Myth and Reality of the Chinese Diaspora

Dong Sull Choi

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Comparative Civilizations Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Migration is one of the world’s greatest travel sagas of all time. It is safe to assume that right after the first human beings appeared on the earth they began to migrate, moving from place to place in pursuit of big game. The rapidity with which hunting bands occupied all the continents, probably with the exception of Antarctica, in about 50,000 years, attests to this human propensity. No dominant species ever spread so far so fast. In modern times, people have always moved to find land and work, and to flee from war, famine and oppression. The Second World War (1939–1945) displaced nearly forty-five million people.

In English usage, the Greek term “diaspora” refers specifically to the dispersion of the Jews from their homeland. There is thus no ambiguity about the term diaspora or dispersion when it is used in relation to the Jewish people. But once it is applied to other religious or ethnic groups, it becomes immediately apparent how difficult it is to find a definition that makes a clear distinction between a migration and a diaspora, or between a minority and a diaspora. The term clearly implies the idea of “exile.” Thus the term “diaspora” is not used when discussing the presence of descendants of British people in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Canada, and the United States.

Conversely, and making matters even more complex, there is a widespread tendency to apply the term “diaspora” to the Chinese or Indian communities scattered across the globe when European imperialism was at its height in the second half of the nineteenth century. These people scattered to southeast Asia, the West Indies, the Indian Ocean, eastern and southern Africa, Europe, and the United States.

It has often been observed that in all the annals of recorded history, there is no chapter more romantic, more inspiring, yet more complex than the 2,500-year-long episode of the Jewish people in exile, begun with the so-called Babylonian Captivity in the sixth century B.C. For the last four centuries, however, the world has observed another more significant migration from the world’s most populous country, China. Undisputably this Chinese diaspora is regarded as the most widespread and continuing series of migrations by one nation the world has ever seen. Indeed, the Chinese dispersal across 109 countries of the world is
part of that great saga. The fifty-five million overseas Chinese are the fastest-growing economic force in today’s world. The three major financial centers of the Chinese diaspora—Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong—possess combined foreign reserves twice as large as those of Japan, Germany or the United States of America.

China was a large and complex civilization from about 221 B.C., when Ch’in Shih Huang Ti established the first Chinese empire controlled by a strong central government. It was the most advanced nation in the world, from about 1000 to 1500 A.D., in technology, organization, commerce, and literature. By the eleventh century A.D., China had achieved a level of economic development that no European nation reached before the eighteenth century.

The oldest book in existence was published in China in 868 A.D. The English economist and pioneer of modern population study, Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), declared as late as 1798 that China was the richest country in the world.

One of the foremost overseas Chinese scholars, Wang Gungwu, has said that, historically and chronologically, there have been four main varieties of migrant Chinese. The first to appear was the migrant of “commercial calling”—the trader, the artisan, the miner and the skilled worker. The seaports and cities of southeast Asia were thickly settled with their kind—the Hokkiens in Batavia and Manila, the Teochins in Bangkok, the Hakkas in West Borneo—and it was they who developed the great trading networks of southeast Asia. Theirs was the dominant pattern of migration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and before the industrial revolution and the age of European imperialism, this was the only significant and indeed the only possible pattern of migration.

The second type of migration was represented by the “contract laborer” or the coolie of peasant origin. More like today’s guest workers than true settlers, most of this type usually returned to China when their contracts terminated. Many Chinese laborers went to Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, but as an immigrant category they figured less importantly in southeast Asia (where they were ancillary to the commercial migrant) than in North America and Australia (where they became familiar as gold rushers and railroad workers). If there was a fundamental difference between the American and southeast Asian migrants, it lay chiefly in this, that the former were predominantly working-class, while the latter were strongly mercantile. But falling within the era of quickened transformation, partly by the rapid expansion of plantation economies and mining, and partly by growing Western wealth and industrialization, the movement to the Americas
came to an end by the close of the nineteenth century, and to southeast Asia by the 1920's.15

The third type was the so-called "hua-ch'iao," overseas Chinese and refers broadly to all Chinese living outside China. Its model was a sojourner who enjoyed the protection of the Chinese government (through its embassies or consulates), and who remained attached politically, culturally, and emotionally to his mother country China. The notion was of comparatively recent coinage, and the pattern it embodies had its heyday in the period between 1900 and 1950, the years of increasing nationalism among the overseas Chinese.16

When a Chinese called himself a hua-ch'iao, he generally did so with pride and honor, for it signified his inclusion in the great Chinese political family; he was somebody that the Chinese government recognized as one of its own and, moreover, as somebody whose money and expertise China needed and courted. The Chinese who settled in America were especially proud and happy to call themselves hua-ch'iao, because the attributes and advantages that went with the name national pride, official Chinese recognition, and consular protection, all gave them the self-respect which, as a despised and persecuted minority of coolie origin, they had so far lacked.

The last and fourth of the Chinese immigrant type was the "hua-i" or "hui-jem," the naturalized foreign national of Chinese origin, a category which embraces not only the foreign-born descendants of Chinese immigrants but also educated professional re-migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and other countries of southeast Asia. Many of these might have been immigrants twice or three times over, originating in China, and going on to the United States, Canada, Europe, or Australia after a spell in southeast Asia.

For instance, Malaysian Chinese in Perth (Australia), Taiwan Chinese in Monterey Park (California), Laotian Chinese in Paris (France), Hong Kong Chinese in Toronto (Canada)—these are all representatives of the breed. They are the people who have shifted the focus of Chinese migration from southeast Asia to America, Australia, and Western Europe. Cosmopolitan in nature, very often Western-educated, they are "cultural Eurasians" who think that "it would be more satisfying to be Eurasians among Westerners than among Asians" like some Taiwanese or Malays—perhaps because they are "too Western to be comfortably Chinese and yet too Chinese to accept conditions where Chineseness is being penalized."17

One of the significant watersheds in the history of Chinese migra-
tion came in 1644, when the 276-year-long Ming dynasty fell to alien invaders from the north, the Manchu founders of the Ch’ing dynasty (1644–1911). Most Chinese resented the Manchus, and the new government’s unpopularity rose dramatically when it proved unable to deal with the repeated threat of European imperialism. Particularly from the far southern provinces, where the resistance to the Manchus did not end for some decades, thousands of Chinese fled to Taiwan, the Philippines and other sanctuaries in southeast Asia. Large numbers of Ming loyalists also arrived and settled in Indochina, long a place of refuge for fugitive supporters of fallen Chinese dynasties.

The chief challenge to Manchu supremacy came from Koxinga, the son of a Japanese mother and a Chinese trader-buccaneer from Fukien province. In Taiwan, which he made his strategic base for his resistance, Koxinga has remained a folk hero to this day. In the course of the protracted struggle against Koxinga, the Manchu government decreed that all of the coastal regions be evacuated and the population moved several miles inland. This was the great “Boundary Shift of 1661,” when travel was banned and the southern coasts became a no-man’s land. The Manchus looked to these measures to blockade the sea-roaming Ming loyalists from food and supplies and to break their resistance. They succeeded, but it was a big tragedy for the local inhabitants, who saw their boats destroyed, and their coastal villages and towns razed to the ground—an early instance of the “scorched earth” tactics that virtually halted China’s maritime trading activities and left the way open for the easy intrusion of European powers into east and southeast Asian waters. This coastal ban which was finally lifted after the Manchu conquest of Taiwan in 1683 made refugees of the coastal inhabitants, many of whom found themselves stripped of home and land left to make a new life abroad.

Despite the anti-emigration laws of the Manchu government which were widely ignored, the seaways between the southeast Asian ports remained busy and flourishing with trade vessels. Commercial activities were given a great boost by the arrival of the European powers on the southeast Asian shores, but it was not until the high colonial era of the nineteenth century, with the large-scale explorations of the hinterlands and the white man’s assumption of imperial responsibilities, that the tides of Chinese migration to southeast Asia were given their strongest impetus. In much of southeast Asia, Chinese emigrants followed on the heels of the European advances, and as the historian Wang Gungwu observed, “it could almost be said that Chinese trade always followed
The greatest waves of Chinese emigration actually began in the second half of the nineteenth century, with more than two million moving from their homeland to the Malay peninsula, Indochina, Sumatra, Java, the Philippines, Hawaii, the West Indies, California, Latin America, and Australia between 1848 and 1888, which means, on the average, some 50,000 Chinese leaving their homeland every year for some forty consecutive years.

A number of contributing factors for the mass migration can be enumerated: population pressure, Western penetration, political upheaval, Taiping Rebellion, famine and natural disasters. The intrusion of the Western powers came at a time when China was experiencing a rapid increase in population. For instance, in 1700 China’s population was estimated at 150 million. Within another 150 years, it had swelled and almost tripled to 430 million. In a country where there had appeared no new kinds of economic, technical or political improvement to absorb this proliferation of people, such huge numbers inevitably made for destitution, popular demoralization, corruption, apathy, and the breakdown of public order and personal morality. A small number of landlords controlled much of the farmland on which the great majority of people toiled in serious poverty.

Suffering and famine led to a nation-wide peasant uprising, the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), which swept across 16 provinces and destroyed more than 600 towns, and it shook the Ch’ing empire (1644–1911) to its roots. Generally regarded as the most destructive rebellion in history, the Taiping catastrophe claimed more than 20 million lives. Never before in the two hundred years of Manchu rule had the empire been so horribly and helplessly ravaged. Chinese annals also reveal that about 15 million people died from famine and epidemics in 1849, 8 million deaths resulted from famine in 1857, and another 10 million deaths from famine in 1878. In less than three decades, more than 60 million people lost their lives in all, and it was against this backdrop of enormous death, destruction and faltering imperial authority that the mass emigration of Chinese took place.

It is noteworthy to see that virtually all of the Chinese who went abroad came from two southeastern provinces, Fukien and Kwangtung, and the tropical island of Hainan. More than 95 percent of the 19th-century emigrants to the United States came from Kwangtung province alone. Originating from such a geographically concentrated area requires some explanation. For instance, Fukien province, about the size...
of England, has little land fertile enough to reward intensive agricultural effort, and by about 1500 A.D. the province had less cultivated land per person than any other in China, its half-acre per head being roughly half the national average. Chinese annals show it to have been struck again and again by famine, 228 times in the seventeenth century, 158 times in the eighteenth century, and a total of 888 times in the 844 years between 1068 and 1911.

The precise number of overseas Chinese is not known and is a matter of speculation. Some southeast Asian countries no longer classify their citizens of Chinese descent as “Chinese,” although within the community, the differentiation is still made. Inaccurate definitions of overseas Chinese, non-standardized categories, insufficient information, and tenuous estimates make it almost impossible to draw a reliable world map of the Chinese diaspora. S. Gordon Redding, Dean of the Business School of Hong Kong University, has estimated that in 1990 the overseas Chinese in southeast Asia totaled some 43 million. The former editor for The Washington Post Joel Kotkin estimated some 52 million in 1992. It is now generally agreed by most scholars that somewhere between 54 and 58 million overseas Chinese reside in more than 109 countries the world over. Politically and geographically, the Chinese diaspora may be divided into three separate entities: Hong Kong and Macau, the former British-ruled until 1997, the latter Portuguese-ruled until 1999, with more than 6 million; Taiwan, more than 22 million; and a further 30 million spread among the nations of southeast Asia, the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the European continent.

By 1992 and 1993, China’s economy was growing more than 13 percent annually, faster than that of any other country in the world. It is rather fashionable these days to see the Chinese people, particularly overseas Chinese, as natural capitalists, and to explain the economic boom in that way. The overseas Chinese in southeast Asia have for centuries been analogized to the Jews in Europe. However, the Chinese controlled far more of the southeast Asian economies than the Jews ever controlled of the more advanced European economies. Rather it is more appropriate to say that the Jews might be called the Chinese of Europe. The fastest growing areas in the world in the last couple of decades have been those with large Chinese populations or else exposed to strong Chinese influence: China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. And while the Philippines has trailed far behind, its Chinese minority has done extremely well and plays a spectacular role in the business and financial community. For instance, according to the Nihon
Keizai Shinbun, in the Philippines, where ethnic Chinese account for 1.5 percent of the population, they hold sway over a remarkable 60 percent of assets. In the Indonesia, as much as 75 percent of capital is in the hands of ethnic Chinese who make up only 2.4 percent of the total population.

One of the 20th-century’s greatest historians, Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975), predicted in the early 1920s that the Chinese would soon dominate southeast Asia’s “weaker and less efficient peoples” and gradually supplant the Europeans as well. At the time overseas Chinese in southeast Asia numbered roughly 8 million, and most were still petty traders, laborers and artisans, yet from Singapore to the jungle of New Guinea, the European traders were already being squeezed by “John Chinaman.” Toynbee’s predictive observation proved amazingly prescient.

Historically, most of the Chinese who settled in southeast Asia started their lives as humble and poor, and sometimes the group included outcasts, vagabonds, and criminals. They began their new life in a foreign country as penniless laborers who worked and saved relentlessly until they had enough money to begin some sort of business. While the Chinese immigrants were willing to work up to 18 hours a day for as long as it took to reach their financial goals, the native peasants in southeast Asia spent much of their time in leisure and recreation. While the native peasants were willing to go into debt even for luxury items, the Chinese immigrants lived extremely austerely on unappetizing food and packed into overcrowded housing. It was not uncommon for a Chinese woman to work in the field for long hours under a sultry hot sun, bent over, often knee-deep in water, and even carrying a baby on her back as well. Throughout the world, the Chinese gained a reputation for their industriousness, frugality, acumen, and reliability in business. Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629), the founder of Batavia (modern Jakarta) and the Dutch colony of the East Indies wished to see his colony peopled as much as possible by the Chinese, and said, “There are no people who can serve us better than the Chinese.” The Chinese brought new economic vitality to the tradition-bound peasant fold culture of the southeast Asian communities.

The story of Chinese diaspora cannot be completed without mention of the Chinese Americans. Chinese Americans have always been a tiny part of the larger worldwide phenomenon of the overseas Chinese. No one can say exactly when the first Chinese arrived in what is today the United States of America. During the seventeenth century, the
Spaniards brought a number of skilled Chinese workers to the New World from Spanish colony in the Philippines. Many of these Chinese converted to Roman Catholicism and took Spanish names. One of them was among the 23 founders of the city of Los Angeles in 1781. Although he had the very un-Chinese name of Antonio Rodriguez, the Spanish records list him as a “Chino,” Spanish for “Chinese.” Probably this Antonio could be officially the first Chinese to set foot on the North American soil.

Although some individual Chinese names are reported in Pennsylvania as early as 1785, significant migration began with the California gold rush of 1849 and ended with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act on May 6, 1882. During that 33-year period, nearly 300,000 Chinese were enumerated as entering the continental United States, many of whom were enlisted to build the transcontinental railways. A little over 100,000 arrived between 1849 and 1870; another 100,000 between 1870 and 1877; and about 75,000 between 1877 and 1882. Well over 90 percent of these early Chinese were male adults. Although male migration was then a common phenomenon and characteristic of many early groups, among no large group of immigrants to the 19th-century America was the sex ratio as skewed as it was among the Chinese. By the 1880s, according to the censuses of 1880 and 1890, Chinese males outnumbered females by more than twenty to one. In Australia the imbalance was incredible: in Victoria, for instance, in 1857 there were 25,421 Chinese and just 3 females. The ratio was 8,474 males to one female.

These early Chinese men all wore queues, long pigtails that the Manchu government required for every male Chinese. Aside from their peculiar appearance, there was one very important difference between the Chinese and the Germans, Irish, Spanish, or English who also went to California to find gold and get rich. The Chinese could not legally become citizens of the United States. A federal law passed in 1790 (during George Washington’s administration, 1789–1797) stated that only people of the white race could become naturalized citizens. Unlike other immigrants, none of the Chinese living in the United States could appeal to a representative of their homeland for help. China’s government had no consuls in the major cities of America, as European countries did. Indeed, the Chinese empire then regarded its overseas citizens as “wild geese” who were unworthy of attention. The Chinese immigrants received some legal protection when the United States and China signed a treaty in 1868. Called the Burlingame Treaty after the
American ambassador to China Anson Burlingame (1820–1870), the agreement allowed American and Chinese citizens to migrate freely “from one country to the other.”

Still, the Chinese faced vicious prejudice from people who feared they were taking jobs away from white Americans. In America as in southeast Asia, the Chinese became hated and reviled for their virtues. American workers generally could not compete with Chinese, either in endurance or frugality. Labor unions and political radicals like Jack London (1876–1916) spearheaded the anti-Chinese movement, which spread through the press, the state legislature, and eventually the halls of U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. In 1882 (during Chester A. Arthur’s administration, 1881–1885), only 14 years after the Burlingame agreement, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, surely one of the most shameful laws in American history. It prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years, but was later extended for an indefinite period. For the first time, the United States closed its borders to a group of people solely on the basis of race. The total Chinese population in America steadily declined from the peak of more than 100,000 in 1890 to 57,000 in 1940. Only two mainland cities, San Francisco and New York City, had more than 10,000 Chinese residents each.

In 1943, the U.S. Congress passed a bill permitting Chinese to immigrate, but it set an annual quota of just 105 people. In 1965 (during Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration, 1963–1969), a new immigration law instituted a new quota system that gave preference to people with special talents and skills and allowed up to 20,000 new immigrants from any country. Since then, hundreds of thousands of Chinese have arrived from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and many countries of southeast Asia. The 1990 U.S. census showed that nearly two million Americans claimed Chinese descent. Though they make up less than one percent of the total population, Chinese Americans are no longer “curiosities.” They have proudly taken their pride in the mainstream of American life.

As in southeast Asia and many other parts of the world, a core of Chinese concentration is found in big cities like New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Honolulu. At the southern end of Manhattan (New York City) is the largest Chinese community in the Western Hemisphere. The heart of Chinatown is the eight blocks bounded by Canal Street to the north, Baxter Street to the west, Bowery Street to the east, and Worth Street and Park Row to the south, but the geo-
graphical limits have become more and more indeterminate as Chinatown eats into the ethnic enclaves that abut it. A survey by the U.S. immigration authorities shows that some 300,000 Chinese reside in the area. In addition to immigrants from the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan, Chinese from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Laos, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba, South America, and the Philippines have come, bringing their various dialects and cultures. They have turned Chinatown into the city’s apparel manufacturing center. Its nearly 600 factories have an annual payroll of over $200 million. It is also an important jewelry district now, turning over $100 million in gold and diamonds a year. Its more than 400 restaurants draw an enormous number of tourists and conventioneers. The local business directory lists 144 lawyers, 55 dentists, and more than 100 certified public accountants. It is virtually a nation in itself.

Of a great number of successful stories of the Chinese Americans, three examples are chosen here before the conclusion of this paper. On August 24, 1959, Hiram Leong Fong stood at the podium of the U.S. Senate, in Washington, D.C., and took the oath of office. It was a great moment in the history of Chinese Americans, for Fong was the first ever to serve in the Congress of the United States of America. He represented Hawaii, the newest state in the union, the only one with a majority of Asian Americans. Fong’s parents had come to Hawaii from Kwangtung province in 1872. They worked on a sugar plantation and supported their family of 11 children on their combined wages of $12 a month.

Their seventh child, Hiram, born in 1907, followed the classic American success story. As a boy, he supplemented the family income by shining shoes, selling newspapers, and caddying. After graduating from McKinley High School in Honolulu, he worked his way through the University of Hawaii. Graduating at the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Fong saved enough money to go to Harvard Law School. As a graduate from Harvard, Fong founded the law firm of Fong, Miho, Choy & Robinson, the first multiracial law firm in Hawaii.

Over the next two decades, Fong’s shrewd investments made him a multimillionaire. He held interests in shopping centers, a real estate firm, and an insurance company. Even so, when the Second World War (1939–1945) broke out, he signed up to serve in the U.S. Army Air Force, where he rose to the rank of major. After the war, Fong entered politics, serving 14 years in the territorial legislature. In 1959, when Hawaii became a state of the union, its citizens elected him to one of the two U.S. Senate seats. Though a Republican, Fong received the support
of Hawaii’s most powerful labor union. During Fong’s three terms (18 years) as a U.S. senator, he toured Asian countries, encouraging understanding and trade between the United States and the emerging Pacific Rim nations. On his trips, he held Hawaii up as an example of a multiracial society that worked for the benefit of all. Fong retired from politics in 1976.67

In May 1993, another Chinese American Connie Chung reached the top of her profession as a television journalist. Only 46 years old, Connie Chung was named co-host of the “CBS Evening News.” This promotion capped a 22-year career that had already made her one of the best-known Chinese Americans. Millions of TV viewers know Connie Chung’s face from the many programs on which she has appeared. She was won three Emmys and a Peabody, the highest accolades of broadcast journalism.

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1946, Connie Chung was the 10th child of a family that had fled war-torn China during the Second World War. Her childhood in the suburbs of the nation’s capital helped form her career. “You can’t grow up where I did,” Chung recalls, “without developing an interest for how this country works.” After graduating from the University of Maryland, she took a job with a D.C. television station, where she began to demonstrate a remarkable talent and skill as a woman anchor.

In 1976 she moved to the CBS station in Los Angeles, and during the next seven years she won several awards for her reporting and became the highest paid local broadcaster in the country. In 1984 Chung moved to the NBC network, which offered her the chance for nationwide exposure. In 1987, she visited her homeland China for the first time, broadcasting live from Beijing, where she interviewed some of her own relatives, whom she had never met before. “It was most rewarding experience I’ve ever had,” Chung said. “Through their experience, they told the history of modern China—how the war affected this family. I went to my grandparents’ graves, and I cried a lot with my relatives. My life had been much defined by my roots since that experience.” In 1989 she returned to CBS to host “Saturday Night with Connie Chung.” Those who know her best think that Chung’s greatest achievements may still be ahead of her.68

America is really a paradise for sportsmen. Tennis fans watching the final match of the 1989 French Open felt certain that Michael Chang’s amazing string of victories was about to come to an end. Earlier in the tournament, the slightly built, 17-year-old Chinese
American had defeated Ivan Lendl, the number-one player in the world. Michael Chang was the youngest man ever to win the prestigious French Open and the first American to take home a silver victory cup in 34 years.

Joe Chang, Michael’s father, came to America in 1966 from Taiwan. A research chemist, Joe Chang developed such a keen interest in tennis that he moved his family to California so they could play year-round. His younger son Michael showed great promise, winning his first tournament when he was only seven. Joe Chang took a scientific approach to training his son Michael. He made graphs and flow-charts to make Michael’s progress. “Creating a tennis champion,” he said, “is 90 percent information gathering and 10 percent creativity. The important thing is to have the right 90 percent information.” According to his father’s charts, Michael Chang still has not reached the peak of his potential strength and ability. The best is yet to come.

Among other notable Chinese-Americans have been three Nobel prize winners—all in physics. Another Chinese-American physicist Wu Chien-Hsiung, a woman, helped develop America’s first atomic bomb during the Second World War. Also I. M. Pei, one of the most famous American architects; C. Y. Tung, one of the largest individual shipowners in the world; and Joe Shoong, called by the Time magazine “the richest, best-known Chinese businessman in America” are some of other notables.

Chinese-Americans today have much higher incomes than Americans in general and higher occupational status. According to the prominent sociologist, Thomas Sowell, one-fourth of all employed Chinese-Americans are working in scientific and professional fields. The Chinese have risen to this position despite some of the harshest discrimination and violence faced by any immigrants to the United States in history. Today, much of the Chinese prosperity is due to the simple fact that they work harder and usually better than others. Influenced by Confucianism, China is generally believed to have developed the first formalized educational system in history.

In sheer numbers, the fifty-five million Chinese diaspora is more than twice the population of Canada. Its economic drive has created three of the so-called Four Little Tigers of Asia: Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. With these powerful strengths, the Chinese diaspora has begun to play an increasingly important role in the political and economic interests of the mainland China. The trade, investment, and technology of the Chinese abroad are vital to mainland China’s reform pro-
grams. Their contacts in the outside world, higher level of education, and technical and financial knowledge and know-how are of great value to China, as well as to the countries in which they reside. This enormous oversees Chinese power is being plugged into mainland China’s economy. Hong Kong and Taiwanese investors were largely responsible for the successful launching of the special economic zones early in the reform period (1978–1989). Overseas Chinese were the principal partners in the $15 billion spurt of investment in hotels, apartment buildings, food processing plants, light industry, and restaurants in the old emigre areas of Kwangtung and Fukien provinces. Approximately 80 percent of the investment that has poured into economically booming southern China in recent years has come from the Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Thailand.

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) was supposed to have said, “Let the Chinese dragon sleep, for when she wakes she will shake or astonish the whole world.” Undoubtedly, China (both mainland and overseas) has awakened after a long sleep and is beginning to return to the position of preeminence it once occupied.

Notes:
3. Ibid., xiv.
8. Ibid., p. 45.
10. Ibid., p. 336.

14. The word "coolie," probably of Tamil origin, has been translated into Chinese character meaning bitter labor. It refers to those who earn their livings by physical exertion. The coolie trade was a system under which Chinese laborers were sent abroad under contract. It developed in the 1840s, and demand for Chinese labor increased as anti-slavery sentiment cut off the supply of African slaves. The major destinations of coolies included the West Indies and Peru. See Hugh B. O'Neill's *Companion to Chinese History* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987), p. 73.


17. Quoted from Wang Gungwu's keynote lecture given at the University of Hong Kong, December 14-16, 1984.


22. Ibid., p. 9.


26. Lynn Pan, p. 43.


29. Chaliand and Rageau, p. 130.


32. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, p. 9.

34. Chin-chiang, p. 77.


39. Victor Purcell, pp. 120-122.


42. Quoted from Joel Kotkin, p. 179.


46. Ibid., p. 111.

47. Ibid.

48. Victor Purcell, p. 121.

49. Ibid., p. 284.

50. Ibid., p. 430.

51. Quoted from Lynn Pan, p. 34.

52. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, p. 35.


54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Daniels’ *Coming to America*, p. 241.

57. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, p. 35.

58. Ibid., p. 36.


60. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, p. 36.

61. Ibid., p. 37.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, p. 111.
68. Ibid., p. 109.
69. Ibid., p. 108.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p.152.
73. Ibid.
75. Donald and Constance Shanor, p. 203.
77. Ibid., p. 3.