

ships with those ghosts. Not only did migrants resist becoming ghosts themselves by dying abroad with nobody to take care of their souls, but even the experience of living abroad was akin to an experience of ghostliness in this world. In Shanghai, enormous territorial rites and festivals to feed the hungry ghosts were sponsored by native place associations on into the twentieth century, despite the objections of officials. They were instrumental in demarcating and expanding the prestige of competing native place interests, but also provided rites of incorporation that dealt with the worries of the many rootless and indigent men in the city.⁷⁴ The daily life of isolation and frustration described by Paul Siu also resonates as a kind of ghostliness on earth. Despite the potential benefits of interacting with ghosts, migration remained a risky flirtation with all the negative aspects of ghostliness.

Gates's logic might explain this as the alienation that results when petty bourgeoisie ideology is carried to its extreme. If money and exchange carried the luster of egalitarian virtue, they also brought the isolation of atomized self-interest. The main protection that migrants had against this atomization was the maintenance of networks linking them to their homes. Individuals were willing to confront the risks of the outside only if they were assured of the backing and stability of family and other corporate units. An individual fraternizing with ghosts on his own without any corporate support was likely to become little more than a ghost himself (as with the many bicultural individuals who were despised and mistrusted despite the services they performed). The ritual cosmology within which migrants were embedded must be understood on a transnational scale. Migrants were not merely relocating themselves in a new setting where ritual relations had to be reconstructed. They were entering the ghostly margins of a cosmology centered on their families in China and had to put effort into maintaining those links.

As these networks expanded, they adapted situationally to local sociopolitical contexts, as discussed in the following three chapters. The challenges of nationalism and of modernizing and localizing identities were not always successfully accommodated by these transnational networks. Also, the transnational links could be brittle, and migrants occasionally broke off and fell out of their networks. Adjustments were made, however, differently in each of the three locations, but all connected to the same economic and cultural interests in Hong Kong and villages in South China.



CHAPTER 5

Becoming Foreigners in Peru

They have come from Canton
even blind men and babes,
and now they are dressed for respect.
Today, in Peru
the Chinaman wants to be somebody.

Today many are plantation managers
and owners of shops,
and through pure plunder
have earned lots of cash.

They have earned to the point
they can kick back and grow fat.
This thing so disgraceful
is the obvious truth.
They desire to be somebody
but they never will be.

"El chino quiere ser gente," Peruvian folksong

THE CONSTITUTION OF A BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Wu Tingfang's Agenda for the Chinese of Peru

The visit to Lima of Wu Tingfang, the minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary of the Chinese Empire to the United States, Cuba, and Peru in 1909 was a significant social and diplomatic occasion for Peruvians and Chinese alike. Chinese in Peru have remembered this visit as a political and social success reflecting on them and on China as a modern nation. The Porras-Wu Protocol that resulted from this visit left little basis for such a proud memory. At best, the voluntary suspension of emigration to

Peru provided for in the protocol was a face-saving compromise which established the same status for China vis-à-vis Peru that Japan had achieved vis-à-vis the United States with the signing of the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement. At worst, its failure to provide any realistic regulation of migration called into question the good faith and domestic powers of both governments. But hints of failure have been overshadowed by the recognition accorded to Wu himself. His reception demonstrated that the wealthiest and most powerful elites of Peru were willing to welcome a Chinese representative with the highest standards of civility and negotiate with him on terms of equality. It was a public declaration that Chinese could resolve their problems without descending to the level of the lower classes who had looted and burnt their shops in May 1909.

Wu was a progressive official, born in Singapore, who had long been associated with various reform factions in China. He had written the first commercial law code for China in 1904 and had achieved solid successes in projecting a positive image of China as a modern nation during his diplomatic career. Shortly before his departure from Lima, on 22 August, a banquet was given in his honor. Bankers, doctors, senators, the prefect of Lima, the captain of the police, and several Chinese businessmen attended. Wu gave two speeches, one in English and one in Chinese. The speech in English covered the usual courtesies of thanking his Peruvian hosts for their hospitality and their willingness to cooperate in the spirit of civilization. The speech in Chinese was more didactic. The leading Peruvian newspaper, *El Comercio*, summarized its contents as follows:

[Wu said that the Chinese in Peru should] try to assimilate themselves to the customs and habits indigenous to the country, the laws of which they should know and respect, dedicating themselves exclusively to work and the fulfillment of their obligations; that by such means, each man wins the esteem of his equals; that the upper and official classes of Peru have a good opinion of the Chinese residents, judging them to be of prudent and diligent character; that they should endeavor to extend this opinion to the lower classes, who are the most impressionable and share neither the leisure nor the capability for analysis of the superior classes; that they engage in isolated and individual work, which can then be translated into collective force; . . . that they already live in a constitutional nation, and they should instruct themselves in its legislation which is seated in the rights of man and society; and given that China would soon be ruled constitutionally, and would be frankly following the road of progressive innova-

tions, . . . they should repay the hospitality of this country with an honorable comportment and hard work.¹

Wu's speech presented local ethnic relations as inseparable from international relations. Harmony in both was achieved through mutual respect earned by honorable behavior. Acceptance by Peruvians was predicated on adherence to universal standards of comportment, one of which was respect for sovereignty and customs. Local customs did not deserve to be adhered to merely because they existed, but because they were part of a constitutional nation that was "seated in the rights of man and society." Assimilation to local customs was encouraged not as a process of amalgamation into local society but as a complement to isolated and productive work as a strategy for gaining respect. Wu saw strong and honorable national identities as the foundation of harmonious relations, but such identities had to be constantly adjusted in conformance to international standards of behavior and local opinion. The process of acceptance in Peru would not only serve the interests of local Chinese, but would reflect the ability of China to hold a place in the modern world.

Over the next twenty years, the migrant elites in Peru tried to live up to much of this advice. They made economic accomplishment the basis for any claim to social recognition. They presented themselves to the Peruvian public not as the representatives of Chinese associations or the Chinese community, but as the honorable managers of important companies who worked in the interests of Peru without interfering in the affairs of the people. They framed their commercial efforts in the language favored by the Lima elites who controlled international commerce and the exploitation of Peru's natural wealth. This was part of a strategy to become known as "foreigners" rather than merely Chinese. That is, they endeavored to be equated with the foreign merchants from North America and Europe, whom much of the coastal elite put forth as ideals of what Peru should strive to become. They did this by emphasizing their international commercial activities and working closely with diplomatic representatives from China.

Public statements in Peru were always couched in the rhetoric of constitutional rights. Different social groups in Peru all phrased their own interests within that rhetoric, and the Chinese were no different. In their efforts to do so, the Chinese also conformed with the tendency of the Peruvian elite to define their own modernity in opposition to the lower classes, who were seen not as the basis of progressive government but as its irrational alter ego, as suggested in Wu's low estimation of their

"capability of analysis." Thus, Chinese made it clear that they represented international standards of order and modernity, and the formation of a Peru that conformed to that order. The underside of this "constitutional" order was the frequency with which Peruvian elites were willing to ignore national laws in pursuit of individual interests. Chinese also aggressively cultivated the exchange of special favors and privileges.

Merchants and Migrant Power

The presence of official delegates like Wu injected local problems with international significance. In cities like Chicago, where there was no diplomatic representation, Chinese could rarely hope to be more than another exotic immigrant group at best. In Lima they were the representatives of and were represented by a nation. The first Chinese delegation sent to Peru in 1874 to investigate of the conditions of Chinese plantation laborers was associated with the end of the coolie trade and the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation. The visit of Minister Zheng Zaoru in 1883-84 resulted in the establishment of a commercial agent in Lima, a system of consuls up and down the Peruvian coast, and recognition by the Chinese government of the Sociedad de Beneficencia China (SBC) as a representative organization. The first actions of the SBC included provisions to help illiterate laborers write letters to China and reestablish their connections to the homeland and a request to the Peruvian government that it be allowed to take over the implementation of a plan to register all Asians residing in the country.² These two projects both created a sphere of migrant autonomy as foreign nationals rather than coolies.

The close association of the SBC with the Chinese legation has been largely maintained through every change in the succession of Chinese governments over the last century. Commercial agents were regularly invited to spend vacations at Chinese-owned plantations, to act as directors of local Chinese companies, and to mediate conflicts between local Chinese. This relationship meant that it was relatively difficult to establish an Emperor Protection Association branch in Peru. The 1903 visit of Liang Qichao's brother, Liang Qitian, only succeeded in obtaining donations.³ No branch was established until 1905, a time when increasingly progressive Chinese diplomats were more likely to be in sympathy with the increasingly conservative agenda of the reformers.

Many native place associations had come and gone in Lima in the years before and after the establishment of the SBC. The earliest and most enduring were the Gu Gangzhou Huiguan established by Siyi immigrants

in 1867, the Tongsheng Huiguan for Hakkas established in 1889, and the Panyu Huiguan established in the 1880s. *Huiguan* for migrants from Zhongshan, Heshan, Huaxian, Chiqi, and Nanhai counties had also been established by the 1920s.⁴ With the exception of the Longgang Association established in 1910 for the Peach Garden Oath families, the Chinese in Peru did not form any lasting surname associations. Sworn brotherhoods also existed, but apparently they never exerted much influence. In 1924, the Yingyi She, the Wanxing Gongsi founded by Fujianese, and the Yixing Gongsi made up of Hakkas were all consolidated within a reorganized Zhigongtang that had links to the international organization of the same name.⁵

By the 1920s, in accordance with the self-image of Chinese as a cosmopolitan commercial community in Peru, the nexus of power among the migrants was focused more on businesses than on native place or surname associations. The SBC was meant to be the representative organization of all the Chinese in Peru. Unlike CCBAAs in the United States, its officers and active membership were not selected as representatives of other Chinese organizations but from among wealthy and prominent individuals. Accounts from the early twentieth century consistently listed a core group of prominent individuals, most of whom were Zhongshan Hakkas. Although the lists could be much longer, five men and one company topped them consistently. They were Aurelio Powsan Chia of the Pow Lung Company, established in 1889 (fig. 8); Ezequiel Chankan of Hop On Wing Company, established in 1893; Escudero Whu of the Pow On Company, established in 1897; Jo San Jon of the Cheng Hop Company, established in 1900; Javier Koo of the Kong Fook Company, established in 1910; and the manager of the Wing On Chong Company, which had been established in 1872 and was run by men appointed from Hong Kong. Their names appeared repeatedly as directors of all the important Chinese associations and businesses, including the SBC, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, La Unión insurance company, the Chungwha Navigation Company, and the Tayouk Tennis Club in the fashionable residential district of Miraflores.⁶

Directorships and election as association officers were important in constituting the power of these men, but the commercial house each one of them owned or managed was the most crucial element of their prestige, and their names were rarely mentioned without reference to these companies. Their businesses were central nodes in much larger networks of kinsmen, fellow villagers, and other allies, all tied together through mutual interest and credit. Wing On Chong was the largest business, with its headquarters in Hong Kong and branches throughout Peru, Cuba, and Brazil. Of all the individuals, however, Aurelio Powsan Chia stood head and



Figure 8
Aurelio Powsan Chia

shoulders above the rest. His fame was described not only in terms of his financial power and social connections, but also with glowing appreciation of his generous philanthropy and unshakable moral stature. Even a blanket attack by young Chinese journalists in the 1930s on the irresponsible, self-serving attitudes of the Chinese elite in Lima made an exception for Chia and Guillermo Kongfook, his adopted son and business partner, considering them to be "among the rare people who have no enemies."⁷

Most of these powerful businesses had been founded in the late nineteenth century, often as branches of companies based in Hong Kong or San Francisco. Few ex-plantation laborers, other than labor contractors, ever accumulated enough capital to open anything more than a small artisanal establishment. The importation of foodstuffs and luxuries from China was dominated by migrants who had not gone through the plantation labor experience. From 1874 to 1904, only a trickle of these new migrants landed in Peru. Those that brought money, commercial ambitions, and strong connections from Hong Kong, China, and California found a large Chinese clientele and little competition. As these companies grew larger, they also turned to the sale and distribution of Peruvian products. Events as early as the War of the Pacific in the 1880s already revealed the different relationships that plantation laborers and Chinese merchants in

Lima were establishing with Peruvians. The laborers saw clearly that their interests were not served by the continued stability of the Peruvian elite. Thousands of them joined invading Chilean troops, especially those led by General Lynch, who was said to have a red complexion and a smattering of Cantonese learned during a term of duty in Hong Kong, which gave him at least a passing resemblance to Guandi, the God of War. Most of the Chinese provided only logistical support, but some went into battle against the Peruvian troops, often wearing masks or painting their faces. On the other hand, Chinese merchants in Lima calculated that supporting the Peruvians was in their long-term interest and gathered a contribution to the public war fund second only to that offered by the bankers. They also formed a militia to help protect the city, as well as benevolent societies to protect their own interests, but this failed to stop the massacre of four hundred Chinese by Peruvian troops in the days immediately before the entry of the Chilean troops.⁸

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, many Chinese ex-laborers continued to use the Spanish names they had been given on the plantations. Many found places in local communities as clients of powerful Peruvians—renting their land, serving their households, and having them as godparents (*compadrazgo*) for their children born of alliances with local women. By the end of the nineteenth century, as the commercial influence of the new migrants grew stronger, these ex-laborers increasingly began to use their Chinese names again, take an interest in migrant associations, do business with other Chinese, and marry their half-Chinese daughters off to new Chinese migrants. The use of *compadrazgo* continued but was now used to reinforce Chinese networks, as godparents were increasingly chosen from among other Chinese.⁹ The influx of migrant capital and stronger connections to China reversed the gradual integration of Chinese into the coastal lower classes and pulled them into the networks of a migrant community. The owners of large businesses were able to channel and profit from the surge of new migrants after 1904. They set up steamship lines, struck deals with Peruvian officials, made special requests for new immigrants, and controlled the economic networks that supplied the small groceries, which were the economic mainstay of this new migration.

CHINESE IN THE CONSTITUTION OF PERU

Peruvians of all classes did not necessarily hold as high an opinion of the Chinese as Wu Tingfang had suggested. Negative images of Chinese had

been circulating for over half a century and would continue to circulate for at least another half. These images had powerful effects which could be utilized by groups in Peru with very different agendas. The progressive-minded elite could use them to depict the lower classes as riddled with weaknesses, and the working classes could use them to criticize the corruption and exploitation of the elite. Discourse on the Chinese was woven into the very fabric of class conflict. The images themselves were not contested as much as their meaning was.

Many historians have described violence and racism as an integral part of Peruvian history—so much so that attacks on Chinese after fireworks displays in the central plaza of Lima by gangs of youth known as the “Knife Battalion” have been memorialized in folklore collections as part of the Limeñan tradition. One historian has characterized “pogroms against the Chinese,” as the “traditional” result of labor uprisings in the early part of this century.¹⁰ Racial discourse circulated through all sectors of Peruvian society and could be deployed as effectively by the “popular masses” as by elites, who used it to justify their domination. Like the status of *mestizos*, the status of the Chinese within this discourse was a bit unstable, drifting between the more settled categories of white, black, and Indian which dominated the social landscape.¹¹

A characterization presented by José Félix Caceres of the Lima Geographical Society at the Third Pan-American Scientific Congress in 1924 brought together many of the reigning stereotypes, and can serve as an introduction to Peruvian anti-Chinese discourse:

[The Chinese] have been a constant obstacle to our psychic and physical well-being, due to the manifestation of their character, customs, temperament, and vices in repugnant excess, . . . indecent brothels; the gambling houses, where the “paca-piú” and the “Chinese luck” have sharpened the ingenuity of our Creoles for petty theft and crime; the opium dens; and many other iniquities. In consideration of public morality as well as private, the selfishness particular to them which has caused all of the money they have earned on our soil going to fatten the strongboxes of their mandarins without having improved any part of the country, not even the capital, through some notable edifice or humanitarian donation; the cheapening of manual labor to the obvious detriment of the Peruvian worker; the total lack of hygiene in the pigsties in which they live . . . their traditional hatred of the race and lack of altruistic sentiments, because these latter are unknown in their own country; and many other reasons; are powerful motives not only to declare that they do not exemplify the qualities we desire, but

also to ask that we be liberated this very day from this obstacle to progress that weighs on us as one of the largest calamities we are burdened with.¹²

Caceres's arguments were common to the scientific racism that flourished in Latin America in the early twentieth century. Such arguments often claimed a goal of improving the human stock of the heteroglot Latin American nations. This usually amounted to recommendations for increased immigration of northern Europeans. The influence of other peoples was described in terms of contagion and degradation: their vices and immorality would spread, and their offspring would weaken the genetic stock of the nation. This threat of degradation was often amplified by neo-Lamarckian convictions that negative traits produced by the environment could be inherited.¹³ Indeed, Caceres went on to argue that some Chinese degradation was a legacy of the nineteenth-century traffic in Chinese laborers.

Most of the images used by Caceres had been circulating since the earliest debates over the importation of Chinese labor. Planters had considered Chinese laborers to be slightly less than human tools which could be profitably utilized in the service of their own ambitions. Opponents claimed that intermarriage would degenerate the Peruvian race and that the vicious habits of the Chinese would spread throughout the lower classes, claims that were commonly reproduced by the lower classes themselves. In the early twentieth century, Chinese were aware of these images and tried to disassociate themselves from the laborers of the nineteenth century. They sometimes criticized plantation owners for having created such a degraded class, but usually emphasized that they were a different type of Chinese, more civilized and educated than the coolies of a previous era, willing to conform to and promote the demands of a progressive society.

In the eyes of the lower classes, the Chinese were damned by their association with the goals of the planters. The importation of coolies had made Chinese a key component in the elite attempt to degrade the value of human labor. The lower classes continued to use images of the Chinese as laborer into the twentieth century, long after it had any basis in fact. Even after workers' propaganda began to recognize Chinese primarily as small businessmen, they were still linked with elite hegemony, but now as the willing henchmen of economic domination rather than the hapless victims they had once been as laborers. Despite their use of Chinese to criticize the elites, working-class activists also appropriated many aspects of progressive discourse, such as the concerns for hygiene and moral-

ity raised by Caceres. The following sections elaborate the course of Chinese migration and anti-Chinese attitudes in Peru over the first half of the twentieth century.

The Aristocratic Republic

Both land and political power in Peru were increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small aristocracy in Lima during the early twentieth century. Many members of this elite were not from the older, landed families that had dominated Peru during the colonial era and had continued to dominate regional power outside of Lima. Rather, they were the children of more recent immigrants from Italy, Spain, and Chile, who had a more dynamic and rationalizing attitude toward the exploitation of agricultural lands. This aristocracy was itself plagued by internal differences, but from 1895 to 1919 many of these differences were held in check by the dominance of the Civilista Party. The Civilistas tried to build a government on the common ground of the aristocrats that were its members and who could unite to confront the growing unrest of laborers and the challenges of regional powers attempting to retain their old privileges. They promoted an economy based on exploitation and export of the natural resources of Peru, and looked to Europe for cultural fashions and material luxuries. They also perpetuated a political rhetoric based on the idea of constitutional rights, which even the most recalcitrant of local strongmen made use of to legitimize his power.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the party was also extremely exclusive, which meant not only that few Peruvians had any opportunity to participate in the nominally democratic structures of the government, but also that the government had little effective influence beyond Lima and a few smaller urban centers. As individuals, however, many Civilistas did have influence outside of Lima, and their word could be law in the ever-expanding plantations they owned.

These plantations grew at the expense of local communities, which rarely had access to the resources necessary to defend their land and interests.¹⁵ The largest and most self-sufficient of these plantations were located on the north coast of Peru, where most of the Chinese resided (see fig. 9). The small communities on the margins of these plantations were similar to the growing urban ghettos, in that they were also homes for the dispossessed and underemployed. They made up a growing class of coastal poor, dependent on the elite for wages and on Chinese and Italian merchants for goods.

Some of these Chinese merchants were treated with respect and spe-

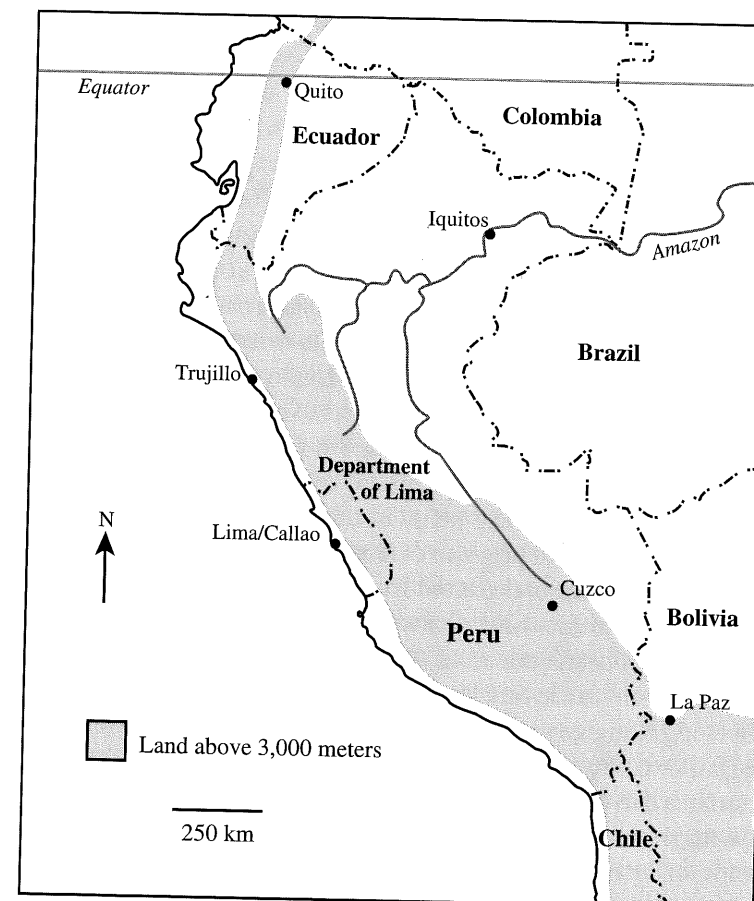


Figure 9 Peru

cial privileges, especially in small towns, where they patronized local festivals and could even hold local office. Local papers were often filled with grateful testaments by women who claimed to have been cured by Chinese herbal doctors. Chinese further encouraged such positive images by donating statues to local plazas, contributing to public causes, and providing fireworks for National Day celebrations.¹⁶ On the other hand, communications from the Chinese legation in Peru to the Ministry of Foreign Relations were consistently filled with protests—which rarely received a response—against the maltreatment of Chinese by officials, police, soldiers, and “popular masses” in all parts of the country. To some extent, this kind of treatment could be expected by any *forastero* (outsider), espe-

cially those engaged in highly visible mercantile activities. Nonetheless, the Chinese as a group were an especially common scapegoat in local political strife.

The Rejuvenation of Immigration

The flow of independent migrants had reached a steady stream of two or three hundred a year by the turn of the century, but the dreams and ambitions of Eduardo Muelle were most directly responsible for the rejuvenation of Chinese migration after 1904. Muelle assumed the post of Peruvian Consul in Hong Kong on 3 July 1903. He brought with him not only the renewed interest of coastal agriculturists to resume the importation of laborers from Asia—which had already brought some laborers from Japan—but also a conviction that Chinese colonists would be valuable in opening up the Amazon and a belief in the promise of the great Chinese market (or at least in the promise of free trade in Hong Kong) as an outlet for Peruvian products extracted from the Amazon and other parts of Peru.¹⁷ To achieve these three dreams, he gave his full support the *Compañía Marítima Occidental*, a British firm attempting to establish a shipping line between Callao and Hong Kong. He spared no effort in convincing the Hong Kong government to rethink its ban against the collective emigration of Chinese to South America (which was actually a misinterpretation of a ban against indentured migration), and “after a virtual campaign, with thousands of setbacks and discussions with the Governor and the Colonial Secretary, the license for the emigration of free Chinese to Peru [was] granted.”¹⁸ The first boat carrying Chinese migrants, the *Kensington*, arrived in Callao on 19 October 1904, with 356 Chinese passengers, including five women.¹⁹ It turned out, however, that no Peruvians were interested in exploring the Chinese market, and Muelle’s hopes crumbled after only two voyages. Except for a few samples of salt, the *Kensington* had returned to Hong Kong with no cargo, and the *Compañía Marítima Occidental* went out of business.

If Peruvians would not take advantage of Muelle’s efforts, many Chinese were more than happy to follow up on them. Muelle had often criticized the *Compañía Marítima Occidental* for not having established good relations with the Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong and Lima. With the collapse of the company, eight of these enterprises decided to take things into their own hands and established the shipping company Lee Chay in February 1905. They advertised for potential migrants in the Hong Kong newspapers, and in April 1906 the *Lennox* made its first voyage, carrying 630 Chinese passengers as well as rice, medicines, foodstuffs, silks, and

other staples of the migrant economy.²⁰ In December 1906, the Japanese company Toyo Kisen Kaisha joined the traffic to Callao, adding an extra leg to its voyages from Hong Kong to Honolulu via Yokohama.

Except during the anti-Japanese boycott of 1907, as many as six to nine hundred Chinese traveled to Peru on each boat, but none of them fulfilled the hopes of Muelle and others by taking jobs as agricultural laborers. They worked as butchers, bakers, shoemakers, and as employees in Chinese commercial houses. Most of all they opened *pulperías* (small groceries) throughout the coastal cities and towns. Subsequent Peruvian consuls in Hong Kong took stances against the continued migration of Chinese to Peru and cast aspersions on the motives of the Lee Chay company and its Chinese investors. One of them wrote that “the businessmen who occupy themselves with the emigration of coolies obtain a good return for each Chinese they send to Peru.”²¹ Similarly, letters in the Peruvian press accused Chinese businesses of importing Chinese laborers for exploitation in their plantations and shops. Whatever the truth of such accusations, several wealthy migrants in Peru clearly had a direct financial interest in the activities of Lee Chay, because Pow Lung and other companies sent representatives to meet migrants as they got off the boat, and the majority of new migrants were able to find jobs working for other Chinese or for themselves.²²

As described in chapter 2, the arrival of the *Montrose* with 774 passengers in July 1910 convinced Peruvian authorities that the Porras-Wu Protocol of 1909 was ineffective. The resulting scandal and crackdown made this the last voyage sponsored by Lee Chay. The subsequent restriction of migration opportunities meant that false documents, assumed identities as returned migrants, and special permissions to work as employees in Chinese companies in Peru began to carry a high market value. Peruvian consuls accused Chinese in Hong Kong of speculating in Peruvian resident passports, Peruvian citizenship papers, and false titles of kinship for children. Newspapers in Hong Kong and Canton advertised migration positions to be sold to the highest bidder. When the Ministry of Foreign Relations instituted stricter controls over proof of Peruvian citizenship, they claimed that “the interest of the Chinese in nationalizing as Peruvians disappeared.”²³

The market in migration rights was facilitated by the connections of influential Chinese with corrupt consuls and port officials. Each of the six Peruvian consuls that served in Hong Kong from 1913 to 1920 left their posts plagued by accusations of venality and dishonesty. The most common accusations, by both the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Lima and the Chinese in Hong Kong, were of demanding exorbitant fees and selling

visas to the highest bidders. Within days after arriving at his post in 1915, consul Salvador Cavero was already predicting and making excuses for his own decline, writing to the Ministry that, "in the circumstance of finding oneself so far from home, so poorly financed, and in the midst of an element so likely to make unscrupulous proposals of all kinds, I am referring to the Chinese element, the honor of the official can easily weaken if he is not exceptional, and once he is on the slope, nobody can know where he will stop."²⁴ Others never ceased protesting their honesty throughout their appointment. One of them reached apocalyptic tones in his protests against denunciations in the Hong Kong press, writing that the Chinese were "vile and offensive, and do not consider for an instant the good name of the Government, nor of its representative, dragging his name and reputation through the dirt until his desires are crowned; but some day they will be made to feel the weight of justice, and the rectitude and justice of the Peruvian Government will be shown to them in this form."²⁵ This consul was much criticized by his successor for the scandalous state of the records he left behind.

Luís Alvarez, who took over as consul in 1917, sent a relatively detailed description of the mechanics of corruption back to the Ministry in Lima. He began by noting how all the other consuls, ship accountants, and authorities in the colony were talking of the "business and thick profits that had been made in this consular office" and by the officials in Callao. He went on to describe how, upon his arrival, he had found a Chinese in his office who told him he was the "Secretary of the Consulate." Within a short time, the consul learned that this man was a wealthy partner in a commercial house in Hong Kong who was well known by shipping company officials and who "associat[ed] on a par with persons of the European colony here, and enjoy[ed] the protection and confidence of a South American colleague." Candidates selected for emigration by the commercial houses were presented by him to the consul along with an appropriate gratuity. The result was that "there have been officials who shortly after arriving have felt themselves to be virtual sultans, and have proceeded capriciously."²⁶ Several other consuls hinted that accusations in the local press were not the expressions of indignation by righteous Chinese they appeared to be, but attacks by competitors who felt they were not receiving an adequate amount of favoritism. At one point, several Chinese companies even asked the Chilean consul to represent them in approaching the Peruvian consul with their complaints over how he was allowing other Chinese businesses and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong to control his affairs.²⁷

Smuggling of migrants was another important means of entry that

depended on extensive support networks and the corruption of other Latin American consuls. As the entry of Chinese into Ecuador was extremely difficult, most surreptitious entry into Peru came via Chile, Bolivia, and up the Amazon from Brazil.²⁸ Both Bolivia and Chile had restrictions against Chinese immigration, although Chile allowed a periodic quota of Chinese to enter upon payment of a high entry tax. According to the Peruvian consul, the Bolivian consul seemed free to charge whatever price he liked to grant Bolivian visas. Several Peruvian consuls complained that the large majority of the Chinese who obtained visas to these two countries eventually ended up in Peru, "the promised land." However they got to Peru, the paths of Chinese migrants were paved by a dense network of connections and exchanges.

Enemies of Hygiene

Strong anti-Chinese sentiment was already available to greet the 356 Chinese passengers on the first direct steamer from Hong Kong in 1904. The *Kensington* had the misfortune to arrive toward the end of a bubonic plague epidemic in Lima. The plague was widely believed to have originated in Asia and had resulted in the establishment of an invasive public health apparatus.²⁹ The *Kensington* was met at the port in Callao by doctors charged with its fumigation and police posted "to prevent that the people should assume a hostile attitude against the Chinese."³⁰

In the following days, representatives in both chambers of the legislature presented laws to prohibit the collective immigration of Asians. In response, factions of plantation owners presented their own proposals to allow Chinese immigrants to be brought over on the condition that they signed four-year contracts and would be repatriated after the contracts were fulfilled. The planters repeated an argument they had made over a half a century earlier, that the Chinese were a "necessary evil" if Peru's resources were to be developed.³¹ Neither side got its way, but the Ministry of Foreign Relations felt it wise to discourage any pretext for more controversy. In early 1905, Consul Muelle was already counseling Lee Chay representatives in Hong Kong that it was not prudent to carry so many Chinese passengers on its first voyage. The company responded with the same arguments that Muelle had already used to convince the Hong Kong Government to allow emigration—that Peru and China had a treaty that guaranteed free immigration, and none of the migrants had signed contracts.³²

Most opinions against the arrival of the Chinese amounted to the conviction that they were a degenerate and noxious race that would debilitate the physical and moral strength of the country by contaminating

Peruvian blood, spreading their pernicious habits and pushing Peruvian laborers out of their jobs. Images of social contamination were complemented by a preoccupation with health and hygiene. All the Chinese on the first voyage of the Lee Chay ship *Lennox* were required by Consul Muelle to obtain certificates of health before embarking, although this did not avert a minor panic over the fear of bubonic plague and other diseases when the ship docked in Callao.³³ Muelle's requirement was made law on 12 June, 1907. Two months later, on 12 August, another decree stipulated a fee of five pounds for the certificate. The consul responded approvingly that "Asian emigration will diminish considerably [which] will obligate the Chinese company to suspend its voyages."³⁴ Clearly, the authorities considered this to be a measure not only against viruses carried by the Chinese but against the Chinese themselves. After the hoped-for decrease did not occur, the fee was raised to ten pounds in February 1908. This time the consul was not so optimistic that it would have any effect on migration, writing that it was not the passengers themselves who paid for the tickets and fees, but the Chinese commercial houses to which the Chinese were indebted upon arriving in Peru.³⁵ The only complaint recorded from the Chinese was that the certificate was demanded of all Chinese subjects "without distinction of class and social condition."³⁶

Although concern over hygiene and contamination—by germs, immorality, and interbreeding—was spearheaded by the scientifically oriented elite, it garnered widespread acceptance among other classes. Two labor unions, the Confederation of Artisans and the Assembly of United Societies, were convinced that plantation owners were responsible for the importation of Chinese, and appealed to the president of Peru in 1906 to halt it. They insisted that "the yellow race has only contributed to Peru hybrid descendants, who are weighed down with vices and physical defects too numerous to mention." They also claimed that by competing for the jobs of Peruvian nationals, the Chinese were threatening "the improvement of the national race and its future prosperity."³⁷

Newspapers were filled with anti-Chinese articles and letters, reaching such a point in 1907 that the Chinese legation presented a memorandum to the Ministry of Foreign Relations complaining of the "general and systematic slander against the Chinese in the press." The memorandum also noted an increasing frequency of unjust treatment and detention by local authorities and of attacks against Chinese establishments and individuals by soldiers and the people, and stated that, "even if the police are aware of the things that happen, they adopt no means to prevent them."³⁸ The *Fray K. Bezón*, a publication with anarchist sentiments, was established in 1907, devoting much of its space to a systematic series of jokes and

attacks on the Chinese.³⁹ In early 1909 the standard of cleanliness in small Chinese restaurants was a common target of criticism in several papers, which often accused the Chinese of eating and serving rats.⁴⁰ In 1917, the *Ilustración Obrero* (*Worker's Illustrated*) suggested openly that hygiene requirements were an ideal excuse for official harassment: "The Inspection of Hygiene should make its authority felt. With this purpose in mind, we judge that this municipal organ should be able to initiate its work by obligating all small Chinese industrialists to obtain their respective certificates of health to continue performing their services. As it will be humanly difficult to fulfill the requirement, we are sure that there will be at least a fifty percent decrease in these monopolies, and our people will be able to return to set up their diverse businesses."⁴¹

Enemies of Labor and the Riot of 1909

Labor practices associated with Chinese migration were also frequently attacked. The 1913 requirement that Chinese children traveling to Peru obtain passports and proof of kinship was accompanied by accusations published in *El Comercio* by the consul in Hong Kong that hungry and homeless children were being purchased in Hong Kong by Chinese businesses in Peru to be sent across the ocean to work for them.⁴² In one of the few public responses by the Chinese in Lima in those years, T. Pusan Chia wrote a letter to *El Comercio* denying the allegations, adding that "this would not be possible in a place like Hong Kong where the culture has reached an appreciable level of development, influenced by the English element, open to the commerce of all nations, and where the human and liberal laws of the Republic of China are observed with the utmost strictness."⁴³ This response, with its emphasis on rule of law, commerce, and civilized behavior, echoed both the sentiments expressed four years earlier by Wu Tingfang and the contents of the more concentrated image-building efforts that the Chinese in Peru would embark on in the 1920s. Nonetheless, accusations that wealthy Chinese in Lima were importing other Chinese to work as virtual slaves continued through the 1910s. The desire to recruit their own indentured laborers was openly admitted by the plantation-owning elites of Peru, thus creating an ideal opportunity for workers' groups to conflate the actions of their enemies.

Urban working-class dissatisfaction and hatred of Chinese came to a peak in the riot of 9 May 1909. The riot started as an open rally of the Workers' Party in the streets of Lima. The participants yelled *vivas* to Nicolás de Piérola and Augusto Durand—two provincial politicians with reputations for patriotism, *machismo*, and rebellion—and "Death to the

Chinese!" Speakers blamed the government for having brought the Chinese into the country to work cheaply when Peruvians themselves had no jobs. After the speeches, the crowd was led to the residence of de Piérola, "mistreating any Chinese who happened to pass by." Not finding de Piérola at home, they began to shout, "Down with the Chinese!" and then separate into small groups that spread to all parts of the city to attack and loot Chinese shops. The police estimated that "almost all the Asian stores were threatened by the people." The claim for compensation presented four days later by a commission of Chinese merchants counted twenty-four looted stores.⁴⁴

Competition for jobs and excessively inflated prices in the stores were suggested in the newspapers as motivations for the hostility but do not account for the specificity of attacks against Chinese. No Italian shops were attacked, although they were as numerous as the Chinese shops. As far as competition for jobs was concerned, very few Chinese were actually employed in laboring occupations. The highest concentration of Chinese in any manual occupation in 1908 were the 223 Chinese shoemakers, who made up less than 10 per cent of the 2,253 shoemakers in Lima in 1908. The only manual occupation they dominated was street sweeping, where 132 Chinese nearly monopolized the 141 available positions.⁴⁵ Chinese were singled out more as a highly visible symbol than as a critical threat.

The government also singled out the Chinese as a convenient scapegoat in their attempts to smooth over the threat of the organized and beligerent lower classes. After the riot, the Chinese legation quickly demanded that the Peruvian government take immediate measures for the compensation and protection of Chinese subjects.⁴⁶ The Peruvian government responded with uncharacteristic haste but not with the kinds of measures that the Chinese had hoped for. Within five days of the riot President Leguía, noting that "public opinion has openly manifested itself adverse to Chinese immigration," issued a decree requiring that Chinese migrants could enter the country only when carrying five hundred pounds sterling on their person.⁴⁷ The decree was later explained to Wu Tingfang as a means to pacify the demands of the workers and prevent similar disorders in the future.

The mayor of Lima, Guillermo Billinghurst, acted even more quickly and sensationally than the president. Billinghurst was an anti-Leguian politician with populist pretensions and a strong base among the workers, which was unusual in urban politicians of the day.⁴⁸ The misfortune of the Chinese created an irresistible opportunity. At three in the afternoon of 11 May, two days after the riot, Billinghurst ordered the immediate destruction of the Callejón Otaiza. The Callejón was a building, or conglom-

eration of buildings, built around a courtyard within which more than five hundred Chinese were thought to live and do business. It had often been a target of newspaper critiques and invasions by the sanitation police over the previous five years. Billinghurst justified the destruction not only as a long-planned hygienic action against the "squalor and perversion" that were believed to exist inside, but also as the first in a projected series of public works designed to create employment and improve living conditions in the city. During the destruction, many Chinese remained in the Callejón until "the dust billowing from the darkened walls threatened to asphyxiate them," while crowds gathered outside the Callejón looking for jobs and yelling *vivas* to Billinghurst.⁴⁹ In place of the Callejón a "decent and clean street that deserves to carry the name of the Mayor" was built. By 13 May, Billinghurst had begun to search the outskirts of Lima for a suitable location to which Chinatown could be moved, "and subjected to the necessary vigilance of the hygiene inspection." It was never found.⁵⁰

As Wu Tingfang later noted, none of these measures seem to have been particularly successful in pacifying the workers, for on 29 May, at least eleven more Chinese shops were looted in the disturbances surrounding an attempted revolution by the sons of Nicolás de Piérola. Many observers believed the violence would have been even more serious if not for the widespread belief that the Chinese had been buying guns to protect themselves.⁵¹ The election of Billinghurst to the presidency in May 1912 was also accompanied by the looting of a few Chinese stores. The financial compensation promised to the Chinese in the wake of the 1909 riot was a lot slower in coming than the scapegoating responses. In March 1911, twenty-two months after the riot, the Peruvian government offered to pay 30 percent of the reclamations requested by the Chinese commission. Even this small amount was probably only offered in recognition of the international ceremony surrounding the visit of Wu Tingfang, and the Chinese accepted it as "proof of a spirit of cordiality."⁵²

In the Context of Indians and Europeans

Some upper-class observers, like the editors of *El Comercio*, claimed to understand the "legitimate disgust" that the "most modest social classes" felt toward the Chinese, but they criticized the violence used to express anti-Chinese feelings as an offense against "national decorum."⁵³ The upper-class dislike of the Chinese was related not so much to economic insecurity as to social insecurity. They believed not only that the Chinese presence provoked threats and disorder on the part of the lower classes, but that their habits threatened to further corrupt the already substandard morals

and virility of the workers and indigenous population. Such fears were expressed with increasing frequency as the Peruvian elite became more concerned with how the people who lived within the territorial limits of Peru could be integrated as the citizens of a Peruvian nation.

At the turn of the century, many Peruvian intellectuals were increasingly convinced that a united and constitutional Peruvian nation-state could not be asserted without a solid basis of racial and cultural homogeneity. Yet attempts to define or create such a basis were confounded by a belief in the unchanging nature of racial groups, buttressed by the increasing use of biological vocabulary. Some despaired that these racial distinctions were insuperable. Others found hope for the creation of a Peruvian identity through *mestizaje*, although often on the condition that more immigrants of Northern European stock were necessary to add strength and vitality to a mixture that would otherwise be dominated by Indian and Asiatic blood. Attempts to promote European immigration were largely ineffective. As old Chinese workers died out at the end of the nineteenth century and the export of plantation products grew increasingly lucrative, many coastal plantations began to turn toward the Andes as a source of labor and Indian communities as sources of land. The appropriation of Indian land and proletarianization of their labor were accompanied by an ideology promoting the rapid incorporation of Indians as citizens of a consolidating nation.

A 1905 circular sent to all the departmental prefects offered a succinct summary of official goals at the time. It began by criticizing absurd local obligations and fees imposed on the Indians and declaring that all Peruvians should be equal before the law, because

Our indigenous peoples still preserve latent in them all the valuable qualities that allowed the Incas to organize them into a vast and powerful empire. . . . This is not only an attempt to realize a civilizing work of uprooting a considerable number of beings from dejection, but also an attempt—and this is the interesting aspect of the problem—to have them participate actively, as a factor of progress, an element of production of incalculable force.⁵⁴

The increased interest in the Indians led to their becoming a "problem," and to pose them as a problem was to suggest that they could be solved. Indians were increasingly described in terms of malleable cultural differences rather than fixed biological ones. Solving the problem was a project aimed not only at the Indians, but also at the displacement of local powerholders by the central government. Indian culture was often portrayed as the legacy of colonial degradation, something which could be

reversed by the eradication of "feudal" land relations, education, moral cultivation, and determined, positive action. Practical education programs usually began with training in hygiene and led to lessons in Spanish, love of country, and the biographies of national heroes. Other measures to incorporate the Indians included the destruction of collective communities (seen as obstacles to progress and private property), the building of roads into the mountains, and the encouragement of migration to areas in need of labor.

Public discussion about the relationship of Indians to the nation and which of their qualities should be selected for nurturing, reform, or extermination were an integral part of defining the Peruvian nation-state.⁵⁵ Some people did not agree with the more aggressive and socially disruptive measures taken by the government and plantation owners to turn them into individualistic worker-citizens. They created pro-indigenist groups which aimed to protect the Indians against the white elite through the discovery and preservation of their culture and history. Nonetheless, their agenda began with many of the same assumptions made by the government. A 1909 speech by the prominent Pro-Indigenist Society member Dora Mayer demonstrates many of these assumptions, as well as the marginal position of the Chinese in these debates over the nation:

The conservation of the indigenous race is a duty for many reasons. It is not important that the Indian belongs to an inferior race. Even if he did not have any intelligence, he would have to be cared for: a good housewife takes care to preserve the most modest objects in her house; she does not permit a single broom to be mistreated, because it is of use to her. The Indian is not less than a broom. He is useful to us and he must be cared for. . . . I add that if the gentlemen [in the audience] are partisans of the suppression of the Indian, they must also believe themselves to be better off by cutting off their feet and hands. The races of color, the Chinese, the Blacks, the Indians, are the feet and the hands of the white. The Europeans are better for ordering than for working as soon as they leave their climate. As soon as the army of Saxons, which some persons here hope for as much as the coming of the Messiah, erupts over us through the Panama Canal, the new colonists will bring Asians in great quantities to carry out the tasks of industry. And the Asians in bondage cannot compete with the aborigines who are made of the clay of the native land.⁵⁶

The Chinese were not only inferior, but alien as well. While they could be of some use to developing Peru, the convenience they offered was not a substitute for putting one's own house in order first.

Other commentators saw the Chinese as a more direct threat to the project of uplifting the Indians. If not worrying about the physical degeneration brought about by intermarriage, they worried that the vicious habits and cultural degeneration of the Chinese would spread to the Indians, hindering any attempts at moral reform. A tightening of opium licensing laws in 1916 was preceded by a public campaign concerned with precisely this question. A report produced by the Office of Public Assistance in 1916 proposed many of the requirements for the ventilation, hygiene, surveillance, and exclusion of women and non-Asians from the opium dens that would later become law. To justify the proposed measures, the writer of the report argued that

everything leads one to believe that opium addiction would find unique conditions of acclimatization in Peru if permitted to reach the Indian. Our aboriginal race, which possibly has distant ancestral relations with the Asian, is, like them, congenitally and hereditarily disposed to the dreams and indolence which are artificially excited by the intoxication of opium. The Indian now only knows the drunkenness of alcohol and the stimulus of coca, and we see the customary abuse of both, but it is indubitable that if opium came to be known and accessible, he would become an opium addict, just as he is an alcoholic and a coca addict, and he would docilely and voluntarily encounter and acquire one more morbid opportunity to accelerate the process of organic and moral decadence of which he is already victim.⁵⁷

As this report suggests, few were concerned about the effects of opium on the Chinese. They were considered irredeemable in their subjection to the drug, and the only concern was that their vices not spread. Nonetheless, the adoption of restrictive measures in 1916 did not help much in alleviating these fears, for in 1918 the Lima press continued to be scandalized by the patronage of opium dens by white men and women.⁵⁸

Even positive depictions of the Chinese were situated primarily as commentaries and critiques of other groups in Peru. In his observations on the riot of 1909, leftist intellectual Manuel Gonzales Prada argued that popular anti-Chinese feeling had been artificially stirred up as a political tool and that the majority of poorer Peruvians harbored good will to the Chinese, whose humble and persevering ways made a favorable contrast to the insatiable greed of European immigrants.⁵⁹

Like the Indians, the Chinese were constituted as bearers of racial characteristics, but they were alien ones which could be isolated or cleansed from the national body rather than incorporated. The relative

lack of positive social action focused on the Chinese actually gave some room to maneuver, especially since the practice of Peruvian nation-building was never so clear-cut and efficient as the ambitions of its rhetoric. The Chinese occasionally fell victim to hygiene and morality campaigns, but they were just as likely to be granted realms of delimited autonomy in such matters, as the attention of reformers and officials was directed toward the creation of citizens out of other human material.

CHINESE AND THE REPUBLIC

Justice in Trujillo

The complex relationships of Chinese with local communities, which ranged from roles as victimized outsiders to respected residents, could be seen in the coastal city of Trujillo, about three hundred miles north of Lima. In the first half of the twentieth century the Chinese population in this city averaged about one thousand individuals, about 5 per cent of the total population. Chinese enterprise in this city centered on *pulperías*, butcher shops, small bars, bakeries, pig farms, and a monopoly of the pawnshop industry. They played a very important if not dominant role in the provision of goods and finance to the poorer residents of the city. They were also constantly exposed to the surveillance and petty extortions of a variety of municipal inspectors and police, resulting in frequent fines for infractions of hygiene laws, doing business on Sundays, inaccurate weights and measures, and unlicensed liquor sales.

The administrative suits considered by the Trujillo government for the years 1900 to 1920 are dominated by Chinese contesting the imposition of inspection fines, in a proportion far greater than the 30 percent of new business licenses granted them over those years. The Chinese themselves were quite aware of the discrepancy, and they—or, to be more precise, their lawyers—were often quite eloquent in demanding their constitutional rights while accusing the municipal government of “antagonizing the Asian Colony, and acquiring funds for the Municipal Government at the cost of our work and industry.” One suit claimed that “there are no violent and often arbitrary methods which have not been employed to humiliate us.”⁶⁰ Often these suits reproduced images of the Chinese as uncultured aliens in order to draw a picture of predatory health inspectors who fell upon victims who were ignorant of their rights and how to defend themselves. Sometimes this image was given a historical dimension as the Chinese attempted to turn the accusations back on the hypocrisy and cruelty of the Peruvians in bringing them there in the first

place: "The majority of the members of the Chinese colony were brought here by these same Peruvians to work on their land, and now, weakened by the work and the demands, when not invalids, they are still not able to return to their Motherland to bury their remains."⁶¹ Such invocations of the past were rare, however, and most Chinese tried to distance themselves from any association with coolie labor and a lack of culture.

Characterizations of the Chinese as helpless and unaware may have been accurate in individual cases, but the Chinese as a whole were much more active in defending their interests through confrontation with the local government than any other group in Trujillo. Not until the late 1920s were Chinese administrative complaints eclipsed in number by the suits of middle-class Peruvians annoyed at being fined for traffic violations. More common than images of ignorant victimhood were Chinese self-portrayals that drew attention to the positive status conferred by Peruvian legislation and international politics, to the material benefits brought by their presence, to laws promising equal treatment of foreigners, and to the 1874 treaty which had abolished the coolie trade and guaranteed the free pursuit by Chinese of commercial activities in Peru.

Some struggles against particular regulatory legislation continued for years and were referred to Lima for resolution. A fight against stricter pawnshop regulation lasted from 1903 to 1909. The Chinese made an appeal to international standards by calling upon Wu Tingfang for help during his visit in 1909, who forwarded their complaint to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The case was finally resolved in Lima in 1910, largely in favor of the Trujillo government but with some concessions to Chinese objections.⁶² A similar struggle over the attempt by the city government to remove Chinese-operated pigsties from the Trujillo city limits was resolved in Lima in 1911, largely in favor of the municipality again.⁶³ The Chinese had better luck contesting the enforcement of legislation than the legislation itself. Complaints brought to the municipality by individual businesses were frequently rewarded with reduced or canceled fines. Indeed, despite their occasional blanket condemnations of the motives of the Trujillo government, the Chinese generally found their interests could be well served by appealing to its sense of enlightened justice.

Identity in Trujillo

Prejudiced enforcement of hygiene laws contributed to the public constitution of a Chinese identity by singling them out and creating a cause around which to mobilize. The common struggle against health inspections, however, was still far from sufficient to forge solidarity among the

Chinese. In fact, the rhetoric of modern hygiene and rule of law within which health legislation was embedded could also contribute to social divisions among the Chinese, as some migrants tried to distinguish themselves from the degradation and misfortune of others. This attempt to make distinctions could be seen in the shifting public images presented by migrant associations.

The new wave of Chinese migration to Peru in the twentieth century was accompanied by a proliferation of Chinese institutions, as local SBCs began to appear in towns up and down the coast.⁶⁴ These associations were usually organized with the stated goals of developing unity, providing aid, and offering representation on behalf of the local Chinese community. In practice, the achievement of these goals was qualified by the interests of the wealthy merchants who held office in these associations. When the Trujillo government attempted to enlist the services of the local SBC during the bubonic plague scare of 1904, the local Chinese as a unified community suddenly slipped through their fingers. The city was concerned that the many Chinese beggars on the street were a medium of infection and asked the Chinese community to take up the responsibility of removing them to a confined location. Their first attempts to contact the Chinese community through the SBC met only with responses by individuals who claimed to no longer be president of the association or to represent the Chinese as a whole. Eventually, several individuals presenting themselves merely as a group of influential merchants with no connection to the SBC or any other representative organization formulated a response:

The Inspection proposes to commit the Asian Colony to bear the cost of these beggars for three months, but it seems it did not take into account that the Colony is not a Society of Charity, nor are its members personally obligated to respond to obligations other than those which are related to the preservation of each one of us. If, then, each of us enjoys complete independence, responsible for the support of his family through his own actions and work, we would be doing wrong to commit ourselves to this, and [doing wrong] to the interests of the rest of the Asians in responding to such external necessities to which we are not obligated by any law, either individually or collectively.⁶⁵

Thus, the merchants justified their own freedom from responsibility as a claim for the rights of all Asians to be considered in terms of the individual rights recognized by Peruvian law. Of course, the city's request was very ill-timed, coming in the midst of a particularly severe hygiene inquiry against small businesses and the beginning of the legal campaign

against the pawnshops owned by the elite. Moreover, most of the beggars were former plantation laborers, precisely the group against which the merchants were trying to distinguish themselves as educated and well-to-do businessmen. The bubonic plague threat exposed the fragility of the ties that ran across different migrant networks and interests. Nonetheless, two weeks later the merchants compromised a little, offering to assist in the production of a large theatrical show for the benefit of plague victims. It was a form of charity that linked them more with the Trujillo bourgeoisie than with exotic, impoverished aliens.

Monopolizing Vice in Lima

The Chinese of Lima were more successful in presenting a public face of solidarity than those in Trujillo. Although I have found hints that Chinese nationalist politics were a source of tension, and a general tendency for Hakkas and Siyi migrants to move in different circles, such rifts never penetrated the appearance of unity. Most differences were enveloped in silence, and little documentary evidence is available to trace them. Even if the image of harmony did not accord with reality, the maintenance of such an image was still a remarkable achievement by the more powerful Chinese.

Struggles over the control of gambling and opium that accompanied the imposition of restrictive laws after the turn of the century are a rare case where Chinese differences are recorded in the public record. The concern to restrict opium and gambling was part of a larger interest on the part of nation-building Peruvian elite in the creation of urban order. Gambling, opium smoking, and "degenerate" activities in general were widely perceived by Peruvians as congenital and irrepressible aspects of Chinese culture (who blithely ignored how plantation owners had always provided their laborers with opium, not only because they believed it made the Chinese work harder and rebel less but also because its sale channeled much of their wages back into their own hands), and laws were designed to contain them as isolated spheres of Chinese activity. On their part, many Chinese were aware of the monopolies and profits that could be obtained by cooperating with the government in enforcing limited restrictions and pushing out competitors.

The licensing of opium, gambling, and prostitution had already begun in 1906. Larger prostitution and gambling establishments were mostly licensed out to non-Chinese, while lower-level gambling establishments and the sale of opium were managed by Chinese. The administration of licenses and regulations was put up for auction each year by the municipal

government, and the winning bidder was always Chinese. Aseng and Company, Auctioneers and Collectors of Special Police Fees and Licenses, successfully bid for the Lima licensing monopoly of 1909 and promptly began efforts to replace the existing gambling licenses with licenses for establishments of its own choosing. When Aseng presented the monthly licenses for approval, the subprefect of Lima noticed that all the names were different from those on the register of existing gambling establishments and refused to put his seal on them, admonishing Aseng not to be involved in managing gambling houses. Aseng subsequently made out licenses to the previous establishments but refused to hand them over to the representatives who came to collect them. Aseng explained itself by claiming that the representatives were not the real owners of the houses, making dark hints about the very existence of these owners and the sinister interests manipulating the legitimate practice of gaming in Lima for their own illicit purposes. The company also attempted to argue that because these houses were legally closed while these licensing problems were being resolved, there was nothing in the law to stop them from granting the licenses to new proprietors. This tactic was blocked by the prefect of Lima, but Aseng continued in its attempts to dislodge the existing establishments by raising the licensing fees, demanding the deposit of larger guarantees, upgrading the status of the houses to higher licensing categories, and imposing a multitude of fines for technical infractions. The existing gambling houses attempted to go over Aseng's head by appealing to the prefect with the claim that Aseng owned the houses to which it wanted to grant the new licenses. In March, the office of the prefect reversed its previous attitude and supported Aseng in all its attempts to impose extra fees and fines, noting that it did not matter who ran the gambling establishment so long as Aseng could pay the amount of money it had promised to the government.⁶⁶

Even before Aseng had gotten gambling in Lima firmly under its control, it had turned its attention to the rest of the Republic. The original charter for the collection companies only mentioned specific jurisdictions in a few provinces and for particular kinds of gambling houses—the specifications of which suggested that the original intention was only to regulate gambling in areas where there was a large Chinese population. In February Aseng requested that its jurisdiction be extended unambiguously to all the departments in the Republic and to all classes of gambling establishment, and the government agreed.⁶⁷ Notably, Aseng did not request that its jurisdiction be extended to all the brothels in the Republic as well, a vice with a much higher level of non-Chinese proprietorship and patronage, and with which Aseng maintained much more congenial rela-

tions. On the other hand, tactics of usurpation were immediately extended to the gambling houses of Trujillo. At first, the Trujillo Chinese refused to accept that Aseng's agent, Ricardo Pérez, had any jurisdiction in Trujillo, saying that they had always received their licenses from local pawnshop owner Li Chi (also known as Yec Li). The municipal government of Trujillo supported the local proprietors, ruling that Aseng could only collect fees and not replace houses. Aseng was able to secure the more powerful support of the prefect of Lima with the argument that they were providing the government with three times as much revenue as the previous collectors. Even so, they could not dominate the Trujillo market as easily as the one in Lima, and in 1910 they were still trying to put another of their own houses in place by taking advantage of a gap provided by the transfer of ownership of another local house.⁶⁸

Aseng and Company acted as collectors for five years. The collection monopoly was then granted to Yec Lee and Company from Trujillo in 1914, and to Tomás Yui Swayne in 1915. By Swayne's time the collecting monopoly was not as lucrative as before due to increased municipal interference. Whenever his actions were criticized by other Chinese, Swayne argued that the government should support him because nobody else wanted to act as collector since stricter gambling laws had reduced the opportunity for profit.⁶⁹ In 1916 the restrictions on gambling, opium, and prostitution were tightened and aimed more specifically at limiting these activities as specifically Chinese threats against the moral constitution of the city. At the beginning of the year, Chinese operated eight licensed opium dens, and nine Chinese stores had permission to sell opium. After a series of raids on unlicensed gambling and opium dens, the Peruvian government reduced the number of establishments permitted to sell opium to four and promulgated a host of restrictions that included stipulations for hygiene and methods of operation as well as restrictions against the entry of non-Asians. Licensed gambling establishments in Lima were also reduced to four. The collection company was eliminated, and the operation of establishments in Lima was granted to one Chinese entrepreneur in gambling and one in opium, both of whom were very enthusiastic in seeking out and notifying the police of illegal gambling and contraband opium.⁷⁰

Although the control of vice in Lima was an area of intense conflict between Chinese, it never degenerated into the open violence common in other Chinese migrant communities around the world. The plantations and mercantile companies owned by migrant elites of Peru already offered a significant source of wealth and domination that did not depend on the

control of gambling and vice. Their struggle depended not so much on the deployment of violence as on the ability to invoke the threat of violence controlled by the Peruvian state—an ability achieved by adhering to administrative procedure, developing special relationships with officials, and perpetuating the perception that Chinese affairs were unique and could be properly regulated only by other Chinese. In the 1920s, the Peruvian government finally consolidated its gradual penetration into the regulation of vice by taking control of the distribution of opium and banning gambling completely. This had two effects on the Chinese. One was the final delegitimization of activities that had come to be associated with Chinese and the public disassociation of Chinese elite from any involvement in their practice. The other was to bind Chinese elite closer to various members of the government who could protect illegal activities.

BECOMING COSMOPOLITAN IN THE ONCENIO

In a message to congress during his first presidency in 1911, President Augusto Leguía proclaimed, "With a clear vision of the future, the government has imperturbably followed the path of progress, and nothing will be able to divert it from this path. Peru, with its almost inexhaustible natural resources, only needs the general and conscientious cooperation of its social elements to become a respected and prosperous state."⁷¹ This was the standard vision of the Civilista government of those years, but not until a military coup in 1919 led to Leguía's second rise to power were comprehensive efforts made to impose that ideal beyond the small circle of Peru's coastal elite. The eleven years of Leguía's second presidency, known as the Oncenio, were also a relatively golden age of influence and prestige for many of the Chinese merchants in Peru who were able to mobilize local and international resources in response to Leguía's ambitions.

Leguía rode into office in 1919 on a wave of social turmoil and bitterness against the cliquishness and elitism of the Civilistas and their inability to firmly confront social problems. Through a committed disregard for democratic practices and institutions, Leguía was much more able to act upon visions of an integrated Peruvian nation producing wealth which could be sold to the world. His government built roads into the mountains, purged local strongmen, encouraged foreign investment in the systematic exploitation of natural resources, developed registration and conscription policies designed to involve more closely all residents of Peru in nation-building projects, erected buildings and monuments in the capital, and negotiated with neighboring countries to clearly define the national

borders. This wide embrace of the modern world facilitated the rise of progressive social and political organizations, which were careful to establish popular educational programs.

On the other hand, the implementation of modernity also included techniques for the repression of internal opposition. Even the generous welcome shown to foreign investment was tempered by registrations of foreigners, laws designed to expel pernicious aliens, and a strong paranoia about foreign infiltration in affairs of state. The consequence of this conditional commitment to openness and change was that the drive for a modern, integrated Peru resulted mostly in the increased ability of Peruvian elites and foreign enclaves to access and exploit Peruvian resources for the benefit of themselves and international markets. Some provincial elites expressed their dissatisfaction with Leguía's policies through their congressional representatives, while others resisted his invasive policies through rebellions in the early 1920s. Urban intellectuals constantly complained of nepotism, patriarchalism, disregard of democratic procedure, plutocracy, and the toleration of corruption practiced by his administration, all to little effect. Objections were systematically repressed and ignored, rebellions were defeated, congress made impotent, and intellectuals imprisoned.⁷²

Leguía took an opportunistic approach toward Asian immigrants. He had been directly involved, through his position with the British Sugar Company, in the importation of the first batches of Japanese contract laborers after the turn of the century. Many people suspected he had a similar interest in the importation of Chinese, but his connections there were much different.⁷³ As president in 1909, he had acceded to the victimization of the Chinese in the name of preserving social order by promulgating the first anti-immigration decree. He explained to Wu Tingfang that this action was only undertaken in order to mollify the workers but that he personally had no belief in the inherent inferiority of any race and supported the advancement of all peoples through education.⁷⁴ If, during the Oncenio, his government never publicly promoted the Chinese cause, the actions of his officials suggested that the ability of Chinese to reproduce the political rhetoric of the New Fatherland and act as sources of profit to individual officials was indeed more important than skin color in obtaining political patronage.

Immigration During the Oncenio

The common ground of material profit forged between the Chinese elite in Peru and Leguía's supporters was clearly apparent in Chinese migration

practices during the Oncenio. From 1909 to 1919, every consul in Hong Kong felt compelled to send at least one communication to Lima expressing his strong opposition to the "danger" of Chinese immigration, a protestation of loyalty that few Leguian consuls felt compelled to make. In defending themselves against accusations of corruption, some Leguian consuls even went out of their way to defer to the Chinese in Peru, writing comments like, "The Asians of this place [Hong Kong], who are in their own country, are not the peaceful individuals we know in our own; . . . once they are outside of the jurisdiction of the Republic, they remove their masks and begin their destructive work, most of all that which can serve their ambition and personal profit."⁷⁵ Such observations had their roots as much in the personal and professional problems of the consuls as in any deportment on the part of the Chinese, but they nonetheless reflected the esteem that Chinese were beginning to enjoy among some sectors of Peruvian society.

Before 1919, most fraudulent migration through Callao had primarily taken the form of altered return certificates, paper sons, and the corruption of lower-level Peruvian officials. By 1919, a system of multiple photographs, improved communication and record keeping, and passports put in care of ships' accountants had made the fraudulent practices of the previous ten years more difficult.⁷⁶ Fortunately for potential Chinese migrants, the Oncenio produced new opportunities for semilegal migration. The special permits granted to Chinese companies to replace their employees provided the foundation of these opportunities. Before 1919, permits had been limited and not created any significant administrative problems. The Chinese legation was expected to investigate each request and present a final list to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, which approved it and forwarded it to the consul in Hong Kong. The number of permits never exceeded one hundred for any year prior to 1920, and everyone involved took pains to create an appearance of rectitude. The Chinese legation in particular often remarked how much smaller its final list was compared to the number of requests it received. If the actual distribution and use of permits was still subject to fraud and corruption, it was of little concern to the government, because the total number of permits granted was closely regulated.

During the Oncenio, this formal procedure was put aside, and the granting of permits increased dramatically. Four hundred and six permits were authorized in the first eight months of 1922, many of which were written and signed by prominent supporters of the Leguian government, such as congressional Deputy Manuel Quimper, founder of the newspaper *El Tiempo* (which had once been notorious for its outspoken anti-Chinese

stance but now included pro-Chinese pieces and advertisements); Deputy Ernesto Devéscovi and the famous doctor Enrique Basadre, both connected to the interests of the Peruvian Steamship Company; Minister of War Germán Luna Iglesias; ex-Prefect of Lima and Minister of the Navy Octavio Casanave; and the two sons of the president, Carlos and Augusto Leguía Swayne, who were widely rumored to be involved in gambling and the distribution of opium in Lima.⁷⁷ Chinese to whom such permits were granted merely presented themselves to the consul in Hong Kong with a signed letter which said, "Certified by [name of prominent person], who has guaranteed the honorable conduct of the named [Chinese persons] and their condition as merchants." Then the consul compared the names with a list sent by the ministry and granted the visa. As could be expected with the multiple origins of the permits, confusion was unavoidable, and the blame for misunderstandings generally fell on the heads of the consuls. The Chinese in Hong Kong were more reserved in their accusations against the consuls than previously, now allowing high officials in Lima to exert the bulk of the pressure.⁷⁸ Despite the occasional delays, the future of migration under this permit system looked promising enough that Chinese merchants in Lima established the Chungwha Navigation Company in 1921, with stockholders in Chile, Panama, Mexico, Honolulu, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.⁷⁹

The rise in Chinese immigration was again accompanied by an increase in public anti-Chinese sentiments, which had never disappeared since 1909 but had become somewhat more muted. The general strike of May 1919, which set the stage for the Leguian coup in July, was the occasion for another outburst of looting, albeit one more indiscriminately directed at petty merchants of all races. The financial reparations by the Leguian government to the Chinese were made in only nine months, much more quickly than after 1909.⁸⁰ In the 1920s, however, Chinese immigration and the corruption that surrounded it gained new significance as a wedge that could be used by anti-Leguian congressmen in their generally futile struggles against the president. By 1922, the institutions of civil society were once again suffused with anti-Chinese sentiment. Labor organizations like the Anti-Asian Patriotic League presented petitions to their representatives in congress. Letters, editorials, and articles against Chinese immigration filled the newspapers.⁸¹ A law requiring the closure of Chinese medicine shops was promulgated in June of 1922, citing the need to protect gullible women from unscientific charlatanism.

A widespread belief emerged that Chinese immigration was not proceeding in accordance to the Porras-Wu Protocol and that corrupt bureau-

crats were to blame. In July 1922, the Callao authorities refused to allow the Chinese passengers of the Japanese vessel *Anyo Maru* to disembark. The Chinese Commercial Agent, Tsung-Yee Lo, immediately obtained a personal audience with Leguía, during which he appealed to the rights of immigration guaranteed by the Porras-Wu Protocol. Leguía's personal intervention led to the Chinese being able to disembark "without delay."⁸² Despite this presidential interest, the Ministry of Foreign Relations ordered the Hong Kong consul to grant no more visas allowing Chinese to travel to Peru (an order he seems to have interpreted loosely).⁸³ In November 1922, the House of Deputies sent a special commission to investigate the status of the Chinese who had just arrived in Callao on the steamer *Ginyo Maru*. Their report stated that of the 106 Chinese on board they allowed only 16 to disembark, including 13 men with return passports issued by the Chinese legation in Lima, 2 children, and 1 woman, who did not require passports according to the protocol. Otherwise, they interpreted the Porras-Wu Protocol as a total prohibition of all new migration, noting that the other passengers did not know Spanish, were not familiar with Peru, and had defective passports. They concluded with a proposal for legislation that would, "from this moment cut off all Asian immigration." The law was approved without discussion, but with "great applause."⁸⁴

Again the Chinese Commercial Agent obtained an audience with Leguía.⁸⁵ The proposed law was never presented to the Senate, but Chinese migration was suspended for nearly two years until June 1924, when it was reinitiated through clandestine diplomacy. In March of 1924, the Chinese legation had sent a communication to the Ministry of Foreign Relations requesting it to live up to an oral promise that, after Congress was in recess, Chinese who had previously resided in Peru would be permitted to return. In July, the Ministry authorized its consul in Hong Kong to visa the passports of three hundred Chinese who knew Spanish, whose return would be distributed over the next three voyages. Fifty more returns were authorized in August, as well as 120 special permissions for new arrivals. These authorizations were justified partially "with a view to maintaining the existence of Chung Wha [Navigation Company]." This crack in the dike led to a flood, and by 1925, Chinese migration to Peru exceeded the levels of 1922. More than 1,300 migrants left Hong Kong between June 1924 and August 1925, at least 549 of whom carried special permissions issued by the Chinese Legation and approved by the Ministry of Foreign Relations.⁸⁶

Public Image

The willingness of the Leguistas to support Chinese migration was based on more than just a mutual interest in illegitimate profit and a taste for intrigue and personal favors. The Chinese also cooperated in the production of similar visions about the modernization of Peru. Whatever journalists, congressmen, and labor organizations thought of the Chinese and their unsuitability for Peruvian society, the migrants found a comfortable niche in the Leguian vision of the "New Fatherland." Basadre described the characteristics of the New Fatherland as a desire for the "miraculous realization of progress" and an exaltation of practical politics over the "vague, the diffuse." "Practical politics" in action tended to mean a toleration of high levels of personal enrichment by the political elite (although Leguía himself was believed to be quite honorable) and a strict public order that originated in strong government. The concrete goals most strongly promoted by the New Fatherland were a spirit of commercialism, the growth of a middle class, material progress, and urban development.⁸⁷ In such a political environment, the Chinese could develop a much more vigorous public response to the attacks made on them than they did in the previous decade. They were in a good position to present themselves as a group willing and able to fulfill the Leguian demand for progress, international commerce, and the full utilization of the natural resources of Peru.

In the 1920s, Chinese frequently contributed to the debate about them in the Peruvian press. The most common tactic was to compare Chinese migrants favorably to other migrants, selecting judiciously from all the readily available stereotypes. The Japanese were a favored foil, with several writers complaining that Japanese migrants had largely been spared for no good reason the public opposition that had arisen against the Chinese. As a letter sent by a Chinese to *El Comercio* put it, the Japanese "do not represent to the Republic a laborious element, patient and docile, like the Chinese, but a rebellious and dangerous factor which feels itself supported by the cannons of its homeland."⁸⁸ Another tactic was to emphasize the services provided by Chinese merchants and businessmen in distributing cheap goods and providing employment to the poor. A full-page advertisement for the Wing On Chong Company published in *El Tiempo* on New Year's Day, 1923, began with a long discourse on the values of international trade. It pointed out how Chinese business had contributed to the development of a maritime traffic which traded South American raw materials for Oriental silks and porcelain and had added greatly to the national treasury through tariff payments. The role of the Chinese was given an anti-imperialist twist by depicting Chinese commerce as preferable to

that of other foreign colonies because the Chinese only acted as intermediaries between foreign producers and Peruvian buyers and did not force any unwanted products on the market. The article also argued that the success of Chinese-run agricultural enterprises in Peru had proven that Peruvian workers could produce just as much as Europeans, given an efficient and humane management willing to pay adequate wages. The willingness of Chinese to contribute to the development of Peru was due not only to their inherent sense of generosity and gratitude, but also to the rising prestige and self-awareness that accompanied the transformation of China into a modern nation:

These [Chinese commercial] houses have understood that the energies of the foreigner should not be limited only to the deed of carving out a fortune to attain personal well-being, but should also be applied to the benefit of the country which has furnished this fortune. That is why there is no activity where the action of well-organized Chinese capital has not been felt, not with the object of dominating, but with the disinterested object of repaying the hospitality and generosity which the nationals of this beautiful country have given. . . . Chinese commerce has now entered a stage of progress which speaks well of the advantages which the new men, who make incarnate the ideals of the renovation transforming China since the revolution, bring to the colony. . . . These men . . . have reorganized commerce on foundations of efficiency which it did not have before. They do in Peru what they have done in their homeland, in order to extract all of the benefit possible from contemporary civilization, but with a spirit of cooperation in which respect for the country in which they labor is united with the desire to return the benefits which the country has offered them.⁸⁹

Articles such as this attempted to promote the Chinese in the racial hierarchy of Peru to the level of the white coastal elite, while still claiming a certain sympathy for the interests of Peru which other foreign merchant colonies did not have. The suggestion that China was successfully undergoing a revolutionary transformation into an efficient, modern nation implied not only that Chinese merchants brought managerial skills and access to commercial opportunity, but also that they had a memory of foreign domination which translated into affinity with other dominated peoples and experience in overcoming that domination. They were to be a progressive and humble elite which actually lived up to the modern, humanitarian ideals that were promised but not delivered by other elites.

In 1924 the Chinese repeated many of these points in a book distributed to members of congress, entitled, *The Chinese Colony in Peru: Representative Men and Institutions: Its Beneficial Action in the National Life*. It was intended "to convince congress of the importance of having a Chinese colony among us as an element of progress, as a factor of order, and as a stimulant of the national energies, now that thousands of Peruvian workers are already at the service of Chinese agricultural enterprises, where they are always treated with all manner of consideration."⁹⁰ It contained biographies, descriptions of Chinese-owned businesses and plantations, advertisements for Chinese and non-Chinese firms, and essays emphasizing the low rates of delinquency and mendicancy among the Chinese. In many ways the book promoted the importance of thriving commerce in building a strong nation even more than the desirability of having the Chinese in Peru. The dedication of the book to "the illustrious statesman" Mr. Leguía asserted,

Our country, hospitable because of the excellence and the enthusiastic welcome of all initiative by nationals and foreigners, which tends to increase commercial and industrial activity, has Mr. Leguía as its most genuine representative. With the singular commercial vision which has distinguished him since his youth, Mr. Leguía has understood that the economic future of the country depends in large part on taking advantage of all the living forces that contribute their fertile initiatives, their capital, and their energies to the end of placing Peru in the first rank among the countries most distinguished by a high level of economic activity.⁹¹

The Chinese who produced the book underlined their links to international commerce but downplayed any links or loyalties to a foreign government of the kind for which they had criticized the Japanese. They also discouraged perceptions of local Chinese institutions as organs of political power and social control independent of the Peruvian government. The book claimed that the SBC had been reorganized as the Central Chinese Society and was no longer an organization providing regulation and political representation but a forum for the social gatherings of men committed to performing humanitarian acts: "The idea could not have been more brilliant, because when converted into a social group, the humanitarian acts of the Sociedad de Beneficencia China will naturally be more frequent and effective; and because the idea of charity is born more freely and spontaneously from the social gatherings than from committees charged with practicing it in organized form."⁹² Similarly, the Chinese

newspaper, *La Voz de la Colonia China*, founded in 1911 as an organ of political factions in opposition to Sun Yat-sen, now represented itself as an organ of the "independent mercantile interests" of the Chinese community, which was "little by little putting itself in direct contact with Chinese commerce in the capital and the rest of the Republic, and progressing rapidly in connecting itself to the social interests of the colony and its commercial interests, which find themselves represented and defended in *La Voz*."⁹³

Dora Mayer, whom we saw fifteen years earlier characterizing the Chinese as the feet and hands of the whites, now made her own contribution to this outburst of positive publicity with a book entitled *China, Silent and Eloquent: A Homage from the Chinese Colony to Peru: Motivated by the Centennial of Her Independence* (and she probably wrote, under the pen name Zulana, the long advertisement in *El Tiempo* quoted above). This book offered a romanticized version of Chinese civilization and history which challenged her earlier position on the greater suitability of the locally rooted Indians to be cultivated as members of the Peruvian nation by asking, "Is it possible to believe that the barbarian Zulu or Inca Indian is more assimilable than people of the classical secular civilization of Asia?"⁹⁴ She also distinguished the recently arrived Chinese migrants from the coolies of the previous century as more cultured, educated, and like the "respectable foreigners" from Western Europe and the United States.⁹⁵

The Chinese also followed the practice of other foreign colonies by contributing to the monumental statuary of Leguian Lima. For the centennial of the Independence of Peru in 1921, funds were collected from among all the Chinese to have a marble fountain built in Italy and shipped to Lima (fig. 10). The sculpture on top of the fountain depicting a woman surrounded by several children was meant to represent nature protecting the many races of mankind. The young boy on the left of the fountain and the young woman on the right were meant to symbolize Peru and China. Each of these figures held jars from which streams of water cascaded into a larger basin, where they mixed into a single current, signifying that, "The rice and silk of the Yangtze had arrived at the margins of the Amazon, and coffee and sugar from the valley of Chanchamayo had approached the mouth of the Yellow River."⁹⁶ The fountain arrived in 1924, in time for the centenary of the Battle of Ayacucho, and was presented to the city in a grand ceremony attended by Leguía, his ministers, and several important Chinese merchants. Aurelio Powsan Chia and Escudero Whu were granted the Order of the Sun in recognition of their efforts.



Figure 10 Commemorative Fountain for the Centenary of the Independence of Peru. (Author's photograph)

Effects of Chinese Efforts

The Chinese media campaigns did have some effect on Peruvian attitudes. The illustrated weekly *Variedades*, which had been one of the greatest cheerleaders of the destruction of the Callejón Otaiza in 1909, now noted with approval that the top hats and tuxedos worn by the Chinese to the many respectable functions they were invited to attend gave them a demeanor of "aristocracy and distinction."⁹⁷ Banks printed advertisements in Chinese on the front pages of Peruvian newspapers, stressing their convenient connections with financial institutions in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Chinese even attained a certain level of respectability among the Europeans and North Americans in Lima. An article in the English-language weekly, the *West Coast Leader*, compared the Chinese in Lima favorably to

those in San Francisco and to the native population of Peru. It remarked that the plantations operated by Chinese were "models of scientific cultivation. The labor is Peruvian, and the welfare of the peons is studied in every way." The most notable cause for compliment, however, was the remarkable ability of the Chinese to assimilate into Peruvian life:

The Chinaman does not assimilate himself with ways that are disorderly and unmethodical, and cleanliness is to him very near akin to godliness. . . . He has not sought to bring China to Peru or to live in an isolated aloofness. On the contrary, he has adapted himself to his Peruvian surroundings to a greater degree than any other immigrant. The Chinese merchant or working man goes about his affairs in exactly the same manner as the business man or laborer from any other part of the world. . . . Taken by and large, there is no more industrious and law-abiding element in the country.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most fascinating conflation of the interests of the Chinese with the interests of upper-class Lima and international commerce were the reports which appeared in the Chinese and English-language press of Hong Kong in 1923 and 1924 that anti-Chinese riots in Lima were being suppressed by United States Marines.⁹⁹

The alliances and conflicts established by 1922 repeated themselves through the rest of the Oncenio. The struggle of congress and labor against Leguía's support of Chinese migration began another cycle in August 1925, when the authorities in Callao only allowed 18 of the 258 Chinese passengers of the *Bokuyo Maru* to disembark. As in 1922, their release was obtained through clandestine diplomacy. This time the Chinese commercial agent made a deal with the minister of government, the minister of foreign relations, and the chief of police in Callao "to extra-officially permit the excluded passengers to find their own means and methods of disembarking, but not in Callao, with the promise that they would not be pursued by the local authorities."¹⁰⁰ In the end, however, they were taken to Panama, where they awaited the efforts of the legation to secure their entry with new special permits, an alternate farce which had also been suggested by the Peruvian ministers.¹⁰¹ In October, the 194 passengers on the *Rakuyo Maru* disembarked only through the intervention of President Leguía, and Chinese immigration was again suspended.¹⁰²

This suspension meant the end of the Chungwha Navigation Company, but not the end of Chinese migration to Peru. As with the previous suspension, migration was resumed after several months with a concession to the Chinese legation for a limited quantity of returning Chinese

and special permits, this time restricted to twenty-five Chinese per boat. In December 1926, the legation suggested a rigorous procedure for the granting of special permits that would give it "complete and strict control over the new Chinese, in order to assure their quality."¹⁰³ The proposal was quickly accepted by the Ministry of Foreign Relations and led, once again, to the highest numbers of immigrants since 1908, reaching a peak of 1,233 in 1929, 795 of whom came with special permissions. Far from assuring the quality of new migrants, the legation even granted special permits without specifying the names of the migrants to whom they were granted.¹⁰⁴

AFTER COSMOPOLITANISM

The Collapse of Respectability

Chinese became undesirable aliens once again with the fall of Leguía in 1930. Whatever identification the Chinese had achieved with the Leguian government had suddenly become a political liability. The military coup led by the populist Luís Sánchez Cerro brought a vision of the Fatherland quite different from the Leguian one. One worker remembered the triumphant entry of Sánchez Cerro into Lima as a kind of euphoria: "Everybody was a Sánchezcerrista. Blacks, whites, *cholos*. The people cried, they applauded, they embraced him. . . . I have never seen anything like it."¹⁰⁵ He notably did not include Asians in his vision of "everybody." Yellow skin was on par with foreign capital and connections to corrupt and autocratic Leguian officials as anathema to this new vision of the Fatherland.

One of the first acts of the new government in 1930 was to impose a total ban on the entry of all Asians, including naturalized citizens and those who had families in Peru. The ban on Japanese, who were backed by a strong government, was partially lifted after three weeks, but the ban on Chinese remained in force for nearly two years.¹⁰⁶ The only concession granted the Chinese government was to allow it to maintain the fiction that migration had been suspended voluntarily by China in accordance with the Porras-Wu Protocol. A quota of twenty permissions issued each month to Chinese who had not been out of the country for more than two years was in place by 1935, and ratified with a new protocol in 1941.¹⁰⁷ Other new laws included a prohibition on the sale of herbal medicine in December 1930, stricter anti-gambling laws in March 1931, several local laws prohibiting the establishment or sale of businesses to foreigners, and the native employment law of April, 1932, which required that at least 80 percent of the workers in any business be Peruvian. Other

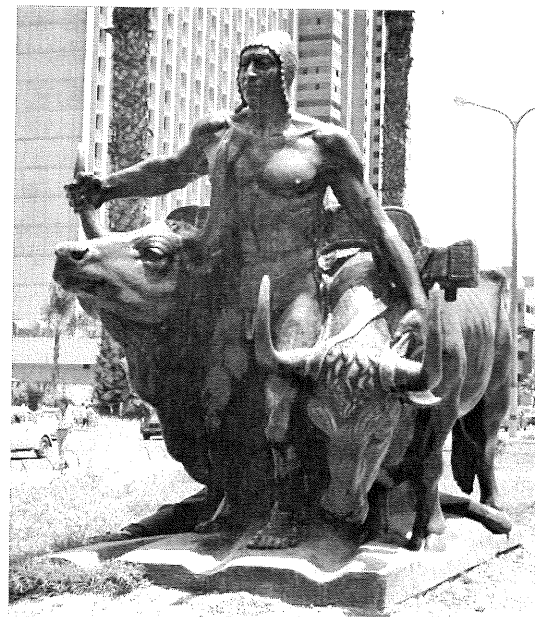


Figure 11 Statue in Honor of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of Lima. (Author's photograph)

than some objections against the native employment law, the Chinese usually gave way in the face of the uncompromising ideological fervor in support of these regulations, agreeing that they were necessary to avoid more popular disturbances. They also continued with some attempts to ingratiate themselves with the new government, such as another contribution to the public statuary of Lima made in 1935 in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of the capital (fig. 11). This time two bronze sculptures were offered, one of a peasant with Indian features leading oxen and one of a group of llamas, which appealed to Peruvian nationalism more than to international brotherhood.¹⁰⁸

The Legacy of Respectability

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which images of the Chinese as a sophisticated and mercantile foreign colony actually circulated through Peruvian society. The Leguian government, the Chinese legation, and the migrant elite had found common ground both in rhetoric that justified the migration of honorable and commercially oriented Chinese and in the financial rewards that came from the channeling of such migration, but it would be difficult to argue that the Chinese shared in any but the smallest part of the status granted to Europeans and North Americans. The image-

building campaign had clearly backfired by the 1930s, but it did have some strong, long-term effects. Both Chinese and non-Chinese in Peru today have little memory of the powerful anti-Chinese sentiments common earlier in this century, and images of Chinese as honorable and diligent workers, skillful merchants, and immigrants open to assimilation into Peruvian society are now widely accepted. These images are inseparable from contemporary political strategies, but support for them has been drawn from readings of publications produced by the Chinese decades ago.

A commemorative volume put out by the Chinese community for the centennial anniversary of the SBC in 1986 reproduced these tropes of friendship, harmony, and integration. One passage on the history of the Chinese in Peru echoed the advice of Wu Tingfang seventy-seven years earlier in describing success and interracial harmony that consisted of each person maintaining his proper place:

The Chinese did not trust Peruvian workers. When they needed a partner, they always hired their compatriots. If they needed merchandise transported, they hired local people. Because of this relationship, the life of the Chinese was always within the circle of their countrymen, and they did not have conflicts with anybody. They nurtured their own strength, and never tried to steal Peruvians' "rice bowl." This is why even though the Chinese of those years were the victims of some discrimination, they never were victims of hatred or exclusion. This is because the Chinese never had any conflict with Peruvians in industry, business, or matters of profit, and the great majority of Chinese upheld the public order and conformed to the rules.¹⁰⁹

The American anthropologist Bernard Wong also looked through this rose-colored history in his comparison of Chinese assimilation in Lima and New York in the 1970s. He argued that the Chinese in Peru assimilated much more successfully because "the Peruvians are used to cooperating with people of many different cultures in the economic and social spheres. There is no desire to maintain a superior race or the homogeneity of a ruling racial group. Their racial attitudes are tolerant, and their economic and social structures are pluralistic."¹¹⁰ One significant difference between Wong's depiction of Chinese integration and the rhetoric produced by the Chinese is that Wong understands the process of acceptance as incorporation into an egalitarian pluralism (the populist pluralism that did emerge under Sánchez Cerro had little place for the Chinese), whereas the Chinese, both then and now, clearly understood that they were negotiating their way up a racial hierarchy. Much of their economic

success was based on exploiting the gap between the white elite and non-white lower classes, but they wanted to shake off the negative associations with the lower classes that had originated in their days as plantation laborers and still persisted through their extensive, small-scale retail interests. Their claim to acceptance was not a claim to become Peruvian but to be considered as respectable foreign residents capable of productively exploiting the material and human wealth of the country.