

# **Chinese Settlement in NSW**

**A thematic history**

A report for the NSW Heritage Office of NSW

by

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The contribution of Chinese settlement to the heritage of NSW is unique. Features of this settlement such as the value placed on maintaining links with the villages and districts of origin, the predominance in early migration of men over women and the experience of prejudice and anti-Chinese legislation, combined to ensure this uniqueness. Continuous and substantial links with villages and districts in south China greatly influenced the nature of Chinese settlement in NSW until at least the middle of the 20th century. Non-Chinese are more likely to be aware of the involuntary role played by Chinese settlers in the evolution of Australian national identity through racism and the White Australia Policy. The impact of anti-Chinese laws and discriminatory behaviour, particularly regarding issues of labour, on Chinese people has often been told. Less researched is the basis in Chinese culture and history of such practices as work habits, the non-emigration of women, opium smoking and returns to China that were often the pretexts for anti-Chinese prejudice and actions.

With these and other features of Chinese settlement in mind, it is proposed to examine the history of Chinese people in NSW through nine themes. The first of these themes, *Migration*, describes the cultural and social background to Chinese migration with emphasis on how significant elements of this background have contributed to a unique pattern of settlement, including the location of NSW heritage items in the villages of south China. The themes *Social Institutions* and *Commerce* utilise this background to demonstrate the importance of the districts of origin in China to the organisation, support and business relations of Chinese people in NSW. *Law and Order* and *Labour* focus on the role played by racism, the mechanisms of the White Australia Policy and Chinese people's responses in shaping the pattern of Chinese settlement. *Agriculture* and *Mining* describe two of the most significant areas in which Chinese people contributed to the heritage of NSW, while *Leisure* examines the role of opium and gambling, two images popularly associated with Chinese people in NSW. Finally, *Persons* depicts some representative families and individuals in order to reveal the diversity of lives led by people of Chinese origin throughout NSW history.

Chinese settlement covers nearly the entire history of both the colony and state of NSW. Unlike most other groups, this settlement is not a pattern of small beginnings and gradual expansion, rather it is one of rapid population growth and slow declines, of periods of interaction followed by periods of strong discrimination mixed with acceptance of individuals. From the China-bound ships of the First Fleet to the indentured shepherds of the Australian Agricultural Company in the 1840s, the relationship of an isolated British settlement with the relatively nearby Chinese Empire was a significant factor in its early growth. The lure of gold in the 1850s to the 1870s made this factor a major issue which soon raised questions of identity, immigration and labour. These questions continued in the 1880s and 1890s as more Chinese people arrived not to seek gold but to work in a range of occupations around NSW. Federation imposed a 'white' answer to these questions and in doing so transformed tens of thousands of Chinese residents into 'domiciles' with restricted rights. The result was a steady decline in the numbers of Chinese people in NSW until an influx of refugees due to Japanese aggression in China and the Pacific in the 1930s and 1940s combined with a new generation of Australian-born people of Chinese origin to transform matters once again.

The post-war period and its strong 'assimilationist' outlook brought a gradual extension of citizenship rights to Chinese people, while the 'Chinese cafes' of a new generation replaced market gardeners as the predominant image of Chinese people in NSW. Tertiary students from various Asian nations in the 1960s, nearly all of ethnic Chinese origin, marked a period of both increasing Chinese immigration as the White Australia Policy was gradually dismantled and the beginning of a 'remigration' of the Chinese diaspora.<sup>1</sup> A diaspora that NSW had always been part of, if unwittingly, and one which Australians of Chinese background increasingly acknowledged by the 1980s. The replacement of 'assimilation' with 'multiculturalism' in the 1970s and 1980s saw numbers of Chinese people once again reach

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Chinese Diaspora' has become a common way of denoting the widespread migration of Chinese people. See for example, Wang Gungwu, 'Upgrading the Migrant: Neither Huaqiao nor Huaren', *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1996, pp.1-18 & Pan Lynn, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese diaspora*, Boston, Little Brown, 1990.

historic levels, if not proportions, as non-Cantonese speaking background people settled for the first time in significant numbers in NSW.

Just as Chinese settlement in NSW is unique among migrant groups so too are the sources from which its history can be gathered. Antagonism, complemented by restrictive legislation, meant that the activities and movements of Chinese people have been particularly recorded throughout NSW's history. While often ignorant and nearly always prejudiced, this material is plentiful. Of a rare level of credibility is the report of the Chinese speaking and comparatively dispassionate J. Dundas Crawford who, in 'accordance with the instructions of Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Peking,' in 1877 prepared a report on Chinese people in the Australian colonies. Some records even allow Chinese people to speak for themselves, as does the 'Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling' with its many Chinese witnesses.<sup>2</sup> Chinese people were also, along with Aboriginal people, especially identified in statistics and after 1881, were required to obtain special re-entry certificates each time they travelled outside NSW and later the Commonwealth. As NSW Chinese residents made many such trips over the years, the result is the existence of a wealth of systematically collected material. Finally, NSW has numerous people of Chinese descent who are generous in their willingness to recount the doings and contributions of their parents, grandparents and in many cases remoter ancestors, to the history and heritage of NSW.

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<sup>2</sup> *Notes by Mr. Crawford on Chinese Immigration in the Australian Colonies*, Acting Consul Davenport to Lord Tenterden, September 1877, Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints, F.O. 3742 and *Report of the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling and Immorality and Charges of Bribery Against Members of the Police Force*. Appointed August 20<sup>th</sup> 1891. Government Printer, Sydney, 1892. (Hereafter *Royal Commission*).

*Earliest arrivals - 1788 to 1848*

From the very beginning of the colony, links with China were established when several ships of the First Fleet, after dropping off their convict load, sailing for Canton to pick up goods for the return to England. The Bigge Report attributed the high level of tea drinking to ‘the existence of an intercourse with China from the foundation of the Colony ...’<sup>1</sup> That the ships carrying such cargo had Chinese crew members is likely and that some of the crew and possibly passengers embarked at the port of Sydney is probable. Certainly by 1818, Mak Sai Ying or John Shying had arrived and after a period farming became, in 1829, the publican of *The Lion* in Parramatta. John Macarthur employed three Chinese people on his properties in the 1820s and the records may well have neglected others.<sup>2</sup>

*Indentured Labour - 1848 to 1853*

Individuals such as Macarthur’s employees were part of the varied mix that was early Sydney Town. It was the increasing demand for labour after transportation ceased in the 1840s that led to much larger numbers of Chinese people arriving as indentured labourers to work as shepherds and irrigation experts for private landowners and the Australian Agricultural Company. These workers seemingly all came from Fujian province via the port then known as Amoy (Xiamen) and some may have been brought involuntarily as kidnapping or the ‘sale of pigs’ as it was called, was common.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1848 and 1853, over 3,000 Chinese workers on contracts arrived via the Port of Sydney for employment in the NSW countryside.<sup>4</sup> Resistance to this cheap labour occurred as soon as it arrived and like such protests later in the century was heavily mixed

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Bigge Report, Remarks on Distillation, 28/1/1821. See also, ‘*Chinese export porcelain from the wreck of the Sydney Cove (1797)*’ Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Special Publication No.12, 1998, pp.7-9.

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, State Library of NSW Press, Sydney, 1997, pp.13-18.

<sup>3</sup> Persia Crawford Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries Within the British Empire*, P.S. King & Sons, Westminster, 1923; Kay Saunders (ed.), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834-1920*, Croom Helm, Canberra, 1984 and Darnell, Maxine, *The Chinese Labour Trade to New South Wales 1783-1853*, PhD thesis, University of New England, 1997 and Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.22.

<sup>4</sup> Darnell, Maxine, Responses and Reactions to the Importation of Indentured Chinese Labourers. Paper presented to ‘The River’ Australian Historical Association Conference, Newcastle, 28-30 September 1997, p.1, n.5 & Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.19.

with racism.<sup>5</sup> Little is known of the habits of such men or their relations with other NSW residents except for those that appear in the records of the courts and asylums.<sup>6</sup> Some stayed for the term of their contracts and then left for home, but there is evidence that others spent the rest of their lives in NSW. A Gulgong resident who died at age 105 in 1911 had been in NSW since 1841 while in 1871 the 'Keeper of Lunacy' still required the Amoy dialect from his interpreters.<sup>7</sup>

### *Gold Rushes - 1853 to 1877*

Attempts at importing contracted labour ended with the discovery of gold as those contracted at minimal wages could and did simply head for the diggings.<sup>8</sup> Large numbers of Chinese people were working on the Victorian goldfields and fewer on the smaller NSW fields in the mid 1850s, when major gold finds in NSW and the passing of more restrictive anti-Chinese legislation in Victoria resulted in thousands of miners moving across the border in 1859.<sup>9</sup> Many more Chinese goldseekers came by ship through Twofold Bay and Sydney and onto the various diggings. Fish curing, stores and dormitories in places such as the Rocks, soon developed to support the miners on the fields as well as on their way to the diggings and to China.<sup>10</sup> The presence of numerous Chinese on the diggings led to anti-Chinese agitation, including violent clashes such as those on Lambing Flat, the immediate result of which was the passing of an Act in 1861 designed to reduce the number of Chinese people entering the colony.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 'the very scum of hell' was one description of Chinese 'coolies', Darnell, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>6</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.64-66.

<sup>7</sup> *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901-1912*, No.6. 1913, 'Death of Centenarians 1911', p.217 and Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.66.

<sup>8</sup> C. A. Price, *The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australasia, 1836-1888*, Australian Institute of International Affairs with ANU Press, Canberra, 1974. p.77, refers to an attempt to include in the Goldfields Management Bill of 1852 a check that Chinese people applying for gold licences had discharged their contracts & Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.22-23.

<sup>9</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.23, Barry McGowan, *Conservation and Heritage overview of the Araluen catchment area*, Canberra, August, 1998, pp.13-27 and Lindsay Smith, *The Chinese of Kiandra, New South Wales*. A report to the NSW Heritage Office, October 1997, pp.31-37.

<sup>10</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, Report of the Royal Commission, Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1879-80, Vol. III, line 1441 & Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.68.

<sup>11</sup> The 'Chinese Immigrants Regulation and Restriction Act,' repealed in 1867 when numbers fell.

*From miners to artisans - 1877 to 1901*

The last gold rush in the eastern colonies of Australia occurred in 1873 in the far north of Queensland at the Palmer River and by 1877 there were 20,000 Chinese there.<sup>12</sup> After the ending of this Queensland rush people either returned to China or dispersed, including a significant number coming into NSW either immediately or in subsequent years. This openness of the land borders and the rise in Chinese numbers after a period of decline again raised anti-Chinese fears in NSW resulting in restrictive Acts in 1881 and 1888.<sup>13</sup>

Gold was always a risky endeavour and very soon after arrival Chinese people began trying other ways of earning a living. People opened stores and became merchants and hawkers, while a fishing and fish curing industry operating north and south of Sydney supplied dried fish in the 1860s and 1870s to Chinese people throughout NSW as well as Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>14</sup> By the 1890s Chinese people were represented in a wide variety of occupations including scrub cutters, interpreters, cooks, tobacco farmers, market gardeners, cabinet-makers, storekeepers and drapers, though by this time the fishing industry seems to have disappeared, and at the same time Sydney's proportion of the Chinese residents of NSW had steadily increased.<sup>15</sup>

*Domiciles & ABCs - 1901 to 1936*

By Federation, Chinese people in NSW were a significant group, running numerous stores, an import trade, societies and several Chinese language newspapers. They were also part of an international community involved in political events in China such as sending delegates to a Peking Parliament or making donations at times of natural disaster.<sup>16</sup> The 1888 restrictions had not had a great impact on total numbers and a continued inflow from Queensland mitigated even this. The passing of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901, however, froze the Chinese communities of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into a slow decline.

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<sup>12</sup> Crawford, op. cit. pp.20-21.

<sup>13</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.28. See theme, *Law & Order*.

<sup>14</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, op. cit., lines 1444 and 3595.

<sup>15</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit. p.27 and Appendix IV, Table 2.

<sup>16</sup> C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: the Chinese in Australia, 1901-1921*, Raphael Arts, Richmond, South Australia, 1977, p.84-94.

Continued discrimination, both legal and social, reduced the occupational range of Chinese people until market gardening, always a major occupation, became far and away the representative role of 'John Chinaman'.<sup>17</sup> It was as gardeners that most pre-1901 'domiciles' visited their villages and established families throughout the first 30 years or so of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, relying on the minority of merchants to assist them to negotiate with the Immigration Restriction Act bureaucracy. Only the rise of a new generation of Australian-born Chinese people, combined with new migrants that the merchants and others sponsored, both legally and illegally, prevented the Chinese population of NSW disappearing entirely.

*War & Refugees - 1936 to 1949*

By the war period numbers had nevertheless fallen greatly and Australian-born people of Chinese background began to predominate over China-born people for the first time. Numbers increased rapidly again when refugees began to enter Australia as the result of Japan's war in China and the Pacific. Some were Chinese crew members who refused to return to Japanese-held areas and others were residents of the many Pacific islands evacuated in the face of the Japanese advance. Still others included those with Australian birth who were able to leave Hong Kong and the villages on the approach of the Japanese.<sup>18</sup> At the same time the anti-Japanese War helped inspire the development of organisations focused on China rather than the districts of origin and aimed at making Australia aware of the danger of Japan and the need to assist China.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix IV, Table 4.

<sup>18</sup> Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, pp.41-42, on Chinese seamen deserting their ships. Interview with Victor Gow, 30 October 1997 (7) and AA (NSW), SP1122/1; N67/4101, Kwok Pearl (Mrs) (Pearl Lock Lee).

<sup>19</sup> For details of such organisations see theme, *Social Institutions*.

*Cafes to Citizens - 1949 to 1958*

In the post-war period, assimilation became the dominant policy and this led to some extension of rights with gradual changes to citizenship laws.<sup>20</sup> At the same time cafes began to replace market gardens as the major source of employment and avenue for bringing in new migrants, both legal and illegal. These changes, combined with the increased number of Australian-born Chinese, the final return of the last of the domiciles who still wished to do so and the arrival of Chinese background students under the Colombo Plan from various parts of Asia, brought about the end of the link between Sydney and south China as it had existed for nearly 100 years.<sup>21</sup>

*Re-migration & Multiculturalism - 1958 to the present*

The final death of the White Australia Policy saw new arrivals from the Chinese diaspora and for the first time significant numbers from non-Cantonese speaking parts of China.<sup>22</sup> New institutions were established for these arrivals and old ones such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce revived.<sup>23</sup> Chinese language newspapers were once again published while the equality of citizenship laws and family reunion immigration after 1972 meant that an imbalance of the sexes was not an issue in these later migrations. The 1980s saw a significant reverse of the traditional migration pattern with many families settling in NSW while the breadwinner returned to Hong Kong to continue earning an income.

This brief chronological overview of Chinese settlement history in NSW is intended to provide a frame of reference. Chinese settlement will be explored in greater depth through nine themes. Each theme will explore an aspect of Chinese settlement while providing background to surviving heritage sites and items.

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<sup>20</sup> See theme *Law & Order*.

<sup>21</sup> Wilton, Janis, *Chinese Voices, Australian Lives: Oral history and the Chinese contribution to Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield and surrounding districts during the first half of the twentieth century*, PhD thesis, University New England, August, 1996, pp.229-230, on the lessening of the sense of China as home and p.232, on the effects of Australia becoming less racist & Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.148.

<sup>22</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.49 and Kee Poo-Kong, *Chinese Immigrants in Australia: Construction of a Socio-Economic Profile*, Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, September, 1988, pp.1-3, Figure 1 and Table 1.

<sup>23</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.158.

To understand how the unique patterns of Chinese settlement in NSW arose, including the location of NSW heritage items in the villages of south China, it is essential to understand the cultural and social background of the migration. This understanding includes not only the motivation for that migration but also the significance of the districts and dialects of those who migrated, the traditional culture of the migrants and the organisation of this migration. In the case of Chinese people in NSW these elements are not only important in understanding why they came to NSW and what they did on arrival, but to an appreciation of their settlement patterns over time including why so many Chinese residents returned to their villages, either temporarily or at the end of a working life in NSW.

The Pearl River Delta districts, from which most Chinese migrants to NSW originated before the 1950s, provided ample motivation for emigration, including famines, floods and civil disturbances that ranged from bandit attacks to open warfare.<sup>1</sup> But such motivations do not explain why the emigration to NSW was largely limited to this handful of districts, nor why it was of nearly all men.<sup>2</sup> A prime reason for the narrow range of the districts of origin is that leaving the family to earn money overseas for long periods was a concept with a long history in these districts, one going back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> The spread of news about the Californian and later the Victoria goldfields through Hong Kong combined with the recently imposed proximity of European shipping in the waterways of the Pearl River Delta simply opened up new prospects.

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<sup>1</sup> Chi-cheung Choi, *Descent Group unification and segmentation in the coastal area of southern China*. University of Tokyo, PhD, 1987, p.60, refers to secret society revolts in the 1842-55 period; p.61, the Taiping rebellion in 1854; pp.142-3, to inter-family feuds as late as 1898-9; and Appendix 1, pp.490-92, gives a table of disasters throughout the 19th century, including floods, famines and bandit attacks. Similar reasons are also recorded in ancestor records about clan members who emigrated, see, 郑山玉 Zheng Shanyu, *华侨与海上丝绸之路 - 部分侨乡族谱中的海外移民资料分析* 'Chinese yu hai shang sichou zhi lu - bufen qiaoxiang zupu zhong de haiwai yimin ziliao fenxi' (*Huaqiao and the Silk Road of the Sea - An analysis of overseas migration information of clan records in part of the emigrant communities*), *华侨华人历史研究 Chinese huaren lishi yanjiu (Overseas Chinese History Researches)*, no.1, 1991, pp.23-30 and in Zo Kil Young, 'Emigrant Communities in China, Sze-Yap', *Asian Profile*, vol.5, no.4, August, 1977, pp.313-23. In the 1930s, economic pressure was given as the principle cause of emigration in 70% of cases, Chen Ta, op. cit., pp.259-261, Table 26.

<sup>2</sup> The districts of the Pearl River Delta were a small number of the Chinese Empire's 1,500 districts. Chang Chung-li, *The Income of the Chinese Gentry*, University of Washington, Seattle, 1962, p.69.

<sup>3</sup> This emigration was usually to South-East Asian countries. Crawford, op. cit., p.2, contrasts the attitudes of northern and southern Chinese people to emigration. See also, 林金枝 Lin Qinzhi, *从族谱资料看闽粤人民移居海外的活动及其对家乡的贡献* 'Cong zupu ziliao kan min yue renmin yiju haiwai de huodong ji qi dui jiaxiang de gongxian' (A look at clan records to see the overseas activities of Fujian and Guangdong people and their contribution to their hometowns), *华侨华人历史研究 Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu (Overseas Chinese History Researches)*, 1, 1991, pp.16-23.

A significant factor for the newly arrived migrant was the family left behind. Strong attachment to parents, along with that to the ancestral village, meant that emigration did not occur lightly, even among families with a history of such movement.<sup>4</sup> The family and particularly parents were the focus of life in traditional Chinese culture and so the majority of those coming to NSW did so not as individuals seeking their fortune but as family representatives entrusted with the role of providing supplementary and possibly essential income.<sup>5</sup> As to marriage, it was considered that a woman not only married, but that as a wife, her primary role was to support her husband's parents more than it was to take care of that husband.<sup>6</sup> These attitudes of traditional Chinese culture to parents and related ideas about the function of marriage help to explain why Chinese emigration before the 20th century was overwhelmingly male. If this pattern did not occur in every case, such attitudes nevertheless provided the ideals around which most Chinese residents in NSW in the 19th and the early 20th century operated.

Despite poverty, war and other problems, the movement of thousands of villagers around the Pacific was not a disorganised stampede of the impoverished and dispossessed.<sup>7</sup> Rather, emigration involved a range of co-operative methods and commercial transactions among villagers, family members and brokers that has perhaps too readily been summarised under the rubric 'credit-ticket' system.<sup>8</sup> In order for most Pearl River Delta villagers to get to NSW, it was necessary to 'form themselves into co-operative bands' or 'individually to enter into unwritten bonds with a labour agent' or a relative who had sufficient money after

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<sup>4</sup> When Chang Yet, who had lived in NSW since 1898, was preparing to bring his son, Chang Gar Lock, to Australia in 1933, he took him to the village temple, where a promise was made to the local goddess that his son would return to the village. Interview with Arthur Chang, NSW, 7 March 1998. (Tape 1, B, 9.00).

<sup>5</sup> Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1964, p.123, considers children's education in traditional China to consist largely to encourage, 'piety and awe towards parents.' Chen Ta, *Emigrant Communities in South China: A Study of Overseas Migration and its influence on standards of living and social change*, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1940 (1939), Table 5, pp.82-85, shows among a survey of emigrant families that 75% to 85% of family income was from remittances.

<sup>6</sup> C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1975, p.13, and Price, op. cit., p.55 also discuss this aspect; Wilton, op. cit., pp.172-4, mentions the tradition of male migration and a preference to leave wives in China. Crawford, op. cit., p.31 is more cynical when he says, 'it is difficult [for a migrant] to persuade his family to part with his wife, and thus break the chain which binds him and the money he may make to his ancestral home.'

<sup>7</sup> See Chen Yong, 'The Internal Origins of Chinese Emigration to California Reconsidered', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 28 (Winter 1997), pp.521-546, for a discussion of this aspect.

<sup>8</sup> See Arthur Huck, *The Chinese in Australia*, Longmans, Melbourne, 1963, pp.3-4; Choi, *Chinese Migration*, op. cit., p.14; Price, op. cit., p.58; Yong, op. cit., p.1, quotes a 1857 Victorian parliamentary committee report that estimated two-thirds of the Chinese migrants of the time had arrived by this method.

their own sojourn.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the methods used, the majority of Chinese men in NSW throughout the 19th century arrived indebted. This factor determined much about the habits and activities of Chinese settlers of both the goldseeker and subsequent generations.

A prominent characteristic of people from the Pearl River Delta districts was their strong identification by district and dialect.<sup>10</sup> From the time of the first Chinese goldseekers in the 1850s it was on the basis of dialect, district and village that Chinese people organised their migration, local societies, businesses and presumably their diggings. Most NSW Chinese people spoke the Yue dialect of Chinese (Cantonese), but with variations that made the members of the different districts readily distinguishable. Some groups, such as the *Hakka* (客家) and people from the Long Dou (隆都) area within Zhongshan district, spoke a non-Yue dialect that was unintelligible to the majority of Cantonese speakers.<sup>11</sup> Up to half of the Zhongshan people of NSW were reported to be from this single Long Dou area and the people of this district felt an affinity with each other that extended beyond that of village and family.<sup>12</sup>

This affinity of district helps to explain the differing district representation in NSW from that of Victoria.<sup>13</sup> While limited evidence is available for the goldseeker generation in NSW, what there is would indicate a wider range of districts was represented than that contained in the Royal Commission of the 1890s, while an analysis of district distributions in NSW from the 1960s gave a narrower range again.<sup>14</sup> The narrowing of district representation over time could be explained by the fact that subsequent 'chain migration' was greatly influenced by who had successfully established businesses and support mechanisms, thereby enabling

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<sup>9</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.2. 'Some said that they did not even have the half dollar to pay the boat fare from the mainland to Hong Kong.' Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.26, and a discussion of ticket arrangements in the 1880s.

<sup>10</sup> See, Leo J. Moser, *The Chinese Mosaic. The Peoples and Provinces of China*, Westview, London, 1985, pp.203-5 & 215, for a general discussion of Pearl River Delta dialects; David Faure & Helen Siu, *Down to Earth. The Territorial Bond in South China*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1995, Introduction, p.11, discusses the complexity of South China's dialects; J. M. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution – The Case of Kwangtung, 1895-1913*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975, pp.12-14, discusses the tensions created by dialect differences; Choy op. cit., pp.90-1, discusses the importance of dialect in unifying groups and Somers Heidhues, op. cit., pp.49-51, refers to the, 'natural division of overseas Chinese along speech groups'.

<sup>11</sup> Moser, op. cit., p.208, on *Hakka* in South China, p.216, dialect enclaves and p.199, the dialect enclave of Long Dou; Choy op. cit., p.95, mentions six Zhongshan dialects and p.114, Longhua (Longdu dialect).

<sup>12</sup> Interview with D. Young, NSW, 11 October 1997 (6) & Arthur Chang, 7 March 1998 (Tape 1, B, 0.84).

<sup>13</sup> Victoria was dominated by people from the Sze Yap districts. Choi, *Chinese migration*, op. cit., p.78.

some to sponsor and/or to give credit to fellow district members. Members of less 'successful' districts thus gradually disappeared from NSW.

Stores and societies set up were always organised around districts of origin. Stores remitted money and sent letters only for fellow district members, while societies provided support and guaranteed the return of bones only of those who came from the same or partnered districts.<sup>15</sup> Life in NSW for those with such organisational support must have looked more attractive for those leaving the village for the first time. The strength of such family and district links, combined with continuing unrest in China, also helps explain the assistance given to people to migrate, regardless of legal and other barriers.<sup>16</sup>

The significance of family, district and debts have been identified. These factors combined to make Chinese settlement in NSW a well-organised, close community of hard-working men. With a heavy debt, no immediate family with him and the aim to support his family in China, habits such as living in dormitories, accepting board as part payment for work and being willing to do just about anything, must have seemed natural to most Chinese workers in NSW. Perhaps just as naturally these habits were despised by European workers, ignorant of their origins and intent on better wages and conditions, and so were used as pretexts for anti-Chinese prejudice and agitation.<sup>17</sup>

The link to the family in China also meant trips home once the period of indebtedness had passed and the regular remittance of money when in NSW.<sup>18</sup> Such returns, even at the end of an entire working life spent in NSW, was not uncommon nor were returns after death with over 1500 exhumations from Rookwood cemetery alone between 1875 and 1939.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Price, op. cit., p.220, n.12, Zhongshan (40%), Gao Yao (24%), Dong Goon (20%), Sze Yap (10%), Sam Yap (3%) and non-Cantonese (2%); *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.119, line, 4784 and p.145, line 5805 and Crawford, op. cit., p.7-8. See Appendix III, District proportions in NSW.

<sup>15</sup> See theme, *Social Institutions*.

<sup>16</sup> See theme, *Law and Order*.

<sup>17</sup> Discussed further in the theme *Labour*.

<sup>18</sup> Such journeys to China were officially recognised as early as 1861, see SP115/10; Certificates Exempting from the provisions of the Influx of Chinese Restrictions Act of 1881, 1862-1888.

<sup>19</sup> See theme, *Social Institutions*.

The regular flow of remittances, donations and gifts brought on trips to the villages means that much NSW heritage material is in such villages. Items range from birds cages built to hold 'Arnott's' rosellas to safes purchased at Anthony Hordens, as well as bridges, schools and roads constructed with money sent from NSW. Most visually conspicuous was the building of new and bigger houses often including a defensive 'tower' built as an addition to a more traditional house, or a totally 'foreign' house built by wealthier merchants. Children, usually of Chinese fathers and Europeans mothers, were often taken back at a young age to be brought up by their grandparents and other family. Not all of these children returned to Australia and their descendants presumably reside in south China today.

The role of Hong Kong in NSW Chinese history can not be neglected. Hong Kong was a conduit between Chinese people overseas and their villages and a base for buying passage on European ships, sending and receiving remittances, and the return of bones to the villages. In the development of this role for Hong Kong, overseas Chinese, including those in NSW, played a major part.<sup>20</sup> Hong Kong also played the role of 'safehaven'. Despite the many improvements remittances could bring, village life was not always safe, particularly for those who had grown used to something different.<sup>21</sup> For those who could afford to and for the increasing number of Australian-born Chinese who felt at home in (or alienated from) both European and Chinese culture, Hong Kong was ideal. Regardless of district, for those with wealth to protect, Hong Kong was a refuge from both the poverty and corruption of the home villages, and the discrimination and foreignness of Australia.

The anti-Japanese war brought about two major changes in the migration background of Chinese people in NSW. The growth of Chinese nationalism lead to more 'Chinese' and less district identification, including many new organisations, while the threat to the villages and Hong Kong forced many to make a choice as to where their families should make their homes. The impact of the new government in Beijing and the effective cutting off of former contacts with the villages and districts completed this change.

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong*, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1989, pp.100 & 111-2, and p.163, on the role of educated overseas merchants and p.169, on the role of an Australian born Chinese specifically. See also, John H. C. Sleeman, *White China. An Austral-Asian Sensation*, Ultimo Sydney, 1933, pp.137-142.

<sup>21</sup> Chen Ta, op. cit., p.202, 'Returned emigrants from Australia and America sometimes were able to found new communities.'

By the 1960s the settlement patterns of Chinese in NSW had been completely transformed. Citizenship and the possibility of family migration ended the imbalance of the sexes while the migration of Chinese people from places other than southern China began for the first time. Many of these migrants were 're-migrations' from areas of the Chinese diaspora such as Malaysia or, after the 1970s, from a more diverse range of areas within China itself.<sup>22</sup>

The elements of the background to Chinese migration in NSW has included the motivations of the migrants, the organisation of that migration, the nature of the traditional family and the identification of the individual on the basis of village, district and/or dialect. The direct result of these elements have included the migration of an overwhelming proportion of men, the continuation of strong links with the families in the villages, the organisation of societies and businesses on the basis of district identification and a high level of eventual return to the village. This background also helps to explain the efforts that were made, both legal and illegal, to bring other family and village members to Australia, as well as some of the pretexts on which anti-Chinese prejudice and discrimination were based.

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<sup>22</sup> See Kee, *op. cit.*, pp.1-5, Table 4, pp.8-9, and Table 5, p.12 for summaries of these wider origins.

Unlike Chinese cities, whose workers were organised around occupational guilds, those of the Chinese diaspora relied on regional associations for social and political organisation.<sup>1</sup> These *tongxian* (同县), or ‘same place’ societies, were ‘benevolent institutions, formed on the basis of ‘cousinship’, displaying their charity in the transport of old men and the bones of their deceased countrymen to China’.<sup>2</sup> The societies raised money from member’s subscriptions with nobody being, ‘allowed to pay less than £1, but many of the merchants paid as much as £5, £10, and £50’.<sup>3</sup> Such societies also, played a significant role in ‘keeping *huaqiao* [overseas Chinese] focused on their obligations to their families in the village’.<sup>4</sup>

District-based societies are central to an appreciation of Chinese settlement in NSW before the 1930s. Not only did they provide support for those in need but they were responsible for establishing temples and returning the bones of the dead to families. The merchants who ran these societies also owned the stores through which their fellow district members received a great deal of support.<sup>5</sup> It was only after the 1930s, as more ‘national’ ideas arose, that organisations with a ‘Chinese’ rather than a district focus became more common.<sup>6</sup>

It is not known when the first societies were established in NSW but the Quong Sing Tong, which was in existence by 1877, was reported to be the oldest.<sup>7</sup> By the 1890s there were at least 10 such societies in Sydney with memberships that reached throughout NSW.<sup>8</sup> Most districts had their own society, though some had more than one and some districts combined to form a single society, such as the Dong Guan and Zeng Cheng peoples who joined to form the Loong Yee Tong.<sup>9</sup> Today three of these 19th century societies still

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<sup>1</sup> Sinn, *Power and Charity*, op. cit., pp.55-6, notes the strength of the guild based structure of Hong Kong and Chinese cities generally and the importance of regional associations among the overseas Chinese.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.28.

<sup>3</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.117, line 4697.

<sup>4</sup> The purpose of such societies was also to express longing and to remind members of their obligations. Elizabeth Sinn, ‘Xin Xi Guxiang: A Study of Regional Associations as a Bonding Mechanism in the Chinese Diaspora. The Hong Kong Experience’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 31/2, 1997, p.375.

<sup>5</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.14, line 402, ‘The principal stores would be the treasury’; line 404, ‘the principal storekeepers would hold the money’; and on their NSW reach, p.54, lines 2065-83. Sinn, *Power and Charity*, op. cit., p.55, refers to the role of merchants in taking the place of the scholar elite in the circumstances of Hong Kong and p.60, discusses the characteristics of Chinese voluntary organisations.

<sup>6</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.117-118 & 137.

<sup>7</sup> ‘There is one very old society called Quong Sing Tong.’ *Royal Commission*, op. cit., cit., p.153, line 6094. The district this society covered is unknown.

<sup>8</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., scattered references.

<sup>9</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.146, lines 5871-2. The Commissioners needed to have the ‘exclusiveness’ of the societies explained to them on a number of occasions, such as when Way Shong stated that, ‘Moy Ping is not of my community – he would not subscribe’, and when Sam Tin needed to explain that he was denying membership of the Loong Yee Tong, not because it was a gambling society but rather ‘as I do not

operate in Sydney.<sup>10</sup> The Yum Duck Tong of the largest represented district in NSW, that of Zhongshan district, dissolved in the 1930s and was refounded in the 1970s. More recent migrants have founded their own district societies since the 1980s.<sup>11</sup>

Merchant leadership was part of a traditional paternalism which, as explained by his grandson describing Way Kee's role in the Koon Yee Tong of the Doon Goon district people, was not a question of seeking election but, 'on account of seeing that my grandfather was in such a larger way of business, and was trusted, these men would take their money to him to keep for them'. The men he was referring to were those principally in 'the gardening or hawking line'.<sup>12</sup> A man in Way Kee's position was obliged to help others of his community. As his grandson again explained, 'if my grandfather did not go and bail them out [Chinese arrested for gambling], being a leading man, it would not look well.'<sup>13</sup>

The practice of returning the bones of the dead to rest in the soil of their ancestors was fundamental in Chinese culture and played an important role in the bond with the village.<sup>14</sup> The usual practice was to bury a body for several years then to collect the bones of a number people at once to be 'returned to China'.<sup>15</sup> An alternative, for those who could afford it, was to be embalmed and returned immediately.<sup>16</sup>

District societies played the dominant role in the return of bones.<sup>17</sup> The societies collected fees from their members and used the funds to ship the bones of those who died in Australia. The Hing Foon Tong (洪福堂) of the Gao Yao people kept a membership book which recorded the names and villages of its members to ensure the information would be

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belong to that part of the country they would not let me in it'. *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.69, line 2697 and p.117, line 4665.

<sup>10</sup> That of the Gao Yao, Dong Guan and Sze Yap districts, see Appendix I.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>12</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.47, lines 1934-36.

<sup>13</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.52, line 1946.

<sup>14</sup> Freedman, Maurice, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, University of London, Athlone Press, 1966, pp.139-140, on the role of bones in ancestor worship. Sinn, *Power & Charity*, op. cit., p.18, considers that concern for the dead was 'paramount' with the overseas Chinese.

<sup>15</sup> 'Returned to China,' in red ink, indicated exhumed plots in the, *Register of Burials in the Necropolis at Haslem's Creek*, Rookwood Cemetery, Anglican Trust, Chinese Section of General Cemetery.

<sup>16</sup> Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; C47/2369, Wellington Wing Ning, Charles Wong Wing Kau, statutory declaration by Ah Ching, December 1914. Australian Archives hereafter AA.

<sup>17</sup> Sinn, *Power and Charity*, op. cit., p.18, concern for the dead was, 'a keystone of community leadership and influence'.

available if required.<sup>18</sup> The Chinese Gambling Commissioners were told in 1891 that it cost '£10 to remove a man's bones from the country' and that it cost Way Kee's society £529/19/2 to 'raise 84 bodies'.<sup>19</sup> The return of bones to the actual villages was probably done through the Tung Wah Hospital based in Hong Kong, a role this institution played for Chinese people in many countries.<sup>20</sup> The concern that bodies not be lost was so strong that 'the putting of coffins on board vessels going to and fro in case a Chinaman dies' was also one of the functions of the societies. Money was also donated to the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong to ensure that this was done at that end also.<sup>21</sup>

The high percentage of exhumations from Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney suggests that many of the Chinese cemeteries in rural NSW no longer contain remains.<sup>22</sup> From the records of this cemetery it can be seen that there was a tapering off of returns after 1930, and from 1938 there were few removals until after World War Two. Many of those who died after 1931 were exhumed between 1946 and 1948, after which only 10 more were removed in 1950, with the last recorded exhumation from this section of the cemetery in 1962.<sup>23</sup>

A related role of the societies was in the establishment of temples. Currently only two pre-war temples remain in Sydney.<sup>24</sup> Both these temples were built with material imported from China and originally such temples, like the district associations, were aligned with their districts and people from other districts would not have associated with them. In rural NSW many more temples or Joss Houses are recorded, particularly in former gold mining settlements.<sup>25</sup> In recent times a number of Chinese temples have been built, the most recent of which opened in Ashfield in July 1999.

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<sup>18</sup> Membership book in possession of the Tiy Loy & Co., sighted by the author.

<sup>19</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.15, lines 486-7 and p.57, line 2232 & Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.53 for major exhumations in 1862.

<sup>20</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.105, line 4169, 'they send some money to the Chinese Hospital in Hong Kong, the Tong Wah Yee Yuen'.

<sup>21</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.55, line 2113 and p.70, lines 2724-28. Sinn, *Power and Charity*, op. cit., pp.108-9, mentions coffins being placed on emigrant ships to prevent the dead being thrown over board.

<sup>22</sup> Evidence to the Chinese Gambling Commissioners was that 500 bones (from rural NSW) had been sent in 'the last 10 years'. *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.14, line 485. In the same period 250 bones were exhumed from Rookwood. See theme *Mining*.

<sup>23</sup> At the period of most active exhumation and shipment of bones, from 1875 to the late 1930s, a peak of 75% of burials in the 'Old Chinese Section' of Rookwood Cemetery were, 'returned to China', with an average of 55% to 65%. Note the drop in returns around the time of the 1911 revolution. The total number of burials in this section from 1875 to 1950 was 3,094. See Appendix IV, Table 7.

<sup>24</sup> That of the Sze Yap in Glebe and the Gao Yao in Alexandria.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, op. cit., p.50, records a Joss House for miners in 1860. One at Emmaville in the 1870s was described as 'gorgeous', Ian Lobsey, *The Creek, A History of Emmaville, 1872-1972*, Emmaville

While the majority of Chinese people in NSW were not Christian and remained so, a minority did convert to various Christian Churches. The motivation for doing so seemed to have been intermarriage and the desire of the usually non-Chinese wife that children be brought up as Christians.<sup>26</sup> The predominant Church appears to have been the Chinese Presbyterian Church due to the missionary work of Rev Young Wai but the Anglican and others all had Chinese Churches, including some specifically built for Chinese congregations.<sup>27</sup> English classes then as now also provided avenues of contact and conversion as well as opportunities to meet future wives.<sup>28</sup> 'Christian Chapels for Chinese' are also referred to in rural NSW and Bathurst was the base for the 'Western Chinese Mission' in 1899.<sup>29</sup>

A prominent organisation that was not limited to a single district or group of districts was the Chinese Masonic Society. This had been the Yee Hing until 1912, a 'secret society' which traditionally took its members from those cut off from their village or districts.<sup>30</sup> The Chinese Masonic Society greatly expanded in 1916 and ran its own newspaper for many years. It was also prominent in many of the legal cases taken up to improve the rights of Chinese, including the High Court challenge to the attempted expulsion of many wartime refugees in 1949. The Society continues to operate from the building in Mary St, Sydney it has occupied since 1912.<sup>31</sup>

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Centenary Celebrations Committee, Glen Innes, 1972, p.34-35. Crawford, op. cit., p.9 gives a brief description of a Victorian temple. Further information on NSW Joss Houses and related artefacts is in *Golden Threads*, a project by Janis Wilton to be completed late 1999, see Appendix I.

<sup>26</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.8-9 and Yong, op. cit., p.208.

<sup>27</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.100 and Yong, op. cit., p.203.

<sup>28</sup> See Margaret Egerton, 'My Chinese', *The Cosmos Magazine*, Sept, pp.124-128 for an interesting description of one such class & William Lee, correspondence with the author, June, 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Lobsey, op. cit., p.34 & Theo Barker, *A History of Bathurst*, Vol 2, Crawford House Press, Bathurst, 1992, p.299.

<sup>30</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.10, identifies the 'Sheathed Sword Society' as another such secret society he observed in Victoria and Qld with a primarily religious influence and more sway than the district societies. He also noted that as 'immigration wanes' they degenerate into 'mere tea shops.'

<sup>31</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.157 & William Lee, correspondence with the author, June, 1999.

Apart from the Chinese Masonic Society and various merchant associations,<sup>32</sup> the first 'Chinese,' as opposed to district organisations, were several attempts at establishing Chinese language schools. Two schools were established around 1914 but both had difficulties obtaining teachers and were closed and reopened many times in the 1920s.<sup>33</sup> A further effort at providing Chinese language education was made around 1941 by the Australian Chinese Association but lack of students forced the school's closure after only a year's operation.<sup>34</sup>

Education in English was provided at the Anglican Church of St Lawrence in the early part of the 20th century but as families with children moved to the suburbs the demand for primary education diminished. However, in the 1930s, students sponsored under the Immigration Restriction Act increased in numbers and the Chinese School of English run by the Presbyterian Church in Campbell St, Haymarket was opened after the government ruled that sponsored Chinese students could not attend Public Schools. As many of these students were older than their stated age and more interested in helping their sponsors in their shops or gardens, the smooth running of the school was difficult and inspections by Customs and later Immigration Officials frequent.<sup>35</sup>

Major 'Chinese' associations of a social or community nature were not formed until the 1930s when Japanese attacks on China and a growing sense of nationalism among a younger generation led to the founding of such groups as the Chinese Youth League and the Australian Chinese Association in the late 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>36</sup> After the war the Australia-Chinese Friendship society was formed to maintain links with the new China.<sup>37</sup> In more recent times, organisations such as the Australian Chinese Community Association (ACCA), the Indo-Chinese Chinese Association and Chinese Women Association have been formed with combined social and benevolent aims. Most of these organisations profess a 'Chinese' coverage but in practise membership is often still based on dialect and region of origin, though on a somewhat broader basis than in the past.

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<sup>32</sup> See theme *Commerce*.

<sup>33</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.215-16.

<sup>34</sup> William Lee, correspondence with the author, June, 1999.

<sup>35</sup> William Lee, correspondence with the author, June, 1999 and interview 20/8/99 & AA (NSW), SP1122/1, N53/24/435, Betty Gee (Lai Kong Gee), School report form, 30/6/50.

<sup>36</sup> William Lee, correspondence with the author, June, 1999 and interview 20/8/99

<sup>37</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.145.

Chinese people and commerce were linked in NSW before significant Chinese settlement began. China trade began with the First Fleet while the indentured workers of the 1840s were part of an international trade in labour. The goldseekers were also part of an organised system of emigration which by the 1870s included working gangs moving from country to country seeking contracts.<sup>1</sup> Commerce conducted by Chinese people began with ex-goldseekers who set up stores and other businesses to supply, at first Chinese, and then European customers throughout NSW. Fishing and the curing of fish, storekeeping, international trade, fruit and vegetable selling, hawking, drapery, cabinet-making, newspaper publishing, shipping and restaurants have all been occupations carried out by Chinese people in NSW at various times.

The first recorded Chinese store was in Campbell St, Sydney in 1858 but by the end of the 19th century, Sydney was the centre of a network of such stores spread throughout NSW.<sup>2</sup> The stores in the countryside had a high level of interaction with non-Chinese people and many NSW towns saw their Chinese storekeeper as a prominent and valuable citizen.<sup>3</sup> In Sydney, firms such as Anthony Hordern, Arnott's and Mick Simmons regularly advertised in the Chinese language papers.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless a racially based anti-Chinese stores movement did get underway in 1904-5 and the decline in the number of Chinese customers, especially outside Sydney, saw the number of rural Chinese stores greatly reduce, one exception being the Hong Yuen network of stores that maintained itself in northern NSW.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.2 refers to these international contract gangs and p.19, to the importation of bonded labour and the chartering of immigrant ships by Australian based Chinese merchants.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.68. This network of stores and societies is well illustrated in the *Royal Commission*, where there are numerous references scattered throughout the evidence to visits by the witnesses to such NSW towns as Hay, Hillston and Tingha and their Chinese 'camps'. Way Kee is reported to have had four stores in Bourke, Bega, Stanthorpe and Hillston, *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.47, lines, 1704-8. See also Yong, op. cit., pp.39-41, for a discussion of the Chinese in the rural environment.

<sup>3</sup> For example, a testimonial on wax parchment was signed by Gundagai residents, including the Mayor, for Mark Loong on his departure for China in 1903, after 16 years in the district. Australian Archives (NSW), SP42/1; C1903/875, Mark Loong, Testimonial, 9 January 1903.

<sup>4</sup> See end of this theme for Chinese language newspapers.

<sup>5</sup> Wilton, op. cit., pp.98-101, discusses the campaign against Chinese country stores, also Yong, op.cit. p.47 and A. T. Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia: the background to exclusion, 1896-1923*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p.118. See Appendix IV, Table 1.

The Sydney stores had links and partnerships with those in rural NSW and between them would pass remittances to the villages and imports from China such as birds' nests, smoked duck, lychees and medicine herbs.<sup>6</sup> The stores also provided services for fellow district members. People without a district-related store of their own could use other stores, but for sending remittances and other services relative to their villages they were not of great use.<sup>7</sup> The Zhongshan based firms such as Wing On, Onyik Lee and the Kwong War Chong, paid fares, purchased tickets, arranged Immigration Restriction Act paperwork, provided accommodation and even lent money for the first remittance home, including a letter written by the firm's scribe if necessary.<sup>8</sup>

These Sydney-based stores were able to provide services that reached back to the villages because they were part of a network of stores related by ownership and/or common partners in Hong Kong and the home districts.<sup>9</sup> Kwong War Chong & Co. was typical of many such stores. It was run by people from the Zhongshan district and was used by market gardeners from that district.<sup>10</sup> Established in 1883 in Campbell St by several partners, including Phillip Lee Chun who had come to Australia in 1874, the store moved to 84 Dixon St in 1910, where it operated as a general store and trading company until 1987.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hong Sing of Reservoir St, Surry Hills sold to stores in Tenterfield, Emmaville and Tingha, AA(NSW), SP1122/1; N57/2220, Chang Wai Sheu Sing. Wilton, op. cit., p.133, for details of northern NSW connections with Sydney. For imports, AA(NSW), A1026, Correspondence in connection with Immigration Restriction Act 1904-12, vol. 3, report, 'Check on importation of Chinese Goods', Collector of Customs to Comptroller-General, 5/6/08.

<sup>7</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.115, as San Tin reported of his Lodging House, 'only friends and countrymen [district] stop there'. Yong, op. cit., p.46, discusses this feature of the stores. Interview with Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (Tape 2, B, 0.00).

<sup>8</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.115, lines, 4567-71, Sam Tin reported that as many as 50 stayed in his lodging house 'when they have been going away to China, or going into the country'. Victor Gow remembers he and his father in the 1920s staying above the Kwong War Chong store, Dixon Street Sydney, on buying trips from Wollongong. Interview with Arthur Gar Lock Chang, Sydney, 7 March 1998 (Tape 2, B, 0.75) & Victor Gow, 30 October 1997 (9).

<sup>9</sup> The 'General Merchants' firm of Sun Sam Choy had 25 partners, only five were in Sydney, nine were in Newcastle, one in Glenn Innes, eight in Hong Kong and a further two in Canton. AA (NSW), SP42/1; C29/48, Ping Fun, Certificate of Registration of a firm with the Registrar-General, Sun Sam Choy – General Merchants, no.3, 694, 5 June 1906.

<sup>10</sup> In the Zhongshan district capital, Shekki, (石岐, Shiqi), the Kwong War Fong (光和丰) was a branch of the Kwong War Chong (光和昌). Interview with Norman Lee, 25 September 1997 (2).

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (1 & 10) and AA (NSW), SP42/1; N59/3386, Kwong War Chong & Co., 'Particulars form', 30 October 1951.

The customers of these stores made many trips to their villages in China and were expected to bring gifts and to display some of the success they were experiencing in foreign lands. A shopping visit to a local trading store such as the Kwong War Chong or to Anthony Hordern & Sons, was necessary therefore before taking ship to buy such gifts as Arnott's biscuits, boiled lollies and umbrellas, as well as guns, leather shoes and in at least one instance, an Ajax safe.<sup>12</sup>

Remittances to the family in the village were a significant part of this commerce.<sup>13</sup> Nineteenth century remittances may have been in gold but by the 1930s, bank drafts were more common. In this case, a store collected the individual remittances from its customers and a standard letter was written to the family, usually by the store's clerk, to accompany the payment.<sup>14</sup> The Kwong War Chong, for example, charged a small commission on each remittance and consolidated them into a single draft drawn on the English, Scottish and Australian Bank in pounds sterling. The draft was then sent to the Hong Kong branch of the Kwong War Chong, where it was converted to Hong Kong dollars and then into Chinese dollars for the money to be sent to the district capital Shekki. The store's branch in Shekki then distributed the money to the families, either by their collecting it or by it being delivered to the villages by the firm's clerks. A receipt, which included a letter back to Sydney, would be signed and returned to the shop in Dixon St, where it was set up on a rack in the front window for people to collect.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Cliff Lee, 28 September 1997 (3). Photo, Appendix V.

<sup>13</sup> Breakdowns of figures are not available but in 1927 the Manager of one Sydney Bank stated, 'In this Branch alone, the Hong Kong exchange sold by us yearly averages £600,000.' William Liu papers, Box 1, ML MSS 6294, Letter, 16/8/27, Manger, C.A. Morgan, The English Scottish and Australian Bank Ltd to Mr W. J. L. Liu.

<sup>14</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.55, line, 2126; Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 47, refers to an early mishap which may have encouraged the use of a safer system. Interview with Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2). When the Bank of China began to take over all remittances after 1949 it issued a standard letter form to accompany remittances that may have been modelled on that created by the stores' scribes. Such a letter had 5 points: best wishes, write more often, let me know when received, have received your letter & tell how to spend the money in another letter. Mar Letters, no.264, Bank of China notice, 5 June 1944.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Norman Lee, Sydney, 25 September 1997 (2,3 &4). 繆文雨 Miao Wenyue & 高煥章 Gao Huanzhang, 石岐銀業的回乙 'Shiqi YinYe de Huiyi' (Recollections of the Shiqi silver industry), 中山文史 Zhongshan Wenshi (Zhongshan Cultural History), 1962-5, reprint, Special collection, 5.10.1989, pp.88-90, discusses commissions earned between Shiqi and Hong Kong. For similar descriptions of remittance services in Hawaii, Char Tin-Yuke, *The Sandalwood Mountains. Readings and Stories of the Early Chinese in Hawaii*, The University Press of Hawaii,

The purchase of tickets for ships was another matter handled by the stores in both Sydney and Hong Kong.<sup>16</sup> In this, the average Chinese person had little choice as shipping agents preferred not to have to deal with Chinese people directly.<sup>17</sup> In 1892 some of the leading Sydney Chinese merchants formed the Lin Yik Tong partly for the purpose of acting as an agent in the purchase of these tickets, a role succeeding associations of merchants continued to play.<sup>18</sup>

Travel between NSW and south China in the 19th century included charters as well as regular runs, usually via Singapore.<sup>19</sup> By the beginning of the 20th century such journeys were provided by two companies, the Eastern & Orient Line and the Taishan Maru, operating two ships each between Sydney and Hong Kong. Later the Japanese line was replaced by the Eastern & Australian Steamship Co. This meant an average of two ships per month and a trip of about three weeks between Sydney and Hong Kong.

A shipping shortage in WWI and the temporary domination by the Japanese Line inspired Chinese merchants in NSW, with some support from merchants in Melbourne and elsewhere, to establish the China-Australia Mail Steamship Line. Two ships were purchased in 1917 by the co-operative efforts of most of Sydney's Chinese merchants. The venture met with immediate losses when the Commonwealth Government requisitioned its ships for the duration of the war. In 1919, with its ships returned, the company purchased 'China House' in George St and began again. However, the Line faced strong price competition and could not rely on the loyalty of the many Chinese passengers in the face of substantial cuts in passenger fares by its competitors and by 1924 the Line was wound up and its ships sold.<sup>20</sup>

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Honolulu, 1975, p127; and South-East Asia, Chen Ta, op. cit., p.79. The Tiy Loy & Co. of the Gao Yao people in Sussex St. Sydney still have such a letter rack, now used only for correspondence.

<sup>16</sup> Such arrangements go back to at least the 1880s, when tickets purchased in bulk in Hong Kong would be sold in the villages regardless of names on tickets, SP42/1, C33/7368, Harry Chun Fook, memo Collector of Customs to Deputy Crown Solicitor, 18/9/33, & Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.26.

<sup>17</sup> '... if an ordinary Chinamen came to book a passage they would refuse to take his money; he would have to book through a Chinese merchant.' *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.99, lines, 3982-83.

<sup>18</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.80. The stores knowledge of European ways, English and the capacity of the store managers and merchant's class position to override, to some extent at least, racial bias.

<sup>19</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.25-26 and Crawford, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>20</sup> Yong, op. cit., pp.97-109.

The China-Australia Mail Steamship Line was not the only example of co-operation among Chinese merchants. The role of the Lin Yik Tong was taken over in 1903 by the more representative Chinese Merchants Association, formed partly to balance the grouping of the more conservative merchants, the Empire Reform Association. Soon after, the Chinese Merchants Defence Association was also formed to counter the agitation of the Anti-Asiatic League. These two associations merged in 1913 to form the NSW Chinese Chamber of Commerce, a level of co-operation which assisted the establishment of the shipping line. This organisation lasted until 1965 when lack of numbers caused its dissolution.<sup>21</sup> An organisation with the same name was formed in 1975 and continues to promote various benevolent and cultural activities today.

These organisations and the merchants they represented were involved in a number of causes not strictly commercial. The boycotts of U.S. and Japanese goods in 1906 and 1908, the support for the 1911 revolution, including sending delegates to Peking, and numerous donations for flood and other disaster relief were some of the activities of NSW's Chinese merchants.<sup>22</sup> However, links with China and Hong Kong were always an important aspect of the operation of NSW firms including support for large scale investment in China, the setting up of China and Hong Kong based businesses with capital generated in NSW, and the development of an import/export trade.

In 1919, Chinese businessmen in the Eastern States were able to raise £30,000 to invest in China Steelworks and in 1921, 10% of the capital of a Shanghai Company, or £13,000, was raised in Australia. NSW based businessmen also used their capital to establish companies in China and/or Hong Kong. In 1924, two Sydney Chinese businessmen established the Xiangshan Bank in Shekki<sup>23</sup> and in 1928 Lee Yip Fay returned to Sydney after a lengthy time trying to, 'float The Chosen Co. of Hongkong, Canton and Shakee [Shekki], General Importers and Exporters,' of which he was the Manager of the 'Shakee Branch'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.85-90 & Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.112.

<sup>22</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.90.

<sup>23</sup> Which collapsed after two years operation, 繆文雨 Miao Wenyue & 高焕章 Gao Huanzhang, 石岐银业的回忆 op. cit., p.93.

<sup>24</sup> AA (NSW), SP42/1; C31/135, Lee Yip Fay. Letter, Lee Yip Fay to Collector of Customs, 15 May 1928; Chen Ta, op. cit., p.20, quotes a report on the increase in overseas Chinese investment in

More well-known than these unsuccessful ventures are the successes of Wing On & Co. and Wing Sang & Co. in founding Hong Kong-based companies with their NSW capital and knowledge of modern business practises.<sup>25</sup> NSW and Australian trade with China had been in decline since the 19th century but its gradual growth in the 20th, as both the Australian and Chinese economies developed, was not due to such successful Chinese merchants, who preferred to move their capital to Hong Kong rather than invest in a 'White Australia'.<sup>26</sup> The Wing On and Wing Sang branches in Sydney therefore remained small trading firms.

In the 19th century Chinese stores imported and exported goods to provide for their customers, but after the Immigration Restriction Act took effect this international trade became linked to their capacity to bring in family members and employees under the White Australia Policy.<sup>27</sup> More than 2,000 people entered Australia before 1940 on 'temporary' Certificates of Exemption who were able to remain until war-time conditions made their return impossible or at least politically difficult. They entered as students, merchants, the wives of merchants, and as substitutes and assistants to those working in stores and market gardens.<sup>28</sup> The linking of the number of people on Certificates of Exemption that could be employed by a firm with turnover by the Immigration Restriction Act after 1934 often meant the stores slashed profit margins in order to boost turnover.<sup>29</sup> In the 1950s this criteria became profits and so tax returns were then exaggerated. The cost of such measures becoming part of the 'bond' the new employee needed to pay off.<sup>30</sup>

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home districts after 1911 and the failure of these investments due to 'disturbances', and pp.75-76, on the later preference for keeping capital elsewhere due to China's instability.

<sup>25</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.56-58.

<sup>26</sup> Yong, op.cit. p.47 and p.262, trade figures.

<sup>27</sup> See theme *Law & Order*.

<sup>28</sup> Fitzgerald, op.cit. p.38 & 41.

<sup>29</sup> In 1948, the Kwong War Chong, with a turnover of £5,994, was able to employ four assistants. AA (NSW), SP42/1; N59/3386, Kwong War Chong & Co. Figures attached to minute, 18 March 1948. See theme *Law & Order*.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with King Fong, 1 April 1998 and Donald Young, 11/10/94 (4). See theme, *Labour*.

Chinese restaurants such as the *Peking Cafe* in Pitt St had always been popular in Sydney but during the 1950s numerous small establishments were opened up to serve 'Australian-Chinese' meals to unsophisticated palettes throughout NSW towns and the city suburbs. The reason for this sudden boom was that after WWII, as the number of stores and especially market gardens declined, Chinese cafes and restaurants took over as the way in which those in NSW could carry on a 'Chinese' business which would entitle them to employ a Chinese person.<sup>31</sup>

The commercial activity of most Chinese stores was closely linked to businesses such as the vegetable and banana trades, as well as the earlier fishing and fish curing industry.<sup>32</sup> As early as the 1860s a fishing industry was established on the NSW central coast involving catching, curing and exporting the dried product. Longer lasting was the vegetable trade, with many market gardens owned by the merchants who owned the stores. Many merchants acquired their capital by working in the gardens or as vegetable dealers at the markets before becoming partners in a store. Many Sydney-based stores owned plantations in Fiji and later attempted to develop plantations on the NSW north coast before discrimination and banana diseases ended their efforts.<sup>33</sup>

An industry not directly related to stores or market gardens was that of cabinet-making. A quarter of all such workshops were reported to be Chinese in the 1880s and in 1912 there were 862 Chinese people employed in the furniture trades area.<sup>34</sup> Most workshops were very small and scattered throughout the city and by the 1920s few were left. The biggest and most successful being that run by the Lock Lee family in Botany Rd, Alexandria. Cabinet-making was an industry that attracted a great deal of anti-Chinese attention including various NSW Factory Acts that directly discriminated against Chinese people working in this industry.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Officials would calculate that a cafe served 'Chinese meals at approximately 85%' for example, AA (NSW), SP1122/1, N57/5016, Chan Yin Ming. Report on the Sun Sun Restaurant, Clerk Non-European to CMO, 9/10/56.

<sup>32</sup> See theme *Agriculture*.

<sup>33</sup> Yarwood, op. cit., pp.117-119, on the banana trade; Yong, op. cit., p.77-78, on restrictions placed on Chinese in the banana trade. See theme *Agriculture*.

<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald, op.cit. p.83-84 & Yong, op.cit. p.41. See theme, *Labour*.

<sup>35</sup> Yarwood, op. cit., pp.117-119, on the furniture trade. Choi, *Chinese Migration*, op. cit., p.53 on the refusal of all applications for substitutes and assistants in this industry.

A final commercial activity involving Chinese in NSW was the Chinese language newspapers. The earliest, the *Chinese Australian Herald* was established in 1894 by two Europeans and a Chinese person named Sun Johnson. Its reliance on European advertisers is an indication of the commercial links between the Chinese population, of Sydney at least, and such non-Chinese firms. Subsequent papers were all established with Chinese capital and were founded with a political role in view as well. The *Tung Wah News* (later *Tung Wah Times*) was established in 1898 in response to the humiliation of the Sino-Japanese War to promote China's modernisation and position in the world. The *Chinese Republican News* was founded in 1914 to support the new Republic of China, and the *Chinese World News*, founded in 1921, was the voice of the Chinese Masonic Society then newly reorganised. In the 1920s the *Chinese Times* was transferred to Sydney from Melbourne to become the official organ of the Chinese Nationalist Party.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Fitzgerald, op.cit. p.98 & Yong, op.cit. p.90, 116 and 166.

More than any other group within NSW with the exception of Aboriginal people, people of Chinese origin have had a great number of legal restrictions placed upon them. While violence meant dealing with the law in order to secure its protection, hopefully. Contract labourers before the courts for absconding from their employers argued they had been improperly treated.<sup>1</sup> Anti-Chinese violence on the goldfields brought police protection as well as the first restrictions on Chinese immigration, these restrictions culminated in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which had the effect of freezing Chinese settlement patterns into a slow decline and endangered the links with families in the villages. Such restrictions and the denial of citizenship and other rights ensured that people of both Chinese birth and origin remained separate from the rest of the community in NSW and tied to a restricted range of occupations. Factory Acts and bans on opium and gambling put Chinese people on the wrong side of laws sometimes enacted for that purpose. Resistance to these laws included political lobbying, legal challenges, smuggling, a high degree of self-support within the Chinese community and a sophisticated manipulation of regulations, as well as simply being very friendly with the relevant officials.

Not all discrimination against Chinese people in NSW was enacted in law and the consequences of violence, the threat of violence and of racial prejudice, while difficult to determine, cannot be underestimated. From Lambing Flat to larrikins at Bondi, Chinese people in NSW had to deal with a high level of racial prejudice and associated violence.<sup>2</sup> Crawford observed a marked degree of difference between Victoria and Sydney, at least in the 1870s, in 'the unhappy air of constraint which characterises the Chinese of Sydney, and distinguishes them from their free-mannered countrymen in Victoria.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald, *op. cit.* p.65. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p.12 optimistically considered the use of the Colonial Courts by Chinese people in disputes with other Chinese as proof of 'their general acknowledgment of the justice of English law.'

<sup>2</sup> On Lambing Flat and other early acts of violence, Price, *op. cit.*, p.78-83; Egerton, *op. cit.*, Oct 19, p.139-140, does not understand the possible consequences and is shocked that nearby fellow Chinese made no attempt to assist the person set upon; A disrespectful winding up of pig-tails was necessary due to larrikins according to a British China Consul, Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints, F.O. 24867, Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 15/12/1888, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford, *op. cit.*, p.11.

Acquiescence was not always the response, particularly by the merchant class, and when an Anti-Chinese Asiatic League was created in 1904 the Chinese Merchants Defence League was quickly formed to provide counter arguments and refutations in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.<sup>4</sup> Even where such anti-Chinese prejudices did not exist overtly their place was often taken by high levels of paternalism.<sup>5</sup>

The special place Chinese people had within NSW can be traced in statistical records. Aboriginal and Chinese people were the only ethnic groups consistently counted separately in the census of 1891. However, in 1898 when a record of 'aliens' in Sydney was compiled it included Japanese, Indians and others but did not include any Chinese people, they were aliens of another sort.<sup>6</sup> A 'sort' whose passing was to be noted, as when a special section appeared in the 1925 Commonwealth Year Book entitled the 'Chinese in Australia', which reported with satisfaction that, 'as only 2,026 of the 17,157 Chinese recorded in 1921 were born in this country, the decrease is likely to continue'.<sup>7</sup>

The most well-known of the legal impositions upon the Chinese in NSW were those directed at their coming into NSW at all. These included an 1861 Act (repealed in 1867), and ones in 1881, 1888 and 1898 in NSW and finally the 1901 to 1957 Federal Immigration (Restriction) Act, with various gradually lessening discriminations until 1972.<sup>8</sup> All but the last of the NSW Acts were aimed at 'members of the Chinese race' while the 1898 and Federal Acts did not mention any people by name in the interests of Imperial politeness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.94 and Yong, op. cit. p.70-72.

<sup>5</sup> 'I have found him a white man in all my dealings', speaks for itself. AA (NSW), SP42/1, C47/2245, Ah Tong, Reference for Ah Tong by Mrs Nesbit, 1/2/1926.

<sup>6</sup> SP822/10, 'Aliens Registered Sydney', 23/12/1888 - 7/1/1902.

<sup>7</sup> T. A. Coghlan, *NSW Statistical Register for 1899 and Previous Year*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1900, p.593, Part VII, Table 2, includes 'full' and 'half-castes' of both groups; Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, no.18, 1925, Section 14, 'Chinese in Australia', pp.951-956.

<sup>8</sup> See, Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.187-189 for details of all such legislation and amendments.

<sup>9</sup> Yarwood, op. cit., p.1-16.

All these laws recognised the rights of Chinese people already resident in NSW to travel to China and to return, though the NSW Act gave only nine months to do so while the Commonwealth Act gave 36 months to pre-1901 ‘domiciles’, with extensions.<sup>10</sup> However, even these limited rights were subject to administrative whims and the early administration of the Immigration Restriction Act began by interpreting the ‘domicile’ requirement as ‘intention to establish a permanent home’ rather than evidence of pre-1901 domicile, leading to a number of early refusals to grant the ‘Certificates of Domicile’ necessary to re-enter Australia.<sup>11</sup> Complaints by the shipping companies at the loss of passengers and protests by the Chinese merchants themselves may have influenced the decision to soften the interpretation. A relatively relaxed attitude to such matters was essential if the links with the home villages were to be maintained and the Chinese were not forced to choose between the income they could earn and their families in China.

The Immigration Restriction Act extended itself further than the NSW Acts, to Hong Kong and beyond, by fining shipping companies £100 for every illegal immigrant carried to an Australia port. The result was that Chinese people in Hong Kong could not purchase a ticket to Australia without either a valid CEDT<sup>12</sup> or a letter from the Collector of Customs stating that they would be admitted, ‘on being satisfactorily identified’. People eligible as ‘domiciles’ would give their CEDTs to agents, often branches of the Sydney-based stores, who would purchase steamer tickets for them. After 1912 the merchant class could use passports issued by the Chinese government.<sup>13</sup> However, most Chinese people continued to be dependent upon the stores for all aspects of their dealings under the Immigration Restriction Act.<sup>14</sup>

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

<sup>11</sup> Yarwood says this is because the Immigration Restriction Act had been designed to be based on ‘administrative techniques’ and this required administrators to look to the debates rather than the wording of the Act. In addition, the ALP used its influence to ensure that administration of the Act was tight. See, Yarwood, *op. cit.*, pp.22-3, and pp.68-70, for discussion of the early interpretation of the Act.

<sup>12</sup> Certificates Exempting from the Dictation Test replaced Certificates of Domicile in 1905.

<sup>13</sup> AA (NSW), SP115/1; *Taiping* 2/6/29 & *Arafura* 30/5/29 and Yong, *op. cit.* p.25.

<sup>14</sup> See theme *Commerce*.

While the various restrictions on Chinese immigration attempted to control people's lives they also left open many opportunities for manipulation as well as circumvention, opportunities more easily taken up by merchants and those with money. For the bulk of market gardens this meant that their wives, present or future, would remain in the villages regardless of circumstances. In this way legal restrictions acted to reinforce existing patterns and to prevent, or at least slow, change.<sup>15</sup>

Under pre-Federation NSW law, the children and wives of Chinese people naturalized as New South Welshmen were exempt from the £100 poll tax and could enter freely. This was reduced by the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act to only the wives of merchants and after 1903 even these people could obtain temporary entry only.<sup>16</sup> Extensions could be sought and a temporary stay sometimes converted into a permanent one.<sup>17</sup> The substitute and assistant provisions of the Act offered even further opportunities. Eligibility was defined by turnover and a judgement that the position required a Chinese person to do it. This also meant that those with businesses were in a better position to bring family members, or at least fellow villagers, than the average market gardener.<sup>18</sup> It also meant that if a person lost their job they were liable to deportation, a continuation of the 'bonded' employment previously ensured by the credit ticket system.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "The traditional Chinese imperatives to return home to China were thus reinforced by Australian regulations ..." Fitzgerald, *op. cit.* P.37. The Chinese Gambling Commissioners were told that 'the majority of them who come here are too poor to pay the passage money for their wives', and even Way Kee, a rich merchant, waited 22 years before bringing his wife to NSW. *Royal Commission*, *op. cit.*, p.58, lines 2239-40 and p.57, line 2213.

<sup>16</sup> See, Yarwood, *op. cit.*, pp.79-81 for a discussion of these amendments and their reasons.

<sup>17</sup> Through numerous such extensions and the judicious building up of a trading firm, one couple was able to remain long enough in NSW to be among the first Chinese to take up the right of Australian Citizenship when this was finally granted to Chinese people in 1958, Australian Archives (NSW), SP1122/1; N57/2220, Chang Wau Sheu Sing. Wilton, *op. cit.* pp.174-7, gives examples of strategies used to extend short-term visits for wives. Yong, *op. cit.* p.31 on agitation to allow wives to enter.

<sup>18</sup> Yarwood, *op. cit.*, pp.110-112, on firms such as Wing On & Co. being favoured; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, pp.37-40, on the need to be importer/exporters; Wilton, *op. cit.*, pp.120-5, on the sponsorship of assistants by stores in northern NSW.

<sup>19</sup> See theme *Labour*.

While some people may have been able to manipulate the Act's requirements, others were prepared to defy it entirely. After the 1888 imposition of a £100 Poll Tax on the entry of Chinese people into NSW, the land border with Queensland became of great significance. While the receipts of the poll tax shows a handful of people supposedly entered NSW after 1888, the records of the Immigration Restriction Act shows a very much larger number actually did so. An 'underground' seems to have been set up which saw the prospective New South Welshman arrive at Cooktown, northern Queensland and make his way overland or perhaps by coastal steamer, to Brisbane. From there he could cross the NSW border at Stanthorpe and make his way to Sydney.<sup>20</sup>

After Federation, the purchase of false Naturalisation Certificates and CEDTs were some of many illegal methods used to enter Australia. Corrupt officials supplying false identification as a returned domicile was another method but more common was desertion by ships crews.<sup>21</sup> However, the method that seems to have added to NSW's Chinese population more than any other after Federation was the smuggling of people on board ships.<sup>22</sup> These were usually part of an organised effort that included crew members and the planning of people in both Hong Kong and NSW. The prospective emigrants were concealed in such places as coal bunkers and water tanks, and as these last were inside the 'Chinese passengers quarters', returning 'domiciles' presumably knew all about this alternative method of migration.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> SP42/1, C47/2468, record of interview with Yum Leong, 1947. He arrived in 1900.

<sup>21</sup> Australian Archives (NSW), SP1122/1; N53/24/2343, Ah Tom, memo re number of blank CEDTs stolen by Departmental Officer, 3 August 1953; Yarwood, *op. cit.*, p.62, refers to evidence of Customs officials involvement in illegal entry and p.54, NSW was a 'haven' for Chinese deserters, and pp.56-57, gives figures for 1914 that 77 of 81 deserters were in NSW due to ships staying longer in NSW and the greater number of Chinese there making hiding easier. Also Fitzgerald, *op. cit.* p.29-30.

<sup>22</sup> Between 1926 and 1929, 400 people were deported as stowaways, Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.32, though this began after the 1888 Act, Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.30.

<sup>23</sup> AA (NSW), A1026; Correspondence re Immigration Act 1904-12, vol. 1, p.12, letter, the Collector of Customs to Manager, Burns Philp & Co., 10 January 1906 & vol. 3, p.328, memo, Detective Inspector to Boarding Inspector, 23/3/1908. Yarwood, *op. cit.*, pp.56-62, on stowaways.

Those who were caught, either on ship or after a period in NSW, were given the 'Dictation Test' at the Customs House, Sydney. Such 'tests' are usually blank, apart from signatures at the bottom of the page.<sup>24</sup> Stowaways, deserters and other 'prohibited immigrants' faced gaol terms before they were deported unless someone was willing to go surety until they embarked on a ship back to Hong Kong. This, various people were willing to do, putting up as surety £100 per person and in one case, a total of £1,000.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout the life of the Immigration Restriction Act, court cases and other legal challenges were mounted. Such cases were supported by members of the Chinese community and were often successful in limiting the powers of administrators. So much so that these administrators sometimes became wary of taking a case to court lest it result in an adverse ruling that would further limit their discretion.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most extreme example of discrimination was the denial of citizenship rights to both naturalised and Australian-born people of Chinese origin. The Immigration Restriction Act did recognise the Australian, or rather 'British' citizenship of those naturalized in NSW, but not the rights of their children despite both British citizenship law and the Australian Constitution recognising the rights of naturalised British subjects and their children and of those born in Australia. All people in the category of Chinese and other Asian origins were denied such rights by a combination of bureaucratic discretion, political decision-making and court rulings. Eventually, some rights were recognised when Australian-born people who returned to Australia in less than 10 years were recognised as having a right to do so, but not to citizenship.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Dictation Test, due to successful legal challenges, needed to be carefully administered. A 1927 instruction explained such details as the use of an interpreter to explain what was required, the possibility of authorising an outside person to give the test in the language chosen, the necessity of reading the whole passage at dictation speed even if the person makes no attempt to write, and the fact that it was not allowable to abandon a test started in a language that the person unexpectedly looked like passing. AA (NSW), C4203/1; Boarding Branch Records, 1914-1931, vol.2, p.460, circular, Assistant Secretary to Collector of Customs, 4 March 1927.

<sup>25</sup> George Gay and Lee Bung Yee in 1923 did so for 20 deportees at £50 each for a total of £1,000. AA (NSW), SP740/1; NN George Gay & Lee Bung Yee, bonds, 15 March 1923.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Jones, *Alien Acts: The White Australia Policy, 1901 to 1939*. PhD, Uni of Melbourne, 1998, p.84.

<sup>27</sup> Jones, *op. cit.*, p.84-86 and Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.50 & pp.189-90.

Laws relating to citizenship and immigration were not the only ones that discriminated against Chinese people living within NSW. Factory Acts of 1898 and 1913 brought harsher regulations to bear on any workshops employing Chinese people while the Crown Lands Consolidation Act 1912 prevented Chinese people from acquiring such land, denial of entry into the army was ensured by a clause stating that 'European' blood was necessary.<sup>28</sup>

The heritage provided by discriminatory laws against the Chinese in NSW and Australia is immense. Images of the acquiescent but cunning 'Chinaman', the hardworking gardener and the thrifty merchant are common enough. The role played by restrictive Immigration Laws and an atmosphere of threat in creating and maintaining the basis of such images are rarely acknowledged. A more tangible heritage are the tens of thousands of photos of Chinese men and a few women who strove to maintain links with the families they could not bring to join them. Less easy to determine is the contribution of this heritage of 'law and order' to Federation, Australian-Imperial relations and the development of Australia's identity as a 'white' nation and to its more recent 'multicultural' transformation.

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<sup>28</sup> See theme, *Labour*.

It was through issues of labour and wages that Chinese people became most caught up in colonial politics. The struggle for workers rights in NSW was partly fought out around the issue of Chinese Labour, with racist elements always present. Even those who supported a Chinese presence in NSW usually did so on the basis of racist stereotypes of hardworking and submissive ‘orientals’.<sup>1</sup> Hostility began when the Amoy contractors, intended to replace convicts as cheap labour, were opposed as a threat to ‘free’ labour.<sup>2</sup> Conditions such as the credit-ticket system<sup>3</sup> of the goldseekers and later arrivals which helped to ensure that the continued frugality and hardwork of farm-born peasants was maintained as long as possible, and the Immigration Restriction Act’s enforcement of a form of ‘bonded’ labour well into the 20th century, provided ‘proof’ for many that Chinese workers were not the same as other workers.

Colonial workers and their growing unions early rejected the possibility of workers uniting regardless of race, instead opting for racially-based policies of exclusion.<sup>4</sup> The attempted use of Chinese seamen in 1878 as strike-breakers reinforced such attitudes and the fact that Chinese workers in the cabinet-making industry were organised and prepared to strike did not change this.<sup>5</sup> It was seamen’s and waterfront unions, however, that first broke with these exclusionist policies and worked with the Chinese Seamen’s Union during WWII to fight for equality of wages regardless of race. The replacement of market gardens with Chinese cafes as the major source of employment for Chinese workers in the post-war years and the only gradual dismantling of the White Australia Policy meant that full equality of wages regardless of race was not finally achieved until the 1960s.

One of the most obvious characteristics of Chinese settlement in NSW related to labour was the gradual narrowing of jobs and occupations. After shepherding<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> E. W. Cole, *Better Side of the Chinese Character*, Melbourne, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Darnell, op. cit., p.1-5 and Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.21.

<sup>3</sup> See theme, *Migration*.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, pp.157-179; Choi, *Chinese Migration*, op. cit., pp.86-87, on the union contribution to restricting opportunities for improvement.

<sup>5</sup> Markus, op. cit., pp.81-87; Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.76 & 83; Markey, op. cit., pp.348-350 and Price, op. cit., p.163-64.

<sup>6</sup> Once indentured labour ended, Chinese people seem never again to have worked as ‘shepherds,’ though shearing did employ many before unionisation.

goldmining,<sup>7</sup> the occupations of Chinese men quickly expanded until by the end of the 19th century, scrub cutting, tobacco farming, fishing and cooking provided a great deal of work.<sup>8</sup> Most of these occupations were highly transient and a record of locations shows that working in an average of four to eight different locations widely spread around NSW and Queensland for Chinese workers during the last two or three decades of the 19th century was not uncommon.<sup>9</sup> In Sydney, the main occupations were ‘merchants, storekeepers, cabinet-making, market-gardeners, hawkers, and gamblers.’<sup>10</sup>

After 1901 the range of occupations greatly contracted and market gardening predominated, apart from a few storekeepers and the cabinet-making industry, as many people took up work in Sydney.<sup>11</sup> This was due to the dramatic collapse of the NSW rural Chinese population in the early years of the 20th century resulting in Sydney becoming the dominant centre and maintaining its numbers despite a statewide decline in the overall Chinese population.<sup>12</sup>

Often neglected as an occupation, yet one that played a crucial role, was that of interpreter. The NSW courts attempted to have interpreters present, even if they were not always so concerned as to their capability.<sup>13</sup> The position was not only well-paid and prestigious, but provided employment for the relatively few Australian-born Chinese people, often of part-European descent.<sup>14</sup> ‘If a fracas occur in a teashop, or a watch be missed from the pocket of an opium-sleeper, it is the interpreter to whom the

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<sup>7</sup> Chinese miners worked as porters at Kiandra when weather halted mining, Smith, op. cit., p.51-52.

<sup>8</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.40-41; Reports upon Chinese Camps, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1883-84*, 11th Parliament, Vol.II, p.660, and *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, op. cit., throughout.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix IV, Table 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.27.

<sup>11</sup> Choi, op. cit., p.28.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix IV, Table 2.

<sup>13</sup> William Lee, correspondence June, 1999. If they were present at all, see Administration of Justice (Imprisonment at Parramatta of a Blind Chinaman), *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1879-80*, Vol.III, pp.207-210.

<sup>14</sup> Long Pen was one such interpreter who claimed that he charged, ‘a guinea a day’, which compared well to a market gardeners’ £1 per week *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.93, line 3698 and p.418, line 15506. A guinea being £1 and 1 shilling.

Chinese community looks for the punishment of law breakers, and on his head the blame when a thief eludes the police.’<sup>15</sup>

It was commonly reported that Chinese workers worked for very little and so undercut efforts of other workers to maintain or raise wages and conditions. A police report in 1916 described this; ‘the keeper of every cabinetmaker’s shop, produce, fruit and grocery store, employ large numbers of chinese [sic] (aliens) who are paid a weekly wage, and are provided with accommodation for their services’.<sup>16</sup> These wages were lower than average, with cabinet-makers in 1899 recorded as being paid a wage of £2/8/-, while Chinese cabinet-makers received £1/11/6. Similarly, cooks were recorded as averaging £2 per week, while Chinese cooks earned only £1/2/-.<sup>17</sup> As these wages were in addition to board the overall payment is difficult to assess and costs given by Chinese merchants in 1904 suggest that the differences were not great.<sup>18</sup>

For many Chinese workers, wages and conditions were determined by the debts they incurred obtaining passage to NSW and the need to support a family in China.<sup>19</sup> Referring to the cabinet-making industry, the Chinese Gambling Commissioners described the system as ‘indentures under which new arrivals were compelled to work for certain periods at excessively low rates’.<sup>20</sup> The Commissioners also had described to them how a Dr On Lee brought in 30 immigrants, paid the £100 poll tax on them and then deducted this from their wages. The agreement was that they would work in

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<sup>15</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.13.

<sup>16</sup> AA (NSW), SP11/16; Aliens Registration 1916-21, Item no. 2, No.2 Police Station, Regents St, Sydney to Department of Defence, 8 December 1916. Also Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.84, for a discussion of Ah Toy’s workshop. Not that Chinese were the only workers to accept board, Thomas Smith, *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.420, lines 15635-15639, gave evidence of paying his two European workers 18s plus board while his Chinese worker received 26s without board.

<sup>17</sup> T. A. Coghlan, *NSW Statistical Register for 1899 and Previous Years*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1900, p.994, Part XIV, Industrial Wages, Table no. 7, and p.1004, Table no. 11. Though the rate for cooks in 1912 was reported as 30s per week and that for ‘Chinese Cooks’ as 40s! *NSW Statistical Register, 1919-20*, no.51, ‘Average Rate of Wages in Misc. Industries, 1912,’ p.486.

<sup>18</sup> See, ‘Chinese Merchants reply’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1904, p.12, for a table of typical expenses for a Chinese and European store in which the inclusion of boarding costs makes the Chinese store more expensive to operate.

<sup>19</sup> ‘For each tael I must repay two taels.’ Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.27. See theme, *Migration*.

<sup>20</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.27.

his gardens for five years.<sup>21</sup> Crawford refers to ‘domestic slaves’ as well as ‘bondsmen’ but felt a ‘good workman soon clears off the debt of say £20.’<sup>22</sup>

The impression should not be that Chinese workers were hopelessly suppressed. Crawford also noted that Chinese workers ‘under the influence of Australian institutions and the attraction of high wages without debt, grow so careless of consequences and independent of custom, as to desert, ...’<sup>23</sup> As a consequence of immigration restrictions imposed by NSW in 1888 and the Commonwealth in 1901, wages for both cabinet-makers and gardeners improved due to their enhanced bargaining position.<sup>24</sup> Whatever wages were paid, lower living costs due to the provision of board and lodging and having no family to support in NSW meant that it was possible to remit money to the villages. Such money sent from NSW would go far in the villages according to estimates given to the Chinese Gold Commissioners as, it cost ‘four times as much to feed a man here’, while wages were, ‘20 times as great’.<sup>25</sup>

After paying their debts, workers saved to purchase a share in a market garden or other business while remitting what they could to their parents. When these parents announced they had saved sufficient to arrange a marriage, or if this became increasingly unlikely, a man saved sufficient himself, he could finally return home to begin to raise a family of his own.<sup>26</sup> For a man with a family in the village, the cost of seeing them occasionally was also part of his expenses. In 1921, the ‘Deck class passage money’ on an Eastern and Australian Steamship Co. ship to Hong Kong was £5/10/- and the CEDT cost £1.<sup>27</sup> For a market gardener this was about 3 weeks’ wages for the ticket, and at least half a week’s wage for the CEDT.<sup>28</sup> Including the

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<sup>21</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.160, lines 6420-35.

<sup>22</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>23</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>24</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.418, lines 15506.

<sup>25</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.419, lines 15566-70. This was in the late 19th century, by the 1930s the gap had widened even more when according to, Chen Hen-Seng, *Landlord and Peasant in China – A Study of the Agrarian crisis in South China*, 2nd edn, Hyperion Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1973, p.103, it took a labourer 5 days in the 1930s to earn the price of a *mu* of land [rice field measure] in Canada compared to 8 years in Guangdong Province.

<sup>26</sup> Chen Ta, op. cit., p.131, an emigrant would, ‘remain single, especially if they have failed to improve their economic status’ and p.135, higher betrothal payments expected of emigrant sons.

<sup>27</sup> AA (NSW), SP42/1; C33/7574, Ah Lee. Letter, Eastern and Australian Steamship Co. to the Collector of Customs, 30 June 1921.

<sup>28</sup> Billy Gay estimated that £2 per week in the 1930s was a ‘good wage’ for a market gardener.

loss of income while away, these journeys were an expensive, though necessary, activity for Chinese workers if links to the family and village were to be established and maintained.

For those who came into Australia after 1901 there was a link between eligibility to remain in Australia and employment for those on Certificates of Exemption<sup>29</sup> which resulted in a form of bonded employment similar to those arriving in the 19th century.<sup>30</sup> People on Certificates of Exemption were liable to deportation if they lost their job, required official permission to change jobs and could only work in jobs defined as 'Chinese'.<sup>31</sup> The Second World War changed the situation when Chinese seamen became reluctant to return to ports under threat of Japanese attack and a manpower shortage meant that Chinese workers could expect to demand and receive equal wages. The Chinese Seaman's Union began to organise these workers and, with the support of the waterside unions and many in the Chinese community, equality of payment and the right to work in any position was established, at least temporarily.<sup>32</sup>

The aging and retirement of many market gardeners and the effect of administrators not allowing sufficient 'substitutes' and 'assistants' to replace them, meant that by the 1950s Chinese market gardens had nearly disappeared, often replaced by recent southern European migrants. With their customer base thus reduced, the number of Chinese stores, even in Sydney, were also greatly reduced. However there was much capital in the Chinese community and the Immigration Restriction Act still allowed businesses with a need for 'Chinese' labour to sponsor people to enter Australia.<sup>33</sup> With large numbers of refugees entering Hong Kong, the result was a dramatic increase in the number of Chinese cafes and restaurants around NSW, all employing Chinese cooks and waiters.

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Interview with Billy Gay, 19 March 1998 (Tape 2, A, 115).

<sup>29</sup> Certificate Exempting from Dictation Test.

<sup>30</sup> Wilton, *op. cit.*, pp.129-30, mentions this virtual bonding & Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.88.

<sup>31</sup> See the case of Yut Kwan in Michael Williams, *Sojourn in Your Native Land*, M.Lit thesis, University New England, October, 1998, pp.73-74, for examples of all these features.

<sup>32</sup> Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.41-44 & William Lee correspondence, June, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> See theme, *Law & Order*.

The limitations of the Immigration Restriction Act meant that this employment continued to be potentially exploitative, and those who entered Australia illegally were in an even more exposed situation. These conditions were only alleviated when the gradual extension of citizenship rights and changes in union attitudes allowed many workers to leave their 'Chinese' only positions and/or to join unions. While the gradually increasing number of migrants of Chinese background from South-East Asia in the 1960s and 70s faced no such restrictions and were able to take up a wide range of positions.

People from the districts of the Pearl River Delta were described as ‘nearly all farmers and labourers’<sup>1</sup> and for those who gave up gold mining or came after the gold rushes, a move into agricultural occupations was natural and comparatively easy. By the end of the 19th century it was ‘only in cabinet-making and vegetable-growing’, that Chinese workers were in ‘serious competition with European tradesmen.’<sup>2</sup> Fishing, banana plantations and tobacco growing were other areas involving Chinese people but it was Chinese market gardeners who for over a generation, from the late 19th century to the 1930s, that dominated the production and distribution of vegetables in NSW.<sup>3</sup>

Some regarded the Chinese production of vegetables as saving the health of a colony which could not produce sufficient without them and having ‘reduced vegetables from an expensive luxury, often exotic, to being a cheap and universal article of diet.’<sup>4</sup> Despite this dominance, no ‘Chinese’ vegetables were introduced into the general diet of NSW people before the 1970s. Such vegetables were grown by Chinese households for home consumption only until they began to become popular after the 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese Gambling Commissioners observed that ‘in the cultivation of vegetables the Chinese are practically masters of the situation’ and this was ‘due to extreme frugality and unremitting toil’.<sup>6</sup> Though evidence of a European market gardener was that ‘Chinese competition did not cause any great difficulty and he could make it pay.’<sup>7</sup> Certainly the techniques used on the gardens were of an intensive nature and willingness to do this kind of work, probably gave Chinese workers an edge over Europeans who were freer to choose from a wider range of occupations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> By Way Kee in the *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.57, line 2220.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.27, ‘Callings and Occupations of the Chinese’.

<sup>3</sup> In 1901, 67% of market gardeners in NSW were Chinese people, Yong, op. cit., p.262.

<sup>4</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Billy Gay, 19 March 1998 (Tape 2, A 115).

<sup>6</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.28; Yarwood, op. cit., p.117, gardening regarded as a, ‘special preserve of the Chinese’; Price, op. cit., p.224, greater efficiency compared to European gardeners; and ‘Chinese in Sydney’, *The Sydney Mail*, 25 February 1903, p.482, describes a Chinese Garden as, ‘remarkable for the thorough manner in which it is worked. There is never a patch idle or weedy, ...’

<sup>7</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit., p.28.

<sup>8</sup> Billy Gay cannot now understand why his father insisted he hand water with two five gallon cans when taps and pipes were available. Interview with Billy Gay, 19 March 1998 (Tape 2, A 115).

In Sydney the main gardens were established in the sandy soils of the coastal suburbs, from Rose Bay to Randwick and through Botany to La Perouse, while Alexandria had a small number of gardens of people from the Gao Yao district.<sup>9</sup> At the turn of the century there were also many numbers gardens in the Willoughby area and Fairfield, while Chester Hill, Camden, Parramatta and Windsor all had at least one or two gardens. Around NSW, Chinese market gardens could be found in nearly every town and on many stations where people working as cooks would also grow vegetables.<sup>10</sup>

Most of these gardens were leased by groups of 5 to 10. Such arrangements suited people who would go to China for a year or two.<sup>11</sup> When they did so their share was passed onto another gardener and taken up again on return. The vegetables themselves would be either hawked around the streets or sold at the Belmore Markets where Chinese stallholders were common. Chinese people often worked as vegetable dealers and a gardener with limited English would sell his entire load to such a dealer who then sold it at the markets.<sup>12</sup> The dormitories above the stores in the Haymarket would be full on market day before the gardeners returned to their huts on the gardens.

Exemptions for assistants to, or substitutes for, market gardeners under the Immigration Restriction Act did not keep pace with their retirements, despite it being recognised that most of Sydney's vegetables were grown by Chinese people and that this was endangered by their aging.<sup>13</sup> By the 1950s, the NSW Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries strongly supported the transfer in status of a Chinese student to an assistant because; 'As you know, this Chamber is very concerned at the low production of vegetables and is anxious to do anything it can to improve the supply, and therefore supports the application ... to enable the youth to be employed in the garden.'<sup>14</sup> Vegetable production in NSW was maintained by the post-war arrival of

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<sup>9</sup> See 'The Belmore Markets,' *Dalgety's Weekly*, 1 January 1902, p.85; Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p.97. For a description of gardeners huts see, Gifford and Eileen Eardley, 'The Chinese Market Gardeners of St George District', *St George Historical Society Bulletin*, Dec 1970, pp.75-81.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>11</sup> Billy Gay, knew many gardeners who would, 'go back for 12 months whenever they had saved £100.' Interview with Billy Gay, 19 March 1998 (Tape 2, A 115).

<sup>12</sup> 'The Belmore Markets,' *op. cit.*, p.85-88 for a description of the markets.

<sup>13</sup> Choi, *op. cit.*, p.53, on the impact of aging on market gardens.

<sup>14</sup> AA (NSW), SP1122/1; N65/3278, Lee Bing Hoong, letter, NSW Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries to Department of Immigration, 20/5/52.

Italian and other immigrants who developed market gardens on the outskirts of Sydney as Botany and other traditional market gardening areas were developed for new housing. Today, only four market gardens remain in the Botany area while the Chester Hill garden of George Gay is now a local park.

For many Chinese men in NSW their market gardens were not their only agricultural pursuits as many returned there to use their NSW-earned money to buy land. Thus workers in NSW were often also landowners in China. Land purchased was rented out, possibly to relatives and certainly to fellow villagers.<sup>15</sup> Rent would be paid in cash or as a share of the rice crop which was then sold on the speculative rice market.<sup>16</sup> The handling of the family's affairs, such as deposits on land, rent collection and payment of taxes, was usually in the hands of the wife.<sup>17</sup>

Given the strong agricultural background of most Chinese people in NSW, their involvement in forms of agriculture aside from vegetable gardening is surprisingly low. Fishing, tobacco and banana-growing are the only significant areas of Chinese agriculture outside market gardens. A significant fishing and fish curing industry seems to have arisen along with the arrival of numerous goldseekers and their requirements for food. Fishing grounds such as that at Lake Macquarie, Broken Bay, Port Stephens, Jervis Bay and Twofold Bay all seem to have been extensively fished in order to supply the diggers with 'dried and salted' fish.<sup>18</sup> Both Chinese and Europeans fished and supplied their catch to Chinese curers who cut the fish, salted them and packed them into casks for shipment to the diggings and later Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>19</sup> By the time of the Fisheries Inquiry Commission in 1880, some Chinese fishermen were still present but the days of their taking 'all the fish brought' seem to be long over.<sup>20</sup> Chin Ateak stated the decline in Chinese fishermen to be because of the fewer Chinese numbers than in previous days, but while the number of Chinese people in NSW had

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<sup>15</sup> Chen Hen-Seng, *op. cit.*, pp.22, 47-8, on sub-renting in Chungshan (Zhongshan) and other districts; Faure, *op. cit.*, p.205, discusses the complexities of the landlord/tenant relationships.

<sup>16</sup> Chen Hen-Seng, *op. cit.*, p.48, on speculation in rice & p.54, reports that cash rents were more common in Zhongshan than most other districts.

<sup>17</sup> Chen Ta, *op. cit.*, p.121, on the role of the wife 'acting head of the family' while the husband was overseas; Chen Hen-Seng, *op. cit.*, pp.46-8, on leasing details, such as deposits and sub-tenants.

<sup>18</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, *op. cit.*, p.23-28.

<sup>19</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, *op. cit.*, line, 2418.

fallen in the 1870s, perhaps a broader diet also explains the reduced demand for salt fish.<sup>21</sup> In the 1870s Chinese fishermen were reportedly known for the 'cheapness of their fish, by their destruction of sharks, and by recent objections to ... their nets.'<sup>22</sup> Though as evidence to the Fisheries Inquiry Commission makes clear, many non-Chinese used more destructive nets and methods.<sup>23</sup>

Tobacco growing was an industry that appears to have been pioneered by Chinese farmers in NSW and by 1891 there were 464 growers in NSW and Victoria, a number that fell to 89 only 10 years later. Areas of tobacco farming included Albury, Nundle and in particular Manilla in northern NSW.<sup>24</sup>

The banana trade was a profitable business for many Chinese stores in Sydney and many of these stores also owned plantations in Fiji. Rising tariffs on imported bananas led a number of these stores to support the development of plantations in northern NSW and by 1919 nearly 500 acres around Mullumbimby were owned or leased by Chinese growers. There was a great deal of resistance from established European growers and returned soldiers attempting to enter the industry and, while no specific legislation was introduced, the Crown Land Act's prohibition of Chinese owning land may have limited expansion.<sup>25</sup> In any event, by 1925 disease had ruined the industry for all in northern NSW.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, op. cit., line, 2417.

<sup>21</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, op. cit., line, 3603.

<sup>22</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>23</sup> *Fisheries Inquiry Commission*, op. cit., line, 5003-5.

<sup>24</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.40.

<sup>25</sup> The Act prohibited non-citizens owning land but Chinese people could not become citizens.

<sup>26</sup> Yarwood, op. cit., pp.117-119, on the banana trade; Yong, op. cit., p.52, on restrictions placed on Chinese in the banana trade and pp.77-78.

The Chinese as goldseekers is for many Australians the predominant image of Chinese people in Australian history. Certainly the search for gold was the motivation that first brought large numbers of Chinese people to NSW.<sup>1</sup> From these diggings many former miners dispersed to nearly every town in the colony to take up a range of other occupations. But while the major NSW gold rushes were over by the mid-1860s, in 1901, 9% of Chinese people were still occupied as miners.<sup>2</sup> This was due to the continued search for gold by some and because tin mining had become prevalent.

The stereotype of the Chinese gold miner in Australian history is one of hardworking Chinese patiently working in groups and going over the diggings left by European miners while suffering unrelenting hostility and violence. While containing some truth, such generalisations are not the whole picture. Chinese miners discovered new fields as well as worked old ones, they sought gold individually and worked in groups.<sup>3</sup> While hard working and frugal, Chinese miner's gradual acquisition of a more 'comfortable' lifestyle was noted and while violence there certainly was, peaceful workings over many years were also the case.<sup>4</sup>

While the big Victorian goldfields in the early 1850s attracted most prospectors, including Chinese ones, the smaller NSW fields also had Chinese miners, probably from those in NSW as contracted labourers.<sup>5</sup> In 1856 only 700 Chinese miners are recorded on NSW fields but even this relatively small number had resulted in some disturbances.<sup>6</sup> In 1858 the first large numbers of Chinese miners entered NSW when Twofold Bay became a point of entry to the increasingly hostile Colony of Victoria.<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Crawford considered the cause of goldseeking to be; "From three causes, over-population, internecine feuds, and an universal spirit of gambling, resulting in different degrees of slavery, crime, and debt, gold-hunting possesses every attraction for men of the south [China], providing means of escape, or food for excitement, with the final inducement that if they return they will return rich enough to compensate for past offences or misfortunes." Crawford, op. cit. p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Yong, op. cit. p.40.

<sup>3</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.30-35. Crawford, op. cit. p.5 refers to the common if not legal habit of 'prohibiting Chinese from occupying unturned ground.'

<sup>4</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.5, 'usually a humble extravagance keeps pace with income, an imperceptible bettering of dress and accessories ...' see also the Rev E.J. Eitel, 'Social Life in China,' *Royal Geographic Society of Australia*. S.A. Branch, Proceedings 8, 1904-06, pp.1-18.

<sup>5</sup> Price, op. cit. p.77 refers to W. C. Wentworth's attempt to include in a Goldfields Bill of 1852 an assurance that Chinese miners had discharged their contracts.

<sup>6</sup> Windyer in 1854, Christo Aitken, *Windeyer - Tent Town to Village*, p.147 & Rocky River near Armidale in 1856, Price, op. cit. p.78.

<sup>7</sup> Price, op. cit. p.78. While 9,000 went overland to Victoria, 3,000 went to NSW fields.

1859, 3000 and in 1860, 7,000 Chinese goldseekers arrived by sea in NSW while a further 10,000 crossed the land border from that colony after it enacted severer restrictions on Chinese immigration in 1859 than it already had.<sup>8</sup> The crossing of ex-miners from other colonies was a feature of NSW Chinese immigration even after the major NSW gold rushes ended, as when the end of the Palmer River rush resulted in the crossing of former goldseekers from Queensland in the late 1870s.<sup>9</sup>

The arrival of thousands of Chinese miners on the NSW goldfields resulted in more hostility and violence, the most famous incidents being those at Lambing Flat in 1860 and 1861. While the authorities suppressed this violence and some perpetrators were brought to trial, the ultimate result was the 1861 'Chinese Immigrant Regulation and Restriction Act' which, until its repeal in 1867, imposed a £10 poll tax, tonnage restrictions and prevented any Chinese person becoming naturalised.<sup>10</sup> This hostility was usually dealt with by the police through the segregation of 'Chinese camps' from that of European miners.<sup>11</sup>

Complaints against the Chinese on the goldfields ranged from the way they used, or misused, water to the selling of 'spurious' gold.<sup>12</sup> But the fear of competition for the hard sought gold combined with the racist thinking of the day ensured that such complaints took on a violent edge.<sup>13</sup> While discussion of violence on the goldfields usually emphasised that of Europeans towards Chinese, Chinese also fought with Chinese and committed violence against Europeans.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Price, op. cit. p.80 & Smith, op. cit. p.31.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix IV, Table 5.

<sup>10</sup> Price, op. cit. p.78-9 and p.85. This last point making the NSW law much harsher than that of Victoria. See theme *Law & Order*.

<sup>11</sup> For an example of this segregation at Kiandra see Smith, op. cit. p.51.

<sup>12</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.35 & 40 and Price, op. cit. p.82.

<sup>13</sup> Price, op. cit. p.83 refers to the then Premier's concerns about 'aliens' such as Germans and Americans on the goldfields.

<sup>14</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.33 & 35 & Price, op. cit. p.82. Sam Poo was a case of a 'Chinese Bushranger' in the Gulgong area, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/10/1865. Crawford, op. cit. p.8, reporting at a later time considers that inter-district rivalry among Chinese people in Australia was much less than that in the United States.

The pattern of settlement by Chinese gold miners was generally similar to that of European miners in that a find of gold would result in a large influx of miners into a district followed by a rapid decline once the gold was depleted or a new field opened.<sup>15</sup> In some areas Chinese miners would remain to work the old field methodically and even after the gold was finished continue in the area as storekeepers or in other occupations, often marrying local women and raising a family.<sup>16</sup>

While both European and Chinese miners worked many claims co-operatively, Chinese miners were also reported to have worked their fields in large 'gangs' under a 'headman'.<sup>17</sup> Such organisation of mining was due to many miners arriving in debt or possibly even under a form of 'slavery'.<sup>18</sup> This arrangement also helps explain why some Chinese miners were prepared to methodically work abandoned diggings rather than follow European miners onto ever fresher finds. It was not a matter of Chinese people being unusually patient or long sighted but simply that such miners worked for a master and did what they were instructed.<sup>19</sup>

The hard work and frugality of Chinese miners was also much remarked upon. However the distinction between those who worked for others and those who worked for themselves was not often made by Europeans, when it was, the naturalness of the response to circumstances was obvious. Miners free to earn and spend as they liked gradually adopted habits of comfort and spending similar to those around them, while 'if his earnings are not his own, his shoes remain of straw, his jacket of coarse blue cotton, and his luxuries continue to consist of pickled cabbage and jerked pork till his time is fulfilled.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.31-32.

<sup>16</sup> Kiandra is an interesting example, Smith, op. cit. p.45-65. Most local histories in the former gold mining areas refer to an aged Chinese goldminer or Chinese family remaining years afterwards.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, op. cit. p.55.

<sup>18</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.29. See theme *Migration*.

<sup>19</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.3, 'on the older fields only diggers remain who are steadily working under agreement'.

<sup>20</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.5.

The methods of mining used by Chinese miners were usually considered to be different from those of European miners in some respects and this may have been due to their adopting techniques used by Chinese tin miners in south-east Asia.<sup>21</sup> Archaeological investigations have shown that the tailings of Chinese diggings are distinct with evidence of much more intense working.<sup>22</sup> The well built 'races' used to bring water to a site constructed by Chinese miners are much remarked upon and were adopted by European miners in at least one instance, as are their dams and stonework parapets.<sup>23</sup>

Other characteristics of Chinese miners reported include that they never sank their shafts deeper than 60 feet, used rounded shafts rather than squared ones to prevent ghosts occupying the corners and rarely worked reefs, instead sticking to alluvial gold, often with the most primitive equipment.<sup>24</sup> As deep shafts are reported to have been unprofitable as more workers were required for the same area of a claim, the question might well be, why did Europeans sink so many deep shafts?<sup>25</sup> The fear of ghosts in square holes is unknown to Chinese mythology but while square shafts were more easily timbered, perhaps shallower round ones did not need such supports.<sup>26</sup> As to the Chinese reluctance to work reefs, which required more capital, as did the later methods of hydraulic sluicers and dredgers. It needs to be remembered that Chinese people still on the goldfields after the 1860s were those who did not return to their villagers as relatively wealthy men or did not open stores and other easier ways of making a living. The question, why did 'Chinese' prefer to stick to alluvial prospecting? is based on too narrow a view. No one would ask why impoverished Europeans did not take up dredging as a method of mining gold.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Yong, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>22</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.4.

<sup>23</sup> McGowan, op. cit. p.91. For a description of the building of such a race see, Aitken, op. cit. p.152.

<sup>24</sup> Many of these reports come from local histories and are based on various folk memories and stories which even if true usually make no allowance for the period of origin.

<sup>25</sup> Blainey, Geoffery, *The Rush that Never Ended. A History of Australian Mining*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria, 1969, p.89.

<sup>26</sup> I am not saying the fear did not exist as local folk beliefs are infinite.

<sup>27</sup> Impoverished Europeans might be employed by a dredging company but Chinese people would be unlikely to be employed by such companies, see Blainey, op. cit., p.89.

Scattered throughout NSW with its many gold mining sites are burial grounds, including the usually separate Chinese cemeteries. Such cemeteries have not been used to provide all the information they might be able to yield. A typical headstone would attempt to record as much information as was available to allow exhumation and transport to the home village at a future date. Thus not only the name and date of death of the person was recorded, sometimes by Imperial counting and later by the Revolutionary calendar, but also the province, district and village. Not all of this information was always available and the name in Chinese would not necessarily match the name the person was known as among Europeans.<sup>28</sup> Also the date recorded may have been a reburial date rather than the actual date of death if the body was moved before final return to China. If sufficient information was not known about a person at the time of their burial, removal would be difficult and perhaps would not have taken place.<sup>29</sup> The records of Rookwood Cemetery reveal that an average of 75% of Chinese burials were removed to China between 1875 and 1930.<sup>30</sup>

Another common story related to Chinese miners was that they used the bones of their fellow miners to smuggle gold out of Australia and is assumed to be because gold was banned as an export. However the export of gold was never banned from NSW or Australia, except for a brief period during World War One. Customs duties were levied and this would have provided some incentive to concealing exports.<sup>31</sup> The use of bones to do this and certainly on any scale, would have been extremely unlikely for the reason that exhumations were usually undertaken several years after the burial and it is unlikely people would have risked their gold for so long. A wealthy few were embalmed and returned immediately after death but the vast majority of miners could not have afforded this.

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>29</sup> Such a lack of details occurred about a number of burials in Townsville when an appeal for further information was advertised in Chinese language papers published in NSW. Such circumstances may have also occurred in NSW. *Chinese Australian Herald* (广益华报), 3 June 1903, p.3.

<sup>30</sup> Williams, op. cit. p.65-67. See also Appendix IV, Table 7.

<sup>31</sup> Crawford attempts a detailed estimate of amounts undeclared based on the Palmer River goldfield in 1877, Crawford, op. cit. p.25-26.

After gold, mining for tin became common when major alluvial finds were made in the early 1870s. Tin mining had been carried out by Chinese miners in Malaya and Borneo and like gold, this form of mining could be carried out cheaply by a few people.<sup>32</sup> Northern NSW was the major area for tin mining and the district population reaching many thousands in the 1870s and 1880s then fell rapidly thereafter.<sup>33</sup> Emmaville was one of the main sites of this form of mining and a contemporary description describes the Chinese miners as living in 'bark humpies', though the same report also describes a quite large Chinese marriage in 1887 and 'a gorgeous Joss-house'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Yong, op. cit. p.1.

<sup>33</sup> Wilton, op. cit. p.5 and p.85.

<sup>34</sup> Lobsey, op. cit., pp.33.

The image of Chinese people toiling unremittingly with little or no time for leisure is as one-sided as the image of the inveterate gambler and habitual opium smoker. Music, tea-drinking and chatting among friends, perhaps while smoking cigars, were more likely sources of entertainment for Chinese people in NSW. Gambling and the smoking of opium, considered the two great vices of Chinese men, were not only much indulged in by Europeans but opium was legal until the early 20th century and was an ample source of income for the NSW government.<sup>1</sup>

Crawford observed that; 'Most of the village idlers are drinking tea ...' and it was, 'The clubs (now tea shops) where members of the same family or district meet after work to smoke tobacco and drink tea ...'<sup>2</sup> Over 20 years later, Way Kee explained to the Chinese Gambling Commissioners that cigars were a regular item of expenditure for the enjoyment of the committee members of his district organisation.<sup>3</sup> While another 30 years on, every Sunday the Kwong War Chong in Dixon St, as did other such stores, held 'open table' for the market gardeners on their one day off.<sup>4</sup>

Music was another source of entertainment, and throughout the 1860s Chinese Opera and acrobatic troupes toured the Victorian goldfields attracting large audiences, including curious non-Chinese.<sup>5</sup> In the Chinese camp at Cooktown in 1877, a crowd gathered every night to listen to music in a hall dedicated to that purpose.<sup>6</sup> While neither of these examples is from NSW there is no reason to think that its Chinese residents were less inclined to appreciate music. Certainly Emmaville in northern NSW when it was a centre for tin mining in the 1870s and 1880s, had its own 'Chinese band'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'the very considerable sum of £12,961' per year according to Quong Tart, *Chinese Camps*, op. cit., p.665.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.9 & p.11.

<sup>3</sup> Royal Commission, op. cit. p.54, line 2083.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with William Lee, 20/83/99.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Love, 'Chinese theatre on the Victorian goldfields, 1858-1870.' *Australasian Drama Studies*, Vol 3, No.2, April 1985, pp.45-86.

<sup>6</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.10.

<sup>7</sup> Lobsey, op. cit. p.35 & photo, p.34.

Two generations after the last Opera tour, regular dances sponsored by the Chinese Youth League in the 1930s and 1940s, with music supplied by the Chinese Masonic Society orchestra, were popular ways of spending leisure time in the Chinese community.<sup>8</sup> Such dances only became possible when the numerical imbalance between the sexes finally disappeared. For many men in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose family links may have been lost forever or who led a *de facto* bachelor life even when they had a wife and children in a south China village, leisure time often needed to be filled in more forceful ways.

Two of the most popular methods of filling the lack of family or possibly bring about such a lack, were opium smoking and gambling. When Chow Kum, for example, was asked why the old don't go back to China he replied, 'Because they have no money. As a general rule their money has all gone in opium-smoking and gambling, and they have become too old to do anything to make any more.'<sup>9</sup> Crawford estimated the number of opium smokers in NSW to be half the number in Sydney and one third of those in the rural districts or about 2,000 'habitual' and 4,000 'occasional' smokers in total.<sup>10</sup>

Opium smoking had been common in China for many centuries before European trade in cheaper, higher quality opium varieties helped to make it a major social problem.<sup>11</sup> Chinese government attempts to ban opium smoking and its importation were forcibly suppressed by the British in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. This action led, among other things, to the occupation of Canton and the facilitation of access by people in south China to European shipping and subsequently to British colonies such as NSW.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> William Lee, correspondence, June 1999.

<sup>9</sup> *Royal Commission*, op. cit. p.39, line 14357.

<sup>10</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.16 bases his calculations in part on the amount of opium imported into NSW.

<sup>11</sup> A fact that meant 'in the matter of opium the Chinese are entitled to every consideration' as far as Martin Brennan, Quong Tart's fellow inspector of Chinese Camps, was concerned, *Chinese Camps*, op. cit., p.661.

<sup>12</sup> Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate - Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1861*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1966, especially pp.172-6. The wresting of the concession of 'free emigration' is told by British Officials in Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints, No. 894, 'Correspondence respecting Emigration from China, April 1859 to May 1860'.

The presence of opium among Chinese people in NSW was not therefore in itself remarkable. What was remarkable was the development of the image of the 'opium demon' whereby Chinese people were only seen not only as debased opium addicts but to use opium to seduce and corrupt others, usually young girls.<sup>13</sup> For many, already prejudiced against Chinese people, the fact that non-Chinese women chose to live with Chinese men could only be explained by the power of opium.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese merchants such as Quong Tart were campaigning to ban opium in an effort to raise the image of Chinese people.<sup>15</sup> Such a ban was passed in 1905, and opium smuggling was added to the image of the Chinese in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

In NSW gambling had been an illegal but much practised leisure pursuit since the colony's foundation. While Chinese people were by no means the only practitioners, general hostility towards them ensured that their involvement had a high profile. Thus when the issue of police corruption was raised in the 1880s and 1890s, it was closely linked with Chinese gambling and the Royal Commission investigation into this area spent the bulk of its time and resources interviewing Chinese people about gambling and very little with the police about corruption.<sup>17</sup>

There were various main forms of gambling popular among Chinese people, though the most well-known are Fantan and Pak-a-pu.<sup>18</sup> Fantan is a game played indoors on gaming tables while Pak-a-pu (or 'pigeon catching') is a form of lottery based originally on 80 Chinese characters and is thought to be the basis of Keno.<sup>19</sup> Other games were popular, such as dominoes and card playing, and some games may have been more popular with people from different districts or provinces.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This notion was 'a fallacy and has nothing in truth to support it', *Chinese Camps*, op. cit., p.661.

<sup>14</sup> Yong, op. cit. p.179-188. The Chinese Gambling Commissioners fascination with this topic resulted in their being sidetracked into detailed interviews with such women. *Royal Commission*, op. cit. pp.425 to 465.

<sup>15</sup> Yong, op. cit. p.186.

<sup>16</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.125-6.

<sup>17</sup> Fitzgerald, op. cit. p.74. Twenty-five Chinese witness were called to one police witness.

<sup>18</sup> Yong, op. cit. p.174-78 & Crawford, op. cit. p.14 gives a description of Fantan.

<sup>19</sup> In the 1950s, Children were asked by old men to pick out characters at random. Interview with King Fong, 3/6/99.

<sup>20</sup> Crawford, op. cit. p.15, describes a game played with a 'teetotum' popular with Fujian people.

It was not only in NSW that opium smoking and gambling were recognised as problems. Opium, prostitution and gambling were part of village life in China and according to some researchers, more likely to be present due to remittances from places such as NSW. The comparatively high level of disposable income that remittances gave to such families led to some of their members indulging in these activities. Analysis of the role of clan elite's has also revealed that they attempted to gather some of the remittances by demanding money for 'protection' and controlling gambling, opium houses and prostitution.<sup>21</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s Chinese people in NSW continued to have a reputation for being enthusiastic gamblers with the Mandarin Club reputed to be Sydney's leading illegal casino. Then, as before, the patrons of such establishments were non-Chinese as often as they were Chinese.

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<sup>21</sup> Chen Ta, op. cit., pp.187-192 describes the relationship of these habits with 'emigrant communities'; 郑德华 Zheng Dehua, 十九世纪末台山侨乡的形成及其剖析 'Shijiu shiji mo Taishan qiaoxiang de xingcheng ji qi pouxi' (A analysis of the formation of overseas emigrant communities in Taishan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century), 侨史学报 Qiaoshi xuebao (*Journal of overseas Chinese History*), 1986-3, p.36.

Too often in Australian history Chinese people have been seen as background players in the mainstream dramas of gold and racism. The obvious can be forgotten, that Chinese people were individuals with families and their own aims and desires. They were not all Quong Tarts, a rare kind of person in any society, but they were fathers and sons, mother and daughters, humble workers and founders of multinational businesses, supporters and opponents of revolution, landlords and gardeners, those who died surrounded by their descendants and those who died alone in rooms above Sydney's Dixon St.

The following is not an attempt at a definitive list of all Chinese people in NSW, nor of the 'prominent' or 'successful'. It is intended simply to show something of the individuals behind the phrase 'Chinese people' and to reveal some of the variety beyond stereotypes and generalisations.

*The Hoon family:* Louie Hoon from Dou Tou village, arrived in Sydney in 1880 and worked in various occupations including as a vegetable dealer in Parramatta. He married a European woman and they had a son named John Louie Hoon who at age seven was taken back to his father's village to be looked after while his father returned to Sydney. Unfortunately Louie Hoon died and when John returned to Sydney aged 16, he could no longer speak English. John worked as a market gardener for the rest of his life, making numerous trips back to China where he married and had a son and two daughters. John, usually called Jack or even *fung gwai* (whiteman Hoon), spent the war years in China where he and his family suffered greatly. He afterwards returned to Sydney where he spent the rest of his life. John died in 1981, aged 85, but not before one of his daughters migrated to Australia where she now lives with her husband and son, a third generation Australian.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AA (NSW), SP1122/1, N1952/24/3951, John Louie Hoon.

*The Gows:* Joe Wah Gow was a successful Wollongong merchant whose wife was brought to Australia on a purchased Australian passport and whose first six children were all born in Australia. The entire family went back to the village to live in 1929 when Joe Wah Gow retired. The Japanese invasion of south China in 1939 resulted in some of these sons returning to Australia where one of them, Victor Gow has lived even since. Victor has a sister and numerous relatives in south China as well as being part owner of a business there.

*The Changs:* Chang Yet came to Australia in 1898 and after making eighteen trips back to the village of Long Hee, made a final trip in 1950 to retire. His family owned some land before his remittances enabled them to expand these lands further. The new government after 1949 took all this land and left the family the village house only. This house today contains many items Chang Yet brought back on trips, including a bird cage made to contain a rosella brought because of its familiarity from the Arnott's biscuits Chang Yet also brought back. In 1933, Chang Yet's son, Chang Gar Lock (Arthur), came to NSW when he was sponsored as a student by Chang Yet's employer. Arthur worked in this employer's store in Tingha before moving to Sydney where, during the war, he was an organiser for the Chinese Seamen's Union.

*The Gays:* George Gay was a 'well known market gardener' who began by leasing a garden in Rose Bay before becoming manager of a Fijian banana plantation. On return to Sydney with his wife, Ada, Australian born and part-Chinese, he purchased land at Chester Hill. George never returned to the village but did own land there and assist his brothers to come to Australia. He also sent his second son, Billy to his family village for three years so that he would be able to speak Chinese. Billy took over the market garden from his father and worked it until the 1950s. The site of the garden is now a local park.

*The Lees:* Philip Lee Chun came to Australia via Cooktown in 1874 before coming to Sydney where he became a partner in establishing the Kwong War Chong. This business he eventually became the sole owner of before travelling to Hong Kong where he died in 1935. Philip Lee Chun was a leading member of his districts' association, of the China Mail Steamship Line and assisted many gardeners in their dealings with the administration of the Immigration Restriction Act. His eldest son William became one of the first people of Chinese decent to move into the professions, becoming a leading Sydney barrister. Philip Lee Chuns' others sons, Harry and later Norman, took over the running of the business, while Arthur became Professor of English at the University of Amoy.

*Rich & Famous:* Chinese people such as Way Kee, Philip Gock and Quong Tart are well known because of their wealth. Way Kee was a leading businessman in NSW whose funeral in Sydney in 1892 brought out nearly every person of Chinese origin in the city. Mei Quong Tart had been brought up by a European family and was able to deal equally well with both European and Chinese people. The Gock brothers are famous for their establishment of Wing On & Co in Hong Kong and Shanghai as the first department store in China with capital originating from their banana import business in Campbell St Sydney.

Certificate of Exemption: Yat Kwan (Ken Wong) arrived in Australia on a temporary Certificate of Exemption in 1921 and did not leave Australia again until his honeymoon trip in 1963 when he departed as an Australian citizen. During that time he was threatened with deportation on a number of occasions because the jobs he had disappeared or were denied him due to his Chinese background. Yat Kwan fought these moves in court and in the newspapers and was eventually able to take out Australian citizenship when he was certified to be 'a good sort' who lives in the suburbs and drinks beer, that is, he had properly assimilated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Williams, op. cit. p.72-74.

*Pan Kees:* For families such as the Pan Kees regular trips to Hong Kong, the bilingual education of their children and business branches in both Hong Kong and Australia were part of normal life. Thomas Pan Kee of Moree and Narrabri, and later Campbell St NSW, had 10 children, two born in Hong Kong. During the 1920s all the children lived in Hong Kong while Thomas remained in NSW. In 1930, the family returned to live in NSW and between 1930 and 1950 various children lived in Hong Kong and NSW, with most marrying in Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup>

*Pearl Kwok:* Pearl Kwok was Australian-born who left for Hong Kong in 1926, aged 14, marrying, in 1931, one of the Kwoks of Wing On.<sup>4</sup> She visited her mother in NSW in 1946 and in 1949, with three of her four children. The entry of these children was refused at first, then granted temporarily. Pearl and two of her children returned to Hong Kong in 1954 while one daughter stayed and became an Australian citizen in 1960.<sup>5</sup>

*The unrecorded:* Historical records cannot be trusted to leave us an accurately proportioned account of human activities. Inevitably the nature of some peoples activities means that they leave more records than others. Crawford, for example, tells us that 'Of great colonial fame is a Chinese doctor Wang of Sydney,' Wang like many other such doctors, has left no other record.<sup>6</sup> People of *Hakka* origin (a distinctive and often persecuted minority group within south China), were very few in Sydney, too few to have had their own association. Yet some *Hakka* people did live in the city and perhaps elsewhere in NSW. How people isolated within an already isolated community managed in NSW is an as yet unanswered question.

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<sup>3</sup> AA (NSW), SP1122/1; N53/24/2284, Choy See Pan Kee (Mrs Thomas Pan Kee) & N53/24/2285-90, files of the Pan Kee children, Lawrence, Rose, Agnes, Minnie and Mary.

<sup>4</sup> Nee, Lock Lee of the well-known Alexandria cabinetmakers.

<sup>5</sup> AA (NSW), SP1122/1; N67/4101, Kwok Pearl (Mrs) (Pearl Lock Lee).

<sup>6</sup> Crawford, op. cit., p.9.

*Australian-born Chinese:* Comparatively unknown to Australian history are those people born in NSW who made their mark in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Such includes many involved in the early days of the Chinese revolution, including those working closely with Sun Yat-sen, the first editor of the China Mail and others prominent in the development of Hong Kong.<sup>7</sup>

*Women:* The greatest gap in our knowledge concern women. Those few who came to NSW, the many who remained in the villages, those of European origin who married and they and their children who went to the villages. The decision of so many to marry in the village was not only the result of custom and parental wish but also because of limited choice. The great imbalance between the sexes, whether created by Chinese cultural norms or European legal restrictions, imposed a basic restriction on the choices available. The Commonwealth Census of 1911 records 801 Chinese out of a total male population of 21,032, living with wives in Australia and a further 6,714 were recorded to have wives in China. The places of birth of the Australian based wives were recorded as, 'China born' - 181, 'England' - 63, 'Scot' - 15, 'Ireland' - 22 and 'Australia born' - 485. This last group are assumed to be 'Chinese or mixed', though on what basis is unclear.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their greater chances of bringing a wife from China, merchants and storekeepers were also more likely to marry the few Chinese or part-Chinese women who were in Australia. While poorer people were more likely to marry, or at least live, with non-Chinese women. Perhaps because they were 'so lonely they married Australian girls', as one explanation has it.<sup>9</sup> The 'intermarriage' option was one that was disagreeable to both Chinese and European cultures throughout the period though as, the 1911 census figures indicate, a number did take this option.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sleeman, op. cit., pp.137-142.

<sup>8</sup> *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne, 1925, Table 10, no.18, p.956.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Norman Lee, 25 September 1997 (7).

<sup>10</sup> The census was recording formal marriages only. On the question of attitudes to marriage and intermarriage see, Price, op. cit., pp.108-9 & 249; and Wilton, op. cit., p.164. For a case of a Chinese father's opposition to his daughter marrying a 'white,' that was well publicised in 1946, see, Australian Archives (NSW), SP1655; N54/24/3362, Gwenda Yee.

*The lonely*: A final 'choice' that an indeterminate number made was to neither marry nor return. Many village members who left for Australia simply 'disappeared' as far as their village was concerned. Sometimes family in the village might make an effort to contact them but this could easily be ignored. A rough estimate of the proportion that might fall into this category was four to five percent of the population.<sup>11</sup>

It is unsatisfactory to try and breakdown stereotypes with further categories. Nevertheless it is hoped that some hint of the range of individuals and their efforts can be gained from this arbitrary and by no means conclusive overview of few of the many who have contributed to the Chinese heritage of NSW.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Cliff Lee, 28 September 1997 (8) & Norman Lee, 25 September 1997 (7). Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.164, discusses the 'old men' in the 1950s and 60s, and quotes King Fong, 'Some of the old men sold peanuts at Randwick races, in baskets once used for vegies'.

The unique contribution of people of Chinese origin to the heritage and history of NSW cannot be doubted. The setting for this contribution was, until as recently as the 1970s, the interaction of traditional Chinese culture and the specific aims and ideals of those who came to NSW, with conditions of social alienation and legal discrimination. These elements combined to help create the distinctive patterns of Chinese settlement. It is for this reason that the background to Chinese migration and culture, as partly outlined in the theme *Migration*, needs to be understood in conjunction with the history of Chinese people within NSW before the Chinese heritage of NSW can be fully appreciated.

Once the background to Chinese migration and culture is better understood, much of the stereotyping that has pervaded the image and history of Chinese people in NSW loses its capacity to mislead. Thrift and hard work can be seen as partially the result of contractual and other conditions of migration, while the lack of female migrants is readily understandable in terms of culture. Neither require the stamp of the ‘mystic East’ or ‘inscrutability’ to be understood. It is for this reason, for example, that gambling and opium have not been dealt with under *Law & Order*, or from a European legal view, but under *Leisure*, a practical perspective. After all, such activities served much the same purpose when legal as when they were not. The most extreme example of stereotyping, however, has been the perpetration of kind of ‘disembodiment.’

Chinese people in much historical writing have been viewed as merely the alien victims of white racism with no ideals or individuality of their own. While the impact of prejudice has not been denied, it is hoped that an understanding of such aspects of Chinese history in NSW as the continuing links with families and villages in China and the fundamental role the districts of origin played in self-identity, has highlighted the reality that the actions of Chinese people have not been dependent upon European attitudes. For this reason also, the theme *Persons* is not a list of the ‘famous’ or ‘notable’, but is instead an effort to illustrate variety and individuality in an attempt mitigate the ‘disembodiment’ of the past.

A feature of Chinese settlement that runs through all themes and which has perhaps contributed most to the Chinese heritage of NSW is the level of organisation that accompanied most aspects of this settlement. The bulk buying of steamer tickets in Hong Kong, the chartering of migrant ships, the development of a specific food supply for the diggings, numerous court challenges and the removal of bones to China, are just some examples of the manner in which settlement in NSW was organised to enable largely illiterate peasants to earn money, survive and support their distant families over a life time spent in a hostile and foreign environment. It is this high level of organisation over many years with its attendant paternalism between the merchant class and their humbler district fellows, that has provided NSW with its plentiful heritage of temples, stores, cemeteries, gardens, organisations and even material items in south China.

Along with tangible items of heritage, the contribution to national identity and history that the very presence of Chinese people in NSW inspired cannot be ignored. For those who wished a 'white' identity only, this presence stimulated struggles around issues of national identity which, combined with struggles for improved conditions for workers, left a mark on the history and heritage of NSW and Australia that cannot be understood without also understanding the role played in them by people of Chinese origin.

NSW can be seen to have a long and interesting Chinese heritage, one that reaches from the tea drinking disapproved of by Bigge to the present day descendants of John Shying. This heritage is represented in the remains of buildings and items scattered throughout most regions of NSW, in organisations still functioning today and in the many citizens of NSW with a perhaps unknown Chinese ancestor. Migration free of the discrimination of the past also ensures that new contributions will continue to be added to the heritage of NSW for the foreseeable future.