

*Intermediary Elites in the Treaty Port World: Tong Mow-chee and His
Collaborators in Shanghai, 1873–1897¹*

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Abstract

This article examines the functions of Chinese and foreign intermediary elites in the commercial and political world of Shanghai, an international city in the nineteenth century mainly consisting of British, American, European and Chinese residents. Specifically, it focuses on the formation of the socio-economic network of Tong Mow-chee (Tang Maozhi 唐茂枝) (1828–1897), a well-known Chinese comprador-merchant serving the British firm Jardine Matheson & Co. and other anglophone and Chinese figures, including William Venn Drummond and Tong King-sing who supported Mow-chee's commercial and political activities. My research mainly draws on English and Chinese sources and enables a deeper understanding of the unofficial figures who contributed to the management of the international society of Shanghai in the late nineteenth century, offering new insight into social roles of the middlemen operating in an area of Britain's informal empire in China.

Introduction

In nineteenth-century Shanghai, the social order of the city, which consisted of different nationalities and communities, was largely maintained by Chinese and

¹ This article represents an extended version of a paper I presented at the China Postgraduate Network (CPN) Annual Conference 2012 (University of Edinburgh) on 18 June 2012 and at the workshop, *Modern China's Internationalizations and its Legacies* (University of Bristol) on 11 January 2013. I would like to thank Andrew Hillier for sharing his family materials with me.

foreign intermediaries. Of these, Tong Mow-chee (*Tang Maozhi* 唐茂枝)(1828–1897) was an indispensable linkman for the smooth administration of international society in Shanghai, an informal influential area of the British Empire since the end of the First Opium War in 1842. Tong Mow-chee, otherwise known as Tong Achik or Tong Ting-chik 唐廷植 (*Tang Tingzhi*), from 1873 to 1897 was a comprador (*maiban* 買辦) for Jardine, Matheson & Co. in Shanghai, one of the largest British trading firms in East Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He succeeded remarkably well in the business and political world of Shanghai by using his extensive local network along with foreign and Chinese authorities, including his younger brother Tong King-sing (*Tang Jingxing* 唐景星) (1832–1892), also known as Tang Tingshu (唐廷樞). While Tong King-sing was also a comprador for Jardine, Matheson, he was a famous entrepreneur actively involved in the modernisation and industrialisation projects known as the Self-Strengthening Movement or the Westernisation Movement (*yangwu yundong* 洋務運動) of 1861–1895 led by Qing officials and merchants.² Mow-chee's network included European intermediaries such as William Venn Drummond, a well-known pro-Chinese barrister in Shanghai. Drummond frequently advised and represented Chinese merchants, including Tong Mow-chee and King-sing, in court cases in Shanghai. These middlemen became influential in the local commercial and political world of Shanghai in the late nineteenth century by coordinating the interests of different communities. Shanghai was a multilayered city; although the Chinese mainly lived in communities separate from that of the British, Americans,

² Xu Run 徐潤, *XuYuzhai zixu nianpu* 徐愚齋自叙年譜 (published around 1927), pp. 57–58; Yang Tian-yi 楊天溢, 'Shinmatsu yomuundo ki no kigyosha katsudo—kantokushoben seido wo chushin' ni 清末洋務運動期の企業者活動--官督商弁制度を中心に [The entrepreneur system in the industrialization of 19th-century China: the institution of the official supervision and merchant management mystem] Keiei Shigaku (*Japan Business History Review*), I(3), pp.70–71.

and other foreigners, there would be commercial and social interaction between the residents. Many Chinese found business opportunities with foreigners, who were required to communicate with Chinese officials, merchants and servants for their business and daily lives. Due to cultural differences and frictions between the foreigners and the Chinese, there was a demand for intermediaries who could settle these disputes and streamline the communication between various groups of people.³ This article attempts to examine the history of Chinese and foreign intermediaries in the nineteenth century by focusing on several representative figures, especially Tong Mow-chee and his foreign and Chinese collaborators.

Beyond biographical study, this research on Tong Mow-chee's commercial and political position in Shanghai contributes to the historiography of intermediaries who were active in formal and informal territories of European empires. In the nineteenth century, European powers developed an informal empire, prioritising the expansion of the commercially influential territories through military, economic and diplomatic actions. For the expansion of the informal territory of the empire, ruling and managing the local communities meant that, in practice, indigenous collaborators were required in addition to European rulers.⁴ In the case of nineteenth-century India, native information workers, or 'native informants', such as an agent or spy, provided intelligence about the indigenous politics in India to British officials. In this manner, British authorities

³ In terms of the importance of the intermediaries in modern Shanghai, Leung Yuen-sang discussed at length the multifaceted functions of the Chinese social leaders in the mid-nineteenth century: Leung Yuen-sang, *The Shanghai Taotai: Linkage Man in a Changing Society, 1843-90* (Honolulu and Singapore, 1990), pp.160-165. Mark Elvin summarises the relationship between Chinese public associations and the Foreign Municipal Council in the late nineteenth century: Mark Elvin, "Administration of Shanghai, 1905-1914", in *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*, (eds) Mark Elvin and William G. Skinner (Stanford, 1974), pp. 240-250.

⁴ See John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The imperialism of free trade", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, VI, 1 (1953), pp. 1-15; Ronald Robinson, "Non-European foundations of European imperialism: Sketch for a theory of collaboration", in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, (eds) Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London, 1972), pp.120-124.

were able to administer more effectively, even though there were limitations on British ability to control political intelligence communication there.⁵ Such native collaborators, or native informants, also existed in nineteenth-century China. The numerous compradors or native mercantile agents were employed by the majority of foreign companies and authorities operating in the coastal port cities, including Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tianjin during that period. European settlers also functioned as intermediaries between the two communities, often communicating with the compradors. Several scholars, such as Yen-P'ing Hao, Chan Kai Yiu and Motono Eiichi, have conducted extensive studies on the comprador-merchants' commercial activities.⁶ However, studies on the collaborations between the compradors, Chinese and foreign authorities are surprisingly scarce in comparison to studies on competition and conflicts among them.⁷ Therefore, this study will attempt to explore how the foreign and Chinese intermediaries established a constructive relationship.

Leung Yuen-sang shed light on the transitional role of the Shanghai Taotai (*daotai* 道台) (the highest-ranking Qing official in the city) as a 'linkage position' connecting different societies and values such as East/West and

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⁵ C. A. Bayly, "Knowing the country: empire and information in India", *Modern Asian Studies*, XXVII, 1, Special Issue: How Social, Political and Cultural Information Is Collected, Defined, Used and Analysed (February, 1993), pp. 3–43.

⁶ See Yen-ping Hao, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge between East and West* (Cambridge, 1970); Kai Yiu Chan, *Business Expansion and Structural Change in Pre-war China: Liu Hongsheng and his Enterprises, 1920-1937* (Hong Kong, 2006.); Kai Yiu Chan, "A turning point in China's comprador system: KMA's changing marketing structure in the lower Yangzi region, 1912-25", *Business History*, XLIII, 2 (2001), pp.51–72; Eiichi Motono, "A study of the legal status of the compradors during the 1880s: with special reference to the three civil cases between David Sassoon Sons & Co. and their compradors, 1884–1887", *Acta Asiatica*, LXII (1992), pp.44–70.

⁷ Business competition between Chinese and foreign merchants and the predominance of Chinese comprador-merchants over foreign merchants in coastal areas of China, has been studied and accessed by various scholars. For example, see Eiichi Motono, *Conflict and Cooperation in Sino-British Business: 1860-1911: the Impact of the Pro-British Commercial Network in Shanghai* (New York, 2000); Jerry L. S. Wang, "The profitability of Anglo-Chinese trade, 1861–1913", *Business History*, XXXV, 3 (1993), pp. 39–65; Kwang-Ching Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China, 1862-1874* (Cambridge, MA, 1962).

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tradition/modernity.⁸ Leung's argument regarding the Taotai's adoption of different norms can be questioned because concepts like East, West, tradition and modernity are inadequate for tracing the highly complex international and multicultural local society of nineteenth-century Shanghai. However, Leung's argument as to the role of the Taotai as an intermediary, coordinating various local authorities for the administration of Shanghai, is useful for understanding the roles of intermediaries in the treaty port world. In the case of late nineteenth-century Shanghai, in addition to the Taotai, there were a small number of Chinese and foreign intermediaries operating in the commercial and political sectors. These linkage men collaborated with each other, and their activities enabled them to connect separated communities in the city. The other objective of this study is to trace the roles of Chinese and foreign middlemen, especially focusing on prominent figures such as Tong mow-chee and William Venn Drummond.

Mow-chee resided in Hong Kong, San Francisco and Tianjin before he settled in Shanghai in the 1870s and his life is a good example of the Chinese populace moving within the territory of the British Empire and elsewhere in the nineteenth century and working with foreigners. This summary draws on Carl T. Smith's research on the Tong Brothers.⁹ Mow-chee was born in 1828 in Xiangshan (*Xiangshan xian* 香山縣) in Guangdong (廣東), the hometown of the many of the Shanghai compradors. When Mow-chee was eleven years old, in September 1839, he was enrolled in the Morrison Education Society School, a missionary school in Macao.¹⁰ His younger brother, Tong King-sing, also studied at the same school. Then, in 1847, Mow-chee started working in the Magistrates'

⁸ Leung Yuen-sang, *The Shanghai Taotai*, pp.168–170.

⁹ Carl T. Smith, "The formative years of the Tong Brothers: pioneers in the modernization of China's commerce and industry:", *Chung Chi Journal*, X,1 and 2 (1971), pp.81–95.

¹⁰ Smith, "The formative years", pp.82; Frank Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, 1997), pp.153.

Court as an interpreter in Hong Kong.¹¹ However, in 1851, he was dismissed from his work in the Magistrates' Court because of a suspicion that he was in league with pirates and because of a scandal regarding his relationship with a 16-year old girl in a brothel. In June 1851, Mow-chee became a Christian and received the baptismal name, 'Laying cheu' and the following year went to San Francisco with his uncle, who had been a comprador to the Sheriff of Hong Kong. There, Mow-chee became a leading figure in the Chinese community and was involved in political activities in opposition to the anti-Chinese movement in America.

Occasionally he acted as court interpreter.¹²

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It is thought that Mow-chee returned to China between 1856 and 1857 and started working at China's Imperial Maritime Customs Service. However, between 1864 and 1865, he was arrested by the Shanghai Taotai, Ding Richang (丁日昌) due to his acceptance of a bribe from a Chinese merchant and was imprisoned for at least five months. On 8 November 1864, Robert Hart, the second Inspector-General of the Customs, recorded that Achik (a name which Mow-chee used in his youth) received 500 *taels* from a man.¹³ At that time, Hart sympathised with Ding, who was actively tackling the issue of corruption between the Qing officials and Chinese merchants. As such, Hart agreed to hand Mow-chee over to Ding. Later, when Hart realised the Qing officials were torturing Mow-chee, he began to push for his release.¹⁴ Mow-chee's career in the late 1860s was unclear, but by 1871 in Tianjin, he was working for Jardine, Matheson & Co. as a comprador. Then, in

¹¹ National Archives (London): CO 129/23, John Davis to the Earl Grey, 25 January 1848, pp. 82–83.

¹² Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2013), pp. 34, 331 note 64; *Sacramento Daily Union*, VII, 1084, 13 September 1854, p.2 ; Tong Achick's name was recorded in *Colville's San Francisco Directory* (1857), p.220.

¹³ Robert Hart, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, eds Richard J. Smith, John K. Fairbank and Katherine F. Bruner (Cambridge, MA, 1991), p.229.

¹⁴ Robert Hart, *Robert Hart* pp. 217–218, 229, 243, 259.

1873, Mow-chee took over his younger brother Kingsing's position as a comprador to Jardine in Shanghai.¹⁵ There, he also became a head of the Cantonese Guild and acted as a representative for the Chinese community, working on a number of public affairs.¹⁶ Moreover, Mow-chee actively participated in several benevolent activities before his death in Shanghai in 1897.¹⁷ On 3 September 1897, his obituary in the *North China Herald* described the graciousness displayed at Mow-chee's funeral, which, held at his house, was attended by more than 350 people, including his relatives, friends, foreigners, Chinese natives and Chinese officials. For the funeral, over a hundred condolences were sent by foreigners and almost a thousand satin or silk scrolls were sent by Chinese as last gifts.¹⁸ As few obituaries of Chinese people appeared in English newspapers in nineteenth-century China, this obituary indicates his significance for and influence on the Chinese and foreigners in the late Qing China.

By examining the Chinese intermediary's function when working with Chinese and foreigners, and the interconnections between foreign and Chinese intermediaries, I address three key questions: (1) how did Tong Mow-chee collaborate with Chinese elites? (2) how did he collaborate with foreign elites? (3) how did Tong Mow-chee and his collaborators work together on public issues in Shanghai?

Compradors

The compradors were intermediaries employed by foreign firms to conduct trade in China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this period, the compradors mediated business between the foreign and Chinese

¹⁵ Smith, 'Formative Years', p.92.

¹⁶ *The North China Herald (NCH)*, 3 September 1897, p.459.

¹⁷ Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City and Nation: Regional Networks and Identity in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (Berkeley, 1995), p.110; *NCH*, 3 September 1897, p.459.

¹⁸ *NCH*, 3 September 1897, pp. 459–460.

merchants since most of the foreign traders did not speak Chinese or understand the Chinese commercial system and, vice versa, the Chinese merchants did not fully understand the English language or foreign business practices. The compradors filled that niche, as they were able to understand both Chinese and foreign languages and both sets of business customs. The comprador system, the system of intermediation, existed long before the opening of the treaty ports. Before the conclusion of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, the compradors acted as provision purveyors to the foreign workers operating in the Pearl River Delta, especially in Canton. At that time, only those who held a license issued by the Qing government were allowed to become compradors. However, the First Opium War dissolved the formal regulation of the compradors and privatised the comprador system.¹⁹ After the establishment of Hong Kong as a British colony and the opening of the five treaty ports, the number of compradors steadily increased from the 1840s to the 1870s. It was estimated that 550 compradors operated in the coastal area of China by 1870.²⁰

In the treaty port world, the compradors not only acted as provision purveyors but also became responsible for hiring Chinese staff, accounting, financing and marketing in the Chinese commercial world.²¹ Many large foreign firms had a comprador office or department. In 1876, Tong Mow-chee

¹⁹ For a detailed description of the compradors in Canton, see, Paul Arthur Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong, 2005), especially chapter 4, "Compradors and the provisions trade", pp.51–75; John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: the Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), p.51.

²⁰ Jardine, Matheson & Co Ltd, *Jardine and the Ewo Interests* (Shanghai, 1947), p.48; *The Chronicles and Dictionary for China, Japan and Phillipines* (Hong Kong, 1870), p.221, cited in Yen-P'ing, Hao, *Comprador*, p.102.

²¹ Samuel Wells Williams, *A Chinese Commercial Guide: Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China, Sailing Directions, Tables*, Fourth edition, revised and enlarged (Canton: 1856), pp.224–225.

was the head of the comprador department of Jardine in Shanghai, which consisted of approximately 10 Chinese staff such as a shroff (a professional evaluator of coins and bullion), a book-keeper, and “collectors of bills and examiners of dollars”.²² In addition, the compradors negotiated business deals with the Chinese merchants on behalf of their foreign principals, obtaining in return a 2–5 per cent commission in addition to their ordinary salary.²³ For instance, in 1876, Mow-chee worked for both the comprador department and the shipping office of Jardine in Shanghai. From the comprador department he received an annual salary of 1,300 taels, and from the shipping department he received a 2 per cent commission from all business transactions which totalled 980 *taels* in that year.²⁴ Through supporting Chinese and foreign traders’ and merchants’ commercial activities, compradors became knowledgeable in both Chinese and foreign business practices. This enabled them to set up and run their own enterprises. The prominent “comprador-turned-businessman” figures were Zheng Guanying (鄭觀應), who worked for Butterfield & Swire, and Liu Hongsheng (劉鴻生) (1888–1956), who worked for the Kailan Mining Administration (KMA) in Shanghai.²⁵ Zheng Guanying was engaged in the tea and salt trades alongside his

²² A8/131/8/10, Tables by Tong Mow-chee of salaries in the Shipping Office Department, 1876, and Comprador Department, 1876, Jardine Matheson Archive (JMA), Cambridge University Library.

²³ Hao, *Comprador*, pp. 89–90.

²⁴ JMA: A8/131/8/10, Tables by Tong Mowchee of salaries in the Shipping Office Department, 1876, and Compradore Department, 1876.

²⁵ Chan, *Business Expansion and Structural Change in China*, p. 51; Elisabeth Köll, *From Cotton Mill to Business Empire: the Emergence of Regional Enterprises in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), p.61.

comprador activities. Liu Hongsheng started working for the Kailan Mining Administration in Shanghai and later had a coal distribution business in China.²⁶

However, the compradors' external business activities also caused problems for the foreign principals. The compradors were internal staff of the foreign companies as well as external business partners for them. This duality caused various problems for the foreign principals. Misappropriation of funds by the compradors was a constant issue for the foreign firms throughout the nineteenth century.²⁷ Despite the problem in the comprador system, the foreign firms continued to hire compradors until the mid-twentieth century. In part, this is because, for the foreign principals, the compradors' commercial network with the Chinese merchants benefited the conduct of trade and business in China, particularly in the case of Tong Mow-chee.

Collaboration with the Chinese Community

As a well-to-do comprador merchant, Tong Mow-chee's commercial success was heavily dependent on support from the Chinese mercantile community in Shanghai and other treaty ports in China. Principally, Mow-chee drew on his family network for his variety of commercial activities, including his shipping and sugar refining business. Second, as a Cantonese merchant, Mow-chee made use of his fellow provincials' network. Furthermore, beyond the regionalism among Chinese merchants, Mow-chee was involved in the management of numerous Chinese

²⁶ David Faure, "Beyond networking: an institutional view of Chinese business", in *Chinese and Indian Business: Historical Antecedents*, Medha M. Kudaisya and Chin-Keong Ng, (eds) (Leiden and Boston, 2009), pp. 31–60, 52.

²⁷ Lo Hok Pang, a head comprador at the Hong Kong office of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, absconded, leaving the bank over one million dollars in debt in March 1892. *The Hong Kong Telegraph*, 30 January 1895; HSBC Group Archives (London): HSBCS 0019/0001, Comprador File; Frank H. H. King, *The History of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Vol.1 1864-1902* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 515–516.

associations and guilds. Through cooperating with his family and Chinese mercantile people, Mow-chee became a significantly influential figure in modern China. The next section attempts to create a comprehensive picture of his ties with Chinese merchants.

Mow-chee's links to his relatives were his foremost reliable business ties and it was common for a comprador merchant to have a relative take over his business. For instance, in the case of the Tong family, in 1873 Mow-chee took over his younger brother King-sing's position as a comprador to Jardine in Shanghai, while Mow-chee's eldest son Tong Kidson (*Tang Jiechen* 唐傑臣), otherwise known as Tang Rongjun (唐榮俊), succeeded to Mow-chee's position of comprador to Jardine in Shanghai after his death.²⁸ Furthermore, Mow-chee and his relatives supported each other's business and trade activities. Many of the members of Tong family were involved in the shipping business. Tong King-sing was a general manager of China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company (*Lunchuan zhaoshang ju* 輪船招商局) from 1873 to 1884, while Mow-chee participated in the management of several Sino-foreign owned shipping companies at the same time.²⁹ The conducting of the Tong brothers' shipping business will be described in detail during the later section on Mow-chee's ties with foreigners. The other younger brother Tong Afu, also known as Tong Aku, has been identified with Tong Ting-keng (*Tang Tinggeng* 唐廷庚), who worked in the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company in Canton.³⁰ In November 1883, Nguyễn Thuật (*Ruan Shu* 阮述), an eunuch from Vietnam, met Mow-chee who was a

²⁸ Smith, "Formative Years", p.92; before that, Mow-chee was a comprador to Jardine in Tianjin; Hong Kong Public Record Office (HKPRO), HKRS144-4-1161, Will of Tong Mow Chee, 22 December 1894.

²⁹ Hao, *Comprador*, pp.122–124; John King Fairbank, Martha Henderson Coolidge and Richard J. Smith, *H.B. Morse, Customs Commissioner and Historian of China* (Lexington, 1995), pp.70–72.

³⁰ Smith, "Formative Years", p. 92.

director of the China Merchants' Company in Shanghai at that time. Mow-chee informed him that King-sing had gone to Europe and the USA but had not yet returned China, while the other brother, Yingsing (應星) (another name of Tong Ting-keng) was in Canton.³¹ This family shipping business was carried on by the next generation. Tong Mow-chee appointed his two sons, Tong Kidson and Tong Shun-fung (唐純峯), as heirs in his will.³² Kidson succeeded to his father's position as a comprador for Jardine in Shanghai and started to handle the shipping business of the company in the 1890s as his father had done before him.³³

These strong family ties enabled Mow-chee to conduct large-scale enterprises in China. For instance, Mow-chee and King-sing were both involved in the management of the sugar company Smith, Wahee and Company. William McGregor Smith and King-sing were early directors of the company: Smith holding the largest share of 16,000 taels, while King-sing held 3,000 taels. The sugar company mainly carried out business in Shanghai during the first half of the 1860s.³⁴ After the mid-1860s, Mow-chee took over King-sing's share and started performing a key administrative role.³⁵ In this vein, the company opened a sugar depot for sales of refined sugar, golden syrup and molasses at No.25 Wellington Street in the East Point of Hong Kong in 1869.³⁶ Until the end of December of

³¹ Thuật Nguyễn, edited by Chen Jinghe 陳荆和, *Ruan shu "WangJin riji 阮述" 往津日記* (Hong Kong, 1980), p.58. In 1882, Tang Tinggeng was dispatched to Vietnam by the Viceroy of Liangguang, Zhang Shusheng 張樹聲. Li Hongzhang also ordered Tinggeng to investigate and report the circumstances there. 龍章 Long Zhang, *Yuenan yu zhongfa zhanzheng 越南與中法戰爭* (Taipei, 1996), pp. 83–84.

³² HKPRO, HKRS144-4-1161, Will of Tong Mow Chee, 22 December 1894.

³³ *NCH*, 23 Sept 1897, p.459.

³⁴ Jardine Matheson Archive (JMA)(Cambridge, UK), MS JM/F10/5, deed of partnership of Shanghai merchants. A copy of a deed of co-partnership between William Francis Brown Sams, Tong King Sing, William McGregor Smith and Wahee, all merchants of Shanghai, for a joint trade as sugar crushers and refiners at Hong Kong or Swatow, 7 March 1867.

³⁵ Smith, "Formative Years", p.92.

³⁶ *The Hong Kong Daily Press*, 17 July 1869.

1869, Mow-chee held a responsible position in the company.³⁷ In this manner, Tong Mow-chee, his brothers and his son conducted family businesses such as shipping and the establishment of the sugar refinery.

Mow-chee played a leading role for Cantonese merchants as well as other Chinese merchants coming to Shanghai from different regions. In the nineteenth century, a number of compradors from Guangzhou emigrated to Shanghai and continued to work, as Mow-chee did, as compradors. Many prominent Cantonese compradors, Tong King-sing, Xu Run(徐潤) and Xu Rongcun(徐榮村) became leading figures of Guang-zhao Gongsuo (廣肇公所), which was known as the Canton Guild.³⁸ Mow-chee was once its chairman.³⁹ As a head of the guild, Mow-chee recognised the importance of establishing connections with a variety of Chinese people. In 1877, on 22 September, he mentioned the importance of networking in his letter to F.B. Johnson, a manager of Jardine in Shanghai:

There are a great many things which occupy some of my time, that I hate to have anything to do with, but in some I cannot possibly avoid. As Chairman of the Canton Guild, I have always some cases in hand for inquiry, arrangement or decision. Many officials and literati pass up and down through this port, they pay me their formal visits and I have to return them. [If] I forget to do so they take for impoliteness on my part. I have to make friends all around.⁴⁰

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Cantonese compradors connected to each other through native organisations and Mow-chee was part of the connection. Furthermore, Mow-

³⁷ *The Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 22 January 1870, p.37. The company went into bankruptcy, stopping its service in the beginning of 1875. *The Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 20 February 1875, p.55.

³⁸ Hu, Bo 胡波, *Xiangshan maiban yu jindai zhongguo* 香山買辦與近代中國 [Xiangshan's compradores and modern China] (Guangzhou, 2007), pp. 126, 130, 161–164.

³⁹ *NCH*, 23 Sept 1897, p. 459.

⁴⁰ Hao, *Comprador*, p. 188.

chee had connections with his fellow provincials in different cities in China. For instance, Mow-chee's name can be seen on the list of advocators for the Tung Wah Hospital, a semi-official institution for the administration of the Chinese community, as well as providing medical care for them in Hong Kong.⁴¹ Even in his later years, Mow-chee was involved in the issue of the shooting of stray dogs in Shanghai. Mow-chee and a charitable organisation called the Humane Society at Soochow contributed to an arrangement to catch the dogs and release them at Suzhou.⁴²

Goodman points out that for the leaders of the Canton guild, it was important to maintain their reputation. Pursuing economic interests with foreign traders, Cantonese people were often criticised as “Guangdong sluts” and “foreigners' dogs” by the Chinese populace.⁴³ Thus, the prominent Cantonese elites, specifically those who were leaders of the guild, actively sought to enhance the reputation of their community through benevolent activities.

Mow-chee not only functioned as a representative of the Cantonese community, but also represented the interests of the other Chinese merchants, including acting as head of the Canton-Swatow Opium Guild. The Guild mainly consisted of Swatow (*Shantou* 汕頭) merchants. Mow-chee, because of his mediation of disputes between Sassoon, Sons and Co. and the Guild,⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tung Wah Hospital Archives (Hong Kong), *Zhengxinlu* 徵信錄 (Annual Report), 1873.

⁴² *Annual Report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, Shanghai for 1894*, pp. 56–62.

Mow-chee obtained the report about the hunting of stray dogs by police from colleagues of Jintzetang Charitable Institution.

⁴³ Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*, p.107; *Shenbao*, 14 January 1874.

⁴⁴ Eiichi Motono, *Conflict and Cooperation in Sino-British Business, 1860-1911: the Impact of Pro-British Commercial Networks in Shanghai* (New York, 2000), p.9; *NCH*, 23 Sept 1879, p.309; *NCH* 3 Sept 1897, p. 459; Gary G. Hamilton, “Nineteenth century Chinese merchant associations: conspiracy or combination?: the case of the Swatow Opium Guild”, *Ch'ing-shih wen-i'i*, III, 8 (1977), p.53.

was the only member not from that area who participated in the opium trade. For Swatow merchants, Mow-chee was a negotiator between foreign firms and the merchants. In the Swatow Opium Guild case in 1879, which will be described later, Mow-chee acted as a translator for a Chinese merchant who appeared in the court case.⁴⁵ Mow-chee was also a representative of the Eight Principal Guilds, consisting of tea, silk, foreign piece goods, opium, bankers, ship chandlers, Ningpo and Canton guilds in Shanghai. In 1892, the *North China Herald* published his letter regarding his response to a big fire and asking permission from the Shanghai Municipal Council to wear a uniform or waistcoat which was stamped by the office with the name of each guild. As such, it would be possible to determine who would be permitted to enter the hazard area to rescue people and save premises. In the letter, Mow-chee pursued the issue as a result of a request from the committee of the Eight Principal Guilds.⁴⁶ For Chinese merchants, Mow-chee was a channel through which they could communicate with foreign businessmen and administrators in Shanghai.

It should be highlighted that Mow-chee worked not merely with Chinese merchants but also with Chinese Christian elites in Shanghai. On 25 November 1885, he, King-sing, three other Chinese merchants and two Chinese Christians sent a letter to the municipal council concerning the prohibition of Chinese people's entry to public gardens.⁴⁷ The two Chinese Christians were Yan Yongjing (*Yen Yungjing* 顏永京), who was a preacher

⁴⁵ *NCH*, 3 Sept 1897, p. 459.

⁴⁶ *NCH*, 28 Oct 1892, p. 641.

⁴⁷ *Annual Report, Shanghai Municipal Council* (1885), pp.179–180; The senders of the letters were Tan Tongxing 譚同興, Chen Yongnan 陳詠南, Li Qiping 李秋坪, Chen Huiting 陳輝廷, Wu Hongyu 吳虹玉, Yan Yongjing 顏永京 in addition to Mow-chee and King-sing.

with an affiliation to the Chinese Anglican Church and a dean of the St John's College, and Wu Hongyu (吳虹玉), who was a priest at Laozha Episcopal Church in Shanghai.⁴⁸ They asked to open the gardens to the Chinese populace, claiming that it was not reasonable that Chinese were prohibited from entering the garden while western foreigners, Japanese and Koreans were free to visit. They discussed the difficulty of explaining to noble Chinese visitors to Shanghai why they were unable to enter the garden. They suggested several measures to solve this issue.

First; that all *bona fide* native visitors may be permitted to visit the Gardens on exhibition of passes which may be granted either by the Council or on the introduction of some well-known resident, native or foreign, or by a Committee of respectable native residents.

Secondly; that two or three days in each week (Saturday or Sundays) be set apart for the admission of natives of known respectability, recommendations being given as before.

Thirdly; in view of the small area of the present garden it is submitted that the grass plots in front of the Bund, at present screened off by posts and chains, be laid out as adjuncts to the present garden, and be open to the community generally.⁴⁹

The issue was discussed by the Municipal Council on 27 November, and on 2 December the council replied that no decision had been made and that the issue would be forwarded to the annual ratepayers' meeting in the following February.⁵⁰

A letter from Vix Ra Nostra Voco appearing in *the North China Herald* is an

⁴⁸ See a son of Yan Yongjing, Yan Huiqing's (顏惠慶) autobiography, W. W. Yen, *East-West Kaleidoscope, 1877-1946: An Autobiography* (New York, 1974); *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/y/yan-yongjing.php>.

⁴⁹ *Annual Report, Shanghai Municipal Council* (1885), p.179.

⁵⁰ *Annual Report, Shanghai Municipal Council* (1885), p.180; *Shanghaishi danganguan bian* 上海市檔案館編 [edited by Shanghai Municipal Archive], Shanghai Municipal Council, *Gongbuju dongshihui huiyilu* 工部局董事會會議錄 [The minutes of Shanghai Municipal Council Vol.8](Shanghai, 2001), pp. 322–323.

example a response from the foreign settlers to this issue. He claimed that these Chinese representatives attempted “to invade” the exclusive public ground for foreigners and hoped the Municipal Council would reject their petition.⁵¹ Then, on 8 December, an article on the Chinese merchants’ petition appeared in the contemporary Chinese newspaper, *Shenbao* (申報). The article called for larger support from the Chinese merchants to appeal this issue to the foreigners before the ratepayers’ meeting in order to improve the situation.⁵² Although this attempt in 1885 by the Chinese elite was not successful, the Chinese leaders did not give up. In 1888, a similar article called for fundraising to establish a “Chinese Public Garden” as the Chinese people were still not permitted enter the public garden.⁵³ Qing officials were also aware of the exclusion of Chinese from the public garden. On 11 March in 1889, the Shanghai Taotai, Gong Zhaoyuan (龔照瑗), told the British consul that the exclusion of Chinese from the public park was an insult to the Chinese, as the Chinese had largely funded the establishment of the park and the park was a part of Chinese land.⁵⁴ Chinese mercantile and Christian elites carried a campaign regarding the public garden in the 1880s; this campaign ultimately influenced the Qing officials in Shanghai.

This way, by using the commercial network of family members, his fellow-provincials and various Chinese merchants, Mow-chee was able to expand his

Comment [AL4]: unclear what this means

⁵¹ *NCH*, 25 November 1885, p. 608; The Shanghai Literary and Debating Society also voiced their opinion to the newspaper. *NCH*, 10 February 1886, p. 145.

⁵² *Shenbao* 申報, 8 December 1885, (Guangxu 光緒 11/11/3), cited in *Shanghai yuanlinzhi* 上海園林志 (History of gardens in Shanghai), pp. 711–712.

⁵³ *Shenbao* 申報, 21 September 1888 (GX14/8/16), cited in *Shanghai yuanlinzhi* 上海園林志, pp. 712–713.

⁵⁴ Chang Shiying 張世瑛, “Wanqing shanghai xishi gongyuan chuxian hou de shehui fanying 晚清上海西式公園出現後的社會反應 [The people’s reactions to the Western Parks that appeared in Shanghai during the late Ching period]”, *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 國史館學術集刊, vol. 14 (December 2007), p. 54; Shanghai Municipal Council, *Gongbujie huiyi ji lu* 工部局會議錄 [Minutes of the Shanghai Municipal Council, Vol.9] (Shanghai, 2001), p. 709.

shipping businesses and reduce the risks involved in investing in new businesses. Furthermore, Mow-chee's extensive network with Chinese authorities enabled him to be a leading figure in Chinese society in Shanghai. This was possible because of his multiple backgrounds, such as a Cantonese, an overseas Chinese and a Chinese Christian. Furthermore, Mow-chee represented the interests of the Chinese community to the foreign merchants and administrators in Shanghai. As a leading figure himself and a head comprador for Jardine in Shanghai, he had a channel of communication to foreign leading figures in the Chinese community.

The Foreign Community

Certain foreign and Chinese merchants had a shared economic interest in conducting business in the late Qing China. As a comprador merchant, an employee and business partner of foreign companies, Mow-chee was able to establish a social relationship with a number of foreign businessmen and authorities. Examples of these are Francis Bulkeley Johnson, an executive of Jardine's branch in Shanghai and William Venn Drummond, a famous pro-Chinese law practitioner.⁵⁵ Thus, this part focuses on Mow-chee's social network with foreign merchants with regard to the shipping business and on his ties with foreign lawyers in court cases.

The Tong brothers, Mow-chee and King-sing, and foreign merchants who were working for Jardine, Matheson & Co. collaborated in the running of various modern businesses, especially shipping. Since the early 1870s, Jardine had conducted its shipping business in China. As a comprador to Jardine, Mow-chee

⁵⁵ Arnold, Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China* (London, 1908), p. 516.

and King-sing had an opportunity to become involved in the business with Jardine staff members. One of them was Francis Bulkeley Johnson, who recognised the importance of the compradors in the success of businesses in China. In 1868, Johnson stated that their compradors' credibility and acumen was key to obtaining benefits from the investment in short-term loans of native Chinese bankers.⁵⁶ In 1871, he had already noticed Mow-chee's competence when he worked in Tianjin. Johnson wrote that the increase in the efficiency of the Tianjin office could be because of newly hired Tong King-sing's staff's contribution, i.e that of Tong Mow-chee.⁵⁷ In July 1870, Johnson encouraged King-sing and his Chinese friends to purchase a steamer from the North China Steamer Co. when the company was in financial difficulty. Later, Jardine's subsidiary, the China Coast Steam Navigation Company (CCSNC), was established in 1873 and thereafter the *Nanxing* was under the control of the company.⁵⁸ King-sing participated in the management of the *Nanxing* as he was a half owner. Tong King-sing and A.J. How, a staff member at Jardine, were also initial directors of the company.⁵⁹ Comprador merchants were important contributors to the establishment of the CCSNC. In 1873, 60,775 taels of the total initial capital of 299,000 taels of the newly established company were subscribed by Tong King-sing and his fellow Chinese, who were mainly compradors.⁶⁰ He was also involved in the management of the CCSNC to some extent. In 1877, Mow-chee wrote a memorandum on the value

⁵⁶ Ji, Zhaojin, *A History of Modern Shanghai Banking: The Rise and Decline of China's Finance Capitalism* (Armonk, 2003), pp.55–56.

⁵⁷ F. B Johnson to W. Keswick, 22 June 1871, JMA cited in Kwang-ching Liu, "A Chinese Entrepreneur", in *The Thistle and the Jade: A Celebration of 150 Years of Jardine, Matheson & Co*, Maggie Keswick, ed. (London, 1982), p.124.

⁵⁸ F. B. Johnson to J. Whittall, 15 and 21 November, 1872, JMA, Shanghai, cited in Liu, "Chinese Entrepreneur", p. 124; Kwang-Ching Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China, 1862–1872* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), p. 141.

⁵⁹ Liu, "Chinese Entrepreneur", p. 124; Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry*, p.141.

⁶⁰ Liu, *Steamship Rivalry*, p. 140–141; Zhang Xiuli 張秀莉, "Shijiu Shiji shanghai waishang qiyezhong de hua dong 19世紀上海外商企業中的華董 [Chinese directors of foreign enterprises in Shanghai in the nineteenth century] 史林 *Shilin* [Historical review], Issue 4, 2004, p.3.

of Jardine's shareholdings in the CCSNC and reported a substantial loss in the value of the shares between 1873 and 1877. According to the memorandum, Jardine lost 7,680 *taels* in 1877, accounting for 37 per cent of the company's total loss in the last five years.⁶¹ Partly due to this, King-sing lost his position as the director of the CCSNC by the spring of 1877. However, in a letter to Johnson in April 1877, Mow-chee points out that Kung Kee's taking over of King-sing's position as a director of the CCSNC was unfair. He emphasised that a Chinese company, of which King-sing was a partner, was the largest customer of the CCSNC and Kung Kee was not the largest shipper in the company. In the letter, Mow-chee also added his wish to continue to hold both of his positions as a director of the CCSNC and as a comprador for Jardine.⁶² In February 1883, it was recorded that Mow-chee, with other shareholders, including A. J. How, one of Jardine's staff, participated in the company's liquidation.⁶³

Mow-chee was engaged in the management of another shipping company. He was a shareholder in the Cooperative Cargo Boat Company of Shanghai (*Rongtai bochuan xing* 榮泰駁船行) from as early as 1882.⁶⁴ In 1890, in that company's annual meeting, Mow-chee and J. F. Seaman and J. M. Ringer were re-elected as directors.⁶⁵ Ten years later, at the meeting on 8 February in 1892, Mow-chee was elected as a director for the ensuing year.⁶⁶ In 1893, Mow-chee was a senior director of the company and participated in the meeting of shareholders with other foreign shareholders.⁶⁷ This way, collaborating with his brother and

⁶¹ A8/131/8/10, Memo of China Coast Shares, 1877, JMA. Mow-chee estimated the total loss was approximately 20,887 *taels* from 1833 to 1877.

⁶² MS B7/37/8987, 18 April 1877, Shanghai, Tong Mow-chee to F. B. Johnson, JMA.

⁶³ *The London and China Telegraph*, 19 March 1883, p. 244.

⁶⁴ Zhang, "Shijiu Shiji", p. 5.

⁶⁵ *The London and China Telegraph*, 4 April 1890, p. 292.

⁶⁶ *The London And China Telegraph*, 21 March 1892, pp. 231–232.

⁶⁷ *NCH*, 3 March 1893, p. 308.

foreign merchants, Mow-chee became engaged in the shipping business in the long term.

Moreover, Mow-chee and King-sing established a constructive relationship with a few foreign lawyers. During the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, compradors and Chinese merchants often appeared in court cases in Shanghai due to reasons such as contractual defaults, troubles resulting from the use of principals' money and bankruptcy.⁶⁸ In the court cases in Shanghai, Mow-chee and other Chinese merchants were frequently represented by barrister William Venn Drummond and Robert Ernest Wainwright, a solicitor.⁶⁹ Drummond especially was well known as a "legal advisor" for Chinese guilds in Shanghai.⁷⁰ On 20 February 1894, the *Daily Advertiser* (Singapore) reported that the local Chinese guilds had held a meeting to object to Drummond's appointment as the Acting Crown Advocate in Shanghai; the guilds were concerned that there would be no foreign lawyers able to take up Chinese cases in the future if the appointment were successful.⁷¹ Drummond's appointment as Acting Crown Advocate also caused the controversy in the British community. The *North China Herald* reported that Drummond's appointment was discussed at the meeting of the Shanghai Branch of the China Association on 26th January 1894. Some of the members of the association offered objections to his appointment due to his strong ties with the Chinese merchants and officials. A participant stated:

⁶⁸ Hao, *Comprador*, p. 169.

⁶⁹ In addition to legal works, Drummond and Wainwright were involved into the management of various companies. In 1886, Drummond was the chairman of the Selangor Tin Mining Company of Shanghai. *China Overland Trade Report*, 13 April 1886, pp.10–11. Drummond was also the chairman of Perak Tin Mining and Smelting Company, Limited in 1886 where Wainwright was a shareholder; 23 April 1886, *China Overland Trade Report*, p. 9.

faluhudongjiyingxiang"略論近代上海外籍律師的法律活動及影響 [Brief sketch of foreign lawyers' legal activities and influence in modern Shanghai]", *Shilin 史林*, III, 2005, p. 32–38.

⁷¹ "Mr. W. V. Drummond and The Chinese Guilds", *Daily Advertiser* (Singapore), 20 February 1894, p. 3.

Evil days would appear to be falling upon Shanghai when the acts and machinations of an astute anti-foreign Taotai may at any time be found to have the support and encouragement of notoriously philo-Chinese lawyer.⁷²

Eventually, Drummond took the position of Crown Advocate but relinquished it a short time later, mainly because of the difficulty of managing both his service to the Viceroy as a Chief Law Officer for Foreign Affairs and the work of Crown Advocate at the same time.⁷³

Drummond became a defence lawyer for the Tong Brothers in many court cases. In 1875, Drummond worked for Tong King-sing in the court case regarding the collision of the steamer *Fusing* and the steamer *Ocean* in April. Colliding with the *Ocean*, *Fusing* sank and more than 50 people, including Chinese officials, passengers and shipmen died and cargo worth 200,000 *taels* were lost. The *Fusing* was a steamer that belonged to the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company and, as Tong King-sing was one of the owners of the ship, he became a plaintiff in the court case on behalf of the other owners, the crew and the passengers.⁷⁴

Thereafter, Drummond kept actively working for Chinese merchants, especially Tong King-sing and Mow-chee. Drummond's collaboration with Mow-chee could be observed in the Swatow Opium Guild case in September and October 1879, which was one of the big court cases between foreign merchants and Chinese guilds.⁷⁵ In 1879, T.W. Duff and D. M. David, foreign traders, brought an accusation against the members of the Swatow Opium Guild as the guild had

⁷² *NCH* "Mr. Drummond's Appointment", 26 January 1894, pp. 132–134.

⁷³ *North China Daily News*. "The Late Mr. W. V. Drummond", 24 March 1915.

⁷⁴ National Archives, Kew (London): PCAP 1/556, Appellant: Peter Denny, owner of the steamship *Ocean* Respondent: Jong (Tong) King Sing, shareholder and manager of the Chinese Merchants' Steam Navigation Co, owners of the steamship *Fusing* Subject: Collision between said vessels on 4 Apr 1875 Lower Court: Supreme Court for China and Japan at Shanghai; *NCH*, 29 May 1875, pp. 524–536.

⁷⁵ Gary G. Hamilton, "Nineteenth Century Chinese Merchant Associations: Conspiracy or Combination?: The Case of the Swatow Opium Guild", *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, III, 8 (1977), p. 51.

violated treaty regulations by excluding foreign merchants from the opium trade. The British Consul in Shanghai, Arthur Davenport, in the court as an observer, objected to Drummond and Wainwright acting for the Chinese defendants, but the objection was over-ruled⁷⁶ Mow-chee's close connection with opium traders in the guild was suspect and he was therefore required to attend the court. King-sing also appeared in the court but as a spectator.⁷⁷ At that time, Mow-chee was the only Cantonese member in the guild, which predominantly consisted of Swatow merchants. He was also a trustee of the Canton Guild and a director of the Opium Tax office, as well as working for Jardine as a comprador.⁷⁸ However, the claims made by the plaintiffs were thrown out because the Swatow Opium Guild did not monopolise the opium trade in an obvious manner. The defendants emphasised that the guild's main function was as a lodge to help fellow natives of Swatow, and that by not enforcing regulations, they did not monopolise the opium trade. Some of the Qing officials collaborated with Chinese merchants in the Swatow Opium Guild case. Wu, the Acting Viceroy, judged that there was not sufficient proof that the guild had monopolised the opium trade and ordered simply that the "Chinese and Foreign merchants should conduct their business with harmony." The British officials continued discussing and investigating the Swatow Opium Guild case into the early 1880s. In March 1880, Davenport attempted to order Mow-chee to come and to report the details of the case.⁷⁹

Mow-chee worked with Drummond for a long time. Nearly a decade later, in 1888, in the court case examining the bankruptcy of B. R. Grayston, Drummond

⁷⁶ Hamilton, "Nineteenth Century", pp. 51–52.

⁷⁷ *NCH*, 23 September 1879, p. 309.

⁷⁸ *NCH*, 17 October 1879, p. 386.

⁷⁹ FO228/658, To Shanghai 1–63, From Shanghai 1–52, Declaration from Acting Governor General Wu, Signed 5 February 1880, p. 54, National Archives (London).

worked for Tong Mow-chee and Wainewright was present.⁸⁰ During the 1880s, which was a period of transformation of the taxation system, Mow-chee and Drummond were still active as intermediaries between Chinese and British merchants and officials. The Additional Agreement of the Chefoo Convention came into force in March 1886, enabling the Imperial Maritime Customs Service to collect import duty and the *Lijin* (釐金) [transit tax] on opium. This was a threat to the monopoly of the Canton-Swatow Opium Guild.⁸¹ To secure its monopoly, Mow-chee, as director of the Guild, negotiated with Acting Consul-General Alabaster who opposed the Guild's monopolisation of the opium trade by collecting the *Lijin* within an area of the International Settlement. Soon after the failure of Mow-chee's negotiation with Alabaster, Drummond, also working for the Guild, attempted to negotiate with the British firms importing opium, such as Jardine and Sassoon, by sharing the profits from the collected tax.⁸² Although their attempts to secure the interests of the Guild were not successful, this case demonstrates Drummond's close ties with the Chinese guilds in Shanghai.⁸³

As Hao Yen-p'ing suggests, foreign merchants and compradors in the treaty port world established symbiotic and codependent relationships in order to conduct mutually profitable business.⁸⁴ In the case of Tong Mow-chee, by drawing on Jardine's business network and collaborating with other foreign merchants, he expanded modern entrepreneurial businesses, in particular in the area of shipping.

⁸⁰ *NCH* 19 Oct 1888, pp. 447–448.

⁸¹ Motono, *Conflict and Collaboration*, pp.94, 104.

⁸² See, Motono, *Conflict and Collaboration*, Chapter 4, "Conflict over the opium trade", especially, pp.102–107.

⁸³ The British officials continued discussing and investigating the Swatow Opium Guild case into the early 1880s. National Archives, Kew (London): FO 228/985, Chinese Enclosures (Shanghai), 1879–1883, Acting Viceroy Wu to Consul Davenport, 8 March 1880, p. 97.

⁸⁴ Hao Yen-p'ing, *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-century China: the Rise of Sino-Western Mercantile Capitalism* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 212–213.

However, Mow-chee and King-sing encountered several business problems caused by the differences between foreign and Chinese legal, cultural and social practices. As a middleman from the other side of the community, Drummond contributed to solving the Tong Brothers' difficulties. By providing useful legal advice, Drummond assisted and promoted Mow-chee and other Chinese merchants' commercial activities. There were numerous competitions and disputes between Chinese and foreign merchants; however, some of the foreign and Chinese elites succeeded in establishing a constructive and profitable relationship with each other in late nineteenth-century Shanghai.

Sino-Foreign Public Projects

Tong Mow-chee was a indispensable intermediary between the Chinese and foreign communities in Shanghai. In addition to collaboration with Chinese and foreign merchants, Mow-chee worked with foreign and Chinese elites through his participation in public activities, especially the opening of the zoological garden in Shanghai. Apart from the court cases, the above-mentioned Drummond also worked with Mow-chee in a number of charitable activities. The members of the committee established for public matters in Shanghai often consisted of the same members, including both Chinese and foreign representatives. The overlapping of the members in these committees or organisations suggested the existence of a symbiotic community, which included intermediaries like Mow-chee and Drummond.

Mow-chee was recognised as a spokesperson for the Chinese community by the foreign authorities in Shanghai. This can be particularly seen in the attempt to open a zoological park in Shanghai in the late 1880s. In September 1888,

foreign and Chinese elites in Shanghai held a meeting to establish a Chinese Zoological Summer and Winter Gardens. Mow-chee participated in the meeting, held in the library of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The participants at the meeting were the consuls of various countries including Britain, the United States, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Italy and several other foreigners, including Drummond and H.M. Hillier, a deputy commissioner of customs and Drummond's son-in-law. Others included J. Macgregor, a staff member at Jardine, Yang Kin Tuck (*Yang Jingde* 楊經德) and Lo Ch'en Yi (*Lu Zhenyi* 露貞意), Drummond's Chinese secretary. In addition, Chinese gentry, more than 40 people who were described as the "Compradoric class" and a few Chinese officials participated in the meeting. In the meeting, Mow-chee made his address, stating that Chinese participants wanted the support of foreigners and hoped to establish the zoological park. It is unclear whether the project was completed or not, yet the meeting itself was remarkable in view of the wide variety of participants.

Drummond told the meeting that "the occasion was the first in the history of Shanghai where an attempt was made to bring together for the discussion of a common object, the Chinese and foreign citizens of the Settlement". Selected as committee members for the project were Tong Mow-chee, Drummond, Yang Kung-the, (probably identified as Yang Kin Tuck), a staff member at Messers Russell & Co, Carl Bock the Norwegian naturalist, the Consul-General for Sweden; General Kennedy, the US Consul-General; and four other prominent Chinese.⁸⁵ An article in *Shenbao* on 21 September 1888, which asked for financial support for the construction of the "Chinese Public Garden", could be identified with the Chinese Zoological Summer and Winter Gardens discussed in the

⁸⁵ *NCH* 29 September 1888, pp. 351–353; Christopher Bo Bramsen, *Peace and Friendship : Denmark's Official Relations with China, 1674-2000* (Copenhagen, 2000), p.100.

meeting. In a sense, it is possible to say that the failure of Tong Mow-chee and other Chinese leading figures' attempts to obtain permission for Chinese entrance to the public garden in 1885 led to their later attempts to establish a Chinese public garden in 1888.

The Chinese and foreign representatives who took part in the meeting to establish a zoological garden participated in other public projects. When the North-China Famine Relief Committee was established in 1889, it included Mow-chee and Drummond; other members included H.M. Hillier; Yang Kin Tuck and Lo Ch'en Yi.⁸⁶ Later in 1892, Mow-chee and Yang Kung-the purchased land in Hongkew to establish a place to serve food to the needy.⁸⁷ Drummond and Mow-chee were also deeply involved in the management of the Chinese Polytechnic Institute at Shanghai. At the meeting of the committee on the management of the institute on 14 April 1883, Drummond, the chairman King-sing, Mow-chee and other Chinese participants discussed fundraising for the institution. King-sing and Mow-chee planned to petition the high-ranking officials of the Qing court, the Viceroy of Liangjiang (*Liangjiang zongdu* 兩江總督) and Li Hongzhang, another high-ranking official, to obtain approval to collect funds from Chinese mining companies in Shanghai for the establishment of a school teaching chemistry, mining and metallurgy.⁸⁸ This demonstrated that the Tong Brothers were able to obtain support from the Chinese officials as well as from the British authorities. Seven years later, in 1890, the members of the committee consisted of 16 Chinese and foreign members; Drummond was the chairman and Mow-Chee

Comment [AL5]: correct?? Or teh?

⁸⁶ *Reports from the Consuls of the United States*, Issues 101–104, pp. 426–427; *NCH*, 15 June 1889, p.741.

⁸⁷ *NCH*, 28 October 1892, p.628.

⁸⁸ *NCH*, 18 April 1883, pp. 431–432.

was the honorary treasurer.⁸⁹ In this manner, Mow-chee functioned as one of the most important intermediary elites in the international society of Shanghai from the 1870s to the 1890s.

It should be noted that Chinese and foreign intermediaries established a cooperative relationship with the Qing officials in the 1870s and the 1880s. Merchant-elites like the Tong brothers established a constructive relationship with the Qing government by supporting Qing's westernisation of industry and the military. The Tong brothers also purchased official titles to cultivate their network with the Qing officials. Tong King-sing held the title of expectant Taotai and often showed himself as an official by wearing official robes at many public gatherings.⁹⁰ Although Mow-chee had once forfeited his official rank in 1865, he later re-established an amicable relationship with the Qing officials. By 1880, he was rewarded with the Decoration of Peacock's Feather because of his significant financial contributions to the Qing government through the establishment of the westernized regiments.⁹¹ In a similar manner, Drummond was awarded with various ranks and honours by the Qing government as a reward for his legal service to the Qing authorities and his efforts to raise funds for famine relief in the Shaanxi province.⁹² For intermediaries, as well as their skills of intermediation, it was essential to establish constructive ties with the Qing officials to elevate and secure their social positions

⁸⁹ *The London and China Telegraph*, 27 May 1890, p.462.

⁹⁰ Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (Berkeley, 1995), p.61; Leung, *Shanghai Taotai*, pp. 162-163.

⁹¹ *NCH*, 3 September 1897, p. 459.

⁹² Par Kristoffer Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan* (Oxford and New York, 2012), p. 170; Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions*, p. 516.

In the case of Tong Mow-chee, his skills of negotiation and persuasion enabled him to cultivate a network with foreign and Chinese leading figures in late nineteenth century Shanghai; this is observed in Mow-chee's writings to Jardine's staff. In many letters and memorandums, Mow-chee provided detailed explanations of his circumstances and convincing reasons behind his actions and opinions. In his letter to F. B. Johnson on 27 September 1877, Mow-chee reports that his shroff and the bookkeeper in the comprador office conducted miscarriages with regard to their handling of the company's money. However, Mow-chee attempted to convince Johnson to maintain his staff by stating the difficulty of finding substitutes, promising better performances from them in the future, and referring to a Chinese proverb which emphasises the importance of trusting in employees.⁹³ Another example, in 1876, is Mow-chee's note about his income from Jardine. At that time, Mow-chee received income from both the comprador department and the shipping office. To legitimise this dual income, he explained that he did not receive a great deal from the shipping department.⁹⁴ An obituary of Mow-chee also honours his skill in intermediating and coordinating the interests of various communities in Shanghai. "His astuteness in settling disputes amongst them prevented many a case from going to Court,"⁹⁵ Drummond also found opportunities in intermediating Chinese and foreign authorities' commercial and political interests beyond simply serving the British authorities in Shanghai: some of the foreigners did establish a symbiotic

⁹³ B11/3048, a letter from Tong Mow-chee to F. B. Johnson, 27 September 1877, JMA. "Do not use the person you doubt or doubt the person you use" (*yiren buyong, yongren buyi* 疑人不用, 用人不疑).

⁹⁴ A8/131/8/10, Tables by Tong Mow-chee of salaries in the Shipping Office Department, 1876, and Comprador Department, 1876, JMA.

⁹⁵ *NCH*, 3 September 1897, pp. 459–460.

relationship with the Chinese. Drummond's obituary states that he never worked for the Municipal Council so that he would be in a position "to play the part of the opposition in Parliament at Home".⁹⁶ In the late nineteenth century, the intermediary elites were keen to find and fill niches between different communities, and their overall social and commercial activities enabled them to be representative figures in the international society of Shanghai.

Intermediary Elites in the Treaty Port World

The emergence of a class of intermediary elites such as Mow-chee and Drummond symbolised the rise of a Sino-Foreign symbiotic circle of elites in late nineteenth-century China, especially in the treaty port world. Kurata Akiko (倉田明子) notes the emergence of Chinese intellectual elites who acquired western knowledge from foreign missionaries in the treaty port world in the late imperial era. This included intellectuals such as Hong Rengan (洪仁玕), a cousin of the leader of Taiping Uprising and an advocate of the western-style reform of the Taiping regime, who introduced his foreign knowledge to Chinese society in various ways.⁹⁷ Other intellectual figures of the period included Wang Tao (王韜), a famous translator, journalists, as well as Chinese Christians who were heavily

⁹⁶ *The North China Daily News*, "The Late Mr. W.V. Drummond", 24 March 1915.

⁹⁷ Kurata Akiko 倉田明子, *Jiukyuseiki minamichugoku ni okeru purotesutanto fukyo no hatten to 「kaikoujou chishikijin」 no tanshou: Koujinkan to 『shiseishinpen』 no ichiduke wo megutte 19世紀南中国におけるプロテスタント布教の発展と「開港場知識人」の誕生: 洪仁玕と『資政新篇』の位置づけをめぐる* [The emergence of "open-port intellectual elites" in nineteenth-century southern China: Hong Rengan and 'Zizheng xinpian'], PhD Thesis, University of Tokyo, 2010; Hong Rengan wrote a monograph, *Zizheng xinpian* 資政新篇 [The new essay on economics and politics] which suggested the reform of the Taiping regime based on his experience and communication with Christian missionaries in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

influenced by foreign technologies, knowledge, and social systems. Kurata describes them as “treaty port intellectual elites” (*kaikojo chishikijin* 開港場知識人). This concept is also applicable to Chinese commercial and political elites who adopted foreign business and cultural practices around the same time. In addition alongside Chinese elites, foreign elites who learnt the Chinese language and customs for their duties could be also categorised as part of a “treaty port elite”. Obtaining knowledge of different societies, they were able to become influential intermediaries in the areas of commerce, politics, as well as in academic circles. In a sense, both Mow-chee and Drummond were part of this intermediary elite who were mainly operating in the treaty port world.

In the case of Shanghai, Chinese and foreign influential figures collaborated throughout the 1880s and 1890s in various public projects. Robert Bickers suggests that well-to-do compradors were “vital actors” in the drastic transformation period of late nineteenth-century China, by contributing to the self-strengthening movement and to fundraising activities in response to famines and floods.⁹⁸ In addition to the Chinese intermediaries, there were also foreign intermediaries: for instance, lawyers working with the Chinese merchants. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Hong Kong, during the same period. John M. Carroll discusses Chinese elites, including compradors, merchants, lawyers and doctors who emerged and raised their social position through commercial and political activities, as well as their collaboration with the European settlers. Concurrently, similar attempts were made by Chinese elites in Shanghai. In Shanghai, middlemen like Tong Mow-chee and Drummond were pivotal figures who spontaneously organised projects to improve the circumstances of the local

⁹⁸ Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London, 2011), pp. 290–291.

Chinese and foreign populace of Shanghai. This was partly because many Chinese compradors, merchants and missionaries travelled frequently between the treaty ports and the colony and it was possible to share news and information regarding their socio-economic activities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Chinese elites in the two cities inspired each other. In both, figures like Tong Mow-chee and Ng Choy (Wu Cai 伍才), also known as Wu Tingfang (伍廷芳), a lawyer educated in England and the first unofficial member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, were pivotal intermediaries who enabled effective communication between the foreign and Chinese elites.⁹⁹ On the other hand, foreign collaborators with the Chinese community also played an important role. William Venn Drummond in Shanghai supported the Chinese merchants by providing legal advice and by contributing to public projects. In Hong Kong, the eighth governor, John Pope Hennessy, implemented many policies that were beneficial for the Chinese community in Hong Kong, and was subject to a backlash from the European community during the 1870s and the 1880s.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the rise of Chinese intermediaries like Tong Mow-chee and their attempts to establish a society for themselves in Shanghai could be put into the broader context of the emergence of Sino-foreign symbiotic elites in the treaty port world in the late Qing period.

Legacies of Tong Mow-chee

⁹⁹ John M. Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, pp.66–70, 78; For Wu Tingfang's works as a barrister in Hong Kong, see Linda Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang (1862-1922): Reform and Modernization in Modern Chinese History* (Hong Kong, 1992), pp.41–70.

¹⁰⁰ Regarding Hennessy's career in Hong Kong, see Kate Lowe and Eugene McLaughlin, "Sir John Pope Hennessy and the 'native race craze': Colonial government in Hong Kong, 1877–1882", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, XX, 2 (1992), pp. 223–247.

Tong Mow-chee died in 1897. He therefore did not witness successive disturbing incidents in the terminal phase of the Qing Dynasty. However, some of Mow-chee's collaborators lived through the confusing period, and the Sino-western symbiotic system, in which the Tong Brothers played important roles, survived. Mow-chee's eldest son Tong Kidson succeeded both the economic and political functions of his father. After the latter's death, he became a principal comprador of Jardine in Shanghai and, like his father, he became a head of the Canton Guild. Kidson followed Mow-chee in many aspects, and was involved in many Sino-foreign industrial, commercial and charitable projects as part of the intermediary elite.¹⁰¹ On his death in 1904, aged 44, Kidson was a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and was famous for his charitable contributions to the establishment of public schools in Shanghai. Kidson's obituary in the *North China Herald* states: "His death will be a decided loss to the cause of education here and the Settlements generally."¹⁰² After the end of the Self-Strengthening period in the mid-1880s and the rise of revolutionary movements thereafter, intellectual and political elites emerged in addition to a mercantile class, as a result of an increase in demands for personnel who could contribute to establishing a new administrative system in China. The second and third generations of the early compradors and commercial elites tended to become militants, politicians, diplomats and lawyers. Many of them were educated in foreign countries and returned to China to participate in the construction of the new China.¹⁰³ Successive

¹⁰¹ For instance, for Kidson's involvement in the establishment of a public school for Chinese, see Timothy Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China. Reminiscences* (London, 1916), pp. 317–318; for his relationship with the western community in China, see "The development of China", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 11 January 1899, p.3.

¹⁰² *NCH*, "The Late Mr. Tong Kidson", 11 March 1904, p.492.

¹⁰³ Tze-Ki Hon and Robert Joseph Culp, *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 3–4; P'eng-yuan Chang and Andrew J. Nathan, "Political participation and political elites in early republican China: the parliament of 1913-1914", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXVII,2 2 (1978), pp. 310–313.

generations of Tong Mow-chee's family were also in the circle of Sino-western intellectual and political elites. For instance, one of Kidson's two daughters was married to a prominent Chinese diplomat, Sao-Ke Alfred Sze (Shi Zhaoji 施肇基) (1877–1958).¹⁰⁴ The legacies of Tong Mow-chee, a socio-economic intermediary, who linked Chinese and foreign sectors in Shanghai, were inherited and transformed by successive generations of his family.

Conclusion

Ultimately, by establishing close ties with both foreign and Chinese elites, Mow-chee improved his social position in the late nineteenth-century Shanghai. Mow-chee's relatives and fellow provincials supported his commercial activities in China. In particular, Mow-chee's younger brother, King-sing, who was also a famous entrepreneur, worked with Mow-chee for the expansion of their shipping and sugar refining business in the treaty port world. Mow-chee turned into a representative figure in the Chinese community of Shanghai by actively collaborating with other Chinese intellectual elites. Mow-chee also cultivated ties with foreign businessmen, including the staff of Jardine Matheson & Co., and foreign lawyers like William Venn Drummond, who defended Chinese merchants in a number of court cases. These foreign businessmen supported Mow-chee's conduct in his shipping business as well as provided legal support for his commercial activities. Moreover, based on his ties with these influential foreign and

¹⁰⁴ Sao-Ke Alfred Sze and Anming Fu, *Sao-Ke Alfred Sze, Reminiscences of his Early Years* (Washington DC, 1962), p. 37; Alice Yü-hua T'ang 唐鈺華[Tang Yuhua] (1886–1974) was the daughter of Kidson who was married to Sao-Ke Alfred Sze.

Chinese noble figures, Mow-chee was involved in a number of public projects, such as the management of the Chinese Polytechnic Institute at Shanghai and the opening of the city's Zoological Garden. By engaging in multiple public projects, Mow-chee consolidated his social status in the local community. Mow-chee and his collaborators' involvement in the public projects suggests that at least some foreign and Chinese influential figures succeeded in formulating a symbiotic community contributing to the improvement of the living conditions of Shanghai for local residents.

This research thus highlights the functions of the intermediary elites consisting of Chinese and foreign merchants, intellectuals and compradors in late nineteenth-century Shanghai, with specific focus on Mow-chee, an established comprador merchant and an informal representative of the Chinese community of the city. Through commercial and social activities, the Chinese and foreign leading figures established a mutually profitable relationship. These intermediaries played key roles in connecting the local people belonging to different societies, such as Chinese, British, American, Cantonese and Swatow individuals. Although Shanghai was an international and multicultural city, deep divisions between Chinese and foreigners existed, as well as regional rivalries within the local Chinese populace. Therefore, Mow-chee's various identities as Cantonese, comprador, merchant and Christian enabled him to be an indispensable coordinator. Furthermore, Mow-chee was able to find an intermediary elite counterpart in Drummond, who further streamlined the communication between foreign and Chinese communities. This rise of the Chinese and foreign intermediary was not merely observed in Shanghai but also in Hong Kong and other treaty ports

from the 1860s to the 1880s. The case of Mow-chee and his foreign and Chinese collaborators provides some understanding of the Sino-foreign symbiotic community in the treaty port world of late nineteenth-century China.<hizka@bristol.ac.uk>