

**DRAFT**

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**Voicing from afar: Family and Business Networks in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries\***

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**Abstract:**

The primary concern of this paper is to discuss how Cantonese families connected with South China, Hong Kong and Japan in doing business after their migration to Canada on one hand, and associated themselves with the British interests in forming their networks in the period of 1870s-1910s on the other, from quoting what the families recorded by themselves in the family correspondences and business documents. These materials are mainly represented by the Yip's and Chung's collection, which are housed in the Vancouver City Archives and the University of British Columbia's Library respectively.

This paper tries to discuss the hidden aspect of cross border networks of Cantonese in asking the following few questions. How the Cantonese had successfully extended and maintained their networks from North America to South China, Hong Kong, Japan, and elsewhere? To what extent the family networks were interwoven with the business networks? How these networks functioned effectively? And how the families were able to manage these networks?

The formation of business and family networks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was due to the following two groups of the keywords: trade, remittance, settlement of accounts; marriage, education and flow of information. However, trade and emigration are the two major factors for generating networks. Nevertheless, these trade and emigration networks are usually complemented each other.

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## Setting: why networks are important?

We are used to say the nexuses of Chinese network constituted the following three major elements: kinship ties, regional ties and occupational ties. These also formed as a paradigm of understanding the traditional Chinese society.<sup>1</sup> Gordon Redding pursued his argument that Chinese are “strong in linkages but weak in organization” from his study of Chinese family business.<sup>2</sup> I don’t think this paradigm can be challenged until empirical study has been done. More interesting, David Faure examined and specified the role of Chinese lineages in business from their various commercial activities because of the absence of company laws.<sup>3</sup> So, we come to a preliminary conclusion that Chinese maintained networks for two major reasons: family and business. Other than absence of company laws, Furuta Kazuko pointed out that Chinese merchants used to do business without a contract, and she concluded in her article that there are two types of market information as she named as “type A”: information obtained by networks with merchant groups or intermediary parties (middlemen); “type B”: information on spot such as quantity, quality, and variety of merchandise, medium of trade and exchange rate of currency, etc. As mentioned by her, the “type A” information is additionally difficult for non-Chinese parties to obtain.<sup>4</sup> Networking is important in the sense that it is the source of information and protection of risk.

Hamashita Takeshi and Kawakatsu Heita argued the reason of Japan to choose industrialization instead of commercialization in the late nineteenth century was due to fact that the most of the intermediaries for conducting trade in Asian had been occupied by Chinese merchants.<sup>5</sup> This argument is echoed by Sugihara Kaoru by giving more

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<sup>1</sup> See Lloyd E. Eastman, *Family, fields, and ancestors: constancy and change in China's social and economic history, 1550-1949* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and Negishi Tadashi, *Chūgoku no girudo* [Guilds of China] (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> See Gordon Redding, “Weak organization and strong linkages: managerial ideology and Chinese family business networks,” in Gary Hamilton (ed.), *Business Networks and Economic Development in East and Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1991), pp. 30-47.

<sup>3</sup> David Faure, “The lineage as business company: patronage versus law in the development of Chinese business,” in *The Second Conference on modern Chinese Economic History* (Taipei: Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, 1989), pp. 347-376.

<sup>4</sup> Kazuko Furuta, “Keizaishi niokeru joho to seido: Chugokushonin to joho” (Information and institution in economic history: Chinese merchant and information), in *Shakai Keizai Shigaku* (Journal of Socio-economic history), Vol. 69, No. 4 (Nov 2003), pp. 18-19; 22-25.

<sup>5</sup> See Hamashita Takeshi and Kawakatsu Heita (eds.), *Ajia kōekiken to Nihon kōgyōka, 1500-1900* [The trade zone of Asia and Japan’s industrialization, 1500-1900] (Tokyo: Riburopoto, 1991).

details of the reaction of Japan in resisting the Chinese influences and how the European colonial powers helped to facilitate the Asian trade which was manipulated by Chinese merchants.<sup>6</sup>

Overseas Chinese networks in terms of trade and emigration started early in the tenth century. Including Japan, Southeast Asia is usually the main partner of Chinese maritime trade in Asia. It is not until the nineteenth century, the intrusion of British capital into Asia has made a great impact of Chinese emigration, particularly the Cantonese from South China to Southeast Asia. Commercial linkages or business networks are mingled with these outflows of emigrants. There are three interesting questions in studies of overseas Chinese history. First, why emigrants have to leave their country? Second, how they settled down in the host countries? Third, how and why they established networks and then maintained relationships with the home countries? This paper will show how family be considered as a major factor for generating networks, in terms of marriage and patriarchy.

Studies of Chinese emigration have rarely touched upon emigrant family, my question is how family constitutes as a major factor to form and maintain networks.

### **Cantonese emigration in the nineteenth century**

Historically, South China was the recipient of successive waves of migration from the north. By the end of eighteenth century, the rate of delta land reclamation could not match the rate of increase in population in South China. Growth of population had caused massive emigration both domestically and overseas. The rapid growth of population unaccompanied by improvements in agricultural technology, meant that it was increasingly difficult for peasants in this area to depend on the soil alone for a decent livelihood. To support themselves they had to turn to migration to urban centres and overseas emigration.<sup>7</sup> The overwhelming majority of the Cantonese emigration came from the Pearl River Delta region, particularly from the following counties as Xinning, Xinhui, Kaiping and Enping that are named collectively as Siyi while Panyu, Nanhai and Shunde were Sanyi. However, many emigrants also left from Xiangshan, Chixi and Baoan.

Following the path of traditional junk trade, overseas emigration was common in Southern Fujian and eastern Guangdong in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but it

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<sup>6</sup> Kaoru Sugihara (ed.), *Japan, China, and the Growth of the Asian International Economy, 1850-1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 11-13.

<sup>7</sup> Yuen-fong Woon, *Social Organisation in South China, 1911-1949: the Case of the Kuan Lineage in K'ai-p'ing County* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1984), pp. 7-11.

did not spread to the rest of Guangdong until the nineteenth century. It was not until 1819 when Singapore was declared a free port of trade, attracted thousands of Chinese from adjacent area and China mainland to Southeast Asia. In the 1860s when the Europeans were initiating mining and plantation projects in Southeast Asia, and when the American continent was building transcontinental railways, China became a major source for labour recruitment and Hong Kong finally became a major port for Chinese emigrants leaving for Southeast Asian countries. The high points of Southeast Asian emigration came between 1876-1889, Hong Kong was the most common port from which Chinese emigrants embarked at when compared with Amoy and Swatow. During 1879-1900, a total of 1,369,781 Chinese left Hong Kong for Southeast Asia.<sup>8</sup>

Hong Kong became the major centre of coolie trade. With immense interest derived from the coolie trade and Hong Kong's advantage in its harbour and shipping facilities, this illegal business prospered quickly. Features of Cantonese emigration are as follows. First, similar to other ethnic groups, Cantonese from the same geographic regions tended to immigrate to the same places because of district and kinship ties. Second, Cantonese emigrants kept in close contact with their home villages.

### **Cantonese business networking**

During the nineteenth century, the majority of Chinese in Hong Kong did not settle permanently but returned home or moved to other places in China. They retained ties with their home villages on the mainland. Wealthy Hong Kong Chinese usually held property in Hong Kong, but in their wills there are also frequent references to fields and houses in the home villages and houses in Canton, Foshan and Macau. The property they held consisted mostly of houses and land, and little of it was in shares.

Geographical proximity has been a decisive factor in making Canton-Hong Kong-Macau (*sheng-gang-ao*) an interlocking region. Merchants were pioneered to immigrate to Macau and Hong Kong, however, they maintained their primary homes in Canton and did business in Hong Kong and Macau. The more successful merchants also established their own associate firms in Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, San Francisco, and Yokohama, indicating they had associates who were knowledgeable in Chinese business practice. The close business connections among Hong Kong, Canton, Macau and Shanghai formed an important business area. Inseparable economic ties

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<sup>8</sup> Akira Kani, Honkon imin tokei shiryo: tonan ajia indoyo homen kankei (The statistics of Hong Kong emigration: part of Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean). In *CAS Newsletter* (Centre for Area Studies, Keio University), No. 55 (April 1993), pp. 2-7.

existed between Hong Kong and Canton, with Hong Kong serving as the entrepot--importing goods that Canton had collected from inland. It is noteworthy that some of the importing and exporting firms in Hong Kong were not only engaged in business with China but also with America and Southeast Asia.

As the overwhelming majority of Chinese emigrants to America and Australia were Cantonese, Chinese participation in the trade between Hong Kong, Australia and America was nearly monopolized by the Cantonese merchants. Examples include: first, Lee Chak, who had one importing and exporting firm in Hong Kong, two in England, three in San Francisco, two in New York and one in Honolulu, spanning business from Hong Kong to America and Europe;<sup>9</sup> second, Chan Kin Tong, who owned a firm named Guang Yangxing in Hong Kong and had associate firms in Manila and Havana named Yangxing and Rongan respectively.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, records of Cantonese merchants who went from Hong Kong to Southeast Asia to open up business are not rare. Chan Mui, for example, specialized in drapery in Hong Kong and had seven associate firms abroad. One was located in Chen Village, Canton, and two in Vietnam, three in Haipong and one in Siam.<sup>11</sup> Another Cantonese coming from Dongguan, named Li Mui Shek, opened a factory for producing matches in Hanoi and Tongking.<sup>12</sup> Hong Kong emerged as a centre in the network of overseas Chinese commerce. Chinese communities abroad clung to the Chinese way of life, making Hong Kong the centre of an international trade catering to their needs.<sup>13</sup>

### **Liangtoujia: Family with more than one homes**

Cantonese emigrants in Southeast Asia are predominantly male, mostly they left their hometown when they are young and unmarried. Some of them will marry local people in abroad while the others will go back China and marry with women of the same native origin. Situation may be complicated when they do the both. Generally, it is very common that emigrants have more than one wives. Nevertheless, having concubines in South China are not rare to wealthy merchants. When we look at the specified situation of Chinese emigrant in Southeast Asia, as it is pointed by scholar that they were primarily transient sojourners before 1900,<sup>14</sup> it is so convenient for them to

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<sup>9</sup> HKRS 144, Deposit & Serial No. 1087: Lee Chak (May 1894).

<sup>10</sup> HKRS 144, Deposit & Serial No. 1093: Chan Kin Tong (April 1896).

<sup>11</sup> HKRS 144, Deposit & Serial No. 1445: Chan Mui (May 1899).

<sup>12</sup> HKRS 144, Deposit & Serial No. 2306: Li Mui Shek (November 1909).

<sup>13</sup> Jung-fang Ts'ai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Wang Gungwu, "Chinese politics in Malaya," in Wang Gungwu, *Only to connect: Sino-Malay*

maintain more than one homes, or even more than one marriages at the same time.

Similar to Southeast Asia, the majority of those Chinese living in Hong Kong did not settle permanently but rather eventually returned home or moved to other places in China during the nineteenth century. Throughout their diaspora, they retained ties with their home villages in the mainland. I have studied a total of 1,113 Chinese wills (probate jurisdiction) written between 1850-1910 which originally held by the Supreme Court of Hong Kong, 615 of them are believed to be those of merchants. Merchants are defined here as those individuals owning businesses, joining in partnerships and holding properties. Of these 615 specified wills, 76 of the testators (12.4%) were absent from Hong Kong at the time their will was drafted. Most of them were in Canton or Macau, and nearly all of them had left Hong Kong for retirement or medical reasons. Wealthy Hong Kong Chinese usually held landed property in Hong Kong, but, in their wills, they also made frequent references to land and houses in their home villages or houses owned in Canton, Foshan and Macau as well as other places in Asia. However, many of them maintained their primary residences either in Canton or Hong Kong. The reason for maintaining more than one home at the same time as pointed out by Chen Da, is due to the fact of double or multiple marriages. It was particularly common among the Cantonese and Hokkien emigrants in Southeast Asia.<sup>15</sup>

Why it was so popular for Cantonese in Southeast Asia to have concubines? Loke Yew had four wives and eight children; Eu Tong Sen had three wives and twenty five children; Chan Wing had five wives and twelve children; Chee Wor Lok had three wives and nine children; Khaw Sim Bee had three wives and more than five children; Leong Lok Hing had four wives and two sons; Yip Sang had four wives and twenty three children; whereas their Hokkien counterparts like Tan Kah Kee had four wives and eighteen children; Aw Boon Haw had four wives and nine children.<sup>16</sup> I think other than the “mobile” status of the emigrants as mentioned in the above, the recognition of polygamy by the British law is the other important factor.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the

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*encounters* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2001), p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Chen Da, *Nanyang huaqiao yu minyue shehui* [Emigrant communities in South China: a study of overseas migration and its influence on standards of living and social change] (Changsha: Commercial Press, 1938), pp. 126-130.

<sup>16</sup> See Lee Kam Hing and Chow Mun Seong ed., *Biographical dictionary of the Chinese in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1997), and Choi Kwai Keong, “The overseas Chinese family”, in *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese overseas* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> Wu Qiyun, “Zhongguo qieji zai Xianggang, Xinjiapo he Malaixiya zhi falu diwei” (The legal status of Chinese wives in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia), in *Zhongguo haiyang fazhan shi lunwenji* (Essays in Chinese maritime history), Volume 5 (Taipei: Sun Yat-sen Institute for Social Sciences and Philosophy, 1993), pp. 605-650.

implementation of British law in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malay, part of North America and other region of the British sphere of influence, favoured the growth of this phenomenon.<sup>18</sup> According to the British law, secondary wives or concubines had the right to be the trustee of inheritance and sons of them are equal with the sons of the principal wife to succeed wealth and estate from their father.<sup>19</sup> More important, though I have no evidence to show how these wives had such a power to ask their husbands to reside in the sphere of British law, I am sure that they did enjoy a more superior social status when compared with those primary wives in the China homeland. It was obvious that colonial governance in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlement (Singapore, Malacca and Penang) had provided an environment to create a network of the mobile family or a family with multiple homes.<sup>20</sup> As it is explained by Chen Da, family of an emigrant may have two branches (or more) in the life-time of its founder, one in South China and the other in Southeast Asia, an arrangement common enough to be widely recognized as the dual family system (*liangtougia*). The wife of the absent head of the family manages the household affairs in the village.<sup>21</sup> For the reasons of family union, business, employment, medical treatment, education, entertainment, etc, it is easy to learn that the head of the family and family member of him have to travel frequently from one region to another. Many of these *liangtougia* people married more than twice.<sup>22</sup>

Table 1: number of Chinese in Southeast Asia in 1930s

region	Total population	No. of Chinese (1933)
British Malaya (of 1931)	4 385 346	1 709 392
Dutch Indies (of 1930)	60 727 233	1 233 214
Siam (of 1929)	11 506 207	558 324
French Indo-China (of 1930)	20 491 000	402 000
Philippines (of 1934)	13 055 220	150 000
Total	110 165 006	4 052 930

Source: Chen Da, *Nanyang huaqiao yu Minyue shehui*, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> It has to be mentioned that the time of implementation of British law in Straits Settlement, Federated Malay States, Unfederated Malay States, Sambas and Sarawak, are not the same. See *Sheridan, Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo Territories: the development of their laws and constitutions* (London, 1961), p. 15. Quoted from Wu Qiyun, *ibid*, p. 664.

<sup>19</sup> As different from their homeland, the distribution of inheritance could simply help by lawyers in Southeast Asia, instead by a prominent figure of the lineage. See Chen Da, *Nanyang huaqiao yu minyue shehui*, p. 144.

<sup>20</sup> Choi Kwai Keong, "The overseas Chinese family", in *ibid*, pp. 77-79.

<sup>21</sup> Chen Da, *Nanyang huaqiao yu minyue shehui*, pp. 140-143.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157.

It has to be mentioned that according to Chen Da, *liangtougjia* does not simply mean more than one location or venue of home, instead, each home should have a head of household who is usually the wife of the absent head of the family. As been remarked by Chen Da, these *liangtougjia* people did not necessary have family problems since first, their wives were not lived together, usually one of them lived in the homeland while the other lived in overseas; second, even they lived together, there were many cases reported that the wives were able to cultivate relationship to each other. Problems occurred only when the *liangtougjia* people remitted no money to the homeland.<sup>23</sup>

The Sam Kee Company was established in 1888, was one of the wealthiest Chinese business firms in Vancouver, Canada. Its business operations were extensive, ranging from charcoal manufacturing to contracting Chinese labour. It also imported and exported fish and rice to and from China. Business partners of the Sam Kee Company scattered over Canada, US, China, Hong Kong and Japan.<sup>24</sup> The founder Chang Toy, a Panyu native, had two sons called Chang Yat Jun and Chang Yat Leong. These two sons respected their father very much for they asked Chang Toy's consent for every single business decision. The correspondences between the sons and the father revealed that Chang Toy had fully controlled the company, showing the patriarchal nature of the business.

Another example I have found is from the letters sent between Yip Sang and his sons during the early of twentieth century. These correspondences show how Yip's sons followed the advice (in a narrower sense, obeyed the orders) given by his father in Vancouver.<sup>25</sup> Yip Sang is a Taishan native, he came to North America in 1864. Seventeen years later he settled in Vancouver and became rich gradually. Yip came to Canada in 1881 to work on the Cariboo goldfields. Unsuccessful there, he moved to what would become Vancouver and sold coal door to door until he was employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Supply Company on a construction gang. He became the company's bookkeeper, timekeeper, and paymaster, and eventually its superintendent of Chinese labour.<sup>26</sup> In 1888 Yip founded the Wing Sang Company in Vancouver. Like many Chinese firms at this time, Wing Sang engaged in a variety of

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp. 154-155.

<sup>24</sup> For details of the Sam Kee's businesses, please read Paul Yee, "Sam Kee: a Chinese business in early Vancouver", in *BC Studies*, Nos. 69-70 (1986), pp. 73-77.

<sup>25</sup> Various letters from the Yip Sang Collection, deposited in the City Archives of Vancouver, Canada. The author wish to acknowledge his appreciation to the assistance provided by the Archives in accessing to the materials.

<sup>26</sup> See Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1988 reprinted), p. 21



enterprises. In addition to labour contracting, the company ran a trans-Pacific import and export business, pioneering the export of salt fish to various points on the Pacific rim, including Japan. It also played an important role in forwarding remittances from workers to their families in China and serving as a contact point for correspondence. Yip became the Chinese agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, supplying its railway with construction labourers and its steamships with sailors and fresh produce. By 1908 his company was one of the four largest Chinese companies in Vancouver, with an annual revenue of \$50,000 from its import-export business alone and real estate holdings worth over \$200,000. In 1891, Yip became a naturalized British subject.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the success of Yip in business was closely related to the British firm CPR.

Similar to Sam Kee Company, Yip's business scattered over import/export, labour contracting, remittance, rentals and producing dry-salt fishes. He had been once returned to Hong Kong and stayed there for a few years. He had been elected as a director of the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong. This puzzled me of the reasons why he came to Hong Kong and took the appointment from Tung Wah? Is the alien environment in Canada forced him to look for another home for settling? As it is limited by the source materials, I cannot give an answer to this question. However, I came across some correspondences between Yip and his son about accounts of happenings in the Hong Kong business community. Obviously, Yip relied on his son in obtaining information of the political and economical changes of China. Other than routine business, the son regularly reported to his father of what he has observed in his residing city of Hong Kong.

### **Family as a network**

Yip Sang had four wives (Lee Shee, Dong Shee, Wong Shee, and Chin Shee) and a total of twenty three children – nineteen sons and four daughters, spreading across North America and China. Correspondences among the family members in different areas of Canada and Asia are interesting.

Since Yip had been deeply involved in the remittance business for the Chinese labourers,<sup>28</sup> I have read hundred of letters from his collection of materials, asking the

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<sup>27</sup> See <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/yipsang/>

<sup>28</sup> Yip's remittance business had been competed with modern Chinese banks but finally survived. Recent study has argued overseas Chinese in North America relied on modern banks such as Bank of China and Bank of Canton than the other ways to remit their money to China. See Lin Jiajing, *Jindai Guangdong qiaohui yanjiu* [A study of overseas Chinese remittances in modern Guangdong] (Guangzhou: Zhongshan University Press, 1999), pp. 15-16.

addressees to send back money to cover family expenses. These letters are sent either directly to the addressees or via friends/relatives/business partners/native colleagues/remittance houses. Other issues dealt with in these letters are: urging the addressees to come back home (for example, wives informed husbands of their life at home and their longing for them to be home; elderly father insisted for the son to come back and carry on their business at home; mother urged their son to come back home to get married; parents reminding their sons to be always hardworking and thrifty and never take gambling or other bad habits while away from home; inquiries about the procedures to enter Vancouver; the possibility of borrowing money for starting business; accounts of happenings in the China homeland such as war, famine, and roaring price of food products; complaints from senior family members of the son for not sending money home for months; enquiries of those from Chinese communities in other parts of Canada about job opportunity in Vancouver; explanations of being unable to send out money as requested; notices of the repayment of money borrowed, etc. The one impressed me most is a letter wrote by Yip Sang to teach his son how to cultivate friendship with the businessmen in Hong Kong. It shows on one hand how the father/son team worked effectively, and on the other the out posting son is controlled by the family at Vancouver.

### **Concluding remarks:**

The term “entrepreneurship” can generally be interpreted as profit-making, risk taking and making innovational changes, as elaborated in a model devised by Joseph Schumpeter.<sup>29</sup> However, if we looked at the cases of Cantonese merchants (including their wives and sons) who did the networking in Hong Kong, China, Southeast Asia, North America, and elsewhere in the world, we can also say they are all entrepreneurial, not just confined to the family head. The phenomenon of *liangtou jia* was commonly happened among the wealthy Cantonese families in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Family with multiple households, creates more networks and household master (usually of secondary wives and sons) will have learnt how to maintain the so-called family networks, in order to keep close relationship with the patriarch, the core of power of he family. This tradition of *liangtou jia* has been maintained even in today. According to a recent research conducted by the Guangzhou municipal government, 15.25% of the Guangdong families have relatives living in

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, “The fundamental phenomenon of economic development”, in Peter Kilby (ed.), *Entrepreneurship and economic development* (New York: Free Press, 1971), pp.43-70.

abroad due to the impact of emigration.<sup>30</sup> How Cantonese used and maintained their family networks, would be an interesting topic. The impact of emigration is eminent to many Cantonese families, they maintained networks with their home town on one hand and among their multiple homes on the other, with the city of Hong Kong or Guangzhou served as intermediaries of these networks.<sup>31</sup>

Cantonese are not difficult to work with the British colonial powers, in reverse, they tended to associate with them. Chang Toy and Yip Sang had both been served as the agent of the British firms. Chang was the agent of The Blue Funnel Steamship Line and Yip for the Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian Pacific Steamship. Yip became naturalized in 1891. Perhaps they felt more easy to work under the British sphere of influence in Asia and North America. However, we should not overlook the concubines and the sons of the merchant families, also take advantage from the protection of the British laws, to assure their right of succession of wealth.

This paper, is however, unfinished, I should add more on two parts: first, on Yip Sang family itself, to enforce what I have tried to illustrate ‘family as a network;’ second, the relations between Yip Sang and his business partners in Hong Kong like Sam Wo Hing and Sam Wo Lung, for their business operation lasted until 1950s and 1960s respectively.

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<sup>30</sup> Guangzhou shi zhi, vol. 17 [The gazetter of the Canton city: custom, dialect, religion, and family] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 1998), p. 575.

<sup>31</sup> As Wang Gungwu put, these transnational Cantonese or Chinese are different with their natives living in the inland, as he called them ‘China coast Chinese’, see Wang Gungwu, “Hong Kong as the home of China coast Chinese: An historical perspective,” in Wang Gungwu and Wong Siu-lun (eds.), *Hong Kong in the Asia-Pacific Region: Rising to the new challenges* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1997), pp. 145-166.

## Chinese Glossary:

Aw Boon Haw	胡文虎
Chan Kin Tong	陳健堂
Chan Mui	陳梅
Chan Wing	陳永
Chang Toy	陳才
Chang Yat Jun	陳日進
Chang Yat Leong	陳日亮
Chee Wor Lok	朱和樂
Chin Shee	陳氏
Choo Eng Choon	朱永春
Dong Shee	鄧氏
Eu Tong Sen	余東璇
Guang Yangxing	廣陽興
Khaw Sim Bee	許心美
Lee Chak	李澤
Leong Lok Hing	梁樂卿
liangtou jia	兩頭家
Loke Yew	陸佑
Rongan	榮安
Sam Kee Company	三記號
Sam Wo Hing	三和興
Sam Wo Lung	三和隆
Sanyi	三邑
sheng gang ao	省港澳
Siyi	四邑
Tan Kah Kee	陳嘉庚
Yangxing	陽興
Yip Sang	葉生

Figure 1: Letter to Yip Sang I

Figure 1 shows a handwritten letter in Chinese on a grid background. The text is written in vertical columns from right to left. The rightmost column contains the recipient's name and address: 香港德輔道中... 葉錦棠... 啟. The main body of the letter discusses financial matters, mentioning '股份' (shares) and '利息' (interest). The date '壬戌十月' is written on the left side.

Figure 2: Letter to Yip Sang II

Figure 2 shows a handwritten letter on a grid background. At the top, it is addressed to '五省外交視察員辦公廳' (Office of Inspector-General for Foreign Affairs). The main text is written in vertical columns and discusses various topics, including family matters and social activities. The date '壬戌十月' is written on the left side.



Figure 3: Letter from Hong Kong firm Sanhexing

敬啟者 本公司創辦至今歷年生意藉各東福蔭願  
有進步除歷年派股息紅利之外尚有盈餘茲為貫徹  
原定方針以期久遠穩固計經遵章邀集在港股東議  
決由庚午年七月初一改組為有限公司將盈餘積項擴  
為股本由壹拾壹萬柒仟員增至壹拾柒萬伍仟伍佰元  
即每股擴為叁股祈將股份票携來換取三和興有  
限公司股票便合隨呈上三和興由庚午年正月初壹  
至閏六月底總結一本又三和興有限公司庚午年總  
結一本另附設之三和隆有限公司庚午年總結一本統  
希察核是年營業因金貴銀賤及貨價疊疊暴跌虧  
不小本公司附設三和隆有限公司經營麵粉虧缺至  
萬零陸佰餘員幸是年本公司除派息外仍獲有  
溢利得以彌補兩相比對所虧有限回湖是年麵粉  
及各行生意情形大局不佳虧缺些小端藉各東福  
蔭之所致也茲擇定于庚午九百三拾壹年五月拾壹號  
即本月廿五日(即西曆五月廿八日)下午八點鐘在  
會省覽年結及開派庚午年股息屆時惠臨會議  
一切共策進行是所厚望此致

葉樹春堂股東先生  
辦得四月念二號  
辛未三月初五日  
三和興有限公司啟