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Chinese Government Policy toward Overseas Chinese

Chinese government policy toward overseas Chinese covered a wide range of activities. This report will not touch on the entire range of policy because it has already been analyzed by others from many perspectives, and because of space limitations. Instead, we will review three major issues that had direct effects on the Malayan Chinese from the late 1940s through the early 1950s, and which were often taken up by the press. These issues were: (1) the selection and sending of delegates to the National Assembly under the Kuomintang government and to the National People's Congress set up by the government of the People's Republic of China, and also the role of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (Committee), (2) administrative involvement in the education of overseas Chinese, and (3) procedures for selecting delegates to the Olympic Games. The policies we will analyze are those adopted by the Kuomintang government until the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, and those followed by the PRC after its foundation.

I. Selection of Congressional Delegates and the Role of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (Committee)

1. Selection of Delegates to the National Assembly, 1946–48

A four-member delegation “returned to the country in response to the call-

ing” (*feng zhao fan guo*) to attend the Constituent National Assembly which was held in Nanjing in November–December 1946 to establish a new constitution. The members were Lim Keng Lian (Lin Qing Nian), Quek Sin (Guo Xin), Wang Mo Ren, and Ho Ju Khoon (He Ru Qun). Quek and Wang returned to Malaya in February 1947.¹ It is not clear when Lim and Ho returned. The procedures followed for their selection as delegates are also uncertain.

The 1946 Constitution was adopted at this Constituent National Assembly and promulgated on January 1, 1947. In order to elect members to the Legislative Yuan (which functioned like parliaments in Western countries), the Law for the Election of the Members of the Legislative Yuan was enacted on March 31, 1947. It was agreed to elect nineteen members from among overseas Chinese and Chinese nationals residing abroad. It was also agreed to entrust the business of election management to various local Chinese organizations designated by the government’s Election Office for the Overseas Chinese and to give the vote to those who were resided in a constituency for at least three years.² Malaya and North Borneo were designated as the twelfth constituency with a quota of two seats.³

In parallel with the election of the members of the Legislative Yuan, delegates were also to be elected for the First National Assembly, the primary purpose of which was to amend the 1946 Constitution. In late June 1947, the following list of overseas Chinese constituencies for the National Assembly was announced.

- Constituency 28: Singapore
- Constituency 29: Malacca
- Constituency 30: Johor
- Constituency 31: Selangor
- Constituency 32: Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Kelantan,
Terengganu
- Constituency 33: Perak
- Constituency 34: Penang, Kedah, Perlis
- Constituency 35: British Borneo.

The fixed number of seats was one each for all constituencies except Constituency 28, which was given three seats (including one for a female delegate).⁴

However, this program was criticized by Lee Kong Chian (Li Guang Qian), chairman of the Associated Malayan Chinese Chambers of Commerce, who argued that with no police powers the consulates were unable to determine the qualification of voters or the eligibility of candidates, and that as univer-

sal suffrage would be difficult to implement within the Chinese community under British rule, elections should be entrusted to individual clan associations.⁵ Lee, who was ahead of his time in terms of his sense of identity with Malaya, disliked consular intervention, but was not opposed at this stage to participation in Chinese politics by overseas Chinese in general.

In early September 1947 a Malay language newspaper criticized the elections that were to be conducted in Malaya as an act of “extraterritoriality.”⁶ On September 6, 1947 the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* also editorialized that the elections would violate the sovereignty of the local government, and that direct voting, if implemented, should be conducted by mail. It then criticized in sympathy with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that the National Assembly itself was illegal.

Despite these criticisms, there were some moves to push ahead with voting, including the nomination of a member for the election administration committee by the Keluang Chinese Association.⁷ However, those involved began to recognize that it would be difficult to overcome all the opposition from the British colonial administration, Malay nationalists, and leftist Chinese. The heads of all constituency offices in Malaya gathered to discuss the implications of the elections on domestic laws and the opposition to them from many quarters.⁸ Also, all the consuls held meetings with those involved in the elections to discuss the matter.⁹ Meanwhile the British ambassador to China, acting under instructions from his government, submitted a request to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs calling for the suspension of elections involving the Chinese in British colonies.¹⁰ Liu Wei Chi, chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, commented that “North and South America are sympathetic toward elections, but we are negotiating with some opposing countries in the South Seas.”¹¹ In October the Thai government announced that organizations participating in elections would be “severely punished.”¹² Because of the unfavorable outlook for the elections in many Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese government abandoned the plans for overseas elections later that month on the pretext of “respect for the sovereignty of host countries.”¹³ In February 1948 the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission notified government establishments abroad of the discontinuance of elections.¹⁴

Nevertheless, it appears that the Chinese consulates in Malaya were secretly exploring the possibility of elections. In Keluang, elections were conducted through door-to-door canvassing in early November of 1947,¹⁵ while later that month the consulate general announced a provisional measure to carry out the elections and made known that elections would be held shortly provided that there would be no intervention by the local government, and

that a notice would be issued if such intervention occurred.¹⁶ As no approval came from the British colonial administration, delegates to the National Assembly were eventually selected secretly through voting within the KMT Malayan branch which was under the direct control of the party headquarters.

Of the six candidates (Chua Hui Seng [Cai Hui Sheng], Tay Koh Yat [Zheng Gu Yue], Teh Sin Kwang [Zheng Xin Guang], Teo Chin Seng [Zhang Qin Sheng], Ho Lai Eng [He Li Ying: Quek's wife], and Chew Pei Ching [Zhou Pei Zhuang: female]), Chua and Teo were elected. Since visits to China as delegates to the assembly were prohibited under local law, the two delegates and Ho Lai Eng, who was appointed directly by the Overseas Department of the Chinese government, returned to China on March 25, 1948 under the pretext of private sight-seeing to attend the First National Assembly held in Nanjing from March 29 to May 1.¹⁷

These facts were reported by the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, a paper sympathetic to the CCP, and as such it continued its criticism that the three delegates did not represent Malayan Chinese because of illegal and improper election procedures.

2. Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission

Lim Keng Lian, an influential member of the Kuomintang and a businessman in Singapore, attended the 1946 National Assembly as a delegate. After returning to Singapore, he visited China again in August 1947 to be appointed vice chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission.¹⁸ When he returned to Singapore in August 1948, Lim stated that he did not know when he would go back to China.¹⁹ The fact that he never did go back was due in part to the establishment of the People's Republic of China. How long Lim remained as vice chairman is unclear, but it was in this capacity that in September 1949 he acted as a wedding witness, a function that had been performed by Consul General Wu Paak Shing until early 1948, at a group wedding sponsored by the Mayfair Musical and Drama Society (Aihua Yinyue Xiju She), a cultural group affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party.²⁰ In addition to Lim, a member of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission was stationed in Singapore, and his expenses were tentatively borne by the city's Chinese Chamber of Commerce in the early days of the postwar period.²¹

It is assumed from many press reports that the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission of the Kuomintang government had the following duties.

(1) Licensing and Authorization of Chinese Newspapers and Journals Abroad

In July 1947 the Chinese government announced that the publication of newspapers and magazines by overseas Chinese should be registered with

the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, and that the publication of any articles unfavorable to the Chinese government would lead to the revocation of publication permits, a prohibition on the importation of the newspapers or journals in question into China, and a prohibition on the return of their publishers to China.²² However, the announcement had little practical effect since magazines and newspapers affiliated with the Chinese communists had already secured a firm footing in Malaya. Indeed, even Consul General Wu Paak Shing confided that the effect would be no more than a mere “import prohibition.”²³

(2) Registration of Overseas Chinese Organizations

The Keluang Chinese Association in Johor applied for registration with the Commission and obtained its certificate by early 1948.²⁴ It is not clear, however, how many out of the numerous organizations applied for registration and how many certificates were granted. Applications seem to have been the exception rather than the rule, since there were few reports on the subject.

(3) Financial Assistance to Chinese Schools

The consulate general in Singapore announced in June 1947 that the Commission would provide 450,000 yuan worth of books and teaching materials to more than seventy Chinese primary and secondary schools in Singapore.²⁵ It is uncertain if similar projects were undertaken in other parts of Malaya, or if the plan was implemented as announced.

(4) Protection of the Rights of Overseas Chinese

In November 1947, Liu Wei Chi, chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, stated that he had requested the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take action to rectify discrimination against the Chinese often practiced in other countries. As examples of discrimination he pointed to the strict citizenship provisions imposed on local Chinese as set forth in the preliminary draft of the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, to the very small quota for Malayan Chinese in the Legislative Council, and to the exclusion of Singapore from the Federation of Malaya which would favor Malays as a ratio of total population.²⁶ However, his remarks only angered overseas Chinese in Malaya. Lee Kong Chian commented that neither the Commission nor the Nanjing government had anything to do with the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, and that the chairman’s remarks had to be treated as strictly personal.²⁷

The moderate leftist Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) made the following criticism: “The person who made these remarks does not know the Malayan situation. The British government’s draft of the Constitution does have

some drawbacks, in the sense that it encourages overseas Chinese and others to retain their original nationalities, thus impairing their patriotism toward Malaya. However, Liu's remarks will disrupt ethnic harmony and stir up alienation among different ethnic groups (*minzu*). Liu says that the non-Malays will have no right to vote even after they become citizens, but such right is not given to the Malays either."²⁸

In its editorial, the *Min Sheng Pao*, an organ of the Malayan Communist Party, labeled Liu's remarks as thoughtless words by a person who did not understand the special situation of Malayan Chinese who were expected to comply with the common interests of all ethnic groups in Malaya.²⁹

Responding to these criticisms in a statement released late in December, the chairman questioned why the Democratic League (Minzhu Tongmeng), which was outlawed in China in October 1947, did not dissolve itself in Malaya. As this refutation was based on the chairman's confusion of the Malayan branch of the China Democratic League (Zhongguo Minzhu Tongmeng) with the Malayan Democratic Union (Malaiya Minzhu Tongmeng), he was ridiculed by the MDU as "having revealed his ignorance of Malaya again."³⁰

These facts suggest that, despite the seeming importance of nominal assignments, the Commission played a very limited actual role in Malaya. It appears that the overseas Chinese, for their part, did not feel close to the Commission unlike their feelings toward the consulates.

3. Selection of Delegates to the National People's Congress, 1953–54

The First Session of the People's Political Consultative Conference of China was held in October 1949, immediately after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Overseas Chinese participants numbered eighteen, including five returnees from Malaya. Above the quota for overseas Chinese delegates, there were another five people connected with Malaya, such as Hu Yu Zhi who represented the China Democratic League. Most of the returnees from Malaya had already settled in China and none of them went back to settle in Malaya after the conference. Probably these returned overseas Chinese were selected not through voting by Malayan Chinese, but through consultation between the Chinese Communist Party and influential pro-CCP people like Tan Kah Kee (Chen Jia Geng), who had returned to China in May 1949. However, there are indications that the new Chinese government was not without its own plan for the selection of delegates by overseas Chinese themselves. Signs of this emerged in 1950.

In January 1950, Huang Sheng, secretary-general of China's Shantou Military Administration Committee, wrote a letter to the New Teochew Society

(Xin Chao She) in Singapore asking the society to select eight or nine delegates from among the Malayan Chinese who were of Teochew (Chaozhou) origin and send them to the Chaozhou-Meixian People's Congress (Chao Mei Gejie Renmin Daibiao Dahui) to be held in Shantou from February 22. Shantou, Chaozhou, and Meixian are cities or districts in the eastern part of Guangdong Province and Huang himself was from Chaozhou.³¹

The society lost no time in soliciting views about the sending of a delegation,³² while a group of Teochew Chinese issued an open letter urging the Teochew community to accept Huang's request.³³ However, as there was no follow-up on this request, it seems that there was no delegation, let alone an election, probably because of obstacles such as Singapore's statutory barriers.

In March 1953 the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the PRC announced that overseas Chinese would be represented at the National People's Congress, and that there would be elections for delegates.³⁴ According to a November 1953 announcement, overseas Chinese delegates numbered thirty (five from Malaya, four from Thailand, four from Indonesia, two from Indochina, one from North Borneo, and one each from fourteen other places).³⁵

While the announcement of the actual method of delegate selection was delayed, the British administration discussed various ways to prevent elections from being held in Malaya and North Borneo. They exchanged views on possible legal grounds for prohibiting the elections, which could be held either at the discretion of private overseas Chinese associations or by postal elections. They also discussed the possibility that since even Malayan or Singapore citizens were permitted to hold Chinese nationality, voting by overseas Chinese with Chinese nationality would not infringe against Malayan or Singaporean laws. Finally they concluded that voting would constitute interference with the sovereignty of the local government, subjecting voters to disciplinary action and possible rejection of any applications for naturalization in Malaya that they might file in the future.

The Chinese government started preparations for elections in August and September of 1953 in Indonesia, with which it maintained diplomatic relations.³⁶ In late November of that year, He Xiang Ning, chairman of the committee, announced that overseas Chinese delegates would be selected through deliberations by the committee (not by elections).³⁷ In December British officials reached the conclusion that China had presumably withdrawn its election plans.³⁸ Eventually overseas Chinese delegates were elected from among returned overseas Chinese, except for delegates from certain countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The delegates from Malaya were all returned Chinese.

This process indicates that although China still shared the Kuomintang government's perception that its sovereignty covered the entire overseas Chinese community, it had already adopted a cautious stance in actually exercising its "sovereign rights." The situation had changed since 1947, and there were no official Chinese establishments in Malaya in 1953. In other words, there was no entity to promote elections for overseas Chinese groups. Accordingly, overseas Chinese for their part must have had little enthusiasm for elections. Yet the considerable nervousness of the British government suggests that an acute sense of identity with China still prevailed among overseas Chinese.

II. Education

From around 1920 the Kuomintang government and the British colonial administration had been disputing over the right to control and supervise Chinese schools. However, the basic British stance was to refrain from oppressive action unless there was intolerable activity against the British colonial administration at Chinese schools. What was taught at these schools was generally based on a line set by the Chinese government and reflected China's domestic situation.

Having experienced extreme oppression during the Japanese occupation, Chinese schools were reconstructed after the war. At first they followed the prewar educational policy, but gradually the British colonial administration tightened regulations on these schools. The Federation of Malaya enforced its Education Ordinance in November 1952, and by the mid-1950s the schools had been compelled to operate under the Malayan school education system.

However, during a transitional period in the latter half of the 1940s, the Chinese government still retained links with Chinese schools in Malaya in the following areas.

1. School Registration

The Chinese consulate general in Singapore announced a simplified procedure for school establishment in late February 1947.³⁹ In June Consul General Wu Paak Shing talked with the director of Singapore's Education Department over the issues of school registration and textbooks.⁴⁰ How many Chinese schools registered with the Singapore government and how many with the Chinese government is not certain. In early 1949 a Chinese school inspector for the Singapore government stated that more than forty schools were authorized in 1948, with more than a hundred remaining unregistered, and that most school buildings had been found inadequate.⁴¹ It seems that at

the time more schools chose to register with the Chinese than with the Singapore government.

2. Appointment of Principals and Teachers

The Chinese consulate in Kuala Lumpur announced in late May 1946 the Provisional Law on Assistance for Travel Expenses and Departure Formalities for Teachers in Overseas Chinese Schools in accordance with an official notification from the Ministry of Education of the Kuomintang government. The law was intended to help teachers from China with both financial and procedural requirements.⁴² The July 18, 1946 issue of the *Min Sheng Pao* reported that the Kuomintang had assisted a great number of teachers departing for southern countries after the war. Conceivably this type of financial assistance started soon after the war.

No statistical data are available regarding the total number of such teachers, but an official document of the Chinese government records that a total of 183 teachers were sent to Thailand, Java, Borneo, and Malaya between July and September 1947.⁴³ It is estimated that in one year around this time the number of teachers sent to Malaya alone reached 100. These teachers gave students lessons on Chinese history and geography and inspired them with patriotism for China and the Sinocentric spirit. Leftist Malayan Chinese repeatedly criticized this manner of education as “Kuomintangization education” (*danghua jiaoyu*).⁴⁴ On the other hand, a significant number of teachers who had been sent out by the Chinese Communist Party provided education according to their own version of patriotism as well as pro-CCP lessons, only to incur strong suppression from the British authorities.⁴⁵

In August 1947 the Ministry of Education of the Chinese government announced the appointment of a Kuomintang member, Lin Bing Yin, as the principal of the Chong Hwa Secondary School of Kuala Lumpur. In late December Lin assumed that position in the face of vehement opposition from pro-CCP local Chinese. Out of fourteen teachers, thirteen resigned in protest. The one remaining teacher was a Kuomintang member.⁴⁶

It was variously reported that the Chinese government’s education subsidies toward overseas Chinese in 1946 would amount to U.S.\$4 million,⁴⁷ U.S.\$3 million,⁴⁸ or U.S.\$6 million (including U.S.\$1 million for Malaya).⁴⁹ However, this subsidy plan was not implemented, probably because the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission had diverted the money.⁵⁰

3. Textbooks

Overseas Chinese schools used textbooks edited and printed in China, but in 1947 Shanghai Shuju in Singapore published new textbooks on civics

(equivalent to social studies) which incorporated the regionalism of southern countries and areas.⁵¹

In the Federation of Malaya, the federal government in 1952 launched an initiative to Malayanize textbooks by establishing the General Chinese Textbooks Committee and the Chinese Textbooks Advisory Committee. The General Chinese Textbooks Committee was composed of government officials (British officials and Chinese school inspectors) and citizens (including representatives of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaya [Malaiya Huaxiao Jiaoshihui Zonghui: Jiao Zong] which had been founded in late 1951). By contrast, the members of the Chinese Textbooks Advisory Committee were all Chinese educators. After frequent discussions, the two committees compiled textbooks in sufficient quantities to allow Chinese schools in the country to choose freely. This process took five years. The Chinese members of the committees were most intent on presenting Chinese culture, traditions, and spirit in textbooks in ways that would enable these subjects to be taught efficiently to students. As a result, in history textbooks, for instance, China accounted for 50 per cent of the total pages, Malaya 30 per cent, and the world at large 20 per cent.⁵²

The completely Chinese-compiled textbooks of the immediate postwar period were all replaced with Malayan-compiled textbooks by the mid-1950s. This change coincided with the time when the sense of belonging to Malaya began to take root among ethnic Chinese.

4. The Roles of Consuls and Consulates

In May 1946 the Federation of Chinese Schools in Selangor was formed on the initiative of Hsu Meng Hsiung (Xu Meng Xiong), consul in Kuala Lumpur, who made a congratulatory speech on that occasion.⁵³

In the summer of that year, Wu Paak Shing, consul general in Singapore, summoned the people in charge of education for overseas Chinese throughout Malaya, and formed the Guidance Committee for Reopening of Overseas Chinese Schools. Those present at the committee meeting, which included two educators from the Ministry of Education of the Chinese government, discussed how to reconstruct the Chinese schools that had been devastated during the Japanese occupation. Shortly thereafter the committee established branches in Selangor and Penang under the leadership of the consuls. The Guidance Committee planned to commence activities with a subsidy worth U.S.\$1 million from China. The subsidy plan was canceled, however, and the committee seems to have vanished like the mist.⁵⁴

It was announced in 1948 that graduation certificates required the consulate's seal of approval according to the rules of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Com-

mission.⁵⁵ No data are available that show how long that practice continued.

5. Inspection Teams from China

In May 1946 a Kuomintang government inspection team headed by Chen Shao Xian, chief inspector of schools, visited Malaya (traveling overland via Burma) to inspect Chinese schools in many parts of the country.⁵⁶ The chief inspector's behavior was criticized as "aiming to force government-designated textbooks on students and publicize the Kuomintang" by Lim Lian Geok, who was busily engaged in the reconstruction of the Confucian Secondary School in Kuala Lumpur and who later became chairman (December 1953 to December 1961) of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaya (Jiao Zong).⁵⁷

The Kuomintang government's involvement in the inspection of overseas Chinese education drew criticism from a wide range of leftist Chinese groups including the pro-CCP factions, who labeled it "Kuomintangization education." Interference in school management and the content of teaching as well as forced reshuffles and teacher dismissals by school committees, many of which were dominated by Kuomintang factions, were also denounced as typical tricks of the Kuomintang.⁵⁸

The Kuomintang government had a perception that overseas Chinese education was under its jurisdiction. That jurisdiction was, however, severely limited by the British colonial administration's strict management and control, and by opposition from leftist elements in the Chinese community. It seems that textbooks were the only area where this jurisdiction could be exercised.

6. The People's Republic of China and Overseas Chinese Education

On the first New Year's Day after the establishment of the new China, the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, which was essentially the organ of the China Democratic League's Malayan branch, published a twenty-four-page special New Year's edition (January 1, 1950) which carried an article by Li Xun entitled "A Review and Outlook for Chinese Education in Singapore" that argued the following.

Chinese education in Singapore should not be a replica of China's domestic education. The new Chinese education should be changed into a new overseas Chinese education and then into a Singaporean overseas Chinese education. This final form of education must be nationalistic and popular in nature and should be based on love and respect for the motherland [i.e., China], people, labor, science, and public assets. "Nationalistic" implies an attitude of promoting ethnic harmony, not of excluding other ethnic groups.

It is possible to swear loyalty to Malaya and become genuine citizens of Malaya while loving our motherland. Overseas Chinese education should aim to instill this sense of citizenship. As Malaya has not achieved real independence, the complete discontinuance of efforts to foster patriotism [toward China] will not achieve the intended purpose of education, just as the abandonment of nationalism for the sake of enhancement of internationalism will prevent the unification of patriotism with internationalism. In today's world, in which the state system has become established, patriotism is a basic human right. The nurturing of patriotism is compatible with the nurturing of a sense of Malayan citizenship.

As society advances and suitable conditions are established, overseas Chinese education in Malaya and Singapore should naturally change into Malayan education, and overseas Chinese education will become a matter of the past.

Overseas Chinese education in Singapore in 1950 should proceed, *under the guidance of consulates*, through cooperation with the Department of Education of the local authorities and on the basis of consultation with the Chinese Chambers of Commerce, school committees, and teachers. (italics added)

“Consulates” in this context meant those of the new government to be set up in place of the Kuomintang government consulates. On January 6, 1950 the British government recognized the new Chinese government, and the former consulates were all closed. However, no consulates of the CCP government were established, since the British government decided not to allow them in Malaya for the duration of Emergency. (It was in 1974 when China and Malaysia opened diplomatic relationship that the Chinese embassy was first established in Malaysia.) The concept of overseas Chinese education under the guidance of the consulates ended up as a pie in the sky.

Li Xun's statement was, as far as patriotism is concerned, in line with the stance of the Kuomintang government on overseas Chinese education, but differed in terms of such goals as ethnic harmony, the nurturing of a sense of Malayan citizenship, and integration into Malayan education in the future. Signs of the Malayanization of overseas Chinese education were already evident in his statement.

In February 1950 Tan Kah Kee, a committee member of the Central People's Government, who had returned temporarily from China to Singapore, made the following comments during an interview with the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*.

The present education of overseas Chinese is inconsistent, and the schooling system is not unified. After the consulates of the People's Republic government are established, professionals should be stationed, depending on the circumstances, in order to instruct and guide overseas Chinese education. However, efficient arrangements will be possible only with the unification of overseas Chinese organi-

zations and will be impossible as long as reactionary elements remain active. Since these elements behave as if Taiwan is as large as the entire world, the unification of overseas Chinese and the organization of overseas Chinese education must wait at least until Taiwan is liberated.⁵⁹

It is not clear how serious Tan was when he said “to wait until the liberation of Taiwan.” In any event, as explained earlier, consulates were not established and the new government’s policy of “guidance and instruction” never saw the light of day. It may be assumed that he intentionally referred to reactionary elements and Taiwan simply because he knew that realization of Chinese government’s policy was unfeasible.

Although direct guidance of Malayan Chinese education by the CCP government was not realized, the establishment of the government itself had a substantial indirect effect. Considerable number of Chinese teachers returned to China in the first half of the 1950s. The situation created by the continuing repatriation of numerous teachers without replacement, and by tighter regulation by the local colonial administration, was viewed as “a crisis in overseas Chinese education” even by Hsue Yung Shu (Xue Yong Shu), the leader of the Singapore Chinese School Teachers’ Association and an official of the Singapore sub-branch of the China Democratic League, which was close to the Chinese Communist Party. At the commemorative conference for Teachers’ Day on June 6, 1950, he lamented this fact and added that under the present situation it was impossible to nurture the spirit of patriotism. The preparatory report on the commemorative conference which was compiled after Hsue’s speech, included the following observation.

There are two alternatives for educators to choose. One is to proceed with educational work under the guidance of the People’s Republic government, and the other is to surrender and create *bai Hua* [white Chinese: presumably denoting overseas Chinese with the attitudes of white people]. There is no middle way.⁶⁰

Although there was no direct guidance over overseas Chinese education by the new Chinese government, overseas Chinese educators in Malaya around 1950 still had a strong sense of belonging to China. It would be safe to say that the sense of belonging to Malaya was instilled in the overseas Chinese educational community during the mid-1950s when the Malayization of textbooks was completed.

III. Selection of Olympic Athletes

Before World War II, overseas Chinese took part in the Olympic Games as athletes representing China. In late February of 1948, it was decided at a

meeting of the Malayan Chinese Physical Education Representatives Conference (whose chairman, Aw Kow [Hu Jiao], was the son of Aw Boon Haw [Hu Wen Hu], a noted businessman) that overseas Chinese should participate in the London Olympic Games of that summer in the same manner as in the prewar era.⁶¹ Malayan athletes were required to take part in China's Seventh National Athletic Games held in Shanghai on May 5–16, which doubled as a preliminary for the Olympics. Qualified entrants were required to be citizens of the Republic of China aged eighteen or over for men and sixteen or over for women,⁶² which meant that overseas Chinese in these age brackets were all eligible.

The Malayan preliminaries for the National Athletic Games to select Malayan participants for each event were held in many parts of Malaya. They started with the All-Malayan Chinese Track and Field Championship on March 28 and 29 in Penang, which was followed by preliminaries for swimming, water polo, soccer, basketball, badminton, table tennis, and weight lifting. With the inclusion of officials, the participants on the Malayan team headed by Aw Boon Haw is said to have numbered either 83,⁶³ or 123,⁶⁴ or 135.⁶⁵ The team's expenses were not borne by China but funded with donations from overseas Chinese individuals and organizations.⁶⁶ The team leader, Aw Boon Haw, donated 2,000 Straits dollars.⁶⁷

Participants in the National Athletic Games in Shanghai numbered 2,233, including officials. From outside China, 104 participated from Hong Kong, 83 from Malaya, 62 from the Philippines, 47 from Indonesia, 24 from Vietnam, 3 from Hawaii, and 1 from Canada.⁶⁸

The National Athletic Games did not proceed without disturbances, including a scuffle caused by political antagonism sparked by the virtual civil war then under way in China. Yet all the events were somehow completed on schedule by May 16.

Malayan competitors took part in all events except volleyball and achieved excellent results, despite the cold weather that they were not accustomed to.⁶⁹ They won a number of events, including group badminton, the men's swimming races in the 400- and 1,500-meter freestyle, 100-meter backstroke, and 200-meter relay, the women's 100- and 200-meter backstroke, and the men's 110- and 440-meter track hurdles.⁷⁰

Participants in the Olympic Games had to be strictly screened due to a shortage of funds. The chosen athletes announced at the close of the National Athletic Games numbered four for track and field (including Ng Liang Chiang [Huang Liang Zheng] from Malaya), one for swimming (an Indonesian Chinese), and a basketball team (including Huang Tian Xi from Malaya and a Philippine Chinese).⁷¹ Just before the Olympics (held on July 29–August 14),

another track and field athlete, Li Shi Qiao (a Malayan Chinese), was added to the list.⁷²

The soccer team members, who included three Malayan Chinese, had been selected in April before the National Athletic Games. However, this decision was opposed by some people who argued that the Olympic athletes should have been selected at the National Athletic Games. After a period of heated debate,⁷³ soccer matches were held at the National Athletic Games, but no names of Olympic participants were announced. The decision made in April seems to have been finally accepted.

In May to June, the selected Chinese soccer team visited Southeast Asian cities such as Hong Kong, Manila, Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore, and Jakarta to compete in friendly games and raise funds. In late May and late June, the team visited Singapore where it played against the all-Malaya Malay team, the Malayan Chinese team, and the all-Malaya team,⁷⁴ drawing capacity crowds each time. The fact that the team competed with an overseas Chinese team only once and played with an all-Malay team as well seems to have reflected the visiting team's consideration for the issue of Malayan ethnicity. Meanwhile, on June 4 a Chinese basketball team visited Singapore.⁷⁵

The Olympic performance of the Chinese athletes was unremarkable, and they won no medals. Nevertheless, the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* and its evening edition, *Nan Chiau Ban Pao*, gave a lot of coverage to events every day, especially to soccer and basketball games, arousing wild audience enthusiasm. The publishers arranged to have Olympic news cabled during the day-time for inclusion in the evening paper. The arrangement helped to bring a sharp increase in the circulation of *Nan Chiau Ban Pao*, Singapore's only evening paper, which was inaugurated on April 1, 1947.⁷⁶ This is further evidence of the strong sense of belonging that overseas Chinese felt toward China in those days.

From the Federation of Malaya only one player participated in the Olympic Games. Lloyd Valberg, a Eurasian high jumper, finished in eighth place.

Before it could participate in the Olympics, a country was required to establish a national Olympic committee. The June 13, 1951 edition of *Nanyang Siang Pau* reported the existence of an Olympic committee in Singapore, adding that there would soon be a Malayan committee and then an all-Malaya (including Singapore) committee. (The Federation of Malaya Olympic Council [*sic*] was formed in 1953.)⁷⁷

The forty-member team that the People's Republic of China sent to the Helsinki Olympics in 1952 included a swimmer who had represented China as an Indonesian Chinese in the 1948 Olympics. Taiwan withdrew its delegation from the Games in protest against the PRC's participation.

There were no National Athletic Games of the kind that had been held prior to the London Olympics, either in China or in Taiwan. Singapore sent its own five-member delegation, but the Federation of Malaya sent none.⁷⁸

It was to the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 that the Federation of Malaya sent its first delegation. The federal government's *Official Year Book* reported that "Australia's proximity made it financially feasible to send a contingent there whereas the cost of sending teams to London in 1948 or Helsinki in 1952 would have been prohibitive."⁷⁹

Malayan Chinese athletes now had no ties with the Chinese delegation and began to participate in the Olympics as members of Malayan (or Singaporean) delegations. This change, which was prompted by a growing sense of Malayan identity among Malayan Chinese, seems to have deepened these feelings even more.

Notes

- 1 *Min Sheng Pao*, February 6, 1947. The paper criticized that the four persons did not represent Malayan Chinese. *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, February 22, 1947.
- 2 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, April 1, 1947.
- 3 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, August 9, 1947. Announced by the Singapore Consulate General on August 3.
- 4 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, June 23, 1947.
- 5 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, August 9, 1947.
- 6 According to the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 5, 1947.
- 7 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 11, 1947.
- 8 The *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* (September 5, 1947) reported that this consultation was scheduled for September 8.
- 9 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 22, 1947.
- 10 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 22, 1947. The British Ambassador to China protested this matter as "an unwarrantable interference with the sovereignty [of Malaya]" (quoted in "Election of 30 Overseas Chinese Delegates to the All China People's Congress," in "Proposal to Elect Delegates from Territories Having a Community of Overseas Chinese, to Represent Them at an All-China People's Congress to Be Held in Peking," PRO, CO 1022/404 [1953-54], p. 62).
- 11 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 23, 1947.
- 12 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, October 24, 1947.
- 13 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, October 31, 1947.
- 14 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, March 5, 1948. The notification was dated February 24 (announced by the Singapore Consulate General on March 4).
- 15 *Min Sheng Pao*, November 7, 1947.

16 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, November 26, 1947.

17 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, March 25 and April 28, 1948.

However, there is some confusion in the reports of the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* about the participation of three “Malayan delegates” in the National Assembly, as well as some contradiction with the data of the Kuomintang government.

The March 25, 1948 issue of the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* said that the three delegates represented Singapore. This description coincided with the Singaporean quota of two men and a woman. However, as there was no mention of delegates from other parts of Malaya in the paper’s other reports at that time, it cannot be confirmed whether they were really delegates selected within Singapore’s delegation quota. The paper’s April 28 issue said that the three were Malayan delegates.

On the other hand, their names do not appear in the delegation list of China’s two official reports: *Di-yi-jie Guomin dahui di-yi-ci huiyi jilu* [Document of the first conference of the first-term National Assembly] and *Guomin dahui shilu* [Minutes of the National Assembly] (both reports were edited by the Guomin Dahui Mishuchu and published in 1948 at Nanjing).

According to the Minutes of the National Assembly, it had been decided to elect sixty-five overseas Chinese delegates from forty-one areas throughout the world. However, only twenty-two delegates from seventeen areas including South and North America arrived in time for the assembly. Malayan and Singaporean delegates had not been selected (p. 90), and thus there was no participation from these two areas. This leads us to assume that the three were Malayan delegates not to the National Assembly but to the Legislative Yuan and they attended the conference of the Legislative Yuan which was held from May 8 to July 21, 1948 after the end of the National Assembly.

However, according to China’s official document, *Zhonghua nianjian, 1948* [China yearbook, 1948], 2 vols. (Nanjing, 1948), out of the quota of nineteen seats reserved for the overseas Chinese to be represented in the Legislative Yuan, including two seats for Malaya and North Borneo (vol. 1, p. 447), only two were filled, one each from Canada and Europe (vol. 1, p. 455).

There is no trace of the three Singaporean delegates in the official document, presumably because of consideration for the British government or for the delegates’ safety after their return.

18 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 19 and August 19, 1947.

19 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, August 17, 1948.

20 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, September 8, 1948.

21 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 27, 1948. After the war the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce paid 3,600 yuan to support the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission and had received 2,000 yuan in repayment by July 1948. In other instances, China’s official establishments requested overseas Chinese associations for funds. For instance, the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce donated 7,770 Straits dollars for the establishment of the consulate, and had the custody of nineteen

- items at the time of closure of the consulate in January 1950 (*Xian Dai Ri Bao*, January 24, 1950).
- 22 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 18, 1947; *Min Sheng Pao*, August 15, 1947.
 - 23 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 19, 1947.
 - 24 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, March 8, 1948.
 - 25 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, June 27, 1947.
 - 26 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, November 3 and November 7, 1947; *Min Sheng Pao*, November 3, 1947.
 - 27 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, November 4 and November 7, 1947; *Min Sheng Pao*, November 6, 1947.
 - 28 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, November 7, 1947; *Min Sheng Pao*, November 8, 1947.
 - 29 *Min Sheng Pao*, November 24, 1947.
 - 30 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, December 25, 1947.
 - 31 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, January 25, 1950. This article carried the following brief personal history of Huang Sheng: "Also known as Gao En, he is well versed in economic issues. He founded the Nanqiao Secondary School in Jieyang, Guangdong Province, China in the early years of the anti-Japanese war. Just before the Pacific War broke out, he came to Singapore and taught guerrilla tactics to the Squad for Training Youth Cadets, which was established by the Singapore Chinese Anti-Enemy Mobilization Council (Xingzhou Huaqiao Kangdi Dongyuan Zonghui). He went back to the home country guarded by his students just before Singapore surrendered to the Japanese. In the early postwar years when Hu Yu Zhi founded the New Nanyang Press [in November 1945], Huang came back to Singapore and renewed old friendship with cultured people. He also visited Penang and Ipoh and frequently contributed thought-provoking essays to the *Xian Dai Ri Bao*. His speeches impressed audiences immensely. Then he went to Bangkok [where he led in establishing the China Democratic League Thai branch serving as *zhuren* or director]. He also edited the *Mangu Shang Bao* [Bangkok Commercial News], and wrote coherent and lucid economic essays under the pen name of Lang Zhu Gao which were highly received by Thai Chinese. With a person having a profound knowledge of the situation for overseas Chinese in the new position, it is expected that their interests will be duly respected."
 - 32 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, January 31, 1950.
 - 33 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, February 3, 1950.
 - 34 PRO, CO 1022/404, p. 135.
 - 35 PRO, CO 1022/404, pp. 33, 55, 56.
 - 36 PRO, CO 1022/404, pp. 66, 89.
 - 37 PRO, CO 1022/404, p. 55.
 - 38 PRO, CO 1022/404, pp. 45, 47.
 - 39 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, March 1, 1947.
 - 40 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, June 29, 1947.
 - 41 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, January 6, 1949.
 - 42 *Min Sheng Pao*, June 1, 1946.

- 43 Republic of China, Ministry of Education, Jiaoyu Nianjian Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, ed., *Di-er-ci Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian* [Second educational yearbook of China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan [Commercial Book Co.], 1948), p. 1274.
- 44 For example, see *Min Sheng Pao*, November 20 and November 27, 1947.
- 45 Beijing Guiguo Huaqiao Lianyihui, ed., *Kangyi yingdi pohai Malaiya huaqiao* [Protest against persecution of Malayan Chinese by the British imperialist] (Beijing [1951]), pp. 110–21.
- 46 *Min Sheng Pao*, August 21, August 23, September 4, September 7, and November 18, 1947 and January 5, 1948.
- 47 *Min Sheng Pao*, May 22, 1946.
- 48 *Min Sheng Pao*, July 18, 1946.
- 49 Lim Lian Geok (Lin Lian Yu), *Fengyu shiba nian* [Weather-beaten eighteen years] (Kuala Lumpur: Lin Lian Yu Jijin Weiyuanhui, 1988), pp. 19–22.
- 50 Lim Lian Geok, p. 22.
- 51 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 3, 1947.
- 52 Lim Lian Geok, pp. 32–43; Malaixiya Huaxiao Jiaoshihui Zonghui, *Jiao Zong sanshisan nian* [Thirty-three years of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia] (Kuala Lumpur: Malaixiya Huaxiao Jiaoshihui Zonghui, 1987), pp. 321–23, 356–57.
- 53 *Min Sheng Pao*, May 20 and May 30, 1946.
- 54 Lim Lian Geok, pp. 19–22.
 According to the *Min Sheng Pao*, July 11, 1946, the two experts from China talked with people concerned with Chinese education in Kuala Lumpur as well.
- 55 *Min Sheng Pao*, March 3, 1948.
- 56 *Min Sheng Pao*, May 11, 1946.
- 57 Lim Lian Geok, pp. 14–17.
- 58 *Min Sheng Pao*, November 20 and November 27, 1947 and April 3, 1948.
- 59 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, February 25, 1950.
- 60 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, June 7, 1950.
- 61 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, February 29, 1948; *Min Sheng Pao*, March 1, 1948.
- 62 *Min Sheng Pao*, February 20, 1948.
- 63 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 5, 1948.
- 64 *Min Sheng Pao*, April 30, 1948.
- 65 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 17, 1948.
- 66 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, April 21 and April 23, 1948.
- 67 *Min Sheng Pao*, April 15, 1948.
- 68 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 5, 1948.
- 69 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 4, 1948.
- 70 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 17, 1948.
- 71 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 22, 1948.
- 72 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, July 28, 1948.
- 73 *Min Sheng Pao*, April 8 and April 15, 1948.
- 74 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, May 23, May 24, and June 28, 1948.

75 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, June 5, 1948.

76 *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, August 8, 1948.

77 Federation of Malaya, *Official Year Book, 1961*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), p. 369.

78 *Nanyang Siang Pau*, July 19, July 20, July 24, July 25, July 26, and July 31, 1952.

79 Federation of Malaya, *Official Year Book, 1961*, vol. 1, p. 369.