Abstract of thesis entitled

Collaboration and Conflict: Food Provisioning in Early Colonial Hong Kong

Submitted by

Luk Chi Hung

for the degree of Master of Philosophy
at The University of Hong Kong
in August 2010

The thesis is a study of food provisioners in Hong Kong and the parties involved in local food provisioning, including boat people, fishermen, sea merchants, food shopkeepers, hawkers, and public market operators and stallholders. These people were significant to the survival of the colony; their relations with the British authorities and the relations among these people were a miniature of Hong Kong colonial relations. The discussion commences in 1839 during the First Anglo-Chinese War and ends around 1848, when Governor John Davis left office.

Drawing heavily upon contemporary English-language newspapers and petition letters from the Chinese community, the thesis discusses several important themes in the studies of British imperialism in China and Hong Kong. It argues that the identity of a colonial subject varied over time. Between 1839 and 1848, the food provisioners were transformed from wartime collaborators to an impediment to British rule, and then to supporters of the colonial treasury. Meanwhile, they were not always helpless against colonial rule; sometimes they

united against exploitative government measures. The thesis also examines the weaknesses of British power in China and Hong Kong, including the reliance of the British on indigenous provisioners in the Pearl River Delta in the late 1830s and early 1840s; the failure of the colonial measures against food hawking; and the corruption of the Chinese in the colonial administration through the market farming system.

The thesis unveils an arena in which the Chinese elite managed the affairs of the Chinese community in the 1840s, the public markets. The colonial authorities employed wealthy and trustworthy Chinese as overseers to manage the market trade. But this does not mean that the Chinese elite always represented the interests of the common Chinese or held control over them. The market operators, for example, were unsupportive of their renters' collective actions in the 1844 Registration Affair.

The thesis comprises three chapters. The first traces a neglected root of British colonialism in China. Thanks to Chinese food provisioners in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong was a temporary but reliable food provision centre for the British merchants and soldiers during the Sino-British hostilities. To establish a permanent provision centre was one of the reasons why the British occupied Hong Kong in 1841. As time went on, more food dealers poured into the infant colony, and made it a permanent provision centre. The second chapter studies the features of early British rule in Hong Kong. Accompanying the birth and growth of the city of Victoria, the food hawkers brought spatial and social problems to the colonial government, which then carried out measures against them. These measures were carrot-and-stick in nature, and a mixture of direct and indirect rule. They, however, turned out to be a failure: food hawking

persisted, and new social problems existed. The final chapter unveils the intricate colonial relations forged by the various parties involved in the market farming system. They manipulated available resources to pursue their own interests, and cooperated and conflicted with the other parties in different situations. (499 words)

Collaboration and Conflict

Food Provisioning in Early Colonial Hong Kong

by

Luk Chi Hung
B.A. *CUHK*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Philosophy
at the University of Hong Kong

August 2010

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed……..

Luk Chi Hung

Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I owe a debt of thanks for their support over the past two years. First and foremost, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my primary supervisor Professor John Carroll, who offered guidance and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. I am also very grateful to my co-supervisor Dr David Pomfret for his advice and suggestions.

I would like to thank several friends and colleagues for helping with the preparation of this thesis. Carol Tsang has been very generous in proofreading my thesis many times. I also thank Christopher Cowell for his invaluable advice on Chapter one of my work. Michael Chan, Xyrus Ho, Kelvin Ip, Wilhelmina Ko and Sammy Tsang and have also been helpful in providing insights for my research.

Finally, I wish to express thanks to my family and girlfriend Natalie, who offered constant support and love throughout my MPhil studies at the University of Hong Kong.

Note on Romanisation

It is impossible to standardise the Romanisation of all Chinese words in this thesis. For the Chinese whose Chinese names have not survived, and the Chinese who had both Chinese and English names in record, their names are Romanised according to contemporary usage. For the names of the Chinese with Chinese version only, pinyin is used. Whenever possible, the thesis lists out different versions of names of the Chinese as a reference for readers. Concerning the names of places, institutions and official titles, while the majority are Romanised according to convention, pinyin is applied in some cases.

Table of Contents

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the activities of food provisioners in Hong Kong, and in the Pearl River Delta at large, and the parties involved in the Hong Kong food provisioning system. The discussion commences in 1839 during the First Anglo-Chinese War (1839-42) and ends around 1848, when the second Governor of Hong Kong John Davis left office. This thesis is not an investigation of Hong Kong as an entrepôt of food, for example, the trade of rice and sugar from Southeast Asia to China, Japan and the United States, although it was an important aspect of the history of Hong Kong as a commercial entrepôt.[1] It is also not quantitative research that aimed at making precise calculation of the exact amount of food imported into and exported from the colony, an effort that is deemed impossible because of the serious scarcity of sources available. The thesis is a study of food provisioners in Hong Kong and the parties involved in local food provisioning, including boat people, fishermen, sea merchants, food shopkeepers, hawkers, and public market operators and stallholders.

In early colonial Hong Kong, most food provisioners came and brought their goods from outside Hong Kong. They played a significant role in the survival of the colony. Hong Kong was never, and could never be, self-sufficient. Though the notion that colonial Hong Kong was a barren rock is an exaggeration, the majority of provisions from local farmers and fishermen

[1] For studies that mention the entrepôt trade of rice and salt in colonial Hong Kong, see Jung-fang Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 27; David Faure, "The Rice Trade in Hong Kong before the Second World War", in Elizabeth Sinn, ed., *Between East and West: Aspects of Social and Political Development in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1990), pp. 216-225.

were for subsistence purposes only.[2] As the *Hong Kong Almanack for 1847* noted, "Nearly the whole of the provisions consumed in Hong Kong are brought from the mainland" by the Chinese.[3] A Chinese intellectual called Yu Hanfen understood this, and thus suggested that a good strategy to retake Hong Kong was to call back such "Chinese traitors" (*hanjian*).[4] Moreover, as food supply in any society is basically routine and day-to-day in nature, colonial Hong Kong would suffer seriously if the food provisioners refused to import food, went on strike or returned to China even for only several days. Two good examples of this occurred in the Registration Affair of 1844 and the Strike-Boycott 1925-26.[5]

The term "food provisioners" does not imply that they were one homogeneous group. Rather, it is a large category incorporating a wide range of parties with different backgrounds and interests. The provisioners can be generally divided into importers and sellers, although some belonged to both groups. The food importers included individuals procuring food from nearby rural places and bringing it to the city of Victoria for sale; boat people and fishermen who brought in small amount of catch and goods from the adjacent regions and waters; and merchants sailing large junks to import food from neighbouring and farther places. The food sellers included food shopkeepers,

---

[2] For examples of the opinion of contemporary newspapers and colonial officials on the low food production in early colonial Hong Kong, see *Friend of China*, 27 Aug. 1845, 26 Sept. 1846; *Hong Kong Register*, 9 Dec. 1845; *China Mail*, 8 Jan. 1846.

[3] *The Hong Kong Almanack for 1847* (Hong Kong: Noronha, 1848).

[4] Yu Hanfen, "Shang Liangzhongcheng pingyi" [Memorial to Magistrate Liang to Supress Barbarians], in Ma Jinke, ed., *Jiaoqi Xianggang shi yanjiu ziliao xuanji* [Selection of Sources about Studies of Early Hong Kong], Vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co. Ltd., 1990), p. 264.

[5] For how Chinese food provision dealers caused difficulties to the colony during these two events, see Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 40; E. J. Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong from the Beginning to the Year 1882* (1895; repr., Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 224; Cai Rongfang [Jung-fang Tsai], *Xianggang ren zhi Xianggang shi* [The Hong Kong People's History of Hong Kong, 1841-1945] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 129, 132.

public market stallholders and hawkers. Servants employed by the food importers and sellers, public market overseers and farmers were involved in local food provisioning but fell into neither of the above types. To facilitate discussion, the term "food provisioners" refers here to all of the groups mentioned above. The relations among these groups and their connections with the colonial authorities were a miniature of Hong Kong colonial relations.

Through studying the activities of the food provision dealers, this thesis discusses several important themes of studies of British colonialism in Hong Kong. The first is the relations between the British colonial authorities and Chinese common people. Scholars have argued that the British colonial officials in the 1840s considered most common Chinese in the colony to be the lowest class of the Chinese and an impediment to their rule.[6] This argument, however, simplifies the relations between the colonial authorities and their subjects. This thesis argues colonial authorities held a range of changing attitudes towards their Chinese subjects, depending on how these people cooperated with the British. During the Sino-British hostilities of the late 1830s and early 1840s, many native Chinese in the Pearl River Delta were important wartime collaborators of the British as they went to where the British anchored and supplied them with food. It was only the colonisation of Hong Kong that transformed part of the food provision dealers into an impediment to colonial rule. They were food hawkers, who were "born" at the same time as the city of Victoria. They grew rapidly in number along Queen's Road and other roads and

[6] For the perception of the colonial authorities towards the Chinese population in Hong Kong in the 1840s, see Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Richmond, Surrey, Eng.: Curzon Press, 2001), 68-71, 73; Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 39; Ding Xinbao [Ting Sun Pao Joseph]. "Xianggang zaoqi zhi Huaren shehui, 1841-1870" [Early Chinese Community in Hong Kong, 1841-1870] (Ph.D. diss., University of Hong Kong, 1989), pp. 143-153.

streets, and brought spatial and social problems to the colonial authorities. For a time the Hong Kong government endeavoured to eliminate them. However, when these measures failed, food hawking was at last legalised. Every licensed food hawker then became a supporter of the colonial treasury.

Historians have also emphasised that the Chinese commoners were subjugated and fell victim to oppressive British rule. Christopher Munn, for example, has asserted that in early colonial Hong Kong, "a general criminalization of the Chinese community took place… in the creation of new offences applicable only to Chinese residents, and in the wide net cast by both police and Magistracy."[7] This thesis, on the other hand, shows another side of early British rule in Hong Kong. To eliminate food hawking, the colonial authorities not only imposed strict prohibition but also adopted benevolent measures to attract food hawkers to move into the public markets prepared for them. The British authorities even intended to "educate" food hawkers to be orderly food sellers.

While many scholars perceive that early British rule over the Chinese was indirect in nature, Munn considers it direct and highly infiltrative.[8] Here a dichotomy exists, which shades the intricate natures of British rule in the colony. Taking the management of the public markets as an example, the colonial authorities adopted a mixture of direct and indirect rule: while the colonial police intervened in the market affairs in cases of serious crimes and accidents,

[7] Munn, *Anglo-China*. Fung Chi Ming has also studied the infiltration of police power in colonial Hong Kong and its impact on rickshaw pullers. See *Reluctant Heroes: Rickshaw Pullers in Hong Kong and Canton, 1874-1954* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005).
[8] For academic works that have studied the indirect rule policy in early colonial Hong Kong, see Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity: A Chinese Merchant Elite in Colonial Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003); Tsang, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 56-72 ; for the studies about the infiltrative nature of British rule in Hong Kong, see Fung, *Reluctant Heroes*; Munn, *Anglo-China*.

the market overseers and farmers, who were Chinese, were responsible for the daily administration of the market trade. This shows that the British authorities, according to different situations, would adopt different means of rule, whether direct or indirect, to rule over their subjects.

The discussion above raises a broader question of the nature of British imperialism in China. While Ronald Robinson has highlighted the importance of indigenous collaboration for the founding of the European imperial empires, British power in China before the First Anglo-Chinese War was even weaker and more vulnerable than many have perceived.[9] Under the high-handed measures of Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu, from 1839 to 1841 the British merchants in South China had to flee Canton and Macau and took refuge in the waters of Hong Kong, Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun, and relied on Chinese locals there for food. At that time the collaboration of the indigenous food traders was crucial to the British survival in China.

In early colonial Hong Kong, the British rule was neither smooth nor efficient. As Munn has shown, the weaknesses of early British rule in Hong Kong included judicial inefficiency, corruption and scandal, and the gulf between the colonisers and the colonised.[10] This thesis also examines the weakness of British rule and power in Hong Kong. The colonial authorities desired to remove food hawking from Queen's Road and other roads and streets, but they suffered serious setbacks. The public market system not only failed to solve the problems of food hawking but also led to new social problems. The market farming system introduced by Governor Davis provided golden

[9] Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration", in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 117-142.
[10] Munn, *Anglo-China*.

opportunities for the Chinese working for the colonial administration to extort money from the Chinese market farmers, and that finally led to the exposure to the public of one of the most scandalous corruptions among the officials in early colonial Hong Kong.

This thesis also investigates the relations between the Chinese elite and common people in Hong Kong in the 1840s, a period before what colonial officials called "a better class of Chinese" emerged.[11] Scholars have noticed that as early as this period the Chinese elite had been leaders managing the affairs of the Chinese community through such elite organisations as the City Temple since 1843 and the Man Mo Temple since 1847.[12] Hindered by the paucity of sources, however, scholars could neither specify how these organisations ran nor assess their effectiveness. This thesis provides a platform for detailed discussion of another arena, the public markets. The first public market came into existence in 1842, earlier than the establishment of the two temples. For the daily administration of the markets, the colonial authorities, considering the market trade essentially a Chinese affair, first employed a Chinese overseer and later even franchised the markets to the Chinese. Similar to other Chinese community leaders, the market overseers and farmers were wealthy and trusted by the colonial authorities. The market operators, however, did not do their job well: malpractice of stallholders and crimes in the public markets were commonplace.

Jung-fang Tsai has argued that before the Sino-French War of 1884-85, the Chinese elite represented the interests of the vast Chinese population and

[11] John M. Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 37-57.
[12] Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp. 31-32, 60, 71, 73; Sinn, *Power and Charity*, pp. 15-17; Ting, ""Xianggang zaoqi", pp. 181-190, 307-308; Carl Smith, "Notes on Chinese Temples in Hong Kong", *Journal of Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13 (1973): 133-139.

effectively acted as a bridge linking the Chinese community and the colonial government.[13] Much scholarship on early Hong Kong Chinese elite has conveyed an impression that the Chinese common people were subordinate to their control. The findings in this thesis, however, show otherwise. The stallholders of the public markets neither shared the same interests with the market operators nor were subordinated to them in all cases. The stallholders, for example, may have organised themselves in opposition to the 1844 registration ordinance. The market farmers were certainly unsupportive of, if not opposed to, their actions, which meant a potential decrease of stall rents from the stallholders.

Scholars have usually applied the "coloniser-colonised" paradigm to analyse early Hong Kong colonial relations. On the one hand, they have depicted well the uneasy relations between the colonial authorities and their subjects; on the other hand, there have already been a number of fruitful works on how early colonial measures provided a ladder of affluence to the Chinese elite.[14] Yet the "coloniser-colonised" model fails to unveil the different dimensions of colonial relations and the heterogeneity of a colonial society. As some scholars have noticed, the colonial authorities, Chinese and foreigners were never three homogenous groups.[15] Within each, there were different parties sharing the same but also different interests. Individuals within the same

[13] Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*; Jung-fang Tsai, "Popular Insurrection in 1884 during the Sino-French War", in David Faure, ed., *Hong Kong: A Reader in Social History* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 365-392.
[14] For the studies about the tense relations between the British authorities and Chinese in early colonial Hong Kong, see Smith, Carl T. "The Chinese Settlement of British Hong Kong" *Chung Chi Journal* 48 (May 1970): 30-31 and Dafydd Emrys Evans, "Chinatown in Hong Kong: The Beginnings of Taipingshan." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1970): 69-78; Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 40-41; Munn, *Power and Charity*, pp. 128-130; Eitel, *Europe in China*, pp. 221-226. On how the establishment of a colony in Hong Kong provided the Chinese chances of being wealthy, see Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp. 21-55; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 73-78, Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 43-45.
[15] Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 57-86.

party, and different parties within the same group would cooperate or conflict with one another, and interacted with the other groups concurrently. A Chinese market operator, for example, may have cooperated with the colonial authorities against his Chinese and foreign rivals. The thesis attempts to unveil such complex colonial relations.

Last but not least, the thesis throws lights on the neglected history of the public markets in early colonial Hong Kong. Before the British settled in Hong Kong, food hawking in no sense existed, as most food provision dealers conducted their business ashore and in future Victoria Harbour without any disturbance to the scarce activities of the foreign merchants and British military on land. The rise of food hawking, as mentioned above, coincided with the construction of Queen's Road and other roads and streets after May 1841. To remove food hawkers, the colonial authorities opened the first public market a year later. Set against the backdrop of the establishment of the markets, the thesis scrutinises their physical structure, internal rules and regulations, how they were managed, and the significance of the public market system. The thesis does not end here. In 1844 Governor Davis introduced the farming system into the public markets. By examining how the parties involved in the farming system pursued their own benefits, this thesis unveils the complicated colonial relations.

Perhaps one of the reasons why scholars have not written much on local food provisioning is that they think sources are too scarce or fragmented to write a thorough story. This perception would be correct if we relied only on such "traditional" colonial documents as the *Hong Kong Blue Books* and official correspondence between the Hong Kong colonial government and the

Colonial Office under the series 129 of the Colonial Office files. In these documents, the Hong Kong government kept only very brief records and hardly reported to the Colonial Office matters about local food supply and consumption. The colonial authorities kept even fewer records about food before the establishment of the civil government in the colony in May 1841. The scarcity of sources in official colonial records is out of two reasons. First, circulation of food was less "visible" than other aspects of a colonial society, such as construction of buildings. Second, in many cases the colonial government corresponded with the Colonial Office only when problems appeared. Hong Kong faced no shortage of food provision during most of the period under research. The colonial authorities would not pay much attention to the activities of Chinese common people unless they threatened colonial rule and social stability.

Therefore, in order to study the activities of common Chinese like food provisioners, it is necessary to introduce sources other than "traditional" colonial records. In this aspect, Munn is the first scholar to draw systemically upon two "new" types of sources to reconstruct the colonial society in Hong Kong for its first thirty or forty years. One type is the contemporary English-language newspapers in Hong Kong, Canton and Macau.[16] They carry daily notifications and proclamations of the colonial authorities, editorials on colonial rule and policies, reports of the colony's socio-economic development and, on top of these, the reports of trials in the Magistracy and Supreme Courts. These magisterial and criminal records are indispensable for scholars studying

[16] For a brief introduction about Engligh-language newspapers in early colonial Hong Kong, see Li Shaonan, "Xianggang de zhongxi baoye" [Chinese and Westen Newspaper Industry of Hong Kong] in Wang Gengwu, ed., *Xianggangshi xinbian* [Hong Kong History: New Perspectives], Vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd, 1997), pp. 497-501.

early Hong Kong colonial society, because they often include backgrounds of the complainants, prosecutors, defendants and witnesses. Another source Munn has deployed much is the hundreds of petitions letters presented by the Chinese from all walks of life dated between 1844 and 1851 and now housed in the British National Archives under the series 233 of the Foreign Office files. They also provide very effective insight into the Chinese society in early colonial Hong Kong.

Inspired by Munn, my thesis draws heavily on the English-language newspapers and Chinese petitions. Many food provision dealers came before the Magistracy and Supreme Court to make accusations, depositions or testimonies. Through analysing their statements and details of the cases, we can understand their activities, the corresponding official regulations over them, and the effectiveness of the regulations. Moreover, during the governorship of Davis, a number of the market operators and stallholders petitioned to the colonial authorities. Their petitions not only reflect details of the market farming system but also the relations among the parties engaging in the market farming affairs.

Of course the English-language newspapers and Chinese petitions are not without limitations. Munn has questioned the authenticity of the statements of the Chinese before the court, and the accuracy of translation by the court officials. Whether the details given by the Chinese in their petitions were genuine is highly doubtful too. To overcome these problems, this thesis makes careful comparison between statements of different persons, pays close attention to whether the information is fake and misleading, and never quotes isolated cases.

Apart from the English-language newspapers and Chinese petitions, this

thesis also employs various kinds of other sources. For pre-1841 Hong Kong, this thesis investigates the dispatches from Elliot to Palmerston, the British foreign secretary; Guangdong official records about the status of food provisions in Hong Kong; and trial reports of the "Chinese traitors" selling food to the British kept by the Guangdong authorities. For early colonial Hong Kong, the thesis employs the official letters of Henry Pottinger, the first Hong Kong governor, and Davis to the Colonial Office. Among the letters the most notable are the reports of the trial of two extortion cases related to the public markets. Other important sources include deeds on the lease of the public markets stored in the Government Records Service of Hong Kong; the narratives of the British contemporaries sojourning in Hong Kong and South China; and original maps housed in the British National Archives.

Before we begin, it is necessary to clarify certain key words and ideas in this thesis. In this study, "food" excludes wine and spirits, samshoo, a kind of strong Chinese liquor, ice and opium. As stated earlier, food provisioning refers to local food supply, which means the import and retail of food. Hotel restaurants, refreshment houses, tea shops and banquets held in public halls, private houses and on board the ships in Victoria Harbour are beyond the scope of this study. Most of the "food provisioners" in this thesis were Chinese. There were foreign food provision dealers at that time, for example traders of luxuries stored on ships and in warehouses, bakers, confectioners and poultry keepers. When compared with Chinese food dealers, however, their number and the amount of food they sold were certainly trivial.[17] In order to facilitate

[17] For an example of the bakers, see *Friend of China*, 13 Oct. 1842. For an example of poultry keepers, see *Friend of China*, 5 Jan. 1843. For example of confectioners, see *Friend of China*, 26 Oct. 1844. Examples of luxury traders are prevalent in contemporary English-language newspapers.

discussion, the term "food provisioners" also includes the Chinese compradors of foreign ships anchoring in Hong Kong before 1841.

"Public markets", another key term in this thesis, refer to those food-selling places established and owned by the colonial authorities in the city of Victoria from 1842. Traditional marketplaces and market towns in Stanley and Aberdeen are beyond the scope of this study.[18] Except for coal, goods sold in the public markets were all food.[19] It is also essential to distinguish between the public markets and bazaars. "Bazaar" had several meanings in contemporary records. It meant Chinese settlement in the colony, for example the Upper and Lower Bazaars. It also referred to some selling places owned by private individuals such as the Canton, Duus', Morgan's, Matheson's and Webster's Bazaars. In these places, food was very seldom sold.[20] Some writers have confused the Canton Bazaar with the Central Market.[21] In fact, they were two different places once occurring in the colony at the same time. Some contemporaries even refer to the bazaar as the public market in their writings. On one occasion, for example, the *Hong Kong Register* referred to the Eastern Market as the "Eastern Bazaar".[22]

This thesis comprises three chapters. The first chapter traces a neglected root of British colonialism in China. Thanks to the Chinese food provision dealers in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong, and also Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun, was a temporary but reliable food provision centre for the British

[18] For an introduction of these market towns, see James Hayes, "Hong Kong Island before 1841", *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24 (1988), pp. 105-142.
[19] *China Mail*, 31 Dec. 1846.
[20] Only one source mentions that there was a sweetmeat shop in the Canton Bazaar. See *The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1846* (Hong Kong: China Mail, 1847).
[21] For example of such confusion, see Li Jinwei, ed., Xianggang bainianshi [Centenary History of Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Nanzhongchubanshe, 1848), p. 265.
[22] *Hong Kong Register*, 27 May 1845.

transients and ships of war during the Sino-British hostilities of the late 1830s and early 1840s. To establish a permanent provision centre was one of the reasons why the British occupied Hong Kong in 1841. As time went on, more food provision dealers poured into the infant colony, and the position of Hong Kong as a food provision centre supporting the activities of the British soldiers and merchants became more and more secure.

The second chapter studies the features of early British rule in Hong Kong. After occupying Hong Kong, the colonial authorities built the city of Victoria along the northern shore of the island. While only a small number of food provision dealers were allocated land to conduct trade, those not assigned any land became food hawkers. As food hawking brought about problems to the colony's development, caused annoyance to the foreign community and threatened social order, the British authorities carried out measures against food hawking. Rather than being absolutely oppressive, the government measures were carrot-and-stick in nature: on the one hand, food hawking was strictly prohibited; on the other hand, the government established the public markets to attract them into one orderly place and to "train" them to be orderly food sellers and "good" colonial subjects. For the management of the market affairs, the colonial authorities adopted a mixture of direct and indirect rule: while the police would intervene in the market affairs in case of serious accidents and crimes, Chinese overseers were appointed to regulate habits of the stallholders, who were predominantly Chinese. These measures, however, turned out to be a failure: food hawkers continued to be a headache of the colonial authorities, the public markets were disorderly, new social problems emerged, and the market farming system led to the rise of food prices that caused suffering to common

Chinese in the colony.

The final chapter unveils the relations among the parties involved in the market farming system, including Governor Davis, senior and junior colonial officials, Chinese and foreign market farmers, Chinese government servants, and market stallholders. They employed different means to pursue their wants, and cooperated and conflicted with the other parties in different situations. They forged very complex colonial relations.

Chapter 1

Stomach Matters: Chinese Food Provisioners in the Pearl River Delta and the Occupation of Hong Kong

Historians have generally highlighted the British intention to expand trade in China as one of the primary reasons for the outbreak of the First Anglo-Chinese War (1839-42). Based on this argument, they have attributed the birth of colonial Hong Kong in 1841 to the British desire to establish in China "an emporium between East and West".[1] This chapter, on the contrary, argues that British imperialism in China was not purely expansionist in nature. During the Sino-British conflicts in the late 1830s and early 1840s, the threats of the Guangdong authorities against British food supply and personal safety compelled almost all the British to leave Canton (Guangzhou) and Macau, then the only two settlements for Westerners in China, and to seek refuge on the waters of the Pearl River Delta including Hong Kong Bay, Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun. Without any support from the official comprador system, the British merchants now badly needed other sources of food provision.

The British transients soon found the native food provisioners at their temporary shelters very dependable. Coming from the neighboring regions in

[1] For examples of discussions about how the Sino-British trade was related to the outbreak of the First Anglo-Chinese War, see Peter Fay, *The Opium War, 1840-1842: Barbarians in the Celestial Empire in the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century and the War by Which They Forced Her Gates Ajar* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Michael Greenburg, *British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-1842* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951); Brian Inglis, *The Opium War* (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979). For discussions about British intentions of developing early colonial Hong Kong into a commercial entrepôt, see Jung-fang Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 17-35; Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Richmond, Surrey, Eng.: Curzon Press, 2001), pp. 13-43.

the Pearl River estuary, these Chinese food traders were highly mobile, and were able to furnish the British floating community with abundant and various kinds of food. The provisioners thus successfully transformed Hong Kong Island, and also Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun, into a reliable food provision centre during the Sino-British hostilities. The satisfactory British experience in these retreats partly explains why Charles Elliot, British chief superintendent of trade in China, finally chose Hong Kong as the centre of food provision for not only the British merchants but also the China Expedition after relinquishing Chusan (Zhoushan). This highlights the close yet still largely neglected relations between indigenous collaboration and the British occupation of Hong Kong.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first introduces briefly the traditional official comprador system in South China, and how the Guangdong rulers manipulated the removal of compradors and food supply against the "unruly" foreigners in the early nineteenth century. In 1839, the Chinese Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu repeated such "anti-barbarian" measures, and eventually nearly all the British in China gave up their settlements in Canton and Macau, took shelter on board their merchant vessels, and looked to Chinese locals in the Pearl River Delta region for food. The second section explains why the collaboration of the native food suppliers and unofficial compradors with the British was possible, and examines their ability to satisfy the British needs and tastes for food. The third section discusses the British need for naval depot and provisioning centre for their expeditionary troops after mid-1840, and how the occupation of Hong Kong in January 1841 and the establishment of the permanent provision centre there went in line with the British military and

economic interests in China. The last section focuses on the energetic activities of Chinese food provisioners in the new colony so as to highlight their contribution of founding on colonial Hong Kong a British military station and commercial entrepôt.

The Collapse of the Chinese Official Comprador System

In the early nineteenth century, it was the official compradors, under the traditional Canton System, that provisioned most foreigners in South China.[2] According to the "Rules on Trade between Chinese and Barbarians" of 1809, when a "barbarian ship" proposed to enter Canton, it had to engage a ship comprador at Macau, the Portuguese settlement in China but still partly under Chinese magisterial control until 1887, or Whampoa, an island two miles south of Canton where the legal foreign cargo ships anchored. Another proclamation restricting the "western barbarians" in 1835 clarified ship compradors as the only people allowed to procure provisions for the foreign ships. It also stipulated that factory or house compradors, another type of official compradors, were responsible for all the needs of their secured foreigners in the factory areas in Canton, the only other settlement for Westerners in South China before the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. When the foreign merchants made annual retreat to Macau during the low seasons of trade, factory compradors and Chinese servants would follow their respective masters and take care of their meals.[3]

---

[2] For the introduction of the Canton System, see Immanuel Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 139-167. Paul van Dyke has examined in details the role of compradors in supplying provisions under the Canton system. See *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), pp. 51-75.

[3] Memorial of Bai Ling and Han Feng, 2 June 1809, Memorial of Qing Gui, et al., 1 July 1809, reprinted in Gugong bowuyuan, ed., *Qingdai Waijiao shiliao, Jiaqing chao*, [Diplomatic Historical Documents in the Qing Dynasty, Jiaqing reign], Vol. 3 (Beiping: Gugong bowuyuan,

For decades the Chinese authorities had taken full control of the official comprador system. To become eligible, ship compradors needed guarantees from local lineage leaders and "security neighbors" (*baolin*), the latter of whom were first chosen by the Chinese authorities in Macau and then authorised by the Panyu or Macau mandarins. In Canton, a factory comprador was in a chain of responsibility. He was recommended and guaranteed by an officially appointed linguist, who was in turn selected and secured by a Hong merchant (The Hong merchants were the ones who obtained from the Chinese authorities the monopoly of South China overseas trade before the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing.) Subordinate to the Canton officials, the Hong merchant was held responsible for all the needs and conducts of his secured foreigners.[4]

The Chinese authorities preferred to grasp firmly foreigners' food supply in order to, by using the terms of Paul van Dyke, pacify them and persuade them to yield in case of clashes.[5] Despite the strict control, the foreign merchants in Canton and Macau generally enjoyed luxurious and lavish lives in peaceful times.[6] It was only during Sino-foreign rivalries that the Chinese authorities, in order to "intimidate barbarians" (*zhiyi*), removed Chinese compradors and thus threatened the stomachs of the "unruly" foreigners. The Guangdong rulers twice carried out such measures against them, or more

---

1932), pp. 9-10, 16-18; Memorial of Huang Juezi, 4 May 1838, in Liang Tingnan, comp., *Yue haiguanzhi* [Chronicles of Guangdong Maritime Customs], Vol. 29, pp. 30-31, reprinted in Shanghai guji chubanshe, *Xuxiu sikuquanshu* [Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature, revised edition], Vol. 835 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995); Memorial of Lu Xun and Qi Gong, 8 March 1835, reprinted in Masaya Sasaki, comp., *Yapianzhanzheng qian Zhong-Ying jiaoshe wenshu* [Diplomatic Correspondence between China and Britain before the Opium War] (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1976), pp. 53-55; William Hunter, *The "Fan Kwae" at Canton before Treaty Days* (London: K. Paul, Trench, 1882), pp. 83-85; Fay, *Opium War*, pp. 26-27.

[4] Hunter, *Fan Kwae*, pp. 35-36, 53-54.

[5] Van Dyke, *Canton Trade*, p. 52.

[6] Hunter, *Fan Kwae*, pp. 40-42; Ljungstedt, *Historical Sketch*, p. 283; Lin Zexu to Deng Tingzhen, 5 Jan. 1840, in "Xinjilu" [Collection of Letters of Correspondence], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, p. 360.

precisely the British, in the early nineteenth century. The first happened in 1808 under the reign of Guangdong and Guangxi Governor-General Wu Xiongguang, who in the ninth lunar month ordered Chinese servants to quit their works for the Canton British to counter the aggression of British Rear Admiral William O'Brien Drury towards Macau. Later he even banned food procurement to Drury, his soldiers and British cargo ships in Macau and Whampoa.[7] Twenty-six years later, in 1834, another governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, Lu Xun, again removed from the Canton factories all compradors and servants working for the British, and prohibited all kinds of provisions to the British there. A similar prohibition was also enforced in Macau. Lu's high handed measures were a response to Napier's disobedience of the "rules and institutions under the Heavenly Dynasty" (*Tianchao fadu*) and his naval challenges at the Pearl River Mouth.[8]

The British at the Pearl River estuary were susceptible to the effects of the above threatening measures. In 1808, after the Chinese servants left, the British officials in Canton were forced "to retreat precipitately to their ships". Drury's situation was worse: he desperately sent a dozen sampans into entrance to the

[7] Memorial of Wu Xiongguang, et al., 30 Nov. 1808, Memorial of Wu Xiongguang and Sun Yuting, 14 Dec. 1808, Memorial of Bai Ling, 21 May 1809, reprinted in *Qingdai Waijiao shiliao*. Vol. 2, p. 33-35, Vol. 3, pp. 1-4; Peter Auber, *China: An Outline of the Government, Laws, and Policy* (London: Parbury, Allen and Company, 1834), p. 232. For a detailed account of the Drury affair, see Xiao Zhizhi and Yang Weidong, *Xifeng fu xiyang: Yapianzhanzheng qian Zhong-Xi guanxi* [West Wind Stroke Setting Sun: Sino-Western Relations before the Opium War] (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2005), pp. 280-283.

[8] Proclamation by Lu Xun and Qi Gong, 2 Sept. 1834, Proclamations by Acting Magistrate of Canton District, 4 Sept. 1834, 7 Sept. 1834, Proclamation by Guangdong-Guangxi Governor-General Magistracy, 9 Sept. 1834, reprinted in *jiaoshe wenshu*, No. 10, pp. 8-9, No. 11, pp. 9-10, No 15, pp. 12-13, No 17, p. 13; Memorandum of Foreign Office, Feb. 1840, in "Correspondence Relating to China", No. 14, pp. 32-39, reprinted in Irish University Press Area Studies Series, *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30: Correspondence, Orders in Council, and Reports Relative to the Opium War in China, 1840* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), pp. 270-277. For detailed accounts of the Napier affair, see Maurice Collis, *Foreign Mud: Being an Account of the Opium Imbroglio at Canton in the 1830's and the Anglo-Chinese War That Followed* (London: Faber, 1946), pp. 120-157; Chang Hsin-pao, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press; New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), pp. 51-62.

Pearl River in order to get food from the factory areas by force, an action provoking Chinese military action. One British soldier was killed, three were wounded, and the British ships were forced to return to Whampoa.[9] In 1834, Napier and his staff, as Chang Hsin-pao notes, "were compelled to live on salt meats conveyed from the warship".[10] The vulnerability of the British was one of the reasons why Drury and Napier finally conceded in the above two incidents.

From his predecessors Wu Xiongguang and Lu Xun, Lin Zexu learnt how to *zhiyi*. Conducting his anti-opium movement in Guangdong, Commissioner Lin twice dismissed the Chinese compradors and servants in 1839. On 24 March, three days after he began to blockade the Canton foreigners in their factories, an estimated eight hundred Chinese compradors, servants, cooks and coolies at his command left the service of providing daily supply to the foreigners there, and did not return until mid-April.[11] The withdrawal was a reaction to the escape from Canton to Macau of Lancelot Dent, the most notorious British opium merchant in China in Lin's mind. In mid-August, Lin instructed all Chinese compradors and servants working for the British in Macau to resign. As he stated in his report to the throne, his approach was based on the case of the Drury affair in 1808. [12]

Commissioner Lin, as Chang puts it, did not actually intend to starve the

[9] Memorial of Bai Ling, 4 March 1809, reprinted in *Qingdai Waijiao shiliao.* Vol. 3, pp. 1-4;
[10] Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, p. 56.
[11] Hunter, *Fan Kwae*, p. 143; Great Britain, Foreign Office, Chinese Secretary's Office, Various Embassies and Consulates, China: General Correspondence, Series 682 (FO682), National Archives, Kew, FO682/1972/15, 20 April 1839, Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen to Elliot; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Sept. 1839, pp. 219-221; *Canton Register*, 23 April 1839.
[12] Memorial of Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen, 1 Sept. 1839, reprinted in Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan, ed., *Yapianzhanzheng dangan shiliao* [Historical Documents of the Opium War], Vol. 1 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 669-672.

foreigners in Canton during their detention from March to May 1839.[13] During that time, his primary goal was to confiscate every ball of opium in China owned by the foreign merchants. As early as 27 March 1839, only three days after the Chinese compradors and servants left the Canton factories, Elliot, as head of the British mercantile community in China, gave in and promised that all the British opium traders would hand over their goods. On the same day, Lin accordingly awarded more than two hundred pieces of "sundry articles of food" to the detained foreigners in Canton. Seeing that the opium confiscation and destruction processes were generally smooth, Lin did not impose further measures until August 1839.[14] According to Charles Paterson, an incarcerated British surgeon in Whampoa, a few official compradors remained there throughout the entire period of detention.[15]

In sharp contrast to his measures in Canton, a few months later Lin Zexu was determined to completely suspend the food supply against the whole British community in Macau. In August 1839, he was no longer patient of the British refusal to sign the bonds declaring that they would never bring opium into China; the alleged continuation of British opium trade on Chinese illegal seas; and Elliot's lenient punishment of the murderers of a native villager Lin Weixi at Tsim Sha Tsui.[16] In mid-August, the Chinese authorities in Macau, holding military powers, forbade the market shopkeepers, hawkers and carriers

[13] Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, pp. 157-159.
[14] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 12 April 1839, in "Yapian zouan" [Memorials Related to Opium], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp. 92-93; Lin Zexu to Elliot, 8 April 1839, in "Xinjilu", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp. 252-253; *Canton Press*, 20 April 1839.
[15] *The Times*, 19 Aug. 1840.
[16] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 24 Sept. 1839, in *Linwenzhonggong zhengshu*, [Linwenzhonggong's Political Writings], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp.175-178, Lin Zexu to Macau Acting Magistrate, 22 Aug. 1839, in "Xinjilu", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp. 305-307; Memorial of Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen, 1 Sept. 1839, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 1, pp. 669-672.

there to sell to the British "the smallest quantity of provisions".[17] On 25 August, in Xiangshan (nowadays Zhongshan), bordering Macau, Lin ordered the decapitation of a Chinese provision dealer called Huang Jinsheng who had violated the prohibition.[18]

Harsh or not, Lin's *zhiyi* measures did not cause starvation among both the foreigners in Canton and the British in Macau in 1839. After the Canton detention began in March, the food stocks there lasted for the foreign community for about a month.[19] Furthermore, not only the Canton foreigners but also the Macau British received help from their friends and acquaintances in China during their hard times: in Canton, the *Hong* merchants and linguists, instead of leaving together with the Chinese compradors and servants, transported food into the factories.[20] In Macau, the *Chinese Repository* reported on 21 August, six days after Lin's prohibition against any form of assistance to the British, that "Most of the British houses, however, were supplied with provisions by Portuguese servants, who obtained them without much difficulty."[21]

Their actual experience notwithstanding, Elliot and the British in China often recalled their bitterness induced by the removal of their Chinese compradors and food provision. In September 1839, twenty-eight British and Parsee merchants jointly memorialised to Foreign Secretary Palmerston to express their grievances: "in Macao… we were first deprived of our servants and supply of food, and then compelled to abandon our dwellings, without

[17] *Canton Register*, 27 Aug. 1839.
[18] Lin Zexu, *Lin Zexu riji* [Diary of Lin Zexu], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, p. 27.
[19] Evidence of Robert Inglis, 7 May 1840, pp. 22-23, in "Report from the Select Committee on the Trade with China; Together with the Muniutes of Evidence Taken before them, and an Appendix, and Index", reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, pp. 36-37.
[20] Hunter, *Fan Kwae*, p. 144; *Canton Press*, 20 April 1839.
[21] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, pp. 217, 221.

previous preparation, and in the possession of means barely adequate for the removal of our books, papers, and articles of immediate use and necessity".[22] Even though they might have felt threatened, they exaggerated their real situation, probably because they wanted to draw the attention of the London government.[23] Regardless, their grievances show that they no longer tolerated the Chinese authorities' manipulation of the official comprador system and food supply. As the Chinese mandarins also threatened their personal safety by military force, almost all the British finally fled Macau in late August 1839. Afterwards, they never depended on the official comprador system, even though the Chinese authorities partially restored it during the First Anglo-Chinese War.[24]

Leaving their familiar settlements, most British in South China now lived aboard merchantmen in the waters of the Pearl River Delta. By the end of August 1839, the vast majority, including those who had retired from Canton to Macau since April, were at Hong Kong Bay, the future Victoria Harbour. They remained there until mid-November when they departed to Tung Kwu, or

---

[22] Memorial of British Merchants Resident in China to Palmerston, 7 Sept. 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", Inclosure in No. 158, p. 452, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, p. 692. For other examples of the grievances of Elliot and the British mercantile community, see Public Notice Issued by Elliot to British Subjects, 27 March 1839, Elliot to Palmerston, 11 April 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", Inclosure 20 in No. 146, No. 148, pp. 374, 388, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers*, *China, 30*, pp. 614, 628; Great Britain, Public Record Office, Domestic Records , Miscellaneous Papers and Correspondence Relating to China, with Particular Reference to the China Expedition of 1841-1842, Series 30, Division 12, Sub-Division 26, Sub-Sub-Division 5 (PRO/30/12/26/5), National Archives, Kew, PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Palmerston, 4 May 1840, in "Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of China: 1839-40-41", Inclosure 4 in No.20, No. 43, pp.72-74, 135-157.

[23] For example, on 2 April 1839, only 8 days after the detention started, Elliot reported to Palmerston that the foreigners in Canton had been allowed to buy food. See Elliot to Palmerston, 2 April 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", No. 146, p. 358, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, p. 598.

[24] Susanna Hoe, *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong: Western Women in the British Colony, 1841-1941* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 22; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, May 1839, pp. 14, 21, 24-25, 28-30, Dec. 1839, p. 439; Public Notices to Her Majesty's Subjects, 22 and 23 March 1839, Memorial of British Merchants Resident, 7 Sept. 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", Inclosure 10 in No. 146, No. 158, pp. 363, 452, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, pp. 603, 692; *Canton Register*, 20 April 1839.

Urmston's Harbour, southeast of Lintin Island and west of today's Castle Peak. By the end of April 1840, the British fleet sailed to Kap Shui Mun (Capsingmoon in contemporary records), a passage at the northeast end of Lantau Island leading to Hong Kong Bay. In October 1840, the merchant fleet returned to Tung Kwu.[25] The British community afloat was on a large scale. In early August 1839, according to Henrietta Shuck, an American missionary passing through Hong Kong Bay, a total of 45 "square-rigged vessels" "in different directions" had already berthed there.[26] Before the arrival of the first China expedition in mid-1840, the vessels, including several non-British ones, on one occasion totaled as many as 70 and loaded several thousands of British subjects in China.[27]

Without any support from the traditional comprador system, the British transients, now living on Chinese "illegal" waters, badly needed alternative sources of food. James Matheson, head of Jardine, Matheson & Co., reported to Elliot on the day before his embarkation from Macau that provisions had been ordered from Manila.[28] At about the same time, Elliot wrote to the captain-general of the Philippines and the governor of Singapore for food importation.[29] These overseas supplies, however, were insufficient and could not serve the urgent needs of so many British sojourners in China. Throughout

[25] PRO/30/12/36/5, Elliot to Auckland, 16 Oct. 1840, Inclosure 10 in No. 146, p. 363; Memorial of British Merchants, 7 Sept. 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", Inclosure in No. 158, p. 452, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, p. 692; Lin, "Xinjilu", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp. 279-280; *Canton Register*, 27 Aug. 1839.
[26] Susanna Hoe and Derek Roebuck, *The Taking of Hong Kong: Charles and Clara Elliot in China Waters* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 21.
[27] Notice to the Chinese People against Poisoning the Water, 2 Sept. 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", Inclosure 1 in No. 157, p. 448, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, p. 688; Lin, "Xinjilu", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, p. 358; *Canton Press*, 21 Sept. 1839.
[28] PRO/30/12/36/5, James Matheson to Elliot, 25 Aug. 1839, Inclosure 2 in No. 155, pp. 434-436; Collis, *Foreign Mud*, p. 248.
[29] PRO/30/12/36/5, Elliot to Auckland, 22 March 1840, Inclosure in No. 22, p. 77.

the entire period of the Sino-British hostilities, some foreign merchants, similar as before, sold miscellaneous articles at the British assemblages, but the items were chiefly luxuries. The limitations of the above means of food provision underlined the necessity of assistance from indigenous Chinese in the Pearl River Delta region.

Chinese Food Provisioners in the Pearl River Delta

According to a contemporary Chinese ballad, Guangdong is a region of "three mountains and six seas". The ballad implies one common background of the province's maritime population: their close relations with water.[30] Many lived either ashore or aboard boats, and participated in full-time, part-time or temporary water related occupations. A lot of these coastal Chinese and their descendants had worked for foreigners as unofficial linguists and pilots, opium smugglers and, of course, food suppliers for decades or centuries prior to the Sino-British conflicts in the late 1830s and early 1840s. During the conflicts, thousands of Chinese locals at the mouth of the Pearl River actively approached or were passively approached by the British temporarily taking refuge on board and, on a voluntary basis in most cases, provided their clients with food at Hong Kong Bay, Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun.[31] Apart from provisions sellers, some Chinese were private compradors of the British ships during and also before the beginning of the Sino-British hostilities. Huang Tianhua, for example,

[30] Reply to the Imperial Edict by Lin Zexu, et al., 27 April 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, p. 67.

[31] For example of Chinese as unofficial linguists and pilots, see Memorial of Wei Yuanlang, 28 June 1832, in "Daoguang chao waiyang tongshang an" [Documents of Trade on Outer Waters in Daoguang Reign], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng,* Vol. 1, p. 95 ; as opium smugglers, see Memorial of Liang Zhangju, 8 July 1832, in "Daoguang chao waiyang", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng,* Vol. 1, pp. 101-102; as food suppliers, see Memorial of Lu Xun, et al., 11 March 1833, in "Daoguang chao waiyang", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng,* Vol. 1, p. 115.

was a comprador aboard various foreign ships since 1835. He worked for the merchantman *Carnatic* of Jardine, Matheson & Co. when he was arrested by the Chinese authorities in June 1839.[32]

There were a number of external favorable factors for the Chinese food dealers in the Pearl River Delta region to collaborate with the British nearby during the Sino-British clashes. The region has a rugged coastline of different fathoms, with innumerable offshore islands and channels of passages. The countless ports on isles of various sizes dotting in the river mouth were excellent hideouts for Chinese boats and sampans. Accustomed to the local geographical setting, these maritime Chinese were able to escape detections by the official patrols.[33]

The Chinese official control was too loose to stop the Chinese boats from sailing to where the British anchored. In order to diminish the "traitorous" activities of boat and fishing peoples, Lin Zexu announced a set of regulations stipulating that each ship at Guangdong ports was assigned a serial number and organised into a group of five, within which members were mutually responsible; fishing ships could not set out to sea before the foreign vessels went away; and fishermen were only allowed to have at most one day of foodstuffs on their boats. It is highly doubtful, however, whether the corrupt and inadequate Chinese officials ever rigorously enforced these measures in the littoral areas. As late as April 1840, Lin still reported to the throne that "the number of ships was inestimable, and hitherto the coding had not yet

[32] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 21 Nov. 1839, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 1, p. 727; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, June 1839, p. 112; Lin, *Linwenzhonggong*, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, p. 189.

[33] Dian Murray has vividly described the geographical settings of the Pearl River Delta and the South China seas at large. See *Pirates of the South China Coast, 1790-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 15-18.

completed."[34]

The Chinese mandarins also failed to prevent the coastal villagers of South China from collaborating with the British. Although repeatedly forbidding any forms of cooperation between rural Chinese and the Westerners during the First Anglo-Chinese War, the Chinese officials carried out no specific enforcement measures.[35] The suggestion of Ceng Wangyan, magistrate of Shuntian prefecture, part of today's Beijing, in June 1840 to organise local militia (*tuanlian*) along the coasts was stopping the barbarians on water from landing but did not keep a close eye on the villagers. As shown below, many of these villagers were indispensable food vendors for the British.[36] Compared with the official compradors in Canton and Macau, the coastal population of Guangdong faced much fewer constraints and could reach the British anchorages more freely.

Admittedly, not all the British anchorages were ideal venues for the littoral Chinese to sell food. While foreign merchants long regarded Hong Kong Bay as an excellent natural shelter, sea entrances in Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun were so open that the enemies could attack the two places easily.[37] Still, the Chinese naval authorities lacked adequate forces both to interdict local assistance to their enemy living aboard and to launch vigorous attacks upon where the British vessels assembled. The most effective Chinese military action against the contraband food trade during the Sino-British hostilities was the stationing of

[34] Reply of Lin Zexu et al. to the Imperial Edict, 27 April 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, p. 67.
[35] For examples of the announcement of the prohibitions, see *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, pp. 212-215, Sept. 1839, p. 269; *Canton Register*, 27 Aug. 1839; Memorial of Lin Zexu, 16 Aug. 1839, reprinted in *Chouban yiwu*, Vol. 9, p. 22.
[36] Memorial of Ceng Wangyan, 14 Jan. 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 1, p. 769.
[37] Hugh Lindsay, *Remarks on Occurrences in China: Since the Opium Seizure in March 1839 to the Latest Date* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1840), p. 48.

the three naval cruisers in late August 1839 by the Dapeng Squadron colonel near the Kowloon Mountain at the eastern shore of Kowloon Peninsula adjacent to Hong Kong Bay. There native boatmen and villagers had been unable to trade until 4 September 1839, when the three Chinese warships suffered damages from the British cannonades and sailed away. The local provisions trade then became prosperous again.[38]

After the Kowloon mêlée, the Chinese mandarins no longer posed a serious challenge to illegal provisioning activities in the Pearl River Delta. On several occasions Chinese war crafts and fireboats surprised native boats and huts and caught a handful of "Chinese traitors", but the effect of such piecemeal raids were only trivial.[39] When the British commenced their campaign at the river entrance by the end of 1840, the Chinese naval power was so restrained that the military authorities did not venture any assault on the British anchorages afterwards.[40] Without serious threats from their rulers, the local Chinese, as Elliot's reports to London show, consistently supplied the British with food after the skirmish at Kowloon.[41]

In a letter to Palmerston in March 1840, Elliot concluded that the British experience in China for the past few months had proven that "wherever protection is available to the Chinese subjects, there will always be large

---

[38] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 18 Sept 1839, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 1, p. 679; Elliot to Palmerston, 23 Sept. 1839, in "Correspondence Relating to China", No. 159, p. 455, reprinted in *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30*, p. 695; *Canton Press*, 7 Sept. 1839, 21 Sept. 1839; *Canton Register*, 1-30 Sept. For how Chinese war junks blocked British food procurement, see Acting Magistrates of Foshan and Macau to Elliot, 20 June 1839, in "Xinjilu", reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, pp. 301-302.

[39] *Canton Press*, 14 Dec. 1839, 7 March 1840, 13 June 1840; *Canton Register*, 3 March 1840, 9 June 1840; Memorials of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, 4 June 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49, 129-130; PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Palmerston, 19 Jan. 1840, Elliot to Palmerston, 19 Feb. 1840, Elliot to Auckland, 22 March 1840, Elliot to Palmerston, 28 March 1840, No. 14, No. 19, Inclosure in No. 22, No. 24, pp. 45, 62-63, 77, 82-83.

[40] Fay, *Opium War*, pp. 261-282.

[41] PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Auckland, 22 March 1840, Inclosure in No. 22, p. 77.

quantities of supplies". His statement requires clarification. Notwithstanding the superiority of the British cannons, one should not overestimate the protection they offered to the Chinese provisioners at the British temporary anchorages which were extensive. After the H.B.M. sloop *Larne* left for India on 29 May 1839, not a single British warship was present in China until the arrival of the H.M.S. *Volage* three months later. By mid-October, it was joined by another, the *Hyacinth*. From then on, for the next ten months, no more British warships came to China.[42] Very often the *Volage* and *Hyacinth* even left the British assemblages to perform military actions, to intimidate the Chinese authorities, and to protect those British returning to Macau.[43] Even if one counts auxiliary naval force-- the famous cutter *Lousia*, for instance-- the British maritime power in China was by no means strong until the first China Expedition arrived in mid-1840.[44]

Therefore, it was largely the British merchant fleet that provided security for the Chinese food traders, who berthed their bumboats alongside the foreign merchantmen in order to avoid being captured. Such kind of security, however, was very unreliable. In the mandarins' fire attacks, the Chinese provisioners always suffered much more damage than the British floating community. The British protection was even weaker when the raids specifically aimed at the Chinese natives.[45] Still, the coastal Chinese did not stop provisioning the British, simply because they possessed some strengths that enabled them to

[42] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, June 1839, p. 57; *Canton Press*, 12 Oct. 1839, 2 Jan. 1841.
[43] For example see *Canton Press*, 2 Jan. 1841; *Canton Register*, 4 April 1840.
[44] For discussion about the activities of the *Louisa* in the First Anglo-Chinese War, see Fay, *Opium War*, pp. 127-129.
[45] *Canton Press*, 14 Dec. 1839; Memorials of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, 4 June 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49, 129-130; *Canton Press*, 7 March 1840, 13 June 1840; *Canton Register*, 3 March 1840, 9 June 1840; PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Palmerston, 19 Feb. 1840, Elliot to Palmerston, 28 March 1840, Inclosure in No. 22, No. 24, pp. 62-63, 82-83.

evade the seizure of the mandarins.

First, the Chinese provisioners in the Pearl River Delta were highly mobile in terms of their scope of activities. When the chance came, many were ready to quit their former occupations and sail their boats from different native districts to where the British gathered. Such mobility saved much of the British effort in finding private compradors and sources of food. Among the ten "Chinese traitors" apprehended in an official night attack at Tung Kwu on 29 February 1840, Huang Tianfu was formerly a fisherman, boatman and servant. He carried two cattle for sale to the waters of Cheung Sha Wan, west of Kowloon near Tung Kwu, when noticing that the British were there. Lin Yachang, Zhong Yashou and Liu Yawu, the other captured culprits, were formerly peddlers in Xin'an district (Hong Kong Bay, Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun were all parts of Xin'an). They shipped food to a sandy beach on an island at Tung Kwu, where they erected huts and sold food to the British purchasers, who approached them by sampans. Huang Tianhua, the aforementioned private ship comprador of various foreign ships until he was taken into custody in June 1839, came from Dongguan district, adjacent to Xin'an.[46]

The Chinese provisions dealers were mobile because the size of their activity groups and ships were generally small. They could thus prevent the Guangdong military from discovering them when travelling from one place to the other. The food purveyors arrested in the nocturnal assault of February 1840 acted either in a group of two, Chen Shuisheng with Wu Ya'er for instance, or individually like Lin Yachang. Their vessels were sampans or small fishing

[46] Memorials of Lin Zexu, et al., 21 Nov. 1839, 29 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 1, pp. 727-729, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49.

boats.[47] Loo Aqui, owner of a large fleet useful for transporting foodstuffs to the British navy at Hong Kong Bay during the war, was only one of the very few exceptions.[48]

Many Chinese food providers had extensive social networks. As the *Canton Press* described, the native boats in Tung Kwu moored in regular lines.[49] After the British occupied Hong Kong in January 1841, the Tung Kwu people established there a native bazaar, which was so well organised that there was a "head Chinaman" who helped keep order.[50] A detailed example shows the functions of such strong local networks. According to the *Canton Press*, in early January 1841 the Chinese authorities plotted to send spies to the Chinese transient community in Tung Kwu, "with the view of ascertaining the names of the dealers, so as to able to visit the punishment of their contumacy upon their unoffending families". Discovering the plot, the Chinese transients attacked the boat of the eight informers, two of whom then jumped overboard and were drowned The remaining six "were bound, and tied to the timbers of the boat, which was hauled on the beach high and dry". Food trade in Tung Kwu as a result remained unaffected.[51]

An important reason why the British aboard relied on the native food provisioners was that the latter could maintain stable and abundant food provision. Although each local boat and booth sold only a small amount of

---

[47] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, 18 Oct. 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49, 484; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, p. 215.
[48] *Yingyi ru-Yue jilue* [Account of the English Barbarians' Entry into Guangdong], reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 3, pp. 25-26; William Tarrant, *Hong Kong: A History of Hong Kong from the Time of Its Cession to the British Empire to the Year 1844*, Vol. 2 (Canton, Friend of China Office, 1862), p. 16; *Friend of China*, 6 May 1846; *China Mail*, 9 Nov. 1861.
[49] *Canton Press*, 2 Jan. 1841.
[50] Elliot Bingham, *Narrative of the Expedition to China, from the Commencement of the War to Its Termination in 1842: With Sketches of the Manners and Customs of That Singular and Hitherto Almost Unknown Country* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), p. 42.
[51] *Canton Press*, 9 Jan. 1841.

provisions, their congregation at where the British fleet took refuge formed an enormous marketplace, either ashore or afloat. In early August 1839, before the British fled Macau, "daily upwards of 100 comprador's boats" had already stayed at Hong Kong Bay selling food and miscellaneous articles. When Elliot and his Chinese-language secretary, Karl Gützlaff, cruised to Kowloon to procure food in early September 1839, the native food tradesmen promptly brought "a large quantity of pigs, ducks and fowls to the beach for sale."[52] From Tung Kwu waters, Elliot wrote to Palmerston in January 1840 that at least two thousand Chinese boats dwellers were selling food to the British.[53] A year later, the *Canton Press* wrote: "Ever since the English shipping have made Tungkoo [Tung Kwu] their anchorage, a number, daily increasing, of all kinds of Chinese tradesmen carrying on their business in boats, have gathered there, until at the present time there are so many".[54] The size of the marketplace was so considerable that the editor described it as a "floating Wapping". A number of Chinese traders even set up provisional sheds there for temporary residence.[55]

Why were there so many Chinese congregating at where the British assembled? Some had invited their fellows to join the food trade, while some others had requested referrals from their friends to the British clients. Chen Shuisheng, a poor peddler in a Xin'an bazaar, on the one hand asked Wu Ya'er to be his companion in sea food trade with a British vessel, and on the other hand asked for a recommendation from his friend Huang Tianfu, who was

[52] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 7 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, p. 27; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, p. 215; *Canton Press*, 21 Sept. 1839.
[53] PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Palmerston, 19 Jan. 1840, Elliot to Palmerston, 19 Feb. 1840, Nos. 14, 19, pp. 45, 62-63.
[54] *Canton Press*, 9 Jan. 1841.
[55] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49.

already engaged in the provision business. Most probably the coastal vendors along the Kowloon shore knew one another, as many of them came from the same village in Tsim Sha Tsui, "a large town in the immediate neighbourhood of Hongkong".[56]

Provisions supplied by the Chinese at the Pearl River estuary were wide-ranging. They included flour used for cooking bread, and other kinds of British staple food such as chickens, geese, ducks, and vegetables and fruits of all sorts. Of the twenty or more native boats burnt by the Chinese war junks at Tung Kwu in late February 1840, fifteen were flat boats loaded with snacks, cakes and biscuits.[57] This, however, does not mean that all the food items sold by the sellers were cheap and small-sized. A number of better-off coastal Chinese were capable of supplying the British with relatively costly foodstuffs. Chen Shuisheng, arrested for peddling snacks, confessed before the Chinese authorities that his scale of business was incomparable to Huang Tianfu, who on two occasions traded with a British ship six cattle in exchange for six balls of Bengal opium, which he then sold to Zheng Futian and Zheng Chengzhao at $150 (At that time the average monthly salary of a Chinese police constable in Canton was about $4).[58] In August 1839, along the coast of Kowloon Peninsula were shops of wine and miscellaneous articles. In early January 1841, Chinese traders at Tung Kwu were so diversified that there were carpenters, blacksmiths, tailor's shop keepers, shoemakers and ginshop keepers, and "each boat … [was] a shop in which most necessities and even some luxuries of life are offered for sale." The British lives on the outer waters, therefore, were not as hard as

[56] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, p. 215; *Canton Press*, 21 Sept. 1839.
[57] Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, p. 215.
[58] *Canton Press*, 5 May 1840; Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49.

Commissioner Lin perceived.[59]

The satisfactory experience of the floating British shows that the Chinese authorities failed to intimidate them through starvation. The highly mobile local compradors and food suppliers at the estuary of the Pearl River contrasted sharply with their counterparts under the mandarins' stringent control in Canton and Macau. The former simply replaced the latter: the native food provisioners swiftly proceeded to where the British took refuge and supplied them with food. Thanks to their collaboration, Hong Kong, together with Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun, became temporary but a reliable food provision centre for the British during the Sino-British hostilities in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

These provisional food trade centres were also commercially important for the British, as they supported the wartime British trade, which remained surprisingly prosperous. A telling indicator of this prosperity was the nearly same amount of tea as before the war that was transported by tens of ships from Hong Kong, Tung Kwu, Kap Shui Mun to England.[60] As Hugh Lindsay of the British firm Lindsay & Co. noted, the First Anglo-Chinese War did not significantly affect the British overseas trade.[61] As in peacetime, a stable food supply was a prerequisite for the flourishing foreign trade. The temporary food provision centres, therefore, enabled the British in China not only to survive but aeven to prosper during the Sino-British conflicts.

[59] Lin, *Linwenzhonggong*, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng*, Vol. 2, p. 178; Memorial of Lin Zexu, et al., 29 March 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Aug. 1839, p. 215; *Canton Press*, 9 Jan. 1840.
[60] PRO30/12/36/5, Statement of the Teas and Silk, Shipped from the Anchorages of Hong-Kong, Tonkoo, and Capsing Moon, to Various Ports in Great Britain, from July 1, 1839 to June 30, 1840, Inclosure 1 in No. 26, p. 92.
[61] Lindsay, *Remarks on Occurrences in China*, p. 51.

Provisioning the China Expedition, and the Occupation of Hong Kong

The first British expeditionary warship arrived in China in June 1840. By the end of the month, there were in total 10 H.M.S., 3 steamers and 21 British transports, with 4,000 British soldiers and sailors.[62] The British military authorities required a naval depot to store provisions brought from overseas, and somewhere they could procure food, particularly fresh products, from the indigenous people to sustain their expeditionary war in China. The Earl of Auckland, governor-general of India commanding the China Expedition, reminded Elliot several times that the occupation of such a depot and place of provision was of the highest importance.[63]

Although the British already had a plentiful local food supply at the temporary anchorages in the Pearl River Delta, they did not establish their first military base in China in the region. Instead, the British navy in early July 1840 chose to occupy Chusan (Zhoushan), an island near the entrance of the Yangtze River, and built their depot there. In most British eyes, Chusan "is as fertile as it is salubrious, and not only yields sufficient for all the wants of its inhabitants, but exports large quantities of produce."[64] Despite the early difficulties of obtaining fresh provisions from local Chinese, after late October 1840 Chusan had become a flourishing provision centre for the British expeditionary troops.[65]

Of course, local food provisioning was not the only consideration of the

---

[62] *Canton Press*, 13 June 1840, 27 June 1840.
[63] For an example, see PRO30/12/36/5, Auckland to Elliot, 3 March 1840, No. 13, p. 19.
[64] *Hong Kong Register*, 9 Dec. 1845.
[65] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 10, Sept. 1841, pp. 500-501, 503-504; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 9, Aug. 1840, p. 232, Dec. 1840, pp. 640-641; *Canton Press*, 17 Oct. 1840, 21 Nov. 1840; PRO30/12/36/5, Elliot to Palmerston, 23 June 1840, No. 32, pp. 111-121; Memorial of Keshen, 2 Sept. 1840, Memorial of Keying, 6 Sept. 1840, Memorial of Tuohunbu, 23 Sept. 1840, reprinted in *Yapianzhanzheng dangan*, Vol. 2, pp. 319, 327, 401.

British to conquer Chusan. Scholars have investigated how Chusan strategically served the British diplomatic, economic and military purposes during and after the First Anglo-Chinese War.[66] Nor were the British only concerned about the advantages of Chusan *per se*. As scholars have also shown, the changing situation during the war also affected the British decision. Finally, in January 1841, the last British warship quitted Chusan under Elliot's commands.

In the long run, rather than only a depot supporting the British wartime military actions, Elliot also desired to establish a settlement where the British merchants could trade peacefully without any coercion from the Chinese authorities. In his mind, to occupy Chusan was not a wise decision, for the island was so near to the Chinese political centre that its conquest would certainly antagonise Beijing. Conversely, British interests in China would be more secure when the free trade was conducted in faraway Guangdong. Elliot also preferred a place of refuge under British armed protection for the British mercantile community in Canton in case of further disturbance.[67]

The choice of Hong Kong as a food provision centre after Chusan, which was really the case in late January 1841, ran parallel to the British military and economic interests. As far as naval supply was concerned, Hong Kong was better than Chusan as Hong Kong was nearer to British military provisions stations overseas such as Singapore and Australia. Situated in the southern end of Guangdong, Hong Kong was more than a thousand miles away from Beijing.

---

[66] For examples of discussions about why the British first occupied Chusan but later evacuated it in late 1840, see Christopher Munn, "The Chusan Episode: Britain's Occupation of a Chinese Island, 1840-46", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25:1 (Jan. 1997), pp. 82-112; Liu Cun-kuan, *Xianggangshi luncong* [Studies of Hong Kong History] (Hong Kong: Qilin shuye, 1998).

[67] PRO30/12/36/5, Palmerston to Elliot, 18 Oct. 1839, Elliot to Maitland, 21 Feb. 1840, Elliot to Auckland, 22 March 1840, Inclosure in No. 22, No. 1, Inclosure 2 in No. 17, Inclosure in No. 22, pp. 1, 58, 77.

Near Canton, it could also function as a convenient asylum for the Canton British community in times of instability. Although the Chinese cannonades in Kowloon once compelled the British to leave Hong Kong Bay for Tung Kwu in November 1839 (in fact they were never a real threat), this was not longer a problem in early 1841, for the British had then completely destroyed the Chinese forts there.[68] At that time Hong Kong was ready to be a safe provision centre for the British merchants and soldiers.

Why did the British choose to occupy Hong Kong but not Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun? Apart from these places, the British in fact had many other options, such as Amoy, Taiwan and even Macau.[69] Elliot finally occupied Hong Kong because of numerous factors, including the advantages of Hong Kong itself; the disadvantages of the other places; the wartime strategies of Elliot and Auckland, who were under the influence of other British parties; and Elliot's game of diplomacy with Keshen (Qishan), the imperial commissioner after Lin Zexu, according to the changing situations.[70]

This chapter is not a full account of why the British occupied Hong Kong, which many scholars have already examined.[71] What it has explored so far is the short but largely neglected history of Hong Kong, as well as of Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun, as a place of food provision during the Sino-British hostilities in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Thanks to the Chinese food

---

[68] Elliot to Auckland, 7 Jan. 1841, in "Additional Papers Relating to China", Inclosure 1 in No. 3, pp. 40-41, reprinted in Irish University Press Area Studies Series, *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 31*, *Correspondence, Returns, Orders in Council and Other Papers Respecting the Opium War and Opium Trade in China, 1840-85* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), pp. 76-77; *Canton Press*, 16 Nov. 1839; *Canton Register*, 19 Nov. 1839, 26 Nov. 1939; *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 8, Nov. 1839, p. 379, Jan. 1840, p. 493.

[69] Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, p. 187; PRO/12/36/3, The Earl of Auckland to the Plenipotentiaries on the Coast of China, 10 May 1841, No. 22, p. 37.

[70] Fay, *Opium War*; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 32-68.

[71] For example see Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 21-52; Fay, *Opium War*; Yu Shengwu and Li Cunkuan, eds., *Shijiu shiji de Xianggang* [Hong Kong in the Nineteenth-Century] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2007), pp. 20-60.

provisioners in the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong became a temporary but reliable provision centre for the British transients. This was one of the reasons of the British conquest of Hong Kong in January 1841.

The Foundation of Permanent Food Provision Centre in British Hong Kong

Hong Kong was a significant British military station during and immediately after the First Anglo-Chinese War. When Elliot was negotiating peace with Keshen from 8 January to mid-February 1841, the British warships at the mouth of the Pearl River did not carry out any campaigns. Since the hoisting of the Union Jack onto Hong Kong Island on 26 January, the greatest portion of the British troops at the river mouth encamped along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, and the squadrons anchored in its harbour.[72] This situation lasted until mid-February, when the British warships advanced north for the Canton campaign. After a short relinquishment of the island in late February, the British re-planted the Union Jack in early March 1841. Afterwards, until the end of 1842, Hong Kong was several times a place of rendezvous for the China Expedition. For example, the reinforcements of the China Expedition arriving in May 1841 took Hong Kong as their first station on the mainland.[73] On 22 August 1841, according to the *Canton Press,* ten vessels of war, four steamers, and twenty-two transports left Hong Kong for the north.[74] Hong Kong had also

[72] W. D. Bernard and W. H. Hall, *The Nemesis in China: Comprising a History of the Late War in That Country, with an Account of the Colony of Hong-Kong* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 87; *Canton Press*, 13 Feb. 1841; *Canton Register*, 16 Feb. 1841.
[73] Edward Belcher, *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World: Performed in Her Majesty's Ship Sulphur during the Years 1836-1842: Including Details of the Naval Operations in China, from Dec. 1840 to Nov. 1841* (London: H. Colburn, 1843), pp. 220-229.
[74] Another English-language newspaper in Macao, the *Canton Register*, noted the date of the departure of the British fleet was 21 August 1841, and the British fleet sailing northwards consist

been a temporary anchorage for countless British warships and transports throughout the First Anglo-Chinese War.

Similar to what they did before, many of Chinese food dealers in the Pearl River Delta promptly responded to the rise of the new British military outpost in Hong Kong and created in the colony a provisions centre for the British navy and soldiers. As a few Protestant missionaries from Macau observed in early February, in Hong Kong a "temporary village of from 20 to 40 houses made of bamboos and mats, has recently sprung up opposite the anchorage, at which provisions are furnished by the Chinese for the accommodation of sailors and soldiers, stationed there for the present." This village was the native bazaar originating in Tung Kwu that followed the British naval occupants. The missionaries also saw "100 to 200 native craft of various sizes" in Hong Kong Bay.[75] On 13 February 1841, the *Canton Press* noted that the inhabitants of Hong Kong at that time were those "having been attracted to the spot by their dealings in supplying the wants of the fleet."[76] Samuel Fearon, registrar-general of colonial Hong Kong, recalled in 1845 that "The arrival of the British fleet in the harbour speedily attracted a considerable boat population" who supplied it with provisions and necessaries.[77] A water-colour drawn by British naval surgeon Edward Cree in April 1841 illustrates that in the harbour there were numerous Chinese boats scattering among the British ships of war. Many of these boats must have been loaded with food.[78]

---

of 34 British ships of war, including 21 transports. See *Canton Press*, 28 Aug. 1841; *Canton Register*, 24 Aug. 1841, 21 Sept. 1841.

[75] *Canton Register*, 16 Feb. 1841; Bingham, *Narrative of the Expedition*, p. 42.

[76] *Canton Press*, 13 Feb. 1841.

[77] Great Britain, Colonial Office. Original Correspondence: Hong Kong, 1841-1951, Series 129 (CO129), National Archives, Kew, CO129/12, 24 June 1845, Report of Census and Registration Office by Samuel Fearon, pp. 305-306.

[78] Edward Cree, *The Cree Journals: The Voyages of Edward H. Cree, Surgeon R.N., As Related*

After the British re-occupation of Hong Kong in early March 1841, Hong Kong grew from a mere British military base into a trading port. By the end of March and the beginning of April 1841, roughly-built godowns and European bungalows began to arise on the island ashore.[79] More importantly, the British merchant ships at Tung Kwu changed their port to Hong Kong in about April.[80] The British floating community at Tung Kwu also moved to the new colony at that time. In May 1841, Queen's Town, later renamed Victoria, at the northern shore of Hong Kong Island began to take shape. Even though the British government had not yet granted the colony permanent status and the first governor Henry Pottinger restrained its development before the conclusion of the Treaty of Nanjing in August 1842, foreign merchants sailed their vessels laden with goods to the colony in growing numbers, and foreign mercantile establishments blossomed. Whereas the prevalent sickness and piratical activities did not frighten most foreign merchants from settling there, the peace settlement further excited foreigners' investment in the new colony. As the foreign merchants flocked into Victoria, so did coastal Chinese. They were traders, shopkeepers of all sorts, compradors or servants working for the foreign community, and craftsmen and coolies-- all participating in the construction and operation of this new commercial entrepôt.

The influx of Chinese food provisioners accompanied to the rapid development of the newborn British trading port. The first official census, published in *The Hongkong Gazette* on 15 May 1841, suggests that approximately 2,000 boat people then lived in Hong Kong Bay. Commenting on

---

in His Private Journals, 1837 – 1856, Michael Levien, ed. (Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1981), p. 97.

[79] Eitel, *Europe in China*, p. 161.

[80] Eitel, *Europe in China*, p. 161; *Canton Register*, 13 April 1841.

the second official census released eight months later, the *Friend of China* estimated that the boat population were as many as 5,000 (the number in this census was 2,100).[81] Many of them must have been food providers serving not only the British force but also the merchant ships and local residents. According to the census of March 1842, 402 out of about 6,000 Chinese in Queen's Town worked in chandler's shops, which numbered a striking 67, ranking the first among all sorts of shops. Shops of butchers, bakers, confectioners, greengrocers, fishmongers, rice dealers and eating houses totalled 27 involving 190 people. The census also recorded 600 hawkers in Queen's Town[82] Although demographic statistics of early colonial Hong Kong, as British officials themselves even admitted, were by no means accurate, they are still good indicators of the prosperity of the activities of the Chinese food dealers during that time.

With so many Chinese provisions traders, food was abundant in early British Hong Kong. In July 1841, the *Canton Press* noted that the native bazaar in Queen's Town was "well stocked with everything".[83] The *Canton Register* also commented in November that "The supplies of provisions are abundant; beef, pork, poultry, fish of all sorts, vegetables in profusion, &ca [sic]".[84] A report entitled "Prices of Provisions" in the *Friend of China* dated 7 April 1842, though perhaps exaggerated, deserves attention:

> [T]he markets are well supplied, with all kinds of comestibles, adapted to the absolute wants of the humble cooley [coolie] and the utmost requirements of the refined gastronome. We have noticed in the Bazaar, with which we were familiar at Macau, and many other kinds before

[81] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 10, May 1841, p. 289; *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.
[82] *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.
[83] *Canton Press*, 24 July 1841.
[84] *Canton Register*, 2 Nov. 1841.

> unknown to us.… Of Vegetables the supply is very abundant. Good Bread and Biscuit are made here, and Milk and Butter are no longer rarities. Goats thrive very well, as also Cows.[85]

Food was not only copious but also varied and cheap in colonial Hong Kong for its first years. The lists of prices of local provisions occasionally published in the English-language newspapers reflect the great variety of foodstuffs sold in Victoria. For example, according to a list of fruit and vegetable prices in the *Friend of China* in July 1842, fruits included plantain, yellow and red plum, brown and yellow pear, mango, litchi, water melon and musk melon, whereas vegetables included turnip, carrot, squash, pumpkin, bean and snap, tomato, Irish and sweet potato, fresh ginger root, onion and eggplant.[86] On 2 November, the *Canton Register* commented that all provisions in the colony were "at reasonable prices"; about a month later, the *Canton Press* wrote that food was "at cheap rates".[87] In April 1842, the *Friend of China* also reported that although mutton was then expensive, beef was cheap.[88]

When explaining the British occupation of Hong Kong, apart from economic, military and diplomatic factors, one cannot neglect how the British needs for food was threatened by the Chinese authorities but satisfied by Chinese food provisioners in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta at large during the Sino-British clashes in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Indeed, as time went on, contemporary British colonial officials in Hong Kong recognised the importance of the Chinese provisioners. Among them the most notable ones were Elliot and Alexander Johnston, the deputy superintendent of trade in China charged with the government of Hong Kong during the absence of Elliot and

[85] *Friend of China*, 7 April 1842.
[86] *Friend of China*, 7 July 1842.
[87] *Canton Register*, 2 Nov. 1841; *Canton Press*, 3 Dec. 1841.
[88] *Friend of China*, 7 April 1842.

Elliot's successor Pottinger. While Elliot saw the retention of the colony necessary to offer the Chinese suppliers "justice and protection," Johnston made allotments to those Chinese "who against every obstacle settled down at Hong Kong and who have on various occasions supplied the Fleet when it could not otherwise obtain provisions."[89]

Elliot's words and Johnston's action were expressions of gratitude towards the Chinese suppliers on whom the British had depended since the First Anglo-Chinese War and the occupation of Hong Kong. They confirmed the contribution of the Chinese provisioners to the establishment of the new British military station and commercial entrepôt in China. Nearly six months after the British occupied Hong Kong, Elliot, in his dispatch to Lord Ellenborough, the governor-general of India, noted that one of the reasons of preserving the colony was to offer "justice and protection to *the Native population upon which we have been so long dependent for assistance and supply*."[90]

[89] Morse, *International Relations*, pp. 650-651; CO129/10, Johnston to Pottinger, 8 Jan. 1842, p. 216.
[90] Morse, *International Relations*, pp. 650-651.

Chapter 2

Hawking Matters: The Establishment of Public Markets in Early Colonial Hong Kong

This chapter explores several features of early British rule in Hong Kong by investigating the rise of Chinese food hawking and the colonial measures against it in the 1840s. Many Chinese food provisioners were transformed from collaborators to an impediment to colonial rule after the British took over Hong Kong. Before the Union Jack was hoisted on Hong Kong Island on 26 January 1841, the British activities were limited to the northern shore and its adjacent harbour. During that time the British were only transients having neither permanent interest in the island nor intention to rule over the indigenous Chinese. After the occupation, however, the British soldiers and foreign merchants began to settle in the colony. Conflicts became frequent between the British and Chinese food dealers, who also poured into the infant colony. Many of these Chinese became hawkers hindering the colony's development and British colonial rule. The adversarial relationship between the peddlers and the British authorities ended in 1847, when food hawking was legalised. From then on, licensed food peddlers became supporters of the colonial treasury.

While many scholars see early colonial rule over the Chinese as an indirect one, Christopher Munn argues that it was largely direct and highly intrusive.[1] In fact, indirect and direct rule co-existed in early colonial Hong Kong. On the one hand, any colonial powe had to rely on indigenous elite to enhance its rule,

[1] For academic works that have studied the indirect rule policy in early colonial Hong Kong, see Sinn, *Power and Charity*; Tsang, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 56-72. For studies about the infiltrative nature of British rule in Hong Kong, see Fung, *Reluctant Heroes*; Munn, *Anglo-China*.

and early British Hong Kong was no exception.[2] On the other hand, the geographical settings of the tiny and compact, city of Victoria enabled the British to impose direct rule over the Chinese population. How the British colonial officials mixed direct and indirect rules together over their Chinese subjects is an under-researched topic. This chapter examines the public market system, established in 1842 to eliminate food hawking, to exemplify the mixture of direct and indirect rule: while the colonial police intervened in the market affairs in case of serious crimes and accidents, the market overseers and farmers, predominantly Chinese, were responsible for the daily administration of the market trade.

Scholars have tended to focus on the oppressive nature of early British rule in Hong Kong. Recurrent subjects of this period are the 1844 registration affair, the imposition of curfews, the forcible resettlement of the Chinese population from the Upper Bazaar and the prohibition of rice cultivation in Victoria.[3] The colonial measures against food peddling, however, challenge the notion of an oppressive British colonialism. Instead of one-sided high-handed means, the colonial authorities adopted a carrot-and-stick approach to deal with food hawkers. In addition to prohibiting food hawking, the colonial officials attracted food traders along the roads and streets to move into an orderly food selling place – the public market-- so as to "educate" them to be orderly. Besides, that

[2] For the discussion about the indigenous elite collaboration in a colony, see Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism". For examples of studies of collaboration of the Chinese elite in early colonial Hong Kong, see Carroll, *Edge of Empires*.

[3] On the forcible resettlement of Chinese residents from the Upper Bazaar to Tai Ping Shan in 1844, see Smith, "The Chinese Settlement", pp. 30-31 and Evans, "Chinatown in Hong Kong"; on the Registration Affair of late October and early November 1844, i.e. the imposition of poll tax on every Hong Kong residents that led to the general discontent of the foreign mercantile community and general strike of the Chinese population, see Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 40-41; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 128-130; Eitel, *Europe in China*, 221-226; on the imposition of curfew, see *Friend of China*, 5 April 1843; for the prohibition of rice cultivation in Victoria, see Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 89-98.

British rule over Hong Kong Chinese in favour of the foreign community was oppressive lies on an assumption that the foreigners and Chinese always conflicted with each other. This assumption is not true in the case of the establishment of the public markets. At the very beginning, the British colonial officials intended to benefit the foreign and Chinese communities, whereas European contemporaries considered the market system a "great boon to the colony". Nevertheless, one should not ignore the fact that early British colonial rule was by no means effective. The measures against food hawking and the public market system proved to be a failure. The public markets even caused trouble for the British colonial authorities and sufferings to the Chinese population.

This chapter comprises three sections. The first section analyses the rise of food hawking as a problem within the context of the rapid development of early colonial Hong Kong. It focuses on the problems which food peddling caused the foreign community and the colonial authorities. The second section scrutinises the government measures against food hawking activities, i.e. the prohibition against food hawking and the establishment of the public markets, and pays more attention to the latter. The discussion ends in 1847, when the first foreigner owned the right to operate a public market. The last section assesses the significance of the establishment of the public market system, contrasting the visions of the colonial authorities and the unpleasant outcomes.

From Collaboration to Obstruction: The Rise of Food Hawking and its Problems

In the first month of British Hong Kong, the Chinese food dealers settled where

the British force and merchants were located along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. A "temporary village of from 20 to 40 houses made of bamboos and mats, has recently sprung up opposite the anchorage", observed several Protestant missionaries visiting the colony on 9 and 10 February 1841, two weeks after the British conquest. This village was most likely the one that originated in Tung Kwu, west of today's Castle Peak, following the British naval occupants. It was adjacent to the temporary barrack housing the detachments of the Bengal Volunteers at the western shore of Hong Kong Island.[4] From this bazaar, the missionaries proceeded eastwards, and found "isolated houses frequently near the shore, at short intervals". Numerous of these houses were owned by the Chinese "having been attracted to the spot by their dealings in supplying the wants of the fleet", which in mid-February 1841 comprised about twenty war and merchant vessels.[5]

The Chinese provisioners and the British seldom intervened in each other's activities.[6] This was because for the first two months the British force and merchants had not yet taken root in the infant colony. On 21 and 22 February, the British armies and navies evacuated Hong Kong and sailed to Sha Chau, near Tung Kwu, for the ensuing military operations up the Pearl River. Only in early March did they resume their conquest over the island.[7] Before May 1841, their establishments on the island were merely a handful of coastal and temporary barracks and camps. Moreover, Hong Kong did not immediately

[4] *Canton Register*, 16 Feb. 1841; Bingham, *Narrative of the Expedition*, p. 42.
[5] *Canton Press*, 13 Feb. 1841.
[6] The only exception was the bazaar from Tung Kwu, where military rule was adopted. See Bingham, *Narrative of the Expedition*, p. 43.
[7] *Canton Register*, 23 Feb. 1841, March 1841, 8 June 1841; Bingham, *Narrative of the Expedition*, pp. 48-49; Duncan McPherson, *Two Years in China, Narrative of Chinese Expedition, from Its Formation in April, 1840, to the Treaty of Peace in August, 1842, with an Appendix, Containing the Most Important of the General Orders & Despatches Published during the above Period* (London: John Murray, 1841), p. 108.

become a flourishing commercial entrepôt after the British occupation. Until late March, the majority of foreign merchants in the Pearl Delta region remained at Tung Kwu, for they had not yet placed much confidence in the infant colony. In the first month of British Hong Kong only Jardine, Matheson & Co. ever erected a godown ashore.[8]

Things began to change by the end of March and the beginning of April 1841. At that time, roughly-built godowns and bungalows owned by European merchants started to arise on the island alongshore.[9] In May, a British civil government came into being, and a new colonial city called Queen's Town began to take shape along the northern shore of the island. In the same month the government began to build the first urban thoroughfare, Queen's Road, which laid the blueprint for the city of Victoria. Its construction paved the way for the first public land sale in June 1841, in which the government auctioned, mainly to British merchants, thirty-four marine lots whose distance from the sea to the road varied and did not exceed 200 feet, amounting to nine acres.[10]

The first land sale started a history of spatial conflicts between the Chinese food dealers and the colonial authorities. Lying exactly on the lots sold in June 1841, the mat sheds or huts conducting food trade and other business on the harbour side of the island, along with other temporary Chinese settlements there, now became obstacles. Presumably they were either cleared or moved to other places gradually when the lessees of the marine lots erected buildings there. Later, the government, although with only limited success, continued to destroy sheds of matting, wood and other inflammable materials, and repeatedly issued

[8] *Canton Register*, 13 April 1841; E. J. Yorke, The Princely House, (unpublished), p. 487, quoted in Dafydd Emrys Evans, "Jardine, Matheson & Co.'s First Site in Hong Kong", *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1970): 149.
[9] Eitel, *Europe in China*, p. 161.
[10] *Report from the Select Committee*, (London : H.M.S.O., 1847), p. 377.

ordinances and notifications against their erection. To the government, these sheds were obstructive to building lands and roads, harmful to health, conducive to fire (many of the cleared mat sheds were cooking shops), threatened the adjacent buildings, and were hiding places for evil Chinese characters.[11]

The removal of the Chinese ashore to give way to foreign mercantile buildings did not mean that the British colonial officials utterly disrespected the interests of the enormous numbers of Chinese traders. During his acting governorship in September 1841, Alexander Johnston made allotments to those Chinese "who against every obstacle settled down at Hong Kong and who have on various occasions supplied the Fleet when it could not otherwise obtain provisions."[12] In total he parcelled out 150 lots on a long strip of land west of Queen's Town, each of a size of 40 feet by 20 feet, and leased them to the Chinese inhabitants at a nominal rate of $5 per annum. This was the Lower Bazaar, or Sheung Wan as the Chinese customarily called it.[13] When the Chinese continued to flock into the colony, in early 1842 Johnston developed another Chinese settlement in the east of the Lower Bazaar on the hillside of

[11] CO129/19, 3 Feb. 1847, David to Stanley, p. 141b; Britain, Foreign Office, Miscellanea, 1759-1935, Series 233 (FO233), National Archives, Kew, FO233/185, Proclamations by H.E. the Governor and Chief Magistrate 1844-1849, 1844, No. 23, 1845, No. 21; *Friend of China*, 28 May 1845, 11 July 1846; *China Mail*, 11 Sept. 1845, 8 Jan. 1846, 29 Jan. 1846; *Hong Kong Register*, 28 Oct. 1845. Other types of sheds under government clearance included those selling samshoo, temporary resorts, cooking place or residence for construction coolies and blacksmiths, gambler's shop and storing booties, and also those for native villagers being forced to resettle to the other places such as Sai Ying Pun and Shek Tong Tsui. See FO233/185, 1845, No. 46, p. 20a; *Hong Kong Register*, 23 Sept. 1845, 2 Nov. 1847; *Friend of China*, 9 April 1845, 28 May 1845. There were also some legal mat sheds, that the Chinese were allowed to construct after paying a small sum of ground rents. See *Hong Kong Register*, 18 May 1847; *Friend of China*; 13 March 1847, Great Britain, Colonial Office. Executive and Legislative Council Minutes: Hong Kong (from 1844), Series 131 (CO131), National Archives, Kew, CO131/1, 26 June 1847, Executive Council Minutes, p. 204b.

[12] Great Britain, Foreign Office, Pottinger Papers, Series 705 (FO705), National Archives, Kew, FO705/49, Memorandum by Alexander Johnston, p. 22.

[13] CO129/2, 4 July 1843, Alexander Jordon to Lord Saltoun, pp. 175a-175b; FO705/49, 12 Sept. 1841, Regulations in Respect to Land in the Island of Hongkong, pp. 15-16.

Queen's Road. It included four rows of lots amounting to 118, each generally with 14 feet street frontage and about 36 feet deep. This was the Upper or Middle Bazaar, or Chung Wan according to Chinese usages.[14] In the Upper and Lower Bazaars, many Chinese rented lots from the colonial authorities at $4 and $5 per annum respectively, or from other Chinese leaseholders, and opened shops to sell food.[15] Most of the 91 food shops involving hundreds of Chinese in the 1842 census were likely situated in these two Chinese "official" settlements.[16] Throughout the early colonial period, the British authorities continued to grant and auction lands to Chinese, even when this was stopped for the foreign inhabitants between May 1842 and June 1843, during which period the London government had not yet confirmed the permanent status of the colony.[17]

But not all Chinese food traders could be landholders. Some simply could not afford the land rents, even at only a few dollars. Nor were the officially-endorsed lots sufficient enough to house all Chinese shopkeepers in Victoria, who were steadily growing in number. A significant number of Chinese chose to settle in the Tai Ping Shan area uphill of the Lower Bazaar even before it was developed by the colonial government in 1844, and in Sai Ying Pun and Shek Tong Tsui west of the Lower Bazaar.[18] Still, the Chinese

[14] There were many other versions of name for Chung Wan used by the British colonials and contemporary newspapers, including Choong-wan, Choong Wong, Chonghong and Choong-hong. This causes confusion to studies of early colonial Hong Kong.
[15] CO129/2, 4 July 1843, Alexander Gordon to Lord Saltoun, pp. 175a-175b; Great Britain, Foreign Office, Library: Maps and Plans, Series 925 (FO925), National Archives, Kew, FO925/2387, 1843, Survey of the Northern Face of the Island of Hong Kong by Major Aldrich.
[16] *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.
[17] For example, the government often put the land at Sai Ying Pun to auction for Chinese only, and frequently granted lands for homeless and miserable native villagers upon their request. See FO233/185, 1844, Nos. 11, 14, pp. 23b, 26a.
[18] Great Britain, Colonial Office, Hong Kong Blue Books, 1844-1940, Series 133 (CO133), National Archives, Kew, CO133/1, 1844, p. 32; CO129/6, 6 Oct. 1843, Gützlaff to Pottinger, pp. 435b, 436b.

settlements did not accommodate all Chinese food dealers. Some traded not in Chinese settlements, but instead hawked along the thoroughfare linking the most prosperous part of the colony inhabited mainly by Europeans.

Food hawking had been prevalent in colonial Hong Kong since early 1842. The earliest surviving record which reflects the prevalence was in the *Canton Press* of 15 January 1842, reporting that "hawkers of every description" abounded in the colony.[19] The 1842 census released in March 1842 counted 600 hawkers in Queen's Town, one-tenth of the Chinese population there.[20] Alexander Matheson, head of Jardine, Matheson & Co., recalled in 1847 that before the establishment of the Central Market in 1842 "hucksters went round the streets with stalls, selling provisions of all sorts".[21]

When analysing the problems that food hawking caused for the colonial authorities and the residents in the colony, one must not neglect George Malcolm, the founder of the Central Market, the first public market in colonial Hong Kong. Secretary to the British Legation in China and acting colonial secretary of the colony, he gave birth to the Central Market when he was a zealous member of a land and road committee appointed by Governor Henry Pottinger to investigate land ownership and spatial arrangements in early British Hong Kong.[22] Malcolm saw the establishment of the market as a means of dealing with the adverse effects caused by hawking of the Chinese. In the 1847 Select Committee on Commercial Relations with China in the British Parliament, he recalled, "On the first establishment of the colony, the country [Chinese] people came over and exposed their goods for sale on the principal

[19] *Canton Press*, 15 Jan. 1842.
[20] *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.
[21] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 162.
[22] Tarrant, *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, Vol. 2, p. 34; *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.

roads and thoroughfares. As the population increased, this was found to be very inconvenient, and it was thought advisable to erect a market-place."[23]

Who were these hawkers, and what kind of inconvenience had they caused? The first problem caused by them was the spatial encroachment to the foreign business community. One of the functions of the land and road committee was to "order the immediate removal of any encroachments that may be found to have been unauthorizedly made upon" Queen's Road and "all other existing public roads within the settlement".[24] This, apart from the clearance of the Chinese's mat sheds, probably referred to the elimination of food peddling. Queen's Road ran through the central part of Victoria, where the greatest portion of foreign mercantile establishments was located.[25] The colonial authorities were cautious of spatial obstruction to this part of the island. For example, they fined shopkeepers and construction workers for disposing building waste, dispersed or banished beggars along the thoroughfare, and allowed no extension of balconies and verandas outside the limits of lands allotted.[26] The colonial government would not let the Chinese hawkers disturb the foreign merchants' activities, which were one of the *raison d'êtres* of Hong Kong as a British colony.

Food hawking of the Chinese was not only a spatial hindrance to the foreign business community, but also caused great annoyance to many Europeans. Like their counterparts in other colonies, Europeans in Hong Kong considered many practices of the natives peculiar, disturbing and even dangerous. Such kind of disgust was typically expressed in a 1843 press article

[23] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 348.
[24] *Friend of China*, 24 March 1842.
[25] For the description of this greatest portion of foreign mercantile establishments see Tarrant, *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, pp. 56-65.
[26] FO233/185, 1846, No. 9; *China Mail*, 17 June 1847; *Friend of China*, 20 Nov. 1844.

entitled “Chin Chinning Yuet”, a traditional Chinese religious practice of worshipping the moon during the Mid-Autumn Festival to prevent typhoons:

> With many of the Chinese houses had poles of from 20 to 40 feet high, on which were lanterns, and all sorts of grotesque figures of dragons, men, etc. This was harmless enough, but *the whole length of the Queens Road was disturbed* from morning to night by the letting off of Chinese crackers. *The noise was bad but the smell was ten times worse*. Let the Chinese amuse themselves, that is all fair, but *the legs and health of the English Colonists should not be put in jeopardy* by those devotees, firing cannons pistols, guns and worse than all, abominable crackers, on the public highway.[27]

Similarly, the awful sound of Chinese hawkers selling unpleasant-smelling food greatly annoyed the foreign inhabitants.

Food hawking also posed a threat to order along Queen’s Road. Since its first day of construction, Queen’s Road was infested with congregating “idle vagabonds”, loitering or running thieves, coolies waiting for work, gamblers, and drunken European and Indian soldiers and seamen who misbehaved and attacked the Chinese and the police. Furious riding by Europeans, some of whom were intoxicated, was detrimental to the traffic on the roads and caused many traffic accidents. The colonial authorities also thought that noises from Chinese gamblers and quarrellers during the day, particularly on the Sabbath days, and the noisy drunkards and the barking and howling of dogs during the night also threatened order. In the first few years of colonial Hong Kong, heavy rains frequently caused ankle-deep mud that rendered the narrow thoroughfare impassable. The unfinished state of Queen’s Road until 1847, unsatisfactory drainage systems and the slow speed of repairs worsened the situation.[28]

---

[27] *Friend of China*, 12 Oct. 1843.

[28] *Friend of China*, 23 Jan. 1844, 6 Feb. 1844, 5 March 1844, 31 Aug. 1844, 2 Oct. 1844, 22 March 1845; *China Mail*, 24 April 1845, 6 Nov. 1845, 27 Nov. 1845, 18 Feb. 1847; *Hong Kong Register*, 3 Dec. 1844, 13 May 1845, 23 Sept. 1845, 23 Feb. 1847; FO233/185, No. 62, p. 36b; CO129/12, 4 July 1844, Davis to Stanley, pp. 62a-62b, 266b; CO131/1, 23 Sept. 1844,

In the early colonial period, the government adopted measure after measure, to prevent social disorder along Queen's Road: constructing and clearing of drains and sewerage; making traffic laws; killing rabid dogs; and fining drunkards for breaking the peace, and the Chinese who let off fireworks without reasons. Apart from encroaching upon space and creating noise, food hawking activities could nurture crime: some food hawking stalls were in fact gamblers' shops, and hawkers and customers very often quarrelled along the thoroughfare.[29] Prohibitions against food hawking were thus one of the many measures of the colonial government to eliminate potential threats to social order.

Government officials and Europeans saw a link between food hawking and public health. They were concerned about exposing food for sale under the sun. "[I]n a climate like Hong Kong, a man cannot expose his fish uncovered, or his meat uncovered", commented Thomas Gibb, head of Gibb, Livingston & Co.[30] The *Canton Register* praised the establishment of a public market as a means to prevent "fish being hawked about or sold at every corner from huckster's stalls where putrid filth would rapidly accumulate."[31] Ordinance no. 14 of 1845 stipulated that anyone who exposed or proffered for sale in markets or elsewhere any liquor or food "in a tainted, noxious, adulterated, or unwholesome state" be liable to a penalty of less than $5 or imprisoned for less than seven days. On 24 June 1847 a Chinese "having been warned by the Inspector of Police to desist from exposing butcher meat in the Lower Bazaar,

---

Executive Council Minutes, p. 53a.

[29] *China Mail*, 8 Jan. 1846, 27 March 1845, 17 April 1845, 6 Nov. 1845, 8 Jan. 1846, 5 March 1846, 5 March 1846, 14 Jan. 1847; *Friend of China*, 2 Oct. 1844, 27 March 1845; FO233/185, 1845, No. 18, p. 34b, No. 62, 44b, 1846, No. 9, p. 46a.

[30] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 75.

[31] *Friend of China*, 14 June 1842.

and having neglected to do so, was fined $2 to the Queen, with 50 cents costs."[32]

Carrot and Stick: Prohibitions of Food Hawking and the Establishment of the Public Markets

As the large numbers of food hawkers were an important source of food, it was impossible to eliminate all food sellers from the roads and streets without providing them with places to settle. Prohibitions against food hawking and the establishment of the public markets, therefore, were two sides of a coin.

From 1842 onwards, for a few years the British colonial officials carried out high-handed measures against street trading. As soon as the Central Market was ready in May 1842, "an order was issued forbidding any one to offer things for sale on the road".[33] Along with this order, Edward Reynolds, the former assistant land officer, was appointed as the land and road inspector two weeks after the Central Market opened.[34] He was to prevent "any sort of nuisances" on the roads or streets and to report such cases to the acting governor (Pottinger was very often out of the colony for his duties as chief superintendent of trade and plenipotentiary in China) and chief magistrate, who would "take the necessary steps, through the police, to abate them."[35] Reynolds had an assistant: the first was J. Pascoe, a member of Malcolm's land and road committee, and the second was William Tarrant, later an assessor of the police rate and then the clerk of registry and keeper of records in the Land Office.[36]

---

[32] *China Mail*, 8 Jan. 1846, 1 July 1847.
[33] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 389.
[34] Tarrant, *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, Vol. 2, pp. 32, 35.
[35] *Friend of China*, 2 June 1842.
[36] *China Mail*, 10 July 1845; CO133/3, Hong Kong Blue Book, 1846, p. 47; CO129/20, 21 July 1847, Davis to Stanley, p. 317b.

The first ordinance that wrote measures against food hawking was the 1845 police ordinance. According to the ordinance, the government would impose a fine not exceeding five pounds on anyone who "in any thoroughfare or public place, to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers, kill or slaughter, or expose for show or sale", or "who shall expose any thing for sale in or upon, or so as to hang over any carriage-way or foot-way, or on the outside of any houses or shop".[37] The Chinese version of the ordinance stated more plainly that the latter group referred to those who "erect sheds along the street for sale so as to obstruct roads".[38]

The Magistracy and Supreme Courts frequently charged Chinese food dealers for selling prohibited items along the main road. (For a short period the chief magistrate intentionally transferred petty cases like hawking to the Supreme Court to express his grievance against the prohibition of flogging as a means of punishment in the colony.)[39] Charged with hawking fruit in Queen's Road and obstructing the thoroughfare, Eup-chung-chang was fined 50¢ in January 1846. In May 1847, two fish dealers were fined each $2.5 for their obstruction to the thoroughfare leading to the market wharf. Wong-awun, a fruit seller, was accused of erecting a stall on Queen's Road, thereby blocking the thoroughfare. He was fined $20, in default to be imprisoned for 14 days with hard labour. This was his second offence.[40]

The measures eliminating food hawking, however, were not one-sidedly oppressive, but carrot-and-stick in nature. The establishment of the public markets was a benevolent government measure to attract food dealers along the

[37] *China Mail*, 8 Jan. 1846.
[38] FO233/185, 1846, No. 9.
[39] Munn, *Anglo-China*, p. 169.
[40] *China Mail*, 14 Jan. 1846, 27 May 1847, 1 July 1847.

street to move in. The first public market in Hong Kong was the Central Market, on marine lot 16 of Queen's Road, which was first open to the public on 16 May 1842.[41] According to Malcolm's stipulation, with Pottinger's approval, it cost only 75¢ to rent a stall of fish, salt fish, fowls, cake and tea, or vegetable for a month in the market. (At that time the monthly salary of a market coolie, one of the humblest occupations, was $5 in 1843.) Stallholders selling pork and running cooking shops there paid more, but still only $1 and $2.5 a month respectively. Malcolm even allowed every Chinese to rent a stall on a daily basis. As Matheson explained, before the farming of markets in 1844, the rents were not profitable.[42]

In contrast to the disorderly roads and streets, the 1842 Central Market was very organised and orderly. Fenced by railings with the gate at the roadside, the market was a compound of four or five sheds. Each shed was supported by columns, covered with mats at the beginning and later tiled roofs, and was separate from the another.[43] Stalls selling the same kind of food were grouped into one department and housed in their respective sheds. The *Friend of China* reported that the departments included "1st for kinds of meat, 2nd fruit and vegetables, 3rd poultry, 4th salt fish, 5th fresh fish, 6th weighing room, 7th money-changer house etc., etc."[44] In the rebuilt Central Market of 1845, there

[41] *Friend of China*, 12 May 1842. The Central Market was also called Centre Market, Chung Wan Market, Government Market No. 1 and later Old Market, when two other public markets were constructed. On the customarily-called Pottinger Map, whose scale was inaccurate, there was a "Fish poultry and Vegetable Bazaar" located very near, if not exactly, on the site of the Central Market. The map was drawn at the time when the Central Market was under construction or finished, and thus the bazaar most likely referred to the Central Market. See CO129/10, Malcolm to Pottinger, pp. 195a-195b; FO925/2387, 1843, Survey of the Northern Face of the Island of Hong Kong; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 347

[42] CO129/10, Pottinger to Malcolm, p. 248b; CO129/5, Pottinger's Report, pp. 413b, 478b; Tarrant, *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, pp. 35-36; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 249.

[43] FO925/2387, 1843, Survey of the Northern Face of the Island of Hong Kong; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 347.

[44] *Friend of China*, 12 May 1842.

was also "a pound at the [Central] market station for the security of stray cattle".[45] John Ouchterlony of the Madras Engineers and the editor of the *Friend of China* commented that the arrangement in the market was judicious and the market itself spacious and commodious.[46] From the organisation of space in the Central Market, therefore, one can see the government's efforts to confine previously uncontrolled food hawkers along the roads to an orderly trading place.

From 1844 on the government farmed out the public markets to private individuals. The government also required the market farmers to maintain a good environment selling food. According to the deed leasing the Central Market in 1845, the market farmer should "remove the mat sheds therein and replace them with new brick houses to be covered in with tiles".[47] The deed licensing the Eastern Market stipulated that the farmer should "lay down proper and convenient passages and make proper drains of the same seas to keep the said Market dry and clean".[48] A Chinese pupil of the Morrison Education Society of Hong Kong wrote that public markets in Hong Kong were nicer than those in Macao, most of which were always muddy.[49]

Stallholders in the well-organised public markets were subject to rules set by the colonial authorities. To control the prices of food sold there, the chief magistrate periodically published a price list and posted it inside the market.[50] In the market were a weighing room, probably storing weights and measures

[45] *Friend of China*, 18 April 1846.
[46] CO129/10, Pottinger to the Colonial Office, p. 505a; Co129/12, 4 Aug. 1843, Pottinger's Report, p. 200b; John Ouchterlony, *The Chinese War: An Account of the Operations of the British Forces from the Commencement of the Treaty of Nanking* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844), p. 217.
[47] HKRS149-2-17, 9 July 1845, Bond: By Agui, Attai and Akow.
[48] HKRS149-2-5, 1 Oct. 1844, Agreement and Bond: Executed by Akow for the Sum of $500.
[49] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 12, Sept. 1843, p. 367.
[50] Henry Sirr, *China and the Chinese: Their Religion, Character, Customs and Manufactures* (London: Orr, 1849), p. 33.

stamped with official marks and regularly checked by official examiners, and a money-changer house, one of whose functions was to distinguish fake coins. Initially, as Malcolm stipulated, no one, except the superintendent of market, could stay in the market overnight, no doubt to prevent crime.[51]

In the public markets, there was no specific regulation on the habits of customers. Before 1847, there was no prohibition against the entry of any kind of people. The public markets were not racially segregated. Unlike sellers, buyers in the markets were not exclusively Chinese. Some foreigners wanted to choose the fresh food in the public markets by themselves. Also, some foreign residents did not trust their Chinese compradors and servants, who were very often accused of extorting money through the procurement of foodstuffs.[52] A foreign woman might procure food herself in the market and employ a Chinese boy to carry her purchases.[53] A foreign cook of a foreign master would go to the markets as well.[54] Less well-off foreigners went to the public markets simply because they did not have Chinese compradors and servants. Mahomed Lal, an Indian police sergeant, bought something in the Western Market by himself on 25 April 1847.[55]

Several colonial departments and officials were made responsible for the construction, maintenance and supervision of the public markets. The market ordinance of 1847 stipulated that the public markets had to be constructed of brick or stone, according to a plan approved by the surveyor-general.[56] The

[51] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 389.
[52] For the complaints about the extortion of the Chinese household compradors, see *Hong Kong Register*, 26 Nov. 1844, 8 July 1845.
[53] For example, see *China Mail*, 3 Aug. 1847.
[54] For example see *Hong Kong Register*, 22 Dec. 1846.
[55] *Hong Kong Register*, 3 Aug. 1847.
[56] CO129/20, 295b. Ordinance no. 1 of 1847, whose full name was "An Ordinance for Licensing Markets and for Preventing Disorders Therein", was repealed and amended by

construction works were inspected by the Land Office. Deeds leasing the public markets specified that all maintenance works by the market farmers were subject to the approval of the surveyor-general. With respect to the market supervision, the power of superintendence was first held by Malcolm and then by the chief and police magistrates. The 1847 market ordinance clearly stipulated that the markets were to be under the superintendence of the chief magistrate, "who is hereby required to take all requisite Measures to prevent Disorders and to preserve Peace and Tranquillity therein." Under the chief magistrate, the land and road inspector had to see that the government markets "are preserved from damage, and are kept clean, and in a state fit for the uses" of which it was designed, and had to report nuisances to the chief magistrate and the deputy governor to abate them. (The post of land and road inspector was cancelled in December 1843.) Specific police constables took charge of each market. They would patrol at the markets daily and regularly, and go to the places in case of serious accidents.[57]

The daily operation of the public markets, on the other hand, was held in the hands of Chinese. Before the farming of markets in 1844, the colonial government employed the Chinese overseers, receiving salaries from the government, to administer the public markets; under the farming system, the overseers were generally the market proprietor or proprietors (some public markets were held by a number of shareholders), who before 1847 were

---

Ordinance no. 4 of 1847 because the former one empowered Executive Council to pass regulations from time to time, which was considered unconstitutional by the Colonial Office. See CO129/20, Stanley to Davis, pp. 291b-292a.

[57] CO129/12, 13 Aug. 1844, Davis to Stanley, pp. 182b-183a, 201a, 208b; HKRS149-2-17, Bond: By Agui, Attai and Akow; HKRS149-2-20, 18 Oct. 1845, Bond: By Hung-Attai, Vai-Quai, and Chun-Akow; CO129/10, 13 Dec. 1842, Pottinger to the Colonial Office, pp. 248b-249a; CO129/20, 7 July 1847, Davis's Report, p. 295b; *Friend of China*, 2 June 1842; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847. For example of police patrolling in the markets, see *Friend of China*, 14 Nov. 1846, *Hong Kong Register*, 22 Dec. 1846.

exclusively Chinese.[58]

The market overseers, as Malcolm thought, held immense powers. Although they had to report serious cases, accidental death for instance, to the chief magistrate, they were responsible for day-to-day management of their respective market and keeping it "in good order". The market farmers should "see that good provisions are exposed for sale, keep in repair all Government property therein", and keep the "market dry, clean and secure, free from nuisances of all kinds, and more particularly not use or permit the use of any fire or fire-works in an incautious manner so as to endanger the market". They also had to "see that no person of bad characters be allowed in the market." The house of the overseer and farmer was in the market. According to the 1843 Aldrich's map, the elevation of the Central Market was higher than the stalls inside, which certainly facilitated the overseer to oversee all the matters there. The market overseer and proprietor also collected rents from the market stalls. In the markets, there were Chinese watchmen on duty who were appointed by the market overseers and farmers with the approval of the shopkeepers. Chinese coolies and accountants were employed by the government before the monopoly of the market operation, and then by their respective market farmers.[59]

These market overseers and farmers were crucial to the administration of the public markets. The first overseer of the Central Market was Wei Afoon (Wei Kuan), who held the post at least until May 1843. Coming from Honam in

[58] CO129/20, 6 July 1847, Report of the Attorney General on an Investigation Officially Made by Him into the Circumstances Connected with Mr. Tarrant's Case, pp. 223b, 233b, 240a, 264a-265b.

[59] *Report from the Select Committee*, pp. 162, 348; HKRS149-2-17, 9 July 1845, Bond: By Agui, Attai and Akow; HKRS149-2-5, 1 Oct. 1844, Agreement and Bond: Executed by Akow for the Sum of $500; *China Mail*, 4 March 1847; *Hong Kong Register*, 23 Dec. 1845; CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 235b, 241a-241b, 254a, 257a, 262b-265a.

Panyu district northwest of Hong Kong, Wei Afoon was a government builder and contractor, and was employed by Malcolm to construct the Central Market. He had at least four sons and his post was later held by one of them. The son was called Wei Aqui, *alias* Wei Akwei, Wei Tiangui. At one time Wei Aqui was overseer of the market, while his father was "In Charge" of the Central Market as shown in the colonial records. It is reasonable to conclude that during that time the two Weis co-administered the Central Market. After his father died in 1843, Wei Aqui became the sole superintendent. Wei Aqui speculated much on land, as his name frequently appears in land auction records.[60]

After Wei Aqui died in December 1846, the Central Market was under the charge of his elder brother Wei Afoon, *alias* Wei Tianfu, Wei-teen-foo, Wei Afoo, Affoo and Affong. (As his name was the same as his father's, in this thesis the son is named young Afoon and the father old Afoon). Young Afoon was the administrator of his deceased younger brother's estate, and, like his brother, a land speculator. Young Afoon was also a builder and contractor for the government, responsible for erecting the barracks in Aberdeen and the debtor's prison in the Victoria Goal. Apart from Wei Aqui, young Afoon had two more elder brothers. One of them was Wei-Acheun, who had once been Wei Aqui's assistant. Another, Wei-Acho, claimed himself an overseer of the Central Market. Wei-Anam, a relative of young Afoon, was a temporary comprador to Holiday, Wise & Co. The Wei family's interests in the Central Market ended in 1847, when, as Carl Smith has noted, it was seized by the

[60] Smith, "The Chinese Settlement", p. 29. *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847; CO129/5, 1 Aug. 1843, Receipt for Wages Paid to Persons Employed in the Government Market Place at Victoria Hongkong during the Month of July 1844, pp. 413b, 478b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

government and sold at auction to a Chinese interpreter of the Supreme Court.[61]

Concerning the overseers and farmers of the other public markets, the farmer of the Western Market, also called Sheung Wan Market or Lower Market, was Loo Aqui, an affluent and powerful Chinese in early colonial Hong Kong. Surviving records show that Loo-yuet-shing was an overseer of the Western Market in 1847. He was probably Loo Shing, who, according to Carl Smith, may have been a son of Loo Aqui. Loo Shing was a property owner who received land from Loo Aqui, who was later in financial difficulties. Loo Shing may have continued to be the Western Market overseer until 1849, when its ownership was transferred to George Duddell, a British land speculator. Carl Smith has classified Loo Shing as a member of the Chinese elite, as he was one of the petitioners representing the Chinese community to appeal for crown rent reduction.[62] Moreover, criminal records from the time reveal that Leong-akwong was a "part owner and occupier" of the Western Market in June 1847, but no surviving sources show his background.[63] About the Eastern Market, also known as Government Market No. 2 or Ha Wan Market, the smallest among the three, its first overseer was Fung Atai, *alias* Foong Akwei, Loong Attai and Feng Huaqi. He farmed the Eastern Market from 1845 to 1850, but it is not certain whether he was the overseer at the same time. A partner of

[61] *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847; *China Mail*, 5 Feb. 1846, 24 Sept. 1846, 10 June 1847, 30 Dec. 1847; CO129/16, 6 Sept. 1845, Land Records, pp. 515b-524a, CO129/7, Estimate of the Colonial Expenditure, 319b, CO129/20, 17 April 1847, Davis to Stanley, 122b-123b, CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 235b-236a, 245a, 248b, 250a, 251a-251b; HKRS149-2-35, 1 July 1846, Bond: Contract No. 44 between Affoong and the Surveyor General of the Colony of Hong Kong; Smith, "The Chinese Settlement", p. 29.
[62] CO129/12, 13 Aug. 1844, Davis to Stanley, pp. 182b-183a; *China Mail*, 4 March 1847; HKRS149-2-91, 22 Aug. 1844, Acknowledgement of Loo Acqui to Having Received from George Duddell His Original Outlay of $2,500 on the Western Market; Smith, "The Emergence of a Chinese Elite", pp. 75, 82, Smith, "The Chinese Settlement", p. 26.
[63] *China Mail*, 24 June 1847.

Loo Aqui, Fung was an opium farmer and property owner.[64]

The backgrounds of the market overseers, and the above colonial measures to fight food hawking, cast light on the natures of British rule in early colonial Hong Kong. Scholars have argued that in the early colonial period, the British authorities had no intention to educate their vast subjects, who were of the lowest characters and "unchangeable", about the English laws and western civilization. Munn has highlighted the clash between "Anglo-China" rhetoric and the real ruling problems encountered by the colonial authorities, who then imposed oppressive measures against the vast Chinese population.[65] However, the colonial policies against food hawking challenge Munn's argument. Rather than only adopting high-handed and fearful measures, the colonial government also launched benevolent measures to attract street food hawkers to a well-organised place. The government desired to "train" food hawkers to be orderly food traders under various kinds of regulations. This was in line with the development of the market halls in England and the public markets in other British possessions.[66]

The ways of administering the public markets also shed light on the scholarly debate on whether the British authorities imposed direct or indirect rule upon the Chinese subjects in early colonial Hong Kong. The public market

[64] CO129/27, 25 Feb. 1848, Report of Committee House of Commons, p. 302b; CO129/12, 13 Aug. 1844, Davis to Stanley, pp. 183a-183b; HKRS149-2-20, 18 Oct. 1845, Bond: By Hung-Attai, Vai-Quai, and Chun-Akow; CO129/5, Receipt for Wages, pp. 413b, 443b, 478b; CO131/1, 23 June 1846, Executive Council Minutes, p. 160a, CO129/16, Land Records, pp. 515b-524a.

[65] Munn, *Anglo-China*.

[66] For the development of the market halls in England, see James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall : A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1999). For the development of the public markets in other British possessions, see Jonathan Brown; Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture* (Sydney: Watermark Press, 1999); Norman Edwards, *The Singapore House and Residential Life, 1819-1939* (Singapore: New York, Oxford University Press, 1990); Yunn Chii Wong, *Singapore 1:1 City: A Gallery of Architecture & Urban Design* (Singapore: Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2005).

system of the time in fact lies in-between: it was a mixture of direct and indirect rule. The colonial authorities considered the public markets essentially a Chinese business, as all sellers and most buyers inside were Chinese. Once the food hawkers, who threatened the colony's development and social order, were removed from the thoroughfare and settled in an orderly market, the colonial authorities, before 1847, simply left them to the daily administration of the Chinese overseers and farmers. Although the chief and police magistrates held ultimate power over the public markets (for example, the market overseer was under their supervision), they and the police would intervene only in the market affairs in case of robberies, thefts, assaults, and other serious crimes and accidents.[67] As many scholars have highlighted, the major concern of the early colonial authorities was to maintain social order.[68] To achieve this goal, the British colonisers would impose different means of rule over their subjects, irrespective of a direct, indirect, or mixed one.

Money also affected who managed the public markets. In Hong Kong, as in many other British possessions, employing a European for colonial administration was more expensive than employing a native. According to the estimated expenditure from April 1844 to March 1845, the salaries of the overseers of the Central, Western and Eastern Markets were respectively $20, $10 and $8 per month. Although the Central Market overseer had the highest salary among the Chinese government servants of the time, it was only about a quarter of that of a British overseer of roads.[69]

The public market was an arena in which the Chinese elite managed the

[67] Tarrant, *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, p. 36.
[68] Munn, *Anglo-China*; Sinn, *Power and Charity*.
[69] CO129/6, 30 March 1844, Estimate of Expenditure, p. 236b; CO133/1, Blue Book, 1844, p. 66.

affairs of the Chinese community in the 1840s, a period before what the colonial officials called "a better class of Chinese" emerged.[70] The public markets came into existence in 1842, even earlier than such "elite organisations" as the City Temple in 1843 and the Man Mo Temple in 1847.[71] Like other early Chinese community leaders, the Chinese market overseers and farmers, as shown above, were better-off or even affluent. Like other early Chinese community leaders, the market overseers and farmers were trusted by the colonial authorities. Loo Acqui, for example, was on good terms with William Caine, later colonial secretary, who was the primary official managing the market farming affairs.[72] Old Afoon, Wei Aqui and young Afoon were also friends of Caine. Wei Aqui was intimate with Karl Gützlaff, Chinese-language secretary of the governor. Before his death, Wei Aqui was under the medical care of Gützlaff.[73] Loo Aqui and the Wei father and sons had another strength: they could speak either fluent or simple English.[74] The colonial officials would be willing to give the market administration right to a trustworthy Chinese.

From "a Great Boon" to Failure: Significance of Prohibitions Against Food Hawking and the Public Market System

Scholars have generally agreed that in the 1840s, the British authorities in Hong Kong cared only for the interests of the European community. Admittedly, the

[70] Carroll, *Edge of Empire*, pp. 37-57.
[71] Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp. 31-32, 60, 71, 73; Sinn, *Power and Charity*, pp. 15-17; Ting, "Xianggang zaoqi", pp. 181-190, 307-308; Carl Smith, "Notes on Chinese Temples in Hong Kong", *Journal of Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13 (1973), pp. 133-139.
[72] CO129/20, Report of Attorney General, p. 281a.
[73] CO129/20, Davis to Stanley, pp. 334a-335a; FO233/186, Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 4, p. 32b
[74] George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1972), p. 83; CO129/20, Report of Attorney General, p. 278b.

principal reasons why the government established the public markets were to obviate inconvenience caused by food hawking to the foreign community and to prevent social disorder, but the colonial authorities also anticipated the erection of the public markets as being beneficial to Hong Kong Chinese. One of the functions of Malcolm's land and road committee, from which the Central Market was born, was to examine "the best points for laying down new lines of roads,… *with a view of providing locations*, *to meet the demands*… that may be expected from the rapidly increasing population of the colony, *both European and native*."[75] In a reply to Malcolm, Governor Pottinger praised him as the one who "zealously undertook to superintend" the building and arrangement of the Central Market. As far as the public market was concerned, the colonial authorities, at least in the very beginning, committed themselves to serve the population in Hong Kong in the long run. Immediately after the first public market opened its door to the public, Pottinger sanctioned the construction of a second one, provided that "the wants of the settlement demand it".[76]

The government at first intended to benefit not only food sellers but also food buyers in the colony. Malcolm testified to the 1847 select committee that before the farming system, "Any person coming to the market" could let stalls at fixed rates, which, as shown above, were very lenient. Charles Stewart, colonial treasurer, saw the fixed rent "a great public convenience" to the market stall vendors. The public markets also provided a new place for those food traders whose mat-sheds were cleared by the colonial authorities. For food buyers, the Central Market was very convenient for Chinese and foreign residents and ships to procure foodstuffs, as it was situated at the angle between

[75] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. 10, March 1842, p. 184.
[76] CO129/10, Pottinger to Malcolm, p. 248b.

the Upper and Lower Bazaars, the two major early Chinese settlements, and along the coast at Queen's Road, occupying, as Alexander said, the most valuable position. With the later addition of the Western and Eastern Markets, the three public markets were respectively located in three different districts (*huan*) of Victoria, namely Central, Western and Eastern districts. The size of each market was proportional to the population in each district.[77]

The colonial newspapers and contemporaries held a high opinion, or expectation, of the establishment of the public markets. The *Friend of China* reported that the opening of the Central Market to the public on 16 May 1842 was a spectacular event. On that day "The exhibition of Fruit and Vegetables was large and its effect was very pleasing. The singular variety of fish exposed, would afford many subjects of interest to the ichthyologist."[78] In October 1844, the *Friend of China* produced a colourful account:

> We noticed a neat market in the course of erection at the west end of the town, opposite the new China bazaar, with a water frontage and entrance from the road. This will be a great convenience to the inhabitants in that district, also to the shipping, many of the vessels being moored at some distance from the present market. The great benefit however- and it is one of no small magnitude- will be in cleanliness and consequently purity of the atmosphere, by confining the stalls for the sale of animal food and vegetables to one place, which will be kept clean under the supervision of a government Superintendent.[79]

In the eyes of William Bernard, captain of the war steamer *Nemesis*, "The Chinese willingly resorted to it, and brought abundant supplies of every kind."[80] Alexander Matheson, a Hong Kong resident until 1845, saw the establishment

---

[77] *Report from the Select Committee*, pp. 249, 348; CO129/6, Pottinger to Caine, pp. 416b-417b, CO129/16, Davis to Stanley, pp. 156b-168b.
[78] *Friend of China*, 19 May 1842.
[79] *Friend of China*, 2 Oct. 1844.
[80] Bernard, *Narrative of the voyage*, p. 84.

of the Central Market "a great boon" to Chinese food hawkers, who could rent the stalls at a very moderate rate.[81]

However, as time went on, the government failed to achieve its original aims and visions of founding the public markets. Report after report in the contemporary newspapers of crimes related to food hawking show the inability of the government to eradicate the hawking of food and other articles along Queen's Road and other roads and streets. The inefficiency of the police, who were frontline officials and thus shouldered the largest responsibility to clear peddling, was one of the reasons for the failure. As both contemporary English-language newspapers and modern scholars always observed, the police in early colonial Hong Kong were very corrupt.[82] Food hawkers may have paid protection fees to the police for allowing them to conduct business and bribed the police when they were caught.

Perhaps because of the failure of early measures against food hawking, the colonial government, instead of imposing stricter prohibition, legalised food hawking in 1847. Samuel Fearon, acting registrar-general, claimed that the legalisation was out of the consideration of revenue, to "check the present system of bad characters professing to be Hawkers, as a cloak to their proceedings", and to "save the police much trouble".[83] Under Ordinance no. 7 of 1846, which repealed the customarily-called registration ordinance of 1844, from 1 January 1847, a hawker could do his business when he was permitted by the registrar-general, "who shall enquire into the character and receive proper security for the good conduct of such hawker". After the enquiry, the

[81] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 162.
[82] For examples of studies about the corruption of the police in early colonial Hong Kong, see, Chi-wa Ng, "The Establishment and Early Development of Police System in Hong Kong", Ph.D. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999.
[83] CO129/19, Report of Registrar General Fearon, pp. 61a, 65a-65b.

registrar-general would grant a pass to the hawker, who then became licensed. He would have a badge of tin, painted and numbered, which was issued at an annual fee of about $1.[84] The police would treat the hawkers as vagrants if they did not wear the badge on their basket or dress. A hawker's license would be forfeited by the police magistrate on conviction of any offence. Fearon reported that he had registered "upwards of a Thousand professing Hawkers" from January to October 1846.[85]

According to the 1846 registration ordinance, an unlicensed hawker would be fined not more than $20. But as the police and magisterial reports reveal, fines were often not as high as the ordinance stipulated, and the punishment was not limited to fines. For example, on 3 April 1847, Li-kum-tee, a fruit seller, was fined $1 and had his baskets forfeited for hawking without a license. On 2 May 1847, Low-afook and Yuen-assam were fined $1 each, in default of which they were to receive 10 strokes, of being found hawking without a license.[86]

Despite the legalisation of hawking, its spatial and social problems persisted. This is proved by the numerous charges against those having stalls which obstructed the thoroughfare. For example, on 6 June 1847, four Chinese hawkers were "fined $10 each for obstructing the thoroughfare, by exposing their wares to sale." Problems of food hawking, along with many other persistent problems along Queen's Road, continued to cause inconvenience to the foreign community. The legalisation had its intrinsic weakness. Although each food hawker had to obtain security from other Chinese, the ineffectiveness of such a security system was under severe and recurrent attack from the

[84] The *Friend of China* once exclaimed that "The wretched hawkers of sweetmeats &c., are to pay $2 annually, in quarterly payments!" See *Friend of China*, 10 March 1847.
[85] CO129/19, Report of Registrar General Fearon, pp. 61a, 65a-65b.
[86] *China Mail*, 15 April 1847, 13 May 1847, 10 June 1847, 1 July 1847.

contemporary newspapers, which criticised that the security system could not eliminate "evil" Chinese from the colony.[87] This implies that the legalisation measure by and large failed to eliminate the Chinese of bad character from doing their business along Queen's Road and other roads and streets.

The legalisation of food hawking marks a significant change in the attitude of the colonial authorities towards food hawkers. At the very beginning, the British rulers considered them as a hindrance to the colony's development and a threat to social order. Now, a great number of them became licensed hawkers, with the approval of the registrar-general to run business. The legal food hawkers also paid regularly for their license. Many food hawkers, therefore, were transformed from an impediment to colonial rule to legal supporters of the colonial treasury.

The establishment of the public markets did not bring about the positive effects to the food buyers and sellers that the colonial authorities had hoped. A good food trade environment did not exist in the public markets. On 18 June 1847, 8 Chinese stall renters in the market were fined $1 each for "obstructing the path with baskets, &c". On the same day, a Chinese was fined $2 "for allowing filth to accumulate before his door." The public markets also suffered from poor drainage along Queen's Road and in the whole colony. On 7 May 1847, after torrential rains, which "exceeded in violence any storm during the last five years" as the *Friend of China* commented, at one time "the whole of the Queen's Road from the entrance to the large Bazaar to the market place [probably the Central Market] was completely flooded to the depth of from 2 to

[87] *China Mail*, 13 May 1847.

4 feet."[88]

The public markets also failed to nurture good habits of the stallholders too. Circulation of bad and counterfeit coins was so wide in the markets that the operators of the Western and Central Markets petitioned the colonial government.[89] Henry Sirr, a voyager in Hong Kong in 1847, gave a vivid description of the malpractice of the food traders in the markets:

> The poultry, pigs, and small fry are sold alive by weight; and the Chinese exercise their ingenuity to increase the specific gravity of these creature comforts- and they accomplish this feat as regards the pigs, by administering copious doses of salt to piggy, who becomes horribly thirsty, and swills water in copious draughts, then the gentlemen or lady, as the case may be, is taken to the bazaar [public market] for sale, with a belly distended, until it is as tight as a drum. The Chinese fattened their pigs to an enormous extent, consequently the pork is disgusting to our taste, and unfit for food; it is stated by medical men that the prevalence of leprosy in China is attributable to the quantity and quality of the unctuous food that is eaten by the Chinese. These ingenious rogues cram their poultry, before taking them to the bazaar [public market], with pellets of wet sand, and rub it abundantly into their feathers; we had the curiosity to examine a duck that had been purchased by our compradore, and found half a pound of wet sand plastered under each wing; and when the bird was killed, he found the craw filled with the nutritive substance.[90]

A good social order did not exist in the public markets. Quarrels and fighting for matters related or unrelated to food trades were frequent. In the morning of 14 July 1846, in a public market, Leang Ahing, a cook's assistant, wanted Seang Ason, a boy of a fish seller called Kan Fook, to give him some fish on trust. Considering this as improper, the boy refused. Leang struck him with a sword in the shoulder and on the ankle, and the boy consequently lost a finge. About 30 or 40 Chinese then ran about with swords and spears, and a

[88] *China Mail*, 24 June 1847; *Hong Kong Register*, 13 May 1845.
[89] FO233/186, the eight month of Daoguang 27, Loo Aqui's and Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 25, p. 38a.
[90] Sirr, *China and the Chinese*, 33.

number of them rushed up a street, seized the prisoner, and rushed back to the marketplace.[91] The *China Mail* recorded in detail another quarrel, which probably occurred in the Central Market:

> A quarrel took place in the market yesterday [29 April 1846] at 4, P.M., between two Chinaman named Choi-a-Fat and Asow, about a few (49) cash, which the former owed the latter. After exchanging angry words, Choi-a-fat became so exasperated that he threatened to kill his creditor, which threat he immediately followed up by drawing a short sword from his belt, stabbing A-sow slightly in the shoulder, and finally giving him a severe wound in the abdomen, which is likely to prove fatal. He immediately ran off, pursued by a number of the on-lookers, who brought him to bay in one of the houses in the market, where he kept his pursuers at a safe distance with his small weapon, although they were armed with long poles and sticks.

A policeman then came to the spot and arrested the prisoner, who was later recognised as an offender with previous records (two thefts).[92] From this case, the *Friend of China* questioned whether the colonial authorities should allow the lower-class Chinese to carry concealed weapons when outside.[93]

Various kinds of petty theft and robbery also occurred in the public markets frequently. A foreign cook named Francis was found guilty of stealing a piece of pork worth 2 d. from a pork shop owned by Lung Awing on 17 November 1846. (At that time 4s. 2d. equalled $1.)[94] On 12 August 1842, Chong Pun was sentenced for stealing a bundle of clothes from Lo Ham, the accountant of the Central Market residing there. In a case tried on 17 February 1847, Chun-afook, a seller of salt fish, was "accused of being on the premises of Loo-yuet-shing, overseer of the Western Market, at midnight, with intent to

---

[91] *Friend of China*, 14 Nov. 1846.
[92] *China Mail*, 40 April 1846.
[93] *Hong Kong Register*, 5 May 1846. For other examples of quarrelling, fighting and disturbance in the public markets see *China Mail*, 4 Feb. 1847, 18 Feb. 1847, 13 May 1847.
[94] *The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1846*; *Hong Kong Register*, 22 Dec. 1846.

commit felony. The prisoner was seen inside the room by one person, and on the roof of the house by another. He was recently released from jail, after suffering six months confinement for larceny." In another case tried on the same day, Lew-asze was charged with stealing a jacket worth about $0.5 from the front of a stall in a market. On 17 June 1847 Mun-foong-be, a labourer, was sentenced to be whipped for snatching a mace out of a basket carried by a coolie in the Central Market.[95]

In addition to thieves and robbers, foreign drunkards, firecrackers and incendiaries were also origins of market disorder. On 8 March 1847 Domingos de Souzs, a Portuguese cook, was accused of being drunk and making a disturbance in the Western Market. The prisoner was repeatedly found guilty of the same offence. On 30 April 1847, Wong-akow was "fined $2 for firing crackers in a marketplace, and thus endangering the neighbouring buildings." In the beginning of October 1843, some Chinese robbers even attempted to burn the Central Market, and "at noon a number of Chinamen, armed with knives, entered the Market, threatened all around, wounded an [sic] European policeman, and then walked away unmolested."[96]

The colonial government once devised means to improve the unpleasant situation in the public markets but failed. As thefts in the markets were rife, in April 1847 the colonial authorities allowed only "a certain number of boys of good character" to go inside the place in search of employment. The boys were required to wear a badge in order to distinguish themselves. The new measures,

[95] *China Mail*, 4 March 1847, 24 June 1847. For other examples of thefts and robberies inside the public markets, see *Friend of China*, 11 Jan. 1845; *Hong Kong Register*, 3 Aug. 1847.
[96] *China Mail*, 11 March 1847, 3 May 1847; Irish University Press Area Studies Series, *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 24: Correspondence, Dispatches, Reports, Ordinances and Other Papers Relating to the Affairs of Hong Kong 1846-1869* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), p. 116.

however, not only failed to solve the old problem, but also led to a new one. In a case tried on 13 May 1847, Yeun Akow, formerly imprisoned for 6 months of larceny and recently released from jail, wanted to take a market badge from a boy. As the boy refused to part with it, Yeun assaulted and beat him. Two days later, two coolies severely beat a Chinese boy, because the boy had received a market badge and they could not get one. Before a constable arrested them, the coolies "were in the act of drawing the little fellow, covered with blood, along the road". One of the prisoners was an old offender, lately assaulting the police constable in charge of the market.[97]

There are several reasons why the public markets did not develop into orderly places. The police, Chinese, Indian or British, were certainly partly responsible for the disorder there. Criminals and offenders inside the market were hardly afraid of the fact that the Central and Western Markets were located near the police stations.[98] Comparatively speaking, however, the market overseers and farmers, the primary figures overseeing the daily administration of the public markets, had to shoulder more responsibility. By and large it was they who failed to maintain a good environment for food trade. On 17 June 1847, Leong-akwong, a "part owner and occupier of the western market", was fined $40 for "allowing filth to accumulate and pigs to run about loose, by which the passage was obstructed." He had often been warned by the police inspector before.[99] This highlights the weaknesses of the Chinese elite to rule over the common people and also the shortcomings of the colonial authorities' indirect rule policy.

[97] *China Mail*, 20 May 1847, 27 May 1847.
[98] *China Mail*, 20 March 1845; HKRS149-2-91, Acknowledgement of Loo Acqui.
[99] *China Mail*, 24 June 1847.

The ignorance of certain internal regulations constituted was another reason for the failure of the public markets. Malcolm originally stipulated that no one, except the market overseer, would be allowed to stay in the markets overnight. However, the April 1844 census released by Gützlaff counted 391 and 111 males living in the Central and Western Markets respectively. The places were becoming a shelter for criminals. In July 1846 Yung-Achong, knowing that four Chinese stole the watch of his master Mr Lowrie, went into the prisoners' house in the marketplace, pretended to exchange it back with $12, and eventually took the theives into custody.[100] Some Chinese thieves, robbers and pirates even stored their booties in the markets.[101]

The establishment of the public markets even led to new social problems: it indirectly created hiding places for criminals. Near the Central and Western Markets, there were wharves for the anchorage of boats of fish and other sorts. Many robbers, pirates, murderers and other criminals hid amid these boats. For example, on 29 April 1847, two servants of a Mr Wilson of MacEwen & Co.'s stole his master's property, and were traced on board a boat which lay off the Central Market all night; next morning, they sailed for Cumsingmoon adjacent to Macau. After killing a former Chinese policeman named Aleen for his inability to pay the debt, Atti hid in a boat in the wharf near the Central Market.[102]

On land, as popular public venues, the markets became places of

[100] CO133/1, Blue Book, 1844, p. 101; *Hong Kong Register*, 23 Dec. 1845; *Friend of China*, 14 Nov. 1846.
[101] For example of robbers, thieves and pirates who stored booties in the public markets, see *China Mail*, 14 June 1847, 12 July 1847, 9 Oct. 1847.
[102] *China Mail*, 4 Dec. 1845, 13 May 1847. For more examples of criminals who hid near the waters of the public markets, see *Friend of China*, 3 Dec. 1845; *Hong Kong Register*, 12 Oct. 1847, 2 Nov. 1847. For more examples of the waters of the public markets as a place for the pirates, robbers and burglars to save booties, see *China Mail*, 28 Nov. 1847; *Friend of China*, 14 Nov. 1846.

congregations of Chinese coolies, gamblers and vagabonds. In a case of robbery on 10 September 1842, a witness Apo found out three offenders "in front of the Market where about 150 Coolies were collected waiting for employment". The crowds of coolies were potential threats to the colonial authorities and origins of social nuisance. On 17 September 1842, a Chinese called Alleco was sentenced to 10 strokes for his laughing at the chief magistrate, who had ordered Alleco to clear the road opposite a marketplace where an enormous number of coolies clogged the road. On 16 February 1847, a crowd of about four hundred Chinese assembled near the Western Market on Queen's Road, "some of whom were observed fighting with swords and spears. On the police approaching the crowd dispersed, leaving some of the weapons lying on the road." On the same day, about two hundred Chinese were found gambling on a thoroughfare near the Western Market. The police seized a man who appeared to be a director of one of the gambling tables.[103]

Last but not least, rather than "a great boon" to the colony, the public markets brought sufferings to food buyers and even sellers. From 1844, the rise of food prices and fall of food quality in the public markets, and in the whole colony at large, had been frequent complaints in the newspapers and among foreign residents and voyagers.[104] Several possible reasons explain the unpleasant situation, including the drop in food supply in Canton and other neighbouring regions, extortion of compradors, opium farming, heavy land rents, police rate and registration fees, and above all, the farming of the public

[103] *Friend of China*, 13 Oct. 1842, 27 Oct. 1842; *China Mail*, 25 Feb. 1847.
[104] For the reports and criticism by the English-language newspapers about the rise of food price, see *Hong Kong Register*, 4 June 1844. For the complaints of foreign residents and voyagers about the rise of food price, see Select Committee, p. 164; Sirr, *China and the Chinese*, p. 33. For the drop of food quality, see Julius, *A Voyage to China*, p. 36; *Hong Kong Register*, 8 July 1845; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 280.

markets.[105] It is unfair to attribute the rise of food prices and fall of food quality solely to the farming of the public markets, but the farming no doubt exacerbated the problem. Under the farming system, the colonial government exacted high market rents from the market operators, who in turn imposed high rents on the stall lessees. The *Hong Kong Register*, when commenting on the 1847 market ordinance, complained that "Of course every exaction under the name of License or any other upon dealers frequenting the market can only be met by an increased rate demanded for their goods of whatever kind, and the sum comes at last from the pockets of the consumers."[106]

Matheson argued before the 1847 select committee that "provisions should be as cheap as possible in a new colony like Hong Kong."[107] His testimony deserves deeper analysis. There were several important significances of keeping food prices at a low level in early colonial Hong Kong. The Chinese population, most of who lived from hand to mouth, of course welcomed this; if the price climbed up high, which was the case in Hong Kong in the 1840s, the Chinese commoners certainly became increasingly discontented. Matheson thought that as a result of the rise of food price, "poor labouring people cannot afford to live in the colony as they did formerly."[108] To cover their daily expenses, they might demand an increased wage, which in turn brought pressure to their masters, many of whom were British merchants. In the eyes of the colonial

[105] *Friend of China*, 21 May 1844; *Hong Kong Register*, 12 Nov. 1844; Julius Berncastle, *A Voyage to China: Including a Visit to the Bombay Presidency, the Mahratta Country, the Cave Temples of Western India, Singapore, the Straits of Malacca and Sunda, and the Cape of Good Hope* (London: Shoberl, 1850), p. 36, Sirr, *China and the Chinese*, 33; FO233/185, Petitions from Residents of All Districts, 1844, No. 29, pp. 22b-23a; FO233/185, Petitions from Residents of All Districts, 1845, No. 33, pp. 37b, 38b. Matheson commented that "The fishermen or person who produces vegetables has to pay a higher price for his opium, and consequently require a higher price for everything that he bring to market at Hong Kong. See *Report from the Select Committe*e, p. 278.

[106] *Hong Kong Register*, 9 Feb. 1847.

[107] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 165.

[108] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 162.

authorities and British merchants, this was no doubt unfavourable to the development of early colonial Hong Kong as an infant commercial entrepôt.

More importantly, scholars have neglected another side of the picture: the rise of food prices was a source of social discontent of the Chinese common people. Hong Kong in the 1840s witnessed a series of collective actions by the common Chinese against exploitative government policies. The grievances of the common Chinese may have originated in the pressure from their daily lives. Here lies a paradox that while the colonial authorities launched the public market system as a means to eliminate food hawkers who impeded colonial rule, the public markets later became source of social instability and threats to colonial order. The colonial authorities failed to achieve most of their original aims of founding the public markets.

Although suffering from the rise of food prices, the Chinese common people were not only subordinate to their unpleasant situation. On the contrary, in early colonial Hong Kong, different groups of people, ranging from the colonial officials to Chinese government servants, from market farmers to stallholders, knew how to manipulate the available resources. To pursue their interests, they would collaborate and conflict with the others according to different situations. The next chapter examines the intricate colonial relations in early British Hong Kong.

Chapter 3

Power Matters: The Market Farming System as a Reflection of Colonial Relations in Early British Hong Kong

Scholars have usually applied the "coloniser-colonised" paradigm to analyse colonial relation in early British Hong Kong. They have depicted well the uneasy relations between the British colonial authorities and their foreign and Chinese subjects. They have, for example, discussed in detail such "big events" as the forcible resettlement of the Chinese residents to Tai Ping Shan, the so-called Registration Affair in 1844 and the Second Anglo-Chinese War (1856-60), and have analysed how the colonial authorities during the events imposed arbitrary measures and the corresponding resistance or subordination of their subjects.[1] There have also been a number of fruitful works on how early colonial measures provided a ladder of affluence to the Chinese elite. The establishment of opium farms in the colony was a typical example of this.[2]

But applying the "coloniser-colonised" model only to study colonial relations is not sufficient. Most scholars have overlooked the different dimensions of colonial relations and the heterogeneity of a colonial society. The British colonial authorities, Chinese people and foreigners were never three

[1] On the forcible resettlement of Chinese residents from the Upper Bazaar to Tai Ping Shan in 1844, see Smith, "The Chinese Settlement of British Hong Kong", pp. 30-31 and Evans, "Chinatown in Hong Kong". On the Registration Affair of late October and early November 1844, i.e. the imposition of poll tax on every Hong Kong residents that led to the general discontent of the foreign mercantile community and general strike of the Chinese population, see Eitel, *Europe in China*, 221-226; Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 40-41; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 128-130. On the restrictive government measures against the Chinese subjects prior to and during the Second Anglo-Chinese War, see Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 280-289.

[2] On how the establishment of a colony in Hong Kong provided the Chinese chances of being wealthy, see Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp. 21-55; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 73-78; Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 43-45.

homogenous groups.[3] Within each, there were different parties sharing similar but also different interests. Individuals within the same party, and different parties within the same group would cooperate or conflict with one another, and interacted with the other groups concurrently. For example, a Chinese market operator may have cooperated with the colonial authorities against his Chinese and non-Chinese rivals. The "coloniser-colonised" paradigm is unable to reflect such a complex colonial relation.

This chapter scrutinises the intricate colonial relations during the governorship of Governor John Davis, from 1844 to 1848, by studying the market farming system. Davis was notorious among his subjects, Chinese and foreign alike, because of his arrogance towards the foreign merchants, his discriminative measures disregarding the interests of the Chinese, his persistent efforts to develop new sources of colonial revenue, and his numerous disturbing ordinances and proclamations.[4] From his market farming system, however, one can see a history of more than just subordination of the colonial subjects during his governorship. The different parties involved in the system, ranging from Davis himself to Chinese government servants, from Chinese and foreign market farmers to market stallholders, all knew how to manipulate resources available to achieve their goals, from profit-making to self-protection. In one case, their interests collided; in the other case, their interests contradicted one another.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section discusses the relations among the colonial authorities, Chinese market farmers and foreign market farmers. It focuses on how the first two parties used their own powers to

[3] Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 57-86.
[4] On the features of Davis's governorship, see Eitel, *Europe in China*, pp. 221-242, 250-251.

benefit from the market farming system, how their interests ran parallel to each other, and how the the Chinese and foreign market farmers competed and cooperated. An examination of the multifarious relations among the Chinese market farmers then follows. The second section analyses how Chinese government servants extorted money from the Chinese market farmers, and the complicated relations between them. It pays particular attention to two extortion cases related to the market farming. Initially a perfect equilibrium existed in the extortion system among the Chinese market farmers, government servants and colonial officials involved. But later the equilibrium collapsed, their relations changed, and they adopted different tactics to get rid of their embarrassing situations. The last section studies the relations among the colonial authorities, Chinese market farmers, stallholders and food dealers outside the markets, especially food hawkers. It argues that the stall lessees were not necessarily subjugated to the market farmers and the colonial authorities. The stallholders, for instance, united against exploitative government measures. The latter part of this section denotes the conflicts between the market farmers, stallholders and food hawkers. It shows that the Chinese elite did not always represent the interests of the common people; in many cases their interests even ran contrary to each other.

Colonial Authorities, Chinese and Foreign Market Farmers

Governor Davis was skilled at utilising available resources to increase colonial revenues. On 26 June 1844, only six weeks after he took office, his Executive Council resolved that the government markets be farmed.[5] The public market

[5] Great Britain, Colonial Office. Executive and Legislative Council Minutes: Hong Kong (from

was basically different from the other farmed, monopolised or licensed items, which were either franchises or private businesses.[6] It was government rather than private property. The farming of the public markets meant that the colonial authorities leased them out and licensed the market operation rights to private individuals for a period, one or five years in most cases. During that period the market was an estate of its farmer; when the license expired, the operator had to return the whole market to the colonial authorities, who would then select the next farmer. If the cycle ran well, this system would generate steady returns to the colonial treasury.

Davis made perfect calculations of the design of the market farming system. For the colonial government, the system was not only lucrative but also cost-free and expense-saving. Prior to the farming system, stall rents of the markets were at such a moderate level that they were probably insufficient to cover such daily expenses as salaries of the market overseers and maintenance fees. Taking the first half of 1844 as an example, the government received only about $900 in total from all the markets in the colony.[7] Now, under the farming system, the government licensed the whole market to one market operator, who paid a monthly rent of as much as $400. He either had to provide a surety in advance or would be fined if he broke the conditions of the lease. The government did not need to pay a penny for the farming; the market were responsible for all construction or re-construction works and repairs. Once the

---

1844), Series 131 (CO131), National Archives, Kew, CO131/1, 26 June 1844, Executive Council Minutes, p. 30a.

[6] During Davis' governorship, these franchises included opium, bhang, tobacco, snuff, spirit, betel nut and betel leaf; farmed, monopolised or licensed private business included pawnbroking, auctioneering, stone quarrying, public house keeping, billiard table keeping, salt weighing and brokerage, grass cutting, and the management of the provision and lodging of Lascar seamen (the manager was known as ghaut serang).

[7] CO133/1, Hong Kong Blue Book, Revenue, 1844, p. 2; CO129/11, 28 Feb. 1845, The Treasurer's Accounts, pp. 120a, 122a.

lease was over, the farmers handed over their property to the government without receiving any compensation. Under no circumstances, therefore, would the market farming system incur a loss to the colonial treasury.

The colonial government was not only concerned about how much money could be received from the market farming system. It also had its social and political considerations. At least before 1847, the colonial authorities did not abuse their power by granting excessive market licenses to the many applicants. During this time the concept of "one district, one market" remained, and thus no vicious competition existed between different public markets. For a period Davis also continued his predecessor's indirect rule policy, according to which the market stallholders, exclusively Chinese, were under the management of the Chinese only.

Under the above considerations and concerns of the colonial authorities, if one wanted to be a market operator, he had to fulfil two criteria apart from being Chinese. The first criterion was to be affluent enough. Franchising a market was an expensive business. A typical example was the Central Market, the largest public market in early colonial Hong Kong. Its first legal farmer was Wei Aqui, son of old Afoon, whose farming of the Central Market started in August 1844. Extending the market lease in July 1845, he was obliged to replace mat sheds there with new brick houses covered with tiles, lay down roads paved with brick or stone, and make proper drains. He also needed to pay with two sureties a security of $2,000 beforehand, and an increased monthly rent of $400, one-third higher than the initial amount. The duty and construction fee were so enormous that Wei Aqui, even though being a government contractor and land speculator and thus wealthy, had to borrow several thousand

dollars in total from many other Chinese. He also divided the property into 13 shares and invited the investment of his elder brother young Afoon, who later succeeded his estate, and Chung-tai-shing, alias Chun-shing, Chen Dacheng, probably Wei Aqui's friend, amounting to $7,000.[8]

In fact, the Wei brothers of the Central Market were much less affluent than the Chinese farmers of other markets, who were the richest property merchants and farmers of other items in early colonial Hong Kong. The first franchisers of the Western and Eastern Markets were respectively Loo Aqui and his partner Fung Atai, who were the great estate owners in the Lower Bazaar and participated in opium farming, one of the most profitable businesses at the time in the colony.[9] Also, one would not apply for a market license unless he was very wealthy. Tam Achoy, applying in around March 1847 to erect a market on his marine lot no. 1 adjacent to the Lower Bazaar, was an extremely wealthy property merchant and government contractor.[10]

---

[8] Government Records Service, Hong Kong, HKRS149-2-3, 16 Aug. 1844, Security Bond: By Foong Atye as Security for Wei Acqui, Overseer of Government Market, to Keep the Said Market in Good Order; HKRS149-2-17, 9 July 1845, Bond: By Agui, Attai and Akow; CO129/12, 13 June 1845, Davis to Stanley, p. 182b; FO233/186, the twelveth month of Daoguang 26, Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 4, p. 32b; CO129/20, 6 July 1845, English Translation of an Agreement of the Lease of the Central Market by Wei-teen-kwei, Chun-tai-shing and Wei-teen-foo, p. 262b, English Translation of an Agreement by Wei-foo, Chun-shing and Hoi-tseok for the Transfer of the Central Market shares to Foong-che, p. 265a, Note on the English Translation of Chinese Documents, p. 268b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847; Dafydd Emrys Evans, "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market and the Tarrant Affair", *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12 (1972): 150-160.

[9] CO129/27, 302b, Smith, "Chinese Settlement of British Hong Kong", p. 26.

[10] George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846* (London, 1847, repr. Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1972), pp. 82-83; CO129/20, 6 July 1847, Report of the Attorney General on an Investigation Officially Made by Him into the Circumstances Connected with Mr. Tarrant's Case, pp. 260a-260b; CO129/27, 25 Feb. 1848, Report of Committee House of Commons on "Commercial Relations with China" Observations on Evidence and Enclosures Papers, p. 302b; FO233/186, the eleventh month of Daoguang 26, Loo Aqui's Petition, 1847, No. 3, pp. 32a-32b, FO233/186, the first month of Daoguang 27, Tam Achoy's Petition, 1847, No. 8, p. 33b, FO233/187, the first month of Daoguang 25, Tam Achoy's Petition, 1847, No. 7, p. 23b; HKRS149-2-5, 1 Oct. 1844, Agreement and Bond: Executed by Akow for the Sum of $500. Atei to Keep the Government Market No. 2 in Good Order, and the Said Atei to Pay to Government the Sum of $60 Monthly in Advance for the Space of One Year for His Right of Farming the Market; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847;

The affluent Chinese market operators were important financial supporters of Davis's government, which ran a deficit. Their market rents formed a reliable source of colonial revenues. From July to December 1844 (the farming system started in June 1844), the colonial treasury collected about $2,600 from the public markets. In 1845, the figure soared to $7,800; in 1846, it remained nearly the same. In the 1840s, amid the proceeds from the farmed, monopolised and licensed items, the market rents were the second largest source of government income, only after the opium revenue.[11] Davis may have been satisfied with the remarkable contribution of the Chinese market farmers, and that was perhaps a reason why he exclusively kept the market farming a Chinese business before 1847.

The second criterion for being a market operator was to have good relations with senior colonial officials. In general the public markets were not open to auction; usually it was the private individuals who applied for farming the public markets and saw whether the colonial authorities endorsed their application. Wei Aqui and Loo Aqui were friends with William Caine, chief magistrate and later colonial secretary, who was the primary official managing the market farming affairs. William Tarrant, clerk of registry and keeper of records in the Land Office, claimed that young Afoon once told him that "[Wei] Aqui got the market through the influence of Major Caine" and that Wei Aqui entered into an agreement to pay $150 to Caine. This corruption case will be analysed in detail later. It is reasonable to presume that Caine also gave his friend Loo a helping hand for acquiring the license of the Western Market. Wei

---

Friend of China, 14 July 1847; Smith, "Chinese Settlement of British Hong Kong", p. 26.

[11] CO133, Hong Kong Blue Books, Annual Censuses, 1844-1849, Revenue, 1845-1846; CO129/11, 28 Feb. 1845, The Treasurer's Accounts, pp. 120a, 122a; Eitel, *Europe in China*, pp. 236-237.

Aqui was also an intimate friend of Davis's Chinese-language secretary Karl Gützlaff.[12] Corrupt or not, the colonial officials were willing to grant the market operation right to a trustworthy Chinese.

On the Chinese side, despite heavy expenses, many Chinese still considered the market business profitable, and were keen on operating a public market. Loo Aqui, for instance, franchised the Western Market for five years from November 1844. Many Chinese were attracted by the lucrative income from the stall lessees. Taking the Central Market as an example, the food shops in an area of 37,800 square feet may have numbered one or two hundred, and the stall rents could reach as much as a thousand dollars a month. Its farmer Wei Aqui also received rents from the nine shops outside the market gate on the side of Queen's Road. This "quasi-monopoly" of food trade in the market sector was also very attractive. Though there was no strict regulation about what kinds of food had to be sold exclusively in the public markets, most meat and fish for local consumption were actually sold there.[13] This shows the preference of poultry- and fish-mongers for conducting their trade in a market, which to the market farmers meant a potentially considerable income.

Like the colonial government, the Chinese market operators were concerned about matters other than money. In February or March 1848, a Chinese under his shop name of Huaji, which literally means "China Firm", petitioned with some other Chinese to open a new market in the Eastern district. Their memorial reflects their desire to benefit the vast population: "When

[12] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 278; CO129/20, 27 July 1847, Report of the Trial of Tarrant Charged of Conspiracy against Caine's Reputation, p. 281a; CO133/3, Hong Kong Blue Book, 1846, Hong Kong Colonial Official List; CO129/20, 6 July 1847, Report of the Attorney General, p.243a; FO233/186, Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 4, p. 32b.
[13] FO233/186, Loo Aqui's Petition, 1847, No. 3, FO233/186, Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 4, p. 32b; CO129/23, 26 Jan. 1848, Report of Revenue, p. 103b, CO129/27, Report of Committee House of Commons, p. 288b; *Hong Kong Register*, 9 Feb. 1847.

planning to found a country, one should first gather people and set up markets (*juminlishi*), and so to assemble goods. Now around the area of Tung Lung Chau [in the Eastern district], households are quite many, but no market has been erected there so there is no place for the assembly of goods. Buying and selling is done day and night, so the present situation is not convenient to the people's lives. Therefore, we convened to discuss…… [and] intend to construct [a new market]".[14] This statement revealed the mentality of the better-off Chinese who were self-conscious of making contributions to the Chinese society.

It was not only the Chinese who desired to franchise the public markets. While many foreigners objected to their farming, which resulted in the rise of food prices in Victoria, some foreign speculators saw it a profitable property investment. In August 1844, only about two months after the farming system was established, a British firm, Smith & Co., asked for permission to build a new market on its recently-purchased marine lot no. 14. In fact, as early as June or July 1842, a private market had already been in the Eastern part of Victoria constructed by John Ouchterlony of the Madras Engineers, who at first intended to build a bazaar for the soldiers encamping nearby but later decided the plan was unsafe.[15]

Interestingly, seeing that the public markets attracted both the Chinese and foreign merchants, the colonial authorities kept the operation right exclusively in the hands of the Chinese until 1846. The government imposed an interdict

[14] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 262b; FO233/187, the first month of Daoguang 28, Huaji's Petition, 1847, No. 2, pp. 32b-33a; Evans, "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market", p. 151.
[15] CO129/10, 21 Aug. 1843, Woosnam to Ouchterlony, p. 505b, Co129/12, 23 June 1845, Davis to Stanley, p. 200b; CO131/1, 23 Aug. 1844, Executive Council Minutes, p. 46b; *Report from the Select Committee*, pp. 162-165.

upon the use of Ouchterlony's property as a marketplace, and resumed it in 1843 (Ouchterlony received his compensation of about $880 three years later.) The property then became Government Market No. 2, or the Eastern Market. The colonial authorities first employed a Chinese to oversee it and later farmed it to Fung Atai. The Executive Council rejected Smith & Co.'s application to erect a market in the western part of Victoria, "on the ground that an additional market place was not required in that part of the Town and that it was advisable for the Government to reserve Public Markets or grant them only for short periods preserving a control over them." These reasons were not valid at all, because on the same day, the council approved Loo Aqui's erection of a new market near Tai Ping Shan for a longer period of five years.[16] Thus, contrary to the conventional wisdom, in early colonial Hong Kong the British authorities were not always pro-British and discriminative against the Chinese in commercial sectors where competition between the Chinese and the British was present.

Suddenly, without any sign, in January 1847 the Legislative Council passed the first market ordinance detailing the market license system.[17] In the same year the government received two applications for market licenses. In February 1847, Robert Strachan asked for permission to "convert his wooden Buildings on, and adjoining Marine Lot no. 67 into a Market Place for the sale of Provisions". Strachan was a clerk in the house of Gemmell & Co, agent of

[16] CO129/5, 1 Aug. 1843, Receipt for Wages Paid to Persons Employed in the Government Market Place at Victoria Hongkong during the Month of July 1844, p. 413b, CO129/12, 31 Jan. 1845, Ouchterlony to Presidency of Madras, p. 205a, CO129/17, Acting Colonial Treasurer's Account for the first half of 1846, p. 34b, CO129/19, Return of Special Disbursements not charged against the Departments, during the Year 1846, p. 188b; CO131/1, 23 Aug. 1844, Executive Council Minutes, pp. 46b-47a; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 410; HKRS149-2-5, Agreement and Bond: Executed by Akow for the Sum of $500.

[17] The market ordinance of January 1847 was repealed by an amended version several months later because some terms in the first one were unconstitutional.

the Canton Bazaar's proprietor (the Canton Bazaar was a place selling products other than food), and land speculator. In June 1847, Charles Marwick, a government auctioneer and land speculator, also requested to build a market on his inland lot no. 75. Now the colonial authorities no longer rejected applications from foreigners, and accordingly granted the market licenses to Strachan and Marwick promptly. Afterwards, there were more and more foreign market operators. One was George Duddell, a notable land speculator and once an opium farmer, who was the Western Market farmer after 1849.[18]

It is hard to explain why the government initially allowed only the Chinese enter into the market farming business. It is tempting to attribute this to the indirect rule policy, as food trade in the markets was largely a Chinese affair, and to the fact that foreign merchants in the colony were generally on very bad terms with Davis after the so-called Registration Affair in 1844. These reasons, however, cannot explain the later shift of the government's attitude in 1847, a year which saw no departure from the indirect rule policy and of conciliation between Davis and the foreign merchants. Another possible reason was financial concerns, but this cannot explain why the government did not open the door of the market sector to the foreigners earlier or even at the very beginning. Whatever the reasons, the government benefited from its relaxation of control on granting the market license. Strachan ran his new market for one year after March 1847 for a total sum of $600, instalments of $50 per month in advance.

[18] CO131/1, 13 Aug. 1845, 10 Feb. 1847, 25 Feb. 1847, 14 June 1847, Executive Council Minutes, pp. 154a, 206b-207a, 209b-210a, 223a; *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 241; *Friend of China*, 13 Dec. 1845; *China Mail*, 18 Dec. 1845; CO129/16, 4 June 1846, Davis to Stanley, pp. 515b-524a; CO129/27, 25 Feb. 1848, Report of Committee House of Commons, p. 285b; HKRS149-2-92, 2 Nov. 1849, Bond for $2,000: By George Duddell, with James Wentworth Brimelow and William Emeney as Security for the Due Payment of the Rent of Western Market. For examples of Duddell's speculation on lands, see CO127/7, 41a-41b, CO129/7, 318b; *Friend of China*, 13 Dec. 1845, *China Mail*, 18 Dec. 1845; CO129/16, 515b-524a.

The Executive Council also allowed Marwick to operate a market on terms similar to Robert Strachan's.[19]

As a result of the "open door policy", severe competition was inevitable between the foreign and Chinese market operators. No wonder the competition adversely affected the latter's business. A public market, the Western Market, had already been in Tai Ping Shan serving the inhabitants there. In 1847, Robert Strachan opened a new market in the Tai Ping Shan area. This inevitably diverted part of the Western Market's business, so that its farmer Loo Aqui sent a petition to the government appealing for waiving his market rents.[20] Two markets in the Western district were too many at that time, as the population there did not increase proportionally.[21] At the same time, the construction of the new Tai Ping Shan market also brought about the migration of numerous vendors from the Central Market. In 1848 Wu Jue, the Central Market farmer, expressed his grievances to the colonial authorities that many stalls in his market were then empty and the remaining shopkeepers demanded rent reduction. Under such difficult situations his market income decreased by a third.[22]

Nevertheless, the Chinese and foreigners were not always competitive and hostile to each other as far as the market farming was concerned. In some cases, the pursuit of profits broke the racial barriers. Some Chinese and foreigners cooperated for a market license. In 1847, Lin Tiangui and a foreigner (the Chinese called him "Weishimagu" or "Meimagu") successfully applied together

[19] CO131/1, 13 Aug. 1845, 10 Feb. 1847, 25 Feb. 1847, 14 June 1847, Executive Council Minutes, pp. 154a, 206b-207a, 209b-210a, 223a.
[20] FO233/186, Loo Aqui's Petition, 1847, No. 3, pp. 32a-32b, FO233/187, the tenth month of Daoguang 26, Loo Aqui's Petition, 1846, No. 10, p. 20b.
[21] From 1844 to 1848, the colony's population as a whole stagnated, if not decreased. See Eitel, *Europe in China*, p. 237
[22] FO233/187, the eighth month of Daoguang 28, Wu Jue's Petition, 1848, No. 17, p. 36b.

for land and permission to open a market at Tang Lung Chau in the Eastern district. In February or March 1848, Weishimagu again made a similar application with the Chinese shop Huaji.[23] Such examples question the assumption that the Chinese and the foreigners in early colonial Hong Kong rarely cooperated in economic aspects.

Relations among the Chinese market farmers were very intricate and operated at various levels. The first level was a cooperative one. They would join together when facing a common problem. In September 1847, young Afoon of the Central Market and Loo Aqui of the Western Market co-petitioned to the colonial government against the bad and counterfeit coins circulating in their markets and in the colony at large. The market operators were also on friendly terms in least some aspects. A glance at the deeds leasing the markets reveals that Wei Aqui of the Central Market and Fung Atai of the Eastern Market stood sureties of and provided securities to each other.[24]

At another level, Fung Atai and the Wei brothers, as well as other shareholders of the Central Market, were involved in very complex transactions in forms of money, market shares and the market operation right. As a debtor to the market's investors, Fung gradually became its biggest shareholder and operator. Fung Atai lent $2,800 to Wei Aqui for the re-construction of the Central Market. According to young Afoon, Wei Aqui originally divided the franchised Central Market into 13 shares, later split three of these shares into

[23] FO233/187, 19 Aug. 1847, Lin Tiangui's Petition, No. 19, p. 26b, FO233/186, Wei Tiangui's Petition, 1847, No.4, pp. 32b-33a; FO233/187, Huajis' Petition, 1848, No. 2, pp. 32b-33a.
[24] CO131/1, 30 Sept. 1847, Executive Council Minutes, pp. 241b-242a; FO233/186, the eighth month of Daoguang 27, Loo Aqui's and Wei Tianfu's Petition, 1847, No. 25, p. 38a; HKRS149-2-3, 16 Aug. 1844, Security Bond: By Foong Atye as Security for Wei Acqui, Overseer of Government Market, to Keep the Said Market in Good Order; HKRS149-2-17, Bond: By Agui, Attai and Akow; HKRS149-2-20, 18 Oct. 1845, Bond: By Hung-Attai, Vai-Quai, and Chun-Akow..

four, and finally allocated one of them to Fung. On 24 October 1845, young Afoon, Chung-tai-shing and Hoi-tseok transferred their Central Market shares to Fung. The purpose of their transaction was to borrow money from him. From around 26 October to 24 November 1845, Fung and some others advanced $1980 to young Afoon, Chun-tai-shing and the other market shareholders. Afterwards, Fung became the biggest stakeholder of the Central Market, having 10 out of a total of 13 shares. Young Afoon also handed his market seal over to Fung, meaning that Fung now became the market operator. Afterwards, as one of the legal proprietors, Fung collected rents from the market vendors, and paid the official ground rent to the colonial authorities after Aqui's death in December 1846.[25]

But Fung Atai was not satisfied with what he had already gained. He planned to obtain full possession and legal operation of the Central Market. According to Norcott D'Esterre Parker, acting solicitor general, Fung applied to him in November 1846 to transfer the Central Market from Wei Aqui, as "[Wei] Aqui owed him [Fung] over 2,000 dollars, besides his being security for the payment of a number of debts due by the Market for various parties, who had lent money for building the market." Parker accordingly prepared a deed, which was taken up and signed at the British Consulate in Canton, where Wei Aqui was dying. Parker then had the deed registered in the Land Office in Hong Kong. As the surviving land records show, Wei Aqui assigned his market lot to Fung on 13 November 1846, for an unspecified amount. Fung asserted that Wei Aqui sold him the lease of the Central Market at $1,000. With several debtors of Wei Aqui, Fung further wrote a Chinese petition to the colonial authorities for

[25] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 236b-237a, 240a, 258a, 264a- 265b, 268a-269b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

the succession of the legal operation right of the Central Market. On the publication of the market ordinance in January 1847, Parker also "wrote an official letter to the Colonial Secretary to obtain a license in Attai's name for the Central Market." Fung even occupied meat stalls of the Central Market on an earlier date of 24 October 1846.[26]

Fung Atai's desire to take over the Central Market led to a strong rebound by young Afoon, the successor of his brother's estate in December 1846. While admitting that his brother owed Fung $2,000, young Afoon argued that Fung's version of the Central Market's transaction was contrary to common sense, as the market cost as high as $7,000. He also accused the document produced by Fung of being fake, as "[Wei] Aqui was not out of the house at the time the assignment was executed, and that he was not in his senses." Consequently Afoon and Chung-tai-shing, a shareholder of the Central Market, sent out two separate petitions complaining of the fraud and Fung's plot, and asking for the return of the market operation right. Finally Fung gave up his claim on the possession of the market after young Afoon had cleared up his brother's debts.[27]

In the above Central Market affair, young Afoon was helped by two colonial officials. The first was Tarrant, who pronounced the deed signed between Wei Aqui and Fung Atai a forgery. Tarrant offered assistance probably because he was a friend of young Afoon, his brother Wei Aqui and his father old

[26] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp, 258a-258b; FO233/186, the eleventh month of Daoguang 26, Fung Atais' Petition, 1847, No. 1, p. 32a, FO233/186, Wei Tiangui's Petition, 1847, No.4, pp. 32b-33a, FO233/187, the tenth month of Daoguang 26, Fung Atais' Petition, 1846, No. 9, 20a-20b; *Friend of China*, 14 July 1847; Evans, "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market", pp. 151-152.

[27] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 242b-243a; FO233/186, Wei Tiangui's Petition, 1847, No.4, pp. 32b-33a, Chen Dacheng's Petition, 1847, No. 5, p. 33a; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

Afoon. The second helper was Auditor General Adolphus Shelley.[28] According to Parker, "Mr. Shelley told me himself that he would get Attai out of the market, because [young] Afoon would then get possession of it, and was then to take his ground from him for a Garden. Attai and his friends said that Mr. Shelley got money out of the market, and that was the reason why he interested himself so much about Afoon." Parker went on to claim that a man called Garner, Shelley's servant, "was trying to influence the tenants [in the Central Market] not to pay any rent to Attai, but to pay it to Afoon." It seems that the government and the public were not aware of Parker's allegation against Shelley. If the allegation was accurate, Shelley was an example of the many officials bribed by the Chinese in early colonial Hong Kong.[29]

Chinese Government Servants and Extortion

The farming of the public markets was not a deal involving simply the market operators and a handful of colonial officials. Although the 1847 market ordinance stipulated that it was the Governor who granted out the market license, in practice this power was controlled by the Colonial Secretary. But this does not mean that applicants for the license were to negotiate directly with the Colonial Secretary. They also had to discuss the details of the lease with particular Chinese government servants, who knew very how to utilise their intermediate role to earn extra income apart from their fair salary from the market farmers. From surviving records, two such extortion cases can be constructed. They were the outbreak of the "Tarrant Affair", as Dafydd Emrys

[28] *The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1846* (Hong Kong: China Mail, 1847); CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 259a-259b, Report of the Trial of Tarrant, p. 282b; *Friend of China*, 14 July 1847.
[29] Munn has discussed in great detail the corruption of British officials in early colonial Hong Kong. See *Anglo-China*, pp. 290-328.

Evans calls it, which was one of the most notorious government corruption scandals in early colonial Hong Kong. Although Evans has discussed the two extortion cases and the Tarrant Affair at length, relations among the parties involved were even more intricate.[30]

The first case originated in Tam Achoy's attempt to apply for opening a market in March 1847. Before an official inquiry into the two extortion cases in early July 1847, Tam deposed that when he sent his application, the treasury's comprador Chow Aoan, *alias* Tsoo-Aoan, Tso-on and Zhou Yaan, told him that he could only have the market for one year at the rate of $50 a month, unless he paid Colonial Secretary Caine $500.[31] Both Tam and Tarrant stated in the official enquiry that Chow claimed he had been instructed by Caine to ask for the bribes.[32] If the deal had been made, whether the extra money would really go to Caine is uncertain, but most likely Chow would benefit from the deal. Chow may have thought that Tam dared not to provoke Caine, who was a very powerful colonial official of the time. About three weeks after the inquiry, for reasons unknown, Tam narrated a different and more detailed story to the *Hong Kong Register*: Chow told Tam that if he wanted to rent the market at $50 per month he had to give Caine a cumshaw of $1,500; if he wanted the market at a monthly rent of $100 he had to give $1,000; if the cumshaw was less than $500, the rent would then be $150.[33]

No matter which version of the story was genuine, Tam responded to offer a cumshaw of $500 to the treasury's comprador Chow for renting the market at

[30] Evans, "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market". Munn has also noticed the Tarrant Affair and the extortion to the Chinese market farmers, but his discussion is brief, and his focus is on the accusation against Caine. See *Anglo-China*, pp. 299-301.
[31] *Friend of China*, 14 July 1847; CO129/20, 260a-261a
[32] For a biography of Caine, see Endacott, *A Biographical Sketch-Book*, pp. 60-65; on how powerful Caine was, see Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 299-300.
[33] *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

$50 per month. However, Tam did not actually pay the bribes after the intervention of Tarrant, who promised Tam that his master Surveyor General Charles Cleverly, who was also acting Colonial Treasurer, would permit a more favourable lease even without extra payment. Tarrant's promise, however, did not come true: Tam was only granted a one-year lease at a monthly rent of $100. Presumably these unfavourable terms were worked out under the influence of Chow, who, if the presumption was true, successfully overrode Tarrant and even Cleverly, Chow's superior in the colonial government. The deal was definitely unprofitable for Tam, "As he must have incurred considerable expense in building, for which a license for one year could afford no adequate remuneration." Finally Tam gave up the idea of farming a market altogether.[34]

While Chow Aoan failed to extort Tam Achoy, another case of exaction to the Wei brothers of the Central Market best illustrates how much Chinese government servants benefited from the market farming system. This case not only involved Chow but also Caine's comprador Lo Een-teen, *alias* Lo Ken-teen, Lo-Yun-suey. As early as 1845, when the Central Market was being re-built, Lo required Wei Aqui to pay every month an extra fee of $150 on top of the market rent "in order to obtain the goodwill and protection of Major Caine". Of course this was not written in the official agreement. A deposit of $1,000, called "Caine's rent or tax", was paid in advance.[35] Lo said the extra money was "for Major Caine's use", but it is likely that Lo Een-teen had taken it all.[36] Most probably Chow was also a beneficiary of the bribery, for when young Afoon later ceased the cumshaw, Chow and Lo cooperated to intimidate

[34] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 233b, 242b-243a, 260a-261a; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847
[35] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 250a-250b, 255a.
[36] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 235b-236a, 249b; *Friend of China*, 14 July 1847; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

him. Young Afoon, Wei Aqui's property successor, also paid the cumshaw. He started to do so when Wei Aqui's deposit was used up. Young Afoon's cumshaw was more than the monthly regular payment. He needed to pay "at the end of each year 400 Dollars more as long as the lease of the market continues." The cumshaw also included "as much fish and fruit as Lo-Een-teen chose to take" as testified by Wei Acho, an elder brother of young Afoon and overseer of the Central Market.[37]

Relations between the Chinese market operators and government servants were as convoluted as relations among the Chinese market farmers. Like Fung Atai of the Eastern Market, Lo Een-teen was a debtor to the Wei brothers. Wei Aqui owed Lo $1,300 at the time of the former's death. After Wei Aqui died, young Afoon, shouldering his brother's debt, on one occasion gave Lo a promissory note for the due. And like Fung, Lo was an investor of the Central Market. In August 1845 Lo owned a small share, about one-seventeenth, of the market. In October, Lo became its legal joint possessor. To make things more complicated, Fung later sold his Central Market shares valued $750 to Lo, who could receive profits from the market afterwards.[38]

When compared with Lo Een-teen, the treasury's comprador Chow engaged in a more complicated transaction with the Wei brothers. It was more complicated because it included not only money and market shares but also market rents and securities, and because it involved many other parties having linkages with the Central Market. In 1845, Wei Aqui borrowed money from Chow to complete the re-erection of the market. According to an agreement

[37] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 236a, 246a, 248a, 250a, 252a-252b, Report of the Trial of Tarrant, p. 283a; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.
[38] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 236a-237a, 239a-241a, 246b, 254b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

signed between them on 27 March 1846, Wei Aqui, "being indebted to Tso-on [Chow Aoan] in $750 share money, now to clear off this account, assigns to Tso-on for fifteen months, the rents $50 a month which should be received monthly from the fish sheds in the market." On the day following this agreement, Chow paid about $200 to Lo Een-teen. Most probably this was to help Wei Aqui repay part of the debts to Lo. When the fifteen-month agreement between Wei Aqui and Chow was due, young Afoon made a new one with Chow and another Chinese called Le-Kwong-Chaong or Le Quong-cheong. Young Afoon did so because he desperately needed money to pay for the market rent to the colonial treasury, and to clear up his brother's debts to Fung during the Central Market Affair. The new agreement on 28 June 1847 wrote that young Afoon assigned Chow and Le his interest of the market on trust as a security. After Chow signed the agreement, he "received rent from the fish market from the fishermen themselves."[39] Since Chow, and also Lo, lent much money to the Wei brothers and invested heavily in the Central Market, the extortion inquiry committee concluded that all the money received by Chow and Lo was strictly their market returns or the Wei brothers' repayment but involved no cumshaw.[40]

Actually, before the outbreak of the Tarrant Affair, relations between the Chinese market operators and government servants were not tense. Rather, there was a perfect triangular equilibrium among these two parties and Colonial Secretary Caine. Chinese market farmers and applicants considered themselves beneficiaries of the extortion system rather than victims of it. Wei Aqui was

[39] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 236b, 240b-241a, 242a, 266a-266b, 269a.
[40] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 224b-225a, 238a-238b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847; Evans, "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market", pp. 152-153, 155.

used to paying the cumshaw to Lo Een-teen, who helped him secure the lease of the Central Market. Though he was indebted to Lo and Chow Aoan, he was in good relations, at least ostensibly, with them. Even if the Chinese market operators paid the cumshaw out of compulsion, they recognised its function. As young Afoon explained after the death of Wei Aqui, "I continued to pay this money to keep on good terms with Lo-Een-teen for fear of getting into trouble, as Chinamen have many fears." Granted a market lease of only one year, Tam Achoy expressed his grievances against Tarrant's intervention to his cumshaw payment to Chow. Whether Caine knew of and benefited from the blackmail was not the question, as long as he kept a distance from the scene. Although Tarrant heard from young Afoon of his exaction case as early as January 1847, he was doubtful of the validity of young Afoon's statement, and thus did not immediately expose the case to his superior.[41]

The stable equilibrium did not last forever. The cause of its collapse was the financial difficulties of young Afoon. In mid-1847, his financial situation was so desperate that he reduced the monthly bribes to $100 and gave Lo Een-teen a bill for the remaining $50 payable at the end of the year. Later young Afoon even cut all the cumshaw.[42] This led to a series of reactions of the parties involved and not involved in the extortion system, which finally brought the extortion cases to the public.

Lo Een-teen and Chow Aoan knew only too well how to pull young Afoon back into the extortion system. They turned their eyes upon his recent contract for the government works at Aberdeen and threatened him with Caine's displeasure. Lo warned young Afoon that if he did not continue the cumshaw,

[41] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 230a, 237b, 242b.
[42] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 246a-246b.

he would complain to Caine, who was his master. "[H]aving some Government contracts to perform I was afraid of getting into trouble", worried young Afoon. More plainly, Chow, as the treasury's comprador, told young Afoon that unless he paid the cumshaw or $700 at one time out of monies which he would receive on completion of his Aberdeen contract, Caine would impose a fine for his non-completion of government contract on time.[43] Here Chow usurped the power of Colonial Treasurer Cleverly.

Threatened, young Afoon attempted to get out of this embarrassing situation by using his friendly relations with Tarrant. He informed Tarrant about the two compradors in January 1847. This led to a chain reaction that exposed the scandal to the public, and pulled Caine into the whirlpool. On 3 July 1847, Tarrant reported the case in a letter to his master, Surveyor General Cleverly, who had previously been completely ignorant of the exaction case. Cleverly subsequently told the case of bribery and forwarded Tarrant's letter to Caine on the same day.[44] Dragged into the scandal, Caine had no choice but to report the case to Governor Davis. An official inquiry from 6 to 8 July immediately followed. As the British Colonial Office concluded, "Although Tarrant proposed to make no charge against Major Caine, it certainly looked as if he wished it to be inferred that Major Caine was implicated in the corruption." The official inquiry also unveiled Tam Achoy's extortion case. To defend his reputation, Caine in turn charged Tarrant with conspiracy.[45]

Young Afoon may have never thought of the uncontrollable consequences of his complaints to Tarrant. He, and Tam Achoy, dared not to irritate the

[43] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 234a, 237b, 245a-245b, 247a; *Friend of China*, 14 July 1847.
[44] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, 247a-247b.
[45] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 229b, 242b, 245b, 247a-247b, Report of the Trial of Tarrant, p. 278b.

powerful Colonial Secretary. Although subject to exaction, Tam had no courage to go with Tarrant and Chow Aoan to report his case to the Governor, probably because he was afraid this would cause Caine's displeasure. Knowing that accusing the two compradors was equal to accusing Caine, in the trial of Tarrant young Afoon endeavoured to explain that it was Tarrant who pushed him to bring the whole extortion matter forwards and thus highlighted his own passive role in the accusation.[46] Young Afoon betrayed Tarrant even though they were friends, and even though Tarrant stood on his side in the Central Market Affair against Fung.

Lo Een-teen and Chow Aoan used clever tactics to avoid being charged. Throughout the trial, they denied all knowledge of the extortion. Moreover, like young Afoon, they tried hard to defend Colonial Secretary Caine. Chow further implicated Tarrant for compelling him to make false statement against Caine. In turn Caine, approving of their exaction or not, may have given them a helping hand. He had a great influence over the inquiry committee members. In the committee Charles Hillier, his successor as chief magistrate, and Charles Holdforth, assistant chief magistrate, were his protégés. The result proves that the tactics of Chow and Lo were successful: after the entire affair, Lo left, or fled, the colony, and Chow still held his post in the government.[47]

The end of the story was a miserable one for young Afoon. His endeavour to erase his mistake of exposing the extortion was useless. Unpunished, Lo Een-teen and Chow Aoan, whether or not under Caine's order, may have taken revenge on young Afoon. In December 1847, only several months after the

[46] CO129/20, Report of the Trial of Tarrant, p. 278b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.
[47] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, pp. 239a-239b, 246b-247a, 261b-262a, Report of the Trial of Tarrant, pp. 279b-281a; CO133/5, Hong Kong Blue Book, 1848, Chinese Government Servants List; Evans, "The Origin of Hong Kong's Central Market, p. 155.

affair, young Afoon was declared insolvent, probably due to his inability to fulfil the contract for constructing the debtors' prison in the Victoria Goal.[48] Whether this was done by Caine and the two Chinese government servants is high doubtful. All in all, the extortion system contributed to ruin young Afoon's career.

Market Farmers, Stallholders and Food Hawkers

Relations between the Chinese farmers and stallholders within a market were multifarious. On the one hand, they shared certain common interests. Both, for example, were vulnerable to such catastrophes as typhoon and conflagration. Whereas the destructive fire of May 1847 in the Eastern Market caused a great loss to its farmer Fung Atai, "The poor people who had stalls in the market will be ruined by this calamity", as the *Friend of China* commented.[49] Also, Wu Jue and the stallholders of the Central Market had to spend much on the repairs after a typhoon in 1848 which destroyed all the shops ashore and damaged most of the others.[50]

On the other hand, the stall renters were subordinate to their market farmers in some cases. As Matheson described the market farming system, "a Chinaman takes a farm; he gets a great many dependents about him, and gives those people an interest in the farm; and all people beyond those dependents are excluded from the place altogether". This was probably the case of the Western and Eastern Markets, which were under the domination of Loo Aqui and Fung Atai of the Lower Bazaar clique.[51] A personal experience of Matheson shows

[48] *China Mail*, 30 Dec. 1847.
[49] *Friend of China*, 28 May 1845
[50] FO233/187, Wu Jue's Petition, 1848, No. 17, p. 36b.
[51] George Smith, *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit*, pp. 82-83.

the domination. “I lived at a distance from the market [the Eastern Market], and at one time I wished people to come to me, and bring their provisions to me, without having the trouble of sending my servants to the market, and the thing was interdicted; they were not allowed to bring them to me.”[52] Most likely the person interdicting such kind of trade was the farmer Fung, who endeavoured to maintain a “quasi-monopoly” of food trade within his market by subjugating the stall lessees.

Several other examples show the subjugation of the stallholders. In order to cover his heavy expenditure, a market farmer would set the stall rent at a higher level than before the farming system. “[H]e must charge an additional price, in order, first of all, to pay the farm, and then to put a profit in his own pocket”, thought Matheson.[53] The market vendors also fell victims to the vicious competition between some market operators. In October 1846, Fung Atai of the Eastern Market, plotting to annex the Central Market, once occupied the meat stalls of the Central Market, and pressed their keepers for the rent.[54]

Yet the stallholders were not always blindly subordinate to the market farmers. Those in Wu Jue’s Central Market sought a better business environment by ways that ran contrary to his interests. During the economic recession of 1848, they asked Wu for rent reduction, and some of them simply abandoned their old stalls when attracted by the advantages of renting new stalls in the new market in Tai Ping Shan. As a result of their injurious actions, as well as a recent typhoon, Wu’s market income decreased so significantly that he appealed to the colonial authorities to reduce his market rent.[55]

---

[52] *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 163.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 164.
[54] FO233/186, Wei Tianfu’s Petition, 1847, No. 4, p. 32b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.
[55] FO233/187, Wu Jue’s Petition, 1848, No. 17, p. 36b.

What the market stallholders did in the Registration Affair of 1844 is another example of how they could act against the interests of the market farmers. In this year, when the Chinese population misunderstood that the British authorities were going to charge each resident in the colony a poll tax of $1 to $20 monthly, most Chinese shopkeepers stopped their trade in the colony, including the market stallholders. On 1 November 1844, the proposed day for the registration ordinance to come into effect, the *Friend of China* noted that "the market people have ceased to bring in provisions". The strike lasted for about two days.[56] It is unlikely that the stallholders were instigated by the market farmers, whose first priority was the stability of food trade in their markets. For a market farmer, the refusal of stall lessees to trade was equal to a possible loss of stall rents, which was his primary source of revenue. Instead, the market farmers may have attempted to end the strike. If so, they failed.

Obviously what the market vendors did in 1844 was collective in nature. An important question is, how they were organised to act collectively? The colonial authorities and newspapers of the time accused the Chinese compradors of local foreign firms as the ringleaders of the whole strike. But it was also possible that the market stall keepers' action was a spontaneous one without any instigation from outside. In fact, the 1844 strike was not the only time that the Chinese acted together to fight for their own interests. In early 1846, for example, the Chinese mandarins squeezed, terrified and maltreated the Western Market fish stall keepers who procured their goods from the fishing ships in Victoria Harbour. The fish stall keepers united, in the name of "Fresh Fish Company", to petition the colonial authorities expressing their miseries

[56] *Friend of China*, 2 Nov. 1844; James William Norton-Kyshe, *The History of the Laws and Courts of Hong Kong* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), Vol. 1, p. 67.

and appealing that the colonial authorities negotiate with the Chinese counterparts calling for the prohibition of the extortion.[57]

One can also examine the collective action of the market people in 1844 in a wider context. In addition to the Registration Affair, Hong Kong in the 1840s witnessed a series of events in which some groups of Chinese acted jointly to resist official measures injuring their interests or to express their grievances. Seven months prior to the Registration Affair, the government proclaimed the registration of all the boats in Hong Kong. To avoid this regulation there were "numbers of the boats which used to lie along the beach [of Victoria Harbour] having gone over to the other side, while others are anchored at some distance as if waiting to see whether the new regulations will be enforced." Also, as a result of the new registration ordinance in December 1846, "The whole of the boats left Hongkong and for several days last week no one could be had, however urgent the necessity, of a higher grade than a tanka boat." The people were discontented because of the imposition of the higher registration fees. As a result of their action, the colonial government consented to reduce the ship registration fee, and the boats then returned to their usual occupation.[58]

Therefore, it may be possible that the market stallholders, noticing that they shared common interests, united and joined the general strike in 1844. They knew well about what cards were in their hands. The greatest portion of food in Victoria came from the public markets. The stoppage of the supply there was related to the very survival of Victoria itself, a headache so serious that the colonial authorities could not suffer for long. Certainly that was part of the

[57] FO233/186, the first month of Daoguang 26, Sheung Wan French Fish Company's Petition, 1846, No. 2, 27a; *Hong Kong Register*, 5 Nov. 1844; *Friend of China*, 6 Nov. 1844.
[58] *Hong Kong Register*, 9 March 1847, 12 March 1844.

reason why the government gave in and temporarily waived the registration ordinance only two days after the general strike broke out.[59] Whether the market people had linkages with the other parties, Chinese coolies for example, in the affair is difficult to determine; what is certain is that the stallholders were not blind sufferers under harsh colonial measures. They played the cards in their hands for self-protection.

Competition and conflict spread to food dealers outside the public markets. An example was the hostility of the market farmers and stall renters towards food hawkers. Although the farming system had no strict regulation about what kinds of food had to be sold in the public markets, most meat and fish retail trades at that time were in fact conducted there. The market operators would try hard to maintain their ascendency over those threatening the "quasi-monopoly" system, food hawkers in particular. The market farmers' attitude was parallel to that of the stallholders, who also did not welcome food hawking as it forced them to lower their food prices.[60] This shows that the market farmers would protect the interests of themselves and their stall renters against rival food dealers outside the market.

Some market operators preferred a lenient measure towards food hawkers. They attempted to incorporate food hawking into the market farming system in order to achieve a win-win result. In August 1847, Lin Tingui of the Tang Lung Chau market petitioned the colonial authorities for a license giving him the power to gather those street pedlars near the market. He considered this a means to eliminate their obstruction along the street and prosper the market business.[61]

---

[59] *Hong Kong Register*, 5 Nov. 1844; *Friend of China*, 6 Nov. 1844.
[60] CO129/23, 26 Jan. 1848, Report of Davis to Stanley, p. 103b; FO233/186, 30 March 1846, 1846, No. 5, p. 27a.
[61] FO233/187, Lin Tiangui's Petition, 1847, No. 18, pp. 26b-27a.

No surviving records show whether the colonial authorities accepted his proposal.

Other market farmers preferred a prohibitive measure against all food hawkers. On 30 March 1846, Fung Atai of the Eastern Market petitioned to complain that several food traders from other places had recently transported goods to Hong Kong by sea, and then called pedlars to carry the provisions with a pole for sale. The hawkers even brought the foodstuffs to the house doors of customers, who of course found it very convenient and made the purchase. What was more, the price of the hawkers' provisions was cheaper, as they did not need to pay any rent. As a result, trade in the Eastern Market deteriorated, and most stallholders there lost much in their business. Fung expressed his worries of being unable to pay for the market rent, and thus requested the colonial authorities to ban the hawking of chicken, duck, pigs, cattle fish, fruit and vegetables accordingly.[62]

Despite the market farmers' grievances, the colonial government did not necessarily take their side. The government did nothing to satisfy Fung Attai's request. As a matter of fact, the colonial authorities had carried out measures against food hawking as early as 1842. However, as discussed in the last chapter, the measures did not bring about much improvement, if any. As time went on, the colonial authorities tacitly approved of the existence of food hawking in Hong Kong. In 1847 Davis explained the official stance on local food trade: "The purchase of provisions in the market is quite optional with the purchaser……Fish……there is no prohibition against such sale; dealers take it to the market from choice. Pork is constantly sold by hawkers, and both Beef

[62] FO233/186, Fung Atais' Petition, 1846, No. 5, p. 27a.

and Pork are now sold opposite to Spring Gardens daily, where there is no market".[63] In the same year, the colonial authorities even legalised the trade of hawkers of good characters. The legalisation not only put an end to the government's losing battle against food hawking; it also guaranteed a stable, although not significant, income from food hawkers for the colonial treasury. For this, the *Friend of China* exclaimed: "The wretched hawkers of sweetmeats &c., are to pay $2 annually, in quarterly payments!"[64] The ignorance of the colonial authorities on food hawking resulted in the continuation of the market farmers' and stallholders' sufferings and grievances.

Given that all the parties involved in the market farming system used various means to pursue what they desired, running a market was by no means an easy business for a Chinese. He had to bear all the costs of the operation and risks transferred from the colonial authorities, face the severe competition of rival market farmers as well as food hawkers, pay for the cumshaw to Chinese government servants, fulfil the request of the stallholders, and suffer from their collective actions.

Although the market farmers, affluent and trusted by the British colonial officials, thought market farming a potentially profitable business, the difficulties were so enormous that their investment was by and large a failure. The accountant of the Central Market testified in July 1847 that "latterly the market did not produce any return." Its farmer, young Afoon, once plainly noted that the Central Market "was never profitable". The situation was also bad in

[63] *Report from the Select Committee*, pp. 163-164; CO129/27, Report of Committee House of Commons, p. 288b.
[64] *Friend of China*, 6 June 1847.

other markets. Loo Aqui of the Western Market said in 1847 that its net profits could not cover the expenses. The market farming business could even ruin a market farmer's life. The bad financial situation of young Afoon, inherited from his brother's debts related to the Central Market and deteriorated by the two Chinese government servants' extortion, continued to be so desperate that he was forced to sell out all his market shares to another Chinese in November 1847.[65] In the next month, he was declared bankrupt. Farming a market, therefore, was not necessarily a profitable business.

From the difficulties of a market farmer, we can see the complex colonial relations in early British Hong Kong. Young Afoon was finally in a desperate financial situation largely because of his collaborations or conflicts with the parties involved in the market farming system, from the colonial officials to Chinese government servants, and from rival market farmers to the stallholders. These findings highlight the shortcomings of the "coloniser-colonised" paradigm: if we applied this paradigm to study, for example, young Afoon's life and focused on his relations with the colonial authorities, we would not be able to produce a full account of his financial difficulties. In a colonial society, there were different dimension of colonial relations. Each people in a colony would collaborate and conflict with the others according to different situations, and this made colonial relations very intricate.

[65] CO129/20, Report of the Attorney General, p. 254b; FO233/ 186, Loo Aqui's Petition, 1847, No. 3, pp. 32a-32b; *Hong Kong Register*, 27 July 1847.

Conclusion

This thesis has studied the activities of Chinese food provisioners in Hong Kong, and in the Pearl River Delta at large, from the Sino-British hostilities in the late 1830s and early 1840s to the time Governor John Davis left office in 1848. The British had to rely on the indigenous people for food supply when taking refuge in Hong Kong, Tung Kwu and Kap Shui Mun. Moreover, early British rule in Hong Kong was full of problems, including the inability to eliminate food hawking and the prevalence of corruption. The thesis has also shown that relations between the colonial authorities and their Chinese subjects varied over time. From 1839 to 1848, many of the Chinese food provisioners were transformed from collaborators to an impediment to colonial rule, and then to supporters of the colonial treasury. The colonial authorities also adopted a mixture of direct and indirect rule to manage the market trade.

By studying the public market and market farming systems, this thesis has challenged conventional wisdom about the relations between the Chinese elite and common people. Their relations changed according to different situations. Taking the public market and market farming systems as examples, while the market overseers and farmers managed over the affairs of the stallholders and sometimes represented their interests, the stallholders were not always subordinate to their rule. The stallholders would unite for self-protection, a collective action running contrary to the interests of the market operators. Last but not least, the thesis has argued against the "coloniser-colonised" paradigm by suggesting complex relations among the parties involved in the market farming system, including the colonial officials, Chinese servants, market

farmers, market stallholders and hawkers.

The arguments in this thesis can also be applied to the study of local food provisioning beyond the late 1840s. As many scholars have highlighted, because of the political and social instability in South China caused by the rebellions, Hong Kong in the 1850s underwent a new wave of immigration.[1] Among the Chinese immigrants, many were food provisioners. They adjusted to the changing situation, and were able to provide food for the vast and increasing Chinese population. They were thus important collaborators supporting the daily needs of the colony.

Throughout the late 1840s and 1850s, relations between the colonial authorities and Chinese people were growing tense. The case of poisoned bread in 1857 during the Second Anglo-Chinese War (1856-60) is the most representative reflection of such bitter relations.[2] During that time, while some of the Chinese food provisioners chose to leave the colony, the majority remained. Again, relations between the colonial authorities and the common people were multifarious.

In the 1850s, the public market and market farming systems underwent significant changes. The market farming system formally ended in 1858, when the colonial authorities decided not to lease a whole public market to one farmer. Afterwards, the colonial government imposed a more direct control over the food trade in public markets. The Market's Ordinance of 1858 wrote that the colonial authorities rented each stall to the highest bidder. The regulations in this ordinance were much more detailed than those in the previous two market

[1] For the increase of Chinese population in Hong Kong in the 1850s, see Ding, "Xianggang zaoqi zhi", pp. 326-335.
[2] For the social unrest of colonial Hong Kong in late 1840s and 1850s, see Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 51-58; Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 257-289.

ordinances. (The second market ordinance was enacted in 1854.) The 1858 Market's Ordinance stipulated that the stalls inside the markets are numbered, certain kinds of food have to be sold there, and the renters or lessees are prohibited to underlet their stalls. More significantly, with the extension of the colonial apparatus, in 1863 the colonial government appointed a foreign inspector of markets, who was held responsible for the daily market affairs.[3]

While Europeans in the 1840s did not associate the heath and sanitation of the colony very closely with food hawking, the British authorities became increasingly concerned about the local sanitary conditions from the 1850s. In this context, the public markets were finally put under the control of the Sanitary Board, which was established in 1883. As scholars have noted, the Sanitary Board was a semi-official organisation. Whereas the colonial officials held ultimate power over the board, more and more Chinese were appointed as unofficial members as time went on.[4] The developments above show that the management of the public markets from the 1850s throughout the second half of the nineteenth century was a swing from direct to indirect rule. Once more, to achieve their goals, the colonial officials would impose either direct or indirect rule, or both, over their subjects depending on different situations.

With regard to relations among the Chinese food provisioners, during the 1850s, the composition of Chinese society in Hong Kong was more heterogeneous.[5] This was also the case with the Chinese food provisioners.

---

[3] A. J. Leach, *The Ordinances of the Legislative Council of the Colony of HongKong, commencing with the year 1844* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., Govt. Printer, 1890-1891); *China Mail*, 6 March 1863.

[4] For the studies of Sanitary Board, see Liu Runhe, *Xianggang shiyihui shi: 1883-1999: cong Jiejingju dao Shizhengju ji Quyushizhengju* [Municipal History of Hong Kong: 1883-1999: from the Sanitary Board to the Urban Council and the Regional Council] (Xianggang: Kangle ji wenhua shiwu shu, 2002).

[5] For the features of societies in 1850s-Hong Kong, see Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp. 46-51;

Some large merchants emerged and monopolised certain kinds of food trade in the colony. For instance, Kwok Acheong, alias Atsung, Guo Song, nicknamed "Ngau Lan Atsung", which literally means "cattle market Atsung", monopolised the cattle trade until the 1870s.[6] Since the late 1840s, local Chinese had been opening western-styled restaurants, traditional Chinese restaurants selling western food, and Chinese eating-houses. Moreover, in the late nineteenth century, guilds of certain kinds of food, fish for instance, also came into existence, and more and more food provisioners joined them. Relations among the food provisioners, from prominent food merchants to Chinese eating house keepers, and their relations with the colonial authorities must have been intricate.

There is still room for further research into food provisioning in Hong Kong. One possible area is relations between boat people in Victoria Harbour and food traders on Hong Kong Island. Exaggerating or not, E. J. Eitel, a colonial official in the nineteenth century, claimed that "the half-caste population" in Hong Kong" were offspring of boat people.[7] Surprisingly, there have been very few studies, especially in English, on the activities of boat people in Hong Kong, and in South China at large, in the nineteenth century, when South China underwent great social disorders and changes.[8] While many scholars have stereotyped boat people as the oppressed group with low social status, Xiao Fengxia and Liu Zhiwei have argued that "Tanka" as a category

---

Ting, "Xianggang zaoqi", pp. 326-352.

[6] *China Mail*, 22 April 1880.

[7] Eitel, *Europe in China*, p. 169.

[8] For the studies of social disorders in China in the mid-nineteenth century, see Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1861* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966). Some scholars have studied boat people in Hong Kong, but their scope is not the nineteenth but the twentieth century. See, for example, Agnes Liu Tat Fong, **"**Negotiating Social Status: Religion and Ethnicity in a Seui Seuhng Yahn Settlement in Hong Kong", Ph.D. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999.

was only a kind of coding, meaning "the others" and the inferiors, imposed by the local lineages to meet their needs. Those being coded would strive to evade the code and raise their status. They also chose to live according to their encounters and needs: while some settled on land and were assimilated into Chinese rural society, others chose to work in shipping, trading or as pirates.[9]

In colonial Hong Kong, apart from running water transports in Victoria Harbour, most boat people were providers of food, particularly fish. Market fish stallholders would sail to the boats in the harbour to procure goods.[10] Whether voluntary or not, while many boat people settled on the island, some remained to live on boats throughout their lifetime. The cooperation and conflicts between boat people and food traders on land, and how boat people were pushed out of the colonial society are worthwhile research topics.

This study has largely excluded two large groups of food provisioners in early colonial Hong Kong: farmers and fishermen in the local rural areas. They are in fact a good research focus for anyone who studies relations between the British colonisers and their Chinese subjects. The British authorities colonised the rural areas and neighbouring waters as soon as they occupied Hong Kong. They stipulated that land and fishing rents not be paid to the Chinese mandarins but to the colonial treasurer, and allowed the Chinese land tenants of the Tang clan on the Chinese mainland to own their lands.[11] The colonial authorities also confiscated cultivated rice fields from the indigenous people, without adequate compensation, for the construction of roads and barracks and on behalf of the

[9] Xiao Fengxia and Liu Zhiwei, "Zongzu, shichang, daokou yu danmin --- mingyihou zhujiangsanjiaozhou de zuqun yu shehui [Clans, Markets, Pirates and Tanka Population --- Ethnic Groups and Society after Ming Dynasty], *Zhongguo shehuijingjishi yanjiu* 3 (2004): 1-13.
[10] FO233/186, the first month of Daoguang 26, Sheung Wan French Fish Company's Petition, 1846, No. 2, 27a.
[11] Munn, *Anglo-China*, pp. 89-94; Hayes, "Hong Kong Island before 1841", pp. 21-27.

healthiness of the foreign residents.[12] The frequent petitions from Chinese farmers on Hong Kong Island appealing for rent reduction are good indicators of the general harshness of their lives. Admittedly, not all Chinese common people could react against exploitative government measures; bound to their native villages, indigenous farmers and fishermen were unable to leave the island as a means of expressing grievances. They were by and large subjugated to colonial rule.

Because of the scarcity of sources, the first chapter of the thesis does not analyse the reasons why Chinese food provisioners in the Pearl River Delta chose to help the colonial authorities rather than the Chinese authorities. It is tempting to regard money as the main factor, but it is not difficult to see the shortcomings of this explanation. For example, during the First Anglo-Chinese War, a *shuiyong*, which literally means "water brave", received 100 or 200 copper cash per day with daily provisions for helping the Guangdong authorities to fight against the British.[13] Chen Shuisheng and Wu Yaer, partners selling cakes, earned in total 300 or 400 copper cash only for trading once with the British.[14] This shows that the Chinese coastal people did not always earn more money by collaborating with the British. Admittedly many Chinese collaborators of the British were driven by economic factors, but certainly not all. Another reason many scholars have suggested is the desire of the Chinese collaborators to raise their social status. This is in fact a rather far-fetched explanation. Although the Chinese food provisioners might have been in contact with foreigners in South China for long, it would have been impossible

[12] For the reasons why the British authorities confiscated cultivated lands from the native Chinese, see *Hong Kong Register*, 7 June 1845, 12 Feb. 1846; *Friend of China*, 2 Jan. 1845, 19 April 1846.
[13] *Chouban yiwu shimo*, Vol. 13, p. 25.
[14] *Yapianzhanzheng dangan shiliao*, Vol. 2, pp. 46-49.

for the food dealers to foresee that the "barbarians" would establish their rule in a place in the Chinese Empire. Also, the collaborators could hardly imagine themselves elevating their social status in this new place. Many of them may not have known the fact that many Chinese were able to enhance their social status by working with Europeans in Southeast Asia, such as in Singapore, Jakarta and Manila. Therefore, the reasons why the Chinese coastal population chose to help the British in the Pearl River Delta remain unexplored.

Because of the scarcity of sources, this study has not focused on the local provision of the most important Chinese staple: rice. There are some statistics about its re-export, but there are very few records about its local consumption. Food hawkers and market stallholders did not sell rice; it was only sold in rice shops. Surviving records show that rice merchants provisioned the localities where rice production was absent. On 28 April 1844, in a disturbance between government-employed carpenters and local residents in Stanley, Lo-seen, a Stanley merchant, threatened the Chinese in Shau Kei Wan that unless they came to his assistance, he would stop supplying rice. As a result, four to five hundred Chinese in Shau Kei Wan came to help the villagers.[15] There are also several significant aspects on the study of rice trade, for example the social backgrounds of the rice merchants, and their relations with the colonial authorities. Yet, there is very little work done on local rice trade in early colonial Hong Kong.[16]

Food was always crucial for the survival of a British enclave like Hong Kong, regardless of whether it witnessed social turmoil or rapid economic

[15] *Hong Kong Register*, 7 May 1844.
[16] For studies on rice trade in British Hong Kong, see Zheng Hongtai, Huang Shaolun, *Xianggang miye shi* [History of Rice Industry in Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co. Ltd., 2005).

development. The colonial authorities could never ignore the role of Chinese food provisioners in supporting the colony, although in some cases they were detrimental to colonial rule. Through the food provisioning activities in early colonial Hong Kong, we can better understand the intricate relations among the parties involved in the provisioning system, including the British colonial officials, foreigners and Chinese.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Allom, Thomas. *China, in a Series of Views, Displaying the Scenery, Architecture, and Social Habits of That Ancient Empire*. 2 vols. London: Fisher, 1843.

Auber, Peter. *China: An Outline of the Government, Laws, and Policy*. London: Parbury, Allen and Company, 1834.

Belcher, Edward. *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World: Performed in Her Majesty's Ship Sulphur during the Years 1836-1842: Including Details of the Naval Operations in China, from Dec. 1840 to Nov. 1841*. London: H. Colburn, 1843.

Bernard, W. D. and W. H. Hall. *The Nemesis in China: Comprising a History of the Late War in That Country, with an Account of the Colony of Hong-Kong*. New York: Praeger, 1969.

Bernard, Dallas. *Narrative of the Voyage and Services of the Nemesis, from 1840 to 1843: And of the Combined Naval and Military Operations in China: Comprising a Complete Account of the Colony of Hong Kong, and Remarks on the Characters and Habits of the Chinese from Notes of W. H. Hall; with Personal Observations*. London: Colburn, 1844.

Berncastle, Julius. *A Voyage to China: Including a Visit to the Bombay Presidency, the Mahratta Country, the Cave Temples of Western India, Singapore, the Straits of Malacca and Sunda, and the Cape of Good Hope*. London: Shoberl, 1850.

Bingham, Elliot. *Narrative of the Expedition to China*. London: Henry

Colburn, 1842.

Canton Press, 1839-1844.

Canton Register. 1839-1843.

China Mail. 1845-1848.

Chinese Repository, 1839-1848.

Cree, Edward H. *The Cree Journals: The Voyages of Edward H. Cree, Surgeon R.N., as Related in His Private Journals, 1837 – 1856*. Ed. Michael Levien. Exeter, Eng.: Webb and Bower, 1981.

Cunynghame, Arthur. *An Aide-de-camp's Recollections of Service in China, a Residence in Hong Kong, and Visits to Other Islands in the Chinese Seas*. London: Saunders and Otely, 1844

Davis, John Francis. *China, during the War and since the Peace*. London: Longman, 1852.

------. *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1972.

Fortune, Robert. *Three Years Wanderings in the Northern Provinces of China, Including a Visit to the Tea, Silk, and Cotton Countries: With an Account of Agriculture and Horiculture of the Chinese, New Plants, etc*. London: J. Murray, 1847.

Friend of China. 1842-1848.

Great Britain, Colonial Office. Executive and Legislative Council Minutes: Hong Kong (from 1844), Series 131 (CO131). Kew: National Archives.

------. Original Correspondence: Hong Kong, 1841-1951, Series 129 (CO129). Kew: National Archives.

Great Britain, Foreign Office. Hong Kong, Survey of the Northern Face of

the Island of Hong Kong by Major Aldrich. MS. 200 Feet to One Inch., Series 925, Division 2387 (FO925/2387). Kew: National Archives

------. Hong Kong, Surveyed by Captain Sir Edward Belcher, 1841. Admiralty Chart 1466. 0.33 Sea Mile to One Inch, Series 925, Division 2293 (FO925/2293). Kew: National Archives.

------. Kwangtung Provincial Archives: Documents of the Chinese Administration in Kwangtung, Series 931 (FO931). Kew: National Archives.

------. Plan of Hong Kong, Referred to in Report on Ordnance Establishments and Expenditure within Colonies. Presented to Parliament, 1852. Day & Son. Lithographed, Series 925, Division 2282 (FO925/2282). Kew: National Archives.

------. Plan of Hong Kong. MS. In Sir H. Pottinger's 'Superintendent' No 8 of 1842, Series 925, Division 2427 (FO925/2427). Kew: National Archives.

------. Records of Letters between the Plenipotentiary and the High Provincial Authorities, and Proclamations by H. E. the Governor and Chief Magistrate, 1844-1849, Series 233 (FO233). Kew: National Archives.

------. The Ordnance Map of Hong Kong Surveyed by Lt Collinson, RE, 1845. Atlas. Ordnance Survey, Southampton, Series 925, Division 2398 (FO925/2398). Kew: National Archives

Great Britain, Public Record Office, Domestic Records. China Expedition, Series 30, Division 12, Sub-Division 36 (PRO/30/12/36). Kew: National Archives.

------. Miscellaneous Papers and Correspondence Relating to China, with Particular Reference to the China Expedition of 1841-1842, Series 30, Division 12, Sub-Division 26, Sub-Sub-Division 3 (PRO/30/12/26/3). Kew: National Archives.

Gugong bowuyuan, ed. *Qingdai waijiao shiliao, Jiaqing chao* [Diplomatic Documents in the Qing Dynasty, Jiaqing Reign]. 6 vols. Beiping: Gugong bowuyuan, 1932.

Audit Office. Hong Kong: Legal Documents Relating to Staff, Supply of Goods and Services, and Property, 1844-1853 (HKRS149). Hong Kong, Government Records Service.

Historical and Statistical Abstracts of the Colony of Hong Kong, 1841-1930. Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1932.

The Hong Kong Government Gazette. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1841-1900

Hong Kong Register. 1843-1848.

The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1846. Hong Kong: China Mail, 1847.

The Hongkong Almanack for 1847. Hong Kong: Noronha, 1848.

The Hongkong Almanack, and Directory for the Year of Our Lord 1850, and of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria the Fourteenth. Hong Kong: Noronha, 1849.

------. *Bits of Old China*. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1911.

Hunter, William C. *The "Fan Kwae" at Canton before Treaty Days*. London: K. Paul, Trench, 1882. Reprinted by Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1965.

Irish University Press Area Studies Series. *Additional Correspondence Respecting China, 1840*. In *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 31: Correspondence, Returns, Orders in Council and Other Papers Respecting the Opium War and Opium Trade in China, 1840-85*. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971.

------. *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 24: Correspondence, Dispatches, Reports, Ordinances and Other Papers Relating to the Affairs of Hong Kong 1846-1869*. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971.

------. *British Parliamentary Papers, China, 30: Correspondence, Orders in Council, and Reports Relative to the Opium War in China, 1840*. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971.

Leach, A.J., comp. *The Ordinances of the Legislative Council of the Colony of HongKong, Commencing with the Year 1844*. Hong Kong: Noronha, 1890-1891.

Legge, James. "The Colony of Hong Kong." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1971): 172-193.

Liang Tingnan, comp. *Yue haiguanzhi* [Chronicles of Guangdong Maritime Customs]. In Shanghai guji chubanshe, *Xuxiu sikuquanshu* [Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature, revised edition], Vol. 835. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995.

Lindsay, Hugh. *Remarks on Occurrences in China: Since the Opium Seizure in March 1839 to the Latest Date*. London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1840.

Ljungstedt, Andrew. *An Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China.* Boston: Munroe, 1836.

Ma Jinke, ed. *Jiaoqi Xianggang shi yanjiu ziliao xuanji* [Selection of Sources about Studies of Early Hong Kong. 2 vols. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co. Ltd., 1990.

McPherson, Duncan. *Two Years in China, Narrative of Chinese Expedition, from Its Formation in April, 1840, to the Treaty of Peace in August, 1842, with an Appendix, Containing the Most Important of the General Orders & Despatches Published during the above Period*. London: John Murray, 1841.

Orange, James. *The Chater Collection: Pictures Relating to China, Hong Kong, Macau, 1655-1860.* London: Butterworth, 1924.

Ouchterlony, John. *The Chinese War: An Account of the Operations of the British Forces from the Commencement of the Treaty of Nanking*. London: Saunders and Otley, 1844.

Report from the Select Committee on Commercial Relations with China. London: H.M.S.O., 1847.

Sasaki, Masaya, comp. *Ahen Sensō go no Chū-Ei kōsō* [Anglo-Chinese Conflicts after the Opium War]. Tokyo: Kindai Chugoku Kenkyu Iinkai, 1964.

------, comp. *Yapianzhanzheng qian zhongying jiaoshe wenshu* [Diplomatic Correspondence between China and Britain before the Opium War]. Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1976.

------. *Ahen senso no kenkyu. Shiryo hen* [Studies of the Opium War: Documents]. Tokyo: Kindai Chugoku Kenkyu Iinkai, 1964.

Sirr, Henry Charles. *China and the Chinese: Their Religion, Character, Customs and Manufactures*. London: Orr, 1849.

Smith, George. *A Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China, and to the Islands of Hong Kong and Chusan in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the Years 1844, 1845, 1846*. Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1972.

Tarrant, William. *Hong Kong: A History of Hong Kong from the Time of Its Cession to the British Empire to the Year 1844*. Canton, Friend of China Office, 1862.

The Times, 19 Aug. 1840.

Warner, John. *Fragrant Harbour: Early Photographs of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: John Warner Publications, 1977.

Wen Qing, et al. *Chouban yiwu shimo (Daoguangchao)* [Conducting Barbarian Affairs (Daoguang Reign]. 80 vols. Reprint, Chen Yunlong, ed., *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, Vol. 551. Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1970.

Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan, ed. *Yapianzhanzheng dangan shiliao* [Historical Documents of the Opium War]. 3 vols. Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992.

Zhongguo shixuehui, ed. *Yapianzhanzheng* [The Opium War]. 5 vols. Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1954.

Secondary Sources

Beeching, Jack. *The Chinese Opium War*. London: Hutchinson, 1975.

Brown, Jonathan, and Philip Goad. *Melbourne Architecture*. Sydney: Watermark Press, 1999.

Cai Rongfang [Jung-fang Tsai]. *Xianggang ren zhi Xianggang shi* [The Hong

Kong People's History of Hong Kong, 1841-1945]. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Carroll, John M. *A Concise History of Hong Kong*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

------. *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Chan, Ming K., ed. *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong between China and Britain, 1842-1992*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994.

Chang, Hsin-pao. *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; New York: W. W. Norton, 1964.

Chen Xujing. *Danmin de yanjiu* [Studies of Tanka population]. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946.

Cheng Meibao and Zhao Yule, eds. *Xianggangshi yanjiu lunzhu xuanji* [Selected Essays about Studies of Hong Kong History]. Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press, 1999.

Collins, Charles Henry. *Public Administration in Hong Kong*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952.

Collis, Maurice. *Foreign Mud: Being an Account of the Opium Imbroglio at Canton in the 1830's and the Anglo-Chinese War That Followed*. London: Faber, 1946.

Deng Kaisong and Lu Xiaomin. *Yue Gang guansxi shi* [History of Relations between Guangdong and Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Qilin chubanshe, 1997.

Ding Xinbao [Ting Sun Pao Joseph]. "Xianggang zaoqi zhi Huaren shehui, 1841-1870" [Early Chinese Community in Hong Kong, 1841-1870]. Ph.D. diss., University of Hong Kong, 1989.

Ding You. *Xianggang chuqi shihua* [Early Hong Kong]. Beijing: Lianhe chubanshe, 1983.

Edwards, Norman. *The Singapore House and Residential Life, 1819-1939*. Singapore: New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Eitel, E. J. *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong from the Beginning to the Year 1882.* Hong Kong: Kelly and Walsh, 1895. Reprint, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Empson, Hal, ed. *Mapping Hong Kong: A Historical Atlas.* Hong Kong: Government Information Services, 1992.

Endacott, G. B. *A History of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong, London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

------. *Government and People in Hong Kong, 1841-1962: A Constitutional History*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 1964.

------, *A Biographical Sketch-Book of Early Hong Kong*, with new introduction by John M. Carroll. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press; London: Eurospan, 2005.

------. *An Eastern Entrepot: A Collection of Documents Illustrating the History of Hong Kong*. London: H.M.S.O., 1964.

Evans, Dafydd Emrys. "Chinatown in Hong Kong: The Beginnings of Taipingshan." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1970): 69-78.

------. "The Origins of Hong Kong's Central Market and the Tarrant Affair." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12 (1972): 150-160.

Faure, David, ed. *Hong Kong: A Reader in Social History*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2003.

------. "The Rice Trade in Hong Kong before the Second World War". In Elizabeth Sinn, ed., *Between East and West: Aspects of Social and Political Development in Hong Kong,* pp. 216-225. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1990.

------. *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Faure, David, James Hayes, and Alan Birch. *From Village to City: Studies in the Traditional Roots of Hong Kong Society*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1984.

Fay, Peter Ward. *The Opium War, 1840-1842: Barbarians in the Celestial Empire in the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century and the War by Which They Forced Her Gates Ajar*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Fung, Chi Ming. *Reluctant Heroes: Rickshaw Pullers in Hong Kong and Canton, 1874-1954.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005.

Greenburg, Michael. *British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-1842.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.

Hamilton, Sheilah E. *Watching over Hong Kong: Private Policing 1841-1941*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008.

Hanes, W. Travis, and Frank Sanello. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, 2002.

Hao, Yen-p'ing. *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge between*

East and West. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Hayes, James. *The Hong Kong Region: 1850-1911, Institutions and Leadership in Town and Countryside*. Hamden: Archon Books, 1977.

------. *The Rural Communities of Hong Kong: Studies and Themes*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983.

------. "Secular Non-Gentry Leadership of Temple and Shrine Organizations in Urban British Hong Kong". *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 23 (1983): 113-134.

Hoe, Susanna, and Derek Roebuck. *The Taking of Hong Kong: Charles and Clara Elliot in China Waters*. Richmond, Surrey, Eng.: Curzon Press, 1999.

Hoe, Susanna. *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong: Western Women in the British Colony, 1841-1941*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Hsü, Immanuel. *The Rise of Modern China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Inglis, Brian. *The Opium War*. Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979.

Lethbridge, Henry J. *Hong Kong: Stability and Change: A Collection of Essays*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Li Jinwei, ed. *Xianggang bainianshi* [Centenary History of Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Nanzhong chubanshe, 1948.

Lin Youlan. *Xianggang shihua, zengding ben* [Stories of Hong Kong, Revised Edition]. Hong Kong: Shanghai shudian, 1985.

Liu Cun-kuan. *Xianggangshi luncong* [Studies of Hong Kong History]. Hong Kong: Qilin shuye, 1998.

Liu Guoying. *Xianggang bainian* [Hundred Years of Hong Kong]. Hong Kong:

Youlian chubanshe, 1941.

Liu Runhe. *Xianggang shiyihui shi: 1883-1999: cong Jiejingju dao Shizhengju ji Quyushizhengju* [Municipal History of Hong Kong: 1883-1999: from the Sanitary Board to the Urban Council and the Regional Council]. Hong Kong: Kangle ji wenhua shiwu shu, 2002.

Liu Shuyong, ed. *Jianming Xianggangshi* [Concise History of Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1998.

Liu, Agnes Tat Fong. "Negotiating Social Status: Religion and Ethnicity in a Seui Seuhng Yahn Settlement in Hong Kong". Ph.D. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999.

Luo Xianglin. "Danjia" [Tanka]. *Minsu* 76 (September 1929): 1-32.

Morse, Hosea Ballou. *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*. Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1971.

Munn, Christopher. "The Chusan Episode: Britain's Occupation of a Chinese Island, 1840-46." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25.1 (January 1997): 82-112.

------. *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880*. Richmond, Surrey, Eng.: Curzon Press, 2001.

Murray, Dian. *Pirates of the South China Coast, 1790-1810*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Ng, Chi-wa, "The Establishment and Early Development of Police System in Hong Kong. Ph.D. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999.

Ngo, Tak-wing, ed. *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Norton-Kyshe, James William. *The History of the Laws and Courts of Hong Kong*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898.

Polachek, James M. *The Inner Opium War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Robinson, Ronald. "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration." In Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, pp.117-142. London: Longman, 1972.

Sayer, G. Robley. *Hong Kong: Birth, Adolescence, and Coming of Age, 1841-1862*. London, Oxford University Press, 1937.

Schmiechen, James and Carls, Kenneth. *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Sinn, Elizabeth. "The Study of Local History of Hong Kong: A Review." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 34 (1997): 147-169.

------. *Power and Charity: A Chinese Merchant Elite in Colonial Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003.

Smith, Carl T. "The Emergence of a Chinese Elite in Hong Kong." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1971): 74-115.

------. "An Early Hong Kong Success Story: Wei Akwong, the Beggar Boy." *Chung Chi Bulletin* 45 (December 1968): 9-14.

------. "Ng Akew, One of Hong Kong's 'Protected Women.'" *Chung Chi Bulletin* 46 (1969): 13-17, 27.

------. "Notes on Chinese Temples in Hong Kong." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13 (1973): 133-139.

------. “The Chinese Settlement of British Hong Kong.” *Chung Chi Journal* 48 (May 1970): 26-32

------. *A Sense of History: Studies in the Social and Urban History of Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong Educational Pub. Co., 1995.

------. *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Tsai, Jung-fang. *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Tsang, Steve. *A Modern History of Hong Kong*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Van Dyke, Paul. *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005.

Wakeman, Frederic E. *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1861*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

Waley, Arthur. *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958.

Wang Gengwu, ed. *Xianggangshi xinbian* [Hong Kong History: New Perspectives]. 2 vols. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd, 1997.

Welsh, Frank. *A History of Hong Kong*. London: Harper Collins, 1997.

Wong, Yunn Chii. *Singapore 1:1 City: A Gallery of Architecture & Urban Design*. Singapore: Urban Redevelopment Authority, 2005.

Wu Ruilin, *Sanshui Danmin diaocha* [Investigation on Tanka people in Sanshui]. Guangzhou: Lingnandaxue xinan shehui jingji yanjiusuo, 1948.

Xiao Fengxia and Liu Zhiwei. “Zongzu, shichang, daokou yu Danmin: Ming yihou zhujiangsanjiaozhou de zuqun yu shehui.” [Clans, Markets, Pirates and Tanka Population: Ethnic Groups and Society after the Ming Dynasty] *Zhongguo shehuijingjishi yanjiu* 3 (2004): 1-13.

Xiao Zhizhi and Yang Weidong, eds. *Xifeng fu xiyang: Yapianzhanzheng qian Zhongxi guanxi* [West Wind Stroke Setting Sun: Sino-British Relations before the Opium War]. Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2005.

Yeoh, S. A. Brenda. *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Yu Shengwu and Li Cunkuan, eds. *Shijiu shiji de Xianggang* [Hong Kong in the Nineteenth Century]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2007.

Yuan Bangjian. *Xianggang shilue* [History of Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Zhongliu chubanshe, 1993.

Zhang Wenqin, et al, eds. *Guangzhou Shisan Hang Cangsang* [The Thirteen Hongs in Guangzhou]. Guangzhou: Guangdong ditu chubanshe, 2001.

Zheng Hongtai and Huang Shaolun. *Xianggang miye shi* [History of Rice Industry in Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co. Ltd., 2005.