

FROM COOLIES TO COLONIALS: CHINESE MIGRANTS IN HAWAI'I

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
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Abstract

Focusing on the period 1870-1920, my dissertation offers a social history of colonization and exclusion that integrates the experiences of Chinese migrants, indigenous Hawaiians, and white colonial and territorial officials. Drawing from government records and reports, newspaper articles, and family histories, I recover the aspirations of Chinese migrants who arrived in the islands as plantation laborers, but staked claims to alternative futures through independent, collective, creolized, and occasionally illicit economic networks, frequently capitalizing on their intimate contact with Native Hawaiians. I argue that although the management of Asian contract labor was critical to the expansion of American empire in the Pacific, migrants also undermined Americanization by pursuing autonomous endeavors. While migrant mobility and enterprise frustrated both American imperial plans for Hawai‘i as a white settler society and local elites’ development of a plantation colony, migrants cooperated as well as competed with indigenous investments in the islands. I treat American annexation and the extension of Chinese exclusion laws as a crucial hinge that profoundly changed the conditions and possibilities of Chinese settlement in Hawai‘i,

incentivizing migrants' accommodation to American empire and mobilizing the politics of Asian settler colonialism.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first interrogates opium regulation in the Hawaiian kingdom as a racializing colonialist discourse that patronized Native Hawaiians and criminalized migrant Chinese, laying the ideological groundwork for both annexation and exclusion. The second chapter considers the rise and fall of Chinese rice culture, and examines immigration exclusion laws as economic policies designed to constrict non-white migrant enterprise. The third chapter investigates Chinese success in commercial food production, specifically fishpond and poi factory operation, as the result of collective financial networks, cultural appropriation, and interracial economic intimacies. My final chapter explores Chinese diplomatic and grassroots resistance to exclusion laws and the culture of racial violence that these laws fostered. I argue that legal, economic, and political insecurity around annexation freighted organized responses to everyday transgressions against Chinese subjects, overlaying concerns about the treatment of marginalized migrants with the weight of exclusion.

Ultimately, I contend that Hawai'i Chinese mobilized settler colonial politics in response to American imperial takeover and exclusion, which curtailed the possibility of grounding migrant rights in transnational frameworks of belonging, and reduced diasporic Chinese to aliens unable to make political claims on the territory from outside the category of citizenship. As American imperial policies threatened the security of Chinese futures in the islands, migrants couched their claims to

belonging in a discourse of racial and economic exceptionalism premised on their alleged superiority to Native Hawaiians.

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Introduction

From Coolies to Colonials: Theory and Method

Introduction

My dissertation explores Chinese migrant life in the Hawaiian Islands between 1870 and 1920, from the monarchical period through the incorporation of Hawai‘i as an American territory. I argue that while the management of Asian contract labor was critical to the expansion of American empire in the Pacific Islands, migrants also worked to unsettle the American archipelagic frontier by pursuing autonomous endeavors and alternative futures. While migrant mobility and enterprise frustrated both populist plans for Hawai‘i as a white settler society and elite ambitions for a plantation colony, migrants cooperated as well as competed with indigenous investments in the islands. Drawing from government records and reports, newspaper articles, and family histories, I focus on Chinese migrant business, relations with Native Hawaiians, and claims to belonging across a period of intense political and economic transformation. I take American annexation and the extension of Chinese exclusion laws as a crucial hinge that profoundly changed the stakes of Chinese life in the islands, and occasioned a shift from antagonism to accommodation with respect to American hegemony in Hawai‘i. Ultimately, I am concerned with the racial logistics of imperial rule, and the implications of race-based exclusion on the political imagination of migrant communities.

Responding to the critique of “Asian settler colonialism”¹ raised by scholars in Hawai‘i—the charge that Asian migrants and their descendants were invested and complicit in the colonization of the islands and the displacement of indigenous

Hawaiians—I center Chinese-Hawaiian relations in my research, and provide a long history of Chinese settlement that places migrant life within the frame of American imperialism and the shadow of race-based exclusion. I argue that Asian settler colonialism must be treated historically by disaggregating the category of “Asian”—which held little valence for the diverse migrants that peopled the archipelago—and by contextualizing the roots of settler colonial politics and praxis within American imperial racial policies. Without this historical work, Asian settler colonialism appears as an inevitable outcome of immigration, obscuring alternative histories of migrant-indigenous collaboration, and undermining the extent to which migrants disrupted the ambitions of colonial capital and imperial expansion.

While histories of American colonization of the Hawaiian Islands have focused on the impact of American imperial hegemony on indigenous populations, I want to expand this focus to consider the consequences for migrant communities. Similarly, previous studies of Asian migration and labor to the Hawaiian archipelago have failed to grapple with migrants’ relations to indigenous communities, imagining Native Hawaiians as an irrelevant and receding presence in the struggles of migrant groups for enfranchisement under the post-Annexation order. My dissertation seeks to correct both exclusions by centering exchanges between Chinese migrants and Native Hawaiians, including relations of appropriation and indebtedness, in order to reconstruct a social world that was intimate and entangled, as opposed to the deceptively contained plural society so often reproduced by colonial historiographies. In this way, I hope to produce a triangulated narrative of Hawaiian history, and an account of the impact of American

imperial expansion on both diasporic and indigenous communities, while considering the anxieties of colonial officials in response to the collaboration of marginalized subjects.

Historiographical Review

Critical Colonial Studies: United States and Hawai‘i

This project draws inspiration from a range of fields, including American empire and critical colonial theory, global Chinese migration studies, and histories of intimacy in the late imperial Pacific. Previous studies of American colonization of Hawai‘i have focused on the dispossession of indigenous people by colonial legal reforms, and the gradual expropriation of native land by corporate agricultural interests. These works are primarily concerned with sovereignty, and the profound and ongoing disenfranchisement of Native Hawaiians under American rule. Over the last three decades, Native Hawaiian historians have succeeded in restoring historical agency to indigenous actors by recovering their engagement with colonial modernity, while also critiquing its conditions.

In her groundbreaking study of land privatization, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, the historian Lilikalā Kama‘eleihiwa analyzes Hawaiian and Euro-American interests in overhauling the indigenous system of land tenure, while revealing the fundamental asymmetricality of their collaboration.² While Hawaiian commoners were consistently skeptical of haole efforts to control and commodify land, chiefly leaders negotiated the imperative to assimilate to Western legal and economic codes in the context of imperial expansion across Oceania that threatened the sovereignty of island polities. Ultimately, Kama‘eleihiwa argues, the uneven politics of recognition that

mandated Hawai‘i undertake cultural, legal, and economic reforms along the lines of Western nations was premised on the very racial and geopolitical hierarchies that would nullify the kingdom’s sovereignty.

The political scientist Noenoe K. Silva identifies these historical constraints as explicit colonization. In *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, she narrates American involvement in the Hawaiian Islands from missionary contact as a colonial project of cultural, political, and economic domination.³ Her account of the infiltration and overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom centers on Native Hawaiian resistance, recovered through Hawaiian-language sources from covertly inflammatory literary productions to petitions circulated in opposition to American annexation. For Silva, Hawaiian political resistance entailed the direct contestation of the codes and modes of American colonization, as opposed to strategic attempts at cooptation, and included the resurgence of sacred cultural production and nationalist activism.

In *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*, the anthropologist J. Kēhaulani Kauanui investigates the federal government’s insidious efforts to undermine Hawaiian nationalist organizing by reorganizing the very category of “Native Hawaiian” into a legal racial construct.⁴ In the first three decades of the twentieth century, Hawaiian politicians called for land reforms to rehabilitate an indigenous population devastated by colonial expropriations and corporate capitalist predations. They mobilized the concept of indigeneity as a collective political subject position vested with inalienable rights to the land and resources of a stolen kingdom. In response, local white elites, in collusion with federal authorities, insisted on legally

defining Hawaiian indigeneity by blood quantum. The result was the discursive reduction of a nation entitled to the reclamation of pillaged lands to a group of racialized subjects dependent on the largesse of the federal government. Kauanui's analysis of federal intervention in Hawaiian nationalist organizing reveals the intimate linkages between land and sovereignty that were denatured by a racial project that sought ultimately to dissolve indigeneity—and its unique political claims—within the context of a settler colony.

The historian Davianna Pōmaika'i McGregor's exploration of indigenous cultural retention and economic autonomy, *Nā Kua'āina: Living Hawaiian Culture*, points the way forward towards scholarship that considers Native Hawaiian resistance to colonial capitalism through innovation, collaboration, and the pursuit of alternative modernities.⁵ Drawing from ethnographies of rural Hawaiians who refused to assimilate to the demands of the capitalist market, McGregor's subjects embody the syncretic possibilities of survival and persistence against the expansive pressures of corporate capital in Hawai'i. The subsistence farmers and fishermen who people her narrative engage with capitalism on a partial and strategic basis, turning to occasional wage work to supplement customary lifeways. The power to resist total assimilation was premised on rural Hawaiians' access to land, and partially on their economic engagement with intermediary subjects who were themselves operating on the margins of colonial capitalist economies—namely, Chinese merchants and shopkeepers. This is a generative starting point for further scholarship that considers the plural economic strategies of indigenous people who resisted total assimilation into colonial capitalist modes of production, either by refusing to engage with the market altogether, or selectively harnessing its potential. Furthermore, it

highlights the importance of investigating economic exchange between marginalized subjects in colonial contexts to reconsider narratives of totalizing economic assimilation.

While crucial to understanding the long and complex history of Hawaiian political resistance to imperial expansion, most studies of American colonization and Hawaiian sovereignty tend to overlook Asian migrants as political subjects. Beyond the material necessity of contract labor for capitalist production, American imperial sovereignty and expansion depended on the exploitation and exclusion of Asian migrants. Besides performing the labor of “coolies,” Asian subjects destabilized schemes of colonial domination while providing the pretext for greater imperial intervention. The social panics and crises of governance generated by Chinese migrants allowed annexationists to rationalize American imperial order in the Hawaiian Islands as the optimal means of productively managing racial difference in a colonial space. As studies like McGregor’s reveal, Chinese migrant enterprise in some cases enabled the refusal of Native Hawaiians to totally assimilate to capitalist systems of production and exchange. My project contributes to the historiography of American colonial capitalist expansion in Hawai‘i by examining the political import of Chinese migrants; investigating their critical economic exchanges with Native Hawaiians; and considering the multiple strategies of both groups to persist in rapidly transforming economic landscapes.

Global Chinese Migration and the Case of Hawai‘i

Studies of Chinese migration in a global context, and specific case studies of Hawai‘i, have examined the relationship between migrant mobility and national sovereignty, and debated the nature of migrant mobility itself—whether permanent or

temporary, linear or circulating, diasporic or colonial. Asian-American studies scholars have argued that the management of Asian labor and exclusion of Asian migrants was a crucial project of American statecraft and sovereignty. In *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, the legal historian Mae Ngai demonstrates that the production of exceptional racialized subjects through federal immigration laws was essential to defining a sovereign, territorialized nation despite the reality of heterogeneity and unstable borders.⁶ What's more, the legal codification of racialized migrant subjects as "illegal aliens" functioned as a tool of capital, creating a vulnerable caste of persons subject to both labor exploitation and deportation. Ngai's material understanding of sovereignty as the power to manage and exploit both resources and bodies is particularly useful to studies of racialized labor in the complex political context of Hawai'i, where multiple systems of sovereignty competed with and overlaid one another, but were always tied to control over the means of production in a plantation economy.

Following Ngai, the historians Erika Lee and Adam McKeown have examined the bureaucracies and technologies of immigration regulation as crucial sites where national sovereignty reproduces itself. In *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*, Lee argues that the legal regime of immigration restriction called into being a bureaucratic apparatus that materialized national sovereignty in the service of racial exclusion.⁷ Furthermore, the ongoing process of exclusion, which continued after entry and operated within the boundaries of the nation to order racialized subjects as either legal or illegal, severely proscribed the meaning of citizenship for Chinese-American subjects. In *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the*

Globalization of Borders, McKeown extends these arguments by showing that the technologies of passports, borders, and national immigration databases produced the very subjects whose mobility they purported to regulate, while diplomatic efforts to control immigration rendered American national sovereignty both legible and potent in a transnational context.⁸

My project seeks to translate mainland critiques of American sovereignty and the production, management, and exclusion of racialized migrant subjects to Hawai‘i, whose shifting political order allows for historical comparisons between a protocolonial⁹ monarchy, pro-annexation republic, and formal American territory. I argue that each of these modes of political organization in some way articulate coloniality, whether in its attempt, anticipation, or actualization. The case of Hawai‘i presents unique conditions and complications for the study of Chinese migration, as the islands became entangled in competing visions of American hegemony. Whether as guest workers in a plantation society or interlopers in a white settler outpost, Chinese migrants were salient subjects of state efforts to regulate mobility and reify race in order to reproduce various forms of colonial sovereignty.

In his article “Between Sovereignty and Capitalism: The Historical Experiences of Migrant Chinese,” Prasenjit Duara compares Chinese migrant citizenship under nation-states versus colonies.¹⁰ Using the example of the nineteenth century United States, Duara argues that as migrants within a nationalist system organized around the binary of citizen-outsider, Chinese experienced a total suspension of rights. Theoretically, they were utterly vulnerable in relation to the state. Within a colonial system organized around racial and religious hierarchies, Chinese actually enjoyed a

degree of communal autonomy. Duara points to creolized Chinese in particular as benefiting from the social, political, and economic securities that constitute belonging. His comparative analysis creates space for further inquiry into the nature of Chinese mobility and enterprise in an unstable political context like Hawai‘i. While the majority of scholarship on Chinese migration to the islands has treated migrant subjects as immigrants, sojourners, and settlers, moving because of economic necessity, and making political claims to belonging based on material investment in the islands, the last decade has introduced the critique of Asian settler colonialism, a tremendous reappraisal of migrant mobility.

Synthetic treatments of global Chinese migration like Lynn Pan’s *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora* have posited the model of a merchant diaspora, and more specialized studies of overseas Chinese typically maintain the analysis that Southern Chinese evolved into a migratory community in response to demographic and economic pressures exacerbated by famine, violence, and imperialism.¹¹ The subjects of Pan’s study act according to financial rationality, and move to pursue economic opportunities abroad in order to sustain precarious domestic formations at home. Their overseas enterprise is cast as a necessary condition of survival, as opposed to a calculated act of domination. Indeed, Pan explores the innate vulnerability of a mobile and marginal caste often subject to local violence. This phenomenon is naturalized as a given risk of diasporic alterity, and the result of being instrumentalized by ruling elites as a buffer class. Little attention is paid to the non-violent interactions of diasporic Chinese with the people indigenous to their destinations,

and the possibility that migrants themselves engaged in extractive and exploitative practices is underexplored.

Biographies of “pioneer merchants” reveal an active mercantile class in Hawai‘i that often functioned as an intermediary group between Chinese contract workers and Euro-American planter capitalists. In *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains: Afong and the Chinese in Hawai‘i*, Bob Dye’s biography of Chun Afong—arguably the most financially successful and politically significant Chinese migrant in the islands prior to annexation—the historian demarcates the uppermost possibilities of Chinese mobility in the Hawaiian kingdom.¹² Mapping the life of an exceptional subject, Dye complicates linear narratives of immigration, assimilation, and enfranchisement in his treatment of the political struggles of Chinese migrants not for political incorporation within the Hawaiian nation, but rather adequate diplomatic representation as overseas Chinese resident in Hawai‘i.

Classical immigration studies like Clarence Glick’s *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawai‘i* posit a linear trajectory for some migrants—Glick’s “settlers”—and analyze the patterns of cultural assimilation and struggles for political enfranchisement in their adopted homelands.¹³ The genre of plantation labor histories like Ronald Takaki’s *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawai‘i, 1835-1920* and Gary Okihiro’s *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawai‘i, 1865-1945* are particularly concerned with the latter narrative—the transformation of migrant contract laborers into citizens, notably through the pathway of collective organizing against economic exploitation.¹⁴ These studies of laboring subjects dominate the literature on Asian migrants in Hawai‘i, but fail to grapple with Native Hawaiians as equal subjects of

historical transformation. Their relationships to migrant communities are deemed irrelevant to the narrative of Asians' economic and political liberation in the post-annexation era.

In response to these histories that marginalize Native Hawaiians while fixing Asian political subjectivity in the imperial framework of American citizenship, scholars in Hawai'i have developed a critique of Asian settler colonialism. Elaborated in the anthology *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*, edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura, this critique considers the social, economic, and political domination of the islands by the descendants of Asian migrants who, the authors argue, have been both the agents and beneficiaries of US imperialism.¹⁵ Focusing their analyses on the Second World War and postwar era, these theorists contend that Asians in Hawai'i accommodated American imperial sovereignty against indigenous political claims in order to substantiate their own citizenship. While this argument potently describes the postwar landscape, its failure to historicize Asian settler colonialism before the Second World War is problematic, as the elision of history seems to suggest that even the migrations of marginalized and multiply colonized subjects inevitably become colonial projects.

Fujikane contends that Asian settler colonialism is not the result of intention, but rather, as Iyko Day has interpreted her argument, of "*self-determination and structural contingency*."¹⁶ Here, "structural contingency" refers to the imposition of American sovereignty and its expression and reiteration through literal political and legal structures. I argue that when considering Asian migrants' investments in American empire and engagements with settler colonial practices, it is crucial to take *time* as a vector of identity

and politics. To declare Asian migrants became settler colonials upon the event of their arrival is to overlook the contingent and deliberate processes by which American colonialism became entrenched in the islands and incentivized Asian investment in the structures of American imperial power. How then might we *historicize* Asian migrants' self-determination and the structural contingency, the ongoing production, of American empire in Hawai'i? In other words, how might we map a material temporality of Asian settler colonialism, not to deny the claim, but to restore historical contingency and complexity?

I argue that a historical analysis of Chinese communities in Hawai'i organized around the hinge of American annexation and Chinese exclusion refines both histories of Asian migration to Hawai'i as well as the critique of Asian settler colonialism by contextualizing migrant life within the framework of American imperialism. Indeed, it was at this moment, and not the mid-twentieth century, when migrant communities began appealing to the new imperial order to exempt the islands from deleterious American racial policies in the form of immigration exclusion. Following the establishment of exclusion in the islands, once circulatory and creolized subjects that practiced transnational citizenship hardened into communities on the defensive, willing to stake their claims to belonging in the recently incorporated territory explicitly against the aspirations of Native Hawaiians.

Prior to this moment, however, migrants engaged in what might be considered diasporic colonialism, mobilizing their unique resources of circulating human capital to profit from an archipelago that was but one set of nodes in a wider Pacific network that enabled the reproduction of indigenous life in their Southern Chinese homelands. This

was a project unaffiliated, and often at odds, with the explicit white settler colonial imperative to tautologically extend American hegemony by repeatedly invoking and relying on the power of the American state. Nevertheless, the “self-determination” exercised by migrants as mobile entrepreneurs shared with American hegemony a vision of the Hawaiian Islands as the terrain of free enterprise, where the sovereign claims of Native Hawaiians to political autonomy and territorial integrity were secondary to the principle of profit.

Day offers a “theory of settler colonialism...that operates as a triangulation of symbolic positions that include the Native, the alien, and the settler. The distinctions between alien and settler are by no means stable or fixed but are meant to emphasize the role of territorial entitlement that distinguish them...the alien may not only be *complicit* with the settler colonial regime but may eventually inherit its sense of sovereign territorial right, such as Asian settlers in Hawai‘i...the degree of forced or voluntary migration or level of complicity with the settler state is ultimately secondary to their subordination under a settler colonial mode of production driven by the proprietorial logics of whiteness.” (23-24)

The “recruitment of indentured and ‘free’ Chinese labor incorporated provisionality, excludability, and deportability into the notion of alien-ness. The heterogeneously racialized alien is a unique innovation of settler colonialism...The governing logic of white supremacy embedded in a settler colonial mode of production relies on and reproduces the exploitability, disposability, and symbolic extraterritoriality of a surplus alien labor force.” (24)

Material Intimacies in the Late Imperial Pacific

Oceanic historians have restored material analyses to histories of late imperialism that consider the intimate encounters of white settlers, aboriginal peoples, and racialized migrants. As Kauanui has revealed, the very categories used to organize colonial societies were themselves unstable historical productions. Both she and historian Damon Salesa, whose study of colonial New Zealand, *Racial Crossings: Race, Intermarriage, and the Victorian British Empire*, considers the multiple meanings of European-Maori contact, have argued that in fact the legal constitution of indigeneity was directly linked to colonial land policies which treated mixed indigenous subjects as white in order to erode their unique claims to resources.¹⁷ Liberal racial policies, in other words, masked colonial intentions to expropriate native resources and dissolve native sovereignty.

Across Oceania a different set of colonial racial policies dealing with non-white subjects were engaged in the separation of marginalized ethnic communities whose response to exploitation and expropriation was to cooperate with each other. In the case of Hawai‘i, as McGregor has shown, both migrants and indigenous subjects capitalized on these exchanges, which afforded both groups the kind of cultural and economic autonomy that colonial processes otherwise foreclosed. These exchanges were both intimate and economic, and included, for example, the production of creolized domestic clusters and networks of cash-free barter.

Recent historical scholarship that materializes marginalized interracial intimacies as the result of colonial market relations succeeds in addressing multiple problematics of frontier histories, including the tendency to privilege contact between Europeans and others, and to overlook the gendered disparities of successful assimilation amongst

colonized communities. Furthermore, they correct the excessive focus of critical colonial studies on the triumph of capitalism, instead centering alternative economic practices that disrupted market revolutions and civilizing missions. The historian Jenny Bol Jun Lee's article "Eating Pork Bones and Puha with Chopsticks: Maori-Chinese Constructions" presents an intimate portrait of Maori-Chinese exchange in cooperative market gardens that, along with indigenous-Asian intimacy, became the subject of colonial anxiety and legislative interventions.¹⁸

In *The Pearl Frontier: Indonesian Labor and Indigenous Encounters in Australia's Northern Trading Network*, Julia Martinez and Adrian Vicker narrate the history of pearling networks organized by Australian capital, dependent on Indonesian labor, and entangled with Aboriginal communities. Placing intimate encounters within colonial market relations, the authors describe Australian policies of forced deportation to separate Asian fathers from their mixed families, acts that directly attacked the crucial strategy of migrant workers to secure their belonging in foreign lands through conjugal ties with indigenous women, and the choices made by these women to invest in wage-earning migrants.¹⁹

Drawing on these trends in Oceanic scholarship, my project attempts to offer a materialized account of migrant-indigenous intimacy, and to complicate the historical divisions between migrant enterprise, native subsistence, and colonial capitalism. Ultimately, I am concerned with the range of creolized, collaborative, and exploitative transactions and formations that occurred on the margins of colonial societies.

Selected Sources

This project draws from a range of primary sources to reconstruct a social history of migrant enterprise, interracial exchange, and political organizing. These sources include family histories of Hawai‘i Chinese subjects, newspaper articles, political pamphlets, and government reports from the kingdom, republic, and territorial period. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, around the bicentennial anniversary of Chinese arrivals to the Hawaiian Islands, volunteer historians from the Hawai‘i Chinese History Center, a community initiative to preserve local Chinese history, conducted oral interviews with first-, second-, and third-generation Chinese and Chinese-Hawaiian subjects. Interviews were conducted in English, Cantonese, and Hawaiian Pidgin, and along with written personal narratives solicited from community members, were compiled into anthologies and published with support from the University of Hawai‘i.²⁰

These remarkable sources, which captured the voices of an aging generation born to some of the first Chinese migrants to the islands, contain intimate accounts of urban and rural Chinese life through the turn of the twentieth century, and offer glimpses of the creolized nature of early Chinese settlement. Surprisingly, these texts have been overlooked by historians of Chinese in Hawai‘i, who instead consult autobiographies of elite, educated subjects like Chung Kun Ai’s *My Seventy-Nine Years in Hawai‘i* and Li Ling Ai’s *Life is for a Long Time*.²¹ The advantage of the oral and personal histories archived in the Hawai‘i Chinese History Center anthologies is the sheer diversity of subjects included, from urban merchants to rural rice farmers, and the privileging of quotidian experiences over exceptional episodes in the lives of migrant families.

The collection is not without its own problematics, and patterns arise across the anthologies, organized by location, that reveal the political imperatives of public history

for Chinese subjects in Hawai‘i. At times respondents articulate the ethnocentrism and triumphalist accounts of model-minority citizenship critiqued by scholars of Asian settler colonialism. There is a general skewing within the collection towards middling and elite Chinese who record their debts to successful predecessors. The rhetorical performance of model economic citizenship reiterated across the histories presents its own subject of inquiry, and raises questions regarding the historical constraints and conditions of Chinese belonging in the islands.

The unique political imperative to perform exceptional economic citizenship is reflected in a petition submitted by the United Chinese Society, a federation of Chinese civic organizations, to visiting American commissioners following annexation. The commissioners were charged with surveying the recently incorporated territory, and would make recommendations regarding the extension of mainland Chinese exclusion laws to the islands. The petitioners appealed for exemption from exclusion laws that threatened Chinese lifeways and livelihoods organized around mobility and circulation. I argue that this document represents the first formal articulation of settler colonial politics—as opposed to diasporic colonialism—in its demands for political prerogative and incorporation on the basis of productive settlement and economic performance, which the Chinese petitioners explicitly contrasted with alleged Native Hawaiian failure to perform rational, modernized economic subjecthood.²²

Contrary to the incorporative ambitions of the petition, consular records archived in the Foreign Office and Executive collection at the Hawai‘i State Archives reveal a pre-annexation community that sought power and protection through the practice of diasporic citizenship, appealing less to local governmental institutions—which functioned in the

service of corporate capital—than to Chinese advocacy groups and diplomatic offices, even when these political organs lacked the same vested power as the representative agencies of other nations. The notable exception to this pre-annexation pattern is migrants' ready use of the court system, although here too Chinese litigants sought the counsel and intervention of Chinese commercial and consular agents.²³

Reports and correspondence from other Hawaiian government agencies, including the Department of the Interior, which oversaw immigration to the islands and operated the criminal justice system that ensnared migrants engaged in non-licit activities like gambling and opium trafficking; the Bureau of Public Health, which oversaw the operation of quarantine laws and directly intervened in the life of migrants during moments of epidemic crisis; and legislative records concerned with regulating the physical and economic mobility of migrants who arrived primarily as contract laborers, all furnish information on the dilemmas of governance posed by Chinese migrants. These official sources bring into focus the gaze of local authorities across multiple political orders—kingdom, republic, and territory. Furthermore, they offer a qualitative means of gauging shifts in the representation and rule of Chinese subjects, whose position, purpose, and predicaments fluctuated with the political reorganization of the islands.

In addition to local governmental sources, federal reports and surveys of the Territory of Hawai'i provide evidence of the imperial logics that informed the management of contested resources and contentious subjects. The survey commissioned upon annexation, mentioned above, mapped out the stakes and struggles of establishing imperial sovereignty over the islands. Federal commissioners clashed with local elites

over the future of American Hawai‘i as the domain of corporate plantation capital or the westernmost frontier of white workingmen’s settlement. Under the former scenario, Chinese were necessary as guest workers whose mobility could be controlled through labor contracts and laws mandating their repatriation following the termination of agricultural employment. Under the latter scheme, they were a nuisance twofold: first because their labor reproduced the wealth of an oligarchic caste of planters, and second because their maneuvers off of plantations and into independent production threatened the racialized economic prerogative of white settlers. Tellingly, the same federal survey that recommended the extension of Chinese exclusion laws to Hawai‘i also entertained the economic viability of white homesteading in the tropical territory, while discounting the tremendous economic significance of the rice industry dominated by Chinese growers.²⁴

To reconstruct popular discourses pertaining to Chinese migrants, I consult both local newspapers and political pamphlets. Newspaper accounts offer more than factual representations of historical events—they reveal the cultural logics and political imaginaries that structured contemporary interpretations of these events. This is particularly important when it comes to historicizing the production of racial knowledge. Publications like the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, *Hawaiian Gazette*, and missionary organs like *The Friend* offer competing interpretations of the implications of plantation expansion, American annexation, and Chinese migration for the welfare of the islands. What’s more, the sensationalizing of specific topics reveals the historical conditions of their salience. For example, the scandals surrounding opium smuggling gained lurid traction in newspaper accounts at a moment when both the viability of indigenous

sovereignty and moral fitness of Chinese migrants were being questioned by the Hawaiian public. Like newspaper articles, political pamphlets narrativized historical events, but also hypothesized political futures during moments of immense anxiety and upheaval.

Hawaiian historians have drawn attention to the urgent political and intellectual imperative of centering indigenous-produced knowledge in historical research by accessing Hawaiian language sources.²⁵ While I am in the process of learning Hawaiian, my current intermediate proficiency precludes me from fully accessing the material of a prolific Hawaiian-language archive. However, it is my intention to continue my language training, and ultimately conduct research between both English and Hawaiian archives. Although Chinese language training is currently unfeasible for me, the social worlds of migrants that I explore—specifically, the multiple sites of interaction with indigenous communities and colonial authorities—were mediated by Pidgin, English, and Hawaiian language. Undoubtedly, however, further scholarship in Chinese-language archives like the twentieth-century press hold out the promise of greater understanding of migrant life in the islands.

Chapter Outline

The dissertation is divided into four chapters organized thematically around opium regulation, commercial fishpond operation, rice culture, and diasporic citizenship. Each chapter explores, through its respective topic, the social, economic, and political stakes of American colonization for Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i, and assesses their

shifting strategies of enterprise and belonging as a function of the political transformation of the islands from an independent nation to an American territory.

In the first chapter, “The Politics of the Pipe: Opium Regulation and Protocolonial Governance,” I outline the global imperial maneuvers that rendered Hawai‘i susceptible to protocolonial infiltration and transformed the migratory districts of Southern China into lucrative labor markets. This historical background is necessary to understand each successive chapter. I center my analysis of opium regulation within the late monarchical period, when Hawai‘i was still a nominally independent nation under intact, if eroded, indigenous sovereignty. I argue that the official discourse around the opium trade provided the ideological framework for the extension of both American imperial hegemony and Chinese exclusion by racializing Native Hawaiians as unfit for sovereignty while criminalizing Chinese mobility. Both claims of racial knowledge justified the intervention of a paternalist, regulatory American state.

Focusing on the last quarter of the nineteenth century, I posit that the final two decades of the Hawaiian monarchy offer an example of protocoloniality, wherein Euro-American agents agitating for annexation accumulated political power in advance of explicit claims to authority. Within this complicated political context, I analyze legislative debates and legal policies that sought to control the lucrative traffic in opium through two competing methods: total abolition and licensing laws that legalized the drug’s sale and consumption for Chinese subjects alone. I argue that the latter strategy produced Chinese as an exceptional legal category subject to increased state surveillance and regulation while legally proscribing the bodily sovereignty of Native Hawaiians by denying outright their use of the substance.

While white authorities proclaimed the inherent vulnerability of Native Hawaiians, who were supposedly dying out due to their own failures to assimilate to colonial capitalism and falling victim to the alleged predations of Chinese migrants, Chinese and Hawaiians engaged one another at the margins of colonial society through the illicit transactions of opium exchange. I argue that these exchanges became the metonymic sites of colonial anxieties around Chinese-Hawaiian intimacy and economic cooperation, heightening white fears that Chinese migrants would disrupt both the edification and proletarianization of Hawaiians upon which the colonial capitalist order depended.

Ultimately, pro-annexationist factions within the protocolonial Hawaiian state succeeded in mobilizing the discourse around opium as a crisis of native governance. In addition to legislative debates and sensationalist newspaper accounts of opium-related crimes, I offer a critical reading of an 1892 government report produced by a special committee on opium months before the native monarchy was overthrown.²⁶ I argue that the document, in its portrayal of the Hawaiian monarchy as inept and corrupt, and Chinese economic power as rampant and illicit, anticipated the coming order of imperial takeover and racial exclusion.

The second chapter, “Ahuna and the *Mo‘o*: Rethinking Chinese Success in Hawaiian Commercial Food Production,” deconstructs official claims of Chinese economic exceptionalism by investigating commercial fish ponds and poi factories. I argue that these creolized ventures, often operated by mixed Chinese-Hawaiian families, relied on the appropriation of knowledge from Native Hawaiians, and the support of migrant financial networks. I begin with the colonial claim that while Chinese possessed

inherent financial savvy, Native Hawaiians were financially inept, and this allowed the former to capitalize on native foodways and commercialize indigenous systems of food production. These reductive and essentialist analyses, which persist into the present, obscure a socioeconomic world of Chinese-Hawaiian exchange that enabled migrant, indigenous, and mixed families to subsist beyond the plantation industrial complex.

The existing literature on fish ponds includes archeological studies and surveys commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of revitalization. I draw on these works to narrate the long history of Hawaiian aquacultural innovation. I investigate official claims of Chinese monopoly made by American agents surveying commercial fishing and aquaculture in Hawai‘i following annexation. Their extensive report, commissioned by the federal Bureau of Fisheries and published in 1901, reveals the imperial reading of the racial and economic landscape of the islands, in which fish ponds came to symbolize a declining native population overtaken by cunning Chinese producers.²⁷ Accounts of commercial fish pond operation found in the Hawai‘i Chinese History Center’s interviews and narratives of rural Chinese families contradict these claims, describing rural ventures that were entirely dependent on Chinese-Hawaiian exchange.

Using these sources to reconstruct a history of Chinese and Hawaiian economic intimacy, I argue that certain ventures that have been recorded as categorically “Chinese” must be reinterpreted as creolized. These joint enterprises, which combined diasporic networks of labor and capital with indigenous knowledge and resources, demonstrated an alternative path from plantation capitalist modernity. I offer an analysis of the commercial poi industry, which similarly relied on creolized economic formations

involving Hawaiian land, Chinese labor and credit networks, and the reproduction of mixed families. I do not romanticize all interracial economic exchange as egalitarian and cooperative, but offer critical readings of migrant practices that marginalized indigenous labor within these industries. I conclude that credit must be restored to indigenous participants when evaluating the success of migrant enterprise.

The third chapter, “Rice Culture and the Economics of Exclusion,” examines the racial and economic politics of immigration exclusion through the rise and fall of the rice industry. Rice was grown almost entirely by Chinese migrants, who essentially transplanted the crop from their Southern delta homelands, replicating technical methods of agriculture and land management. Rice farmers even imported water buffalo from China to work paddies that burgeoned in marshlands amenable to both taro and rice culture. Indeed, many leased their lands from Native Hawaiian farmers who could not find a market for commercially grown taro.

Serving the demand from local Chinese and the transpacific diaspora, in particular those who had migrated to the west coast of the United States, the rice industry enabled former contract workers to become independent producers. This fact troubled American officials looking to subsidize white settlement in the newly acquired territory. Following the extension of Chinese exclusion laws to territorial Hawai‘i, the rice industry collapsed, initiating major shifts in the spatial distribution, economic strategies, and political outlook of Chinese communities. I argue that rice, the commodity that literally sustained a transpacific network of migrant Asian labor, offers clear cases of the cooperative organization of migrant enterprise, while marking the shifting stakes of independent production. Structured around networks of credit and circulating human capital, rice

modeled the unique diasporic economic strategies that were directly undermined by exclusion laws.

I draw on the only existing monograph of rice culture in Hawai‘i, a 1937 study commissioned by the University of Hawai‘i that offers an economic history of what had by then become a collapsed industry.²⁸ I consult the Hawai‘i Chinese History Center’s anthologies of rural Chinese families whose personal testimonies intimately describe daily life on rice-farming homesteads and the aftermath of their failure. I also offer a reading of the survey of the Hawaiian Islands commissioned by the federal government following annexation, mentioned in the previous section. It is in this chapter that I introduce the petition by the United Chinese Society to the American commissioners, as the authors were specifically concerned with the viability of rice production under exclusion. I use both documents to structure the central argument of my dissertation: that migrant settler colonial politics must be framed by broader projects of American empire, including racialized economic policies like immigration exclusion and discriminatory investment in white settlement and enterprise.

The final chapter, “Diasporic Diplomacy: Migrant Advocacy Post-Exclusion,” explores the networks of protest and circuits of appeal activated by migrants in the years immediately preceding and following formal exclusion. Paying special attention to the seemingly mundane matters that Chinese diplomats and activists assumed as legitimate grievances against the territorial state, I hope to demonstrate both the heightened stakes of community organizing and the unique strategies of enfranchisement pursued by subjects explicitly excluded from the category of citizenship.

In the seven years before American subjecthood and the two decades that followed, Chinese migrants denied rights of citizenship and naturalization pursued alternative means of enfranchisement. Community activists engaged the transnational framework of diplomacy to substantiate their rights as diasporic citizens, appealing to consular representatives for advocacy and protection against exploitative employers and ambiguous immigration restrictions. A crucial sector of consular labor was to seek justice for the victims of state violence, from the procedural dehumanization of public health policies to the fatal interventions of law enforcement agents. While Chinese consuls extended their services towards subaltern subjects, their sway with local authorities was limited, and Chinese migrants recognized that their representation in Hawai‘i was incomplete.

While the various methods deployed by migrants to protect their collective autonomy and provide for the care of their community were often simultaneous and overlapping, there was a general movement in their civic activism and political praxis from diasporic organizing to settler entrenchment. These shifting strategies reveal the unstable terms of belonging for Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i; the incomplete delivery of each method of enfranchisement outside of citizenship; and the proscribed political possibilities of a diasporic community striving to manifest rights in a colonial context.

The conclusion, “To Die in the Islands: Settler Entrenchment,” considers Hawai‘i as a generative site of inquiry into American empire and diasporic coloniality. I offer an assessment of the settler colonial politics incentivized by American annexation and iterated through the campaign to establish a care home for indigent elderly Chinese men. As Progressive movements gathered momentum for reform in the Territory of Hawai‘i,

Chinese leaders and organizers sought to substantiate migrant rights within a framework of entitled subjecthood, demanding state investment and social benefits on the basis of productive residence, a claim to belonging that did not hinge on legal citizenship, but nevertheless mobilized political and economic logics of settler colonialism. By making claims to economic exceptionalism to justify their presence in the islands, Chinese activists resorted to a discursive strategy that played into colonialist racial epistemologies, and implicitly denigrated the worth of Native Hawaiian citizens in the Territory of Hawai‘i.

Chapter 1

The Politics of the Pipe: Opium Regulation and Protocolonial Governance

Introduction

During the last two decades of the Hawaiian monarchy, cultural, political, and economic struggles converged in the regulation of opium, and nearly every faction of Hawaiian society had a stake in the debate. What made opium regulation such a salient site of struggle? How did the debate come to consume the attention and resources of the nation, and what does this captivation tell us about the sociological imagination of the late nineteenth century Hawaiian body politic? The discursive and empirical record of the regulation of opium reveals less about who was actually using and selling the drug than it does about who was already perceived to be criminal, which improper and abject subjects needed to be policed and purged.

The discourse around opium reveals a lurid public imaginary, one preoccupied with the precarious fate of an island kingdom always on the precipice—whether of demographic failure, financial ruin, or annexation. Opium, whose sensational tragedies and alleged abuses circulated through rumor and published account across the imperial world, lent these fears a sordid urgency. It became, in the eyes of the state and respectable society, a crisis of criminality in the case of the Chinese, a crisis of public health for the Native Hawaiians, and a crisis of governance for a protocolonial state unable to extend its reach into those corners of society deemed most threatening—the interiors of Chinese and Hawaiian life.²⁹

I argue that opium, when taken as an optic, reveals both the vexing blindspots of protocolonial governance, as well as its strategies of sovereignty, including sinophobia, paternalism, and exclusion. Each tactic was crucial to the maintenance and extension of American hegemony in the islands. I use the term “protocolonial” in describing the Hawaiian state to draw attention to the political and economic mechanisms manipulated by American ministers whose imperial intentions, though coded and covert, were nonetheless conspicuous to the general public.

While the traffic in opium-generated fortunes for some, squandered the meager holdings of many, filled jails and government coffers, and scandalized the native monarchy, it has been largely ignored by contemporary historians of Hawai‘i. However, its strength as an optic for viewing Hawaiian history is evident in its wide scope. The discourse around opium regulation deserves critical analysis because of its high-stakes terms, the urgency and anxiety generated by the perceived drug crisis, and the material impact it had on Hawaiian politics, economy, and society. Furthermore, historicizing opium as a site of struggle reveals the stumbling, frustrated, contingent, and improvised nature of American imperialism in the islands. It is precisely in these vexations, in the rehashing and testing and failure of schemes of colonial governance, that an alternative history of colonialism lies—one that reveals its insidious processes to be both endless and incomplete.

Reciprocity and American Hegemony

Inter-imperial rivalries overshadowed the political history of the nineteenth century Pacific Islands. American involvement in Hawai‘i was plagued by perpetual fears

that the islands were being pulled away from the North American mainland—specifically, towards Britain and China. It was against the former pull that the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875, the inaugural triumph of King Kalākaua’s reign, was passed. The culmination of years of previous efforts to negotiate, draft, and ratify an agreement facilitating trade between the United States and Hawai‘i, the treaty fastened the fate of the Hawaiian economy, particularly the sugar industry, to the United States market. Stipulating that the Hawaiian government recognize the United States as its favored trading partner, the treaty excited popular suspicions of American annexation. Amidst these fears, American ministers in the Hawaiian government had a tricky path to negotiate. While lobbying for the extension of American power into the archipelago, they dissembled their imperial intentions through assurances that a closer alliance with the United States would secure Hawaiian independence.³⁰

A loud champion of the Reciprocity Treaty and American supremacy in the islands, Walter Murray Gibson delivered his “Address to the Hawaiian People” in 1876 with two purposes: to assuage their fears that the treaty was effectively a blueprint for colonization, and to convince them to expend their civic energies elsewhere—namely, in reproduction. For the minister, reproduction had more than a biological connotation. Reproduction meant assimilating to the modes of capitalist labor and behavior by which American economic activity in the islands was structured. By measuring population increase against assimilation, Gibson displaced blame for the decimation of the Hawaiian people from *haole* (white, foreign) colonists to the Hawaiians themselves. He contrasted the islands to the “many countries where...the red skins have increased from one million to many millions since the whites went to live among them, because the native people

have become as orderly and industrious as the white foreigners.”³¹ It was the Hawaiians’ own failure to civilize and adapt, and not their exposure to promiscuous propagators of disease and extractive policies, that had caused their great loss of life. Their cooperation with the aims of the Reciprocity Treaty would be a new test of their fitness as a race, and as individual members of the global capitalist market.

Gibson argued that only the proper adoption of Anglo-American culture and habits could redeem the Native Hawaiians, warning, “If you do not prosper there must be some cause of decay in your blood or in your situation.”³² In a cunning metaphor that couched the imperatives of the global market in contemporary theories of morbidity and epidemiology, Gibson claimed Hawai‘i’s supposed isolation was the cause of her people’s demographic distress:

You have been so long, so many ages isolated in the great ocean, and have so long interbred and associated in your narrow isles under the destructive influences of a polluting heathenism, that your blood has become corrupt and weakened, and predisposed to receive and succumb to every new disease that comes to desolate your beautiful islands.³³

In Gibson’s epidemiological imaginary, Polynesian cultural, racial, and economic pathologies—represented as heathenism and isolation—had been absorbed into the blood as pathogens.

His address recorded the condescension that saturated haole propaganda, and demonstrated an important dimension of political discourse: namely, that few political claims were made in late nineteenth century Hawai‘i that did not attach themselves to the demographic crisis. For the state and haole officials, this crisis was an embarrassing

indictment of colonial mismanagement. For the indigenous people, it was a devastating reality of loss and vulnerability ranging from the economic to the epidemiological.

Throughout the archive of political rhetoric are promises that successive programs and policies would stem the decline of the native population and reinvigorate the islands. As in Gibson's case, these promises masked the more urgent goal of profiting from the land, its inhabitants, and its proximity to the United States.

It is no small irony, then, that the Reciprocity Treaty did not resolve Hawai'i's demographic crisis, but in fact created new ones. The treaty's bolstering of Hawai'i as a sugaring island produced an immediate and rapacious need for labor that could be easily assimilated to the demands of cane cultivation. Evidence from across the sugaring world pointed to China as the source of cheap, tractable, exploitable labor. Imperial accounts spoke of China as a land of starving masses—the first place one would look for workers who could be underpaid and heavily disciplined. Furthermore, China had, arguably, the most available pool of labor in the world. While the coolie trade from South Asia had come under serious regulation by the British colonial government, the weak and quasi-colonized Chinese state could barely enforce its own restrictions on emigration, much less ensure the humane treatment of its nationals abroad. After much lobbying, the organized sugar interests succeeded in persuading the government to sponsor Chinese contract migration, and facilitate a private trade in Chinese coolie labor. This traffic would radically transform the demographic composition of the islands, setting off social panics that would influence Hawaiian politics for decades to come. Chief among these was opium, which shifted from a problem to a crisis after the Reciprocity Treaty was enacted.³⁴

Opium Regulation in Hawai‘i: Sovereignty, Paternalism, Sinophobia

Opium regulation has been studied extensively within colonial historiography, most notably in Dutch, French, British, and to a lesser extent, American Southeast Asia. Scholars have also looked to opium to narrate nationalist historiographies, particularly in the Pacific frontier of the American West.³⁵ Each of these contexts served as cases of comparison and precedent to Hawaiian policymakers, who frequently cited colonial practices in Java, and always kept an eye on the policies of the United States in relation to its Chinese subjects. But compared to Southeast Asian and North American contexts, opium regulation in Hawai‘i was unique for three major reasons. The first is that the kingdom did not fit neatly into either category of nation or colony. While it was, in fact, a sovereign nation, its sovereignty was considered—with both anxiety and hope—to be precarious and negotiable. Though Hawaiian diplomats had labored to secure international recognition of the kingdom’s independence, foreign agents and imperial powers continued to intervene in the political affairs of nearly all Oceanic polities, whether by claims to economic supremacy or campaigns of outright conquest. Indigenous statesmen deftly played these forces off against each other, but each alliance with a foreign power legitimized imperial hopes of eventual accession.³⁶

To many influential haole politicians in Hawai‘i, colony was the future tense of a nation unlikely to stave off imperialist advances. Furthermore, in their arrogant ideologies of race and rule, they deemed Hawaiians fundamentally unfit for self-governance, their very independence a tenuous bargain with generous imperial powers, delivered by the genius of haole political advisers. Despite international recognition of

their independence, the internal logic of protocolonial governance cast Hawaiians as semi-civilized subjects in desperate need of Anglo-American tutelage, even as they bucked it off. Indeed, their recalcitrance was taken by white ideologues as further proof of indigenous people's ineligibility for autonomy.³⁷

Hawaiian patriots were not easily deceived by the treacherous motives of haole leaders, and experienced nationhood in crisis. In their exercise of power they remained acutely aware of the threat of foreign conquest. Hawaiian leaders understood that their recognition as a sovereign people had been conditioned upon their ostensible submission to the codes of Euro-American governance and morality. Their political autonomy was at least partially premised on their strategic reproduction of idealized social conduct and cultural norms. Thus, even in matters of social reform, sovereignty was always explicitly at stake. If civilizing missions within official colonies fetishized indigenous sovereignty as something to be (eventually) gained, within Hawai'i it was under the perpetual threat of being lost. This sense of managing a state and society under the implicit threat of colonization marks nineteenth-century Hawaiian national politics as particularly fraught.³⁸

The second unique quality of opium regulation in Hawai'i was the belief that the drug had to be kept away from an indigenous population that was already dying. While colonial policies throughout Southeast Asia contained what we will call the "Chinese exception," which legalized the distribution and consumption of opium for Chinese subjects alone, it was seen as a preventative measure to ensure the health of their native populations. In Hawai'i, the express prohibition of opium for natives was more urgent than a matter of prevention—public officials and policymakers were already struggling to

prevent the immense and ongoing loss of native life. While haole ministers justified their authority through claims that they could rescue a degenerating race, death and depopulation haunted Hawaiian political discourse. By the time opium use gained salience as a source of public concern in the kingdom, it appeared as a kind of opportunistic infection, a scourge on an already imperiled population that government officials had been failing to protect.

The third and final reason regulation efforts in Hawai‘i were unique had to do with the sheer volume of Chinese migrants present in the islands. Hawaiian ministers were not struggling to govern cohesive and coherent communities located in hypervisible urban pockets. Certainly, the Hawaiian government and haole reformers fretted and fixated over Honolulu’s Chinatown, but by the 1870s Chinese migrants were everywhere, dispersed across the archipelago from bustling port cities to remote rural towns, with countless numbers roaming in between as peddlers and runaways. Their apparent ubiquity was confirmed when the census of 1872 recorded more Chinese men than haole, and again in 1884 when it was revealed that Chinese men composed half of the adult male population of the islands.³⁹ While numbers alone do not suffice to account for the vitriolic rhetoric and social panic that arose in response to the growing Chinese population, these statistical realities anguished policymakers and reformers. Uncontained Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i were more than an inconvenience for Hawaiian ministers. They constituted a crisis of governance.

Regulating Opium, Regulating Migrants

This crisis was reiterated throughout the course of Hawaiian politics and across the spectrum of daily life. It spoke through the figures of Chinese incarcerated in prisons and insane asylums, where typically their numerical dominance was second only to Native Hawaiians. It manifested itself in the regulations imposed on virtually all forms of Chinese economic activity, from laundries to poi factories to the roving carts of fishmongers. It was articulated in the restrictions devised to control and curb further Chinese migration to the kingdom. Beginning in 1882, these efforts ensured that Chinese arrivals to the islands did not exceed departures, resulting in the gradual decrease of the Chinese population between 1884 and 1890. But the crisis of governance was given its most consistent and profound expression in the political status of the Chinese themselves, subjects with near-impossible access to formal political representation whose slim chances of enfranchisement through naturalization were altogether rescinded by the Bayonet Constitution of 1887.

Scholars have shown that the regulation and exclusion of Chinese bodies was a central project of statecraft in white settler nations; but in Hawai'i it provided the material and discursive pretext for the establishment of a colonial state.⁴⁰ Though some partisans feared that the influx of Chinese migrants would render the islands racially undesirable to the United States, haole politicians invoked the perpetual crisis of Chinese regulation as an invitation for American intervention, and ultimately the extension of mainland exclusion laws.⁴¹

To be clear, the objective of exclusion was never eradication, but the refined immobilization and marginalization of subjects deemed to be outside of the nation. Opium regulation became one mechanism in a regime of exclusion gradually developed

by the protocolonial state. It engaged modern techniques of governance including surveillance, quarantine, incarceration, segregation, and deportation. The supposed transits of opium mapped the problems posed by the Chinese population, and the strategies and institutions devised for its regulation doubled as the architecture of exclusion of the Chinese themselves. In the name of drug regulation, white citizens demanded intensified policing of Chinatown and Chinese social space. “It is high time that the Chinese Theatre were either shut up by the authorities or placed under vigilant police surveillance,” demanded one author in the *Daily Bulletin*. “The Chinese Theatre is said to be the common resort of gamblers and opium-smokers, where they commit their illegal practices with a feeling of comparative security from detection.”⁴² The increased scrutiny and hypervisibility of Chinese in the eyes of law enforcement agents resulted in the criminalization of entire communities, which were categorically suspected of using and dealing opium.

Opium regulation was even written into immigration laws to mark certain bodies as unfit for entry. The Act to Regulate Chinese Immigration of 1887 disqualified any resident Chinese from re-entering the Hawaiian kingdom unless he could “make it appear to the satisfaction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that he has resided within the Kingdom for two years, and that he is not a vagrant, criminal, professional beggar, user of opium, or one likely to become a charge upon the country.”⁴³ It is difficult to imagine what constituted sufficient proof that one was not an opium user considering the widespread suspicion that virtually all Chinese consumed the drug. In response to the intense disciplinary focus of the Hawaiian state and haole society, the Chinese innovated strategies to circumvent their laws and undermine their order. They mobilized community

networks adept at operating below state radar. They smuggled opium into and across the islands, escaped from carceral institutions like jails and sanatoriums, and, it was suspected, illegally shared re-entry permits in order to sustain lifeways and livelihoods organized around mobility and circulation.⁴⁴

Opium Law and the Chinese Exception

Legislative efforts to regulate opium trafficking and consumption can be categorized into four phases. The first regulations, enacted between 1856 and 1860, authorized licensed physicians and surgeons to sell opium for medicinal use only. When authorities realized that Chinese migrants were taking opium “recreationally,” beyond the control of white medical professionals, a law was passed specifying that doctors could not sell to Chinese customers without prescriptions. The notion of the recreational use of opium by Chinese is somewhat misleading. Opium had been used medicinally in China for centuries, where the technique of vaporizing (“smoking”) the substance to optimize its properties was developed and refined. Its status as a substance of both health and pleasure was not contradictory within the epistemological framework of Taoist medicine, as it was in Western medical logic--which remained particularly embattled against alternative systems of care in Hawai‘i.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, the perceived misuse of opium by Chinese consumers resulted in the second phase of regulation, the Chinese licensing laws. From 1860 to 1874 the importation, sale, possession, and consumption of opium was authorized for Chinese subjects only, as a kind of cultural accommodation to a category of people viewed by

some authorities as being inherently dependent on the substance. This in turn reproduced popular understandings of opium as a uniquely Chinese vice.

The routine subversion of these regulations by smugglers, merchants, and indigenous consumers caused some in government to become disillusioned with the practical reality of the opium license and Chinese exception. “It is estimated that when the prohibitory act went into effect, not less than 500 to 1000 natives had acquired the opium habit,” wrote prominent attorney and prohibitionist William R. Castle in 1884.⁴⁶ From 1874 to 1876 opium was outlawed in the kingdom, marking the third phase of regulation: prohibition. But beginning in 1876, the great influx of migrant smokers revived the opium question, leading to the fourth phase of regulation, characterized by perpetual debate. On one side were those who called for a return to the licensing laws; on the other, those determined to extend prohibition. The legislative struggle was ultimately silenced in 1893 when the provisional government established after the overthrow of the monarchy ruled to prohibit opium once and for all, a decision upheld under annexation.

The most intense period of contestation, between 1876 and 1892, was marked by growing sinophobia and shifting interest groups made up of missionaries, planters, merchants, and reformers—each with a high stake in the future of opium in Hawai‘i. Haunting these struggles was the continued failure of the protocolonial government to improve the health and life chances of the Native Hawaiian population, many of whom had come to appreciate the allure of opium. Although virtually excluded from the halls of government, Chinese and Hawaiian dealers and smokers contested all attempts at regulation through elaborate networks of underground consumption and trafficking. Given the volume of the opium trade, the state itself had a major vested interest in

licensing its sale. So lucrative was opium to the elite Chinese merchants who oversaw its distribution and to the cash-poor kingdom that collected its fees that in 1874, on the eve of prohibition, the license to sell opium in the kingdom sold for \$19,266—purchased on the *chance* that it might be validated.⁴⁷

The factions and allegiances that formed through these debates were porous and changing. Missionaries generally favored prohibition, viewing opium as a vice incompatible with proper Protestant morality. Planters were split on the issue, with some convinced that opium hindered the productivity of their plantation workers, while others—perhaps more informed—were willing to tolerate its consumption as a concession toward their foreign laborers. Undoubtedly, some planters even benefited from the use of opium by addicts, as cases of dependent coolies locked into labor contracts by mounting debts attest. There was no consensus to be found among Native Hawaiian or Chinese communities, either. Bourgeois elites in both groups tended to echo missionary views of opium use as a transgression against morality, decency, and racial uplift as their humbler members actively partook of the drug. In all camps hypocrisy, venality, and ulterior motives complicated the official positions and narratives of opium’s supporters and detractors. It was frequently alleged in legislative debates that those ministers supportive of prohibition were themselves engaged in the illegal trafficking of opium,⁴⁸ and Castle alleged that certain Chinese were “offering large amounts to procure the passage of license laws.”⁴⁹

The first Chinese license law was passed in 1860 and set practical precedents that were rearticulated by all subsequent versions. While opium remained a licit medicinal substance to be dispensed by doctors, the act allowed for its importation and distribution

by licensed Chinese entrepreneurs, to be sold to Chinese consumers only. The license to sell opium in a particular district was sold at auction, the government hoping to generate as much of a profit as possible from wealthy merchants eager to monopolize the trade of a precious commodity. These hopes were thwarted, however, by the cooperative spirit of the merchants themselves, who refused to bid against each other for the profit of the state, and instead agreed to rotate ownership of the license by year. These agreements were not always successful, interrupted periodically by interethnic antipathies and personal economic competition. In 1874 the moral panic around opium culminated in the passage of the Prohibitory Act, the first regulation ever to criminalize the possession of opium.

Bills were proposed in 1878, 1880, and 1884 to reinstate the Chinese opium license. Each passed the assembly, only to be vetoed by King Kalākaua. Finally in 1886 a new licensing law was passed, providing for a single four-year license to be sold without auction. The ensuing scramble among Chinese entrepreneurs to secure the license resulted in a major bribery scandal, at the center of which was King Kalākaua himself. The embarrassing incident became potent ammunition for haole propagandists, and ultimately served as one pretext for the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, which stripped the native monarch, as well as his non-white subjects, of meaningful political power. The mostly-white vigilantes who forced Kalākaua to ratify the document under threat of violence moved to prohibit opium in the kingdom, but honored the Chinese license of 1886.

Throughout this period Chinese merchants negotiated regulations and penalties in the courts, which, along with bribes, served as surrogate institutions through which they participated in the political life of the kingdom. Concurrently, the penalties for violating

the Prohibitory Act were lessened. Then in 1892, in the midst of an economic depression, a final licensing law was proposed with strict and specific provisions to restrict the sale, location, clientele, and consumption of opium to authorized sellers in opium dens with Chinese male clients over the age of twenty. Almost immediately after the “Opium Den” Act was passed, a new vanguard of vigilantes staged a coup with the backing of American marines that brought an end to the Hawaiian monarchy.

The cultural significance of the licensing laws, which operated on the principle of Chinese exception, has been oversimplified by scholars of opium and empire. Some attribute the solution, implemented across colonial Southeast Asia, to sinophobia, cultural relativism, and paternalism in relation to indigenous populations, whether Malay or Polynesian. To a certain extent, each of these ideologies and techniques of governance animated the laws and lent them their traction. But if we consider some insights offered by scholars of colonial law, and particularly those focused on the British empire, we must recognize that law was more than a tool of legislative governance. It was an instrument of social and cultural engineering. Laws like those pertaining to the Chinese opium license relied on racial taxonomies that evaluated persons differently based on their perceived membership in specific groups. These categorizations, it has been argued, did not passively reflect social realities—which became ever complicated by the intractable intimacies engendered by colonialism itself—but actively produced them. Colonial, and by extension, protocolonial governments, did not rule stable and transparent racial groups, but governed through the production and distinction of specific groups whose perceived differences were classified as racial in the eyes of the law.⁵⁰

Castle alluded to the difficulties of separating Hawaiian from Chinese in the years before mass migration, noting that in the census of 1860, the year the first Chinese license law was passed, Chinese “were counted with Hawaiians at some places.”⁵¹ At a crucial moment of demographic transformation, Chinese licensing laws performed more than the legal operation of determining who could and could not partake of opium based on race. They performed the social and cultural labor of producing racial groups—a codified Chinese community distinct from both Native Hawaiians and the mixed progeny that descended from both. These groups, the laws themselves betrayed, could not be kept apart, and it was their quotidian interactions, which occurred most disturbingly in the lowest registers of society, that created a panic of protocolonial governance beyond the actual traffic of opium.

Chinese Mobility: Unsettling the White Pacific

But what was at stake in regulating Chinese-Hawaiian intimacy? In the Malthusian terms of the late nineteenth century, which reframed life as a racialized bid for survival, Chinese were described as a uniquely competitive race, not because they had evolved through virtue and civilization into a higher form of life, but because they had adapted to suffering. They survived by virtue of their lower life form, their willingness to feed from the bottom, their ability to cheat and skimp. Where the European went with his torch of enlightenment, to bestow the gifts of knowledge and progress upon lesser creatures, the Chinese lurked in the shadows, eager to siphon even the humblest dregs of wealth back into his celestial kingdom. The licensing laws, then, were meant to protect the Native Hawaiians from the Chinese as much as from opium. Their forced separation,

some hoped, would protect the former from the supposedly predatory machinations of the latter. Further, it would prevent the Hawaiians from adapting the soiled habitus of the heathen Chinese, whose gritty cosmopolitanism threatened to spoil the natives.

“The Hawaiian has not the cunning and secretive qualities of the Chinese,” Castle stated, giving voice to the common racial-moral taxonomies embraced by haole reformers and activists. Their social geography of the islands was landscaped by sinophobia and hypocrisy. In white minds, the Chinese were an invasive species who overwhelmed the native race and derailed the Anglo-American Protestant civilizing mission. Their putative power and criminality eclipsed the exploits of white adventurers often engaged in the same activities of smuggling and dealing. Hawai‘i was, after all, a small nation in the vast expanse of a maritime frontier. Enterprising rogues and pioneers from across the globe converged on the islands to gamble on a future in the young kingdom.

But to the haole establishment, the missionaries, businessmen, and planters whose fathers and grandfathers had come to the islands to evangelize and trade, not all migrants deserved to claim a future in the islands. For this faction that had risen to political and economic power, the struggle for dominance in Hawai‘i was as much against the Chinese as it was against the Native Hawaiians. This struggle was betrayed by the fixation on opium, which came to stand in white protocolonial discourse as the ultimate sign of Chinese influence and intractability. Opium did not create new hatreds; rather, it illuminated the antipathies that structured the social, cultural, and political life of the islands by revealing which subjects were deemed abject by the Hawaiian state and dominant society.

Chinese migrants occupied a troublesome place within the haole power structure of Hawai'i. To this seasoned diasporic people, who knew the islands as the Sandalwood Mountains, Hawai'i was one mooring spot in a churning Pacific that had beckoned young men for centuries. There, they established what would become the two most lucrative industries of the kingdom, sugar and rice cultivation, and facilitated a trade in people that recruited tens of thousands of Chinese migrant workers during the four decades preceding formal exclusion.⁵² While their labor recruitment efforts aided and abetted Euro-American imperialism across the Pacific, they also frustrated white settler colonial projects in Hawai'i.

Chinese entrepreneurs facilitated a contract labor system that landscaped two hemispheres under the terms of imperial capital. It was the superexploitation of Chinese (and South Asian) labor that built railroads, powered ships, and cultivated cash-crops in the age of capital. These systems of human energy extraction were underwritten by the contract, a collaboration between capital and the governments of the territories the migrants entered, devised to optimize production and discipline racialized workers after liberalism and humanism declared slavery too crude a mechanism for the modern market.⁵³ Contract migrants across the globe were predominantly male, and this was especially true of Chinese emigrants. Overwhelmingly, women stayed in Southern China to maintain domestic lives ruptured by the demands of imperial capital. Nearly all of the Chinese migrants to the Kingdom of Hawai'i were men, whose arrival exacerbated the skewed gender dynamics of the islands and gave rise to sexualized anxieties and moral panics. Nevertheless, supposing that they could be confined to the status of coolies and

kept within the boundaries of plantations, the Chinese were essential to the economic future of Hawai‘i envisioned by haole capitalists.

There was a small but vocal faction of white workingmen who had come to the islands without the pretension and power of the missionary-planter elite, and they objected to Chinese labor—contracted and free—from the start. The laboring vanguard of the white settler Pacific, these men resented coolies as the units of human capital that enriched greedy planters, and despised Chinese merchants, mechanics, and craftsmen as competitors in territories that they believed should be the exclusive domain of white colonial prerogative.⁵⁴ To them, the Sandalwood Mountains were “*Pake* [Chinese] Paradise,”⁵⁵ a nightmare of white settlement where “John Chinaman” lived easy and reigned supreme.

In a pamphlet provocatively entitled “The Planter’s Mongolian Pets,” the polemicist Z. Y. Squires aimed his racist invective at all levels of Chinese society, rehearsing common arguments against Chinese migration. He decried the innate criminality of the Chinese, who were “trained...from infancy in all the arts of vice and villainy and deception”; proclaimed their unfitness for democratic citizenship, claiming “no other race or tribe of people would submit tamely to tyrannical laws and rules put in force by most of our plantation managers”; and highlighted their corrupting influence on Hawaiians, warning that the Chinese were “demoralizing our once respectable Hawaiian citizen and inhabitant.”⁵⁶ The author’s most urgent critique was of the unbridled economic power embodied by Chinese migrants, who were fit to “cause the disappearance of the white laborer... from our shores.”⁵⁷ It was the perceived financial savvy and economic mobility of the Chinese that most threatened white settler colonials

and protocolonial sovereignty in the kingdom. Hawai‘i was on track to become a racially amalgamated plantation colony, and this was a matter of despair for the white laboring classes.⁵⁸ But for the planter elite, it was a lucrative concession.

Unfortunately for haole planters and workingmen alike, the Chinese had designs of their own. The post-Reciprocity migrants who came as fieldhands had been recruited by various combinations of kin, Chinese firms, haole planters, and the Hawaiian government to work in sugar and rice plantations. But the planters who imported them could neither predict nor prevent the trajectories they pursued once in the islands. The historian Clarence Glick has argued that “occupational mobility among the migrants in Hawai‘i was far greater than among the Chinese in the continental United States or in many overseas Chinese colonies.”⁵⁹ This was due partly to the vacancies left by Hawaiians across the economic landscape, and largely to the maneuverings of Chinese themselves.

Despite serial ordinances passed by the state that increasingly linked Chinese belonging with plantation labor, migrants’ persistent resistance, mobility, and cooperation destabilized the very category of “coolie” in Hawai‘i.⁶⁰ Migrants whose journeys had been sponsored by sugar planters evaded their contracts upon arrival and went to work in rice, where cooperation and collective ownership created the discipline so desired by contract. Others ran away before their contracts expired. The majority, however, served their terms, and upon their release assumed or innovated jobs that were at once marginal and central, disruptive and supplemental, to the bustling plantation and port economies of Hawai‘i. They engaged in a kind of colonialism of the pocket, staking claims to the small change of Native Hawaiians, haoles, and fellow Chinese alike. As peddlers and hawkers

they traveled between urban centers and rural interiors, stocking up on goods from Chinese merchants and selling them for cash—or barter, with the stubborn Native Hawaiians who refused to be proletarianized. They set up shop in plantation towns and expanded into trading houses in the ports of Hawai‘i. They worked in agriculture, from petty market gardening to enormous rice plantations that shipped their harvests to the growing Asian populations on the West Coast of North America.⁶¹ Opium was just one of many commodities imported and smuggled, peddled and pushed, across sprawling networks of mobile Chinese.

The menace of opium merely highlighted networks and circuits of Chinese economic life that had long been construed as a danger to the islands. In truth, the scourge of opium and Chinese activity were mutually constitutive. It was the rumor of opium that made Chinese trade suspect, and Chinese capital and combination that made opium toxic. Chinese economic activity beyond the sugar plantation caused enough concern to the Hawaiian government that in 1890, for the first time, the census tabulated occupation by “nationality.”⁶²

William Castle’s pamphlet on opium prohibition can be read as a map of Chinese economic activity, highlighting its marginality, subversion, insidiousness, and criminality. Landmarks included the porous borders of the islands, the paths of peddlers running from ports to interiors, urban opium dens, and plantation barracks. The extent of smuggling activities—in which haoles and Native Hawaiians were also engaged—registered in the figure of 3632 pounds of opium reportedly seized by the Custom House between 1875 and 1884.⁶³ Bribery and artifice allowed these smugglers to subvert the sovereign technology of customs and border control. Within the islands themselves,

peddlers and hawkers were pervasive, extending the ring of distribution as far as even the most remote plantation.

“Large quantities of opium were sold by the licensee to people who went all over the country, from Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i, peddling it, and it was sold and furnished to natives—and it will be again,”⁶⁴ Castle warned, pointing out the fact that even licensed distribution did not conform to legal mandates. These illicit interracial transactions occurred across the vast network of opium distribution. “The native in the country can procure opium as easily as in Honolulu; perhaps he is not as likely to become addicted to its use as in town.”⁶⁵ This speculation betrayed anxieties beyond the sinophobic conceptualization of Chinese urban space, hinting at fears of indigenous urbanization, especially if Chinese from “the opium using class”⁶⁶ were serving as tutors. While “the old [licensing] law prohibited the sale [of opium] to natives...it did not prevent them from visiting the frequent opium dens and partaking with the Chinese, of the drug, for which they paid, not the holder of the license, but the proprietor of the den.”⁶⁷ Indeed, the great danger of Chinese mobility and space lay not only in the sprawling, roving networks that organized economic activity but also in the fixed enclaves that harbored and hid Chinese-Hawaiian social life.

Racing Bodies: Public Health and Haole Paternalism

Before we can discuss the cultural and political implications of haole anxiety around opium’s interiors, and the interracial intercourse that occurred within them, we must further clarify the racist thinking about Chinese and Hawaiians that cast the former as villains and the latter as victims. As mentioned before, opium regulation was

crucial to constructing regimes of racial knowledge and institutions of separation and segregation meant to extricate the two groups. The extent of their entanglement was broad and profound, occurring in all registers of life, from economic ventures to conjugal homes. In 1935, the sociologist Romanzo Adams estimated that before 1900, between 1200 and 1500 Chinese men had established families with Native Hawaiian women.⁶⁸ These figures say nothing of the fleeting, casual, and platonic interactions that served as sinews connecting Chinese and Hawaiians in a shared social world.

While some welcomed Chinese men who adequately performed Protestant patriarchal roles, stabilizing “half-caste” families and linking them to the modern market, most observed interracial interaction with growing unease.⁶⁹ After all, Chinese and Hawaiians composed two populations in desperate need of rationalization through civilization, evangelization, and integration into the global capitalist market. That these two irrational—and often illegible—groups appeared to collaborate so fluently posed its own problem for protocolonial governance and the imagined destiny of Hawai‘i. Each group would have to be rationalized and assimilated to the haole colonial vision of Hawai‘i separately: while Hawaiians were to be proselytized, tutored, and groomed for positions within the nation according to the dictates of paternalism and white settler colonialism, Chinese were to be immobilized, criminalized, and segregated as guest-workers and outsiders within a growing regime of exclusion.

These dual programs of paternalism towards Hawaiians and exclusion of Chinese manifested themselves in the discourse around care, health, and opium use. Castle described opium, perhaps sardonically, as “a drug so poisonous and deadly that on no account could it be sold or furnished *to any but Chinese*.”⁷⁰ His own concern for the

drug's effect on their health was confined to the productive bodies of plantation workers. "If the Government wishes to have regard for the physical condition of the laborers in the country," he argued, "it will not license opium."⁷¹ Speaking in 1852 to the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society, the planter E. H. Allen prefigured the protocolonial economy of care and affect in which the Chinese were to become impoverished. "You must have sympathy with honest labor," he advised his cohort.⁷² Decades into the Chinese experiment, haole planters, workingmen, missionaries, ministers, and reformers had little sympathy left. They were not alone, as licensing laws across the imperial world revealed the pervasiveness of this lack of concern for the welfare of migrant Chinese. From French Indochina to the Dutch East Indies, colonial governments profited from the gradual deterioration of Chinese bodies. And indeed, these systems operated by the identical logic that promoted the global exploitation of coolies as a universal good.

For Hawaiians, the paternalistic care of the state and haole establishment was no simple gift. The historian Warwick Anderson describes hygienic reform as among the most invasive and insidious tools of colonial intervention. The "goal of hygiene," he explains, "is to reform the individual body." It is a "disciplinary" technology, operating at the level of the body and the home to restructure the interior and domestic cavities of indigenous life.⁷³ From missionary days, Native Hawaiians were the targets of near-obsessive campaigns to rationalize their modes of dress, movement, consumption, and sexual and family relations. This ethos of reform persisted even as missionary influence waned, with government officials taking up the mantle of civilizing mission. Their concern, yet another pretext for increased state oversight and management of marginalized life, was in accord with the principles of late imperialism: namely, that

colonial governments had to demonstrate that they were doing some good for the native population.

Care, then, was a highly problematic and complicated category in the context of colonial governance. One might ask, for example, why so many programs of hygienic intervention focused on maternal and infant health while so few concerned themselves with the suffering of the elderly. The answer is that care was never synonymous with altruism. The Hawaiian protocolonial state recognized the discourses of colonial violence in which it was embedded—they circulated across the entire white settler Pacific, from North America to Australia. And it was this discourse—which highlighted the ironies and hypocrisies of so-called “enlightened” rule by pointing to the decimation of native populations wherever these rulers seemed to go—that forced the Hawaiian state to reckon with the demographic crisis it had created and continued to exacerbate. What happened to coolies, kept discursively and materially outside of the nation, only came into the biopolitical purview of the protocolonial state when native bodies were implicated.

Few documents outline more clearly and completely the assumptions and imperatives of the protocolonial state in relation to indigenous health and hygienic intervention than Walter Gibson’s “Sanitary Instructions for Hawaiians.” The product of a special committee (including Castle) convened by the legislature in 1878, “Sanitary Instructions” remains remarkable for its lofty goals and meticulous practicalities. Over the course of some two hundred pages, Gibson concerned himself with the salvation of a precarious people, endangered by their exposure to Western civilization and simultaneous alienation from traditional ways of living. For Gibson, Hawaiians occupied a liminal place between tradition and modernity, nature and culture. They could neither return to

their idyllic past, nor navigate the modern world without falling victim to its excesses. They needed to be protected and prepared, informed of their constitutional vulnerabilities and taught the proper defenses against pollution and disease, and thus shepherded into modernity. Hawaiian bodies, homes, and communities had to be re-formed. In this project of reconstituting a declining population into hygienically well-behaved units, no detail of biological and material life was too small, from the picking of teeth to the wearing of undergarments.

Alongside these minute prescriptions were expansive meditations on the very nature of decay. Gibson's treatise was deeply concerned with the presumed medical-moral nexus of health, sexuality, and productivity that informed much of the social scientific and evangelical discourse that circulated among public officials and reformers in late-nineteenth century Hawai'i. According to this moral and epidemiological conception of the body, disease was not simply the outcome of contact with biological contagions, but the result of misappropriated energies, particularly sloth and licentiousness. Warned Gibson: "A woman who lies on a mat all day, soon wastes her strength in lasciviousness at night," and these twinned indulgences produced an internal filth that sedimented itself in the body, eventually manifesting itself as disease.⁷⁴

Gibson's lens was especially trained on reproductive women, in whose bodies he located the suffering of the race. "The hope of her country is in her womb,"⁷⁵ he wrote with strained ambivalence of Hawaiian women. Throughout his instructions he fretted over the young indigenous female body, specifically its protection and exposure. Girls should sleep in nightgowns in private and secluded quarters. They must take care to wash and cover their private parts. These precautions were almost obsessively reiterated

throughout the text, intended to protect young women from the sexual pathologies harbored by native families and the very souls of Hawaiian girls themselves. Still, the greatest threat from which young women required protection, a threat positioned at the center of a treatise on feminine, reproductive, and national hygiene, was the threat of interracial intimacy with Chinese men.

At the very beginning of the text, while brooding on the origins of indigenous depopulation, Gibson blamed interracial intimacy as the chief cause.⁷⁶ He argued against the claim that Native Hawaiians were inherently doomed, pointing instead to the disturbing social realities of sugar culture, which in 1879 had become dominated by Chinese labor. According to Gibson, the source of Hawaiian decline could be located in the besieged wombs of Hawaiian women, whose reproductive energies were being usurped and sapped by the hypersexualized demands of “large numbers of men without women,” an obvious allusion to the Chinese.⁷⁷ It was by these men, entangled in their own web of sexual pathologies, that “*the wombs of [Hawaiian] women [were] made sterile.*”⁷⁸

Several points are important to note here. First, that Gibson, despite his own condescending attitudes towards Native Hawaiians, denied the inevitability of their extinction. There was hope, and that hope lay in the intervention of the protocolonial state and the missionary-planter establishment, in the salve of Christian morality and the stimulant of capitalist agriculture. To deny this would be to deny the central rationale for the persistence of haole authority despite its devastating outcomes. Second, the blame for indigenous decline did not fall solely on Hawaiian women. Rather, their—and by extension their race’s—deterioration was the result of intimate contact with a

demographic believed to be more sexually pathological than the natives themselves. Within the text and the popular discourses of public health in which it circulated, we can see Hawaiian girls and Chinese men paired as dangerous subjects of perversity and decay.

Contagion and Collaboration: Opiated Intimacy and Interracial Exchange

This menacing pairing haunted the discourse on opium regulation. While opium appeared only once in the text of “Sanitary Instructions,” under the heading of “Vegetable Poisons,” the fears around its quotidian exchange between Chinese and Hawaiians, especially Hawaiian women, were illuminated throughout Gibson’s writings. As a commodity it facilitated the social interpenetration of both groups; as a substance it supposedly lubricated their destructive passions. The threat of opium, and of Chinese migration more broadly, was a profoundly sexualized threat, and racialized reproductive anxieties were embedded and sublimated within the discourse around its containment.

No case better illustrated the sexualized threat of opium and Chinese men than the murder of a Chinese shopkeeper by a young Hawaiian woman in Wailuku, Maui on March 1, 1879.⁷⁹ The facts of the case were summarized by Chief Justice Harris at the woman’s sentencing, and published in the *Hawaiian Gazette* as follows:

By your confession it appears that for the smallest temptation, you undertook to assist in the murder of a man who had been your paramour for many years, with whom, it does not appear, you had any cause of quarrel, from whom you had separated yourself at your own will, and with whom you still continued intimate

and friendly enough to pass the night previous to his death, in company with your husband, under his roof.⁸⁰

The “smallest temptation” amounted to ten dollars. Although she acted with two accomplices, her husband, Alonzo Davis, and their Chinese friend, Asham, Keliihanaiwi Davis was the only one sentenced to death. Following the outcry of elites against the decision of a native jury, King Kalākaua commuted her sentence to life imprisonment.

Seven years later, during the legislative debates on licensing of 1886, prohibitionist Lorrin A. Thurston retold her story to illustrate the dangers of opium to Hawaiian reproductive life:

A young man on the island of Maui who was a very clever, able and good looking man had married as nice a native girl as ever he (the speaker) had seen. He and his wife contracted the opium habit. He became a miserable, degraded worthless fellow. His wife murdered a Chinaman to get out of his store a few tins of opium which she had not the means to buy. She was sentenced to be hanged, but the sentence was commuted by His Majesty, and now she is serving out her life sentence over the reef [on Maui].⁸¹

Whether his inclusion of opium was a modification or elaboration of the actual case, the narrative was given coherence by the discourse around the drug, Chinese dealers, and the destabilization of native reproductive life. His emphasis on the seemingly viable couple, who might have had a chance of establishing a proper domestic life, narrated opium as a disruptive Chinese agent that penetrated intimate spheres of Hawaiian conjugality. This point was strongly articulated in the “Report of the Special Committee on Opium” of 1892, which argued in favor of prohibition, citing “the decrease of reproduction and

unhealthy progeny of all opium-smokers.” The authors summarized the natalist, paternalist, and prohibitionist mandate of the protocolonial state thusly: “In this country where the reproduction of the natives is already so naturally deficient, we cannot allow any extraneous causes to increase the evil and accelerate the extinction of the Hawaiians.”⁸²

Despite the tireless efforts of the haoles establishment to reform indigenous life, evidence points to popular insistence on the self-management of bodily intimacies through native systems of care and pleasure. Though skewed by the perspectives of their editors, newspapers offered a rough map of the social landscape of Hawai‘i, and registered in their crime and arrests section the daily rebellions of unreformed natives against the dictates of public health and social order. Among the most common crimes listed were those that pertained to practicing medicine without a license and selling ‘awa, an indigenous spirit distilled from kava root, to Native Hawaiians. The first was likely a reference to *kahuna*, indigenous healers and intermediaries of the divine, whose expertise Hawaiians commonly sought in matters medical and spiritual. Much like the irresponsible young Hawaiian woman and the lecherous Chinese man, the superstitious and tricky *kahuna* was a thorn lodged deep into the side of the missionary establishment and the reformist state. Sellers of ‘awa, usually white shopkeepers, violated a paternalist prohibition that applied only to Native Hawaiians.

It is important to note that the emphasis of criminality in these cases was on the sale and not the purchase of ‘awa, and the practice rather than the receipt of customary care, from which the native people, the state contended, required protection. Even, or perhaps especially, in the case of medico-moral crimes, Native Hawaiians were denied

accountability for their own selves by the protocolonial state, a move that further reified their status as wards. Because opium smoking was never construed as an indigenous vice like the consumption of ‘awa or the patronage of kahuna, its enjoyment was cast as a foreign imposition, a case of Hawaiians under the influence of a Chinese menace. Undoubtedly, Hawaiian users were ensnared by the nets of law enforcement, but they were recruited into unique and intermediary positions which will be discussed later.

Though a dubious freedom, to take opium was to exercise a kind of bodily sovereignty against the logic of paternalism and the regime of public health that sought to construct Native Hawaiians as unfit for self-governance down to the level of the body. Speaking in defense of a proposed bill to regulate the importation of opium, Representative Kaunamano stated that “opium had been generally used among native Hawaiians as far back as 1856...He (the speaker) had used opium himself and could speak from experience after giving it a fair trial.”⁸³ Kaunamano’s argument defied the paternalistic logic invoked throughout the debate that cast Native Hawaiians as easy victims of opium, doomed to be destroyed by it. His admission of having personally used the substance was more than a cheeky interjection. It was a defiant claim that he, as a Native Hawaiian, had exercised a form of self-possession and self-control that haole ministers actively sought to deny racialized, indigenous, others.⁸⁴ Countless numbers of Native Hawaiians could have delivered the same testimony. In dens and homes across the country, countless numbers continued, despite the penalties, to enact an embodied autonomy against the oppressive logics of paternalism and hygiene, hidden from the gaze of the regulatory state.

The moral, racial, and sexual panics of opium, Chinese migration, and interracial intimacy are best framed through the concept of opium's interiors. These hidden enclosures antagonized reformers and undermined protocolonial governance precisely because they delineated those domains of migrant Chinese and indigenous Hawaiian life that could be neither exposed nor regulated in full. In his sinophobic manifesto, Squires complained:

This once innocent Hawaiian people are now the victors of John Chinaman. They are enticed into dens of debauchery, dens of deception, dens of corruption, dens of infamy, dens of gambling, dens of contagion, dens of opium, dens within dens, dens adjoining dens, dens encircling dens, and lastly dens, the most filthy that the human power can conceive of.⁸⁵

The dens, opera houses, dead bodies, and closed fists of opium culture taunted the protocolonial governmental gaze, revealing the deceptive exterior of a social world impenetrable to elite haole observers.

Opium's transits mapped that which was unknowable, and yet urgently important, to regimes of governance. Its exact effects within the bodies and minds of smokers—themselves closed cavities of crucial information—were not even fully understood by contemporary reformers. Castle cited a mere eleven deaths directly caused by opium over a period of four years.⁸⁶ Throughout his treatise he lamented the general dearth of statistical information available to model social realities for the purposes of biopolitical governance. “What its effects have been,” he admitted, “can never be known in the absence, not of reliable, but of *any* vital statistics in most parts of the Kingdom.”⁸⁷ Nevertheless, he and other activists and officials continued to decry the “extinction of the

Hawaiian race” that would surely result from the licensed traffic of opium and the circulation of opiated Chinese.

The frequent refrain that Chinese were literally killing off Native Hawaiians was deceptive and instrumental. In reality, evidence suggested that Chinese migrants revitalized Hawaiian communities by improving their financial viability and extending their economic citizenship beyond the confines of the haole plantation. As conjugal partners they provided for mixed and extended families, a fact that impressed even the most sinophobic of observers. As petty traders willing to barter, they collaborated with Native Hawaiians resistant to the capitalist market of wage labor and cash exchange. As rice farmers, they served a similar function, renting native land parcels (*kuleana*) through a system of tenancy and land use that, like bartering, was indigenous to both Hawaiian and Southern Chinese economic cultures. For many Hawaiian families, then, social and economic intercourse with Chinese migrants staved off their dispossession from the land and allowed them to sustain domestic life despite constant sieges by colonial political economy.⁸⁸

In truth, the Hawaiian body that haole reformers accused the Chinese of killing was a sign for the Hawaiian nation itself. It was not, however, the sovereign indigenous nation that the figure of the Native Hawaiian body might imply, but the special domain of white colonial prerogative whose resources—land, people, and wealth—were being poached by the Chinese. The myth of the Hawaiian-killing Chinaman was instrumental to the maintenance of protocolonial sovereignty, as it allowed haole politicians and propagandists to scapegoat the migrants for their own administrative ineptitude. When Castle quoted a policeman as saying that during the licensing years “it was a common

thing...to find a person on the floor dead from the effects of using opium, and sometimes it was a native,” he was inviting his readers to picture the Chinese seller who had killed him.⁸⁹

Politics of the Pipe: Illicit Commerce and Intoxicated Counterpublics

But was it opium that left the corpses? And was it opium that would kill off the remainder of the declining indigenous population? Haole authorities entrusted with the life of the nation were engaged in an experiment of protocolonial governance with devastating results. Despite implementing the kinds of liberal, scientific, and humanitarian reforms that came to characterize the technocratic and humanistic regimes of late imperialism, they found themselves conducting racial autopsies, speculating and studying the causes of native death. “You, Hawaiians,” Gibson apostrophized in his hygienic treatise, “need a great physician...who would explore Hawaiian diseases in their vilest haunts.”⁹⁰ With a major vested interest in the colonial capitalist future of the islands, haole authorities could not afford to consider that the great dying of native people had been caused by the implementation of policies so antithetical to indigenous lifeways and livelihoods as to destroy both altogether.

But the natives knew this. Those who lingered on *kalo* (taro) patches and leisured in opium dens sought alternatives to the future offered by colonial capitalist modernity. So did many Chinese, particularly those from the coolie classes whose cooperative impulses mediated the manifold abuses of the colonial political economy. And these groups that refused to assimilate to the imperatives of the global marketplace or accept haole hegemony shared a social world of opium that was covert, subversive, and

autonomous. The historian Nayan Shah writes that “the common method of smoking opium encouraged a special intimacy.”⁹¹ He describes men lying face-to-face on bunks, sharing pipes of opium. The scholar (and opium enthusiast) Peter Lee describes the socially cohesive practice of smoking around a shared lamp. Seasoned smokers speak of initiation and tutelage, for opium was a difficult drug to prepare, and novices almost always enlisted the help of willing experts. Opium was a social substance and a socializing experience.⁹² Beneath the salacious and sensationalist myths, the panicked claims that opium induced smokers to criminal and sexual deviance, lay an embodied experience that may afford insights into indigenous and migrant life irretrievable from the colonial archive.

Claims that Chinese cruelly peddled a deadly drug to natives are difficult to maintain, considering the commonality of opium’s consumption among migrants and its hallowed place within their epistemology of care. Practitioners of Taoist medicine extolled the benefits of the drug for centuries. They innovated the method of “smoking” opium to maximize its beneficent properties. Sap harvested from the ripe pods of poppies and processed into opium, when vaporized (not incinerated), released into the lungs of the inhaler a multitude of powerful alkaloids. Coursing together through the bloodstream, these compounds relieved joint and muscle pain, bronchial congestion and asthma, insomnia, gastrointestinal disorders like diarrhea and dysentery, tropical fevers like cholera and malaria, and depression.⁹³

Opium’s threatening properties, the rapid addiction and gradual emaciation of its users, were offset by special diets, exercises, and periods of detoxification. The notion of “addiction” itself must be complicated by Taoist beliefs that the opium habit could be

healthfully sustained by conscientious users.⁹⁴ Despite the general lack of vital statistics, it is clear that the vast majority of opium users in late-nineteenth century Hawai‘i did not drop dead from the habit. Those who did waste away from addiction were likely predisposed to substance abuse; ignorant of the preventative measures taken by chronic smokers to maintain bodily equilibrium; or, for reasons of financial hardship, unable to secure decent quality opium and adequate stores of food to replenish body fat lost by drug use.⁹⁵ Accordingly, colonial conditions of poverty, deprivation, and stress likely exacerbated the toxicity of the drug. Certainly plantation workers consumed the drug to help their bodies conform to the demands of capitalist agriculture. But we must think beyond the rigid political economy of plantations if we are to understand better these smoking subjects.

Troubling though it may be to our modern, rational, hygienic selves, Chinese and Hawaiian smokers alike risked the bodily perils of opium consumption to enjoy its physical, social, mental, and perhaps, liberatory benefits. Desperate smokers may have even resigned themselves to an opiated grave amidst the developments and dislocations of protocolonialism. Considering the routine suicides by plantation workers and the trauma and tragedy of indigenous death, this does not seem so farfetched. Whether fatalistic or deliberate, users experienced a drug more subversive than any other. Rather than facilitating their escape from colonial reality, opium enabled smokers—groups of smokers—to retreat to a shared otherworld, “an alternative world to inhabit, a self-contained world of comfort, contentment, and convivial company, complete with a culture all of its own.”⁹⁶ This alternative space, organized around cooperation, leisure, pleasure, and care, inverted the codes and demands of the colonial capitalist market. For

plantation workers drilled by regimented labor, “time itself dissolve[d], leaving the smoker suspended in an artificial eternity.”⁹⁷

Opium first struck users as a stimulant before settling into its soporific effects. Smokers experienced various combinations of disembodiment, detachment, and disengagement, and feelings of satiation and tranquility.⁹⁸ Contrary to the moralistic claims that opium increased sexual appetites, the drug gave users the impression of having had all appetites appeased.⁹⁹ Opium, then, helped to counter the commodification of people and things, as users ceased to feel the strains of their overworked bodies and the material wants they likely had little means to satisfy.

At the same time, the initial hedonism that encouraged smokers to enjoy a pipe undermined the very notions of temperance and restraint that informed the Protestant ethic of leisure.¹⁰⁰ Lee offers a further insight into the disruption constituted by opium use amidst civilizing missions aimed at ordering Hawaiian society: “The addict’s behavior is neither moral nor immoral, but rather entirely amoral and neutral, but from society’s point of view, this is the worst behavior of all because it does not conform to accepted standards of right and wrong, good and bad, and therefore it allows no room for reform or redemption by society.”¹⁰¹ More terrifying than the savage whose inherent deficiencies precluded his effective civilization was the addict who chose not to be reconstructed, for the latter had evaluated the offer of proper civilized society, and determined he had no use for it.

Chinese intent on eventual repatriation may very well have adopted this position towards the dominant culture and society of the islands. Choosing the pipe over polite white society enabled migrants to reproduce, at least in part, the social world of Southern

China. The material ritual of opium smoking equipped users with a standard and familiar set of paraphernalia that may have served as visual coordinates forming a grid of home.

“No matter where he goes, as long as the smoker has some opium and a smoking kit, he always feels at home.”¹⁰² By all accounts, opium seemed a well-suited balm for the exclusions and alienations experienced by abject indigenous and diasporic subjects alike.

Few colonial historians are tempted to interrogate the intoxicated subjectivities of subalterns, perhaps because it defies our relentless quest to impute rationality and agency to subjects long deemed to be lacking both. But perhaps rationality and agency were not the only means towards empowerment. And perhaps empowerment and resistance were not actually the most relevant and immediate concepts subalterns reached for in the daily process of making life bearable. It may be that desire and relief were the categories through which they ordered their lives, the objectives they pursued with all the zeal and tenacity we scout out in loftier projects of resistance and liberation. And it may well be that one cannot engage in either project without the other, for the exhaustions and traumas of marginalization are indeed relieved by self-care and fellowship.

Whether stubbornly refusing to assimilate to the dictates of colonial political economy, or actively seeking remedies to its daily abuses, marginalized Chinese and Hawaiian smokers can be read as engaging in a politics of the pipe, a position that was decidedly oppositional to the dominant order. A politics of the pipe entailed seeking out the margins, shadows, and dens of colonial life and rendering them habitable; it meant mobilizing community networks, and enlisting the aid of available substances, to reproduce social life where dominant logics dictated it could not exist. Gathered together by the centripetal forces of imperialism and capitalism and the intimate allure of opium,

Chinese and Hawaiian smokers instantiated counter-publics of care and pleasure every time a bowl of processed poppy sap was prepared.

Towards Colonial Sovereignty

Opium's worlds of interracial sociality and intoxicated defiance were fleeting. In their quest to separate two groups who had come together under circumstances of barest life, protocolonial authorities innovated new strategies of surveillance and policing that turned Chinese dealers and Hawaiian clients against each other. The effectiveness of the strategy attests to the relationships of trust, friendship, and familiarity that had developed between two groups who shared conditions of colonial marginality. At least as early as 1880, police enlisted the services of Hawaiian smokers as informants, offering them half of the fines exacted from perpetrators found guilty of breaching any part of the ponderous body of opium laws. "The Chinaman who would furnish opium to the Hawaiian, well knows that his victim after enjoying the deadly trance caused by its use, will report to the police for the reward promised," Castle smugly announced.¹⁰³ Thus incentivized, Hawaiian smokers were co-opted by the protocolonial state and incorporated into the burgeoning regime of Chinese exclusion.

Late in 1892, a report by the Special Committee on Opium, convened in July of that year, was published. The authors resolved to expose the evils of opium, "principally to the native members [of the legislative assembly], who may not [have been] fully cognizant of all its bearings and hideous consequences and need[ed] to be educated on the subject."¹⁰⁴ The report offered a brief history of opium in China, focusing on the hypocrisy of British imperialism, the corruption of Chinese officials, and the eager

consumption of the drug by Chinese masses. It rehearsed the familiar concerns with the effect of opium on the productivity of laboring bodies, and determined that “all inclination for exertion [became] gradually lost” by smokers.¹⁰⁵ The authors surveyed the imperial world for proof of the drug’s universally deleterious effects on public health and morality, and highlighted regulatory strategies that could be employed by the Hawaiian government. They concluded that prohibition was the only logical option to suppress a trade carried on through corruption and deceit.

Referencing China, whose venal officials sold the health—and ultimately, the sovereignty—of the nation in exchange for foreign bribes, not only provided a historical context, but a case of comparison. Hawaiian officials in the deep pockets of treacherous Chinese merchants had betrayed the nation. The text fixated on smuggling as the most pernicious element of opium trafficking, a practice that explicitly undermined the bordered sovereignty of the kingdom. At the same time, the crisis of smuggling portrayed the nation as incapable of regulating its own affairs. The addict corrupted and “enslaved” by the drug was like the kingdom corrupted and dependent on bribes—and both were unfit for self-governance.

In the final pages of the report, the committee pointed to its own failure to uncover any substantial information on smuggling as further proof that the problem of opium had become absolutely intractable, and the ringleaders of its sale frighteningly powerful.¹⁰⁶ After implicating the royal family in the smuggling ring, the committee made a disturbing recommendation that prefigured the tumultuous events to come: should the Hawaiian government fail to take adequate action to protect the kingdom against the

scourge of opium, a “vigilante committee” should be formed to take matters into its own hands.¹⁰⁷

The vigilante committee that formed some months later, at the start of 1893, did not cite opium smuggling as an explicit pretext for overthrowing the native sovereign, Queen Lili‘uokalani. It did, however, substantiate its power according to the same logics of colonial governance outlined in the report. The exigency of opium regulation in a moment of supposed crisis had served as a potent warrant for increased haole authority and oversight of migrant and indigenous life. The discourse around opium helped to elaborate a politics of paternalism towards Native Hawaiians that denied their claims to both bodily sovereignty and collective autonomy, and materialized a regime of exclusion against Chinese migrants by framing their mobility as an explicit threat to the health of the nation. These dual outcomes of the regulation of opium proved indispensable to the extension of American hegemony in Hawai‘i, serving as both ideological pretexts and political claims for the islands’ eventual annexation to the United States in 1898.

The great debate around opium in the kingdom rehearsed arguments for the protection of Native Hawaiians by white authorities while authoring Chinese as exceptional legal subjects. Furthermore, the policies enacted to regulate the drug’s traffic institutionalized the pernicious racial constructions that would prove so crucial to the efforts of haole political usurpers. While the legal exceptionality of Chinese subjects first iterated in the opium licensing laws was preserved and extended by discriminatory immigration laws that worked to rationalize the racial landscape of the islands, the legal vulnerability of indigenous Hawaiians produced by regulatory policies called forth formal colonial management by a foreign empire. Ultimately, both claims of racist colonial

thought were reified by American legislation that barred Chinese from entry to Hawai'i and transferred the sovereignty of the Hawaiian nation to the United States.

Chapter 2

Ahuna and the *Mo‘o*: Rethinking Chinese Success in Hawaiian Commercial Food Production

Introduction

Hawaiian mythic history tells of a race of people, slight and sturdy, deft and diligent, who completed monumental feats of engineering overnight. Called the *Menehune*, they are credited with the construction of dams, ditches, and fishponds throughout the islands. How else to explain the appearance of these colossal structures, involving hundreds of yards of solid stone precisely placed to persuade miles of flowing water to animate the surrounding lands? These achievements were the natural result of the innate skill of the Menehune, whose exceptional talent for organizing labor defied the limits of human ability.¹⁰⁸

Centuries of crisis and transformation intervened between the Menehune, the builders of fishponds, and the Chinese migrants who came to operate them around the turn of the twentieth century. To contemporary observers, *Pākekē*, as Chinese migrants were called in Hawaiian, seemed to have embedded themselves in the economic landscape of the islands overnight, skillfully coaxing the flow of capital into their coffers. “That Chinese immigrants took to operating fishponds is not surprising,” argues the scholar and former pond operator Carol Wyban. “Chinese had a centuries-long history of fish farming in polyculture fishponds... Chinese differed from Hawaiians, however,

because they were entrepreneurial. They had a merchant class and were consummate business people.”¹⁰⁹

Like Native Hawaiians, over generations Chinese had developed a system of food production and resource management to suit the amphibious terrain of their homelands. But according to Wyban and countless scholars and observers before her, Chinese were equipped with innate business savvy, whereas Hawaiians were not. That they should prosper where Hawaiians apparently failed was natural—predictable. These were a people supposedly specialized in eking by, fighting for crumbs in the seething counties of Guangdong Province in Southern China, where the aftershocks of colonial violence carried profound reverberations. The image of China as home to hungry hordes had drawn labor recruiters from the Hawaiian Islands before migrants began coursing across the waters of the Pacific. Under the global regime of contract labor, Chinese became notorious as a race that could thrive even in the harshest conditions.

These notions and stereotypes, which fetishize racial difference and descend from colonial thinking about native and migrant labor, continue to stand in for historical explanations of divergent outcomes among communities under colonization. Without intending any great offense, Wyban and others have implied that Hawaiians failed to prosper after *haole* (foreign, white) contact because of their inability to comply with the dictates of the global capitalist market. Exploited by the economic ambitions of U.S. expansion, they have ironically been recorded as a people outside of capitalism, a people impoverished by their own putative misunderstandings of modernity. Claims of failure require visible bodies and landscapes—starving families and sprawling slums. Haunting the narratives of an exceptional merchant diaspora are those Chinese whose names did

not make it to street signs or business directories, whose families were never sent for, whose bodies withered in opium dens and elderly homes run by vice and charity, whose bones never returned home.

Historians mining the archive of Chinese life in the Hawaiian Islands must remember that odes to success speak over lamentations of failure: for every acclaimed patriarch there was a bachelor who died in the shadows of an annexed frontier. The family histories that form the backbone of this paper were collected in the 1970s and 1980s from descendants of so-called Chinese pioneers who felt a sense of pride and indebtedness in relation to their ancestors—feelings structured by material privilege and gain. Most of the histories collected were skewed towards narratives of success and striving. Those that recollect failure were usually noted by editors or respondents as remarkable.

This story is not about failure but about reconceptualizing histories of success. It strives to contribute to an intersectional historiography of colonialism and diaspora and to converse with contemporary critiques of Asian settler colonialism in Hawai‘i by considering the intimate and economic transactions between indigenous Hawaiians and migrant Chinese, contextualizing them within the framework of American empire and colonial economic expansion.¹¹⁰ Further, the family histories considered in this paper highlight the critical links between Hawaiian women and Chinese men, which subsidized and insured migrants’ claims to independent economic futures in the islands.

The paper begins with the socioeconomic phenomenon of Chinese migrants capitalizing upon indigenous Hawaiian foodways, a fact taken by colonial officials and contemporary observers as evidence of Chinese financial exceptionalism and Hawaiian

economic inability. When investigated historically, this deceptive conundrum of Chinese success in industries ostensibly suited to Native Hawaiian production becomes neither evidence of innate migrant savvy, nor an indictment of indigenous enterprise. After all, colonial evaluations of success relied on capitalist metrics of profit, which significant sectors of indigenous producers resisted and which Chinese entrepreneurs themselves frequently defied. Furthermore, the dichotomy of migrant and indigenous production sustained by colonial officials was misleading, as enterprises analyzed through the lens of Chinese monopoly were in fact creolized operations engaging Hawaiian labor, resources, and knowledge.

By examining commercial fishponds and, to a lesser extent, *poi* (pounded boiled taro) factories from the mid-nineteenth century through the first two decades of the twentieth century, this history considers pluralized trajectories of survival and success that involved community organization, interracial communion, and cultural appropriation. Against the persistent image of Chinese migrants as clannish and thrifty, this narrative outlines Pākē as gregarious gamblers —social and mobile migrants who learned, borrowed, and took from Hawaiians, and bet on their friends. Beyond family, their sociofinancial networks were broad both horizontally and vertically. They did not save every cent but rather risked many on associates, both lateral and junior to their station. They did not shun Hawaiians out of perceived racial difference but fostered intimacy and exchange out of shared cultural practices and capitalized on the knowledge that they gleaned from those interactions. I offer this sketch not to exonerate historical subjects from all claims of predation but to retire stereotypes that perpetuate racist thinking about both migrant and indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Food Production and Colonial Transformations

Centuries before Euro-American intervention, indigenous inhabitants of the Hawaiian archipelago innovated an elaborate system of political organization and resource management structured by hierarchy, reciprocity, and sustainability. Rank was the most potent axis of differentiation, dividing society between chiefs (*ali 'i*), land stewards (*konohiki*), and commoners (*maka 'āinana*). With rank came responsibility toward sociopolitical inferiors, articulated through the concept of *pono*, which describes a holistic righteousness assessed in multiple, intersecting planes—cosmic, ecological, and social.

The major duties of a chief entailed the protection of his or her constituents and the distribution of resources among them. Land was imbued with sacred genealogies, and although it could be conquered, it could not be commodified.¹¹¹ Arguably more important than land was water. Waterways, and specifically irrigation systems, were the structure and substance through which sovereignty was enacted—the lifeblood of the sacred chieftaincy that governed pre-contact Hawai'i.¹¹²

Hawaiians adhered to a conscientious vision of sustenance and conservation that respected the fragility of islands as ecosystems and comprehended the interconnectedness of waterways.¹¹³ This understanding informed their strategies of land and water management, including the division of islands into districts (*ahupua 'a*) that ran radially from the mountains to the sea. Within each district, homesteads (*kuleana*) were apportioned to extended families (*'ohana*) for cultivation.¹¹⁴ The most widely grown crop was taro (*kalo*), the brother of man in Hawaiian cosmic genealogy.¹¹⁵ Grown in

both drylands and flooded paddies (*lo 'i kalo*), kalo influenced a system of food production characterized by interlaced methods of agriculture and aquaculture. In their most elemental form, fishponds emerged from this system as nurseries adjacent to kalo paddies (*loko i 'a kalo*).¹¹⁶

Commoners likely maintained these small ponds for domestic consumption, but fishponds also served as immense structures of chiefly power and political cohesion.¹¹⁷ Under the *kapu* system, a matrix of sacred prohibitions that buttressed political authority, chiefs commanded the labor and produce of their constituents.¹¹⁸ They commissioned the construction and operation of fishponds in order to facilitate tribute. As institutions of royal food production, fishponds helped to relieve commoners from the arduous obligation of relinquishing their produce to feed chiefly retinues. Instead, specialized caretakers (*kia 'i loko*) operated the ponds, maintaining their boundaries, water, and stock, and harvesting fish for royal consumption.¹¹⁹

From the integrated paddy-ponds emerged more complex structures irrigated to varying degrees by ditches, springs, artesian wells, and seawater. *Loko kuapā*, by far the most labor-intensive type of pond to build and maintain, were marine pools enclosed by enormous coral and lava rock walls.¹²⁰ These ponds were connected to a major source of water, whether a stream or the ocean, by one or many channels (*'auwai*). These channels were outfitted with a sluice grate (*mākāhā*), the defining feature of Hawaiian fishponds that appears nowhere else in the world.¹²¹ These grates enabled the controlled porosity of fishponds, allowing nutrients and fry to enter and enrich the cultivated ecosystem. They encouraged the circulation of water, clearing the pond of silt and sediment. They also facilitated the harvesting of fish. Pond operators, either balanced atop a seawall or seated

in a canoe, would place a net at the sluice grate to catch fish that rushed to meet the incoming tide.¹²²

On their official visit to the islands in 1824 to return the bodies of the late Hawaiian monarchs King Kamehameha II and Queen Kamāmalu from England, the voyagers of the H. M. S. Blonde stopped at the island of Hawai‘i to be graciously hosted by the widow of Kamehameha I. “The old Queen Ka‘ahumanu,”¹²³ as the Reverend Rowland Bloxam called her, was a powerful woman in her own right, credited with abolishing the kapu system upon her husband’s death.¹²⁴ Despite this notorious breach of tradition, the *kuhina nui* (premier and regent) adhered to other noble customs of hospitality, offering the foreign party a feast of fresh fish. This gesture signaled Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s enormous gratitude to her guests for having completed their tragic mission, while demonstrating her command over the people and bounty of the island.

As Bloxam wrote regarding his visit to the island, “We came to a large fresh water lake, which was plentifully stocked with a most delicious fish, the red mullet.”¹²⁵ He further remarked, “Though these reservoirs are most thickly tenanted, no native is allowed to touch one.”¹²⁶ The use of this pond remained the royal prerogative of the widowed queen even after the kapu system had been formally abolished. “Orders were however issued... to draw the pond daily for a large supply of these excellent fish for us.”¹²⁷ However the foreigners perceived the curious leader, Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s followers continued to seek shelter under her aegis and maintained the productive symbols of her power.

The transformations of the following decades had enormous consequences for indigenous political economy and exacerbated the disruption of the reciprocal

relationship between the chiefly and commoner castes that had resulted from Euro-American contact.¹²⁸ The Great *Māhele* (Division) of 1848 overhauled the indigenous system of land tenure in which chiefly title and common usufruct existed as inextricable, mutually sustaining rights. Through the imposition of a capitalist regime of private property, the land of the islands was reconceived as fungible parcels that could be individually owned and alienated through sale. While the sovereign and chiefly castes claimed large holdings from which commoners were expected to carve their own claims, foreign interlopers had their own designs for the lands' disposal.¹²⁹ Newly enfranchised to purchase Hawaiian land by their own legal reforms, ambitious haole vied for large tracts of the commodified landscape.¹³⁰ For many commoners, homesteading became untenable under the regime of privatization.¹³¹

The end result of seven years of legal and economic restructuring was the aggressive accumulation of property by foreigners, the formalization of native elite claims to land resources, and the widespread dispossession of commoners—some of whom had refused to register their claims, while many more had chosen to sell them. Many of these commoners vacated the countryside and settled near port towns in search of a more lucrative future in the growing market economy.¹³² Those steadfast families who held tight to their kuleana supplemented subsistence farming with cash cropping or wage work in the plantation economies that were beginning to take root in the island heartlands.¹³³ While many chiefs experienced dispossession, others benefited by consolidating estates composed of the choicest land sections. Lands surrounding fishponds, historically the prized preserves of royal families, were eagerly claimed by their descendants.¹³⁴

But while chiefly privilege regarding land tenure was ostensibly fortified by the Māhele, chiefly prerogative in relation to the citizens of the kingdom had shifted. By the end of the Māhele in 1855, the kapu and tribute systems that had buttressed the seat of indigenous sovereignty had been dismantled. Through Western-style reforms, the sacred chieftaincy had been divested of much of its temporal power. While some families gained formal legal ownership of the fishponds they had historically used, they could no longer summon the labor of the surrounding commoners to operate them.¹³⁵ As the overall number of Hawaiians decreased with the ravages of epidemics, exacerbated by the damages done to native households by insalubrious economic policies, rural areas across the archipelago began to appear deserted.¹³⁶

Economic privatization and demographic loss were auspicious circumstances for Chinese merchants scouting opportunities for commercial venture. It had not taken long for haole planters to crowd them out of the sugar industry, but the merchants were still capable of amassing significant sums of capital and labor.¹³⁷ Furthermore, these migrants from China's delta region were equipped with at least rudimentary knowledge—if not nuanced technical skill—to operate Hawaiian fishponds, which relied on the same logics of aquatic resource management that informed the development of Chinese polyculture ponds.¹³⁸ After the completion of the Māhele, Hawaiian fishponds offered valuable opportunities for Chinese migrants to gain a sturdy foothold in independent production. Between 1852 and 1899, 56,720 Chinese migrants arrived in Hawai'i, many filling the order forms of plantation managers.¹³⁹ But a critical mass would dexterously maneuver themselves and their families off of plantations and into rural homesteads, pioneering commercial industries from rice cultivation to poi production and fishpond operation.

Perhaps the earliest Chinese commercial operator was Chung Hoon, who in 1856 leased the loko kuapā at Maunalua from Princess Victoria Kamāmalu, the sister of Kamehameha IV. Chung paid a substantial \$305 a year to rent the 523-acre pond, the largest of its kind on O‘ahu.¹⁴⁰ He cut the figure of a typical pioneer merchant, an early arrival to the islands who quickly capitalized on labor recruitment from China. He established the firm Chung Hoon Company, an agency involved in Chinese sugar plantations, and he owned an import store in Honolulu. Chung and his wife, the Hawaiian Alo K. Chung, were friends of the Kamehameha family. Nearby at Moanalua salt pond, the merchant firm Yit Lee Company managed a burgeoning fish farming operation employing both Chinese and Hawaiian workers.¹⁴¹ While the estate at Maunalua passed through the descendants of the Kamehameha dynasty, ending with Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the lease for the pond passed through a series of Chinese operators. After Chung Hoon, Lau Akau held the lease for over thirty years.¹⁴² The pond’s eventual proximity to O‘ahu Market increased its profitability as the island—and particularly the port of Honolulu—drew more and more people who came to speculate in its potential bounty.

Imperial Visions of Local Industry

In 1893 a faction of haole vigilantes, comprising sugar factors and other elite agitators who had the support of both the U.S. navy and the American minister to Hawai‘i, overthrew the native monarch Queen Lili‘uokalani. They established an oligarchic provisional republic and waited for the United States to recognize their coup. After five years of congressional debate and nearly unanimous indigenous protest, the

United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands, which became a territory under the Newlands Resolution.¹⁴³

In 1900, the U.S. Fish Commission dispatched three agents to survey commercial fishing in Hawai‘i. Lead by John Nathan Cobb, who authored a report on their findings, the group spent three months in the islands to investigate the history of fishing, transformations wrought by mass migration, and potential legislative improvements to stimulate the industry’s expansion. America had opened a new frontier, and it was the job of the commissioners to describe it to the self-appointed sovereigns in the mainland. The priorities of the expedition extended beyond its stated goals. The commissioners eyed the landscape with a mind toward naval strategy, mapping harbors and bays that were both vital and vulnerable in the prevailing ideology of “sea power.”¹⁴⁴ Hawai‘i was the “Key of the Pacific” with “an immense strategic importance in case of war.”¹⁴⁵

Charged with documenting the conditions of commercial fishing in regions recently claimed by American empire, Cobb and his colleagues materialized the linkages between imperial conquest, economic expansion, and ecological exploitation.¹⁴⁶ As in the North American West, the process of integrating a conquered territory entailed assessing its natural capacity for capitalist production. Federal agents surveyed the natural assets of these environments while engineers devised development projects to optimize their commodification—to the overwhelming benefit of corporate capital.¹⁴⁷ Compared to the West, where stores of riverine fauna had been greatly depleted over the previous decades, overconsumption in Hawai‘i posed little problem to the commissioners.¹⁴⁸ Rather, the agents looked to maximize the output of an economic system still characterized by subsistence production and sustainable practices. The

question for Cobb and his colleagues was whether Hawaiian fisheries were productive *enough* and *who* benefited from capitalist gain—if it was indeed capitalist industry that fed the residents of the islands.

Concerns pertaining to the human resources of island fisheries reverberated across the Pacific, where activists and legislators agonized over the vexing indispensability of Asian labor to westward expansion.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, the survey of commercial fishing was intended to index the progress of Hawaiians under capitalism—an essential factor in judging their incorporation into a nation reaching for hemispheric dominance. Reports like Cobb's were concerned with the American future of Hawai'i and struggled to make sense of the islands' Polynesian past and apparent Oriental interim.

Indeed, this type of thinking was the teleology of American thought, a vision of the islands that conceived of its natives as dying out while gasping for American uplift as Asian migrants hopped plantation fences and ran amok, frustrating American designs. While the United States promised Hawaiians U.S. citizenship in exchange for national sovereignty, it offered Asians a growing regime of exclusion as they continued to escape the plantation complex. This difference was highlighted by the Cobb report in which the author meticulously catalogued Hawaiian mythology, ritual, and fishing culture, and described Asian economic participation with ambivalence and anxiety.

As the commissioners toured the islands, they met with the freshly minted territorial authorities and interviewed local fishers. They consulted official records, missionary publications, and ethnographic writings. The resulting document was one of remarkable texture, revealing the Americans' complete curiosity at their new possession. But the question that helmed the meandering investigation was how to reform Native

Hawaiians into productive citizens. A brief revisionist history of U.S. involvement celebrated what had already been done and situated the commissioners as the inheritors of a triumphant missionary legacy. As Cobb stated in the report, the missionaries had “found the islanders steeped in savagery of the most revolting character. They clothed and taught them, and today the average Hawaiian... will compare very favorably with the average citizen of the States.”¹⁵⁰

But enlightenment had its costs. Sidestepping blame for the demographic devastation of the indigenous population that had followed the introduction of foreign diseases and the imposition of capitalist economic policies, the commissioners lamented the mixed blessings of American progress. “The vices inseparable from civilization... have had their effect on the [Hawaiian] race and it is rapidly dying out.”¹⁵¹ American civilization was a potent force and had been applied too effectively, perhaps, to the ill-constituted natives. But where dying Hawaiians fell across the landscape, the promise of American salvation rose. Rather than serving as evidence of the noxious nature of U.S. colonization, the political motif of dying Hawaiians became a call for greater intervention, conditioning the legitimacy of U.S. sovereignty. This intervention had to be technical and humane, the result of extensive investigations that handled with care the delicate situation of the Hawaiians—a race supposedly caught between pathological past and promising future. The near-obsessive study of native fishing produced by the commissioners offered a solution to the predicament of a dying race. Not a return to the land, but a return to the sea, would rehabilitate this “amphibious” people.¹⁵²

This strategic vision coincided with the sugar rush that followed annexation. For decades U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i had been the violent fantasy of white venture

capitalists, and with their triumph, planters and financiers aggressively invested in expanding plantations across what was now American soil.¹⁵³ Land prices inflated, pushing many small farmers out of the countryside and into the cities. Within two decades, this process of dislocation would reach its height as corporate sugar plantations monopolized the backlands and Hawaiian and Chinese homesteaders poured into towns.¹⁵⁴ But while the great white dream of sugar had not yet come to pass, it was clear that landed Hawaiians and unbound Chinese were both motes in the eyes of the speculators.

These haole elites hosted and informed the commissioners, who marveled at the supposedly natural aptitude of Native Hawaiians for fishing as they described the sacred economy with lurid anecdotes of ritual sacrifice and exhaustively catalogued every type of fish, method of capture, and fine technology crafted over centuries of littoral living, from hand-woven gill nets of varying gradations to fish baits concocted from octopus ink. Although the overarching implication that Hawaiians were categorically and inherently suited to marine industry betrayed hierarchically and racially ordered schemas of labor and economy, the commissioners were rightly awed by the elaborate culture of fishing that Hawaiians had developed.

The commissioners could scarcely make recommendations for improving the existing technology. They suggested the use of a beam trawl, a net that drags along the ocean floor swallowing “everything in its path,” but Hawaiian techniques were anathema to the illogic of overconsumption and instead provided highly calibrated methods of capture depending on the type, age, and size of fish desired.¹⁵⁵ Sustainability of resources and community was the animating ideology of the Hawaiian fishing industry.

Of all the racial groups modeled and measured by the commissioners, Hawaiians accounted for the largest portion of fishers, including among their numbers women and children and preferring to split catches and market proceeds rather than to work for wages.¹⁵⁶

“The most interesting of the fishery resources in the islands are the fish-ponds,” the commissioners reported.¹⁵⁷ Emphasizing their Polynesian provenance, the authors studied the creation myths of the ponds, referencing the Menehune and the alternative motif of an unbroken chain of Hawaiian commoners under chiefly command, passing lava rocks from the mountains to the sea to build the pond walls.¹⁵⁸ They described the technical aspects of fishpond operation—the brackish water sourced from mountain streams, artesian wells, seawater ditches, and the ocean itself; the sluice gates innovated by Hawaiians, opened and closed with the tide; the seines and gill nets for selectively catching adult fish; and the variety of fish cultivated for market.

Migrant Ventures and Chinese Monopoly

Interrupting the pastoral portrait of “amphibious” Hawaiians were descriptions of the cunning Chinese. If the white settler blueprint for Hawai‘i marginalized Native Hawaiians to coastal economies, it fixed Chinese and other Asian migrants to the plantations. And while most mainland officials championed a populist vision of white settlement at odds with the oligarchic plantation complex, they nonetheless resented the mobility of Asians determined to become self-sufficient, independent producers.¹⁵⁹

The commissioners counted a few Chinese anglers plying their trade along the shore, but the majority worked the ponds, which were particularly numerous on O‘ahu

and Moloka‘i.¹⁶⁰ Cobb reported that “a few years ago they began leasing the fish ponds still in use on most of the islands, and now have practically a monopoly of this part of the industry. They also quite generally control the selling of fish in the markets.”¹⁶¹ The commissioners failed to mention the long Chinese history of aquaculture in the fish and duck ponds of the Pearl River delta; they likewise omitted the sustainable methods of growing watercress and lotus root in auxiliary pools to optimize cultivatable space. Yet the implicit economic threat of Chinese participation in commercial fishing deserved attention. Monopoly was already familiar in the islands, but the commissioners cast it in a highly racialized discourse. That is to say that haole monopoly of the sugar and ranching industries created little administrative anxiety, while Chinese predominance in typically marginal industries provoked a call for greater governmental oversight and regulation.¹⁶²

The commissioners treated the ponds as metaphors for Polynesian decay and Asian renewal. Their 1901 report estimated that in the previous three decades, about half of the fishponds of the islands had fallen into disuse, again citing the fatalistic claim that “the native population [was] dying off rapidly.”¹⁶³ They pointed to the conversion of ponds into kalo and rice paddies, the reclamation of ponds by nature in the form of lava flows and suffocating hyacinths, and the ambiguous legal status of certain ponds where disputed ownership made commercial operation a precarious investment. Amidst this tableau of decline and sloth, the report cast Chinese intervention as a mixed blessing: “Owners of ponds rarely have much to do with the practical working of them, as they usually lease them to Chinese who attend to everything.”¹⁶⁴

Curiously, the report seems to have overstated the alleged Chinese monopoly. The commissioners tallied 7 Hawaiian pond workers compared to 20 Chinese on Moloka‘i, and 29 Hawaiian pond workers compared to 113 Chinese on O‘ahu. Those 29 Hawaiian pond workers were all located in the district of ‘Ewa where they comprised half of all pond workers; the other half were Chinese. Despite the unique status of this district, the commissioners failed to interrogate its exceptionality, instead choosing to emphasize the supposed sinification of all fishponds. Furthermore, they treated the categories of “Chinese” and “Hawaiian” as mutually exclusive and ignored the reality of racial mixing that characterized rural districts in particular.

In fact, creolization defined the entire syncretic venture of Chinese-operated fishponds wherein migrant fishers relied upon indigenous technology and knowledge, from the sluice gates to the spawning cycles of fish first observed by Native Hawaiians. Chinese family histories corroborate the casual exchange of knowledge about the natural world that occurred between Hawaiians and Chinese trying to survive in the backcountry. Though uncredited and unnamed, there was a Hawaiian antecedent to every Chinese fisher, who pointed out the choicest fishing spots, recommended the most potent bait, translated the color and texture of the ocean, and demystified the habits of native fish.

This history—and the fact that many Chinese fishponds were actually run by mixed families—escaped the gaze of the commissioners, who turned their attention to the implications of a Chinese monopoly on white consumers. “Most of the ponds on O‘ahu are controlled by two Chinese merchant firms in Honolulu, who work in close harmony,” Cobb wrote, troubled by the migrants’ apparent economic control. “They take particular care that the Honolulu market never becomes overstocked with amaama and awa, and are

thus enabled to command almost any price they please during certain seasons of the year... This falls quite heavily on the white population, as they are the principal consumers of the amaama.”¹⁶⁵ It did not occur to the commissioners that these fluctuations in the price of mullet and milkfish might have pertained to harvest and availability and not to the conniving disposition of Chinese merchants.¹⁶⁶

The system of fishpond cultivation emphasized patience and sustainability. Pond operators waited years for fish to reach a mature and marketable size, and they used nets designed to catch adult fish. Ponds were operated as sheltered aquariums attached to the greater ocean, and overfishing was successfully prevented precisely because operators avoided waste at all cost. The commissioners’ report identified limits on fish marketing that stemmed from the general lack of refrigeration technology. But it was not a rudimentary distribution system that hemmed in pond production. Operators managed carefully balanced ecosystems to maximize long-term regeneration. Ponds could not be overburdened with stock; their healthy equilibrium determined commercial productivity.

Commercial ponds were emphatically for-profit ventures. In the context of a plantation economy that depended on contract labor, independent production transformed the trajectory of labor migrants, granting them mobility and autonomy. These aspirations must frame any analysis of migrant Chinese enterprise in Hawai‘i. The Honolulu-based merchant firms that supported the fishpond industry provided similar financial scaffolding for the booming rice industry, which had enabled scores of Chinese laborers to transition from coolies to homesteaders. These firms defied the logic of predatory capitalism by investing in small producers.¹⁶⁷ Like rice farms, which were split between

firm-run plantations (*wai goon*) and firm-supported family and collective farms, fishponds ranged from corporate ventures to firm-financed family businesses.

Most enterprises combined merchant capital with family labor. In rice planting, even the bachelors who worked on *wai goon* were distantly related to partners in the controlling firm. Consider Koon Kwon, Ltd., which leased He'eia, a *loko kuapā* in Kāne'ohe Bay, O'ahu, from Bishop Estate in 1925. Koon Kwon, Ltd. was a partnership between Hee Kwong and Edward Siu Hen Au, who together paid \$1,500 a year to lease the eighty-five-acre pond.¹⁶⁸ Among the many managers were several of Hee's sons, who operated the pond in residence along with hired hands.¹⁶⁹ Thus He'eia was simultaneously a corporate and family venture.

It should be noted that in the case of fishponds, though leases could be high, profits were modest. While the commissioners' report estimated the total value of fishpond operations to be \$150,761 for O'ahu's seventy-four ponds and \$11,709 for Moloka'i's fifteen ponds, roughly 98 percent of these estimates described the value of the pond itself, to which operators held only usufructuary rights. The high cost of leases and relatively low cost of investment in equipment and personnel suggests the crucial role played by merchant firms, which extended to independent operators the capital required to lease ponds, thus making aquacultural ventures accessible to middling Chinese.

Diasporic Community Development

Colonization exploited status differences among Hawaiians, but the experience of diaspora mitigated such differences among Chinese. Virtually all Chinese arrivals to the islands hailed from the county of Chungshan in the province of Guangdong. The

majority had migrated under contract, recruited by white and Chinese agents of sugar and rice planters in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁰ White recruiters quickly became notorious for transporting individuals ensnared against their will in what was known as the “pig trade”; they even called in ports where lepers roamed unregulated.¹⁷¹ Chinese labor agents, in contrast, tended to recruit from among their own clans and co-villagers. It may be challenging to conceive of contract migration as a family affair, but Chinese entrepreneurs were adept at stretching the bonds of kinship taut. Caught between coolie and apprentice, countless cousins, nephews, brothers, and sons traveled to the islands along this web of relations, a growing network of family and financial resources that would assist them throughout their sojourn.¹⁷²

While many migrants traced the web back to China after terminating contracts, others climbed up from plantations into independent or cooperative production. The structure of these sociofinancial networks, which encouraged young men to prove themselves through humbling and rigorous labor and rewarded the stalwart with credit and opportunity, provided the major cultural mechanism for the stunning mobility of Chinese migrants. These economic maneuvers, which translated kinship and friendship into real financial capital, catapulted a fortunate few beyond the fate they could have expected in China as the younger sons of poor farmers. Third son Wong Aloiau, known as the “Rice King of Kapa‘a,” the wealthiest Chinese merchant-planter on Kaua‘i and among the most successful migrants in the islands, had left a farming household in Pun Sha to work on his uncle’s duck pond and rice farm on O‘ahu.¹⁷³ Few in the uppermost strata of Chinese society in Hawai‘i could pretend to have come from loftier

backgrounds. On the whole, their presence in the islands was an admission of struggle in the homeland.

Social status was unstable for elites, as well. Women in particular stand out in family histories for the tension they experienced in clinging to notions of superiority while stooping to supplement marginal family incomes. Perhaps because they remained acutely disadvantaged by the strictures of a patriarchal culture, many found it difficult to adjust to a social landscape where status mattered less.

Such tension simmered in the Wong household, in which women were incorporated into kinship positions incongruous with their social rank in China. Wong himself had fathered children by four separate women—the first and last were Chinese women whom he met by arrangement, and the second and third were Hawaiian women with whom he improvised intimacy. Before Wong sent for his final companion, Mew Hin, in 1891, his eldest son from his first marriage had married the bound-footed, classically trained daughter of a scholar. In China, Mew Hin had worked as a servant for the young lady's family and had physically carried the girl on her back. Mew Hin's own unbound feet and extreme poverty had destined her for servitude to social superiors in China.¹⁷⁴ Both young women assumed the risk of immigrating to Hawai'i to better their economic fortunes and reunited in the same household by coincidence—this time with Mew Hin, mother-in-law, far outranking her former mistress.

While migrant women like Wong's daughter-in-law may have experienced the loss of status with shame and tragedy, they endured for the sake of their families. Men striving to stay off of plantations could not afford to partner with women who fancied themselves above labor, and countless scholars' daughters became pig farmers and

market gardeners.¹⁷⁵ By and by, they let their daughters' feet grow unbound, partly because of Hawaiian dictates against it, but also perhaps because the meanings of family, gender, labor, and rank had decidedly shifted across the ocean.¹⁷⁶ This was the strange alchemy of diaspora—at least, for a time as Chinese settlers found their class pretensions challenged by more urgent imperatives to form families and forge communities.

Not all Chinese migrants experienced this process in terms of loss of status. Just as young men were summoned by kinsmen who commodified their journey and labor, girls were brought under bond to the islands by wealthy families and employed as servants until they could be resold to local grooms. Known as *mui tsai*, these girls were purchased from the poorest families in China but married up in Hawai'i where the preponderance of male migrants inflated the demand for young women.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the families that imported, employed, and owned the *mui tsai* had a vested interest in securing a wealthy groom who could pay a handsome dowry—not to the girl's natal family but to her employers. This institution, which does not seem to have been regulated by Hawaiian authorities, speaks not only to the instability of class in diaspora, but also to the willingness of Chinese to commodify one another—particularly the young and marginalized.

If Chinese constructs of rank and class lost some of their deterministic power in Hawai'i, what other criteria coded the destiny of migrants? As previously explained, Chinese found opportunities through sociofinancial networks that translated intimacy and friendship into real financial capital. The same cultural structures that enabled predation and exploitation also opened crucial lines of credit and cooperation, both horizontally and vertically. The same word, *hui*, describes synonymous concepts in both Hawaiian and

Chinese. A Hawaiian hui was a cooperative that pooled financial resources together for the purpose of eventual and shared distribution. The hui protected Hawaiian claims to land through the purchase of enormous tracts, especially in rural areas, to distribute among members. In this way, collectives of indigenous producers resisted dispossession.¹⁷⁸ Chinese hui were animated by the same ethos of cooperative finance, pooling resources for mutual assistance and prosperity, and advancing capital on the basis of familiarity and trust.

But while both Hawaiian and Chinese hui tended to be organized among subjects lateral to one another socioeconomically, Chinese also invested in fledgling producers with whom they shared bonds of familiarity whether through kinship, friendship, or employment.¹⁷⁹ Differences of class were understood as mutable and a hardworking, credible young man, if given the opportunity, could enrich not only himself but also his financier. In the context of financial discrimination by haole-operated banks that loaned money to Chinese clients at disadvantageous interest rates, these lines of sponsorship and community credit were crucial to aspiring independent producers.¹⁸⁰ In his 1937 study of rice production, John Coulter noted that nearly every independent farmer had sustained his small business through loans from the local Chinese general store.¹⁸¹ Those with more extensive connections could also count on the patronage of merchant firms, run out of ports like Honolulu with sturdy ties to China's coastal cities. The generative ethos of sponsorship was modeled by a Chinese custom practiced by families in the agricultural districts of windward O'ahu. Performing the *sarm sang mi* ritual, parents or an eldest child called on large fishponds and wai goon to request a bowl of rice. The offering was taken back and fed to the family's youngest child, bestowing the hope and blessing of

good health and fast growth.¹⁸² According to the ritual, even the smallest investment from Chinese commercial firms could stimulate the development of a community's humblest members.

The topography of Chinese migrant life reproduced these networks of sponsorship. Young men traveled to the islands on borrowed funds, promising to repay relatives and friends. Workers who shared the experience of indenture planned for their economic futures in cane fields and barracks together. The nephew who migrated at the request of his planter uncle could expect a small loan upon completion of his contract. While sugar plantations—which required hundreds of acres of arable land—supported one estate or corporation, Chinese farming districts supported tens of family homesteads, from the Hakka strawberry fields of Nu‘uanu Valley to the Punti rice paddies of Punalu‘u. And every Chinese settlement from Kāne‘ohe to Kula had a house for gambling. Usually adjacent to the general store—the heart of communal financial life—gambling houses entertained into the morning hours. Seated on milk crates, sharing tobacco and rice gin, observant men could take note of who was reliable and who was reckless; who, in other words, was a safe bet. It was the man whose wealth grew in concentric circles, the benefactor who lifted those beside and beneath him, who was admired as a civic leader—not the thrifty hermit who distrusted his fellow migrant.¹⁸³

It is a recurring truth of family histories that Chinese men seeking Chinese brides resolved to establish themselves financially before wedding, while Chinese men in intimate partnerships with Hawaiian women frequently formalized these ties before stabilizing themselves as successful producers.¹⁸⁴ On the one hand, this dynamic reflects the competitive market for Chinese brides in Hawai‘i, where even a mui tsai could marry

a merchant. On the other, it indicates the assets Hawaiian women brought to interracial households, acting as the stabilizing agent that anchored landless Chinese men to kuleana outside the plantation complex. This explanation is not meant to suggest that Chinese women held out for the highest bidder while Hawaiian women scraped the bottom of the barrel. Indeed, Hawaiian families speculated in Chinese men, vetting viable partners for their daughters.¹⁸⁵

The sociologist Romanzo Adams, who studied interracial marriage in Hawai‘i in the 1930s, recorded the following saying from an elderly Chinese-Hawaiian informant: “If you marry *haole* your hair smell of smoke, because you have to do the cooking, but if you marry Chinese your hair smell of sandalwood.”¹⁸⁶ A playful reference to the fact that Chinese husbands cooked for their Hawaiian wives, this fragment of vernacular wisdom offers valuable insight into the ideas and imperatives of Hawaiian women and families. While interracial intimacy with whites was conceived in terms of exploitation—wives became laboring bodies—marriage to a Chinese man was understood as advantageous, a pathway to comfort and perhaps luxury. And a Hawaiian family with a bit of arable land could do more to support the ambitions of a prospective son-in-law than a Chinese woman with no land at all. In the case of Wong’s former father-in-law, a Hawaiian businessman named Daniela I, the risk of offering his *hānai* (adopted) daughter to the fledgling entrepreneur paid off.

Creolized Ventures and Syncretic Strategies

In light of these relationships, which were simultaneously intimate and economic, certain ventures that have been recorded as categorically “Chinese” must be reinterpreted

as creolized. The fishponds and poi factories that sustained so-called Chinese households beyond the plantation complex were far more than the fruits of innate Chinese entrepreneurial savvy. They were joint ventures engineered and managed by diasporic networks of labor and capital along with indigenous knowledge and resources. That Chinese came to commercialize the production of the two foods most emblematic of indigenous lifeways poses less of a historical conundrum when due credit is restored to the indigenous people themselves and to women in particular.

Take the case of Kaloko fishpond, an enormous loko kuapā on the southern leeward coast of the island of Hawai‘i. Kaloko was exceptional for its commercial tenure by Hawaiian operators, including a kin-based hui. At the time of the Māhele, Kaloko was claimed by Kamehameha V and remained the property of his descendants until the death of Bernice Pauahi Bishop. The pond was sold to the haole landowner C. H. Judd, who in turn sold it to John A. Maguire in 1906, at which point the pond began to be commercially operated.¹⁸⁷ Between 1920 and 1924, Maguire leased the pond to a Chinese man named Ahuna and his wife, a Hawaiian woman named Apā. Decades later the locals of North Kona remembered Ahuna for his success, which they attributed to his piety and generosity—two traits he practiced in a distinctively creolized mode.

Before Ahuna harvested fish, he offered a suckling pig to the spirit of the pond.¹⁸⁸ The reverence of such an offering would have been immediately recognizable to both Hawaiian and Chinese observers. Ritual sacrifices of cooked food were central to the operation of pre-contact fishponds and the ceremonies of Chinese migrants, in particular the *Ching Ming* festival, during which victuals were taken to cemeteries in honor of the dead.¹⁸⁹ Ahuna’s suckling pig was a conscientious offering to the true caretaker of the

pond, the *mo‘o wahine*, or lizard goddess, who inhabited the waters and commanded all that lived beneath the surface. Her influence beyond Kaloko was felt by the surrounding inhabitants, from the ancients who praised her generosity in contrast to the callousness of self-serving chiefs and land stewards, to the local informants who registered a divine seething about the place.¹⁹⁰ The fish and all who depended on their harvest fattened and starved at the mo‘o’s will.

Ahuna’s recognition of her power suggests an intimate knowledge of local beliefs—a knowledge that his Hawaiian wife Apā undoubtedly possessed. Surely her guidance did not stop at the transmission of knowledge, for Ahuna demonstrated both familiarity and commitment to Hawaiian custom and cosmology. He showed *mālama* (care) for both the mo‘o and the surrounding people—twelve households to whom he distributed the first catch of fish upon each harvest.¹⁹¹

In addition to exchanging cosmological beliefs that helped migrants assimilate to the social and ecological order of rural localities, Hawaiians also provided technical knowledge to Chinese entrepreneurs. The Tom family of Waikāne in windward O‘ahu leased a local fishpond and employed Hawaiian laborers. Tom Heong began his illustrious career as a gold miner in California, where he invested in commercial fishing before becoming a rice planter and general store owner in Hawai‘i. He mastered the management of credit networks and eventually accumulated enough wealth to operate the pond. His son, Wah Poon Tam, remained a fisherman all his life and credited local Hawaiians with teaching him their techniques, from the laying of *kākā* lines (stationary lines with multiple hooks) to the capture of *moi*, a small reef fish that they scared into nets by dropping stones tied with strips of orange cloth.¹⁹²

The syncretic nature of commercial fishponds that combined both Chinese and Hawaiian ecological and economic strategies was apparent to operators like Harry W. Y. Akana. His father Ching Wah Sing, or C. S. Akana, came to Hawai‘i under a sugar contract and worked a series of odd jobs before raising the requisite capital to lease Kaihikapu fishpond and the surrounding salt flats in Moanalua, O‘ahu from Damon Estate in the 1920s. Akana was married to Mikela Kapa‘a, a Hawaiian woman who worked as a teacher, with whom he had twelve children. Their only son, Harry, described helping his father at the fish and salt ponds along with “ten employees... mainly Chinese who had just arrived from China,” to whom his father paid “a dollar a day with three meals and lodging.”¹⁹³ The young Akana credited his family’s success to both parents and noted in his family history that “fishpond culture by old Hawaiian methods and fish culture by Chinese in China were alike.”¹⁹⁴

The pattern of migrant Chinese labor underwriting creolized ventures pertained especially to poi factories on the outer islands. That poi even became a commodity purchased by Hawaiians speaks to the extent of indigenous dispossession, as poi was the staple of Hawaiian households. Grown on nearly every kuleana, kalo was boiled and pounded into a thick, starchy paste (*pa ‘i ‘ai*), and thinned with water. After the Māhele, urban dwelling Hawaiians who had been alienated from their kuleana bartered for poi from Chinese producers, who cooked it in factories and peddled it from house to house. That poi was bartered and sold points directly to the syncretism of Chinese-Hawaiian enterprise and exchange.

The barter system prevailed throughout Hawai‘i, especially in rural districts, even as the market economy encroached upon every facet of island life. Refusing to depend

wholly on the cash wages of plantation work, Native Hawaiians instead pluralized their subsistence strategies. The barter that occurred between Chinese and Hawaiian producers enabled the latter to sustain households whose assimilation into the market economy remained strategically partial and incomplete, while enriching the former, who typically lacked sufficient capital to open shops.¹⁹⁵ Even when Chinese did succeed in establishing stores, they continued to exchange goods on barter, in keeping with local practice, and thus also resisted their own economic assimilation.¹⁹⁶

This flexibility in business practices marked the shift from rice to kalo cultivation across the outer islands. Chinese cultured and consumed both starches in their lands of origin, and with rice, they had literally transplanted what became the second most lucrative industry in Hawai‘i after sugar.¹⁹⁷ This was an industry that both capitalized upon and reproduced the growing diaspora of Chinese to the Pacific Islands and the West Coast, but plummeted in the two decades following annexation and exclusion.¹⁹⁸ Because rice and kalo grew under similar conditions in wetland paddies that were alternately flooded and drained, many struggling rice farmers substituted kalo and began producing for the indigenous Hawaiian market.

One such farmer was Young Yim, who had come to Hawai‘i from Young Mer in 1840 to work on a plantation in ‘Ewa, O‘ahu. Following a dispute with his Portuguese *luna* (overseer), Young left the plantation and embarked on a series of unsuccessful collective ventures, including investing in a rubber plantation with Chinese partners. Eventually he settled down with a mixed Chinese-Hawaiian woman and the two shared a rice, and then kalo, farming homestead in Ke‘anae, Maui. His son, Joseph Kwong Ming,

followed in his father's footsteps, farming kalo with his Chinese-Hawaiian wife, Eliza Ho'okano Young, whose father had also worked the fields.¹⁹⁹

As in fish farming families, Hawaiian women in kalo and poi production were far more than the anchors of a stable domestic life. In countless cases, they were the property owners of the land from which their husbands, with their Chinese networks of capital and kin, wrested profits. This was certainly true of Kong Yip and Kaiawe Kekohai. Kong, or Aipa, as he came to be called by Hawaiians, was born in China in 1853 and came to Hawai'i in 1885. He worked under contract at a sugar plantation in Kipahulu, Maui before settling in Puko'o, Moloka'i with his wife, Kaiawe, of Wailau, whom he married in 1891. On her half-acre of land—partly purchased and partly inherited from her brother—Aipa and Kaiawe raised sixteen children, cultivated Chinese and Hawaiian provisions, and operated a poi shop across the street.

But Aipa's wife was not the only woman in the family with a valuable landholding. His mother-in-law held a kuleana in Halawa Valley, and this is where Aipa grew the kalo for their poi factory. Of course, he did not plant, harvest, transport, process, and deliver the kalo on his own. In addition to conscripting his own children's labor, Aipa recruited four bachelors from among his kin in China to work for pay, room, and board at the Aipa Poi Factory. While he commercialized his affinal kin's property and likely supported their household through payments of rent or land taxes, Aipa chose to employ members of his own natal family, even though it meant transporting them across the Pacific.²⁰⁰

It is not entirely clear who grew the kalo in Halawa Valley. Perhaps it was members of the Kekohai family, who were also farmers in Moloka'i. But Kaiawe's

inheritance of family property points to the growing trend of outmigration among Hawaiian men who left rural districts seeking wage work in Hawaiian ports, the West Coast, and the greater maritime world.²⁰¹ Perhaps those who stayed could not be persuaded to perform labor off their own kuleana unless obligated to obtain cash. This was a common practice in rural localities, where Hawaiian subsistence farmers periodically moonlighted in Chinese kalo patches for wages and where elderly Hawaiian women earned meager incomes peeling kalo in Chinese poi factories.²⁰² While the marginalization of indigenous labor within Chinese poi operations may reflect the deliberate assertion of Hawaiian economic autonomy, Aipa's recruitment of migrant labor may also have betrayed a conflicted ethnocentric preference for his own kind.

Scores of Chinese fathers counted their mixed children as wholly Chinese by virtue of their patrilineage and made overt distinctions between the fitness of Hawaiians for reproductive versus productive labor. Countless migrants held the view that any woman could birth a Chinese baby—but not just anyone could work in a Chinese business.²⁰³ Had these men imbibed the racist logic of their former plantation masters, who decried native sloth while demanding contracted coolies? Did Aipa himself adhere to a racialized scheme of labor management that vetted Chinese for skilled positions while confining Hawaiians to menial labor?²⁰⁴ Perhaps more credit is due to him, but these lines of inquiry must remain open throughout excavations of Chinese life in Hawai'i. It would be a mistake to confuse the willingness of migrants to procreate with Hawaiian women as sound evidence of their inclusive and egalitarian racial politics.

Recruiting labor from China made economic sense when one considers the broad network of sociofinancial sponsorship that subsidized diasporic Chinese enterprise.

These networks provided the financial means to restructure economic communities, empowering the growth of an independent productive class. But each new cohort of fledgling producers required a constant influx of dependent migrants to maintain the viability of their independent operations. For every migrant who moved up the web, a new dependent needed to enter the islands at the bottom. This is precisely why the extension of the Chinese Exclusion laws to Hawai‘i took such a devastating toll on Chinese business in labor-intensive agricultural industries.²⁰⁵ As Chinese businesses were cut off from the lifeblood of their enterprise—young male migrants who worked cheaply, loyally, and intimately under their employers—many of these ventures eventually decayed.

More than menial labor, these landless migrants assimilated fluently to Chinese business strategies that blurred the lines between labor, capital, and kin. Whether in fishpond operations or rice and kalo plantations, Chinese bachelors boarded in barracks adjacent to family homes, worked alongside proprietors and their children, and ate from the same stores of provisions and pots of rice—willingly accepting payment in kind and cash. These homogenizing labor practices overshadowed the fundamental creolization of Chinese diasporic enterprise, even as they betrayed the peculiar imperatives of a people initially recruited to serve the colonial plantation economy.

Few migrants better embody the ambivalence of Chinese settlement than Chong Ung Pung. Born in Mui Kok Village in See Yup District, Chong came to Halawa, Moloka‘i sometime in the late nineteenth century. He began planting kalo and married a Hawaiian woman from a kalo farming family, Kamamala Kanaka‘ole, in 1888. Chong operated a poi shop in Kaunakakai, transporting his harvest on pack mule from Halawa

Valley to be processed. Like Aipa, he employed Chinese laborers, including his own relatives. Unlike Aipa, Chong moved his wife and three children to Mui Kok, leaving them in the care of his brother, who had learned Hawaiian from his own sojourn to the islands.

Chong had already agreed to let the Kanaka‘oles hānai his youngest daughter, as adoption was fairly common both among and between Chinese and Hawaiian families. Perhaps this decision had spurred his determination to raise his remaining three children in an emphatically Chinese manner. He would not go so far as to separate them from their Hawaiian mother, and Kamamala tearfully followed her children to China. In her brief and lonely exile she died, and Chong, who continued to live and work on Moloka‘i, eventually sent for their children. By then they had lived in China for over a decade—long enough for Chong’s son, Ju Kong, who was five when he left Hawai‘i, to have married Wong Yee Dai, whose family owned the successful import-export store Yee Wo Chan in Honolulu. Upon their arrival in 1912 the young couple settled into the family business, which Chong had been assiduously building. They lived at Kalamaula Coconut Grove, sharing the complex with Chong, his Chinese workers, and Pikake, the sister of the late Kamamala.

While Chong upheld his obligation to his late wife’s kin, Chong’s daughter-in-law, Yee Dai, struggled to assimilate to the family’s creolized lifestyle. She felt herself in exile and shunned Hawaiian company, despite having married the son of a Hawaiian woman. She birthed her children without anyone in attendance—either a testament to her independence or a sign of her stubborn racism, as most midwives were Hawaiian.²⁰⁶ Yee Dai, who ventured into pig farming to supplement the family income, even refused the

Hawaiian Homestead land to which her husband was entitled.²⁰⁷ When Grandfather Chong retired to Kaunakakai with Kekaha, his second wife and the cousin of Kamamala, he took his granddaughter, Mary, so that she could be schooled in the town. Thus began a minor custody battle that played out over the following years, with Chong trying in vain to hānai his mixed grandchild, and Yee Dai laying claim to her Chinese daughter.

Yee Dai had no interest in the syncretic social world of rural Moloka‘i, where her husband dove in fishponds and her father-in-law attended church services in Hawaiian. In 1920 she proposed moving back to China, a prospect that was so frightening to Mary that the young girl actually ran away, back to Chong and Kekaha. Yee Dai retrieved her, and moved the family to Honolulu where a burgeoning, middling, and mercantilist Chinese community had begun cloistering itself after exclusion. Grandfather Chong returned, hoping to spirit the young girl back to Moloka‘i, where her surrogate grandmother continued to write her letters in Hawaiian. But Yee Dai foiled his plot, and the girl remained in her mother’s custody. The same man who had once risked his own wife’s happiness to ensure the sinification of his mixed children wept bitterly at losing his granddaughter to her ethnocentric mother.²⁰⁸ In his twilight years Chong moved into his son’s household in Honolulu, leaving his poi shop in another son’s care. He too came to retire in Honolulu, and the Chong family relinquished their tenure of the shop. No more poi would be sold in Kaunakakai.²⁰⁹

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1920s, Chinese families poured into urban O‘ahu, abandoning the rural enterprises of their forebears. Working under the aegis of U.S. empire, they

were no longer homesteaders but instead civic-minded technocrats who had been as much displaced from the countryside as they had been lured by the unique opportunities of American development. With access to better schooling, their children came to staff the multiplying bureaucracies of the territorial government, the sugar industry, and the military complex.

For the children of former contract workers, education rather than homesteading held the promise of autonomy, offering an alternative to the precariousness of rural production in a plantation colony where sugar inflated the cost of land and exclusion laws terminated the circulation of inexpensive kindred labor. Furthermore, the expanding military occupation and auxiliary tourist industry rendered fishponds and surrounding marshlands both vulnerable and desirable, leading to their condemnation and redevelopment as military bases and places of recreation. It would take decades for local officials to advocate for the innate ecological genius of fishponds, much less their potential to stem the growing dependence of Hawai‘i’s residents on the mainland for food.²¹⁰

When the epic of Chinese history in Hawai‘i was recorded in the 1970s and 1980s by scholars, descendants, and volunteers, the literature on Hawaiian fishponds was urgently produced. Both the Bishop Museum and the Department of Land and Natural Resources conducted extensive surveys of the remaining ponds that had not been destroyed by natural disaster, filled by land developers, or condemned and confiscated by the military. Conservationists with an eye toward revival charged anthropologists and archaeologists with the task of reconstructing these aquatic wonders of Hawaiian engineering. And at the same time that successful Chinese families were forgetting their

debt to the indigenous people of the Hawaiian Islands, scholars and activists were marginalizing the critical role Chinese operators once played as the custodians of Hawaiian knowledge.

Despite these paired exclusions, a shared history remains. Before a voracious American empire swallowed down hard on the whole archipelago, indigenous, migrant, and mixed families pursued autonomous futures and alternative economic strategies in overlapping networks of exchange. Native Hawaiians who refused to be extinguished from their homelands tenaciously tended kuleana while experimenting with the cash economy. Chinese migrants recruited to serve corporate plantations settled and unsettled an insular frontier. Beyond the cohesive metrics of Chinatown, a patchwork of creolized Chinese life once spread, strategically incorporating Hawaiian knowledge, culture, and bodies.

Trajectories of successful Chinese settlement in the islands were more than points of stumbling pioneers and stable patriarchs connected by lines of capital investment. Grounding and fostering Chinese success in local ventures were the intimate exchanges between migrants and indigenous Hawaiians, particularly women. Just as the work of Chinese caretakers must be re-inscribed into the archive of Hawaiian ecological knowledge, the centrality of Hawaiians to Chinese sustenance and settlement must also be emphasized and explored. Perhaps then the colonial myth of inherent Chinese financial savvy can be exorcised, along with its implicit premise of indigenous incompetence. Both claims deny credit to native people for the knowledge and resources appropriated by migrants for gain. Indeed, this relationship of appropriation provided the material condition for the liberation of migrant subjects from imperialist exploitation.

Chapter 3

Rice Culture and the Economics of Exclusion

Introduction

No commodity tied together the nineteenth century Pacific world like rice. From the Pearl River delta in Southeast China to the West Coast of the United States, rice followed the multiple streams of migrants whose labor underwrote industrial expansion in the age of empire. While taro remained the staple food of indigenous Hawaiian households, even as sugar, in its aggressive production, became metonymically linked with colonial capitalist development, rice gained a foothold in the islands by the plantings of Chinese migrants. By the end of the nineteenth century, rice became the second most lucrative crop in the islands, literally supplanting taro in the marshy wetlands formed by the fertile valleys of O‘ahu, Maui, and Kaua‘i.

How do strangers see and seize foreign lands? Often there is an element of the familiar that becomes the basis for entitled settlement and strategic enterprise. When Euro-American planters inducted the Hawaiian Islands into the sugaring world, they transplanted a crop that had proven profitable across the subtropical regions of the Americas. It was a punishing cultivar whose production tended to rely on coercive labor regimes, which allowed managers optimal control over workers, and colonial property relations, which secured the steep financial investments required to furnish land, labor, and machinery. The haole planters who claimed the lands of Hawai‘i for capitalist development were not innovative entrepreneurs, but shrewd students of a global network

of sugar culture that held vast swaths of the world under regimes of extractive colonial production.

A different familiarity might have struck the traveling merchants who arrived in Hawai‘i from the ports of Guangdong Province in the first half of the nineteenth century. The lush marshlands of meticulously irrigated paddies and ponds would have resembled the rice growing regions of Southern China. The swelling numbers of Chinese laborers contracted by plantations created a growing demand for the grain. But there was no imperial scheme that vested these migrants with self-conscious colonial agency. Until 1880, there was not even an official diplomatic organ to represent Chinese nationals in Hawai‘i.²¹¹ With severely limited diplomatic protection, and no militarized imperial backing, these merchants had come to stake out a future in what they hoped would prove a lucrative node in the growing network of transpacific trade. Their commercial success would not directly enrich their nation, whose own sovereignty had been compromised by a multinational vanguard of militarized and mercantile imperialists, but themselves, their trading firms, and the families they had left behind in a country similarly experiencing the upheavals of global capitalism and colonial incursions.²¹²

Apart from handling the traffic of Chinese goods into the islands, these merchants insinuated themselves into the commerce of the country by offering their services as labor recruiters for sugar planters. Early on, Chinese businessmen had been pushed out of sugar production by the well-financed and landed haole gentry.²¹³ These men overwhelmingly of missionary stock had only recently secured the islands for colonial enterprise, having agitated for the institution of private property laws realized in the Great Māhele (division) of 1848. This event, which will be discussed in greater detail later,

rewarded its haole architects with vast tracts of land.²¹⁴ Not to be deterred from a share of the profits, Chinese merchants made themselves indispensable to haole planters by pursuing auxiliary industries in the sugar market. Supported by associated firms located in China's commercial ports, they connected Hawaiian agriculture to a pool of Chinese contract labor that would swiftly remake the demographics of the islands. Unlike the success of haole planters, it was not vast tracts of land that blossomed into fortunes for the pioneer-merchants, but a circulating network of human capital connecting entrepôts from Hong Kong to Honolulu.²¹⁵

Evidence from across the sugaring world pointed to China as the source of cheap, tractable, exploitable labor. Imperial accounts spoke of China as a land of starving masses—the first place one would look for workers who could be underpaid and heavily disciplined. Furthermore, China had, arguably, the most available pool of labor in the world. While the coolie trade from South Asia had come under serious regulation by the British colonial government, the weakened Chinese state struggled to project the power needed to regulate the treatment of its nationals abroad.²¹⁶ After much lobbying, the organized sugar interests succeeded in persuading the Hawaiian government to sponsor Chinese contract migration, and facilitate a private trade in Chinese coolie labor. While a wily array of European and American ship captains delivered the first boatfuls of unreliable laborers to Hawai'i, Chinese merchants and firms, recruiting largely from amongst their own clansman and kinsman, carried on a more stable and humane trade in indentured labor.²¹⁷

The statistics of Chinese migration to the islands reveal its suddenness and scope. In 1853, 364 Chinese were resident in the islands. A little more than a decade later, their

numbers had increased by nearly a thousand. Six years later, in 1872, 2,038 Chinese were recorded. The next few years would prove momentous for sugar, and with the growth of the industry came scores of Chinese laborers. 1874 marked the year a reciprocity treaty was reached with the United States, under the administration of King Kalākaua, which tied the economic fate of the kingdom to the great market across the sea.²¹⁸ Sugar planters had gambled on this moment, and the payoff was a mainland market free of tariffs. Planters who had seized upon the opening left in the American sugar market by the Civil War doubled down on their investments after reciprocity, and the demand for Chinese labor swelled. In 1878, 6,045 Chinese inhabited the islands, and by 1884, the Chinese population reached 18,254 persons—a fact interpreted by many as a crisis.²¹⁹

For missionaries, these allegedly godless bachelors—for the migration was virtually all male—posed a moral crisis for an island nation as yet unredeemed by Christian salvation. For government ministers, the coolie hordes and their foreign habits posed a crisis of governance. For white artisans and mechanics the migrants, who never could stay put on the plantations, posed a serious economic threat. Native Hawaiians, as a whole, were divided on the issue, with some trafficking in the sinophobia of working whites and organizing against the importation of Chinese labor, while others actively associated with the newcomers and decried their scapegoating by the forces of colonial capital. For the mercantile Chinese, however, these scores of compatriots embodied further commercial opportunities in the islands, instantiating a market for familiar goods that could be profitably imported or, in the case of rice, locally produced.²²⁰

What follows in this chapter is the story of rice in Hawai‘i, its rise and fall, and the communities it impacted and called into being. Crucially, the history of rice culture uncovers the complicated relationships of Chinese migrants to Hawai‘i as a colonized space, and to the imperial authorities that effected the islands’ absorption into the expanding sphere of American sovereignty. While the figure of the Chinese migrant has remained a vexing one for historians of Hawai‘i, narrated as both vulnerable coolie and predatory colonial, recognition of the variegation and flexibility of Chinese life, and the pluralization of narrative frames for the telling of Hawaiian history, could shed light on these ambiguous ciphers.²²¹

Narrative Frames: Histories of Hawai‘i Beyond Sugar

To date, the dominant narrative frame of Hawaiian historiography has been the political economy of sugar. Scholars of Asian migration and Native Hawaiian life alike constantly struggle against its hegemony, and the assumptions and tropes about both groups it has perpetuated. While attempting a totalizing narrative of the islands, sugar has failed to adequately describe, for example, mercantile Chinese or urban Hawaiian life. While its timeline corresponds neatly with American colonization, annexation, and exploitation of the islands, it has a tendency to narrate teleologically, obscuring the multiple meanings and possibilities that Hawai‘i held to subjects outside of the white plantation elite. Furthermore, by positioning sugar as the central force of historical transformation in Hawaiian history, the ideas and actions of Asians and Hawaiians beyond the plantation have been denied due consequence.

To be fair, the dominance and traction of sugar-based historiographies is not without reason. Looking back from the present moment, the interests and industry of sugar did win out in the battles over the resources, purpose, and sovereignty of Hawai‘i. But to narrate from a point of victory is to minimize the contests that sugar faced, its epic failures, and the competing claims that also succeeded in shaping the archipelago of today.

It is not the intention of this paper to suggest that the narrative frame of rice should replace that of sugar, but to insist on a plurality of frames in keeping with the magnificent diversity of life in the islands. While only one scholarly monograph, published in 1937, documents the development of the rice industry in Hawai‘i, a rich archive of memories and anecdotes is preserved in the family histories of Hawai‘i Chinese whose parents and grandparents were engaged in the rice industry.²²² Their stories, recorded in oral histories and family biographies published in the 1970s and 1980s, offer invaluable insights into the social and cultural history of rice culture in the islands..²²³

The most informative histories reflect a wide diversity of socioeconomic imperatives and experiences among rice growing families. While many households engaged in rice production as a deliberate stepping stone from plantation to professional work, others found enough satisfaction in farming life to remain for generations, occasionally branching out into other rural enterprises like commercial fishponds and salt flats. Still others failed in their bids to transform family fortunes through rice production, leaving uneducated progeny to make a living in the countryside. These narratives of failure, so often shunned, should be recognized as a crucial part of the migrant

experience. Several narratives described the varied trajectories of mixed-race families, a welcome complication of the very category of “Chinese.” One is no less “Chinese” for being rural, working class, and mixed; conversely, one is no more “Chinese” for being urban, upwardly mobile, and ethnically homogenous. To operate with these assumptions is to ignore the role of class in determining family trajectories, including location and ethnic composition, and to confine the Chinese experience to the model minority stereotype.²²⁴

The texts themselves reveal the precarious positions of the speakers and authors, who use the discursive space to both eulogize their pioneer ancestors and justify their belonging in the colony of Hawai‘i and the empire of America. They demonstrate the onus shared by all Americans descended from formerly excluded races to express gratitude for the accident of American birth, while rationalizing the experience of alienation. Further complicating the contested settlement of Chinese in Hawai‘i is the urgent reality of a displaced and colonized aboriginal population, in whose suffering Asian migrants and their descendants have been complicit. Speakers and authors express a fascinating ambivalence towards their Native Hawaiian neighbors, at times investing in the model minority myth and settler colonial politics to promote their own contributions, at others empathizing with the plight of a people so thoroughly marginalized in their own homeland.

The intention of this chapter is to tease out this ambivalence by historicizing the experience of rural Chinese in Hawai‘i, paying special attention to their intimacies with Native Hawaiians, and the constraints annexation and the regime of exclusion placed on their modes of sustenance and belonging. The story of rice grants historiographical space

to Chinese migrants who actively shaped their destinies in the islands and the destiny of the islands themselves. It reveals migrants whose initial imperatives were to reproduce rural life when it had become impossible to do so in China. What's more, a careful examination of rice reveals the interracial intimacies that structured agriculture in an island frontier.

Hawaiian Dispossession: "Waste Lands" and Spaces of Enterprise

The first Chinese to plant rice in the islands succeeded by capitalizing upon the crucial absences and presences of the indigenous people into whose society and lands they had arrived. Chinese migrants were merely one stream of labor in a swirling Pacific market, which included Hawaiian men sojourning on the West Coast of North America and the wider maritime world. Chinese could have, and in fact did, rub shoulders with these voyagers on merchant ships and in mining camps. But the Chinese of this story came to Hawai'i, and maneuvered into social and economic spaces left behind by Hawaiian men. They bartered with their families and cohabited with their female relatives. They planted their lo'i (wetlands) with rice. Above all, they demonstrated that in the context of colonial Hawai'i, diasporic connections could translate into profit more proficiently than land ownership.²²⁵

The mid-nineteenth century Māhele had replaced the customary system of land tenure and tribute with privatization and cash-based taxes. The Euro-American architects of the policies deemed the reforms necessary to secure their financial investment in Hawaiian lands. The laws had the result of transforming haole settlers into landed gentry, eager to exploit the productive potential of their holdings for the global sugar market.

These same reforms turned aboriginal subjects, once tenants with inalienable rights enshrined in the kapu system, into reluctant proletariats and ambivalent property owners. In an island economy still largely premised on subsistence, lands that required cash payments to claim and sustain became liabilities for indigenous owners.²²⁶

The new tax codes based on American law abolished the tribute system, which had structured land use and belonging through the cyclical offering of surplus subsistence goods (such as kalo or fish) to ali'i (chiefs) by the maka'ainana. Now the Hawaiian families who had successfully registered their land claims during the Māhele had to pay taxes on their kuleana (land grants) in cash. For rural Hawaiians, barter and exchange, not money, mediated socioeconomic transactions. Embedded in economies of subsistence-based agriculture, few had access to cash. Taking drastic measures, many families sold their kuleana to haole planters and ranchers, who stood ready to gain from their dislocation. Taking perhaps even more drastic measures, many families sent their daughters to port towns to earn cash through sex work. Both activities served to exacerbate Hawaiian suffering, particularly the struggle to reproduce Hawaiian life.²²⁷

Native Hawaiians resisted their displacement under the new property regulations, and sought to preserve their customary relationship to the land through the formation of *hui kū'ai 'āina* (land purchasing organizations). These hui functioned as organizations of mutual economic support, pooling together the financial resources of a community in order to purchase large tracts of land. Held under collective Hawaiian ownership, these lands were then divided into kuleana and distributed to respective members of the hui. The outcomes of this strategy of maintaining indigenous land tenure by interfacing with the colonial regime of private property were mixed. Successive divisions of kuleana

among members and their respective households could result in negligible holdings. But the greatest threat to collective Hawaiian land ownership through hui organizing came from lawsuits that sought to impose colonial logics of individual property ownership on the members. These suits worked specifically to dissolve hui, and were too often successful.²²⁸

Hawaiian families determined to defend their kuleana despite the interference of colonial economic policies straddled two worlds. While maintaining semi-traditional, subsistence-oriented economies like kalo production and fishing, they also engaged in the new colonial market. They became partial proletariats, struggling to compromise familiar lifestyles and colonial imperatives by strategically commodifying the resources at their disposal. So daughters were sent to the towns as sex workers. Mothers offered their services as midwives at a price, making use of their extensive knowledge of both local flora and the life cycle. Men secured odd jobs that relied on their own knowledge of the ecosystem, like hauling lumber, which required one to locate the choicest trees. Many families engaged in cash cropping. But this was not always enough. Some chose to rent portions of their kuleana. While this was usually the first step towards sale and alienation from the land, outcomes varied by location and economy.²²⁹

For example, in the wetlands of Ke‘anae, a taro-producing settlement on the windward coast of Maui, Chinese rice farmers leased portions of kuleana from local Hawaiian families in the 1880s and 1890s. From this economic and ecological intimacy came familial ties, and many bachelors married into the community. When they died, their Hawaiian families replanted the kuleana in kalo. In this way, indigenous land ownership was maintained through strategies of creolization.²³⁰

Reproducing Home: The Roots of the Rice Industry in Hawai‘i

Roving the rural frontier, capital-poor Chinese migrants sought contact with Hawaiians for companionship, credit, labor, and land. In turn, many managed to mediate the dislocation experienced by Hawaiian families in a time of drastic change. A long stream of meandering Chinese made their way to Hawaiian homesteads, as peddlers engaged in barter, as laborers looking for odd jobs, and as bachelors seeking brides. From these chance intimacies might come meaningful economic opportunities for both sides. Barter—trade mediated by trust, not cash—granted Hawaiian families access to transpacific and urban products not found in the countryside. It established commercial contacts with Chinese hawkers looking constantly to unload their wares.²³¹ Such transactions diversified the exchange value of goods produced by Native Hawaiian households, like taro, copra, poultry, and pigs. Networks of barter were further expanded and stabilized into the twentieth century by Chinese shopkeepers who continued to honor this system of exchange beyond the cash economy.²³²

More lucrative were the agricultural enterprises of rural Chinese migrants, many of whom had finished or escaped contracts on sugar plantations and were determined to wrest their fortunes from the islands as independent producers. The lucky ones found in Hawaiian families willing landlords eager to monetize patches of wetland that lay dormant due to gradual depopulation and the decreased demand for food. Luckier ones still found domestic partners whose local knowledge, connections, and multiple labors lessened the burdens of fledgling entrepreneurs. These men would have found familiars in the young women who toiled in all trades—from fishing to plantation labor—to

support their families amidst the dislocations of colonial capitalist expansion.²³³ They would have found familiar, too, the landscape of the lush and windward parts of the islands, that resembled so closely their homelands in the Pearl River delta, where the life-sustaining crops of rice and kalo were grown.

Wong Aloiau, the famed “Rice King of Kapa‘a,” achieved exceptional wealth as a planter on the island of Kaua‘i. While his fortunes were extraordinary, his basic strategy of capitalizing on familial relationships, and diversifying these networks by courting Hawaiian patriarchs, were not uncommon among Chinese migrants, and epitomized a particularly diasporic logic of potential capital in personal connections. Wong had been summoned to Hawai‘i in 1865 to work as an overseer at the duckpond and rice plantation owned by the firm Chulan and Company. He was the clansman of the successful merchant-planter Wong Kwai, who along with three other relatives, Ching Alee, Chung Afong, and Ching Achuck, had founded Chulan and Company as a labor-recruiting venture in 1860. Their services were contracted by the government and private planters determined to secure reliable laborers for the developing sugar industry.

The firm soon branched out into auxiliary industries, anticipating and engineering the increase of the Chinese population in Hawai‘i. Chulan and Company began planting and milling rice on O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i to feed the Chinese laborers whose very transits they had sponsored and commercialized. **(See Peck/Reinventing Free Labor on the “commodification of space”)** Not only did these labor recruiters “commodify space,” to borrow Peck’s analysis of immigrant padrones who profited from the physical migration of working-class compatriots. The merchants of Chulan and Company capitalized on the migrants themselves, recognizing in their pool of foreign laborers a

cohesive market for imported and ethnically specific goods unavailable in islands so far removed from their homelands. The more labor they recruited, the more the local demand for rice grew, and Chulan and Company's own planting ventures expanded into lucrative *wai goon* (plantations) throughout the three islands.

As was typical of Chinese labor recruiters, the partners of Chulan and Company drew heavily from their own natal villages, calling upon kin to labor in their expanding plantations. The advantage of engaging a familiar pool of labor was unknown to sugar planters, for whom all migrants were essentially foreign. For the managers of *wai goon*, importing clansmen meant securing a labor force bound as much by legal contract as by social, cultural, and familial codes of obligation. A coolie could desert a sugar plantation and have only the law to reprimand him. A field hand who breached his covenant with a clansman could face serious stigma in Hawai'i and China. Furthermore, by proving himself unreliable, the potential for future financial sponsorship would be lost.

As Wong Aloiau's case illustrated, rice plantations furnished migrants with critical opportunities for professional development. The managerial experience and financial grants migrants earned following their successful tenure as hired underlings were especially crucial given the routine racial discrimination Chinese faced from the local haole establishment. Chinese merchant firms provided alternative routes to financial stability, and preferred to share these opportunities with friends and relatives with whom they shared affective and familial ties. It was precisely through these channels, lubricated by an established clansman, that Wong began his ascent through the rice industry, bypassing the usual bottom rung of field hand.²³⁴

After discharging his managerial duties for Chulan and Company, Wong decided to strike out on his own. By 1870 he had relocated to Kaua‘i, and was engaged in a variety of fledgling businesses, gathering timber from Anahola forest to sell as firewood with a gang of Hawaiian workmen, and illegally manufacturing rice-based *‘okolehao* (moonshine), an activity that would land him in criminal court. Looking to save capital to finance his various enterprises, Wong found himself working in a restaurant under a Hawaiian proprietor, Daniela I. This man would invest in the young migrant twice: first by arranging marriage between his hānai daughter, Emma Ellis, and Wong, and second, by providing Wong with a loan to purchase land for a rice-growing operation. Though the marriage ultimately ended in divorce, it stabilized the young man’s domestic life and further bonded him to his creditor as affinal kin. Together Wong and Ellis had two daughters, whose fortunes they similarly hoped to secure by arranging their marriages to enterprising Chinese bachelors.²³⁵

Cooperative Capitalism and the Diasporic Ethics of Rice

This early generation of rice growers not only established themselves in planting, but cornered auxiliary industries like retail, establishing groceries and general stores that became central to the sustenance of Chinese agricultural life. General stores offered both a shared, public space of leisure and communion, and a critical economic node in the transnational network of rice. Often run by Chinese proprietors who contracted with merchant firms in Honolulu, general stores connected the cosmopolitan market of Honolulu with isolated rural districts whose logistical distance from port cities cannot be overstated. Furthermore, general stores offered more than convenient commodities.

They also furnished much-needed credit, particularly to fledgling and independent rice growers who needed small advances of capital to jumpstart their rice-growing homesteads. This informal financial network was the primary means by which small planters secured capital for rice.²³⁶

The majority of rice planters did not become wealthy merchants, but they survived by staying within their networks. Whether planting in family farms or cooperative partnerships—one could find both systems together, with families claiming larger shares of cooperative farming ventures—independent growers benefited from the infrastructure established by wealthier planter-merchants and Chinese commercial firms involved in rice. Firms located in Honolulu managed the larger plantations, known as wai goon, that usually contained at least ten times the acreage cultivated by smaller family or collective farms. However, far from creating an atmosphere of predatory capitalism, these firms supported independent producers by extending credit, renting land, securing laborers, operating rice mills, arranging transportation, and managing the wholesale and retail of rice. Handling all commercial aspects of rice beyond the local economy of planting, these firms, themselves cooperative ventures among Chinese, enabled cash-poor migrants to enter an industry designed to support its producers with economic and social safety nets. Wai goon also offered their facilities to the wider rice growing community during holidays and celebrations, serving as a site of cultural cohesion.²³⁷

Rice provided an economic model that was unique in the islands as a stable export-oriented agricultural industry operated overwhelmingly by small, independent producers. Such a system was but a pipedream shared by very few of the architects of the

sugar industry. A crop like sugar required enormous capital investment and industrial landscaping of terrain. It had developed in the islands as a high-stakes and highly competitive industry with a tendency towards predatory monopoly. Rice was different. It operated in a commercial world bound to principles of mutual aid as well as profit. Not all was harmonious, and court records are replete with litigious Chinese planters suing one another over water rights and land usage, but even these disputes were handled within the community of rice growers first. Unlike the sugar industry, rice growers had a variety of means to establish themselves as independent producers. In rice, migrants succeeded in reproducing rural Chinese life at a time when the possibilities of stable homesteading in the rice growing areas of China had been severely curtailed by a vicious multinational form of colonialism.

A prospective planter could start a small farm with a modest loan from a general store, as mentioned above, and enlist the labor of family members, with the occasional reinforcement of a few hired hands during planting and harvesting seasons. These farms were quite common, and reveal the importance of families to Chinese economic life. Taking into account all of the unremunerated labor contributed daily by partners and dependents, family men had economic advantages over bachelors that were impossible to overstate.

Alternatively, a planter could join cooperative ventures in one of two arrangements. One was the hop-pun system of farming, a small partnership of usually two to three planters who split all costs and profits equally, including the lease of the land, the cost of the equipment, the investment of personal labor, and the harvest itself. The second arrangement was the fun-kung system, a form of tenant farming wherein a

similar cooperative agreement was made, but with one partner being the owner or lessee of the land. A ten-year lease from 1880 for land in Wailua, Kaua‘i illustrated the practicalities of this system. The lease was made between the landowner, Ernest Lindemann, possessed of sugar lands that he, evidently, had failed to render profitable, and two Chinese planters: Alama of Kapa‘a (Kaua‘i) and Ahuna of Waialua (O‘ahu). Lindemann agreed to furnish the land needed to cultivate the crop, as well as to make the necessary arrangements for its transport, by schooner, to market. In exchange, he was entitled to one-third of the harvested paddy. The Chinese growers, entitled to the remainder, were entirely responsible for its cultivation.²³⁸

Out of this patchwork of wai goon, homesteads, and cooperative farms blossomed the second most lucrative export in all the islands. When the rice industry reached its peak in the late 1890s and early 1900s, over 9,000 acres of Hawaiian land were cultivated in paddies. In a little over five years, this number would shrink by one-third. By the 1930s, less than a thousand acres of rice lands remained.²³⁹

Rice and the Economics of Exclusion

While Chinese life flourished in the country wetlands of Hawai‘i, the fact of its growing presence and diversification beyond sugar plantations agonized the colonial establishment. Amongst the white settlers, the oligarchs and populists were beginning to see eye-to-eye: the Chinese, so desired as indentured, immobilized labor, had begun to proliferate like weeds across the land, threatening to choke the growth of white enterprise in the islands. Hawaiians joined the chorus with calls of “Hawai‘i for Hawaiians.”²⁴⁰

Gradually, a regime of restriction emerged to grapple with the social, economic, and political nuisance of a class of independent Asian producers.

Laws tended to target new arrivals, the most marginal members of the Chinese community, but the slippage between both groups evidenced by the socioeconomic mobility of migrant Chinese hinted at the fiction of these legal distinctions. For example, a law passed in 1890 revoking the right of laborers to stay in the islands after the expiration of their contracts may have targeted incoming indentured labor, but it was embedded in a larger discourse of sinophobia resentful of middling Chinese. In the decade following 1883, similar laws were passed in the hopes of reducing the population of Hawai‘i Chinese, and intended to limit their economic possibilities in the islands. Quotas, passports, and laws encouraging repatriation foreshadowed the legal configuration of the modern guestworker, expending their labor in a foreign country to which they will, by definition and design, never belong. A people who had capitalized on their own mobility--to traverse oceans and islands, and to summon kin into similar circuits—felt their wings clipped.²⁴¹

The overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by members of the sugar oligarchy in 1893, followed by the establishment of the Republic of Hawai‘i under Sanford B. Dole, was tantamount to the closing of a frontier for Chinese migrants. Despite the increasing regulations and restrictions passed during the last years of the Hawaiian monarchy, Chinese subjects had negotiated rights and prerogatives necessary to reproduce an impressive diversity of life in the islands. Following the overthrow, Hawai‘i became a colony in future tense, and the pro-American vanguard of the white settler establishment awaited with growing impatience its annexation to the United States.

The same architects of the coup had plotted the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, under Kalākaua's reign, which had the dual affects of eviscerating the power of the Hawaiian sovereign and nullifying the citizenship of Asians. For haoles engaged in this form of vigilante-colonialism, indigenous sovereignty and Asian enfranchisement were twin threats to their destiny of domination. When, after five long years of fierce debate, the United States Congress finally agreed to annex the islands of the Republic of Hawai'i, these fears remained.²⁴² But while the first was ostensibly suppressed by the presumed finality of annexation, the second loomed unresolved.

The Report of the Hawaiian Commission on Annexation, authored by five American officials and published in 1899, insinuated these racialized anxieties and articulated their implications for the future of rice. Having received their appointments from the president of the United States, the commissioners included the current president of the Republic of Hawai'i, Sanford B. Dole, Senator Shelby M. Cullom. Senator John T. Morgan, Representative Robert R. Hitt, and Walter F. Frear. Ensconced in 'Iolani Palace, the seat of the Hawaiian monarchy, the commissioners met daily to determine the political fate of the eventual territory.²⁴³

While their attitude towards rice as a valuable export was ambivalent, their opinion of the Chinese was quite clear. The second page of the report announced their recommendation to extend the Chinese Exclusion Laws to the Hawaiian Islands. The commissioners quoted the "Joint resolution to provide for annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States," approved on July 7, 1898, which stated in the first section:

"There shall be no further immigration of Chinese into the Hawaiian Islands, except upon such conditions as are now or may hereafter be allowed by the laws

of the United States; and no Chinese, by reason of anything herein contained, shall be allowed to enter the United States from the Hawaiian Islands.”²⁴⁴

Given that the remainder of the report grappled with the question of governing the newly incorporated territory, including considerations of legal exceptions to account for the particularities of Hawaiian history, there is no reason to accept this provision as inevitable given the preexisting regime of exclusion in the United States. Nevertheless, for commissioners, the matter was not up for debate. The central concern regarding Chinese resident in Hawai‘i was the effective management of an undesirable population that had become settled over multiple generations.²⁴⁵

While discussing the newly acquired subjects of the United States, the commissioners were quite conscious of the fact that there were many in Congress who remained unconvinced of the shrewdness of annexation given the racial composition of the islands’ inhabitants. Thus, the commissioners made a point to advertise the best traits of each group—at least, the traits that would make them most attractive to a nation with its own punishing and exclusionary racial politics. They extolled the virtues of the Hawaiians, describing them as generous, hospitable, and childlike. Crucially, the commissioners claimed that Native Hawaiians were highly amenable to tutelage by Americans. They highlighted their ongoing miscegenation with local haole to prove their alleged assimilability--likely hoping to relieve mainland skeptics wary of incorporating another formerly sovereign indigenous people.

The commissioners went on to describe the industriousness of the Japanese, a supposedly national trait of a people whose homeland demanded increasing respect on the international stage. A major source of contract labor for local sugar planters, it was

particularly important to the white settler elite that this group should receive rhetorical vindication as worthy Hawaiian residents. The most generous selling point the authors of the report were willing to grant the Chinese was that: “Nearly all Chinese laborers desire and expect to go back to China at death, if not before.” In other words, what made the Chinese attractive to the custodians of the territory was their eventual disappearance. Their harmonious incorporation into the insular empire was contingent upon their attrition.²⁴⁶

But what of their labor in the islands? Surely, the immense collective industry that had brought forth from the marshlands of the islands bountiful harvests of rice would garner some appreciation from the commission. The rice industry was indeed mentioned in the section on agriculture. Despite its place in their hierarchy of notable commodities—second only to sugar, as in its material production and lucrative export—the description given to rice was strategically scant in comparison to the laudatory rhetoric regarding sugar. Of the cane industry, they wrote: “The great market crop which furnishes the income for the agriculturists of Hawai‘i is sugar. The sugar crop exceeds in money value many times the aggregate of all other products.” Of rice: “The rice crop is now limited to small areas and raised only by Chinamen. And yet sufficient rice was grown in 1896 to export over 5,000,000 pounds, valued at nearly \$200,000.” There seemed to be more incredulity than confidence expressed in the rice industry, which was degradingly described in such diminutive terms as “limited” and “small,” the domain of “only...Chinamen.”²⁴⁷

The picture was more complicated than this section of the report suggested. The commissioners went on to excoriate the white oligarchy and racialized plantation society

that had developed out of sugar, despite fetishizing its profits and potential for growth under American sovereignty. They spared haole planters the embarrassment of guilt by blaming “corrupt royal favoritism” and “inexpensive Asiatic labor” for enabling monopoly capitalism, a clever means of indicting both the Native Hawaiian monarchy and the Asian contract workers that had been allowed to immigrate to the islands.²⁴⁸

How could sugar, fetching export profits upwards of fifteen million dollars, invite criticism? In what ways did the industry fail to satisfy the longings of the annexationists? The answer helps to explain their ambivalence towards rice, and the resolve with which they signed the death warrant of the industry. As the commissioners lamented, through the phenomenal expansion of the corporate sugar industry, “the prime object of American citizenship, the making of homes and the complete development of the family as the unit of our social system, seems, in a degree, to have been lost sight of in the Hawaiian Islands.”²⁴⁹

Immediately following descriptions of sugar and rice was a promising account of the emergent coffee industry, which offered the possibility of small-scale independent production by settler agriculturalists. Commissioners noted the governmental energies invested in the future of coffee production in the islands. Here was the populist vision lost by sugar, now redeemed by the prospect of homesteads verdant with coffee plants. Their program for agricultural, and thereby social and political reform, included improving the infrastructure of transportation and irrigation, to be undertaken by the government for the benefit of its citizens. “What more is needed to inaugurate in the Territory of Hawai‘i a foundation for the highest type of citizenship and the best manhood and womanhood than the evolution of the home and farm?”²⁵⁰

What more, indeed? In a single report the commissioners had conscientiously endeavored to clear every obstacle in the way of free white enterprise in the newly annexed territory. They had made provisions for the subsidized settlement of white farmers, who would benefit from a well-paved and watered landscape ripe for cultivation. They had extended the Chinese Exclusion Laws to eliminate “inexpensive Asiatic labor” that threatened eventual competition with white producers, and instituted a system of passports intended to restrict the illicit circulation of suspect Chinese subjects. “By the terms of the contracts made for Chinese laborers,” the commissioners inveighed, “all must return to their own country at the expiration of their terms of service, if not reengaged. They can not remain and engage in competition with artisans and merchants.”²⁵¹ Accordingly, the provisions for governing the new territory granted citizenship to all residents of the islands with the enormous exception of Asians.²⁵² In time, the nuisance of Asian participation in the civic and commercial life of the islands would be brought under control, as intended by each measure recommended by the report.

The commissioners laid bare their scheme of subtropical white expansion in islands cleared of Asian settlement. “The growth of almost all agricultural products found profitable in Hawai‘i has also been demonstrated to be profitable and successful in other countries where white labor is employed,” they argued.

“The production of coffee and rice, it is claimed, is also as perfectly feasible with white or native labor as by imported Asiatic labor. The producing classes of the United States are anxious to have the privilege of making investments and homes in these islands when the conditions which prohibit such investments shall have

been obliterated. Give to the American citizen laborer a fair show and let him then take care of himself.”²⁵³

A fair show, in this case, meant the removal and displacement of independent Asian producers for the benefit of white settlers. This drastic substitution, which could not be effected without the action of the federal government, revealed the economic logic underpinning Chinese Exclusion, and the fear that Asian migrants would steal the blessing of white Americans entitled to political and commercial domination over the Pacific frontier.

The challenge of rice to the vision of privileged white colonial settlement had become glaringly apparent. Commissioners were neither ignorant of nor disinterested in the industry. Rather, they had a vested interest in dismantling it, or at least alienating it from the crafty “Chinamen” who operated it. They found nothing quaint or picturesque in their meticulous paddies, painstakingly cultivated by both family homesteads and corporate wai goon that anchored the entire enterprise. They refused to recognize in the toiling Asiatics a common desire to live, and perhaps live well, off a modest measure of land; to exercise self-determination over the extent and outcome of their labor; and to secure for their families a viable future. That they were racially undesirable was enough to render their claims to a future in the islands null, and made the prospect of their participation in the territory perverse. The ideal of citizenship enabled and protected by independent production was not meant for a people whose only place in the islands was as the dependent guestworkers of white-owned corporate plantations. The Chinese did not belong in the islands, and neither did the fruits of their labor.

Whether or not the sugaring interests agreed with the populist sentiments of the commissioners was irrelevant to the fate of rice culture and Chinese life in the islands. Whether claiming tracts of arable land for corporate sugar or homestead coffee, the proliferation of Chinese rice paddies had to be checked. This would not be the first time, and certainly not the last, that American officials took a stand against migrant Chinese enterprise. After surveying the islands, the strange and variegated peoples there and the livelihoods to which they clung, the commissioners remained steadfast in their determination to make of Hawai‘i an American outpost, a garden of Anglo-Saxon prosperity, a land of cane and, perhaps, coffee. The fates of the thousands of Chinese and Hawaiian families living creatively off the land did not concern them. They were determined to dominate the islands by assimilating its troubling amalgamation of semi-civilized subjects to the benevolent control of the metastasizing United States.

Bargaining with Empire: Chinese Organize Against Exclusion

Among the petitions handed to the commissioners of annexation, who in the months leading up to the publication of their report shamelessly occupied ‘Iolani Palace, was an appeal by the Chinese subjects of Hawai‘i. The “Memorial to the United States Commissioners by Chinese Resident in the Hawaiian Islands,” completed August 17, 1898, was submitted in vain, but the document nonetheless registered the demands and desires of a diasporic community threatened by the rigid racial politics of the incoming imperial regime. Annexation forced every political interest group in the islands to reframe and recalibrate their claims to partake in the resources and participate in the future of the territory. For migrant Chinese and their descendants, annexation and its

terms of exclusion forced them to justify their very presence in the islands. To do so, they called on a variety of discursive strategies that reflected the islands' trajectory from a protocolonial contact zone to a formal imperial possession.

The memorialists began with a deceptive appeal to the representatives of imperial sovereignty. "In framing the laws for its territories the Congress of the United States may legislate in accordance with the special needs of each locality and vary its regulations to meet the circumstances of the people."²⁵⁴ Against the efforts of American commissioners to treat the islands as an extension of the mainland, the Chinese authors alluded to the alterity of Hawai'i, rendering the space as an exceptional "locality"—one that traced its difference historically to an independent Polynesian monarchy and an influential influx of Chinese migrants. Furthermore, the memorialists, in calling for Congress to recognize the uniqueness of Hawai'i, rhetorically granted themselves the authority to claim the Territory of Hawai'i as an exceptional space in the geography of American imperial sovereignty. They appointed themselves "the people" of Hawai'i, and proceeded to justify this claim by pointing to their illustrious tenure in the islands, highlighting their transformative economic contributions, and their assimilation through naturalization, intermarriage, and acculturation.

The memorialists presented their credentials as desirable subjects who had enjoyed a special place in Hawaiian society. Although they noted, perhaps strategically, that they had been excluded from political participation, they assessed their treatment under independent Hawaiian governments as just. They had been granted the freedom to move and prosper, and this they had done, having "been admitted to citizenship by naturalization;...intermarried with the natives of the country and...had children born to

them in the land.”²⁵⁵ But it was their investment in the land—their infusion of labor, capital, and enterprise—that grounded their claims to belonging.

The authors portrayed their constituents as consummate economic subjects, dedicated capitalists responsible for the islands’ burgeoning agricultural industry. According to the memorialists, Chinese in Hawai‘i had “expended large sums of money and much labor in the reclamation of waste and barren lands and...done much to foster and ensure the commercial and industrial resources of the Hawaiian Islands.”²⁵⁶ The image of Chinese migrants as redemptive agriculturalists making the barren wastelands of the islands blossom framed their description of rice culture. “In this line the Chinese have been of great benefit to the country. Large areas of land which were unfit for ordinary cultivation, great reed-covered swamps, which were the home of the wild duck and the water hen, have been made productive by them and now yield a fine rent to the owners of the land and a revenue, in taxation, to the Government.”²⁵⁷ Though they had been denied political enfranchisement, Chinese migrants nevertheless enriched the Hawaiian state.

Their commercial activity extended far beyond the cultivation of land. “To them is due a share of credit for the prosperity of Hawai‘i to-day, in consequence of their labor developing the sugar and rice plantations, the fruit farms and vegetable gardens and the great shipping business and commercial relations with the Orient of which they were the pioneers.”²⁵⁸ Chinese mercantile networks had thickened the connections between Hawai‘i and a transpacific market that linked developing maritime capitals. According to the memorialists, Chinese business had put Honolulu on the same map as port cities like San Francisco and Hong Kong. While the labor of Chinese fieldhands had made local,

colonial capitalist enterprise profitable for corporate sugar plantations, the business of Chinese merchant firms appeared to align with American imperialist ambitions to integrate the islands into the global economy.

The authors portrayed migrants as innovators, contrasting their entrepreneurial savvy with the supposed economic stasis of Native Hawaiians. Speaking of the fishing industry, they claimed, “Hawaiian fishermen work chiefly each for themselves or in little companies of from three to half a dozen. The Chinese work in large companies, a firm of small capitalists owning the boats, nets and drying houses and other buildings, and employing their own countrymen at wages, and sometimes with a small interest in the firm, to do the work.”²⁵⁹ These subtle rhetorical maneuvers worked to emphasize the financial capacity and productive potential of Chinese subjects, placing them on a scale of capitalist development ahead of Native Hawaiians, whose economic practices could not compete with the modernity of Chinese enterprise. The authors made this point explicit when they outlined, in their appended memorandum, entitled “Reasons why the Chinese Exclusion Laws, as enforced in the United States should not be extended to the Hawaiian Islands,” that “Chinese laborers are needed in the Hawaiian Islands...possessing those very qualities which the natives lack...thousands of acres of valuable land would lie waste but for the Chinese.”²⁶⁰

In their desperate bid to prevent the extension of exclusion laws to the islands, the Chinese memorialists urged the federal officials to recognize their fitness for entitled subjecthood under the American empire. They did not demand the full spectrum of political rights, requesting citizenship only for their Hawaiian born progeny, and naturalization for those migrants who had already become citizens of the Hawaiian

government. But they boldly insisted on the rights of mobility that had sustained the growth and enabled the autonomy of their community for decades.

In demanding these protections from commissioners who regarded their people as racially undesirable and ineligible for enfranchisement, the Chinese petitioners positioned themselves as exceptional within an American racial schema that placed Native Hawaiians at the bottom of the local racial hierarchy. They made Native Hawaiians the rhetorical foil for their claims of model subjecthood and productive residence in the islands, implying that without their arrival, the lands of Hawai'i would have lain in waste. If the missionary elite and white business establishment had justified their presence in Hawai'i as a boon to the natives, a dual civilizing mission that brought moral edification and modern economic development to islands benighted by the kapu system and a regime of land use anathema to private property, the Chinese memorialists appropriated this logic of economic salvation in their appeal to the United States commissioners. According to this rationale, without the rights to secure the future of the Chinese community in the islands, the islands themselves would have no future of social progress and commercial development.

Perhaps if the memorialists had had the advantage of reading the commissioners' subsequent report, they would have understood the dangerous implications of their argument. It was not the condescending portrayal of Native Hawaiians as non-modern and economically stunted that conflicted with the American imperial vision. It was the prospect of a thriving, economically independent Chinese community that would compete with, and possibly preclude, white settlement. The Chinese petitioners made

direct appeals to protect the mobility they had enjoyed—though not without controversy—under independent Hawaiian governments.

Several entreaties pertained specifically to rice, the industry most threatened by the extension of Chinese Exclusion laws. The authors asked “that in the laws and regulations affecting the immigration of Chinese laborers special provision be made for the importations from time to time by the owners of rice plantations of a limited number of Chinese laborers to work such plantations,” and that “the Chinese merchants be permitted to import clerks for their business establishments.”²⁶¹ Both requests reflected the direct threat that exclusion posed to Chinese businesses that relied on the continual arrival of migrant recruits, and the burdensome implications of stringent definitions of “laborers” and “merchants,” which left categories of liminal workers liable to be refused entry. By design, the rice industry depended on a pool of overseas labor that was already intimately connected with the Chinese planters in Hawai‘i. So while the exclusion of Chinese fieldhands from Hawai‘i caused corporate sugar plantations the inconvenience of contracting foreign workers from other countries, like the newly annexed Philippines, it cut off rice farms and plantations from the only source of labor that toiled on their terms.

These memorialists’ demands were ultimately denied by the extension of the full regime of Chinese Exclusion to the islands, as recommended by the United States commissioners and enforced by the Organic Act of 1900. Had the federal government provided an exception for the entry of Chinese laborers into Hawai‘i, it might have saved the rice industry. But Chinese Exclusion was always, at its core, an economic policy intended to counter the expansion of an independent, mobile, racialized migrant

community. The implementation of these policies in Hawai‘i, predictably, dealt a fatal blow to Chinese rice growing ventures.

The Fight for Rice in the Territory of Hawai‘i

American annexation and Chinese exclusion reordered the social and economic life of the islands in ways that made commercial rice production increasingly unfeasible. Exclusion meant more than the immediate shortage of fieldhands. The total prohibition on the arrival of Chinese laborers meant the loss of consumers of local rice.²⁶² The entire regime of immigration exclusion, with its strict criteria for entry and severe penalties for failing to comply with problematic policies, encouraged many migrants to repatriate. Coulter documented 6,000 Chinese men returning to China between 1902 and 1904, the first signs of a massive labor shortage that would only grow worse.²⁶³ By 1908, Chinese planters were so desperate for reinforcements they convened a meeting in Honolulu under the aegis of the United Chinese Society.

On April 20, Chinese community leaders met to strategize the recovery of the critically ailing rice industry. The missionary organ *The Friend* reported between two and three hundred Chinese present, including the Chinese Consul. The most pressing issue for the assembly was the shortage of labor for rice ventures. The result of the meeting was an appeal for federal intervention to save the dying industry. The committee recognized a major disadvantage in their efforts, struggling at such a remove from the seat of federal power. Thus the first resolution passed by the committee, as recorded in *The Friend*, was to “begin a campaign of information, to furnish the people of the United States with real facts as to the Chinese of Hawai‘i.”²⁶⁴ Clearly, the attendees of the

meeting recognized the root of their suffering as the disastrous policies of the federal government, enacted out of racialized antipathies that were costing them their livelihood, an industry they had labored for generations to cultivate.

Brazenly, the assembly passed a second resolution, “that the important rice industry, begun and fostered by Chinese toil in these Islands, deserves consideration and support from the Congress of the United States.” This support, they hoped, would come in the form of an exemption in the exclusion of laborers from China to provide for the hiring of fieldhands desperately needed by rice planters in Hawai‘i. Thus, the third resolution, “that we use every honest effort to secure a limited number of Chinese laborers, and their families, for the needful work in Hawai‘i, that they alone can do.”²⁶⁵ The convention of Chinese planters mobilized to circulate their petition to the highest authorities, charging the Governor of the Territory of Hawai‘i and the Chinese Consul with delivering their demands to the president and the Chinese ambassador in Washington, D.C. Ultimately, the federal government granted no such relief to the stakeholders of the second-most lucrative industry in the territory.

However, the petition itself reflects the remarkable sense of alterity maintained by Chinese in Hawai‘i following annexation. Even if the federal authorities treated Hawai‘i as an outpost of American sovereignty whose role as a buffer against Asian immigration to the mainland could not be compromised, local Chinese continued to view the islands as an exceptional space where collective self-determination remained possible. Nevertheless, this autonomy was underwritten by economic independence, and this was the freedom that rice had sustained.

Just as decisive in the fate of the rice industry was the relentless cultivation of sugar. The sugar industry had become increasingly oppositional to rice in the explicit support it received from federal authorities, and its total reliance on labor that was legally immobilized, incapacitated, and excludable. As sugar plantations expanded, filliped by the promise of American incorporation to facilitate the development of the industry and the circulation of the crop, rice planters faced new challenges. First, the sugar boom drove up land prices, increasing rents in some areas from \$10 an acre to \$30 in a matter of a few years. The cost of fertilizer similarly increased, making rice farming on exhausted lands prohibitively expensive. Finally, the diversion of waterways to irrigate insatiable cane fields left entire districts of paddies in drought.²⁶⁶

Conclusion

The decade after 1910 was a trying one for rice planters. By 1920 the majority of Chinese families had vacated the countryside, rebuilding community in the growing hub of Honolulu's Chinatown. The rice industry that had literally fed their households was fading with little hope in sight. Chinese families hoped to secure the prospects of their children by steering them towards technical careers in the world of sugar, and away from the instability of rural occupations.²⁶⁷

In their authoritative account of the rice industry in Hawai'i, John Wesley Coulter and his research assistant, Chee Kwon Chun, concluded their study with this melancholy eulogy for what had once been a transformative crop:

“At present writing (1936), the total acreage of land used for rice in the Territory of Hawai'i is 1,275 acres...Clumps of introduced trees—Chinese orange, mango,

and lichi—remain to mark the sites of former Chinese rice farms in Hawai‘i; a few mills crumbling to ruins; scattered, broken threshing floors—small white scars on the landscape; a few weather-beaten old Chinese bachelors living in shacks in rural districts in the rut of circumstances which restricted their opportunity to the only means they know of eking out a living. Soon they, like their industry, will have passed away.”²⁶⁸

Rice, the staple of Chinese households, fortuitously grafted across the wetlands of the islands, disappeared almost entirely from the Hawaiian landscape.

This was the effect of the slow violence of exclusion, which succeeded in reforming a migrant community whose expansive settlement had been ineffectively checked by independent Hawaiian governments. The total and targeted exclusion of Chinese laborers from the United States and its overseas possessions had calculated implications for all Chinese residing within the empire. For Chinese households in the rice-growing districts of the Hawaiian Islands, the prospect of reproducing rural life in independent homesteads became a memory. Rice, like *kalo*, was aggressively displaced by sugar, and its stewards were absorbed into a new world of possibilities stipulated and stymied by the American imperial order.

Chapter 4

Diasporic Diplomacy: Migrant Advocacy Post-Exclusion

Introduction

In a letter dated September 25, 1899, the Chinese Consul to Hawai‘i, Yang Weipin, demanded from the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. A. Mott Smith, a thorough investigation into the gruesome death of a Chinese fisherman. Identified as Sue Chow, the man had been plying his humble trade in the waters of Honolulu Harbor early on the morning of September 13, when he was caught in the path of the S.S. Alameda, a commercial steamship connecting Hawai‘i to San Francisco and the burgeoning network of pan-Pacific trade. Helpless against the momentum of the looming vessel, Sue Chow was mowed down and killed.²⁶⁹ To the local authorities, the case was cut and dry. The fisherman had been in the wrong place at the wrong time, an unfortunate but conceivable casualty in the context of Hawai‘i’s rising role as a node of global commerce. As American financial and strategic investment in the islands intensified, men like Sue Chow appeared atavistic, alien aberrations in what was destined to become a capitol of maritime modernity.

Before the police investigation into Chow’s death had even been completed, mainstream papers decried the alleged failure of the Chinese fishermen, who worked in wooden boats, to escape the incoming steamer that had fast approached them in the narrow channel. Despite admitting that “very little could be learned about the accident aboard the Alameda,” the *Evening Bulletin* reported, on the day the incident occurred, that “instead of getting out of the way of the steamer the Chinamen paid absolutely no

attention to her approach.”²⁷⁰ Two days later, the *Hawaiian Gazette* was even less sympathetic. In an article entitled “Chinaman Drowned,” the paper reported “little doubt that the accident was caused by the Chinamen’s stupidity in trying to save their nets in spite of the fact that the big liner was bearing down on them at full speed.”²⁷¹ After a police investigation and inquest, a jury that included “six prominent Chinese merchants” ruled Chow’s death accidental, exonerating the *Alameda* and its crew.²⁷²

Undeterred by the callous condemnations of the mainstream press that blamed the victim for his own accidental death, the Chinese Consul had called on the state to recognize that in Honolulu Harbor an injustice had occurred, that the life of a Chinese fisherman was not worthless, and that the Hawaiian government was obligated to investigate the conditions of his demise. Thus Chow, ultimately ruled a hapless casualty, was added to a long list of seemingly lost causes. His death occurred during a political turning point for Chinese in Hawai‘i, when exclusion loomed inevitable as the United States formally consolidated its power over the newly incorporated territory. Like his predecessors at the Chinese consulate, Yang had failed to stave off the extension of the discriminatory laws to Hawai‘i. Despite this, he and his frequent collaborators in the United Chinese Society—the local, grassroots representative organ of overseas Chinese—worked tirelessly to defend the rights, mobility, and dignity of migrant subjects degraded by the culture of exclusion and targeted by the procedural violence of American takeover.

The intercession of the highest representative authorities of the Hawai‘i Chinese community into incidents mundane and morbid reveals two critical features of Chinese political experience in the era of annexation and exclusion. First, that Chinese migrants

and their liaisons did not end the fight against exclusion upon the passage of formal policies, but remained vigilant against violations of even the lowliest of their compatriots, who magnified their collective vulnerability and tested their belonging under a sociolegal structure that treated them as categorically disposable. And second, that this network of grassroots activism and official diplomatic protest constituted a politics of diasporic citizenship that was at once strategic and aspirational. Unable to secure their legal status as mobile and enfranchised subjects during the transfer of power from the Republic of Hawai‘i to the United States, Chinese migrants invested their political and appellate energies in a creative process of rights-making that subverted the racialized strictures of domestic citizenship and defied the limits of imperial subjecthood stipulated by American incorporation.

This chapter will explore the networks of protest and circuits of appeal activated by Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i in the years immediately preceding and following formal exclusion. Paying special attention to the seemingly mundane matters that Chinese diplomats and activists assumed as legitimate grievances against the territorial state, I hope to demonstrate both the heightened stakes of community organizing and the unique strategies of enfranchisement pursued by subjects explicitly excluded from the category of citizenship. As the protean status of migrants from China under the native monarchy gave way to the racialized restrictions of republican rule and finally, to the explicit exclusions enacted by the territorial state, Chinese in Hawai‘i organized around their shared origins, aspirations, and vulnerabilities to make the case, however precarious, for their rights, dignity, and belonging in the islands.

Exclusion: An Official Appeal

To return to the fisherman Sue Chow, what did it mean to be an aberration in the order of American imperial modernity? Was it the rudimentary nature of his accumulative labor? Or his independent status as a fisherman in a plantation society that rendered him problematic in the grand scheme of imperial capitalist expansion? Ironically, it was not in spite but because of their commercial success that Chinese migrants found they had overstayed their welcome in places that once deemed their labor essential. Men like Sue Chow defied the racialized division of labor that entitled some to pursue free enterprise while relegating others to a dependent workforce regulated by exclusionary laws.²⁷³ American expansionists extrapolated this ideology of dominance and dependence far beyond their continental territory, into global aspirations of commercial hegemony secured by sea power.²⁷⁴ When their order of modernity met the merchant diaspora that for centuries had staked claims to lucrative pockets of the Pacific, they exercised their newfound sovereignty to, if not expel, then exclude, contain, and manage the futures of Chinese interlopers who chose to stay in recently acquired American territories.

This was the outcome of American expansion in both Hawai‘i and the Philippines, where Chinese settlement predated American sovereignty by generations, but was nonetheless deemed problematic and subjected to legal prohibitions upon imperial incorporation. The extension of immigration exclusion laws to the new Pacific territories was urgently contested by representatives of the Chinese in the United States, who had launched the same fight decades prior and understood the disastrous implications of such policies on transnational family structures, and the economic and physical security of

Chinese communities. These activists in the mainland urged federal authorities to recognize the historically specific situation of multi-generational Chinese settlements in Hawai‘i and the Philippines, and exempt these territories from the regime of exclusion that had enclosed the continental United States.²⁷⁵

Since the 1860s, Chinese advocacy in the United States had been spearheaded by the Six Companies, a confederation of *huiguan*, or native place associations. Huiguan offered their members access to benevolent aid, employment opportunities, financial credit, and legal assistance based on shared natal ties. Initially, they functioned as discrete societies serving migrants who belonged to districts scattered throughout Guangdong province. But in the absence of formal diplomatic representation from the Qing state, and the urgent threat of discriminatory legislation and racial violence in the United States, the leaders of the various huiguan consolidated their representative power into one organization to protect the rights of Chinese in America. This was a kind of improvised diplomacy to defend communities under siege, whether by aggressively xenophobic policies or actual mob violence. The material exigency of collective action was further reflected by the overwhelming consensus among migrant Chinese to recognize such an organization as their representative organ.²⁷⁶

But the cooperative ethic of consolidated organizing did not guarantee seamless unity. Ideological schisms and class hierarchies made advocacy a fraught and dialectical effort. As in Hawai‘i, Chinese in the United States tended to harbor reformist and even revolutionary anti-Qing politics, creating friction with the official diplomats, who, beginning in the 1880s, were dispatched from China to represent them. The divide between laboring and mercantilist members generated conflict, too, with working class

migrants frequently accusing their elite representatives of colluding with local authorities to advance their own class interests over broader community needs. But the power of vernacular invective and the threat of rebellion enabled marginalized members to shift the agenda of consolidated organizing, however slightly, in their favor. In this sense, there was a democratic dynamic to Chinese collective advocacy.²⁷⁷

The crisis of exclusion tested the efficacy of Chinese collective advocacy, which by the 1880s entailed the cooperation of Qing-appointed diplomats with the self-styled statesmen of the Six Companies.²⁷⁸ But Chinese communities recognized the magnitude of the threat posed by the alliance of populist antipathy and federal power. Having spent the past two decades lobbying and litigating against discriminatory policies at municipal, state, and federal levels; pleading for restitution on behalf of ransacked Chinatowns; and demanding justice for murdered compatriots, Chinese activists recalibrated the machinery of migrant advocacy to fight the proposed exclusion laws. It was a battle that subsumed ideological and class divides. While diplomats and huiguan leaders joined in protest, merchants recognized that despite their technical exemption from the category of excluded migrants, the loss of laboring Chinese would threaten their livelihoods as potential clientele were barred from entry.²⁷⁹ What's more, the vitriolic rhetoric circulated by the legislation's supporters threatened to further enflame and embolden violent opponents of Chinese settlement. These fears were not unfounded, but substantiated by a series of deadly pogroms across the Western United States that terrorized Chinese communities in the years leading up to exclusion.²⁸⁰

In response to the proposal of explicitly biased immigration exclusion laws, Chinese advocates launched a multi-pronged campaign to rally against their passage. On

the diplomatic front, Chinese consuls argued that immigration exclusion specifically targeting Chinese subjects was an affront to Sino-American relations, violating treaties and threatening trade between the two nations. Legal advisors commissioned by the Six Companies took to the courts to argue that in denying entry to one racial group, exclusion laws were unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment. Leaders and allies of the Chinese migrant community argued pragmatically in mainstream American papers that exclusion was a foolhardy and reactionary plan that would lead to economic stagnation by removing that sector of the population that had contributed disproportionately to the nation's phenomenal production and growth.²⁸¹

But in the midst of economic depression and the racist hermeneutics it summoned—the surging sinophobia of nativists who decried Chinese labor as the scourge of free white workingmen—the savvy apparatus of Chinese advocacy could not prevail. Indeed, the very terms and strategies through which Chinese activists had sought to substantiate the rights of their constituents had changed. The relative racial liberalism of the reconstruction era, epitomized by capacious interpretations of the Fourteenth Amendment and the promise of equality honored briefly but earnestly by federal courts, had been stifled by a reassertion of racialist thinking, and a broad effort to reclaim the nation and its means of inclusion for whiteness.²⁸²

When the Chinese community in Hawai'i confronted federal exclusion laws, they -were aided in their resistance by leaders of the Six Companies and the Qing legation in Washington. But while the mainland Chinese experience set a precedent of struggle and strategy, local advocates in Hawai'i grappled with a different set of conditions and constraints. There had never been a treaty between China and Hawai'i to offer a basic

framework for the rights of Chinese nationals in the islands.²⁸³ While Chinese migrants in the United States had, for a time, claimed fundamental protections of personhood under liberal readings of the Fourteenth Amendment, the updated Hawaiian constitution of 1887 had explicitly disenfranchised Asians, denying them the option of naturalization, the possibility of citizenship, and the right to vote.²⁸⁴

But in contrast to the United States, Hawai‘i was a socially porous place where Chinese migrants had been able to compensate for their official political exclusion, amassing enough wealth to organize into influential merchant lobbies, and courting indigenous elites. Less fortunate migrants had secured themselves through intimate and economic partnerships with Native Hawaiians. Unlike the western United States, Hawai‘i had never hosted a critical mass of laboring whites that might perceive Chinese workers as competition. Opponents of the exclusion laws highlighted these profound distinctions, arguing that mainland American policies were inappropriate given the exceptional social and economic realities of Hawai‘i.

In a memorandum to the United States commissioners who had been tasked with assessing the administrative needs of the newly annexed territory, representatives of the United Chinese Society stated plainly that “Chinese Immigration [did] not jeopardize any vested interest in the Hawaiian Islands.”²⁸⁵ In their letter, which was printed for public edification in the *Evening Bulletin*, the authors laid out the ultimately perilous claim that Chinese settlement in the islands had been conducive to American expansion. In actuality, Chinese immigration had enriched a small minority of American planters and financiers, and had resulted in the formation of a robust Chinese mercantile class. Both

of these developments seemed to preclude the kind of populist settlement of the islands by white Americans that justified the forceful opening of an insular frontier.²⁸⁶

Portraying the islands as a unique space of Asian and Polynesian comingling, the memorial's authors deployed arguments against exclusion that had been unavailable to Chinese in the continental United States. Bearing in mind the dominant American rhetoric of Chinese as an alien menace, they naturalized their presence in Hawai'i based on the duration of their settlement, their supposed complementary integration with Native Hawaiians, and the lack of white labor in the islands. Through these intertwined tactics, Chinese advocates could make claims to productive residence over and above both absent white laborers and present but supposedly non-productive indigenous Hawaiians. "There is no competition in the Islands between the Chinese and the white laborers," the petitioners pointed out. Dismissing Hawaiian labor with the same patronizing implications of inefficiency first iterated by white planters, they insisted that, "Chinese laborers are needed in the Hawaiian Islands. They are on good terms with the natives, and, possessing those very qualities which the natives lack, do not for this reason excite their jealousy." In a plea aimed specifically to protect the right of entry of agricultural workers, they emphasized that, "thousands of acres of valuable land would lie waste but for the Chinese."²⁸⁷

At the same time the Chinese representatives argued for liberalized immigration policies tailored to Hawai'i's particular needs and exceptional circumstances, they sought to grapple with the logistical implications of American incorporation. And this was where their appeal for legal exception failed. Well versed in the trials of mainland Chinese living under the exclusion laws, local Chinese could not ignore this experience in

their memorial to the federal government. They insisted on the right of mobility of Chinese in Hawai‘i, specifically, to travel to and from the mainland, and railed against the implementation of exclusion laws in the United States, which contradicted the cooperative intention of Sino-American treaties, and infringed on the freedoms of Chinese legally entitled to immigrate by presuming all Chinese were barred from entry pending aggressive and invasive interrogation. They quoted a pronouncement by the United States Attorney General, who had concluded that “the true theory [of the exclusion laws] is not that all Chinese persons may enter this country who are not forbidden, but that only those are entitled to enter who are expressly allowed.”²⁸⁸

Chinese in Hawai‘i had weathered the fickle turns of local immigration policy, navigating restrictive laws with lobbying efforts, legal appeals, and even fraudulent applications. But the proscriptions imposed by the Hawaiian bureaucracy were dwarfed by the regime of exclusion administered by the American federal government. Imminently incorporating Hawai‘i into its network of enforcement was a system of procedural suspicion and routine humiliation where even elite prerogative was dissolved by racial prejudice. Chinese in Hawai‘i could hardly demand their rights of movement without indicting the broader federal system that threatened to immobilize them, but this was their precise predicament: there could be no viable exception to exclusion. Hawai‘i was to become a part of the United States, an outpost of an empire moving westward across the Pacific, and not a stepping-stone for racial undesirables to infiltrate the mainland.

With no treaty to normalize ties between their countries of origin and settlement, the Chinese in Hawai‘i lacked the protection of a fully accredited diplomatic official.

Petitions by overseas Chinese and even the Qing appointment of a local merchant to the post of consul had gone unheeded by the Hawaiian government, which was under pressure from the United States not to commit to formal diplomatic relations with China. Migrants of other nationalities had recourse to foreign consuls. But to represent local Chinese, the Hawaiian government initially would recognize only a Chinese commercial agent, the tacit directive being to restrict their concern to matters of business and trade.²⁸⁹ In 1880, under the monarchy, the first Chinese commercial agency was established in Honolulu, funded by local Chinese elites.²⁹⁰ Despite the presumptive limitations on their authority, Chinese commercial agents assumed the responsibilities of regular diplomats. They interfaced with local officials on behalf of the entire Chinese community—whether mercantile or laboring. Agents took their duties seriously, sedulously delivering the demands of their constituents to the highest ministers of the Hawaiian government, but their power to effect change was debilitated by their irregular status as non-diplomats.

It was not until 1897, under the Republic of Hawai‘i, that the Chinese commercial agent was granted diplomatic recognition by the Hawaiian government and promoted to the status of consul. Instead of receiving the appointment from the Qing state, the highest representative of the Chinese in Hawai‘i was to be chosen locally from among the leaders of the United Chinese Society, the confederated association of huiguan that mirrored the Six Companies in form and function.²⁹¹ The first individual to hold this office was Goo Kim Fui, a successful rice planter. An ethnic Hakka, Goo had immigrated to Hawai‘i under contract in 1867, married a Hawaiian woman, Ellen Kamae, and converted to Christianity. While making his fortune in trade and rice culture, he devoted himself to organizing and uplifting the Chinese community. An earnest pupil of the missionaries,

Goo capitalized on the opportunities they afforded for self-improvement, learning English and establishing Honolulu's first Chinese Christian church. When the Republic of Hawai'i agreed to recognize a Chinese diplomatic official, Goo was a natural choice, having amassed the necessary cultural capital to function as an intermediary between Chinese migrants and the local political establishment.²⁹²

While his promotion to consular status had been encouraging, the timing of his tenure was inauspicious. With annexation looming, Goo was in the onerous position of representing a people marked for exclusion. His correspondence with Henry Cooper, the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, reflected the continual struggle to secure the rights of Chinese subjects within a system that demanded a politically disenfranchised and legally incapacitated alien labor force, and deliberately discouraged migrants from venturing off plantations. In the months leading up to formal annexation, Goo sent a series of anxious letters to the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting clarity on the legal, political, and economic implications of American rule for Chinese migrants residing in Hawai'i, and for those intent on coming. On July 8, 1897 he sent a dispatch to Minister Cooper on behalf of the Chinese Foreign Minister to the United States, who had leveraged his relatively greater diplomatic clout to advocate for his insular compatriots. The prospect of a new code of laws and policies for Hawai'i in conformity with the American regime of racial exclusion was met with tense apprehension by the Chinese delegates, who cited seven specific concerns in their letter to Cooper.

The Chinese legation sought to decipher the legal and political ambiguities Chinese migrants would have to navigate during Hawai'i's transition from an independent republic to a territory of the United States. Would annexation mean the

further disenfranchisement of Chinese migrants already precariously positioned within the country? Pointedly, the delegates' first concern was the "political and economic states of Chinese residents in Hawai'i." Were there major changes that could be anticipated by the Chinese authorities? Secondly, they asked whether the new government would honor the pre-annexation entry permits held by Chinese migrants. Next, they demanded to know whether the new government would recognize the Hawaiian citizenship of naturalized Chinese and Chinese-descended subjects born in Hawai'i. Would the political currency of Hawaiian enfranchisement hold value under American imperial rule? Fourth, they inquired into the "rights and privileges of Chinese of transit and of entrance and exit." Here, they gestured towards the specific impact of American exclusion laws, should they be extended to the islands. Would they deny the rights of mobility exercised by Chinese under the republic?²⁹³

Their fifth concern was property rights, a tricky subject given its double valence as both a potential claim to legal rights and a political liability arousing fears of yellow peril. It was precisely because Chinese had become independent proprietors—of land but mostly of business—that they had incited the jealousy of their neighbors and the suspicion of the new authorities. Nevertheless, they continued to cite their notorious pecuniary success as proof that they had been assets to the islands, and tried to parlay their collective titles into legal footholds of belonging. The sixth and seventh items of the letter concerned the future of Chinese migration and labor in Hawai'i, pertaining to the impact of annexation on further immigration and pending immigration contracts, respectively. Was there hope for the continuity of Chinese settlement and enterprise in a territory under American rule?²⁹⁴

Barely a month later, Goo sent a new letter to Cooper stating the intention of the Chinese delegation to protest any action of the Hawaiian government that would “impair or prejudice the persons, properties or rights” of Chinese residing in Hawai‘i as the provisional republic adopted American legal codes. In other words, this letter was a direct protest against the Hawaiian government’s decision to restrict Chinese immigration in compliance with American exclusion laws. Goo expressed his explicit concern not only for the marginalized status of Chinese currently living in Hawai‘i, but for Chinese “residing abroad and connected with this country by ties of kindred or commercial relations.” His advocacy on behalf of subjects absent from the islands was a testament to the transnational mobilities and formations that had enabled diasporic Chinese enterprise and reproduction—the prospective migrations that sustained the possibility of a Chinese future in Hawai‘i. It was this unique mode of circulatory settlement, of communities productively sustained by pathways of return, routine absences, and potential arrivals, that gave exclusion laws their devastating power.²⁹⁵ Goo himself was not beyond the impact of the laws. Recognizing the threat to his livelihood posed by an embargo on Chinese labor, he dissolved his businesses and moved with his wife to China, where they served as missionaries in his home village of Leen Tong.²⁹⁶

Not only had Goo’s epistolary campaign failed to steer the Hawaiian government off the pathway to exclusion, but his letters yielded few satisfying answers regarding the consequences of annexation for Chinese subjects in Hawai‘i. Again, on October 28, 1897, Goo wrote to Cooper requesting a formal statement from the Hawaiian government describing the provisions restricting Chinese immigration. Then, in a move that emphasized the government’s enduring obligations to the migrants whose labor powered

the most lucrative industry in the islands, Goo asked that the Hawaiian government dispatch a bilingual investigator to survey the conditions of Chinese plantation workers. Goo's switch in focus from official immigration policy to the labor conditions of marginalized Chinese subjects presaged the substance and strategy of Chinese diplomatic advocacy in the islands following annexation. To interrupt imperial expansion and prevent immigration exclusion was evidently beyond the power of Chinese advocates, but they would reformulate their struggle to secure the rights of their constituents by directing their oversight to the plight of the laboring, the indigent, and the delinquent.²⁹⁷

Diasporic Citizenship

Even before American-mandated exclusion, legislative reforms proposed under the monarchy and republic sought to immobilize Asian labor and capital. Laws aimed at restricting the future endeavors of Asian immigrants brought under labor contracts, or limiting the number of business licenses issued to Asian entrepreneurs, were designed to stem the protean potential of alien labor to become independent.²⁹⁸ This particular persecution was not unfamiliar to migrant Chinese, but had influenced the development of a highly transferrable set of advocacy strategies and political practices that constituted a form of diasporic citizenship.²⁹⁹ Prior to American territorial incorporation and the implementation of formal exclusion, Chinese representative authorities—both official foreign legations and local grassroots agencies—pursued rights for their compatriots that transcended the racialized restrictions of local policies. These networks and strategies of diasporic citizenship would serve migrants after annexation and into the era of exclusion.

Having been denied the right to vote and effectively barred from citizenship under the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, an early victory for the pro-annexation faction that had infiltrated the Hawaiian government, Chinese migrants remained politically disenfranchised subjects after the overthrow of the monarchy and under the republic.³⁰⁰ Virtually excluded from electoral politics, some sought recourse from the courts to uphold their basic rights, with varying degrees of success. While elite merchants navigated the legal system with the aid of distinguished attorneys, working class subjects often found their tenuous rights further trampled in courts deeply invested in the plantation economy. But migrants from both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum had access to the services of the Chinese commercial agency, and later Chinese consular agency, which liaised on their behalf with the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, relaying the complaints of indignant merchants and railroaded contract workers alike.

It was this diasporic network of petition and protest that grounded and substantiated Chinese migrant rights before and after annexation, independent of domestic institutions of legal and political citizenship. The concern with localized matters reflected a demand on behalf of migrants for rights and dignity in their host country, an approximation of the barest guarantees of citizenship to mobility, justice, and enterprise. But the means by which migrants pursued these claims evolved from a diasporic repertoire of collective advocacy. Chinese migrants submitted their demands of the Hawaiian government through diplomatic authorities and improvised organs that represented them on the basis of their inherent separateness, a legal and political alterity that had been reified by racially discriminatory laws. In response to such policies, Chinese mobilized the legal liability of racial difference as the political basis of collective

organizing for diasporic citizenship. They pursued a creative alternative framework to rights-making and rights-claiming beyond the boundaries of domestic citizenship, appealing instead to the conventions of international diplomacy as foreign nationals belonging to a significant elsewhere, and insisting on the inherent dignity of Chinese migrants as human subjects. The tenuous rights invoked by these political strategies were ultimately aspirational, often failing to secure the affirmation of local authorities. However, the strategies themselves succeeded in positing a material framework of migrant Chinese rights given the legal impossibility of political assimilation and incorporation.

It bears asking, what was different about the work of Chinese consular agents in Hawai‘i at this time? What was unusual or extraordinary about their function of protecting Chinese nationals abroad, given that this was the purpose of diplomatic agencies generally? Two fundamental conditions rendered their work historically remarkable. The first was the grassroots impetus for Chinese consular activity in Hawai‘i. The establishment of a Chinese consular agency in Hawai‘i was not a top-down process dictated by high-ranking foreign officials, but a popular mandate from migrants already struggling for rights and recognition overseas. The second was the political context of Chinese consular labor, the limitations on Chinese rights in Hawai‘i, and thus the added challenges of ensuring migrants’ security. Given the harsh restrictions of local laws that denied Chinese the right to vote and naturalize, and the hegemony of the plantation establishment, which tended to skew both the courts and the legislature away from the interests of migrant laborers, working class Chinese subjects in particular had virtually no other official channels to substantiate their rights. Chinese consular agents

served a unique cross-section of foreign nationals, including laboring subjects particularly prone to exploitation by employers, and mercantile elites who had been civically engaged residents and financial patrons in the islands for decades, but were denied the protections of citizenship for reasons of race.

The unique exigencies of Chinese consular efforts were shared by the legation in the United States, which faced similar challenges of substantiating the rights of racialized migrants in the face of popular hostility, political marginalization, and legal disenfranchisement. In describing the unique strategy pursued by Chinese migrants who successfully harnessed community organizing into officially sanctioned diplomatic power, Qin notes that, “by identifying their interest with the presence of the Qing consulate and bounding themselves and the legation closely together, the Six Companies and the Chinese in California also distinguished themselves from the rest of the immigrants who were assimilating.”³⁰¹ Unlike the Chinese in Hawai‘i, the Chinese in California had the advantage of an official diplomatic legation established by a formal treaty between China and the United States. Thus, Chinese seeking to claim rights of labor, movement, and habitation could invoke the protections guaranteed them by formal diplomacy and international law.

Recognizing their tactical disadvantage, Chinese in Hawai‘i frequently called on the Qing legation in the United States for support in local matters. In one instance that illustrated the logistical practice of diasporic citizenship, the Chinese Minister to the United States, Tsui Kwo Yin, complained to the United States Secretary of State, John W. Foster, of the inadequate diplomatic representation of Chinese in Hawai‘i. Their correspondence was forwarded to the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, John L.

Stevens. In his letter of 1892, Minister Tsui requested American consular protection for Chinese nationals resident in Hawai‘i, citing the insufficient protection offered by the Chinese commercial agent, who merely approximated the role of a proper diplomatic official. In his letter, Tsui lamented that without a treaty between the two nations, his government had no authority to install a regular diplomatic agent to serve their nationals in the islands. Interestingly, his request that the United States provide consular services to Chinese in Hawai‘i was not on behalf of suffering coolies, but for the benefit of merchants in order to protect their property in the event of local turmoil. Writing just before the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, the Chinese Minister cited the precedent of American consular intervention on behalf of Chinese merchants in South America who suffered great property losses during political uprisings, and similarly had no recourse to a Chinese consular official when seeking restitution from local governments. Tsui’s letter implied a critical distinction between the power of commercial agents and consular officials to render assistance in moments of crisis.³⁰²

While undoubtedly lacking the same clout as a full-fledged diplomat, the Chinese commercial agent could still effect local change and improve conditions for their countrymen. This was especially true where the most vulnerable migrants were concerned. In one example of the power of the commercial agent to intervene on behalf of plantation workers, Goo Kim Fui wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Henry E. Cooper to expose the gross injustices that had occurred at the Pioneer Mill Company of Lāhainā, Maui. His letter and report of December 20, 1896 were the result of an extensive investigation into alleged abuses at the plantation, and the subsequent discovery of corruption within the local justice system. Goo’s inquiry had been prompted by an

appeal submitted by a group of Chinese migrant workers at Pioneer Mill, who complained through a hired scribe of severe and routine labor violations. Goo dispatched an investigator, Chang Kim, to look into the troubling conditions at the Lāhainā plantation. Chang's subsequent report revealed a network of planters and district magistrates cooperating to exact unremunerated labor and inflated fines from Chinese workers, and frequently resorting to unwarranted imprisonment for supposed delinquency. While plantation managers took advantage of the laborers' lack of English proficiency to violate their contracts, local courts and jails meted out punishment to dissenting workers. What's more, Chang discovered that the local authorities that enforced the dubious orders of the Pioneer Mill Company were in many cases related, both financially and familially, to the planters themselves.³⁰³

In light of Chang's disturbing discoveries, Goo demanded from Cooper greater oversight from the Republic of Hawai'i into the labor conditions of Chinese plantation workers.³⁰⁴ The investigation into the Pioneer Mill Company was one of many such responses to the desperate complaints of beleaguered migrant workers denied justice in their labor contracts and within local courts. Indeed, the investigations of the Chinese commercial agency into corporate plantations across the islands revealed the depth of local magistrates' vested interests in the industry and their participation in an oppressive system of labor control. They actively sanctioned labor abuses and supported managers by leveraging the real threat of punishment and prosecution against noncompliant employees. Against such a powerful syndicate, migrant workers had little hope of securing justice without the intervention of the Chinese commercial agent. Thus, Chinese laborers mobilized their diasporic citizenship to solicit the services of unofficial consular

agents who advocated for their rights *beyond* a legal and economic system engineered to exploit them.

Grassroots Diplomacy

The consuls and community leaders who contested local authorities' treatment of Chinese migrants in Hawai'i following annexation had not abandoned the battle against exclusion, but transferred their reformist energies from legal policies to their social and cultural consequences. The very terms of racial exclusion reinforced the dominant cultural discourse of Chinese subjects as excessive, undesirable, and disposable. Mobilizing the networks and tactics of diasporic citizenship activated under the monarchy and republic, Chinese community organizers and consular agents in the era of exclusion defended those subjects rendered abject by the designs of territorial incorporation. These advocates protested official abuses against such marginalized subjects as addicts, beggars, gamblers, elderly bachelors, illegal immigrants, and rebellious contract workers, who they believed had been unfairly targeted by the state for reasons of race.

Despite the humble positions of those who petitioned organizations like the United Chinese Society and Chinese consular agency for help, and those whose tragic demise motivated posthumous appeals for justice, Chinese community advocates represented migrants based on a diasporic sense of collective obligation and shared origin. Their efforts to extend basic protections to even the most marginalized subjects constituted a radical claim to belonging on behalf of migrants who defied the criteria of normative behavior and desirable subjecthood stipulated by local colonial and federal

imperial authorities. This register of consular labor resisted the culture of exclusion at its most profound level. Collective concern with the morbid fates of marginalized migrants highlighted a sense of crisis that united Chinese communities alienated by the new territorial order. While the exclusion laws had become entrenched through the territorial system, their social and cultural consequences for Chinese migrants could be mitigated through collective organizing and consular action. The ostensibly minor complaints taken up by Chinese community and consular advocates were symptomatic of the broad regime of racial exclusion that enabled them.

The specific incidents referenced in this section pertain to physical violence and material violations committed by agents of the territorial state and the literal forces of American empire. The fears of Chinese migrants that mainland racial violence had spread to Hawai‘i through territorial law and its agents of enforcement imbued seemingly trivial consular affairs with tense gravity. Chinese communities in the United States and Hawai‘i understood the dangerous links between discriminatory policies, racist invective, and physical violence, and argued that both inflammatory discourse and quotidian assaults were issues that deserved diplomatic action and government attention.³⁰⁵

In the aftermath of annexation, a series of assaults by American servicemen against Chinese people and properties aggravated migrants’ anxieties about their future in the islands and the implications of American control. Annexation had opened the path for the American military occupation of Hawai‘i, a process further stimulated by the United States’ military engagements in the Pacific that began with the Spanish-American War. Hawai‘i had been annexed, in part, to offer a strategic perch upon the oceanic theater, and served as a stopover for troops fighting in the Philippines. These soldiers

from the American mainland, involved in a war of expansion into the sphere of Spanish empire--a war that on both sides trampled the sovereign claims of already colonized peoples--found in Hawai‘i a bewildering outpost of racialized others pursuing their own autonomous futures. The United States was new to the claiming of overseas territories, and this venture had been framed domestically in vivid and visceral terms of exotic conquest and pioneering destiny. Perhaps it was this racialized discourse of aggression and seizure that primed the soldiers for their first encounters with the islands’ residents.³⁰⁶

Over the course of two days in September of 1898, American soldiers plundered the market gardens of Mānoa Valley, targeting Chinese farmers, though some Hawaiian homesteaders were among the aggrieved. The *Hawaiian Gazette* described the perpetrators as “over a hundred uniformed men” who “literally devastated a large section of the valley of its fruits”:

“The victims of Uncle Sam’s soldiery were in all cases Chinese fruit gardeners. The marauders entered garden after garden in overpowering numbers and denuded them of fruit. Unripe pineapples were cut along with ripe fruit and hacked to pieces with knives; young watermelons were torn from the vines and ruthlessly strewn along the highways.

In some instances the Chinese gardeners told the soldiers they might take all the ripe fruit they required, but pleaded with them to spare the young pineapples and watermelons. The entreaty fell on deaf ears...

The Chinese in Mānoa and in fact in all the suburban agricultural districts are now thoroughly alarmed over the actions of the soldiers. The farmers are

heartbroken to see in a few minutes the work of months ruined before their eyes by the strangers wearing the uniform of the Stars and Stripes. The Chinese have lived here in peace and security so long that they do not at all understand what has happened to suddenly place them at the mercy of marauders day and night.”³⁰⁷

The *Gazette* was highly sympathetic to the farmers whose produce had been destroyed by errant soldiers. The account of the deliberate hacking of unripe fruit suggested the raids were an economic attack on Chinese enterprise, as opposed to a desperate attempt at foraging by hungry troops. The sheer number of delinquent servicemen involved meant individual punishment was practically impossible. While the Hawaiian government lodged a formal complaint with the American general in charge of the installation at Mānoa, local police turned their attention to Native Hawaiian bootleggers, on whom blame for the raids was ultimately misplaced.

The *Hawaiian Star* dismissed the malicious violence of the raids with mirth, downplaying the destruction as tangential to the search for indigenous moonshine by intrepid if rambunctious “boys in blue.” It was the “experimental spirit of the American” that gave these soldiers, rendered juveniles, a taste for ‘*okolehao* and swipes, a beer made from distilled potatoes. The *Star* even quoted an anonymous source that commended the soldiers for discovering so quickly the routes to unlicensed liquor, noting wryly that, “the police could find several illicit stills up there [in Mānoa Valley] if they knew where to look.” Indeed, the response of local law enforcement was to crack down on the underground economy of indigenous spirits that employed and entertained Native Hawaiians. The only arrest made in the wake of the raids was of “a native boy by the name of Nalei” for “distilling and selling liquor without a license.” The arresting officer

disguised himself as a soldier. Thus a wanton case of economic violence became the pretext for a new incursion into the livelihoods of marginalized producers.³⁰⁸

The Chinese consular agent, Goo Kim, was neither amused by the soldiers' alleged mischief nor impressed by local law enforcement's diversion of blame. Immediately following the incident, he wrote to the president of the provisional republic, Sanford B. Dole, requesting support from the executive council to protect Chinese property owners from further destruction at the hands of American military personnel.³⁰⁹ Goo recognized the insidious cruelty that had inspired and forgiven the raids in Mānoa, and conveyed the collective fear of his constituents that territorial incorporation would remake the islands into a seedbed of American racial violence.

The anti-annexationist newspaper, the *Independent*, echoed this analysis in the aftermath of the raids, connecting the attacks directly to the folly of annexation, which from their perspective endangered the power that had been painstakingly amassed by local white elites. While the editors' metaphorical connection between the marauded gardens and the annexed republic reflected their ultimate concern with white settler sovereignty, they raised a critical question about the impact of American military occupation on local racial politics. Like Goo, they did not seek to whitewash the highly racialized nature of the raids on Chinese farms, instead commenting sardonically that, "in the Western States the Chinese rank in the minds of liberal, free-born Americans a little below through-bred cats and perhaps a little above the general breed of rats."³¹⁰ It is interesting to note that in their bid to maintain hegemonic authority over the islands, local haoles styled themselves as the natural rulers of Hawai'i. The editorial in the *Independent* gestured towards their supposed mastery of the techniques of governing a

plural society, as demonstrated by the authors' proficient knowledge of local races, and raised the specter of mainland American racism against the genteel efficacy of white settler dominance.

Apart from the immediate economic repercussions of the soldiers' spoliation of Chinese crops, there was a sinister symbolism to the ruthless razing of young fruit that underscored the American troops' desire to remove the Chinese community that had taken root in the islands. The historian of overseas Chinese in California, Madeline Hsu, has argued that, in addition to restrictive immigration laws, "exclusion also took the form of economic boycotts, social ostracism, physical attacks, and statutes that penalized Chinese business practices."³¹¹ In the case of post-Annexation Hawai'i, where exclusion laws were extended based on American precedent, Chinese had a close and concrete example to look to in their struggle for rights, and recognized that the stakes of their advocacy and resistance surpassed the legal technicalities that mediated transnational mobility. Given the violent nature of American sinophobia, Chinese in Hawai'i had good reason to fear American exclusion policy as a holistic and multi-faceted system that enabled physical violence, and to take seriously any incidents of targeted attacks, particularly those carried out by uniformed representatives of the United States.

In October of 1899, a little over a year after the Mānoa raids, a rash of crimes by American soldiers again incited panic and fury within Chinese communities. This time servicemen had targeted the shops, groceries, and merchants of Chinatown. The new Chinese consul, Yang Wei-pin, promptly wrote to the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. A. Mott Smith, to complain about a litany of "assaults" on the "persons and property" of Honolulu Chinese by "men wearing the uniform of the United States

Army.”³¹² The offenses, which occurred over a period of ten days, ranged in severity from petty thefts to serious physical assaults. The victims included small vendors and shopkeepers, as well as prominent merchants. The delivery of the complaint, collated initially by the Society before being passed on to the consul, revealed the process of petition and protection mobilized by diasporic subjects. The United Chinese Society was the initial liaison between migrants and the local power structure, and served as a grassroots advocacy organ that could summon consular intervention when necessary.

The collective perception of racial peril reached new heights with the plague crisis that began in the winter of 1899. Notorious in racist mythology as carriers of contagion, Chinese migrants became the first victims when the global resurgence of bubonic plague reached Hawai‘i.³¹³ Despite the geographic proximity of Chinatown to Honolulu Harbor, from whence infected rats had smuggled the disease into the islands, local authorities and media outlets were quick to blame Chinese vice and vulgarity for incubating the disease. In the ensuing effort to contain the outbreak, public health policy seemed to target rather than treat the Chinese residents of Honolulu. Local leaders seized the opportunity to call for the razing of Chinatown, citing hygienic concerns. White civilians deputized as plague inspectors claimed the liberty to enter Chinese homes to scrutinize residents. Eventually the entire neighborhood, carefully outlined to exempt white businesses and wrangle in stray Chinese establishments, was placed under a strict quarantine.

But perhaps the most inflammatory practice for local Chinese was the mandatory cremation of plague victims.³¹⁴ This was a practice anathema to Chinese funerary ritual, which regarded the remains of the deceased as the sacred vessel of the soul. Bones were so crucial to the proper mourning and remembrance of an individual that migrants had

established a lucrative trans-Pacific traffic in human remains to guarantee their safe delivery from overseas outposts to Southern China.³¹⁵

The controversial burnings were so horrific to migrants that many conspired to spirit the bodies of suspected plague victims out of Chinatown, where their improper disposal posed a serious public health threat. Desperate to reach a culturally competent compromise between the emergency policies of the Board of Health, which had seized official control of the islands, and the Chinese community, Consul Yang requested that the relatives of plague victims at least receive notification prior to cremation.³¹⁶ This seemed like a basic right of the bereaved, for whom the deceased was not merely hazardous matter, but a beloved relation whose incineration doubled the trauma of a brutally painful death. Yang even boldly suggested an alternative to burning that was practiced in Hong Kong, another afflicted site of the global plague epidemic. There, under the oversight of British colonial authorities, plague victims were buried in designated areas for a period of six years, after which time the bones were exhumed and returned to their relatives.³¹⁷

But it was not just the burning of plague victims that distressed Chinese residents of Honolulu. The Board of Health had been pursuing a program of sanitary fires to destroy known plague sites. As Chinatown had been isolated as the center of contagion, the fires were virtually all within the quarantined zone. Neighborhood activists called for alternative methods to sanitize buildings without destroying the homes and businesses they contained. Their demands were to no avail. While white residents of Honolulu vociferously called for the mass burning of Chinatown as an irredeemably unwholesome, indeed necrotic, public health threat, the Board of Health authorized a sanitary fire that

accidentally spread far beyond its intended boundaries, igniting nearby buildings and blocks, and eventually claiming the entire neighborhood.

Residents already traumatized by the nearness of plague and the dangers of quarantine were evacuated by local authorities and herded into refugee camps, their trembling column kept in line by armed white citizens threatening violence to anyone who attempted to flee. As the heart of Chinese commercial and community life in Hawai‘i smoldered, a rumor spread among the dispossessed that the fire had been deliberate. This interpretation of traumatic history predominated among the Chinese of Honolulu for generations, who narrated the fire as intentional government retaliation for widespread Chinese opposition to annexation. Annexation in turn provided the historical frame for ordering these memories, an era when every policy implemented in Hawai‘i was undertaken in consideration of the desires of the incoming imperial power.³¹⁸

While this was certainly an exceptional moment of epidemiological crisis, in their assessment of events, local Chinese had taken into account a pervasive climate of sinophobia that had literally fanned the flames of the destruction of their neighborhood. The persistent rumors around the Chinatown fire indexed a profound sense of persecution in the wake of annexation. Rumors like these offer a synthesis of vernacular wisdom and sense, and given the physical, legal, political, and economic attacks on Chinese—by men in American military uniform, restrictive immigration policies, and discriminatory legislative proposals—it was logical for Chinese communities to extrapolate from the explicit desire for their exclusion a deliberate effort to remove them when an opportunity presented itself.

The controversial strategies employed by the Board of Health to rid Honolulu of plague exacerbated the tension between Chinese communities and their representatives in the consular agency. Unlike Goo Kim, Yang had not been elected by local leaders from among their membership, but installed by the Qing state. His primary allegiance was not to overseas Chinese, who composed a fractious group with respect to national politics, but to his superiors in China. This troublesome loyalty put him at odds with local community leaders who actively organized against the Qing government, promoting reform and revolution, and even harboring fugitive agitators like Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao in the islands. Yang expended much of his official energy informing on these unruly subjects, going so far as to punish their relatives in China for their activities in Hawai'i, and was ultimately divested of his duties after a series of infuriated appeals were sent by the United Chinese Society to the American minister in Peking.³¹⁹

The contentious politics of representation were as much a part of diasporic citizenship as coalition and consensus. During the plague crisis, Chinatown residents circulated pointed invective against their official leaders, accusing them of collaborating with the local authorities, and threatening violent riots to resist the degrading terms of their treatment. Their defiance put pressure on both the consular agency and the society to negotiate the implementation of the Board of Health's more controversial policies.³²⁰ The assent of the community mattered to its intermediaries, as well as to local authorities. Conflict and contestation functioned as the democratic engine of a political apparatus intended to represent every member of the overseas Chinese community. By demanding that their leadership adequately represent their interests to the local government, restive

migrants substantiated the structure and pretext of a system of transnational bargaining for the rights of non-citizens.

Membership in this network of diasporic citizenship was not limited to the living. Many of Consul Yang's advocacy efforts were on behalf of his deceased constituents. Demanding inquiries into the wrongful deaths of Chinese migrants, the consular agency upheld the sanctity of Chinese life against the indifference of local bureaucracies, and the alienation and exclusion of the coming imperial order. It became the duty of the consular agency to resolve the gross discrepancies migrants experienced between their sense of dignity and the actual treatment they received by local authorities acting under imperial directives. Recalling the collective agony around state-mandated cremations during the plague crisis, Yang again challenged bureaucratic profanity on behalf of migrants who expired while in holding at the O'ahu quarantine facility. The main bureaucratic organs regulating Chinese immigration into Hawai'i were the consulate in Hong Kong, the Chinese bureau in the foreign office, and the quarantine facility in Honolulu Harbor. All three were engulfed by procedural turmoil during annexation and the implementation of American exclusion laws. For Chinese migrants, the excruciating process of awaiting entry was further complicated by the ambiguity of law and procedure as the United States assumed control over immigration into the Territory of Hawai'i.

When federal laws contradicted local policies, American authorities turned away subjects who had been legally entitled to enter the Republic of Hawai'i. In August 1899, nine Chinese merchants arrived in Honolulu from Hong Kong holding valid entry permits issued under the republic. At this point, however, United States customs agents had assumed control of Hawai'i's immigration bureaucracy, invoking policies of exclusion

and exercising their own discretion to determine eligibility for admission. On the order of the United States special inspector of Chinese immigration, the nine migrants were denied entry into Hawai‘i and returned to Hong Kong. The merchants immediately contacted Consul Yang, who wrote to the Hawaiian minister of foreign affairs, complaining that the American inspector had overstepped his authority, wrongfully barring the migrants “without due process of law or lawfull [sic] authority.”³²¹ The Hawaiian government eventually recognized the right of the nine migrants to enter the territory. But the stringent interpretation of exclusion policy by federal authorities had inflicted significant material hardship upon the merchants. Demanding compensation for their damages, they filed a joint lawsuit against the Hawaiian government for \$1,200, accounting for lost wages and the considerable cost of re-emigrating from Hong Kong.³²²

The jarring changes in policy and bureaucratic interpretation were especially distressing for families seeking to immigrate together. Like the Chinese consul in Hawai‘i, the Hawaiian consul at Hong Kong struggled to advocate for emigrants despite the lags, lapses, and general disconnect of information following annexation. Although the American treasury department had assumed control of immigration to Hawai‘i, the Hawaiian consul at Hong Kong continued to oversee the daily traffic of migrants attempting to reach Honolulu, who increasingly risked refusal of entry and return to China.

Writing to the Hawaiian foreign minister, Henry Cooper, on April 15, 1899, the consul noted that while return permits issued under the republic would still be honored in the Territory of Hawai‘i, no new permits could be issued to women or minors, who, immediately prior to annexation, had been able to immigrate as dependents of returning

Chinese.³²³ In a letter sent May 11, 1899, the consul noted a case where this shift in policy threatened to separate a family. Earlier that year, Tam Ching, a resident of Hawai‘i, arrived in Honolulu from China with his wife and child. The family sought entry on Tam’s valid return permit, which when issued had allowed for their entry as dependents. Due to “the then existing uncertainty as to the law” in Honolulu, Tam and his family were prevented from entering Hawai‘i together. Tam, it seems, was eligible for admission, but refused to be separated from his wife and child. Instead, he appealed to the consul at Hong Kong, who petitioned Minister Cooper to make an exception to the new laws, despite the temporary suspension of women’s and minor’s permits.³²⁴ The cost of re-emigration from Hong Kong following deportation from Hawai‘i would have been punishing even for a small family, considering the long period of effective unemployment while in detention and transit. Thus minor shifts in immigration policy, and their routine misinterpretation, could be materially devastating for migrants.

When migrants died in detention, in the custody of immigration officials, their families had to contend with the bureaucratic mystification of the circumstances of their death, and the severe methods of their disposal. At least two families appealed to Consul Yang for help following the death of a relative awaiting entry, knowing only that the deceased had expired in the purgatorial isolation of the O‘ahu quarantine facility. In both cases, local authorities cremated the bodies without notifying the next of kin. It is possible that the cremations were residually related to the plague crisis of the previous winter, and the agents at the quarantine facility had taken special precaution to eliminate potentially harmful matter from an institution charged with accommodating healthy as well as sick individuals. But no cause of death was issued for either person. Rather, both

bodies appear to have been treated as alien matter—potentially harmful and affectively inconsequential. Yang's letters of May 2 and June 4, 1900 to the Hawaiian minister of foreign affairs requested reports on both migrants, asking specifically for the causes of death, and the fate of the men's personal effects.³²⁵

Though sparse and formulaic, these letters lend salience and consequence to subaltern subjects whose historical record would otherwise have disappeared within the quotidian operation of the exclusionist state. In defending Chinese migrants against the stringent protocols of local institutions of public health and immigration control, Consul Yang's efforts resisted multiple registers of alienation: the metaphysical alienation of Chinese souls inflicted by state-mandated cremations; the personal alienation of family members separated by exclusion laws; and the political alienation of Chinese migrants from the Territory of Hawai'i as it came under formal American control. Detainees who died at the quarantine facility epitomized the despair experienced by Chinese migrants subject to the new regime of racial exclusion and the procedural violence of bureaucratic discrimination.

In addition to these alienating acts, migrants occasionally suffered direct fatal encounters with agents of the state charged with carrying out law and order, a mandate that gained greater urgency in the wake of American takeover. These victims embodied the growing sense among Chinese that, as in the mainland, exclusion had rendered them disposable.

Targets of vice raids by local and military police tended to be the most marginalized members of Chinese society: both current contract workers and aging bachelors who, though retired from productive plantation labor, had failed to repatriate.

Their persistence in the islands proved particularly troublesome under the American order, which effectively repealed the legal accommodations made for Chinese alterity under independent governments. In the case of opium use, for example, the legal exception made for Chinese consumers under the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was replaced under the republic by prohibition, a policy in line with contemporary American practices.³²⁶ Like the legal allowance for opium, the prevalence of gambling was, for pro-annexationists and the American authorities they welcomed, another aberration that indexed the undue influence and unruly liberty of Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i.

Under the republican and territorial prohibition of opium, local police and customs agents launched aggressive campaigns to combat trafficking and prosecute users. Relying on a network of paid informants, local police conducted raids into the homes of suspected smokers, who were predominantly Chinese.³²⁷ Even in rural districts, the elongated reach of the prohibitionist state breached the privacy typically afforded by remote locales. In one instance of the increasing crackdown on possession, an elderly man was killed by a police officer while attempting to flee arrest. Hii Ti Kwan of Kaluanui was a known user, who was caught smoking in the forest by a Hawaiian police officer, Keoki, on the night of August 19, 1899. While attempting to detain the offender, the officer struck the man across the head, causing him to fall into a nearby stream where he either succumbed to his injuries or drowned. The victim’s brother brought the incident to the attention of the United Chinese Society, who called on Consul Yang to demand justice for Hii’s wrongful death.³²⁸

The record of Yang’s correspondence with the Hawaiian foreign minister regarding the case reveals a thorough investigation into the fatality, including reports of

the autopsy and inquest. While the outcome of the investigation did not suggest deliberate malice on the part of the Hawaiian officer carrying out the mandate of his job, the case itself reflected the increasing precariousness of subaltern Chinese life in post-Annexation Hawai'i. The new policies passed in anticipation of annexation, which aggressively criminalized opium use, were indeed intended and executed to target vulnerable Chinese subjects.³²⁹ Regardless of the intentions of the individual officer, the victim's marginal status as a poor, rural, elderly Chinese opium smoker determined the structure and dynamic of his violent confrontation with the law.

Like opium, gambling in Hawai'i was closely associated with Chinese migrants, and contributed to stereotypes of clannish secrecy, corruption, and inherent vice. Illegal gaming had persisted across the islands through networks of bribes and clandestine venues, whose occasional ruptures out of secrecy and into public awareness caused much distress to social reformers and law enforcement agents. On April 8, 1905, based on a tip that two notorious professional gamblers would be in attendance, police raided a game of *che fa* at O'ahu Sugar Plantation in Waipahu. The officers acting under Deputy Sheriff Fernandez made a major bust, hauling a group of eleven men out of the gambling house and onto the road, wrangling them towards wagons that would transport them to the local jail. All of the men were employees of the plantation, contract workers whose limited English required translators for the court proceedings that followed. Word was sent to the plantation manager to offer bail, and some of the men insisted on waiting before being taken away, as they would surely face further penalties for missing work if they were incarcerated.³³⁰

Reporting the testimony of “Chinese witnesses, gamblers whose arrest caused the trouble,” the *Hawaiian Star* noted that, “the Chinese did not resist arrest but resisted being taken when bail was coming.” The officers responded to this resistance with force, striking the men along the road and coercing them into the wagons. Amidst the commotion, one of the detained men, Chong Choy Fat, was shot. According to the translated testimony of one witness, “Chong Choy Fat...had a dispute with [an] officer. He said ‘you have no right to kick me.’ The officer asked him to go [to the wagon] and he wouldn’t and then he fired a shot.” As he lay dying from a bullet that had penetrated his abdomen, Chong indicated that the shooter was a mounted officer. Subsequent autopsy reports confirmed that the bullet that killed him had been fired from a close distance at high elevation, but the inquest and investigation failed to name the party responsible. None of the officers involved were held accountable for the killing.³³¹

On July 9, three months after the shooting with no officer charged, the Chinese consul Chang Tso Fan, who had attended the inquest, wrote to the Hawaiian attorney general demanding accountability for the wrongful death of Chong Choy Fat. Citing the overwhelming evidence that Chong had been killed by a man on horseback, he pointed out that, “no one was on horseback excepting the police who raided the place and therefore it must be the police who did the shooting.”³³² In his response, the attorney general, Lorrin Andrews, prevaricated, sidestepping the forensic evidence that implicated the police and challenging the witness testimony by claiming there had been “considerable perjury committed at the hearing of the Coroner’s inquest.” Doubling down on his demurral regarding police guilt, Andrews solicited “any assistance” from the Chinese consulate in the “hunting down of the person guilty of the killing.”³³³

The legal proceedings that followed the shooting at O‘ahu Sugar Plantation laid bare the implicit biases of the Hawaiian justice system against Chinese as credible subjects. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* was quick to discredit the testimony of the alleged professional gamblers, who were indeed indicted on charges of perjury—though the charges were ultimately dropped.³³⁴ Regardless of the outcome of the perjury trial, the prosecution of two crucial eyewitnesses to the shooting had allowed the attorney general’s office to defer charging anyone in the killing of Chong Choy Fat. Ultimately, the department submitted a report to Governor Carter to forward to Consul Fan. Their investigation upheld the inconclusive finding of the initial inquest that declared the guilty party unknown.³³⁵ By this time the press had reached a curious consensus on the killing. Chong had not been shot in a raid, but in a “riot,” a casualty of Chinese disorder, rather than a victim of police violence.³³⁶

In their pursuit of justice for slain migrants, Chinese advocates were not deterred by the ostensible criminality of their deceased constituents. The widespread presumption of Chinese vice implicated all migrants as potential criminals under the scrutiny of local and federal authorities. What’s more, the leisure activities classified as illicit vice under American law were customary mediums of migrant sociality and cohesion, with a different moral valence to Chinese observers, and at any rate did not warrant police killings. Though extreme, these incidents lent visceral and embodied meanings to the political discourse of exclusion, and materially marked the most severe limits of migrants’ treatment by the territorial state. That these slayings occurred within the realm of legal possibility with little to no consequences for the perpetrators was a source of

major grievance for a community reckoning with its precarious place in a shifting territory.

Conclusion

In the decade before American subjecthood and the two that followed, Chinese migrants excluded from citizenship pursued alternative means of enfranchisement. Community activists engaged the transnational framework of diplomacy to substantiate their rights as diasporic citizens, appealing to consular representatives for advocacy and protection against exploitative employers and ambiguous immigration restrictions. A crucial sector of consular labor was to seek justice for the victims of state violence, from the procedural dehumanization of public health policies to the fatal interventions of law enforcement agents. While Chinese consuls extended their services towards subaltern subjects, their sway with local authorities was limited, and Chinese migrants recognized that their representation in Hawai‘i was critically incomplete.

Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to discount the political agency of historical subjects denied citizenship. While incapacitating in countless ways, exclusion from citizenship and electoral politics did not prevent Chinese participation in civic and transnational organizing for rights, belonging, and persistence. Similarly, citizenship itself should not be fetishized as the singular teleological objective of all migrant political action. The creative frameworks of rights-making developed and deployed by Chinese activists in Hawai‘i demonstrated the acute political savvy and flexible advocacy networks of a diasporic community that appealed to multiple sources for liberty, justice, and vindication.

Whether interfacing with republican or territorial, local or federal, or even their own consular authorities, the most potent organizing strategy innovated by overseas Chinese was the consolidated representation of the United Chinese Society. Like the Six Companies in San Francisco, the United Chinese Society grew out of the modernized mobilization of huiguan, benevolent organizations that facilitated mobility and safeguarded migrants against the multiple risks of diaspora. This form of collective organizing took diverse and highly vulnerable subjects into account, while holding local authorities accountable for respecting migrants' basic rights and welfare as human subjects. While consular agencies and advocacy organs lacked the official power to rewrite the terms of inclusion for Chinese migrants within the American empire, they provided a set of benefits and entitlements for their members that surrogated citizenship.

Conclusion

To Die in the Islands: Settler Entrenchment

Introduction

Hawai‘i’s formal incorporation as a territory of the United States marked the completion of a decades-long colonial project to expand the sphere of American sovereignty into the Pacific. What began as the long-term objective of hopeful citizens engaged in private enterprise and colonial civilizing mission culminated in annexation by the Newlands Resolution of 1898 and official administrative takeover under the Organic Act of 1900. For Native Hawaiians, who had petitioned the federal government to restore sovereignty to the native monarch following the overthrow, formal annexation dimmed the hope of reclaiming their nation. Annexation had effectively validated the coup, and reified the power of the local white oligarchs who had assumed control of the islands.

But the backing of American imperial authority came with a price. As a territory of the United States, Hawai‘i was incorporated unconditionally into the American market, meaning its agricultural exports enjoyed exemption from tariffs, a massive victory for sugar interests. The prize of annexation for federal authorities was their absolute access to the resources of Hawai‘i. Lands and harbors deemed strategically valuable were seized and assimilated into a growing network of military outposts that allowed an imperializing nation to guard, manage, and extend the boundaries of its overseas possessions.

The military was as influential as the agricultural industry in remaking the social world of the islands. It introduced a new stream of transient settlers and displaced local

communities associated with a pre-American past of corrupt permissibility and poor governance. Among the most salient figures of pre-Annexation disorder, living relics to the misrule of independent Hawaiian governments, were the Chinese bachelors who remained in the islands beyond their period of service to plantations. As the military undertook anti-vice campaigns to root out the social evils that were ensnaring wayward servicemen, they increasingly encountered these troubling subjects. These ciphers were read against an older discourse of sinophobia that associated all Chinese migrants with opium, gambling, corruption, and commercialized vice. While anti-vice campaigns ushered in an era of Progressive reform bolstered by the mandate of national security, Chinese community leaders took up the plight of elderly migrants whose persistence in the islands had become a hypervisible nuisance.

Community efforts to care for indigent Chinese predated annexation, and had been a central function of *huiguan* from their establishment in the islands. But in the territorial era of American moral order and Progressive sanitary reform, Chinese community advocates looked to new models of care. As military police cleaned the streets around encampments, raided drug dens, and breached the illicit social worlds of impoverished and intoxicated migrants, respectable Chinese activists sought to organize a progressive system of care for marginalized subjects struggling without access to social services. They succeeded, albeit on a small scale, with the establishment of a care home for elderly Chinese bachelors, partially funded by corporate plantations, and administered by the Social Service Bureau.

The subtle shift in strategy and structure of the care home from the old Chinese hospital that had preceded it reflected a gradual process of accommodation and

assimilation to the norms of American territorial order. The Chinese community that had developed in the islands over decades of settlement, beginning as a colony insisting on its alterity and autonomy to preserve a space of exception and prerogative under relatively flexible laws and rules of governance, had been unable to protect the interests of its constituents through the fraught process of American takeover. From strategies of diasporic citizenship invoked to claim rights, protections, and mobility, emerged a program of settler entrenchment that emphasized the rootedness of Chinese in Hawai‘i at a moment when it had become most precarious.

Sanitizing the Territory: Military Moral Order

As discussed in the first chapter, anti-vice debates in Hawai‘i under the monarchy had played out between abstemious and allowing factions, and were difficult to disentangle from the politics of sovereignty and annexation. Hawai‘i the creolized plantation colony with its predominance of Asian migrant laborers had developed pluralized and pragmatic attitudes of permissibility towards vice, despite the history and persistence of missionary influence. Annexation demanded conformity with American laws, including the prohibition of vices that had been regulated, as with opium, or selectively criminalized, as with gambling.

Furthermore, what had once been conditionally permitted as the necessary leisure outlet of an overwhelming sector of the plantation workforce now posed a major problem for the new labor regime in Hawai‘i: the American military, whose presence expanded as a result of annexation. Compared to migrant contract workers, the moral and hygienic constitution of enlisted men was of far more importance to their supervisors. General

Wisser, the department commander of the United States army in Hawai‘i, issued a memorandum order reminding servicemen that the military’s anti-drug policies were enforced “to protect young soldiers from the insidious ravages of the opium habit.” Indeed, “no habitual drug user [could] remain a useful and valuable soldier.”³³⁷

With its deep pockets of commercialized vice, Hawai‘i posed a unique set of problems as a military outpost. Commanders became acutely aware of the abounding illicit temptations, and the consequent challenge of enforcing proper behavior among enlistees. In response, they joined local reformers in calling for aggressive anti-vice campaigns. Of particular concern to military authorities were the networks of illicit exchange developing between local opium dealers and American soldiers.

In 1912, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported on the steep consequences of this trade for sellers: “The attempt to dispose of opium to soldiers stationed at Leilehua resulted in the arrest of a Chinese who booked under the name of Wong. Tai was found guilty of selling the drug and sentenced to pay a fine of \$75 and the court costs.”³³⁸ In 1915, a raid into an alleged den on ‘A‘ala Street at the edge of Chinatown disrupted the business of a reputed cocaine and opium dealer named Ah Chong. The *Star-Bulletin* reported that as police surrounded the shack, “a stream of colored soldiers of the 25th Infantry began to flow through a rear window, alight nimbly on the ground and vanish swiftly in the dark.”³³⁹ By the following year, as the sale of opium to American soldiers continued, the penalties for dealers increased from heavy fines to prison time. “In police court, two Chinese, Chuck Ki and Lau Sing, were forcibly impressed with the intention of the police to stamp out the practise of selling opium to soldiers when they were

sentenced to nine months each...Three similar cases of furnishing opium have been recently disposed of...with sentences of six, eight and nine months, respectively.”³⁴⁰

By 1917, military officials lead their own intervention into the unrelenting exchange between Chinese opium dealers and American servicemen. In late December, Captain Lewis A. Weiss, acting under the directives of General Wisser and Colonel Heard, the commander of Schofield Barracks, conducted a series of raids around Waipahu. Among their discoveries was an opium den described by the authorities as “a constant temptation to men of the army, a larger number of whom have fallen into the habit of using the drug.”³⁴¹ The *Hawaiian Gazette* elaborated that “this particular den was run by Hu Fun and Ah Choy and two Chinese were found on the premises stupefied with the fumes.”³⁴²

The zeal and apparent efficacy of military officials in eradicating vice caused some consternation among the civilian leaders of O‘ahu, who began to question the perfunctory work of law enforcement agencies prior to the military’s involvement. When a session of the Municipal Affairs Committee of the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce was convened to discuss the progress of the “clean-up campaign,” Sheriff Charles H. Rose was asked “why he had not cleaned up Honolulu before, if he was able to do this now under pressure of the army authorities, and civic organization.” Momentarily silent, the Sheriff did manage to point out acidulously that the town had not been “up in arms” prior to the military’s action.³⁴³

In rampant gambling and opium indulgence, local and federal authorities saw evidence of the disorder and dissolution of a racially heterogeneous society, and the vexations it posed for governance. With the accelerated build-up of the American

military presence in Hawai‘i after the first decade of the twentieth century, vices that were previously ethnicized as problems of Chinese migration became generalized as broad social evils that were being rapidly commercialized for a multiracial market of American soldiers. Certainly, the older discourse around opium and gambling regulation, though centered on alleged Chinese vice, had always entailed a concern for its spread to other groups through illicit commerce. The new campaigns of the late 1910s to crack down on iniquitous industries retained this sedimented sinophobia, but reflected broader fears of multiracial disorder. The image of Chinese drug dealers trafficking dope to “colored soldiers,” for example, reflected the modern anxieties of a society whose racialized fissures were being further strained by a growing military occupation.

Progressive Reform and Chinese Community Organizing

As evidenced by the anti-vice campaign, there were two unique contours of Progressive reform in Hawai‘i, in contrast to the mainland United States. First was the exigency of militarization, which introduced national security as a rationale for social reform, and military force for its execution. Second was the islands’ particular racial politics, which complicated the core concerns of Progressive movements with substantiating citizenship and renegotiating the social contract.

Progressivism in all its ambitious iterations reformulated the relationship of citizens to the state. Social purity campaigns strove to produce edified subjects capable of exercising the obligations of citizenship. Economic reforms sought to stabilize the vagaries of the capitalist market and insure laborers against the perils of working life.³⁴⁴ Despite being legally barred from citizenship, Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i could

participate in Progressive movements to expand the benefits of American subjecthood. It was in the context of local Progressive reforms—the broad-based campaign to sanitize Hawaiian society, and organized efforts to remediate poverty as aging migrants retired from plantation work—that Chinese community leaders recognized an opportunity to make a significant demand for state investment and public resources to benefit their most marginalized members.

In previous decades, the charity and advocacy work of organizations like the United Chinese Society had been premised on the alterity, and consequently necessary autonomy, of the overseas Chinese community. Chinese advocates strategically asserted their alleged inassimilable differences to exercise greater independence over the welfare, enterprise, and outcomes of their communities. But in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Progressive campaigns of Chinese community leaders demanded that the government and mainstream civil society recognize their stake in the welfare of an immigrant population that was aging and settling, with neither a social safety net nor plans to repatriate. In other words, Chinese civic strategies shifted from a diasporic framework that demanded specific liberties and exceptions from state power, to what might be called a settler framework that insisted on state investment, subsidies, and an entrenched place in local public life.

By developing this new strategy, Chinese organizers did not renounce their claim to collective self-determination, which had been seriously compromised by the regime of exclusion that dictated from federal policy the mobility of Chinese migrants. Rather, they exercised a liminal and syncretic conception of subjected citizenship, one denied formally by law but partially substantiated by a discourse of indebtedness, accountability,

and belonging. For decades, immigrant advocacy organs had enabled states to outsource the governance of pluralized communities to their elite leaders; now these organizations demanded state investment in communities that were not satellite outposts, but settlements. Ironically, it was the rigid restrictions of the new immigration regime that had influenced this trend toward stasis and settlement over customary patterns of mobility and circulation.

No figure better articulated the strategy of bargained belonging than the renowned entrepreneur and advocate Chung Kun Ai. Ai had left Sai San village in the district of Chung Shan to join his father, a factor in various Chinese taro and tobacco ventures and Hawaiian coffee farms, on the big island. Only 14 years of age at the time of his arrival, Ai was raised in part by his Hawaiian stepmother. As a young man, he defied his father and risked social ostracism to convert to Christianity. He was consequently disowned, but remained a devout Christian for the rest of his life. His fierce adherence to an independent sense of principles guided him in his advocacy for the Chinese community, and he served as president of the United Chinese Society from 1901 to 1905.³⁴⁵ His memoir, published in 1960, fleshed out the workings of migrant credit networks, offering a carefully accounted genealogy of financial sponsorship that lauded generous and credible entrepreneurs while recording for posterity the outstanding debts and shameful renegades of others.³⁴⁶

It was with the same meticulous calculus of obligation, a pragmatic and materialist conception of ethics, that Ai devised his campaigns for justice, autonomy, and free enterprise for Chinese migrants in Hawai'i. In one instance, he noted his effort as president of the United Chinese Society to investigate the fatal police shooting of an

anonymous gambler. Ai reasoned that since the man had paid his two-dollar dues to the organization, he was thus owed their advocacy regardless of his reputation.³⁴⁷ He wrote triumphantly of his cunning in circumventing the Board of Health, enemy of Chinese enterprise. In order to curb the peripatetic mobility of Chinese fishmongers and exercise greater control over the industry, the territorial state had established the bureaucratic O‘ahu Fish Market. When vendors complained of the aggressive and arbitrary regulations of the market, enforced by notoriously racist Board of Health officials, Ai built an entirely separate facility, free from their direct oversight.³⁴⁸ But in his long career of community advocacy, Ai’s most gratifying campaign was the establishment of a charity home to care for destitute elderly migrants.

The politics of care and belonging mobilized by leaders like Ai relied on an economic narrative of model non-citizenship. Even those subjects who had ultimately failed to perform were rendered deserving of care based on their past productive output for the plantation economy. This strategy of entitlement supplied the rationale behind the petition submitted by the United Chinese Society in 1896 requesting a government land grant on which to build a Chinese hospital.³⁴⁹ Addressed to President Dole by the Chinese “residents and taxpayers” of the Republic of Hawai‘i, the authors framed their request as an appropriation for a deserving community. “The Chinese are an industrious law abiding and hard working people and form a desirable and profitable portion of the population of this Republic,” the authors contended, making frequent references to the burgeoning rice industry as one of their many contributions to the economic welfare of the nation. Even as the petition posited the legitimate needs of “sick,” “aged infirm and helpless Chinese” who would be served by the intended hospital, the overarching

argument of entitlement based on economic output spoke to the contradictions of Chinese belonging in Hawai‘i.³⁵⁰

Production had been the very pretext for Chinese migrants’ collective presence in the islands. While exclusionary policies sought to suppress their political agency, migrants found means of calling on the state to recognize their modicum of rights by leveraging their past, present, and potential economic value. This translation of entitled subjecthood into economic logic was necessary in the context of a plantation colony that had deliberately disenfranchised racialized migrants as aliens ineligible for citizenship. Nevertheless, the strategy of bargaining with the state to substantiate rights based on performance and production reinscribed the contingent terms on which Chinese subjects claimed belonging in Hawai‘i. That contingency reasserted itself over a decade later when the territorial government moved to revoke the land grant made to the United Chinese Society under the republic.

Rooted Rights: From Diasporic Demands to Settler Investments

The creation of the Chinese Old Men’s Home entailed a protracted legal battle with the governor of the Territory of Hawai‘i over the grounds of the former Wai Wah Chinese Hospital. Opened in 1897 and operated by the United Chinese Society, the hospital had been modeled on a facility in Hong Kong that served not only the health needs of local Chinese, but facilitated their immigration across the diaspora.³⁵¹ After approximately ten years of operation, the Chinese Hospital, which had been funded entirely by the Society and a few elite donors, lost its license and became defunct. The state under Governor Pinkham and the Territorial Land Commission sued to reclaim the

lands. Serving on the board of the United Chinese Society, Ai fought to recoup their considerable investment in constructing the hospital, and proposed to repurpose the facility as a charitable care home.³⁵²

When the Society originally petitioned the government for a contribution to the welfare of the Chinese community, the republic had made the appropriation from its holding of government lands.³⁵³ These lands were an amalgamation of public and crown lands seized from the Hawaiian monarchy during the overthrow, and recodified into a public trust that dissolved the unique claims of Native Hawaiians to determine their disposal.³⁵⁴ Thus the literal terrain over which the United Chinese Society and the territorial government scrabbled was itself overlain with the sovereign claims of Native Hawaiians. In calling for the land and fighting to maintain it, the civic leaders of the Chinese community enacted a politics of settler entitlement, demanding a share of “public” resources that were in fact the product of colonial expropriation. The legal fight over the land grant was not merely symbolic of the settler premises and projections of the Chinese struggle for inclusion in an annexed Hawai‘i, but a material investment in the colonial process of claiming indigenous lands.

The Society’s leaders argued that, despite the hospital’s closure, their substantial investment in the land justified their retention of the grant. In one particularly pointed letter, Ai challenged Governor Pinkham to count “the number of dead Chinese that the hospital had buried” on the lot. He pressed his point even further, demanding the territorial government reimburse the United Chinese Society \$90,000: “By burying our own dead, we had saved the Territory that cost.”³⁵⁵ With these figures, Ai brazenly appraised the indebtedness of the state, which benefited from the necessary self-

sufficiency of a marginalized community that had cared for its own sick and buried its own dead. While Chinese migrants contributed enormously to the wealth of the territory, they remained excluded from the social contract of citizenship and care. Ai pursued a variety of strategies to recover the Society's investment in the defunct hospital, even offering to relinquish their claims to the contested land in exchange for a new plot on which to construct a charity home. While Governor Pinkham refused this plan, Ai lobbied the territorial senate. Ultimately, the senate settled the dispute by ordering the land returned to the government, and compensated the United Chinese Society \$5,000 for the building they had constructed.

The Society was effectively evicted from the house they had built. These were the unstable terms of contested belonging. But despite losing the land grant, Ai and the rest of the Society leadership remained determined to provide for the welfare of their infirm and indigent constituents. In 1917, using the \$5,000 settlement payment and raising an additional \$2,000 through charitable donations, the United Chinese Society purchased land and buildings in Pālolo Valley. Three years later, they opened the Chinese Old Men's Home. With the Social Service Bureau acting as trustee, the home secured the public support and legitimacy that the Wai Wah Chinese hospital had critically lacked.³⁵⁶

The old hospital had garnered an infamous reputation as a morgue and a public nuisance, in part because of the tendency of patients who subscribed to alternative methods of care to seek clinical treatment in the terminal stages of illness.³⁵⁷ In the contemporary opinion of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, "Chinese looked upon the hospital as a place of last resort—to die in, but not to get well in."³⁵⁸ Between the Wai

Wah Chinese Hospital and the Chinese Old Men's Home, there was little change in the function to furnish hospice care and the mission to grant a dignified death to even the most destitute individuals. But in contrast to the hospital, the Old Men's Home reflected a system of care assimilated to Progressive norms.

While the Chinese Hospital had sought exceptions from the state to run its operations--for example, permitting a physician from China to practice without having been licensed in the territory--the Old Men's Home sought public support on the condition of normative regulation.³⁵⁹ Before closing in 1907 due to insolvency, the hospital had in fact embraced reforms that were lauded in the mainstream press.³⁶⁰ The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* congratulated the institution's "radical change in the installation of a trained white nurse, Miss E. M. Warland, who...from disorder and dirt, has transformed the establishment into a clean, attractive hospital."³⁶¹ The paper also noted the promising figure of "a healthy young Chinese girl with an English education, who [was] studying to be a trained nurse to work especially among her own race."³⁶² But neither these changes, nor Chinese fundraising or white patronage, could sustain the hospital as an independent facility.

By 1917, with a generation of Chinese contract laborers retiring without a safety net beyond the provisions of benevolent societies, the United Chinese Society recognized the urgent necessity of delivering sustainable social services.³⁶³ While municipal clean-up campaigns attempted to reorder public space along the lines of American hygienic and moral norms, steorage companies began offering to repatriate elderly Chinese men for two-thirds the normal rate. Ai recalled the "shameful sight" of Chinese beggars who hustled alms and lodgings from their compatriots in downtown Honolulu.³⁶⁴ These were

the targets of the Old Men's Home, whose case files revealed that the majority of indigent elderly Chinese residents had been plantation workers whose productive capacity was compromised by illness and injury sustained without compensation.³⁶⁵

There was no formal system of social security to relieve them from their poverty, beyond the intermittent care of *huiguan* that occasionally fed and housed them, sending their bones home to China if funds permitted.³⁶⁶ The home actually institutionalized a limited system of insurance by securing charitable donations from major plantations at a rate of five cents for every ton of sugar produced.³⁶⁷ In the absence of a state mandate to provide social security for retired contract workers, the home organized payments from former employers within the framework of charity, substantiating a pecuniary ethics that justified care through the concept of indebtedness--without enshrining it as a legal right.

The Chinese Old Men's Home cared specifically for those migrants whose disposal was encouraged, whose settlement was undesired, and whose public presence indexed the intractable racial realities of a plantation colony. Their removal from public space reflected a rare confluence of ambitions between Chinese leaders, social reformers, and territorial authorities. While the home operated on a small scale, unable to lure the most subaltern targets, who balked at the facility's admissions criteria of sobriety and zero-tolerance drug policy, it managed to successfully sustain its operations through a modernized model of community and public support.³⁶⁸ Operated by the Social Service Bureau, an umbrella organization that coordinated benevolent work across Hawai'i, the home attested to the salience of elderly Chinese indigence as a social problem with diverse stakeholders.³⁶⁹

It was the perceived public nuisance of Chinese poverty in a moment of social reform that empowered Chinese community organizers to mobilize broad support for their cause. Through the formation of the Chinese Old Men's Home, the United Chinese Society established an institutional link to mainstream civil society, staking a claim to public resources for the welfare of their community. The social contract instantiated here was that impoverished elderly migrants who consented to the behavioral mandates of charity workers and community health professionals received public resources. However destitute, Chinese subjects who were morally and hygienically assimilated, and bureaucratically governed, became deserving of public support and investment.

More importantly, their previous productive labor in the service of plantations purchased their marginalized place in local society, and mobilized a limited system of social security that recognized the obligation of corporations to care for their former workers. The condition of possibility for the creation of a facility designed to care for elderly Chinese, an institution conceived as permanently entrenched in Hawai'i with an ongoing mandate to deliver care into the future, was a settler colonial politics reliant on the racialized claim of productive residence and the categorical performance of economic exceptionality.

Conclusion

As Progressive movements gathered momentum for reform in the Territory of Hawai'i, expanding the social contract between citizens and the state, Chinese leaders and organizers sought to substantiate migrant rights within a framework of entitled subjecthood, demanding state investment and social benefits on the basis of productive

residence, a claim to belonging that did not hinge on legal citizenship but economic performance. While the various methods deployed by migrants to protect their collective autonomy and provide for the care of their community were often simultaneous and overlapping, there was a general movement in their civic activism and political praxis from diasporic organizing to settler entrenchment. These shifting strategies reveal the unstable terms of belonging for Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i; the incomplete delivery of each method of enfranchisement outside of citizenship; and the proscribed political possibilities of a diasporic community striving to manifest rights in a colonial context.

Within the specific historical context of post-overthrow Hawai‘i, campaigns to claim “public” resources for Chinese communities anticipated the settler colonial politics of later generations of locally born and legally enfranchised Asian-Americans. The resources to which Chinese migrant advocates and others laid claim had only been made available to Hawai‘i’s multiracial public through its long history of colonial exploitation and expropriation, and the ongoing denial of Native Hawaiian claims to sovereign possession. While the political strategies of Chinese community activists relied on portrayals of their constituents as consummate capitalist subjects responsible for generating wealth in the islands, they discursively cast Native Hawaiians as undeveloped economic actors. Beyond the rhetorical damage of this propaganda, settler colonial investments in the material processes of empire—the expropriation of native power, land, and resources—affirmed American hegemony in the Hawaiian Islands.

Chinese migrants, over generations of settlement through the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth, claimed belonging in Hawai‘i under radically shifting political conditions. Under an indigenous monarchy eager to modernize an

independent nation along western modes of civilization, Chinese migrants had found opportunities for economic enterprise and social mobility that stretched their commercial networks across the Pacific. They became assets, and some elites, in a racially porous society where international contacts presented advantageous opportunities to a young kingdom attempting to engage foreign powers and the global market on its own terms. Chinese migrants were indeed influential shapers of the islands' destiny, engaged both as laborers transforming the lands under capitalist relations of production, and as merchant recruiters actively changing the demographic composition of the islands.

Serving the interests of colonial capital, their labors enriched a white settler establishment with explicit plans of domination, even as their own political sensibilities recognized that their collective rights and prerogatives were best secured by indigenous sovereignty. They recognized the coup staged by the white elites against the Hawaiian monarch as a political crisis. Although rumored to have been party to plots to restore the indigenous monarchy, Chinese migrants nevertheless bargained with the leaders of the republic to guard their autonomy and mobility as diasporic subjects. When they realized the establishment of the Republic of Hawai'i had been effected to open the pathway to American annexation, the tone of collective organizing became increasingly urgent.

Annexation presented a new political crisis for Chinese migrants. The incorporation of the Territory of Hawai'i into the empire of the United States threatened the flexibility with which they had lived and developed their communities in the islands. The regime of Chinese Exclusion engulfed Hawai'i with disastrous material consequences for Chinese residents, and established an explicit culture of officially-

endorsed sinophobia imported from the mainland United States and embodied by the federal authorities charged with managing the assimilative development of the islands.

It was in this moment of alienation, exclusion, and threatened mobility that Chinese communities formulated a politics of settler colonialism to insist on their right to remain in the islands as fully enfranchised subjects of the imperial United States. By no small irony of history, a diasporic community that owed its existence in the islands to the indigenous custodians of the land, bolstered its negotiating position with imperial authorities by degrading the contributions of Native Hawaiians. In this way, they assured and manifested their investment in Hawai‘i as a colonial project of the United States.

References

Introduction

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Chapter 1

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³⁷ In *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1992), Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa explores the tense negotiations for power between Hawaiian nationalists and haole interlopers that played out in the mid-nineteenth century over land privatization. Haole ministers routinely invoked the racialized discourse of civilization to delegitimize indigenous claims to autonomy and authority.

³⁸ Kamanamaikalani Beamer offers an innovative study of indigenous statecraft in nineteenth-century Hawai'i, focusing on the strategic incorporation of haole political techniques by Hawaiian leaders. See Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014).

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⁴³ *Report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Hawaiian Legislature, Session of 1888* (Honolulu: Pacific Commercial Advertiser Steam Print, 1888), Appendix D: xvii.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 10. When the 1887 Act to Regulate Chinese Immigration resulted in the virtual halt of Chinese applications for re-entry permits, government ministers inferred that migrants were covertly sharing documents.

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⁴⁶ William R. Castle, "Shall Opium Be Licensed?: Opium in Hawai'i" (Honolulu, 1884), 3.

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⁵⁶ Z. Y. Squires, "The Planters' Mongolian Pets, or, Human Decoy Act" (Honolulu, 1884), 8.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 18. Activists like Squires promoted a scheme of sugar cultivation that would have encouraged white settlement in the islands. They envisioned sugar grown on homesteads and processed at collectively owned mills. See also Kuykendall, 49-53.

⁵⁹ Glick, xi.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 28-29. These regulations include an 1881 ordinance requiring all Chinese entering Hawai'i not under contract to furnish proof that they would not become vagrants, leading many incoming migrants to contract with labor recruiters stationed at quarantine facilities. In the 1890s, labor contracts regularly included clauses stipulating that upon completion of their terms of service, Chinese migrants could not stay in the islands except as domestics or fieldhands.

⁶¹ For an authoritative account of Chinese migrant economic activity, see Glick, 45-101.

⁶² Ibid., 83.

⁶³ Castle, 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5.

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⁶⁸ Statistic quoted in Glick, 162.

⁶⁹ Walter M. Gibson, "Sanitary Instructions for Hawaiians" (Honolulu: J. H. Black, 1879), 216. The author notes: "It is cheerfully admitted that an industrious Chinaman makes a good husband for an Hawaiian woman; and in some few instances, such a union has produced many healthy offspring," although he himself is doubtful.

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⁷³ Warwick Anderson, "Immunization and Hygiene in the Colonial Philippines," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2007, 4.

⁷⁴ "Sanitary Instructions," 213.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁷⁶ In an 1888 lecture to the Honolulu Social Science Association, the Reverend Sereno Edwards would list "Wifeless Chinese" as number seven in a list of answers to the titular question of his paper, "Why Are the Hawaiians Dying Out?"

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⁷⁹ *The Hawaiian gazette*. (Honolulu [O'ahu, Hawai'i]), 16 July 1879. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

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⁸³ *The Daily bulletin*. (Honolulu [Hawai'i]), 11 Oct. 1886. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

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⁸⁴ It was no secret that elite members of society enjoyed opium. However, it was its consumption by marginal and "irregular" members of society that threatened the social order and summoned state involvement.

⁸⁵ Squires, 7-8.

⁸⁶ Castle, 4.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 3, emphasis in original.

⁸⁸ Specific examples of Chinese and Hawaiian economic exchange and cooperation beyond the plantation capitalist economy can be found throughout Davianna Pōmaika'i

McGregor's ethnographic study of rural Hawaiian localities, *Nā Kua 'āina: Living Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). For further accounts of Chinese-Hawaiian economic cooperation, see for example Jocelyn Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence: Rank, Gender, and Colonialism in the Hawaiian Islands* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); James H. Chun's *The Early Chinese in Punalu'u* (Honolulu: Yin Sit Sha, 1983); and Violet K. Lai's *He Was a Ram: Wong Aloiau of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁰ "Sanitary Instructions," 185.

⁹¹ Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 91.

⁹² Lee, *Opium Culture*, 71-82.

⁹³ For a thorough description of the pharmacology of opium, see Lee, *Opium Culture*, 45-60.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 13-17.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 25-26, 83-104.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 71, 76, 82.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 65-67, 82.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 74.

¹⁰² Ibid., 76.

¹⁰³ Castle, 2-3. See also Lim-Chong and Ball, 69-70.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of Special Committee on Opium*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

Chapter 2

¹⁰⁸ Mary Kawena Pukui, *Tales of the Menhune*, Rev. ed. (Honolulu: Kamehameha, 1985). While at present I am limited to English language sources, a prolific Hawaiian-language and substantial Chinese-language press promise further insight for scholars with the skills to access them. It is my hope to offer in this paper a preliminary exploration of Chinese commercial food production, interracial economic intimacies, and official responses, and to encourage further interrogation into these topics in multiple archives. For a critical analysis of the scholarly and political urgency of Hawaiian language-based historical research, see Noelani Arista, "I ka mo'olelo nō ke ola: In History There Is Life," *Anglistica* vol. 14, no. 2, 2010, pp. 15-23.

¹⁰⁹ Carol Araki Wyban, *Tide and Current: Fishponds of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1992), 137.

¹¹⁰ Candace Fujikane defines Asian settler colonialism as the investment of Asian migrants and their descendents in the political, economic, and social structures of U.S. colonialism in Hawai'i, over and against indigenous claims to sovereignty and self-determination. Candace Fujikane, "Introduction," in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From*

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¹¹¹ For discussions of pre-contact Hawaiian political organization, see Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* (Honolulu: Kamehameha, 2014), 18-32; Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke, 2004), 15-45; and Jocelyn Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence: Rank, Gender and Colonialism in the Hawaiian Islands* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1990), 75-111.

¹¹² William Kikuchi, “Prehistoric Hawaiian Fishponds,” *Science*, vol. 193, no. 4250, 1976, 295. Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2007), 28.

¹¹³ Wyban, *Tide and Current*, 89.

¹¹⁴ See Kamanamaikalani Beamer and Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor for descriptions of land use and resource allocation. Beamer cautions against reducing the imperatives governing the *ahupua‘a* system to purely ecological concerns, arguing that the boundaries that determined the distribution of natural resources in pre-contact Hawai‘i organized space according to the production of sacred tribute. Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*, 32-44; McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 25-30.

¹¹⁵ McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 13.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of integrated agriculture and aquaculture in Hawai‘i, see Wyban, *Tide and Current*, 85-97. Barry A. Costa-Pierce describes the “socio-cultural system” of food production, and William Kikuchi proposes that all types of fishponds evolved from ponds integrated with taro paddies. Barry A. Costa-Pierce, “Aquaculture in Ancient Hawai‘i,” *BioScience*, vol. 37, no. 5, 1987, 320-331; Kikuchi, “Prehistoric Hawaiian Fishponds,” 295.

¹¹⁷ Catherine Summers asserts that major fishponds were intended to feed chiefly retinues, while small inland ponds were constructed and maintained for domestic consumption by farmers. These latter ponds were too small to be profitably commercialized, unlike the former, which reached sizes of several hundred acres. Catherine Summers, *Hawaiian Fishponds* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1964), 19-23.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the cosmology and social politics of the *kapu* system, see Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa and Jocelyn Linnekin. For an overview of the reciprocal relationship between commoners and chiefs, organized around concepts of care and service, see Linnekin. Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1992), 33-40, 44-49; Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 14-24.

¹¹⁹ Kikuchi, “Prehistoric Hawaiian Fishponds,” 298; Wyban, *Tide and Current*, 88.

¹²⁰ Kikuchi, “Prehistoric Hawaiian Fishponds,” 295-96.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 296; Wyban, *Tide and Current*, xiv.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 104-107.

¹²³ “Visit of H. M. S. Blonde to Hawai‘i in 1825, As Described by Rev. R. Bloxam, Chaplain, in a Letter to His Uncle,” in *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1922*, ed. Thomas G. Thrum (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrum, 1921), 73.

¹²⁴ Accounts of the abolition of *kapu* by the women of the Kamehameha dynasty can be found in Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 74-79, Linnekin, *Sacred*

Queens and Women of Consequence, 69-73, and Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 28-32. Silva points to the proximity of chiefly women to missionaries, who did not follow kapu but seemed immune to epidemics that were decimating the native population.

¹²⁵ “Visit of H. M. S. Blonde,” 72.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

¹²⁸ Linnekin argues that while the indigenous political hierarchy was not inherently exploitative of commoners, it became oppressive after foreign contact produced a market economy. Specifically, the provisions and sandalwood trade between Hawaiian chiefs and foreign sailors and merchants depended on the excessive and unremunerated labor of commoners. This abuse of customary conscription characterized the post-contact period, although missionaries and other foreign observers strategically interpreted the sacred chieftancy as ahistorically oppressive. Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa cites mid-century reforms to ameliorate economic exploitation of commoners under the *konohiki* system. Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 155-170; Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 204-205.

¹²⁹ Native Hawaiian scholars have offered critical reappraisals of Hawaiian political investments in the *Māhele* and the institutionalization of private property. Beamer theorizes that Hawaiian *ali‘i* “selectively appropriated” (3) Western instruments of power, including private property, to preserve the sovereignty of the kingdom. Support for the *Māhele* derived from the desire of indigenous statesmen, at the urging of foreign advisers, to render their political system legible and therefore legitimate in the eyes of foreign empires, and to restore the vitality of a nation devastated by demographic loss through Western economic development. See Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*, 142-153. Kame‘eleihiwa contends that although the *ali‘i* acted to protect the rights of their constituents at a time of epidemiological, geopolitical, and socioeconomic crisis, their political possibilities were severely limited by the robust influence of *haole* advisers who envisioned the introduction of private property as the necessary precondition for their own capitalist accumulation. See Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, on the imperial conditions of land reform (169-198); the legal logistics of land privatization (201-225); and the ramifications for indigenous land ownership (287-318). Linnekin investigates the gendered consequences of the *Māhele* on Hawaiian patterns of property ownership. Regarding the formal division of land and the resulting dispossession of commoners, see Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 199-207. Silva discusses land privatization as a colonial maneuver in *Aloha Betrayed*, 15-45.

¹³⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 170-173, 177-180, 193-198, 298-306; Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 195.

¹³¹ While debt to foreign merchants pressured many chiefly families to sell the lands they had come to own in fee simple, commoners were discouraged from holding on to their homesteads by multiple factors. First, the new system of land taxation that preceded the *Māhele* and replaced the tribute system required payments be made in cash, not kind. Similarly, the process of registering a land claim entailed a cash fee to survey the parcel in question. Families engaged in subsistence production and bartering economies were in a poor position to comply with these policies. Additionally, the new property laws stipulated that families could not claim ownership over uncultivated land, despite the

customary Hawaiian practice of disengaging land to sustain its fertility. Large landowners eagerly purchased these “vacant” fallow lands to augment their holdings, despite their still being occupied. Even the forested uplands (*kula*), which functioned as a kind of commons under the indigenous system of usufructuary tenure, became effectively privatized, and Hawaiian chiefs and haole gentry alike denied commoners their customary rights to hunt and gather. See Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 295-298; Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 177-179, 195-206; McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 37-39.

¹³² Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 204-205; McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 40-44.

¹³³ Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 182-186, 217-218. McGregor documents indigenous persistence in rural localities where Native Hawaiians fostered autonomous cultural practices and subsistence economies at a remove from global capitalist development. McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*.

¹³⁴ Marion Kelly, *Kekaha: ‘Āina Malo‘o: A Survey of the background and history of Kaloko and Kukio, North Kona, Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1971), 3-6.

¹³⁵ Marion Kelly writes that, “By 1851 a konohiki’s claim on the labor of the commoners who were living on kuleana in the ahupua‘a under his control was supposed to be ended once the commoners received their kuleana awards.” Kelly, *Loko I‘a O He‘eia: He‘eia Fishpond* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1975), 13.

¹³⁶ Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 217: “The last tenancy relations were eventually dissolved in the wake of the Māhele. Pressured by expanding plantations and ranches, most Hawaiians abandoned the land to become a largely urban proletariat by the early twentieth century.”

¹³⁷ Clarence E. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 1980), 4-5.

¹³⁸ Wyban, *Tide and Current*, 137.

¹³⁹ Tin-Yuke Char and Wai Jane Char, eds., *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu* (Honolulu: Hawai‘i Chinese History Center, 1988), 25. Clarence Glick gives an overview of the “Cycle of Migration” of Chinese to Hawai‘i, focusing on plantation expansion and labor recruitment, anti-Chinese agitation and regulation, and ultimately, exclusion. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 1-22. For a political treatment of Chinese labor migration, see Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1874-1893, the Kalākaua Dynasty* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 1967), 116-122, 135-153.

¹⁴⁰ Char and Char, *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu*, 10.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴³ Silva explores early U.S. colonization of the Hawaiian Islands from the perspective of indigenous resistance, analyzing primary Hawaiian language sources, including petitions against annexation that were circulated by Hawaiian nationalist factions (*hui*).

¹⁴⁴ The naval theorist Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan published his landmark treatise less than a decade before American annexation. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890).

¹⁴⁵ John N. Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, Report, United States Fish Commission, 1901, 384.

¹⁴⁶ J. Richard Dunn, "John Nathan Cobb (1868 -1930): Founding Director of the College of Fisheries, University of Washington, Seattle," *Marine Fisheries Review*, vol. 65, no. 3, 2003, pp. 1-24. Following his tour of Hawai'i, John Nathan Cobb's next assignment by the Bureau of Fisheries was a similar survey of Alaska. Donald Worster describes the interlocking processes of territorial conquest, geographical survey, and economic development. Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

¹⁴⁷ The limits of ecological sustainability were strained by industrialists and naturalists alike, who collaborated under the banner of conservationism to capitalize on natural resources to the detriment of the environment. For histories of conservation and the commodification of nature in the West, see: Worster, *Rivers of Empire*; Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

¹⁴⁸ White, *The Organic Machine*, 43.

¹⁴⁹ See *Ibid.*, 32-39 and Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 160-168. On the Columbia River, Chinese drew particular ire from white fishermen for their employment in industrial canneries. Similarly, in the hydraulic West, tensions between white settlers and corporate capitalists were displaced onto Asian laborers, who were explicitly denied employment on irrigation projects under the National Reclamation Act of 1902.

¹⁵⁰ Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 387.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 392. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui investigates the discourse of Native Hawaiian rehabilitation in the 1920s, which focused on land redistribution, and culminated in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke, 2008), 7-8.

¹⁵³ The overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy was by no means a spontaneous event. A decade prior, in 1887, a similar pack of white agitators had forced the reigning King Kalākaua to sign a new constitution, at gun point, which eviscerated his executive authority, curtailed Native Hawaiian political citizenship, and explicitly disenfranchised Asians. This event is known as the Bayonet Constitution. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 123-164; John Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2002), 193-249.

¹⁵⁴ For a political analysis of the monopolization of Hawaiian land by sugar interests, see Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, esp. 145-171. For a case study of the impact of land inflation on Chinese farmers, see James H. Chun, *The Early Chinese in Punalu'u* (Honolulu: Yin Sit Sha Society, 1983).

¹⁵⁵ Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 423.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 427.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 427.

¹⁵⁹ American commissioners sustained the populist vision of white American settlement in Hawai'i despite the desires of local haole elites to transform the colony into sugaring islands. The former knew this labor regime would limit opportunities for white workingmen and would exacerbate the so-called mongrelization of the islands by admitting more racialized migrants under labor contracts. The tension between these two

ideologies is best captured by what is perhaps the earliest U.S. government report after annexation, *The Report of the Hawaiian Commission, Appointed in Pursuance of the "Joint Resolution to Provide for Annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States," Approved July 7, 1898* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898).

¹⁶⁰ The exact figures enumerated by the report are seventy-four commercial ponds on O‘ahu and fifteen commercial ponds on Moloka‘i, 431.

¹⁶¹ Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 388.

¹⁶² Glick mentions official anxiety and increased government regulation in relation to Chinese laundries. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 74.

¹⁶³ The report claims that declining numbers of indigenous Hawaiians translated into a shrinking market for pond fish, misconstruing the relationship of Native Hawaiians to large fishponds. As these ponds had been cultivated for chiefly consumption, commoner Hawaiians were not consumers but conscripted laborers, whose decision to stop operating the ponds after the abolition of the kapu system (1819) and the Great Māhele (1848) reflects their engagement with growing colonial markets. Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 428.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 430.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 430.

¹⁶⁶ Ironically, the commissioners later noted: “The price of sugar has largely controlled everything on the islands.” Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 440.

¹⁶⁷ Accounts of merchant firms collaborating with small rice producers appear in Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 55-56. Coulter and Chun describe the cooperation between Chinese merchant firms and independent producers in John Wesley Coulter and Chee Kwon Chun, *Chinese Rice Farmers in Hawai‘i*, University of Hawai‘i Research Publications, no. 16 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i: 1937), 16.

¹⁶⁸ Char and Char, *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu*, 58.

¹⁶⁹ Hee’s son, Hee Yee, a former manager, served as one of Kelly’s major informants in her 1975 study of He‘eia. Kelly, *Loko I‘a O He‘eia*.

¹⁷⁰ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 116–22, 135-153; Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 1-22.

¹⁷¹ For a discussion of labor agents in the Hawaiian coolie trade, see Bob Dye, *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains: Afong and the Chinese of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 1997), 36-41.

¹⁷² Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 15.

¹⁷³ Violet L. Lai, *He Was a Ram: Wong Aloiau of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1985).

¹⁷⁴ Lai, *He Was a Ram*, 69-70.

¹⁷⁵ Widows especially could not afford to disengage from the market. Women like the Hakka Mrs. Ching Ho-Kyau operated He‘eia fishpond from 1920 to 1924 following her husband’s death, as did Loo Luke Sun, who operated Hanaloa fishpond in Waipahu in the 1920s. Both women relied on the labor of sons, male affinal kin, and hired hands to work the ponds. Char and Char, *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu*, 125, 204.

¹⁷⁶ Due largely to missionary agitation, footbinding was outlawed in Hawai‘i in 1895. See Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 342.

¹⁷⁷ For a personal narrative of a former *mui tsai* in Hawai‘i, see Elizabeth Wong, “Leaves from the Life History of a Chinese Immigrant (1936),” in *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present*, eds. Judy Yung, Gordon H. Chang, and Him Mark Lai (Berkeley: University of California, 2006), 91-96. The significant age gap between bride and groom in this narrative, and throughout the oral histories consulted, reflects the time and labor male migrants required to stabilize their economic lives as independent producers before establishing families in Hawai‘i.

¹⁷⁸ For an example of this practice in Ke‘anae, Maui, see Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 219. *Hui* also functioned as political factions.

¹⁷⁹ For a time, Kaloko pond was operated by a Hawaiian *hui*, composed of extended family members. As Kelly explains, “Residence and family relationships were the two most important aspects of *hui* membership.” The purpose of a Hawaiian *hui* was not to extend financial credit, but to pool collective resources among intimate groups. Kelly, *Kekaha*, 42.

¹⁸⁰ Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 92. Edna Tavares Taufaasau, who wrote a brief biography of her grandfather Tong Kan for the Hawai‘i Chinese History Center, gave explicit details of discriminatory banking practices: “While a white man could borrow money at nine or ten percent [interest], Chinese had to pay sixteen or eighteen percent for the same money. This discrimination led to the eventual opening of banking establishments by the Chinese community.” Ken Yee and Nancy Wong Yee, eds., *Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i* (Honolulu: Hawai‘i Chinese History Center, 2009), 280.

¹⁸¹ Coulter and Chun, 16.

¹⁸² Char and Char, *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu*, 79.

¹⁸³ Hee Kwong’s son, Lan Hung Hee Chan Wa, memorialized his father thusly: “He was all out for free enterprise and encouraged his friends to do likewise. He helped many start their business by offering a down-payment for them.” *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸⁴ Wong Aloiau is a good example of this phenomenon, having settled twice with Hawaiian women before securing his fortune and only sending for a wife from China after becoming financially successful.

¹⁸⁵ Daniela I, the guardian of Emma Kalikokauai Ellis, encouraged her marriage to Wong Aloiau based on his evaluation of the young man as a promising earner, Lai, *He Was a Ram*, 34-35. Noelani Meyer Keliikipi shares that her Hawaiian grandmother, Hattie Kiuwahine Pilemona, was encouraged to marry the Chinese migrant Yim Kam Chee because “being Chinese, he would treat her like a queen,” Yee and Yee, *Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i*, 323. Further testimony of Hawaiian popular knowledge that Chinese men made stable partners appears in Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawai‘i: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 95-96.

¹⁸⁶ Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawai‘i*, 96.

¹⁸⁷ Kelly, *Kekaha*, 29.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸⁹ Chun gives a detailed example of *Ching Ming* celebrations and Cobb gives details of pre-contact Hawaiian rituals in honor of fishing deities. Chun, *The Early Chinese in Punaluu*, 37-38; Cobb, *Commercial Fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands*, 389-394.

¹⁹⁰ In *Kekaha*, Kelly quotes informants who described the pond as “‘kupua’ (spooky) and not like other ponds” (27). She cites the historian Samuel Kamakau, who “explained that water-spirit gods (akua mo‘o) cared for the health and welfare of the people who ‘kept’ [honored through ritual offerings] them” (58). Kamakau describes the *mo‘o wahine* as the divine feminine counter to the temporal political power of ali‘i and konohiki, whose tendency to withhold the pond’s bounty from the people was checked by the overwhelming power of the mo‘o, who “loved ‘the poor and the fatherless.’” This tension offers an insight into ponds that complicates Kikuchi’s analysis of them as symbols of chiefly monopoly and consumption. The right to enjoy the bounty of ponds may have been contested by various castes and factions over time. The abiding popular faith in the judicious power of the mo‘o may in fact signal a belief among commoners that chiefly monopoly was both inappropriate and temporary, perhaps a function of conquest and conflict which accelerated before and during Hawaiian contact with Europeans. Throughout his writings Kamakau suggests that ponds were indeed communal funds, but that this function was both contested and corrupted. By the time Europeans began recording their observations of ponds, their status as royal preserves had become conventional. Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The People of Old* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1964), 84-85, quoted in Kelly, *Kekaha*, 58.

¹⁹¹ Kelly, *Kekaha*, 27-28.

¹⁹² Char and Char, *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu*, 83-88.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁹⁵ Glick discusses the shared history of barter between indigenous Hawaiians and Chinese migrants. McGregor’s Native Hawaiian informants offer accounts of bartering with Chinese shopkeepers and planters, typically exchanging surplus kalo, copra, pigs, or labor to purchase goods on credit and secure tools and manufactured wares. These routine and informal exchanges, which occasionally involved modest sums of cash, were a crucial economic strategy for Chinese entrepreneurs whose links to retail networks enabled them to commodify such surplus goods, and at least partially compensated for the labor demands of Chinese planters following the passage of the Exclusion Laws. For rural Hawaiians, Chinese settlers served as instrumental links to cash and retail markets, allowing indigenous subsistence producers to selectively engage with capitalist economies without conceding their own economic autonomy. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 69-71; McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 72, 113-114, 172.

¹⁹⁶ William S. Fong, writing of his family’s provisions store in Kula, Maui, during the 1900s and 1910s, explained that “Most of our business was done by trading. We gave credit to our customers, and they in turn paid us with eggs, poultry, or pigs. There wasn’t any currency, and if there was any cash, it would be in either silver or gold coins.” One of McGregor’s informants, David Makaoi of Waipi‘o, Hawai‘i, framed this reality as a choice: “Why live in town?...In the country, you don’t need much cash,” thus emphasizing that for rural Hawaiians, assimilating to capitalist regimes of labor and exchange was neither inevitable nor desired, and in many cases was deliberately resisted. Yee and Yee, *Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i*, 217-218; McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina*, 72.

¹⁹⁷ “Report of the Hawaiian Commission,” 11; Coulter and Chun, *Chinese Rice Farmers in Hawai‘i*.

¹⁹⁸ Coulter and Chun analyze the decline of the rice industry, citing Chinese exclusion laws as the primary factor. Ibid., 53-62.

¹⁹⁹ Yee and Yee, *Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i*, 306-310.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 316-317.

²⁰¹ Linnekin discusses the labor emigration of Hawaiian men in relation to native households and women’s property ownership. Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence*, 212-226.

²⁰² McGregor, *Nā Kua ‘āina*, 65-69.

²⁰³ Aloiau firmly believed this, viewing his mixed daughters as Chinese and arranging their marriages to Chinese men. The merchant and pond operator Chung Hoon went so far as to send his mixed son to China to be educated, a practice that was common among Chinese men who could afford it. Their criteria for racial identification were not limited to genealogy and phenotype. Language proficiency, conjugal choices, and economic mobility were crucial factors in assessing the race of an individual.

²⁰⁴ In fact, Chinese were situated below Hawaiians in the hierarchy of sugar plantation labor, the former hired as fieldhands and the latter employed as overseers. Skilled and industrial positions were typically reserved for Europeans. For an analysis of the racial politics of plantation labor, see Ronald T. Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawai‘i, 1835-1820* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 1983), 75-81.

²⁰⁵ Coulter and Chun, *Chinese Rice Farmers in Hawai‘i*, 53-62; James H. Chun, *The Early Chinese in Punalu‘u*, 18, 52,

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 347-48.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 349. For a historical account of the Hawaiian Homestead movement, see Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.

²⁰⁸ Yee and Yee, *Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i*, 349.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 351.

²¹⁰ Andrea Feeser and Gaye Chan offer an account of the expropriation and destruction of fishponds by the United States military. Andrea Feeser and Gaye Chan, *Waikīkī: A History of Forgetting and Remembering* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2006), 39-51.

Chapter 3

²¹¹ Yen Ching-Hwang dates the establishment of a Chinese Commercial Directorate in Honolulu to 1880, eventually upgraded to a consulate the following year. Yen Ching-Hwang, *Coolies and Mandarins: China’s Protection of Overseas Chinese during the Late Ch’ing Period, 1851-1911* (Kent Ridge: Singapore University Press, 1985), 148-149.

²¹² Clarence Glick describes this first wave of “pioneers” in *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1980), 1-4.

²¹³ Glick, 4-5.

²¹⁴ Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa offers a profound investigation of the consequences of the Great Māhele for Native Hawaiian life in *Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Are We to Live in Peace?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), as does Jocelyn Linnekin in *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence: Rank, Gender, and Colonialism in the Hawaiian Islands* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990). Noenoe K. Silva’s

analysis in *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) illuminates the centrality of the Māhele to white American blueprints for the colonization of Hawai‘i.

²¹⁵ Dye, 36-44; Glick, 6-11.

²¹⁶ Yen narrates the efforts of Qing officials to protect Chinese subjects serving as contract workers across the imperial world, devoting special focus to this topic in chapters 3 and 5.

²¹⁷ See Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, Volume III: 1874-1893, The Kalākaua Dynasty* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1967) 116-122, 135-153, for a discussion of the beginnings of Chinese contract migration to Hawai‘i. For a comparison of Euro-American and Chinese systems of contract labor recruitment, see Dye, 36-43.

²¹⁸ For a detailed account of the trying political labor involved in realizing the Reciprocity Treaty, see Kuykendall, 17-53.

²¹⁹ Statistics on the Chinese population in Hawai‘i are taken from Glick, Appendix: “Population of the Hawaiian Islands by Racial and Ethnic Groups: 1853-1970,” 356.

²²⁰ Adam McKeown offers a concise description of sinophobia in Hawai‘i in *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawai‘i, 1900-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 34-35. Violet L. Lai mentions Hawaiians meeting at a church in Honolulu in 1869 to protest the importation of coolies in *He Was a Ram: Wong Aloiau of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1985), 15. For a fuller discussion, see Edward C. Lydon’s *The Anti-Chinese Movement in the Hawaiian Kingdom* (San Francisco: R & E Research, 1975). For the Hawaiian counterpoint, see for example, “Move! Excel the Highest! The Celebrated Lilikalani Manifesto of the Election Campaign of February, 1882,” trans. H. L. Sheldon, (Honolulu: Thomas G. Thrum, 1882), located in the “Kalākaua’s Hawai‘i” microfilm collection at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

²²¹ For further reading on Asian settler colonialism in Hawai‘i, see the anthologies *Whose Vision? Asian Settler Colonialism in Hawai‘i*, *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2000 and Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, eds., *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008).

²²² I will use the term “Hawaiian Chinese” to describe Chinese resident in the islands. The term “Chinese-Hawaiian” will be used to describe persons of mixed ancestry. The former term, however, should not be read as indicative of racial purity, but meant to describe a diasporic subject-position informed by location and ethnicity.

²²³ Sources in this category consulted for this paper include Violet L. Lai’s previously cited biography of her great-grandfather, *He Was a Ram* (1985); James H. Chun’s account of rural Chinese life in his own hometown and surrounding areas, commissioned by the very society that organized social life in those parts, *The Early Chinese in Punalu‘u* (Honolulu: Yin Sit Sha, 1983); and Tin-Yuke Char and Wai Jane Char, eds., *Chinese Historic Sites and Pioneer Families of Rural O‘ahu* (Honolulu: Hawai‘i Chinese History Center, 1988), one anthology in a series dedicated to maintaining a public archive of Hawaiian Chinese history. It should be noted that all of these texts were either published or distributed by the University of Hawai‘i.

²²⁴ Adam McKeown, for example, in his discussion of Hawaiian Chinese in *Chinese Migrant Networks*, has a tendency to overstate the historiographical fetish of the urban, educated, upwardly-mobile Chinese. See pages 231-270.

²²⁵ For more information on Hawaiian men's labor migrations from the islands, see: David Chang, "Borderlands in a World at Sea: Concow Indians, Native Hawaiians, and South Chinese in Indigenous, Global, and National Space, 1860s-1880s," *Journal of American History*, vol. 98, no. 2, 2011, pp. 384-403; Linnekin, 223; and Dye, 5-6. For a description of the openings left by migratory and moribund natives in the agricultural landscape, particularly wetlands, see John Wesley Coulter and Chee Kwon Chun, *Chinese Rice Farmers in Hawai'i*, University of Hawai'i Research Publications, no. 16 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1937), pp. 10-11.

²²⁶ For a fuller description of the dislocation occasioned by the Māhele's overhauling of the land-use/tribute system in favor of an American-styled legal system of property and taxation, see Linnekin, Kame'eiehiwa, and Silva.

²²⁷ See Linnekin, 217-218 for more information on the economic struggles and strategies of Hawaiian families post-Māhele. The information on sex work is taken from Dye, 9-10.

²²⁸ Writing the history of land relations and indigenous tenure in the ahupua'a of Hā'ena on the island of Kaua'i, Carlos Andrade offers a case study of a hui kū'ai 'āina that bought the entire district from a white landowner in 1875. For eighty years the hui kept Hawaiian families on the land until it was dissolved by a lawsuit initiated in 1954, resulting in the total privatization of the land. Carlos Andrade, *Hā'ena: Through the Eyes of the Ancestors* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 103-122.

²²⁹ Linnekin discusses families engaged simultaneously in cash-cropping and subsistence agriculture, and the desperate strategy of renting portions of kuleana, 217-219.

²³⁰ Though she does not refer to it as "creolization," Linnekin details this process of intimacy and exchange in Ke'anae, 219. She attributes long-term Hawaiian landownership to the location's isolation, inhospitality, heavy rainfall, and local Hawaiian involvement in hui lands—cooperative homesteading ventures undertaken without state involvement.

²³¹ McKeown, 57.

²³² Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 69-71; McGregor, *Nā Kua'āina*, 72, 113-114, 172.

²³³ Linnekin presents census data for Maui from the year 1866, reporting an astounding array of professions assumed by Hawaiian women who headed households following demographic decimation and labor emigration—see 224-225.

²³⁴ Biographical details on Aloiau are furnished in exceptional detail by Lai. An account of the history of Chulan and Company is offered in *Char and Char*, 96-101. On kinship and labor recruiting, see Glick, 14-15.

²³⁵ Details taken from Lai. For insight into vernacular attitudes towards Chinese-Hawaiian intermarriage, see Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawai'i: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937). On page 96, one interviewee, an elderly Chinese-Hawaiian woman, repeats the common saying: "If you marry haole your hair smell of smoke, because you have to do the cooking, but if you marry Chinese your hair smell of sandalwood," because typically, Chinese men cooked for their Hawaiian wives. Perhaps

just a playful saying, it nonetheless affords a glimpse into the attitudes of Hawaiian women towards romance and family, and suggests that while they conceived of haole husbands in terms of exploitation (you cook and smell of smoke), they saw Chinese husbands as abler caretakers (he cooks and treats you to luxuries like sandalwood incense).

²³⁶ Coulter and Chun, 16. Wai Jane Char, "Three Chinese Stores in Honolulu," *Hawaiian Journal of History*, vol. 8, 1974, pp. 11-38.

²³⁷ Coulter and Chun, 14-18; Char and Char, 96-101; and Chun, 14-15.

²³⁸ Coulter and Chun, 18-20. The lease, dated March 30, 1880, is located in the Dole Collection of the Hawai'i State Archives in Honolulu.

²³⁹ Statistics quoted from Coulter and Chun, 53-54.

²⁴⁰ McKeown, 34.

²⁴¹ For a more thorough discussion of these laws, see McKeown, 34-35.

²⁴² The best source on this debate is Thomas J. Osborne, *"Empire Can Wait": American Opposition to Hawaiian Annexation, 1893-1898*, (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981). Particularly pertinent to this paper is his discussion of the racial offense to many American politicians of incorporating a predominantly non-white island into the Union.

²⁴³ The Report of the Hawaiian Commission, Appointed in Pursuance of the "Joint Resolution to Provide for Annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States," Approved July 7, 1898 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 2.

²⁴⁴ Report, 2.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 11.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 139.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 139.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 140.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 143.

²⁵² From Chapter 1, Section 4, of the "Bill to Provide a Government for the Territory of Hawai'i," entitled "Citizenship": "All white persons, including Portuguese, and persons of African descent, and all persons descended from the Hawaiian race, on either the paternal or maternal side, who were citizens of the Republic of Hawai'i immediately prior to the transfer of the sovereignty thereof to the United States, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States." Quoted on 13 and 22.

²⁵³ Ibid., 143.

²⁵⁴ "Memorial and Accompanying Data Presented to the United States Commissioners by Chinese Resident in the Hawaiian Islands," (Honolulu, 1898), 4.

²⁵⁵ Memorial, 4.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 4.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁶⁰ "Memorandum, setting forth the Reasons why the Chinese Exclusion Laws, as enforced in the United States should not be extended to the Hawaiian Islands," (Honolulu, 1898), i-ii.

²⁶¹ Memorial, 6.

²⁶² Coulter, 22.

²⁶³ Ibid., 53.

²⁶⁴ “Chinese in Hawai‘i active: ask for a limited number of laborers for important rice industry,” *The Friend*, vol. 65, no. 5, May 1908.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Coulter suggests that annexation provided a boost to the sugar industry at the expense of rice. “The annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States gave a great impetus to the sugar industry which adversely affected rice farming. Expansion of the sugar cane acreage caused more competition for land and, therefore, increased rents. Rice land formerly rented at from \$10 to \$20 an acre increased in a few years after annexation to rent at from \$30 to \$35 an acre. Cost of production was further heightened by increasing cost of fertilizer...In some districts water used for raising rice was diverted to raise sugar cane, which after annexation was assured a very prosperous future,” 55.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 54-55.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 62.

Chapter 4

²⁶⁹ “Letter from Yang Wei-pin to E. A. Mott Smith, September 25, 1899.” File 44: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

²⁷⁰ “Run Down in the Channel,” *Evening Bulletin*, September 13, 1899.

²⁷¹ “Chinaman Drowned,” *Hawaiian Gazette*, September 15, 1899.

²⁷² “The Coroner’s Verdict,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, October 20, 1899.

²⁷³ On the racialization of Asians as a dependent labor force, see Iyko Day, *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University, 2016). Theorizing the role of race in mediating social relations of production, Day argues that, “the governing logic of white supremacy embedded in a settler colonial mode of production relies on and reproduces the exploitability, disposability, and symbolic extraterritoriality of a surplus alien labor force,” 24. Day explains further that, “a logic of exclusion is the *prerequisite* for the recruitment of alien labor, functioning either to reproduce an exclusive labor force...or to render an Asian labor presence highly conditional to the demands of capital,” 34.

²⁷⁴ The journalist and economist Charles Arthur Conant wrote a treatise on empire as both the necessary outcome and condition of capitalist expansion. His vision of economic development was not unmoored from racist thinking. Invoking notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, he posited a destiny for the United States as the emissary and primary beneficiary of global capitalist expansion, marketing surplus commodities and investing surplus capital throughout a world secured for commerce by imperial power. See, *The United States in the Orient: The Nature of the Economic Problem* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900).

²⁷⁵ See Yucheng Qin, *The Diplomacy of Nationalism: The Six Companies and China’s Policy toward Exclusion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2009) 122, 136.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 44-45.

²⁷⁷ While Qin discusses social purity campaigns spearheaded by the Six Companies, who acted as moral reformers within migrant communities, he does not specifically address class conflict among members. Nayan Shah, in his study of race and public health policy in San Francisco's Chinatown, makes these conflicts explicit, discussing both the divergent interests of the mercantilist elite leaders and their laboring constituents, and the resentment and suspicion they incited among the broader community as a result of their cooperation with local authorities. Common members vocalized their dissent through pamphlets, rumors, and protests, and in turn the organization's leaders proved receptive to their input. See Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001) 123, 131-137, 143, 148.

In his history of the bubonic plague crisis in Honolulu, James Mohr describes a similar dynamic of productive antagonism between the Chinese community and the merchant elite leaders of the United Chinese Society, who served as their liaison to the Board of Health. These conflicts were perhaps inevitable given the scope of membership in both organizations, which conceived of their mission as representing the entire Chinese community. Mohr teases out another vector of tension between the local society leaders and members, many of whom supported reformist and revolutionary nationalist movements in China, and the Chinese consul appointed by the Qing state. Despite—or perhaps because of—these fault lines, the various factions formed an effective, if fissiparous, network of resistance to the Board of Health's policies. See Mohr, *Plague and Fire: Battling Black Death and the 1900 Burning of Honolulu's Chinatown* (New York: Oxford University, 2005) 78-79, 95, 149-151.

Chung Kun Ai, the former president of the United Chinese Society who himself harbored revolutionary politics, documented the power struggles between the society and Yang Wei-Pin, the Qing-appointed consul. See Ai, *My Seventy-Nine Years in Hawai'i* (Hong Kong: Cosmorama Pictorial, 1960) 301-305. As Ai put it: "The Chinese community in Honolulu has often been puzzled by the types of consuls that the Chinese government has seen fit to send to Honolulu. The community has always welcomed and respected these officials, but some of them have not displayed the dignity due their position," 303.

²⁷⁸ The Qing government did not deploy a minister to the United States until 1875. Due to the lobbying efforts of the Six Companies and Cantonese merchants, the Chinese state established a consulate in San Francisco in 1878; see Qin, *Diplomacy of Nationalism*, 94-96. The consulate worked directly with Six Companies personnel, and employed several leaders in official diplomatic positions (*Ibid.*, 101-103).

²⁷⁹ While immigration exclusion laws tended to target the most marginalized class of Chinese (i.e. laborers), middling and mercantile classes were hurt by the laws' economic ramifications, and by the culture of exclusion promoted through official policy. Qin explains that, "since a great part of the merchandise imported to the US by Chinese merchants depended on Chinese consumption, if no Chinese laborers were allowed to enter, Chinese merchants would also suffer," 135. The policy and rhetoric of exclusion hurt merchants in other ways, including boycotts of Chinese goods and businesses, and physical attacks encouraged by sinophobic invective, 99-101.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 116-118.

²⁸¹ Qin discusses Chinese diplomatic efforts to repeal, revise, and renegotiate American treaties and policies; see 113-115 and 120-122. On legal battles to test the constitutionality of exclusion laws, see 123-124. Qin cites the efforts of Chinese diplomats to lobby political elites and influence public opinion through speeches and print media; see 125-131.

²⁸² As the Chinese legation fought exclusion in American courts, arguing that policies like the Geary Act of 1892 violated treaty and constitutional law, American legal authorities refuted these challenges “on the grounds that a sovereign state had plenary and unconfined power over immigration”—regardless of treaty agreements. Furthermore, they excluded Chinese from constitutional protections by claiming these rights applied strictly to American citizens; see Qin, 124. Sam Erman describes a shift from the “Reconstruction Constitution” that liberalized citizenship and enfranchised racial minorities after the Civil War, to the “Imperial Constitution” that emphasized the plenary power of the federal government to differentially grant legal rights to non-citizen subjects of newly acquired overseas possessions. Sam Erman, “Citizens of Empire: Puerto Rico, Status, and Constitutional Change,” *California Law Review*, vol. 102, no. 9, 2014, pp. 1181-1242. Thus the turn towards reactionary and exclusionary readings of constitutional law occurred simultaneously in matters of immigration and overseas expansion at the end of the nineteenth century, enabling an imperializing nation-state to selectively incorporate and (dis)enfranchise the foreign subjects it encountered at its moving borders.

²⁸³ Chinese migrants living in Hawai‘i and Qing diplomats called for a treaty between the two nations that would regulate immigration, secure the rights of overseas Chinese, and facilitate Chinese commercial shipping across the Pacific. While some Hawaiian foreign ministers concurred that a treaty was necessary, the United States government and American elites in Hawai‘i feared that efforts to foster exchange between the two nations would threaten American hegemony by encouraging Chinese commercial expansion and demographic encroachment into the islands. Bob Dye discusses both local Chinese demands for rights and representation and American interference in the China-Hawai‘i relationship in *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains: Afong and the Chinese in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 1997) 136-149 and 178-190.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 214.

²⁸⁵ “Memorandum...why the Chinese Exclusion Laws, as enforced in the US, should not be extended to the Hawaiian Islands.” Document 196: File 16: Box 1: Series 401. Numbered Documents, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

²⁸⁶ Some supporters of annexation promoted Hawai‘i as a future white settler colony, greatly at odds with local planters’ development of corporate sugar culture. In their memorial to the United States commissioners, reprinted in the *Overland Monthly*, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association noted: “It has been the belief of some, and the hope of many more, interested in the future of Hawai‘i, that annexation would bring to Hawai‘i a white American farming population which would solve both the labor and the political problem.” J. B. Atherton and C. Bolte, Memorial to United States Commissioners, September 8, 1898, reprinted in Alexander Allen, “American Hawai‘i,” *Overland Monthly*, vol. XXXII, no. 191, November 1898, 448.

²⁸⁷ “Memorandum...why the Chinese Exclusion Laws, as enforced in the US, should not be extended to the Hawaiian Islands.”

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Dye, 141-142, 145.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 147-148.

²⁹¹ The United Chinese Society was established in 1882 to coordinate advocacy and diplomatic efforts, and to represent the Chinese in dealings with the Hawaiian government. See Dye, 187-188.

²⁹² “Goo Kim Fui,” *The Friend*, vol. LXV, no. 6, 1908, pp. 6-7.

²⁹³ “Letter from Goo Kim to Henry Cooper, July 8, 1897.” File 42: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ “Letter dated August 3, 1897.” File 42: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

²⁹⁶ Goo’s obituary in the missionary journal *The Friend* explicitly linked his financial decline with the passage of Chinese exclusion laws: “When annexation brought with it the unjust closing of Hawai‘i to Chinese immigration Mr. Goo Kim was one of the many merchants of that nationality to be embarrassed by the new conditions. Forseeing [sic] that he must fail, he closed out his business interests at once, safeguarding his creditors, paying his obligations, winning the lasting regard of the business community and retiring a poor man,” “Goo Kim Fui,” 7.

²⁹⁷ “Letter from Goo Kim to Henry Cooper, October 28, 1897.” File 42: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

²⁹⁸ In *Plague and Fire*, Mohr cites two such proposals under the Provisional Republic, the first stipulating that anyone brought into the islands as an agricultural labor must remain an agricultural labor, and the second requiring that Asians engaged in trade and manufacture obtain a special license to continue operating, and prohibiting the issue of any further licenses. See Mohr, 22.

²⁹⁹ Here I draw on the work of the cultural anthropologist Lok Siu, who theorizes diasporic citizenship in her landmark study of the Chinese in Panama. “Diasporic citizenship provides both a methodology and an epistemological framework in which to understand citizenship in a transnational context that accounts for geopolitical dynamics and people’s situated and simultaneous commitments to different cultural-political communities. It illuminates two interconnected processes: how the different cultural-national entities intersect and interact to determine the parameters of diasporic belonging, and how diasporic subjects engage these parameters, as well as each of the entities separately, to assert, redefine, and/or transform their belonging.” Lok C. D. Siu, *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2005) 5. Siu’s construction of diasporic citizenship stipulates that migratory subjects experience both liability and leverage in relation to nodes of power (specifically, local states) due to their difference as displaced, diasporic subjects. While geopolitical processes qualify and complicate their belonging, these subjects negotiate both effective and affective rights through unique social and cultural practices that reflect

their shifting and liminal positions locally, transnationally, and in relation to an ever-dilating diaspora.

While Siu employs a capacious definition of citizenship as an ongoing process of negotiating not only political and legal, but social and cultural belonging, I am concerned with the struggle of migrant Chinese for very literal enfranchisement. Focusing on the context of annexation-era Hawai‘i, when the historical conditions of Chinese belonging were truncated by immigration exclusion laws, I construct diasporic citizenship as a deliberate, aspirational, and incomplete political strategy for wresting rights from the host nation by invoking the influence of the home nation and, perhaps more pragmatically, mobilizing local resources of the diaspora. What is unique about my argument is its particular historicization of diasporic citizenship, examining the practice not in the era of late-capitalist globalization, but its prelude at the turn of the twentieth century, when labor migrations and exclusion laws calibrated citizenship and subjecthood to meet the exigencies of imperial and capitalist expansion.

³⁰⁰ Dye offers a brief account of the political maneuvering of the pro-annexationist faction in Hawai‘i to disenfranchise Asians and Native Hawaiians under the new constitution; Dye, 214.

³⁰¹ Qin, 97.

³⁰² “Letter from ‘Chinese Legation,’ Tsui Kwo Yin, Chinese Minister to US, to John W. Foster, US Secretary of State.” Folder 41: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³⁰³ “Letter and Report from Goo Kim Fui, Chinese Commercial Agent, to Henry E. Cooper, Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 20, 1896.” Folder 41: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Chinese demanding state protection against mob violence in San Francisco in the 1870s made explicit reference to the invective that encouraged physical attacks. Citing a letter by the consolidated benevolent organization known as the Six Companies, which acted as the diplomatic mouthpiece of Chinese in the United States, Qin writes that “the presidents of the Six Companies sent another appeal to the mayor [of San Francisco] on November 4 [1877] complaining that mob violence was occurring ‘with increasing fury, without any check or hindrance by the authorities’ and calling for municipal protection from the violence under their treaty rights. They called his attention to those ‘who use the most violent, inflammatory and incendiary language, threatening in plainest terms to burn and pillage the Chinese quarter and kill our people unless, at their bidding, we leave this ‘Free Republic,’” 88.

³⁰⁶ Publications like the *Overland Monthly* simultaneously proclaimed noble intentions for the humane guardianship of subjugated peoples, and enthusiasm for the adventure of foreign conquest. The historian Kristin Hoganson has analyzed American popular support for the Spanish-American war in terms of a masculinist discourse of national regeneration through the exercise of martial potency. See *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University, 1998).

³⁰⁷ “A Soldier Raid,” *Hawaiian Gazette*, September 6, 1898.

³⁰⁸ “They Were After Swipes,” *Hawaiian Star*, September 7, 1898.

³⁰⁹ “Letter from Goo Kim to Sanford B. Dole, September 5, 1898.” File 43: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³¹⁰ “Military Outrages,” *Independent*, September 5, 1898.

³¹¹ Madeline Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2000) 55.

³¹² “Letter from Yang to Mott, October 27, 1899, relating complaints by Chinese of assaults by US military personnel.” File 44: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³¹³ Nayan Shah’s history of public health interventions in San Francisco’s Chinatown explores at length the nexus between racial epistemologies and epidemiological theories. Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001). Mohr notes that racialized conceptions of contagion extended to all Asians, who were treated as suspiciously susceptible to disease in both colonial contexts and the United States, 13-14.

³¹⁴ Mohr chronicles the republic’s efforts to combat plague in *Plague and Fire*, paying special attention to the differential treatment of Chinese space and subjects. He describes the controversy created by the cremation of plague victims on pages 68 and 76-80.

³¹⁵ Elizabeth Sinn meticulously analyzes this industry in *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2013), chapter 7.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

³¹⁷ “Letter from Yang to Mott, December 27, 1899, suggesting alternative to cremation of Chinese plague victims.” File 44: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³¹⁸ Mohr, 192-193.

³¹⁹ Glick offers an account of Yang’s removal, and the persistent conflicts between the consular agency and the United Chinese Society, 282-284.

³²⁰ Mohr discusses Chinese resistance to Board of Health policies like plague site burnings, cremations, and quarantines, and the widespread resentment of Consul Yang for ostensibly supporting them. See 78-81, 149-151.

³²¹ “Letter from Chinese Consul Yang Wei-pin to Minister of Foreign Affairs E. A. Mott Smith, August 14, 1899.” File 44: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²² Letter of August 28, 1899. Letterbook from Minister of Foreign Affairs to Chinese Consulate. Number 22: Volume 110: Series 410. Outgoing Letters of the Foreign Office, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²³ Letter of April 15, 1899. Hong Kong Consul, January-June 1899. File 231: Box 14: Series 404. Hawaiian Officials Abroad, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²⁴ Letter of May 11, 1899. Hong Kong Consul, January-June 1899. File 231: Box 14: Series 404. Hawaiian Officials Abroad, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²⁵ Letters of May 2, 1900 and June 4, 1900. File 44: Box 3: Series 403.

Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²⁶ Lily Lim-Chong and Harry V. Ball surveyed the changing laws and strategies regulating opium in the kingdom and republic. They noted the lenience of many influential planters who tolerated the use of opium by contract workers. In this sense the drug played an important role in negotiating leisure and labor on plantations. See “Opium and the Law: Hawai‘i, 1856-1900,” *Chinese America: History & Perspectives—The Journal of the Chinese Historical Society of America*, San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America with UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 2010, 72.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-70.

³²⁸ “Letter from Yang Wei-pin to E. A. Mott Smith, August 26, 1899. File 44: Box 3: Series 403. Correspondence with Foreign Officials in Hawai‘i, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³²⁹ While opium use was widespread it was perceived as a Chinese vice and indeed endemic to Cantonese communities. They composed the overwhelming majority of arrests and convictions for possession and illegal sale. See Lim-Chong and Ball, 69-71.

³³⁰ The case was reported by several outlets and publicized as an international incident due to the involvement of the Chinese consul. “Chong Was Shot by Officer on Horseback,” *Hawaiian Star*, April 13, 1905; “Who Killed Chong Choy Fat?,” Letter from E. K. Bull, Manager of O‘ahu Sugar Co., to Editor, *Hawaiian Star*, April 19, 1905; “Consul Fan Wants Light,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, July 21, 1905.

³³¹ “Chong Was Shot by Officer on Horseback,” *Hawaiian Star*, April 13, 1905.

³³² “Consul Requests Investigation of Waipahu Shooting,” Letter from Chinese Consul Chang Tso Fan to Hawaiian Attorney General Lorrin Andrews, reprinted in *Evening Bulletin*, July 21, 1905.

³³³ Response of Attorney General Andrews to Consul Fan, reprinted in *Evening Bulletin*, July 21, 1905.

³³⁴ “Killing of a Chinese Becomes an International Incident,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, July 21, 1905; “Circuit Judges Will Agree,” *Hawaiian Star*, November 8, 1905.

³³⁵ “Report for the Consul,” *Hawaiian Star*, September 12, 1905; “Waipahu Riot Investigated,” *Hawaiian Star*, September 14, 1905.

³³⁶ Both the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* and the *Hawaiian Star* used this term to refer to the fatal incident. While the *Advertiser* had always accused the arrested Chinese of having fomented a riot, the *Star* had initially referred to the incident as a raid and a shooting.

Conclusion

³³⁷ “Army Orders War Upon Drug Habits,” *Hawaiian Gazette*, September 18, 1917.

³³⁸ “Dope Dealer Heavily Fined,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 27, 1912.

³³⁹ “Arrested Man Tells Police of Hop Joint,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 17, 1915.

³⁴⁰ “Opium Seller Given Nine Months’ Sentences,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 10, 1916.

³⁴¹ “Army Clean-Up Campaign Nets Score Offenders,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 27, 1917.

³⁴² “Net Drawn Tighter Around Violators of Army Regulations,” *Hawaiian Gazette*, December 28, 1917.

³⁴³ “Rose Silent on Why He Let Vice Flourish for So Long,” *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 12, 1918.

³⁴⁴ For historical surveys of Progressive Era movements, see John W. Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890- 1920*, 2d Ed., (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2000); Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans in the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010); Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1998); Shelton Stromquist, *Re-Inventing “The People”: The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006).

³⁴⁵ Ai, 267.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 83-94, 170.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 98-99.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 159-161.

³⁴⁹ Document 101: File 9: Box 1: Series 401. Numbered Documents, Foreign Office and Executive, Hawai‘i State Archives.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 269.

³⁵² Ai recounts the establishment of the Chinese Old Men’s Home, including the legal battle with the governor over the grounds of the former Chinese Hospital, in his memoir, 307-311.

³⁵³ Ibid., 307.

³⁵⁴ For a thorough history of the creation and seizure of the crown lands, see J. M. Van Dyke, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i?* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2008).

³⁵⁵ Ai, 310.

³⁵⁶ Xin Liu offers a concise history of the Chinese Old Men’s Home, with brief reference to the Wai Wah Chinese Hospital, as part of a case study of immigrant assimilation in Hawai‘i. See Liu, Xin. (1990). *Palolo Chinese Home* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, 34-35.

³⁵⁷ Ai, 308-309.

³⁵⁸ “New Chinese Hospital,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, October 29, 1903.

³⁵⁹ “The physician in question, Dr. Tong Sui Ting, was direct from the Tong Wa Hospital, in China...He had been appointed resident physician by the Chinese Hospital management, and asked that the Board find some way of granting him a license to practice, not on the outside, but within the limits of the hospital alone. He was not versed in foreign methods and could not pass an examination in such. However, in Chinese methods, there were none in China who could excel him,” quoted in “Chinese Hospital Sends in Petition,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, August 27, 1897.

³⁶⁰ “Hospital Will Be Improved,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, November 15, 1907.

³⁶¹ “New Chinese Hospital.”

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Xin, 15-16.

³⁶⁴ Ai, 311.

³⁶⁵ Xin, 11.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 23-26.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 52-53.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 37-38; Ai, 311.

³⁶⁹ Xin, 33.

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