also paid “funeral money” to the relatives of those who died in a destination.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, marriage to a “Gold Mountain Fellow” was considered desirable despite the likelihood that one’s husband would be away for long periods, if he returned at all. On occasions, wives who had married *huaqiao* in the destinations, including wives of non-Chinese background, were brought to the *qiaoxiang*. There are many individual examples of such wives but as with many aspects of *huaqiao* history, it is difficult to estimate numbers. The examples that do exist are often associated with problems and the efforts of these women to return home, but these probably give a false or at least slanted impression.⁵¹ As Rev Young reported in the 1860s, cases of “Chinese deserting European wives in China or Hong Kong” were

⁴⁷ These aspects are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, pp.148-149.

⁴⁸ Judy Yung, Angel Island oral history project, 1975-1990: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/62; Koon T. Lau, interview 10 June 1990, p.2.

⁴⁹ Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, Tape B, 55 and Liu Rubin (劉汝彬), Yuen Han, 12 December 2000. The delayed news being the result of the Japanese War.

⁵⁰ For examples of lists, 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 15 November 1922, p.8, 2 June 1925, p.8 and 香山南報, 8 November 1924, p.4. For payments, 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 2 June 1925, p.8.

⁵¹ For example, a dramatic case reported in John H. C. Sleeman, *White China - An Austral-Asian Sensation* (Sydney: Published by the author, 1933), pp.127-131 and cases of impoverished Peruvian women in, McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, p.71.



rare, “not so rare, though, the cases of European wives who desert their Chinese husbands”.⁵² The Hawaiian consul in the 1880s, “had provisions for returning women” married to Chinese men.⁵³ The Rev. Damon during his 1884 “rambles” in Zhongshan met at least two Hawaiian women who he described as “dressed in Chinese fashion and looked well and healthy” and “that their husbands were kind to them”.⁵⁴ Another asked him for help to return to Hawaii but this was because her husband had died and although she now got on well with her dead husband’s first wife she longed to return to her home.⁵⁵ It is not clear what impact such women had upon the *qiaoxiang*. Villagers remember one or two in each village but the relative isolation of women in their homes meant that little is recalled about such residents.⁵⁶ Such wives were more likely to have lived in Shekki than the villages, or Canton and Hong Kong.

It was also common for *huaqiao* to bring children born in the destination to the family in the *qiaoxiang*. Such children, often born of non-Chinese mothers, were brought to the village to be educated and raised by the village wife or mother. Rev. Young reported on boys being sent “to China to be educated there” in the 1860s and a missionary working in the Siyi counties reported numerous boys of “non-Chinese mothers” in the 1870s.⁵⁷ Older children were sent back in order to “learn more Chinese customs”, such as both Billy Gay, to his father’s village of Da Tou (渡頭), and William Lee to Hong Kong in the 1920s.⁵⁸ Accounts of the reception of such outsiders indicate that they caused a stir though were ultimately able to get along.⁵⁹ Not all the children taken to the *qiaoxiang* returned to the destinations and presumably, as with Chinese ancestry in NSW and Hawaii, more people have non-Chinese ancestry than is realised in these villages today.

⁵² “Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria by Rev. W. Young, 1868” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.51.

⁵³ Glick Archive, Card file: interview Mrs. F. W. Damon, n.d. (c.1930).

⁵⁴ Damon, “Rambles in China”, p.45.

⁵⁵ Glick Archive, Card file: interview Mrs. F. W. Damon, n.d. (c.1930).

⁵⁶ Interviews, Chang She May (張雪梅), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, (36-40) and Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, Tape B, 30.

⁵⁷ “Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria by Rev. W. Young, 1868” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.50 and Selby, *Chinamen at Home*, p.206, who also reported translating a letter from the mother of one such boy.

⁵⁸ Interviews, Billy Gay, 19 March 1998 (210) and William Lee, Letter No.2 – 5 June 1999 (4).



Contributions

In addition to the direct effects on family life a major impact of the *huaqiao* resulted from a range of monetary and material contributions. Men were absent from their families and villages in order to provide income and support. The income earned was sent to the families and spent on family needs of various kinds. The *huaqiao* also brought to their *qiaoxiang* gifts and practical items, things either difficult to obtain or as tokens of status. Beyond the immediate family numerous donations were also made for the benefit of the wider community, particularly donations for health and education.

Remittances were a significant part of the *qiaoxiang*/destination relationship and the uses remittances were put to have often been analysed at a provincial level. In general findings are that the poverty of most recipients meant the bulk of remittance money was spent on basic family support and after this, on the building of houses and for the purchase of land.⁶⁰ Analysis of clan records, some going back to the 16th century, has divided the uses of *huaqiao* income into five categories: immediate family support, building or repairing a house, helping brothers to marry, contributing to land purchase by the clan/relatives, and lending money for relatives to start businesses. In later times, investing in enterprises within the *qiaoxiang* was added to this list. Assistance during natural disasters, the building of temples and support for the revolutionary movements of the early 20th century were also mentioned in these clan records.⁶¹ These categories do not greatly differ from an analysis of 20th century (1905-37) remittance use in Fujian which was: family support, 58%; house building, 20%; family events such as marriages and funerals, 15%; local public facilities, 3%; and investments and social functions 2% each.⁶²

⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, p.64.

⁶⁰ Xiong Yue 熊越, “Luelun jindai Xiamen de huaqiao huikuan ji qi zuoyong” 略論近代廈門的華僑匯款及其作用 (A brief discussion of Modern Xiamen's remittances and their function), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人近代歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), 4, 1990, pp.16-21; Lin, “Cong zupu ziliao kan min yue renmin yiju haiwai de huodong”, pp.16-23; Feng, “Luelun jiefang qian guangdongsheng huaqiao huikuan”, pp.31-40 and Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.84-85.

⁶¹ Lin, “Cong zupu ziliao”, pp.22-23.

⁶² Xiong, “Luelun jindai Xiamen de huaqiao huikuan ji qi zuoyong”, p.19.



Public sources such as newspapers and *qiaokan* naturally focus on the social uses of *huaqiao* money and give the impression that most *huaqiao* could afford or were inclined to use their money this way. The high proportion of remittances devoted to basic family support in the above studies indicates that for most, survival was the prime purpose and major outcome of this income. Nevertheless, there were always those who did better than survive and for these, initial spending beyond basic needs and also the first public demonstration of their wealth, was on housing.⁶³ Evidence for this use of money earned comes from the earliest goldseeker period in a report made on the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s. The witness (who was probably from Taishan but possibly from Zhongshan), stated: "If I go home with so much money, I can buy so much land and a house, and buy so many wives four or five wives, or ten or a dozen."⁶⁴ Damon, in 1884, reported from Zhongshan: "Many new homes at different points had been built by these returned laborers who had earned enough abroad to give their family thus a decent home. The dwellings are all of one story."⁶⁵

Damon does not seem to feel that these houses were any different from other houses and the only feature of them he felt was due to foreign influence was the addition of an extra window.⁶⁶ By the 1920s, however, *huaqiao* houses were more distinctive with references to "foreign houses" (洋樓, *yang lou*) common. This appears to have been a reference to any two or more story non-traditional style house.⁶⁷ In Zhongshan at this time, *huaqiao* seem to have been building two types of houses, either a non-traditional style two-story house or a traditional house but with a distinctive 'tower' built on.⁶⁸ The towers, *diao lou* (碉樓) were designed to provide a family with refuge in case of bandit attack.⁶⁹ Of course, not all *huaqiao* would have been able to build such houses or towers, while others would have simply built a new and/or larger traditional house. In addition to these choices, the wealthy might build a completely foreign style house or mansion. This the Kwok family did in the Liang

⁶³ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.110-111 discusses this.

⁶⁴ Evidence to the Commission on the Chinese, 15 January 1855 in McLaren, *Chinese in Victoria*, p.13.

⁶⁵ Damon, "Rambles in China", p.45.

⁶⁶ For houses built by Taishan *huaqiao* see Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.44-45.

⁶⁷ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.110-111 and Elena S. H. Yu, "Overseas Remittances in South-Eastern China", *China Quarterly*, No.79, 1979, p.341.

⁶⁸ See Picture 2.1: *Huaqiao* houses, Zhongshan, p.104.



Du village of Zhuxiuyuan (竹秀園), as well as the Ma's in neighbouring Heng Mei and Joe Wah Gow in Long Tou Wan village, Long Du.⁷⁰

The building of these family homes was an obvious impact on the *qiaoxiang*, something that can still be seen today. Also of great impact were the many donations made, often in co-operation with other *huaqiao* on projects such as health clinics, schools, street lights, reading rooms, tea pavilions, community buildings, village watch towers and bridges.⁷¹

These donations were not mere symbols but practical contributions designed to improve the living standards of those in the villages. Nevertheless when *huaqiao* made such donations they were not only exercising personal generosity but mirroring a role that had long been played by the traditional gentry of China. According to a study of the pre-Republican gentry: “They undertook many tasks such as welfare activities, ...” “Numerous examples in local gazetteers show their very frequent activities in such public works as the repairing of roads, the building of bridges, the dredging of rivers, the construction of dikes, and the promotion of irrigation projects.”⁷²

Non-gentry also participated in the less costly of such projects, wooden rather than stone bridges, for example.⁷³ It can be assumed therefore that *huaqiao* returning with money would have participated in similar projects. There is no evidence, however, that even wealthier *huaqiao* performed such tasks before 1911. During the 1920s and 1930s, on the other hand, certainly in Long Du district, there is a great deal of

⁶⁹ William Lowe, “Survey of Longtouwan Tower Houses”, paper presented to Brisbane Chinese Historical Society, July 2002.

⁷⁰ See Picture 2.2: Wealthy *huaqiao* houses in Liang Du and Long Du, p.105.

⁷¹ Zhongshanshi Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui Bian 中山市地方志編纂委員會編 (Zhongshan Local records committee), *Zhongshanshi Zhi* 中山市志 (Zhongshan City Records), (廣東: 廣東人民出版社, Guangdong Peoples Publishing Co., 1997), p.1312, for examples of medical related donations after 1911; Fok, *Lectures on Hong Kong History*, pp.111-114, for examples of Hong Kong based donations for vaccinations, flood relief, bridges and schools; Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.271, gives examples of a hospital and library; 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 21 August 1922, p.5, mentions a reading room; 20 April 1925, p.6 and 12 April 1928, p.5, donors listed and thanks expressed for donations made; 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.29, 1923, p.7, a stone bridge and Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 15 November 1935 and 16 June 1936, for examples in Buck Toy village.

⁷² Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, p.51



evidence of public donations by *huaqiao*. By the 1930s for example, Buck Toy village had a reading room, telephone system, watchtower and streetlights, all the result of its generous Hawaiian *huaqiao*.⁷⁴

Two of the most common areas in which *huaqiao* contributed were health and education. The general health of the villages of the Pearl River Delta was not high and diseases such as smallpox, cholera and leprosy were common.⁷⁵ It is not surprising therefore that a favourite target of *huaqiao* donations was for health care, usually in the form of a village clinic which dispensed free medicines. Part of the Chung Kok village community hall, built in 1913, was used to dispense medicines and the Guangrenzeng Yiju (廣仁贈醫局), the medical clinic of Long Tou Wan village, had both a Chinese herbal and a western trained doctor in the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁶ The “Long Life Association” was formed in order to raise money for this Long Tou Wan clinic, which it did by subscription as well as through donations from individual *huaqiao*.⁷⁷ Other health related donations by *huaqiao* included a maternity home founded by Wong Hing Chow and the main hospital, both in Shekki.⁷⁸

By far and away the most favoured form of donation and one that probably had the greatest impact on the *qiaoxiang* in the long term were those for education.⁷⁹ Education during the Qing period was the means of entering the scholar or gentry class and the various ‘Scholars gates’ scattered around the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* testify to its community importance.⁸⁰ The contribution of *huaqiao* to education took many forms, ranging from supplying the money to enable more children, including girls, to attend school, to building new schools and incorporating traditional one teacher village schools into a more ‘modern’ education system. In the

⁷³ Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, p.56.

⁷⁴ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 16 June 1936.

⁷⁵ Chen, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.175-180, analyses the prevalence of these diseases in the villages of south China, though not the Pearl River Delta specifically.

⁷⁶ Chung Kok (象角) village hall, Zhongshan County, Guangzhou: donors tablets, 1913; 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 17 November 1924, p.8 and interview, Chang She May (張雪梅), Long Tou Wan, 21 May (57).

⁷⁷ 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 25 August 1932, p.7.

⁷⁸ Chinese of Hawaii (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), p.15 and 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 17 November 1924, p.8.

⁷⁹ On this aspect in Taishan see Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.45-47.

⁸⁰ On education as the means of entry to the scholar class see, Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*.



years following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) the desire to modernise and strengthen China swept the country and the keenness of *huaqiao* to contribute to education was certainly part of this.⁸¹ When the traditional examination system was abolished in 1905 in order to allow for the development of new schools capable of teaching modern subjects the opportunities for those with an education in these subjects greatly expanded.⁸²

While many in China, in addition to *huaqiao*, supported schools and education, there is evidence that *huaqiao* began doing so earlier, generally focusing their efforts on their own *qiaoxiang*. A study of Taishan County has shown that an imbalance of schools existed between districts within the county depending on their *huaqiao* links. This study also showed that the numbers of schools greatly expanded in Taishan from 5 in 1850 to 47 in 1911.⁸³ Educational statistics for 1935 show the percentage of children at school in various *huaqiao* counties, Taishan 75%, Zhongshan 36%, Enping 68%, Kaiping 36%, Shunde 56%.⁸⁴ The relatively low proportion of schools in Zhongshan County overall perhaps reflects a concentration in Long Du district.

While no specific studies have been done for Zhongshan County, Shekki and Long Du certainly had many 'modern' schools established from at least 1895. And both an Australian and an American English school were reported in Shekki in the 1920s.⁸⁵ The Ma family of *Sincere & Co.* and Joe Soong of the *National Dollar Stores* supported schools in their home villages of Heng Mei and Long Tou Wan in the 1930s.⁸⁶ In addition to these schools for children, education for adults was also promoted and night schools were also set up by returning *huaqiao*.⁸⁷

Another significant area of *huaqiao* influence in education was female education. It was not impossible for girls to receive an education in the *qiaoxiang*. However, when

⁸¹ For an examination of *huaqiao* attitudes and support of education elsewhere in Guangdong as well as Fujian province see Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.149-168.

⁸² Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, pp.207-209.

⁸³ Zheng "Shijiu shiji mo Taishan qiaoxiang de xingcheng ji qi pouxi", p.38. See also Yu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940", pp.47-72.

⁸⁴ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.47, figures from the Guangdong Educational Bureau.

⁸⁵ *Zhongshan wenshi*, No.25, p.9, Australian English school and No.1-3, p.69, American School.

⁸⁶ Rong Hui 容暉, "Zhongshan de Youer jiaoyu" 中山的幼兒教育 (Education of young children in Zhongshan), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.43, 1998, pp.95-96.

⁸⁷ *竹秀園月報* (*Zhu Xiu Yuan Monthly*), No.2, 1920, p.18.



resources were scarce, boys would receive preference and in any case the tendency for girls to marry young often cut short their school years. According to Young Oy Bo Lee, girls received 3 years schooling and boys 5 years, at least in her village.⁸⁸ Peng Qiying was able to go to school as the result of remittances from her brothers in San Francisco and her three years schooling enabled her to learn to write sufficiently to keep in touch with them after she had married and moved to another village.⁸⁹ With the cost of a year's education at a village school in the 1920s around \$8 to \$10, basic education was within the reach of those in the *qiaoxiang* with access to remittances.⁹⁰

By the 1930s an increasing alternative to village schools or even schools in the county capital, was to send children to schools and universities in Canton, Hong Kong, Shanghai or even in the United States and Japan. Chang She May was sent to board in Canton schools from an early age and then proceeded to university in Shanghai to study medicine, as did a number of her brothers in the 1930s.⁹¹ Liu Lin Yan was sent to middle school in Hong Kong in the 1920s with money her father was earning in Fiji.⁹² The proportion of *huaqiao* related students in the University of Hong Kong were around 20-30% in the 1920s and 1930s and this was only those born overseas. Those who attended the University of Hong Kong on money earned by their fathers in the destinations would also have contributed significantly to the make up of the student body.

Investment

Developments in houses, bridges, street lights, medical clinics and schools were all based on the capacity of the *huaqiao* to earn an income overseas. Some income was also available to make investments rather than donations and this is another area in which significant influences on the *qiaoxiang* occurred as a result of the *qiaoxiang* links. Many direct investments were made by *huaqiao* in their *qiaoxiang*, often

⁸⁸ Mrs. Young Oy Bo Lee, interview by Kate Gong, 1987. *From China to America* (Chinese Historical Society of America), Regional Oral History Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California.

⁸⁹ Peng Qiying (彭綺卿), Shekki, 6 December 2000, Tape A, (53).

⁹⁰ Peng Qiying (彭綺卿), Shekki, 6 December 2000, Tape A, (54) and 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), 1923, No.29, p. 7.

⁹¹ Interview, Chang She May (張雪梅), Long Tou Wan, 21 May 2000 (31).

⁹² Interview, Liu Lin Yan (劉林然), Long Jui Wan (龍聚環), 4 December 2000 (29).



beginning with the purchase of rice land but also including establishing banks, stores and other businesses. A range of infrastructure investments were also made, such as building roads, developing bus lines and setting up electricity plants. Despite such investments, the main economic impact of the *qiaoxiang* links on the *qiaoxiang* appears to have been the development of a high level of consumerism and of a dependence on outside income.⁹³

For the *huaqiao* and their families, after a house, land was the next most likely object of spending as, “wealth takes form in owning land, for land is the surest means of ownership.”⁹⁴ The exchange value between what could be earned in a destination and purchased in south China meant that a relatively poor *huaqiao* could usually purchase sufficient land in his village to make his family fairly well off. At a time of depreciation of the Chinese currency in the 1930s, the cost of a *mu* (畝) of medium grade land which took 8 years to earn in Guangdong, could be earned in only 5 days in Canada.⁹⁵ This may have been an extreme situation and that a *mu* of rice land cost an average *huaqiao* in Sydney or Hawaii about a months earnings in the 1930s is more probable.⁹⁶ The average amount of land a *huaqiao* might have owned or which was necessary to be comfortable is difficult to estimate. Young Koon Nuen’s father, for example, owned 100 *mu* which was rented out at 100 *jin* of rice per *mu*, Arthur Chang’s family owned 50 *mu* and the wealthy family of Joe Wah Gow 600 *mu*.⁹⁷

The ownership of land was closely linked to social status as land and its ownership and control was a source of power and prestige in the village. As commercialisation in the *qiaoxiang* developed in the 1920s and 1930s, those with more education and/or business experience did not necessarily buy land but preferred to make investments. So much so that by the 1930s one observer felt that: “Only the poor buy land”.⁹⁸ For those who did invest in land, it was not farmed directly but was rented out to tenants.

⁹³ Feng Yuan is one researcher that feels that overall, remittances inhibited the local economy and promoted consumerism, Feng Yuan, “Luelun jiefang qian guangdongshen huaqiao huikuan”, pp.39.

⁹⁴ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁹⁵ Chen Han-Seng, *Landlord and Peasant in China - A Study of the Agrarian crisis in South China* (New York: International Publishers, 1936), p.103. A *mu* as a measure of land varied but was approximately one third of an English acre.

⁹⁶ See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of earnings and relative purchasing power.

⁹⁷ Interviews, Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, Tape B, (3) and Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998, Tape 1, A (9) and Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997 (5).



Thus the *huaqiao* became landlords. Rent could be paid in cash or as a share of the rice crop and then sold on the highly speculative rice market. The handling of the family's affairs, such as deposits on land, rent collection and payment of taxes, was usually in the hands of the wife, though selection and negotiation with tenants usually took place through an intermediary. Tenants were also required to pay the rent in advance and so potential difficulties as far as the landlord was concerned were minimised.⁹⁹

The purchase of rice land was a personal or family investment but for those with larger capital or ambitions investments were also made in the wider *qiaoxiang* community. Perhaps the most common of these investments were for the building of roads and the improvement of transport generally. Improved transportation and communications would have been important for those used to travelling. Improved transportation was also necessary if other developments were to occur and essential in an economy increasingly based on consumerism.¹⁰⁰ Until the late 1920s and early 1930s, the main means of transport in Zhongshan was walking or by motor boats, after which improved roads rapidly transformed the situation. For roads to be built, land needed to be purchased and this was done through private companies set up by the *huaqiao*. As these were often toll roads they also caused many disputes.¹⁰¹ The main road from Zhongshan City to Macao was a *huaqiao* investment, sixty miles of this road being constructed by 1928.¹⁰² Such roads allowed the introduction of the rickshaw, which soon replaced the sedan chair.¹⁰³ Bigger changes in transport also followed, especially when the *huaqiao* began operating bus lines along their new roads.¹⁰⁴ Buses replaced the Long Du boats to Shekki in 1930, cutting the travel time down from 2-3 hours to 20 minutes, although boats from the villages of nearby Liang

⁹⁸ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁹⁹ Interview, Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, Tape B, (8).

¹⁰⁰ Cheng & Liu in particular make this link between remittances, higher consumption and the need for improved transportation, Cheng & Liu, "Chinese Emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Toisan", p.63.

¹⁰¹ Mei Shimin 梅土敏, "Qiguan Chelu Liushinian" 岐關車路六十年 (Sixty years of the Macao Rd), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.43, 1998, pp.151-161. See also Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.217-224 and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.48 for road building elsewhere in Guangdong.

¹⁰² Woodhead, *The China Year Book 1928*, p.332.

¹⁰³ Li Gong 李公, "Shiqi Jiefangqian de Shouche Gongsji" 石岐解放前的手車公司, *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.1-3, [1962-1965] 1989, pp.74-76, on how rickshaws were organised.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 20 May 2000, also, Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.270, bus route to Shekki.



Du seem to have continued.¹⁰⁵ By 1933, the villages of Long Du were receiving a daily postal service delivered by “motor” along these roads.¹⁰⁶

After roads a common form of investment by *huaqiao* was in shops and stores. The large *huaqiao* enterprises of *Wing On* and *Sincere* in Hong Kong are often mentioned. Less often referred to is the fact that both these companies also operated branches of their department stores in Shekki, the *qiaoxiang* of their founders. In addition to these branches of large Hong Kong stores, many other *huaqiao* also opened a range of businesses in the *qiaoxiang*. Very often these were branches of stores based in the destinations and designed to facilitate the operation of remittance services and trade companies between the destinations and the *qiaoxiang*.¹⁰⁷ The Kwong War Chong of Sydney, for example, established branches in both Hong Kong and Shekki.¹⁰⁸ In 1924, two Sydney *huaqiao* established the Xiangshan Bank in Shekki.¹⁰⁹ Chang She May’s father used capital he earned in Hong Kong combined with that earned by his father in Sydney, to establish in the 1920s, a Department Store in Shekki.¹¹⁰ These businesses were aimed at meeting the demand created by cash-rich *huaqiao* and their families for consumer goods. The main streets of Shekki were lined in the 1930s with pawn, gold shops and other businesses associated with the need to exchange foreign currency.¹¹¹ Shaxi (沙溪), the market town of Long Du in the late 1940s, was similarly lined with pawn and gold shops.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 20 May 2000, Tape 1, 10min and 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), January 1925, p.43. *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.41, 1997, p.136, claims the first steam power boats were introduced before 1908.

¹⁰⁶ Directorate General of Posts, *China postal atlas: showing the postal establishments and postal routes in each province* (Nanking: Directorate General of Posts, 1933), Pearl River Delta map.

¹⁰⁷ Gao Minchuan 高民川, “Zhongshansi huaqiao dashiqi” 中山市華僑大事記 (Record of major events of Zhongshan City overseas Chinese), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.20, 1990, p.13.

¹⁰⁸ Gao, “Zhongshansi huaqiao dashiqi”, p.11 and interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2).

¹⁰⁹ Miao Wenyue 紹文雨 & Gao Huanzhang 高煥章, “Shiqi yinye de huiyi” 石岐銀業的回憶 (Recollections of the Shiqi silver industry), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol. 1-3, [1962-1965], 1989, p.93 and Gao, “Zhongshansi huaqiao dashiqi”, p.21.

¹¹⁰ Interview, Chang She May (張雪梅), Long Tou Wan, 21 May 2000, (15).

¹¹¹ Li Guorui 李國瑞, “Zhongshan Shangmao Yanbian Gaishu”, 中山商貿演變概述 (A description of the development of Zhongshan businesses), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.30, 1994, pp.75-80 mentions department stores, pawnshops, silvershops, couriers and lettershops.

¹¹² Zhongshansi Shaxizhen Renmin Zhengfu Bian, 中山市沙溪鎮人民政府編, *Shaxizhen Zhi*, 沙溪鎮志 (Shaxi Town Gazetteer), (Zhongshansi Huacheng chubanshe, 中山市: 花城出版社,



Such investments as banks, department stores, pawn and gold shops were enterprises based on consumption and designed to provide services for remittance-rich *huqiao* and their families. However there were other types of investments intended to provide infrastructure for future production. Electricity, essential for modern industry as well as personal comfort, led to electric companies being formed as early as 1911.¹¹³ Other industries established in Zhongshan by *huqiao* produced bricks, shoes, glass and numerous rice processing companies.¹¹⁴ Australian *huqiao* in 1924, collected money for a new port designed to bypass dependence on Portuguese controlled Macao.¹¹⁵ Wong Hing Chow, an Hawaiian *huqiao*, also set up a rice mill in Shekki and made investments in shipping companies in the 1920s.¹¹⁶

Research has tended to focus on national projects and large *huqiao* investments in Hong Kong and Shanghai, neglecting investment in the *qiaoxiang* or emphasising the failure of such investments, especially following the republican revolution.¹¹⁷ The large investments made in Hong Kong or Shanghai by the Australian *huqiao* who founded *Wing On*, *Sincere & Co* and *Sun Sun Co* were more successful and therefore more prominent in the research.¹¹⁸ Neglected are small-scale investments and co-operative projects primarily intended to improve the *qiaoxiang*. The flow of *huqiao*

Zhongshan City Huacheng Publishing, 1999), p.205, has a map of Shaxi businesses around 1945 to 1949.

¹¹³ Xiao Baoyao 蕭寶耀, “Guiguo Huaqiao Yan Diguang Beihai Shimo” 歸國華僑嚴迪光被害始末 (The tale of Yan Diguang, a returned overseas Chinese), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.1-3, [1962-1965], 1989, p.66, states that a United States *huqiao* in 1911 set up the first electricity company in Shekki, charging \$1.80c per globe per month.

¹¹⁴ Lin Jinzhi and Zhuang Weiji, 林金枝/莊爲璣, “Jindai huqiao touzi guonei qiyeshi ziliaoxuanji – Guangdong juan” 近代華僑投資國內企業史資料選- 廣東卷 (Collection of historical material of modern overseas Chinese investment in national enterprise – Guangdong), 福州: 輯福建人民出版社 (Fujian: Renming chubanshe, 1989), p.92.

¹¹⁵ 廣州民國日報 (*Guangzhou Republican Daily*), 25 September 1924, p.5.

¹¹⁶ *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), p.15.

¹¹⁷ Godley, *The Mandarin-capitalists from Nanyang*, “South China’s railroad offensive 1904-8”, pp.149-172; Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.20-21, quotes a report on the increase in *nanyang* *huqiao* investment in their home districts after 1911 and the general failure of these investments due to “disturbances”, and pp.75-76, on the preference for keeping capital elsewhere due to China’s instability and Gao, “Zhongshansi huqiao dashiqi”, pp.13-14.

¹¹⁸ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.56-58; Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, p.48; Tan Renjie 譚仁杰, “Guo Shun Zhuanlue” 郭順傳略 (A brief biography of Guo Shun), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.24, 1992, p.88-9, raising capital in Australia for *Wing On Co*. textile mill expansion in Shanghai around 1920 and *Wing On Life Assurance Company*, *The Wing On Life Assurance Company Limited Golden Jubilee Book, 1925-75* (Hong Kong: 1975) and Yen Ching-hwang, “*Wing On and the Kwok Brothers*”, in Kerrie L. MacPherson, *Asian Department Stores* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp.47-89.



capital into the *qiaoxiang* never ceased, low returns or even losses being compensated for by the desire to bring benefit to the *qiaoxiang*.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless many of these investments were lost, with corruption a major cause. “Too many people get free lights,” was how one observer put it.¹²⁰ This was part of a broader range of social and political issues in China which a failed businessman has left us a glimpse of. Lee Yip Fay returned to Sydney in 1928 after trying to, “float The Chosen Co. of Hongkong, Canton and Shakee [Shekki], General Importers and Exporters” of which he was the Manager of the “Shakee Branch”. As Lee Yip Fay reported it, “our Chinese internal trouble caused us no end of worry and suffered heavy losses and was continually harassed in business and my ambitions were scattered, so much so, ... it amounted to an ordeal ...”¹²¹

Control

A consequence of the failure of investments in the *qiaoxiang* was that without the development of productive industries the *qiaoxiang* continued to be dependent upon the *qiaoxiang* link. Without its own productive industries a *qiaoxiang* such as Long Du needed to continuously reproduce its links with the destinations in each generation. For this to occur the *huaqiao* needed to ensure their status and security within their *qiaoxiang*.

Evidence from the late 19th century of local affairs would suggest that *qiaoxiang* society was more integrated and less dependent upon the *huaqiao*, or certainly less conscious of the *huaqiao* as the source of wealth or benefits. Various charity organisations and other public projects do not mention *huaqiao* involvement. The officials or gentry were in place, and the major landowners and officials who dominate villages in the late Qing know how to keep prestige to themselves. The earliest evidence of *huaqiao* involvement in the *qiaoxiang* concerns donations for the repair or re-building of Ancestor Halls. The 1905 education reforms and the 1911

¹¹⁹ Michael Godley, “The Nanyang Connection: Overseas Chinese enterprise in the economic development of South China 1900-1915”, in Douw, *South China*, pp.113-118.

¹²⁰ Glick Archive, File 3: interview notes with James Leong, n.d. (c.1930s). Similar demands for free service and other forms of corruption helped to bankrupt the Taishan railway, see Cheng, “Chinese emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Toisan”, pp.68-69.



revolution meant that barriers between formal title holders and those with money collapsed completely, resulting in what has been described as a fusion of the old gentry and the merchants.¹²² The *huaqiao*, including those who were not necessarily ‘merchants’ would certainly have been part of this, at least at the village level. Through buying land and performing tasks previously done by officials and the gentry class, the *huaqiao* would have added to their and their families status and influence. This rise in status was clearly observed by some: “The returned emigrant because of bringing home of wealth and new things and ideas rise out of the position of peasants to become a respected class and their importance and influence have elevated the position of those that depend on them.”¹²³

This is not to say that the rise in the position of the *huaqiao* went unchallenged or that the old gentry had simply disappeared. In a reference to gentry/*huaqiao* relations from the Long Du village of Xijiao (谿角), the “gentry class” is described as despising the *huaqiao* in the period before the Japanese invasion. A situation the author felt greatly improved in the post-war period when reliance on *huaqiao* aid for rebuilding was high.¹²⁴ A similar example comes from a Chung Tou village article in which the dominance of gentry over how *huaqiao* donations were used in the pre-war period is contrasted with the situation in the post-war period.¹²⁵

In order to influence their *qiaoxiang* and avoid being exploited it was necessary for *huaqiao* to gain positions of influence. Spending, donating, investing and the potential to keep doing so, put the *huaqiao* in a powerful position. By the 1920s and 1930s, the *huaqiao* and their families were prominent in the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* and at the village level their prestige and wealth could give them the status of “village elders”.¹²⁶ Their advice and support (and money) was sought and some were willing and able to influence politics, in many cases while still in the

¹²¹ AA (NSW), SP42/1; C31/135, Lee Yip Fay, letter, Lee Yip Fay to Collector of Customs, 15 May 1928.

¹²² Marie-Claire Bergere, “The Role of the Bourgeoisie”, in Mary Clabaugh Wright (Ed.), *China in Revolution: The First Phase 1900-1913* (London: Yale University Press, [1968] 1978), pp.229-295.

¹²³ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

¹²⁴ Liu Tian Zhuo 劉天焯, “Zhi haiwai ge qiaobao” 致海外各僑胞 (To overseas Chinese people) Xijiao Yuebao 錢角月報 (*Xijiao Monthly*) July 1948, p.3-6.

¹²⁵ “Cong Congtou xiulu shi shuoqi” 從涌頭修路事說起 (Let’s start talking about Chong Tou road repairs) *Congtou yuekan* 涌頭月刊 (Chong Tou Monthly), No.10, 1 May, 1949, p.1.



destinations.¹²⁷ In 1930, for example, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Honolulu sent a telegram to the Commissioner of the Interior of Guangdong province requesting him to dispatch soldiers to Zhongshan for the protection of the people Hu-Chung village and to prevent future raids on it.¹²⁸

For the majority, involvement in even county level politics was probably rare, as B. C. Lee put it: "The emigrants are conscious of what is going on in the village and is more interested in village affairs than in local politics."¹²⁹ One means by which the *huaqiao* maintained this interest was through the *qiaokan*, magazines specifically designed for the *huaqiao* in the destinations. By the 1920s *qiaokan* were being organised at the village level and distributed to the destinations to inform the *huaqiao* about goings on in the *qiaoxiang* and to encourage donations. These *qiaokan* were not organised by a separate group but were run by *huaqiao* who had returned to the village. They were the means by which *huaqiao* in both the destinations and the *qiaoxiang* keep themselves informed and solicited money for projects, in the process re-enforcing their position within the *qiaoxiang*.

However, with corruption common, more involvement was needed than through *qiaokan*. It was also necessary for those donating money to become involved in the management of projects such as schools if they wished to ensure that their aims were achieved. Thus many *huaqiao* participated in committees of education. The United States resident and Long Tou Wan village *huaqiao* Joe Soong became the principal of the Long Tou Wan school to which he donated.¹³⁰ The *huaqiao* were also able to use their role as benefactors to acquire official positions. Young Kwong Tat managed a Honolulu store until 1921, when he retired to the village and became the magistrate of Zhongshan the following year.¹³¹ Lau On was able to make use of his Kuomintang

¹²⁶ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 15 November 1935.

¹²⁷ Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, pp.164-175, discusses this influence from afar. Also Elizabeth Sinn, "Cohesion and Fragmentation: A county-level perspective on Chinese Transnationalism in the 1940s" in Douw, *Qiaoxiang Ties*, pp.67-86.

¹²⁸ Glick Archive, File 3: notes on Chinese Chamber of Commerce Annual Report, 1930, p.6.

¹²⁹ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

¹³⁰ Interview, Young Koon Nuen (楊觀暖), Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, Tape B, (34).

¹³¹ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).



and “Lung Doo” society connections to become what the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* described as the “sheriff” of Long Du district in the 1920s.¹³²

Such influence was of course part of the same system that made profitable investments so difficult. James Leong, who was born in Hawaii, felt that, “no matter what they are prepared for in the States, when they go back to China, they get into government jobs. In Shekki there are many in government jobs and they follow the old system of squeeze.”¹³³ The Young Kwong Tat who became the Zhongshan magistrate in 1922 was also a Buck Toy man. The *huaqiao* of Buck Toy in Hawaii suggested to their fellows in the *qiaoxiang* that they should naturally approach this magistrate in order to get their roads repaired.¹³⁴

Negatives

Despite their rise in status and ability to acquire official positions, the impact of the *huaqiao* on their *qiaoxiang* was also accompanied by a number of negative consequences. Some of these were the result of dependence on outside incomes and others were due to the political and social circumstances of which the *qiaoxiang* were a part. The threat from bandits, family breakdowns, a lack of opportunity for the younger generation and vulnerability resulting from their continuing dependence on outside income, are just some of the negatives with which *huaqiao* and their families had to contend.

The most obvious danger for the *huaqiao* and their families was the threat posed by bandits. For those without access to land or driven into poverty, a common alternative was banditry and kidnapping. While bandits had always been part of Pearl River Delta life, they were an increasing threat in the 1920s and 1930s.¹³⁵ Naturally those with money or access to money, the *huaqiao* and their families, were targeted.

¹³² *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 26 May 1930, p.5.

¹³³ Glick Archive, File 3: interview notes with James Leong, n.d. (c.1930s).

¹³⁴ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

¹³⁵ For examples of pre-Republican bandit activity in the Pearl River Delta see *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 6 July 1898, p.2; 24 August 1898, p.3; 21 January 1899, p.2; 20 September 1899, p.3; 16 June 1900, p.2 and 6 February 1901, p.3. Zhongshan was not particularly prone to such attacks and according to one list of robberies by county, perhaps on the lower end of the scale, only 10 in Zhongshan, compared to 235 in Nanhai (which included Canton City) and 57 in Xinhui, *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 16 June 1900, p.3.



Lee Man Duck, a vegetable shop owner in Sydney, was kidnapped while visiting his Liang Du village in the 1920s and only released after paying a ransom.¹³⁶ In 1930, bandits entered the house one evening and kidnapped Wong Chock Tong, the son of the president of the Liberty Bank in Honolulu, while he was visiting his mother and grandmother in the village of Long Tou Wan. A ransom of \$4,000 had already been paid and \$40,000 more demanded when he was able to escape and return to Hawaii.¹³⁷ Buck Toy village did not have a kidnapping until the 1930s, when the grandson of Y. Akin, a Buck Toy millionaire, was kidnapped at a cost of about \$10,000 Mex. to get him back.¹³⁸

As a result of this bandit threat the building of “gun towers” or watchtowers in the villages and the creation of local troops for protection became a necessary part of most south China villages. To the building of these defences, the *huaqiao* were expected and anxious to contribute.¹³⁹ Buck Toy village was only attacked 2-3 times in its history, as it was surrounded by other villages and so it was not easy for robbers to get in without raising an alarm. Nevertheless, by the 1920s, the villagers of Buck Toy were soliciting donations from their Hawaiian *huaqiao* to build watchtowers and support a night patrol.¹⁴⁰ But despite such protections the threat continued. In 1925, bandits burnt down three tower houses in a Zhongshan village and in 1923 their attacks on passenger boats threatened to close this as a means of transport between Zhuxiuyuan village and Shekki.¹⁴¹

It was not always a case of helpless villagers waiting in fear to be attacked. Guns were apparently plentiful by at least the end of the 19th century, as when in 1898 bandits killed the Liu’s, husband and wife, despite their both being armed.¹⁴² Guns

¹³⁶ Interview, Cliff Lee, Sydney, 28 September 1997 & 12 April 1999.

¹³⁷ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 29 September 1930, p.1 and Glick Archive, File 3: interview notes with Lee Kau, 8 October 1931.

¹³⁸ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung-Chong Lee, 15 November 1935. Also Liang Yaozhong 梁耀中, “‘Daminghuo’ he qunzhong de fangfei ziwei” ‘打明火’ 和群眾的防匪自衛 (‘Night attacks’ and group self defence against bandits), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.31, 1994, pp.190-191. On bandits in Taishan see Hsu, *Dreaming of gold*, pp.50-51.

¹³⁹ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.197-201 gives examples of public safety measures in “emigrant” communities.

¹⁴⁰ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 15 November 1935 and 16 June 1936.

¹⁴¹ 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 3 June 1925, p.7 and 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), January 1923, p.43.

¹⁴² *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 14 December 1898, p.2.



were also used by villagers later that same year to drive off bandits after they made a second attack in two nights on Bailigang (白歷港) village in Zhongshan.¹⁴³ Villagers could call on soldiers to help and when these came villagers would join with them to attack the bandits in their mountain locations.¹⁴⁴ When bandits attacked Heng Mei village in 1924, the sounds of gun shots, siren, warning bell and canon from surrounding villages caused the bandits, according to later investigation, to fear their retreat would be cut off and they abandoned the attempt.¹⁴⁵

Less directly violent means of getting money included “black-ticket fees”, which referred to money demanded by local “bosses”, which if not paid led to a “black-ticket” being issued that would prevent crops being either sown or harvested. An account in 1924 mentions that at harvest time bandits sent letters to farmers with various bandit chiefs asking for amounts per *mu* ranging from \$0.65c to a silver dollar. The amounts were to be paid by a certain deadline before harvest could begin.¹⁴⁶ An uncle of Victor Gow seemingly was not prepared to pay a black-ticket fee or knew that payment was no guarantee of safety. This uncle had a “station” or *wai gee* (圍基) in the 1930s, an area about the size of two football fields for threshing rice and surrounded by a moat and wall. The entrance had a swivel bridge and four breech loading cannon, 4-5 feet long, at each corner. The station was about an hour’s walk from the village and was often attacked by bandits. Victor himself carried a German luger for protection.¹⁴⁷

From the *huaqiao* point of view bandits were an outside force they could only protect themselves from as best they could. Family was quite another thing and despite the strong family orientated culture of the *qiaoxiang*, it was not unknown for the bonds of family to disintegrate under the impact of the *huaqiao* lifestyle. It is impossible to estimate the proportion of *huaqiao* families that ‘broke down’ but local Zhongshan newspapers, though not the *qiaokan*, carried numerous reports of family disputes and

¹⁴³ *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 6 July 1898, p.2.

¹⁴⁴ *Tung Wah News*, 東華新報, 24 August 1898, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.37, October 1924, p.69.

¹⁴⁶ 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.37, October 1924, p.69.

¹⁴⁷ Interview, Victor Gow, Sydney, 14 April 1999.



instances of complete breakdown. These reports include not only news items but letters and notices placed in the papers by family disputants themselves.

Many family disputes involved the sale or leasing of land against the wishes of other family members. Newspaper items would be posted warning readers not to accept certain land deeds as guarantees for loans and denying any responsibility should this happen.¹⁴⁸ A wife selling her husband's land in order to finance a love affair or a son needing to pay debts might take such an action. More usually the problem seems to have been a lack of support, or perceived lack, for a widow by her son or perhaps a daughter-in-law, who is living in a destination and not sending the necessary remittances.¹⁴⁹ Another type of family dispute announced in the newspapers was when a Long Du man explained why he had used the police to claim money from his half brother. The money had been leant to his brother to go to San Francisco who on his return had repaid nothing.¹⁵⁰

If a wife taking a lover while her husband was overseas caused trouble, a husband returning with a wife from overseas could also result in problems.¹⁵¹ A *huaqiao* could also return to find his wife preferred the remittances he could no longer send to his own presence.¹⁵² In at least two instances sons of returned *huaqiao* became so enraged or were made so desperate by a father seeking to limit their spending, that the fathers were shot.¹⁵³ These are dramatic stories suitable for newspapers and are not evidence that all or even most *huaqiao* families suffered such disruptions. However, they are a reminder of the pressures of the '*huaqiao* lifestyle' and that diversity at the family and other levels needs to be acknowledged.

¹⁴⁸ 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 17 November 1924, p.7; 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 30 September 1925, p.6; 大同報 (*Datong News*), 15 February 1927, p.4 and 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 1 November 1932, p.6.

¹⁴⁹ 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 17 November 1924, p.8; 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 26 March 1926, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ 大同報 (*Datong News*), 8 August 1927, p.8.

¹⁵¹ For example, 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 21 August 1922, p.5; 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 23 November 1931, p.7; 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 25 May 1932, p.4.

¹⁵² 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 23 November 1931, p.7.

¹⁵³ 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 21 August 1933, p.5 and 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 28 July 1934, p.4.



Many of these family disputes were the result of the younger generation's lack of opportunities. Joe Wah Gow had moved his entire family back to the village from Australia in 1929. Despite this he also felt that was "no future for the boys in the village" and had made plans at the same time for his sons to return to Australia and take up business.¹⁵⁴ A consumer economy dependent on outside income was not one that offered much scope to young people. Growing up in the villages and relying on remittances, the involvement of the sons of *huaqiao* in opium, gambling and prostitution was often referred to.¹⁵⁵ Opium and gambling houses were therefore a great concern and the *huaqiao* were very supportive of efforts to drive out gambling and opium, "especially by outsiders". During the 1930s in Buck Toy village, for example, three opium houses were taken over and closed. A move closely monitored and supported by the village's *huaqiao* in Hawaii.¹⁵⁶

Part of the problem for the sons of *huaqiao* was that once educated it was not considered possible to take up a labouring occupation. For an educated person to work in the fields was "a disgrace in which his family would share".¹⁵⁷ The educated sons of *huaqiao* found themselves in a similar position to those gentry who, while educated, had few means of support. In pre-republican times the result was that "a sizeable proportion of gentry were deriving an income from their work in the teaching profession."¹⁵⁸ As in other areas, the *huaqiao* found themselves in a similar situation to the old gentry. Teaching was a low paid occupation in the *qiaoxiang* and the incentive to go overseas to earn continued to be strong in each generation.

Occupation and revolution

The option and continuing incentives to seek income in the destinations was part of the continuing dependence of the *qiaoxiang* on outside income. A dependence that was vulnerable to disruptions to that income. The barriers raised to movement to the destinations by the restrictive laws in the years after 1880 was one such threat successfully over come by some. The Depression in the 1930s was another for those who lost their source of incomes, but again many survived this. Economic recovery

¹⁵⁴ Interview, Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997. The plans did not eventuate.

¹⁵⁵ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.187-192.

¹⁵⁶ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 16 June 1936.

¹⁵⁷ Fei Hsiao-tung, *China's Gentry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p.136.



in the mid-1930s was shattered by the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, which led to the occupation of Canton City and parts of Guangdong province in 1938. Between 1938 and 1941 loose Japanese control over Guangdong resulted in the rise of “bosses” as the political control of the *qiaoxiang* became divided between Japanese, Nationalists, Communists and bandits.¹⁵⁹ Despite this worsening political situation, remittances continued to flow and *huaqiao* to travel back and forth after 1938.

It was with the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong at the end of 1941 until 1945 that the most devastating blow to the *qiaoxiang* link and to the *qiaoxiang* themselves occurred. Remittances and visits ceased almost completely, and food shortages grew as imports dried up. Those who had previously taken refuge in Hong Kong were driven back to their villages by the Japanese. For many, the result was simply starvation. One account estimates that Zhongshan County’s population fell during the occupation from 1.1 million to 880,000 or less, these losses including many who fled to other areas as well as those who died.¹⁶⁰ Begging for food by those whose remittances were cut off is said to have become common.¹⁶¹ Tables published in *qiaokan* after 1945 list the results of the years of occupation and starvation, with whole families wiped out or left with only one or two members.¹⁶²

The same article that had described Xiaaze village before the war also gives a picture of the impact of the occupation on this *huaqiao* village. According to this account, with the Japanese came a rapid decline and “hardship replaced happiness”. Gambling of many kinds took place, opium was traded and smoked in public as Xiaaze became a centre for such activities and security disappeared once the Japanese moved in. Prices rose and it wasn’t rare to see people die from starvation. *Huaqiao* families couldn’t receive money from overseas and those who could turned to farming, raising pigs or working as peddlers to support themselves. People without skills sold

¹⁵⁸ Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*, p.217.

¹⁵⁹ Siu, “Subverting Lineage Power”, pp.196-197 and 中山月刊 (*Zhongshan Monthly News*), No.5, 1946, p.27. For an account of these bosses and the political impact of the Japanese occupation in the neighbouring county of Xinhui (新會) see Siu, *Agents and Victims*, pp.88-97.

¹⁶⁰ He Dazhang, “Zhongshan Xian Dili Zhi Xin Renshi”, p.28. For similar accounts of Taishan see Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.179-180 and Cheng, “Those who stayed at Home”, p.12, where an estimated 200,000 are said to have died in this period.

¹⁶¹ Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.100.

¹⁶² 中山月刊 (*Zhongshan Monthly News*), No.2, 1946, p.22; No.3, pp.27-29 and No.6, pp.30-33.



their property and houses to survive a few days. Between 1939 and 1945 the population fell by over a thousand (from 3,700) and over one hundred houses were torn down. The worst situation of all, the writer felt, was the school. The equipment gradually disappeared and the students became fewer and fewer. In 1944, hundreds of Japanese soldiers came and used the school as a base, the school was closed and they changed classrooms to kitchens and bathrooms, using furniture to make fires, 40,000 books were burned to ashes.¹⁶³

However, as with all accounts of the *qiaoxiang* diversity must be considered and even during this period of devastation it cannot be assumed that all villages or families were affected in the same way. An account from Shaxi (沙溪), a village just a few kilometres to the west of Xiazi but on the “border” between Japanese and non-Japanese controlled areas during the occupation, gives a very different picture. Shaxi became a thriving centre of commercial business as people avoided occupied Shekki. The County Middle School was moved to Shaxi, along with other institutions. Shaxi also had to suffer the presence of the “Da Tian Er” (大天二) or local bosses, who became dominant in this period, but overall does not seem to have suffered as much as Xiazi.¹⁶⁴

The most significant factor during this time was probably the degree of pre-war dependence on remittances. According to Liu Tian-zhuo, Xijiao village survived due to the good government of the village which regularly supported the poor by opening the grain storage. The village was close to the rice fields and had many farmers, unlike other villages that relied more on remittance support. During the difficult period of the occupation therefore, Xijiao could operate relatively normally. In fact, during this time traders from other places came, bringing prosperity as grain and mixed business did well. There were many shops during 1943-44 and all the village was using electric lights.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ya Da , “Xiaze xiang zhi Jin Xi”, p.27.

¹⁶⁴ Jin Guo 巾帼, “Yidu fanrong de Shaxixu” 一度繁榮的沙溪墟 (Once bustling Shaxi market)
Zhongshan yuekan 中山月刊 (*Zhongshan Monthly News*), No.5, 1946, p.27.

¹⁶⁵ Liu, “Zhi haiwai ge qiaobao”, p.3.



There were those who survived the occupation intact or even prospered. For most *huaqiao* and their families, dependent on remittances as they were, the impact of this period was devastating. *Huaqiao* who had been prevented from visiting the *qiaoxiang* by the occupation rushed to do so after 1945. Many had not had any news of their families for years and the revived *qiaokan* began publishing tables that listed families and their deaths or survivals.¹⁶⁶ Many returned to find only loss, such as a *huaqiao* who returned from Australia to find all of his family dead except for one son.¹⁶⁷ Another father discovered that in desperation his wife in 1943 had sold their son. The father wrote that he would send no more remittances until the son had been found.¹⁶⁸

The *Chung Tou Monthly* (涌頭月刊) in 1948 reported the number of its *huaqiao* who had returned to the village and those that were still in the “travellers places of residence”. Of its 329 “travellers”, 55 or around 16% were in the village at the time.¹⁶⁹ They had returned to a village and *qiaoxiang* more plagued by bandits and dependent on donations than ever before.¹⁷⁰ But while things may have looked bad to the returning *huaqiao* they were in fact an improvement for those who had been in the *qiaoxiang* during the Japanese occupation. For the recorder of Xiaaze’s fortunes, once the Japanese soldiers went to Shekki to surrender, the village began to recover, gambling places disappeared and village people regained their happiness. With support from the *huaqiao* it was possible to provide free grain for the poor three times; in December 1945, 2,532 people received grain or nearly the entire population, in April 1946, 1,350 people and again in July, 1,063 people received free grain. Pupils at the school had by this time increased to 270 and many of the societies were open again. The writer felt that with the support of all, Xiaaze would again be a place to be praised.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ For example, 中山月刊 (*Zhongshan Monthly*), No.3, 1946, pp.27-29 & No.6, 1946, pp.30-33.

¹⁶⁷ 蠔角月報 (*Gu Jiao Monthly*), June 1948, p.22.

¹⁶⁸ 中山民國日報 (*Zhongshan Republican Daily*), 23 February 1947, p.3.

¹⁶⁹ 涌頭月刊 (*Chung Tou Monthly*), No.2, September 1948, p.3.

¹⁷⁰ On bandits see, 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.16, 1948, p.28 (Bandits demand \$500); 蠔角月報 (*Gu Jiao Monthly*), January/February 1948, p.40 (Bandit demands and restoration of water transport) and 中山民國日報 (*Zhongshan Republican Daily*), 26 February 1947, p.3 (Returnees from Cuba cheated).

¹⁷¹ Ya Da , “Xiaaze xiang zhi Jin Xi”, p.27.



Rebuilding was also the aim for many of the *huaqiao* who returned in the late 1940s. Donations flooded in to assist with projects for roads, bridges, fire equipment, libraries and hospitals.¹⁷² As well, *huaqiao* made efforts to provide for the safety of their families. Land was bought and more towers were built during the years after 1945 than had been built in some villages in the years before the war.¹⁷³ Due to the hardship suffered during the period remittances were stopped, many bought land as a way of ensuring support for the family should such a situation recur.¹⁷⁴ For many people the situation after 1945 was one of recovery with the intention of continuing life as it had been before. While others chose to take their families to the destinations, it was not the case at this time of refugees seeking to escape the threat of a Communist Party government, a threat most were unaware of or did not consider an immediate possibility.

This continuing strength of the *qiaoxiang* links makes the ending of the civil war in 1949 and the establishment of a new government in China all the more significant. Significant because, while 1949 does not necessarily mark the dramatic change it is usually given in hindsight, it does mark the end of the *qiaoxiang* links in the form that had evolved since 1849. The movement of large numbers of people and incomes back and forth between the Pearl River Delta *qiaoxiang* and the Pacific Ports that had existed for a century dwindled after this date. Returns of aged *huaqiao* continued into the early 1950s but remittances gradually fell, due both to the new Chinese government's policies and those of destination governments hostile to a Communist government.

Conclusion

This case-study of the *qiaoxiang* of Long Du has shown the role of the *qiaoxiang* links and the impact of the *huaqiao* over several generations in the years before 1949. Over a period of around 100 years the people of Long Du had transformed their villages by establishing generations of links across the Pacific. Family life was heavily influenced and contributions made to health, education, the economy and

¹⁷² On donations, 賴角月報 (*Xu Jiao Monthly*), No.5, 1946, pp.29-36 (Report on spending of donations) and 隆都僑報 (*Long Du Overseas Chinese News*), No.2/3, April 1947, p.12 and 中山月刊 (*Zhongshan Monthly*), No.1, 1947, p.44 (on donations from Hawaii).

¹⁷³ Lowe, "Survey of Longtouwan Tower Houses".

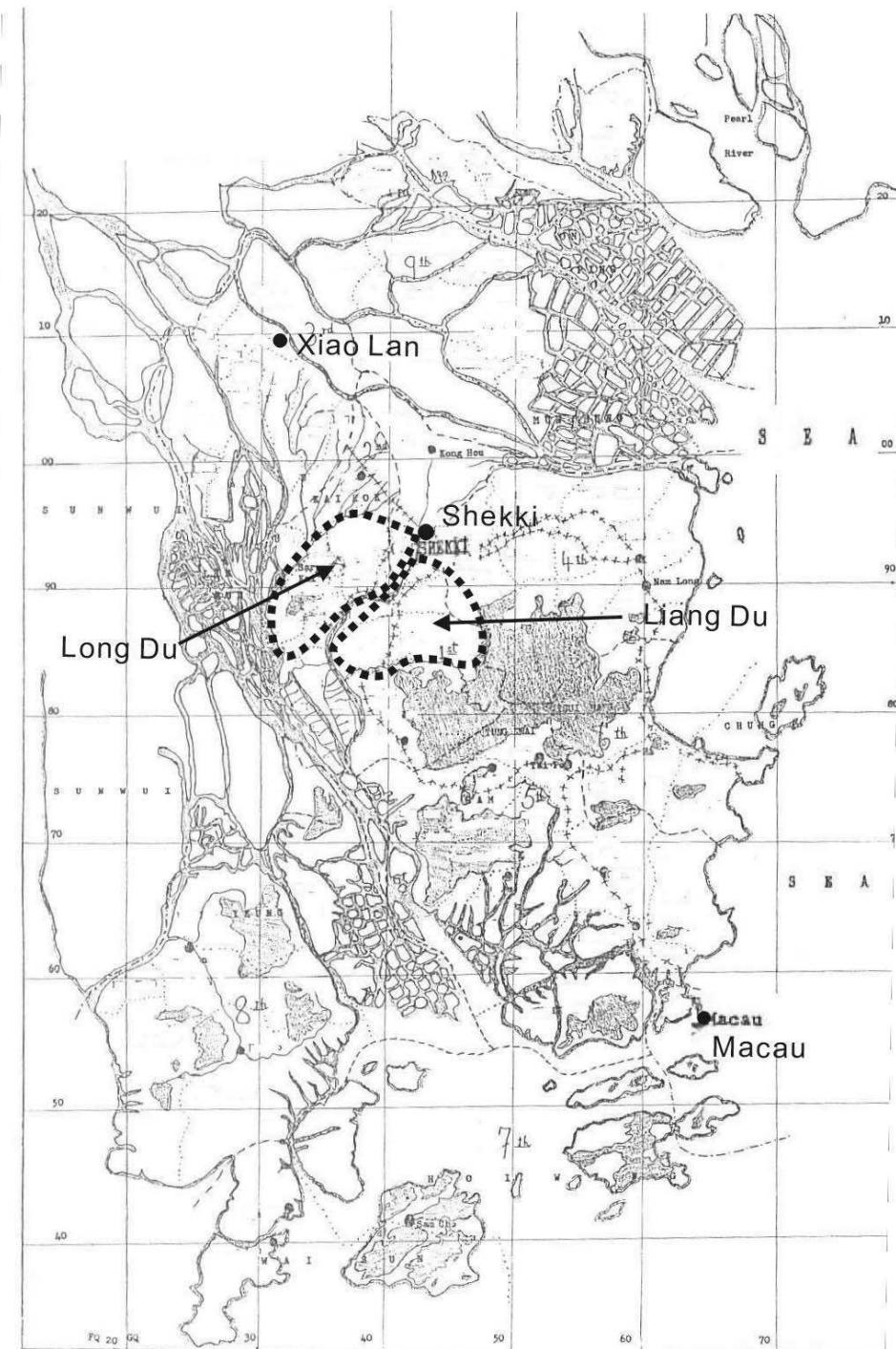


politics that affected the *qiaoxiang* at the village level. Not all the contributions were positive and ultimately the *qiaoxiang* were left vulnerable to outside forces that proved devastating during the disruptions of the Japanese occupation. However the links were durable and the restoration and recovery of the *qiaoxiang* links after this was only cut short by the establishment of a new China government in 1949.

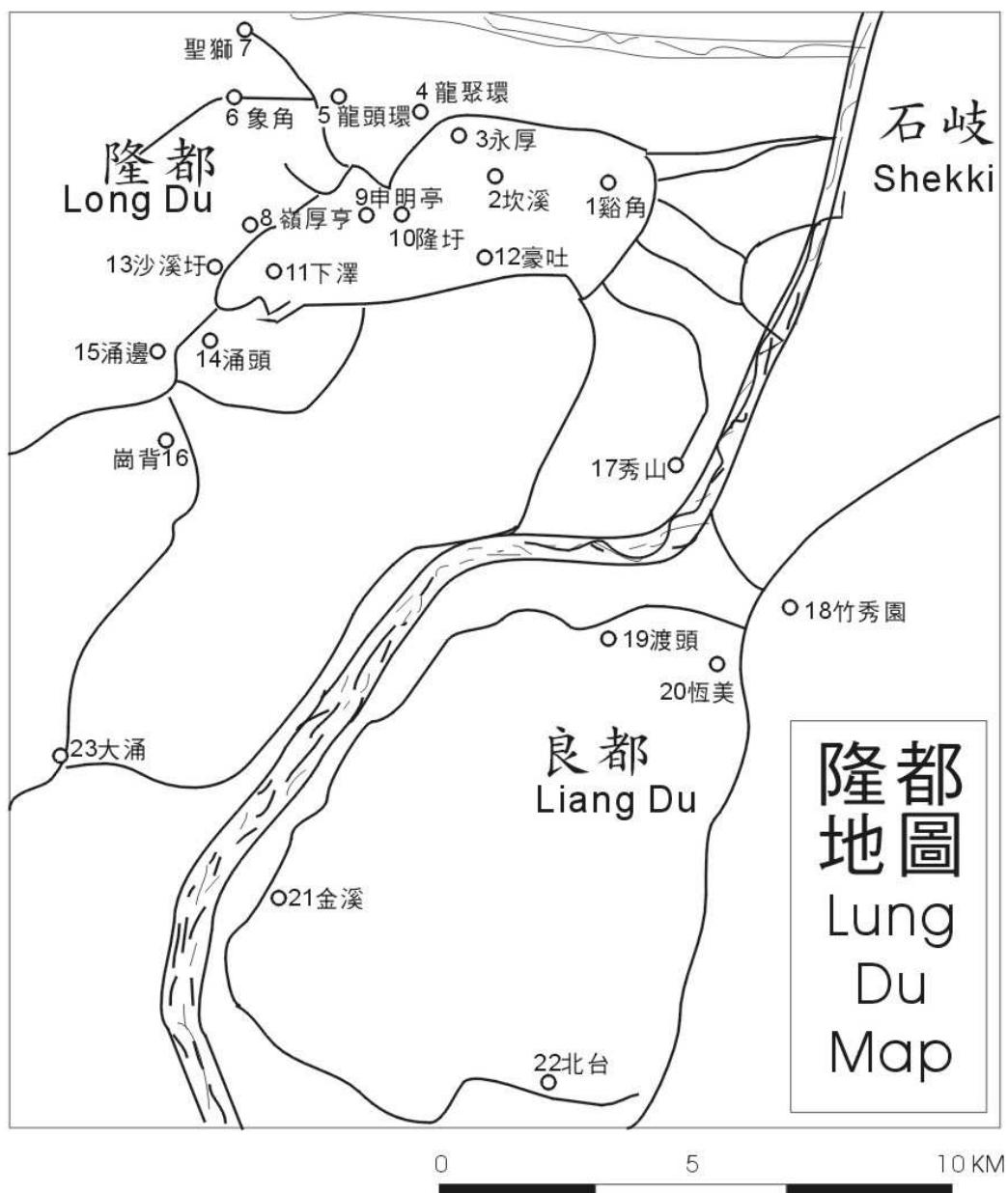
In 1980, after most of a life spent in the United States, Mrs. Leong told an interviewer that she and her family had intended when she first arrived, to return to their *qiaoxiang* where they had a “big house”. This chapter has endeavoured to show what kind of place it was to which she wished to return and to which many *huaqiao* did return. The following chapters will discuss the mechanisms and the motives through which life in a *qiaoxiang* such as Long Du was influenced by the *qiaoxiang* links and how developments arose that resulted in some never returning to their “big house”.

¹⁷⁴ Liu, “Zhi haiwai ge qiaobao”, p.3.



Map 2.1: Zhongshan County and Long Du district.¹

¹ United States Consulate General, Hong Kong, *Index of Clan names by villages for Toishan, Sunwui, Hoiping, and Chungshan Districts* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General, 1965-1968).

Map: 2.2: Long Du and its villages.¹

隆都地圖
Lung
Du
Map

隆都 Long Du

- 1 霽角 Xijiao
- 2 坎溪 Kanxi
- 3 永厚 Yonghou
- 4 龍聚環 Longjuhuhan/Long Jui Wan
- 5 龍頭環 Longtouhuhan/Long Tou Wan
- 6 象角 Xiangjiao/Chung Kok
- 7 聖獅 Shengshi
- 8 嶺厚亨 Linghouheng
- 9 申明亭 Shenmingting

良都 Liang Du

- 10 隆圩 Longxu
- 11 下澤 Xiazhe
- 12 豪吐 Haotu/Hou Tou
- 13 沙溪圩 Shaxixu
- 14 涌頭 Congtou/Chong Tou
- 15 涌邊 Congbian
- 16 岗背 Gangbei
- 17 秀山 Xiushan
- 18 竹秀園 Zhuxiuyuan
- 19 渡頭 Dutou
- 20 恒美 Hengmei
- 21 金溪 Jinxi
- 22 北台 Beitai/Buck Toy
- 23 大涌 Dacong

¹ Based on San Francisco Long Du Association map, c.1965, redrawn by Chen Mei-Su.

Picture 2.1: Huaqiao houses, Zhongshan.¹



A typical *huaqiao* house of Zhongshan



A typical tower house, built as an addition to a more traditional house



¹ Taken by the author in Zhongshan County, 2000-2001.

Picture 2.2: Wealthy *huaqiao* houses in Liang Du and Long Du.¹



One of two Ma family mansions built in their village of Heng Mei.



Mansion of the Kwok family in the village of Zhuxiuyuan.



Mansion of Joe Wah Gow built in the Long Du village of Long Tou Wan.

¹ Ma and Kwok family house photos by author, 2000-2001. Joe Wah Gow house picture by courtesy of Victor Gow, c.1970.

Chapter 3: He would have to send money

The picture of life and developments in Zhongshan and Long Du discussed in the previous chapter were founded on links established and sustained between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations over generations. The motivations for establishing and maintaining these links will be examined in the following chapter. Here is investigated the mechanisms, or those tangible elements, which ensured that money, information and people were constantly transferred between the *qiaoxiang* and the Pacific Ports. Sending money, being kept informed on family and *qiaoxiang* affairs, regular visits and even ensuring that ones bone's returned after death were all part of the *qiaoxiang* links. These links were sustained through the establishment of associations in the destinations, as well as through services provided by stores and businesses. How these elements were established, maintained and evolved over distance, time and generations, and how their development helped to sustain the *qiaoxiang* links will be investigated here.

The *huaqiao* pattern

All ... returned home to get married; remitted money home and sent their local-born sons home for education; returned home for visits and went home during the Depression and the second world war. They had the bones of their deceased villagers sent home for proper reburial.¹

Many researchers have identified and described a ‘*huaqiao* pattern.’² Central to this pattern was a continuing effort to maintain long distance links with the family and village, often over generations. This pattern began with the mass movement of labourers associated with the European colonial demand for labour, the gold rushes in California and the Australian colonies, and the development of plantations in Hawaii in the 19th century.³ The *huaqiao* pattern continued to develop in the 20th century, despite the establishment of restrictive laws in all the Pacific Ports. This

¹ Woon, “An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area”, p.283.

² For example, Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.4-5 and Char, *The Sandalwood Mountains*, pp.95-96.

³ Previous to this period merchants rather than labourers dominated, see Wang, “South China perspective’s on overseas Chinese”.



pattern intensified until the beginning of the anti-Japanese War and changed permanently only with the establishment of a new government in China in 1949. Over this period the *huaqiao* evolved a range of links with their *qiaoxiang* that included return visits, village marriage, remittances, a variety of means of communication, the regular sponsorship of relatives and the systematic return of the bones of the dead. These links involved founding organisations to sustain contacts, to send the remittances and to provide support in the destinations, as well as to assist in final trips home for both the poor and the dead.

Central to the *huaqiao* pattern was the location of the family in the *qiaoxiang*, the result of the predominantly male movement and marriage in the village. While variations in this pattern of family location existed and developed over the period (discussed in Chapter 5), it was around family location in the *qiaoxiang* that most of the mechanisms for the links with the *qiaoxiang* evolved. Parents, wives and children generally stayed in the villages and wives were seldom brought to the destinations until well into the 20th century.⁴ This pattern of family location was based on custom, regard for the needs of parents and helped to ensure that money would be sent to the family.⁵ In Hawaii, the government attempted to subsidise the migration of women but failed to attract significant numbers.⁶ This separation of *huaqiao* from their family created a range of options and consequences for the development of links with the *qiaoxiang*.

Most *huaqiao* first moved from their *qiaoxiang* as unmarried young men or even boys and it was usually only after their first trip back to the home village that they married.⁷ About 75% of *huaqiao* of the generation that arrived in Sydney before 1901 reported that they had married after their first visit back to the village.⁸ Or to

⁴ For a good description of the “joint family structure” that was characteristic see Peffer, *If they Don’t Bring their Women Here*, p.5.

⁵ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.118-123, gives examples; Crawford, *Notes*, p.31, refers to wives as part of the “chain which binds him and the money he may make to his ancestral home” and Nathan Chow felt that his mother returned to the village from California in 1932 with him as a “hostage” for his father’s continuing remittances, interview Nathan Chow, 21 March 2000, Hong Kong.

⁶ Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.14.

⁷ Interview, Young Koon Nuen, 6 July, 2000, Tape B: 20min.

⁸ Based on an examination of Immigration Restriction Act files, AA (NSW): SP1122/1, General Correspondence and Case files, 1901-1967. Also, Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, p.28.



put it another way, they made their first trip back when they had saved sufficient to marry. In Hawaii in 1910, there were 5,674 Chinese men who were married, an increase on the 4,027 of 1898, with the majority of wives in China.⁹ United States statistics also show the large number of married *huaqiao* whose wives were not with them. In 1900, for example, 31,794 Chinese men were reported married while the total Chinese female population in the United States was 2,157, even allowing for intermarriage with non-Chinese women, this indicates that large numbers of wives remained in the *qiaoxiang*.¹⁰

The most profound impact resulting from the tendency of wives to remain in the village was that the *qiaoxiang* remained the centre of family life, with most *huaqiao* travelling back to marry, to produce children and to visit. Other consequences were that life in the destinations for most *huaqiao* was that of a ‘bachelor’ and that relatively few children were born in the destinations. This last was significant in that it meant the lack of a generation that could act as a bridge between cultures. Social isolation in the destinations, due to low intermarriage and slow growing destination-born and educated populations, did not encourage destination settlement as an alternative to maintaining *qiaoxiang* links.¹¹

Family in the *qiaoxiang* provided the focus around which other factors and features of the *qiaoxiang* links were built. These were tangible, consciously intended, measurable links that maintained and strengthen the relationship with the *qiaoxiang*, they were centered around visits, means of communication, remittances and the organisational networks that facilitated these. The most tangible of these elements was the money remitted to families in the *qiaoxiang*.

Remittances

As the poverty of the family and a desire to improve the family’s prospects were motivations for leaving the *qiaoxiang*, so sending money to the family was

⁹ Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.161.

¹⁰ C. Livingston Daley, *The Chinese as Sojourners: A Study in the Sociology of Migration* (City University of New York, Ph.D., 1977), p.132.

¹¹ These aspects are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.



considered essential. As an 1854 rule of the “Su-Yap clan” (Siyi), in the Colony of Victoria clearly expressed it:

*The product of the earth (gold) is to be found in these southern regions;
the gathering of it together is for China.*¹²

The previous chapter discussed how this money was spent in the *qiaoxiang*. Despite low wages and the debts under which most *huaqiao* arrived, remittances were common. Lower living costs due to board and lodging arrangements and having no family to support in the destinations allowed even the poorest labourer or street hawker to send some proportion of their earnings to support their family. Relative values also meant that small amounts from a destination could make a significant contribution to family income in the *qiaoxiang*.¹³

The mechanisms used to transmit money from the destinations to the *qiaoxiang* developed over time. During the gold rushes “remittances are usually sent by the hands of some trustworthy acquaintance, or fellow-villager who is returning to China” and “diggers bound for Hong Kong are delegated to carry a parcel of gold-dust.”¹⁴ Such personal methods had their risks and could result in losses as happened to a group of *huaqiao* in Sydney in the 1860s.¹⁵ This money was also vulnerable to thieves such as occurred in 1898, when the crew of a ship were found to be stealing remittances from letters.¹⁶ Using merchants as carriers was safer, even if they charged a commission. Way Kee described in 1891 how, “he sent home in the same box [as his £10,000] some money from Chinamen here [Sydney] who wished to send to their parents or friends in China”.¹⁷ Other methods that were used over the period

¹² “Rules of a Chinese Society, 1854” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.49.

¹³ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.87-89 compares *huaqiao* incomes with non-*huaqiao* families. Relative values and income are discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁴ “Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria by Rev. W. Young, 1868” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, pp.49-57 and Crawford, *Notes*, p.18.

¹⁵ Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, p. 47, refers to a mishap, which may have encouraged the use of a safer system.

¹⁶ For an example of letter stealing see *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 28 September 1898, p.3.

¹⁷ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.55, line, 2126.



included specialist couriers, local and foreign banks and using remittances collectively to purchase trade goods, with remittances paid from profits.¹⁸

The transfer of remittances in the form of gold specie was popular, even after banking systems and exchangeable currencies became common. During the First World War it was the opinion of the Australian Comptroller-General of Trade & Customs, when gold exports were limited to £50 per person, that “particular note of them [Chinese passengers] should be taken” when searching for possible gold smugglers.¹⁹ In California, gold coins were minted and in regular use until 1918 and the use of United States gold coins for remittances were current throughout the 1930s.²⁰ In Australia, remittances by the 1920s were known as “se ling dan” (司令單) or sterling because English pounds were used as the currency of exchange due to their stability and convertibility.²¹ By the 1930s, bank drafts rather than gold were more likely and in such cases a store may have collected the individual remittances from its customers and consolidated them into a single draft to send to Hong Kong.²²

Despite banks and post offices, the role of merchants and their stores was always a prominent one in the movement of remittances. Ma Tsui Chiu was a Hong Kong based businessman at the turn of the 20th century who facilitated the transfer of remittances to Taishan County through his extensive network of contacts in both his *qiaoxiang* and overseas.²³ By the 1920s and probably much earlier, destination stores linked to *qiaoxiang* such as Zhongshan and Taishan regularly carried ads

¹⁸ Various descriptions of these methods and estimates of their relative importance can be found in Feng, “Luelun jiefang qian”, pp.32-33; Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.78-81; Woon, “An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area”, p.287 & Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.36-38.

¹⁹ Australian Archives (NSW), C4203/1; Department of Custom & Excise, NSW, Boarding Branch Records of Files & Orders, 1914-31, vol.1, p.35, memo, Comptroller-General, Department of Trade & Customs to Collector of Customs, 3 March 1916.

²⁰ McWilliams, *California*, p.227. See, 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.7, 1921, p.25; 沙溪月報 (*Sha Xi Monthly*), No.14, 1930, p.164-165 and 東鎮僑聲半月刊 (*Dong Zhen Overseas Chinese Voice Fortnightly*), No.1, 1936, front & back, for exchange rates including for United States gold coins.

²¹ Interview, Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (Tape 1, 10)

²² Interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 97 (2).

²³ K. C. Fok, “Private Chinese Business Letters and the Study of Hong Kong History - a preliminary report”, in Hong Kong Museum of History, *Collected Essays on Various Historical Materials for Hong Kong Studies* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1990), pp.14-19.



guaranteeing the safe arrival of money and letters.²⁴ In Zhongshan and Hong Kong newspapers of the 1920s, the ads of firms such as *Wing On Sing Co.* and *Wing Sang & Co.*, promised to safely transfer money between Luzon, San Francisco and Peru, and Hong Kong or Shekki.²⁵

Why most *huaqiao* continued to prefer the store based remittance systems to banks can be seen from the level of service such a store could offer. In Sydney, the *Kwong War Chong* (廣和豐) was a major remittance centre for Zhongshan *huaqiao*, though stores such as *Wing On & Co.* also remitted.²⁶ The *Kwong War Chong* charged a small commission on each remittance and consolidated all the monies into a single draft drawn on the *English, Scottish and Australian Bank*.²⁷ The draft was then sent to the Hong Kong branch, the *Kwong War Fong* (廣和丰), where it was converted into Hong Kong dollars and then into Chinese dollars to be sent to the *Kwong War Cheong & Co* (廣和祥), the branch in Shekki. The Shekki branch then distributed the money to the families, either by their collecting it or it being delivered to the village by the firm's clerks or by professional couriers.²⁸ Young Koon Nuen describes how his mother would regularly make the trip from their village into the district capital of Shekki. There she would pick up from a silver shop the letter and £2 that his father would send from Cairns, northern Queensland each month.²⁹ A receipt, which included a letter back to the *huaqiao* in the destination, would be signed and returned to the store, where it was set up on a rack in the front window for people to collect.³⁰

²⁴ One European observer reported that the mails were kept safe by regular payment to “local brigands”, Samuel L. Gracey, “Chinese Letter Shops”, *The Chautauquan*, Vol.XXI, June 1895, No.3, p.311.

²⁵ For example, 大同報 (*Datong News*), 16 February 1927, p.7. Also Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.37.

²⁶ Interview, Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997 (9) & Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2).

²⁷ Perhaps from 1% to 5% according to Samuel L. Gracey, “Chinese Letter Shops”, p.310.

²⁸ See Lee Bung Chong, “The Chinese Store as a Social Institution”, *Social Process in Hawaii*, Vol. II, May 1936, pp.35-38 for a similar account of Hawaiian stores. For an account of a courier see Li, “Qiao qing ji ku”, p.29.

²⁹ Interview, Young Koon Nuen, Long Tou Wan, 20 May 2000 (5).

³⁰ Interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2-4). See also, Miao & Gao, “Shiqi yinye de huiyi”, pp.88-95, which discusses the commissions earned between Shiqi and Hong Kong. For similar descriptions of remittance services see, Char, *The Sandalwood Mountains*, p.127 (Hawaii); Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.79-80 (Nanyang) and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.37 (California). The *Tiy Loy & Co.* of the Gao Yao (高有) County people in Sussex St. Sydney still (in 1999) have such a letter rack, now used only for general correspondence.



This was the system used by most *huaqiao* with small amounts to remit. It was a system that relied on family-like connections among people from the same *qiaoxiang*. Something banks could not offer. Despite this, elements of mistrust could be present. A remittance customer once complained that his family had not received their money and accused Phillip Lee Chun, manager of the *Kwong War Chong* in Sydney, of stealing the remittance. Phillip Lee Chun was sitting outside his shop in Dixon St one evening, “taking the air” when, according to his son Norman Lee, he was suddenly struck on the head by a piece of “two by four”. The man later apologised when his family sent word that they had received the money.³¹ It was also considered by some that male relatives carrying remittance letters “often appropriated part of the money” and to protect against this it was the practice to write the amount of the remittance on the outside of the envelope.³²

The amount of money remitted naturally varied with the earnings of the individual. Crawford reporting in 1877, believed that the “average amount so exported [packets of gold dust for relatives] hardly exceeds 1*l* a-head annually.”³³ In 1891, Chow Kum, a carpenter and furniture maker in Sydney, stated that he sent £20 per year to his wife.³⁴ Yang Rui, a Cairns shopkeeper in the 1920s and 1930s, sent his family £2 per month and £4 on special occasions.³⁵ Liang Qichao calculated an average of remittances sent from both Australia and the United States of \$100 per year in 1904 and scholars have made estimates from California of \$30 per year in the 1860s and \$80 by 1900.³⁶ It is not, however, the value of these sums in a destination that is important but their value in the *qiaoxiang*; an aspect discussed in the following chapter.

Despite the relatively small sums remitted by most *huaqiao* the amounts flowing back to the *qiaoxiang* were significant, sometimes adding up to more than the total production of a county and representing a major proportion of China’s balance of

³¹ Interview Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (5).

³² Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.146 and Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

³³ Crawford, *Notes*, p.18. 1*l* = a guinea or £1 and 1 shilling.

³⁴ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.395, lines, 14333-14337.

³⁵ Interview, Young Koon Nuen, Long Tou Wan, 20 May 2000, (5).

³⁶ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 20 August 1904, p.2; Zo, *Chinese Emigration*, p.172 and Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, p.76.



trade. In 1869, it was estimated that \$US3m was sent each year from San Francisco, “for the aid of the kindred of those employed here”.³⁷ Ships leaving Sydney for Hong Kong around the turn of the 19th century carried “gold boxes” with amounts ranging from £300 to £7,000 and on at least one occasion, £18,000.³⁸ In 1931, it was reported that \$13m Mex. was sent to China from Hawaii, the equivalent of around \$5.4m US dollars.³⁹ One investigation of remittances (in Chinese dollars), reported \$105m in 1899; \$150m in 1902; \$120m in 1923 and \$200m in 1930, passing through Hong Kong.⁴⁰ The total amount of money being remitted amounted to over half China’s trade balance in some years.⁴¹ In the 1930s, Hong Kong’s import surpluses were attributed to remittances, while in 1929, the demand for Hong Kong banknotes in south China caused a scarcity of banknotes in Hong Kong itself.⁴²

Keeping informed

Along with the remittances would go letters, as news and information about the *huaqiao* and families in the *qiaoxiang* were as important as the flow of income. Letters were in fact so bound up with remittances that sending a letter without money seems rarely to have occurred. Letters, however, were not the only means of obtaining news, especially as letters, usually scribe written, were restricted in content and form. News of family and *qiaoxiang* to those in the destinations could come from various sources, including newspapers published in the destinations, magazines published specifically for the *huaqiao*, even telegrams on occasions, and of course the gossip of those returning from visits to their *qiaoxiang*.

That people separated by time and distance would wish to keep in touch is understandable. It was necessary to know that the family was getting the money and that they were using it properly, while the family wished to maintain its connection,

³⁷ “Some facts relating to Chinese”, *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27/11/1869, p.4. The article is a summary of a report by the Secretary of the Chinese Protective Society of San Francisco.

³⁸ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 7 September 1898, p.4; 18 October 1899, p.3; 11 August 1900, p.3, 7 November 1900, p.3 and 3 March 1900, p.3.

³⁹ *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 26 March 1932, sec.3, p.2.

⁴⁰ C. F. Remer, *Foreign Investments in China* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), p.206 and p.225. See also George L. Hicks (Ed.), *Overseas Chinese Remittances from Southeast Asia, 1910-1940* (Singapore: Select Books, 1993) and Yu, “Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940”, p.48.

⁴¹ Remer, *Foreign Investments in China*, p.177.

⁴² C. F. Joseph Tom, *The Entrepot Trade and the Monetary Standards of Hong Kong, 1842-1941* (Hong Kong: K. Weiss, 1964), p.10 & p.61.



even if only with a source of income. Thus, along with the development of a system for transmitting remittances there developed the transfer of letters. The sending of letters between the destinations and *qiaoxiang* was grafted onto the system already common throughout China. This was a system that much impressed non-Chinese observers, one reporting at the end of the 19th century that “letters from every part of the province were never lost”.⁴³

The interdependence of remittances and letters was often observed. It was reported of Lau Dau in the 1930s, for example that he, “does not wish to renew the correspondence [with relatives in China] as it would mean that he would have to send money whenever he wrote a letter, as the people back home expect that.”⁴⁴ Another interview with a *huqiao*, around the same time, stated the reverse of this when it was said that he has, “not rec’d any letters from home village for several years, esp since he quit sending money home”.⁴⁵

When there was money to be sent and a letter to be written this was done at the same store that arranged to send the remittance. In such a store in the 1930s, a standard letter was written to the family, usually by the store’s clerk as, “they were not much letter writers”, to accompany the payment.⁴⁶ A store or money shop clerk would also often write the return letter in the *qiaoxiang* that accompanied the receipt. Letters and receipts sent back to the *huqiao* might be set up on racks in the shop front of stores, although lists of these letters were also placed in newspapers.⁴⁷ The *Tung Wah News* in 1901, for example, listed “good news to be collected” for various “Xiangshan” (Zhongshan) people, who also needed to pay a stamp on collection of this (hopefully) “good news”.⁴⁸

Letters generally contained little personal or individual detail but followed a pattern developed by the scribes. When the Bank of China in the 1940s, began to take over

⁴³ Selby, *Chinamen at Home*, p.16. Selby also reported, as an example of the priority given the safe delivery of letters, the case of a drowned postman neglected while his letters were carefully dried.

For a general account of the letter system see Gracey, “Chinese Letter Shops”, pp.309-312.

⁴⁴ Glick Archive, Box 2: Lau Dau, Social Services Bureau report, No.18626, 8 April 1936.

⁴⁵ Glick Archives, File notes 1; interview of B. C. Lee with Tung Wo Kung Si, 25 December 1935.

⁴⁶ Interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (4) and William Lee, Sydney, 3 June 1999 (5).

⁴⁷ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 7 September 1898, p.4.

⁴⁸ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 28 September 1901, p.3.



the remittance system from stores and remittance agencies, it issued a standard letter form to accompany remittances. This standard may well have been modeled on that created by store scribes. Such a letter was supposed to contain five points: best wishes, write more often, let me know when received, have received your letter and tell how to spend the money in another letter.⁴⁹ While most letters have an impersonal ring to them there are exceptions, such as the letters translated for Clarence Glick from a wife to her husband written in 1931 and 1932, soon after his departure for Honolulu. The wife stresses her dependence upon her husband, his income and the need for him to remain loyal to her; "my life or death is entirely left to you, my husband".⁵⁰ This dependence, real or apparent, of those in the *qiaoxiang*, was a major aspect of the link.

Another way of transmitting letters and obtaining information was when individual *huaqiao* visited the *qiaoxiang*. A *huaqiao* would take letters and remittances with him on behalf of other *huaqiao* and spend some of his time in the *qiaoxiang* visiting the families of those he worked with in the destination. In this way much gossiping and exchange of information would have taken place and a kind of 'checking up' to ensure the proper behaviour of the family. On his return to the destination the *huaqiao* would have taken his news and gossip to various gatherings of his fellow *qiaoxiang* members. Such gatherings were common in the stores on Sunday's off as well as in gambling halls, which were also a place of socialisation.⁵¹ What a person recently returned from the village had to say was of great interest and at these times his "words found meaning; he could be understood and his conversation appreciated."⁵²

Scandals and problems such as bandit attacks required quicker and more direct means of communication with the *huaqiao*. At least one village made extensive use of the telegram to keep in touch with its *huaqiao*. In the 1920s and 1930s, the *huaqiao* of Buck Toy village living in Hawaii kept up communications with their

⁴⁹ Mar Letters, no.264, Bank of China notice, 5 June 1944.

⁵⁰ Glick Archive, Card file: translation of correspondence between husband and wife, 1931/1932.

⁵¹ Interview with William Lee, August, 1999; Gillenkirk, *Bitter Melon*, p.35; Lee, "The Chinese Store", p.35-38 and Lew, "A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families", p.102.

⁵² Lee, "The Chinese Store", p.36.



village via cable. The village seems to have begun this habit at least as early as 1917 with a cable that simply said, “Robbers violently [sic] send money at once”.⁵³ The cables continued to pass back and forth over the years. One was from the Hawaiian *huaqiao* congratulating a Buck Toy man on becoming a magistrate and another from Buck Toy requesting that the Hawaii *huaqiao* intervene in order to help prevent a “public performance” from taking place in the village. Most were from the *qiaoxiang* soliciting money for a variety of village causes.⁵⁴

Information of a more general kind was provided by the publication of numerous newspapers in the Pacific Ports.⁵⁵ Some of the first Chinese language newspapers in the destinations were bilingual ones produced by missionaries, though these carried little or no *qiaoxiang* news.⁵⁶ The first Chinese language newspaper published in Hawaii was the *Tan Shan Sun Bow* (Hawaiian Chinese News) in 1883, this was soon followed by a number of publications associated with the reformer Liang Qichao and the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen.⁵⁷ By 1940, there were six Chinese language newspapers in San Francisco, and in Australia by the turn of the 20th century there were four Chinese language newspapers.⁵⁸ These destination-published newspapers were designed to keep *huaqiao* informed on events either in the destination itself or in China generally and most contain relatively little information directly related to the *qiaoxiang*.⁵⁹

In the absence of local news the most developed effort on the part of the *qiaoxiang* for keeping in touch with their *huaqiao* were the publications referred to as *qiaokan* (僑刊, or overseas Chinese magazines).⁶⁰ The villages and clans of the *huaqiao*

⁵³ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 15 November 1935.

⁵⁴ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of Bung Chong Lee, 16 June 1936.

⁵⁵ See bibliography for titles.

⁵⁶ For example *The Oriental* 東涯新錄 and *The Golden Hills' News* 金山日報錄, both published in San Francisco in the 1850s.

⁵⁷ “A general outline of Chinese Newspapers”, *Liberty News*, August 31, 1936 [from a translation found in the Glick Archives].

⁵⁸ Samuel D. Lee, *San Francisco's Chinatown: History, function and importance of Social organisation* (San Francisco: Central District Coordinating Council, 1940), pp.12-21 and Poon Yuk Lan, *Through the eyes of the Dragon – The Chinese Press in Australia, 1901-1911* (University of Sydney: BA Hons Thesis, 1986).

⁵⁹ The Tung Wah News 東華新報, published in Sydney appears to be the main exception to this, containing local news items about most of the Pearl River Delta counties.

⁶⁰ For discussion of *qiaokan* from Taishan see, Zheng & Wu, “Yipi youjiazhi de huaqiaoshi ziliao - Taishan jiefangqian chuban de zazhi, zukan pingjie”, pp.454-489 and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*,



produced these magazines to inform their *huaqiao* about events in the *qiaoxiang* and to act as a means of communication. They were generally distributed through the same stores that handled remittances and letters.⁶¹ The earliest *qiaokan* appears to have been first published in 1909 in Taishan County. By the 1920s, such magazines were common in Zhongshan also and by the 1930s nearly every village with major *huaqiao* links seems to have produced one at least once a month. Published at a county, district and village level, the *qiaokan* were financed by *huaqiao* donations and distributed to *qiaoxiang* members around the destinations.⁶²

The earliest and most consistently published *qiaokan* in Zhongshan was the 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*) of Zhuxiuyuan village, an Australian dominated *huaqiao* village in Liang Du (良都) just across the river from Long Du. This and numerous magazines like it, produced information about events in the village, stories to uplift and entertain, information on exchange rates and crop prices, bandits, boat fares and night schools. Also published in the *qiaokan* were lists of who had returned home, who was leaving, letters seeking to trace people and discussions of areas of interest such as the growing popularity in the 1920s of Cuba as a destination and a description of a journey from Shekki to Macao.⁶³

While the purpose of these *qiaokan* was to inform the *huaqiao* about what was happening in their *qiaoxiang*, they were also aimed at fostering and maintaining links between the *qiaoxiang* and their respective *huaqiao*.⁶⁴ Thus there were limitations on what those in the *qiaoxiang* could convey and on what the *huaqiao* in the destinations wished to be made public. Bung Chong Lee reported, for example, that the Buck Toy village magazine received many complaints in the late 1920s when it published negative comments about the village.⁶⁵ The restricted contents of the

⁶¹ pp.124-155. For a listing of *qiaokan* from various *qiaoxiang* see, Appendix 1, Douw, *Qiaoxiang Ties*, pp.326-337.

⁶² Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁶³ 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.4, 1920, p.58; No.37, 1924, back page and No.6, 1948, back page.

⁶⁴ 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly News*), various issues 1920-1924; 沙溪月報 (*Sha Xi Monthly News*), No.30, Jan, 1930, pp.68-69; 恒美月刊 (*Hengmei Monthly*), 1933, p.99 and 東鎮僑聲半月刊 (*Dongzhen Overseas Chinese Voice Fortnightly*), No.3, April, 1936, p.30.

⁶⁵ Zheng Dehua & Wu Xingci, "Taishan Magazines and Clan publications", pp.454-489 and Sinn "Cohesion and Fragmentation", p.73.

⁶⁶ Glick Archives; Card Files, No.2, Bung Chong Lee, n.d., (c.1930).



qiaokan are pointed up the fact that the local Zhongshan newspapers of the same period contain numerous items about family scandals and personal disputes involving *huaqiao* families.⁶⁶ The *qiaokan* contain nothing of this type of material.

Visiting home

Better than gossip or the filtered news of the *qiaokan* was the chance to actually go home oneself. The *huaqiao* of Hawaii, Sydney and San Francisco could spend years remitting money, writing and receiving letters and reading about their *qiaoxiang* in the newspapers or *qiaokan*. On Sundays they could visit a store or gambling house and hear the latest gossip from someone recently arrived from the *qiaoxiang*. However, to continue such a life, no matter how successful in the destination was considered to be like “wearing silk in darkness”.⁶⁷ Only by “returning home with glory” could the *huaqiao* truly enjoy the fruits of years of toil and savings in the destination.⁶⁸

Visits home followed a general pattern in all three destinations. There was usually a long initial period, perhaps ten years or more, before the first trip back. This was due to the need to pay off the debt incurred in moving to the destinations. Another reason for delay would have been the need to save enough to pay for a dowry as the first trip back was often to marry. Free of debt and perhaps with a share in a market garden or laundry, the *huaqiao* was in a position to increase his links with the home village and family. Trips by the *huaqiao* to visit their *qiaoxiang*, despite restrictions imposed in the destinations, is a major feature of their middle years. Trips subsequent to the first marriage return were likely to be more frequent and associated with building new, bigger houses, with perhaps a tower, buying rice fields and of course producing children.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ For example, 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 21 August 22, p.5 and 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 28 July 34, p.4 for various family scandals reported. Some examples of these were discussed in Chapter 2.

⁶⁷ Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, p.104.

⁶⁸ 滿載榮歸 (man zai rong gui) was one of a number of similar phrases used. For example, *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 7 September 1898, 18 October 1899 and 11 August 1900, p.3. Also Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.176, mentions a similar phrase.



Wong Yow was born in Yuen Fung village near Shekki in 1900. He was the fourth generation of his family to go to the United States, which he did in 1921 after his father purchased a “slot” for him as the son of a United States citizen for \$1,650. Wong Yow worked with his father as an agricultural labourer in the Sacramento Delta until 1927 to pay off the debt his father incurred for his slot. It was not until 1936 that he first returned to his village to marry after having arranged to purchase a house the year before along with seven fields.⁷⁰ Wong Yow was of a poor background and arrived in the United States with heavy debts. These debts and the necessity to save enough in order to be able to afford a wife forced many *huqiao* such as this to delay marriage for many years. Married in the village, *huqiao* usually returned to the destination once assured they were leaving behind a pregnant wife.

Such a broad pattern predates the imposition of restrictive legislation whose regulations were often drawn up with these patterns in mind. All the restrictions introduced after 1880 in the destinations had provision for those already resident to leave and return. The NSW legislation of both 1881 and 1888 issued certificates of nine months validity that allowed re-entry exempt from the poll tax.⁷¹ “Laborers”, under the United States restrictions introduced in 1882, were given 12 months to re-enter and extensions were possible. Hawaii was the exception here, more concerned about labourers not continuing to work on the plantations, its legislation limited return certificates to those classified as “merchants”.⁷² Under the new Commonwealth of Australia’s restrictions introduced in 1901, those who were already residents were allowed certificates of three years validity, which could also be extended.⁷³ Thus, although designed to limit new arrivals, the various restrictive laws also responded to the patterns established by the *huqiao* in maintaining their *qiaoxiang* links.

⁶⁹ This is a pattern clearly seen in the Australian Immigration Restriction Act files. It is less clear in the United States files but supported by anecdotal evidence. See also interview, Young Koon Nuen, 20 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Tape 1, (10).

⁷⁰ Peter C. Y. Leung, *One Day, One Dollar: Locke, California and the Chinese Farming Experience in the Sacramento Delta* (California: Chinese American History Project, 1984), pp.48-51.

⁷¹ AA (NSW), SP115/10, Certificates of Residence 1862-1886, contains certificates issued under the various NSW Acts.

⁷² Wright, “Chinese Immigration to the Hawaiian Islands”, pp.74-75.

⁷³ Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia*, p.67.



Throughout the period the *huaqiao* favoured Third Class or steerage travel due to cost and the convenience of ensuring Chinese food and companionship during voyages that, even in the days of steam, took two to three weeks. Once in Hong Kong, accommodation could be got at one of the many Gold Mountain Shops before taking a ferry to the *qiaoxiang*. For those travelling to Taishan and nearby counties the route might be via Canton. For those from Zhongshan County it was a simple matter of travelling either to Macao and then by road or perhaps a direct ferry to Shekki. Once arrived in the village, the purpose was partly to relax after years of hard work and to show off some of the wealth that ‘Gold Mountain’ living supposedly meant. By the 1920s, at least, the situation was that: “The emigrants while in the village spend their time leisurely. There is little manual work to do except if they care to they will cultivate the family vegetable garden.”⁷⁴ There may also have been business matters to arrange or perhaps decisions to be made about a son’s education or potential to go and assist in a destination garden or laundry.

Of special note among visits to the *qiaoxiang* was the retirement trip, a final trip undertaken to ensure burial in the *qiaoxiang*.⁷⁵ Such a trip could be well organised in advance, as was Joe Wah Gow’s in 1929. Or it could perhaps be as death was felt to be approaching, as were those of Phillip Chun Lee in 1934 or those of Lee Man Duck and Chang Yet after 1949.⁷⁶ For some, the final return to the *qiaoxiang* was also their first. This was the case for the “old gold mountain fellow” who, after an absence of 30 years, arrived at his house to be asked by his wife, still hopeful of news of her husband; “Which port are you coming from?”⁷⁷ For those who had not visited regularly or maintained their *qiaoxiang* links, the options were limited. One was to remain in the destination living the life of an aging bachelor.

For many, perhaps as they felt death approaching, the decision was made to return, perhaps when considerations of shame and prestige were no longer so important. Assisting the poor, sick or elderly to return to their *qiaoxiang* was a role taken on by many associations of the *huaqiao*. The provision of such assistance, for example, was

⁷⁴ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁷⁵ Often referred to by the phrase, *luo ye gui gen* (落葉歸根) falling leaves return to the roots.

⁷⁶ Interviews, Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997 (2); Cliff Lee, Sydney, 28 September 1997 (4) and Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (1).



part of the proposed rules of a Chinese Vegetable Growers Association in Sydney.⁷⁸ But in Sydney the most organised assistance for those needing help returning to their villages was through the Lin Yik Tong, a merchant organisation formed in 1896. The Lin Yik Tong organised discount tickets with shipping companies for those in need, such people required two guarantors of eligibility and were liable for a £20 fine if fraud was discovered, such discovery being encouraged by offering a £10 reward.⁷⁹ How common fraud was is difficult to say, but the demand for discount passages was high enough that in 1901 Chinese merchants wrote to the shipping companies to request that one passage in four be allowed for such tickets.⁸⁰ The Honolulu Chinese Chamber of Commerce got a 25% discount fare in the 1920s and 1930s for “old people”.⁸¹ And in 1928, 58 “old men” were able to take up this discount.⁸² In both Sydney and Hawaii, the merchant organisations “recommended” who would receive such discounts.

Departed Friends (先友, xianyou)

While most *huaqiao* visited or at least retired to their *qiaoxiang*, some died before this was possible. Death in the destinations, however, was not necessarily the end of the wish to return to the *qiaoxiang*. Death can come at any time and this possibility led many to ensure that the return of ones bones, at least, would still occur. Local Zhongshan newspapers regularly announced the arrival of “departed friends” via Hong Kong’s Tung Wah Hospital for collection by relatives.⁸³ The shipment of bones, which took place from at least 1855 until the mid-20th century, is the most consistent behaviour pattern of the *huaqiao* and one that demonstrates attachment to the *qiaoxiang*, as well as changes to this attachment overtime.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 25 May 1932, p.4

⁷⁸ This association wished to limit its obligations and its rules also stated that membership fees would not be returned on departure to China nor would assistance with legal fees be given. *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 19 July 1899, p.2.

⁷⁹ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 12 September 1900, p.3.

⁸⁰ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 31 July 1901, p.3.

⁸¹ Lun Chock, “Chinese Organizations in Hawaii”, *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1936), p.23.

⁸² Glick Archive, Box 1: Theodora Ching Shai, The Chinese Chamber of Commerce, 24 May 1930, p.8.

⁸³ Such as the 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 2 June 1925, p.8 and 香山南報 (*Xiangshan Southern News*), 8 November 1924, p.4

⁸⁴ A shipment of 70 dead to China was recorded in San Francisco in May 1855, Dorothy H. Huggins, *Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1939),



The practice of returning the bones of the dead to rest in the soil of their ancestors was a fundamental one in Chinese culture and played an important role in the bond with the *qiaoxiang*.⁸⁵ In the *qiaoxiang*, funeral associations were common and probably provided a model for this kind of activity in the destinations.⁸⁶ The Rev Young reported bones being returned from Melbourne in “small wooden cases, or carpet bags” in 1868.⁸⁷ Concern that bodies not be lost was so strong that “the putting of coffins on board vessels going to and fro in case a Chinaman dies” was common by the 1890s.⁸⁸ Money was also donated by the *huaqiao* to the Tung Wah Hospital of Hong Kong to support its role in the transfer of bones to the *qiaoxiang*.⁸⁹ The significance and organisation of the return of bones is illustrated in an advertisement that appeared regularly in the *Chinese Australian Herald* 廣益華報 in the early 20th century.⁹⁰ The ad was placed by people concerned about Chinese graves in Townsville, northern Queensland, whose home villages could not be identified and describes the regret all must feel for those who remain apart from their ancestral soil. The ad requests information about the identity of the dead so that their bones can be returned to their villages and lists stores in Sydney and Queensland as contact points for passing on the information.⁹¹

The clearest record concerning the return of bones over a long period comes from the “Old Chinese Section” of Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney. At the period of most active exhumation and shipment of bones, from 1875 to the late 1930s, a peak of 75% of burials in the “Old Chinese Section” were, “returned to China”, with an average of

⁸⁵ p.43. For Australia see Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, and for Hawaii, Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.247.

⁸⁶ Freedman, *Lineage Organisation*, pp.139-140, on the role of bones in ancestor worship. Sinn, *Power & Charity*, p.18, considers that concern for the dead was “paramount” with the overseas Chinese.

⁸⁷ Li Guoruan 李國瑞, “Changshengshe yu Changshengdian” 長生社與長生店 (Long Life Associations and Long Life Shops), *Zhongshan wenshi*, No.30, 1994, pp.274-276.

⁸⁸ “Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria by Rev. W. Young, 1868” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.50.

⁸⁹ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.55, line, 2113. Sinn, *Power & Charity*, pp.108-9, also refers to coffins placed on emigrant ships to prevent the dead being thrown over board.

⁹⁰ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.70, lines, 2724-28.

⁹¹ For example, *Chinese Australian Herald* 廣益華報, 3 June 1903, p.3.

⁹² Picture 3.1: “Notice: exhumation and transport of bones from Townsville”, p.134.



55% to 65%.⁹² The Royal Commissioners were told in the 1890s, that it cost “£10 to remove a man’s bones from the country” and that Way Kee’s society (Dungguan and Zengcheng people) paid £529/19/2 to “raise 84 bodies”.⁹³

In both the other Pacific Ports the concern for “departed friends” was just as great, although such clear statistics are not available. As in other matters, organisational detail could also vary. In Sydney the *huaqiao* used a section of cemetery controlled by a Christian Church, while in San Francisco the Chinese Benevolent Association (中華總會館) directly controlled the Chinese cemeteries located at first in the city and later at Colma to the south. These cemeteries were divided into sections according to the ‘companies’ or *tongxianghui* (同鄉會) which made up the membership of this umbrella organisation. Between 1856 and 1876, a total of 7,782 bodies were reported to have been shipped from San Francisco, including 600 by private friends.⁹⁴ In Hawaii, cemeteries, like the *huaqiao* communities themselves, were scattered around the islands. Two cemeteries near Honolulu were predominately of Zhongshan *huaqiao* and distinguished according to their being Hakka and non-Hakka.⁹⁵ In 1931, the cost of arranging an exhumation in Hawaii, including storage until ready to send to China, was \$20.⁹⁶

Sydney’s Rookwood Cemetery statistics in Table 3.1 show an increase in exhumations in the last decades of the 19th century. After this there is a gradual reduction in the proportion of burials that are returned as well as a fall in total burials as the *huaqiao* population declined in the 1920s and 1930s. There was a tapering off of returns after 1930, and after 1938 there were very few removals until after World War II. Many of those who died after 1931 were exhumed between 1946 and 1948, after which only 10 more were removed in 1950, with the last recorded exhumation

⁹² “Returned to China” was written in red ink to indicate exhumed plots. Anglican Trust, Rookwood Cemetery: Register of Burials in the Necropolis at Haslem’s Creek, under the Necropolis Act of 1867, 31st Victoria, no.14, “Chinese Section of General Cemetery”.

⁹³ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.15, lines, 486-7 and p.57, line, 2232.

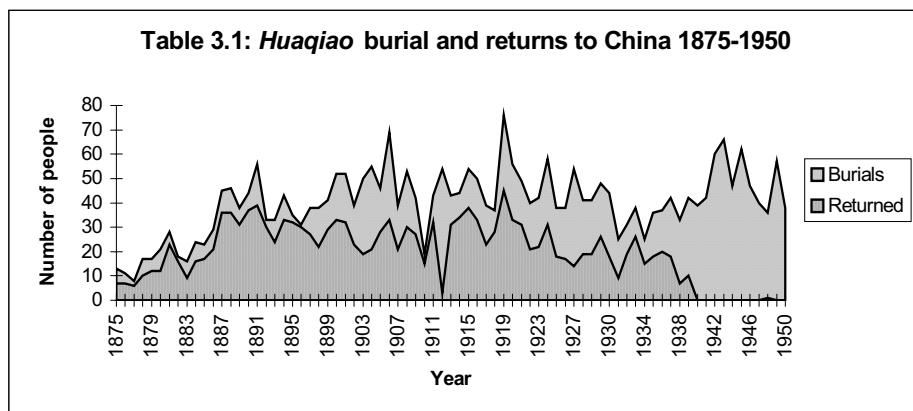
⁹⁴ Benjamin S. Brooks, *Appendix to the Opening Statement and Brief of B. S. Brooks on the Chinese Question* (San Francisco: Women’s Co-operative Printing Union, 1877), p.117.

⁹⁵ These were the Manoa Cemetery and that near the Punchbowl, which also includes Hakka from San On County. Personal observation, July 2000.

⁹⁶ Glick Archive, Box 2: Clarence E. Glick, Malihini observations at Ching Ming, Manoa Chinese cemetery, 5 April 1931, p.9.



from this section of Rookwood Cemetery in 1962.⁹⁷ These statistics on “departed friends” can be seen to follow the general pattern of *huaqiao* history. Growing as the *huaqiao* become more organised in the destinations, declining as their demographics decline, disrupted during the Japanese occupation before a final period of renewal just before the abrupt severing of links in 1949.



Bones rather than bodies are always referred to, as the usual practice was to bury a body for several years then to collect the bones of a number of *huaqiao* at the same time, to be “returned to China”. The Lung Doo (Long Du) society in Hawaii sent bones back every five years until the Board of Health made seven years the rule. The Long Du Association of Sydney published regular requests in the *Tung Wah News* in order to keep a register of burials for exhumation at regular intervals.⁹⁸ Those who were buried in Sydney sometimes had to wait quite a time to return to the *qiaoxiang*. Ah Chung was buried in 1892, but was not returned until 1923, while Ah Sing, who was buried in 1884, was finally removed only in 1946.⁹⁹ However, the average time in the ground for those whose bones were exhumed from Rookwood, at least, was six to seven years, though 10 or 15 years was not unusual. An alternative to this wait, for those who could afford it, was to be embalmed, as Hong Wong was in 1901, his body being accompanied to the home village by his sister Ah Ching.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Anglican Trust, Rookwood Cemetery: Register of Burials “Chinese Section of General Cemetery”.

⁹⁸ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, various ads 1904-1910.

⁹⁹ Anglican Trust, Rookwood Cemetery: Register of Burials, “Chinese Section of General Cemetery”, Ah Chung, 1892 & Ah Sing, 1884.

¹⁰⁰ Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; C47/2369, Wellington Wing Ning, Charles Wong Wing Kau, statutory declaration by Ah Ching, December 1914.

Various accounts of the procedures followed in exhuming bodies have been given. According to an eyewitness account from Hawaii in the 1917; “Taking mouthfuls of wine, the man [hired to do the exhumation] sprayed it all over the area as a purification ritual before he removed bone by bone and wrapped each with a piece of white cloth amidst burning incense. He labelled the bones as he went along in order that the remains would be in their proper positions when reburied in a sitting position in a large urn.”¹⁰¹ Clarence Glick reported observing a much less careful exhumation in 1931.¹⁰² From Sydney come other details such as: “The bones would be washed, wrapped in blankets and placed in an iron coffin about one metre long and 30 centimetres high.” “The bones were known by Gaoyao (高有, Gouyiu) county people as *xian you* [仙友, friends of the immortals].”¹⁰³

Having left the destination, the remains were sent to Hong Kong where the Tung Wah Hospital had, from the 1870s, handled the return of most bones to their *qiaoxiang*.¹⁰⁴ In the *qiaoxiang* themselves, organisations such as the *Yushan Tang* (興善堂) in Shekki would be responsible for collecting bones from the Tung Wah Hospital and distributing them to the families, often by notices in the newspapers. Names and villages would be listed under the title “Departed Friends” and a relative would then pick up the bones for return to the village and a ritual internment.¹⁰⁵ When 22 sets of bones were sent from Vegetable Creek in NSW, to the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong and then onto Shekki, two “se ling dan” (司令單) or £2 sterling was also given to the relatives.¹⁰⁶ The system seems to have worked even

¹⁰¹ Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, pp.118-119.

¹⁰² Glick Archive, Box 2: Clarence E. Glick, Malihini observations at Ching Ming, Manoa Chinese cemetery, 5 April 1931, p.4.

¹⁰³ Ann Stephens, *The Lions of Retreat Street - A Chinese Temple in Inner Sydney* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, Hale & Iremonger, 1997), p.70, interview with Harry Chong Choy.

¹⁰⁴ Royal Commission on alleged Chinese Gambling, p.105, line, 4169, “they send some money to the Chinese Hospital in Hong Kong, the Tong Wah Yee Yuen”. Sinn, *Power & Charity*, p.6, refers to general *huaqiao* links, p.71, n.119, mentions links with Sydney in 1887 and p.73, refers to membership by Australian organisations.

¹⁰⁵ 香山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 15 November 22, p.8; 香山南報 (*Xiangshan Southern News*), 8 November 1924, p.4 and interview Young Koon Nuen, 20 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Tape 1, (10).

¹⁰⁶ 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 2 June 1925, p.8. See also 仁言報 (*Renyan News*), 3 June 1925, p.7 for a notice of 30 bones being returned from Japan.



better than the families anticipated on occasion and at one point the remains of 104 *huaqiao* were uncollected and remained waiting in the Shekki *Yushan Tang*.¹⁰⁷

Tongxianghui (同鄉會)

The links provided between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations by letters, visits, remittances and even bones were not a matter of individual effort. A major aspect of the *qiaoxiang*/destination links was the regionally organised associations or *tongxianghui*.¹⁰⁸ There was much variation among the destinations but in general the *tongxianghui* served to provide support to members bound by a localised sense of identity. They performed specific functions such as the return of the bones of the dead, sometimes enforced debts incurred getting to the destinations, and played a significant role in “keeping *huaqiao* focused on their obligations to their families in the village”.¹⁰⁹ This last was a factor of some importance, given the length of time many *huaqiao* were separated from their families.

On arrival in a destination, therefore, to which fellow *qiaoxiang* members had preceded him, the young *huaqiao* found organisations and businesses able to assist him both in the destination and in maintaining links with his *qiaoxiang*. Two examples, widely separate in distance but both from the 1850s illustrate the practical nature of this assistance. In Melbourne, new arrivals could, according to Rule 11 of the Siyi or Four Counties Association, borrow sufficient money to enable them to get to the goldfields.¹¹⁰ Similar arrivals in San Francisco could find not only find accommodation in the Yeung-Wu association building but were entitled to store their “baggage” for a maximum of three years.¹¹¹

People from the same *qiaoxiang* would form their own associations and while there was some flexibility and variations in the specific *qiaoxiang* that could form an

¹⁰⁷ 香山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 15 November 22, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ Literally, “same native place association”. See, Elizabeth Sinn, “Xin Xi Guxing: A study of Regional associations as a bonding mechanism in the Chinese Diaspora. The Hong Kong experience”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 31, 2, pp.375-397 and Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, Chapter XI, pp.189-195. For a study of the role of *tongxianghui* in Shanghai see, Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation. Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-937* (University of Californian Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁹ According to Sinn, the purpose of such societies was also to express longing and to remind members of their obligations. Sinn, “Xin Xi Guxiang”, p.375.

¹¹⁰ “Rules of a Chinese Society, 1854” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.46.



association, once set up the groups were exclusive. The Royal Commissioners of the 1890s in Sydney needed to have the “exclusiveness” of the societies explained to them on a number of occasions. Way Shong told them that, “Moy Ping is not of my community – he would not subscribe” and Sam Tin explained he was denying he was a member of the Loong Yee Tong, not because it was a gambling society but because, “as I do not belong to that part of the country they would not let me in it”.¹¹²

The groupings and size of the *tongxianghui* developed quite differently in the various Pacific Ports partly due to initial *qiaoxiang* distribution and partly due to destination circumstances. Thus in Hawaii, there were 13 major place associations by the 1920s and a complex mix of clan, surname and village groups as well as a number of trade guilds.¹¹³ In Australia, on the other hand, a simpler pattern of regional associations based largely on counties developed and the numerous surname and village clubs of Hawaii never arose there.¹¹⁴ In California, organisation for political purposes occurred as early as the end of 1849 and the first regional associations the following year.¹¹⁵ The regional associations in San Francisco came together as the Chinese Benevolent Association (中華總會館) or “Six Companies” to provide protection, perform mediation functions and the management of debt collection.¹¹⁶ In Hawaii, a similar umbrella organisation was formed in 1882 only as the result of direct intervention by the Chinese consul based in the United States. The United Chinese Society (Chung Wah Hui Goon, 中華會館) never had the power or prestige of the ‘Six Companies’ but did serve a useful co-ordinating role with many of the Chinese communities’ leading merchants serving as directors.¹¹⁷ The only comparable

¹¹¹ “New Rules of the Yeung-Wu Ui-Kun” (1854) in Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire*, p.559.

¹¹² *Royal Commission on alleged Chinese Gambling*, p.69, line, 2697 and p.117, line, 4665.

¹¹³ Clarence Glick, “Transition from Familism to Nationalism among the Chinese in Hawaii”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIII, March, 1938, No.5, pp.734-743 and *Sojourners and Settlers*, pp.187-188, pp.239-265.

¹¹⁴ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, pp.189-195, on the “county societies”.

¹¹⁵ *Alta California*, 10 December 1849, p.1, reports a meeting of 300 of the Chinese residents of San Francisco to select a “counselor and advisor”. The Sam Yup Association or The Canton Company, was formed in 1850, Him Mark Lai, Yuk Ow, P. Choy (Eds), *A History of the Sam Yup Benevolent Association in the United States, 1850-1974* (California: Sam Yup Association, 1974), p.14.

¹¹⁶ William Hoy, *The Chinese Six Companies* (California: Californian Chinese Historical Society, 1948).

¹¹⁷ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 25 August 1934, p.8.



organisation in Sydney was the Lin Yik Tong (聯益堂), formed in 1893, which later evolved into the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.¹¹⁸

In general, each county had its own association, though some had more than one and some counties combined to form a single organisation, such as the Dongguan and Zengcheng people did in Sydney to form the Loong Yee Tong.¹¹⁹ In Melbourne, San Francisco and other locations where people from four close districts predominated, associations known as the Ssu-Yap (Siyi, 四邑) or Four Counties were formed. However, much depended on numbers and in San Francisco a clan group from the Four Counties felt sizeable enough to form its own association.¹²⁰ Other common groupings in all the destinations were the Sam-Yap (Sanyi, 三邑) or Three Counties, and Zhongshan, which was the most common single county grouping. Long Du was the only district within a county to form an organisation in all the Pacific Ports, and in all except Sydney, these organisations continue to this day.¹²¹

Having such localised organisations did not necessarily mean that the *huaqiao* of various *qiaoxiang* were isolated from each other. The Long Du association in San Francisco was a member society of the Yeong Wo Association, which covered all Zhongshan County people. The Yeong Wo Association in turn, was a member of the Chinese Benevolent Association. The Lung Doo Chung Shing Tong (隆都從善堂) of Hawaii was founded in 1892 by 24 Lung Du businessmen.¹²² Unlike its San Francisco counterpart, but similar to that in Sydney, it did not form part of a hierarchy of associations. However, some of its members would also have been members of organisations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and so informal networking would have occurred.

¹¹⁸ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, pp.85-90.

¹¹⁹ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.146, lines, 5871-2.

¹²⁰ Chen Shanying 陳山鷹, “Cong qiao kan xiang xun ziliao kan: Meiguo huaqiao huaren de gutu guannian” 從僑刊鄉訊資料看美國華僑華人的故土觀念 (From overseas Chinese publications: American overseas Chinese people ideas of the homeland), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 華僑華人歷史研究 (Overseas Chinese History Researches), No.3, 1991, pp.2-3.

¹²¹ They are the Lung Dou Tong Sen Tong (隆都同善堂) of San Francisco and the Loong Doo Benevolent Association (隆都從善堂, Lung Doo Chung Shing Tong) of Honolulu. Sydney's Long Du Association, the Xiangyi Long Du Tong Sen Tong (香邑隆都同善堂) was established in 1906, *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 21 April 1906, p.6 and appears to have ceased functioning by the 1930s.

¹²² *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 6 December 1939, p.7.



The *tongxianghui* played the dominant role in the return of bones and through this in linking the *huaqiao* and their *qiaoxiang*.¹²³ The Royal Commissioners described them in the 1890s as, “benevolent institutions, formed on the basis of “cousinship”, and displaying their charity in the transport of old men and the bones of their deceased countrymen to China”.¹²⁴ Political pressure may have had a role in the early formation of associations in San Francisco but in NSW the wish to organise bones removal appears to have been the prime motivation. In 1862, three Pearl River Delta counties are mentioned in reference to the first large-scale removal of bones in NSW, Dongguan, Zengcheng and Zhongshan.¹²⁵ Two of these counties had a joint organisation at the end of the 19th century in Sydney, while “Hsiangshan” (Zhongshan) county had one of its own. These associations may have begun by organising the return of bones but they soon grew to do more, such as fund raising for temples and organising accommodation for new arrivals.¹²⁶ The associations raised their money from subscriptions according to Yuen Tak of the Koon Yee Tong, with nobody being “allowed to pay less than £1, but many of the merchants paid as much as £5, £10, and £50”.¹²⁷

Tongxianghui or ‘native place’ associations played an important role in *huaqiao* settlement in the destinations as well as the *qiaoxiang* link. Adapted to the circumstances of each destination, they had their roots in the *qiaoxiang* and helped to maintain identity and provided for mutual support. While membership of the associations was open to all who identified with the same ‘native place’, the merchants who owned businesses that provided other tangible aspects of the *qiaoxiang* links ran them. Storeowners generally provided the officeholders of the associations and the infrastructure for their meetings and services.

¹²³ Sinn, *Power & Charity*, p.18, says concern for the dead was, “a keystone of community leadership and influence”.

¹²⁴ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.28.

¹²⁵ NSW State Archives, Col Sec; 4/3476, 62/4222, Molison & Black to Colonial Secretary, 26 August 1862.

¹²⁶ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.191.

¹²⁷ Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling, p.117, line, 4697.



Stores and other businesses

Along with regional associations, the businesses and stores established by the *huaqiao* in the destinations also provided many direct links with the *qiaoxiang*. They provided services for sending remittances and letters, acted as centres for social gatherings and provided accommodation and jobs for the newly arrived.¹²⁸ A significant feature of the stores was that they too operated on a ‘locality’ basis and were patronised primarily by customers of a specific *qiaoxiang*.¹²⁹ San Tin reported of his lodging house in 1891, for example, that “only friends and country [county] men stop there”.¹³⁰ It was not necessarily that people of another *qiaoxiang* could not use the services of the stores due to hostility or prejudice. Rather, for the sending of remittances, gossip in one’s own dialect and other assistance related to their own villages, they would not have been of much value.

Huaqiao, from the earliest goldseeker period, had provided services to miners and other Chinese residents, beginning with equipment for the diggings and food. Everything from rice to tent canvas was supplied to the goldseekers in Cooktown ready for their walk to the Palmer River gold fields in the 1870s.¹³¹ Fishing industries quickly developed on both the NSW and California coasts to catch, salt and transport fish to the goldfields and continued for many years afterwards.¹³² Most stores provided accommodation and board for those travelling through the ports of San Francisco, Honolulu and Sydney, to and from China and the gold fields or plantations.

Provision of these services naturally meant profits for those who set up the stores while the centering of services and business around ‘native place’ increased these profits by giving the stores a ‘loyal’ customer base. In servicing this customer base

¹²⁸ For a general account of the role of the store see Lee Bung Chong, “The Chinese Store as a Social Institution”, *Social Process in Hawaii*, Vol. II, May 1936, pp.35-38.

¹²⁹ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.46 and Lee, “The Chinese Store”, p.36, discuss this feature of the stores, also see Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.102 for a Honolulu example of such a store.

¹³⁰ Royal Commission, p.115.

¹³¹ Crawford, *Notes*, p.28.

¹³² *Fisheries Inquiry Commission, Report of the Royal Commission*, Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1879-80, Vol. III, p.23-28 and Robert F. G. Spier, “Food habits of 19th century California Chinese”, *California Historical Society Quarterly*, June, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp.81-82.



the stores built up a range of services to assist in linking the *huaqiao* and his *qiaoxiang*. These services reached such a level that most things could be organised through them. The main Zhongshan firms in Sydney for example, *Wing On & Co.*, *Onyik Lee & Co.* and the *Kwong War Chong*, by the 1920s paid fares, purchased tickets, arranged Immigration Restriction Act related paper work, provided accommodation and even lent money for the first remittance home.¹³³ Numerous stores in San Francisco, the Sacramento Delta and Honolulu operated in a similar manner.¹³⁴ Most of the firms providing these services operated as general merchandise stores, but ‘gambling houses’ also provided these services in some locations.¹³⁵

Providing the means for earnings from a Sydney market garden, San Francisco laundry or Hawaiian sugar plantation to regularly and safely arrive in the hands of a wife or mother of a small Pearl River Delta village was the most fundamental service the stores performed in maintaining the *qiaoxiang* links. These stores, often referred to as Gold Mountain Stores (金山庄, Kam Shan Chong), were able to perform this role by being linked from the Pacific Ports, through Hong Kong and into the *qiaoxiang*.¹³⁶ These destination based stores reached back to the villages through a network of stores related by ownership and/or common partners in Hong Kong and the *qiaoxiang*.¹³⁷ The “General Merchants” firm of *Sun Sam Choy* in Sydney, for example, had 25 partners in 1906. Only five of these were in Sydney, nine were in Newcastle (to Sydney’s north, where there was perhaps a branch store), one in the countryside at Glenn Innes, eight in Hong Kong and a further two were in Canton.¹³⁸

¹³³ This last was referred to as “Returning Gold” (回金) and signaled safe arrival, interview with Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (Tape 2, B, 0.75). Also interview Victor Gow, 30 October 1997 (9). Wellington K. K. Chan, “Wing On and Sincere Companies, 1900-1941”, in Douw & Post (Ed.), *South China*, pp.169-181 and Zheng Jiarui 鄭嘉銳, “Xuelishi Zhongshan Huaqiao Yiji Kaocha Jishi” 雪梨市中山華僑遺跡考察記事 (A record of investigations of the remains of Sydney Zhongshan Overseas Chinese), *Zhongshan wenshi*, Vol.24, 1992, pp.40-52.

¹³⁴ Interview, Morrie Chung, San Francisco, 13 July 2001; Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.102 for the *Wing On Tai* in Honolulu and Lee, “The Chinese Store as a Social Institution”.

¹³⁵ Gillenkirk, *Bitter Melon*, p.35.

¹³⁶ See Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, pp.138-139 in Hawaii and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.35-38 on California; Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, p.15, on Australia.

¹³⁷ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.46, considers that some were established with Hong Kong capital.

¹³⁸ Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; C29/48, Ping Fun, Certificate of Registration of a firm with the Registrar-General, Sun Sam Choy – General Merchants, no.3, 694, 5 June 1906.



The *Wing On Sing Co.* and *Wing Sang & Co.*, referred to earlier in this chapter had by the 1920s, networks that included Peru, Luzon and San Francisco.¹³⁹

The *Kwong War Chong* of Sydney had branch stores in both Hong Kong, (*Kwong War Fung & Co.*) and in Shekki (*Kwong War Cheong & Co.*).¹⁴⁰ The *Kwong War Chong* was a Sydney store used by most Zhongshan market gardeners and provides a good example of the type of stores being discussed. Several partners, including Phillip Lee Chun who had originally come to Australia in 1874 to join the Palmer River Gold rush in northern Queensland, established the firm in 1883.

The *Kwong War Chong & Co.* was typical of many *huaqiao* businesses in being founded by numerous partners, in this case seven, all holding equal shares. All the partners, except one, arrived in Sydney before 1902 and all except one had returned to China by the 1930s.¹⁴¹ This partner, Phillip Lee Chun, became the sole owner and was also a founder and leading member of the Sydney Long Du *tongxianghui*, the Xiangyi Long Du Tong Sen Tong (香邑隆都同善堂), established in 1906. The store remained operating as a general store and trading company until 1987 and stocked everything a *huaqiao* might need. Especially the type of goods they might want to take back with them to the village, boiled lollies, Arnott's biscuits (plains not creams), umbrellas, shoes and tools.¹⁴² On Sunday's the store's owners held an open dinner for Zhongshan market gardeners who, on their one day off a week, would come into Sydney to gossip, eat and relax.¹⁴³

The merchants who ran these stores and helped organise the *tongxianghui* may have been better able to cope with destination affairs than the average labouring *huaqiao*. However their prominence in records and research should not let it be forgotten that they operated services and made their profits largely on the basis of a wider group of *huaqiao*. These merchant *huaqiao* and their services were centered on the *qiaoxiang*

¹³⁹ 大同報 (*Datong News*), 16 February 1927, p.7,

¹⁴⁰ Gao, "Zhongshansi huaqiao dashiqi", p.11 and interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2).

¹⁴¹ Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; N59/3386 Kwong War Chong & Co., "Particulars form", 30 October 1951.

¹⁴² Interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (1 & 10) and Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; N59/3386, Kwong War Chong & Co., "Particulars form", 30 October 1951.

¹⁴³ Interview, William Lee, Sydney, 3 June, 1999.



links and existed in the way they did because of the links all *huaqiao* maintained with their *qiaoxiang*.

Conclusion

In all the Pacific Ports the *huaqiao* developed means to maintain their links with their *qiaoxiang*. Associations and stores, both relying on *qiaoxiang* identity and connected through their merchant members, were major organisational elements that helped to ensure that money, letters and regular visits kept up the *qiaoxiang* links. The presence of the family in the *qiaoxiang* was central to the evolution of these mechanisms. Those in the *qiaoxiang* did not remain passive in this interaction and through their letters and more formally through the *qiaokan* made efforts to keep the *huaqiao* connected and supportive.

The *qiaoxiang* links were established and the mechanisms for maintaining them were developed over distances and generations. Why the *huaqiao* made this effort, sometimes only returning after a lifetime's absence or even after death, requires more than a knowledge of these tangible mechanisms if the *qiaoxiang* links are to be satisfactorily understood. The next chapter will focus therefore on what motivated the *huaqiao* to maintain their *qiaoxiang* links.



Picture 3.1: "Notice: exhumation and transport of bones from Townsville".¹¹ The Chinese Australian Herald 廣益華報, 3 June 1903, p.3.

Chapter 4: Returning Home with Glory

The previous chapter examined tangible elements of the links connecting the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations. Remittances, letters, *qiaokan*, visits and sending of bones were discussed, as were the organisations and practices that facilitated them. This chapter will examine the motivations behind these elements. Underpinning the remittances and stores, the families in the *qiaoxiang* and the years of effort in the destinations, was the necessity to earn an income. Incomes, what these incomes meant to those in the *qiaoxiang* and the jobs that secured these incomes are discussed. Considerations of income are incomplete, however, without also considering what was done with the money and why. The second part of this chapter therefore will discuss the role of prestige and social status in the establishment and maintenance of the *qiaoxiang* links.

Earning an income

What was this income the *huaqiao* sought in the Pacific Ports and more importantly, what did these earnings mean in the *qiaoxiang*? Remittances are often given in terms of trade balances and annual flows, but what did a San Francisco cigar wrapper make in 1910 and what did this mean to his family in a Pearl River Delta village? There are many difficulties in answering such questions, not least being the exchange rate of currencies and change in values over time. The following is an effort to obtain a glimpse of the value of *huaqiao* earnings for those the earnings were intended to support, the families in the *qiaoxiang*.¹

In Table 4.1 it can be seen that the amounts of income that could be earned in the destinations varied greatly compared with each other and over time.² It should also be noted that income earned in Mexican dollars could remain steady or even increase despite falling wages in a destination, as happened during the Depression to some

¹ In the analysis that follows all earnings have been converted to a figure per month and the various currencies have also been converted to a value in Mexican (Mex.) or silver dollars, the dominant currency in the Pearl River Delta throughout most of the period.

² Table 4.1: Earnings in the Pacific Ports, p.159.



extent. The importance of exchange rates was well understood by the *huqiao*, as the regular publication of exchange rate tables in the *qiaokan* demonstrates.³

In the 1850s and 1860s, California as a destination was a consistently higher source of income in Mexican dollars. By the 1870s, earnings were up in all three destinations, though down for miners, which was no longer the major occupation of the *huqiao*. Hawaiian contractors, however, continued to earn less than gardeners and laundrymen in Sydney or California. By the early years of the 20th century, Hawaiian plantation labourers had caught up with the average earned by a Sydney gardener, at around \$40Mex. per month and even Californian agricultural labourers earned \$60Mex., due to a better exchange rate with the \$US dollar. The average earnings in Australia in the 1930s are perhaps less than in California generally, but higher than for the agricultural labourers of the Sacramento Delta. A San Francisco worker could earn more than most, provided he had a job and could keep it, perhaps as much as \$120Mex. per month.

The above are the incomes Pearl River Delta people crossed the Pacific to earn. It is perhaps useful to also look at possible earnings in China and Hong Kong throughout this period. From Table 4.2 it can be seen that earnings in the mid-19th century in many occupations in China and Hong Kong were comparable to what could be earned in the Pacific Ports.⁴ Thereafter, while earnings in Hong Kong are considerable higher than in China, both Hong Kong and China incomes are well below what is possible in the destinations. Even for early in the period, allowance must be made for factors such as opportunity, circumstances and regularity. When the Hong Kong Governor, for example, reported that a “coolie” could earn \$6 per month in 1845, this was based on the unlikely assumption that such a person would get work everyday of the month.⁵ An Hawaiian plantation worker, on the other hand, for the length of his three, five or eight year contract, barring sickness, could expect to work and be paid for the entire month. As well, many occupations, such as Hong Kong “wharf coolies”, were controlled by *qiaoxiang* based guilds and those from

³ For example, 竹秀園月報 (*Zhuxiuyuan Monthly*), No.7, 1921, p.25 & No.21, 1922, p.20; 沙溪月報 (*Sha Xi Monthly*), No.14, 1930, p.164-165 and 東鎮僑聲半月刊] (*Dong Zhen Overseas Chinese Voice Fortnightly*), No.1, 1936.

⁴ Table 4.2: Earnings in China and Hong Kong, p.161.



other *qiaoxiang* could not easily find such jobs. A final consideration is that many labourers in the villages may not have been paid in cash, simply food and accommodation.

The point of significance is that, in silver dollars by the 1930s, a Sydney Market gardener could earn more than an Hawaiian-born teacher in Canton and a Californian agricultural labourer more than a Pearl River Delta village school teacher. But whatever the income, it was the amount remitted that was important to those in the *qiaoxiang* and to the maintenance of the link, and this was in part determined by expenses in the destination. It must also be kept in mind that income in a destination must be seen in terms of spending costs in that destination. This is because it was the proportion of wages that could be remitted which was fundamental to the *qiaoxiang* link. Higher wages in California, for example, were of no account if costs there simply consumed wages. When, for example, rates of pay in the 1920s and 1930s for agricultural work fell considerably in California, it became more difficult for *huaqiao* there to save and remit, despite improvements in the exchange rate.

Estimates of spending power are difficult to make but some indications are possible. In NSW in 1854, a straw hat cost five shillings, shoes 7s and boots 18s.⁶ This last was around three week's wages for a labourer but only one week for a moderately successful miner. In 1900, a Chinese tailor in Sydney advertised ready to wear suits for £1/1 and tailor-made for £2/2, while best quality cost £3/3.⁷ This was at a time when scrub cutters received £4 a month and market gardeners perhaps £8. When Californian earnings ranged from \$20 to \$40 per month, \$5 bought a boy's suit at the end of the 19th century, a Panama hat in 1910 and a razor in 1929 America. In 1872, also in America, \$10 bought a week's board and lodgings, a phonograph in 1910 and a man's suit in 1915.⁸ Wong Chun said his expenses per month in 1907 in California, when not working, were \$6-7. This was when earnings could be as high as \$40 per

⁵ CO129/11, pp.92-93, Davis to Stanley, 8 February 1845.

⁶ Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, *Colonization Circular*, No.15, April 1855, p.8.

⁷ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 9 May 1900, p.3.

⁸ Norman M. Davis, *The Complete Book of United States Coin Collecting* (New York, 1971), pp.176-186.



month.⁹ In the 1920s, a shared room cost \$5 per month in the Sacramento Delta town of Locke, though monthly earnings by then were down to \$30.¹⁰ In Hawaii in 1897, when \$20 per month could be earned, it cost \$5 to \$7 a term to attend high school. In 1913, a meal could be had at the Man Fong Lau Chinese Restaurant for between 10 and 15 cents or steamed mullet for 5c.¹¹ In 1935, Toy Yew, who had been unemployed in Hawaii since 1933, paid \$2.50 per month rent, plus 50c in utilities to share with 15 others. Under the government relief payments he received \$13.73 per month, which included \$9.23 for his food and \$1 for clothing.¹²

From these figures it can be seen that, if employed and if living frugally, then a fair proportion of income could be remitted. These are not certain ‘ifs’, nor were they uncommon or impossible ones. Much would depend upon the circumstances under which a *huaqiao* was employed. As Crawford observed in 1877, in the Australian colonies, “if his earnings are not his own, his shoes remain of straw, his jacket of coarse blue cotton, and his luxuries continue to consist of pickled cabbage and jerked pork till his time is fulfilled.”¹³ The frugal lifestyle of many *huaqiao* was often observed as was the common practise of employers providing board and lodging. A Sydney police report of 1916 stated that, “the keeper of every cabinetmaker’s shop, produce, fruit and grocery store, employ large numbers of chinese [sic] (aliens) who are paid a weekly wage, and are provided with accommodation for their services”.¹⁴ Under such conditions the figures given in the previous chapter of average remittances from Australia of £20 or from California of \$30 per year, would not have represented an especially high proportion of average earnings.¹⁵

The above estimates of remittances convert to a sum of around \$120Mex. per year. This sum is close to that calculated by Liang Qichao who used overall remittances

⁹ NARA, RG 85: Return Certificate Application, Lawfully Domiciled Labourers Departing, 1903-1911; 9180/1886, Wong Chun, record of interview, 22 November 1907.

¹⁰ Leung, *One Day, One Dollar*, p.49.

¹¹ Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.138 and *Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1913), p.46.

¹² William Hoy Papers, 1935-1949: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/27, Box 2, Folder 18, WPA Caseworker notes, #126-135UR, Toy Yew (Toy Ying Gay), March 1935.

¹³ Crawford, *Notes*, p.5.

¹⁴ AA (NSW), SP11/16; Aliens Registration 1916-21, Item no. 2, No.2 Police Station, Regents St., Sydney to Department of Defence, 8 December 1916.

¹⁵ See Chapter 3, n.34-36.



and population figures to estimate are average *huaqiao* income in the three Pacific Ports of \$700Mex. per year and yearly average remittances of \$100Mex.¹⁶ What could such money buy in China? In 1855, a slave girl (*mui tsai*, 妹仔) could be bought for \$5Mex. and in 1884 a cotton suit for \$3.¹⁷ In 1890, a *mui tsai* was purchased for \$90 or \$10 for every year of her age.¹⁸ The cost of rice could vary considerably depending on harvests, in 1898-1899 grain cost less than \$2 silver per 100 jin (about 100lb) but not long after was reported to be \$5 for 100 jin.¹⁹ During the 1930s, \$10 a year was sufficient to send a child to a Long Du village school for a year.²⁰ In Hong Kong, thirty to forty dollars in the early 20th century was sufficient for tuition to the Hong Kong Medical college for a year. While 5c was two days rations for “coolies” in 1895 and this was also the cost of a jinricksha trip of 15 minutes in Hong Kong in 1901.²¹ On the basis of these figures \$100-120Mex. per year in remittances would have given a family in the *qiaoxiang* considerable extra purchasing power.

The Depression greatly changed the situation for some, with earnings falling in all the destinations. However, improved exchange rates cushioned the impact provided some money could be sent to the *qiaoxiang*. Thus agricultural labourers in California earned only \$US20 but this still represented over \$80Mex. For plantation labourers in Hawaii the impact of the Depression was greater as such work nearly completely disappeared. Those on unemployment relief received only \$6 per month, insufficient to allow remittances and many at this time returned to their *qiaoxiang*. In Sydney, the fall in earnings was not so great nor was the improvement in exchange rates, nevertheless earnings of \$80Mex. per month were also possible. Such earnings, at a time when pork was 50c per jin or land could be purchased at \$60Mex. per *mu*,

¹⁶ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 20 August 1904, p.2.

¹⁷ William B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1885), p.20 & Thomas E. La Fargue, *China's First Hundred - Educational Mission Student's in the United States, 1872-1881* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1987 [1942]), p.75.

¹⁸ Wong, “Leaves from the Life History”, p.40

¹⁹ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 16 September 1899, p.3 and 4 April 1900, p.2.

²⁰ Peng Qiqing (彭綺卿), Zhongshan City, 3 December 2000 and 6 December 2000.

²¹ K. C. Fok , “Early Twentieth-Century Hong Kong Serving China”, in Fok, *Lectures on Hong Kong History*, p.40 and *Report of the Chair and Jinricksha Commission*, 1901, p.5. The Commissioners thought 5c “unnecessarily large”.



continued to give those *huaqiao* with income the ability to support their families and contribute to their *qiaoxiang*.²²

The decline in the exchange rate of Chinese currency against the United States and other currencies had begun long before the Depression. At US55c in 1922, the Chinese dollar was valued at 41c in 1929 before it plunged to 21c by 1932. The Chinese dollar made a gradual recovery to 36c by 1935, but slipped again to 21c in 1938. During this same period the Chinese dollar and the Hong Kong dollar, both on a silver standard until 1935, kept close together in value.²³ After the Japanese invasion, the fall in the Chinese dollar was most dramatic, despite falls in the Hong Kong dollar after it was invaded at the end of 1941. During the war, inflation saw the Chinese dollar worth only 5c US by 1941 and even less in the chaotic years until 1945.²⁴

Such a fall in the value of Chinese currency had a double effect. While it meant that remittances in foreign currency were worth more in the *qiaoxiang*, it also meant that foreign goods cost a great deal more. The *huaqiao* kept a careful watch on exchange rates and on occasion major movements of currency and even people appear to have been based on such changes. It was reported that when the price of silver had been high during World War One, remittances were correspondingly low and that when the value of silver fell in 1930, remittances rose dramatically.²⁵ During the Depression many *huaqiao* cashed in their destination assets and returned to the *qiaoxiang*. In some areas they purchased so much land in their *qiaoxiang* with this money that they caused a boom in land prices, which was later followed by a crash.²⁶

This assessment of income earned in the destinations and its role in the *qiaoxiang* link was based on a number of considerations. Earnings in the destinations need to be balanced against the cost of living in each destination and this was always much more expensive than in China. Hawaii had the advantage of being the least costly for those on the plantations and this partly compensated for its usually lower incomes.

²² Interview Li Huari (李華日), Zhongshan, 6 January 2001 and Leung, *One Day, One Dollar*, p.50.

²³ Tom, *The Entrepot Trade*, p.153, Appendix 16.

²⁴ Fei, *China's Gentry*, pp.199-284.

²⁵ Remer, *Foreign Investments in China*, p.185 and p.188.



Naturally the standard of living that each individual *huaqiao* chose greatly influenced the amount he was able to remit, a consideration not lost on those in the *qiaoxiang* and often referred to in letters.²⁷ However, if a *huaqiao* was in constant work and did not “squander … valuable time in ‘dens of vice’ ”, then savings of considerable value to those in the *qiaoxiang* were possible.²⁸ Success or failure in earning such incomes was not guaranteed and the variations had a considerable impact on the very existence of links with the *qiaoxiang* as well as on the nature of that link.

Occupations

How did the *huaqiao* earn their incomes, remitted or not to the *qiaoxiang*? It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that even before large numbers of *huaqiao* began to move to the destinations after 1849 and the gold rushes, there were people from China scattered around the Pacific. The first occupations in Hawaii undertaken by Chinese were as traders, perhaps as early as 1820, as well as sugar grinders, perhaps as early as 1804, and certainly in the 1830s.²⁹ In Honolulu by 1851, several Chinese hawkers and wholesale merchants were listed in the local newspaper.³⁰ In Sydney, some household labourers and a publican from China are recorded in the 1820s and in California, Chinese seamen and traders were in Monterey, Spanish California before 1817 and Chinese merchants, carpenters, house builders and hotel keepers were in San Francisco on the eve of the gold rush.³¹ Contract labourers were the first Chinese people to arrive in any numbers in both Hawaii and NSW. In Hawaii, this meant working on sugar plantations and in NSW, as “shepherds” and other agricultural labourers. By the mid-19th century Chinese people from the Pearl River Delta and elsewhere in China were working in a range of occupations in all the Pacific Ports.

These early *huaqiao* were soon overwhelmed in the Australian colonies and California by goldseekers as mining became a major occupation of the *huaqiao*. However, in both Australia and California, mining was never the only occupation,

²⁶ Shozo, *With Sweat and Abacus*, p.215-16 and *North China Daily News*, 9 April 1931, p.1.

²⁷ Known sometimes as “letter-bullets”, Sui, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.129.

²⁸ Glick Archive, Card file: translation of correspondence between husband and wife, 22 October 1931, p.1.

²⁹ Char, “Chinese Merchant-Adventurers and Sugar Masters in Hawaii, 1802-1852”, pp.3-9 and Glick Archive, File 1.

³⁰ *The Polynesian*, 29 March 1851, p.183.

³¹ Chapter 1, n.18-22.



even excepting merchants and traders. In both “gold mountains” many earned their money supplying gold-seekers with necessities. Accommodation in the ports, tools for the diggings and food were supplied by fellow *huaqiao* from the beginning.³² Along the NSW coast and in San Francisco Bay in the 1860s, a fishing and fish salting industry arose for supplying those on the diggings further inland.³³ A similar industry is recorded centered at Monterey on the California coast and in 1856 a “gang of Chinaman” was reported “getting aulones (abalone)”.³⁴ Chinese dominance of fishing is also reported around 1870 in Hawaii.³⁵

In California, *huaqiao* early in the period worked in a range of occupations. Some researchers have argued that hostility from white miners, along with the scarcity of women, led to the *huaqiao* taking up “domestic” and support occupations such as cooking and laundry work in preference to mining.³⁶ In NSW, while hostility to Chinese miners also existed, such work was taken up by the *huaqiao* only gradually as gold mining declined.³⁷ Work other than mining was done, however, from the earliest times, such as on the Kiandra goldfields south of Sydney, where it was reported that large gangs of Chinese did the hauling of goods.³⁸ In Hawaii, ex-contractors would often establish themselves as hawkers and small traders, a tendency described as “the evil results of the free contract system”.³⁹ In California, the largest single employment of the *huaqiao* in the 1860s was in building the trans-continental railway.⁴⁰

³² Crawford observed the organisation of supplies for new arrivals on the Palmer River, North Queensland in the 1870s, Crawford, *Notes*, p.28.

³³ *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, pp.1101-1265 and Rev. A. W. Loomis, “How Our Chinese are Employed”, *The Overland Monthly*, Vol. II, 1869, p.235.

³⁴ Thomas Oliver Larkin, *The Larkin Papers* (Berkeley: University of California, 1960), Vol. X, p.283; John R. Cooper to Larkin, Sud Rancho, 22 June 1856.

³⁵ Paul Kimm-Chow Goo, “Building Hawaii’s Prosperity”, *The Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), p.15.

³⁶ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, p.57.

³⁷ In 1878, mining was still reported to be the occupation of 4,073 Chinese people out of a NSW population of 9,616. Many of these would have been tin miners. State Records Office of NSW, Special Bundle 4/829.1: Inspector General of Police to Principal Under Secretary, “Chinese Information Respecting, Resident in the Colony”, 12 November 1878, p.5.

³⁸ Lindsay M. Smith, *The Chinese of Kiandra, NSW. A Report to the Heritage Office* (Sydney: Heritage Office of NSW, 1997), pp.51-52. See also Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.36.

³⁹ W. H. Wright, “Chinese Immigration to the Hawaiian Islands”, *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1894* (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrush, 1894), p.73.

⁴⁰ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, pp.58-66.



Once the initial period of the gold rushes passed in California and the Australian colonies of Victoria and NSW, ex-miners and new arrivals in the 1870s began to take up a wider variety of occupations. As one observer put it, this was a, “transition from miner to artizan”.⁴¹ This was the period of the maximum range of jobs undertaken by the *huaqiao* even as overall numbers in both California and NSW fell from their gold rush peaks. A survey of Immigration Restriction Act files shows that in NSW, *huaqiao* at the beginning of the century worked in a broad range of occupations that included market gardener, labourer, grocery storekeeper, hawker, cook, carpenter, scrub cutter, cabinet maker, tobacco farmer, miner, draper and bookkeeper, although gardening predominated.⁴²

In 1869, the Chinese Benevolent Association of San Francisco reported the occupations of its 14,000 members as ranging from domestic servants and cigar makers to doctors and photographers, though relatively few laundrymen.⁴³ Jobs such as railroad workers, domestic servants, laundrymen, cigar makers and shoemakers were *huaqiao* occupations different from those found in NSW or Australia generally.⁴⁴

Hawaii offered a more restricted range of occupations, with ex-plantation workers usually setting up as small traders and hawkers near the plantations on the islands or in Honolulu. By the 1880s, *huaqiao* with some capital and perhaps family connections with land owning native Hawaiians, began to set up rice plantations on which contract labour also worked. While most of these rice plantations were owned by Honolulu merchants and run through managers, some *huaqiao* also worked their own rice fields in small groups of 8-10 or even 2-3.⁴⁵ In 1882, it was reported that of 13,500 Chinese people in Hawaii, 5,000 were employed on the sugar plantations and a “large number” in cultivating rice. Vegetable growing and domestic service employed many others and of 692 businesses, 219 were reported to be Chinese.⁴⁶ Over ten years later, the occupational distribution had changed only slightly. In 1894,

⁴¹ Crawford, *Notes*, p.4.

⁴² See Table 4.3: Occupations in NSW, end of 19th century, p.162.

⁴³ See Table 4.4: Occupations in San Francisco, 1869, p.162.

⁴⁴ A difference also noted by Crawford, *Notes*, p.7.

⁴⁵ Damon, “Tours Among the Chinese”, p.37.



it was estimated that of the total population of 14,500 Chinese people, 4,500 *huaqiao* were employed on the sugar plantations, 2,000 on the rice plantations and another 2,000 in various other types of agricultural work. At this time there were perhaps 700 women, 1,200 children and 900 men who were classed as merchants. Another 3,000 were employed in what were described as, “occupations which conflict with the white and Hawaiian laborer”.⁴⁷

From the mid-19th century the range of occupations held by the *huaqiao* in all three Pacific Ports had broadened. But by the early years of the 20th century, the tendency was for the range of jobs to narrow in NSW and California, though it continued to broaden in Hawaii. In Hawaii, both the sugar and rice plantations were collapsing, leaving little for the unskilled to do in an impoverished rural economy. Sugar plantations as an employer of the *huaqiao* greatly declined in the 20th century, with the number of Chinese workers on them dropping to less than 3,000 by 1912 and less than 1,000 by 1929.⁴⁸ Those who could, saved a little from plantation work and set up small stores; “at least a thousand” around Honolulu, “where trade is confined to fruit, vegetables, candy, cold drinks and a poor quality of cigars and tobacco, with occasionally a small line of ordinary groceries or dry goods.”⁴⁹ A 1928 survey found that of 580 stores in Honolulu, 280 were run by Chinese, 10-15 of these by people from Buck Toy village. Chinese merchants were reported to dominate the “restaurants, butcher and bakery businesses” and Long Du people were said to dominate the fish sellers, at least by 1931.⁵⁰

In Australia, as the *huaqiao* became more urbanised, along with the rest of the population, market gardening in Sydney and Melbourne became the new stereotype of the “Chinaman”. By 1899, it was claimed that there were some 5,000 market gardeners in NSW including 2,000 in Sydney, out of a total *huaqiao* population in NSW of about 10,000.⁵¹ Cabinet making was another popular urban occupation for

⁴⁶ *Board of Immigration Report, for the Biennial Period ending March 31st, A. D. 1882 to The Minister of the Interior* (Honolulu, 1882), p.3.

⁴⁷ Wright, “Chinese Immigration to the Hawaiian Islands”, p.73.

⁴⁸ *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1936), p.37.

⁴⁹ “Small Traders from Asia”, *Paradise of the Pacific*, July 1904, p.10.

⁵⁰ Glick Archive, Card file: interview with H. Q. Pang, 16 March 1931 and Goo, “Building Hawaii’s Prosperity”, p.16.

⁵¹ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 19 July 1899, p.2.



the *huaqiao* but one that had more discrimination directed against it than market gardening. In California, the range of occupations also gradually narrowed to a relative few, with the laundryman instead of the market gardener becoming the typical ‘Chinese’ occupation. In the Sacramento Delta area, many *huaqiao* continued to do seasonal agricultural work, though with steadily declining incomes.

Within this narrow range of ‘typical’ occupations, some *huaqiao* worked in specialist jobs as Chinese medicine practitioners, such as Zhang Bingchang (張炳昌) in Sydney or Lo Kwoi Sang and Thomas Chong in Victoria.⁵² A significant minority in all the Pacific Ports worked in the many stores as owners, managers, clerks and scribes, compositors for the Chinese language newspapers and in Hawaii, as colporteurs. It was in Hawaii, with its greater intermarriage and higher number of destination-born, that a generation first began to enter ‘professional’ or at least ‘white collar’, occupations, doing so in not only in Hawaii itself but also in China.⁵³

The participation of the United States and Australia in the war with Japan and the war economy also had a great impact on the *huaqiao*. Not only did incomes rise but a much greater range of jobs became available as manpower shortages and the fact of Chinese partnership in the war against Japan reduced anti-Chinese racism. The internment of Japanese in California led many Chinese people to purchase Japanese owned businesses. The United States also actively recruited Chinese people into the army, leading to large numbers of *huaqiao* taking on a very different status as “veterans”, with significant consequences in the post war period. In Australia, many refugee arrivals were able to take up jobs outside those previously considered ‘Chinese’ occupations.

A particular feature of the occupations of the *huaqiao* was the development of niches, jobs dominated by the *huaqiao* or even by *huaqiao* of a particular *qiaoxiang*. A characteristic of these jobs, such as market gardening, laundrymen and small goods

⁵² Interview with Chang She May, 21 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Zhongshan, Tape 1, (5) and Morag Loh, “A County practice: Thomas Chong, herbalist of Bairnsdale; his place, his practice, his peers” in Paul Macgregor (Ed.), *Histories of the Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific* (Melbourne: Museum of Chinese Australian History, 1995), pp.15-25.

⁵³ Goo Kimm-Chow Paul, “Chinese Economic activities in Hawaii”, *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1936), p.14.



stores was that they did not directly threaten the white working class. Jobs in which *huaqiao* competed with white workers continued to be a source of friction, while friction faded in areas such as cabinet making, cigarmaking and shoemaking as *huaqiao* employment in them fell. Thus the *huaqiao* tended to remain for most of the period in relatively low paid and unskilled jobs. Such occupations were generally sufficient to make them successful in supporting their *qiaoxiang* based families but not sufficient to give them many opportunities in the destinations. The exception to this were merchants and wealthier businessmen who had choices about settlement outside the *qiaoxiang* not open to most.

For the majority of *huaqiao* these jobs were low in both income and prestige. Low, however, judged from the perspective of the destinations in which the jobs were worked. This was not, however, the perspective most significant to an individual *huaqiao*. Nor, as was discussed above, was it in the destination only that the value of an income was most likely to be felt. It was also not in the destinations that the prestige of a job or the income earned from it had its prime impact.

Prestige

Abused by laws and prejudice, restricted to low paid jobs and with family far away and rarely seen, the average *huaqiao* would seem to have been willing to undergo a great deal for material gain. Emphasis on incomes earned and jobs performed give the impression that material improvement was the sole basis of the *qiaoxiang* link. This, however, would be a narrow interpretation of the motives that kept the *huaqiao* working in the destinations so long and considerations of prestige and social status are essential if much about what the *huaqiao* did and why they did it are to be understood.

There was nothing hidden or subtle about the link between money and prestige for the *huaqiao*. As a letter written in 1892 to the brother of a storekeeper in Tasmania concluded, if you come back to China poor, “you will feel very ashamed”.⁵⁴ The phrase “returning home with glory” was often used in newspaper items listing the amount of money returning in ships strongboxes, and the close link between letters

⁵⁴ Michael Dugan [et al.], *Shadow Play* (Hobart: Department of Education and The Arts, 1990), p.31.



and remittances was discussed in the previous chapter. *Huaqiao* and those closely associated with them also clearly saw this connection:

*If you want to achieve great things, America is not the right place. But if you want to make good money to help your family out of financial difficulty, no other country's money is worthier than the American dollar.*⁵⁵

*The emigrants went abroad to get status and economic security at home, their success was determined by how much wealth they brought back home. An emigrant coming home with empty hands is a disgrace.*⁵⁶

*... if the emig. doesn't muster any wealth, he is always haunted with starvation and of becoming a beggar. His role is not of that of an successful emigrant. He is not respected and has not status of any kind.*⁵⁷

The important thing to realise about the desire for enhanced status was that it was a desire for status in the *qiaoxiang*. For most *huaqiao*, to go home with money was considered to be “returning with glory” while to remain in the destination was like “wearing silk in the dark.”⁵⁸ It was this attitude that kept *huaqiao* in the destinations for years longer than the mere survival or even comfort of the family required. Behaviour did not centre only on the wish to earn an income, support the family and return. Returns to the *qiaoxiang* were influenced by the desire to display success. The years of grinding work, relatively short periods at home, gift bearing and patterns of house building, land purchases and donations require more than a simple desire for money to be understood and explained.

Many *huaqiao* spent most of their lives in the destinations despite their desire for prestige within their *qiaoxiang* because the prestige and social status they desired

⁵⁵ Liu Haiming, “The Trans-Pacific Family: A Case Study of Sam Chang’s Family History”, *Amerasia Journal*, 18: 2, 1992, p.15.

⁵⁶ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁵⁷ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁵⁸ For examples of the use of “glorious returns” see *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 7 September 1899, p.4; 18 October 1899, p.3 and 11 August 1900, p.3. For the phrase concerning silk wearing see Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, p.104, n.34. Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, p.109 also refers to this “old adage”.



was not only an individual thing. Family and ‘clan’ status was equally important and this provided the motivation for much of what the *huaqiao* were prepared or induced to do. This sense of group prestige was often expressed in terms of being “laughed at”, with the individual’s shame or wrong doing bringing scorn on the group. Thus for Hon Way it was necessary for his sons to donate to the village watchtower so that others would not “laugh at us”.⁵⁹ Rose Hum Lee described how pressure to comply with certain funeral arrangements and other duties was based on the need to give “face” to other family members.⁶⁰ For similar reasons a sworn brotherhood in Hawaii included the curse, if you “let others laugh at us, you would die on the roadway”.⁶¹

With prestige linked to the family it was not necessary for an individual *huaqiao* to return to the *qiaoxiang* to participate:

*The more frequent the letters is sent it shows that family ties are binding strongly and it shows that the emig. is doing well. It is the pride of the aged father or the wife of the emig. if large amount and regularly [sic] letter is sent.*⁶²

The first steps for the *huaqiao* in achieving status was to repay the debt by which the trip to the destination was financed, as failure to do so would have been a source of family shame. Next came marriage and producing children, then buying a house (or a better one), and finally, to begin purchasing land (with pigs).⁶³ Analysis of remittance records shows that spending on house and land was the most common type of expenditure after basic living expenses.⁶⁴ The purchase of land and the building of a new house, discussed in Chapter 2, was a major aim of the *huaqiao* and their families, seemingly from the first gold diggers, and was a way to demonstrate their new status.

⁵⁹ AA: A1/15, 35/7020, Hon Way to Heg Ning and Heg Joong, 3 June 1915.

⁶⁰ Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities*, p.245.

⁶¹ *Disclosures as to Chinese Secret Societies* (Honolulu, 1884), p.2.

⁶² Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁶³ Interview Young Koon Nuen, 20 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Tape 1, (20).

⁶⁴ See Feng Yuan, “Luelun jiefang qian guangdongsheng huaqiao huikuan”, pp.31-40.



Land and houses had a practical purpose regardless of the prestige that may have been derived from them. Of lesser substance than houses and land but more directly related to prestige, were the gifts brought by *huaqiao* on their return to the *qiaoxiang*. For returning *huaqiao*, a shopping visit to a local trading store such as the *Kwong War Chong* or to such destination stores as *Anthony Horden & Sons* in Sydney, was necessary before taking ship. Typically these purchases would include a mixture of practical additions to the household and more obviously demonstrative items and gifts. Biscuits, tools, shoes, guns, lollies, perfumed soaps, sultanas, canned beef and tea were common, also bikes, tomatoes, cabbage seeds, grindstones, clocks, sewing machines and on one occasion at least, an exotic bird.⁶⁵ A list from Hawaii contains a similar range of items and included: “soap, canned salmon, canned sardines, condensed milk, Kingan ham, coffee, chocolate and cocoa, raisins, candles, cookies and biscuits, canned Dole pineapples, gold rings, broadcloth, shoes, pencils, watches, sewing machines, shovels, picks, hoes, [and] personal pictures.”⁶⁶ These items had significance beyond the practical: “The people in the village are just fond of American things tho [sic] these things can be bought cheaper in HongKong.”⁶⁷ Such tangible items also would have been evidence of the outside world and the basis (false) on which the next generation often was inspired to follow in the footsteps of their fathers.⁶⁸

Social status and prestige required more than easily transported gifts and it was through public donations that the *huaqiao* also sought to display their status and increase their prestige. This was not something that the *huaqiao* invented themselves. As discussed in Chapter 2, the traditional culture of China that predominated in the Pearl River Delta was loosely governed by a “gentry” class that included “scholar-officials” holding positions in the government and others. The gentry as a class were

⁶⁵ Interviews, Young Koon Nuen, 20 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Tape 1, (10); Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (1 & 10) and Arthur Gar Lock Chang, 7 March 1998, Tape 2A, (20). Also, Yang Yuesheng 楊悅生, “Zhongshan yongyou he jiashi zixingche de diyiren” 中山擁有和駕駛自行車的第一人 (The first person to own and ride a bicycle in Zhongshan), *Zhongshan wenshi* Vol.43, 1998, p.35, for reputedly the 1st bike in Zhongshan brought in 1889 from Hawaii. See Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.177, for similar items taken by Taishan *huaqiao*.

⁶⁶ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁶⁷ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁶⁸ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.53, discusses the ignorance of those in the *qiaoxiang* of conditions in the destinations and Sui, *The Chinese Laundryman*, pp.113-115, gives examples of the disappointment of new arrivals at harsh working conditions.



responsible for many public and charitable works from which they derived prestige, displayed their social status and earned the right to act as the ruling group.⁶⁹ It was within this culture of public benefaction and titles earned and bought that the *huaqiao* operated. Under the government of the scholar-officials many organisations for public benefit existed, such as those for distributing free or cheap rice to the poor and during times of grain shortage.⁷⁰ The gentry provided money and organisation for local and provincial projects such as the building of bridges and roads. There is little evidence before 1911 of direct *huaqiao* involvement in such projects, which would have been performed under the patronage of gentry and officials even if *huaqiao* money was involved. However, after 1911 the *huaqiao*, at least in Zhongshan, were more obviously involved in promoting similar types of projects. By the 1920s, returning *huaqiao* themselves were even taking up official positions, especially those from Hawaii.⁷¹

An interesting contrast with the prominent involvement of the *huaqiao* in local donations and a clue to its social purposes can be obtained from a comparison with Italian return migration of the late 19th and early 20th century. Italian returnees from working in the United States show many similar features to the *huaqiao* such as remittance agencies, new houses, the renting out of land bought and displays of wealth. In marked contrast, however, is a sense of hostility generated by their secretiveness about money and unwillingness to support community projects. Italian returnees generally came to be regarded as “parasites” by their local communities.⁷² If the *huaqiao* were to survive and rise in status in their *qiaoxiang* they needed to avoid such hostility.

There are early references that are often cited about returning *huaqiao* having their money confiscated by magistrates and officials. While individual cases of such treatment undoubtedly occurred, indirect means of extracting this wealth, such as taxes or through gambling and opium were probably more common; else the golden

⁶⁹ See Chang, *The Chinese Gentry*.

⁷⁰ See *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 24 August 1898, p.2 for an example; also Rev. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), p.195, for a general description of such “charity”.

⁷¹ Chapter 2, pp.91-92.



goose would have been killed. As early as 1855 these suggestions occupied the minds of those investigating Chinese people and was as early denied: “do the Mandarins get the gold from them [Chinese diggers] when they go back? – No, they keep it themselves, and buy land and build houses.”⁷³ Nevertheless, many wealthier merchants did purchase titles to help protect their wealth and the sale of titles was certainly part of Qing government efforts to access the wealth of the *huaqiao*. The purchase of such titles may even have been obligatory in some cases.⁷⁴

Thus, just as powerful gentry were required to make donations to maintain their position, so the *huaqiao* found themselves increasingly part of a network of obligations and schemes of solicitation that rarely left donations up to individual generosity. In Chapter 2, the similarity of the *huaqiao* and the gentry in some respects was pointed out and in Chapter 3, the significance of communications, including the role of the *qiaokan*, as an element of the *qiaoxiang* links were discussed. Here it can be seen that these elements come together in the desire of the *huaqiao* to raise the status of themselves and their families.

One way in which the *huaqiao* did this, also discussed in the previous chapter, was through the development of well organised mechanisms. These involved magazines, special publications, letters and even collection visits to *huaqiao* communities in the destinations. The *qiaokan* of the 1920s through to 1949, contain numerous references to donations, thanks for donations and on occasion, disputes about donations. There is also ample evidence from local newspapers and surviving inscriptions that the level and range of donations in the *qiaoxiang* of Zhongshan were quite high. It was seen in Chapter 2 that donations in the 1920s and 1930s ranged from rebuilding

⁷² Dino Cinel, *The National Integration of Italian return migration, 1870-1927* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.118-129.

⁷³ Evidence of Howqua to the Commission on the Chinese, 15 January 1855 in Ian Francis McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria: official reports and documents* (Victoria: Red Rooster Press, 1985), p.13. Much evidence for returning *huaqiao* being robbed by officials seems to come ultimately from the not particularly dependable, R. H. Conwell, *Why and How: why the Chinese emigrate, and the means they adopt for the purpose of reaching America, with sketches of travel, amusing incidents, social customs, &c.* (New York: Lee and Shepard, 1871), pp.143-144.

⁷⁴ Maurice Freedman, “Immigrants and Associations: Chinese in Nineteenth Century Singapore”, in L. A. Fallers (Ed.), *Immigrants and Associations* (Paris: Mouton, 1967), p.22, referring to a report in 1886.



Ancestral Halls, village bridges and watchtowers to schools, reading rooms, maternity homes, tea pavilions, free coffins and health clinics.⁷⁵

Much of traditional southern Chinese life was centered on the clan and the center of this was the Ancestor Hall (族堂 *zutang*). Multi-surname villages had a hall for each clan and the prestige of a clan could be measured by the size and beauty of the Ancestral Hall. It is not surprising therefore, that some of the first donations of the *huaqiao* were for the purpose of rebuilding such Ancestor Halls. Even *huaqiao* who became Christians built Ancestor halls, such as the Ma brothers, founders of *Sincere & Co.*, in their village of Heng Mei (恒美) not far from Shekki. Temples were also of importance; three new village temples were built in the early 1880s in the village of Buck Toy with donations primarily from *huaqiao* in Hawaii.⁷⁶

However, there could only be so many Ancestral Halls and Temples and at the village level, donations were also made for a variety of other public benefits. The broader range of *huaqiao* donations are most evident in the 1920s and 1930s and demonstrate either the decline of the role of traditional gentry at this time or the increasing relative wealth of the *huaqiao*, or both. A wealthy individual might provide the initial donation such as Mr Miu (繆) did in Ge Heng (格亭) village of Long Du for a reading room, with other *huaqiao* contributing to its day to day running.⁷⁷ Clinics, libraries and reading rooms were popular in the wealthy villages of Long Du close to Shekki, while watchtowers were also common in villages where the threat from bandits was greater. *Huaqiao* who had retired in the village made donations, such as Joe Wah Gow and Yang Rui (楊瑞), who both grew vegetables, giving regularly to the poor, as well as donating to the free medicine clinic in the village.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Chapter 2, n.71.

⁷⁶ Glick Archives, File 3: notes of B. C. Lee, 16 June 1936.

⁷⁷ 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 21 August 1922, p.5.

⁷⁸ Interviews, Victor Gow, 30 October 1997 (5) and Young Koon Nuen, 20 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, Tape 1, (15).



Buck Toy village

The *qiaokan* were designed to inform the *huaqiao* about happenings in the *qiaoxiang* and to solicit donations and their role in this has been discussed in the previous chapter. But the relationship between the *huaqiao* in the destinations and their *qiaoxiang* could be more intimate than the arrival of a monthly magazine. A good example of the ongoing nature of the relationship between a village and its fellows in a destination comes from that of Buck Toy and their Hawaiian *huaqiao*. In 1894, subscription booklets were sent out from Buck Toy to their *huaqiao* to raise money for the enlargement of one of the village temples, temples that their previous donations had already helped to build.⁷⁹ This is the beginning of a record of donations and appeals for help, between the *huaqiao* of a destination and their *qiaoxiang*, which continued for at least a generation.

Village security was a major concern and the Buck Toy village club of Hawaii made a series of donations relating to this, including nearly \$100 for a night patrol in 1899 and 1900, \$216 for bandit patrols in 1914 and a further \$1500 for a patrol in 1917. The donations were the result of much soliciting on the part of those in the *qiaoxiang*, such as in letters written in 1914 and 1917, pleading for \$500 for guns to protect against banditry. When robbers attacked the village in 1923, a cable was sent to the Hawaii *huaqiao* requesting \$1500 urgently and \$500 was sent to help build watchtowers (at a cost of \$7,000 for two) in that year. At least \$9,500 was eventually raised for the watchtower fund. In 1926, the *huaqiao* were consulted on the establishment of a “civil guard” for the village and despite some criticism of this service in 1931, money continued to be requested to support it. The danger to the village came not only from bandits but also from neighbouring villages that were considered the “enemy”. Thus, also in 1926, \$1100 was contributed to build a canal that would enable passing an “enemy village” to be avoided. When in 1928 a public meeting was held to help Young Leong, a fisherman who had been beaten by neighbouring villagers, the Buck Toy *huaqiao* in Hawaii were kept fully informed.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of B. C. Lee, 15 November 1935 and 16 June 1936.

⁸⁰ Glick Archive, File 3: notes of B. C. Lee, 15 November 1935 and 16 June 1936.



In addition to security, the Buck Toy village *huaqiao* of Hawaii were concerned with matters such as health, morals, local politics, roads and the general running of the village. They had become de facto “village elders”.⁸¹ In 1922, \$75 was donated for smallpox vaccinations; in 1923, a cable was sent by the *huaqiao* to stop the mortgaging of public property in the village and the following year a cable of congratulations was sent to Young Kwong Tat on his becoming a magistrate. Cables were also sent to prohibit a public performance in the village, to suggest making use of Buck Toy’s ‘own’ magistrate to improve village roads, to instruct on matters such as auditing the books of the funeral society and on the question of outsiders living in the village. The issue of opium and gambling houses, “especially by outsiders”, was also a great concern and the *huaqiao* were supportive of measures such as the taking over and closing of three opium houses in the village. Such efforts involved corruption and in one instance at least, a court case. Less problematic issues concerned approving a telephone system, repairs for street lights and gutters, and funds for a reading room in the village.

These many issues and appeals were dealt with by the Hawaiian *huaqiao* of Buck Toy who included by the 1920s not only those who had left the village many years before, but also a new generation, eighty-five strong by 1926, with recent memories, understanding and interest in the village. While it cannot be assumed that all *huaqiao* were so generous, this community represents an example of what one letter from the *qiaoxiang* described as, “loyal *wah kiu* (*huaqiao*)”.⁸² The impact of these donations on the *qiaoxiang* was discussed in detail in Chapter 2. From this Buck Toy example it can be seen that solicitation and direct appeals for assistance were based upon a continuing sense of being part of the *qiaoxiang* felt by *huaqiao* and the status they derived from being able to assist.

Recognition

An essential aspect of this status was the prominent display of the names of benefactors. Not only personal names but also the destination from which the income derived, as this helped to present a challenge to other *huaqiao*. The Chung Kok (象

⁸¹ Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.156, also refers to this status.

⁸² Glick Archive, File 3: notes of B. C. Lee, 16 June 1936.



角) village community hall, erected in 1913, for example, has a row of black marble panels set into its wall inscribed with the names of donors grouped according to their destinations. These are mostly various locations in Australia as well as Hawaii, San Francisco, Canada, Peru and Mexico.⁸³ The Sau Shan (秀山) village tea pavilion was erected by donations of *huaqiao* from Peru, San Francisco and Hawaii and also has the names of the donors prominently displayed on inscriptions carved in stone and set into the structure.⁸⁴

The value of donations for the Chung Kok Hall are inscribed in the various foreign currency amounts rather than silver dollars and this would suggest that they have been taken directly from a subscription list prepared in each of the ports. The earliest recorded means of soliciting donations from those still in the destinations appears to have been subscription booklets or tickets sent to the destination whereby each *huaqiao* pledged a sum for a specific project. This was the method used to obtain funds in 1894 for a temple in Buck Toy village and also around the same time to obtain donations from Zhongshan *huaqiao* in New Zealand.⁸⁵ The village of Long Tou Wan in Long Du established a free medicine clinic using subscription booklets in the 1930s, as well as through individual donations.⁸⁶

Local newspapers would also publish donations lists and from these can be seen the wide range of donors around the world, including those in other parts of China.⁸⁷ The “Zhongshan Outside Fellows Association”, for example, published the names and amounts donated to it by various Hawaiian *huaqiao* in 1925.⁸⁸ But it was the *qiaokan* published by a village or clan and distributed to those in the destinations that were the predominant means of publicising donors. The *qiaokan* themselves also needed donations to survive and one offered an “award to encourage donations”. This was two portraits, of “24 inches”, one for the house and one to hang in the publication

⁸³ Picture 4.1: Chung Gok (象角) Community Hall and donations list, p.163.

⁸⁴ Picture 4.2: Tea Pavilion and inscription of donors and their destinations, p.164.

⁸⁵ Glick Archive, Notes 3: Bung-Chong Lee, 16 June 1936 and inscription booklets in possession of Dr James Ng, New Zealand, seen by the author, February 2001.

⁸⁶ 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*) 25 August 1932, p.7 and interview, Chang She May, 21 May 2000, Long Tou Wan, (57).

⁸⁷ 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 17 November 1924, p.8.

⁸⁸ 香山仁言報 (*Xiangshan Renyan News*), 20 April 1925, p.6.



office, as well as the publishing of one's picture and a five year supply of the magazine for all who subscribed more than \$500 in "Canton silver".⁸⁹

In Chapter 2, it was discussed how schools and support for education was a major element of the *huaqiao* impact on the *qiaoxiang*. Remittances were often spent in sending children to the village schools and many donations were made to set up and maintain schools of a more modern type. In 1919, it was reported that it cost \$800,000 to build a High School and at this cost the solicitation of school donations were naturally the most complex and persistent.⁹⁰ There is more evidence about soliciting for schools from Taishan and this may well be an area of difference between the *qiaoxiang*. Taishan evidence is that money collecting booklets were sent to the United States and after the money was donated they were used to carve the names of donors on memorial tablets. Taishan school magazines were as prominent as village and clan magazines and were published by the school committees and clan organisations. Donors were given recognition scaled to the amounts given in these magazines as well as in Chinese language newspapers such as those published in San Francisco.⁹¹

As *huaqiao* prestige grew so did their involvement in all aspects of village and local life, including its politics. The Buck Toy *huaqiao* of Hawaii were described as "elders" and along with their money their advice was also sought. That some *huaqiao* also returned to the *qiaoxiang* to take up official positions was also seen in Chapter 2. On a wider level the first major political intervention for which there is evidence occurred during the Portuguese threat to absorb more of Zhongshan County into their colony of Macao around the turn of the 19th century. Zhongshan *huaqiao* around the world were mobilised to support the Qing Government in resisting this threat.⁹² Later, when it was proposed to move the Zhongshan county capital away from Shekki, the many *huaqiao* of Hawaii, at least, protested and petitioned the

⁸⁹ 中山濠溪月報 (*Zhongshan Haoxi Monthly*), September, 1929, p.103. For a similar example in Taishan see Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.145.

⁹⁰ 香山華字日報 (*Xiangshan Chinese Daily*), 18 November 1919, p.3.

⁹¹ Yu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940", p.57 & 65.

⁹² *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 19 April 1902, p.2.



County government against the move.⁹³ The level of *huaqiao* influence is difficult to estimate but the decision to move the capital was reversed.

Not only local politics but politics on the national level began to involve some *huaqiao*. In Australia, for example, two *huaqiao* representatives were sent to a session of the Chinese Parliament in 1912.⁹⁴ A Sydney committee collected donations for the Hong Kong port strike in 1925 and another Sydney based *huaqiao* collected money to purchase an airplane for the Republican government for which he was rewarded with a medal.⁹⁵ In Hawaii also, similar relief appeals and support for airplanes occurred.⁹⁶

Whatever the influence on a county, provincial or even national level, for most *huaqiao* prestige was a matter of status within the *qiaoxiang*. This was status within the family and village primarily, or when in the destination, among ones *huaqiao* fellows.⁹⁷ The reciprocal manner in which this status operated is well illustrated by Ah Way when he explained to the Chinese Gambling Commissioners the basis of the role his grandfather, Way Kee, played in the Koon Yee Tong of the Doon Goon (Dongguan) people in Sydney around 1890. It was not a question of his seeking election but, “on account of seeing that my grandfather was in such a larger way of business, and was trusted, these men would take their money to him to keep for them”. The men he was referring to were those principally in “the gardening or hawking line”.⁹⁸ A man in Way Kee’s position was obliged to help others of his community as Ah Way again explained, “if my grandfather did not go and bail them [Chinese arrested for gambling] out, being a leading man, it would not look well”.⁹⁹

⁹³ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 16 June 1930, p.5.

⁹⁴ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.88.

⁹⁵ Kan Yanxin 闢延鑫, “Cong Kaiping huaqiao bowuguan wenwu cangpin, kan huaqiao dui zuguo de gongxian” 從開平華僑博物館文物藏品, 看華僑對祖國的貢獻 (From the collection of the Kaiping Museum to see the overseas Chinese contribution to the homecountry), *Qiaoshi xuebao* 僑史學報 (Journal of Overseas Chinese History), 1, 1987, p.44.

⁹⁶ Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, pp.272-273, relief appeals, p.303, 1922 donations for airplanes.

⁹⁷ The phrase *qiaobao* (僑胞) or “*huaqiao* fellows” is common in the *qiaokan*. See for example, “Cong Congtou xiulu shi shuoqi” 從涌頭修路事說起 (Let’s start talking about Chong Tou road repairs) *Congtou yuekan* 涌頭月刊 (Chong Tou Monthly), No.10, 1 May, 1949, p.1.

⁹⁸ Royal Commission, p.47, lines, 1934-36.

⁹⁹ Royal Commission, p.52, line, 1946.



Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the motivations for the existence of the *qiaoxiang* links must be understood in the interplay between income and prestige. What this income was, how it was earned and most importantly what it was worth in *qiaoxiang* terms was investigated. It is the use of a *qiaoxiang* perspective that allows the income of the *huaqiao* to be seen in this way, just as it also allows the role of prestige to be seen. Prestige was something that the majority of *huaqiao* could only earn in the *qiaoxiang*. How this was done involved not only individual status but also the status of the family and the development of an interdependent relationship between those in the *qiaoxiang* and those in the destinations. This relationship was seen in some detail for the Buck Toy village *huaqiao* in Hawaii.

Recognition was an essential element of this relationship and one that enabled the *huaqiao* to “return with glory”. Returning with glory could mean for a *huaqiao* acquiring the status of a “village elder” and it was at the village level that the majority of *huaqiao* would have enjoyed their prestige. Although there are examples of *huaqiao* who became involved in county level or even national politics it should not be forgotten that these were a minority or perhaps even those who had already lost their *qiaoxiang* links.

The relationship illustrated in this chapter was not an easy one. If prestige could be earned with income and generous donations, it could also be lost through a failure to achieve such incomes or refusal to participate in the pattern of donations. The following chapter will focus therefore, not on how the *qiaoxiang* links have been built up, as has been the case until now, but on the choices and opportunities given by the *qiaoxiang* links. These choices and opportunities could result in the loss of *qiaoxiang* links as well as in their maintenance.



Table 4.1: Earnings in the Pacific Ports

Date	Location	Job	Local wage in destination	Wage in Mexican/ Silver dollar	Exchange rate Local:Chinese
1840s	NSW/Qld	contractors (shepherds)	£1	\$4.5	1:4.5
1849	California	contracted cook	\$15	\$18	1:1.2
1850s	California	miners	\$40	\$48	1:1.2
	Hawaii	plantation worker	\$3	\$3.6	1:1.2
		houseboy	\$2	\$2.4	
	NSW	cook	£3	\$13.50	1:4.5
		labourer	£2	\$9	
		servant	£2/5s	\$11	
1860s	California	railroad worker	\$30	\$36	1:1.2
	Victoria	Worker on a “European claim”	£4 - £6	\$18 - \$27	1:4.5
	Hawaii	plantation worker	\$4	\$4.8	1:1.2
1870s	California	miners	\$20	\$30	1:1.5
		cook	\$35	\$52	
		waiter	\$25	\$37	
	Vic/NSW Qld	gold miners	£5	\$22.5	1:4.5
			£2	\$18	
	Hawaii	plantation worker	\$8	\$12	1:1.5
		colporteur	\$75	\$112	
		cook or servant	\$20	\$30	
1880s	West Australia	contractors	£2	\$9	1:4.5
	California/ San Francisco	shoemaker	\$25	\$37	1:1.5
		domestic servant	\$18	\$27	
1890s	Hawaii	agricultural labourers	\$20	\$30	
		plantation worker	\$10	\$15	1:1.5
		bookkeeper	\$17	\$25	
	California	mission helper	\$30	\$36	1:1.2
	NSW	cabinet makers	£8	\$48	1:6
		cooks	£4/8s	\$27	
1900	Hawaii	plantation worker	\$15	\$22	1:1.5
		bank teller	\$25	\$37	
	NSW/Qld	scrub cutters	£4	\$24	1:6
		cane cutters	£5/4s	\$31	



Table 4.1: Earnings in the Pacific Ports

Date	Location	Job	Local wage	Mexican/ Silver dollar	Exchange rate Local:Chinese
1910s	NSW/Sydney	market gardeners	£8	\$48	1:6
		cooks	£10	\$60	
		labourers	£7	\$42	
		cabinet makers	£21	\$126	
	California	agricultural labourers	\$40	\$100	1:2.5
	waiter	\$25	\$62		
	cook	\$35	\$87		
1920s	Hawaii	tailor	\$90	\$180	1:2
		plantation worker	\$20	\$40	
	California	labourer	\$50	\$100	1:2
		laundry manager	\$70	\$140	
		cook	\$60	\$120	
		agricultural labourers	\$30	\$60	
	NSW	cooks and labourers	£5	\$45	1:9
1930s	Sydney	market gardener	£8	\$160	1:20
	California	agricultural labourers	\$20	\$80	1:4
	Hawaii	unemployment relief	\$6	\$24	1:4
1940s	California	packers servants & agricultural labourers	\$50 \$75	\$200 \$300	1:4

Sources: These figures are derived from a variety of sources, including: Remer, *Foreign Investments in China*; Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*; various Zhongshan *qiaokan*; *Report of the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling*; Gillenkirk, *Bitter Melon*; Zo, *Chinese Emigration into the United States* and various oral history interviews in Zhongshan and Australia.



Table 4.2: Earnings in China and Hong Kong.

Date	Location	Job	Local wage (Mexican/ Silver dollar)
1840s	Macao	folder	\$4.50
	Pearl River Delta village	hawker	\$5
	Hong Kong	labourer	\$6
1850s	Hong Kong	interpreter	\$75
		labourer	\$10 - \$15
		foreman	\$15 - \$16
1860	south China	labourer	\$4
1870s	Shanghai	seamen	\$16 - \$20
	Hong Kong	labourer	\$7
		compositor	\$19
1880s	Hong Kong	doctor (Tung Wah Hospital)	\$27
	south China	Taotai	\$140
		minor official	\$14
		labourer	\$4
	Pearl River Delta village	watchman	in rice
1890s	Canton	scholar	\$6 - \$10
	China	labourer (with food)	\$1.50
		unskilled	\$2
		skilled	\$3
1901	south China	soldier	\$10
		jinricksha coolie	\$8 - \$12
1930s	Hong Kong	bus driver	\$35
	Long Du village	teacher	\$40
	Canton	teacher (Hawaiian born)	\$140

Sources include: Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America*; Hong Kong Administrative Reports; Parker, “The Economy of Chinese Labour”; La Fargue, *China’s First Hundred*; Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past” and various oral history interviews.



Table 4.3: Occupations in NSW, end of 19th century.¹

Occupation	<i>huaqiao</i>	percentage	Occupation	<i>huaqiao</i>	percentage
Gardener	101	46%	Scrub cutter	7	3%
Labourer	23	11%	Tobacco	5	2%
Storekeeper	14	6%	Drapery	2	1%
Hawker	13	6%	Bookkeeper	2	1%
Groceries	12	5%	Farmer	2	1%
Cook	11	5%	Station work	1	0%
Cabinet Maker	11	5%	Total	219	100%
Carpenter	8	4%			
Miner	7	3%	Multiple jobs	45	

Table 4.4: Occupations in San Francisco, 1869.²

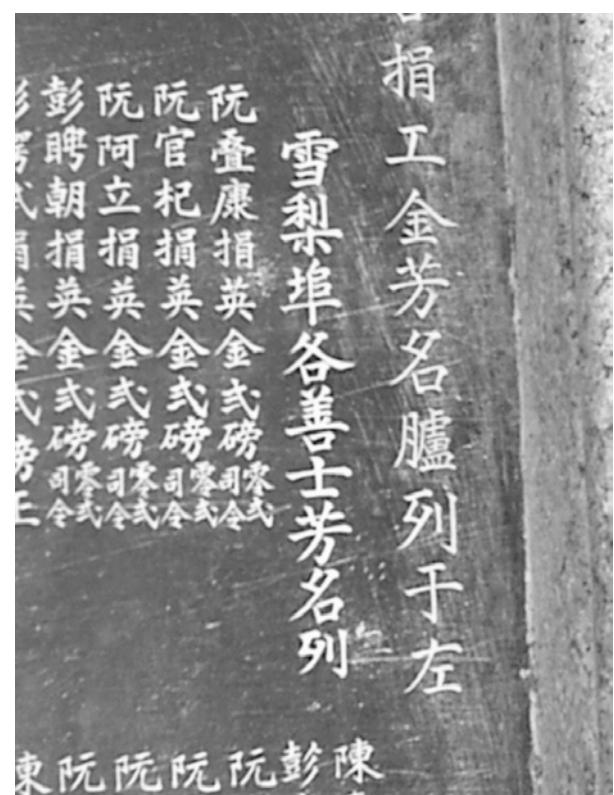
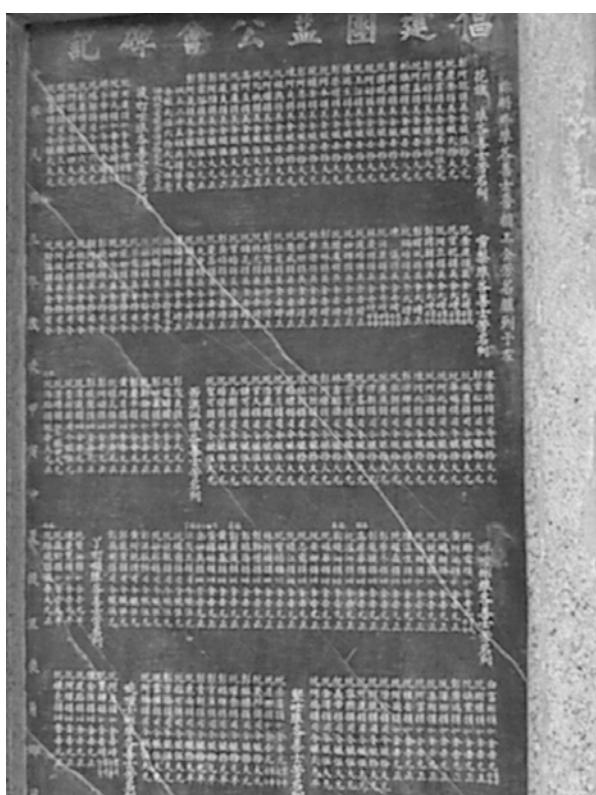
Occupation	<i>huaqiao</i>	percentage
domestic servants	4,580	33%
cigar makers	2,750	20%
factory hands	1,500	11%
shopkeepers	1,200	9%
laundrymen	746	5%
merchants	375	3%
doctors	17	-%
carpenters	48	-%
photographers	16	-%

¹ Based on a sampling of Immigration Restriction Act files, from Williams, Sojourn in Your Native Land, Appendix IV, Table 4, p.101.

² *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27 November 1869, p.4, based on figures supplied by the 'Six Companies'.



Picture 4.1: Chung Gok (象角) Community Hall and donations list.¹



¹ Pictures taken by author, Chung Kok (象角) village, January 2001.

Picture 4.2: Tea Pavilion and inscription of donors and their destinations.¹



¹ Pictures taken by author, Sau Shan (秀山) village, January 2001.

Chapter 5: Things did not work out that way

Although a resident of Australia most of his life, Arthur Lowe, “... always intended [his children] to get some schooling in China, he said, but things did not work out that way, and then it was too late.”¹ Sam Chang had not expected “that he would stay in the United States as a farmer and never go back to China, even for a visit.”² Both of these *huaqiao* were referring to choices they made or did not make in the 1930s, and indicate the gap which often exists between intention and result. While historians generally deal with the results of people’s actions, it is useful to remember that results are not necessarily proof of intentions.

Once the gap between intentions and results is acknowledged it becomes necessary to take into account the changing circumstances of people’s lives. Nation-state perspectives, in focusing only on circumstances within prescribed locations fail to do this adequately. In such perspectives, the focus is on settlement in a nation-state and factors such as the restrictive laws are interpreted in terms of their effect upon such settlement. A *qiaoxiang* perspective provides a broader context and therefore a broader range of circumstances through which to understand the choices and opportunities the *huaqiao* had and made.

This chapter discusses some of the choices and opportunities that were provided to the *huaqiao* by their *qiaoxiang* links, choices and opportunities that often did result in settlement and the severing of *qiaoxiang* links. However, there were many other choices and opportunities, the context of which is much wider than nation-state perspectives usually permit. Family options, conditions in the *qiaoxiang*, responses to the laws, opportunities presented or denied by success and failure or by destination-birth, are all factors that operated within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links. Within this context, it will be seen that choices about maintaining *qiaoxiang* links or settling in a destination involved more than overcoming legal barriers or problems of ‘assimilation’.

¹ Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, p.53.

² Liu, “The Trans-Pacific Family”, p.13.



Family options

This thesis has stressed that continuing links with the *qiaoxiang*, including the intention to return to them, are the context for interpreting the movements of people from the Pearl River Delta that occurred between 1849 and 1949. This context continues to be relevant when considering those who did not maintain such links, including those who settled permanently in the destinations. Within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links, those who made choices that ended the links were, in a sense, ‘deviations’ from the dominant intention to maintain links and to return. What proportion of *huaqiao* took up various options is difficult to determine and here it is intended only to narrate some of the choices *huaqiao* actually took concerning their families. This is in order to develop an impression of the range of choices and opportunities that were created within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links.

Many have assumed that if destination laws restricted families, then the arrival of families in a destination implied an intention to permanently settle in a destination.³ However, the choices *huaqiao* had and made were more complex than such interpretations and assumptions would imply. While most *huaqiao* married in the *qiaoxiang* and left their wife there, some *huaqiao* brought their wife, or a second wife, to a destination while others married in a destination, either to Chinese descended or to non-Chinese women. However, bringing a wife to the destination, raising children in the destination or even marrying a non-Chinese woman in the destination did not necessarily mean that links with the *qiaoxiang* would be ended. Many families that had been in a destination returned to the villages, including some with “white wives”. Goldseekers returning from Australia with “English” wives were reported in the 1860s and 1870s.⁴ Hawaiian women were plentiful enough in Zhongshan in the 1880s to have acquired a reputation (one for “laziness”), according to Rev. Damon and sufficient non-Chinese wives were coming from Australia in the 1920s to inspire a customs circular on the topic.⁵ Joe Wah Gow took his entire

³ This is implied by arguments which stress that the restrictive laws prevented women and families coming and reduced numbers of immigrants and settlers. For examples of such arguments, see Peffer, *If they Don't Bring their Women Here*, especially p.108 and Chan, “The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943”, in Chan, *Entry Denied*, pp.94-146.

⁴ For examples see, *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 25 July 1864, p.2 and Don Aldus, *Coolie Traffic and Kidnapping* (London: McCorquodale & Co., 1876), p.179.

⁵ Damon, “Rambles in China”, p.45 and AA (NSW), C4203/1; Boarding Branch Circulars, 1914-1931, p.207, circular, Secretary to Collector of Customs, 9 June 1923.



Australian-born family back with him to the village in 1929.⁶ Nathan Chow's mother returned from San Francisco with him to their Long Du village in the 1920s, even after several children had been born in the United States and after Nathan joined his father in San Francisco his mother continued to prefer to live in the village.⁷ Low Shee arrived in San Francisco in 1921 and had six children born there before she returned to China in 1931 and was not expected to return.⁸ As one women put it in 1924, Chinese women were often lonely and preferred to go back to their family in the *qiaoxiang*.⁹

Although many returned to the *qiaoxiang* with their families from a destination, *huaqiao* who married in the Pacific Ports did not have the same incentive to return to the village as those with wives there. This was the case with Au Concheok, for example, whose children grew up in Hawaii and for this reason preferred Hawaii to the *qiaoxiang* for his retirement in the 1930s.¹⁰ For most, such decisions would have been based on a number of factors, as when Mrs Lee Let stated in 1932 that she preferred the Hawaiian climate but also feared "hunger-mad bandits" in Taishan. In addition, most of her children were in Hawaii and a son living in Canton had sent four of his eight children to live there also.¹¹

It was not always a choice between *qiaoxiang* or destination and some *huaqiao* raised a family in both. Afong did this in the 1870s, sending his Hawaiian-born son to the *qiaoxiang* and raising his *qiaoxiang*-born son in Hawaii.¹² However, such cases were rare and would have required substantial resources. More usual was the situation of George Gay who did not return to his village after marrying his Australian-born, part Chinese wife Ada, around 1900 and setting up as a well-to-do market gardener in Sydney. He did, however, send one of his sons, Billy Gay, to live in his Liang Du village of Dou Tou (渡頭) in the 1920s. After three years Billy returned to Sydney, visiting the village again only after his retirement many years

⁶ Interview, Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997 (2).

⁷ Interview, Nathan Chow, Hong Kong, 21 March 2000.

⁸ NARA, RG 85, INS: Chinese Departing, 1300/5861, Wong Quon To, interview 1934.

⁹ Hoover Library & Archives, Race Relations Survey: Doc 23, 19 March 1924, Myrtle Hosang, pp.5-6.

¹⁰ *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 27 March 1932, p.8.

¹¹ *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 17 April 1932, p.11.

¹² Dye, *Merchant Prince*, p.78 & p.107.



later.¹³ Phillip Lee Chun, reputedly one of the wealthiest Chinese people in Sydney and with a wife and family in that city, returned to Hong Kong only when he felt his death approaching, and to the village itself, only after his death in 1937. One of his several sons, William Lee, was sent to Hong Kong in the 1920s to be educated in Chinese, visiting the village itself only once.¹⁴

The fact that *huaqiao* such as George Gay or Phillip Lee Chun did not return to their *qiaoxiang* is not necessarily proof of their original intentions. Decisions to stay in a destination or about the continuation of *qiaoxiang* links were more likely the result of short-term plans and practical options than explicit choices. Mrs. Lim's father, reporting the birth of his three daughters, declared that they were "boys", doing so as part of a plan to make a profit later by selling the "slots".¹⁵ The unforeseen result was that when the entire family decided to move to San Francisco years later in the 1930s, only one daughter could come, the other two having to wait until they were married.¹⁶ Mrs. Young Oy Bo Lee was born in a Taishan village in 1918 and in the 1930s married a Californian *huaqiao* 25 years older than herself who needed a second wife to take care of his Canton house. Her first son was sent to San Francisco to be brought up as the first wife's son. Later she came to San Francisco as the "paper daughter" of another family, becoming the mother of eight children in addition to her own four when her husband's first wife died.¹⁷ For this woman, life and her settlement in the United States, was a series of practical decisions based on what was of benefit to her husband and family at the time. Such decisions are difficult to understand outside the context of the *qiaoxiang* links.

Family location therefore is not a simple indicator of whether or not *huaqiao* intended to settle in a destination or return to their *qiaoxiang*. Families, wives and children could shift between a destination and *qiaoxiang* and it was the opportunities provided by the *qiaoxiang* links themselves that helped to determine choices about settlement or return. The proportions of *huaqiao* who made these various choices are

¹³ Interview, Billy Gay, 19 March 1998.

¹⁴ Interview, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 and William Lee, Sydney, 3 June 1999.

¹⁵ See Chapter 1, pp.54-55 for discussion of "slots".

¹⁶ Judy Yung, Angel Island oral history project, 1975-1990: Asian-American Studies Library, ARC 2000/62; Mrs. Lim, interview 12 September 1976.



difficult to determine. However, that such choices existed and were made must be acknowledged and this requires a broader interpretation than that the movement was largely about efforts to ‘get in’ or efforts to keep people ‘out’.

China Conditions

Many of the choices made about family location were based on circumstances and conditions in China, circumstances and conditions that changed greatly over the period. The destruction of the family was one extreme of these conditions, but *qiaoxiang* based families were vulnerable to a range of circumstances that could affect the link between *qiaoxiang* and destination. Increasing social and political chaos, bandit attacks and poverty, as well as commercial opportunities and Japanese invasion must have led many to view residence outside the *qiaoxiang* as desirable. The *qiaoxiang* and the choices people had were also affected by the *huaqiao* themselves, their wealth, ideas, the evolution of a ‘*huaqiao* lifestyle’ and associated expectations and dependence.

During the period 1849 to 1949, China, including the Pearl River Delta, underwent a series of social and political upheavals that often resulted in great hardship and the destruction of families and communities. Such disruptions are often cited as providing the motive for people to leave their *qiaoxiang*. But if the disruptions were extreme enough to provide a motive to leave, what was the motive to return or to maintain links with the *qiaoxiang*? Many *huaqiao*, particularly the early contractors, must have been similar to Aheong, whose family was broken up or destroyed by the Taiping disturbances. Despite his education, Aheong accepted an agent’s false promise of a supervisory position and ended up working as a “coolie” on an Hawaiian sugar plantation. In the 1860’s, Aheong set up a store, married an Hawaiian wife and converted to Christianity. While Aheong did make visits to China, he made Hawaii his permanent home.¹⁸ Another whose movement began in disruption, was Fung Ying of Hoiping, born in 1828 he joined the Taiping rebellion in the 1850s. In 1865 he was in California working on the transcontinental railway, after which he went to Hawaii in 1877. Fung Ying worked on sugar and rice

¹⁷ Mrs. Young Oy Bo Lee, interview by Kate Gong, 1987. *From China to America* (Chinese Historical Society of America), Regional Oral History Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California.

¹⁸ *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 September 1870, p.2.



plantations and finally as a laundryman before ceasing to work in 1924, when, aged 96, he entered a home for the aged. Fung Ying never married or returned to his *qiaoxiang*. At age 101 he became a Christian and died in 1933, aged 104.¹⁹

While the Taiping and other disturbances may have led some to leave with little reason to return, other hazards would also have discouraged return. The *qiaoxiang* were not the safest of places. Heath hazards, poverty, food shortages and floods, as well as political instability, all contributed to the inherent difficulties and dangers of pre-modern village life.²⁰ For many, rising expectations of what life might offer in the way of comfort meant return to the *qiaoxiang* was no longer a welcome option. The establishment of “new villages”, extensions of the old villages rather than completely separate ones, illustrate the changing material standards of returned *huaqiao*.²¹ For those who wanted security or simply running water, there was a range of choices available, starting with moving to a county capital such as Shekki. The attractions of a modern lifestyle also made Hong Kong a desirable place to live, its closeness to Zhongshan in particular, meant contact could be maintained relatively easily with the *qiaoxiang*.

Even if life could be made reasonably comfortable in the village or county capital, there was the threat of bandits. While the destruction of the family would be an extreme situation, the threat of destruction or at least harm would have influenced choices made. Bandits were a common threat to most villages in the 19th century but as the *huaqiao* became more prominent and poverty and dislocation increased, bandit attacks specifically directed at the families and homes of the *huaqiao* increased.²²

Chapter 2 also discussed the threats to the family that could come from within the family.²³ Long periods without a husband or father, new ideas about the family or how life should be conducted, often coming from the *huaqiao* themselves, resulted in attitudes and behaviour which could disrupt the *qiaoxiang* link. The traditional role

¹⁹ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 7 January 1933, p.5.

²⁰ See Chapter 2, p.68.

²¹ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, p.202 particularly refers to returned “emigrants from Australia and America” in this regard; also Woon, “An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area”, pp.296-297. See also Chapter 2, p.74, for the reaction to village life by an Hawaiian teenager in the 1920s.

²² See Chapter 2, pp.92-94.



of women, as far as the *huaqiao* were concerned, was for women to remain in the village, raising children and managing the household while faithfully waiting for the husband's return. A wife had to be careful, as a husband could easily cut off the flow of remittances on hearing of any "impropriety" on her part.²⁴ Despite this, wives disputed with husbands and did not always wait so faithfully for their return. Wives took lovers and sold land without their husbands' knowledge while sons became indolent and dependent upon the money sent so regularly. A *huaqiao* had a number of options when facing such circumstances. He could simply return to the destination or not leave the destination in the first place rather than face such circumstances.²⁵ Others stayed, but set up a new house in another village, the county capital or in Hong Kong.²⁶

Families were also vulnerable because of their dependence on the flow of remittances. Chang Yet lost a thumb when working as a Sydney cabinetmaker in 1925, resulting in remittances to his family ceasing for many months and his family fearing the worst. He was fortunate in that he received £25 compensation, was able to continue to earn a living, and that the family had sufficient resources to survive the stoppage.²⁷ How many were not so fortunate is difficult to know but those with families in the *qiaoxiang* found that they were increasingly vulnerable to outside influences. The Depression, the Japanese invasion of the Pearl River Delta in 1938 and the occupation of Hong Kong in 1941-2, were all a series of blows to the *qiaoxiang* that affected *huaqiao* families on a large scale. Throughout the period it is likely that many individual families were severely affected by the loss of remittances.

Conditions in China and the *qiaoxiang* may have meant that for some no *qiaoxiang* links were established in the first place or that once in a destination they had little wish to return. Changes to *qiaoxiang*-based families may have caused links to fail, as would the destruction of families. It is important to note that while choices based on these considerations may have often led to *huaqiao* remaining in the destinations,

²³ Chapter 2, pp.94-95.

²⁴ Lucie Cheng, "Those who stayed at Home: Emigration and the Women of Taishan", Conference paper, Lucky Come Hawaii, East-West Centre, Honolulu, July 1988, p.15 and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.118-121.

²⁵ As did John Lee York see, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 1933, p.10.

²⁶ For example, 中山仁言報 (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 25 May 1932, p.4.



destination settlement was not the only option. The county capital, nearby Shekki for those of Long Du, as well as Canton City or Hong Kong, both not far from Zhongshan, were all options for those seeking alternatives to the *qiaoxiang*.

Restrictive Laws

Conditions in the *qiaoxiang* are an obvious consideration when determining factors that shaped *qiaoxiang* links. The impact of the restrictive immigration laws of the destinations is another factor that must also be considered. The restrictive laws have naturally been considered as a means of keeping people out or for their effect in isolating the *huaqiao* from mainstream destination society. However, by adopting a *qiaoxiang* perspective it can be seen that many aspects of the responses of the *huaqiao* to the restrictive laws have been neglected. There is evidence that the restrictive laws and other racist acts, including violence, had a direct impact and caused some *huaqiao* to leave the destinations permanently. There were also those who never attempted to enter a destination, who decided on a different destination or who tried but failed to enter a destination. All as the result of the various legal restrictions raised by the destinations. Nevertheless, ‘getting in’ to a destination was not the only aim that the *huaqiao* held and the range of responses the *huaqiao* made to the restrictive laws are better understood within a context of *qiaoxiang* links.

The restrictive laws introduced at various times by the three destinations were intended to limit the number of Chinese people who could enter them. Based on general figures, such laws certainly did reduce numbers and to the extent that less *huaqiao* in a destination meant less of a link to the *qiaoxiang*, then these laws can be said to have weakened the *qiaoxiang* links. The first law discriminating against Chinese in California was the “Foreign miners tax” which, while first aimed at all ‘foreigners’, came to be directed mainly at Chinese people. Contemporary reports considered that the larger than usual numbers of departures of Chinese people from San Francisco in 1855 were the result of this tax. The tax drove many off the goldfields and into San Francisco at least, as well as reduced the numbers departing

²⁷ Interview with Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (Tape 1, A, 14.00).



from China.²⁸ The early poll taxes in the Australian colonies seemed to have had a similar impact on numbers.²⁹ However, in both cases, dwindling gold finds and other economic factors, as well as alternative destinations should not be ignored. Crawford in 1877 described how: “Java, California, Victoria, Queensland and the Straits Settlements have all in turn been visited by ‘rushes’, one to the exclusion of the others ...”³⁰ Similar effects were observed much later, during the early years of the 20th century, when the administration of the United States laws became especially harsh and a contemporary felt that the result was that, “all the great Chinese merchants” returned to China.³¹

While some *huaqiao* returned to their *qiaoxiang* others, who might have gone to a destination, did not even try due to the restrictive laws. Young Koon Nuen’s father was a shopkeeper in Cairns, Queensland. Speaking in the year 2000, Young Koon Nuen still knew the details of Australia’s Immigration Restriction Act of the 1940s and that this law was why he never joined his father in his Cairns shop.³² The number of those who might have established *qiaoxiang* links or continued those of their fathers can only be guessed at from the falling numbers of those entering the destinations after these laws were introduced.³³

In addition to those who never tried, there were those who tried and failed. Records would suggest that nearly every boat to Australia in the later 19th century had at least a few whose papers were rejected and were sent back, a practice the shipping companies continuously and fruitlessly protested.³⁴ In the United States also many were sent back. Between 1904 and 1906, for example, of 1,246 “section 6” merchants who attempted to enter the United States, 22% or over 270 people were

²⁸ Huggins, *Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco*, p.67 and p.81. Also, United States. Dept. of State, “Replies of Hong Kong Consul”, *Report on the commercial relations of the United States with all foreign nations* (Washington: C. Wendell, 1856-57), pp.635-636.

²⁹ Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.5.

³⁰ Crawford, *Notes*, p.2.

³¹ Ng Poon Chew, *The Treatment of the Exempt Classes of Chinese in the United States* (San Francisco: Chung Sai Yat Po, 1908), p.13. See also McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, pp.28-36.

³² Interview, Young Koon Nuen, Long Tou Wan, 6 July 2000, (25).

³³ Table 1.6: *Huaqiao* returns, p.64, ‘Arrivals’ column.

³⁴ State Records Office of NSW, 4/884.1: Collector of Customs to Undersecretary, 18 June 1888, reported 138 rejections out of 896, between 1881 and 1888. See also *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 20 July 1898, p.4 and 23 July 1898, p.3 for examples of papers rejected and deportations.



denied and sent back to China.³⁵ Failure in an attempt to enter one destination did not necessarily mean returning to the village. A failed attempt still generated debt while the motivation for going remained. The three Pacific Ports were not the only destinations and alternatives such as Peru, Mexico, Canada, Chile and Cuba were all common in the 20th century for Zhongshan people. As well, the differing restrictions could also lead to a switch in destination. Many, whose fathers had been in Australia, for example, went instead to the United States after Australia introduced its major restrictions in 1901.³⁶

The difficulties that restrictive laws created for those who wished to enter the destinations are obvious and in line with the intentions of those who imposed them. However, laws do not always have the results intended by their creators and one consequence of laws intended to make entry difficult was that they also made it difficult to leave. These laws also encouraged others to stay in the destinations by giving them a special role to play there. The illegal status given by the laws to some and the restrictions imposed by their administration even on those with a legal status, made visits to the *qiaoxiang*, a significant aspect of the links, difficult and even impossible for many. The restrictions also made most *huaqiao* more dependent upon the services and abilities of the merchant class and their stores. This in turn gave merchants not only much profit but also a special role, with obligations and opportunities, the overall impact of which was to increase ties to the destinations, while weakening *qiaoxiang* links over time. Such responses and consequences are more readily understood within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links.

Those who came in defiance of the restrictions of the destinations often found themselves in the position of needing to remain in the destination rather than risk their position by attempting to return. Such circumstances naturally had consequences for the continuation of their *qiaoxiang* links. In such a position were those who hid in Sydney market gardens, often for years at a time. On occasions these “prohibited immigrants” (their legal label), would attempt to visit their *qiaoxiang* by claiming the right of domicile possessed by those who had been in

³⁵ Lee, At America’s Gates, p.249. This period was one of particularly harsh administration, however.

³⁶ Interviews, William Lowe, San Francisco, 6 July 2001 and members of the Berkeley Chinese Community Church Senior Centre, July 2001.



Australia before 1901. In 1924, officials were warned: “Particular care is desirable when comparatively young looking Chinese (who may claim to be over 40, but look younger) state that they have been in Australia since prior to December, 1901 and have not since been absent.”³⁷

The options for illegal entry were greater in the United States due to the more complex laws and this meant that there were also more options for turning an illegal position into a legal or at least semi-legal one. Much depended therefore on the security of such procedures while the often amended United States laws made the position of even ‘legal’ entrants insecure. “The ones [Buck Toy villagers] who came during the 1920-1923 periods are largely single men and because the legal authority questions their legal status, there have been very few returning to China.”³⁸ Again numbers are unclear but law-related considerations were a factor in the decisions people made and therefore in their ability to maintain links with their *qiaoxiang*.³⁹ The potential number of those who could be affected by these considerations was high, with illegal entry to the United States being, “more common than scholars have believed, perhaps as high as 90%”.⁴⁰

Not only the laws themselves but their complex and discriminatory administration affected people’s ability to maintain their *qiaoxiang* links, especially in regard to the United States laws. Wong Tae’s 1907 application for a “pre-trip affidavit” was denied on the grounds that he was, “not in the store much” that he claimed to manage, was probably running a restaurant (classed as a labouring job), and had only one “white witness”.⁴¹ Illegal or not, the effort to meet administrative requirements was too much for some, as when Fong Hong withdrawing his application made in the same year retorted: “You ask too many questions, I won’t answer them.”⁴² Both

³⁷ Australian Archives (NSW), C4203/1; Boarding Branch Records, 1914-1931, Vol.2, p.353, Circular, Secretary to Collector of Customs, 25 February 1924.

³⁸ Glick Archive, Box 2: Bucktoy Villager Families in Hawaii, n.d. (c.1930).

³⁹ Paul Siu talks of men “forced to stay on because of immigration difficulties”, they would not return “unless their economic security could be assured”. Paul Siu, “The Sojourner”, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.LVII, July 1952, p.42.

⁴⁰ Lee, *At America's Gates*, p.230, see also Hsu, “Gold Mountain Dreams”, p.52.

⁴¹ NARA, RG85: File 12248/23, Wong Tae; Return Certificate Application Case Files, Box 17.

⁴² NARA, RG 85: Return Certificate Application, Lawfully Domiciled Laborers Departing, 1903-1911; 9180/1720, Fong Hong, record of interview, 20 September 1907.



Wong Tae and Fong Hong might have gone to their *qiaoxiang* anyway but would have needed to pay heavily to risk being smuggled back.

The administration of the United States laws seem to have been harsher than those in Australia and this may have had an effect on the capacity of their respective *huaqiao* to maintain links with their *qiaoxiang*. When in the 1930s, Ah Moy and Yum Leong applied to make their first trips back to China after 31 and 46 years respectively, officials in Australia suspected that they had entered illegally after 1901 and were posing as “domiciles”. Whatever the reasons that made each wish to go to China after such long periods they were urgent enough that both left without the necessary return certificates, a CEDT, but with confidence that it was worthwhile to return and try to re-enter Australia. Both did so and were able to re-enter after convincing officials that they were in fact pre-1901 “domiciles”.⁴³

The administration of laws are as significant as the laws themselves and that paperwork, costs, language barriers and fear had an significant impact on the pattern of visits to the *qiaoxiang* should not be discounted.⁴⁴ For those entering San Francisco port these experiences ranged from being accused of studying maps when answers were “too correct”, to long delays while people mentioned in interviews were themselves interviewed.⁴⁵ In Australia, excepting the period immediately after 1901, most *huaqiao* didn’t see a customs officer except for identification on leaving a ship, making their applications through intermediaries.

While *huaqiao* in Australia and the United States, including Hawaii, were receiving different treatment, those of differing classes also received varying treatment by administrators of the restrictive laws, both between and within the destinations. “Merchants” under United States laws could enter as new arrivals, while under the Immigration Restriction Act of Australia new entrants were strictly limited. After 1901, a little more than 2,000 people entered Australia on “Certificates of

⁴³ AA (NSW): SP1122/1; N52/24/314, Ah Moy (Mhoy) and SP42/1; C47/2468, Yum Leong.

⁴⁴ David D. Jones, *The Surnames of the Chinese in America* (San Francisco: The Chinese Name Spelling Company, 1904), gives many details of the complex practical requirements at that time in the United States, down to the “correct” spelling of names.

⁴⁵ For a good example of the processes see, INS, RG 85: Return Certificate Application Case Files of Chinese Department, 1894-1911, Box 3, File 11817/4, Pon Bock Chong, also Lai, *Island*.



Exemption” as students, merchants, the wives of merchants, and as substitutes and assistants to those working in stores and market gardens. “Certificates of Exemption” were temporary but they were extendable and over the years such extensions became easier. Merchants and those with businesses found such extensions easier to get, but were unable to visit the *qiaoxiang* again without endangering their status. Those with “merchant” status in the United States were in a very different situation. Having acquired this status, they also had the right to bring a wife and dependent children and could travel and return with relative ease. The United States laws, while referred to as “exclusion”, only really intended this for “laborers” and it was “merchants” and their dependants who provided the bulk of entrants after 1882.⁴⁶

In addition to this legal preference for merchants, the administration of the restrictive laws in the destinations also favoured this group in other ways. Proving merchant status, applying for an “assistant”, selling “slots” and providing hiding places for “illegals” were all, in various ways, sources of profit. The restrictive laws therefore encouraged some to remain in the destinations by giving them a special role to play and special privileges, things not easy to reproduce in the *qiaoxiang*. The most obvious way this occurred was to make many *huaqiao* dependent upon the services and abilities of the merchant class and their stores. The need to act as intermediaries with officials, provide interpreters and witnesses, and deal with bureaucratic and legal procedures, gave the merchants a special place with special obligations and opportunities for profit making. Both legal and illegal entry required money and it was the merchants who chose who could enter or be sponsored by them. Once in a destination, the ‘illegal’ *huaqiao* often needed to enter into a form of ‘bonded’ employment that provided many merchants with cheap labour.⁴⁷ The debt of a sponsored person needed to be repaid and ensuring this happened was another reason the sponsor had to stay in the destination.⁴⁸ The overall impact of these factors was to tie some merchants to the destinations with a consequent weakening of their *qiaoxiang* links.

⁴⁶ Lee, At America’s Gate, Table 5.2, pp.298-299.

⁴⁷ For an example of such ‘bonding’ see the case of Yut Kwan in Williams, Sojourn in Your Native Land, pp.74-76.

⁴⁸ Interview, King Fong, Sydney, 1 April 1998, gives the example of exaggerating a store’s income in order to be eligible to legally sponsor a new arrival. The extra income tax incurred by this was part of the new arrivals debt.



Thus, the responses of the *huaqiao* to the restrictive laws were more than simply striving to get in and stay in. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective, the need to maintain the *qiaoxiang* link was so important that this provided strong motives for avoiding or defying the restrictions. This in turn forced many to remain in the destinations rather than jeopardise their position, with contradictory results for the *qiaoxiang* links. The benefits to be derived from remaining in the destination and assisting some to enter despite the restrictions were also a source of profit and prestige. The restrictive laws thus indirectly encouraged many *huaqiao* to remain in the destinations, either through fear of being unable to return or due to the alternatives these laws allowed them.

Success and failure

The differing manner in which administrators treated ‘merchants’ and others with wealth and resources is an aspect of their ‘success’ and ‘failure’. In the previous chapter motivations for *qiaoxiang* links to be found in income and prestige were discussed. In a similar manner ‘success’ or ‘failure’ is important in presenting *huaqiao* with different choices and opportunities. However, choices made and the opportunities given can only be adequately understood when ‘success’ and ‘failure’ are judged from a *qiaoxiang* perspective.

That *huaqiao* were generally confined to a narrow range of low-income jobs was discussed in the previous chapter. Low income in turn contributed to social isolation, self-sufficiency, reliance on *qiaoxiang* organisations and the maintenance of *qiaoxiang* links. However, low incomes also meant hard work, limited numbers of trips, fewer remittances and a smaller buffer against disaster or destitution. If the initial debt was not paid off quickly, then the first return trip and marriage would also be delayed, along with the development of *qiaoxiang* links this promoted.⁴⁹ Sickness, the temptations of gambling, opium or simply a more comfortable lifestyle could extend the period before a first return occurred, indefinitely. A consequence of such delay could be the failure to meet *qiaoxiang*-based expectations and the loss of links with the *qiaoxiang*.

⁴⁹ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, p.131, links failure to “improve their economic status” with remaining single.



Poverty and the inability or unwillingness to return to the *qiaoxiang* can be seen as an individual factor, a case of “personal disorganization”, but it could also be a community feature.⁵⁰ Many of the Hawaiian plantation communities were trapped by decline in the sugar and rice industries. As early as 1913, the Ket Hing Society at Kula on the island of Maui, was assisting their elderly, not to return to the *qiaoxiang*, but by building “old people’s quarters”.⁵¹ In California in 1869, the number defined by the Chinese Benevolent Association as “old and decrepit” was 1,807.⁵² By the 1920s agricultural wages had declined significantly in California and wages everywhere declined with the Depression.⁵³ The Depression caused many to return home permanently, as well as isolating in the destinations others whose lack of work could not be compensated for by improved exchange rates.⁵⁴ Many in Mexico and other Latin American countries were expelled at this time and the disruption to trade this caused impacted on those in San Francisco. In Australia, the Depression seems to have prolonged the sojourns of many in order for them to continue to support their *qiaoxiang*, also hard hit by the economic collapse.⁵⁵

There had always been *huaqiao* who fell into poverty regardless of general economic trends. This is demonstrated by the fact that all the earliest associations formed in the destinations had assistance in returning the poor and elderly to their *qiaoxiang* as part of their aims.⁵⁶ However, such assistance could involve humiliations that may have made this help difficult for some to accept. The need to secure guarantors of the genuineness of ones poverty would not have helped, and methods such as those used by the Long Du society in 1931, would have discouraged any but the most desperate. According to a member, the society would, “give him a book and he will go around

⁵⁰ Siu, “The Sojourner”, p.42.

⁵¹ Irma Soong and Ted Gong, *A Study of the Meeting Records of the Ket Hing Society, Kula, Maui 1913-1947* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Chinese History Centre, 1979), Sept, 1913 and June, 1914. They charged 50c a month rent. This was a community that paid its local doctor in chickens.

⁵² *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27 November 1869, p.4, based on figures supplied by the ‘Six Companies’.

⁵³ Though not just during ‘The Depression’: “Owing to the general trade depression the number of decrepits, repatriated from the various countries touched by the emigration trade, has greatly increased. As the available space in the Tung Wah Hospital is limited arrangements have been made with the Police department to assist in dealing with the larger parties.” *Hong Kong Administrative Reports*, Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, 1922, p.3.

⁵⁴ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.52.

⁵⁵ Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, p.64.



to the members”, getting “four bits, two bits, whatever they want to give,” until he gets sufficient to go back.⁵⁷ This society also supported those who stayed in the destination by maintaining rooms where the old or sick could live rent free and even given support money on occasions. About half a dozen Long Du fellows were provided for in this way in Honolulu around 1931, some paid rent and others used a home for the aged.⁵⁸

There may have been a tendency for the ‘shame’ associated with returning poor to the *qiaoxiang* to increase as expectations on the *huaqiao* also increased during the period. Whether this is so or not, a final ‘choice’ that an indeterminate number of elderly and destitute *huaqiao* made, was not to return, to lose their *qiaoxiang* links and to remain in the destination. From the *qiaoxiang* perspective the failure to remit money or communicate meant that their family members had ‘disappeared’ and there are many examples of letters from *qiaoxiang* relatives inquiring about such lost relatives. In the *Hawaiian Chinese News* of 1904, a notice placed by Young Chew Hin concerning his brother, stated:

*Young Chow Kwun, about thirty years old, is a native of Loong Tow Wan village, Loong Tu district, Heong-shan. Ten years ago he arrived here to work on the plantation, but for the last nine years he has not sent a word to his parents in China. Time and time again my parents have written letters asking me to find him. If anyone knows anything about him, -- whether alive or dead – please write me so that I can inform his family as to the circumstances.*⁵⁹

A similar appeal appeared in an Australian newspaper in 1900 from a mother writing to her sons’ cousin in Australia for news. The cousin placed a notice in the *Tung Wah News* giving his name and village and asking anyone with news to write.⁶⁰ While some of these ‘disappeared’ became the single aged men of the various Chinatowns of the Pacific Ports, others made more permanent choices. Such as Lin Xinyi from

⁵⁶ See Chapter 3, pp.120-121.

⁵⁷ Glick Archives, Card file: interview with H. Q. Pang, 16 March 1931.

⁵⁸ Glick Archives, Card file: interviews with H. Q. Pang, 16 March 1931 & Lee Kau, 1931.

⁵⁹ Glick Archives, File 2: translation of notice *Hawaiian Chinese News*, 13 February 1904.



Antang village Long Du living in Brisbane and making paper bags for a store; Lin committed suicide after losing £10 from his home.⁶¹ Mei Liji disappeared in a NSW forest while chopping wood and his body was found days later while Fang Yaping hanged himself after having been sick for two years.⁶²

In the destinations these ‘lost’ men could adopt the life of elderly bachelors.⁶³ In 1929, 31 “aged Chinese men” were reported in a local Hawaii newspaper to be living in shacks and a run down building in Honolulu. The building itself belonged to a *huqiao* association that no longer had the resources to assist them beyond continuing to pay the land taxes. All were over 60 years old and a lucky few received \$2 a week from the Social Services Bureau.⁶⁴ The remarks of one “aged” *huqiao* from Hoy Ping County gives an insight into the circumstances of such men and how they were arrived at. He had come to Hawaii in 1897 and worked on sugar plantations for over 30 years when, in 1935, he was unemployed and receiving \$6 a month in relief through the Fook Yum Tong. He never saved any money and warned his interviewer not to be as foolish as he was in his younger days. He thought the work was not too hard for the pay he got, but spent it on having a good time. Now he was old he had no money and cannot go back home, he had nothing to live on here except what he got from relief. This man had never been back to China and had not received any letters from the home village for several years, especially since he quit sending money home.⁶⁵ As a researcher and Chinese community member in the 1930s reported; “An emigrant coming home with empty hands is a disgrace.”⁶⁶

The awareness of failure to meet family expectations is also clear in Lau Dau’s case. Born in “Lung Doo” (Long Du) in 1866, the sixth son of a family of 14, he received no education and at age 10 began working in the rice fields. By 1890 he still had no prospects of being able to afford to marry and his family, by selling many of their water buffalo and chickens, provided him with \$100 to go to Hawaii. A sacrifice

⁶⁰ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 7 November 1900, p.3.

⁶¹ *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 24 December 1898, p.2.

⁶² *Tung Wah News* 東華新報, 31 December 1898, p.2 and 14 January 1899, p.3.

⁶³ “Among the aging males are the sojourners who have been unsuccessful.” Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America*, p.330, referring to the 1950s.

⁶⁴ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 5 August 1929, p.1.

⁶⁵ Glick Archives, File 1; interview notes at Tung Wo Kung Si, 25 December 1935.

⁶⁶ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).



which he felt, would “linger until his death.” Through a fellow villager he obtained work and for 15 years did so on rice plantations at \$9 a month plus room and board. Afterwards, he did contract work as a cane cutter, averaging \$1 a day for 10 years until his strength began to weaken. With his savings he went into partnership and for 15 years was quite successful until the decline in the rice industry resulted in losing all his money. Lau Dau regretted not having returned to China at that point and within 6 years was forced to seek the assistance of the Social Services Bureau. He still had some people in China but he had not heard from them for many years, presumably since he stopped remitting. In 1936 Lau Dau was living with other old Chinese men in an abandoned railway station in a corner he had fixed up for himself. Aged 70, he was requesting only temporary help, refused the idea of entering the “Chinese Home” and was looking for work.⁶⁷

For many, though by no means all, ‘failure’ in *qiaoxiang* terms resulted in a loss of links with the *qiaoxiang*. The opposite of ‘failure’ is ‘success,’ but just as failure did not always mean that people lost their *qiaoxiang* links, so success did not necessarily mean that these links were maintained. The wider options available to those with wealth could result in a wider range of outcomes. Wealth meant a greater capacity to bring a wife, due to both affordability and the exemptions of at least the United States laws. Wealth also provided buffers to prejudice and hostility that could make living in a destination more palatable. Finally, the ability to provide a ‘western’ education for their children, whether in the destinations or in Hong Kong, significantly influenced the choices these children made and sometimes those of their parents.

Merchants had always been more likely to bring wives and to raise families in the destination. Under the restrictive laws this same class of people were given exemptions and generally favoured by administrators. Early in the period under discussion merchants were a small minority of the *huqiao* but as the period progressed the above factors and the greater return rates of poorer *huqiao* changed the proportions. One result of the increased proportion of wealthier *huqiao* was an increase in those who chose to settle in the destinations. The increased entry of wives

⁶⁷ Glick Archive, Box 2: Lau Dau, Social Services Bureau report, No.18626, 8 April 1936.



also produced more families and a more rapid growth of those born in the destinations. While wives and family in the destination did not automatically mean the diminution or loss of *qiaoxiang* links, the choice was there.

Wealth and middle class status also enabled buffers to be erected against the prejudice and discrimination of the mainstream destination societies. This in turn made the option of remaining in the destinations more palatable. The difference in treatment for ‘middle class’ *huaqiao* is well demonstrated by the administrators of the restrictive laws and others who regularly used phrases such as, “superior class of the Chinese” or “slightly coloured passenger of superior standing”.⁶⁸ As Ching Ah Kew put it when he was politely interviewed on his return from China in 1887, despite being married to a “white” woman, “I have money, that makes some difference”.⁶⁹ For those who could afford it, the destinations, even if in a “mat hidden” world, could be more comfortable than the *qiaoxiang*.⁷⁰ For poorer *huaqiao*, on the other hand, favourable exchange rates would have made the *qiaoxiang* a more comfortable option than a ‘spartan’ lifestyle in the destinations.⁷¹

If success and wealth broadened opportunities and made destination settlement more attractive for some, this same wealth and success also attracted additional social pressure in both the destination and the *qiaoxiang*. Thus remaining in the destination was not only about comfort or profit but also about being able to provide ‘sponsorship’. The capacity to sponsor others could be both a source of honour and an obligation, and remaining in the destinations in order to sponsor family members became increasingly important as the *huaqiao* lifestyle evolved.⁷² In Australia, this could be a legally recognised option to sponsor “substitutes and assistants” for jobs deemed “Chinese”.⁷³ In the United States, the “paper sons” system meant those with recognised citizenship could create “slots” for future use by either their own sons, by those willing to pay for them, or by those to whom they might be obligated. Such

⁶⁸ Wright, “Chinese Immigration to the Hawaiian Islands”, p.71 and AA (NSW), C4203/1; Boarding Branch Circulars, 1914-1931, p.281, circular, Secretary to Collector of Customs, 29 July 1920.

⁶⁹ He was described as a Texas cattle owner, *San Francisco Examiner*, 19 December 1887.

⁷⁰ Crawford, *Notes*, pp.19-20.

⁷¹ Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.167, for an example of moving to Shekki from Hawaii because of the favourable exchange rates.

⁷² Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.108 describes it as a “matter of personal pride”.

⁷³ Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.31.



“slots” could be sold for much money but required the seller to remain and act as the ‘parent’.

While social obligations and associated profit encouraged some *huaqiao* to stay in the destinations, other obligations as well as dangers in the *qiaoxiang*, made the *qiaoxiang* less attractive. Social pressures and even exploitation were part of the lot of *huaqiao* in the *qiaoxiang* and while wealth gave better protection against this, it was also a greater attraction for exploiters and bandits. For those hoping to make investments in the *qiaoxiang*, corruption and underdevelopment led many to move their capital to safer and more profitable places and often their families followed.⁷⁴ Wong Hing Chow, for example, having lived and worked in Honolulu for over 30 years returned in 1908, to found a rice mill in Shekki, as well as investing in reclaimed waste land and various shipping companies. After less than 10 years in China however, he returned to Hawaii where he remained until his death in 1928.⁷⁵

For those with wealth and investments, the choice was not only between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations. People could also choose to live a county capital such as Shekki, or in Canton, Hong Kong or Shanghai. In the case of Long Du, Shekki was only about 30 minutes away by bus once a road was built in the late 1920s. For those in Taishan County, the capital was up to a day or so away and Canton was also popular. Hong Kong was popular for those desiring their children to be educated in a western fashion, or at least to acquire English.⁷⁶ These locations offered security, distance from the importunities of the *qiaoxiang*, educational opportunities and of course, better jobs for the educated and investment opportunities for those with capital.

Thus, poor *huaqiao* remained in the destinations because lack of money made it impossible for them to return, while wealthy *huaqiao* could choose to remain in the relative comfort of the destinations. The resources of the wealthy allowed them to

⁷⁴ Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.220-223 discusses losses due to various social and political disruptions.

⁷⁵ *Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), p.15. The efforts of the Taishan railway entrepreneur are also illustrative of the difficulties, see Cheng & Liu, “Chinese emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Toisan”, pp.59-74.



bring wives and to adopt a comfortable lifestyle either in the destinations or elsewhere outside the *qiaoxiang*. However, these are simply examples from a range of choices and the majority, rich or poor, returned to the *qiaoxiang* throughout most of the period. Success and failure are relative concepts and there is not always a clear way of defining them. Here the perspective is that of the *qiaoxiang* and of *huaqiao* intentions. For some, ‘failure’ led to a refusal to return, while others in similar circumstances did return after years without contact as they felt death approaching or grew too desperate in the destination.⁷⁷ For others, ‘success’ resulted in their staying in a destination, while those in similar circumstances returned.

Destination-born

If the wealthy had greater choices, another group who also had more choice were those born in the destinations. The destination-born are usually considered in terms of their assimilation within a destination’s society and *qiaoxiang* links are ignored or seen only as an ‘escape’ from the racism of the destinations and associated identity problems. However, the circumstances and choices of those born in the destinations were not as simple as the ‘assimilate or not’ accounts of nation-state studies would imply. Nor were the choices and opportunities of the destination-born unrelated to those made by the China-born.

In all the destinations the proportion of the destination-born gradually rose, though at different rates in each of the three ports. These ‘non-*huaqiao*’ had different attitudes, were usually more ‘assimilated’ or at least knowledgeable of mainstream destination society, they often had citizenship rights and a wider range of opportunities and choices. In addition to becoming ‘assimilated’ with destination society, however, many destination-born became *huaqiao* like their fathers. They returned to China, though not necessarily to the *qiaoxiang*, often to official positions or businesses in Canton, Hong Kong, Shanghai or elsewhere. Like those made by their *huaqiao* fathers, these choices were not necessarily explicit and changed or developed over

⁷⁶ For examples of numerous children of *huaqiao* in Hong Kong see Woo Sing Lim, *Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Five Continents Book Co., 1937).

⁷⁷ See for example, *中山仁言報* (*Zhongshan Renyan News*), 25 May 1932, p.4, return of an old gold mountain fellow.



time and circumstances. Some of the options taken by the destination-born led to their maintaining *qiaoxiang* links while others did not.

There had always been destination-born but it was not until the 1920s and 1930s that they became a significant proportion of Chinese communities in the destinations.⁷⁸ Barriers to citizenship and other attitudes meant that these people did not automatically consider themselves to be Australian or Americans. They did have some citizenship rights, most generously in Hawaii, and the impact of this is seen in the early development of this group there. In the United States, such rights were mixed with the “paper sons” system, while in Australia, there was much confusion between potential rights and bureaucratic denial of what rights may have existed.

While the destination-born did not automatically consider themselves Americans or Australian, a choice open to them, nevertheless, was to assimilate, to take on the cultural attitudes of the mainstream.⁷⁹ By definition this is a choice impossible to estimate as such people would no longer identify themselves as ‘Chinese’ and so not appear in the statistics. Certainly NSW birth records indicate a much higher number of destination-born children with at least one Chinese parent than census figures indicate.⁸⁰ In Hawaii, high rates of intermarriage with the native Hawaiian community and its relative lack of prejudice also allowed many to take the option of ‘assimilation’ there.⁸¹ By definition this choice implies a loss of *qiaoxiang* links.

For others the choice was not so extreme. Many destination-born who did not ‘assimilate’ completely nevertheless did not consider themselves *huaqiao* in the same way as their parents. They had more of a sense of being ‘Chinese’ as opposed to the *qiaoxiang* or ‘local’ loyalty of the China-born *huaqiao*. The choices these destination-born had included acting as ‘bridgers’ between the *huaqiao* and the destination society, a position which many used to become wealthy and influential.

⁷⁸ See Table 1.5: Births in destinations as percentage of total Chinese populations, p.64.

⁷⁹ Clarence E. Glick, “Transition from Familism to Nationalism among the Chinese in Hawaii”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIII, March 1938, No.5, pp.734-743 on identification as an index of assimilation.

⁸⁰ Preliminary survey of NSW Births, Deaths and Marriage records made by the author.

⁸¹ *Koloa: An Oral History of a Kauai Community*, Vol. I-II (University of Hawaii at Manoa: Centre for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, September 1988) for references to “Hawaiian” interviewees of Chinese origin.



There were others who chose to use their western education and knowledge in China itself and many of those who grew up in the destinations before the Japanese war preferred Canton and other large cities to the *qiaoxiang*. In such places their Western education could gain them jobs in both government and business. According to a University of Hawaii survey in the 1930s, over 700 Hawaiian-born United States citizens were living in China and this was reportedly due to the inability of Hawaii to provide sufficient “white-collar” jobs for its graduates.⁸² A contemporary expressed this in terms of a balance of the practical and the idealistic: “A favorable exchange rate, a sense of identity with their roots and a desire to contribute to the progress of China motivated many American-born Chinese to go to China.”⁸³ In Hong Kong, a Chinese or English education could be obtained in relative security and jobs and investment opportunities made. This made Hong Kong a place where many destination-born ended up.⁸⁴ Often such people are not recognised as ‘destination-born’ due to ‘assimilation’ in another form. Here it is important only to point out that the choice of Hong Kong was an alternative to either *qiaoxiang* or destination residence.

This position of the destination-born between China and the destinations is often discussed. Less often considered are those destination-born that became neither intermediaries with the destination societies nor ‘educated Chinese’ helping to modernise China; those who simply became *huaqiao* like their fathers. Many children born in the destinations were taken to the villages at an early age to be raised, returning when older to take up similar *huaqiao* lifestyles to those born in the villages, while others presumably remained in the villages.⁸⁵ The destination birth of such people gave them some rights in the destinations, which in turn gave them more choices than China-born *huaqiao*.

⁸² Kum Pui Lai, “Attitudes of the Chinese in Hawaii toward their language schools”, *Sociology and Social Research*, November-December, 1935, Vol. XX, No.2, p.143 & p.142.

⁸³ Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, p.176. Also Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet. A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (California: University of California Press, 1995), pp.159-160, on students wishing to “serve China”.

⁸⁴ Woo, *Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong*.



John Louie Hoon was Australian-born of mixed parentage and taken to the Liang Du village of Dou Tou in 1916, aged seven. His father returned to Sydney and died there, leaving John to return to Australia when 15 years old as a Chinese speaker only. His Australian birth entitled John to enter but after this he lived the life of an average Chinese market gardener, returning to the village to marry and subsequently to father a number of children there. It was not until 1956 that a file notation begrudgingly recognises him as “an Australian citizen apparently”.⁸⁶ Very different was the life of Victor Gow, whose father Joe Wah Gow of Long Tou Wan was a successful merchant in Wollongong, just to the south of Sydney. Joe Wah Gow was able to bring a wife to Australia and many of his children were born there. In 1929, Joe Wah Gow decided to sell his business and return with all his family to the village. Despite this decision, Joe Wah Gow felt there was “no future for the boys in the village” and made plans for his sons to return to Australia when older, plans which did not work out. Their Australian birth enabled Victor and one of his brothers to return to Sydney during the war with Japan, where they lived for the rest of their lives. Sufficient English and an education, as well as wartime manpower shortages and changing attitudes, gave Victor a wider range of opportunities in the destination, while the war and the post-1949 changes restricted his chances of maintaining links with his *qiaoxiang*. The other children of Joe Wah Gow continued to live in China. One sister marrying a boy from the village whose father and grandfather had both been *huaqiao* in Brisbane, both became doctors.⁸⁷

A family that illustrates some of the choices and opportunities open to the destination-born is that of the Lee's of Sydney. Philip Lee Chun came to Australia for the Palmer River gold rush in 1877. He soon made his way to Sydney and became a partner in a trading company that acted as a remittance shop for the Long Du people of Zhongshan County. Philip Lee Chun had been married in the *qiaoxiang* but on the death of his first wife he returned to the village around 1900 to remarry, this time bringing his wife to Sydney where she gave birth to many children. Philip

⁸⁵ This taking of young children to the *qiaoxiang* occurred from the earliest period, see for example, “Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria by Rev. W. Young, 1868” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.50 and Selby, *Chinamen at Home*, p.206.

⁸⁶ AA (NSW): SP1122/1; N1952/24/3951, John Louie Hoon.

⁸⁷ Interviews, Victor Gow, Sydney, 30 October 1997 and Zhou Muheng (周慕珩), Long Tou Wan, 8 January 1998.



Lee Chun did not return to the village after this, in old age going as far as Hong Kong, where he died in 1937. Two of his four sons received an education at the University of Sydney, one becoming a Sydney barrister and the other a Professor of English at Xiamen University. Two other sons carried on the business of the Sydney store, which operated until the 1980s. A daughter moved to Hong Kong at the time her father went there, where she remains living until the present time.⁸⁸

While there were always those who were born in the destinations, it is important to point out that their place of birth and upbringing did not simply result in a gradual process of destination settlement and assimilation. As with so many aspects of the *huaqiao* and their *qiaoxiang* links, the interactions and responses were more complicated than this.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the *huaqiao* that did not maintain their *qiaoxiang* links, including those that settled in the destinations and established families. These developments, it was argued, took place within a broader context than that usually given by studies using a nation-state perspective. That some people changed their original intentions and remained in the destinations is unremarkable. That so many did not do so, but instead returned as planned to their *qiaoxiang* is also unremarkable, but too often ignored or misunderstood. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective, those who settled in the destinations were in a sense ‘deviations’ from the majority who supported families in the *qiaoxiang* and maintained links over years and generations. People made the decision to return or stay based on a range of factors broader than those usually included in nation-state perspectives.

If people’s intentions and motivations, as well as the choices and opportunities given them by the *qiaoxiang* links, are not considered, then they are too easily categorised as ‘migrants’, and their settlement patterns attributed solely to racism or discriminatory laws. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that choices about family options and the choices of the destination-born were broader than simply

⁸⁸ Interviews, Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997; William Lee, Sydney, 3 June 1999 and Lilly Lee, Hong Kong, 24 November 2000.



efforts to enter a destination or to assimilate. Considerations based on conditions in the *qiaoxiang* are usually neglected, while the impact of restrictive laws are considered only as barriers to entry. This chapter has attempted to show that the choices and opportunities given to the *huaqiao* by their *qiaoxiang* links made for a more complex range of interactions than simple judgements of ‘success’ or ‘failure’ provide.

Histories of Chinese people in the destinations have placed particular emphasis on the processes of settlement within the territories of the nation-states and the role of the attitudes, prejudices and laws of those nation-states as determining factors. That destination laws and attitudes had a significant role is not denied. However, it is argued that unless the *qiaoxiang* and links between the destinations and the *qiaoxiang* are included in such histories, then the context in which the impact of destination laws and attitudes are interpreted will be too narrow. For the *huaqiao*, if “things did not work out” the way they originally intended, this was for many reasons. These reasons cannot be satisfactorily understood unless a *qiaoxiang* perspective is considered along with that from the destinations. Options and complexities rarely seen in studies based on nation-state perspectives become easier to see from a *qiaoxiang* perspective. The following chapter will discuss how a *qiaoxiang* perspective can provide a better understanding of the history of Chinese people in the destinations than is can be obtained through nation-state perspectives alone.



Chapter 6: Anglo-Saxonizing Machines

In 1887, the editor of *The Friend* described Hawaii as an “Anglo-Saxonizing machine” comparable on a smaller scale to the United States as a “converter of all sorts of men into ultimate Englishmen.” However, the “Chinese element seems most likely to prove the most refractory to the moulding influence of our Anglo-Saxon civilization.”¹ This perception of the Chinese as “refractory” was common to all the Pacific destinations throughout the period under discussion. It will be argued here that an assumption of the “refractory” nature of the *huaqiao* continues to be a strong element in the literature based on nation-state perspectives.

One factor in the limitations of nation-state research is that it is usually based on a single nation-state. The obvious solution to this is comparative analysis, but while some comparative work is presented, the major aim of this chapter is to argue that the incorporation of a *qiaoxiang* perspective best allows the limitations of explanations based on nation-state concepts to be explored. Ignorance of the *qiaoxiang* has contributed to the range of stereotypes, including a perception of refractoriness, that the *huaqiao* have been subjected to in the destinations. Much research has attempted to explain or deny the basis of these stereotypes, however, in doing so without an appreciation of the role of the *qiaoxiang* links, the basic assumptions of these stereotypes often remain unquestioned.

Pacific Port comparisons

Before investigating these stereotypes some of the local variations between the Pacific Ports will be discussed. This is in order to demonstrate that, despite some significant local variations, the issues discussed here can best be seen from a *qiaoxiang* perspective. Chapter 1 discussed how the background to the restrictive laws and their administration differed among the three “Anglo-Saxonizing” machines. Laws were not the only ways in which the Pacific Ports varied and the differing interactions in each destination naturally produced differing *huaqiao* communities.

¹ *The Friend*, August, 1887, p.1.



California and San Francisco's *huaqiao* community was by far the largest, it also began to organise itself the earliest and had many features not found in the other two Pacific Ports. In general, California treated the *huaqiao* with greater violence and the *huaqiao* of this destination were more organised. Features unique to San Francisco were the large-scale importation of prostitutes, extremely low rates of intermarriage and a very isolated Chinatown. A Chinatown which at one point developed gang-like "tongs" and even, for a time, a standard mode of dress. San Francisco also provided many urban occupations such as cigar making and sewing that were rare in the other destinations. Finally, San Francisco's Chinatown began to occupy an 'exotic' image within the wider society, including people being taken on tours, something that never developed in Sydney or Honolulu.²

Hawaii had a high rate of intermarriage and integration in a community in which Chinese people and people of Chinese descent were a relatively high proportion. Honolulu City did not occupy the same place as Sydney or San Francisco did in relation to their hinterlands, and the scattered Hawaiian *huaqiao* communities of those who did not move to Honolulu were relatively isolated and self-sufficient on the various islands and plantations. Hawaii was unique as a destination in early developing a large destination-born group and in having formal *qiaoxiang* organisations even at the village level. Honolulu's 'Chinatown' was never dominated by Chinese people alone, although Honolulu did gradually have the majority of Hawaii's Chinese population as the number of destination-born grew.

Sydney, like San Francisco, only came to hold the majority of the Chinese people of NSW as urbanisation increased around the turn of the 20th century. Market gardening dominated as an occupation while cabinet making was the only urban occupation comparable to those in San Francisco. The *huaqiao* population of NSW and Sydney shrank at a faster rate than in Hawaii or California under the impact of more exclusive restrictive immigration laws. There were also more modest rates of intermarriage in NSW than in Hawaii, though they were higher than in San Francisco or California. Overall, Australia's restrictive laws excluded *huaqiao* more, while allowing easier conditions for those with rights of residence.

² Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, pp.98-99.



Table 6.1 shows the proportions of *huaqiao* by both province and city in each of the destinations.³ *Huaqiao* in Sydney and NSW never made up a significant proportion of the total population after the early gold rush years, even though by the 1930s Sydney's *huaqiao* were 25% of Australia's total *huaqiao* population.⁴ In Hawaii in the 1880s, the *huaqiao* proportion of the total population reached over 22% and over 25% of Honolulu. Even after the restrictions of the United States were imposed and numerous returns to the *qiaoxiang* occurred, the *huaqiao* were still a respectable 6% of Hawaii's and over 12% of Honolulu's population in the 1940s. California, like NSW, had its highest proportion of *huaqiao* in the early gold rush period, over 18%, and the figure was still over 5% until nearly the end of the 19th century. San Francisco had a larger proportion of *huaqiao* early, and they still made up nearly 10% of the city population in the 1880s, before dropping to less than 3% in the 1940s.

Table 6.1 also gives the actual numbers of *huaqiao* by province and city in the destinations. Hawaii had the smallest decline in numbers and began to increase the earliest after the restrictive laws were imposed. California had by far the largest numbers but also the most rapid decline and a strong increase beginning in the 1920s. New South Wales had a steady decline from the lowest numbers and no increases during the period after restrictive laws were introduced. The figures for the ports alone show the impact of urbanisation in modifying these patterns somewhat. Honolulu never experienced a decline in *huaqiao* numbers and San Francisco's 1920s increase was more pronounced. Sydney still shows a decline, though to a lesser degree. San Francisco's *huaqiao* numbers seem smaller than Honolulu's due to the spread of *huaqiao* throughout the San Francisco Bay area. Oakland, for example, directly across the bay from San Francisco City, had a *huaqiao* population of 3,048 in 1930 and 5,531 by 1950.⁵

Thus the size of the *huaqiao* populations of the Pacific Ports and their relative position within each destination society differed widely. Such variations had an impact on the capacity of the *huaqiao* communities in each port to organise and the

³ Table 6.1: *Huaqiao* as a percentage of total population and *huaqiao* populations, p.221.

⁴ Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, p.50.

⁵ S. W. Kung, *Chinese in American Life* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962), p.43.



manner in which they did so. Chapter 3 discussed the role of *huaqiao* destination-based organisations in the *qiaoxiang* links. These organisations not only helped maintain the *qiaoxiang* links but were also designed to deal with the destination societies and to assist the *huaqiao* to live within these societies. Most obvious to observers in the destinations were those organisations that seemingly united all the *huaqiao* and which appeared to speak on their behalf. The use of such ‘umbrella’ organisations was often interpreted as a sign of Chinese organisational strength. The power and control of that in California, the Chinese Benevolent Society or Six Companies, for example, was even at times believed to extend from the Qing Court.⁶ In reality the division of the *huaqiao* into *qiaoxiang* based groups necessitated loose associations and made co-operation difficult.⁷ Less obvious to observers were the many smaller *huaqiao* organisations, the *tongxianghui*, based on their *qiaoxiang* loyalties, organisations which played a significant role in helping the *huaqiao* deal with life in the destinations. In particular, when violence and legal problems occurred, it was through the associations that information was passed, negotiations took place and legal challenges were mounted.

It was perhaps in anticipation of such violence and legal problems that the *huaqiao* of San Francisco began to organise themselves early in the period. The *Alta California* reported in November 1849, that 300 “Chinese residents of San Francisco” met in the Canton Restaurant, Jackson Street to select a “counsellor and advisor” in the “event of any unforeseen difficulties arising”.⁸ This advisor, Selim E. Woodward, was the first of many such counsellors of the *huaqiao* in the United States. The San Francisco *huaqiao* were also the first to organise an umbrella association that presented a united front to the destination society, the Chinese Benevolent Association, commonly known as the “Six Companies” in the 1860s.⁹ By 1940, a survey of the San Francisco community reported there were 20 regional associations in addition to the Chinese Benevolent Association, 28 family

⁶ *San Francisco Examiner* 25 January 1897, p.1, for example, falsely reported that families in China of those living in San Francisco had been arrested on the orders of the Six Companies.

⁷ In 1929, for example, a major dispute broke out within the Six Companies over the priority of seating arrangements based on county representation, see *Jiujinshan Ningyang zong hui guan*. For a discussion of the rivalry between the “Sze Yup” and “Sam Yup” see L. Eve Armentrout Ma, “Chinatown Organizations and the Anti-Chinese Movement, 1882-1914”, in Chan, *Entry Denied*, pp.155-156.

⁸ *Alta California*, 10 December 1849, p.1.



associations, 8 “tongs” and 11 trade guilds. There were also seven temples and eleven churches, six Chinese language schools and six Chinese language newspapers. The United States-born had nine organisations and there were three more organisations described as “political”.¹⁰

An organisation covering all the *huaqiao* was not formed in Hawaii until 1882 and this was the result of direct intervention by the Chinese consul based in the United States.¹¹ This United Chinese Society did not play the same role as the Chinese Benevolent Association, but with leading merchants from various *qiaoxiang* serving as directors it could act in a co-ordinating role.¹² Organisations in Hawaii in the 1930s included, apart from ‘umbrella’ groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and United Chinese Society, many Zhongshan county related associations. The greater number of Zhongshan people in Hawaii meant that organisations which operated on a sub-county level could exist. These organisations included, the See Dai Doo, Lung Doo Benevolent Society, Yung Wo Society, Nyin Fo Society, Duck Doo Society, Leong Jun Society, Lung-tao-wan Villager’s club, Lung Kong Four clan society, Oo Sak Kee Loo, On-tong Villager’s club, Sil Yun Villager’s club and the Chuck Sin Tong (Wong Leong Doo).¹³ These societies represented both Zhongshan County districts similar to Long Du, as well as individual villages, mostly also in Long Du. Hawaii, by the 1930s, also had many guilds for butchers, seamen and cooks, musicians, bakers and laundrymen. Literary organisations of various kinds and numerous student organisations, created mostly by Hawaiian-born Chinese students, were also prominent.¹⁴

As early as 1862 in NSW, the *huaqiao* of the three counties of Zhongshan, Dongguan and Zengcheng were co-operating for the purposes of bones removal but how formal the organisation of this was is unclear.¹⁵ In the 1850s, both the “Yeong Wo Association” in Hawaii and the “Yeung-Wu Company” of San Francisco, were

⁹ See Chapter 3, p.127.

¹⁰ Lee, *San Francisco's Chinatown*, pp.12-21.

¹¹ See Chapter 3, p.127.

¹² *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 25 August 1934, p.8.

¹³ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 16 June 1930, p.5.

¹⁴ Lun, “Chinese Organizations in Hawaii”, pp.24-29.

¹⁵ NSW State Archives, Col Sec; 4/3476, 62/4222, Molison & Black to Colonial Secretary, 26 August 1862.



also made up of people from these same three counties.¹⁶ This suggests a relationship between these three counties before the arrival of their members in the Pacific Ports, probably among Hong Kong based brokers and merchants of these three *qiaoxiang*. In any event, the *huqiao* of Dongguan and Zengcheng by the 1890s had formed a joint association in Sydney while those of Zhongshan had formed a separate one of their own. The *huqiao* of Sydney also never really formed an umbrella organisation comparable to that in San Francisco. The closest was the *Lin Yik Tong*, which was succeeded by the Chinese Merchants Association in 1904, which in turn became the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1913.¹⁷ The Chinese Masonic Society was also a prominent organisation, one that had evolved out of an earlier “secret society”.¹⁸ Like the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Masonic Society also had cross *qiaoxiang* membership but was not limited to merchants.

While it can be seen that the range and nature of the various organisations in the destinations differed, one that all had in common was the basic *tongxianghui* or “same place society”.¹⁹ That is, organisations centered on the various *qiaoxiang* by which the *huqiao* were prepared to identify themselves and with whom they were prepared to co-operate. The *tongxianghui* helped to control their members and were concerned to ensure that any friction with members of other *qiaoxiang*, as well as with non-Chinese, was kept to a minimum. *Tongxianghui* regulations in Melbourne in the 1850s included members being “forbidden to wear Chinese trousers” as these were “disliked by Europeans” and exhorting members not to fight openly but to seek mediation.²⁰ Rule 20 of this same Melbourne association of the “Su-Yap clan” (Siyi) stated that: “The establishment of the club is chiefly for the purpose of doing justice to parties that are aggrieved.”²¹ Similar rules in San Francisco also emphasised the need to co-operate with the destination society: “They [the rules] are in conformity with the customs of the foreign country in which we are sojourning”.²²

¹⁶ Dye, *Merchant Prince*, p.43 and “New Rules of the Yeung-Wu Ui-Kun” (1854) in Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire*, p.558.

¹⁷ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, pp.85-90.

¹⁸ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, p.8.

¹⁹ See Chapter 3, pp.125-129.

²⁰ “Rules of a Chinese Society, 1854” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, pp.48-49.

²¹ “Rules of a Chinese Society, 1854” in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.48.

²² “New Rules of the Yeung-Wu Ui-Kun” (1854) in Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire*, p.558.



When it was necessary to provide justice between *huaqiao* of different *qiaoxiang* this would be done by the umbrella organisations. As early as 1854, the rules of one association in San Francisco stated that matters in dispute could be “referred for settlement to the assembly of the five companies”.²³ According to Lee Kau, President of the Lung Doo association, the United Chinese Society of Hawaii was considered “like a Supreme Court”.²⁴ Related to these concerns about disputes was the role undertaken by the *tongxianghui* in legal defence for those facing action under the restrictive and other laws, including those who had entered illegally. The Chinese Benevolent Association largely undertook this role in California while in Sydney, the Chinese Masonic Society did so.²⁵

All the organisations placed a primacy on co-operation, as when the Sydney Chinese Chamber of Commerce organised in 1918 the distribution of tea imports among the various stores at a time of war induced shortage.²⁶ The Hawaii Chinese Chamber of Commerce organised meetings among the owners of dry goods stores and grocery businesses in order to work out their business problems.²⁷ Such work was not limited to the Chinese community, as when the [non-Chinese] Honolulu Chamber of Commerce made a request that the problem of uneven prices among the mostly Chinese owners of “soda works” be dealt with. This they did through some amicably arranged price fixing.²⁸

The non-merchant *huaqiao* also organised themselves on an occupational basis and such associations usually included small employers as well as employees and also emphasised support and co-operation. They acted as employment agencies and provided money and lodging to unemployed members. In the case of the San Francisco laundry guild, regulations were made to protect their businesses, such as, that no laundryman should have a Caucasian partner or that there must be at least 10

²³ “New Rules of the Yeung-Wu Ui-Kun” (1854) in Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire*, p.559.

²⁴ Glick Archive, Card File: interviews with Lee Kau, 1931.

²⁵ Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, p.157 and Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.18.

²⁶ Noel Butlin Archives Centre (Australian National University): Deposit 111/2/3, “List of Chinese Merchants for the delivery of tea”, 1918.

²⁷ Glick Archives: Theodora Ching Shai, “The Chinese Chamber of Commerce”, May 24, 1930, p.9.

²⁸ Glick Archives: Shai, “The Chinese Chamber of Commerce”, p.9.



doors between laundries.²⁹ A member of the Honolulu based Hoy On Tong, an organisation for ship stewards, cooks and waiters on both the inter-island and foreign ships begun around 1903, stressed that strikes were not part of its aims. Assisting members to get a job or if in any kind of trouble was their main role. Members would also meet on Sundays to play games.³⁰ Like many such organisations, the Hoy On Tong would give members \$10 when returning to the *qiaoxiang*, it also supported those too old or sick to work and provided \$100 for funeral expenses.³¹ While a Vegetable Growers Association in Sydney had a similar role at the end of the 19th century, there is no evidence for this or any other formal occupational associations in Sydney by the 20th century.³²

As the larger *huaqiao* communities grew in the Pacific Ports of Honolulu and San Francisco, including women and children, they became more interested in developing institutions necessary to an established community. In 1896, the United Chinese Benevolent Society in Honolulu petitioned the new Hawaiian government for land to build a hospital and “home for the aged, infirm and helpless Chinese.”³³ The following year the Chinese Hospital (Wai Wa Yee Yuen) was opened.³⁴ Not long afterwards, the *huaqiao* of San Francisco also built a hospital and the organisation of the committees for this hospital is a good illustration of the structure of the Chinese community at that time. The eight member committee was headed by the Chinese consul and had four representatives from the “Chinese Mercantile Companies or Guilds” and three from the “Chinese Christian Churches”.³⁵ The relatively high profile of the Christian groups indicate their role in providing links to the wider community, necessary to ensure the success of the project. The San Francisco Chinese community was not necessarily given much choice regarding this project as according to its fund raising pamphlet, the “City and County Hospital only opens its doors to a very limited number of Chinese patients”.³⁶

²⁹ Walter N. Fong, “Chinese Labor Unions in America”, *The Chautauquan*, Vol.XXIII, No.4, July 1896, pp.400-402 and L. Eve Armentrout Ma, *The Chinese of Oakland - Unsung Builders* (Oakland: Chinese History Research Committee, 1982), p.13.

³⁰ Glick Archive, Card File: interview with Ling, 12 March 1931.

³¹ Glick Archive, Card File: interview with Ling, 12 March 1931.

³² See Chapter 3, p.121, n.78 for the Sydney Vegetable Growers Association.

³³ *The Friend*, May 1896, p.36.

³⁴ *The Friend*, April 1897, p.26.

³⁵ *The Chinese Hospital of San Francisco* (Oakland: Carruth and Carruth, 1899), pp.13-14.

³⁶ *The Chinese Hospital of San Francisco*, Introduction, p.1.



There were wide variations among the *huaqiao* communities in the destinations in terms of their size, proportions and organisation. The larger size of the *huaqiao* population in Honolulu and San Francisco enabled them to organise community projects such as hospitals. In Sydney and San Francisco, most associations were at the county level, with Long Du associations being the main exception on a district level. Hawaii, with its greater concentration of *huaqiao* from the single county of Zhongshan even had associations at the village level. Despite these differences, for the *huaqiao* of all three Pacific Ports, association on the basis of *qiaoxiang* and concern with self-help can be seen to have been a significant characteristic.

San Francisco Chinatown

Of the three Pacific Ports, San Francisco has had the most written about it. The prominence of San Francisco in the absence of comparative studies can give the impression that San Francisco, its Chinatown and the *huaqiao* of California, are ‘typical’ or represent in some sense a ‘standard’ *huaqiao* community. In reality, San Francisco had many unique features that can be attributed not to the *huaqiao* but to the demands of local circumstances. This dominance of San Francisco Chinatown and its popular image has helped to create and perpetuate a range of stereotypes. While many features of the *huaqiao* of San Francisco are of interest, only a few will be mentioned here that contrast with the other Pacific Ports. These are, the numbers of Chinese prostitutes, the development of a ‘Chinatown fashion’, the collection of a “departure fee” by the Chinese Benevolent Association and the rivalry of the “tongs”.

Thousands of Chinese women were brought to San Francisco in the 1870s by the *huaqiao* there to work as prostitutes, something the *huaqiao* of Sydney or Hawaii never did.³⁷ The explanation for why this occurred only in San Francisco would appear to be a matter of demand: “The gold rush had brought women from North and South America, Europe and Asia to supply the demand for sexual services.”³⁸

³⁷ For a thorough discussion of this topic see Lucie Cheng, “Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth Century America” in Lucie Cheng and Edna Bonacich (Eds.), *Labor Immigration under Capitalism – Asian Workers in the United States before WWII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp.402-434.

³⁸ Joan M. Jenson and Gloria Ricci Lothrop, *California Women: A History* (San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1987), p.37.



Nineteenth century California, like Singapore or Hong Kong, had a great imbalance in the sexes and the consequent higher profitability of prostitution explains the numbers of women brought into these ports.³⁹ The place of origin of the customers was not the main factor in where the prostitutes came from with a great many of the prostitutes of Singapore coming from Japan.⁴⁰ Similarly the Chinese prostitutes of San Francisco supplied general demand, not just that of the *huaqiao*. In Hawaii and Sydney, on the other hand, native women or women from Ireland, both relatively scarce in California, supplied the ranks of prostitutes that met the demand of *huaqiao* and others. When the imbalance in the sexes (regardless of race) was no longer so great in California, the trade in Chinese prostitutes fell, a pattern similar to that in both Hong Kong and Singapore.⁴¹

Another feature of San Francisco was the development of a distinctive fashion style among the *huaqiao* of that city in the 1890s. Early in all three destinations it was reported that the *huaqiao* distinguished themselves by their clothing, “a loose, long sleeved tunic which hugged the neck line with no collar and a pair of loose pantaloons”.⁴² Reports from each of the destinations were also of a gradual adoption of “western” clothes, in a process, described in 1870s Australia as a, “humble extravagance [that] keeps pace with the income, an imperceptible bettering of dress and accessories.”⁴³ A similar evolution was also reported in California in the 1860s, “the Chinese are adopting the American costume. The first thing they drop is their bag-bottomed pantaloons: next they adopt our boots: the soft hat follows. But there they stop. They cannot manage our coats. Universally, among high and low, the French blouse is worn.”⁴⁴ In San Francisco, however, this trend seems to have dramatically reversed itself with the evolution of a distinctive “Chinatown” style

³⁹ As a researcher of prostitution in Singapore expressed it, “extraordinary importation of cheap labour gave rise to a dynamic urban life in which prostitutes were indispensable”. James Francis Warren, *Ah ku and karayuki-san: prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.11.

⁴⁰ Warren, *Ah ku and karayuki-san*.

⁴¹ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, pp.93-94 and Henry J. Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: stability and change* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.71-73.

⁴² Douglas D. L. Chong, *Reflections of Time. A Chronology of Chinese Fashions in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Chinese Historical Society, 1976), p.2

⁴³ Crawford, *Notes*, p.5.

⁴⁴ Joseph S. Silver, “The Chinese in California”, *Lippincott’s Magazine of Literature, Science and Education*, July 1868, p.38.



characterised by a loose black shirt and heavy black hat.⁴⁵ This was a situation very different from that in the other Pacific Ports where by the 1880s, apart from the queue, *huaqiao* were rarely seen publicly in clothes different from that usual among the rest of the population.

Another feature of the Pacific Ports that developed differently in San Francisco were the so called “secret societies”. Damon in his visits to the Chinese communities on the various Hawaiian Islands reported on them in the 1880s: “I regret especially to see what a strong hold the Chinese secret society, the “Triad Organization” has on Kauai; it is a great hindrance to Christian work.” He gives no details as to their activities but thinks the government should suppress “this baneful association”.⁴⁶ Thereafter, very little mention of them occurs in Hawaiian history. In the Australian colonies in the 1870s, Crawford already felt that the secret societies were “fading into mere tea shops” and the only survival in 20th century Sydney was the Chinese Masonic Society, a prominent, rather than secret, organisation.⁴⁷ A very different path occurred with the “Tongs” of San Francisco. In this city the societies seem to have gained in strength towards the end of the 19th century and became major rivals of the *tongxianghui*. There was also an element of class rivalry in this division. In the 1920s, the period of the “Tong Wars”, the similarity with the gangster wars of many other United States cities is obvious. As with prostitution, local conditions must be considered to have played a significant role in such developments.

Finally, the Chinese Benevolent Association of San Francisco was well known for its collection of a fee from departing *huaqiao*.⁴⁸ Until the 1930s all *huaqiao* leaving for China were required to pay a fee, in part to ensure that no debts were left behind.⁴⁹ While this practice has a parallel in Canada this was not the case in Australia or

⁴⁵ See Picture 6.1: San Francisco Chinatown fashions, 1898, p.222.

⁴⁶ Damon, “Tours Among the Chinese”, p.80.

⁴⁷ Crawford, *Notes*, p.10.

⁴⁸ For details of this fee collection in San Francisco see, Wang, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration*, pp.111-112; David W. Galenson, “Chinese Immigration and Contract Labor in the Late Nineteenth Century”, *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 1, 24, 1987, pp.22-42 and Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, p.224.

⁴⁹ The collection of this fee and the enforcement of debts was often reported to be harsh. In theory this was not so: “Debtors shall not be hindered returning to China on their pleading poverty or chronic sickness”, from “New Rules of the Yeung-Wu Ui-Kun” (1854) in Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire*, p.562.



Hawaii.⁵⁰ Similar considerations did, however, operate in these ports and those who had debts were also supposed to settle them before departure. The 1854 rule of Melbourne's Siyi association refers to the need to "repay what the capitalist in China has advanced" and to *huaqiao* being "permitted to take his passage" only after debts had been paid.⁵¹ There is no evidence for this practice after this in Australia except an attempt to set up a mechanism, "on the Californian principle" in NSW in the 1870s, an attempt that reputedly failed due to *qiaoxiang* rivalry.⁵² In Hawaii debt arrangements were handled differently and the newspapers of the 1920s carried notices in which departing *huaqiao* announced their planned departure and requested that all their creditors should come forward to settle matters.⁵³

Thus San Francisco's *huaqiao* community had a number of features quite different from those of Sydney and Hawaii, though they may have been similar to other ports such as Hong Kong, Singapore or those of Canada. Various reasons can be put forward for the differences with size and level of organisation the most obvious. In addition, local factors such as greater hostility and sense of separateness must have also contributed. That San Francisco's Chinese Benevolent Association could set up a debt enforcement mechanism and maintain it for so long indicates its more organised nature. This San Francisco *huaqiao* organisation was partly inspired by the greater pressure its *huaqiao* came under from the destination society and certainly sustained by the larger numbers it could draw on for support. At the same time, the 'ghetto' that San Francisco Chinatown was, compared to either Honolulu or Sydney, would have encouraged features such as a distinctive fashion and support for self-protective organisations like the tongs. Similarly the larger number of women can be attributed to better organisation and local features of supply and demand. Most of these features can be attributed to the circumstances of San Francisco and United States society in general, rather than to inherent characteristics of *huaqiao* whose fellows developed very differently in Hawaii and Sydney, where circumstances allowed or demanded.

⁵⁰ Lai Chuen-yan David, "The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria: Its Origins and Functions", *B.C. Studies*, No.15, 1972, pp.53-67.

⁵¹ "Rules of a Chinese Society, 1854" in McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria*, p.47.

⁵² Crawford, *Notes*, p.11.



Stereotypes

One of the difficulties in accessing the relative role of local variations and *qiaoxiang* factors is the power of stereotypes. The image of the San Francisco Chinatown is one of the most powerful but it is only one of many the *huqiao* were subjected to. It is argued here that not only are these stereotypes wrong but more importantly that researchers have accepted many of the assumptions on which these stereotypes are based, even as they have sought to deny them.

In 1933, when Chinese people had been living in San Francisco in large numbers for nearly three generations, it could be said that, “of their actual hopes and fears, their inmost thoughts, their relations to each other, few writers have had more than the slightest notion”.⁵⁴ This lack of knowledge of the *huqiao* in the destinations was certainly contributed to by a lack of knowledge of their *qiaoxiang*. In 1882, the Rev. Frank Damon could not conceive of the workers he met on Hawaiian rice plantations as thinking of more than, “crops and bargains and sales”.⁵⁵ Of their thoughts of home, parents, wives and villages, he knew nothing. The Rev. Damon was a rare exception in that two years after these comments, he actually made a trip to these villages. Damon reported from China that he felt “deeper sympathy” for Zhongshan people in Hawaii, “because I have seen their homes here, and know something of their life from which they have come”.⁵⁶

For most, such deeper sympathy was not to be. More likely were distortions of Chinese culture and activities such as that in a 1904 article entitled, “Chinese in Australia sending children into slavery”. This article, despite clear denials from the Chinese community, could understand the sending of “half-caste” children to the villages in no other way than the wish to ‘sell’ children. In keeping with the arrogance of the times these “half-castes” are declared to be, “better looking than the pure Chinese type, and, accordingly, realise higher prices”.⁵⁷ A less offensive but

⁵³ For example, *Hawaiian Chinese News*, 29 March 1904, p.3. (Translation in Glick Archives)

⁵⁴ William Purviance Fenn, *Ah Sin and his Brethren in American Literature* (San Francisco, College of Chinese Studies, 1933), p.130.

⁵⁵ Damon, “Tours Among the Chinese”, p.40. He hoped the Christian tracts he left behind would lead their thoughts to “a higher range”.

⁵⁶ Damon, “Rambles in China”, p.44.

⁵⁷ Mitchell Library, newspaper cuttings: John Plummer (Sydney correspondent), “Chinese in Australia sending children into slavery”, *Globe*, c.1904, p.28.



typical contribution to the range of stereotypes made around the same period was an explanation of methods used for sending mail. Knowing nothing of the postal system of China at the time or the arrangements necessary for the delivery of mail to the villages, the writer announced that “Chinese merchants” often handled letters in bulk.⁵⁸ This was interpreted as an elaborate effort to save on postage: “If a Chinaman saves fours cents in a transaction of this kind it is an item that counts with him.”⁵⁹ Once established stereotypes were easily re-enforced; in extreme cases even by ‘guides’ who maintained “bogus opium dens” and pointed out “rat meat” in butcher shops while bound feet could be viewed for 25c in 1903.⁶⁰

Some stereotypes, such as those associated with health, were common to all the destinations. At a time when outbreaks of smallpox or the plague were still possible, the wish to find scapegoats and the perceived public health risk of Chinese people could reach hysterical proportions.⁶¹ Other stereotypes were peculiar to a destination society or port. In San Francisco in the 1880s, for example, “hoodlums” (youth gangs) were said to exist because it was the Chinese who did cheaply the type of jobs such young men would otherwise have had.⁶² In Sydney, suffering from similar disturbances by “larrikins” around the same time, no such link was ever made. Also in San Francisco, Chinese prostitutes were accused of targeting and infecting young boys with diseases, a bizarre intent not conceived of elsewhere.⁶³

Non-Chinese who dealt with Chinese people in some way were the most likely to imagine their explanations had some basis in reality. Thus Commissioner White of the United States Immigration Service in 1930 boldly declared that the reason Chinese men went to China to find wives was that “local girls” were too expensive.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 3, pp.113-115.

⁵⁹ *Paradise in the Pacific*, August 1901, p.1.

⁶⁰ Hoover Library and Archives, Race Relations Survey, 1929: Doc 150, March 1924, Ester Wong, p.11. See also the account of various frauds on Chinatown tourists in “San Francisco’s Old Chinatown” By Commissioner Jesse B. Cook, Former Chief of Police (Museum of the City of San Francisco, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist9/cook.html>). For the cost of bound feet, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 April 1903, p.5.

⁶¹ For example, Mitchell Library, newspaper cuttings: “Health”, pp.24-26. See Lew, “A Sentimental Journey into the past of the Chan and Jong Families”, pp.116-117 & pp.141-143, and Char, *The Sandalwood Mountains*, pp.101-102 for the treatment of Honolulu Chinatown during an outbreak of the plague in 1900.

⁶² William B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1885), p.43.



The same paper was unusual in carrying a refutation soon after from the “Chinatown girls”, rejecting this argument and declaring that they were all in fact married.⁶⁴ Even in Hawaii, where the relative size of the Chinese population and its high proportion of Hawaiian-born Chinese made extreme stereotypes less likely, many of a more moderate tone could find acceptance. In Hawaii the stereotype of the impoverished labourer arriving and working many years to establish a store or business was as strongly believed there as in other destinations. This stereotype was so strong that when Au Huna Tong, writing about Mrs Lee Let in 1932, was told that her husband had brought his capital to Hawaii in the 1880s. Au Huna Tong felt compelled to describe Lee Let as: “the only Chinese man who brought money to the Sandalwood Islands to start business.”⁶⁵

The strength of such stereotypes in at least one destination was demonstrated in 1934 by a psychology researcher who accompanied a “young middle class Chinese couple” with excellent English on a 10,000 mile tour of the United States. The researcher kept a careful note of the couple’s treatment when visiting hotels, restaurants and “auto camps” during the trip. He concluded that in the overwhelming majority of cases the couple received either no discrimination or even better treatment because of “increased curiosity”. Six months later the researcher sent questionnaires to businesses in all the places visited, as well as many that had not been visited in the same locations. The questionnaire asked: “Will you accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment?” The overwhelming response was ‘No’.⁶⁶ At the time of this trip there were relatively few Chinese or Asian people living in the United States outside of the Pacific coast, New York and perhaps Chicago. Negative responses to the questionnaire were presumably based on images and stereotypes about the “Chinese race” derived from the media and generally accepted views. When confronted with an actual non-stereotyped couple, however, the reaction in most cases was quite different from what might be expected.⁶⁷

⁶³ Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad*, p.67 and Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement*, p.30.

⁶⁴ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 March 1930, p.3 and 4 April 1930, p.8.

⁶⁵ *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 17 April 1932, p.11.

⁶⁶ R. T. LaPiere, “Attitudes and Actions”, *Social Forces*, Vol.13, 1934, pp.230-237.



In the case of the Chinese couple, people responded to what was before their eyes and their stereotypes did not come into play. They were not asked to accept behaviour with which they were unfamiliar or which they perceived as ‘wrong’, rather they found behaviour that was both familiar and acceptable. In a similar manner, researchers of the *huaqiao* have sought to make many stereotypes irrelevant. They have not challenged their basic assumptions but instead have striven to either deny *huaqiao* activities or to explain them as caused by factors outside the control of the *huaqiao*. In this way nothing unfamiliar needs to be accepted, instead behaviour is refashioned to make it familiar and acceptable.

Sojourners

One of the most fundamental stereotypes of *huaqiao* in the destinations was that they were sojourners; that the *huaqiao* came to the Pacific Ports not to settle but to make money and return to their families. This sojourner characterisation was used by some to justify discrimination against the *huaqiao* because destination societies supposedly only wanted people who would contribute directly to them. It was also argued that with their families elsewhere, the *huaqiao* as workers were able to compete unfairly for wages with those who did have their families with them.⁶⁸ These are ‘border guard’ views in the sense that they represent the concerns of those who would protect the ideal of their nation and interpret behaviour in that light. From this perspective behaviour embodied in the “sojourner” stereotype was to be deplored.

The Introduction discussed how the sojourner image has been rejected by recent research of the history of Chinese people in the United States and Australia, especially by those in Asian-American studies.⁶⁹ This rejection of the sojourner, however, has not sought to reject or question the underlying border guard assumptions. Instead, aspects of the *huaqiao* lifestyle such as the degree to which people returned to their *qiaoxiang* or the numbers of wives brought, have been

⁶⁷ Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, pp.8-13 also discusses the power of stereotypes and gives examples.

⁶⁸ Or that Chinese businesses could unfairly compete due to the lower cost of their employees, see “Chinese Merchants reply”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1904, p.12, for a refutation of these claims against stores made by the Anti-Chinese and Asiatic League, including a table of typical expenses for a Chinese and European store in which the inclusion of boarding costs makes the Chinese store more expensive to operate.

⁶⁹ Introduction, pp.9-10.



disputed.⁷⁰ Where numbers cannot be denied, the cause is attributed to prejudice and discriminatory laws in the destinations.⁷¹ In this way the *huaqiao* are, in a sense, turned into a “young middle class Chinese couple”, presenting nothing unfamiliar or unacceptable.⁷²

In this process of rejecting the sojourner and associated patterns of behaviour, the *huaqiao* are portrayed as undifferentiated Chinese seeking only to migrate and lead normal immigrant lives in America (or Australia). If the restrictive laws attempted to limit Chinese entry, then the assumption is that Chinese people only wished to enter. If the Chinese were accused of not bringing their families, then this too must be false and instead the restrictive laws and destination conditions prevented them. The unchallenged assumption is that if *huaqiao* did freely choose to leave their families in the *qiaoxiang* and to return to the *qiaoxiang* themselves, then the accusations and behaviour of the ‘border guards’ is justified. Rather than questioning the correctness of such judgements they are tacitly accepted, along with judgements that the aims and activities of the *huaqiao* are in some manner ‘wrong’.

The assumption that to enter a destination to earn money and return to their place of origin is behaviour that can be judged wrong has been left unchallenged. That *huaqiao* had a right to choose to be sojourners, regardless of the reaction or judgement of ‘border guards’, seems rarely to be considered. Once this is accepted then the aims of the *huaqiao* themselves can be accepted as legitimate and understood in terms other than those proposed by nation-state perspectives. In order to explore the implications of this a number of characteristics of *huaqiao* history will be examined from a *qiaoxiang* perspective.

Laws

The most direct and effective way to re-define the sojourner and other stereotype without challenging their underlying assumptions is to simply lay stress on a

⁷⁰ The most extreme example being Peffer, *If They Don't Bring their Women Here*.

⁷¹ Sucheng Chan for example, argues that restrictions became on their introduction, “the more significant factor” influencing the number of women entering the United States despite arguing the impact of a range of other factors in the period before their introduction. Chan, “The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943”, in Chan, *Entry Denied*, p.95.



powerful outside factor. Such an outside factor is most readily found in the restrictive laws that all the Pacific Ports enacted. The role of the restrictive laws in shaping *huaqiao* patterns and behaviour have been over emphasised in a number of ways due to a lack of appreciation of the significance of *qiaoxiang* links. To avoid simply seeing the impact of these laws as the cause of ‘deviant’ behaviour for which ‘blame’ needs to be assigned, there is a need to see the impact of the restrictive laws within a broader context than that provided by the nation-state.

Scholars of the overseas Chinese often accept the assessment of nation-state specialists on the determining role of the restrictive laws. A prominent scholar of the overseas Chinese but not of Chinese American history has said that: “Because exclusionary policies were introduced that kept women out, very few Chinese families could be settled or created.”⁷³ Another non-specialist has even said that the Chinese were “finally and totally excluded from the country [the U.S.]” by these laws.⁷⁴ Other researchers give the impression that the restrictive laws were largely responsible for such features of *huaqiao* history as the predominance of males, few wives and lack of settlement. These are all aspects of *huaqiao* behaviour that do not conform to ‘migration’ norms. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective the role of the restrictive laws can be interpreted instead as having re-enforced many of the attitudes and actions of the *huaqiao* deriving from their *qiaoxiang* links. In particular, the patterns of regular return, which all of the restrictions in the destinations recognised and allowed under various conditions, even for the “labourers” most destinations were so anxious to exclude.⁷⁵

In all three Pacific Ports *huaqiao* strove to get around the restrictive immigration laws. The steady insistence of the *huaqiao* on ignoring and circumventing the restrictions led those whose job it was to administer these laws to regard the Chinese as “incorrigibles”. Researchers have often proceeded on the assumption that the *huaqiao* were resisting the laws simply because they were desperate to become

⁷² LaPiere, “Attitudes and Actions”, p.230. Or as Peffer expresses it, they are people who would “celebrate prosperity”, Peffer, *If They Don’t Bring their Women Here*, p.3.

⁷³ Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, p.63.

⁷⁴ Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion, 1882-1924: San Francisco newspaper coverage of the Chinese and Japanese in the United States* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991), p.1.



‘Australians’ or ‘Americans’, or even pursuers of the “American Dream”. Such approaches are not only narrow but fail to explain many of the choices and responses discussed in the previous chapter. An understanding of the role of the *qiaoxiang* links, and the importance to the *huaqiao* of maintaining them makes better explanations possible. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective the *huaqiao* were trying to maintain a vital source of income and support for their families. Within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links, sponsorship and the obligations associated with this, as well as the potential profits generated by the restrictive laws, also help explain *huaqiao* efforts. This business element in the movement of people was clearly expressed in 1916 by Lee Som Yee, when he wrote, “by all means, get him landed, so that we may secure the profit, which of course will be a loss, if he is deported.”⁷⁶

This is not to deny that the restrictive laws had a significant impact, including those attributed to them by scholars. Many *huaqiao* undoubtedly did wish to enter the destinations and remain, especially as conditions in the *qiaoxiang* deteriorated in the 1930s. However, the *huaqiao* lived within the context of their *qiaoxiang* links and the restrictive laws were only one element within this context. It is necessary therefore, to look at the interaction of the restrictive laws and the *huaqiao* within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links if *huaqiao* history is to be adequately interpreted. Aspects examined here include the patterns of visits to the *qiaoxiang*, the encouragement of merchants, changes in destinations and the narrowing of those involved in the movement.

In general, the *huaqiao* of Sydney seem to have developed a more regular pattern of visits with their *qiaoxiang* than those of San Francisco and Hawaii.⁷⁷ An explanation for these differences must take into account both the differing laws and the different circumstances of the *huaqiao*. Generally those in Sydney who were pre-1901 domiciles were relatively free to come and go with a minimum of administrative or legal complications. In addition, most *huaqiao* working as Sydney market gardeners or in even more profitable occupations could afford to “return with glory” on a

⁷⁵ See Chapter 1, pp.48-49 for more details.

⁷⁶ Densmore Investigation: Box 1, Folder 4, Lee Som Yee to Lee Wooey Hong, 2 October 1916.



regular basis. In California and Hawaii on the other hand, even those with a legal right to do so could face onerous administrative barriers and ran a risk each time they left the destinations that they would not be able to return.⁷⁸ Disparities of incomes were also greater, with many *huaqiao* in California and Hawaii earning quite low incomes that reduced their chances of “returning with glory”.⁷⁹

Another difference between Australian and United States restrictions was in their relative encouragement of merchants. As with any system of restrictions easier access was granted to those with the resources to manipulate the system. However under Australian laws and administration this was minimal compared to a United States system that gave merchants legal exemptions as well as providing numerous loopholes that could be more readily taken advantage of by the wealthy. The overall result was that merchants increased as a proportion of the *huaqiao* in California, rising from an average of perhaps 10% in the 19th century to around 25% by the 1930s.⁸⁰ In Australia, while there was also an increase, the rise in merchant proportions was less, perhaps from 10% to 15% over a similar period.⁸¹ It is interesting that while “professionals” and middle class occupations increased more in Hawaii than the other two ports, “merchants” remained less than 10%.⁸² This was partly because new merchant arrivals, using the exemptions possible under the United States restrictive laws, preferred San Francisco to Hawaii. The overall result was a greater proportion in California of a class that was also more likely and able to bring wives, establish families and to settle permanently in a destination.⁸³

⁷⁷ The laws of Australia’s ‘White Australia Policy’ seemingly demanded just such a pattern of returns and substitutes, yet the *huaqiao* history of the *nanyang* in the 19th century, where such legal restrictions did not apply shows a similar pattern. Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities*, pp.120-130.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 5, p.175.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of incomes in the destinations.

⁸⁰ ‘Merchant’ like ‘middle class’ is a difficult category to determine statistically. These figures are conservative but consistent across various sources. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27 November 1869, p.4, based on figures supplied by the ‘Six Companies’; Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, p.359 and Lee, *The Chinese in the United States*, p.48.

⁸¹ Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, p.261 and analysis of immigration records in Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, Appendix IV, Table 4, p.101.

⁸² Paul Kimm-Chow Goo, “Chinese Economic Activities in Hawaii”, *The Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1930), p.14; Char, *The Sandalwood Mountains*, pp.310-311 and Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, p.66 & p.110.

⁸³ Ling Huping, “Chinese Merchants Wives in the United States, 1840-1945” in *Origins and Destinations* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California & UCLA Asian



The value of incorporating a *qiaoxiang* perspective can most easily be seen in the shift that occurred over a generation between Australia and the United States as a destination. The greater exclusiveness of the Australian laws meant that a generation of potential *huaqiao* in the *qiaoxiang* with access to *huaqiao* incomes was blocked from following in the footsteps of their fathers. The result was that some members of the generation after 1901 went instead to the United States and so in the United States there was a new generation of *huaqiao* whose fathers had been Australian *huaqiao*.⁸⁴ The United States was an expensive destination and so other options would also have been taken. An example of this occurred when a smuggled Long Du man was arrested in a Sydney market garden, the debts incurred in this attempt left him no choice but to try again, this time for Peru.⁸⁵

Many of the above changes and developments were caused by the restrictive laws raising costs and requiring new means of movement. This resulted in what E. H. Parker described as a “special class of emigrant” travelling to the Pacific Ports.⁸⁶ A further consequence was the narrowing of the range of *qiaoxiang* involved in the links with the destinations. A narrowing of the diversity of *qiaoxiang* can be seen in Victoria, NSW, Hawaii and California. This is explained by an increasing reliance on successful links, particularly as legal restrictions drove up costs.⁸⁷ Thus, Zhongshan people seem to have concentrated in NSW after the 1860s despite having been more common in Victoria in the early gold rush years.⁸⁸ *Huaqiao* of Hakka origin also seem to have disappeared in both Victoria and NSW after the initial gold rush period. Hawaii on the other hand seems to have broadened or at least maintained the wide range of Zhongshan County districts from which people came.⁸⁹ Those whose early members were less successful would have faded from the destinations or perhaps concentrated on only those destinations from which fellow members successfully

American Studies Center, 1994), p.79, “The majority of these early Chinese immigrant women were merchant wives”.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 5, n.36.

⁸⁵ 中山大公日報 (*Zhongshan Public Daily*), 23 November 1931, p.7

⁸⁶ Parker, “The Economy of Chinese Labour”, p.256.

⁸⁷ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.57, stated that the laws and bureaucracy “required Chinese to have extensive and reliable networks of friends, kinsmen, or fellow villagers already in the country” and Sui, *The Chinese Laundryman*, pp.108-113 that, “only those who have money and have good connections” could enter the destinations.

⁸⁸ Linda Brumley, *Fading Links to China - Ballarat's Chinese Gravestones and Associated Records, 1854-1955* (Parkville: University of Melbourne, 1992)



returned. This process is most clearly seen with the *huaqiao* of Buck Toy village of Zhongshan County. According to B. C. Lee, Buck Toy villagers had gone to Burma, Saigon, Sydney and California as well as Hawaii. However, beginning around the 1880s, the success of those in Hawaii eventually led to approximately 350 Buck Toy members being in Hawaii by 1930, with only two in Vancouver, ten in South America and five in Sydney by that time.⁹⁰

Bringing their women

From the above it can be seen that the interpretation of *huaqiao* interaction with the destinations, even when looking only at the restrictive laws, is greatly assisted by a *qiaoxiang* perspective. Such a perspective provides a context without which many aspects of *huaqiao* history must go unregarded or misinterpreted. One of the most obvious features of the *huaqiao* movement throughout the period was the relatively low number of women who participated.⁹¹ This is also a feature that has often been attributed to the restrictive laws, despite the consistently of low numbers of women regardless of the laws actually in place at various times through the period. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective the proportions of women are not very extraordinary. As a 19th century European (rather one-sidedly) observed, a *huaqiao* had difficulty in persuading “his family to part with his wife, and thus break the chain which binds him and the money he may make to his ancestral home.”⁹² This description is one sided because it fails to take into account the prestige element in the *qiaoxiang* links discussed in Chapter 4. For most observers in the destinations, however, the lack of women and families meant that the Chinese were not migrants, thus demonstrating their “unassimilability”.

As with the rejection of the sojourner concept, much recent research has focused on attempting to either explain or deny the low numbers of women.⁹³ Such research does not argue that the *huaqiao* had a right to bring or not bring women or wives.

⁸⁹ See Table 1.2, p.62 for *qiaoxiang* variations over time in the destinations.

⁹⁰ Glick Archive, Card file: notes of B. C. Lee, n.d. (c.1930).

⁹¹ See Table 1.4: Proportions of female *huaqiao*, p.63.

⁹² Crawford, *Notes*, p.31.

⁹³ Examples are, Peffer, *If They Don't Bring their Women Here* and Sucheng Chan, “The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943” in Chan, *Entry Denied*, pp.94-146. For a critique of this position see Adam McKeown, “Transnational Chinese Families and Chinese Exclusion, 1875-1943”, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol.18, No.2, 1999, pp.76-110.



Instead it is argued that the *huaqiao* would have wished to be ‘normal’ migrants and that it was racism and the restrictive laws that prevented more women from coming. Perhaps the most extreme effort to assign ‘blame’ for low numbers of women, though not in this case on the laws, was the declaration that, “American capitalists paid low wages to Chinese men to deter their women from crossing the Pacific.”⁹⁴ This is an example of a perspective that accepts the assumption that to move without family is wrong and for which an explanation is required. The *huaqiao* continue to be refractory but the ‘blame’ for this is shifted elsewhere.

More usual is to attribute the low proportion of women among the *huaqiao* to the restrictive laws: “Few men could bring wives with them because the U.S. immigration laws were even stricter for Chinese women than for Chinese men.”⁹⁵ This is an argument less common in Australia, however, despite the proportion of women being much lower. Certainly the labourers excluded after 1882 by the United States and after 1901 by Australia could not bring their wives, even when they were entitled to return themselves. However, such labourers had rarely brought their wives and the “restrictions of Chinese society” and “financial incapability” are usually accepted as explanations for the period before restrictions were enacted. For the period after the restrictions are imposed, however, the argument becomes that “these exclusion laws effectively banned most Chinese women from joining their husbands”.⁹⁶ Reasons for the sudden change in social attitudes or financial capacity are not given.

The impact of racism and the restrictive laws in making the entry of *huaqiao*, men and women, difficult or impossible cannot be denied. However, arguments that ignore or deny *huaqiao* choices concerning these matters perpetuate ignorance of the *qiaoxiang* links and the aims of the *huaqiao*. They also implicitly accept ‘Border Guard’ views that not to wish to migrate with one’s family or to return from a destination is wrong. In all the destinations the proportion of women are low

⁹⁴ Cheng, “Free, Indentured, Enslaved”, p.406. This explanation attributes to capitalists an excuse they rarely seem to need and a capacity for long range thought they rarely seem to have.

⁹⁵ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.91. See also Peffer, *If They Don’t Bring their Women Here*, p.ix, who argues low number of *huaqiao* women were the result of “gender-specific immigration restriction”.



throughout the period but gradually rise despite the restrictive laws. In 1870, the earliest year for which we have comparable data, both Hawaii and California have *huaqiao* populations which are around 8% female, while in NSW the figure is well under half of one percent. By 1900, the proportion of women in Hawaii rose to 13%, while in California it is much the same and NSW is still less than 2%. Urban proportions are higher and by 1910, Sydney has a female proportion of 5%, while San Francisco's is 13%, both rising until, by the 1940s, over one quarter of Sydney's and one third of San Francisco's Chinese population is female.⁹⁷ In all the ports the rise in the proportions of women are due to destination-born girls and the return of older male *huaqiao* to their *qiaoxiang* as well as the increasing entry of female *huaqiao*, especially towards the end of the period.

While restrictive laws played a part in determining the proportions of female *huaqiao*, this role was a more complex one than that of simply raising barriers. Erika Lee expressed the relationship between the movement of women and restrictive laws best when she stated that the barriers raised by the laws, in so far as they presented special difficulties for women, perpetuated “the earlier migration patterns”.⁹⁸ However, Lee goes on to say that the United States exemptions were “male categories”, merchants, teachers, etc., and this contributed to the lower proportion of women.⁹⁹ Yet each of these categories had their female exemption, in addition to those for minor children. Between 1900 and 1930, the percentage of women entering the United States rose from 0.7% to 30%. This was over a period when continuous efforts were made to make entry more difficult, including the 1924 Immigration Act which resulted in the alien wife of citizens being denied entry.¹⁰⁰ It has even been argued that women had a greater chance of entry than men did during this period.¹⁰¹ If more female *huaqiao* were coming to the United States despite changes in the restrictive laws then factors other than the restrictive laws alone need to be considered. Factors such as the rising proportion of merchants who had always preferred to bring wives, deteriorating

⁹⁶ Ling Huping, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women - Their Lives* (Albany: State University of NY Press, 1998), pp.27-28. For a similar argument see Chan, “The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943”, in Chan, *Entry Denied*, p.95.

⁹⁷ See Table 1.4: Proportions of female *huaqiao*, p.63.

⁹⁸ Lee, *At America's Gates*, p.xx.

⁹⁹ Lee, *At America's Gates*, pp.67-68.

¹⁰⁰ According to Erika Lee, 150 women a year were entering under this category, Lee, *At America's Gates*, pp.70-71.



conditions in the *qiaoxiang* (particularly in the 1930s), the profitability of the ‘paper sons’ scheme and the choices of the *huaqiao* themselves are some of the factors that need to be considered.

Merchants had always been the most likely to bring wives due to their financial capacity and the likelihood that they had a second wife, thus allowing them to fulfil their *qiaoxiang* obligations by leaving a wife behind. As one observer reported it: “In any case wives are, where it is possible, left at home to guard the *sacra*. Most concubines, Hakka or other, have natural feet, and concubines are usually taken on a journey.”¹⁰² The Chinese Gambling Commissioners were told that “the majority of them who come here are too poor to pay the passage money for their wives”.¹⁰³ The United States restrictive laws not only allowed wives to enter but also favoured merchants over other categories of people. In Australia, the relatively few merchants who did enter were also more likely to bring wives and to establish families.¹⁰⁴ Thus one reason for a gradual rise in the number of women is that this reflects the gradual rise in the proportion of merchants. Australian law did not favour merchants as much as United States laws and so the increase in Chinese women in Australia is largely restricted to those being born in Australia until the late 1930s.¹⁰⁵

Changing circumstances in the *qiaoxiang* would also have influenced decisions about women and their participation in the movement. When the proportion of women did begin to rise they did so at a time when the restrictive laws were very much in place or were even at their harshest. This was in the 1920s when conditions in the *qiaoxiang* were becoming more dangerous and the desire to safeguard families by removing them to a destination was growing. Another factor that may have encouraged even poorer *huaqiao* to bring their wives at this time was that growing expectations in the *qiaoxiang* meant that it was becoming socially cheaper to have one’s wife in the destination.

¹⁰¹ McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, p.32.

¹⁰² E. H. Parker, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, No.24867, December 15, 1888, p.15.

¹⁰³ Royal Commission, p.58, lines, 2239-40 and p.57, line 2213.

¹⁰⁴ Wilton, *Chinese Voices, Australian Lives*, p.175.

¹⁰⁵ Choi, *Chinese Migration*, p.43.



For poorer *huaqiao* it was necessary to make the most of what financial opportunities were available and one of these was the “paper sons” option. The paper sons scheme did not include significant number of “paper daughters” until changes to the United States restrictions in 1924 made the non-citizen (alien) wives of citizens ineligible to enter.¹⁰⁶ The great imbalance in the number of sons declared over daughters by “Chinese citizens” was often remarked on.¹⁰⁷ However, the number of sons and daughters declared by merchants did not show the same imbalance.¹⁰⁸ For merchants it was not necessary to use their families as a source of profit and they used the exemptions they had to bring in their wives and children. For poorer *huaqiao* who had citizen status the opportunity to make profit through the sale of the “slots” could not be easily forgone. While those who purchased a slot required the income earning capacity of male *huaqiao* to return any investment. Thus poorer *huaqiao* who had always been less willing or able to bring a wife continued to move as single males. They mostly in order to enter the United States by selling a “slot” to a “paper son” who was required to pay this back. In Australia some movement was possible through organising a “substitute” or “assistant” who would work in the shop or market garden.¹⁰⁹

Where people had a choice of who to bring to a destination, such as in the exemption categories of students and substitutes, there was also a strong preference for males. In the case of children, the choice to bring sons or daughters was for Chinese people themselves to make; a choice made overwhelmingly of sons over daughters. The restrictive laws certainly played a role in the choices people made and the opportunities they had. However, the assumptions of much nation-state based research that the interaction with the restrictive laws was a simple one of desire to enter versus barriers to entry, are too narrow. A *qiaoxiang* perspective broadens the context within which this interaction can be viewed and allows a more complex interpretation of the *huaqiao* and their choices.

¹⁰⁶ Lee, At America’s Gate, p.221.

¹⁰⁷ In 1929, for example, a Department of Labor report found that 770 Chinese citizens had reported 1,973 sons and 169 daughters, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9th Oct 1929, p.13.

¹⁰⁸ The same 1929 report stated that 448 Chinese aliens (merchants) had reported 581 sons and 647 daughters, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9th Oct 1929, p.13.

¹⁰⁹ Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia*, pp.112-114.



Wage competition

A final area where the tendency has also been to leave assumptions unquestioned and instead to seek denials or to apportion blame, can be seen in the issue of wages. Stereotypes and lack of a *qiaoxiang* context has obscured the discussion over wage competition and the attitude of white workers to the presence of the *huaqiao*. While fear of justifying ‘border guard’ views has meant that any possible legitimacy in working class assertions cannot be acknowledged. It cannot be accepted that the *huaqiao* worked cheaper, or if they did, it was due to discrimination. Having family in the *huaqiao* and being able to live a frugal ‘bachelor’ lifestyle was the result of laws that prevented families coming, not the result of any arrangements the *huaqiao* themselves may have chosen to make.

As with previous efforts to make the *huaqiao* fit within acceptable norms the result is a neglect of various aspects of the *qiaoxiang* links. Thus the effort to see the *huaqiao* as simple worker victims of racism has meant that the very success of the *qiaoxiang* links is obscured. This was a success in securing the movement of a village boy or young man to one of a number of distant ports. So successful were the *qiaoxiang* links in doing this that the choice of who made the trip was not based on levels of English, education or any other criteria that might have enabled them to deal with the destinations individually. Instead, those most ignorant and dependent could arrive in a destination, with significant consequences in terms of isolation, alienation and dependence upon their *qiaoxiang* fellows and organisations. A hint of the organisation and the dependence of the new *huaqiao* is contained in an observer’s account of an 1869 embarkation of a steamer newly arrived in San Francisco from China. He describes the separate gangways, the merchants and “six companies” representatives meeting the arrivals, dressed in “blue cotton blouses and loose baggy breeches, blue cotton cloth stockings” and “shoes with heavy wooden soles” and of their being separated into groups and escorted to Chinatown, each carrying their possessions.¹¹⁰

Such newly arrived *huaqiao* in a destination, with a debt to repay and a family to support, could waste no time being unemployed, holding out for better wages or



conditions, learning English or undertaking training other than on-the-job. The majority of *huaqiao* took what form of employment they could, usually arranged through a fellow *qiaoxiang* member or relative. This resulted in a narrow range of jobs, the clustering of people within certain occupations and a general tolerance for low pay and poor living conditions. This is to say, the *huaqiao* were similar to any first generation migrant group with poor English, social isolation and low paid jobs.¹¹¹

That it is difficult to organise newly arrived workers was recognised by all who strove to improve the wages and conditions of workers through unionism. Clashes between new arrivals and established workers were extremely common. Established workers in both California and NSW at various stages opposed Irish migration and coercive methods were used to unionise newly arrived German workers to Sydney in the 1880s.¹¹² The *huaqiao* were no exception to this. Yet the approach of some studies has been to play down the right of workers to fight for better wages and conditions and their prejudices and impressions are routinely rejected.¹¹³ The simplest way to do this is to recount that the *huaqiao* were usually only a small proportion of the total population, thus implying an hysterical or self-serving ‘real’ reason for workers fears. Yet the proportion of *huaqiao* to total population alone gives a misleading impression when it remembered that a feature of the *huaqiao* for most of the period was that they were nearly all male, of working age and working class. As a proportion of males, of working age males and most significantly of the working class, *huaqiao* proportions were much higher than the basic figures reveal.¹¹⁴ Or, as the Rev. Damon put it, the Chinese are “no very great number”, but

¹¹⁰ Albert S. Evans, “From the Orient Direct”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XXIV July 1869, pp.542-546.

¹¹¹ See, Australian Archives (NSW), SP1655/7; N53/24/3574, Choy On, letter, Deputy Crown Solicitor to Crown Solicitor, 24 November 1937, for references in a court case to poor English among Sydney Chinese in the 1930s as “well known” and no proof of recent illegal entry.

¹¹² McWilliams, *California*, p.140 and Albert A. Hayden, “New South Wales Immigration Policy, 1856-1900” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.61, Pt 5, 1971, pp.14-15 & p.47.

¹¹³ For example, Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, pp.80-81 and Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, pp.71-122.

¹¹⁴ Table 6.1: *Huaqiao* as a percentage of total population and *huaqiao* populations, p.221. Even Sydney’s 1% of the population quickly becomes a not insignificant 5% of the male working class.



when you “consider that they are nearly all strong, healthy working men, in the prime of life”, they “must make themselves felt”.¹¹⁵

The real issues are not whether *huaqiao* worked cheaper or if this was due to the location of their families, nor the reality or otherwise of the threat to the jobs or wages of others. If the efforts of workers to raise wages and conditions are accepted as legitimate in the 19th century, then the real issue is the methods adopted. White workers had a choice to attempt to incorporate Chinese workers within their unions or to isolate these workers on racial grounds. The white workers of the destinations generally chose the later course and to that extent they acted in a discriminatory and ultimately self-defeating manner.

How self-defeating can be seen in an example from the Victorian wage boards. Wage Boards were introduced in the early 20th century, representing both employers and employees in order to set basic wages in various industries, the representatives usually being elected. In the case of cabinetmakers, where Chinese representatives would have been elected, boards were appointed instead. Wage rates set by these boards without their participation were naturally met with resistance by Chinese cabinetmakers, both owners and employees, resulting in their collusion to defeat the purposes of the wage boards.¹¹⁶ Chinese cabinetmakers working for lower wages than European cabinetmakers therefore continued in Victoria. The situation in California was even worse for workers where it was often not workers but small employers who used anti-Chinese agitation to eliminate their Chinese competitors.¹¹⁷

The racist assumption that the *huaqiao* had no right to compete with other workers should not obscure the fact that they were, in fact, competing. Prejudice and stereotypes were part of efforts to eliminate the perceived threat from *huaqiao* as workers. However, the effort to refute such stereotypes should not result in denying the reality of much of *huaqiao* history and the choices they made within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links. The racist responses made in the past were wrong then as they

¹¹⁵ Damon, “Tours Among the Chinese”, p.36.

¹¹⁶ M. B. Hammond, “Wages Boards in Australia: IV. Social and Economic Results of Wages Boards”, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol.29, No.3. (May, 1915), pp.594-595.

¹¹⁷ McWilliams, *California*, p.140.



are wrong now but unless this history is seen clearly, it will be impossible to learn from it.

Conclusion

The narrowness of nation-state perspectives has been seen concerning the issue of sojourners, the role of the restrictive laws, explanations for the low number of women and the stereotype of wages competition. In all these areas it was seen that much emphasis has been placed on seeing the *huaqiao* as ‘normal’ migrants. These efforts obscure much about the ideals and activities of the *huaqiao* themselves while failing to resist “racist and nationalist pressure to interpret such practices as undesirable”.¹¹⁸ In dealing with these stereotypes of the *huaqiao* in the Pacific Ports, comparisons assist in bringing out local variations and seeing the adaptability of the *huaqiao*. In particular the many unique features of San Francisco and its Chinatown can be seen, allowing too great an emphasis on ‘Chinese culture’ as an explanation to be avoided. However, it is the *qiaoxiang* perspective that contributes most to providing satisfactory interpretations of the *huaqiao* in the destinations.

The three Pacific destinations, or “Anglo-Saxonizing Machines,” tried at various times and often at the same time to reject, assimilate, isolate, get benefit from and simply live with the *huaqiao*. Many of these interactions were based on ignorance of the *huaqiao* and their motivations, an ignorance that persists in many ways. Continuing ignorance of the *qiaoxiang* and of the nature of the *qiaoxiang* links helps to sustain many stereotypes about the ‘Chinese’. Most common is a general sense of the *huaqiao* as “refractory”, as a group whose behaviour needs to be explained or justified in some way. The result has been that stereotypes are often rejected while leaving the assumptions on which they are based intact. Thus some researchers, while not perhaps wishing to turn everyone into “Englishmen”, seem to wish to turn everyone into a version of an “American migrant”. Concepts such as sojourner are rejected in favour of a new stereotype, the settler/migrant battling racism. Like all stereotypes, it is not that elements of truth are completely absent from this characterisation, but that from a *qiaoxiang* perspective much is inevitably left out.

¹¹⁸ McKeown, “Transnational Chinese Families and Chinese Exclusion, 1875-1943”, p.81.



Table 6.1: *Huaqiao* as a percentage of total population and *huaqiao* populations.¹

By Province						
Year	Hawaii		NSW		California	
	%	pop	%	pop	%	pop
1856	0.50	364	0.68	1,806	18.36	17,000
1861	1.17	816	3.73	12,988	9.19	34,933
1871	3.24	2,038	1.45	7,220	8.80	49,277
1881	22.65	18,254	1.38	10,205	8.69	75,132
1891	18.62	16,752	1.18	13,157	5.97	72,472
1901	16.73	25,767	0.75	10,222	3.08	45,753
1911	11.29	21,674	0.50	8,226	1.52	36,248
1921	9.19	23,507	0.34	7,282	0.84	28,812
1930	7.38	27,179	0.15	3,665	0.66	37,361
1940	6.80	28,774	0.12	3,272	0.57	39,556
1950	6.48	32,376	0.09	3,012	0.55	58,324

By City						
Year	Honolulu		Sydney		San Francisco	
	%	pop	%	pop	%	pop
1861	1.08	124	0.20	189	4.79	2,719
1871	4.26	632	—	—	8.04	12,022
1878	—	—	0.24	960	—	—
1881	9.20	1,299	0.99	2,232	9.29	21,745
1884	25.50	5,225	1.00	2,766	—	—
1891	19.24	4,407	0.90	3,499	8.64	25,833
1896	25.71	7,693	—	—	—	—
1901	—	—	0.72	3,474	4.07	13,954
1911	18.35	9,061	—	—	2.54	10,582
1921	16.06	9,574	0.50	2,889	1.53	7,744
1930	14.05	13,383	0.30	1,891	2.57	16,303
1940	12.52	19,334	—	—	2.80	17,782
1947	10.78	22,445	0.16	2,337	3.20	24,813

¹ Data compiled from Commonwealth of Australia Year Books and United States Census reports.



Picture 6.1: San Francisco Chinatown fashions, 1898.¹



¹ Arnold Genthe Photograph of Chinatown – 1898, Museum of the City of San Francisco (<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/index0.html>)

Conclusion: You have been loyal *huaqiao*

One of the many telegrams that passed between the Zhongshan village of Buck Toy and their fellows in Hawaii during the 1920s and 1930s included the comment: “You have been loyal *wah kiu*.¹ The loyalty of the *huaqiao* (*wah kiu*) is usually seen as national loyalty to the Chinese motherland but for those of Buck Toy as well as many in the *qiaoxiang* this loyalty had a narrower focus. Despite this not everyone who moved between the Pearl River Delta and the Pacific Ports in the generations after 1849 had been “loyal *wah kiu*” and it has not been the purpose of this thesis to argue they were. It has been argued, however, that a concept such as “loyal *wah kiu*” and the history of the movement of people from the Pearl River Delta over the period, are best understood within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links. It has also been argued that nation-state perspectives and the conceptions and assumptions that have been characterised as ‘border guard views’, have failed to understand the significance of the “loyal *wah kiu*” and the role played by the *qiaoxiang* links. *Destination Qiaoxiang*, by interpreting this history through the perspective of the *qiaoxiang*, has attempted to add to this understanding.

Huaqiao developments

The history discussed by this thesis has been that of the *huaqiao* of the Pearl River Delta and their movements to the Pacific Ports of Sydney, Hawaii and San Francisco between 1849 and 1949. Chapter 1, *Wading 10,000 li*, described the basic movement of people from the Pearl River Delta around the Pacific Ports in the century after 1849. Where people came from, why they left, their numbers and proportions and some of the major fluctuations and interactions that constituted the movement over this century was discussed. Particular attention was paid to the reactions of those who dominated the societies of the Pacific Ports and the restrictive laws they imposed. Chapter 2, *Because in the Tang Mountains we have a big house*, described a single *qiaoxiang*, the impact upon it of the movement and its links with the Pacific Ports. This detailed understanding of a *qiaoxiang* made it possible to build up a picture of the *qiaoxiang* links. This picture was begun in Chapter 3, *He would have*

¹ Glick Archives: Notes 3, Bung-Chong Lee, 16 June 1936. *Wah kiu* being the Cantonese pronunciation of *huaqiao*.



to send money, which investigated what the links consisted of, how they were established and what were the mechanisms for maintaining them not only over distances but over generations. Such tangible elements could not explain all there was to the *qiaoxiang* links so Chapter 4, *Returning Home with Glory*, discussed the significance of income and prestige in providing motivation for the *qiaoxiang* links.

Not everyone who set out for the destinations maintained links with their *qiaoxiang* in the same way or at all. The existence of the links themselves provided or broadened opportunities that could lead to a diminishing of the *qiaoxiang* links or even the loss of these links. Chapter 5, *Things did not work out that way*, discussed the range of factors operating within the context of the *qiaoxiang* links that could bring about outcomes such as permanent settlement in a destination as well as ‘return with glory’. The final chapter, *Anglo-Saxonizing Machines*, discussed the three Pacific destinations in order to demonstrate how the *qiaoxiang* perspective can provide a wider range of interpretations and explanations of *huaqiao* involvement in their history than is possible within nation-state perspectives alone.

This thesis has presented a picture of the *huaqiao* and their history in the roughly four generations after 1849. After the initial ‘rush’ generation of 1849 to around 1877, the following generation was able to take advantage of the money and connections that had been established with the Pacific Ports. More permanent *qiaoxiang* links gradually grew based on destination businesses and access to passage money available through relatives who were themselves *huaqiao*. As this occurred more family orientated sponsorship replaced large-scale labour recruitment through brokers. This generation was hampered by the imposition of major restrictions by the destinations in the 1880s, nevertheless further *huaqiao* generations were able to establish themselves. The *huaqiao* lifestyle seemingly reached a peak of organisation in the 1920s and 1930s, surviving the Depression and even the Japanese War, despite reduced incomes and increasing dependence of the *qiaoxiang*.

This chronology is built not around destination laws or major events in the nation-states but on developments in the *qiaoxiang* links themselves. Within this timeframe, one of the most significant developments was the growth of a specialised lifestyle in



the *qiaoxiang*. A lifestyle based on expectations on the *huaqiao* to achieve certain levels of income and status. Much about the *huaqiao* lifestyle and the expectations on the *huaqiao* therefore revolved around money, money to repay debts, money to support the family, to sponsor others or money for donations in the *qiaoxiang*. Money and its use cannot be understood separately from the family and cultural networks of the *qiaoxiang*. From first contracting a debt enabling an individual to leave the village and travel to a Pacific Port, the *huaqiao* was part of a network of obligations and dependence that kept the majority focused on the *qiaoxiang* and eventual return.

These networks determined such matters as which destinations and *qiaoxiang* became linked and the numbers of people that moved. The obligations enforced lengthy initial periods of absence before a first return and tied people to their fellows in the destinations. As the generations passed and *huaqiao* returned, they had the means and the incentive to assist the next generation. Sponsorship, both legal and illegal, support with paperwork and in dealing with administrators was needed with the growth of restrictive laws. These changes encouraged some to remain in the destinations while narrowing the range of people that could participate in the movement.

The continuing dependence of the *qiaoxiang* on *huaqiao* earnings in the destinations and the consequent vulnerability of the links to outside factors meant that the *qiaoxiang* links and the *huaqiao* lifestyle were in a sense a dead-end. That is to say, the links were a cycle of dependence that could not be escaped without changing the nature of the *qiaoxiang* links themselves. Such change could only be achieved either by making the *qiaoxiang* economically independent of outside income or by leaving the *qiaoxiang* and settling in Hong Kong, Shanghai or one of the destinations where productive occupations were more viable. Neither of these options the majority of *huaqiao* were able or willing to take, instead, from 1849 until 1938, most *huaqiao* continued to send their remittances and ultimately retire to the *qiaoxiang*. By doing so they completed intentions that had taken them from their villages, in some case, 40 or 50 years earlier.



The year 1949 was chosen to mark the end of the *qiaoxiang* links in the form that they had been developing for roughly four generations because at this point the *huqiao* could no longer achieve their aims in the *qiaoxiang*. This was not merely a matter of cutting off remittances but more significantly the ending of the ability to turn their efforts in the destinations into prestige and status in the *qiaoxiang*. This was a development imposed on the *qiaoxiang* by the nature of the new China government and one that removed an essential motivation of the *qiaoxiang* links.

Nation-state perspectives

The history of the *qiaoxiang* links developed by this thesis is one that is difficult to appreciate within the nation-state perspectives of most research. The introduction argued that understanding of the history of the movement of Chinese people to the Pacific destinations was limited by conceptions of the nation-state. These limitations had allowed the views of what were termed ‘border guards’ to predominate, even in studies that sought to refute these views. Studies based on trans-national concepts, such as those of the ‘Chinese diaspora’, it was argued, have also been unable to escape many of these limitations. Continuing links with places of origin, including return, and motivations not centered on one-way migration and settlement, are either neglected or interpreted as the result of destination laws and prejudice. Rarely are these actions or choices seen as those people might make according to their own ideals or intentions.

Analyses built around concepts such as nation-states, diaspora or even transnationalism have a tendency to focus on movement to and outcomes in, a specific location. In particular, the crossing of borders and patterns of settlement in a specific nation-state are given great emphasis to the neglect of motivations and relationships with other places, except in so far as they provide background to the history of settlement or border crossings. These emphases did not develop by chance but were an evolution of the views of the ‘border guards’, those who observed and commented on Chinese people in ‘their’ territory from the first *huqiao* arrivals.

A significant characteristic of the border guard view is the assumption that the Chinese were a problem in need of a solution. Missionaries saw the problem as one



of conversion, racists and those with faith in the desirability of an “Anglo-Saxon” society saw the solution as restrictions on entry. Many of those who have rejected the assumptions of difference and hostility underlying such views and sought non-racist solutions have done so by simply reversing those of the border guards. In doing so, however, the Chinese remained a ‘problem’; the problem becoming, why they did not become ‘normal’ migrants and settlers. The solution to this problem was to deny, minimise or neglect behaviour outside a narrow definition of migrants and settlers or to attribute blame such behaviour to destination racism and laws. The ‘problem’, as defined by the border guards was not confronted but instead assumed to have disappeared by shifting blame and ignoring or neglecting what the *huqiao* themselves intended.

The most prominent of the ‘border guard views’ was that which, from the beginning of *huqiao* arrival in the destinations, defined them as ‘migrants’. This was not necessarily due to ignorance of the *huqiao* wish to return or of the fact that many did return. Rather it was because the possibility of their staying in the destination was what concerned observers the most. Those *huqiao* who did stay and the fear that new arrivals would wish to stay, dominated popular attitudes. These assumptions of intention to settle were taken on by later researchers, this time as part of efforts to prove that migrating and staying was the main intention of the *huqiao* all along, hampered only by destination restrictions and prejudices. In both cases a basic assumption is that one-way migration and settlement is ‘normal’ behaviour.

The histories of the Chinese in various nations have been argued to be too narrow to encompass the *qiaoxiang* links. However, studies based on conceptions beyond a single nation-state such as ‘diaspora’ research suffer from other limitations. A lack of historical context is the primary limitation of diaspora studies. The contemporary focus of these studies usually leads them to see the diaspora and its economic networks as an intention rather than an outcome of historical factors. This is partly because diaspora studies only go beyond the nation-state by multiplying them. That is, the Chinese diaspora is seen as Chinese people outside China in many places rather than one place and links and connections with the *qiaoxiang* are rarely considered.



Both nation-state and diaspora studies have a tendency to neglect various players in the history of the movement. Most obviously those who remained in the *qiaoxiang* or those who left the destinations and returned to the *qiaoxiang* are rarely mentioned. Rarely mentioned by nation-state studies because such people leave or are beyond their borders, or by diaspora studies because it is the creation and existence of the diaspora ‘outside’ China that is the focus. Much emphasis is also given to merchants and traders by nation-state and diaspora studies. Such emphasis is partly a matter of records in which the wealthy and those involved in trade networks leave more obvious evidence of their passing. It is also because the ‘Chinese diaspora’ is usually seen as an economic network rather than a social one.

This thesis has not been the first to attempt to escape the limitations of nation-state perspectives. Recent researches by Madeline Hsu, Adam McKeown, Yong Chen and James Cook have, in their different ways, attempted to place the history of the Chinese overseas in a wider context.² Of these four, only Madeline Hsu has investigated the *qiaoxiang* in any detail.³ Hsu investigates the connections of people from Taishan County with the United States as an example of “transnational” families but a nation-state perspective dominates the context of this history. Her Taishan families must choose between places and it is the nation-state that seems to provide the determining factors in this choice.

Yong Chen gives an account of a community in a destination, San Francisco, which he rounds out by emphasising the importance of “trans-Pacific” connections to this community. However, this is based on a very limited view of the *qiaoxiang* and ultimately fails to account for what motivates these trans-Pacific links. Nor does the “trans-Pacific” concept allow those who left this destination or those who never reached it to become part of the history. Similarly, Adam McKeown tells us much about *huaqiao* communities and the significance of their links in each of the three places he investigates. However, like Yong Chen, without a full appreciation of the *qiaoxiang*, the result is that much is missing, particularly concerning motivations.

² See Introduction, pp.17-20.

³ Cook does focus on the Fujian city of Xiamen but fails to distinguish between this and the *qiaoxiang* of those he is discussing.



While James Cook focuses the most on a *qiaoxiang* in theory, in reality his is a discussion only of merchants in a single city. Cook never acknowledges that Xiamen is not the *qiaoxiang* of most of his subjects and so fails to see the broader context of their choice to settle in that city. Nor does he acknowledge that merchants were part of a larger movement of people that included not only those who were not merchants but also those who did not settle in Xiamen and even those who never left their *qiaoxiang*.

Qiaoxiang perspectives

In each of the four attempts to escape the limitations of nation-state perspectives discussed above, difficulties have arisen due to a lack of appreciation of the role of the *qiaoxiang*. ‘China’ or a location in China, as in the research of Yong Chen or James Cook, is not sufficient and an appreciation of the specific ‘native place’ within China of those who travelled is necessary. The adoption of a *qiaoxiang* perspective therefore is the core of the approach taken by this thesis. That is, taking the *qiaoxiang* as the origin of the motivations around which the movement of Pearl River Delta people developed. From this it follows that movement to the destinations established links and these links gave rise to a series of choices and developments played out in both the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations. The *qiaoxiang* perspective provides a context within which to examine much that is neglected or misinterpreted by nation-state and diaspora approaches.

Basic to this *qiaoxiang* perspective therefore has been the *qiaoxiang* itself, in this thesis based on a case-study of the Zhongshan County district of Long Du. This focus on a single *qiaoxiang* has allowed details to be seen that greatly assisted in interpreting *qiaoxiang* links. Based on this *qiaoxiang* case-study, evidence of the impact of links between the destinations and the *qiaoxiang*, including the significance of family, prestige, motivations and income were revealed. A great deal of the evidence of *huaqiao* history is also to be found in the destinations and within research that has been interpreted only from a nation-state perspective. This *qiaoxiang* evidence and capacity to re-interpret destination-based evidence, made it possible to analyse the *qiaoxiang* links, the mechanisms through which they operated and the choices they gave the *huaqiao*.



A thorough understanding of a *qiaoxiang* also allowed success and failure to be judged in terms of what this meant in the *qiaoxiang*. To become an American or Australian, or even simply to remain in those nations, is a measure of ‘success’ derived from the nation-state perspective of a destination, though a measure undoubtedly chosen by some *huaqiao*. Knowledge of a *qiaoxiang* allowed ‘success’ to be seen as the survival and improvement of the family in the village, of houses, lands, education and a better future for the next generation. This *qiaoxiang* perspective also enabled the movement of most and the migration of some, to be seen in a context in which it could be understood that those who did not return to the *qiaoxiang* were ‘failures’.

Qiaoxiang standards were those by which most *huaqiao* would have judged themselves and *qiaoxiang* based judgements of success and failure, shame and prestige were how *huaqiao* determined their actions and responses. Fear and loathing of destination society, concern for restrictive laws or even the desire for ‘liberty’ and wealth in the destinations, should not be seen therefore as dominant factors in people’s responses. The *huaqiao* had their own concerns and issues to deal with, and a major purpose of the *qiaoxiang* case-study was to supply a basis for this perspective.

With a *qiaoxiang* perspective the significance of the *qiaoxiang* links can be seen. The phrase ‘*qiaoxiang* links’ has been used to encompass the connections between the *qiaoxiang* and the destinations that were maintained by Pearl River Delta people over time and generations. This concept was developed in order to avoid too much emphasis on place and the act of movement in one direction or another. Discussion of the history, not of places but of relationships, allows processes of interaction to be more easily revealed. Interactions are something often obscured by nation-state perspectives in which such actions by a nation-state as imposing laws and indulging in racist behaviour, are seen to be determining factors in people’s lives. The ‘place’ emphasis of a nation-state also leads to a focus on those who are in one place more than another, with inevitable distortions in investigations of people who move from location to location. Such distortions the concept of ‘*qiaoxiang* links’ was intended to avoid.



However, as with the “transnational” and “trans-Pacific” conceptions of other researchers, if *qiaoxiang* links are not to be mistaken for intentions rather than outcomes, it is necessary to explain the motives for establishing and maintaining the links. It is in helping to explain motivation that the *qiaoxiang* perspective and the concept of the *qiaoxiang* links provides a better scope for interpretation than the more descriptive “transnational” or “trans-Pacific”. Motivations to maintain links with the *qiaoxiang* were not only based on income and a desire to support the family, aims that could have been accomplished by settling in the destinations as many *huqiao* did. Just as important were motivations based on prestige, a motive not only linked to the *qiaoxiang* and family but one that was difficult to transfer elsewhere.

A major reason researchers employing nation-state perspectives have focused on laws and prejudice as determining factors for the *huqiao* is that without them it is difficult to provide motivations for actions or patterns of behaviour. Nation-state studies, for example, have looked at the entry of Chinese people into a defined territory as the most important aspect of that history while struggling to explain why they did so in the face of barriers raised. However, from a *qiaoxiang* perspective, such entry is merely one step in an overall process, the focus of which is the *qiaoxiang*. Even when *qiaoxiang* motivations were supplanted by other motives, they remain important as part of the context in which such decisions took place. A *qiaoxiang* perspective is essential to allowing broader interpretations of motivation, motives that operated not only in the destinations but also in the *qiaoxiang*.

Motivations can be clarified through a *qiaoxiang* perspective because of the broadening of context that this brings. It is not that settlement, assimilation, striving to become ‘American’ or ‘Australian’, as outlined in many nation-state narratives, did not occur. These things existed, but they existed as part of a broader context encompassed by the *qiaoxiang* links. For each example of those who chose to settle in a destination, many others made the choice to return to the *qiaoxiang*. A choice not only based on considerations of destination prejudice or restrictive laws but also on ‘success’ and ‘failure’ in terms that require an understanding of the *qiaoxiang* to be satisfactorily understood.



The *huaqiao* did not always return to the *qiaoxiang* and many remained in the destinations. A consequence of the nation-state focus is that much of the history of Chinese people in the destinations is written in terms of ‘migration’ and ‘settlement’ through studies only of those who stayed. Not only does the *qiaoxiang* perspective allow such stayers to be seen as part of a broader movement but also that many decisions to stay were part of the *qiaoxiang* links. Many of those who settled in the destinations did so for reasons associated with their *qiaoxiang* links. Destination conditions and laws were undoubtedly factors also, but they were ones that influenced the *huaqiao* in a variety of ways when seen from the *qiaoxiang* perspective.

In a similar fashion, those *huaqiao* who as seen as part of the ‘Chinese diaspora’ can also be seen to have done so as a consequence of the movement and the *qiaoxiang* links. They represent a minority of *huaqiao* who failed to return to their *qiaoxiang* due to a variety of destination and *qiaoxiang* factors, that is, because of the *qiaoxiang* links. Often missing in discussion of the Chinese diaspora is any acknowledgement that this is only one consequence or result among many. The origin of the Chinese diaspora was largely the consequence of movement during the period 1849 and 1949 and the choices of a minority of settlers and ‘non-returners’. The overall consequences of the *qiaoxiang* links included destination settlement as well as “returns with glory”, diaspora’s, as well as new villages, elaborate towers and destination Chinatowns. This is an interpretation made possible using the *qiaoxiang* perspective.

Just as the economic focus of diaspora studies has led to an emphasis on merchants so the focus on those who were actually in a nation-state has led to a neglect of those who left them or who never came. Yet the role of families in the *qiaoxiang*, as well as cultural and psychological ties to the *qiaoxiang*, were significant to the actions and aims of even *huaqiao* who spent all their lives in a destination. A *qiaoxiang* perspective has been especially valuable in encompassing a range of participants regardless of location, temporary or permanent, into this history. Women, parents, villagers, *qiaokan* editors, gentry, the poor and those who failed to earn destination incomes, the destination-born and white wives, those who returned and those who



stayed. These are all participants in this history usually neglected by investigations that use the boundaries of nation-states to determine who is included.

An aspect of the border-guard view is that border protection and restrictive immigration laws are seen to have determining roles. That is, that the history of the movement of Pearl River Delta peoples is about nation-states, governments and the powerful, building up barriers and controlling people's destiny. The *huaqiao* and others are seen as victims of this process, outsiders trying to slip through the cracks. However, once the perspective is changed to a more 'bottom-up' approach a very different history can be seen in which border controls and restrictive laws are often reactive to the demands and strategies of people in the Pearl River Delta villages. The structure of these laws, bureaucratic responses and ultimately the sense of the nation-state, are themselves outcomes of processes and history that must first be understood on the level of families and the *qiaoxiang*.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the *qiaoxiang* perspective has been the 'legitimisation' of *huaqiao* ideals and intentions. This thesis has argued that to deny those actions of the *huaqiao* that do not fit assumptions about the 'correct' behaviour of new migrants or residents is to deny the legitimacy of the ideals and intentions of the *huaqiao* themselves. The assumption of this thesis has been that *huaqiao* efforts to support their *qiaoxiang* are as legitimate as efforts to migrate and settle. It was not assumed that moving to a destination to earn money and then to leave after a period is behaviour for which 'blame' is to be laid or an 'explanation' in racism or legal restrictions must be sought.

The 'Chinese' have not therefore been assumed to be a 'problem' in need of 'explanation', but as participants in history whose aims are legitimate in their own terms. The capacity to understand and legitimise the aims of the *huaqiao* and to discuss their actions and intentions in their own terms was greatly facilitated by the *qiaoxiang* perspective. This legitimisation of the *huaqiao* aims meant that return, support for a *qiaoxiang* based family and toleration of harsh conditions, as well as efforts to subvert restrictive laws, could be seen in a new light. Such activities do not have to be explained away, turned into heroics or blamed solely on destination



factors. Instead, they were part of efforts by the *huqiao* to maintain links with their *qiaoxiang*, efforts based on *qiaoxiang* such as Long Du.

Once the intentions of the *huqiao* themselves are accepted then the choices and opportunities that they had as the result of the *qiaoxiang* links can also be seen. These choices resulted from the interaction of circumstances in both the *qiaoxiang* and the destination, leading some to return and some to stay, some to remain sojourners and others to settle in the destinations or in Hong Kong or Shanghai. The *qiaoxiang* links were a complex interaction in which various choices and opportunities were created by the *qiaoxiang* links themselves. There were factors that limited people's choices and those that widened their opportunities. Some of the choices people made maintained or strengthened their *qiaoxiang* links, while others weakened or ended the links. There were those who never considered any other choice but to return and some who perhaps never intended to return once they had left their *qiaoxiang*. Within these extremes lie the bulk of *huqiao* who made their choices one at a time, seized or neglected opportunities and found that the choices they made led in unforeseen directions. For some, choices led to a loss of the *qiaoxiang*/destination link and return to their *qiaoxiang* as entry to a destination became more difficult or the environment more hostile. The restrictive laws and racism, however, could also mean profits, obligations to sponsor or lower incomes, the consequences of which could be again the loss of the *qiaoxiang* link but with settlement in the destination the result.

Destination Qiaoxiang has attempted to improve the understanding of the history of the movement of Pearl River Delta people around the Pacific Ports through the adoption of a *qiaoxiang* perspective. Such a perspective, it has been argued, widens the context of this history and allows motivations and an understanding of choices and opportunities to be understood. Most important has been the concept of the *qiaoxiang* links, through which the *huqiao* were able to influence their *qiaoxiang* and maintain their lifestyle. As well, this perspective provides an overall context to nation-state and diaspora research while allowing many assumptions of these approaches to be identified and explored. The *qiaoxiang* perspective also enables more adequate explanations for many aspects of *huqiao* history, explanations that



allow the ideals and intentions of the *huqiao* themselves to be incorporated into this history. Such a perspective also allows us to concentrate on motivation over results, to give cultural origins and explanations greater weight and to see them with more clarity. Finally, this perspective allows the ‘success or failure’ of the *huqiao* to be judged in their own terms rather than in terms of assimilation, resistance to racism or restrictive laws. Thus merchants and ageing ‘bachelors’ in the destinations can be seen to be the tip of a larger group of China and Hong Kong merchants, women in the villages and retired market gardeners and laundrymen who “returned with glory” to their *qiaoxiang*.

Further perspectives

The thesis developed in *Destination Qiaoxiang* is by no means a final step in establishing a *qiaoxiang* perspective over nation-state perspectives. As one researcher has stated:

By developing a diasporic history of Chinese migration that does not fit into standard American narratives of what immigration should be, and by resisting the racist and nationalist pressure to interpret such practices as undesirable, we will be able to more fully situate the gender and family composition of Chinese migration, and even embark on a coherent alternative to the hegemonic narratives of nationalistic history.⁴

Perhaps the *qiaoxiang* emphasis of this thesis cannot be described as a “diasporic history”, but it has attempted to go beyond the limitations of “standard American narratives” or the nation-state perspectives of most United States and Australian research. A focus on the legitimacy of *huqiao* ideals and the *qiaoxiang* perspective has, it is argued, enabled “racist and nationalist” pressures to be resisted. While the wider context of the *qiaoxiang* links has allowed many who have been left out of this history to be more fully included. These thesis has also attempted to escape the “hegemonic narratives of nationalistic history” through its focus on ‘*qiaoxiang* links’ over place, ‘ports’ over nations and above all, through the use of a *qiaoxiang* perspective. The result has been a history where the concerns and issues of nation-

⁴ McKeown, “Transnational Chinese Families and Chinese Exclusion, 1875-1943”, p.81.



states are pushed into the background. As well, factors such as the restrictive laws imposed by these nation-states have been seen to be less dominating and even to some degree reactive and conditional to the concerns and actions of the *qiaoxiang*.

Essential to the approach of this thesis has been the focus on a single *qiaoxiang*. This approach was adopted for many reasons but one was an awareness that much previous research has been based on generalisations in an area of great diversity. Many more ‘single *qiaoxiang*’ investigations will be needed before the extent and depth of this diversity can be fully known and adequate comparative analysis done. The range and quality of local sources found in Zhongshan County and Long Du district have demonstrated that such investigations can yield much. The archives, local libraries, villages and personal collections of this Pearl River Delta county contain much of value to the historian of the *qiaoxiang* links. While other Pearl River Delta counties have not been looked at to the same degree there is every probability that similar if not better sources will be found by future researchers.

Oral history in particular, in both the Pearl River Delta and the destinations, is one of great potential for this field. Oral research in the *qiaoxiang* is essential to enable the *qiaoxiang* perspective to be used and to bring into the history of the *qiaoxiang* links those who returned to the *qiaoxiang* as well as those who never left. Oral history in the destinations is more common but the nation-state perspectives of most studies has meant that oral history research among *huaqiao* settlers and their descendants has focused almost entirely on actions and attitudes in the destinations. Rarely has the concern been with questions of *qiaoxiang* relations. Yet such questions are part of the choices of even those who spent most of their lives in the destinations. Choices made within the *qiaoxiang* context are a significant part of the history of Chinese communities in the destinations and of the development of the Chinese diaspora which require further research, including re-interpretation of evidence.

A continuing theme identified in nation-state-based research has been the attitude that ‘Chinese migration’ represents a ‘problem’ in need of solution. Central to this has been the concept of the ‘sojourner’ and ‘sojourning’. That people from the Pearl River Delta ‘sojourned’ cannot be denied. The question is, however, does this



sojourning represent something unique in the history of migration? To answer this question research comparing the movement of people from the Pearl River Delta to the movements of other peoples is needed. A re-conceptualisation of ‘sojourning’ is also needed if the history of Chinese movement is not to be continually seen as a unique ‘problem’, an issue within the racial politics of other nation-states to be explained, defended or justified.

In the absence of comparative research of the movement of Chinese and other peoples the focus of much analysis is on the outcomes of migration over its intentions. What were the results of the movement of the *huqiao* is a question given priority over what were the intentions of the *huqiao* in moving? An understanding of intentions is necessary to bring out choices and their context, without which outcomes become substitutes for motives. A focus on outcomes is common in destination-based research in which those who stayed/settled are studied almost exclusively and this outcome is assumed to have been the original intention. The choices leading up to this outcome are rarely considered while returnees are neglected or interpreted as ‘deviations’ from this outcome.

This tendency to focus on outcome can be seen even when sojourning is recognised as a form of migration. Wang Gungwu, for example, has described the existence of a distinct form a migration “featuring ‘sojourners’ who eventually became migrants”.⁵ The original intention not to settle in a destination is recognised yet behaviour aside from when “they eventually settled down” is discounted. In a later study Wang Gungwu described sojourning as, “a distinct form of temporary and experimental migration”.⁶ Here the legitimacy of sojourning in itself is questioned in favour of migration that leads to permanent settlement somewhere.

If sojourning is not accepted as a legitimate form of movement in itself then it will always be seen as a step towards ‘real’ migration and the primacy of the concerns of the ‘host’ nation-states will be maintained. Migration and the movement of people is

⁵ Wang Gungwu, “Migration and Its Enemies”, in Bruce Mazlish & Ralph Buultjens (Eds.), *Conceptualizing Global History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p.133.

⁶ Wang Gungwu, “Migration History: Some Patterns Revisited” in Wang Gungwu (Ed.), *Global History and Migrations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p.2.



not by its nature easily divided into various types, but the acknowledgement of sojourning as a part of the whole is important and points to possible future research. Research of ‘Chinese sojourning’ alone is insufficient however. Comparative studies of what in European studies is called ‘return migration’ would help to determine if the *huqiao* differ in quality or quantity in the persistence of their *qiaoxiang* links.⁷ Many groups have sojourned in the past and do so today. The 19th and early 20th century European missionaries and traders in China were a prominent group of sojourners that are rarely bracketed with the *huqiao* for example. Were the *huqiao* unique or simply uniquely persistent? Does the development of *huqiao* history have parallels? Was the class nature of *huqiao* participation in the movement and the relative ease with which those with overseas income could change their family status the most significant factor? Do the answers to these questions lie in the destinations or the *qiaoxiang*?

The three destinations can be seen as three variations on a theme of white European exploitation of the rights and property of others that were inherently racist in conception and execution. Into this stepped the *huqiao* with inevitable consequences for their relations with those who dominated the destination societies. At this point began a problem not just in relations but in perceptions that it has been argued has continued in subsequent research. Nation-state and immigration perspectives, assimilationist and racist policies of the post-war period and the globalisation enthusiasms of the present have all left their mark upon how the movements and links that took place between 1849 and 1949 are viewed.

This thesis has argued that the aims of the *huqiao* were quite different from those assumed by their ‘defenders’. From a *qiaoxiang* perspective efforts to prove that racism and the restrictive laws were responsible alone or largely, for the low number of women or the high rates of return can be seen as a form of apologetics. Such defences are often based on the assumption that Chinese movement is a ‘deviation’ from a standard migration pattern, one in need of explanation. Instead it has been seen that the *huqiao* were intent on establishing and maintaining complex links

⁷ For a rare example of such a comparative see Franklin Ng, “The Sojourner, return migration, and immigration history”, *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1987, pp 53-71.



between the destinations and their *qiaoxiang* which necessitated their crossing of national borders for purposes quite different from those defined by migration and settlement alone.

The history of *qiaoxiang* links is not merely a history of settlement outside the *qiaoxiang* but a history of efforts to survive, return to, retire in and improve the *qiaoxiang*. It is hoped that this thesis is a contribution to escaping from the ‘Chinese as a problem’ and border guard orientated histories of the nation-states. What this thesis has tried to do is to illustrate a century of links from the perspective of the village and free of the limits of nation-state and border guard views. *Destination Qiaoxiang* has not been about proving diaspora or nation-state studies wrong, but about putting people and their own ideals at the centre of history. The perspective of the *qiaoxiang* was adopted because that was the predominant perspective of those involved for most of the time. The loyalty of the *huaqiao* to their *qiaoxiang* despite the many changes and developments in both destination and *qiaoxiang*, is the key to this history. Overall it has been argued that the inherent narrowness of nation-state perspectives in dealing with a history dominated by movement and family and local loyalties has resulted in limited interpretations. The *huaqiao* movement to the Pacific Ports did include migration and settlement. But this movement cannot be understood without an understanding of life in *qiaoxiang* such as Long Du and of the aims and ambitions of people there, as well as those in the Pacific destinations. This thesis has attempted to understand the core of the history of the links between the destinations and the *qiaoxiang* that is summed up in the phrase “you have been loyal *wah kiu*”.



Places Names

Character	Mandarin (Pinyin)	Cantonese	Long Du dialect (L) & non standard romansiations
中山	Zhongshan	Chongshan	Chung Shan (L)
香山	Xiangshan	Heongshan	Hsiangshan (L)
隆都	Long Du	Lung Dou	Loong Doo (L)
石岐	Shiqi	Shekki	Shakee (L)
良都	Liang Du	Leung Dou	Leoong Doo
小欖	Xiaolan	Siu Lam	
四邑	Siyi	Sze Yap	Ssu Yip
新寧	Xinning	Sunning	Sun Wing
台山	Taishan	Toishan	
開平	Kaiping	Hoi Ping	Hoy Ping
恩平	Enping	Yanping	Ying Ping
新會	Xinhui	Sunwui	Sun Wiy
三邑	Sanyi	Sam Yap	Sam Yip
順德	Shunde	Sun Tak	Sun Duck
增城	Zengcheng	Tsang Sing	Chang Sing
東莞	Dongguan	Tung Guan	Toon Guan
高有	Gao You	Gao Yao	Koyui
赤溪	Chixi	Ch'ih Hsi	
廈門	Xiamen		Amoy
廣東	Guangdong	Kwong Tung	Canton
廣州	Guangzhou	Kwong Chou	Kwang Chou

Villages – Long Du

龍頭環	Long Tou Huan	Lung Tou Wan	Long Tow Wan
嶺厚亨	Ling Hou Heng	Leng Hau Hang	Ling Ho Harng
豪吐	Hao Tu	Hou Tou	Hou Duo
雲漢	Yun Han	Wan Hon	Yuen Han
龍瑞	Long Rui	Lung Sui	Long Soy
象角	Xiang Jiao	Chung Gok	Chung Kok
坎溪	Kan Xi	Ham Kai	Kum Kei
秀山	Xiu Shan	Sau Shan	Sau Shan
申明亭	Shen Ming Ting	San Ming Ting	Sun Ming Ting
隆圩	Long Xu	Lung Ju	Long Hee
涌頭	Cong Tou	Cung Tau	Chung Tou
下澤	Xiaze	Ha Zak	

Villages – Liang Du

竹秀園	Zhu Xiu Yuan	Chu Shu Yuen	
恒美	Heng Mei	Hom Mei	
渡頭	Du Tou	Da Tou	
北台	Beitai	Buck Toy	



General

English	Character	Mandarin (Pinyin)	Cantonese
Old Gold Mountain	舊金山	Jiu Jin Shan	Gao Gam San
New Gold Mountain	新金山	Xin Jin Shan	Sun Gam San
Gold Mountain Firm	金山庄	Jin Shan Zhuang	Kam Shan Chong (Gam San Chong)
overseas Chinese native place	僑鄉	qiaoxiang	kiu hoeng
overseas Chinese	華僑	huaqiao	wah kiu
same place association	同鄉會	tongxianghui	tung hoeng wui
overseas Chinese magazine	僑刊	qiaokan	kui hon
magazine	雜誌	zazhi	fa zi
port (place)	埠	bu	fow
county	縣	xian	jyun
braves/fighters	勇	yong	jung
little sister/slave girl	妹仔	meizi	mui tsai
people	民	min	man
sandy fields	沙田	sha tian	sa tin
plot	畝	mu	mau (mow)
guest people	客家	kejia	hakka
natives	本地	bendi	punti
association	會館	huiguan	wui gun
sterling	司令單	zi ling dan	si ling dan
traveler	旅	lu	leoi
departed friend	先友	xianyou	sin jau
returning home with glory	滿載榮歸	man zai rong gui	mun zoi wing gwai
gold (remittance) letter	金信	jin xin	gum san
gazetter	縣志	Xiang zhi	jyun zi
Gold Mountain women	金山婆	Jin shan po	Gum Sam Po
Gold Mountain Fellow	金山伯	Jin shan bo	Gum Sam Haak
foreign house	洋樓	yang lou	joeng lau
Sydney	雪梨	Xueli	Syutlei
Sacramento	三埠	Sanbu	Samfow
San Francisco	三藩市 大埠	San fan shi Dabu	Samfanshi Da Fow
Honolulu	檀香山	Tanxiangshan	Taanheongsam
guntower	碉樓	diao lou	diu lau
South-East Asia	南洋	nanyang	nam joeng
Boss (Bandit Chief)	大天二	Da Tian Er	Da Tin Yi
Chinatown	唐人街	Tang Ren Jie	Tong Yen Gai

