The Pirate Chui-A-Poo, Hong Kong, c. 1845.

Coolies, Pirates and Secret Societies
Narratives of Chinese Underclass in Hong Kong, Macao and the Straits Settlements as Revealed in British Colonial Office Records, 1838-1938.[1]

Wong Wei Chin*, Robert J. Antony**

ABSTRACT: The purpose of our paper is to introduce the British Colonial Office records pertaining to Hong Kong, Macao, and the Straits Settlements in the century between the First Opium War and the Second World War (1838 and 1938). We begin with a general introduction to the British Colonial Office records, explaining where they are located, how they are organized, and what they contain. Our focus will be on two collections: (1) Colonial Office, Hong Kong, Original Correspondence (commonly referred to as CO129), and (2) Colonial Office, Straits Settlements, Original Correspondence (commonly referred to as CO273). Because these two archival collections are quite huge, we will limit our scope to descriptions about the Chinese underclass in these port areas, namely coolies, pirates, and members of sworn brotherhoods. Despite that there are few primary sources in the Chinese language on these topics for the period under discussion, the British Colonial Office records are essential documents not only because they can help us fill in the gaps, but also because they provide us with a new perspective for studying China's history from below. These foreign records reveal much new information about how coolies, pirates, and brotherhoods organized themselves, what roles they played in local society, as well as how the British colonial governments viewed, regulated, and criminalized the Chinese underclass during the heydays of colonialism.

KEYWORDS: Colonial Office Records; Hong Kong; the Straits Settlements; Macao; *Coolie*; Pirates; Secret Societies; Chinese underclass.

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**Until his recent retirement, Robert J. Antony was Distinguished Professor in Chinese Maritime History at Guangzhou University. Currently he is a Visiting Scholar at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies and an Associate in Research at Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. His publications include *Like Froth Floating on the Sea: The World of Pirates and Seafarers in Late Imperial South China (2003), Pirates in the Age of Sail (2007), and Beyond the Silk Roads: New Discourses on China's Role in East Asian Maritime History (2017).*

Até se ter reformado recentemente, Robert J. Antony foi Professor Emérito de História Marítima Chinesa na Universidade de Guangzhou. Actualmente é Investigador Visitante no Instituto para Estudos Avançados em Princeton; e Investigador Associado do Centro Fairbank para Estudos Chineses, em Harvard. As suas publicações incluem Like Froth Floating on the Sea: The World of Pirates and Seafarers in Late Imperial South China (2003), Pirates in the Age of Sail (2007), e Beyond the Silk Roads: New Discourses on China's Role in East Asian Maritime History (2017).

The British Colonial Office (CO) records are a massive collection of documents pertaining to a large variety of subjects related to the British colonies all around the world. Covering the years from 1570 to 1970, the CO records consist of correspondence with the colonies, entry books, and registers of correspondence relating to the administration of the British colonies. The earlier records were mostly incoming dispatches from various colonial governors, but later the records came to include office minutes and drafts of outgoing dispatches, as well as correspondence from other sources related to the colonies. Although there are some loose papers (mostly before the 19th century), most of the records are in bound volumes arranged chronologically within the following subject headings: Dispatches (letters of the Governors), Offices (letters of government departments and other organizations), and Individuals (arranged alphabetically). As a great convenience to researchers, each bound volume contains a content list or a précis of each letter giving the name of the correspondent, date of the letter, and subject matter; but after 1926 the correspondence is arranged in subject files. Today the CO records are housed in the British National Archives in Kew Garden, London. As they are classified as "public records", they are open to everyone. For detailed information on the Archive's holdings, the best place to start one's research is through its official website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. The National Archives has a very efficient on-line document ordering system (on its webpage above), whereby researchers can pay by credit card to get either a digital-pdf file or a hard copy through regular mail.

The British Empire was a world-wide empire. The CO records, which were concurrently produced with the British imperial expansion, are an important primary source for the study of world history and global interactions. They contain information on all areas of the world: Europe, the Mediterranean Sea (Gibraltar, Cyprus, Corsica, Malta), Africa, Middle East (Palestine, Iraq, Arabia), North, Central, and South America, Australia and New Zealand, Atlantic islands of Ascension, Falklands, and St. Helena, Pacific islands of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Christmas Island, and Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius and Seychelles. One of the largest CO collections pertains to Asia, including South Asia, Southeast Asia, and China. For scholars interested in China and overseas Chinese, two of the most important sets of CO records are on Hong Kong, which includes CO129, CO130, CO349, CO380, CO403, CO852, CO489, CO927, etc.; and on the Straits Settlements, which include CO273, CO380, CO381, CO383, CO425, CO426, CO486, etc. Taken as a whole there are over 100,000 documents in the various CO series pertaining to Hong Kong, Macao, and the Straits Settlements, and many of them are directly related to China.

The CO129 Records on Hong Kong and Macao

The CO129 series, covering the period from 1842-1951, includes about 40,000 dispatches, totaling over 400,000 pages. Besides the original documents (now available on microfilm) at the National Archives in London, other complete sets of CO129 records are on microfilm at the University of Hong Kong Library, the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, and the Hong Kong Public Records Office, as well as at several major universities in the United States and Europe. As a great convenience for researchers, Prof. Elizabeth Sinn has created an on-line Index to the CO129 files at http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/co129/. The Index is also available on CD-Rom through the History Department, University of Hong Kong. When ordering up a CO129 document, either in London or in Hong Kong, scholars must make sure to give the full citation from the Index, including the page numbers. The Index is a useful tool for finding specific documents (arranged by keyword searches) and is easy to use, as the following examples show:

Example 1

Keyword search: *piracy*

> CO 129/29, pp 64-75 [*indicates file, number, and pages*].
>
> From: 1849-04-24 to: 1849-04-24 [*indicates the file date*].
>
> Document: THE GREAT INCREASE IN CASES OF PIRACY [*indicates the topic*].

Microform: HKU 2507067 [*indicates the microfilm number at the HKU Library*].
From: BONHAM [*indicates the correspondent*]
Send to: THE EARL GREY [*indicates the receiver*].
Encl: ENCLOSURE=4. A LIST OF 13 BOATS HAVING BEEN PILLAGED IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, THEY ARE CARRIED ON UNDER A REGULAR ORGANIZED SYSTEM [*brief summary of the document contents*].
Keyword(s): PIRACY, STEAM, ENGINE, PIRATE, BOAT [*keywords for this file*].

Example 2

Keyword search: *triad*

CO 129/227, pp 287-397 [*indicates file, number, and pages*].
From: 1886-06-15 to: 1886-06-15 [*indicates the file date*].
Document: TRIAD SOCIETY [*indicates the topic*]
Microform: HKU 2507231 [*indicates the microfilm number at the HKU Library*].
From: MARSH [*indicates the correspondent*].
Send to: EARL GRANVILLE, K.G. [*indicates the receiver*].
Encl: ENCLOSURE=12 *TO SUBMIT THE INFORMATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT *APPENDIX NO. 1 - THE INFORMATION OF HIS EXCELLENCE THE FOLLOWING REPORT AS TO A SECRET SOCIETY THAT IS BEING FORMED IN THIS COLONY. *MINUTE BY ACTING CHIEF INSPECTOR *REPORT BY THEIR CONSTABLE NO. 192 *THE ACTING GOVERNOR OF THE BRITISH COLONY OF HONG KONG - MARSH ISSUES A FOUNDATION *COLONIAL SECRETARY, HONG KONG TO THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY - CERTAIN SOCIETIES EXIST IN THE COLONY, THE MEMBERS OF WHICH ARE BECOMING A SOURCE OF TREMBLE TO THE POLICE. *MINUTE BY THE CLERK OF CRIMINALS *CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE TO COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE - TO CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE GROWTH AND PRESENT POSITION OF THE TRIAD SOCIETY IN THIS COLONY *POLICE MORNING REPORT *LIST OF EXISTING TRIAD SOCIETY HOUSES IN HONG KONG AND ITS DEPENDENCIES *THE DAILY PRESS OF 24TH MARCH 1886 - ANOTHER MURDER IN HONG KONG *DR. HO KAI TO THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY - TO SUBMIT THE ENCLOSED MEMORANDUM ON THE RECENT DISTURBANCES [*brief summary of the document contents*].
Keyword(s): TRIAD SOCIETY [*keywords for this file*].

Using keyword searches for "piracy" we could locate 423 items, and for "triad" there are 30 items in the collection. However, we can certainly locate additional items if we use other relevant keywords.

The CO129 records are the primary reference materials for research not only on Hong Kong's history, but also on the Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong. In the following section, we will only discuss the relevance of the CO129 records to the study of Chinese lower classes—coolies, Triads, and pirates—in Hong Kong and what their stories can tell us about the history of Hong Kong between 1842 and 1938. Using the above Index, 396 items related to coolies were located in CO129 records using the keyword search for "coolie." The majority of these items are related to the coolie trade, that is, those Chinese laborers who were sent overseas, particularly to South America in the last half of the 19th century.[2]

In addition, there are several hundreds of pages of documents on the coolie trade that relate directly to Macao. For example, CO129/61, CO129/70, and CO129/154 deal with the mistreatment of coolies who were transported overseas from Macao to Cuba, Peru, and other areas of South America. In many cases, the documents provide detailed information on how Chinese villagers were kidnapped and sent abroad against their will as coolies. CO129/166, for instance, explicates the coolie trade out of Macao in 1873:

Example 3
Keyword search: coolies

CO 129/166, pp 188-193
[From: 1873-01-24 to: 1873-01-24].
Document: EMIGRATION OF COOLIES FROM MACAO
Microform: HKU 2507172.
From: HAMMOND.
Send to: SECRETARY OF STATE.
Encl: ENCLOSURE=2 *LETTER FROM WADE TO THE EARL OF GRANVILLE - ENCLOSE CONFIDENTIALLY AN EXTRACT FROM AN INTERESTING NOTE. *A LETTER FROM SIR D. B. ROBERTSON AND CONSUL AT CANTON TO MR WADE, DATED HONGKONG, 5 OCT. 1872.
Keyword(s): EMIGRATION, COOLIES, MACAO, CHINESE, SLAVE, TRADE.

To find records relating to the coolies who worked on Hong Kong docks, other keyword searches are also necessary, such as "strike," "boatmen," or "laborers," where we found over 100 items. Because Hong Kong authorities paid close attention to the activities of Chinese stevedores and boatmen, we have hundreds of documents in the CO129 collection.

A close examination of these records can help us reconstruct the history of Hong Kong coolies or dock workers as a distinct group of the port's Chinese population, as well as help us to better understand their connection with British colonial governance in Hong Kong. From these documents we can learn much about the key features of the coolies as a group, particularly on the issues of how they represented the lives and working conditions of the lower class of Chinese population in Hong Kong, how they interacted with government officials and policies, and how the relations between government and the lower class changed over time. The CO129 records are valuable because they clearly show how Hong Kong, as a colonial trading port, has always depended on the human power of Chinese coolies for its economic prosperity, yet at the same time coolies were often discriminated against and even mistreated by colonial officials and "white" government policies.

As an activist group, coolies continuously struggled with colonial government policies for better living and working conditions in Hong Kong. In April 1888, for example, several thousand coolies and boatmen went on a "general strike" causing much distress in the port's trade (CO129/237 and CO129/239). This strike followed a devastating outbreak of cholera among the Chinese population the year before (CO129/231). Six years later, following an outbreak of bubonic plague in the city in 1894, another "strike of coolies," again numbering in the thousands, was directly caused by harsh working and unsanitary living conditions in Hong Kong (CO129/266 and CO129/267). The plague had greatly impacted on the poor sectors of the Chinese population in the city, especially impoverished workers who lived in overcrowded, rat-infested slums (CO129263, CO129/264, and CO129/265). In the early 20th century coolies also became vocal proponents for social change and revolution (CO129/351, CO129/381, CO129/383, CO129/389, and CO129/395).[3]

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, secret societies such as the Triads, or commonly known as *Sanhehui* (三合會) in Chinese, were very active among the Chinese working class population in Hong Kong and Macao. They were involved in organizing labor, workers' strikes, racketeering, gambling and prostitution (CO129/212, CO129/232, and CO129/300). According to Dr. Chalmers of the British Missionary Society, the Triads in Hong Kong were well organized into several branches, each with its own appellation. Each group staked out its own "territory" within the precincts of the city where they extorted protection fees from Chinese businesses and controlled the labor market (CO129/228). In 1884, for example, Triad-led coolies incited protests and riots in Hong Kong and Canton, causing much destruction of property and injury to several people (CO129/217 and CO129/218). In 1886, Triads were involved in several gang related homicides

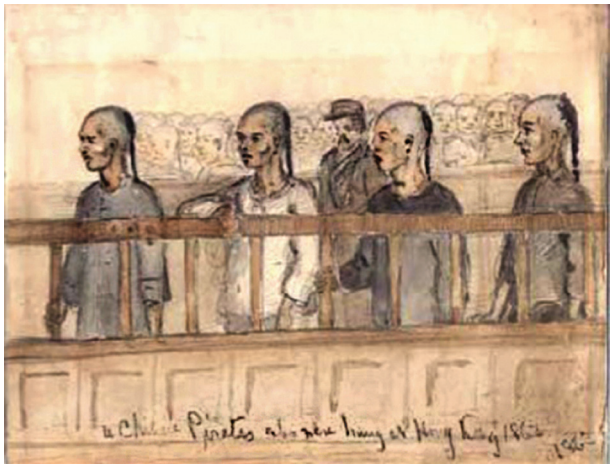
PIRACY IN ASIA

and other public disturbances in Hong Kong in which a number of dock workers were implicated (CO129/227 and CO129/228). In fact, by the 1880s and 1890s, Triads had infiltrated workers' organizations where they assumed leadership positions. One Triad leader named Li Fun李凡, for instance, was also a coolie head who helped to recruit about a thousand coolies into the Triads in 1886.

Triad involvement in revolutionary movements in and around Hong Kong, Macao, and Canton also are described in the CO129 documents. For example, in the 1890s, Triads were involved in illicit shipments of guns into China and Macao in support of revolutionaries (CO129/253); in 1896-1897, Triads expressed open hostility to the Qing government (CO129/274 and CO129/275); and in the early 1900s, some Triads supported Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his Revolutionary Alliance or *Tongmenghui* (同盟會), while others supported Kang Youwei and the Reform Party in Hong Kong (CO129/300).[4]

Piracy was a perennial problem in the waters around Hong Kong and Macao. Although the year 1810 marked the end of large-scale piracy in the region, nonetheless petty piracy remained a persistent problem for over a century. The CO129 records provide important information on the nature, evolution, and scope of piracy, as well as the suppression policies and military campaigns adopted by the British government in Hong Kong. The CO129 records also are important for what they can tell us about how piracy interacted with Hong Kong's trade and how pirates impacted the local economy. For the years 1838-1948, the Index listed 423 items under the keyword "piracy."

Many opportunistic and well-armed gangs of Chinese pirates regularly plied the waters between South China and Southeast Asia, attacking native vessels and, when opportunities arose, foreign ships. Appendix 1, which is drawn from an 1855 Hong Kong police report on piracies (CO129/50), shows that in the waters around Hong Kong the greatest numbers of vessels victimized by pirates were fishing craft, followed by



Trial of Pirates in Hong Kong, c. 1850s.

small trading and cargo boats and passage boats. There were few reported attacks on foreign vessels. Most incidents of piracy were relatively minor. One such minor incident occurred near Lintin Island on the night of 20 June 1846, when several pirates robbed passengers, including two Portuguese travelers on route to Macao, aboard a "fast boat" (CO129/18).

Besides Chinese, pirate gangs sometimes included foreigners from Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa. After 1840, in fact, an increasing number of British, American, French, and other foreigners worked with Chinese merchants in Hong Kong, Macao, and other treaty ports to organize piratical syndicates. Actually, a number of Chinese, British, and Portuguese merchants in Hong Kong and Macao supplied pirates with weapons and other naval provisions (CO129/60). In June 1845, Henry Sinclair was the first European to be convicted of piracy in Hong Kong. He had been sentenced to transportation for life, but after serving only two years, due to illness and hardships, he received a pardon (CO129/20).

There also was an intimate relationship between piracy and opium smuggling. On the one hand, pirates often plundered opium ships to resell their cargo, and on the other hand, pirates also collaborated with opium smugglers. Because of the increasing demands in China for opium over the course of the nineteenth century, the

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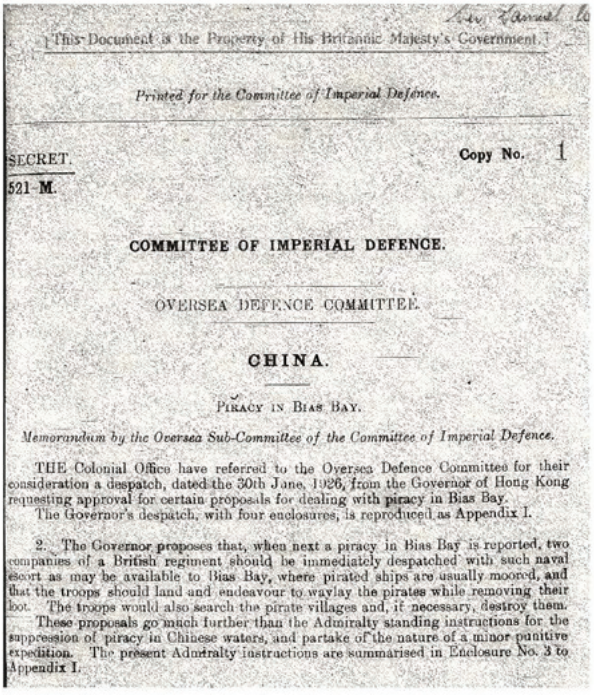

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Printed for the Committee of Imperial Defence.

SECRET. Copy No. 1

521-M.

COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

OVERSEA DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

CHINA.

PIRACY IN BIAS BAY.

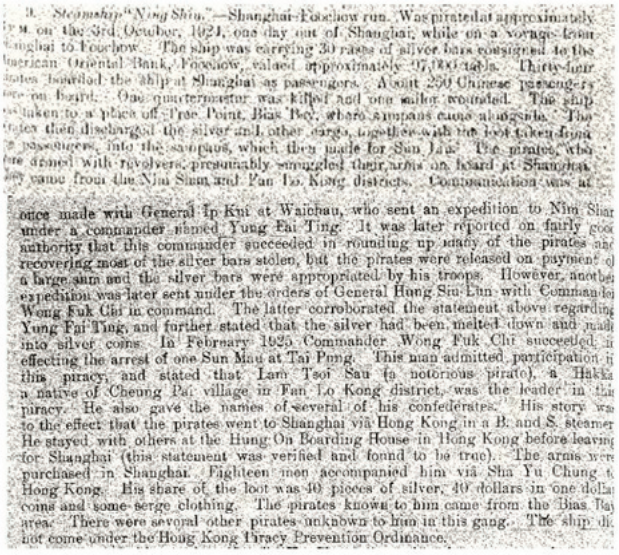
Memorandum by the Oversea Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

THE Colonial Office have referred to the Oversea Defence Committee for their consideration a despatch, dated the 30th June, 1926, from the Governor of Hong Kong requesting approval for certain proposals for dealing with piracy in Bias Bay.

The Governor's despatch, with four enclosures, is reproduced as Appendix I.

2. The Governor proposes that, when next a piracy in Bias Bay is reported, two companies of a British regiment should be immediately despatched with such naval escort as may be available to Bias Bay, where pirated ships are usually moored, and that the troops should land and endeavour to waylay the pirates while removing their loot. The troops would also search the pirate villages and, if necessary, destroy them.

These proposals go much further than the Admiralty standing instructions for the suppression of piracy in Chinese waters, and partake of the nature of a minor punitive expedition. The present Admiralty instructions are summarised in Enclosure No. 3 to Appendix I.



3. *Steamship "Nung Shin."*—Shanghai-Foochow run. Was pirated at approximately [illegible] on the 3rd October, 1921, one day out of Shanghai, while on a voyage from Shanghai to Foochow. The ship was carrying 30 cases of silver bars consigned to the American Oriental Bank, Foochow, valued approximately $7,000 taels. Thirty-four pirates boarded the ship at Shanghai as passengers. About 250 Chinese passengers were on board. One quartermaster was killed and one sailor wounded. The ship was taken to a place off Tree Point, Bias Bay, where sampans came alongside. The pirates then discharged the silver and other cargo, together with the loot taken from the passengers, into the sampans, which then made for San Tau. The pirates, who were armed with revolvers, presumably smuggled their arms on board at Shanghai. They came from the Nim Sam and Fan Lo Kong districts. Communication was at once made with General Ip Kui at Waichau, who sent an expedition to Nim Shan under a commander named Yung Fai Ting. It was later reported on fairly good authority that this commander succeeded in rounding up many of the pirates and recovering most of the silver bars stolen, but the pirates were released on payment of a large sum and the silver bars were appropriated by his troops. However, another expedition was later sent under the orders of General Hung Siu-Lun with Commander Wong Fuk Chi in command. The latter corroborated the statement above regarding Yung Fai Ting, and further stated that the silver had been melted down and made into silver coins. In February 1925 Commander Wong Fuk Chi succeeded in effecting the arrest of one Sun Mau at Tai Pung. This man admitted participation in this piracy, and stated that Lam Tsoi Sau (a notorious pirate), a Hakka a native of Cheung Pai village in Fan Lo Kong district, was the leader in this piracy. He also gave the names of several of his confederates. His story was to the effect that the pirates went to Shanghai via Hong Kong in a B. and S. steamer. He stayed with others at the Hung On Boarding House in Hong Kong before leaving for Shanghai (this statement was verified and found to be true). The arms were purchased in Shanghai. Eighteen men accompanied him via Sha Yu Chung to Hong Kong. His share of the loot was 40 pieces of silver, 40 dollars in one dollar coins and some serge clothing. The pirates known to him came from the Bias Bay area. There were several other pirates unknown to him in this gang. The ship did not come under the Hong Kong Piracy Prevention Ordinance.

CO129/496 Report on Bias Bay Piracies (Excerpt)

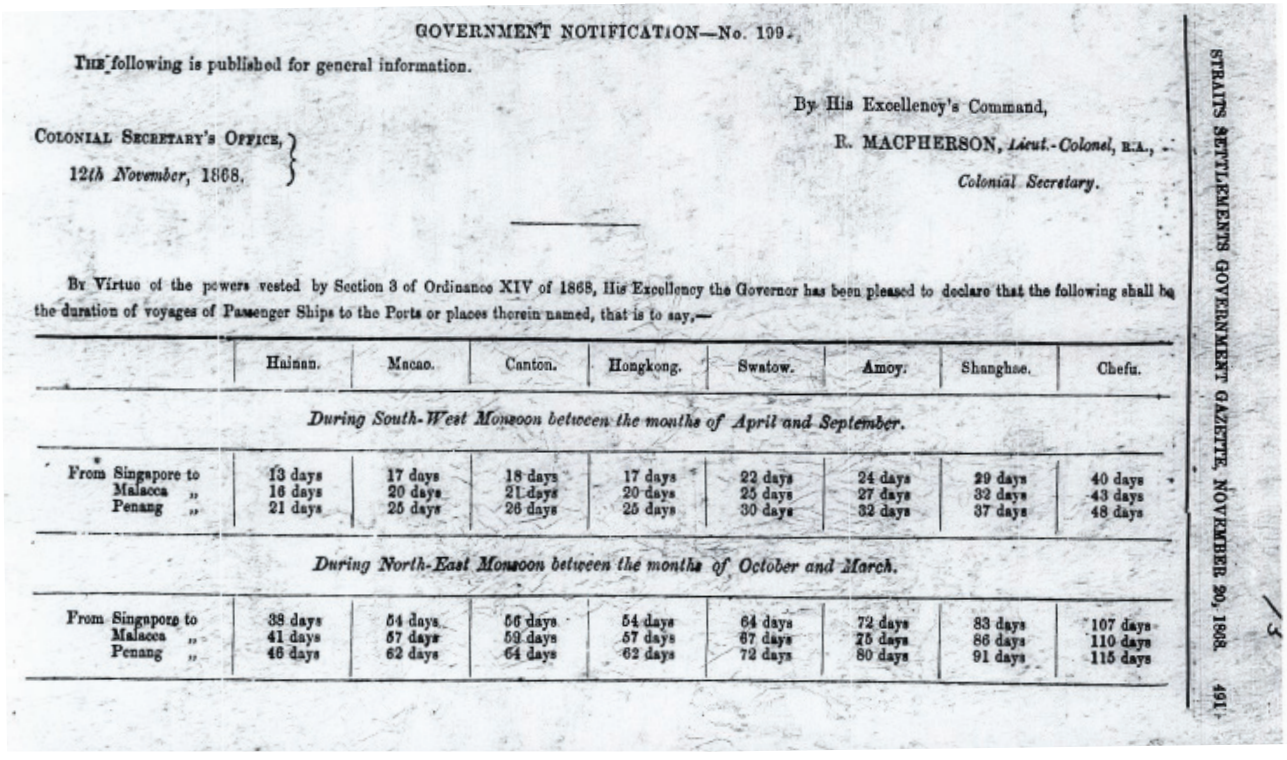
trade generated huge profits. Opium ships were always tempting targets as they were the richest prizes. In 1845, pirates plundered 72 chests of opium from the schooner *Privateer*, and two years later pirates stole an estimated $160,000 in opium and silver stored aboard the *Omega* and the *Caroline*, two opium-receiving ships. In 1853, about 20-30 pirates, armed with muskets and stink-pots, landed at the village of Soo-cum-poo, near Hong Kong, where they robbed an opium shop. Pirates also cooperated with smugglers, as was the case of Cheung Shap-ng-tsai (張十五仔) and Akeu (阿嬌). In 1848, at the opium-receiving anchorage at Cumsingmoon in the Pearl River estuary, Cheung traded stolen goods for opium and supplies from Akeu, who was the mistress of a shady American opium dealer named Captain Endacott. Pirates not only stole and traded opium, but they also regularly smoked opium, adding further incentive to steal the drug (CO129/18, CO129/23, CO129/25, and CO129/33).

A new stage of piracy began with the introduction of steamships into Chinese waters in the mid-nineteenth century. Starting in the 1870s, pirates quickly adapted to the new circumstances by switching their tactics from direct attacks to hijacking. Gradually, more and more pirates boarded steamers as passengers and after they got underway took control of the vessel. The pirates then robbed passengers and crew, and sometimes took hostages for ransom (CO129/410, CO129/411, CO129/417, and CO129/496). By the early twentieth century, the majority of pirate hijackings originated from Bias Bay, which lies to the east of Hong Kong and abounds in numerous islands and shallow harbors (CO129/410, CO129/411, CO129/417, and CO129/496). In a secret dispatch in June 1926 to the home government, Cecil Clementi, governor of Hong Kong, explained: "Bias Bay is a sort of 'No Man's Land,' in which the writ of the Canton Government does not run, and which is dominated by pirates and brigands from the large village of Fan Lo Kong (粉羅崗) at the north-east corner of the bay" (CO129/496). The above is an excerpt from CO129/196, on the problem of Bias Bay piracies in the 1920s.

Because of the issue of Chinese sovereignty, at first the colonial government in Hong Kong had to act carefully in adopting anti-piracy policies that would

not offend the Qing government (CO129/39). Therefore, at times, British naval forces cooperated with Chinese naval forces to attack pirate strongholds on islands around Hong Kong (CO129/27, CO129/99, and CO129/113). Yet, later in the early 20th century as China was beset with turmoil and revolution, the British navy implemented more direct and independent methods for dealing with piracy around Hong Kong (CO129/489, CO129/490, CO129/495, CO129/496, CO129/507, and CO129/513). The government in Hong Kong also issued several anti-piracy ordinances 防海盗章程 (CO129/22, CO129/113, CO129/125, CO129/202), enacted new regulations to register and disarm Chinese vessels (CO129/129, CO129/134, CO129/484), constructed several gunboats and created a maritime police force (CO129/115, CO129/117, CO129/294, and CO129/411), and tried, convicted and executed a large number of pirates in local courts (CO129/19, CO129/63, CO129/74, CO129/91, CO129/122, CO129/401, CO129/543).[5]

In 1910, the sensitive issue of Chinese sovereignty was an important factor in a major international incident involving pirates on the island of Coloane to the south of the Portuguese enclave of Macao. In the early twentieth century, Coloane, in particular, was a contested territory at the center of a bitter controversy between the governments of China and Portugal concerning which country had jurisdiction over the island. As a result, the island became a refuge for pirates, smugglers, and other malcontents seeking a safe haven free from the close scrutiny of any state. After pirates kidnapped about twenty children and took them to their base on the island, the Portuguese government in Macao sent gunships and soldiers to rescue the children and suppress the pirates. The incident also provided the Portuguese with a reason to fully incorporate Coloane into their enclave of Macao. The British government in Hong Kong paid close attention to this incident and in particular the Portuguese involvement in the annexation of the island (CO129/367, CO129/368, and CO129/372).



GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION—No. 199.

THE following is published for general information.

By His Excellency's Command,

R. MACPHERSON, *Lieut.-Colonel*, R.A.,

Colonial Secretary.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
12th November, 1868.

BY Virtue of the powers vested by Section 3 of Ordinance XIV of 1868, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to declare that the following shall be the duration of voyages of Passenger Ships to the Ports or places therein named, that is to say,—

	Hainan.	Macao.	Canton.	Hongkong.	Swatow.	Amoy.	Shanghae.	Chefu.
During South-West Monsoon between the months of April and September.								
From Singapore to	13 days	17 days	18 days	17 days	22 days	24 days	29 days	40 days
Malacca „	16 days	20 days	21 days	20 days	25 days	27 days	32 days	43 days
Penang „	21 days	25 days	26 days	25 days	30 days	32 days	37 days	48 days
During North-East Monsoon between the months of October and March.								
From Singapore to	38 days	54 days	56 days	54 days	64 days	72 days	83 days	107 days
Malacca „	41 days	57 days	59 days	57 days	67 days	75 days	86 days	110 days
Penang „	46 days	62 days	64 days	62 days	72 days	80 days	91 days	115 days

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, NOVEMBER 20, 1868. 491

CO273/39 Chinese Passenger Ship's Ordinance of 1868

Chinese laborers in Perak district, c. 1875.

The CO273 Records on the Straits Settlements and Macao

The reinterpretation of the history of nineteenth-century Malaya and the Straits Settlements also relies heavily on the English-language British colonial records. The most useful primary sources relating to the Chinese underclass include the following kinds of sources: (1) the Strait Settlements Records (SSR), a collection of records comprising the British administration in Singapore, Penang and Malacca from 1826 to 1946; and (2) the Colonial Office Records, particularly the Straits Settlements Original Correspondence of series CO273 for the period 1838 to 1946.[6] Although voices of criticism were raised against the assumptions of the colonist historians who have produced substantial literature on the Chinese underclass communities in the area, it is doubtful that the history of Chinese migration in British Malaya can be properly understood without these colonial documentations.[7] In the following section, we will focus our discussions on the relevance of CO273 records to the study of Chinese in the nineteenth-century colonial Malayan context with special reference to the subjects of coolies, secret societies, Macao, and opium.[8]

The CO273 records are the collection of original colonial correspondence relating to the Straits Settlements. There are 680 English-language reels of bound volumes presently preserved in microform and arranged chronologically from 1838 to 1946. The six earliest volumes consist of miscellaneous reports and correspondence transferred from the India Office to the Colonial Office in London in 1867, while

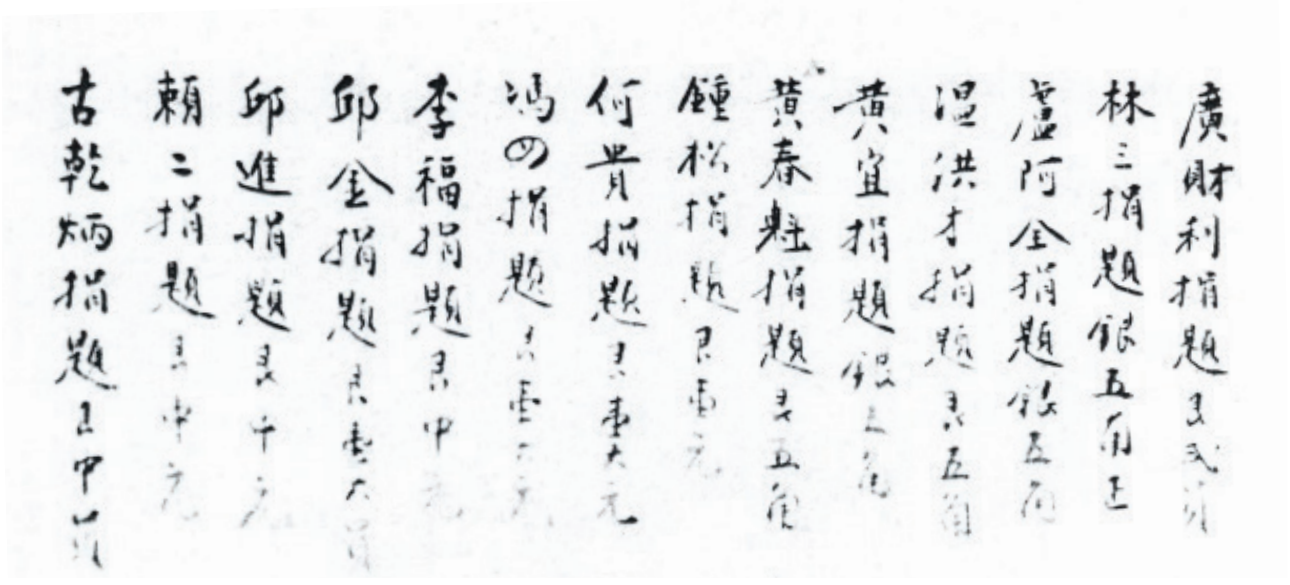
the remaining 674 reels of microfilms have been arranged alphabetically, as mentioned earlier in the article, within the subject headings of "Dispatches", "Offices" and "Individuals." Although the original CO273 records are housed today in the British National Archives in Kew Garden, duplicate copies of these records are also kept in Singapore and Malaysia, including Arkib Negara (National Archives), the Main Library of University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, and the Main Library of the National University of Singapore. Like those in London, each CO273 volume begins with a contents list, or an abstract of each letter including the name of the correspondent, date of the letter and subject matter. Using colonial sources to study Chinese history in Malaya, however, did not become a common scholarly practice until the National Archives of Malaya compiled and published the indexes to explain how the CO273 records were organized and classified in the Colonial Office.[9] The indexes are valuable finding aids to help researchers—particularly those who came to know the CO273 records after the 1990s—to locate specific documents according to keyword searches. To find records relating to the "Chinese" who settled in nineteenth-century Malaya, we have found more than two thousands pages of files in the CO273 collection.

The earliest record we located, as shown above, provides the Chinese Passenger Ship's Ordinance of 1868, a document relating to shipping between the ports of the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, Macao, and other Chinese ports, such as Canton, Swatow, Amoy and Shanghai during the South-West and North-East Monsoon periods before the 1870s (CO273/39). With strong fair winds, Chinese merchant junks usually arrived at Singapore in about 13 to 29 days from Amoy, Canton, Hainan, Macao, Swatow, and so forth. In fact, the word "Macao" in the nineteenth century colonial Malayan context was known as one of the major Chinese communities besides the "Hokkien," "Cantonese,"

Bronze statues of nineteenth-century Chinese Port Coolies, Boat Quay, Singapore.

"Teochew," "Hakka," and "Hailam." However, the "Macao" community in British Malaya referred to people not from Portuguese Macao, but to the natives from the Canton area. The reason why they were bound together after they arrived in Malaya was because their points of embarkation to British Malaya were all the same: Macao.[10]

According to historian Wang Gungwu, Chinese migration to Malaya was organized on the "kinship-based system," which was developed by sojourning Chinese merchants who established small shops and businesses throughout Southeast Asia to bring trustworthy workers among their relatives from China since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[11] In actual practice, however, the majority of Chinese migrants were brought as coolie laborers from China to Malaya usually by means of the "labor brokerage system." The British colonists also called this labor brokerage system the "credit ticket system." This system became popular mainly because there were high demands on Chinese coolie labor in British Malaya, which in turn provided a major impetus to the labor brokers in China who made considerable profits by sending Chinese migrants to Malaya in the nineteenth century. At that time, besides the labor brokers, there were also "sub-labor brokers" based in China to help recruit young bachelors from Fujian and Guangdong provinces.[12]



CO273/168 Subscription Money Paid to Anonymous Secret Societies.

In CO273 records, the labor brokers were commonly called "kheh-taos" (*ketou*; 客頭), literally "the leading source of labor," as they were the ones who arranged shipments between China and Malaya in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The newly arrived Chinese coolie laborers were known as "sinkheh" (*xinke*, 新客; literally new guest or new arrival) in the records (CO273/69 and CO273/70). Because many prospective sinkhehs could not afford to pay for their passage overseas, the passage money provided to them was generally transferred to local Chinese secret societies, which were known commonly amongst the Chinese as "hoé" or "hoey" (*hui*會; literally gathering or society) in Malaya. According to one British official's observation in the 1850s, the sinkhehs generally transferred their passage money to local Chinese secret societies upon their arrival in Malaya:

The immigrants are usually over-crowded on shipboard but treated well on the whole. They arrive in the months of January, February and March.... The charterer [kheh-tao] gets for a master workman, either tailor, goldsmith or carpenter, 10 to 15 dollars, for a cooly 6 to 10, for a sickly man 3 to 4 or less. The Singké [sinkheh] then agrees to serve for 12 months, receiving food, clothes and a few dollars for his services.... Their agreements are generally faithfully fulfilled; at the end of the 12 months the Singké [sinkheh] is at liberty to enter his master's services on a monthly stipend or to seek his livelihood elsewhere.... Very few Chinese remain clear of the Hoés [Chinese secret societies], but as few will acknowledge themselves members it is difficult to arrive at the truth.[13]

The interrelationship of supply-and-demand between the kheh-taos and the local Chinese secret societies quickly bound the sinkhehs to Chinese secret societies after they arrived in British Malaya.[14] This is why when we search for documents in the CO273 collection relating to "Chinese" and "coolie," many documents provide information on the relationships between Chinese and "secret societies." For example, the figure above shows a document pertaining to the "Suppression of Secret Societies" in CO273/168. While this document exemplifies the list of names and amounts of subscription money the Chinese paid to an anonymous secret society in British Malaya, it concurrently suggests that how the sinkhehs may have cleared the

passage money they owed the local Chinese secret societies through regular membership fees, which ranged from 50 cents to two dollars.

Nevertheless, after the 1860s there has been a colonial tendency to explain the outbreak of violence and riots among the Chinese as an indicator of inherent Chinese divisiveness in terms of their active participation in local secret societies and their common spoken dialect. In April 1867, when the Colonial Office in London transferred direct administrative powers to the British colonial authorities of Malaya from India, the new government immediately enacted laws to control the local Chinese secret societies. A Legislative Council was established and 32 acts were promptly passed to deal with matters relating to the administration of justice, public health and safety, and the protection of colonial revenue. One of these acts, "Preservation of the Peace Act," was passed specifically to regulate Chinese secret societies.[15] This act, in a practical sense, was enacted to legally banish the Chinese who constantly caused riots and disturbances in Malaya back to China. The banishment sentence, however, was given only to those China-born settlers; the Malaya-born Chinese descendants were not liable to such banishment since they were considered British subjects under colonial law.[16] From this point onward, CO273 documents relating to secret societies largely depicted them in relations to social disturbances. For example, in records CO273/50 there were quarrels between groups who spoke different dialects, such as the Hokkiens and the Teochews in Singapore in 1871. At the same time, disturbances arose also between two rival Chinese secret societies—the Ghee Hin and Hok Hin—in Penang in 1871. In 1876, many Penang properties were burned to the ground and many lives were lost due to the hostile feelings triggered by the members of two secret societies, Ghee Hin and Toh Peh Kong (CO273/84).

The CO273 records reveal that the British colonial officials depicted the Chinese in late nineteenth-century Malaya as ruthless and riotous people whose political structure and ideology were derived from the mysterious sworn oaths that bound them together into

Captured Chinese Pirates aboard British Warship, c. 1920s.

Execution of Pirates in Kowloon, c. 1890s.

brotherhoods (CO273/180 and CO273/250). Yet, a number of colonial records also offer us an important insight that the Chinese coolies in Malaya had generally solidified their relationships with the secret societies based on the following principles: common spoken language, common native birthplace, and common point of embarkation to Malaya.[17] For example, in records CO273/69 and CO273/122 pertaining to "The Chinese Immigration Ordinance, 1873," the British had recruited Chinese interpreters who spoke Hokkien and Cantonese to deal directly with the Chinese migrants from Hong Kong, Macao, Amoy, and Swatow. All Chinese coolies who landed in Malaya would automatically register and come under official supervision. For the first time, these newly arrived Chinese *coolies* or sinkhehs were officially labelled as "immigrants" and each of them had to register their name, occupation, port of embarkation, and purpose for which they came to Malaya. The registration officers would then explain the terms of the labor contract to the newly-arrived Chinese immigrants with the help of Chinese interpreters, including the British protection they enjoyed while working in Malaya, as well as the working places and conditions that they were entering.

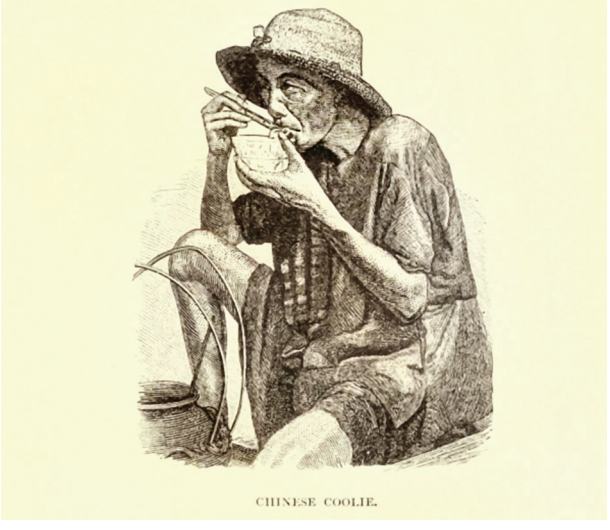
The CO273 records relating to the opium farming industry in colonial Malaya further reveal how the colony retained economic strength after coming into regular contact with Chinese secret societies. During the nineteenth century, the opium-smoking habit was common among Chinese coolie laborers in British Malaya. In fact, this opium-smoking habit was acquired in Malaya rather than in South China, as the majority of Chinese coolies had probably never tasted opium before settling in Malaya. Opium was taken frequently by Chinese coolies in Malaya for the relief of physical and mental fatigue after the long hours of work in tin mines and on plantations.[18] In some cases, the employers who needed coolies to develop their plantation estates or mines used opium

as a means to keep the sinkhehs in service longer than the agreed period. The opium addiction usually caused the sinkhehs to be stuck with the same job and the same employer for many years since they could not pay off the debts they owed to the master.[19]

The development of the aberrant opium and spirit farms in colonial Malaya could not have been initiated without the British connection with secret societies. In this sense, the Chinese secret societies were commercial enterprises that had often come into regular contact with European merchants and other locally born Chinese merchants to receive a share of the profits in selling opium to the Chinese population in Malaya. For example, a list of opium and spirit-farming syndicates in Singapore, Johor, Malacca, and Penang that were found in the records where the revenue farm affiliated only among the Chinese merchants between 1886 and 1909 (CO273/135 and CO273/300). Therefore, when the British colonial government suppressed all Chinese secret societies in Malaya 1890, two reputable Chinese merchants in Penang, Li Phi Yau and Koh Seng Tat, immediately sent a petition written in English to the government to persuade the British not to suppress all the Chinese secret societies in Malaya. Many of the signatures in this petition were collected from the people who had close connections with Ghee Hin and Toh Peh Kong societies in Penang. Without the local secret societies, it would be difficult for Li and Koh to maintain their businesses in opium, liquor, and gambling in Penang (CO273/186). Although the documents relating to suppression of secret societies have inherently distrusted the local "hoes" as criminal syndicates involved in organized crime and riots, kidnapping of the newly-arrived sinkhehs and involvement in the disgraceful opium trade (CO273/69, CO273/168, CO273/180, CO273/186 and CO273/250), nonetheless the weight of such locally formed Chinese "hoes" cannot be ignored if we wish to understand the forces that shaped the social and economic order among the Chinese communities in the Malayan context during the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Summarizing the findings above, we can observe that the CO records contain much new and important information about how Chinese coolies, pirates, and sworn-oath brotherhoods organized themselves and the roles they actually played in the local societies in Hong Kong, Macao, and the Straits Settlements. In fact, it is almost impossible to read the archival records of the Chinese in nineteenth-century Hong Kong and Malaya without encountering the topics of coolies, secret societies, pirates, and opium over and over in the CO273 and CO129 documentation. Significantly too, a large number of the CO records that we examined also discuss Macao in relation to our focused topics. During the heyday of colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the British colonial governments continually reported on, regulated, and criminalized the Chinese underclass. This shows that the colonial discourses are quite conservative in the sense of pro-British colonial mentality. The weight of such a factor cannot be ignored if we are to understand the forces that shaped the social, political, and economic order of the Chinese underclass in British colonies in both Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements between the Opium War and the Second World War. The CO records are indispensable primary sources to scholars. RC



Chinese coolie in Malaya, c. 1870s.

PIRATARIA NA ÁSIA

Appendix: Reported Piracies to Hong Kong Police on 1 January to 23 May in 1855.

Date	Pirates	Site of Crime	Distance from Victoria Harbor (miles)	Victims	Particulars
1 Jan.	90 pirates in 3 boats	Pootoy	12	fishing boat	
5 Jan.	10 pirate vessels	Pootoy	12	fishing boat	crew and boat carried off
7 Jan.	3 pirate boats	Pin Hoi	55	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
11 Jan.	12 pirate boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	trading junk	cargo plundered, boat released
11 Jan.	5 pirate boats	Tay-too-moon	10	2 firewood boats	
13 Jan	60 pirates in 2 boats	Longshunmoon	20	trading junk	
13 Jan.	2 pirate boats	Longshunmoon	20	trading boat	cargo plundered, boat released
15 Jan.	1 pirate boat	off Aberdeen	5	trading boat	
16 Jan.	1 pirate boat	Capsonmoon	8	trading boat	
21 Jan	1 pirate boat	Shanmoo	80	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
25 Jan.	10 pirate boats	Foo-moon	50	British lorcha	cargo plundered, boat released
26 Jan.	30 pirates in 1 boat	off Aberdeen	5	2 fishing boats	
26 Jan.	30 pirates in 1 boat	Tai-loong (east coast)		fishing boat	
26 Jan.	3 pirate boats	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
27 Jan.	2 pirate boats	Saimoon	4	fishing boat	
30 Jan.	60 pirates in 1 boat	off Aberdeen	5	fishing boat	
31 Jan.	40 pirates in 1 boat	off Cawloong (Kow-loon)	3	passage boat	
1 Feb.	100 pirates in 3 boats	Cap-chee	20	trading boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 1 man killed
4 Feb.	2 pirate boats	off Lytown	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 10 men carried away; 4 men wounded
6 Feb.	1 pirate boat	off Cee-chow	3	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 2 men carried away
7 Feb.	8 pirates in 1 boat	Ly-E-Moon	5	fishing boat	
8 Feb.	20 pirates in 2 boats	Ly-E-Moon	5	fishing boat	
9 Feb.	100 pirates in 4 boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	trading boat	
10 Feb.	15 pirates in 2 sampans	Stone Cutters Island	3	fishing boat	
12 Feb.	50 pirates in 4 pirate boats		25	cargo boat	
13 Feb.	1 pirate boat	Lye-moon	5	trading boat	
13 Feb.	7 pirate boats	Cum-sing	30	salt boat	
24 Feb.	100 pirates in 7 boats		20	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released; cargo valued $5,230
24 Feb.	500 pirates in 8 boats	Ly-e-moon	5	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released; cargo valued $5,380
27 Feb.	10 men from shore	off Sookunpoo		fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
3 Mar.	50 pirates in 4 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
3 Mar.	10 men in 1 boat	Wong Shun Chow	3	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
6 Mar.	2 pirate boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	cargo boat	
6 Mar.	100 pirates in 6 boats	Fat-too-moon	10	British lorcha	cargo plundered, boat released
7 Mar.	90 pirates in 3 boats	Cap Sue Moon	8	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 1 man killed
7 Mar.	7 pirate boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
7 Mar.	60 pirates in 4 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
10 Mar.	20 pirates in 1 boat	Lintin	15	fishing boat	
11 Mar.	1 pirate boat			passage boat	
12 Mar.	1 pirate boat	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	
13 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Ly-e-moon	5	trading boat	
13 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Cheong-soo-moon	10	stone boat	
14 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Cap-sue-moon	10	fishing boat	
14 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Lintin	15	salt boat	cargo plundered, boat released
15 Mar.	20 pirates disguised as passengers	Ty-hoe	12	passage boat	
17 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Chin-Wan	3	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 1 man killed
17 Mar.	4 pirate boats	Ping-hoy	55	fishing boat	
21 Mar.	1 pirate boat	Ping-hoy	55	fishing boat	
22 Mar.	3 pirate boats	Loong shun Wan	20	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
22 Mar.	4 pirate boats	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	
23 Mar.	7 pirate boats	Lama	10	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
23 Mar.	200 pirates in 50 boats	Cap-sue-moon	10	passage boat	
23 Mar.	1 pirate boat		8	fishing boat	
24 Mar.	100 pirates in 9 boats		10	trading boat	valuable cargo; 3 men killed, 11 wounded

PIRACY IN ASIA

Date	Pirates	Site of Crime	Distance from Victoria Harbor (miles)	Victims	Particulars
24 Mar.	50 pirates in 1 boat	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	
24 Mar.	100 pirates in 6 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
26 Mar.	60 pirates in 3 boats	off Stanley	8	2 fishing boats	
26 Mar.	50 pirates in 3 boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	trading boat	4 men carried away
26 Mar.	40 pirates	Cap-sue-moon	8	stone boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 3 men carried away, 1 wounded
27 Mar.	2 pirate boats	Pinghoy	55	fishing boat	
28 Mar.	10 pirate boats	Ly-e-moon	5	fishing boat	2 men carried away
29 Mar.	1 pirate boat	off Aberdeen	6	fishing boat	
30 Mar.	50 pirates in 2 boats	Pinghoy	55	trading boat and 2 fishing boats	
30 Mar.	300 pirates in 20 boats	Lintin	15	2 pullaway boats	
30 Mar.	20 pirate boats	Lintin	15	2 cargo boats	valuable cargo
30 Mar.	30 pirates in 1 boat	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
1 Apr.	20 pirates in 2 boats	Capsuemoon	8	fishing boat	
6 Apr.	50 pirates in 2 boats	Pingchow	5	fishing boat	
8 Apr.	2 pirate boats	Ly-e-moon	5	trading boat	valuable cargo plundered, boat released
9 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Fat-tow-moon	10	cargo boat	
10 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Wong Shun Chow	3	fast boat	1 man carried away
11 Apr.	2 pirate boats	Lintin	20	fishing boat	
12 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Chai-moon	4	fishing boat	
12 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Wong Shun Chow	3	fishing boat	
12 Apr.	5 pirate boats	Cap Sue Moon	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 1 man wounded
13 Apr.	2 pirate boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
14 Apr.	2 pirate boats	Lytown Bay	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
14 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Koo Chow	6	salt boat	
14 Apr.	1 pirate boat	Ly-e-moon	5	fishing boat	
16 Apr.	70 pirates in 2 boats	Poo-toy	12	fishing boat	
17 Apr.	3 pirate boats	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	
19 Apr.	40 pirates in 2 boats	Lytown Bay	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
19 Apr.	120 pirates in 6 boats	off Stanley	8	2 fishing boats	
21 Apr.	50 pirates in 2 boats	off Stanley	8	fishing boat	
22 Apr.	120 pirates in 6 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
22 Apr.	20 pirates in 1 boat	Kong chun chow	3	fishing boat	
23 Apr.	30 pirates	Lintin	15	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released
23 Apr.	14 pirates in 1 boat	Ly-e-moon	5	trading boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 1 man killed, 3 wounded
26 Apr.	50 pirates in 3 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 3 men carried away
26 Apr.	100 pirates in 6 boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
27 Apr.	120 pirates in 9 boats	Cheung chow	8	fishing boat	3 men carried away
27 Apr.	18 pirates disguised as passengers	Lin moon	8	passage boat	1 man killed, 4 wounded
29 Apr.	50 pirates in 2 boats	Lintin	15	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
29 Apr.	50 pirates in 2 boats	Lintin	15	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; cargo valued $140
29 Apr.	120 pirates in 7 boats	Ping Hoy	55	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; cargo valued $1,000
30 Apr.	20 pirates in 1 boat	Green Island		fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
30 Apr.	30 pirates in 2 boats	Lama	10	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 2 men wounded
30 Apr.	30 pirates in 2 boats	Ping Hoy	55	fishing boat	
30 Apr.	100 pirates in 7 boats	Ping Hoy	55	fishing boat	
1 May	300 pirates in 20 boats	Macao	40	fishing boat	
1 May	100 pirates in 4 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
1 May	150 pirates in 5 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	3 fishing boats	
3 May	100 pirates in 5 boats	Canton		2 salt boats	cargo plundered, boat released
3 May	1 pirate boat	Capsuemoon	8	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
4 May	100 pirates in 8 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	cargo boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 3 men killed
5 May	100 pirates in 5 boats	San Mee	80	British lorcha	cargo plundered, boat released
5 May	70 pirates in 4 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	

PIRATARIA NA ÁSIA

Date	Pirates	Site of Crime	Distance from Victoria Harbor (miles)	Victims	Particulars
6 May	12 pirates disguised as passengers	Capsuemoon	8	passage boat	
6 May	1 pirate boat	Long shunwan	25	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 2 men wounded; cargo valued $215
7 May	100 pirates in 6 boats	Longshunwan	25	salt boat	
8 May	60 pirates in 2 boats	Longshunwan	25	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 2 men wounded; cargo valued $100
8 May	100 pirates in 7 boats	Fat-tow-moon	10	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 7 men carried away
9 May	6 pirates engaged on boat		8	pullaway boat	
9 May	200 pirates in 10 boats	off Macao	40	3 fishing boats	cargo plundered, boat released
10 May	3 pirate boats	Cheung chow	10	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released; 4 men carried away
10 May	50 pirates in 1 boat		90	fishing boat	cargo plundered, boat released
12 May	100 pirates in 5 boats	Koo chow	8	passage boat	
12 May	4 pirate boats	Capsuemoon	8	cargo boat	
14 May	3 pirate boats	Capsuemoon	8	cargo boat	cargo plundered, boat released
15 May	60 pirates in 1 boat	Saiwan	4	fishing boat	
15 May	10 pirates disguised as passengers	Capsuemoon	8	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released
15 May	9 pirates in 1 boat	Fat-tow-moon	10	fishing boat	2 men carried away
17 May	100 pirates in 4 boats	Tam Koon Tow	20	fishing boat	
17 May	30 pirates in 1 boat	off Stanley	8	cargo boat	cargo plundered, boat released
18 May	1 pirate disguised as passenger	off Stanley	8	passage boat	
19 May	8 pirates in 1 boat	Lintin	15	fishing boat	2 men carried away
19 May	30 pirates in 1 boat	Ly ping poo	40	fishing boat	
20 May	5 pirate boats	Lintin	15	passage boat	cargo plundered, boat released; cargo valued $4,000
20 May	18 pirates in 1 boat	Capsuemoon	8	fishing boat	
23 May	90 pirates in 5 boats	Capsuemoon	8	cargo boat	

Source: Compiled by authors from CO129/50 (7 June 1855).

NOTES

1 This work was supported by the Education Department of Guangdong Province, China [grant number 2018WTSCX193] under the Guangdong provincial scheme of University Innovation and Enhancement Project.

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Discourses on China's Role in East Asian Maritime History, ed. by Robert Antony and Angela Schottenhammer (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), pp. 165-187.

6 Although some Malaysian and Singaporean scholars commonly described the CO273 records covering the period only from 1867 to 1946, but CO273 in fact contains files relating to the Straits Settlements before they were transferred by the India Office to the Secretary of State, Colonial Office. This is why the earliest records can be traced back to 1838, which covered the period before the Straits Settlements came under the direct control of the Colonial Office in 1867. See articles written by Malaysian and Singaporean scholars: 李金生, 〈新加坡館藏檳榔嶼華人研究文獻略述〉, 《亞洲研究》26 (2002): 229; 廖文輝, 〈早期新馬地區東南亞研究英文文獻概述(1800–1867)〉, 《台灣東南亞學刊》, 8, no. 1 (2011): 148.

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