



The Auspicious Legacy of the Ancestors in Hawaii

Most Chinese in Peru and Chicago in the early twentieth century were born in China, and their experiences were strongly linked to global migrant networks. In Hawaii, by the 1930s, as many as half of the Chinese were locally born. They had little experience with the physical act of migration and were more likely to conceptualize their future primarily in terms of Hawaii. Nonetheless, the precedents and institutions created by earlier migrants, the reputation of the Chinese nation, and the opportunities offered by transnational networks continued to shape their activities and public relations.

By the 1900s, China-born migrants in Hawaii had achieved even more recognition as successful businessmen than the Chinese in Peru in the 1920s. In Peru the image of the cosmopolitan businessman adhered only to a handful of elites. In Hawaii, the image of the respectable merchant was shared by a much larger spectrum of Chinese engaged in a variety of small-scale retail and wholesale activities. They were well integrated into the Hawaiian economy and experienced less competition over the control of segregated economies. As in Peru, the Chinese in Hawaii had close relations with diplomatic representatives from China and made direct links between the international status of China and their own local status. The stronger social status of Chinese in Hawaii, however, meant that even though the Chinese had close relationships with Chinese officials, they were not so dependent on official representation, and these relationships were often quite stormy. In the early 1900s, Chinese nationalist politics was the most public site of conflict among Chinese in Hawaii. The struggle for political recognition surpassed economic interests, native place, and surname alliances as the issue that defined competition among the Chinese.

By the 1920s, with the failure of the republic and the rise of a strong locally born generation, Chinese increasingly defined themselves in terms

of Hawaii as a coherent ethnic group in a multicultural society. Interest in the struggles of Chinese politics was replaced by a less partisan interest in the rise of China as a modern nation. Interest in the old migrant associations was also revived in the 1930s as markers of local ethnicity and immigrant heritage. Local Chineseness was critically shaped by American patriotic rhetoric. The public agenda of the federal government, which promoted the United States as a land of immigrants and freedom that was hostile to patriarchal and elitist domination, provided guidelines for appropriating aspects of the Chinese past and presenting them as a local ethnic heritage. It also offered a vocabulary that could be used strategically to compete for status with other groups on Hawaii.

BEFORE ANNEXATION

The Early Chinese Presence in Hawaii

As agriculturists, merchants, and financiers, Chinese created and dominated many of the networks that connected rural Hawaii with Honolulu and plantations with villages in the nineteenth century. As merchants, they distributed a variety of consumer items imported by the large Chinese and *haole* (a word referring to Caucasians other than Portuguese and Spanish immigrants) firms in Honolulu to villages and plantation laborers throughout the Islands, and they provided capital and tools to Chi-

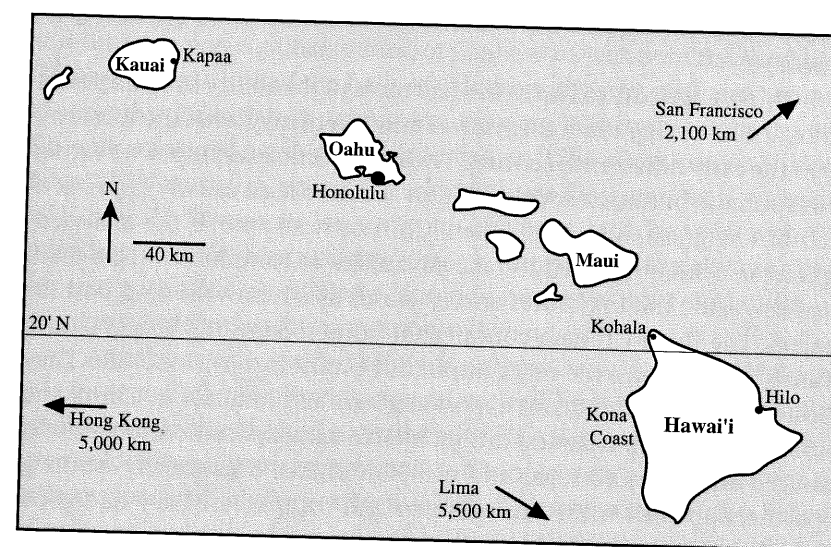


Figure 16 The Hawaiian Islands

nese rice growers. They cultivated good economic relations with both haoles and Hawaiians; among the former, they found reliable markets, suppliers, millers, and financial connections with the former, and from the latter they obtained favors from the royalty, a pool of temporary laborers, and steady customers for their shops. They collected and shipped locally grown produce back to Honolulu, often on terms of barter and credit with Hawaiians that few haoles would have been willing to grant, but which were secure investments for the Chinese, who were better integrated into rural life. As rice and taro planters, Chinese also reclaimed and utilized land owned by themselves, haoles, and Hawaiians.

Some rice-growing districts were so heavily populated by Chinese migrants that they could appear to be independent of other Hawaiian social structures, with water buffalo and fruit trees imported directly from China. As late as the 1920s, many rice farmers continued to be perplexed by the behavior of white landowners and tax collectors. The visits of Chinese or Hawaiian tax collectors and landlords were social events, a time for food, smoking, and the reinforcement of social ties. White landlords, on the other hand, were an enigma. When they visited their lands, they could only speak of contracts and avoided other displays of mutual commitment. They often knew nothing of farming and cared little for socializing. The autonomy of Chinese agricultural districts, however, depended precisely on the links to markets, money, and services provided by Chinese who successfully merged into non-Chinese Hawaiian life. When the need arose to deal directly with the haole owners, planters who had connections with interpreters and merchants in Honolulu were at a great advantage.¹

Chinese agricultural activities had roots in the ability of some prominent Chinese to ingratiate themselves and intermarry with the local royalty in the early nineteenth century. Their connections and spouses earned them special economic concessions and access to land usually kept out of reach of foreigners. As businessmen, Chinese were among the many entrepreneurs who attempted to take advantage of Hawaii's strategic place on trans-Pacific trading routes and its status as a reprovisioning port for whalers. The three Chinese commercial houses, Samsing, Hungtai, and Tyhune, were among the most important businesses in Honolulu. They supplied ships, imported and exported goods and luxuries to China and California, operated bakeries, ran inter-island transportation routes, and managed and financed sugar and rice plantations, occasionally working in partnership with white businessmen and companies. They had good relations with the Hawaiian royalty and even enjoyed a certain amount of respect among the rather exclusive haole community in Honolulu.²

Following the examples of the Americans and Germans in Honolulu, the Chinese merchants threw a great ball in 1856 to honor the marriage of King Kamehameha V and Queen Emma. Although some participants were patronizing and astonished at the Chinese ability to throw such a successful party, most praised it as a successful social event and took pride in the cosmopolitan atmosphere it lent to Honolulu society.³ The ball was successful largely because of its embellishment of Western social forms with smatterings of exotic detail. Elaborate Chinese costumes, beautifully presented food, and dance cards written in romanized Cantonese impressed all who attended as tasteful, intriguing, and exotic variations on the standard grand ball. Chinese merchants were also invited to social affairs thrown by haoles, and cosmopolitan pride can be seen in comments such as this from the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* about a soiree held by the British consul-general in 1861, which noted "a striking and characteristic feature of our polyglot society—the presence of our leading Chinese merchants, than whom His Majesty does not possess more faithful and devoted servants, as honored guests."⁴

Even in the increasing anti-Chinese atmosphere that arose between the late 1860s and the 1880s, Chinese retained much of their political clout. Although Hawaiians often allied with haole immigrants in opposition to Chinese, this rarely interfered with cordial personal relations in day-to-day life. This was also true at the highest levels of government. King Kalakaua, who reigned from 1874 to 1891 after running for election on a platform of "Hawaii for the Hawaiians" and "Preserve and Increase the Race," was remembered by many Chinese as a "friend of the Chinese," and his reign was a golden period of Chinese influence in the Kingdom.⁵ Chinese lobbyists filled the halls of Congress, offering gifts and banquets to receptive Hawaiian congressmen, assuring that many proposed anti-Chinese measures never passed into law. In 1882, Commissioner of Immigration Armstrong wrote, "Everywhere the King goes he is welcomed by [Chinese]; flowers are strewn in his pathway; satin banners with Chinese dragons greet him at every turn; . . . the walls of the city are always covered with Chinese emblems, and no one knows what they mean. . . . It is a very uncomfortable condition to live under."⁶

Armstrong's discomfort reminds us that Chinese political influence was inseparable from growing stresses within the Hawaiian government. Haoles were increasingly dissatisfied with Hawaiian rule and were making ever-bolder attempts to control policy. Chinese were a haole concern not only as potential laborers or "undesirable" immigrants, but also because of growing rumors and fears that the Chinese government had designs on Hawaii and may even have been planning a naval invasion. Attempts to

sign a treaty between China and Hawaii were undermined by haole opposition, and attempts to establish a Chinese consulate were delayed several years until 1881. Kalakaua's 1879 investiture of the merchant Chun Afong as a Hawaiian noble and member of His Majesty's Privy Consul was done in part as compensation for failed diplomatic negotiations.⁷

In the end the close relationship of Kalakaua and prominent Chinese led to the besmirching of both of their reputations by the opium scandal of 1887. After the Hawaiian legislation restored a licensed opium monopoly in 1886 at a set price of \$30,000, a Chinese rice planter named Aki claimed Kalakaua had accepted \$71,000 from him in return for the license but then granted the monopoly to Chun Alung, a China-born son of Chun Afong, who had taken part in the first Chinese educational mission in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1872, accompanied Yung Wing to Peru in 1874 to investigate the conditions of Chinese plantation laborers, received a degree at Yale, and had recently left his post as assistant to the Chinese envoy in Washington, Chen Lanbin. Kalakaua insisted he had thought the money from Aki was just a gift and that no commitment had been promised in return. Aki took the case to court, which determined that the king could do no wrong and thus could not be sued. This financial immunity did not translate into political immunity. Kalakaua attempted to counteract criticisms and gossip about the affair by buying the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, using money provided by Alung, who had agreed to finance the purchase only after Kalakaua blocked an attempt to raise the Chinese landing fee from two dollars to ten. Such efforts were in vain. The opium scandal remained one more justification used in the 1887 haole uprising that led to haole control of the legislature and a new constitution that revoked suffrage for all Asians not born on the Islands, including those who had naturalized.⁸

The Rise of the Haoles

The rise of anti-Chinese attitudes in Hawaii was closely linked to the rise of haole power. Although far from united in their opinions, missionaries contributed greatly to the early fund of negative images of Chinese on the Islands. In their zeal to educate, nurture, and civilize the Hawaiians, they often depicted the Chinese, with their opium and gambling, as a negative moral influence on the impressionable Hawaiians. They believed the lack of Chinese women led to the corruption of Hawaiian women, while Chinese cleverness and lust for profit deceived the Hawaiians into acting against their own best interests. Their opposition to Chinese was not absolute but closely linked to their conceptions of the nuclear family as a

basis of Christian civilization. Although they occasionally opposed Chinese immigration, they were just as likely to call for the immigration of Chinese women, which they believed would result in families that were more likely to treat Hawaii as a home. Indeed, as early as the mid-nineteenth century, the offspring of unions between Chinese men and Hawaiian women had come to symbolize the future of Hawaii, not only as a sign of emerging Chinese-Hawaiian hybridity, but also because of their ability and eagerness to conform to missionary ideas of what respectable Hawaiian society should be like. Missionary teachers in Hilo commented that the Chinese-Hawaiian girls "were the best educated, the most fluent in English, the neatest housewives, and the most likely young ladies," and predicted of both girls and boys that they were "destined to occupy stations of great influence."⁹

By the 1880s, anti-Chinese activities in Honolulu had received a shot of energy from the growing community of haole artisans and from newspapers claiming to be the organs of the working class. Their propaganda accused the Chinese of pushing the Hawaiians out of employment and found receptive ears among Hawaiian voters and politicians who were excellent allies in presenting anti-Chinese bills to the Hawaiian congress. The series of immigration bills which led to the near cessation of Chinese immigration 1886 has already been outlined in chapter 2. After that year, the legislature considered a new series of bills aimed mostly against Asian property and economic influence. One of the most offensive to the Chinese was a bill requiring that all business accounts be kept in English, Hawaiian, or a European language, which was pushed past King Kalakaua's veto to become law in 1888. Several laws restricting Chinese land ownership also passed over the next few years. None of these measures, however, brought with them the same level of bloodthirsty popular participation and demagoguery that had shaped the anti-Chinese movement in California. Many of the earliest attempts to pass migration legislation were against labor migration in general, rather than specifying Asians. Hawaiian resistance to all forms of immigration was linked to their hostility against the planters who promoted it and the regime of disciplined labor and profit they were trying to impose. Haoles and Asians were two sides of the same problem in the eyes of Hawaiians: the white men took away their land in the country, and the Asians their employment in the towns.¹⁰

In Peru, the thirty-year gap between the end of the labor trade and the resurgence of Chinese migration had made the popular link between elite exploitation and the spread of urban Chinese artisans and traders somewhat implausible by the early twentieth century. In Hawaii, however, the rising influence of haole planters and money following the sugar

boom that came with the 1876 treaty of reciprocity with the United States was very closely linked to the local status of Chinese. Not only did the sheer number of Chinese migrants imported to work on the plantations arouse local resistance, but they also lacked the wealth necessary to present the cultured image cultivated by the merchants, and ex-plantation workers were seen as flooding urban retail and artisanal trades with unreasonably cheap competition.

Equally significant was the decline of the monarchy and missionary influence, and its replacement by a rising haole oligarchy.¹¹ The inefficient social structures and relatively tolerant attitudes of earlier governments—to the point of actively promoting racial hybridity—fell aside in the face of a labor regime that was ideologically dependent on the maintenance of racial distinctions. As their wealth increased, haole planters no longer depended so much on cultivating good relations with Hawaiians in order to make their fortunes; instead, they justified their exploitation as part of the natural order of things. This rapidly consolidating haole oligarchy, made up mostly of the descendants of missionaries and merchants linked together in a multistranded web of marriage, education, social clubs, and friendship, was increasingly exclusive. Armed with biological arguments about the inferiority of nonwhite races, they were also increasingly contemptuous of the ability of nonwhite peoples to govern their own affairs. They became more openly rebellious against government policies they perceived as contrary to their own interests, and projected their own interests as the true “interests of Hawaii.” By the late 1880s, cynics and supporters of the oligarchy both commonly asserted that the only morality on the Islands was that determined by the needs of sugar.

The prejudices of the haole oligarchy were entangled in a slightly different set of fears than were the prejudices of the Hawaiians, haole artisans, and earlier missionaries, although clearly based on the same common fund of negative images and stereotypes. Their initial motivation in promoting images of the Chinese as a degraded race arose from their interest in the continued immigration of easily controlled laborers. Later, with the availability of Portuguese and Japanese laborers in the 1880s, many planters changed their attitude toward the Chinese and came to dislike them as troublemakers (as happened with other ethnic groups that were perceived as too numerous). As haoles became increasingly convinced that their destiny as white men was to rule and bring order to the Islands, their primary concern was not the economic competition or moral influence of the Asians, but their fear that a predominance of Asians would make it difficult to remake the Islands in their own image. The decline of the native Hawaiian population through disease and inter-

marriage supported popular theories of racial succession and evolution, but the Asian population was less accommodating, showing no signs of giving way demographically. The belief that Asians were not yet capable of exercising or appreciating democracy made this persistence seem all the more threatening and ominous.¹²

Rising haole ambitions came to a head in the brief revolution of 1893, in which the last remnants of the monarchy were overthrown, and the Republic of Hawaii was created. One of the unfulfilled goals of the revolution was immediate annexation to the United States, in the hope that American influence could buttress haole civilization against the swarming brown men beneath them. Failing that, laws were passed forbidding the Chinese to naturalize. Nonetheless, despite a common contempt of the Asians, the haole elite was still divided over how they should be incorporated into Island life. Whatever opinions the planters held about the Asians, they still needed them to work their fields, and they generally believed that the less educated and more dependent the laborers, the better. Other instigators of the 1893 revolution were professionals and merchants from Honolulu who were unwilling to support planter interests on many issues, including Asian immigration. The vision of illiterate, Asian coolies bound to the plantation regime was exactly what the professional haoles feared most in their vision of an Americanized Hawaii. In their view, if Asians were to be admitted at all, they needed to be educated and amenable to controlled participation in a democratic state. A compromise was reached in which quota of five thousand Chinese laborers a year was admitted on the provision that they return home after their contracts expired.

Negotiating Political Shifts

Despite their political troubles, Chinese migrants flourished in Hawaii in the years between the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876 and annexation by the United States in 1898. They increased in number, their economic strength grew and expanded, they became entrenched at the nodes of many local power networks, and a significant minority decided to settle their families (or at least part of their families) on the Islands. The stipulations of the Reciprocity Treaty worked together with the declining native population to create opportunities that led to the entrenchment of Chinese interests in the Islands. Both Chinese and haole planters grew financially and socially independent of the Hawaiians. The new waves of Chinese immigration promoted by the government in the wake of the treaty were intended to serve sugar interests but also worked to the benefit of Chinese

companies, which not only profited from the traffic in laborers itself, but from channeling their labor into the production of rice, which had become duty-free in the United States. The decline of the Hawaiian population left disused taro fields and swamplands for reclamation as rice paddies, often in remote areas where Chinese could achieve wealth and power with almost no competition. Much of the wealth of Chinese companies and individuals in Honolulu was based on their extensive networks and holdings in rural areas.

Public Chinese response to the anti-Chinese movement was rare before 1887, but when Chinese channels to high-level official influence were cut off by the haole control of the government, the Chinese immediately began to respond to anti-Chinese measures with mass meetings, petitions, legal action, increased security, bribery, and revolution. A Bao'an Ju (Self-Protection Bureau) was created in 1887 and solicited wide participation and contributions to the struggle against anti-Chinese agitation. A handbill posted by the society called for contributions, drawing from examples across the Western Pacific to assert that the Chinese needed to transcend their existing divisions (Hakka-*bendi* conflicts were rampant) and act in concert against the threats confronting them:

We Chinese in Hawaii left our home villages to make our fortunes. At first we lived peacefully and happily, but later on conflicts arose among ourselves as we cut each other's skins. And because of this weakness we were frequently subject to foreign exploitation. . . . If we are not harmonious among ourselves and do not promote friendship among our countrymen, how can we protect our property and life? This is why the establishment of a Protective Bureau in Hawaii is the most pressing need. Remember the massacre of Chinese in Peru, also the driving out of Chinese in Los Angeles and the burning of stores there. Beware that we don't fall into the same trouble.¹³

The handbill did not locate the source of the threat in the anti-Chinese sentiments of Hawaiians, or even in the haole oligarchy, but only in the "Foreign Worker Party" (*Waiguo Gongdang*). Despite their new tactics of mass mobilization, the Chinese still did not want to antagonize their old patronage networks.

Some of the money collected by the Bao'an Ju was used for physical protection, including the purchase of rifles and hiring of watchmen. The organization also attempted to forestall the necessity of battle through legal and political channels. They had the 1888 legislation requiring all business records to be kept in Hawaiian or European languages declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Later that year, mass meetings,

petitions, and bribes to congressmen helped defeat a proposed constitutional amendment that would have allowed the Legislative Assembly to forbid the employment of Chinese in any occupation except the production of rice and sugar, deny them the right to own land, and block them from remaining in the country for more than six years. More public meetings and legal action blocked proposed legislation in 1894 that would have prohibited Chinese from entering mercantile or mechanical trades and resulted in an anti-foot-binding law being declared unconstitutional in 1895. They were less successful in regaining the suffrage denied them by the constitution of 1887, regaining voting rights only for Chinese born on the Islands. This loss was especially galling because suffrage had been returned to Japanese residents that year on the same terms as for the haoles.¹⁴

A few Chinese even collaborated in the unsuccessful, pro-monarchy rebellion of 1889 led by Robert Wilcox, but this alliance did more harm than good, because further restrictions on Chinese rights during the Republic were often justified by the suspicion that Chinese were contributing to other "counterrevolutionary" movements. Moreover, this alliance of Chinese migrants and Hawaiian royalists was not promising for the Chinese, since the kind of nationalism that fueled the uprisings was generally no more accepting of Chinese immigration than it was of haole dominance. In the 1890 elections, Wilcox's Hawaiian Political Association formed a coalition with the haole-dominated Mechanics' and Workmen's Political Associations, two parties that had little in common other than a conviction that Hawaii should not be overrun by Asians.¹⁵

This period of open conflict between Chinese and the rulers of Hawaii was brief. By the time of annexation in 1898, a strategy of conciliation and emphasis on common mutual interests was more common. If racial destiny was one pillar upon which the oligarchy rested its claim to rule, private property and wealth was the other. In the months before the 1887 haole uprising, assertions that the brown man was not fit to govern his own affairs were entangled with statements like this one in the *Hawaiian Gazette*: "Advocates of universal suffrage may put forward what specious ideas of human equality they please, but it stands to reason the necessity of government lies as much in property rights as anything else. Life and property are the two principal wards of organized government, as they are the only stakes which we have to pledge in defense of established order."¹⁶ The pillars of property and race tended to support each other. The property requirements for suffrage effectively excluded many nonwhite groups from the vote, and racist laws further hindered them from ever acquiring property. At the same time, biological and evolution-

ary theories were used to explain haole dominance and superior wealth as part of the natural development of racial difference. It was a vicious circle that the oligarchy had no intention of ever straightening out.

Yet, the glorification of property and sugar interests as fundamental national values provided a window of opportunity for Chinese integration. It was a minuscule window, to be sure, but accessible via a genre of commercial republicanism similar to that exploited by the Chinese in Peru. A reputation as respectable merchants was certainly not sufficient for entry into the haole oligarchy, but still raised the status of Chinese in comparison to other local groups. Moreover, social order based on wealth and hierarchy easily intersected with the interests of most migrants. The search for wealth was what drew most Chinese to Hawaii in the first place, and the accumulation and proper use of this wealth was a key marker of status for Chinese migrants around the world. By the late nineteenth century, Chinese nationalists had begun to explain the low status of China in the modern world as the result of its commercial weakness and technological inferiority. The ability to attain wealth was increasingly accepted as a marker of status. The superior treatment accorded to Japanese migrants throughout the Americas after the turn of the century confirmed the importance of wealth as the route to respectability.

Of course, given that international prestige was also deeply entangled with racial and cultural discourses, wealth was rarely a sufficient basis for respect as an equal. Given that racism also permeated more egalitarian and leveling democratic rhetoric, however, the window of opportunity offered by Hawaiian commercial republicanism was larger than that offered by populist democratic movements that opposed propertied interests. Populist democratic rhetoric was an integral part of the most belligerent anti-Chinese movements in California, Peru, and Hawaii. In populist visions, Chinese were a degraded people incapable of assimilation, and they were further stigmatized as tools of the capitalist to exploit and degrade the working man. Nothing short of the complete exclusion of Asians would do if an egalitarian and homogeneous society were to be attained. That is, democracy was understood as a national quality. The more the Chinese might attempt to integrate themselves economically, the more they would be rejected as subversive competitors or alien exploiters.

Promoters of commercial republicanism, on the other hand, depended on growing intercourse with the outside and the maintenance of class and racial distinctions. Thus, even though the subjugation of a controllable work force was in their interest, they also welcomed the rise of

middlemen who could facilitate commercial interactions across class and racial divides. In places like Peru and Hawaii, where a small, white elite dominated a large population of a different color, the ability of Chinese to conduct themselves as respectable merchants helped to place them slightly above the subjugated masses. In places like Chicago or California, which aspired to a common culture or individualistic egalitarianism, Chinese were often rejected as different or excessively parochial and backwards. In places like Peru, Hawaii, or even the southern United States, where ruling groups did not hope to forge a common culture and hierarchy was more acceptable, Chinese were more able to occupy an intermediate status.

In Peru, Chinese positioned themselves as international merchants. In Hawaii, they deployed a commercial identity even more effectively than in Peru, but as the basis of a local ethnic identity and heritage. Chinese in Peru avoided drawing attention to long-term local roots because they did not want to link themselves to the coolie legacy or *hoi polloi* of the lower classes. The Chinese in Hawaii, on the other hand, could use their history as businessmen and their role in the early development of sugar to portray themselves as pioneers and builders of an emergent Hawaii. This image gained strength after annexation, when a fund of patriotic rhetoric backed by the power of the American state became available. The Chinese could use the image of the groundbreaking pioneer in portraying themselves as avid Americanizers from the very moment they landed on the Islands, and they could also select from the more populist strains of American republicanism in order to challenge the more exclusive Americanizing visions of the oligarchy.

URBANIZATION AND CHANGING CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS

From 1900 to 1930 the proportion of Chinese who resided in Honolulu increased from 35 to 71 percent. The rice economy was in decline, taking with it the rural economic networks that were the basis for much Chinese wealth. This shift coincided with a rise in the proportion of locally born Chinese counted by the census, which grew from 15 to 72 percent. Thus, much of this increased urbanization was due to locally born Chinese and new migrants settling in Honolulu, and the rural Chinese population was increasingly dominated by aging migrants without families. Chinese in Honolulu were involved in a variety of small- to medium-sized retail trades, service occupations, and a slowly rising number of semiskilled and professional occupations. The rural networks that had once isolated the

Chinese under the protection of wealthy mediators and financiers gave way as many of the new Honolulu businessmen learned to deal with haoles on their own. Chinese began to learn English rather than Hawaiian and to move their businesses and residences away from Chinatown, dispersing them throughout the city.¹⁷ These changes did not lead to the dissolution of the Chinese identity but to its reformulation from local village and kin networks into a national group and then a local ethnic group.

As the Chinese in Hawaii became increasingly integrated into Honolulu society and self-consciously American in their outlook, the bases of recruitment for their associations appeared to grow increasingly particularistic, developing from the sworn brotherhoods common in the late nineteenth century to the native place and political organizations formed at the turn of the century and then to the surname associations created from the 1920s to the 1960s. The aims and significance of the associations also changed. Whereas the older associations were oriented toward the immediate needs of employment and companionship, the turn-of-the-century associations were designed more to channel influence back to China. Later associations were primarily markers of ethnic identity in Hawaii. Global flows of goods, money, and people continued to be integral parts of these new institutions, but the nodes of these networks were increasingly centered in Hawaii.

Hongmen Associations

The first known noncommercial Chinese association in Honolulu was the Manoa Lianyihui, founded in 1854 to provide for burial and care of the migrant dead. Over the next hundred years several more burial societies were established by different native place groups in different parts of Hawaii. Of more significance politically were the sworn brotherhood Hongmen Associations established throughout rural Hawaii.¹⁸ The first of these societies for which there is any record was the Tongxing (mutual progress) Gongsì, founded in 1869 by Hakkas in rural Oahu. By 1910, at least thirty more had been established. Admission usually entailed an initiation ritual and the swearing of an oath in which the initiate promised always to aid his brothers in need and not betray anyone to outside authorities. Many gathered enough money to build clubhouses that were often the only two-story buildings in the area and could serve as gambling halls, opium dens, altars, fairgrounds, and schools.

The creation of Hongmen societies was usually sponsored by wealthy

Chinese merchants. They gained prestige by erecting clubhouses and acting as officers and mediators, and profited from them as institutions for the recruitment and distribution of agricultural labor. In the 1880s, sugar planters often accused the Hongmen of helping Chinese to escape their contracts by sheltering those who had fled the plantations and buying them out of their contracts. Little conflict occurred among these Hongmen. Most of them tended to be the only Chinese associations in isolated villages and rice-planting districts, where most of the residents, if not from the same village, at least spoke the same dialect. More than one Hongmen sometimes arose in places with a greater diversity of migrants, such as in Kohala on the Big Island, where Christian Hakkas joined together with *bendis* to form an association in competition with another Hongmen made up of non-Christian Hakkas. Although many Hongmen had been founded in order to institutionalize local power, the lack of local competition meant that they usually functioned as centers for the entertainment and companionship of isolated men rather than as weapons for protection and profit.

The Hongmen disappeared as the Chinese moved to Honolulu after the turn of the century. As the interests of migrant elites became focused less on the organization of Chinese labor and more on developing business contacts and gaining individual respect as Honolulu merchants, the support of associations like the Hongmen became less relevant to them. The Hongmen that survived in rural areas became more and more oriented toward charitable services for the old migrants who had stayed behind. Some of the clubhouses were made into residences for aged migrants, some became homes for the wealthy migrants who founded them, and some served as resorts for Chinese travelers from Honolulu, but most were abandoned in the end.

A few Hongmen associations attempted to negotiate the changing social landscape by capitalizing on the anti-Qing reputation of the Hongmen and hooking up with nationalist movements after the turn of the century. Emperor Protection Association leaders had joined local Hongmen in 1900, as did Sun Yat-sen on Maui in 1903. Both joined for the purpose of developing practical connections (for Sun, this translated into legal assistance from the San Francisco Zhigongtang when he attempted to enter the United States as a Hawaii-born citizen the next year) although eventually they resisted too close an identification with these migrant organizations.¹⁹ Resentful of this rejection, these politicized Hongmen began to produce their own newspapers and political agendas. In 1913, two of the remaining Hongmen in Honolulu consolidated into one associa-

tion, taking the Zhigongtang name in 1919 and later becoming active in the international Zhigong Party.²⁰ Hongmen and the Zhigongtang were never very influential as political associations in Hawaii. Only the Guo An (Ket On) Association, which was the new name of the Tongxing Gongsi after it moved to Honolulu in 1899, remained consistently active throughout the twentieth century, primarily as a social club.

The United Chinese Society

The United Chinese Society (UCS) was founded as an organ of merchant and diplomatic interests in November of 1882 and remained a central stage for migrant ambitions as the Chinese urbanized after the turn of the century. Like the SBC of Lima, it was a reorganization of a previously existing association, this time under the auspices of Minister Chen Lanbin. His visit was partly in response to complaints by local Chinese about Chun Afong, who had been appointed as the Chinese Commercial Agent in 1879. He was accused of masterminding a virtual slave trade in Chinese that worked in favor of local *bendi* interests at the expense of the Hakka. After his visit, Chen gave local merchants one thousand dollars to erect a meeting house and assigned two commissioners who were familiar with the Six Companies in San Francisco to help organize the UCS in Honolulu. The reorganized society was intended to offer an organized response to rising anti-Chinese activities, smooth over tensions between Hakkas and *bendi*, and act as a conduit of communication with the Chinese government. It also served to replace the consul general, which had been established the previous year. In response to the unwillingness of the Hawaiian government to sign a treaty with China, Li Hongzhang, the Chinese official in charge of negotiations, demoted the consulate from an appointed organ of the Chinese government to a representative body selected by local merchants, who would have to make their own negotiations with both the Chinese and Hawaiian governments.²¹

The UCS was unlike the Six Companies (but similar to the SBC and the early New York CCBA) in that membership was granted on the basis of individual prestige rather than to representatives of other associations. The first members were twenty-five prominent Honolulu merchants. This meant that the rural Hongmen were ignored in favor of urban merchant interests (although their interests were not always distinct). On the other hand, a strong effort was made to assure equal representation to Hakkas and *bendi*. The prominent *bendi* merchant C. Alea was the first president, and the Christian Hakka Goo Kim was made vice president, positions they held until 1890. The president and vice president also held concur-

rent positions as Chinese commercial agent and vice-commercial agent to Hawaii.

Many Hawaiian officials and legislators feared that the UCS had subversive or extraterritorial ambitions. Formal recognition and incorporation as an association under the laws of the kingdom were not granted until the UCS agreed that the minister of the interior and the Board of Trustees could approve the appointment of all officers, and that minutes of all UCS meetings would be provided to the government in English. Despite these initial suspicions, the government proved more than willing to delegate responsibility for the enforcement of its new immigration restrictions to the UCS. As of 1887, passports for Chinese leaving Hawaii with the intent to return were issued by the commercial agent for a fee of five dollars, two of which went into the UCS treasury and became one of its most important sources of funds. Thus, the merchants who ran the UCS had their status and control over migration formally recognized by both the Hawaiian and Chinese governments.

Village and native place associations began to appear in Honolulu after 1890 and continued to arise through the 1950s. The majority of them were established by migrants from districts and villages in Zhongshan county. The 1892 law allowing for a quota of five thousand laborers a year led to a burst in the Siyi population of Hawaii, and the Siyi *huiguan* was established 1897, later splitting into the Yiyi Tang in 1901 and the Gangzhou *huiguan* for migrants from Xinhui in 1907.²² One stated function of these associations was to take over the mutual aid and socializing functions of the declining Hongmen societies. Yet burial associations already existed to take care of the dead, and guilds were replacing the Hongmen to provide for the concerns of employment. They were also relatively inactive in providing formal representation for their constituencies, never pressing for formal representation in the UCS or acting as an important base of factionalization in Honolulu. In San Francisco, the native place associations had been the basis of Six Companies power. In Honolulu they were adjuncts to UCS power, spreading merchant influence deeper into the Chinese community in Hawaii and then beyond to villages in China.

Building the Chinese Nation and Dividing the Chinese

The UCS seems to have succeeded in reconciling the Hakka-*bendi* feuds that plagued the Chinese of Hawaii through the 1880s. C. Alea and Goo Kim continued to dominate the association until 1902. Over the next decade, however, UCS officerships became much less stable as Chinese wealth moved away from isolated rural fiefdoms and concentrated in

Honolulu. By 1912, struggles to control the UCS had become openly hostile, to the extent that association activities were suspended from 1916 to 1919, pending resolution of a dispute between two competing slates of officers claiming legitimate election. The issue that most divided the two sides was the political future of China. The noisy and well-promulgated ideological hostilities easily drowned out any other pretext for conflict.

Unlike Peru or Chicago, Honolulu did not give rise to a single dominant person or clique. The extensive economic opportunities throughout the Islands in the late nineteenth century meant that nobody had been able to dominate flows of migration and economic activity. Even in Honolulu after the turn of the century, migrant fortunes were based less on the control of other migrants through credit, extortion, or the financing of migration than on direct economic relationships with the greater Honolulu society. Thus, migrants did not struggle so violently over economic domination, nor were the lines of conflict drawn around kinship, native place, or direct economic competition. Correspondingly, the structure of migrant institutions in Honolulu was never so well articulated and involved in the daily lives of migrants that it could facilitate domination. Most kinship and native place assistance was still relatively informal, and more prominent merchants had clients with a variety of surnames and dialects.

It was relatively easy for a Chinese to operate a reasonably successful business in Hawaii while remaining aloof from political entanglements. Social involvement was necessary, however, to translate that wealth into prestige. The successful merchant who did not devote time and money to organizations and fund-raising was generally looked down upon.²³ Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Honolulu was a prominent site for the early organizing activities of the Qing government, reformers, and revolutionaries. Competition for recognition in Chinese politics led to a highly factionalized migrant community.

Sun Yat-sen founded his first revolutionary organization, the Xingzhonghui, in Honolulu in 1894 "to promote the interest and uphold the dignity of China." It attracted about fifty young men, a good portion of whom were Hakkas and Christians or had been classmates of Sun during his days at the Iolani School. Many of them had also been involved in the 1889 Wilcox uprising. The association collected six thousand dollars for Sun to instigate an uprising in China that year and held military drills in the yard of the Reverend Frank Damon (who later claimed that the overthrow of the Qing in 1911 was "God-ordained for the advancement of humanity," and even took some credit for it, claiming that "I had the

honor to place in Sun Yat Sen's hands a copy of a volume on American democracy which I believe has been the foundation for his propaganda for a constitutional government in China.")²⁴ In 1896, in the wake of his failed uprising, Sun returned to Hawaii to find that the military training had been discontinued, and the former Xingzhonghui members received him with somewhat less enthusiasm. Although the impact of the Xingzhonghui at the time of its founding was minimal, it attained much greater significance later as some Chinese in Hawaii sought to claim a revolutionary heritage.

Interest in Chinese politics was rekindled on a much larger scale in 1900, when Liang Qichao spent nearly half a year in Hawaii. He established a branch of the Emperor Protection Association in Honolulu, helped found the *New China News* (*Xin Zhongguo Bao*), and traveled around the Islands giving speeches, engaging in debates, and establishing more association branches. Association officers claimed that from 80 to 90 percent of the migrants on the Islands joined, including many former Xingzhonghui members. This organization lasted much longer than the Xingzhonghui, although contact between the migrants and prominent reform leaders quickly dwindled and transformed into mutual suspicion after Liang's departure. Liang even avoided visiting the Islands in 1903 on his return from a tour of the United States, claiming that the Emperor Protection Association there was evil and a "national humiliation," which may well have been a way to divert attention from his own mishandling of contributions.²⁵

A Chinese consul was posted in Hawaii after annexation in 1898. Goo Kim continued as vice-consul for several years, and officers of the UCS were all appointed as members of the consular staff, but their political agendas often conflicted with that of the consul. Even though many of his staff were Emperor Protection Association members, the first consul, Yang Weibin, aggressively persecuted all association activity in Hawaii. He successfully opposed incorporation of the Emperor Protection Association under the territorial government and had the viceroy of Guangdong imprison the family of a man who had housed Liang Qichao during his stay in Hawaii. The president of the Honolulu Emperor Protection Association, Wong Leong, was harder to punish because he was a Hawaii-born American citizen, and his family was in Honolulu. Yang settled for having the tablets from his lineage's ancestral hall confiscated, causing lineage members to demand that Wong pay the redemption money. Yang later promised nonreprisal to any migrant who filed a \$5.25 certificate with the consulate swearing that he belonged to no society opposed to

the Chinese government. The last straw was when Yang announced his intention to send \$9,500 of the \$25,000 in relief money collected by the UCS for the victims of the 1900 Chinatown fire to Beijing to help finance the continued reconstruction of the Summer Palace. The destruction of the palace by British forces in 1860 and the frequent misuse of funds in its reconstruction from the 1870s on made it a potent symbol of Qing weakness and corruption. The UCS, led by C. K. Ai and assisted by Secretary of State Hay, appealed to the Chinese minister in Washington for the impeachment of Yang and succeeded in having him recalled in 1902.²⁶

Hawaii was an important center for the development of debates between reformers and revolutionaries. During his visit to Hawaii in 1903, Sun was impressed by the effects of Liang Qichao's journalistic activities and started to become more active in developing his own propaganda. By 1905, many Chinese in Hawaii had become frustrated with the remoteness of the leaders of the Emperor Protection Association. The arrival of revolutionary newspaper editor Loo Sun from Hong Kong at about this time and the founding of the revolutionary *Liberty News* (*Ziyou Xinbao*) in 1908 kept political debate in the public eye. The *Liberty News* soon competed with the *New China News* as a key organ of Chinese revolutionary propaganda in the Western Hemisphere, and the two papers never tired of spitting invective at each other. Political opponents twice attempted to have Loo Sun thrown out of Hawaii on immigration charges. The first attempt was based on technicalities in his admission status, and the second tried to have him deported as an anarchist on the basis of articles he had written praising the recent assassination of a Japanese prince. The *Liberty News* writers claimed that the group attempting to have him deported was made up of the Chinese consul working in conjunction with the Emperor Protection Association, and later revolutionary histories claimed that Wu Tingfang and several prominent Hawaii merchants had personally helped him beat the charges.²⁷ The competition extended to education, and two new Chinese schools opened in Honolulu within four days of each other in February 1911: the Minglun School (fig. 17), with a reformist agenda, and the Huamin School, with a revolutionary agenda.

By 1911, the Chinese consuls had become deeply enmeshed in this web of local conflict. They had also been deeply involved in the immigration process since 1906, when the consul asked the Immigration Bureau to notify him immediately if any Chinese were refused admission, so that he could assist in arranging an appeal.²⁸ They were also often involved in property disputes brought to the UCS for mediation, not only as respected judges but also as partisan supporters of interested parties,

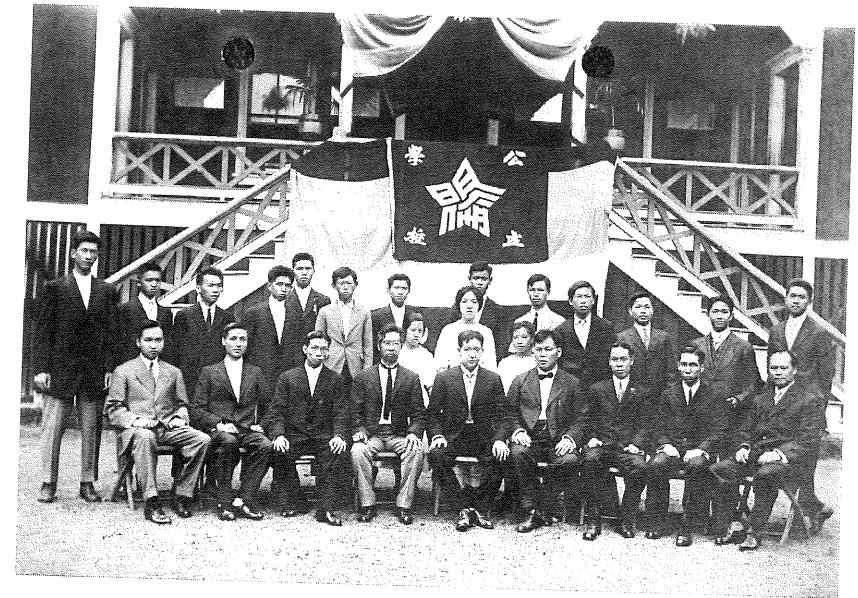


Figure 17 Minglun School, circa 1915. (Source: Old Chinese Immigration Case Files, 1903–15, case number C-1983. Honolulu District Office, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85. National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Region [San Francisco])

occasionally threatening to use their influence to terrorize the opposition's family in China.²⁹ Consul Liang Guoying (fig. 18), who took his post in 1910, brought the scandal and conflict surrounding the consulate to a peak. Although the *Liberty News* routinely accused him of working hand in hand with the Constitutionals, in the end he managed to unite most of the factions in Hawaii against him. The two acts which most offended the local Chinese were his intention to conduct a census of all the Chinese in Hawaii, requiring that each person counted pay a \$1.25 enumeration fee, and his sending a list accusing seven Honolulu migrants of being "dangerous revolutionary characters" to the viceroy in Guangdong. The negative reaction was so universal among the local Chinese that the UCS formally requested Liang to retract his charges.

When the *Liberty News* printed the full text of Liang's report to the viceroy, revealing that his insinuations about the loyalty of the migrants in Hawaii were much broader than previously realized, a large public rally was held, and the UCS petitioned the Chinese minister in Washington to have Liang removed. The increasingly besieged Liang brought a libel suit to the Hawaiian courts against individuals he thought had slandered him



Figure 18
Liang Guoying, Chinese
Consul in Hawaii, 1910.
(Source: Edgeworth Col-
lection, Bishop Museum,
Honolulu, Hawai'i; Neg.
CD 24917-XS 16939)

in the mass meeting. He lost the suit, and the judge criticized him for using methods "foreign" to American values. Pleased at Liang's defeat, many Chinese further denounced him for having brought internal problems into the American courts for judgment by outsiders in the first place. The *Liberty News* expressed a mixture of glee at seeing Liang embarrassed by the judge and opposing lawyers and resentment that American imperialists could so easily humiliate a formal representative of China. The Chinese minister in Washington asked Liang to resign in early 1911.³⁰

After the Revolution

The unity of the migrant response to Liang Guoying rolled over into widespread support (or at least lack of public objection) for the revolution of 1911 and the establishment of a republican government in China. The momentary suppression of political differences and the mixed reaction to Liang's humiliation in court remind us that involvement in Chinese politics reflected not only a concern for personal prestige or even a nationalist concern for the fate of China, but also an awareness of the way that the status of China reflected on their local status as an ethnic group. Un-

fortunately, the good feelings that came with an internationally respected republic were short-lived. As the unity of the republic quickly crumbled, so did the unity of the Chinese in Hawaii.

In 1911, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce had arisen as a new platform in the competition for prestige and had already sowed the seeds for later discord. The establishment of Chambers of Commerce as the representative organs of migrant communities around the world had been promoted by the Qing since 1907. The push to establish chambers was renewed as the Qing tried to revitalize its relations with Chinese migrants in the final months of its reign. The government provided the bylaws and constitutions of these chambers and delegated to them the authority to work with the consuls as intermediaries between Beijing and the local migrant population. Two competing chambers arose in Hawaii. One was the Chinese Merchants' Association (*Zhonghua Zongshanghui*), formed in August 1911 by the same men who were officers in the UCS. The rival Overseas Chinese Merchants' Association (*Huaqiao Shanghui*) was established a few months later by followers of Sun Yat-sen, inspired by the revolution then occurring in China.³¹ In the UCS elections of December 1912, followers of Sun Yat-sen packed the hall with newly registered members and got themselves elected into control of the society.

The ousted officers tried unsuccessfully to contest the elections in the territorial courts, but they were more successful in blocking recognition from China. By the time the new Republic of China got around to giving some attention to overseas Chinese, conservative military strongman Yuan Shikai had already taken power from Sun in China. His government recognized the Chinese Merchants' Association as the legitimate Chamber of Commerce in Honolulu, and its newly appointed consul ignored the reception arranged for him on 1 January 1913 by the revolutionary UCS. The consul also replaced the former role of UCS officers in the consulate with an Advisory Board made up of the conservative ex-UCS officers, who were concurrently members of the National People's Constitutional Party, a reorganization of the Emperor Protection Association ordered by Yuan. They were responsible for investigating all the complaints and immigration matters brought before the consul and thus recaptured much of the power they had previously exercised through the UCS.³²

The group of men ousted from the UCS leadership—many of whom had been staunch Constitutionalists in opposition to the revolutionaries—readily embraced republicanism after the revolution, but their republicanism was firmly opposed to Sun Yat-sen and his supporters. In 1913, a forty-eight page booklet in English, entitled *Chinese in Hawaii: A Resume*

of the Social, Industrial, and Economic Progress of the Chinese in the Hawaiian Islands, with an Historical Sketch of the Events Leading to the Foundation of the Chinese Republic, was published "to Commemorate the recognition of China as a Republic by the United States, and the Friendship which has long Existed between the Two Great Nations of the East and the West."³³ It was a clearly partisan publication insisting that Yuan Shikai was "the only strong man fitted to establish the new republic on a firm footing." It gave credit to Sun and his followers for instigating the revolution, only to criticize them for turning against Yuan in the second revolution of 1913, thus "endangering the life of the young republic, and so losing the prestige they had gained, only to become wanderers on the face of the earth."³⁴

Individual Accommodations

The greater part of *Chinese in Hawaii* was devoted to promoting the Chinese in the eyes of non-Chinese. Many individuals were quoted as urging the Chinese in Hawaii to bury their factional differences—both in politics and business—and work together. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as the supporters of Yuan pressuring the followers of Sun to concede their loss. Yet such calls gave these conflicts a different tone than the conflicts in Chicago, where factions always strove to completely discredit each other, and only outsiders ever called for compromise. Factionalism in Chicago developed a wide social base through violence, migrant institutions, and concrete economic interests. The process of struggle and its outcome directly affected all the local Chinese. In Hawaii, however, the causes and effects of factionalization were comparatively abstract. The relentlessly dogmatic drawing of lines that accompanied nationalist discourse in Hawaii stood in contrast to the flexible political leanings of most individuals. The newspapers and a handful of devoted partisans made up the core of political factions, but the support they received from political parties was contingent and fickle, determined more by opportunistic ambitions and changing political winds than by the relatively less flexible bonds of kinship, credit, or sworn brotherhood. Almost anyone who traveled the Islands giving speeches in Chinese, be he a revolutionary, reformer, or Christian missionary, was bound to attract the attention and contributions of entertainment-starved migrants.

Two of the most prominent Chinese at the turn of the century, Chu Gem and C. K. Ai, are good examples of the ways in which individuals could flexibly negotiate migrant politics. Of the two, Chu was more of a



Figure 19
Chung Kun Ai, 1913. (Source: Old Chinese Immigration Case Files, 1903–15, case number C-633. Honolulu District Office, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85. National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Region [San Francisco])

practical politician.³⁵ His biography in the 1913 booklet called him the "Merchant Prince" and described him as "possessing probably the widest acquaintance of any Chinese in Hawaii, honored and trusted by all." He liked to boast that he had never been sued. He had long been a follower of the reform parties, was a "staunch supporter" of the Minglun School, and backed the pro-Yuan *Huaxing Bao* (*Flourishing China News*).³⁶ He was president of the UCS several times from 1906 to 1921 and leader of the conservative slate during the split of 1912. He was also president of the Chinese Merchant's Association from its founding until 1918 and a founder and long-time president of the Siyi *huiguan*. On the other hand, he also fought for Loo Sun's right to reside in Hawaii as an editor, helped to obtain land for the revolutionary Huamin School, led the struggle against consul Liang Guoying, and collected funds to assist former consul Zhang Zuofan, who had been arrested in China for plotting against Yuan in 1913. He was also an investor in the City Mill run by C. K. Ai (fig. 19), a prominent supporter of Sun Yat-sen who referred to Chu with respect in his autobiography.

C. K. Ai was a Christian Hakka who attended Iolani School with Sun Yat-sen, with whom he used to steal mangos, swim, and beat up Hawaiian kids. He was an original member of the Xingzhonghui and later became treasurer of the Emperor Protection Society upon its founding in 1900 and president of the UCS from 1902 to 1905. He lost his enthusiasm

for the reformers in 1905, when he was snubbed by Liang Qichao during a visit to Japan to inquire about the fate of contributions sent from Hawaii. He later became a sponsor of the *Liberty News*, which earned him the enmity of more die-hard reformers. In an interview with the Bureau of Immigration in 1915, Constitutionalist Party President Wong How said, "I know that all the merchants and all the good people favor Yuan Shikai's government." When confronted with the fact that the prominent merchant C. K. Ai did not favor Yuan, he responded, "Do you suppose C. K. Ai got money he is high class; what does C. K. Ai know about China? . . . I think that kind of people no good for China, no good."³⁷ Another merchant was more cautious in his estimation of Ai when he remarked that "his speech and his acts seem to belong to the Nationalist [revolutionary] Party, but I don't know."³⁸

According to his autobiography, Ai had tired of Chinese politics by 1915 and devoted more of his efforts to directly promoting Chinese interests in Hawaii. His desire to contribute to the economic development of the republic had been frustrated during a trip to China in 1913 by what he saw as the shortsightedness and petty greed of republican officials and businessmen. Upon his return to Hawaii, he became a cofounder of the Chinese American Bank in 1916 and the American Chinese Federation of Hawaii in 1917. He also worked hard to modify the exclusion laws, moving from an interest in promoting the immigration of Chinese rice plantation laborers that began during his days as a UCS president to a stronger interest in overcoming the travel difficulties of Hawaii-born Chinese. After some business failures in the 1920s, Ai grew increasingly devoted to his Christianity. This devotion coincided with a rekindling of interest in his home village, as was common among many older migrants. He supported charitable activities directed toward China, including the Unbounded Faith-Love Mission, and started the C. K. Ai Foundation "to aid in the preservation of Chinese culture, with particular reference to the villages in the area around Xishan Village, China, which was the ancestral home of the Trustor."³⁹ Such generalized charity was less involved with subscription lists and lineage interests than with clothes drives and missionary activities, and it drew attention to the status of its instigator in Hawaii.

Ai's conversion to Hawaii-based issues was an example of a more general decline in revolutionary passions in the decade after 1912. Many revolutionaries disliked the thought of plunging China into a civil war, and supporters of Yuan Shikai were put off by his attempts to install himself as emperor. The succession of governments in Beijing after Yuan's

death in 1916 inspired little loyalty from anybody. By 1920, the old UCS officers were reelected, and a close working relationship between the UCS and the Chinese Merchants' Association was established. Over the next twelve years they gave their allegiance to the Beijing governments, although the instability of those governments meant that in practice this allegiance was little more than loyalty to the idea of a Chinese Republic. Even without close support from China, the local status of these two associations as the most important Chinese institutions in the Islands grew stronger. By 1926 the Chinese Merchants' Association had changed its English name to Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Honolulu, and extended its membership to include all substantial merchants who cared to register. They also unveiled plans for the construction of a new building, which, when completed in 1929, had a direct corridor to the UCS chambers, physically symbolizing how indistinguishable the two organizations had become.

The rise of the Guomindang to national power in 1927 led to some shuffling of political alignments in Honolulu, but not with the level of hostility manifested after 1911. Through the late 1930s, two competing Guomindang branches existed in Hawaii, a pro-Chiang Kai-shek faction and a leftist, anti-Chiang faction centered around the *Liberty News*. For many migrants, however, the rise of the Guomindang was an opportunity for Hongmen members, Constitutionlists, and supporters of the northern governments to admit the eclipse of their respective causes and throw their support behind an ambitious new government which made concerted and effective efforts to woo the wealthy migrant elite and had attained a high level of international respect. The rise of the Guomindang also meant the rewriting of migrant history as the valiant struggle of Sun Yat-sen and his masses of supporters in Hawaii to overcome the wrong-headed deceptions propagated by the reformers. Much of the previous factionalism was swept under the carpet, whereas selected events like the founding of the Xingzhonghui and the struggles against consul Liang Guoying were recalled with pride for decades.

The Guomindang victory over political loyalties was, to some extent, built upon the indifference of the migrants. Chinese in Hawaii had become more committed to defining themselves as an ethnic group. The circulation of Chinese-language newspapers had dropped to less than a thousand by the late 1920s, and many observers noted that only old, China-born migrants were still interested in the ideological differences and home town gossip recorded in their pages.⁴⁰ The Chinese nation was no longer relevant as an immediate source of political contention, and

local migrants were happy to grasp any image of China as earnestly striving to take a place in the modern world.

FROM HISTORY TO HERITAGE

Annexation

Most of the haole oligarchy on Hawaii welcomed annexation because it guaranteed a market for Island produce and promised to add institutional backing for their project of cultural control. Annexation had some disadvantages, however, and two of the most serious drawbacks revolved around Asians. The first was related to the sugar planters' desire for inexpensive, controllable labor. The Chinese exclusion laws were immediately extended to the Islands after annexation, and the planters had no reason to believe that the free entry of Japanese and Korean labor would be allowed to continue for much longer. Fortunately for the planters, the colonization of the Philippines by the United States in 1898 opened a new source of migrants against which it was highly unlikely any that new barriers would be erected. Nonetheless, rice and sugar planters continued to petition Congress for a modification of Chinese exclusion through the 1920s, as they came to fear the growing Japanese and Filipino populations.

The second drawback of annexation came with the Organic Act of 1900, which established the territorial government of Hawaii and extended United States citizenship to all individuals, including Asians, born or naturalized on the Islands. The Americanizing efforts of the United States Congress were far more extensive than many haoles were prepared for. Although haoles were divided over the desirability of more Chinese immigration, they were more unified around the conviction that Chinese and other Asians should be restricted to the plantations and not allowed to take part in the affairs of the Islands. Unfortunately for them, the Americanization project of the federal government did not want simply to support the continued dominance of the haole oligarchy. It wanted to undermine what it saw as the less desirable characteristics of elitist local power structures and impose its own lines of direct control. Asians turned out to be the unintended beneficiaries of this project. Congress insisted that the letter of American democracy be upheld in Hawaii; all citizens of every race were given the vote, and democratic and juridical precedent were followed to the extent that several bills presented in the Hawaiian legislature to limit Chinese occupational activities were rejected, despite widespread haole support. These moves toward encouraging the participation and inclusion of Asians came more from a position of fear and be-

siegement than from tolerance. Federal representatives reasoned that if Asians were not actively assimilated, Hawaii would become a colony like Singapore, Hong Kong, or the Philippines, where the ruling elite was a minority among the Asian masses.

The fears of the haole oligarchy that enfranchisement would create undue Asian influence on local politics were considerably exaggerated, especially in the case of the Chinese. In 1902, only 143 Chinese were registered to vote. The number of Chinese voters did not begin to reflect the significance of the Chinese population in Hawaii until 1930, when the 4,402 Chinese registered to vote amounted to 8.4 percent of the voting population. Even then, only 48 percent of those eligible to vote that year actually voted, the lowest percentage of all ethnic groups, and they tended to support the ruling haoles by voting Republican.⁴¹ Even the Japanese, who had greater influence both through sheer number of voters and through labor organization, which exploded into the great strikes of 1920, never came near to the takeover envisioned by haole alarmists. The Hawaiians, on the other hand, did make a brief attempt for power in 1900. That year Robert Wilcox ran for and won the position of Hawaiian representative to the United States Congress as the candidate of the Home Rule Party. By 1902 the oligarchy had reorganized itself within the Republican Party and recaptured congressional representation with the election of their candidate, Jonah Kalaniana'ole Kuhio, a member of the Hawaiian royalty. Using their considerable wealth to distribute patronage, offer bribes, and provide extravagant election parties, the Republican Party dominated representation to Washington and elective positions within Hawaii over the next four decades, until the imposition of martial law in 1941.

As far as Chinese legislation was concerned, Home Rule would not have been much different than Republican dominance. Although Hawaiians were generally more cordial to the Chinese on a daily basis, they shared haole political fears when it came to Asians. Republican Representative Kuhio was beholden to the interests of his patrons in the sugar industry, but he occasionally felt that as a member of the Hawaiian royalty he should also uphold the spirit of Robert Wilcox. One of Wilcox's platforms that Kuhio refused to abandon, despite his patrons, was the intention to cut off Asian immigration, block Asian economic opportunities, and pass legislation that facilitated homesteading and the acquisition of government jobs by Hawaiians. Sometimes he even promoted haole homesteading as preferable to Asian immigration, despite the common perception that the haoles had already stolen the land from the Hawaiians. Such a position was, in part, based on the fear that too many Asians

in Hawaii might lead to the loss of self-rule and the imposition of a military commission on Hawaii. It was a threat often evoked by the oligarchy, and it worked in subduing political challenges from Asians who, as we will see below, would have lost access to the political tool of egalitarian American rhetoric.

The Imposition of American Hegemony

Despite the fears of an Asian takeover, most local haoles continued to perceive Asians as little more than servants or laborers, despite their extensive commercial activities. Most books and articles by visitors and residents on the Islands barely mentioned the presence of Asians. A well-known haole in 1910 said that the "Asiatics" in Hawaii had the same impact on the institutions and customs of the Islands as did "the cattle of the ranges," and five years later an observer from the federal government noted that the haole leaders thought of the Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans "primarily as instruments of production."⁴² Racial issues were generally not mentioned in polite company, which obscured the pillar of racism that helped buttress haole power.

New haole migration from the mainland—settlers and military personnel—brought cruder and more direct expressions of racism as well as a distaste for the haole oligarchy and their comfort with the social hierarchy of Hawaii. This new population of middle-class whites shared neither the advantages and exclusive networks of the haole oligarchy nor their often patriarchal attitude toward Asians as children who had to be carefully watched over. They were much more inclined to see Asian merchants as a subversive threat to their own livelihood and less likely to play along with the polite racial etiquette that pervaded much public discourse in Hawaii.

The most influential bearers of these new attitudes were the haoles who came with the new federal agencies as administrators and officials. Although taking positions next to the oligarchy as rulers, they did not share the same sense of a destiny deeply enmeshed with the past and future of the Islands. They saw the oligarchic system as a feudal vestige that needed reform and democratic civilizing just as much as the masses of brown men. At times this difference in political and moral vision led to an all-out attack on the corruption and laxity that had allowed so many Asians to arrive in the first place. Circuit Court Judge Estes denied all but one habeas corpus case of Chinese refused admission by the Bureau of Immigration put before him in 1900, often on the basis of technicalities

or hesitating testimony. When he demanded that a claimant for American citizenship must "prove by a preponderance of the evidence that he was born in these Islands," he went against not only precedents of lax enforcement set by previous Hawaiian governments, but also judicial precedent established on the mainland, where it was the duty of the Immigration Bureau to prove that claimants presented to the court were not citizens.⁴³ He did, however, succeed in setting a local precedent so strong that few Chinese attempted to appeal to him in succeeding years. In one decision he summarized the motivation behind his work, a simultaneously egalitarian and racist vision of Hawaii's future as an inalienable part of the United States, which showed great unfamiliarity with the economic conditions of Chinese in Hawaii:

Chinese laborers come to America to work only . . . and not to become a part of the body politic; they rarely bring their families with them or encourage American home life; they are always Chinamen in America and not Americans; they live apart here as in China. It thus seems dangerous to the American republic to admit on an equal footing with American labor, these vast hordes of Chinamen who neither love this country nor assimilate with its civilization. The presence of such a people tends to create class and racial distinctions, and tends also to lower the standard of American manhood, by placing beside them, competing in the field of labor, a different race of men, who know nothing of the free institutions and only seek our shores for a temporary advantage.⁴⁴

Although not stated explicitly, Estes's attack was directed as much against oligarchic sugar interests as against the Chinese. It was firmly in the tradition of crude connections made between cheap Chinese labor and degrading capitalistic monopoly that had fueled many anti-Chinese labor organizations in California.

Twenty years later, this same egalitarian vision was in vogue among federal immigration agents in Hawaii, but the explicit racism had given way to local practices of racial etiquette. In 1921, a Honolulu immigration inspector made an (unsuccessful) plea to the secretary of labor on behalf of a Chinese named Yong Yee who was about to be deported for polygamy. Estes's unproblematic incorporation of Hawaii into the sovereignty of the United States was now replaced by an almost apocalyptic vision of the continuing struggle to impose righteous justice. The agent blamed the Hawaiian agricultural-political complex not for having allowed the Chinese into the Islands but for having exacerbated the undesirable morality

of the Chinese, who, in turn, still retained the potential for redemption under the tutelage of American democratic institutions:

[The Chinese] were kept under a paternal industrialism in which they were permitted to follow the practices which were customary in their own country. . . . Following their own customs among themselves, to themselves doubtless there was not the sense of moral turpitude that would obtain in similar cases of one of our own social order to which these laborers were not made to conform to any extent. The elements of moral stability were subordinated to the maintenance of the satisfied, ignorant, laboring class. The land was practically permitted to be polluted for profit. It is now the task of our government to put right in the place of rot. Immunity for Oriental laxity must pass; but in view of the past and endeavoring to bring about a better state of affairs, it would seem that justice might be tempered with mercy. Yong Yee was simple, honest, and direct in his admissions, and his conduct must have been due to the ignorance which was abetted by those in power in this community in years past. He may have regarded himself, if still under the domination of old ideas, as without sin, when before annexation many like unto himself were practically so treated. However, the law came with annexation, and for him sin revived, and he, like others, was deported. . . . Had the enlightening officials of these islands before annexation placed moral considerations before material, I am of the opinion that this Chinaman would have had the knowledge and felt the necessity of conforming to the higher conditions and methods of conduct which are deemed necessary by us to the stability and welfare of the State.⁴⁵

In this context, the appropriation of a vocabulary of Americanization by Chinese was useful not only as a way to project a positive image of themselves, but also as an appeal to the support of outside power against a haole oligarchy invested in perpetuating the inferiority of Asian residents. The oligarchy had wrapped itself in the cloak of American culture, thus making conformity to American ideology the standard for respect in Hawaii. Nonetheless, the United States also brought a critique of the oligarchy that could easily be used by less powerful ethnic groups to claim a stronger progressive and egalitarian heritage on the Islands than the haoles. As a result of the simultaneous political power and social abstraction of democratic ideology in Hawaii, becoming American for Chinese on the distant islands would become easier than in the United States.

Accommodation to Exclusion

The Chinese met annexation with a memorial prepared by the UCS for the commissioners assigned to investigate conditions on the Islands. Much of the memorial attempted to demonstrate the economic importance of the Chinese to the development of Hawaii and the extent to which they had adapted to local customs through intermarriage, naturalization, land reclamation, and conversion to Christianity:

[The Chinese] have contributed very largely to the revenues of the country and their progressive influence, from knowledge gained here, has been beneficially felt in their own land. To them is due a share of the credit for the prosperity of Hawaii today, in consequence of their labor developing the sugar and rice plantations, the fruit farms and vegetable gardens, and the great shipping business and commercial relations with the Orient, of which they were pioneers. To them Hawaii has become endeared as their adopted home by the kindness and fair treatment of many years, and their long sojourn here has been marked with amity and the absence of all discordant influences. In commercial and social life they have been respected and esteemed, and they have constituted a peaceable and law-abiding portion of the community.⁴⁶

The memorial also requested right of transit for Chinese from Hawaii to the United States, no legal discrimination, and that immigration rights be granted to Chinese workers for rice plantations, Chinese clerks for their businesses, and the wives and children of Chinese residents. A ten-point appendix was attached arguing why exclusion should not be extended to Hawaii. The main arguments were that laws should be applied flexibly to local conditions, and the situation in California that had called for exclusion did not apply in Hawaii. They argued that singling out Chinese from all other nationalities for exclusion "has the effect of lowering China in the eyes of the world," and that the Chinese presence on Hawaii was actually beneficial because they were law-abiding, "minded their own business," did not compete with white labor, got along with the natives, and possessed enterprising qualities that the natives lacked. These images and arguments were presented repeatedly by the Chinese over the next three decades. They were similar to the images produced by the Chinese in Peru in the 1920s. The one significant difference was that the Chinese in Hawaii emphasized how thoroughly they had settled in Hawaii and made it their home.

Annexation got off to an inauspicious start for the Chinese with the

bubonic plague prevention measures that led to the great Chinatown fire of 1900. In the long run, however, immigration and opium were the only two issues that ran contrary to Chinese interests. Before annexation, laws against the importation of opium were not vigorously enforced, and the drug was a common aspect of migrant life, offered as a matter of course to guests, friends, and temporary workers on the rice farms. Federal enforcement after annexation severely affected the supply and price of the drug, forcing many addicts to quit and many merchants to lose an important source of profit.⁴⁷ Dislike of anti-opium measures was generally kept quiet, however, whereas exclusion could be protested publicly.

The first wave of Chinese protests against the exclusion laws in Hawaii from 1900 to 1905 generally included complaints against rigorous and humiliating treatment of "respectable" merchants, while admitting the value of restricting "undesirable" classes. C. K. Ai was a local leader of the 1905 anti-American boycott, even though his City Mill had won the contract to build the local immigration offices and detention quarters in 1903—a job on which he claimed to have lost five thousand dollars.⁴⁸ By the middle of the decade, protests focused on the argument that the Islands would benefit economically from the immigration of Chinese agricultural laborers. The UCS often worked with sugar planters in writing petitions to the United States Congress and the Department of Commerce and Labor requesting a modification of the exclusion laws. In 1915, the Rice Grower's Association even sent a delegation to Washington for a congressional hearing. This movement was finally a dead issue in 1921, after even an attempt by sugar interests to play up the specter of the Japanese menace in the wake of the recent sugar plantation strikes could not procure the admission of Chinese laborers.⁴⁹

Most public statements against exclusion were carefully tailored to show that Chinese were more than willing to conform in most other aspects of Hawaiian life and Americanization. The 1913 booklet quoted above, *Chinese in Hawaii*, was a typical vehicle for such imagery. An article entitled "Chinese Labor Problem" explicitly addressed the issue of the exclusion laws, asking why the Chinese were made to bear the brunt of mainland prejudice when, "as a race they had never disturbed the balance of power. They had not meddled in politics; they were peace loving and law abiding, and all they had ever expected was the right to engage in commerce and trade without molestation."⁵⁰ The article expressed the hope that the emergence of China as a democratic nation-state would lead to a reduction in the "indignities" the Chinese were forced to suffer, but most of all it emphasized how the exclusion laws hurt the local economy, arguing not only that the rice and sugar industries would benefit if Ha-

waii were exempt from the enforcement of the exclusion laws, but that "the development of other natural resources of the Islands which require cheap labor to place them on a paying basis will be materially hastened."⁵¹ The introductory article attempted to make a connection between the economic significance of Chinese and their cultural contributions to Hawaii:

No better indication of the industry of the Chinese can be found than the fact that from the most humble beginnings, many have acquired beautiful and comfortable homes which in all respects are on a par with those of the most cultivated persons of other races. Pianos and other musical instruments are found in their houses, and many of their sons and daughters are accomplished musicians. They are patrons of the arts, acquiring paintings and statuary, and are constant in attendance at theaters.⁵²

In 1908 a Chinese Information Committee was set up under the auspices of the UCS to propagate ideas favorable to Chinese immigration, with the Reverend Edward W. Thwing as chairman and principle propagandist. The committee put out a weekly newsletter in English that was distributed in Hawaii and to government agencies in Washington. The articles repeated the whole range of pro-Chinese images that had been in circulation since 1898 and added a few new themes of their own, all of which would become standard fare for Chinese publications over the next sixty years. One of these additions included the story of how the Chinese had taught King Kamehameha I how to organize his port, charge tariffs, and more fully integrate Hawaii into the international market at the beginning of the nineteenth century, thus initiating the entrance of Hawaii onto the international stage. The strongest emphasis was always placed on the commercial respectability of the Chinese, their contributions to the wealth of the Islands, and their potential as a link to an extensive international market. Chinese affinity with local cultural and political institutions was also a significant theme. The success of the local Chinese baseball team was a particularly fertile topic:

In the appeal of the Chinese of Hawaii to the American people on behalf of a limited immigration of Chinese to Hawaii, the athletic spirit may not be an unimportant factor. In a country where the athletic spirit is as vigorous as in America, where it plays as important a part in the life of the country as it does there, and where the chief magistrate owes not a little of his popularity to his athletic spirit, a basis of common interest could be found. . . . With the common bond of athletics

recognized, much of the prejudice that has existed in the past is likely to give way, and open candid minds to new information and new considerations on the questions involved in this desire to permit a limited Chinese immigration to the Hawaiian Islands.⁵³

By and large, Chinese made a show of welcoming American institutions after annexation. They even began to accommodate themselves to the exclusion laws as it became increasingly clear they would not be modified. The basis by which exclusion was made palatable could be seen as early as 1911, when Yong Got, the president of the Hilo Tongmenghui, was unable to reenter Hawaii after a trip to China because somebody had reported to the Immigration Bureau that his Hawaiian birth certificate was false. This incident provided yet another opportunity for the *New China News* and the *Liberty News* to hurl invective at each other. The opening salvos of the debate by the *New China News* focused on what it saw as the hypocrisy of Yong's involvement in Chinese politics while claiming to be a citizen of the United States. The paper waxed particularly satirical in portraying the opportunism of Yong's claim to American citizenship: "China is weak, America is strong. He doesn't recognize weakness, just strength. He understands the state of the world. Scholars, ancestors, and descendants will all take him for a sage."⁵⁴ The reformers went on to criticize Yong's use of a false birth certificate because it had made the immigration inspectors suspicious, so that they might begin deporting people.

In response, Wen Xiongfei, the America-born editor of the *Liberty News*, wrote an editorial entitled "Emperor Protection Association acts as loyal official to the American Government." It argued that the reformers were collaborating with the enforcement of exclusion by turning Yong in to the immigration officials and were thus traitors not only against China, but against the good reputation of the Chinese in Hawaii:

Only Hawaiian birth certificates get good treatment from the American government. . . . The American government's treating the Hawaiian born so well is a result of the Hawaiian overseas Chinese having created these conditions for themselves. The natives born in San Francisco all know about the special privileges of the Hawaiian born, and want the same privileges. Why can't they get them? Because of the big smuggling industry. The people involved in it attack each other daily. If it is not A attacking the legitimacy of B's certificate, then B is attacking the witnesses for A's certificate. . . . We Chinese have caused the laws to be stringently enforced. Since I have come to Hawaii, I have noticed that the Hawaii officials treat the Chinese well here, not like

in California. We cannot fail to put forth the good reputation of the Chinese here as a reason for this.⁵⁵

The article made no attempt to show that Yong Got was born in Hawaii, but proceeded with a long diatribe about how the Constitutionists did not care for the good reputation of the locally born Chinese, but only cared about money and inducing persecution by foreigners. The argument was strong enough to put the *New China News* on the defensive, claiming that others had unmasked Yong's birth certificate before they did and that they would never have voluntarily called attention to such an incident.⁵⁶ This exchange revealed a tacit understanding that matters of practical immigration should take precedence over ideological vendettas and also showed the extent to which maintaining a public image as law-abiding citizens could supersede all other concerns.

This growing willingness to comply with exclusion reached an extreme in an article by Hawaii-born lawyer Ernest S. Ing, published in English and Chinese in a 1929 volume of self-promotion put out by the Chinese, entitled *Chinese of Hawaii*. Ing argued that in light of the great benefits offered by residence and citizenship in the United States, exclusion and the inability to naturalize were only minor inconveniences. He emphasized how Chinese citizens resident in Hawaii were "alien friends," who shared many of the rights of citizens and owed a temporary allegiance to the United States of America. He further remarked that

living under these advantages and restrictions, the civil status of the alien Chinese cannot be said to be oppressive, though far from being enviable. . . . If our Chinese-American citizens suffer any hardships through restrictions imposed upon their alien relatives, this is on account of the disadvantages growing out of the operation of the immigration and naturalization laws of the United States and does not derogate from the value of their citizenship.⁵⁷

Ing reduced exclusion to an unfortunate historical circumstance which did not adequately reflect the status of local Chinese, discounting the discrimination and suspicion that also existed in Hawaii against locally born citizens of Asian extraction. As late as 1933, the governor of the territory wrote, "Our citizens are largely of oriental blood and for the most part are recognized as aliens until the contrary is proved."⁵⁸ It is unlikely that Ing was ignorant of such attitudes. He was, instead, just proceeding one step further in a strategy that Chinese had followed since annexation—that of manifesting extreme loyalty and devotion to democratic

and commercial institutions in order to gain peace and acceptance. This step was consistent with a growing trend among Chinese in Hawaii to interpret their migrant past within the American framework as a heritage of pioneering immigrants dedicated to the building of America.

ANCESTORS FOR AMERICANIZATION

Ethnic Associations

As a generation of Hawaii-born Chinese came of age in the 1920s, they reinterpreted their past from within the framework of American nationalism and began to revive and create many immigrant associations as vehicles of that interpretation. The Chinese were redefining themselves as ethnic groups in the context of multicultural Honolulu, and Chinese associations were the markers of that ethnicity. Village associations continued to be founded through the 1950s, and many of them continued to sponsor the building of schools, ancestral halls, and public works projects in home villages in China, but this interest began to carry a flavor of charitable volunteerism. Contributors to these projects were concerned less with bolstering their status in the eyes of villagers in China and more with promoting the image of Chinese in Hawaii as a humane and generous people.

The shift in orientation toward Hawaii emerged more clearly in the surname associations and the large Zhongshan and Hakka *huiguan* founded after the 1920s. The emergence of these associations also marked the rising participation of the locally born. On into the 1970s, China-born migrants continued to be more involved in village associations and the locally born in the surname associations.⁵⁹ These new associations no longer emerged primarily from the context of migrant mutual aid and links back to China; they now centered around picnics, bridging the generation gap, historical preservation, and relations with neighboring ethnic groups. They were often created with the explicit goal of providing a site for social activities and networking opportunities, and professionals like dentists or merchants used them to build clientele. For example, the Mao family association founded in 1931 claimed that its purpose was "to bring together the old and young," to help and advise those in distress, to remember the hardship and struggles of the pioneer Maos, and "to keep pace with the American standard of living and to develop better American citizens," this last function perhaps being fulfilled by the maintenance of a vacation resort outside of Honolulu for members.⁶⁰ They also

functioned as constituencies for individuals who wanted to use them as stepping stones for entry into other Chinese associations.

The Hakka and Zhongshan *huiguan* had no strong links to China and were very much products of perceived interests in Hawaii. Before the 1920s, most Hakkas had been strongly involved in organizations like Christian churches, the YMCA, the Chinese-English Debating Society, nationalist organizations, and the long-lived Guo An Association, and they did not feel the need for a formalized organization that explicitly revolved around being Hakka. Several locally born Hakkas talked about forming the Renhe *huiguan* around 1911, but it only met informally until 1921. It was unable to get together funds to erect a clubhouse—a crucial marker of associational prestige—until 1937, when it also changed its name to the Chongzhenghui and linked itself to the world network of Hakka associations under the same name. The clubhouse emerged long after the association was of any use in providing practical mutual aid services to migrants. The aims behind it could be better appreciated in the opening ceremonies, to which leaders from all of the other native place and kinship associations were invited. Speeches were given in Cantonese rather than Hakka, and the main topics were the speakers themselves, their accomplishments, and their contributions to the Chinese community.⁶¹ More than anything, the Chongzhenghui was a platform for ambitious Hakkas to gain face and integrate themselves into the larger migrant community. Similarly, in 1950 all of the district and village associations from Zhongshan came together to establish a Zhongshan *huiguan*. As most associational services were already being provided by the smaller associations, there was little necessity for its creation other than to invest its members and representatives with a status equal to those from the Siyi and Hakka *huiguan*.⁶²

Only three surname associations had been created before the 1920s: a Lin association in 1889, a Huang association in 1906, and a Longgang Gongsuo, for the Liu, Zhang, Guan, and Zhao surnames in 1919. These early associations had purposefully sought memberships and officers that spanned the district boundaries of Zhongshan, in the hope that they could serve to resolve disputes between people from different districts. A few more associations were founded in the 1920s, and a handful continued to be established in each decade through the 1960s.⁶³ Many of these associations had a strong interest in maintaining ancestral halls in China and in editing and publishing family genealogies. In fact, family researchers in the 1980s occasionally found that all the remaining genealogy books for their lineage were to be found in Honolulu.⁶⁴ This interest,

however, was often less of a filial interest in the maintenance of a patri-line than an attempt to establish a pedigree as the descendant of a genuine immigrant family, as is evident in the public statements accompanying the reorganization of the Lin family association in 1931:

About one hundred years ago people of our clan with a pioneer spirit, and progressive mind, crossed the sea and came to this place from Kwangtung. We, the posterity, should revere the pioneer spirit of our clan people, which can rival that of Columbus and Magellan. If we don't have an organization to bring our clan people together, friendship will be diminished, and we'll treat each other as strangers. It is, therefore, evident that our clan needs an organization to bring all of our people together. . . . We must have past history as a model for the present. . . . Since the establishment it has now been several decades. As time goes by, all the deeds [the founders] have done are buried. All the records have been lost.⁶⁵

The ancestors appealed to were not those who had founded the Lin family several generations back in China but the immigrant pioneers who, as Columbus and Magellan had supposedly done for the Europeans, had forged a place for the Lins in Hawaii.

Many of the new surname groups strove for a broad membership beyond the descendants of a single lineage and residents of a single village. The president of the Gu family association explained the rationale behind this in 1966, writing, "With the Goos, historically they came from different villages. We felt that we were Chinese by heritage and basically Goos, so whether we are of the same village doesn't matter. . . . We would like to base it on the American system where you are of German or Italian ancestry but basically American."⁶⁶ Belonging to a Chinese family association not only integrated individuals into the Chinese community, but provided them with an immigrant heritage that linked them to America more than the homeland.

Sociologist Clarence Glick wrote in 1938 that Chinese associations in Honolulu were losing vitality and becoming less relevant.⁶⁷ Tin-Yuke Char echoed this evaluation in the 1950s, adding that many associations only continued to exist because of the income from the land and buildings they owned.⁶⁸ In the 1970s, anthropologist Judith Morrison also recorded a general belief among the Chinese that the associations were losing vitality and that young people in particular were not interested in them.⁶⁹ From her longer historical perspective, however, she did not take this judgment at face value. Glick also removed this evaluation from the version of his dissertation published in 1980. Focusing her attention on

the native place associations, Morrison argued that even when they did not engage in any significant charitable or communal activities, their existence as the institutional representation of a particular group was still meaningful, both in relation to other Chinese and as a marker of Chinese ethnicity which distinguished them from non-Chinese. While agreeing with Chinese observers that the native place associations in Honolulu primarily attracted the interest of older men, she argued that this was a reflection the human life cycle rather than an associational life cycle. These old men still recruited successful, middle-aged businessmen to act as officers because of the prestige and connections they could bring to the association. Most of them accepted the positions willingly, despite previously having had more interest in associations such as the Chinese Civic Association and the Rotary Club, reflecting an awareness of the important role of the associations in creating their own positions in Honolulu's multiethnic business community.

Morrison's observations were a reformulation of arguments made in the 1930s by Clarence Glick and Romanzo Adams. They argued that on an emotional level the associations emphasized a common cultural heritage, and on a practical level the network of banquets, inaugurations, and commemorations attended by officers of the various groups fostered a concrete sense of connection. Moreover, status granted to the immigrants through the associations often translated to status in the eyes of other ethnic groups. Summarizing his understanding of the relation between migrants and associations, Glick wrote,

The activities of the migrant brought him formal, highly valued recognition from China; they brought him the more personal esteem of the other members of the Chinatown community; and, finally, as these Chinese activities secured recognition from the dominant island groups, the migrant who achieved "face" in Chinatown was raised in the esteem of the interracial society. . . . In a sense, assimilation of the migrant into a Chinatown society meant at the same time accommodation to a larger interracial society of which Chinatown was an integral but distinct part. To the extent that the migrant willingly participated in the emerging interracial society, he did so in the role of a recognized member of a distinct racial and cultural group.⁷⁰

Even older migrants who had not reoriented their consciousness in terms of Hawaii adapted to the localization taking place around them. In their old age they wanted to enjoy the trappings of the status in Chinese terms, such as wearing the clothes of Manchu officials in birthday ceremonies performed for their honor and arranging for elaborate funerals

with around-the-clock wailers, mourning clothes, public processions, the burning of paper money, servants, horses, and cars for use in the underworld. Significantly, they did not feel they had to go back to China to enjoy these things. Families had taken root in Hawaii, and death on the Islands was no longer a threat of ghostliness. As one old man remarked about his desire to be buried permanently in Hawaii, "I want to be there with my children, and my children's children."⁷¹ It was possible to establish a new patriline, based on the efforts of the founding ancestor. Of course these funeral rituals, as well as other rituals that continued to surround Chinese New Year and marriage ceremonies, did not have the same significance as in China. Most younger participants were ignorant or even scornful of what they saw to be the superstitious beliefs underlying their performance. Yet, many still took part in them as a part of their heritage. These rituals became ethnic markers in much the same way as the surname groups. As in China, differing interpretations did not matter so much as the way in which common participation drew boundaries and forged orderly social relationships.

Racial Succession

The work of sociologists like Adams and Glick is useful not only because of its insight into the Chinese community in Honolulu, but also because the Chinese themselves began to draw on their theories in creating a place for themselves in Hawaiian society. By the 1930s, with the increasing arrival of servicemen and other haoles from the mainland, cracks were appearing in the racial etiquette of Hawaii, and a popular impression of the mixed races of Hawaii as a breeding ground of delinquency was beginning to emerge. On the other hand, scholars who had been attracted to the Islands as a successful experiment in melting-pot democracy helped preserve racial etiquette in the face of increasingly open racial tension by depicting Hawaii as an example of smooth racial relations and amalgamation. Many Chinese were quick to latch on to these models and attempt to make them into social reality.

Funding from sugar planters made possible the research of Stanley Porteus that led to the book *Temperament and Race* in 1926. It was a pioneer of race research in Hawaii, and the strongest academic voice in support of inherent racial difference. It was the definitive application to Hawaii of theories which attempted to describe personality as the biological properties of racial groups, working from the assumption that "the place in the community that each racial group attains will be determined, not by the weight of the environmental handicap, but rather by the mental,

temperamental, or character traits which each possess."⁷² Thus, for Porteus, it was natural that the Chinese had a status inferior to that of the haoles in Hawaii. Although they were intelligent, it was only a practical intelligence based on the desire to accumulate money. They were still desirable residents, however, because they were "unlikely to scheme for the advancement of their group" and each had "all the virtues of a useful citizen without the embarrassing ambition to be one."⁷³ That is, the Chinese kept to their place under the terms of Island racial etiquette.

The Chinese and the missionaries who often represented them in the petitions and pamphlets written at the beginning of the century had often cooperated in producing such a judgment. Their emphasis on economic contributions to Hawaiian history and their unwillingness to interfere in local affairs had seemed very opportune in light of their desire to obtain the entry of more Chinese migrants while diffusing fears of an Asian takeover. Most of their hopes for political status were pinned publicly on the recognition of China as a modern nation-state. By the 1920s, however, the failure of the Chinese republic and a growing awareness of the limit to upward mobility inherent in the racial characterization of the Chinese led to a search for new explanations of their position in Hawaii. Newer sociological theories that explained the status of local ethnic groups as the result of universal historical and environmental processes rather than internal characteristics found quick favor.

A group called the Overseas Penman's Club put out a slew of commemorative and promotional volumes and yearbooks during the 1930s. For the most part, they contained the usual hodgepodge of statistics, biographies, accounts of funds collected to "save China," business directories, brief histories of associations, and advertisements that have filled Chinese commemorative volumes throughout the world. Yet the descriptions of the cultural and economic significance of Chinese in Hawaii marked a slight change from earlier publications in Hawaii. Their first publication in 1929, *The Chinese of Hawaii*, had a Chinese section largely devoted to the new task of promoting the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and rewriting the history of the Chinese in Hawaii from the perspective of the Guomindang. The English section, on the other hand, was much more attentive to redefining the Chinese experience in Hawaii in terms of popular American discourses of hardy pioneering, cultural pluralism, and eager modernization. It was dedicated "to the spirit of progress which has characterized Chinese life from the days of the earliest pioneers; to the future of a Chinese community in its service to all in this territory."

In addition to the articles written by Hawaii-born Chinese professionals on the usual topics of athletics, churches, and economic success,

it included an article by Romanzo Adams entitled "The Meaning of the Chinese Experience in Hawaii." It was intended as a reinterpretation of the Chinese presence on Hawaii that emphasized "the special circumstances under which they have lived and thus [made] them more understandable to others on the basis of our common humanity."⁷⁴ He argued that, until recently, Hawaii-born Chinese "seemed to desire unrestricted social relations with Caucasians, but what they really did want was a satisfactory social life on the American plan with people of similar education and interests, and most of such persons, for the time being, happened to be Caucasians."⁷⁵ As more and more Chinese received an American education, however, they were able to forsake haole companionship and create networks and associations among themselves without giving up their claim to be truly American. He argued further that the love of China taught in the Chinese-language schools should be encouraged, because it instilled in children the values necessary to be able to love the United States as well. Adams concluded with homage to the immigrant heritage that echoed the opening dedication, asserting that "when the immigrant generation shall have passed away, their posterity will erect to them memorials in lasting granite. In literature their achievements will be celebrated, and their virtues will be recounted for the instruction of youth."⁷⁶

Adams saw this ethnic solidarity of educated Chinese as a temporary phase. In other writings he made it clear that he was a strong advocate of intermarriage and total integration, and showed more awareness of haole discrimination against the Chinese. Chinese, however, latched onto this vision of an identity that was simultaneously Chinese and Americanized. The nature of this identity was developed more extensively in the second volume of *Chinese of Hawaii* in 1936. In this volume, the Chinese and English sections were much more similar, centered on two economic and educational histories of the Chinese in Hawaii written by Kum Pui Lai and Paul Kimm-Chow Goo. With the help of copious statistics, these articles presented a celebration of Chinese success in Hawaii shaped by theories of ethnic succession then being pursued in Hawaii by sociologist Andrew Lind. As explained by Lai, ethnic succession meant that "success in cultural adjustments of the immigrant groups in Hawaii seems to vary with their length of residence, numerical size, and group solidarity. . . . This 'graduation' from the rural plantations to the business houses and then to professional occupations in the cities of Honolulu and Hilo appears to be duplicated by each group after a period of labor in the sugar camps and pineapple fields."⁷⁷ Thus, as the Chinese were the first group to arrive after the haoles, this theory claimed a status for the Chinese as the second most integrated and important group in Hawaii (native Ha-

waiians were not taken into consideration by this theory, except as the unfortunate victims of succession).

From the perspective of ethnic succession, nothing more than the timing of Chinese arrival in Hawaii was necessary to explain their status as a unique Hawaiian ethnic group. Chinese success on the Islands was due to their having come together as Chinese, but the influence of Chinese culture and connections to China could be taken into account or ignored at will, depending on the context. Thus, Paul Kim-Chow Goo could assert of the Chinese that "their characteristic traits of industry, providence, thriftiness, endurance, love of peace, and patience were important in their struggle to rise to the top against resentment, prejudice, and misunderstanding, which in time gave way to better understanding, and a more friendly spirit ensued," without necessarily negating his claim that other ethnic groups in Hawaii, "like the Chinese, are all the products of the same general ground pattern, and they proceed on the same general uniformity of progress."⁷⁸ He could depict the Chinese as inherently noble and industrious while avoiding any of the biologically racializing implications of such a mode of characterization because they were contingent cultural qualities rather than deterministic traits. The status of Chinese in Hawaii was now determined by environmental and historic factors. Whereas much assimilation theory on the mainland required the breaking down of group identities as a basis for assimilation into the cosmopolitan and individualistic larger society, racial succession provided a basis for pluralistic integration as a group with a particular local history.

Ethnic Consolidation

Mui King-Chan, the Chinese consul in Hawaii, wrote an article entitled "The Chinese as Builders of Hawaii" for a 1937 issue of the *Pan Pacific* magazine devoted to the Chinese in Hawaii. In it he transformed the process of ethnic succession into a dramatic procession: "Huge obstacles in the way of foreign language and culture and strange environment were fought and conquered through the dogged patience and persistence of each succeeding generation. From farmer to merchant and merchant to leader the Chinese progressed."⁷⁹ This article was jumping ahead of itself. The Chinese had been stuck on the plateau of merchant for over four decades, and in 1937, describing Chinese as leaders was more wishful thinking than empirical observation. In 1938 Lind himself noted that ethnic succession on the Islands was no longer as dynamic as it once was, appearing to have hit a kind of status quo. The number of professional and leadership positions at the top was limited and had already been filled

by haoles, leaving fewer avenues of mobility for those on the bottom.⁸⁰ Adams often explained this impasse as a result of haole discrimination and decried it as an unfortunate barrier to complete integration. The haole oligarchy dominated the largest business interests in agriculture, shipping, wholesale distribution, and department stores, and they cooperated closely to exclude all economic and political competition, leaving only smaller retail concerns and a few selected products to the Chinese.

The Chinese also took part in the reproduction of this stagnant status quo. Few Chinese writers acknowledged racial restrictions on the development of Chinese economic life, preferring instead to underline their contributions, commitments, and general acceptance in Hawaiian society. They presented themselves as satisfied with their second rank on the ethnic totem pole and tended to adhere to the racial etiquette of the Islands, rarely posing challenges to the haoles or any other ethnic groups for that matter. Unlike the Japanese and Filipinos, they were never involved in strikes or political opposition to the haoles, and even during the anti-Japanese war they generally restrained themselves from participating to the prevailing discourse of fear and prejudice against the Japanese on the Islands (although they untiringly attacked the ambitions of the Japanese government).⁸¹ They held a precarious position and worked hard not to disturb it.

In economic activities, ethnicity and ethnic associations facilitated the consolidation of business connections and the protection of those interests from the interference of other groups. Chinese had a very clear sense of what kinds of merchandise were part of the Chinese economy, such as poi, tea, and fish, and few Chinese were willing to invest in products like coffee or pineapples, which were believed to be dominated by other ethnic groups. Yet within this Chinese economic sphere relations were shaped more by intense competition than cooperation. Occasional attempts to set up committees for business regulation and price control generally met with failure. Frustrated or ambitious Chinese businessmen would occasionally talk about the "need to modernize" as a criticism of other Chinese businesses for their tendency to hire managers and employees on the basis of family ties rather than competency, their reluctance to adopt more efficient management techniques, and their unwillingness to depart from the exclusively Chinese business networks.⁸² Nonetheless, even sophisticated financial institutions like the Chinese American bank, established in 1916, and the Liberty Bank, established in 1922, tended to reinforce a segregated Chinese economy in Honolulu.

Many children of Chinese and Hawaiian parents preferred to publicly identify with the Chinese rather than the Hawaiian side of their an-

cestry in deference to the higher status of the Chinese and common beliefs that Chinese were more diligent and had more business skills, even though many of them had been raised only by their Hawaiian mothers after their Chinese fathers had returned to China, died, or abandoned them. Many even embroidered their family histories to assert that their fathers or grandfathers in China had been doctors, scholars, and other men thought to be of superior quality. On the other hand, growing ethnic consciousness meant that Chinese were increasingly less likely to accept Chinese-Hawaiians into their networks and associations, unless "personal character or family connections" recommended them.⁸³ Race, migrant past, and economic niche were becoming one and the same.

Many educated young Chinese with professional ambitions were unable to achieve their goals, given the limited opportunities available in Hawaii and were more likely to feel the glass ceiling placed on their advancement. Finding so few chances in Hawaii to exercise their professional skills, many moved to the mainland or, more commonly, to China in search of employment (where they were known for their talents in baseball and ukulele playing). From 1924 to 1931, 911 more American citizens left for China from Hawaii than returned.⁸⁴ Many of those young Chinese had developed a sincere sense of patriotism for America and American values during their education in public schools, accepting George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and English constitutional liberties as their own personal heritage.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, as Romanzo Adams told his Chinese readers in 1929, Chinese enthusiasm for America and democracy often faded quickly after the young graduates found that what they had learned in the integrated halls of the school was not necessarily the reality of work and economic competition they had to deal with when they left. A visit to the mainland and the experience of more open racism there often left a deep impression on many Hawaii-born Chinese. One student in the 1920s told how bad experiences while studying in California had made him rethink his feelings toward China and Hawaii: "While I am being more and more Americanized—adopting more and more American customs, habits, and ways of thinking—I am also feeling more sympathetic to China." He considered going to China to begin his career, but was not certain he could fit in there, either, because he had also been rejected while trying to mix with students from China in California.⁸⁶ This dilemma was common among many young Chinese in an era when identity was closely tied to national inclusion. A common response was the development of a pluralist alternative through the reinforcement of Chinese ethnicity in Hawaii.

In the context of Hawaii, the goals of "Americanization" were diffi-

cult to distinguish from "modernization." Both included a taste for social recognition and acceptance, a high standard of life surrounded by technological conveniences, and a commitment to national patriotism rather than what were seen as parochial cultural attachments. As such, the process of taking root as a Chinese ethnic group in Hawaii was not much different from the experiences of other Chinese migrants around the world. The most significant differences in Hawaii were the transformation of connections to villages in China into distant heritages and the fact that access to modernity was not dominated by a small elite. As Americans, all young Chinese felt that modern life should be within their reach.



CHAPTER 8

Chinese Migration and the Early-Twentieth-Century World Order

I want to be able to rely on you, [my father] who inked each piece of our own laundry with the word "Center," to find out how we landed in a country where we are eccentric people (Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*).¹

There is no East here. West is meeting West. This was all West. All you saw was West. This is *The Journey in the West*. I am so fucking offended. Why aren't you offended? . . . These sinophiles dig us so much, they're drooling over us. They think they know us—the wide range of us from sweet to sour—because they eat in Chinese restaurants. . . . What's so "exotic"? We're about as exotic as shit (Wittman Ah Sing, complaining about reviews praising his staging of an old Chinese novel, in Maxine Hong Kingston, *Tripmaster Monkey*).²

I'm tired of all this Chinese this, Chinese that. You people, you think gambling, extortion, corruption are kosher? Because it's a thousand years old? Well all this thousand-year-old stuff, it's a lot of shit to me. This is America you're living in, and it's two hundred years old, so you better get your clocks fixed. You're not special, and you're not beyond the law, any more than the Puerto Ricans or the Polacks. So we're all going to obey the law the way it says (Lieutenant Stanley White, in *Year of the Dragon*, a Dino de Laurentiis film).³

American children hear no stories about ghosts. They spend a dime at the drugstore to buy a Superman comic book. This "Superman" is an all-knowing, resourceful, omnipotent hero who can overcome any difficulty. . . . Superman represents actual capabilities or future potential, while ghosts symbolize belief in and reverence for the accumulated past. As much as old Mrs. Park, trying to lessen the distance between east and west, might lead me over to the corner of the living room to