Formation process of Chinese Community in Penang, 1786-1830

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

When Penang Was colonized by the British in 1786, it was transformed into a different place for cultivation and trade. The colonial administration needed various people from all levels, such as merchants, labourers or carpenters, so there were diverse migrants in Penang. Among the migrants, the Chinese community was one of the representative ethnic groups in Penang. Under the Kapitan system, the Chinese community was established by colonial policy which became another society for the Chinese migrants. In cultural perspective each Chinese migrant spoke a different dialect of Chinese due to their different regional backgrounds; therefore, Chinese migrants as a group formed a complex form of coexistence. Each Chinese migrant worked hard to get a living. In plantations, the Chinese planters employed labourers from their homeland, recruiting manpower by forming claim-obligation relationships. Based on income level, the Chinese migrants were stratified in the community. While certain groups were trusted by the colonial administration to manage several businesses, there were other minority groups who were vulnerable to the ethnic conflicts, gambling addiction, violence, maritime violence or epidemics. Despite several difficulties, the Chinese migrants had some welfare provision after establishing a Chinese poorhouse. Whereas certain Chinese groups disrupted public order by committing robberies, violence, murder and slave trade. The Chinese migrants concerned the colonial state repeatedly so the Penang government restricted arrivals of Chinese. In terms of religions and education, the Chinese migrants usually worshipped their ancestors or other gods, and some of them became Christians. The Christian missionaries and the colonial state opened schools for Chinese children so the Chinese parents did not have to send their children back to China anymore. The Chinese migrants were involved directly or indirectly in Penang's various issues that affected their settlement and presented a variety of views about the Chinese society. This research explores how Chinese community had expanded over almost 40 years.

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EIC East India Company

LMS London Missionary Society

VOC Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie

Note on terminology

In this thesis, the dollar symbol ($) is used to refer to the Spanish Dollar.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Under the British colonial rule which began in 1786, Penang became a multi-cultural society including Malays, Indians, Eurasians and Chinese migrants. In the years before the British occupation, Chinese had already migrated to the Malay Archipelago since the fifteenth century due to the prosperity of international trade, but Penang was the only place where a Chinese community had not been founded before the eighteenth century. When the British transformed Penang into a free port, they welcomed any migrants to stimulate the economy, and Chinese immigrants were one of many different ethnic groups attracted there; therefore, this historical change created a prominent social group in Penang.

In the early nineteenth century, the British colonized Penang, Singapore and Malacca with the colonial power granted different functions in the development of each colonial city. While Singapore primarily became a commercial and trading port, Malacca was a political administrative centre up to the nineteenth century, and Penang was considered a land for plantation and farming. Regardless of the original plans of the colonies, these cities were transformed by Chinese migrants who changed landscape of the colonies, establishing their presence as they participated in all walks of life.

Penang was made a colony by the British in 1786. In general, it is known that trade between China and the British East India Company encouraged the British to pioneer a trading base in Southeast Asia.[1] The volume of trade was expected to increase, and Penang, therefore, was an ideal place for the British, not least as its strategic location would check the Dutch economic dominance in Southeast Asia. Penang was ceded to the British East India Company by the Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah, in exchange for military protection from Selangor, who were threatening Kedah. Francis Light became the negotiator tasked with

[1] Loh Wei Leng, 'Penang's Trade and Shipping in the Imperial Age', in *Penang and Its Region*, ed. By Yeoh Seng Guan, Loh Wei Leng, Khoo Salma Nasution and Neil Khor (NUS Press, 2009) (p. 90).

negotiating the handover of Penang, and as someone had engaged in trade between Madras and Kedah since 1763, he had a good understanding of the Malay world. When Light arrived in Penang, there were only 58 people living there, but the British transformed Penang into a trading base and an imperial base for the extension of their colonial power.[2]

When Penang became a free port, the colonial administration needed various people from all levels, such as merchants, labourers or carpenters. As a result, Penang experienced the arrival of diverse migrants with each group tending to be categorized by cultural identity. The migrants divided themselves into subethnic communities, each with its own associations and distinctive occupational specialties.[3] The colonial administration adopted the 'Kapitan system' with a headman (*kapitan*) appointed for each immigrant community.[4] The colonial authority did not know much about migrants' customs, practices, and traditions; therefore, this system was an effective form of rule. The Kapitan system fostered insularity within the respective communities, each with its own way of living, worldview, characteristics, identity and loyalty with each kapitan acting as a mediator between the colonial administration and community.[5] This colonial policy meant that the Chinese migrants were unified into one 'Chinese group' under a single community leader.

The central purpose of this thesis is to show how Penang's Chinese community developed as a distinctive society from the foundation of Penang. Under the colonial rule, Penang became a multi-ethnic society, and the Chinese migrants formed their own small community under the Kapitan system. Although the Kapitan's leadership and cultural homogeneity resulted in the formation of Chinese community, the migrants were not always united. The Chinese community was divided into various classes by time of settlement, place of origin, occupations, or wealth. The novelty of this thesis lies therefore in its detailed exploration of the diverse communities of the Chinese migrants in social and historical perspectives, and the strategies

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[2] Zhou Weimin and Tang Lingling, *A History of Sino-Malaysian Interactions* (Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies, 2011), pp. 234-235.

[3] Jean DeBernardi*, Penang: rites of belonging in a Malaysian Chinese community* (NUS Press, 2009), p. 21.

[4] *Kapitan* means captain in Malay.

[5] Ooi Keat Gin, 'Disparate Identities: Penang from a Historical Perspective, 1780–1941', *Kajian Malaysia*, 33, (2015) p. 32.

they used to build communities in this early history of Penang. As such it adds to literature on early settler societies in colonial contexts in this region.

Through a close empirical study of the development of this community during formative years between 1786 and 1830, it will show how the Chinese community developed as a distinctive society with various classes. Once the Chinese community was established, the community became a highly stratified society as time went by. The Chinese community was created artificially but the Chinese migrants maintained the community by establishing their order. An influx of Chinese migrants and birth of new generations resulted expansion of the Chinese community. My own interest in this project is the Chinese migrants were stratified while the migrants put down roots in Penang for about 40 years. For example, in the pepper farms, the Chinese planters employed labourers from China who paid the labourers' passage money and monthly labour cost. The manufacturing process in pepper farms divided the Chinese migrants into the capitalist classes and labouring classes. Furthermore, the pork farmers donated a portion of their profits to take care of the poor Chinese. In the research, I observe how social and cultural diversity was bound to be happened in the Chinese community as a result of stratification. The wealth, morality, place of origin, religion and education level divided the haves and the have-nots. My research presents that the Chinese migrants formed a stratified society by establishing a cooperative relationship among the classes from early years of the settlement. While other scholars, such as Hussin, Nordin (2007) or Wu (2003) mainly focuses on economic achievement of the Chinese planters, my research provides additional narratives about the Chinese underclasses whom were involved with the Chinese capitalist classes to carve out their new lives. The Chinese community could not solely maintain by certain classes which was consisted of all levels of the community.

In terms of cultural background, there were two types of Chinese migrants that moved into Penang. The first were those who already had experience of the Malay world, migrants who had been in the region for a few generations since the fifteenth century and were familiar with local culture. They were even able to deal with the British administrators. Migrants in the second group were new arrivals to the region during the eighteenth century and mostly labourers. The first group, mostly merchants, recruited workers from China to expand their businesses. During their arrival period, each migrant spoke a different dialect of Chinese due

to their different regional backgrounds; therefore, Chinese migrants as a group formed a complex form of coexistence. A growing number of Chinese migrants began to demonstrate a strong presence in political, socio-economic, and cultural spheres, but they did not always live peacefully with their neighbours. They sometimes competed against each other in an attempt to establish a certain group's economic or political hegemony within the community. The Chinese community in the early years of colonial Penang was a remarkable forecast of the role which they later adopted in the development of British Malaya.[6] They raised profits by establishing plantations of pepper or sugar that became economic foundations in later years. In addition to the plantations, the Chinese migrants managed revenue farms, and as a result, the colonial administration expected economic activation of the colony by their commercial activities. This upswing in commercial activity increased the Chinese population in Penang, and as the Chinese community expanded, it became the largest proportion of the colony's population by the middle of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the Chinese community accommodated a large number of migrants, and each migrant created individual their own specific cultural identity.

Table 1 shows the population increase in Penang from 1818 to 1860. According to the table, the Chinese community represented the smallest population in 1818 but had become the largest group by 1860. This change induced me to examine how Chinese migrants carved out their new lives in Penang.

Table 1: Population of Penang from 1818 to 1860

	Malays	Europeans	Indians	Chinese	Total population
1818	12190	?	8197	7858	35000
1830	11943	1877	8858	8963	33959
1842	18442	1180	9681	9715	40499
1851	16570	347	7840	15457	43143
1860	18887	1995	10618	28018	59956

Source: L.A. Mills. *British Malaya 1824-67.* The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. P.250.

[6] Lennox Algernon Mills, *British Malaya:1824-67* (The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), p. 53.

This research focuses on the period from 1786 to 1830, which covers from the foundation of Penang to the establishment of the Straits Settlements, when in accordance with colonial policy the Chinese migrants began to promote the formation of their own community. Although the foundation of Singapore in 1819 made Penang less important than before, it was the first place where the British governed over Chinese migrants. The Chinese population in Penang increased considerably during the 1850s as the Chinese community settled down successfully and produced numerous descendants for some time. Despite unexpected challenges in early years, such as fires, diseases or internal conflicts, the Chinese migrants successfully put down roots in Penang. As a result, Chinese community became one of the principal members of society in Penang. Gradually, Chinese migrants began to form more of their own communities across other parts of the Malay Archipelago, in response to the British colonial policy. These processes affected the sense of identity among Chinese Malaysians in later years.

As well as exploring the context of Penang itself, this research examines how Chinese migrants were divided into different groups according to differences in wealth. While certain groups were trusted by the colonial administration to manage several businesses, there were other minority groups who were vulnerable to the diseases or poverty. The vulnerable groups had to endure many difficulties in order to survive their new surroundings because of the absence of a proper welfare system. They could get help from privately led welfare societies within the Chinese community or religious organizations, but some groups of Chinese labourers became addicted gamblers or criminals, which might lead to social unrest at any time. These groups contrasted with the influential Chinese merchants as the latter formed the economic foundations of Penang. Chinese migrants were both major and minor actors in handling issues such as maritime violence, fires, diseases, robberies or the slave trade that concerned the whole of society. The Chinese migrants were involved directly or indirectly in issues that affected the development of their settlement and presented a variety of views about the Chinese society. As a result of the stratification in the Chinese community, each group had different concerns.

The Chinese migrants have settled down in Penang from 1786, and most of them were male in early years. Under the Kapitan system, the Chinese population was growing steadily though some of the Chinese migrants experienced ethnic conflicts with other groups. In Penang, the

Chinese migrants began their economic activities in pepper businesses, pork farms, arrack farms, opium farms, sugar plantations, construction works and gambling houses from 1800s. The economic activities of the Chinese migrants raised tax revenue for the colonial state. However, the Chinese migrants were vulnerable to challenges from mid-1810s, such as robbery, fire, maritime violence, epidemics and disease. The poor class was accommodated in the poorhouse. Whereas some Chinese criminals committed violence or murder. Furthermore, certain groups of Chinese became slave traders, and few Chinese organizations conspired to rise in revolt in 1820s. The Chinese criminals determined the Penang government to restrict Chinese immigration from 1829. The religious activities and education resulted expansion of Chinese community. From the early years, the Chinese migrants promoted their friendship by practicing religious activities but some of them converted to Christianity. The Christian missionaries opened mission schools and the colonial state opened public schools, so the Chinese children were given educational opportunities from mid 1810s. The religious activities and education affected identities of Chinese migrants. The settlement of Penang over 40 years explains how the Chinese community developed as a distinctive society.

The objective of this research is to understand finds out the origins under colonial rule of the distinctive characteristics of Penang's Chinese community, and its expansion over almost 40 years. Prior studies have focused on issues among the Chinese in Malaya after the late-nineteenth century, the process of colonising Malaya, and the imperial practices in the region but few scholars have focused on Penang. Compared to other ethnic communities, the Chinese migrants made up their specific stories in Penang as social minorities. This study explores the patterns in the growth of Chinese community in social perspective, so the study hopes to provide a case study of one of the most important examples of early colonial Chinese settlement.

1.2 Literature Review

Some of the various previous studies have examined the relevant themes of this research. They have illustrated Chinese migrants' influence from the middle of nineteenth century, but

they do not explain how this influence originated from this pioneer community.[7] After the British founded Penang, the colony was transformed into a 'plural society' due to the influx of immigration, and the local Chinese community was created. Among the several ethnic communities, Chinese migrants have survived as a community based on the networks that they established. Therefore, this research project studies relevant secondary data on various themes such as modern British imperialism, Southeast Asian history, Malaysian history, plural society, Anglo-Chinese relations and overseas Chinese communities.

British imperialism needs to be discussed prior to focusing our attention on the main topic. The formation of Penang's Chinese community was a result of British imperialism in the region. Cain and Hopkins conceptualized British imperial expansion as the result of 'gentlemanly capitalism', in that imperial policies were strongly influenced by capitalists in Britain whose priorities were their business interests.[8] Cain and Hopkins' work encouraged a shift of emphasis away from seeing provincial manufacturers and geopolitical strategy as important influences, and towards seeing the expansion of empire as emanating from London and the financial sector.[9] Some landowners were directly involved in overseas trade as exporters of grain (back to the 1760s) or as producers of wool for the textile industry and had a stake in the fortunes of the import trades from Asia and the New World.[10] This meant those capitalists affected the imperial or foreign policy of the British government in order to suit their commercial needs. When Penang was newly founded, the colony created new industries, such as pepper plantations, that produced export items, and among the migrants, there was a considerable number of merchants who started the trading activities in those early years based on the production of these export items, which in promoted Penang as a trading centre. The colonial officials considered local conditions in terms of the development of Penang but it should be discussed whether London's capitalists had any specific interest in the urban planning

[7] Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920-1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Wong Yee Tuan, *Chinese Commerce in the 19th Century: The Rise and Fall of the Big Five* (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2015); and Wu Xiao An, *Chinese Business in the Making of a Malay State, 1882-1941: Kedah and Penang* (Routledge, 2003).
[8] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas: 1. The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *Economic History Review*, 39 (1986), p. 502.
[9] Martin Lynn, Untitled Review of 'British Imperialism' by P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *The English Historical Review*, 111 (441, 1996), pp. 501-503.
[10] Cain and Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism', p. 518.

of Penang.

Moreover, Webster illustrates the process of British imperial expansion in Southeast Asia through the perspective of gentlemanly capitalism. In the British view, they were attempting to pioneer a new market for opium export; China was a popular market but the East India Company was also looking for a secondary market as an alternative if the Chinese market became depressed. In fact, pressure groups in Britain, based in towns like Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow, would have planned this project, lobbying and petitioning parliament for trade with the Far East.[11] Conversely, Tarling applied an 'informal empire' framework to British expansion in Southeast Asia, attempting to explain British colonial policy in Southeast Asia as based on the strategic considerations of the Empire as a whole. He argued that British decisions were determined by extra Southeast Asian considerations such as relations with other European powers or concern to preserve control over the flanks of the route to China.[12] The British had to compete with the Dutch for possession of the Malay Archipelago until the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was signed in 1824, enabling the British to acquire the Malay Peninsula and Singapore. However, while the British had solved a problem with the Dutch, they had another challenge with France in Southeast Asia, having to prevent French expansion in order to protect their interests. In this case, Siam was located between British Malaya and French Cochin China; therefore, the British elaborated with Siam to achieve their goals while Siam were able to remain an independent nation as a result. Both theories might illustrate why the British East India Company had military and commercial goals in Southeast Asia. During the period of imperialism, the European powers were competing for their national interests in East Asia. Penang was occupied for strategic options it offered, which enabled British influence to expand towards the Malay Peninsula or Hong Kong. These imperial historiographies are more relevant in conjunction with British national interests; the empire needed colonies to drive market expansion and further the industrial competitiveness needed to complete the imperial project. The considerable number of Chinese migrants forming their community became

[11] Anthony Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in Southeast Asia, 1770-1890* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), pp. 86-87.
[12] Nicholas Tarling, *Imperial Britain in South-East Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 5.

essential workers, as the imperial policy increased the size of Penang's Chinese population while the migrant community contributed to the success of British rule.

From the British colonial period, Penang was transformed into a plural society by accepting immigrants, including Chinese migrants. Barth describes a plural society as the combination of ethnic segmentation and economic independence with each group sustaining its own cultural solidarity, such as religion, language or education.[13] The concept of plural society was established by John Furnivall, who used it to compare the colonial policies in British Burma and the Dutch East Indies. Furnivall claims that each ethnic group has different function and particular occupations in a plural society based on a division of labour along racial lines.[14] In terms of similarities, both regions were colonised by European powers that formed plural societies; Burma was the rice cultivation centre of the British Empire while Java was the spice production and trading centre of the Dutch Empire.[15] Both colonies might be described as 'plural societies' by the arrival of Chinese and Indian migrants. European colonisers believed that each ethnic community specialised in certain economic sectors and implemented a division of labour in the colonies. They aimed to achieve their economic goals efficiently through the influx of the immigrants. In this way, a plural society was established from the viewpoint of economic exploitation as the Europeans transformed the social structures of colonies completely. As Furnivall claims, Penang experienced a similar case. Penang was composed of peoples of various ethnicities in similar proportions, and in the early years of Penang, the Chinese community was one of the migrant groups. The colonial officials expected the Chinese migrants to raise tax revenues by cultivating pepper or managing gambling houses. The officials simply considered the Chinese migrants as economic tool of colonial Penang. This thesis will explore how the colonial officials treated each ethnic community and how the Chinese community established its relationship with the colonial administration and other ethnic communities in multicultural Penang. Cultural differences and ethnic interests caused

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[13] Fredrik Barth, 'Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan', *American Anthropologist*, 58 (1956), p. 1079.

[14] John Sydenham Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. 304-312.

[15] ibid., p. 10.

ethnic conflicts; therefore, attitudes within the Chinese community towards other groups should be explored to better understand the Chinese community's influence or political position.

Overseas Chinese are the descendants of Chinese migrants who maintained their cultural identities who established strong ties in order to survive. Some migrants would have been acculturated, but many formed their own communities based on cultural solidarity. Anderson claims that even though members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their compatriots, in the minds of each individual lives the image of their communion; in this case, it could exist as an imagined group. Communities are distinguished by the style in which they are imagined, not by their genuineness. Regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation, communities are conceived in terms of deep, horizontal comradeship.[16] China has a diverse culture and several languages across its regions; as a result, Chinese migrants would encounter cultural barriers within the community. The migrants were not always harmonious in Penang based on their 'imagined community'. Under the Kapitan system, the Chinese migrants seemed to cooperate with each other at first due to low population. After some time, the migrants were divided into various groups who competed for certain group's benefits. The community was established by the colonial state's imagination that sometimes experienced internal conflicts. The Chinese immigrant population in Malaya, including Penang, increased rapidly during British colonial rule as the new Chinese migrants added to this community. As in Penang, Chinese communities were formed in Singapore and Thailand as both places became pluralistic societies. Skinner explores how Chinese migrants settled down in the Ayutthaya Kingdom, Thailand from the seventeenth century onwards with at least ten thousand Chinese scattered everywhere in the kingdom following many different careers. The Chinese community was mainly made up of merchants, but other occupations, such as pig breeders or artisans, were represented as well.[17] Although plenty of migrants were scattered across the kingdom, they found solidarity as one community. There were many similarities with the situation in Penang but the Chinese population was lower, and Penang was smaller. Neal examines how Chinese

[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 5-7.
[17] George William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: an analytical history* (Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 12-20.

migrants affected the development of Singapore in the nineteenth century with the administration expecting economic activation by Chinese merchants, and solutions to their labour problems in the form of Chinese labourers.[18] In fact, the British administration experienced the same patterns in Penang and they attempted to deal with economic issues in a similar way. Regardless of career, officials expected Chinese migrants to be involved in economic activation of the colony at every level. While the Chinese merchants could drive export increases, Chinese labourers could increase the productivity in the plantations that played an important role in the colonial economy.

When Europeans colonised Southeast Asia, they employed Chinese migrants as labour in various plantations. Without assimilation into the indigenous populations, the Chinese migrants established their networks based on reciprocity and cultural commonality. Reciprocity became a basic element of Chinese companies and Chinese associations in Southeast Asia that sought cooperation. Reciprocity is one of the elements of social capital that establish solidarity in relationships.[19] Within the network, obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held is based on trustworthiness of the social environment.[20] As the members aim to achieve common goals, aberrant individual behaviour is discouraged within the networks. This process took place in Penang and other parts of Malaya as well, with Chinese migrants organising various societies, such as fraternities or hometown alumni associations, that strengthened relationships between the migrants. They depended on each other and that created an exclusiveness towards non-Chinese migrants. Gungwu Wang suggested four main patterns of Chinese migration, divided into trader, coolie, sojourner and descent patterns.[21] The trader pattern refers to merchants who successfully set up commercial bases abroad, which are eventually taken over by their descendants. The coolie pattern features landless male labourers engaged in plantation or construction who are largely subordinated to the trader pattern. The sojourner pattern belongs to the professionals such as teachers or journalists who went out to

[18] Stan Neal, *Singapore, Chinese Migration and the Making of the British Empire, 1819-67* (Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 26-52.
[19] Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974), p. 189.
[20] James Coleman, 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital', *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (1988), p. 102.
[21] Wang Gungwu, *China and the Chinese Overseas*. (Times Academic Press, 1991), p. 4.

promote Chinese culture, residing abroad only temporarily. The descent pattern categorizes foreign nationals of Chinese descent who emigrate to another foreign country. In general, Penang's Chinese migrants followed the merchant and coolie patterns. The immigrant community was organised by the merchants but the community was expanded by the increasing number of labourers.

In Penang, the British officials created a new dominant-subordinate relationship with Chinese as colonisers. Wang aims to offer a longer view of Anglo-Chinese relationship from various perspectives, conceptualizing Arthur Waley's four words 'fight, trade, convert or rule' as being at the core of the history of Anglo-Chinese interaction.[22] When the British defeated Qing forces during the First Opium War, between 1839 and 1842, China was forced to open trading ports and the British sought to expand their national interests. As a result of this Anglo-Chinese encounter, Chinese people experienced several lifestyle changes by adopting Western technologies. When the British colonised Hong Kong and the Malay Peninsula that increased the number of Anglo-Chinese encounters, regardless of whether it was direct or indirect rule. These places included strong Chinese communities representing various sections of society, such as merchants or nationalists, and therefore their responses to the British form of governance would also differ. Hilleman has pointed out how the networks of imperial expansion shaped the diverse British imaginings of China.[23] He focused on how British imperial networks in India and Southeast Asia were critical mediators in the British encounter of China and that British expansion into Southeast Asia resulted partly from issues of trade with China. Although he did not focus on Penang, Hilleman explained why the British Empire was eager to occupy Southeast Asia, arguing that the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia played an important role in the formation of knowledge about the country. Chinese immigrants provided useful information about their homeland, and their geographic knowledge helped the British to prepare for war in later years. While the British received help from the Chinese, the lives of Chinese migrant workers were not improved as, because of the racial hierarchies,

[22] Wang Gungwu, *Anglo-Chinese Encounters since 1800: War, trade, science and governance* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 8.
[23] Ulrike Hilleman, *Asian Empire and British Knowledge: China and the networks of British imperial expansion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 106.

colonial officials only sought to exploit their labour.

Contradicting the Anglocentric perspective, Hu Sheng points out how Chinese were exploited by the European imperialists.[24] When China was defeated by Britain in the Opium Wars, the Qing dynasty was weakened. As a result, the Chinese were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, which ceded Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity and established five treaty ports at Shanghai, Canton, Ningpo, Foochow, and Amoy. The British even helped the Qing troops to repress a 'Taiping Rebellion', justifying their interference in domestic affairs of China. The meaning of the term 'Anglo-Chinese' relationship varies from place to place. In Malaya, for example, in the early period the Anglo-Chinese relationship was a more co-operative one as Chinese migrants attempted to preserve their political position. These cases are divided into cross-border relations and patron-client relationships within the same term. Furthermore, the British administration implemented colonial policies based on elitism. Resident of Singapore, John Crawfurd, attempted to introduce liberal ideals of free trade, the rule of law and private property to Southeast Asia, and considered the development of freedom and role of colonialism as a new form of barbarian invasion.[25] As the global hegemon, the British strongly believed that their governing style had to be implanted into their colonies, but when they introduced large-scale plantations, they could become the object of resentment as a result of environmental change and them allowing immigration to Penang. The new policies focused only on commercial profits, which tended to result in ethnic conflict, as the British simply overestimated the value of their ideals instead of assessing the local situation.

In terms of the literature devoted to British Malaya, Watson and Andaya offer an overview of Malaysia's entire history, including British Malaya, explaining how the peninsula was colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, in that order.[26] While the Portuguese and Dutch occupied Melaka only as a trading base, the British attempted to occupy other regions as well such as Penang or Singapore to increase the scope of its commercial activities. When the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was signed in 1824, the British aimed to centralise the administration

[24] Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese politics* (Foreign Languages Press, 1955), p. 17.
[25] Gareth Knapman, *Race and British Colonialism in Southeast Asia, 1770-1870: John Crawfurd and the Politics of Equality* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 5-6.
[26] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), p. 117.

of Penang, Malacca and Singapore as the Straits Settlements. Mills, however, illustrates the colonial process in early 19th century differently.[27] He attempts to describe the development of British Malaya's until it was transferred from the colony of India to the Colonial Office. The British needed a diplomatic strategy to establish the Straits Settlements, but with the Malay Peninsula located between Siam and Burma, these neighbours did not welcome the British arrival in the region. The Dutch territories were also located in south of the Malay Peninsula. However, when the diplomatic dispute was settled, the British acquired Malacca in 1825 by the Treaty of London and the whole Malay Peninsula by the 1874 Treaty of Pangkor. Furthermore, Mills explains some specific content, such as the legal and economic history of Penang and Singapore, James Brooke in Borneo and Chinese migration process in Malaya. Lees explores the development of colonial governance and the experiences of Malayan residents under British rule.[28] Compared to the other literature, Lees' work focuses more on the social history of the plantations and towns. Because of the needs of the sugar and rubber plantations, the number of migrant workers required increased the population of the colony. At first, most migrants were male labourers who were paid low wages and even suffered from debt or opium addiction. These labourers were known as 'coolies'. Then, with the increase in female migrants and new-born babies during the nineteenth century, the population of British Malaya increased, thereby affecting civil society, education, housing, sanitation and urbanization in the colony.

Some scholars have explored Penang's history through comparative analysis or case studies. Nordin Hussin contrasts the policies of two Southeast Asian European colonies, Dutch Melaka and British Penang.[29] On the one hand, the Dutch in Melaka accepted some local culture during the colonial period while the British in Penang sustained the culture of their homeland because they had not adopted local culture. Furthermore, Hussin contrasts the global power of the Dutch and the British. From the eighteenth century onwards, the influence of the Netherlands was reduced while the British were expanding into the territories to Southeast Asia. When the Anglo-Dutch treaty was signed in 1824, it divided the governing area between the

[27] Lennox A. Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67* (The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), p. 35.
[28] Lynn Hollen Lees, *Planting Empire, Cultivating Subjects: British Malaya, 1786-1941* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 22.
[29] Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830.* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007), p. 105.

Dutch and the British administrations, which led to the eventual foundation of four different countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. The author focuses on the geopolitical functions of these ports and describes the migration process generally. In particular, Penang was transformed into a multicultural place under the British East India Company administration, wherein each ethnic community had different migration process. The arrival of migrants contributed to Penang's prosperity; therefore, it should be discussed how the migrants settled down successfully in Penang within each community. Lewis describes the transitions in Bangkok, Rangoon and Penang between the 1920s and 1930s as Britain expanded its territory in Southeast Asia and these three cities were transformed by the British Empire's influence.[30] Penang and Rangoon were colonized by the British, while Bangkok was affected by the Burney treaty in 1825. Under the British influence, these cities had influx of migrants who were mostly from China or India, and instead of assimilating, each ethnic community was sustained by cultural identity and headed by its own ethnic leaders. The role of these leaders was to consolidate their own community and negotiate with other leaders and the colonial authorities. Lewis also explains the cultural transition in the three cities in terms of news, education and the cinema. As cultural diversity spread in these cities, each of the three cultural mechanism was made available in various languages. Furthermore, it was notable that women had more opportunities for education. With regards to these two studies, most cities in Southeast Asia underwent many changes, no longer maintaining traditional features where they hosted new industries and more migrants. Penang was converted into a new place by the Europeans and was not preserved for many years like Malacca had been. Penang was almost uninhabited and therefore the British had to make something out of nothing. This thesis will explore how the Chinese community established their political, economic and social positions during the urbanization of Penang.

In terms of case studies of the colony, research has been conducted into Chinese family business. Wu Xiao An explains the links between migrant Chinese business networks and family studies, considering issues of state, region, ethnicity and migration in Penang and

[30] Lewis, *Cities in Motion,* p. 101.

Kedah.[31] Unlike other historians, Wu emphasizes the important role played by migrants. In Penang, the Chinese migrants played a fundamental role, in conjunction with the Europeans and the Malays, which triggered an economic transformation and the building of the colonial state. Based on strong networks, the Chinese migrants were dominant in economic activities in Penang and Kedah as the British and Malays both needed Chinese capital for their own benefit. Wu also explores the transformation of Chinese business sectors, such as opium, rice or pawnbroking, while Wong Yee Tuan focuses on Penang's Hokkien families.[32] The reference illustrates how these five leading families expanded their economic influence from the early nineteenth century, consolidating their business leadership based on Penang's economic transformation. Chinese business elites protected their profits, even in competition with the Western enterprises and when the colonialists expected to gain economic profit from taxing the Chinese business elites. However, it is uncertain whether other ethnic communities experienced economic hardship due to Chinese dominance. Wu's and Wong's focus on the economic influence of Chinese migrants induced me to examine whether the Chinese migrants had any political or cultural influence in Penang. Any influence was based on networks, but their networks would have been created or expanded based on political and social factors, such as winning bids for revenue farms or monopolies. Turnbull describes Penang's historical transition as part of the Straits Settlements.[33] While Melaka's port could only cope with local trade, Penang was the centre for the export of rubber, tin, and palm oil from the northern Malay states via the Suez Canal. At the same time, Penang faced immigration from China, India and Sumatra, and once Penang became a major trading centre, the colony utilized its human resources based on cultural diversity and its networks. Loh Wei Leng illustrates the persistence of earlier global, regional and local connections as Penang emerged to become the entrance to Western markets.[34] Although Singapore became the most important city in the Straits Settlements, Penang was still important in connecting British India, Burma and the Malay

[31] Wu Xiao An, *Chinese Business*, p. 31.
[32] Wong Yee Tuan, *Chinese Commerce in the 19th Century: The Rise and Fall of the Big Five* (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2015), p. 14.
[33] Constance Mary Turnbull, 'Penang's Changing Role in the Straits Settlements, 1826-1946', in *Penang and Its Region*, ed. By Yeoh Seng Guan, Loh Wei Leng, Khoo Salma Nasution and Neil Khor (NUS Press, 2009) (p. 30).
[34] Leng, 'Penang's Trade and Shipping in the Imperial Age', p. 90.

Peninsula for exchanging external goods, peoples and capital. The Chinese merchants competed or cooperated with the Indian-Muslim and European traders in Penang and thereby activated international trades.

The religious activities of Chinese migrants were mainly studied by DeBernardi. In terms of traditional religious activities, Chinese migrants built a Buddhist temple, named Kong Hok palace. Apart from Buddhist worship, Chinese migrants practised Confucian worship, and used the temple as a Chinese community centre until the Chinese Town Hall was constructed in 1886. Many wealthy Chinese provided leadership by building community religious institutions and supporting public hospitals for the poor. They created new forms of religious practice and political participation by using their wealth.[35] They did not care much about religious doctrine, but there were a wide variety of activities in the temple that brought the migrants solidarity. In addition to traditional practices, European Christian missionaries attempted to convert the Chinese migrants with Protestant missionaries especially determined to convert the Chinese population through regular visits, distributing tracts and opening schools. However, the author focuses on the missionaries' plans and activities rather than how the Chinese migrants approached the new religion.[36] Despite efforts to convert the whole Chinese community, Christianity was not attractive to them. The migrants simply considered Christianity as a foreign religion that became optional among the various religions. For the Chinese, the religious activities aimed at consolidation of unity rather than strengthening the spiritual sense. They could not experience cultural intimacy from Christianity, and as a result there were only a few Chinese Christians in the early years.

Most studies focus on the influence of Chinese migrants or functions of Penang in mid-nineteenth century and these studies illustrate the success of the colony or the migrants as a results of its successful foundation. It became an important city in the Straits Settlements, and Chinese migrants formed a community and networks while settling in Penang. Earlier studies usually focus on British colonial strategies and the commercial achievements of the Chinese,

[35] Jean Elizabeth DeBernardi, *Penang: Rites of Belonging in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (NUS Press, 2009), pp. 27-36.
[36] Jean Elizabeth DeBernardi, *Christian Circulations: Global Christianity and the Local Church in Penang and Singapore, 1819-2000* (NUS Press, 2020), pp. 73-93.

but I focused on how Chinese migrants approached social issues. After reviewing the literature, this research aims to examine how the Chinese community was created and how it expanded within Penang and provides in-depth studies to fill in some of the silences in Penang's Chinese community and as such contributes to the existing general history of Penang.

1.3 Concepts and Methods

1.3.1 Concepts

1.3.1.1. *Diaspora*

The objective of this study is to analyse the formation of the Chinese migrant community in Penang, and this research investigates the process through the concept of 'diaspora', a term originally used to understand Jewish population movements that has come to refer to any migrant population separated from its indigenous territories. Some migrants were acculturated for various reasons, but others have kept their unique cultural identities and established their own communities. Robin Cohen[37] categorized diasporas into five types, as in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Ideal types of Diaspora

Main types of diaspora	Main examples	Notes
Victim	Jews, Africans, Armenians	- Irish and Palestinians - Refugee groups
Labour	Indentured Indians	- Chinese, Japanese, Turks, Italians, North Africans - Proletarian Diaspora
Imperial	British	- Russians, colonial powers other than

[37] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, second edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 18.

		Britain - Settler or Colonial Diasporas
Trade	Lebanese, Chinese	- Venetians, Indians, Chinese, Japanese
Deterritorialized	Caribbean, Sindhis, Parsis	- Roma, Muslims and other religious diasporas - Hybrid, Cultural, Post-Colonial

Source: Robin Cohen, *Global diasporas: An Introduction* (2nd edition). London; New York: Routledge, 2008. p. 18

In this case, Penang's Chinese community would be classified into Labour and Trade type. When Chinese migrants arrived in Penang, they had various occupations such as traders, carpenters, masons, smiths, shopkeepers and planters, and the type of diaspora could be classified by each migrant's job or arrival period. Most early settlers had already migrated to the Malay Archipelago for trade since the fifteenth century, attracted by Penang's business environment, and while they were expanding their businesses, they would have sought to recruit labourers from networks in China. My aim is to make use of this concept to interpret any specific characteristics of Penang's Chinese community. The Chinese community does not belong to certain category as each migrant had different careers; therefore, I aim to explore how different classes cooperated or competed within the community.

1.3.1.2 *Social Capital*

When Chinese migrants established a community, they sought consolidation for survival that promoted social capital. Social capital is the aggregate of resources within social networks that is maintained by symbolic exchanges among the members.[38] Based on reciprocity and trust, this research examines how to cooperate with each other for a common good within the network. In fact, the Chinese migrants and organizations took care of poor Chinese who always needed help. They also promoted friendship of the migrants by performing religious ceremonies

[38] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* edited by J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), p. 21.

together.

The basis of Chinese social structure is the family system. Within the Chinese community, respect and considerations for ancestors and elders is strongly emphasized, which implies obedience in various matters. It is quite common for the parents and several children of a family to work together to expand the scale of businesses; therefore, Chinese businesses in Southeast Asia, including Penang, are usually family owned and managed through a centralized bureaucracy.[39] These firms are typically mid-sized corporations with trade and financing guided by family ties, and personal relationships are prioritized over formal relationships. The Chinese migrants relied on family, friends and people from same homeland, in accordance with trust.

When the Chinese community was founded, each migrant had a different regional background. Based on local patriotism, there were several Chinese organizations which sometimes broke the law for the interests of their members. Competitive bids for revenue farms often resulted in smuggling and violence among the migrants that could not be controlled by the public power. The social capital of the Chinese migrants ensured a successful start for the businesses at first but it revealed certain groups' egotistic attitudes.

1.3.2 Research Method and Sources

The methodology is drawn from archival research in an attempt to reconstruct the historical settlement process of Chinese migrants, focusing on colonial history collected from colonial archives. Milner points out a preference for European official writings because other historians considered them as reliable sources.[40] The historians of the colonial period did not pay much attention to traditional Malay polity, but Malay leaders' traditional functionals changed little. When Penang was converted into a multi-ethnic society, Chinese migrants established a

[39] Murray L. Weidenbaum. *The Bamboo Network: How Expatriate Chinese Entrepreneurs are Creating a New Economic Superpower in Asia* (Free Press, 1996), pp. 4–5.

[40] A.C. Milner, 'Colonial Records History: British Malaya', *Modern Asian Studies*, 211 (1987), p.782.

relationship with the colonial officials or other ethnic groups and how this happened should be explored. The Chinese migrants did not colonise Penang so the reasons for their commitment to Penang's development and their social activities' influence on the colonial officials is ripe for further research.

Conversely, Stoler argues that scholars should view archives as knowledge production as colonial archives would have been affected by the contemporary social and political conditions in the colonies. Official exchanges between the governor and his subordinates became reference guides to the administrative thinking in the Dutch Indies' government, but it should be considered whether the colonial officials understood local conditions completely.[41] When the colonial officials adopted the Kapitan system, they sought efficient governance but it has not been discovered whether the migrants were satisfied with the colonial policy. Moreover, the ethnic leader was not always supported by every member of their community. In order to suggest the Chinese community was a result of British colonial policy, it is necessary to illustrate whether the Chinese migrants thought any differently about colonial policy.

Ranajt Guha divides historical writings on colonial India into three types. Beside the official communications, primary discourse originates from people in the non-official sector, such as planters or traders. This discourse was written either concurrently with or soon after the event, and, secondly, was written by the participants concerned. Secondary discourse is also the work of administrators, such as monographs on particular events, as the authors considered it important to note those events. Tertiary discourse is the work of non-official writers or former officials, who in most cases represented a different standpoint to that of the government.[42] After categorising the discourses, I then analyse why the British aimed to exercise their influence in Southeast Asia. The British East India Company transformed Penang into a free port for economic goals with colonial officials attempting to revitalise the port by inviting migrants; therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether the colonial officials trusted certain groups, and what these officials thought about Chinese migrants.

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[41] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), p. 98.

[42] Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', *Subaltern Studies, Volume II: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) (pp. 44-75).

My approach will look how the Chinese community was described in old newspapers, archives and Parliamentary papers. India Office records from the British Library will be employed to explore the lifestyles of Chinese migrants and the colonial government's policy towards the Chinese community in Penang. The *Factory Records: Straits Settlements (1786-1830)*[43] archive contains records of political, economic and social affairs in the Straits Settlements that became main sources of the research. Penang was the first colony in the Straits Settlements, and this file illustrates how the East India Company sought to pioneer a trading base in Penang and how they observed the Chinese migrants. In the records, the administration explained the various social cases involved in the lives of Chinese migrants. In addition to the *Factory Records*, several files in *Board's Collections Vol 634* and *Vol 726* were employed for supplementary explanations, showing how the administration approached educational issues that affected Chinese students.[44] These files point out that Chinese students were given educational opportunities from mid-1810s from various institutions. 'Revised regulations for the Chinese Poor House at Penang (1818)'[45] illustrates how the poorhouse was reformed to accommodate the poor Chinese residents with improved services, and 'The Penang Government defend the regulation they enacted prohibiting Chinese emigrants from Macao to land on Penang without permission of the Police Superintendent (1830)'[46] suggests that the colonial government attempted to control the population. The Penang government was concerned that the growing Chinese population would bring social unrest, and therefore officials restricted further arrivals of Chinese. Based on this background, I aim to observe how the colonial officials treated Chinese migrants and how the officials and the immigrants worked together in their common interest. While most sources focused on Penang Island, 'Papers regarding the administration and development of Province Wellesley (1820-1823)'[47] describe the conditions of Province Wellesley. Although the province was part of the the Penang

[43] The British Library: African and Asian Studies, *Factory Records: Straits Settlements*, 1786-1830, IOR/G/34.
[44] 'IOR/F/4/634/17201 The Penang Government give financial support to the Chinese and Malay mission schools (1819)' and 'IOR/F/4/726/19694 Report on the Chinese and Malay mission schools at Penang for the year 1821/22 - proposal that hospital apprentices should be recruited from the pupils of the Free School at Penang (1823)'.
[45] The British Library, IOR/F/4/634/17187.
[46] ibid., IOR/F/4/1271/51015.
[47] ibid., IOR/F/4/738/20275.

settlement, there were several geographical differences, and the archive file explains how educators and Protestant missionaries attempted educational exchanges between the island and the periphery.

In addition to the India Office records, the records of the London Missionary Society are employed in order to examine the religious activities and education of the Chinese migrants. In particular, the 'Ultra Ganges letters' and 'Ultra Ganges journals'[48] are the main sources in the LMS records. The Christian missionaries observed Chinese idolatries as competition, distributed tracts and visited their congregations regularly to expand their missionary works. They opened schools as one of the mission methods to contact more non-Christians, and while public or Catholic schools taught students in English, the Protestant missionaries opened different schools for each student's native language or dialect.

English newspapers provide important data because they would be considered the main source of illustrations of Penang's early years. At that time, English newspapers were the only printed media sources until the first Penang-based Chinese newspaper, *Penang Sin Poe* (槟城新报) was published in 1895. The *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* (1806-27) was the first English-language newspaper printed in British Malaya. It will be explored later in this research whether this newspaper published much about the local affairs; it may be that if the colonial officials relied on all the ethnic leaders for news of local affairs, they would have been more interested to read about British affairs. In 1838, it was renamed the *Penang Gazette* (1838). Slightly further afield, the *Singapore Chronicle* (1824-37) mainly provided news of trade and shipping in Singapore, although news from the Straits Settlements, including Penang, was carried and therefore it would be beneficial for research. *The Bengal Hurkaru* (1795-1866) was an English-language newspaper published in Calcutta, British India. Before being made a British Crown Colony, the Straits Settlements were controlled by the East India Company from Calcutta, and *The Bengal Hurkaru* provided news of these territories as well. Moreover, newspapers from Australia, the *Australian Town and Country Journal* (1870-1919), *The People's Advocate and*

[48] School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Archives, 'Ultra Ganges letters, 1815-1887 (CWM/LMS/14/02)' and 'Ultra Ganges journals, 1813-1841 (CWM/LMS/14/05)'.

the New South Wales Vindicator (1848-1856), *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (1803-1842) and *The Sydney Herald* (1831-1842), sometimes provided correspondent articles from Penang. Compared to the English newspapers, Chinese newspapers would have reported much more information about the local Chinese community due to the clan association, and Chinese education or business connections. *Penang Sin Poe*, the first Chinese-language newspaper in Penang, was sold to *Kwong Wah Yit Poh* (光华日报) in 1936, and when the new Chinese newspaper was published, there was an explosive increase in Penang's Chinese population. As this newspaper aimed to provide news for Chinese immigrants, it would provide more information relevant to this study than the English newspapers did; however, the Chinese newspapers were published in the late nineteenth century and did not provide sufficient information about Penang's early years.

Parliamentary papers were also employed in order to observe the reported characteristics of Chinese migrants in the early years, the urban development, and the illegal slave trade. The main sources are 'Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings (1837-38)', 'Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade (1828)', 'Select Committee of House of Lords on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index (1830)' and 'Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. First Report (China Trade), Minutes of Evidence, Appendix (1830)'. While some parts of these resources overlapped with the *Factory Records*, the rest included interviews with the recorders of Penang, briefly describing the cultural characteristics of Chinese migrants during the mandate.

The archival research will be used to link the colonial archives in Britain and Malaysia, which requires critical observation in order to analyse the historical events. The research will be reconstructed through a survey of all extant archival collections of documents in English, while newspapers and Parliamentary papers were considered when reconstructing the foundation and migration processes of Penang. After collecting the data, I will divide them into several topics and analyse them by using a narrative approach, as well as current secondary

data obtained through library research. Primary sources were created during the period under research whilst secondary sources were published in order to illustrate events of that period based on primary sources. Therefore, these sources will be analysed with the theoretical concept to identify how Chinese migrants were described in any events during the formation of the community.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis and Dissertation Plan

After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 will examine how the British implemented policies in Penang. To support successful rule, the administration adopted free trade and the Kapitan system. As there were no proper urban facilities, the British implemented urban development, but there was a shortage of labour in Penang due to low population. The East India Company employed slaves, bricklayers and labourers for the construction of the city, but in addition to the labourers, there were various merchants and farm workers that arrived when Penang became a free port. In the multi-ethnic society, the administration appointed ethnic leaders to enable efficient rule with these leaders given absolute powers to maintain social order in each community. Among the ethnic groups, the Chinese community was formed under the leadership of the Chinese *kapitan*. The community experienced several issues with its population or cultural gaps from its early years. Some early settlers had problems with gambling addictions or internal conflicts but these issues continued until the 1820s. They will be explained in the later chapters in more detail. The Chinese migrants sometimes had conflicts with other ethnic groups that resulted in violence or murder, and this chapter will focus on how Chinese migrants started new lives during the early, unsettled pioneering years.

Chapter 3 will explore the commercial activities of the Chinese migrants and the social consequences of them. Before beginning commercial activities, Chinese migrants needed land on which to build their economic foundations. Once an official tenure system was introduced, Chinese migrants opened various farms, producing crops like pepper, pork, opium, arrack and sugar. On the pepper farms, the Chinese planters employed labourers from their homeland,

recruiting manpower by forming claim-obligation relationships. Moreover, the pepper farms demonstrated there was social stratification among the migrants. On the pork, arrack and opium farms, Chinese migrants competed hard to obtain management rights, and the Chinese labourers were the main consumers of these products, creating large profits. The extreme levels of competition led to smuggling and violence among the Chinese as the economic hegemony triggered conflicts within the migrant community. Sugar was the only product mainly cultivated in Province Wellesley. Although the Chinese farmers could not mass produce their goods, they found specific cultivation and manufacturing methods to raise commercial value. While the farmers enjoyed higher returns, Chinese crafts people played important roles in the urban development of Penang. They participated in constructing government agencies, roads and bridges. Also, they were employed in repair works of bridges and army facilities, and they came to be paid higher than other groups in later years. The gambling houses were managed by the Chinese as well, although they could not be opened every day as gambling addiction became a serious issue. For example, plenty of Chinese labourers spent most of their earnings on gambling, and therefore it was only allowed for a limited amount of time. However, there were several lawbreakers who gambled at all hours without the government's approval. These lawbreakers were only interested in their profits, and they did not obey the law. When the colonial administration granted some commercial rights to Chinese migrants, they were only interested in how much the Chinese businesses could pay in taxes based on the profits. Nobody considered any possible negative social influences from these commercial activities.

Chapter 4 focuses on the painful history of the Chinese community as a social minority. During the settlement process, Chinese migrants suffered unexpected tragedies, including several great fires in Penang. Despite their thorough preparations, the tragedies were inescapable as there were insufficient fire-fighting facilities, and the fires caused enormous economic damage to the Chinese community. Similarly, Chinese migrants were often attacked by pirates while they were having trading at sea. Every resident of Penang, including Chinese migrants, became targets of the maritime raiders, and the Penang government considered several measures, such as diplomatic cooperation or military action. The maritime raiders repeatedly kidnapped or killed Chinese migrants. Furthermore, outbreaks of disease threatened lives of Chinese migrants, the most representative cases being the smallpox and cholera

outbreaks that caused a high death rate and decreased population in the city. The Chinese migrants had to endure these difficulties, but they had some welfare provision after establishing a Chinese poorhouse. The instituted accommodated anyone that needed care that was open to non-Chinese residents in later years.

Chapter 5 probes into the various social issues among Chinese migrants in Penang, including those criminals who disrupted public order by committing robberies, violence and murder. The slave trade had been restricted since 1809, but there were still Chinese slave traders in the area almost 20 years later. Most female slaves were from the island of Nias, Sumatra and became concubines or prostitutes, and the Chinese slave traders established a commercial network with Chinese migrants in Sumatra to maintain their slave supply. Beside the colonial rule, the Chinese migrants did not have enough protection and organised secret societies to protect each other. The organizations required loyalty and appealed to a sense of brotherhood among the members. Religion too became a cultural alliance among the migrants, and the Chinese strengthened ties, therefore, through religious activity. The Chinese societies combined optimistic and pessimistic effects, helping the migrants to become familiar with Penang's new environment and providing accommodation to a few poor Chinese. Whereas some organizations were suspected of planning to rise in revolt and protected criminals. The Chinese migrants concerned the colonial officials repeatedly so the Penang government restricted arrivals of Chinese. When the government restricted Chinese migration from the late 1820s, the new policy limited the population growth of the Chinese community. The government required permission especially from the passengers in Macau.

Chapter 6 discusses religions and education in the Chinese community. Although the Chinese migrants built a Buddhist temple, they usually worshipped their ancestors or traditional God. These practises comforted the overseas Chinese, but their religious passion caused a high mortality rate during the outbreak of diseases. This religious passion also led to the Chinese to commit immoral acts without feeling guilty. Apart from Buddhism and traditional beliefs, Christian missionary works converted some Chinese. The Christian missionaries, both Catholics and Protestants, built schools, distributed tracts and visited the Chinese community regularly. The missionaries often experienced cultural differences during their mission works.

As a part of missionary works, the mission schools provided educational opportunities to Chinese children. While the Catholic school taught students in English, the Protestant missionaries opened two Chinese schools, teaching in each dialect. In addition to the mission schools, some Chinese students studied in public schools. In particular, the Prince of Wales Island Free School became the main public school. Regardless of a student's cultural background, any children admitted into the school were taught in English. Before the establishment of mission and public schools, some Chinese children were sent back to China for their education. It should also be noted that both schools were open to female students and there was no gender discrimination in education. The improvements in the educational system of Penang affected Chinese children growing up in the city.

Chapter 7 concludes the story of the Chinese community in Penang with the aim of clarifying the reason for the significance of the Chinese community in Penang. After colonization, Penang was transformed into a multi-ethnic society, and the British began to cooperate with Chinese in order to secure control. While high-class Chinese were trusted by the administration, low-class Chinese were simply neglected for the benefit of the colony. In other words, the findings of this study will show how the British East India Company transformed Penang in pursuit of its economic goals, and what Chinese migrants did to ensure their survival.

This thesis aims to explore various aspects of the history of Penang's Chinese migrants by connecting the above chapters, which attempt to offer interpretations of the lives of Penang's Chinese migrants in the early nineteenth century.

Chapter 2.

Foundation of Penang

This chapter focuses on the early years of colonial Penang and the arrival of Chinese migrants. The East India Company aimed to expand British influence in the region by founding a port in Penang. Due to the town's small population, colonial officials attempted to attract various migrants to increase the size of the new colony. In addition to merchants, some migrants reached Penang as labourers or slaves and were engaged in city construction. Some Chinese migrants experienced conflict or violence within the multicultural society in the colony, and, therefore, parliamentary papers, newspapers and India Office records will be used to explore the policies the authorities applied regarding the inflow of Chinese migrants into Penang. Despite challenges in early years, the Chinese migrants successfully put down roots in Penang. With first-generation Chinese in Penang, the Chinese migrants were strengthening their influence.

2.1. Urban development and Slavery in Penang

Penang was ceded to the East India Company by the King of Kedah in 1786 with the treaty negotiated on the British side by Captain Light.[49] By that period, trade between the East India Company and China had increased with the East India Company importing Chinese tea and exporting Indian opium to China.[50] Geographically, Penang was a suitable place for trade and the East India Company benefited with company officials believing that a harbour at Penang would be convenient for ships from Madras.[51] Therefore, the British sought to extend their influence in Southeast Asia by occupying Penang. As the Dutch East India Company already controlled some trade in Southeast Asia, the British East India Company had to prevent the Dutch from expanding, in order to protect Britain's economic interests.

[49] Parliament, House of Commons, *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 419.
[50] Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists,* p. 20.
[51] The British Library, IOR/G/34/2, p. 65.

As a pioneer in Penang, Captain Light explained why the British needed the port by sending a letter to Calcutta on 15 February 1786. In the letter, Light described that Penang had a good harbour on the east side and soft ground at the north. The captain described Penang as a suitable place for living because there was plenty of fresh water, wood, wild cattle and fish and he had obtained information that Malays, Bugis and Chinese would come to reside in the area. In trade terms, trade with China had become more necessary; therefore, British ships needed to be able to meet with Eastern merchants in Penang.[52] Light explained the importance of Penang in his letter, asserting that the area was suitable for living and trade in a location that could benefit the British and suggesting that Penang could be transformed by various trading activities and an influx of migrants.

In accordance with Light's plan, the East India Company began negotiations with the Sultan of Kedah. Light already knew about the Sultan and other Malay chiefs, which put him in a strong negotiation position, and his knowledge of the Malay language enabled the charge and superintendence of Penang on behalf of the Company.[53] As the ownership treaty was signed, Light was married to one of the Sultan of Kedah's daughters and the East India Company had to pay 6000 Spanish dollars.[54] The name of the island was then changed to 'Prince of Wales Island'[55] as the day power was transferred to Britain was the eve of the Prince of Wales' birthday.[56] Penang was an almost uninhabited island; therefore, company officials had to solve this population problem. They attracted merchants or accommodated migrants from neighbouring states, and the inhabitants of the Penang were increased by more than 100, including women and children, from Kedah. However, the Sultan of Kedah was so alarmed by the decrease in population that he imposed fines upon every family for emigration.[57] Light was granted a free hand to determine and control trading activities in Penang to his fellow merchants.

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[52] ibid., pp. 52-55.
[53] ibid., p. 67.
[54] John Crawfurd, *Journal of an embassy from the Governor-General of India to the courts of Siam and Cochin China, exhibiting a view of the actual state of those kingdoms* (H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), p. 35.
[55] House of Commons, *Correspondence on State of Slavery,* pp. 420-421.
[56] Weimin and Lingling, *A History of Sino-Malaysian Interactions*, p. 234.
[57] House of Commons, *Correspondence on State of Slavery,* p. 421.

Thus, these merchants had rights to impose trade duties and taxes that affected the prices of goods imported and exported in Penang.[58]

When Penang was taken by the East India Company, there were a few Malay families who were already inhabitants there, though it is not evident whether they were originally from Penang or had migrated from elsewhere. They usually lived by fishing and extracting wood-oil but some were pirates who had been disrupting the commerce of Kedah.[59] However, the British regarded Penang as an uninhabited island as it did not have sufficient land management or occupation which was interpreted as an absence of administrative power by Western standards.[60] As part of the pioneering process, Light requested that the Governor General in Bengal sent him a number of labourers. He aimed to cultivate the county by labourers who could then assist with other public services, explaining why he requested workers from Bengal instead of employing locals:

> I request the favour of a further supply of 100 coolies, as the price of labour here is enormous, one-quarter dollar per day for one man. If they are husbandmen, the better…[61]

The East India company decided to send 150 slaves from Bencoolen in 1787,[62] thereby introducing slavery to Penang as company officials did not want to pay the local rates for labour. These first slaves participated in urban construction under state control and belonged to the East India Company, who took part in establishing the colony. Typical tasks included cutting timber and they earned a fixed salary every month.[63] As slaves did not work for free and there were attendant transportation costs, this suggests that labour was expensive in Penang. The slaves were engaged in construction as labourers and their lives were devoted to urban development. In fact, the British were not the only colonial power who employed slaves when

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[58] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p. 75.

[59] House of Commons,

[60] Knapman, *Race and British Colonialism in Southeast Asia,* pp. 29-30.

[61] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extract of a Letter from the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island to the Governor General in Council, dated the 12th September 1786' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 421.

[62] House of Commons, *Correspondence on State of Slavery*, pp. 421.

[63] ibid., p. 422.

establishing a colony. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) also purchased two kinds of slaves to work in the administration's ostentatious households and in urban development, respectively. Within the households, the slaves were concubines, musicians, cooks, gardeners and coach-drivers. In terms of founding the colony, the slaves were unskilled labourers, artisans and crop farmers in the Malay Archipelago.[64] Except in the case of personal use, the British followed a similar pattern during the urbanization of Penang.

Furthermore, the East India Company supercargoes in China sent ten bricklayers and one labourer to Penang in 1788 in order to build a customs house. Light had encountered Chinese labourers before and he was satisfied with their achievements. He expected them to be engaged in more construction days:

> I have employed them in building a storeroom for the military stores, which they have completed in a most excellent and workmanlike manner; they are now employed in building a customhouse, which is much wanted… I shall afterwards employ them in building a warehouse for holding the Company's goods…[65]

These Chinese workers were employed by the company and were not migrants. It is not evident whether they remained in Penang and formed part of the local Chinese community after their work was completed. Regardless of whether they settled in the area, there were evidently various people with different cultural backgrounds employed in Penang. These workers were involved in various sectors within construction. For example, Chinese labourers were engaged in building construction, while Malays were involved in cutting down trees and clearing woods.

Urban development included constructing roads and bridges extending 3 or 4 miles into the interior from George Town, Penang's capital. The project cost 52,055 Spanish dollars, even though the East India Company already had debts of 3000 dollars.[66] Astronomical sums of money had been invested in the project to transform the whole colony, and the administration

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[64] Alfons van der Kraan, 'Bali: Slavery and Slave Trade' in *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. By Anthony Reid and Jennifer Brewster (Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), p. 329.
[65] House of Commons, *Correspondence on State of Slavery*, p. 423.
[66] The British Library, 'Report of the Lieutenant Governor upon Prince of Wales Island, 18th September 1805' in *Factory Records: Straits Settlements*, IOR/G34/9.

attempted economic stimulation by creating an innovative transportation environment: a bold decision. Moreover, in 1805 Colonel Farquhar constructed an aqueduct from a waterfall located four miles from the town,[67] and during its construction, 100 convicts were employed in cutting the canal, while tin pipes were connected to the houses for water supply. The government spent 28,000 dollars on the supply of water to the public and to shipping.[68] Before completion of the construction, there were no proper water supply facilities and the government made a massive investment to improve city conditions. This project completely transformed Penang into a modernized location.

In addition to the interior works of the colony, the government needed fortification. In fact, there was a fort originally built with a *nibong* (palm trunk) stockade and no permanent structures. Some parts of the fort's walls were found to have leaned or collapsed due to soil movement, presence of damp, water pressure or constant traffic vibrations from the surrounding roads.[69] From 1806, fort reconstruction was discussed among the officials in order could prevent invasion by enemies, who could strike anytime. At first, land compensation was promoted to enable its construction, and the plan had to focus on defence of the harbour. When the project was begun, the site was named 'Fort Cornwallis'[70] and the construction was completed in 1810 at a cost of 80,000 dollars.[71]

Despite this transformational process, Penang was in an unstable condition, both inside and outside. The island had been threatened by pirates, which meant that Kedah could not exercise its influence over Penang, and these pirates were notorious in the Straits of Melaka for threatening Kedah's security.[72] The Sultan of Kedah could not prevent the rampant piracy in the region; so, he might have expected that the British would suppress the pirates and aid social

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[67] Harold Parker Clodd, *Malaya's first British pioneer: the life of Francis Light* (London: Luzac, 1948), p. 117.
[68] Donald Davies, *Old Penang* (Donald Moore, 1956), p. 16.
[69] M.R. Ismail, A.G. Ahmad and H. Awang, 'Structural defects and solutions: A case study of Fort Cornwallis, Penang, Malaysia', *Structural Studies, Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture*, 66 (2003), pp. 350-352.
[70] The British Library, 'Instructions Sent by the Bengal Government to the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island (Penang) with a view to the introduction of administrative reforms, Aug 1796-May 1797', IOR/F/4/262/5848, pp. 1-58.
[71] Ismail, Ahmad and Awang. 'Structural defects and solutions', p. 350.
[72] Francis Light, 'Extract of a Letter from a letter from Captain Light, the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island to the Governor General in Council, dated Fort Cornwallis, 20th June 1788' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade*, (House of Commons,1828), p. 423.

stability in Kedah. The presence of pirates exposed the weak authority of Kedah and represented new challenges to the East India Company. After the acquisition of Penang, by 1788 there were around two to three hundred Malays who had arrived in Penang for employment and who aimed to return to their families after having earned a little money.[73] Captain Light was surprised by the Malays' attitude:

> …the greater number of thefts have been committed by our own Caffrees, who seem to have been prepared by frequent practice for any punishment… but the Malays seem to be greatly civilized by their intercourse with this place, and familiarized to its government…[74]

Light described how the crimes were often committed in Penang. He aimed to reduce labour costs by employing slaves, but they caused trouble. In contrast, the Malays preserved public order in the early years of the colony. The influx of the labour force was needed for setting up the colony, which caused distress to the governor. Light expected that the slaves would only focus on work, but they caused unexpected anxiety. In fact, there were at least 250 prisoners in the colony between 1795 and 1806. During the urban development of Penang, the administration needed to improve the legal system in order to handle criminal affairs[75] as there was a population change in the colony's early years that sometimes resulted in the absence of public security.

While the East India Company was transforming Penang into a new place, the slavery issue worsened relations between the British and Kedah. Light explained why it became worse:

> …The term slave can only be applied to a person legally sold, or one condemned to slavery for crimes. The king extends it to such people as have taken refuge in his country from war, or famine, and to debtors to his merchants; several of these people, not natives of Queda, but Burmen and Chooliars, have come over with their families and demanded protection; the king

[73] ibid., p. 423.

[74] ibid., p. 423.

[75] Azlizan Mat Enh and Siti Alwaliyah Mansor, 'The Establishment of Penang Prison under the British in Malaya', e-Bangi Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 16 (2019), p. 2.

> sent to demand them as slaves, I have not refused giving them up, but as they cannot be prevailed upon to return, being assured to suffer death…[76]

Light could not trust the king anymore. Light decided that Kedah had broken a treaty but it should be considered whether it was only Kedah's fault. The population of Kedah was decreased after the foundation of Penang and that would have disappointed the Sultan of Kedah. The British did not attract migrants from Kedah only because they had to welcome migrants from everywhere to boost the low population. However, emigration to Penang deteriorated trust on both sides, and they were not able to trust each other.

The governor of Penang was often changed between 1794 and 1800. Captain Light died on 21st October 1794, and was replaced by Philip Mannington. Unfortunately, Mannington resigned his position in 1796 due to health problems. In April that year, Major Forbes Ross MacDonald was appointed as the superintendent of Penang, which he remained until 1799.[77] As a new colony, Penang had various problems, such as construction of the city, labour problems, slavery issues, medical service and armament shortages, and public order difficulties. Mannington and MacDonald administered the colony only briefly, and Penang experienced an administrative vacuum until Sir George Leith was appointed in 1800.

When Leith became Lieutenant Governor of Penang, the territory of the British settlement was expanding. The British had annexed the territory they then named Province Wellesley (known as Seberang Perai today) from Kedah, located opposite Penang Island and stretching from the river Muda in the north to the river Krean to the south. Leith opened negotiations with the Sultan of Kedah on 20 April 1800, and a treaty was signed on 5 July that same year. The treaty conceded that the East India Company agreed to pay 10,000 dollars to the Sultan of Kedah.[78] In later years, the province was considered a defensive barrier between Penang and

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[76] Francis Light, 'Extracts from a Report by Captain Light, the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island to the Governor General in Council of Bengal, dated 30th July 1792' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (House of Commons, 1828), p. 425.

[77] George Leith, *A short account of the settlement, produce and commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca* (London: J. Booth, 1805), pp. 13-16.

[78] 'The British Settlement in the Straits of Malacca' in *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 13 November 1880.

the Siamese territory,[79] but its acquisition expanded the territory of the settlement in the early years. Based on this territorial expansion, the British aimed to ensure a trade route for junks and attract export industries such as sugar. In fact, the colonial officials paid attention to Province Wellesley from the 1820s onwards due to the sugar plantations and commercial activities of the Chinese migrants there.

In addition to this urban development and territorial expansion, junior servants of the government were advised to become familiar with the language and customs of Malays. Those who were interested could learn from a native tutor, and a medal, valued at 500 dollars, was going to be given to those that could speak Malay fluently.[80] When the British negotiated with the Kedah government, Light's knowledge was helpful for the acquisition of Penang. The administration believed that fluency in Malay could be useful for ruling the colony; therefore, junior officials were given the opportunity to learn.

The slavery issue became controversial due to the question of ownership between the migrants and Penang government. In Southeast Asia, slaves were presented as a marriage gift, donations to monastery and security for a loan, and slave owners were obliged to provide a wife for their male slaves.[81] Slaves were traded and managed by their owners like livestock. When migrants arrived in Penang, they were allowed to own slaves, but slavery was not officially sanctioned. Slaves were considered to be migrants' property, but colonial officials did not have an exact definition of slavery.[82] In general, slaves usually offered services to their masters and worked on the land or in the households. They shared the homes of their masters and had to be obedient to their lords.[83] Some slaves were in indefinite slavery, but there were also slave debtors who became indentured voluntarily until their debts were paid. After considering these variables, slavery was officially established in the colony in 1802.[84]

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[79] Thomas John Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca: Viz. Pinang, Malacca, and Singapore, with a History of the Malayan States on the Peninsula of Malacca* (J. Murray, 1839), p. 105.

[80] The British Library, IOR/F4/262/5846, pp. 21-29.

[81] Anthony Reid, *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), pp. 8-9.

[82] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extract, Bengal Public Consultations, 28th January 1802' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 429.

[83] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p.187.

[84] House of Commons, 'Extract, Bengal Public Consultations, 28th January 1802', p. 429.

Moreover, the slavery issue resulted in the agreement of another treaty between Penang and Kedah. According to this treaty, all slaves that had escaped from Perlis and Kedah into Penang, or from Penang into Perlis or Kedah, should be returned to their owners. If they did not pay their debts, they could be taken away to their creditors.[85] From 1801 to 1802, it was reported that more than 1200 slaves were engaged in clearing of the land and cultivation of pepper crops.[86] The number of slaves then increased to around 1400 by 1805. A register was kept of their sale and transfer from one master to another, but there was no tax levied upon their importation.[87]

In September 1805, the Lieutenant Governor, Robert Townsend Farquhar, suggested that slavery should be abolished on the island. Farquhar's suggestion was accepted by the Governor General of Bengal, who wrote about the matter in a letter from Bengal:

> It is understood that the system of slavery has been carried to a considerable extent at Prince of Wales Island… The toleration of this system cannot be necessary in India, where labour of every description can be performed by free men… that at Prince of Wales Island the system of Slavery should, if possible, be prohibited.[88]

In fact, the number of slaves amounted to between 1,200 and 1,400 at that time. The Lieutenant Governor was afraid that the number of slaves could soon reach 5000.[89] The company officials aimed to abolish the slavery by themselves. In contrast to some of the

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[85] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a Treaty concluded by Sir George Leith with the King of Queda, in August 1800, and confirmed by the Governor General in Council, in November 1802, for the Surrender to the Company of a tract of Land on the Queda shore' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 433.

[86] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a General Letter from the Court of Directors to the Governor in Council of Prince of Wales Island; dated 18th April 1805.' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 433.

[87] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a General Letter from Governor in Council of Prince of Wales Island to the Court Directors; dated 12th November 1805.' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade*, (1828), p. 434.

[88] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a General Letter from the Governor of Bengal to the Lieutenant Governor, dated 27th September 1805.' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 434.

[89] Paul H Kratoska, 'Slavery and the Emancipation of Slaves on Penang', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (88, 2015), p.127.

excuses used by contemporary slave owners in the West Indies, the officials of the East India Company thought that cultivation or commerce could be carried by ordinary freemen. It was claimed that this was already proven in India, and so the Lieutenant Governor of Penang aimed to abolish slavery. In addition to the East India Company, some of Penang's residents, such as the Chinese or Malays, also owned slaves and company officials had to consider the conditions of the residents.[90] It was not evident how the slave-masters resolved the slavery problems. As some slaves could not pay their debts, it had to be clear how the officials could compensate the proprietors before slavery's official abolition.

The abolition of slavery became an issue in Penang, with diverse opinions being expressed. However, the Court of Directors agreed to abolish slavery, as was later explained in a letter:

> As the toleration of slavery cannot be necessary at Prince of Wales Island, where the population is at present extensive and is daily interesting, we consider it a subject deserving of your serious notice, and direct that every means be resorted to for effecting its immediate abolition, provided the public interests of the settlement are not materially injured…[91]

While Farquhar was pessimistic about slavery, the directors objected to the system due to the growth in Penang's population. The directors might have thought that Penang had an enough population to replace the slaves; it was no longer an infant colony. Indeed, it was flourishing. At the same time, every reasonable consideration was to be shown to their proprietors with some influential families, such as those of Seied Hussein or Noqueda Byan, possessing a considerable number of slaves. Although the historical records did not state how the proprietors were convinced, or compensated, the import of slaves was prohibited from 1 January 1809.[92] However, the continuing development of the city meant many more slaves arrived and *de facto* continuance of slavery for several more years. The practice stimulated

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[90] House of Commons, 'Extracts of a General Letter', p. 434.

[91] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a General Letter from the Court of Directors to the Governor in Council of Prince of Wales Island, dated 18th February 1807' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 434.

[92] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extract, Prince of Wales Island Consultations, 29th December 1807.' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 434.

intense debate across the whole British empire, but the influential migrants represented significant opposition to the government's attempts to stop it. The Penang government were forced to change the plan to abolish it because the administration still needed the cooperation of influential migrant families to continue the operation of government. The colonial state had to devise a compromise plan to appease the opposition. Instead of abolition, the import of slaves was prohibited but the regulations were so vague that the slaves could not be free without their masters' permission.

Contrary to expectations, however, the population of Penang decreased due to the restrictions in the slave trade and the emigration of the Chinese inhabitants. The colonial officials were afraid that the restriction might prevent population growth and even considered purchasing and employing women as public prostitutes, so that those women could be married to Chinese labourers. If those women started new families with the labourers, they might settle down and have children in the region. The colonial officials expected that those Chinese families would increase the population more than casual residents.[93]

Apart from the slavery issues, the East India Company had to contend with a continuing maritime violence threat. In 1815, colonial officials were suspicious of the relationship between the pirates and the sultanate of Perak. Most pirates came from that area, so the officials thought the sultan of Perak might have been supporting their activities, although the sultan claimed his innocence in a letter.[94] At this time, the maritime criminals threatened the safety of the Penang colony. They kidnapped some residents and the threat of this prevented some migration to Penang and even affected Penang's economy. Colonial state did not convince potential immigrants why Penang was a safe place for economic activities. They had to secure the colony because more migration and economic activity would benefit the colony.

In the early years, Penang had to resolve various problems such as diplomatic tensions, population levels, urban construction and slavery. The administration proceeded with a large-scale construction project, and as a result of this urban development, there were various migrants available for business expansion and construction with public slaves and migrant

[93] Parliament, House of Commons. 'Extract, Prince of Wales Island Consultations, 29th September 1808.' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), pp. 440-441.
[94] ibid., pp. 457-458.

labourers, in particular, working on the construction sites. Colonial officials had expected to build the colony using cheaper labour, but that was changed by the prohibition of slave imports. East India Company officials thought that local labour cost was expensive and the native population of Penang was low in number; therefore, the British officers decided to construct the colony by employing more slaves and Chinese labourers together with some migrants who came from Kedah. The officials were focused on achieving their plans and it was not important to them where the newcomers came from and whether they were engaged in different forms of labour. Sometime afterwards, there was an antislavery movement across the British Empire but the administration could not deal with antagonising the Asian migrants; therefore, instead of abolishing slavery, a ban on importing slaves came into force. The foundation of Penang resulted in various groups of migrants arriving but the size of the population remained a cause for concern. Company officials aimed to establish an administrative system, and they had to consider the most efficient way for the newly established multicultural society to be governed.

2.2. The formation of a multicultural society

Aside from the native residents of Penang, the arrival of slaves and migrants changed the social structure of the island, and while slaves or labourers were engaged in construction works, some migrants arrived in Penang as merchants. Regardless of their occupations, the newly founded Penang consisted of Malays, Chinese, Indians, and Siamese,[95] and these new residents mainly settled down in George Town, located in the north-eastern part of Penang. As each migrant group had a different cultural background, the company officials had to consider carefully how to rule the new colony effectively. As a result of their cultural differences, it was likely that conflicts might occur between the colonial leadership and migrants, or among the different ethnic communities. Therefore, colonial officials attempted to reduce the cultural gap by adopting the Kapitan system and appointing a headman (*kapitan*) in some ethnic communities. These headmen were appointed in terms of the languages they used, with colonial officials aiming to publish a code of regulations for their guidance. The *kapitans* had to

[95] G/34/2. P.501.

maintain the Registers of Births, Death, and Marriages in each community.[96] Furthermore, colonial officials would have expected that each headman might improve relations between the colonial officials and migrants as a mediator.

Before the foundation of Penang, the headman system had already been implemented in Ayutthaya, Melaka and Batavia and had resolved disputes between the indigenous people and migrants.[97] As the migrants were not familiar with local conditions, local leaders needed to consider the most suitable governing style. The monarchy or colonial officials had to accept existing practices due to their lack of experience and administrative resources to share with the migrants.[98] The elimination of the traditional order might trigger a violent process; therefore, the colonial officialdoms needed to cooperate with traditional elites for stable management of the colony.[99] The *kapitans* enabled the company to establish a system of indirect rule in Penang. Kapitan China represented the Chinese community and Kapitan Keling represented the Indian Muslims, who were also responsible for enabling peace and harmony within each community. Having installed these ethnic leaders, the colonial authorities did not have to understand migrants' customs, practices, and traditions completely.[100] The system was not applied to all communities because some communities had low populations; the *kapitans* were appointed to bigger communities only. However, the colonial officials assumed it was an efficient way to rule over the population as every headman became used to the colonial rule which had already been installed in their own community.

Apart from cultural barriers, the colonial officials expected the *kapitans* to take charge of public order. Generally, *kapitans* were well-known elders who could exercise their influence towards the migrants and who acted as subordinate courts for migrants, assuming cognizance in some cases or disputes with the *kapitan* of each subordinate court assisted by his assessors.[101]

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[96] *The Journal of The Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia, Vol V*, ed. by James Richardson Logan (1847), p. 109.

[97] Lewis, *Cities in Motion,* p. 37.

[98] Mona Lohanda, *The kapitan Cina of Batavia, 1837-1942: a history of Chinese establishment in colonial society* (Djambatan, 2001), p. 62.

[99] Carl A. Trocki, "Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, *Vol 2*, ed. by Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 81-83.

[100] Keat Gin, 'Disparate Identities' *Kajian Malaysia*, p. 32.

[101] *Journal of The Indian Archipelago* , p. 193.

While the system was implemented, *kapitans* did not receive any remuneration and they helped the colonial officials to understand the customs or traditions of the migrants. Under the Kapitan system, several offences were punishable by the death penalty: for example, thefts, which were quite numerous in the Chinese community, often including acts of violence.[102] The authorities wanted to maintain social order, and therefore they urged the *kapitans* to strongly confront criminals in their jurisdictions, issuing them with instructions as part of their duties to the colonial government. According to the instructions, they were told to hold a court at their own houses twice in week.[103] When there were any quarrels between different ethnic groups, the disputes had to be settled by the superintendent of Penang[104] as the ethnicity of each *kapitan* could affect the fairness of the trial and judgment. Violent acts aside, religious affairs and recovery of debts were reported to the *kapitans* when trials were needed. They were also required to keep registers of marriages, births and deaths, to ascertain the arrivals and departures of members of their ethnic groups.[105] The role of the *kapitans* combined jurisprudence and administration and the remained on duty until the Kapitan system was officially abolished in 1808 after the founding of the Court of Judicature.

As the migrants had experienced different laws in their home countries, officials studied various laws, such as Chinese legislation or the Koran, in search of different interpretations. Sir Ralph Rice, Recorder of Prince of Wales Island, described how he managed it in an interview:

> Did you find that the different classes of native population acquiesced, without complaint, in the principle and decision of the court, founded as this had been, upon those of the English law? – They were not founded upon the principles of English law, because by the clause in the

[102] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows:' in *Select Committee of House of Lords on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index* (1830), p. 85.
[103] James William and Norton Kyshe, 'Instructions for Native Captains' in *Cases heard and determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements, 1808-1884. Vol. I: Civil cases* (Singapore and Straits Print Office, 1885), p. 23.
[104] Nurfadzilah Yahaya. 'Legal Pluralism and the English East India Company in the Straits of Malacca during the Early Nineteenth Century', *Law and History Review*, 33 (2015), p. 953.
[105] Tan Soo Chye. 'A Note on Early Legislation in Penang', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 23 (1950), p. 100.

> charter we were bound to administer the law to every part of that mixed population according to their respective laws and customs.
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> You conceived yourself then under the necessity of making yourselves acquainted with any branch of the eastern law as it applied to the particular persons whose causes were under consideration? – We were bound to do it in what I call the civil law, that is, the dispute between man and man. With regard to the criminal law, there is something a little more extensive than in our charter. We were to respect the customs of the natives in the criminal law, but not to be altogether governed by that law.
>
> What means had the court recourse to for the purpose of making itself acquainted with the principles of the various systems of law which it was called upon to administer? – With regard to the Chinese law, we looked to those books we had access to, and we called in the principal, the head men, among the Chinese, to assist us; with regard to the Mohamedans, we always had the advantage of the Koran, and different interpretations upon it…[106]

In the interview, Rice described examples of how *kapitans* worked as mediators, helping judges understand the differences among various laws. In addition to the maintenance of public order in each community, these ethnic leaders supported the judges in Penang. The colonial administration needed the kapitans' assistance to manage the affairs of the colony. When the Lieutenant Governor, Robert Townsend Farquhar, claimed to have reduced the powers of the kapitans, the judicial system was not yet established completely.[107] By appointing these leaders, the colonial administration divided resident groups by their cultural backgrounds, and from the nineteenth century onwards, the concept of 'race' was widely adopted in Southeast Asia by the European imperialists. For example, John Crawfurd, colonial administrator of Singapore, thought that Asian migrants needed to be transitioned to become civilized and believed in European superiority over Africans, as Africans were slaves or existed at the lowest social levels of British society.[108] Based on ideas of ethnic superiority, the administration categorized ethnic groups, and ruled the colony through appointing the ethnic leaders. They reigned over the Asian residents of Penang and kept the European residents in privilege.

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[106] ibid., p. 85.
[107] Choon San Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans* (Singapore: Ministry of Culture, 1963), p. 10.
[108] Knapman, *Race and British Colonialism in Southeast Asia,* pp. 111-112.

In terms of native Malay residents in Penang and Malay migrants from Kedah, the Malay community in colonial Penang began with the migrants from all parts of the Malay Archipelago. Malays were Muslims and generally fishermen, fruit gatherers or fruit planters.[109] In addition to the native residents and migrants, colonial policies unified various natives within the Malay community. Some of them would not be considered as 'Malay' today, but the British classified even the Javanese, Bugis, Minangkabaus and other Sumatrans as Malays.[110] In particular, there were a few Bugi residents who came to Penang annually, staying for two or three months, who were considered the best merchants in the eastern islands.[111] Some Arabic descendants, Syed Hussain and Syed Jaffer, to give two examples, were also considered Malays. They had migrated to Penang with very large families, and upon their arrival, they had requested license to govern their own families and slaves with considerable independence and to have all legal cases involving them to be judged by Islamic law. Light considered their request carefully, as they were respected by the Malay princes. He believed that if any of their people committed a public breach of the law, they should be punished publicly but their requests were against colonial law.[112] It is not clear from the records whether their requests were accepted, but the Syed families were influential with the colonial authorities. Also, the Jawi Pekans were considered as Malays. Jawi Pekans were a mixed group of descendants of Indian men and Malay women. They were described as a useful group because some of them were qualified accountants and effective assistants in public offices, and, as a result of their backgrounds, they could speak two languages. So, some of the Jawi Pekans became interpreters or diplomats.[113] Meanwhile, despite the different dialects, the Chinese identities among the migrants were firmly established and spread their fraternity across the community. In the case of the Malay

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[109] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows:' in 'Select Committee of House of Lords on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index' (1830), p. 84.

[110] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p. 307.

[111] G/34/6, pp. 128-129.

[112] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts from a Report by Captain Light, Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island, to the Governor General in Council of Bengal; dated 30th August 1792' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 433.

[113] James Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, Or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca: Including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula. With Brief References to the Settlements of Singapore & Malacca* (Singapore: Free Press Office, 1836), pp. 250-251.

community, the colonial officers constructed an ethnic federation without taking each group's opinions into consideration. While Bugis were sometimes recognized as an independent group, the rest of the neighbouring groups were recognized as Malays without any division. Perhaps the colonial officials simply homogenised every group of the Malay Peninsula as a same group so that the Malay community became the biggest ethnic group in Penang.

The Indian community mostly consisted of labourers and petty traders. The majority of Indians were from southern India and divided by religion.[114] Among the Indian migrants, Chulia migrants were considered as the major group in Penang, people who were from the Coromandel coast, some of whom had lived in Kedah before their arrival in Penang and were shopworkers or labourers who arrived with the families.[115] Most Chulia migrants were Muslim merchants who stayed for a short period and returned to their hometown, the coast of Malabar or the coast of Coromandel. They focused on short-term economic goals because they did not want to settle down in Penang permanently.[116] Although the Chulia migrants did not increase the colony's population, they activated its economy by expanding their businesses. They attempted to achieve only economic goals as they considered Penang purely in business terms. Beside the business activities, the Chulias were the only group of people whom could manufacture brick and chunam in the early years.[117] Those materials were essential for public works in Penang. Unlike the Chulias, the convicts and soldiers sent to serve this new British outpost were Hindus,[118] and aside from any political or economic aims, the East India Company considered Penang as a place of transportation. The company sent about 1500 to 2000 convicts, who were engaged in the construction of roads and buildings.[119] British India was the nearest colony to Penang, and the colonial officials needed some human resources for their urban development, immediately. Therefore, the abolition of slavery would have meant the arrival of convicts from India as their replacements. The colonial office needed labourers

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[114] Constance Mary Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements, 1826-67: Indian presidency to crown colony* (Athlone Press, 1972), p. 8.
[115] G/34/6, pp. 124-125.
[116] House of Commons Papers. 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows:', p. 84.
[117] *The Journal of The Indian Archipelago*, p. 648.
[118] Parliament, House of Commons, 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows:', p. 84.
[119] ibid., p. 86.

for constructions even as they increased the population, and if the British had controlled colonies too far from Penang, the relative lack of available human resources could impeded their development plans.

Compared to other ethnic communities, there were very few European residents with the European population of Penang estimated to be just above one hundred.[120] Nonetheless, European residents were given some privileges. First, the European residents did not have rules of punishment attached to the jurisdiction[121] and enjoyed more freedom than other inhabitants. Second, the licensing system was available to private European residents, who were allowed to acquire large holdings of land. Colonial officials would have believed that Penang could be developed by attracting European capitalists to exploit its resources.[122] Based on these privileges, the Europeans were the most powerful inhabitants in Penang. For example, they called a general meeting to express their concerns about the East India Company's policy,[123] worried that an enemy's naval force could threaten the security of the general commerce in the region. While other migrants were told to follow the Company's policies, the Europeans could exercise their influence over the officials, and most European elites did not have mixed marriages with other ethnic groups in order to preserve their racial purity while single European males were often married to Asian women,[124] as they could not invite marriage partners from their homeland. They seemed to settle down in Penang permanently by starting families, and the mixed marriages increased Penang's permanent population. As the colony was transformed by various groups of migrants, different religions appeared too. Therefore, the colonial officials would have attempted to prevent any religious disputes among the migrants in order to maintain social stability.

Unlike European residents, Siamese, Burman and Arabic residents were not paid as much attention to as the Europeans received. The Siamese and Burmans had similar customs but differed in language, and by 1794, it was estimated that there were about a hundred Siamese and Burmans in total, many of whom had converted to the Roman Catholic church. They were

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120 ibid., p. 84.
121 ibid., p. 84.
122 Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements*, p. 11.
123 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 4 October 1806.
124 Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka,* p. 298.

largely employed in cultivation at that time. Arabic descendants formed another part of the community and were strict Muslims who usually engaged in trade.[125] Regardless of their language differences, the colonial officials simply categorized the Siamese and Burmans as one group. These two ethnic groups shared some similarities, and each group included only a few people; as a result, neither the Siamese nor Burmans participated in many sectors of the local economy. Likewise, not many records were found about the Arabic residents. As written above, some Arabic descendants were actually considered Malays; therefore, the Arabic community was assimilated into the Malay way of life.

Penang consisted of various ethnicities, and so it became a diverse city. As a result of urban development, there were various styles of buildings, such as European houses, Hindu bungalows, Malay cottages, Chinese dwellings and Burman huts. The first settlers built their residences according to the customs of their homelands. Also, there were intermarriages among the residents. As written above, Jawi Pekans became an example of intermarriage. In addition, the descendants of intermarriage between Arab men and Malay women were known as Arab Peranakan, while the Baba community emerged from the intermarriage of Chinese men and Malay women. As written above, European men married Asian women as well. Such intermarriages could lead to cultural openness amongst the residents.[126]

Apart from marriages, these ethnic groups established relationships with Chinese migrants, either directly or indirectly, or for better or worse. As social partners or competitors, these groups could affect the interests of the Chinese community, who seemed to particularly experience cultural conflicts or commercial competition with other migrants. They could not only rely on themselves, and therefore they had to consider their roles as citizens of Penang.

However, in the early nineteenth century, the Penang government missed a chance to increase the population. Since the British ruled the island, the French and Dutch imperialists were not happy about the expansion of British power in Southeast Asia. From 1795, the British had occupied Malacca, temporarily, as the Netherlands were participating in the Napoleonic Wars and their forces were not strong enough to defend Malacca.[127] In May 1805, Farquhar

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[125] G/34/6, pp. 126-127.

[126] Mahani Musa, 'Malays and the Red and White Flag Societies in Penang, 1830s-1920s', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 72 (1999), p. 153.

[127] Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 36.

detected threats from the French and the Dutch, but instead of defending the territory, the Lieutenant Governor planned to demolish Malacca and move 8000 residents to Penang, as the administration expected more economic activity among any new migrants. However, the government scrapped the original plan as the administration could not negotiate with the residents of Malacca; the Europeans and Chinese required enormous compensation while the Malays declined migration as they were afraid of having to adapt to new surroundings.[128] The colonial officials invested enormous amounts of capital into the urban planning and clearing the land and they could not afford moving costs. Also, most residents of Malacca had made a good living; so, they did not have persuasive enough reasons to leave their location. Several Chinese moved from Malacca to Penang in the 1790s to begin new lives but Penang was not very attractive to most Malacca residents.

Before the Kapitan system was abolished officially in 1808, the Police Department was organised in 1806 to replace the *kapitans*' security duties with the aim of maintaining law and order, just as the *kapitans* had enjoyed the jurisdiction to do before. Although the Kapitan system was then officially abolished, the Chinese *kapitan* was still influential when solving land problems or family disputes.[129] Moreover, minor disputes among neighbours were still settled by the headmen in sections and villages until the 1830s.[130] The power of *kapitans* in terms of local influence was needed to mediate any issues between neighbours. While each *kapitan* managed a certain ethnic group, the police had to control every resident; therefore, the police preparatory committee members were advised to be familiar with the character and customs of the Malays, Chinese and other Asian communities.[131] When the police department was organised, the positions were not given to certain migrants. The department drafted in Indian migrants, principally, but there were a few Chinese, Malays and Jawi Pekan (Malay-Indian heritage). The Chinese police officers were good at looking after the Chinese migrants, but the police department was vigilant for possible connections within ethnic organizations and

[128] 'Extract of a letter from R. J. Farquhar, the Lieutenant Governor of Prince of Wales Island, 25th May 1805', G/34/9.
[129] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p. 245.
[130] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang,* p. 238.
[131] F/4/262/5837, p. 3.

did not trust the Chinese officers alone on important occasions involving their compatriots.[132] The police department was a multi-ethnic organization and its recruitment policies could be explained by two factors. First, the department had to employ anyone who was well-prepared for the role as the population of Penang was so small. The department could not waste any time and risk an administrative vacuum. Second, diverse police officers could respond to various events. For example, most migrants would not able to speak other languages, except their mother tongue; therefore, the department could choose which officers attended depending on the languages involved.

Since the foundation of Penang, the colony had been transformed into a multi-ethnic society. Apart from the European administrators and merchants, most migrants came to Penang to achieve their economic goals, as merchants or labourers, and became members of the new colony as a result. Regardless of their regional backgrounds, each community sought solidarity among fellow migrants and they shared cultural homogeneity with their compatriots. As the colonial officials appointed *kapitans* to help govern Asian migrant communities, the migrants were able to settle down in Penang successfully. The Kapitan system helped maintain the peace until the law system was officially introduced. The Chinese community also experienced the same process. It had been one of the smaller ethnic communities in terms of numbers, but it developed into one of the most influential groups in Penang.[133] Within the multicultural society, there were intermarriages among the different ethnic groups, and the various types of buildings found in the street demonstrated the cultural diversity in Penang. Some *kapitan* functions were take on by the police, which was established as a multi-ethnic department. Each policeman understood his ethnic group's idiosyncrasies and was expected to keep an eye on them efficiently. Apart from the police, various architectural styles on the streets and inter-marriages that reflected the diversity in the colony, the development of migrant communities could be influenced by acculturation; therefore, it is necessary to examine how Chinese migrants settled down in Penang's early years.

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[132] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang*, p. 244-245.
[133] Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements*, p. 8.

2.3. Inflow of Chinese migrants

The first Chinese settlers arrived in Penang a few days after Light's arrival. It is not evident where they originated, but it was assumed they came from Kedah because of their quick arrival. Kedah is the nearest state in the Malay Archipelago to Penang and there was already a thriving Chinese community in Kedah.[134] Therefore, it is likely any migrants from there would have likely sought to expand their economic bloc into Penang. Almost all of the Chinese migrants were male, and officials reported that there were no female Chinese migrants at all.[135] The Chinese migrant workers were considered the most valuable as they engaged as merchants, artisans, and labourers,[136] and their reputation suggests that they were trusted by the colonial officials. Sir Ralph Rice, Recorder of the Prince of Wales Island, described the Chinese merchants as admirable merchants and that they were accurate in their accounts and precise and detailed in their speculations.[137] Sir Rice was sure the Chinese could survive anywhere and he described the Chinese migrants, based on his experience in Penang, during his interview as follows:

> Have you reason to think that the Chinese accommodate themselves easily to a change of circumstances? – I think upon all mercantile questions particularly so; indeed I do not know that their mercantile views are very different from ours; they are admirable merchants, most excellent in every respect, so far as I was enabled to judge of merchandize, both as to accuracy of account and minuteness in their speculations.[138]

The interview suggested that the Chinese migrants achieved their economic goals by their adaptability. They were ready to ready to accept a new culture for coexisting with any locals or migrants. However, each Chinese migrant did not survive individually, and the migrants

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134 ibid., p. 9.
135 G/34/135, p. 291.
136 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows:', p. 84.
137 ibid., p. 87.
138 ibid., p. 87.

formed a group in Penang. The Chinese migrants maintained their identities by relying on each other in the community.

As shown by other ethnic groups, colonial officials expected brisk trading and population growth in Penang with the arrival of Chinese migrants. The Chinese migrants created a community under a *Kapitan Cina* ('Captain China'), the first of whom was Koh Lay Huan who was a wealthy and educated man from Kedah. He exercised his influence in Penang as a merchant, planter and tax revenue farmer,[139] and was known by a number of aliases: Cheki, Chu Kee, Patcan, and Chewan.[140] It was not recorded why he had various names, but he was known as the most respectable person in Chinese society. Company officials appointed Chinese *kapitans* to settle the disputes among Chinese migrants,[141] and with the support of the company officials, the *Kapitan Cina* had power to establish laws, albeit for the Chinese community only. Chinese migrants formed group solidarity based on the *kapitan*'s authority, and, although Koh was a Hokkien man, he had to balance the demands of the various Chinese dialect groups in his role as *Kapitan Cina*.[142] In addition, the colonial administration developed further leadership channels to control the Chinese community through revenue farmers and the headmen of secret societies.[143] The colonial officials and the *Kapitan Cina* needed to negotiate political compromises with various groups in order to rule the Chinese community effectively. These Chinese groups could face a conflict of interests; therefore, they had to establish a cooperative system. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only a few Chinese settled down in Penang permanently. Some Chinese migrants always wanted to return to their own country and some of them did so. If any of them had financial resources, they sent their children back to China for their education.[144] Those Chinese seemed to consider themselves as temporary workers. Had they planned to settle down in Penang permanently, they would have tried to adapt to their new environment. They would not have been attracted by the terms and

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139 Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements,* p. 9.
140 Hussin. *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p 245.
141 G/34/2, p. 502.
142 Neil Khor Jin Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Penang', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 79 (2006), p. 66.
143 Trocki, 'Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', p. 83.
144 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows', p. 86.

conditions of life in Penang.

Koh was a culturally open-minded man. His familiarity with Western culture made a bridge between the British officials and Chinese migrants. He decided to guarantee his family's future by investing in an English education, ensuring that his eldest son was proficient in English, but maintained close links with China by sending his youngest son to school there. By the second generation, the Koh family members were not only bilingual but had become multilingual, speaking Baba Malay, Hokkien, Mandarin, and English.[145] Koh's decisions suggested how his family could survive in an alien land, and the family demonstrated the cultural flexibility required to adapt to new surroundings. As a result, the family became one of the most influential groups in Penang.

In fact, Koh had two jobs as a merchant and an arrack producer, nurturing a commercial bond with the Aceh region. (In 1790, he obtained pepper seed from Aceh, and pepper vines plants in Penang.)[146] Koh became a trusted friend of both the British administrators and Western traders with most of the wealth he derived from revenue farming being reinvested into Penang's plantation sector.[147] In July 1814, a group of Penang merchants, including Syed Hussain, complained to the Penang government about Aceh's trade monopoly, whereby these merchants paid duties but could take only a few shipments.[148] As explained above, Syed Hussain was the most influential Malay man in Penang and the most important voice of the memorialists. However, Koh, the *Kapitan Cina*, did not support Syed Hussain's views, preferring to establish contact with the Sultan of Aceh, Jauhar ul-Alam. Two years later, Koh was contracted to supply the Sultan with arrack.[149] There was a conflict of interests regarding the authority of Aceh in Penang; while Syed Hussain demanded better trade conditions, Koh attempted to sell the liquor through the social connection. That such influential ethnic leaders

[145] Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 61.
[146] James C Jackson. *Planters and speculators: Chinese and European agricultural enterprise in Malaya, 1786-1921* (University of Malaya Press, 1968), p. 95.
[147] Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 67.
[148] G/34/44, pp. 1619-1626.
[149] 'C. Fenwick 18th March 1816' in G/34/54.

had different business strategies suggests there were initial tensions between the Chinese and Malay communities.

Apart from Koh's extension of influence, there were other Chinese migrants who took opportunities to begin economic activity. When Ayer Itam, one of the districts in Penang, was newly cleared, an unknown Chinese man built flour mills in the district. A year after the establishment of the Penang settlement, there were 60 Chinese families who kept shops in the Bazar, which they had already extensively decorated.[150] Although the migrants were not yet familiar with their new surroundings, they immediately worked hard to make a living immediately, extending their commercial influences and making their presence felt in later years.

In April 1789, a census of Chinese residents in George Town was released, with surveys conducted in December 1788 including 425 Chinese residents in total. The list shows that how the Chinese population increased after foundation of Penang in 1786, stating that most Chinese migrants were from Kedah, Malacca, Perak, Perlis, Patani and Songkhla. In addition to the regions in the Malay Archipelago, the last two, Patani and Songkhla, were regions of Thailand. These regions listed were neighbouring states of Penang but it was not recorded why they had migrated. The migrants that came from Southeast Asia, on the other hand, were from mainland Chinese regions, such as Guangdong, or unidentified regions in China.[151] The Dutch colonial powers at Malacca were not happy with the foundation of Penang. They were conscious about mass immigration of Chinese migrants to Penang; therefore, they watched and checked them carefully.[152] Most of these migrants did settle down in Penang with their family members. The foundation of Penang attracted Chinese migrants in neighbouring states, which could have caused population fluctuation of those states.

In terms of lifestyle, there were differences between the Chinese from the Malay Archipelago and new recruits from China. Among the long-settled Chinese migrants, some migrants were known as Baba Nyonya or Straits Chinese, having intermarried with local "Malay" women and

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[150] Keppel Garnier. 'Early Days in Penang', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1 (1923), p. 6.
[151] '10th April 1789, Appendix to Consultations' in G/34/3.
[152] Davies*, Old Penang*, p.7.

created an amalgamation of Sino-Malay culture. They adopted much from Malay socio-cultural traditions and European culture.[153] The Chinese men in Malacca could be a classic example of Baba culture as they married Malay women, and their descendants inherited the culture.[154] Before the Chinese migrants arrived in Penang, they were based in Kedah or Melaka where Malays had authority. Under the Malay influence, they accepted some Malay culture, which affected their cuisine or language. The Chinese migrants in Penang might have faced a similar situation due to geographical and cultural factors. Francis Light explained how those Straits Chinese were affected:

> …I have likewise hired eight Chinese from Queda, but they have been so long with the Malays, they have lost much of their native industry.[155]

While the Straits Chinese became the majority class in Penang's Chinese community, there were other groups of Chinese migrants arriving directly from China in the early years. Records show there was a low number of China-born migrants among the 425 Chinese migrants in 1788,[156] but that share had increased by the 1810s. They became labourers in pepper farms, and they were paid for travel expenses.[157] Other Chinese migrant groups engaged in different plantation agriculture; for example, several Chinese were employed to superintend tea plantations.[158] The Chinese capitalists seemed to trust the performance of their compatriots instead of employing local labourers. Within the community, Chinese leaders were also running various types of business that attracted many young Chinese men to Penang, offering them better job opportunities. A recruitment agency was established in 1805, which triggered labour migration to the Malay colony with even labourers transferred to other places so that Penang,

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153 Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 63.

154 'To the honourable Governor and council Fort Cornwallis, 31st October 1808' in G/34/9.

155 Parliament, House of Commons, 'Extracts of a Letter from the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island, to the Governor General in Council, dated 12th September 1786'. in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 421.

156 G/34/3.

157 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture*, p. 42.

158 Parliament, House of Commons Papers. 'Extract Public Letter to the Bengal Government, dated 7th April 1829' in *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company Report, Minutes of Evidence- (I. Public, Appendix, Index) (II. Finance and Trade, Appendix, Index) (III. Revenue, Appendix, Index) (IV. Judicial, Appendix, Index) (V. Military, Appendix, Index) (VI. Political or Foreign, Appendix, Index), General Appendix, Index* (1831-32), p. 667.

as a transit station, became a centre of the coolie trade.[159] The arrival of Chinese labourers would have enabled the expansion of business and population growth in the Chinese community of Penang. It might have transformed Penang into a prosperous entrepôt but most labourers did not have plans to stay permanently.

Between the Straits Chinese and the China-born migrants, there were variety of views. Purcell asserted that the Straits Chinese felt their separateness from the newcomers and were inclined to despise them. Some of them claimed to be British subjects and proud of it.[160] However, John Deans, an English merchant, had a different view. Deans stayed in the Eastern Archipelago for twenty years, including three years in Penang, and therefore he was confident about his experiences with Chinese migrants in the Archipelago.[161] The English merchant described his view:

> From your intercourse during so many years with the Chinese can you state to the committee whether they are indifferent to foreign trade, or attach any importance to its advantages? – The Chinese of the Archipelago, who I believe do not differ from the Chinese in their native country, are very sensible of the importance of commerce,[162]

During the interview, Deans described the Straits Chinese's commercial skills, stating he never felt there were any differences between the two groups. Purcell attempted to explain how two Chinese groups differed in Penang, but Deans did not experience any cultural differences. Taken together, there was a cultural difference among the Chinese migrants that had no immense difference between the two groups.

Regardless of each migrant's background, there were several facts about the characteristics of the Chinese migrants. Compared to other ethnic groups, the Chinese were known to be taller: generally, two inches taller than Siamese, and three inches taller than the Malays. Similar to

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159 Weimin and Lingling, *A History of Sino-Malaysian Interactions,* p. 245.

160 Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, p. 61.

161 'Mr. John Deans called in; and examined.', p. 233.

162 ibid., p. 237.

other groups, they wanted to be comfortable; they wished to eat well and live in comfort and therefore they worked diligently.[163]

Within the Chinese community, there were various dialects spoken by the migrants, such as Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka and Hainanese. They organised themselves into small groups by dialects and kept distinct from each other,[164] but there were two strong dialect groups – Hokkien and Cantonese. The Hokkiens were from Fujian Province and the Cantonese from Guangdong Province. Each group showed a strong loyalty to its own group, which resulted in rivalry and fighting.[165] For example, these two groups competed for lucrative business. It was impossible to distribute wealth to all migrants without causing division, and the inequality of wealth resulted in conflict and competition as a result of these economic challenges; however, how the Kapitan responded to the situation was significant. When the Kapitan system was introduced, the colonial officials tended to appoint the leader of the largest Chinese dialect group.[166] As the colonial officials appointed Koh, this suggests that the Hokkien dialect group was the biggest in the Chinese community, but, regardless of the *kapitan*'s background, the supreme leader could not behave tendentiously during his leadership. One of the *kapitan*'s duties was to harmonise the whole community. If the *kapitan* could not mediate between the dialect groups successfully, it could be interpreted in terms of Kapitan's incapacity or favouring certain group. In fact, Koh pushed the Hokkien-Cantonese partnership forward that resulted in 1810 in the establishment of the Kong Hok Palace.[167] The name of palace means 'the temple for the people of Cantonese and Hokkien together';[168] unfortunately, the partnership ended in 1826 as the Koh passed away.[169] The absence of the supreme leader caused political confusion within the Chinese community that resulted in competition for

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[163] *The Sydney Herald*, 11th December 1834.
[164] Parliament, House of Commons. *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. First Report (China Trade), Minutes of Evidence, Appendix* (1821), p. 297.
[165] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka,* pp. 309-310.
[166] Chan Gaik Ngoh, "The Kapitan Cina System in the Straits Settlements", *Malaya in History*, 25 (1982), pp. 74–75.
[167] Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 66.
[168] Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans*, p. 12.
[169] Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 69.

hegemony among the various dialect groups.

Among the dialect groups, the Straits Chinese usually shared a common ancestry with the Hokkiens, whereas the Cantonese did not share much cultural homogeneity and therefore seldom married into Straits Chinese families. Cantonese women were sent back to their home province for marriage.[170] While there were several intermarriage cases in Penang, the Cantonese had conservative marriage views, believing that their children should look for life partners from the same province. These conservative marriage views suggested there was a sense of cultural exclusiveness among the Cantonese.

Due to the regional divisions, Chinese migrants organised various clubs or societies to establish group solidarity. These organisations were aimed at promoting relationship and giving assistance to newly arrived migrants,[171] who were not familiar with local culture and most of whom were uneducated.[172] In fact, some Europeans took advantage of Chinese migrants' ignorance and induced them into signing bonds without understanding. Once the Chinese migrants were swindled by the Europeans, they lost their houses and lands.[173] They could only rely on the organisations for their survival and therefore they would have been obedient. Membership was conferred upon migrants who came from the same area and spoke the same dialect; migrants from other districts or that spoke different dialects were not permitted to join.[174] The organisations' activities would have expanded their power and influence, and it was an important element in each dialect group's competitive power. Although these organisations were friendly societies, they often encouraged hostilities, rivalry and physical violence.[175] As will be explained in more detail later (Chapter 5), the organisational activities of the Chinese migrants could cause social unrest from the 1820s due to excessive loyalty of the organisations' memberships.

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[170] ibid., p. 61.

[171] Leon Comber, *Chinese secret societies in Malaya: a survey of the Triad society from 1800 to 1900*. (New York: J.J. Augustin,1959), p. 32.

[172] Hussin. *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka,* p. 310.

[173] Leith. *A short account of the settlement, produce and commerce of Prince of Wales* (London: J. Booth., 1805), p. 48.

[174] Hussin. *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p. 310.

[175] ibid., p. 310.

In January 1794, Light briefly described the lives of Chinese migrants. The then-population of Chinese migrants were estimated at about 3000, including men, women and children around six times more than in 1788. There was a huge increase in Chinse population for six years but Light did not give any clear reasons of population growth. The Chinese migrants were carpenters, smiths, traders, planters and shopkeepers, and some of them employed small vessels and prows for travelling to the neighbouring states. Light thought that they were the only Asian group who could support themselves. Chinese labourers worked more than others in order to earn two or three dollars and wanted to return to China. When they earned a little money, they married and set up home in order to look after their families. In terms of gender, each Chinese group led different lives. While some male migrants were sent to China for their education, female migrants always remained at home until they were married.[176] After eight years of life experience in Penang, Light explained how Chinese migrants made a living while abroad, earning money to return to their hometowns or getting married and raising a family which meant they to work hard.

As written above, the population of Penang, including the Chinese community, increased when residents of Malacca migrated to the new colony. Contrary to the situation in 1805, the Chinese population in Penang could not be increased as the colonial company officials aimed to send some Chinese migrants to Trinidad, which had lately been ceded to Britain, in the hope, among company officials, that Chinese migrants would cultivate the latest colony.[177] At that time, it was suggested the slave trade should be abolished and labour cost of slaves was estimated as more expensive than that of Chinese labourers. Colonial officials in Trinidad believed that 100 Chinese migrants could do the work of 250 African slaves.[178] Chinese migrants were not forced to embark for Trinidad but the British government wanted to solve the population problem by sending some Chinese migrants there; furthermore, the East India Company considered Penang as a rendezvous point for Chinese migrants to Trinidad. Although some Chinese had already settled in Penang, other Chinese migrants headed to Trinidad via Penang. According to a letter from one agent to the Governor General of Penang in March 1805,

[176] G/34/6, pp. 120-124.
[177] G/34/135, p. 7.
[178] B. W. Higman, 'The Chinese in Trinidad, 1806-1836', *Caribbean Studies*, 12 (1972), pp. 22-24.

the expense of shipping from China to Penang was about 25 Spanish dollars, and 75 Spanish dollars from Penang to Trinidad.[179] The British Empire established a plantation system in most colonies and the officials were satisfied with the productivity of Chinese labourers. They could have invited the migrants from South America or Africa but they were impressed by diligence of the Chinese. After some Chinese migrants had moved to Trinidad, the Chinese migrants of Penang were estimated to number 5000 in the early 1800s.[180] As written above, the abolition of slavery had been discussed since 1805, and abolitionism was supported within the British Empire; however, a labour force was still needed to meet the imperial economic goals and this need resulted in further Chinese emigration. Moreover, the establishment of Singapore in 1819 affected the Chinese population. At that time, Penang was experiencing economic stagnation, and some Chinese migrants decided to start new businesses in Singapore instead of restarting their businesses in Penang.[181] Compared to other ethnic groups, the Chinese community was not expanded much by the British government's policy. Chinese migrants were especially affected by the territorial expansion of the British Empire as other colonies needed labourers or capital. These cases show how the supply of Chinese migrants from Southeast Asia by British officials resulted in fluctuations in the Chinese population in Penang.

Unfortunately, the Chinese migrants suffered a heavy mortality rate during the early years. At that time, almost the entire population lived on swampy, poorly drained land near the harbour, and these living conditions caused the high death-rate. In addition, there was only one poorly equipped temporary hospital without any nurses.[182] Apart from the manpower export to Trinidad, the poor surroundings caused a decrease in the Chinese population. As written above, the administration had invested heavily in urban development but residential environment and medical welfare needed to be improved. More seriously, neither the colonial officials nor the *Kapitan Cina* seemed very concerned about the mortality issue. They were responsible for the healthy life practices of Chinese migrants so that they could become a pillar of economic development of Penang.

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[179] G/34/135, p. 302.
[180] ibid., p. 248.
[181] Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese', p. 62.
[182] Clodd, *Malaya's first British pioneer*, p. 117.

As will be shown in greater detail later (in Chapter 3), Chinese migrants, especially the single labourers, enjoyed gambling for their amusement. At first, the single migrants enjoyed a tremendous amount of freedom and gambled excessively because nobody restrained them, even though they often ruined themselves. However, in later years, gambling addiction was no longer a problem only for single migrants with some of the addicts selling their families, and the company officials claimed they wanted to protect the vulnerable class. Historical records suggest most Chinese migrants enjoyed gambling and the company officials were biased and their views contradictory.[183] The view that Chinese migrants were addicted to gambling was at odds with their decision to send Chinese labourers to Trinidad in order to preserve its social order, suggesting that the colonial officials had a prejudice based on extreme cases, such as betting families.

The company officials treated the Chinese migrants with prejudice. The first superintendent, Francis Light, established a gambling house in 1791. Apart from raising tax revenue, Light expected that establishing a gambling farm would prevent the daily riots between the Chinese and Malays in Penang mentioned in the historical record.[184] Company officials aimed to prevent social participation between these two groups, and the officials might have believed that protesters would cancel their plans in favour of entertainment. Furthermore, it seems the gaming plan was successful because there was not even a single dispute from then on.[185] If the company officials respected the Chinese migrants, they had to negotiate with the Chinese leaders. The officials had to be responsible for any social problems among Chinese migrants, such as family problems.

In addition to gambling addictions, certain groups of Chinese migrants experienced issues with poverty and education, with some labourers living in poorhouses, which would result in temporary illness.[186] The residents of the poorhouse needed care from others living in the same squalid surroundings, owing to these poor conditions, the police magistrate suggested moving to a better place.[187] These Chinese minorities had to endure the pain until the system was

[183] G/34/22, pp. 299-300.
[184] ibid., p. 298.
[185] ibid., p. 299.
[186] ibid., p. 64.
[187] G/34/26, pp. 542-543.

improved. Moreover, Chinese parents were concerned about their children's education. While some Chinese parents sent their children back home for their education, the rest of them could not be educated until the establishment of the Prince of Wales Island Free School in 1816. Before the establishment of the school, nothing was known about Chinese children's education in Penang or about how Chinese children might be educated. On 22 October 1817, the committee members of the school agreed to open to all ethnicities in Penang and that students could be educated in their own languages by native teachers.[188] The establishment of the school reassured Chinese parents that their children would be given educational opportunities and that they did not have to think about sending their children abroad as they could be educated in Penang. The poverty and education problems faced by the Chinese migrants were party solved during the 1810s.

The Chinese migrants were associated with certain issues, such as gambling, education, organisational activities or welfare, from the early years of the colony but these issues attracted more attention during the 1810s. At first, the administration simply judged the Chinese migrants when they had problems with these issues; however, once the administration and the Christian missions could no longer leave the problems as they represented a threat to social order, they instituted an amendment of the regulations and construction of new buildings.

While Penang's multicultural society was forming, the Chinese community became a key part. Although the leader, Koh Lay Huan, was Hokkien, he never showed favouritism towards his dialect group. Chinese immigrants came to Penang from various regions of China or Southeast Asia, and the *kapitan* emphasized the need for a strong partnership including every dialect group in the Chinese community so that there was no conflict of interests among the groups when Koh was alive. Within the community, Chinese migrants represented different social classes in terms of culture, dialect, jobs and wealth. However, the Chinese captain could not solve all problems, such as the migration of Chinese labour to Trinidad, regional conflicts, gambling addictions, poor education, disease, or poverty as time passed. These issues continued to be a concern or became worse for many years and they needed some time to

[188] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 25th October 1817.

resolve. The migrants had to solve the problems by themselves as the pioneers of Penang, and these difficulties were an unavoidable part of starting their migration history.

2.4 Ethnic affairs in early years of Penang

Apart from the Chinese, the residents of Penang came from a wide range of different cultural backgrounds. It was the norm in the colony to preventing ethnic conflicts; nevertheless, there were ethnic barriers between the different residents, which sometimes caused conflicts or tensions – and this also applied to the Chinese community. Not every resident in Penang was ready or able to understand cultural diversity because most residents did not plan to live there permanently, and they did not have any opportunities to learn about other cultures. Chinese migrants had conflicts with Europeans, Malays and Indians, and some cases were reported in Prince of Wales Island public consultations. Cases in the records dating from between 1794 and 1807 explained how Chinese migrants were attacked or murdered, and they show how the difficulties Chinese migrants experienced during the settlement process.

In Penang, each ethnic community was formed based on their cultural background. Colonial officials welcomed any migrants, regardless of culture, and these migrants were divided into various communities by their culture. Huntington claims that people define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, historical values, customs and institutions.[189] As various ethnic communities were founded without any cultural exchanges, Penang's migrants did not have chances to develop any multicultural understanding. Moreover, some migrants planned to return to their home countries after achieving their economic goals and, therefore, did not try to understand other cultures. Kolsky described how the law in British India gave imperial whiteness a kind of stability.[190] However, although the colonial records did not always report trial results, some cases detailed how Chinese migrants were beaten or neglected by the

[189] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, 2002), p. 21.
[190] Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 103.

European elites. The ethnically oriented social climate or European supremacy caused the Chinese migrants difficulties during the settlement process. As written in the previous section, each ethnic group shared a specific culture in Penang, regardless of any conflicts, and, when all the ethnic groups gathered in one place, such as a festival, the differences were evident.

> Thus the whole area was full of savoury pungent smells, no doubt attractive to the taste of each all…The Malays with their tubs of rice, bowls of curried buffalo, and sauces of sambals (condiments). They dug into the contents with their right hands, carefully keeping their left hands from the dishes, for reasons it would offend good taste to mention. The Chinese with their kits of rice, and cups full of stewed pork, shovelled mouthfuls into their wide open jaws, laughing and joking in their uncouth dialects, Then, again, the Hindoos eat their simple, quiet, and unsocial meals, hidden in some out-of-the-way corner where nobody could see them…[191]

The above excerpt shows some of the various dietary habits among the diverse residents of Penang, a salient example of cultural differences among the residents due to lifestyles and on religious grounds. However, the records were written in a biased view of the Europeans which could not be trustworthy completely. The differences caused misunderstandings and violence as shown by the several cases in the early years of the colony.

In February 1807, one Chinese man was brought to the police station as a victim of violence. His name was Gee, a respectable shopkeeper, whom claimed that he was beaten by Captain Drummond, the Town Mayor of Penang.[192] Gee was held by two armed men and Captain Drummond used his stick to beat the shopkeeper, who recognized Captain Drummond by the stick in the captain's hand.[193] The incident was described in a public consultation of Prince of Wales Island as follows:

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[191] John Turnbull Thomson, *Some Glimpses Into Life in the Far East* (London: Richardson & Co., 1865), pp. 79-80.
[192] G/34/17, p. 167.
[193] ibid., p. 171.

> …he perceived a Chinaman letting off crackers with his fire towards his own door at this time… but the horses were frightened at the noise of the crackers, and the Lady seemed to be greatly alarmed… [194]

Captain Drummond was angry about Gee's religious practices, as the horses were frightened at the noise of the crackers, and that was the cause of the captain's anger and violence against the Chinese man. The captain immediately exercised public force for his personal revenge. Neither was the case a bilateral issue, as two armed men joined in with the captain's attack. One of the two armed men was even a police officer.[195] During the investigation by the police magistrate, it was found that the letting off crackers was a religious practice among Chinese migrants. Gee was trying to honour and respect public standards, but his religious practice unintentionally triggered a violent response. Although the governor and council did not want to interfere with the Chinese community's celebrations, the authorities prohibited letting off crackers on the road while horses and carriages were passing. If anyone was found letting off crackers in the public, they were fined.[196]

The case of Drummond and Gee illustrates the two perspectives of Penang's early period. First, the Chinese migrants had not considered any cultural differences. According to the Gee case, it seemed that Chinese migrants did not care about the threat posed by crackers in advance. The religious practice could be understood to have good intentions but the Chinese residents did not consider the cultural differences. They could celebrate with the crackers in a more secluded place. If any leaders, such as the *Kapitan Cina* or colonial officials, notified the migrants in advance, the incident might have been prevented. Second, the European elite looked down on Asian migrants with irrational racism. Despite the assumed threats, Captain Drummond, as a civil servant, used violence. He was even supported by the two armed men. He could complain to Gee to prevent the recurrence of the issue; however, as Drummond chose to commit a violent act, it shows how European leaders viewed the Asian migrants.

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[194] ibid., pp. 169-171.
[195] ibid., p. 172.
[196] ibid., p. 181.

While Chinese migrants were not treated respectfully by the European elite, there was also a violent incident between a Chinese and an Indian woman. In August 1794, one Captain Hamilton claimed that his female servant had experienced prejudice while shopping at the Chinese woman's shop. At that time, the female servant wanted to buy some betel for her mistress and had found a sepoy buying a bundle of betel for two-and-a-half pice. When the servant was about to make her payment of two-and-a-half pice, she was told she had to pay three pice for her betel. The servant failed to bargain with the Chinese woman, who was named Siah, but she continued to hold the betel in her hand and refused to give it back. The Chinese woman tried to take the betel away and beat her, which resulted in a fight between the two women. The servant also beat her back, and they pulled each other's hair. When Siah's husband, named Chee Ong, arrived at the shop, sepoys were dispatched to the site, and they prisoned the Chinese family. It was later found that Siah had been holding her child in her arms and that the Bengali woman took the child away while they were fighting. Chee was beaten by the sepoys without any reason while in jail. After the trial, the court ruled that the Chinese family should be released as Siah was the aggrieved rather than the aggressor.[197]

This 1794 case explains how the Chinese family was victimized by a false accusation. Although the quarrel did not arise from a cultural misunderstanding; the Chinese family was sacrificed by the European resident and his servant's one-sided arguments while the servant was an arrogant woman who behaved rudely under the protection of her master. Her master had to observe the incident objectively but he did not care. Fortunately, the judge collected various pieces of evidence and ensured witnesses for the right judgement so that the Chinese family could be released. This case was significant as the judges returned an impartial verdict. At that time, the Penang government had not yet established any proper legal system nor a police department. The judges had to secure evidence that did not hurt innocent victims.

In addition to the above cases, Malays also committed murder of Chinese migrants. On 15 March 1806, one Chinese man, named Ong, visited the police station to report an incident. When he was on a boat with two other Chinese men, named Chio and Chong, on the Soongey

[197] G/34/6, pp. 578-598.

Groogur river, they were attacked by Malays, who murdered the other two men.[198] Before this incident on 6 March, the police reported that a Chinese man had identified to police officers four Malays as the perpetrators of the crime. The incident was related to business, and it ended up as an ethnic conflict, and it was questioned why the Chinese migrants were targeted by the Malays. When these Chinese men were attacked by 13 Malays, they left the boat immediately to save themselves. After some time, the Chinese men retuned to get a boat but the perpetrators were waiting for them and they killed Chio and Chong. Ong was a resident of George Town who had resided in Penang about four years; the other victims, Chio and Chong, had lived in Penang for about six and five years, respectively.[199]

After almost 20 years, there was a similar case between Malay and Chinese residents. A resident of George Town, named Choo Hoh, was beaten by two Malays from Batu Kawan, Province Wellesley. The Malay criminals reached Penang Island by canoe, found a Chinese victim, and suddenly administered a severe blow to Choo's head. The victim cried out for help but nobody could save him as the spot was an isolated location. Choo survived for three days until he could be taken to the hospital. Sometime afterwards, the victim was dead, and an arrest warrant issued for the two Malays. At the site of the murder, a bag was found which contained a few clothes. The police planned to investigate further whether it had also contained money or something valuable.[200]

The motives for the crimes were not found in these cases. I assume that the incident was caused by one of the following reasons. First, the Malays were maritime criminals who attacked any innocent people found on a river or at sea, attacking anyone in order to fulfil their needs in various ways and regardless of the size of the pirate gangs. The full-scale attacks committed by the maritime criminals will be further described in Chapter 4. Second, there was a cultural conflict between the Malays and their Chinese victims. Malays were Muslims who went to the mosque in the Malay quarter, while Chinese migrants had their own temple.[201] The different religious practices on both sides could make them uncomfortable. If each of the ethnic leaders

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198 G/34/13, p. 262.
199 ibid., p. 263.
200 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 31st January 1824.

201 Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka*, p. 262.

encouraged all community members to understand the other residents, it would result in a harmonious society. Moreover, the severity of the punishment was not yet properly established.[202] The shoddy system allowed anybody to be armed, thereby resulting in murder or an attack, and the above cases were random killings that were committed without specific criminal motives. The incidents show the absence of public security in Penang and how every resident had to defend themselves.

In fact, colonial officials conducted evaluations of each ethnic group. In December 1805, Robert Townsend Farquhar, Lieutenant Governor of Penang, made a report about conditions in the colony between February 1790 and September 1805. According to the report, the Lieutenant Governor claimed that Chinese migrants are more industrious than Malays or Indians. At the same time, the industrious migrants drink arrack, smoke opium and gamble and thereby they spent half of their gains.[203] Farquhar demeaned the other migrant groups by comparing them with the Chinese migrants and made lampooned the Chinese consumption behaviours. From Farquhar's perspective, the Chinese migrants worked harder than others because the officials were not happy with the efforts of the Malays or Indians. However, the Chinese migrants spent most of their earnings on their hobbies, which were additional sources of government revenue. The Chinese migrants were beneficial both as a willing workforce and to the national finances. More seriously, Farquhar showed favouritism to certain groups based on each group's character. As the head of the colony, he had to harmonize all the groups, but he made his report based on the little knowledge he had. Farquhar never tried to learn about different cultures properly, and the colonial officials often caused ethnic conflicts. The report suggested that the officials recognized Asian migrants only as simple fortune-makers.

In contrast, a newspaper article reported about a conflict resolution between Malays and Chinese. The journalist did not describe why these two groups were in conflict, but the article simply showed the successful outcome, pointing out how Chinese and Malay settlers helped create a highly flourishing state:

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[202] *The Journal of The Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia, Vol. V* (Singapore: J.R. Logan, 1851), p. 206.
[203] G/34/12, p. 37.

> …in consequence of the system of farming the revenues being done away, and establishment provided similar to that of Bengal. The Chinese and Malay settlers now live on terms of perfect harmony together, and the spice plantations under their management are in a highly flourishing state.[204]

The article aimed to convince the readers about the success of the policy by the colonial authority, claiming that their ethnic harmony granted mutual benefits. The officials aimed for a tremendous propaganda effect. From their perspective, Asian migrants were lower classes of the society who could cause disorder at any time, as Malays often committed murder and the Chinese migrants were unable to protect themselves. As the colonial officials made peace between the two sides, they misunderstood themselves to be successful governors. They had to consider how to prevent further conflicts based on this successful case. Although ethnic harmony was needed, the article did not explain how those migrants agreed to improve their relationship; it would have been better to put forward more examples of ethnic harmony and include future plans for how to improve the intercultural relations.

As Penang became a pluralistic society, the Chinese migrants had a difficult time settling down because of the cultural differences with other ethnic groups. The above cases were examples of the ethnic conflicts, and these cases show how Chinese migrants had difficulties with non-Chinese residents. Around this time, the official legal system was introduced so responsibility for public security was transferred from the *kapitans* to the police magistrate. However, there were continual conflicts among the migrants, and the police did not seem strong enough to control some incidents. The police could not always save the Chinese migrants so they had to protect themselves.

2.5 Conclusion

When the East India Company acquired Penang, it represented the British expansion in the region. Colonial officials aimed to join in with the commercial competition and prevent other European expansion by establishing an entrepôt in Penang. The founder of the colony, Francis

[204] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 8th June 1811.

Light, had to persuade the officials in British India to expand trade with China from Penang, which was an almost uninhabited island on which the colonial officials had to pioneer the land and establish an administrative system. In the early years following foundation, the colonial officials had to deal with diplomatic problems involving neighbouring Kedah and slavery. The king of Kedah was worried that emigration to Penang would mean a decrease in Kedah's own population; moreover, there was a complex problem about ownership of slaves between Penang and Kedah. Colonial officials attempted to improve human rights by abolishing slavery, which caused decrease in population and labourers, but the colonial officials had to find substitutes and any migrants were welcomed, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Although slavery was not to be replaced perfectly by free labour, the arrival of various migrant groups contributed to Penang's prosperity. The British colonial officials aimed to expand their businesses from their base to Penang and bring in labourers, attracting various merchants from all the world and transforming Penang into a multi-ethnic society. As the colony experienced a drop in its population, the colonial officials did not care about the migrants' cultural backgrounds. They adopted a 'Kapitan system' through which they could harmonise the diverse migrant communities in the colony. The *kapitans* acted as mediators between the officials and the various ethnic communities. They committed themselves to preserving public order until the establishment of police, but the Malay community seemed to be in conflicts with the colonial officials due to their cultural differences. For example, the Malay community claimed they should be able to continue slavery due to their traditional reasons. While Indian merchants focused only on business and then returned to their homelands, Indian convicts or soldiers stayed in Penang. Colonial officials trusted the European community the most, as the elite of the colony, though the community itself was small in number, with some Europeans settling down in the region through mixed marriage. The least influential groups were the Burmans, Siamese, Arabs and Armenians, who had smaller populations than the other ethnic groups. Each ethnic group exhibited a specific character that was differentiated by culture, language and religion. The colonial officials did not force the migrants to be assimilated and allowed them to sustain their cultural identities; however, they categorized each community without any attempt at a complete understanding.

The Chinese community began with the arrival of Chinese migrants from Kedah. They were already accustomed to different cultures due to their business experience and their lives in Kedah, and they had survived by establishing a close relationship with the local authorities. As the colonial officials appointed the official *kapitan* for each ethnic group, the Chinese community sought to expand the community and strengthen its solidarity under the *kapitan*'s leadership. Alongside the migrants from Kedah, the Chinese community was expanded by the arrival of migrants from Malacca, Perak, Perlis, Thailand and China. However, the Chinese migrants were divided by occupation or dialect; while some Chinese elites owned businesses, other newcomers from China worked as labourers without any opportunity for education. The Chinese community was stratified, and the inequitable distribution of wealth caused a division and rivalries between the dialect groups, based on egotism. However, the Chinese population decreased as expected when some Chinese migrants emigrated to Trinidad or Singapore, recruited by British officials experiencing labour shortages in those locations, and Penang became a stopover to the Caribbean Sea. As the Penang government had not established proper administrative system at that point, the Chinese migrants could not educate their children, and experienced gambling addictions and health problems in a poor environment. The colonial officials simply left the Chinese migrants to look after themselves and ignored their difficulties.

In fact, some Chinese migrants experienced cultural conflict with the governors or other migrants. Colonial officials harboured prejudices against Chinese migrants and some of their entertainment or religious practices. Some of these religious practices could threaten public safety, but colonial officials sometimes misused force in order to enact their personal revenge and their domestic servants were sometimes arrogant under their protection. The officials had to negotiate with the Chinese headman instead of committing violence; however, outside the authority's support, some Chinese migrants became victims of violence from Malays because anybody could be armed easily so they targeted the Chinese migrants. Unless the judges made the correct decision in court, the Chinese community were not protected by the public power. Chinese migrants had to endure various difficulties in order to survive.

The Chinese community did not exercise its influence much in the early years. Within their specific settlement process, some Chinese migrants even suffered extreme difficulties and

needed support from the local government. Colonial officials seemed to welcome them but the Chinese migrants were merely the essential labour needed to manage their colony. The early settlers had to overcome difficulties in the new land as pioneers, but their sacrifice contributed to the settlement of Chinese migrants in Penang and created their identities. As there were various migrants within the Chinese community, it is worth examining how they arrived and started new lives. The first-generation Chinese successfully put down roots in Penang so they began commercial activities. These commercial activities resulted social consequences that will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 3.

Commercial activities and Social consequences in Chinese Community

This chapter focuses on how Chinese migrants engaged in commercial activities from late 18th century, such as pepper plantations, sugar plantations, revenue farms, construction work and managing gambling houses. Since Chinese migrants settled in Penang, they took on different jobs this variety of careers resulted in stratification within the Chinese community. Beginning with the introduction of the land tenure system, the colonial administration focused on economic stimulation to collect tax revenues; therefore, Chinese migrants were involved in this project at all levels. When the Chinese migrants began businesses, such as pepper cultivation, pork farms, manufacturing arrack or gambling houses, these enterprises resulted in social issues, such as hyper-competition, smuggling, violence or addiction, that were sometimes a wider concern for society. This chapter aims to explore how commercial activity among Chinese migrants were initiated and how the relevant social issues developed. The commercial activities employed various people so more employment caused social impact. The India Office records and contemporary newspapers will be used to explore the policies of the authorities concerned regarding the commercial activities and economic contributions of Chinese migrants in Penang.

3.1 The land tenure system in Penang

When the British acquired Penang at first, the colonial officialdom decided on practical use of the land, and some of the lands were cleared to be used for agriculture. The colonial officials expected agricultural activities in the cleared land to produce export commodities and they allowed land for tenant farming, which resulted in the introduction of the land tenure system. The tenure system then aroused the interests of the residents in Penang, including the Chinese.

In Java, the Dutch colonial administration assisted with the economic activities of the residents, rather than becoming an enterprise itself. This idea created an entrepreneur class, who lived in West Java from the eighteenth century, that gradually replaced the European

landlords.[205] In a similar way, several Chinese migrants became an entrepreneur class in Penang. In the colonies of the British empire, the landholding system was based on conception of a collective right over the land. In a tenancy, the landlords are individuals, companies or governments, and tenants could be given full rights of occupancy with a fixed-term contract. This system is aimed to stimulate economic development by giving tenants a greater sense of security and incentives to enable a more intensive cultivation. In the Malayan states, including Penang, colonial governments were in stronger positions to take every action on the land. The public power could determine the form which tenures or rights would take.[206] Colonial officials encouraged Chinese migrants to establish pepper plantations or pork farms on the state-owned land. These tenants then had to pay monthly rent and a portion of their profits as tax, thereby establishing a bond of trust between the officials and the Chinese tenants.

As a response to increased migration flows, Francis Light, superintendent of Penang, decided to grant lands to the new settlers. Moreover, sometime after Penang's foundation, Light predicted an exact picture of Penang's early years:

> People will come from Malacca from the Coast of Coromandel and many of the places to settle at Penang. It will be necessary to grant them a portion of land, and to establish a police for their security.[207]

The superintendent hoped the migrants would settle down in Penang permanently; therefore, he attempted to attract them by granting lands. Light expected that residents could realize the economic opportunities after occupying and clearing the lands offered.[208] He believed that the land tenure system could serve the interest of both the administration and tenants by providing security and economic opportunities for the latter. In fact, Captain Scott and Captain Glass, subordinates of Light, had a meeting with several Malay and Chinese migrants to discuss

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[205] Ulbe Bosma, 'The Cultivation System (1830–1870) and Its Private Entrepreneurs on Colonial Java', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 38 (2007), p. 280.

[206] Charles Kingsley Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies* (G. Cumberlege for Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. xix-1.

[207] India Office Records, F/4/1043/28681, pp. 71-72

[208] Devasahayam David Chelliah. *A history of the educational policy of the Straits Settlements with recommendations for a new system based on vernaculars* (G. H. Kiat & Company, 1960), p. 3.

applications for portions of land. Captain Light and his subordinates were advised by the Indian government to award a portion of land to each migrant family that was trustworthy. Light was given the right to choose the applicants for this issue and he needed to consider the best selection process in order to distribute the lands fairly.[209] Light had to give the lands to qualified applicants because their land use plans could be connected with the administrative affairs of the colony. He was responsible for transforming Penang and therefore he needed reliable people who could bring about favourable outcomes for the colony.

Light clarified that the distribution of lands proceed as a long-term lease. Once the tenants had cleared and cultivated the land measuring 50 orlongs (65 acres), they would be exempt from tax for seven years. If any tenants left Penang with their families before the end of this privileged period, they had to pay two thirds of the profits of that year.[210] Instead of transferring ownership of the lands, the superintendent applied this rule strictly, recognizing residents of Penang as transient and not allowing private ownership. He never trusted the migrants blindly and therefore added that proviso in an attempt to prevent remigration.

Since land tenures were permitted in 1789, the colonial officialdom had a vague hope of economic activation in order to collect more tax revenues. Officials expected the establishment of plantations, especially those growing pepper, could bring in export earnings and employment.[211] They believed that export commodities would be produced in Penang, with plantation labourers increasing production. As a result, the land tenure system was founded as one of the economic fundamentals of Penang.

Table 3: Summary of leased land size by ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Size of the land (Orlongs)
Europeans	1477.19
Chinese	776.15
Malays	19.15
Bugis	100.17
Siamese	40.9

[209] India Office Records, F/4/1043/28681, pp. 72-74.
[210] ibid.., p. 88.
[211] ibid., p. 135.

Chulias	253.9
Bengalis	84.27
Former African slaves	14.10
Burmese	93
Native Portuguese	235.10
Acehnese	70.12
Arabic	15.5
Other groups	12
East India Company	63
Total	3269.50

Source: India Office Records, F/4/1043/2868, pp. 171.

This summary was released in 1795 and explains how much land was leased. The administration claimed that 5152.76 orlongs were leased by various groups, but the officials calculated the size of the whole land wrongly. The exact reason for the miscalculation was not reported. Despite the miscalculations, it seems clear that Europeans leased the largest plots of land, and the Chinese were given plots of considerable size as well. These two groups showed the greatest economic influence in later years; therefore, Table 3 suggests how passionate they were about economic activities. However, the summary did not clearly explain the criteria used to decide how the lands were distributed to each applicant, and therefore it was assumed that the land distribution was based on Light's own discretion.

The land tenure system resulted in diversification of agriculture in Penang between 1800 and 1805. At that time, George Leith, Lieutenant Governor of Penang, encouraged farmers to cultivate various spices and tropical crops.[212] Pepper became one of the key products of Penang during this period, which will be explained in more detail in the next section. In the case of pepper, the colonial officials considered planting any lucrative crops and the Chinese planters attempted to meet their demands. The land tenure system provided an opportunity for the Chinese migrants to start their own economic activity in the colony, and the leased land represented a fresh start to settle down in Penang.

[212] K.G. Tregonning, 'The Early Land Administration and Agricultural Development of Penang', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 39 (1966), p. 41.

In terms of land ownership, the new land tenure system the |British introduced in Penang involved large-scale construction to build a new colony and clearing lands for farming. Officials distributed the lands on long-term leases, rather than private ownership, because the supreme leader of Penang was afraid that the tenants could leave any time. Light introduced benefits and strict rules to the system in order to prevent remigration. The system was not favoured towards certain ethnic groups and therefore the Chinese migrants were able to lease considerable amounts of land to begin their economic activities. The officials expected to raise tax revenues from the economic activities of the migrants. The Chinese planters cultivated pepper on the cleared lands and managed revenue farms successfully, which were encouraged by the colonial officials. These products promoted colonial interests, which then helped build trust with the Chinese migrants. Therefore, the introduction of the land tenure system resulted in the formation of Chinese planter groups.

3.2. Pepper businesses and Chinese migrants

When Penang was colonized by the British East India Company, company officials planned to promote commercial agriculture, aiming to import and cultivate some profitable crops that were not originally from Penang. From 1802, Penang produced cocoa-nut, beetle-nut and pepper, cash crops which were common to the neighbouring countries.[213] As there was a demand from Europe, the company officials exported those crops and the colony enjoyed export earnings in the early nineteenth century.[214] The successful result in early years led to the colonial officials deciding to encourage more plantations. Wolf defines a plantation as a capital-using unit employing a large labour force under close managerial supervision to produce a crop for sale that requires as many resources as possible for the cultivation of a single crop.[215] Colonial officials expected to raise tax revenues with these plantations, as they had experienced similar success in other colonies. Moreover, the Penang government imported

[213] George Leith, *A short account of the settlement, produce and commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca* (London: J. Booth, 1805), p. 54.
[214] James C Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European agricultural enterprise in Malaya, 1786-1921* (University of Malaya Press, 1968), p. 88.
[215] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (University of California Press, 1982), pp. 315.

pepper from the neighbouring states. In pepper plantations and import businesses, Chinese migrants were fundamental in contributing to both sectors of the colonial project. Therefore, the pepper business was important both to the colonial officials and Chinese migrants for tax revenues and livelihoods.

In Penang, pepper was the first crop to be tried in commercial plantations and ranked as the most important export in Southeast Asia since the sixteenth century. The demand for pepper had grown steadily, which meant that huge growth in pepper production in the Indonesian area and, consequently, a trade boom.[216] Before planting pepper in Penang, the British already had some unsuccessful experience in west Sumatra as they had been unable to get enough pepper to gain much economic benefit.[217] Despite the failure in Sumatra, the British knew how pepper brought economic benefits to other colonies and they tried to cultivate pepper successfully in Penang. Chinese migrants played an important role in starting the pepper plantations and the pepper trade, and therefore officials had to trust their activities.

Francis Light, the first superintendent of Penang, introduced the cultivation of pepper in the colony.[218] It was known that Light sent the Kapitan Cina, Koh Lay Haun, to Aceh in 1790 with financial aid, having instructed him to obtain pepper seed and then plant pepper vines in Penang.[219] Koh completed the mission, and some Chinese migrants engaged in pepper cultivation from 1795. Philip Manington, acting superintendent of Penang, expected that pepper farms would raise the revenue in few years as many Chinese migrants were employed in pepper cultivations.[220] Although the colonial officials made the original suggestion, the Chinese migrants were pioneers of the pepper business in Penang; the Chinese leader obtained the seed from abroad and the Chinese migrants set up the pepper farms.

The British expected pepper production would activate trade in Penang by starting exports to European markets, and Leith expected the pepper would be of good quality. The European planters then developed their estates for planting pepper after they were given privileges to

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[216] Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680: Expansion and Crisis v. 2* (Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 7–10.
[217] Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, p. 95.
[218] India Office Records, G/34/51, p. 92.
[219] Jackson. *Planters and Speculators*, p. 95.
[220] India Office Records, G/34/7, p. 374.

acquire the best cultivated land for their plantations.[221] Under the support of the colonial leadership, the number of pepper vines increased, and from 1798 to 1801, a total of 733,349 pepper vines had been planted in Penang.[222] Leith even claimed that Penang's pepper was cleaner than that of the surrounding countries. In 1802, a thousand tons of pepper were exported from Penang to Europe and the colonial officials expected export earnings.[223] Before pepper was cultivated, the only revenue in Penang came from farming opium, producing arrak and gambling.[224] Colonial officials, therefore, hoped to supplement existing revenue streams via the increase in pepper cultivation and trade.

However, the success of pepper plantation did not last long. The Decrees of Berlin (1806) and Milan (1807) issued by Napoleonic France caused the East India Company to be cut off from its continental markets. As a result, stocks of pepper, spices and coffee remained unsold in the company's warehouse in London.[225] The price of pepper decreased drastically. For example, the price of pepper was 17 dollars per pikul in 1804 but dropped to 8 dollars per pikul in 1807.[226] In 1807, the colonial administrator of Penang, William Edward Phillips, sent a letter to the acting secretary to the Penang government, Thomas Stamford Raffles, to report the current situation of the pepper plantations in Penang. In the letter, Phillips claimed that the only market for exporting pepper were the British colonies or China.[227] As a result, colonial officials aimed to minimize losses by capturing alternative markets. There was not enough shipping space for Penang pepper, and Benkulen's pepper was also exported to China, therefore, the competition resulted in a sharp decrease of pepper exports from Penang, even at a low cost.[228] Five years later, Penang was still experiencing general stagnation in trade and the price of pepper remained very low.[229] The difficulties in Europe resulted in pepper planters being

[221] F. G. Stevens. 'A Contribution to the early history of Prince of Wales' Island', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 7 (1929), p. 396.
[222] Leith. *A short account,* p. 55.
[223] ibid., pp.87-88.
[224] ibid., p. 69.
[225] C.D. Cowan, 'Early Penang and the Rise of Singapore 1805-1832', *Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, 23 (1950), p. 5.
[226] Tregonning, 'The Early Land Administration and Agricultural Development of Penang', p. 43.
[227] India Office Records, G/34/17, p. 212.
[228] Jackson. *Planters and Speculators*, p. 97.
[229] India Office Records, F/4/451/10812, p. 9a.

ruined and the effect of the depression continued until 1814. Phillips reported how serious the situation was in Penang:

> …the article of pepper alone cultivated on the island, amounted to 30000 peculs and had the markets of the world continued accessible… in 1802/3 it yielded the planter from 12 to 13 dollars the pecul, no more than from 4 to 5 dollars…[230]

Phillips also worried that the cultivation itself was in a lamentable state of deterioration, and nearly half the cultivated land had been abandoned. As pepper production was no longer beneficial, he attempted to cultivate cotton on the abandoned land.[231] This decision suggests that the blockade from the European markets had affected Penang's economic plan. Pepper was the only cash crop in Penang no longer sold in Europe, and colonial officials had to plant alternative crops, such as cotton, despite the fact it was not proven as easy to cultivate or as successful in terms of selling as pepper was.

With the fall of Napoleonic France in 1815 and the reopening of European markets, Penang's pepper production seemed to revert to the early 1800s.[232] However, Penang experienced a tremendous shortage of shipping, and pepper from Penang had to compete against produce from Malabar. The government had to focus on trade with China for some time.[233] Although the uncertain trade situation had meant levels had not returned to those of a decade ago, the situation in pepper sales was improving, and, as part of the process, the colonial officials recorded how Chinese migrants were involved in pepper cultivation. Chinese migrants were the first pepper planters in Penang;[234] as written above, Koh Lay Huan obtained pepper seed from Aceh to plant in Penang. The Chinese were also now already influential in their community and owned valuable estates and houses.[235] In fact, the uncertain trade situation discouraged the Chinese planters not to cultivate pepper anymore. There were several Chinese

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[230] India Office Records, G/34/44, p. 1429.

[231] ibid., p. 1430.
[232] Jackson. *Planters and Speculators*, p. 97.
[233] Tregonning. 'The Early Land Administration', p. 44.
[234] Leith, *A short account of the settlement,* p. 46.
[235] ibid., p. 46.

planters who attempted to cultivate coffee instead, but as the pepper situation improved, they decided to plant pepper again. Moreover, Penang was not a suitable environment to cultivate coffee.[236] The Chinese planters began their new cultivations in the district of Soongei Kluang, in the east side of Penang, in October 1815. The district was fertile so it was expected to be suited to cultivating pepper[237] and was known as the most completely cultivated district in Penang. There was a large beetle-nut plantation there too, and it was considered as the leading plantation district.[238] Colonial officials established experimental pepper gardens at Soongei Kluang, which were successful at first, resulting in the Chinese also planting smallholdings in other parts of Penang.[239]

The Chinese planters also sought to expand plantations in other districts with several planters submitting petitions to the governor at the Council of Penang in November 1817. They requested permission to clear and take possession of the lands in the district of Soongei Dua,[240] which was located on the eastern side of Penang and known as the district with a beautiful hill. In the district, the summit commanded a view of the whole strait.[241] At that time, Soongei Dua was considered a piece of wasteland belonging to the government of Penang, and it was the council's responsibility to grant the planters license to cultivate it.[242] Since Koh Lay Huan began pepper plantations, other Chinese planters in Penang were influenced to cultivate pepper and as a result they became major pepper manufacturers, managing every sector of pepper production thoroughly. The pepper plantation was one of the major economic activities in the Chinese community; therefore, they aimed to produce and sell more pepper by cultivating more districts.

The pepper plantations needed more labourers to expand the product scale, and the Chinese planters employed indentured labourers from China to increase the productivity. Richard B. Allen explains how planters employed indentured labourers in British Mauritius. Due to the

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[236] India Office Records, F/4/346/8090, p. 24.
[237] India Office Records, G/34/51, pp. 92–93.
[238] William Hunter, 'Plants of Prince of Wales Island, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 52 (19090, p. 58.
[239] Jackson, *Planters and Speculators,* p .95.
[240] India Office Records, G/34/62, pp. 64–65.
[241] Hunter, 'Plants of Prince of Wales Island', p. 57.
[242] India Office Records, G/34/62, pp. 65–66.

abolition of slavery in 1835, planters dispatched their agents to China, Singapore, Ethiopia and Madagascar to identify possible supplies of cheap labour. The labourers were then sent to sugar plantations.[243] The employment pattern was similar in Penang's pepper farms in the mid-1810s, which were established earlier than Mauritius, as the employment system of the pepper farms resulted in the arrival of migrant labourers. Campbell describes the Chinese labour migration as 'the credit-ticket system', which was chiefly managed by Chinese middlemen who recommended and supplied labourers. The role of middleman was similar as in the slave trade.[244] The employers paid the employees' passage money, and paid them two dollars monthly, for provisions, for one year. Additionally, the labour cost of one man averaged about three dollars monthly.[245] After three years working on pepper plantations, the employers used to lease their half of the plantation for five years to their employees. The rent was paid in produce at the rate of 30 pikuls per annum for the first three years, and 56 pikuls annually for fourth and fifth year of the contract. In a good soil, a pepper vine was expected to be yielded about one-eighth of a pound of dry produce at the end of the first year, about a quarter of a pound at the end of the second year, and about one pound at the end of the third year. From the fourth to fifth year, pepper vines were expected to be yielding 3 to 3.5 pounds and 8 to 10 pounds, respectively.[246]

In April 1819, two Chinese brothers submitted a petition to the governor of Penang for assistance in their economic difficulties. According to the petition, the Chinese brothers, named Koh Chay and Koh Lun, claimed that their father, named Koh How, had obtained 25 orlong (32.5 acres) from the government and planted 1000 pepper vines. After Koh How's death, his sons experienced a terrible drought after which there were only 500 vines remaining. Koh How had also got in debt with a loan of 350 dollars of which he had repaid 230 dollars. His two sons had to repay their father's debt totalling 600 dollars, including the remaining 120 dollars and

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[243] Richard B. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 55.
[244] Persia Crawford Campbell. *Chinese coolie emigration to countries within the British Empire* (London: F. Cass, 1971), p. xii.
[245] James Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, Or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca: Including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula. With Brief References to the Settlements of Singapore & Malacca.* Printed at the Singapore Free Press Office (18360), pp. 42.
[246] ibid., pp. 42–43.

interest.[247] It seemed impossible for these two young sons to pay the debt, as they were very poor. Fortunately, there were several anonymous contributors who lent them 250 dollars, and a grant that could be given to them by the governor of Penang.[248] This case shows how the Chinese planters suffered from drought. Furthermore, although it was not known who lent them money and paid off the Koh family's debts, the case suggests this was an example of failed pepper farming. The pepper farms were not always able to secure wealth. The Koh family obtained the land and received help from the government, but it was a labour-intensive form of agriculture which needed more hands for cultivation and production; therefore, poor families, such as the Kohs, needed to manage plantations more carefully. Many Chinese migrants were engaged in pepper plantations, but farming was sometimes threatened by unexpected difficulties.

In contrast to the case in 1819, Koh Lay Huan lost his pepper gardens in 1824. Robert Ibbetson, superintendent of the East India company's lawsuits, reported that Koh had outstanding debts so Ibbetson decided to deprive Koh of his pepper gardens.[249] Koh was the most influential of the Chinese migrants and had been appointed as the Chinese leader, and he was a pioneer of pepper cultivation in Penang. His liabilities took the pioneer's pepper garden away. As he was the first to cultivate pepper in Penang, some Chinese entrepreneurs were influenced by his plantations and engaged in pepper cultivations themselves. Koh's pepper garden was symbolic as the first pepper garden owned by a Chinese migrant that disappeared in history.

In the pepper farms, the Chinese labourers were loyal to their employers, but their sense of loyalty sometimes caused conflict with the neighbours. In March 1826, a James Town pepper planter named Brown was troubled by the Chinese labourers of his competitors. He employed several guards to secure his pepper farm; however, several Chinese labourers began to steal produce, and there were several physical clashes between the Chinese labourers and guards. The repeated clashes resulted in one of the guards receiving an injury and being sent to hospital. The labourers' violence instilled fear in the guards and therefore Brown needed further

[247] India Office Records, G/34/66, p. 249.
[248] ibid., p. 250.
[249] India Office Records, G/34/90, p. 390.

protection, requesting that the police sending a few sepoys to patrol the whole neighbourhood. The police accepted his request.[250] Although this case involved theft by Chinese labourers, the employees could commit violence with the implicit consent of their employers. The labourers were obedient to their planters as they established a claim-obligation relationship on their arrival. Brown could complaine to the Chinese planters, but he attempted to solve the problems through civic power. The Chinese labourers were essential workers in the process of pepper production, but they showed disrespect to their competitors. As pepper production was competitive in Penang, that encouraged the labourers' violence as well.

As the number of convicts from India was increasing in Penang, William Edward Phillips, the governor, considered converting the convicts into labourers on the pepper farms. In fact, the Indian convicts sent to Penang from 1793 engaged in constructing roads and public buildings. The convicts were no longer needed on construction sites; therefore, the governor contemplated pepper farms as alternative workplaces. Phillips appreciated the Chinese planters' abilities and he expected that more pepper could be produced by employing more labourers.[251] However, he simply approached the convict growth problem as an aspect of convict distribution. He would rather have persuaded the Indian government to send the convicts to somewhere else to solve the internal issue as the suitability of the convicts for labour on pepper farms was not verified. The planters established a rigid production structure by claim-obligation relationships, but the Indian convicts had no reasons to be loyal to the Chinese planters.

Penang was not able to produce enough pepper and some was imported from Aceh before the imported pepper and Penang's pepper were re-exported to China, the Bengal Coast and Bombay.[252] As a result, some Chinese migrants engaged in the pepper trade between Aceh, Padang and Penang, including two Chinese merchants, named Che Toah and Che Seong, who had resided in Penang from late 1790s.[253] Apart from their trade activities, Che Toah and Che Seong owned several arrak and opium farms in Penang.[254] They also operated a vessel, 'Lam

[250] India Office Records, G/34/109, pp. 770–773.
[251] India Office Records, G/34/94, pp. 372–376.
[252] Leith, *A short account*, pp. 84–86.
[253] India Office Records, G/34/66, p. 702.
[254] Kam Hing Lee, *The Sultanate of Aceh: Relations with the British, 1760-1824* (Oxford University Press,

Hin', which sailed from Penang to Aceh and Padang. Aceh is located on the northern end of Sumatra, an area that included some major ports. The Chinese merchants usually bought pepper in Pulau Dua and other goods in Mangin. For example, one trade included a cargo valued at 5700 dollars, and the vessel itself was valued at more than 2000 dollars in 1814.[255] They usually purchased a quantity of pepper in Aceh and resold it in Penang. This trade network was established by the Acehnese Sultan and the two merchants as a business tie-up.[256]

John Anderson, an agent of Penang government, reported on his journey to the east coast of Sumatra in April 1823. In his report, he had a chance to visit district called Pangalan Butu, where large quantities of pepper were produced. The Sultan of the district, Ahmed, encouraged the promotion of more pepper farms, which then became extensive pepper plantations. The produce from Pangalan Butu was then imported into Penang.[257] Anderson's report suggested diversification of imports. As pepper farmers in Penang could not produce enough pepper to meet demand, some merchants imported pepper from Aceh. However, if the merchants no longer needed to import from certain places, transaction costs could be reduced.

In February 1824, Phillips reported a conflict between a Malay merchant, Syed Hussain, and Chinese merchants. The Malay merchant and the Chinese group were competing in pepper imports and Syed Hussain was given the whole of the pepper crop from Deli in Sumatra as decided by the Rajah of the county. Syed Akil, son of Syed Hussain, was married to a daughter of the Rajah of Deli, and this resulted in a partnership between the Malay merchant and the Rajah. The Chinese merchants considered the deal as a monopoly on imports and they expressed they concerns to the governor of Penang.[258] Their petition appealed to the governor of Penang citing the unfairness of the deal:

> …their dealings with Malays and other traders been in the habits with the view to adjust them…your petitioners have made advances to several Nacodas of prows residing at and belonging to Delli and Butu China, on the east coast of Sumatra, for pepper, which they

1995), p. 232.

[255] |India Office Records, G/34/66, pp. 700–701.

[256] Lee. *The Sultanate of Aceh*, p. 233.

[257] India Office Records, G/34/90, p. 243.

[258] India Office Records, G/34/94, p. 228.

> contracted to furnish your petitioners with, but it has been with considerable disappointment… the Rajah of Delli has interdicted the exportation of pepper to Penang… that pepper thus got possession of has been consigned to Syed Akil Bin Hussain Aideed, of their island, who lately proceeded to Delli, where he married the Rajah's daughter, who has given him assurances of a monopoly of the pepper trades in his dominions. That your petitioners most humbly relying in the justice and protection of your honor, respectfully solicit your honor will be graciously pleased to communicate with the Rajah of Delli, and obtain permission for the Nacodas…[259]

Despite sending a petition to the governor, the Chinese traders could not change this situation. They did not have any partnerships in Sumatra, and there were no places where they could produce enough pepper to meet demand in Penang. As the Chinese merchants asked the governor for his help, they had to wait for the outcomes of the political talk between the governor of Penang and the Rajah of Deli. In order to accept the petitioners' request, Phillips sent a letter to the Sultan Panglima of Deli, in which he pointed out that cargoes of several vessels belonging to Chinese merchants had been transferred to Syed Akil. The Chinese merchants were sorely disappointed as nothing had been offered as compensation.[260] The governor considered this trade unfair because, while the Chinese merchants invested much in Deli, Syed family made unfair profits from the partnership. This case shows the merchants competed hard to increase the market share and that this resulted in political intervention. As the production market was competitive, pepper importers faced similar situations, but each merchant had a different business strategy in order to secure his own interests.

Furthermore, pepper boats from the east coast of Sumatra were sometimes attacked by pirates. The police considered sending a cruiser to protect the trading boats and the merchants, releasing a profile of a pirate named Sannao, who was a Malay resident of Penang.[261] Although the police did not identify specific victims of the attack, Chinese merchants had to be mindful of the situation. The pirates had been notorious in the Straits of Malacca, where they threatened the trading ships. The Penang government realized the importance of the pepper trade between

[259] ibid., pp. 231–232.
[260] ibid., p. 241.

[261] G/34/109. P.855–858.

Penang and Sumatra and therefore the police planned to send security professionals and arrest the suspects.

Map 1: Samuel Thornton, 'A chart of the easternmost part of the East Indies and China, from Cape Comarine to Iapan, with all the adjacent islands, 1715'. Courtesy of the National Library Board Singapore.

Pepper plantations became one of the major commercial activities among Chinese migrants. In Penang, in the year 1789-90, the only revenue was raised from the opium farms, arrak distillers and gambling before the beginning of the pepper plantations. When Koh Lay Huan obtained pepper seed from Aceh, it led to more Chinese migrants working in pepper industry. The Chinese planters cultivated the pepper and they contributed to increases in Penang's revenue. Although the plantations experienced some temporary depression, there was a chance of revival and eventually the Chinese planters cultivated their crop successfully. They

employed Chinese labourers who had just arrived in Penang and, once again, Chinese migrants were engaged in every sector of pepper cultivation. Moreover, some Chinese merchants imported pepper from Sumatra and were in competition with Malay traders. Pirates attacked the trading boats, and the Chinese merchants needed protection. In summary, the Chinese migrants exercized their influences in both cultivation and trade and the pepper business shows how they were engaged in every part of Penang's pepper industry, stratified in terms of their jobs.

3.3 Chinese migrants in revenue farms

The previous section has explained how the Chinese migrants showed their commercial influence in the pepper business. However, Chinese migrants held a diverse range of jobs, including traders, carpenters, smiths, shopkeepers and planters.[262] The Chinese capitalists, in particular, enjoyed management rights over revenue farms producing, amongst other items, pork, arrack and opium. Colonial officials expected that Chinese farmers would pay massive amounts of tax after raising huge profits, but the farms could not always make enough profit due to weather problems, epidemics or smuggling. Despite these unexpected issues, the Chinese migrants endured and overcame these difficulties to become successful. The various roles in the revenue farms reflected the diversity of the stories of the settlement process of thr Chinese community.

Revenue farming means in essence the sub-contracting by the state to private interests of the sovereign right of tax collection. It was an alliance between the state and the mercantile class. In nineteenth century Southeast Asia, the state had rights to collect taxes coercively in revenue farms. In the system, leaders of the Chinese community managed the farms on behalf of the states who were allowed to employ private armies for strict management.[263] Chinese migrants began to engage in revenue farming in Southeast Asia from the 1600s as their chief commercial activity, turning tax farming into local political power. Reid claims that it was a monopoly right

[262] India Office Records, G/34/6, p. 120.

[263] Howard Dick, 'A Fresh Approach to Southeast Asian History' in *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* edited by Howard Dick, Michael Sullivan and John Butcher (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), pp. 3-7.

to conduct a particular service for profit, as an exchange for an agreed fixed price paid in advance to the state. In case of Batavia, Chinese migrants began revenue farming by opening a gambling house. From the 1630s onwards, the annual auction of the government revenue farms took place on New Year's Day under the guidance of the Kapitan Cina, and by 1644, the Chinese migrants were operating 17 revenue farms, including gambling houses and a Chinese theatre.[264] Under this system, the taxes on opium, pork, drinking and gambling were ideally suited for taxing the Penang residents and the Chinese migrants managed pork, arrack and opium farms as well as gambling houses as their major revenue farming activities. The European colonial regimes felt it necessary to control the farmers as the government had to ensure the best possible price for the farms. If the government felt that the farmers cheated or did not pay the minimum amount that the farm was worth, officials invited other investors, even from outside the settlement, and encouraged them to bid against the incumbent farmers.[265] In general, the European administrations trusted the Chinese farmers but they were prepared for issues as mutual trust could be damaged at any time and the Europeans had a prejudice that the Chinese farmers might take secret payments.

Before the nineteenth century, there were no proper commercial forms of production, finance, banking or systems of law in Southeast Asia that could protect or regulate such enterprises. Modern capitalism was introduced by the Europeans, who attempted to connect Southeast Asian economies to the global capitalist system, which represented one of the purposes of colonialization. Within this new commercial environment, it was largely the Chinese that created capitalist institutions in Southeast Asia,[266] treating revenue farming as a mechanism through which to enter into local colonial society. Revenue farming could bring wealth, and they needed the kind of social relationships that led to patronage. Revenue farming also affected the business style of the Chinese migrants as they considered inter-dialect group cooperation. Moreover, the Straits Chinese realized that a veneer of Western culture would get

[264] Anthony Reid, 'The Origins of Revenue Farming in Southeast Asia' in *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* edited by Howard Dick, Michael Sullivan and John Butcher (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), pp. 69-75.
[265] Carl A. Trocki, "Opium and the Beginnings of Chinese Capitalism in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33 (2002), p. 311.
[266] ibid., p. 299.

them ahead of their competitors.[267] The migrants could not be stick to their traditional management system; they needed to consider cooperating with the administration or rival groups in order to secure business rights.

In January 1794, Francis Light described the values and characteristics of Chinese migrants in the East India Company records, based on his eight years in Penang:

> The Chinese constituted the most valuable part of our inhabitants… They are the only people of the East from whom a revenue may be raised without expense and extraordinary efforts of government. They are a valuable acquisition…[268]

Light valued the Chinese migrants as they could raise revenue for the colony because some managed their revenue farms successfully and their earnings became the wealth of the colony in its early years. Among the farms, the pork farm was the greatest source of Chinese migrant wealth. It was not reported how they acquired the pork farm, but from 1795 the revenue from it was spent on supporting a number of old, blind and lame Chinese migrants.[269] The charity work based on the pork farm revenue became the basis for the Chinese poorhouse in 1810.

Although pork farms brought the Chinese migrants together by supporting the poor, in 1813 it also illustrated a conflict among them. The Chinese pork farmer, Cha Sye, sent a petition to the governor of Penang complaining that some people killed hogs without the petitioner's permission. Each hog was liable to a fine of five dollars. The petitioner claimed that the suspects were Chinese, from Chinchew (also known as Quanzhou), and living in George Town. As the suspects killed the hogs illegally, the petitioner had not been able to sell twenty dollars' worth of pork to the Chinese residents in Beach Street, George Town for two months. The petitioner had already received a significant reduction to his rent for some months from the Penang government when a fire broke out in 1812. He requested that a heavy penalty was imposed on the suspects to prevent further damages. The collector of customs and land

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[267] Neil Khor Jin Keong. "Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Penang", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 79 (2006), p. 61.
[268] ibid., pp. 120–121.

[269] India Office Records, G/34/7, p. 369.

revenues, William Edward Phillips, proposed to increase the fine of each hog from five to ten dollars, which the colonial administration approved, meaning the suspects had to compensate Cha Sye for his loss.[270] It was not recorded where Cha Sye originally came from but his case became an example of regional conflict within the Chinese community. As Cha was not from Chinchew, his business was disrupted by the Chinchew migrants, who may not have known that they committed a crime but could not take out their hatred towards non-Chinchew migrants.

There was a similar case 15 years later. To prevent the smuggling of commodities harming the revenue farms, the Penang government revised the regulations to protect the rights of the revenue farmers. However, one of the influential Chinese families flouted the law. Pork farmers Che Ee and Che Ching sent a petition to present a damage report, claiming that they heard a noise of pigs being slaughtered in Low Ammee's house. Shortly afterwards, four policemen entered Low's house, and Achong, Ammee's son, ordered his followers to beat the two Chinese policemen while they were carrying pork. Low was not permitted to manage pork farms at that time, but his son ignored the law. Furthermore, he instigated violence and obstructed the police in carrying out their duties. The petitioners confessed that they were threatened by Low family, and as a result they did not want to manage pork farms anymore.[271] Low was one of the influential Chinese capitalists who had not received a license to manage pork farms at that time. Instead of demonstrating social responsibility, his son butchered pigs illegally and attempted to fight against governmental authority, and his supercilious behaviour meant the pork farmers gave up managing the farms.

The pork farms yielded good returns as the various Chinese migrants competed for their management roles. However, the pork farms did not always guarantee 100-percent margins to the farmers. The cholera outbreak of 1819 meant pork farms experienced a slump in business and a Chinese pork farmer, China Whoat, sent a petition to the governor of Penang regarding his debts. As someone who had already sustained a heavy loss, he could not pay his rent for two months.[272] Whoat already had debts, which were increased in the aftermath of cholera, and as he had been in default for a long time, he was arrested.[273] Furthermore, Chinese pork

[270] India Office Records, G/34/38, pp. 93–97.
[271] India Office Records, G/34/123, pp. 248–250.
[272] India Office Records, G/34/72, pp. 921–923.
[273] India Office Records, F/4/634/17221, pp. 1-2.

farmers Che Ee, Koke Tye and Che Toah sent a petition to Phillips for help from the government when the outbreak of cholera caused pork purchases to fall, creating economic losses for the pork farmers. They requested a reduced monthly rent from the government until the conditions improve.[274] Cholera threatened the livelihoods of the pork farmers because they could not produce enough pork, and consumers did not buy as much pork as before. The farmers had smaller returns on the pork and the burden of monthly rent as well, and, unable to cope with financial difficulties anymore, they needed the help from the government.

In 1824, the collector of customs and land revenues of Penang, John Macalister, sent a letter to the secretary of Penang government, Robert Ibbetson, about operational plans for pork farms. The collector pointed out that monthly rent of a pork farm was 725 dollars, and the monthly expenses for the Chinese poorhouse amounted to two thirds of that monthly rent. Macalister proposed to levy a direct tax five times more than before and granted the pork farmers the privilege of being the only people who could sell the pork in Penang. The collector thought that the privileges would free the Chinese farmers from the uncertainty of finding purchasers .[275] In addition to Macalister's proposal, the governor of Penang, William Edward Phillips, agreed with Macalister, proposing to amend the existing regulations governing pork distribution. At that time, farmers purchased hogs at 8 or 9 pice each, but the governor suggested paying 3 dollars per hog, thinking these farmers would want to sale all or any portions. This structure encouraged the rearing of hogs which would offer disposal of pork in the public market, causing a boom for the Chinese farmers.[276] The colonial administration were interested in pork farms and therefore they discussed market revitalization strategies. While some of the revenue was spent managing the Chinese poorhouse, the price of hogs was low; the farmers could not earn as much as they had committed to, and the colonial officials hoped the farmers' efforts could be rewarded.

Arrack became one of the Penang's revenue sources in the early years with arrack farms making opening earnings between 1789 and 1801.[277] In June 1790, Light reported an arrack

[274] India Office Records, G/34/72, pp. 1164–1165.
[275] India Office Records, G/34/94, pp. 474 – 475.
[276] ibid., pp. 481–485.
[277] Leith, *A short account,* p.75.

farm being sold by public auction.[278] The report did not state who had the authority of running the farms at that time, but Chinese farmers were later found to be arrack renters, as shown in the petitions. Arrack was made by distilling a fermented mixture of rice and molasses[279] and the arrack farms were managed by the Chinese as their community was the major consumer of the drink.[280] Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, Robert Townsend Farquhar, described how Chinese migrants enjoyed drinking arrack in a public consultation of Prince of Wales Island:

> …but as they drink arrack, smoke opium & gamble, they return about one half of their gains to government; When they have made their fortunes, they return to China with their money, and seldom emigrate second time, but as they annually pay one half of their earnings to the Company…[281]

Farquhar explained how Chinese labourers wasted their incomes. The labourers aimed to return to China after earning plenty of money; however, despite the labourers' dreams, they could not save as much money as they planned. They spent most of their earnings on entertainment, such as drinking arrack or smoking opium. However, it seems that the Lieutenant-Governor thought carefully about how the colonial officials should raise tax revenues of Penang. The colonial state only cared about their own interests, which frustrated the Chinese labourers' dreams. Just as they caused the labourers to spend too much money on their entertainment, colonial state took advantage of the Chinese labourers in another two ways. First, the taxes of Penang were raised a lot every year, which meant the Chinese labourers were involved in economic activities but they could not save much of their incomes as shown above. Second, the population of Penang was increased as the labourers could not go back to China. They were not able to return to their home towns and had to stay in Penang. This meant the Chinese farmers fulfilled their revenue goals successfully and the Chinese labourers remained the main consumers of arrack.

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[278] 20 June 1790 in G/34/4.
[279] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil,* p. 55.
[280] Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007), pp. 254.
[281] India Office Records, G/34/12. P.37.

Unlike the successful achievements of the early years, bad debts were incurred by arrack farms in 1822. In August 1822, colonial administrator James Carnegy sent a letter to the acting collector of customs and land revenues, A. D. Maingy, about arrears due to the government from Chinese arrack renters Che Toah and Che Em for the past year of 1821 and 1822. These renters requested an extension of the deadline for payment as they were confident about covering their arrears a month later than the original date. The arrears totalled 13,325 dollars and had to be paid by the Chinese renters, but as the renters wished, the government permitted the extension of the deadline for payment.[282] It was not recorded why the arrack renters were in arrears, but this case shows how much colonial officials trusted the Chinese farmers. The government could confiscate the farmers' properties, but they accepted the request instead. They were confident about the Chinese farmers' capability to repay and therefore an extension of the payment deadline was permitted.

On 3 September 1825, observations on the revenue farms, including the arrack plantations, were reported in the Prince of Wales Island public consultations, with the author of the report describing the conditions on the arrack farms:

> The arrack farms here, like the opium, have always been in the hands of Chinese who endeavor no doubt in the same manner… This farm is supported by our Chinese and native Christians principally… The revenue derived from this source is paid by about 5 or 6000 of our population…[283]

The report suggests that more than a few residents enjoyed drinking arrack as the Chinese farmers managed the farms successfully. Chinese migrants had been main consumers of arrack from the early years, and the number of drinkers was growing due to population growth. Moreover, Chinese migrants usually drank liquor while having meals.[284] Liquor was an item of personal preference to the Chinese migrants and in this way Chinese culture secured customers for the arrack farms and generated national revenue.

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[282] India Office Records, G/34/86, pp. 1521–1525.

[283] India Office Records, G/34/105, p.742.

[284] ibid., p. 746.

There was a high demand for arrack until the late 1820s with the Chinese in Province Wellesley becoming the principal consumers, visiting Penang Island every month to purchase plenty of liquor for personal consumption.[285] There were no distilleries in the province, and the consumers had to visit the island to collect alcoholic products, stocking up as they could not get any liquor in their area.

The steady demand for arrack was lucrative, and this meant unauthorized arrack farmers. In 1828, several Chinese arrack farmers reported that they found four Chinese men distilling arrack without licenses. There was a trial regarding the case and the farmers appeared in court as witnesses, but, contrary to the licensed farmers' expectations, the Chinese defendants were released for lack of evidence. In fact, some Chinese migrants in more remote places or neighbouring states manufactured arrack without licenses, which resulted in great losses and damage to the licensed arrack farmers' businesses, which they assessed at 2000 dollars; therefore, they asked the government to prevent bootlegging more strictly. The government decided to exempt the rent for a certain period due to the loss of earnings.[286] Regardless of the farmers' expectations, however, they claimed that the trial result would encourage other Chinese migrants to commit more illegal acts. The colonial administration could not compensate the farmers indefinitely; therefore, they had to find a fundamental solution to the problem.

In addition to the other crops mentioned, Chinese migrants established a similar system for opium farming. The first opium farm was established in 1791 and became one of the major sources of Penang's revenue.[287] As above, most of the customers of opium were Chinese migrants who enjoyed smoking and lavished their income on doing so. As a result, the opium business was thriving.[288] The landlords of opium farms usually organized large groups of investors who managed these investments and made them grow with the management systems of opium farms working as vehicles for capital accumulation.[289] In fact, opium farms were considered as a highly profitable business which required licenses. In 1826, the Penang

[285] India Office Records, G/34/123, pp. 9–10.
[286] India Office Records, F/4/1130/30191, pp.9-12.
[287] India Office Records, G/34/75, pp. 1095–1096.
[288] India Office Records, G/34/12, p. 37.
[289] Trocki. "Opium and the Beginnings of Chinese Capitalism in Southeast Asia", p. 299.

government announced it would grant 12 licenses for opium farm management, and the Chinese migrants competed to win licenses to expand their business. The government decided to observe the competition carefully as the farms had to be managed by qualified people.[290]

Contrary to the government's expectations, the opium farmers sometimes caused anxiety. In May 1825, three Chinese farmers, Che Yee, Che Toah and Beng, reported that they could only pay 10,000 dollars to the government. The governor thought that the farmers' indolence had caused the low level of earnings; however, a great quantity of opium had been collected and exported at that time.[291] The Chinese farmers did not give any clear explanations and the governor doubted their honesty. John Anderson, acting secretary of the government, suggested extending the deposit date.[292] Apart from the amount of the harvest, opium farmers had many expenses, such as the rent, and they could not share profits immediately. The governor's complaint suggests there was a perception gap between the administration and Chinese farmers.

Apart from processing opium products, the farmers also required ownership or control of a network of retail outlets. These opium shops sold small quantities of *chandu*[293] that were packed on a takeaway basis. In addition to distribution, the farmers needed to control a large body of private security personnel.[294] The whole system was sometimes threatened by gangsters and smugglers. In 1824, a Chinese man, named Cheah Soo, reported to the police about his losses regarding his opium farms. Cheah claimed that his two farms were plundered by robbers, who, after occupying the farms, attempted to attack Cheah's house nearby. The Chinese man owned an opium shop and supplied goods to robbers and pirates. He did not want any business relations with them, but he was forced to do so. In addition to the losses from the farms, Cheah's valuables, such as gold rings, were stolen by the robbers. Cheah suspected the king of Kedah as the mastermind of the robbery, as, after a great number of Kedah's residents had left for Penang, the king had tacitly supported their attacks because he subsisted on the stolen valuables. Therefore, the government decided to send an investigator to Kedah.[295] The

[290] India Office Records, G/34/109, pp. 1050–1052.
[291] India Office Records, G/34/101, pp. 1641–1643.
[292] ibid., p. 1646.
[293] *Chandu* is the Malay term for opium that has been processed for smoking.
[294] Trocki. "Opium and the Beginnings of Chinese Capitalism", p. 310.
[295] India Office Records, G/34/99, pp. 72–75.

robbers and the king of Kedah had established a cooperative relationship for their common interests, simply attacking civilians in the neighbouring state in order to accumulate wealth. Opium farms represented one of the major sources of Penang's revenue; therefore, the government attempted to prevent the recurrence of these robberies through diplomatic channels.

After a year, the opium farmers Che Ee, Che Toah and Beng sent a petition to the government regarding the system of fines, claiming that it needed to be improved to prevent opium smuggling. When offenders were arrested, they were only fined 20 dollars, and the offenders could not be charged twice for the same offence after the court released them. Therefore, the petitioners requested to impose heavier fines on the offenders.[296] In general, several Chinese syndicates fought to obtain the rights to operate opium farms, and a losing syndicate would often attempt to smuggle processed opium into the territory of a farmer who had outbid them.[297] The smugglers crossed borders at any time and the police could not apprehend them easily, while loopholes in the system threatened the opium farmer's interests. Smugglers could be punished only once, and so they decided to continue their illegal activities. The opium farmers who had acquired legal licenses needed strong protections.

The government introduced new regulations in 1828 to protect the opium farmers from smuggling and violence. However, despite the new policy, the opium farmers saw no improvements; instead, they found loopholes in the regulations. Another three opium farmers, Che Somg, Che Hoy and Ache, complained that they were forced to rent the opium farms as they trusted the government for further protection. The new regulations stated that a portion of heavy losses could be compensated by the government. However, the farmers were still threatened by the smugglers, and the collector of customs had not replied to any complaints regarding compensation. The farmers claimed for damages of 10,000 dollars. The colonial government admitted their error and agreed to discuss compensating them. John Anderson, secretary of the government, claimed that the regulations were introduced to prevent smuggling but the government had never guaranteed they would compensate the farmers, asserting they would not provide full compensation for the farmers.[298] The petitioners started opium farming

[296] India Office Records, G/34/102, pp. 668–670.
[297] Trocki, "Opium and the Beginnings of Chinese Capitalism", p. 312.
[298] India Office Records, F/4/1130/30191, pp. 3-6.

as they trusted the government, but the collector of customs had unexpectedly neglected his duty and the farmers were not sure about the government's support. The insincerity of several officials could result in dwindling opium production, which would have an adverse effect on the Penang economy.

Contrary to expectations, the Chinese revenue farmers sometimes suffered economic damage from their compatriots. Regardless of the products, the Chinese smugglers caused them anxiety that could dwindle production of these commodities. The smugglers attempted to achieve their goals by committing violence, but the revenue farmers could not be protected. Despite revised regulations, colonial officials neglected their duties, and the smugglers became braver and committed more illegal acts. The revenue farms had to be in fair competition in order to maximize the value of their commodities; however, the perpetual fears discouraged people looking to manage revenue farms. Apart from smuggling, the revenue farmers suffered unexpected negative effects from weather, fire or disease, and an unexpected course of events could affect cultivation at any time. The administration were only interested in the tax on the earnings but they required institutional support and protection in the interests of both farmers and the government.

Revenue farms were the mechanisms of trust connecting the administration and Chinese migrants. When Penang was founded, the new colonial government had only a few sources of revenue, which were revenue farms. As the Chinese revenue farmers demonstrated great commercial performance, the administration came to trust them and that became beneficial for both sides. Apart from administrative costs, the revenue from the pork farms was also spent on the operating expenses of the Chinese poorhouse, though other farms did not spend anything on welfare. Likewise, the pork, arrack and opium farms were managed by the Chinese migrants who welcomed their compatriots as their main customers. The system of revenue farms established consumer markets for these products that were almost entirely managed by Chinese capitalists. Although the scale of the consumer market was not known exactly, the Chinese capitalists faced competition in securing the management rights of revenue farms. As a result of this fierce competition, the revenue farmers were often threatened by smugglers, whose illegal activities were dealt with by an unreliable punishment system. The profits from the revenue farms caused conflicts among the Chinese migrants. Some of the revenue farmers did

not want to manage the farms anymore as they submitted to the various threats. The Chinese community became a kind of weakest-go-to-the-wall society that encouraged certain groups to commit violence to achieve their goals.

3.4. Sugar Plantation in Province Wellesley

While pepper plantations and revenue farms were established in Penang, the Province Wellesley followed a similar system as part of its settlement. Sugar became a staple item in the province that was cultivated by Chinese migrants and its cultivation became one of the main economic activities of the Chinese community on the periphery of the settlement, especially as the Chinese sugar farmers had cleared and converted the forest into suitable plantation lands. By contrast, the Penang government expected to raise more revenue for the colony by producing variety of goods.

Sugar cane is native to the tropics and requires an abundance of heat to grow. The best temperatures for sugar farming are between 27°C and 38°C. Below 21°C, the rate of growth is greatly reduced and cane would not germinate at all in cold weather.[299] In terms of climate, Southeast Asia was a suitable place to cultivate sugar, and Province Wellesley was not the only area in Southeast Asia where sugar was produced. In Siam, sugar cane was introduced by Chinese migrants around 1810, and within a few years, it became one of the most important export crops in the country as demand was growing in the global markets. The Teochiu region in China was also known for its production of sugar for export.[300] Indeed, the literature suggests that the Chinese produced sugar in every place they resided, including Province Wellesley. In addition to Chinese productivity, the British aimed to meet the internal demands for sugar exports. In fact, the Dutch had cultivated sugar in Java since the seventeenth century, with Javanese sugar used to make arrack and some sold to Europe.[301] Similarly, the British

[299] J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry: an historical geography from its origins to 1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 14.

[300] George William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: an analytical history* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 46.

[301] Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry*, pp. 210-214.

encouraged the Chinese revenue farmers to produce arrack so that the domestic sugar production could increase for use in liquor production.

Chinese sugar estates may have existed in Province Wellesley before 1800, suggesting that Chinese migrants might have been the first group to cultivate sugar canes.[302] Before the arrival of the Europeans, Chinese migrants represented the majority of those in the sugar industry. The sugar cane was partially cultivated in Penang but there were more plantations in Province Wellesley, where there were three important factors for sugar plantation – fertile land, waterways and cheap firewood – that the Chinese planters could exploit.[303] The Chinese migrants established the sugar estates in a southern district of the province called Batu Kawan, where a few coffee plants were cultivated as well.[304] It was an isolated area of mangrove swamps surrounded by water, but the Chinese migrants successfully transformed the muddy lowlands into cane-growing fields where they could cultivate sugar.[305] When the area was converted into sugar farms, there were initially only 10 Chinese people who cleared the lands, but the converted land was managed by 100 followers in later years.[306] The administration in Penang took 20 years to discover the periphery's sugar plantations. The province had been ruled by the Penang government from 1800 but not much was known about it until the local superintendent made his report.

Sugar cane is known as an adaptable plant that was first harvested in the Pacific Islands and spread to China and India.[307] Regardless of adaptability, the differentiation of species diversifies the character and taste of each sugar cane, and when the sugar estates were established, the farmers tried to plant different species from the West Indies and Mauritius. Against all expectations, however, these species did not become as valuable as the local species,[308] perhaps because they were not suitable for cultivation in Southeast Asia. Compared

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302 Jackson, *Planters and Speculators,* p.128.
303 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil,* p. 49.
304 India Office Records, G/34/95, p. 831.
305 Lynn Hollen Lees, *Planting Empire, Cultivating Subjects: British Malaya, 1786-1941* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 24.
306 India Office Records, G/34/132, p. 71.
307 Toby Musgrave and Will Musgrave, *An Empire of Plants: People and plants that changed the world* (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 38.
308 John Cameron, *Our tropical possessions in Malayan India: being a descriptive account of Singapore, Penang, Province Wellesley, and Malacca; their peoples, products, commerce, and government* (Smith, Elder

to the sugar plantations in the West Indies, smaller quantities of sugar were produced in Province Wellesley. However, there were so much land available for sugar production, that it could be increased by cultivating the empty land.[309] Wellesley was the only place where sugar was produced in Penang settlement, but the whole region was not used for sugar production. In order to plant sugar, all obstructions on the ground, including the surface, needed to be cleared away. The best plantation season is between April and June, but the canes were not always planted in those months as ripe canes could be generally seen any time of year.[310]

Among the various sugar canes, the Chinese migrants planted the cane called *tubboo*, which is comparatively free from the ash powder found on several other kinds. The Malay planters planted other canes because they considered *tubboo* less sweet, but the Chinese planters were satisfied with *tubboo* as it was free from the colouring matter and yielded the most juice.[311] While the Malay planters considered taste most important, the Chinese planters preferred to produce greater quantities. The Chinese and Malay planters had different values, and therefore they planted different canes.

The Chinese planters cultivated sugar without the support of merchants or capitalists.[312] They made the sugar estates on their own as successful planters with thorough preparation, monitoring the sugar market closely in order to produce cultivated clayed sugar when prices were high and a coarse black sugar when prices were low. The planters needed 14 to 16 months to manufacture an average quantity of sugar.[313] During the manufacturing process, the Chinese overseer was paid ten Spanish dollars per month, and each Chinese labourer was paid five dollars per month. The Chinese sugar mills manufactured sugar using primitive methods, such as two vertical rollers driven by buffaloes.[314] Until the 1830s, Chinese migrants were influential in sugar plantations and recognized as monopolists. These Chinese planters occasionally received from 8 to 9 dollars (per pikul) for their sugar. At that time, there was not

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and Co., 1865), p. 340.

309 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, pp. 49-50.

310 Cameron, *Our tropical possessions in Malayan India,* p. 341.

311 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, p. 51.

312 ibid., p. 137.

313 ibid., p. 49.

314 ibid., p. 52.

much imported sugar in the Penang settlement and therefore the trade situation benefited the Chinese planters.[315] Furthermore, the process of sugar cultivation was described briefly in a newspaper article in 1829, by which time, the cultivation of sugar had increased, amounted 10000 pikuls and the value of the produce was estimated at more than 60,000 Spanish dollars.[316] Although the news report did not refer to individual planters or their ethnicities, the Chinese planters were known as the main sugar producers in Wellesley. They contributed greatly to the output and achieved regular success through strategic decisions and strenuous efforts.

In 1830, the Chinese farmers sent a petition to protest strongly against increase in land rents. They claimed that James Low, Superintendent of Province Wellesley, planned to increase the rent but they did not agree with his decision. Robert Fullerton, the governor of Penang, complimented the Chinese farmers on their management of sugar cultivation. He knew how the Chinese migrants had reclaimed Batu Kawan, where the administrators had sometimes hunted wild elephants. The commitment of the Chinese migrants had transformed the whole district into an area that cultivated 10,000 dollars' worth of sugar. The governor was really pleased that the migrants never complained to the government, although they deserved to be rewarded. He promised that the government was ready to help the Chinese farmers when they needed help; however, he warned them that the government would seize the land if they petitioned again. Fullerton thought that the government could replace the leaseholders at any time.[317] The governor took a strong attitude toward the Chinese farmers instead of appeasing them. Regardless of the farmers' commitment over the decades, the government could not always meet their demands.

There were several similarities between the pepper plantations in Penang and the sugar plantations. Although pepper and sugar were imported, the domestic plantations provided minimal amounts of both products, and both plantations were managed and operated by the Chinese managers and labourers. The division of labour reflected the stratification of the Chinese migrants during the manufacturing process. The difference between the two

[315] ibid., p. 58.
[316] *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 31 December 1829.
[317] India Office Records, G/34/132, pp. 71-73.

plantations was the government's concern. The administration encouraged the Chinese planters to cultivate pepper farms in various regions, but they simply considered the sugar estates as one of the economic activities in the periphery and were not interested in expanding more sugar farms.

The sugar industry of Province Wellesley changed from the 1840s, when the Europeans made an entry into the industry. They used new manufacturing techniques, such as water-power driven mills, and employed planters from Mauritius and Bengal.[318] as well as an influx of Tamils and Javanese as labourers.[319] The sugar industry was not dominated by the Chinese migrants anymore and because of the strong competition, they were no longer satisfied with their conditions. They needed new production techniques to develop a more competitive product.

Sugar cultivation was one of the economic activities of the Chinese migrants in Province Wellesley, who had completed the groundwork for sugar cultivation by clearing the forest. The Chinese migrants were not the only group who produced sugar, but they became distinguished by creating their own production method. They tried various species and different methods to increase the productivity and needed every worker to commit to the manufacturing process. Due to their efforts, sugar became a new product in the Penang settlement that contributed to the colonial tax revenue. However, they had a problem with the government concerning the land rents. The colonial government assumed a firm attitude rather than appeasing the Chinese migrants because the colonial officials wanted to establish a low-cost, high efficiency model. While several Chinese revenue farmers troubled by the smugglers, the Chinese sugar farmers had conflicted with the colonial officials. The government's obdurate attitude led to discontent among the Chinese migrants in the province that brought more troubles in later time. Although the Chinese planters did not dominate the sugar industry after the 1840s, they showed off their abilities in cultivating sugar. The government had to recognize the Chinese farmers' commitment and respected them as pioneers of sugar production.

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[318] Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, pp. 138-139.

[319] Ooi Keat Gin, "Disparate identities: Penang from a historical perspective, 1780–1941", *Kajian Malaysia*, 33 (2015), p. 46.

3.5. Chinese carpenters

The Chinese carpenters were employed by the Penang government to establish a new colony, contributing to the urban development partially by building forts. Compared to the revenue farmers, Chinese artificers, like blacksmiths and carpenters, did not receive much public attention as they could not pull in much income for the colony. These Chinese migrants formed a different social class within the Chinese community and were not as influential as the capitalists. While the Chinese capitalists raised their revenue by expanding their businesses, Chinese artificers and shopkeepers attempted to make an honest living in their own way. Despite their lack of influence, the artificers were still needed for maintenance work in Penang in order to sustain the quality of the colony. They endured difficulties, such as conflicts, but they tried their best when they were needed.

Penang was converted into a new port by urban development, and the colony needed plenty of ships for commercial activity. The need for heavy construction and ship assembly created carpenters, including Chinese migrants. Headrick asserts that the new global economy was created by transportation as cheaper transportation widened the market for all products and reduced the prices of many goods.[320] Although Penang was a centre of trade, ships were the only form of transport due to its topographic conditions. Carpenters were not only the Chinese migrants, but the Chinese carpenters contributed to the traffic development in Penang.

As written in the previous chapter, the East India Company invited Chinese bricklayers to work on the urban development of Penang from the late eighteenth century.[321] In particular, there were Chinese carpenters involved in the fortification project from 1795, although the administration was sometimes dissatisfied with the carpenters' mistakes.[322] Nothing was recorded as to whether the Chinese bricklayers went back to China or settled down in Penang but the administration needed the Chinese workers for construction projects. After a while,

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[320] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940* (Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 18.

[321] House of Commons Papers, 'Extract of a Letter from a letter from Captain Light, the Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island to the Governor General in Council, dated Fort Cornwallis, 20th June 1788'. in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), p. 423.

[322] India Office Records, F/4/262/5848, p. 38.

Chinese carpenters were employed by colonial officials to construct ships and the officials believed that the carpenters gained much experience from that time.[323] Moreover, a Chinese carpenter repaired a bridge in June 1819 after it was reported that a large bridge on the Crammat road had been damaged by heavy rains. The bridge had to be repaired so the superintendent of the road, Mr. Wallace, was sent immediately to assess the problem, then the Chinese carpenter repaired the bridge under the superintendent's supervision at a cost of two hundred dollars.[324] Unless the construction or repair works were needed, the colonial officials did not really care about the Chinese carpenters; however, although these Chinese carpenters were not given much work, they tried their best to complete the projects.

After 1821, the Chinese migrants were given more repair and construction work by the colonial officials. In January 1821, the military secretary to Governor of Penang, Henry Burney, proposed the construction of some fortifications and public buildings. In order to carry out the government's duty, he reported that a Chinese carpenter, named Ackee, was willing to contract to remove and reconstruct the old buildings.[325] Burney also asked for wooden bridges to be constructed on the Southern Road in May 1821, claiming that plank bridges on the Southern Road had become unserviceable and threatened the safety of the passengers. He hoped that a Chinese bricklayer could join this project with some masonry works and construct some bridges and tunnels on the Southern Road. The construction cost 1950 dollars, and Burney thought that the construction would make the road more useful to the public. His proposal was approved by the government and construction was about to begin immediately.[326] In addition, the Chinese artificers participated in repairing the hospital with expenses estimated at around 365 dollars.[327] After a long time, the administration needed the Chinese artificers' services again. When the bridge in Ayer Itam District needed to be rebuilt, the Chinese artificers won the bid for the construction, which cost about 650 dollars.[328] The administration trusted the

[323] India Office Records, G/34/26, p. 433.
[324] India Office Records, G/34/71, p. 189.
[325] India Office Records, G/34/79, pp. 103–105.
[326] ibid., pp. 507–508.
[327] ibid., pp. 600–602.
[328] India Office Records, G/34/117, p. 1262.

Chinese artificers to bid for construction and repair projects whenever they were needed. They had considerable experience in construction sites and showed their capabilities.

When large-scale constructions were needed, the Chinese migrants were employed again, though they did not take leading roles in this project. The government decided to repair 13 sites across the Penang Settlement, including the Penang bridge and the Southern Siamese Temple. The officials decided to employ 15 native Christian and Chinese labourers because they were paid less than six dollars per month.[329] The administration was satisfied with the Chinese migrants' productivity and the cheap labour; however, they did not explain why they employed the native Christians as well. They received the same pay for their labour as the Chinese migrants, even though their productivity was unproven.

As of 1822, a Chinese carpenter at Penang received 15 dollars per month, a Chulia 8 dollars, and a Malay 6.[330] Compared to the others, the Chinese carpenters were paid almost double, but the reason for the difference in labour cost was not known. Despite these higher labour costs, Chinese carpenters were often employed for building and repair works as they were trusted. As written above, each Chinese labourer was paid six dollars, but the labour cost was increased after a year. The Chinese carpenters increased their value by performing to the best of their abilities.

Apart from the public constructions, Chinese carpenters were also involved to build houses. Although carpenters could not complete constructions within the stipulated time, they could build something that was requested for and designed by the customers. There was a case of Chinese carpenter brothers who were known as famous carpenters in house building.[331]

However, the Chinese carpenters did not always have a happy time; they also experienced difficulties, such as death or disputes. In February 1811, there was a dispute among the Chinese carpenters. A news article reported that they were employed in building and constructing ships in a marine yard of the East India Company. After finishing their work, the carpenters went to a *chandu* shop, where the suspects wounded three Chinese men. One of the victims was taken

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[329] India Office Records, G/34/115, pp. 119–121.

[330] John Crawfurd, *Journal of an embassy from the Governor-General of India to the courts of Siam and Cochin China, exhibiting a view of the actual state of those kingdoms* (H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), p. 31.

[331] John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China: Or, Ten Years' Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad* (S. Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, 1875), p. 17.

to the hospital, and the two suspects were accused of causing an affray and injuring the victims.[332] The article did not mention any criminal motives, only that the disputes caused an accident. The conflict suggested that there was a lack of harmony among the colleagues and therefore the carpenters were involved in the case.

In addition to the above incidents, the Chinese carpenters' livelihoods were threatened. On 3 July 1826, the Chinese carpenters sent a petition complaining that the white people (the English) were preventing the Chinese carpenters from cutting timber. These carpenters used to cut timber on a subsistence basis, but the English prohibited the practice. The carpenters were not given any funds to engage in any other line of business; therefore, the Chinese and Malay carpenters decided to give up their work.[333] The petition did not explain why the English had prohibited cutting timbers. The Chinese carpenters needed to cut the timbers to make a living and they could not work without knowing the reasons.

The commitment of Chinese carpenters became a part of the history of the Chinese community. Despite some hardships, the carpenters committed themselves to urban development, and they were awarded some public contracts in the early years involving installation or repair. They contributed to the infrastructural development of Penang by successfully completing their projects. The Chinese carpenters or bricklayers performed their duties successfully though they did not receive much attention. Compared to other artificers, the Chinese artificers were paid higher as their abilities were well renowned.

3.6. Gambling and Chinese migrants

Gambling was one of the major tax incomes of the Penang government, and it was first raised in the year 1789-90 along with revenue from arrack and pork farms. With the exception of a small tax on shops, there were no alternative revenue sources during this period.[334] While gambling houses increased Penang's tax revenue, they caused gambling addiction among the residents, especially the Chinese and Malays.[335] If the government had strictly prohibited

[332] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 2 March 1811.
[333] India Office Records, G/34/110, pp. 307–308.
[334] Leith, *A short account*, p. 69.
[335] 'Notices of Pinang', *The Journal of The Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, vi (1852), p. 26.

gambling activities, it could be prevented social problems in advance but the Penang government had to consider how tax revenue should be raised. As Chinese migrants got attention from the colonial officials in gambling issue, the colonial officials had to deal with the migrants by changing policy or better understanding their culture.

As written in Chapter 2, Chinese migrants reportedly enjoyed gambling a great deal. In the Prince of Wales Island Public Consultations, the governor of Penang, Norman Macalister, explained how Chinese migrants enjoyed to gamble, claiming that Chinese migrants betted with their property, even their wives or children.[336] Despite the author's prejudice, certain cases show how some migrants were seriously addicted and gambling was an important part of Chinese culture. Children were allowed to gamble only during the first 15 days of the Chinese New Year, and this entertainment added to the excitement of important Chinese festivals.[337]

In terms of the Chinese migrants across the whole of Malaya, Yen Ching-Hwang claims that they were tempted to gamble due to several factors. As they were stressed by job insecurity and frustration as migrant labourers, they became addicted to gambling. Most of them were young when they just arrived in Malaya and therefore there was no parental control or social pressure to prevent them from gambling. When they had free time, they gambled with their cash and borrowed heavily from employers. Some young migrants mortgaged their lives to the employers in order to pay back their debts.[338]

Penang's gambling house was thought to be established in 1787. In October 1787, the first superintendent of Penang, Francis Light, reported that the *Kapitan Cina*, Koh Lay Huan, requested a license for a gambling house. The Chinese captain suggested 500 dollars as a payment for management authority,[339] attempting to acquire wealth by running the gambling house. The Chinese captain expected plenty of Chinese migrants would visit the gambling house for their entertainment, and he was sure that the gambling house would bring him profits; therefore, he negotiated with Light. In 1795, it was reported that a few Chinese were permitted

[336] India Office Records, G/34/22, p. 299.
[337] Yen Ching-Hwang, *Community and Politics: Chinese in Colonial Singapore and Malaysia* (Times Academic Press: Singapore, 1995), p. 132.
[338] ibid., p. 133.
[339] 1 October 1787 in G/34/3.

to hold gambling houses, though it was not known whether Koh had the license yet for a gambling house.[340] As Chinese migrants engaged in various revenue farming activities, gambling became one of the activities that expanded the influence of the Chinese in Penang. The Chinese capitalists attempted to maximize their profits without knowing about the forthcoming issues.

When the colonial state permitted gambling houses to open, they already recognized possible social issues:

> …the farms of opium and gaming Houses appear to give encouragement to the two most dangerous vices in society. But we understand it has been thought that the Chinese and Malays being naturally addicted to both, it would not be practicable effectively to eradicate them, and that under such circumstances, it only remained to confine the indulgence in those propensities…[341]

The colonial officials accepted the risks in order to raise the colony's tax revenue. They believed that the Chinese and Malays would be the main customers of opium and gambling; however, the above quotation suggests the British officials were acting irresponsibly. When they found out about certain classes' addiction problems, they saw it, through their prejudice, as every Asian migrant's problem. They had a warped view of the Chinese and Malays, which they demonstrated repeatedly, and never realized that they were endangering the lives of Chinese and Malays to meet their colonial objectives.

In 1810, the Penang government recognized the side effects that opium and gambling were having on society, claiming that these two activities could cause immoral acts.[342] As a result, gambling was prohibited to prevent further trouble. After a year, the total profits of the revenue farms were announced with colonial officials claiming that the temporary residents continued gambling instead of returning to their hometowns to work.[343] Believing that gambling could

[340] India Office Records, G/34/7, p. 537.
[341] India Office Records, F/4/633/17170. pp.1-2.
[342] ibid., p. 12.
[343] India Office Records, F/4/451/10812, p. 16.

cause more trouble later, the authorities had abolished gambling, but the total profits of the revenue farms decreased.

Although gambling activities had been prohibited for a few years, entertainment became a social issue again from 1818. The Governor of Prince of Wales Island, John Alexander Bannerman, recognized the attitudes of Chinese migrants towards gambling regardless of the current gambling restrictions, believing that some Chinese migrants aimed to collect money by fair means or foul while gambling because they considered gambling as an easy way to acquire wealth.[344] The migrants had reached Penang for economic reasons, and therefore if they sought to earn money in the easiest way possible, they did not feel guilty about it. If they worked hard and earned hardly any money as labourers on pepper farms, they could not earn enough money to return to their hometowns. They needed money immediately to enable their return, and they considered gambling as a means to achieve their dreams. Some Chinese migrants considered gambling as a business through which great gains could be acquired. They were passionate about gambling in various ways; therefore, the colonial officials admitted that it was impossible to stop them.[345]

In addition to the Chinese migrants, some Malays were also addicted to gambling. Bannerman claimed that those Malays and Chinese were passionate about gambling and it could not be prevented by the public policy.[346] As plenty of residents were addicted to gambling, it was strictly prohibited, and heavy fines were imposed. The Penang government sought to cooperate with the judicial authorities to prevent gambling addiction. Bannerman expected that his colleagues would be able to show the number of cases of punishment for gambling, and he claimed that Malay and Chinese residents composed three quarters of the population of Penang at that time, which meant gambling was a social issue.[347]

Apart from the economic purpose, there was another reason for establishing the gambling houses. In 1790s, there were frequent riots and fatal disputes between the Malays and Chinese. Francis Light had to consider political expediency, which resulted in the establishment of a

[344] India Office Records, G/34/65, p. 372.
[345] ibid., pp. 372-373.
[346] ibid., p. 373.
[347] ibid., p. 374.

gambling farm.[348] The former governor of Penang, Norman Macalister, claimed that the gambling farm was an efficient way to prevent the disputes, and it was described in those terms in a public consultation in Prince of Wales Island:

> …after my first arrival here in 1791, in which I was called in with the Military to suppress dreadful and fatal disputes… but since the restrictions established by the Farm have been in force, I have never heard of a single dispute that had ended fatally…[349]

As Macalister thought, the establishment of gambling farms reduced disputes and the number of victims but caused gambling addiction among the Chinese and Malay residents. In fact, some Chinese migrants claimed licenses for gambling houses by investing 10,000 dollars in 1791.[350] It was not reported who acquired these management rights to run gambling houses but it shows that the Penang government considered handing over management authority to the private sector.

As written earlier, colonial state was concerned about gambling addiction and plenty of residents were addicted to gambling by 1818. The colonial state had previously addressed ethnic conflict with a piecemeal approach that had resulted in another social issue. Therefore, Bannerman considered special controls and directions for the gambling houses to supersede the existing system of renting gambling places, such as licensing. He expected that the new system would prevent fraudulent gamblers taking advantage of honest or inexperienced gamesters. He also thought that the new system would deprive soldiers, servants and convicts of the opportunity to gamble and steal.[351] Licensing the gambling houses meant the necessity of establishing the same principles regarding compensating for past defects. Gambling had resulted in Chinese and Malays committing the most dreadful crimes and therefore the governor advised there was a need for strict restrictions and regulations.[352]

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[348] ibid., p. 402.
[349] ibid., p. 402.
[350] India Records Office, G/34/4.
[351] India Office Records, G/34/65, pp. 383-384.
[352] ibid., p. 385.

Furthermore, the government could not ignore the decrease in colonial tax revenue. Since gambling houses had closed in 1811, the total profits from the revenue farms had decreased. The farms were a major source of Penang's income; therefore, the colonial administration considered reopening the gambling houses for financial reasons.[353] Instead of diversifying sources of income, the officials focused on the profitability of gambling houses. The government had experienced how trade could not guarantee profits due to the instability of the international situation. Therefore, officials believed gambling could become a stable source of income.

The crime rate of Penang and the reoccupation of Malacca by the Dutch meant the British decided to reopen gambling houses as well, claiming that crime rate had never been affected by abolition of gambling. Rather, they simply blamed the characteristics of the criminals. Moreover, the officials were worried that industrious Chinese migrants would move to Malacca as the Dutch would offer a more attractive working environment and wages.[354] As a result, the social issues were to be tolerated as the government decided to reopen gambling houses from the mid-1810s. Although the authorities were still aware of gambling addiction among the Chinese community, the migrant labourers were needed to improve the productivity of various farms. Furthermore, the Chinese were main consumers of gambling and therefore the government could not ignore their spending on gambling.

If gambling houses were established under the new system, Bannerman suggested, there should be two in George Town and one in James Town. He claimed that those gambling houses should be placed under European superintendence with respectable native assistants on paid salaries. It would be better, he reasoned, if the native assistants did not have any motives or objectives to promote gambling. Bannerman also thought that those issues should be discussed by a committee of assessors who stayed in Penang for a long time.[355] The fact the governor expressed concern shows how gambling was a serious social issue of Penang in the early nineteenth century. It was impossible to get rid of gambling activities completely; therefore, the colonial officials aimed to find alternative approaches to prevent further damage.

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[353] India Office Records, F/4/633/17170, p. 23.
[354] ibid., pp. 25-32.
[355] India Office Records, G/34/65, pp. 387-388.

James Town, known as Bayan Lepas today, is located on south part of Penang Island, 10 miles from George Town. In April 1809, the government council of Penang auctioned an exclusive license for a gambling house in James Town, which would be valid from 1 May 1809 to 30 April 1810. According to the regulations and restrictions, the purchaser had to pay two months' rent as a deposit in advance, which was charged in Spanish dollars, gold or any other valuables. There should be only one gambling house in the district, and it had to shut at nine o'clock every night. The renter of the gambling house was not allowed receive any kinds of pawn and nobody was allowed to bring any kinds of weapons.[356] The colonial officials aimed to prevent social problems by suggesting an alternative option of giving a licence to certain places. It was not possible to prohibit gambling completely and therefore the colonial officials allowed gambling houses to exist but with more rules.

Gambling and opium farms were known to cause the greater part of Penang's crimes. As the special license was given in James Town, it was claimed it referred to way the Dutch or Malay kingdoms solved problems.[357] However, the licensing system did not solve the problems. Instead, it was claimed that even licensed gambling and opium houses remained the original sources of local crime, and this activity could undermine other industries in Penang as well.[358] While Bannerman considered closing gambling houses, he received an advisory letter about preventing crimes in gambling houses from a merchant named P. Carnegy. In the letter, Bannerman was advised to appoint a manager in gambling houses and continue to receive the tax revenue. Moreover, Carnegy claimed that there would be less fear of any disputes under proper regulation. He even considered requesting help from their Chinese friends to help prevention, admitting that it was impossible to prevent the certain Chinese from gambling.[359] On 30 December 1817, Carnegy sent another letter to the Governor Bannerman. In the letter, he described the Chinese migrants as the most valuable members of society and their complaints would threaten the prosperity of Penang.[360]

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[356] ibid., pp. 389-391.
[357] ibid., p. 401.
[358] ibid., p. 407.
[359] ibid., p. 418.
[360] ibid., pp. 423-424.

In addition to considerations and advice, new regulations were proposed for the licensed gambling houses on 25 February 1818. In summary, they stated that there should be only two gambling houses in George Town which would shut at 9 pm every night and not open until the next morning, except for during the holiday seasons such as Chinese New Year. During the holiday seasons, permission would be required from the magistrate to extend gambling hours. If anybody was involved in a quarrel in the gambling houses, they would be arrested and given over to a police officer.[361] There were some similarities to the 1809 regulations, such as closing time or restriction of weapons, but this meant colonial officials had allowed restricted gambling at licensed places only.

Although the colonial officials enforced strict rules regarding gambling, the rules could not prevent murder. On 18 February 1819, a Chinese resident in George Town named Sooan found a wounded Chinese man named Baoh while he was lighting his evening lamps, hearing the cries of the victim and seeing him fall. Sooan took Baoh immediately to the victim's house, but Baoh told Sooan that he would not survive the attack. Sooan carried the victim to the police office and the victim passed away after his arrival.[362] A Chinese man, named Locke, was accused as a suspect of the case. A newspaper article explained the situation between Baoh and Locke:

> Locke, the accused, was apprehended by the Peons near the Police Office, and stated that he had arrived some days ago from Kheda; that the defeated and himself with two more Chinese were gambling in a House in China street, that he had lost Twenty Seven Dollars, and afterwards won back four, which the deceased refused to pay, upon that a quarrel ensued: the two other persons present kicked him, & the deceased attempted to stab him with an instrument he had in his hand, when he (Locke) wrested the said instrument from the deceased and wounded him, but with no intention to cause his death.[363]

The incident began with gambling and resulted in murder. Penang residents were allowed restricted gambling for entertainment, as, although the colonial officials planned to abolish

[361] ibid., pp. 432-433.
[362] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 20 February 1819.
[363] ibid.

gambling completely, gambling was the only entertainment which could relieve the stress of the residents. Gambling attracted visitors to Penang from neighbouring states and the suspect in this case was from Kedah. The only entertainment in Penang caused dispute and murder, unintentionally, and therefore colonial officials had to consider how to prevent a recurrence.

In the gambling houses, gamblers usually played a game called Poh. Poh is played with a die in a brass box, which is kept from moving by a smaller box that fits inside the first. The keeper of the gambling house was the referee of Poh and placed the die.[364] While legal games were allowed to play in gambling houses, some games were considered illegal. According to a newspaper article, it was stated in the Prince of Wales Island Police Regulations that cock fighting was an illegal game. The article pointed out the revival of the illegal game in Penang and explained how gamblers could be punished for taking part:

> The practice of Cock fighting so conductive to idleness and breaches of the peace, is positively prohibited throughout this Island, and any persons detected in fighting Cocks or joining as spectators, are declared liable to be taken up and confined, till brought before the Magistrate by whom on conviction they will be fined a sum not exceeding Ten Spanish Dollars, and shall be liable to be committed to the House of Correction…[365]

Although the Penang government permitted gambling with some restrictions, some people broke the law by participating in the illegal game. It was not recorded who and how many people were involved in the case but the article warned the readers to avoid any illegal games. The government realized that gambling could not be prohibited completely and the colonial officials eased restrictions to minimize their losses; however, some gamblers returned to playing illegal games and that caused a dilemma about opening gambling houses. Colonial officials could only monitor the gambling houses in an attempt to prevent any illegal activities.

One year later, there was a similar case when the police found a gambler's base in George Town. The government required licenses and allowed gambling in limited circumstances, but these gamblers operated gambling places at any time and without legal rights. The police

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[364] Jonas Daniel Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (Mission Press, 1879), p. 61.

[365] *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 17 January 1828.

believed that there were more illegal gambling places being operated by the Chinese community, but they were also concerned that the administrators of the legal gambling houses could be tempted to operate illegally outside the permitted hours.[366] Gambling houses could ensure a minimum income and therefore there were various gambling houses, regardless of licenses. They were mainly managed by Chinese migrants and the police planned to investigate whether there were more illegal places.

The gambling fever among Chinese migrants continued in Province Wellesley. The superintendent of the province, James Low, reported that many Chinese migrants gambled openly and when the police or soldiers attempted to check whether they were playing illegal games, the Chinese refused to cooperate and preferred to attack governmental authority. The managers of gambling houses already deployed 100 Chinese men to frustrate official duties; on this occasion, several soldiers were wounded. Low claimed that the increase in rent for the sugar farms caused unrest among the Chinese migrants. Holding a grudge against governmental authority, they reacted violently instead of cooperating with the patrol. Therefore, the governor of Penang, Robert Fullerton, considered strong confrontations, such as military action or punishing the leaders of this case.[367] As written above, gambling was only allowed in licensed places and only certain games were legal. The authorities had the right to reveal any illegality concerning gambling, but this case revealed how the migrants in the province were involved in further illegal activities that meant the administration had to consider strong confrontation.

The gambling industry was managed and consumed by the Chinese and it was evident that they were affected by it. They gambled for entertainment, which unintentionally caused social problems. The colonial state had to be aware about social order and therefore they kept an eye on the gambling and opium houses. Gambling houses had raised Penang's revenue in early years and had been expanded by some Chinese and Malays visiting. Although Chinese migrants already liked gambling when they arrived in Penang, the colonial policy and the newly established society resulted in gambling addiction among the Chinese migrants. Some migrants were killed or involved in illegal games, to offer two examples of the harmful side effects.

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366 *Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca Government Gazette*, 17 October 1829.

367 India Office Records, G/34/132, pp. 209-215.

Before the gambling houses were opened, it might have been better to apply regulations strictly. However, several Chinese migrants expanded their businesses by opening illegal games or gambling dens, which meant the officials had to manage the gambling industry more strictly. When issues were raised from gambling houses, the colonial officials needed to analyse their mistakes but instead simply focused on the prejudiced ideas about the character or culture of Chinese migrants. Nonetheless, the Chinese migrants were an important asset to Penang because they cultivated the crops in various farms and spent their wealth on gambling.

3.7. Conclusion

Since Chinese migrants settled in Penang, their commercial activity had social consequences for Penang. When the Penang government permitted the Chinese migrants to take up certain commercial activities, they never expected any of the subsequent social influences. The businesses consisted of different sectors with planters or renters placed in the higher classes and the labourers belonging to the lower. The structure of the businesses stratified the Chinese migrants into different classes. While the Chinese capitalists could accumulate their wealth by maintaining the business system, Chinese customers sometimes raised social concerns.

Before the Chinese migrants established the agricultural plantations, they had to wait until the colonial administration introduced a land tenure system. As a result of the large-scale constructions in Penang, some land was reclaimed from the forest, but instead of allowing private ownership, the officials distributed the land on a long-term lease with tax exemption. They expected migrants to take up permanent residence while having economic activities in the leased lands, and if any tenants left Penang, they were given penalties. Under this system, the Chinese migrants leased a considerable amount of land on which to start their economic activities.

In case of the pepper business, different sectors of the business showed how Chinese migrants were stratified. When the colonial officials aimed to cultivate pepper in Penang, various Chinese migrants were involved in the new project. The Chinese capitalists began pepper plantations and employed Chinese labourers, who had just arrived from China.

Compared to the planters, the labourers were not paid much. Some Chinese merchants importing pepper from Sumatra experienced unfair competition in the market and were threatened by pirates as well; so, the trading conditions were difficult. Although conditions in Napoleonic Europe affected pepper business in Penang, this also increased Penang's revenue, and Chinese migrants engaged in every sector of pepper distribution process. Plenty of Chinese were engaged in pepper businesses that became a microcosm of Chinese community.

In addition to pepper businesses, Chinese migrants engaged in commercial activities as revenue farmers. The colonial officials trusted in the abilities of the Chinese farmers to manage pork, arrack and opium farms, and the earnings from the pork farms were partly used as welfare expense, resulting in the establishment of a Chinese poorhouse. As time went on, the colonial officials realized that the Chinese farmers faced problems such as cholera or inflation. Some farmers could not pay back their arrears and requested an extension on the deadline for payment. Furthermore, the commercial rights of the revenue farmers were threatened by robbers and smugglers, whose importing of illegal commodities caused the farmers commercial losses. Some smugglers were supported by neighbouring states and the Penang government therefore attempted to prevent further losses through diplomatic channels. The smugglers had competed for the commercial rights and therefore they bullied the revenue farmers who had won their bids with a vengeance. The relationship between the revenue farmers and smugglers suggested conflicts among the Chinese migrants.

The Chinese migrants in Province Wellesley cultivated sugar as an economic activity, clearing land for sugar cultivation and inventing their own production method after several attempts. While the sugar farmers emerged in the periphery, they committed themselves to transform the wilderness into sugar farms, and this commitment resulted in diversified export products for Penang. However, the Chinese farmers came into conflict with the colonial administration concerning rents after officials increased the monthly rent, causing an uproar. Before the arrival of European farmers, the Chinese had cultivated sugar and represented a major group that created their own valuable products.

The Chinese carpenters gained the colonial officials' trust after being employed often in construction sites in the early years, and they were given more work after proving their

capabilities. During the urban development, the Chinese carpenters contributed to transforming Penang, undertaking maintenance works on bridges and roads. As they proved their abilities, they became better paid than other carpenters; however, they were not always happy. They could not avoid construction accidents and their businesses were sometimes interrupted.

As the number of Chinese migrants increased, there were more people who enjoyed gambling, and when gambling houses were opened in Penang, some Chinese migrants acquired licences. The gambling houses functioned to raise revenue in Penang and ease social conflicts; however, the Penang government already recognized how gambling could be harmful when the businesses were permitted. Nevertheless, when the gambling became a social issue, the colonial administration simplified the issue as a Chinese cultural problem, claiming that Chinese migrants loved gambling without ever speculating on the reasons behind the addiction. They were permitted to raise tax revenues that caused gambling addiction. Most newly arrived Chinese migrants were young, and there was nobody to prevent them being addicted; furthermore, Malays were often addicted to gambling too. A haphazard policy caused gambling addiction of plenty of residents in Penang, and therefore the colonial officials had to implement new regulations. Unlike the administrators' original plans, they realized that it was impossible to abolish the gambling houses permanently; the government could not ignore the profits the gambling houses made because a significant portion would be paid as taxes. The complaints would threaten the society and they could even leave Penang for neighbouring states. Therefore, the officials decided to open the gambling houses for a certain limited period, such as Chinese New Year. They permitted certain games as well, but many Chinese ignored the illegal status of other disallowed pastimes. The gambling industry was important to the Chinese community because the gambling houses were managed by the Chinese, who were also their main customers.

To summarize, Chinese migrants experienced a new social phenomenon within their society. At first, every Chinese migrant reaching Penang was categorized according to different jobs. Chinese capitalists employed Chinese labourers, and they even supported the poor by raising funds. While the capitalists suffered unfair trade, some other Chinese migrants were addicted to gambling. Each Chinese migrant had different concerns in terms of his social class or income,

but the colonial officials trusted the high-class Chinese to govern Penang efficiently and were concerned with the lower class Chinese only with regards to social order. The social issues of the Chinese migrants were not only originated from commercial activities. The Chinese migrants were vulnerable to unexpected challenges, such as fires, robberies, maritime violence or epidemics. The Chinese migrants had to endure any difficulties during the settlement that will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4.

Chinese migrants as social minorities

This chapter focuses on how Chinese migrants survived as social minorities. Since Chinese migrants first settled in Penang, they were threatened by fire, accidents, attacks, maritime violence or diseases that resulted in economic losses or death. The colonial administration had not established proper systems that could protect the Chinese migrants from these difficulties, and the victims were usually neglected as colonial officials lacked integrity. Without any help from the administration, Chinese migrants had to endure many difficulties in order to survive with the Chinese poorhouse their only welfare system, which accommodated any Chinese people who could not live without help. This chapter aims to explore how Chinese migrants, as a social minority, suffered from fire, maritime violence and poverty as well as discussing the poorhouse's position as the only welfare service available for certain poor classes. After experiencing some challenges, the colonial state attempted to prevent tragedies. These cases were painful history of first-generation Chinese in Penang. There are some related cases in the India Office records and newspaper archive which will be used in order to examine how the Chinese migrants adapted to these challenges.

4.1. The Chinese migrants and unexpected challenges

Migrants could face difficulties during the settlement process. They usually reached the new land with dreams of their new lives but became frustrated by unexpected difficulties, for which they had no protection. Regardless of the extent of damage, many Chinese inhabitants experienced fire, animal attacks, violence, suicide, robberies and police harassment. There were three major fires in Penang – in 1789, 1808 and 1814 – and each fire affected the lives of the Chinese migrants differently. The fires, in particular, threatened damage to both property and lives and therefore became one of the defining moments of Chinese migrant suffering. The 1808 fire was especially troubling for Chinese planters because they experienced extensive property damage, resulting in serious declines in their earnings decline or losing their homes. There was no suitable insurance or compensation system to secure their position and the

imperfect system neglected plenty of vulnerable people, who then had to endure every hardship as nothing was improved to try and prevent the accidents recurring. The unexpected challenges sometimes threatened lives and resulted in economic difficulties that had to be overcome by the victims themselves without any support networks. These cases illustrate how several Chinese migrants experienced unexpected challenges in an unfamiliar foreign land.

From the early years, Chinese migrants were vulnerable to unexpected challenges, such as murder, robbery or disasters. The unstable public security and poor welfare system could make anyone vulnerable, but the Chinese migrants were not always victims. Kirchengast contends that the victim plays a significant role in various epochs of criminal justice, as the interaction of victim with the community shows how the victim became a discursive agent in the formation of criminal law and justice.[368] Although the legal system was improved gradually, the Penang government did not establish any compensation legislation to help with damage. Arson suspects were judged on the basis of public order but nothing was given to the victims; they had to protect themselves as the government would not defend them.

Fire can be classified as a traumatic event. During the Great Fire of London in 1666, the distress of the disaster and the victims' emotional aftermath was intense. Apart from the 100,000 burnt houses, the city was almost unrecognisable as most facilities were destroyed.[369] When fires broke out in Penang, the Chinese migrants could become discouraged in their work because they had lost their new homes and workplaces; there was no compensation or help from the government available until the rescue system got improved. In the absence of welfare support, Chinese migrants had to endure conditions by themselves, and they were not protected by the Chinese government either.

Following Penang's foundation by the British in 1786, the colony was damaged by fires three times and there were no fire regulations or firefighters in the early years. Also, there were no strict regulations on building materials, which resulted some fires.[370] In Penang, buildings

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[368] Tyrone Kirchengast, *The Victim in Criminal Law and Justice* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 3.

[369] Stephanie Trigg, 'Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London: Trauma and emotion, private and public' in *Disaster, Death and the Emotions in the Shadow of the Apocalypse 1400-1700,* ed. by Jennifer Spinks and Charles Zika (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 344.

[370] Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830.* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007), p. 149.

had to be constructed lightly from timber with roofs of palm thatch, as these construction materials could protect from risk of floods.[371] However, these building materials were combustible and using them resulted in property damage for most residents. They had to be conscious of the importance of securing their property, as fires threatened all residents of Penang, including the Chinese inhabitants, with enormous economic damage. The scale of damage was different each time, but they were never free from worry. They could not be compensated for the damages so they paid particular attention to the threat.

The first fire disaster occurred in 1789 and the cause was not known. Francis Light, first Superintendent of Penang, recorded that the fire was discovered in Malabar Street, George Town. In order to prevent further damages, he ordered the troops to be assembled quickly to rescue the residents. As the fire spread fast, soldiers had to be aware of the danger of it spreading to the Chinese houses, but a change of wind direction carried the flames away and prevented further damage. After experiencing this disaster, Chinese migrants hid their properties in their backyards and quietly armed themselves so they could protect themselves from burglary.[372] This disaster was the first fire in Penang's history and terrified most residents, who feared for their lives and property, and the colonial government could only send soldiers to act as fire fighters. Despite the help from the soldiers, the colonial administration could not stop social disorder, such as threats to victim's property. The fire caused public security to disappear and the Chinese migrants were passionate about protecting their property.

In addition to the Chinese community, Chulia migrants also suffered material damage. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these Chulia migrants were from the Coromandel Coast in India, and some of them had already migrated to Kedah before coming to Penang.[373] During the fire, 56 houses in Malabar Street belonging to Chulias were burnt and they had to secure their shops against theft. Light was reported that the fire caused disorder in the town as some Malay thieves were caught stealing from Chulia shops, although some shop guards had already taken their places to secure the properties. Subsequently, there were petty thefts in Penang who were arrested before being whipped and exiled from the colony. Although nobody was killed

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[371] Harold Parker Clodd, *Malaya's First British Pioneer: the life of Francis Light*, (London: Luzac, 1948), p. 60.

[372] India Office Records, G/34/3, 'Captain Light's letter, dated 18th July 1789'.

[373] India Office Records, G/34/6, p. 124.

by the thieves, the losses among the residents were estimated at 20,000 dollars.[374] The colonial officials understood the gravity of the situation in that some suspects had broken the law and that the fire caused chaos in Penang that resulted in property damage and the absence of public security.

Francis Light and Captain Glass aimed to encourage the residents by building new houses. They finished constructing 10 brick houses, with each house containing a shop and a warehouse, and hoped the residents would build more houses as the price of the bricks was reduced.[375] Light explained in July 1789 what the residents in Penang needed after the fire:

> …The inhabitants have made application for a number of bricklayers and coolies to be sent there either from Bengal or the coast. I request the favour your Lordship will give directions for 20 Bricklayers and 30 coolies to be sent here by the first conveyance the expense will be paid by the public…[376]

The Penang government tried to support the residents in the recovery as much as possible. Light thought that aid from Bengal would be helpful to the residents, requesting labourers to help rebuild the houses of the victims. Penang did not have many skilled labourers at that time, and recovery was important for its economic revival. Moreover, the colonial administration realized the seriousness of fire. The owners of the premises had to adopt prudent precautions in order to prevent accidental fires, and several wells were dug near the buildings and filled with water.[377]

The case in 1789 shows that each ethnic community relied on public support during the recovery. There was no cooperation between the Chinese and Chulia migrants because most residents formed their solidarities based on shared cultural backgrounds. As the Chulia victims suffered the most from burned-down shops and burglary, the Chinese migrants were determined to act with caution. Although they were all residents of Penang, the Chinese migrants considered the incident as something like a tragedy befalling a neighbouring foreign

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[374] India Office Records, G/34/3, 'Captain Light's letter, dated 18th July 1789'.
[375] ibid.
[376] ibid.
[377] India Office Records, G/34/13, p. 410.

land. They became cautious about the threats to their community, but they did not help the Chulia victims. This case shows there was no cooperation among the different ethnic groups.

Unfortunately, fire broke out again in 1808, 1812 and 1814, with each fire taking place in George Town. In 1808, fire spread within 250 yards of George Town. A committee of investigation estimated the loss of 534,750 dollars due to the destruction of property.[378] Apart from the amount of damage, the total number of deaths was not reported. It was presumed in this case that the Chinese migrants did not suffer much. However, unlike the incident in 1789, there were more Chinese victims in 1812: Tequa, who rented an arrak farm, suffered losses of 50,000 dollars; and Che Em, an opium farmer, also suffered heavy losses.[379] Both were known as wealthy Chinese merchants, but they were vulnerable to the fire as it happened unexpectedly. Another Chinese merchant, Bawa Bosing, lived on King Street, George Town, when his house was burnt by fire in 1812, costing him 8800 dollars.[380] Similar to the first case, these Chinese victims could not get any support from the government or the Chinese community as there was no insurance system established at that time. The only safe area was Beach Street, where the government warehouses and marine store houses were located.[381] Records only usually highlighted distinguished Chinese victims, so there is no record of how blue collar workers suffered. These distinguished victims were revenue farmers and played important roles in the raising tax revenues. They petitioned the administration for financial support, whereas blue collar workers did not petition about their difficulties and therefore it was not known how they suffered from the fires.

After experiencing these disastrous fires, colonial officials aimed to improve Penang's water system. In October 1814, the colonial administrator, William Edward Phillips, recorded that in response to the 1812 fire, the water supply system would be improved by opening more wells. In addition, there were more fire hooks to be kept at each police ground, and each police office manager had to be responsible for preventing any accidents.[382] The extent of the damage in 1812 caused huge losses to property similar to those in 1789. Fires could spread unexpectedly;

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[378] Donald Davies. *Old Penang* (Donald Moore, 1956), p. 25.
[379] India Office Records, G/34/35, pp. 844 - 846.
[380] India Office Records, G/34/37.
[381] Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka,* p. 151.
[382] India Office Records, G/34/45, p. 2285.

therefore, every resident had to be alert in order to prevent further losses. The fires determined the civic improvements made by the administration that established the first rescue system in Penang.

Despite the improved system, fire broke out again after a while. It was reported by a police office that the fire was started by a Chulia man named Cauther. At that time, Cauther was looking after his child in his house located in George Town as the child was ill from smallpox. He aimed to prepare medicine for his sick child by using a torch. Unfortunately, the fire spread immediately to the whole house which caused a fire in the neighbourhood. Cauther and his family denied the allegations as nobody proved any evidence.[383] The fire in 1814 affected the economic activities of Chulia merchants and therefore four merchants from the community sent a petition, claiming that mortgages should be given to four brick shops which were totally burnt and destroyed by the fire. The colonial officials decided to grant a loan of 3000 dollars to the petitioners as financial aid.[384] This fire was similar as in 1789 as Chulia merchants suffered more economic losses than their Chinese counterparts. The Penang government introduced a new water system before the fire destroyed George Town but nothing helped. Colonial officials had to consider a more effective system for protecting their residents.

Among the three major fires, 1812 was the worst for the Chinese migrants as their area of activity suffered the most. The Chinese community remembered how the Chulia victims had suffered by theft and fire in 1789, and so they prepared thoroughly, such as arming themselves, in order to prevent further losses. However, the fire protection system was not improved enough before they suffered a fire in 1812. The fire and rescue system had also been improved, but the Chinese victims could not minimize their losses as fire spread unexpectedly towards them and the resultant property damage affected the economic activity of the Chinese community. Penang was a fire-prone area at first; therefore, the colonial authorities had to promote a safe environment in order to increase economic activity. Moreover, the disaster relief system had improved after the experiences learnt over several fires, but the potential for disastrous fires became the subject of caution among Chinese migrants during Penang's settlement process.

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[383] ibid., p. 2296.
[384] ibid., pp. 2301-2304.

In addition to the fires mentioned above, another fire broke out in 1827. The outbreak of fire was discovered on Chulia Street and was extinguished immediately by several civic workers, soldiers and residents of the town. It was fortunate that the fire was discovered as most shops were closed in the evening, and the determination of the volunteer firefighters prevented loss of lives and property.[385] The cause of the fire was not found; however, the major fires of the settlement period past focused the residents' attention in a way that resulted in successful fire suppression. Moreover, alternative construction materials were used that might prevent further damages. After the experience of several great fires, more solid materials were used in construction from 1821 onwards.[386] Safety became more important than expense or time until completion as the painful memories of previous destruction ensured the officials realized the importance of precautions against fire.

In addition, several Chinese residents suffered from other misadventures, having died unexpectedly or committed suicide. On 1 July 1807, a nine-year-old Chinese boy was found dead. The boy, a son of Low Ammee, a Chinese businessman, was hanged using a cord at the top of the house, and a house maid found his lifeless body.[387] The article detailed the tragedy of a young life ended due to poor safety precautions. The young boy had no specific reasons to commit suicide, and if any of his family members or maids had looked after the boy more carefully, the tragedy could be prevented. The young boy was neglected in his house, where he could be cared for and kept safe by the adults.

Surprisingly, there were also a few cases of wild animal attacks. In 1812, an inquest was held regarding the body of a Chinese boy at Soongei Kluang. The inquest revealed that the deceased boy and a Malay woman were bathing in Soongei Kluang river a few days before. While they were bathing, an alligator suddenly attacked them, and the boy was killed instantly. The woman survived the alligator attack and escaped from the river to get help from the police officers.[388] In fact, a great number of alligators were seen in various parts of Penang in the

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385 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 3rd February 1827.

386 John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-general of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China: Exhibiting a View of the Actual State of Those Kingdoms* (H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), p. 17.

387 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 4th July 1807.

388 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 4th July 1812.

1810s. They usually inhabited riverside areas and threatened anybody who visited for bathing.[389] In this case, a young life was unexpectedly ended. Although the boy was accompanied by an adult guardian, the guardian was not strong enough to protect the young victim. The alligator could attack her or other people in the district and, therefore, she had to report it to the police to prevent new accidents. After 14 years, there was a similar case at the same district, when reports emerged of the appearance of a tiger that killed three Chinese fishermen. After finishing their work, the fishermen were returning to their houses at midnight, when, unexpectedly, they met a tiger that killed them. The three victims were taken to the jungle where their bodies were found the next morning.[390] The victims had to walk along a lonely road where they were exposed to the threat of a wild animal attack. More seriously, this showed that while wild animals could attack civilians anytime, the police had not prepared any effective countermeasures.

The suicide of a young Chinese man was also reported in 1829. The employee at Kent & Co's shop, who was named Tan Kengho, committed suicide using a pistol, after attacking a partner of the firm named Sayho. The subsequent investigation uncovered that Sayho had been examining some accounts at a table in the shop and had admonished Tan. Tan was frequently blamed by Sayho and an argument turned into an attack and, eventually, suicide [391] Unfortunately, the incident was a result of workplace bullying; Sayho had treated Kengho disrespectfully and the employee became violent, expressing his anger by attacking the victim and then taking his own life.

In addition, Chinese shopkeepers experienced police harassment that contrasted with the respect shown to Chinese manufacturers. On 23 May 1826, several Chinese shopkeepers sent a petition to Robert Fullerton, the governor of Penang, in which they claimed that some policemen had imposed certain demands on the shopkeepers: unless the police were paid, the petitioners complained, the policemen threatened the shops every morning and created disputes

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[389] George Wilkinson, *Sketches of Chinese Customs & Manners, in 1811-12, Taken on the Spot; and Interspersed with a Variety of Curious Occurrences, During a Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, Pulo Penang, China, Canton, Whompoa, and Saint Helena: With Some Account of the Ladrones; in a Series of Letters to a Friend at Palermo, and Dedicated to Sir George Staunton, Bart.* (J. Browne, 1814), p. 92.

[390] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 1st July 1826.

[391] *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 22nd October 1829.

nearby. However, although the shopkeepers were victims in the disputes, they themselves were arrested on a charge with causing a public nuisance.[392] This case shows how corrupt policemen threatened the Chinese shopkeepers, suggesting that these corrupt individuals attempted to make unfair profits by abusing their police authority. The police were supposed to work for social stability but they preferred to harass civilians. However, they misunderstood the Chinese shopkeepers, thinking they would acquiesce to the police's demands without feeling ashamed for neglecting their duties.

After a few weeks, the police investigation revealed the whole story. In June 1826, Caunter reported that a policeman named Mustan was identified as one of the suspects bullying shopkeepers. It was proved that Mustan extorted vegetables from the Chinese shopkeepers in the bazar, and, subsequently, Mustan was dismissed from his position.[393] Although Chinese shopkeepers were bullied by some corrupt policemen, Caunter had a negative opinion of them. The superintendent of police described how Chinese shopkeepers behaved in the bazar, as follows:

> …the Chinese they have a very refractory people to deal with, and such as they find it impracticable to control – It is their duty to interfere and prevent quarrels and disputes in the bazar which frequently arise between the Chinese shopkeepers and dealers… the police officers often get very ill-treated, and frequent complaints are made by them of their invariably to pressure order among the people, particularly Chinese…[394]

The police could not judge the case objectively because the opinion of the superintendent betrayed his colonial attitudes to the Chinese migrants. The police investigated this case after receiving a petition from the Chinese shopkeepers, and it was proved that one of the policemen was charged for bullying the shopkeepers. However, the superintendent blamed the behaviour of Chinese shopkeepers instead of recognising the need to reorganize the police. The shopkeepers were bullied by several corrupt policemen; so, Caunter had to make a sincere apology while promising not to repeat the police harassment. I assume that the police intendent

[392] India Office Records, G/34/110, pp. 40 – 41.
[393] ibid., p. 186.
[394] ibid., pp.186-187.

simply viewed Chinese migrants without any respect as he did not care about different matters. If Caunter was not happy with the Chinese shopkeepers, he had to meet the Chinese leaders or Chinese shopkeepers to try and improve the situation. The victims were Chinese shopkeepers, yes, but the colonial officials made an unreasonable demand.

A murder of Chinese pedlar name How Hock was reported in 1828 after he was found murdered near a private house. Hock had visited a man named Maat frequently with a bundle of cloth for sale, and before the day of murder, the victim slept in Maat's house. The next day, Maat went out to buy some groceries, and when he returned, his house was deserted, and Hock found dead. The victim's blood was traced on the ground of the house, and the police suspected that the victim was killed by Maat's wife (Meh) and cousin (Che Nee) as they attempted to leave the scene of murder immediately.[395]

In Province Wellesley, a Chinese migrant was robbed by a group of Malays. The victim, a woman named Wan Buo, was a resident of Telok Ayer Tawar, one of the districts in Province Wellesley, and her stolen property included some gold and silver. The suspects committed robbery under the guidance of a Chinese man named Ping Huan. The Malay robbers and Ping were residents of Kedah; therefore, they only could be arrested in Wellesley. The local resident (minister) of Wellesley, Mr Maingy, received intelligence that Ping had later returned to Wellesley and that some of the stolen silver had been found in the district. Therefore, the resident planned to arrest Ping and asked for the Kedah government's cooperation.[396] This case suggested a lack of public security in Province Wellesley. Gangs frequently crossed the frontier to rob and the unguardedness of the district caused damage to civilian property. In the end, the lack of security in Wellesley meant the residents kept arms in their houses for self-defence.[397]

Chinese migrants had experienced diverse unexpected challenges during the settlement. Penang experienced several major fire disasters between 1789 and 1814. At that time, there was not yet a proper system to secure the lives and properties and this absence caused huge and

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[395] *The Penang Register and Miscellany*, 19th March 1828.
[396] India Office Records, G/34/96, pp. 855-856.
[397] James Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, Or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca: Including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula. With Brief References to the Settlements of Singapore & Malacca* (Singapore Free Press, 1836), p. 256.

unpredictable losses of both life and property. The Penang government needed an aid from British India for restore the condition of the colony as the government could not repair the damages by itself. The period between 1789 and 1814 marked the beginning of Penang's plantation of various cash crops, such as pepper, and the only revenue sources in Penang at the time were trade, agriculture and gambling; however, the disastrous fires discouraged the residents from settling in the area. This painful experience resulted in the systems used to prevent and control fires being improved in later years. The fires threatened the economic activity of the residents; therefore, the colonial administration realized the importance of precautions. While a poorhouse was established to help the poor Chinese, by contrast the Chinese migrants did not help each other after the experiences of these fires. The fires put a strain on the Chinese community but there were only a certain number of victims. As well as the fires themselves, the Penang government's attempts to strengthen the relief and rescue system could not be free from the population from anxiety completely. They were nervous about the unpredictable nature of disasters, but each victim handled the crisis differently. The Chinese migrants could not avoid difficulties during the settlement process, and the lack of any protection system could not save or help the innocent victims and the Chinese community had to endure the difficulties. As aliens, the Chinese migrants needed to have more interest in their neighbours preventing accidents in their own areas. Except for the animal attack cases, there were several dead young men who could be saved if neighbours cared about each other. Furthermore, there were more challenges, including suicide, murder, robbery and police harassment; therefore, the Chinese migrants could not always focus on their economic activity. In several cases, various migrants became victims of murder or robbery when they were in unexpected hardship. In terms of police harassment, Chinese shopkeepers were subjected to police protection rackets, whereby the victims were living from hand to mouth but were forced to pay bribes. Instead of tightening discipline among the colonial officials, the officials rather made unreasonable demands. The corrupt police force failed to maintain public order, which was a burden to Chinese migrants. The Penang government could not ensure the protection of the Chinese migrants and that prevented them from adapting successfully to their new environment.

4.2. Maritime violence and Chinese victims

As written in the previous chapters, the Penang government considered maritime violence as one of the key issues. The maritime criminals had been notorious during the 1800s as they damaged property and murdered civilians, as they went ashore to attack residents and seized trading boats at sea. Colonial officials had been aware of the pirates since the foundation period of Penang and they attempted to establish a system of military preparedness and strengthened diplomatic cooperation with neighbouring states to clear away the pirates from the 1820s onwards. However, the maritime raiders were stronger than expected; therefore, the colonial officials failed to eradicate the problem. There were also many victims of maritime violence, many of whom were Chinese migrants, who were also attacked by the raiders while they were taking part in economic activity, such as seaborn trade. Many from the Chinese community were kidnapped or murdered by the maritime criminals and the Chinese traders were terrified as they were often exposed to the threat itself.

When the European imperial powers colonized Southeast Asia, they cultivated new crops, such as pepper, in the colonies and increased the volume of trade from the late-eighteenth century onwards. The Europeans gained hegemony over the oceans and seas of Asia and drove the economic boom of that time,[398] but as long as the Europeans had lively economic activity, they also had to protect their activities from maritime violence. Mulligan describes maritime raiders, known as 'pirates', as a group of people who threatened trading activities and often took hostages and enslaved them. Maritime violence was an affront to the British as they prided themselves on the being the leading maritime power in the world.[399] Meanwhile, Warren claims that the increase in flow of commodities among Southeast Asia, China and Europe caused the appearance of piracy in Southeast Asia. Some Iranun people, from Mindanao in today's Philippines, raided coastal towns in Southeast Asia via small craft, appearing in August, September and October. Customary warnings were then issued each year by the Dutch, Spanish and English. The Iranun raiders targeted trade between the Europeans or Chinese, and seized

[398] James Warren, *Pirates, Prostitutes and Pullers: explorations in the ethno- and social history of Southeast Asia* (Crawley, WA., UWA Press, 2008), p. 310-311.
[399] Michael Mulligan, 'Piracy and Empire: The Campaign against Piracy, the Development of International Law and the British Imperial Mission', *Journal of the History of International Law*, 19 (2017), p. 73.

their cargoes of tin, opium and spices.[400] In terms of Penang, there were maritime raiders living near the island but it was not discovered whether they were Iranun. Regardless of the origin, these raiders have mixed with other ethnicity while expanding their power. As a result of lively trade, Penang was also threatened by maritime raiders and some Penang residents became victims of their attacks.

From the date of Penang's foundation, maritime raiders attempted to threaten Penang. These raiders built their villages on the neighbouring islands, and in Kedah and Perak.[401] When the British possessed Penang, colonial officials found that only a few residents in Penang had been plundered by maritime raiders. Captain Kyd sent a letter to the Secretary General in Bengal to explain the conditions in Penang, and how piracy threatened the colony:

> When it was first taken possession of by this government, there were a few Malay families…These people having given themselves up to plunder and piracy, which disturbed the commerce of Queda, the king fitted them out with armament, and expelled them form the island.[402]

The letter explains that the king of Kedah expelled the maritime raiders before Penang was ceded to the British. The pirates were assumed, therefore, to have originated from the neighbouring islands of Penang, from which they threatened the native families of Penang, the commercial activities of Kedah and the king of Kedah as well. As ownership of Penang was transferred from Kedah to the British, the colonial state had to consider preventing threats in advance. The British aimed to expand trade and gain economic profits by possessing Penang; therefore, they had to solve the problems of protecting trade routes. The residents of Penang also expected that they would be protected by the British as they possessed the island.[403]

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[400] Warren*, Pirates, Prostitutes and Pullers*, pp. 311-317.

[401] Lennox A. Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67* (The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), p. 263.

[402] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Extracts from an Enclosure in Captain Kyd's Letter to the Secretary General, dated 8th September 1787' in *Correspondence on State of Slavery in Territories under Rule of East India Company, and Slave Trade* (1828), pp. 422-423.

[403] F. G. Stevens, 'A Contribution to the Early History of Prince of Wales' Island', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 7 (1929), p. 383.

In terms of security, the Lieutenant Governor of Penang, Sir George Leith considered establishing a small marine force in Penang after founding the colony. Leith thought that an armed ship of 250 tons was needed with carronades for pursuing maritime raiders as common boats could not follow them. The Lieutenant Governor stated that a marine force was organized with the aim of repelling the pirates in the Straits of Malacca who frequently cut off the supplies from Kedah to Penang.[404] It was not known when the Penang government established the marine force, but the Lieutenant Governor clearly realized the importance of security. The East India Company had colonized Penang as a trading base in Southeast Asia, and the company officials had already heard how the maritime violence threatened other port settlements. In addition, the company officials were developing some parts of the colony, such as the Great Western Bay, by clearing woods and planting paddy, and Leith expected that some people would settle in the newly founded district where the raiders had often appeared before.[405] The pirates became the main enemy of the British in the early years of Penang, and colonial officials expected to increase the trade volume and settle more districts in Penang by solving the maritime violence problems.

In 1809, first recorder of Penang, Sir Edmond Stanley, sent a letter to Norman Macalister, governor of Penang, about prisoners charged on suspicion of maritime violence. These prisoners were detained in jail for a long time and the first defendants in a maritime violence case in Penang. As Stanley had taken charge of the case, he explained the circumstances before they were jailed. These 32 people had departed from Calcutta for Penang with a cargo that was seized by the British. Stanley was not sure when a commission would be established to undertake a maritime violence trial, and he was afraid of delays in the process.[406] It was not discovered why the 32 people were suspected of maritime violence, but the cargo was confiscated as evidence. In addition to security concerns, colonial officials were so cautious about maritime violence that they arrested any suspicious people, and the Penang government overreacted in response to suspected maritime violence to discourage criminals from arriving.

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[404] George Leith, *A short account of the settlement, produce and commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca* (London: J. Booth, 1805), pp. 93-94.
[405] ibid., p. 22.
[406] India Office Records, G/34/23, pp. 1038-1042.

The government assumed the pirates were its main opponent because of the threat to marine activities they posed.

After three years, in 1812, the colonial state received some reports about attacks by maritime raiders on Penang's neighbouring areas. The state considered taking measures to suppress the criminals, and the East India Company's investigator arrived from Calcutta to examine the cases.[407] One colonial administrator, William Clubley, found that the pirates indicated Langkawi Island as their target, and therefore the Sultan of Kedah, Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Shah II, planned to send some guards to confront them. The colonial administrator informed the Sultan that his commanding officer would help Kedah's unit, and they planned to send a detachment of soldiers to suppress the maritime raiders. A few days later, John Crawford, the commanding officer, reported that the raiders were being repelled by Kedah's unit, and the king of Kedah did not require further assistance.[408] From then, the neighbouring states, Penang and Kedah, carried out joint operations to attack the raiders. The maritime raiders plundered and damaged most states in the Straits of Malacca and became public enemy number one, but Penang and Kedah sorted out the problem efficiently via military cooperation that aimed to isolate the attackers.

Unlike the successful defence in earlier years, more maritime violence cases were reported from late 1810s. Victims were attacked while undertaking economic activities, and the criminals were able to accumulate wealth and showed a strong presence. The colonial officials had to consider new solutions and approaches to preventing attacks as the number of cases increased. For example, this newspaper article from 1819 explains how maritime raiders threatened Penang and the neighbouring area at that time:

> Several pirate boats are stated to have made their appearance lately off Pulo Bunting near this Island. A Chinese junk and Malay Prow proceeding to Quedah were attacked a few days ago, and have been obliged to return into Port with two men severely wounded. We understand that some nights since, the report of small had been distinctly heard by some of the inhabitants at Pulo Tecoose in the direction of the entrance to the North Channel of the harbour.[409]

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[407] India Office Records, G/34/35, p. 1907.
[408] ibid., pp. 1909-1911.
[409] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 17th April 1819.

The newspaper article discussed an attack by maritime raiders that seemed like a warning to the Penang government. Although the colonial officials were fully prepared to accept the threat of attacks during the founding years, the maritime raiders were getting stronger. From the 1820s, there were more cases of maritime violence recorded in the East India Company records, and the victims of the cases included the unprotected Chinese traders. The number of maritime raiders increased and they plundered traders more often than before.

Piracy threatened the lives of the Chinese migrants as reported on some cases in Prince of Wales Island public consultations. In October 1820, Yap Eaw, a Chinese fisherman, experienced an attack by maritime raiders. He had gone to Batu Kawan, a neighbouring island of Penang, to fish with three other Chinese fishermen named Yap Yatok, Hoo Chaa and Hoo Sohwan. After fishing, they saw a fleet sailing on their way to George Town but the four fishermen did not suspect the sailors might be maritime raiders. However, the approximately 18 Malay raiders pursued and fired on the Chinese group using a canoe, which resulted in the death of Hoo Sohwan; the remaining three companions had to leave immediately and took their boat to a shelter near Batu Kawan. However, when they arrived, the maritime raiders were waiting to capture them, and the three Chinese men became hostages. The raiders obtained a considerable quantity of rice and booty, a variety of objects from the vessels they plundered. Ten of the maritime raiders were Malay men and one was Chinese, but the hostages could not remember their names – only that they were from Kedah.[410] The Chinese hostages were taken to a raiders' base two or three days after being kidnapped. After a while, Yap Eaw realized that the pirates were not taking strict precautions anymore and ran into the jungle and hid for three days. He then reached the territory of Perak and met with his companions, Yap Yatok and Hoo Chaa. The three men started their journey back to Penang and found the dead body of their companion, Hoo Sohwan, where it had been thrown away by the raiders, near Batu Kawan. The three returned safely to Penang with the corpse of their companion and immediately reported the attack.[411] The response of the colonial government was not recorded but the administration realized the seriousness of the episode. The victims had to fish for their living,

[410] India Office Records, G/34/77, pp. 363-365.
[411] ibid., pp. 366-367.

but the raiders disturbed their economic activity and threatened their lives and freedom. The maritime raiders were attempting to make sea a lawless area and therefore the colonial government had to take immediate action.

There was a similar case around the same time, in October 1820. Chow Awah was a Chinese migrant, living in George Town, who was the of owner of a junk named Wong Jaat. Chow had been to Kedah several times to trade grain between Penang and Kedah. On 3 October, Chow went to Kedah with another junk which was commanded by a Chinese man named Attye. There were 18 crew members abroad Attye's junk: two Chulias and 16 Chinese. On their way to Kedah, they were passing Bunting Island, when they were suddenly attacked by 20 maritime raiders from this island. Chow tried to escape from the raiders, but some were killed or wounded. The rest of survivors, including three wounded people, arrived in Kedah on a boat. After a while, Chow Awah and two others from the crew returned to Penang safely, and three wounded men remained in Kedah. The survivors claimed that they had 11 hundred dollars in cash, located in the junk as a cargo, with which they had planned to buy some rice, but it fell into the hands of the maritime criminals. Most of the maritime raiders were from Kedah and Perak, and five or six were Chinese. One Chinese seaman, named Choo Alsom, was abducted by the pirates.[412] In contrast to the case of Yap Eaw, there were Chinese raiders who threatened Chow Awah, and this case marked the first time that Chinese raiders were reported. The maritime raider group was not led by any particular ethnicity but had become more diverse and stronger by accepting any people regardless of cultural background. Although this case did not explain how these Chinese members became criminals, it was clear they threatened the freedom and lives of their compatriots. The Chinese raiders committed a crime to satisfy their own selfish interests and desires.

Maritime violence among Penang's residents was not limited to certain regions, and the maritime criminals widened their field of activity from the mid-1820s onwards. In December 1825, the maritime raiders plundered Province Wellesley and killed four residents, a whole family. The superintendent of Province Wellesley also reported that a Chinese junk, carrying four loads of rice, was seized on its way to Rangoon. According to the report, two Chinese, the

[412] ibid., pp. 368-373.

captain and a passenger on the junk, were murdered by the raiders, and rest of the hostages were taken to their hideout, near the province.[413] Moreover, another Chinese junk was attacked by the maritime raiders on its way to Penang from the west coast of Sumatra. The captain reported that his property, amounting to about $2000, was plundered by the Raja Mooda of Aceh. According to the captain, the Raja sent a message for the captain to board the Raja's brig. The captain was suspicious about the Raja because he was armed and equipped for piratical purposes, and when the captain refused the request, several shots were fired from the brig. The captain also lost his whole cargo.[414] The residents of Penang had been attacked by various maritime raiders, but apart from the anonymous pirates, the Raja of Aceh publicly allowed maritime violence in his territorial waters as well. Although the news report did not explain why the Raja required the captain to anchor in Aceh again, the state's supreme leader attacked the civilian to get his wishes. The Raja's maritime violence illustrates Aceh's abnormal management of the state through breaking diplomatic customs.

There are more cases that Chinese were attacked by the maritime raiders. Those Chinese victims were killed or kidnapped by the criminals more than above cases but these cases in 1820s were enough to show how Chinese migrants became victims. The Chinese victims were threatened by the maritime raiders while they were engaging in economic activities, such as fishing or trade. The Chinese victims were usually attacked at sea between Penang and Kedah at first but the maritime raiders expanded their target area. Most victims were traders, fishermen and seamen who had to work at sea and therefore were targeted by the raiders.

As the maritime raiders threatened Penang's residents more than before, the colonial officials became sensitive about maritime violence issues. The police office received a report from a Chulia trader named Mariean, a resident of Kedah who was threatened by maritime raiders on his way to Kedah. The criminals were from Riau and stole the belongings of the passengers.[415] The threat the raiders posed the neighbouring state worried the officials and they arrested anyone suspected of maritime violence. In November 1820, there was a discussion between the police and the recorder about a Malay man named Che Lah who had been in custody

[413] India Office Records, G/34/105, pp. 634-636.
[414] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 24th March 1827.
[415] India Office Records, G/34/79, pp. 26-31.

charged with being a maritime riader. He had been in custody for a long time but the police had not received any orders about him. The Recorder of Penang, Sir Ralph Rice, could not trust Che Lah's confession, and the testimony of the witness for the prosecution was against him. The recorder thought that Che Lah should be kept in custody, as he had not denied the charge of maritime violence and robbery.[416] William Edward Phillips, Governor of Penang, felt that he could not get further evidence against Che Lah and doubted he was completely guilty. The governor suggested Che Lah should be transmitted to a competent jurisdiction in Lingga, where he was from, and that the Sultan of Lingga would make an equitable judgement.[417] A month later, the Resident of Singapore, William Farquhar, reported to the Penang government about Che Lah's arrival. Che Lah was kept in custody in Singapore before heading on to Lingga.[418] Although this case did not show any direct connections with Chinese migrants, colonial officials warned of punishment against the crimes on the sea. As shown in several cases above, there were Chinese fishermen and traders who were vulnerable to maritime violence, and the colonial government was prepared to arrest a notorious pirate to protect safety on the sea.

Owing to the increase in maritime violence from 1819, Phillips announced new regulations for protecting native supplies and other trading boats on 6 February 1822. The governor expected the new regulations would help to prevent maritime violence effectively in the vicinity of Penang. They included a general register of all junks and other large native boats that belonged to the residents of Penang and Province Wellesley. The governor thought that it would be an effective way to distinguish between the belongings of civilians and maritime raiders. Once the boats were registered, they were given registration numbers, and the owners were given certificates of registry.[419] Some residents in Penang, fishermen or traders, conducted economic activity on the sea but the Penang government could not halt this economic activity on safety grounds. The government considered the maritime raiders a serious threat to the safety of Penang's residents as they usually attacked civilians at sea in camouflaged junks; therefore, colonial officials expected they would be able to detect the criminals more

[416] India Office Records, G/34/77, pp. 690-695.
[417] ibid., p. 697.
[418] India Office Records, G/34/79, p. 108.
[419] India Office Records, G/34/86, pp. 1299-1302.

easily under the new regulations. They were worried that the raiders would take a big bite out of Penang's economic activity by threatening the fishermen and traders.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, John Anderson, an agent of Penang government, reported about his journey to the east coast of Sumatra in April 1823. He reported that the chiefs of Batubara, as well as all the leaders in eastern Sumatra, requested that the Penang government protect their ships from the maritime raiders. He also stated that some residents of Batubara became maritime raiders.[420] The eastern Sumatran states, including the Batubara, were the main trading partners of Penang. Some traders had to visit Sumatra for the pepper trade but some of these trading partners also collaborated with criminals. The raiders already attacked the traders in the sea between Penang and Kedah so that they could threaten the traders en route to Sumatra. The Penang government had to consider protecting the traders because of the expansion of the maritime violence area.

In January 1820, the Rajah of Ligor sent a letter to the governor of Penang. In the letter, the Rajah stated that a great number of maritime raiders and robbers had recently been pillaging Kedah and that four maritime criminals had been transported to his land. The Rajah employed some military agents, who were ordered to watch for possible maritime violence in Ligor and who captured the criminals from Langkawi named Che Allang, Che Akul, Che Musa and Che Jay. These raiders derived their revenues by attacking and robbing trade ships.[421] Although the riaders threatened Ligor, the neighbouring state was an important intelligence-gathering operation. Different kinds of maritime raiders threatened civilians in various parts of Southeast Asia and all maritime violence represented a threat to peace and security in the Strait of Malacca.

Unlike the case in 1820, Superintendent of Police Caunter stated a connection between the Rajah of Ligor and the maritime raiders during the Prince of Wales Island public consultations. Caunter claimed that the Rajah carried on a good deal of secret correspondence with the Canton or Macau Chinese in Penang while he was at Kedah about three years before the records began. The Rajah sent some of these Chinese to cruise to the north of Kedah when they were suspected,

[420] G/34/90. P252-254.
[421] G/34/99. P402.

and Caunter was sure about their acts of maritime violence.[422] The Penang government encountered betrayal from its one of allies and citizens. The government attempted to defeat the maritime raiders by cooperating with the neighbouring states; however, one of the allies communicated secretly with the criminals, which meant the colonial officials had to change strategies. More shockingly, some Penang residents were involved in the maritime violence; while Chinese civilians were sacrificed by the raiders, some Chinese migrants helped the Rajah and the pirates for their own benefit.

In addition to strengthening defence, the Penang government considered in October 1824 sending out the gun-brig 'Jessy', which carried six guns, and the twelve-gun cruiser 'Prince of Wales'. The brig cost $283.50 and the cruiser $775.30 and the plan was to load them with the newest weapons for defeating the maritime raiders. The new governor of Penang, Robert Fullerton, agreed with the plan, reporting it in turn to the supreme government in India.[423] Furthermore, Fullerton proposed obtaining another cruiser to patrol Penang, Malacca and Singapore. The governor thought that these colonies could construct an efficient joint defence system against the pirates.[424] While the junk registration system aimed to find the civilians in advance, the marine forces attempted to improve their weapon systems for counterattack. The amount of maritime violence increased from the late 1810s, emphasizing the necessity of strengthening the military power in Penang. The government succeeded in mounting a defence in the early years against the maritime raiders by cooperating with its neighbouring states; however, as the maritime raiders became stronger, the governor had to work on strengthening the military presence. It also attempted to prevent the pirates by reforming the administrative and military systems.

From its foundation, Penang was aimed to counter maritime violence. The colonial officials realized that the maritime criminals could threaten the economic activities of the residents and they prepared to defend Penang through having military cooperation with the neighbouring states. However, maritime violence increased from the late 1810s and that forced colonial officials to take strong action against the criminals. The situation in Penang threatened the

[422] G/34/101. P1316.

[423] India Office Records, G/34/96, pp. 678-679.

[424] India Office Records, G/34/110, pp. 273-274.

settlement process of Chinese migrants. Some conducted economic activity at sea and were therefore targeted by the raiders. Chinese victims engaged in trade were often exposed to threats from maritime raiders, and once the criminals seized their trading boats, the victims were kidnapped or murdered. Colonial officials received reports of several attacks on Chinese migrants and they had to consider solutions to protect them, but the solutions were left undone. Unexpectedly, the maritime raiders also expanded their influence by gaining strategic footholds against the improved defence systems. The expansion of the raiders' power was a large concern for the colonial administration because the officials could not come up with more effective measures. Chinese migrants had to work hard to make a living so they could do nothing except trust the government.

4.3 Epidemics and Diseases among the Chinese migrants

The living conditions in 19th century Penang were unhealthy as proved by the outbreaks of cholera, smallpox and other diseases. A large-scale urban development and trading port was highly likely to suffer outbreaks of disease that caused heavy casualties, and neither the administration nor the residents knew how to prevent the diseases, which then brought social unrest. There was no system established to help deal with recovery after disasters, and there were many victims, including Chinese migrants, who had to endure the issues until the disease came to an end. As in case of fire, economic activity and educational opportunities in the Chinese community were threatened by epidemics and diseases, and several migrants were forced to make wrong choices.

Penang was not the only place that experienced cholera pandemics in Southeast Asia. It is assumed that cholera was spread from Penang to Siam in 1820,[425] and the first cholera outbreaks in Java from 1821 to 1824 continued to re-appear every 10 to 17 years.[426] Cholera

[425] B. J. Terwiel, 'Asiatic Cholera in Siam: Its first occurrence and the 1820 Epidemic' in *Death and Disease in Southeast Asia: Explorations in social, medical, and demographic history*, ed. by Norman G. Owen (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 148.

[426] Peter Boomgaard, 'Morbidity and Mortality in Java, 1820-1880: Changing Patterns of Disease and Death' in *Death and disease in Southeast Asia: Explorations in social, medical, and demographic history,* ed. by Norman G. Owen (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 53.

broke out in Penang in 1819 and therefore the epidemic hit Southeast Asia around the same time. Compared to Java, the Penang cholera outbreak was on a small scale, but it was not the only disease which threatened Penang. Smallpox also threatened the safety of Penang's residents, as it spreading from person to person, only able to exist in a community where susceptible people were available to keep the disease going. It spread more rapidly during the winter months in temperate climates and during the dry season in tropical regions.[427] In fact, smallpox was reported in the Philippines and Indonesia as early as the fifteenth century when the Portuguese and Dutch seafarers began trading in the area. Moreover, there was a case of a ship from Mexico carrying smallpox to the Philippines in the late sixteenth century.[428] Any smallpox in Southeast Asia was assumed to be imported from Europe or Latin America due to the opening of trade between the regions. When various epidemics spread around the British Empire in 1918, the Colonial Office and local government boards agreed to establish a new centralized disease-information network. The network identified diseases as belonging to three groups: plague, cholera, yellow fever, smallpox and typhus in the first group; relapsing fever and dysentery in the second; and cerebrospinal fever, acute poliomyelitis, influenza, and pneumonia in the third. Outbreaks of diseases had to be reported immediately to London, regardless of their seriousness, then the disease information was compiled by the Ministry of Health and circulated to all the colonies.[429] There was a variety of epidemics that usually spread from the neighbouring states to Penang. These epidemics spread quickly and the lives of residents, including the Chinese community, were often endangered.

The lives of Penang's residents were known to be vulnerable to epidemics and diseases. In the streets of the colony, the houses were usually built of stone, brick, wood or atap. They were narrow and crowded by tenants, which meant disease would probably spread rapidly among the occupants. Moreover, Indian arrack and Chinese liquor often contained deleterious ingredients that resulted in epidemic infections.[430] During the manufacturing process, the drinks had to be managed strictly for hygiene. Living conditions in Penang were vulnerable to

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[427] Donald R. Hopkins. *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in history* (University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 8-9.
[428] Frank Fenner, *Smallpox and its Eradication* (World Health Organization, 1988), p. 228.
[429] David Killingray, "A New 'Imperial Disease': The Influenza Pandemic of 1918–9 and its Impact on the British Empire", *Caribbean Quarterly*, 49 (2003), p. 42.
[430] India Office Records, F/4/1272/51026, p. 24.

diseases as Asian migrants lacked a sense of hygiene and tended not to realise the seriousness of the disease until they became infected. Regardless of diseases, the administration simply neglected Asian migrants in their daily lives. The government did not control their living spaces, or the ingredients used in the population's drinks carefully. Diseases could cause every resident pain; therefore, food and beverage manufacturing processes had to be strictly controlled.

In October 1819, cholera broke out in Penang, having been transmitted from India. The cholera outbreak was known to have started at the mouth of the Ganges in 1817, and then took several different routes. The first led to Madras and Ceylon; by the second, it spread to Arakan, the Malay Peninsula, Penang, Sumatra, Java, Timor and the Philippines; and the final route took it to China and Mongolia in 1821.[431] In addition to the outbreak in India, Penang endured poor sanitation, and the disease spread quickly.[432] When the colonial officials reported the cholera in India, they could not ignore that it was only a matter of time, and they met with health professionals to establish measures. As a result, they deployed soldiers to the hospital, and prepared notices in various languages.[433] The government took all possible steps for disease prevention as the situation became inescapable.

When the cholera spread in Penang, the government took several steps to resolve the crisis. Several hospitals were built in various parts of Penang, and several individuals were supported by distributing medicines and comforts to the patients.[434] As the cholera spread fast, the hospitals were told to prepare for emergency cases, and the police magistrate had an emergency meeting with Syed Hussain and Kadir Maiden, the heads of the Malay and Chulia communities, to request their cooperation in preventing the epidemic spreading.[435] The cholera made its appearance in October, which resulted in a serious situation for another month, before it gradually declined from December. Between November and December, there were 50 Chulia and Malay casualties, at most.[436] However, despite the pre-emptive actions taken against the disease, cholera caused great damage to Penang. The government had exhausted every means

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[431] *The People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, 1st February 1851.
[432] Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz, "Ordering of Housing and the Urbanisation Process: Shophouses in Colonial Penang", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 71 (1998), p. 134.
[433] India Office Records, F/4/634/17218, pp. 1-10.
[434] India Office Records, F/4/1272/51026, p.28.
[435] India Office Records, G/34/72, pp. 958-964.
[436] India Office Records, F/4/1272/51026, p. 28.

of minimizing losses, but as the situation could not improve immediately, officials needed to draw on every resident's wisdom.

The colonial administration needed everyone's cooperation to handle the crisis, which took five months to end. The police made a public statement of the official death toll, and Table 4 summarizes the number of deaths from the cholera, organized by ethnicity.

Table 4: The official death toll from cholera

Ethnicity	Number
Chulias	530
Malays (including Acehnese and Bugis)	237
Chinese	97
Siamese and Burmese	14
Bengalis	24
Arabs	5
Europeans	1
Descendants of Europeans	1
Native Christians	19
Convicts	45
Total	973

Source: G/34/74, pp. 267-268.

The table shows that Indian migrants had suffered the most casualties, even as they were divided into Chulias and Bengalis. The police could not explain why Indian migrants showed such a high mortality rate, but the department considered the possibility of infection during their business trips. Indian migrants visited their homeland regularly for business, which accounted for how cholera moved from India and spread in Penang. In terms of Chinese deaths, the police doubted that the number because some of the migrants concealed their compatriots' deaths. The Chinese migrants had to be conscious of cholera regardless of their faith in their religions; however, when the religion could not save the Chinese from cholera, they scaled back the number of cases in order to justify their actions retroactively.[437] Despite contingency

[437] India Office Records, G/34/74, pp. 266-270.

plans before the outbreak, the impact of cholera was inevitable. The public health authorities had already predicted the fatal effects of cholera but they could not exterminate the disease as the necessary medical technology was not yet developed.

In addition to the official announcement, Christian missionaries also could not understand behaviour of Chinese migrants, directly and indirectly. John Ince, the English missionary and owner of the Chinese Mission School, heard from his students that an unidentified body had been found in the jungle. Ince heard that the dead man had lived in the jungle alone with nobody to take care of him, and when the victim was infected by cholera, he did not go to hospital because he mistook it as a cold.[438] Unfortunately, some victims did not take the cholera seriously, despite the fact that once infected, victims needed medical assistance immediately. Another English missionary, Thomas Beighton, found that the Chinese temple demanded religious donations from its members estimated at more than 20,000 dollars. The temple officials claimed that they attempted to improve the situation by providing meal, believing, mistakenly, that the cholera would be driven away by the act of dispensing charity.[439] Chinese migrants incorrectly believed that they would not be infected by cholera, and worse still, the ignorance of their religious leaders put vulnerable people in danger. They simply insisted on religious authority instead of emphasizing the need for sanitation.

The official announcements and recollections of the missionaries stimulated my curiosity regarding why the administration simply sat on the fence regarding the Chinese migrants. The migrants thought that their Chinese physicians were better than the European ones, but the Chinese physicians had no knowledge of anatomy or physiology.[440] Although the Chinese migrants did not trust European medical practices, the administration had to persuade the parties concerned to prepare in advance by visiting the hospitals. Officials issued a notice in various languages, including Chinese, but they did not realize that the Chinese migrants would not follow their instructions. The migrants were vulnerable to the disease as they attempted to ward off cholera based on mistaken information. Instead of taking responsibility for this, the

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[438] School of Oriental and African Studies, CWM/LMS/14/05/05, 'Extracts from the Journal of Thomas Beighton, 14th November 1819'.
[439] School of Oriental and African Studies, CWM/LMS/14/05/04, 'Extracts from the Journal of Thomas Beighton, 30th November 1819'.
[440] Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 64.

public health authorities simply blamed the lifestyles of the migrants. This tragedy became more serious due to the religious activities of the Chinese and indifference of the colonial authorities.

Furthermore, cholera interrupted the academic performance of Chinese students. Ince recorded that there were only a few Chinese students in his school since the outbreak of cholera, claiming that the Chinese migrants had predicted the effects of the epidemic and therefore only a few students were sent to the school.[441] The Chinese inhabitants trembled with fear during the disease, and this fear forced the students to abandon their educations.

Moreover, the cholera exercised a bad influence on the economic activity of the Chinese community. As written in the previous chapter, cholera caused enormous damage to the pork farms, who faced similar situations to the *arrack* and *sirih*[442] farms. Arrack farmers Ahoo and Achee, for example, complained of the difficulties cholera brought to their business. The aftermath of the epidemic saw a reduction in the workforce, which meant they were not able to make earnings anymore or import any rice to run their business due to their fiscal problems. The arrack farmers informed the administration that they could not pay monthly rents for a while.[443] *Sirih* farmer Boochuan faced a similar problem, and he also requested a deduction in the monthly rent. However, the collector's office could not cater for all the requirements and therefore they decided to meet each petitioner to discuss support plans.[444] The collector of customs and land revenues in Penang, John Macalister, received a report from famers manufacturing *toddy* (a liquor made from rice) and *baang* (a liquor made from rice and liquor extracted from coconut palm) concerning reducing their monthly rents. Macalister allowed a deduction of one half of their rent until a favourable change had taken place.[445] As the epidemic depressed economic activity among the Chinese, the revenue farms produced smaller returns, thereby adding to their rent burdens. They only asked for the government's support so that the administration would reduce the rent.

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441 School of Oriental and African Studies, CWM/LMS/14/05/05, 'Extracts from the Journal of Thomas Beighton, 27th October 1819'.
442 A vining plant of Sumatra with leaves that may be chewed with betel nuts.
443 India Office Records, G/34/72, p. 1163.
444 ibid., p. 1184-1187.
445 India Office Records, F/4/634/17221, pp. 11-12.

Cholera broke out again in the beginning of May 1821 and lasted for two months, but compared to the first infection, the epidemic was less fatal than before.[446] Based on their experiences the first time, the public health authorities did not struggle to control the disease and there were fewer victims. However, the disease broke out repeatedly and officials always needed to alarm the citizens in case of emergency. The threat of disease depressed economic activity and the officials needed to prepare compensation for losses.

Smallpox also threatened the safety of Penang's residents, after it was first reported in Penang in 1805. Its exact cause was not found, but it was assumed it had been spread via the commercial traffic from India and China. Fortunately, vaccine was introduced immediately after the outbreak so the orphan children, in Spain, South America and Philippines, were vaccinated.[447] Smallpox was the first epidemic in Penang but it did not seem to cause much loss in the early years. Since the first case was reported, nothing else was found, such as information of the patient or disease control. Perhaps the public health authorities escaped the danger at that time so the relevant cases were not reported for a while.

In 1813, appearance of the smallpox was reported again, after spreading, it was assumed, from trading ships returned from the Coromandel Coast.[448] A year later, fear of the various viruses encouraged the vaccination of residents of Penang. The medical board of Fort William (Calcutta) warned that virus could soon spread from Bengal to Penang, and the public health authorities suggested that Siamese and Indian children had to be vaccinated first, before the Chinese and Malay children. The health authorities arranged the vaccinations by the size of each ethnic group. As the Chinese and Malays were the largest group in Penang, the authorities decided to give priority to the smaller groups.[449] After a year, vaccines were effective against the viruses. William Russell, superintendent of the medical board at Calcutta, claimed that smallpox had not appeared naturally for 12 years as a result of vaccination, recommending that the same was required in Penang.[450] Although the type of virus was not identified in his report,

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446 Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy*, p. 32.
447 Frank Fenner, 'Smallpox in Southeast Asia', *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studie*s, 3 (1987), p. 38.
448 India Office Records, F/4/451/10835, p. 8.
449 India Office Records, F/4/513/12339, pp. 10-16.
450 ibid., pp. 50-52.

the health authority believed that the vaccine could prevent most diseases, including smallpox. The virus was fatal to everyone, but the health authorities did not have enough vaccines. They needed to prioritize the children, then prioritize them again by ethnicity. The effect of vaccination was proven and therefore it was agreed the authorities needed enough vaccines.

In July 1814, the public health authority in Penang recognized that smallpox had become a local disease; however, the authorities were concerned that most parents were unaware how vulnerable their children were to the disease.[451] As with the cases of cholera, the inattention of parents would endanger the whole family. This announcement suggested preparation for the disease, but there was a perception gap between the administration and regular civilians.

The lack of attention on smallpox affected the population levels and when the number was announced in January 1825, Penang's population had decreased by 2300. Robert Fullerton, the Governor of Penang, claimed that fever and smallpox in 1824 had caused an increase in mortality and affected population numbers, and attempted to persuade the authorities that regular vaccination for smallpox was needed to prevent further damage. The Penang government planned to maintain a vaccine set-up which needed 45 dollars a month.[452] The various diseases threatened the health of the residents and the administration was conscious of the need for disease control. Furthermore, the government reported the vaccination effect in 1814, but this case suggested changes in the vaccination plan. Although the administration in Calcutta recommended obtaining the vaccine, the Penang government did nothing until experiencing the tragedy 10 years later.

In Penang, the prevalent disease was an intermittent fever that caused diarrhoea, dysentery and rheumatism among the residents.[453] There were two cases of jungle fever in Penang, which broke out in the southern hills and affected the residents, and the public health authorities prepared the treatment to prevent it.[454] During the urban development, trees and woods were cut down that affected environmental conditions. At that time, fever was severe and frequent, as the large-scale deforestation affected the soil in Penang thereby fostering malaria and

[451] ibid., p. 30-31.
[452] India Office Records, G/34/99, pp. 301-303.
[453] India Office Records, F/4/1272/51026, p. 28.
[454] *The Penang Register and Miscellany*, 11th June 1828.

cholera.[455] Fever caused fewer fatalities than cholera or smallpox but it had to be controlled strictly to prevent more deaths in the future.

Moreover, ulcers were common among the Malays and Chinese. In terms of the Chinese victims, they were newcomers who were not familiar with the climate. The victims suffered from large scars on their legs and became lame, while Chinese migrants, especially among the low classes, also suffered leprosy. The lower-class Chinese had bad food and unhygienic habits and were therefore vulnerable to the disease. From 1821 to 1829, there were 48 patients in the poor asylum with leprosy, and 21 patients died of the disease. Nobody recovered during those eight years as a new treatment had not yet been developed.[456]

When cholera, smallpox and other diseases broke out in Penang, they had all originated outside the colony as a result of its high level of dependence on trade. After experiencing the various diseases, the system for responding to disease was improved. While certain Chinese migrants only believed in their gods during the outbreak, the administration simply blamed their lifestyles. However, once smallpox began to seriously affect the population, the government planned to introduce the vaccines. Controlling the disease needed everyone's cooperation and the narrowing of perception gaps between the administration and residents. Furthermore, the officials never understood that domestic conditions could make the situation worse, even though the diseases originated abroad. Officials had to instil a strict sense of hygiene.

Chinese migrants could not escape every epidemic and disease, but they suffered from cholera most while smallpox took a far lighter toll. Perhaps the administration failed to keep account of every historical fact, but there were no relevant records about smallpox in the Chinese community. These two epidemics could kill many Chinese but no historical account exists describing their irrational behaviour against them. When the prevalent diseases broke out in Penang, the diverse classes of Chinese migrants suffered differently. Among the migrants, newcomers and low-class migrants were especially vulnerable to ulcers and leprosy. Once the minorities contracted diseases, they could cause the full extent of damage to the whole of society, but the Chinese upper class and the administration simply neglected the minorities.

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[455] India Office Records, F/4/1272/51026, p. 30.
[456] ibid., p. 28.

The first cholera outbreak caused significant harm in Penang, including heavy casualties, economic depression, and discontinuity in the education. The disinfection procedures were not effective enough to deal with cholera as they needed every resident's cooperation, and some victims were complacent about the epidemic. The Chinese community simply ignored the situation or attempted to exterminate cholera with religious rites, and their lackadaisical attitudes resulted in more casualties. Apart from the deaths, the Chinese migrants experienced economic losses and deprivation of their education for which they could not be compensated. Moreover, a smallpox outbreak in Penang caused more deaths among the residents. Compared to cholera, the Chinese migrants did not suffer much from the smallpox but they were still in trouble. Whereas certain classes of Chinese suffered ulcers and leprosy and had to adapt to new surroundings and changed habits without anybody advising them about any preventive measures. The disastrous situation got worse by the government's lax attitude and a lack of communication between public health authorities.

4.4. Chinese poorhouse

Among the Chinese migrants, there was a group of people who could not look after themselves. These minority groups were either disabled or extremely poor and they always needed help. As they needed practical help, there were several attempts to provide care that resulted in the establishment of a Chinese poorhouse. Every Chinese migrant could not share the wealth equally, and in later years, colonial officials were interested in the poorhouse issue and that resulted in a joint operation. A brotherhood that had formed among the Chinese migrants began with aid projects to help the underprivileged and opened an official welfare institution. Penang was a new colony without a proper welfare system, and the poorhouse was the only welfare institution in the early years of the colony.

A poorhouse, also commonly known as a workhouse, was a place where those unable to support themselves were offered accommodation. In England, a national poorhouse system was established from the mid-seventeenth century for lessening the burden of assistance and

making the poor contribute to the country's welfare.[457] In British India, the problem of vagrancy was raised in the 1830s and the government asked to build a poorhouse. The government approved the poorhouse but rejected vagrancy legislation.[458] After a long time, poorhouses were built in the 1870s after the Vagrancy Act was amended in 1871. As the number of vagrants increased, with 5,682 vagrants in workhouses between 1876 and 1895, the poorhouse became established in India.[459] In Southeast Asia, there were poorhouses in Singapore and Batavia, and Tan Tock Seng Hospital was the first pauper hospital in Singapore that accommodated sick migrants, and starving beggars and vagrants. Maintenance and operation funds were derived from selling opium and arrack and from gambling farms.[460] Whereas the Dutch had managed a poorhouse in Batavia from 1725, the British simply accommodated the minorities in the poorhouses across the whole empire. In addition, the Dutch attempted to transform the paupers from the recipients of charity into cash-croppers to expand colonial agriculture.[461] In addition to the institutional aspect, the Chinese already relied on their social networks of family members and clansmen for support in times of need, inheriting their social culture from overseas. The migrants feared sickness, unemployment, disability and death during the settlement, and therefore they could only rely on the welfare obligations from their compatriots.[462] Compared to the above cases, Penang was the only place where the Chinese migrants voluntarily opened a poorhouse for the destitute, which attempted to make them comfortable on the basis of shared humanity. The Chinese poorhouse resulted from a combination of the English institutional experience and Chinese networking culture.

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457 Cosma Orsi, 'The Political Economy of Inclusion: The Rise and Fall of the Workhouse System', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 39 (2017), p. 45.

458 David Arnold, 'Vagrant India: Famine, Poverty, and Welfare under Colonial Rule' in *Cast Out: Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective*, ed. by A. L. Beier and Paul Ocobock (Ohio University Press, 2008), pp. 125-126.

459 Harald Fischer–Tiné, 'Britain's other civilising mission: Class prejudice, European "loaferism" and the workhouse–system in colonial India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 42 (2005), p. 316.

460 Y. K. Lee. "The Pauper Hospital in Early Singapore (Part 1) (1819-1829)", *Singapore Medical Journal*, 14 (1973), p. 49.

461 Albert Schrauwers, "The 'Benevolent' Colonies of Johannes van den Bosch: Continuities in the Administration of Poverty in the Netherlands and Indonesia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 43 (2001), p. 320.

462 Yen Ching-Hwang, *Community and Politics: Chinese in Colonial Singapore and Malaysia* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1995), pp. 45-46.

In the case of Penang, the origins of the poorhouse could be traced to a local pork farm in 1795. In order to help abandoned sick and poor people, the fund was initially put under the supervision of a European agent and entrusted to the Kapitan Cina. There were a great number of destitute, poor and sick Chinese migrants and this fund resulted in responsibility being transferred to the Chinese leader, Koh Lay Huan. Payments were proportional to each class.[463] The Chinese leader, Koh, owned a pork farm so that he could support the poor Chinese from its revenues. Therefore, although the Penang government had not established a proper welfare system, the poorest people were supported by the local leaders.

While the Chinese leader supported the poor Chinese, poor migrant who were unable to live without help were offered accommodations from the government. However, since the accommodation was managed by the government from the 1800s, the condition of the building was poor and the police magistrate reported several problems. The magistrate suggested a new place near the town and the proprietor was willing to welcome them. The condition of the place was described by the police:

> …that the house at present occupied by Government for the Chinese poor, is in so ruinous a state, as to be no longer habitable and as the Proprietor declined putting it into a state of repair, common humanity will not allow of their being continued there…I would therefore with all deference, recommend their being removed to some dry, healthy situation…[464]

The suggestion received approval from the police magistrate and the Chinese migrants were moved to new places in April 1805 due to the poor state of their residences. The government could not repair the building because the proprietor did not allow repairs to his privately owned building, which he rented out for twenty dollars per month.[465] This government building was the first poorhouse in Penang. It is not known when the place began to accommodate the poor Chinese, but the system was established earlier than in British India. This case became an example of reformation of the poorhouse and the colonial officials acknowledged their

[463] India Office Records, G/34/12, pp. 27-28.

[464] India Office Records, G/34/26, pp. 541-542.

[465] ibid., pp. 541-542.

responsibilities. It is remarkable that the poverty problem was reported by the police magistrate as, generally, the magistrate simply did not recognize it as a certain group's problem. Despite the European elites' prejudice, the police magistrate sought to strengthen the social safety net and improve social order. If the magistrate had not recognized the poverty issue, it could cause problems as it had to be remodelled. It also meant that the magistrate aimed to solve any social problems and this was applied equally to other migrants as well. The colonial government recognized the gravity of the situation and treated the migrants as members of society by helping the poorest among them.

On 30 August 1815, the police reported to the secretary of the government on the completion of the accommodation for poor Chinese migrants. The housing issue was raised in 1810 and the construction completed five years later after a Chinese man named Low Amee agreed to construct the accommodation. This project aimed to support poor Chinese migrants alongside other destitute poor, and it was located near the general hospital. The rent for the new place was 50 dollars per month but the government advanced it to Low Amee on account of this loan.[466] Low Amee's role was not explained in the records or literature, but he helped the government accommodate the poor, supported by the government, fund from the pork farm, and individual voluntary contributions.[467] This issue attracted many people's attention and resulted in its cooperative management.

In 1818, the Governor Bannerman visited the Chinese poorhouse, and his visit inspired him to frame an accompanying set of regulations for better management of the institution. As the funds derived from the pork farm reached 9600 dollars per annum, the governor hoped to revise how the fund could be usefully employed. Bannerman had received much information on the issue from Mr McIntosh and therefore the governor considered Mr McIntosh the best qualified person to investigate further. Bannerman claimed that the monthly revenue of the farm ought to be shared and the new regulations would leave a large balance amount.[468] While the government could not do anything with the poorhouse system initially, this case shows that the

[466] India Office Records, G/34/51, p. 2102.
[467] Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, p. 64.

[468] India Office Records, G/34/67, pp. 67-68.

colonial officials became interested in the Chinese poorhouse. Bannerman realized what the institution needed in order to improve its conditions after visiting the place.

Before the announcement of new regulations, Mr McIntosh visited the poorhouse and reported on its environment on 6 August 1818. He explained that the toilet was dirty and never cleaned. He described how sick patients were allowed to cook in their own rooms but the kitchen fireplaces were broken. Mr McIntosh planned to supply the workhouse inhabitants with some food every day, such as tea, rice, fish and vegetables. He could not afford enough beef for the poor every day, but it would be supplied twice a week. Although the place aimed to accommodate the poor Chinese, he also proposed to the government that it accommodated a few convicts that needed treatment.[469] Mr Mcintosh also asked that Chinese patients should not be allowed to leave the place. He found that patients used to smoke opium, and he would prevent some products being supplied to the house.[470] The government aimed to accommodate the poor somewhere better, which resulted a constructing a new building; however, the poor were not served properly and it caused new regulations to be implemented.

The new regulations for the Chinese poorhouse were announced on 15 September 1818, stating that at least one of the patrons should visit the poorhouse once a week. The patrons were the governor of Penang, members of the council, the secretary of Penang government, the chaplain and the town mayor.[471] There was an overseer (supervisor) at the poorhouse, who received a monthly allowance of 25 dollars as a salary. The overseer had to be responsible for the general cleanliness of the place and two daily meals for the residents: breakfast and dinner.[472] As Mr Mcintosh had demonstrated his passion for the Chinese poorhouse, he was appointed as the overseer with the monthly salary. He was also allowed to have a peon at five dollars for assistance.[473] The government improved the residential environment and the poorhouse system after experiencing difficulties, and after a month, the governor considered increasing the total budget. Before the new regulations were implemented, the poorhouse was

[469] ibid., pp. 72-73.
[470] ibid., p. 74.
[471] ibid., p. 68.
[472] ibid., pp. 70-71.
[473] ibid., p. 75.

granted 78 dollars per month that could be increased to 108 dollars. Bannerman claimed that the pork farm annual revenue of $9600 meant a budget increase was needed to improve the poorhouse's condition.[474]

In July 1822, Bacon, an agent of Syed Hussain, sent a letter to Walter Sewell Cracroft, Acting Secretary of the Penang government about the claim-obligation relationship between Syed Hussain and Low Amee. Bacon claimed that Low had borrowed $3250 from Syed Hussain and mortgaged the Chinese poorhouse. Low failed to pay the debt back to Syed Hussain and the creditor wondered whether the government could pay him back.[475] When the poorhouse was newly built by Low in 1815, the Penang government paid him 50 dollars as monthly rent. Syed Hussain thought that the rent the government paid every month could be sent to him as the creditor instead. Although Low had built the new poorhouse in order to help the poor, his irresponsible lending endangered the institution.

In addition to Low Amee's debt problems, the Chinese poorhouse experienced its own financial problems after four years. In February 1822, McIntosh sent a petition to Phillips to reimburse his allowance as, although price of rice had increased since September 1821, he was still responsible for serving meals to the poorhouse inhabitants. He spent $228.51 in total for the rice, which was a very heavy burden to the overseer. The governor of Penang understood McIntosh's difficulties and he arranged for the overseer to be reimbursed the exact amount.[476] Inflation of food prices unintentionally threatened the management of the poorhouse as operating funds were limited, and nobody could predict the economic condition. Regarding the financial emergency in the poorhouse, McIntosh suggested Phillips procure some provisions in advance.[477] This case caused the governor great distress as he attempted to manage the institution efficiently. In September 1822, Phillips reported that the Chinese poorhouse had a debt, amounting to $173.50.[478] The institution had financial problems that had to be considered from a long-term point of view. The system of Chinese poorhouse had been improved by

[474] F/4/634/17187, pp. 19-20.
[475] India Office Records, G/34/86, pp. 1471-1472.
[476] G/34/84. P448 - 451.
[477] India Office Records, G/34/86, p. 1649.
[478] ibid., p. 1648.

solving the problems such as new building construction, but it often faced unpredictable problems and its executives had to pay careful attention.

In June 1823, the Chinese poorhouse was suggested as accommodation for some refugees from the Siamese invasion of Kedah. They had escaped to Penang for their safety, but many became beggars unable to work or support themselves. The magistrate proposed to the government that between 25 and 31 refugees would be accommodated in the Chinese poorhouse; however, the government refused the proposal as the institution could not accommodate any more people. The administrators suggested sending the refugees to Province Wellesley, and providing them with some rice and shelter. Moreover, the lease of the Chinese poorhouse was about to be end, and the colonial officials had to look for a new site.[479] Although the Chinese poorhouse accommodated anyone who needed help regardless of their cultural background, the government could not afford to accommodate the refugees from Kedah at that time. The poorhouse was mortgaged to the Malay creditor, and the institution had financial problems. There were some considerations of poorhouse management so the colonial state could not help the refugees.

In April 1824, Robert Hutchings, a patron of the Chinese poorhouse, sent a letter to the governor of Penang with some suggestions. He was pleased to report that tenants were served with good food, and the institute showed an exemplary spirit of philanthropy by helping the Chinese poor as well as non-Chinese occupants with Hutchings claiming that non-Chinese poor should be still allowed. Unfortunately, the poorhouse could not accommodate the new Chinese poor; therefore, the patron suggested obtaining two more buildings to support them.[480] Regardless of the financial problems of the Chinese poorhouse, the patron pointed out the institute's space shortages, and as a result, the Chinese poorhouse could not accommodate the refugees from Kedah or the new poor Chinese migrants. The patron made the suggestion for good reasons but it seems doubtful he was unaware of the poorhouse's financial problems. As mentioned above, the poorhouse was still mortgaged to the creditor and had to solve the financial problems before accommodating the new occupants.

[479] India Office Records, G/34/90, pp. 477-479.
[480] India Office Records, G/34/95, pp. 708-715.

The overseer of the Chinese poorhouse, Mr McIntosh, resigned from the position in August 1824, deciding to leave Penang and go back to Europe.[481] He had led administrative reform of the poorhouse from 1818, and, although he had experienced difficulties with inflation and the landlord's debts, McIntosh had improved the quality of the service at the poorhouse, such as the residential conditions and food. As the overseer left, the poorhouse had to be confronted with changes, accommodating more new residents to help the poor. The governor and the patrons had to be concerned about the poorhouse regularly and for its successful management.

Under the Kapitan system, ethnic leaders were responsible for each ethnic group, including welfare. Within the Chinese community, the *Kapitan Cina* attempted to help the underprivileged groups by opening the poorhouse, which demonstrated the social stratification of Chinese migrants. While they were divided into planters and farm labourers, some Chinese migrants had to stay in the poorhouse. The Chinese poorhouse was the first social welfare service in Penang; however, the Penang government could not afford to manage it alone and therefore Kapitan Cina supported the fund derived from pork farm. In ethnic perspective, the Kapitan Cina tried his best to help his compatriots because the colonial officials granted responsibility to the *kapitan* for the Chinese community. Within this scope of authority, the leader aimed to relive the poor from homelessness, and, in later years, colonial officials participated in joint management of the poorhouse and appointed an overseer to properly manage the institution. In fact, Penang's Chinese poorhouse was established earlier than British India. While it took many years to establish poorhouses in India due to legal issues and amending the law, Penang's poorhouse was established without any conflict between opinions. Indeed, the officials converted certain ethnic group's charity works into an official welfare system, while the poorhouse systems were improved using opinions from the police and colonial officials. It was not reported whether there were other poorhouses for Malays or Indians, but the Chinese poorhouse accommodated any destitute poor regardless of their ethnicity. The report made by the police magistrate recommended moving the residents to a better place and Mr McIntosh's visit caused the imposition of new regulations. Despite financial difficulties in later years, the poorhouse was never closed. It remained important as

[481] ibid., pp. 257-259.

an example of cooperation between the government and the Chinese leader over the establishment of the poorhouse system.

4.5. Conclusion

When the Chinese migrants arrived in Penang, they experienced unexpected difficulties. The Penang government was only recently founded and lacked sufficient safety, rescue and welfare systems. The East India Company only cared about Penang's strategic location and importance to the British national interest, but the colonial officials were unable to predict any of the troubles found during the settlement process. The Penang government's unsuitable systems could not secure the residents from any kind of threat and the Chinese migrants could not get much help. Sometime later, however, there was some small progress in the improvement of welfare and rescue systems as the officials had to prevent the suffering of civilians.

In Penang, Chinese migrants experienced unexpected challenges, such as fire, maritime violence, suicide, robberies, and police harassment. In fact, there were disastrous fires in 1789, 1812 and 1814, and when each fire broke out, it spread among certain districts and ethnic groups. In 1789 and 1814, the fires resulted in economic losses among the Chulia migrant with the first fire in 1789, in particular, causing confusion in the city. There were thefts from shops and as a result Chinese migrants promoted the awareness of protecting their properties and lives. Contrary to Chinese expectations, they became the major victims of the fire in 1812, as it caused property losses to Chinese migrants and they did not receive any financial support from the government or Chinese leadership. The fire in 1814 again damaged Chulia businesses but they did not experience as much confusion as in 1789. Rather, they asked the government to help them repair and restore. Furthermore, the government had gradually improved the water system so that fires did not cause as much property damage in later years. These tragedies indicated to the administration they needed to improve the emergency rescue system; as a result, the Chinese community did not suffer from fires as badly after 1814. Additionally, Chinese migrants experienced unexpected difficulties with neighbours and robbers. Worse still, several corrupted policemen habitually extorted money and goods from Chinese shopkeepers. The

victims requested that the police prevented further damage, but the police ignored the requests. The Chinese community was vulnerable to various unexpected threats without any protection or help.

Unlike fire protection, colonial officials attempted to prevent maritime violence in advance, trying to establish a marine force for Penang's security, and carrying out joint operations with neighbouring states. The government observed maritime violence cases in its own territorial and neighbouring waters; however, maritime violence became more common from the late 1810s and threatened the safety of Chinese migrants. The number of maritime raiders increased and the number of different cultural backgrounds as well, including Chinese pirates. There were some maritime violence that victimized the Chinese community, who were attacked while engaging in economic activities, such as trade. The victims were killed or abducted and that forced the colonial officials to reform the system, arresting anybody who was suspected of piracy in order to disconnect networks among the maritime raiders. Moreover, the Penang government implemented a junk registration system and considered obtaining a new brig gun-ship and cruiser for further protection. However, the pirates also continued to expand their power, which made the government countermeasures meaningless, and they continued to trouble the residents of Penang for long periods.

In a world of pandemics, Penang could not be free from disease with various outbreaks causing heavy casualties in the colony. When cholera broke out in India, the administration expected that it would soon spread to Penang and built more hospitals, asking ethnic leaders for their cooperation. Despite these attempts to prepare in advance, many Chinese victims met their deaths based on mistaken information. Furthermore, both the administration and religious leaders assumed passive attitudes, which meant the situation deteriorated even further. The Chinese migrants also experienced disruption in their education and economic downturns due to cholera. The disease lasted for a few months, but it caused tremendous damage to residents of Penang in all aspects. However, the Chinese migrants suffered less when smallpox broke out, when compared to cholera's impact. Perhaps the Chinese migrants complied with the safety measures taken against the smallpox, but they still experienced difficulties as the disease threatened the whole Penang settlement. While cholera and smallpox affected every Chinese

migrant, ulcers affected only certain class of Chinese citizen. The lower-class workers were vulnerable to the disease due to a lack of hygiene, and they needed to improve their habits and living conditions in order to prevent disease.

Moreover, among the Chinese migrants were those too poor or sick to care for themselves. Those people were without places to stay and they needed help from others. The Penang government could not afford to support them by itself; however, Kapitan Cina took care of them with funds derived from his pork farm. Unfortunately, the first site of the Chinese poorhouse was not in good condition, especially the quality of the building, but the police magistrate realized the seriousness of the problem and requested the poor were moved to a better place. After moving, the inhabitants had similar problems and the governor of Penang appointed an overseer to take care of them. The poorhouse system had been improved by the attention paid by various people; however, it faced several issues during the 1820s, such as inflation or accommodating refugees, and the improved system did not guarantee smooth functioning at the institute.

The Chinese migrants had to survive in an unfamiliar foreign land, and when they experienced trouble, they were sacrificed due to a lack of suitable systems. However, colonial officials eventually attempted to improve the systems after experiencing the difficulties. Although the Chinese community had formed around Kapitan Cina, the Chinese leader could not help everyone. If any problems occurred with the government, the *kapitan* could mediate a settlement but some problems, such as maritime violence, were beyond his jurisdiction and could not be solved completely by the government. The minimal support from the Chinese community resulted in the establishment of a Chinese poorhouse. Regardless of wealth, every Chinese migrant was part of a minority that could not be protected perfectly. The Chinese migrants experienced various difficulties that became their painful history. Unlike the challenges, there were groups of Chinese who caused social problems as well. Those cases will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5.

Social issues among the Chinese migrants from the 1820s

This chapter focuses on how Chinese migrants committed illegal acts. Aside from their commercial activities, Chinese migrants were involved in various robberies, fires, the slave trade and insurgency. As a result, the colonial administration restricted the immigration of Chinese people, and the Kapitan and the colonial officials aimed to prevent crimes by introducing a legal system. The Penang government had restricted the importation of slaves from 1809 but demand for slave labour remained high, and Chinese slave traders worked to supply that demand. Moreover, several Chinese organizations conspired to rise in revolt after expanding their powers, and the police arrested the leaders of the revolt immediately. While Chinese criminals became regarded as a social evil, colonial officials attempted to position their solidarity as a security risk. These crimes were committed by different groups of Chinese migrants; therefore, the colonial administration decided to restrict the number of arrivals of Chinese people to prevent further problems. This chapter aims to explore how Chinese migrants experienced these various incidents and how they led to social tension. The colonial state did not trust the Chinese migrants anymore so the state and the migrants experienced conflicts. The Chinese migrants also thought that they were not respected by the state so they expressed their anger. Related cases in the India Office records, Parliamentary papers and contemporary newspaper will be examined to better understand how Chinese criminals produced social disorder and thereby brought about restrictions on Chinese arrivals.

5.1. Chinese suspects in various incidents

Both contemporary newspaper and historical records explain how Chinese migrants became tormentors. Chinese robbers had afflicted innocent civilians from the early years of the Penang colony, but there were still robberies in the late 1820s. In order to prevent further crimes, the Kapitan Cina and the colonial administration agreed on rights of punishment for Chinese criminals who committed crimes in Penang. Moreover, there were two cases of arson that were committed by the Chinese migrants. The victims experienced these robberies or fires as another

kind of ordeal for which they unable to demand any solutions. The gangsters could rob or attack civilians unexpectedly and therefore the police could do nothing in advance to prevent the crimes.

The criminal cases discussed in Prince of Wales Island public consultations or newspaper articles did not explain any motives. I could only assume that the Chinese suspects caused robberies or fires in order to create social distractions. Lopez et al. claim that mistrust and fear of unknown newcomers has marginalised immigrants within various socioeconomic environments.[482] While Chinese elites gained the trust of the colonial officials in Penang, the same officials were concerned about certain Chinese groups, such as gambling addicts or inhabitants of the Chinese poorhouse. Chinese criminal suspects also became another group of misfits assigned a negative impact on society, and the colonial state had to consider crime prevention for maintenance of public order.

Sir Ralph Rice was the third Recorder of Penang and served from 1817 to 1824. On 11 March 1820, Sir Ralph had an interview, in which he briefly discussed Chinese crimes while he was in Penang:

> Were the Chinese, as compared with other descriptions of inhabitants, more or less criminal offenders? - I think in thefts they were quite as numerous as other classes, but not, I think, in offences arising out of acts of violence.[483]

Although Rice admitted that there were crimes committed in every ethnic group, the former recorder of Penang remembered the nature of crimes that the Chinese were involved in, pointing out that Chinese migrants were committing more violent crimes than before. The interview did not include concrete explanations of any specific crime cases, but they included petty theft, burglary and murder. When crimes were committed in Penang, the police took two

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[482] Kristina M. Lopez, Nicholas M. Perez, Wesley G. Jennings and J. Mitchell Miller, "Immigration and Gangs" in *Routledge Handbook on Immigration and Crime* edited by Holly Ventura Miller and Anthony Peguero (Routledge, 2018), p. 95.

[483] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows' in *Select Committee of House of Lords on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index.* (1830), p. 85.

hours to investigate the perpetrators.[484] The Chinese crime cases usually found in the historical records or newspaper articles described how the Chinese assailants tormented their victims.

As written in Chapter 2, the Kapitan Cina carried out the functions of both police chief and judge until the establishment of the legal system in the late 1800s. When a Chinese criminal named Hoong Pah was taken to trial for a wilful offence, the Chinese leader judged the case at his house, and Chinese was used throughout as the main language of the trial and the records. The Chinese leader sentenced the prisoner to be whipped publicly and sent to the public works after being released.[485] The trial records did not explain what act of violence the prisoner had committed, but the Chinese leader had absolute power to punish the Chinese prisoner. He was never tolerant of his compatriots but looked instead to the maintenance of order.

Under the Kapitan system, the Kapitan Cina could not judge inter-ethnic conflicts and adultery, two issues that were judged by the superintendent due to their serious nature and the importance of impartiality. After the judgement, these cases were reported to India as the colonial officials had rights to approve or reject the settlement. For example, there was an adultery committed by Aphoe, a Chinese man, and Kehim, a Chinese woman, and the adulterous couple were ordered to have their heads shaved and stand twice in the pillory. Aphoe was also sentenced to be imprisoned for few hours before he was banished from Penang.[486] This case suggests how adultery was highly controversial at that time. This adulterous couple were humiliated which illustrates how the administration intended to prevent adultery by taking such publicly punitive measures. Before the introduction of the official legal system, the functions of constitutional adjudication were shared. Depending on nature of crime, each case was assigned to the Kapitans or the superintendent, and the results of trials conducted by the superintendent were reported to India for final approval.

However, the official law system could not prevent the increase in the number of Chinese defendants despite the fact that, among the misfits in Penang, the Chinese were not the only

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[484] James Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, Or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca: Including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula. With Brief References to the Settlements of Singapore & Malacca* (Singapore Free Press Office, 1836), pp. 255-257.

[485] James William and Norton Kyshe, '4th June 1803' in *Cases heard and determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements, 1808-1884. Vol. I*, *Civil cases* (Singapore and Straits Print Office, 1885), p. 22.

[486] James William and Norton Kyshe, '27th April 1797' in *Cases heard and determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements, 1808-1884. Vol. I*, *Civil cases* (Singapore and Straits Print Office, 1885), p. 8.

robbers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Malay thieves attempted to rob Chulia shops during the fire in 1789. However, the Chinese gangsters sometimes caused social disturbances that were reported in the newspapers. On 4 October 1808, a dwelling house in the district of Tullock Sulotong was attacked by a group of Chinese robbers. The victim of the incident, a man named Harroo, was wounded, several of his slaves were killed and some of his valuables were stolen. The police magistrate sought any relevant information, such as information on anyone concerned with the robbery or murders, offering a potential reward of five hundred dollars. Furthermore, the gangsters left a musket and a spear at the spot and the victim intended to identify any perpetrators by recognizing their weapons.[487] This was the first murder case reported in the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*. However, the police were unable to find any clues about the gangsters, and the victim attempted to find out about any informants by writing to the newspaper.

On 26 November 1810, Mr George Hill Elmes was found dead in the district of Tulloh Ayer Rajah. George was a Siamese resident whose place had been attacked by 11 or 12 men. The suspects were assumed to be Chinese gangs as they used Chinese weapons when attacking the house. The master of the victim's house, Oontong, claimed that the gangs attempted to enter the house using a ladder and the master realised the seriousness of the situation immediately. When the gangs got inside, Elmes fought against the gangs without any weapons himself; unfortunately, he was wounded by the gang and eventually died. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder by people unknown.[488] Although the gangs were not identified as Chinese, the juror assumed them to be so, judging by the weapons they used. The article did not explain the motives for the crime or stealing the goods while the gangsters attacked the house, suggesting only suggested that the police force was not maintained properly to protect the civilians.

After the experiences of this case in 1810, the Penang government announced in the local press a new set of precautions to tackle crime prevention. According to the article dated 26 January 1811, the government explained a policy of legal gambling days and their attempt to prevent robberies during the Chinese New Year holidays, warning that readers had to be extra careful because several robberies had been committed a few weeks before[489], and the recent

[487] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 15 October 1808.
[488] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 1 December 1810.
[489] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 26 January 1811.

robberies could be continued into the holiday season. The officials aimed to prevent the robberies by advising caution in the newspaper.

Further crimes involving Chinese migrants were reported again from the mid-1820s. In 1825, a native woman named Kee was robbed by a gang of 10 Chinese men in the district of Teluk Ayer Rajah. The Chinese gangsters painted and disguised their faces and armed themselves with long knives before entering the house of the victim. At the crime scene, the gangsters carried off a trunk containing money and gold. Kee's life was threatened by the gang so that she could not call for assistance.[490] After a few months, another robbery was attempted by a different Chinese gang using similar criminal techniques. They broke into the house of an anonymous Malay man and burnt the place, carrying away a chest that contained money and gold ornaments worth a considerable amount.[491]

Richard Caunter, superintendent of the police, reported a robbery on 21 January 1827, during which, according to the police report, the house of a Chinese man named Hoan was entered by a gang of seven armed Chinese gangsters. They stole money and armaments from the scene valued at 133 dollars in total, and, during their arrest, a policemen was beaten by them.[492] This case details how Chinese gangsters threatened a Chinese civilian and attacked their compatriots and a policeman to achieve their goals. It appears clear they did no respect for human rights or fraternity and therefore they targeted any houses. After a few days, a further robbery was committed in the house of a Muslim man named Mohammed Hussain by a gang of 12 or 15 unknown Chinese men, during which one of the suspects was injured by a spear. After the robbery, the gang was arrested by police near the Siamese temple as they were retreating towards the Ayer Itam hills. The gangsters stole clothes, money and armaments from the scene with a total value of 96 dollars.[493] Although the victim lost some of his property, he did not let the gangs commit the robbery freely, counterattacking them to protect his property, leading to one of the suspects being injured.

On 8 July 1828, a Malay man named Che Jahl attempted to save the lives of his neighbour and family from a Chinese gang, only to die a few days later. In fact, the 20 Chinese gangsters

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490 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 26 January 1825.
491 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 6 April 1825.
492 India Office Records, G/34/115, pp. 254-255.
493 ibid., p. 15.

had previously attacked the victim's house a month before this second action. During the attack, two other Malay men were killed as well, but their sacrifice prevented more robberies. One of the Chinese gangsters was arrested near the spot immediately after, and there was no doubt of his involvement. The rest of the gangsters escaped. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against Ow She, the defendant, and certain other unknown Chinese people.[494] The article did not explain why Che Jahl was attacked repeatedly by the Chinese gang or whether any of the valuables in the victim's house or town could explain the motives of the crime. The article described the Malay victim as heroic as he predicted the attack. He expected that his family and neighbours could be in trouble again and therefore he did not avoid the danger.

According to the cases from 1825 to 1828, Chinese gangs committed robberies without any specific reasons. Robberies were committed by many different minor gangs, who simply plundered money and goods, and they threatened civilians, which also led to social tensions in Penang. The robberies ended with the deaths of innocent victims, and therefore the police had to consider how to prevent further trouble in order to placate the social unrest. However, the police did not have any sources of information with which to protect people from the gangs' unexpected attacks. The police only could track down the criminals and inspect the crime scene. The Chinese criminals were becoming more daring in the ways they committed crimes so countermeasures had to be established immediately.

In October 1828, three Chinese suspects were on trial charged with murder. The principal witness against them was a person in confinement for an alleged burglary but the trial result was not released.[495] Although the newspaper article did not explain the motives for the crime or the trial result, it suggested the cruelty of the Chinese suspects. In fact, criminal activities were more often committed by Chinese groups than by others at that time. Different groups of Chinese gangs committed robberies frequently and therefore judges attempted to warn other gangs by releasing the details of the trial process.

There was a more complicated case by the largest Chinese gang in 1829. The incident began with the death of a Chinese man named Tan Teow. Tan was severely beaten by six Chinese men and died in the general hospital a few days later. However, the case was not over and 70

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494 *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 31st July 1828.

495 *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 20th November 1828.

Chinese gangsters attacked the house of Tan's brother in search of a person named Hong Teck, as Hong had quarrelled with one of the gangsters a few days earlier. The gang believed that Hong had been hiding in Tan's brother's house, and while the 70 gang members attacked the house, three people were injured defending the house and property. Tan Teow's brother, an anonymous man, was a witness to the scene and ran away into the jungle. Hong Teck was the principal object of this incident and the police were trying to locate his whereabouts. Several gangsters were hospitalized as they were injured and therefore they were not fit to stand trial.[496] The cause of Tan Teow's death seemed to be relevant for Hong Teck because the Tan brothers were attacked. The gangsters targeted Hong but they believed that the Tan brothers were concealing Hong's whereabouts.

Apart from the robberies, Chinese criminals were involved in several cases of murder or attempted murder. One anonymous Chinese man was sentenced to death for murder after another Chinese criminal named Puenseng was hanged from the iron crossbar of a window about eight and a half feet from the ground, murdered while he was sleeping.[497] The motive for the crime was not recorded but the criminal's cruelty was revealed, which resulted in the death sentence in court.

The internal conflict within the Chinese community resulted in murder as well. In 1826, a respectable Chinese merchant, Che Toah, was murdered in Beach Street, George Town. While he was returning to his house, he was suddenly murdered by several Chinese men. The suspects were arrested immediately but their motive was not robbery.[498] As written in previous chapters, Che Toah was influential in the pepper business and he had reported several Chinese organizations for taking part in revolts. The case shows that even the influential members of society could be attacked at any time.

In another example of attempted murder, three accomplices made their getaway while Tan Loh was the only arrest. Tan intended to murder a Chinese boy named Yeokseoo, using a cook's knife,[499] and the Chinese boy had been assaulted by the suspect, though the report did not explain the suspect's motive. The trial result was not reported, but the report suggested

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496 *Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca Government Gazette*, 28 November 1829.
497 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 15 October 1823.
498 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 12 August 1826.
499 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 6 January 1827.

there was possibly child abuse within the Chinese community. There were no human rights monitors or juvenile protection workers at that time; therefore, it seems child abuse would not have been considered a serious issue.

In 1829, the Police Committee of the House of Commons announced that there had been a great increase in crime in Penang during the previous year. According to the police, there were from 16,000 to 18,000 cases of crimes, with horse-stealing the most frequent. The police requested registration for horse dealers, and consumers were advised not to deal with unknown people.[500] The police also announced the number of crimes recorded regardless of criminals' ethnicity. The increase in crimes suggests there was social unrest among the civilians, and the Chinese criminals could not be an exception in the survey.

The robbery and murder cases were often reported in the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*. Lewis claims that while ethno-centred newspapers aimed for expressing their shared concerns and articulating their own group identities, the English newspapers were central to the imperial machine of global capitalism. In fact, the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* targeted the English merchants, planters and colonial officials residing in Penang, usually reporting news from abroad, shipping news, passenger lists and criminal cases.[501] At that time, the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* was the only media source and only provided limited information. Crimes committed by Asian migrants made the white readers worried about their safety. Offenders had to be punished but the newspaper usually only reported crimes by Asian migrants and did not report any commotion among the Europeans.

In addition to the robberies and murders, there were small fires set by Chinese suspects that had broken out either mistakenly or intentionally. The cases were linked with the Chinese migrants. On 16 May 1814, Richard Caunter reported to James Cousens, acting secretary of Penang government, about a fire involving some Chinese migrants. Caunter claimed that two or three Chinese paupers accidently caught fire, burning all their clothing and other necessary belongings. These paupers usually made a fire every night in their place. At that time, they lit a lamp by the fire, which caused the breakout. Fortunately, the fire was not as alarming as the cases in 1789, 1812 and October 1814. Caunter requested the colonial officials to provide

[500] *Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca Government Gazette*, 26 September 1829.
[501] Su Lin Lewis, "Echoes of Cosmopolitanism: Colonial Penang's 'Indigenous' English Press" in *Media and the British Empire* edited by Chandrika Kaul (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2006), pp. 233-234.

shelter for the paupers, suggesting they could stay at the shelter for a few months so that they would not threaten every resident's safety with another fire.[502] However, the superintendent of police requested that the colonial officials helped the suspects instead of arresting them. At that time, the Chinese poorhouse accommodated only a few people before it moved to a new site and these poor Chinese had to stay in poor surroundings because they could not get any help. They simply made a fire to keep themselves warm but they could be suspected of causing the catastrophe. The police considered the fact it was a mistake as a mitigating factor, and these Chinese suspects were not convicted of arson.

After seven months, there was another Chinese suspect who had attempted to set fire to the town. On 4 December 1814, Sir Edmond Stanley, recorder of Penang, reported to William Petrie, the governor, about a suspect named China Toh. According to Stanley's report, Toh was suspected of setting fire to the town along with some other unknown suspects on 17 and 18 November that year and was prosecuted and confined to jail on 3 December.[503] The incident took place a few months after the disastrous fire in October 1814, and the colonial administration was sensitive about fires as they could destroy the whole colony. Compared to the previous case, when the suspects had accidentally started a fire, Toh had started one on purpose. Although the suspect's motives for the crime were not disclosed, the judge claimed that the trial should not be delayed. Stanley aimed to discourage fires in Penang by judging the Chinese suspect, and his attitude suggested how the Penang government reacted to the crisis.

In addition, there was the case of a crafty Chinese shopkeeper. In 1806, Ko, a shopkeeper in George Town, was arrested for using light weights when selling sugar and fined 10 dollars. Ko denied the accusations made against him, but his refutation was not recognized by the police.[504] He was known as an unscrupulous shopkeeper who had frequently cheated his customers. The soul of commerce is round dealing, but Ko was focused only on immediate gains.

Although the jurisdiction was transferred from the Kapitan Cina to the government, there were Chinese criminals who caused damage to their neighbours. Chinese gangsters robbed and intimidated civilians and frequently committed robberies from the early years in Penang

[502] India Office Records, G/34/44, pp. 1085-1086.
[503] India Office Records, G/34/45, pp. 2993-3011.

[504] India Office Records, F/4/262/5837, pp. 46-47.

onwards. When they robbed, they usually attacked the owners of houses in order to steal money or valuables. The robbery cases were then described in newspapers and historical records with the intention of warning readers about crime prevention. Furthermore, the Chinese gangs committed murders, made threats and dished out abuse that suggests there were various shameful cases. Although these gangs often committed crimes, nothing was recorded as a means to prevent further crimes as the police were not strong enough; they could only look for criminals and investigate the crime scene. In addition to the gangsters, there were two cases of Chinese suspects who could burn down Penang, and regardless of intentionality, these suspects could open old wounds by setting fires in the town. Fire incidents in the past had resulted in great losses and that could be happened again at the hands of the Chinese suspects. These cases of violence and fires caused the social disturbances that became the bugbear of the Penang government.

5.2. Chinese migrants in the slave trade

When Penang was founded by the British, the Penang government invited 150 slaves from Bencoolen, and some migrants brought their own slaves with them to Penang. These slaves were involved in constructing the infant colony but the colonial officials thought that cultivation or commerce could be carried by ordinary freemen, as had proved successful in India. Finally, the Penang government prohibited importing slaves from 1809, though some Chinese migrants were still being reported for breaking the law in 1828. The government restricted the importation of slaves but the Chinese wrongdoers went against the government's policy. While the Chapter 2 focused on public slaves and public opinions concerning slavery, this section explores how the Chinese traders worked against the government's slave abolition plan.

The understanding of slavery in Penang was vague. The 1809 prohibition on importing slaves did not mean the complete abolition of slavery. Perhaps some influential migrants, such as Syed Hussain, that had plenty of slaves would have considered the abolition of slavery as confiscation of property. The government could only prohibit the arrival of slaves in order to decrease the numbers. The anti-slave trade campaign was started in the eighteenth century by English Quakers and resulted in the abolition of slavery in 1834. The British planters in the

West Indies were strongly opposed to the change as it meant they could not compete with the French, Spanish and Brazilian planters due to labour costs.[505] Similar to the case in the Atlantic, the Chinese migrants broke the law as they considered their private interests to be more important than their humanity; the Penang government had already restricted importing slaves, but the slave traders just ignored the law. In case of Bali, the Chinese slave brokers continued to deliver slaves to Bali between 1827 and 1831. While the traders sold the illegal slaves to private consumers in Penang, the Dutch administration officially bought between 30 and 40 slaves per month in Bali.[506] Slave trading was still legal in the Dutch Indies, and the administration supplemented their personnel by slaves. The illegal slave trade also seemingly followed the gender stereotypes of the period. In general, most men believed that it was the women's role to reproduce the race, bear children, look after their men and make families and households.[507] Female slaves were sold as concubines or prostitutes who had to obey their male masters, and the slave consumers needed female slaves for 'women's work' in their houses.

Before slave importation was prohibited, several Chinese migrants owned slaves. According to the police's slave register, a Chinese fisherman named Che Law purchased two slaves for 62 dollars in 1806, one of whom died after a while; Law then enquired with the police about financial compensation.[508] The owner only cared about what he had lost financially and he did not remember the deceased.

The reprehensible reality of the Chinese slaver traders was revealed by a tip-off. After almost two decades, Reverend Mr Boucho sent a letter to Robert Ibbetson, Resident Councillor at Penang, to instigate a police investigation. Boucho claimed that a Chinese junk had arrived in Penang with at least 80 captives from Pulo Nias on the western coast of Sumatra. These captives had been sold to different Chinese buyers, and a few young girls had been seen in the houses, entertaining some of the Chinese, for the purpose of prostitution. Boucho requested

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[505] Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 189-191.

[506] Alfons van der Kraan, "Bali: Slavery and Slave Trade" in *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia* edited by Anthony Reid and Jennifer Brewster (Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), p. 334.

[507] Catherine Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century" in *Gender and Empire*, edited by Philippa Levine (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 47.

[508] India Office Records, F/4/262/5837, pp. 42-43.

that the authorities prevented any inhuman commerce by saving the captives.[509] On 19 June 1828, Robert Caunter, the superintendent of the police, confirmed that Boucho was right, and made a list of Chinese junks that had arrived from the West Coast of Sumatra and Aceh.[510] Table 4 summarizes the list of Chinese junks logged in 1828.

Table 5: List of Chinese Junks arriving from the West Coast of Sumatra and Aceh, from 1 May to 19 June 1828

No.	Name of Junk	Owner	Captain	Departure Place	
1	Seen Soonhun	Tik Cheong	Lee Goan	Padang	
2	Hoh Hoatheen	Chea Soey	Kbung Too	Aceh	This vessel imported four women, two girls and two boys.
3	Him Haphoat	Soo Cheon	Tan Yukhan	Aceh	
4	Soon Sing	Lim Seong	Lim Piklow	Aceh	This vessel imported six women, two girls and one boy.
5	Sin Heen	Bboon Seoo	Lee Lake	Aceh	
6	Khin Ee	Lim Seong	Lim Yooey	Padang	This vessel one woman and one boy.

Source: India Office Records, G/34/123, p. 233.

The list shows that several junks imported slaves from Sumatra. Caunter claimed that young female servants usually became the wives or concubines of their Chinese masters when they grew up. In fact, some slaves felt happy and healthy, and they did not to want to return to their own country. For example, a female slave named Kafeena lived with a captain named Khung Too and wished to stay with him. When the Sumatran slaves from the list were found by the police, they could not stay with their masters anymore. Fortunately, the Rev Mr Boucho allowed them to be received into the nunnery as the police could not accommodate them.[511] In addition, the police found the Sumatran slaves who arrived in Penang between May and June in 1828. Chinese captains committed illegal activities by taking the slaves but some female

[509] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, "Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 3 June 1828" in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 223.
[510] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 23 June 1828' in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceeding* (1838), p. 223.
[511] ibid., p. 224.

slaves hoped to start new lives in Penang. Regardless of the slaves' opinions, the Chinese captains broke the law anyway and therefore the police had to investigate the slavery issues.

On 23 June that same year, Ibbeston sent a letter to CWH Wright, the Master Attendant of Penang, to report that three captains of Chinese junks were in custody at the police office, charged with trafficking in slaves.[512] On 12 July, Caunter submitted copies of depositions taken at the police office regarding the matter of the slave trade. Caunter claimed that Kbung Too, Lim Piklow and Lim Yooey did not report to the police that they had brought any passengers, and no less than 16 people. According to the captives of the three Chinese captains, these Chinese junks brought 100 people from Nias island in Sumatra. The captives were disposed of at different Malayan ports, and the Chinese purchased or procured the others.[513] The police investigated the illegal activities the Chinese suspects had committed in several places, not just Penang. The slaves were in demand among the Chinese migrants, and therefore the suspects had become suppliers.

The police went through additional investigations for each suspect. Khung Too, captain of the junk Hoh Hoatheen, denied the charges against him of having been in any way concerned in slave-dealing. He asserted that he did not go to Nias island, nor was he ever at that place. The defendant stated that four Sumatrans were taken on board at Trumore, on the west coast of Sumatra, where the defendants were obliged to receive six of them in liquidation of a debt held by a Chinese man named Tong Chooey. In Khung's opinion, these Sumatrans were taken as debtors, not as slaves, and came away with a defendant of their own free will. The Chinese captain intended most of them to be servants in his own family; one of the women was his concubine. When Caunter asked Khung about not reporting arrivals of the Sumatrans, the captain answered that he was ignorant of the regulations as he was out of this port.[514] The Chinese captain ignored human rights of the Sumatran captives, justifying taking the Sumatrans as the redemption of a debt. He simply claimed that he did not know any voyage regulations but he had to know different regulations as a captain.

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[512] ibid., p. 225.
[513] Parliament, House of Commons Papers. 'Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 21 July 1828.' in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 226-228.
[514] ibid., p. 229.

Lim Picklow, captain of the junk Soon Sing, and Lim Yooey, captain of the junk Khin Ee, had similar attitudes to Khoong's. Both Chinese captains denied having been at all concerned in slave-dealing, and that the Sumatrans on their boats were free people. Lim Picklow claimed that one of the women and the boy were intended to became servants in the defendant's family, the other four women were concubines for another four of the crew. Lim asserted that he never visited Nias before, and these Sumatrans all left Aceh voluntarily, where their debts were paid for them by the defendant and his people led them to their respective masters. Lim Yooey also claimed that his passengers were from Padang and returning to Penang voluntarily as debtor servants for his own family.[515] These Chinese defendants simply insisted that the Sumatrans followed them voluntarily but nothing they said demonstrated their insistence. If the defendants were right, they had to show legal certificates to be proven innocent.

In addition to the Chinese captains, the police investigated anyone involved in this incident. Sim Ticklow, a Chinese shopkeeper and George Town resident, stated that the little girl and one of the Nias women taken out of his house were sent to him by a Chinese man from Padang named Choo, for use as servants. Sim intended to adopt the young girl, and the other three women were concubines of three of the junk's crew, who requested him to let them stay at his place for few days. Lim Seong, a Chinese merchant, who owned the junks Soon Sing and Khin Ee, denied having ever been employed in slaving. Cheah Cheong, a Chinese merchant and an agent for his brother, Sooey, owner of the junk Hoh Hoatheen, made the same claim as Cheah Sooey, declaring he had never authorized that junk to be used for slaving.[516] These defendants denied the charges during the police investigation. However, they had commit an inhumane organized crime because this incident showed how various Chinese migrants formed their illegal networks in the Straits Settlement of Malacca.

Table 6: List of Nias women and children in Penang taken by Hoh Hoatheen, Soon Sing and Khin Ee

	No.	Names	Sex	Remarks
Hoh Hoatheen	1.	Saandee	Woman	Found on board the junk
	2.	Kafeeha	Woman	1.Found on board the junk 2.Living with the captain.

[515] ibid., p. 230.
[516] ibid., p. 230.

	3.	Nahah	Woman	1.Found in Lim Piklow's house, intended to be sold for prostitution
	4.	Jenoah	Girl	Found in the house of Chea Sooey, owner of the junk
	5.	Lykan	Girl	Found on board the junk
	6.	Dalooch	Boy	Found on board the junk
	7.	Boodee Boodee	Boy	1.Found on board the junk 2.Sold for 23 dollars to a native woman, named Mah Tejah, who has adopted him, a young child
Soon Sing	8.	Luhlye	Woman	Found in Lim Piklow's house, intended to be sold for prostitution
	9.	Noord	Woman	Found in Lim Piklow's house, intended to be sold for prostitution
	10.	Sinaaloo	Woman	Found in Lim Piklow's house, intended to be sold for prostitution
	11.	Cheghye	Woman	Found in China Koo Chow's house
	12.	Nahoo	Girl	Found in Lim Piklow's house
	13.	Esah	Girl	Found in Lim Piklow's house, with the before-mentioned women, a young child
	14.	Kaachuney	Boy	Found in Lim Piklow's house
Khin Ee	15.	Rakhye	Woman	Found in captain Lim Yooey's house
	16.	Lama	Boy	Found on board the junk
Besides the 16 aforementioned people, there were three women, named Bobok, Se Candoo, and Escoo, who were not yet found.				

Source: Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 23 June 1828' in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 225.

Among the captives in the list, it was suggested that several Sumatran women were to be sold as prostitutes. Lim Piklow, the captain of Soon Sing, was a supplier of prostitutes who attempted to sell four Sumatran women, who, except for Nahah, were kept captive in Piklow's house until the trade was completed. Apart from these four, most of the other women had no explanation for their arrivals, and there were four girls and four boys. The list also suggested three missing people who were not found in Penang. The records did not state how the Chinese defendants were judged after being in custody, but the issue became a matter of concern for the Penang government.

Table 5 also suggests that most Sumatran slaves were female. In fact, emigration of females from China was not allowed, and the gender ratio of the Malays was nearly equal. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society indicated that female slaves could increase the size of the population of the Chinese community.[517] Apart from the slaves sold for prostitution, female slaves could be paramours of the unmarried men, such as the case of Kafeena, who was found at Captain Kbung Too's house. As written in Chapter 2, the administration considered marriage between female slaves and Chinese male labourers in 1808 a way to solve the population problem, and it was considered this way for 20 years. Additionally, these Chinese men would accept no responsibilities for the wellbeing of the female slaves. In case of the Chinese of Banten, they had many children with female slaves, but the female slaves were then left behand when these Chinese migrants returned to their homelands.[518] Similar situations were likely in Penang as, due to the demand for the female slaves, purchasers simply considered the slaves as objects of sexual desire that could result in an out-of-wedlock birth. This situation shows that there were not many changes in the recognition of female slaves for 20 years. While in the early years, slaves were sent to urban planning or private farming, the illegal consumers later wanted the slaves for another reason for almost 20 years. Regardless of the government's law, slaves had been imported but the purpose of the importation changed from being employed in construction or housework to sexual exploitation in later years. The importation of slaves was banned in an attempt to abolish the system gradually, but illegal traders found loopholes.

Furthermore, this case revealed the existence of the 'marriage market'. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, women and girls were primarily intended to supply the marriage market.[519] Although this marriage market became common in later years, the female slave trade marked the beginning of the objectification of women. There was a difference in status, between slave and bride, between the early and late nineteenth century, but the women had been trade goods for certain male consumers. In fact, female emigration from China was prohibited at that time, and sex delinquency became one of the causes of crime, and the

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[517] British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. *Slavery and the Slave Trade in British India: With Notices of the Existence of These Evils in the Islands of Ceylon, Malacca, and Penang, Drawn from Official Documents*. (British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841) p. 68.

[518] Reid, *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, p. 26.

[519] Shawna Herzog. "Domesticating Labor: An Illicit Slave Trade to The British Straits Settlements, 1811–1845", *Journal of World History*, 28 (2017), p. 350.

imbalance of the sex ratio in the Chinese community led to a large demand for female slaves.[520] It was a male-dominated society and therefore the slave traders promoted the formation of a marriage market. Traders and consumers indulged in unethical practices that created this illegal market and the colonial administration needed to prepare countermeasures to correct the gender imbalance and thereby increase the legal marriage rate.

As these trades were exposed, the administration launched further investigations. The governor of Penang, Robert Fullerton, requested assistance with investigations into the viceroys of Malacca and Penang to uncover whether anybody was involved in the slave trade.[521] Furthermore, W. H. Gage, Rear Admiral and Commander-in-Chief, sent a letter to Fullerton to discuss countermeasures, suggesting that slave dealings by certain Chinese migrants would be the subject of legal investigation at the next session of "oyer and terminer". It was evident that a considerable slave trade was carrying on between Penang, Aceh and Nias, and the commander-in-chief requested that Fullerton authorized him to inspect any vessels at sea.[522] Although the historical records did not record the new policy being implemented, Gage attempted to eradicate any social ills on the sea through the inspection of vessels, an idea that could not disrupt illegal networks in the Straits of Malacca completely but that he expected would reduce the number of crimes.

In addition to the arrest procedure and investigations, the slave transport process was elucidated in the account of a potential victim who was not deceived by the slave traders:

> Of a cargo of thirty slaves, twenty have been known to perish before the conclusion of the voyage; and on a moderate calculation it may be estimated, that, of the total number purchased, one fourth never reach their destination, but fall victims to the various circumstances above mentioned.[523]

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[520] "Extract Singapore Consultations, 12 March 1830" in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 239.

[521] India Office Records, G/34/123, p. 152.

[522] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, "Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 5 August 1828" in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 233.

[523] *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 3 March 1829.

Every slave transport process was inhuman. The illegal traders did not care about lives of the hostages, and they did not take any responsibility for the Sumatrans' safety during the voyage. Worse still, the Sumatran hostages were not protected by their own local authority. While Chinese traders enslaved Sumatrans, the local rajas effectively condoned their illegal activities by getting compensation.[524] In reality, the local rajas were the slave suppliers of the Chinese traders. However, anti-slavery agitation was becoming a global trend. In the Cape Colony, a society was established to purchase the freedom of slaves and slave children.[525] Unfortunately, the behaviour of the Chinese traders and local rajas put the clock back. The Sumatrans were exposed to danger because their weak and corrupt leaders were only interested in their own benefit.

As a result of the slave trade issue, the Penang government attempted to redefine the term slavery. On 11 May 1830, Bentick, Bayley and Metcalf, Governors-General in India, conducted an exchange of opinions with Fullerton by letter. The governors-general stated that slaves registered under the preceding Dutch government needed to be considered as remaining in a state of slavery even after the transfer of the colony to British authority. Moreover, they suggested that the government and local authorities in Malacca must be guided by existing legislation until a different legal structure was put in place by a higher authority.[526] At that time, the Straits Settlements was established by combining Penang, Malacca and Singapore, which the Governors-General collectively called Malacca, while discussing Penang's situation. The Straits Settlements government, including Penang, only could prevent human trafficking but could not abolish slavery immediately.

Slave importation restrictions were introduced in order to abolish slavery. However, certain Chinese migrants remained involved in human trafficking. These Chinese slave traders made a mockery of government policy for two decades, establishing illegal networks with Chinese residents in Sumatra that enslaved innocent people. Their illegal junks transported slaves to Penang, as reported by a Christian priest, and although the captain of each junk had variety of

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[524] ibid.

[525] *Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca Government Gazette*, 28 November 1829.

[526] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, "Extract Prince of Wales' Island Public Consultations, 23 June 1830" in *Correspondence between Directors of East India Company and Company's Servants in India and Ceylon on Slavery and Slave Trade; Orders, Regulations and Proceedings* (1838), p. 237.

roles, such as transport or trade, the owners of junks and certain Chinese merchants were implicated in the slave trade. The consumers needed female slaves as their sexual objects, and the traders fulfilled their desires to achieve their own economic goals. Some slaves wanted to stay with their masters, but the traders and consumers broke the law. The fundamental cause of the female slave trade was the low marriage rate due to imbalanced gender ratio in Penang. The colonial officials needed to consider a countermeasure as a means to increase the legal marriage rate as the purpose of slave importation had changed over the two decades. As importing slaves was illegal in Penang, Chinese defendants were in custody that meant colonial officials had to consider the slavery issue and prevent any reoccurrences.

5.3. Chinese organizations

Chinese migrants established various organizations in Penang. As each Chinese migrant spoke a different dialect, organizations were established based on their home regions, such as Canton, Fujian or Macau. These organizations attempted to help the newly arrived migrants adjust to the new environment and developed solidarity. However, these solidarities triggered collectivism within the organizations that could result in social chaos. Organization members were expected to be loyal, and that could contradict governmental authority. The organizations considered the collective as the most important thing and might even cause armed uprisings to achieve their goals.

In fact, the Chinese had established organizations for many centuries. They were originally religious or charitable associations which were converted into political groups as a way to resist the Manchu conquest of China.[527] These characteristics then remained when the organizations moved overseas, in order to help the migrants. As the organizations provided protection and spiritual satisfaction, they became socially essential for the Chinese migrants. Blythe claims that a society with a secret ritual and binding blood-oaths of loyalty was influential in a foreign land where the ruling power was completely alien in race, language, religion, manners, and customs.[528] Despite a few native residents, Penang was an almost uninhabited land without

[527] Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 155.
[528] Wilfred Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: a historical study* (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1969), p. 1.

any administrative system until the British arrived and introduced a new administrative system to achieve their colonial goals. The newly established Penang government had not established any proper support mechanisms; therefore, Chinese organisations became an alternative source of security and structure for newcomers.

No specific information about Chinese organizations of Penang has survived from the earliest years. I assume therefore that the Chinese organizations did not cause trouble at that time, and therefore the colonial officials took no precautions against them. Francis Light, first Superintendent of Penang, recognized the establishment of organisations as Chinese culture. In 1794, he described the Chinese organizational activities during his Bengal consultations relating to Prince of Wales Island:

> …they are able to form parties and combinations in the most secret manner against any regulation of government which they disapprove and were they as brave as intelligent they would be dangerous subjects…[529]

In the records, Light stated how the Chinese migrants could act as a group, and although the Chinese had not demonstrated any organized opposition at that time, Light considered these characteristics as a potential danger. However, the colonial officials did not comprehend the scale of the Chinese organizations as no evidence was found, and, regardless of their characteristics, the officials entrusted most national projects, such as revenue farms, to the Chinese migrants as they did not face any opposition from the migrants. The colonial officials tried to understand Chinese culture in order to secure the success of the national project.

Eventually, the colonial officials did receive information about the Chinese organizations in 1825. In May that year, police reported to colonial officials about a Chinese man, named Shimyep or Shimyen. The Chinese man recounted his experience as an employee of a Macau Chinese goldsmith named Kinneao. The employer invited his employee to join a club that he himself belonged to, known as ‘Gheehin’, and all the club members had to take an oath as members to join in with any public actions. Shimyen also claimed that the club members had stores of spears and other weapons located in different places, and that the club charged each

[529] India Office Records, G/34/6, p. 122.

member a five-dollar entrance fee.[530] This report explained how Chinese organizations were managed, although there were differences in every organization. The members of the organization were required to fight for the group based on loyalty and prepared weapons, in case they were called on to threaten public safety in Penang.

Apart from Gheehin, there were two other Chinese organizations in George Town, named Hoosing and Hysan.[531] Table 6 summarizes the Chinese organizations known about in 1825.

Table 7: List of identified Chinese organizations in Penang

Name	Location	Manager	Occupation
Gheehin	Church Street	Boon Appao	Watchmaker
Hoosing	Ujong Pasir	Hoh Keao	Shopkeeper
Hysan	Praingin Road	Loh Allak	ditto

Source: India Office Records, G/34/101, p. 1315.

The colonial officials also found that a Chinese businessman named Low Achong, Low Ammee's son, was a member of both the Hoosing and Hysan clubs.[532] Low Ammee was recognized as one of the most influential Chinese capitalists in Penang and his son joined both organizations so that a network could be formed in the Chinese community under the Low family's influence. The Chinese organizations could then oppose the government in line with the designs of the Low family.

Based on the summaries of the three Chinese organizations in Penang, the governor of Penang ordered a further examination. Gheehin was established in 1801 with the aim of including sick and poor members. Most of the members of the organization were Cantonese Chinese, including tradesmen, mechanics, planters and seamen, but there were also four or five Chinchew Chinese members. The organization had two meetings every year. Hysan was established in 1809 or 1810 which the aim of relieving and assisting sick people from Wyehow. Every member of Hysan was from Wyehow in the province of Canton. The organization was mostly composed of planters or agriculturalists and held four meetings every year. Hoosing was established in 1822, again with the aim of helping sick people. Every member of Hoosing

[530] India Office Records, G/34/101, pp. 1313-1314.
[531] ibid., pp. 1314-1315.
[532] ibid., p. 1315.

was Cantonese, and the group included tradesmen, shopkeepers, mechanics, planters and others, holding two meetings every year. Unlike the other two groups, Hoosing did not require an oath but an entrance fee had to be paid to become a member. Low Achong was regarded as a dangerous character and therefore the police attempted to clarify accusations around Low by examining the three organizations. Indeed, Low was told to surrender to police custody for further questioning.[533] These Chinese organizations were established to help their compatriots and they could act as good influences within the Chinese community, but the colonial officials were warned about their illegal actions and the involvement of Low Achong. The officials wanted to prevent any threats to the social order, and therefore they investigated anything related to Low.

In addition to these three Chinese organizations, there were eight Chinese clubs, called Hooeys, in Penang, some of them were established a few years before 1825. At that time, there were about 3000 Chinese migrants in Penang, who were divided into regional groups: Canton, Hokkien or Macau. The Chinchew (Hokkien) Chinese migrants were usually showed great jealousy of other regional groups.[534] The increase in the Chinese population in Penang divided the migrants into various groups that then attracted the colonial officials' attention. From this point, officials began to understand the circumstances within the Chinese community. Officials had previously usually cared about commercial activities, gambling addiction or the poorhouse because these issues were related with Penang's tax revenue or public order, but as per Light's concerns 31 years earlier, Chinese migrants also organized fraternal societies and the colonial officials realised that these Chinese organizations were influential in the migrant community. Therefore, the officials had to worry about the potential danger of violence, for example.

Apart from reports into Gheehin, Hoosing and Hysan, there were more investigations looking at four other Chinese organizations because of the governor's concern. Choongchang Khoon was established in 1821, and its president, Ow Yongsow, was a pepper planter. Every member of the organization was from Chongfa, a district in Canton, China. The members were planters or traders, the entrance fee was between one and five dollars, and they had meetings three times a year. Wyechow Khoon was established in 1824, and its president, Lee Ahang, was a pepper planter. The majority of the members of the organization were renters, but the

[533] ibid., pp. 1476-1480.
[534] ibid., p. 1316.

rest were fishermen, traders and artificers. The entrance fee was from one to 10 dollars, and the members met three times a year. Yan Woh Khoon was established in 1805, and its president, Chan Achoon, was a shopkeeper. Every member of the organization was from Mang Chow, a hill district in the province of Canton. The organization had 17 members, including shopkeepers, planters, goldsmiths and barbers, and the entrance fee was from one to 10 dollars, with three meetings a year. Yeng San Khoon was established in 1795 and founded by some Chinese migrants from the Sambas coast in Borneo. The organization was intended to promote harmony among the Canton Chinese in Penang, but there were only 16 members in 1825. Most members were planters, and the rest were carpenters and labourers. The president was Chung Ayyat, who was a small-scale shopkeeper. The entrance fee was between half and one dollar, and there were three meetings in year.[535]

These four organizations had some similarities with the three larger organizations mentioned above. Cantonese Chinese were principal members of each of them, and every organization had annual meetings. However, these Cantonese Chinese belonged to different organizations because each migrant was from a different area within their home district. The oldest organization, Yeng San Khoon, could be an example of the division among Cantonese Chinese as it had only a few members.

In June 1829, the police produced an updated report about the Chinese organizations in Penang. In addition to the already existing groups, Choon Sim and Woh Sang Khoon were newly founded additions. Choon Sim was established in 1826, and its president was Ong Eng. Every member of the organization was Chinchew Chinese, including shopkeepers, labourers and seamen. It had 200 members, and no entrance fee or oath was required. The organization planned charitable projects for its members, such as managing funerals for any members that died. Woh Sang Khoon was established in 1827, and its president was Soh Aloke. Every member of the organization was Cantonese and were mostly labourers, agriculturalists and shopkeepers. The object of the organization was to pay for the funerals and burial rites of its members, and the club held a meeting four times a year for entertainment and religious ceremonies.[536] Aside from these new organizations, the police did not describe Hoosing in the

[535] India Office Records, G/34/102, pp. 116-121.

[536] G/34/129. P.60-61.

report, suggested it had disbanded, though the report did not state any relevant information. Furthermore, the report stated the changes of leadership in several organizations.

The leaders of these Chinese organizations were strong enough to settle many disputes and complaints privately. Every organization was known for its culture of loyalty, which became the social structure of the membership. Within each organization, every member concealed their identity so that they only could communicate each other through signs. As evidence of membership, every member received a diploma, consisting of certain secret characters written on red cloth. When any member revealed the secrets of their organization, they were murdered.[537] Each organization formed its own society that was based on a strong leader and loyal members.

The Chinese organizations attracted the members because they were based on an understanding of the condition of Chinese migrants. William Armstrong Clubley, Resident Councillor at Penang, explained what Chinese migrants experienced on their arrival in Penang:

> With regard to the subject of Chinese emigrants arriving here… they are as stated people of poor condition, and generally without the means of defray their passage money from China. Thus on their arrival here, as is the case in other parts, their labour is temporarily mortgaged to individuals in consideration of the payment of their passage money…[538]

According to Clubley's record, Chinese migrants contracted debts for their journeys to Penang, which amounted to between 15 to 20 dollars, and the Chinese migrants were employed in voluntary service to learn about the nature and value of their future labour.[539] After investigating the Chinese organizations, colonial officials began to understand how the Chinese migrants reached Penang. As mentioned in Chapter 3, they became indentured labourers upon their arrival in order to pay back their debts. These migrant labourers needed help in their new environment and therefore they became members of the organizations. Instead of uncovering any clues about the organizations, Clubley saw their good effects as they helped the migrants in poor conditions.

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[537] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil,* pp. 246-247.
[538] India Office Records, G/34/102, pp. 18-19.
[539] ibid., p.19.

Moreover, the Chinese organizations encouraged the members to be united in order to obtain revenue from arrack farms, as the mutual benefits their unity created meant non-Chinese revenue farmers might get nothing. As the organizations demonstrated the importance of unity, betrayers were sure to be murdered.[540] The organizations demanded allegiance that assured their mutual benefit but never showed mercy to traitors.

Apart from the Chinese poorhouse, five Chinese organizations accommodated some sick and poor migrants on charitable grounds, opening up their headquarters as accommodation for the weak. However, the good intentions of the organizations were not always welcomed by other Chinese migrants because they doubted the honesty of the organizations. These organizations protected robbers and gangsters and therefore some migrants did not trust them.[541] Table 7 summarizes how many weak Chinese were accommodated by each organization.

Table 8: Number of sick and poor Chinese living at the different organizations in June 1825

Name	Number
Hysan	8
Gheehin	7
Wyechow	6
Wohsan	4
Yen Woh	2

Source: India Office Records, G/34/102, p. 130.

Compared to the poorhouse, each organization accommodated fewer inpatients. Charity was not the major purpose of the organization; therefore, they only could offer a small favour. The organizations could not be perfect substitutes, but they attempted minor contributions to the Chinese community.

Unlike the good intentions above, several Chinese organizations attempted to bring social disorder to Penang, and the police and colonial officials investigated these organizations as they could not ignore a potential threat. On 9 May 1825, the governor of Penang, Robert Fullerton was concerned about the weapons that the Chinese organizations possessed, claiming

[540] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, pp. 246-247.
[541] India House Records, G/34/102, pp. 125-126.

that the weapons should be seized, and the acting secretary of the government, John Anderson, relayed the governor's instructions to Richard Caunter, the superintendent of police, by a letter. The secretary stated in the letter that the police should take Low Achong into custody.[542] Convinced that the Chinese organizations could threaten the public security of Penang at any time, Fullerton attempted to take decisive steps against them possessing weapons. In addition, colonial officials aimed to counteract the organizations' influence by arresting Low Achong, expecting that the organizations would cooperate with the government if their most influential man was in custody.

Before the governor decided to arrest Low Achong, Che Toah obtained information about Low and reported it to the governor of Penang. Che Toah was one of the principal Chinese merchants in Penang and had established various trade networks in the Straits of Malacca. The Chinese merchant received a letter from his agent in Ligor, where the agent had seen Low. The agent found that 500 to 1000 Macau Chinese had held a meeting near the rice bazaar, and at that time, Achong attended the meeting as a head of the Low tribe.[543] As mentioned in the previous chapter, some Chinese enjoyed a strong connection with the rajah of Ligor. In fact, the Penang government had long suspected links between a group of Penang Chinese and the rajah of Ligor before Che's report, and they were concerned about the possibility of any illegal activities within the collective.[544] These Chinese migrants shuttled between Penang and Ligor and they were suspected of a conspiracy among the rajah, pirates and themselves. Perhaps nothing was found from the meeting of certain Chinese organization in Ligor, but Low Achong was found at the scene, suspected of being the mastermind of weapon possession in some Chinese organizations. If these Chinese migrants had caused a revolt, they could kill innocent people with their weapons. The colonial officials had to introduce social stability for the safety of its residents and therefore they needed to prepare for the worst.

On 21 May 1825, Caunter reported investigation to Anderson. The superintendent of police stated that no information was obtained to prove weapon possession in the three Chinese organizations. He explained that these organizations were established to help sick Chinese migrants, and the Chinese migrants did not have relatives or friends in a foreign country like

[542] India House Records, G/34/101, p. 1322.

[543] ibid., p. 1329.

[544] India House Records, G/34/84., pp. 383-386.

those in Penang. The investigation revealed that Low Achong did not belong to any of these organizations.[545] Unexpectedly, there was no evidence against the Chinese organizations and Low Achong. Caunter was confident in the case about the Chinese organizations and Low, but nothing was proven. Perhaps the Penang police had not got conclusive enough information to prove anything. At this point, Caunter's attitude changed as well, as he decided to change his attitude and reported on the positive functions of the organizations.

However, Fullerton could not trust the investigation report or opinions of Clubley. On 22 June 1825, the governor claimed that the government should take Shimyep's tip-off seriously as certain Chinese migrants were viewed with alarm from 1822 onwards. Although Fullerton conceded the positive information reported, he was repeatedly warned by European and native residents of Penang about the Macau Chinese. The governor also asserted that Low Achong was the principal agent of the rajah of Ligor as he was sure he received correct information. When Low returned from Ligor to Penang, Fullerton had a conversation with Low for 30 minutes, during which Fullerton discovered that Low had advised the rajah to attack Selangor. In addition to the conversation with the suspect, he remembered the report from Che Toah and Shimyep and therefore he was confident that Low was a dangerous man.[546] Fullerton and the police received different information about Low, and the governor was concerned about the reliability of the police's information. He knew about the social benefits of the Chinese organizations but was also aware that they could be a security threat as the governor received the information from various sources.

On 22 June 1825, Caunter reported to John Anderson, acting secretary of the Penang government, about Low Achong, stating that Low was now placed in close custody and any talk with him was strictly forbidden. The superintendent of the police secured testimonies from some respectable Chinchew Chinese traders that Achong was the head of some Chinese organizations, and the opinions of these Chinchew traders contradicted the positive reports received in May. Although each organization had its clubhouse for accommodating its sick members, Caunter apologised for his report, which was not written objectively,[547] as the investigation had been undertaken by the organization members that had provided positive

[545] ibid., pp. 1600-1602.
[546] India Office Records, G/34/102, pp. 94-106.
[547] ibid., pp. 122-129.

reports in the past. Caunter had to revise the report carefully, but he was obsessed with the charitable purposes of the organizations. After correcting his mistakes, he decided to guard Low strictly to enable a more precise investigation.

In fact, the colonial officials attempted to establish good relations with various Chinese leaders, not just Kapitan Cina. They never showed favouritism towards certain groups because cooperation was their priority. However, Achong's behaviour broke the trust between the administration and certain Chinese groups. As written in Chapter 3, Achong butchered pigs illegally and instigated violence against policemen. He was mistaken in his belief he was above the law and committed unlawful acts several times. He never respected others when exercising his influence and therefore he never thought how he might cause confusion, even though his supercilious behaviour could trigger violence in Penang at any time.

This case also represented more than one particular man or an organizations' antisocial conduct. In this case, there were two groups of Chinese migrants, one which supported the British officials and one that opposed the colonial government. This situation illustrated how each Chinese migrant considered different groups as the ruling power as they never integrated into a single opinion as one community. Apart from the regional homogeneity of each organization, the existence of Chinese organizations suggested the different political lines that stretched among the migrants. These different political views became one of the sources of conflict at that time.

Apart from Low's conspiracy, Chinese organizations were involved in smuggling. On 18 May 1829, seven Chinese opium farmers – Che Leong, Bengsan, Teng Layho, Che Tong, Ko Ekchye, Tan Watsoye and Chew Ong – sent a petition to the collector's office to report their loss, claiming that they had found a group of smugglers selling chandu in Ujong Pasir without any legal right. The smugglers were members of a Chinchew organization, the members of which threatened the petitioners with weapons. When the petitioners reported the problem to the police, the magistrate told the petitioners that they had no authority to interfere in the incident. Moreover, the police always refused to help the petitioners. They could not assert their commercial rights due to non-cooperation from the police, and they were afraid of revenge from the Chinchew organization. The petitioners begged the government for protection and for

the police to arrest the offenders.[548] The name of the organization was not recorded, but the organization members clearly violated the rights of the opium farmers. The offenders were Chinchew Chinese who threatened the opium farmers in order to make unfair profits. The police was not strong enough to take charge of security and this situation allowed the illegal activities of certain Chinese groups to go unpunished. The collectivism of the organization disconcerted their compatriots and created a sense of "the law of the jungle" within the Chinese community.

In June 1829, William Caunter, Law Agent of Penang, reported on the trial of the opium offenders to I. Pattullo, the secretary of the Penang government. In the trial, the judges discussed whether opium offenders should make reparations to the opium farm renters, and the exclusive privileges were given to Che Leong, Koo Bengsan, Teng Layho, Che Tong, Ko Ekchye, Tan Watsoye and Chew Ong to rent the land for opium farming from May 1829 to April 1830. The offender, Chan Yeang, breached the regulations by cheating and defrauding without any rights, purchasing a quantity of opium from certain unknown people and not from the legal renters already listed. Therefore, Chan Yeang was sentenced to forfeiting the opium and he was made liable to pay 100 Spanish dollars to the renters.[549] According to the result of trial, Chan Yeang was the only offender, which was inconsistent with the petition as there were more accomplices in the case. Perhaps the Chinchew organization was able to influence the judges so that there only one offender was tried. The Chinese renters were given responsibility by the Penang government and they had to be protected; however, the police could not protect them and the renters had to accept the suboptimal result in the court.

Between 1825 and 1829, the Penang government suspected twice that the Chinese organizations had protected Chinese murderers or robbers, and many of the organizations breached the public peace. The organizations provoked Chinese migrants to break the law. Pattullo aimed to prohibit the organizations from holding any meetings in order to prevent further incidents. At that time, organizational activities were already strictly prohibited in China, and anyone concerned was punished. In fact, members were required to practise cruel rites, such as drinking blood, and the organizations aggravated conflicts between the Cantonese,

[548] India Office Records, G/34/129, pp. 371-373.

[549] India Office Records, G/34/130, pp. 183-185.

including Macau migrants, and the Chinchew Chinese.[550] Once a member was arrested for a crime, every member of the organization tried to get the criminals off. When relevant clues of the crimes were found, members destroyed the prosecution's evidence.[551] The superintendent of police believed that Chinese organizations intimidated the public security forces and therefore he attempted to prohibit their activities. The organizations protected dangerous men, instead of reporting them to the police, and triggered conflicts among the Chinese migrants. The bigger issue was that the organizations tried to free their members when they were arrested as criminals. Organization members achieved their goals by hook or by crook and therefore they continued to commit crimes, being saved by their powerful sponsors who supplied the motives and opportunities to repeatedly commit crime.

Apart from the Chinese organizations in Penang Island, there was an organization of Chinese sugar planters in Province Wellesley. Before the establishment of the organization, there was keen competition among the sugar planters, who took arms to threaten each other using various weapons. However, they realised that the constant conflict caused big losses for all the planters. and they agreed to establish an organization to promote amicable cooperation. This organization then had an indirect influence on amount of sugar produced.[552] While the Chinese organizations in Penang could bring about social unrest, the sugar planters stopped the fighting after establishing an organization in Wellesley. The organization meant the planters could focus on sugar production more than internal conflicts.

The Kapitan Cina, Koh Lay Huan, lost his influence from the 1820s because the Chinese organizations grew in influence, constructing their own power instead of cooperating with the past power, Koh.[553] Each organization clarified its political course. Although certain Chinese organizations attempted illegal actions, not every organization was against the Penang government. Each organization worked for its own good, which sometimes fell into extreme egoism, but, regardless of the effect on wider society, the Chinese organizations used every conceivable means to achieve their goals. From a positive perspective, several Chinese

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[550] India Office Records, G/34/129, pp. 57-59.
[551] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil,* p. 248.

[552] ibid., p. 247.
[553] Neil Khor Jin Keong, "Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Penang", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 79 (2006), p. 68.

organizations accommodated poor Chinese migrants, which improved their images as organizations, as their good influences on the society appealed to others. At the same time, the above ruled the Chinese migrant community with fear, and the migrants would be convinced that these organizations were strong enough to overcome the government. They demanded allegiance from their members or every migrant instead of respecting the government.

The Chinese organizations were already established by 1795 but the Penang government began investigating them only from 1825. The organizations aimed to promote friendship among the Chinese migrants who were divided by each migrant's regional origins, but some organizations only accepted members from certain districts. They accommodated poor members in their meeting houses and conducted funerals for deceased members; however, the organizations were not always so benevolent. When the police received a report about the Chinese organizations possessing weapons, colonial officials kept tabs on the organizations as potential threats. The organizations required loyalty from their members and possessed weapons to use to fight at any time; some organizations had an influential leader who was supported by a foreign state. If the leader caused a public revolt, Penang could be plunged into uncontrollable confusion and therefore the colonial officials had to confront the issue squarely. The Chinese organizations had to guide their members to be exemplary citizens but they trained immoral mobs. The colonial state realised that these organizations' activities were successfully restricted in China and they attempted to adopt similar policies for public order in Penang.

5.4. Restriction of Chinese arrivals

Over several decades, there was a growth in the population of Chinese migrants in Penang. As a result of this population growth, gang activities and crimes increased in number; therefore, the colonial administration considered countermeasures. Their concerns were especially triggered by several Chinese organizations that influenced the most migrants and conspired against the colonial government. Within the Chinese community, each organization had a different political line regarding cooperating with or opposing the government. Despite the cooperation they received from certain groups, the government restricted Chinese immigration to preserve social order. The new policy meant any Chinese migrant required permission before entry and the Chinese population could be affected.

Colonial officials attempted to control immigration from China in order to reduce the power of Chinese migrants. They restricted migration from Macau in 1826 so that the newcomers had to get permission upon arrival to enter. Van Eijl explains how the Dutch Aliens Act of 1849 affected illegal migrants in the Netherlands, aiming to prevent entrance of poor aliens because poor migrants could not be deported if they received residence permits.[554] As the Dutch implemented one law in their homeland, British officials restricted immigration to their colony in a similar way. Hayter asserts that racism was the principal reason for border controls, giving the example of Irish migrants in Britain in the nineteenth century, who misunderstood as lazy, idolatrous, diseased and criminal and forced to live and work in harsh conditions.[555] In Penang, there were vicious turf wars between the different dialect groups after the death of the most influential figure, Koh Lay Huan, and his absence could not prevent further crimes. The repeated conspiracies resulted in restricting migration into Penang from late 1820s.

In most cities in the Straits Settlement of Malacca, including Penang, Chinese migrants were divided into different dialect groups. These various Chinese groups had some differences. The Hokkien Chinese had a more dynamic character than other groups. The Cantonese Chinese were divided into three classes: migrants from the town of Canton and its neighbourhoods; the natives of Macau and other islands in the river; and the natives of some mountainous districts in the same province. The Macau Chinese were not as influential as the other Cantonese migrants.[556] However, Blythe did not agree with the historical record completely. He claims that the Cantonese, Hakkas, Hainanese, and Tiechius were all classified as 'Macau Chinese' because these groups departed from Macau. He explained further that the Hokkiens were called 'Chinchew Chinese' because this group departed from the port of Chuan Chiu, north of Amoy.[557] In general, colonial officials recognized the differences between the Chinese groups but the records did not always state the correct information. Macau Chinese could be classified

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[554] Corrie van Eijl, "Tracing back 'illegal aliens' in the Netherlands, 1850-1940" in *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective* edited by Marlou Schrover, Joanne van der Leun, Leo Lucassen, and Chris Quispel (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), p. 46.

[555] Teresa Hayter. *Open Borders: the case against immigration controls* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 25.

[556] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, "A View of the Emigrations of the Chinese to the various Countries adjacent to China" in *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. First Report (China Trade), Minutes of Evidence, Appendix* (1830), p. 297.

[557] Wilfred Blythe. *The impact of Chinese secret societies in Malaya: a historical study*. Royal Institute of International Affairs. P.44.

as Cantonese as minorities were established as arbitrary units by the officials. Despite sharing the same culture, the Chinese migrants were divided by regional discrimination.

In fact, the colonial officials identified each Chinese migrant's home region in 1813 for the first time. As written in Chapter 3, there was a complaint from a Chinese pork farmer whose hogs were slaughtered without the farmer's permission, and the farmer claimed that the suspects were Chinchew (Hokkien) Chinese.[558] This case suggested that regional discrimination caused a conflict among the Chinese migrants; therefore, the regional origins of assailants and victims were specified. In 1825, the police received a report about the Chinese organizations and identified each Chinese migrant's home region. As written in the above section, the police stated the issue between the informant and his employer from Macau while investigating the Chinese organizations.[559] The Macau Chinese were reported to the colonial officials from 1825 onwards but they were not as influential as the Hokkien or Cantonese Chinese.

As written in previous chapters, the Hokkien group cooperated with the Penang government. Kapitan Cina, Koh, was a Hokkien man and several Chinese organizations failed in their conspiracies as several Hokkien merchants reported them to the officials. However, the government could no longer ignore the crimes and the officials then attempted to reduce the power of the Chinese groups. They believed that newly arrived migrants might belong to extreme groups and therefore that similar cases would occur in the future. The internal conflicts were issues for the Chinese community but the government could not accept any incidents as they related to social unrest.

In 1826, Richard Caunter claimed he had contacted the Macau government or British chiefs in China about preventing further arrivals of Chinese migrants. If any suspicious Chinese migrants were identified, he planned to send them back to Macau and punish anybody involved in illegal entry. On the next day, Robert Fullerton, governor of Penang, recorded a supplementary explanation about immigration from Macau. The governor explained that Macau Chinese had reached Penang annually via Portuguese ships and became debtor servants for a certain period, paying travelling expenses to the captains. Fullerton pointed out that these newcomers arrived in Penang without informing or getting permission from the police. Every

[558] India Office Records, G/34/38, pp. 93–97.
[559] India Office Records, G/34/101, pp. 1313-1314.

passenger needed a pass upon arrival or they would be sent directly back to Macau.[560] The colonial officials were not happy with arrival of Macau Chinese. The colonial records did not explain why immigration of Macau Chinese was restricted in Penang but they were only allowed to come with legal passes. As the arrival of Macau Chinese was restricted in Penang, they used Portuguese ships for free entry.

In order to prevent this free entry via Portuguese ships, John Anderson sent a letter to the commander of the Portuguese ship, Brig Derempenha, in January 1827. Anderson stated some precautions in the letter, stating that any Chinese passengers from Macau needed permission before getting on board the ship, and the commander needed to make a list of legal entrants.[561] Anderson's letter suggested that the Penang government only wanted a few migrants from Macau, but colonial officials believed that they were not able to restrict arrivals without cooperating with the commanders of the Portuguese ships.

On 9 January 1827, Caunter reported a number of Macau Chinese in Penang. The list did not state when they had arrived but it was assumed the investigation took place between 1826 and 1827. Among the passengers, there were 98 traders and 141 labourers. Some labourers were not employed but came to Penang for job hunting.[562] Table 9 summarizes the information regarding the Chinese passengers from Macau.

Table 9: Number of Chinese passengers by the Portuguese ship

Name of the ship	Number of passengers
Dezenpenko Brig	82
Angelica	108
St Antoneo	57
Total	247

Source: India Office Records, G/34/115, P. 111.

Caunter sent another letter to Anderson offering a supplementary explanation about the Chinese passengers. The vast number of Chinese migrants arrived in Penang in the previous 15 or 20 years. The superintendent was concerned about an influx of vagrants and bad

[560] India Office Records, G/34/115, pp. 22-30.
[561] ibid., p. 53.
[562] ibid., p. 111.

characters. If any ineligible entrants, particularly Achenese and Malays, arrived in Penang, they could be sent back to their home regions directly. However, the Chinese entrants could be sent to neighbouring states if the government could not send them back to China.[563] The letter clarified the immigration status of certain aliens. Unlike before, Penang had enough population by the late 1820s, and therefore the colonial officials strengthened immigration controls. The administration had already experienced various social issues, such as gambling addiction or robbery, which meant that only innocent migrants were welcome. Moreover, the colonial officials could not trust Chinese migrants anymore after experiencing issues with their organizations. Moreover, there was another case that left the Penang government with a pessimistic impression of the Chinese. As written in Chapter 3, there was a conflict between Chinese gamblers and soldiers in Province Wellesley. At that time, several soldiers were wounded while the soldiers were checking the legality of the gamblers. In the province, most Chinese migrants originated from Macau and they were no longer happy with the British officials. The Chinese migrants claimed that the government increased the rent on the sugar farms and as a result they opened a gambling house without a legal license. In the province, there was a considerable number of Chinese migrants who had recently settled down without permission. They had seized public land illegally; therefore, the superintendent of the province considered countermeasures to restore social order. The migrants recognized that the officials depressed their economic conditions and as a result they conducted illegal acts.[564] On more than one occasion, these migrants had several confrontations with the colonial authorities, blowing sharply on buffalo horns to express their dissatisfaction.[565] In addition to the conspiracy by several Chinese organizations a few years earlier, the administration was worried about the potential for violence of the Chinese migrants. The colonial administration no longer welcomed Chinese workers because they wanted to avoid further confrontations and these similar cases meant the British restricted the arrival of Chinese immigrants.

Furthermore, there were similar cases in the neighbouring states that meant the administration restricted Chinese immigration into the whole of the Straits Settlement. For example, at least 883 Chinese people migrated from Riau to Singapore in 1827 but the

[563] ibid., pp. 114-116.

[564] India Office Records, G/34/132, pp. 209-211.

[565] Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, p. 158.

authorities there were concerned by the frequent robberies conducted by the Chinese.[566] In Riau, there were 30,000 Chinese migrants but the Dutch government could not control them due to frequent robberies and burglaries. Robert Fullerton, the governor of Penang, could not ignore the similar cases from outside the colony, and he worried about further depravation in the near future.[567] The same policy was maintained for similar reasons as the Singaporean government also had stereotypes about the Chinese. Dutch officials experienced worse in Riau because the Chinese migrants were out of control. Unlike 20 years ago, the British recognized the Chinese community as the black sheep of the whole settlement.

From 1829, the Penang government officially prohibited landing of Chinese without permission. The new regulations had no limitations on the numbers of entrants but the entrants had to ensure their registration and address. The regulations had loopholes as the commanders of the vessels did not have to take responsibility when any passengers arrived without permission. The continuance of regulations could be reconsidered depending on the effects.[568]

Regardless of political lines or dialects, several Chinese groups were involved in several social issues. These Chinese groups committed illegal activities repeatedly and the government decided eventually to restrict Chinese immigration. The colonial officials expected to solve the problems by controlling the Chinese population. Although some Chinese passengers planned to return to their home regions after the end of their contracts, the colonial officials never trusted them. These passengers could reside in Penang permanently and become involved in social problems. The officials needed to think about alternative solutions, such as strengthening the police force or applying heavy fines, but they simply restricted immigration.

5.5. Conclusion

Apart from the commercial activities, colonial officials did not know many details about the Chinese migrants, such as their class or characters. The officials usually cared about collecting tax revenue from the Chinese revenue farmers or Chinese migrants who needed support. The government had to help any migrants who were in trouble, but the officials could not tolerate

[566] *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register*, 12 February 1829.
[567] India Office Records, G/34/132, pp. 213-215.
[568] India Office Records, F/4/1271/51015, pp. 1-5.

any illegal activities. The illegal activity of the Chinese migrants was reported to the government from early years in various ways. These illegal activities of Chinese migrants were robbery, organization activities, the slave trade and illegal migration. The repeated illegal activities of the Chinese left a bad taste in the mouth of the colonial officials, who felt they could no longer trust Chinese migrants.

Since the Chinese migrants arrived in Penang, they were involved in various incidents as suspects. Crimes were committed by every ethnic group in Penang, including the Chinese, who committed robberies and caused small fires and were a concern to society. At first, the Kapitan Cina had the right to judge Chinese criminals until the official law system was introduced. However, the changes in the legal system did not affect any crime rates of the Chinese. As the former Recorder of Penang concerned, the Chinese suspects committed crimes repeatedly. Although the colonial officials took these cases seriously, they could not improve the system due to insufficient administrative power. The officials had to strengthen police power or punish the suspects severely, but nothing was changed. The officials could only advise the residents in advance to help crime prevention, while the Chinese criminals wrote their shameful and alienated history during the settlement process.

Contrary to the government's policy, several Chinese captains brought slaves from Sumatra in their junks. The Chinese captains established networks with Chinese residents in Sumatra to sustain the slave business. Although the Chinese captains asserted that the Sumatrans boarded the junks voluntarily, one of the captains was found guilty of selling several women as prostitutes. As female slaves were in demand, male consumers and traders treated them as trade goods. The Chinese captains were in custody after police investigation, and the Penang government carefully conducted inspections at sea or redefined slavery. The slave trade was related to human rights and observing the constitution; therefore, the officials needed advice from the supreme government in India. The slave traders realised there was an imbalance in the gender ratio in the Chinese community, and they established networks with slave wholesalers in Sumatra and a marriage market. The colonial officials needed a fundamental solution to prevent illegal trade and increase legal marriage rates.

Apart from these incidents, the colonial officials launched some other investigations into the Chinese organizations. Since the first Chinese organization was established in 1795, more

organizations had been founded to help Chinese migrants. Each organization was managed by a president that accepted members with entrance fees and each aimed to help the newly arrived migrants from certain areas in China. Several organizations gave accommodation to poor Chinese migrants in their headquarters, seemingly enhancing the stability of society by helping the migrants. However, some organizations required excessive loyalty from their members and caused unrest in order to expand the organizations, and they got support from the neighbouring state. The government arrested the leader of these organizations in order to prevent violent crime. Moreover, certain organizations extorted from the revenue farmers that could reduce national revenue. The Chinese organizations caused social problems so the Penang government attempted to restrict their activities.

The increased gang activity and number of crimes persuaded the colonial officials to restrict Chinese immigration to Penang. Unlike early years of Penang, the government did not welcome Chinese entrants anymore. The colonial officials worried about the influx of vagrants; therefore, every entrant was required to get a legal pass upon their arrival. As the entrants required permission, some Chinese landed in Penang from Portuguese ships. The passengers on Portuguese ships were not required to fulfil the same strict entry criteria that attracted more Chinese passengers than before. The colonial officials requested the commanders to check every passenger's eligibility for boarding. The officials thought that Penang had a large enough population to raise its national revenue; they did not want newcomers to cause further social problems. Over the past three decades, there had been a change in perception about the Chinese among the administration; as a result, Chinese immigration was restricted gradually. As a result of strict entrance criteria, the Chinese population did not increase, and the Macau Chinese remained a minor group in the Chinese community.

Although the Chinese migrants were already involved in the shameful cases of the early years, they experienced further cases in the 1820s. Since the Kapitan Cina lost his power and died, the Chinese migrants had demonstrated melioristic behaviours. The considerable number of Chinese migrants became out of control and that had a bad influence on society. Moreover, colonial officials were sensitive about the Chinese organizations and newcomers from Macau. They did not display a favourable attitude towards certain classes of Chinese due to their negative issues at that time. Most issues, such as the criminal activity, the slave trade and other

conspiracies, during this period dishonoured the whole Chinese community; therefore, the colonial officials attempted tighter controls to frustrate illegal actions. However, the Chinese community experienced unexpected issues in the 1820s centred on social disturbance and population control. These issues were related with population growth of Chinese community. The population growth determined the colonial state and Christian missionaries to establish religious or educational facilities. The freedom of religion and educational opportunities diversified identities of Chinese migrants that will be discussed on the next chapter.

Chapter 6.

Religions and Education in the Chinese community

This chapter focuses on how Chinese migrants were affected by and engaged with Christian missionaries. Before meeting Christian missionaries, the Chinese migrants usually worshipped their own gods. The Chinese migrants attempted to harmonize by practising religious activities together. Apart from the traditional religious activities, such as church services, fellowship, educational activities and medical services, the Chinese migrants could experience Christianity in other ways in Penang. Among the various missionary activities, the missionaries realized that Chinese migrants were keen to access opportunities for education and therefore they established a variety of mission schools in the colony. This chapter aims to explore how Chinese migrants were affected by these religious activities and education. The religious activities and education affected identities of the Chinese migrants. Related cases in the India Office records, missionary archives, Parliamentary papers and newspapers which will be used to examine how some Chinese migrants were affected by Christian missionaries.

6.1. Traditional religious practices in the Chinese community

As Penang became a multi-ethnic area, each migrant group had its own religious culture. In Penang, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity became major religions but the Chinese migrants usually performed ancestral rites or folk beliefs as part of their traditional religion in the early period. Despite many Chinese being Buddhists, most worshipped the ancestors and idols, as described in both the East India Company records and the missionary archives, though these descriptions were often coloured by prejudice. For example, colonial officials described the practices concerning social issues, such as links between worships and disease, and the missionaries were surprized by their passionate faith based on cultural difference. Regardless of religious beliefs, Chinese migrants maintained their cultural identities by continuing to practice their traditional rites, invoking blessings and developing emotional bonds within the community through these traditions.

In contrast to other religions, Chinese religion involves the worship of deities such as nature spirits or ancestors. Chinese Malaysian households may have had a goddess of mercy on its main altar in the living room to whom worshippers should pray[569] as a protector goddess. In addition, the Chinese migrants took care of the burial grounds as another way to worship their ancestors. In Malacca, Chinese migrants occupied the bases of different hills for their tombs and burial places,[570] while in Singapore, the Chinese burial grounds were so numerous that they covered large areas. Each grave had a tomb, which became an object of great attention for the family, and the burial grounds were managed by the heads of the clans.[571] In fact, Chinese Singaporeans in the 1880s fought conflicts regarding the burial grounds, as the expansion of the city was restricted by the scarcity of suitable land for building purposes and the town planners attempted to remove Chinese burial grounds. The Chinese members of the Legislative Council requested an enough time to relocate burial grounds,[572] but the colonial state did not consider any cultural differences and that provoked a revolt among the Chinese migrant community in Singapore. The state did not care much about Chinese religious and burial culture because they believed that Chinese culture disrupted urban development. The Chinese migrants followed the new policy without any resistance. The literature describes various specific rites performed by Chinese migrants in the Malay Archipelago, with the same religious services performance regardless of their specific location, even while each colonial town had different policies due to the local circumstances.

When Francis Light founded Penang, he claimed that Chinese and Siamese had almost the same religion and manners,[573] though he did not explain further how this might be the case. The relevant texts only state that the Chinese migrants were usually Buddhists or believers in reincarnation; however, Chinese migrants were far from orthodox Buddhists as Chinese Buddhists usually worshipped a few tutelar and other deities.[574] In 1800, Chinese merchants

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569 Chee-Beng Tan, "Chinese Religion in Malaysia: A General View", *Asian Folklore Studies*, 42 (1983), p. 218.
570 "To the honourable Governor and council Fort Cornwallis, 31st October 1808" in India Office Records, G/34/9.
571 John Turnbull Thomson, *Some Glimpses Into Life in the Far East* (Richardson, 1865), p. 282.
572 Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "The Control of 'Sacred' Space: Conflicts Over the Chinese Burial Grounds in Colonial Singapore, 1880-1930", *Journal of Southeast Asian studies*, 22 (1991), pp. 285-291.
573 India Office Records, G/34/2, p. 501.
574 James Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, Or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca: Including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula. With Brief References to the Settlements of Singapore & Malacca* (Singapore Free Press, 1836), pp. 282-293.

from Fujian (Chinchew) and Guangdong (Cantonese) cooperated to build a Buddhist temple, the Kong Hok Palace.[575] As Low observed, the Kong Hok Palace was the site for ceremonial and political occasions. The temple served as a religious site, community tribunal and council until the completion of the Chinese Town Hall in 1886. In the palace, the Chinese worshippers propitiated Guanyin on the nineteenth day of the sixth month, dressed in flattish conical caps made of rattan with horsehair dyed red and long white robes. They had a dress code to show their respect for the deity or public occasions;[576] in fact, Penang's leading Chinese citizens dressed identically in 1829 to welcome Lord William Bentinck (the governor general of India) on his arrival at Penang.[577] In Chinese Buddhism, various practices are mixed up with Chinese folk religion, and migrants often practised these mixed religious activities in the Chinese temple. For religious purposes, these migrants could maintain their traditions with their compatriots. Chinese Buddhism was syncretized, with several Straits-born Chinese women attending the Dhammikärāma Burmese Temple, the oldest Theravãda Buddhist temple in Penang which still exists today.[578] This case suggests that Chinese Buddhist migrants had different doctrines. As there were various sects in Buddhism, such as Mahãyãna or Theravãda, the Buddhist migrants were not forced to follow certain ways and means within the religion.

Chinese migrants sometimes performed religious rites that encroached on public spaces. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a Chinese man named Gee was beaten by Captain Drummond, the town mayor of Penang in February 1807. When Gee let off some firecrackers as a religious rite, the noise frightened the captain's horses, leading to Drummond's violent reaction.[579] The cultural difference triggered the violence, but the record did not explain what the firecrackers meant to the migrants. The Chinese usually set off firecrackers to celebrate the advent of the new year or a wedding, for good luck. On New Year's Day, firecrackers were lit from three or four o'clock in the morning until late at night.[580] The Chinese migrants set them off for luck,

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575 Jean DeBernardi, *Christian Circulations: Global Christianity and the Local Church in Penang and Singapore, 1819-2000* (NUS Press, 2020), p. 79.
576 Jean DeBernardi. *Penang: rites of belonging in a Malaysian Chinese community*. NUS Press. 2009. P.40-41.
577 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, pp. 307-308.
578 Beny Liow Woon Khin, "Buddhist Temples and Associations in Penang, 1845-1948", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 62 (1989), pp. 66-67.
579 India Office Records, G/34/17, pp. 167-172.
580 Jonas Daniel Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (The Mission Press, 1879), pp. 24-44.

but the Europeans considered the crackers in a public space as a threat. The Chinese migrants lit firecrackers for their psychological relief, but this was then restricted for safety concerns. As Penang lacked adequate medical facilities, nobody could save the Chinese migrant community from disease; therefore, they relied on traditional culture. Moreover, the Chinese migrants had practised folk beliefs in Penang from the early years of the colony. However, these religious activities caused some between the Chinese migrants and the colonial state. For example, an anonymous Chinese man cut off a cock's head and burnt idol sticks in front of the temple in Pitt Street, which so shocked the passers-by he was fined 150 dollars.[581] Regardless of the cultural gap, the Chinese man was desperate to practise his religious rites; however, the activity could easily be misunderstood as a possible threat to passers-by, and therefore it was vital that he behaved thoughtfully. On the other hand, these cases should be be considered critically as the colonial state responses to various displays of religious devotion in public spaces were based on prejudice. For example, the Western discourse around sati included aspects of both glorious martyrdom and cruel execution. In the early nineteenth century, Western observers viewed the practice of sati very negatively, seeing it as a barbaric aspect of Indian society.[582] The colonial officials simply thought that the uncivilized societies of the colonies caused cruelty among certain religious activities.

John Ince, an English missionary in Penang, shared his experience of visiting the Chinese temple, where he was surprised to see a vast concourse of people. At that time, he found a large paper idol, called *fa sye yay*, which had glass eyes and was painted with different colours. The idol was worshipped by six priests, who initially led the ritual.[583] While the Protestant missionary experienced cultural difference, the Chinese migrants worshipped the idol for their comfort and Ince was shocked that they had made the paper idol by themselves. Ince's experience suggests that Chinese religious culture was not familiar to Europeans.

Ince's successor, Samuel Dyer, had a similar experience when he met a Chinese teacher of the missionaries, describing his conversation with this Chinese Protestant in his memoirs:

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581 James William and Norton Kyshe, '21st December 1806' in *Cases heard and determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements, 1808-1884. Vol. I*, *Civil cases* (Singapore and Straits Print Office, 1885), p. 36.

582 Andrea Major, *Pious Flames: European Encounters with Sati, 1500-1830* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 8-10.

583 Extracts, 4th September 1819 in India Office Records, CWM/LMS/14/05/05.

Dyer: Do the Canton people worship idols?

Teacher: Yes.

Dyer: Is that right, or not?

Teacher: Not right. It is right to worship Jesus the Lord of Heaven.[584]

Although the missionary recorded the dialogue as his religious achievement, he suggested that idolatry was rampant among the Chinese migrants. The missionary also saw that there were little children, aged about seven, dressed up and taught to bow down to the idol. The Chinese migrants usually had negative perceptions of any Chinese migrant without an idol.[585] Dyer's experience highlights the difference of cultural viewpoints between the English missionaries and Chinese migrants. The missionaries usually undervalued the Chinese idolatries based on their cultural or religious superiority but they recognized idolatry as a religious competitor.

When cholera broke out in 1819, the Chinese migrants practised religious activities for the purpose of prevention. One day, Ince visited the Chinese temple and found a man standing in front of several idols with wings, adorning himself with rings, with a vast number of followers. The man explained the cause of cholera, based on wrong information, and the followers only believed their religious leader.[586] Apart from Ince's experience, in 1820 the Chinese migrants made a dragon idol called Diyong out of oiled and coloured papers with lanterns inside that was expected to expel cholera.[587] Unfortunately, their prayers were not answered and there were more victims.

After the tragedies of various cholera outbreaks, folk beliefs remained central to the lives of Chinese migrants. Walter Henry Medhurst, an English congregationalist, experienced two cases of Chinese idolatry, one directly and the other indirectly. One day, he found a Chinese man engraving an idol in his house and saw that the Chinese man's house was full of works of his own hand. Medhurst asked the man why he made idols, and the man answered that he followed others and made idols for his own benefit. Chinese migrants like this man felt

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584 Evan Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer: Sixteen Years Missionary to the Chinese* (London: John Snow, 1846), p. 61.

585 ibid., pp. 62-64.

586 "Extracts, 2nd November 1819" in India Office Records, CWM/LMS/14/05/05.

587 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, p. 298.

comfortable worshipping their own idols. After few days, the missionary was shocked while having a conversation with another Chinese man, who had visited the missionary for some medicine and a conversation began in which the man confessed he had killed his own daughter. Medhurst had heard a similar case a few days earlier and therefore he asked why. The Chinese answered it was common to kill daughters in Chinese culture to save themselves from future troubles. The missionary told the man that murder was the most dreadful sin, but the man just laughed at Medhurst's advice; the missionary tried to explain what the man had done wrong.[588] The examples were taken from a missionary magazine, however, and it is highly likely that the authors could overstate the facts. In the early nineteenth century, many missionaries undertook extensive speaking tours and published a wide range of memoirs, histories and other testimonies which lionized the missionaries in order to stir public interest.[589] The English missionaries could not understand Chinese folk beliefs, but they were strongly opposed to their religious activities.

Apart from idol worship, Chinese migrants in Penang inherited the traditional burial culture. Chinese migrants were not the only group who had burial grounds in Penang; the European residents had large burial grounds as well.[590] However, the Chinese migrants created a specific culture around their burial grounds. On 16 October 1805, there was a committee meeting regarding the space located between the Chinese burial grounds and the hospital, in which committee members discussed whether the space could be used for one thousand native troops.[591] The record did not state how the committee was organized but it briefly described the Chinese burial grounds, suggesting that the Chinese migrants followed their traditional religious rites and burial culture. The Chinese burial landscape was a site in which the Chinese could cement kinship ties and group loyalties by worshipping their ancestors.[592] For example, a Chinese organization, named Yan Woh, provided a decent burial for any member that died.[593]

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588 Walter Henry Medhurst, "Penang - The Cruelty of Idolaters, exemplified in the conduct of the Chinese; extracted from the Journal of Mr. Medhurst, when he resided in Penang", *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine,* 2 (1823), p. 58.

589 Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 19.

590 14 February 1810 in India Office Records, G/34/9.

591 India Office Records, G/34/11, p. 256.

592 Brenda S.A. Yeoh and Tan Boon Hui, "The Politics of Space: changing discourses on Chinese burial grounds in post-war Singapore", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 21 (1995), p. 187.

593 India Office Records, G/34/102., p. 120.

The Chinese migrants in Malaya, including Penang, believed that the ancestral worship made the worshippers spiritually closer to their origins. They thought that the ancestral worship granted them some emotional respite and increased their awareness of their duty to their parental clans in China.[594] During the worship, the Chinese sacrificed animals as offerings because worshippers believed their ancestors would be honoured by offerings of food.[595] There were no subsequent reports regarding the cemetery issues; therefore, the officials and migrants, presumably, came to a satisfactory settlement. The Chinese migrants commemorated deceased neighbours and ancestors by regularly participating in relevant activities, and these activities preserved the cultural homogeneity of the Chinese migrants.

Similar to the cases of ancestral worship or folk beliefs, the Chinese fishermen practised similar rites at sea. For example, some Chinese fishermen believed that there supernatural powers presiding over them. They felt uncertain about their safety at sea, and they sometimes felt frightened. They believed that they had to worship the appropriate protectors or they would at risk.[596] In fact, the Chinese migrants considered the sea an important workplace around Penang Island with Chinese traders ensuring their trade routes and fishermen conducting their economic activities. As they could not solve safety problems in advance, they could only rely on the gods of the sea.

According to the factory records and missionary archives or journals, colonial officials and missionaries never understood the Chinese religious culture, being more interested in the economic productivity of the migrants. They cared only how the migrants could raise revenue for the colony and never considered religious influences. The colonial officials were utterly indifferent to the Chinese migrants, only recording when the migrants accidentally threatened the peace while practising their religious activities.

Chinese migrants inherited the tradition of practicing their religious and burial culture in Penang. Although they had to overcome English prejudice, the migrants cherished these traditions of worshipping idols and ancestors. Instead of sharing temples with other ethnic groups, such as the Burmese, Chinese migrants built a Buddhist temple specifically for

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[594] Yen Ching-Hwang, *Community and Politics: Chinese in Colonial Singapore and Malaysia* (Times Academic Press: Singapore, 1995), p. 44.
[595] Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil,* p. 301.
[596] ibid., pp.45-46.

themselves, even though several people went to other temples due to differences in doctrine. Most Chinese migrants trusted in their folk beliefs, and this sometimes helped the spread of disease and moral problems. In terms of these folk beliefs, the colonial state and Chinese migrants could not understand cultural differences as both sides could not recognise what they have done wrong. The Chinese migrants respected their deceased neighbours and ancestors by taking care of their cemeteries and worshipped them regularly, but the Europeans and Chinese had different views on idolatry that suggested a cultural gap between the two groups. The Chinese migrants could maintain their cultural identities by following the specific traditional rituals. Aside from the occasional extreme activities, the bond of brotherly affection between Chinese worshippers was a great comfort to them. These religious activities became the engine of their lives overseas.

6.2. Christianity and Chinese migrants

When Penang was founded by the British, there were various Christian missionaries of different denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. These missionaries aimed to hold services for European residents and evangelize the non-Christians in Penang. Many Chinese migrants experienced Christianity for the first time, and the missionaries tried to understand what the migrants wanted in an attempt to convert them to Christianity. The missionary works included education, regular visits and medical services, and as a result of these works, several Chinese migrants became Christians. Christianity was recognized as a new culture to the Chinese migrants, rather than a new religion, as the missionaries aroused the Chinese migrants' interest.

In fact, the East India Company had prohibited evangelising of the Indian public until 1813, which was a policy that troubled the relations between officials and missionaries.[597] Whereas the Penang government neither prohibited missionary works or forced religious conversion onto the local migrants. Instead, the colonial officials recognized missionaries as partners in social contribution, in areas like education. Missionary works were allowed in the colony, and therefore Christian missionaries had to consider their missionary strategies based on cultural

[597] Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire,* p. 18.

norms. Staples argues how leprosy patients became Christians in India in the 1950s, indicating the example of Bethany, a leprosy colony in the coastal Guntur District, where the provision of services such as medical care was a way for missionaries to access potential converts. Many hospital patients married fellow converts who were not from their original caste groups. These patients could obtain the treatment and care they needed to survive through conversion.[598] European missionaries planned different missionary strategies in Africa and the Pacific Islands. In Africa, most missionaries established settlements to recruit potential converts who lived apart from the larger population, introducing Christianity by ruling the settlements and the residents. Whereas missionaries in the Pacific islands established schools, medical posts, and sometimes plantations, which attracted a rapid growth in interest in Christianity.[599] The missionaries in Penang followed similar patterns as those in the Pacific Islands. Unlike Africa, the living environment was already formed in Penang during the urban development, and the British officials appointed several ethnic Kapitans to maintain public order. Missionaries were allowed to get involved in missionary works; therefore, they established Christian institutions and printed Christian texts. There were plenty of Chinese who were in trouble that the missionaries might attempt to convert by helping them.

Before the arrival of the Christian missionaries, an Armenian church was the only Christian place in Penang as Armenians composed one of the ethnic groups drawn to the new colony.[600] Historical records do not mention whether they held religious activities, but it is assumed they celebrated rituals at the Armenian church. In November 1822, Catchatoor Galastaun, an Armenian man, reported to Macalister, Collector of Government Customs, that he had imported some timbers from Rangoon in order to construct the Armenian church.[601] Then in May 1824, Galastaun reported to Robert Ibbeston, Secretary of the Penang government, that he was permitted to invite a clergyman and enlarge the church building. The Armenian man expected that the church construction would be completed by 31 August that same year.[602] The

[598] James Staples, "Putting Indian Christianities into Context: Biographies of Christian Conversion in a Leprosy Colony", *Modern Asian Studies*, 48 (2014), pp. 1136–1137.
[599] John Barker, "Where the Missionary Frontier Ran Ahead of Empire" in *Missions and Empire* edited by Norman Etherington (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 92-93.
[600] George Leith, *A short account of the settlement, produce and commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca* (London: J. Booth, 1805), p. 45.
[601] India Office Records, G/34/87, p. 163.
[602] India Office Records, G/34/94, pp. 598-599.

Armenian church had been completely built by 1822 with the construction expense paid by Catchatoor.[603] However, the Armenian church was only attended by Armenians and made no attempt to convert anybody or engage in education; therefore, it had no effect on the Chinese migrants.

The Catholic believers in Penang were usually Portuguese-Eurasians and Asian converts from Siam.[604] When Penang was founded by the British, the French missionaries in Siam and Christians in Kedah moved to Penang and formed a Catholic community, and Light gave the Catholics land in town so they could build a church.[605] In addition to the Catholic migrants, the Catholic missionaries aimed to spread their influence by converting non-Christians. The Catholic missionaries usually engaged in education, following similar patterns to those of the Protestant missionaries. They established the Catholic school in 1825, which became the main mission work of the Catholics,[606] and by 1827, the Catholic population of Penang was assumed to be around 1200, with the Catholic school receiving financial assistance from the government.[607] Despite their lack of religious influence, the Catholics gradually settled down in Penang, and there were some converts to the Catholicism in later years. Based on their good relationship with the government, the Catholics promoted social contributions by opening a school so that they could prepare for future-oriented missionary works.

As the Catholic missionaries progressed in their activities, they sometimes interacted with Chinese migrants. In terms of their missionary purpose, the Catholic priests built two Roman Catholic chapels in Penang, and 759 Chinese migrants were thought to have converted from late 1820s. Among those converts, 80 of them were residents of Province Wellesley.[608] Although there were Chinese converts, Catholicism was the least influential religion in the Chinese community. The Catholic missionaries never treated ethnic groups in a particular way,

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603 Mesrovb Jacob Seth, *History of the Armenians in India from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Calcutta: self-published, 1895), p. 133.
604 Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007), p. 261.
605 'Report of the Lieutenant Governor upon Prince of Wales Island', 18 September 1805 in India Office Records, G/34/9.
606 India Office Records, G/34/103, p. 771.
607 Robert Hunt, Kam Hing Lee, and John Roxborogh, *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History* (Pelanduk Publications, 1992), p. 11.
608 Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil*, p. 293.

aiming rather to convert any residents, and this simple mission strategy could not arouse the interest of the Chinese migrants.

By contrast, the Protestants planned to construct the church building and missionary works together. In early years of Penang, Europeans and Siamese migrants were the only Christian groups who could not have services as there was no church.[609] In September 1805, the Lieutenant Governor of Penang, Robert Townsend Farquhar, reported that the government had been given a building for use as a Protestant church; however, the church construction plan was postponed due to the limited number of English residents in Penang. The construction expense was estimated at 40,000 Spanish dollars,[610] and the Penang government had only a limited budget; therefore, church building could not commence. Although English residents formed the smallest community in Penang, they needed a place for public worship. These English residents lived in a poor religious environment and had to wait until the church was constructed.

As the Christians in Penang had hoped, the new church was finally opened on 25 December 1818, and the first service (a Christmas service) was celebrated and attended by a large congregation. After the service, several children were baptized.[611] Without the involvement of the missionary groups, the church was built by the Penang government; instead, the missionaries, such as the London Missionary Society, were only interested in converting the non-Christian residents. They did not care about the government's plans to construct the church building. Since Penang had been founded, the Protestants had to wait for 32 years due to the limited number of Christians and the question of cost. They no longer faced restrictions and could find peace of mind at a new place of worship.

Apart from the first church in 1818, missionaries announced their plan to erect a Mission Chapel on 4 March 1823, placing an advertisement in the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* that described that their goal was to convince non-Christian residents and explain why Christianity is far superior to their own religions. The missionaries thought that George Town was an interesting spot for building the Mission Chapel, and 4,000 Spanish dollars were needed for

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609 Leith, *A short account*, p. 69.

610 'Reports of upon Lieutenant Governor the Prince of Wales Island', 18 September 1805, in India Office Records, G/34/9.

611 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 2 January 1819.

the construction. They expected to receive donations from China and Malacca as well.[612] Despite the missionaries' religious passions, they promoted evangelism arrogantly, commencing their project with a sense of duty but showing no respect for other religious cultures. They had a religious superiority complex, and therefore they misunderstood themselves as the civilized group. Instead of focusing on the construction of a chapel, they had to consider peaceful coexistence with non-Christians.

As the missionaries had hoped, the new mission chapel was opened on 20 June 1824. In the chapel, the building was constructed with walls which contained appropriate passages from Scripture in English, Chinese and Malay.[613] After the original plans were released, the chapel construction took more than a year. The various scripture passages suggested the cultural diversity in Penang so that the chapel would not be considered as belonging to a single group. The chapel was open to anybody in Penang, regardless of their ethnicity, and any visitors had to be welcomed into the chapel and the missionaries had to respect them without any prejudice.

The Protestant missionaries in Penang were members of the London Missionary Society (LMS), which had been established during the great Protestant revival in Britain in the late eighteenth century and favoured a simple form of worship with an emphasis on the Scriptures.[614] The society was permitted to commence the Chinese and Malay missions at Malacca in 1815, and at Penang one year later, and was given a land by the former governor of Penang, William Petrie, so that the missionaries could expand their missions based on the granted land.[615] In fact, the LMS attempted to pioneer a missionary route from Southeast Asia to China, a project known as the Ultra-Ganges Mission, with Malacca chosen as its base. The major cities, such as Malacca or Penang, in the Malay Archipelago had sizeable Chinese communities and connected with China for trade. In the Malay Archipelago, the missionaries expected to improve their Chinese language and potentially enable some Christian publications to get into China by ship.[616] In 1819, William Milne, an English missionary at Malacca, sent a letter to John Bannerman, the governor of Penang, to explain how the LMS planned a

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612 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 22 March 1823.
613 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 23 June 1824.
614 Sandra Hudd, 'Revisiting Christian Missionaries in the Straits Settlements: Blurring the Boundaries between Empire, Mission and Development', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 92 (2019), p. 24.
615 Milne to Bannerman, 19 January 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.
616 Hudd, 'Revisiting Christian Missionaries in the Straits Settlements, p. 24.

missionary goal in Penang. The letter is recorded in both the Prince of Wales Island public consultations and the records of the LMS. Milne claimed that the original plan of establishing the mission at Malacca was not solely for the place itself. The missionaries aimed to expand their missions in neighbouring islands and countries, such as Penang.[617] Moreover, Milne claimed that the LMS had long wished to begin a mission at Penang for Chinese and Malay residents and requested a plot of land near George Town for accommodating schoolhouses, places of worship, and other purposes for Chinese and Malays.[618] The letter suggested that Penang missionaries were engaged in mission works under the advice of missionaries at Malacca, and there were similarities between Penang and Malacca in that both were composed of Malays and Chinese and therefore the LMS could expand the mission works with a similar approach. The LMS established a missionary route to convert any Chinese in East Asia, but they had as much interest in converting the Malays. Although the LMS was given land by the governor of Penang, the space was not enough for their missionary works. The society considered more support was needed from the government and this led to Milne's letter.

Contrary to expectations, the Protestant missionaries were not welcomed by everyone in Penang. While the missionaries celebrated Christian services or distributed tracts, some Malay parents claimed Islamic doctrines were also taught at mission schools, and opponents were concerned that the Muslim population might decrease as mission schools never taught the Koran. Some parents were forced not to send their children to the mission schools.[619] Therefore, the missionaries had to ease the tensions with non-Christians. The purpose of mission schools was evident and therefore non-Christians could be strongly opposed; the missionaries needed to create an innovative curriculum to attract new students.

After the LMS took charge of missionary work in Penang, Chinese migrants had more opportunities to encounter Christianity. The missionaries attempted to convert the Chinese migrants from the late 1810s onwards. On 18 February 1819, Walter Henry Medhurst, an English congregationalist, reported to the directors of the LMS that he had distributed 500 little

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[617] India Office Records, G/34/70, pp. 143-146.

[618] Milne to Bannerman, 19 January 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.

[619] Thomas John Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca: Viz. Pinang, Malacca, and Singapore, with a History of the Malayan States on the Peninsula of Malacca* (J. Murray, 1839), pp. 93-94.

bundles, containing about 3000 tracts, among the Chinese migrants in Penang. Medhurst did his missionary work in Malacca, but stayed in Penang shortly before the arrival of missionaries who would be in charge. He established two Chinese schools, the Hokkien and Cantonese schools, and there were 20 or 30 children in each on the first day, but the congregationalist expected that more children would join the schools soon.[620] Medhurst focused his missions on the Chinese migrants in Penang. Although several Chinese elites had established the Chinese poorhouse, there were no educational institutions for the Chinese in the colony, and Medhurst attempted to accommodate more Chinese children by providing a customized service so he established two Chinese schools. He understood Chinese culture more than the colonial administration as he recognized the various dialects within the Chinese community.

On 22 November 1820, Medhurst sent a letter to the directors in London about his missions in the James Town district, in which he described James Town as a small village where the principal residents were Chinese migrants. He believed that James Town could be a promising field for missionary exertions because James Town seemed like a desirable place for a missionary when he visited the village in 1819. Medhurst came to Penang with six Malays and two Chinese people from Malacca, expecting that these followers would form the basis of his congregation. The Chinese boys read the New Testament and other Christian books and attended family worship in their tongue daily. Medhurst opened a school in his own house that was for boys in the afternoon, and for young people in the evening. There were 10 young people who had to work during the days and could read Christian books.[621] When Medhurst moved to Penang, he arrived at his new mission site with several followers, who had become Christians after meeting Medhurst and came along with the missionary for their religious training. If they became mature in terms of their religious lives, Medhurst expected, they could contribute to the ministry. Furthermore, Medhurst opened a school for Chinese migrants of all ages. He did not state which subjects were taught for them but attempted to make Christianity familiar to the Chinese students.

The Chinese migrants' lack of understanding of Christianity was evident. The English missionary, John Ince, shared his experience with a Chinese migrant, whom Ince had once met and asked about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in which the one God exists in three divine

[620] Medhurst to LMS directors, 15th February 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.
[621] Medhurst to LMS directors, 22 November 1820 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/003.

persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Chinese man was confused whether the Christians believed in one or three Gods because the missionary did not answer in exact number of God. As the Chinese man could not understand the concept, he did not ask the missionary anymore about it.[622] Ince's experience suggested the different outlooks between Christians and non-Christians. Chinese migrants were unfamiliar with Christianity; therefore, the missionaries had to explain the doctrine as easily as possible to try and convince the nonbelievers.

After Medhurst went back to Malacca, Ince and fellow English missionary Thomas Beighton took charge of the missionary works in Penang with Beighton focussing on the Malay missions, while Ince worked on the Chinese. In September 1823, the missionaries reported to the directors of the LMS about their missionary works in Penang, stating that they held services in Chinese, Malay and English, but there were very few in the congregations of the English service. There were 12 members of congregation for the Chinese service, bit only a few attendants for the Malay one.[623] The missionaries held services in three languages, and therefore they preached to the few Chinese and Malay believers. They needed to be very patient when trying to attract new members, but the number of believers suggests that Christianity was not influential to the Chinese and Malays. Moreover, the missionaries did not state whether the Chinese service was held in Mandarin or in other dialects. As shown from the case of the Hokkien and Cantonese schools, most Chinese migrants were divided into different dialect groups and the missionaries needed to consider having services in dialects in to attract more church members.

Beighton and Ince continued their missionary activities by visiting every district in Penang. One day, while visiting the district called Ayer Itam, they met a small group of Chinese migrants. At that time, the migrants were not all interested in learning tracts; therefore, the missionaries had to change conversation topics[624] and consider how they might interest non-Christians in hearing Christian doctrine. The Chinese migrants had no reason to convert, and therefore the missionaries needed to prepare alternative evangelist strategies.

The mission patron, Brown, sent a letter to Beighton about the lifestyles of some Chinese migrants, sharing that some Hokkien Chinese occasionally visited China. If they could be

[622] Extracts, 15 July 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/05/05.
[623] Ince and Beighton to LMS directors, 9 September 1823 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/006.
[624] Extracts from our journal, 16 December 1822 in CWM/LMS/14/05/08.

converted, Brown considered, their visit would be an opportunity for further missionary work. By giving an example of certain Chinese migrants, he advised why Chinese and Malay missionaries had to be trained,[625] suggesting the future direction of the mission work. The English missionaries usually focused on education, services and the distribution of pamphlets, but, although there were several Malay and Chinese followers from Malacca, there were no any records of them. The followers could play a limited role due to local circumstances and perhaps they had returned to Malacca with Medhurst. Brown advised that Beighton should expand missionary activities in the neighbouring states instead of focusing on Penang.

On 24 April 1825, the death of John Ince was reported in the newspaper.[626] However, his partner Beighton had to continue missionary work alone. On 4 May, a few weeks after the death of Ince, Beighton sent a letter to the directors of the LMS regarding the Chinese mission in Penang, explaining that the Chinese migrants spoke various dialects and future missionaries needed to learn them. Regardless of the mission, he pointed out that the missionaries only studied Mandarin when they began their missionary works, and, although Mandarin was useful in the heart of China, future missionaries would be in trouble for preaching to the Chinese migrants without any dialect knowledge. For example, when Ince arrived in Penang, he could only talk to two or three Chinese migrants as most could not speak Mandarin. Beighton recognized Penang as a missionary station for achieving their goals and therefore he requested more support from LMS headquarters.[627] The letter was a general report to London which suggested Beighton's affection for Penang and Chinese migrants, and he hoped that future missionaries could carry out their missions with both knowledge and commitment.

Despite several alternative plans for the Chinese missions, Beighton failed to fill the massive gap from the death of Ince. Since Ince died, the Chinese mission was not managed well; Beighton tried his best but he could not leave the Malay missions behind.[628] As Ince and Beighton took charge of missionary works together, they could share their duties before the death of Ince, but from 1825 on Beighton had a heavy workload that he had to handle by

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625 Extract of a letter written by D Brown, 4 May 1825 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/008.
626 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 27 April 1825.
627 Beighton to LMS directors, 4 May 1825 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/008.
628 Beighton to Hackney, 23 October 1826 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/009.

himself. He hoped that the new missionaries would replace Ince immediately for the Chinese mission.

Although Beighton's prayer was not answered exactly as he hoped, he was able to get help from the temporary missionary. In 1827, Samuel Dyer had arrived in Penang for a brief stop on his way to Singapore, but while he stayed in Penang, he found that Beighton was experiencing difficulties with the Chinese mission as the LMS would not send a replacement. Dyer could not leave Beighton alone for his journey, and therefore he changed his travel plan to help Beighton.[629] As Ince had previously focused on the Chinese mission, Dyer could do the same job.

On 9 September 1827, Dyer informed the LMS directors he was going to stay in Penang as a regular missionary. Dyer found that Chinese missionary work had been interrupted, except for the boys' mission school; therefore, he decided to stay in Penang in order to strengthen the missionary works. As Dyer's mission was focused on the Chinese migrants, he began to learn Hokkien in order to reach more Chinese migrants, claiming that missionaries had to learn any foreign language while in England because they could be sent anywhere in the world.[630] In fact, Dyer knew nothing about the Chinese language as he had never planned to take charge of missionary works with the Chinese.[631] He worried that he would often be in trouble due to his language problem, but, fortunately, Dyer adapted to his new surroundings by learning Hokkien. In fact, Beighton thought that Dyer learnt the dialect more easily than expected.[632] After a few years, Dyer preached two sermons in Chinese, even though there were only few in the congregations.[633] It is not recorded whether the service was in Mandarin or Hokkien, but the missionary was able to see the fruit of his efforts. Dyer became a regular missionary unexpectedly, so he had not learnt any foreign languages. He thought that there were many missionaries who had similar experiences to his, and his mind was changed while he was in Penang when he decided he had to learn the Chinese dialect. The Chinese missions could not be left any longer and the new missionary was passionate about serving the Chinese migrants by studying their language.

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629 Dyer to LMS directors, 29 August 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
630 Dyer to LMS directors, 6 September 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
631 Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* p. 58.
632 Beighton to LMS directors, 25 September 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
633 Davies. *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer*, p. 69.

Since the missionaries recognized the importance of learning Chinese dialects, they put efforts into converting Hokkien speakers. The missionary patron advised them to observe the Hokkien dialect, and the new missionary, Dyer, also learnt it. As written in Chapter 2, Hokkiens comprised the biggest dialect group in the Chinese community and therefore the missionaries met them more than any other group. The missionaries found efficient methods to attract new church members after having some local experience. However, they did not give them as much attention as to other dialect groups, such as Cantonese speakers. Each Chinese group spoke in a different dialect and the missionaries had to observe every group equally. While Dyer focused his missions on the Hokkien group, he did not visit the Cantonese group or learn their dialect. Missionaries aimed to convert most Chinese migrants rather than a certain group; therefore, they felt they needed to serve any and all Chinese migrants without any prejudice. Moreover, the accounts of idolatry and missionary works show a distinct contrast between the Hokkien and Cantonese groups. Compared to the Cantonese, the Hokkiens were open-minded and there were relatively more converts to Christianity in their community, whereas the Cantonese were more conservative in their religious views and the missionaries, therefore, considered them a group of idol worshippers. Regardless of the scale of each dialect group, the missionaries felt more comfortable with the Hokkien speakers than the Cantonese in their missionary works.

Although Dyer started his missions with passion, he experienced difficulties expanding the new congregations. In 1827, there were no new Chinese congregations registered in the church. Dyer was not pessimistic because he could meet the Chinese migrants anytime, and many tracts had already been distributed among them.[634] He considered it as a passing phase, and he expected to welcome new congregations as soon as he was more devoted to the duties. Since the death of Ince, the Chinese mission had been suspended until Dyer arrived. As Beighton could not handle every activity, the Chinese migrants had been offered fewer chances to come into contact with Christianity. The missionary could not simply wait for new members in the church and visited any places where the Chinese usually went, including the temple, to spread the gospel, and there were several Chinese followers to assist his mission.[635] The missionaries were responsible for most parts of the missionary work, but they could be supported by several Chinese converts, who could be mediators between the missionaries and the non-Christians;

[634] Beighton and Dyer to LMS directors, 21 November 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
[635] Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* p. 63.

therefore, they were important as they could help with inviting more Chinese members of the church at a later time.

In order to strengthen the missionary works, the English missionaries in the Malay Archipelago attempted to make a Hokkien dictionary together. Medhurst and Dyer were main authors of the dictionary, which was not completed until 1828, unexpectedly. Although it took more time to be printed, Dyer believed that the dictionary would be used widely in any part of the Chinese-speaking world, such as mainland China or the Chinese residential area in Southeast Asia.[636] Dyer had already attempted to use a European press for printing Chinese bibles. As he thought that printed materials had to be portable, he aimed to produce a portable Chinese bible by minimising the size of the printed Chinese characters in order to reduce the number of volumes.[637] Dyer was interested in printing technology as a missionary activity; therefore, he joined in with the compilation of the dictionary. In fact, the LMS realized that potential converts would open up to Christianity by reading texts in their own local languages. The society considered the translation and printing of texts as important as any of the mission methods.[638] The missionaries had to overcome the language barrier in order to increase contact with the Chinese migrants. The dictionary could be a mechanism to solve language problems for current or future missionaries.

As Beighton and Ince had visited every district for their missionary works, Dyer continued with something similar. Although Dyer did not record which area he went, he visited houses of Chinese migrants to distribute tracts. In fact, he found one Chinese man was reading a tract and the missionary hoped to meet him again.[639] Dyer decided to meet some Chinese migrants every evening, believing that he could teach the Christian doctrine via increased contact.[640] Compared to few years ago, the Chinese migrants were more open to Christianity, and Dyer told of an experience when he had a dinner with Chinese converts, without any of the Chinese once disputing his representations. Indeed, he was told to go and visit those converts again, and

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636 Dyer to LMS directors, 31 December 1828 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/011.

637 Leona O'Sullivan, 'The London Missionary Society: A written record of missionaries and printing presses in the Straits settlements, 1815-1847', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 57 (1984), p. 64.

638 Hudd, 'Revisiting Christian Missionaries in the Straits Settlements', p. 23.

639 Dyer to LMS directors, 4 February 1829 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/012.

640 Dyer to LMS directors, 13 August 1829 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/012.

the missionary hoped to meet more Chinese to convert them.[641] Although there are no figures showing how many Chinese became Christians, Christianity became a new religion among the Chinese and spread gradually as more migrants attempted to experience it. The hard work and great effort that went into the mission schools or distributing tracts meant the missionaries left a good impression of Christianity and piqued the curiosity of the non-Christians.

In addition to regular visits, Dyer purchased a small house in the Chinese bazaar which functioned as a dispensary. He went to the dispensary every morning, where was crowded by a group of patients visiting the missionary to get some medicines that were granted by the government. After distributing the medicines, Dyer remained in the house until evening to have more conversations with the Chinese migrants.[642] The evening visitors, 30 of them at most, were the Chinese congregations that the missionary thanked for their regular visits.[643] One day, a Chinese visitor asked Dyer about drinking wine as a Christian. In his view, all Englishmen drank freely and he wondered whether Dyer got drunk, but the missionary answered it was against Christianity.[644] The house became a meeting point for Dyer and the Chinese migrants, with the missionary providing medical help and opeing the house to welcome any Chinese migrants, regardless of their medical condition. As the Chinese visitors had questions regarding Christianity, the missionaries recognized their visits as opportunities to promote religious theology.

As Chinese converts were affected by various Christian denominations, Chinese Christians sometimes held different beliefs, which resulted in arguments. One of Ince's congregation, a man named Seen Sang, had an argument with a Chinese Catholic regarding differences in the Commandments between Protestant and Catholic doctrines. The Chinese Protestant claimed that no other gods should be served according to the Second Commandment but the Catholics created likenesses of Jesus. He also contended that Catholics did not follow the Scriptures, but the Catholic man did not respond at that time.[645] This episode suggests two situations. First, some converts became devout and wanted to show their loyalties. After all, the missionaries were expected to spread the religion through their converts. Second, religious loyalty could

[641] Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer*, p. 65.
[642] Dyer to LMS directors, 7 August 1830 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/013.
[643] Dyer to LMS directors, 17 August 1831 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/014.
[644] Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* p. 69.
[645] Extracts, 1 November 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/05/05.

cause conflicts among the Chinese migrants, who already suffered conflicts caused by social levels or region of origin. The Protestant missionaries were wary of the Catholics, as their influence was considerable [646] and the competition in conversions between the two denominations resulted a proxy conflict within the Chinese community. All Christian missionaries had to be careful whether their religious goals might trigger hostilities.

While the Catholics released approximate numbers of Chinese converts, the number of Chinese Protestants was not recorded. In terms of the extension of religious power, both denominations sent missionaries from neighbouring states, Siam and Malacca, respectively, to Penang to convert the non-believers. However, both denominations had different missionary strategies. The Catholics simply spread the religion to neighbouring regions and did not focus on converting specific ethnic groups, whereas the Protestant missionaries recognized Penang as one of the missionary stations on the route to China. The missionaries attempted to get to know the customs of Chinese by converting the Chinese migrants, hoping to understand the cultural differences before extending their missions into China later.

In contrast to the Catholics and the Protestants, the Armenian Church did not plan any missionary activities in Penang. There were only a few Armenians in Penang and the church only cared about its own believers, and as the Armenian Church did not plan any missionary activities, the Chinese migrants had nothing to do with the Armenian denomination. However, as mentioned above, the Catholic Church and the LMS were interested in converting Chinese migrants. As both Catholics and Protestants converted migrants, the new converts often argued over differences in doctrine. Protestant missionaries, in particular, described how they contacted the Chinese migrants, and the reactions towards Christianity. Most Chinese were not familiar with the religion, which meant the missionaries had to learn local languages and print translated texts. The Protestant missionaries used their building as a rendezvous for the Chinese converts so that the Chinese Christians could get assistance or religious counsel. Maybe there were not as many Chinese converts as the missionaries expected, but they did successfully introduce Christianity to the Chinese migrants. Both Christian denominations experienced minor religious achievements by insinuating themselves among the Chinese migrants, by providing education, for example, or medical assistance. The Christian missionaries attempted

[646] Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* p. 67.

to convert all Chinese, but they extended humanitarian aid to the Chinese migrants regardless of their religious goals.

6.3. Mission schools in Penang

As a part of their missionary works, the Catholics and the LMS opened mission schools in Penang with the aim to contact more non-Christians by providing educational opportunities. As there were not many educational institutions in Penang until the mid-1810s, the schools were an attempt by the missionaries attempted to evangelize the locals. The missionaries could teach what the students wanted to learn, and they could link Christianity to the curriculum. Certain mission schools taught classes in different Chinese dialects to attract more Chinese students. The function of mission schools was to benefit the missionaries and students by expanding missionary works and providing educational opportunities.

The absence of an education system provided opportunities for the mission schools, the function of which was to attract young people and bring them into contact with Christianity.[647] The missionaries had to stir up the students' interest by providing education that showed them Christianity. In Penang, all students in the Catholic school were converted, and the students in LMS schools were taught Christian discipline. However, there is no evidence whether these students practised their new religions. Some students could simulate religious conversion briefly in exchange for the educational opportunities. Moreover, mission schools varied enormously as per local circumstances when trying to attract students. In Africa, the missionaries attracted students by providing clothing and wages.[648] Despite their earnest efforts, African parents in Natal and Zululand sent one of their children for one month then replaced the first child with another, and most African societies refused to allow girls to be educated.[649] The missionaries could not ignore cultural characteristics, and therefore they attempted to change the educational environment gradually. In Penang, the missionaries

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647 Brain Holmes, *Educational policy and the mission schools: Case studies from the British Empire* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 9.

648 Norman Etherington, *Preachers, peasants and politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (Royal Historical Society, 1978), pp. 65-66.

649 Norman Etherington, 'Education and Medicine' in *Missions and empire* edited by Norman Etherington (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 262.

divided the Chinese schools into two dialects. They understood that each Chinese group spoke in a different dialect; therefore, they opened two schools. However, the Chinese parents requested the missionaries to teach their children the traditional Chinese curriculum that was not based on Christianity. Furthermore, the Chinese parents had views on female education, and they sent their girls to schools when they were older.

The Catholic school was the only mission school which was not built for a certain ethnic group. It was established on 9 January 1826,[650] and the Catholic priest, Fr Boucher, reported that there were 97 scholars with the school given a monthly allowance of 100 dollars. The Catholic school had to be examined periodically by a committee appointed by the Penang government, and on 19 December 1826, the examination of the school was undertaken by two civil servants, John Anderson and Thomas Church, who had been appointed as committee members. The committee reported that the proficiency of the scholars exceeded expectations as the students were more familiar with English grammar. The students, all boys, were divided into six classes; the first class gave definitions from the dictionary, practised basic English grammar among themselves and wrote a large text by hand, while in arithmetic, 13 students were in the rule of three, and seven completing compound addition. The other classes were examined only in reading, spelling and the elements of grammar. Prizes were given to 20 students out of 97 but every student became Roman Catholic regardless of their scholarly achievements.[651] The Catholic school provided basic educational opportunities for religious conversion of the students, and, while the Protestant schools were divided by ethnicity or dialect, the Catholic school did not have entrance requirements of each student before admission. As the school was supported by the government, they had to prepare for annual examinations by committee members and therefore the school had to prove it was educationally competitive.

The Catholic school requested more support from the government for a plan to educate orphans and poor children as they lived in poor surroundings. Despite the support given by the charity, the Catholic families believed that education could be a real help to these poor children,

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650 India Office Records, G/34/112, p. 720.

651 House of Commons Papers. 'Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca' in *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company Report, Minutes of Evidence- (I. Public, Appendix, Index) (II. Finance and Trade, Appendix, Index) (III. Revenue, Appendix, Index) (IV. Judicial, Appendix, Index) (V. Military, Appendix, Index) (VI. Political or Foreign, Appendix, Index), General Appendix, Index.* (1832), pp. 478.

planning to accommodate 30 students, 15 students each gender, and needing 2 dollars every month to manage them.[652] Although the government had not decided to accept the request, the planned Catholic school could provide equal educational opportunities. The administration could not help every orphan or poor child; therefore, the Catholic school attempted to care for them instead.

On 20 December 1827, the committee members of the Catholic school, John Anderson, Edward Lake and James Low, reported on examinations for the school. The committee briefed that there were 87 boys who were divided into seven classes. The committee members observed students reading and writing during the class,[653] and examined the school every December, in 1828 and 1829 as well. In 1828, there were 95 students, and the committee members were gratified with the proficiency of the students.[654] While the Catholic school was examined every year, the committee members never felt disappointed. Every student was devoted to their studies and therefore the Catholic school managed students efficiently, creating a common interest as the students were given educational opportunities and all became Catholics.

The LMS opened mission schools in 1819, earlier than the Catholic version, but while the Catholic school accepted students regardless of their ethnicity, the LMS established different mission schools due to the language barrier. The classes in the Catholic school were taught in English but other ethnic mission schools taught in the mother tongues of the students. Perhaps each ethnic mission school was established for the religious conversion of a certain ethnic group. The ethnic mission schools could then train missionaries so they could exercize their religious influence to their compatriots.

In order to plan missionary activities, the LMS planned to provide a learning system for the Chinese children. On 19 January 1816, William Milne, an English missionary in Malacca, sent a letter to the governor of Penang, William Petrie. As a missionary, he explained in the letter how he had opened Chinese schools in Malacca in August 1815. The English missionary had attempted to teach poor Chinese children reading, writing and arithmetic in their own language, claiming that there were two different dialects among the Chinese children and therefore he established several schools which were taught in different dialects. He aimed to prepare the

[652] India House Records, G/34/112, pp. 536-58.
[653] India Office Records, G/34/119, pp. 761-762.
[654] India Office Records, G/34/125, p. 468.

youth for the better discharge of the common duties in their lives. His colleague also planned to open Malay mission schools.[655] Before the beginning of the LMS missionary activities, Milne reported how the society took charge of the mission in Malacca. The society planned to begin missionary works in Penang soon and Milne suggested how the missionaries planned to establish mission schools in Penang.

As suggested by Milne's letter, the LMS established several Chinese and Malay mission schools in Penang around 1819. Walter Henry Medhurst, an English missionary in Malacca, informed the governor of Penang, John Alexander Bannerman, about his arrival and requested 20 dollars for educational awards every month, a request that was approved by the government.[656] Furthermore, Medhurst sent a letter to the directors of the LMS to report on his missionary activities, in which he stated that he had established two Chinese schools in Penang: one for Hokkien (Chinchew) and the other for Cantonese children. (Fortunately, the Chinese migrants allowed him to use the Chinese temple as a classroom.) On the first day of the school, there were between 20 and 30 children. Medhurst was pleased with his achievement before his return to Malacca.[657] He was also sent briefly to Penang to establish the Chinese schools there. After completing his first mission, he succeeded in obtaining educational awards from the government; as a result, the Chinese schools got more management expenses. As Milne experienced in Malacca, Medhurst realized that each Chinese child spoke a different dialect and therefore he established two schools. He suggested that the LMS was interested in educating any Chinese children regardless of their dialect.

John Ince and Thomas Beighton reported to the directors of the LMS that there were Chinese and Malay adults who had a strong desire to learn English. Although these missionaries worried that they could not speak Chinese or Malay fluently, they considered it as an opportunity for evangelism, and the adults' English class was scheduled from 7 to 8 o'clock every evening.[658] Based on the experiences in Malacca, the missionaries managed children's education efficiently in Penang; however, they had to open classes for adults without any prior experience. Instead of declining a suggestion, the missionaries decided to open classes every evening and

[655] 19 January 1816, Letter from Rev. Mr. Milne. in India Office Records, G/34/54.
[656] India Office Records, G/34/70, pp. 45-47.
[657] Medhurst to LMS directors, 15 February 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.
[658] Ince and Beighton to LMS directors, 10 August 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.

watched for an opportunity to meet any Chinese or Malay residents that they hoped to evangelize the attendants during the English classes.

On 21 September 1822, Beighton sent a letter to Walter Sewell Cracroft, acting secretary of the Penang government, in which he thanked the Penang government for their support, including the allowance, and enclosed a report on the ethnic mission schools in Penang in 1821 and 1822.[659] The report stated that the LMS had established two Chinese schools and five Malay schools. In Chinese school No.1, there were 18 boys and a native teacher named Hao Seem Sang. The students studied with standard Chinese books, and they were also taught catechisms on every Sabbath. The younger children, who were not sufficiently advanced to read books, were taught to read the simplest Chinese characters. In Chinese school No.2, there were 15 boys and a native teacher named Lim Leem Sang. The curriculum at school No.2 was same as No.1, which was established later. In addition to the Chinese schools, the report also explained about five Malay schools and each Malay school had female students.[660] As there were two Chinese schools, the report did not state which dialect was used in each school. The missing information might suggest how many students were from each dialect group. These Chinese schools taught in the mother languages of the students together with Christianity and provided a special class for poor students. In fact, the Chinese parents hoped that their children would learn to read Confucian classics. While Confucian philosophy teaches that human nature is fundamentally good, in Christianity, humans are sinners until saved by Jesus;[661] therefore, there was a contrast between the ideas of the missionaries and parents. The missionaries aimed to convert the students in later years based on the curriculum, but the parents believed that a Confucian education was necessary in order to maintain their Chinese identity. Furthermore, the Malay mission schools had female students, while the Chinese schools had only male ones. The report did not explain any reasons for this difference, but it suggests that Chinese girls did not have the opportunities their Malay counterparts enjoyed.

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659 Beighton to W. S. Cracroft, 24 September 1822 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/005.

660 'Report of the native mission schools established in Prince of Wales Island for the years 1821-2' in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/005.

661 Jean DeBernardi, 'Circulations: Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity in Nineteenth-Century Singapore and Penang' in *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism* edited by Simon Coleman and Rosalind I. J. Hackett (NYU Press, 2015), p. 59.

The monthly allowance from the government amounted to 35 Spanish dollars at first. The missionaries thanked the government for their support in managing the Malay and Chinese schools. However, Beighton requested an increase in the supporting amount to accommodate more students.[662] As Beighton had hoped, the government planned to contribute 100 Spanish dollars to the Chinese and Malay mission schools every month. As these schools added English in the curriculum, the secretary recognized their improving educational level,[663] and that this decision would benefit both the schools and students. The mission schools could only be operated effectively with financial aid. In addition to the existing curriculum, these ethnic mission schools attempted to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities by adding a new subject. The improved curriculum and the government aid made the mission schools better and that could benefit the students.

Despite the allowance from the government, the Chinese mission schools had management difficulties. As written earlier, the death of Ince affected the Chinese mission and the Chinese schools had to be closed temporarily. On 26 January 1827, Beighton sent a letter to a priest named Morrison, who was a missionary to China, in which he explained about his difficulties without his mission partner. Without Ince, the Chinese schools were not managed properly and Beighton hoped that the new missionary could replace Ince's position immediately.[664] The closing of the Chinese schools reduced educational opportunities of Chinese students. They could join the public schools or the Catholic mission schools but the Protestant mission schools were the only establishment which taught in the students' native languages. The Chinese schools had to be opened to expand educational options. Moreover, Beighton suggested that the mission schools were only managed by certain people. Unlike the public school system, the missionaries controlled the whole system of the schools without any alternative staff. Although the missionaries employed local Chinese teachers, they were in charge of school management. The LMS had to consider immediate alternative measures in order to reopen the schools.

Fortunately, the Chinese schools were reopened after three months. On 30 April 1827, Beighton sent a letter to the LMS directors to report the several missionary issues. In the letter, he informed them of the reopening of the Chinese schools in the Chinese idol temple, which

662 India Office Records, G/34/112, pp. 413-414.
663 John Anderson to Beighton, 23 November 1826 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/009.
664 Beighton to Morrison, 26 January 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.

accommodated 30 students.[665] Beighton did not clearly state whether the new missionary joined his mission to replace Ince, or he took charge of all the missionary work, but despite the uncertainty and the reorganization of system, the Chinese students could return to their schools. Beighton could not leave the Chinese students anymore, as it could have been dereliction of duty as a missionary.

The Chinese mission schools experienced several changes from August 1827. As written in the previous section, Samuel Dyer became a new missionary who managed Chinese missionary activities, including schools. The head of the Chinese schools was not absent any more and the Chinese students did not have to worry about the closing of the schools. Also, there were three Chinese schools in total in 1827 as one more Chinese school was established. There were 20 boys in each school and they were open for two or three days a week. Dyer hoped to open another school for 50 Chinese girls from 1 December that year.[666] The existing Chinese schools accommodated students in terms of their dialect but nothing was recorded about the new school. The establishment of a new school suggested that the numbers of Chinese students were increasing. In addition to these three schools, Dyer attempted to provide educational opportunities to the Chinese girls opening a girl's school. The missionaries did not explain why the existing Chinese schools had not accepted any female students, but instead of accommodating the female students at the same places, the missionary planned to open another school for female students only.

In February 1828, Dyer briefly reported on the curricula of the Chinese schools, explaining that the children read Christian books at school and never showed any resistance. The teachers allowed them to read their own books as well, which was what Dyer considered providing the best possible education.[667] Although the students had to learn Christianity as a compulsory subject, Dyer allowed the students to read Chinese classics unless they were against Christianity itself. The students could broaden their perspectives by reading various books.

Contrary to Dyer's expectations, the missionary was disappointed with the educational environment of Penang. Dyer recounted his experience about Chinese children in Penang as follows:

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665 Beighton to LMS directors, 30 April 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
666 Beighton and Dyer to LMS directors, 21 November 1827 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/010.
667 Dyer to LMS directors, 4 February 1828 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/011.

> The number of children in Penang is not remarkably great. I think we have most of the girls who live near enough to our schools to attend.[668]

Dyer realized that the children in Penang lacked basic education because the wider society or their parents did not care about them much. The missionary believed that these children, including the girls living near schools, had to be sent to any institution, but there were not as many students in the mission schools as he expected. He attempted to attract more students by improving the quality of education and Dyer was passionate about the school operation; he was always interested in students' academic performances and opened two more schools.

As written earlier, Dyer opened a Chinese girl's school in 1827 that was managed by Maria Dyer, Samuel's wife. Maria felt sorry for the absence of education in the lives of the Chinese girls. She aimed to disabuse the Chinese parents of their prejudices towards the female education.[669] After a year, the girl's school experienced several changes, such as having a new building and a female tutor, and the missionary was satisfied with the academic achievement level of female students. However, the girl's school still had difficulties. The girl's school had to be closed from 1829 to 1830 as there were no new female students or teachers anymore.[670] While the school was closed, Dyer continued to contact the Chinese parents interested in educating their daughters, promising them the best education when the school reopened.[671] The situation improved from 1831 as Dyer decided to re-open the girl's school by appointing a new headmaster.[672] When Maria opened a girl's school, she got the support of a private network of British Christian women who had collected donations. The network shipped handmade goods to Penang to be sold.[673] This case suggests there were different mission methods between the Protestants and Catholics. While Protestant missions were often staffed by married couples and families, Catholic missions predominantly sent out single, sex-segregated personnel, such with the priests.[674] The Catholic priests were celibate so they could

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668 Dyer to LMS directors, 9 May 1828 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/011.
669 Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* p. 78.
670 Dyer to LMS directors, 6th February 1830 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/013.
671 Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer*, p. 80.
672 Dyer to LMS directors, 17 August 1831 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/014.
673 DeBernardi, 'Circulations', p. 60.
674 Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire,* p. 16.

not have spouses as mission partners, whereas Maria managed the girl's school in order to strengthen the missionary work of her husband. Like the case of boys' schools, the Chinese girl's school experienced difficulties in early years. The school had to be closed briefly as there were not enough students and tutors, and the members of the school left earlier than expected as a result of poor management. Despite these difficulties, the female missionary looked for a sponsor to improve the management and her patience eventually meant she could resume her religious tasks. Furthermore, Maria's commitment could be an opportunity to convert Chinese women, and the missionaries could attempt to convert more Chinese women by providing educational opportunities.

The Protestant mission schools showed both the pros and cons. In addition to other schools, the mission schools improved the educational environment of Penang, and the missionaries established various schools so that the students could choose the best option. They also changed the educational perception of Chinese parents regarding female education. However, the missionaries were not much interested in students' final achievements. They simply recorded how the students learnt the Scriptures but did not describe how the former students lived after leaving the schools. The mission schools were established to convert the students as the main goal; the school staff had not considered the future careers of the students.

Compared to other mission methods, education was the most effective way to achieve religious goals. From the perspective of the non-Christians, they saw no reason to be converted and only wanted the educational opportunities; these were the different motives held by the missionaries and the non-Christians concerning the mission schools. The missionaries attempted to change the students' minds by teaching Christian ideas during the classes, and the mission schools were established to educate poor children in Penang so that the students could be influenced by the Christianity. With the exception of the Catholic school, the Christian mission schools taught in the students' native languages so that the students did not have to worry about learning English. Although they failed to convert all the Chinese students, they improved the educational environment in Penang. In particular, Chinese girls were not given educational opportunities at first but the girl's school was eventually opened. The missionaries tried their best to educate the Chinese students by providing a familiar educational environment, and while the establishment of mission schools did not guarantee conversion of the whole

Chinese community, they revived the Chinese migrants' hopes for having a better future in Penang.

6.4. Public schools in Penang

After the establishment of the mission schools in 1819, there were two more schools established in Penang which were Prince of Wales Island Free School and Penang Boarding School. Unlike the mission schools, the public schools only focused on students' education. The number of children in Penang was growing and the government decided to open public schools for their education. Regardless of the purpose of the establishment, the children or teenagers in Penang were therefore able to access more educational opportunities. The Penang government attempted to establish a public education system by allowing the foundation of two schools, which were open to any children in Penang so that the Chinese children could benefit as well. The improved educational system resulted in a wide range of choices becoming open to Chinese children.

Due to the lack of an administrative system, the Penang government was not able to consider establishing schools in its early years. When Penang was founded, most migrants were merchants or labourers and mostly adult men. The demand for education was not considered in the early years due to age-structure of the population, and there was a considerable number of residents who considered Penang as a transient place. In case the of Java, Herman Willem Daendels, the Dutch Governor General of Java, ordered the establishment of schools for local children in 1808, where they were taught Javanese culture and religion as the governor expected them to be grown up into good Javanese. Aritonang claims that the Dutch East India Company (known as VOC) established a basic education system without making any improvements. Dutch officials were afraid that the Indonesians could be inspired by the humanitarian Enlightenment after being educated, and therefore the education system was not introduced across the whole Dutch East Indies.[675] Regardless of the need for education in Penang, British officials never cared about the education system until the late 1810s. As written in the previous chapter, Penang's security was frequently threatened by Chinese migrants, but

[675] Jan S. Aritonang, *Mission schools in Batakland (Indonesia), 1861-1940* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 10-11.

colonial officials never expected any internal disorder resulting from education. Rather, the officials recognized the education as an autonomous decision by the migrants. As the officials were concerned with education issues, the educational institutions were being established almost 30 years after the founding of the colony. When Chinese migrants arrived in Penang at first, they were divided into birthplaces or dialects, but generalized access to education led to recognition of the quality of each school. In the nineteenth century, formal education in Britain was recognized as the privilege of upper- and middle-class children whose parents could afford to send them to privately-operated institutions. The religiously based schools were regarded as a limited charitable and religious duty involving a curriculum of basic skills for the poorer classes.[676] The idea was spread similarly in Penang, due to stratification.

In the early years, there were some schools in Penang but we lack information. The first non-missionary school was established by Peter James Hart in 1806, who advertised the school aimed to teach children reading and writing in English.[677] As the newspaper was published mainly for the European residents, the school founder only allowed entrance to certain groups of children. However, nothing was recorded after the advertisement, and the name of the school was not recorded either. The school was assumed to be managed in a poor way or could not have lasted long. Likewise, it can be assumed that Penang Boarding School was established in 1826, granting admission to 20 boys who were the children of poor families. From 1829 to 1830, the Penang government contributed the monthly sum of 109 rupees to the school but the board of directors disapproved of this grant. Meanwhile, their opponents expressed a high opinion of the utility of the Prince of Wales Island Free school.[678] According to the restricted information, the records did not state curriculum, admission requirements, school entry age or the founder's identity. For example, Catholic school and the ethnic Protestant schools taught basic education in English or mother languages of students with religious purpose but there is

[676] Peter Wicks, 'Education, British Colonialism, and a Plural Society in West Malaysia: The Development of Education in the British Settlements along the Straits of Malacca, 1786-1874', *History of Education Quarterly*, 20 (1980), p. 166.

[677] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 5 April 1806.

[678] Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca' in *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company Report, Minutes of Evidence- (I. Public, Appendix, Index) (II. Finance and Trade, Appendix, Index) (III. Revenue, Appendix, Index) (IV. Judicial, Appendix, Index) (V. Military, Appendix, Index) (VI. Political or Foreign, Appendix, Index), General Appendix, Index* (1832), p. 478.

nothing in the records about Penang Boarding School. The boarding school was the least influential institute in Penang but was simply considered as a minimal welfare or waste of tax.

The establishment of a public school in Penang was discussed from 1815. The British residents realized the necessity of public education in the colony and therefore they submitted a proposal to the government, considering the educational opportunity for Asian children as public charity work.[679] The discussions resulted in the establishment of the Prince of Wales Island Free School, which became a representative non-mission school in Penang. It was founded on 21 October 1816 after several discussions, and the word 'free' was meant to denote that there were no restrictions as regards race or religion of the students, and no school fees had to be paid.[680] The founders of the school considered the Calcutta Free School as their operating model. which was managed in the same way with public and grammar schools in England.[681] The free schools in Asia followed the English teaching style with touches of localisation; the Calcutta Free School was a standard education model. The establishment of a 'free school' was first mooted by a committee led by Rev. R. S. Hutchings, the chaplain of the settlement, in January 1816. His original plan was to build a boarding school for orphans and the poor, but the school was also intended to educate the students in their own languages for a certain number of day students, such as Chinese, Malay and Indian. Therefore, the school committee considered employing native teachers for the day students. Contrary to the original plan, the school was established as a day school which taught the students in English. The changes in the plan took some time before the school was opened with 25 boys. It accepted female students from July 1817, when the school's headmistress arrived. The committee appointed Mr. and Mrs. Cox as headmasters of the school and paid them 80 and 50 dollars per month, respectively.[682] Before the establishment of this institution, poor children did not have educational opportunities. The establishment of the Free School provided educational opportunities, which were no longer connected with the parents' financial situation. Poor children were exempted from the fees but they had to be nominated before entrance to the

[679] India Office Records, F/4/542/13200, pp. 2-63.
[680] Leslie N. O'Brien, 'Education and colonialism: the case of Malaya', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology,*16 (1980), p. 55.
[681] Devasahayam David Chelliah, *A history of the educational policy of the Straits Settlements with recommendations for a new system based on vernaculars* (G. H. Kiat & Company, 1960), p. 42.
[682] *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 25 October 1817.

school.[683] The school was only opened to the qualified students to create an academic atmosphere. Although the students could not be taught in their native languages from the first day, the school committee still understood the importance of native languages that could be reorganized in the future. The free school took the first step towards cultivation of regional human resources.

The establishment of Prince of Wales Island Free School attracted the missionaries' attention. When Ince and Beighton reported to the LMS directors about their missionary works on 10th August 1819, they also explained about the Free school. These missionaries understood that the students in the Free school were taught in English, and they were Portuguese, Chinese, Malay and Indians.[684] Just as the missionaries provided educational services for children in Penang, the Penang government had established a public education system. The missionaries did not consider the Free School their competitor, so they did not have any opinions. Regardless of each school founder's opinion, the schools in Penang would foster healthy competition that would then raise educational standards of the colony.

Apart from reasons for their establishment, the ethnic mission schools and Prince of Wales Island Free School had some differences. Both schools aimed to teach poor children but each establishment taught in different languages. Although the Free School attempted to teach in the native languages of the students, the students had to learn in English due to the changes in curriculum. The mission schools were divided by the ethnicity or dialect of the students; therefore, students in the mission schools could be more comfortable than Free School students. Moreover, the mission schools focused on Chinese and Malay students only, while the Free School accepted Portuguese and Indian students. The LMS sent two missionaries who each took charge of Chinese and Malay missions with the aim to convert these two groups and which resulted in the establishment of Chinese and Malay schools. The missionaries employed the native teachers to attract more Chinese and Malay students. Due to the lack of missionaries, the LMS could not begin an Indian or Portuguese mission and therefore the society only focused on Chinese and Malays. The Free School was opened to every child in Penang and there were a wider variety of students than in the mission schools. As Penang was a multi-ethnic society, the Free School was a microcosm of that society.

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683 Donald Davies, *Old Penang* (Donald Moore, 1956), p. 28.

684 Ince and Beighton to LMS directors, 10 August 1819 in CWM/LMS/14/02/02/002.

On 20 December 1820, there was a public examination of the 51 boys in the Prince of Wales Island Free School. The governor of Penang, William Edward Phillips, visited the examination venue with some directors. At that time, the boys were examined in arithmetic and English proficiency, such as reading and writing.[685] As Penang government founded the Free School, the governor was very interested in the school and visited the examinations. Compared to the other schools, the Free School was often reported in the newspapers as the governor was its patron.

In 1829, a subsequent examination of the students took place, the students displaying their academic progress to the great satisfaction of the committee members. A report on the students' examination was ordered to be printed and forwarded to England, and it included news that the Penang government paid 210 rupees to the Free School every month and a total subvention of 2,520 rupees per annum.[686] Although the records stated achievements of the school and students, the condition of the school was not described in detail. At that time, the school had been open for 13 years and had turned out some graduates, but the records did not describe how the students started their careers after graduation. The Penang government established public education by opening the Free School, but the colonial officials did not take any responsibility for the lives of young people.

In fact, the general hospital of Penang considered recruiting students from the Free School as medical staff, believing that the students would be helpful when caring for the convicts or working at the dispensary, and the student staff could be paid 15 dollars per month, which could increase when they got promoted.[687] Although the Free School did not provide medical courses, the proposal was suggested during a medical manpower shortage in Penang. In fact, Penang had experienced various epidemics and piracies that had caused a considerable number of patients, and hospital officials had to strive to secure an outstanding workforce to accommodate the increased number of patients. Hospital officials decided to fill vacancies from

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685 *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, 23 December 1820.

686 Parliament, House of Commons Papers. 'Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca' in *Select Committee on State of Affairs of East India Company Report, Minutes of Evidence- (I. Public, Appendix, Index) (II. Finance and Trade, Appendix, Index) (III. Revenue, Appendix, Index) (IV. Judicial, Appendix, Index) (V. Military, Appendix, Index) (VI. Political or Foreign, Appendix, Index), General Appendix, Index.* (1832), pp. 477-478.

687 F/4/726/19694. pp. 7-16.

their students. Newly educated talents were expected to contribute to advancement of medical environment in Penang.

In fact, the Free School attempted to open branch vernacular schools from 1821 for Tamils and Malays, but they were closed in 1823 and 1826, respectively. In terms of the Chinese schools, an attempt was made, but the committee members of the Free School could not manage educational planning properly. The committee found that too much time could be taken up by teaching proper Chinese and the Chinese school was not opened. There was a similar discussion in 1853, but nothing happened.[688] Before the vernacular branches of the Free School were opened, the Protestant missionaries had already opened similar models at the same level. The vernacular branches did not have specific advantages compared to the ethnic mission schools. They did not last long as they could not provide advanced curriculum, but the committee did not make any clear plans. In terms of Chinese, the committee only focused on time and operational efficiency and did not open the school. The committee did not feel the need to teach higher education through Asian languages.

In Province Wellesley, there were three boy's schools in 1823 that were branches of the Prince of Wales Island Free School.[689] Although Province Wellesley became part of the Penang settlement from 1800, geographical factors prevented the provision of an integrated education process across the whole settlement. According to the superintendent of Wellesley, the residents were satisfied with the educational qualities of these schools, which taught 70 boys in total. Mr. Hutchings, one of the committee members of the Free School, purchased elementary books and religious tracts for them, and the Protestant missionaries, Beighton and Ince, also visited the province to discuss the possibility of forming institutes. While the boys were given educational opportunities, the girls were not yet given any opportunities due to the absence of any female teacher, although the superintendent had considered an applicant who taught at a girl's school at Calcutta. The Christian missionaries planned to open a girl's school soon so that the students might be taught some reading and needlework.[690] However, the superintendent did not state clearly how these schools were founded. The colonial officials and the missionaries sought to strengthen educational support in the periphery who were not related

[688] Chelliah, *A history of the educational policy*, pp. 42-43.
[689] ibid., p. 42.
[690] F/4/738/20275, pp. 27-28.

with the establishment process of the existing schools. Moreover, the superintendent did not report the schools' curriculum or the ethnic ratio of the students thereby only providing restricted information.

Alongside the ethnic mission schools, the Free School became one of the options for educating Chinese children. The Chinese children were able to access education in Prince of Wales Island Free School as residents of Penang. However, the school was not established especially for the Chinese and hardly seemed to record issues concerning the Chinese students. The only clue was that those Chinese students could be taught in Chinese if the original plan was implemented. The records simply described how the students were examined or taught so that the Chinese students were assumed as part of those students. One of the Chinese alumni of the school was Koh Teng Choon, a grandson of Koh Lay Huan, the first Kapitan Cina of Penang, who was sent for an English education.[691] After graduation, Teng Choon became a Chinese interpreter for the Supreme Court in Penang.[692] As written in Chapter 2, the Koh family considered an English education important to ease cooperation with British officials. The Koh family believed that a cooperative relationship would make a powerful and influential family. Moreover, Koh's entrance contrasted with the motive for the establishment of the Free School. The school was opened to educate any poor children, but Koh's family had been influential in Penang for many years, which suggests that the students of Free School became children of haves in later years.

DeBernardi contends that the Free school Anglicized the students as students were irrespective of their race and religion. With freedom of thoughts and beliefs, English-based education offered exceptional opportunities to the residents of multi-ethnic Penang. When Straits Chinese were educated in Chinese, they adopted many aspects of European lifestyle, such as language, cuisine or house design, so they wanted to be distinguished from the ordinary Chinese.[693] As a case of Koh Teng Choon, the Chinese students were influenced by the educational surroundings in their growth process. In abroad, the migrants did not have to inherit

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691 Neil Khor Jin Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Panang', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 79, (2006), p. 70.

692 John Timothy Beighton, *Betel-Nut Island; Personal Experiences and Adventures in the Eastern Tropics* (The Religious tract society. 1888. P.121.

693 Jean Elizabeth DeBernardi, *Penang: Rites of Belonging in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (NUS Press, 2009), p.23.

every tradition. After experiencing a new education style at Free School, the surroundings affected the identity formation of students that created new culture among certain Chinese descendants. In later years, those educated in English considered themselves progressive and culturally more sophisticated than the Chinese-educated. They considered fluency in English important, and they were influenced by English literatures in their constructions of the world view.[694] The next generations were divided by education experiences that created diverse identities in the Chinese community.

In addition to the poorhouse, education was considered as minimal welfare of the Chinese migrants. The gap between the rich and poor Chinese migrants was never reduced and the government attempted to provide educational opportunities to every child. In fact, the Chinese parents generally sent their children back to China for their education when they could afford it.[695] The Chinese migrants were gripped by a powerful educational fever, and they considered any options for educating their children. In the traditional Chinese society, education was the most important steppingstone to upward social mobility,[696] migrants had not changed their views about education so they were passionate about their children's education. However, whether the Chinese children could be educated depended on their parents' economic abilities. Before the establishment of the various schools in the mid-1810s, poor Chinese parents could not afford to send their children back to China. The Free School and mission schools relieved much of the heavy burden of educational expenses. The education system suggested improvement of the administrative system in Penang.

Compared to mission schools, Chinese girls were given educational opportunities earlier at the Free School. While the Chinese girl's school was opened by Protestant missionaries in late 1820s, the Free School had already accepted female students from 1817. Although the newspapers or the factory records specifically stated Chinese female students, the Free School was open to any ethnic groups. Chinese girls, we can assume, were given educational opportunities from the late 1810s or 1820s. As written in Chapter 2, the Chinese women, in the

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694 Keong, 'Economic Change and the Emergence of the Straits Chinese' , p. 76.

695 Parliament, House of Commons Papers, 'Sir Ralph Rice is called in; and examined, as follows' in *Select Committee of House of Lords on State of Affairs of East India Company, and Trade between Great Britain, E. Indies and China. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index.* (1830), p. 86.

696 Yen Ching-Hwang, *Community and Politics: Chinese in Colonial Singapore and Malaysia*. Times Academic Press, Singapore. 1995. P44.

1790s, were always at home until they were married.[697] The Chinese women generally had to learn embroidery and needlework at home but their parents never thought about their education and neglected them as illiterates.[698] As time went by, the extension of women's rights resulted in Chinese women's educational opportunities returning after 30 years. The female Chinese students symbolized changes in perception of Chinese migrants.

However, several British officials thoughts on female education were based on sexual stereotypes. The general letters from Province Wellesley described the advantage of a girl's school as follows:

> Native girls could be taught a little reading… and from which our Chinese farmers and artificers could select proper wives, would prove of the greatest utility and importance. It is true that a Chinese at Penang is unable to purchase a slave… the Chinese residents of the neighbouring countries continue to do to furnish themselves with the women who live with them… a young woman who had received any education, calculate to assist, and be of use to him at home during the hours he was labouring…[699]

According to the letter writer, he expected that female education would train proper wives, but as written in the previous chapter, some Chinese migrants bought female prostitutes as their wives or concubines. The colonial authorities believed that educated women were better options than female slaves, claiming that educated wives take good care of the home, while the female slaves could only satisfy men's sexual desire. They focused on preventing slave trades through female education rather than improving women's rights.

The colonial state introduced public education in Penang in 1816, and public education provided more educational opportunities to children in Penang. Unlike the ethnic mission schools, the non-missionary institutes were open to every child, regardless of ethnicity, and the condition of the Free School interacted the various students so they could get opportunities to understand other cultures. However, the colonial officials were only interested in school administrative operations and did not record much about the students. Without proper

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697 India Office Records, G/34/6, pp. 120-124.
698 Davies, *Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer,* P.78.
699 F/4/738/20275, pp. 29-30.

management plans, the colonial state simply believed that public education could foster the children of Penang and educate girls to solve marriage problems in the future. In the case of mission schools, they recorded how the students were devoted to their studies, such as learning Chinese characters. The purpose of the education was to train talented individuals for society so that one of the Chinese graduates might became a court interpreter, for example. The curriculum of the schools affected the identities of Chinese students, who were Westernized and ended up with mixed identities. The differences in education methods created a new group within the Chinese community.

6.5. Conclusion

In Penang, there were various religions as each ethnic group had its specific culture. The Christian missionaries had to consider how they should approach the non-Christians so they attempted to convert the non-believers through education. The missionaries opened several influential public schools, and the missionaries introduced new sects of Christianity and new educational systems to Penang. The specific conditions in Penang linked religions and education to provide educational opportunities to the youth.

Chinese migrants continued their traditional religious rites in Penang, and although they built a Buddhist temple, they utilized the place for non-Buddhist festivals as well. Chinese Buddhists considered ethnic identity more important than the religious identity, and in terms of religious ceremonies, they usually worshipped an idol in the temple or performed ancestral worship rituals. Chinese migrants considered folk beliefs as part of their lives but some of them had full faith in their God while epidemics broke out. As they started new lives abroad, they needed to find a peace of mind to endure the difficulties. The religious activities of the Chinese migrants strengthened the bonds that maintained the ethnic identities.

There were three Christian denominations in Penang: the Armenian Church, Catholics, and Protestants. While the Armenian church only cared for the Armenian residents, the Catholics and the Protestants began their missionary works from the mid-1810s. Apart from the Portuguese or Siamese, the Catholics attempted to convert the Chinese and achieved minor success. The Protestant missionaries were supported by the LMS, who attempted to bring the

Chinese migrants into contact with them with the aimed of converting any Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia; therefore, the missionaries in Penang established a cooperative system with missionaries in Malacca. They expected to learn about Chinese culture from the migrants in Southeast Asia before beginning their missions in China. The Protestants distributed printed materials to the Chinese migrants to inform them about Christianity and opened a Chinese service, visiting Chinese houses regularly and providing medical services to attract more Chinese members. Although Christianity did not exercise much influence in the Chinese community, certain classes of Chinese migrants received the missionaries' help.

As part of the missionary works, there were various mission schools in Penang. In the Catholic school, the students were taught in English and all were baptized Catholics. The Protestant missionaries, with the support by the LMS, established several Chinese and Malay schools, in which the students received a basic education in their native languages. The missionaries also opened an evening English class for adults in another attempt to achieve their religious goals. However, the Protestant missionaries experienced several difficulties. First, there were not as many converts as the Catholic school managed, despite the fact they taught Christianity within the curriculum, as the students were more interested in the school classes than the doctrine. Second, the ethnic mission schools did not have proper committee members and therefore had to depend heavily on the missionaries. If anyone was unable to manage the schools, they experienced difficulties. However, despite the difficulties, the missionaries never gave up managing the Chinese schools and also eventually provided educational opportunities to Chinese female students. The Chinese female students were given educational opportunities later than their Malay counterparts due to the prejudices of the Chinese parents. Finally, the missionaries achieved their goal and the Chinese female students were given equal educational opportunities.

While the missionaries established the institutes to achieve their religious goals, there were two non-mission schools in Penang set up for educational purposes only. Penang Boarding School and Prince of Wales Island Free School became educational options to the children in Penang as they were established to educate poor students. However, the colonial officials misunderstood the function of female education, thinking it was for training better wives so that men in Penang would not obtain female slaves to marry. The public schools did not have

many issues with Chinese migrants but they provided a better educational environment. When there were no schools in Penang, the Chinese parents usually sent their children back to China for their education, the once the schools arrived the poorest people within the Chinese community who could not afford to educate their children in China sent them to the schools. The various schools in Penang brought many benefits to the Chinese migrants, as parents did not have to worry about educational expenses or unwanted separation among the family members. The atmosphere in the schools affected the identity formation of Chinese students and created cultural diversity within the Chinese community in later years.

The relationship between religion and education affected Chinese migrants in Penang. Although the Chinese migrants cherished worshipping their ancestors, the activities were practised in order to strengthen their ethnic identities rather than for religious purposes. The European missionaries considered education the best missionary work for converting the Chinese migrants; however, unexpectedly, there were not many Chinese that converted even though they never missed the educational opportunities. The government established public schools, and the missionaries established mission schools, and therefore the Chinese parents did not have to worry about their children's education. While the Chinese migrants followed traditional religious rites and sent their children back to China initially, they adjusted to the new environment in later years as a result of the missionary work and public education. In the new environment, they had more choices regarding religions and education.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

This research has traced how the Chinese community was created in Penang. Over 44 years, Chinese migrants had diverse experiences while settling down in Penang. During the process of urban development, Chinese migrants left their homes to pioneer their new living conditions in Penang, most of them successfully put down roots in Penang as the first generation that formed the Chinese community. Within the first generation, the community had expanded to became one of the more influential ethnic groups in Penang. This research aimed to explore the various aspects of the history of Penang's Chinese migrants.

This research aimed to explore how the Chinese community was linked with terms of diaspora and social capital. The Chinese community was consisted of diasporic labourers and traders. These Chinese labourers and traders contributed to the urban and economic development of Penang. While the Chinese labourers committed themselves in construction sites and plantations, the Chinese traders exported goods, such as pepper or sugar. With two characteristics of diaspora, the Chinese migrants cultivated their lives by forming a community. Moreover, social capital of the Chinese migrants was promoted under the leadership of *Kapitan Cina.* Although there were several conflicts, such as smuggling or certain organizations, among the Chinese migrants in 1820s, the leadership of the Kapitan promoted friendship of the Chinese migrants on a basis of reciprocity in early years. He attempted to work together harmoniously for common interests of the Chinese migrants. The Chinese traders, especially those imported pepper from Sumatra, worked together against the Malay trader's monopoly on imports. Regardless of dialect group, the Chinese migrants had religious activities together, and the *Kapitan Cina* and several Chinese organizations accommodated the poor Chinese strata by opening a poorhouse and accommodating them in their headquarters. In economic and social perspectives, the Chinese migrants usually cooperated and protected each other.

Penang was colonized by the British in 1786. Most of the Chinese migrants were expected to help achieve the colony's economic goals as the British converted Penang into a crop-producing area and trading post, beginning with a large-scale construction in Penang that

included roads, fortifications, water supply and reclamation. After 14 years, the British acquired Province Wellesley, which expanded the territory of the Penang settlement. The new environment of Penang attracted various migrants, including more Chinese, and the British administration employed construction labourers and leased plantations at random. Officials attempted to move residents from Malacca to Penang to increase the population, but the plan was cancelled as the residents refused to leave Malacca. Mass immigration divided the migrants by cultural background, and therefore the officials appointed leaders for certain ethnic groups, called Kapitans. The main purpose of the Kapitan system was to keep public order until the official law system could be introduced. Each Kapitan had a right to judge any criminals within their community, but if any cases were involved between different ethnic groups, superintendents or lieutenant governors passed judgement on them. After the official legal system and police department were established, the Kapitans no longer had jurisdiction but they remained influential in each community. In every aspect, Penang became a multi-ethnic society due to the arrival of various migrant groups. The police department included Muslim and Chinese policemen, who were expected to communicate efficiently with the Malay and Chinese communities. In the street, there were buildings in various architectural styles, and there was intermarriage between different ethnic groups. The colonial officials paid particular attention to the Chinese migrants during the pioneering process of Penang, but despite the obvious cultural homogeneity, the migrants came from various regions in Southeast Asia and China. There were plenty of Chinese migrants who had been living in Malacca or Thailand and migrated again to Penang to expand their businesses. As the Chinese migrants were from various regions, each migrant group spoke in a different dialect. The diversity in the Chinese community was further developed under the leadership of the Kapitan Cina Koh Lay Huan, who emphasized cooperation among the dialect groups and aimed for them to work together for the common good. However, the Chinese population was not a stable one in Penang's early years. Some of the Chinese migrants were persuaded to move to Trinidad to replace slaves, and the foundation of Singapore attracted several Chinese capitalists. Moreover, the Chinese migrants suffered from high mortality rates, the absence of education and gambling addictions during the early years, and some of these issues became more controversial 10 years into the colony's history. In addition to these existing difficulties, several Chinese migrants entered into conflicts with other ethnic groups. The public power could not protect innocent civilians. The

society aimed towards peaceful coexistence among its residents, but every migrant could not always find peace. The administrative system was still relatively ineffectual and therefore the Chinese migrants simply had to endure these difficulties until the system was improved. During the settlement process, Chinese migrants played important roles in Penang's early history, carving out their new lives while relying on their compatriots to endure these difficulties overseas.

When the Chinese migrants began their economic activities, these also had social consequences, either directly or indirectly. At first, the Chinese migrants needed land to set up their economic foundations. The then superintendent of Penang, Francis Light, was concerned that the residents could leave Penang anytime, and therefore he introduced the land tenure system, which included tax exemption. As a result of land reclamation, Light expected, the migrants could contribute to colonial interests by utilizing the cleared lands. At that time, the Chinese migrants leased a considerable amount of the land, on which several Chinese planters had established pepper plantations. In fact, Light had asked Koh Lay Huan to obtain pepper seed from Aceh, having realized how lucrative pepper business was, and persuaded the Kapitan Cina to start a pepper business in Penang. Generally, pepper cultivation benefited Penang's economy and the Chinese capitalists with the pepper planters employing Chinese labourers in the production process that resulted in the stratification of the Chinese migrant community. The planters bore the travel expenses of farm labourers from China and established a contract relationship for several years to come in an attempt to raise production efficiency based on cultural homogeneity. In addition to pepper cultivation, several Chinese merchants set up pepper imports from Sumatra. Indeed, Chinese migrants were engaged in every part of the pepper business in Penang from the beginning. The Chinese migrants also produced pork, arrack and opium through the revenue farming system, where land was cultivated for an agreed fixed price paid in advance to the state. The colonial administration had absolute confidence in the business management capabilities of the Chinese migrants. In terms of the pork sales, a portion of the profits was spent on operating the Chinese poorhouse. Moreover, the Chinese migrants themselves were the main consumers of these commodities and that guaranteed high-rate profits. However, the revenue farmers were threatened by epidemics and smugglers. Epidemics, such as cholera or smallpox, lasted for several months and the smugglers were a constant threat to the revenue farmers. The smugglers depreciated the values of revenue-farm

commodities by selling unlicensed products; moreover, they occupied the farms illegally by force. The government introduced new regulations to protect the rights of the revenue farmers, but many farmers gave up because of the incessant threats. The rights to revenue farm management resulted in bidding wars that led to terrorism among the Chinese. While the Chinese migrants started most of the economic activities in Penang Island, they cultivated sugar in Province Wellesley, once the land of the province had been reclaimed. The Chinese farmers developed their own successful production methods to maximize the commercial value of the sugar. However, after several decades, the Chinese farmers had a conflict with the government concerning an increase in rent. The governor of Penang recognized the Chinese farmers' commitment in the province but claimed that new rent was a reasonable amount. From the foundation of Penang, the Chinese artificers played an important role in urban development. Once the Chinese artificers had successfully completed the construction in the early years, the colonial authorities trusted in their construction abilities. When the officials needed repair works, they usually employed Chinese artificers despite the higher labour costs. The Chinese migrants also became both administrators and consumers of the gambling industry, a situation with its merits and problems. In addition to pepper, pork, opium and arrack, gambling houses became one of the major sources of colonial revenue. When the colonial administration allowed gambling houses to be opened, several Chinese capitalists were interested in acquiring management rights as gambling was the most popular leisure activity in Penang and guaranteed high-rate profits. Once the Chinese labourers collected their earnings, they spent the largest portions of them enjoying gambling. Although gambling was a vocation among Chinese migrants, there were plenty of gambling addicts that became an object of social concern. The colonial state prohibited gambling temporarily but the new policy did not last long; however, closing the gambling houses resulted in a drop in colonial revenues. The officials attempted to solve addiction problem and secure tax revenues together by allowing the gambling houses to reopen at certain times with several restrictions. Unexpectedly, several Chinese migrants broke the law, which caused similar problems again. In every area of economic activity, the Chinese migrants demonstrated how social issues were involved, such as social stratification, competition for wealth, formation of specialized groups and addiction problems. These issues suggested how the Chinese migrants formed their own small society, although several issues were problems across the whole of Penang society. These economic activities were not only

related to economic gains for the Chinese migrants but also showed evidence of social characteristics in the Chinese community.

During the settlement process, the Chinese migrants experienced various difficulties. The absence of a functioning administrative system meant the needs of most Chinese migrants were neglected, leaving them to endure their difficulties alone until the system was improved. The most representative cases would be the various fires that broke out until the 1810s, one of which destroyed the economic foundations of many Chinese who could not be compensated properly. The colonial authorities realized the seriousness of the impact of fires on economic activity and acted to improve the waterways and prepare fire protection system in several households. Another threat to economic activity were came from the pirates. Some Chinese migrants were fishermen or traders who usually conducted their economic activity at sea. Many of those Chinese were kidnapped and murdered by maritime raiders, and therefore the administration prepared several measures to counteract them. However, the maritime raiders also expanded their power and were able to maintain a sustained campaign of habitual violence at sea. There were also Chinese among the maritime raiders, who attacked their compatriots without slightest hesitation to achieve their own goals. Colonial officials prepared for military confrontation and diplomatic cooperation, which were effective only in the short term. The population growth in Penang promoted the formation of a society that encouraged accidents and crimes. Although the Chinese migrants were not the only group, they experienced unexpected death or attacks. If the migrants had taken more interest in their neighbours, several fatal cases could be prevented. Moreover, some Chinese victims had suffered from robbery, murder or police harassment. The police department had been established for several decades but was not strong enough to maintain the public order. The dangerous potential of further epidemic outbreaks was also seared into the minds of Chinese migrants, after they had suffered from cholera, smallpox, intermittent fever, leprosy and ulcers that caused a great number of casualties. These epidemics depressed economic activity among the Chinese migrants, who then asked the government for financial aid. In terms of cholera and leprosy, some Chinese were vulnerable to these epidemics due to their lifestyles. When the cholera broke out, several Chinese worshipped their gods for their protection, but although they had a prejudice against English medical officials, they had to listen to the advice from the public health authority. The unhygienic habits of several Chinese migrants spread leprosy. They did not care about food

hygiene or personal cleanliness, but these practices had to change in order to protect their neighbours. In the Chinese community, there was a certain class who could not take care of themselves, but for humane reasons, the Chinese migrants built a poorhouse to accommodate them. At first, the Chinese migrants started charity activity by spending some of the earnings from the pork farms. Sometime afterwards, the charity activity led to the establishment of a poorhouse that became a joint operation with the government. The Chinese poorhouse had gradually improved its living conditions and began to accommodate non-Chinese people in later years. Despite financial difficulties, the supervisors aimed for the smooth functioning of the institute, and while the Chinese poorhouse had several points that needed improvement, it was significant as it represented the introduction of a welfare system in Penang. During its establishment, the Chinese community led the plan to found it to help their compatriots and thereby afforded colonial access to welfare. The Chinese migrants were social minorities who could not be protected completely. They had to endure many difficulties in order to survive, but several sacrifices could not be prevented in advance. Although several Chinese were not responsible for their individual preventive measures, the sacrifices of Chinese migrants resulted in improvements in the administrative system.

While certain classes of Chinese had painful memories, there was an especially inglorious chapter in the Chinese community's history as some Chinese people became criminals who sought to cause social disorder. These Chinese criminals committed illegal activities in various ways and they were never afraid of the power of the authorities. Before the introduction of an official law system, the Kapitan Cina exercised criminal jurisdiction over Chinese accused of a crime. He passed judgements at his house, and Chinese was the main language of the trial and records. Regardless of jurisdiction, the Chinese criminals committed crimes unceasingly with various Chinese gangs robbing civilians' houses and getting involved in murders or fires in order to achieve their goals. Every ethnic group had criminals, but the Chinese petty criminals never cared how they damaged their neighbours and compatriots. On a related case, the Penang government attempted to abolish slavery gradually by restricting slave importation. Contrary to the government's plan, several Chinese migrants became slave traders at this point, usually importing female slaves from Sumatra who were sold as concubines or prostitutes. The slave traders realized that the female slaves could satisfy sexual desires and therefore they constructed the slave market. The suppliers were Chinese migrants in Sumatra who sold the

slaves in the principal cities of the Malay Archipelago. The bigger problem was that local chiefs in Sumatra cooperated with the suppliers, and the slave traders had a good understanding of the supply and demand and their economic interests. These Chinese traders were arrested immediately after being found guilty, and the Penang government only allowed the arrival of registered slaves in order to prevent further human trafficking. From Penang's early years, the Chinese migrants had organized several groups based on members' home regions, which aimed to promote friendship among the members to help each other in a foreign land. When any members died far from home, the organizations held funerals and buried them. Furthermore, several poor members were accommodated at the headquarters of the organizations with brotherly affection. These actions resulted a cohesive unity among the members. From the 1820s onwards, the colonial authorities realized the influences on society of these Chinese organizations and several of their members were suspected of carrying illegal weapons. They were suspected of attempting to subvert society with the support of military aid from foreign powers, but their conspiracy could not take place as the police were notified in advance. The leader of the conspiracy had caused several social problems and he was arrested immediately. Therefore, while the Chinese organizations helped the Chinese migrants to orient themselves in Penang, several of them also caused social disturbances, and because so many Chinese were involved in these more controversial issues, colonial officials decided to restrict Chinese immigration. When any Chinese wanted to migrate to Penang, they had to receive permission before departing their previous location. Officials attempted to reduce the threat of violence or vagrancy by introducing these new regulations and this repeated incidents changed the colonial officials' trust in Chinese migrants. Officials trusted the hard-working qualities of the Chinese in the colony's early years, but they could not ignore the social problems committed by them anymore. These controversial issues were caused by certain groups, but the migrants did not realize that issues would damage the Chinese community's image and prestige in Penang.

The cultural characteristics of the Chinese migrants were clearly demonstrated in terms of religious and educational issues. Chinese migrants established their own idiosyncratic educational and religious values during the settlement process. When the Chinese community built a Buddhist temple, for example, it was not opened only for religious purposes but also for several social events that aimed to promote harmony within the Chinese community. Most Chinese migrants considered solidarity more important than religious belief, and generally the

migrants worshipped ancestors and idols in the early years. Once any deceased were buried, they took care of burial grounds in a similar way as they would in China. Several Chinese organizations took charge of the funeral and burial arrangements of any deceased members in order to respect them. Chinese migrants worshipped ancestors regularly, while several clans performed ancestral rites together to promote friendship among their members. However, most of the Chinese migrants' folk beliefs sometimes terrified other residents of Penang. Furthermore, the blind faith in tradition among many Chinese migrants encouraged them to ignore the outbreak of cholera and sacrificing family members in search of answers to their prayers. Regardless of religious freedom, some antisocial behaviours among believers could not be tolerated as they potentially put innocent people in danger. In addition to the traditional religious activities, some Chinese migrants became Christians after two denominations, Catholics and Protestants, sent missionaries to Penang. While the Catholic missionaries did not establish a mission strategy along ethnic lines, the Protestant missionaries were passionate about converting the Chinese migrants in particular with a view to familiarize themselves with Chinese culture by interacting with the migrants in Penang before extending their missionary works into China itself. They celebrated religious services in Chinese, visited Chinese congregations and learned Hokkien to convert more Chinese. As two different denominations converted some Chinese, there were arguments between the newly converted Catholics and Protestants in the Chinese community about differences in doctrines based on strong beliefs. Unintentionally, the Christian missionaries caused conflict among the Chinese migrants. Despite the small number of converts, the Christian missionaries attempted to strengthen their missionary works by opening mission schools. Indeed, the main missionary work of the Catholics was to educate children at school and they accepted admissions of any students, regardless of ethnicity. The students in their schools were given a basic education. Conversely, the Protestant missionaries opened two Chinese mission schools, which were divided into schools using Hokkien and Cantonese dialects. As so many Chinese students spoke in different dialects, the missionaries attempted to angle towards the students' level. After several years, a Chinese girls' school was opened as well, which needed to overcome the prejudices of many Chinese parents. The parents believed that their children had to be taught with a Confucian curriculum to maintain their Chinese identities. Moreover, they never felt the necessity for female education, which is why it took the missionaries a while to be able to educate the

Chinese girls. Aside from the mission schools, there were two public schools, Penang Boarding School and Prince of Wales Island Free School, which were opened in the mid-1810s. The mission schools and public schools provided greater educational options to students in Penang. While the Boarding school accommodated only a small number of students, the Free School granted admission to any students regardless of their cultural backgrounds. The Free School also opened several branches in Province Wellesley to expand the educational bases of the whole settlement. Before the schools were established, some Chinese parents sent their children back to China for educational purposes, but the increase of educational options meant families did not have to be separated. Moreover, the educational environment of the Free School affected the identities of the Chinese students, who were educated in English, establishing a cosmopolitan mentality among the Chinese graduates. Apart from the dialect or locality, educational background affected the identities of subsequent generations of Chinese. The female students were given educational opportunities as well, although that did not aim for gender equality, as the colonial administration expected Chinese unmarried men would marry female graduates and thereby prevent the importing of female slaves. The religious and educational issues described how Chinese migrants struggled in early years without understanding their new environment. They persisted with their lifestyles at first, although they changed gradually after the migrants were enculturated by the society of Penang.

The foundation of Penang resulted in the formation of a Chinese community, which took parts in the development of Penang and encountered changes during the settlement. The Chinese migrants formed a community based on cultural homogeneity, but there was a diversity among the migrants. The Chinese migrants raised tax revenues by cultivating pepper and managing revenue farms, and as a result they had economic influence in Penang, showing that the Chinese community played an important part in the colonial economy. The economic development of Penang resulted in a division within the Chinese community between different social classes by wealth or dialect group that continued across subsequent generations. The diversity in the community also reflected the different political attitudes of certain Chinese organizations, just as the scale of the Chinese community grew with the Chinese population and increased the diversification of jobs, education levels, political allegiances and religious beliefs of the Chinese migrants. Nonetheless, a cultural homogeneity connected the Chinese migrants as one group within the colonial state's plan for an imagined community. This migrant

community was involved in various issues in the early history of Penang, either as key or minor players, and this research has attempted to explain these issues in terms of the Chinese migrants' views.

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