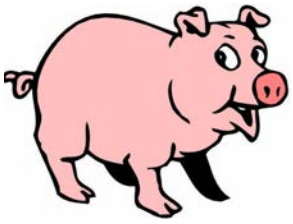
CBA NEWS
June 2007



Year of the Pig

CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

CBA NEWS

18 TRINIDAD TERRACE IS RETURNED TO THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

By 'purported' resolution of July 8, 1993, Mr Charles Moo, a past president of the Chinese Benevolent Association and Chairman/Trustee of the Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society (SYSBS), duly authorized himself to give away all the assets of the said Society, including 18 Trinidad Terrace, to the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica.

These assets represent contributions of earlier immigrants to the earlier Chung San Beach at 104-106 Windward Road (Sun Yat Sen Recreation Centre), which property was later acquired by the UDC and part proceeds used to purchase 18 Trinidad Terrace.

In January 2007, the CBA undertook to re-examine the 'legality' of this injustice to the Chinese community and pledged $500,000 towards legal fees. It was noted that previous attempts since 2000, using moral suasion only, did not succeed and should not be pursued as a course of action.

It was generally felt that Mr. Charles Moo had acted *ultra vires* as there was no Special General Meeting of SYBS called to pass a resolution to effectively give away assets of the Chinese community.

As the Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society remained dormant and inactive for a while but was never wound up or dissolved under the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act, it was determined that SYSBS must be resuscitated. This was to be undertaken by at least 21 members of the CBA, acting on behalf of the Chinese community.

In accordance with the Amended Rules of the SYSBS of 1996, a meeting was convened by way of notice in the *Daily Gleaner* on April 19, 2007 and sent to all members of the Society, who are on file with the Department of Cooperative and Friendly Societies, and to 23 newly ac-

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

From the Editor	2
Dr Sun Yat Sen	3
Downtown Merchants	4
Tsung Tsin Assoc of Ontario	6
Letter from our girl in Florida	7
Colonos Asiaticos in Cuba	10
Dr Evelyn Hu-DeHart	12

Be there!

The CBA Badminton Tournament takes place June 21-24 and June 29-July 1 at the CBA Centre

From the Editor

Since our last newsletter of March 2007, a few events have taken place. CBA President Wilson Look Kin received donation of 14 cases of Chinese books from the Embassy of the PROC. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador Chen Jinhua. We certainly appreciate this valuable contribution of literary works for our library.

Webmaster of chinesejamaican.com Terry Kong (Vancouver) and his brother Laddie Kong (Miami) paid us a brief visit in late March to meet and greet CBA executives and friends. They were in Jamaica for the funeral of their Mom, Jean Kong – late widow of Arthur Kong.

Crime has been a sore point in Jamaica and because of recent break-ins in downtown shops within a short time span, the CBA organized a meeting of downtown Chinese merchants to discuss with the Police how to deal with the matter. Not too long after, the newspapers carried reports of downtown merchants' treatment of workers. Since then, meetings have been held to address those issues.

On Good Friday, Outreach Chairperson Sandy Chung headed a small group who did the Easter Treat rounds, visiting the Chinese Home for the Aged and the Mustard Seed Communities, where we shared bun and cheese and good cheer. Karen Hoo was instrumental in making the necessary arrangements and in obtaining donations of buns from several local bakeries.

President Wilson Look Kin along with David Chang and Robert Lee visited Toronto over the Easter weekend, when a CBA presentation was made to the Tsung Tsin Association of Ontario on the Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery/Gah San and the matter of 18 Trinidad Terrace/Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society. This was organized by Carol Wong and Lipton Wong of TTA. About 60 persons attended the open forum, many of whom were interested in locating and repairing the graves of their loved ones. David Chang provided assistance that was much appreciated.

CBA Gah San was held on April 15 and attracted a good turnout as usual without incident of crime - the fear of many persons. We received significant donations towards completion of Phase 1 of the Cemetery Restoration Project on that occasion.

CBA has achieved success in resuscitating Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society and in taking possession of 18 Trinidad Terrace on behalf of the Chinese community. Indeed, this is a remarkable achievement.

To inform ourselves about the man for whom this Society was named, Wilson Look Kin has prepared a brief summary of the life and work of Dr Sun Yat Sen, now revered as the Father of the Revolution in China.

- Phyllis Kong, Editor

18 Trinidad Terrace is returned

(Continued from page 1)

cepted members of the SYSBS.

The following were elected to the Committee of Management: Chairman – Wilson Look Kin; Vice Chairman – David Chang; Treasurer – Ventry Foo; Secretary – Marcia Harford; three Trustees – James Lowe, Richard Tenn, Roger Chang.

Following notification to the Registrar of Cooperative and Friendly Societies of the meeting and the elected officers, the Executive of SYSBS laid claim to certain inactive accounts at Scotia Bank totalling $5.4 million as being the legal entitlement of SYSBS, precluding any other claimant to these funds, and excluding all previous signatories to the account.

Simultaneously, a caveat was filed in the name of the Chairman of SYSBS to protect the interest of the Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society, which is the registered owner of the property located at 18 Trinidad Terrace. We have also requested a full accounting of the known and unknown assets belonging to the SYSBC.

All tenants occupying 18 Trinidad Terrace have been advised that SYSBS has taken possession of the building and back rentals are being received by SYSBS, whose registered office is located at CBA Centre, 176 Old Hope Road.

Let this be a salutary lesson to members that we must be vigilant to protect and to defend the inherited assets of our forefathers and that any proceeds be applied to worthwhile projects as befits the Chinese community operating under the aegis of the CBA.

- Wilson Look Kin

Transition

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Dr. Victor Chen See on May 19 at home in Philadelphia, PA. after a long illness. He was the recipient of the CBA 2007 Award for Excellence earlier this year, and had been a volunteer at the CBA Dental Clinic at 1 North Street for a number of years. A Memorial Mass will be held on June 9 at 3:00 p.m. at Sts. Peter & Paul Church.

We also regret to inform you that Mr. Jit Chong Hoo passed away on April 9. Mr. Hoo was a resident at the Chinese Home for the Aged.

Mr. Victor (Sin Foh) Li died suddenly on April 6. Sin Foh was a member of the CBA and was well known in the Chinese community.

Our sincere condolences to the families of those who have passed.

Dr. Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925)

By Wilson Look Kin

In China, he is seen as a Chinese nationalist and socialist, and is highly regarded as the Forerunner of the Revolution

In the history of modern China, he is regarded as the Father of the Revolution and Father of the Republic and is credited with leading the insurrection in the overthrow of the Qing (Manchu) dynasty of feudal rule by the Emperor. He is equally revered by the Nationalists of the Kuomintang party and the Communist party as represented by the People's Republic of China.

Sun Yat Sen was born in Chung San district of Guangdong province on November 12, 1866 and migrated at age 13 to Hawaii where he studied, and later went to Hong Kong where he qualified as a Physician.

Sun was not the typical westernized Chinese who sought a professional life, but was imbued with a socialist revolutionary spirit and was determined to change the Imperialism and Colonialism that existed in China.

In 1894, China was sliding into chaos as Japan had defeated a weak China and Taiwan was ceded as a Japanese Colony. It must be appreciated that, subsequent to the first Opium war in 1854, China ceded Hong Kong to Britain and, in successive humiliating treaties, Macao to Portugal, and other parts of China to every European nation, the Americans, Russia and Japan. This also accelerated the migration of Chinese worldwide as 'coolie' or slave labour, ostensibly, to seek a better life

Sun returned to Hawaii where he formed an underground secret society dedicated to ensuring that China was governed by its own people to the benefit of its 1.3 billion population. He recognized that his opposing enemies were both the ruling Manchu dynasty and the other occupying Colonial powers, mainly Britain. He also sought the support of overseas Chinese to assist his revolutionary efforts.

He formulated the "Three Principles of the People", which were nationalism, democracy and socialism. He recognised that the government of China must be by the Chinese people and that land must be nationalized and, whilst people would be deprived of the right to own land, they would retain rights over the land by permission of the State.

In 1911, Sun succeeded in overthrowing the Manchu dynasty and was elected its first provisional President, and the infant Emperor Pu Yi was placed in exile.

Sun abdicated power to the warlord Yuan Shi Kai to avoid civil war, which led to even greater fragmentation instead.

Sun returned to China in 1917 as head of the Kuomintang party and formed a strategic alliance with the newly founded Communist party in 1919.

The then principal of the Whampoa Military Academy was Chiang Kai Shek and its military director was a young Mao Tse Tung.

In 1918, the first Foreign Minister of China was Eugene Chen from Trinidad and known in China as Chen Yu Jen, the vitriolic writer of English who defended the rights of the Chinese in the very same British courts of Hong Kong.

Sun Yat Sen died in 1925 of cancer of the liver and a memorial in his honour was established by the Kuomintang in Guangzhou (Canton). His dream of a unified republican

(Continued on page 9)

Addressing issues raised in newspapers about downtown Chinese merchants' treatment of workers

Summary of meeting held at CBA Center May 16, 2007
- by Dalton Yap, Chairperson

The meeting started at 7:45 p.m. with over 100 people from the downtown business community in attendance. The attendees were all aware of the issues because they have read the translated version of a newspaper item, which appeared in **The Observer** of 14th May 2007.

The meeting started by outlining the background of the article and its negative effect on the image of the Chinese in general and the downtown Chinese merchants in particular. Questions were raised about the veracity of the research paper because of the small sample size of women interviewed while the total number of workers downtown was reported to be 600 only. The meeting was asked to focus on the issues raised and try to understand them and begin the process of taking corrective actions.

Issues raised in the article were itemized and recommendations were presented with a Q & A session following each item;

1) Working Hours, Minimum Wage and Overtime Pay

The present minimum wage of $3,200 per week or $80 per hour is applicable for the 40-hour per week situation. Overtime would have to be calculated based on time and a half or $120 per hour.

Statutory deductions must be made before salary payment and these deductions must be paid over to the Tax Collectors by the 14th of each month.

Employers were asked to conduct salary reviews based on performance evaluation and avoid salary based on minimum wage for all categories of workers.

2) Lunch Time

45-minutes must be set aside for a worker for break. The worker can use it for lunch or whatever he/she chooses.

The most contentious point was whether the 45-minute break is included in the 8-hour working period or falls outside of those hours.

3) Maternity Leave

Very animated discussions took place on this topic. Important points to note were the 8 weeks maternity leave with pay and a further 4 weeks without pay.

A worker is entitled to maternity leave after 52 weeks of employment counting from the first day of employment, not after probation.

An employer cannot dismiss a worker when she becomes pregnant. This is illegal.

4) Holiday/Vacation Leave

A staff is entitled to holiday/vacation leave after 110 working days of employment and 1 day per 22 working days, which works out to be 14 days or 2 weeks.

5) Sick Leave

Staff is entitled to two weeks sick leave per year after 52 weeks of employment.

6) Hygiene – Cleaning of Toilet

Employers should set up a roster for members of staff to clean the toilet on a daily basis. This applies to sweeping and maintaining cleanliness of the work environment. All prospective employees should be told about these work requirements.

7) Dismissal Practice

During the probationary period of 90 days, a worker can be dismissed without cause or prior notice.

Two weeks pay in lieu of notice must be paid to a dismissed worker.

8) Proper Record Keeping and Management

Business operators were enjoined to keep proper recording of staff records, leave requests, payroll receipts, etc. to avoid unnecessary fallouts after the dismissal of a staff.

The attendees were told to treat their staff with fairness and to motivate them "not by stick but by carrot" and to ensure that their businesses operate within the laws of Jamaica.

A copy of a booklet by the JEF, which gives a summary of the labour laws of Jamaica, will be translated to Chinese and will be made available to the Chinese Community.

Action Items

Clarify the issue about the 45 minutes break and communicate to the downtown merchants by flyers.

Translate the latest version of the JEF booklet

Organize workshops to teach Chinese business operators aspects of running a business pertaining to labour laws.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Dealing with upsurge of break-in robberies in downtown Kingston

CBA facilitates meeting of downtown merchants
- by Dalton Yap

A meeting of downtown merchants was held at the CBA Centre on March 28, 2007, to deal with an upsurge of break-in robberies in downtown Kingston. In a short span of two weeks, over ten shops were robbed by break-ins either by digging through the walls or the roof. Inspector Franklyn Downer of the Kingston Central Division was invited and Messrs John Azar and Tony Gentles of King Alarm Systems were also asked to attend the meeting with a presentation on their security solutions.

Inspector Downer started out by quoting crime statistics, comparing same periods between 2006 and 2007, showing that there is a general reduction of crimes in Kingston Central especially in armed robberies, which experienced a huge reduction from 24 to 8. He noted, however, that break-ins were on a dramatic rise to almost three-fold and shared his concerns with the business community downtown on this unpleasant trend.

He then outlined what the Police have been doing to counter this upsurge:

1) Have regular patrols between the hours of 8:00 pm and 6:00 am;

2) Two additional patrol cars have been put in place;

3) and a third was being organized to carry out more spot checks

He reported that as a result of the increased efforts, five persons were arrested from the Matthew Lane area and were now waiting for identification parade. He then fielded questions from members of the downtown merchants and ended his presentation by urging merchants to cooperate with the Police and report persons who tried to sell them goods of suspicious origin. He elaborated on the need to continue to report any incident of robberies and he gave his contact numbers to the members. He also asked merchants to install alarm systems as one way to become proactive in the effort to deal with the recent upsurge in break-in activities.

Mr. John Azar then did a presentation on burglar alarm system for detection of break-ins and the procedure to work with a contracted customer in response to an intrusion alarm. His presentation was well received as evidenced by the number of questions raised and merchants who were ready to sign up.

Recently, Inspector Downer was contacted and he indicated that there was a drastic reduction of break-ins after the meeting. He attributed this to the implementation of the measures by the Police, the alarm systems that were put in place and the cooperation of the merchants. He was pleased with the outcome so far but cautioned the downtown merchants that they must continue to be vigilant and fully cooperate with the Police in the fight against crime.

Scenes at CBA Gah San Sunday April 15, 2007 at the Chinese Cemetery

Excerpts from TTA Appeal

By Carol Wong, TTA - Cultural & Social Committee

"My ancestors are the foundation on what I am. I stand on the shoulders of their efforts and with my own, will contribute to the future generations of my family. I still honour my ancestors and those of my people. In doing so, I ensure that they would never be forgotten, nor will their contribution and achievements be lost."

- Liang Jiemin

On April 02, 1904, eleven and a half acres of land were purchased to be developed as a Chinese Cemetery under the care of the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) already in existence in Jamaica. Now, after 50 years since the last major repair project was completed in 1957, the CBA, as guardian, is now appealing to our Chinese community not to let this historical place of rest for our ancestors and loved ones fall into further disrepair.

Over the past years in our absence, the financial burden and labour have been borne by the CBA and the generosity of those left behind, for all of us; and now financial help is needed for the restoration work already in progress to continue.

In the past, there was no provision made for this and we, as benefactors of the migration, hardships, and sacrifices of our pioneering ancestors in search of a better life, **must** feel an obligation and ought to assist the dedicated volunteers of the CBA to do this task for us now living overseas, having left our roots at the Chinese Cemetery in Jamaica.

With Mr. David Chang's book of records and his laptop computer, some of us were able to locate our ancestors' graves and arranged to have them repaired and cleaned for *Gah San* (Chinese Memorial Ceremony to pay homage to our ancestors held during Ching Ming Festival). Maps of the cemetery, photographs of the construction work in progress and architectural drawings of Phase I were on display.

Whether we have loved ones buried at the Chinese Cemetery in Jamaica, or not, we owe it to our family and ourselves to carry on the Chinese tradition of ancestral worship and shoulder our familial responsibilities.

We should all give financial assistance to help the CBA preserve and revere this past of our Hakka and Jamaican history like they do in Panama, Cuba and other parts of the world where the Chinese had settled.

Please make a contribution of any sum today payable to the "Chinese Benevolent Association" and mail to Carol Wong, Tsung Tsin Association of Ontario, 3880 Midland Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1V-4S8.

TTA NEWS

"Younger Generation" on board

The "younger generation" of Jamaican Chinese in Toronto have made great strides and were recently elected to the Management and Supervisory Boards of Tsung Tsin Association of Ontario, which is a world-wide Hakka association. As a result, meetings are now conducted in both English and Hakka dialect.

The "younger generation" are serving on both Boards for the 12th Term of Office at TTA. Each term is for two calendar years, which makes TTA in its 24th year of operation. Elections are held during the AGM in the month of January.

The "younger generation" are: Carol Wong (2nd Vice President), Lipton Wong (3rd Vice President), Sonny Chin-Fook (Treasurer), Norman Hew-Shue, Clive Yap Sam, Patrick Lee, Arthur Yap, Rudy Chen, Basil Lee, Minnie Chen, Ella Chong, Eustace "Tassy" Lyn, Errol Williams, Cecil Hugh Sam, Sadie Wong, Trevor Wong, Mandison Chin, Aston Wong.

Shui Mein Night

Cantonese or Malay-Chinese

Served from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday July 21, 2007 at CBA Centre

Prizes and Surprises!

Contribution: $500

Call: CBA 977-3059 or Robert Lee
926-3540 (office) 813-7088 (cell)
927-4269 (home)

Proceeds in aid of Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery

Letter from Fay Chang-Allen — our girl in Florida

Waking up at 5:30 a.m. to rush down to Miami Dade College for the Chinese Cultural Foundation's New Year Festival on February 25th was no fun, neither was rushing to get our complimentary "Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery" booth ready by 10:30 a.m.

Both Winnie Devensky (nee Chung) and I have been doing this for the past four years. Winnie knows every Jamaican Chinese, so she goes around and gently leads them to our booth where we both do our "begging" for contributions for the restoration.

This year was extra special, for not only did my husband donate a 42"x32" banner with one of David Chang's pictures in the background, we had sixteen 8"x10" photos of the "before" and "starting of" the restoration of our Chinese Cemetery, and Clifton Yap's artistic rendition of the Cemetery. We attracted a lot of people to whom we gave pledge/contribution forms, and they wrote in their names, addresses, telephone numbers, plus e-mail addresses by which to contact them. We had 39 people signing, about half of whom were asking to locate their loved ones' graves.

This year we were honoured to have CBA President, Mr. Wilson Look Kin and his wife, Delores, Mr. Clifton Yap and his charming and persuasive wife, Maria, who joined Winnie and me in showing the pictures and Clifton's artistic rendition of the Cemetery. Last but not least, we had the Chairman of our Chinese Cemetery Restoration Committee and Project Manager, Mr. Robert Lee, with us.

Rev. Fr. Easton Lee and his family shared our table, and he donated all he made from sale of his books to the Cemetery Fund. Thank you, Fr. Lee.

It was a sunny, cool day. We were all one big happy family, and I must say that having Messrs. Look Kin, Yap, and Lee made our booth look "legitimate". Maybe next time Mr. and Mrs. David Chang will grace our booth with their presence.

People contributed more at this festival and we are still receiving contributions, as I have been sending out "friendly reminders". David Chang has been busy checking the cemetery records for the people who asked to locate their loved ones.

Robert Lee's decision to start the restoration project was a wise one as, not only is the cemetery being restored, it has made our Chinese people remember their loved ones.

We did not disgrace ourselves, as we were asked to "come back" next year.

I heard Gah San had a good turn out. I was there early with my brothers and their children to pay respects to our loved ones, but had to leave as I was returning to the U.S. that afternoon. We did not raise just a little money there. Mr. George Chong Sang of Morant Bay gave a large sum of money at the cemetery and so did several other generous donors.

CBA Easter Treat

Outreach has always been a very dear project to Karen Hoo and, even though she no longer sits on the Executive Board of the CBA, she made certain to put in place the necessary arrangements for the continuation of the annual CBA Easter Treat. Outreach Chairperson 2007 Sandy Chung was glad to receive such able assistance to make her task that much easier.

A small group of us met at CBA Centre on the morning of April 6 as we started our journey, reaching out to the less fortunate and providing Easter cheer with bun and cheese. Our first stop was at the Chinese Home for the Aged, where four of our senior citizens resided, including Mr. Jit Chong Hoo who, sadly, passed away on April 9. Mr. Hoo had recently had surgery and couldn't participate in the bun and cheese party with us. Up to maybe five years ago, there were seven residents at the home and that number has dwindled with the passing of our senior citizens who once led productive lives in a country foreign to their ancestry and culture.

Our focus this year was on the Mustard Seed Communities. We visited three of their homes: Mary's Child, a home for teenage mothers where academic instructions, counselling and skills training are provided, along with care for the young mothers and their babies for up to a year in residence; Martha's House, which houses young orphans with HIV/AIDS and where managed care is provided; and My Father's House, a home for abandoned children with serious physical and mental disabilities.

The visit to these homes was a moving and humbling experience for those of us who had never seen persons with afflictions such as Downs Syndrome, Hydrocephalus, Cerebral Palsy and Muscular Dystrophy. Yet, the children seemed happy and were clean. The homes appeared to be well-kept and properly managed.

On behalf of the CBA, Sandy Chung presented a cheque donation to Mustard Seed Communities and Easter treats for their other home in St. Catherine, Jerusalem, a home for young adults with physical and mental disabilities.

We take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this treat in any way, including Consolidated Bakeries Ja Ltd (Purity), Prestige Bakery; Jack's Bakery, and National Baking Co Ltd.

Cemetery Restoration Phase I Completed

The erection of the main gate at the distinctive Chinese entranceway marks the completion of Phase 1 of the Chinese Cemetery Restoration project.

This phase consisted of the total reconstruction of the front wall with brick facade extending for over 100 ft. along Waltham Park Road and the new entranceway.

On Labour Day May 23, the Restoration Committee headed by Fay Chang-Allen planted several Manila palm trees to symbolically mark this achievement.

This reconstruction has cost us $7.5 million to date and was achieved through generous donations from our Jamaican Chinese communities in Florida, Toronto, Jamaica, and the CBA.

The greater task of reconstruction of the entire perimeter wall surrounding the 11.5-acre cemetery represents the second phase and will cost $6 million. It is to be completed before the start of the Cemetery's Centenary in 2008.

We are now appealing to the Chinese community to donate generously in order to achieve completion of this next phase.

Dr. Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925)

(Continued from page 3)

China became a reality with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

His testament reads:

"For 40 years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people's revolution with but one end in view: the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during these 40 years have convinced me that, to attain this goal, we must bring about an awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in common struggle with those peoples of the world who treat us as equals.

The Revolution is not yet finished. Let our comrades follow my Plans for National Reconstruction, Fundamentals of National Reconstruction, Three People's Principles and make every effort to carry them out. Above all, my recent declaration in favour of holding a National Congress of the People of China and abolishing the unequal treaties should be carried into effect as soon as possible."

BRING YOUR DUES UP TO DATE

The CBA is your community association and your membership dues help to defray expenses. Call 977-3059 for information on the amount outstanding.

Colonos Asiaticos in Cuba

Excerpt from **Coolies and Shopkeepers: Chinese Immigrants and their Descendants in the Caribbean**

By Evelyn Hu-Dehart

By the middle of the 19th century, Cuba had become the world's leading sugar producer; slave uprisings and political turmoil in the rest of the Caribbean had severely weakened her British and French competitors. While significantly mechanized, sugar was still very much a labour-intensive enterprise. The Cuban planter class epitomized by men such as Julian Zulueta, who was landowner (*hacendado*), slave owner (*esclavista*) and slave trader (*negrero*) all in one, reigned supreme – their business interests driving much of the island's policies. He would soon add another to his long list of unofficial titles: *chinero* or Chinese coolie trader.

In the mid-1840s, due to the British embargo on the slave trade and pressures to abolish slavery as a labour system all across the Americas, Cuban planters experienced a critical shortage of labour while the demand for sugar continued to rise. Inspired by the British example as well as their own familiarity with Chinese workers in their Philippines colony, Spaniards, too, turned to Asia for supplementary labour – in their case, identifying China as a vast labour reserve.

On June 3, 1847, the Spanish ship *Oquendo* docked in Havana with 206 Chinese on board, after 131 gruelling days on the high seas around the Cape of Good Hope; nine days later, the *Duke of Argyle* arrived with a second human cargo of 365 Chinese. All of them were consigned to the infelicitously named *Comision de Poblacion* Blanca (originally charged with promoting European immigration to Cuba) of the *Real Junta de Fomento y Colonizacion* (Development and Colonization), presided by none other than planter Zulueta. As was the established practice with the sale of slaves, the Chinese were distributed in lots of ten to some of the island's most prominent planters and one railroad company. After a shaky start in the British-controlled treaty port of Amoy on the South China coast, the Cubans moved their operations to the more pliable Portuguese colony of Macao in 1853. From that date until the cessation of *"la trata amarilla"* in 1874, there were yearly shipments of Chinese contract labourers officially known as *"colonos asiaticos"* but commonly called *"culies"* (coolies). In total, 124,813 coolies landed in Cuba with probably 140,000 or so actually embarked in Asia, the difference accounted for by the high mortality rate en route.

As the African slave trade wound down, ending with the last shipments in 1865 and 1866 of just 145 and 1,443 slaves, the size of coolie imports rose correspondingly, reaching the high marks of 12,391 and 14,263 in 1866 and 1867, as if immediately making up for the sharp drop in new slaves. The most intense period were the last nine years of this 27 year trade: from 1865 to the last shipment in 1874, 64,500 coolies or over 50 percent of the total volume entered Cuba. During this time, sugar production climbed steadily, reaching a high of 768,672 metric tons in 1874. Clearly then, Chinese coolies constituted the sources of labour replenishment, delaying the economic crisis that would have surely set in with the end of the slave trade. Without Chinese labour, it could not have continued to produce aggressively to supply a robust world market for sugar. Indeed, after 1875 when both the slave and coolie trade had ended – although both the slave and coolie systems of labour would persist for another decade – sugar production displayed a pattern of general decline, a crisis brought on certainly in large part by the shortage of labour but, equally so, by the growing political turmoil in Cuba for independence from Spain.

When the planters turned in desperation to Chinese coolies to meet their enormous demand for labour, it is not clear at all that they gave serious thought to the social consequences of introducing a third racial element and a new labour system to Cuba's plantation society. In fact, they thought they could simply slot the Chinese into the existing system of slavery, while socially locating the *asiaticos* somewhere on the familiar black-white racial hierarchy. In this way, they hoped not to have to disrupt the carefully constructed and rigidly maintained social system divided into slave and free, with its corresponding and reinforcing racialist dichotomy of black and white.

Translated into practice, this meant that, on the plantations where 80 percent of the Chinese had been consigned much as slaves before they had been sold, they worked alongside African slaves and were treated the same on a daily basis. Those who ran away were braded as *"chino cimarron"*, using the same terminology, *cimarron*, for a run-away slave. With no apologies, planters and all other managerial personnel on the plantations simply extended the *esclavista* mentality well honed over centuries of practice to cover the newly imported Chinese coolies. Original contract stipulations, which spelled out terms for their personal freedom after fulfilling the eight-year term, were replaced by new regulations in 1860 that forced coolies to recontract indefinitely—widely denounced by the Chinese themselves as a crude ploy to maintain them in agricultural labour against their will. Without exception, Cuban historians who have closely examined the coolie system all concluded that it was barely disguised to extend the system of slavery.

(Continued on page 11)

Colonos Asiaticos in Cuba

(Continued from page 10)

Regarding what racial identity to assign to the Chinese, Cuban planters and authorities also attempted to be pragmatic, although here they encountered more ambivalence. In daily practice, Chinese were usually lumped with blacks. But on other occasions, they were included among whites, for example, on certain local censuses which did not recognize fine distinctions beyond the conventional divisions of white and slave. More complex censuses sometimes included a category for *asiaticos*. Complicating the matter was the fact that neither the contracts nor the many regulations governing the coolie system stipulated a racial identify for the coolies, although it could be inferred that as long as they were defined legally as free men, their immigration to Cuba as voluntary, they could be considered white; after all, they were technically recruited by the immigration agency ill-named the *Comision de Poblacion Blanca*. Most intriguing were the few documented cases in which a Chinese coolie married a white woman: his baptism and marriage were subsequently recorded by the local parish priests in the white, not black, registries.

But just as surely as the Cuban planters and authorities wrestled with these issues, the Chinese were always acutely aware of their plight and insisted to whomever would listen that they were neither black nor slaves. In 1864, a local official appealed to an administrative judge for guidance on "whether or not it is permitted to transfer *asiaticos* to *personas de color* (blacks or mulattos), because an *asiatico* resisted being owned by *la negra* Antonia, who had bought his contract from a white man. The judge ruled that, given the Chinese man's resistance, "because he considers himself superior by race to the black person who owns him," it was best to return him to his original white master. In a most telling moment, he reasoned that it was not "convenient" to allow *gente de color* to enjoy the same superiority as white masters over the *colonos asiaticos*.

Chinese coolies responded to the harshness of slavery in much the way slaves did: they rebelled individually and collectively; they committed suicide; they torched buildings and crops; they engaged in various forms of sabotage; frequently, they ran away. They seemed fully aware of laws enacted for their welfare and protection; consequently, were very bitter that local authorities repeatedly failed to observe and enforce them. During their indenture, hundreds of coolies filed complaints about the "baneful laws and evil deeds of Spain."

If planters did not anticipate it at first, the Chinese by their actions and behaviour certainly contributed to discredit slavery both as a legal system and as a racial system. By insisting on their humanity as free men, even though they were treated equally harshly or worse than "negro slaves" and, as a non-white population who refused to be subjugated racially by whites, they offered alternative visions to those still enslaved. Towards the end of the indenture period, the dangerous example of a free but non-white racial group in or near the plantations finally dawned on the Cuban planters and colonial authorities. So great, in fact, was this concern that the planters suspended the practice of hiring *cuadrillas* or labour gangs that Chinese labour contractors organized from the ranks of free Chinese or runaway coolies, because their presence among slaves "demoralized the workers."

The concluding chapter of the coolie experience in Cuba was closely intertwined with the dramatic final turn of events in the protracted struggle for Cuban independence, which coincided with the intense last phase of Chinese indenture. At the most crucial moments of their existence, slaves and coolies, blacks and Chinese were able to transcend their differences, their antipathy towards each other, and all other sources of conflict to join in the struggle towards Cuban independence; they both understood that independence would lead to their personal freedom. Chinos *mambises* (freedom fighters) joined with black and white counterparts and fought under Maximo Gomez, Antonio Maceo, Carlos Roloff and other high commanders; they not only provided rank and file men, but a significant number rose to positions of leadership, such as Jose Tolon, Jose Bu, Jose Fong, Andres Cao. Jose Bu so distinguished himself in valour and leadership that after independence, he was accorded the same right as Maximo Gomez and Carlos Roloff "to be elected president of the republic."

"Original contract stipulations were replaced by new regulations that forced coolies to recontract indefinitely — widely denounced by the Chinese themselves as a crude ploy to maintain them in agricultural labour against their will"

Viewed as national heroes by Cubans since then, their place in Cuban history has been secured by this tribute shortly after independence by fellow patriot Gonzalo de Quesada: *"No hubo un Chino cubano desertor; no hubo un Chino cubano trador"* ("There was no Chinese Cuban deserter; there was no Chinese Cuban traitor"). Later in the century, as if to echo this earlier sentiment, renowned Cuban writer Severo Sarduy, who traced his own ancentry to Macao, proclaimed: "Three cultures, at least, have been superimposed to constitute the Cuban – Spanish, African, and Chinese."

CBA NEWS

CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

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Annual CBA Badminton Tournament

The Annual CBA Badminton Tournament will be played this year on June 21-24 ("B" & "D" Divisions) and on June 29-July 1 ("Open" & "C" Divisions). There will be the usual prize monies, trophies, spot-prizes, etc.

Entry forms are available at the CBA Centre, 176 Old Hope Road, and at the Constant Spring Golf Club Badminton Hall.

Players wishing to enter are advised to register early as no late entries will be accepted. Entries for the "B" & "D" Divisions close at 12 noon on Saturday June 16 and entries for the "Open" & "C" Divisions close at 12 noon on Saturday June 23.

This year's tournament will take on an added significance as ALL proceeds will go towards the Cemetery Restoration Fund.

***Contact*: Robert Lee— 926-3540 (office) 813-7088 (cell) 927-4269 (home)**

Dr. Evelyn Hu-DeHart

Recently, we had the pleasure of meeting Dr Evelyn Hu-DeHart when she visited CBA, while in Jamaica for a conference at the UWI in Kingston for only a few days.

She is Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America and Professor of History at Brown University. She taught at other universities in the U.S. and lectured at universities and research institutes in Latin America and Asia.

She was born in China and immigrated to the United States with her parents when she was twelve. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, she studied in Brazil on an exchange programme. She became fascinated with Latin America and that interest eventually led her to a Ph.D. in Latin American History from the University of Texas. She is the author of books and scholarly articles on ethnicity and multiculturalism. Her current research is on the Asian Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We found her to be a remarkable person with a wealth of knowledge of the overseas Chinese in the region, and noted the ease with which she would speak in Cantonese to one of us, turn to say something in English to someone else, and speak animatedly about the Chinese in Cuba and Mexico, using Spanish expressions for "flavour".

We invited her to come back soon to Jamaica and she promised she would, as this trip did not allow her much time here.