Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Journal of Contemporary Asia

ISSN: 0047-2336 (Print) 1752-7554 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjoc20

Chinese bourgeois nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1930s

Huei-ying Kuo

To cite this article: Huei-ying Kuo (2006) Chinese bourgeois nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1930s, Journal of Contemporary Asia, 36:3, 385-405, DOI: 10.1080/00472330680000241

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00472330680000241

Chinese Bourgeois Nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1930s[1]

Huei-ying Kuo

[**Abstract:** This article explains the diverse responses among the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore to Chinese nationalist movements in the 1930s. In Singapore, the slogan of "Chinese buy Chinese goods" boosted the Chinese bourgeoisie in their business competition with Japan. The same slogan was used by the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong to emphasize increased sales of Chinese goods while Japanese imports were used by Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong. I also interpret Chinese bourgeois nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore as a move toward transnational economic citizenship. Emphasising their Chinese ethnicity, the bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore asked the Chinese government for favourable import tariffs. At the same time, the bourgeoisie requested the British for favourable tariffs, when they wished to export goods to markets in Britain and its colonies.]

KEYWORDS: **nationalism, Chinese diaspora, business networks, Great Depression, transnationalism**

On 3 June 1919, nine students of the Hong Kong's Tao Ying High School walked down the street with their black umbrellas open. On that sunny morning, the attention of passers-by was drawn to the two Chinese characters marked on the umbrellas: "national products" (*guo huo*). Police arrested the students and charged them with not registering their social gathering in advance (*Wat Tsz Yat Po [WTYP]*, 9 June 1919).

This was among the first anti-Japanese agitations conducted in Hong Kong in the aftermath of the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement earlier that year. In early May, when news about China's concession to Japan over the suzerainty of Shandong in the Paris Peace Conference reached Hong Kong, anti-Japanese boycotts erupted spontaneously. Different from what was occurring in Beijing, Shanghai, Canton and other major cities in China, the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong did not take any positive action to support the movement.[2] On the eve of the Paris Peace Conference, in February 1919, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong (CGCCHK) declined to cable the Chinese delegates of the conference with a word of support. The standing committee of the CGCCHK explained the decision this way, "This is not what we can do. Unlike the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in the provincial capital [i.e.

*Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, NY,13902-6000, USA, Email: hkuo@binghamton.edu

Canton], Hong Kong is a British colony.... Even if we follow this suggestion, the cable inspector in Hong Kong would definitely have deleted what we send" (*WTYP*, 14 February 1919).

In another British colony with a predominantly Chinese population, Singapore, Chinese anti-Japanese boycotts also surged after the months following the May Fourth Movement. Like their counterparts in Hong Kong, the Chinese bourgeoisie in Singapore were not involved in the boycotts. Japanese intelligence reports even noted that some officers of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC) tried to pacify anti-Japanese fever (*Nany_ Ky_kai Zasshi* [*NKZ*], 5, 9: 39-49). Perhaps provoked by the lukewarm response of the SCCC, enthusiastic nationalists expressed their anger by sending bombs packed in biscuit tins to two of its key leaders (*Supplement to Straits Settlements Government Gazettes 1919*: 14).

In contrast to their active participation in Chinese nationalist movements in the 1930s, one may well query why the Chinese bourgeoisie in both Hong Kong and Singapore chose to distance themselves from the May Fourth Movement, the first Chinese "mass movement" (Chesneaux, 1968: 154-6)? The relationship between Chinese businesses and nationalist activities is the core concern of this article. It highlights the economic motivations behind the Hong Kong and Singapore Chinese bourgeoisie's responses to nationalist calls. I make use of the concept of the making of transnational economic citizenship to analyse bourgeois nationalism in the two British colonies.

Chinese Nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore

The existing literature on Chinese nationalist activities in pre-war Hong Kong and Singapore generally interprets these movements as transplanted from China. Some scholars emphasise that Chinese nationalism was introduced abroad from the late 19th Century as a cultural construction. By then, the majority of earlier Chinese immigrants who had settled in Southeast Asia, through assimilating with local peoples and cultures, had become a distinctive "creolised" ethnic group (for example, "Baba Chinese" in Malaya and "Peranakan" in Java). However, they reconsolidated their Chinese identity at the turn of the 20th Century, when a large number of new Chinese immigrants arrived in Southeast Asia. Williams (1960) identifies the introduction of Mandarin as the new spoken language of China and the circulation of Chinese newspapers as significant factors contributing to a pan-Chinese identity that provided common ground for Chinese of different dialects and geographical origins to identify with. Wang (1981) emphasises the role played by Chinese intellectuals in arousing Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia. In conjunction with the rise of pan-Chinese movements since the late 19th century, this Chinese ethnic identity would connect Chinese in Southeast Asia with the state of affairs in China. More recently, Kenley (2003) applies Anderson's thesis on "imagined communities" to indicate how cultural discourses on nationalism and enlightenment stimulated the rise of Chinese ethnic identity in Singapore.

Other scholars emphasise the influence of political activists from China. Purcell (1966: 292-303) argues that Chinese nationalist identity in Southeast Asia was shaped by the aggressive nationalist policy of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang

[KMT]). Its influence reached beyond China's borders to Chinese immigrant societies including those in British Malaya and Hong Kong. Yen's (1976) study on the contribution of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia to the 1911 revolution in China also highlights how political frictions in Chinese communities in Southeast Asia resembled the political struggles in China. Yong and McKenna (1990) delineate how the conflicts between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China shaped the politics of Chinese nationalists in British Malaya. In addition, Chan (1975), Chan (1999), and Tsai (2001) all attribute surging anti-British nationalist movements in Hong Kong in the 1920s to the infiltration of the CCP.

By comparing the timing of the emergence of Chinese bourgeois nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore with that in China, this article revisits the transplantation thesis of Chinese nationalism. I argue that the Chinese bourgeoisie in both Hong Kong and Singapore were isolated from the nationalist upheavals in mainland China in the "golden age of Chinese bourgeoisie," as Bergère (1989) describes of the years between 1919 and 1927. But after the late 1920s, the Chinese bourgeoisie in both Hong Kong and Singapore took the initiative in leading nationalist movements. But the Chinese bourgeoisie in these two societies had their own rationales for responding to the call of nationalism.

In conceptualising these rationales, the concept of transnational economic citizenship, drawing on Ong's (1999) discussion of flexible citizenship, is used. Ong examines the recent literature that emphasises shared Chinese ethnic ties in motivating investment from Singapore, Taiwan, and California, in China. She argues that the national identity of these Chinese investors, returning from abroad, is negotiable. Ong observes that these business people can be ardent nationalists when such a stance promises handsome economic returns (see also Hamilton, 1991; Redding, 1990; Hsing, 1998). In a similar vein, Post (1995) and Lin (2001) emphasise the practice of holding dual or even multiple-citizenship among ethnic Chinese elites in Southeast Asia. The association between Chinese national identity and ethnic Chinese residing abroad was not essential but was contingent to different local contexts and individual considerations.

Along these lines, I will argue that economic change and competition associated with the Great Depression of the 1930s constituted a significant moment for the Chinese bourgeoisie in both Hong Kong and Singapore. These elites attempted to negotiate their economic citizenship with the Chinese government. The Chinese nationalist rhetoric employed by the Singaporean and Hong Kong Chinese business people was a bourgeois nationalism. It did not demand exclusive loyalty toward a territorially-bounded political sovereignty of China or of the colonies in Singapore and Hong Kong, and co-existed in harmony with the British status quo.

Chinese Bourgeois Nationalism in Singapore

The surge of Chinese nationalism from the late 1920s on the part of the Singapore Chinese bourgeoisie can be understood in relation to the sharpening business competition between Chinese and Japanese products in Southeast Asia. Singapore was an important base for Japan's business expansion in Southeast Asia from the First World War. In

February 1916, the *ad hoc* organisation for Japan's southward business expansion–the South Sea Association (*Nany_ Ky_kai* in Japanese; established in Tokyo in January 1915) opened its second branch office in Singapore. Its first branch office was set up in Taipei in August 1915 (*NKZ*, 5, 6: 114). The South Sea Association received funds from the Office of the Japanese Governor-General in Taiwan. The association's primary goal was to collect business information to facilitate Japanese trade in Southeast Asia. In 1918, the Department of Commerce and Industry in Tokyo financed the establishment of the Singapore Commercial Museum. It provided a showcase for Japanese commodities. The association also offered apprenticeship for Japanese students to learn the languages, customs, and other skills of doing business in Southeast Asia (*NKZ*, 4, 3: 77).

Statistics show that, between 1919 and 1927, exports from Japan (including Japanese colonies) to the Straits Settlements[3] rose 1.23 times. With 1928 as the base year, Japan's exports to the Straits Settlements tripled in 1934.[4] Below, I will analyze how the expanding exports of Japan's rubber-soled shoes and Taiwanese Baozhong tea threatened Chinese businesses in Singapore.

Sino-Japanese Business Competition in Singapore

Rubber-soled shoes: In the first half of the twentieth century, the highest level of Singapore's prosperity was enjoyed by rubber tycoons. Among them, Tan Kah Kee (1874–1961) and Teo Eng Hock (1871–1958) were active Chinese nationalist leaders. In the aftermath of the Jinan Incident (where the Japanese army fired on the Chinese army in May 1928), Tan organised the 1928 Shandong Relief Fund. It became the first and foremost Chinese nationalist fundraising campaign in Singapore. After China declared war with Japan in July 1937, Tan was appointed as the leader of the region-wide South Seas Chinese Sojourners' National Salvation Campaign (Yong, 1987: 189-96, 202-6). Teo was a pioneering partisan of the Chinese Nationalist Party who supported Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary campaign before 1911. Teo was also a key leader in the 1932 nationalist fundraising campaign to relieve victims in the Shanghai Incident (in which Japan bombed Shanghai on 28 January 1932) (Song, 1984: 473; Yong and McKenna, 1990: 9-15).

Before closing their businesses, products of Tan's Tan Kah Kee & Co. and Teo's People's Rubber Shoes Manufacture, as well as of Nanyang Rubber Manufacturing Co., were regarded as the most formidable competitors of Japanese shoes in the Southeast Asian markets. Rubber-soled shoes were popular commodities for middle- and lower-class people in Singapore, particularly after 1927 when global rubber prices slumped and an ordinance was enacted prohibiting people from walking barefoot in urban streets. Had everyone followed the ordinance, the market would have expanded by 40%.[5]

But the expanding market might have benefited Japanese shoes as well as any others. Market shares of Japanese rubber-soled shoes among all imported shoes in the early 1930s were: 81.34% in 1930, 82.20% in 1931, 60.30% in 1932, 77.63% in 1933 and 78.73% in 1934 (Table 1). Japanese shoes dominated the market because they were much cheaper than shoes manufactured by Singapore Chinese rubber factories. According

to a May 1931 survey, a pair of rubber-soled canvas shoes from the "big three" Chinese rubber manufacturers in Singapore cost 0.40 to 1.15 Straits dollars; and a pair of Japanese shoes of the same kind cost 0.55 to 0.70 dollar (*NKZ*, 18, 5: 48-50). Teo Eng Hock's People's Rubber Goods Manufactory was shut down in late 1933 (*NKZ*, 20, 4: 40-41); Tan Kah Kee's company was closed in 1934 (*Nan Yang Siang Pao* [NYSP], 7 June 1934).

Table 1: Market Share of Rubber-Soled Shoes from Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Britain in British Malaya

Year	Japan	Hong Kong	China	Britain	Total
1927	248,936*	134,738	90,289	54,360	721,274
	(34.51%)	(18.69%)	(12.52%)	(7.54%)	
1928	318,731	129,485	61,933	27,237	690,860
	(46.14%)	(18.74%)	(8.96%)	(3.94%)	
1929	282,259	103,368	5,603	17,163	528,814
	(53.38%)	(19.55%)	(1.06%)	(3.25%)	
1930	556,018	92,213	10,130	4,437	683,558
	(81.34%)	(13.49%)	(1.48%)	(0.65%)	
1931	421,964	39,518	25,574	2,689	513,366
	(82.20%)	(7.70%)	(4.98%)	(0.52%)	
1932	235,666	95,954	28,440	1,124	390,807
	(60.30%)	(24.55%)	(7.28%)	(0.29%)	
1933	327,650	–	–	–	422.079
	(77.63%)				
1934	649.925	–	–	–	825,481
	(78.73%)				

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of the imports in total market shares, while the figures above these refer to amounts in Straits Dollars.

Sources: 1927: *NKZ*, 17, 5, p. 48; 1928-30: *NKZ*, 18, 3, pp. 11-12; 1931: *NKZ*, 19, 3, p. 13; 1932-33: *NKZ*, 20, 4, pp. 38-9; and 1934: *NKZ*, 22, 4, pp. 24-5.

Depreciation of the yen in the early 1930s increased the competitiveness of Japanese goods in Southeast Asia. The exchange rate between the Straits dollar and the yen at the end of May 1932 was 1: 1.3175. From August to September 1932, the rate reached 1: 1.70. In other words, during these five months, the yen depreciated about 22.5% (CO, 1932b: 4). Singapore Chinese manufacturers could not cut their prices sufficiently to compete with Japanese products. Although rubber shoes made in China and Hong Kong were cheaper, the conventional perspective was that products from mainland China and Hong Kong were less durable than higher-priced Japanese shoes (*NKZ*, 20, 4: 38, 44-5). Under these circumstances, Chinese shoes lost their markets in Southeast Asia to Japanese imports.

Chinese tea: When Tan Kah Kee organised the first Chinese nationalist fundraising movement in Singapore in 1928, Chinese tea merchants also sought to boycott tea

imported from Taiwan, then a Japanese colony. The Singapore Chinese Tea Merchants' Association (SCTMA), founded on 23 June 1928, took the lead.[1] Its primary goal was to circumvent the trade in Taiwanese Baozhong tea.

Taiwanese Baozhong tea, a semi-fermented *Oolong* tea with special flavour, was the most formidable competitor of Chinese tea in Southeast Asia. Although Taiwan's tea industry was originally introduced from Fujian in the mid-19th century, improved tea cultivation and effective marketing in the early 20th century gradually made it an attractive product in overseas markets (Wu and Fan, 1937: 172-81). The Dutch East Indies was the Southeast Asian distribution centre for Taiwanese tea. Major ethnic Chinese tea merchants in Java were involved in the organisation of the Taiwan Tea Merchants' Association in Taipei in 1915. Also, the wholesaling and retailing systems of Taiwanese Baozhong tea in the region overlapped with the trade of Chinese tea imported from Fujian and Guangdong (Kawarabayashi, 2000: 107-20).

Before the penetration of Taiwanese Baozhong tea in Singapore, Singapore Chinese merchants mainly imported tea from South China. These agents also engaged in a broader import-export trade between China and Southeast Asia. For example, major Singapore Chinese tea agents set up trade agents in Amoy or Swatow, or both, from whom they imported Chinese tea stocks to Singapore and to whom they exported spices, fruits, seafood, and other native Southeast Asian products. The trade in Chinese tea had been a lucrative business in Singapore. In addition to local consumption, tea shipped to Singapore was also re-exported to England and continental Europe. After the First World War, the demand for Chinese *Oolong* tea was replaced by the rapid growth of black tea produced in Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra, while the market for Chinese green tea faced severe competition from the Taiwanese Baozhong tea (*NYSP*, 23 May 1932; *NYSP*, 16 June 1932; *NYSP*, 26 August 1932; Yao, et al., 1940: 606-607).

The establishment of the SCTMA marked the separation of the Chinese tea trade from the trade in Taiwanese tea. Singapore Chinese tea merchants decided not to sell the Taiwanese product, and to sell only Chinese tea. In the preparatory meeting before the founding of the organisation, participants concluded: "Our goal is to expand the market of Chinese national products. Based on our conscience, we vow not to trade in any Japanese goods. We will hold to this position until the Jinan Incident is resolved in a satisfactory way" (*NYSP*, 26 June 1928). One SCTMA member, the Lim Ho Thye Tea Chop, posted a notice in a Chinese newspaper, declaring that it would no longer import any tea from Taiwan:

> Previously we have ordered tea stocks from Taiwan. Now these bad stocks [*sic*] are gone, but we decided not to abandon our previous trademark as it has been used for years. We will keep the same Thye Chuan Yellow bottle-gourd trademark, but the content will be replaced by tea imported from our Amoy head office. These tea stocks were all collected from [China's] Wuyi Mountains (*NYSP*, 28 July 1928).

The owner of this company, Lim Bendao, became the first chairperson of the Singapore Tea Merchants' Association (NA 531, the Singapore Tea Importer-Exporter Association: minutes of annual general meetings and executive committee meetings, 1928).

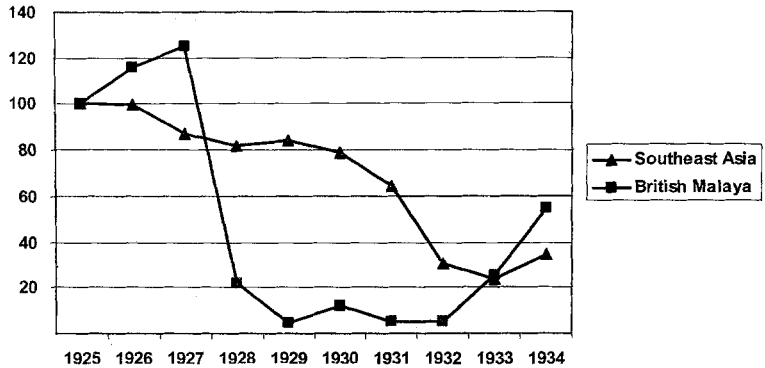
Lim Keng Lian (1893–1968) was another leader of the Association. Like his

contemporary, nationalist entrepreneurs, such as Tan Kah Kee and Teo Eng Hock, Lim was active in the SCCC. He was born in China, graduated from the Beijing University and moved to Singapore in the 1920s to take care of the family tea business in Malaya, the Lim Kim Thye Tea Chop. In the 1930s, he was one of the high-profile KMT partisans in Singapore.[2]

The Singapore Tea Merchants' Association took a rigorous anti-Japanese line. Their boycott of Taiwanese tea proved to be effective. Statistics of the import of Taiwanese Baozhong tea shows that from 1928 to 1934, the trade declined more sharply in British Malaya than in Southeast Asia in general (Figure 1).

Taiwanese tea nonetheless continued to sell in Singapore in the 1930s. In the early 1930s, it was reported that exports of Taiwanese tea stock to Southeast Asia would be repacked as Chinese tea in Swatow before exporting to Southeast Asia (*NYSP*, 23 May 1932). In the late 1930s, Chinese tea merchants in Singapore imported tea from Taiwan to compensate for their losses resulting from the declining supply of tea stocks from mainland China (Yao, et al., 1940: 606–7).

Figure 1: Indexes of Exports of Taiwan's Baozhong Tea to Southeast Asia, 1925-134



Note: 1925 = 100
Source: Compiled from *Nettai sangyo chosa-kai: chagyo ni kansuru chosa-sho,* 1935, pp. 61-2, 254-5.

Bourgeois Nationalism in Hong Kong

***Canton-Hong Kong and the Chinese Customs Tariff*:** To understand the emergence of Chinese bourgeois nationalism from the 1920s, it is necessary to examine the competition between Hong Kong and Canton over the entrepôt trade at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta. This competition provoked serious conflicts between the two cities up to 1929, the year that China finally achieved tariff autonomy. From the Opium War in the 1840s to 1929, the Chinese Maritime Customs were managed by the British. All imports from Hong Kong to China could enjoy the low 5% ad valorem custom tariff. Hong Kong controlled the transshipment of South China's import-export trade to the world market.

The prosperity of Hong Kong was also viewed as, at least from the perspective of Chinese nationalists in Canton, something achieved at the expense of Canton's development (Chan, 1975: 334-42). In the late 1910s, as soon as Dr. Sun Yat-sen rose to power in Canton, the Canton Government started to challenge the Canton Maritime Customs (managed by an international consortium led by Britain). Between 1919 and 1922, the Canton government seized the customs surplus from the collection of the Chinese central government in Beijing. Though the practice was interrupted by the intervention of the international consortium, struggles over the Chinese Maritime Customs nonetheless paved the way for a further embargo against Hong Kong and British interests in South China in the 1920s (Chen, 1999: 99-121).

The first time that the Chinese nationalists in Canton tried to blockade Hong Kong's trade was in the Seamen's Strike in early 1922. But Guangdong province was then divided among several military forces. Hong Kong's only setback was its trade with Canton. Hong Kong could compensate for the loss by sending goods to other ports in Guangdong province beyond the control of the Canton government. In contrast, Canton's economy suffered by losing its most important outlet, Hong Kong. The big Chinese bourgeoisie in both Canton and Hong Kong therefore expected a quick settlement of the Seamen's Strike (Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Editorial Board, 1961: 23).

In June 1925, when the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike and Boycott erupted, the situation changed to favour Canton. Particularly after January 1926, when most parts of the Guangdong province were unified under the Canton government, picket lines against British cargoes were extended (Deng, 1957: 230-1; Chan, 1975: 338). By the end of 1925, the territory that the Canton government effectively controlled reached east to Swatow and west to Pai Hoi. Facing the co-ordinated strength along the shores of the Guangdong province, Hong Kong's embargo on the shipment of foodstuffs to Canton did not create hardship, as Canton was able to find alternative means of securing its food supply, such as trading directly with the rice-producing areas of China. Therefore, while Hong Kong lost its transhipment role in the trade between South China and Southeast Asia, Canton's trade jumped dramatically in October, after a slight decline in July and September (Deng, 1957: 235-9; Chesneaux, 1968: 308-9; Chan, 1975: 327-8; Lu and Ta, 1997: 155-6, 166-92).

Established Chinese elites in Hong Kong, with business interests tied to the British status quo, chose to confront these Chinese anti-British nationalist activities (Sinn, 1989: 211; see also Tsai, 2001: 145-6). For example, the assassination of Liao Zhongkai (a crucial leader of the General Canton-Hong Kong Strike and Boycott) was celebrated by the Chinese elites in Hong Kong. It was reported that they partied all night after hearing the news (*WKYP*, 22 August 1925). At the same time, major Chinese business leaders in the Tung Wah Hospital, the CGCCHK, and the Federation of Twenty-Four Merchant Guilds collectively signed a statement and cabled it to other Chinese native-place associations abroad. It solicited other Chinese societies to support their confrontation with the Canton government (*WKYP*, 22 August 1925).

China's Move Toward Customs Autonomy: In the eyes of the British, the primary

cause of the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike and Boycott was Bolshevik influence in the Canton government. But the British also recognised that the perennial conflicts between Canton and Hong Kong were rooted in discontent over the Chinese maritime customs. Given the weakness of the central government in Beijing, the British feared actions like the seizure of maritime customs in Canton in 1919 might occur in other places. If China's local governments broke treaties, British interests in China would suffer (CO, 1926a: 458). For this reason, pushing China toward tariff autonomy became the British long-term solution to the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike and Boycott.

However, the British were reluctant to negotiate with the Canton government. In an internal communication between Britain's Foreign Office and the British Minister Sir Ronald Macleay in Beijing, the Canton regime was referred to as "a good illustration of the evils" inherent in the present regime because of the devastating boycott against Hong Kong and in foreshadowing problems elsewhere (CO, 1926a: 459). The government in Beijing, on the other hand, was viewed as the ideal party to negotiate with, though the regime later "disappeared altogether" from the conference – the worse scenario that Britain could imagine (CO, 1926b: 205–10). Nonetheless, in the tariff meetings during 1925 and 1926, the table of interim surtaxes was set up, whereby the 5% ad valorum tax was abandoned, with a new set of high tariffs imposed on the Chinese maritime customs. This table became the foundation for China's tariff autonomy after 1929 (Koo, 1982: 190).

The Canton-Hong Kong General Strike and Boycott ended in April 1926 when most of the leftists in the Canton government were purged and Chiang Kai-shek and his right-wing forces rose to power in Canton.[1] With Canton as the base, Chiang launched the Northern Expedition, and eventually, by conquest and accommodation, formed a stronger national government in 1928. With this political transformation, relations between Chinese business elites in Hong Kong and Chinese nationalists in mainland China also changed.

Reconciliation between Hong Kong Chinese business communities and Chinese nationalists in China first emerged in the 1928 Jinan Incident. When news of the Incident reached Hong Kong, Shandong sojourning business people in Hong Kong requested Chinese business associations, including the CGCCHK, the Tung Wah Hospital, and the Federation of the Twenty-four Merchant Guilds, to collect funds to help the Jinan victims. These Chinese business groups were, however, cautious about expressing their sympathy for the victims.

This caution can be found in, first, the insistence of both the CGCCHK and the Tung Wah Hospital that the whole fundraising movement should be conducted as a charity program, rather than as a nationalist campaign. Donations were directly wired to the Red Swastika Society, rather than the Nationalist Army – the latter being the recipient of the Singaporean Shandong Relief Fund campaign (*WTYP*, 4 June 1928; *WTYP*, 5 June 1928; *WTYP*, 12 June 1928; *WTYP*, 6 July 1928; *WTYP*, 15 August 1928).

Second, Chinese elites in Hong Kong tried to downplay the political implications of the Sino-Japanese conflict. One Chinese leader Li Yau Tsun emphasised that the Jinan Incident was only one among other disasters in China that required charitable

funds. He said, "Things have priority. Now Hainan Island and the Haifeng and Lufeng areas in the Guangdong province have been devastated by the communists. Many merchants and people were killed. These tragedies in South China also need our help" (*WKYP*, 18 August 1928). The implication was that relief for the victims of Sino-Japanese military clashes in Shandong did not have the highest priority.

Third, Chinese elites in Hong Kong took the initiative to decide how much money would be sufficient and how the donations would be collected. In August 1928, when Shandong representatives arrived in Hong Kong, they were disappointed that only HK$6,000 had been raised. Given that Hong Kong was a "prosperous port" where "many millionaires gathered," more was expected (*WKYP*, 20 August 1928). They therefore requested that Tung Wah Hospital to launch a door-to-door fundraising campaign. The Hospital, however, agreed only to coordinate donations collected spontaneously by individual groups (*WKYP*, 18 August 1928; *WKYP*, 21 August 1928). While the Hong Kong fundraising campaign for the Jinan Incident had a low profile, the support of Chinese elites from both the CGCCHK and the Tung Wah Hospital nonetheless marked the first time that Chinese business elites responded positively to Chinese nationalist activities.

In the 1930s, the growing conflict between China and Japan saw anti-Japanese feelings grow in Hong Kong. In the aftermath of the 1931 Manchurian Incident, when the Japanese army occupied Manchuria, a Japanese family were murdered by Chinese. The British responded to the murder by enacting martial law, with Japanese being protected and anti-Japanese riots suppressed (*WKYP*: Sept. 27, 1931; Oct. 5, 1931; CO, 1932a).

In 1932, right after the Shanghai Incident, when the Japanese Army bombed Shanghai, the Tung Wah Hospital took the initiative to organise a fundraising campaign. It is worth noting that the Hospital was then chaired by Chan Lian Pak [Chen Lienpo] (1884–1945), once a comprador of the Canton branch of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Chan was believed to be the key person behind an abortive rebellion against the Canton Government in 1924 – the Merchant Corps Incident (Chung, 1998: 107-24; Tsin, 1999: 83-114). Chan later moved to Hong Kong and managed the Nanyang Brothers' Tobacco Company, a Chinese owned company which made effective use of nationalist rhetoric for promoting its business interests (Cochran, 1980: 185-95), and became an active Chinese national business person. In 1934, he organised the Chinese Manufacturers' Union, Hong Kong (CMUHK) which played an important role in promoting the "buy Chinese products movement" in the late 1930s (see below). Chan's nationalist turn marked the changing political orientation of the Hong Kong Chinese business community in the 1930s. Even so, in this decade, the CGCCHK and Tung Wah Hospital never promoted Chinese anti-Japanese boycotts. Fundraising for charitable causes remained the standard response by the bourgeoisie to Japanese encroachments in China.

Growing Canton-Hong Kong and Hong Kong-Malaya Economic Ties: The changing position of the Hong Kong Chinese business community was, in large part, a result of

China's tariff autonomy after 1929. The high Chinese customs duties after 1929 were also claimed by Hong Kong Chinese business community as one of the critical reasons for the failure of the Hong Kong's economy in the early 1930s (*WKYP*, 5 January 1934). In the summer of 1933, Hong Kong Chinese manufacturers collectively requested the Chinese government for tariff deductions. This concern further pushed the formation of the CMUHK in 1934 (*WKYP*, 11 March 1934).[2]

At the same time, to avoid the new customs duties, many Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong set up branch factories in China. In 1932, it was reported that there were "few factories in Hong Kong which are not duplicated in China" (CGCCHK, 1932: 22). For example, Ping Sing Knitting Co., founded by the Lee brothers in Yaumatei, Hong Kong, in 1922, set up a branch factory in Canton in 1935. Standard Chemical Works Ltd., founded by Luk Chung Shan and Robert Der in 1931, opened a branch office in Canton in 1932. Nam Jam Factory, a manufacturer of flashlights, set up in Hong Kong in 1928, subsequently opened a branch factory in Canton (CMUHK, 1936: section b). Beginning in 1932, the British also abandoned the free-trade policy and replaced it with an imperial preference system. The primary goal of the British Imperial Preference System was to stimulate trade within the British Empire, with British goods dominating the exclusive markets for industrial goods manufactured in England. According to the 1932 Ottawa Conference, all Empire products could enjoy the 10% favourable tariff if traded within Empire territories. In Hong Kong, the required criterion for manufacturers' products to become certified as British meant that 25% of production costs had to be related to British interests, including raw materials, labour, and factory overhead expenses (HKGCC, 1932: 21-2). Under pressure from domestic industrial capitalists, particularly Lancashire textile interests, a quota system was set up to minimise the importation of foreign textiles to most British territories. In Asia, this system was to have particular impact for Japanese goods. From May 1934, although Singapore was covered by the quota system along with Penang and Malacca of the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong was exempt (Howe, 1996: 201-31; Miners, 2002: 53-76).

The difference in British trade policies for these two Crown colonies can be explained by their different economic roles. In Hong Kong, the enactment of a discriminatory trade policy, such as the textile quota, would have undermined its competitive edge over Canton and adjacent ports in the entrepôt trade of South China. In addition, even if the protectionist policy were implemented in Hong Kong, highly competitive Japanese goods could still find their way to China through other ports (Miners, 1994: 61-3). But the situation in Singapore was different. Singapore was not only the trans-shipment centre but also the emporium for hinterland Malaya, Sumatra, Siam, Java, and Borneo. By controlling the volume of Japanese goods in Singapore, the British could protect their Southeast Asian markets (Wong, 1978: 69-84; Brown, 1994: 114-15). The textile market in Singapore received imports from both Japan and England (particularly Lancashire). Thus, by reducing the supply from Japan, the British could protect Lancashire interests.

To take advantage of British Imperial Preferences, Chinese manufacturers in Canton or Shanghai would open factories in Hong Kong. For example, Chow Ngai Hing Knitting

Factory, established before 1911 in Canton, set up a factory in Hong Kong in 1927. Later in 1934, the company expanded. Two sales offices were opened in Shanghai and Singapore respectively. Other companies that moved from Canton to Hong Kong included the Kwang Tung Hat Factory, established in 1924 in Canton, which set up its factory in Hong Kong in 1933, and Chuan Hsin Knitting Factory, founded in Macao in 1930, which opened a factory in Hong Kong in 1933 (CMUHK, 1936: section b).

In the 1930s, the boundary between Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong and those in Canton began to blur. Japanese intelligence reports commented that most "made in Hong Kong" products were actually manufactured in Canton (*NKZ*, 17, 5: 47–52; *NKZ*, 19, 10: 38). Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong would import semi-finished products from China (particularly Guangdong province) for final processing. While only minimal parts of the production procedure were conducted in Hong Kong, these products nonetheless qualified for certification as Empire products and enjoyed the preferential duty (HKGCC, 1932: 22; HKGCC, 1933: 22-23; HKGCC, 1935: 26-27).

In the absence of the quota system, the importation of Japanese goods to Hong Kong was without limit. They constituted an important source of raw materials for the Chinese weaving and knitting industry. The supply of cheap Japanese cotton and artificial silk was regarded as a crucial element in the success of the Chinese weaving and knitting factories in Hong Kong in the 1930s (*WKYP*, 26 June 1937; *WKYP*, 16 June 1937). Table 2 shows that the importation of cotton yarn from Japan to Hong Kong increased during the years between 1932 and 1936. Though the trade declined after 1937, except for the year 1938, the importation of cotton textiles from Japan exceeded that from Britain.

Table 2: Import of Piece Goods and Textiles to Hong Kong, by Country, 1932-40%)

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Great Britain	38.6	23.9	15.5	13.6	12.6	12.7	15.3	8.1	7.6
Japan	7.0	9.3	17.3	30.3	42.6	36.3	11.8	20.6	13.6
North China	36.3	47.3	50.6	46.0	35.2	32.9	46.5	57.6	71.1
Others	18.1	19.5	16.6	10.1	9.6	18.1	26.4	13.7	7.7
Total imports (HK$ million)	107.32	75.08	66.55	52.67	76.84	79.83	99.20	142.15	

Sources: 1932-38: *Hong Kong Trade and Shipping Returns*, annual reports between 1932 and 1938: "imports and exports by main groups"; 1939-40: *Hong Kong Blue Book 1940/1941*, pp. S4-S12.

Where were the markets for manufactures exported from Hong Kong in the 1930s? British Malaya, along with other British territories such as Canada and the West Indies, as well as Britain itself, were the important markets (Miners, 2002: 62). Table 3 shows that British Malaya and, later, Britain itself, were the major markets for Hong Kong's apparel exports. About a quarter to a third of all exports were to these two Empire markets.

Table 3: Export of Hong Kong Apparel by Destination (%), 1932-40

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
British Malaya	20.0	21.1	21.2	17.5	14.4	14.4	15.6	13.7	9.8
United Kingdom	0.2	5.9	21.5	18.8	18.8	17.1	20.3	23.0	30.8
China	28.4	23.4	11.2	6.7	2.5	2.0	4.9	1.2	1.1
Others	51.4	49.7	46.1	57.1	64.3	66.5	59.3	62.10	58.3
Total exports (HK$ million)	12.78	8.49	8.49	6.22	12.59	19.68	20.56	28.52	41.44

Sources: 1932-28: *Hong Kong Trade and Shipping Returns*, annual reports between 1932 and 1938: "imports and exports by main groups": 1939-40: *Hong Kong Blue Book 1940/1941*, pp. S4-S12.

The growth of Hong Kong's manufacturers troubled industrial capitalists in Britain, who were particularly annoyed that the British Imperial Preference System did not protect their interests, but rather, benefited their Chinese counterparts in Hong Kong. Most Hong Kong manufacturers used Japanese materials or semi-finished products from China rather than materials from Britain. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce suggested to the Superintendent of Imports and Exports in Hong Kong that "frequent checks should be made in view of the fact that singlets and other goods made in Japan can be imported and sold here at a price below the cost of local manufacture, and if such goods can be re-exported as British, it entirely defeats the objective of Imperial Preference" (HKGCC, 1935: 26).

In 1933, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce pressed the Hong Kong colonial administration and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (the most important business association for British merchants in Hong Kong) to take a stricter stance on the eligibility for favourable tariffs. They wanted the proportion of production cost related to the British Empire (including materials, labour and factory overhead expenses) to be raised from 25% to 50% (HKGCC, 1933: 22-23). The change was repeatedly proposed in the following years, but until 1937 the 25% criteria for British Empire interests remained (HKGCC, 1935: 27).

In 1937, the British government decided to respond to the complaints of their homeland capitalists, even though solutions would hurt the development of Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong. A new regulation mandated that all industrial goods exported from Hong Kong were to be double checked by both the Superintendent of Imports and Exports and accountants. The latter were responsible for scrutinising whether or not a textile was manufactured from British raw materials and was "spun, woven, and finished in the British Empire" (HKGCC, 1937: 35-6). Only piece goods made of 100% British yarns could apply for the export license and enjoy the preferential tariff (*WKYP*, 26 June 1937).

The requirement for 100% British materials was an impossible target for most Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong; most could barely meet the 25% requirement (*NYSP*, 20 July 1937; *WKYP*, 24 June 1937; *WKYP*, 6 July 1937). Pressure from Britain, however, triumphed. From 7 July 1937, many British territories were ordered not to

import any piece goods from Hong Kong unless they met the 100% requirement. The enforcement of the new regulation was certain to devastate the manufacture of Chinese piece goods in Hong Kong (*WKYP*, 7 July 1937; *WKYP*, 8 July 1937; *WKYP*, 16 July 1937). Hong Kong Chinese manufacturers banded together and collectively requested that the British reconsider the policy, but it nonetheless came into force in November 1939 (HKGCC, 1939: 27).

Exports from Hong Kong to British Malaya slumped dramatically. While a Chinese industrial newsletter in Hong Kong attributed the downturn to poor quality – Chinese textile goods were "too rough and coarse, fell apart during cleaning, and their colors easily faded away" (*Industry and Chinese Products [ICP]*, 1, 7: 64), Britain's hostile trade policies were significant. As shown in Table 3, the exports of apparel from Hong Kong to British Malaya declined from 1938 to 1940.

The Making of Transnational "Economic Citizenship"

For Chinese business elites in Singapore, the Chinese nationalist turn from the late 1920s was associated with the accelerating Sino-Japanese business competition. In Hong Kong, however, most Chinese manufacturers benefited by their ability to obtain and use cheap Japanese materials. Their growing support of Chinese nationalism from the late 1920s was, in part, a response to the changing Chinese and British tariff systems. In both societies, business interests preoccupied with the attempt to tap Chinese markets – be they in China or Southeast Asia – constituted a shared concern.

In the late 1920s, the rapid growth in sales of Japanese products in Southeast Asia and the collapse of global rubber prices battered Singapore Chinese rubber manufactures. They managed to secure their market in China, but China's changing tariff system denied them this last foothold. From 1929, the nationalist rubber tycoon Tan Kah Kee filed a request for exemption from importation tariffs for overseas Chinese enterprises to China (*NYSP*, 21 March 1930). But until his company liquidated in 1934, none of his requests were approved (*NYSP*, 7 June 1934). Also, members of the CMUHK made similar requests to the Chinese government. None of these requests received a positive response. Singapore Chinese merchants supported the anti-Japanese boycotts. Hong Kong Chinese manufacturers turned to coordinate with factories in Canton to take advantage of the British Imperial Preference System. The strategies adopted by Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore under the changing economic circumstances are indicative of their search for transnational economic citizenship. The bourgeoisie asked for favourable tariff status as subjects of both China and Britain.

While the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore demonstrated their commitment to Chinese nationalism, their quest for transnational economic citizenship was thwarted by China. According to the criteria laid out by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a product could qualify as a Chinese national product if it fitted the following four criteria: Chinese capital, Chinese management, Chinese raw materials, and Chinese labour. Accordingly, if a product was produced by a Chinese-owned company (Chinese capital), managed by Chinese supervisors (Chinese management), used Chinese raw materials, and was processed by Chinese labour, it

was recognised as an authentic Chinese "national product" (SCCC, 1936: n. p.). The rules were simple and straightforward. But what constituted "Chinese" capital? Did products of Chinese factories set up in foreign countries such as colonial Hong Kong and Singapore qualify as Chinese national goods?

Chinese manufacturers in both Hong Kong and Singapore believed that their products should be regarded as Chinese national goods and thus eligible for protection in the China market. This perspective is presented in one advertisement in Singapore of the Tan Kah Kee & Co.:

> A student asked a teacher, "What does national economy mean?"
> The teacher replied, "National economy means people only purchase products made by their own nation. Are you wearing shoes made by Chinese?"
> All of the students said, "Sure! They are products of the Tan Kah Kee & Co."
> The teacher cheerfully said, "That is exactly what national economy means. All products of Tan Kah Kee & Co. are national goods" (*NYSP*, August-September 1930).

In Tan's advertisement, a Chinese product meant a product made by ethnic Chinese, whether they resided in mainland China or abroad, and whether holding Chinese or foreign citizenship; Tan himself was a naturalised British subject as were many business leaders in Singapore and Hong Kong. He argued that his products fully qualified as Chinese national products. First, he was an ethnic Chinese (Chinese capital). Second, although his Tan Kah Kee & Co. was a manufacturer set up in British Malaya, the enterprise created jobs for ethnic Chinese immigrants in the region (Chinese management and labour).[1] Moreover, a significant proportion of the profit of his enterprise was contributed to subsidise and support the budget of the schools he founded in his home county in China; Jimei School (founded in 1918) and Amoy University (1921).

The Chinese customs system, however, adhered to a rigorous definition of what constituted a Chinese national product. Only manufactures produced within the territorial boundaries of the Republic of China could qualify as Chinese national products. It is therefore clear that tariff protections – both China's tariff autonomy and the British Imperial Preference System – fixed the rules of the game involving transnational Chinese businesses in both Hong Kong and Singapore, including the trade between the two cities, between them and China, and between them and Britain. To respond to the territorially-bounded tariff systems, Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong and Singapore launched a National Products Movement (*guohuo yundong*).

In 1935, the First Grant Exhibition of Chinese National Products took place in Singapore on 5-13 October 1935 (SCCC, 1935). In the following year, these two associations cooperated in the Second Grant Exhibition of Chinese National Products in Singapore on 2-11 October 1936 (SCCC, 1936). The SCCC was the host of the trade fairs and, behind the scene, the tea merchant Lim Keng Lian was the principal organiser. Members of the CMUHK attended the two fairs. Through these experiences, many local agents in Singapore established business ties with Hong Kong firms (SCCC, 1935; SCCC, 1936).

The initial encounter between Hong Kong and Singapore merchants was embarrassing, however. According to Liang Qianwu, the manager of the general office of the CMUHK, at the trade fair in 1935, the delegates from Hong Kong first thought they were neglected in Singapore because no one talked to them. It turned out to be a

misunderstanding caused by poor communication between the Hong Kong participants and the Singapore organisers. The representatives from Hong Kong spoke only Cantonese, which was not understood by the organisers in Singapore (CMUHK, 1936: section d: 10-16).

The fairs in Singapore also drew many Chinese merchants from major cities in China, such as Tianjin, Shanghai, and Canton. Together they adopted the slogan "Chinese buy Chinese products." The slogan was, however, interpreted differently by merchants from China and those in Hong Kong and Singapore. Those from China were interested in expanding exports from China to Southeast Asia; those in Hong Kong and Singapore expected the Chinese government to protect their trade in China.

The Chinese Nationalist Government had promoted the "buy Chinese products" movement since 1928 (Pan, 1995: 32-53). The goal of the official propaganda was to motivate the trade of products made in China. The development of Chinese manufacturers in overseas societies was not their concern. This perspective was well presented in Chen Gongbo's article "My Plan to Develop the Nanyang (i.e., Southeast Asian) Trade," an article in the souvenir volume issued for the first nationalist trade fair organised by the SCCC in 1935 (SCCC, 1935: section j: 1-5). It illustrated the importance of persuading all Chinese in Southeast Asia to consume products made in China. Not a word was mentioned about how to facilitate the growth of ethnic Chinese manufacturers in overseas societies such as Hong Kong and Singapore. The lack of attention to that issue was purposeful, however, as Chen Gongbo was the Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Chinese Nationalist Government. The official agenda aimed at developing nationalist consciousness among Chinese in Southeast Asia so that they would support products imported from China.

Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong and Singapore were certainly disappointed at their exclusion from the official "buy Chinese" agenda. These merchants complained of the lukewarm attitude of the Chinese National Government towards overseas Chinese manufacturers. They criticized the failure of the Chinese government to take more positive and aggressive steps on their behalf, much less than what the Japanese government had done to protect its capitalists abroad (SCCC, 1935: section e: 1-3).

In this regard, these exhibitions lend weight to the notion of transnational Chinese economic citizenship, deviating from the Chinese official criteria of "Chinese products" as defined by territorially-bounded tariff systems. Chinese manufacturers set up in Western colonies and in China were treated equally in the exhibitions in Singapore, but the official discourses on Chinese national products excluded those manufactured in foreign territories from the category of Chinese national goods.

The happy union between Hong Kong and Singapore manufacturers was, however, short-lived. With the tightening of regulations on Hong Kong's exports under the British Imperial Preference System beginning in 1937, Hong Kong manufacturers turned their focus to the recovery of the China market. Their goal was facilitated by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in July 1937. The war brought an influx of refugees that provided an ample labour force for Hong Kong (Chan and Chan, 1941: n.p.). Even the number of industrial capitalists grew. Many of them were industrialists relocating from Shanghai.

It was estimated that about 700 Shanghai factories were located to Hong Kong (Chan and Chan, 1941: n.p.).

From 1940 onwards, the Chinese government finally paid attention to Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong and other overseas societies. On 26 October 1940, the Department of Economics of the Chinese Nationalist Government mandated that all Chinese manufacturers overseas must apply for "Chinese products" licences if their products were to be imported to China or were to be sold in overseas Chinese communities (*ICP*, 1, 1: 84; Lee, 1997: 338). For the first time, Chinese manufacturers located outside China's territory would have their products officially recognised as "Chinese" (*ICP*, 1, 5: 97; *ICP*, 1, 6: 113).

In the late 1930s, the British enacted a series of policies to curb Hong Kong's exports to British Malaya. In addition to the tightening regulation on the qualification for British preferential tariffs, after the British declared war with Germany in September 1939, exports from Hong Kong were discriminated against because Hong Kong was not part of the sterling bloc. Effective 18 November 1939, imports of many classes of goods from non-sterling countries to Singapore and British Malaya were restricted (HKGCC, 1939: 27). The scope of commodities being restricted, according to an ordinance published in the Straits Settlements Government Gazettes of 4 May 1940, included piece goods, sarongs, and apparel made of artificial silk. These had been important exports from Hong Kong to British Malaya (ICP, 1, 1: 79-81).

With the declining business connections between Hong Kong and Singapore, manufacturers from the two cities no longer cooperated with each other in organising nationalist trade fairs. Between 1938 and 1940, Chinese manufacturers in Hong Kong organised four exhibitions for Chinese products. Unlike the transnational networking in the Singapore fairs in the mid-1930s, most participants in the Hong Kong fairs were Hong Kong-based manufacturers (Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, 1964: 24). The only exception was the arrangement of a special exhibition section for Shanghai manufacturers in the fourth fair (held between 22 December 1940 and 2 January 1941) (*ICP*, 1, 2: 105-7). Throughout the four fairs, no trading agents from Singapore were invited.

Conclusion

This article departs from the literature that attributes the rise of Chinese nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore to either the use of ethnic consciousness or the mobilisation of political forces. I emphasise the economic motivations that provided solid foundations for the turn toward Chinese nationalism on the part of the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore from the late 1920s. In Singapore, nationalism was triggered, in part, by the advance of Japanese goods in Southeast Asia. The turn toward Chinese nationalism on the part of the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong was a response to the imposition of high tariffs in China and the enactment of the British Imperial Preference System.

In Singapore, the slogan of "Chinese buy Chinese goods" was used to justify the Chinese anti-Japanese boycotts. The same slogan was used by the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong to emphasise increased sales of Chinese goods, rather than an economic

boycott of Japanese goods. Japanese imported raw materials were used for Chinese manufacturing in Hong Kong. Intertwined with economic motivations, Chinese nationalist rhetoric was clearly defined differently by the Chinese bourgeoisies in Singapore and Hong Kong.

I also interpret the rise of Chinese bourgeois nationalist movements in the two British colonial cities as a quest for transnational economic citizenship. Chinese ethnic identity became an important asset in their negotiation for economic protection from the Chinese government, although their goods were manufactured in British territories, enjoyed favourable British tariffs, or were made of Japanese materials.

Last but not least, this historical analysis sheds light on the discussion of the contemporary revival of Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia in the context of the region's growing economic ties with China. Existing literature argues how the shared ethnic ties and cultural affinity facilitate the efforts of ethnic Chinese capitalists from Southeast Asia in reaping economic profits in booming China. This article reverses the causal relationship commonly imputed to ethnic ties and business practices. Chinese ethnic identity is not primordially associated with all Chinese, especially among those who have settled abroad and are enjoy the benefits of their foreign citizenship. Cultural and political mobilisations are not always effective in making one associate with one's "homeland." But an ethnic and national identity would appeal to people when the identity would lead to positive economic return.

The Chinese bourgeoisie from abroad emphasised and utilised their Chinese ethnic ties when their business connections when markets were encouraged in China. The global protectionism of the 1930s (manifested in such ways as China's tariff autonomy and the British Imperial Preference) motivated the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Singapore to embrace Chinese nationalism, and the nationalist commitment became an asset to negotiate for transnational economic citizenship. In short, the macro regional and global political-economic contexts, rather than cultural and ethnic consciousness, are the key to understanding the development of Chinese bourgeois nationalism in Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1930s, and perhaps again in the new millennium.

Notes:

1. The author would like to express gratitude to Mark Selden, Vivienne Wee, and two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on earlier versions of the article. Archival research received funds from Dissertation Year Fellowship, Binghamton University (2000-2001), Small Grant Program of the China and Inner Asia Council, Association for Asian Studies (2002), Fellowship Program of Doctoral Candidates in Humanities and Social Science, Academia Sinica, Taipei (2003) and the Small Grant Program of Urban China Research Networks of the State University of New York at Albany (2004). Acknowledgement also goes to Centre of Asian Studies, Hong Kong University, Southeast Asian Research Centre (SEARC), City University of Hong Kong, and Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, for hosting my dissertation research. This article was first presented at *Symposium I* (24-25 March 2004) on *China and Southeast Asia: Challenges, Opportunities and the Reconstruction of Southeast Asian Chinese Ethnic Capital*, co-organised by the Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Xiamen University, sponsored by The Japan Foundation.

2. To resonate with Bergére's (1986) concerns on urban Chinese nationalism, I use the term bourgeoisie to designate Chinese business elites in Hong Kong and Singapore. According to Sinn (1989) and Chung (1998), the Chinese bourgeoisie in Hong Kong were represented by officers of the Chinese General

Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong (CGCCHK) and the board of directors of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals.

3. Singapore became part of the Straits Settlements, which included Penang and Malacca on Malay Peninsula from 1826 to the Second World War.
4. In 1919, total exports from Japan to the Straits Settlements valued 29,844,374 yen. In 1927, the amount reached 36,658,000 yen. In 1928, the amount was 20,449,000 yen and soared to 63,320,000 yen in 1934 (*Nih_n Teik_ T_kei Nenkan* Vols 38-53).
5. A survey published in 1931 suggests that 40% of the population in British Malaya did not have the habit of wearing shoes. Compared to easily broken cloth shoes or expensive rubber shoes, rubber shoes became ordinary people's first pair of footwear (see *NKZ*, 17, 5: 47–52).
6. The Singapore Tea Merchants' Association changed its name to Singapore Tea Importer–Exporter Association after 1948.
7. For Lim Keng Lian's participation in the SCCC, see SCCC (1964: 174-176). For his business and life, see Sim (1950: 19-20), and *Xiamen Huaqiao zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui* (1991: 159). The year of Lim's death is taken from NA 531, the Singapore Tea Importer-Exporter Association: Minutes of Executive Committee meeting, 10 December 1968. Lim was about to chair the meeting had it not because of his sudden death.
8. To specify a particular date as the end of the General Canton-Hong Kong Strike and Boycott is difficult. Though a formal announcement of the end of the boycott was made in October 1926, the effectiveness of the boycott had declined against the backdrop of the coup by right-wing Nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-shek. The leftists lost power due to the coup on 20 March 1926, and a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Party on 15 May 1926. In April 1926, about 30,000 workers from Hong Kong still lingered in Canton. In June 1926, the Canton government decided to end the boycott against Hong Kong (Chesneaux, 1968: 306-18; Chan, 1975: 308-56; Tsai, 2001: 158-61).
9. The association changed its name to Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong after World War II.
10. This is supported by an official survey. Tan hired 4,088 employees in the beginning of 1929, and all of them were ethnic Chinese (see *Supplement to Straits Settlements Government Gazettes 1930*, Appendix F).

References:

Bergère, M. 1989, *The Golden Age of Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Originally published in 1986.

Brown, I. 1994, "British Merchant Community in Singapore," in S. Shinya and M. Guerrero (eds), *International Commercial Rivalry in Southeast Asia in the Interwar Period*, New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies, pp. 111-32.

Chan, M. 1975, *Labor and Empire: The Chinese Labor Movement in the Canton Delta, 1895-1927*, Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University.

Chan, L.K. 1999, *From Nothing to Nothing: The Chinese Communist Movement and Hong Kong, 1921-1936*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Chan, T. and M. Chan (eds), 1941, *Bainian shangye* [A Century of Commerce], Hong Kong: Guangming wenhua shiye gongsi.

Chen, S. 1999, *Zhongguo jindai haiguan shi: Minguo bufen* [History of Modern Chinese Maritime Customs, Section on the Era of Republican China], Beijing: Renmin chubanshe.

Chesneaux, J. 1968, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong (CGCCHK) 1932, *Annual Report*, Hong Kong: CGCCHK.

Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong 1964, *Xianggang Zhonghua changshang lianhehui xinsha kaimu qingdian tekan* [Souvenir Issue for the Opening Ceremony of the Newly Completed Chinese Manufacturers' Union Building, Hong Kong], Hong Kong: Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong.

Chinese Manufacturers' Union, Hong Kong (CMUHK) 1936, *Xianggang zhonghua changshang chupin zhinan* [Directory of Chinese Manufacturers' Union, Hong Kong], Hong Kong: Chinese Manufacturers'

Association of Hong Kong.
Chung, P. 1998, *Chinese Business Groups in Hong Kong and Political Change in South China, 1900-25*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
Cochran, S. 1980, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890–1930*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Colonial Office (CO) 1926a, "Foreign Office to Secretary of State: Chinese Special Custom Tariff Conference," 129/495, 6 January.
Colonial Office (CO) 1926b, "FO Running Memo: Part VIII," 129/496, 31 May.
Colonial Office (CO) 1932a, "Anti-Japanese Riots at Hong Kong," 129/539/6, 25 February.
Colonial Office (CO) 1932b, "Memorandum: Boycott of Japanese Goods by Chinese in Malaya," H. M. Trade Commission at Singapore to the Comptroller-General, Department of Overseas Trade, London, 273/583/92110, 20 October.
Deng, Z. 1957, *Zhongguo zhigong yundong jianshi, 1919-1926* (A brief history of Chinese industrial labor movements, 1919-1926), Beijing: Renmin chubanshe. Originally published in 1949.
Hamilton, G. (ed.), 1991, *Business Networks and Economic Development in East and Southeast Asia*, Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, Hong Kong University.
Hong Kong Blue Book for the Year 1939, 1940/1941, Hong Kong: Government Printer.
Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (HKGCC) 1932, 1933, 1935, 1937, 1939, *Annual Report*, Hong Kong: HKGCC.
Hong Kong Trade and Shipping Returns, annual reports, 1932-38, Hong Kong: Government Printer.
Howe, C. 1996, *The Origins of Japanese Trade Supremacy: Development and Technology in Asia from 1540 to the Pacific War*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Hsing, Y. 1998, *Making Capitalism in China: The Taiwan Connection*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Industry and Chinese Products (ICP), Vol. 1-6 (January-June 1941), Hong Kong: Zhongguo guohuo shiye fuwushe.
Kawarabayashi N. 2000, "Taiwan chagy_ no rekishi teki tenkai: nihon shokuminchi-ki ni okeru taigai b_eki katsud_" [A history of the tea industry development in Taiwan: its foreign trade during Japanese colonial period], Ph.D. thesis, City University of Osaka.
Kenley, D. 2003, *New Culture in a New World: The May Fourth Movement and the Chinese Diaspora in Singapore, 1919–1932*, New York: Routledge.
Koo, S. 1982, *Tariff and the Development of the Cotton Industry in China*, New York: Garland Publication.
Lee, Y. 1997, *Huaqiao zhengce yu haiwai minzu zhuyi, 1912-1949* (Policies on overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese nationalism), Taipei: Guoshi guan.
Liang Qianwu (ed.), 1936, *Xianggang Zhonghua changshang chupin zhinan* [Directory of products of the Chinese Manufacturers' Union, Hong Kong], Hong Kong: Chinese Manufacturers' Union.
Lin, M. 2001, "Overseas Chinese Merchants and Multiple Nationality: A Means for Reducing Commercial Risk (1895-1935)," *Modern Asian Studies* 35, 4, pp. 985-1009.
Liu, H. 2000, "The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Institutionalisation of Chinese Business Networks in Asia," *Lishi yanjiu*, 263, pp. 106-18.
Lu, Q. and Q. Ta 1997, *Sheng Gang da bagong shi* [History of the Great Canton-Hong Kong Strike and Boycott], Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe.
Miners, N. 1994, "From Nationalist Confrontation to Regional Collaboration: China-Hong Kong-Britain, 1926-41," in M.K. Chan (ed.), *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong between China and Britain, 1842-1992*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 59-70.
Miners, N. 2002, "Industrial Development in the Colonial Empire and the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa 1932," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 30, 2, pp. 53-76.
NA 531, the Singapore Tea Importer–Exporter Association: Minutes of Annual General Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings, 1928-1941, Singapore: National Archives, Singapore.
Nan Yang Siang Pau (NYSP), September 1923-March 1939, Singapore: Nanyang shang bao she.
Nany_ Ky_kai Zasshi (NKZ), Vol. 4-20 (1918-1934), Tokyo: Nany_ Ky_kai.
Nettai sangy_ chosa-kai: chagy_ ni kansuru ch_sa-sho [Surveys of Tropical Products: Report on Tea and Its Associated Industries], 1935, Taipei: Taiwan S_tokufu shokusan-ky_ tokusan-ka.
Nih_n Teik_ T_kei Nenkan [Annual Statistics of the Japanese Empire], Vol. 38–53, compiled by Naikaku

T_kei-kyoku between 1919 and 1934, Tokyo: T_y_ Shorin, (reprint in 1996).
Ong, A. 1999, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, Durham: Duke University Press.
Pan, J. (ed.), 1995, *Zhongguo jindai guohuo yundong* [Buy Chinese Products Movement in Modern China], Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe.
Post, P. 1995, "Chinese Business Networks and Japanese Capital in South East Asia, 1880-1940," in R. Brown (ed.), *Chinese Business Enterprise in Asia*, London: Routledge, pp. 154-76.
Purcell, V. 1966, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, London: Oxford University Press. Originally published in 1951.
Redding, G. 1990, *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*, New York: W. de Gruyter.
Sim, V. (ed.), 1950, *Biographies of Prominent Chinese in Singapore*, Singapore: Nan Kok Publication Company.
Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC) 1935, *Xinjiapo Zhonghua zongshanghui guohuo kuoda zhanlan tuixiao dahui tekan* [Souvenir Issue for the Grand Exhibition of Chinese National Products Organised by the SCCC], Singapore: SCCC.
SCCC 1936, *Xinjiapo Zhonghua zongshanghui dierjie guohuo zhanlan tuixiao dahui tekan* [Souvenir issue for the Second Exhibition of Chinese National Products Organised by the SCCC], Singapore: SCCC.
SCCC 1964, *Souvenir Issue of the Opening Ceremony of the Newly Completed Chinese Chamber of Commerce Building*, Singapore: SCCC.
Sinn, E. 1989, *Power and Charity: The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
Song, O. 1984, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, Singapore: Oxford University Press. Originally published in 1923.
Supplement to Straits Settlements Government Gazettes 1919: Annual Report on the Straits Settlements Police Force and the State of Crime for the Year 1919, Singapore: the Straits Settlements Government Printing Office.
Supplement to Straits Settlements Government Gazettes 1930: Annual Report of the Labor Department for the Year 1929, Singapore: the Straits Settlements Government Printing Office.
Tsai, J. 2001, *The Hong Kong People's History of Hong Kong, 1841-1945*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
Tsin, M. 1999, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China: Canton, 1900–1927*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Editorial Board 1961, *Development of the Tung Wah Hospitals 1870–1960*, Hong Kong: Tung Wah Group of Hospitals.
Wah Kiu Yat Po (WKYP), 1925-1940, Hong Kong: Huaqiao ribao Co. Ltd.
Wat Tsz Yat Po (WTYP), 1919-1940, Hong Kong: Huazi ribao Co. Ltd.
Wang, G. 1981, *Community and Nation: Essays on Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, Singapore: Heinemann Asia.
Williams, L. 1960, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916*, Glencoe: Free Press.
Wong, L. 1978, "Singapore: Its Growth as an Entrepôt, 1819-1941," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 9, 1, pp. 50-84.
Wu, J. and H. Fan 1937, *Zhongguo chaye wenti* [The Problems of the Chinese Tea Industry], Shanghai: The Commercial Press.
Xiamen huaqiao zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (ed.), 1991, *Xiamen huaqiao zhi* [History of Overseas Chinese from Xiamen], Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe.
Yao, N., et al. 1940, *Xingzhou shinian* [Ten Years in Singapore], Singapore: Xingzhou ribao chubanshe.
Yen C. 1976, *The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution, with Special Reference to Singapore and Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
Yong, C. and R. McKenna 1990, *The Kuomingtang Movement in British Malaya, 1912-1949*, Singapore: Singapore University Press.
Yong, C. 1987, *Tan Kah Kee: The Making of an Overseas Chinese Legend*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
Yong, C. 1992, *Chinese Leadership and Power in Colonial Singapore*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.